IN DARK ALLEYS



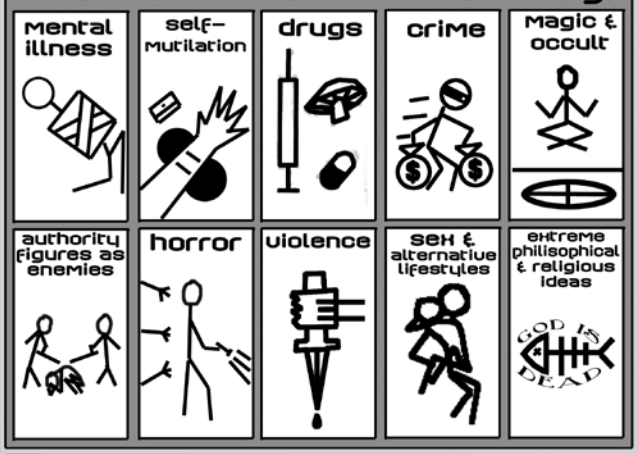
WARNING: INTENDED FOR MATURE READERS

THE ROLE PLAYING GAME

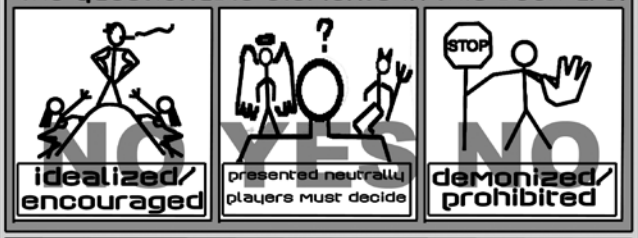
IN DARK ALLEYS

WARNING

This Book Contains The Following:



The questionable elements in this book are:

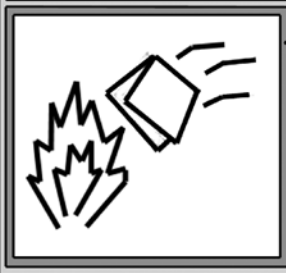


NOT RECCOMENDED

for people with

POOR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS





This book has been voluntarily rated:

BURN IMMEDIATELY



ORGANIC RULE COMPONENTS

IN DARK ALLEYS the Role Playing Game
Is published by Vajra Enterprises, Eureka California

ISBN 0-9713095-4-X

Written and Designed by Brian St.Claire-King

Cover by Jason Juta

Art by
Michaël Brack (p.6, p.154, p.235, p.250, p.255), Nicole Cardiff (p.14, p.21, p.23, p.26, p.39, p.46, p.53, p.86, p.103, p.112), Kulbongkot Chutaprutikorn (p.81), Alice Duke (p.30), Tomasz Jedruszek (p.216), Jason Juta (p.55), Cristina Ortega (p.252), Pablo Palameque (p.44, p.132, p.168, p.176, p.194, p.234, p.259), William Teo (p.101), Gracjana Zielinska (p.11, p.42, p.51).

Playtested by Tiffany St.Claire-King, Nick "Eeyore!" Page, Diamond Charlotte, Sherelle Castro, Jorden Contreras, Paula Long, David Tuttle, Tim Simpson, Peter Fulton Alexander, Nick Argall, Carolina Barnatan, Chris Bell, William Bluford, Thom Brown, Marce Connor, Shawn Connor, Darren Stefan Gilliver, Kevin Flowers, Kyle Flowers, Barnard Friedman, Remy Handler, Bryan Head, Víctor Jiménez Merino, Allon Mureinik, Michael Kalinin, Aviad Katz, Edward Saxton, Rodney Smith, David Turner and Justin Wright.

Research Consultation by Allon Mureinik and Tiffany St.Claire-King.

Hand Models: Jorden Contreras and Tiffany St.Claire-King.

Editorial Assistance by Tiffany St.Claire-King and Shawn Connor.

Copyright © 2006 by Vajra Enterprises
All rights reserved under the Universal Copyright Convention.
No part of this book may be reproduced in part or whole without permission from the publisher.

Visit www.InDarkAlleys.com

A Basic Overview of the Game

Style- This is a game about heretical philosophies that have been dismissed, ridiculed or suppressed because they don't have 'happy endings.'

It's a game about people driven to seek truth despite the danger. It's about the double-life those people must lead and the thrill and power that accompanies their exploration of the dark truths of this world.

This is a horror game, yet players are not given the comfort of a monster they know from legends: there are no ghosts or vampires or devils. Instead, the 'monsters' are the people, places and things that we depend on and believe in and that suddenly turn malevolent when their true nature is perceived.

In Dark Alleys draws style from three main sources:

-Movies from the Japanese "horror revolution" (and their American remakes).

-A number of American Indie comics whose creators found innovative ways of bringing readers into the damaged psyches of the protagonists.

-A certain sci-fi trilogy that uses questions about the nature of reality to form the basis for furious action.

Background- The game takes place in what seems to be the modern world, yet hidden just below the surface is a world of conspiracies, heretical faiths, occult powers and supernatural dangers. The true nature of the universe is not immediately divulged to the players, but players know this much: what most people believe about the universe is not only wrong, it is a deliberate deceit. Los Angeles is provided as an in-depth campaign setting, yet In Dark Alleys can be played anywhere in the modern world.

Player Characters- The players are all "touched," people who have had a peek behind the curtain of normal reality and have been irrevocably changed by otherworldly forces. These encounters often were against their will. The exact nature of what has happened to them is currently beyond the characters' understanding. The encounters have left them different in two ways. First, they have unusual abilities. Second, they know that the reality most people believe in is false. The touched are driven by fear, by curiosity or by lust for power to discover more about the universe's dark secrets, even if it means walking into dangers they can't comprehend and may not be able to survive.

Character Creation- The character has one pool of points to buy attributes with and another pool of points to buy skills with. Characters must choose a Day Job (the character's place in mundane society) and a Secret Life (the source of the character's supernatural knowledge and powers). The Day Job sets the cost for mundane skills and the Secret Life sets the cost for supernatural skills. Advantages and disadvantages are used to round out the character. Skill points, attribute points, money and points from advantages and disadvantages can all be traded for each other via a simple ratio.

PCs earn XP (experience points) by surviving dangers, helping people, discovering secrets of the universe and by scaring or creeping-out fellow PCs. XP can be used to improve characters. In order to gain supernatural skills, PCs must spend XP but must also do dangerous experiments with their own abilities.

Game Mechanics- All mechanics are based on a simple system: The sum of attribute + skill + modifier(s) + 1d20 must be equal to or higher than the difficulty of the proposed action. Opposed rolls are made when two actions are in conflict with each other. Each of the opposing parties wants to beat his or her particular difficulty by more than the other party beats his or hers. Fighting is made up of opposed actions and reactions with different difficulties and effects. In combat, for each round each character gets one action to make against an opponent and one reaction if someone else does something to him or her. Supernatural powers use the basic skill system.

Why Alleys?

The front of a building is a disgusting lie: the trash swept away, the graffiti painted over, the homeless people chased off by cops or security guards, the weeds plucked or poisoned. It's meant to tell a story of order, control and prosperity that has nothing to do with reality.

The beauty of the front of buildings is a mask which has been mass manufactured and designed not to offend. Like porn, it gives us what we're supposed to want but in the end it accomplishes and signifies nothing.

Alleys tell the real truth about society: our wastefulness, our underclasses, our lack of control over the universe. All of society's dark secrets are swept into dark alleys where nobody has to publicly acknowledge them and deal with them. We celebrate our strengths and hide our weaknesses, allowing those weaknesses to grow.

There is real beauty in alleys for those who dare to see it. It's dangerous, scary, disturbing and flawed, but it is also real beauty. It's beauty that means something.

Modern American society values image more than truth. Looking healthy, happy and strong is more important than actually being healthy, happy and strong. Nowhere in America is this truer than Los Angeles, a city built upon a tissue of lies and willful ignorance. This is the society that prefers the pleasant and boring lie of the façade to the troubled beauty of an alley. And it is correspondingly the city with the deepest, darkest, dirtiest and most dangerous alleys.

This game is about alleys. Both the wonderful and terrifying things that can be found in literal alleys, and the figurative alleys: the alleys of academia where we send ideas that don't have pleasant consequences, the alleys of our minds where we sweep the thoughts and feelings that aren't pleasant, and the alleys of the urban landscape where we send the poor and homeless.

This game is about those who are tired of the shallow pleasantness of façades, tired of being told comforting lies, tired of a standard of mass-manufactured prettiness that strives to be as inoffensive as possible. For these people, alleys are the only real beauty to be found in the city. This game is about those who are coming to terms with the unpleasant parts of themselves and their societies, and for whom an alley is the only place they truly feel alive.

Table of Contents

Introduction 003
A Basic Overview of the Game 003
Why Alleys? 003
Table of Contents 004

Character Creation 005
Character Creation in Brief 005
Step 1 – Character Concept 005
Step 2 – Psychodynamics 007
Step 3 – Attributes 008
Step 4 – Secret Life 010
Androgynes 011
Animists 013
Cannibals 021
Faustians 023
Heroes 025
Power Creation Rules 030
Lost 039
Outcasts 042
Professionals 046
Scribblers 050
Survivors 052
Wonderlanders 054
Step 5 – Day Job 058
Step 6 – Skills 065
Step 7 – Equipment 087
Step 8 – Bonus Characteristics 110
Step 9 – Character Advancement 122

Organic Rule Components 125
Basic Mechanics 125
Using Attributes 126
Using Psychodynamics 129
Health Attributes 131
Drugs, Disease and Poisons 133
Skills 136
Chasing 138
Fighting 139

A History of Unpopular Ideas 150
Animism 150
Buddhism 150
Platonism and Neoplatonism 151
Gnosticism 152
Descartian Skepticism 152
Sadism 152
Marxism 153
Nihilism 153
Freudian Psychoanalysis 155
Surrealism 156
Existentialism 156
Jungian Psychology 157
Punk 157
Paglian Feminism 157
Postmodernism 158

Los Angeles 159
History 159
Culture 162
Entertainment 162
Population 163
Transportation 166
Climate 166
Economy 167
Politics 167
Law Enforcement 168
Crime 170
Infrastructure 175
Geography 175

Secrets of the Touched 185

Secrets of This World 222

Secrets of Other Worlds 248

A Story 265

Adventures 267
Payphone 268
Darkness 272

Appendices 278
Glossary of Game Terms 278
Character Sheets 280
Quick Ref 282
Open Game Flyer 284
Index 285

Chapter One - Character Creation

We are born cold, wet and hungry. Then things get worse. -anon

Step One – Character Concept

Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 – Character Concept: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, drives, etc.

Step 2 – Psychodynamics: Spread 80 pts. across 8 personality elements (min. 1 max. 20).

Step 3 – Attributes: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 Bonus Point).

Step 4 – Secret Life: Choose a source of supernatural knowledge and ability.

Step 5 – Day Job: Choose occupation. This sets income and cost for mundane skills. Some occupations cost or give Bonus Points.

Step 6 – Skills: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by Day Job and Secret Life. Can buy 1 to 5 levels of any skill.

Step 7 – Equipment: Buy stuff with money from Day Job. Can't buy illegal things without the Black Market skill.

Step 8 – Bonus Characteristics: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages. Max. 30 BP of disads.

Step 9 – Character Advancement: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC. Gaining supernatural skills require dangerous experimentation.

Advanced Character Creation

The order of character creation steps listed here is recommended for people not yet completely familiar with the character creation system. Advanced players may want to take it in a different order, e.g. start with bonus characteristics, then choose secret life and day job, then skills and equipment, then attributes and psychodynamics. Although not as simple, taking character creation out of order can be more flexible.

Using Bonus Points

PCs start with 0 Bonus Points (BPs). In order to buy something that **costs** BP the PC must choose some other character creation option that **gives** BPs.

Things that can give or cost BPs include: optional Advantages and Disadvantages particular to some Secret Lives, some Day Jobs and all the Advantages and Disadvantages in the Bonus Characteristics section.

For more on using Bonus Points, see Bonus Characteristics, p.110.

In Brief: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, drives, etc.

First, create a character concept. Character concept includes name, gender, appearance, history, personality and motivation. The GM may ask you the following questions to get a better sense of who your character is. Even if he or she doesn't ask these questions, it is a good idea that you know the answer to them.

Family- Where is the PC's family? Who are they and what do they do? What is the PC's relationship with them?

Gender/Sex- What is the PC's gender and sexual preference? Is the PC looking for any kind of long-term relationship, and if so then what kind? What does the PC find attractive in a man/woman? Does the PC have any kinks? Does the PC ever wish to have children?

Ethnicity- What is the PC's ethnic background? What kind of connection does the PC have to this background?

Personal History- Where did the PC grow up? What kinds of things did the PC do? What kind of people did the PC associate with? What fortunes and misfortunes befell the PC?

Appearance- What does the PC look like and how does the PC tend to dress? What message, if any, does the PC try to send with his or her personal style?

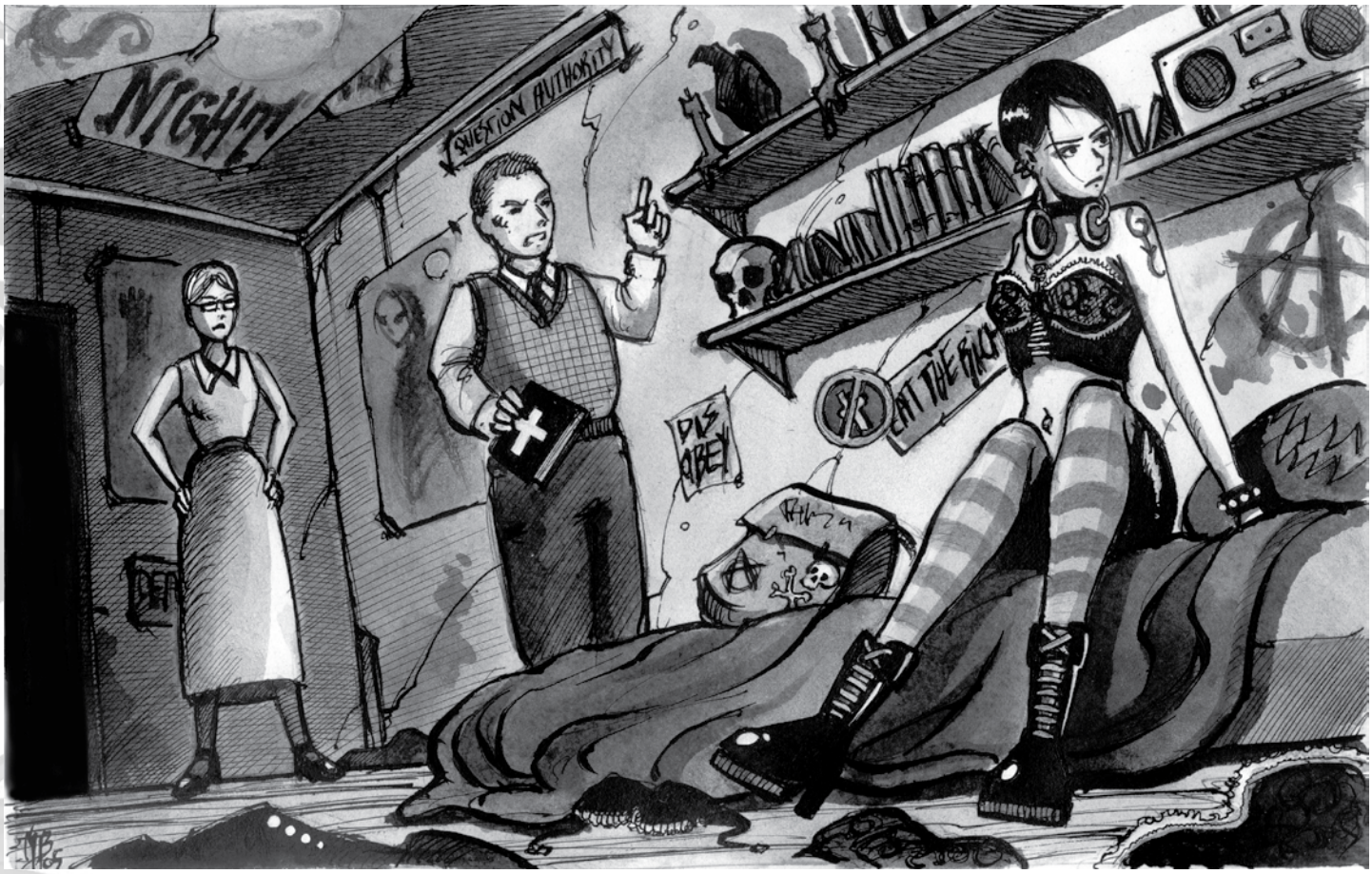
Drive- All PCs are people who seek to find out the truth about the world around them, even if that truth is scary and dangerous. Come up with a phrase that describes why the PC would endanger himself or herself for the truth. Examples include:

Intellectual Honesty: The PC is obsessed with the idea of following any sort of inquiry to its logical conclusion. To ask a question and then not do everything to find the correct answer would be hypocrisy.

Pessimistic Paranoia: The PC is certain that there's something terribly wrong with the universe. Unable to ignore this fact, the PC would rather know the nature of the threat.

Curiosity: The PC has always had an insatiable desire to get into off-limits places and learn people's secrets. This drive is so strong that it sometimes overpowers the drive for self-preservation.

Fear Junkie: The PC likes anything creepy, scary or disturbing, The PC used to be addicted to horror books and movies but those no longer do anything for the PC. The PC now gets a rush by seeking out the scary in the real world.



Misanthropy: People have been cruel to the PC, and now the PC has a grudge against people. The PC wants to find out that the universe is a terrible place and rub people's faces in it.

Power Hungry: With knowledge comes power. The PC is obsessed with gaining occult powers, no matter what dangers to mind, body and soul stand in the way.

Self-Defense: The PC is convinced that some supernatural power is after him or her and that the only way to escape a terrible fate is to discover the nature of the supernatural.

Resentment: The PC knows he or she has been lied to about the universe. The PC resents being deceived and will seek out the truth, not so much because he or she wants to know but to spite those that would hide it from him or her.

Optimistic Faith: The PC has seen scary things, but the PC has faith that there is some light at the end of the tunnel, some good that will make it all worth while. So the PC strikes off to find the good hidden behind the horrors.

Sample Character Creation – Step 1

Our sample character will be Maggie Hernandez, a young woman driven by loyalty to her community to fight supernatural evil. We'll say her drive is self-defense: she wants to find out what dangers are out there because she feels personally threatened.

Secret Lives in Brief

While creating a character concept, keep in mind that in step 4 the PC will be asked to choose from one of the following sources of his or her supernatural abilities and knowledge:

Androgynes- Have discovered there is a power to human sexuality, a power beyond and capable of changing our bodies and our genders.

Animists- Heirs to aboriginal wisdom, they learn to speak to the spirits that are everywhere and gain power using dangerous drugs.

Cannibals- Monks and priests who deny the flesh, break taboos, mutilate themselves and gain powerful phantom body parts.

Faustians- Alien entities living in their minds give them mental strength and supernatural powers but have their own agendas.

Heroes- Troubled vigilantes, some with unusual powers, who seek meaning in life by hunting supernatural horrors.

Lost- Become lost, often while drunk, and end up wherever they want to be, sometimes even in places that don't exist in this world.

Outcasts- Labeled crazy because they can see and hear things others can't. They know the city's supernatural places, people and things.

Professionals- Workaholic problem-solvers who have earned the trust of the Powers-That-Be and access to special training by secret societies.

Scribblers- Heretical academics, study dark philosophies, trade knowledge by writing graffiti in dark places.

Survivors- Having overcome death by force of will, they find themselves nearly immortal, yet hunted by something from beyond.

Wonderlanders- The fantastic worlds of their childhood imagination are real. Things and people can cross between them and this world.

Step Two – Psychodynamics

In Brief: Spread 80 pts. across 8 personality elements (min. 1 max. 20).

Spread 80 points (average 10 each) across the following 8 psychodynamics, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 20 each. All 80 points must be spent. 10 is the average for a normal, healthy person. The farther a psychodynamic is from 10, the more unusual the PC's personality and behavior and the more likely the PC is to be thought of as 'crazy.' These psychodynamics are elements of the PC's subconscious. Combined they make up the PC's drives, desires, fears, likes and dislikes.

A score of 1 indicates that the psychodynamic is unusually weak and has little chance of effecting how the PC behaves. PCs with low scores in a particular psychodynamic will get little interference but also little aid and insight from that piece of their subconscious (see p.129).

A score of 20 indicates that the psychodynamic is unusually strong and makes up a large part of the PC's personality. PCs with high scores in a psychodynamic can expect a lot of aid and insight from that psychodynamic (p.129) but also a lot of interference with their rational thought.

In addition to assigning point values, you can also choose to have one or more of the psychodynamics corrupted. See the Corrupted Psychodynamic disadvantage (p.116) for more.

ANIM (Animus/Anima)- This represents the strength of the PC's masculine (Animus if PC is female) or feminine (Anima if PC is male) side.

At 20 ANIM, the PC has a strong feminine side (if the PC is male) or a strong masculine side (if the PC is female). The PC may try to hide this side or may be open about expressing it. The PC has empathy for and gets along well with members of the opposite sex.

At 1 ANIM, the PC has practically no feminine or masculine side, either because the PC doesn't judge his or her behavior in terms of gender or because the PC's thoughts, impulses or emotions are always completely consistent with the PC's idea of his or her gender. Either way, the PC has little empathy for the opposite sex.

When ANIM is corrupted, the PC is fearful and untrusting of the opposite gender and the PC's 'feminine' or 'masculine' impulses are frightening and reprehensible to the PC.

EGO (Ego)- This represents the part of the PC that integrates other psychodynamics to form a whole and suppress psychodynamics when they interfere with the PC's self-concept.

At 20 EGO, the PC has a strong sense of who he or she is. The PC never experiences thoughts, feelings or impulses that don't match the PC's self-concept. If the PC doesn't want to think about or remember something, the PC won't. The PC can ignore most desires and discomforts.

At 1 EGO, the PC has little idea who he or she is and is buffeted by contradictory thoughts, feelings and impulses. The more the PC tries not to think about something, the more it pops into the PC's head.

If the EGO is corrupted, the PC thinks about and remembers the most unpleasant and unhelpful things, while forgetting things which would actually be useful to the PC.

ID (Id)- This represents the part of the PC that seeks pleasure and avoids discomfort.

At 20 ID the PC has a powerful "lust for life." The PC enjoys all manner of physical pleasures and enjoys trying new things. The PC rails angrily against all forms of discomfort.

At 1 ID, the PC cares little about physical pleasures and displeasures, caring more about ideas and identity.

If the ID is corrupted, the PC seeks out unpleasant things and shies away from pleasant things. The PC may have a desire to poke himself or herself with pins, or hold in urine until the bladder is painfully full, or chew up aspirin for the bitterness.

REPT (Reptile)- This represents the PC's most basic instincts, those we share in common with reptiles.

At 20 REPT, the PC has strong instincts. The PC puts the basics of life (food, shelter, sex and freedom from danger) above all else. The PC has no trouble seeing these needs as an evolutionary imperative: a matter of survival-of-the-species that trumps moral or aesthetic concerns. The PC reacts quickly to life-and-death situations, moving without thinking,

At 1 REPT, the PC has few instincts. The PC relies on logic, aesthetics and ethics to guide his or her actions. If there isn't anything tasty to eat, for instance, the PC will probably forget to eat. The PC rarely thinks in terms of basic needs and reacts slowly to life-and-death situations.

If the REPT is corrupted, the PC's instincts will tell the PC to do bizarre and unhealthy things: e.g. eat a newspaper, go to sleep on a cold sidewalk, have sex with a relative, attack a larger and meaner person, etc.

SEGO (Super-Ego)- This represents the part of the PC which fears punishment for doing bad things.

At 20 SEGO, the PC has a strong conscience. The PC doesn't like breaking society's laws or cultural norms; doing so makes the PC very nervous. The PC doesn't like other people who break rules and would like to see them punished. The PC has respect and empathy for authority figures.

At 1 SEGO, the PC has little or no conscience. The PC has no innate aversion to breaking rules. The PC may find other reasons not to break rules (e.g. concern for reputation, an intellectual belief in ethics, sympathy and compassion) but is not motivated by guilt or an irrational fear of being caught. The PC has no innate dislike of rule-breakers and feels little empathy for authority figures. The PC has poor knowledge of social codes of behavior and etiquette. The PC often forgets what other people consider right or wrong.

A corrupted SEGO means the PC starts feeling frightened and guilty about things that nobody considers wrong (e.g. brushing one's hair).

SHAD (Shadow)- This represents the PC's dark side.

At 20 SHAD, the PC has many scary and ego-dystonic thoughts, impulses and emotions. If the PC's EGO and SEGO are weak, the PC will find himself or herself constantly acting upon those impulses against his or her will. If the EGO and SEGO are strong, the PC will be able to control the impulses, although they will still be there.

At 1 SHAD, the PC has practically no dark side, either because the PC has never had a thought or impulse worth being ashamed of or because the PC is a psychopath who unashamedly does whatever he or she thinks it is possible to get away with.

If SHAD is corrupted, personality elements that the PC wants to have will begin to disappear into the dark side. For instance, the PC may become unable to be creative, or be passionate, or be logical except when expressing his or her dark side.

STRA (Stranger)- This part represents the PC's respect for people and beings that are not like the PC and the hope that they have wisdom that the PC can learn from.

At 20 STRA, the PC is not scared of strangers, alien things or nature. The PC is adept at recognizing and learning from the wisdom in books or people. The PC is prone to flashes of inspiration in which the words of a stranger suddenly make sense and the solution to a problem suddenly becomes apparent.

At 1 STRA, the PC is uncomfortable around anyone/or anything that doesn't look and think like the PC. The PC doesn't want to learn anything new. The PC ridicules as nonsense any ideas he or she doesn't understand.

If the STRA is corrupted, the PC often attributes good motives to people/things that aren't like the PC and bad motives to people/things that are like the PC.

THAN (Thannatos)- This represents the part of the PC that sees hope in and longs for death and destruction.

At 20 THAN, the PC has an obsession with and desire for death. The PC likes morbid humor, has little fear of death, and generally thinks death will be a good thing. Death will be like going to sleep after a hard day. Knowledge that death is inevitable helps the PC deal with the trials of life. The PC also likes the idea of an armageddon where the whole world is destroyed.

At 1 THAN, the PC sees nothing romantic or comforting about the idea of death. The only emotion the PC feels about death is fear. When life is hard, the PC sinks into inescapable depression because both life and it's alternative sound equally horrible.

When THAN is corrupted, the PC feels that other people need to and want to die.

Sample Character Creation – Step 2

We want Maggie to be principled, so we'll give her a strong Super Ego, have good self-preservationn instincts, so we'll give her a high REPT. She is not extremely 'masculine' as her culture defines it, so we'll give her a low ANIM, and fairly afraid of death, so we'll give her a low THAN. We want her to be reasonably sane, so we'll try to make sure no psychodynamics are too high or too low. We start spreading the points evenly: 10 each. Then we start adding to some and removing from others, e.g. +3 to REPT, -3 to THAN. In the end we end up with 8 ANIM, 12 EGO, 9 ID, 13 REPT, 13 SEGO, 9 SHAD, 9 STRA, 7 THAN.

Step Three – Attributes

In Brief: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 Bonus Point).

Characters have 10 points per attribute (80 points, total) to distribute between the eight attributes listed below.

1 represents as low as the attribute can get without the person being actually disabled.

10 represents the average for a healthy young adult.

20 represents the highest a person can achieve without special training.

You must spend at least 1 point on each attribute and can spend a maximum of 20 attribute points on any attribute. Later character creation options can subsequently increase an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. If a character buys 20 Strength with attribute points and then takes an advantage which gives her +5 Strength, she will have 25 Strength. GMs must define the effects of negative attributes (for instance, -5 Strength may mean that the character can not move or even breathe unaided).

Agility (AGY)- This represents limberness, coordination, balance and speed of physical reactions. Agility is used when a character needs to move silently, keep his or her balance, scale a wall or get through a small space.

Awareness (AWR)- This represents the ability to notice things. This is not the acuity of one's senses, but the ability to be aware of important details. Awareness is used whenever characters need to notice a clue, avoid an ambush or sense attempts at mental manipulation. Most supernatural skills that involve sensing things use this attribute.

Charm (CHM)- This represents likeability, social presence, persuasiveness and ability to read people. Charm is used when a character needs to put on an act, convince an audience or seduce someone. Just as Intelligence doesn't represent cleverness, charm doesn't prevent a character from saying something that gets the group in trouble or saying something that saves the day.

Endurance (END)- This represents stamina for intense physical exertion as well as the body's ability to fight disease and resist toxins. Endurance is used when a character needs to hold his or her breath, go on a long hike or survive a serious illness.

Intelligence (INL)- This represents the speed at which the mind reacts, ability with abstract thought, learning, creativity and memory. Intelligence is used when a character wants to perform a knowledge based skill, understand a complicated philosophical text or win at a strategy game. Intelligence is not cleverness or wisdom: any PC can come up with a clever plan or completely miss the obvious no matter what their intelligence.

Speed (SPD)- This represents the ability to run and leap as well as the damage a character can do with a kick. The character's kick can do the following blunt damage:

SPD	1-5	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	½ blunt	1	1½	2	3	4	5

Strength (STH)- This represents upper body strength as well as the character's strength of grip and back muscles. A character would use strength to yank away someone's weapon, lift a heavy object or do damage with hand-to-hand weapons. Characters with high or low strength get plusses or minuses with blunt weapons as follows:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	41+
+ to DMG	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

The character's punches do the following blunt damage:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	41+
DMG	0	½	1	2	3	4	5

Willpower (WIL)- This represents the ability to resist emotions, discomfort and psychological manipulation. Will would be used to control emotions, resist pain, stay conscious or battle against mind control. Most supernatural skills that involve making things happen use this attribute.

Health Attributes

Characters also have 12 points to divide up between three additional attributes: Body, Blood and Incapacity (minimum 1, maximum 6).

Body Points (BDY) represents the amount of blunt damage a character can take before they start losing Blood Points (when all BDY is gone, blunt weapons do double their normal damage to BLD).

Blood Points (BLD) represents the amount of damage characters can take to their vital systems (heart, blood supply, etc.) before they are mortally wounded. When all BLD is gone, damage is done to INCY.

Incapacity (INCY) represents the character's ability to act even after taking fatal injuries. After a mortal injury, damage is done to INCY (END is also lost). When a character's INCY reaches 0, he or she becomes incapacitated, unable to fight or perform any other useful action. See the section on Health Attributes (p.133) for more information.

Sub-Attributes

This is an optional way to give even more depth to your character. You can choose to have the PC be very good or very bad at one specific aspect of an attribute. Say, for instance, a PC is not very strong (5 Strength) but his profession causes him to use his hands a lot so the player wants the character to have strong hands. For one extra attribute point the PC will have +3 to any Strength roll using hands alone. For an opposed strength roll to keep a hold of something, for instance, the PC would have 8 Strength. The PC might also want a bad back (-3 Strength) which would give one attribute point but the PC would have only 2 Strength for lifting and carrying objects. Available sub-attributes are listed below each attribute.

Sub-Attributes can not be used to raise an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Sub-Attributes move with the attributes, so if the character in the preceding example works out and increases his Strength by 7 (to 12 STH) he would now have 15 STH with his hands and 9 STH with his back.

AGY:

Good/Poor Balance: ±3 to any save vs. loss of balance.

Good/Poor Precision: ±3 to any roll which involves manipulation of small objects.

Good/Poor Climbing: ±3 to any climbing roll.

Good/Poor Prowling: ±3 to any prowling roll.

AWR:

Good/Poor Introspection: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice anything going on in the character's own head.

Good/Poor People Sense: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice what people are doing, not doing or saying (this does not include sensing people prowling).

Good/Poor Back Watching: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice anything happening behind the character.

Good/Poor Detail Sense: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice small details on/in something the character is observing.

CHM:

Good/Poor Self-Confidence: ±3 to first impression rolls to present himself or herself as self-confident.

Friendly/Unfriendly: The character is ±3 to all first impression rolls to present himself or herself as a friendly or likeable person.

Good/Poor Seduction: ±3 to any seduction roll.

Good/Poor Actor: ±3 to any acting roll.

Good/Poor With Children: ±3 to any CHM roll involving children.

Good/Poor With Animals: ±3 to any CHM roll involving animals.

Good/Poor With Authorities: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people in positions of power.

Good/Poor With Plain Folk: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves simple or average.

Good/Poor With Outcasts: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves to be at the bottom of the social ladder.

END:

Good/Poor With Heat: ±3 to any save vs. heat exhaustion.

Good/Poor With Cold: ±3 to any save vs. hypothermia.

Good/Poor At Disease Contraction: ±3 to any save vs. disease contraction.

Good/Poor At Fighting Off Diseases: ±3 to any save vs. disease progression.

Good/Poor Lung Capacity: ±3 pooled END when the character is holding his/her breath.

INL:

Quick/Slow Thinker: ±3 to any roll based on the speed of mental reaction (not including combat).

Good/Poor Memory: ±3 to any roll to remember or memorize something.

Good/Poor Skepticism: ±3 to any roll to figure out illusion, hallucination, forgery, etc.

SPD:

Good/Poor Jumping: ±3 to any jumping roll.

Good/Poor Kicking: The character does kick damage as if he or she had ±3 SPD.

Good/Poor Long-Distance Running: ±3 to SPD when the PC is running long distances.

Good/Poor Sprinting: ±3 to SPD when the PC is sprinting.

STH:

Good/Poor Back: ±3 to any STH rolls to lift heavy objects.

Good/Poor Hands: ±3 to any STH rolls using only the character's grip.

Good/Poor Bulk: ±3 to any STH roll using the whole weight of the character's body (e.g. a football tackle, knocking down a door, etc.)

Good/Poor Punching: The character does punch damage as if he or she had ±3 STH.

WIL:

Good/Poor With Addiction: ±3 to any WIL roll to resist psychological addiction or drug cravings.

Good/Poor With Drug Effects: ±3 to any WIL roll to save vs. drug effects.

Weak/Strong Stomach: ±3 to any save vs. nausea.

Good/Poor With Distracting Pain: ±3 to save vs. distracting pain (see p.129).

Good/Poor With Shocking Pain: ±3 to any save vs. shocking pain (see p.129).

Good/Poor Temper: ±3 to any save vs. anger.

Good/Poor Sense of Self: ±3 to any opposed WIL vs. WIL roll.

Sample Character Creation – Step 3

Once again we'll spread the points evenly between Maggie's 8 attributes, then take away from some and add to others. We know Maggie will be 'fighting' the supernatural, but probably not with her fists, so we we'll give a higher priority to her agility and her mental attributes than to her Speed, Strength and Endurance. We want her to be fairly observant so we'll give her a high Awareness. We don't need her to be charming, so we'll give her a moderately low Charm. We end up with the following: AGY 12, AWR 14, CHM 8, END 7, INL 13, SPD 8, STH 6, WIL 12.

We do like the idea of her being good with the 'common folk' (since she will be protecting her community) so we'll give her the optional Charm subattribute "Good with Simple Folk" which means her CHM is effectively 11 when dealing with people who consider themselves normal or average. To pay for this we could either reduce one of her attributes by 1, or we could take a bad sub-attribute. We decide we'll make her poor at introspection: she's at -3 AWR to recognize something going on in her own mind.

Finally we have 12 points to spend on the three health attributes. We don't see her being very big and burly, so we'll only give her 3 BDY, then 5 BLD and 4 INCY.

Step Four – Secret Life

In Brief: Choose a source of supernatural knowledge and ability.

Choose one of the following Secret Lives for your character. Choosing a secret life will set skill costs for supernatural skills and many give the PC access to special advantages and disadvantages. Some of these advantages and disadvantages, labeled "mandatory" are not optional and neither give nor cost Bonus Points. Others, labeled "optional" can be bought with Bonus Points (if advantages) or taken to gain Bonus Points (if disadvantages) if so desired as per the Bonus Characteristics rules (see p.111).

Androgynes- Have discovered there is a power to human sexuality, a power beyond and capable of changing our bodies and our genders.

Animists- Heirs to aboriginal wisdom, they learn to speak to the spirits that are everywhere and gain power using dangerous drugs.

Cannibals- Monks and priests who deny the flesh, break taboos, mutilate themselves and gain powerful phantom body parts.

Faustians- Alien entities living in their minds give them mental strength and supernatural powers but have their own agendas.

Heroes- Troubled vigilantes, some with unusual powers, who seek meaning in life by hunting supernatural horrors.

Lost- Become lost, often while drunk, and end up wherever they want to be, sometimes even in places that don't exist in this world.

Outcasts- Labeled crazy because they can see and hear things others can't. They know the city's supernatural places, people and things.

Professionals- Workaholic problem-solvers who have earned the trust of the Powers-That-Be and access to special training by secret societies.

Scribblers- Heretical academics, study dark philosophies, trade knowledge by writing graffiti in dark places.

Survivors- Having overcome death by force of will, they find themselves nearly immortal, yet hunted by something from beyond.

Wonderlanders- The fantastic worlds of their childhood imagination are real. Things and people can cross between them and this world.

Sample Character Creation – Step 4

We decide to make Maggie a Hero. Looking at the Bonus Characteristics section, we see that all Heroes have a mandatory advantage called Unique Ability. Since Maggie is a Hero she must have this advantage (and since it's mandatory we don't have to pay anything for it). The advantage makes us choose one of the power sources. We choose Supernatural Object. Maggie found something that she can use to fight supernatural evils. Other than creating her supernatural object (p.38) we have nothing left to choose in the Secret Life section. Had we chosen a Secret Life that gave access to supernatural skills, the Secret Life section would tell us which skills we could buy and how much they would cost.

Alleys

Androgynes

In Brief- Have discovered there is a power to human sexuality, a power beyond and capable of changing our bodies and our genders.

Other Names- Genderqueers, Metasexuals, Two-Souls, TransTantrics.

The Chosen- Those who are chosen are most often those who are seen acting in a way that defies stereotypes of either the straight world or the gay world, e.g. a straight woman who gets into bar fights, a straight man who goes to clubs with gay male friends, a male crossdresser who makes no attempt to act feminine, an otherwise 'butch' lesbian who wears a pink dress, etc.

Most importantly, though, those who are chosen have an intensity of spirit, a passion that shows in their faces, that initiators can easily see.

Initiation- Most Androgynes are initiated via a random sexual encounter. They meet someone at a club, bar, house party, LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual) bookstore, P.F.L.A.G. (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meeting, jail cell, college lecture, protest, tea room, etc. The initiator is usually very androgynous and the initiate finds hirself instantly and powerfully attracted to the person. Drunk on passion the initiate follows the initiator to a secluded place (most often the initiate's home) and they have sex. During intercourse, through, something undeniably supernatural happens. Perhaps the androgynous stranger changes gender. Perhaps the two briefly switch bodies. Perhaps the androgynous stranger's genitals transform into something not human. In most cases the initiate is so overwhelmed with shock, physical exertion and pleasure that sie passes out. The initiate awakens the next day to find a short note with a cryptic statement like "what's between out legs is so powerful that even the heavens fear it," or "sex is the most powerful thing a human can do, that's why society puts so many restrictions on it" or "only when you stop letting society tell you who and what you are can you find out what you're capable of." Along with the cryptic half-explanation is a time and address for the initiate to find out more.

Genderless Pronouns

Sie- A gender neutral version of "he" or "she." Pronounced like "see."

Hir- "His" and/or "her," pronounced like "here."

When the initiate goes to the place sie does not find simple answers. Instead, sie is anonymously given a number of challenges, most of which involve either successfully masquerading as the other gender or seducing members of both genders. Each successful challenge is answered only by an anonymous note, phone call, email or whisper from a passing stranger leading to another challenge.



A minority of initiates come to the Androgyne movement through a different route: they learn about genderqueer (a movement that advocates freedom from gender roles), become fascinated by it, start hanging out with the preeminent genderqueer philosophers, learn that some have merged genderqueer philosophy with some form of mysticism, and ask to be initiated into this system. From this point on, however, they must face the same challenges as those initiated through random sexual encounters.

Only after the initiate has proven hir willingness to transcend boundaries of gender and orientation will the initiate be rewarded with another sexual experience, often with hir original initiator. In this experience, though, the initiate witnesses having hir body switched, hir original body's gender changing, and being transferred back to hir original body but this time as another gender.

The sudden change of gender has different effects on different initiates. Some are able to hide it via careful choice of clothing and makeup and go on with their normal lives. Some adopt new identities. Some quit showing up to work and, when they can no longer pay the rent, become homeless. Wherever they end up they are always left with instructions on how and where to find their next supernatural sexual encounter.

During further sexual encounters the initiate finds hirself in the initiator's body for longer and longer periods and learns that sie can access the initiator's memories. Not only that, but when sie returns to hir own body sie can remember what the initiator thought and experienced as hir.

Although never given the time to make a thorough survey of the initiator's memory, the initiate is able to learn a few things: sie is being initiated into a secret mystical movement that is an offshoot of the genderqueer movement. The genderqueer movement is concerned with supporting the right of people not to have to identify with a single gender stereotype. Some genderqueers go so far as to advocate the abolition of the idea of gender.

The initiate learns that sex has incredible power, and that intense sexual experiences can lead to a temporary breakdown of the rules of physics. This is a dangerous power and most who have such experiences are killed in the process. The genderqueer movement is the only way to shed the sex act of its cultural 'baggage' and thus have some hope of accessing its power without being killed.

The initiate learns that 'Androgynes,' as members of the movement call themselves, learn to bypass the laws of physics, at first via sexual passion and eventually via strength of will alone, gaining powers and abilities far beyond normal humans. Yet for all their powers the Androgynes must practice in secret or else they will be hunted down and killed by the 'Powers-That-Be,' a conspiracy which they presume secretly rules mundane society and enforces gender stereotypes. Androgynes have been told that the Powers-That-Be's agents have their own supernatural powers, although few Androgynes have encountered an agent and lived to tell about it.

At adventure one, the initiate has learned to manifest supernatural powers during the passion of intercourse and may have even developed a few powers that sie can use without intercourse. The initiate has changed gender multiple times but most likely has one gender particular to hir mundane identity. The Androgyne spends most of hir time as, feels most comfortable as and tends to identify with this gender. The initiate has not learned the history or scope of the movement or what further Androgyne practice will lead to.

Typical Evening- Most androgynes spend a portion of their evenings meeting with other androgynes. They meet in private homes, college classrooms, GBLT bookstores and in the back-rooms of gay bars. They discuss the theory and practice of androgyny.

Androgynes spend many of their evenings out on the town experiencing what it's like to interact with people as a member of a different gender. Few androgynes are in a monogamous relationship. Most are sexually active and seek to explore the potential of passion by having sex with many different people as many different people. Thus they spend many of their evenings hitting the bars and clubs, both gay and straight, where singles congregate. A good evening means bedding an interesting person, exploring passion and the power that comes with passion, and leaving the lover with a supernatural experience that will alter hir life forever.

Some androgynes think of themselves as cultural terrorists whose duty it is to disrupt gender roles. They remove signs from bathrooms, paste gay porn on the walls inside churches, seduce famous and important people and then "out" them as gay, spray anti-gender graffiti on walls, dress statues of famous people in drag, etc.

Gender Identity Disorder

Mainstream psychiatrists no longer claim that homosexuality is a disease. However, many young people who are struggling with gender issues are diagnosed by modern psychiatrists with "Gender Identity Disorder." To qualify for such a diagnosis, the person must have strong feelings of being the wrong gender and identification with the opposite gender, and the feelings must be strong enough that they distress the person or impair the person. Gender Identity Disorder is diagnosed in children, adolescents and adults.

As a diagnosis, GID is a double edged sword. Some psychiatrists use it to identify people who are in real pain because they are unable to accept "who they are," whether that be a heterosexual, homosexual or transgendered person. To them, treating GID means helping people decide how they want to live their lives and helping them accept this decision without fear or guilt.

Other psychiatrists use the GID diagnosis as an excuse to try to brainwash people into conforming to traditional gender roles as "treatment" for an "illness" or as an excuse to deny people seeking sex-reassignment surgery (because the problem, they say, is psychological and not physical, so changing the body would be wrong).

Alleys

What You Know

-Sexual passion is powerful in a way that can break the laws of physics and help us break free from the limitations of the flesh.

-Too much passion released in an uncontrolled fashion can damage reality and kill those involved.

-Physical bodies get in the way of passion, keep our "souls" from making love.

-The true "us" is not male or female, is not even a biological entity.

-The rich white men who rule the world want to protect their power by discouraging experimentation with sex and gender roles.

-Heterosexual monogamous relationships are a means of keeping wealth and power concentrated in families by keeping lines of paternal descent clear.

-It is only by overcoming gender roles that humans can gain access to their full potential.

Going Deeper- Most Androgynes start by alternating between genders. They use makeup or occult powers to become the gender opposite their natural anatomy. They alternate back and forth until they are comfortable with and identify equally with either gender. After that is accomplished, Androgynes can attempt the even-harder task of becoming neither gender. They dress ambiguously and may even use occult powers to create genitals that are neither male nor female.

By eliminating gender within themselves, Androgynes can recapture drives, thoughts and feelings that were once denied to themselves and by reuniting these divergent energies they can gain psychological strength. By exploring passion and the power that comes with it, Androgynes may discover more about the universe and how reality can be bent and broken. By researching the nature of the Androgyne movement they will discover who is behind it, what those people want and what the end result of Androgyne training is.

Dark Side- A few Androgynes become true terrorists: using violence against those that defend traditional gender roles or forcefully changing other people's bodies.

Supernatural Skills

The PC can purchase the following skills at **10** skill points per level:
Be Other (WIL)
Birth Servant (WIL)
Change Gender (WIL)
Switch Bodies (WIL)

The PC can purchase the following skills at **20** skill points per level:
Flesh Control (WIL)
Masks (WIL)
Revive (WIL)

Recommended Day Job- Performer, Sex Industry Worker, Student, Trendy Customer Service Job.

Recommended Skills- Disguise, Fashion & Beauty, Performance, Impersonation, Seduction.

Recommended Equipment- Makeup Kit, Wardrobe, Condoms, Makeup: Theatrical.

Recommended Reading- Paglian Feminism (p.157).

Animists

In Brief- Heirs to aboriginal wisdom, they learn to speak to the spirits that are everywhere and gain power using dangerous drugs.

Other Names- Witchdoctors, Brujos, Shamans.

The Chosen- Almost every Animist is a first or second generation immigrant from a culture that believes in spirits, magic and magical practitioners. Most have a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle who is an Animist. As children, most were respectful of their elders and their people's ways. Most were smart with an especially good memory. A significant percentage survived a near-fatal injury or illness with the help of an Animist. A significant percentage have suffered from what western doctors would call a mental illness. They tend to have few close friends. There are almost no Animists who were born into a non-animistic culture.

Within any immigrant community there will be a bell curve of how much members stick to the traditions and values of their culture. At one end are those who do anything they can to act, look and think like "normal" Americans. On the other end are those who remain fiercely loyal to their traditions and who have only minimal contact with mainstream America. The latter are those who become Animists.

Initiation- Animists grew up in communities where the people around them believed there were spirits everywhere. Some spirits live in objects, some float in the air, some live inside people's bodies and keep them healthy. The people believed in these spirits as strongly as anything they could see and touch. If someone's car broke down, it was assumed the spirit of the car was angry. If someone had headaches, it was assumed that a 'misfortune,' a spirit dedicated to causing trouble, was attacking the person. If a person was depressed, it was assumed that one of his or her guardian spirits had wandered off.

Yet when young Animists went to school they quickly learned that there were situations when one had to pretend not to believe in spirits. Some were even taught to call themselves Christians.

When someone in the community had trouble with, or wanted something from, the invisible spirits, that person always called on someone known to have power with those spirits. These people were always treated with great respect, and often a bit of nervousness. For many Animists, their first memory is of some scary, intense old man or woman performing some bizarre ritual in their living room. Young Animists grew up believing these were the most powerful people they knew.



Sometime during adolescence the Animists-to-be were selected by an elder Animist (or by a spirit speaking through the Animist) for training. Mostly it was unquestioned that they would accept their calling. As apprentices, they followed their elders on their nightly routines. They carried things, acted as gophers and observed rituals. Slowly, they learned that most of the physical components of the ritual: the candles, chants, costumes, incense, etc. were only there to help assure the clients that something was happening. The real work, the students found, was done via the power of the Animist's will.

Power, the students learned, does not come from living right, being humble, reading books or doing meaningless little rituals. Power comes from dangerous ordeals that bring one close to dying or going insane. These ordeals might include fasting, self-torture, isolation and using dangerous deliriant drugs. Surviving these ordeals left one with a soul strong enough to issue commands to the invisible spirits that surround humanity.

Students were trained to keep an open mind to strange sights and sounds that were signs from the spirits. They were trained to leave their bodies and travel the world as spirits. They were told that there were other worlds beyond ours that could only be reached as a spirit, all dangerous to visitors. Some students were taken on brief tours of some of these worlds.

At adventure one, the Animist has learned enough to be able to take on clients from the community by himself or herself. The teacher is, most likely, still around, but the Animist knows that he or she has to be able to handle problems without help in order to gain the trust of the community.

Typical Evening- Animists gets calls, or visits in person, from members of their communities who need supernatural help. Some Animists will only take the job if they think they can help, others have no qualms about taking someone's money to do useless and un-needed rituals. There is typically an appointment to diagnose the problem, then another appointment for a ceremony to solve the problem. Appointments are typically held in the clients' homes.

Much of the ceremony is just meaningless gestures to show clients that something is being done: Animists may wear funny costumes, burn incense, wrap people in colored string, burn candles with pictures of saints on them, prescribe taboos, etc. Animists are usually paid from $40 to $500 for their services, and may be offered items or services instead of money. Before and during the ceremony Animists commonly use a client's family as servants: sending them to purchase ritual items, prepare the patient, cook prescribed meals, decorate the apartment in a certain way, etc. Giving the family tasks keeps them busy.

The most common ceremony Animists perform is curing a patient from a disease caused by 'misfortunes.' In addition to the parts of the ceremony done 'for show,' there is usually the ingestion of psychoactives, then the use of visions, possession or spirit travel to find where on the body the

misfortune is, and then the use of chanting, blowing, sucking, yelling, hitting or smudging (anointing with smoke) to remove the misfortune.

Other times the problem is the loss of a guardian spirit and the Animist may have to leave his or her body and travel to the spirit world to convince a wayward spirit to return to its duties.

Community members may also ask Animists to investigate cases of suspected curses and hauntings, to give luck in legal, economic or career matters or to harm enemies (usually people from outside the community who are giving community members a hard time). Some Animists are called on by gang members to help provide protection from the cops and give an edge over enemies.

When not performing rituals, Animists are often pressured to attend community events. They may be invited for dinner by families who want to get on their good sides. Some Animists are asked to perform tasks that have nothing to do with their supernatural powers: matchmaking, arbitrating disputes, acting as spokespeople for the community, etc.

Most Animists need exotic, sometimes illegal, herbs, and spend some time either tending to a small garden or going to dimly lit herb shops or botanicas.

A typical evening involves rituals designed to keep Animists pure and powerful. Rituals may involve chanting, meditation, ritual bathing (often in ice-cold water) or smudging. Regular ingestion of psychoactive drugs may also be used to keep an Animist powerful.

Los Angeles Immigrants and Minorities

Caucasians are a minority in the Los Angeles area.

More than one in three Los Angeles County residents was born in another country (30% of Orange County residents, 19% of Riverside and San Bernardino County residents). More than half of L.A. County residents are from Latin America and almost half are from Mexico.

About 20% of people in the L.A. area are non-citizens. 500,000 are illegal immigrants (more than 20% of the illegal immigrants in the whole country).

Ethnicity of L.A. Area Residents

	L.A. county	Orange County	Riverside County	San Bernardino County	Total
Asian	1.1 M	400 K	55 K	78 K	1.7 M
S Asian	70 K	30 K	6 K	9 K	115 K
SE Asian	400 K	200 K	31 K	44 K	675 K
E Asian	627 K	147 K	17 K	25 K	816 K
Pacific	26 K	9 K	4 K	5 K	44 K
Hispanic	4 M	800 K	560 K	670 K	6 M
Mexican	3 M	700 K	500 K	500 K	4.7 M
Caribbean	70 K	16 K	10 K	15 K	111 K
C. American	340 K	28 K	12 K	20 K	430 K
S. American	75 K	18 K	5 K	8 K	100 K

Animist Disdain For Western Science and Occultism

Westerners want to take everything apart, understand how every little part works. Their science and technology is quite good at manipulating those few parts of the world they understand. Yet anything they don't understand they ignore or ridicule. If some disease, for instance, is understood by them they hop all over it with their drugs and surgery and radiation. If they don't understand it, though, they call it untreatable and laugh at the idea of making even a simple offering to a spirit.

Non-Westerners may not understand how every little part of every little thing works, but they know how to do what works. If a ritual helps people then it is a good ritual, even if it makes no sense. Westerners call this superstition, but it's just being practical.

Western occultists typically have the same Western obsession with understanding how things work. This often leads to intellectual meandering that has nothing to do with helping people or with real power. Most every Western occultist is just a powerless windbag.

What You Know

-The ancient ways of your people have power. Western science's understanding of the world is limited or flawed.

-Those with strong souls can learn to wield power by going repeatedly to a state that is near death and madness.

-The world teems with invisible entities, most of which want to cause illness or misfortune.

-These spirits have limited intelligence, but those with power can speak to them.

-Even inanimate physical objects have spirits and can be persuaded to act differently.

-Every human has a soul which exists separately from the physical body and goes to a dark place after death.

-Each human also has various guardian spirits. If any of these spirits is sick or goes missing the human will go crazy or become ill.

-Guardian spirits live in the spirit world, a place accessible via dreams or soul travel.

-There is also a realm where the dead wander in darkness and confusion for some time until they end up in whatever comes next.

-There are other dangerous worlds that are very different from the spirit world and the land of the dead.

-Sometimes people who have gone too close to haunted places are infected by evil guardian spirits. They give strength, but they consume the person's other guardian spirits.

-The fact that your people were subjugated by imperialists, despite your people having powerful Animists, suggests that the imperialist conquerors had their own spiritual power (whether they knew it or not).

Myth: Aboriginal People Are In Tune With Nature

The truth is that aboriginal people fear nature. They depend upon it and they know from experience that it can fluctuate dangerously in extreme ways.

They typically have no conception of nature as a single entity. Nature is a variety of forces, both visible and invisible. Some parts of nature are completely hostile to humans, but the majority are neutral. They treat all parts of nature with respect for fear of offending them and incurring their wrath.

Aboriginal people try to remove themselves from nature as much as their technology allows. They burn the forest to create clearings to live in. They create shelters to keep nature out.

To say that aboriginal people are in tune with nature is like saying a person who lives in an inner city is 'in tune with gang members' because that person doesn't throw rocks at gang members just to see what would happen.

Aboriginal don't pretend that they fully understand how nature works, and so when they do something to the natural world and something bad happens, they try to never do that thing again. If someone drops a food dish on the floor and the next day there's a terrible storm, they decide never to let food dishes touch the ground again. Thus they avoid a lot of the western world's mistakes, but they also fill their lives with pointless prohibitions.

Aboriginal people pass down knowledge about nature, but it is only the information they find useful for their actual survival. If you want pointless facts about how insects mate or diseases that effect trees, ask an entomologist or a botanist, not an aboriginal person.

Going Deeper- Animists gain power by repeatedly doing dangerous rituals which bring them close to madness or death. This power fortifies them to survive longer and deeper travels into the spirit world and those realms beyond. Those legendary Animists who have gained great levels of power have done so by becoming seasoned travelers in the other worlds.

Dark Side- Animists are sometimes called upon to be protectors of traditions, mostly from young people who want to adopt American ways. An Animist may be asked to threaten or attack a young person trying to resist an arranged marriage, go off to college, seek treatment in a hospital for an illness, or date a white person. Other Animists act as mercenaries: hurting people at the request of the wealthiest members of the community. Others are parasites, getting money for doing ceremonies that people don't actually need or, even worse, extorting supernatural 'protection' money.

Supernatural Skills
The PC can purchase the following skills at **10** skill points per level:
Animal Form (WIL)
Body Invasion (WIL)
Command Animals (WIL)
Command Inanimate (WIL)
Command Misfortunes (WIL)
Dreaming (WIL)
Journeying (WIL)
Possession Trance (AWR)
See True Face (AWR)
Visions (AWR)

The PC can purchase the following skills at **20** skill points per level:
Flesh Control (WIL)
Masks (WIL)
Revive (WIL)
Spirit Speed (WIL)
Spirit Strength (WIL)
Playland Geography (INL)

Bonus Characteristics

Unacculturated (Mandatory Disadvantage)- Even if the PC was born and raised in the United States, he or she was raised in an isolated non-English speaking household. The PC speaks English poorly and with a thick accent. The bigger problem, however, is that the PC was raised with a worldview that is very different than that of most Americans. The PC's ideas of morality, philosophy, community and individual rights and obligations are surprising and alien to Westerners and visa versa. It is precisely this isolation from the basic worldview of Western culture that makes it possible for the Animist to become powerful, but it is also a serious disadvantage. Unlike more acculturated members of the immigrant community, who can get along with mainstream American society and get mainstream jobs, the PC will probably be unable to get work outside his or her own community.

For 10 skill points per level the PC can purchase the special skill Act American (see text box) which will allow the PC to fit into mainstream American society, but will also reduce the PC's supernatural abilities. The PC must purchase levels of this skill to have certain day jobs as follows:

0 Levels: Alternative Health, Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Dangerous Field Job, Homeless, Homemaker, Paranormal Professional, Privileged, Retired, Sex Industry Worker, Welfare, Ward.

1 Level: Boring Customer Service Job, Child Care, Computer Tech, Creative, Driver, Performer, Security Professional, Student.

2 Levels: Business Owner, Boring Office Job, Pilot, Investigator, Law Enforcement Professional, Legal Professional, Medical Professional, Professor, Religious Professional, Reporter, Researcher, Social Worker, Trendy Customer Service Job.

Act American (CHM)- This skill allows the PC to hide the cultural differences that separate him or her from mainstream American culture. Doing so requires knowledge of the modern American worldview and exposes the PC to ideas about the world that can hamper his or her supernatural powers. For each level of this skill, the PC gets -4 to all supernatural skill rolls.

Easy (10): Act American while buying something in a store.

Moderate (20): Act American at a party.

Hard (30): Act American in a job interview with a big corporation.

Alleys

Traditional Learning (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC gets 4 free levels worth of Traditional skills (see p.77).

Ethnic Group (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC gets the equivalent of the Ethnic Group advantage (p.112) free.

Extra Income (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC starts with an extra $1,000 and +$25/wk. from income earned serving the community.

No Teacher (Optional Disadvantage, Gives 1 BP)- The elder Animist who trained the PC has died or is otherwise completely unavailable to give advice or training.

Recommended Day Job- Alternative Health, Homemaker, Welfare, Small Business Owner. Note: Choice of Day Job is limited by the mandatory disadvantage Unacculturated, see p.16.

Recommended Skills- Ethnogens, Language, Gardening, Herbal Medicine, Performance, Poisons, Sleight of Hand.

Recommended Equipment- Car (Used), Cigarettes, Ethnogenic Deliriant, Ethnogenic Euphoriant, Quarterstaff, Lighter, Poison Ring.

Recommended Reading- Animism (p.150).

Latin American and Caribbean Animists

The pervasive influence of Christianity has robbed most native beliefs of power on the American continent. There are, however, a few places where native beliefs managed to survive. Most Latin American and Caribbean Animists can trace the origin of their beliefs primarily to Native Latin Americans or to West African slaves (although there is much crossover between the two). In those few places where beliefs survived in pure enough form to give real power, they have survived because the places were too remote to be fully infiltrated by Western civilization and religion. When missionaries did come they hid their religion by pretending to adopt Christianity and by calling native beings by Christian names. Some Latin American and Caribbean Animists still feel they must hide behind the false pretense of being Christian or actually believe they are practicing a form of Christianity (albeit one which varies drastically from mainstream Christianity).

Curanderismo- Native Latin American beliefs have largely survived in a pan-Latin-American tradition known as Curanderismo. Curanderismo is found most often in Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Colombia and Cuba. Influences include Catholicism, African beliefs and even ancient Greek healing treatises (which traveled from Greece to the Muslim world to Spain to the Americas). Yet the forms of Curanderismo that contain actual supernatural power are those that hide native Animistic beliefs and are usually practiced by Indians.

Each country has its own curanderismo traditions incorporating native beliefs and plants. Some South American curanderos, for instance, use ayahuasca, an admixture of hallucinogenic plants.

Curanderos can be male or female, though they are most often female. One tradition is that a child who cries in the womb has the power to become a Curandero.

Curanderismo, as the name implies, is primarily a system of healing practices. Diseases are believed to be caused by an imbalance of humors (yellow bile, black bile, blood, phlegm), attack by malevolent spirits, attack by brujos (witches) or loss of one's soul. Three common diseases that curanderos believe in are Ataque (caused by extreme shock, manifesting as bizarre behavior, violence and sometime mutism), Susto (depression, insomnia, anxiety, lethargy and anhedonia caused by soul loss), and Bilis (diarrhea, vomiting, headaches and dizziness from bile entering the bloodstream because of an excess of emotions). Herbs and foods thought of as hot or cold are also prescribed to treat cold or hot illnesses.

Curanderos may possess the power to operate on one or more of the following levels: the material level, the spiritual level and the mental level. The majority of Curanderos operate only on the material level: they use material things (e.g. herbs, eggs, oils) to cure illnesses. The spiritual level is less common and those who work on this level can cure via candles, prayers and calling on benevolent spirits. The mental level is the least common, those who operate on this level can manipulate the world and effect cures via power of the mind alone. A true Animist Curandero would be one of the few able to operate on the spiritual and mental levels.

Much of Curanderismo on the spiritual level borrows from Espiritualismo, the Latin American extension of Spiritualism. Spiritualism came from New York in 1848 and enjoyed popularity across the Western world during the Victorian age. Spiritualism trained mediums to contact the spirits of the dead. In Latin American Curanderismo both good and bad spirits can enter a medium and speak through him or her.

Brujeria is the evil opposite of Curanderismo. While curanderismo is often thought of as a gift from god to cure people, Brujeria is a gift from the devil to cause harm. Although most people who go to Curanderos think of Curanderos and Brujos as exclusive categories, wise Curanderos (especially those from traditions with less Christian influence) know that the "gift" can allow for both good or evil. Brujos can turn into animals, send misfortunes, and create a variety of cursed objects.

Botanicas are shops where Curanderos and believers in Latin American folk magic can buy herbs, candles and other magical components. Although a few items are there for Curanderos there are many more 'good luck sprays' or 'lotto candles' created for the superstitious. There are hundreds of botanicas in the L.A. area, from tiny, dimly lit shops with hand painted signs that reek of herbs inside, to occult supermarkets with aisles stacked high with manufactured "spiritual" goods.

African Syncretisms- There are several Latin American and Caribbean religions that are based on West African animistic beliefs. They are practiced primarily in Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Central and South America, Haiti, Jamaica and the West Indies.

The syncretic religions believe in a creator god but that god is remote and unknowable and is seldom appealed to. More important are ancestor spirits and a large number of "loa" "orisha" or "orixa" that are able to aid humans by interdicting in human matters. Most are associated with a saint. Shrines are kept and offerings are made (including animal sacrifice) but the most important rites are dances wherein practitioners are possessed by these beings who speak and act through them. All loa are active in the life of every practitioner, although there is one who is 'in charge' of the person.

continued next page

Latin American and Caribbean Animists (continued)

Each group calls these beings by different names and each group has a few major beings that are unique to that region. Some major members of the Haitian pantheon are:

-Papa Legba (male loa of crossroads, pranks and compacts, a messenger to other loa)

-Damballa (male loa of serpents, co-creator of the universe)

-Ayida-Wedo (female loa of rainbows, co-creator of the universe)

-Erzulie (female loa of love, sensuality, femininity, rivers and freshwater)

-Obatala (male chief of the loa and creator of humanity)

-Chango (male loa of war, justice, lightning and dance)

-Oggun (loa of hunting, plants, tools, minerals, wild animals)

-Baron Samedi (loa of the dead and death)

-Maman Brigette (female loa of thunder, storms, cemeteries, war, passage to the afterlife)

Vodoun: This is the syncretic religion found in Haiti and, to a lesser extent, in the Dominican Republic and parts of Cuba. Vodoun practitioners sometimes practice journeying. In Vodoun there is a two-part soul, known as the 'big guardian spirit' and the 'little guardian spirit'. The big guardian spirit is the immortal soul; the little is consciousness (that is displaced when one is possessed).

Candomble and Umbanda: These are religions that began in Brazil and spread to adjacent South American countries. In Candomble belief, humans are stellar beings trapped in a physical world until we can evolve to control our own minds. Guardian spirits, known as Orixas, prepared the planet, after its creation, for human inhabitation. Among other things, Orixas help keep human energies in balance. Divination is very important to Candomble, especially via the casting of seashells. A practitioner uses divination to determine a person's guardian Orixa and then attempts to contact that Orixa. Rituals are typically held in homes where practitioners beat small drums and chant/sing stories of the Orixas.

Santeria: This syncretic religion had its origin in Cuba and is now practiced in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, parts of Mexico, Central and South America. Mexican Santeria is more Roman Catholic, Cuban Santeria is closer to the original African beliefs. Santeria has the most American practitioners of any of the African Syncrtisms (about 35,000). Each Santero has one Orisha he or she is dedicated to. A Santero is initiated to a particular Orisha and follows the camino (path) of that Orisha. When consulted by patients a Santero will perform divination (Ifa: casting a chain on a grid of pictures or Dilogun: casting cowry shells that refer to one of 265 Yoruban mythology poems) and then prescribe a course of action that will allow the patient to put things right. This may include herbs and animal sacrifice (most often chickens). Possession by Orishas is the most important form of supernatural work in Santeria. Santeria practitioners with legendary power can take on animal form.

Obeah: This occult system is primarily from Jamaica and the West Indies. Obeah has lost most of the African religious qualities including communal rituals and the belief in the African pantheon. What is left is a series of superstitions and magical rituals designed to directly effect other people. Obeahmen and women are known for sending duppies (dangerous ghosts) to attack humans, for using components such as graveyard dust to create poisons and cursed objects. Apart from hurting and killing people, many Obeah practitioners are skilled in the use of herbs and a few can go into possession trances. Some Obeah practitioners wear belts with several knives hanging from them. Obeahmen and women are born with the gift, usually inherited from a parent. Deformed obeah practitioners are considered more powerful. Obeah is still illegal in many Caribbean nations.

Southeast Asian Animists

The three Southeast Asian immigrant groups in LA that have a significant number of Animists are Hmong, Cambodians and Vietnamese. The Hmong are the smallest group but are the most purely Animistic and thus have the highest proportion of Animists with real supernatural powers. The Vietnamese are the largest group but are the most industrialized and have the smallest proportion of real Animists. The Cambodians fall somewhere in between.

Hmong

Population- Of the nearly 90,000 Hmong in California, only are about three-thousand are in the L.A. area. More than 1,000 are in Orange County. Santa Ana has the largest Hmong community in Orange County, followed by Garden Grove/ Westminster. L.A. County has more than 700, mostly in Long Beach. Riverside County has about 700, nearly all of which are in Banning. San Bernardino County has about 200, scattered around San Bernardino, Fontana, Pomona, Rialto and Morena Valley.

History: The Hmong were agrarian mountain tribe. They were recruited by the CIA to help fight the secret war in Laos. After the US pulled out the Hmong were persecuted and a large percentage of the population died. Many Hmong fled to Thai refugee camps. In 1975 the US began accepting Hmong refugees.

Culture- American Hmong are divided into 18 major clans, each of which shares a family name. Women must marry outside their clan. They typically move in with the husband's family and are adopted into the clan of their husbands. Mutual assistance is provided via clan associations. Clan leaders often settle disputes.

The Hmong have had a lot of trouble adapting to American society. Some problems are because the Hmong were one of the least industrialized groups to come to the US and thus have less in common with Anglo-American culture than other groups. Other problems are because many arriving Hmong were illiterate and so have less access to the information needed to survive in modern America. Some of their problems include marriages that are not legal or are not registered with the government. Sometimes girls as young as 13 marry older men (most often 4 or 5 years older) which is illegal under US law. Corporal punishment of children is common in Hmong households and sometimes may cross the line into what the law considers abuse. Some Hmong refuse to go to, or send their children to, western doctors for medical problems. Traditional Hmong medicine often discourages the Hmong from getting surgery or getting blood drawn. Many Hmong also believe autopsies may interfere with reincarnation. All in all, the Hmong are often very reluctant to seek the help of US government authorities for help with their problems.

Hmong marriages are arranged by marriage negotiators who set dowries and perform rituals. Polygamy was practiced in Asia but is very rare in the US. Divorce is not permitted in traditional Hmong society. When Hmong children are born, the placenta (called "birth shirt") is buried nearby and after death it helps guide the person to the land of the dead. The Hmong have a complicated and long funeral ritual which helps guide souls to the afterlife. Funerals typically involve the ritual sacrifice of animals.

In comparison with white Americans, Hmong people can be reluctant to show emotions or say what they really think. Many don't like handshakes or direct eye contact with strangers.

The Hmong are known throughout Southeast Asia for their brightly colored and intricately embroidered clothing. In America this clothing is most often displayed at Hmong New Year celebrations in the fall.

continued next page

Southeast Asian Animists (continued)

Supernatural Beliefs- About one-third of Hmong are Christians, the rest are traditional animists. Hmong culture has one of the purest forms of animism one can find in the first world. They believe that the world is filled with spirits, including the spirits of the dead. After going to a land of ancestors, the dead are reincarnated. Humans have 12 separate souls that are necessary for physical and mental health.

Many Hmong wear red necklaces, white cloths around their wrists or red or white string around their wrists to help keep away malevolent spirits. Hmong avoid traveling in unpopulated areas because they believe evil spirits live here.

Illnesses are caused by curses, environmental causes, aging, malevolent spirits or offended ancestor and nature spirits. Animals may be sacrificed and "spirit money" burned to appease offended spirits. Mental and physical illness can be caused by lost souls. Souls can be lost through extreme fear, grief, shock or they may be kidnapped by evil spirits. Souls who aren't happy in their own humans may even try to move to another person.

Shamans, called tvix neeb, can be male or female. They carry a knife or a sword, wear heavy silver necklaces and carry a rattle (an iron hoop with metal pieces on it). Shamans can command malevolent spirits to leave. They can go into a trance, wearing a black hood, and travel into the spirit world on a spirit dragon, horse or cloud ship.

Common Boy's Names: Chue, Ka, Long, Pao, Shua, Teng, Thai, Tong, Tou, Toua, Yeng, Xang.

Common Girl's Names: Bao, Bo, Chue, Ka, Kia, May, May Ia, Mee, Pa, Shua, Tong, Xi, Yeng, Yi.

Common Surnames: Chang, Cheng, Fang, Her, Kang, Kha, Kong, Kue, Lao, Lor, Lee, Moua, Pha, Thao, Vue, Vang, Soung.

Suggested Skills: Journeying, Command Misfortunes.

Cambodian

Population- The Los Angeles area has the largest concentration of Cambodians outside of Cambodia and Long Beach has the world's largest Cambodian community. There are more than 40,000 Cambodians in the L.A. area: about 1,000 in Riverside County, 2,700 in San Bernardino County (mostly in the city of San Bernardino), 4,500 in Orange County (mostly in Fullerton) and 28,000 in L.A. County (mostly in L.A. and Long Beach).

History- After a violent war the Khmer Rouge Communist army in Cambodia put most of the country's population on communal farms. More than one million Cambodians died on these farms. Some starved and some were executed. Large numbers of Cambodians fled to refugee camps in Thailand, and in the early 1980s many came from there to the US.

Culture- Cambodians believe it is rude to touch another person's head, point the bottom of one's feet at another person, or make eye contact with an elder or superior. Traditionally they greet each other with palms together and a slight bow. Cambodians call their non-relative elders grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle, brother or sister. Traditionally, marriages are arranged. Modern Cambodian-Americans at least consult with their parents before marrying. Dowries are paid for girls. Women keep their names after marriage and wives are the leader of their household and typically handle the finances. Cambodian women use little birth control and thus Cambodian families are typically large.

Cambodian girls who go against cultural norms are often branded "slut" or "prostitute." This is especially likely to happen when a girl has premarital sex or complains about her domestic situation (even if she is being abused). Men, on the other hand, are not looked down upon for having premarital or extramarital sex. Since men are free to have affairs, married women have been known to attack their husband's mistresses. In Cambodia there has been a rash of attacks by women who poured acid on the faces of husbands' mistresses to permanently disfigure them.

Most of the Cambodians who immigrated to the US were from rural Cambodia and were illiterate. Education is low in LA's Cambodian community, and so is unemployment and poverty. Because so many experienced war, death and torture in Cambodia, Cambodians are at high risk for mental illness. A high percentage of Cambodians smoke tobacco and marijuana use is fairly common.

Supernatural Beliefs- Most Cambodians are Therevadan Buddhists and go to Buddhist monks and nuns for many of their supernatural needs. There are also a number of animistic folk practitioners. The Kru prepare charms and amulets, find lost objects, predict the future, exorcise evil spirits, and cure illnesses. The Achar are ritual specialists who perform rituals at births, weddings, funerals, etc. Thmup and Bangbot are sorcerers who can kill people by remote, read omens and make dangerous aphrodisiac preparations. The Rup Arak are mediums, usually male, who are possessed by ancestor spirits. Ancestor spirits can tell people whether any spirits in the spirit world have been offended and need to be propitiated.

Illnesses can be caused by angry spirits or by an imbalance between the hot and cold elements. Imbalances can be cured by ingesting herbs or foods that have hot or cold properties. Sometimes, however, an imbalance can cause a "bad wind" which must be brought out via cupping, pinching, or scraping the skin with a coin.

There are many types of spirits, including nature spirits, home protectors, animal protectors, ghosts and ancestor spirits. Any type of spirit can be dangerous if offended. Most Cambodians have spirit shrines in their homes. The most dangerous type of spirits are the ghosts of people who died unnatural or untimely deaths.

Many Cambodians believe in magical tattoos that can protect one from weapons. The tattoos include pictures of animals and humans, ornate designs and words in ancient Khmer script. The tattooist may be a Kru or Achar and specially prepares the needle, burns incense, says prayers while tattooing, etc. Sometimes black ink made from animal bile is used. There are often instructions for rituals the user must perform to keep the tattoo working. Tattoos may lose their power over time, making it necessary for the person to get new tattoos.

Suggested Skills: Possession Trance, Command Inanimate.

Common Male Names: Anchaly, Arun, Atith, Boran, Bourey, Chakra, Chann, Chanthou, Chanvatey, Chhay, Heng, Khemera, Kiri, Kong Kea, Kravann, Makara, Mau, Narith, Nhean, Nimol, Nisay, Oudom, Phhoung, Piseth, Peou, Ponlok, Prak, Rachana, Rangsei, Rath, Rathanak, Rithisak, Samay, Sambath, Samang, Samrin, Sann, Sokhem, Sokhom, Sonith, Sophat, Sothear, Sov, Sovann, Sovannarith, Thom, Vannak, Vibol, Vichet, Vireak, Visal, Viseth, Vithara, Vithu.

Common Female Names: Akara, Arunny, Botum, Bopha, Champei, Chamroeun, Chan, Chankrisna, Chanmony, Channary, Chanthavy, Chanthou, Chaya, Chhaya, Chivy, Choum, Da, Dara, Devi, Jorani, Kaliyan, Kannitha, Kolthida, Kunthea, Makara, Malis, Maly, Mau, Nary, Nuon, Phally, Phary, Peou, Punthea, Putrea, Rachana, Rachany, Rathana, Reaksmey, Roumjong, Samphy, Sathea, Savady, Sita, Serey, Seyha, Sikha, Sokha, Sonisay, Sopheap, Sopheary, Sophorn, Soriya, Sothy, Sovanara, Sovandary, Sovanna, Srey Doung, Srey Mau, Sreynuon, Srey Pek, Suorsdey, Taevy, Thavary, Thida, Veasna, Veata, Vimean, Visal.

Common Surnames: Chann, Chea, Chhan, Chhith, Chhoub, Choeun, Duong, Em, Hong, Keo, Khan, Khlot, Kim, Long, Ma, Meang, Meas, Moa, Moul, Muy, Neak, Noeun, Nourn, Nuth, Ouk, Oum, Phal, Phay, Puth, Samouth, Sang, Sok, Sum, Thuy, Touch, Voeum, You.

continued next page

Southeast Asian Animists (continued)

Vietnamese

Population: There are more than 230,000 Vietnamese in the L.A. area. There are about 6,000 Vietnamese in Riverside County, 10,000 in San Bernardino and 78,000 in L.A. County. LA County's Vietnamese population is centered on Rosemead and other working class areas of the surrounding San Gabriel valley. Many ethnically Chinese people from Vietnam live in the same area. There are 135,000 Vietnamese in Orange Country, most of which are in Westminster/Garden Grove. About one third of Westminster/Garden Grove is Asian. This area is the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam and is home to Little Saigon. Little Saigon is a 4 block area centered on Bolsa Ave. It has many Vietnamese mom and pop stores, strip malls, Vietnamese TV and radio stations, Vietnamese pop music recording studios (more than in all of Vietnam), Vietnamese newspapers and a 2 story shopping mall famous for good values on Asian jewelry. Little Saigon has had trouble with Vietnamese gangs extorting protection money from business owners. There are also many Vietnamese in the nearby cities of Santa Ana, Anaheim, Fountain Valley and Stanton. In recent times the centralized Vietnamese population of Orange County has started to disperse, the lower-middle-class going to poor (traditionally Hispanic) sections of Santa Ana and the upper-middle-class going to Huntington Beach, Fountain Valley and Irvine. The University of California at Irvine has a large percentage of Vietnamese students.

History: Vietnamese immigration took place in three waves. 130,000 Vietnamese fled to the US in 1975 after the US pulled out of Vietnam. Most of these were young, well educated, English speaking people from cities. About half were Catholic. The next wave happened after relations between China and Vietnam broke down and many ethnically Chinese people in Vietnam were persecuted. These people tried to escape the country by boat (and are known today as 'boat people'). About half of them died in the attempt. This second wave was a much more diverse group. The third immigration wave peaked between 1985 and 1991 when reunification programs allowed people to immigrate to the US to be reunited with lost relatives. New Vietnamese immigrants continue to trickle in due to reunification programs.

Culture- Compared to white Americans, Vietnamese tend to be more polite, guarded, more likely to try to spare others' feelings and avoid conflict, more quiet and less likely to use large hand gestures. Vietnamese rarely smoke or drink in public.

Traditional Vietnamese greet each other by bowing slightly and joining hands. They bow their head to elders and superiors and don't look them directly in the eye. Women traditionally do not shake hands with men. The typical American way of beckoning someone (motioning with an upturned finger) is reserved for animals and people of inferior status in Vietnamese culture.

Traditionally, men should be kind, loyal, helpful, self-controlled and have control over their families. Women should be obedient of fathers or husbands, modest, graceful and soft-spoken. In reality, though, Vietnamese American women are likely to run the household, have control over the finances and have equal power with men when it comes to family decisions.

Age and education is more important than wealth to traditional Vietnamese. Vietnamese-American families typically put a lot of pressure on their children to study hard. Young Vietnamese adults are typically allowed to date, but their families retain the right to be consulted before the young adults decide to marry. Traditionally, children are thought of as owing a debt to their parents, who they must obey and care for.

Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, is one of the most important Vietnamese celebrations. Tet is a time to pay debts, forgive transgressions, turn enemies into friends and improve oneself.

Vietnamese cuisine has a strong French influence because the French once occupied the country.

There are several Vietnamese and combined Vietnamese/Cambodian gangs in the L.A. area, including 6 Vietnamese 'girl gangs.' Southeast Asian gangs in the US started in 1985 when Cambodian immigrants, who were being preyed upon by nearby Latino gangs, adopted the gang structure for themselves. LA's first Vietnamese gang is now one of the largest Asian gangs in the US and has spawned several imitators. There is still a big rivalry between Latino and Asian gangs in the L.A. area. See p.171 for more on Vietnamese gangs.

Supernatural Beliefs- For the most part, Vietnamese are Buddhist, with elements of Taoism and Confucianism and some elements of folk religion left over. Many Buddhist figures are worshipped in the same way local spirits were once worshipped.

Traditional Vietnamese believe that ying-yang imbalances can cause illness. They use cupping, pinching, coining, acupuncture and herbs to cure illnesses.

There are many types of spirits: guardian spirits, nature spirits, Taoist immortals and holy sages, spirits from Chinese and Cambodian folk religion, domestic spirits, ancestor spirits, ghosts and minor demons. Many Vietnamese have two altars in their homes: one for offerings to ancestors, another for offerings to spirits. Petitions are sent to sprits and gods by burning them at an altar. Ancestors depend on living relatives to perform rituals that help them progress through the afterlife. Those who die and don't have ancestors to care for their souls become dangerous wandering ghosts. Animals may be sacrificed to placate offended spirits and gods and to pay for sins.

For protection from malevolent spirits, traditional Vietnamese put mirrors on their doors (demons are scared by their own reflections) or ask supernatural practitioners to write 'spirit paper' (spells in ancient Vietnamese script) to put on their walls or over their doors.

Astrology and geomancy are important to traditional Vietnamese. Skilled geomancers can keep the five elements in balance and make sure that the flow of energies through a place is kept healthy.

Besides Buddhist monks, the most important supernatural practitioners are mediums. Spirits speak through them, allowing people to find out what is going on in the supernatural world. Mediums can sometimes journey to the spirit world to fight with demons for the health and safety of their charges. Mediums wear costumes created for the spirits they want to summon. These costumes are very colorful and resemble what members of an ancient Vietnamese royal court would have worn.

Mediums can be male or female. Female mediums come from a group that worships a number of goddesses. They are usually called in a dream and taken ill before they become mediums. Male mediums are usually worshippers of Tran Hung Dao, a historical Vietnamese general who became a national hero by defending Vietnam against Mongol invasion. Some male mediums cut their tongues while in a trance. The blood is collected and put into amulets.

Suggested Skills- Possession Trance, Journeying.

Common Male Names: An, Anh Dung, Binh, Bao, Canh, Chien, Chinh, Cuong, Dac Kien, Dao, Danh, Dat, De, Dien, Duc, Due, Dung, Duong, Giang, Hai, Hao, Hien, Hieu, Hoc, Huu, Hung, Huy, Huynh, Khan, Lanh, Lan, Loc, Minh, Nguyen, Nhat, Phuc, Phuoc, Quan, Quang, Quoc, Sang, Si, Sinh, Son, Thang, Thanh, Thao, Thinh, Tho, Thu, Thuan, Toai, Toan, Trang, Trieu, Trong Tri, Trong, Trung, Tu, Tuan, Tung, Van, Vien, Viet, Vuong, Xuan

Common Female Names: Ai, An, Anh, Be, Bian, Bich, Binh, Cam, Canh, Chau, Chi, Cong, Dao, Diep, Diu, Doan Vien, Dong, Dung, Giang, Ha, Hai, Han, Hang, Hanh, Hanh Phu, Hien, Hoa, Hong, Hue, Hung, Houng, Huyen, Hyunh, Ket Nien, Khanh, Kieu, Kim, Kim Cuc, Kim-Ly, Lam, Lan, Lang, Lanh, Le, Lieu, Lien, Linh, Long, Ly, Mai, My, Nam Ha, Ngoc, Ngoc Nich, Ngon, Ngu, Nguyet, Nhu, Nhung, Nu, Phuong, Qui, Quy, Quyen, Sang, Suong, Tam, Tan, Tham, Thanh, Thanh Ha, Thao, Thi, Tien, Thom, Thu, Thuy, Trinh, Truc, Tuyen, Tuyet, Uoc, Van, Viet, Xuan, Yen.

Common Surnames: Bach, Banh, Bui, Cao, Che, Chu, Chu, Cu, Dam, Dang, Dao, Dinh, Do, Doan, Du, Duong, Ha, Hoa, Hoang, Hoang, Hua, Huynh, La, Lai, Lam, Le, Lieu, Lo, Luong, Ly, Mai, Nghiem, Ngo, Nguy, Nguyen, Pham, Phan, Pho, Phung, Quach, Ta, Tang, Thach, Thai, Thieu, Ton, Tran, Trang, Trinh, Trung, Truong, Tu, Vanh, Vo, Vuong.

Alleys

Cannibals

In Brief- Monks and priests who deny the flesh, break taboos, mutilate themselves and gain powerful phantom body parts.

Other Names- Order of St. Carpocrates, Evil Priests, Heretic Monks, Mortificants, Leper Kings

The Chosen- A majority of those who will become Cannibals have had mystical or religious experiences from an early age. Almost all are in some religious occupation (priest, rabbi, imam, monk, nun, chaplain, pastor, religious scholar, seminary student, etc.). Those not in a religious occupation are active members of religious communities. Most are Christian, though there are significant minorities from Jewish and Muslim faiths. Almost all of those in a religious profession have been censured or denied promotion because they questioned the doctrines of their religion. They have a special disdain, more than their peers, for 'worldliness' (the focus on physical property and pleasures in the secular world). A significant portion were disabled or disfigured before becoming initiated.

Initiation- Most Cannibals were approached by someone they knew from religious study or worship. They were asked if they were interested in hearing about some interesting doctrines, religious texts, means of worship and/or mystical practices. The initiates were warned that some of it is not 'standard' church teachings and might not be seen as favorable by the church hierarchy. Interested, the initiates received photocopied pages of text, attended a lecture in the home of religious peers, or received a tape of someone lecturing. The ideas were presented without attributing their sources, and the initiators evaded questions of the origins of the teachings.

The doctrines said that there is a world of spirit and a world of physical matter. Our souls are beings of spirit trapped in physical bodies. Communion with god is the ultimate experience for humans, but our ability to commune with god is limited by our physical bodies. The doctrines presented the physical world as a trap, something we must find a way past to reach ultimate freedom, power, wisdom and happiness.

As initiates learned and agreed with these doctrines, they were given access to more and more extreme doctrines. They met elders of this movement who had practiced self-torture and mutilation, going so far as to amputate body parts. As this did not repulse the initiates, or cause the initiates to go blabbing to church authorities, they were rewarded with a demonstration of the power of the human spirit. In some quiet, secluded place they watched an elder perform some supernatural feat, often someone doing something with a severed body part as if the body part was there. They may have seen an old monk with a hand missing reach out and 'pick up' a glass of water, the glass hovering in midair a few inches from the end of a stump.

Initiates were be given texts that describe meditations to help one overcome attachment to the physical world. The mildest of these practices involve prayer or visualization. Less mild practices involve self-deprivation and torture. The most extreme practices involve breaking society's taboos to convince oneself that the world and everything in it is meaningless.



Initiators were eventually given access to the raw documents that are the source of these doctrines. Most are from Gnostic Christian sects that split off from mainstream Christianity around 200 AD. These doctrines were named heresies by the Christian church and wiped out, only to be rediscovered later by scholars. The initiates could no longer pretend that what they had been studying and practicing was anything other than a blasphemy in their church's eyes.

As a final initiation, new Cannibals were asked to consume raw human flesh. They did this to prove that they believed that the taboos of the physical world are inconsequential because the physical world is a trap that keeps us far from God. After consuming human flesh the new Cannibals were seen as a full-members of this group, whatever that may mean. Even as a full member, the group is still very secretive.

At adventure one, the new Cannibal has tasted human flesh, has done a number of extreme acts of devotion, has manifested some supernatural abilities, but has not yet purposefully severed any of his or her own body parts. The Cannibal has only met about a dozen other members of the group and only has the names and contact information for one or two. This secrecy, the new Cannibal has been told, is meant to protect the group if some student is discovered. Who, if anyone, leads the group, and what powers they have developed after years of study is something the initiate's contacts either don't know or won't tell.

Typical Evening- Most Cannibals spend much of their evenings alone reading religious texts, praying and in silent contemplation. They may make regular pilgrimages to local places that feel holy to them. They may spend time searching through antique bookstores or searching on the internet for ancient texts. A few evenings a week they may meet with a small group of other Cannibals, usually in the home of one or in a dark unused corner of a church. They talk about religious ideas or participate in group rituals. Those Cannibals who are religious professionals or devoted members of religious communities spend many evenings doing charity work (like working in a soup kitchen or hosting AA meetings) or attending church gatherings.

Those Cannibals who sever body parts must live as disabled people, even if they are more 'able' than regular humans. For some, stumbling around with a white cane when they can see perfectly, or scooting around in a wheelchair when they could glide through the air at incredible speeds is an important act of humility.

What You Know

-There is a secret network of operating within modern organized religion.

-This network bases its beliefs on the ancient Gnostic heresies.

-They believe that the physical world is a trap keeping human souls from realizing their true nature.

-Practitioners gain supernatural powers.

-Practitioners can remove body parts but keep equal or superior abilities by using 'spirit' body parts instead.

-Members of this group are very frightened of being found out.

Going Deeper- Cannibals go deeper by continuing to study the ancient thinkers whose writings the Cannibal doctrines are based on. They also continue cultivating an indifference to the physical world by meditation, self-torture and breaking taboos. Most Cannibals go on to remove their own body parts. If Cannibal doctrine is correct, diligent practice will give Cannibals supernatural power and insight into the true nature of the universe.

Dark Side- Cannibals break taboos to break themselves of an emotional connection to the physical world. Usually they break taboos by themselves or with fellow Cannibals. Some Cannibals, however, break taboos with people against their will. Some do so in the belief that it is not immortal to kill, rape, molest or mutilate people's physical bodies because those bodies either don't matter or are inherently unholy. Others believe that they are helping people by forcing them to break taboos.

Skills- The PC gets Mortification of the Flesh (1 level) free.

The PC can buy the following skill at **10** points per level:
Mortification of the Flesh (WIL)

The PC can buy the following skills at **20** points per level:
Body Invasion (WIL)
Command Animals (WIL)
Command Inanimate (WIL)
Command Misfortunes (WIL)
Ecstatic Rage (WIL)
Flesh Control (WIL)
Journeying (WIL)
Nihilist Rage (WIL)
Revive (WIL)

Bonus Characteristics

Simple Living (Optional Advantage, Costs 1 BP)- The PC has shunned most worldly pleasures: TV, expensive food, nice clothes, etc. The PC lives in the cheapest place he or she can find. The PC gets +$5,000 to start and +$100/wk.

Recommended Day Job- Religious Professional, Student.

Recommended Skills- Mythology, Oratory, Philosophy, Religion, Research: Academic.

Recommended Equipment- Surgical Kit.

Recommended Reading- Gnosticism (p.152), Platonism and Neoplatonism (p.151).

Jewish and Muslim Cannibals

Although Cannibalistic doctrine has found adherents among Muslim, Jewish and other monotheistic faiths, it is primarily a Christian doctrine. There are significant problems encountered by members of popular non-Christian faiths who take up Cannibalism:

In Judaism there is a strong prohibition against self-mutilation, including tattooing and piercing. Since all Jewish religious professionals are active members of the Jewish community they must take special care to make loss of limbs look like a series of unfortunate accidents. The prohibition against self-mutilation is usually explained by saying that G_d created human bodies in his image, and that humans have no right to change this design. Jewish Cannibals typically justify their actions by saying that the soul is the true body which is an image of G_d, the physical flesh is a false body that has nothing to do with G_d.

In Islam, Cannibalism is usually found amongst those who are drawn to Sufism. Sufism is a mystical tradition wherein initiates try to personally experience the beauty and love of Allah which is inherent in everything in the universe. Sufis say that Allah is in everything, so humans have godliness in them. Sufism often comes under fire by conservative Muslims, who feel that equating humans with Allah is dangerous and sinfully arrogant.

Both Jewish and Islamic Cannibals tend to be drawn to the less conservative movements in their religions that stress personal faith and experience over religious dogma and authority.

Alleys

Faustians

In Brief- Alien entities living in their minds give them mental strength and supernatural powers but have their own agendas.

Other Names- Horses, the Ridden, the Infected, the Possessed, Hosts.

The Chosen- Before they became Faustians they were typically weak-willed people: slaves to temptation, easily manipulated, not very brave. Many lived in ghetto or skid row areas or were homeless. Many had lives filled with unresolved personal problems that would eventually lead to a personal crisis, e.g. debts, drug addictions, hanging out with a bad crowd.

Initiation- At some time in each Faustian's life, they encountered an intense personal crisis that they didn't believe they had the psychological strength to survive. Perhaps without even realizing it, they sent out pleas for any being in the cosmos willing to help to come do so. At that moment, something entered them they found the strength to survive, some even displayed supernatural powers that allowed them to escape the situation.

Later, putting their lives back together, most new Faustians believed that the sensation of an alien presence was a stress-induced hallucination. Yet something had undeniably changed. Thoughts, ideas and feelings, completely out of context with what was happening, would occur to them for no reason and those same things endlessly repeated in their dreams. Their personalities were changing, typically for the better: brave where they had been nervous, outgoing where they were shy, willful where they were weak, smart where they were stupid. They also started experiencing bizarre urges: to search out certain antiques, to rearrange their dwellings in a certain way, to embark on unusual art projects. Those that tried to resist these urges had their newfound psychological strength suddenly yanked away, as if punishing them for resisting. Unwilling to live in a state of weakness, they eventually gave in to the desires of the alien presence.

The new Faustians also discovered they had supernatural abilities to sense and effect minds of others, especially in the areas of memory and sensation.

Most recently, new Faustians have attempted communicating with this alien presence. After several failed attempts, they received a response. It was short, curt, cryptic and unhelpful, but it proved to them that something intelligent was in them, something that referred to itself as a "dance".

At adventure one, a new Faustian still doesn't know what the Dance is or what it wants. He or she knows that it expects a symbiotic relationship. The Faustian gets psychological strength and supernatural abilities. What the Dance gets is not entirely clear, but at least part of it involves having a servant that can run errands for the Dance. Each time the Faustian successfully completes an errand he or she is given a harder, more dangerous or more ethically-questionable errand.

Typical Evening- Most evenings are taken up running errands for the Dance. Instead of communicating its desires, Dances fill Faustians with sudden, powerful desires to do things. The Faustians often have a sudden desire to modify their dwellings: paint the walls lime green, spread lilacs around, get a lamp with a yellow lampshade, find a turntable and an old jazz album from the 30s, etc.

Those Faustians who have artistic



Those Faustians who have artistic skills are often filled with urges to create art pieces that embody and convey a certain subtle emotion. Faustians are often driven to stay up all night working on paintings, songs, sculptures or poems, but rarely feel satisfied that they have captured the exact right emotional tone. When they do get a piece of art right, they are unable to part with it. Instead, they place it in their homes where they can stare at it every day (or, in the case of music, play it over and over again).

Sometimes Faustians are called on to break into and redecorate abandoned places with the same style that they have been driven to redecorate their own dwellings. Sometimes they are compelled to install bars, chains, reinforced doors or heavy-duty locks in these empty places. At other times they are compelled to leave trinkets and decorations at the door to an abandoned place, but a feeling of dread tells the not to enter. These places are usually homes, apartment buildings or motel rooms that have been abandoned for quite a long time.

On other evenings, Faustians feel compelled to eliminate threats to the sanctity of an abandoned place. The threat could be a homeless person looking for a shelter, a gang of teens who like to graffito abandoned places, a real estate development company who wants to tear down a place and build something over it, a historical preservation society that wants to renovate it, or an old dying man who has willed his unused property to his children. Faustians are free to use any methods, from subtle manipulation to blatant violence, so long as the job gets done without attracting attention to the abandoned place.

Faustians have some ability to refuse errands they can't or don't want to do. The Dance will attempt to get what it wants by threatening to remove the PC's gifts (or threatening even worse things) but in the end it comes down to this: Faustians can get away with a little disobedience and retain their powers so long as they remain useful to the Dance. There is also a possibility that Dances are unable to completely and permanently remove a Faustian's powers, although a Dance would never admit this.

What You Know

-You're infected with some supernatural entity that has invaded the your mind.

-The entity can grant psychological strength and supernatural powers, but wants you to help it in return.

-The entity has some ability to remove your psychological strength and powers.

-The entity is intelligent, but doesn't seem to think or act like a human.

-In part, the entity seems to need you because it has trouble understanding how to get things done in the human world.

-The entity seems to know what's going on in the minds of people all around the city.

-The entity can communicate with words, but prefers to communicate by making the PC 'feel like' doing or not doing things.

-The entity has some connection to abandoned places, mostly places people once lived in but that nobody has been in for a long time.

-The entity wants the PC to redecorate some of these abandoned places.

-The entity wants the PC to deliver things to (but never enter) other abandoned places.

-The entity wants the PC to stop people from entering or damaging any of the abandoned buildings it is associated with.

-The entity has some connection to old trinkets and old décor from a mismatch of time periods.

-The entity has some connection with a repeating cycle of déjà vu like thoughts, emotions and sensations in the back of the PC's mind.

Going Deeper- Some Faustians go deeper by becoming trusted servants of their Dances. The more they are willing to do to help the Dance, the more the Dance teaches them about what it wants and needs. The Dances can sense deception, so only those who truly desire (even for selfish reasons) to help the Dance can walk this path.

Others declare war on their Dances. Their powers are removed and they are attacked by servants of the Dance as they break into the abandoned buildings associated with the Dance to try to find out what's hidden there.

The majority of Faustians walk a middle path: doing enough errands to keep the Dance satisfied, but using their spare time to do historical research, try to find others who have dealt with Dances, or use psychotherapy techniques to try to figure out what's going on in their heads.

Dark Side- The Dance doesn't care how Faustians remove threats to the abandoned places, and many Faustians end up murdering innocent people, seemingly at random, to protect the Dance. The more violence they do, the easier it becomes for a Dance to convince them to do immoral things. Some become pure sociopaths, willing to do anything the Dance desires, and that's when the Dance asks them to do things that are far more horrible than murder.

Supernatural Skills- The PC can purchase the following skills at **10** skill points per level:

Command Will-Less (WIL)
Danger Sense (AWR)
Déjà Vu (WIL)
Psychometry (AWR)
Read Minds (AWR)

Alleys

Character Concept: Your Dance

The Dance should, for the most part, be a mystery to both the PC and the player. It is useful, however, to establish the following facts:

-What and where is the building the PC has come to associate with the Dance (this is the building the PC was near when he or she first became infected and that the PC is sometimes asked to protect from invaders). It should be a building with at least one room that has been abandoned and unentered for quite a while.

-What are some of the thoughts, emotions and perceptions that the PC associates with the Dance? These should be experiences that people who once occupied the building (see above) might have had, and they are typically very intense. Try to come up with at least five that the PC is conscious of.

Bonus Characteristics

Weak Willed (Mandatory Disadvantage)- Remove 8 points in attributes from the PC. The PC can't have a natural WIL more than 7.

Alien Psychological Strength (Mandatory Advantage)- So long as the PC is on good terms with the Dance, the PC gets +10 WIL, +7 INL and +7 AWR.

Symbiote (Mandatory Disadvantage)- The PC has an alien thing living in his or her mind. The Dance, when its motivations and reasoning can be discerned, appears to act logically without emotions such as anger, friendship or pride coming into play. The Dance has a completely selfish attitude towards the PC: so long as the PC is a useful servant, it doesn't want anything bad to happen to the PC, but if the PC stops being a useful servant (or, worse, becomes the threat) the Dance doesn't mind hurting or even killing the PC. At adventure 1, the worst thing the PC can threaten the Dance with is to refuse to do an errand for the Dance and the worst the Dance can threaten is to try to deprive the PC of the PC's supernatural strengths and abilities. The Dance can instantly rob the PC of all his or her alien psychological strength and give -10 to all supernatural skill rolls.

Recommended Day Job- Boring Field Job, Creative, Dangerous Field Job, Legal Professional, Security Professional.

Recommended Skills- Alarm Systems, Business, History: Local, Law: Basic, Lock Picking, Visual Arts.

Recommended Equipment- Crowbar, Dust Mask, Flashlight (Large), Rohypnol, Work Gloves.

Heroes

In Brief- Troubled vigilantes, some with unusual powers, who seek meaning in life by hunting supernatural horrors.

Other Names- Hunters, Warriors, Vigilantes

The Chosen- The average hero shares a lot in common with serial killers: A large portion are male, most are in their twenties, most were raised in a single-parent home with harsh discipline, very few have any feelings of ethnic pride or identity. They are generally loners and losers: only a few have had any college education, many are on some form of public assistance, almost none are in a long-term romantic relationship, almost all either live alone or with parents. Most have suffered from chronic self-esteem problems. Many have used violent fantasies as an escape since adolescence. A significant minority have been obsessed comic book fans.

Initiation- Most Heroes have long had an obsession with the idea of helping people by fighting 'evil' as some sort of vigilante or hunter of supernatural dangers. Most have given up hope of having an impact on the world by raising children, having a fulfilling relationship, being a productive employee, creating a great work of art, etc. For most, hunting down that which harms humanity was their only hope for meaning in their lives. Many carried around pistols or pepper spray or tire-irons with them everywhere they went, hoping in vain that something would happen that would allow them to use their weapons to help an innocent person and thereby becoming a "hero." Waiting in line in the bank they would daydream about what they would do if armed robbers suddenly burst in.

Yet for most it was just a fantasy: they never had the guts to actually go out and do it. Then, most of those who would become Heroes gained access to something unique: special training, a magical or high-tech tool or some kind of supernatural powers. Now they had no excuse not to fulfill their fantasies.

Yet finding evil to fight it is not easy. After countless hours wandering in the streets the initiates are more likely to find another self-styled hero than a monster to fight. Thus many Heroes met and traded stories with other Heroes. Some of these stories involved supernatural dangers and, if they can be believed, then it meant that innocent humans are in danger from things that the police don't know how to fight. Of course, many of the so-called-Heroes the initiate met acted like they had serious emotional and mental problems, so the truth of their stories was questionable.

At adventure one, the PC has stopped a number of criminals, has met and talked with a few other Heroes, and has had at least one encounter with a supernatural danger.

Typical Evening- Some Heroes start their evenings with a trip to a gym, dojo or firing range. The poorer ones spend time training at home: doing pushups on a dirty carpet or attacking a human shape painted on an old mattress leaned up against a wall. Some heroes put on armor, strap weapons to themselves. Some put on disguises (wigs, makeup, glasses) in case they are caught on video.



Some Heroes read through their local newspapers, paying special attention to the police blotter, hoping to find a story about a serial criminal preying upon a neighborhood or something that would indicate some supernatural evil at work.

Then Heroes hit the streets. Most go to a bad neighborhood and walk around hoping someone tries to victimize them. They look down every alley, hoping to see someone getting robbed, beaten, raped or killed. Some Heroes take up a surveillance position: on a rooftop, inside a car with darkened windows, etc. They scan the surrounding area with binoculars hoping to see some crime or supernatural event going down. Some go to a high crime area and wait with a radio scanner, hoping to beat the police to an emergency. Others approach distraught looking people, asking them what's wrong. The area outside of women's shelters is a good place to find people that need extra-legal aid.

Some Heroes stakeout drug corners where dealers openly ply their trade, waiting for a good opportunity to take out a drug dealer.

On their rounds, Heroes may see people they know to be fellow Heroes. This is often a good excuse for a dinner break. They talk in low voices in restaurant booths, asking if each other have had any interesting encounters.

On most nights nothing happens to most Heroes. They return home after midnight in time to get a few hours of sleep before getting up for work the next day.

What You Know

-There are genuine supernatural threats to humanity.

-Some threats look like humans but have strange powers, some are invisible and intangible, only a few are visibly monstrous.

-The government only seems concerned with covering up the existence of these threats.

-Sometimes homeless crazy people can point a Hero towards supernatural threats.

-People who study traditional magic of aboriginal cultures may be able to deal with the invisible/intangible threats.

-If something has physical form it can almost always be killed if you do enough damage to it.

-Some threats are humans with paranormal powers. Others look like humans but evidence (e.g. their insides) shows they aren't.

-Some supernatural threats act intelligently and are able to communicate with and call on other supernatural threats for help.

-Other supernatural threats, mostly the 'monsters', act insane and seem to operate alone.

-The intelligent threats are very concerned with keeping their existence hidden.

Going Deeper- Heroes have no teachers to go to for wisdom. Fellow Heroes have a lot of stories to tell about supernatural encounters, but it's hard to tell whether these stories are truth, lies or delusions.

For most Heroes their main hope to learn about the supernatural world is to keep hunting down more supernatural entities. Tracking them to their lairs can help the Hero discover what they want and how they live. Heroes may be able to learn a whole lot if they are able to scare or anger a community of supernatural threats into taking action.

Dark Side- Heroes work from their own codes of ethics and justice, codes often colored by deep rage and irrational hatred. An observer with a different idea of morality and justice would see a Hero as evil. Heroes often attack people with little proof that they are guilty of anything, and give out punishments that are very harsh compared to the crime committed. Some are bigots who think that a person's race, sexual orientation, religion, political affiliation or socioeconomic class are a crime worthy of punishment. The worst Heroes are really just hateful bigots who use supernatural powers to murder innocent people and yet pretend that they're doing good.

Other Heroes may be so desperate to be someone's savior that they may create a dangerous situation just to save people from it

Supernatural Skills- Heroes do not start play with supernatural skills (unless they take the Occult Training option, see below).

Bonus Characteristics

Origin Story (Mandatory Advantage)- Choose one of the following sources of power: Complete Obsession, Familiar, H-Tech Machine, Money & Equipment, Occult Training, Shattered Person, Soul Linked, Special Training, Supernatural Object or Top Secret Tech.

Complete Obsession: The PC has no particular power, no special resources, no access to special training. The PC is obsessed with being a hero, so much so that it's all the PC ever thinks about, day and night. The PC can't hold a job (must start with Day Job: Homeless, Ward or Welfare) and has no social life. The PC trains, exercises and plans constantly. The PC starts with +50 skill points, +10 attribute points and +$500 worth of weapons and armor.

Familiar: At some point in the PC's past a cat, dog or horse found the PC. The animal is supernaturally intelligent, strong and agile and was instantly and completely loyal to the PC. The PC is not sure where the animal came from, why it chose the PC or why it is so powerful.

The familiar will come if called by the PC no matter the distance between them. Although it cannot speak, it can understand human speech at the level of a three year old. It's problem-solving skills are also comparable to a three-year-old's. The familiar doesn't communicate with the PC except to warn the PC of danger or lead the PC in a certain direction. The familiar will stay loyal to the PC unless the PC severely abuses it. The familiar will sacrifice its life to protect the PC.

Choose from a Cat, Dog or Horse

H-Tech Machine: The PC owns a machine created by a crazy person. Anyone with knowledge of electronics and physics will say that the machine should do nothing but waste massive amounts of electricity. Yet the machine does do incredible things, possibly even supernatural things. Create a power with 4 levels of Effect and 8 levels of Limitations and the power source as a piece of strange-looking machinery (see Power Creation Rules, see p.30).

Cat Familiar

Appearance- A very large, visibly muscular tabby housecat with short hair.

Attributes- AGY 22, END 15, SPD 18, STH 5, WIL 18, BDY 4, BLD 8, INCY 5.

Senses- Sight AWR 15 (no darkness penalty), Smell AWR 20, Hearing AWR 25.

Attacks- Slash attack with claws at 1d20 +15 vs. 0, Vital Strike (Bladed) with teeth at 1d20 +5 vs. 0 (1 bladed damage), Dodge at 1d20 +15 vs. 0.

Powers- Can read the emotional state and immediate intentions of any intelligent creature. Can see and effect the invisible. Climbing rolls at 1d20 +10 vs. 0.

Dog Familiar

Appearance- A large, dark-grey wolf-like dog.

Attributes- AGY 15, END 17, SPD 16, STH 10, WIL 14, BDY 6, BLD 6, INCY 4.

Senses- Sight AWR 10, Smell AWR 30, Hearing AWR 20.

Attacks- Split Jump-In and Wing with teeth at 1d20 vs. 10 (doing 1 bladed damage), split Grab and Vital Strike with teeth at 1d20 vs. 5 (doing 4 bladed damage), Dodge at 1d20 +5 vs. 0.

Powers- Once given a scent, can track the prey anywhere. Can travel to other planes of existence (taking the owner and any other followers with it) in search of prey.

Horse Familiar

Appearance- Small brown horse.

Attributes- AGY 10, END 30, SPD 40, STH 30, WIL 14, BDY 6, BLD 10, INCY 4.

Senses- Sight AWR 15 (+5 to see long distances), Hearing AWR 22, Smell AWR 22.

Attacks- Kick at 1d20 vs. 0 (6 blunt damage), Trample (like a stomp, horse must use 1 action to rear up) at 1d20 vs. 0 (12 blunt damage), simultaneous kick at 1d20 vs. 2.

Powers- Thick hide has PR 2 bladed 2 blunt. Running does not use END and the horse never needs to sleep. While on the back of the horse the PC is impervious to environmental dangers (cold, heat, toxins, lack of oxygen, etc.)

Money & Equipment: At some point in the PC's past, he or she came into a lot of money and the PC used it to outfit himself or herself for being a Hero. The PC starts with an extra $100,000 and can get up to felony level equipment during character creation (see legality, p.88).

Occult Training: At some point in the PC's past the PC was tutored by someone with occult powers. The PC was not taught the philosophy behind the skill and thus doesn't know 'how it works,' only that it does. The PC starts with a total of four levels (prerequisites apply) in one or more of the following skills:
Animal Form (WIL)*
Automatic Writing (AWR)
Be True Desire (WIL)
Body Invasion (WIL)*
Blood Sigils (WIL)
Command Animals (WIL)
Command Inanimate (WIL)*
Command Misfortunes (WIL)
Dreaming (WIL)
Flesh Control (WIL)
Get Lost (WIL)
Truth Ordeal (WIL)
Journeying (WIL)
Masks (WIL)
Possession Trance (AWR)
Revive (WIL) *
Soul Blade (WIL)
Spirit Speed (WIL)
Spirit Strength (WIL)
Untouchable (WIL)
*Prerequisites

During game play the PC can upgrade the skills the PC has at 10 skill points per level.

Shattered Person- Once the PC, or someone the PC was near, had an intense experience, one in which he or she felt both pain, pleasure, fear, hatred and joy all at the same time. Most likely the experience involved sex. Somehow the strength of this experience 'broke reality,' making the laws of physics go haywire in the surrounding area. Anyone nearby was killed and the PC survived only through extreme luck. Thereafter the PC found that his or her body warped the laws of physics around it. Create a power with 4 levels of Effect and 4 levels of Limitations and the power source as one of the PC's body parts (see Power Creation Rules, see p.30).

Soul Linked- During some moment of personal weakness and desperation, the PC somehow became linked to another person. The PC's personality changed and the PC gained special strengths and abilities. The PC does not know exactly what happened, but feels a strong connection with the person, a desire to help that person, and a knowledge that if anything bad happened to that person something terrible would happen to the PC. Choose one of the soul linked bonuses (see text box, next page) for the PC.

Dear woman who works at the newsstand,

You don't know who I am, but I watch you a lot. Even though I don't know your name, I feel I know a lot about you. Just by watching you I know you are beautiful but not arrogant. You are kind, easy going and like to laugh. I think a lot about how happy it would make me to have someone like you in my life. I think about how I would do everything in my power to make you happy, and how I would always be loyal and grateful. Yet for all the thinking I do about us, I never come up and talk to you. In my imagination it would be perfect, but things never work out the way they do in my imagination. I'm not good with people. If I came up to you, you'd probably think "what a loser" or "what's wrong with this guy?"

I want you to know that I might have saved your life. I've gotten rid of people and things that hurt innocent people. I've done this to protect people like you.

I don't mean to scare you, but there's some weird things out there. I don't know how to explain it, but it's real and nobody seems to know anything about it except me. There are things that look like people, and maybe they are people, but they have weird abilities. I've seen people take a gunshot wound to the head and keep coming. I've seen people turn a corner and be gone, then appear from a different corner a second later. I've seen people who had these long insect-legs come out of their mouth with pincers.

It's not easy what I do. It's countless hours exercising and training. It's reading through the police log in every little piece of shit newspaper. It's long nights driving around with my police scanner on, staking out high crime areas with binoculars, hanging out in emergency rooms eavesdropping on conversations, walking around bad areas at night trying to look like a good robbery victim. Night after night I go out and I come home so late I can only sleep a few hours before I have to get up and go to my crappy job. And I do this every night and most nights I don't get shit.

And when I do run into something, I'm so scared I nearly shit myself every single time. I mean, I'm only human. All it would take is for someone to pull out a gun and shoot me between the eyes and I'd be dead. And that's just when it's a normal human. When it's not, I have no idea what's going to happen. I could shoot it with my shotgun and it could just laugh. I could swing my blackjack at it and it could pass right through the thing. Or maybe it could just kill me by looking at me. It could happen, I have no idea, I don't know what these things are and what they can do. I'm convinced the only reason I've survived so long is luck.

But when I've taken out a whatever-it-is and I'm standing over the body, that's the moment that makes all the hard work and terror worthwhile, because I think "This thing I just killed might have one-day tried to kill the girl who works at the newsstand. I might have just saved her life. I might not be able to make her laugh or smile like those handsome, well-dressed guys do, but at least I can go this for her.

And I like to think that what I did is something that you would be proud of me for, if you knew me. And that makes me feel a little better about being such a weirdo and a loser and a loner.

And maybe, some day, if I kill enough of these people and things that prey on innocents, maybe I'll feel good enough about myself that I can come up and talk to you. And you won't know me because I won't seem like a freak, I'll seem like all those other self-confident, charming guys.

Or, more likely, I'll die first. But I'll have died making the world safe for you, and that's okay.

Soul Linked Bonuses

Id- Duty: Make sure the protectee gets anything he or she desires and that the protectee is not made uncomfortable. Personality Change: The PC becomes more impatient, hedonistic, immature and unashamed. -4 WIL, +4 STH, +2 SPD, +8 END, +3 BLD, +3 BDY, +5 INCY, +10 to save vs. the effects of overindulgence.

Ego- Duty: Make sure that the protectee doesn't discover anything about self or the world that would hurt the protectee. In other words, to protect the protectee's innocence. Personality Change: The PC becomes more of a neutral, impartial observer, willing to mediate and compromise, better at putting on an act or hiding unpleasant facts. +4 WIL, +4 INL, +6 CHM, +2 BDY, +2 INCY, +7 to prowling, sleight of hand, forgery or disguise rolls.

Super Ego- Duty: To prevent the protectee from doing anything bad (e.g. anything that those in power would disapprove of) and to punish the protectee when he or she does transgress those rules. Personality Change: The PC becomes more strict, unforgiving, opinionated, moralistic and obsessed with rules and justice. +4 INL, +6 WIL, +4 STH, +2 BLD, +2 BDY, +10 to rolls to sense guilt or malicious intent.

Thannatos- Duty: To help the protectee overcome fear of death and become comfortable with taking risks. Personality Change: The PC becomes more morbid, pessimistic, prone to violence and unafraid of death. +20 to save vs. fear or psychological shock, +4 WIL, +2 STH, +2 AGY, +2 INL, +2 CHM, +4 BLD, +10 to vital strikes, can make simultaneous actions as if they were normal actions.

Animus- Duty: To help a female protectee understand and deal with the opposite sex. Personality Change: The PC becomes more stereotypically masculine: strong, willful, stubborn, quick to anger and adventurous. -10 to save vs. anger, +4 WIL, +2 STH, +4 BDY, +2 BLD, +2 INCY, +4 END, +5 to seduction rolls.

Anima- Duty: To help a male protectee understand and deal with the opposite sex. Personality Change: The PC becomes more stereotypically feminine: caring, protective, social and manipulative. +6 CHM, +2 INL, +4 BLD, +4 INCY, +8 to seduction rolls, +5 to rolls to calm or comfort another.

Shadow- Duty: To do all the things the protectee is unwilling to do because of moral and cultural constraints. Personality Change: The PC becomes more cruel, mean, devious, insulting, less afraid of punishment and less law-abiding. +5 STH, +5 INL, +2 END, +5 CHM, +7 to crippling, slash and pain/stun rolls, -5 to save vs. anger.

Stranger- Duty: To humble the protectee and confront the protectee with ideas and opinions that are alien to the protectee. Personality Change: The PC becomes more quiet, intense, observant and wise. +6 AWR, +6 INL, +4 WIL, +2 BLD, +2 INCY.

Reptile- Duty: To secure food, warmth, sex and freedom from danger for the protectee. Personality Change: The PC become less thoughtful, less talkative, less empathetic, less easily bored and more prone to act without thinking. -4 CHM, -4 WIL, +6 AGY, +6 AWR, +6 SPD, +4 STH, +10 to initiative, +2 BDY, +4 INCY.

At the GM's discretion, another PC can be the protected. Otherwise, choose the PC's relationship with the protected:

Trusted (Costs 5 BP)- The protected knows and trusts the PC.

Stranger (0 BP)- The protected does not know the PC.

Frightened (Gives 5 BP)- The protectee knows the PC and has already decided that the PC is untrustworthy and dangerous.

Special Training: The PC has had a period of intense training far beyond what a normal person in the PC's day job might be expected to have had. Choose one of the following:

Martial Arts: PC gets 9 free levels from the following skills: Aikido, Boxing, Immobilization, Tae Kwon Do, Wrestling.

Assassin: PC gets 9 free levels from the following skills: Assassin: Armed, Assassin: Unarmed, Sniper.

Sniper: PC gets Prowling (3), Gun Repair (2), Wilderness Survival (2), Sniper (4).

Thief: PC gets 10 free levels from the following skills: Prowling, Alarm Systems, Auto Theft, Lock Picking, Pocket Picking.

Terrorist: PC gets Black Market (1), Cryptography (1), WMDs (2), Forgery (2), Disguise (2), Sniper (1), Demolitions (4).

Serial Killer: PC gets Knife Fighting (2), Torture (3), Immobilization (2), Performance (2), Disguise (2), Prowling (2).

Supernatural Object: The PC has come into the possession, probably by complete accident, of a seemingly normal object that is capable of warping reality around it. Create a power with 4 levels of Effect and 4 levels of Limitations and the power source as an everyday object.

Top Secret Tech: At some point in the PC's recent past, he or she was able to steal a prototype of incredibly expensive military technology from a corp or from the military itself. Create a power with 5 levels of Effect (no more than 2 levels for each effect, no effects listed as Supernatural) and 5 levels of Limitations, with the power source as a piece of technology. If the government gets wind that its technology is being used in the field without its permission, it will devote considerable resources to hunting down the user.

Recommended Day Job- Boring Customer Service Job, Boring Factory Job, Boring Office Job, Researcher, Welfare.

Recommended Skills- Alarm Systems, Climbing, Disguise, Local Geography, Prowling, Research: Law Enforcement, Rifle/Shotgun, Tracking.

Recommended Equipment- Binoculars, Crowbar, Kevlar Vest, Motorcycle (Used), Nightvision Goggles, Pager, Pipe Bomb, Plastic Restraints, Radio Scanner, Rope & Grapple, Shotgun, Taser.

Power Creation Rules

Power Creation Steps

Step 1 – Choose Power Source. Decide what actually creates the effects. It could be a part of the PC's body, a seeming normal object or a high-tech electronic device.

Step 2 – Choose Power Range. Choose one of the following:

Area: The power effects everything within a given radius from the source of the power. Unless stated otherwise the range is 20 ft. (6 m.) per total effect levels of the power. If you wish to have the power be something that can be "shot at" a target, choose this option and then get the 'aimable' control.

Enclosed: Anything the object encloses is effected by the power, e.g. cages, suits, boxes that effect everything inside them.

Touch: Any solid object the power source touches is effected. If the power source touches something very large (like a building or the ground) it effects every part of that object within a radius of 20 ft. (6 m.) per effect level from the power source.

Step 3 – Choose Effects. Effects are bought in levels, like skills. Most effects allow 1 to 3 levels to be purchased. Some effects are listed as Paranormal and cannot be purchased with a technology based power. Within each effect are several sub-types. Choose one subtype.

One power can have multiple effects and can have different subtypes within the same effect. For example, if you are creating a power with 4 levels of effect, you could choose "Transport (2): Throw" and "Destroy (2): Burn" (the power both tosses and burns anything in the power range), or you could choose "Destroy (2): Burn" and "Destroy (2): Electricity" (the power both burns and electrocutes anything in the power range).

Unless specified otherwise, all effects take 1 round to do whatever it is they do.

Effect levels can also be spent on Controls, which allow the PC to control how the power works. Controls are bought in levels as if they were an effect.

Step 4 – Choose Limitations. You will be required to choose a given number of levels of limitations. These are exceptions, side effects and fallibilities of the powers. They are bought in levels, just like powers.

A Warning

The power rules here are supposed to represent dangerous and terrible things: artifacts from alien realms, things present at a brutal shattering of reality, and dangerous untested technology. Powers are by their nature difficult to control. See No Control Powers, below. Even with several levels of controls, however, powers are hard to use safely. Whenever it is not specifically stated, assume that a given aspect of a power is not under control of the PC.



Power Creation Rules (continued)

Effects

Controls (On/Off Switch, Aimable, Intensity Control, Effect Switch, Precision, Exempt, Target Type)

Create (Worthless Substances, Creatures, Valuable Substances, Dangerous Substances).

Destroy (Burn/Melt, Consume, Crush, Cut, Freeze, Electrify, Irradiate, Poison, Shake, Smother)

Disrupt (Sensory Nervous Systems, Motor Nervous Systems, Immune Systems, Metabolic Systems, Mechanical Systems, Electronics)

Enhance (Physical, Mental, Health, Occult Ability*, Attractiveness, Scariness, Damage Resistance)

Nullify (Light, Heat, Gravity, Momentum, Sound, Friction)

Psych Effect (Thought, Emotion, Perceptions)

Reveal (Far Things, Small Things, Hidden Things, Weak Things, Invisible Things*, Other Worlds*)

Transport (Slide, Fly, Throw, Teleport*, Portal*)

Warp (Stickiness, Flexibility, Durability, Shape, Size*, Tangibility*, Invisibility*, Weight*)

**Paranormal*

Controls

This 'effect' allows the power to be controlled. Each control applies to all other non-control effects on the power.

On/Off Switch: If this control is not selected the power will either be always on or will activate randomly.

(1 level) The PC can instantly turn the power on or off.

Aimable: Instead of effecting everything in the effect range (e.g. every part of the area, every part of the enclosure, anything that touches any part of the object) only a limited portion of the effect range is effected.

(1) If Area, the PC can aim the power at a 180 degree arc of the area. If Touch, only things that touch half of the object are effected. If Enclosed, only things in one half of the enclosure are effected.

(2) If Area, the PC can aim the power as a wide beam, like spraying a hose. If Touch, only things that touch a small part of the object are effected. If Enclosed, only things in one small part of the enclosure are effected

(3) If Area, the PC can target any specific point within the area, even behind objects. If Touch or Enclosure, only things that are touched by one specific point on the object or are at one specific point in the enclosure are effected.

Intensity Control: The PC can choose to make the power have less than full effect. If this control is not selected, the power always has full effect.

(1) The PC can do something to cut the effects in half, but must keep doing that thing or the effects will go back to full strength.

(2) The PC can choose between ¼, ½, ¾ or full power. Each change takes a round to take effect.

(3) The PC can instantly dial the effect down to almost none or back up to any level of intensity.

Effect Switch: The PC can choose which effect of this particular power source will happen.

(1) The PC can choose one effect which will be the only effect that can happen in the next 1d20 minutes.

(2) The PC can switch between effects at will.

(3) The PC can choose any combination of effects to be on or off (can't switch them all off, though, without On/Off Switch).

Precision: This allows the PC to control how and in what direction the effects work. E.g. with Transport the PC can choose which direction things are transported to. With Destroy: Cut, the PC can make precise cuts. With Warp: Shape the PC can choose what shape things are warped in to.

(1) The PC has clumsy control (e.g. could cut a rough square).

(2) The PC has moderate control (e.g. could carve readable text in a wall).

(3) The PC has fine control (e.g. could draw a picture using cuts in a wall).

Exempt: With this control, the power has lessened effect on the person or object which is the source of the power.

(1) The source of the power experiences half effect.

(2) The source of the power experiences quarter effect.

(3) The source of the power experiences no effect.

Target Type: The power only effects one class of things. The class must be put in quantifiable chemistry or physics terms. Examples of legal target types include: "only effects gold," "only effects items moving 10 mph relative to the source of the power," "only effects objects containing mostly organic chemicals and weighing more than 100 lbs." Examples of target types that would not be legal include: "only effects ugly things," "only effects people with malevolent intentions" or "only effects humans."

(1) The power only effects the subclass.

(2) The power can be switched between effecting everything or only effecting the subclass.

(3) The power can be switched between effecting 2 subclasses.

A Power With No Controls

A power with no level of controls would either always be on or would activate randomly. It would effect everything in its range (if ranged), everything in the enclosure (if enclosed) or everything it touches (if touch) and it would effect itself as well. All levels of all effects associated with the power would operate simultaneously and always with maximum intensity. The power cannot be controlled with any precision: a Transport effect, for example, will throw effected things around in random directions. A Warp: Shape effect will warp things into random shapes.

Create

The power creates inanimate matter or animate creatures.

***Worthless Substances*:** E.g. sand, water., rocks, scraps of paper, lint, etc.

(1) Create up to 1 cup (250 ml) of worthless objects or substances.

(2) Create up to 100 lbs. (45 kg) of worthless objects or substances.

(3) Create up to 1,000 lbs. (450 kg) of worthless objects or substances.

Power Creation Rules (continued)

Creatures: Creatures could be biological or robotic, depending on the nature of the power.

(1) Create up to 100 small stupid creatures (e.g. ants) per round (live 1 hr., max. 500/day).

(2) Create up to 100 rat sized creatures that perform one indiscriminate task (e.g. attack anyone they can find, dig holes in anything they can, eat anything they can, etc.) live 1 wk., max. 500/day -or- 1,000 small stupid creatures.

(3) Create one creature, up to 300 lbs. (136 kg.), that is smart enough to follow simple commands, has 20 STH, 20 SPD, 10 AGY, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, and a natural weapon that does 4 blunt or bladed damage (live 24 hrs., max. 3/day) -or- 1,000 rat-sized creatures or 10,000 small stupid creatures.

***Valuable Substances*:** E.g. gold, computer parts.

(1) Create up to $5 worth of a valuable substance (max $100/dy.).

(1) Create up to $50 worth of a valuable substance (max $250/dy.).

(3) Create up to $500 worth of a valuable substance (max $1,000/dy.).

Dangerous Substances:

(1) Create up to potential ½ damage worth of a dangerous substance, e.g. enough poison to do ½ BLD damage.

(2) Create up to 2 potential damage worth of a dangerous substance, e.g. enough explosives to do 2 explosion damage.

(3) Create up to 20 potential damage worth of a dangerous substance, e.g. enough plutonium to do 20 radiation damage.

Destroy

The power had the primary effect of hurting people or things. The effect may have other uses (e.g. use burn to cook food, use electrocute to power a simple electronic device) but, unless you buy a lot of controls, any creative use of the power is clumsy at best. The power does the damage listed to each object, person and/or animal each time it comes within the effect range of the object.

(1) Does 1 damage.

(2) Does 5 damage.

(3) Does 20 damage.

Burn/Melt: Does Burn damage.

Consume: Parts of the item are bitten off and destroyed. Does ragged bladed damage.

Crush: Does blunt damage.

Cut: Does bladed damage.

Freeze: Does damage directly to BLD and Hypothermia (10/pt.).

Other Types of Damage

See p.136 for more.

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:

-BLD damage (1 pt. per pt. of burn damage).

-Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/pt. of damage).

-Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage).

-Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/pt. of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Dropped Objects: Do blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs or 5 kg) times number of stories.

Electricity:

-Paralysis (WIL+1d20 vs. 20/pt. of damage), only while the electricity is running.

-Unconsciousness (WIL/END+1d20 vs. 10 per pt. of damage)

-Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage), see p.132.

-Burn Damage: 1 pt. of burn damage for every 4 pt.s of electrical damage.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor typically cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Radiation: For every pt. of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per pt. of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but for each pt. of ragged damage taken the PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction (see p.146).

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). Resting will not bring back any lost END. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Electrify: Does electrical damage.

Irradiate: Does radiation damage.

Poison: Kills organic matter via toxic chemicals. Does damage directly to BLD within 4 rounds.

Shake: Destroys structures by vibrating them. Humans must save vs. loss of balance (10 difficulty/level) but otherwise take no direct damage.

Smother: Does oxygen deprivation damage.

Disrupt

The working of biological or technological systems are temporarily disrupted.

Sensory Nervous Systems: Any entity with sensory neurons must make a save vs. distracting pain at:

(1) 20 difficulty

(2) 30 difficulty

(3) 40 difficulty

Motor Nervous Systems: Any entity with motor neurons must make a save vs. paralysis at:

(1) 20 difficulty

(2) 30 difficulty

(3) 40 difficulty

Immune Systems: Any biological entity with an immune system gets a penalty to saves vs. disease contraction and progression as follows:

(1) -20 to save

(2) -30 to save

(3) -40 to save

Metabolic Systems: Any biological entity which metabolizes chemicals for energy becomes less able to do so. For humans, this means a loss of pooled END (when pooled END is at zero, all attributes are halved, and each point below zero is removed from BLD) as follows:

(1) -10 END

(2) -20 END

(3) -30 END

Mechanical Systems: Anything with mechanical parts becomes unstable: working inefficiently and sporadically and then stopping.

(1) Machines work inefficiently (consume twice the fuel for half the effect) and have a 1 in 20 chance of breaking down.

(2) Mechanical systems work sporadically (every round, 1 in 2 chance they will do anything) and have 1 in 6 chance of breaking down.

(3) Machines absolutely do not work. If enough pressure is applied they will break, possibly injuring those nearby.

Power Creation Rules (continued)

Electronics: The more complex electronics are, the more easily they are disrupted by this effect.

(1) Computers crash, appliances work in fits, lights sputter.

(2) Appliances short out or do nothing, lights work sporadically.

(3) No electrical device operates. Many short out, melt or burst into flames.

Enhance

This power enhances the abilities of humans and, when appropriate, animals.

Physical: Note that, unless the PC stays perfectly still, increased strength will cause damage via wear and tear on muscles, joints, bones and shearing off of skin.

(1) +7 SPD, STH and END, ½ BLD and ½ BDY damage per day.

(2) +20 SPD, STH and END, ½ BLD and ½ BDY damage per hour.

(3) +50 SPD, STH and END, ½ BLD and ½ BDY damage per minute.

Mental: The speed and energy available to the neurons in the brain increases, but there is a corresponding increased tendency to insanity.

(1) +4 INL and AWR, Insomnia (10), Delusions (10).

(2) +7 INL and AWR, Insomnia (20), Delusions (20).

(3) +12 INL and AWR, Insomnia (30), Delusions (30).

Health: The oxygen and chemical energy available to cells increases, but the PC gains a corresponding increased need for food and oxygen.

(1) +5 END, +1 BLD, BDY and INCY. Double food need, oxygen deprivation does double damage.

(2) +10 END, +3 BLD, BDY and INCY. 4x food need, Oxygen Deprivation does 4x damage.

(3) +20 END, +6 BLD, BDY and INCY. 8x food need, those effected must breathe pure oxygen to survive.

Occult Ability (Paranormal)

(1) +7 to all supernatural skill rolls. Any save vs. emotion that is failed by 20+ will shatter reality (see p.236).

(2) +15 to all supernatural skill rolls. Any save vs. emotion that is failed by 10+ will shatter reality.

(3) +30 to supernatural skill rolls. And any failed save vs. emotion will shatter reality.

Attractiveness: People effected by this effect are perceived as more sexually appealing. The effect doesn't change a person's signifying characteristics enough to disguise the person.

(1) +7 to seduction rolls

(2) +15 to seduction rolls

(3) +30 to seduction rolls

Scariness: People effected by this effect are perceived as more frightening. The effect doesn't change a person's signifying characteristics enough to disguise the person.

(1) +7 to rolls to intimidate

(2) +15 to rolls to intimidate

(3) +30 to rolls to intimidate

Damage Resistance: Effected people's tissues become harder to pierce, bruise, break or rupture. At the same time, there is an accompanying loss of the flexibility and permeability, interfering with movement and metabolism. Treat as armor with AR 20 (see p.131).

(1) PR 4 (all damage types), -4 AGY, -2 END

(2) PR 10 (all damage types), -10 AGY, -5 END

(3) PR 20 (all damage types), -20 AGY, -10 END

Nullify

This power reduces or completely cancels out a certain type of energy.

Light

(1) Everything becomes very dim, everyone is at a -7 penalty to actions and reactions.

(2) There is near total darkness (-15 to all actions and reactions) and lights that would otherwise be very bright can only barely be seen.

(3) There is no light of any kind (-15 to actions and reactions).

Heat

(1) Most fires go out (things like gasoline and napalm burn, although weakly), the temperature drops about 50 degrees and every effected person must make a legendary save vs. hypothermia.

(2) Fires cannot burn, water freezes, humans are killed.

(3) The temperature in the effect range drops to absolute zero. All liquids and gasses condense into solids. Solid objects become brittle and may crumble under their own weight. Living things are killed instantly.

Gravity

(1) The weight of things is cut in half, people have trouble walking (-5 SPD) and falling does ¼ normal damage.

(2) Things weigh one-hundredth their normal weight, people can jump hundreds of feet and falling does no damage. Everyone must make a moderate (20) save vs. vomiting.

(3) There is no gravity. Objects with momentum will keep moving until something stop them. A breeze will fill the air with dirt or dust. Everyone must make a moderate (20) save vs. vomiting.

Momentum

(1) The SPD of vehicles and people is cut in half, weapon or hand-to-hand strikes do ½ normal damage.

(2) Everything happens in slow-motion. People can move at max. 1 SPD, but to do so is exhausting (uses 1 END per round). Even the blood in people's veins circulates slowly (halve END). The only way to hurt someone is to use leverage to slowly apply increasing pressure.

Power Creation Example: Darkness Gas

Say you want a character to have a high tech device that can be strapped to one's back and releases a non-toxic gas that blocks out light, creating a haze of darkness.

Step one, we'd choose a high-tech backpack as the power source. For step two, we'd choose the power range as area (the gas spreads and engulfs a large area). For step three, we'd choose Nullify: Light. 2 levels should be enough. Then for limitations, we'd choose Needs Fuel (1) (there would be tanks of the gas). We'd also choose Bulky (1) (because the pack is a little bit heavy). We'd also choose Slow (1) (because it would take a while for the gas to spread through the area) and Blockable (1) (the gas couldn't get inside a sealed chamber).

Power Creation Rules (continued)

(3) Nothing physical can happen. People's hearts stop beating, neurons stop firing. Even photons do not move: anyone who views the effect area from outside will see only blackness. After the effect is over, the photons from outside that have built up along the edges will be released, causing a flash of light. The intensity of this flash is based on how long the effect was in place: a stunning flash with a minute's worth of photons, semi-permanent damage from an hour's worth, bright enough to cause things to burst into flames from a day's worth.

Sound

(1) Even loud noises become very faint. People are at -20 to all hearing based AWR rolls.

(2) Someone shouting in your ear is just barely audible.

(3) No sound is possible.

Friction

(1) Every surface becomes very slippery. Anyone attempting to walk must make moderate (20) saves vs. loss of balance. -40 to Climbing rolls.

(2) People cannot walk. Moderate (20) difficulty to stay standing.

(3) There is no friction. Things in motion will stay in motion until blocked. The only way to hold something is to completely envelop it. It takes moderate AGY and STH rolls to do anything but lie on the ground.

Psych Effect

The power has the effect of making everyone within range experience one pre-determined thought, emotion or perception. Everyone experiences the effect, but each person effected can make a save to keep from being disrupted or incapacitated by the experience. Anyone expecting the effect gets +10. Anyone who has had a chance to practice resisting the effect gets an additional +10. In addition, if the thought, emotion or perception is jarringly different from what the victim is expecting, the victim must make a moderate or hard save vs. psychological shock (see p.129).

(1) 20 difficulty save

(2) 30 difficulty save

(3) 40 difficulty save

***Thought*:** Victims must make a save vs. delusion to avoid believing the thought. Failure by 10+ means the victim forgets where he or she is and what he or she is doing and takes a few seconds to become reoriented.

Emotion: Victims must make a save vs. emotion to avoid acting on the emotion. Failure by 10+ means the victim is paralyzed with emotion.

Perceptions: Victims must make a save vs. hallucination to know that the smell, taste, touch, sight or sound is not real. A failure by 10+ means that real sensations in that sensory modality are blocked (e.g. the sound of a clock ticking blocks out the voices of friends shouting to run).

Reveal

This power has the effect of making things visible (or audible, feelable, tasteable, smellable) which might not normally be. Choose which sensory modality is revealed. Choose power range twice: once for the range of what gets revealed, once for the range of who it is revealed to. For example: you might have a cage that reveals any invisible object within (enclosed) to anyone within range of the cage (area). Or you could have a rod that makes anything touched by it (touch) appear magnified to anyone holding the other end (touch).

Far Things: The power makes far things look, sound, smell, feel or taste as if they were close.

(1) The effect is up to 100 feet (300 m.).

(2) The effect is up to 5 miles (8 km.).

(3) The effect is up to 1,000 miles (3,000 m.).

Small Things: Small things are perceived as if they were bigger.

(1) The effect is up to 10x (ten times bigger).

(2) The effect is 500x.

(3) The effect is 300,000x (equivalent to an electron microscope).

Hidden Things: Things are revealed that would otherwise not be perceivable because they are behind some barrier or cover.

(1) The effect works through thin partial cover (like blankets).

(2) The effect works through normal walls.

(3) The effect works through anything.

Weak Things: Weak sensations are made stronger: a dimly lit scene becomes brightly lit, quiet sounds become loud, a faint smell becomes strong, etc. Any sensation that is strong enough to be easily perceived becomes painfully strong.

(1) Gives +20 to AWR rolls to sense the faint sensation.

(2) Gives +40.

(3) Gives +100.

Invisible Things: (supernatural) The effect reveals sensations from the invisible world.

(1) Dim/Transparent/Faint (-7 to hit).

(2) Solid.

Other Worlds: (supernatural) The effect reveals things that would not be perceivable because they are in another plane of existence.

(1) Dim/Transparent/Faint.

(2) Solid.

Transport

Anything effected by this power is moved as follows:

(1) 5 SPD or 50 ft. (15 m.)

(2) 20 SPD or 1 mile. (1.5 m)

(3) 100 SPD or 30 miles. (50 km.)

Slide: The effected people and/or things travel along the ground. If not supported by something like wheels the people effected by this power will take skidding damage (1 bladed and 1 blunt per 20 SPD).

Fly: The effected things are moved through the air.

Throw: Effected things and/or people are tossed, and when they hit an object they will take falling damage (2 blunt/10 ft. or 3m.).

Teleport: (supernatural) Effected things and/or people disappear from one location and reappear in another with a loud pop. Teleporting one solid object into another will destroy both. At 4 levels the effect Teleports things to other planes of existence.

Portal: (supernatural) A portal is created that leads to another place. The portal works in both directions. At 4 levels of effect the portal can lead to other planes of existence.

Warp

This effect changes the physical properties of matter (including people). The matter goes back to its normal state when the power stops working (except for the shape subtype, which is permanent). For some subtypes you will have to decide on the direction of the effect. E.g. when choosing Warp: Hardness, decide whether the power makes things more hard or less hard.

Stickiness (Increase)

(1) People make smacking sounds when walking on effected surfaces and get +7 to climbing rolls.

(2) It takes an easy (10) STH feat to pull something from an effected surface. -15 SPD moving over effected surfaces. Climbing rolls are at +20.

(3) Anything touching an effected item cannot be removed without destroying one or both items.

Flexibility (Increase or Decrease)

(1) Clothes become stiff, flesh is tough (-5 AGY, 1 PR blunt and bladed), paper is brittle -or- shelves sag, armor is too flexible (-1 PR), locked doors can be yanked open.

(2) Water feels like honey, flesh cracks when people move too fast, clothes shatter -or- bones bend like cartilage, metal rebar can be twisted into loops, armor has no blunt PR and ½ normal bladed PR.

Power Creation Rules (continued)

(3) Liquids freeze solid, air feels like honey, people's lungs and hearts shatter -or- anything solid collapses into a gelatinous mass, people suffocate because their diaphragms aren't attached to a solid ribcage.

Durability (Increase or Decrease)

(1) Double the PR of armor, the STH feat difficulty to break something and the BLD and BDY of living beings -or- halve the PR of armor, the STH feat difficulty to break something and the BLD and BDY of living beings

(2) The surface tension of water makes it act like a water-balloon. It take hard STH rolls to rip apart a piece of paper, flesh and armor seems nearly impenetrable, and it becomes hard to breathe (halve END) -or- anything bearing weight falls apart, bones snap when people try to run, metal bars can be broken with bare hands, armor is useless and ½ point of blunt or bladed damage is enough to kill someone.

(3) Effected objects become unbreakable; even air cannot be separated and living beings asphyxiate -or- effected objects burst or crumble into dust under their own weight.

Shape: The power changes the shape of objects by twisting, curving, bending, flattening, corrugating, pinching or rippling them. The change in shape may cripple humans or make them unable to take in air. Curving is used in the following examples:

(1) Humans find their limbs nearly unusable. Example: Effects objects will bow.

(2) Humans will be unable to move, barely able to breathe. Example: Straight objects will curve into a circle.

(3) Humans will be unable to breathe. Example: Straight objects will curve into spirals.

Size: (Supernatural) (Increase or Decrease) The size of objects changes, as does weight and mechanical strength. Note that when living beings change size their metabolisms become unable to react with the molecules in air and food, meaning they will die of oxygen deprivation unless they have an oxygen supply that has also changed size. Also, the human body works poorly at an altered scale because the environment effects the body disproportionately at different scales: light works differently in a smaller or bigger pupil, the width of the body effects the body's ability to retain or radiate heat, pumping blood to very high altitudes is disproportionately difficult, etc.

(1) Increase size and STH by 25%., +1 BLD and +1 BDY -or- decrease size and STH by 25%, -1 BLD and -1 BDY.

(2) Double size of things. To humans: 4x BLD, 4x BDY, -10 vs. heat exhaustion, -7 to all actions and reactions, -15 to vision based AWR rolls, -10 END, Unconsciousness (20) when standing, cannot hear high pitched noises, can hear ultra-low frequency noises. -or- Halve the size of things. To humans: BDY/4, BDY/4, -10 to hypothermia , -7 to all actions/reactions and -15 to vision based AWR rolls, cannot hear low pitched noises, can hear ultrahigh frequency noises.

(3) Things grow by a factor of 20. To humans: 50 BLD and 50 BDY, -30 vs. heat exhaustion, practically blind (-15 to actions and reactions), cannot hear audible sounds, Cardiac Arrest (20 if lying down, 40 if standing) -or- things shrink by a factor of 20. To humans: 1 BLD, 0 BDY, 0 INCY, -30 vs. hypothermia, practically blind (-15 to actions and reactions), cannot hear audible sounds, must make AGY feats to walk.

Tangibility: (Supernatural) (Increase or Decrease) This power either makes denizens of the invisible world able to touch and be touched -or- things and people in this world can be made part of the intangible world. A biological entity made intangible cannot breathe.

(1) Things sputter in and out of tangibility. Any strike has a 1 in 2 chance of hitting an effected person or object.

(2) The effect is constant and complete.

Invisibility: (Supernatural) (Increase or Decrease) This power makes a denizen of the invisible world visible to us, or makes a denizen of our world invisible to our eyes yet able to see and be seen by denizens of the invisible. A person made invisible can no longer see the visible world.

(1) The effect is partial: the thing is transparent to denizens of either world (-7 to be hit).

(2) The effect is complete (-15 to be hit).

Weight: (Increase) The weight (not mass or size) of objects is increased (to decrease weight, see Nullify: Gravity).

(1) Weight is doubled. Humans must make a hard STH roll to stand.

(2) Weight is increased by a factor of 10. Humans cannot stand and must make a hard (30) save vs. Cardiac Arrest.

(3) Objects are liquefied under their own weight and sink into deep pits in the ground.

Power Creation Example: Shooting Out Nails

We want a PC who is a shattered person to be able to shoot nails out of himself and impale people with them.

First, we'll choose the power source as the person's body. Range will be area (the nails will be ranged weapons).

Our first effect will be Destroy: Cut. 2 levels will do 5 BLD damage to anything in the range.

Next we would need Create: Worthless Substances. 1 level would create a cup of nails, which should be enough.

Next, we need controls. We don't want the PC shooting out nails every minute of every day, so we will choose On/Off Switch (1). We also want the nails to only shoot out in one direction (e.g. from the PC's back) so we'll choose Aimable (1), allowing the PC to aim a 180° arc of damage.

For Limitations, we would choose Blockable (1), because hiding behind something heavy would protect a target. We'll also choose Damages User, since we envision the nails doing damage to the PC as they rip through the skin. 2 levels will do 1 bladed damage to the PC. We'll also choose Painful (2) for the same reason. We'll also choose Tiring (1), the power tires the PC, and Noisy (1), the power makes some strange noise while operating.

The power would be annotated as follows: Skin of Back; Area; Destroy: Cut (2), Create: Worthless Objects (1), Controls: On/Off Switch (1), Controls: Aimable (1); Blockable (1), Damages User (2), Painful (2), Tiring (1), Noisy (1).

Power Creation Rules (continued)

Limitations

Blockable (1)- Use only with Area or Enveloped. Any person or object that is completely sealed off (e.g. in a space suit) is not effected.

Blockable (2)- Any person or object which is completely blocked from view (e.g. inside a house or hiding under a pile of blankets) is not effected.

Blockable (3)- Any person or object which is mostly protected (e.g. wearing jeans, gloves and a hooded jacket with the hood up) is not effected.

Bulky (1)- The item weights about 75 lbs. (34 kg).

Bulky (2)- The item weights about 250 lbs. (113 kg).

Bulky (3)- The item weights about 2000 lbs. (900 kg).

Damages User (1)- User takes ¼ pt. bladed damage per round while power is in effect.

Damages User (2)- User takes 1 blunt or 1 bladed damage (choose one) per round while power is in effect.

Damages User (3)- User takes 1d6 blunt or bladed damage (choose one) per round while power is in effect.

Drug Side Effects (1)- The power is based on the consumption of a drug. Choose 3 Drug/Infection Side Effects (see sidebar). The power takes full effect within 5 minutes after the drug is injected or within 2 rounds after it is ingested and only lasts about 1 hour. The drug may interact with other drugs.

Drug Side Effects (2)- Choose 6 Drug/Infection Side Effects.

Drug Side Effects (3)- Choose 10 Drug/Infection Side Effects.

Environmentally Sensitive (1)- The power source will cease functioning if it gets very cold, very wet or is shaken violently (a portable CD player would have this level of this limitation).

Environmentally Sensitive (2)- The power source must be kept within a ~30° F (~15° C) temperature range and cannot be exposed to excess humidity or vibration.

Environmentally Sensitive (3)- The power source must be kept within a few degrees of a predetermined temperature (either almost freezing or 110° F / 43° C), must be kept completely free from humidity and dust and must not be allowed to vibrate at all.

Fragile (1)- If the source of the power takes 3+ blunt or bladed damage it will stop working permanently.

Drug/Infection Side Effects

Anemia (-2 BLD)

Blotchy Skin (-10 to seduction rolls)

Blurred Vision (-10 to vision based AWR rolls)

Clumsiness (-4 AGY)

Confusion (-4 INL)

Cough (-10 to prowling rolls)

Delusions (occasional 20 difficulty saves)

Dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance)

Drowsiness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness)

Dysphoria (20 difficulty save to do any but life or death actions)

Euphoria (20 difficulty save to do any but life or death actions)

Fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion)

Hallucinations (occasional 20 difficulty saves)

Insomnia (30 difficulty save or will suffer from 1 day's sleep deprivation damage)

Light Sensitivity (-7 to all actions and reactions in bright light)

Narrowing of Attention (-7 to AWR rolls)

Nausea (10 difficulty save vs. vomiting every 5 minutes)

Poor Memory (-10 to memory based AWR rolls, 20 difficulty saves vs. anterograde, retrograde and sudden amnesia)

Tinnitus (-10 to hearing based AWR rolls)

Tiredness (-8 END)

Weak Immune System (-10 to saves vs. disease contraction and progression)

Weakness (-2 STH, -2 SPD)

Fragile (2)- If the source of the power takes as much as ½ point blunt or bladed damage it will stop working permanently.

Fragile (3)- The source of the power is as fragile as a thin piece of glass. If it is dropped, handled roughly or takes any damage it will break.

Heat (1)- While active the power source creates large amounts of heat energy. If it is an enclosed area with little or no ventilation the temperature will grow steadily hotter, requiring increasingly difficult saves vs. heat exhaustion. The object is hot to the touch and anyone wearing it or holding it will have to make a moderate (20) difficulty save vs. heat exhaustion within 5 minutes.

Heat (2)- The object does 1 burn damage to anything it touches and any one spending time within 5 ft. (2 m.) of it must make a moderate (20) save vs. heat exhaustion.

Heat (3)- The object does 4 burn damage to anything it touches, causing flammable objects to burst into flames. Any one spending time within 20 ft. (6 m.) of it must make a hard (30) save vs. heat exhaustion.

Infection Side Effects (1)- Choose this limitation if the source of the power is a viral, bacterial or parasitic infection. Choose 3 Drug/Infection Side Effects (see sidebar). The infection can be cured if the PC is given the right antibiotics, antivirals or antiparasitics. It can be spread if infected tissues or fluids find their way into another person's bloodstream (10 difficulty save vs. disease contraction with unprotected sex or sharing needles).

Infection Side Effects (2)- Choose 6 Drug/Infection Side Effects.

Infection Side Effects (3)- Choose 10 Drug/Infection Side Effects.

Using Limitations as On/Off Switches

Some limitations can be used in place of the On/Off Switch control. If a power has the Power Required limitation, for instance, the PC can simply not plug it in until it is ready to be used. Or, if a power has Blockable (2) the PC can keep it wrapped up in something until it is ready to be used. Yet in any case, using a Limitation as an on/off switch will always require the PC do some additional action and thus will take longer.

Power Creation Rules (continued)

Limited Lifespan (1)- Every month there is a 1 in 20 chance the power will stop working permanently.

Limited Lifespan (2)- Every month there is a 1 in 6 chance the power will stop working permanently.

Limited Lifespan (3)- Every week there is a 1 in 6 chance the power will stop working permanently.

Needs Fuel (1)- The object requires some substance to run that can be easily acquired (e.g. helium, hard water, gasoline). One 5 lb. (2 kg) tank can supply power for about 5 minutes.

Needs Fuel (2)- The object requires expensive components (e.g. gold powder) such that is costs about $100/minute to use the power -or- the components must be custom made in a lab (each hour of work can make 1 minute worth of components).

Needs Fuel (3)- The power requires a component that is very hard to obtain, e.g. plutonium, moon rocks.

Noisy (1)- While operating the power makes a loud noise or emits a bright light that can be seen or heard hundreds of feet away.

Noisy (2)- Can be seen or heard from miles away.

Noisy (3)- Can be seen or heard hundreds of miles away. Will permanently blind or deafen anyone within 100 ft. (30 m.).

Painful (1)- User must make a moderate (20) save vs. distracting pain while using the power.

Painful (2)- User must make a hard (30) save vs. distracting pain while using the power.

Painful (3)- User must make a legendary (40) save vs. distracting pain while using the power.

Polluting (1)- The power source releases foul, noxious smelling gasses when the power is active. The effect is magnified up to 10 times if the power is operating in an enclosed space with little or no ventilation. Within 15 ft. (5 m.) the gasses cause 10 difficulty pain when it gets in the eyes and 3 damage to END per round when inhaled.

Polluting (2)- Within 30 ft. (10 m.) it causes 30 difficulty pain and 7 damage to END per round. Within 10 minutes exposed skin develops painful blisters (hard save vs. distracting pain).

Power Required (1)- The power source is run by bulky (4 lb. or 2 kg) batteries which provide for 20 minutes of activity each.

Power Required (2)- The power source must be plugged into the wall or a portable electric generator in order to operate.

Power Required (3)- The power source must be plugged into a special high-capacity power line with a transformer in order to operate.

Random Activation (1)- Every day the power has a 1 in 6 chance of activating.

Random Activation (2)- Every hour the power has a 1 in 6 chance of activating.

Random Activation (3)- Every round the power has a 1 in 6 chance of activating.

Slow (1)- The power takes 5 combat rounds to have full effect on the people and things it effects.

Slow (2)- The power takes 1 hour to have full effect.

Slow (3)- The power takes 24 hours to have full effect.

Slow Fade (1)- After the power stops effecting an object or person, the effect itself continues for 1d20 hours.

Tiring (1)- To make the power work takes physical exertion on the part of the PC. Uses 1 END per round of use.

Tiring (2)- Uses 5 END/round.

Tiring (3)- Uses 20 END/round.

Ungainly (1)- The nature of the power source is such that while in it or carrying it the PC has trouble manipulating the real world. For instance, it might be a very bulky piece of armor. Gives -4 AGY, -7 to sight and sound AWR rolls, -10 to AGY rolls involving fine manipulation.

Ungainly (2)- Gives -8 AGY, -4 SPD, -15 to sight and sound AWR rolls, -20 to AGY rolls involving fine manipulation, -4 to saves vs. loss of balance.

Ungainly (3)- Gives -15 AGY, -10 SPD, -20 to sight and sound AWR rolls, -40 to AGY rolls involving fine manipulation, -10 to saves vs. loss of balance.

Unhideable (1)- The source of the power is too big to be hidden in a pocket or under clothes and too odd looking to be carried around without attracting attention.

Unhideable (2)- In addition to being odd looking and too large to be easily concealed, the source of the power constantly emits a sound, light or smell that makes it easy to notice and find even from a distance.

Unhideable (3)- A long trail of clearly non-normal effects leads directly to the current location of the source of the power.

Power Creation Example: H-Tech Portal

An H-Tech machine (p.235) which opens a portal to another realm might be constructed as follows:

To start, we'd want Transport: Portal (4). We could buy a precision control if we want the users to be able to control what realm the portal goes to, but that's not fun so we'll leave it out. We could also buy an on/off switch, but it's not really necessary because we're going to get the Power Required limitation. So in other words, the machine will work whenever it's plugged in.

Finally, for limitations, we'll choose Bulky (3) (it's a huge mass of machinery), Fragile (1) (someone with a baseball bat could make the machine stop working), Heat (2) (it produces a lot of heat), Noisy (1) (it makes a loud hum), Power Required (3) (it needs to be plugged into a power line), Slow (2) (it takes an hour to warm up), Slow Fade (1) (the portal stays open a while even after the machine is turned off).

Power Creation Rules (continued)

Random Power Creation Table

Power Range
01-60: Area
61-80: Enclosed
81-00: Touch

Effect
01-01: Controls: On/Off Switch
02-02: Controls: Aimable
03-03: Controls: Intensity Control
04-04: Controls: Precision
05-05: Controls: Exempt
06-06: Controls: Target Type
07-09: Create: Worthless Substances
10-11: Create: Creatures
12-12: Create: Valuable Substances
13-14: Create: Dangerous Substances
15-16: Destroy: Burn/Melt
17-18: Destroy: Consume
19-20: Destroy: Crush
21-21: Destroy: Cut
22-22: Destroy: Freeze
23-24: Destroy: Electrify
25-26: Destroy: Radiate
27-27: Destroy: Poison
28-29: Destroy: Shake
30-31: Destroy: Smother
32-33: Disrupt: Sensory Nervous Systems
34-35: Disrupt: Motor Nervous Systems
36-37: Disrupt: Immune Systems
38-39: Disrupt: Metabolic Systems
40-41: Disrupt: Mechanical Systems
42-43: Disrupt: Electronics
44-44: Enhance: Physical
45-45: Enhance: Mental
46-46: Enhance: Health
47-47: Enhance: Occult Ability
48-48: Enhance: Attractiveness
49-49: Enhance: Scariness
50-50: Enhance: Damage Resistance
51-52: Nullify: Light
53-54: Nullify: Heat
55-56: Nullify: Gravity
57-58: Nullify: Momentum
59-60: Nullify: Sound
61-62: Nullify: Friction
63-64: Psych Effect: Thought
65-66: Psych Effect: Emotion
67-68: Psych Effect: Perceptions
69-69: Reveal: Far Things
70-70: Reveal: Small Things
71-71: Reveal: Hidden Things
72-72: Reveal: Weak Things
73-74: Reveal: Invisible Things
75-76: Reveal: Other Worlds
77-78: Transport: Slide
79-80: Transport: Fly
81-82: Transport: Throw
83-84: Transport: Teleport
85-86: Transport: Portal
87-88: Warp: Stickiness
89-90: Warp: Flexibility
91-92: Warp: Durability
93-94: Warp: Shape
95-95: Warp: Size
96-97: Warp: Tangibility
98-99: Warp: Invisibility
00-00: Warp: Weight

Effect Level
01-20: 1 levels
21-80: 2 levels
81-00: 3 levels

Limitations
01-02: Blockable (1)
03-04: Blockable (2)
05-05: Blockable (3)
06-07: Bulky (1)
08-09: Bulky (2)
10-10: Bulky (3)
11-12: Damages User (1)
13-14: Damages User (2)
15-15: Damages User (3)
16-17: Drug Side Effects (1)
18-19: Drug Side Effects (2)
20-20: Drug Side Effects (3)
21-22: Environmentally Sensitive (1)
23-24: Environmentally Sensitive (2)
25-25: Environmentally Sensitive (3)
26-27: Fragile (1)
28-29: Fragile (2)
30-30: Fragile (3)
31-32: Heat (1)
33-34: Heat (2)
35-35: Heat (3)
36-37: Infection Side Effects (1)
38-38: Infection Side Effects (2)
39-39: Infection Side Effects (3)
40-41: Limited Lifespan (1)
42-43: Limited Lifespan (2)
44-44: Limited Lifespan (3)
45-46: Needs Fuel (1)
47-48: Needs Fuel (2)
49-49: Needs Fuel (3)
50-51: Noisy (1)
52-53: Noisy (2)
54-54: Noisy (3)
55-56: Painful (1)
57-58: Painful (2)
59-59: Painful (3)
60-61: Polluting (1)
62-63: Polluting (2)
64-65: Power Required (1)
66-67: Power Required (2)
68-69: Power Required (3)
70-71: Random Activation (1)
72-73: Random Activation (2)
74-75: Random Activation (3)
76-77: Slow (1)
78-79: Slow (2)
80-81: Slow (3)
82-83: Slow Fade (1)
84-85: Tiring (1)
86-87: Tiring (2)
88-89: Tiring (3)
90-91: Ungainly (1)
92-93: Ungainly (2)
94-95: Ungainly (3)
96-96: Unhideable (1)
97-98: Unhideable (2)
99-00: Unhideable (3)

Power Notation

Pre-written powers can be written as follows:

Power Source; Power Range; Effect 1: Subtype (level), Effect 2: Subtype (level), etc.; Limitation 1 (level), Limitation 2 (level).

Example: Severed Hand; Area; Nullify: Sound (2), Transport: Thrown (1); Blockable (1), Noisy (2), Slow (1).

Sample Character Creation – Power Creation Rules

Our sample character, Maggie Hernandez, is going to be a Hero with the Supernatural Object option. We are told to create a power with 4 levels of Effect and 4 levels of Limitations with the power source as an everyday object.

First off, we decide that the power source is going to be an old denim jacket she found.

Next we decide the range. If it's 'enclosed', then the power would effect her. If it's touch then it would effect her and anyone who touches her jacket. We decide on area: the jacket radiates its effect around it at a range of 20 ft. per effect level, so 80 ft.

Next we decide what powers the jacket has. Since she's going to be wearing the jacket we don't want it doing its thing all the time, so our first power level is going to be a Control. We'll purchase On/Off Switch (costing 1 effect level), meaning there's something Maggie can do to instantly turn the power on or off. We decide that the jacket activates if she zips it up.

Area broadcasts the power in all directions, but we don't want our effect to effect her, so we'll spend another level in Control: Aimable and make it so that the power only broadcasts out from the jacket, anyone inside is safe.

We have two levels left to spend on what the Jacket actually does. We don't want it to just do damage because she might kill PCs or innocent bystanders. We choose Nullify: Momentum (1) and Warp: Weight (1). Everyone around Maggie will grow extremely heavy and will only be able to move slowly. This should give her a big bonus in taking out any physical opponent while not killing her friends.

Next we have to choose 4 levels of limitations. We choose Blockable (2) (people can avoid the effect of the jacket by hiding behind something). We also choose Heat (1), the jacket becomes very hot while operating, and Noisy (1), we'll say that the jacket makes a warbling-whining noise while operating.

Finally we'll notate the power on the character sheet as Denim Jacket; Area; Control: On-Off Switch (1), Control: Aimable (1), Nullify: Momentum (1), Warp: Weight (1); Blockable (2), Noisy (1), Heat (1).

Alleys

Lost

In Brief- Can enter and bring others to, often while drunk, a state where one can go anywhere in the world just by turning a corner.

Other Names- Fugues, Barhoppers, Metropolitans, Wanderers, Hyperspacers.

The Chosen- Most always wanted to be explorers or world travelers but never had the time or money. Most were heavy drinkers and/or regular drug users at the time they became Lost. Most have always had a poor sense of direction and were unfamiliar with the city they were in when they became Lost. A small but significant percentage have dabbled in surrealist techniques like automatic writing or psychogeography. Nearly half were in the middle of some personal crisis (a divorce, death in the family, loss of a job, etc.) when the powers first manifested.

Most importantly, those Lost who would go on to develop their powers are those who like to explore unfamiliar places and don't mind being lost.

Initiation- For most Lost, the first time they realized something was weird was when they walked into an all-night convenience store to ask for directions. It turned out they were more than a dozen miles from where they had started, although they seemed to have been walking for less than an hour. Most had been trying to walk home from a bar after closing. Many initiates assumed they had blacked-out and forgotten a ride on a bus or in a taxi.

Then came more nights and more winding up in different places. A different city, then a different state, then halfway across the country. There may have been embarrassing calls to work: "Sorry, I won't be able to make it in today. I'm in New York and I have to take a bus back." All of these strange events seemed to happen when the initiates didn't know or didn't care where they were. These events were frightening but also thrilling. While many others would have gotten a street map or stopped walking around the streets at night, those who would become true Lost were driven to keep exploring this unexplainable phenomenon.

Most Lost eventually walked into a bar, ordered a drink and asked the bartender the address. When the bartender turned away someone else at the bar turned and said "hey pal, you look lost." This is how most initiates met their first other member of the Lost. Over drinks the older Lost explained that certain people have the ability to travel impossible distances, but only when lost. The initiates were told that it's possible to control where one ends up. They were told that the Lost meet in bars and recognize each other by the phase "hey pal, you look lost."



As time went on the new Lost met more of the Lost and heard more stories. They heard about Lost who could travel around the world in a few minutes, who could walk into bank vaults and help themselves to cash, who could reach in to their pockets and pull out whatever they wanted, and even ones who wandered into strange places that weren't on any map.

At adventure one, the Lost has been experimenting with his or her powers for months and is starting to get a handle on what he or she can and can't do. The Lost has wandered through a lot of interesting places and has even passed very briefly through a place that seemed unearthly: an eerie deserted city, a giant concrete space of unknown purpose, a space filled with endless bizarre machinery, a dark canyon filled with naked marching people, a place with a featureless black floor and sky, or a place that seemed like something from a children's book.

Typical Evening- For most of the Lost, the evening starts with a trip to a bar to have a few drinks. Then they typically leave the bar and start walking. Their night takes them to exotic places and they enjoy the ambience of every new place. They visit trendy downtowns buzzing with nightlife, abandoned industrial zones, rich residential areas, seedy red-light districts, brand new suburbs, etc. They stop at a dozen different bars of every variety, looking to meet up with Lost and trade tales of adventure.

When the Lost learn they can take others with them, many assemble groups of friends to accompany them. Their companions help the Lost investigate and enjoy the places they end up, but they also help ease the Lost's fear of ending up in some unearthly place and coming across some entity not of this world.

What You Know

-There are a small population of people around the world who can travel long distances while lost.

-With practice they can bring others with them.

-Intoxicants make it easier to become lost, but are not necessary.

-With practice the power can be developed and controlled.

-It is possible to travel to places that don't exist on any map.

-According to some accounts, there are dangerous non-human creatures in these strange places.

-Lost disappear forever when they try to go to the authorities or go public with their powers.

Going Deeper- The Lost practice their powers every night. They gain the most knowledge when they let go entirely and just go wherever fate takes them. It is at these times that they may travel to places that don't exist in this world and they may discover truths that normal humans can't.

Dark Side- Many Lost are alcoholics who use alcohol to escape their responsibilities in life. They may have debts mounting, bosses about to fire them, children they never see, legal problems they need to clear up, etc. Some Lost make money by smuggling drugs between countries and, in doing so, they involve themselves with dangerous and brutal criminals.

Supernatural Skills- The PC starts with Get Lost (1 level) free.

The PC can purchase the following skills at 10 skill points per level:
Get Lost (AWR)
Homing (WIL)
Grab Bag (WIL)

The PC can purchase the following skills at 20 skill points per level:
Area Knowledge: Supernatural (INL)
Automatic Writing (AWR)
Dreaming (WIL)

Bonus Characteristics

Weird Thing You Found (Optional Advantage, Costs 4 BP)- In one of the PC's travels, when he or she was in a very odd place, the PC picked up a weird little trinket. Afterwards, the PC discovered that the trinket warps reality around it. Create a power (using power rules on p.30) with 1 level of Effect (no Enhance) and 2 levels of Limitations.

Expensive Thing You Found (Optional Advantage, Costs 1 BP)- In one of his or her journeys, the PC chanced upon some item that was completely unguarded and looked like it was worth money. The PC grabbed it and walked away. Now the PC has some item that isn't especially useful to him or her (e.g. a box of computer chips, a painting, some gaudy gold jewelry) but that is worth about $5,000 if the PC can find a safe way to sell it.

Recommended Day Job- Boring Office Job, Career Criminal, Creative, Welfare.

Recommended Skills- Alarm Systems, Drug Resistance, Language, Pistol, Prowling, Running.

Recommended Equipment- Backpack, Bolt Cutters, Cellphone (Basic), Disposable Camera, Hip Flask, Winter Coat.

Recommended Reading- Surrealism (p.156).

Alleys

Random Get Lost Results

01-50: Different block (same neighborhood)

51-75: Different neighborhood (same city)

76-92: Different city (same nation)

93-98: Different nation

99-00: Different world (see p.249)

Random Urban Neighborhood Table

00-01: Beach (Surfers, partiers, dog-walkers, restaurants, expensive homes.)

02-04: Campus (Grass, pathways, big school buildings, dorms, students on bicycles.)

05-10: Commercial Park (Large complexes of one-or-two story office buildings and doctor's offices, used car dealerships, virtually abandoned at night.)

11-13: Docks (Docked ships, warehouses, bars, industrial lots running 24/7.)

14-20: Downtown Commercial (Big office buildings, parking structures, cheap lunch places.)

21-25: Ethnic Enclave (Non-English signs, old apartment buildings, import grocery stores, tiny restaurants.)

26-32: Ghetto (Blocks of cheap apartments, drug dealers on the corners, overpriced grocery stores.)

33-37: Historical Residential (Old, nice looking houses, trees, parks.)

38-43: Industrial: Active (Railyards, gated industrial complexes, warehouses.)

44-48: Industrial: Run Down (Abandoned factories, unused railyards, homeless camps.)

49-56: Main Drag (Gas stations, fast food, liquor stores, motels, heavy traffic at all hours.)

57-59: Mansions (Huge lots, perfectly landscaped lawns, wrought iron fences, regular drive-bys by private security.)

60-64: Park/Graveyard (Grass, trees, people walking dogs.)

65-69: Projects (Row after row of identical, cheaply built apartment buildings with an occasional community center.)

70-75: Shopping District (Strip malls, chain restaurants, huge parking lots.)

76-80: Skid-Row (Liquor stores, cheap hotels, shelters, vacant lots, homeless people sleeping on the sidewalks.)

81-89: Suburb (Nearly identical, brand new middle-class houses with perfect lawns and SUVs in the driveways.)

90-94: Touristy (Antique and novelty shops, overpriced cafes, historical landmarks, small museums and parks.)

95-99: Trendy Downtown (Night clubs, coffee shops, bars, trendy clothing stores.)

Random Indoor Location Table

001-004: Abandoned Home
005-008: Abandoned Industrial Building
009-012: Abandoned Office Building
013-013: Aircraft Hanger
014-014: Airplane Interior
015-015: Airport Concourse
016-016: Aquarium/Zoo
017-020: Arcade
021-021: Armory
022-023: Art Gallery
024-024: Auditorium
025-025: Bank Lobby
026-026: Bank Vault
027-034: Bar
035-038: Boardroom
039-043: Boat Interior
044-043: Bomb Shelter
044-047: Bowling Alley
048-051: Bus Station
052-054: Cabin
055-059: Café
060-063: Cafeteria
064-069: Church
070-075: Classroom
076-080: Convenience Store
081-083: Copy Shop
084-086: Courtroom
087-091: Cubicle Farm
092-092: Dance Studio
093-093: Darkroom
094-097: Daycare
098-102: Deli/Butcher Shop
103-106: Department/Mega Store
107-109: Dojo
110-118: Elevator
119-128: Stairwell
129-132: Factory Floor
133-134: Fraternal Lodge
135-135: Funhouse
136-140: Greenhouse
141-144: Gym
145-148: Half-Constructed Building
149-159: Hallway
160-160: Homeless Shelter
161-164: Hospital Patient Room
165-168: Hospital Waiting Room
169-176: Hotel Room
177-177: Illegal Drug Lab
178-181: Institutional Kitchen
182-184: Internet Café
185-188: Janitor's Closet
189-191: Laboratory
192-195: Library
196-199: Liquor Store
200-203: Mausoleum
204-208: Mortuary
209-214: Movie Theater
215-215: Movie/TV Studio
216-217: Museum
218-221: Nightclub
222-242: Office
243-245: Office Building Lobby
246-248: Pawn Shop
249-252: Photography Studio
253-255: Police Station
256-259: Pool Hall
260-264: Post Office
265-268: Prison/Jail Block
269-308: Public Restroom
309-332: Residential: Attic
333-366: Residential: Basement
367-458: Residential: Bedroom
459-518: Residential: Garage
519-598: Residential: Living Room
599-678: Residential: Restroom
679-748: Restaurant: Dining Area
749-828: Restaurant: Kitchen
829-832: Retail Shop: Antiques
833-836: Retail Shop: Appliances
837-840: Retail Shop: Auto Parts
841-844: Retail Shop: Beauty Supply
845-848: Retail Shop: Bible
849-853: Retail Shop: Bike Shop
854-857: Retail Shop: Carpet
858-861: Retail Shop: Cellular
862-865: Retail Shop: Clothes
866-869: Retail Shop: Book/Comic
870-873: Retail Shop: Computer
874-877: Retail Shop: Flower
878-881: Retail Shop: Food
882-886: Retail Shop: Furniture
887-890: Retail Shop: Garden Supply
891-894: Retail Shop: Gifts/Novelties
895-898: Retail Shop: Gun
899-903: Retail Shop: Hardware
904-907: Retail Shop: Herb/Botanica
908-911: Retail Shop: Hobby
912-915: Retail Shop: Lock & Security
916-919: Retail Shop: Music
920-923: Retail Shop: Paint
924-927: Retail Shop: Pet
928-932: Retail Shop: Photo Developing
933-937: Retail Shop: Record
938-941: Retail Shop: Sporting Goods
942-945: Retail Shop: Thrift
946-949: Retail Shop: Toy
950-954: Salon/Barbershop
955-956: Server Room
957-959: Shopping Mall
960-963: Spa
964-967: Stable
968-971: Steam Tunnel/Sewer
972-975: Storage Closet
976-979: Storage Shed
980-982: Strip Club
983-986: Train Car
987-991: Underground Parking Lot
992-993: Vehicle Sales Showroom
994-997: Veterinarian/Animal Shelter
998-000: Warehouse Interior

Lost Combat

An accomplished member of the Lost, with multiple levels in Get Lost, Grab Bag, and Homing can be a tough opponent. At the first sign of trouble they run around a corner and disappear. Then, a few seconds later they appear around a different corner holding a loaded pistol, which they fire a few times before disappearing again. This happens over and over again, each time with the Lost appearing from a random direction and always with a fully loaded gun.

In terms of combat rules, the Lost uses an action to run around a corner, an action to use the Get Lost skill (30 difficulty), an action to use the Grab Bag skill to pull a loaded pistol out of a pocket (30 difficulty), and an action to use the Homing skill to come back into the battle (20 difficulty). Upon re-entering combat the Lost re-rolls initiative (with a surprise attack bonus of +5, unless someone made a Hard AWR roll to be looking exactly as the PC came around the corner), uses an action to fire, and then uses a reaction to escape (using the Jump reaction to get back behind the corner).

Outcasts



In Brief- Labeled crazy because they can see and hear things others can't. They know the city's supernatural places, people and things.

Other Names- Those Who See, Schizos, Crazies, Seers.

The Chosen- Outcasts are born into every type of community. They tend to be slightly more intelligent than the average person, more artistic and more emotionally sensitive.

Initiation- Outcasts are born with the ability to see, hear or sense things other people don't. Many things they experienced frightened them, and most grew up being timid children. When they learned to start describing the things they experienced their parents told them, sometimes fearfully and sometimes angrily, that those things weren't real. Most young Outcasts learned to turn off their unique senses. Many forgot completely that they had ever had them. Those who never learned to turn it off spent their early lives bouncing between therapists, 'special' classes, mental hospitals and even juvenile hall.

Whether they were able to turn off their senses or not, all Outcasts grew up feeling like they were different. This led most to being isolated, awkward, eccentric and paranoid. With effort, some learned to act like normal, healthy adults, even though inside they felt very different. Others always acted as crazy as they felt.

For those who learned to block the visions, there was eventually some crisis or period of severe deprivation in their lives and in the midst of the stress their control over the visions faltered and suddenly they were sensing everything.

Some saw invisible monsters wriggling through the air, occasionally attaching themselves to people like leeches, and shadowy non-human figures moving through the world unnoticed.

Some could hear people's private thoughts, no matter how vile or insane, being screamed at them wherever they went.

Some experienced dramatic scenes from a place or thing's past being replayed in front of them by ghostly actors.

Some saw bizarre hallucinations that, through a layer of symbolism, told hidden truths about things of people. For instance, seeing a skull try to push its way out of someone's belly then later finding out that person has stomach cancer.

Some Outcasts were unlucky enough to experience more than one of these phenomenon.

Most couldn't help reacting to the things they experienced going on around them and this made others think they were crazy. Even when they could avoid reacting, the constant stress of seeing unexplainable and frightening things left them unable to concentrate on jobs, school and relationships. Most Outcasts ended up in a mental institution then on the streets.

As much as they would have liked to, it was impossible to believe that these visions were merely hallucinations because real-world things corresponded to what they saw.

Most new Outcasts spent months or years searching in vain for someone they could depend on to tell them what their visions meant. Most who said they had visions were just hallucinating and even those with real visions had crazy and contradictory ideas about what they meant.

Those who survived this period without killing themselves or going permanently psychotic began a life of observing the supernatural world to try to discover its secrets. The Outcasts discovered that humanity, whether they know it or not, are under constant danger from supernatural threats. In fact, most people have an uncanny ability to look the other way, to ignore and avoid the places where reality is not what it seems. A small minority have some knowledge of or power over the supernatural. Yet even the most powerful can't see everything that Outcasts can see.

Some Outcasts watch people effecting the invisible world by painting symbols with their bodily fluids. By copying what they do, Outcasts can learn their abilities. Other Outcasts learn they can command the alien things they see just by shouting commands at them.

At adventure one, the PC has been observing the world with his or her abilities for several months. The PC has followed a lot of people, snuck into a lot of places, and seen a lot of weird things. Yet the PC is only starting to see patterns and to make educated guesses as to what the various phenomenon mean. The PC is still seeing completely new things every day.

Typical Evening- Most Outcasts spend their evenings standing around or walking around the city observing. They follow anyone they see acting suspiciously. Occasionally they try to warn someone about supernatural danger, but they are usually called crazy and dismissed. When they want to be alone the Outcasts know places that normal people instinctively avoid. Homeless Outcasts can use this skill to find places to sleep where they will not be bothered.

Outcasts see things others can't, not just because of their supernatural senses, but because they learn to be 'invisible'. Most Outcasts are homeless (or look and act such that people assume they are). In the city, most people learn to ignore the homeless. Some don't give a homeless person any more thought than they would a pile of trash on the sidewalk. People will do and say things in front of homeless people that they never would in front of anyone else. Thus, Outcasts who are in the right places at the right times can see all sorts of people doing all sorts of unusual things.

What You Know

What an Outcast starts the game knowing depends on what supernatural skills he or she starts with:

See Invisible

-The world is filled with squirming, intangible insects that latch on to people and cause many misfortunes.

-There are also larger, smarter beings that move invisibly among us.

-Some holy-men and women from 'primitive' cultures and a few 'g-men' types are able to effect wrigglers.

Psychometry

-Strong human memories live on in places and things.

-In some abandoned places the memories seem to have coalesced into something that can take over human minds and that don't like their spaces invaded.

-Most of the events that leave impressions are emotionally powerful but otherwise quite mundane. Yet seeing enough history will reveal people experiencing supernatural phenomenon or being killed by non-humans.

Read Minds

-Most people think thoughts more horrible than anything they would ever admit to.

-Most people who think they are experiencing supernatural phenomena or have supernatural powers are just crazy.

-There are a few that actually have powers or are experiencing real phenomena. They have little or no definitive knowledge of why and how those powers/ phenomena work.

-The PC knows a little about the major classes of people who have contact with the supernatural (more-or-less what's listed in the in brief descriptions on p.10).

-About 1 person in 10 has a mind which is completely silent. They act perfectly normal.

See Souls

-A few people, mostly dressed as priests or nuns, look like they're amputees but they have soul-limbs that can effect the real world.

-About 1 in 10 people don't have a soul. They tend to be completely average people who never stray from their place in life.

-Souls arrive at humans in the womb and leave (sometimes struggling and screaming) shortly after death.

-A few people have souls which appear brighter or stronger than most. Many of these people experience supernatural phenomenon or have strange abilities.

See Reapers

-There are shimmering blurs who come to people after they die.

-These blurs sometimes congregate before a person is likely to die or where an accident is likely.

-In a tiny minority of cases, reapers actually cause accidents to try to kill people, yet these people always seem especially hardy and difficult to kill.

Visions

-Some visions foretell mundane accidents or misfortunes.

-Some visions foretell a supernatural force that will cause someone to die or disappear.

-Some visions tell of the activity of things that may be parts of peoples' personality or may be intelligent beings associated with those people.

-Some visions indicate that people have supernatural abilities. There seem to be about a dozen major 'types.'

-Some visions seem to indicate that certain things that look like humans aren't.

Going Deeper- The more the Outcast sees, the more he or she is able to piece together. Outcasts can identify those who deal in the supernatural but don't know who to trust. If they can find non-Outcasts they can trust they can enhance their understanding of what they see. Because they can recognize so many other types of Touched, Outcasts stand the best chance of putting together all the pieces. Knowledge can also be gained by exploring forbidden places, including wandering through the cracks in this reality.

Dark Side- Outcasts know that supernatural things are happening all the time, yet they have nobody authoritative who can tell them what the things they see mean. A need to understand what they see often leads Outcasts to create complex and fantastic stories, usually far-reaching conspiracies. This paranoid outlook leads Outcasts to distrust everyone around them, which leads to few social contacts and an increasingly unrealistic view of the universe. The worst case scenario is of an Outcast who suddenly decides that innocent people are out to get him or her, and uses his or her powers to destroy those people "in self defense."

Seeing the Invisible

This is what PCs with the See Invisible skill typically see:

Insect-like creatures, most 6 inches to a foot long (.15-.3 m.), squirm through the air. They move like they're wriggling through a thick gel. They move through solid objects as if they weren't there. Any direction the PC looks he or she can see several of these creatures. They only stop moving when they have latched on to a human. The majority of people walk around with one or more of these things attached to them.

Other entities are seen more rarely: Manta-ray looking things that swoop through the air, large worms with balloon bellies and mosquito proboscises, building-sized sleeping insects and tall white figures with porcelain looking masks of smiling faces. And there are other creatures that are completely unique in appearance and behavior. Some are standing there in plain view, others are glimpsed only briefly through the window of a building or out of a passing car.

When invisible figures meet one may hear them communicating via fast clicking. Sometimes one can hear a distant female voice sobbing and calling out 'please help me,' over and over again. Other times one hears a guttural voice hissing out an unending litany of insults 'you're filth, you're stupid, you're ugly, everyone hates you,' etc.

Sometimes one sees 'cracks' floating in the air, as if something has shattered the ether. These cracks are usually seen in abandoned places.



I See Dead People

Most Outcasts with Psychometry went through a period where they thought they were seeing ghosts, since they saw what looked like people, often in old-fashioned clothing, acting out significant moments of their lives. However, Outcasts will eventually see scenes that happened to people they know are still alive, and the actors don't seem capable of being interacted with or changing.

Supernatural Skills
The PC starts with one of the following (choose one) free: See Invisible (2), Psychometry (2), Read Minds (2) or Visions (2).

The PC can purchase the following skills at **10** skill points per level:
Area Knowledge: Supernatural (INL)
Give Vision (WIL)
Psychometry (AWR)
Read Minds (AWR)
See Souls (AWR)
See Invisible (AWR)
See Reapers (AWR)
Visions (AWR)

The PC can purchase the following skills at **20** skill points per level:
Blood Sigils (WIL)
Command Misfortunes (WIL)
See True Face (AWR)

Bonus Characteristics
Abnormal Behavior (Mandatory Disadvantage)- The PC sees, hears and reacts to things other can't, making the PC appear twitchy or crazy. At a cost of 10 skill points per level the PC can purchase a skill called Act Normal (see text box).

Act Normal (CHM)- The PC has learned what normal people see and don't see and has trained himself or herself not to react to things that others can't see.
Easy (10): Act normal while being quiet in an elevator.
Moderate (20): Act normal with coworkers.
Hard (30): Act normal in a psychiatric interview.

The PC must purchase levels of this Act Normal to have certain day jobs as follows:

0 Levels: Homeless, Homemaker, Retired, Welfare, Ward.

1 Level: Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Paranormal Professional, Privileged, Sex Industry Worker.

2 Levels: Alternative Health, Business Owner, Boring Customer Service Job, Boring Office Job, Computer Tech, Creative, Dangerous Field Job, Driver, Pilot, Investigator, Religious Professional, Reporter, Researcher, Security Professional, Social Worker, Student.

3 Levels: Child Care, Law Enforcement Professional, Legal Professional, Medical Professional, Performer, Professor, Trendy Customer Service Job.

Unstoppable Visions (Mandatory Disadvantage)- Whatever supernatural sensory skills the PC has, he or she can't stop using them. The PC may have once had this ability but has lost it. Every waking hour the PC is haunted by unwanted sensations of the supernatural and can rarely sleep a whole night without being awakened by one of these sensations.

Sleep Deprivation Vulnerability (Mandatory Advantage)- For every night's worth of sleep deprivation, the PC gets the normal -3 to AWR/CHM/INL/END as well as +8 to all sensory supernatural skill rolls and -8 to any rolls to distinguish supernatural sensations from mundane sensations.

Thing You Grabbed (Optional Advantage, Costs 5 BP)- The PC once encountered a place where the rules of physics appeared to be 'broken.' The PC grabbed an item from this place and carried it away, finding that wherever it went it was capable of warping reality. Create a power (using power rules on p.30) with 1 level of Effect (no Enhance) and 2 levels of Limitations.

Contact: Dance (Optional Advantage, Costs 5 BP)- There's a thing locked up in an abandoned building. It never leaves and it uses servants to protect the building from intruders. Most of its servants are stinking-drunk or psychotic, people with little control over what they say or do. The thing can sense what's happening outside its building and can possibly read minds. You've learned that if you threaten to burn down its building or phone in a false police report you can sometimes intimidate it into doing you favors: giving you information or sending a servant to run some errand for you.

Always Crazy (Optional Disadvantage, Gives 2 BP)- The PC has never been capable of blocking his or her supernatural senses, although the PC might have spent several years trying to ignore what he or she thought were hallucinations. The PC spent his or her time being treated as a "special" person and never had much practice dealing with "normal" people as equals. Today, the PC is unfamiliar with the culture of "normal" people. The PC is at -10 to any CHM roll to act "normal" or with anyone who considers themselves "normal." Because the PC has spent so much time in the mental health system he or she gets Science: Psychology (1) and Psychotherapy (1) free.

Recommended Day Job- Welfare, Ward, Homemaker, Homeless. Note: Day Job choice is limited by the Abnormal Behavior disadvantage, see above.

Recommended Skills- Local Geography, Lock Picking, Light Sleep, Lip Reading, Prowling, Street Survival.

Recommended Equipment- Dog: Guard, Flashlight: Small, Lock Picks: Homemade, Swiss Army Knife.

Recommended Reading- Freudian Psychoanalysis (p.155), Jungian Psychology (p.157).

Professionals



In Brief- Workaholic problem-solvers who have earned the trust of the Powers-That-Be and access to special training by secret societies.

Other Names- Lodge Members, Problem Solvers, Fixers.

The Chosen- Professionals are the perfect workaholics: most have no children or significant others, little personal life, are comfortable when under stress, don't know how to relax and have a strong work ethic. They take pride in doing a good job and are brave and industrious. They never take sick days and are reluctant to take vacation. They don't mind doing dirty or dangerous work and they need little supervision. Most are initiated at a point in their lives where they feel they have nothing that makes them unique or special except how well they do their jobs.

Initiation- After college, young Professionals entered a profession that involved investigating and eliminating threats to the American people. Most Professionals work in a profession that could be called "law enforcement," though there are exceptions (see Special Day Job, p.48). As the Professionals proved they could do quality work with little supervision, they were quietly promoted. They were put into positions where they worked alone and were given 'problem cases' (those that stymied others) with complete discretion about how to go about solving those cases.

Then they were handed down a case with clearly supernatural elements. When they solved and closed the case without going to the press or demanding a hearing or otherwise making a big deal about it, they were immediately given a raise or bonus, a sign that the initiates did the right thing. After that, they were given more and more supernatural cases.

The big bosses, the old white guys with offices on the top floor, suddenly knew the initiates by name. There were pats on the back in the elevator, spontaneous office visits to "see how you're doing" and indefinite comments about "having you over for dinner some time."

The Professionals were also asked or pressured to join some fraternal organization (see Fraternal Orders, p.49). They were given strong hints that membership was vital to their careers. They joined and discovered more or less what they had expected: a bunch of well-connected, mostly older, mostly upper-class people who used the lodge as an excuse to get together and drink and who used generic ceremonialism to make themselves feel important. The lodge had 'levels' and to gain levels they had to memorize ceremonial texts and pass tests. This was challenging enough to keep the lodge from being unbearably boring.

Then they were invited to join another secret order within the lodge, called the Order of the Defenders. This order met at the lodge, and was made up of lodge members, but most ordinary lodge members didn't even know it existed. The

Professional initiates joined and found even more intense rituals and tests. Yet they began to perceive that the rituals were having supernatural effects and conveying skills and knowledge to fight supernatural dangers.

At adventure one, the PC has gotten into a routine of regularly dealing with supernatural cases. The PC is a first degree member of the Order of the Protector. Other members of the Order rarely answer the PC's questions, insisting that the PC will find out 'in time.' Most of the ceremonies and cryptic texts read at meetings are still incomprehensible to the PC.

Typical Evening- Unlike most of the Touched, who have a terribly mundane day job and a thrillingly supernatural night life, Professionals spend days and evenings at their jobs. Days might be eaten away by boring things like meetings, going to court, writing reports, etc. but the PC will use every spare moment during day or evening to investigate the cases he or she has been given.

Some of the cases will be purely mundane, the same as everyone else in the Professional's profession gets. Some seem mundane at first, but after investigation they have some supernatural elements to them. Others are clearly supernatural from the moment the PC opens the file. In any case, the Professional does his or her best to find out what happened, then eliminate the threat either by bringing someone to justice or by destroying a supernatural danger.

A Professional goes to Order of the Protector meetings 2 or 3 times a week. The evenings are usually held after midnight in a lodge building. Members of the Order do not even speak to each other until they have been secluded in the heart of the lodge with guards at each entrance. They proceed with serious, deliberate ceremonialism. They don crimson robes, swear oaths of secrecy and loyalty to the Order and to protecting humanity, they read metaphor-heavy passages from old books, they do occult things with swords and blood, and sometimes they drink liquor from skulls and sit in the dark as elders whispers in their ears about the paradise that awaits protectors of humanity after death.

Informants and Contacts

Members of the Order are discouraged from associating with other members of the touched and are trained to ignore heretical propaganda. Yet the Order doesn't seem to be watching everything a Professional does. For the most part they judge a Professional on results, not on how those results are achieved. Many Professionals find they can achieve results much more efficiently if they have a 'contact' who is a member of the touched. Since the contact will have abilities and knowledge the Professional doesn't (and visa versa) sticking together during a supernatural threat can increase the likelihood that both will survive. Trust and even friendship may grow between Professionals and their contacts, although if the Order asks the Professional can say that the person is 'just a useful informant.'

What You Know

-There are supernatural things going on all the time.

-The people in charge of keeping our society safe know that supernatural things are happening, but either don't want to know the details or don't want to talk about them.

-The job of the PC, and other elite professionals like the PC, is to quietly take care of supernatural threats.

-The Order of the Defenders is a secret society that trains people in occult skills to help them fight these threats.

-Members of the Order can get away with doing just about anything so long as they take care of threats and don't make their actions and abilities public.

-One type of threat is humans who have gained paranormal skills or powers.

-Some of these humans are trying to destroy society (or perhaps even destroy reality itself).

-Some of these humans are in dangerous occult groups that meet in or near bars, accident survivor support meetings, gay/lesbian bookstores, libraries, immigrant communities and abandoned buildings.

-Other humans don't have control over their powers and go around causing problems unintentionally.

-Another type of threat is inhuman beings. Some are visible and tangible. Some are invisible and intangible. Their motivation is a mystery, they seem crazy.

-There are some things that look like humans but aren't. They torture and kill humans. Silver weapons do the most damage to these creatures.

-When things get really out of hand, mysterious figures, who might or might not be human, show up to 'fix things.'

-These figures are extremely powerful and the PC has been encouraged to stay out of their way.

-Sometimes inanimate objects can be the source of paranormal events. The PC has been encouraged to give these objects to the Order for safekeeping.

-Sometimes places are the source of paranormal events. If informed, the Order can pull strings and make sure these places lie abandoned and unused.

-There are supernatural vigilantes who sometimes hunt the same threats as professionals, but they don't know how to 'play by the rules.'

-Some of society's most powerful and important people have a relationship with the Order.

Going Deeper- Professionals gain knowledge of the supernatural world by confronting its dangers. They learn what kinds of dangers lurk in the shadows and those mysterious forces that try to keep supernatural events secret.

So long as they make the Powers-That-Be happy, Professionals will progress in the Order, be given more training, be told more secrets and get to know more powerful people. Tests may be arranged to confirm their

ability, bravery and loyalty. They may be asked questions by those with the Truth Ordeal skill. They may eventually come into the confidence of those who actually know the secrets behind the Order: where it came from, what its goals are and where it got its occult knowledge.

Or, Professionals can go the other way and start talking with those dangerous occultists who they are told are trying to destroy society. If they find out, the Powers-That-Be won't like this. They may, first, give a warning and, second, take away the Professional's career. Yet by taking the risk of associating with these dangerous occultists the Professionals may be able to hear a side of the story that the Order would never tell them.

Dark Side- Professionals only advance so long as they serve the needs of the Powers-That-Be. For the most part, they can do this by taking care of legitimate threats to humanity. Sooner or later, however, each Professional will be asked to "take care of" someone who is a threat to the Powers-That-Be but who never actually did anything wrong. Some Professionals go with their conscience and either quit their jobs or find some way to make it appear that they did what they were told. The majority of Professionals, on the other hand, go ahead and kill their innocent targets. Any member of the Touched, even other Professionals, could find themselves being hunted by a Professional under the right circumstances.

Supernatural Skills- The PC can purchase the following skills at **20** skill points per level:

Blood Sigils (WIL)
Ecstatic Rage (WIL)
Truth Ordeal (WIL)
Soul Blade (WIL)
Untouchable (WIL)

Bonus Characteristics

Not a Lodge Member (Optional Disadvantage, Gives 5 BP)- The PC refused the invitation to join a lodge or has put off joining, yet the PC is so good at hunting down the supernatural that he or she has been allowed to keep his or her position (for now). The PC starts with no knowledge of the Order of the Protector and no supernatural skills.

Special Day Job (Mandatory Advantage)- During character creation Step 5 (p.58), don't chose from the normal Day Job list. Choose one of the special Day Jobs in the sidebar. There are no promotional opportunities as there are in normal Day Jobs because a Professional will be kept in his or her current position as long as the Professional remains useful to the Powers-That-Be.

Recommended Day Job- See Bonus Characteristics, above.

Recommended Skills- Emergency Medicine, Crime Scene Forensics, Forensic Pathology, Law: Basic, Interrogation, Pistol, Research: Law Enforcement.

Recommended Equipment- Anti-Psychotic, Ballistic Armor, Ear Bud Radio, First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional), Handcuffs, Lockpick Gun, Parabolic Microphone, Pistol (Heavy).

Special Professional Day Jobs

Note: The following descriptions are of what 'official' job duties for a Professional in each day job. The PC knows, and the PC's bosses know, that the PC's real unofficial job duty is to track down and eliminate supernatural threats, though the PC may occasionally be asked to do some mundane aspect of their job duties.

Corporate Troubleshooter- The PC works for a major multinational corporation. The PC has risen the ranks through in-house security and is now an investigator. The PC is flown around the country (and sometimes to other countries) to investigate crimes involving corporate employees and resources.

Income: $15,000 to start and $600/wk.

Free Skills: Business (2), Research: Law Enforcement (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 7, ATHL 7, CMBT 10, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 5, LABR 7, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

FBI Agent- The PC is a Special Agent in the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The PC investigates violent crimes, particularly those that cross state lines.

Income: $12,500 to start and $500/wk.

Free Skills: Pistol (1), Research: Law Enforcement (1), Crime Scene Forensics (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 7, ATHL 7, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 5, LABR 7, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Intelligence Operative- The PC is a trained agent of one of the US' intelligence agencies: the CIA, NSA or military intelligence. The PC's job is to: analyze data, use surveillance and do undercover operations to gather information on threats to the nation; track down national security leaks; recruit foreigners who are willing to become paid agents of the US. Note that, for the most part, these agencies are not supposed to be doing domestic operations (that being the FBI's job).

Income: $15,000 to start and $500/wk.

Free Skills: Pistol (1), Language (1), Interrogation (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 7, ATHL 7, CMBT 8, CRTV 5, CRIM 12, TECH 7, INVS 7, LABR 7, MEDI 7, PEOP 5, TRAD 7

Mafia Fixer- The PC is a made-man (or, very rarely, a made-woman), a member of one of the oldest and most powerful mafia families. Although the PC came up through the ranks as a petty criminal, the PC's life today is as much about protecting the family's legitimate business assets as their illegitimate ones. The PC is typically sent out to observe mafia owned operations and take care of any problems (embezzlers, informants, competing organized crime) that would put the mafia's profits in jeopardy. Fixers have learned to tread lightly so as not to gain the attention of the feds (they may even be asked to work with the feds). Yet Fixers are not afraid to revert to the methods of a criminal thug when nobody is looking.

Income: $10,000 to start and $400/wk.

Free Skills: Black Market (1), Assassin: Armed (1), Organized Crime (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 9, ATHL 8, CMBT 10, CRTV 6, CRIM 7, TECH 8, INVS 7, LABR 6, MEDI 8, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Security Consultant- The PC belongs to a small but elite private security firm that contracts itself out to the households of the world's most rich and powerful people. A PC may be responsible for setting up the security for a mansion, investigating death threats against a rich CEO, or retrieving a royal family's runaway teenager.

continued next page

Special Professional Day Jobs (continued)

Income: $15,000 to start and $600/wk.

Free Skills: Bodyguard (1), Pistol (1), Alarm Systems (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 8, ATHL 7, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, CRIM 14, TECH 7, INVS 7, LABR 7, MEDI 6, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Think Tank Researcher- The PC is a professor who has more-or-less retired from teaching to work in a private think tank. The think tank most likely operates out of, and has offices in, a major university, but its funding comes from government and corporate sources. The think tank has some ambiguous name like "Threat Assessment Foundation" and they don't go out of their way to let the general public know what they do. Mostly the think tanks collect and analyze data and produce papers for use by the government in setting policy. Researchers do go out to the field to collect additional data about 'statistical outliers.'

Income: $12,500 to start and $500/wk.

Free Skills: Research: Academic (2), Research: Internet (1), Math (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 8, CMBT 13, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 5, INVS 7, LABR 9, MEDI 6, PEOP 6, TRAD 8

Vatican Investigator- The PC is an agent of the Catholic Church. The PC is an ordained priest who has a background in law enforcement and investigation. The PC's job is to investigate cases of possible sainthood, miracles and demonic possession and do internal investigations of priests suspected of committing crimes or practicing heretical faiths.

Income: $7,500 to start and $300/wk.

Free Skills: Religion (1), Crime Scene Forensics (1), Science: Psychology (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 7, CMBT 12, CRTV 5, CRIM 17, TECH 7, INVS 6, LABR 7, MEDI 7, PEOP 5, TRAD 6

Fraternal Orders

Freemasonry- This one of the oldest of the modern fraternal organizations. Almost everyone who has formed a fraternal organization or secret society which is around today was a Mason and Masonry has served as a prototype for these organizations. This includes the Golden Dawn, the most famous occult organization in recent history.

Males who believe in god or a "creative force" can join. There are isolated instances of women being allowed to join as early as the 18th century, but it is not standard practice in any American lodge. Applicants must be of sound mind and body and of good moral character. There is a minimum age, but it varies between lodges. There are about 3.5 million masons in the US and 5 million worldwide.

Nobody is really sure where Freemasonry came from. The official version is that Freemasonry traces its roots back to medieval stonemasons' guilds. Among other things, Masonry seems to have some Neoplatonic influence.

Masonic lodges are self-governing. Each lodge is ruled by a Mason called the Right Worshipful Master. Masonic lodges in California receive charters from the California grand lodge, Prince Hall, in the bay area. Each lodge sends representatives to grand lodge meetings. A lodge can have its charter revoked by the grand lodge for serious infractions.

Masons have often been active in political movements, including the American Revolution. They have often supported democracy and the separation of church and state. Because of this, and because they keep certain aspects of their organization secret, Masons have been the target of paranoia from both the left and right. Masons were persecuted by the Nazis. Himmler's SS collected books from Masonic libraries in Germany and occupied countries. These books, numbering more than 80,000 are now housed in the library of the University of Poznan in Poland.

The Catholic church has often decried freemasonry, and at times masons have, in turn, been anti-Catholic. Catholics are currently prohibited from joining the Masons, although as with other church edicts there are many Catholics who ignore it.

Freemasonry has three degrees of initiation: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Some European lodges require members to prepare and present philosophical papers before being allowed to rise to new degrees. Initiations are accompanied by moral lessons told through the use of biblical stories and the use of drama. The most important allegorical story is that of the building of King Solomon's temple. It acts as a metaphor for both the building of a just society and of building oneself into a better person. The head architect had secret knowledge which other masons asked for. He refused, since he did not have the right to impart those secrets, and so he was murdered. Masonic ritual also uses architectural and mathematical symbolism.

While rituals are held, the meeting place is locked and is guarded both from the inside and outside. The guards outside, known as "tylers" carry drawn swords. Rituals include such elements as lambskin aprons (representing the work aprons of ancient masons), blindfolds, altars, bowls, swords, special clothing and the memorization and recitation of texts. The term "so mote it be," a literal translation of "amen" is used often.

Masons have a secret grip they can use to identify members and a secret word they can use to identify members or call for help from other Masons.

There are several Masonic centers around the L.A. area. The oldest Masonic temple in the L.A. area is on Main Street near the L.A. Plaza. It was built in 1858, making it the oldest building south of the plaza, and it now holds a museum of Masonic memorabilia. The meeting center with the largest number of attendants is the Westchester Masonic Center in Playa Del Rey. The Southern California research lodge, which does research on Freemasonry and maintains a Masonic library, operates out of Fullerton.

Freemasonry has several "appendant bodies." These are fraternal societies that are not part of Freemasonry but that require all members to have achieved Master Mason status. Where Freemasonry is open to anyone who believes in a god or creative force, many appendant bodies are only for Christians. Most consider their teachings to be an expansion on or further exploration of what is taught and explored in Freemasonry Many confer additional degrees, beginning with the fourth, yet they are careful to note that these degrees do not make one Master Mason "higher" in status than any other. The three largest appendant bodies are the Scottish Rite, York Rite and the Shriners.

Rosicrucians- In the 17th Century, a number of pamphlets were published that claimed to reveal the secrets of an ancient secret society. The pamphlets were most likely fiction, although they were based on real hermetic philosophy and mysticism. Since then, several orders have tried to replicate the order of the Rose Cross. These Rosicrucian orders are the oldest of the modern fraternal orders and have influenced many of the other orders. The Rosicrucians are the most mystical of the orders, falling somewhere between a religion and a fraternal order.

Grange- A fraternal order for farmers founded in 1867 in Washington DC. The Grange borrowed heavily from Freemasonry for its rituals and practices. At first it was largely a political group fighting for rights of farmers. It is still the most politically active of the orders, but it's importance as a social organization has been growing. Today there are about 300,000 members nationwide. Males and females can be members.

Scottish Rite- This appendant body to Freemasonry was founded in 1758. It confers degrees 4 through 32 (1 through 3 being the degrees of Freemasonry). There is a 33rd degree but it is purely honorary. The group is dedicated to progress, liberty, freedom and equal rights. It has 1 million plus members. The largest Scottish Rite building in L.A. is the temple on Wilshire Blvd. which has a museum and auditorium.

continued next page

Fraternal Orders (continued)

York Rite- The York Rite has multiple chapters, each of which confer different degrees. The Knights Templar are one chapter. The Templars are dedicated to application of Masonic principles to the Christian faith and are based on the story and values of the Templars. The York Rite continues the allegory of the building of the Temple of Solomon, taking it to the point when the temple is symbolically completed and the Ark of the Covenant is placed inside it. During one point of initiation members of the York Rite get their own unique mark which is recorded in the book of marks.

Shriners- Founded in New York City in 1870 to be the "fun" part of Freemasonry. Before 2000, Shriners had to complete the Scottish or York Rites, now any Master Mason can join. When it was founded the Arabian Nights were popular and so the Shriners took on a faux-Islamic theme. Today the Shriners spend most of their time doing charitable work. They have a big children's hospital in L.A. which opened in 1952. Until recently, the Oscars were held in an L.A. Shriners' auditorium.

Knights of Columbus- This order was founded in 1882 to provide Catholics with an alternative to the Masons, who Catholics believed to be anti-Catholic. The Knights is open to male Catholics who are 18 or older. They are active in politics, supporting the values of the Catholic church. They are strongly anti-abortion and anti-same-sex-marriage. They do a lot of charity work. There are now more than 1.5 million members worldwide.

Knights of Pythias- This group was founded in 1870 by Justus Rathbone, a lawyer and teacher, in Washington DC. Rathbone went to Abraham Lincoln and described a society which might help heal the wounds of the Civil War. Lincoln gave his support and the Knights of Pythias was the first fraternal organization to be recognized by an act of Congress. The group was named after the play Damon and Pythias, about two ancient Greek friends who showed great loyalty to each other. The Knights are dedicated to peace and understanding. Some of the symbols and rituals of the Knights are taken from the Pythagorean Brotherhood of ancient Greece. Today the Knights has 2,000 lodges in the US and Canada and more than 50,000 members. Only males can join, though there is a related organization, the Pythian Sisters, for women.

Order of the Eastern Star- This group was founded in 1850 by lawyer Robert Morris. Some Masonic lodges consider it an appendant order, others do not. Only Master Masons or women who are first-order relatives of Master Masons can join. There are 10,000 chapters and 1 million members. Although it is open to any monotheist, it uses the life stories of people from the bible as examples of various virtues.

Elks- Founded in 1868 as a drinking club to bypass New York City laws about tavern hours, it later turned into an organization to serve 'those in need.' It has more than 1 million members. To join one must be invited, must be a US citizen and must believe in God.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows- Very recently females have been allowed to join this organization. Odd Fellows in the US trace their roots back to 1819 Baltimore. The Odd Fellows are dedicated to improving and elevating the character of man. They spend most of their time doing charity work. They were named because they considered it "odd" for one to want to organize to help others. Like Freemasonry, Odd Fellows have appendant orders. Once very popular, there are now only about 7,000 Odd Fellows left in California.

In Dark Scribblers

In Brief- Heretical academics, study dark philosophies, trade knowledge by writing graffiti in dark places.

Other Names- Students, Bookworms, Heretics.

The Chosen- A majority had trouble making friends as children and found solace in books. Most Scribblers were very bright young people with the ability to excel in academics. Many didn't do well in school because they were too easily bored or questioned the authority of teachers too often. A majority were raised in strongly religious households and as an act of rebellion they studied religions and philosophies that contradicted the doctrines of their family's religion. A significant minority have been involved in counterculture movements or radical/revolutionary groups.

Initiation- Many who would become Scribblers were already questioning the basic principles of modern philosophy and religion long before they ever heard from another Scribbler. Many were philosophy students who finally found a philosopher who made sense, only to find that nobody considered this philosopher anything other than a joke. The initiate's favorite philosopher was studied only because it was interesting that someone who seemed so smart could be so wrong.

At some point those who would become Scribblers came into contact with some phrase, most often scrawled on a wall or on a piece of paper hidden in a library book. The phrase said exactly what the initiate had been thinking for years yet never knew anyone else believed in. It might have said that what we can see and touch is only a tiny part of what there is to reality. Or it might have said that human consciousness can't have been created in or designed to live in the mundane realm. The clear disdain for orthodox beliefs the graffiti showed was as important to the initiate as any theories the graffiti put forth.

After that the initiate kept his or her eyes peeled for more messages and learned where to find them. Although they could pop up anywhere the writers had the audacity to put them, they were most dense in run-down, seldom or never-used locations where nobody would ever bother to clean up graffiti. The initiate may have discovered, for instance, a ratty old bathroom stall in a dive bar where the walls were coated with scribbling in dozens of hands. For many initiates the discovery of their first 'bulletin-board' was the most ecstatic moment of their lives. Sitting for hours, they read not only statements of unorthodox beliefs but also debates, discussions, references to books, references to other bulletin-boards, references to places to find supernatural phenomena, reports of supernatural experiences and directions for occult experiments. Many of these experiments included meditating on the falseness of the material world.

It was the supernatural and occult experiences that most new Scribblers seized on as a means to prove to themselves that the universe is not what people think it is. Although dangerous, these experiments could turn theory into knowledge. And so although many were afraid, the initiates set out to discover the truth.

Alleys

At adventure one, the Scribbler has seen a few 'bulletin boards', seen a few supernatural things, done enough occult experiments to show that it is possible for one to develop real powers, but the Scribbler knows that he or she has only seen the tip of the iceberg of the Scribbler discourse there is to see and of the abilities there are to develop. The Scribbler has now proven, to his or her satisfaction, that modern science and philosophy are wrong, but does not know which of many alternative theories is the most accurate one.

Typical Evening- Most Scribblers spend their nights in two main spheres of activity: discussing the nature of the universe with other Scribblers and trying to get the word out to the rest of humanity. To 'discuss' with other Scribblers, Scribblers seek out "bulletin-boards," places where graffiti is not cleaned up (e.g. alleys, dive bar bathrooms, abandoned buildings, sewer tunnels and broken phone booths). They read the new graffiti and they post their own. In addition to philosophical discussions there are also discussions of books to read, supernatural places to visit, news items that may have a supernatural meaning or occult experiments to perform. Any rumor or urban legend of something supernatural finds its way onto a local bulletin-board.

The second part of being a Scribbler is trying to get ideas out to the public. Scribblers seek out any way they can to reach an audience. They spray-paint on anything and everything. They write ideas on slips of paper and hide them places where people will find them (most often in library books). They post on internet message boards. They set up pirate radio and TV stations and make short broadcasts over commercial channels. They post flyers on message boards or stick stickers on lampposts. However they get the message out the Scribblers have to take great pains to make sure they do so anonymously: they know that Scribblers who are caught disappear. The immediate effect of getting the message out is to draw in new Scribblers. The long-term effect that many Scribblers hope for is to reintroduce ideas into the culture that have been removed by the Powers-That-Be.

What You Know

-Neither modern science, nor any of history's popular religions and philosophies can explain the things you've seen.

-There are supernatural things in this world and people can develop supernatural powers.

-If the notes of other Scribblers can be believed, the supernatural things you've seen are only the tip of the iceberg.

-Humans can develop supernatural powers, especially if they vigorously disbelieve in the physical world.

-Human potential for power suggests that we are more than just biological machines.

-Other evidence seems to show that humans are the target of special scrutiny from non-human entities.

-Throughout recorded history, the people in charge have actively tried to repress certain philosophies.

-These philosophies each seem capable to explaining some of the phenomenon you have experienced and read about.

-There is historical evidence of the rulers of society using elite troops to eliminate those who gained power via heretical philosophies.

-Some of history's "secret societies" may have been created to train these elite troops.

-There is no evidence that humanity has allies that try to aid us or reveal the truth to us.

-All this evidence seems to suggest that the world of normal experiences was designed to hide something from us.



Going Deeper- Scribblers can gain more theoretical knowledge by visiting the places that host scribbler graffiti. Many bulletin boards give clues on where to find other bulletin boards. They are not explicit (this is a mechanism to protect bulletin boards from being wiped out by enemies) so the Scribblers have to do some hunting.

Any rare old philosophy book can help the Scribbler discover more about the universe. An even greater find would be one of the legendary book from the era when Scribblers conversed in the margins of library books, not on walls. Just one of these books has the information contained in a dozen bulletin-boards.

Dark Side- Most people who become scribblers are teens and young adults rebelling against the philosophies of their families and communities. The spirit of rebellion burns strongly with these Scribblers. Some become violent anarchist-nihilists, advocating the violent destruction of everything. Some grow to hate the "ignorant masses" and would like nothing better than to shock them into consciousness with acts of violence, destruction and terror. Some Scribblers use their abilities to try to destroy the foundations of power: government buildings, police stations, schools, banks and even churches. Innocent people are often hurt in these acts.

Supernatural Skills- The PC can purchase the following skills at **10** skill points per level:
Automatic Writing (AWR)
Blood Sigils (WIL)
Nihilist Rage (WIL)
Untouchable (WIL)

The PC can purchase the following skills at **20** skill points per level:
Body Invasion (WIL)
Command Animals (WIL)
Command Inanimate (WIL)
Dreaming (WIL)
Flesh Control (WIL)
Get Lost (AWR)
Journeying (WIL)
Mortification of the Flesh (WIL)
Soul Blade (WIL)
Spirit Speed (WIL)
Spirit Strength (WIL)
Visions (AWR)

Bonus Characteristics

Bibliophile (Optional Advantage, Costs 2 BP)- The PC is an obsessed book collector who goes shopping for books compulsively and has done so for years. The PC has several rare books, the equivalent of Research Library: Medium (see p.100) and all of the Reference Books (p.99).

Recommended Day Job- Privileged, Professor, Small Business Owner, Student.

Recommended Skills- Research: Academic, Research: Internet, Language (French, Greek, Hebrew, German).

Recommended Equipment- Bolt Cutters, Digital Camera (Pro), Flashlight: Large, Laptop (Used), Research Library.

Recommended Reading- A History of Unpopular Ideas (p.150).

In Dark Survivors

In Brief- Having overcome death by force of will, they find themselves nearly immortal, yet hunted by something from beyond.

Other Names- Lazaruses, Revenants, the Undead, Flatliners.

The Chosen- A majority are light sleepers or had problems with insomnia. A large percentage had a greater-than-average fear of death (bordering on the pathological). Many had greater-than-average willpower. Other than that, the Chosen have few things in common, except for the bad luck to die at the same time as a lot of other people.

Initiation- Almost all Survivors were either in terrible accidents in which a lot of people died or were in a hospital when a lot of people were dying. The Survivors received a mortal injury and their hearts stopped beating and everything faded out. Then they awoke, trapped inside a body that would not move. Although their eyes would not move, most discovered a way to 'look around.' They saw that the corpses around them contained ghost-like figures, some asleep and others struggling to get free. They also saw moving, human sized, shimmering blurs appear. The blurs started removing the ghost figures from the corpses and holding them to slits in the blur's torsos. Inhuman hands reached through these slits to grab the ghost figures and pull them through.

Somehow, driven by desperation and fear, before a blur could get to them, Survivors managed to will their hearts to start beating again. They were suddenly awake, in control of their bodies and unable to see the harvesting going on around them.

The Survivors healed from their injuries with a rapidity that amazed doctors. Many became stronger and healthier than ever. Those who had pre-existing health problems or disabilities experienced miraculous cures. A few Survivors had been retarded since birth and suddenly gained normal or above-average intelligence. Some noticed tiny injuries like paper cuts disappearing in a matter of minutes. Scars and signs of old age faded away.

And the Survivors discovered that they could still see the shimmering blurs, at first only out of the corner of their eyes but more clearly with practice. Blurs showed up whenever someone died. They stopped at each body and then left. Sometimes they showed up after a death, sometimes before. New Survivors also noticed that they were being constantly followed by blurs.

Most Survivors ended up going to accident survivors' groups and found that a few people there had similar stories. The initiates could see blurs following those people as well.

Alleys

Some of the Survivors the initiate met with claimed they were immune from physical harm. Some went so far as to stab themselves to prove the point. Yet others told stories of Survivors dying in mysterious accidents. If those stories were to be believed, then Survivors were not immortal and were, in fact, being slowly eliminated. Sometimes it happened while they were wide awake in the middle or a crowd, but most often whatever killed them happened when they were alone and asleep. The fatal blow was a fire, explosion or other spectacular accident that decimated, decapitated or cut the body in half. Activity by the blurs typically preceded these accidents.

At adventure one, the PC has confirmed what other Survivors have told him or her, that the PC has control over his or her own body. The PC has only come back from the initial mortal injury once and has not yet been subject to any of the unexplained accidents or explosions that other survivors worry about.

Typical Evening- Most Survivors are afraid to sleep. They drink a lot of coffee, some use amphetamines. Some doze in public places like bus stations. They spend the night wandering, at the same time afraid and bored, going wherever there are people.

They also keep an eye out for blurs. They often see a congregation of blurs that signifies a death waiting to happen. Some Survivors try to warn the people involved or prevent the death. Some Survivors are obsessed with wandering the city trying to prevent deaths.

Many Survivors make the rounds of accident survivor support groups. These meetings are usually held in the evenings, usually in community centers and churches, the same places as AA meetings. The people there sit in uncomfortable folding chairs, drink bad coffee, eat stale doughnuts, smoke cigarettes and talk about their feelings. Survivors recognize each other by the blurs following each Survivor and give each other knowing looks. After the touchy-feely stuff is over, the Survivors talk quietly in a corner of the room, trading information about their newfound powers and their new threats.

Some Survivors take advantage of their new health and physical resiliency. They drink, smoke, use drugs, have unprotected sex, get in fights, walk around in bad parts of town and do dangerous stunts. Some have lived lives of fear or physical limitations and are now living dangerous lives with gusto.

What You Know

-You have some level of control over your own flesh: you can change your physiology and survive mortal injuries.

-Massive damage (being burned to ash, blown to pieces, decapitated or cut in half) will kill you.

-There are others like you, most were in big accidents.

-Blurs take away people's souls after they die.

-The blurs tend to congregate where there is a danger of death.

-The blurs follow Survivors.



-Survivors are often victims of unexplained explosions or other accidents, often when they are alone and/or asleep.

Going Deeper- The longer Survivors can survive, the more they will learn to control their bodies. They may learn to go beyond simply repairing the flesh and may develop flesh that is beyond human limitations.

Or, they may concentrate on learning about the blurs: what they do, how they think, what they want, perhaps even how to defeat or escape them. Watching blurs might necessitate going to disaster scenes.

Dark Side- Some Survivors deliberately cause accidents they believe they will survive. Car accidents are the easiest to fake. Some think killing others will placate the blurs, others just like hurting people. Some become so convinced of their immortality that they think they can take on the whole world. Armed with automatic weapons they take out their enemies and then go on to shoot it out with the police.

Skills- The PC starts with Revive (1) and See Reapers (1) free.

The PC can purchase the following skills at 10 skill points per level:
Flesh Control (WIL)
Revive (WIL)*****
See Reapers (AWR)

The PC can purchase the following skills at 20 skill points per level:
Change Gender (WIL)
Mortification of the Flesh (WIL)
Spirit Speed (WIL)
Spirit Strength (WIL)

*The Flesh Control prerequisite to Revive does not apply to Survivors.

Bonus Characteristics

Under Suspicion (Optional Disadvantage, Gives 1 BP)- The people investigating the event that killed the PC are not sure why the PC survived when everybody else died and think that perhaps the PC might have had something to do with the event.

Recommended Day Job- Dangerous Field Job, Law Enforcement Professional, Medical Professional, Retired.

Recommended Skills- Drug Resistance, Light Sleep, Motorcycle, Street Fighting: Unarmed.

Recommended Equipment- Amphetamines, Caffeine (Pills).

In Dark Wonderlanders

In Brief- The fantastic worlds of their childhood imagination are real. Things and people can cross between them and this world.

Other Names- Alices, Playlanders

The Chosen- Wonderlanders are chosen as small children. They are typically a relative or friend of the family of the initiator. They tend to be bright, creative, brave, passionate, curious, imaginative and attractive children. A majority were undergoing some crisis (a death in the family, a divorce, a move, etc.) when they became initiated.

Initiation- At a young age, Wonderlanders became entranced in a fantasy world of their own creation. Each had an "adult friend" (usually a relative or friend of the family) that took a special interest in them and helped them escape into the fantasy world. The help may have included giving them a place to play alone and giving them toys or books. Some adult friends invited their young Wonderlander to come stay with them until some family crisis resolved itself. Most importantly, the adult friend told stories to the young initiates based on their own fantasy worlds.

With the help of their adult friends, the young Wonderlanders' "playlands" became more detailed and so vibrant that many young Wonderlanders believed, for a time, that their playlands were real places. A few odd coincidences or brief 'hallucinations' may have increased this feeling that the playland was real.

Eventually, Wonderlanders grew out of solitary play in the worlds of their imagination. As they became adults, they thought less and less about their playlands. They were denigrated to the status of 'fairy tales.'

Then something happened to remind initiates of their playlands. For some it was in the midst of a personal crisis that they started to see things that reminded them of their playlands: a face in a crowd, a toy on a shelf in a store moving by itself, a crazy homeless guy singing a certain song, a corner of a local park that suddenly looked different, etc.

For other Wonderlanders it was a message they received or evidence that they found that suggested that their adult friend had been psychologically manipulating or experimenting on them. The Wonderlanders found out that their adult friends had unusual interest in their playlands and knew things about them that the young Wonderlanders had never told anyone. Parts of the messages were, for some Wonderlanders, instructions from the adult friend telling them how the power of the Playland could be harvested in time of need.

Alleys

Doing more research, Wonderlanders discovered that the same thing had been done to other children, perhaps even by the same adult friend. Initiates may have come into contact with characters from their own playlands. Some were seen in dreams or trance-like daydreams. Others found their way into the real world. The Playland characters had uncanny knowledge about the Wonderlanders, especially their secret thoughts, feelings and memories. These characters are completely convinced the playland is real. The Wonderlanders may have even come into brief contact with playland characters that seemed to belong to other people.

And then the Wonderlanders, in most cases spurred into action by immediate physical danger, called on the power of the playland and discovered that they had real supernatural powers.

At adventure one, the PC has seen a lot of weird phenomenon, has learned to control a few abilities, but doesn't know what's going on or why. The PC is only in control of a small portion of the phenomenon going on around him or her, but that portion is rapidly growing.

Typical Evening- Many Wonderlanders spend their evenings trying to find out what happened to them: doing historical research in a library, talking to people who knew them as children, scouring the attics and basement of relatives looking for old toys, etc.

Dealing with playland phenomena is an almost daily occurrence. Wonderlanders may receive prophetic messages or warnings in dreams, they may spend time wandering through their playlands, they may have to hunt down some playland entity that escaped into this world and is causing havoc, or they may help out people whose problems seem to be caused by random problems in or from their playlands.

What You Know

-The world you imagined as a child ("playland") is real.

-Things can travel between this world and playland.

-Events happening in playland effect your psychological state and visa versa.

-Your connection to your playland is the result of some occult or psychological experiment covertly performed on you as a child.

-Your playland is peopled with a handful of semi-intelligent beings with shallow and exaggerated personalities.

-Your playland also contains various non-intelligent creatures, most of whom are malevolent.

-It is possible to enter into your memories from your playland.

-It is possible to enter into your playland from a dream. Playland characters sometimes visit dreams.

-It is possible to find your way from your playland to another person's playland.

-You can summon help from your playland or temporarily warp the rules of this world to be like the rules of the playland.

-It seems that most people have a playland, except they aren't normally in touch with it.

-There is evidence that other people may have been in your playland a long time ago and may still be there.



Going Deeper- A Wonderlander can find out important things by exploring his or her playland: what outsiders have been there, clues to the origin of the place, the true nature of the inhabitants and what secret things are hidden in remote corners of the playland.

A Wonderlander can also learn more by doing research into his or her personal history and the personal history of the "adult friend". Exactly what was done to the Wonderlander? Why was it done? Where did those who did it learn to do it?

Dark Side- Wonderlanders were experimented on as children, often by people who had an unhealthy obsession with children and childhood. What was done to them is still not entirely clear. In the course of figuring it out, some Wonderlanders start performing their own experiments with children. Many of these experiments may harm children.

Supernatural Skills
The PC can purchase the following skills at **10** skill points per level:
Animate Toys (WIL)
Child Empathy (CHM)
Playland Geography (INL)
Masks (WIL)
Imaginary Powers (WIL)
Summon Imaginary Friend (WIL)
Enter Playland (WIL)

The PC can purchase the following skills at **20** skill points per level:
Automatic Writing (AWR)
Dreaming (WIL)
Possession Trance (AWR)
See True Face* (AWR)

*The Visions prerequisite for See True Face does not apply to Wonderlanders.

Bonus Characteristics

Playland Phenomena (Mandatory Disadvantage)- In addition to the powers the PC consciously controls, there are phenomenon which will happen against the PC's will. Toys will animate, portals will open to playland, playland entities will cross over into this world, etc. These events are most likely to happen when the PC is under stress. There is a small possibility they will help the PC, but if they have any effect on the PC's life they are most likely to cause trouble. Sometimes when a PC has a desire he or she is unwilling to act on (perhaps because of moral considerations, fear of disapproval by others, impracticality, etc.) some playland phenomena will attempt to act on that desire on the PC's behalf.

Dear Mr. Washington,

I hope you remember me. Jamal. Mary and Phillip's son. I used to call you "Uncle Bob."

Do you remember the summer my parents sent me to stay on your farm? When they were getting divorced? They said I'd have to do all sorts of work, get up before dawn to milk cows, but you didn't even have cows and you let me spend all day playing.

Do you remember all those old toys you had? Do you remember watching me play? Do you remember asking me questions like 'what's this little fellow's name?' or 'where do you think they are right now?' Do you remember making up stories about the people and places I invented? You'd tell them to me when I was going to sleep.

There was a town made out of candy. I was the mayor. There was a rootbeer sea with pirates on it. There was a broccoli forest and a grumpy old troll who lived there who hated all the people from Candy Town. And there was the magic gumball machine. You could ask it any question and when you turned the handle a gumball came out with a sort of riddle on it that told you the answer.

You probably don't remember. My parents said that you helped out a lot of inner city kids. There must have been a dozen other kids on a dozen other summers, each with their own silly made up worlds.

Except I always felt like when you talked about Candy Town it was like you understood it, like you believed in it, like you'd been there. You were the only adult I ever met who I thought knew what it was like to be a kid.

Things have been weird for me lately. That's why I'm writing you. Financial aid ran out and I don't think I'll be able to afford school next year. There's this girl I've been seeing. She's pregnant and it might be mine.

I've been under a lot of stress. I haven't been sleeping well and I spend a lot of nights just wandering around the city. And I've been seeing a lot of weird things.

Like one night, I swear to god, I saw a house made of candy. It was as real as anything, just sitting there in the middle of the block with the other buildings. I went to get my camera, but when I came back it was gone.

And once I was in this minimart, late at night, and this gumball rolled up the aisle. I picked it up and it said "Unless this be a place for skiing, perhaps you should be fleeing." I left and the next day I heard the place was robbed by a guy in a ski mask.

And I keep having dreams about Candy Town. People from Candy Town keep coming to me and asking for help. They say that Candy Town is over-run with giant ants. Almost every night I have these dreams.

And my mom keeps complaining that there's noises coming from the attic. I went up there with some rat poison, but I heard the noises were coming from this box of my old stuff. I know there's toys you gave me in there, toys I used to play with when I believed in Candy Town. I'm too afraid to open the box but I can't stop thinking of it.

I don't know if you can help me. I don't know if you remember me. I don't know if this address is still any good, or if you're still alive. But I'm praying that you'll know something, remember something that might be able to help me, because I don't know what I'm going to do otherwise.

Your 'Nephew',
Jamal

Toy (Optional Advantage, Costs 4 BP)- The PC has a toy that was used during the creation of his or her playland. This allows the PC to use the Animate Toys skill at no penalties (PC will otherwise take a penalty for using a toy other than the one he or she played with as a child, see p.80). This is an ordinary children's toy appropriate to the era that the PC was a child in (see Popular Toys by Era).

Contact: Adult Friend (Optional Advantage, Costs 5 BP)- The person who helped the PC become a Wonderlander is still alive and the PC is in contact with him or her. The friend seems to be on the PC's side, but is unwilling to answer all the PC's questions, especially about what was done to the PC and why, saying that it is 'too soon' for that information.

Character Concept: Your Playland

When creating a Wonderlander, come up with a general idea of the playland. It doesn't have to be incredibly detailed. You and the GM will work to fill in the gaps as your character "remembers" more about his or her playland.

What is the environment? A huge castle, a steamy African jungle, a moonbase? What are some of the common dangers? Trolls, crocodiles, martians? What are a few of the major characters of the playland?

Here are a few characters you might want to include:

-The devious troublemaker who is always trying to get the PC in trouble.

-The big greedy character who always wants as much as he or she can get of everything.

-The wise stranger or noble animal who appears out of nowhere to offer help or advice.

-The authority figure who is always out to punish the PC and playland characters for breaking rules.

-The despicable villain.

Recommended Day Job- Child Care, Creative, Homemaker, Privileged, Social Worker.

Recommended Skills- Psychotherapy, Science: Psychology, Storytelling, Tracking, Wilderness Survival.

Recommended Equipment- Camping Net, Knife: Hunting, Pepper Spray, Protein Bar.

Popular Toys by Era

1900s- Teddy Bear, Crayola Crayons, Kewpie Doll.

1910s- Electric Train, Tinker Toys, Raggedy Ann, Lincoln Logs, Pogo Stick.

1920s- PEZ, Duncan Yoyo, Madame Alexander Collectible Dolls.

1930s- Mickey Mouse Doll, Toy Soldiers, Viewmaster.

1940s- Model Airplanes, Slinky.

Early 1950s- Frisbee, Fisher Price Little People, Mr. Potato Head, Matchbox Car.

Late 1950s- Legos, Hula Hoop, Tonka Trucks, Model Rockets, Barbie Doll.

Early 1960s- Etch-A-Sketch, Blaze the Galloping Horse, Jen Doll, Sea Monkeys, Phantom Raider, Troll Dolls.

Late 1960s- G.I. Joe, See N' Say, James Bond Astin Martin, Super Balls, Hot Wheels, Popcorn Popper, Nerf Ball.

Early 1970s- Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots, Happy Faces, Magna Doodle.

Late 1970s- Stretch Armstrong, Holly Hobby, Star Wars Action Figures.

Early 1980s- Rubik's Cube, Smurf Toys, My Little Pony, Masters of Universe, Care Bears.

Late 1980s- Transformers, Cabbage Patch Kids, Teddy Ruxpin, American Girl Dolls, Barney Toys, Koosh Ball.

Early 1990s- Ninja Turtles Toys, Rescue Heroes, Captain Planet Toys, Polly Pocket Dolls, Power Rangers, Beanie Babies.

Late 1990s- Toy Story Toys, Tickle Me Elmo, Furby.

Myth: Children Are Innocent and Happy

Children understand a lot more about what's going on around them than adults assume. Children are good at figuring out how adults want them to act and acting that way, so they often pretend not to know about bad things happening around them because they know they're expected to act that way. When there is trouble in the home (as there is in most homes) children are almost certain to know it.

When children don't know something, they typically assume the worst. Children who don't know what sex is typically assume it is something unpleasant, disgusting and/or dangerous. Children who know there is trouble in the home but don't know why typically assume it is their fault. Adults are constantly bombarded with messages telling them to worry about things. Children get hit with these messages as well, except they don't have the critical thinking skills that allow them to dismiss worries with no rational basis. They often worry about things like appearance, health, finances and whether their parents will get divorced. Most children go though a period where they fear supernatural dangers, whether they be ghosts, 'bad luck' superstitions, or a god who will strike them down for saying or doing the wrong thing.

The one thing children have going for them is their incredibly short attention span, which allows their periods of stress and dread to be interspersed with periods of joy and abandon while they are doing something fun. Adults tend only to notice and remember the latter, which is why so many adults mistakenly believe that life as a child is more pleasant than life as an adult.

Step Five – Day Job

In Brief: Choose occupation. This sets income and cost for mundane skills. Some occupations cost or give Bonus Points.

Choose one of the following Day Jobs. This is what your character does to make a living. It sets the PC's starting money, income and skill costs for mundane skills. Some Day Jobs have no point cost. Some cost or give Bonus Points, the same as advantages or disadvantages (see Bonus Characteristics, p.111).

If your Secret Life is Professional, do not choose one of the following Day Jobs (see p.48). If your Secret Life is Outcast or Animist there are special mandatory disadvantages that effect what day job you may take.

Most jobs have advancement levels listed. This means you can buy a higher status within the profession (e.g. start the game as a senior partner in a law firm rather than a legal secretary who takes law classes on the side). Advancement is bought with Bonus Points like an advantage (see p.111). Or, you can buy the advancement during game play with XP (Experience Points, see p.122). The BP cost listed for advancement is the number of Bonus Points you must spend during character creation to go from 0 levels of advancement to that level. The XP cost is the number of Experience Points you must spend during game play to step up to that level from the previous level of advancement.

Example: *Tim is a cop (Day Job: Law Enforcement Professional). The player wants Tim to start the game as a detective, so spends 8 BP to have Tim start at Advancement 2. During the course of game play, however, the player decides to make Tim the police chief. To do this the player must spend 25 XP to move Tim up to Advancement 3, then another 25 XP to move Tim up to Advancement 4.*

Day Jobs

- Alternative Health (0)
- Boring Customer Service Job (-1)*
- Boring Factory Job (-2)*
- Boring Field Job (0)
- Boring Office Job (0)
- Business Owner (0)
- Career Criminal (7)
- Child Care (0)
- Computer Tech (2)
- Creative (2)
- Dangerous Field Job (0)
- Driver (0)
- Homeless (-8)*
- Homemaker (0)
- Investigator (4)
- Law Enforcement Professional (10)
- Legal Professional (2)
- Medical Professional (2)
- Paranormal Professional (4)
- Performer (2)
- Pilot (2)
- Politician (4)
- Privileged (8)
- Professor (2)
- Religious Professional (2)
- Reporter (4)
- Researcher (4)
- Retired (0)
- Security Professional (4)
- Sex Industry Worker (0)
- Social Worker (0)
- Student (0)
- Trendy Customer Service Job (1)
- Ward (-4)*
- Welfare (-2)*

*These Day Jobs give BP as Per disadvantages.

Alternative Health

0 BP

Description: The PC is an herbalist, massage therapist, acupuncturist, personal trainer, psychotherapist, hypnotherapist, drug abuse counselor, etc.

Income: $2,500 to start and $100/wk.

Perks: Meet a lot of people.

Drawbacks: No authority within the official 'medical' system.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 10 XP) $150/wk., PC is a senior in the clinic/office/gym.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 10 XP) $200/wk., PC is head of a clinic, works reduced hours.

Free Skills: Choose from Acupuncture (2) OR Herbal Medicine (2) OR Hypnosis (2) OR Physical Therapy (2) OR Psychotherapy (2).

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 5, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 8, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 5, PEOP 7, TRAD 5

Boring Customer Service Job

Gives 1 BP

Description: The PC works in retail, a restaurant, answers phones or some other job where he or she has to deal with customers all day long.

Income: $2,000 to start and $75/wk.

Perks: PC is lower-middle class, has some opportunities for advancement.

Drawbacks: 8 hours a day in which the PC gets nothing useful or interesting done. If the PC misses more than 15 days of work in a year the PC will be fired. PC is often exposed to crazies and assholes.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 10 XP): $100/wk., manager (in addition to the annoying customers, the PC must deal with annoying employees).

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 5, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Boring Factory Job

Gives 2 BP

Description: The PC goes to a factory every day, does some sort of repetitive manual labor for 8 hours, and then comes home.

Income: $1,250 to start and $50/wk.

Perks: None.

Drawbacks: 8 hours a day of boring, tiring, often smelly and occasionally dangerous work. The PC is exhausted (-4 END) at the end of the day. If the PC misses more than 15 days of work in a year the PC will be fired.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 10 XP): $100/wk., supervisor.

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 4, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Boring Field Job

0 BP

Description: The PC goes out every day and fixes things, installs things, checks on things, takes things away, etc. Examples include: postal carrier, plumber, gardener, maid, insurance appraiser, construction worker, real estate agent.

Income: $2,000 to start and $75/wk.

Perks: PC is lower-middle class, has some opportunities for advancement.

Drawbacks: 8 hours a day of tiring work which leaves the PC exhausted (-2 END) at the end of the day. If the PC misses more than 30 days of work in a year the PC will be fired.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 10 XP): $100/wk., supervisor.

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 7, CMBT 14, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 4, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Boring Office Job

0 BP

Description: The PC goes to an office everyday, does some stuff with paper, phones and/or a computer, then goes home.

Income: $2,500 to start and $100/wk.

Perks: PC is middle class, has some opportunities for advancement and medical insurance.

Drawbacks: 8 hours a day in which the PC gets nothing useful or interesting done. If the PC misses more than 30 days of work in a year the PC will be fired.

+2 BP for **Telecommuting** (PC spends most days working from home and can choose how to manage his or her time).

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 10 XP): $150/wk., PC has a senior position.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 10 XP): $200/wk., PC is middle management.

Advancement 3 (6 BP or 10 XP): $300/wk., PC is department head.

Advancement 4 (8 BP or 10 XP): $500/wk., PC is a chairperson.

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 6, INVS 10, LABR 5, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Business Owner

0 BP

Description: The PC is the sole proprietor of a small business, e.g. a used bookstore, locksmith, restaurant, portrait studio, music lessons, etc. The PC has, at most, a few part-time, minimum-wage employees.

Income: $2,500 to start and $100/wk.

Perks: Freedom to manage own time.

Drawbacks: Must work very hard or the business will go bankrupt.

+4 BP for **Useful Inventory** (PC makes or carries something that may be useful in an adventure, e.g. reproduction medieval armor, occult books, bondage gear).

+2 BP for **Home Office** (PC runs the business from home and can choose to work at any time of day).

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 15 XP): $200/wk., PC has a dozen employees, multiple outlets.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 15 XP): $400/wk., PC has many employees, a half-dozen outlets, a main office.

Advancement 3 (6 BP or 15 XP): $800/wk., PC has hundreds of employees, outlets around the country.

Free Skills: Business (2).

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 4, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 4, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Career Criminal

Costs 7 BP

Description: The PC makes a living as a drug dealer, burglar, shoplifter, pocket-picker, con artist, forger, fence or smuggler.

Income: $2,500 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: Ties to the criminal underworld.

Drawbacks: PC is in constant danger of being arrested, has a criminal record.

+4 BP for **Made** (PC is a full member of a gang, tong or organized crime group, gives +$100/wk.)

Advancement 1 (4 BP or 20 XP) $300/wk., big time criminal.

Advancement 2 (8 BP or 20 XP) $500/wk., international criminal, has underworld ties throughout the world.

Advancement 3 (16 BP or 20 XP) $1000/wk., criminal boss, is in charge of a small criminal gang or enterprise.

Free Skills: Organized Crime (1), 3 free levels in Criminal skills.

Skill Costs: ACAD 7, ATHL 7, CMBT 8, CRTV 6, CRIM 7, TECH 8, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 9, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Child Care

0 BP

Description: The PC works with children in a school, youth center or daycare center or as a nanny or tutor in private homes.

Income: $2,000 to start and $75/wk.

Perks: Insight into the lives of many children.

Drawbacks: Must avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 10 XP): $100/wk., supervisor or VP.

Advancement 2 (2 BP or 10 XP): $150/wk., manager or principal.

Free Skills: Science: Psychology (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 4, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 5, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Computer Tech

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC works tech support for a corporation or government agency. The PC travels from office to office fixing computer problems.

Income: $5,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: If the PC wants to he or she can know everyone in the company's business.

Drawbacks: PC is not paid much considering he or she is one of the most important people in the company.

+4 BP for **Powerful Office**: the PC maintains computers for an office with a lot of power (e.g. an FBI office or the world headquarters of a major multinational).

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 10 XP): $250/wk., PC has a senior position.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 10 XP): $300/wk., PC is middle management.

Advancement 3 (6 BP or 10 XP): $400/wk., PC is department head.

Free Skills: 6 free levels in High Tech skills.

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 8, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 3, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Creative

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC is a writer, artist, photographer, poet or composer.

Income: $5,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: PC can choose how to use his or her time.

Drawbacks: The PC's income is not always steady. The PC is in the public eye.

Advancement 1 (4 BP or 25 XP) $400/wk., most people within specialized circles (e.g. connoisseurs of b&w art photography) have heard of the PC.

Advancement 2 (10 BP or 50 XP) $800/wk., about 1 in 20 people in the US have heard of the PC.

Advancement 3 (20 BP or 75 XP) $1,600/wk., most people in the English-speaking world, and many people beyond, have heard of the PC.

Free Skills: 5 free levels in Creative skills

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 3, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 5, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Dangerous Field Job

0 BP

Description: The PC is a fire fighter, high-steel construction worker, fisherman, bicycle messenger, demolitions expert, hazmat worker, animal control officer, lumberjack or in some other non-law-enforcement job which puts him or her in regular danger.

Income: $7,500 to start and $300/wk.

Perks: Relatively good pay, lots of vacation time.

Drawbacks: Work is exhausting and dangerous. PC often (1 in 4 chance) starts an adventure still healing from on-the-job injuries.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 10 XP) $400/wk., supervisor.

Advancement 2 (2 BP or 10 XP) $500/wk., manager/chief.

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 5, CMBT 13, CRTV 6, CRIM 15, TECH 8, INVS 9, LABR 4, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Driver

0 BP

Description: The PC drives a bus, limo, taxi, armored car, dump truck, etc.

Income: $2,500 to start and $100/wk.

Perks: PC gets to know the area he or she drives in very well.

Drawbacks: Long hours, few opportunities for advancement.

+4 for **Own Vehicle:** PC owns the vehicle he or she uses on the job, can use it for personal business.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 10 XP) $150/wk., senior.

Advancement 2 (2 BP or 10 XP) $200/wk., supervisor.

Free Skills: Driving (3), Local Geography (1)

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 4, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Homeless

Gives 8 BP

Description: The PC has no steady income. The PC may make money begging, recycling cans, doing odd-jobs or shoplifting. The PC gets food from dumpsters and soup kitchens, rescues clothes and toiletries from the trash, and sleeps in abandoned places or shelters.

Income: $250 to start and $7/wk.

Perks: The PC is hard to track down, has plenty of free time. Because people are used to seeing and ignoring homeless people, the PC has +4 difficulty to be noticed in most urban situations.

Drawbacks: Loitering, vagrancy and 'camping' are illegal in most urban areas. The PCs life is stressfully inconsistent: there is always a danger of going hungry or not having a safe place to stay. It is hard to stay clean.

Advancement 1 (3 BP or 25 XP) +$25/wk., PC survives by couch crashing or living out of his or her car, occasionally gets work (usually day labor).

Free Skills: Street Survival (2)

Skill Costs: ACAD 8, ATHL 7, CMBT 12, CRTV 5, CRIM 10, TECH 9, INVS 10, LABR 5, MEDI 9, PEOP 9, TRAD 5

Business Improvement Districts

Homeless people in Los Angeles have a major nemesis: Business Improvement Districts. These are associations of the people who own businesses in a neighborhood and who pool their money for various projects like advertising the area, planting trees, cleaning the streets, etc. Most of their money, however, goes to paying for private security guards who patrol the district and keep out the sorts of people who might scare off customers (homeless people and rowdy teenagers). Homeless people typically know the security guards by their uniforms (e.g. "red caps", "green caps"). The security guards are selected for their ability to make people with money to spend feel respected and cared for and to make homeless people feel in danger of getting their faces kicked in. There are countless stories among the homeless of brutality and violations of their rights at the hands of BID security guards. The worst part of it is that Business Improvement Districts are becoming more popular, and more and more of the city have some color of caps walking the streets looking for homeless people. Good areas for panhandling and scrounging are disappearing and homeless people are being forced to spend their time in only the most economically depressed neighborhoods.

Homemaker

0 BP

Description: The PC has a significant other who works. The PC stays home and takes care of the household.

Income: $2,500 to start and $50/wk.

Perks: Free time.

Drawbacks: Income depends on the good-will of the significant other.

-2 BP for **Sexist Relationship:** the PC's significant other believes it is wrong for the PC to do anything other than be a homemaker.

-4 BP for **School Aged Children:** PC must care for children, except during school hours. See the Caregiver: Child disad (p.116) for an infant child.

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 8, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 8, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Investigator

Costs 4 BP

Description: The PC is a private investigator, bounty hunter, skip tracer or investigator for a law office. The PC is licensed to find people and investigate all manner of events. Most of the work of an investigator involves making phone calls and interviewing people.

Income: $4,000 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: The PC has some law-enforcement powers, but doesn't have to follow all the rules that cops do.

Drawbacks: Work is sometimes dangerous and the PC doesn't have the high-pay, benefits, respect and backup that law enforcement gets.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 10 XP) $200/wk., senior investigator.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 10 XP) $300/wk., head investigator.

Free Skills: 4 free levels in Investigation/Espionage skills.

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 7, CMBT 9, CRTV 6, CRIM 10, TECH 7, INVS 5, LABR 6, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Law Enforcement Professional

Costs 10 BP

Description: The PC is a cop, deputy sheriff, coroner, prison guard, FBI agent, etc.

Income: $5,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: Generous benefit package, good union. Access to law enforcement databases and forensics labs. Law enforcement powers (the ability to get warrants, arrest suspects, hold people for questioning, etc.)

Drawbacks: Dangerous and psychologically grueling work.

Advancement 1 (4 BP or 25 XP) $250/wk., PC is a senior officer/agent.

Advancement 2 (8 BP or 25 XP) $300/wk., PC has a caseload of crimes to investigate and can decide how to allocate time between those cases.

Advancement 3 (12 XP or 25 XP) $400/wk., PC is a section head.

Advancement 4 (16 XP or 25 XP) $500/wk., PC is management (bureau head, sheriff, chief of police, warden, etc.).

Free Skills: Law: Criminal (1), Pistol (1), Driving (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 6, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, CRIM 12, TECH 7, INVS 6, LABR 6, MEDI 6, PEOP 8, TRAD 7

Legal Professional

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC works in a law office. Unless the PC buys levels of Advancement the PC will start as a Legal Assistant who is taking night classes at a law school or is doing self-study.

Income: $4,000 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: Access to legal and court databases.

Drawbacks: Long hours and stressful work, can be disbarred or prevented from ever being barred if caught committing any crime involving dishonesty or deceit.

+2 BP for **Criminal Defense**: PC defends criminals, has some knowledge of and contacts in the criminal underworld.

+4 BP for **Mob Lawyer**: PC defends rich organized criminals, starts with extra $2,000 and makes extra $50/wk.

+4 BP for **District Attorney**: PC prosecutes suspected criminals, has discretionary funds for investigating crimes.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 30 XP) $250/wk., PC is a barred attorney, licensed to practice law in the PC's home state.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 15 XP) $400/wk., senior attorney.

Advancement 3 (6 BP or 15 XP) $700/wk., partner.

Advancement 4 (8 BP or 15 XP) $1000/wk., senior partner.

Free Skills: Law: Basic (3).

Skill Costs: ACAD 3, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 6, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 8, LABR 7, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 8

Medical Professional

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC works in a hospital, clinic or doctor's office caring for the health of patients. Unless the PC buys advancement, the PC starts as a registered nurse or physician's assistant who is studying pre-med at night.

Income: $4,000 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: Access to medical supplies and equipment.

Drawbacks: Exposure to diseases.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 15 XP) $150/wk., medical student: PC can practice medicine under the guidance of other doctors.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 15 XP) $300/wk., MD, the PC is a full fledged doctor, can go into private practice.

Advancement 3 (6 BP or 20 XP) $600/wk., specialist, the PC is a specialist in a high-paying field like heart surgery.

Free Skills: Diagnosis (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Pharmacology (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 3, PEOP 7, TRAD 8

Paranormal Professional

Costs 4 BP

Description: The PC works in a field where he or she is hired by people who believe in the supernatural to do supernatural work, e.g. fortune teller, ghost-hunter, professional shaman, etc. The PC may believe in what he or she does or may be a conscious fraud.

Income: $4,000 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: The PC is paid to investigate the supernatural and can get away with not keeping his or her Secret Life completely secret.

Drawbacks: Most people will assume that the PC is a charlatan or a self-deluded fool.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 15 XP) $200/wk., PC is known and respected by others within his or her field.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 15 XP) $300/wk., PC is known and respected by ordinary people with an interest in that field of the paranormal.

Free Skills: Legends (2) OR Psychology (2) OR Religion (2).

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 12, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Performer

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC is an athlete, musician, actor, stand-up-comedian, circus performer, etc.

Income: $4,000 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: PC has a lot of free time.

Drawbacks: The PC's income is not steady. Disfiguring or disabling injuries will make the PC unable to work. The PC is in the public eye.

+3 BP for **Stage Magician**, PC starts with Sleight of Hand (2), Lock Picking (2) and Escape Artistry (2) free.

Advancement 1 (4 BP or 30 XP) $400/wk., PC is moderately famous: most people have heard of the PC within specialized circles, e.g. fans of local hockey.

Advancement 2 (8 BP or 30 XP) $1,000/wk., PC is very famous: most people in the English-speaking world, and many people beyond, have heard of the PC.

Free Skills: Performance (3) OR Sports (4) OR Acrobatics (3).

Skill Costs: ACAD 7, ATHL 4, CMBT 15, CRTV 4, CRIM 15, TECH 8, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 7, PEOP 4, TRAD 7

Pilot

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC flies a plane, captains a boat or conducts a train.

Income: $5,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: Good income. PC can travel for free, so long as the PC is willing to go standby.

Drawbacks: PC often has to work overnight shifts and spend the night far from home.

+4 for **Own Plane/Boat** (the PC owns a small charter plane or boat and can use it for personal purposes while not working).

Advancement 1 (3 BP or 25 XP): $300/wk., senior pilot.

Free Skills: Boat Pilot (3) OR Airplane Pilot (3).

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 4, MEDI 7, PEOP 7, TRAD 7

Politician

Costs 4 BP

Description: The PC belongs to a salaried elected office in the city, county or state government. Besides doing the job the PC was elected to do, the PC must devote a large amount of time to PR work (doing things to get on the news) and fundraising for his or her next campaign.

Income: $5,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: Power and connections.

Drawbacks: Political opponents and reporters who will keep an eye out for the PC doing anything wrong.

Advancement 1 (6 XP or 40 XP) $500/wk., PC is in the state assembly.

Advancement 2 (10 XP or 60 XP) $800/wk., PC is in the US congress.

Free Skills: Government (2).

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 17, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 7, PEOP 5, TRAD 7

Privileged

Costs 8 BP

Description: The PC either has his or her own fortune or is cared for by a large trust fund which pays for all the PC's needs.

Income: $50,000 to start and $500/wk.

-2 BP for **Limited Duration**: the trust fund is set to stop within a few years, by experience level 3.

-3 BP for **Revocable**: the PC's parents can take away the PC's income if the PC displeases them.

Perks: Money can buy just about anything.

Drawbacks: The PC attracts exploiters and con artists, is also in the public eye. It's a lot easier to fritter away a fortune than to make one grow.

Advancement 1 (5 BP or 75 XP) $1,000/wk.

Advancement 2 (10 BP or 75 XP) $2,000/wk.

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 7, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 8

Professor

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC works for a university, teaching, doing research and publishing articles. With no advancement the PC is an associate professor who hops between state colleges and city colleges teaching general-ed classes.

Income: $5,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: The PC is a respected authority on some subject, can use students as assistants, has access to a library. After advancement the PC can get a lab and research funds.

Drawbacks: Advancement is slow. When the PC does advance, the PC must bring in grant money to the university and must publish papers regularly.

+4 BP for **Supernatural Field**: the PC works in Anthropology, Comparative Religions, Parapsychology or some other field which gives the PC free-reign to investigate supernatural events.

Advancement 1 (3 BP or 25 XP) $250/wk., full professor. The PC has an office at a state college and university, gets to teach some upper division and graduate level classes.

Advancement 2 (6 BP or 30 XP) $300/wk., tenured professor at a fairly prestigious university. The PC has access to a lab and graduate student assistants. The PC spends more time doing research than teaching.

Free Skills: Research: Academic (2), 5 free levels in any one Academic skill.

Skill Costs: ACAD 3, ATHL 8, CMBT 15, CRTV 4, CRIM 15, TECH 6, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 6, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Religious Professional

Costs 2 BP

Description: The PC is a monk, nun, priest, preacher, rabbi, imam, pastor or chaplain.

Income: $2,500 to start and $100/wk.

Perks: Many see the PC as an authority on ethical and spiritual matters. PC can often get into hospitals, prisons, disaster scenes and other places closed to the public.

Drawbacks: The PC will lose his or her job if he or she is caught professing a belief or doing some activity contrary to the religion's doctrines.

Advancement 1 (3 BP or 25 XP) $200/wk., PC is the spiritual leader to several hundred people.

Advancement 2 (6 BP or 25 XP) $300/wk., PC is a bishop, abbot, televangelist or leader of a large multi-church ministry.

Free Skills: Religion (2).

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 5, MEDI 7, PEOP 6, TRAD 7

Reporter

Costs 4 BP

Description: The PC does research and writes stories or takes photos for a TV show, newspaper, magazine, website or for nonfiction books.

Income: $5,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: Press credentials, which can get the PC into places others can't go and get people to talk who otherwise wouldn't. The PC has access to a research library and research databases.

Drawbacks: The PC must regularly come up with an interesting story or be fired. Some people are less willing to talk to a reporter.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 20 XP) $250/wk., PC is a senior reporter. The PC has more discretion over what story to investigate and how to do it, and has a better chance of getting the employer to pay for incidentals like hotels, meals, paying off informants, etc.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 20 XP) $400/wk., PC is a special correspondent who gets to travel and work on stories for extended periods. The PC's name is recognized by many people.

Advancement 3 (6 BP or 20 XP) $500/wk., PC is an editor. The PC gets to tell other reporters what stories to work on.

Free Skills: Research: Law Enforcement (2) and either Writing (2) OR Photography (2).

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 8, CMBT 15, CRTV 4, CRIM 12, TECH 7, INVS 7, LABR 6, MEDI 7, PEOP 5, TRAD 7

Researcher

Costs 4 BP

Description: The PC is a highly skilled and highly specialized engineer or scientist. The PC works for a private foundation or corporation, in a lab, doing scientific research or product development.

Income: $7,500 to start and $300/wk.

Perks: Access to a research lab with all the latest equipment for the PC's particular field.

Drawbacks: The PC must produce results for the company or foundation or will be fired. Anything the PC discovers belongs to the company or foundation.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 20 XP) $500/wk., Senior Researcher, the PC is the head of a small group of researchers working on a project.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 20 XP) $750/wk., Division Chief, the PC directs other researchers working on a variety of projects.

Free Skills: 5 levels in any one Academic or High Tech skill.

Skill Costs: ACAD 3, ATHL 8, CMBT 15, CRTV 6, CRIM 15, TECH 4, INVS 10, LABR 7, MEDI 4, PEOP 7, TRAD 8

Retired

0 BP

Description: The PC is living off of personal savings supplemented by either social security or disability.

Income: $4,000 to start and $30/wk.

Perks: Plenty of free time.

Drawbacks: PC must take the Old disadvantage (p.120), has a limited income with no advancement opportunities.

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 9, CMBT 13, CRTV 5, CRIM 12, TECH 9, INVS 9, LABR 5, MEDI 6, PEOP 6, TRAD 5

Security Professional

Costs 4 BP

Description: The PC works as a bodyguard, security guard or bouncer.

Income: $4,000 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: The PC has some credibility with law enforcement. Gets a free baton or pepper spray and a walkie talkie.

Drawbacks: The work alternates between boring and dangerous. The PC has very little legal power or authority to use violence and must bluff people into thinking he or she does. PC is often forced to work inconvenient hours (graveyard or swing).

Advancement 1 (3 BP or 25 XP) $300/wk., Senior Officer. PC gets Pistol (1) and a free pistol or Driving (1) and a company car to use on-duty.

Advancement 2 (5 BP or 25 XP) $400/wk., Security Chief. PC supervises other guards and is in charge of a site or shift.

Free Skills: Club (1) or Self-Defense Weapons (1).

Skill Costs: ACAD 7, ATHL 6, CMBT 9, CRTV 6, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 9, LABR 5, MEDI 6, PEOP 8, TRAD 8

Sex Industry Worker

0 BP

Description: The PC sells sex for money, working in either pornography, strip clubs, escort agencies or on the streets as a prostitute.

Income: $2,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: Easy access to drugs, underworld contacts.

Drawbacks: Often the target of violence and police harassment. Many in the sex industry grow to hate sex, the opposite gender and themselves. PC's job security depends on the PC's ability to stay attractive.

-2 BP for **Street Walker**: The PC is in the sector of the sex industry that is most likely to expose the PC to violence or legal trouble.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 25 XP) $500/wk., PC is a porn-star or high-class escort.

Skill Costs: ACAD 7, ATHL 6, CMBT 12, CRTV 7, CRIM 10, TECH 9, INVS 10, LABR 7, MEDI 8, PEOP 6, TRAD 6

Social Worker

0 BP

Description: The PC works to help people in need, especially those who can't help themselves, gain access to social support services, navigate the legal system and plan out their futures.

Income: $4,000 to start and $150/wk.

Perks: Stable work. Contacts with many aspects of the legal, medical and social support systems.

Drawbacks: Few advancement opportunities, often stressful and tiring.

Advancement 1 (2 BP or 15 XP) $250/wk., Supervisor.

Advancement 2 (4 BP or 15 XP) $350/wk., Division Chief.

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 6, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 6, PEOP 5, TRAD 7

Student

0 BP

Description: The PC goes to school full time, living off of scholarships, financial aide and occasional contributions by parents. With no advancement the PC starts as a city college student.

Income: $500 to start and $25/wk.

Perks: Access to libraries, labs, professors.

Drawbacks: If the PC misses too many classes or study time the PC's GPA will drop too low to get scholarships or financial aide.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 15 XP) $50/wk., University Undergraduate

Advancement 2 (2 BP or 15 XP) $75/wk., Graduate Student, PC spends less time in classes and more time doing his or her own research.

Advancement 3 (3 BP or 15 XP) $125/wk., Post-Doc, the PC teaches some classes, has assistants, may have his or her own corner in a lab.

Advancement 4 (15 XP) PC can become a Professor.

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 6, CMBT 15, CRTV 4, CRIM 15, TECH 6, INVS 8, LABR 8, MEDI 6, PEOP 6, TRAD 8

Trendy Customer Service Job

Costs 1 BP

Description: The PC works in a place frequented by the rich, powerful and famous. Example: a hairdresser in a trendy salon, a bartender in a trendy nightclub, a maitre d' at a five-star restaurant, etc.

Income: $4,000 to start and $200/wk.

Perks: Frequent contacts with some of society's most powerful and influential people. PC gets invited to a lot of parties.

Drawbacks: The PC must stay as trendy as the establishment or be fired. Poor benefits, few advancement opportunities.

Advancement 1 (1 BP or 15 XP) $250/wk., senior.

Skill Costs: ACAD 6, ATHL 5, CMBT 15, CRTV 4, CRIM 15, TECH 8, INVS 10, LABR 7, MEDI 7, PEOP 4, TRAD 7

Ward

Gives 4 BP

Description: The PC is either underage or has been judged mentally incompetent. The PC is cared for by another person who pays for all the PC's expenses. If the PC is underage (has taken the Young disad) the PC will eventually become old enough to be emancipated. If the PC was judged incompetent, a legal hearing and good report from a psychiatrist is needed.

Income: $250 to start and $10/wk.

+1 BP for **Upper-Middle Class Family**: starts with $750 and $20/wk.

+2 BP for **Upper-Class Family**: starts with $1,250 and $40/wk.

-4 BP for **Hardass Caregivers**: the people in charge of the PC are unusually restrictive of the PC.

-1 BP for **Foster Kid**: the PC is underage and a ward of the state; has to endure being bounced around between foster homes, some of which have abusive or intolerant caregivers.

Perks: Free time.

Drawbacks: The caregivers have a legal right to tell the PC what to do, and can call the cops to back them up.

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 8, INVS 10, LABR 8, MEDI 8, PEOP 8, TRAD 8

Welfare

Gives 2 BP

Description: The PC is on public assistance. The PC must meet with caseworkers regularly and provide proof that he or she is still poor and has been looking for work.

Income: $500 to start and $20/wk.

Perks: Free time.

Drawbacks: The government will revoke welfare after a set period of time (by level 3), or if it suspects any kind of malfeasance by the PC, or if the PC misses more than 1 caseworker appointment in a row

Skill Costs: ACAD 5, ATHL 8, CMBT 15, CRTV 6, CRIM 15, TECH 8, INVS 10, LABR 5, MEDI 8, PEOP 8, TRAD 6

Sample Character Creation – Step 5

We decide that a doctor would be a good job for Maggie Hernandez, so we choose Medical Professional. Just buying it makes her a nurse, so we want Advancement x2 which makes Maggie a full fledged MD. Medical Professional costs 2 Bonus Points and Advancement x2 costs 4 BP, so we'll have to pay for a total of 6 BP (see Bonus Characteristics, p.111).

Our Day Job choice means that Maggie starts with $4,000 and has $300 disposable income per week. Maggie also gets some free skills: one level of Diagnosis, one level of Emergency Medicine and one level of Pharmacology. The day job also sets the costs for buying mundane skills, which will be important when we buy skills in the next step.

Step Six – Skills

In Brief: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by Day Job and Secret Life. Can buy 1 to 5 levels of any skill.

Every character begins with 100 skill points to buy skills with. Each Day Job has a list of skill costs for mundane skills. Each category of skills has a cost. That number represents the number of skill points it costs to buy one level in any skill from that category. These costs are based on how easily characters of that profession have access to teachers of those skills or can teach themselves. Each Secret Life has a list of Supernatural Skills the PC has access to and the costs for each. Skills are bought in levels from 1 to 6 with 1 representing a hobby level and 6 representing mastership at the skill. PCs can not buy level 6 for a starting character without special permission from the GM. Each skill level above the first gives +4 to skill rolls using that skill.

Some skills have prerequisites. One or more levels of another skill must be taken before any levels of this skill can be taken. Prerequisites are listed at the beginning of each skill.

Each skill lists the attribute which is typically used with that skill. Combat skills list only "combat" since the attributes used depend on the fighting maneuver the PC attempts.

For example: *A Career Criminal, who can buy Criminal skills for 7 points each, buys 3 levels of Escape Artistry. Escape Artistry has a prerequisite of Lock Picking (2). Since the PC already has 2 levels of Lock Picking it's not a problem. Buying 3 levels of Escape Artistry will cost 21 skill points (3x7) and gives the PC a skill level of 3, meaning he will have +8 on all rolls using this skill (+4 for each level after level 1). Since Escape Artistry typically uses AGY, the PC will typically roll his AGY +8 +1d20 vs. the difficulty. If his AGY is 10, his "AV" (action value) could be recorded on the character sheet as 18, meaning he will roll 18 +1d20 for almost all Escape Artistry rolls.*

See the section on using skills (p.136) for more information.

Mundane Skills

ACAD (Academic)
- Business (INL)
- Cryptography (INL)*
- Government (INL)
- History: Local (INL)
- History: World (INL)
- Law: Basic (INL)
- Law: Business (INL)
- Law: Criminal (INL)*
- Law: International (INL)*
- Law: Tort (INL)*
- Linguistics (INL)
- Math (INL)
- Mnemonics (INL)
- Mythology (INL)
- Philosophy (INL)
- Physics (INL)*
- Religion (INL)
- Research: Academic (INL)
- Science: Agriculture (INL)
- Science: Archeology/Paleontology (INL)
- Science: Botany (INL)
- Science: Chemistry
- Science: Ecology (INL)
- Science: Genetics (INL)
- Science: Meteorology (INL)
- Science: Pathology (INL)
- Science: Psychology (INL)
- Social Work (INL)

ATHL (Athletic)
- Acrobatics (AGY)
- Bicycle (AGY)
- Climbing (AGY)
- Running (SPD)
- Skates (AGY)
- Sports (AGY)
- Swimming (END)

CMBT (Combat)
- Aikido (Combat)
- Archery (Combat)
- Assassin: Armed (Combat)
- Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)
- Automatic Weapons (Combat)
- Bodyguard (Combat)
- Boxing (Combat)
- Club (Combat)
- Fencing (Combat)
- Florentine Sword (Combat)
- Gun Repair (INL)
- Immobilization (Combat)
- Kickboxing (Combat)
- Knife Fighting (Combat)
- Knife Throwing (Combat)
- Ordinance (Combat)
- Pistol (Combat)
- Rifle/Shotgun (Combat)
- Self-Defense Weapons (Combat)
- Sniper (Combat)
- Specific Weapon Training (Combat)
- Staff Fighting (Combat)
- Street Fighting: Armed (Combat)
- Street Fighting: Unarmed (Combat)
- Sword and Shield (Combat)
- Tae Kwon Do (Combat)
- Wrestling (Combat)

CRTV (Creative)
- Cooking (AWR)
- Filmmaking (INL)
- Gardening (INL)
- Music (AWR)
- Photography (AWR)
- Sculpture (AWR)
- Visual Arts (AWR)
- Writing (INL)

CRIM (Criminal)
- Alarm Systems (AWR or INL)
- Auto-Theft (INL)
- Black Market (CHM)
- Card Counting (INL)*
- Drug Resistance (WIL)
- Escape Artistry (AGY)*
- Forgery (INL)
- Gambling (INL)
- Lock Picking (AGY)
- Organized Crime (INL)
- Pocket Picking (AGY)
- Poisons (INL)
- Prowling (AGY)
- Street Drugs (INL or AWR)

TECH (High Tech)
- Anonymity (INL)
- Computer Hardware (INL)
- Computer Security (INL)
- Computer Software (INL)
- Data Pirating (INL)*
- Denial of Service (INL)*
- Hacking (INL)
- Internet Publishing (INL)
- Networks (INL)
- Phone Phreaking (INL)
- Programming (INL)
- Research: Internet (INL)

INVS (Investigation/Espionage)
- Bomb Disarming (INL)
- Brainwashing (INL)*
- Crime Scene Forensics (INL)
- Disguise (INL)
- Forensic Pathology (INL)
- Impersonation (CHM)
- Interrogation (CHM)
- Military Tactics (INL)
- Offensive Driving (AGY)
- Research: Law Enforcement (INL)
- Torture (INL)
- WMDs (INL)

LABR (Labor)
- Airplane Pilot (AGY)
- Blacksmithing (INL)
- Boat Pilot (AGY)
- Brewing (INL)
- Carpentry (INL)
- Demolitions (INL)
- Driving (AGY)
- Electronics (INL)
- Heavy Machinery (AGY)
- Helicopter (INL)
- Mechanics (INL)
- Motorcycle (AGY)
- Plumbing (INL)

MEDI (Medical)
- Diagnosis (INL)
- Emergency Medicine (INL)
- Pharmacology (INL)
- Physical Therapy (INL)
- Plastic Surgery (INL)*
- Psychopharmacology (INL)*
- Surgery (INL)
- Veterinary Medicine (INL)

PEOP (People)
- Fashion and Beauty (CHM)
- Language (INL)
- Oratory (CHM)
- Performance (CHM)
- Psychotherapy (CHM)
- Seduction (CHM)
- Storytelling (CHM)

TRAD (Traditional)
- Acupuncture (INL)
- Animal Training (CHM)
- Local Geography (INL)
- Ethnogens (INL)
- Herbal Medicine (INL)
- Hypnosis (CHM)
- Lipreading (AWR)
- Light Sleep (AWR)
- Sleight of Hand (AGY)
- Street Survival (INL)
- Tracking (AWR)
- Traditional Crafts (INL)
- Wilderness Survival (INL)

*Prerequisites

Skill Description Features

The attribute this skill generally uses (roll Attribute + 1d20 +4/skill level above 1 and try to match the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do with the skill)

Cryptography (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2). This is knowledge of mathematical theories behind modern cryptography and code-breaking techniques. Includes the ability to analyze, modify and create codes and attempt to break codes.
Easy (10): Do simple cipher by hand.
Moderate (20): Break a simple cipher.
Hard (30): Analyze the encryption on a Hard Drive.

A skill PCs must have before they can buy this skill (and the number of levels of the prerequisite skill the PC must have).

A series of examples showing things PCs might do with a skill at different difficulties.

Day Jobs and Skill Costs

	ACAD	ATHL	CMBT	CRTV	CRIM	TECH	INVS	LABR	MEDI	PEOP	TRAD
Alternative Health	5	5	15	5	15	8	10	6	5	7	5
Boring Customer Service	6	7	15	5	15	7	10	5	7	7	7
Boring Factory Job	6	7	15	5	15	7	10	4	7	7	7
Boring Field Job	5	7	14	5	15	7	10	4	7	7	7
Boring Office Job	5	7	15	5	15	6	10	5	7	7	7
Business Owner	4	7	15	4	15	7	10	4	7	7	7
Career Criminal	7	7	8	6	7	8	10	6	9	7	7
Child Care	4	7	15	4	15	7	10	5	7	6	7
Computer Tech	4	8	15	5	15	3	10	6	7	7	7
Creative	4	7	15	3	15	7	10	5	7	6	7
Dangerous Field Job	6	5	13	6	15	8	9	4	7	6	7
Driver	5	7	15	5	15	7	10	4	7	7	7
Homeless	8	7	12	5	10	9	10	5	9	9	5
Homemaker	6	8	15	5	15	7	10	8	7	6	7
Investigator	6	7	9	6	10	7	5	6	7	7	7
Law Enforcement Pro.	6	6	7	6	12	7	6	6	6	8	7
Legal Professional	3	7	15	6	15	7	8	7	7	6	8
Medical Professional	4	7	15	5	15	7	10	6	3	7	8
Paranormal Professional	5	7	15	5	12	7	10	6	7	6	7
Performer	7	4	15	4	15	8	10	6	7	4	7
Pilot	5	7	15	5	15	7	10	4	7	7	7
Politician	4	7	15	5	17	7	10	6	7	5	7
Privileged	5	7	15	5	15	7	10	7	7	6	8
Professor	3	8	15	4	15	6	10	6	6	6	7
Religious Professional	4	7	15	5	15	7	10	5	7	6	7
Reporter	5	8	15	4	12	7	7	6	7	5	7
Researcher	3	8	15	6	15	4	10	7	4	7	8
Retired	5	9	13	5	12	9	9	5	6	6	5
Security Professional	7	6	9	6	15	7	9	5	6	8	8
Sex Industry Worker	7	6	12	7	10	9	10	7	8	6	6
Social Worker	4	7	15	6	15	7	10	6	6	5	7
Student	4	6	15	4	15	6	8	8	6	6	8
Trendy Customer Service	6	5	15	4	15	8	10	7	7	4	7
Ward	5	7	15	5	15	8	10	8	8	8	8
Welfare	5	8	15	6	15	8	10	5	8	8	6
	ACAD	ATHL	CMBT	CRTV	CRIM	TECH	INVS	LABR	MEDI	PEOP	TRAD

ACAD (Academic)

Business (INL)- This is knowledge of the world of business, from single proprietorships to multinational corporations. The PC is familiar with business bookkeeping, taxes, investment, labor practices, sales, distribution, manufacturing and warehousing.

Easy (10): Write a business plan.

Moderate (20): Incorporate.

Hard (30): Borrow money to buy a shipment of 100,000 pens from China then sell them to an American company at a 100% markup.

Cryptography (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2). This is knowledge of mathematical theories behind modern cryptography and code-breaking techniques. Includes the ability to analyze, modify and create codes and attempt to break codes.

Easy (10): Do simple cipher by hand.

Moderate (20): Break a simple cipher.

Hard (30): Analyze the encryption on a Hard Drive.

Government (INL)- This is knowledge of the structure and procedures of government, from city councils to federal agencies.

Easy (10): Make a statement before the city council.

Moderate (20): Get a funding grant from a federal agency.

Hard (30): Get a state water management board to rescind its annual report to the state assembly because it failed to make a draft available for public comment for 30 days.

History: Local (INL)- This is knowledge of the history of the area the campaign takes place in.

Easy (10): Tell how and why the city was founded.

Moderate (20): Tell when year a skyscraper was built.

Hard (30): Determine what was on any given block 200 years ago.

History: World (INL)

Easy (10): Describe the major players in WWII.

Moderate (20): Name the major Chinese dynasties and say what made each one special.

Hard (30): Name the winner of any given battle in the crusades.

Law: Basic (INL)- This is knowledge of basic legal principles and procedures. Includes: where laws come from, what courts judge what cases, how cases are brought in front of a court, who can practice law, the remedies for each type of legal problem and the general procedures for legal actions.

Easy (10): File an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief.

Moderate (20): File an ethics complaint against a lawyer with the state bar.

Hard (30): Research all relevant laws and cases for a given legal question.

Law: Business (INL)- This is the study of laws and legal doctrines relating to corporations and other businesses. Unlike other forms of law it is possible to learn business law without a thorough grounding in basic legal principles.

Easy (10): Form and register a business partnership.

Moderate (20): Put together a flawless record contract with a musician.

Hard (30): Make sure an annual stockholder's report conforms to SEC requirements.

Law: Criminal (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). This is knowledge of prosecuting or defending those who have been accused of crimes.

Easy (10): List the elements of murder.

Moderate (20): Figure out whether the 'deal' the district attorney is offering a criminal defendant is a good deal or not.

Hard (30): Get the evidence obtained from a not-quite-legal police search thrown out.

Law: International (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). This is knowledge of the laws and legal procedures that cut across national borders. Includes maritime law, war crimes and international business law.

Easy (10): Determine who owns the floating cargo left over from a plane crash in international waters.

Moderate (20): Write a contract for the sale of goods to a company in another country.

Hard (30): Prepare a brief, on behalf of one country, seeking reparations from another country for war crimes.

Law: Tort (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). This is the study of civil (as opposed to criminal) law and the legal actions that can be taken by someone harmed by a tort.

Easy (10): Take someone to small claims court over a dented fender.

Moderate (20): Sue someone for libel.

Hard (30): File a class action lawsuit against multiple international corporations.

Linguistics (INL)- This is the theoretical study of language. Each level of this skill gives -2 to the skill cost for the skill Language (min. 1).

Easy (10): Determine what language someone is speaking.

Moderate (20): Determine the origin of a language by comparing it to other languages.

Hard (30): Determine where someone is from by analyzing his or her accent.

Math (INL)- This is knowledge of all branches of mathematics and statistics.

Easy (10): Calculate the compound interest on a loan.

Moderate (20): Find a complex mathematical proof.

Hard (30): Create complex computer models to predict the movement of storm clouds.

Mnemonics (INL)- This is the collection of tricks and techniques that allow large amounts of information to be memorized quickly and recalled accurately.

Easy (10): Remember a phone number for days after hearing it once.

Moderate (20): Memorize the configuration of a chessboard and remember it for days.

Hard (30): Memorize several pages of a book and remember it verbatim for weeks.

Mythology (INL)- This is knowledge of the stories of gods, spirits, monsters, magic and ancestors from around the world and through history.

Easy (10): Name the Roman god of time.

Moderate (20): Tell the Navajo story of the origin of this world.

Hard (30): Tell a particular New Guinea tribe's name for a wild human-eating jungle spirit.

Philosophy (INL)- This is knowledge of academically esteemed theories of ethics, logic and reality.

Easy (10): Identify the logical fallacy in an argument.

Moderate (20): Outline and critique Descartes' argument for the existence of god.

Hard (30): Identify the major principles of morality taught in West African legends.

Physics (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2). This is knowledge of the theories and mathematical formulae that explain everything from falling objects to aerodynamics to the birth of the universe.

Easy (10): Calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

Moderate (20): Calculate the amount of x-rays that would escape from the event horizon of a black hole.

Hard (30): Understand a string-theory equation.

Religion (INL)- This is the study of the history, beliefs and organization of all the world's religions.

Easy (10): Tell the difference between a Shiite and Sunni Muslim.

Moderate (20): Name the 7th Roman Catholic pope.

Hard (30): Tell the name of the thunder god of a small Papa New Guinea tribe.

Research: Academic (INL)- This is knowledge of how to find out information by searching through libraries, research databases, newspaper archives, private collections of historical documents, etc.

Easy (10): Find a paper describing the effects of Ritalin on pregnant rats.

Moderate (20): Find the winner of a local beauty pageant in 1923.

Hard (30): Find the letters home from British soldiers who had been in a certain battle in the Crimean War.

Science: Agriculture (INL)- This is knowledge of the history, methods and science of modern agribusiness.

Easy (10): Explain crop-rotation.

Moderate (20): Determine which crop is most profitable for a certain farm.

Hard (30): Plant, grow, protect, harvest and sell a small crop.

Science: Archeology/Paleontology (INL)- This is knowledge of the methods used to gain information about pre-history, as well as the information that has been gained by those methods.

Easy (10): Tell when humans first came to the American continent.

Moderate (20): Recognize the bones of a euoplocephalus.

Hard (30): Analyze ice-core samples to find increases in forest fires 5,000 years ago.

Science: Botany (INL)- This is knowledge of the science of plants.

Easy (10): Classify plants by phylum.

Moderate (20): Identify North American edible plants.

Hard (30): Distinguish poisonous from edible wild mushrooms.

Science: Chemistry (INL)- This is knowledge of the composition and interactions of chemicals as well as the practical methods of analyzing, synthesizing and isolating chemicals.

Easy (10): Draw a diagram of the composition of monosodium glutamate and describe how it might interact with other chemicals.

Moderate (20): Test for the presence of MSG in a food sample (requires Chemical Analysis Equipment, see p.102).

Hard (30): Synthesize MSG from soy beans (requires a small chemistry lab).

Science: Ecology (INL)- This is knowledge of how plants, animals, micro-organisms and the environment interact with each other.

Easy (10): Determine whether an ecological system is relatively 'healthy.'

Moderate (20): Identify the role of each major player in an ecosystem.

Hard (30): Determine what the introduction of a particular species will do to an ecosystem.

Science: Genetics (INL)- This is knowledge of methods of reading, comparing and changing DNA as well as what little is known about how genes produce biological traits.

Easy (10): Do a paternity test.

Moderate (20): Determine a person's ethnic background.

Hard (30): Create frost-resistant lima-beans.

Science: Meteorology (INL)- This is knowledge of weather and weather prediction.

Easy (10): Predict the next hour's weather using satellite images.

Moderate (20): Predict the next few day's weather using satellite images.

Hard (30): Predict the next few day's weather using a homemade barometer and weather vane.

Science: Pathology (INL)- This is the study of diseases: how they spread, what they do to the body, how they reproduce.

Easy (10): Describe the disease vectors of influenza.

Moderate (20): Describe the effects on the liver of hepatitis.

Hard (30): List the onset symptoms of a rare South American parasite.

Science: Psychology (INL)- This is knowledge of the theories and research concerning the workings of human and animal minds.

Easy (10): List some of the consequences of not enough dopamine.

Moderate (20): List Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Hard (30): Name the likelihood of each attachment style.

Social Work (INL)- This is knowledge of the various services available to the needy via city, county, state and federal government programs. The skill can be used to identify what services are available to meet a person's particular needs and how to get the person those services.

Easy (10): Help someone get on welfare.

Moderate (20): Help someone get on disability.

Hard (30): Help a mentally ill homeless person get into a group-home.

ATHL (Athletic)

Acrobatics (AGY)- This is training in physical tricks involving swinging, jumping, rolling, balancing, etc. Primarily for the purposes of amusing others. STH may be used instead of or in addition to AGY for some stunts. Acrobatics adds +4 per level to jumping rolls and saves vs. loss of balance.

Easy (10): Do cartwheels.

Moderate (20): Swing off of a fire escape, somersault in midair and land on one's feet.

Hard (30): Backflip off a building and land on a telephone wire.

Bicycle (AGY)- This is training on various terrain with racing and mountain bikes. Gives the following maneuvers (with +4 for each level after the first, see Vehicle Skills, p.137).

Jump (20): Jump the bike over holes or obstacles.

Sharp Turn (20): By leaning over almost to the point of touching the ground, the PC can make tight turns.

Skidding Turn (30): By skidding the rear tire, the PC can make incredibly fast and tight turns.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Climbing (AGY)- This is training in climbing with or without climbing tools. Climbing adds +4 per level to climbing rolls (see p.126).

Easy (10): Climb a tree.

Moderate (20): Climb a cliff face using climbing tools.

Hard (30): Climb a cliff face using no tools.

Running (SPD)- This is training in maintaining an efficient stride and knowing how much energy to spend to maintain maximum speed throughout different length runs. Gives +4 per level to sprinting rolls (see p.138) or +4 per level to END for use with long distance running.

Skates (AGY)- This is training in the use of roller-skates and rollerblades. The skill can also be used with ice-skates or skis but at +10 difficulty. Gives the following maneuvers:

Jump (20): Jump over holes or obstacles.

Rails (30): Ride on very thin things like railings or small ledges.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sports (AGY)- This is training in all the popular physical sports, including basketball, soccer, football, handball and tennis. Choose one sport the PC has specialized in: the PC gets +10 to rolls involving that sport. To determine the outcome of the game, each player must make either a sports skill roll (easy difficulty) or an AGY roll (moderate difficulty). The opposed winner wins the game.

Swimming (END)- This is training at swimming for speed, distance and agility. The PC also knows how to use SCUBA gear for diving. Gives +4 per level to SPD for fast swimming (people can typically swim at ¼ their normal SPD) or +4 per level to END for use with long-distance swimming.

CMBT (Combat)

Aikido (Combat)- This 20th century martial art was designed for non-violent self-defense. Gives the following moves with bare hands and feet only:

+4 to Disarm
+4 to Grab (Pain)
+0 to Knockdown
+4 to Dodge
+4 to Flip
+0 to Parry

Archery (Combat)- Gives the following maneuvers with bows and crossbows:

+4 to split action Draw and Strike (excluding crossbows)

Double Aim (takes 2 actions, +10 to next action)

+0 to Strike (Projectile)
+4 to Vital Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

Assassin: Armed (Combat)- Techniques for quick, efficient and silent surprise attacks with knives and garrotes. This skill does not include firearm training (see Sniper, p.70). Gives the following:

+4 to Grab (Strangulation) with garrote weapons.

+0 to Special Action: Jugular Attack (Requires ½+ bladed damage handheld weapon. If successful, victim cannot speak or scream and loses 4 BLD per round until dead. AWR + AGY +1d20 vs. 40).

+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed) with knives

Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)- Techniques for quick and efficient unarmed killing of a surprised opponent. Gives the following maneuvers with hands and feet:

+4 to Grab (Strangulation)

+0 to Special Action: Neck Breaking (Requires a hold on the victim's head. If successful, instant paralysis and death. STH + AGY +1d20 vs. 40)

+4 to Stomp
+0 to Knockdown

Automatic Weapons (Combat)- Gives the following actions with machine guns, submachineguns, automatic rifles and automatic pistols.

+4 to Area Attack
+0 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
+4 to Split Reaction: Dodge and Simultaneous Strike
+4 to Split Reaction: Drop and Simultaneous Strike

Combat Skills In Brief

Each combat skills lists plusses to combat actions and reactions (described on p.79) with a certain set of weapons. At level 1 in the skill, the PC only gets the plusses listed. Ignore any plusses that give +0 or a penalty. For every additional level of the skill, add +4 to each one of these plusses (meaning that the zeroes and negatives will eventually become plusses).

For instance, at level 1 a skill might give +4 to Strike, +0 to Parry and -4 to Vital Strike with a weapon. At level 1, the only plus that really counts is the +4 to strike. At level 2 the PC will get +8 to strike, +4 to Parry and +0 to Vital Strike (now only the Vital Strike does nothing). At level 3: +12 to Strike, +8 to Parry, +4 to Vital Strike.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

Bodyguard (Combat)- This is training in protecting others in the middle of combat. PCs with this skill can use their reaction when an attack is directed towards another person.

+2 per level to initiative
+4 to Grab
+4 to Tackle

+0 to special action **Parry Another** (STH + AGY + 1d20 vs. 30, if successful the PC parries a blow directed towards another).

+0 to special reaction: **Body Block** (SPD + AGY + 1d20 vs. 20, if successful the PC put himself or herself between a strike and the intended target).

Boxing (Combat)- This is training in fighting with bare or gloved fists.

+4 to Parry with forearms
+0 to Strike with fists
+4 to Blinding Strike with fists
+0 to Knockout Strike with fists
+4 to Pain/Stun Strike with fists

Club (Combat)- This is training with all club-like weapons, including baseball bats, nightsticks, pipes, telescoping batons, etc. Gives the following plusses with club weapons only:

+4 to Parry
+4 to Vital Strike (Blunt)
+0 to Wing
+0 to Strike

Fencing (Combat)- This is training in competitive fencing. Gives the following plusses with fencing swords (or with other swords at -8):

+8 to Parry
+0 to Strike
+0 to Vital Strike
+4 to Jump

Florentine Sword (Combat)- This is training in fighting using two swords.

No penalty for using paired swords.
+4 to Parry
+4 to Strike

+8 to Split Reaction: Parry and Simultaneous Strike

Gun Repair (INL)- This is knowledge of how to assemble, clean, maintain and repair firearms.

Easy (10): Clean a pistol.
Moderate (20): Manufacture bullets.
Hard (30): Recalibrate the sights of a sniper rifle.

Immobilization (Combat)- This martial art is usually taught to police officers and security guards. It entails taking-down and immobilizing opponents without doing permanent damage. Gives the following:

+8 to Grab (Pain)
+4 to Grab (Wrestling)
+0 to Grab
+0 to Knockdown
-4 to Crippling Attack
-4 to Disarm

Kickboxing (Combat)- Gives the following actions with feet:

+4 to Wing
+4 to Parry
+4 to Knockaway
+0 to Strike

Knife Fighting (Combat)- Gives the following actions with knives and daggers:

+8 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
+4 to Jump
+4 to Split Action: Jump and Strike
+0 to Dodge

Knife Throwing (Combat)- The PC has trained in throwing knives, daggers and other thrown, bladed weapons. Gives the following actions when throwing only:

+2 per level to initiative
+4 to Strike
+0 to Vital Strike
-4 to Blinding Strike
No penalty for targeted strikes.

Ordinance (Combat)- Gives the following with grenades, molotov cocktails, anti-tank weapons and grenade launchers:

Double Aim (takes 2 rounds, gives +8 to the next action).
+4 to Strike (Projectile)
+4 to Jump

Pistol (Combat)- The PC has trained at close quarters combat using pistols. Gives the following plusses:

No penalty for using paired pistols
+2 per level to initiative with pistols
+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
+4 to Strike (Projectile)
+4 to Split Reaction: Dodge and Strike
+4 to Split Reaction: Drop and Strike

Rifle/Shotgun (Combat)- The PC has trained with the use of all rifles (including assault rifles and sniper rifles) and shotguns (including sawed-off shotguns). Gives the following actions with those weapons only:

+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
+4 to Simultaneous Strike
+0 to Strike

Self-Defense Weapons- Gives the following plusses with pepper spray and tasers.

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+4 to Blinding Strike
+4 to Simultaneous Pain/Stun Attack

Sniper (Combat)- Gives the following with sniper rifles. Other types of rifles with scopes can be used at -8.

Double Aim (Takes 2 rounds, gives +8 to the next action).
+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
No penalty for targeted strikes.

Specific Weapon Training (Combat)- This is training in some non-projectile weapon that is not covered by any other skill (including blowpipe, fire axe, pickaxe, sledgehammer, tiger claws and whip). Gives the following:

+4 to Strike
+4 to Vital Strike -or- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack (choose one)
+4 to Parry -or- +2 per level to initiative (choose one)

Staff Fighting (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with staves or any long pole being used as a staff.

+8 to Parry
+0 to Strike
+4 to Split Action Jump and Strike

Street Fighting: Armed (Combat)- This is rough-and-tumble, no-rules, do-anything-to-win fighting using whatever objects are available that can be used as weapons. Gives the following plusses using improvised weapons (see p.145) or cheap weapons (baseball bats, chains, crate cutters, crowbars, daggers, knives, pipes, sharpened sticks, etc.):

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+4 to Simultaneous Strike
+4 to Crippling Attack
+0 to Slash
-4 to Vital Strike (Bladed and Blunt)

Street Fighting: Unarmed (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with hands and feet only:

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+4 to Crippling Attack
+4 to Blinding Attack
+0 to Knockdown
+0 to Stomp

Sword and Shield (Combat)- This is the use of a sword or machete in one hand and a shield in the other. Gives the following plusses:

+4 to Parry
+8 to Split Action Parry and Simultaneous Strike
+0 to Knockaway

Tae Kwon Do (Combat)- One of the most popular martial arts in the world, nearly synonymous with Karate. Focuses on dropping opponents swiftly and efficiently using only hands and feet. Gives the following plusses while unarmed only:

+2 per level to initiative
+4 to Strike with fists or feet
+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+0 to Split Action Jump and Strike (kick)
+0 to Parry (with the back of the hand)

Wrestling (Combat)- Gives the following plusses:

+0 to Grab
+8 to Grab (Wrestling)
+4 to Knockdown
+4 to Tackle
+0 to Flip

CRTV (Creative)

Cooking (AWR)- Training in various styles of cooking.

Easy (10): Make a tasty meal in a well-stocked restaurant kitchen.

Moderate (20): Make a delicious meal in a middle-class person's kitchen.

Hard (30): Make a delicious meal out of food from the food bank.

Filmmaking (INL)- This is knowledge of the costs, equipment, techniques and art of capturing moving images.

Easy (10): Create an indie movie on Super 8 worthy of play at a minor festival.

Moderate (20): Create a professional quality 30-second commercial.

Hard (30): Direct and produce a pro-quality feature length movie with special effects.

Gardening (INL)- This is knowledge of how to grow small amounts of plants for food, medicine, poison or decoration. To grow on a large scale, see Science: Agriculture. For knowledge of how to utilize medicinal or poisonous plants, see the skills Herbal Medicine and Poisons.

Easy (10): Grow hardy plants in a greenhouse with grow-lights.

Moderate (20): Grow plants in an air-conditioned house with a small grow-light.

Hard (30): Grow exotic plants in a pot in a backyard.

Music (AWR)- This is knowledge of composing, reading, writing, playing and improvising music. Choose one instrument (including voice) that the PC specializes in playing. The PC is -10 when using any other instrument.

Moderate (20): Make up an entertaining song in a few hours.

Hard (30): Make up an entertaining song while jamming.

Legendary (40): Compose songs worthy of an album.

Photography (AWR)- Training in utilizing photographic, developing and printing technology to capturing a scene exactly as the photographer wants it captured.

Easy (10): Use studio lighting to photograph someone looking very nice.

Moderate (20): Capture the beauty of a dark alley.

Hard (30): Make a portrait using daguerreotype technology.

Sculpture (AWR)- This is training in carving beautiful or useful things from rock or wood or forming them from clay.

Easy (10): Make a wooden doorstop.

Moderate (20): Make a clay pot.

Hard (30): Carve a stone statue that is a perfect likeness of someone.

Visual Arts (AWR)- This is training in how to create beautiful or compelling images on paper, cloth, canvas or computer screens. Choose one specialty (e.g. painting landscapes), the PC gets +10 to skill rolls involving that specialty.

Easy (10): Create a recognizable sketch of someone.

Moderate (20): Create a painting that someone would accept as a gift and put up proudly.

Hard (30): Create a painting that could sell for $500 if placed in the right gallery.

Writing (INL)- The PC knows how to describe things in writing in a way that is informative, understandable, technically correct, conforms to a given style and is even pleasant to read. The PC can use this skill to write journalism, academic papers, fiction, technical manuals or even advertising copy.

Easy (10): Write a memo that clearly and concisely describes an incident.

Moderate (20): Write a newspaper article about a tenement that captures the feel of the place.

Hard (30): Write an entertaining technical manual.

CRIM (Criminal)

Alarm Systems (AWR or INL)- This is knowledge of the various electronic alarm systems that protect buildings from intruders. The skill can be used to recognize alarm systems (AWR) and determine how to bypass or disable them (INL). Sometimes AGY rolls are also required to disable or bypass the alarms without setting them off.

Easy (10): Recognize a motion detector -or- Bypass infrared beams.

Moderate (20): Recognize a door sensor -or- Move very slowly past a motion detector.

Hard (30): Recognize pressure sensitive floor plates -or- Dress up in a ice-pack-filled-suit to bypass a heat sensor.

Auto-Theft (INL)- This is knowledge of various tricks for opening vehicles and hot-wiring them. The amount of success determines the time it takes to accomplish the theft, 10+ success means only a few seconds.

Easy (10): Open a door on an older car using a long flat piece of metal.

Moderate (20): Hotwire an older car.

Hard (30): Hotwire a new car with a security system.

Black Market (CHM)- This is knowledge of where and how to purchase illegal goods and services, how to bribe officials, where or how to sell illegal goods and services and how to determine the value of black market goods and services. The PC is at -10 in any other than the PC's home area and -20 in other countries. This skill also allows the PC to start play with illegal items (see p.88).

Easy (10): Buy an infraction level item (e.g. a dime bag of marijuana) or pay for a blowjob.

Moderate (20): Buy a misdemeanor level item (e.g. a switchblade) or bribe a cop to forget about a speeding ticket.

Hard (30): Buy a felony level item (e.g. a machine gun) or hire an assassin.

Legendary (40): Buy a capital level item (e.g. weapons-grade plutonium) or hire mercenaries to overthrow a government.

Card Counting (INL)- Prerequisite: Gambling (1). This is training in remembering the values of cards that have been played to determine what cards are most likely to come up next and give a small (but in the long run very significant) advantage over other players.

Easy (10): Gain a +4 advantage in blackjack.

Moderate (20): Gain a +7 advantage in poker.

Hard (30): Gain a +7 advantage in poker when multiple decks are used.

Drug Resistance (WIL)- This is experience with many types of drugs and practice acting normally while under the influence. Gives +4 per level to save vs. drug effects and can help PCs 'regain' attributes that have been temporarily reduced by the drugs as follows:

Easy (10): +1 to lost attributes.

Moderate (20): +2 to lost attributes.

Hard (30): +3 to lost attributes.

Escape Artistry (AGY)- Prerequisite: Lock Picking (2). This is training in the various techniques that stage magicians use to escape from enclosures. Most uses of this skill require a lock-pick to be hidden on one's person, then contortion to be used to retrieve it and gain access to the lock so it can be picked.

Easy (10): Escape from a pair of handcuffs.

Moderate (20): Escape from a straight-jacket.

Hard (30): Escape from a steamer-trunk wrapped in a chain with a padlock.

Forgery (INL)- This is training in forging signatures, ID cards and other paper based documents. Most attempts at forgery require an investment in equipment (ink, printers, lamination, etc.) which can range from a few bucks (for a cheap ID) to several thousand (for counterfeiting money).

Easy (10): Copy a signature ($1 investment).

Moderate (20): Create a photo ID ($20 investment).

Hard (30): Create California Driver's License (with hologram) ($500 investment).

Legendary (40): Counterfeit money ($5,000 investment).

Gambling (INL)- This is training in various popular games of chance (mainly dice or card games). When playing a game the PC makes an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) roll against their opponents (who can make gambling skill rolls or hard INL rolls).

Lock Picking (AGY)- This is training in opening locks, typically by putting tension on the lock and raking each pin in the lock with a pick until they stick in the proper position. This skill can be used in combination with the Electronics skill to bypass electronic locks.

Easy (10): Pick the lock on a cheap filing cabinet.

Moderate (20): Pick the lock on the door to someone's apartment.

Hard (30): Pick the lock on the change box on a payphone.

Organized Crime (INL)- This is knowledge of the structure, business and culture of organized crime groups that operate in the US, from lowly street gangs to international cartels.

Easy (10): Tell whether two major street gangs are at war.

Moderate (20): Decipher gang graffiti.

Hard (30): Recognize a major mafia Don by sight and know the names and ages of his kids.

Pocket Picking (AGY)- The victim gets an opposed (moderate) AWR roll to sense the theft. Victims can also use common sense (e.g. knowing to check their pockets after someone has bumped into them).

Easy (10): Grab the wallet from the external pocket of an overcoat on a drunk person in a crowd at a rock concert.

Moderate (20): Bump into someone while walking past and pull something out of a pants pocket.

Hard (30): Rob a fellow bus passenger by slitting a pants pocket with a razor blade.

Poisons (INL)- This is knowledge of the origin, use, effects and treatment of poisons.

Easy (10): Find something under a person's sink that, when put on a blade, will exacerbate any injuries the blade makes.

Moderate (20): Manufacture deadly-when-ingested poison from the contents of a gardener's shed.

Hard (30): Recognize a common poison by examining a dead body.

Prowling (AGY)- This is practice in sneaking up on people, moving silently, quickly finding hiding places, crawling through shadows and blending in with the environment. Gives +4/level to prowling rolls (p.12).

Street Drugs (Uses AWR or INL)- This is an overall familiarity with common street drugs – how much they cost, what their effects are, what people act like when they are on them, etc. INL is used for remembering facts, AWR is used for recognizing drugs or drug effects. The skill also includes knowledge of how to manufacture street drugs.

Easy (10): Name the going price for good heroin (INL) -or- Feel and recognize the effects of bennies (AWR).

Moderate (20): Describe heroin withdrawal (INL) -or- Determine how pure cocaine is by looking at and tasting it (AWR).

Hard (30): Create a meth lab (INL) -or- Determine what drug a person is on just by how they look and act (AWR).

TECH (High Tech)

Anonymity (INL)- This is knowledge of how to access the internet while concealing the source of the access. This is typically done through anonymous re-sender servers operated by privacy advocates.

Easy (10): Send an anonymous email for a $5 fee.

Moderate (20): Make an anonymous VOIP phone call for $1/minute.

Hard (30): Chat anonymously, live and for free.

Computer Hardware (INL)- This is knowledge of the parts and peripheral devices that make up modern computer tech and how to purchase, assemble and repair such parts.

Easy (10): Install a network card.

Moderate (20): Build a computer from parts.

Hard (30): Repair a damaged hard drive.

Computer Security (INL)- This is knowledge of how to setup computers and networks to resist malicious software (viruses, trojans, worms) and resist

unauthorized access. Opposed skill rolls can be made vs. the Hacking skill.

Easy (10): Setup a personal firewall on a PC.

Moderate (20): Remove a virus from an infected computer.

Hard (30): Program a router to detect and block denial of service attacks.

Computer Software (INL)- This is knowledge of how to install, use and fix utilities, applications and operating systems.

Easy (10): Reinstall Windows on a buggy computer.

Moderate (20): Turn data in a text file into graphs in a slide-show style presentation.

Hard (30): Hex edit a damaged FAT table to retrieve lost files.

Data Pirating (INL)- Prerequisite: Research: Internet (2). This is knowledge of how to obtain free software, music, even movies and television files via the various file sharing networks and piracy rings on the internet. Downloading the data can take seconds or days depending on the size of the file and amount of success. A PC with this skill starts with $2,000 in pirated data per skill level, anything else must be pirated during gameplay. The skill also includes knowledge of how to crack the copy protection or digital rights management schemes meant to protect data from being pirated.

Easy (10): Find an mp3 of a rare track from an out-of-print album by a popular country singer.

Moderate (20): Find a camcorder-taped copy of a major motion picture that just came out.

Hard (30): Find and crack a major A/V editing software suite weeks before it goes on sale.

Denial of Service (INL)- Prerequisite: Networks (1). The PC knows how to overload computers and network connections by flooding them with false requests or garbage packets. Such attacks are often 'distributed': the hacker takes over several computers and uses all of them to attack at once.

Easy (10): Slow a small web server to a standstill using fifty computers.

Moderate (20): Slow a personal computer's internet connection to a standstill using ten computers.

Hard (30): Slow a major ISP's mail server to a standstill using one computer.

Hacking (INL)- This is knowledge of how to gain unauthorized access to other people's computers and networks. Hacking can be accomplished by finding flaws in software or security setups or by conning users into giving up their passwords. The greater the success, the more access and control the PC has on the target system.

Easy (10): Get into a networked PC that has no firewall.

Moderate (20): Get into a credit report system.

Hard (30): Get into a government database.

Internet Publishing (INL)- This is the ability to create things that people can access via the internet,

Easy (10): Create a simple static web page.

Moderate (20): Create a dynamic web page that people can log into and see content specifically suited to them.

Hard (30): Create a MUD (multi-user dungeon) game that people can play by sending text messages with cellphones.

Networks (INL)- This is knowledge of the physical technology that makes networks possible: fiber-optic cables, hubs, satellite dishes, wireless routers as well as the networking software and protocols. The PC can setup, tap into or repair networks and can track the physical location of a node.

Easy (10): Setup a home network of 3 computers.

Moderate (20): Give a large office access to an internet pipe and private networked drives.

Hard (30): Tap into a network with packet sniffers and trace malicious packets back to their source.

Phone Phreaking (INL)- This is knowledge of how to gain unauthorized access to and control over telecommunications equipment: PBXs, voicemail systems, cellular networks, pagers, etc.

Easy (10): Get a payphone to let you make a free phone call.

Moderate (20): Clone a cellphone so you can make calls on another person's account.

Hard (30): Find someone's unlisted phone number and have calls to that number forwarded to you.

Programming (INL)- This is knowledge of how to create (as well as analyze) computer software. Along with Hacking this skill can be used to create malicious software (e.g. viruses).

Easy (10): Create a calculator.

Moderate (20): Create a word processor.

Hard (30): Create an operating system.

Research: Internet (INL)- This is knowledge of how to find anything on the web quickly, efficiently and cheaply. The PC also knows generally what types of information are available on the net, what are the technological and economic mechanisms that make them available and what are the motivations of the people who put them there. Please note that this skill only includes finding publicly available resources, it does not include anything that would require hacking or piracy to get.

Easy (10): Find a recipe for Anise-White Chocolate Sauce.

Moderate (20): Find a list of past bishops of a local Catholic church.

Hard (30): Find a live webcam showing a nearby major intersection.

INVS (Investigation/Espionage)

Bomb Disarming (INL)- This is training in disarming explosives.

Easy (10): Dispose of a pipe bomb.

Moderate (20): Disarm a land mine someone has stepped on.

Hard (30): Disarm a briefcase nuke.

Brainwashing (INL)- Prerequisites: Interrogation (1), Torture (1). This is a technique that uses sleep deprivation, hunger, pain and intimidation to break someone's psychological resistance. Over the course of several days

(or weeks) resistance is brought down to a point that the victim can be forced to say, and subsequently to believe, anything that the brainwasher wants. Difficulty is lower if the brainwasher has assistants (or can devote 24 hours a day to the victim), drugs, and unlimited time. Each day, the victims can make a moderate (20 difficulty) opposed WIL roll to keep his or her defenses up for another day.

Easy (10): Brainwash somebody over the course of 2 months, using a full staff, several different types of psychoactive drugs and a polygraph machine.

Moderate (20): Brainwash somebody over the course of 4 weeks using a few doses of truth serum and an assistant.

Hard (30): Brainwash someone in one week with no assistance or special equipment.

Crime Scene Forensics (INL)- This is knowledge of how to use scientific techniques to analyze evidence left at a crime scene, including DNA, blood spatter, fiber, ballistics, footprint, tire track and fingerprint evidence.

Easy (10): Pull a fingerprint off of a doorknob.

Moderate (20): Determine the force of and angle of a blow by examining blood spatters.

Hard (30): Find a fiber on a windowsill and match it to a suspect's sweater.

Disguise (INL)- This is training in the use of physical devices to change someone's appearance: clothing, makeup, wigs, latex masks, platform shoes, etc.

Easy (10): Make a young male look unrecognizable, even by close friends.

Moderate (20): Make a young male look like an old male or a young female.

Hard (30): Make a thin young white male look like an old fat black female.

Forensic Pathology (INL)- This is knowledge of the tests and procedures used to determine the cause and circumstances of death as well as the person's health during life.

Easy (10): Determine what caused a person's death.

Moderate (20): Determine if a person has been a heavy user of any drug.

Hard (30): Determine how many seconds it took for a person to bleed to death from a stab wound.

Impersonation (CHM)- This is training in adopting the mannerisms, posture, accent and voice of another. The skill can also be used, at lower difficulty, to fake being from another ethnic group. The following examples assume a successful Disguise skill roll has also been made.

Easy (10): Wave hello to an acquaintance from across a street.

Moderate (20): Say a few words to coworkers while hurrying through an office.

Hard (30): Speak a few sentences with a friend in an elevator.

Interrogation (CHM)- This is training in the detection of lies and in the use of psychological pressure to keep someone from collecting their thoughts. This skill also includes training in the use of polygraph (lie detector) equipment. Use of a lie detector adds +10 to a skill roll.

Easy (10): Yell at someone to disrupt his ability to lie or detect lies (-7 to CHM, INL rolls).

Moderate (20): Convince someone that it is impossible for them to get away with lying to the interrogator.

Hard (30): Convince someone that they're better-off telling the truth.

Military Tactics (INL)- This is knowledge of military strategy and maneuvers, both in theory and in practice.

Easy (10): Draw up a battle plan and explain it to a group of soldiers.

Moderate (20): Assess the military capabilities of a group of fighters by observing them with binoculars.

Hard (30): Using satellite surveillance, direct a group of soldiers in a surprise attack on an enemy compound.

Offensive Driving (AGY)- This is training in driving motor vehicles in combat or chase situations. Gives the following maneuvers (see Vehicle Skills, p.137):

Ram (20): Hit a person or other object with the full force of the vehicle.

Resist (20): Resist an attempt by another vehicle to push the PC's vehicle off the road.

Sideswipe (20): Hit the side of another vehicle with the goal of damaging the vehicle and forcing it off the road or into some obstacle.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Research: Law Enforcement (INL)- These are the techniques used by law enforcement, private investigators and skip tracers to gather information on people, including criminal records, recent financial activity, current and previous addresses, family and acquaintances and work history. Law enforcement officers can use this skill to apply for warrants for phone, medical and academic records.

Easy (10): Find outstanding warrants or a six-month-old home address.

Moderate (20): Find complete criminal records or a 2-week-old home address.

Hard (30): Find acquaintances or the last place someone used a credit card.

Torture (INL)- This is training in applying extreme amounts of pain to an individual without killing, knocking out or permanently injuring that person. Victim gets an opposed WIL roll to resist the torture.

Easy (10): Force victim to do or say something when victim has no real reason not to.

Moderate (20): Force victim to betray victim's country or friends.

Hard (30): Force victim to do or say something that will cause victim's death.

WMDs (INL)- This is knowledge of the manufacture, detection, destruction and deployment of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

Easy (10): Determine whether a particular gasmask will protect from Sarin gas.

Moderate (20): Recognize an anthrax lab.

Hard (30): Safely dispose of a (non-armed) dirty bomb.

LABR (Labor)

Airplane Pilot (AGY)- This is training in navigating and flying all types of airplanes (does not include helicopters). Gives the following maneuvers (see Vehicle Skills, p.137):

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Emergency Landing (20): Land on something that is not a landing strip (or without landing gear) without destroying the plane or its passengers.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Blacksmithing (INL)- This is the ability to make artful or useful things out of metal using moulds or a hammer and anvil.

Easy (10): Create a simple metal tool.

Moderate (20): Create a precise tool or weapon.

Hard (30): Create machinery parts.

Boat Pilot (AGY)- This is the ability to navigate and pilot all types of multiple-passenger water vessels. The PC gets the following maneuvers:

Survive Wave (10-30): By turning into a large wave at the right moment, the ship can ride over it without being capsized (difficulty is based on the size of the wave).

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Brewing (INL)- This is the ability to ferment fruit, grains or sugars to create alcohol, as well as distilling alcohol to make spirits.

Easy (10): Make a bad tasting beer with enough alcohol to get drunk (and kill any bacteria in the water).

Moderate (20): Make a tasty beer or a bad tasting brandy.

Hard (30): Make a tasty brandy or an award winning beer.

Carpentry (INL)- This is the ability to build and modify buildings and other large structures.

Easy (10): Build a small temporary shelter that can withstand a storm.

Moderate (20): Build a modern house.

Hard (30): Build a sea-worthy sailing ship.

Demolitions (INL)- This is knowledge of manufacturing, wiring and placing explosives to achieve the desired effect. This skill does not teach how to disarm explosives (see Bomb Disarming, p.73).

Easy (10): Place a charge to destroy the hinges on a tank door.

Moderate (20): Make a pipe bomb.

Hard (30): Bring down a large building (without harming surrounding buildings) using dynamite and radio detonators.

Driving (AGY)- This is training in driving automobiles, trucks and busses. Gives the following maneuvers:

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sharp Turn (20): A tight, high-speed turn.

Skidding Turn (30): Make incredibly fast and tight turns by skidding the rear tires.

Electronics (INL)- This is fluency in the electrical components and wiring in everything from an office building to a pocket watch. With the right replacement parts the PC can fix any non-computer electronic device (to repair computers, see Computer Hardware).

Easy (10): Repair a clock radio.

Moderate (20): Wire a house.

Hard (30): Create a voice-modulation circuit.

Heavy Machinery (AGY)- The PC can operate large industrial machines and vehicles such as cranes, bulldozers, steamrollers, forklifts, etc. The PC gets the following maneuvers:

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sharp Turn (20): A tight, high-speed turn.

Attack (30): Hit or grab humans or vehicles with the machine's scoop, arm, claw, fork, etc.

Vehicle Skills In Brief

Unlike normal skills, which list an easy, moderate and hard action that can be done with the skill, vehicle skills list a number of maneuvers that can be made with the skill. Each maneuver has its own difficulty. See the section on Vehicle Skills (p.137) for more.

Helicopter (INL)- This is ability to fly a helicopter or similar vehicle. Gives the following maneuvers:

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Hover (20): Stay still in the air.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Mechanics (INL)- This is the ability to analyze, maintain, repair and create mechanical systems.

Easy (10): Sabotage a garage door opener by sticking something in a gear.

Moderate (20): Repair an old fashioned pocket watch or an automobile transmission.

Hard (30): Engineer and build a mechanical device that makes a preserved corpse look like it's doing a little dance.

Motorcycle (AGY)- Gives the following maneuvers.

Jump (20): Jump the motorcycle over holes or obstacles.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Skidding Turn (30): Make incredibly fast and tight turns by skidding the rear tire.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Trample (30): By raising the front wheel up, the driver can attempt to knock down and run over a person.

Plumbing (INL)- This is the ability to repair, maintain and install plumbing.

Easy (10): Clean out a clogged pipe.

Moderate (20): Bring water in from a street line.

Hard (30): Create a solar-powered water heater.

MEDI (Medical)

Diagnosis (INL)- The ability to examine a patient and determine what disease a patient has and the severity/progression of that disease. A full examination includes observing physiological differences, getting a medical history, asking the patient to describe what he or she is experiencing and doing laboratory tests.

Easy (10): Diagnose a disease by doing a full examination (see above).

Moderate (20): Diagnose without doing any tests.

Hard (30): Diagnose just by looking at a patient.

Emergency Medicine (INL)- This is training in keeping patients alive long enough to get them to a hospital.

Easy (10): Clean and dress wounds (prevent additional bleeding and reduce chance of infection).

Moderate (20): Intubate a patient to make sure that air can continue to flow into the lungs.

Hard (30): Do emergency surgery to reduce intracranial swelling.

Pharmacology (INL)- This is knowledge of the use of pharmacological treatments (drugs) for various illnesses, as well as the side effects and possible interactions of pharmaceuticals. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis, above) is the prerequisite for any pharmacological treatment.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for pain.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for late stage AIDS.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a serious drug interaction.

Physical Therapy (INL)- This is the ability to help people recover from serious injuries and illnesses. Therapy involves mostly exercises and stretching.

Easy (10): Help a patient recover from a stab wound to the thigh.

Moderate (20): Help a patient recover from a year in a coma.

Hard (30): Help a patient recover from serious brain damage.

Plastic Surgery (INL)- Prerequisites: Surgery (1). This is the advanced surgery techniques used to change peoples' appearance.

Easy (10): Slightly improve someone's appearance.

Moderate (20): Make someone look very different.

Hard (30): Do a complete sex change operation.

Psychopharmacology (INL)- Prerequisites: Pharmacology (1). This is training in the use of pharmaceuticals to treat psychological problems. One of the major difficulties of psychopharmacology is finding a treatment that works but has side effects mild enough that the patient can be convinced to stay on it.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for anxiety.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for schizophrenia.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a patient with manic depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and a sexual fetish.

Surgery (INL)- This is training in the surgical treatments of illnesses. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis, above) is the prerequisite for any surgical treatment.

Easy (10): Remove a bullet from a thigh without causing additional bleeding.

Moderate (20): Open the chest and repair lacerations to the heart caused by a stab wound.

Hard (30): Replace a defective heart with a donor heart.

Veterinary Medicine (INL)- This is training in the diagnosis, surgical and pharmacological treatment of common animal ailments. The PC can also treat humans at +10 difficulty.

Easy (10): Splint a broken bone.

Moderate (20): Treat a common communicable disease.

Hard (30): Open-heart surgery.

PEOP (People)

Fashion and Beauty (CHM)- Put together an outfit, makeup, jewelry and hair style that accentuates positive features and sends a certain impression.

Easy (10): Put together an attractive outfit (+4 to seduction) for $500.

Moderate (20): Put together a very attractive outfit (+8 to seduction) for $100.

Hard (30): Put together an outfit that makes someone look both attractive and intelligent (+8 to seduction and CHM rolls to act smart) for $20.

Language (INL)- Purchase separate levels of this skill for each language the PC knows. Note that some languages are so similar that one language skill may be used to substitute for another at increased difficulty (e.g. substitute Language: Latin for Language: Italian at +20 difficulty).

Easy (10): Read and write text in the given language.

Moderate (20): Speak slowly about common things.

Hard (30): Have a normal-paced conversation.

Legendary (40): Speak with perfect, accent-less fluency.

Oratory (CHM)- This is training in speaking before an audience, making the most persuasive arguments for different types of audiences and using cues from the audience to gauge which persuasive tactics are working and which aren't.

Easy (10): Write a speech designed to work on a particular audience (+4 to persuasion rolls).

Moderate (20): Notice when a strategy isn't working and change gears (can re-roll a bad persuasion roll).

Hard (30): Predict the arguments an opponent will make and pre-argue against them (-7 to the opponent's persuasion roll).

Performance (CHM)- This is training in entertaining an audience via a public performance. Choose one of the following specialties: dance, acting, comedy, signing. The skill can be purchased multiple times for different specialties.

Easy (10): Passable performance.

Moderate (20): Entertaining performance.

Hard (30): Award-winning performance.

Psychotherapy (CHM)- This is training in helping people overcome psychological problems and traumas using various forms of therapy (talk therapy encourages people to discover their own feelings and mental processes; cognitive therapy teaches people to avoid illogical or harmful thoughts; role-playing therapy helps people prepare to deal with real-life situations; exposure therapy helps people deal with fears by slow exposure to the source of the fears).

Easy (10): Help a patient overcome a mild phobia.

Moderate (20): Help a patient deal with the psychological effects of a recent severe trauma.

Hard (30): Help a patient overcome an ego dystonic sexual fetish.

Legendary (40): Help a patient discover that he or she is paranoid and delusional.

Seduction (CHM)- This is practice at seducing people. Every level of the skill gives +4 to seduction rolls (see p.127). The skill can also be used to notice body language cues that tell how easy to seduce a person is or how well a seduction is going (moderate difficulty).

Storytelling (CHM)- This is the ability to tell entertaining and engaging stories.

Easy (10): Entertain small children.

Moderate (20): Entertain young adults.

Hard (30): Entertain battle-weary veterans.

TRAD (Traditional)

Acupuncture (INL)- This traditional form of Chinese medicine uses needles in specific points to effect the functioning of the body.

Easy (10): Ease pain from a damaged nerve.

Moderate (20): Ease nausea.

Hard (30): Completely anesthetize someone for surgery.

Animal Training (CHM)- Care for and training of animals. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the task and the natural 'trainability' of the animal.

Easy (10): Keep a dog alive and keep it from going feral.

Moderate (20): Train a dog to fetch thrown objects.

Hard (30): Train a dog to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Legendary (40): Train a cat to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Local Geography (INL)- Choose one urban or rural area for this skill. The skill can be purchased multiple times for different areas. This is familiarity with getting around and finding things in the area as well as landmarks, businesses and neighborhoods.

Easy (10): Find an address.

Moderate (20): Find a Pakistani grocery store.

Hard (30): Shave 30 minutes off a rush-hour drive by taking the right freeways.

Ethnogens (INL)- This is knowledge of how to recognize, harvest, prepare and use as safely as possible the plant (and occasionally animal) based substances that native peoples have used to induce altered states of consciousness. Also gives +4 per level to save vs. ethnogen effects.

Easy (10): Tell whether Khat is a stimulant or depressant.

Moderate (20): Recognize the symptoms of Datura overdose.

Hard (30): Brew Ayahuasca.

Herbal Medicine (INL)- This is traditional knowledge of the use of herbs for the treatment of diseases. In urban areas, herbs can be bought in herb shops and botanicas.

Easy (10): Treat headaches.

Moderate (20): Treat the symptoms of a flu.

Hard (30): Treat a major infection.

Hypnosis (CHM)- This is the ability to put willing people into an altered state of consciousness where they are highly open to suggestion. There are many things hypnosis can not do: memories can not be made more accurate (although they may be made to seem more accurate), people can not be forced to do something they truly don't want to do, attributes can not be increased (e.g. a person can not be made more agile). Hypnosis can sometimes reveal blocked memories, but it can also cause the hypnotized person to make up completely fictional memories.

Easy (10): Help someone fall asleep.

Moderate (20): Give someone +4 to save vs. drug cravings.

Hard (30): Uncover blocked memories.

Legendary (40): Contact a psychodynamic.

Lipreading (AWR)- The PC can reconstruct what people are saying by watching their lips move. Difficulty increases when the PC does not have a good view of the person's lips or if the person is speaking abnormally (e.g. screaming in anger).

Moderate (20): Read lips at 5 ft. (1.5 m.) in a well-lit room with the person speaking normally.

Hard (30): Read lips at 12 ft. (4 m.) in a dimly lit room.

Legendary (40): Read lips at 12 ft. (4 m.) in a dimly lit room with that person screaming.

Light Sleep (AWR)- This is training in sleeping warily such that one will awaken at any sign of danger.

Easy (10): Awaken if someone turns a light on.

Moderate (20): Awaken if someone is walking around by the PC's bed.

Hard (30): Awaken if any one of several roommates awakens.

Sleight of Hand (AGY)- This is training in manipulating small objects quickly, while misdirecting an audience's attention, so that the manipulation goes unnoticed.

Easy (10): Make a penny "disappear" by palming it and dropping it into a pocket.

Moderate (20): Replace one playing card with another (from a sleeve) while tapping the deck.

Hard (30): Make 10 lit cigarettes disappear by waving one's hand over them.

Street Survival (INL)- This is knowledge of how to find food, spare change and a warm, safe place to live in an urban environment.

Easy (10): Find palatable food in a dumpster.

Moderate (20): Make $2/hr. panhandling.

Hard (30): Build a shelter, using scrounged materials, that can withstand a storm.

Tracking (AWR)- This is the ability to follow the signs that show that an animal or human has passed. This skill is most useful in wilderness areas where the ground can show tracks, but it can also be used in urban areas at a higher difficulty. Tracks grow significantly harder to follow the older they get (generally +1 difficulty per hour after they were made). Tracking can also be used to determine information about the people or animals being tracked: how fast were they going, did they have a limp, did they stop often, etc. A tracking roll can also be made to try to avoid leaving tracks.

Easy (10): Track a large man who ran through muddy ground while bleeding.

Moderate (20): Track a child who was exploring an abandoned building (by looking at disturbed dust).

Hard (30): Follow tracks along the bed of a stream.

Traditional Crafts (INL)- This is knowledge of making simple things using low-tech tools and materials.

Easy (10): Make a deerskin cap.

Moderate (20): Make a bow and arrows from wood, flint, sinew and feathers.

Hard (30): Make a water-tight basket.

Wilderness Survival (INL)- This is training in finding food, clean water and shelter in wilderness environments. The PC must roll for each day in the environment. Difficulty is based on how much food, water and shelter is available in that environment.

Easy (10): Survive in a forest during summer.

Moderate (20): Survive in grasslands during winter.

Hard (30): Survive in the desert.

Sample Character Creation - Step Six

We now have 100 points to spend on skills for Maggie Hernandez, our sample character. Her skill costs are set by her day job. She also gets Diagnosis (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Pharmacology (1) free because of her day job. Her Hero Origin Story doesn't give her access to Supernatural Skills, so we can spend all 100 points on mundane skills.

According to her day job, her skill costs are as follows: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 3, PEOP 7, TRAD 8.

First we decide what skills we want Maggie to have. Since she's a doctor we want most of her skills to be medical, so we want to buy levels in Medi skills. If we buy Diagnosis (2), Emergency Medicine (2), Pharmacology (2) Psychopharmacology (1) and Surgery (2) that's 9 levels in Medi skills, at a cost 3 skill points per level that will use up 27 of her 100 skill points. Psychopharmacology has a prerequisite of Pharmacology (1), meaning the PC must take at least 1 level of Pharmacology to take Psychopharmacology, but that's no problem.

Next we choose Academic skills. We want her to have Science: Chemistry (1), Science: Pathology (1), Science: Genetics (1), and Research: Academic (2). That's 5 levels total, at 4 skill points per level, so it will cost 20 skill points.

Combat skills are very expensive for Maggie, but we want her to have at least a little training, so we give her Self-Defense Weapons (1) at a cost of 15 skill points. We also want to give her Research: Internet (1), a Tech skill, at a cost of 7 points, Crime Scene Forensics (1) and Forensic Pathology (1), both Investigation/Espionage skills, at 10 points per level, so 20 points total, and Local Geography (1) and Tracking (1), Traditional skills at 8 points per level, at 16 points total.

Altogether we've spent 100 points. When we add in her three free skills from her day job we get:

Science: Chemistry (1)
Science: Pathology (1)
Science: Genetics (1)
Research: Academic (2)
Diagnosis (3)
Emergency Medicine (3)
Pharmacology (3)
Psychopharmacology (1)
Surgery (2)
Self-Defense Weapons (1)
Research: Internet (1)
Crime Scene Forensics (1)
Forensic Pathology (1)
Local Geography (1)
Tracking (1)

So, if she wanted to diagnose a medical problem she would roll INL (the appropriate attribute for Diagnosis), plus 8 (+4 for each level of Diagnosis above the first), plus 1d20 and then try to beat whatever difficulty was assigned by the GM. If she wanted to answer a Chemistry question, though, she would only roll INL + 1d20 because she only has 1 level in the skill. If she wanted to try to track someone, she would roll AWR + 1d20 because AWR is listed as the normal skill to use with Tracking.

Self-Defense Weapons, because it is a combat skill, works a little differently. It does not have a normal attribute, instead it gives plusses to a list of combat actions as follows:

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+4 to Blinding Strike
+4 to Simultaneous Pain/Stun Attack

So Maggie makes note on her character sheet that she gets +4 to Pain/Stun, +4 to Blinding Strike and +4 to Simultaneous Pain/Stun Attack with self-defense weapons. If she buys another level of the skill all those plusses will become +8.

Supernatural Skills

Animal Form (WIL)*
Animate Toys (WIL)
Area Knowledge: Supernatural (INL)
Automatic Writing (AWR)
Be Other (WIL)
Body Invasion (WIL)*
Birth Servant (WIL)
Blood Sigils (WIL)
Change Gender (WIL)
Child Empathy (CHM)
Command Animals (WIL)*
Command Inanimate (WIL)
Command Misfortunes (WIL)
Command Reapers (WIL)*
Command Will-Less (WIL)
Danger Sense (AWR)
Déjà Vu (WIL)
Dreaming (WIL)
Ecstatic Rage (WIL)
Enter Playland (WIL)
Flesh Control (WIL)
Get Lost (AWR)
Give Vision (WIL)
Grab Bag (WIL)*
Homing (WIL)*
Imaginary Powers (WIL)
Journeying (WIL)
Masks (WIL)
Mortification of the Flesh (WIL)
Nihilist Rage (WIL)
Playland Geography (INL)
Psychometry (AWR)
Possession Trance (AWR)
Read Minds (AWR)
Revive (WIL)*
See Invisible (AWR)
See Reapers (AWR)
See Souls (AWR)
See True Face (AWR)*
Soul Blade (WIL)
Spirit Speed (WIL)
Spirit Strength (WIL)
Summon Imaginary Friend (WIL)
Switch Bodies (WIL)
Truth Ordeal (WIL)
Untouchable (WIL)
Visions (AWR)

*Prerequisites

5 Level Limit

The rule that you cannot purchase more than 5 skill levels in a skill without special permission of the GM applies to supernatural skills too.

Supernatural Skill Duration

Unless specifically stated otherwise, each skill takes one action to complete. How long effects of the skill last is listed in each skill.

"While Concentrating" skills have effects that only last while the PC concentrates on maintaining the effect. The PC cannot use other skills and any save vs. fear, pain or emotion will break the concentration. The effects disappear immediately after concentration is broken.

"Until Stopped" skills have effects that last until the PC chooses to stop the effect.

"Permanent" skills make changes that do not go away on their own. The world is altered and stays that way until some other force, natural or supernatural, alters is in a different way.

"1 x/success" skills have effects that last one unit of time per point of success. Example: *a "1 min./success" skill, where the difficulty is beaten by 5, will have a 5 min. effect.*

Secret Lives and Supernatural Skill Costs

Androgynes
10: Be Other, Birth Servant, Change Gender, Switch Bodies
20: Flesh Control, Masks, Revive

Animists
10: Animal Form, Body Invasion, Command Animals, Command Inanimate, Command Misfortunes, Dreaming, Journeying, Possession Trance, See True Face, Visions
20: Flesh Control, Masks, Revive, Spirit Speed, Spirit Strength, Playland Geography

Cannibals
Free: Mortification of the Flesh (1)
10: Mortification of the Flesh
20: Body Invasion, Command Animals, Command Inanimate, Command Misfortunes, Ecstatic Rage, Flesh Control, Journeying, Nihilist Rage, Revive

Faustians
10: Command Will-Less, Danger Sense, Déjà Vu, Psychometry, Read Minds

Heroes (Occult Training option)
Free: 4 levels of Animal Form, Automatic Writing, Be True Desire, Body Invasion, Blood Sigils, Command Animals, Command Inanimate, Command Misfortunes, Dreaming, Flesh Control, Get Lost, Truth Ordeal, Journeying, Masks, Possession Trance, Revive , Soul Blade, Spirit Speed, Spirit Strength, Untouchable

Lost
Free: Get Lost (1)
10: Get Lost, Homing, Grab Bag
20: Area Knowledge: Supernatural, Automatic Writing, Dreaming

Outcasts
Free: (choose one) See Invisible (2), Psychometry (2), Read Minds (2) or Visions (2).
10: Area Knowledge: Supernatural, Give Vision, Psychometry, Read Minds, See Souls, See Invisible, See Reapers, Visions
20: Blood Sigils, Command Misfortunes, See True Face

Professionals
20: Blood Sigils, Ecstatic Rage, Truth Ordeal, Soul Blade, Untouchable

Scribblers
10: Automatic Writing, Blood Sigils, Nihilist Rage, Untouchable
20: Body Invasion, Command Animals, Command Inanimate, Dreaming, Flesh Control, Get Lost, Journeying, Mortification of the Flesh, Soul Blade, Spirit Speed, Spirit Strength, Visions

Survivors
10: Flesh Control, Revive*, See Reapers
20: Change Gender, Mortification of the Flesh, Spirit Speed, Spirit Strength
*The Flesh Control prerequisite for Revive does not apply to Survivors.

Wonderlanders
10: Animate Toys, Child Empathy (CHM), Playland Geography, Masks, Imaginary Powers, Summon Imaginary Friend, Enter Playland
20: Automatic Writing, Dreaming, Possession Trance, See True Face*

Animal Form (WIL)- Prerequisite: Journeying (2). The PC can leave his or her body and travel this realm or other realms as an animal. The PC's body stays behind, appearing unconscious, although strong stimuli can bring the PC back (see Journeying). When buying this skill the PC must choose one of the following animals to be the one animal the PC can transform into: jaguar, bear, wolf, coyote or mountain lion. Gives +4 per hour of meditation or chanting. Gives +10 if the PC uses a deliriant or hallucinogen. Gives +10 of the PC wears a skin of the animal. Duration: Until Stopped.

Easy (10): Travel as an intangible, invisible spirit with the SPD and AGY of the animal.

Moderate (20): Travel as an intangible spirit which can be seen by normal humans (they see what looks like a normal animal).

Hard (30): Travel as a tangible animal with all the physical abilities of the animal.

Animal Forms

Bear- STH 25, AGY 7, END 14, SPD 25, BLD 4, BDY 6, INCY 6, 3 damage bite (hard strike, pierces as 5), 2 bladed 1 blunt damage claw swipe, +20 to smell based AWR rolls.

Coyote- STH 5, AGY 20, END 20, SPD 30, BLD 3, BDY 2, INCY 4, 1 damage bite (easy vital strike), +10 to smell based AWR rolls, +10 to hearing based AWR rolls, halve darkens penalties.

Jaguar/Panther- STH 7, AGY 15, END 10, SPD 25, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 3, 3 damage bite (easy vital strike), 2 damage claws (easy slash, easy pain/stun, +10 to climbing rolls), +7 to smell based AWR rolls, +7 to hearing based AWR rolls, no darkens penalties.

Mountain Lion- STH 7, AGY 12, END 12, SPD 25, BLD 2, BDY 2, INCY 3, 2 damage bite (easy vital strike), 2 damage claws (easy slash, easy pain/stun, +10 to climbing rolls), +7 to smell based AWR rolls, +7 to hearing based AWR rolls, halve darkens penalties.

Wolf- STH 10, AGY 15, END 10, SPD 25, BLD 2, BDY 4, INCY 3, 2 bladed damage bite (hard strike, easy vital strike), +5 to smell based AWR rolls, +5 to hearing based AWR rolls, halve darkness penalties.

Animate Toys (WIL)- The PC can make a toy that he or she played with as a child come temporarily alive. The PC can also make a toy that is the same type as one the PC played with come alive at +10 difficulty, or all other toys at +20 difficulty. The toy's movement and abilities are limited by its form: cars can drive around, teddy bears can walk, pterodactyls can fly, but a teddy bear without fingers can't pick something up and a toy car can't climb up a wall. The toys have 1 STH, most have 1 SPD (toys with wheels may have up to 10 SPD, flying toys may have up to 20). They cannot speak unless specifically built with the ability to play recorded human speech. They have no attack abilities unless a weapon has been attached beforehand (e.g. a kitchen knife duct-taped on). Fake weapons (e.g. a spaceman's blaster) do not become real. A moderate Summon Imaginary Friends roll can be used to summon an imaginary friend into a toy. Duration: 1 hour/success.

Easy (10): Toy does short, simple actions while the PC watches and concentrates.

Moderate (20): Toy does a series of actions, with no ability to improvise or adapt, without the PC needing to watch or concentrate.

Hero (30): Toy has a moderately-simple goal and can act independently to achieve it, working with the problem solving abilities of an average cat or dog.

Legendary (40): Toy works towards a goal with human-level problems solving abilities (toy is not sentient or self-aware).

Area Knowledge: Supernatural (INL)- The PC knows the supernatural secrets of his or her surrounding geography: places haunted by dances, portals to other realms, places where Animists perform rituals late at night, places where reality doesn't work right, buildings guarded by the Powers-That-Be, places where dangerous invisible beings live, places where scribblers have recorded messages on the walls, etc.

Easy (10): Find an occult bookstore.

Moderate (20): Find a haunted house.

Hard (30): Find a portal to another realm.

Legendary (40): Find a piece of working h-tech (p.235) in a trash heap.

Automatic Writing (AWR)- The PC can enter a light trance and write and doodle without thinking. Subconscious knowledge will manifest through the words and drawings. Some of it will seem like nonsense, but it will have hidden knowledge in it. This skill is similar to the Visions skill, except knowledge is manifested on paper rather than as a hallucination. The PC cannot do anything during the light trance, but is dimly aware of his or her surroundings and will exit the trance if something requires his or her attention. The PC will also do Automatic Writing without even trying whenever the PC is holding a writing device and is not paying attention to what his or her hands are doing. Duration: Until Stopped.

Moderate (20): Do Automatic Writing.

Be Other (WIL)- To use this skill, the PC must be (or appear to be) the opposite sex of the victim. The PC can embody everything someone hates, fears, admires or lusts after in the opposite sex. Gives a bonus to persuasion, intimidation and seduction rolls towards a person equal to that person's Animus or Anima (average +10 bonus). Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): Be other with someone the PC has an ongoing sexual relationship with.

Moderate (20): Become one person's other just by looking at him or her.

Hard (30): Be other for multiple people simultaneously.

Body Invasion (WIL)- Prerequisite: Journeying (1). This skill allows a PC who has left his or her body via the Journeying skill to enter and take control of another person's body. If the person is conscious (or becomes conscious) that person can make an opposed WIL roll to resist the invasion or regain control of his or her body. Duration: Until Stopped.

Birth Servant (WIL) The PC must be in a body with a uterus and vagina to use this skill. The PC gives birth to a servant which does a pre-determined task or follows orders. Servants look like bloody fetuses which crawl around on all-fours. It takes at least 4 rounds to gestate and give birth to the servant. Duration: See below.

Easy (10): Mouse sized servant, 1 STH, 2 SPD, 1 BLD, can do 1 predetermined task, dies within 5 minutes. If it has fangs or claws it does ½ bladed damage, choose 1 ability (text box below).

Moderate (20): Rat sized servant, 2 STH, 3 SPD, 2 BLD, can do multiple predetermined tasks, dies within 1 hour. If it has fangs or claws it does 1 bladed damage, choose 2 abilities.

Hard (30): Cat sized servant, 3 STH, 6 SPD, 1 BDY, 2 BLD, can follow verbal instructions, dies within 24 hours. If it has fangs or claws it does 1½ bladed damage, choose 3 abilities.

Legendary (40): Dog sized servant, 4 STH, 8 SPD, 1 BDY, 3 BLD, 1 INCY, has near human intelligence, lives until killed. If it has fangs or claws it does 2 bladed damage, choose 4 abilities.

Servant Abilities

Flying- Membrane wings allow servant to fly like a bat.

Fangs- Allow servants to bite people.

Claws- Allow servants to claw people.

Poison- After claws or fangs do damage, does 3 BLD damage per round for 3 rounds.

Speech- Can use human speech.

Climbing- Can scale almost any surface, can even crawl on ceilings, at full SPD.

Tough Skin- +2 BLD, +2 BDY.

Rubbery- Can squeeze itself through almost any opening.



Fetus Servant

Blood Sigils (WIL)- The PC can draw arcane symbols with his or her bodily fluids then energize them with his or her will such that invisible forces will accept them as 'commands'. When seen by those who can see the invisible, the sigils appear to glow. Duration: 1 day/success or until the body fluids are wiped off or destroyed.

Easy (10): Anyone in the area will be either more or less likely to suffer from misfortunes and medical problems.

Moderate (20): Every hour spent in a marked building there is a 1 in 20 chance of dying of heart attack or stroke -or- anyone staying in a marked building heals 1 BLD and 1 BDY per day.

Hard (30): Mark someone for scrutiny by the powers-from-beyond -or- cause a natural disaster to ravage a city -or- create a portal to 'the citadel,' an alien world inhabited by dangerous monsters.

Change Gender (WIL)- The PC can change his or her sexual anatomy and appearance. Gives +10 to the roll if the PC is experiencing a strong orgasm. Duration: Permanent.

Moderate (20): Change gender, minimal change of appearance (PC will look like a 'male version' or 'female version' of hir last body).

Hard (20): Change gender and appearance (change ethnicity, build, hair color, features, etc.).

Legendary (40)- Change into an androgynous being with no genitals, multiple genitals or inhuman genitals.

Ultimate Genitals

With a legendary Change Gender roll, the PC can have genitals that are not on any natural being on the planet. The PC's genitals can have any form and be made out of tissues with all the powers of any other part of the human body. It would not be impossible, for instance, to create genitals with working eyes. The most popular configuration, often called 'the flower and the snake,' allows the owner to engage in any sexual activity a male or female could, as well as to:

-Reach out up to 7 ft. (2 m.) to grab and manipulate objects with 25 STH.

-Pierce objects with a probe doing 3 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6).

-Grab onto flesh with retractable barbed teeth (do negligible damage unless the flesh is ripped away, which does 3 ragged damage) and reel the flesh in at 25 STH.

-Feel objects with extreme sensitivity (+20 to touch based AWR rolls).

-Chew up (and later spit out) wood, flesh, plastic or softer types of stone and metal. Does 2 ragged damage per round.

Child Empathy (CHM)- By connecting at a subconscious level with the playlands of other children, the PC can form a rapport with those children. The PC gets +4 per level on CHM rolls involving children. In addition, the PC can create an unspoken bond with children by playing with them. Duration: Permanent.

Easy (10): Gain the trust of a child by playing with him or her.

Moderate (20): Communicate with a child who doesn't speak the PC's language by playing with him or her.

Hard (30): Discover a child's deepest secrets by playing with him or her.

Legendary (40): Communicate telepathically across any distance with a child the PC has played with.

Command Animals (WIL)- Prerequisite: Command Inanimate (2). By speaking to animals the PC can force them to follow commands. An animal cannot be told to do something beyond its intelligence or sensory abilities (e.g. you can't order a monkey to fix your car or an insect to find and sting a particular person in a crowd). PCs can only control one animal at a time. The difficulty is based on how strongly the animal's instincts are telling it not to do the thing its being told to do. A small minority of animals are completely immune to this skill. Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): Cause a bird to fly through an open window, grab an object, and drop it out the window.

Moderate (20): Cause a dog to attack another dog.

Hard (30): Cause a squirrel to attack a human.

Command Inanimate (WIL)- The PC has learned to impose his or her will on inanimate objects by asking them for favors or issuing commands. Gives +10 if the PC sacrifices something that is valuable to the PC (e.g. burns a $100 bill) to the object. To use this skill, the PC must speak aloud to the object (can whisper if close). Duration: 4 hrs./success

Easy (10): Plus or minus 7 to any difficulty (e.g. give a lock -7 difficulty to pick).

Moderate (20): Plus or minus 15 to any difficulty (e.g. give a sedative +15 difficulty to saves vs. unconsciousness).

Hard (30): Plus or minus 20 to any difficulty -or- plus or minus 2 PR to armor -or- plus or minus 2 damage to a weapon.

Command Misfortunes (WIL)- The PC has learned to use the power of will to command the small spirits which can be found anywhere and which cause everyday misfortunes. Use of the skill requires yelling at, singing to, blowing on, sucking or hitting the area where the misfortune is. Note that in order to know a misfortune is there to command the PC must use the skills See Invisible or Visions. Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): Cause a misfortune to detach from a victim and flee.

Moderate (20): Spit a misfortune at a victim.

Hard (30): Swallow a misfortune and make it dormant until it is to be used.

Random Misfortune Table

01-05: Asthma
06-09: Clumsiness
10-14: Coughing
15-18: Cramps
19-23: Dizziness
24-27: Fatigue
28-32: Forgetfulness
33-36: Headaches
37-41: Indigestion
42-46: Infertility
47-51: Insomnia
52-56: Nervousness
57-61: Nightmares
62-66: Nosebleeds
67-71: Poor Temper
72-76: Tinnitus
77-78: Anemia
79-80: Epilepsy
81-82: Erotomania
83-84: Exhaustion
85-86: Extreme Vertigo
87-88: Fetishism
89-90: Hallucinations
91-92: Sourceless Pain
93-94: Tooth Loss
95-96: Weakness
97-98: Weight Loss
99-99: Heart Attack
00-00: Stroke

Command Reapers (WIL)- Prerequisite: See Reapers (2). This skill allows PCs to temporarily overwhelm the free will of a reaper and make it follow orders. PC can only control one Reaper at a time. Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): Command a reaper to go to a certain place.

Moderate (20): Command a reaper to try to take a life.

Hard (30): Command a reaper not to take a soul.

Command Will-Less (WIL)- The PC can take control of the actions of those who have little or no conscious control over their own actions and make them do anything the PC wants. The PC can try to control sleeping people, but anything which wakes the person will make the PC lose control. PC must be able to see the victim or know exactly where the victim is. Control ends if the person stops being will-less. Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): Taker control of a coma patient or a raving psychotic.

Moderate (20): Take control of someone who is staggering drunk.

Hard (30): Take control of an infant or severely retarded person.

Danger Sense (AWR)- The PC feels a feeling of alarm when there are people with malevolent intent towards the PC or when there are dangerous invisible entities around. The PC does not know what the source of the danger is.

Easy (10): Feel alarm when there is someone standing behind the PC who wants to murder the PC.

Moderate (20): Feel alarm when there is a stroke-causing misfortune nearby.

Hard (30): Feel alarm when the PC passes by a serial killer on a crowded street.

Déjà Vu (WIL)- The PC can make one of the thoughts, emotions or perceptions that constantly runs through the PC's head happen to someone else. The PC must be able to see the victim. The PC gets +10 if the PC can show the victim a stimuli particular to that memory (e.g. show an old can of food from the 50s or play music from a music-box) or +20 if the PC can make the victim smell a stimuli to that memory. Duration: 1 round/opposed success.

Easy (10): The victim feels/thinks/perceives, but not enough to cause disruption.

Moderate (20): Victim feels/thinks/perceives strongly enough that, unless the victim is expecting it, the victim gets a 1 round -4 penalty to all rolls.

Hard (30): Victim feels an emotion so strongly he or she must make a save vs. emotion to avoid acting on the emotion, thinks a thought so strongly the victim must make a save vs. delusion or perceives so strongly that the victim must make a save vs. hallucination.

Hard (40): Victim must make an opposed WIL save or will feel/think/perceive so strongly that the victim is oblivious to the real world.

Dreaming (WIL)- The PC has been trained to be aware that he or she is dreaming and to control his or her dream experience. Every level of this skill gives +4 to rolls using WIL to effect dreams and other non-material worlds. Duration: Until Stopped.

Easy (10): Become lucid.

Moderate (20): Wake from a dream at will.

Hard (30): Find and travel through portals into other people's dreams.

Ecstatic Rage (WIL)- The PC focuses his or her mind on some idea, typically heaven awaiting martyrs, that drives the PC to such ecstasy that the PC is virtually immune to fear and pain. Gives +4 for each hour spent chanting. Gives +10 if using euphoric drugs. Duration: 5 min./success.

Hard (30): Enter ecstatic rage, giving +20 to save vs. pain/fear, simultaneous actions as regular actions (no -20 +WIL), +10 STH, +10 END, +5 INCY.

Enter Playland (WIL)- The PC can enter the world of his childhood imagination. If a PC travels physically to playland and anyone follows the PC then the followers end up in the playland as well. The PC ends up in whatever part of the playland most closely resembles the PC's current location. The PC can enter the playlands of other people at +10 difficulty. The PC must make a second skill roll (at -10 the original difficulty) to return from the playland. The PC always returns to the same place he or she left from. Duration: Permanent.

Easy (10): Enter mentally while daydreaming.

Moderate (20): Enter physically from a place with childhood memories.

Hard (30): Enter physically from any place.

Flesh Control (WIL)- The PC can control his or her own physiology by force of will. No changes can be made that ignore the conservation of mass and energy: a PC who wants to grow or add flesh needs to consume nutrients, a PC who wants to shrink or lose parts must excrete them. Flesh Control cannot be used to cure diseases caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites, although it can reduce physiological symptoms (e.g. weakness), as well as make the PC healthier (higher END) and so have a better chance of fighting off diseases. The time is takes to achieve a change depends on the level of success (see below). Duration: Permanent.

Easy (10): Make small changes to normal systems (increase or decrease heart rate, perspiration, double healing rate, +5 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and drug effects) over the course of several days.

Moderate (20): Make large changes to normal systems (e.g. bring heartrate to almost nothing, quadruple healing rate, +10 to save vs. disease and drug effects, grow or shrink several feet) overnight.

Hard (30): Make radical changes (change appearance, heal any injuries overnight, regrow limbs, grow or shrink several feet) within a few hours.

Legendary (40): Inhuman changes (e.g. grow armored plates, grow fangs, become transparent or bioluminescent) within a few minutes or heal up to 1 BLD and 1 BDY per round.

Max Physical Improvements

When people discover they have the Flesh Control skill, the first thing most do is make themselves as healthy, strong and attractive as they possibly can. These are the absolute upper limits a PC can change his or her physiology based on level of the skill:

1 level	+4 SPD/STH/END	+1 BLD/BDY	+2 to seduction
2 level	+8 SPD/STH/END	+2 BLD/BDY	+4 to seduction
3 level	+12 SPD/STH/END	+3 BLD/BDY	+6 to seduction
4 level	+16 SPD/STH/END	+4 BLD/BDY	+8 to seduction
5 level	+20 SPD/STH/END	+5 BLD/BDY	+10 to seduction
6 level	+24 SPD/STH/END	+6 BLD/BDY	+12 to seduction

Note: Any change of more than 8 STH, more than 4 BLD/BDY or more than +4 to seduction means the PC's appearance changes drastically and the PC may become unrecognizable to acquaintances.

Get Lost (AWR)- The PC can dislodge himself or herself from space and time by becoming lost. The state lasts only as long as the PC doesn't know where he or she is. Being intoxicated gives +10 to skill rolls. Anyone following the PC (keeping the PC in sight) will become lost and will end up wherever the PC ends up. Duration: Until Stopped.

Easy (10): Get lost after walking around an unfamiliar neighborhood for an hour.

Moderate (20): Get lost inside a large office building.

Hard (30): Run around a corner and get instantly lost.

Give Vision (WIL)- The PC can make another person temporarily able to see whatever the PC sees. Duration: While Concentrating.

Easy (10): Give someone vision by grabbing their head and squeezing violently.

Moderate (20): Give vision by placing one's hands on either side of the target's head.

Hard (30): Give vision by touching someone.

Legendary (40): Give vision by looking at someone.

Grab Bag (WIL)- Prerequisite: Get Lost (2). If there is a container and the PC has no idea what's in the container, the PC can reach in and pull out whatever he or she wants, given that the item is something that actually exists inside a container of this type somewhere in the world. The difficulty is based on the rarity of the item. When the PC uses this skill to get an item, that item disappears out of a container somewhere in the world. The PC can conceivably use this skill on his or her own pockets, but only if the PC is so out of it that he or she has no idea what might be in those pockets (e.g. is coming off of a week-long drinking binge). Duration: Permanent.

Easy (10)- Pull $5 or a plastic comb out of a pocket.

Moderate (20): Pull $50 or a pocket knife out of a pocket.

Hard (30): Pull $200 or a loaded pistol out of a pocket. -or- Make an object disappear by putting it in a pocket.

Legendary (40): Pull $1,000 or a picture of another PC's mother out of a pocket.

Homing (WIL)- Prerequisite: Get Lost (1). While in a lost state (see Get Lost), the PC can think about where he or she wants to go and will end up there more-or-less instantly. Duration: Permanent.

Easy (10): End up in the type of neighborhood (but not specifically the location or city) the PC wants.

Moderate (20): End up in a specific place the PC has been to before.

Hard (30): End up where a specific item or person the PC has seen before is currently located.

Legendary (40): End up in a place the PC has never been to but which has been described to the PC (including places outside this reality).

Imaginary Powers (WIL)- The PC can manifest, in the real world, powers that he or she had in playland as a child. The PC get a bonus for concentrating on the power directly before making the skill roll as follows: +5 for one round's concentration, +10 for one minute, +15 for one hour. Duration: See below.

Moderate (20): Manifest the power for one combat round.

Hard (30): Manifest the power for one minute.

Legendary (40): Manifest the power for one hour.

Imaginary Powers

Choose two powers that the PC had in playland. Additional powers can be purchased during character creation for 3 BP each.

Flying- With a running start, the PC can fly at up to 20 SPD.

Change Size- The PC can grow up to 5 times his or her normal size or shrink by up to 100 times. STH, SPD and health attributes all change by the same factor as size (e.g. 4 times as large means 4 times the STH, SPD, BLD, BDY and INCY).

Walk Through Walls- The PC can move through solid, inanimate objects as if he or she was intangible and can bring along anything the PC can hold or drag.

Invention- The PC can cause improbable machines that he or she has built to work, in contradiction of all laws of physics and engineering. The machines work only as long as the PC's effect lasts. Machines can be activated multiple times but always have the same powers. Create machines using the Power Creation Rules on p.30 with up to 3 levels of effect and 4 levels of Limitations.

Tunneling- With a shovel, the PC can tunnel through the earth at a rate of 10 ft. (3 m.) per minute. No type of soil can impede the PC and the tunnel will not collapse while the PC is using it. Although there will be a small pile of dirt surrounding the hole, most of the excavated dirt disappears.

Super Strength- The PC gains +40 STH for the purposes of lifting, +20 for all other purposes.

Breathe Underwater- The PC can breathe underwater or in any other liquid, gas or vacuum. Environmental toxins and irritants still effect the PC. The PC can also swim at his or her normal running SPD with no END loss.

Invisibility- The PC and any clothing and objects held on the person can become completely invisible to the naked eye. The PC still makes noises and people can make AWR rolls to hear the PC moving and breathing. The PC will also make a visible displacement in thick smoke, fog, rain, etc. The PC can be sensed by motion detectors, creatures from the invisible, or any other creature or device that sees outside of the visible spectrum.

Super Richness- The PC can reach in his or her pockets and pull out unlimited amounts of cash. A moderate (20) AWR roll is all it takes to notice that the cash is a poor counterfeit (words are misspelled, the presidents' faces have goofy grins, etc.). Anyone actively looking for counterfeit cash won't even need to make a roll. The cash disappears as soon as it is put where that nobody is looking at it.

Journeying (WIL)- The PC can detach his or her consciousness from the physical body and travel around this world. While detached, the PC's body appears unconscious and the PC must make a hard (30) AWR roll to notice anything happening to his or her body. The PC is invisible and intangible, can only effect the world through the use of paranormal skills that do not require physical components or actions. The PC cannot see other invisible entities without an appropriate skill or power. The PC can fly around at his or her normal SPD (no END loss). The PC can also travel to non-earthy realms (like the spirit world) that the PC has seen before or that the PC has had described to him or her in great detail. Traveling to other worlds usually takes the form of flying down into the ground or up into the clouds, though where the PC pictures himself or herself going is more important than the physical direction the PC travels in. If the PC's soul is badly damaged the PC will be disconnected from his or her body and cannot re-enter it without the Body Invasion skill. The PC gets +4 for each hour of meditation or chanting and +10 for using hallucinogens or deliriants. Duration: Until Stopped (to return to his or her body the spirit has to find and enter the body).

Hard (30): Leave one's body.

Masks (WIL)- The PC can put a mask or a costume on a thing and people will see whatever the costume is. Put a plastic Nixon mask on a person and that person will look exactly like Nixon. Put baby-clothes on a log and people will see a sleeping baby. Those with Visions or who can see the invisible can see past this illusion, as can anyone possessed by a psychodynamic or anyone who makes a legendary (40) opposed AWR roll. The skill cannot make things look like they have a vastly different size or shape. Duration: 1 day/successs.

Easy (10): Make a young person look like an old person.

Moderate (20): Make a person look like a troll.

Hard (30): Make a person look like a bush.

Legendary (40): Make a building look like a dinosaur.

Mortification of the Flesh (WIL)- This skill is used to replace a lost body part with an invisible, intangible spirit body part that can do everything the original did and more. Normally, the skill is being used as the body part is being removed. The PC is at -10 if using this skill after the fact. Difficulty goes up by 5 for each successive body part removed. PC gets +1 for every hour spent in chanting or meditation (max +10). Duration: Permanent (unless the body part is somehow restored).

Hard (30): Replace a body part.

Phantom Body Parts

Phantom Hand: Can reach into people's chests and grab their hearts (4 BLD damage). Can reach through walls and unlock doors. The hand can grab with 20 STH.

Phantom Eye: PC can switch between being able to see the invisible, see through objects or see in the dark. The PC also gets +10 to vision based AWR rolls.

Phantom Body Parts (continued)

Phantom Heart: +5 BLD, +10 INCY.

Phantom Arm: All the powers of a phantom hand, but with a longer reach. Can grab, lift and punch at 20 STH.

Phantom Legs: The PC can run, jump or kick as if he or she had 25 SPD.

Phantom Stomach/Intestines: The PC does not need to eat.

Phantom Lungs: The PC does not need to breathe. +4 BLD, +7 INCY.

Phantom Eardrums: The PC can hear the invisible, cannot be deafened, can hear whispers at 100 ft. (30 m.) and can understand any spoken language. If both eardrums have been removed, the PC can make Hard AWR rolls to hear what people within 5 ft. (1.5 m.) are thinking to themselves.

Phantom Tongue: Can speak telepathically: Can be understood by anyone, including deaf people and people who don't speak the PC's language. The PC can choose who hears his or her words. The PC can "speak" to one or more people in a painful "volume" (victims must make a moderate save vs. pain).

Phantom Brain: +5 INL, +5 AWR, +5 AGY, perfect photographic memory, immunity to psychoactive drugs.

Nihilist Rage (WIL)- The PC creates an aura of disbelief of the physical world that causes all inanimate objects to crumble, break, fray or corrode. Duration: Permanent.

Easy (10): Things within 7 ft. (2 m.) become much easier to break (difficulty for STH feat or amount of damage required to break is halved). PR of armor is halved. Anything which degrades over time does so twice as fast.

Moderate (20): Everything within 15 ft. (5 m.) cracks, corrodes, sours or frays. Anything bearing weight (e.g. a chair someone is sitting in, the tires of a car) breaks or bursts. Parts of the room the PC is in may collapse. Nearly anything can be broken or destroyed with bare hands. Armor is ineffective. Machines and electronics don't work.

Hard (30): Everything within 30 ft. (10 m.) cracks, melts, twists, blackens and corrodes as if exposed to a fire or strong acid. Sinkholes appear in the ground, clothes fall apart, buildings collapse. Weapons are too brittle to do any damage.

Legendary (40): Everything within 60 ft. (20 m.) disappears, leaving a semi-spherical crater. The edges of the crater are black as if there had been a great explosion. Anyone in the area is dumped into another plane of existence.

Playland Geography (INL)- The PC has a knowledge of his or her own playland: the landmarks, domains, characters, etc.

Easy (10): Recognize and name a major playland character.

Moderate (20): Find a shortcut leading directly to a distant part of the playland.

Hard (30): Find a portal to someone else's playland.

Possession Trance (AWR)- The PC can enter a light trance which opens himself or herself up to possession by a spirit. Most possessors are guardian spirits, who have personal knowledge about the PC, insight into the PC's situation, and want to help the PC in their own peculiar fashion. Occasionally a non-guardian spirit, possibly a malevolent one, will possess the PC, but the PC's guardian spirits will kick it out if it tries to hurt the PC. The PC may have slightly enhanced physical and health attributes while possessed. The PC gets +4 to the roll for each hour spend in rhythmic dancing or chanting, +10 if the PC had taken a deliriant or hallucinogen drug and +10 if the PC has tortured himself or herself. Occasionally spirits will attempt to possess a PC without the PC having to activate this skill (PC can make a WIL roll to resist). Duration: Until Stopped.

Easy (10): Be possessed, remember nothing afterwards.

Moderate (20): Be possessed, remember everything afterwards.

Hard (30): Share control of the body with the spirit.

Psychometry (AWR)- The PC can touch an inanimate object and gain flashes of the thoughts, feelings and sensations people had near it. The flashes come from random points in the object's history, although experiences that had a strong meaning to the people who had them are more likely to come forth. Duration: While Concentrating.

Easy (10): Get something from a knife used in a murder.

Moderate (20): Get something from a 5 year old couch.

Hard (30): Get something from a week old pen.

Read Minds (AWR)- The PC can hear what people are thinking and feel their emotions within 10 ft. per point of success. The PC does not know what direction each thought is coming from and can only distinguish who is thinking what if the PC has heard the thinkers' voices. Duration: While Concentrating.

Easy (10): Emotions only.

Moderate (20): Thoughts and emotions.

Hard (30): Thoughts, emotions and perceptions.

Revive (WIL)- Prerequisite: Flesh Control (1). A PC can use force of will to make his or her heart and lungs keep going even after sustaining a mortal injury. Only one skill roll can be made for each lethal incident. After reviving the PC has 1 BLD. Duration: Permanent.

Easy (10): Revive from 0 INCY.

Moderate (20): Revive from -3 INCY.

Hard (30): Revive from -6 INCY.

Legendary (40): Revive from -9 INCY.

See Invisible (AWR)- This skill allows one to see, hear and feel denizens of the 'invisible world' that is coterminous with out own. The PC can also make INL based rolls via this skill to determine what invisible entities do to the real world (e.g. a PC might recognize that a particular wriggler causes headaches in humans). See "Seeing the Invisible" p.44.

Easy (10): See an invisible thing.

Moderate (20): Distinguish an invisible thing from a non-invisible thing.

Hard (30): See an invisible thing through or inside solid objects.

Legendary (40): See a reaper or a soul.

See Reapers (AWR)- The PC can see reapers coming to take the souls of the dead. Since reapers often flock to dangerous situations where deaths are likely to happen, this power can act as a danger sense.

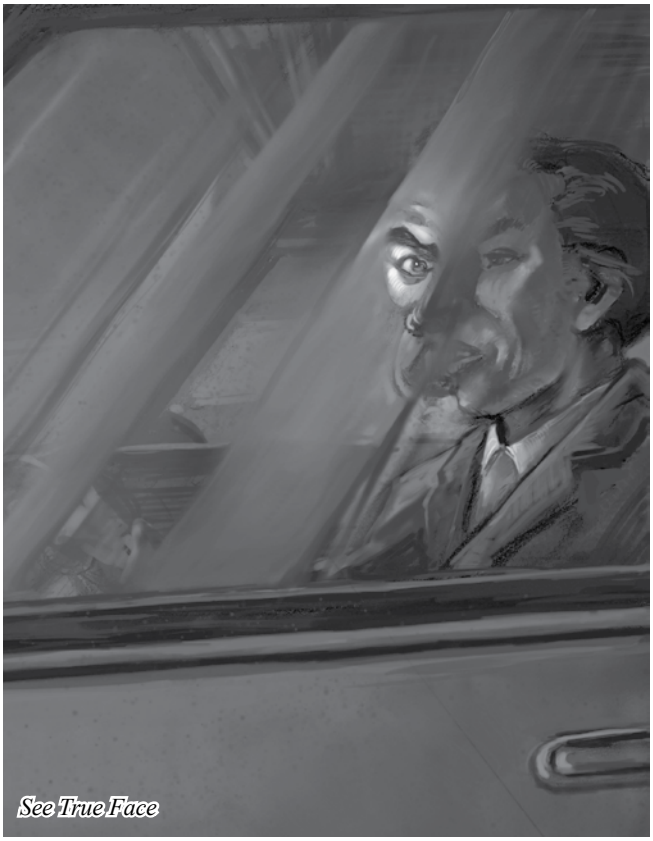
Easy (10): Notice a crowd of several reapers.

Moderate (20): Notice a single reaper floating in front of PC's face.

Hard (30): Notice a reaper while driving past on the freeway.

Where Reapers Go

Reapers show up where deaths are ready to occur. They gather at or follow: deadly plagues, people with suicidal or murderous intent, deadly wrigglers, materials under strain in buildings, bridges and vehicles which are near breaking, imminent natural disasters, people who are very ill or starving. Sudden and fairly random events do not attract reapers beforehand (e.g. a car accident, a fight which suddenly turns violent, etc.).



See True Face

See Souls (AWR)- The PC can see the things that live inside most humans and that live on after the human dies. The PC can recognize when people don't have a soul, and can see the slightly 'brighter' souls of people with supernatural powers.

Easy (10): Tell if a person has a soul by looking deeply in his or her eyes.

Moderate (20): Tell if a person has a soul by looking at them, or see a soul in the dark well enough to fight at only a -7 penalty.

Moderate (30): See and track human souls through walls, or see a soul in the dark well enough to fight at no penalty.

See True Face (AWR)- Prerequisite: Visions (3). The PC can look at a person and see the image of the guardian spirit which is strongest or is currently influencing that person's actions, as well as the emotional state of that psychodynamic. For example: if someone is feeling guilty about lying, the PC might see the angry face of the guardian spirit that is responsible for keeping people's thoughts and actions righteous. Duration: While Concentrating.

Moderate (20): See true face.

Soul Blade (WIL) The PC can anoint a blade with his or her blood, giving it the ability to do damage to invisible intangible spirits and to the souls of humans. The blade cannot destroy a human soul, but it will cause considerable pain, pain which cannot be blocked by painkillers or by the Untouchable skill. If attacking a flesh-and-blood person, the blade does normal bladed damage as well as causing pain. Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): 2 damage to intangible beings or 10 difficulty pain to humans.

Moderate (20): 4 damage or 20 difficulty pain.

Hard (30): 6 damage or 30 difficulty pain.

Spirit Speed (WIL)- The PC has learned to believe in his or her speed and ability to defy gravity with such force of will that the rules of physics are temporarily broken. PC gets +10 if he or she has used hallucinogenic or deliriant drugs and +4 for each hour of chanting or self-torture. Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): +5 SPD, +5 AGY, +20 to jumping rolls

Moderate (20): +10 SPD, +10 AGY, +40 to jumping rolls

Hard (30): +15 SPD, +15 AGY, +60 to jumping rolls

Spirit Strength (WIL)- The PC has learned to believe in his or her own physical strength with such force of will that the rules of physics and biology are broken. PC gets +10 if he or she has used hallucinogenic or deliriant drugs and +4 for each hour of chanting or self-torture. Duration: 1 min./success.

Easy (10): +10 STH, +10 END

Moderate (20): +20 STH, +20 END

Hard (30): +30 STH, +30 END

Summon Imaginary Friend (WIL)- The PC can call a character from his or her playland to temporarily manifest in this world. Duration: See below.

Easy (10): Manifest through the PC. PC has no control over his or her actions and will remember nothing later. Lasts 1 hour or until friend decides to leave.

Moderate (20): Manifest through another person (that person must be willing or have 1 or less WIL). Person will have increased stats as seen on p.29. Lasts 1 hour or until friend decides to leave.

Hard (30): Manifest as an autonomous physical entity. Permanent.

Switch Bodies (WIL)- The PC can switch hir soul with that of another person, putting the PC in charge of another persons' body and visa versa. The PC can access the new bodies' memories. From the moment the switch occurs, the memories of the new body's brain will start to reassert themselves. Each 24 hours, or any time the PC accesses the body's memories, the PC must make a WIL roll not to forget hirself. The difficulty grows by 10 each time (10 for the first roll, 20 for the next, etc.). For each failure the PC loses 1 level in each skill, forgets personal information and the PC's personality becomes more like that of the body's owner's. This damage to self goes away after the PC returns to hir body. The PC can remember everything the other person's soul did in hir body during the switch, and visa versa. If the body the PC is inhabiting is killed, the PC will die. Duration: Permanent.

Moderate (20): Switch bodies during intercourse.

Hard (30): Switch bodies during full-body contact.

Legendary (40): Switch bodies during a touch.

Truth Ordeal (WIL)- The PC can put a question to a person and then touch the person with any hot piece of metal. If the person answers truthfully (as far as he or she knows) the metal will not burn them. Note: Those who can see the invisible will see small tendrils reaching from the body of the PC and into the heads of those being questioned. Duration: While Concentrating.

Moderate (20): Discover if a person is telling the truth.

Untouchable (WIL)- By closing his or her eyes and choosing not to believe in the world around him or her, the PC can take little or no damage from mundane threats such as fire, bullets, stampeding animals, a collapsing building, etc. The PC cannot interact with the world while using this power (because the essence of this power lies in disbelieving in the world). The PC becomes partially intangible and, at high levels, transparent. The PC can use this skill as a combat reaction at -10. Duration: While Concentrating.

Easy (10): Take half-damage from physical sources.

Moderate (20): Take one-fourth damage from physical sources (slightly transparent).

Hard (30): Take one-tenth damage (noticeably transparent).

Legendary (40): Take no damage (completely see-through).

Visions (AWR)- This is the ability to have hallucinations that mean something. A vision is not a sensation of a real thing. It is something that some part of the PC knows subconsciously and that knowledge can only reach consciousness as a hallucination. For instance, if the PC has a vision of a crow perched above someone's head it may mean that some part of the PC has reason to believe that person will die soon. The PC cannot ask for a vision, they come at random times and unexpected intervals. Duration: While Concentrating.

Easy (10): See an omen of potential ill fortune for a person or place.

Moderate (20): See an omen relating to the personality or abilities of a person.

Hard (30): See a vision pointing to the specific location of an invisible entity.

Step Seven – Equipment

In Brief: Buy stuff with money from Day Job. Can't buy illegal things without the Black Market skill.

Starting Equipment

Depending on the PC's weekly expendable income (set by Day Job) he or she will get free equipment and services to start:

$50 or less- A few suits of older clothing, some broken-down furniture, a bus pass, a leaky fridge and a rusty oven, a radio, a few old books, plastic dishes and flatware from a fast food place, packages of ramen, a tiny tenement apartment or welfare-hotel room. Note: Homeless PCs can't start with anything they can't carry unless they rent a storage shed.

$51 to $100- One nice outfit and some grungy outfits, old furniture, a barely-running car, a tiny microwave, a small color TV, a bookshelf full of books, older dishes and flatware, a fridge half-full of food, a small apartment in a bad part of town.

$101 to $200- A few nice outfits, old furniture, an older used car, a microwave, a small TV and DVD player, a CD player, a small library of DVDs, CDs and paperback books, an old computer, an apartment with air conditioning.

$201 to $300- Several nice outfits, including a formal suit and a suit for going to nightclubs, cheap new furniture, a new car, an entertainment center, a new computer, a large apartment or small house.

$301 to $400- An SUV, sports car or luxury car, a large variety of nice outfits, nice furniture, new top-of-the-line appliances, a big-screen TV, a top of the line computer, a condo, house or luxury apartment.

$401 or more- Designer or tailored outfits, luxury furniture, professional quality appliances, two new cars (luxury, sports, RV, SUV or vintage), a boat, a home theater, a top of the line computer, a very large house or multiple luxury apartments.

Purchasing Equipment

The PC starts with an amount of money listed in the PC's Day Job description. Buy equipment and services listed in the following section. The GM may disallow some purchases that would be unreasonable for the PC to own.

Be sure to note which equipment is being stored at home (or hidden somewhere else) and which equipment the PC regularly carries on his or her person. The weight of equipment a PC can carry without minuses is STH times 5 lbs. (or STH times 2 kg.). If the weight is not listed then it is negligible. (See Encumbrance, p.128 for more).

Legality

Illegal equipment has one of the following legality ratings.

Infraction: If the PC is caught with this item and doesn't have the proper license or permit, the PC can be fined up to $300. The PC must have at least 1 level in the skill Black Market to start play with one of these items.

Misdemeanor: Without a proper license or permit, the PC could get up to 1 year in jail and/or up to $1,000 in fines. The PC must have at least 2 levels in the skill Black Market to start play with one of these items.

Felony: Without a proper license or permit, the PC could get several years in prison (average 5). The PC must have at least 3 levels in the skill Black Market to start play with one of these items.

Capital: There are very few items at this level of illegality. Nuclear weapons are one. Being caught means being whisked away to a federal facility, being tried secretly and possibly disappearing forever. The PC must have 4 levels in Black Market.

Animals

Dog: Fighting- A dog that has been bred and trained to injure and kill other dogs in illegal fights. It is short and muscular with powerful jaw muscles. It will follow the commands 'kill' (Vital Strike against other dogs at 1d20 vs. 6), 'watch out' (Jump Out at 1d20 vs. 5), 'stop' (stop fighting), 'finish him' (attack the throat of an incapacitated opponent), 'stay' and 'heel'. Costs $1,000.

Dog: Guard- A dog that has been trained to guard property. It will bark at any stranger who comes near the area in which it is enclosed and will attack any stranger who enters the area. It will follow the commands 'stay', 'he/she's okay', 'heel', 'quiet' and 'attack'. Costs $500.

Dog: Service- A dog that has been bred and trained to assist people with disabilities, especially the blind. It will follow the commands 'fetch' (with point), 'heel', 'stay' and 'get help.' The dog will also guide visually impaired people around obstacles. Costs $750.

Dog: Tracking- This dog has been specially bred and trained to use its incredible sense of smell. Choose one of the following specialties for the dog: tracking humans, finding drugs, finding injured people & corpses, finding explosives. In addition to 'find' or 'point' the dog knows 'heel,' 'stay,' 'down' and 'get' (grab the arm of a fleeing suspect). Costs $2,000.

Dog: Untrained- A healthy young dog which knows no commands. Costs $50.

Equipment Index

Animals	
Dog: Fighting	$1,000
Dog: Guard	$500
Dog: Service	$750
Dog: Tracking	$2,000
Dog: Untrained	$50
Helper Monkey	$10,000
Homing Pigeon	$200
Horse: Police	$2,000
Horse: Pack	$500
Horse: Racing	$1,000
Horse: Untrained	$400
Housecat	$20
Exploration & Survival	
Arctic Tent	$200
Backpack	$2
Bolt Cutters	$50
Bottled Water	$0.50
Camping Net	$75
Camping Tent	$35
Climbing Rope	$1/ft.
Dust Mask	$0.25
Ear Plugs	$2
Emergency Heat Pack	$20
Entry Tool	$250
Fire Blanket	$60
Fire Extinguisher	$70
Fishing Kit	$5
Fishing Line	$15
Flare (Underwater)	$15
Flare	$5
Flashlight (Emergency)	$75
Flashlight (Keychain)	$10
Flashlight (Large)	$25
Flashlight (Small)	$2
Gasmask	$50
Gilly Suit	$150
GPS	$500
Hatchet	$50
Headlamp	$50
Insect Repellent	$5
MRE	$7
Parachute	$1,500
Protein Bar	$1
Radiation Detector	$100
Rock Climbing Kit	$200
Rope and Grapple	$75
Rope Saw	$25
Scuba Gear	$1,000
Scuba Gear (Advanced)	$10,000
Sheet-Metal Snips	$30
Ski Goggles	$5
Steel Toed Boots	$50
Sunscreen	$5
Swiss Army Knife	$25
Trenchcoat	$35
Water Purifying Canteen	$40
Wetsuit	$100
Winter Coat	$10
Work Gloves	$20
Armor	
Ballistic Vest	$500
Chainmail	$500
Hazmat Suit	$600
Firefighting Suit	$25
Leather Jacket	$75
Motorcycle Outfit	$150
Plate Armor	$400
Riot Armor	$2,000
SWAT Armor	$4,000
High Tech	
Computer Hardware	
Desktop (Gaming)	$3,000
Desktop (Used)	$300
Laptop (Military)	$4,000
Laptop (New)	$4,000
Laptop (Used)	$400
Palmtop Computer	$250
Printer	$70
Server	$5,000
Smart Phone	$500
UPS	$100
Wearable Computer	$5,000 +$10/wk.
Software	
A/V Production Suite	$500
CAD Suite	$600
Developer's Suite	$400
Encryption Software Suite	$75
Office Application Suite	$200
Script Kiddie Suite	$100
Security Package	$100
Translation Software Suite	$250
Visual Arts Suite	$200
Communication	
Cellphone (Basic)	$30 +$5/wk.
Cellphone (Top of the Line)	$150 +$7/wk.
Cellular Internet Access Card	$100 +$10/wk.
Ear Bud Radios	$100/ea.
Encrypted Cellphone	$1,000 +$5/wk.
Pager	$25 +$2/wk.
Safellite Phone/Modem	$3,000 or $100/wk.
Walkie Talkies	$15/ea.
Walkie Talkies (Advanced)	$150/ea
Lifestyle	
Art Collection	Varies
Condoms	$1
Fiction Book Collection	Varies
Hip Flask	$25
Home Entertainment Center	$5,000 or $7/wk.
Instrument (Acoustic)	$50
Lighter (Disposable)	$0.50
Lighter (Expensive)	$20
Makeup Kit	$40
Movie Collection	Varies
Music Collection	Varies
Portable CD/Radio	$10
Spray Paint	$10
Wristwatch	$2
Wardrobe	
Clothing Collection	$3000
Clubwear	$150
Costume	$200
Fetish Outfit	$100
Formal Outfit	$200
Format Outfit (Tailored)	$2,000
Jogging Outfit	$10
Military Surplus Outfit	$60
Raincoat	$7
Scrubs	$10
Street Outfit	$1
Uniform	Varies
Medical	
Pharmaceuticals	
Antibiotics	$50/course
Antibiotics (Severe)	$300/course
Anti-Nauseant	$20/dose
Anti-Psychotic	$4/dose
Anti-Shock	$10/dose
Anti-Toxin Kit	$100
Anxiolytic	$2/dose
Birth Control Pills	$30/wk.
Ipecac	$5/dose
Local Anesthetic	$10/dose
Opiate Painkillers	$2/dose
Sedative	$3/dose
Medical Equipment	
Carry Board	$150
Field Surgical Kit	$100
First Aid Kit (EMT)	$250
First Aid Kit (Minor)	$10
First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional)	$75
Hearing Aid	$80
Latex Gloves	$1/pair.
Syringe	$1
Wheelchair	$100
Psychoactives	
Alcohol	Varies
Caffeine	Varies
Chloral Hydrate	$30/dose
Cigarettes	Varies
Cocaine/Crack	Varies
Ecstasy	$10/dose
Ethnogenic Deliriant	$5/dose
Ethnogenic Euphoriant	$10/dose
Ethnogenic Hallucinogen	$20/dose
Hallucinogen	$10/dose
Herbal Sedative/Painkiller	$2/dose
Herbal Stimulant	$3/dose
Heroin	$5/dose
Inhalants	$2/dose
Marijuana	$3/dose
Meth	$5/dose
Roofies	$10/dose
Truth Serum	$80/dose
Research	
Reference Books	Varies
Research Library	Varies
Services	
Animal Boarding	$10/day
Background Check (Credit)	$10
Background Check (Criminal)	$75
Background Check (Full)	$150
Bank Account (Offshore)	$5/wk.
Beauty Treatment	$100
Blood/Urine Test	$75
Bus Ride	Varies
Car Rental	$20/day
Day Care	$200/wk
Insurance (Car)	$10/wk
Insurance (Home)	$10/wk
Insurance (Kidnapping)	$200/wk
Insurance (Legal)	$10/wk
Insurance (Life)	$10/wk
Insurance (Medical)	$30/wk
Legal Research Database Access	$100/wk
Limo Ride	$75/hr
Medical Care (Ambulance)	$25
Medical Care (Drug Rehab)	$400/wk.
Medical Care (Plastic Surgery)	$3,000
Medical Care (Psychotherapy)	$100/hr.
Personal Assistant	$600/wk.
Polygraphy	$500
Security (Alarm System)	$30/wk.
Security (Executive Personal)	$6,000/wk.
Stable Care	$30/wk.
Storage (Locker)	$0.75/day
Storage (Shed)	$10/wk.
Subway Ride	$1.25
Thug	$50/hr.
Real Estate	
Apartment (Luxury)	$500/wk.
Apartment (Moderate)	$250/wk.
Apartment (Slum)	$100/wk.
Home Rental	$350/wk.
Office Rental	$125/wk.
Surveillance & Security	
Audio Bug	$50
Binoculars	$25
Bug Sweeper	$100
Camera (Amateur-Digital)	$200
Camera (Disposable)	$5
Camera (Pro-Digital)	$1,500
Camera (Pro-Film)	$2,000
Camera Bug	$120
Cellphone Interceptor	$300,000 or $1000/wk.
Fiber Optic Inspection Scope	$800
Handcuffs	$20
Laser Microphone	$500
Motion Alarm	$40
Nightvision Goggles	$200
Padlock (Cheap)	$5
Padlock (Expensive)	$80
Parabolic Microphone	$75
Peephole Reverser	$90
Plastic Restraints	$2/ea.
Radio Scanner	$50
Security Camera	$90
Security Camera Recorder	$500
Sound Recorder	$20
Tracking Bug	$250
Videocamera (Cheap)	$100
Videocamera (Professional)	$5,000
Tools	
Autopsy Kit	$2,000
Carpentry Tools	$50
Carving Tools	$40
Chemical Analysis Equipment	$700
Chemical Synthesis Lab	$10,000
Crowbar	$45
Duct Tape	$2
Electronics Repair Kit	$100
Evidence Packaging Kit	$50
Fingerprinting Kit	$50
Forensic Evidence Lab	$50,000
Generator	$600
Gun Repair Tools	$70
Gunshot Residue Test	$20
Lock Breaking Kit	$100
Lock Pick Gun	$50
Lock Picks (Homemade)	$5
Lock Picks (Professional)	$50
Metal Detector	$50
Microscope	$100
Pen Torch	$75
Pickaxe	$100
Polygraphy Set	$2,000
Sledgehammer	$40
Spoon	$1
SWAT Door Ram	$20
Theatrical Makeup Kit	$400
Torture Kit	$500
UV Light	$50.
Vehicle Repair Shop	$10,000.
Vehicle Repair Toolkit	$200
Voice Changer	$30
Vehicles	
Air Bags	$400
Alarm	$200
Bicycle	$150
Bullet Proofing	$10,000
Bus	$7,000 or $20/wk.
Car (New)	$25,000 or $50/wk.
Car (Used)	$7,000 or $20/wk.
Electric Kick Scooter	$200
Helicopter	$20,000 or $100/wk.
Inflatable Raft	$75
Kayak	$200
Moped	$1,000
Motorboat	$20,000 or $100/wk.
Motorcycle (New)	$10,000 or $100/wk.
Motorcycle (Used)	$5,000 or $20/wk.
Rollerblades	$40
Run-Flat Tires	$400
RV	$70,000 or $200/wk.
Single Engine Prop	$10,000 or $25/mo.
Skateboard	$15
Snowmobile	$5,000 or $20/wk.
Sports Car	$50,000 or $175/wk.
SUV	$30,000 or $75/wk.
Tinted Windows	$100
Trailer	$100
Truck (Used)	$6,000 or $20/wk.
Underwater Scooter	$500.
Weapons	
Chemical	
Chloroform	$80/bottle
Curare	$75/dose
Digitalis	$40 for 2 doses
Parathion	$60 for 10 doses
Monkshood	$30/dose
Poison Ring	$30
Ricin Paste	$200/dose
Sarin Gas	$1,000/canister
Strychnine	$20/dose
Tetrodotoxin	$50/dose
Explosives & Incendiary	
Anti-Tank Weapon	$7,500
Dynamite	$75
Flame Thrower	$500
Gasoline	$3/gallon
Grenade (Flash Bang)	$75
Grenade (Fragmentation)	$200
Grenade Launcher	$5,000 +$75/grenade.
Land Mine	$200
Letter Bomb	$200
Matchhead Bomb	$80
Molotov Cocktail	$40
Pipe Bomb	$100
Semtex	$1000/250 g.
Firearms	
Automatic Rifle	$1,000 +$1/bullet
Hunting Rifle	$500 +$1/bullet
Laser Sight	$75
Machine Gun	$10,000 +$100 per belt.
Pistol (Automatic)	$450 +$0.25/bullet
Pistol (Heavy)	$600 +$0.50/bullet
Pistol (Mini)	$200 +$0.25/bullet
Pistol (Revolver)	$350 +$.0.25/bullet
Sawed-Off Shotgun	$600 +$1/shell.
Shotgun (Pump)	$300 +$1/shell
Shotgun (Semi-Automatic)	$700 +$1/shell.
Silencer	$250
Sniper Rifle	$4,000 +$5/bullet.
Submachinegun	$2,500 +$1/bullet
Self-Defense	
Grenade (Tear Gas)	$50
Pepper Spray	$30
Personal Sonic Alarm	$20
Shield (Blast)	$200
Shield (Riot)	$80
Shield (Small)	$50
Taser (Air)	$500
Taser (Baton)	$50
Taser (Heavy Duty)	$70
Taser (Mini)	$30
Tear Gas Keyholer	$70
Traditional	
Baseball Bat	$50
Bear Trap	$100
Blowpipe	$50 +$4/dart
Bow (Archery)	$50 +$5/arrow
Bow (Compound)	$400 +$20/arrow
Chain	$5
Crate Cutter	$5
Crossbow	$500 +$30/bolt.
Dagger	$35
Dagger (Throwing)	$20/set of 3.
Fire Axe	$45
Knife (Combat)	$35
Knife (Hunting)	$30
Knife (Kitchen)	$3
Knife (Switchblade)	$45
Machete	$40
Nightstick	$40
Pen Knife	$45
Pipe	$5
Quarterstaff	$40
Sword (Broadsword)	$100
Sword (Fencing)	$60
Sword (Katana)	$100
Sword Cane	$100
Telescoping Baton	$150
Tiger Claws	$65
Whip	$35

Typical Dog

Attributes: END 10, SPD 15, BDY 2, BLD 2, INCY 3.

Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (2 bladed damage), Vital Strike Bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (4 bladed damage)

Feeding Costs $7/wk.

Helper Monkey- A capuchin monkey which has been specially trained to aid a person with serious physical impairment. The monkey can retrieve items, operate light switches, turn the pages on a book and much more. The monkey has 1 STH, 1 BLD, 1 BDY. If attacked it will fight back with a pain/stun attack (biting a person in a sensitive spot) at 1d20 vs. 5. Costs $10,000.

Homing Pigeon- Trained to return to it's coop upon being released, often with a message attached to it. Costs $200.

Horse: Police- Trained to stop if the rider falls off or drops the reigns, and to attack anyone who attacks or grabs the rider. It understands commands that tell it to 'go/go faster', 'stop', 'slow' and 'turn left/right.' Costs $2,000.

Horse: Pack- Trained to travel on rocky and uneven terrain and to carry heavy baggage. It understands commands that tell it to 'go/go faster', 'stop', 'slow' and 'turn left/right.' Costs $500.

Typical Horse

Attributes: END 20, SPD 45, BDY 6, BLD 6, INCY 3.

Abilities: Thick hide has PR 1 bladed 1 blunt.

Senses: Sight AWR 10 (better for long-distance vision), Hearing AWR 18, Smell AWR 20.

Attacks: Kick at 1d20 vs. 5 (5 blunt), Bite at 1d20 vs. 10 (1 bladed damage, pain/stun attack), Trample (if figure is not prone, horse must rear up, using 1 action) at 1d20 vs. 10 (7 blunt damage, 1 in 20 chance the horse will break a leg).

Feeding Costs $7/wk.

Note: In order to travel on city streets without hurting their hooves, horses must be shod with special rubber shoes.

Horse: Racing- Trained to run at very high speeds (up to 60 SPD) for several minutes, to dodge and weave among traffic. It understand commands that tell it to 'go/go faster', 'stop', 'slow' and 'turn left/right.' Costs $1,000.

Horse: Untrained- A horse that is comfortable with humans, and will let a human climb on top of it, but has otherwise not been trained. Costs $400.

Housecat- A typical housecat. Hard to train, but adept at hunting and killing pests. Has END 5, SPD 13, BDY 1, BLD 3, INCY 3; Sight AWR 10 (no darkness penalty), Smell AWR 15, Hearing AWR 15; a pain/stun attack with claws (at 1d20 vs. 3). Costs $3/wk. to feed. Costs $20.

Exploration & Survival

Arctic Tent- A one-person tent with enough reflective insulation to protect one from an arctic snowstorm. Weighs 30 lbs. (14 kg). Costs $200.

Backpack- Helps people carry their maximum encumbrance (see p.128). Costs $20

Bolt Cutters- Heavy, long handled, can cut chain-link fences and most padlocks easily. It can be used as a weapon (1 bladed or 1 blunt damage, very hard strike (-8), hard entangle (-8)) and if a weapon can be caught between the blades (an entangle), the fighter holding the bolt cutters can use an action to snap the weapon. Weighs 10 lbs. (4.5 kg). Costs $50.

Bottled Water- Costs $0.50.

Camping Net- This lightweight net can hold up to 750 lbs. and is large enough to be used a hammock. Weighs 0.5 lbs. (.2 kg). Costs $75.

Camping Tent- A canvas bag holding a folded up waterproof tent. With practice the tent can be setup or taken down in 5 minutes. Designed for one person. Weighs 15 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $35.

Climbing Rope- High quality rope that a mountain climber or spelunker might use. Has a burn and cut resistant nylon sheath (takes 2 bladed or 4 burn damage to cut the rope). Can hold 6,000 lbs. (2,700 kg). Has moderate bounce. Weighs 1 lb./20 ft. (3 kg./m.) Costs $1/ft. or $3/m.

Dust Mask- A disposable cloth face mask that protects from larger airborne particulates (not from gasses). Costs $0.25.

Ear Plugs- Costs $2.

Emergency Heat Pack- When capsules inside this small gel-filled pouch are broken it becomes very warm and stays warm for up to 1 hour. Can only be used once. Gives +5 to save vs. hypothermia. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $20.

Entry Tool- This long, heavy tool was designed for SWAT teams to quickly get past obstacles. It is a pry bar, an axe and a sledgehammer all in one (one side of the pole has a hammer-axe, the other has a pry bar). Can be used as a weapon doing either 3 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6) or 4 blunt damage, both at range 2 (hard strike (-4)). Weighs 7 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $250.

Fire Blanket- A reflective, heat-resistant blanket that can be quickly unfolded and wrapped over the body to survive a fire. Can also be used to hide from infrared sensors. PR 10 burn damage. Costs $60.

Fire Extinguisher- Costs $70.

Fishing Kit- A pocket-sized pouch with everything needed to catch fish in an emergency/survival situation (easy Wilderness Survival skill roll). Costs $5.

Alleys

Fishing Line- A 100 ft. (30 m.) spool of nylon line. Takes hard (30) strength feat to break. Can hold up to 100 lbs. (45 kg.). Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $15.

Flare (Underwater)- Works underwater for 20 minutes. Costs $15.

Flare- Burns with a bright red or green light for 1 hour, illuminating up to 20 ft. (6 m.). Can be held in the hand. Does 2 burn damage when used as a weapon. Costs $5.

Flashlight (Emergency)- This durable flashlight is waterproof and shockproof and uses no batteries. Twisting a hand crank for a few seconds will power it for a minute. Can illuminate up to 25 ft. (7 m.). Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $75.

Flashlight (Keychain)- A tiny flashlight with a bright LED. Can illuminate up to 10 ft. (3 m.). Battery lasts 1 hr. Costs $10.

Flashlight (Large)- A heavy, long metal flashlight with a steel casing. Can be used as a blunt weapon (range 0-1, 2 blunt). Batteries last 12 hours. Can illuminate up to 100 ft. (30 m.) Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $25.

Flashlight (Small)- A cheap plastic flashlight. Batteries last 2 hours. Can illuminate up to 50 ft. (15 m.). Costs $2.

Gasmask- Protects from all inhalation based chemical and biological attacks. It does not protect from agents that work via skin contact. Costs $50.

Gilly Suit- A camouflage body suit covered with textured plastic that looks like foliage. Gives +10 to prowling rolls in undergrowth. Costs $150.

GPS- A handheld unit, can determine location, down to a foot, anywhere in the world. Has street maps for most 1st world locations. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $500.

Hatchet- A small axe designed for use by campers. Can be used as a 2 bladed damage weapon (range 1). Costs $50.

Headlamp- A waterproof flashlight on a headband, often used by cave explorers. Batteries last 12 hours. Costs $50.

Insect Repellent- Foul smelling cream, lasts 8 hours, one bottle contains 20 applications. Costs $5.

MRE- Meal-Ready-to-Eat, a packaged military ration, designed to fulfill full nutritional requirements, stay edible for years unrefrigerated, and require no preparation. Costs $7.

Parachute- Parachutes can be bought in normal or base-jumping styles. Normal parachutes must open at 2000 ft. (600 m.) to prevent falling damage to the PC. Base-jumping parachutes can be opened as low as 800 ft. (250 m.) but are insufficient for use in higher-altitude jumps. Weight 35 lbs. (16 kg). Costs $1,500.

Protein Bar- Quick energy for situations where it is hard to stop for a meal. Costs $1.

Radiation Detector- Handheld device, clicks in response to radiation (clicks more often the closer it gets to a radiation source). Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $100.

Rock Climbing Kit- A small nylon satchel containing 100 ft. (30 m.) of climbing rope, 6 pitons (1 bladed damage poking weapons), a hammer (2 blunt damage), an ascender, a belay device, a harness, 4 carabineers, 4 cams, a chalk bag and rock shoes. Gives +10 to climbing skill rolls. Weighs 15 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $200.

Rope and Grapple- 30 ft. (10 m.) of climbing rope on a sturdy metal hook. Gives +8 to Climbing rolls. Costs $75.

Rope Saw- A flexible saw-on-a-chain that rolls up into a tiny package (can easily fit in a pocket). Used mainly by campers. Can be used as a 1 bladed improvised slashing weapon. Costs $25.

Scuba Gear- This is a complete diving outfit with wetsuit, gloves, fins, weight belt, regulator, oxygen tank, knife, etc. With the tank fully charged the diver can stay underwater about 2 hours. Weighs 75 lbs. (34 kg). Costs $1,000.

Scuba Gear (Advanced)- This is the latest and most expensive technology, including onboard computers and sophisticated co^2 scrubbing rebreathers. It can allow a diver to stay underwater for 48 hours. Weighs 150 lbs. (68 kg). Costs $10,000.

Sheet-Metal Snips- Heavy-duty snips can cut things as hard as sheet-metal. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $30.

Ski Goggles- The thick lenses give a wearer PR 1 blunt 1 bladed from attacks to the eyes. Costs $5.

Steel Toed Boots- Work boots with steel protection for toes. Gives +1 blunt damage to kicks. Costs $50.

Sunscreen- 20 applications of a 150 SPF sunscreen. Costs $5.

Swiss Army Knife- Comes with a blade, corkscrew, can/bottle opener, screwdriver, puncher, scissors, hook, file, tweezers and toothpick. Costs $25.

Trenchcoat- A thick, ankle-length coat, waterproof, with large internal pockets. Costs $35.

Water Purifying Canteen- The lid has a heavy-duty filter in it so that any water squeezed out is filtered. Costs $40.

Wetsuit- Designed to keep people warm in cold water. Heat Factor: +10. AR 7, PR 1 bladed 3 skidding. Costs $100.

Winter Coat- A thick, hooded, waterproof coat that goes down to mid-thigh. Heat factor: +7. Costs $10.

Work Gloves- These gloves protect the hands from up to 2 bladed or 4 burn damage. Useful for climbing and rappelling. Costs $20.

Armor in Brief

Heat Factor: This is a simultaneous bonus to save vs. hypothermia and penalty to save vs. heat stroke.

AGY Penalty: The penalty to all AGY rolls while wearing this item.

AR: Armor Rating, this is the amount of the body that the armor covers and the amount of success that an enemy must make on a strike to hit some hole in the armor. See p.65 for more.

AR 20: Full body protection with no weak spots.

AR 15: Full body protection with some weak spots.

AR 12: Face completely exposed.

AR 10: Head completely exposed.

AR 7: Head, neck, hands, feet completely exposed.

AR 5: Only body, thighs, upper arms covered.

AR 4: Only torso and hips covered.

AR 3: Only torso covered.

PR: Protection Rating, how much of each type of damage the armor protects from. If an armor protects from 6 bladed damage, then a strike that does 10 bladed damage that hits the armor would only do 4 bladed damage to the wearer.

Armor

Ballistic Vest- A kevlar vest thin and small enough to be concealed under a uniform or business suit. Can be noticed with a Hard (30) AWR roll. AGY Penalty: -1. Heat factor: +5. Gives AR 5, PR 6 bladed 2 blunt. Weighs 15 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $500.

Chainmail- Long shirt made of metal rings, metal plates over arms and legs. Weighs 30 lbs. AGY penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +4. AR 6, PR 3 bladed 2 blunt. Weighs 15 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $500.

Hazmat Suit- A rubber suit with a built-in gasmask, designed to provide complete protection from biological and chemical toxins. AGY penalty: -1. AWR penalty: -1. +20 heat factor. AR 20, PR 1 bladed. Weighs 10 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $600.

Firefighting Suit- A suit with helmet, gloves, boots and gasmask designed to protect firefighters from dangers of smoke and extreme temperatures. Has reflective patches so firefighters can see each other in the dark. Weighs 20 lbs. (9 kg). AGY penalty: -3. SPD penalty: -2. Heat factor: +5. AR 10, PR 2 bladed 1 blunt 6 burn. Weighs 12 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $250

Leather Jacket- A knee length, thick leather jacket. Heat factor: +4. AR 5 PR 1 bladed 1 blunt. Costs $75.

Motorcycle Outfit- A black leather jacket, chaps, boots and a motorcycle helmet. Heat factor: +7. With helmet: AR 10 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 5 knockout 5 skid 2 fall. Without the helmet: AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 4 skid 2 fall. Weighs 7 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $150.

Plate Armor- A series of metal plates which slide over each other at joints, with full metal helmet with eye slits. Weighs 75 lbs. AGY penalty: -5. AWR penalty: -5. Heat factor: +8. AR 15, PR 6 bladed 5 blunt. Weighs 20 lbs. (9 kg). Costs $400.

Riot Armor- Padded armor covering the chest, with arm, leg and crotch guards and a helmet with clear-plastic faceplate. Designed to protect from thrown objects and small caliber weapons. AGY Penalty: -4. AWR Penalty: -2. Heat factor +10. Gives AR 14, PR 7 bladed 5 blunt. Weighs 20 lbs. (9 kg). Costs $2,000.

SWAT Armor- An armored body-suit and helmet designed to provide all-over protection from even high-powered firearms. AGY Penalty: -5. AWR Penalty: -4. Heat factor: +10. Gives AR 10, PR 10 bladed 3 blunt. Weighs 20 lbs. (9 kg.) Costs $4,000.

High Tech

Computer Hardware

Desktop (Gaming)- A brand new computer with top-of-the-line parts: the fastest processor, biggest hard drive, a huge flat-screen monitor, the newest video card, surround sound and more. Avid gamers are typically the only people who need a computer this advanced. Costs $3,000.

Desktop (Used)- An older computer, with a relatively slow processor, small hard drive and a smallish CRT monitor. It's fine for browsing the web, but may have trouble running some of the newest software packages. Costs $300.

Laptop (Military)- A moderately powerful laptop designed to be moisture, shock and dust resistant. Can take up to 1 bladed or 1 blunt damage and still work. Batteries last 8 hours. Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $4,000.

Laptop (New)- A new top of the line laptop computer. It's light (2 lbs. or 1 kg), has a big screen and a long battery life (10 hours). Costs $4,000.

Laptop (Used)- An older model laptop computer. Compared to the newest models it's heavier (5 lbs. or 2 kg), slower, has a smaller screen and a shorter battery life (2 hours). Costs $400.

Palmtop Computer- A tiny handheld computer with a touch sensitive screen. It can't run desktop computer software, but it can be used to play games, check email, access calendar and address book info, take notes, play music or movies and even browse the web (with Cellular Internet Access Card). Costs $250.

Printer- Can print documents or (with special paper) decent color photos. Costs $70.

Alleys

Server- A large flat box, designed to be mounted in a case. Its hardware is designed to be very reliable and many of its parts can be swapped out without even turning it off. It's perfect to run a web or mail server, or to record a continuous flow of data from digital sensors, or to be a workhorse for some scientific or statistical project. Costs $5,000.

Smart Phone- A cellphone that also doubles as a palmtop computer (see p.92). Costs $500.

UPS- Provides up to 15 minutes backup battery power for computers or other appliances. Costs $100.

Wearable Computer- This custom built system consists of a glasses-mounted display, a keyboard that wraps around a forearm and a moderately powerful computer (complete with cellular internet connection) that can be worn as a backpack or hip-belt. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $5,000 +$10/wk. for cellular internet service.

Software

A/V Production Suite- Programs that allow for the professional editing of music and video, including common special effects. Costs $500.

CAD Suite- Software that allows for Computer Aided Design of everything from buildings to microchips. Costs $600.

Developer's Suite- A set of programs that allow programmers, database administrators and web developers to practice their craft. Costs $400.

Encryption Software Suite- Tools that allow people to encrypt individual messages or files or to encrypt the contents of a hard drive. Costs $75.

Office Application Suite- All the software one would need to create and edit a document, spreadsheet, database or presentation. Costs $200.

Script Kiddie Suite- A collection of programs designed to allow amateur hackers to hack systems automatically by running various scripts. The program will scan a network and find any computer that has a commonly known security hole and then exploit that hole to give the user access. Consistently makes Hacking rolls (see p.73) at 10 success. Legality: Misdemeanor. Costs $100.

Security Package- A suite that includes the latest antivirus and firewall software, with free updates. Adds +10 difficulty to hacking or virus attacks. Costs $100.

Translation Software Suite- A set of translators that will translate text from one language to another. The translations are far from perfect, but they are usually good enough to be able to get the meaning of text. Also comes with OCR (optical character recognition) and voice recognition software, but use of these reduces the accuracy of the translation even further. Costs $250.

Visual Arts Suite- All the software one would need to create digital art or illustrations or manipulate a photo. Costs $200.

Communication

Cellphone (Basic)- A cheap cellphone that can't do anything besides make phone calls. Costs $30 +$5/wk. for service.

Cellphone (Top of the Line)- This cellphone boasts all the latest features, including the ability to shoot pictures and short movies and to send and receive text messages. Costs $150 +$7/wk. for service.

Cellular Internet Access Card- This card allows a laptop or palmtop computer to access the internet from anywhere that has cellular coverage. Costs $100 +$10/wk. for service.

Ear Bud Radios- A tiny ear bud is connected via a thin wire to a radio that can be hidden under a shirt. Maximum range 600 ft. (200 m.). Costs $100/ea.

Encrypted Cellphone- Allows users who share an encryption key to have scrambled conversations over normal cellphone networks. Costs $1,000 +$5/wk. for service.

Pager- With the ability to receive text messages via email. Costs $25 +$2/wk. for service.

Satellite Phone/Modem- This is a device with a small satellite dish that allows someone to make phone calls or connect to the internet from virtually anywhere in the world. Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $3,000 (+$20/minute for service) or $100/wk. rental.

Walkie Talkies- Maximum range 600 ft. (200 m.). Cost $15/ea.

Walkie Talkies (Advanced)- Water and shock proof. Built in voice scrambling. Optional hands-free headset. Maximum range 7 miles (11 km.) in open areas or 3 miles (5 km.) in the city. Cost $150/ea.

Lifestyle

Art Collection- $200 for 'okay,' $8,000 for 'impressive,' $50,000 for 'amazing.'

Condoms- Costs $1 for a pack of 6.

Fiction Book Collection- $50 for 'small', $250 for 'okay', $1,000 for 'impressive', $5,000 for 'amazing'

Hip Flask- Flat, therefore easier to conceal. Can hold up to 10 doses of alcohol (see p.96). Costs $25.

Home Entertainment Center- DVD, stereo, big-screen TV, big speakers. Costs $5,000 or $7/wk. to rent.

Instrument (Acoustic)- A non-electronic instrument, like a guitar, pair of bongos, harmonica, sitar, saxophone, etc. Costs $50.

Lighter (Disposable)- Costs $0.50.

Lighter (Expensive)- Can light a damp cigarette in high winds. Costs $20.

Makeup Kit- Enough makeup to use the Fashion & Style skill without penalties Costs $40.

Movie Collection- $200 for 'small', $1,000 for 'okay', $4,000 for 'impressive', $20,000 for 'amazing'

Music Collection- $100 for 'small', $500 for 'okay', $2,000 for 'impressive', $10,000 for 'amazing.'

Portable CD/Radio- Costs $10

Spray Paint- A normal can of spray paint. Can be used as a blinding weapon. Costs $10.

Wristwatch- Costs $2.

Wardrobe

Clothing Collection- A wardrobe large enough for the Fashion & Style skill to be used without any penalties. Includes outfits and shoes appropriate to every type of social function, from business meetings, to church, to a singles bar. Must be purchased twice if the PC will be dressing as either gender. Includes the items Clubwear and Formal Outfit (see below). Costs $3,000.

Clubwear- New, trendy clothing appropriate for a party or going out to a club. Gives +2 to seduction rolls. Costs $150.

Costume- Specially tailored or commissioned outfit, e.g. a stage magician's outfit, a historical re-enactor's middle-ages dress, a superhero costume, etc. Costs $200.

Fetish Outfit- An outfit designed to appeal to people of a particular minority sexual preference. Gives +8 to seduction rolls towards those people. Costs $100.

Formal Outfit- A formal outfit that might be appropriate for a business meeting. It is the right size, but not tailored. Costs $200.

Format Outfit (Tailored)- A formal outfit, incorporating the best materials and latest styles, hand-tailored to fit the wearer perfectly. Gives +2 to seduction rolls. Costs $2,000.

Jogging Outfit- Sneakers and grey sweats. Costs $10.

Military Surplus Outfit- A full outfit, including boots and a hat, from military surplus stores. Mostly olive green and cammo. Gives +4 to prowling in greenery. Costs $60.

Raincoat- A thin plastic raincoat, with hood, which can be folded up small enough to fit in a pocket. Costs $7.

Scrubs- Cheap disposable clothing as a doctor or nurse might wear. Does not include shoes. Costs $10.

Street Outfit- Includes shoes and a hat; bought from thrift stores; appropriate to the current weather; comfortable, durable, warm, looks okay if it gets a little dirty. It is not at all 'stylish'. Costs $15

Uniform- A uniform purchased from a uniform store. Note that law enforcement uniforms are a Misdemeanor level item (unless the PC is law enforcement).

Costs $20 for service industry.

Costs $50 for private security.

Costs $75 for law enforcement.

Drugs in Brief

Administered: How the drug is taken. Note that intravenous injections take a skill roll (using the skill Street Drugs or a MEDI skill).

Effects: What the effects are of one dose of the drug. Effects that can be saved against have the difficulty to save listed after them. E.g. "+7 STH, Vomiting (10), Unconsciousness (20) for 2 hours" means that for two hours the user gets +7 STH, must save vs. vomiting at 10 difficulty and vs. unconsciousness at 20 difficulty every hour. Roll vs. effects once per the period listed for the effects (e.g. every hour, every minute, etc.).

Withdrawal Effects: Effects experienced when the chemical starts to exit the user's system (unless stated otherwise, this is when all the Effects cease).

Tolerance: How much more of the chemical a user must use after having taken many doses. Tolerance increases by 10% for each week of regular use. The maximum tolerance for the drug is listed.

Addiction: When there is a possibility that a drug may be psychologically and/or physiologically addictive, the difficulties are listed here. Users must save vs. addiction based on the listed difficulties with +1 difficulty for each consecutive dose. The difficulty to resist drug cravings and any special circumstances which will trigger cravings is listed. E.g. Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15 means that if a PC uses 7 doses in a row he or she must make a roll of WIL + 1d20 vs. 22 or become psychologically addicted to the drug. See p.134 for the complete rules of addiction.

Long Term Effects: These are the additional effects on a user who uses the drug regularly.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: These are the additional effects of withdrawal on a user who has been using the drug regularly.

Overdose: Each drug may have several overdose ratings. "Overdose (2x)" may list the effects of taking two doses at once, "Overdose (4x)" may list the effect of four doses. Unless stated otherwise, assume the overdose effects last as long as the normal effects.

Medical

Pharmaceuticals

Antibiotics

Administered: Orally as pills

Effects: +8 to save vs. disease progression for bacterial infections.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20) for 2 hours.

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $50 for a full 3 week course

Antibiotics (Severe)- This selection of powerful antibiotics is usually reserved for fighting antibiotic resistant strains and has severe side effects.

Administered: Intravenously.

Effects: +12 to save vs. disease progression for bacterial diseases, hair loss, joint pain (-5 AGY), Vomiting (20), liver damage (permanent -4 to save vs. poison/drug effects), digestive system damage (-15 to save vs. nausea for 3 months).

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $300 for a full 3 week course.

Anti-Nauseant

Administered: Intramuscular Injection

Effects: +10 to save vs. nausea for 4 hours

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $20/dose.

Alleys

Anti-Psychotic- A drug that suppresses the parts of the brain involved in psychosis, hallucinations and schizophrenia. It also suppresses the parts of the brain involved in the experience of pleasure and creativity. It is often over-used in mental hospitals, along with sedatives, to make people docile. It also suppresses supernatural abilities.

Administered: Orally as pills or intra-muscular injection.

Effects: +10 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, -2 INL, -2 AWR, -2 AGY, Dysphoria (10), -10 to supernatural skill rolls. Lasts 24 hours.

Withdrawal: -10 vs. hallucinations/delusions for 24 hours.

Long Term Effects: Because the pills have an anhedonic (loss of ability to feel pleasure) effect, regular users must make weekly WIL rolls (10 difficulty) to continue taking the drug willingly.

Overdose (2x): -7 AWR, -7 INL, -7 AGY, +20 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, Dysphoria (20), -20 to supernatural skill rolls.

Overdose (4x): Tardive Dyskenesia (permanent -4 AGY due to brain damage), Stupor (30).

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $4/dose.

Anti-Shock- A drug that helps keep the body from going into shock after a physical trauma or systemic infection.

Administered: Intramuscular injection

Effects: +10 to save vs. trauma or physiological shock for 2 hours.

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $10/dose.

Anti-Toxin Kit- A briefcase sized metal case containing ipecac, activated charcoal, antitoxins and antivenoms for common types of poisons. Allows the Pharmacology skill to be used in the field to treat poisoning at only -5 (as opposed to no penalty in a hospital with a full pharmacy). Costs $100.

Anxiolytic- Used to treat anxiety, stress and panic disorders.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +7 to save vs. fear and psychological shock for 24 hrs.

Tolerance: +10% for every month of daily use (max. +50%).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by fear or worry).

Tolerance: max. +50%

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 month of daily use: -10 to save vs. fear for 2 days.

Overdose (2x): +10 to save vs. fear, -3 AGY, -2 INL, -2 AWR, -5 to save vs. unconsciousness for 24 hours.

Overdose (4x): Unconsciousness (30), Coma (10) for 24 hours.

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $2/dose.

Birth Control Pills- Misdemeanor without a prescription. Costs $30/wk.

Ipecac- Causes immediate vomiting when swallowed. Costs $5/dose.

Local Anesthetic- Used for numbing body parts when doing minor surgery.

Administration: Injected into tissues.

Effects: Insensitivity to pain in given area for 1 hour.

Overdose (2x): Dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), light-headedness (-4 INL), Vomiting (10) for 1 hour.

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $10/dose.

Opiate Painkillers- Used as a painkiller and a drug of abuse.

Administration: Orally as pills (can also be snorted or injected).

Effects: +10 to save vs. pain, +5 to save vs. fear, -3 INL, -3 AGY, Euphoria (10) for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Insomnia (20), -4 to save vs. pain/fear for 12 hours.

Tolerance: max. +200%

Long Term Effects: After daily use for a month: weakened immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for a month: cramps (roll vs. distracting pain, difficulty 20), Insomnia (30), flu-like symptoms, diarrhea for 7 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 5, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): +16 to save vs. pain, +7 to save vs. fear, -5 INL, -5 AGY, euphoria (20), unconsciousness (20).

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (10), fluid in lungs (-10 END).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30).

Legality: Felony without a prescription.

Costs $2/dose.

Sedative- Used to treat panic, psychosis and insomnia.

Administration: Intramuscular injection.

Effects: +7 to save vs. fear/anger, +3 to save vs. pain, -7 to save vs. unconsciousness, +7 to save vs. insomnia, +4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 12 hours.

Tolerance: max. +50%

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 0, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 week of daily use: Insomnia (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (2x): Unconsciousness (30), -4 INL, +10 to save vs. fear/anger.

Overdose (4x): Coma (30).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (40).

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $3/dose.

Medical Equipment

Carry Board- A lightweight board with straps and handles for immobilizing and carrying wounded patients. Weighs 15 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $150.

Field Surgical Kit- A canvas roll with a series of surgical tools and supplies, all sterile in waterproof packaging, that allows someone to use the Surgery skill in the field at -10 (as opposed to no penalty in a fully-stocked operating room). Has weapons that can be used as 2 bladed damage slashing or poking improvised weapons (p.145). Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $100.

First Aid Kit (EMT)- A large plastic box which opens to reveal many shelves (like a tackle box) containing various tools that a trained Emergency Medical Technician might find of use. Includes everything in First Aid Kit: Semiprofessional as well as: industrial scissors (for cutting off clothes), tracheotomy kit, intubation tube, intubation air pump, stomach pump, neck brace, cling film, Anti-Toxin Kit, 4 doses Anti-Shock. Weighs 25 lbs. (11 kg). Costs $250.

First Aid Kit (Minor)- A pocket-sized plastic box designed for use by people with no medical training to deal with minor (non-life-threatening) injuries. Costs $10.

First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional)- This kit is designed for people who have taken a first aid course and want a kit to keep in their home, office or vehicle. This is a briefcase sized metal box containing bandages, gauze, medical tape, butterfly bandages, disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, cold pack, gloves, CPR mouth-guard, eyewash, scissors, tweezers, ipecac and aspirin. The kit has no equipment for surgical procedures. PCs with the Emergency Medicine skill can perform easy (10 difficulty) tasks with this kit. Weighs 10 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $75.

Hearing Aid- Specially tuned to an individual, helps reduce the effects of the Poor Hearing disadvantage (p.120). Costs $80.

Latex Gloves- Cost $1/pair.

Syringe- Requires a skill roll (Street Drugs or any Medical skill) to hit a blood vessel. Legality: Misdemeanor without prescription. Costs $1/ea. or $10 for 25.

Wheelchair- A non-electronic wheelchair. Can fold up flat. A user can move at a SPD equal to half his or her STH. Costs $100.

Psychoactives

Alcohol- One of the oldest medicinal and recreational drugs. In ancient times, weak alcoholic beverages were the only liquids people could drink without fear of bacterial and parasitic infections. Today, alcohol is the number one recreational drug and number one drug of abuse. In its purest form alcohol can be burned. It can also be used as a disinfectant.

Administered: Orally as a liquid (can also be snorted or taken as an enema).

Effects: +4 to save vs. fear, +4 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-4 AGY), slower reactions (-4 to INL rolls based on speed of thought), pleasant buzz for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: The next day, sensitivity to stimuli (-10 to save vs. pain/dose), nausea (10 difficulty/dose), headache (10 difficulty/dose) for 6 hours.

Tolerance: max. +500% (Note that tolerance disappears when liver damage sets in, see Long Term Effects).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 10, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 10, Craving Difficulty 20 (cravings triggered by anxiety).

Long Term Effects: For every two years of daily use: brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR), permanent Retrograde Amnesia and Anterograde Amnesia (at 2 cumulative difficulty), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Long Term Withdrawal: After 1 month or more of daily use the user experiences delirium tremens: Hallucinations (30), Delusions (30), Panic (20), confusion (-10 INL), Insomnia (30), fever, sweating, Seizures (10), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Cardiac Arrest (10).

Overdose (2x): Vomiting (20), +10 to save vs. fear, +6 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-10 AGY), confusion (-10 INL), loss of inhibitions for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (30), Coma (20), Seizures (20) for 6 hours.

Overdose (8x): Coma (30), Seizures (30) for 6 hours. Liver damage (permanent -4 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Costs $1/dose for fortified wine or beer (wine or beer with extra alcohol added).

Costs $2/dose for canned beer, beer on tap, or a shot of liquor.

Costs $5/dose for good quality beer, wine or other alcoholic beverage.

Costs $15/dose for very high quality alcoholic beverage.

Caffeine

Administration: Orally

Effects: +4 to save vs. unconsciousness, +1 INL for 2 hours.

Tolerance: max. +%100

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 10 (cravings triggered by sleep deprivation).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. unconsciousness, Headache (10) for 2 days.

Overdose (2x) +7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Overdose (4x): Shaking/cramps (-4 AGY).

Costs $2/dose for a large cup of coffee.

Costs $3/dose for an espresso shot.

Costs $0.50/dose for a caffeine pill.

Costs $2/dose for an 'energy drink' containing green tea, ginseng and guarana.

Costs $1.50/dose for a large caffeinated soda from a convenience store.

Chloral Hydrate- This prescription sedative is famous as "knockout drops," and has also been used as a recreational drug. It is a derivative of chloroform.

Appearance: Clear green gelcaps.

Administered: 1x effects within 20 minutes if ingested.

1x Effects: Confusion (-10 INL), clumsiness (-10 AGY), weakness (-10 STH), Unconsciousness (30), Coma (10) for 2 hours.

2x Effects: Coma (30), Respiratory Arrest (20).

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Treatment: Gastric lavage or induced vomiting.

Costs $30/dose.

Cigarettes- A pack of 12 cigarettes. Cigarettes contain nicotine which has a mild calming effect (as does breathing deeply) and is a weak anti-psychotic (many schizophrenics self-medicate by smoking). Cigarettes can be used in self-defense by burning opponents (hard blinding (-4), hard pain/stun (-4)). Cigarettes have the following drug profile:

Effects: +2 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 1 hour.

Tolerance: max. +200%

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 20 (cravings triggered by stress or any activity which was previously always followed by a cigarette).

Long Term Effects: Emphysema (-1 END/2 yrs. Smoking), increased risk of cancer and stroke.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. fear, -4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, headache (20), food cravings for 48 hours.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20) for 1 hour.

Costs $3/12 doses for roll-your-own.

Costs $5/12 doses for generic cigarettes.

Costs $7/12 doses for clove cigarettes.

Cocaine/Crack

Administration: Snorted, smoked or injected

Effects: Excitement, pleasure, +15 to save vs. unconsciousness for 1 hour.

Withdrawal Effects: Dysphoria (10), drowsiness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 8 hours.

Tolerance: max. +100%

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 25, Craving Difficulty 25.

Long Term Effects: After 6 doses in 24 hours: Hallucinations (20 +10/additional dose), Delusions (20 +10/additional dose). After 1 month of daily use: chronically inflamed and runny nose.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 5 doses in 5 days: Dysphoria (20), Drowsiness (-15 to save vs. unconsciousness), increased appetite for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Normal effects plus Convulsions (10), Cardiac Arrest (10) for 1 hour.

Overdose (4x): Normal effects plus Convulsions (30), Cardiac Arrest (30), Delusions (20) for 1 hour.

Legality: Felony

Costs $10/dose for cocaine, $5/dose for crack.

Ecstasy- Once used as an 'empathogen' to create empathy during therapy, this drug is now illegal and commonly used in raves.

Administration: Swallowed as pills.

Effects: Euphoria (10), feelings of empathy and openness, -20 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: tiredness (-5 END), dulled senses (-5 AWR), confusion (-2 INL) for 2 days.

Tolerance: max. +100%

Long Term Effects: After 10 doses in 30 days: Insomnia (10), anxiousness (-7 to save vs. fear), irritability (-7 to save vs. anger), poor memory (-10 to memory based INL rolls) for 6 days.

Long Term Withdrawal: After 4 doses in 4 days: Dysphoria (10), Insomnia (10), -7 to save vs. fear for 2 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 10, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 15.

Overdose (2x): Normal effects plus Confusion (-7 INL), Headache (20), -10 to save vs. heat exhaustion, twitching/tremors (-7 AGY), nausea (-10 to save vs. vomiting), Panic (20).

Overdose (4x): Cramping (-10 AGY), Panic (30), Seizures (20), Cardiac Arrest (20), permanent brain damage (-2 INL).

Legality: Felony.

Costs $10/dose.

Ethnogenic Deliriant- One of many plants, all considered poisonous by modern medicine, which can cause delusions and hallucinations if taken at the right dose. If taken at the wrong dose they can cause insanity or death. The plant matter contains varying levels of the active ingredients depending on when, how and where it was harvested, so it takes an Ethnogens skill roll to figure out what is a safe dose. In most of these plants (including datura, deadly nightshade, mandrake root, henbane and brugmansia) the active ingredient is anticholinergic alkaloids.

Administration: Orally as foul smelling seeds or plant matter.

Effects: Hallucinations (10), Delusions (20), Retrograde Amnesia (10), blurred vision and photophobia (-7 to all actions/reactions, -15 in bright light) for 7 hours.

Tolerance: max. +200%

Overdose (2x): Hallucinations (20), Delusions (30), Panic (20), -10 to save vs. Heat Exhaustion, Clumsiness (-10 AGY), blurred vision (-15 to all actions/reactions), Cardiac Arrest (10), Retrograde, Anterograde and Sudden Amnesia (20).

Overdose (3x): Seizures (30), Coma (30), Cardiac Arrest (20), Delusions (40), Retrograde Amnesia (30).

Legality: Most are legal to possess but a misdemeanor to use.

Costs $5/dose.

Ethnogenic Euphoriant- One of many obscure herbal preparations used by aboriginal peoples around the world that make it easier to go into states of euphoric bliss. They make hallucinations easier, sometimes creating mildly 'psychedelic' states, but are not in themselves capable of producing hallucinogens.

Administration: Orally as a bitter tasting tea.

Effects: +5 to save vs. pain/fear, -10 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions/euphoria, +4 to Creative skill rolls for 2 hours.

Overdose (2x): Normal effects plus Vomiting (20).

Legality: Misdemeanor.

Costs $10/dose.

Ethnogenic Hallucinogen- A traditional hallucinogenic plant, not chemically altered or purified in any way.

Administration: Orally as bitter tasting plant matter or tea.

Effects: Hallucinations (30), Delusions (20), Nausea (10), Panic (10), +4 AWR, +2 INL, +10 to save vs. unconsciousness for 8 hours.

Overdose (2x): Hallucinations (40), Delusions (30), Nausea (30), Panic (20).

Legality: Misdemeanor.

Costs $20/dose.

Hallucinogen- Used by some as a recreational drug, by others as a religious sacrament, a creative aid or even a psychological tool.

Administration: Orally as pill or tab of paper.

Effects: Hallucinations (30), Delusions (10), +4 AWR, +2 INL for 5 hours.

Tolerance: max. +50%

Long Term Effects: For every wk. of regular use: permanent -1 to save vs. Hallucinations/Delusions.

Overdose (2x): Hallucinations (35), Delusions (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (4x): Hallucinations (40), Delusions (40), Panic (20).

Legality: Felony.

Costs $10/dose

Herbal Sedative/Painkiller- A selection of herbs that are made into a tea (often with peppermint, to hide the foul taste of the herbs). Often includes valerian, poppy, skullcap and chamomile. Gives +4 to save vs. fear/insomnia/pain. Mildly addictive (0 physiological addiction difficulty, 10 craving difficulty). Costs $2/dose.

Herbal Stimulant- A small packet of herbs to be made into tea. The main stimulant chemicals are ephedra (a chemical related to amphetamines, although much weaker) and caffeine. The tea is often taken for symptom relief for flus and colds, to stay awake, to curb appetite or occasionally to combat mild depression. Gives +4 to save vs. unconsciousness/dysphoria and +1 END for 4 hours. Costs $3/dose.

Heroin- This powerful opiate painkiller is a major drug of abuse. It has been losing ground to cocaine and meth, mostly because of easier availability of those drugs.

Administration: Typically injected (can be swallowed or snorted but with lesser effect).

Effects: +20 to save vs. pain, +15 to save vs. fear, -5 INL, -5 AGY, Euphoria (20) for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Insomnia (20), -4 to save vs. pain/fear for 24 hours..

Tolerance: max. +200%

Long Term Effects: After daily use for a month: weakened immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression) for 1 week.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for a month: cramps (roll vs. distracting pain, difficulty 20), Insomnia (30), flu-like symptoms, diarrhea for 2 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 5, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 25.

Overdose (2x): +25 to save vs. pain, +20 to save vs. fear, -7 INL, -7 AGY, Euphoria (30), Coma (20), Pulmonary Arrest (10) for 6 hours.

Overdose (4x): Pulmonary Arrest (30), Coma (40).

Interactions: The pharmaceutical drug Nalaxone can instantly undo the effects of heroin and cause immediate withdrawal.

Legality: Felony.

Costs $5/dose.

Inhalants- This is one of many industrial products, including paints, glues, solvents and fuels that can be bought cheaply and the fumes inhaled for a quick high.

Administration: Inhaled, usually in a plastic bag.

Effects: Euphoria (20), +10 to save vs. pain, -10 AGY, -10 AWR, -10 INL for 5 minutes.

Overdose (2x): Normal effects plus Vomiting (20), Unconsciousness (20), weakness (-10 STH/SPD/END)

Overdose (4x): Normal effects plus Coma (30), Paralysis (30), Delusions (30).

Withdrawal Effects: Headache (20).

Long Term Effects: For each 6-months of daily use, permanent -1 INL, -1 AWR.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 15.

Costs $2/dose.

Marijuana

Administration: Typically smoked (can also be eaten, but with lesser effect).

Effects: Anterograde and Sudden Amnesia (20), -7 INL/AWR, increased appetite, poor time sense, +7 to save vs. pain/fear/anger for 4 hours.

Overdose (2x): Anterograde and Sudden Amnesia (30), -15 INL/AWR, increased appetite, poor time sense, Delusions (20) (paranoid), Panic (20), drowsiness (-15 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 8 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Red eyes for 8 hours.

Tolerance: max. +200%

Long Term Effects: After daily use for a month: -7 to memory based INL rolls, lowered libido, -7 to save vs. depression/dysphoria.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for a month: headache (10), irritability, insomnia (10) for 2 days.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 15.

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $3/dose.

Meth- Methamphetamine, a more addictive form of amphetamine, is becoming a widely abused street drug, mainly because it can be made in tiny labs from over-the-counter drugs (rather than cocaine and heroin, which have to be smuggled in from other countries).

Administration: Typically smoked (can also be snorted or injected).

Effects: Excitement, pleasure, loss of appetite, grinding teeth, +10 to save vs. unconsciousness for 5 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Dysphoria (10), anxiety (-4 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (20) for 24 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 10, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 20.

Long Term Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Hallucinations (20 +10/additional dose), Delusions (20 +10/additional dose). After 1 month of daily use: ulcers, malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Dysphoria (20), Anxiety (-8 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (30), Trembling (-5 AGY) for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Normal effects plus difficulty breathing and irregular heartbeat (-10 END) for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Seizures (20), Coma (20) for 5 hours.

Legality: Felony.

Costs $5/dose.

Roofies- Legal in Mexico as a prescription sedative, often used in the US as a recreational drug or to drug people in order to rob or rape them.

Administered: Orally as tablets.

Effects: +10 to save vs. fear, +5 to save vs. pain, -10 to save vs. unconsciousness for 6 hours.

Overdose (2x): Within 15 minutes: disinhibition, clumsiness (-10 AGY), confusion (-10 INL), memory impairment (Sudden Amnesia and Retrograde Amnesia at 20 difficulty), drowsiness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance) for 8 hours

Effects (4x): Same as 2x effects but with Unconsciousness (30), Respiratory Arrest (20) for 4 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 10, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 15.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 10 doses in 10 days: Headache (10), muscle pain (20 difficulty distracting pain), confusion (-5 INL), Hallucinations (10), Seizures (10) for 2 days.

Interactions: 2 doses of Roofies with 2 doses of alcohol cause Retrograde Amnesia (30) for 12 hours.

Legality: Felony.

Costs $10/dose.

Truth Serum- A mixture of Sodium Pentothal (a short-acting barbiturate) and Scopolamine (an anticholingergic deliriant) is used to put people in a state where they are highly suggestible and their memory is impaired to the point that they may forget to lie.

Administration: Intravenous injection.

Effects: Within 1 minute: Confusion (-10 INL), Sudden Amnesia (20), lowered inhibitions, sleepiness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness), weakness (-7 STH, -7 SPD), clumsiness (-7 AGY), Delusions (10). Effects reduce by half within 1 hour, go away completely in 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Delusions (20), Sudden/Anterograde/Retrograde Amnesia (30), Cardiac Arrest (10), Weakness (-10 STH, -10 SPD), Clumsiness (-7 AGY).

Overdose (2x): Cardiac Arrest (20), Pulmonary Arrest (20), Delusions (30), Coma (30), Seizures (20).

Legality: Misdemeanor.

Costs $80/dose.

Research

Reference Books- These are the latest guidebooks and reference books designed specifically to let people find information quickly in the field. Some can be used to supplement a pre-existing skill (Ref), substitute for having a skill (Intro) or both (Intro/Ref). See the section on using skills (p.136) for more info. Reference Books come in 1 or more large hardbound volumes (2 lbs. or 1 kg each).

Skill	Type	Vol.s	Cost
Bomb Disarming	Intro/Ref	2	$90
Business	Intro/Ref	4	$100
Computer Hardware	Intro/Ref	2	$50
Cooking	Intro	1	$20
Electronics	Ref	1	$30
Language	Intro/Ref	1	$20
Government	Intro/Ref	4	$80
History: Local	Intro/Ref	2	$30
History: World	Intro/Ref	4	$80
Law: Basic	Intro/Ref	1	$70
Law: Business	Intro/Ref	1	$70
Law: Criminal	Intro/Ref	2	$120
Law: International	Intro/Ref	2	$120
Law: Tort	Intro/Ref	2	$120
Local Geography	Intro/Ref	1	$50
Mythology	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Networks	Ref	1	$60
Pharmacology	Intro/Ref	1	$50
Philosophy	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Poisons	Intro/Ref	1	$30
Programming	Ref	1	$50
Religion	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Agriculture	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Archeology/Paleontology	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Botany	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Chemistry	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Ecology	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Genetics	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Meteorology	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Pathology	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Science: Psychology	Intro/Ref	2	$80
Surgery	Ref	3	$200
Veterinary Medicine	Intro/Ref	1	$20

Research Library- A collection of non-fiction books with a wide range of subjects that allows one to use the Research: Academic skill without leaving one's home.

Small Library (Research: Academic at -30) costs $200.

Medium Library (Research: Academic at -20) costs $1,000.

Large Library (Research: Academic at -10) costs $10,000.

Massive Library (Research: Academic at -5) costs $100,000.

Services

Animal Boarding- For cats or dogs. Costs $10/day.

Background Check (Credit)- Gives a person's major credit and bank activity. Requires the person's social security number. Costs $10.

Background Check (Criminal)- A private company provides a report on any known criminal records a person has (requires person's name and either social security number or date of birth). Only gives records from within the country. Costs $75.

Background Check (Full)- A private company which collects personal information will attempt to provide current address, old addresses, date of birth, phone number(s), major financial assets and property, licenses, vehicles, business/bankruptcy filings, liens, aliases, names and addresses of relatives, credit and bank activity and criminal records. Costs $150.

Bank Account (Offshore)- This bank account allows money to be kept and transferred with little ability of the government to track it. Costs $5/wk.

Beauty Treatment- The PC is given a facial wrap and scrub, manicure, pedicure and hairstyling. Gives a temporary +4 to seduction rolls. Costs $100.

Blood/Urine Test- A blood or urine sample is tested in a lab for common drugs and toxins. Commonly used by employers to screen employees for drug use. Costs $75.

Bus Ride- $1-$2 depending on what zones one wants to travel to. $3 for a day pass. $50 for a monthly pass.

Car Rental- Equivalent to Car (Used), see p.104. Comes with $5,000 liability insurance. Costs $20/day.

Day Care- A child can be left at a licensed drop-in day care center for $10/hr. or 9-5 during workdays for $200/wk.

Insurance (Car)- Covers liability, theft and vandalism, up to $10,000. Rates may vary based on the PC's driving history. Costs $10/wk.

Insurance (Home)- Up to $10,000 replacement cost for any damage to the home itself or any theft or damage to property within the home. Does not cover anything that is the fault of a homeowner or guests. Costs $10/wk.

Insurance (Kidnapping)- Rich executives usually purchase this kind of insurance. The company will earmark $1 million to pay as a ransom if the insured is ever kidnapped. The company will also try to avoid having to pay $1 million by hiring private investigators to recover the kidnapee first. Rates may vary based on the PC's profession and personal history. Costs $200/wk.

Insurance (Legal)- PC pays in advance and gets free consults from a lawyer, and up to 100 hours of free defense if the PC is ever accused of a crime. Costs $10/wk.

Insurance (Life)- If the PC dies, $10,000 will go to a named beneficiary. Medical checkup may be required. No money if PC commits suicide or is murdered by the beneficiary. Costs $10/wk.

Insurance (Medical)- An insurance company pays all "reasonable" medical expenses up to $10,000 per year. Rates may increase based on pre-existing medical conditions. Costs $30/wk.

Legal Research Database Access- This network allows the user to search through case law. Practicing law without access to one of these networks could be considered malpractice. Costs $40/day or $100/wk.

Limo Ride- Costs $75/hr. (min 3 hrs.) +$100/hr. if limo has bullet-proof armor.

Medical Care (Ambulance)- This is the typical cost if a PC without health coverage must be taken to a hospital in an ambulance. Costs $250

Medical Care (Drug Rehab)- Customer stays in a pleasant facility in the country, attends intensive counseling sessions, is given drugs to help endure withdrawals. Gives +15 to saves vs. cravings. Costs $400/wk.

Medical Care (Plastic Surgery)- The PC has one feature changed or enhanced at a clinic. The PC will have to be bandaged for a week afterwards and will look swollen and bruised for 3 weeks. A well conceived change can add +2 to seduction rolls (max. +10 bonus, including bonuses from the Physically Attractive advantage). The PC can save money by doing multiple procedures at the same time. Costs $3,000 per feature change +$2,000 per concurrent change.

Medical Care (Psychotherapy)- Therapy from a licensed therapist with Science: Psychology (3) and Psychotherapy (4). Costs $100/hr.

Personal Assistant- An assistant works with the PC during the day, following the PC on trips and to meetings. The assistant runs errands, keeps track of appointments, takes notes and makes phone calls. The assistant is available by phone 24 hours a day for urgent matters. Costs $600/wk.

Polygraphy- This is a session in a small office with a licensed polygraph operator and a polygraphy machine. The person paying for the service decides what information the polygrapher will try to get from the subject. Costs $500.

Security (Alarm System)- Includes the installation of an alarm system (with motion detectors and 'panic button'). Any time the alarm is triggered or the owner calls for help, two security guards in a car show up in 2d6 minutes. Costs $30/wk.

Security (Executive Personal)- There are two plainclothes bodyguards watching the customer's residence 24 hours a day who will accompany the customer on any outings and trips. An armored car is available for transport upon request. Bodyguards have pistols and ballistic vests. Costs $6,000/wk.

Stable Care- Care and boarding of horses. Costs $30/wk.

Storage (Locker)- The price to rent a small locker at a bus station or airport. Costs $0.75 for 24 hours.

Storage (Shed)- A 5' by 5' by 8' storage unit costs $10/wk.

Subway Ride- See p.166 for more. Costs $1.25.

Thug- A young criminal willing to beat, intimidate or vandalize anyone who looks like they won't fight back. Legality: Felony. Costs $50/hr.

Alleys

Real Estate

Apartment (Luxury)- A spacious 3-bedroom 2-bathroom apartment in a nice part of town. Costs $500/wk.

Apartment (Moderate)- A moderately large 1 bedroom apartment in a not-bad part of town. Costs $250/wk.

Apartment (Slum)- A tiny apartment, barely able to pass health inspections for human habitation, in a bad part of town. Costs $100/wk.

Home Rental- The cost to rent a full 2-bedroom 1-bathroom house. Costs $350/wk.

Office Rental- One room office in an office building. Costs $125/wk.

Surveillance & Security

Audio Bug- A tiny electronic device, about the size and shape of a pen cap, that broadcasts unencrypted audio up to 100 ft. (30 m.). Batteries last 48 hours. Costs $50.

Binoculars- Cost $25.

Bug Sweeper- A wand that is swept over people and things. It emits a tone when it is near anything that is emitting radio signals. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $100.

Camera (Amateur-Digital)- Costs $200.

Camera (Disposable)- 32 color pictures with a weak flash. Costs $5 +$5 for developing and prints.

Camera (Pro-Digital)- A professional level digital camera. Good enough resolution to take pictures of pages of text for later reading. Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $1,500.

Camera (Pro-Film)- A professional level camera with removable zoom and wide angle lenses, tripod and flash. Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $2,000.

Camera Bug- This tiny camera, about the size of a thick marker, is meant to be concealed from view. It transmits a low quality black-and-white picture within 50 ft. (15 m.) Comes with one small monitor/reciever. Costs $120.

Cellphone Interceptor- A device in a large briefcase that can intercept and track cellphone signals. Weighs 10 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $300,000 or $1,000/wk. to rent.

Fiber Optic Inspection Scope- A long thin probe that can be inserted in a vent hole, under a door, etc. At the end is a small LCD monitor that shows a color picture of what the scope sees. Often used to search for contraband hidden in small places or to look inside a room before entering. Costs $800.

Handcuffs- 20 difficulty to pick. Takes 50 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs $20.

Laser Microphone- A small device on a tripod with an invisible infrared laser. The device must be aimed at a surface it can be bounced off of, like a window. Once calibrated it senses minute vibrations in the surface and plays them as sound. On a clear day it can retrieve sounds from a mile away. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $500.

Motion Alarm- A black box, plugged into a wall, which beeps loudly if someone moves in front of it. Can be turned off with a small keychain remote. Costs $40.

Nightvision Goggles- 2 hour battery life, monochrome black and green display, blinded by bright lights. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $200.

Padlock (Cheap)- 20 difficulty to pick, takes 6 bladed or 6 blunt damage to break. Costs $5.

Padlock (Expensive)- 40 difficulty to pick, takes 15 bladed or 15 blunt damage to break. Takes a hard strength feat to open it with a bolt cutter (and will ruin the bolt cutters). Costs $80.

Parabolic Microphone- A high-powered microphone in a parabolic dish attached to an earpiece, allows people to listen to conversations up to 500 ft. (150 m.) away. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $75.

Peephole Reverser- A small optic device that, when placed over the outside of a peephole, allows someone to see the inside clearly. Costs $90.



Peephole Reverser

Plastic Restraints- Thick plastic restraints that can be quickly closed around wrists and ankles, can only be released by cutting them. Takes 40 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs $2/ea. or $20 for 20.

Radio Scanner- A portable radio with the ability to listen to any frequency, including police channels. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $50.

Security Camera- Comes with a small monitor. Broadcasts wirelessly. Can be set to sweep back and forth. Costs $90.

Security Camera Recorder- A special VCR that can record images from several video cameras. By only recording a frame every second a single tape can last 24 hours. Costs $500.

Sound Recorder- A small handheld device that records digitally or on a small cassette. Can also be hooked up to a phone to record conversations. Costs $20.

Tracking Bug- About the size and shape of a hockey puck. Comes with a special scanner that can track the position of the device up to 10 miles (16 km.) away. Batteries last 48 hours. Costs $250.

Videocamera (Cheap)- Costs $100.

Videocamera (Professional)- The sort of camera a TV reporter might carry around. Comes with a built in light. Weighs 10 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $5,000.

Tools

Autopsy Kit- A collection of the surgical tools, scopes, lights and measuring devices needed to perform an autopsy, includes kits to test for common toxins and drugs. Weighs 15 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $2,000.

Carpentry Tools- Includes tools that can be used as ½ bladed poking or 2 blunt damage weapons (See Improvised Weapons, p.145). Weighs 10 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $50.

Carving Tools- A small pouch of tools used by artists for carving in wood or stone. Has tools that can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 bladed slashing weapons. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $40.

Chemical Analysis Equipment- A computerized spectrograph and a selection of chemical reagents allow someone with the Science: Chemistry skill to analyze the chemical composition of a substance at no minuses. Weighs 100 lbs. (45 kg). Costs $700.

Chemical Synthesis Lab- A collection of equipment and supplies that can be used to manufacture and isolate simple chemicals from batches of material containing related chemicals. Costs $10,000.

Crowbar- Metal bar for prying things open. Can be used as 2 blunt 1 bladed weapon (range 1). Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $45.

Duct Tape- 50 ft. (15 m.) roll. Costs $2.

Electronics Repair Kit- Screwdrivers, flashlight, battery-operated soldering iron, voltmeter and other tools for repairing computers or electronics. Has tools which can be used as ½ bladed poking weapons. Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $100.

Evidence Packaging Kit- Sterile containers, bags with labels for storing crime scene evidence and a mini-vacuum. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $50.

Fingerprinting Kit- A kit of dyes, brushes and tape needed to remove copies of fingerprints from objects for later analysis. Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $50.

Forensic Evidence Lab- Fingerprinting station (with glue fuming chamber), DNA analysis equipment, impression casting kit, microscope, ballistics analysis station, computer forensics equipment and various kits to test for the presence of blood, firearm residue, drugs and accelerants. Allows someone to use the Crime Scene Forensics skill at no minuses. Costs $50,000.

Generator- A portable, gasoline powered generator that produces enough AC to power several appliances. Can run 24 hours on a 5 gallon fuel tank. Weighs 75 lbs. (30 kg). Costs $600.

Gun Repair Tools- Portable toolkit for repairing and cleaning guns. Contains tools that can be used as ½ bladed poking weapons. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $70.

Gunshot Residue Test- A portable swab-kit that can be used to test if a person has fired a firearm recently. The test can be fooled if the suspect thoroughly washes anything that may have been exposed to gunpowder residue. Costs $20.

Lock Breaking Kit- A chisel, rubber mallet and canister of freon for freezing and shattering locks. One can of freon lasts for 4 locks. Costs $25 for chisel and mallet, +$75 for freon can.

Lock Pick Gun- A handheld device with a selection of picks. The gun is inserted into a lock and the handle squeezed repeatedly. Allows someone without the Lock Picking skill to pick locks at 1d20 (those with the Lock Picking skill are better off using actual picks). Costs $50.

Lock Picks (Homemade)- A short rake and tension bar made from street sweeper bristles and other odd bits of metal. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at -4. Costs $5.

Lock Picks (Professional)- A tiny leather pouch with well crafted tools for picking just about any kind of mechanical lock. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at no minuses. Costs $50.

Metal Detector- Either a wand (for scanning people) or a cup at the end of a pole (for scanning the ground). Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $50.

Microscope- A small portable microscope, designed to be used in the field and placed right up against an object. Magnifies up to 500x. Commonly used by forensic crime scene examiners. Costs $100.

Pen Torch- A small butane torch about the size and shape of a thick marker. Can melt glass and soft metals. Can be used as a 1 burn damage weapon (hard strike (-4), hard vital strike (-4), easy pain/stun (+4), easy blinding (+4)). Costs $75.

Pickaxe- Typically used for breaking up rocks. 3 bladed damage (pierces as 6), range 2, hard strike (-4). Weighs 6 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $100.

Polygraphy Set- A 'lie detector,' includes devices that monitor physiological reactions and a device that records and prints them out in real time. Allows one to use the Interrogation skill to detect deception. Comes in two briefcase sized carrying cases. Weighs 20 lbs. (9 kg). Costs $2,000.

Alleys

Sledgehammer- A huge hammer, designed to provide maximum smashing power. Requires moderate STH feat to use as a weapon without penalty. It can be raised over the head (one action) and brought down for a double-damage smash attack. Range: 2. Damage: 4 blunt (pierces armor as 6). Very hard Strike (-8), very hard Vital Strike (-8), very hard Parry (-8). Weighs 14 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $40.

SWAT Door Ram- A heavy metal ram, designed to be used by one or two people, capable of knocking down all except specially reinforced doors. A strike with it does 2 blunt damage to a person or 4 blunt damage to an unmoving object. Weighs 25 lbs. (11 kg). Costs $200

Theatrical Makeup Kit- A large plastic box with a huge selection of makeup, spirit gum, fake beards and mustaches, wigs, and pieces of latex. Allows a PC to use the Disguise skill at no minuses. Weighs 7 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $400.

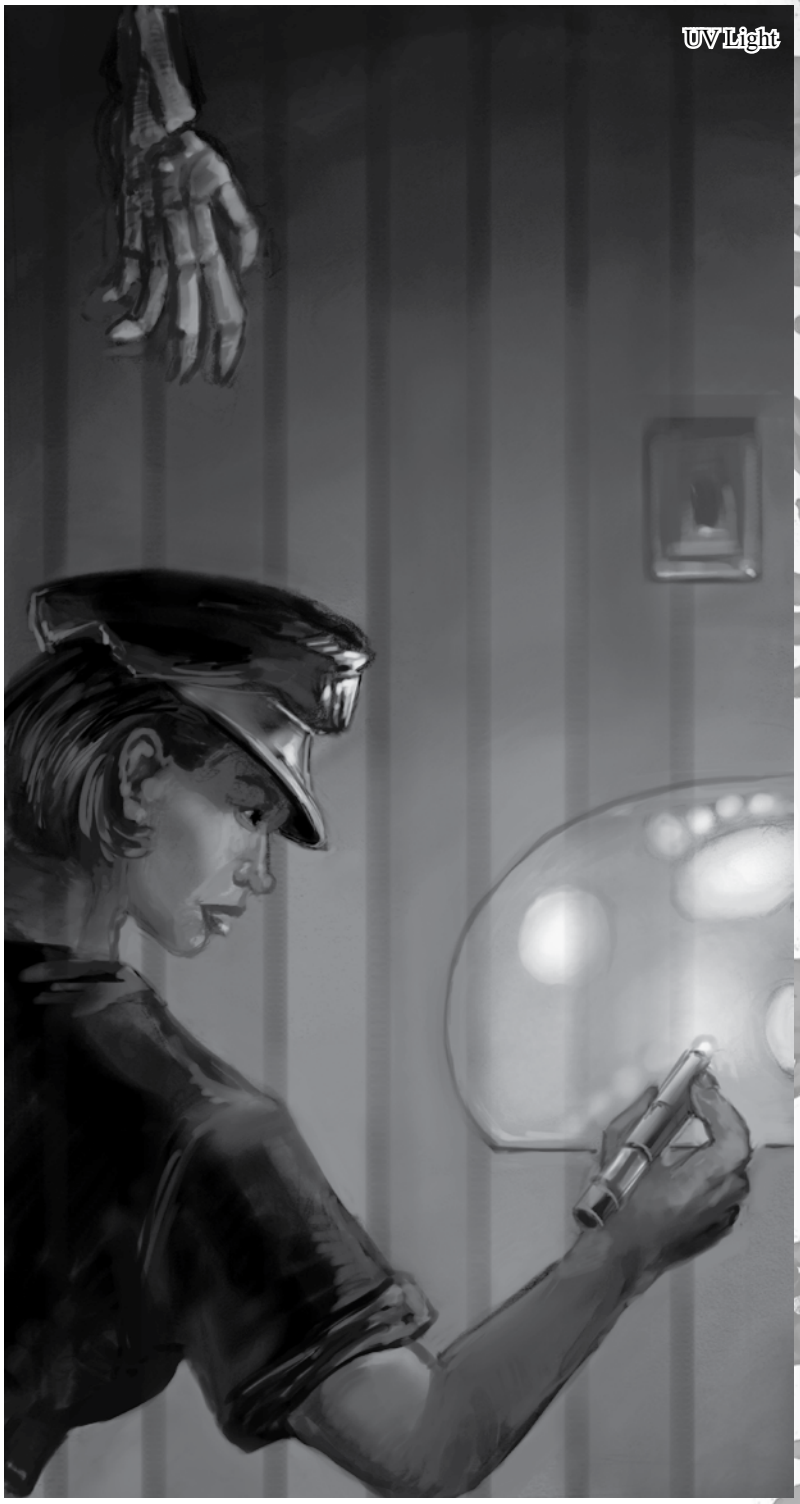
Torture Kit- A small leather pouch filled with tools designed to intimidate a victim as well as being able to cause pain. Allows a PC to use the Torture skill with no minuses. Contains tools which can be used as 1 bladed damage slashing weapons. Costs $500.

UV Light- A portable UV light with a viewing shield that allows the user to see substances (mainly dried bodily fluids) that would be invisible to the naked eye. Weighs 1 lb. (.5 kg). Costs $50.

Vehicle Repair Shop- A variety of tools, machines and commonly used spare parts that allows one to repair and modify vehicles. Costs $10,000.

Vehicle Repair Toolkit- A box of tools with many spare parts. Allows someone to use the Mechanics skill to repair vehicles at -7. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 blunt damage weapons. Weighs 15 lbs. (7 kg). Costs $200.

Voice Changer- A small electronic device that disguises one's voice for use with telephones or recording devices. Changing the pitch of the voice can also give +5 to Impersonation rolls. Costs $30.



Vehicles

Air Bags- The front driver and passenger seats are outfitted with front and side airbags. Reduces crash damage done to passengers by 10 points. Costs $400.

Alarm- The vehicle has a theft alarm that makes a loud blaring noise when someone tries to enter the vehicle without first disabling the alarm. Costs $200.

Bicycle

Speed: Rider's SPD x 2
Maneuverability: +4
Damage Capacity: 4 blunt or 4 bladed.
Costs $150.

Vehicle Features

Speed: Lists the vehicle's maximum speed (on the same scale as the attribute SPD).

Acceleration: How much speed a vehicle can pick up in a round. If a vehicle has acceleration 5 and speed 20 then it can reach its maximum speed in 4 rounds.

Maneuverability: The maneuverability rating is added to any maneuvers attempted in the vehicle. See p.69 for more.

Damage Capacity: How much damage a vehicle can take before it stops working.

Bullet Proofing- The cab of a car is covered with bullet-resistant materials and the windows are replaced with bullet-resistant glass. The cab of the vehicle provides AR 18, PR 7 bladed 5 blunt. Costs $10,000.

Bus- A used 30 seat school bus, still painted yellow.
Speed: 50
Acceleration: 5
Maneuverability: -10
Damage Capacity: 20 bladed or 20 blunt
Costs $7,000 or $20/wk.

Car (New)- Four seat, AC, radio, airbags.
Speed: 125
Acceleration: 25
Maneuverability: +7
Damage Capacity: 10 bladed or 15 blunt.
Costs $25,000 or $50/wk.

Car (Used)
Speed: 90
Acceleration: 15
Maneuverability: +4
Damage Capacity: 7 bladed or 8 blunt.
Costs $7,000 or $20/wk.

Electric Kick Scooter- Like a skateboard with handlebars and a small electric motor on the back. A fully charged battery lasts for 15 miles (24 km.).
Speed: 30
Acceleration: 5
Maneuverability: +10
Damage Capacity: 4 bladed or 4 blunt.
Costs $200.

Helicopter- A small, used, 2 seat helicopter.
Speed: 20 (up) 60 (forward)
Acceleration: 1 (up) 5 (forward)
Maneuverability: 0
Damage Capacity: 10 bladed or 10 blunt.
Costs $20,000 or $100/wk.

Inflatable Raft- A small canvas satchel containing a self-inflating raft that can hold up to 6 people. Costs $75.

Kayak- A one-person human-powered boat, built for riding in rough waters and quick maneuvering.
Speed: STH / 2 in still water.
Maneuverability: +4
Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.
Costs $200.

Moped- A small scooter.
Speed: 20
Acceleration: 7
Maneuverability: +10
Damage Capacity: 5 bladed or 5 blunt.
Costs $1,000.

Motorboat- Holds up to 6 people.
Speed: 40
Acceleration: 5
Maneuverability: +2
Damage Capacity: 8 bladed or 8 blunt.
Costs $20,000 or $100/wk.

Motorcycle (New)- A new top-of-the-line motorcycle.
Speed: 150
Acceleration: 40
Maneuverability: +15
Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.
Costs $10,000 or $100/wk.

Motorcycle (Used)- An old used motorcycle.
Speed: 90
Acceleration: 30
Maneuverability: +12
Damage Capacity: 5 bladed or 5 blunt.
Costs $5,000 or $20/wk.

Rollerblades
Speed: Users SPD + 5
Acceleration: 10
Maneuverability: +5
Costs $40.

Run-Flat Tires- The vehicle has tires specially designed to be able to run with little loss of functionality (only -5 maneuverability) even after being completely punctured. Costs $400.

RV- With shower, toilet, bunk beds, AC electricity, cooking range and sink.
Speed: 80
Acceleration: 5
Maneuverability: -10
Damage Capacity: 20 bladed or 20 blunt.
Costs $70,000 or $200/wk.

Single Engine Prop- A small used plane with room for 4 people.
Speed: 300
Acceleration: 50
Maneuverability: 0
Damage Capacity: 7 bladed or 7 blunt.
Costs $10,000 or $25/mo.

Skateboard
Speed: Rider's SPD.
Maneuverability: -4
Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.
Costs $15.

Snowmobile- A one-person craft for traveling over snow.
Speed: 40
Acceleration: 5
Maneuverability: +4
Damage Capacity: 5 bladed or 5 blunt.
Costs $5,000 or $20/wk.

Alleys

Sports Car

Speed: 200
Acceleration: 50
Maneuverability: +9
Damage Capacity: 7 bladed or 8 blunt.
Costs $50,000 or $175/wk.

SUV

Speed: 100
Acceleration: 20
Maneuverability: 0
Damage Capacity: 15 bladed or 15 blunt.
Costs $30,000 or $75/wk.

Tinted Windows- The windows are tinted to the maximum the law allows. People can't casually glance over and see in. Costs $100.

Trailer- A small trailer, designed to be hitched to the back of a car or truck, can sleep two. Reduces vehicle SPD and maneuverability by 5. Costs $100.

Truck (Used)- A used truck, still running well, with a lot of power.

Speed: 90
Acceleration: 10
Maneuverability: 0
Damage Capacity: 10 bladed or 10 blunt.
Costs $6,000 or $20/wk.

Underwater Scooter- A small one-person device that pulls the rider along on the water or underwater. Although it does not move fast, it keeps a diver from exhausting himself or herself by swimming long distances. A battery charge lasts 10 miles (16 km.).

Speed: 5 on the surface of the water, 3 underwater.
Acceleration: 2
Maneuverability: +5
Damage Capacity: 5 bladed or 5 blunt.
Costs $500.

Weapons

Chemical

Chloroform- Once used as a general anesthetic, its use was discontinued because of its many side-effects. It has also been used as a recreational drug. One in 10 people have a genetic vulnerability to chloroform that causes a high fever.

Appearance: A clear, sweet/pungent smelling liquid.

Administered: 1x effects within 1 round if inhaled from a wet cloth, 1x effects within 10 minutes if swallowed.

1x Effects: +10 to save vs. pain, Vomiting (10), confusion (-10 INL, -10 AWR), weakness (-10 STH, -10 SPD), Unconsciousness (20), 1 in 10 chance of high fever (make hard save vs. heat exhaustion) for 15 minutes.

2x Effects: Same as 1x Effects plus Coma (30), Respiratory Arrest (30).

Treatment: Oxygen or activated charcoal.

Costs $80 for a 10 dose bottle.

Curare- This extract of poisonous bark was used as an arrow poison by natives in South America. It is used in modern medicine as a skeletal muscle relaxant.

Appearance: Sticky, dark-brown, smells like tar.

Administered: 1x effects within 10 minutes if ingested, 1x effects within 1 round if put on something that causes bladed damage.

1x Effects: Weakness (-15 STH), Respiratory Arrest (20) for 2 hours.

2x Effects: Weakness (-20 STH), Respiratory Arrest (40).

Treatment: None.

Costs $75/dose.

Digitalis- This heart medication is refined from the plant foxglove. While small doses may strengthen a weak heart, higher doses stop the heart.

Appearance: Small pills.

Administered: 1x effects within 15 minutes if swallowed.

1x Effects: Vomiting (20), diarrhea, confusion (-10 INL), Delusions (10), tiredness (-10 END), Cardiac Arrest (20). Symptoms last 48 hours.

2x Effects: As 1x effects but Cardiac Arrest (40).

Treatment: Induced vomiting or gastric lavage, activated charcoal.

Legality: Misdemeanor without a prescription.

Costs $40 for 2 doses.

Parathion- This powerful insecticide has also been used in war as a nerve agent.

Appearance: Brownish-yellowish liquid.

Administered: 1x effects within 4 hours if sprayed on the skin, 2x within 1 hour if ingested or inhaled, 2x within 4 rounds if injected.

1x Effects: Headache and abdominal pain (30 difficulty save vs. distracting pain), light sensitivity (-7 to actions/reactions in bright lights), spasms (-10 AGY), nausea (-10 to save vs. vomiting), weakness (-10 STH), diarrhea, Paralysis (10), Pulmonary Arrest (20) for 2 days.

2x Effects: As 1x effects with Cramps and Convulsions (-20 AGY), Paralysis (30), Pulmonary Arrest (40)

Treatment: Large doses of the poison atropine (the active ingredient in many of the Ethnogenic Deliriants, see p.97) is the best treatment.

Legality: Misdemeanor.

Costs $60 for 10 doses.

Monkshood- This extract of the monkshood plant contains the toxin aconitine. Monkshood was used as an arrow-poison in ancient Europe.

Appearance: Sticky, brownish liquid, slightly bitter odor and taste

Administered: 1x effects within 30 minutes if ingested, 1x effects within 2 rounds if put on something that causes bladed damage.

1x Effects: Burning sensation in mouth (if swallowed), Vomiting (20), speech impairment, blurred vision (-7 to actions/reactions and vision based AWR rolls), dizziness (-15 to save vs. loss of balance), weakness (-10 STH), clumsiness (-7 AGY), Hallucinations (20), Delusions (20), Cardiac Arrest (20) for 24 hours.

2x Effects: As 1x effects but Cardiac Arrest (30), Seizures (30).

Treatment: Gastric lavage, oxygen, heart stimulating drugs.

Costs $30/dose.

Poison Ring- This looks like a normal (although large) ring. It has a hidden compartment which can be filled with a powder or liquid poison. When a tiny stopper is removed, the ring only need be tipped over food or drink to drop poison into it. Costs $30.

Ricin Paste- Made from castor beans. A favorite poison of assassins, since a fatal dose can be injected into people so quickly they may not notice (use Pocket Picking skill to 'bump' and inject a victim), or a dab of paste that touches skin (e.g. put underneath the door handle of a car) can be enough to kill. There is also no effective treatment.

Appearance: White paste.

Administered: 1x effects within 24 hours if injected or absorbed via the skin.

1x Effects: Vomiting (20), cramps (-10 AGY, 20 difficulty save vs. distracting pain), Cardiac Arrest (40) for 6 days.

Treatment: None.

Legality: Felony

Costs $200/dose.

Sarin Gas- When released into the air via aerosol, this gas can kill by being absorbed through the lungs or skin. One small gas canister can spread mist in a radius of 200 ft. (60 m.).

Appearance: Colorless, odorless mist.

Administered: 2x effects within 2 rounds if inhaled, 2x effects within 5 minutes if absorbed through the skin. 1x effects if lungs and more than 75% of the body are protected.

1x Effects: pupil contraction, sensitivity to light (-7 to actions/reactions in bright light), chest pain (20 difficulty save vs. distracting pain), Respiratory Arrest (20) for 24 hours.

2x Effects: As 1x but Respiratory Arrest (40).

Treatment: Large doses of the poison atropine (the active ingredient in many of the Ethnogenic Deliriants, see p.97) is the best treatment.

Legality: Felony

Costs $1,000/canister.

Strychnine- Commonly found in rat poison, strychnine causes one of the most painful and the most awful looking deaths of any poison.

Appearance: Bitter tasting white powder.

Administered: 1x effects within 10 minutes if ingested or inhaled.

1x Effects: First, painful contraction of facial muscles (30 difficulty save vs. distracting pain). 10 minutes after, spasming spreads to entire body (-15 AGY). Any sounds or movements will cause full-body spasms (each spasm uses 1 END, victims can die from exhaustion). Respiratory Arrest (30). Effects last 24 hours.

2x Effects: Same as 1x effects but Respiratory Arrest (40).

Treatment: Induce vomiting, activated charcoal, sedatives and artificial respiration, keep in a quiet, dark room.

Costs $20/dose.

Tetrodotoxin- This toxin, found in the ovaries of puffer fish and in other fish and frogs, used by the sorcerers of Haiti, is a powerful paralytic. Often found in biology labs.

Appearance: Clear tasteless liquid.

Administered: 1x effects within 30-40 minutes if ingested, 1x effects within 2 rounds if put on something that causes bladed damage.

1x Effects: Vomiting (30), twitching (-7 AGY), weakness (-15 STH, -15 SPD), slow heartbeat, Pulmonary Arrest (20). Effects last 12 hours.

2x Effects: Paralysis (30), Pulmonary Arrest (20), Cardiac Arrest (20).

3x Effects: Paralysis (40), Pulmonary Arrest (30), Cardiac Arrest (30).

Treatment: None.

Costs $50/dose.

Explosives & Incendiary

Anti-Tank Weapon- A one-use launcher of an explosive shell, designed to take out tanks or walls. FR 7 ft. (2 m.). MR 1,500 ft. (450 m.). Damage: 30 bladed, 10 burn (range increment 5 ft. or 1.5 m.). Weighs 20 lbs. (9 kg). Legality: Felony. Costs $7,500.

Dynamite- A stick of dynamite. It comes with a fuse which can be cut to last anywhere from 1 to 20 seconds. Any shock stands a 1 in 4 chance of causing the dynamite to explode. Does 6 burn damage (range increment 2 ft. or .5 m.). Legality: Felony without a demolitions license. Costs $75.

Flame Thrower- A backpack with two 11-liter tanks, containing a mixture of gasoline and oil. ROF 8. FR 4 ft. (1 m.) MR 200 ft. (60 m.) Easy strike (+4). Damage: 1 burn. Full tanks hold enough for 70 blasts. Weights 75 lbs. (34 kg) (with full tanks). Legality: Felony. Costs $500.

Gasoline- Anything doused with gasoline and set on fire takes 4 burn damage per round for 4 rounds (or until the fire is put out). Costs $3/gallon.

Grenade (Flash Bang)- This grenade creates a deafening bang and blinding flash of light. Detonates 4 rounds after the pin is pulled. Does 2 burn damage within 2 ft. (.5 m.). Anyone within 50 ft. (15 m.) is at -15 to actions/reactions and sound/sight AWR rolls for 30 minutes. Costs $75.

Grenade (Fragmentation)- Detonates 4 rounds after the pin is pulled and the safety lever is released. Sends sharp pieces of shrapnel flying in every direction. Does 1d20 bladed damage (pierces armor as double), range increment 4 ft. (1 m.). Legality: Felony. Costs $200.

Range Increment

Explosives have a range increment. To determine the damage taken by a victim, count the number of range increments away that person is. For each range increment, reduce the damage by half. So, if an explosion does 20 burn damage, has a range increment of 5 ft. and the victim is 15 ft. away, the victim takes 2 ½ burn damage (20, divided by 2 at 5 ft., divided by 2 at 10 ft., divided by 2 at 15 ft.).

Alleys

Grenade Launcher- Designed to be attached to a rifle, this gun fires explosive rounds. Designed for taking out vehicles. ROF 1. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.) MR 1,000 ft. (300 m.). Damage: 12 bladed 5 burn (1 ft. or $^1/_3$ m. range increment). Holds 1 grenade. Legality: Felony. Weighs 6 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $5,000 +$75/grenade.

Land Mine- Does damage mostly to the legs of the victim. Takes a moderate AWR feat to hear the click of the landmine arming. Does 5 bladed, 6 burn damage (range increment 1 ft. or $^1/_3$ m.). Legality: Felony. Costs $200.

Letter Bomb- A tiny bomb small enough to fit inside a thick envelope. The bomb is triggered when the envelope is opened. Does 4 bladed, 3 burn damage (range increment 1 ft. or $^1/_3$ m.). Legality: Felony. Costs $200.

Matchhead Bomb- A small incendiary bomb, about the size of a pack of cards, made mostly from match heads. Usually used for starting fires. Uses a fuse. Does 6 burn damage (range increment 1 ft. or $^1/_3$ m.). Legality: Felony. Costs $80.

Molotov Cocktail- A glass bottle filed with gasoline and oil. It is used as a quick arson tool (light and throw against the building you want to burn) or as an anti-tank weapon (the idea is to engulf the tank in flames and cause it to overheat). It makes a poor hand-to-hand combat weapon since it can fail to shatter when it hits the victim. Any object hit with a burning Molotov Cocktail (which shatters) takes 5 burn damage per round for 5 rounds (or until the fire is extinguished). Legality: Felony. Costs $40.

Pipe Bomb- A homemade bomb made from a length of pipe filled with explosive materials. A fuse is cut to the desired time. Metal shards from the pipe do the majority of the damage. Does 1d10 bladed damage (pierces armor as double), 4 burn damage (range increment 4 ft. or 1 m.). Legality: Felony. Costs $100.

Semtex- A plastic explosive. It is malleable, resistant to accidental detonation, and only small amounts are needed to do a lot of damage. Semtex is 'marked' with a chemical that gives it a distinct odor for easy detection. An order of semtex comes with an electrical detonator which can be set on a timer or detonated within 1 mile (1.6 km.) by a radio controller (included). Each 250 g. does 10 bladed 10 burn damage (range increment 5 ft. or 1.5 m.). Legality: Felony. Costs $1,000/250 g., +$5,000 for non-scent-marked

Firearms

Automatic Rifle- ROF 6. FR 7 ft. (2 m.) MR 1,500 ft. (450 m.). Damage 6 bladed. 32 round clip. Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $1,000 +$1/bullet

Hunting Rifle- ROF 2. FR 7 ft. (2 m.) MR 1,500 ft. (450 m.) Damage: 5 bladed. 7 round magazine. Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). $500 +$1/bullet

Laser Sight- Attached to the top of a firearm. After adjustment, reduces range penalty by up to 4 points. Costs $75.

Machine Gun- A heavy weapon designed to be used from a tripod or mounted on a vehicle. ROF 15. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.) MR 1,500 ft. (450 m.) Damage 8 bladed. 1,000 bullet feed belts. Weighs 90 lbs. (40 kg). Legality: Felony. $10,000 +$100 per 1,000 bullet belt.

Gun Laws in California

Gun Owners- Felons, people who are mentally ill or are in a conservatorship, people under a restraining order and people facing trial for a felony cannot own guns. These same people can't buy tear-gas based self-defense products.

Illegal Ammunition- Armor piercing and explosive bullets are illegal. Guns that shoot more than .60 caliber bullets (except shotguns) are illegal.

Illegal Add-Ons- Silencers, flash suppressors and night scopes are illegal. Anything that would disguise a gun as something other than a gun is illegal.

Illegal Weapons- Machine guns, assault weapons, short barreled rifles, sawed-off shotguns and flamethrowers are illegal. Also illegal: brass knuckles, shrukien, cane swords, leaded canes are all misdemeanors.

Concealed Weapons- It is illegal to carry a loaded, concealed weapon in a public place without a special permit. Permits can be obtained from the local sheriff's office, but in most cases the sheriff's office will only issue one if a person can prove a legitimate reason for having one.

Pistol (Automatic)- ROF 4. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.). MR 175 ft. (50 m.). Damage: 4 bladed. 9 round magazine. Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $450 +$0.25/bullet

Pistol (Heavy)- A large pistol, valued for its 'stopping power.' ROF 2. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.). MR 200 ft. (60 m.). Damage: 5 bladed. 7 round magazine. Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $600 +$0.50/ bullet

Pistol (Mini)- A small pistol deigned to be kept in a purse or under a pillow. ROF 3. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.) MR 150 ft. (45 m.) Damage: 3 bladed. Holds 6 bullets. Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $200 +$0.25/ bullet

Pistol (Revolver)- Takes 3 actions to reload, unless the PC has a speed-loader device. ROF 4. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.) MR 175 ft. (50 m.). Damage: 4 bladed. Holds 6 bullets. Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $350 +$0.25/bullet +$50 for a speed loader.

Sawed-Off Shotgun- This is a shotgun with the barrel shortened to create a wider spray of shot for close quarters combat. ROF 1. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.). MR 40 ft. (12 m.). Very easy strike (+8). Damage: 5 bladed. 7 shot magazine. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Legality: Felony. Costs $600 +$1/shell.

Shotgun (Pump)- ROF 1. FR 6 ft. (2 m.). MR 200 ft. (60 m.). Easy strike (+4). Damage: 6 bladed. 7 shot magazine. Weighs 6 lbs. (3 kg). Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $300 +$1/shell

Unregistered Firearm

Legality: Felony

Any gun that can be bought legally can also be bought illegally for +$200. They can be bought with the serial number burned off. Keep in mind that ballistic analysis may link bullets from this gun to crimes committed before the PC came to own it.

Shotgun (Semi-Automatic)- ROF 2. FR 6 ft. (2 m.). MR 200 ft. (60 m.). Easy strike (+4). Damage: 6 bladed. 5 shot magazine. Weighs 8 lbs. (4 kg). Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $700 +$1/shell.

Silencer- Attached to the barrel of a pistol or rifle, reduces the volume of a shot. Legality: Felony. Costs $250.

Sniper Rifle- With a scope and attached tripod. ROF 5. FR 50 ft. (15 m.) (using scope) 10 ft. (3 m.) (not using scope). MR 2,000 ft. (600 m.). Damage: 6 (pierces armor as 9). Clip holds 15 rounds. Weighs 10 lbs. Legality: Misdemeanor without a permit. Costs $4,000 +$5/bullet.

Submachinegun- ROF 10. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.). MR 700 ft. (200 m.). Damage 7 bladed. 40 round clip. Weighs 6 lbs. (3 kg). Legality: Felony. Costs $2,500 +$1/bullet.

Armor Piercing Bullets

Most bullets are available as armor piercing rounds. These do less damage (because a sharper bullet cuts through flesh more cleanly) but has a higher Pierces As damage. Legality: Felony.

Automatic Rifle: 5 damage, pierces as 8. $5/bullet.

Hunting Rifle: 4 damage, pierces as 7. $5/bullet.

Pistol (Automatic): 3 damage, pierces as 6. $3/bullet.

Pistol (Heavy): 4 damage, pierces as 7. $3/bullet.

Pistol (Mini): 2 damage, pierces as 5. $3/bullet.

Pistol (Revolver): 3 bladed, pierces as 6. $3/bullet.

Submachinegun: 6 damage, pierces as 9. $5/bullet.

Self-Defense

Grenade (Tear Gas)- Goes off in 1 round after being thrown. Lets out a steady stream of vapor (reaches a radius of 75 ft. or 25 m. within 5 rounds). Eye exposure to the vapor causes Moderate (20) distracting pain and partial blindness (-7 to actions/reactions and vision based AWR rolls). Breathing the vapor causes coughing, difficulty breathing (-10 END), Pain (30) and Vomiting (20). Costs $50.

Pepper Spray- A tiny canister which can be kept in a pocket or even put on a keychain. It has a safety lock. When used, it sprays a blast of capsaicin (the chemical which makes peppers hot) which can blind and incapacitate. One canister has enough for 5 attacks. Very Easy Blinding Strike (+8, on a successful blinding strike the victim must also make a hard save vs. pain), Very Easy Pain/Stun Attack (+8). Inhaling pepper spray will cause severe nose and throat pain (30 difficulty save vs. distracting pain), coughing (-10 END) and Vomiting (20). Costs $30.

Personal Sonic Alarm- A small pocket-sized alarm that, when activated, emits a piercing and painful wail (difficulty 10 distracting pain) that can be heard up to a mile away. Costs $20.

Shield (Blast)- This is a large ballistic shield that is meant to be set on the ground and crouched behind when under enemy fire or threat of explosion. PR 15 bladed 10 blunt. Weighs 50 lbs. (20 kg). Costs $200.

Shield (Riot)- This high-tech shield is made of clear polycarbonate. It is 3.5 ft. (1 m.) high and 2 ft. (.6 m.) wide. It is designed mainly to protect from thrown objects and hand-to-hand-attacks, although it will provide some protection from firearms. Gives +10 to parry. PR 5 bladed 5 blunt. Weighs 6 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $80.

Shield (Small)- A small round metal shield, about 2 ft. (.6 m.) in diameter, typically used by historical-recreation fighters who battle with wooden swords. Gives +5 to parry. PR of 3 bladed 4 blunt (shield can be destroyed completely by 6 damage). Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $50.

Taser (Air)- Pistol shaped, but instead of bullets it shoots out two metal darts on insulated wires. Can zap 7 times per battery charge. FR 3 ft. (1 m.). MR 20 ft. (6 m.) Damage: 3 electrical. Costs $500.

Taser (Baton)- A club with taser prongs along the end. The device can be used to simultaneously hit and shock someone. Can zap a person up to 2 times per battery charge. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt, 3 electrical. Costs $50.

Taser (Heavy Duty)- A larger model which delivers a 700,000 volt shock. Can zap 7 times per battery charge. Range: 0-1. Damage: 5 electrical. Costs $70.

Taser (Mini)- Small handheld device with two pointed metal prongs. Can zap a person up to 5 times per battery. Range: 0-1. Damage: 3 electrical. Costs $30.

Tear Gas Keyholer- The funnel-like tip on this tear gas sprayer allows tear gas to be deployed through a keyhole, in the space under a door, or even though a hole punched in automotive glass. Eye exposure to tear gas causes Moderate (20) distracting pain and partial blindness (-7 to actions/reactions and vision based AWR rolls). Breathing the vapor causes coughing, difficulty breathing (-10 END), Pain (30) and Vomiting (20). Costs $70.

Traditional

Baseball Bat- An old wooden or hollow metal bat. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $50.

Bear Trap- Spring loaded metal trap with a chain on it. Takes only 10 pounds (5 kg) of pressure to spring the trap. Does 1 bladed damage and traps the leg that set it off. Weighs 35 lbs. (15 kg). Costs $100.

Blowpipe- A long tube for blowing darts with. Takes 1 round to load a dart in the tube. FR 2 ft. (.5 m.). MR 30 ft. (10 m.). Does 0 bladed damage (pierces as 2). Costs $50 +$4/dart.

Bow (Archery)- A cheap wooden bow designed for amateur sport archery. Takes 1 action to draw an arrow. FR 5 ft. (1.5 m.). MR 100 ft. (30 m.). Damage: 2 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $50 +$5/arrow.

Bow (Compound)- A complicated hunting bow, using high-tech materials to make it lightweight and powerful. FR 7 ft. (2 m.). MR 250 ft. (75 m.). Damage: 3 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $400 +$20/arrow.

Chain- A length of chain of the right size for combat. Can be used for entangling. Range 2-3. Damage: 3 blunt. Hard strike (-4), hard vital strike (-4). Weighs 10 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $5.

Alleys

Crate Cutter- A small folded piece of metal contains a utility blade. Designed as a multi-purpose cutting tool. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy slash (+4). Costs $5.

Crossbow- Takes 2 actions to load the bow (or 1 action with a hard strength feat). 2 handed. FR 7 ft. (2 m.) MR 350 ft. (115 m.) Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 5). Weighs 7 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $500 +$30/bolt.

Dagger- A knife designed for stabbing through the ribcage and into the heart. Damage: 2½ bladed. Easy Vital Strike (+4). Costs $35.

Dagger (Throwing)- A dagger designed and weighted to be thrown. FR 1 ft. (1/3 m.). MR 20 ft. (6 m.). Damage 2 bladed. Costs $20 for a set of 3.

Fire Axe- Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Hard Strike (-4), Easy Vital Strike (+4). Weighs 8 lbs. (4 kg). Costs $45.

Knife (Combat)- This knife is crafted specially for fighting with. It is best at slashing-type attacks. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Easy Slash (+4), Easy Wing (+4). Costs $35.

Knife (Hunting)- A large knife with a serrated back side and a hollow handle (containing matches, sharpening stone, water purification tablets and fishing hook and line). Range 0-1. Damage: 2½ bladed. Costs $30.

Knife (Kitchen)- A large bread knife. Each time it hits an opponent there is a 1 in 20 chance of the blade breaking. Range 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Costs $3.

Knife (Switchblade)- A spring loaded knife designed to be concealed in the palm and opened in an instant for surprise attacks. Range: 0. Damage: 1½ bladed. Easy Slash (+4), Easy Wing (+4), Easy Vital Strike (+4). Legality: Misdemeanor. Costs $45.

Machete- A rounded sword-like blade designed for chopping through thick foliage. Range: 1. Damage: 4 bladed. Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $40.

Nightstick- One handed weapon made from plastic or fiberglass. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt Very Easy Parry (+8). Weighs 5 lbs. (2 kg). Costs $40.

Pen Knife- What looks like a fancy metal pen conceals a strong, sharp blade which is just long enough to pierce the ribcage and heart. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy Slash (+4), Easy Vital Strike (+4). Legality: Misdemeanor. Costs $45.

Pipe- A section of metal pipe or rebar. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 7 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $5.

Quarterstaff- A 6 ft. (2 m.) long straight piece of wood. Range 1-3. Damage: 2 blunt. Easy parry (+4). Weighs 10 lbs. (5 kg). Costs $40.

Sword (Broadsword)- A replica medieval sword. It is very heavy, two-handed and designed to cleave through armor. Takes a moderate (20) STH feat to use without penalty. Range: 1-3. Damage: 5 bladed damage (pierces as 7). Hard Strike (-4). Weighs 7 lbs. (3 kg). Costs $100.

Sword (Fencing)- A thin, flexible stabbing-sword that is designed to move quickly. Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed. Easy Parry (+4), Easy Vital Strike (+4). Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $60.

Sword (Katana)- A replica of a Japanese samurai sword. Range: 1-2. Damage: 5 bladed. Easy Vital Strike (+4). Weighs 3 lbs. (1 kg). Costs $100.

Sword Cane- Looks like a normal cane, but inside is a thin sword blade. Range 1. Damage: 2 bladed. Easy Parry (+4), Easy Vital Strike (+4). Weighs 2 lbs. (1 kg). Legality: Misdemeanor. Costs $100.

Telescoping Baton- A metal tube that can fit in a pocket. When it is swung, it telescopes out into a full sized baton. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. (2 kg). Easy Pain/Stun Attack (+4). Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $150.

Tiger Claws- A pair of wristbands with three claws each curving over the fist for bladed punching and clawing attacks. Adds 2 bladed damage to a punch. Easy Slash (+4). Costs $65.

Whip- A black leather whip. Range: 3. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy Pain/Stun Attack (+4). Costs $35.

Sample Character Creation – Step 7

Because of her Day Job (Medical Professional with 2 levels of advancement) we know Maggie Hernandez' starting money ($4,000) and weekly income ($300/wk.). This is money she has left over after paying for mundane things like rent, food, gasoline, clothing, etc.

Referring to the table on p.88 we see that with her weekly income she starts with the following free: *"Several nice outfits, including a formal suit and a suit for going out on the town, cheap new furniture, a new car, an entertainment center, a new computer, a large apartment or small house."*

She doesn't have any levels in the Black Market skill or have any other special advantage which would let her buy levels in illegal merchandise. Thus, Maggie can't start play with anything listed as illegal.

Since she's a doctor, she'll probably want some medical equipment. We'll get her a Field Surgical Kit for $100 and a First Aid Kit (EMT) for $250. We'll also buy a dose of Anti-Psychotic for $4 and a dose of Sedative for $3/dose. She wouldn't normally be able to buy these (because they're listed as illegal) but Maggie is a doctor so it's okay.

Since she has the Research: Internet skill, we want her to be able to get on the internet in the field, so we'll buy her a palmtop computer ($250) and a cellular internet access card ($100 +$10/wk. for service). Together these will allow her to browse the net from any urban area. We'll also get her a basic cellphone ($30 +$10/wk. for service). Since she's also a very science-oriented person we'll buy her some books she can keep in the trunk of her car. We'll buy books for bomb disarming, mythology, pharmacology, surgery, poisons, science: chemistry, science: archeology/paleontology, science: pathology, and surgery for a total of $700. Some of these books are multi-volume, so around half her trunk will be filled with books. Most of these books are intro/ref, which means that if she doesn't have the skill she can act as if she had 1 level of the skill by using the book, and if she does have the skill she can act as if she has an extra level by referring to the book. The only book that isn't intro/ref is surgery, which is only ref. That's not a problem since she already has levels in surgery.

continued next page

Sample Character Creation – Step 7 (continued)

Since Maggie is a Hero, she knows she's going to be going out and fighting mundane and supernatural dangers, so she should equip herself for a number of dangerous circumstances. We'll buy her a backpack to carry her tools in ($20), a large flashlight ($25), gasmask ($50), nightvision goggles ($200), 20 plastic restraints ($20) and a lockpick gun ($80).

She'll also want armor and weapons. We'll buy her a ballistic vest ($500) for protection. Her only weapons skill is Self-Defense Weapons. Looking at the skill we see that gives her plusses with tasers and pepper spray, so we'll buy her pepper spray ($30), and a taser baton ($50). We'll also buy her a fire axe ($45) in case she runs into something that isn't harmed by electricity or capsaicin.

Altogether what we've bought her comes to $3,457, meaning she has $543 remaining. We decide she'll keep $200 in $20s hidden on her person (for emergency purchases) and the rest will be in her bank.

Since we now have weapons and combat skills completed, we can figure Maggie's typical action and reaction. This will make things go faster when Maggie gets into combat: we'll already know what her best moves are and already have the sums calculated.

Maggie's Self-Defense Weapons skill gives her +4 to Pain/Stun Attack and +4 to Blinding Strike with self-defense weapons. Her pepper spray has the following properties: Very Easy Blinding Strike (on a successful blinding strike the victim must also make a hard save vs. pain), Very Easy Pain/Stun Attack. Her taser baton has the following properties: Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt, 3 electrical. So, if she makes a pain/stun or blinding attack with the pepper spray she gets +8 (from the very easy) and +4 (from the skill). If she makes a pain/stun or blinding strike with the baton she only gets the +4, but if she makes a normal strike with the baton she will get no plusses but will do both blunt damage and electrical damage (the electrical damage will have much the same effect as a pain/stun attack, see p.133). We choose her typical attack should go for greater likelihood of success rather than greatest effect. So her typical attack will be a Blinding Strike with the pepper spray at INL (13) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) +8 (weapon) +1d20 vs. 30. Adding together all the plusses and attributes we get 37 +1d20 vs. 30 or 1d20 +7 vs. 0. We'll mark 1d20 +7 vs. 0 on the character sheet so that if we have combat she'll roll 1d20, add seven, and give that as her success.

Self-Defense Weapons also gives +4 to Simultaneous Pain/Stun Attacks. Since simultaneous strikes give +WIL to rolls and +20 to difficulty, she would be able to do a simultaneous pain/stun at INL (13) + AGY (12) +WIL (12) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 45, or 1d20 vs. 4. Yet she would find it easier just to do a plain dodge at AWR (14) + AGY (12) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +1 vs. 0). So if she's in combat and she's reacting to an attack against her by dodging, she'll roll 1d20 and add 1 to the result as her success.

Step Eight – Bonus Characteristics

In Brief: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages. Max. 30 BP of disads.

In addition to the advantages and disadvantages listed below, you can gain or spend Bonus Points in the following ways:

Extra or Fewer Attribute Points:
1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point

Extra of Fewer Health Attribute Points:
3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Point

Extra or Fewer Skill Points:
1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points

Extra or Less Money:
1 Bonus Point = $500

PCs cannot take more than 30 BP worth of disads without special permissions from the GM.

Bonus Points cannot be used to increase or decrease psychodynamics.

Example: *A PC starts with only 70 Skill Points (-30 Skill Points = +10 Bonus Points), $1,500 less than normal (-$1,500 = +3 BP) but starts with 7 Health Attribute Points (+1 Health Attribute Point = -3 BP) and 90 Attribute Points (+10 Attribute Points = -10 BP).*

Gaining or Losing Bonus Characteristics in Game Play

The simple rule to remember here: character creation is meant to be fair, game play is not.

Advantages and disadvantages can be rewarded or taken away during game-play as part of the adventure with no points being exchanged at all. For instance, a player may buy the Contact: Wealthy advantage, only to have that wealthy contact killed during the first five minutes of game play, meaning that advantage is permanently lost and the points spent are wasted. On the other hand, the PC may save someone's life and gain the equivalent of Contact: Law Enforcement within five minutes of game-play. A PC might start with Addiction: Heroin, and declare in the first minutes of game play that she is quitting. Assuming the PC can resist the cravings rolls, she will be rid of that disadvantage.

To reiterate: Anything that the PC does or anything that happens to the PC in-game can remove advantages and disadvantages, or can give special advantages and disadvantages to the PC regardless of the points spent during character creation.

Secret Life Specific Optional Bonus Characteristics

Animist: No Teacher (Gives 1 BP)

Cannibal: Simple Living (Costs 1 BP)

Lost: Weird Thing You Found (Costs 4 BP), Expensive Thing You Found (Costs 1 BP)

Outcast: Thing You Grabbed (Costs 5 BP), Contact: Dance (Costs 5 BP), Always Crazy (Gives 2 BP)

Professional: Not a Lodge Member (Gives 5 BP)

Scribbler: Bibliophile (Costs 2 BP)

Survivor: Under Suspicion (Gives 1 BP)

Wonderlander: Toy (Costs 4 BP), Contact: Adult Friend (Costs 5 BP)

Alleys

Advantages

Ally: Coworker (Costs 1 BP)
Ally: Parents (Costs 3 BP)
Ambidextrous (Costs 1 BP)
Caregiver: Occult (Costs 5 BP)
Concealed Weapon Permit (Costs 4 BP)
Contact: Corporate (Costs 2 BP)
Contact: Criminal (Costs 2 BP)
Contact: Government (Costs 2 BP)
Contact: Law Enforcement (Costs 5 BP)
Contact: Locals (Costs 3 BP)
Contact: Wealthy (Costs 3 BP)
Contact: Wise (Costs 2 BP)
Drug Resistant (Costs 2 BP)
Ethnic Group (Costs 4 BP)
Ex-Military (Costs 4 BP)
False Identity (Costs 5 BP)
Ghetto Raised (Costs 4 BP)
Inherited Property (Costs 5 BP)
Innate Talent: Brawler (Costs 8 BP)
Innate Talent: Creative (Costs 4 BP)
Innate Talent: Math (Costs 2 BP)
Innate Talent: Technical (Costs 3 BP)
Instructor (Costs 10 BP)
Low Sleep Need (Costs 2 BP)
Multilingual (Costs 2 BP)
Pain Experienced (Costs 2 BP)
Past Life Knowledge (Costs 2 BP)
Physically Attractive: Minor (Costs 2 BP)
Physically Attractive: Major (Costs 6 BP)
Potential Genius (Costs 7 BP)
Prison Experience (Costs 6 BP)
Private School (Costs 5 BP)
Sense of Direction (Costs 1 BP)
Supernatural Object (Costs 7 BP)
Stone Face (Costs 1 BP)
Trust Fund (Costs 4 BP)

Disadvantages

Abusive Relationship (Gives 20 BP)
Addiction: Alcohol (Gives 10 BP)
Addiction: Cocaine/Crack (Gives 25 BP)
Addiction: Heroin (Gives 25 BP)
Addiction: Inhalants (Gives 15 BP)
Addiction: Marijuana (Gives 7 BP)
Addiction: Methamphetamines (Gives 20 BP)
Addiction: Multi-Drug (Gives 15 BP)
Addiction: Nicotine (Gives 5 BP)
Addiction: Pain Pills (Gives 10 BP)
AIDS (Gives 20 BP)
Allergy: Deadly (Gives 4 BP)
Allergy: Incapacitating (Gives 2 BP)
Alzheimer's (Gives 15 BP)
Asshole Boss (Gives 1 BP)
Bad Rep (Gives 2 BP)
Bad Self-Image (Gives 1 BP)
Bad Temper (Gives 1 BP)
Blind (Gives 20 BP)
Caregiver: Child (Gives 10 BP)
Caregiver: Elderly/Physically Disabled (Gives 7 BP)
Caregiver: Mentally Disabled (Gives 15 BP)
Chronic Pain (Gives 2 BP)
Clumsy (Gives 2 BP)
Colorblind (Gives 1 BP)
Compulsion (Gives 4 BP)
Corrupted Psychodynamic (Gives 3 BP ea.)
Criminal Record (Gives 1 BP)
Crush (Gives 1 BP)
Deaf (Gives 7 BP)
Debt: Credit Card (Gives 3 BP)
Debt: Loan Shark (Gives 1 BP per $1000, max. 5)
Delusion (Gives 3 BP)
Disfigured (Gives 6 BP)
Dissociative Disorder (Gives 2 BP)
Drug Sensitivity (Gives 2 BP)
Enemy: Ex (Gives 3 BP)
Enemy: Parents (Gives 3 BP)
Enemy: Stalker (Gives 2 BP)
Epilepsy (Gives 2 BP)
Erased (Gives 20 BP)
ESL (Gives 2 BP)
Failing Marriage (Gives 3 BP)
Family Obligations (Gives 2 BP)
Family Skeletons (Gives 1 BP)
Fetish (Gives 2 BP)
Fried (Gives 4 points)
Fugitive (Gives 15 BP)
Gambling Addict (Gives 7 BP)
Guilty Secret (Gives 1 BP)
Hemophilia (Gives 15 BP)
Herpes (Gives 2 BP)
High Sleep Need (Gives 1 BP)
House Arrest (Gives 7 BP)
Hunted: Corporation (Gives 7 BP)
Hunted: Organized Crime (Gives 10 BP)
Hunted: Powers-That-Be (Gives 10 BP)
Hunted: Serial Killer (Gives 4 BP)
Identical Twin (Gives 1 BP)
Illegal Alien (Gives 12 BP)
Illiterate (Gives 8 BP)
Inexperienced: Urban (Gives 1 BP)
Inexperienced: World (Gives 8 BP)
Insomnia (Gives 2 BP)
Institutionalized (Gives 4 BP)
Learning Disability (Gives 3 BP)
Lingering Abuser (Gives 1 BP)
Lonely (Gives 2 BP)
Malnourished (Gives 5 BP)
Memory Gaps (Gives 1 BP)
Mental Health History (Gives 1 BP)
Missing Arm (Gives 7 BP ea.)
Missing Eye (Gives 5 BP)
Missing Leg (Gives 7 BP ea.)
Mute (Gives 10 BP)
Nightblindness (Gives 3 BP)
Obese (Gives 2 BP)
Old (Gives 15 BP per decade after 50)
Parole (Gives 4 BP)
Personal Mystery (Gives 1 BP)
Phobia (Gives 3 BP)
Physically Unattractive: Minor (Gives 2 BP)
Physically Unattractive: Major (Gives 4 BP)
Pre-Op Transsexual (Gives 3 BP)
Poor Hearing (Gives 2 BP)
Poor Vision (Gives 1 BP)
Post-Traumatic Stress (Gives 10 BP)
Pre-Op Transsexual (Gives 3 BP)
Pregnant (Gives 15 BP)
Recovering Addict (Gives 3 BP)
Restraining Order (Gives 1 BP)
Runaway (Gives 10 BP)
Self-Hatred (Gives 3 BP)
Shy (Gives 2 BP)
Sickly (Gives 4 BP)
S.L.I.der (Gives 1 BP)
Stutterer (Gives 4 BP)
Terminal Illness (Gives 17 BP)
Thin Bones (Gives 7 BP)
Virgin (Gives 1 BP)
Visa (Gives 1 BP)
Weak Stomach (Gives 1 BP)
Young (Gives 5 BP per year below 16)

Advantages

Ally: Coworker (Costs 1 BP)- Someone at the PC's Day Job knows about the PC's Secret Life and will try to help the PC, mostly by covering for the PC when the PC misses work or leaves work early to deal with Secret Life issues.

Ally: Parents (Costs 3 BP)- The PC's parents know that the PC is involved in supernatural exploration and the parents are generally supportive of the PC. The PC can go to his or her parents for advice, a place to stay, emotional support and sometimes even a loan.

Ambidextrous (Costs 1 BP)- The PC is almost equally comfortable using either hand for precision tasks. PC suffers only a -2 penalty for using paired weapons.

Caregiver: Occult (Costs 5 BP)- Buy this advantage in combination with any of the Caregiver disadvantages (p.116). The person the PC is caring for has some of the same occult skills or powers as someone in the PC's Secret Life. Perhaps the PC taught the cared-for, perhaps the cared-for once taught the PC, or perhaps whatever happened to give the PC unusual powers or skills also happened to the cared-for.

Concealed Weapon Permit (Costs 4 BP)- A PC can legally purchase and carry a pistol. Professionals and PC's with the Day Jobs Law Enforcement Professional, Investigator or Security Professional don't have to buy this advantage.

Contact: Corporate (Costs 2 BP)- The PC has a friend who works as a trusted position in the head offices of a major multinational corporation. The friend doesn't mind doing a few quick searches in the corporate records to help the PC, so long as the friend isn't in danger of getting caught.

Contact: Criminal (Costs 2 BP)- The PC has a friend who is a career criminal with a working knowledge of the underworld. During character creation the PC can purchase equipment of up to a felony legality rating (p.88).

Contact: Government (Costs 2 BP)- The PC has a friend who works at a trusted position in a federal agency.

Contact: Law Enforcement (Costs 5 BP)- The PC has a friend who is a member of the local, county or state police or the FBI.

Contact: Locals (Costs 3 BP)- The PC has friends and acquaintances all around the PC's neighborhood. The PC chats with his or her neighborhood friends often and they will mention if anything unusual is going on around the neighborhood.

Contact: Wealthy (Costs 3 BP)- The PC has a friend who has a lot of money and is not afraid to invest it in an interesting enterprise or give it away to a very good and very desperate cause.



Contact: Wise (Costs 2 BP)- The PC has a friend who is old enough to have seen or done just about everything that the mundane world has to offer. The contact doesn't have any supernatural skills or knowledge, but has seen enough to know that not everything can be explained by modern science. The contact has History: Local (5) and Local Geography (4).

Drug Resistant (Costs 2 BP)- The PC's body chemistry is such that psychoactive drugs have less of an effect on the PC than they do on the average person. Gives +7 to save vs. drug effects. Does not help saves vs. drug addiction and cravings.

Ethnic Group (Costs 4 BP)- Limitations: The PC must take either the Bilingual advantage or the ESL disadvantage. Animists get the equivalent of this advantage free. The PC belongs to a small community of non-English speaking immigrants. The PC has spent all or some of his or her youth in the US and understands American culture better than many of his or her fellow immigrants. Thus the PC is often called on to interpret for or represent his or her people. The PC's loyalty to his or her community is repaid in kind.

Ex-Military (Costs 4 BP)- The PC was a military soldier. The PC gets one free level of an Athletics skill, 1 free level of an Investigation/Espionage skill and 2 free levels of Combat skill(s).

False Identity (Costs 5 BP)- The PC has spent years establishing a false identity. This identity has a fake ID, sparse (but believable) credit and rental history and a bank account. It's not perfect (there's no birth certificate for instance), but it can be used to accomplish most transactions.

Ghetto Raised (Costs 4 BP)- The PC was born and raised in a place where the PC was constantly exposed to violence, poverty, crime and drugs. Today, the PC has 'street smarts.' The PC gets 3 free levels of Criminal skill(s) and 1 free level of a Combat skill.

Inherited Property (Costs 5 BP)- Limitations: Not available to PCs with the Day Jobs: Welfare, Ward or Homeless. The PC recently inherited land and a house in the area the campaign takes place in. The PC can sell the land and house, but would need to clean and do renovations on the house first. If the PC chooses to live in the house, the PC can gain extra income by not having to pay rent (+$1,000 to start and +$100/wk.).

Innate Talent: Brawler (Costs 8 BP)- The PC has been getting in fights since he or she was a little kid and fighting comes naturally to the PC. The PC gets +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +5 to initiative, and a +3, a +2, and a +1 to any actions or reactions of the character's choice (the pluses can not be put on the same action or reaction).

Innate Talent: Creative (Costs 4 BP)- This advantage does not change creative skill costs and give no plusses to skill rolls. However, when the PC does succeed at a creative skill, the effect is beautiful or evocative in a way that no one else in the world could produce. For example: A PC with the cooking skill decides to create a new recipe for Fajitas, that recipe will be as good as the success of the roll, but there will not be any Fajita recipe in the world like it.

Innate Talent: Math (Costs 2 BP)- The PC is a mathematical prodigy. The PC gets 4 free levels in one or more of the following: Computer Programming, Math, Physics and Cryptography. The PC also gets +4 to all INL or skill rolls involving math.

Innate Talent: Technical (Costs 3 BP)- The way the PC thinks makes it easier for the PC to understand how technology works and how to interface with it. The PC gets 4 free levels of High Tech skills and gets +4 to High Tech skill rolls.

Instructor (Costs 10 BP)- The PC had a very skilled mentor who trained the PC. Choose one of the following:

-Doctor: 6 free levels in Medical skill(s).

-Fighter: 4 free levels in Combat skill(s).

-Thief: 4 free levels in Criminal skill(s), 1 free level in a Traditional skill.

-Hacker: 6 free levels in High Tech skill(s).

-Artist: 5 free levels in Creative skill(s), 2 free levels in People skill(s).

-Academic: 5 free levels in Academic skill(s), 1 free level in a Medical skill, 1 free level in a People skill.

-Law Enforcement: 2 free levels in Investigation/ Espionage skill(s), 2 free levels in Combat skill(s).

Low Sleep Need (Costs 2 BP)- The PC has never needed as much sleep as the average person. The PC is happiest with about 6 hours of sleep per night and can sleep only 4 hours for several nights in a row with no detectable loss of abilities.

Multilingual (Costs 2 BP)- The PC was raised hearing and speaking two languages. Learning new languages is easier for the PC than for someone who grew up multilingual. The PC can choose 2 languages to be completely fluent in. During or after character creation the PC can buy levels in the Language skill at half the normal skill cost (round up).

Pain Experienced (Costs 2 BP)- At some point in his or her past, the PC experienced quite a lot of pain for quite a while. The PC has learned how to handle pain and act normally while in pain. Gives +5 to save vs. pain.

Past Life Knowledge (Costs 2 BP)- The PC can remember snatches of a previous lifetime. These seem to correspond with a single person who lived before the PC was born. There are also memories that can't be placed in a particular time period: a relentless march in a terrible canyon, under a pure black sky, with a constant but unseen threat that seems nearby. At least once per adventure the GM should allow the PC knowledge that he or she wouldn't normally have: the sudden ability to understand a language, historical and geographical knowledge, and occasionally even manifest skills the PC doesn't have. The majority of past lives, like the majority of people, are non-english speakers from developing countries. If PCs investigate the past life (a difficult task) the PC may find that the past life had some sort of mystical or occult training that made the retention of memories possible.

Physically Attractive: Minor (Costs 2 BP)- The PC has physical features which make him or her more attractive to people who are interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives +4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Attractive: Major (Costs 6 BP)- The PC has physical features which make him or her very attractive to those with an interest in the PC's gender. Gives +8 to seduction rolls.

Potential Genius (Costs 7 BP)- The PC's brain is wired differently from other peoples' such that the PC has incredible mental potential. The cap for the PC's INL is raised from 20 to 25.

Prison Experience (Costs 6 BP)- The PC has spent time in prison where he or she had the opportunity to pick up a lot of useful criminal skills. Gives 4 free levels in Criminal skill(s), 2 free levels in one or more of the following skills: Assassin: Armed, Assassin: Unarmed, Boxing, Knife Fighting, Street Fighting: Armed, Street Fighting: Unarmed, Wrestling.

Prison Experience and Criminal Record

The advantage Prison Experience and the disad Criminal Record are a good match. If the PC buys Prison Experience without getting Criminal Record, it probably means the PC was a juvenile when he or she was imprisoned and has had his or her records sealed, or the PC was imprisoned in a country that doesn't share criminal records with the US, or the PC was imprisoned but was later exonerated. If the PC buys Criminal Record without Prison Experience it could indicate the PC was imprisoned in isolation (thus has no ability to learn from other prisoners) or that the PC just wasn't interested in learning what other prisoners had to teach him or her.

Private School (Costs 5 BP)- As a child, the PC was sent away to a prestigious private school (possibly in an another country) and given access to the best academic learning. The PC gets 4 free levels in Academic skills, 2 free levels in Creative skills and 3 free levels in People skills.

Sense of Direction (Costs 1 BP)- The PC has an inherent ability to sense what direction he or she is facing. Roll this as an AWR feat with a difficulty based on the number of cues available (things like being indoors, being hit in the head or being in another part of the world would increase the difficulty).

Supernatural Object (Costs 7 BP)- At some point in the PC's past the PC was given or found an object with clearly supernatural powers. How or why this object does what it does is not known to the PC. Create a power (using power rules on p.30) with 1 level of Effect (no Enhance) and 2 levels of Limitations.

Stone Face (Costs 1 BP)- Emotions do not register very strongly in the PC's facial expressions, body language, voice or physiology. The PC's emotions are just as strong as anyone else's (though the PC may have trouble convincing people of that fact). +10 difficulty to any attempt to detect lies or emotions in the PC.

Trust Fund (Costs 4 BP)- There is a large pool of money set aside for the PC. Most of it is tied up in investments, and there is a maximum the PC can take out per week. There is an executor who has the ability to halt the flow of money if the PC is doing something illegal or immoral with it or if the PC shows signs of a mental illness or addiction. The PC starts with $1,500 extra and gets an extra $100/wk.

Disadvantages

The Catch-All Rule

If a disadvantage doesn't have the potential to cause problems for the PC, either because of the PC's Secret Life or because of other Bonus Characteristics, the GM can choose to give fewer (or no) BP for it. For instance, a PC can't take the Asshole Boss advantage with the Day Jobs Business Owner or Homeless.

Abusive Relationship (Gives 20 BP)- The PC currently lives with an abusive parent or lover. This abuse has been kept secret from anyone with the guts to actually do anything about it. Besides abusing the PC, the parent or lover has tried to sabotage any means of establishing independence: sabotaging careers, close friendships, education, and even attempts to learn to take care of oneself. In short, the PC doesn't know how to live without the abuser. The abuser is more than a match for the PC in any fair fight.

Addiction: Alcohol (Gives 10 BP)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to alcohol (which has a craving difficulty of 15). See p.134 for addiction rules and p.96 for the drug profile of alcohol. The PC has been using alcohol daily for 1 year so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects (see p.96). Note: It costs an alcoholic approximately $35/wk. to buy enough alcohol to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level. Homeless addicts who do things such as drinking mouthwash can (usually) avoid withdrawals for as little as $10/wk.

Addiction: Cocaine/Crack (Gives 25 BP)- The PC is addicted to smoking crack or sniffing cocaine (which have a craving difficulty of 25). See p.134 for addiction rules and p.97 for the drug profile of cocaine/crack. The PC has been using cocaine/crack for 6 months so far and suffers from a chronically inflamed and runny nose (see long term effects, p.97). Note: it costs a cocaine addict approximately $140/wk. and a crack addict approximately $70/wk. to buy enough of their drug to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level

Multiple Addictions

With the exception of Addiction: Nicotine, the PC can not take more than one of the following addiction disadvantages for points. Taking one of the addiction disadvantages means that drug is the PC's exclusive drug-of-choice. If you're looking for a character who does any drug he or she can get a hold of, take the Addiction: Multi-Drug disadvantage.

Addiction: Heroin (Gives 25 BP)- The PC is addicted to heroin (which has a craving difficulty of 20). The PC injects heroin. See p.134 for addiction rules and p.98 for the drug profile of heroin. The PC has been using heroin for 6 months so far and suffers from a poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), see long term effects, p.98. Note: it costs a heroin addict approximately $70/wk. to buy enough heroin to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Inhalants (Gives 15 BP)- The PC is psychologically addicted to inhalants (which have a craving difficulty of 15). See p.134 for addiction rules and p.98 for the drug profile of inhalants. The PC has been huffing for about 6 months so far and is at -1 INL and -1 AWR. Note: It costs a huffer approximately $24/wk. to buy enough inhalants to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Marijuana (Gives 7 BP)- The PC is psychologically addicted to marijuana (which has a craving difficulty of 15). See p.134 for addiction rules and p.98 for the drug profile of marijuana. The PC has been using marijuana for 6 months so far and suffers from -7 to memory based INL rolls, lowered libido and -7 to save vs. depression/dysphoria (see long term effects, p.98). Note: it costs a marijuana addict approximately $42/wk. to buy enough marijuana to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level

Addiction: Methamphetamines (Gives 20 BP)- The PC is psychologically addicted to meth (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.134 for addiction rules and p.99 for the drug profile of meth. The PC has been using meth for 6 months so far and suffers from ulcers and malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY), see p.99 for more long term effects. Note: It costs a meth addict approximately $70/wk. to buy enough meth to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Multi-Drug (Gives 15 BP)- The PC is not addicted to any one particular drug. He or she has a psychological addiction to being intoxicated. The PC's basic problem is that he or she can not deal with living life in a sober state. The PC lost or never developed the psychological mechanisms to deal with unfiltered reality. The PC can stand to be sober for short periods, typically while he or she is doing something to keep busy (like hustling money to get drugs). When evening rolls around and nothing stands between the PC and examination of his or her life, the PC must make a craving roll (WIL + 1d20 vs. 20) to avoid finding some intoxicant. The PC will use whatever he or she can get a hold of: alcohol, marijuana,

inhalants, pain killers, meth, etc. The PC may blow all available cash on week-long drug binges which leaves him or her with debt, health problems and social problems that are almost as good of a distraction as intoxication. Typical multi-drug addicts can spend as little as $35/week on drugs (though a typical multi-drug addict will spend more on better drugs when he or she has the money).

Addiction: Nicotine (Gives 5 BP)- The PC is physiologically addicted to nicotine (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.134 for addiction rules and p.97 for the drug profile of nicotine. The PC has been smoking for 2 years and suffers from emphysema (-1 END) and increased risk of cancer and stroke. See long term effects, p.97. Note: It costs smokers approximately $15 to $49/wk. (depending on what they smoke) to buy enough tobacco to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Pain Pills (Gives 10 BP)- The PC is addicted to prescription opiate painkillers (which have a craving difficulty of 20). The PC is adept at talking well-meaning doctors into writing prescriptions. See p.134 for addiction rules and p.95 for the drug profile of opiates. The PC has been using opiates for 6 months so far and suffers from a poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), see long term effects, p.95. Note: it costs a pill popper approximately $56/wk. (less if ordering from abroad) to buy enough pain pills to avoid withdrawal, although most addicts buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

AIDS (Gives 20 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. The PC has contracted and is showing symptoms of AIDS, which currently has no cure. The PC currently suffers from: Low energy (-5 END), weight loss, frequent fevers (-5 to save vs. heat exhaustion), rashes and sores (-5 to seduction rolls), poor memory (-5 to INL memory rolls or saves vs. amnesia) and weakened immune system (-10 to save vs. disease progression and mortality). There are drug cocktails which slow the progression of the disease for $200/wk. Without drugs, roll each week on the following table. With drugs, there is a 1 in 6 chance you'll have to roll. All minuses are permanent and cumulative.

01-07: Cough (-10 to prowling rolls)

08-14: Weakness (-5 STH/SPD)

15-21: Clumsiness (-5 AGY)

22-27: Difficulty Swallowing

28-34: Confusion/Forgetfulness (-5 INL)

35-40: Diarrhea (double speed of thirst damage)

41-47: Fever (-5 to save vs. heat exhaustion)

48-52: Vision Loss (-7 to vision based AWR rolls, -7 to actions/reactions)

53-59: Vomiting (10)

60-66: Fatigue (-5 END)

67-74: Weight Loss (-10 lbs. or 4.5 kg, -½ BDY)

75-81: Headaches (10)

82-85: Coma (10)

86-00: Weakened Immune System (-10 to saves vs. disease progression and mortality)

Allergy: Deadly (Gives 4 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. The PC has a serious sensitivity to some common food item (e.g. peanuts, wheat, eggs, milk, soy, shellfish, tomatoes, fish). If the PC ingests even a little he or she will be incapacitated within 10 minutes and will die within 1 hour without medical attention. An intramuscular epinephrine injection ($40) can help stave off death.

Allergy: Incapacitating (Gives 2 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors or Cannibals. Like the Deadly Allergy, except a reaction such as blinding headaches, convulsive vomiting or asthma more-or-less prevents the PC from doing anything (must make a 30 difficulty WIL or END roll to do anything) but will not kill the PC.

Alzheimer's (Gives 15 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. The PC has a degenerative brain disease that does not respond to any known treatments. The PC should roll once per week on the following table. All effects are permanent and cumulative:

01-10: -2 INL

11-20: -1 AGY

21-30: -1 AWR

31-40: Sudden Amnesia (5)

41-50: Delusions (5)

51-60: Hallucinations (5)

61-70: Retrograde Amnesia (5)

71-80: Anterograde Amnesia (5)

81-90: Aphasia (5) (failed INL save means PC cannot speak)

91-00: Agnosia (5) (failed INL save means PC mistakes one object for another)

Asshole Boss (Gives 1 BP)- The PC's immediate supervisor in his or her Day Job is demanding, unforgiving, ignorant and mean. The boss can and will get the PC fired if the boss catches the PC breaking rules. If the PC tries to stand up for his or her rights (e.g. refuses to work late without extra pay) this will only make the boss meaner.

Bad Rep (Gives 2 BP)- Anyone who asks around about the PC will hear something bad. The reputation might be deserved or it might not, but at this point it's too late to change it. Choose one of the following that is said about the PC:

"Crazy": Tales are told of the PC acting as if he or she had no connection to reality.

"Stupid": Tales are told of the PC doing incredibly stupid or naive things.

"Evil": Tales are told of the PC screwing over other people to gain an advantage or just to be mean.

"Liar": Tales are told of the PC deliberately deceiving those who trusted him or her.

"A Drunk/An Addict": Tales are told of the PC being intoxicated during important functions.

"Pervert": Tales are told of the PC trying to coerce people into inappropriate sexual situations.

Bad Self-Image (Gives 1 BP)- No matter how the PC actually looks, any time the PC sees his or her reflection or picture the PC sees someone who is grotesquely ugly. The PC will often make mistaken assumptions based on the belief that he or she is ugly (e.g. will assume people are staring at the PC because the PC is so ugly). -10 to purposeful seduction rolls and any time the PC sees his or her reflection the PC is -7 to all CHM rolls for the next 15 minutes.

Bad Temper (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has always had trouble dealing constructively with anger. Any time the PC is angered, annoyed or frustrated the PC must make a save vs. anger to avoid lashing out (either verbally or physically). The PC is -10 to all saves vs. anger.

Blind (Gives 20 BP)- Limitations: Not available to Cannibals and Survivors. The PC's eyes do not work at all. The PC is -15 to all combat actions/reactions. Supernatural senses are not effected.

Caregiver: Child (Gives 10 BP)- The PC is the primary caregiver of a very small child that the PC is legally and psychologically attached to. If the child dies, the PC will be so psychologically distraught that he or she will be unable to complete normal day-to-day duties effectively (the PC will be seriously messed up or unplayable). The child starts at 3 to 5 years old. Create a mini character sheet for the child (see sidebar). The PC can pay others to watch the child (see Day Care, p.100). The PC can ask friends and family to do it, yet the PC can only ask for so much from friends and family before they start feeling abused and refuse to help. As the PC grows older and wiser, so will the child. For every experience level the PC gains, the child will age 1 year, will gain 4 attribute points and 50 skill points. By the time the PC reaches level 10, the child should be old enough to take care of himself or herself and even to be a PC. The PC's weekly income is reduced by half because of extra costs from the child.

Child NPC Creation

Step 1 – Name, Age, Gender, Description

Step 2 – Create attributes by splitting up 35 attributes with the following maximums: AGY 10, AWR 7, END 7, INL 6, STH 5, WIL 7. The NPC also has 1 BLD, 1 BDY and 3 INCY.

Step 3 – Use 100 skill points to buy skills as follows: 40 skill points for one level of any mundane skill the parent has, 10 skill points for one level in a "child feat" (this is a CHM, INL, AWR or WIL feat that most adults can do but most children that age can't). Example: a child might start with Beg For Food (1), Find Home (2), Call 911 In An Emergency (1), Give Self Injection (2), Skill: Lock Picking (1).

Step 4 – Equip child (use money from PC's starting pool).

Caregiver: Elderly/Physically Disabled (Gives 7 BP)- The PC is the primary caregiver for a loved one (parent, child, sibling, spouse) who cannot take care of himself or herself because of a physical disability. Create the dependent with one physical attribute (AGY, END, SPD or STH) at 0 and the rest at 1, 1 BDY, 3 BLD, 4 INCY, and 10 levels in Academic, Creative, High Tech, Medical, People and/or Traditional skills.

Caregiver: Mentally Disabled (Gives 15 BP)- The PC is the primary caregiver for a loved one (parent, child, sibling, spouse) who cannot take care of himself or herself because of a mental disability. Create the dependent NPC as per Child NPC creation (see sidebar), but the NPC starts with 57 attribute points and, unlike a child NPC, can have up to 20 STH. For most purposes, assume the NPC's INL is 0. The dependent is physically able, but suffers from one of the following (player's choice):

Severe Mental Retardation (Can speak and understand simple sentences, probably not able to learn an occupation, cannot learn to read but may be able to learn to recognize a few words like "exit" "hospital" or "restroom").

Alzheimer's Disease (Frequent delusions, hallucinations, insomnia and periods of complete confusion).

Disorganized Schizophrenia (Periods of very disorganized speech, thought and behavior with some hallucinations and delusions, other periods of severe apathy, anhedonia and unwillingness to communicate).

Autism (Little language or communication abilities, little desire or need to communicate with others, inflexible and useless rituals or obsessions, withdrawal into an inner world in reaction to stress or overstimulation).

Chronic Pain (Gives 2 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors or Cannibals. The PC has some old injury that causes near-constant pain. The PC must make Easy (10) saves vs. distracting pain every hour and is at -10 to save vs. psychological addiction to pain-killer drugs.

Clumsy (Gives 2 BP)- When the PC is not paying attention to what he or she is doing the PC drops things, knocks things over, bumps into things, etc. At least once in a game session, while the PC is not trying to be careful, he or she will make some clumsy movement (a hard AGY roll can help the PC recover from or lessen the damage done).

Colorblind (Gives 1 BP)- The PC was born with eyes that are unable to distinguish between a broad range of colors. Most likely, the PC can not see a difference between colors containing red and colors containing green.

Compulsion (Gives 4 BP)- The PC has a recurring drive to do something that the PC doesn't actually want to do. The PC must make a hard (30) WIL roll to avoid the compulsion whenever it is possible to engage in the compulsive act. Repeated successes at resisting the compulsion will kill that compulsion, but another one will pop up (until the underlying psychological issues are dealt with). Common compulsions include: setting fires, stealing, pulling out hair, cleaning, lying, overeating, counting things.

Corrupted Psychodynamic (Gives 3 BP ea.)- Part of the PC's subconscious mind (see p.7) is "sick" and instead of doing its normal job it is working actively to hurt the PC. See p.7 for the effects on personality and psychology of each psychodynamic becoming corrupted.

Alleys

Criminal Record (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has been tried and convicted of felonies, and any background check on the PC will show a serious criminal history. This will disqualify the PC from some day jobs (PC can't be law enforcement, child care, or if a Professional the PC can't be an FBI Agent or Intelligence Operative). The PC can't carry a firearm.

Crush (Gives 1 BP)- The PC is in love with someone who doesn't return those feelings. The PC may eventually get over these feelings or may be able to finally woo the subject of his or her affections.

Deaf (Gives 7 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors and Cannibals. The PC does not have any ability to hear. The PC gets Language: American Sign Language (4) free. The PC may be able to get a cochlear implant that gives some ability to hear, but it is a long and expensive process.

Debt: Credit Card (Gives 3 BP)- The PC is $10,000 in debt to credit card companies. The PC must pay $100/wk. just to pay the interest on the debt. If the PC does not pay this money, the debt (and interest) will climb and the credit card company will give the debt to debt collectors who will harass the PC, trash the PC's credit rating and try to get the PC's wages garnished.

Debt: Loan Shark (Gives 1 BP per $1000, max. 5)- The PC owes money to a criminal, most likely a member of an organized crime group. The PC is past due on the loan and the loan shark has sent out thugs to get the money, or equivalent in valuables, by any means necessary.

Delusion (Gives 3 BP)- There is something the PC believes in strongly, despite a lack of evidence or rational reason for the belief. The belief has a powerful effect on how the PC lives his or her life. If someone manages to persuade the PC that the belief is false, the PC will just adopt another false belief (until the underlying psychological issue is dealt with). The most common delusions are of persecution (e.g. 'the CIA is after me'), sexual desire (e.g. 'all those homos are fighting over who gets me'), sexual jealousy (e.g. 'my wife is sleeping with my friends'), grandiosity (e.g. 'I am the savior of this millennium') and nihilism (e.g. 'I'm dead and my insides are rotting.')

Disfigured (Gives 6 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. The PC has scarring that cannot be easily hidden. The scarring makes the PC more likely to be noticed, recognized and remembered; and gives the PC -20 to seduction rolls.

Dissociative Disorder (Gives 2 BP)- Any time the PC fails a save vs. fear or psychological shock, the PC is immediately seized by the feeling that the PC is not in control of his or her body and is, in fact, 'somewhere else.' The PC will wander away from danger and will follow commands, but cannot do anything useful or constructive for 1 minute per point of failure.

Drug Sensitivity (Gives 2 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. The PC's body chemistry and neurology is such that the PC is extremely sensitive to psychoactive drugs of all types. Gives -7 to save vs. drug effects (does not effect addiction and craving saves).

Enemy: Ex (Gives 3 BP)- The PC has an ex-lover who is not happy sharing the same planet with the PC. The Ex is not the type who would do anything violent or felonious to the PC, but will otherwise do anything else he or she can to make the PC miserable. The Ex knows a little about the PC's Secret Life, but doesn't know all the details.

Enemy: Parents (Gives 3 BP)- The PC's parents know a little about the PC's secret life and will do anything in their power to stop the PC. Most likely the PC's parents are fundamentalist Christians who believe that the PC has been brainwashed by a satanic cult. The parents will harass the PC and may eventually become desperate enough to try to kidnap the PC for cult deprogramming or an exorcism.

Enemy: Stalker (Gives 2 BP)- The PC is being stalked by someone who believes he or she is deeply in love with the PC. The hope that the PC may someday return this love has become the person's central reason for existing, and any evidence or reasoning that says the love won't be returned is ignored. The stalker may come to have delusions (like that the PC is sending secret love messages or that the PC and the stalker are married), or, if put under enough stress, may attempt a murder/suicide.

Epilepsy (Gives 2 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. The PC suffers from occasional seizures. The PC loses consciousness and may make strange sounds or movements. The seizure lasts about 1 minute and it can take up to an hour to recover full AWR, INL and AGY. Anti-epileptic medications ($21/wk.) can reduce the likelihood of seizures. However, sudden withdrawal from anti-epileptic medication will bring on repeated and severe seizures. Every day the PC has a 1 in 6 chance of having a seizure (un-medicated) or a 1 in 20 chance (medicated).

Erased (Gives 20 BP)- Someone tried to kill the PC, the PC barely escaped, and when the PC got home the PC discovered that nobody remembered him or her and that every record of the PC ever existing had been removed. The PC has been living like a fugitive, not hunted by law enforcement but by old men in grey suits with strange powers. The PC has to constantly keep an eye out for the grey suit men and be ready to run and not come back if he or she sees them. If the PC searches long enough, the PC may be able to find some person who remembers him or her or some evidence of the PC's existence. The PC cannot work above-board and is limited to the following day jobs: Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Homeless and Sex Industry Worker; and is paid less than a legal worker would be (max. $1000 to start, max. $50/mo.).

ESL (Gives 2 BP)- The PC speaks some non-English language fluently and has only recently started to learn English. The PC must buy levels of Language: English to be able to read, write, speak or understand any English at all. During game play, so long as the PC spends a lot of time with English speakers, the PC gets 1 free level of Language: English for every 100 XP earned.

Failing Marriage (Gives 3 BP)- Because of events relating to the PC's Secret Life the PC's marriage is in serious trouble. The PC wants to save it and it may still be salvaged but it will take serious work. Most commonly the problem is because the PC is keeping the Secret Life a secret from the spouse or because the spouse knows about the PC's Secret Life and doesn't like it.

Family Obligations (Gives 2 BP)- The PC has duties, that the PC feels he or she must perform, for the benefit of the PC's family that are beyond the duties imposed by the PC's Day Job and Secret Life. Examples might include lending money to a jobless brother, bringing meals to a shut-in grandmother, keeping a father from getting arrested when he gets drunk and starts screaming at neighbors, etc.

Family Skeletons (Gives 1 BP)- The PC's family has a terrible secret: some members of the family used to do things that were illegal or are serious social taboos. Although the PC didn't participate in these activities as a consenting adult, the PC is guilty of helping hide the secret of the family.

Fetish (Gives 2 BP)- The PC cannot enjoy intercourse or masturbation without the inclusion of some item or activity that is outside of cultural norms, e.g. shoes, rubber, simulated rape, verbal abuse, cross-dressing, etc.

Fried (Gives 4 BP)- The character has used too many hallucinogens and this has left the PC permanently changed. The PC is at -5 to save vs. hallucinations and delusions. Any skill or ability that utilizes abstract thought (e.g. using the Math skill) takes an extra round. The PC suffers from occasional flashbacks (hard difficulty hallucinations or delusions) that are triggered by sensory stimuli that remind the PC of a time when the PC was on hallucinogens. The GM chooses 5 flashback triggers. Once the PC has figured out what the triggers are the PC can attempt to avoid them.

Fugitive (Gives 15 BP)- The PC is accused of committing a serious felony and has no way of proving his or her innocence. The FBI and local police have the PC's description and if the PC is caught the PC will be put away for many years. The PC cannot get legal employment and is limited to the following day jobs: Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Homeless and Sex Industry Worker; and is paid less than a legal worker would be (max. $1000 to start, max. $50/mo.)

Gambling Addict (Gives 7 BP)- The PC is psychologically addicted to gambling. Gambling has a craving difficulty of 30. If the PC fails a craving, he or she must gamble as much money as he or she can get a hold of. If the PC has no money, the PC must try to sell personal items to get money. If the PC is gambling and wins, the PC must make a moderate difficulty WIL roll to stop gambling while ahead. The PC starts with the skill Gambling (3) free.

Guilty Secret (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has done something the PC thinks is immoral. It is something that, if the people the PC respects found out about, they would hate the PC. There is no evidence to link the PC to a crime (unless the PC also takes the Fugitive or Criminal Record disads).

Hemophilia (Gives 15 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. The PC's body does not produce clotting factors that let ruptured blood vessels close up. If injured, the PC keeps bleeding (losing half the original damage again every minute) until the PC dies or is treated. At a hospital a PC can be given clotting factors that let the blood clot, but those factors are expensive ($1,000 per serious injury). The PC can also get regular injections of clotting factors as a preventative (extra blood loss only lasts 2 minutes) but this costs $500/wk.

Herpes (Gives 2 BP)- The PC has genital herpes, a viral STD that cannot be cured. Drugs can reduce the likelihood of outbreaks but can't eliminate them completely and cannot make a person non-contagious. Each week the PC has a 1 in 6 chance of having an outbreak (un-medicated) or a 1 in 20 chance (medicated). Herpes has a contraction difficulty from unprotected sex of 10 (un-medicated) or 5 (medicated). An outbreak includes painful itching and rash, painful urination and blisters.

High Sleep Need (Gives 1 BP)- The PC needs more sleep than most people. The PC is most comfortable sleeping 12 hours a night and will suffer sleep deprivation damage if he or she gets any less than 10 hours.

House Arrest (Gives 7 BP)- The PC has been sentenced to house arrest for the next 6 months. The PC is allowed to leave home to go to work only. The PC has a tamper-resistant tracking device on his or her leg and it will inform the police if the PC goes more than 50 ft. (5 m.) from his or her home after curfew (typically 8 PM). Violations will mean the PC goes to jail for 6 months.

Hunted: Corporation (Gives 7 BP)- A major multinational corporation thinks the PC has something that is very important to them (e.g. secret internal documents, secret r&d tech) or is a major threat to them. The corporation will hire private security teams to watch the PC and will notify local and federal authorities if the PC is doing anything illegal. They will also try to find any excuse to drag the PC into court for expensive civil litigation. It doesn't matter if they can win or not, what matters is that they can use a team of lawyers to bankrupt the PC and disrupt the PC's life.

Hunted: Organized Crime (Gives 10 BP)- A major street gang, mafia family or international drug cartel has put out a contract on the PC. They know the PC's name and will eventually be able to find out where the PC lives, at which point there will be attempts on the PC's life by gang members or assassins.

Hunted: Powers-That-Be (Gives 10 BP)- The rich and powerful men who have a say in how most of the world's corporations and governments operate have decided the PC is a threat to them. They won't act in a way that could be traced back to them, but they can make sure the PC can't get a corporate or government job (PC is limited to Alternative Health, Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Creative, Dangerous Field Job, Homeless, Homemaker, Paranormal Professional, Religious Professional, Retired, Sex Industry Worker, Student or Ward) and is under constant scrutiny from law enforcement. At some point a Professional (p.46) will be sent to take the PC out.

Alleys

Hunted: Serial Killer (Gives 4 BP)- An at-large serial killer has a special desire to kill the PC. Perhaps the PC is "the one who got away" or is someone who bullied the serial killer as a child. The PC doesn't know much about the serial killer. The PC might have caught a brief glimpse of the serial killer's face or heard the serial killer's voice during an aborted attack, but the PC does not know the killer's name and address and would have a hard time picking him or her out of a crowd.

Identical Twin (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has an identical twin. The two share uncommon empathy and often know what each other are thinking and feeling, even from a distance. Unfortunately this also makes the PC vulnerable: anything that hurts the twin's soul hurts the PC as well. The twin does not have supernatural abilities.

Illegal Alien (Gives 12 BP)- The PC is here in the country illegally and if caught by the cops or INS the PC may be deported. The PC cannot get a legal job and must work 'below board.' The PC is limited to the following day jobs: Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Homeless and Sex Industry Worker; and is paid less than a legal worker would be (max. $1,000 to start, max. $50/mo.)

Illiterate (Gives 8 BP)- The PC can not write or read any language. Later in the game the PC can learn to read by buying the equivalent of 5 levels in an Academic skill. While the PC can not read he or she has doubled skill costs for Academic, Creative, High Tech, Investigation/ Espionage, Medical and People skills. The PC is limited to the following Day Jobs: Boring Customer Service Job, Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Dangerous Field Job, Homeless, Homemaker, Performer, Retired, Sex Industry Worker, Ward and Welfare.

Inexperienced: Urban (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has never lived in a city until recently. The PC isn't used to, among other things, freeways, high crime neighborhoods and neighbors making noise at night. The PC must buy a map or will have a hard time getting around.

Inexperienced: World (Gives 8 BP)- Until recently, the PC was not exposed to the modern world. Perhaps the PC was raised in an isolated religious commune, or was raised by an insane parent who didn't let the child go outside, or was raised in a mental institution, etc. The PC may have read books about the modern world, but they were outdated and gave no practical experience. The PC can walk, talk, read, keep himself or herself clean, but doesn't know simple things like what a police officer is, how to use an ATM machine, how to cross at a stoplight or why it is wise to lock one's door at night.

Insomnia (Gives 2 BP)- The PC has trouble sleeping. Every night the PC must make a save vs. Insomnia (WIL + 1d20 vs. 20, failure means the PC suffers one night's sleep deprivation damage). Various sedative drugs will give plusses to save vs. insomnia (equal to the penalty to save vs. unconsciousness).

Institutionalized (Gives 4 BP)- The PC has grown up in the care of the state, being shuffled around between juvenile detention facilities, foster homes, group homes and even mental hospitals across the state. The PC had little time to bond with friends or become part of a community before he or she was moved. The PC was given almost no training in how to survive in the modern world: create a budget, apply for a job, write a check, etc. Even worse, the PC doesn't know how to create a long-term trusting relationship with another person. The PC's starting money is cut in half and the PC is limited to the following day jobs: Alternative Health, Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Creative, Dangerous Field Job, Homeless, Homemaker, Sex Industry Worker, Student, Ward, Welfare.

Learning Disability (Gives 3 BP)- The PC's brain is wired in such a way that some things are incredibly difficult for the PC to learn. Choose the type of learning disability as follows:

-Math: -8 to all skills rolls that involve math or numbers.

-Reading: -8 to all skill rolls that involve reading or recalling written knowledge.

-Spacial: -8 to any skill rolls that involve manipulating real world objects (e.g. driving, painting, repairing a mechanical device).

Lingering Abuser (Gives 1 BP)- The PC lived for several years with someone who sexually, physically or emotionally abused the PC. Now that person is no longer able to hurt the PC (either dead, in prison for a long time, or too weak to hurt anyone), but the abuser's personality left such a deep impression in the PC that the PC feels his or her constant presence. The PC dreams about the abuser, has momentary flashbacks of the abuser being around, and hears the abuser's voice in his or her head. What's worse, if the PC loses control the PC may find himself or herself acting exactly as the abuser would, even speaking with the same tone of voice.

Lonely (Gives 2 BP)- The PC starts the game with no friends. The PC's family provides little or no companionship. The PC is unhappy and would like to have someone he or she could talk to or hang out with.

Malnourished (Gives 5 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Survivors. A recent period of very poor nutrition has left a lasting impact on the PC: permanent -1 BLD, -1 BDY (the max. caps for these attributes suffer from the same penalties). The PC is -4 to save vs. disease contraction and mortality and -4 to seduction rolls because of things like missing teeth, thin hair, etc.

Memory Gaps (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has periods of his or her life that can't be remembered at all. Common causes are drug use, head injuries and prolonged traumas. The danger here is that something dangerous from the PC's past might show up and the PC won't recognize it coming.

Mental Health History (Gives 1 BP)- In the PC's past, he or she has been committed, against his or her will, to a mental institution. A check of the PC's medical or criminal records will show this. The PC cannot be a Professional or get Day Job: Law Enforcement.

Missing Arm (Gives 7 BP ea.)- Limitation: Not available to Cannibals or Survivors. The PC is missing most or all of one arm. For STH rolls that normally require both arms, the PC's STH is half (round down). For $50 the PC can purchase an unmoving hook (can be used as a 1 bladed improvised slashing weapon), for $1,000, the PC can purchase a cosmetic arm which looks real (Hard difficulty to tell it is prosthetic) but is completely non-functional. For $10,000 the PC can purchase a high-tech prosthetic that senses nerve impulses and can do simple tasks like grasping door handles (at 1 STH).

Missing Eye (Gives 5 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Cannibals or Survivors. The PC is missing one eye. A realistic looking glass eye can be purchased for $500. With one eye missing the PC is -7 to AWR rolls requiring peripheral vision or precise judgment of distance.

Missing Leg (Gives 7 BP ea.)- Limitation: Not available to Cannibals or Survivors. The PC can get a solid prosthetic (nothing more than strap on leg-shaped plastic) for $200, crutches for $25, a wheelchair for $100 (p.96). Walking with a solid prosthetic or crutches reduces PC's SPD to 1. For $40,000 the PC can buy an electromechanical prosthetic leg that works by sensing nerve impulses and can allow the PC to walk or run at up to 5 SPD.

Mute (Gives 10 BP)- Limitation: Not available to Cannibals or Survivors. The PC can not speak or make anything other than coughing and gagging noises.

Nightblindness (Gives 3 BP)- The PC sees very poorly (-10 to AWR rolls) in low light. PC is partially blinded (-7 to actions/reactions) in the light of a room lit with a 15 watt bulb and fully blinded (-15 to actions/reactions) in light so dim that a normal person could not read a book.

Obese (Gives 2 BP)- The PC is so overweight that it impairs his or her abilities and causes health problems. The PC is -10 to all jumping, sprinting, climbing rolls and +10 to rolls where weight is an advantage (tackle, pin, ramming). The PC is -7 to save vs. heat exhaustion and +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Unless the PC has 15+ STH, walking or standing is a tiring activity (uses pooled END).

Old (Gives 15 BP per decade after 50)- The character starts the game suffering from the effects of old age. For each decade after 50, the character gets cumulative -2 STH, -2 END, -2 SPD, -1 AGY, -1 BLD and -1 BDY.

Parole (Gives 4 BP)- The PC is out on parole from prison. The PC is out conditionally: there are a set of rules and if the PC is caught breaking them the PC will be shipped back to prison for about 6 months. The PC must meet a parole officer weekly and the parole officer may drop by unannounced (1 in 20 chance each day). The police are allowed to search the PC's car, residence, person or hotel room any time they want. Choose two additional conditions from the following list: steady employment, curfew (in by 8 pm), not allowed in a 'known drug area,' not allowed to associate with criminals or gang members, not allowed within 1,000 ft. of a school or playground, not allowed to take drugs or alcohol (regular urine tests), must complete 100 hours of community service, must complete 100 hours of anger management classes.

Personal Mystery (Gives 1 BP)- Above and beyond the mysteries inherent in the PC's Secret Life, the PC has a very personal mystery he or she has been trying to solve for years. A loved one or family member was murdered or disappeared and the PC wants to find out why and who did it. Law enforcement has more or less given up on solving the case and the PC is the only one still actively looking.

Phobia (Gives 3 BP)- Some relatively common thing provokes strong and unwarranted fear in the PC. By making several successive saves vs. fear the PC can overcome fear of that particular thing, but a phobia to something different will soon pop up (there is an underlying problem that needs to be addressed). The PC must make a Hard (30) save vs. fear to approach the subject of a phobia. Common phobias include: bodies of water, crowds, darkness, human & animal corpses, gaining weight, dogs, enclosed spaces, fire, heights, public speaking, rodents, sick people, snakes and spiders.

Physically Unattractive: Minor (Gives 2 BP)- The PC has features which tend to make him or her less attractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Unattractive: Major (Gives 4 BP)- The PC has features which have a very strong tendency to make him or her unattractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -8 to seduction rolls.

Poor Hearing (Gives 2 BP)- Limitations: Not available to Cannibals or Survivors. Without aid, the PC's hearing is very poor (-10 to hearing based AWR rolls).

Poor Vision (Gives 1 BP)- Limitations: Not available to Cannibals or Survivors. Without prescription glasses or contact lenses, the PC is almost blind. If the PC is nearsighted, he or she can see close-up things okay (well enough to recognize a person's face at 1 ft. or 1/3 m.) or if the PC is farsighted he or she can see far away things okay (well enough to recognize a building). Prescription glasses cost $40. Corrective surgery ($2,000) can improve the PC's vision.

Post-Traumatic Stress (Gives 10 BP)- The PC was in a prolonged period of mortal danger, torture or intense physical/sexual abuse and since then the PC has suffered from trouble eating, sleeping, nervousness and occasional flashbacks. The PC gets:

One per day, moderate (20) save vs. delusions that the PC is back in the stressful situation. Delusions can be triggered by sensations that remind the PC of the situation.

-10 to save vs. nausea, insomnia, fear and psychological shock.

Pre-Op Transsexual (Gives 3 BP)- Not available to Androgynes. The PC has been taking hormones, has had some plastic surgery and has been living as the other gender for some time. Most people the PC knows do not know that the PC still has genitals of the gender opposite what the PC appears to be.

Pregnant (Gives 15 BP)- The PC has recently become pregnant. The PC has a strong desire to give birth to the baby and raise it. The pregnancy lasts for 40 weeks and is broken down into three trimesters. The disadvantages faced by the PC vary according to trimester:

-1st Trimester (weeks 1 to 13): "Morning sickness" (-10 to save vs. nausea). Difficulty sleeping and fatigue (-2 END, -4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Emotional lability (-5 to save vs. fear, anger and other emotions).

-2nd Trimester (weeks 14 to 27): PC will begin to be visibly pregnant (-4 to save vs. loss of balance). Hormonal changes are generally positive: effects on skin and hair may make the PC more attractive to some (+2 to seduction rolls), anxiety is reduced (+4 to save vs. fear). Strange food cravings. Forgetfulness and trouble concentrating (-2 INL). Trouble dissipating body heat (-4 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

-3rd Trimester (weeks 28 to 40): Insomnia (10). The PC is very large (-10 to save vs. loss of balance, back pain, walking around will use pooled END). Breath is short (-4 END). Occasional contractions throughout this trimester (20 difficulty distracting pain). Increased need to urinate. Fatigue (-4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Trouble dissipating body heat (-7 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

During the entire pregnancy the PC must be careful to avoid harm coming to the baby. During the first trimester, the baby is most sensitive to toxins and poisons (takes double damage the PC takes). As the baby gets bigger, it is less vulnerable to toxins but it is more vulnerable to physical injury: any random injury to the PC has a 1 in 20 chance of hitting the baby during the first trimester, 1 in 10 during the second trimester and 1 in 6 during the third trimester. At all times the baby has AR 20 PR 2 bladed 2 blunt from the PC's body. Assume the baby has 0 BDY, 1 BLD, 1 INCY.

If the PC carries the pregnancy to term and gives birth, see Caregiver: Child (p.116) for rules on Child NPC creation.

Recovering Addict (Gives 3 BP)- The PC has been a psychological addict of some drug and has recently quit. The PC has been clean for about 2 months and experiences cravings every 32 days or any time the PC is under psychological stress. The PC is at -10 to psychological addiction rolls for any drug. The PC has a psychological void in his or her life that was once taken up by the drug. This void manifests as things like insomnia, depression, boredom, lack of goals in life, etc. The PC also experiences various health problems depending upon what drug the PC used. Choose one of the following as the drug the PC used:

Name	Craving Difficulty	Health Problems
Alcohol	20	Brain damage (-2 INL, -2 AWR, retrograde and anterograde amnesia at 4 difficulty to save), liver damage (-2 to save vs. drug/poison effects)
Methamphetamines	20	Ulcers, malnutrition (-½ BLD, -½ BDY)
Heroin	25	-2 to save vs. disease progression and mortality.
Cocaine/Crack	25	Chronically inflamed and runny nose.
Pain Pills	20	-2 to save vs. disease progression and mortality.
Inhalants	15	-3 INL, -3 AWR

Restraining Order (Gives 1 BP)- The court has ordered that the PC not call, follow or come near the home or workplace of a specific person. Violating the restraining order is typically a misdemeanor. The PC cannot legally buy a firearm while the restraining order exists.

Runaway (Gives 10 BP)- The PC is under 18 and has run away from home. The PC's parents are actively searching to get him or her back. If the PC is caught by police, and if the police find out the PC's real name, the PC will be returned home. The PC cannot work above-board and is limited to the following day jobs: Boring Factory Job, Boring Field Job, Career Criminal, Homeless and Sex Industry Worker and Welfare; and is paid less than a legal worker would be (max. $1,000 to start, max. $50/mo.)

Self-Hatred (Gives 3 BP)- The PC feels real, visceral hated towards himself or herself. The PC must make a Moderate (20) save vs. delusion to not believe anything bad anyone says about the PC. Whenever the PC is alone he or she must make a Hard (30) WIL save to avoid doing something self-destructive (e.g. self-mutilation, gambling, overeating, doing drugs, etc.). The PC is -10 to any WIL based save where a failure would mean the PC's (and only the PC's) painless death. This disad can be overcome only if the PC helps or bring happiness to a lot of people and the PC significantly changes his or her lifestyle, relationships and personal style.

Shy (Gives 2 BP)- The PC is nervous around strangers or acquaintances (yet not around close friends or family). The PC must make a Hard (30) save vs. fear when dealing with people to avoid making obvious signs of discomfort (e.g. stammering, insulting oneself, laughing at things that aren't funny, fidgeting, etc.).

Sickly (Gives 4 BP)- The PC was born with a susceptibility to many types of diseases. The PC has had more serious illnesses by his or her teens than most people do in 80 years. The PC starts with -7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -10 to save vs. physiological shock. The PC regains lost END and heals from injuries half as fast.

S.L.I.der (Gives 1 BP)- For some unexplained reason, lights tend to burn out when the PC is nearby. This is most common in old streetlights that go out for a short time when they overheat.

Stutterer (Gives 4 BP)- Ever since the PC's childhood, the PC has had trouble speaking. The PC tends to repeat the first part of words several times. The problem grows better or worse depending on the circumstances. After game play starts, the PC can spend 5 skill points per level for a special skill:

Not Stuttering (WIL)
Easy (10): Not stutter while angry, panicked or singing.
Moderate (20): Not stutter in a normal social situation.
Hard (30): Not stutter while under heavy stress.

Terminal Illness (Gives 17 BP)- Limitations: Not available to Survivors. The PC has a cancer or a degenerative genetic disease which has not responded to any known treatment and will eventually kill the PC (unless the PC can be cured by a supernatural power). Choose one of the following types of degeneration:

Cognitive: Each week, -¼ point to INL, AWR, CHM, WIL.

Motor: Each week, -½ AGY (when AGY is 0, PC is confined to a wheelchair, when AGY is -5 the PC is paralyzed).

Immune: Each week, -½ to saves vs. disease progression and mortality.

Vascular: Each week, -¼ END, -$^1/_8$ BLD

Metabolic: -$^1/_8$ BDY, -¼ END, needs +¼ hour of sleep, -2 lbs. (1 kg) per week.

Thin Bones (Gives 7 BP)- The PC has very weak bones, usually as a result of bad genes or poor nutrition. PC is -2 BDY and has a max. cap of 3 for BDY.

Virgin (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has never had sexual intercourse with another person. The PC knows approximately how it's done, but has no way of knowing if he or she can do it well or if he or she will enjoy it.

Visa (Gives 1 BP)- The PC does not have American citizenship and is, instead, here on a work or education visa. The PC is required to report to federal authorities occasionally and the PC can be deported if he or she does anything that upsets authorities.

Weak Stomach (Gives 1 BP)- The PC's stomach is especially sensitive to irritants. -10 to save vs. vomiting. Spicy foods, acidic foods or stress will cause heartburn (easy save vs. distracting pain).

Young (Gives 5 BP per year below 16)- For each year younger than 16, the PC gets -4 attribute points and -½ health attribute point.

Sample Character Creation – Step 6

We start this section 6 BP behind, since we chose to spend that many points to make Maggie a doctor. Also, looking at the advantages there are a few that seem to fit in with her character concept as a protector of her community very well: Multilingual, which costs 2 BP, Ethnic Group, which costs 4 BP, and Contact: Locals, which costs 3 BP. Together with her being a doctor this will cost her 15 BP, which means we'll have to take some significant disads.

We could reduce her starting money, skill points, attributes or health attributes and gain BP that way, but we don't see anything we really want to reduce, so we look at the disads. This will help us know more about Maggie's character: so far we know what she has going for her, but we don't really know much about her problems, which are likely what drives her. We decide on the disads Bad Temper, Hunted: Serial Killer and Post Traumatic Stress, which will give us the 15 points we need. They also help us create the rest of Maggie's back story: as a medical student she was captured and tortured by a serial killer who had a jacket that gave him supernatural abilities. She managed to escape and steal the jacket. Since then he's been after her to get the jacket back. Meanwhile she's been suffering from nearly crippling psychological problems: she suffers flashbacks, is nervous, has problems eating or sleeping and loses her temper often. Out of desperation to change her situation she's decided to don the serial killer's jacket and try to eliminate the many threats she knows plague her community. By becoming her community's protector she hopes she can gain some peace of mind for herself.

Step Nine – Character Advancement

In Brief: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC. Gaining supernatural skills require dangerous experimentation.

Gaining XP

Experience allows the PC to grow as a person and improve himself or herself. Experience is measured by Experience Points (XP). XP is awarded at the end of a gaming session, based on the PC's performance in the adventure. Some things player characters can do during a game to gain experience points:

Completing Adventure Goals- Whatever the goals of the given adventure are, the PCs should be awarded points to the degree that they completed the goals successfully. (5 to 25 XP)

Staying Alive- In many adventures, the PCs are thrown into dangerous situations and the PCs get XP by surviving. (1 to 5 XP) The PC may also get points if every PC involved in the adventure survives. (2 XP)

Making Friends- With PCs of such differing backgrounds it is a commendable achievement when two PCs become good friends. (5 XP)

Scaring Players- The GM will award XP when the character does something or says something that frightens, unnerves, startles or creeps out both fellow PCs and the players who control them. (5 XP)

Discovering Secrets- The game world has a lot of secrets. Whenever a PC finds out a major secret about the game world, he or she will earn XP. (5 XP)

Personal Growth- This is awarded when something happens that makes the PC wiser or more mature or when the PC realizes something important about his or her life. Usually this means that the character has overcome (or has decided to overcome) some personal flaw. It could also mean a wider outlook. XP should only be awarded if this is a permanent change, not just a temporary deviation. This is used to award depth and change in PCs. (5 XP)

Alleys

Good Roleplaying- GMs can award experience points to players who show empathy for or commitment to the psychology and worldview of their PCs by doing something that fits very well with that character. This is a good way for GMs to compensate players that hurt their characters for the sake of realism (e.g. not using knowledge that the player has but the character wouldn't). (2 XP)

Making The World A Better Place- The PC will earn XP any time he or she helps some person or people. This could mean saving a life, providing food to hungry people, teaching someone to read, etc. This can also mean helping people by less direct means, e.g. eliminating a monster and therefor saving the lives of anyone that monster would have otherwise preyed upon. (1 to 10 XP)

Clever Plan- Whenever a PC comes up with an idea which is clever and also works (has good effects) the GM will award XP. (4 XP)

Worked Well as Group- The GM will award XP whenever the PCs show that they can work together well and do things they would be unable to do alone. (4 XP)

Motivation Success- If the PC succeeds in a way which is particular to that PC's motivation, the PC should gain extra XP. For example, a PC with the Pessimistic Paranoia motivation finds out about a conspiracy against him or her in time to prevent it from doing harm to the PC, that PC will gain extra XP. (5 XP)

Secret Life Success- The PC learns or achieves something that corresponds with the basic quest or mystery of the PC's secret life. E.g. a Scribbler discovers something about the nature of reality, a Survivor discovers something about the nature of reapers, etc. (5 XP)

Losing XP

Just as various types of successes will add to the XP earned in an adventure, some failures can cause the PCs to get less XP than they would have otherwise. XP for an adventure can not drop below zero.

Failing at Adventure Goals- The GM may deduct XP if the PC fails at the goals of the adventure (especially if the goals were very easy or very important). (1 to 5 XP)

Splitting Up Group- If the PC chose to split up the party and it hurt the party to do so, the PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

Making the World a Worse Place- Anything that hurts people or otherwise makes the world worse will cost XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Player Character Death- If one of the PCs in the party dies, each surviving PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

Spending XP

Generally, XP can be spent as soon as it is received. The only exception is when so little time has passed in the game universe between one game session and another that it is ridiculous to think that the PC might have improved in that way. Example: *The PCs are in the countryside, on the run from FBI agents and sleeping in barns and cornfields. When a game session ends, the GM awards 16 XP. One player decides that her character will gain one level in the skill Science: Chemistry. The GM rules that since the PC has no access to Chemistry study materials or teachers she must wait until she gets back to civilization to improve the skill.*

XP can be spent as follows:

Skill Points: 2 XP = 1 Skill Point

Attribute Points: 10 XP = 1 Attribute Point.

Health Attribute Points: 30 XP = 1 Health Attribute Point.

Attributes cannot be raised above their max. cap of 20. Negative sub-attributes can be removed (at a cost of 1 attribute point each) but new positive sub-attributes cannot be purchased. Health Attributes cannot be raised above their max. cap of 6.

XP cannot be used to change Psychodynamics. If a PC's personality changes, the PC can shift around points between psychodynamics but cannot reduce or increase the overall number of points.

Experience Levels

In addition to spending XP, players should keep track of the total XP a PC has earned, spent or unspent. This will allow players to more easily compare the relative power level of different characters. An "experience level" is 100 XP, so we could say that a Lost PC with 252 XP is a "Level 3 Lost."

Level advancement can also be used as a rough estimate of time. Each experience level represents six months to two years in the PC's life.

Changing Day Jobs

Changing day jobs requires in-game effort and the development of whatever skills are necessary (typically the same skills that people who take that day job at character creation get for free). Many day jobs require a certificate or degree, meaning the PC must get into an appropriate school, find a way to pay for it, and find time to attend classes and study while attending to his or her normal Day Job and Secret Life. Other jobs require nothing more than knowing the right person.

Generally speaking, the more BP it costs to get a day job during character creation, the harder the PCs should have to work to get it. It should be easy to become Homeless and take a lot of work and luck to become Privileged. Once a PC actually starts working the same new day job he or she gets the income and skill costs for that day job.

Example: *Paco, who is an illegal working at a boring factory job, gets a Professional friend to pull some strings and get him his citizenship. He decides he wants to become a cop (Day Job: Law Enforcement Professional). The GM rules that in order to become a cop, Paco needs to come up with $1,000 to pay his tuition at the police academy night school, he needs to spend his evenings taking classes (and charm his teachers into not failing him when his Secret Life forces him to miss classes) and use XP to buy the skills Law: Criminal (1), Pistol (1) and Driving (1) (the free skills for Law Enforcement Professional). After he does all this the PC lets him be a Law Enforcement Professional (no advancement). His weekly income changes as does his costs to buy mundane skills.*

Changing Secret Lives

This is nearly impossible. Some Secret Lives require a one-in-a-million event to happen to the PC (e.g. Faustians, Heroes, Survivors, Wonderlanders), others require the PC to be born with a special ability (e.g. Lost, Outcasts), others require a very rare personality and outlook (Androgynes, Animists, Cannibals, Professionals and Scribblers). It is not *completely* impossible though. GMs will moderate what in-game events might change a Secret Life. Most circumstances that would change a Secret Life will leave the PC with the abilities, advantages, disadvantages and supernatural skill costs from both the new and old secret lives.

Raising Supernatural Skills

Like mundane skills, PCs must spend XP to buy new levels in supernatural skills or get a level in a new supernatural skill. However, unlike mundane skills gaining supernatural skills has the following additional requirements:

Revelation: To gain a new skill the PC does not have any levels in, the PC must have a revelation. This could involve gaining a teacher, finding an appropriate annotated volume (p.247), or finding out something about the nature of the universe that relates to the PC's powers.

Experimental Skill Rolls: To increase levels in an existing skill or gain a level in a new skill, the PC must make at least 5 experimental skill rolls in-game. The rolls should be made after the PC has spent the XP. The PC can make the experimental skill rolls as if the PC had the skill level he or she just purchased, but cannot make normal (non-experimental) skill rolls with this new level until all 5 experimental rolls are made.

Example: *After a revelation, Firebrand spends the XP to buy Nihilistic Rage (1). Since this is his first level he can only make experimental skill rolls. He can roll Nihilistic Rage but since these are experimental skill rolls there will be increased consequences (see below) if he fails. Once he has completed the 5 rolls he gets Nihilistic Rage (1) for real and can make normal skill rolls with none of the consequences of experimental skill rolls. Next he wants to increase his skill to 2 levels. After spending the XP he can either make normal skill rolls with one level of the skill or experimental skill levels as if he had 2 levels.*

All experimental skill rolls must be at least 20 difficulty. Measures which would normally give plusses to skill rolls (e.g. use of hallucinogens by an Animist) give the same plusses to experimental skill rolls.

A failed skill roll, either because the difficulty was not met or because the PC rolled a 1 on the 1d20, has the following effect depending on the PC's Secret Life:

Androgyne: Reality shatters. Roll once on the random power table (p.38), re-rolling any Enhance, with the power source as the ground or building where the event took place.

Animist: PC gains the equivalent of the Delusion disadvantage (p.117).

Cannibal: For next 24 hours PC must make hourly WIL rolls (difficulty 30) to avoid self-mutilation.

Faustian: Each psychodynamic loses 1d4 points of strength. If the strength is brought to 0 or less the psychodynamic is permanently eliminated. The Dance grows correspondingly stronger (GMs see p.195).

Hero: Same as Scribbler (below) for Heroes with the Occult Training option.

Lost: PC (and anyone following the PC) is stranded in a dangerous unearthly realm for 24 hours.

Outcasts: PC goes into a blind panic, the player loses control of the PC for 24 hours.

Professionals: For the next 24 hours the PC has no fear of death and cannot act in self-preservation.

Scribblers: For the next 24 hours the PC's supernatural skills will activate randomly. Every hour one skill (determine randomly) will activate against the PC's will.

Survivor: Over the next week the PC will lose 1d6 BLD and 1d6 BDY from decomposition of the flesh, accompanied by spreading black spots and the smell of rotting flesh. No supernatural skills can be used to heal the damage until the week is up.

Wonderlander: An imaginary friend will find its way to this realm in full physical form. The Wonderlander will not know where the friend is, which friend it is, or what the friend is going to do in this realm.

Chapter Two - Organic Rule Components

Basic Mechanics

In Brief- Roll attribute + 1d20 vs. diffituly to see if the PC can do something.

Rolls are made during game play for only one reason: to see if a character can do something he or she is trying to do. Rolls should only be made if a doubt exists as to whether the character can or can't do it. When a roll does need to be made, the basic form is this:

Applicable attribute + 1d20 (one twenty sided die)
Vs. Action Difficulty

For instance: *Sam wishes to climb the side of a building to get to the roof. AGY is the attribute and the GM decides that the difficulty will be 20. Sam has an AGY of 9 and so needs to roll 11 or higher on his d20 in order to succeed. Say, however, that Sam has special gloves that gives him +8 to climbing – now he would roll AGY (9) +8 (gloves) + 1d20 vs. 20 (Sam only needs to roll a 3 or better).*

Sometimes the number of points by which the character succeeded (called "success") or failed (called "failure") effects what happens. For instance, the amount by which a climbing character succeeds may determine how quickly the PC climbs.

Sample Difficulties

0- Automatic Success

5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)

10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)

15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)

20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)

25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)

30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)

40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

ORC Changes

Although new components have been added to enhance In Dark Alley's unique attributes, the core components of ORC have only been changed in order to fix serious errors. The changes to ORC from previous games are as follows:

New Components
-Healing rules
-Using psychodynamics
-Supernatural skill rules
-Sprinting and chase rules
-Psychological shock rules

Core ORC Changes
-Changed SPD to MPH ratio
-Combat round = 0.5 seconds
-Changed Area Attack difficulty
-Clarified frequency of save vs. drug/poison effect rolls
-Ofbuscating hallucenations part of normal hallucenations.

Dual Attribute Rolls- Some rolls use two attributes. For instance, to save vs. unconsciousness a PC uses Endurance (for physical energy) and WIL (for mental energy). When using two attributes, add the attributes together and divide by half (rounding up). So, if a PC with 3 END and 12 WIL wants to save vs. unconsciousness with moderate difficulty, END+WIL/2 is 7.5, rounded up it's 8, so the PC would roll 8 + 1d20 vs. 20.

Opposed Rolls- When characters are competing, two rolls are made and whoever has the best success (amount over the difficulty) wins. This represents that people competing may have different levels of ability but may also be trying things of different difficulty. A character trying to do a complicated martial arts maneuver must get a much higher roll to get the same amount of success as someone trying to do something as simple as a punch. Opposed rolls take the following form:

Character 1's Attribute + 1d20 vs. Difficulty 1

opposing

Character 2's Attribute + 1d20 vs. Difficulty 2

The difference between successes is called the "opposed success" (for the winner) or "opposed failure" (for the loser).

Example: *Amanda and Jovonne are playing blackjack. Amanda only wants to win (moderate difficulty: 20). Jovonne wants to win in a way that makes it appear that she won via dumb luck (hard difficulty: 30). Amanda rolls INL + 1d20 vs. 20 and beats 20 by 3 points. Jovonne rolls INL + 1d20 vs. 30 and beats 30 by 7 points. Jovonne wins with an opposed success of 4 (7-3) and Amanda loses with an opposed failure of 4.*

Deliberate vs. Chance- GMs decide whether a roll is a "deliberate" or "chance" roll. This depends upon how much chance influences the outcome of the event (as opposed to skill and talent). On a chance roll, a roll of 1 on the 1d20 means automatic failure, a roll of 20 means automatic success. If a roll could not have succeeded except for rolling a 20, the roll should be considered to have succeeded by 1. In almost all cases, fighting rolls are chance.

Chance Actions: An action a PC needs to get done immediately, or when an action must either succeed or fail the first time the PC does it. Example: a climbing roll involving leaping from one building and grabbing on to the windowsill of another. No matter the AGY and climbing skills of the PC, the PC might succeed or might fail on a 1 or 20.

Deliberate Actions: The PC is trying to do something, but can stop if he or she is about to fail. These are typically slower actions. Example: PC is at the bottom of a wall and makes a climbing roll to see if he can climb up it. A failure here does not necessarily mean that the PC falls, it might just mean that the PC couldn't find a safe way to get up the wall. There are no automatic successes or failures here.

Savings Rolls- Save vs. X rolls are difficulty rolls to keep something from happening that will happen unless the roll succeeds. If a PC is making a save vs. unconsciousness then the PC will become unconscious unless he or she can meet the difficulty. A basic table of savings throws follows. See the section on using attributes for more information.

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	WIL
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Physiological Shock	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Psychological Shock	WIL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL

Opposed Savings Rolls- Occasionally, characters will be required to make opposed savings rolls. This means that even if they succeed (meet their difficulty) they will fail if they do not succeed at a level greater to or equal to the level that their opponent succeeds their difficulty. Example: *Sam hits Carl with a knockout strike. Carl beat his difficulty by 5. Now Sam not only has to beat a the normal difficulty for a save vs. unconsciousness, he has to beat it by 5 or more to avoid going unconscious.*

Using Attributes

Agility (AGY)

Use AGY for athletic type rolls: catching things, throwing things, blocking things (other than strikes), skipping rope, etc.

Balance- Use AGY for rolls to keep one's balance: walking a tightrope, moving on ice covered streets, racing down stairs, etc.

Climbing- Use AGY for climbing. See table for sample difficulties.

Climbing Difficulties (with no equipment)

10 (Easy) Tree with low branches.

20 (Moderate) Rocky cliff face.

30 (Hard) Sheer cliff face.

40 (Legendary) Glacial ice.

Landing- Characters can use AGY to save vs. falling or skidding damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.133). The first point of damage can be saved against at 10 difficulty, the second point at 20 difficulty, the third at 30, etc.

Prowling- AGY is also used for prowling (attempting to move through an area while not being noticed). The difficulty is based on several factors: the number of people and their proximity, how distracted or attentive they are, the amount of cover and whether there is darkness or a weather condition obscuring the PC, etc. The person being prowled against should get an opposed awareness roll.

Prowling difficulties

10 (Easy) Crawling through a field of tall grass with a wind to cover noises and an unsuspecting person nearby.

20 (Moderate) Sneaking up behind someone who isn't expecting anything.

30 (Difficult) Crawling in a gutter at night with several people searching for you.

40 (Legendary) Avoiding someone who is searching for you by staying directly behind them (may also require SPD based rolls).

Awareness (AWR)

Noticing- Use AWR when characters need to notice a detail too small to be included in the GM's description of the surroundings (e.g. the man standing next to you has a small needle mark on his neck) or a subtle sensation (e.g. a tiny scratching noise coming from inside the walls). AWR should not be used for a substitute for directed attention: if a player says "I'm looking carefully at the man next to me," he or she should be given every detail about that person with no AWR roll needed. AWR is also used to save vs. prowling (see above).

Manipulation- An AWR roll is also made to sense when something is trying to manipulate the PC's mind. The normal difficulty is 20. If the PC success is better than the manipulator's success, the PC realizes that he or she is being manipulated, and can try to resist the manipulation (usually with a WIL roll).

Charm (CHM)

Acting- Use CHM whenever a PC needs to put on some sort of act to fool other people.

Acting difficulties

10 (Easy) Making people think you're bored.

20 (Moderate) Making people think you're in pain.

30 (Difficult) Making people think you're not scared.

40 (Legendary) Making people think you're a genius.

First Impressions- CHM rolls can also be made to "modify" an NPC's reaction to the PC. The most common usage is to try to make people like the PC. A PC meeting a stranger who beats 20 on a CHM roll could choose to come off as slightly more confident, friendly, intelligent and likeable than he or she would have otherwise or more tough/mean/scary or as lowly/loser/wimp/nothing-to-be-worried-about. Note that this is "first impressions" only. After the PC has had more interaction with an NPC, the PC's actions and words become what the PC is judged by.

Persuasion- CHM is used to persuade NPCs to agree with an argument. First, PCs must roleplay arguing their case. Next, the GM decides the difficulty of the persuasion based on the logical strength of the argument. A very reasonable argument which makes a lot of sense might have a difficulty of 10. A very improbable argument that asks the listener to make a lot of assumptions might have a difficulty of 30. Don't even bother rolling if an argument is so strong or so weak that it is ridiculous to believe that someone would or wouldn't agree with it.

Seduction- Use CHM for seduction rolls. A successful roll means that the target wants to have sex with the PC. How and if the victim will act on those desires is up to the GM or player. The normal difficulty for a sexually healthy adult who has a preference for the PC's gender is 20 (moderate). GMs can also force players to make "passive seduction" rolls to see if a person is attracted to the PC even without the PC trying to seduce the person. Passive seduction rolls typically have +10 difficulty.

Endurance (END)

Pooled Endurance- Endurance is also used a measurement of the amount of energy a PC has to expend. The PC starts with a "pool" of points equal to his or her END. Any of the following removes 1 point from this pool:

Exertion: Any round in which the PC is doing some strenuous physical action, including combat or anything that uses at least half the PC's STH or SPD.

Oxygen Deprivation: Any round in which the PC can't or won't take in oxygen.

Mortal Injuries: Any round in which the PC is mortally wounded (is at 0 BLD, see p.131).

Other miscellaneous things (e.g. toxins) can also remove pooled END.

When Pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated. The PC can not stand, can not make fighting actions or reactions and can not initiate any kind of communication. The PC will fail at any roll involving AGY, END, SPD or STH.

Example: *Tim has 9 END. He was just shot (bringing his BLD to 0) and he is in a room filled with poison gas. He is holding his breath and running as fast as he can (he hopes to jump out of the window). Each round he loses 3 pooled END, which means he has 3 actions before he becomes incapacitated. After two rounds he gets hit in the head with a rock and must make a save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls 1d20 plus an average of his WIL and END (which is currently 3).*

Fatigue- END can also be used more slowly by activities which do not use half the PC's STH or SPD but are tiring nonetheless (e.g. jogging, manual labor, even standing for long period of time). Example: *Juan has a SPD of 10. If he runs at 5 or faster he will lose 1 END per round, so he decides to run at SPD 4. The GM decides that he will lose 1 pooled END for every 5 minutes running at this speed.*

Rest- When Pooled END is lost to strenuous activity, it returns at 1 point per round when the PC is resting. Pooled END lost to oxygen deprivation returns at 1 point per round when the PC begins receiving oxygen again. Pooled END lost to fatigue returns at the same rate it was lost (e.g. if Juan loses 4 END by jogging for 20 minutes, he will regain it with 30 minutes of rest). If a PC ever reaches 0 END (incapacity) that PC is -1 END for the next 24 hours. If a PC reaches 0 END five times, the PC will be at -5 END the next day.

Health- END is used to represent the body's general health. It is used to save vs. things like hypothermia, heat exhaustion, cardiac arrest (heart attack), shock and (along with WIL) unconsciousness. See Other Types of Damage (p.133) and Symptoms/Effects (p.133) for more.

Disease- END is also used to save vs. disease contraction and progression. See Disease (p.135) for more.

Intelligence (INL)

Speed of Thought- Among other things, INL represents how quickly a PC thinks (as opposed to AWR, which can measure how quickly a PC notices things, or AGY which represents how fast the PC's body reacts). A GM might sometimes ask PCs and NPCs to make opposed INL rolls to find out who figures out something first. INL (along with AWR) is used to determine initiative in combat (see p.139).

Skills- Intelligence is used to perform intellectual or creative skills. See Skills (p.136) for more. In Brief: roll INL +1d20 +4 for each skill level above the first vs. the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do.

Speed (SPD)

Leaping- SPD is used for leaping rolls. The difficulty for making a leap is the distance (in ft.) times two (or, 6 difficulty per meter), so a ten foot leap would have a 20 difficulty. Height differences, inclines, etc. can increase the difficulty.

Running- SPD also sets the maximum speed the character can run. SPD is approximately equal to MPH. 1 MPH = ~1.5 ft./second. Since one combat round is approximately half a second, that means that a PC running at max SPD can run approximately .75 ft. per combat round per SPD. So a PC with 10 SPD can run 7.5 ft. in one combat round.

In metric, a PC can run 1.5 kmph per SPD, or ¼ meters per combat round per SPD. So a PC with 10 SPD can run 15 kmph or 2.5 meters in a combat round.

Sprinting- A SPD + 1d20 roll can be made for a momentary (1 combat round) burst of extra SPD. Doing so uses 2 points of pooled END. See Chasing, p.138 for more.

Strength (STH)

STH is used in opposed strength rolls, for instance, if two people are grabbing for an object.

Strength Feats - Strength is also used for lifting heavy objects or any other "feat" of strength. Assuming a character can get a good grip on an object, the difficulty to lift the object should be the weight in lbs. divided by 10, so a 200 lb. object would be 20 difficulty to lift (a poorly grippable object or an object with poor balance would have a higher difficulty). Or, the difficulty to lift an object is equal to the weight in kg divided by 5. Some example STH feats:

STH Feat Difficulties

10 (Easy) Prying open a nut.

20 (Moderate) Breaking a wooden door

30 (Difficult) Pushing a horse around.

40 (Legendary) Pulling apart a cheap padlock

Play and Time

Giving players unlimited time to think about and discuss what they're going to do can sometimes kill the horror element in a game. When characters have only limited time to deal with a danger, then players should have limited time as well.

One way to do this is to simply require PCs declare their actions within a specified time period. Anyone who hasn't specified an action within the time period had a PC who didn't do anything. Giving a verbal countdown can increase the apprehension.

Another way to deal with extremely short reaction times is to use initiative as if there was a combat round happening. As soon as the PCs notice the danger, have them roll INL + AWR +1d20 and give them each an action in an order determined by initiative. Actions should be limited to only that which a PC could believably do in a combat round (approximately half a second). If a PC starts trying to make a speech, cut the player off and inform them that the PC only got out one or two words, then move on to the next player.

Events to do with the danger can unfold with their own 'initiative scores.' The higher the score, the faster the thing happens. Example: *The PCs are creeping around inside a mansion. An AWR roll allows some of the PCs to notice that the air is quickly getting hotter. The GM has determined that the heat will not be high enough to hurt them on the first round, but at initiative 15 of every subsequent round the PCs will have to make a save vs. pain (at 10, then 20, then 30) then the heat will start doing damage. If a player's initiative roll is higher than 15 they get to use their action before making that round's save vs. distracting pain. If they roll 15 or less, they can only make the action after their save vs. pain. Those players who failed the AWR roll to notice the increasing temperature may miss their first-round action unless another player with a higher initiative alerts them (e.g. by screaming 'run!' or 'trap').*

Encumbrance- STH also determines the amount that the PC can carry on his or her person without suffering a detriment to attributes. A PC's "Base Encumbrance" is equal to his or her STH times 5 lbs. (or STH times 2 kg). If the PC is carrying his or her base encumbrance, well distributed over the body, the PC is at -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 Pooled END per hour. For every 10 lbs. (5 kg) over Base Encumbrance, the PC is at an additional -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 additional Pooled END per hour. Example: *Nyorbu has a STH of 7. His base encumbrance is 7 x 5 lbs. or 35 lbs. If Nyorbu is carrying 25 lbs., so long as it is packed well, he suffers from no minuses. At 35 lbs. he is at -1 to AGY and SPD and loses 1 Pooled END every hour. If Nyorbu is carrying 85 lbs. (35 lbs. plus 50 lbs, or 5x10 lbs. over his Base Encumbrance) he is at -6 to SPD and AGY and loses 6 Pooled END per hour.*

Willpower (WIL)

Mind Control- Will is used for opposed rolls involving attempts mental domination or manipulation by a supernatural force (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the attack roll of the entity) or brainwashing (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the skill roll of the brainwasher). Note that in order to resist mental manipulation, the PC must first realize that someone or something is trying to manipulate him or her (see AWR, p.127).

Resistance- Will is used to resist anything that would cause the PC to act (or not act) against his or her will. PCs can make WIL based saves to resist, among other things, pain, nausea, fear, amnesia, hallucinations, delusions, euphoria, etc. See p.133 for a list of drug/disease/poison symptoms and effects and the consequences for failing saves against them.

Pain- One of the most common things PCs will have to resist is pain. Pain comes in two types:

Shocking Pain: This is pain that comes on suddenly (sometimes unexpectedly). It only lasts a second but it is so strong that it can cause the PC to be unable to act. A PC who fails to save by 1-9 loses his or her next action. A PC who fails by 10 or more loses his or her next action and reaction (see A Combat Round, p.139), meaning that the PC not only cannot act, but cannot defend himself or herself for one round.

Distracting Pain: This is pain that comes on more slowly and stays around longer, causing the PC to be distracted from anything he or she tries to do. When a PC fails a save vs. distracting pain, the PC suffers from a penalty equal to the amount he or she failed by. This penalty applies to any roll the PC has conscious control over (e.g. it would apply to an attempt to catch a ball, but would not apply to a save vs. disease contraction). Example: *Logos fails a save vs. distracting pain by 3. Logos now suffers from -3 to skill rolls, actions, reactions and anything else he has conscious control over.*

Drug Cravings- WIL is also used to save vs. drug cravings (the difficulty based on the drug) after becoming addicted. See Drugs (p.134) for more.

Psychological Shock- Any time a PC sees or experiences something he or she was not expecting, and which is outside the realm of his or her experience, the PC must make a save vs. shock (WIL + 1d20 vs. difficulty). For each point of failure, the PC suffers from a -1 penalty to all conscious rolls. Shock lasts 1 hour per point of failure.

Save vs. Shock Difficulties

Easy (10): Seeing a small child driving a car.

Moderate (20): Seeing a dog driving a car.

Hard (30): Seeing a mass of spiders driving a car.

Legendary (40): Seeing floating globs of congealed blood connected by chains driving a car.

Example: *Ted is driving on the 101. He looks over and sees a man with no face driving the car next to him. He makes a WIL + 1d20 vs. 30 roll and fails by 6. A moment later, the car in front of him hits its breaks and he has to make a swerve roll. He is at -6 to his driving roll.*

Using Psychodynamics

In Brief- Can be rolled on to give aid (bonus to rolls) or insight. Can hurt PC via impulses, slips and hindrances (minus to rolls).

Each psychodynamic can be 'used' in two ways. The player can "roll" it as if it was an attribute to gain some special insight or motivation that will help the PC. In these cases it's good to have a high psychodynamic. The PC rolls 1d20 + the strength of the psychodynamic vs. 20 difficulty. Any success is a benefit to the PC (usually a temporary bonus to any conscious rolls the PC makes in a certain situation).

The GM can roll a psychodynamic against the PC to hinder the PC when the PC is trying to do something that is contrary to a psychodynamic's desires. In these cases the GM rolls 1d20 + the psychodynamic vs. 20. In most cases the PC can try to oppose with WIL + 1d20 vs. 20.

Example: *Lucy has 15 Shadow. When dealing with a mysterious figure she decides to roll her Shadow to gain unconscious insight into any possible malevolent motives the mysterious figure might have. She rolls 7 on the die, giving her a total of 22 vs. 20 or 2 success, meaning she now has +2 on CHM rolls to sense malevolent motives. Later, Lucy is dealing with her asshole boss. The GM decides that the Shadow is trying to send her an impulse to punch her boss. The GM rolls 1d20 + Shadow and gets 25, 5 over the difficulty. The PC must make a save vs. anger (WIL + 1d20) and beat the difficulty by 5 or more to avoid doing something stupid.*

Psychodynamic Help- When PCs roll psychodynamics the help comes in two flavors: insight and aid.

Insight: When the PC succeeds on a psychodynamic + 1d20 roll the PC has a 'feeling' about something. The insight a psychodynamic provides is typically not supernatural or 'psychic,' it merely represents a point of view from a part of the PC that is a lot more familiar with a particular way of thinking than the PC's conscious mind is. Example: *Lucinda is dealing with a mysterious stranger. She chooses to roll her Shadow. She succeeds and the GM tells her she gets a feeling that the man has malevolent intentions.*

Aid: When the PC succeeds on a psychodynamic +1d20 vs. 20 roll, the amount the PC succeeds by can be used as a global bonus to all rolls in a certain situation.

Example: *Lucinda finally decides to beat the shit out of her asshole boss who she has hated for years. Since she is releasing her 'dark side' she rolls Shadow +1d20 and gets a total of 28, 8 more than the difficulty. She gains +8 to all rolls to beat up her boss.*

Psychodynamic Harm- When GMs roll psychodynamics against a PC, the effect comes in three flavors: impulses, slips and hindrances.

Impulses: The PC feels a sudden urge to do something that is not necessarily what the PC would choose to do. The PC can roll an opposed WIL +1d20 roll to resist the impulse. Example: *Lucinda is in her friend's house and while her friend is in the bathroom she sees $40 lying around. The GM rolls Shadow +1d20, succeeds by 3, and Lucinda has a sudden urge to pocket the money. She must roll WIL +1d20 vs. 20 and beat the difficulty by 3 or more if she wants to resist.*

Slip: When the GM succeeds on a 1d20 + Psychodynamic vs. 20 roll the PC will accidentally do something that expresses the desire of a psychodynamic. The PC can make an AWR roll (or CHM troll if the slip is social in nature) to notice the slip in time to prevent it. The difficulty of the AWR roll will be based on how subtle the slip is. Example: *Lucinda has hated her boss for years but has always acted nice to him. On the way to the office the GM rolls Shadow +1d20 and beats a 20 difficulty. Lucinda accidentally parks in his parking spot. Yet Lucinda makes an AWR +1d20 roll, with 10 difficulty (this is a fairly obvious slip). She beats the difficulty, realizes her mistake, and goes to park in a different spot.*

Hindrance: This is more or less the opposite of Aid. When the PC is doing something the psychodynamic doesn't want the PC doing the GM can roll psychodynamic +1d20 vs. 20 and every point of success means a point of penalty on any roll to do that thing. Example: *Lucinda is trying to sweet-talk her boss into letting her take the rest of the week off using her vacation hours. The GM rules that her Shadow doesn't like her being nice to her asshole boss so the GM rolls Psychodynamic +1d20 vs. 20. The GM beats the difficulty by 2, meaning Lucinda is -2 to all CHM rolls to sweet-talk her boss.*

Corrupted Psychodynamics- When a psychodynamic is corrupted, the PC can roll the psychodynamic against the PC in a much broader range of situations. The GM can choose not to let the PC roll the psychodynamic or to have the psychodynamic give the PC false insights.

Psychodynamics vs. Psychodynamics- If the GM uses a psychodynamic against the PC with a hindrance or impulse, the PC can call on a different psychodynamic to help. Example: *Lucinda's Shadow gives her an impulse to steal her friend's money, but Lucinda rolls her Super Ego to help her (give her Aid) in resisting the impulse.*

Typical Psychodynamic Rolls

	Aid	Insight	Impulse	Slip	Hindrance
ANIM	+ to dealing with opposite sex	Into the mind of the opposite sex	To try to please a member of the opposite sex	A phrase or gesture typical of the opposite sex	- to harming a member of the opposite sex
EGO	+ to resist psychological manipulation or doing something against the PC's self-identity	Into what people think about themselves	To tell a lie that placates upset people and makes everything seem 'all right'	Forgetting about something unpleasant or disturbing	- to finding out unpleasant truths
ID	+ to gaining objects of desire	Into the minds of addicts, gluttons and hedonists	To grab some physical pleasure	Accidentally eating/ taking something not the PCs	- to resisting discomfort
REPT	+ to gaining food or shelter or fleeing from danger	Into the minds of animals	To flee from danger	Hissing, baring teeth, growling, etc.	- to resisting pain, hunger, nausea
SEGO	+ to dealing with authority figures and to resisting breaking laws or social codes	Into social codes and the minds of authority figures	To confess a crime	Making a mistake that would cause one to get caught	- to breaking laws or social codes
SHAD	+ to dealing with 'evil' people	Into the minds of 'evil' people	To break whatever rules the PC has set for himself/herself	Making a mistake that hurts or offends someone else	- to resisting anger or other 'unacceptable' emotions
STRA	+ to solving puzzles, understanding cryptic messages	Into alien intelligences	To explore, wander, peer into things	Getting lost	- to repetitive tasks
THAN	+ to save vs. fear of death	Into the minds of suicidal, nihilistic or misanthropic people	To commit suicide	An accident that has a chance of causing death	- to life prolonging measures

Health Attributes

In Brief- Blades and bullets remove BLD. Crushing removes BDY (then double BLD). 0 BLD = mortally wounded, but PC can keep going until INCY or Pooled END = 0.

The three health attributes, BLD, BDY and INCY are used whenever a character takes any kind of damage which moves the PC progressively closer to death. There are many types of damage which may cause pain, cripple or disfigure the PC, but don't move the PC significantly closer to being dead and so they do not remove BLD, BDY and INCY. The two main types of potentially lethal damage are blunt and bladed.

Blunt Damage- Blunt damage comes from that does crushing damage to the PC's tissues, like a club or a punch. Things like falling, being crushed, being rammed by a vehicle also do blunt damage. Blunt damage is subtracted from BDY. Once all BDY is gone, blunt damage is removed from BLD but the effect is doubled. So, if a person with 2 BDY is hit with something that does 5 blunt damage, all 2 BDY are taken away and the character suffers 6 damage to BLD (the remaining 3, times 2).

Bladed Damage- Bladed damage comes from anything which cuts, pierces or spills blood, including knives, guns, barbed wire, skidding, etc. Bladed damage goes straight to BLD. Any other type of damage which causes the PC to lose blood, be unable to take in oxygen, or does damage to the heart and lungs also does damage to BLD.

0 BLD- When a PC reaches 0 BLD it means he or she has been mortally wounded and without medical intervention he or she will eventually die. Even at 0 BLD or below, a PC can still do things, even fight, for a limited period of time. END effects how long the PC can continue to act, and INCY (Incapacity) effects how much more damage a PC can take before being immediately incapacitated.

Incapacity- When damage reduces a PC's BLD to 0, any further damage is done to INCY. INCY represents the character's last reserves of energy to act even after being mortally wounded. All further damage that would have done damage to BLD instead does damage to INCY. All further blunt damage does double damage to INCY. When a PC reaches 0 INCY it means he or she is incapacitated. An incapacitated person can not stand, make fighting actions or reactions, or initiate any kind of communication. An incapacitated PC may make moderate (20 difficulty) WIL rolls to be able to do very simple things (e.g. answer a question, crawl away from a fire) but cannot do anything that would require a roll (e.g. perform a skill).

As long as a PC still has Incapacity and pooled END, he or she can still act normally. As soon as a PC reaches 0 BLD, he or she loses 1 point of pooled END every round (in addition to END lost from other activities/circumstances). When pooled END reached 0, the PC is incapacitated.

After being incapacitated, the PC has his or her INCY + base END number of rounds before brain death occurs and no known means can revive the PC.

Armor

In Brief- AR is how much success a strike needs to bypass armor, PR is subtracted from any strike that hits the armor.

A piece of armor has two factors:

Armor Rating (AR) represents how much of the body the armor covers (or how difficult it is to hit an unprotected spot on the PC).

Protection Rating (PR) represents how much damage each type the armor can absorb.

Example: *Lake has a leather suit with an AR of 7 and a PR of 2 bladed. A strike (a combat action, see p.143) with a success of 7 or below will hit the armor and 2 bladed damage will be subtracted from the damage the strike would normally do. If the strike was with a weapon that does 4 bladed and 2 blunt damage, it would only do 2 bladed and 2 blunt damage. A strike with a success of 8 and above would hit an unprotected spot and do full damage.*

AR of 20 represents total coverage and no amount of success can bypass the armor.

Multiple Layers- When a PC is wearing multiple layers of armor, each layer acts upon the damage independently. One strike may hit one piece of armor and lose some of its damage, hit another piece of armor and lose more, then bypass a third piece of armor and not lose any more. In order for damage to reach a PC, it must either bypass or cut through every piece of armor the PC is wearing.

Armor Piercing- Some weapons and types of damage cut through armor better than they cut through other things (like people). An armor piercing bullet may be listed as doing: "5 bladed damage (pierces as 10)". When subtracting damage absorbed by the armor, treat the damage as if it is 10. When the damage gets to the PC, however, it can't do any more than 5. Note that poisons on a bladed object do full damage if any bladed damage gets through to the victim.

Non-Damaging Attacks- There are attacks which do not do damage, but do things like cause pain, cripple joints, knock people out, etc. Armor can protect from these attacks too. To determine whether armor protects from such an attack, figure out how much damage the attack would have done if it were a normal strike, then figure out if any of that damage would have gotten through. If none would have gotten through, then the non-damaging attack has no effect. Also, some attacks have a minimum damage (e.g. a knockout strike requires an attack that would do at least 2 blunt damage if it was a normal strike) and if armor reduces the "would be" damage to less than this then the strike doesn't work.

Example: *Inferno is trying to stab Hoshi in the nuts with an ice-pick (a pain/stun strike). Hoshi is wearing a leather motorcycle outfit that has AR 10, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. Inferno's difficulty for the strike is 25, and he gets a 32, meaning he succeeds by 7. This success is less than the AR of the armor, so the armor's PR is subtracted. Had this been a normal strike, the ice-pick would have done 1 bladed (pierces armor as 3). So, 3 bladed PR is subtracted from 3 bladed (pierces as) damage, and the result is 0. No damage gets through, and the strike has no significant effect on Hoshi.*

Damage and Medical Effects

These are some sample medical effects one might observe in a PC who has taken bladed or blunt damage during combat:

1 blunt A few ribs broken, a few internal organs bruised.	**1 bladed** A large or deep cut which did not pierce internal organs but caused significant blood loss.
3 blunt Several bones broken, internal organs badly damaged and bleeding heavily.	**3 bladed** Internal organs lacerated, heavy blood loss.
6 blunt Crushed skull or broken spine, massive internal bleeding.	**6 bladed** Major arteries severed, internal organs pierced, massive blood loss.
9 blunt Most bones broken, most internal organs destroyed, tissues pierced by jagged bone fragments.	**9 bladed** Vital organs cut in half, blood spurting.

Healing

For every 7 day period, the average person regains the following:

1 point of BLD

½ point of BDY

Each of the following will slow the healing rate by one day:

Bad Damage Type- The PC was damaged by ragged, burn or radiation damage.

Botched 1st Aid- The PC never had any 1st aid performed on the injury, or an Emergency Medicine skill roll failed.

Infection- The PC contracts any disease, whether or not it is related to the injury.

Low END- The PC's base END is 5 or less.

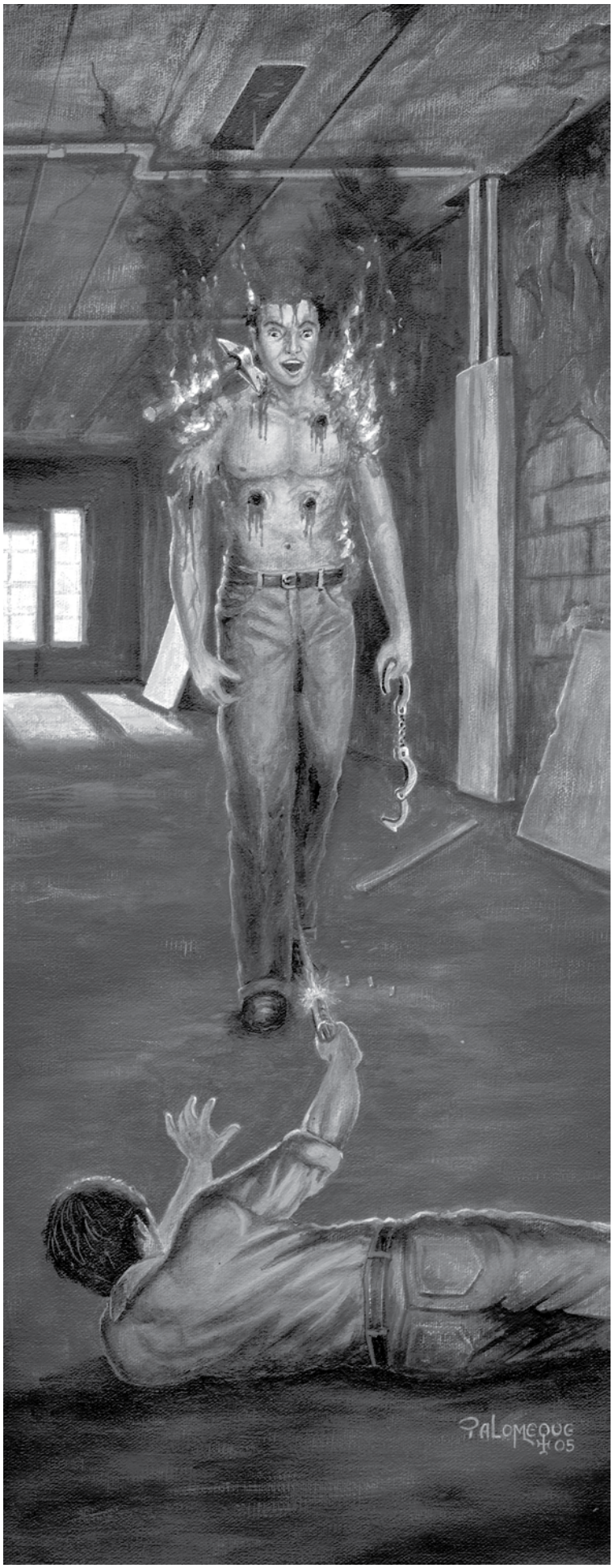
Malnutrition- The PC cannot get food which satisfies basic nutritional requirements.

Mental Stress- The PC is put in constant fear of death or of not having the basic necessities of life met.

Physical Stress- The PC must do heavy labor or suffers from any amount of sleep deprivation.

Poor Hygiene- The PC is unable to keep wounds clean.

Reinjury- The PC take another injury while healing.



Other Types of Damage

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:

-BLD damage (1 pt. per pt. of burn damage).

-Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/pt. of damage).

-Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage).

-Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/pt. of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Dropped Objects: Does blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs or 5 kg) times number of stories. E.g. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

-Paralysis (WIL+1d20 vs. 20/pt. of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.

-Unconsciousness (WIL/END+1d20 vs. 10 per pt. of damage)

-Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (p.133).

-Burn Damage: 1 pt. of burn damage for every 4 pt.s of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all three of the following:

-Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)

-Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)

-Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins do END damage. Every pt. of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor typically cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every day without food: -1/4 BLD, -2 END.

Radiation: For every pt. of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per pt. of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.146). For each pt. of ragged damage taken the PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). Resting will not bring back any lost END. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Each of the following will speed up the healing rate by one day:

Alternative Therapy- Treatment by someone with 3 or more levels in Herbal Medicine or Acupuncture.

Excellent 1st Aid- Immediately after the injury, the PC was given 1st Aid that beat the skill roll difficulty by 10+.

Good Damage Type- The PC was damaged by electricity, cold, heat, hunger or thirst.

Healthy Diet- The PC eats meals prepared by a nutritionist (or someone with the Physical Therapy skill) to provide all the right nutrients a healing body needs.

High END- The PC's END is 15 or more.

Physical Therapy- The PC sees someone with the physical therapy skill for at least an hour a day (costs $150/wk.).

Unlimited Rest- The PC spends as much time as he or she feels like in bed.

Example: *Tim took 3 bladed and 2 blunt damage. The 1st aid was botched and Tim has to work a job doing heavy labor. On the other hand, he has a high END, has a physical therapist giving him therapy and cooking him nutritious meals. Altogether, he has 2 things that would slow his healing rate (physical stress, botched 1st aid) and 3 things which would speed the healing rate (physical therapy, healthy diet, high END). So, his net total is +1, meaning he gains back 1 BLD and ½ BDY every 6 days rather than 7.*

Drugs, Disease and Poisons

Symptoms/Effects

Some drugs, diseases and poisons do simple damage to BLD, just like being stabbed. The majority, however, have effects or symptoms that hit people with different intensities (depending on how much of the drug or poison they've taken or how bad they have the disease). Some symptoms are simply annoying and can not be saved against (e.g. red puffy skin). Some symptoms reduce attributes and can not be saved (e.g. a disease might cause "weakness" and reduce STH and SPD by 5). Some symptoms can be saved against (e.g. a poison might cause Vomiting, which can be saved against with a WIL +1d20 save). Failing a save might mean the PC is incapacitated, or it may even kill the PC.

The following lists some common symptoms/effects, what attribute is used to save against them, and what happens to a PC who fails such a save:

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot recall anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets). 10+ failure means the PC cannot think of anything else (is oblivious to the world).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations. 10+ failure means the PC is unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Headache (WIL): -1 to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.133) as 1 night without sleep.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Physiological Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 1, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Lasts 1 round per point of failure unless specified otherwise.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Drugs

A drug can have different effects based upon when and how it is used. A drug can have:

-Normal dosage effects (a normal person taking one dose of the drug).

-Overdose effects (the effects of taking 2 times, 4 times and/or 8 times the normal dose).

-Withdrawal effects (the effects when the drug exits the user's system).

-Long term effects (the general effects of the drug for a habitual user).

-Long term withdrawal effects (the effects of withdrawal after habitual use).

-Tolerance (the extra amount an experienced user of the drug must take in order to have the same effect. When a person starts using a drug regularly, tolerance typically increases 10% per week until it reaches the maximum).

Most of these effects will have the duration of the effects listed. If a duration for overdose effects, long term effects, etc. is not listed, assume it is the same duration as the normal effects.

When a drug/poison effect requires a roll, e.g. "Effects: Vomiting (20)," the PC should roll once per hour, minute or day depending upon the unit of measurement used to describe the effects duration. E.g. "Effects: Vomiting (20) for 24 hours" means the PC should save vs. vomiting once every hour for 24 hours.

Addiction- Drugs can be addictive in one or both of the following ways:

Physiologically Addictive: Using the drug enough times changes the chemical balance of the brain and body such that the drug is needed for normal functioning. Without the drug the brain does not work right and addicts are driven to take more of the drug in order to "fix" things.

Psychologically Addictive: The addict's personality adjusts to the effects of the drug such that he or she can no longer handle reality (day-to-day life) without the drug.

Saving vs. Addiction- Each addictive drug lists the addiction difficulty for physiological and/or psychological addiction. To this difficulty is added the number of doses the person has taken without a significant break (of at least 24 hours). Saves are thus made as follows:

WIL + 1d20 vs. Psychological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

END + 1d20 vs. Physiological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

Cravings- Cravings first appear within 24 hours after an addicted character tries to stop using. PCs who are both psychologically and physiologically addicted must deal with 2 separate cravings. Cravings are saved against on WIL+1d20 vs. the Craving Difficulty of the drug. On the first successful save, the PC will not have another craving for 1 day. For each subsequent success, the time between cravings doubles. Most drugs do have special "triggers" which can cause a craving at any time, no matter how long it's been since the last craving.

Physiological cravings go away after a number of days equal to the Craving Difficulty. Psychological cravings never go away, they just get farther and farther apart.

If a PC fails a craving, he or she must do anything within his or her power to seek out the drug. If the PC gets a hold of the drug, he or she will use it immediately and will be back to a one day period between cravings. If a PC is searching for his or her drug of choice but cannot find it, the PC can make a new save vs. cravings every hour to give up searching.

Example: *After seeing the thing in the closet and passing out, Max has felt something crawling around under her skin. To help deal with these sensations she starts drinking heavily. Alcohol has a Physiological Addiction Difficulty of 15, a Psychological Addiction Difficulty of 15 and a Craving Difficulty of 20. Cravings for Alcohol can also be triggered by anxiety. Max ends up taking 10 doses in the course of several days. At the end of that period the GM makes her save vs. Physiological Addition (at END + 1d20 vs. 15 +10 (the 10 doses). Max fails and is not physiologically addicted to alcohol. She must also make a save vs. Psychological Addiction (at WIL + 1d20 vs. 15 +10). She fails at this roll.*

Now she is physiologically and psychologically addicted. When she tries to stop using not only does she experience the withdrawal effects listed for the drug, but within 1 day she must two saves vs. cravings at WIL + 1d20. She succeeds at both, and so her next craving will not be for two days. Two days later, she saves again and succeeds, it will now be four days until her next craving. Four days later, she saves again and succeeds. Eight days later, she saves again and succeeds. Before the next craving period, 20 days will have passed, which means she must no longer save vs. physiological cravings. Sixteen days later she saves only once, and succeeds. It will now be 32 days until her next craving.

Unfortunately, though, before that time she catches her boss eating a live mouse, he says nothing but stares at her until she leaves the room. She doesn't know what he is or what he's going to do, thus creating a great deal of anxiety. This triggers an immediate craving. This time, Max fails, and she is now forced to drop whatever she is doing and seek out some alcohol. She succeeds, getting the alcohol. She must make another save vs. physiological addiction (this time at END + 1d20 vs. 15 +1 (one dose)), but this time she succeeds. After the one dose she took wears off, the decides to quit again. She succeeds, and only has to deal with a psychological difficulty. However, her craving periods are now reset and she will experience another craving within 24 hours.

Disease

Contraction- When a PC is exposed to a disease, the PC must make a save vs. Disease Contraction (END + 1d20 vs. the Disease Contraction Rating of the disease). Diseases will have different contraction ratings depending upon how the PC is exposed. Breathing the same air as an infected person may have a Contraction Rating of 10 while sharing bodily fluids with a person may have a Contraction Rating of 40. If the PC makes the save, he or she does not catch the disease. If the PC fails then the PC has the disease at 1x symptoms.

Progression- Once a PC has a disease, the PC must fight to keep the disease from getting worse. Each disease has a Disease Progression Speed, which represents how quickly the disease will get worse. If the disease progression speed is 8 hours, then every 8 hours the PC must save vs. Disease Progression. Each disease has its own Disease Progression Rating (the difficulty to save vs. disease progression). For every consecutive failure to save vs. disease progression, the symptoms increase by 1 level (1x to 2x, 2x to 3x, etc.). However, if the PC succeeds at a save, the disease is "halted": it can no longer progress. From this point onward, a failed save vs. progression has no effect, but a successful save means the symptoms level is reduced (3x to 2x, 2x to 1x). When the symptoms level reaches 0, the PC is cured.

Treatments- Treatments can do two things. Some treatments help the PC fight the disease (give the PC plusses to save vs. disease progression). Other treatments only help reduce the severity of symptoms (most over-the-counter medications work in this way).

Immunity- Once a PC has defeated a disease, the PC has immunity to it, and gets +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from the same disease. The PC also gets +6 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from closely related diseases.

Example: *Marcos was exploring an abandoned building and examining a desiccated corpse when it suddenly surged forward and stabbed him. The wound was exposed to an infection with Disease Contraction Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Speed of 12 hours, can be treated by antibiotics, and has the following symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage for each progression.*

12 hours after being stabbed, Marcos makes a save vs. disease contraction at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20. He fails, he now has 1x symptoms. He is -10 to save vs. heat exhaustion, has -5 STH, -5 SPD, takes 1 BLD damage and must save vs. vomiting (at difficulty 10). 12 hours later must make a save vs. disease progression (at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20). He fails, and now he has 2x symptoms: -20 to save vs. heat exhaustion, -10 STH, -10 SPD, an additional 1 BLD damage and he must save vs. vomiting at 20 difficulty. Since Marcos only has 8 SPD, he now cannot even stand. Marcos' friends finally get him some antibiotics, which give +8 to save vs. disease progression.

After another 12 hours he saves again at END (7) +8 (antibiotics) +1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds: the disease is not halted, but he is still at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and fails, but since the disease is halted nothing happens, he remains at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds, now his symptoms are reduced by 1x. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds again, now the disease is gone.

Skills

Basic Skill Use

There are certain activities that anyone can try to do without being trained: prowling, climbing, jumping, seducing, etc. Skills are generally things that someone can not even try to do without some sort of special training. A person doesn't have to be a trained long-jumper to try jumping over a hole (though it helps), but someone does have to have some physics training to try to calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

The majority of skills are "intellectual" and are rolled using INL. Other skills use the other attributes. Skills are purchased in levels, and are purchased with skill points at a cost per level set by the Day Job or Secret Life (see p.65). For every level above the first, the PC gets +4 to any skill roll. Each skill has six possible levels which can be achieved:

(1) Interest: Characters have studied only the basic levels of the skill. They know enough to try anything, but their chances of succeeding at difficult tasks are very low. (+**0** to skill rolls)

(2) Hobby: Characters keep up on the skill but are far from masters in it. (+**4** to skill rolls)

(3) Pursuit: Characters have spent a large portion of their time practicing the skill or keeping up with the subject. They have a respectable knowledge of the skill. (+**8** to skill rolls)

(4) Study: Characters have spent a significant portion of their lives studying the skill. They know almost everything an average person studying the skill could be expected to learn. Characters have a professional level of knowledge about the skill. (+**12** to skill rolls)

(5) Expertise: This is the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the skill. Characters know subtleties about the skill that few people know exist. (+**16** to skill rolls)

(6) Mastery: This is everything a person could possibly know about the skill. There are only a handful of people on the planet as skilled as the PC. Starting PCs may not have level 6 in any skill without special permission from the GM. (+**20** to skill rolls)

Example: *Tim has Physics (3). Tim wants to calculate the radioactive decay of a batch of toxic waste. The GM says that this will be a moderate (20) difficulty use of the skill. Tim rolls INL +8 (because he has level 3) + 1d20 vs. 20.*

Rerolling Skills

Once a PC has failed a skill roll, he or she cannot reroll until the situation has significantly changed, e.g. the target of the skill is different, the PC is in different working conditions, the PC has been provided new information to jog his or her memory.

Distractions

Anything that distracts the PC (including most failed saves) will give a penalty to skill rolls. If the PC is trying to do two things at once (e.g. answer a question about US history while running) the PC is at -10 to the skill roll.

Skills & Time

When a PC uses a skill, it is assumed that a PC is taking as long as he or she needs to. This might mean one round (e.g. using Science: Archeology/Paleontology o realize that a certain plant is supposed to be extinct) or weeks (e.g. using Carpentry to build a house). PCs gain no plusses from taking extra time to complete a skill, but they do take a penalty if they are trying to rush.

Working Together

Two PC with equal levels in a skill can often work together, giving +4 to the skill roll (one PC makes the roll). PCs with unequal levels in the skill cannot work together (one knows so much more than the other that the other can't do anything to help).

Supernatural Skills

Supernatural skills are rolled using the same mechanic as mundane skills. Like mundane skills, most can be accomplished via the mind alone, others require physical actions or the use of tools.

Unless stated otherwise, most supernatural skills take one combat round to complete. The duration that effects last is listed for each skill. Many have effects that last for as long as the PC can concentrate, meaning that any time a PC fails a save vs. pain or some emotion, the PC's concentration is broken and the effects end.

Books

Books are manuals for using a certain skill. Using a skill with a book generally takes significantly longer than using the skill unaided (twice as long if the text is in a mental program, three times as long if it is in a searchable computerized format, four times as long if it is in printed form). There are three types of books:

Introductory Texts: Useless to PCs who already have the skill, but can temporarily give the equivalent of level one (hobby) in the skill to people who do not have the skill.

Reference Texts Unusable by people who do not have the skill, but for those who do have the skill they increase the skill level by one (max. 6).

Introductory/Reference Texts: Can be used either way.

Not every skill has a book available (for many skills a book would be useless).

Combat Skills

Each combat skill lists fighting actions and/or reactions which are learned as part of the skill. In addition to any plusses listed in the skill, the PC gets +4 for every skill level above the first to each of these actions and reactions. Most combat skills only allow the plusses to work on certain weapons.

Some skills start with a negative on one of the actions/reactions. This does not mean that a PC with one level in the skill has a penalty. It only means that this is something that the PC doesn't benefit from until he or she gets multiple levels of the skill. For instance, if a skill gives -4 to Blinding Strike, then at level 1 the PC gets no benefit, at level 2 (-4 +4) the PC still gets no benefit. At level 3, however, (-4 +8) the PC does get +4 to blinding strikes.

Example: *Fenn has Knife Throwing (4). The skill lists the following plusses when throwing knives or similar weapons:*

+2 per level to initiative

+4 to Strike

+0 to Vital Strike

-4 to Blinding Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

Because Fenn has 4 levels in the skill, he gets +12 to all of the listed combat actions and reactions, so Fenn's actual plusses are:

+8 (+2 x 4) to initiative

+16 (+4 +12) to Strike

+12 (+0 +12) to Vital Strike

+8 (-4 +12) to Blinding Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

Vehicle Skills

Normal skills list example things that a person with that skill could do at each level of difficulty (an easy thing, a moderate thing, a hard thing, etc.). Vehicle skills list a number of "maneuvers" that a person with that skill can do, each with a corresponding difficulty. For example, one of the maneuvers that people with the motorcycle skill get is "Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments." Maneuvers are rolled as normal skill rolls, but they have two special modifiers: maneuverability and speed.

Maneuverability: A rating of a particular vehicle that tells how good or bad it is at complex maneuvers. Maneuverability is expressed as a plus or minus to all maneuvers done with the vehicle.

Speed: For some maneuvers (jumping, stairs), going fast is good, but for the majority of maneuvers going too fast makes the maneuver harder. Unless the GM decides that this is a fast maneuver, the difficulty for the maneuver is whichever is higher: the difficulty listed in the skill description or the current SPD of the rider.

Example: *Rakesh, who has Motorcycle (3), is chasing after someone on his motorcycle and is confronted with a flight of stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he will have to make a sharp turn or hit a wall. Rakesh is going at 30 SPD when he hits the stairs. The GM decides that Rakesh will not take a SPD penalty while going down the stairs. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (the maneuverability of the motorcycle) + 1d20 vs. 20 (the difficulty listed for Stairs in the Motorcycle skill description). Rakesh makes it easily. At the bottom of the stairs is the sharp turn, and the GM says that he will make Rakesh take the SPD penalty. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (maneuverability) + 1d20 vs. 30 (his current SPD).*

Maneuvers as Combat- The maneuvers Ram, Trample and Swerve can be used as combat actions and reactions. They can be opposed by other combat actions and reactions by people on foot.

Example: *Rakesh wants to use the Trample maneuver to hit Lew (who is on foot). On Rakesh's action, he makes a Trample maneuver roll. As a reaction, Lew dodges. Rakesh succeeds by 5, Lew succeeds by 7, thus the dodge is successful.*

Non–Skills

A PC can try anything without using a skill. The PC simply narrates what he or she does.

Example: *Flagg has no demolitions or electronics skills of any kind and he's trying to disarm a bomb. The GM doesn't make him roll a skill roll, doesn't even make him roll INL. The GM simply describes the bomb and asks Flagg what he does. Flagg decides the best thing to do is grab a handful of wires and yank them out all at once. The GM narrates the result…*

Unless they have some special disadvantage, PCs are expected to be able to do normal things that anyone can do, including: read, eat, dress, keep clean, stay afloat in water, use a pistol, read a map, cook a meal, tie a knot, tell a lie, recognize symptoms of serious illness, etc.

Chasing

Since this is a horror game, a lot of action will involve running away from things. The outcome of a chase is not solely dependent on who has the highest SPD. It may depend on other factors.

If both the chased and chaser are just running at their normal SPD, then each round the distance between the two decreases (if the chaser is faster) or increases (if the chased is faster) by a number of feet equal to the difference between the two SPDs (or a number of meters equal to the difference divided by 3).

Example: *The Doberman chasing Andrew has SPD 17, Andrew has SPD 10. They start at 20 ft. apart. At the end of the first round that distance is reduced by 7 ft. (17 SPD-10 SPD) to 13 ft. At the end of the second round it has been reduced to 6 ft. During the third round the Doberman will catch Andrew.*

Starting the Chase- From a stand-still it takes 1 full round for a human to reach full running speed (smaller creatures might be faster, larger creatures slower). For that one round the runner closes a distance equal to half normal. This gives a significant advantage to someone already running against someone standing still or someone who has been forced to stop (e.g. by stumbling over something).

Sprinting- This is a one-round action in which a chased and/or chaser run at their maximum SPD. Sprinting can only be one on open ground. Each runner rolls SPD + 1d20. Compare the results. If the chaser got a higher result, then the space between the two closes by a number of feet equal to the opposed success (or meters equal to one third the opposed success). If the chased got higher than the chaser then the space between the two is increased by that number of feet. If one party is sprinting and the other isn't, then compare the sprinter's SPD+1d20 roll to the other person's SPD.

Jumping- There may be obstacles in the way of the chaser and chased that need to be jumped or vaulted over, e.g. a tree branch, pothole, dead body, table, etc. Each one has a difficulty and the chased and chaser must make jumping rolls (SPD + 1d20 vs. difficulty). If both succeed then the distance between chased and chaser neither increases nor decreases. A chased character may try to knock over an object to create a barrier for the chaser, but this is a risky gamble: the chased will typically have to pause and slow to knock something over and if the chaser succeeds at the jump roll it may give the chaser a lead over the chased.

Dodging- In other cases the chaser and chased may have to duck or dodge an obstacle (e.g. a telephone pole, low hanging branch). Both the chaser and chased should make an AGY + 1d20 vs. difficulty roll to dodge the obstacle. The chased may also choose to try to grab an object and hurl it at the chaser. Use combat rules for an improvised thrown blunt weapon (p.145). Treat attacks meant to slow the chaser as pain/stun attacks or, if the object is really heavy, a knockdown or knockaway attack. Note that runners with superhuman strength may be able to make STH rolls to power through obstacles that weaker runners could not.

Climbing- Other times the chased may lead the chased through a route that requires things be climbed. For instance the chaser may decide to try to escape by climbing a fire escape ladder or a tree. Both the chaser and chased should make climbing rolls (1d20 + AGY vs. difficulty). If one succeeds by more than the other then the opposed winner is climbing faster than the other and the number of feet between the two should be reduced or increased by an amount equal to the opposed success.

Inclines & Stairs- On steep stairs or inclines the chased and chaser should be asked to make an AGY + 1d20 vs. difficulty roll to avoid tripping or stumbling.

Non-Human Chasers- Some of the rules don't apply to non-humans. An intangible creature doesn't have to dodge. A flying creature doesn't have to jump over holes. A snake-like creature might not be able to climb. There may also be routes where a non-human chaser cannot go, e.g. a small hallway. AWR rolls should help PCs notice these opportunities to escape.

Running and Combat- Combat actions and reactions can be made while running but are at -4. If runners want to make a sprint (e.g. to move themselves into weapon's range) and attack in the same round they will take a split action penalty (-10 to each). Any time a PC reacts to an attack, dodges something in his or her path, jumps over an obstruction, etc. that uses the PC's one combat reaction for the round (unless the PC has split his or her reaction or has given up his or her action for the round, see p.142).

Example

Pablo, who has SPD 11, END 7 and AGY 13 is exploring an abandoned building. He turns a corner and sees a thing that looks like a shark with elephant legs made out of black, decomposing flesh. Pablo immediately turns and starts running and the shark thing, which has SPD 15, END 20 and AGY 6, starts chasing. At the beginning of the chase there are 10 ft. separating the two.

Round 1- There are some old chairs in the middle of the hallway. Given a choice between trying to leap over them or going around (which would take longer) Pablo chooses to go over. He makes a SPD + 1d20 roll and gets 23, beating the difficulty of 20 assigned by the GM. A moment later the shark-thing encounters the same obstacle and chooses to plow through it, sending chairs flying. The GM rolls to check whether Pablo gets hit by a flying chair, he does not. At the end of the round Pablo is at 6 END and the monster is at 19.

Alleys

Round 2- Pablo and the monster are in a stretch of open hallway. The monster sprints and, seeing this as he glances back, Pablo sprints as well. Pablo rolls SPD + 1d20 and gets 17. The monster rolls SPD + 1d20 and gets 19. Since the monster beat Pablo by 2 points, the 10 ft. gap between them is reduced to 8 ft. Pablo an now feel cold air escaping from the thing's huge mouth. Since both sprinted, both lose 2 END. Pablo is now at 4 END and the monster is at 17.

Round 3- Pablo sees a relatively intact looking door to his left. He wants to run into the room and slam the door as he passes. In order to slam the door without slowing the GM decides Pablo must make a 20 difficulty AGY feat. Pablo beats the difficulty and manages to slam the door closed without pausing. A moment later the creature encounters the door and decides to ram through it. The creature makes a STH + 1d20 roll and gets 45, good enough to bust down the door but not good enough to do it without some loss of momentum. The GM rules that the door slowed the monster down enough to give Pablo an extra 5 ft. of lead, bringing him to 13 ft. At the end of the round Pablo has 3 END left and the creature has 15.

Round 4- Pablo is now being chased through a dimly lit room. What he doesn't see, until it's almost too late, is an air conditioning duct that's hanging low. Pablo will have to duck to avoid hitting it. The monster doesn't care about ducking and decides to sprint. Pablo asks the GM if he can both sprint and duck. The GM says he can but will be at -10 to each. Pablo decides only to duck. He rolls AGY + 1d20 vs. 20 and succeeds. The monster rolls SPD + 1d20 and gets 22. Since Pablo is running at his top SPD (11) but not sprinting, the GM compares 22 (the monster's success) to 11 (Pablo's SPD) and gets 11. The gap has been reduced by 11 ft., leaving only 2 ft. between them. At the end of the round Pablo has 2 END and the creature has 14.

Round 5- The GM requests an AWR roll from Pablo and Pablo fails it. Since it is close enough, the creature does a split action sprint (to get into range) and strike with its teeth. Pablo declares that he will dodge while continuing to run. Since the monster is attacking while running and Pablo is reacting while running, both take a -4 penalty. Pablo succeeds by more and manages to zig out of the way of the creature's snapping jaws. The creature is still in combat range. Then the GM says that Pablo's foot has snagged on something and he is falling. Pablo fails a save vs. loss of balance and falls on his hands and knees. If he had seen it he would have had the option of giving up his one action for the round to make a second reaction and jump over the obstacle. The creature, not wanting to overshoot him, makes a sudden stop. Pablo now gets one combat action for this round. He makes an extended knockaway attack, lashing out with one foot and kicking the creature's head as hard as he can. The creature attempts to dodge but fails. Pablo wins, but because of the bulk of the creature the GM says that the creature stumbles backwards only 1 range increment, yet that is enough to put it out of range. At the end of the round Pablo has 1 END and the creature has 10.

Round 6- This is the last round Pablo can act. At the end of the round he will be at 0 END. The GM requests another AWR roll. Pablo succeeds this time and notices a hole in the floor, just big enough for a human to fit through, only a few feet away. Since it would take Pablo one round to rise, he decides that he'll scramble to the hole on his hands and knees and throw himself in. This action (scrambling) is Pablo's one action for the round. The creature decides to do another split action sprint (into range) and strike. Pablo will try to block the snapping jaws with his feet. Pablo wins. Pablo squirms through the hole. Since he is now at 0 END the GM does not allow him to save vs. falling damage. He takes 1 blunt damage when he hits the floor. Lying on the floor in a dimly lit room, Pablo sees the creature's huge shark-like snout sticking through the hole in the ceiling above him. The mouth opens and black hands reach out, grabbing onto the jaws to pull itself forward. As Pablo watches, a slender feminine figure made out of the same black, decomposing flesh as the shark thing wriggles from the mouth and drops gracefully to the floor next to Pablo's feet…

Fighting

In Brief

Combat begins by determining initiative (who acts first), then proceeds though a number of rounds until combat is finished. Each round, each participant gets one action (used in order of initiative) to use against an opponent and one reaction to react defensively to something done to him or her. There are many types of combat actions and reactions, each with a different intended result, different difficulty and using different attributes. There are also many factors that can modify the difficulty for an action or reaction, including skills, properties of the weapon and environmental variables.

Initiative

At the beginning of combat, each participant makes an AWR + INL + 1d20 roll. The fighter with the highest roll will get the first action in the round, the second highest will go next, etc. The next round, initiative is the same. Initiative must be re-rolled every time there is a break in the action (e.g. fighters stop to taunt each other).

Surprise- The fighter who initiates combat should get a bonus to initiative, from +5 to +15, depending upon how much of a surprise the combat was to the other fighters. Also, characters who are completely unaware that they are the victims of an action (e.g. are hit unaware by a sniper) do not get a reaction.

Attributes in Combat

The following gives a basic idea of how attributes figure into various combat maneuvers:

AGY- Adds to the speed and accuracy of an action/reaction.

AWR- Adds to actions that require noticing and reacting to a flaw in the enemy's defenses, an attack, etc.

INL- Adds to actions that require the use of knowledge (e.g. knowing where to strike to hit a vital organ).

SPD- Adds to actions that involve quick and powerful footwork.

STH- Adds to the damage and pure force of an attack.

A Combat Round

A combat round is a period of time, approximately equal to half a second, during which each participant gets one action and one reaction. The character's reaction is made in response to any attack against him or her at any time during the round.

Converting Actions & Reactions- Characters do not have to use their actions and reactions at the designated time; they can do any of the following:

-Wait and use their one action at the end of the round.

-Give up their action for that round in order to gain an extra reaction (no penalty).

-Turn a reaction into an action (at extra difficulty, see Simultaneous Action, below).

Range

Each weapon has a range. This is how close to or how far away from an opponent a character must be to use that weapon against that opponent. A sword might have a range of 1-2, this means that at range 0 you are too close to use it and at range 3 you are too far away. Jumps (see Noncombat Actions and Reactions) can be used to get into the proper range.

Range 0: Short knives, biting and clawing, minimum range for small pistols.

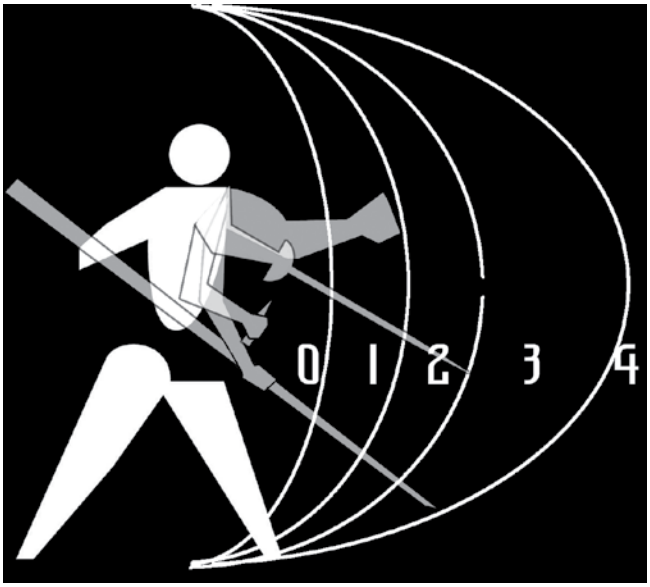
Range 1: Punches, kicks, knives, short swords, disarm and crippling strikes.

Range 2: Long swords, chain weapons, minimum range for shotguns & rifles.

Range 3: Pole arms, broadswords, whips.

Range 4: Projectile weapons.

Why keep track of range? First, because range gives a benefit to opponents with longer weapons. Second, range gives a benefit to opponents who are defending (since the attacker must use an action to step forward).



Action/Reaction Example

Attacker's Action:	Defender's Reaction:
Strike (Handheld)	Dodge

The attacker declares the action first: an attack with some handheld weapon. The defender then chooses to use his or her reaction to dodge the blow.

Attacker's attributes:	Defender's Attributes:
STH+AGY = 23	AWR+AGY = 30

Each action or reaction uses specific attributes, a handheld strike uses STH and AGY, a dodge uses AWR and AGY. The combatants add those attributes.

Attacker's 1d20 roll:	Defender's 1d20 roll:
14	5

Attackers add their attributes to the result of their roll on a 20 sided die. If attackers had applicable skills or situational modifiers, those would be added in as well.

Attacker's Roll vs. Difficulty:	Defender's Roll vs. Difficulty:
Total of 37 vs. difficulty 25	Total 35 vs. difficulty 25

Each combatant's combined attributes plus 1d20 rolls are compared to the difficulty of the given action. Both the attack and dodge have a difficulty of 25. Here, both combatants beat the difficulty for their respective actions.

Attacker's Success:	Defender's Success:
37 – 25 = 12	35 – 25 = 10

Success is the amount by which a player beats the difficulty for the action. Since the strike and dodge are opposed, the person with the most success wins. Here, the attacker's success is more than the defenders (by 2 points, making it an opposed success of 2). The attacker wins and inflicts damage upon the defender (the goal of that particular action).

Alleys

Resolving Combat

A combat action is an attempt to do something to someone else during combat. Like any other attempt to do anything (that the GM decides requires a dice roll) the character's action fails if the player cannot match the difficulty. If the player matches or exceeds the difficulty, the action will succeed unless it is opposed. Like all opposed rolls, the defender must make an opposing action (a reaction) and succeed (beat the difficulty) by more than the attacker succeeded. In other words, whoever does a better job, the attacker or defender, wins.

Noncombat Actions

These are actions which are useful during combat but they do not directly effect opponents and so the opponents can not react to them. The GM usually won't require a player to make difficulty rolls for these actions.

Draw- Ready a weapon for attack (may take more than one round if the weapon is not readily available).

Aim- Aim a projectile weapon at an enemy and follow any movement the enemy makes. If the character later makes an attack against the enemy with that weapon (without their aim having been interrupted) the character gets +4 to the roll.

Rise- Rise to standing from a prone state.

Jump- Move up to 4 range units closer to or farther away from the opponent. See Range (p.140).

Modifiers

Any factor can realistically modify the difficulties for actions and reactions in a combat. GMs will determine bonuses and penalties for each situation. Some common modifiers follow:

Aim	+4 to roll	The attacker has just aimed at the target (see Noncombat Actions)
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is completely obscured.
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is partially obscured or blurred.
Burst	-4 to roll	The character is firing more than one shot at once (up to the max. Rate Of Fire listed for that weapon). If the action is successful, each shot does damage.
Extended Action	+5 to roll	The character puts his or her whole body into an action (+5) but in doing so sacrifices his or her balance (-10 to next action or reaction). Not possible with projectile weapons.
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls	See Improvised Weapons (p.145) for more.
Leaning	-10 to roll	While leaning over to attack something below the character's knees, he or she is at -10 to the roll for any action or reaction.
Mounted	-4 to roll	This is the penalty to make a combat action from atop a moving vehicle or animal. Note that in order to hit opponents, mounted PCs must typically lean (see above). When the PC is moving he or she is at +4 difficulty to hit.
Paired	-4 to roll	The character is attacking with two weapons simultaneously. If the action succeeds, both weapons do damage.
Prone	-8 to roll	Penalty does not apply to kicks or projectile weapons. Because of their reduced profile, prone characters are –8 to hit with a projectile. See also Stomp (p.143).
Simultaneous Action	-20 +WIL to roll	The character makes an action as a reaction: he or she reacts to an action directed towards him or her with another action. Both actions happen simultaneously and neither are opposed. –20 to the roll, but WIL is added in as a third attribute. A will higher than 20 will not give a bonus to the action.
Split	-10 to rolls	The character splits one action into two actions or one reaction into two reactions but gets -10 to each. Actions created in this way must be used at the same time; reactions can be saved for later in the round.
Targeted	-4 to roll	The damage done by a successful attack is done to a specific part of the enemy predefined by the attacker (depending upon the part, the attack might do less damage than normal, but never more).
Underwater	-8 to roll	Because water reduces momentum, all attacks do ½ damage underwater. Characters without any swimming skills can typically move at ¼ their SPD underwater.

Combat Actions

These are actions that every person can attempt, even people with no combat training whatsoever. Actions that only people with special training can do can be found in the combat skills section (p.69).

Actions	Vs.	Reactions
-Each character gets one per round.		-Each character gets only one per round.
-Characters get to use their actions in an order determined by initiative.		-A character can only use a reaction when he or she is the target of an action.
-Actions can be traded for reactions at no extra difficulty.		-A character can use a reaction as an action at extra difficulty (+20 +WIL).
-Characters can wait until the end of the round to use an action.		-If the character is not acted upon in a round, he or she gets no reaction.

Area Attack

Goal- Hit everything in a given area with bullets or other projectiles.

Roll- INL + Number of shots fired + 1d20 vs. 10 + size of area in feet (or +3 per m.).

Weapon- Any that can shoot more than once per action

-Each victim can react separately to the attack.

-This is the only action which doesn't suffer from blindness penalties: the character can fire at an area without seeing it. Distance penalties for projectile weapons do apply.

-When declaring, define an area to spray. Roll a separate success roll for each person in the area.

-Each victim hit takes damage from one projectile.

Blinding Strike

Goal- Damage victim's eyes to blind him or her.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that damages eyes or flesh around the eye or any substance that can obscure vision or makes eyes shut involuntarily.

-Most weapons only partially blind (a nail can only poke out one eye at a time, sand will only partially damage vision).

-Some weapons fully blind on a successful strike (e.g. a caustic chemical spray). See Improvised Weapons: Blinding Substances (p.146) for more.

Crippling Attack

Goal- Damage a limb so as to make it unusable.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that can cut tendons, break bones or dislocate joints (must be able to do at least ½ point of damage had this been a normal strike).

-A successful crippling attack cripples one limb.

-A person can continue to stand on one leg but is at SPD 1, -7 to all actions and reactions, and is -20 to save vs. loss of balance.

Disarm

Goal- Knock the opponent's weapon from his or her hand.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Fists, kicks or anything which can cause a wrist to lose tension.

-Usually a strike to the wrist, though it may be a strike to the weapon itself.

-The victim can resist with an opposed STH feat (STH+1d20 vs. 20) as a reaction.

Grab

Goal- Immobilize one limb or one weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, or anything which can grab (e.g. a snare).

-Once a limb or weapon is successfully grabbed, the grab remains until it is broken. The grabber can choose to let go, or the victim can use an action to make an opposed STH roll against the grabber. Any successful pain/stun attack against the grabber will also cause the hold to be broken.

Grab (Pain)

Goal- Immobilize a limb so that the victim can not move without pain.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Hands

-The victim's arm is simultaneously grabbed and twisted so that the victim must make a save vs. pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 20) to move in any way.

-The victim's free limb is still usable but usually on the opposite side of the body from the grabber.

Grab (Strangle)

Goal- Cut off blood and air flow through the neck.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, anything that can be wrapped around the victim's neck, or anything hard that can pin the neck against a stable surface.

-Grab can be broken by opposed STH roll or pain/stun attack.

-During the hold, the victim loses 1 pooled END per round then 1 BLD per round. If the hold is broken before the victim dies, the lost BLD and pooled END return one each per round.

-Both the victim's hands are free during the grab.

Alleys

Grab (Wrestling)

Goal- Use multiple limbs to immobilize the victim's limbs.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Hands

-Goal is to get the victim in a hold that is easier to maintain than it is to break free from. To break hold victim must make hard (30) STH feat while holder makes easy (10) feat.

-Takes one limb to immobilize a limb (e.g. to immobilize both the victim's arms, attacker must use both his or her arms).

Knockaway

Goal- Do damage and knock the victim backwards.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of inflicting two or more points of blunt damage over a wide area, e.g. a punch by someone with 16+ STH.

-Victim takes 1 point of blunt damage and is knocked back one range unit per point of opposed success.

-Even if the damage is absorbed by armor, the victim is still pushed backwards.

-Victim must make a moderate save vs. loss of balance (AGY+1d20 vs. 20) to avoid falling down.

Knockdown

Goal- Knock the opponent to the floor.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of hooking legs or pushing the victim over through sheer force.

-If successful, the victim is knocked down with no save. See p.141 for more on prone fighters.

Knockout

Goal- Knock the victim unconscious.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of doing 1 or more points of blunt damage

-If successful, the victim can make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness (WIL/END+1d20 vs. 20). If they can not successfully oppose the knockout, the victim is knocked unconscious for one round per point of the attacker's opposed success.

-For every successful knockout, there is a chance of serious damage to the victim, whether the attacker desires it or not. Generally, if the attacker's opposed success is more than 10, the attack also does 1d6 damage to BLD.

Pain/Stun

Goal- Stun the victim by causing him or her pain.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Nearly anything capable of blunt, bladed or burn damage or otherwise capable of causing pain.

-If the attack is successful the victim must make an opposed save vs. shocking pain (difficulty 20). If the victim fails by a difference of less than 10, the victim loses his or her next action. If the victim fails by 10 or more, the victim wes his or her next action and reaction.

Slash

Goal- Cause damage, distracting pain and disfigurement by an attack on the face or any other sensitive area.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of cutting or tearing long gashes in flesh.

-Does ½ point BLD damage and the victim must make an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain. Victim suffers a -1 penalty for each point of opposed failure in this save.

Stomp

Goal- Do 2x damage to victims lower than the attacker.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Feet.

-The victim must be below the knees of the attacker.

-Because this attack uses the full weight of the attacker against the victim, it does double the damage of a normal kick.

Strike (Handheld)

Goal- Do damage to the victim.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Any handheld weapon capable of doing damage.

-If successful, it does the normal damage listed for the weapon.

Strike (Projectile)

Goal- Damage to the target.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 -1 per functional range unit vs. 25

Weapon- Any projectile weapon.

-For every one Function Range (FR) unit away the victim is, the character takes a -1 penalty to the roll (see Projectile Weapons, p.145).

Tackle

Goal- Knock both the attacker and the atackee to the ground.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Body

-If the tackle is successfully dodged, the attacker must make a save vs. loss of balance to avoid ending up on the ground.

-A tackle does no damage.

Vital Strike (Bladed)

Goal- Use a bladed weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Any weapon that does bladed damage.

-Bladed damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Blunt damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where bladed damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, heart).

Vital Strike (Blunt)

Goal- Use a blunt weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40

Weapon- Any weapon that does blunt damage

-Blunt damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Bladed damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where blunt damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, temples).

Wing

Goal- Damage easy to hit but non-vital parts.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Any weapon capable of doing damage.

-Aimed at exposed yet non-vital body parts (e.g. arms, thighs and ribs).

-Any damage not absorbed by armor is cut in half.

Reactions

Dodge

Goal- Sidestep or duck under the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-After a successful dodge, the defender is still in roughly the same place as he or she was before.

Entangle

Goal- Stop and trap the weapon.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30

-Requires something that can stop and trap the weapon (e.g. chain, meat hook, trident, jacket, folding chair).

-If successful, the action is blocked and the attacker must use another action to unentangle the weapon.

Flip

Goal- Dodge attack and knock over attacker.

Roll- AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35

-This requires that the attacker make a lunge (punch or attack with a handheld weapon) and that the defender must be close enough to use the momentum to flip the attacker over a pivot point (usually the defender's shoulder).

-If successful, the attacker is knocked down with no save.

Drop

Goal- Drop below the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

-Whether successful or unsuccessful, the defender ends up on the floor at the end of the reaction.

Jump

Goal- Jump out of weapon's range.

Roll- SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Unlike the Noncombat Action: Jump, this is in reaction to a specific attack.

-Determine how many range levels the character needs to move to be out of the range of the weapon.

-+10 difficulty for every range level beyond the first.

-If the defender beats the difficulty but doesn't beat the opposed action, the PC gets hit but ends up out of weapon's range at the end of the reaction.

-Can also be used to jump towards the opponent, e.g. jump towards an opponent to get too close to be hit by a shotgun.

Mental Block

Goal- Resist attempted mind control (especially psychic attacks).

Roll- WIL+1d20 vs. 20

-This is only useful against attacks that go directly to the character's mind.

Parry

Goal- Block the attacker's weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Be sure to declare what you are blocking and with what.

Advanced Combatants

Combatants with extremely high attributes or high levels in combat skills may find it useful to use split actions and reactions as well as simultaneous actions.

For instance, a very skilled attacker may split her action and do two actions at once, e.g. a stomp on the opponent's ankle (a pain/stun attack) and a punch in the ribs (strike). The attacker will be at -10 to each of these actions. The victim cannot defend against both unless he splits his reaction and takes a -10 penalty to each.

Or, a very skilled defender may split a reaction in order to defend and make a simultaneous attack. For instance, the defender may step to the side (a dodge) and simultaneously slash at the attacker's neck (a vital strike). The defender is -10 to the dodge and is -30 and +WIL to the Vital Strike (-10 from the split, -20 +WIL from the simultaneous strike).

Advanced fighters may also split reactions and save them for later in order to react to an unexpected attack (such as a simultaneous Strike).

Projectile Weapons

Range- When making any action with a projectile weapon, the PC takes a penalty equal to the number of range units away the target is. For example, if a weapon has a FR (Functional Range) of 5 ft. then for every 5 ft. away the opponent is (rounded down) there is a -1 penalty. A target 60 ft. away would be -12 to hit with that weapon. Weapons also have a Maximum Range (MR) beyond which the weapon can not do damage.

Cover- A character who lies flat, facing the enemy (reducing his or her profile) is very hard to hit with projectile weapons (-8 to hit). Any type of cover can give the enemy a minus to hit depending upon how much of the character's body is protected. Treat this as armor: standing partially behind a tree might have an AR of 5 and a PR of 15 bladed/blunt (from that one direction only).

Fighting Non-Humans

Machines- Non-Biological opponents do not have BDY, BLD or INCY. Instead, each device has an amount of blunt or bladed damage that, if it takes, will cause it to cease functioning. One machine, for example, may be able to take 4 blunt or 9 bladed damage before it stops working.

Size- Animals and machines which are bigger or smaller than humans are easier or harder to hit (see table). Also, small opponents can only take limited blunt damage because, instead of absorbing the damage, the opponent goes flying (unless the opponent is crushed against something).

Size	to hit
bee	-20
rat	-10
cat	-5
human	0
horse	+5
elephant	+10
house	+20

Special Attacks- Sense should be used in fighting non-humans. For instance, a blinding strike would be silly against a monster that does not depend upon its eyes, a rhinoceros would not be very susceptible to a knockdown attack by a human, etc. Without some knowledge of mechanics, a vital strike against a machine would be impossible. Vital and pain stun strikes on alien creatures depends upon the attacker successfully guessing what areas to hit to cause pain or do vital damage.

Swarms- A swarm is a group of small animals attacking the character that are so numerous we treat them as one entity. A swarm can not be parried or dodged, only run from.

Armor can help the character: any portion of the character's body which is covered by armor can not be attacked. The amount of the character's body which is protected is the ratio of the AR to 20. So, a character with AR 10 could only be attacked by half the swarm at once. A character with an AR of 5 could only be attacked by three-fourths of the swarm.

Most swarms do not dodge and instead make simultaneous strikes at no minuses (for convenience's sake, assume that all swarm animals which can attack make a successful strike). Characters, on the other hand, usually can't kill more than a few swarm animals with each strike, except with certain weapons like poison sprays or flame throwers.

Weapon Specific Difficulties

The difficulties listed for the various actions and reactions represent the difficulty with the "typical" weapon someone might use to do that action or reaction with. Some weapons are designed so that some actions/reactions are easier, while others are much harder. For instance, a sledgehammer is so heavy and awkward that it is hard to make a strike with it. On the other hand, a whip is designed for pain/stun attacks and so such an attack would be easier. In weapon profiles, special actions and reactions are listed as:

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)

Easy (-4 difficulty)

Hard (+4 difficulty)

Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

Improvised Weapons

Normal objects can be used as weapons but since they are not designed as weapons they have higher difficulties to use. Many will also break after the first attack.

Slashing Weapons: Any object with a cutting edge strong enough to cut flesh does 1 bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: Objects with a point on them strong enough to be driven into flesh do ½ point of bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: Blunt objects with a good handle can do between 1 and 3 blunt damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.

Thrown Objects: Any heavy object without a handle can be thrown at an enemy. If a character attacks someone with a huge rock at point blank range, we can simply say that is was a throw at 0 ft. They have normal difficulties but the following ranges:

Weight	Functional Range	Dmg
1-2 lbs. or ½-1kg.	3 ft. or 1 m.	½
3-5 lbs. or 1-2½ kg.	3 ft. or 1 m.	1
6-10 lbs. or 2½-4½kg.	2 ft. or ½ m.	2
11-20 lbs. or 4½-9kg.	1 ft. or 1/3 m.	3
21-99 lbs. or 9-45kg.	½ ft. or 1/8 m.	4
100+ lbs. or 45+ kg.	½ ft. or 1/8 m.	1 dmg/ 20lbs. or 10 kg.

Blinding Substances: Any substance which can be thrown in the eyes. PCs can make a blinding attack with these substances at no minuses. They can be thrown only within a range of 5 ft. (1.5 m.). Most of these substances can be avoided by closing one's eyes (a very easy dodge). A successful attack, though, will partially blind (-7 to all actions or reactions) or fully blind (-15 to all actions/ reactions) the opponent for a length of time, depending upon the causticity of the substance. Extremely caustic substances (like bleach) will not only blind but act as a pain/ stun strike on a successful blinding attack.

After Combat

After combat is finished, PCs who have taken injuries should seek out medical attention. The best case scenario is that someone with the Emergency Medicine skill and proper medical equipment can immediately treat wounded PCs. Immediate and proper medical care will eliminate the following post-combat complications:

Bleeding- For each point of bladed damage a PC has taken, that PC will lose another ½ point of BLD over the next 15 minutes unless the wound is cared for (tourniqueted, cauterized, stitched up).

Pain- When the endorphins the body produces in an emergency wear off, the PC will feel every bit of damage done. The PC must save vs. distracting pain with a difficulty of 5 for each point of damage done.

Infection- Unless a wound is disinfected, the victim risks a serious infection. For every point of bladed damage a PC has taken, the PC must make a save vs. disease contraction with a difficulty of 10 per point of damage (max. 30). Note that burns and ragged damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.133) increase the chances of infection and are very difficult to treat using medical skills. If the PC fails the save vs. contraction, he or she suffers from a disease with the following profile (see p.135 for more on fighting diseases): Disease Progression Rating: 20. Disease Progression Speed: 12 hours. Treatments: Antibiotics. Symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.

Simple Combat Example

Rusty and Juanita are in a fight:

Rusty: 12 AWR, 8 AGY, 10 INL, 6 SPD, 14 STH, 7 WIL, 3 BLD, 5 BDY, 4 INCY. No combat skills. Has a hunting knife (range 0-1, damage: 2½ bladed). No armor.

Juanita: 8 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 INL, 16 SPD, 4 STH, 8 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY. Kickboxing (2) (gives +8 to wing, +8 parry, +8 to knockaway, +4 to strike with her feet). No weapons. Her kicks do 1½ blunt damage. No armor.

GM- Roll initiative.

Rusty- (rolls INL (10) + AWR (12) +1d20) 28

Juanita- (rolls INL (13) + AWR (8) +1d20) 23

GM- Rusty, you get the first action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm doing a split action, I'm moving into range 1 and doing a strike at Juanita with my knife.

GM- Juanita, are you reacting?

Juanita- I'm going to dodge.

GM- Okay, roll. Remember, Rusty, since you split your action you're -10 to each action. The jump into range will succeed automatically, but you're -10 to hit.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) -10 (split action) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 27, that's 2 success.

Juanita- (rolls AWR (8) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 26. Only one success.

GM- Okay, the knife hits you Juanita, and does 2½ damage to your BLD. Okay, Juanita, now it's your action.

Juanita- I'm going to make a strike with my feet.

Rusty- I'll block with my arm.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeeded by 8.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeed by 12.

GM- Okay, Rusty parries the kick. Next round. Rusty, your action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm going to make a strike against Juanita with my knife.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your reaction?

Juanita- Um… I'll parry with my leg.

GM- Are you parrying the knife blade?

Juanita- Hell no. I'm going to parry his arm. I'm close enough to do that, right?

GM- Yeah.

Juanita- Well that's what I'm doing.

GM- Okay, roll.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 3 success.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) + 8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 30. Five success.

GM- Okay, you kick the blade out of the way. Juanita, it's your action.

Juanita- I'll do a knockdown, with my feet.

Rusty- I'll let her kick me and do a simultaneous strike.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 30). Two success.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) +WIL (7) +1d20 vs. 45). Five success.

GM- Okay. Juanita, you take another 2½ damage to your BLD. Rusty, your knocked on the ground.

Juanita- My BLD is zero now, and I'm down to 3 INCY.

GM- Well, you've just been mortally wounded. From now on you'll be losing a point of pooled END every round. Rusty, it's your action.

Rusty- I'll get up.

Juanita- While he's doing that, I'm going to run away.

Complex Combat Example

Zeus, Chupatra and Michaela wake up in an empty, decaying Victorian house with no idea how they got there. In the living room is a steamer trunk with chains wrapped around it. Something inside is incessantly rattling and straining the chains. Each takes a turn watching it while the other two explore the house, look for ways out, and arm themselves as best they can. After a few hours one of the chains snaps. Chupatra, who is watching the trunk, call for Zeus and Michaela and they come quickly. The trunk opens and what appears to be a young girl in a Victorian dress climbs out of the box and stares at the ground, not seeming to notice them.

"Um… hello?" says Zeus.

The girl looks up at Zeus, then makes an inhumanly high leap in the air towards him.

Zeus
AGY 10, AWR 6, END 13, INL 10, SPD 12, STH 17, WIL 8, BLD 5, BDY 6, INCY 5.
Club (2) (+8 to Parry, +8 to Vital Strike (Blunt), +4 to Wing, +4 to Strike)
Two Candlesticks (each does 2 blunt damage, +2 from Zeus' high STH, range 1)

Chupatra
AGY 16, AWR 13, END 10, INL 12, SPD 11, STH 9, WIL 15, BLD 5, BDY 4, INCY 4
Knife Fighting (4) (+20 to Vital Strike (Bladed,), +16 to Jump, +16 to Split Jump & Strike, +12 to Dodge), Kickboxing (3) (+12 to Wing, +12 to Parry, +12 to Knockaway, +8 to Strike).
Two kitchen knives (range 0-1, 2 bladed, 1 in 20 chance of breaking per attack)

Michaela
AGY 9, AWR 15, END 5, INL 18, SPD 6, STH 5, WIL 17, BLD 3, BDY 4, INCY 6
Spirit Speed (2), Untouchable (3)
Armor (made from pieces of leather furniture) with AR 4, PR 2 bladed 1 blunt, One kitchen knife (range 0-1, 2 bladed, 1 in 20 chance of breaking per attack)

Little Girl
AGY 15, AWR 15, END 20, INL 5, SPD 40, STH 35, WIL 20, BLD 7, BDY 7, INCY 7.
Punch does 4 blunt damage, kick does 3 blunt damage.

Initiative- The PCs were ready for a fight, but not ready for the little girl to leap at Zeus, so the GM rules she gets +5 to initiative. They all roll INL + AGY +1d20. Chupatra (with 42) goes first, then Michaela (with 39), then the Little Girl (with 27) and then Zeus (with 19).

Round 1- The Little Girl is leaping towards Zeus. Chupatra, who gets the first action this round, does a split action jump (to get into range 1, which is the range for her knife) and a Strike (with the knife). Once she declares what her action will be, the GM declares the Little Girl's reaction: she will make a split reaction: one will be a Parry, and the other she will save for later. Chupatra rolls STH (9) + AGY (16) -10 (split) +16 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 12. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + AGY (15) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 27. The strike is parried.

Next Michaela gets an action. She rolls Spirit Speed to increase her abilities. She rolls WIL (!7) +4 (skill) +1d20. She gets 24, allowing her to increase her SPD to 16, AGY to 19 and giving her +40 to jumping rolls. This is the only action she can make this round.

Next the Little Girl goes. The GM declares she is going to make a Vital Strike against Zeus with her feet. Zeus declares that for his reaction he will block with one of the candlesticks. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + AGY (15) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 27. Zeus rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 28. The attack is blocked.

Next, Zeus gets his action for the round. He decides to make a strike with one of the candlesticks. The Little Girl will use her saved split reaction to block with her hands. Zeus rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 21. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + AGY (15) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 23. The attack is blocked.

Zeus, Chupatra and the Little Girl, who all made combat actions and reactions, all lose 1 END.

Round 2- Chupatra goes first again. She is still in combat range. She declares she will make a Vital Strike (Bladed) against the girl with her knife. The GM warns her that if she is wrong in guessing that the girl has more-or-less human anatomy, then the vital strike will only do normal strike damage. Chupatra says she is willing to take that risk. The GM declares the Little Girl will do a split

reaction, blocking and saving the other reaction for later. Chupatra rolls INL (12) + AGY (16) +20 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25, she succeeds by 28. The Little Girl rolls STH (25) + AGY (15) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 20. The kitchen knife does double its normal bladed damage, so 4 is subtracted from the Little Girl's BLD (bringing it to 3). The PCs notice that instead of blood the Little Girl's wounds ooze a silky white fluid. They don't know it yet, but in 1 round that fluid will start to hurt them. Chupatra also rolls 1d20 to see if the knife breaks. It doesn't.

Next Michaela gets an action. She declares she will make a split action jump (into range) and stomp on the girl. This requires Michaela actually jumping on the girl's head. The GM declares the Little Girl will make a simultaneous Crippling attack with her saved reaction. Michaela wants to back out but it is now too late. First, the PC makes Michaela roll to see if she can jump up and into stomping range. It's not difficulty with her +40 to jumping rolls and she succeeds. Then she rolls Stomp at SPD (16) +STH (5) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25. She does not meet her difficulty and thus does not damage to the Little Girl. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + INL (5) -10 (split) + WIL (20) +1d20 vs. 30 +20 (simultaneous action). She beats her difficulty by 18. A success of 18 bypasses Michaela's armor, which only has an AR of 4. Michaela's leg is crippled, reducing her SPD to 1, giving her -7 to all actions and reactions and giving her -20 to saves vs. loss of balance. The GM makes her roll vs. loss of balance to see if she can land on her feet. She fails and is now prone.

Next the Little Girl goes. She declares she will split her action, doing two separate Vital Strikes against Chupatra, one with her feet and one as a punch. Chupatra declares she will use her one reaction dodging the punch. For the punch, the Little Girl rolls STH (25) + INL (5) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 40 and beats the difficulty by 0 (she exactly matched the difficulty). Chupatra rolls a dodge at AGY (16) + AWR (13) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 18. Chupatra avoids the punch. For the kick, which is unopposed, the Little Girl rolls STH (25) + INL (5) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 40 and beats the difficulty by 2. Chupatra takes double the blunt damage of the girl's normal kick: 6 blunt damage. Chupatra only has 4 BDY, so all those are taken away and the remaining 2 points are doubled, thus doing 4 damage to her BLD, leaving Chupatra with only 1 BLD.

Next Zeus gets to go. He declares he will make an extended strike against the girl with his candlestick. Although she could take her one remaining split action and turn it into a reaction, the GM declares the girl will do nothing. Zeus rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) +5 (extended) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 24. He does the normal blunt damage of the candlestick (+2 because of his high STH). The Little Girl's BDY is thus reduced from 7 to 3.

At the end of the round, since everyone made combat actions, everyone loses 1 point of pooled END.

Round 3- Chupatra goes first. She declares she will split her action and will make two separate Vital Strikes with her knives against the Little Girl. The GM declares the Little Girl will split her reaction and make two blocks. Chupatra rolls INL (12) + AGY (16) +2 (skill) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 35 twice. The first time she succeeds by 16 and the second time she succeeds by 5. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + AGY (15) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 and succeeds by 23 and 30. Both of Chupatra's attacks are blocked.

It has now been 1 round (approximately half a second) since Chupatra first cut the little girl. The GM informs them that they smell a 'chemical' smell and that their eyes and lungs are starting to burn. He requests that each make a save vs. distracting pain at 20 difficulty. Zeus and Chupatra both beat the difficulty. Michaela fails by 1 point, meaning she will take a -1 penalty on all further actions and reactions.

Next Michaela goes. She uses her one action for this round to stand.

Next the Little Girl goes. She declares she will make a Knockaway against Zeus (with a kick). Zeus says he will Parry with his candlestick. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + SPD (40) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 39. Zeus rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) -10 (because his last action was extended) vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 18, not enough. He takes 1 point of blunt damage (bringing him to 5 BDY) and is knocked back one range level per point of opposed success. Since the Little Girl succeeded by 59 and Zeus by 18, the opposed success is 41, meaning Zeus is thrown across the room. Zeus must also make an opposed save vs. loss of balance to land on his feet. Yet since it is opposed, he has to not only beat the difficulty (20) but do so by 41 (the opposed success) which he can only do it he rolls a 20 (automatic success). He does roll a 20 and lands on his feet.

Next Zeus gets his action. He is too far away to get to the Little Girl this round. Instead he decides to split his action: to run towards her as fast as he can and to throw one of his candlesticks at her. Treating the candlestick as an improvised thrown weapon, the GM decides it will have a functional range of 3 ft. and do 1 blunt damage. The GM says Zeus is 15 feet away, so he will take a -5 penalty. The Little Girl has no reactions left so can do nothing. Zeus rolls INL (10) + AGY (10) -5 (range) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25. He does not meet the difficulty and the candlestick flies past the Little Girl.

All have exerted themselves this round, so all lose END.

Round 4- Chupatra goes first. She declares she is making an extended Vital Strike with her knife. The GM declares the Little Girl is going to Parry. Chupatra rolls AGY (16) + INL (12) +5 (extended) +20 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35. She beats her difficulty by 36. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + AGY (15) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats her difficulty by 38. The attack is blocked.

Next Michaela goes. She declares she is making an extended Vital Strike with her knife. The Little Girl has no reaction left and so can do nothing. Michaela rolls INL (18) + AGY (19) +5 (extended) -7 (one leg) -1 (failed save vs. pain) +1d20 vs. 35. She beats her difficulty by 2. The Little Girl takes 4 bladed damage. Since she only had 3 left, her BLD is brought to 0 and her INCY is reduced by 1 (to 6). From this point forward, the Little Girl will lose 1 END per round (in addition to that lost by exertion) and when it reaches 0 she will be incapacitated. Michaela rolls 1d20 to see if the kitchen knife breaks. She rolls 1 and most of the blade of the knife snaps off.

Next the Little Girl goes. Zeus is not yet in striking range, but Chupatra and Michaela are. The GM declares the Little Girl will make a split Action: making a Strike (punch) against Michaela and saving the other action for later. Michaela, who is at -7 from her broken leg and -10 from having just done an extended attack, declares she will close her eyes and use her Untouchable skill. Since this is not a physical action, none of those penalties apply. The Little Girl rolls STH (35) + AGY (15) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats the difficulty by 25. Michaela rolls a skill roll of WIL (17) -1 (failed save vs. pain) -10 (using Untouchable as a combat reaction) +1d20. She gets 21 total, allowing her to take only one fourth damage from physical attacks. The Little Girl's punch does 4 blunt damage, so Michaela takes 1 point of blunt damage, reducing her BDY to 3.

Next Zeus goes. He has been running at his max SPD (12) since last round and the GM says he is close enough to do a jump into range. Zeus declares he will do a split jump and strike with his candlestick. The Little Girl declares she will turn her remaining split action into a reaction and will block. Zeus rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25. He beats his difficulty by 16. The Little Girl rolls STH (25) + AGY (15) –10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 and beats her difficulty by 17. No damage is done.

Zeus, Chupatra and Michaela lose 1 END at the end of this round, the Little Girl loses 2 because she is mortally wounded. Michaela, who started with only 5 END, is the only one close to exhaustion. She has only 2 pooled END left, meaning that she can only make combat actions for 2 more rounds before needing rest.

Round 5- Chupatra goes first. She declares she will make an extended Vital Strike against the little girl. The GM declares the Little Girl will parry. Chupatra rolls AGY (16) + INL (12) +20 (skill) +5 (extended) +1d20 vs. 35 and rolls a 1, meaning she fails. The Little Girl's parry roll is unnecessary, although she has still lost her only combat reaction for the round.

Next Michaela goes. She asks the GM what she can do with the remains of her broken knife. He says she can still use it as a weapon, but it will only do 1 bladed damage. Michaela declares she will do an extended Vital Strike with the stub of a knife. The Little Girl gets no reaction. Michaela rolls INL (18) + AGY (9) +5 (extended) -7 (broken leg) -1 (failed save vs. pain) +1d20 vs. 35 and succeeds by 2 points. The attack does double the weapon's normal bladed damage: 2 bladed. The Little Girl has no BLD left, so 2 is subtracted from her INCY, bringing it to 4.

Next, the girl goes. She will split her action, making a strike against Zeus (a punch) and saving the other action for later. Zeus says he will react by making a simultaneous Vital Strike against the girl. The girl says she will use her remaining split action, turn it into a reaction, and Parry. The girl doesn't roll a 1 and so succeeds at punching Zeus. He takes 4 blunt damage (BDY is reduced from 6 to 2). For his simultaneous Vital Strike, Zeus rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) + WIL (8) +8 (skill) +1d20 vs. 40 +20 (simultaneous). He does not meet the difficulty, and so does not hit the Little Girl. Yet the Little Girl has used her remaining split action for the round.

Next Zeus gets an action. He will make an extended Vital Strike with his candlestick at the Little Girl, who cannot react. He rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) +5 (skill) +5 (extended) +1d20 vs. 40. He beats the difficulty by 6. He does double the normal blunt damage to the girl, so 8 blunt. The girl only has 3 BDY left, so all of that is removed, and the remaining 5 blunt damage is doubled and done to the girl's INCY, reducing it to less than zero. The candlestick buries itself deep in the girl's skull, crushing her brain and causing white goo to ooze out. The girl crumples to the floor.

Suddenly, all the lights start to fade.

Zeus, Chupatra and Michaela wake up in an empty, decaying Victorian house with no idea how they got there…

Tips for GMs: Keeping Combat Quick

1. Never let the PCs get into a fair fight. Either the PCs should be ambushed, or the PCs should be doing the ambushing, or the PCs should be vastly superior to the people or things they are fighting, or the PCs should be vastly inferior to their opponents.

2. Enemies run away, surrender or play dead when they realize they are getting their asses kicked.

3. Figure out the NPC fighter's typical reaction and typical reaction ahead of time and calculate it (e.g. this opponent strikes at 1d20 vs. 3).

4. NPC fighters only make simple actions (e.g. strike and dodge, no extended simultaneous split actions).

5. Don't bother keeping track of END if the battle is only going to last a few rounds.

6. Give opponents weapons with the same range as that of the PCs – this makes for a lot less jumping around during battle.

7. Start PCs and opponents in weapons range of each other.

8. Instead of calculating and rolling for every effect of a poison on an NPC opponent, just give the opponent a flat penalty to all actions and reactions. E.G. instead of the large list of symptoms of Monkshood, just say that a person hit by it takes 1 BLD and a progressive -10 to all rolls per round until dead.

9. Give each player only a limited amount of time to declare an action or reaction.

Chapter Three - A History of Unpopular Ideas

Animism

In Brief: Invisible spirits are everywhere; the supernatural world is amoral and potentially dangerous.

Origin: Animism has been discovered by aboriginal people around the world. Animism can often be seen appearing in young children in non-animistic cultures before they are fully indoctrinated into the worldview of their culture. This had led many anthropologists to say that Animism is the 'default' belief system of humans.

Tenants: Animists believe in an invisible supernatural world. Everything that does not have a visible cause (e.g. an illness, the weather, the change of seasons, etc.) has a supernatural cause. Spirits are everywhere and exist in a variety of animals and plants as well as some non-living objects (e.g. a rock or the hearth fire). Since these spirits are equally capable of doing harm or good they are thought of as morally neutral. Because they can be dealt with via simple sacrifices or ceremonies they are thought of as being fairly stupid. Just as there is variety in nature, though, there is variety in the spirit world: some spirits are very smart, some are very powerful, some are almost always benevolent and some are almost always malevolent.

Animistic cultures also believe in one or more soul. A soul is what leaves when a person dies and is what travels when a person dreams. Multiple soul models usually have a soul responsible for consciousness and a soul responsible for health and the will-to-live.

Anything that works via unexplainable means, e.g. a medicinal herb, is believed to work via spirits or supernatural power. Some people are believed to have supernatural power that they were born with, were granted by a spirit, or earned through some difficult or dangerous trial. Supernatural power is associated with strength of will but they are not necessarily the same thing. Supernatural power controlled by people is considered amoral, like a tool, it can be used to help or harm people. Thus healers, shamans or holy-people who have supernatural power are typically feared as much as they are venerated.

People who are physically or mentally 'different' than others are often considered to have more power, and in many cultures the role of shaman is often given to mentally ill people who would otherwise have no useful role in the tribe.

Animism is thus a system that denies the existence of higher-beings (gods) and of an overarching principle of good and evil in the universe. Although invisible, the supernatural is much like everything else in the natural world: amoral, ubiquitous, and capable of being useful or dangerous.

What Scares People: The animistic world is filled with random, invisible dangers and the only people who know how to deal with this invisible world can easily use their powers for evil.

Major Works: None. Pure animisms are universally pre-literate. Anthropology books can contain good descriptions of animistic beliefs and practices. Works by post-animistic religions may still retain some animistic principles.

Buddhism

In Brief: Universe a cycle of reincarnations and suffering. The only way to escape is to shed all attachments.

Origin: Buddhism was created in India in 528 BC. The story goes that a young prince was kept secluded from the horrors of everyday life. He was never allowed to see people who were poor or sick. When he finally did see such people he struck out to find a cure for suffering. He studied under many Indian spiritual masters but found no system that worked for him. He wanted to create a spiritual system that was a middle path between hedonism/self-indulgence and asceticism/self-denial. Upon meditation he discovered the middle path and became enlightened. He then set out to teach his method to others.

Buddhism spread throughout Asia and even today is considered among the great world religions. Yet it is a declining religion. It is all but extinct in its birthplace of India and in other countries it is rapidly being displaced by Christianity, Islam and anti-religious Communism. Only a few countries still have a Buddhist majority.

Tenants: Life is suffering and each being is trapped in a cycle or reincarnation that keeps us continually being born, suffering, dying and being reborn again. The only way to escape suffering is to escape the cycle of rebirths into nirvana, a state where one neither exists nor does not exist.

Alleys

The two things that keep souls trapped in the cycle or rebirth (and indeed which gives the whole universe existence) is: First, the law of karma, which states that the suffering we create or are a part of will come revisit us as misfortune, and, Second, that all desires, beliefs, opinions and emotions ('grasping') cause suffering. To gain enlightenment one must let go of all grasping and also abstain, as much as possible, from accruing more bad karma by creating or participating in suffering. This is accomplished through personal revelation and behavioral restrictions. Gaining enlightenment is a process that typically takes a thousand lifetimes.

What Scares People: The insistence that all existence is inevitably the source of suffering is too 'pessimistic' for some. To Buddhism the universe is just a giant perpetual motion machine which creates and runs on suffering and in which souls are created so they can suffer until they achieve enlightenment.

Many also take issue with a religion that has a goal of each member extinguishing everything that makes people unique. Enlightenment means, in essence, becoming a blank and featureless spirit motivated only by compassion.

Major Works: Gautama Buddha's teachings were only written down after his death. The "*Abhidhamma"* is considered to be the most complete collection of the Buddha's commentary on philosophy and psychology. Different traditions have different versions of this document. Mahayana Buddhists have a number of Sutras: additional texts believed to be discourses from a Buddha. The two most popular of these sutras are the "*Diamond Sutra"* (which explains 'non-abiding': avoiding mental constructs in daily life, and is sometimes read by Buddhists to dispel demons) and the "*Heart Sutra"* (in which the Buddha of compassion explains that 'form is emptiness, emptiness is form'). In Tibet, where a variant form of Buddhism developed, Tantras are very important. Tantras are 'discovered texts' hidden by Buddhist masters because the people were not yet ready to understand them and use them safely. The tantra often contain extreme ceremonies that represent a 'shortcut' to enlightenment via a path that veers dangerously close to insanity.

Platonism and Neoplatonism

In Brief: This world only a dim reflection of the world of perfect forms.

Origin: Plato was born in Greece in 428 BC and died in 347 BC. He was born to a rich and politically active family. He was said to have been a playwright but when he heard Socrates teach he gave up playwriting in favor of teaching and philosophy, even burning his latest manuscript. Plato founded the Academy, a school, and apart from a few unfortunate experiences with politics he taught and wrote until his death. Plato's philosophical works were fictional dialogues between speakers (including real people like Socrates). After Plato's death philosophers at his academy continued to explore his philosophies. What is known today as neoplatonism was merely the evolution of platonic ideas in the academy.

In 529 AD a Christian emperor closed the Platonic academy, killing Neo-Platonism. Neo-Platonism did resurface briefly with early renaissance thinkers, and ideas from Neo-Platonism have survived in western occultism.

Tenants: One of Plato's most unique ideas is his theory of forms. Plato believed that there was a realm of perfect forms like "equal" "beauty" "justice" "big" "small," etc. Objects in our world are but dim reflections of these perfect forms. Something beautiful, for instance, is beautiful only because it reflects a tiny bit of the form of beauty. The ultimate form of good is paramount and makes all other forms possible. Plato believed that humans have immortal souls that are reincarnated and that humans may retain some knowledge from past lives.

To explain the relationship between the perfect realm and the mundane realm, Plato came up with the allegory of the cave. He said that if a group of humans were born in a cave, chained so tightly that they could not move their heads, and grew up seeing nothing but shadows on a wall caused by things happening outside the cave, those humans would believe the shadows were all that was real. Furthermore, Plato said that if someone from the cave escaped the cave and came back to tell the prisoners about the real world, that person would be regarded as insane.

Today, the perfect ideals of Platonism are seen as a foundation for the understanding of mathematics, where the ideals of numbers exist in their own perfect realm separate from the actual things that are being counted.

Plato was the first person to come up with a psychodynamic system. He posited that there were three parts to the soul: a part that loves truth, a part that values honor and victory, and a part which hungers for food and sex. Plato believed that these parts should act in harmony, each doing it's own job and not interfering with the others.

Neo-Platonism taught that there was a One god and that everything in the universe is just a lesser emanation of that One.

Many Neo-Platonists looked for ways to escape the limits and imperfections of the mundane world. Some Neo-Platonists believed that philosophical contemplation could lead to peace and perfection. Some used the Greek Mysteries, secret mystical systems that taught via dramatic revelation, as a means to enlightenment. Iamblichus, an influential Neo-Platonist, said that since one cannot think past the limitations of thought, the mysteries were the only way to achieve knowledge of divinity.

Major Works: Plato's best statements of his metaphysics can be found in "*The Republic*."

Gnosticism

In Brief: This world created by an evil, insane god. Humans are divine spirits trapped in bodies of unholy matter.

Origin: Gnosticism is not a single doctrine, but a number of related doctrines. Gnosticism was created by early Christian thinkers (later labeled Christian heretics). Gnosticism was the most popular in the first and second centuries AD. Around 160 AD, Valentinus, one of the most popular Gnostic thinkers, almost became elected head of the Christian church. Gnosticism also found root among Jewish, Muslim and Pagan thinkers.

Many of the tenants of Gnosticism found their way into Catharism, a religion popular in France in the 11th to 13th centuries before it was wiped out by a Catholic inquisition and crusade.

Even after the Cathars, Gnostic beliefs continued to influence many. Even Jung and some existentialists studied Gnosticism.

Tenants: This world is essentially evil, created (depending on the Gnostic group) as either a terrible mistake or as a purposefully built prison. Humans are divine beings, descended from the godhead, trapped in this material world. All suffering, strife and ignorance is a consequence of our being trapped in, and having bodies that are part of, the unholy material world. To some Gnostics this world is just a poor copy of the Pleroma, the world of the divine.

Most Gnostic groups believed in Sophia, a holy being of wisdom that is the mother of humanity. In most beliefs Sophia made some sort of error, usually a misguided attempt to use creative power without the permission of the godhead, which resulted in the birth of an insane god known as the Demiurge. The Demiurge created and rules the mundane world and many Gnostics thought that the Demiurge sincerely believes that he is the penultimate god. Yet he is a cruel and insane god and the Hebrew bible is filled with his lies and delusions.

Most Gnostics believed that a messiah will or has come to help humans escape the mundane world and reintegrate with the godhead. Many Christian Gnostics believe that Jesus was the son of Sophia (thus brother to the Demiurge) and came into this world as a pure spirit.

Gnostics believed that some people are born with purely material souls. They have no spark of the divine, no ability to become enlightened, and can only act in a base fashion.

Different Gnostic groups had different ideas on how to escape from the mundane world and return back to the divine. Some believed in complete asceticism, denying themselves all worldly pleasures, including sex. Others believed in indulging in all pleasures and in breaking every worldly taboo (since this world is an illusion, nothing one does here can be immoral).

What Scares People: That our world is ruled by an insane, evil, megalomaniacal being and that all of human existence as we know it is essentially unholy.

Major Works: The "*Nag Hammadi"* codices, discovered in 1945 in Egypt, are the best collection of Gnostic texts discovered in the modern age.

Descartian Skepticism

In Brief: We can't know if anything we believe is real.

Origin: Descartes was a philosopher and mathematician born in 1596 in France. Like many other philosophers of his age, Descartes was looking for logical proof of the existence of god. What he discovered, and became famous for, was his theory of the deceiver. He went on to create what he believed was proof of god's existence, but other philosophers remained unconvinced that he had found sound logical proof.

Tenants: The deceiver argument is that we have no way of knowing if anything we experience and believe in is real. Every sensation we are currently experiencing could be put in our heads by an all-powerful deceiver. We cannot even trust our own memories, since a deceiver may control those. We cannot know that we are people or 'beings' in the traditional meaning of the term. All we know is that something is doing some thinking. 'I think therefore I am.'

Although other systems had posited other worlds more 'real' than the mundane realm, Descartes was the first to rationally demonstrate that everything we experience could be a lie. Some credit Descartes as the first to come up with the concept of virtual reality.

What Scares People: The perpetual and unconquerable uncertainty. Humans can never be sure, no matter what they discover, that what they experience is true.

Major Works: Descartes' theory of the deceiver is found in his book "*Discourse on Method*."

Sadism

In Brief: Morality is false, people should hurt and prey upon others for their own pleasure.

Origin: The Marquis de Sade was born in 1740 in France to an aristocratic family. He was jailed for repeatedly abusing and torturing prostitutes, sometimes with the help of his wife, and for poisoning party guests with what he

thought was an aphrodisiac. He was sentenced to death but his sentence was later changed to life-in-prison. He also spent time in a mental institution. While in prison he wrote hardcore pornography that espoused his personal philosophy. He was freed during the French revolution and even worked in government, but was imprisoned again by Napoleon. He died in prison in 1814, but his works, which were smuggled out, drew a following.

Tenants: Sade believed that laws were good for society but bad for individuals. He believed that the 'brotherhood of man' is a myth and that humans are naturally selfish. He advocated the legalization of murder, destruction of governments and religions, and the sacrifice of all to senseless pleasure. Sade believed that a 'libertine' should break all sexual taboos and should abuse and exploit others for his or her own pleasure. He thought that, on the whole, this would make people happier by allowing them to be true to their own natures. People were naturally cruel and pan-sexual and denying their natures made them weak. Destruction of the 'crutches' that are laws and morality would make for a healthier, happier, stronger humanity.

What Scares People: Sade advocated people breaking laws and taboos and hurting other people.

Major Works: His play "*Philosophy in the Bedroom*" (1795), an x-rated play about the corruption of a 15-year-old virgin, is considered to have the best and most concise description of his philosophy.

Marxism

In Brief: Profiteering is evil and hurts workers. Capitalists are 'vampires.'

Origin: Socialism and communism were created in 1830's Paris by secret revolutionary societies. Although there was much overlap between the two, communism was typically more extreme. Karl Marx (b. 1818, d. 1888) was a German, atheist, economist as well as a heavy drinker and cigar smoker, who created the first complete economic theory of Communism. Marx died without seeing a Communist revolution.

Communists came to power in Russia at the end of the 1917 revolution and in Cuba in 1959. Chinese leader Mao Zedong created his own form of Communism, Maoism, which was the basis for revolutions in China, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea. Today, the Philippines, Columbia, Nepal, and India have Marxist or Maoist revolutionary groups trying to take over.

Tenants: Marx's economic system values everything in terms of labor required, not money. For instance, the value of a machine in a factory is the total of the labor it took to mine the metal, design and build the machine and bring the machine to the factory.

To Marx, investors and bankers contributed nothing of any value. In fact they do the opposite: take labor inherent in possessions and lock that labor up so it serves no useful purpose. In essence they steal the labor of workers, labor that they could have otherwise used to make their own lives better. By their very nature capitalists exploit the work of laborers, preying upon them like vampires.

Marx saw revolution by the laborers against the capitalists as an inevitable consequence of the modern economic system.

To Marx, religion was the "opiate of the people." The purpose of religion was to keep people from realizing that the true route to bettering their lives was to gain freedom from capitalists.

What Scares People: Not only does Marxism say that the people who run modern society are 'vampires' preying upon the majority, it also says that revolution is the inevitable result.

Major Works: Marx collaborated on the "*Communist Manifesto*" (1848) a political work. His book "*Das Kapital*" (1867) was the first major economic theory of Communism. He died before he could write the second and third planned volumes in the Das Kapital series.

Nihilism

In Brief: Religion, morality and rationality are false. Nobody has good reason to believe in anything.

Origin: The first people who identified themselves as Nihilists were a group of anarchists (mostly young intellectuals) that terrorized 1800s Russia. They denounced religion, family and government, and some tried to destroy society by means of terrorism and assassination. The most influential writer of nihilist philosophy was Friedrich Nietzsche (b. 1844 in Germany). Nietzsche was briefly a professor, but he left his position to be a medic in the Franco-Prussian war. There he was traumatized by the carnage he saw. He also contracted diphtheria and dysentery, which left him with health problems until his death. Nietzsche was soft spoken and shy, especially among women. He had a big walrus mustache and piercing eyes. He suffered from a weak stomach and migraines. He was a composer who esteemed creativity over rationality. Despite his ill health, Nietzsche lived as a wandering, stateless person who wrote books on philosophy. He suffered a mental breakdown and spent the last ten years of his life insane and cared for by his sister (his critics blamed the insanity on syphilis).

After his death, Nietzsche's ideas, especially that of the superman, were co-opted by the Nazis to justify their policies. After WWII he as so strongly associated with Nazism that no serious academic would dare discuss his ideas in a positive light.

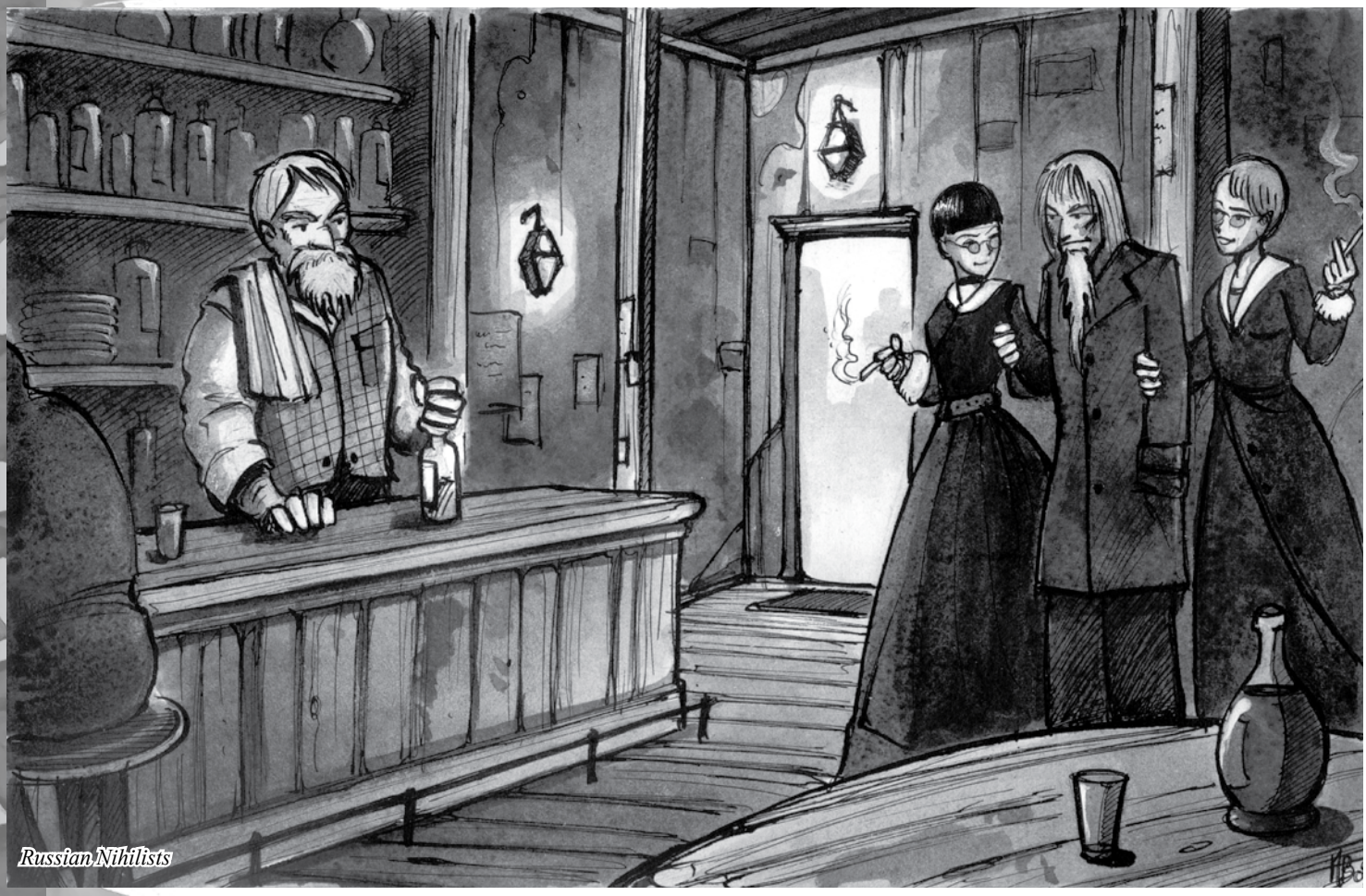
Tenants: Nihilism is the belief that nothing is real and that people should believe nothing, have faith in nothing and give no loyalty. There is no "true" reality, there is only what we choose to believe. Most Nihilists are anarchists, believing that modern society is based on beliefs in false concepts and that the destruction of governments, society and even culture will improve human lives. Nietzsche believed that realization of meaninglessness was an inevitable progression of society. This society will eventually collapse, as past societies have, under the weight of this nihilist realization. After modern society collapses, chaos and amorality will reign.

Nietzsche believed that every being is motivated by the 'will to power': the desire to control everything around it. To Nietzsche, brutality is natural. Humans, furthermore, are not created equal. Some are naturally more powerful than others and are born to lead humanity. Yet religion has been created by the weak to steal power from these natural leaders by calling on the authority of a fictional god. Religion lulls people into 'herd animal morality' in which personal will and creativity is suppressed.

Nietzsche believed that after the collapse of society the ubermensch, or supermen, would arise again as the rulers of humanity. They wouldn't be disabled by nihilism but neither would they allow a fictional god to dictate their morality. They would be strong enough to hurt others, which would make them strong enough to be truly creative. The supermen would not need laws, they would be ruled by their own self-discipline and they would sublimate their animal drives into creativity. The supermen would realize that reason is false, that people are not born equal, and that creativity is of paramount importance.

What Scares People: Nihilism is strongly associated with radical and violent anarchism (and sometimes with fascism). Nihilism posits that none of the beliefs which modern people hold dear are true.

Major Works: "*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*" (1885) is perhaps the most metaphysical of Nietzsche's works, where the famous phrase 'God is dead' is used.



Russian Nihilists

Freudian Psychoanalysis

In Brief: Humans unaware of warring forces and unacceptable thoughts going on inside them.

Origin: Sigmund Freud, b. 1856, d. 1939, was an Austrian neurologist who specialized in cases of hysteria. After listening to the life stories of several patients he became convinced that their problems were the result of issues from their pasts that they were not conscious of and that before they could be cured they had to become conscious of those issues. He created and experimented with many means of getting to these subconscious problems, created a theory of the inner working of the mind, and expanded his theories to fit all types of abnormal and normal human psychology. To most, Freud was the first psychologist.

At Freud's early lectures he was booed and called a pervert. He persevered through several years of being hated until, gradually, his ideas began to be accepted. Today, more recent theories have contradicted much of Freud's ideas but there are still hardcore Freudian analysts who believe in everything Freud said.

Tenants: Freud used the metaphor of a floating iceberg to describe the mind. The tiny bit that is above the surface of the water is the conscious, those workings of our mind which we are consciously aware of. That which might slip above the waves briefly is the preconscious: things like memories and knowledge which we are not always conscious of but could become conscious of at any time. The vast majority of the iceberg below that is the subconscious. This represents the knowledge, memories, emotions, thoughts and drives which we are not conscious of and could not become conscious of without use of special techniques.

Ways Freud investigated to gain access to this secret subconscious world included interpretation of the symbolism of dreams, hypnotism, word association (saying words in response to other words without time for thought) and analysis of the meaning behind seemingly random mistakes ('freudian slips').

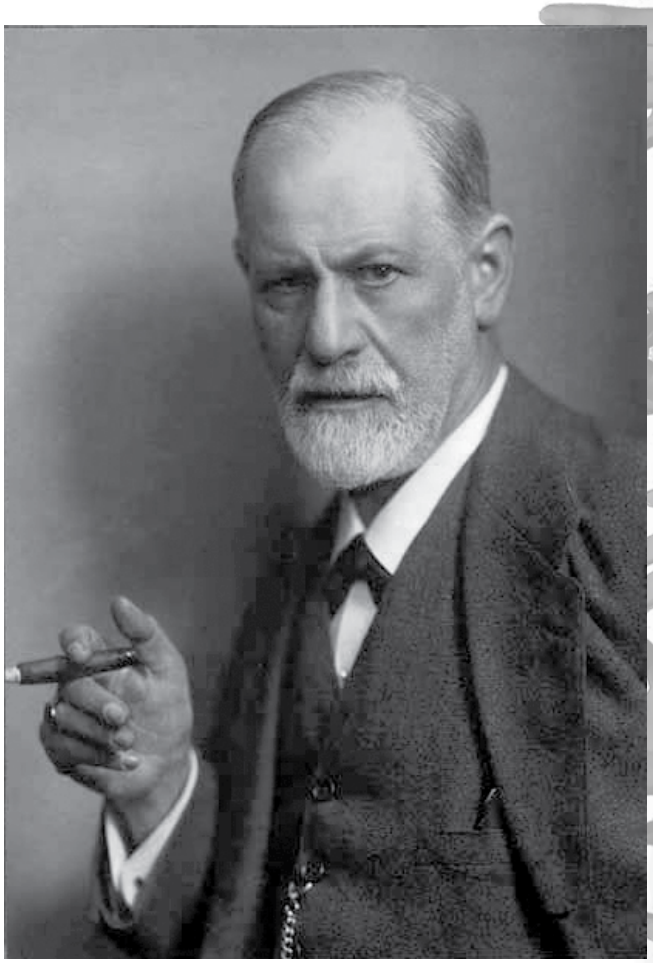
Freud posited a psychodynamic theory of the mind: that there were different forces at work in the human subconscious that represented different basic desires, and that the struggle and interplay between these forces explained human behavior. Freud included the Id, Ego and Super Ego in his earliest models of the subconscious. Later Eros (the lust for life and reproduction) and Thannatos (put in to explain war and genocide) were added.

To Freud, the division between the conscious and subconscious was there to protect the conscious mind from awareness of any thoughts, memories or drives that would disturb it. According to Freud, humans are a mass of conflicting desires: we want to be good, we want to be evil, we want to satisfy our every desire, we want to be proud of our self-control. The subconscious hides these conflicting desires and gives us the illusion that we are a unified being.

Later in his studies, Freud created a theory of developmental psychology. This would be his most controversial theory. He said that humans go through periods of first exploring and, second, denying sexual pleasure through oral, anal and phallic means. He also theorized that each person went through a period of wanting to have sex with his or her opposite sex parent and simultaneously fearing and wanting to kill the same sex parent. Psychological problems in adulthood are often caused by unresolved issues from these stages. Many modern Freudians choose to look at this part of Freud's theory as a metaphor for or one possible example of human development, not something which is literally true for every person.

What Scares People: People are initially off-put by the idea that they, and everyone else, had incest fantasies as children. Beyond this initial shock it is unnerving to imagine that we are unaware of the majority of what goes on in our minds and that deep down we think and want things too horrible to be conscious of. In short, who we think we are is not who we are.

Major Works: The "*Interpretation of Dreams*" (1899) is his most important book on using dreams to access the subconscious. "*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*" (1905) describes his theory of human sexual desires and their relation to neuroses. "*The Ego and the Id*" (1923) is the best description of Freud's theory of the structure of the subconscious.



Surrealism

In Brief: Escape rationality and gain access to the subconscious mind.

Origin: Surrealism drew on the works of Hegel, Marx and Freud, but especially from Dadaism. Dadaism was an anti-art movement, formed after WWI. Dadaists rejected aesthetics and meaning in an attempt to accept and understand a chaotic world which contains no inherent meaning. French Writer André Breton (b. 1896, d. 1966) is the most influential surrealist and his writings form the core of surrealist tenants. Paris was a major center for surrealism, but during surrealism's peak in the 1920s-40s it spread throughout Europe and North America.

Tenants: While Dadasim was an anti-art movement, surrealism was about art as an expression of pure imagination without any censorship by the conscious mind. The primary technique of surrealism is automatic writng/painting/drawing, in which one enters a light trance and creates without the creation being consciously directed. More than just a technique for creating pleasing art, this technique was believed to help people connect with their subconscious minds.

Surrealism was more than just an art movement, it was meant to be a revolutionary movement. Surrealists believed that many of the problems of the modern world stemmed from a false rationalism, a fiction that the world makes sense. Surrealists believed they were at war against the progressive mechanization of human lives and relationships.

What Scares People: Although people still love surrealist-style art, the revolutionary and anti-rational ideas of surrealism are scary. Surrealism is about acting without censorship of thought, which many associate with chaos and anarchy. Nonsense is fine when restricted to a piece of canvas, but when people try to apply it to the important matters of life it becomes threatening.

Major Works: "*Surrealist Manifesto*" (1924) by André Breton.

Existentialism

In Brief: No god, so humans must give meaning to their own existence.

Origin: The two primary thinkers responsible for existentialism are Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre (b. 1905, d. 1980) wrote the major philosophical texts and Camus (b. 1913, d. 1960) wrote the major works of fiction. Sartre drew from Freud and Marx in the creation of his theories. Sartre was a philosopher and writer, later in life he was a peace activist and Marxist. Existentialism was most popular in the 1940s and 1950s.

Tenants: Like Nihilism, Existentialism posits that there is no higher power that gives meaning to our lives.

To Sartre, a paper cutter is a good paper cutter if it does its job, cutting paper, well. Humans were not created by an intelligent being, thus have no job, and thus there is no such thing as a 'good' human.

Sartre believed that the ability to negate, to recognize the absence of something or the possibility of something not being true, was proof that humans had ultimate freedom.

The only meaning in human lives is that meaning which humans give to their own lives. In most existentialist fiction the hero goes through a crisis where he or she first feels sadness and horror (the "anguish of freedom") about the lack of meaning to the universe and then finds joy in the ultimate freedom of it.

This freedom does not absolve people of responsibility. Since people have ultimate freedom they cannot blame biology or experiences for how they've turned out. People must take responsibility for their own character flaws.

What Scares People: Though atheism was not new, Existentialism validated atheism by building a theory of morality and psychology compatible with it. Many have misread Existentialism as saying that humans should be amoral.

Major Works: Sartre wrote "*Being and Nothingness*" (1945) which gave an Existentialist view of consciousness and rationality and "Critique of Dialectical Reason" (1960) which tried to reconcile Existentialism and Marxism. Camus wrote "*The Stranger*" (1942) about a man accused of murder, and "*The Plague*" (1947) about people in a plague-torn city.

The Works of H.P. Lovecraft

H.P. Lovecraft, b. 1890, d. 1937, was a New England science fiction and horror writer. He was an atheist and many of his works confront the horror of living in a universe not ruled by a benevolent god. In Lovecraft's cosmology the penultimate god of the universe is insane and blind, perpetually spinning and dancing in the center of the universe. The blind god has no idea humans even exist, leaving humans in the Lovecraft universe in the same position as an atheist who believes that the universe is ruled by chaotic, unfeeling natural laws. In Lovecraft's series of Reanimator stories the anti-hero, Herbert West, reasons that since there is no god and no soul then humans must be just machines and a dead human can be brought to life if one can find a means of restarting the machine.

In some of Lovecraft's work he strayed from horror into fantasy. Many of these stories take place in the fantastic (and sometimes dangerous) world of dreams. Although Lovecraft was not the first writer to describe the world of dreams his works remain some of the most evocative.

"The most merciful thing in the world ... is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents... The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but someday the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality... That we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age." - H. P. Lovecraft

Alleys

Jungian Psychology

In Brief: All humans share a subconscious set of symbols that effect how we see the world.

Origin: Carl Jung (b. 1875, d. 1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist. He was a colleague and friend of Freud. He studied mythology, mystical Christianity, alchemy, Gnosticism, Kabbalism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Tenants: Jung believed that all humans share a collective subconscious. This is a system of symbols and metaphors ('archetypes') that form the basic subconscious world of humans and that humans are born with. The way humans categorize reality is based on these archetypes. Some of his archetypes included the shadow, animus/anima, father, child, maiden, wise old man, animal, trickster, persona, hermaphrodite and self. Jung believed that archetypes found their way into myths and fiction. Archetypes can also be met and interacted with in dreams.

Jung also studied personality types. He created the modern concepts of introverted and extroverted. He also distinguished between thinking and feelers and between sensers and intuiters.

Unlike Freud, who was generally disparaging of religion, Jung thought humans could find psychological health in religious or spiritual pursuits. His advice to one patient led to the creation of Alcoholics Anonymous.

What Scares People: Like Freud, Jung saw humans as ruled by the interaction of forces we are seldom aware of. Unlike Freud, Jung espoused self-exploration via mysticism and religion and so his theories were unsuitable for basing a scientific discipline on.

Major Works: The "*Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious,*" collected works from 1934-1954. "*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*" (1962), a book about Jung's own inner journeys. "*Symbols of Transformation*" (1952), a book about dream analysis.

Punk

In Brief: Fuck the establishment.

Origins: Punk started as an underground music scene. In England, high unemployment drew young people to bands that could express their frustration with a lack of prospects. The term Punk was first coined by the two publishers of Punk Magazine to describe this aggressive new type of music. The word "punk" once referred to a doll that one knocked down in a carnival game. Calling someone a punk was like calling them 'a worthless little piece of shit.' Punk was a backlash against mainstream culture: rigid conformity to conservative values, ineffective hippie idealism, sappy folk music and vacuous disco. Punk was raw and energetic, in contrast to the over-produced popular music distributed by major labels. Punk was primarily distributed by tiny independent labels due to the controversial lyric content, aggressive sound, and the perceived lack of commercial appeal. Over time, Punk evolved its own fashion and its own lifestyle and philosophy. Punk zines were small, photocopied magazines featuring hand lettering and collage art. Zines helped create and spread punk philosophy.

Tenants: There is no single statement of punk belief. Instead, there are a wide range of beliefs. People who don't believe anything but like the music or the clothing style are usually called poseurs. The following elements are common in punk:

-Disdain of governments, religions, schools, corporations and Western culture in general.

-Purposeful alienation from society by means of extreme appearance and behavior.

-Resisting society's attempts to imprint its values (e.g. you want to get a nice job so you can buy a nice car and a nice house).

-Semi-independence from the economy by means such as DIY (Do It Yourself), squatting, thrift store shopping, panhandling, shoplifting, etc.

-Anger as a useful element of change.

-Rejection of standards of beauty espoused by the fashion industry and other profit-making institutions.

-Rejection of authority, especially by means of vandalism.

What Scares People: Punk pits youth who do not yet have a stake in modern society against mainstream values. People fear punks because they don't know what societal codes a punk has chosen to reject and thus a punk is unpredictable and possibly dangerous.

Major Works: The zines "*Flipside*" (L.A. 70s-00s), "*Kill Your Pet Puppy*" (UK 70s and 80s), "*No Cure*" (UK 70s-80s), "*Slash*" (70s and 80s), Sniffin' Glue (UK 70s). Maximum Rock & Roll (S.F. 80s-00s).

Paglian Feminism

In Brief: Women are more powerful then men, sex is powerful, dangerous dirty.

Origin: Camille Paglia (b. 1942 in New York), a lesbian, libertarian, atheist, classicist and academic, published books containing a unique form of feminism. Her

work was partly a reaction to orthodoxy of 1960s and 70s feminism, which many criticized as being anti-sex. She also drew on the works of Freud, Jung and Nietzsche. Paglia's work first became popular in the 1980s, and since then Paglia has become a fixture (although a controversial one) in the worlds of academia, art criticism and opinion.

Tenants: According to Paglia, gender differences are inherent and the sexes cannot be made equal and identical merely by modifying culture. Paglian feminists believe that sex is powerful and females are inherently more powerful than men. Females are also more a part of nature, which Paglia describes as Cthonian: ugly, dark, terrible, unpredictable, amoral and gross. Out of fear of the Cthonian and a desire to reduce the power vacuum, men have created culture, society, religion and science. To Paglia, many modern ideas are an attempt by men at self-deception so they can try to ignore the overwhelming presence of the Cthonian. Instead of dealing with the Cthonian around them, men immerse themselves in abstract principles and in myths of sky-gods and perfect heavens. Paglian feminists are for pornography and prostitution, seeing those uses of sex not as a subjugation of female sexuality but as an exercise of its inherent power. To Paglian feminists, women are still inherently more powerful and more dangerous than men, and activities such as institutionalized sexism and rape are futile attempts to fight female power with male power.

What Scares People: Most feminists dislike Paglia because she fails to rail against the subjugation and commodification of women by the sex industry, and because she says that women need to take more responsibility in defending themselves against sexual violence. Religious conservatives dislike Paglia because she advocates lesbianism, fetishism and other 'sins.' Others reject Paglian Feminism because of her pessimistic portrayal of both sex and nature as dark, frightening and amoral forces.

Major Works: "*Sexual Personae*" (1990) by Camille Paglia is her first and still her most influential work.

Postmodernism

In Brief: Anything anyone thinks or says is inextricably mired in that person's prejudices.

Origin: Postmodernism began in the 60s and 70s as papers in academic journals criticizing 'modernism'. In 1966, Algerian-born French philosopher Jacques Derrida (b. 1930, d. 2004) created "deconstruction," a major piece of postmodernism. In the decades since then postmodernism has gone from simply being an academic worldview to being a major movement in art and literature that has started to effect popular culture.

Tenants: In postmodernism there is no ultimate truth. Humans, as imperfect beings, can only understand things in the context of our own experiences. Any idea anyone has carries with it the prejudices of the thinker. Deconstruction is taking apart some piece of art, literature, belief, philosophy, etc. into little pieces, explaining each piece in terms of the cultural and personal context of the creator.

Postmodernism rejects academic authority, since academia is rooted in, and thus cannot escape, a biased system that has excluded the viewpoint of the poor, women and non-Whites. New forms of academia based on the viewpoints of women, homosexuals and non-Whites are seen as just as valid as traditional academia.

Postmodernism find it necessary to argue with people on their own terms. Rather than discussing the merits of a scientific work, a postmodernist can criticize all of science as a biased system and deconstruct all the assumptions and prejudices that form the foundations of scientific thought.

Ultimately, Postmodernism doesn't create anything new. It criticizes, then criticizes the criticism, etc. until it is dealing in terms so abstract that several years of schooling in postmodernism is needed to understand them. For some people, postmodernism is nothing more than confusing the audience into thinking that you are right. For example, a computer program was created that strung together postmodernist phrases at random to create a piece of postmodern-sounding nonsense. These papers were successfully submitted to professors in esteemed academic programs who gave them passing grades.

Postmodernism doesn't attempt to uncover ultimate truths that lie beyond prejudices because, to a postmodern thinker, prejudice is inherent in all human thought. Postmodernism criticizes without suggesting any alternative.

Post-modernism has found its way into popular culture as an extreme self-consciousness of 'meta-narratives': the unspoken assumptions behind any form of art, entertainment and communication. Attempts to be straight-forward and sincere, to say exactly what one believes, are increasingly seen as naive.

What Scares People: Postmodernism robs people of hope that society is eliminating its prejudices and progressing towards truth. Postmodernism leaves humans doomed to a world of perpetual blind prejudice, with the well-educated able to point out other people's prejudices but not their own.

Major Works: Derrida has written dozens of books and many more papers. "*Of Grammatology*" (1974) is one of his most comprehensive works on Postmodernism.

Chapter Four - Los Angeles

The "Los Angeles area," as discussed here, is a huge urban sprawl taking up the majority of four counties: Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Bernardino County and Riverside County. The L.A. area is among the world's largest, most diverse and most rapidly changing urban areas. For some L.A. is 'el Norte' a place of hope, opportunity and freedom. For others L.A. is a distillation of everything that's bad about America: a wasteland of the desperate and ignorant poor and the morally bankrupt rich, fueled by false dreams and egocentrism.

History

In Brief: L.A. has a long history of racial intolerance, false advertising, corruption and disasters.

When L.A. was first seen by Europeans in 1542, there were three major groups of Indians living there: the Tongva (later to be called Gabrieliňos after the mission San Gabriel), the Tataviam (later to be called the Fernandeňos after the mission in San Fernando) and the Chumash. European diseases hit the Indians before Spanish missionaries arrived. When missionaries first counted the native population they found about 26,000 in about 170 villages. The Indians were hunter gatherers and fishers and were among the few North American Indians willing to brave the open seas.

As a rite of passage L.A. area Indians used toloache (aka Jimsonweed), a dangerous deliriant drug, to gain visions. The Indians had a wide variety of classes of supernatural practitioners, including "doctors" that could control rattlesnakes, control the weather, transform into bears and those that could both cure and send diseases. Those who would become shamans were generally gifted, during a dream or vision, with spirit animals or power objects that would thereafter aid them. The L.A. area Indians also had people who dressed and lived as the opposite sex and were generally considered holy.

Spanish missionaries established missions: fort-like compounds in which Indians were forced to live so they could be indoctrinated into Catholicism and European ways of life. For the most part the L.A. area Indians submitted peacefully to this process. However, Europeans diseases continued to ravage the Indians, especially a smallpox epidemic in 1864, and by 1900 there were only a handful of L.A. area Indians left.

Spanish settlers arrived in the L.A. area in 1781. In 1835 the Mexican congress incorporated L.A. as a city and named it the capitol of the Mexican state of California. At that time there were about 2,000 people in L.A. The US briefly captured L.A. during the Mexican-American war, but left behind insufficient forces to hold it and were driven out by the residents. In 1848 Mexico transferred possession of California to the US (part of the agreement was that Spanish would remain one of the official languages of California) and in 1850 L.A. was incorporated as an American city. There was resentment by much of the Hispanic population against the "gringos" (Anglo Whites) who in turn discriminated against the ex-Mexicans who had been made citizens. There were many instances of Hispanic banditos robbing gringos. In 1850 there was, on average, one murder per day in L.A., impressive considering the city's small size at the time.

Noir

Noir is a genre that was born primarily in L.A. It started during the great depression with Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe novels, first published in 1939. These novels showed L.A. through the eyes of a hard-boiled detective. Noir quickly found its way to films with such movies as "*The Maltese Falcon*" (1941), "*The Big Sleep*" (1946) and "*The Third Man*" (1946). Noir comes from the French word for black and refers to both the darkly lit style of filmography and the darkness of the plots.

The heroes of early noir were not rich adventurers or principled heroes; they were hard-working middle class people trying to get by doing an unglamorous 9-to-5 job, such as the job of being a private detective. Through the eyes of these middle class heroes Noir portrayed the lazy and corrupt world of the rich and the desperate and dangerous world of the poor. The rich were villains because they had no principles and would do anything to entertain themselves. The poor were villains because they would do anything for a buck.

Although Noir is remembered for what people today think of as exaggerated stereotypes (the hard-boiled private dick, the sultry femme-fatale, the streetwise gangster) at the time it was an unparalleled attempt at realistically portraying the crime, misery and moral ambiguity of urban life.

Noir showed rich people being miserable and psychologically corrupt despite their palatial mansions, armies of servants and ability to get away with nearly anything. Rich characters who sought to isolate themselves from the rules and concerns of normal Americans usually ended up dying in the gutter. It was a rejection of all the promises and ideals that L.A. based itself on. Noir was not only a criticism of L.A., it was a criticism so well made that it caused people around the world to hate L.A. Noir's effect on the world's image of L.A. continues to this day.

L.A. Timeline

8,000 BC – Chumash settle in L.A. area.

200-500 AD – Tongva displace Chumash as major group in L.A. area.

1542 – L.A. first seen by Europeans.

1771 – 1st mission in what is now Montebello

1777 – L.A. pueblo established, Indians baptized.

1781 – Spanish settlers arrive in L.A. area.

1810 – Gage Mansion completed – today it is the oldest building in L.A..

1817 – First school in L.A..

1921 – Mexico gains independence from Spain.

1835 – L.A. is capitol of Mexican California

1836 – Civil War between North and South California.

1836 – L.A. population is 2,228.

1846 – US briefly occupies L.A. during Mexican-American war.

1848 – California to US from Mexico.

1850 – 1 murder per day in L.A..

1864 – Smallpox epidemic kills nearly all remaining L.A. Indians.

1868 – 1st streetlights.

1870 – 1st Chinese community in L.A..

1870 – White Anglos outnumber Hispanics and Indians.

1871 – 19 killed in White mob attack on Chinese quarter.

1873 – 100,000 eucalyptus trees brought from Australia.

1892 – Oil discovered in L.A. area.

1897 – 1st automobile in L.A..

1900 – 100,000 in L.A..

1910 – Bomb set by union leaders kills 21 at L.A. Times printing press.

1912 – 1st gas station in L.A..

1913 – Los Angeles aqueduct brings water from Owens Valley

1914 – Birth of a Nation (historical movie about KKK) filmed.

1916 – Forest Lawn cemetery opens.

1922 – 1st radio stations in L.A..

1924 – L.A. has one million people.

1924 – Owens Valley residents dynamite aqueduct.

1927 – Warner brothers produces first talkie.

1928 – 1st Mickey Mouse cartoon.

1928 – L.A. has highest suicide rate in nation.

1928 – Gambling ships off coastline (outside 3 mi. jurisdiction).

1929 – Great Depression begins.

1933 – 120 dead in Long Beach earthquake.

1933 – 36 fire-fighters die in canyon fire.

1935 – Griffith Observatory opens

continued next page

By 1870 White Anglos outnumbered Hispanics and Indians. L.A. also got its first Chinese community. A year later there was mass violence in the Chinese quarter. A White man was accidentally killed during a Chinese gang battle. A White mob attacked Chinatown, killing 19.

By 1900 L.A. was a city of 100,000 people. It was a major center of industry and the rich and powerful of L.A. were fighting to try to establish a union-free city which would attract businesses and investors from around the country. The Los Angeles times, at the direction of its owner, used all of its propagandizing power to fight unions. This culminated in bombs set by union leaders killing 21 people at a Times printing press. For some time thereafter L.A. remained one of the least unionized industrial areas in the country.

At the same time that L.A.'s barons were trying to create L.A. as a utopia for industrialists, real estate speculators were designing, adverting and selling the Los Angeles area as we know it today. L.A. was the first such area to be extensively planned and marketed by private interests. L.A. was envisioned as a series of small, idealized Midwestern towns connected together (and to industrial areas) by freeways. L.A. was a city designed to use the new technology of the automobile and to make people simultaneously insulated and connected to the amenities of city life. It was also a city designed to be extensively economically and racially segregated, where nobody would have to live next to someone not like themselves. This built-in segregation created huge Black and Hispanic ghettos that exist to this day.

Retiring middle-class Midwesterners were convinced that they could buy small orange groves and live in peace, prosperity and excellent weather. Like all advertising, though, the promises of utopian life were, at best, an exaggeration and, at worst, a flat-out lie. By 1928 it was a city of pollution and racial tensions, with the highest suicide rate in the nation.

L.A.'s growing population (one million people by 1924) had a need for water that quickly outstripped the needs of the area (which, except for the L.A. river, was basically a desert). In 1913 L.A. created an aqueduct to bring water from the Owens Valley. Later, Owens Valley residents, angry at having their water stolen, bombed the aqueduct with dynamite.

In 1914, Birth of a Nation was filmed in L.A. This movie showed the Klu Klux Klan as the saviors of a South in crisis after the end of the Civil War. Birth of a Nation was generally regarded as the greatest movie of its era by White Americans and it began the shift of the movie industry from the East Coast to Hollywood.

The great depression began in 1929. California was not as badly hit as the rest of the nation. Thousands of "arkies" and "oakies' (Arkansas and Oklahoma farmers who has been wiped out by the depression and dust bowl) tried to hitchhike to California. To stem the influx of jobless people into the state, Los Angeles blockaded the California-Nevada border.

In the 1930s, L.A.'s mayor and chief of police ran a huge corruption ring. City contracts were awarded to those who gave kickbacks. Police force jobs and promotions were sold out of city hall. The LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) vice squad was the most corrupt divisions, acting as bag men for the city's vice kings and queens. When a restaurant owner and a private-detective tried to expose the corruption the restaurant owner's taxes were raised, family was threatened and restaurants were stink-bombed and the detective's car was bombed, severely injuring him. Despite these attacks the two succeeded in exposing the corruption. The mayor was recalled in 1937 and many LAPD officers were forced to resign. Many of the vice lords left L.A. and went to Los Vegas.

WWII was a time of greater-than-usual racial tension in L.A. Japanese-Americans, many of whom were successful farmers in the L.A. area, were imprisoned in 'relocation centers' from 1942-1945. Evidence of their disloyalty was later found to have been manufactured by White farmers who just wanted to take their land. At the same time L.A. was a major military port and the streets were teeming with soldiers on leave. These soldiers came into conflict with zoot suiters, young Mexican-Americans known for wearing snazzy outfits. The tensions culminated in the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943 in which the soldiers went on a rampage beating zoot suiters and other Mexican-Americans.

Alleys

After WWII a post-war economic boom hit the nation and the L.A. area did especially well, gaining the aircraft, munitions, automotive, furniture and clothing industries. At the same time, anti-Communist hysteria swept the nation and the heavily Jewish film industry was especially suspect. Led by Senator McCarthy, congress had hearings to try to root out the Communists. Anyone named a Communist (even if it was a lie) was blacklisted by the fearful film industry. In 1947 the "Hollywood Ten" were charged with contempt of congress for refusing to say whether they were Communists.

In 1951 farm owners wanted cheap labor to work on their farms so they began the bracero program, a program of bringing in Mexican citizens to work as farm laborers. They were not given citizenship and were often brought in on a purely seasonal basis. The bracero program opened the floodgates of immigration that California could not close even when the bracero program was ended in 1964. The legacy of this program is the massive amount of undocumented illegal aliens living in L.A., making up 20% of the nation's illegal immigrants.

The 1960s saw more tensions. In 1965 there was a huge riot in the Black ghetto of Watts. 34 were killed and 6,000 buildings were burned down. In 1970 an anti-Vietnam protest, led mainly by Mexican-Americans protesting the disproportionately large number of Hispanics going to Vietnam, turned into a riot and 3 were killed. In 1969 the LAPD raided the L.A. headquarters of the Black Panthers. The Panthers resisted and a five-hour siege took place.

In the 1970s the area's gigantic population put strains on the city that necessitated major changes. Air quality standards had to be instituted to deal with the smog problem. Carpool lanes had to be added to deal with terrible freeway congestion. The educational system was also in crisis. In 1978 the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of a controversial plan to bus kids from poor schools to wealthier schools.

Black gangs first formed in the 1940s to protect young Blacks from violence by White gangs. Although Black gangs continued over the next three decades they mostly stuck to their neighborhoods. In 1971 a new type of gang appeared: the Crips. The Crips aspired to the fierce loyalty engendered by the Black Panthers. The Crips expanded rapidly, creating new franchises throughout Black L.A. Soon the majority of L.A. Black gangs were Crips and the remaining gangs formed together into the Bloods to defend themselves.

In the early 80s the Colombian Medellin cartel used L.A. as a proving ground for its new product: crack cocaine. The combination of cheapness and high addictive potential made crack a smash hit and L.A. was America's major distribution center. The Crips and Bloods became local distributors of Crack, making them a lot of money and allowing them to afford high-tech weapons (including armor-piercing 'cop killer' bullets). The LAPD responded by supplying themselves with helicopters, body-armor and assault weapons. The LAPD became a military force outfitted for a war.

People in minority communities felt increasingly like the LAPD was a hostile occupation army. There were several shootings of unarmed Black men by the police. Minorities were subjected to searches, degrading treatment and violence simply because of their skin color. It was well known that a minority driving in an affluent neighborhood would be pulled over ("driving while Black" or "driving while Brown"). Attempts by minorities to express their anger (e.g. Ice-T's song "Cop Killer") were dismissed by Whites. In 1991 LAPD officers were videotaped severely beating Rodney King. A year later a mostly White suburban jury found the cops not guilty of unnecessary violence. The verdict sparked a huge riot, mostly in the Watts area, in which 55 were killed and 1,100 buildings were destroyed.

In 1994, 61 died in the Northridge earthquake. Later that year OJ Simpson was arrested for murder. In 1996 the Malibu wildfires destroyed 80 homes. In 1997 heavily armed bank robbers battled police officers and forced a retreat, proving that even the highly militarized LAPD could be outgunned.

In 1999 another major scandal of LAPD corruption broke. Officers from the Rampart division were found to have committed perjury, made false arrests, planted evidence, staged shootings, intimidated witnesses, beaten people, stolen property and dealt drugs.

L.A. Timeline (continued)

1936 – L.A. blockades California/ Nevada border to stop unemployed hitchhikers from entering the state.

1937 – Mayor Frank Shaw recalled for massive corruption.

1938 – 78 die in flooding.

1938 – L.A. river channeled with concrete.

1939 – Raymond Chandler publishes 1st L.A. detective novel.

1940 – 1st freeway in West.

1942 – Japanese relocation centers (until 1945).

1943 – Zoot Suit Riots.

1947 – "Hollywood Ten" charged with contempt of congress.

1947 – Black Dahlia murder.

1949 – L.A. starts to get rid of Red Car trolleys.

1951 – Bloody Christmas: 7 young Mexican-Americans beaten by LAPD.

1951 – Bracero program starts.

1952 – 5 killed in earthquake.

1954 – Worst ever smog attack, planes diverted, ships barred from harbor.

1955 – Disneyland opens.

1958 – 1st TV news helicopter in nation.

1961 – Last Red Car trolley line closed.

1963 – Aerospace is L.A.'s leading industry.

1964 – Bracero program ends.

1965 – Watts Riots. 34 people killed, 6,000 bldgs. burned down

1968 – RFK assassinated at the Ambassador Hotel

1969 – 91 dead in floods and mudslides

1970 – 3 killed in anti-Vietnam protest turned riot

1971 – 65 dead in Earthquake

1975 – Medfly in L.A.

1976 – Carpool lanes.

1978 – Bussing begins.

1985-1990 – Major Japanese purchases of L.A. properties.

1986 – 82 killed in midair collision over LAX.

1989 – LAPD starts using semiautomatic weapons.

1991 – 34 killed in runway collision at LAX.

1991 – Rodney King beating by LAPD videotaped.

1992 – Metrolink trains start running.

1992 – Rodney King Riots, 55 killed.

1993 – 5 dead in wildfires, 720 buildings lost.

1994 – 61 die in 6.7 magnitude Northridge earthquake.

1994 – OJ Simpson arrested.

1996 – Malibu wildfires.

1997 – Heavily armed bank robbers battle police in North Hollywood.

1999 – Rampart Division Scandal.

Culture

In Brief: Many in L.A. quirky, trendy, unempathetic.

Many people come to L.A. because they don't fit in with the communities where they grew up or because they dream of making it big in the entertainment industry. The waitress trying to become an actress is a stereotype but it's one based on reality. The influx of outcasts and fame seekers means that L.A. has a larger than average number of people who are quirky, eccentric, colorful, shallow or have unrealistic views of themselves and the world around them. Many who come to L.A. to become famous have their dreams dashed and become crazy or bitter.

Los Angeles is a city of trends. Every few years a new trend sweeps over the city, holds a large portion of the city in its thrall and then fades away once it becomes too commonplace to be trendy. For a while 'new age' was trendy and all the cultural elite had to be seen wearing crystals or getting their astrological tables done. Then all the trendy people had to be seen working out in expensive gyms and drinking wheat grass. More recently there was a minor intellectualism trend where the trendy people wanted to be seen in cafes wearing glasses and reading philosophy books.

The willingness of L.A. to adopt new trends at the drop of a hat is, in part, because this is the home of the entertainment and real estate industries, who specialize in taking a lifestyle or ideology and turning it into something that can be packaged and sold.

Angelinos are often the target of derisive humor by the rest of the world because, in their rush to adopt the latest trends, they don't realize that they're doing things that look ridiculous.

The economic and racial segregation of the city, the lack of public spaces for people to meet, the constant natural disasters and the broken dreams of so many has come together to make L.A. one of the cruelest cities on Earth. Angelinos, on average, have no empathy for the tragedies of others.

L.A. has no "center." There is no part of town that is the heart of the urban sprawl and links the city together. Some say this lack of center makes L.A. democratic, since no part of town is more important to the L.A. experience than another. Others say that this makes L.A. a soulless place, not a real city but a generic sprawl. In truth the highways are the real center of L.A. They're where nearly everyone in the city meets and interacts. That such interactions are between people isolated in their bubbles of security, and that these interactions are often selfish and angry and randomly violent, is emblematic of the culture of L.A.

However, much of the population of L.A. is made up of immigrants, who have a very different experience of L.A. In L.A. they find community, opportunity and hope. They don't want to be famous or trendy or to isolate themselves from the rest of the world. They just want better lives. For most immigrants the promises of L.A. are not empty promises: if they work hard they can achieve better lives for themselves and their families.

L.A. Liberals

Los Angeles is known as one of the most liberal cities in the country. Yet L.A. liberalism is very different from liberalism in other areas. L.A. liberals are mainly home-owners who take up local environmental causes such as 'saving' a local area from development or keeping the beaches clean in order to keep the value of their homes high. They try to keep housing density low in their neighborhoods, supposedly to fight urbanization and protect the environment, but the bottom line is to keep their communities wealthy and exclusive.

Los Angeles liberals will consistently vote for popular causes like saving the whales or providing aid to third world countries. They will give money to charities and be seen at fancy fundraising events for these popular causes, yet they will consistently vote against anything which would cause more homeless people or minorities to live near them or which would hamper the LAPD's military-style war against drugs and gangs

Entertainment

In Brief: Clubs, beaches and shopping are popular.

L.A.'s night life is centered around night clubs, especially on Sunset Strip in West Hollywood. L.A. bars stop serving alcohol at 2 PM and there is no smoking in bars and clubs. Some nightclubs go to extreme lengths to be seen as hip and fashionable, mostly by using the most extreme interior décor they can imagine, from cold and completely bare concrete to a profusion of red velvet. Some clubs are so extreme and unique that stepping into one is like no experience to be found outside the world of dreams. Some clubs are so exclusive that bouncers don't allow anyone in who doesn't look trendy enough. Other clubs have VIP rooms where only the rich and famous can go.

During the day the beaches are where many L.A. residents (especially the White and wealthy) go to hang out. The Venice Boardwalk is one of the most popular beach hangouts. Surfing is big at L.A. beaches. There are also many sunbathers, bicyclists, rollerbladers, people eating at beach-side cafes, street performers, people walking dogs, etc.

For many wealthy L.A. residents, shopping is a major pastime. A day long shopping trip may take them to Hollywood and Beverly Hills and leave them proudly carrying a number of bags with the logos of upscale shops on them.

Alleys

Club xVx

This is a trendy new club in West Hollywood, on the Sunset Strip. Octavio Hidalgo (p.219) owns a third of it. It has been the site of several equally trendy clubs that went bankrupt after their popularity slipped.

Two black-clad bouncers at the front keep out anyone who isn't trendy, famous or rich enough to enter. They can be bribed and this is a common occurrence.

Inside is a fairly standard night club dance floor: colored lights, a DJ booth, video clips playing on big TV screens, two bars, chill-out rooms, large and clean bathrooms. From the moment the club opens its doors (at 7 PM) until is closes (2 AM) there is constant pounding music, a mix of techno, pop and rap, almost too loud for anyone to talk. Each night there is at least one person dealing coke, ecstasy, speed and other 'club drugs.' The management knows the dealers are present but says nothing so long as they are subtle.

At the back of the dance floor area are two more bouncers that guard the entrance to the VIP area. The management is purposefully unclear about what it takes to become a VIP, but most anyone who has to ask will be turned away.

The entrance to the VIP room is two large, heavy, ornately carved wooden doors. Behind them is a diffusely lit hallway. The walls have small, blunt metal spikes on them and the floor is clear plastic over a carpeting of plastic masks of people screaming. At the end of the hallway two more large wood doors lead into the actual VIP room.

The VIP room is a strange mix of antique and ultra-modern. There are Victorian chairs, divans, tables and fainting couches which have been reupholstered with soft red velvet. The ceiling is mirrored but the mirrors have been made yellowish, cloudy and slightly warped to make them look antique. The walls are covered with red velvet. The carpet (burgundy) is plush and immaculately clean. There is a bar made entirely from smoked glass. Expensive liquor bottles sit on glass shelves with amber lights shining through them from behind. There are several abstract glass sculptures filled with a cloudy grey liquid. By virtue of a mechanism inside, old black-and-white daguerreotype photos (sealed in clear plastic) occasionally emerge from the cloudiness, pressed for a second against the surface of the glass before dissapearing again.

The lighting is dim and tinted purple. The music is less loud and tends to be of the 'ambient-industrial' genre. The smell of cigars and clove cigarettes are common. Drugs are often used openly. Most of the people found back here are young celebrities and the children of the rich.

There is no special significance to the club's décor; it was simply the result of hiring the trendiest interior decorator available. The beautiful, exotic, mysterious and slightly menacing ambience has been enough to make a few drugged-up celebrities freak out.

So called 'higher-culture', e.g. theater, orchestras, opera, etc. keeps trying to leave L.A. to go where it would be more appreciated, but real estate interests, who know that 'culture' is a part of real estate value, keep paying it to come back.

Population

There are about 11 million people in L.A. County and about 15 million in the L.A. area.

Nationality

In Brief- Many immigrants, many illegals.

10 million L.A. residents were born in the US, 1 million are naturalized citizens, about 3.6 million are non-citizens. There are about 2 million illegal immigrants in the L.A. area (about one-fifth of all illegal immigrants in the nation). Most new immigrants are from Mexico, the Philippines, El Salvador, China, Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Taiwan, Vietnam and India.

Life as an Illegal Alien in L.A.

Most illegals have paid thousands and risked their lives to come to the US. Some Asians pay as much as $30,000 each to be smuggled into the US, and when they get here they still owe money to their smugglers and are forced to pay it off working in sweatshops.

Immigrants can buy fake social security and green cards, allowing them to get jobs, for as little as $20. Most men work as day laborers, mostly on construction sites. Most women work in garment industry sweatshops where they earn as little as 70 cents per hour. There are over 4,500 sweatshops in L.A. In theory, employers could face fines if they are caught employing illegals, but in reality the number of fines employers face is far too small to discourage them from employing illegals.

Most immigrants find a community waiting in L.A. to welcome them: those from their old homes who came here before them. Most immigrants send a significant portion of their income to relatives back home. Although some immigrants live in cheap hotels or in garages, most live in modest but comfortable working-class apartments.

For the most part illegals worry about the same things as other working class Angelinos: keeping their cars running, getting a good education for their kids, paying their bills. Although some live in fear, immigrants have little cause to worry about being deported so long as they keep out of trouble with the law. Even those who do get in trouble with the law may get through the justice system without being deported, since L.A. law enforcement and INS still don't work together as well as they're supposed to.

The Border Patrol, the military force which is a bane of immigrants who came through the US-Mexico border, has recently caused terror among illegal immigrants by conducting raids in the Inland Empire.

Being illegal has inherent problems beyond the possibility of being deported. Getting car insurance is difficult, and without car insurance an immigrant can lose his or her car if pulled over. Getting anything other than emergency medical care is also difficult. Many have limited English skills.

Illegal immigrants also face a lot of hatred. There are anti-immigrant groups whose hatred and paranoia resemble that of the Nazis.

Ethnicity

In Brief- Largely Hispanic, many Blacks and Asians.

There are about 6 million Hispanics, 6 million Whites, 1 million Blacks and about 1.5 million Asians in the L.A. area. Whites are the majority in Orange County and Riverside County. The vast majority of Blacks are in L.A. County. Most Asians are found in L.A. County. Each county has a large number of Hispanics but in L.A. County they are the largest group.

Although L.A. has a diverse number of ethnic communities, there are some that are unique in the nation: L.A. has the second largest Hispanic population of any city in the world (Mexico City being the first), the second largest Jewish population in the country (the New York area having the first). It has more Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Filipinos, Cambodians, Koreans, Thais, Israelis, Armenians and Hungarians living outside their respective nations than anywhere else in the world. L.A. has the nation's largest Persian, Japanese and Native American populations. There are also a relatively large number of Roma (Gypsies) in the L.A. area. L.A. also has the nation's second largest population of native Pacific Islanders (Honolulu, Hawaii being the first).

Native Americans in L.A.

L.A. has one of the largest Native American populations of any urban area in the US. There are about 200,000 Native Americans in the L.A. area. Some are Native Californians. Although the Native Californian population was decimated by plagues their numbers have been growing. In 1906 there were 42 Chumash people. Today, 2,000 claim Chumash ancestry.

Many Native Americans from other parts of the US were put on busses to L.A. in the 50s by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who thought that dispersing Indians from their traditional homes to large urban areas was a good way to break them of their traditional cultures and ways of life.

Another major component of L.A. Native Americans are natives of Latin America who immigrated here with along mestizos. The Latin American Natives usually live in the same neighborhoods as other Hispanic immigrants but they are often isolated and discriminated against because many only speak Spanish as a second language.

There are a disproportionately large number of Native Americans in L.A.'s homeless population. Alcoholism, displacement from their communities and a spirit of independence are all contributing factors.

The major gatherings for Native Americans in Southern California are the UCLA pow-pow, held in May on the UCLA campus, and the CSU Long Beach pow-wow, held in March. At these pow-wows Native American dancers from the L.A. area, and some from all over the country, put on their best traditional costumes and dance, hoping to win a cash prize. Others drum and sing. Others set up booths to sell food, crafts or merchandise. Others are just there to watch and socialize.

Due to the limited autonomy granted Native Americans under American law, many Native American tribes have opened casinos. The nearest big casinos are near San Bernardino in San Bernardino county and near San Jacinto in Riverside county.

Income

In Brief- Many rich (especially in Orange County), many poor (especially in L.A. County), many homeless.

About 2 million people in the L.A. area are living below the poverty line. L.A. County has the largest percentage of people in poverty (18%), followed by San Bernardino County (16%), Riverside County (14%) and lastly Orange County (10%).

There are about 800,000 people who make $100,000 or more per year. There are about 150,000 who make $200,000 or more. Orange County has the highest percentage of people making this much money (5%).

There are about 90,000 homeless people in L.A. County, the largest homeless population of any urban area in the nation. About two-thirds are male. There is a fairly equal mix of White, Black and Hispanic homeless people. Only about one-in-four finds a bed in a shelter on any given night. More than half of the homeless have mental illness and/or substance abuse problems. About 1 in 10 is a veteran, about 1 in 4 has a physical disability, and about 1 in 10 has been a victim of domestic violence. The average homeless person is 40 years old. A growing portion of the homeless population are single-mom families, though they tend not to be among the "long-term" homeless.

Life as a Homeless Person in L.A.

The most popular area for homeless people to sleep is Skid Row. Other significant areas of homeless occupation are other parts of downtown, South Central, Long Beach, Pomona, Pasadena and Venice.

Some sleep in shelters, others in cars. Some have tents or construct cardboard shelters on sidewalks or under underpasses. Some take advantage of L.A.'s temperate weather and sleep on cardboard sheets on the sidewalk.

About half receive some sort of government assistance (often disability checks that they cash at the local liquor store). Some receive money from friends or family. About one-third have jobs (typically minimum wage jobs that don't pay enough to pay the rent on an L.A. apartment), some panhandle, some engage in prostitution, some do small-time drug dealing, some sell cans to recyclers. Food can be gained fairly easily by going to soup kitchens or eating out of dumpsters and the majority of a long-term homeless person's income is spent on drugs or alcohol.

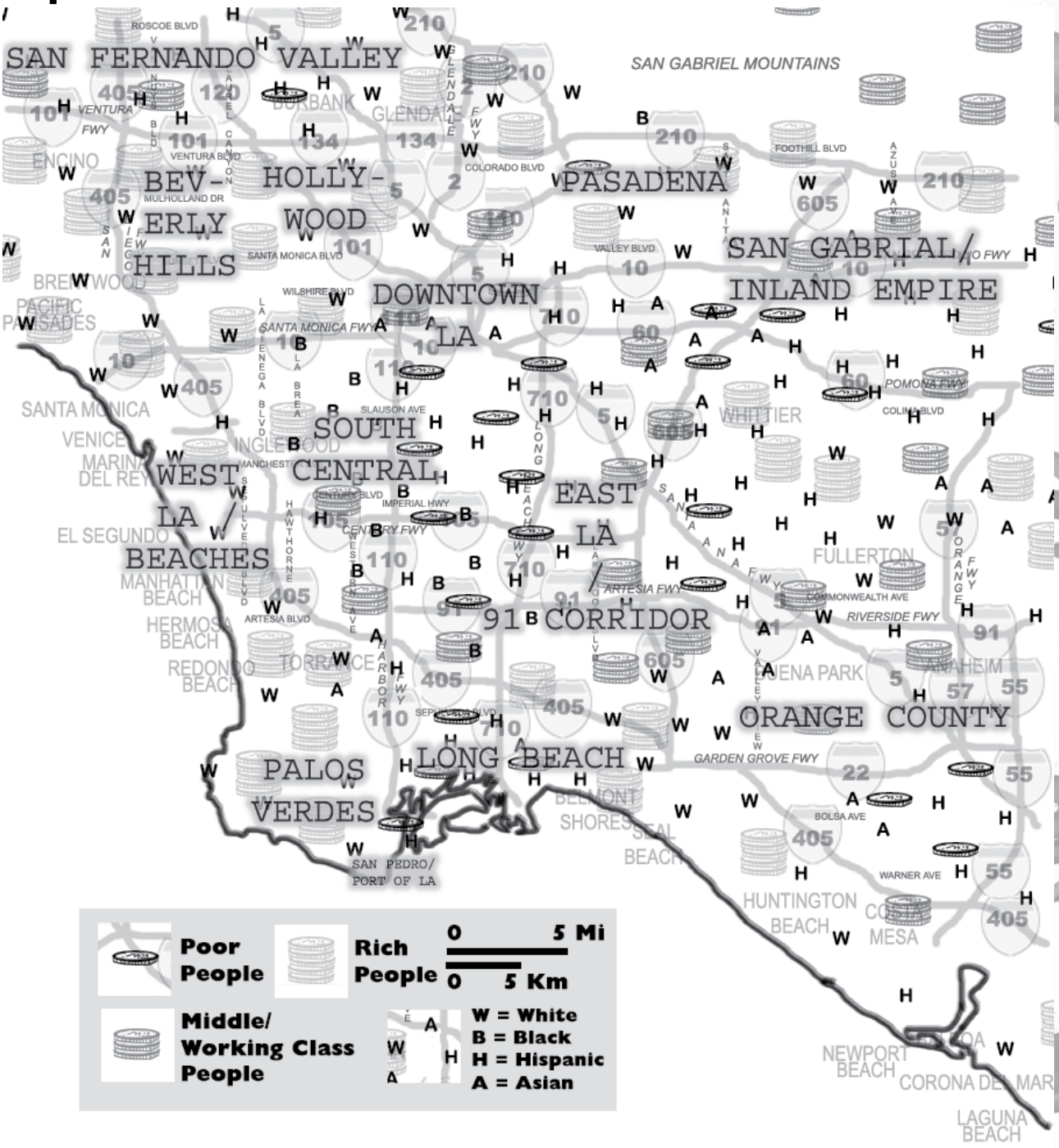
Legal problems are common for the homeless, especially when the LAPD choose to enforce anti-camping, anti-loitering and anti-public urination laws. Many of the homeless in Skid Row are parole or probation violators. Medical problems are common, especially because hygiene is difficult for the homeless. Some are homeless because physical disabilities made them unable to work, others are physically disabled because of an injury or illness caused by being on the streets. Homeless people are attacked and raped at a much higher rate than the rest of the population.

Many homeless people are underage. Most are runaways. About one-third of homeless youth are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. Homeless youth are likely to engage in drug dealing, unsafe sex and illegal drug use.

Religion

In Brief- Catholicism big. New Age & cults relatively big.

There are abut 4 million Catholics in L.A. County. About 1 million people in L.A. County consider themselves non-religious/agnostic/atheists. There are about 3 million Protestant Christians (with Baptists and Evangelicals the largest sub-



groups). Other large religions are Judaism (½ million), Church of Mormon (100,000), Islam (100,000), Buddhism (70,000), Hinduism (70,000) and Jehovah's Witness (70,000). Catholicism, Buddhism and Islam are growing rapidly, mostly because of immigration.

Catholicism- L.A. has the largest Catholic congregation in the US. The vast majority of these Catholics are Hispanic, although a significant amount (10%) are Asian. The L.A. archdiocese has more than 2,000 ordained employees, more than 12,000 lay employees, runs schools, cemeteries, colleges and hospitals and has a lot of investments and real estate.

The L.A. archdiocese also has a history of being one of the country's more conservative and intolerant archdiocese. The archdiocese has been known to send undercover agents to tape liberal priests doing or saying things contrary to archdiocese policies.

The mother church for the L.A. archdiocese is the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, see p.175 for more.

New Age- While it may no longer be cool for people to call themselves 'New Agers,' many L.A. residents to subscribe to such beliefs. New Age is an amorphous set of beliefs as well as the products (books, crystals, aromatherapy equipment) and services (classes, workshops, alternative health treatments, 'readings') that are sold to believers. New Age is made up of a generic sort of mysticism, little bits of beliefs stolen from other cultures and terms and ideas from science

taken completely out of context. New Age practices can include crystals, astrology, past life regression, meditation, yoga, herbalism, aromatherapy, female inner-goddess-empowerment, organic/raw food diets, etc.

Cults- L.A. has a lot of cults. The ideal victims of cult indoctrination are the kind of people who come to L.A. in droves: young people who have just arrived in a new community, are disoriented, desperate and have not formed a social network.

Transportation

In Brief- Complicated but congested freeway system. Underutilized busses & subway.

Unlike other major cities, which were built within limited space, L.A. is purposefully spread out. The design of L.A. means that everyone is forced to travel. Very few in L.A. have homes, workplaces and shopping within walking distance of each other. Despite the addition of carpool lanes, most commuters still drive alone. Commuting to work is a way of life and spending half-an-hour driving to or from work is considered perfectly normal. Freeway congestion is still a major problem and can double, or more, the time of a trip. Because of this, most L.A. radio stations feature regular traffic reports so that drivers can adjust their routes to avoid the worst traffic.

L.A. is behind every other US metropolis in public transportation. The "red car" line of trolleys was dismantled starting in 1949 and a replacement (the subway) was not opened until 1990. Even the public transportation that exists is underutilized by the L.A. population.

Freeways- L.A. is known for its complicated cloverleaf and diamond interchanges, on-ramps that shoot into the sky like roller coasters and many overpasses. Yet L.A. has relatively few freeways for its large and dense population.

Many freeways are surrounded by walls on either side to keep traffic noise from bothering local populations. These walls feature murals, mosaics and a lot of graffiti.

The freeways are most congested during "rush hour" (around 6:30-8 AM and 5-7 PM). Average speed goes as low as 17 MPH (27 kmph) during these times.

With so many people spending so much time on the freeways, random freeway violence is common. "Road rage" is attributed as the cause for much of the violence. There have been a string of freeway shootings in recent years.

Busses- About 450,000 people ride L.A. county busses. Yet bus usage has been declining lately, mostly because of rising fares. 90% of bus riders are poor non-Whites.

Subways- There are four commuter rail lines. They run in underground tunnels in some sections and are above ground in others. They run every 5 to 10 minutes at peak times and every 20 minutes at night. They run from 4:30 AM to midnight. It costs $1.25 for a single fare. In mid-day and evenings ridership is low and it is not hard to find a completely empty car.



Climate

L.A.'s proximity to the ocean gives it a rather mild climate. In summer the daytime highs are around 85° F (29° C), with occasional highs the 90s. The nighttime lows in summer are around 65° F (18° C). Temperatures are warmer the farther one goes from the ocean.

In winter, daytime highs are around 67° F (19° C) and nighttime lows are around 48° F (8° C).

Los Angeles has an average of 325 sunny days per year. Los Angeles doesn't see much rain. Most of the rain is in winter and spring. Snow is a near impossibility.

The L.A. basin and the San Fernando Valley suffer from smog, a hazy air pollution caused by cars and industry. L.A. has improved its air pollution greatly in the last decade, but it is still a serious problem. Smog reaches unhealthy levels about one-third of days. Exposure to smog causes eye irritation, coughing, headaches, nausea, shortness of breath and chest pains (altogether -4 END, 10 difficulty distracting pain).

Los Angeles is known for its many disasters: earthquakes, wildfires, floods and mudslides. Hardly a year goes by without some disaster killing many and causing millions in property damage.

Alleys

The War on Undesirables

L.A. has an unreasonable fear of 'undesirables' which includes homeless people, non-White youth and counterculture youth. This fear has far-reaching implications for the face of L.A. and lifestyle of Angelinos.

The LAPD know, for the most part, that their primary mandate is to protect White Anglo neighborhoods from undesirables. They know that there are neighborhoods where there aren't supposed to be Non-Whites and where they pull over any Non-Whites they find driving around there. Non-Whites, especially Blacks and Hispanics, quickly learn what neighborhoods they're not 'supposed to be in.' And with the number of unarmed Black men who have been accidentally shot by the LAPD, non-Whites know that going where they aren't wanted can be dangerous.

The cops also know that the city has a policy of 'containing' homeless people into the virtual concentration camp of Skid Row. Homeless found outside Skid Row are harassed and often dropped back in this area.

Business Improvement Districts and their hired security guards (discussed in more detail on p.60) do their part to keep undesirables out of shopping zones via harassment and threats.

The L.A. fear of undesirables is so bad that L.A. has made its public places uncomfortable to discourage undesirables (and, as a side effect, anyone else) from hanging out there. Public spaces in L.A. are conspicuous in their lack of places to sit. There are hardly any drinking fountains or any other sources of fresh water (causing many homeless to bathe in the L.A. River). L.A. also has fewer public toilets than any other big city in the US.

Sprinkler systems are designed to go on at unexpected intervals and are aimed to douse parks or sidewalks where the homeless might want to sleep.

Many new buildings in L.A. have been designed to have featureless, forbidding, fortress-like exteriors that makes people not want to hang out in front of them, even thought the interior of the buildings are lush and comfortable.

The consequence on the psychology of Los Angeles residents is enormous. L.A. residents are actively discouraged from being outside, unless they are in their cars. There are almost no places people can meet and hang out without paying to be there. This leads to a sense of isolation that pervades the L.A. psyche and further increases the xenophobic fear of undesirables.

Economy

In Brief- Real estate, garment industry, aerospace, entertainment, tourism, higher education, industrial parks

As it's been for nearly a century, real estate is L.A.'s biggest and most powerful industry. Besides constantly redeveloping any part of L.A. which is more than a few decades old, the real estate industry carves new urban spaces out of the desert, constantly expanding the L.A. urban sprawl. Much L.A. real estate is owned by Japanese investors.

Other major industries include the fashion and garment industry (Downtown), the aerospace industry (Orange County), the entertainment industry (the Valley), tourism and higher education.

The L.A. area has many industrial parks: large complexes of offices and laboratories designed so that a corporation can move in and set up a major operation.

Politics

In Brief- Homeowner's groups very powerful, control communities, build gated complexes. L.A. racially gerrymandered. Real estate also very powerful.

The biggest political struggles in L.A. politics aren't for control of any centralized authority, they're over autonomy. Middle and upper-class communities are constantly trying to form their own autonomous cities so that their tax dollars don't have to support services for poor people. There are more than 200 incorporated cities in L.A. County. L.A. communities were the first to contract out for police and fire services from the larger metropolitan area. Rather than go to the trouble of forming its own police department, a newly autonomous city might, for example, contract out to the LAPD for police services.

The battle for autonomy does not stop at the city level. Homeowner associations who control areas of a few blocks rule their tiny areas as totalitarian states, disallowing any behavior (such as not mowing one's lawn regularly or painting one's house an unapproved color) that might hurt property values. Homeowners associations, with their ability to vote in blocks and contribute significant sums to politicians, are one of the most powerful and feared players in L.A. politics. Homeowner's associations who feel they have been wronged have been known to harass and hold mass protests against government agencies and companies.

L.A. has long had upper-class gated communities where an armed guard at a gate isolates the residents from unwanted visitors. Today, however, even middle class neighborhoods are looking at becoming gated.

L.A. has been extensively gerrymandered: the voting districts carefully arranged to give non-Whites as few districts as possible wherein they are the majority of voters.

As mentioned previously, the real estate industry is L.A.'s wealthiest industry and thus can spend a lot of money influencing elections in their favor.

Law Enforcement

In Brief- Immigration overloaded, LAPD brutal and high-tech, jails overcrowded.

INS- The INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) aka 'La Migra', is a large part of law-enforcement in L.A. INS agents conduct raids on factories and cheap apartment buildings looking for immigrants without valid visas. Yet no matter how many illegal immigrants they capture they can't dent L.A.'s 2 million illegal immigrant population. The L.A. jail system is also supposed to hand over criminal suspects who are illegals. The INS has a major problem housing these suspected illegals until they can be dealt with. Lately the INS has had to contract out to private companies to turn old motels and apartment buildings into mini-jails to hold illegals. From the outside they look like regular motels or apartments, but inside hundreds of illegals are held under lock-down conditions.

LAPD- More than any other police force in the country, the LAPD uses technology rather than manpower to deal with L.A.'s significant crime problem. High crime areas are patrolled on a regular basis by LAPD helicopters using spotlights and infrared cameras. Helicopters also swiftly deliver LAPD SWAT teams, armed with body armor and automatic weapons, to any situation where LAPD patrol officers feel they don't have the enemy completely outgunned.

The LAPD has one of the most hostile relationships with non-White communities of any police force in the nation. See p.161 of History for more on why. The LAPD have not made any significant improvements to their race relations. There are a few officers (mostly gang task force detectives) can converse freely with any member of non-White communities, even hard-core cop-hating gang members, because they have learned the 'secret' of showing at least a little respect to the people they talk to. LAPD gang experts are in a very nice position: they get to appear on TV a lot and when they retire early they can make a lot of money acting as expert witnesses in gang-related trials.

Many new projects (public housing units built to house poor people) are like little police states. Residents have to carry identity passes, LAPD officers have their own substations there, fences funnel anyone entering or leaving past checkpoints where police officers can frisk them, check their identities and ask where they're going and why.

Jails- The L.A. county jail system is the largest in the nation. This is where prisoners are kept who are awaiting trial or who were sentenced to sentences too short to be sent to state prisons.

L.A.P.D. S.W.A.T. Team



Typical LAPD SWAT Team

Appearance- A group of ten men wearing grayish-blue fatigues, heavily armed, with body armor, thick vests and helmets.

Attributes- AGY 10 (armor penalty included), AWR 10, CHM 9, END 14, INL 10, SPD 15, STH 15, WIL 10, BLD 5, BDY 5, INCY 4.

Special Equipment- Each has a fire-retardant combat suit, SWAT Armor (AR 10 PR 10 bladed 3 blunt), earpiece radio, 4 Flash Bang Grenades (-15 to all reactions within 50 ft.), an Automatic Pistol (ROF 4, FR 5 ft., 4 damage, 9 rounds) and an Automatic Rifle (ROF 6, FR 7 ft., 6 damage, 32 round clip). The team also has access to 4 Semi-Automatic Shotguns (ROF 2, FR 6 ft., 6 damage, 5 shots, easy strike) and 2 Sniper Rifles (ROF 5, FR 50 ft. (scope), 6 damage, pierces as 9, 15 rounds). All weapons have mounted flashlights. They also have access to entry tools, poles with mirrors on the end (for seeing around corners) and rappelling gear. They travel around in either an armored vehicle with a battering ram or in an LAPD helicopter.

Special Skills- Each has Climbing (2), Immobilization (2), Pistol (4), Rifle/Shotgun (4). Two have Sniper (4).

Motivations- The SWAT team are the elite of the LAPD. They are sent to protect VIPs, serve high-risk warrants, rescue hostages and rush to the scene of stand-offs with armed criminals.

Methods- The SWAT team is commanded by a sergeant who manages operations from the sidelines. There are two 5-officer teams each led by a senior officer. The two teams might come in through two different entrances to a building. The SWAT team specializes in coming in quick and unexpected. They will break down doors or rappel from rooftops. They move through quickly, breaking down any obstacles in their way, throwing flash-bang grenades ahead of them to disorient and blind the enemy. When they meet their opponents they shoot anyone who resists, throw the rest to the ground and handcuff them.

Typical Action- If possible they try to throw in a flash bang grenade before entering the area where the opponent is. If successful it gives the opponents -15 to all actions/ reactions. They make Vital Strikes with their Automatic Rifles at INL (10) + AGY (10) +16 (skill) +1d20 -1/7 ft. vs. 35 (or 1d20 -1/7 ft. +1 vs. 0), doing 12 damage if successful.

Typical Reaction- Simultaneous Strike (6 round burst) with their Automatic Rifles at AGY (10) + INL (10) +WIL (10) +16 (skill) -4 (burst) -1/7 ft. vs. 45 (or 1d20 -1/7 ft. vs. 3) doing 36 damage is successful.

The L.A. jail system is suffering from serious overcrowding and budget problems. Not only do they not have enough facilities to hold all their prisoners, they don't have enough money to keep all of their facilities open. Many jails have sections that are closed off and unused because there aren't enough staff to staff them. Some facilities have cells with 4 bunks and a fifth person sleeping on a mattress on the floor.

One consequence of overcrowding is that prisoners, even those convicted of violent crimes, are released after serving only 10% to 25% of their sentences. Overcrowding and budget problems also mean that prisoners typically wait days for medical or psychiatric care. Many of the prisoners in L.A. County's jails are mentally ill and receive little or no treatment. There have been bad outbreaks of drug-resistant staph infections in the crowded jails.

L.A. jails are extremely dangerous and violent places. All the major prison gangs (p.174) exist here and L.A. prisons have recently seen race wars with more than half the inmate populations fighting.

At any given time there are about 22,000 prisoners in the L.A. county jail system. 60% are awaiting trial. Each stays an average of 44 days. About half of inmates are Hispanic, a third are Black and 15% are White. The majority of them can be found in the following facilities:

The Twin Towers: This is the county's newest facility and its one of the world's largest jails. A walled compound holds two hexagonal towers and a medical services building. The cell blocks are built on a panopticon model: a ring of prisoner areas with guard stations in the center. The Twin Towers has an inmate reception center through which all new inmates in the L.A. country jail system pass and are processed. The Twin Towers also holds all of the system's female inmates as well as those receiving intensive medical and psychiatric care. The Twin Towers is located in Downtown L.A..

Men's Central Jail: In Downtown L.A., near the Twin Towers, has a 6,800 inmate capacity and approximately 1 staff member per 10 prisoners. The facility has a unit for juveniles being tried as adults and a unit for self-identified homosexual and transgendered male prisoners.

Pitchess Detention Center: This is a compound of four jails on what was originally ranchland 40 miles (64 km.) North of downtown L.A., near the Magic Mountain theme park. Pitchess holds 8,500 prisoners and has seen some of the L.A. system's worst prison-gang wars.

Mentally Ill Offenders- The Patton State hospital in San Bernardino is the L.A. area's state mental hospital. Patients who have been committed by a judge come here and Patton holds a majority of California's criminally insane murderers.

Patton was opened in 1893. It is built according to a tiered model of wings coming off of a central admin building. It is made mostly of red brick. Patton has a 1,300 bed capacity and is one of the few remaining big state mental hospitals.

Inside patients sleep on cots between bare walls. They live a strictly regimented life of medications and treatment groups. The average criminal sent here will stay longer than a criminal sent to prison for the same crime. Those that are released are typically released to live in half-way houses.

Crime

Drugs

In Brief: L.A. is major drug distribution center. Crack and meth are big here.

Crack- In the early 80s, the Colombian Medellin cartel used Los Angeles as a testing ground for crack cocaine. The extraordinary success of Crack led to its nationwide distribution. L.A. remains the largest distribution center of cocaine in the US.

Crack is made mostly in Columbia, Bolivia and Peru. It is brought to the US mostly via Mexican drug cartels. From L.A., Crack is distributed to the rest of the country, mostly by autonomous Colombian drug cartel cells, via private vehicles and commercial trucks. Some of it stays in L.A. where it is distributed mostly by Black street gangs.

Methamphetamines- Mostly made in Mexico or in small meth labs on the outskirts of L.A. It is brought to L.A. either by Mexican cartels or by biker gangs (p.173). In L.A. it is sold primarily by Hispanic street gangs.

Although not quite as addictive as crack, meth can be manufactured locally and it is cheaper and easier to get. Most meth from L.A. is manufactured in labs setup in small apartments, shacks and trailers on the outskirts of L.A. Fontana in San Bernardino (see p.181) is the meth lab capitol of the country.

Marijuana- Most of L.A.'s marijuana comes from Mexico. Most street gangs, and a lot of private dealers, have a share in the marijuana sales market.

Heroin- Some heroin comes from Mexico and Columbia, some from Southeast Asia. The Latin American heroin is smuggled across the border by Mexican cartels and mostly distributed by Hispanic street gangs. Asian heroin is smuggled in by Asian organized crime (mostly in cargo ships) or via commercial airlines with the help of Nigerian organized crime. Asian heroin is sold mostly by Asian street gangs.

Ecstasy- Most ecstasy is manufactured in Europe. It is brought into the country via commercial airlines by Israeli, Russian and Asian organized crime. Most is sold by independent dealers, though street gangs do have a share in the Ecstasy market.

PCP- Mostly manufactured in L.A. area labs and distributed by various street gangs.

Street Gangs

In Brief: 50,000 gang members, mostly Black, Hispanic or Asian. Also privileged Whites emulating gangs and neo-nazi gangs.

Gangs are a huge part of the L.A. underworld. The L.A. area has more than 50,000 hardcore gang members (and many more 'claimers' and 'wannabes' who are peripherally involved in gangs). There are more than 200 Black and Hispanic gangs and nearly 100 Asian gangs. L.A. gangs are so profitable that they have franchises all across the country and even some in other countries. Yet despite the huge number of gangs claiming Blood, Crip, Sureño or Maravilla, each 'set' is its own autonomous entity, a small business retailer in the drug underworld.

Developments in L.A. gang culture often spread to the rest of the country. L.A. is the birthplace of the drive-by shooting, a practice that has caused so many innocent casualties that it has rallied nationwide support for a war on gangs.

L.A. is also in a unique position of having some of the oldest gangs. There are gang members today whose fathers and grandfathers were in (or are still in) their gang. L.A. also has had some of the most successful peace treaties between gangs.

Many join gangs because of family gang membership or because of chronic unemployment and the promise of 'easy money.' Many others join gangs for respect within their communities and for a feeling of kinship and belongingness. Many young people in ghettos feel that making money, and being able to afford flashy jewelry, clothes and cars is the only way available to get respect from their peers and the opposite sex. Furthermore, many are from broken homes or have parents that weren't there for them because of work or drugs. These young people find an intense sense of kinship in gangs. They feel loved by their fellow gang members and they are quite proud to say so.

L.A. also has a large number of girl gangs. Nearly every major gang has a smaller girl gang associated with it. These girl gangs engage in the full range of gang activity: beatings, murder, graffiti and drug dealing.

L.A.'s gangs have developed (and have spread throughout the nation) a language of gang graffiti that is so complex that only gang members (and a few gang experts) can understand it. To those who can read it, gang graffiti chronicles changes in membership, murders, declarations of war, major battles, deaths and peace accords among gangs. Graffiti can also be used as an act of aggression: one gang trespasses into the turf of another gang, crosses out that gangs' graffiti and sprays its symbols instead.

Alleys

Most street gang members are initiated by being "jumped in," an initiation that usually involves being beaten by other gang members. This proves one's toughness, willingness to be hurt for the gang and one's love for the gang. Other gang members may be initiated by committing a crime (murder being the most extreme example). Some female gang members are jumped-in, others are "sexed-in" (required to have sex with several gang members). Those who want to leave a gang sometimes must submit to a "jumping out" ceremony in which an especially brutal beating is delivered.

The majority of gangs are primarily Black, Hispanic or Asian. There are also a few Pacific Islander (Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Guamanian and Hawaiian) gangs. They were first seen joining Black or Hispanic gangs. Nowadays they are mostly affiliated with Black gangs, yet they remain unique in their ability to adapt to both Black and Hispanic groups. There is some feuding between different island groups (e.g. Samoan vs. Tongan). Other small but significant gangs include Jamaican Posses (who specialize in weapon trafficking, smuggling and sales of crack and marijuana) and Armenian Power (a quickly growing gang in Hollywood and Glendale which is forming partnerships with other gangs).

Black Gangs- Most Black gangs in the L.A. area align themselves with either the Bloods or Crips, the Crips being the majority faction. Bloods and Crips do not always form solid political blocks: much of the gang fighting in recent decades has been groups of Crip sets fighting each other.

The spread of the Crips and Bloods was fueled by a terrible wave of unemployment in minority communities. Selling drugs was often the only job a young Black man could get.

Black gangs typically make money by selling crack, PCP and marijuana which comes to them via Mexican and Colombian cartels.

There are more than 270 Black gangs in the L.A. area. The heart of gang activity in L.A. is a large, contiguous area centered on South Central Los Angeles. There are also some large areas of gang activity in Carson and Long Beach.

The Crips and Bloods are not exclusively Black. A few sets are mixed race or are mostly Hispanic. There are even a few sets in Samoan or Tongan immigrant enclaves that consist of those ethnicities.

In 1992, after the Rodney King Riots, the four largest Black gangs in Watts formed a truce. There was an immediate drop in gang homicides. Although the original truce signers have broken the truce, truces had by that time spread to other L.A. area Black gangs. There is still gang war between Black gangs, but not nearly as much as prior to 1992.

Black gang members wear jogging suits, Adidas sweatshirts, bandanas, plaid shirts (loose and untucked), one-color outfits, L.A. area sports team jackets and caps, Nike or British Knights shoes.

Hispanic Gangs- Hispanic gang members make up about half of all L.A. area gang members. Most Hispanic gangs are aligned with either the Sureños (Southern California gangs who war with Northern California gangs) or Maravilla (originally from the Maravilla housing projects) gangs. The Maravilla are the minority, with about 20 gangs in unincorporated areas of East Los Angeles.

The majority of Hispanic gangs can be found in South and Central Los Angeles. There are also large numbers in Compton, Boyle Heights and the San Fernando Valley.

Hispanic gangs make most of their money selling methamphetamines, marijuana, heroin and PCP and often pay taxes on these sales to the Mexican Mafia prison gang (see p.174).

In 1992 the leader of the Mexican Mafia ordered an end to drive-bys. This led to a gang truce between Southern California gang members. The truce greatly reduced gang homicides in the area. However in 1996 the Mexican Mafia decided to tax all drug sales by Hispanic gangs. Those gangs who refused to pay taxes were 'green lighted,' in other words the tax-paying gangs had permission to prey on them, and the homicide rate rose. The Maravilla were the most prominent among these green-lighted gangs.

Traditionally the Hispanic gangs were clean-cut, well-disciplined, respectful to women and had strict codes of honor. In the 1980s young Hispanics seeking alternatives to criminal street gangs formed 'stoner gangs' (mixed race groups into marijuana, heavy metal and skateboarding) and 'tagger crews' (groups of graffiti artists). However, the criminal gangs preyed upon these groups and the stoner and tagger gangs started carrying guns for self-defense. As years went by the stoners and taggers started acting more like gangs and were eventually brought into the fold of the L.A. Hispanic gang scene. This influx of new people destabilized the traditional codes of conduct of the Hispanic gangs.

A powerful new Hispanic gang is Mara Salvatrucha. In L.A. the gang is made up mostly of Salvadorian refugees living in the Rampart area. They are powerful because they have strong connections with a criminal organization in Mexico and Central America that has approximately 300,000 members. Their primary areas of specialty include car theft and firearms trafficking. They also sell marijuana, speed and crack.

Hispanic gang members tend to wear white t-shirts, thin belts, baggy pants, plaid shirts and caps or bandanas.

Asian Gangs- There are about 200 Asian gangs with more than 20,000 members altogether. Asian gangs are found in areas with heavy Asian populations, especially Downtown and South Central L.A., San Fernando Valley and Long Beach.

Some Asian gangs are sets of traditionally Black or Hispanic gangs. Most Asian gangs, however, are independent of those groups.

Asian gang members are, on average, 16 to 25 years old. They dress in the latest styles. They may have tattoos (dragons, tigers, eagles and ships are common) or cigarette burn scars (the more scars the more macho or crazy the gang member is). Asian gangs tend to put less significance on turf and graffiti. Violence is usually only used to achieve a specific end. Most Asian gangs are all about money. They are also more likely than non-Asian gang members to leave their homes and travel long distances to commit crimes.

Filipino gangs tend to be neat, clean and fashionable in appearance. Some wear black trenchcoats, some wear all white. Those that can afford to drive Japanese imports with tinted windows. They tend to carry butterfly knives, clubs and automatic pistols. They are the most likely among Asian gangs to show their toughness via cigarette burns.

Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Hmong, Wah Ching (Cantonese) and Viet Ching (ethnically Chinese from Vietnam) gangs are fairly new but are having a growing impact on the L.A. gang scene. Most formed from Asians who were being preyed upon by Hispanic and Black gangs. These Southeast Asian gangs are often called upon by Chinese organized crime (see p.173) as muscle or to distribute heroin. They are often involved in illegal weapon dealing and their favorite weapons are AR-15s and Uzis. Members are free to jump gangs at will, since gangs are more like a partnership to commit crimes than like a family. These gangs commit a lot of business and home invasion robberies, most of which are planned in advance using inside information. These gangs take advantage of the fact that many Asians dislike banks and keep their money hidden in their homes.

White Gangs- There are almost no White groups in L.A. that fit the standard street gang profile (drug dealing, war with other gangs, protection of turf). Yet there are two types of White youth groups that commit a lot of crimes:

First, there have been increasing numbers of middle and even upper-class White kids who start doing drugs, stealing, vandalizing, raping and beating people up. A lot of their activities have made it into the news because of their habit of videotaping their crimes. Many things have been blamed for this rise of 'privileged violence': violent videogames, gangster rap, absent patents, boredom in the suburbs and general moral decline of American culture. They generally do not sell drugs, defend a turf or fight other gangs.

The other type of White group committing a lot of crimes are White supremacist groups. There are some older, larger, more organized groups: the KKK (which has many members in the L.A. area), and Christian Identity churches (which blend fundamentalist Christianity with racism, sexism and homophobia). Yet the most violent are small youth gangs. They are typically skinhead neo-nazis, sell meth to finance their activities, use meth and steroids, wear Nazi symbols and memorabilia, wear body armor and have automatic weapons. When they attack they typically lie in wait and ambush lone individuals or bomb sensitive places like churches. These hate groups are most commonly found in the Inland Empire, which was recently rural and mostly White until urban sprawl and non-Whites moved in, making Whites a minority.

After the Rodney King riots in 1992 White supremacist groups tried to capitalize on racial tensions by bombing and shooting Blacks to try to start a full-on race war.

Organized Crime

In Brief: Few Italians. Mostly Russians, Armenians, Japanese, Chinese and Biker international groups doing white collar crime and drug trafficking.

There is very little Italian Mafia presence in L.A. What little there is consists mostly of legitimate businesses owned by Mafiosi in other parts of the country and of lone Mafia figures who came to L.A. to perpetrate some specific scam. Organized crime in L.A. is for the most part made up of groups existing within various immigrant communities. This is not to say that immigrants are more likely to be criminals than non-immigrants, only that the criminal elements in immigrant communities tend to have brought an organization with them. They are based on and have strong links to organized crime groups in their countries of origin. They prey primarily on their own countrymen.

Russian Mafia- A.K.A. the Organizatsiya. There are around 700 Russian Mafiosi operating in the L.A. area. They come to the US specifically to take part in organized crime and can disappear back to Russia (or some county with no extradition treaties) if about to be caught. The Russian Mafia specializes in drug smuggling, money laundering, smuggling Russian prostitutes and sex slaves into the US, tax evasion schemes and other international-black-market activities.

Many of the bosses are ex-KGB or ex-Society Army. Much of the lower-level muscle is made up of boxers, martial artists or other athletes who couldn't find legitimate work in the modern Russian economy.

The Russian Mafia has its share of internal feuds and murders.

Armenian Mafia- There are about 500 members of Armenian organized crime in L.A. They are centered on Glendale (a city where one-third of the population is Armenian-American) and more generally in the San Fernando Valley. The Armenian mafia specializes in high-profit white-collar crime: credit card, immigration, welfare and auto-insurance fraud as well as identity theft. In the San Fernando Valley area there has been some violence as Armenian groups war with each other.

Alleys

Yakuza- These Japanese mobsters have a long history and have integrated themselves into nearly every facet of the Japanese economy. Yakuza can often be recognized by large tattoos. Most Yakuza in the US don't speak English well.

In the US the Yakuza are involved mostly in investment scams, money laundering, extorting Japanese tourists, trafficking guns to Japan (where gun laws are strict), extorting Japanese-owned businesses and shipping Caucasian women to Japan to work in the sex trade. Caucasian women are usually lured in by "talent agencies" that are Yakuza-fronts. The women think they are going to get high paying jobs as singers, actresses and models in Japan. Instead, once in Japan they find themselves the property of pimps who threaten and intimidate them.

The Yakuza in the US are especially skilled at keeping a low profile. The media rarely reports on them and law enforcement, although they know the Yakuza exist, have little idea what they're up to.

Many rich Yakuza bosses also own high-profile legitimate businesses or investments in the US.

Another form of Japanese organized crime that's recently come to the US is sokaiya. These gangs extort Japanese corporations by threatening to disrupt stockholder's meetings or by blackmailing corporations with 'scandal sheets' that detail the corporation's dirty secrets. Sokaiya groups have recently started extorting L.A. offices of Japanese corps.

Triads- These are branches of Chinese organized crime societies. The two main triads operating in the L.A. area are the Sun Yee On from Hong Kong and the United Bamboo Gang from Taiwan. They import and distribute heroin, they run illegal gambling operations in Chinese areas, they smuggle illegal Asian immigrants into the US (often to work in sweat shops) and they run massage parlors that are thinly veiled fronts for prostitution (see Sex Industry). Like most organized crime groups with a long history they have complex codes, procedures and rituals that are rarely known to outsiders.

Outlaw Biker Gangs- A handful of large biker gangs form organized crime rings that are as well organized, profitable and influential as the Italian mafia once was. Bikers make most of their money from manufacturing meth and selling it to various street gangs. The bikers put a lot of effort into charity work, advertising and PR campaigns to make people think they are legitimate organizations. The major biker gangs have their symbols trademarked and sale of merchandise goes to legal defense funds to help those accused of crimes. One major biker gang even has its own church. 'Ministers' of that church can come visit bikers in jail.

The average biker is better educated than his average organized crime peer. Bikers use sex, drugs and bribes to gather information about their enemies (including law enforcement) on whom they keep detailed dossiers. Biker gangs are also exporting their criminal enterprises into other countries.

Most of the biker gangs have White supremacist ideologies, but this doesn't stop them from working with criminals of any ethnicity when it profits them to do so.

Sex Industry

In Brief- Porn in the Valley; street walkers & massage parlors around L.A.; expensive escorts.

L.A. is a large center of legal pornography creation and trade, mostly in the San Fernando Valley. L.A. has a huge number of wanna-be, current and ex-porn stars.

Illegal prostitution in L.A. has a wide range of costs and class. At one end of the spectrum are Skid Row junkies who give $5 blow jobs in port-a-potties. $5 is enough to buy a small crack rock and the money rarely stays in the prostitute's pockets for long.

Next are street walkers who work at several spots around L.A., mostly in Hollywood, Downtown, South Central, East L.A. and the Valley. They wear skimpy outfits and typically charge $20 for a blowjob and $40 for intercourse, usually in the john's car or in a nearby cheap motel that they live out of. Most street walkers have pimps, usually big Black guys, who help out prostitutes having conflicts with johns and also take a large percentage of the street walkers' income. Many street walkers are transvestites who, on average, look as good as or better than the female prostitutes (many johns have no idea that the blowjob they bought was from a biological male).

Next most expensive are the massage and acupressure parlors where hand jobs, blow jobs and sex can be bought. Most are run by Asians and most of the prostitutes are Asians, though some parlors employ Hispanic immigrants. Many massage parlors are for Asian clientele. Most massage parlors are found around Hollywood Boulevard, Inglewood or heavily-Asian neighborhoods of Orange County. Prices are typically $100 to $140. Similar in price are seedy strip clubs where johns can negotiate to follow strippers home and have sex with them.

Next highest in price are prostitutes who advertise in local sex mags. Some come to the john's apartments ("outcalls") , some have john's come to their apartments ("incalls"). Many of these prostitutes are current or ex-porn workers. Johns typically pay $150 to $300.

The highest class of prostitutes is escorts. They are often hired not just for sex but to escort rich clients as dates. Escorts work through agencies and can charge from $100 to $1,000 per hour.

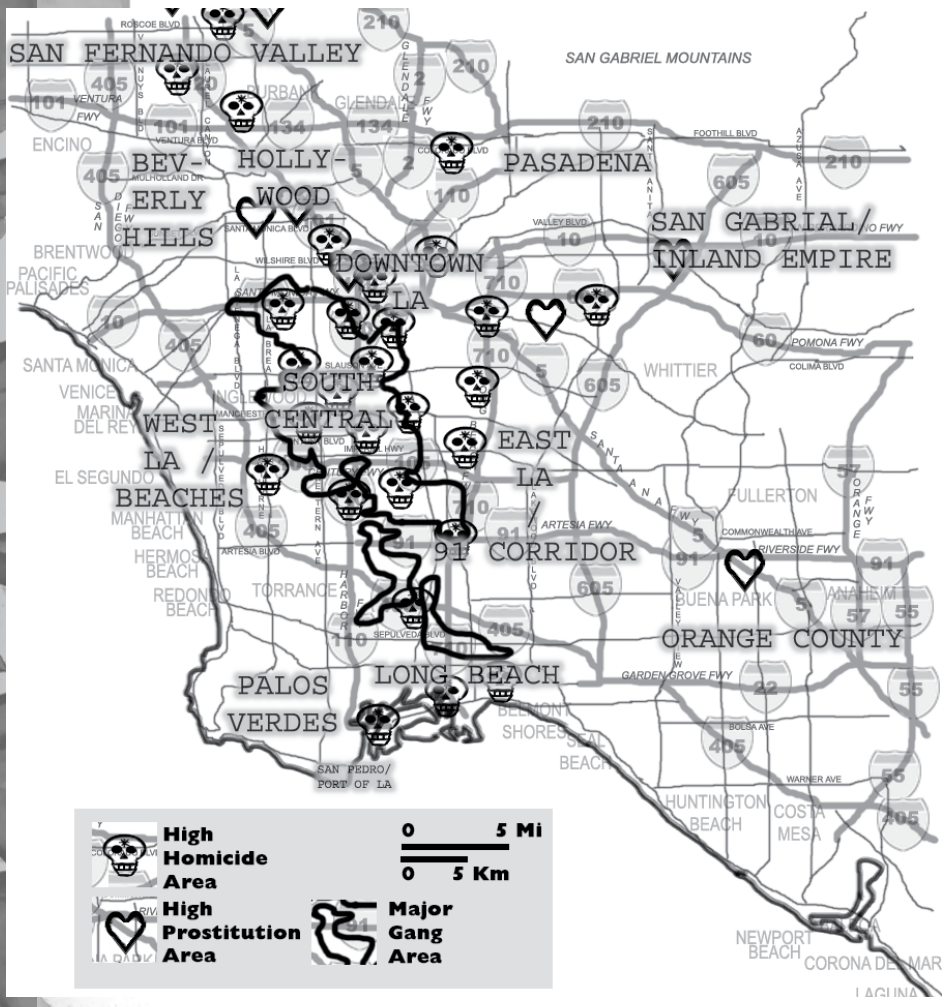
A small minority of prostitutes have been kidnapped or lured in by false premises and illegally smuggled into the US. Here they are held by organized crime against their will and forced to work as prostitutes. Most don't speak English and they are told that they will be put in prison if they try to go to the authorities. Most of these prostitutes are from Russia and Asia.

Prison Gangs

In Brief- Powerful national crime organizations, divided racially, inter-related with street gangs.

There is a complex relationship between prison gangs and street gangs. Generally speaking, prison gangs are the organizing principle that links together street gangs. This is inevitable because the leaders and founders of street gangs from across the state have been brought together in a handful of state prisons. Prison gangs are some of the biggest and most powerful criminal organizations in the state. They sell drugs and other contraband in prison and they have a stake in many criminal enterprises outside prison. Most prison gang leaders have the ability to call in hits in the outside world. Most of the prison gangs that are big in California can be found in prisons throughout the US.

Most everyone who comes to prison (or, to a lesser extent, jail) has to either join a gang for protection or be raped, robbed and assaulted. However, being in a gang is no guarantee against violence since the prison gangs are almost always in a state of subdued war which can quickly escalate to full-out race riots. The gangs are divided strictly along racial lines and people are often attacked because of their race (or what their race appears to be) regardless of their gang affiliation.



Asians, who are a very small minority in most American prisons, have no large prison gang protecting them, and thus are open to attack. Many prisons and jails segregate Asian prisoners to protect them from violence. The L.A. County jail system, however, has recently decided it no longer has the money to segregate Asian prisoners.

The major prison gangs in California are:

Aryan Brotherhood- The White prison gang. The Aryan Brotherhood was formed in San Quentin in 1967. Although they espouse a White supremacist philosophy they have no problem forming alliances with non-White gangs. The Aryan's symbols are Nazi symbols, shamrocks and Gaelic iconography. They are allied with the Mexican Mafia and with biker gangs. They are at war with the Black Guerilla Family and La Nuestra.

Black Guerilla Family- The Black prison gang. It was formed in San Quentin in 1966 by a former Black Panther. They are the most political of the prison gangs and espouse a Marxist/Maoist philosophy. Their symbols include black dragons and crossed sabers or shotguns. Their allies are La Nuestra Familia and various Black street gangs. Their enemies are the Aryans and Mexican Mafia.

Mexican Mafia- A.K.A. "Le Eme." The urban Hispanic prison gang. It was formed in the late 50s in a California Juvenile facility. Their symbols include an eagle and snake, the letter M or a black handprint. Their allies are the Aryans and the Sureño (Southern California) Hispanic street gangs. Their enemies are La Nuestra and, to a lesser degree, the Black Guerilla Family. In many prisons the Mexican Mafia and La Nuestra are segregated because they have a kill-on-sight policy towards each other.

La Nuestra Familia- The rural Hispanic prison gang. This formed in the mid-60s in Soledad prison to help rural Hispanics protect themselves from city Hispanics who were in the Mexican Mafia. In recent times the urban vs. rural dynamic has changed to become Northern California (La Nuestra) vs. Southern California (Mexican Mafia). La Nuestra's symbols are the color red, the number 14 and a sombrero with a dagger. La Nuestra members often get very large tattoos. La Nuestra's enemies are the Mexican Mafia and Aryan Nation. They sometimes align themselves with the Black Guerilla family.

Crips- In the past, Black gang members who went to prison joined the Black Guerilla Family for protection. However, in recent times, Crips (and to a lesser degree Bloods) have started forming their own gangs in prison, bypassing the BGF. The power of Crips in prison is growing to rival that of other prison gangs.

Infrastructure

In Brief- Most power & water from elsewhere. Poor streets. 'L.A. River' is giant concrete storm drain.

The L.A. sprawl's massive population requires an equally massive support system.

The sewer system has 6,500 miles (10,000 km.) of pipes ranging from 8 inches (20 cm.) to 12 feet (3.7 m.) in diameter. 48 pumping plants help move sewage uphill where it goes to 4 major sewage treatment plants.

L.A. has 1,200 miles (2,000 km.) of storm water drainage, most of which is 20 to 40 years old. What was once the L.A. River has been turned into a giant concrete-walled storm drain that exits into the ocean. Homeless people bathe in the river and when it's dry movies are sometimes filmed there and graffiti artists and skaters trespass there.

L.A. gets most of its power from the Palos Verdes nuclear plant in Arizona, from the Hoover Dam, from the aqueducts that bring water to the city and from coal plants in Utah, Arizona and Nevada. There are 4 natural gas powered generators in L.A.. They are meant to only operate at peak energy consumption times. They are a significant contributor to pollution. They have large tanks of aqueous ammonia, which is used to help reduce pollution but which could kill large numbers of people if it was spilled.

In 1995 the California power industry was deregulated (opened to private companies who were forced to bid on and sell power on a commodities market). This led to booming prices of power and reduced power creation which, in turn, led to rolling blackouts throughout the state. Although the system has improved there are still occasional blackouts in summer when most of the city has air conditioners running.

Most L.A. groundwater has been badly polluted by solvents and other industrial chemicals. L.A. gets most of its water from the Colorado River and from Northern California via a large system of aqueducts.

L.A. has 1.25 billion square feet of paved streets. About half are considered to be in poor condition. About one third of streets are not lit by streetlights at night.

Geography

Downtown L.A.

In Brief- Office buildings, Asian neighborhoods, homeless people.

Downtown has both incredibly expensive office buildings, the poorest area in L.A., and, due to recent gentrification, upper class dwellings. For all its variety, Downtown L.A. doesn't have the cultural 'pull' on Los Angeles residents that downtowns in other urban areas do. Among the landmarks of the downtown area are Dodger Stadium, the USC Medical Center, the L.A. County Jail and the University of Southern California.

Chinatown- 15,000 Chinese and Southeast Asians (especially Vietnamese and Cambodians) live here and many more come here to shop. The oldest part of Chinatown was built by Hollywood set designers as a tourist attraction. Few Chinese live in that part anymore.

Little Tokyo- Once a major Japanese-American population center, now there are only about 1,000 Japanese (mostly elderly). It remains a focus of Japanese cultural events.



Union Station- A major subway and train station. Across from the station is Olvera Street, which hosts a Hispanic market bazaar and many Hispanic celebrations.

Historic Core- This historic section has a lot of grand old movie theaters, most are underused or are abandoned. This section has a lot of small retailers and swap meets catering to Hispanic shoppers. There are a lot of drugs and prostitutes in this section.

Fashion District- Featuring clothing design, production and distribution and cloth wholesalers. The are also bootleggers (fake designer wear, pirated DVDs) operating out of back alley shops.

Jewelry District- This section has 5,000 jewelry related businesses and has a yearly 3 billion in sales.

Bunker Hill / Financial District- A section of skyscrapers, including a hill with skyscrapers on it. Some of the oldest office buildings have been turned into expensive high-rise apartment buildings. Near Bunker Hill is the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels, the mother church and seat of the

Los Angeles archdiocese, built after the 1994 Northridge earthquake destroyed the old mother church. The site includes a lot of modern art, a 12-story-high cathedral, a plaza, gardens, waterfall, conference center, gift shop, café and administrative offices. The 50 ft. (15 m.) high cross, which is lighted at night, can be seen for miles. Many homeless live on the fringes of Bunker Hill. The Library tower, at 71 stories, is the tallest building in the Western US.

Civic Center- This is a complex of many federal, state and local government buildings. Included are the Parker Center (the headquarters of the LAPD), major federal and county courthouses, orchestra halls and art galleries. Many working class immigrants and homeless people live nearby.

South Park- A neighborhood with a lot of old office buildings. Due to the downtown real estate boom a lot of new skyscrapers are being built here. The Staples Center (a major sports venue) and the L.A. Convention Center can be found here.

Skid Row- A.k.a. 'the Nickel' because it is centered on 5th Street (East of Broadway). This area is called by many euphemistic names by people who want to deny this blight on downtown. Every other part of L.A. appears regularly on TV and movies but Skid Row almost never does. Skid Row is an economically depressed area that has been turned by the city into a 'containment' zone for homeless people. The LAPD dump homeless people found in other parts of town here. During the day there are some warehouses (mostly fish and produce) and toy wholesalers still operating here. At night, though, about 20,000 homeless people live in this area, which some have called the most dangerous 10 square blocks in the world. Some live in cheap SRO (single-room occupancy) hotels, some sleep in the area's many shelters, some sleep on the streets in tents or on sheets of cardboard. Skid Row has the highest concentration of crack addicts in the city. There is a lot of drug dealing and prostitution here. There are dozens of missions and homeless service centers here. There are also many vacant lots: given the choice between bringing buildings up to code or demolishing them, many building owners chose the latter. Not far away the real estate is very expensive, but because this is the homeless containment zone the property here is nearly worthless.

East L.A. / 91 Corridor

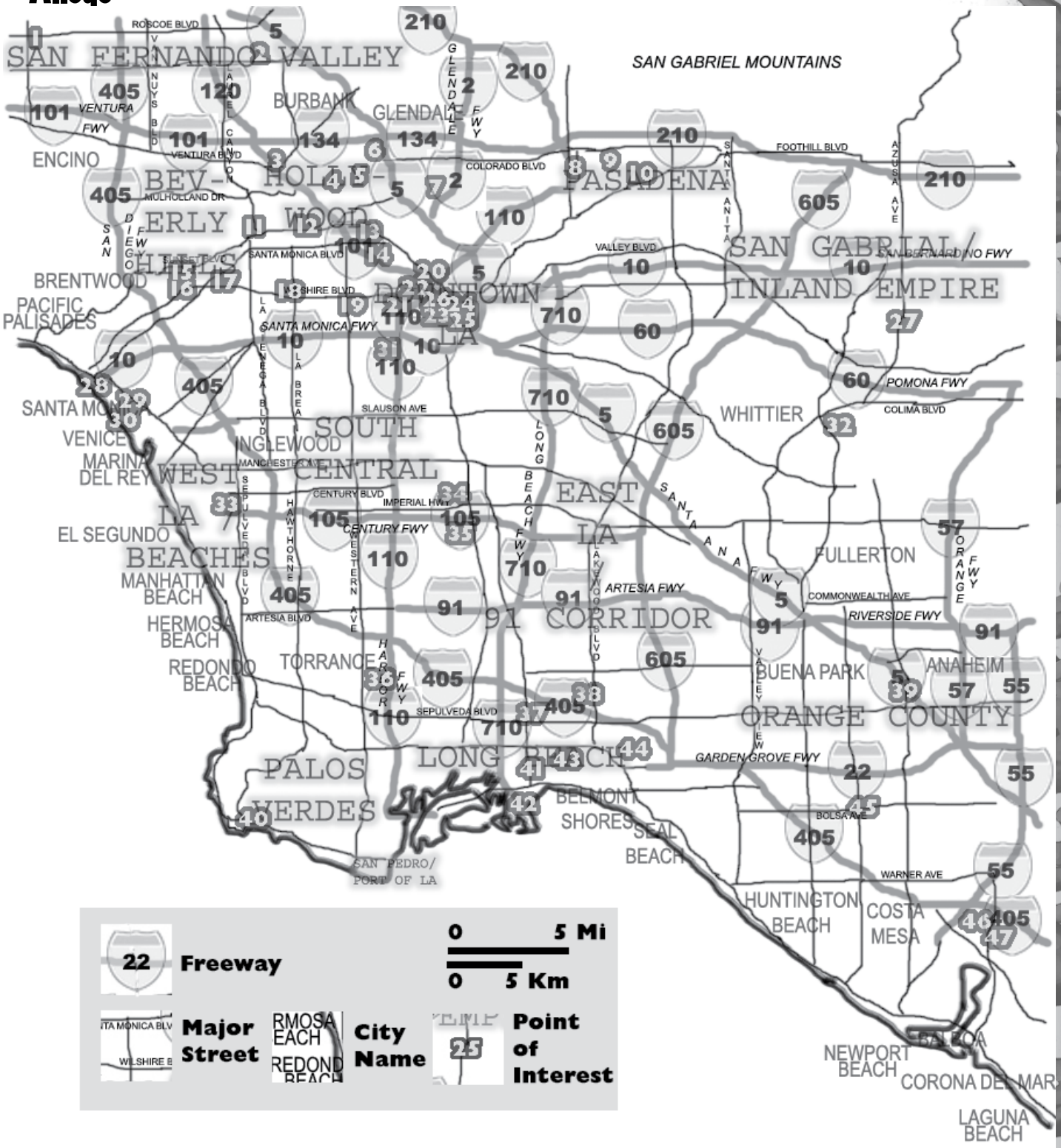
In Brief- Mostly Hispanic. A lot of industry.

This large, heavily Hispanic part of the L.A. area is made up of several incorporated cities (including Pico Rivera, South Whittier, City of Industry, Lynwood, Paramount, Lakewood, La Mirada) and large (but heavily populated) unincorporated areas. In many ways it looks more like a Mexican city than an American one: the street plan is convoluted, industrial buildings sit amid residential buildings, food crops grow and chickens graze in people's yards.



Skid Row

Alleys



1 Northridge Hospital Med. Ctr.
2 Burbank Airport
3 Universal Studios / City Walk
4 Hollywood Sign
5 Griffith Zoo / Observatory
6 Griffith Park
7 Forest Lawn Cemetery
8 Huntington Hospital
9 Cal Tech
10 Huntington Library
11 Sunset Strip
12 Masonic Temple
13 Kaiser-Permanente Hospital
14 Los Angeles City College
15 UCLA
16 UCLA Med. Ctr.
17 Golden Triangle
18 La Brea Tar Pits
19 Korea Town
20 Angelino Heights
21 Macarthur Park
22 Abandoned Subway Tunnel
23 Skid Row
24 Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels
25 Little Toyo
26 Civic Center / LAPD HQ
27 Little Manila
28 Santa Monica Pier
29 Dogtown
30 Muscle Beach
31 USC
32 His Lai Buddhist Monastery
33 LAX
34 Watts Towers
35 Lac-King/Drew Med. Ctr.
36 Harbor UCLA Med. Ctr.
37 Long Beach Memorial Med. Ctr.
38 Long Beach Airport
39 Disneyland
40 Marineland of the Pacific
41 St. Mary's Med. Ctr.
42 Queen Mary
43 Little Phnom Penh
44 CSU Long Beach
45 Little Saigon
46 John Wayne Airport
47 UC Irvine

East L.A. is largely working class. Most of the people who live here are Mexican immigrants who have been in the US for several generations and discovered that it is possible to make it in the US without giving up their unique culture. Accordingly, East L.A. is culturally conservative. Recent Mexican and Central American immigrants live in the in the poorer parts of East L.A. East L.A. is a major hotbed for Hispanic street gangs (see p.171).

East L.A. is home to a lot of factories, especially industries that create pollution. East L.A. has ten times worse air pollution than West L.A.

Many hard-working Hispanics commute every day from East L.A. to West L.A. where they work as maids and gardeners in the homes of rich Jews and Anglos.

Also in this area is the City of Industry, a city that incorporated to prevent its commercial areas from being annexed and taxed by nearby cities. The City of Industry has no business taxes and pays for its limited costs with taxes on retail establishments. The city of industry has few residents: most of the area is taken up by industrial buildings, retail centers, a large shopping mall and the only drive-in movie theater in the L.A. area.

South Central

In Brief- Mostly Black and Hispanic, poor, lots of gangs.

As large numbers of Blacks came to L.A. (primarily during the great depression and after WWII), often seeking an escape from Southern segregation, they found that most L.A. neighborhoods had formed restrictive covenants to prevent Black people from moving there. They found themselves forced to live in what was increasingly an overcrowded ghetto in South Central. In more recent times the booming Hispanic population has moved into the area, displacing Blacks as the dominant ethnicity in many parts of South Central.

South Central is one of the poorest and most crime-ridden areas in L.A. and is a major hotbed for gang activity. Much of modern gang culture started here and spread throughout the US and beyond. Many gang members throughout the country see South Central as a semi-legendary homeland of gangs.

Crenshaw- This was once one of the largest middle class Black neighborhoods in the US, then the 80s crack epidemic, the 1992 Rodney King riots and the 1994 Northridge earthquake did significant damage from which this area was unable to recover, turning it into a poor and violent area and an epicenter of gang activity. Crenshaw is made up mostly of single story bungalows and small apartment buildings. The streets are lined with palm trees.

MacArthur Park- The MacArthur park area was once wealthy, featuring a lot of nice old apartment buildings, but now it is generally a poor part of town where a lot of Central American immigrants live. At the center of the area is MacArthur park, which features a band shell, a lake with for-rent paddleboats and a fountain. Until recently MacArthur park was known for gang activity, teenage prostitution and drug dealing. Recent revitalization efforts, including the addition of security cameras, have significantly reduced crime in the park.

Near MacArthur park are Korea Town (a section with many Korean and Central American immigrants) and the La Brea Tar Pits.

Watts- Nearly half of Watts lives below the poverty line. Most of the population is Hispanic. In 1965 Watts was the center of a big riot that damaged much of the area. Any improvements to the area since then were undone by the crack cocaine epidemic, which turned the area into a wasteland, and then the 1992 Rodney King riots. It remains one of the most blighted parts of L.A. The only recent event which has improved life in the area was a truce between major Watts gangs which reduced violence (if not drug problems) in the area.

Watts is also known for the Watts Towers, a bizarre piece of sculpture created between 1921 and 1954 by an Italian immigrant living in Watts. The sculpture contains several tall towers (two over 99 ft. or 30 m. high) made of a metal skeleton. Imbedded in the sculpture is a huge variety of 'found objects' including pieces of pottery, glass from bottles and construction scrap.

Inglewood- A city near the West Side with a working and middle class Black population and an increasing number of Hispanics. There is a fair amount of manufacturing in Inglewood. Inglewood has a long history of Black gang activity.

West L.A. / Beaches

In Brief- Rich, white, touristy.

This is a wealthy area populated mostly by upper-class Anglos and Jews. Real estate prices here are extremely high because of the good air quality, good weather, and proximity to beaches. This area has a high concentration of plastic surgeons, health clubs and BMWs. The people living here are often culturally isolated. Often times the only Hispanic people they know are their gardeners and maids.

Also in the area: several high rise office buildings, a major Reform Jewish synagogue and several Japanese owned businesses.

Westwood- This college town is dominated by UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles). UCLA was built in 1927 and has, among other things, a law and medical school. Out of the 11,000 students who attend, 8,000 live in on-campus housing.

Santa Monica Mountains- This is a small chain of mountains which forms the boundary between the L.A. basin and the San Fernando Valley. Many mansions are built on mountainsides overlooking the ocean, forming one of the highest concentrations of rich people in the world. The mountains are a popular destination for hikers. There have been mountain lion attacks here.

Alleys

Santa Monica- Many artists, writers and celebrities live here. Santa Monica is known as a liberal city (see p.162 for more on L.A. liberalism) which has given the largest contributions to the Democratic Party of any city. During springtime Santa Monica often has a morning fog or haze which burns off by afternoon. Santa Monica has one of the best and cheapest bus systems in the country. Many British and Irish ex-pats live in Santa Monica and there are a lot of pubs. The Santa Monica pier is a major tourist attraction, with many restaurants, souvenir shops and a two-acre amusement park.

Dogtown- Parts of Santa Monica and Venice make up this small neighborhood which is famous with skateboarders and surfers as the home of pioneering members of their sports.

Venice- Large canals were built here in 1904 to try to replicate Italy's Venice. Now most of the canals have been filled in, some of those that remain have stagnant and stinking water. For some time is has been known as a bohemian area and in the 60s it was the center of L.A. hippie culture. A lot of artists live here and Venice has a lot of large and unique public art projects. Although the area is becoming gentrified and yuppieized, Venice is still the home to many old hippies, artists and homeless people. Venice has the largest free clinic in the US and is home to the head office of the country's largest lifeguard organization.

Downtown Venice is a popular night spot, with a lot of clubs, bars and trendy clothing stores.

Oakwood is a small Black section of Venice, one of the few Black neighborhoods on the West Side. Crip gangs operate here and there is a fair amount of drug activity and violence.

The Venice Boardwalk features many street performers, bicyclists, rollerbladers, volleyball courts, and a fishing pier. Nearby is muscle beach where bodybuilders go to exercise and show off their muscles.

Malibu- This city is home to many rich people, including many famous actors and others from the film industry. There are many mansions on hills overlooking the sea. Building houses on hillsides has turned out to be risky: in recent years wildfires and mudslides on the hills have done millions in property damage.

Beverly Hills

In Brief- Wealthy, famous shopping.

This wealthy city is home to the "golden triangle," centered on Rodeo Drive, one of the most glamorous shopping districts in the world. The area also has many legendary hotels and restaurants. Beverly Hills has a large population of Jews and Persians.

Hollywood

In Brief- No movies. Park, runaways, homosexuals, night clubs.

Despite popular conception, few movies have been made in the Hollywood since the 1920s. Most of the movie and TV studios have moved North to the San Fernando Valley area. Paramount Studios is the last remaining film studio. Some film related industries (e.g. editing, prop design) remain.

Hollywood is a big center for tourism and shopping, with a lot of shops, theaters, trendy restaurants and night clubs. Hollywood Boulevard is the center of tourism and has, among other landmarks, the Chinese Theater and the Masonic Temple.

Hollywood has a big problem with runaways. They come to L.A. hoping to make it big as actors. After failing many become homeless panhandlers or prostitutes working the streets of Hollywood. Others move to the Valley and become porn actors.

Hollywood Cemetery, near Paramount Studios, has a large number of famous people.

Griffith Park- The biggest park in the L.A. area. It is located in the Hollywood Hills (part of the Santa Monica mountains). Griffith Park has an observatory, amphitheater, the L.A. Zoo, golf courses, stables, a train museum, the Hollywood sign, an old merry-go-round and hiking trails.

West Hollywood- This recently incorporated city has a large number of homosexuals, retired seniors and Russian Jews. About one third of the approximately 40,000 people living here is homosexual. Many businesses cater to homosexuals. This is the primary home and nightlife spot for L.A.'s LGBT community. Many call Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood the "main street of gay America." The annual gay pride parade held here is the largest in the nation.

Sunset Strip is the part of Sunset Boulevard that runs from Hollywood, through West Hollywood, to Beverly Hills. It is the home of L.A.'s hottest and most exclusive nightclubs. This area has been on the forefront of new developments in popular music, from go-go dancing, to punk, to new wave, to hair metal. Some of the nightclubs are so snobby that bouncers won't let people in if they don't look cool enough. The strip is dominated by huge billboards and tons of neon and the streets are crowded with cruisers and people watchers. The area also has many expensive hotels.

Also on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood is an 'adult entertainment' district with a lot of strip clubs and porn shops. There are also prostitutes (including many transvestites) on the streets, although recent police crackdowns here have forced many of the prostitutes to move elsewhere.

Angelino Heights- L.A.'s oldest residential neighborhood with a lot of old Victorian houses, especially along the 1300 block of Carrol Avenue.

Palos Verdes

In Brief- Wealthy, isolated, xenophobic.

This is a very wealthy and very exclusive neighborhood on the Palos Verdes peninsula. Palos Verdes is made up of several small cities like Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, and Rolling Hills Estates.

There are few roads in and out of Palo Verdes. The residents are very wary of outsiders and will often call police or private security on anyone who looks like they don't belong. Although the area has great surfing spots, non-locals who come here to surf are harassed or find their tires have been slashed by local surfers. Other hobbies enjoyed by residents are hiking, bicycling, bird watching and horseback riding.

There is a small upscale shopping district in Rolling Hills Estates. Also in Palos Verdes is the Marineland of the Pacific, an aquarium which was closed in 1986 and has remained unused except occasionally as a set for TV shows and movies.

San Pedro / Port of L.A.

In Brief- Major port.

San Pedro is a small historical district with a WWII cargo ship and a Victorian-era lighthouse, both of which are maintained as museums.

The historical district is dwarfed by the Port of L.A. This massive port (7,500 acres, handling about 150 million tons of cargo worth $160 billion per year) is the busiest in the US. The majority of traffic there is container ships coming from and going to Asia. There are also a number of cruise ships that dock here. The ships and land vehicles at the port are a major source of L.A.'s pollution. The Port of L.A. is just East of the Port of Long Beach, which is the second busiest port in the US.

Long Beach

In Brief- Many Asians, large port, haunted ocean liner.

This community features fairly wealthy and fairly poor neighborhoods. There are a significant number of Crips and Asian gangs here.

Long Beach has a fairly large Asian community, with many Laotians, Cambodians, Hmong and Vietnamese. The Hmong and Cambodians are especially prevalent: Long Beach has most of L.A. County's Hmong and is the world's largest Cambodian community outside of Cambodia (mostly in a part of Long Beach known as Little Phnom Penh).

Long Beach has a major port (adjacent to the port of Los Angeles) and a popular harbor. One attraction in the harbor is the Queen Mary, a 2,000+ passenger art-deco ocean liner from 1934. It is a hotel and tourist attraction with restaurants and shopping on board. Many say the Queen Mary is haunted.

Major businesses in Long Beach include aerospace companies, shipping (at the port), and hospitals. Long Beach is home to CSU Long Beach, a major state university. Many Asians attend this university.

San Fernando Valley

In Brief- Prototypical suburbia, now increasingly non-white and urbanized.

Known throughout Southern California as "the valley." It's a large valley directly to the North of Los Angeles. The valley was the early recipient of "White flight" when Whites fled the increasingly non-White L.A. basin. Today, however, the valley is about half Latino and one-tenth Asian. There is a large Iranian community (including both Moslem and Jewish Iranians) in the West Valley and Calabasas. Skyrocketing housing costs and increasing minority populations has caused many Valley residents to move to the Inland Empire (p.181). Most major TV and movie studios can be found in the Valley. The Valley is also home to a multi-billion dollar pornography industry. Three-quarters of adult magazine and video distributors in the US are located here.

The Valley is scorned by most Angelinos as 'not cool.' It's the land of prototypical suburbs. The Valley is also the origin of 'valley girls' and 'valley speak' which developed among suburban Valley teens in the 80s. The Valley is also designed to honor the culture of the car: just about everything can be purchased via a drive-through-window and carwashes are huge landmarks in the hearts of Valley residents.

The Valley has fairly bad air quality because the valley traps pollution.

Glendale- More than half of this city is foreign born. There are Persians, Arabs, Filipinos and other Asians. The city is best known for its huge Armenian population. Glendale even has Armenian organized crime (p.172) and street gangs (p.171). Glendale is also home to the Forest Lawn Cemetery, a cemetery famous for its resemblance to Disneyland. The cemetery has themed areas (e.g. "Babyland" and "Dawn of Tomorrow.") Many sections are decorated with the aesthetics of a Precious Moments figurine. Speakers play recorded music or lectures. Video biographies can be viewed via kiosks. Many famous people are buried here. Many people are married here.

Alleys

Burbank- This is the 'media capital of the world,' home to many TV and movie studios. Burbank also has an airport.

Pacoima- This is the poorest part of the Valley, with a lot of crime and urban blight. It is mostly Hispanic.

Universal Studios- Also in the valley is Universal Studios with a theme park and the City Walk, a sanitized version of a downtown main street filled with shops, music clubs and restaurants. Besides tourists and bored Angelinos, a lot of gang members like to hang out at the City Walk.

Pasadena

In Brief- Mostly white, has Caltech and a rare-book library.

This city and surrounding communities are as old as L.A. They have a fair amount of poverty but also have expensive condominiums. Pasadena is mostly White with a small section of Blacks and Hispanics. The Pasadena area is home to Caltech, a major high-tech university rivaling MIT in its prestige. Pasadena also has the Rose Bowl, a major sports arena. There are also flocks of wild parrots living in Pasadena.

Pasadena also has the Huntington Library, which was built by a railroad tycoon. The library has 600,000 books and 3,000 manuscripts. The library has some of the world's rarest and most valuable books, including a Gutenberg Bible.

San Gabriel / Inland Empire

In Brief- Once rural and White, now suburban with non-Whites.

This area includes the San Gabriel Valley (East of Pasadena and East L.A.) and, to the East of the valley, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

San Gabriel Valley- The valley is largely working-class suburbs, with a few urban areas. As minorities moved into the valley in the 80s and 90s there was "White flight", mostly to Orange County. Today the majority of the San Gabriel Valley is Hispanic and Asian. The Asian population is primarily Chinese (mostly Taiwanese), with 4 "chinatowns" in the valley. There are also Vietnamese, Koreans and Filipinos (the Filipinos are concentrated in the 'Little Manila' district).

Hacienda Heights- In the valley, near East L.A. Nearby is the largest Buddhist monastery in the Western Hemisphere. It is based on Taiwanese Zen and Pureland Buddhism.

Inland Empire- Past San Gabriel is the inland empire, made up of the Western parts of Riverside and San Bernardino counties. It was made up of desert and rural communities until the 80s when urban sprawl moved in. Today, much of the Inland Empire's population commutes long distances to L.A. to work. There are also several large shopping malls, major manufacturing and shipping plants and bad air pollution (some of the worst in the state).

Gangs are a big problem in the Inland Empire, especially considering the relatively small and unsophisticated nature of the police in the area. There are around 70,000 gang members in 300 gangs, mostly Hispanic gangs dealing Meth and other drugs. There are also a lot of neo-nazi skinhead gangs who have been attacking the newly arrived non-Whites (see p.172 for more).

The Inland Empire also has the area's biggest Indian casinos, one in San Bernardino and one in Riverside county.

Fontana- This town, in San Bernardino County, was once an orchard and cattle ranch town. Then, during WWII, a large steel mill was built, turning it into a working class town. The Hell's Angels formed in Fontana after the war. The plant was closed in the 1980s, bringing poverty and unemployment to the area. The economy has been improving as suburban sprawl moves in, but Fontana is still a poor town. Fontana is the meth lab capitol of the country, home to lots of bikers, rednecks, KKK members and poor people. There are ruins of the old steel mill, as well as several big wrecking yards and trucking companies. This is a major hub for truckers and there are a lot of truck stops and adult bookstores. A large number of stray dogs wander the dusty streets.

Palm Springs- Way out in Riverside County, 120 miles (200 km.) east of L.A. is an oasis in desert. Palm Springs is home to many resorts, golf courses, country clubs and rich residential communities.

Orange County

In Brief- White, conservative, Disneyland.

This county, South of L.A., has about 3 million residents. Orange County is mostly White Anglo. One quarter of the population is Hispanic, one-tenth is Asian and there are few Blacks. Orange County tends to be politically conservative (compared to L.A. County, which tends to be liberal). The reason for this conservativism stems from the major sources of Orange County's population. First came White midwesterners who were lured to Orange County with promises of fabulous orange groves. Then came "White flight" from the L.A. basin when the extensive racial segregation there began to break down.

Orange County has many private and public colleges, most notably University of California at Irvine and California State University Fullerton. Tourism and theme parks are the county's biggest industries. There are medieval and old-west themed 'show restaurants' where people can sit and eat and watch a live show. There are also a lot of big tech businesses and business hubs. Orange County has several upper-class communities. There are also many toll-roads.

Punk is big in Orange County and it is the birthplace of several famous punk and pop/punk bands.

Laguna Beach- Often considered the art capital of Orange County. There are a lot of art galleries and a lot of artists living here. Laguna Beach has a yearly living statue festival in which residents dress up and recreate scenes from famous paintings. Laguna Beach has an overwhelmingly White Anglo population.

Anaheim- This is the tourist hub of Southern California. Its major attraction is Disneyland, though there are also many resort hotels, shopping areas and entertainment venues. Anaheim has more racial diversity than most of Orange County.

Disneyland- This theme park was constructed in 1954-5. About 12 million people visit it every year. In recent times its owners have concentrated on turning Disneyland from a theme park for kids into a full-service family resort. Disneyland has the Sleeping Beauty Castle at the center, surrounded by 8 themed 'lands': Main Street USA, Adventureland, Frontier Land, Fantasy Land, King Arthur's Carousel, Tommorrowland, New Orleans Square, Critter Country and Mickey's Toontown. A railroad and monorail help visitors move between these areas. There are also large "back stage" areas that visitors do not see and which contain offices and maintenance shops. A network of tunnels under Disneyland allows employees to move between backstage areas and the rest of the park without being seen. Disneyland maintains extensive surveillance of the park in order to keep visitors safe and to proactively deal with 'undesirables.' In October, Disneyland has 'gay days' where around 30,000 gays and lesbians visit the park.

Fullerton- This city has several colleges (most notably CSU Fullerton), suburban communities and shopping centers. Real estate prices here are very high. In recent times Fullerton has been the site of a big political battle between "slow growth" forces and those who want to develop the city to allow for more people and businesses. The "slow growth" camp is mostly made up of homeowners who want to keep their communities exclusive and their homes valuable.

Westminster- This city is taken up mostly by Little Saigon, the biggest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam. See p.20 for more on Little Saigon.

Irvine- This city was planned and developed by the Irvine Company in the 1960s. It is a city of pristine suburbs, ecological preserves and careful landscaping. Rather than a grid, the streets are laid out in a curving pattern that resembles a necklace. It is the safest city in the US. It is also known for the fascism of its homeowner associations who dictate everything down to what brands of cars residents can park in front of their homes. It is mostly White and Asian with growing Chinese, Korean, Indian and Iranian populations. Irvine is the home to the headquarters of many tech companies, the Ayn Rand Institute and UC Irvine.

Santa Ana- This is the county seat and the largest city in Orange County. Santa Ana has a mostly Mexican-American population. There is also a zoo, a museum with many Central American artifacts, and the Orange County courthouse.

San Juan Capistrano- An old Catholic mission which has been restored and is now a tourist destination. It is famous as the point of return to the US of migrating swallows, although changing migration patterns have recently reduced the number of swallows that come here.

Catalina Island

In Brief- Large wilderness island off coast.

This is a 76 square mile (200 km^2) island approximately 22 miles (35 km.) from L.A. One million tourists come here every year, mostly to camp, hike, mountain bike, snorkel, scuba dive, see reefs and shipwrecks in glass-bottom boats and stay in the island's two small resort villages (Avalon and Two Harbors). Tourists come here via ferries or the island's small airport. The number of cars allowed on the island is strictly limited and most residents and visitors use bicycles or golf carts for transportation.

Catalina is a rocky island with many mountains, canyons, coves and beaches. There is a herd of around 125 bison (brought here in 1924 for the filming of a movie) as well as boars and island foxes.

Location Scouting for GMs

Suggested locations for various scenes.

Crime and Danger	
Blighted ghetto filled with addicts & drug dealers	Crenshaw (p.178), Watts (p.178).
Coughing & bleeding people waiting in a crowded ER.	Lac-King/Drew Med. Ctr. (p.177), Kaiser-Permanente Hospital (p.177).
Homeless people sleeping on the street.	Skid Row (p.176)
KKK rally.	Inland Empire (p.181).
Major gang gunfight.	South Central L.A. (p.178)
Mental hospital.	Patton State Hospital (p.169)
Mentally-ill homeless people raving about demons.	Skid Row (p.176), Patton State Hospital (p.169)
Middle class white gang-wannabes hanging out and causing trouble.	Westwood (p.178), Inland Empire (p.181).
Open air crack and meth market.	Crenshaw (p.178)
Teen runaways begging and prostituting themselves.	Hollywood (p.179).
Seedy strip clubs offering 'private dances.'	Sunset Boulevard (p.179).
Strung-out hookers giving $5 blow jobs.	Skid Row (p.176).
Taggers and homeless people underground.	Abandoned Pacific Electric subway tunnel (in Downtown L.A., p.177)
Violent, overcrowded jail.	Twin Towers (p.169), Men's Central Jail (p.169).

Work & School	
Big-budget film being filmed on a sound stage.	Burbank (p.181).
Corporate r&d labs in a sprawling industrial park.	El Monte (in East L.A., p.176), Orange County (p.181).
Fancy corporate head-offices.	Downtown L.A. (p.175), Santa Monica (p.179).
Immigrants waiting to be picked up in a truck for day labor.	City of Industry (p.178), North Hollywood (in the San Fernando Valley, p.180), East Los Angeles (p.176).
Minimum wage workers toiling in a factory.	City of Industry (p.178), Inglewood (p.178).
Office workers in a cubicle farm.	Downtown L.A. (p.175).
Tract home construction on the edge of the desert.	Palm Desert (in Inland Empire, p.181).
Upper class teens in a well-funded high school.	Santa Monica (p.179), Beverly Hills (p.179).

Home	
Asian immigrant enclave.	Chinatown (p.175), Little Phnom Penh (p.180), Westminster (p.182).
Large projects buildings teeming with violence, gangs and poverty.	Watts (p.178).
Mexican-American residential neighborhood with small shops and restaurants.	Lakewood (p.176), East L.A. (p.176).
Palatial mansions overlooking ocean.	Palos Verdes (p.180), Malibu (p.179).
Poor but dignified non-white working-class community.	Inglewood (p.178), El Sereno (In East L.A., p.176).
Quiet seemingly perfect suburb.	Irvine (p.182), Woodland Hills (in SW San Fernando Valley, p.180), Pacific Palisades and Redondo Beach (in West L.A./ Beaches, p.178).
Upscale condo apartments.	Downtown L.A. (p.175), West Hollywood (p.179).

Entertainment & Shopping	
Big sports game with packed stadium seats.	Staples Center (p.176).
Bikinis, sunbathing, surfing.	Santa Monica (p.179), Huntington Beach (in Orange County, p.181), Malibu (p.179)
Bodybuilders working out.	Venice Beach (p.179)
Crowded theme park with rollercoasters.	Magic Mountain, Disneyland (p.182), Knotts Berry Farm.
Exclusive and snooty clothing shops.	Golden Triangle (p.179)
Flashy casino.	San Bernardino or San Jacinto (in the Inland Empire, p.181)
Gang members hanging out, girl watching, getting into occasional confrontations.	Venice Beach (p.179), Universal City Walk (p.181).
Gay or lesbian bar.	Santa Monica Boulevard (in West Hollywood, p.179).
Hiking and camping in wilderness.	Santa Monica Mountains (p.176), Catalina Island (p.182).
Huge shopping mall.	Southcoast Plaza (in Orange County, p.181), Glendale Galleria (Glendale, p.180), Fox Hills Mall (in Beverly Hills, p.179).
Mexican-American street fair.	Olvera Street (near Union Station, p.175)
Movie premier with celebs, autograph hounds & paparazzi.	Mann's Chinese Theater (in Hollywood, p.179).
Pornos being filmed in a small studio.	Glendale (p.180), Burbank (p.181).
Rich people playing golf.	Palm Springs (p.181)
Small art-gallery.	Venice (p.179), Laguna Beach (p.182).
Small venue punk show.	Various sites in Orange County (p.181).
Tourists snapping pictures of things.	Hollywood (p.179), Chinatown (p.175), Griffith Observatory (p.179).
Trendy nightclub.	West Hollywood (p.179), Venice (p.179).
Underground rave party.	Warehouses in Downtown L.A. (p.175).

Lonely	
Fenced off vacant lots filled with ruble and weeds.	South Central (p.178), Skid Row (p.176).
Half-ruined abandoned buildings & vacant lots.	Skid Row (p.176).
Huge multi-story parking garage.	Downtown L.A. (p.175), Santa Monica (p.179).
Stand-still freeway congestion.	405, 110 & 10 freeways.
Trailer parks, truck stops, weed filled lots, closed factories.	Fontana (p.181).

WARNING

The graffiti found in this place will cause explosive decompression of your semantic blockage. See, you think you're on stilts walking over a desert of knives. Except there really are no stilts and there are no knives, but if you realize that there are no stilts before you realize that there are no knives, you're seriously fucked. And this section is the little midget that runs up to you and says "guess what fucky!" and kicks the stilts out from under you and you have about one-tenth of a second to sum up all your ontological inquiries about the nature of knives.

So the real question is: have you done your holy homework? Are you ready to take your chances with the midget or would you like to spend a few more decades figuring out where your stilts came from? Or do you even realize that you're on stilts? Do you think that you're really tall and all the people who are lying bleeding on the ground are there because they didn't have the guts to be tall like you? If that's the case, fucky, you have no business being in this place. You won't even see the midget until he's standing over your bleeding body demanding that you get back on the stilts so he can do it again.

In case you haven't been paying attention, what I'm trying to say is that what is written here might not be appropriate for everyone. In fact, it might not be appropriate for anyone. Maybe we're all just better off hobbling around, clinging desperately to our stilts, gazing up at the sky we will never touch and never ever daring to look down.

Chapter Five - Secrets of the Touched

Secrets of the Androgynes

In Brief- Members of the genderqueer movement discovered a way to make sexual occult practices safe by shedding the baggage of gender identity.

Origin- Since prehistory, people have chosen to dress and live as another gender, either with or without the knowledge and sanction of society. Almost every culture in aboriginal North America had what Whites called "berdache", people who lived as the other gender and were often considered holy or powerful.

In the mid 20th century, when homosexuality was thought of by most homosexuals as a terrible secret (and by society as a crime and a mental illness), men met in public restrooms known as 'tea rooms' for anonymous sex. Many of these men lived as heterosexuals except for the few minutes they spent in these tea rooms. Occasionally the sex would lead to a supernatural accident, usually killing the participants. Nobody wanted to admit to being there, so nobody reported or talked about the supernatural accidents.

Later in the century, tea room sex lost most of its power as homosexuality became more accepted and homosexual sex roles and rituals standardized.

When sex-change operations were invented in 1952, it created the possibility of actually becoming another gender and thus transsexuals were born.

The term "genderqueer" came into use in the late 1990s, mostly among alternate-sexuality youth groups who wanted a way to define themselves that didn't imply that they had chosen and would adhere to a gender or sexual orientation. The idea of being non-gendered, multi-gendered or semi-gendered spread from youth groups to established queer academics and philosophers. Even some people who were neither homosexual nor transgendered identified themselves as genderqueer.

Apart from attracting radical youth and cutting edge queer-philosophers, the genderqueer movement was the last piece in the puzzle for a number of gays and lesbians who remembered (or had heard about) the tea room events. They had theorized that tea room sex had power because it mixed passion with emotions such as fear and self-hatred, and wasn't bogged down by established roles and rituals. Genderqueer created a new opportunity, and hopefully a safer opportunity, to bypass established sex roles.

Structure- There are about a thousand Androgynes worldwide, almost all of them living in major cities in America, Europe and Japan. 'Liberal' cities, like San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York, where many homosexuals and transgendered people flee to, have the highest populations. There are about 50 Androgynes in Los Angeles.

There is no leadership or official structure to the organization. Some members acknowledge loyalty to those who taught them or are more powerful than them. Others do not. Some Androgynes take it upon themselves to travel to other cities to start Androgyne groups there. The groups rarely communicate and no single Androgyne knows what-all is going on with Androgynes as a whole.

Metaphysics- Sex is a product of evolution. The exchange of genes is the only way to keep a population genetically healthy. Pleasure is the natural means by which evolution caused humans to have sex. However, the powers-from-beyond quickly realized that the ability to directly create pleasure in each other and to share in pleasure was dangerous. Two souls repeatedly sharing such powerful emotions stood a greater chance of awakening than one soul alone. So, since sex was a biological necessity, the powers-from-beyond tried to "cripple" sex by creating numerous sexual taboos and cultural constraints on sex. They also created gender roles and division of labor, essentially giving men and women two separate cultures and making them strangers to each other.

In modern humans, these gender roles are learned early. Children are taught by adults and older children what behaviors are expected from males and what from females. To learn not to act like the opposite gender children must internalize gender ideas. Thus the anima or animus is formed both as an internal model of the opposite sex and as a repository for repressed feelings and impulses.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

When an Androgyne tries to eliminate gender roles in hirself, two things happen. First, the Anima or Animus becomes weaker as more of it is incorporated into the conscious self. Less psychological energy is caught up in that psychodynamic and the energy is available to the conscious self. Second, genderless sex has less to distract participants from the pure sharing of pleasure and is thus more likely to cause a minor awakening in the soul. Androgynes are trained to recognize these minor awakenings and take advantage of the brief weakening of the laws of physics.

Revelations- Androgynes haven't been around long, so the oldest and wisest don't know too much more than the newly initiated. Elders have seen intense sexual experiences 'break' reality, often killing people in the process. Some elders have done historical research and have found evidence that sexual freedom has always had enemies among the ruling classes, and that those enemies have often wielded supernatural powers. Some have found that "miracles" have favored societies that were sexually restrictive, helping them thrive and destroy more permissive civilizations. To an Androgyne historian, the bible is a chronicle of some supernatural force, masquerading as 'god', manipulating historical events to wipe out sexually permissive pagan religions.

Today the powers-that-be are 'the patriarchy', the small group of rich White men who benefit from every form of racial, sexual and class inequality. Elder Androgynes know they could not win in open warfare with the patriarchy. This is why they keep the Androgynes so secretive. They know that Androgyne cells have been wiped out completely after being discovered by the powers-that-be.

Many elder Androgynes believe that the goal of the powers-that-be and their secret masters is, and has always been, to keep humans from finding the true power of our souls.

Various elder Androgynes are in possession of artifacts from sex-related shatters including: Mary Sutton's Bloody Rags, the Vertigo Card, and the Glory Hole (p.244).

Androgynes and the Victorian Girls

While traveling around the world investigating supernatural incidents related to sex, a few of the Androgyne elders have heard about the Victorian Girls (p.244) and have started investigating. They have pieced together some of the incidents from suppressed historical records and have even managed to gain a Victorian Girl artifact. They have not yet figured out exactly how these incidents fits in with their theory of the power of sex. Figuring out how the Victorian Girls and the Tea Room Saints are related would give the Androgynes a much greater understanding of the universe.

Vox Free, Elder Androgyne

Appearance- Youthful, athletic androgynous person, intelligent, perfectly proportioned face, spiky black hair with patches died purple. Silver earrings and pierced septum ring. Naturally red lips. Road-worn cammo pants, plaid flannel shirt under a brown leather vest, carrying a canvas knapsack.

Attributes- AGY 16, AWR 13, CHM 17, END 25, INL 13, SPD 22, STH 19, WIL 16, BLD 8, BDY 7, INCY 8.

History- Vox was born Lance Peterson, the child of upper-middle class suburban Los Angelinos. From an early age he new he was different: he liked girls' games as much as boys', liked girls' clothes and, as he got older, realized that he liked boys. The other children were predictably cruel and Lance learned to fight back physically and to throw up psychological defenses against their insults. As a teen he leaned towards radical intellectualism, reading Marx, Sartre, Paglia and others. After highschool he left home to become a cross-dressing gutterpunk living on the streets of West Hollywood. He was instantly repelled by gay society. People looked down on him because he was a drag queen who was dirty and got into bar fights with bigots. He ended up hanging out with the misfits of gay society. Once, in a bathroom at a public park, he started seeing the walls pulsate. The pulses grew stronger as the moans in the next stall grew louder. Then he heard a crack and blood started to pour. When he looked he found bloody pieces of people, sheared off cleanly as if they froze, shattered and thawed. Not long after that he attended a gay youth conference where he first heard the term genderqueer. He loved the idea and quickly dropped Lance in favor of Vox and tried to obscure hir gender. Vox helped create Androgyne practice and developed Androgyne abilities. Sie lost touch with most of the other elder Androgynes as Sie continued living on the streets, making a one-person war against gender.

Psychology- Vox has almost completely stopped thinking of hirself as male or female. Vox thinks of hirself as a lover, explorer and, most importantly, as a freedom fighter trying to save humanity from the tyranny of gender. Sie doesn't think it's wrong to destroy property or ruin the lives of those who support, consciously or not, gender roles. Vox loves to confuse, disorient and scare 'normals.'

Methods- Vox likes to seduce the rich and powerful and frighten them with bizarre changes during sex. Hir favorite game is to switch bodies with someone, then seduce and switch bodies with another person, and on and on until finally coming back to hir original body, leaving a string of people in the wrong bodies. The challenge for Vox is to find and get back in hir original body before hir memories fade away. Vox also likes to enter corporate or government buildings at night (getting past guards using Be Other or Masks), disable fire suppression systems, and then set them on fire.

Special Skills- Be Other (4), Birth Servant (2), Change Gender (4), Switch Bodies (4), Flesh Control (4), Masks (3), Revive (3).

Typical Attack- Vox attacks with a snake-like probe from hir genital area (see Ultimate Genitals, p.82) which has range 4. Sie does a Strike at STH (25) + AGY (16) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +16 vs. 0) which does 3 damage (pierces armor as 6).

Typical Reaction- An entangle with hir genital probe at INL (13) + STH (25) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +13 vs. 0).

May 98 – Journal of Genderqueer Poetry

'Passion' by CrotchPower

I stare into your eyes. You seem more real than any person I've ever met. Your mouth opens slightly. I feel like I am running down a hill and as the incline grows steeper I must run faster and faster to stay on my feet. Yet there is no fear here, not in this world we have carved for ourselves. Your breath is hard and fast. I can feel my heart pounding in my lips, the lobes of my ears, the tips of my fingers. The air between us is filled with warm moisture. Every part of my body aches with desire to touch you.

We pull ourselves together. We both know the steps to this dance, make them in perfect harmony, although neither is leading. There is softness in your skin, but strength under it. Your body presses against mine and my breath is taken away. We kiss and time is banished. Only this moment exists. Your taste is on my tongue. Your smell fills my nostrils. The warmth of your skin is all over me. Your wordless sounds of pleasure fill my ears. To me there is only you. There has never been anything else and never will be anything. You are the universe.

We lay ourselves down. In no hurry, we slide over each other, positioning ourselves so we can each discover the fire burning between the other's legs. A touch there and we feel electricity leaping between us, traveling through our spines, filling our bodies with a holy vibration. For a moment we are tentative, afraid that this experience will be too intense, that it will obliterate us. Yet we cannot stop, the parts of our minds that make decisions are like tiny insects buzzing against the wrath of a hurricane.

Our fingers dig into each other's flesh. We pull ourselves closer and closer together. Our bodies rock in harmony. There is no longer any difference between giving and receiving pleasure. Our bodies have no shape, all we are is moving and feeling. The waves of pleasure grow higher and higher. What once would have been heartstopping pain is now crashing ecstasy filling all known worlds.

And as we reach a crescendo, something stirs in the darkness. Something that is us and yet more than we can ever imagine. Two things for which time and space and life and death have no meaning reach for each other across a terrible void. And the world shakes. Across every reality that has been or could be, thunder crashes. Petty gods are shaken on their thrones. For ours is the passion that can destroy the heavens.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Secrets of the Animists

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

In Brief- Ancient peoples learned to gain power and deal with the dangers of the invisible by driving themselves insane with drugs, torture and deprivation.

Origin- Animism is a natural development of pre-scientific cultures. Through trial and error, aboriginal people compiled every technique that helped deal with the invisible dangers of the world. Yet Animists were powerful enough to be a threat to the powers-from-beyond, so those powers manipulated history so that organized priesthoods took over the functions of shamans. The coming of science gave the powers-from-beyond an opportunity to slowly wean people off magic and the belief in an invisible world. Organized religion, monotheism, science and colonialism were all attempts by the powers-from-beyond to slowly wipe out Animism.

In Europe, the last real Animists ("witches") died in 1490 (see p.206 for more). Today, modern society is encroaching on the few remote wilderness areas that still have animistic cultures and converting those people to Christianity or Islam. There has been recent interest in shamanism by Westerners, but this 'neo-shamanism' is no threat to anyone. The neo-shamans approach shamanism from a framework of western thought and ideas and, like modern occultists, are almost never able to achieve real power.

Structure- There are Animist elders and students scattered across the globe in remote wilderness areas and in the cities that play host to displaced people. Around the world there are about 100,000 Animists with some sort of real power and about 100 in Los Angeles. Of those 100, about 60 are Southeast Asians, 25 are from African Syncretic Religions, 10 are Curanderos and 5 are from other assorted Animistic cultures.

Most of these Animists will never move past the most basic skills. They will cure minor illnesses, bring small amounts of good luck, make brief and timid forays into other worlds, but will never gain more power or learn more of the universe's secrets.

In centuries past there were a few Animists who were powerful enough to retain their minds and their souls when their physical bodies died. They live in other worlds, only daring to come to our world briefly. When they come here they are almost immediately set upon by reapers. Most have lost many of their memories when their brains died, so their understanding of our realms is fairly simplistic. Most still cling to an us-vs.-them worldview and seek to aid only their particular tribe or people. Many are hostile to the ethnic groups they warred against in life. These Animists are not completely immortal: if they wander the other realms long enough they will eventually run into something capable of destroying them.

Metaphysics- Animists use deliriant and hallucinogenic plants, self-torture, self-deprivation and repetitive chanting or dancing, all of which has the same effect: to put them in an altered state of consciousness where their belief in the rational order of the universe does not or can not exist. It is temporary madness, accompanied by strong emotions. In the grips of temporary madness they are able to overcome the rules of physics in minor ways: enhancing their physical abilities, leaving their bodies, imposing their will on those invisible beings or on inanimate objects, etc. After imposing their will on reality while insane, they become able to do it sober, but only because of an absolute belief in their own ability. Each skill has an explanation within the traditional cosmology. Even when the cultural explanations aren't true, the belief is an important part of the ability. For instance, Animists with Command Inanimate believe they are speaking to sentient spirits inside inanimate objects. In reality the objects do not have any sentience, but the belief that they do is an important framework through which the Animist imposes his or her will on the physical world.

Much of Animist practice involves identifying, removing and even attacking people with what many Animists call 'misfortunes' and Outcasts call 'wrigglers.' These are the invisible beings that cause many of humanity's diseases and other problems. Yet not every illness is caused by an invisible creature. Some are caused by microorganisms or physiological failures, just as scientists and doctors believe, and Animists find themselves powerless in the face of these illnesses. In cities the proportion of illnesses caused by microorganisms and toxins is greater than in Animist's aboriginal homelands. Thus many Animist healers find their powers faltering in the face of modern medicine. See p.228 for more on wrigglers.

Animists' 'guardian spirits' are really human psychodynamics. The 'spirit world' they live in is really the combined subconscious realms of the psychodynamics. When Animists are possessed they are allowing psychodynamics (or occasionally Dances, see p.193) to take control of their bodies. Most of an Animist's psychodynamics take the form of entities from the Animistic culture's myths. Insomuch as the 'spirits' have self-awareness, they believe they are those mythological figures. See p.258 for more on psychodynamics.

Visions are knowledge from the subconscious that has been allowed to leak into the conscious mind in the form of hallucinations.

Revelations- Animists have few sources capable of enlightening them about the secrets of the universe. Psychodynamics ("guardian spirits") can reveal secrets about the mind, but don't know much outside the subconscious ("spirit world"). They don't even know that they are psychodynamics.

Animist elders may have a little more experience in other worlds, but they rarely know what the things they've seen mean in metaphysical terms. Encounters with dead Animists are very rare and the dead Animists have often lost enough knowledge that they have little of importance to communicate.

Among the Savages

Chapter Fourty-Two

A Journey Upriver --- A Surviving Aweti --- A Fantastic Tale

In late spring I traveled upriver to a small camp of Aruto. Living among them was an old woman who my guide claimed was the last surviving member of the Aweti people. She told me several words in her language, which seem to be merely a sub-dialect of Aruto (see table 2.3). Her people's customs, as she described them, were typical for a tribe from this area. She told me some of their myths, most of which were just versions of Aruto or Mudavi myths with differently-named characters. One myth which was unique was of a famous and powerful Aweti witch doctor from ancient times named Utan.

Utan was quite adept at entering the spirit world and dealing with spirits there. One time he was exploring the part of the spirit world which was home to his own guardian spirits. He went to the land controlled by the spirit that controlled his hunger, but the place was cursed and caused him to melt. He narrowly avoided becoming a puddle by finding a hole in the ground which led to a huge cave. The cave was empty of everything except a giant tree. He climbed down the tree and at the bottom he found himself emerging from the mouth of a giant. Looking, he saw the giant looked like him. The giant was asleep: lying next to countless other giants. Each giant was impaled by a tent-pole and each tent pole had magic symbols inscribed on it. He had to flee quickly, for the place was filled with monsters.

When he arrived back in this world he told his people that we were all dreaming and that if we awoke the real world, the spirit world, and even the land of the dead would all be destroyed. Ever since then, the Aweti grande dame claimed, her people held a yearly dance to propitiate their own giant sleeping selves and keep them from waking up.

128

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Cho'Taweh, Elder Animist

Appearance- Seven foot tall Native American male. His face is emotionless and, like a mask, has few features or details. He has rows of scars on his arms and thighs, is naked except for a small buckskin breechcloth, wears a crown of feathers, is muscular, has glowing bronze skin, glowing amber colored eyes, long black hair and carries a huge flint knife.

Attributes- AGY 14, AWR 16, CHM 2, END 20, INL 13, SPD 18, STH 20, WIL 20, BLD 6, BDY 6, INCY 6.

History- Cho'Taweh was a 'medicine man' of the Tatavian Indians who lived in the Los Angeles area. He was the most gifted medicine man in the tribe's memory, possessing powerful guardian spirits and fearlessly making trips deep into the spirit world. Shortly after hearing rumors of Spanish explorers, a terrible plague stuck his village, one which his supernatural abilities were useless against. An enemy Animist in another tribe chose this time of weakness to attack Cho'Taweh. After half his village died, Cho'Taweh succumbed to the disease. As he lay dying he decided to try to avoid being taken to the land of the dead by journeying to the spirit world. When his physical body died he was safe in the subconscious of another. He was not prepared for the loss of his physical brain, though, and he lost most of his memories and knowledge. Cho'Taweh spent the following centuries wandering through the various realms. He has only returned to this realm when a portal inadvertently led here and each time he left as quickly as possible, knowing that there would be spirits here who want to take him to the land of the dead.

Psychology- Most of Cho'Taweh's memories and knowledge are that of a lone wanderer though dangerous and alien realms. He remembers little of his own culture and knows nothing of the modern world. He has gathered that his people as he knew them are gone, usurped by a mysterious tribe of 'white people.' He considers White people his enemy, and will kill one if given a chance, although he doesn't remember enough about his own society to have any real feelings about its destruction. Cho'Taweh lost most of his language abilities and has not found a reason to re-develop them. He does not think to himself in words and instead spends most of his time, like an animal, reacting to the world around him. His main motivations are to avoid being taken to the land of the dead and to find a place to live that is neither dangerous nor is prone to 'disappearing' (as subconsciouses do when their conscious selves die).

Methods- Cho'Taweh walks though the various realms, seeking portals to new places. He never stops to eat, rest or relieve himself. He is constantly on guard in case something should attack him. When he meets something that looks like a human he bares his teeth, hisses at it, shows his knife and then waits to see what it's going to do. If he encounters a White person he may circle the White person and throw rocks at him or her, trying to determine if the White person is a threat. If the White person does not seem like a threat, Cho'Taweh will attack.

Special Skills- Knife (4), Animal Form (4), Journeying (6), See True Face (4), Visions (6), Flesh Control (5), Masks (5), Revive (5), Spirit Speed (4), Spirit Strength (4).

Typical Attack- Whenever possible, Cho'Taweh will use Spirit Speed and Spirit Strength to increase his physical abilities. Unless he rolls a 1 he can boost his stats to AGY 29, END 50, SPD 33, STH 50. He will split his action twice, jumping into range, striking with his knife at AGY (29) + STH (50) -20 (2 splits) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +34 vs. 0) and saving the next action to use as a reaction if attacked (e.g. a Dodge at AGY (29) + AWR (16) -20 (2 splits) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 0). A successful strike will do 5 bladed damage.

Typical Reaction- A split reaction jump (out of range) at SPD (33) + AGY (29) +16 (skill) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +43 vs. 0) and Parry with his knife at STH (50) + AGY (29) +1d20 -10 (split) vs. 25 (or 1d20 +44 vs. 0).

Secrets of the Cannibals

In Brief- Monk at leper colony, reading about Gnostics, learned to deny and remove the flesh and so raise the soul from its dormancy.

Cannibals Origins- In 1869 a Franciscan monk named Sebastian Cook began a serious study of heresies, including the Gnostic heresies. Most of the surviving information about the Gnostic heresies were written by enemies of the Gnostics, yet Cook was able to piece together enough of the philosophy to create his own model of Gnosticism.

In 1880 the church discovered that he had taken an unhealthy interest in the heresies and they had him transferred to a leper colony. Watching people die, he had a revelation about how the soul could gain freedom. He engaged in a number of dangerous and degrading practices, including infecting himself with leprosy. He started teaching the lepers and staff what he had discovered. The colony was shut down in 1895, and Sebastian Cook disappeared (killed by Professionals), but the monks and nuns that worked there took the teachings with them. Each sought out, secretly, peers they thought would be willing to learn their doctrines. Thus a secret group spread throughout catholic monasticism. At the turn of the century Cannibalism spread to the Catholic priesthood. In the last 30 years is has spread to non-Catholic religious communities.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1946 in a cave on the western shore of the Dead Sea. These scrolls contained a huge number of Gnostic texts. Once the texts made it out of the hands of the Catholic Church they greatly increased academic knowledge of Gnosticism and increased the abilities of the Cannibals.

Structure- The Cannibals are organized into independent cells who don't know of each other's existence. The cells are visited sporadically by masters who bring teachings and, occasionally, tasks to be performed. The masters have been practicing Cannibal doctrines between 20 and 80 years. They have several body parts missing but can still pass as normal (although severely disabled) humans. Each master communicates directly with one of a handful of ancient Cannibals. The ancients only rarely communicate with each other. The ancients have been practicing between 50 and 100 years and cannot pass for living humans. They live cloistered deep

in the dark corners of abandoned or sparsely populated monasteries. They rarely leave the monasteries and when they travel within the monasteries it is typically via underground tunnels. They live most of their life meditating, contemplating and reading texts brought to them by masters.

There are about 2,000 novice Cannibals worldwide (30 in L.A.), 100 masters (2 in L.A.) and 5 ancients (1 near L.A.).

Metaphysics- Cannibal abilities come from a cultivation of disdain for the physical world and, most of all, for the flesh. Cannibals meditate on their souls as something existing separately from the flesh. A normal person's soul conforms to the shape and form of the body, like water conforms to the shape of a vessel, and so when a normal person loses a body part the soul contracts. A Cannibal's soul is just 'awake' enough to have its own shape and to retain that shape even when body parts are severed. However, even the most advanced Cannibal is unable to destroy his or her entire body, since that would bring Reapers (p.216).

Revelations- Novice Cannibals will only meet masters a few times and will not normally be able to meet ancients until they become masters themselves.

Masters and ancients can reveal to PCs the history of the group. PCs also learn that leaders of every organized religion are in a secret organization (the "powers-that-be") with the world's most rich and powerful people. The powers-that-be know that the Gnostic heresies are a major threat and try to wipe out active use of the heresies by manipulating society and/or using supernaturally-powered assassins. The powers-that-be have such great worldly power because they are favored by the powers-from-beyond. The powers-from-beyond are believed to be associated with the demiurge of Gnostic myth, the evil creator of this world. Since the beginning of society, Cannibals theorize, the powers-from-beyond have used the powers-that-be as a tool to control society and keep human souls trapped and degraded.

Cannibals have a lot of theories about what lies beyond this reality, but none really know first hand. They believe that our souls came from a perfect being known as the godhead or from a child of the godhead. The godhead, they believe, cares for us but cannot or will not help us because we are too far from it.

Father Garibaldi, Elder Cannibal

Appearance- Floating a few inches off the ground, under a coarse and moth-eaten brown hooded robe, is a torso, part of a head and short stumps where arms and legs should be. The genitals have been removed, the front of the ribcage sawn out and the guts removed, the tongue, lower jaw, nose, ears and eyes have been pulled out, the top of the head has been sawn off and the brain removed. A simple gold crucifix dangles around the neck. The remaining skin is red, leathery, covered with sores, scars and lacerations. Those who can see the invisible see a muscular, beautiful, sexless figure. When he speaks what remains of his mouth does not move, but people hear a warm, thoughtful voice with a thick Italian accent.

Attributes- AGY 25, AWR 30, CHM 5, END 30, INL 25, SPD 30, STH 35, WIL 20, BLD 10, BDY 2, INCY 10.

Social Status- Father Garibaldi is one of the oldest Cannibals. He lives in seclusion, in the ruins of a Southern California monastery, only occasionally communicating with his juniors, who bring him books.

History- Father Garibaldi was born in Italy in 1842. Early experiences of ecstasy during communion left him wanting to become a priest. As a priest though, he questioned the wisdom of his superiors too often and in 1878 he was sent to a small mountain parish. There a monk at a local monastery introduced him to cannibalism. He soon retired to a life of monasticism and lived in seclusion as he amputated his parts. When some of the monks left the monastery in 1909 to help start a monastery in California, he traveled with them. He kept his presence secret from the majority of monks: only those he chose to recruit into Cannibalism ever saw or heard from him. When the monastery closed in 1931 he stayed there.

Personality- Since losing his brain, the father has slowly lost his aesthetic sense, his ability to feel emotions and his empathy with other people. Worst of all, he doesn't feel the ecstasy of loving God like he once did. He does not, however, regret removing his brain. Most of his life takes place in the world of ideas and abstractions and that is usually all he cares to discuss. He does not read newspapers, watch TV or listen to the radio so he has little idea what's been happening in history, culture, science and technology since the 30s.

Methods- The father spends his days and nights (he doesn't sleep) either reading or meditating on what he has read. While doing either he whips the flesh of his back. When he senses people in the monastery he dons his robe and hides in the shadows, watching them.

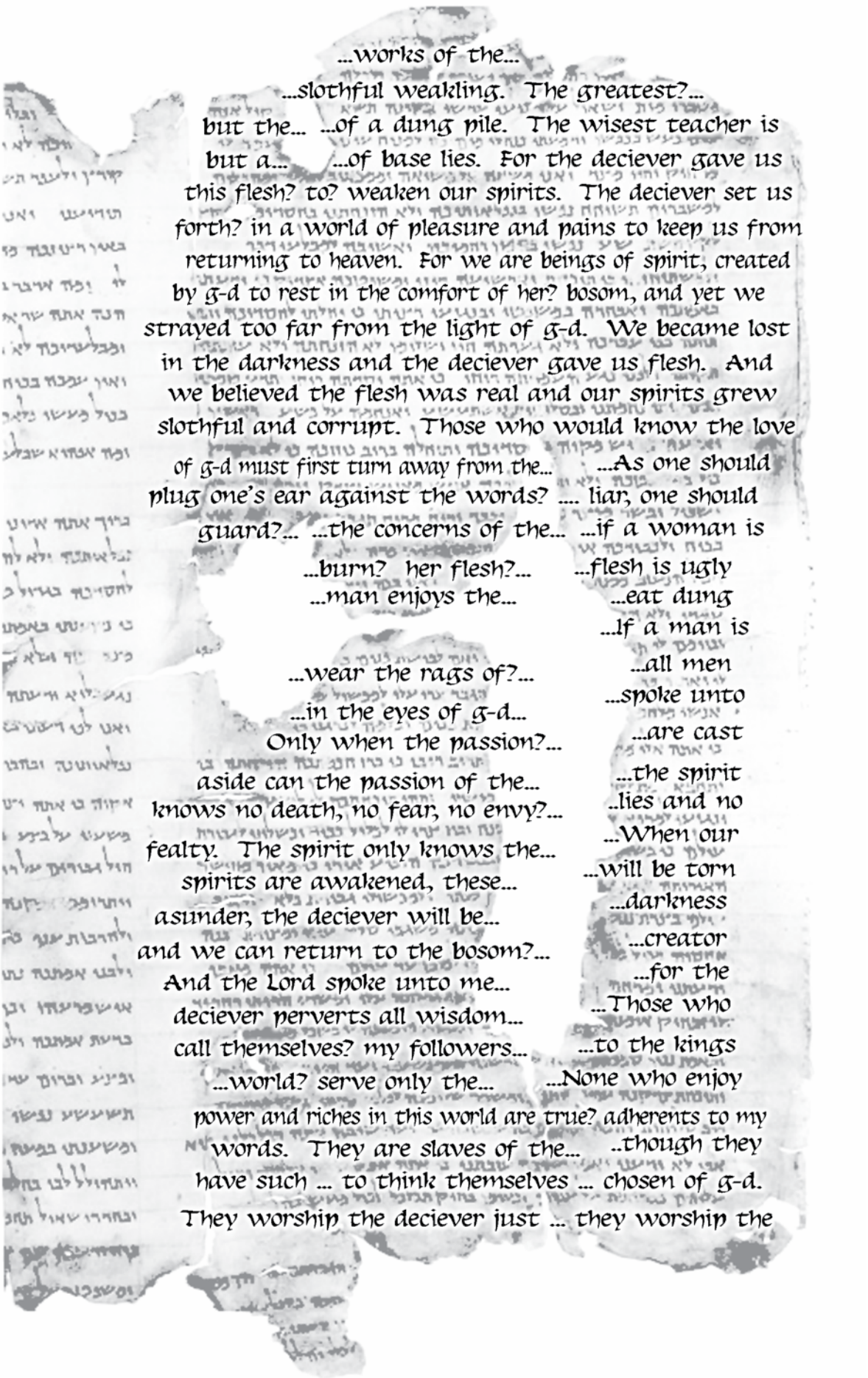
Special Skills- Mortification of the Flesh (6), Command Inanimate (3), Ecstatic Rage (5), Flesh Control (4), Nihilist Rage (4), Revive (5).

Typical Attack- Split targeted Strike against a person's heart at STH (35) + AGY (25) -10 (split) -4 (targeted) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +21 vs. 0) and Disarm at STH (35) + AGY (25) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 +20 vs. 0). The strike does 4 BLD damage if successful.

Typical Reaction- Split simultaneous targeted Strike (at 1d20 +21 vs. 0) and simultaneous Disarm (at 1d20 +20 vs. 0).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY



...works of the...
...slothful weakling. The greatest?...
but the... ...of a dung pile. The wisest teacher is
but a... ...of base lies. For the deciever gave us
this flesh? to? weaken our spirits. The deciever set us
forth? in a world of pleasure and pains to keep us from
returning to heaven. For we are beings of spirit, created
by g-d to rest in the comfort of her? bosom, and yet we
strayed too far from the light of g-d. We became lost
in the darkness and the deciever gave us flesh. And
we believed the flesh was real and our spirits grew
slothful and corrupt. Those who would know the love
of g-d must first turn away from the... ...As one should
plug one's ear against the words? .... liar, one should
guard?... ...the concerns of the... ...if a woman is
...burn? her flesh?... ...flesh is ugly
...man enjoys the... ...eat dung
...If a man is
...all men
...wear the rags of?... ...spoke unto
...in the eyes of g-d... ...are cast
Only when the passion?... ...the spirit
aside can the passion of the... ..lies and no
knows no death, no fear, no envy?... ...When our
fealty. The spirit only knows the... ...will be torn
spirits are awakened, these... ...darkness
asunder, the deciever will be... ...creator
and we can return to the bosom?... ...for the
And the Lord spoke unto me... ...Those who
deciever perverts all wisdom...
call themselves? my followers... ...to the kings
...world? serve only the... ...None who enjoy
power and riches in this world are true? adherents to my
words. They are slaves of the... ..though they
have such ... to think themselves ... chosen of g-d.
They worship the deciever just ... they worship the

Secrets of the Faustians

In Brief- Experiences, and the desire to express them, in undisturbed abandoned buildings coalesce into entities ('Dances'). These entities become powerful and intelligent when they reproduce themselves in human subconsciouses. Powerful Dances can make backup homes and can turn humans into undead experience-machines.

Origin- Ever since humans have had souls there have been Dances. Most early Dances were born in the wilds and could only attack those who happened to wander by.

Dances blossomed in the last half-century where economic downturns could turn a heavily populated area into one full of abandoned buildings that might stay abandoned for decades. Only the modern economy would allow a building in a populated city to sit unused for long periods.

Detroit has experienced one of the biggest economic downturns that an American city has ever experienced. In 1967 a race riot and a loss of auto-plant jobs caused a massive upper and middle class exodus from the city. The city's population went from nearly 2 million in the 1950s to less than 1 million, leaving a huge number of buildings abandoned. Soon after, hundreds of Dances were born. They were surrounded by drunks and psychotics they could control and desperate people they could infect. For the first time ever, Dances began to communicate with each other. There was a Dance renaissance, at attempt by Dances to cooperate and share information for their own survival. Faustians, sent as messengers from this Dance society, have communicated with Dances in every major city in North America.

Structure- There are thousands of Dances worldwide. In L.A. there are about 500 Dances, only about 100 are powerful enough to effect the minds of humans. About 50 have one or more Faustians in their service. These 50 Dances have, altogether, 87 Faustians in their employ. Most have only one, some have as many as 10. 30 of the Dances have more than one abode. The Dances purposefully prevent any organization of Faustians, no matter how informal, from forming. They purposefully try to obscure evidence of their existence and origins. They don't want any organized human resistance against them and they have been almost completely successful.

In Detroit, a group of vigilantes have been trying to destroy Dances by burning down as many abandoned buildings as they can. Their founding member is an ex-Faustian. They don't understand much about Dances and they believe a lot of paranoid things that aren't true, like that Dances control the higher echelons of government. Together with copycat arsonists, this group is responsible for Devil's Night, the orgy of arson that hits Detroit each year on the night before Halloween.

Revelations- Most historical research into Dances will be dead ends. At best, characters will discover that the phenomena they experience are strung together from the experiences of different people who lived in the apartment that is now a Dance's home. Some of these people may still be alive, thus dispelling the idea that Dances are ghosts, and these people experienced no supernatural phenomenon during their lives. If PCs are very lucky they may discern that the experiences that make up the Dance were experiences that meant a lot to the people and that those people had a burning desire to express or communicate those experiences but couldn't.

PCs who investigate their own minds can find out what the Dance is doing inside them. They will find that the Dance is using the PC's brain to think for it, that it is growing 'larger' in the PC's subconscious (using more mental resources) and weakening and finally destroying other psychodynamics (thus destroying the PC's personality). The psychodynamics know something is wrong but don't know what. They don't recognize the Dance when they encounter it and they aren't capable of understanding something from the outside coming into the subconscious.

Metaphysics- When a building sits abandoned for a long time, the unfulfilled desires for self-expression coalesce, unperturbed by random stirring up by new desires, into a single unitary desire. The thoughts, feelings and perceptions that meant the most to the residents of a place, that they wanted to express and share but couldn't, form a cycle of experiences that is the Song. The desire to make the Song be experienced by as many people as possible is the Dance.

Dances are born mindless. They are simply a wish, or the residue of wishes. Like other wishes made by mundane humans, they don't have the power to perceptibly influence the physical world. They can influence minds, though, especially the minds of easily manipulated people like drunks, drug users and psychotics. Any person with a weak mind who comes near the Dance's abandoned building will experience some of the thoughts, perceptions and emotions of the Song and will, in turn, feel the desire to express those experiences, thus making the Dance stronger.

Drunks and psychos are poor vessels for the Dance. It has intelligence, but that intelligence is as flawed as that of the minds it infects. When a mostly sane and sober human who is near a Dance completely opens his mind, usually out of sheer desperation, a little copy of the Dance forms in that person's subconscious. The Dance now has a fully functioning brain that it is operating in, not only increasing its power but also giving it intelligence. As time goes on it takes over more of the person's mental resources, becoming stronger and smarter. Eventually it becomes self-aware and starts thinking in terms of self-preservation instead of just blind pursuit of spreading itself into as many minds as possible.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

When a Dance puts itself into multiple hosts (a.k.a. Faustians) it is able to network together the stolen bits of neurological power from each into one whole, making it as intelligent, or more so, than a human.

Dances are not physical beings and care little about the physical world. They can sense the physical world only through the senses of their hosts, and even then they depend on the hosts to help them understand what they see. Dances exist on the mental plane. They can see the thoughts, emotions and perceptions coming off people like a human sees the light from a bonfire at night. Thus Dances have the ability to read minds, influence minds and sense hostile intentions. Faustians, s parts of the Dance's intelligence, can develop access to these abilities. These powers reduce as a target gets farther from a Faustian's brain or Dance's abode.

Dance Psychology

Even through they can read minds, and even through they are made up of human experiences, Dances have absolutely no empathy for humans. Human thoughts, feelings and perceptions mean nothing to them except something they want to blot out and replace with the Song.

Dances may or may not know of the existence of other Dances (depending on how long they've been around). When they do know that other Dances exist they don't think of them as anything other than a potential tool to be used and a potential threat to be destroyed.

Dances know that humans are mortal and that when a Faustian dies the part of the Dance that is inside that Faustian will die. As long as the abandoned place that contains the thoughtless core of desire remains unperturbed, though, the Dance can always gain new Faustians. What Dances fear most, therefore, is some human invading their abandoned space and messing up the song with his or her own experiences and desires. Thus Dances do everything in their power to keep those with free will out of their abodes.

Many Dances try to reduce their vulnerability by creating copies of their abodes. First they have a Faustian redecorate a place to look, sound and smell like the Dance's abode did when people were living there. Then the Dance has the Faustian deliver a human whose free will is so weakened that the Dance can control that human completely. The victim is led around the abode, experiencing every experience of the song. Then the facsimile abode is sealed up so that those experiences and the desire to express them can ferment and become another part of the Dance.

When Dances become very powerful they begin to be able to effect physical reality. Apart from redecorating, the main use of this power is to control human biology. A Dance who can gain complete control of both the mind and biology of a human can create the perfect experiencer, one who experiences the song over-and-over again without pause for rest, sustenance or even death. The Dance usually directs the Faustian to find someone nobody will miss, drug them to the point of will-less-ness and deliver them to the Dance's abode. Victims become "Puppets," neither alive (for they cannot think for themselves) nor dead (for their neurons still fire and their souls are still in their bodies). To make maximum use of these undead slaves the Dances often bisect them down the middle, having one half experiencing one thing in one part of the abode while the other half experiences something else somewhere else. If the Dance is shocked, injured or distracted the puppets may experience a few minutes of terrible self-awareness before the soul escapes from the body.

The only way to kill a Dance is to remove it from the mind of each Faustian it has infected (or kill those Faustians) and destroy the Dance's abode and any copies it has made of those abodes.

Revelations- Historical research can tell Faustians the circumstances in which Dances form and what Dances do to people and their environments. They may even find out what has killed Dances in the past. This will not answer a Faustian's major questions: what is a Dance, what are its goals, what it is doing to the Faustian's mind and how can a Faustian survive infection by a Dance.

Encountering a Dance in the Subconscious

Characters exploring the subconscious of a Faustian will turn a corner and find themselves in what appears to be the Dance's abode. The more powerful the Dance is in the subconscious, the more likely one is to turn a corner and be inside of it.

The abode will be decorated with a mismatch of the decorations the place had when people lived there. Sometimes décor and environment will regularly switch back and forth: walls will change color, day will change to night, pieces of furniture will change, the house may suddenly be on fire and then stop, etc.

There will be people, but they will be engaged in mindless repetition. Some actors will be sedate: looking, thinking, speaking. Others will be doing intense and dramatic things: a man beating his wife, a young woman slitting her wrists in the bathroom, etc. Observant visitors may recognize that some of the actors are the same people at different ages.

These actors will not respond to anything the visitors say or do. Visitors who touch or are touched by the actors will suddenly become those people and find themselves forced to do the repetitive tasks until they can beat the Dance with an opposed WIL save (make a save hourly until the visitor is free)..

The actors can also be used by the Dance to speak with the visitors. The actors will keep doing their repetitive task while communicating.

Leaving a Dance is not as easy as getting in. Leaving by any exit will lead right back to the same place the character started from. The only ways to leave are:

-To leave the subconscious altogether.

-To persuade the Dance to let the visitors leave.

-To badly hurt the Dance by doing massive damage to the abode.

Alleys

Only if PCs find a way to get the Dance (or another Dance) to reveal its secrets can the PC find out what he or she really needs to know. Dances will be reluctant to reveal their secrets and will only do so in one of three circumstances: First, if they are threatened and see no other choice. Second, if they completely trust a PC (even then the info is need-to-know). Third, if the PC can manage to take control of the Dance's intellect (see Faustians Manipulating Dances). Even then, the Dance doesn't know the metaphysics behind its own existence. It only knows that it is the desire to make the Song be experienced by as many human minds as possible as strongly as possible.

Dance Defenses

Dances surround themselves with layers of protection. The first layer of protection is the Faustians. The Dance uses its ability to read minds at remote to identify potential future threats and then it dispatches the Faustians to remove those threats. The Dance understands little about the world of humans and it depends on Faustians to figure out the best way to deal with those threats. The second line of defense is the almost-will-less: alcoholics, crazy homeless people, severely retarded people that live nearby (often because the Dance has drawn them to live nearby). They have enough free-will to keep themselves alive but they are weak enough that the Dance can take temporary control over them and force them to attack threats. The next line of defense is physical: the Dance will have had Faustians install all manner of locks, bars and even traps. Dances strong enough to manipulate the physical world will have locks that can only be opened from the inside. The next line of defense is any Puppets the dance may have in that abode. The final line of defense is the Dance itself: it will try to drive off or destroy the invading humans by forcing the song on them and/or by manipulating the environment (e.g. making the floor give way).

Dances Manipulating Faustians

The part of the Dance inside each Faustian has a psych STH, just like natural psychodynamics. A level 1 Faustian starts with a 10 STH dance. A Dance's AWR, INL and WIL are approximately equal to the sum of all psych STHs within each Faustian's mind divided by 5.

Dances can hurt or manipulate a PC in the same way a psychodynamic does: with impulses, slips and hindrances. For instance, the Dance might give a Faustian an impulse to push someone into traffic, make the Faustian accidentally leave a burning cigarette on an armchair, or hinder the PC's ability to use the Mind Reading skill to read a certain person's mind. See Using Psychodynamics, p.129 for more.

As time goes on the Dance grows stronger and other psychodynamics grow weaker as the Dance eats more psychological resources. The rate of growth is ½ point per week if the PC is actively resisting the encroachment, 2 points per week if the PC is actively aiding the encroachment and 1 point per week if the PC is doing neither. A PC is actively resisting when he or she tries to use distractions, meditation, hypnosis or force of will to block out the déjà vu feelings that run through the PC's dreams and wandering thoughts, and avoids situations and environments which prompt the déjà vu feelings. A PC is actively aiding the encroachment when he or she tries to prompt the déjà vu feelings.



A Dance's Abode

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Faustians Manipulating Dances

If the PC can become fully conscious of a Dance (rather than the Dance hiding at the periphery of consciousness), the Faustian can try to impose his or her will directly on the Dance, forcing the Dance to do whatever the Faustian wants. To become fully conscious of the Dance, the Faustian must do one of the following:

-Enter the subconscious or dreams of someone infected by that Dance, enter the Dance (see Encountering Dances in the Subconscious) and touch one of the actors, thereby becoming part of the Dance.

-Enter an abode and use the Psychometry skill on the surroundings.

-Use the Mind Reading skill on a puppet or will-less person being controlled by the dance.

-Use hallucinogens or extreme self-deprivation to break down the doors of perception.

When trying to control the part of the Dance within the Faustian, the Dance gets an opposed WIL roll with a WIL equal to the Dance's psych STH within the Faustian. Success means the Faustian can make the Dance in the Faustian's head do anything the Faustian wants: tell its secrets, use its powers in any way the Faustian wants, even reduce its influence on the PC (reducing its psych STH). If the Dance is forced to reduce its influence enough times it will disappear from the Faustian's mind and the Faustian will go back to being a regular person.

After gaining control of the piece of the Dance in his or her own head, the Faustian can try to control the Dance as a whole, or parts of the Dance inside other people. The Faustian must beat an opposed roll vs. the Dance's overall WIL (the total psych STHs divided by 5). The Faustian who gains control of the Dance as a whole can make it withdraw from all the minds it has infected, thus leaving it senseless and nearly powerless. This will not kill it, however, for as long as an abode remains intact it will eventually infect a new Faustian.

The control lasts only as long as the PC can concentrate, after which the Dance regains free will.

Dance Psych STH

10- Faustian feels occasional déjà vu feelings, experiences weird dreams, but otherwise retains the same personality and behaviors.

25- Faustian's normal fears, desires, motivations, opinions and feelings are noticeably weaker. Déjà vu feelings can come at any time, dreams are almost completely made up of the Song.

50- Even casual acquaintances can tell there's something 'different' about the Faustian. The Faustian is cold, emotionless, unempathetic and unambitious. The Song is like a constant background noise to him or her.

75- Faustian speaks short, awkward phrases in a monotone, has no facial expressions, keeps up only the bare minimum of personal hygiene, avoids human contact, spends free time staring onto space, experiencing the Song 'full blast.'

90- The real world can only be experienced as a dim shadow perceived through the constant repetition of the Song. The Faustian has trouble remembering even basic pieces of knowledge about the physical world (e.g. his or her own name, how to cross a street).

100- The original personality, habits and knowledge are gone. The body is merely a puppet. The soul remains but it experiences nothing but the Song and wants nothing but for the Dance to be propagated.

Regina Hamilton, Elder Faustian

Appearance- Late thirties Black woman with short, curly black hair. She is skinny, missing several teeth and has a hateful expression on her face. She typically wears bluejeans and an old T-Shirt under a blue windbreaker.

Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 17, CHM 6, END 5, INL 17, SPD 9, STH 8, WIL 17, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

History- On the streets as a drug addicted teenager, Regina was captured by a gang of thugs who dragged her off to an abandoned place to rape her. Regina opened her mind to a Dance, who gave her the power to reduce her attackers to tears. Regina reveled in her newfound psychological strength: she quit doing drugs and became a drug dealer, all the while gladly doing errands for the Dance. Over the next decade she used her powers to become one of the wealthiest and most powerful drug dealers in the city, yet the Dance continued to eat away at her personality until she no longer felt any pleasure in wealth or power. A decade ago she quit dealing drugs to work for the Dance full time. The Dance taught her a lot about itself and its needs.

Psychology- Regina is almost gone. Few of her human drives remain. Most of her psychodynamics are dead and the survivors are weak and corrupted. Every moment, awake or asleep, the Song pounds through her head. She has lost touch with any compassion or morality. She will kill or torture with cold utilitarianism. Some tiny part of her fears the loss of selfhood that she knows is quickly approaching, but that fear is tiny compared to her overwhelming desire to help the Dance spread its influence. The Dance has 72 psych STH in Regina.

Methods- Regina lives in one of the abandoned buildings her Dance lives in, on the floor below the abode. She has quite a bit of money hidden away, enough to pay for all her needs. She spends her days building fortifications in the Dance's various abodes, redecorating abandoned places in preparation for the Dance living there, assassinating anyone who might disrupt the Dance and kidnapping street people to become puppets.

Special Skills- Pistol (4), Control Will-Less (5), Danger Sense (5), Déjà Vu (5), Read Minds (5).

Special Equipment- Pistol: Automatic (ROF 4, FR 5 ft., 4 dmg, 9 rounds) with Silencer, Chloroform.

Typical Attack- First she uses Déjà Vu to try to paralyze victims with hopeless sadness at WIL (17) +16 (skill) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 +3 vs. 0). The victim gets an opposed save vs. emotion. Next she makes a Vital Strike with her pistol at INL (17) + AGY (9) +16 (skill) -1/5 ft. -4 (burst) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +13 vs. 0) doing 32 damage (4 dmg/bullet x 4 bullets x double damage) is successful.

Typical Reaction- A split reaction Dodge at AWR (17) + AGY (9) +16 (skill) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +7 vs. 0) and Strike at INL (17) + AGY (9) +16 (skill) -4 (burst) -10 (split) -1/5 ft. +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +3 -1/5ft. vs. 0), doing 16 damage if successful.

Patient History

3/17, admitted, unresponsive, underweight and malnourished. Sores and rashes from poor hygiene. Started Haldol 500 mg/dy. intravenous. Police told admitting physician he went missing from college around finals. Found ~2 years later in an abandoned building with several dismembered corpses. Attacked police, went unresponsive when subdued.

3/20, patient asked nurse not to be drugged. Showed flattened affect, threatening demeanor, knew (guessed?) personal information about nurse. Physician on record spoke to patient, promised to lower Haldol dose if patient would submit to interview. Patient agreed.

3/21, throughout interview patient referred to self in third person, implied that whoever was speaking was entity other than the patient but would not say who. Patient showed remarkable empathy, often able to guess exactly what interviewer was thinking. Patient tried to use this knowledge to intimidate interviewer. Patient would not acknowledge killing the dismembered bodies he was found with. Instead, he claimed the bodies were alive and had been cut to pieces so they could "experience more sensations at once" and that they had only died when the police had come in and "interrupted the dance" – would not elaborate on meaning of this term. When asked what he wanted, patient expressed desire for private room he could redecorate however he wanted and where he would not be interrupted. When asked what he wanted if this was not possible, he said to be left alone and not drugged. When asked what he didn't like about the medication, he said it "interferes with this body's ability to feel" – would not elaborate. Patient refused to answer any other questions.

3/30, patient has been completely noncommunicative with doctors and staff since his interview. Possibly communicating with other patients: patients have described 'seeing' or have drawn items which can be seen in photos from the abandoned apartment where patient was found (see attached).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

The Apartment 3B Dance

Song- The feeling of hiding from someone scary and hoping not to be found, the sight of an old woman sitting at a kitchen table crying silently, the sounds of a sweetly sad waltz playing on an old radio, and the thought that one is being lied to.

Attributes- AWR/INL/WIL 25.

Abodes- The Dance has its original abode, two working copies, three that are fermenting and five places that Faustians are remodeling. The original abode is in City of Industry, the copies are in Skid Row and in a run-down part of Pomona.

The original abode is a small one-bedroom apartment with yellowing paint peeling from the walls, warped floorboards, black mold in the bathroom, a layer of dust over everything. A bare light socket is empty and the only light is that which comes in through cracks in a boarded up window over the kitchen sink. The fart-like stink of a nearby pulp-mill pervades the apartment. There is a broken wooden chair and a few old bottles, but otherwise the place is empty.

In the two copies of the abode there is an old style radio in the living room, a round wooden table in the kitchen with an old female puppet sitting at it sobbing, and in the bedroom a patch of carpet and a bed. Half a puppet hides under the bed. The other half alternates between standing next to the radio, swaying gently in time to the music, and walking into the kitchen to stare at the old woman.

The original abode has had the doorknob removed and plastered over so that it's hard to tell where the entrance is. The copies have bars on the windows, metal reinforced doors with expensive locks (35 difficulty to pick) and a heavy chain inside. The floor outside one of the apartments is been weakened so that people stepping on it will fall through onto a pile of bricks on the floor below.

Servants- Several homeless winos and crazies are squatting in the buildings where the abodes are. At any given time the Dance can summon 1d6 near-will-less to protect an abode from invaders.

The Dance has 3 Faustians:

Ted Ecklestein, a fat, middle aged tax attorney who is separated from his wife and kids, keeps a pistol under the seat of his car, and uses his powers to seduce teen schoolgirls. Ted will do just about anything the Dance asks of him, but he is wary of committing murder. The Dance has a psychic STH of 25 inside him.

Zoe Christiansen, a gutterpunk with a Mohawk and nose-ring, who lives in one of the Dance's buildings and has brass knuckles. Zoe is constantly fighting against the Dance's attempt to make her do things she thinks are wrong. The Dance has a psych STH of 12 inside her.

Andrew Lasky, an elderly Black man, retired, living in a welfare hotel near one of the abodes. He has little free will or personality left and the Dance uses him to assassinate threats or kidnap victims to become puppets. The Dance has a psych STH of 87 inside him.

The Dance also has one whole puppet and two bisected halves of a puppet in each of its two copied abodes.

History- The apartment building at 1810 E. Haversham Blvd., City of Industry, was built in 1933. Three families lived in it, including a family where a young boy was abused by his father, a young couple where the wife cheated on the husband, and an elderly couple whose son died in WWII. The building was sealed up in 1972 when it failed to pass an inspection by the County Health Department. At issue were a lack of fire exits, a wooden staircase, lead in the plumbing and fumes from a nearby pulp mill. The owners did not have the capitol to renovate the structure and nobody wanted to tear it down and build something new because, by the 70s, it was surrounded by industrial zones and a freeway. The Dance came into being in 1983 and in 1985 it had gained its first Faustian (Andrew Lasky). It gained its copied abodes in 1996 and 1997 after nearly a decade of incubation.

Secrets of the Heroes

In Brief- Power can come from having a semi-awakened animal, learning skills from the Touched, having an object or body part that was in a shatter, or being the manifestation of another person's psychodynamic.

Origin- Like serial killers, the phenomenon of Heroes came and grew with cities. Both serial killers and Heroes tend to occur in places where people can live in a social vacuum, with no relationships to other people giving meaning to their lives. In other words, when people can walk down a street with complete anonymity, being nothing but a nameless stranger to everyone they pass, some will try to give their lives meaning via acts of illegal violence. Some choose their victims via hatred or lust, others through a sense of justice or desire to make the world a better place. Gaining supernatural powers has always had the effect of making such people bolder and is often responsible for turning someone from a wannabe Hero or serial killer into the real thing.

London was the first European city big enough and anonymous enough to create Heroes as we know them today. At the same time Jack the Ripper was killing prostitutes, an anonymous tanner's apprentice was fighting garroters (the crime wave of the day) with a Victorian Girl's artifact (see p.244).

Metaphysics

Familiar: These Heroes have come across a partially awakened animal. This is a servant of humanity from before human souls were trapped in this reality. Like human souls, these servants are more-or-less immortal and are kept prisoner by the powers-from-beyond in the bodies of animals. Due to some supernatural or h-tech accident the animal became partially awakened and regained some of its powers and intelligence. It cannot remember its life before this world, nor can it escape from the body it has been placed in, but it was able to find its former master. See p.240 for more on awakened animals.

Occult Training: These Heroes trace the origin of their knowledge back to some Animist, Cannibal, Outcast, Professional or Scribbler who tried to teach supernatural skills to a protégé without initiating him or her into the heretical knowledge or philosophy that went with them.

Shattered Person: These Heroes have experienced some event so emotionally powerful that it momentarily awakened their true selves. The true self, clumsily thrashing out with its true power, destroyed the 'machinery' that enforces the rules of physics. Some part of the Hero's flesh is now permanently 'warped' in a way that changes the rules of physics around it. For more on Shatters, see p.234

Supernatural Object: Similarly, these Heroes' power comes from supernatural objects which are relics from Shatters (see Shatter Relics, p.241).

H-Tech Machine: The PC is heir to a machine that takes advantage of some minor 'error' or 'loophole' in the laws of physics. Most likely the machine was created by complete accident by an insane person who had no idea what they were doing. See p.233 for more on H-Tech.

Alleys

Soul Linked: These Heroes have had another person's psychodynamic projected onto them. At some point the psychodynamic found itself desperate to aid its conscious self but it found itself blocked (either by the other psychodynamics, the conscious mind of the person, or by external factors limiting the person's free will). Desperate, the psychodynamic wandered through the nether regions of the subconscious and through a portal into the subconscious of another nearby person. The psychodynamic was allowed by the ego to pass through to the conscious mind. The ego allowed this to happen because it sensed that the psychodynamic would give the conscious self what it needed: psychological strength and a purpose in life. The two merged and thereafter the Hero has been driven to do the job of the psychodynamic.

Example: *Tim is being held hostage by escaped prisoners. Realizing there is nothing it can do to help Tim from inside the subconscious, Tim's Anima travels elsewhere. Tim's Anima enters Eva. Eva is depressed, suicidal, desperate. Tim's Anima makes a deal with Eva's Ego. Eva's Ego will allow Tim's Anima to pass through and merge with Eva's conscious self, and Tim's Anima will give the psychological strength and purpose in life Eva needs to overcome her psychological crisis. Eva suddenly becomes aware that she need to save Tim and she goes and uses her newfound strength and abilities to save him from the prisoners.*

Although the psychodynamic 'traveled to' another mind, it still exists in and draws power from the protectee's mind. If the protectee were to die, that part of the Hero would go away and the Hero would be back to the same state of weakness and purposelessness he or she was in before.

Revelations- The best chance a Hero has to discover the secrets of the universe is if some knowledgeable member of the powers-that-be or the powers-from-beyond offers to give up his/her/its secrets in exchange for not being killed.

Richard "Mr. Death" Bailey, Elder Hero

Appearance- In real life he is a potbellied, middle-aged Black man with a round, goofy looking face. At night he wears a black trench coat, black riot armor (including a helmet with mirrored facemask), gasmask, nightvision goggles, black boots, and two automatic pistols with silencers.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 9, CHM 3, END 9, INL 14, SPD 12, STH 15, WIL 14, BLD 5, BDY 3, INCY 4.

History- Richard was born to a working-class Black family. He was a sensitive, shy boy. His father left when he was seven and this sent him into a spiral of isolation, self-hatred and loneliness that left him friendless during his adolescent years. He entertained himself with fantasies of violence, of him slaughtering armies of racists, terrorists, mafioso, etc. Soon he was living more in his fantasies than in the real world. After high school he had a series of demeaning customer service and manual labor jobs that barely paid the rent. He was poor, lonely and desperate. One evening blood started to drip from his ceiling. He called the cops but nobody came. He went to check on his neighbor and found his neighbor hanging from his neck, pierced with a dozen kitchen knives and masturbating. There was an explosion and a knife cut his hand. Moths started flying from the wound until Richard bound the wound up. The wound would not heal and continued to expel moths whenever unbound. Richard decided the moths were either a curse or a gift from god, and that he was responsible for using them to smite sinners. He trained and equipped himself as a vigilante. Over the next 30 years he killed more than 100 drug dealers, as well as pimps, rapists, abortion doctors, convenience store robbers, carjackers, child molesters, serial killers, innocent people who he mistakenly thought were committing crimes and innocent people who were hit by stray bullets. He has also killed supernatural serial killers, Faustians, an escaped psychodynamic, torturers, a surgeon, deserted city creatures, Animists, a Scribbler/terrorist and a Survivor. He has destroyed a Dance and survived being sucked into a bubble.

Psychology- Going out and killing "evil" things and people is all Richard has. He is a pathologically lonely man. He works a dead-end job he hates and contact with his family is so uncomfortable that he cuts it short whenever possible. His most intense relationships are imaginary relationships with the people he saves. There are a number of terrified young women who he harasses with anonymous letters and phone calls. Richard has a black and white view of morality: anyone who kills or rapes deserves to die. He sees the justice system as unnecessary: to him it's obvious whether someone is guilty or not. He had long ago come to the conclusion that the world is not what it seems, that alien entities prey on humanity with the permission of the powers-that-be, that humans are capable of developing great power (though usually at the expense of their sanity) and that there are other worlds that don't follow the same rules as our world. Although once a Christian, the things he has been exposed to have made him give up on his beliefs. Religion and faith are still sensitive subjects for him.

Social Status- Richard is a friendless loser, polite but distant to those he meets. As Mr. Death he is a legend, a scary story told by L.A. drug dealers. Some don't believe in him, others live in constant fear of him. Depending upon the teller of the story he is a demon, ghost or sorcerer. LAPD homicide and narcotics detectives have files on Mr. Death, but can't seem to convince their supervisors that there's anything worth investigating.

Methods- Richard drives around in an old white van with tinted windows listening to a police scanner. He investigates police calls and newspaper articles that sound supernatural and he looks for drug dealers to execute. When he finds drug dealers he waits in his van until they are alone. He sneaks up on them, ungloves his hand and sprays a cloud of moths at the people. While they are stunned and partially blinded he shoots them in the head. He robs the bodies of cash to finance his activities.

Special Abilities- Richard has a never-healing wound in his hand. When the wound is exposed moths pour out. Large clouds of moths will obscure light sources, flutter in people's faces and bite people. Most people will take a -7 penalty to actions/reactions and must make a moderate (20) save vs. distracting pain. Richard will take no penalty because of his armor and because he is used to fighting amongst the moths. The wound has the following power profile: Enclosed; Create: Creatures (3); Blockable (2).

Special Skills- Area Knowledge: Supernatural (3), Climbing (3), Running (3), Pistol (5), Sniper (4), Tae Kwon Do (4), Alarm Systems (3), Lock Picking (3), Organized Crime (2), Prowling (5), Crime Scene Forensics (3), Interrogation (4), Research: Law Enforcement (3), Tracking (4).

Special Equipment- SWAT Armor (-4 AGY already figured in, AR 10 PR 10 bladed 3 blunt), Gasmask, Nightvision Goggles, Sniper Rile with Silencer, 2 Automatic Pistols with Silencers and Armor Piercing rounds (ROF 4, FR 5 ft., 3 bladed pierces as 7 bladed), 4 Pipe Bombs, Knife: Hunting.

Typical Attack- He makes a Vital Strike with a pistol at AGY (10) + INL (14) +20 (skill) -1/5 ft. +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 -1/5 ft. +9 vs. 0). If successful it does 6 bladed damage.

Typical Reaction- A split reaction Dodge at AWR (9) + AGY (10) + 20 (skill) -10 (split) vs. 25 (or 1d20 +4 vs. 0) and simultaneous Strike with 4 bullets at INL (14) + AGY (10) +WIL (14) +20 (skill) -10 (split) -4 (burst) -1/5 ft. vs. 45 (or 1d20 -1/5ft. vs. 1) doing a total of 12 bladed damage (3 damage x 4 bullets).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

March 18th– killed 2 drug dealers, corner of Laurel and Palter. One tried to shoot me, other put up no resistance. Washed hands 8 minutes.

March 25th– killed prostitute, very dirty, 1800 block of E. Washington. Minor unarmed resistance. Washed 42 min. – reopened scabs.

April 3rd– killed 4 gangbangers & 3 family members, 2815 W. Morrison. Gang members fought back with pistols and automatic weapon. Sustained minor injuries. Washed hands 11 minutes.

April 13th– killed non-human entity in abandoned factory at 1600 Industrial Loop Rd. Considerable resistance via pincers on appendages extending from mouth. Sustained moderate injuries. Creature begged for mercy, promised to tell secrets of this world. Claimed humans once hunted it in some other world – the "real world." Now that humans are trapped here it was given the opportunity to hunt humans. Claims not to know who trapped humans or why, except that it is the one who "lived outside the city" in the city where humans used to live. Claimed it was created by humans that humans used to be considerably more powerful than they are. Killed entity by inflicting massive damage to abdominal area. Washed 182 min – bleeding profusely.

April 16th– killed man who spit on sidewalk at 4200 block of Henderson. No resistance. Washed 36 min. – hand still bleeding profusely, can see tendons in hand, growing faint.

Secrets of the Lost

In Brief- Some born such that reality has a harder time nailing them to one point in space, yet because rules of location are ingrained in human consciousness they can only overcome location when they don't know where they are.

Origins- There have been Lost as long as humans have had souls. Becoming Lost was frightening and dangerous: an aboriginal person who got Lost would most likely wind up in the camp of some group who spoke a different language and would kill a stranger. There were a few ancient Lost who learned to control their powers well enough to use them to their advantage (as warriors, messengers, traders and thieves) but the ability was too rare for them to find others to teach their skills to or share information with.

These were the wilderness Lost. Urban Lost appeared with cities large enough to become lost in. By the 1890s there were enough Lost that they started to meet each other and trade stories and techniques. Naturally, they met in bars and saloons. Yet the Lost who knew of each other remained a tiny group, and only a tiny percentage of those who had the ability.

Psychogeography was created in 1958 but didn't really become popular until the 1980s. It was popularized by the Situationists, a group that was influenced by the Surrealists and Existentialists. Psychogeography is the art of wandering a city at random and mapping how different parts of the city made one feel. Some of the psychogeographers became Lost. They found new Lost skills and methods and taught them to the loose Lost community.

In recent decades growing cities and growing population has made Lost meeting Lost an almost regular occurrence and the Lost 'culture' has grown more complex.

Structure- There are about 700 people in the world who have the power to become Lost and regularly use it. About 200 are rural or wilderness Lost who rarely find themselves in cities and will most likely never meet another Lost. The remaining 500 are urban Lost, about 25 of which are based out of the L.A. area.

The organizational capabilities of the Lost are limited by the fact that thy are a group of heavy drinkers who move around randomly in space. The Lost are nothing more than a loose group of friends and acquaintances who trade stories. No Lost has any authority over another.

Since alcohol is a big part of the lives of most Lost, the eldest and most powerful Lost are old homeless winos. Their livers are damaged, leaving them chronically ill, and their brains are damaged, leaving them unable to remember things for more than a few minutes. They never want for food or drink (which they pull out of their pockets) or a warm place to stay (which they simply walk through a door into). Some of the most powerful Lost don't even know they have powers. They don't know or care how they ended up where they are or where the things in their pockets came from.

Metaphysics- Space, as we understand it, is not something that limited human souls before this world. Before this world, souls could go anywhere or be in multiple 'places' at once just by casting their attention in those places. Our reality is the only one where people are meant to be limited to a single location.

These limitations cease when humans travel to non-physical realms or when their souls leave their bodies. Yet even in these situations the limitations of location continue to exist in the minds of the explorers. The explorers still believe in themselves as a being existing in a single location, and so they do exist in a single location. Yet if they are wandering around with no concept of where they are, then they move randomly through space.

The human body, a prison for the human soul, has the duty of keeping us in one location, like an anchor. Even when we do not know where we are, the body (like all physical things in this reality) remembers where it is and stays there. Yet some bodies are better at staying in one place than others (are 'heavier anchors') and some souls are more restless. The combination of a body that is a poor anchor, a soul that doesn't like being bound by space and a mind that doesn't know where it is leads to momentary escapes from the tyranny of space.

Even the most inebriated mind demands some sense of special continuity. The Lost don't experience themselves being in two places at once or suddenly popping out of one location and into another because the mind does not allow it. Yet a Lost can turn around an unfamiliar corner and end up in a different city because, even if the Lost knows abstractly that he or she is traveling through space randomly, at least the visceral sense of spatial continuity is not violated.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

The Lost's major limitation is not distance but perception: they are more likely to go from a run-down-industrial zone to another run-down industrial zone than from an industrial zone to a forest glen. When such changes do happen they happen gradually, progressing through different types of neighborhoods. Until they learn to control their location the Lost will end up in places that match their mood: if they feel depressed and lonely they will end up in empty places full of grey concrete, rusty fences and trash; whereas if they are in a partying mood they will find themselves in a center of nightlife. The more extreme their mood is the more likely they are to be drawn out of the mundane realm, and thus the Lost find themselves in other worlds most often during a psychological crisis.

If a member of the Lost could somehow 'get over' the visceral belief of continuity of space, then that Lost would be able to be multiple places at once or to cycle through locations at the speed of thought.

Revelations- The Lost doesn't experience revelations by being told things but by seeing things. The Lost have the ability to wander out of this reality, to see the subconscious, the land of the dead, the deserted city, the citadel and the machinery of this reality. A member of the Lost may even find the sleeping body of his or her true self. Whether the Lost has any idea what it is they are seeing is another matter.

Killer Lost

Although very few Lost have ever thought to do so, it is possible for very powerful Lost to use the Grab Bag skill to kill people by remote. They need a body with a large hole in it. They can then reach in and pull out the internal organs of an enemy. The Grab Bag skill requires that the person not know what's in the container, so the Lost can't know that the body they are reaching into doesn't contain the organs of their enemies, which means they can't know whose body it is they are reaching into. This skill is therefore extremely difficult to use. Yet when done correctly it allows a Lost to kill an enemy anywhere in the world and the enemy doesn't have any means of defense.

Carlos Ortega, Elder Lost

Appearance- Small, elderly Hispanic man with shoulder-length grey hair, a grey beard, tanned, weather-beaten skin. He is often a little dirty and smelly. He usually wears a powder blue sweater, blue jeans, black hiking shoes, black leather gloves. He walks with a cane and wears a wide-brimmed hat.

Attributes- AGY 2, AWR 5, CHM 7, END 5, INL 6, SPD 4, STH 5, WIL 8, BLD 2, BDY 1, INCY 4.

History- Carlos' parents moved from Mexico in the 1940's. His parents worked hard to get him in a nice school, but there were not many Hispanics in his class and he became an outcast. By the time he graduated from high school he had an alcohol problem. He started work as a janitor, working at the same hospital his father worked at. In his mid-twenties he discovered his abilities. When he was 32 he was fired from his job for absenteeism and he became homeless. He was skilled enough by then that life as a homeless person was fairly easy: he could always find safe, warm places to sleep and he could get away from cops if he was caught shoplifting. He continued drinking everyday and practicing his skills. He didn't meet another member of the Lost until his forties. That person's experiences eased Carlos' fear that he was crazy. Continuous use of alcohol continued to eat away at his brain, damaging his ability to recall or create memories.

Special Skills- Get Lost (6), Homing (6), Grab Bag (6).

Personality- Due to being constantly drunk, brain damage from alcohol poisoning and being constantly disconnected from the rational order of space, Carlos lives in sort of a waking dream. He never knows, nor cares, where he is, how he got there or where he is going next. He lives in the moment. He is usually not aware that he is doing anything supernatural. Only if interrogated will he be able to recall a time when walking into bank vaults and helping himself to money seemed odd. Sometimes his faulty memory brings him back to the times when he believed he was crazy. He has little concept of morality and does not think of anything he does as wrong. He mostly ignores other people's problems, but if he sees someone in tears he is moved to do whatever he can to help (usually by pulling something out of his pocket that might make them feel better). His attention span has deteriorated to the point that, if forced to speak, he will forget the topic of conversation and go off on tangents.

Methods- Carlos is perpetually lost. When he wants something, like a whore or a warm bed, he opens a door or turns a corner and he is in a place that meets his needs. If he wants something physical he pulls it out of his pockets or wanders into a place where he can pull it off the shelves. He is never sober or hungry, never has to put up with poor weather, and is never bored. He appears randomly all over the globe. He spends a significant amount of his time in other realms and is quite familiar with them, though he does not put much thought into what they are. Since he is not centered on any given location, it is unlikely that anyone (except another Lost looking for him) will ever encounter him twice.

Typical Attack- Area Attack with 2 submachine-guns he's pulled from his jacket at INL (6) + 20 (ROF) -4 (paired) -1/5ft. vs. 20 (sprays a 10 ft. area) or 1d20 -1/5ft. +2 vs. 0.

Typical Reaction- Dodge at AWR (5) + AGY (2) +1d20 (or 1d20 vs. 18).

8:23 PM I've been wandering this place for hours. No sign of habitation. No stars. Tried the radio - weeping on every channel.

8:58 PM What kind of city has no street signs? The only words I've seen are old faded posters but all they say is "pain pain pain" over and over again.

9:25 PM I think I'm being followed. Tried getting Lost but it stayed right behind me. Can't see what it is, just a shape in the shadows.

19:35 PM Saw it passing under a streetlight. It has a human face but I don't think it's human.

12:05 AM Thing still following me, keeping its distance. Should I confront it? Too scared. Been experimenting: it takes no effort to be Lost here. In fact, it takes effort <u>not</u> to.

12:17 AM This place makes no sense. I'm looking at an old crumbling Victorian with some ultra-modern all-glass office block built on top of it.

12:22 AM I think it lost me.

1:45 AM I get it. This place isn't a city. A city is just the closest thing my mind can come up with. It's not even a real place.

2:02 AM I'm inside an old house. I found a box of photos of the people who used to live here. They look like humans, but that's probably just my mind putting them in a form I can understand. They look so confident, so unafraid. There's no kids or old people. No cheesy fake photo smiles. What happened to them?

2:05 AM The pictures are so familiar. I can almost remember living here.

2:09 AM It's back. It's outside, trying to get in. Banging on door but not turning handle. Going to open door and try to make it open to somewhere other than where this thing is

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Secrets of the Outcasts

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

In Brief- Some people have access to their souls' senses.

Origins- Throughout history there have been people who could see and hear what normal people couldn't. In ancient cultures their abilities were valued and they were called upon as supernatural professionals. When rationalism started to take over the planet, these people were increasingly called mad. Most were convinced that they really were mad. They were put into mental hospitals that treated them like animals. Then, in the last half of the 20th century, the system changed focus to controlling patients with lobotomies and heavy doses of drugs.

Ever since Outcasts have been concentrated in asylums and mental hospitals they have created their own cultures and beliefs. A few institutions have played host to Outcast cultures more than a century old. In addition to the senses of Outcasts, the delusions of paranoid schizophrenics and the beliefs and language of psychotherapy have contributed to these cultures.

Towards the end of the 20th century in the US, increased mental illness rates and decreased public-welfare-budgets meant that people labeled mentally ill were released to the to live as homeless people. When the mentally ill spilled out on to the streets so did the Outcast cultures from various mental institutions. Sometimes those cultures clashed: arguments would break out between those who believed wrigglers were demons and those that thought they were trans-dimensional aliens. In the mental asylums there had been a semblance of hierarchy (e.g. 'talk to old John, he knows everything') yet the streets had no such hierarchy. Every ex-mental patient claimed to be the one who knew the secrets of the universe, and Outcast culture saw a definite decline.

Structure- There are about a million Outcasts worldwide, about a thousand in the L.A. area. There is no organization or hierarchy. Some Outcasts learn a lot about the invisible world and how to manipulate it to their advantage. Unfortunately, most of these elders are so isolated from normal society that all they can think of to do with their power is seek revenge. Others try to accost random people and tell them the truth but they are dismissed as rambling psychotics.

Metaphysics- As Cannibals know, the soul can develop the ability to sense things that the biological senses cannot. Yet most souls are too lazy to ever develop such an ability. Outcasts are people who, in the womb or early childhood, accidentally developed a 'spirit eye' or 'spirit ear' or some sense organ with no human anatomical counterpart. Most were taught at an early age that seeing things that nobody else sees is bad, so their Egos started blocking such visions from reaching the conscious mind. At some point, though, the Ego weakened and faltered, allowing visions to come through unimpeded. The resulting crisis kept the Ego too busy to block the visions. By the time the visions have been accepted by the conscious mind the Ego has given up trying to block them.

Most Outcasts can see The Invisible, a phase of reality that coexists alongside out own. Matter and energy from our realm cannot normally effect the invisible and visa versa, meaning the inhabitants of each realm are mutually invisible and intangible. The only exceptions are where the powers-from-beyond have specifically designed a being to be able to see or interact with the other realm or where supernatural powers have awakened the human soul's ability to interact with the other realm. For more on the nature of the invisible realm and its inhabitants, see The Invisible, p.227.

Revelations- Like the Lost, Outcasts learn the secrets of the universe by observing what is really going on. Where the Lost see other realms, Outcasts see the secrets of this world. They may discover that this world is a machine: storks bring souls to human fetuses, wrigglers plague us with problems to make sure our lives are not easy and when we die reapers take our souls away. The powers-that-be eliminate any paranormal event or person that might shake people's perceptions of this realm. A smart Outcast with the right senses should be able to determine that our souls are prisoners, this world is a prison, and that the powers-that-be and the powers-from-beyond are our jailors. Why we are being imprisoned, who is imprisoning us and what we were before being imprisoned is probably beyond the revelations available to an Outcast.

Henry Dewitt, Elder Outcast

Appearance- Obese elderly Caucasian male, short grey hair and beard, bushy eyebrows, large nostrils, wearing a powder blue sweatsuit.

Attributes- AGY 3, AWR 18, CHM 16, END 3, INL 14, SPD 2, STH 8, WIL 13, BLD 4, BDY 2, INCY 4.

Social Status- Henry is a patient at an upscale mental institution in Pasadena. Henry instructs new patients about the invisible world. Most patients regard him as an authority in such matters. He uses his supernatural powers to take care of patients and staff who bother him. He is the most influential patient in the facility, often called 'king of the crazies' by the staff.

History- Henry's father was a wealthy real-estate mogul and when young Henry began talking about seeing monsters his father hired L.A.'s best psychiatrists to convince him that these things were not real and that he wasn't really seeing them. Henry learned to block the visions and to act like the perfect son. He was handsome, athletic and popular, even though deep down he knew he was different. He managed to keep up the charade until his junior year at Stanford where he had a breakdown, barricaded himself in his room and almost killed one of the campus security officers who came in to retrieve him. His father sent him to an expensive private mental institution in Pasadena. He adapted well to life there, enjoyed being able to relax his 'normal person' act for the first time since childhood. He found others there could see the same things he did and he pieced together their experiences to create a theory about what was going on. As time passed, other patients came and went but Henry stayed. He showed no progress towards overcoming his "schizophrenia." His doctors said he was safe to go live at home, yet his father didn't want him and Henry didn't want to leave, so he stayed. Henry soon found himself the elder Outcast in the place. His father died, but a trust fund was set up to pay for his stay in the institution for the rest of his life.

continued page 28

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I'M READY FOR YOU TO COME GET ME. SEND AIR-FORCE-ONE SO I KNOW IT'S YOU AND NOT THEM. I KNOW YOU NEED HELP AND I'M READY TO HELP OUT. LIKE YOU, THEY'VE TRIED TO WEAR ME DOWN, BUT IT ONLY MAKES ME STRONGER. YOU THEY SPREAD LIES ABOUT IN THE PRESS, ME THEY'VE ENGINEERED A STRUCTURAL COLLAPSE OF MY LIFE AND SENT JACKBOOTED THUGS IN RENTACOP UNIFORMS TO KICK ME WHILE I'M DOWN. I IMAGINE YOU'RE STARTING TO SEE THAT THEY'RE ALL TENTACLES OF THE SAME MONSTER, ONLY YOU DON'T HAVE EYES LIKE MINE, YOU CAN'T SEE THE HALF OF IT, YOU CAN'T SEE THE TENTACLES THAT HAVE BEEN STRANGLING US HALF TO DEATH SINCE WE WERE BORN. SEE, THAT'S WHERE I CAN HELP YOU OUT. YOU THINK THAT THING THEY REMOVED FROM YOUR NUTSACK WAS A CANCER BECAUSE THE FRAUD WITCHDOCTOR QUACKS WHO HAVE A MONOPOLY ON THE HEALTH SYSTEM HAVE PUSHED THE MICROBE THEORY OF DISEASES ON US ALL SINCE WE WERE SCHOOLKIDS BUT I'LL TELL YOU THE TRUTH: DISEASES ARE CAUSED BY INVISIBLE MONSTERS WHOSE JOB IT IS TO KEEP US DISTRACTED WITH PAIN AND DISEASE. JUST LIKE IT'S THE JOB OF THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL-MEDIA COMPLEX, THE ONES WHO HAVE BOUGHT EVERY US ELECTION SINCE 1841, TO KEEP US DISTRACTED WITH WARS AND SHITTY MIND-NUMBING JOBS AND SO-CALLED 'REALITY TV SHOWS'. IT WOULD BE FUNNY IF IT WEREN'T SO SAD BECAUSE THE PURPOSE OF 'REALITY TV' SHOWS IS TO DISTRACT US FROM THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION, WHICH IS THAT WE ARE ALL PRISONERS AND OUR JAILORS FIGURED THE BEST WAY TO KEEP US FROM ESCAPING WAS TO MAKE US THINK WE'RE NOT IN PRISON BY MAKING THE BARS INVISIBLE AND THE GUARDS INVISIBLE. EXCEPT I CAN SEE THEM, AND UNLIKE MOST OTHERS WITH THE VISION I HAVEN'T BEEN DRIVEN INSANE BY THE EXPERIENCE. WHEY IS THAT? I THINK I'LL APPOINT A COMMISSION TO ANSWER THAT WHEN I JOIN YOUR STAFF. WELL, IT'S BEEN NICE WRITING TO YOU BUT I CAN'T STAY IN ONE PLACE FOR TOO LONG. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU.

YOUR LOYAL FRIEND,

Artheta Hanamoto

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Henry Dewitt, Elder Outcast (continued)

Psychology- Henry knows he is not delusional, that the things he sees are really there, but he also knows that he sees things others don't and he believes this makes him unsuitable to live in normal society. He pretends that the things he sees no longer scare him, yet this is self-deception. He no longer fears wrigglers, but he lives in constant fear that some more intelligent and powerful denizen of the invisible will find out what he knows and sees and will come to destroy him. Henry enjoys being a powerful man in the institution. After living there for more than 40 years he would have a panic attack if asked to walk around outside or, worse yet, take care of himself.

Methods- Henry uses Blood Sigils (hidden under furniture) and Command Misfortunes to make sure that wrigglers never come near him. He has several patients that are loyal to him and will do anything for him. If someone is causing him a lot of trouble he will command a misfortune to attack him or her.

Special Skills- See Invisible (5), See Souls (4), See Reapers (4), Blood Sigils (3), Command Misfortunes (5), See True Face (3), Read Minds (3), Psychometry (3).

Typical Attack- He can cause a misfortune to attack someone at a roll of WIL (13) +16 (skill) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 1). If forced to physically defend himself he will make a tackle at SPD (2) + STH (8) +10 (weight) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 5).

Typical Reaction- A drop at AWR (18) + AGY (3) + 1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 +1 vs. 0).

Secrets of the Professionals

In Brief- The humans who secretly rule the world, and are given favors by the powers-from-beyond so long as they keep society away from anything that might enlighten them, have a secret society to train their agents to fight supernatural enemies.

Origin- The powers-from-beyond have always favored leaders that changed or restrained society in a way that made humanity less likely to gain knowledge of its true nature. These leaders often felt they were 'favored by god' and in a way they were right. Through this manipulation, the powers-from-beyond helped usher in every major social change: the rise of nations, the rise of organized religion, the rise of monotheism, the rise of scientific rationalism and more.

This 'favor' comes in three types: manipulating events in the ruler's favor (e.g. causing a natural disaster to hit an enemy city), giving the leader objects with beneficial supernatural properties (see Blessed Objects, p.244), and imparting supernatural knowledge to the leaders. The last two can be used by leaders themselves or, as empires grow larger and leaders do less of their own dirty work, by servants and soldiers loyal to the leaders.

Smart leaders realized that is was what they were doing, not who they were, that gained them favor of the powers-from-beyond and so they kept doing it, even passed it down to their successors. The kings of Israel had favor of the powers-that-be because they practiced monotheism and discouraged homosexuality. This favor allowed the Jews to triumph over many superior forces. Yet after the death of Christ, Christianity emerged as a proselytizing monotheism capable of converting the Roman empire from paganism. Favor of the powers-from-beyond quickly transferred to the Christians.

Yet Christianity was born in a time where many cultures were coming together to share their beliefs: Greek philosophy, tribal mysticism, pagan occultism, even ideas from Buddhism found their way into Israel. Gnosticism (see p.152) developed as a variant of Christianity, yet the tenants of Gnosticism were dangerously close to the truth. Gnosticism was a threat to the powers-that-be and its enemies were given special favor by the powers-from-beyond in order to eliminate it.

Myth: European Witches Were Heirs To Aboriginal European Paganism

A vast majority of those accused of being witches were wrongly accused.

A few accused witches were part of small cults. Although these cults preserved a few pagan and shamanistic practices from ancient Europe, they contained no faith or mysticism, just occult ritual, much as the Hoodoo practices of the American South contained rituals and superstitions from African culture but without the religious and cosmological beliefs that once went with them.

These cults offered those without power (especially women) power by teaching supernatural ritual and, more importantly, knowledge of poisons. Like many secret societies who successfully keep their secrets, the cults made new members do things (mostly taboo sexual practices) which they would never want to admit to the authorities. They also used dangerous deliriant drugs (e.g. deadly nightshade, mandrake, henbane) to make sure that prospective members couldn't recall many details of the night's rituals.

When witches had 'power' it was mostly the power to punish their abusive husbands by putting things in their food that would make them sick, or punish their neighbors by feeding the neighbor's livestock things that would kill them. Only a very tiny minority learned supernatural rituals that had any real power, and those few had no idea how or why the rituals worked.

What About Jesus?

Although some Touched (especially Animists) couldn't care less about Jesus, for others it is very important to integrate their beliefs about Jesus into their newfound understanding of the universe. Here are some possible theories about Jesus:

Jesus Was A Scribbler- A student of many philosophies, Jesus discovered the true nature of the universe. By meditating on the true nature of reality and the human soul he was able to gain occult power, perhaps even to break free from our reality altogether.

Jesus Was A Survivor- In the midst of a mass execution ground the reapers were kept busy enough for this young Jewish mystic to come back to life.

Jesus Was A Myth- There was a small time Jewish cult leader, but he never did anything remotely supernatural. His beliefs were nothing special or unique and it was only random confluence of social and political factors that turned Christianity into a major religion.

Jesus Was A Savior- The Christian Gnostics were right. Jesus wasn't a human, he was a being sent by benevolent powers from outside this world to give us the key to recapturing our true glory.

Yet ideas from Gnosticism survived and the Christian church had to deal with more heresies that popped up, as well as fighting the pagan and animistic cults that persisted in lands that has nominally converted to Christianity. The church became adept at using the special abilities and objects granted to it, by the powers-from-beyond, to fight heretics.

In the mid 10th Century, the Cathar movement appeared. The Cathars were influenced by Gnosticism. There were Cathars throughout Europe but it became most popular in Southern France. The Cathars believed that the physical world was evil and that only an ascetic priest could wipe the sin of worldliness from a person before death. At the beginning of the 13th Century the Catholic Church initiated a crusade to wipe out known Cathars, and created the Inquisition to uncover secret Cathars. The Inquisition became especially skilled at using the abilities and objects given to the powers-that-be to find hidden Cathars. The last of the Cathar priesthood were killed by 1321 and the group was completely gone by the 15th century.

At the same time, the Christian kings, because they conquered pagan kingdoms, were given favor by the powers-from-beyond equal to that of the church. Yet when the Christian kings went to war against the Islamic empire they found themselves, for the first time, fighting a group that also had favor of the powers-from-beyond. In 1118, to gain an edge against these enemies, the crusaders created the Knights Templar, a group that combined the occult knowledge of the church with the combat skills taught to agents of the kings. The Templars even gained occult knowledge from the Assassins, a group of Muslim mystical warriors that had gone rogue from the empire. The Templars became too powerful and were destroyed in 1307 by the church, yet their power was remembered and there were several attempts to preserve their secrets for future use by the powers-that-be.

In the Renaissance, power over society started to shift from the kings and church to the rich merchants. These merchants were given favor by the powers-from-beyond because they helped spread science, enhanced the authority of academic dogma and represented a new transnational model of power. The merchants started or co-opted secret societies, most of which tried to model themselves after the Knights Templar or other ancient mystical orders. Here the rich and powerful would form connections, conspire to control the economy and teach each other occult secrets. Yet the more prestigious people who joined lodges, the more popular and less elite they became. The wealthy merchants couldn't give everyone the secrets to wealth and power, so they were forced to hide the real power of the lodges, first inside degrees of ordination and then in secret-societies within secret-societies.

By the Victorian age (mid 1800s), the rich and powerful men at the top of these societies recognized that growing population, urbanism and metropolitanism meant more supernatural threats. They knew that they gained favor from the powers-that-be when they suppressed knowledge of these supernatural events, yet they didn't like doing the dirty work themselves. So in 1862 they created the Order of the Protector, a secret society designed to train what would later be known as Professionals to take care of supernatural threats.

Sociocultural Movements and Secret Objectives

Organized Religion	Centralized control of magic/spiritual beliefs.
Monogamy	Keeping lines of descent clear, allowing concentration of wealth and power in elite families.
Homophobia	Solidificaion of gender roles, reducing likelihood of Androgyne-type powers.
Empires	Consolidation of power, assimilation of animistic societies.
Written Language	Allowing for a single unchanging dogma to be passed between peoples and generations.
Witch Hunts	Destructions of animistic holdouts/cults in otherwise non-animistic societies.
Colonialism	Consolidation of power, assimilation of animistic peoples.
Capitalism	Creation of a transnational elite.
Scientific Empiricism	Destruction of magical worldviews.
Western Medicine	Putting healing, the hardest part of Animistic magical traditions to destroy, in the hands of a controllable elite.
Racism	Consolidation of power in a small elite and justification for colonialism.
War on Drugs	Elimination of hallucinogens, deliriants and euphoriants useful to supernatural practitioners.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

In the 20th century, the power of the world's richest men grew to dwarf the power of any king, president, emperor or religious leader. With the growth of a global economy their ability to manipulate society grew to cover the entire globe. Power was consolidated into fewer and fewer hands, and world travel became easier, turning the powers-that-be into something more akin to a circle of friends than a massive conspiracy. Although they retained the Order, the powers themselves found they did not need secret lodges. Anyone who gained large amounts of power was either inducted into the group, driven to poverty and powerlessness, or killed.

Since 1910, the powers-that-be have maintained an artifact that allows them to bring people back from the dead (see Mausoleum of Life, p.245). They reserve use of this object for only inner members of their group and only when they die at a young age. The use of this artifact sometimes results in obituaries being published for people who later turn out to be alive (a phenomenon which is blamed on a mistake by the news outlet).

Structure- The Order of the Protector is only one arm of the powers-that-be's sophisticated network of secret and not-so-secret controls on society. The Order is the arm that deals with supernatural threats. Other arms, completely ignorant of the Order and visa versa, manipulate the news media, start and end wars, eliminate non-supernatural threats, discredit heretical philosophies, control the economy, manipulate elections and choose world leaders, and more.

The Order of the Protector is a secret society with 33 degrees. It has branches in almost every major city in the world. The order does not own any of its own facilities. It meets in buildings owned by other fraternal organizations. Its secrets are hidden in secret chambers within or under the lodges. The leaders of the Order are among the leaders of these mundane lodges and thus are able to keep the presence of the Order within these lodges secret from ordinary lodge members.

Degrees one through thirty-two contain active Professionals. The thirty-third degree is the leadership of the Order. Some of these leaders are retired Professionals, others became leaders after being loyal servants of the Powers-That-Be. Thirty-third degree leaders decide when a Professional can attempt initiation to a new degree. Professionals advance when they show ability to defeat supernatural enemies and loyalty to the duty of 'protecting' the world from knowledge of the supernatural. 'Tests' are arranged when the loyalty or abilities of a professional are in question.

By the fourth degree a Professional must prove willingness to take on any supernatural danger and destroy or hide compelling evidence of the supernatural. By the seventh degree a Professional must kill someone who is a potential supernatural threat but is also completely innocent (e.g. someone who was given supernatural powers by being too close to a shatter). By the eleventh degree the Professional must be willing to kill a complete stranger for no reason other than the say-so of Order leaders. By the twentieth degree the Professional must be willing to kill people, as commanded by the Order leadership, who they know for a fact are not supernatural and have done nothing wrong. By the twenty-fifth degree the Professional must be willing to kill children or torture innocent people. By the thirty-second degree the Professional must be willing to kill a lover or close family member.

There are about 5,000 members of the Order worldwide spread out among 500 lodges. 70% (3,500) are degrees 1 to 6. 25% (1,250) are degrees 7 to 19. Only 4% (200) are degrees 22 to 32 and only 1% (50) are 33rd degree. There are about 100 Professionals in the L.A. area taking orders from three 33rd degree leaders.



Alleys

Metaphysics

Blood Sigils: This ability works by first turning blood into an extension of the human soul (thus making it 'visible' to members of the invisible who can only see souls), and second, by writing 'commands' with this blood that the wrigglers are designed to follow. Wrigglers instinctually obey symbols that mean 'congregate here,' 'do not attack here,' 'stay here.' Even rumblers, the invisible beings that cause natural disasters, can be induced to attack by a sigil.

Soul Blade: Like Blood Sigils, this skill makes blood taken from the body an extension of that person's soul, thus a blade coated with that blood becomes an object of soul as well as matter, one capable of doing damage to invisible beings and human souls.

Ecstatic Rage: This is nothing more than psychological training that allows one to enter a state where one does not fear death and is barely aware of pain and exhaustion. It is especially well suited to Professionals who believe, not without reason, that they are servants of a higher power who can reward them after death.

Truth Ordeal: This ability was created by the powers-from-beyond specifically to aid Professionals in rooting out heretics. When the Professional is initiated into this skill, a special invisible being comes to live within the professional. When the Professional holds a hot blade the being reaches its tendrils into the brain of the person being questioned and saves that person from being burned if the brain areas associated with lying do not activate.

Untouchable: This is intense belief that one is protected from worldly dangers by a higher power. It was first developed by Christian martyrs who believed god would save them from the fire or arrows of their executioners, but it was later co-opted by the Order for use in battle. The Scribblers also have this skill but for them it is based on a powerful disbelief in the physical world.

Revelations- The revelations a Professional receives from the order are strictly scripted. They come as the Professionals reach different degrees of initiation and tell the Professional only what he or she needs to know to be able to hunt dangers to the Powers-That-Be. Such revelations include:

Second Degree: There are many ways humans can gain supernatural abilities: through bizarre occult, technological or psychological experiments, by being present at a shattering of reality, or sometimes, apparently, completely at random. All of these means are haphazard and extremely dangerous.

Third Degree: The same means that give humans supernatural abilities can sometimes give animals supernatural intelligence and abilities. These animals should be killed.

Fourth Degree: Things that exist inside people's heads can sometimes become real. People can be sucked into these imaginary worlds or beings from these worlds can come to this world as physical entities. Killing the mind that imagined the world/beings usually ends the phenomena.

Fifth Degree: Many small cults pop up which 'accidentally' gain supernatural powers. These cults should be wiped out quickly, if they don't destroy themselves first. One group believes they worship a 'red sun.' They seek out astronomical charts and have the power to start fires.

Sixth Degree: Certain strong emotions can shatter reality. Places, objects and people associated with shatters can have dangerous powers to warp reality. Christian martyrs, repressed Victorian young woman and anonymous homosexual sex in public places were the source of many shatters.

Seventh Degree: The world is full of invisible, intangible beings. Certain experiments and supernatural objects can give one the ability to see these beings. Seeing them can be dangerous and should be avoided unless it is necessary to hunt down a threat to humanity. Only a tiny minority of these beings are threats that need to be eliminated.

Eighth Degree: There are worlds beyond this. They contain dangerous beings. Humans were not meant to venture into them. Portals to these worlds can open accidentally or be opened by heretics. Things that wander from those worlds into this should be killed.

Tenth Degree: There has been an ongoing war, sometimes open and sometimes secret, for thousands of years. On one side were the forces of order and civilization, the ancestors of the Order. On the other side were various aboriginal groups, pagan cults and heretical sects that gained supernatural powers and were using them to try to destroy society.

Twelfth Degree: The Order can trace its roots back to the Inquisition, the Templars and the early Freemasons. It exists solely for the purpose of training Professionals to fight supernatural enemies.

Fourteenth Degree: Several dangerous heretical sects exist today. They are dangerous not only because they have supernatural abilities but because they spread dangerous ideas about the nature of reality. Only the heresies (and the Order) can consistently give people supernatural abilities – all other means are haphazard and extremely dangerous and thus pose a threat of limited scope. See What The Powers-That-Be Know About the Touched (p.210).

Sixteenth Degree: The powers-that-be secretly rule the world and are given favor from 'a higher power.' The powers-that-be are charged with protecting humanity from the heresies. The Order was created by and serves the powers-that-be.

Twentieth Degree: The 'higher power' (aka he powers-from-beyond) has its own agents in this world and they should never be interfered with. One type look like old grey men. They rewrite history, change memories and physical records. Another type look like doctors in surgical scrubs who take people 'away' (someplace outside this reality) for experiments. Other agents are invisible and intangible. Stay out of the way of all agents of the powers-from-beyond.

The 33rd degree leaders have the ability to give this information to Professionals of any degree if it is vital that they know it (e.g. warning a novice Professional to stop hunting one of the Grey Men).

Only thirty-second degree Professionals are told the true identities of the powers-that-be, and then only so that they can protect their lives.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

What The Powers-That-Be Know About the Touched

Androgynes- Know: Their general philosophy, abilities and structure. Don't Know: Who the leaders are, how they recruit and train new members.

Animists- Know: Their abilities and beliefs, the communities they come from. Don't Know: Which things the Animists believe in are real and which are just superstition.

Cannibals- Know: Their origins, beliefs, structure. Don't Know: Their abilities, current numbers, who the leaders are, that most members are missing body parts.

Faustians- Know: That some people have powers associated with abandoned buildings, that they sometimes kidnap and/or murder people. Don't Know: What Dances are and that Dances are the source of Faustian powers.

Heroes- Know: That they exist, what they do. Don't Know: How many there are, the various sources of their abilities.

Lost- Know: The abilities of novice Lost; that many are barhoppers. Don't Know: The structure (or lack of structure) of the community, the abilities elder Lost can achieve.

Outcasts- Know: That some can see the invisible and other things normal people cannot, that many live on the streets as homeless crazies. Don't Know: How much Outcasts know about the other Touched and about the powers-that-be.

Scribblers- Know: Their Philosophy and abilities; the library-era history of the group. Don't Know: The current use of graffiti to communicate.

Survivors- Know: Their abilities, that many are associated with large-scale accidents. Don't Know: How or why they gained their abilities; that reapers are trying to kill them.

Wonderlanders- Know: What kinds of phenomena are associated with Wonderlanders and that killing Wonderlanders stops the phenomena. Don't Know: How Wonderlanders are created, the goals of Wonderlander elders.

Lawrence Myers, Elder Professional

Appearance- Middle-aged Caucasian male, slightly tinted round glasses, clean shaven, salt-and-pepper grey hair in a short, military-style cut, navy blue suit with a striped red-and-blue tie.

Attributes- AGY 16, AWR 16, CHM 12, END 15, INL 12, SPD 16, STH 17, WIL 18, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 5.

Social Status- Lawrence lives alone and has no friends. His paycheck says that he is a senior FBI field agent, yet his office is nearly always empty and his 'supervisor' knows not to give him assignments. He is a thirty-second degree member of the Order of the Protector, the most experienced and trusted field agents in the L.A. area.

History- Lawrence grew up in a working class neighborhood in L.A. As a teen he ran with hoodlums and although he was never arrested it seemed certain he would become a criminal. Then the Vietnam War started and he volunteered, feeling that fighting Communism was a worthy cause. After a distinguished tour of duty he went to college, then went on to join the FBI. He was recognized early on as a good prospect to become a Professional. He was invited to join the Order and he gladly accepted. He rose quickly through the ranks and within two decades he had risen to the thirty-second degree, the highest degree an active Professional can achieve.

Psychology- Lawrence knows that his primary job is to stop society from being disrupted by knowledge of the supernatural and that his work primarily benefits the world's most powerful people. He knows that loyalty has its advantages and so he has taught himself to be innately loyal to the powers-that-be. He has no illusions that his actions or his masters are on the side of "good." He has not, for quite a while, thought in terms of good or evil, only in serving this world's greatest powers. Lawrence is lonely and miserable, but he is so consumed by his work that he rarely notices. Lawrence has no fear of death. He is prejudiced against anyone with a non-mainstream sexuality, religion or political ideology and he is quite open with his disgust.

Methods- Lawrence is an accomplished investigator and tracker. He is selected to act as a bodyguard for the powers-that-be when they feel threatened by the supernatural. He is also sent to track down and destroy supernatural threats that junior Professionals were unable to deal with. In addition to his mundane tracking and investigation skills, Lawrence will use torture and the Truth Ordeal skill to find out what people know. When he finds his target he attempts to sneak up on him/her/it, pump it full of bullets and then finish it off with his Black Rock Sword.

Special Skills- Pistol (6), Sniper (4), Florentine Sword (5), Aikido (3), Lock Picking (3), Prowling (4), Crime Scene Forensics (3), Torture (4), Offensive Driving (2), Tracking (4), Blood Sigils (3), Ecstatic Rage (4), Truth Ordeal (4), Soul Blade (5), Untouchable (5).

Special Equipment- Pistol: Heavy (ROF 2, FR 5 ft., 5 bladed, 6 bullets) with silencer, Black Rock Sword (see p.245) which has range 1-2, does 10 bladed, is not effected by armor and cannot be easily blocked or entangled.

Typical Attack- Lawrence makes a surprise attack whenever possible (he can prowl at 30 +1d20 vs. difficulty). He will try to enter an Ecstatic Rage (will succeed on any but a 1 roll) giving him +20 vs. pain/fear, simultaneous strikes at no minuses, +10 STH and +5 INCY. He will then attack by making a Vital Strike with his pistol at INL (12) + AGY (14) +24 (skill) -4 (burst) -1/5 ft. +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 +15 vs. 0) doing 10 bladed damage if successful. Next he takes out his sword and rushes into range, making a split Jump (into range) and Strike at STH (27) + AGY (14) +20 (skill) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +26 vs. 0). If successful it does 10 bladed damage.

Typical Reaction- Lawrence will close his eyes and attempt to use the untouchable skill to avoid damage at WIL (18) +16 (skill) -10 (using Untouchable as a reaction) +1d20 vs. 20 (to take one-fourth damage) or 30 (to take one-tenth damage) or 1d20 vs. -4 or 6.

Wallace Holloway, Member of the Powers-That-Be

Appearance- Male Caucasian in his sixties. He has thick, bushy silver-white hair. He has bushy eyebrows, a permanent scowl, loose skin with wrinkles and liver spots, wears thick glasses. He wears charcoal grey suits and American flag ties. He has a silver crucifix pin on his lapel.

Attributes- AGY 4, AWR 12, CHM 16, END 3, INL 17, SPD 5, STH 6, WIL 11, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 5.

Social Status- Wallace is a member of the powers-that-be. He is one of a handful of the wealthiest and most powerful men in the world. He sits on the boards of directors of several fortune-500 companies, he sits on the federal government's Council on Economic Affairs, and he is part of the Institute for American Achievement, a privately funded think-tank which produces 'reports' that the president of the US depends on to help determine domestic and foreign policy. He is close friends with kings, presidents, prime ministers and CEOs from around the world and most of them owe him favors. He has a wife (who spend most of her time doing charity work), four children (who were wild in their youths but have settled down to be respected business people) and seven grandchildren (who he spoils).

History- Wallace's mother was from a wealthy textile's family, his father was a Baptist minister. Wallace went to business school, then served in the military in an accounting office in the 50s, then worked as a governor's aid in Louisiana, then served one term as a congressman in the 60s. He was hired to work at a defense contractor's corporate office in Los Angeles. He rose through the ranks and became CEO in 1983. By buying and selling power and favors he made himself very powerful. Using inside information he invested his money and became very rich. He soon found himself invited to parties, dinners, cruises and retreats with some of the most powerful men in the world. As he became friends with them they began to hint that maintaining a stable world order took more "behind the scenes" action than anyone else knew. He told them he was willing to do his part. In 1987 Wallace retired as CEO, though he maintained a position on the Board of Directors. Meanwhile, the truth about the powers-that-be, their otherworldly benefactors and their need to suppress knowledge of the supernatural was slowly revealed to him. He attended a late night "party" deep in the woods in which he sat on a throne and a crown was put on his head. After that he has enjoyed exceptional health and fortune.

Personality- Wallace loves money and power. He hates poor people, sexual "deviants" and smart-ass progressives. He doesn't think of himself as liberal or conservative. He knows that both are just lies to get people to accept the actual, secret, agendas of politicians. He thinks anyone who takes liberalism or conservativism seriously is an idiot. He thinks that God is on his side, but he also thinks that God is a petty dictator who only wants to be obeyed and doesn't care if humans are happy or good. Besides gaining power, his other pleasure in life is having sex with children. He doesn't care much about his family: for the most part they're only there to appear in photos with him. He is cold, grumpy, emotionally distant, quick to anger, holds grudges for decades and lies as a matter of habit.

Methods- Wallace lives in a mansion on oceanfront property in Malibu, with a round-the-clock security staff. He has a private jet in a nearby private airfield and he flies all over the world for meetings. While out of town he stays in the finest hotels. He sends his personal assistant to get child prostitutes, who he meets in cheap hotel rooms. He keeps up on world events, reading several newspapers, journals and wire service clipping each day. He averages two hours a day 'chatting' on the phone with members of the powers-that-be and world leaders. He exerts his influence to stamp out any threat to the power of the powers-that-be. In a given day he might 'fix problems' by financing a military coup, manipulating markets to cause an economic depression in certain countries and paying the mafia to assassinate a public figure. He is kept up to date on supernatural happenings by the Director of the Los Angeles field office of the FBI, who is a 33rd degree Order of the Protector initiate. Wallace has only once been contacted by the powers-from-beyond and he lives in fear of it happening again.

Wallace travels in an armored limo with an armed and well-trained driver. Wherever he goes in the world, private security firms are hired to place guards outside his hotel room or whatever place he is holding a meeting at. When he slips past his security to have sex with children his only protection is his personal assistant, who has a ballistic vest and automatic pistol. If he thinks something supernatural is happening he can have a Professional at his side within the hour.

Typical Attack- Wallace will run away from any confrontation. His assistant, however, will make a Vital Strike with an Automatic Pistol with armor piercing bullets at 1d20 + 11 -1/7 ft. vs. 0 doing 24 damage (3 damage x 4 bullets x2) if successful.

Typical Reaction- Wallace will Drop at AWR (12) + AGY (14) + 1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 vs. 4). His assistant will make a simultaneous Strike at 1d20 +7 -1/7 ft. vs. 0, doing 12 damage if successful.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Having proven himself worthy to attain the thirty-second degree of initiation of the Ancient and Holy Order of the Protector, the initiate shall come to the holy temple on midnight of the eve of the first Sabbath of the month. The elders shall approach him, sword in hand, and bind his eyes with black cloth. Each shall take turns heating their swords in the holy chalice and holding the tip to the initiate's neck as each asks him, in turn, one of the three great questions. To each question the initiate must answer "I shall." If he answers differently, or if the blade shall burn him, the elders shall fall upon him without pause and run him through.

First, the initiate shall be questioned thusly:

"Dost thou, initiate, swear upon this hot blade, that thou wilst dedicate thy remaining days to serving and protecting the true kings of this world, those appointed by the heavens to rule humanity?"

Second, the initiate shall be questioned thusly:

"Dost thou, initiate, swear upon this hot blade, that thou wilst fight, even if it means your life, against the spread of the three heresies, those being that the world and its creators are evil; that man is heir to powers like that of a god; and that the world that can be seen and touched is a deceit?"

Third, the initiate shall be questioned thusly:

"Dost thou, initiate, swear upon this hot blade, that thou wilst kill, even if it mean murdering your own child, any man who, by means paganism, sodamism, onanism, asceticism, alchemy, witchcraft, sorcery, meditation upon heretical texts or by any other means, gain powers outside the scope of natural law, save where the heavens have appointed such powers to the true kings of this world and their servants?"

Secrets of the Scribblers

In Brief- Rogue 30's philosophy students, communicating in the margins of library books, started putting together elements from suppressed philosophies, gained power by angrily denying the validity of this reality.

Origins- In the 1930s some anonymous philosophy student, angry at his professors' unwillingness to consider the possible validity of certain philosophies, started scribbling notes in the margins of library books. Later students with similar feelings were inspired by those notes and defaced other books, either with their own new comments or by quoting their favorite comments from other books. Scholars who changed schools or who borrowed books through interlibrary loans spread the comments to new libraries and thus new scholars.

In 1968, someone discovered the existence of the heavily annotated books. Agents of the powers-that-be began searching out and destroying the annotated books. Scribblers managed to save a few books before the enemy got to them. A few Scribblers tried to fight back and were never seen again.

The Scribbler community, loose and disorganized as it was, quickly found its only means of communication gone. Scribblers went back to being lone weirdos, subscribing to ideas everyone they knew would laugh at.

Yet some Scribblers were so mad at their suppression that they took to scrawling truths on walls. Graffiti became a big thing in New York in 1970 and quickly spread throughout the country, and a minority of that graffiti was Scribbler graffiti. The old Scribblers seized this new way to continue their great philosophical discussion and began to use walls as places for discussion. Places where graffiti was never painted over became host to lengthy discussions and the new hubs of the Scribbler community.

Graffiti that was visible to the public was quickly painted over, yet the Scribblers continued to put up their messages. The attempted censorship only made them more determined to broadcast the truth to as many people as possible. Most people who saw this graffiti ignored it, yet some were intrigued and sought out more. Where the library age only had a few dozen Scribblers, the graffiti age gained hundreds.

Scribblers briefly tried to use computers to communicate. This worked back in the days of dial-up bulletin board systems, since these systems were isolated and could be kept fairly secret (you couldn't find them if you didn't have the phone number). Yet when the internet came along it became too easy for the enemies of the Scribblers to find and censor Scribbler communication. Scrawling on bathroom walls and inside phonebooths remained king.

Structure- Since most Scribblers write anonymously, the only way they knew each other is by their handwriting. Very few Scribblers will ever meet another Scribbler in person, although they will read the writings of dozens of scribblers, dating back to the 1970s (or 30s if they are lucky enough to gain access to an annotated volume). There is no Scribbler hierarchy: each person is judged by his or her words alone. Along with real Scribblers with real insight into the nature of the universe, there are many crazies and wannabes who write complete nonsense or stereotyped hyperbole alongside the words of real Scribblers.

Scribbler activity is confined mostly to the US and UK, and is rarely found outside of cities and towns with large universities. There are about 500 currently active Scribblers in the world, about 20 in L.A. Scribbler graffiti can be found all over the city but is most concentrated in the public restrooms, phone booths, bus stops and alleys on or near one of the major colleges and universities in the area.

Metaphysics- Although the techniques Scribblers use to gain supernatural abilities can be traced back to Gnosticism, Greek mysteries, occultism, psychotherapy, surrealism and even rituals stolen from the Templars, all rely on the Scribbler's disbelief in the physical world as their source of power. Scribblers discover, early in their initiation, that not only is this world an illusion but that they have been purposefully deceived about the nature of this world. Just as Cannibals learn to disdain the physical body which they believe keeps them from God, Scribblers disdain the world of external phenomena which they believe keeps them from the truth. The indignant anger is enough to let the Scribbler temporarily use his or her will destroy (Nihilistic Rage), bypass (Untouchable) or manipulate (Command Inanimate) the physical world.

Revelations- A Scribbler's Secret Life is all about revelations. Every night a Scribbler tries to find out something new about the nature of the universe. The most dangerous, yet most rewarding, part of this quest is finding real-world confirmation of theories and hearsay.

A major find for a Scribbler is an 'annotated volume' from the era when the Scribblers conversed in the margins of library books. See p.247 for more on Annotated Volumes.

Phonebooth in the Desert

Some Scribbler bulletin boards list the location of a phonebooth in the middle of the desert, about 150 miles (240 km.) Northeast of Los Angeles. Apart from a gas station 5 miles (8 km.) away, the phonebooth is nowhere near anything.

When someone travels to the phonebooth they usually find the phone already ringing. Picking up they may be connected to Scribblers from around the globe, to curious 'normals' who saw the number scribbled on a wall somewhere and decided to call it and see what it was, or automated dialing machines set up in the crawlspaces of unused apartments set to call again and again and play back whatever illicit message the owner wanted to convey to visitors to the phonebooth.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

KEEP WASHERS OZZY

Note: not just one RED KING there are many (one for each human being) There are bizarre machines attached to them - at least they appear to be in my mind

To find secret message plot out movement of characters of a red chessboard

This was a puzzler. After a pause, Alice began, "Well! They were *both* very unpleasant characters—" Here she checked herself in some alarm, at hearing something that sounded to her like the puffing of a large steam-engine in the wood near them, though she feared it was more likely to be a wild beast. "Are there any lions or tigers about here?" she asked timidly.

"It's only the Red King snoring," said Tweedledee.

"Come and look at him!" the brothers cried, and they each took one of Alice's hands, and led her up to where the King was sleeping.

"Isn't he a *lovely* sight?" said Tweedledum.

Alice couldn't say honestly that he was. He had a tall red night-cap on, with a tassel, and he was lying crumpled up into a sort of untidy heap, and snoring loud—"fit to snore his head off!" as Tweedledum remarked.

"I'm afraid he'll catch cold with lying on the damp grass," said Alice, who was a very thoughtful little girl.

"He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee: "and what do you think he's dreaming about?"

Alice said "Nobody can guess that." unless you try, Alice!"

Go to the old abandoned WOOLWORTH'S in Culver City look for a portal in the machine room

CHECK OUT BISHOP BERKELEY LETTERS TO SIR JOHN JAMES

HA!

STUPID FUCKING FREUDIANS

A theory of mine is that the deserted City is where the "Red Kings" used to live before they went elsewhere (?) to slumber

But consider this: Alice becomes a Queen without going crazy. I think Carroll is trying to tell us there's a middle path to enlightenment.

Tweedles are crazy. Perhaps this is Carroll's warning that knowledge sometimes comes at the price of sanity.

"Why, about *you!*" Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. "And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?" in his dream

"Where I am now, of course," said Alice.

"Not you!" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. "You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!"



"If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle!"

"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if *I'm* only a sort of thing in his dream, what are *you*, I should like to know?"

Alice talking can't wake the RK - one can't gain enlightenment just by understanding that we aren't real. The RK needs to be shocked into awakening. Something more shocking, more intense than what humans experience in a normal lifetime

Useful note in Stanford copy of Plato's Dialogues p. 132

YES!! WHEN THE RED KING STARTS TO BREAK DOWN LAWS OF PHYSICS STOP WORKING AT RANDOM.

Question: Can the Red King partially awaken?

um chumbawamba I messed up the structure here, I missed

Alice can think that is not true. Something must be the Red King's dream. It must be some thing that is not true. Alice can think that is not true. Something must be the Red King's dream. It must be some thing that is not true. Alice can

Karl Rimbaud, Elder Scribbler

Appearance- Older Caucasian man, curly grey hair under a grey cap, full grey mustache, hunched posture, khakis and a striped sweater, has a cane and a small knapsack.

Attributes- AGY 5, AWR 11, CHM 10, END 3, INL 19, SPD 7, STH 4, WIL 19, BLD 4, BDY 2, INCY 4.

Social Status- Karl is a lone hermit with no friends or family.

History- The son of German and French ex-patriots who organized labor in turn-of-the-century New York, Karl was born to be a radical intellectual. He was a bright student who liked to have raucous debates with professors. His conscience moved him to join the army and fight in WWII. His experiences in the Pacific convinced him that there was something fundamentally wrong with this world. When he came back he went to school, hoping to get a Ph.D. in philosophy at Stanford. He gravitated towards the world of non-mainstream philosophers. He discovered that people were Scribbling interesting notes in the margins of these philosophers' books and he joined in the discussions. Quickly he became convinced that the physical world was just a prison to trap human souls. He did experiments to confirm this. He quit academia so he could travel around the country reading the scribbles in various books. He continued living this way, surviving many experiments, encounters with the Powers-That-Be and encounters with supernatural beings, mostly by sheer luck. At the same time he used his new powers to make terrorist-like strikes against the institutions that he believed enforced the will of the Powers-That-Be (a police station, a seminary, a university administration building and an FBI office). He managed to find a stable portal to a Surgeon's lab and he started using it as his secret hideout. When Scribbled-in books started to disappear in the late 60s he grabbed as many as possible and hid them in his hideout. He has seen some Scribbler graffiti, but he assumed that the Scribbler community died with the removal of the books and that the graffiti is the last gasp of lone Scribblers.

Psychology- Karl has become an isolated, paranoid hermit. He thinks of the average human as ignorant and brainwashed, not worth the effort of speaking to. He lives, for the most part, in the world of abstract ideas and theories. The intellectual game of truth has become more important than the cause of freeing humanity from imprisonment. Karl has dehumanized anyone associated with preserving the status quo (rich people, cops, lawyers, soldiers, government employees, priests). He thinks of them as parasites and predators and he does not regret those he has killed. In his years of solitude he has created his own terminology for describing metaphysical and ontological ideas, a terminology which would make little sense even to another Scribbler.

Methods- Karl spends most of the time in his lab/library, reading books and Scribbling notes in notebooks. He can usually be found at a messy old wooden desk, squinting back and forth between two open books while scribbling in a notebook, under the yellow glow of an old lamp. A loaded shotgun is always within arms reach. He leaves only when he has to: dumping his waste, getting water and groceries, and making the rounds for new books at the few places he still considers safe (the few bookstores that don't have video surveillance). He no longer has the courage to make terrorist strikes against the Powers-That-Be. His disgust for the mundane world is so great that, unless he concentrates on stopping it, his Nihilistic Rage involuntarily activates, making things brittle and decompose quickly. He does not carry any weapons in the mundane world (he is worried the cops will stop and search him).

Special Skills- Rifle/Shotgun (3), Automatic Writing (3), Blood Sigils (2), Nihilistic Rage (5), Untouchable (5), Command Inanimate (4), Dreaming (3), Get Lost (3), Soul Blade (2), Spirit Speed (2), Spirit Strength (2).

Special Equipment- Shotgun: Pump (ROF 1, FR 6 ft., 6 bladed, 7 shots).

Typical Attack- In his lab he uses the shotgun to make a Vital Strike at AGY (5) + INL (19) +12 (skill) -1/6 ft. vs. 35 (or 1d20 -1/6 ft. +1 vs. 0), doing 12 damage if successful. In the mundane world, where he is typically unarmed, he uses his Nihilistic Rage skill to cause weapons to break and the ground to collapse at WIL (19) +16 (skill) vs. 30 (or 1d20 +5 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- Karl closes his eyes and uses the Untouchable skill to reduce physical damage at WIL (19) + 16 (skill) -10 (using Untouchable as a reaction) vs. 20 (to take one-fourth damage) or 30 (to take one-tenth damage) or 1d20 vs. -5 or 5.

Secrets of the Survivors

In Brief- Some die but spontaneously gain the ability to revive their bodies by force of will. The reapers, who take souls to the afterlife, see this and hunt the Survivors.

Origins- There have been Survivors since prehistory, yet they have been so rare that they rarely met. They appear in legends as unstoppable warriors, avenging spirits or miraculous holy people. It has only been since the 1980s that the formation of 'support groups' for accident survivors had brought together enough Survivors that they have created a body of shared knowledge.

Structure- Communities of Survivors only exist in the world's largest cities. Worldwide there are about 2,000 Survivors. There are about 50 in the L.A. area, but only about 10 know any other Survivors. The rest are in the dark: alone, unsure that's happening to them and taken by surprise when the reapers attack.

There is a high turnaround of Survivors. Survivor communities see Survivors die and new ones appear weekly. A Survivor who hasn't met with and learned from other Survivors lasts a month on average. One who has learned about the danger of reapers lives a year on average. Thus the Survivor community is constantly made up of new people trying to come to terms with what is happening to them.

Worldwide there are less than 10 Survivors who managed to eliminate their reapers. These Survivors are practically immortal (although severe enough damage will bring new reapers and allow the soul to be taken). None are involved in the Survivor community.

Metaphysics- This world is a factory through which souls are moved. Stupid and insensate souls, having forgotten everything from their previous lives, are carried by invisible creatures ('storks') who are attracted to fetuses of a certain age. The souls are locked inside the bodies, where they will remain imprisoned until death. When a person's body dies their muscles stop working, neurons stop firing and the soul, for the most part, goes to sleep. The death of the body attracts an invisible being, a reaper, who detaches the soul from the body and stuffs it through a portal to the Land of the Dead (see p.255).

Sometimes, however, while waiting for the reaper the soul 'wakes up.' Although the biological neurons cannot fire, the souls have grown into a metaphysical mirror image of the body, down to the neurons, and thus have the ability for consciousness and thought even when the body does not. The soul experiences itself trapped in a dead body. In most cases of awakening a reaper arrives and takes the trapped soul before the soul can figure out how to do anything. However, when the reaper takes a long time (as is the case in a mass death where the bodies greatly outnumber the reapers) the soul has time to come to terms with and try to do something about its situation.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Reapers

Appearance- Reapers are invisible. Those who can see the invisible see only a shimmering blur, about the size and shape of a human, which glides quickly along the ground. If one looks closely one can see a ring of tiny translucent points. The points are usually where the reaper's 'head' would be, but can travel anywhere within the blur. Those who can touch the invisible (e.g. someone using the Journeying skill) will feel most of the Reaper as nothing more than a thin fluid. The only 'solid' thing on the reaper is five tiny points, which they use like fingertips to grab souls and manipulate the physical world.

Attributes- AGY 2, AWR 2, CHM 0, END 100, INL 0, SPD 5 (see Special Abilities), STH 30, WIL 5, BLD 20, BDY 0, INCY 20.

Abilities

-Can sense death, even at a great distance.

-Can sense several signs of likely imminent death: plagues, severely ill of starving people, suicidal or homicidal people, deadly wrigglers, structurally important materials under strain, imminent natural disasters.

-Can accelerate to any speed (increasing by 5 SPD per round).

-Can grab a human soul, detach it from a corpse, and stuff it through a small invisible portal within itself that leads to the Land of the Dead.

-Minor manipulation of the physical world: starting fires, cracking brittle materials, moving small objects, corroding metals, rotting wood, causing liquids to flow uphill, making surfaces more slippery, etc.

-Do not die of old age and their memory is limitless.

-Can track a particular human soul anywhere in this realm.

-Are immune to most attacks that would damage other denizens of the invisible. Attacks that do the equivalent of blunt or bladed damage to an invisible entity (e.g. a punch by a Journeying Animist or a stab with a soul blade) will pass right through the reaper. The only thing that can hurt the reaper is that which does broad damage to the invisible or destroys the fabric of reality itself (e.g. high level Nihilistic Rage or a shatter).

Behavior- When no deaths are happening nearby, Reapers hover around places where death is likely. When someone dies the body sends out a beacon which attracts Reapers. If it observes a corpse come back to life it will remember that soul and hunt for ways to kill that person for as long as it exists, pausing only to attend to mundane deaths. The Reaper will follow its prey through portals into other worlds, yet has no way to travel between worlds unaided. Reapers can be effected by Command Reapers or with Sigils currently unknown to the Touched, but only briefly.

Psychology- Reapers are about as intelligent as a cat, yet they have instinctual knowledge of various things that are dangerous to human life. They thus excel at problem solving where the problem is how to alter the environment to kill a person. They are emotionless and fearless. They do not communicate. They only do the job they were created to do.

Origin- Reapers are beings created and manufactured by the powers-from-beyond to do a specific job. They are the smartest and toughest of the beings manufactured for use in this reality. They are the main line of defense between humans and immortality. They are designed to be difficult to see, even by those rare humans who can see the invisible.

Typical Action- A Grab at STH (30) + AGY (2) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +7 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- None (see Special Abilities).



A Reaping

Alleys

Some souls will themselves out of their bodies. These are the unlucky ones. The Reapers who witnessed this follow them everywhere, relentlessly hunting them until they catch them, at which point the naked souls are put directly into the Land of the Dead.

Other souls manage to will their bodies back to life. At this point they are temporarily safe: the reapers do not have the power to put a human, physical body and all, into the land of the dead, nor to sever a resisting soul from a living body. Yet the reapers have been given the ability to manipulate the physical world to cause accidents. Reapers are of subhuman intelligence, but they do have an instinctive knowledge of dangers to human life. Survivors are not easy to kill though. Once they have forced their physical bodies back to life once, they can often do it again. The Reapers must follow and wait patiently for an opportunity to kill the Survivor in such a way that decimates the body, leaving too little for the Survivor to revive. In addition to decimating the bodies, reapers look for opportunities to kill Survivors in their sleep, hoping that Survivors will not wake in time to use their revival ability.

Once Survivors have learned to use their force of will (and fear of death) to restart their hearts, it is not hard for them to learn to manipulate their flesh in other ways: healing injuries, improving physical strength, etc.

Revelations- The most important thing for Survivors to realize is something which they must discover quickly or they will die: that reapers are trying to hurt them so badly they cannot revive. The next most important information for Survivors is how to escape or destroy reapers, yet this information is not easy to come by. Reapers will follow Survivors anywhere in this world and it would take very clever use of a portal to trap them in another world. They can only be temporarily delayed by skills like Blood Sigils and Command Reapers. Killing people can distract them temporarily (they will stop hunting Survivors to reap souls) but will not appease them. Only rare supernatural skills and objects which Survivors do not normally have access to can kill reapers.

Octavio Hidalgo, Elder Survivor

Appearance- Handsome, middle aged Hispanic male, light skinned, neatly trimmed bushy black hair with a sprinkling of grey, tall, muscular, wearing a crimson suit over an olive green shirt, sunglasses, expensive diamond ring, usually smoking an expensive cigar.

Attributes- AGY 11, AWR 9, CHM 12, END 30, INL 14, SPD 30, STH 30, WIL 12, BLD 10, BDY 10, INCY 10.

History- Octavio was born in the newly independent Mexico in 1820. He was a mestizo, child of an Indian mother and Spanish father. As a young adult he moved to the Mexican settlement in Los Angeles and worked as a carpenter. In 1839 an Earthquake killed many people but Octavio survived. He soon figured out that 'angels' (as he thought of them) were following him, trying to end his life. Seeking to escape this fate he spent several years traveling and living with Californian Indians, seeking a practitioner of Indian magic who might be able to help him. After several years, and several near-fatal 'accidents', he found an old native practitioner who knew of a dangerous place in a mountain that annihilated spirits. He made a dangerous trek up a mountain and into a cave whose walls dripped with blood. He saw his reapers getting chopped to pieces. Afterwards he moved back to L.A., but found that in his absence California has been ceded to the US. Fearing discrimination by the Americans, he moved back to Mexico City. Having no fear of death he worked as a bull fighter by day and robbed banks by night. He grew wealthy, got married and had kids. Then he watched his family grow old as he stayed the same. In 1915 his oldest son (now 65) begged Octavio to help him cheat death. Octavio tried to train his son to retake control of his body at the instant of death, then Octavio drowned his son. His son never revived. The last of his children died in 1923 and Octavio, though he had frequent love affairs, decided never to marry or have children again. Octavio worked at a number of high-danger, high-pay jobs, both legal and illegal, and had invested the money in a number of ways, some of which eventually made him one of the wealthiest men in Mexico. In the 1935 he bought a mansion in L.A. and since then he has spent most of his time in L.A.

Psychology- Octavio suffers from three major problems: First, there's nobody he really cares about or who cares about him. His life is a series of meaningless short-term relationships. Second, he knows he can get away with doing almost anything he wants. Third, he has grown bored of all the worldly pleasures money can buy. These three factors have tuned what was once a compassionate and thoughtful man into a man who is cruel, deceitful, arrogant, ill tempered, obsessive, amoral, picky, vengeful and intolerant of discomfort. The only people he cares about are his descendents. The only thing he really fears is the Powers-That-Be (he is rich enough to know they exist, but knows little else). Octavio is bisexual, not because of natural inclination but because he long ago bored himself with physical pleasures of sex and, like a collector who has forgotten how to enjoy the things he collects, he now concerns himself with abstractions like 'perfection' and 'rarity.'

Methods- Octavio only has to spend a few hours a day managing his various investments and the complicated shell companies he uses to obscure himself. Mostly 'managing' means making sure his accountants, lawyers and investment managers live in fear of screwing up. He lives in a palatial mansion in the Malibu hills where a staff of domestic servants takes care of his every need. Because of his cruel temper he goes through servants quickly. In the evenings he goes to the city's most exclusive nightclubs where he meets with and seduces some of the most attractive young men and women in the city. He owns several nightclubs and those he doesn't own he pays large bribes to the owners to ensure that people who ask questions about him are met with feigned ignorance. He always has the best drugs, both for personal use and for bait to attract young people. He spends most of every day high on a combination of cocaine, heroin, nicotine and alcohol. He often forces his lovers to join him on dangerous adventures (robbing convenience stores, driving up to gang members and calling them 'putos,' driving the wrong way on the freeway) which he does simply to enjoy his dates' fear. He has arranged for his descendents to move to L.A. and gain US citizenship. From afar he keeps them out of trouble and makes sure they are comfortable. Most of his descendents know only that they have a "rich uncle Octavio" who gives them gifts sometimes. They have no idea of the extent that he manipulates their lives. Octavio has a number of false identities and bank accounts set up should he have to quit his current identity in a hurry.

Special Skills- Flesh Control (6), Revive (6), See Reapers (1), Spirit Speed (4), Spirit Strength (4), Offensive Driving (4), Assassin: Unarmed (5), Wrestling (4).

Typical Attack- Before combat he will attempt to use Spirit Strength and Spirit Speed to increase his AGY to 21, SPD to 40 and STH to 40. He will make a Grab at the victim's head with his bare hands at STH (40) + AGY (21) +12 (skill) -4 (targeted) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +44 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- If the previous grab was successful, he will attempt a simultaneous Neck Breaking (see Assassin: Unarmed) at STH (40) + AGY (21) + WIL (13) +16 (skill) vs. 60 (or 1d20 +30 vs. 0).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Los Angeles Police Department
1/13/89 – Case #D561003 – Samuel Wachowski Interview

Interviewer One: So you see, this is your only chance to give us your side of the story. We know most everything about what happened, but we still want to give you the opportunity to tell us what was going on in your head.

Interviewer Two: We don't think you're a bad guy. We know you must have had some reason for doing what you did.

Suspect: Look, there's someone after me, okay? And I had to start that fire so I could spy on them, see how they do what they do.

Interviewer One: Who was after you Mike?

Suspect: See, the body is like a prison for your soul.

Interviewer One: What are you talking about Mike? Be straight with us. You said someone was after you. Who's after you?

Suspect: It's like you're locked in your body, and when you die, someone has to come along and take you out of your body and send you to the afterlife.

Interviewer Two: Like an angel? Is that what you think you are, Mike, an angel?

Suspect: No, see, I was supposed to die, but I barricaded my cell. Do you see? I wouldn't let them take me. So they're after me, looking for a way to make me come out.

Interviewer One: So you were supposed to die, but you didn't, so they're trying to kill you.

Suspect: But I can't be killed, not by normal stuff, because I'm in charge of my body, see. But if they can blow my body to pieces or cut it in half then they can pull me out. So they're always looking for ways to do that…

Interviewer One: Yeah but…

Suspect: …except when I give them other souls to take and that distracts them.

Interviewer One: Now Mike…

Suspect: If I can get rid of the ones that are chasing me, the others don't know I'm supposed to be....

Interviewer One: Now, Mike, listen…

Suspect: …dead, I'll have broken the cycle, and I can help other people too. Nobody has to die.

Secrets of the Wonderlanders

In Brief- Victorian Children's book authors discovered how to travel into the subconscious of kids by linking the subconsciouses to a vibrant fantasy world, learned to become immortal by living in those subconsciouses.

Origin- The first books written and published especially for children were in 1740's England. In the century that followed the genre of children's literature flourished as writers grew more cognizant of what best suited the tastes of children.

The most popular children's books were written by adults who spent a lot of time with children and created stories for the amusement of those children, often with creative input from the children. The creator of Alice in Wonderland based it on stories he told to Alice, the daughter of his boss. The creator of Peter Pan based it on his play with the children of a friend. The creator of the Oz series based it on the stories he told his daughters. Many less-famous children's authors created their stories the same way. In the 1870s, at the same time that spiritualism and investigation of occult phenomenon were popular in the western world, many of these authors began perceiving phenomena that suggested that the worlds they had created with their young companions were real or were trying to become real. A group of British children's book authors took it upon themselves to discover what was going on.

It wasn't until 1910 that the children's books authors used techniques recently developed by Freud for probing the subconscious mind to determine that the playworlds were manifestations of the children's subconsciouses. Using an admixture of spiritualism, occultism and Freudian techniques the authors discovered ways to send their consciousness into the playlands of their children. An ailing elderly member was in a Playland when her physical body died, but she soon contacted the other members to tell them she was still alive in the playland. The group devised a scheme for their own immortality. They would each escape death by hiding in the playlands of their children, then convince those children to do the same.

The members of this group, and those they chose to teach the secret of immortality to, went on to start lineages of Wonderlanders. Many prepared more than one child (in case something should happen to one) and thus the phenomenon has grown and evolved.

Structure- There are about 1,000 children who have been or are being manipulated by Wonderlanders, 400 living adult Wonderlanders and 200 dead Wonderlanders living inside the others.

A few adult Wonderlanders are free from manipulation because their adult friends died while not in the Wonderlander's mind. The majority, though, have either a live or dead adult friend manipulating them. The adult friend can speak to the Wonderlander when necessary, but prefers more subtle manipulation: by tampering with the world of psychodynamics to effect the very personality of the young Wonderlander. Adult Wonderlanders with several young friends have several different playlands they can live in and travel between, and second or third generation Wonderlanders (dead Wonderlanders living in the minds of other dead Wonderlanders) have dozens of minds they can wander through.

A dead Wonderlander's primary motivation is to keep his or her children from dying prematurely. Next is to teach the child how to achieve his or her own immortality in time for the child to escape death (yet not too quickly, lest the child rebel). Another important motivation is to keep the child at least moderately mentally healthy, since psychological and emotional problems will make the subconscious into an unpleasant and dangerous place to live in.

Wonderlanders achieve immortality by sending their consciousnesses (or their entire bodies) to live in the pocket universes they have helped to create. If their bodies die in the mundane realm and reapers show up they find no soul to reap. The soul has taken up its own life in the playland. As playlands are not physical realms, old age, disease and death only exist when they are part of the fictional setting, and even then they can be overcome by force of will. Dead Wonderlanders who can find the right kind of portal can return to this world as physical beings, although like escaped psychodynamics they remain part of the child's minds and will die if the child dies.

Some Wonderlanders have a motivation that has little to do with wanting to be immortal. They have a romantic or sexual attachment to one of their children and have a plan to live for eternity with him or her in some playland paradise.

Metaphysics- Humans have incredible power over reality. They can make things 'exist' simply by believing hard enough. The requisite belief is emotional and not intellectual. Humans have to <u>feel</u> the truth of a thing, which is a power which dawns with the birth of imagination and slips away quickly as a young person becomes more indoctrinated into the rules of "real" and "not real." The ability to imagine things real peaks at around 4 or 5 years.

The things children believe into being exist outside this universe. They only exist by degrees and after the child stops believing in them most disappear. Only a few circumstances can keep them around, and one is if they are linked to a person's subconscious. Children have an unsophisticated Ego that allows various thoughts and impulses from the subconscious to leak out in what, to an adult, is a poorly disguised form. Children often project their psychodynamics onto characters in their imaginary play. Adult Wonderlanders figure out what those characters represent and enhance the connection to that psychodynamic by telling stories about those characters that enhance that part of their personality. The adult friends help create a fictional world that the child can

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

feel strongly about. The small pocket of semi-reality floating in the darkness outside this reality is linked to the subconscious, a subset of the human mind and thus of the human soul, and so instead of fading away as most imagined worlds do it grows in strength. The beings that live there and the things that happen there are at once real things living in another universe as well as patterns of neurons firing in the human brain and its soul counterpart.

Revelations- A Wonderlander's life is one of slow, planned revelations. The trespasser in the Wonderlander's mind has front row seats to the Wonderlander's changing psychology and can make an educated guess when the Wonderlander will be receptive to each new revelation. Finding out things faster then the trespasser intended can be a threat because it might cause the Wonderlander to fight back against the adult friend's plans.

Revelations can come in many forms:

A long-lost friend of the family from the Wonderlander's childhood shows up to tell the Wonderlander some important secret.

When the Wonderlander turns 18 he is given a note from a lawyer executing the estate of a dead uncle.

Searching for an explanation for the strange phenomena happening to her a Wonderlander rereads a children's book that was dedicated to her by her old nanny and she discovers secret messages in the text.

The Wonderlander is searching through his parent's attic trying to find out exactly what happened to him or her and finds an envelope with his name on it.

A dead friend-of-the-family shows up in a Wonderlander's dream with an important message.

While lost in her playland a Wonderlander meets a playland character who has a message from 'the strange woman.'

Most adult friends try to send revelations in the following order:

-Playland is your subconscious mind.

-You can gain power and psychological health via your unique connection to your playland.

-You can gift other children with a connection to their playlands.

-You can enter these children' playlands to help them by using a toy of theirs.

-One can escape physical death by going inside the playland of another person.

Was Lewis Carroll, author of Alice in Wonderland, a Wonderlander?

The Short Answer: No.

The Long Answer: Although he was not part of the lineage of immortality seeking Victorian children's literature authors, he almost certainly experienced some playland phenomena, and his later writing suggests that he grasped the meaning of some of those phenomenon. Other ideas in his writing, especially the infamous red-king's-dream (p.214), suggest that he was exposed to Cannibal doctrine or something similar.

Agatha Hartford, Wonderlander Elder

Appearance- Short, plump, Caucasian woman with her hair in a bun, in her sixties, wearing a blue-grey dress with padded shoulders and round glasses, speaks with an upper-class Victorian English accent.

Attributes- AGY 7, AWR 15, CHM 13, END 15, INL 16, SPD 5, STH 5, WIL 18, BLD 7, BDY 6, INCY 7.

Social Status- Agatha Hartford is one of the first Wonderlanders. She lives in the subconsciouses of her 'children', who now only exist in the subconsciouses of other Wonderlanders. Her children, and some of her children's children, know she exists and fear her. She usually lets her children manage the affairs of the living Wonderlanders unless someone messes something up badly. She has been known to find portals into the subconsciouses of enemies of her 'grandchildren,' then attack their psychodynamics, driving them insane. She is not in touch with any of her old colleagues, she doesn't even know if they still exist or not.

History- Born in England in 1840, Agatha was one of the group of children's book authors who discovered that it was possible to cheat death by taking up residence in the imaginary world that once belonged to a child. She was the second to achieve immortality this way when her body died of "consumption" (tuberculosis) in 1914. She made sure that the Wonderlanders whose minds she inhabited went on to take up residence in a new generation of Wonderlanders.

Psychology- Agatha acts like a sweet, unassuming, forgetful old woman. In reality she is scheming, manipulative and prone to cruelty against anyone who doesn't do what she tells them to. She clings to Victorian manners and morality and is quite intolerant of any behavior that is not 'proper.' Agatha's strongest motivation is a fear of death, especially because she has become convinced that cheating death is a sin and that when she finally dies she will go to hell. Her second strongest motivation is her sense of abject loneliness. Agatha also hates the real world. She thinks it is dirty, unpleasant and uncouth and she would much rather live in playlands. Her brief forays into the modern world have only increased this feeling.

Methods- Agatha has Victorian mansions staffed with servants, all of which she has created with her mind, in the subconsciouses of each of her children. She spends most of her day puttering around the mansions or working in the gardens. She coerces the conscious selves of her young friends (the ones whose subconsciouses she lives in) into paying her regular visits for tea and playing games. She forces them to assume the form of themselves as children, even though most prefer to walk the playlands in adult forms. The young friends have grown to fear and hate Agatha, yet they come and they pretend to have a nice time because they are scared of her. She knows this but pretends she doesn't. She has severely beaten young friends who haven't played along with the charade. When she hears of trouble, or occasionally out of boredom, she explores the many subconsciouses she is attached to. Only when given no other option does she come to this world.

Special Skills- Playland Geography (5), Masks (4), Enter Playland (6), See True Face (4), Imaginary Powers (5) (super strength, flying, walk through walls, invisibility).

Special Abilities- While in a subconscious, Agatha can manipulate the environment at a roll of 1d20 vs. 5.

Typical Attack- If given time to prepare, Agatha will turn invisible, create a club out of thin air, activate her super strength power and then strike at STH (25) + AGY (7) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +3 vs. 0) doing 5 blunt damage if successful.

Typical Reaction- A block with the club at STH (25) + AGY (7) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +7 vs. 0). If she is invisible, opponents are -15 to hit her.

Lost in the Great Forest

One day, While walking though the great woods on her way to visit the Mockingbird King, Amanda came upon a queer little cottage. It had a little vegetable garden out in front and there was a grownup with a long beard working in the garden.

If you had asked Amanda just five minutes before if there were any adults in the great woods, she would have laughed her pretty laugh and said you were silly. "Everybody knows there are no adults in the great woods," she might have said.

"Hello there," Amanda curtsied politely, "my name is Amanda."

"I know your name," the man said, "we've met before."

"Have you? That's queer, for I don't remember you, and I'm quite sure I would recall if I had met you.

"It wasn't here, it was in the real world."

Amanda scrunched up her nose at this peculiar statement. "This is the real world," she insisted.

"Perhaps to you it is," he said with a wry smile.

Amanda did not know what that meant, so she ignored it. "I didn't know there were any adults living in the great woods

"I'm the only one."

"And may I ask how you came to live here?"

"You showed me the way." This was another statement she didn't understand and so decided to ignore. "And I came here because nobody ever dies in the great woods."

Amanda smiled the kind of smile one gives to the mentally infirm. She and her friends has been through many harrowing adventures, and through luck and wit they had always managed to survive, yet there was always the danger of the worst happening.

"You see," the silly man continued, "As long as your real body lives, the great woods will exist. And as long as the me that you see now is here, I can't die no matter what happens to my real body."

Amanda was determined to follow this chain of nonsense to the end in hopes that it might be anchored to at least a tiny piece of sense. "Well then, what happens to you if my 'real body' dies?"

He gave her another smile. "Clever girl. I can only hope that, by then, you are in someone else's great woods."

GAME MASTERS ONLY

CHAPTER SIX - SECRETS OF THIS WORLD

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Secrets of Los Angeles

Fulfillment Dynamics

In Brief- Cult/Scam, headquartered in L.A., uses h-tech to kill psychodynamics. Paranoid leader has an army of personality-less superhumans.

This enterprise has stolen the most successful elements of several cults, new age movements and self-help/alternative-medicine pyramid schemes. Much of its organization and recruiting techniques were stolen directly from Scientology (with whom it competes). Fulfillment Dynamics sometimes calls itself a religion and sometimes a form of therapy, depending on who's asking and what legal status would be most beneficial at the moment. Fulfillment Dynamics is very profitable and is growing quickly. There are 60 FD centers in America, Canada and Europe, and the book "Your Personal Path to Fulfillment" was in the non-fiction best seller top ten for over a year. Los Angeles, the birthplace of FD, has the most FD centers of any urban area. There are five centers, including the exclusive Hollywood center for celebrities.

History- Fulfillment Dynamics was created by Tom Abernathy, a small-time music promoter who dabbled in the occult and exotic drugs. While temporarily insane from these experiments he invented the Maladaption Destimulator, a piece of H-Tech which FD is based on.

The early history of FD was plagued with problems with patients. Several committed suicide when weakening of psychodynamics allowed the Thannatos to take control, others committed murder or rape or died doing dangerous stunts. Tom Abernathy learned what order to destroy psychodynamics in to prevent these occurrences, but they still remain a skeleton in the closet that FD would prefer to keep secret.

Maladaption Destimulator- Among other components, the Maladaption Destimulator has a TV screen, a bank of controls, and a plastic cap with dozens of electrodes. When active, the machine shows a blurry, distorted face that looks like the patient's face but is distorted enough to give the impression that it is a different entity. When the controller finds the right face, representing the Maladaptive Pattern he or she had chosen to work on, the controller hits another button which causes the face to writhe in pain, then to scream and curse. As destimulation progresses the face starts looking tired and ill, goes unconscious, and eventually disappears.

According to FD literature the Maladaption Destimulator isolates Maladaptive Patterns, unhealthy ways of relating to the world that we have developed during times of trauma or stress and that now make us unhealthy and unfulfilled. Once a patterns is isolated, the machines "destimulates" it, robbing it of its power and eventually destroying it.

Tom Abernathy knows this explanation is bullshit. He knows that destroying some 'maladaptive patterns' can help some people but that destroying all of them turns people into emotionless, unmotivated, unempathetic shells that do whatever they're told. Tom won't use the machine on himself or any of his children.

What the machine really does, although nobody in FD knows it, is damage and eventually destroy psychodynamics. A one-hour session does 1d6 damage to a psychodynamic's psych STH. Victims of this process have superhuman strength of will (since the psychological energy previously used by the psychodynamics is now free) but lack all normal human desires. Fortunately for FD members the sessions are very expensive and it takes hundreds of sessions to destroy all one's psychodynamics, which very few people can afford.

Organization- Fulfillment Dynamics acts as a pyramid scheme: new members become dependent on sessions to keep their more troublesome personality elements under control, but very few can afford continued treatments so they start working for FD. They advertise and sell FD products in malls, subway stations and even door-to-door. Eventually they train to become session operators (this too costs money) so they can work full time for FD.

Tom Abernathy is the undisputed head of FD. He surrounds himself only with trusted high-level FD members who will do whatever he commands and agree with anything he says. His oldest son, Cameron Abernathy, 26, is being groomed to take over FD when Tom dies. He is the unofficial second-in-command of the organization and commands almost as much respect as his father.

Besides those two there are various directors, each handpicked by Tom Abernathy. There are directors of PR, legal, R&D, accounting, publishing, advertising and regional directors of treatment and training centers for the Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, Southwest and international regions.

Alleys

The most important training center, the Hollywood center, is the only one allowed to regularly operate at a loss. The head of this center, Mary Lewis, once a personal trainer for supermodels, has almost as much power as a director and regularly meets with Tom Abernathy.

Tom, Cameron and the directors have offices in the FD head offices, which take up several floors of a prestigious downtown L.A. office building. Tom is rarely in the office, though. He usually rules by remote from his yacht or his home on a sprawling and secluded Rancho Palos Verdes estate.

Methods- Fulfillment Dynamics will do just about anything to protect its profitability. FD has defrauded the FDA by giving them a fake version of the Maladaption Destimulator. It has performed various forms of tax evasion, has used litigation and the threat of litigation to silence critics, has burglarized the homes and offices of reporters, has hacked into web servers. Tom Abernathy has ordered the murder of high-up members of FD who threatened to go public with FD secrets (including Tom's wife). As a result of these practices FD has had practically no bad publicity, despite the fact that the FBI, cult experts, conspiracy buffs and religion reporters know that FD is a dangerous scam.

Fulfillment Dynamics gets away with so much because of "cleans." These are the approximately 100 for so FD members that have had all their psychodynamics destroyed. They are without fear, morals or selfish desires. They are easily manipulated and will do anything Tom Abernathy tells them to. They also have incredible strength of will which gives them superhuman abilities. Tom even has a few Cleans among Hollywood's elite.

FD spends millions seducing celebrities, giving them unending care and attention to keep them in FD. They also make sure that the media finds out which celebrities are into FD, thus giving FD free advertising.

Four years ago a Wonderlander came to FD for help. Tom found out about it and personally oversaw the treatment. He snuffed out her supernatural abilities when he killed her psychodynamics. Tom doesn't know exactly what was the source of her abilities or how the treatment effected them. He desperately wants to get another Wonderlander into treatment (or, to a lesser degree, anyone with supernatural powers) to experiment on.

Tom Abernathy, Fulfillment Dynamics Director

Appearance- Sixty-something Caucasian male with short, dyed-blonde hair, neatly trimmed beard, glasses, slightly pudgy, crooked teeth, well tanned skin. He wears either cream colored suits or plaid sweaters and beige slacks.

Attributes- AGY 6, AWR 11, CHM 15, END 8, INL 15, SPD 8, STH 9, WIL 10, BLD 4, BDY 3, INCY 3.

Social Status- Founder and owner of Fulfillment Dynamics. Considered the ultimate authority in spiritual and psychological matters by thousands of devotees. Very rich and very powerful.

History- As a young man growing up in an upper-middle-class Long Beach family, Tom thought he would be a rock star, yet all his music was just poor copies of other popular music. After years of struggling he gave up on being a musician. He worked a number of jobs, including appliance repairman, door-to-door salesman, and music promoter. At the same time he joined a cabal of occultists that was loosely affiliated with the Golden Dawn. He participated in a lot or rituals (most of which were thinly disguised excuses to do drugs and have orgies). Under the influence of cocaine his egomaniacal side grew. After a week-long binge he became convinced that his consciousness had ascended the Kabalistic tree of life and now he had the knowledge to build a machine that would liberate human potential. He worked in his garage off-and-on again for months, almost always while high, before creating the Maladaption Destimulator. After experimenting on people from his occult group (including the woman who would become his wife) he decided that he hadn't discovered the key to enlightenment. However, after reading an expose on Scientology in the L.A. Times, and how it had made its founder rich, Tom decided to create a similar enterprise. FD grew slowly at first. Meanwhile Tom married and had kids. In the 90s FD began to really grow and Tom became rich and powerful. He also learned how to use Cleans. In 1995 his wife started telling friends some of FD's dark secrets and those friends started telling reporters. Arguments followed and his wife threatened to divorce him. He told his assistants that his wife was suffering from a particularly virulent Maladaption and he ordered them to force her into the Destimulator. Between sessions they kept her locked in a closet, but she became dehydrated and died of a heart attack. Tom and his followers did their best to make the death look natural. Since then he has committed several murders to protect FD.

Psychology- Tom is megalomaniacal. He believes he is destined to change the face of society. He believes he is his generation's greatest philosopher and spiritual leader. Yet at the same time he knows he is running a scam that promises happiness but delivers only poverty and flattened personality. Tom is addicted to the loyalty of his followers and he is constantly asking for more proof of devotion. He is obsessed with the occult and is constantly looking for proof of any occult phenomena that aren't just a scam or self-delusion. Politically he considers himself a libertarian. He is a Theist but thinks that God is just an abstract principle of ultimate knowledge. He is fairly paranoid and hates those who he thinks are potential enemies and detractors: the federal government, the media, psychiatrists, traditional organized religion. He takes every opportunity to try to make his followers hate these enemies. He also has put out a few music CDs of bland folk-rock and has used his influence to get them far more radio play and critical acclaim than they deserve.

Methods- Tom has an entire staff devoted to gathering intelligence about and keeping files on any potential enemy to himself or to FD. If someone appears to be a serious threat, Tom either has Legal start a groundless lawsuit to try to bankrupt them or has a group of Cleans burglarize their homes and offices to find out what they know and destroy records. If these fail, Cleans wait for the enemy in a dark parking lot and threaten him or her. If this doesn't work, Cleans kill the person and bury the body in the desert.

Special Equipment- Pistol: Mini (ROF 3, FR 5 ft., 3 damage, holds 6 bullets) in an ankle holster, which Tom keeps so he can kill himself if he is ever caught by his 'enemies.'

Typical Attack- Strike with the pistol at AGY (6) + INL (15) +1d20 -1/5 ft. vs. 25 (or 1d20 -1/5 ft. vs. 4).

Typical Reaction- Drop at AGY (6) + AWR (11) +1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 vs. 3).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Typical Clean

Appearance- Clean-shaven young man with a conservative haircut and a modest charcoal suit. Wears a Fulfillment Dynamics pin and carries a briefcase full of FD literature and books. Has an emotionless face and cold, unblinking eyes.

Attributes- AGY 25, AWR 25, CHM 1, END 30, INL 25, SPD 25, STH 25, WIL 30, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 7.

Social Status- Typically a high-level executive in the FD bureaucracy, sent around the country to setup and troubleshoot FD operations. One of the few people in the origination that Tom Abernathy trusts completely.

History- Discovered FD while suffering from a number of personal weaknesses (e.g. drugs, sex, food, temper). The treatments only provided temporary relief and he quickly ran out of money so he started working for FD, rose through the ranks from associate to session operator to upper management, in the process destroying all of his psychodynamics.

Methods- Although extremely intelligent and without prejudice, the Clean has little understanding of other humans. Cleans thus aren't used for jobs which require social skills, such as PR or training or motivating employees. Cleans are used to eliminate inefficiencies, track down embezzlers and intimidate employees. They are also used for any illegal activities the organization needs done.

Personality- None. The Clean has no conscience, curiosity, instincts, no desire for physical pleasures, no dislike of discomfort, no empathy, no ideals. The Clean doesn't care whether he lives or dies. The Clean is quite easy to brainwash: tell him to do something enough times and he will do it – not because he is weak but because he has no reason not to. The Clean's subconscious is a cold, empty, dead place.

Special Abilities- Their incredible amount of psychological energy gives the Clean boosted physical and mental attributes (see Attributes).

Special Skills- Aikido (4), Self-Defense Weapons (3), Interrogation (4), Torture (3), Lock Picking (3), Alarm Systems (3), Operating Systems (3).

Special Equipment- Lock Pick Set (Professional), "Maladaption Sensor Wand" (really a Taser: Baton (p.108) disguised as a FD device. Does 3 blunt and 3 electrical damage, range 1-2).

Typical Attack- Crippling Attack with the "wand" at STH (25) + INL (25) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 +20 vs. 0). A successful strike cripples a limb and does Paralysis (WIL +1d20 vs. 60), Unconsciousness (WIL/ END +1d20 vs. 30) and Heart Attack (END + 1d20 vs. 15).

Typical Reaction- Split Reaction Dodge at AGY (25) + AWR (25) + skill (16) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 + 31 vs. 0) and simultaneous Strike with the wand at STH (25) + AGY (25) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +15 vs. 0) doing 2 blunt damage and Paralysis (WIL +1d20 vs. 60), Unconsciousness (WIL/END +1d20 vs. 30) and Heart Attack (END + 1d20 vs. 15).

Dog King of L.A.

In Brief- Dog with human soul who became intelligent is the real power behind a powerful loan shark/black marketeer.

Carlos Iglesias is a middle aged, thin, Hispanic man with thinning hair, sideburns, a dour and unsmiling face and staring eyes. He speaks slowly and calmly with only a slight Hispanic accent. He wears gold colored dress shirts and black slacks.

Carlos Iglesias is a moderately powerful organized crime figure in Southeast Los Angeles. He is a loan shark who is owed money by several local drug dealers, pimps and street gangs. He runs a bookie operation and he owns a pawn shop from which his employees fence stolen items and buy illegal weapons. Carlos is generally feared in the L.A. underworld as someone who you don't want to piss off. People who owe money to other loan sharks live in fear that Carlos will buy their debts.

Carlos is also known for his love of dogs. He has a large rottweiler that follows him nearly everywhere he goes. His house has a huge kennel with dozens of dogs. He also uses dogs to torture and kill his enemies. Each time the L.A. District Attorney has gathered enough information to prosecute Carlos a witness has been killed in a mysterious dog attack.

What nobody knows is that Carlos' Rottweiler, named Killer, is the brains of the operation and Carlos is his slave.

Killer doesn't know it, but he was accidentally given a human soul. He was brighter than the average dog but had no supernormal abilities until he was kidnapped and experimented on by an elderly schizophrenic man who kept him in a basement, performed several surgeries (including brain surgery) on him and subjected him to electric shocks. After a year of this treatment Killer's mind expanded past the limitations of his dog brain. Killer gained human intelligence and supernatural abilities. He killed his captor and escaped, lived for two years as the leader of a pack of stray dogs. Slowly he learned about human society and he decided he wanted human money and power. He sought out Carlo Iglesias, then a homeless heroin addict, and bullied Carlos into acting as a mouthpiece. Together they built an illegal empire.

Killer lives the perfect life: he eats the best food (including live rabbits and birds), he has a harem of dozens of female dogs, his many pups are well cared for and he goes wherever he wants. Killer calls himself the Dog King and at home he is treated as such.

Killer has also been performing experiments on other dogs to try to create more dogs that are as intelligent as he. So far he has been unsuccessful.

Killer, Dog King of L.A.

Appearance- A large, muscular, short-haired, reddish-brown dog with a spiked black leather collar. Those who can see souls will see a fuzzy mess of soul-brain-tissue erupting from the dog's skull.

Attributes- AGY 18, AWR 20 (30 smell/hearing), CHM 3, END 7, INL 10, SPD 17, STH 10, WIL 15, BLD 4, BDY 3, INCY 6.

Social Status- Killer secretly pulls the strings on a moderately large (and very profitable) black market empire. The only person who knows Killer is in charge is Carlos, and Carlos (who knows Killer can read his mind) would never seriously think of betraying Killer.

Psychology- Killer has intelligence comparable to that of a human, but has the instincts, drives and tastes of a dog. He enjoys hunting, having sex with female dogs, dominating and intimidating those around him (both dogs and humans) and protecting his territory. The experiments that were performed on him have left him prone to nightmares, jumpy and with a cruel streak. He is a guiltless murderer. He likes being around dogs but is annoyed by their stupidity. Humans are more interesting to deal with but he finds humans aesthetically unappealing and has no empathy for human desires and ideals.

Special Abilities- Killer can read minds, as per Read Minds (4), and communicate telepathically with humans. He can Revive (3) and can heal as per Flesh Control (3). He can control animals as per Command Animals (4).

Special Equipment- Killer has electronic prosthetic arms (designed for use by amputees) that he can stick his paws in if he wants to manipulate objects and he has specially made reading glasses.

Methods- Killer is present whenever Carlos meets with any employees, debtors or business partners. He can read the people's minds and knows if they're trying to deceive or bluff Carlos. He uses telepathy to tell Carlos exactly what to say. Usually, Carlos' demeanor and ability to know things he shouldn't are enough to intimidate people into doing whatever Carlos says. If anyone insists on disobeying Carlos' wishes, however, Killer will track the person down and cause some dogs (perhaps even the person's own dog) to attack. Killer often steps in to deliver the killing blow after the victims are severely mauled. When Killer wants to send a message to the underworld he videotapes an enemy being eaten alive by dogs in a nondescript warehouse and sends the tape around.

Typical Attack- First, a split action jump (into range) and Knockdown at 1d20 vs. 5. Next, a split action Jump (into range) and Vital Strike with jaws at 1d20 vs. 5, doing 4 bladed damage if successful. Note: if victims are still prone from the knockdown, they are at -8 to react.

Typical Reaction- A Jump (out of range) at 1d20 +5 vs. 0.

A Portal to the Deserted City

In Brief: Dangerous shatter in an abandoned department store leads to Deserted City.

The portal is located in an abandoned department store in Compton, a mostly Black ghetto. The store is in a part of town controlled by a gang called the Rascal Crips. The department store and its parking lot are surrounded by a chain-link fence with barbed wire on top. The fence has been battered down in several places. Weeds grow in the parking lot and there is a lot of trash. The plywood that covered the windows and doorways have mostly been pulled down. Graffiti (mostly gang graffiti by the Rascal Crips) covers all the walls.

Inside, the store is empty of furniture and goods. The walls have been busted open and the plumbing ripped out (to be sold as scrap metal). There is refuse that suggests homeless crack addicts have been living here: soiled sheets and clothes, cigarette butts, empty lighters, crack vials, broken glass, piles of feces in the corners. If visitors come after midnight they will find three crack addicts there. The crack addicts may try to rob the visitors if the visitors act intimidated.

Inside near the door is a piece of Scribbler graffiti that reads "'Real' is not a zero sum game."

In the back of the store are public restrooms. On the door of the men's is a cartoonish looking picture of Satan, drawn in red spray-paint with horns and a beard. Accompanying it are the words "Satan Lives Here."

As the visitors get close to the door they will begin to hear a high pitched whine that feels like it's coming from in their own heads. The noise gets louder as they get closer to the bathroom. Within the bathroom the whine is so loud that the visitors cannot hear each other talking.

Within a circular area that takes up all but the corners of the room nearest the entrance, gravity reverses itself every 1d20 seconds, causing everything not nailed down to slam into the ceiling or floor. Any visitor who falls takes 1 blunt damage (and is at -20 to save vs. falling damage because of the disorientation). Along with any visitors unlucky enough to be caught in the reversal there will be trash, dust, broken glass and a desiccated human corpse falling. A person entering the reversed gravity field slowly may notice in time to pull himself or herself out.

In one of the bathroom stalls is a spot where the air is shimmering. Any being who enters the shimmering area will find itself in a random part of the Abandoned City.

The Devil Boys

In Brief- Vietnamese street gang is growing in power due to hiring a Hmong Animist.

The Devil Boys are a relatively new but quickly growing Vietnamese street gang. They are a powerhouse in the gang world.

Like most Vietnamese gangs, the Devil Boys don't have a strictly defined turf. All the members live in Westminster, a part of Orange County with a large Vietnamese population. Although they do not have a turf, they do have several blocks of Asian owned businesses that they extort for protection money and they violently protect these businesses from exploitation by other gangs.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

The Devil Boys is made up of 80 members with an additional 30 in an associated female gang. Some are as young as 14 and some are as old as 25. Hoover High School in Westminster has a large number of Devil Boys attending. The school has had to use metal detectors to keep gang members from bringing guns to school. Despite their efforts there have been several fistfights on campus and two shootings in the parking lot.

Most of what the Devil Boys do is to gain money. They sell drugs (mostly heroin), they extort businesses, they deal in automatic weapons and they commit home invasion robberies. Most robberies are committed in cocaine and meth fueled road-trip/crime-sprees that have taken the Devil Boys as far as Los Vegas.

Members enjoy showing off their money. They wear fancy clothes and designer sunglasses, they drive expensive sports cars and motorcycles and they arm themselves with powerful automatic weapons.

The Devil Boys employ Yeng Kha, a Hmong Animist, to help them. They go to see him in his home almost every day and pay him each time with wads of cash. Yeng blesses their weapons before battle to keep them from jamming, he creates amulets to keep them from being hit by bullets or pulled over by the police, he tattoos them with lucky Cambodian tattoos and he prescribes herbal poultices to help bullet wounds heal. He curses and spies on the gang's enemies.

Other Southeast Asians in the area know that the Devil Boys employ a powerful shaman. Some don't believe in 'old superstitions' and treat the Devil Boys like any other gang. Others, although they are unlikely to admit it, believe in the power of the shaman and try not to anger the Devil Boys.

Duong "A.K." Bui, Devil Boys Leader

Appearance- Mid-twenties Asian male, lean and muscular, moderately handsome except for his bad teeth, rows of Asian characters tattooed on his back, stylishly cut short dyed-blonde hair, wraparound sunglasses, expensive leather motorcycle jacket, black leather pants, a burgundy-red bandana sticking out of his back pocket.

Attributes- AGY 12, AWR 8, CHM 15, END 9, INL 10, SPD 11, STH 12, WIL 8, BLD 3, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Social Status- A.K. is the founder and leader of the Devil Boys. Members of the Westminster Vietnamese community know and fear him.

History- A.K. was born in America to a poor but hard-working immigrant family. Growing up he felt a lot of pressure to study hard and make it in American society. Yet A.K. was a born thrill seeker, always getting into trouble. By the time he hit high school he was convinced that he would disappoint his parents and be rejected from his community and that, because of his race, he would never be accepted by his Black and Hispanic peers. He gravitated towards the Vietnamese criminal underworld and he became a small-time drug dealer. In his late teens his drug dealing posse became a street gang and grew in power, especially after he started employing Yeng Kha.

Psychology- A.K. feels dead when he's not getting into trouble. He likes sex, drugs, driving fast, listening to Vietnamese pop music at high volume and committing crimes. He likes that members of his gang respect him and he tries to be worthy of their respect. He is very trusting of the people he works with, treating them like old friends. He is a bit vain and spends a lot of time on his appearance. Although he has rejected most of his parent's values his superstitious fear of supernatural people, places and things remains. A.K. is not cruel but he knows that murder is part of the business he's in and he feels only dimly guilty about the people he's killed.

Special Skills- Organized Crime (3), Street Drugs (3), Black Market (4), Auto Theft (3), Kickboxing (3), Automatic Weapons (4), Motorcycle (3).

Special Equipment- Motorcycle: New, 2 submachineguns (ROF 10, FR 5 ft., 7 damage, 40 round clips).

Typical Attack- Area Attack with both automatic weapons over a 20 ft. area at INL (10) + ROF (20) -4 (paired) +12 (skill) -1/5 ft. vs. 30 (or 1d20 -1/5 ft. +8 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- Split reaction Dodge at AGY (12) + AWR (8) -10 (split) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 3) and simultaneous Strike at INL (10) + AGY (12) -10 (split) + WIL (8) +12 (skill) -1/5 ft. +1d20 vs. 45 (or 1d20 -1/5 ft. vs. 13).

Yeng Kha, Hired Animist

Appearance- Chubby but muscular middle aged Asian man, balding, wear large square glasses, has tattoos on his back, arms and neck, wears a white tanktop and jeans, chain smokes. He speaks English only with a very thick accent.

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 11, CHM 7, END 6, INL 7, SPD 7, STH 11, WIL 17, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Social Status- Westminster Hmong people know Yeng as a powerful Tvix Neeb who helps the community with their problems. He is also the hired supernatural mercenary of the Devil Boys, a powerful Westminster Vietnamese street gang.

History- Yeng grew up in a small farming village in the hills of Laos. The village's shaman saw Yeng's power and started training him at the age of 8. Yet war broke out and Yeng joined a group of Hmong soldiers. He used his abilities to help his group of soldiers survive the war and he rose through the ranks to become a general. He moved to the US in 1977 and found himself no longer a general but a poor immigrant. After years of living humbly and barely being able to support his family, Yeng grew to be known as a powerful Tvix Neeb who was visited first by the local Hmong community and then, as word of his power spread, by local Vietnamese and Cambodians. Then he gained the patronage of the Devil Boys and since then he's been able to provide for his family very well.

Psychology- Yeng has seen a lot of war and violence. He sees cruelty as part of human nature and he thinks war (or gang violence) is an unavoidable result. He does not ponder the ethnical questions involved in murdering someone, whether it be with a gun or malevolent spirit. He still thinks of himself as a soldier: someone who provides for his family by fighting against other people. He is a bit of a loner and has few close friends. He has no real vices other than smoking. Dealing with non-Hmong is stressful for him and prefers to avoid or cut short such contact whenever possible.

Special Skills- Command Inanimate (3), Command Misfortunes (3), Dreaming (1), Journeying (3), Visions (2).

Methods- When asked to kill someone, Yeng either travels to the spirit world (that person's subconscious) to do battle with that person's guardian spirits (psychodynamics) or travels around this world as an invisible spirit and causes malevolent spirits (wrigglers) to attack the victim.

Typical Attack- Whenever possible, Yeng tries to keep a wriggler that causes heart attacks nearby. He can cause it to attack with a roll of WIL (17) +8 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 +5 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- A Dodge at AGY (8) + AWR (11) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 6).

Alleys

The Blue Bus

In Brief- Mysterious bus exits this reality.

There's what appears to be an old Los Angeles Metro Transit bus that appears once a month, out of nowhere, has 'not in service' on the front, makes only one stop at midnight in the middle of a deserted industrial neighborhood in East L.A., then disappears into nowhere. Several things that look like people, as well as some invisible entities, get on or get off at the stop. Those who get on pay nothing; the driver doesn't even seem to acknowledge them. Any human who gets on the bus will find the bus stopping outside the front entrance to the Citadel (p.253).

The Elizabeth Lake Monster

In Brief- Deserted City creature living in a lake.

Urban legends are that Elizabeth Lake, North of the Valley, has a giant bat winged monster living in it. This is one of the rare cases where urban legends are true. The lake has a Deserted City creature (p.252) that found its way into this reality living in it, only coming out occasionally.

The Elizabeth Lake Monster

Appearance- The monster is about 25 ft. (7.5 m.) tall when standing erect. Its flesh is clear, showing bones, tendons and muscles underneath. It has no head. It has one hind leg coming out of the bottom center of its torso and two forelegs coming out of its shoulders. It crawls around on all threes. Each limb is powerfully, muscled and has taloned fingers. There are two huge batwings extending from the creature's back. In the large distended belly there appear to be several naked, bloody human figures writhing, thrashing, clawing at each other and trying to claw their way out of the creature's belly. Any person who looks at the faces of the human figures will see himself or herself among them. If anyone manages to pierce the belly with a weapon all they will find inside is dark, rotten smelling blood.

Attributes- AGY 7, AWR 5, CHM 0, END 40, INL 10, SPD 100 (flying) 10 (crawling), STH 50, WIL 20, BLD 25, BDY 30, INCY 10.

Behavior- Most of the time the creature sits on the bottom of the lake unmoving. Occasionally, though, when it senses someone who is in intense emotional pain it will emerge from the lake and follow the person, doing its best to remain unseen, until it can get the person alone. Then it lands in front of the person, the person's eyes are drawn to the writhing figures in the belly, then the person goes completely catatonic for the rest of his or her life. The creature makes its way back to the lake, trying not to be seen.

Psychology- The creature is a servant of those who once lived in the Deserted City. It is a waste cleaner, except in this realm it mistakes human souls in turmoil for the waste it is meant to clean. It does not fear or hate or have any other feelings about humans, although it will defend itself against attack.

Special Abilities

-Can see human souls, even through solid objects.

-Can fly at 100 SPD given a wide enough space (has 30 ft. or 9 m. wingspan).

-Needs no food or air to live.

-Can heal 1 BLD/BDY per minute.

-Has talons that can make a 5 bladed damage strike (range 4).

-Can compel someone to look in its belly (victim must make a hard WIL roll to resist).

-Anyone who looks in its belly for 4 consecutive rounds will have his or her soul and consciousness absorbed into the creature. The person is catatonic and upon death reapers will pull the soul from the creature's belly.

-Opening up the creature's belly is the only way to liberate the souls within.

Typical Attack- Strike with talons at AGY (7) + STH (50) -10 (size difference) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +22 vs. 0), doing 5 bladed damage if successful.

Typical Reaction- A Jump (out of range) at SPD (10) + AGY (7) + 1d20 vs. 25 or 1d20 vs. 7 (remember, PCs are at +10 to hit the creature because of its size).

The Invisible

In Brief- Another layer of reality where creatures designed to watch and control humanity live.

Attached to this world, co-inhabiting the same space, is a world whose inhabitants are invisible and intangible to most of us. There are a few ways to see this world: many Outcasts have the ability to see it. Cannibals using spirit eyes can see it. Certain H-Tech devices (p.235) can make the invisible world visible, audible or sometimes even tangible. Animists with the visions skill have information about the invisible (although they are not truly 'seeing' the invisible, they are seeing knowledge of the invisible filtered through the subconscious). Some shatters (p.236) make the invisible visible and/or tangible.

The visible world cannot be sensed of touched by the denizens of the invisible unless those denizens have been specifically designed to be able to do so. Some of the things that allow the invisible to be seen also make the invisible able to see and touch our world. This is dangerous, since most denizens of the invisible have an instinct to attack any non-invisible-native they see.

There are no inanimate objects native to the invisible world. Almost all matter in the invisible is made up of living creatures.

Human and animal souls are not the same matter as the invisible, but are often able to effect the invisible more easily than the visible world (see, for instance, Soul Blade, p.87). Many invisible beings are designed to be able to sense souls or even grab onto them. To them a Journeying human, whose soul has left his or her body, is indistinguishable from a normal human.

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

In the other worlds there is no distinction between the visible and the invisible. Beings of the invisible that travel to other realms become visible and tangible.

The physics of the invisible world is mostly the same as ours. Matter is made of atoms, light of photons. Yet the invisible is filled with an ether (which is not made of atoms) which provides a constant pressure, temperature and dim lighting. The ether feels like warm jelly. It contains no oxygen or carbon dioxide and thus living beings from the mundane world placed in the invisible quickly suffocate. Natives of the invisible do not need to respirate or eat as the invisible provides them with constant energy which they use to move and repair themselves.

There are two types of denizens of the invisible, those created in the invisible and those who immigrated to the invisible from the Deserted City (see Creatures of the Deserted City, p.252). Those created to live in the invisible are by far the most numerous. They have little or no intelligence and instinctively do whatever job they were designed for. They do not eat, do not sleep, do not reproduce and do not die of old age. They only need to be replaced if damaged, but the circumstances capable of damaging them are rare. There are factories floating high in the sky but they are rarely used. The factories look like giant wasp nests.

The native inhabitants of the invisible have biological systems based on that of biological entities of our world, specifically insects. The powers-from-beyond found it easier to use the engines of evolution to figure out the optimal design of creatures in a world of physical matter.

Invisible natives include: Rumblers, who cause natural disasters, Reapers, who take souls to the land of the dead (see p.216 for a profile), Storks, who bring souls from the land of the dead to fetuses, Wolves, who destroy damaged or outdated invisible inhabitants, Crying Girls, who are traps for those humans who can see the invisible, Starers, also traps for those who can see them, Bad Talkers, who subliminally introduce destructive thoughts and Haunters, who scare people away from shattered places. The most numerous by far are Wrigglers, who come in many models and cause many types of misfortune.

The invisible is like a two way mirror: it allows agents of the powers-from-beyond to watch us and manipulative us without being seen. Aside from being a place to secretly watch us from, the invisible is also a trap for anything that comes to this world unbidden. The form of matter and energy that make up the invisible is the 'default' of matter in this world, so things that wander into this world who don't know what they're doing usually end up part of the invisible. Most are too stupid to ever figure out how to see or interact with the visible world.

Wrigglers

In Brief- Ubiquitous, unintelligent insects cause all manner of 'unexplained' misfortunes.

These are the simplest, stupidest and most numerous inhabitants of the invisible. There are roughly five wrigglers per human. As mosquitoes are drawn to heat, Wrigglers are drawn to human souls, and when a human stands still long enough for a wriggler to attach itself, that person now has a wriggler infection. The wriggler stays attached to the person for a random amount of time (weeks, months or decades) then detaches to find another victim. The average urban human, at any given time, has an average of 1.5 wrigglers on him or her.

There are several subspecies of wrigglers, each of which looks slightly different from the others. Some are quite common; others (especially the ones that kill their victims) are rarer.

Not every disease is caused by wrigglers. In the modern Western world, about 1 in 10 physical ailments are caused by Wrigglers. The rest are caused by visible-world mechanisms like viruses, bacteria and cancer.

Some of the misfortunes caused by Wrigglers follow:

Common: asthma, clumsiness, coughing, cramps, dizziness, fatigue, forgetfulness, headaches, indigestion, infertility, insomnia, nervousness, nightmares, nosebleeds, poor temper, tinnitus.

Rare: anemia, epilepsy, erotomania (an insatiable desire for sex), exhaustion, extreme vertigo, fetishism (inability to have sexual pleasure without some odd element present), hallucinations, sourceless pain, tooth loss, weakness, weight loss.

Very Rare: heart attack, stroke.

The symptoms of some wrigglers can be treated medically (e.g. cough medicine to treat a cough caused by a Wriggler) but no medical procedure can cure a misfortune.

Typical Wriggler

Appearance- A foot-long insect with a segmented body, bulbous black eyes, antennae and pincer-like mandibles. It squirms through the air.

Attributes- AGY 1, AWR 2, CHM 0, END 5, INL 0, SPD 3, STH 3, WIL 5, BLD 2, BDY 2, INCY 1.

Psychology- The wriggler has the mind of an insect. It instinctively attaches to people, causes them one particular kind of misfortune and then at some random point (1d10 x 1d10 x 1d10 days later) it detaches. If it finds itself able to see the physical form of a human it will immediately try to attack with its pincers.

Typical Attack- Strike with its pincers at 1d20 vs. 10, doing 1 bladed damage if successful.

Typical Reaction- Simultaneous Strike with its pincers at 1d20

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Haunters

In Brief- Live in places where reality is cracked, scare off or kill explorers.

These invisible creatures are attracted to places where reality has been shattered (see Shatters, p.236). There are more shattered places in this world then there are Haunters, so only about half of Shattered places have Haunters. Haunters stay in these places and try to frighten off anyone who enters by inducing a feeling of dread into their subconsciouses (much the same way Bad Talkers induce self-destructive thoughts). Those who are not deterred and continue to explore are attacked and their bodies are destroyed.

Typical Haunter

Appearance- It looks like a naked human corpse, pale skinned and half rotten, hanging upside down with its legs attached to a wall. Although its mouth doesn't move it is constantly saying things like "run away, this place is dangerous, get out of here, you're going to die here." When it moves it prefers to slide along a wall, although if it must it can leave the walls and float in midair.

Attributes- AGY 4, AWR 10, CHM 0, END 20, INL 1, SPD 20 (sliding along a wall) 5 (floating through the air), STH 10, WIL 5, BLD 3, BDY 3, INCY 7.

Psychology- Its intellectual abilities are limited to recognizing humans, keeping track of how long humans have been in its domain and knowing how to kill humans.

Special Abilities- Unlike most invisible creatures, the Haunter can see the visible world. It can cause fear in humans (takes a moderate WIL roll not to flee the area). Its hands can effect the physical world, letting it attack humans. It can consume human flesh.

Typical Attack- Split action Jump (into range) and Grab: Strangulation at 1d20 vs. 5. Note that a PC without the ability to effect the invisible cannot break free from the grab.

Typical Reaction- None.

Wolves

In Brief- Predators eat outdated or damaged denizens of the invisible.

These denizens of the invisible are created for the sole purpose of hunting down, killing and consuming other denizens of the invisible when they are damaged or when the powers-from-beyond come up with a new and improved model and want to destroy all instances of the old model. A wolf can grow in order to attack larger denizens of the invisible (e.g. rumblers).

Typical Wolf

Appearance- Wolves look like manta-rays with an exoskeletoned body, black bulbous eyes and a long scissor-like mandibles filled with sharp teeth.

Attributes- AGY 15, AWR 7, CHM 0, END 30, INL 1, SPD 28, STH 7/21*, WIL 3, BLD 4/12*, BDY 4/12*, INCY 6/18*

*At Normal Size/At Human Attacking Size

Behavior- They glide randomly through the invisible, catching up and eating any native member of the invisible that looks damaged or is acting strangely. Wolves cannot normally sense or interact with our world, though they will try to kill any living beings that become able to see and do not recognize.

Abilities- Can grow to any size to match the size of its prey. To grow to human attacking size (about 20 ft. wingspan) takes 3 rounds.

Typical Attack- A Grab and Strike with its mandibles at 1d20 vs. 5. If successful the victim takes 2 bladed damage (pierces armor as 5) and the victim is held. While the victim remains held the wolf can do an additional 2 damage per round by gnashing its mandibles (no roll needed).

Typical Reaction- Dodge at 1d20 vs. 3.

Rumblers

In Brief- Huge invisible creatures, spend most of their time sleeping, cause natural disasters.

These look like building-sized, obese, bipedal beetles. They spend most of their time in a state of dormancy with their heads down on their chests. It is only when agents of the powers-from-beyond or people with the Blood Sigils skill give them commands that they wake up. Some sink into the ground and create earthquakes, landslides or volcanic eruptions; others float up into the sky and create hurricanes, floods or ice-storms. They are used to destroy cities and damage societies that displease the powers-from-beyond. Every city of at least 100,000 people has one. The L.A. area has 10.

Storks

In Brief- Bring souls to fetuses.

These look like long segmented worms with pointy heads and large membranous sacks sticking out of their undersides. They are attracted to a number of invisible portals to the Land of the Dead. They take turns sticking their heads through the portal and sucking up a soul, which goes into the membranous sack (at this point the soul is little more than a lifeless wisp, see Land of the Dead, p.255). The Stork then goes off to find a human fetus that doesn't have a soul yet. It sticks its head in the fetus and regurgitates the soul into it. There are special subspecies that handle dog, cat and horse souls (see p.198).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Crying Girls

In Brief- A trap to kill those who can see the invisible, look like crying women.

These creatures wait at busy pedestrian thoroughfares. They appear as women wearing Victorian clothes, sitting in a heap on the ground sobbing. Crying Girls are a trap meant to find and destroy those with the ability to see the invisible. The girls do not respond to speech. If anyone tries to put a hand on one, she will sink into the ground. Once the person has moved on the Crying Girl will emerge from the ground and follow from a distance until it can get the person alone, then it will attack, racing towards the person, reaching into the person's chest and stopping the person's heart. Aside from killing people who have the vision, this creature also kills many random people who accidentally put their hand in a place where one happens to be (e.g. where someone dropped a piece of change).

Invisible Encounter Table

For each 1 city block, there are 2d20 common wrigglers, plus the following (on 1d100):

01-10: None
11-17: Crying Girl
18-24: Starer
25-31: Bad Talker
32-68: Rare Wriggler
69-72: Very Rare Wriggler
73-80: Stork
81-81: Rumbler
82-86: Haunter
87-93: Wolf
94-00: Reaper

Typical Crying Girl

Appearance- A Caucasian, early-twenties woman, in a white, Victorian style dress, sitting in a heap on the ground weeping plaintively.

Attributes- AGY 3, AWR 5, CHM 0, END 30, INL 5, SPD 15, STH 10, WIL 10, BLD 7, BDY 7, INCY 7.

Behavior- It sits and weeps plaintively at the edge of some busy pedestrian through-way waiting for someone to try to touch it.

Abilities- Can sink down or levitate upwards at SPD 2. Can track victims even through solid objects. Claws can cause a Heart Attack at 40 difficulty to save.

Typical Attack- Strike at 1d20 vs. 5, does Heart Attack (40) if successful.

Typical Reaction- None.

Starers

In Brief- A trap for those who can see the invisible, look like staring men.

These are another trap to find and kill Outcasts. Starers look like bald, clean shaven young men wearing old-style grey-brown jackets and pants. They go to where there are crowds and they stare angrily, looking for someone to meet their eyes. When someone does meet their eyes for more than a split second they follow the victim, teleporting ahead of the victim so that the victim meets the same staring person each corner he or she turns. If the victim meets the Starer's eyes for a second time, the Starer will wait until the victim is alone and kill him or her. The Starer lets out an inhuman screech (one that attracts Reapers) and attack, reaching into the victim's head and giving him or her a stroke.

Typical Starer

Appearance- Bald, Caucasian, mid-twenties male wearing a brown-grey jacket and pants that are at least a century out of style. Dour expression and intense staring eyes that glow slightly. Whatever angle the starer is seen from, viewers see the creature's face straight on. If the viewer tries to go around, the starer will seem to spin.

Attributes- AGY 5, AWR 10, CHM 0, END 20, INL 1, SPD 5, STH 15, WIL 5, BLD 5, BDY 5, INCY 5.

Psychology- The starer is a simple creature with limited intelligence. It knows only what it needs to in order to do its job. It has no creativity or problem-solving abilities outside these areas. It can't communicate.

Special Abilities- The starer can teleport up to 100 ft. or 30 m. It can teleport once every other round. It can see the physical world and can see through physical objects. Its fingernails can cause tears in internal tissues of humans, causing instant paralysis and death within minutes when thrust into a human brain. The starer can see 360 degrees.

Typical Attack- Split action Jump (into range) and Strike (targeted at the head) with its hands at 1d20 vs. 10. A successful strike causes Paralysis (40) and 8 BLD damage.

Typical Reaction- None.

Bad Talkers

In Brief- Sit there saying harmful phrases which subliminally effect humans.

These denizens of the invisible attach to people's shoulders or inanimate objects and whisper harmful thoughts at people. They have a whole litany of things to say: "you're ugly," "you should kill yourself," "everyone's out to get you," etc. For most people, the bad talkers' words are not perceived consciously. They enter the subconscious where, every once in a while, one might get past the Ego and be perceived as a thought. For those who have the ability to hear the invisible, the unending litany of a bad talker is heard as actual words.

Bad Talkers either attach to people's shoulders or take up residence inside of things that people spend a lot of time near: inside a desk, inside a computer monitor, inside a toilet bowl, behind a bathroom mirror, inside a mattress, etc.

Bad Talkers look like large spiral shells with two openings. In the top opening is what looks like a human mouth formed out of shiny grayish skin. In the bottom opening are several tentacles which the Bad Talker waves to move.

Powers-From-Beyond

In Brief- Non-humans from outside this realm that run this reality.

The powers-from-beyond are the non-human entities that are responsible for the current shape of this reality and the current state of human souls. They act on this world via their own agents operating in this world and by influencing the powers-that-be. Insofar as their motives are discernible they seem to be doing everything they can to keep humans from realizing their true power and escaping the limitations of their physical bodies. A few seem to be acting out of hatred of humanity; others show no recognizable emotion.

Not much can be said for certain about the powers-from-beyond. This much is fairly certain:

-They are not omniscient: humans can keep secrets from the powers-from-beyond if they are careful.

-They are not omnipotent: it is possible, although extremely difficulty and rare, for a human to destroy an agent of the powers-from-beyond.

-They are not all completely loyal: the powers-from-beyond have been seen hunting down rogue agents from their own ranks.

Most agents of the powers-from-beyond operating in this world are natives of the invisible (p.227). Yet the most powerful come from other worlds. Some operate in the invisible, some as physical and visible beings, some can do both. These include Surgeons (who experiment on humans), Torturers (who hurt humans for fun), Grey Men (who edit history), and Angels (who communicate with the powers-that-be).

Grey Men

In Brief- Can edit this world, and people's memories, to wipe out the existence of things dangerous to the powers-from-beyond.

The Grey Men are the smartest and most powerful agents of the powers-from-beyond that operate in the mundane world. There are only a handful of Grey Men. They exist for one purpose: for the rare occasions when the powers-from-beyond find it necessary to edit history.

The Grey Men walk this world looking like thin, old men wearing old fashioned grey raincoats and using canes. Everywhere they go they instantly know everything recorded on every piece of paper, film, magnetic tape, photography, computer chip, etc. and can edit these recordings with a thought. They can read human thoughts and memories and can command weak-willed individuals to do, believe or remember whatever the Grey Man command. Those individuals whose wills are too strong are marked for capture by Surgeons who surgically edit victim's brains to remove memories.

The Grey Man are not perfect. They can't find every single person who remembers some event or every single record of it. And even when memories are surgically edited, the soul can retain some trace of memory that can return to consciousness with proper prompting. The Grey Men sometimes find it best to destroy certain people and then, so nobody engages in an investigation which may uncover missed evidence or lost memories, remove that person from history altogether.

Typical Grey Man

Appearance- Thin, caucasian, grey-haired elderly male, grayish-skin, walking with a cane, wearing an old-fashioned grey raincoat.

Attributes- AGY 25, AWR 40, CHM 7, END 30, INL 25, SPD 5, STH 10, WIL 20, BLD 10, BDY 10, INCY 5.

Behavior- Walks through places acting like he belongs there, rewriting the physical world as he passes. He may stop to ask people short questions, never giving any indication who he is or why he wants to know. At all times he act like he is the boss of anyone he meets. Any other agent of the powers-that-be will take orders without question from the Grey Man.

Psychology- The Grey Man is one of the oldest and smartest of the agents of the powers-that-be who travel to this world. He remembers when what would become humans were just frothy algae. He knows that, in theory, humans can be dangerous, but he is typically unimpressed by even the most powerful humans. More than any other member of the powers-that-be he takes pride in his work and in a job well done.

Special Abilities

-Can instantly read and comprehend anything on any storage medium (books, papers, punch cards, film, magnetic tape, CDs, hard drives, etc.) within 20 ft. (6 m.).

-Can instantly change any aspect of the physical world except human anatomy. Takes 1 to 10 rounds depending on the severity of the change.

-Can change human anatomy with a roll of 1d20 vs. 10 (humans get moderate difficulty opposed will roll).

-Can command humans to do, believe or remember anything at 1d20 vs. 10 (humans get moderate difficulty opposed WIL roll).

-Can pass through walls.

-Can know what humans are thinking within 20 ft. (6 m.).

-Can browse through human memories (the humans experience spontaneous recall of those memories).

Typical Attack- Creates a poisoned sliver of diamond that is flying at the enemy at 1d20 +20 vs. 0. Sliver does 0 bladed damage (pieces as 10). If any damage pierces a human, that human takes 10 BLD damage by the end of the round.

Typical Reaction- If being attacked by a weapon, the Grey Man will make the weapon fall apart. If being attacked with hands or feet, the Grey Man will block with its cane at 1d20 +10 vs. 0.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

"Voiding" a person requires such intensive editing that every Grey Man is called in to help. They start in the person's home town and methodically track down and erase every record or memory of the person's existence. A person's home becomes someone else's home, his or her kids become someone else's kids, etc.

Famous people cannot be voided because they are remembered too strongly by too many.

Sometimes the Grey Men are told that a person has been destroyed (typically by Torturers or to the Powers-That-Be) but after they start their editing process they find the person is still alive. The Grey Men take it upon themselves to find and destroy the person, as well as 'cleaning up' any new memories or evidence of their existence they have managed to create. This voided individual finds himself or herself unable to convince friends, family or lovers that they know him or her. Even when the voided person can prompt a memory, the rememberer is usually so frightened that he or she pretends not to remember the voided person. Those who can be convinced to voice a memory are killed soon afterwards.

Surgeons

In Brief- Humanoid creatures that do medical experiments on humans in small labs in pocket realities.

These beings have the job of doing experiments on behalf of the powers-from-beyond. Most of their experiments are on humans: discovering what drugs, technology, physiological manipulation and experiences will increase or retard supernatural powers.

Most surgeons look like tall males wearing latex gloves, green surgical scrubs, green caps and white face masks, showing only yellowish, staring eyes. A few older surgeons look like surgeons from the last century: thin beards and short hair, wrinkled unmoving faces, deep-set eyes, long blood-stained leather aprons over brown wool shirts and pants.

The surgeons own 'labs,' small pockets of physical reality that aren't part of the geography of this world. They can travel to and from the labs whenever they want. The labs were once shiny clean marble. Today they are dirty, grimy places. The ceilings are caked with soot (from the days of gaslights), the floors are sticky with layers of dried blood. Medical equipment ranging from the latest high-tech to antiques from the Victorian age are piled haphazardly in corners. Rough riggings of forty-year old florescent lights cast a harsh yellow glow on everything. There are no windows. Most have no doors, though a few have heavy, locked doors that connect to other labs in a complex.

Typical Surgeon

Appearance- A tall human-looking figure in bloodstained green surgical scrubs, with a green cap and facemask (under the facemask is blank skin), leaving only yellowish staring eyes showing, carrying a black bag full of surgical tools. If killed and dissected it will turn out to be a fleshy shell filled with a black tar-like substance that smells like rotting fish.

Attributes- AGY 15, AWR 13, CHM 2, END 10, INL 17, SPD 6, STH 25, WIL 10, BLD 20, BDY 10, INCY 10.

Behavior- The surgeon is moderately good at acting like a human. It can speak human languages with halting, broken speech and an unidentifiable accent. Typically the only time they speak to humans is when trying to discover the result of some psychological or neurological experiment they have performed on a human.

Psychology- Surgeons are, for the most part, loyal servants of the powers-from-byond. Besides loyalty they are driven by curiosity. They have no empathy and very little emotion. It takes a lot to make them express any fear, anger or joy. They think of humans as nothing more than machines to be taken apart and experimented on. Human suffering brings them neither pleasure nor displeasure. They have little aesthetic sense and don't mind living in places that are stinking and dirty. They have great powers of logic and memory yet little in the way of creativity, cleverness or inspiration. Their facility at manipulating humans comes from decades of ceaselessly trying one thing, then another, then another to see what happens.

Abilities

-Can unlock locks by touching them.

-Cannot be captured on film or video (appear only as a blur).

-Can make people fall asleep by staring at them (victims must save vs. unconsciousness at 10 the first round, then 20 the 2nd, then 30 the 3rd, etc.). Victim does not have to be looking back.

-Can see through solid objects (including human flesh) as if they were transparent.

-Can open a temporary portal between this world and its lab.

Special Skills- All Medical skills at 4.

Typical Reaction- Causing Unconsciousness by staring at the enemy.

Typical Reaction- A simultaneous Crippling Attack with hands at 1d20 vs. 5.

Angels

In Brief- Look after and give messages to the powers-that-be.

These beings are normally invisible, although they can become visible at will. They appear as thin humanoid figures, glowing with a pale light, their faces are unmoving masks of solid porcelain-like material, with only bulges and grooves to suggest eyes and a mouth. The masks feature a blissful and benevolent expression. When they choose to speak the sound seems to come from their chests and is an androgynous multi-tonal voice.

Alleys

Angels watch over the powers-that-be and, in very rare cases, give messages to them. They make sure that no accident or assassin destroys a member of the powers-that-be and they draw sigils in places the powers-that-be frequent to keep misfortunes away. Their most important job is to watch the powers-that-be and make sure they aren't conspiring to do anything which would help humanity understand or escape its imprisonment. Angels also have the responsibility of activating Rumblers when the Powers-From-Beyond want a city destroyed.

They speak to the powers-that-be very rarely: when there is some change the powers-that-be want made to society, when there is some major threat that needs to be destroyed or covered up, or as a single warning against unacceptable behavior. The angels execute disobedient members of the powers-that-be. They do it with an extremely bright light which burns and blackens the skin, causing the victim to die, sometimes days later, from shock.

Torturers

In Brief- Hate humans, allowed to live in this reality in human disguise and kill humans so long as they don't cause too much trouble.

These are beings that the powers-from-beyond have allowed to run free in this world, usually in human form, hunting, torturing and killing humans. They are allowed to torture and kill as much as they want so long as they don't leave any evidence that they are supernatural. Once they start breaking that rule the powers-from-beyond or the powers-that-be hunt them down and destroy them. The powers-from-beyond may occasionally call on them to kill a specific human.

The torturers all have some sort of grudge against humanity. They like toying with humans and proving that they are superior to humans.

The stupider Torturers choose the bodies of huge, muscular, mean looking men. The smarter ones choose bodies that one would not suspect: little old ladies, children, mousy-nerdy looking women, etc. A few stay confined in human bodies at all times. The majority escape from their bodies when they have the victims alone, escaping via a large gash in the chest and leaving only a skin behind. A small number have thrown away their human skins and they are allowed to prowl this world in their true forms so long as they leave no evidence behind.

Their true form is much like a large spider but with a dozen or so legs. The legs are covered in a shiny very-dark-green exoskeleton and have crab-like pincers at the ends. The body is an eyeless, mouthless organ sack with leathery skin. The arms have several joints and are able to bend into almost any shape, allowing the creature to fit through any opening the size of a human head or larger.

Weapons containing silver cause their flesh to burn and dissolve as if it was acid (this is a way the powers-from-beyond made sure that Professionals could kill them easily if they got out of hand). Any damage done by a silver weapon is tripled.

The Jefferson Park Killer

Appearance- A large, bald, Caucasian male. Skin is yellowish and covered with various unhealed scrapes and bruises. Eyes are dull and lifeless. The body is completely hairless, the skull is misshapen. Wears brown corduroy pants, a grey sweater and a grey trenchcoat, all dirty, stained and torn. Walks with an odd shuffling gait, head down and eyes on the ground.

Attributes- AGY 4 (human)/12 (monster), AWR 8, CHM 2, END 30, INL 15, SPD 6 (human)/15 (monster), STH 30, WIL 10, BLD 15, BDY 20, INCY 10.

Abilities

-Exoskeletoned arms act as armor for the organ sack at AR 10, PR 7 bladed 4 blunt.

-Can climb at 1d20 +50 vs. difficulty.

-Can escape from its skin as two actions.

-Can perform split actions/reactions at only -4 penalty per split.

-Can see in the dark at no penalties.

-Can prowl in darkness at 1d20 +20 vs. difficulty.

-Even while in its human skin it can reach out of the skin's mouth with an arm, hitting targets at up to range 3.

Psychology- The Jefferson Park Killer has dim, ancient memories of life before this world, of the beings now trapped in human bodies chasing it, hurting it when they caught it, and then releasing it to be chased again. Now it is addicted to hunting humans. For each one it hunts down, tortures and kills, its anxious feeling of being prey wanes temporarily. Deep down it's still afraid of humans and torture isn't so much an act of rage as it is a nervous experiment to confirm that humans are still weak and fragile. It acts around humans, even once it's shed its skin, in a clumsy parody of human behavior. For instance it makes what it thinks are cruel jokes at its victims' expense, and laughs at them, even though it doesn't really have a sense of humor. For instance "Hey, you leaking some of you red stuff, you mean to do that?"

Methods- The killer lives in various abandoned buildings in the Jefferson Park neighborhood. It spends most of the day with its skin hidden behind a pile of trash and its real body stuck up in some dark corner in an attic or top floor where it waits in semi-conscious dormancy. In the middle of the night it enters its body and prowls the streets, looking for people who are alone. It intimidates them into running. If it can't make them run just by being creepy, it makes inhuman staccato clicking noises. Once it gets them to run it chases after them until it catches them or they get away. It takes those it catches back to the abandoned building and tortures them. If they gave a good chase it will arrange for them to be able to escape while it pretends to be occupied elsewhere. So long as they do not disappoint it may let them escape and be re-caught several times before it finally decides to torture them to death. It doesn't reveal its true body until it is ready to kill the victim. It likes to kill by snipping off little pieces of the body until the victim bleeds to death or dies of shock.

Typical Attack- As a human it shoots out one limb from its mouth, making a strike at STH (30) + AGY (4) +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 vs. 1). In its true form it splits its attack 4 ways, making paired strikes against two targets (each at AGY (12) + STH (30) -8 (two splits) -4 (paired) vs. 25 or 1d20 +5 vs. 0) and two blocks each at STH (30) + AGY (12) -8 (two splits) vs. 25 or 1d20 +9 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- As a human it blocks with its arm at STH (30) + AGY (4) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +9 vs. 0). In its true form it can do two blocks at 1d20 +13 vs. 0 or 4 blocks at 1d20 +9 vs. 0 depending on the number of opponents it is facing.

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

The Red Sun

In Brief- Exiled intelligent sun wants to get back to the solar system, gives powers to humans via dreams in exchange for astronomical research.

The Red Sun was once the sun around which this earth revolved. It was an intelligent being who watched humanity and punished humanity for its transgressions. Yet it quickly became apparent to the powers-from-beyond that the Red Sun was too cruel and prone to violence. The Red Sun was one of the most powerful things in this reality and the powers-from-beyond could not destroy it without destroying this planet. So they moved it, flinging it deep into space.

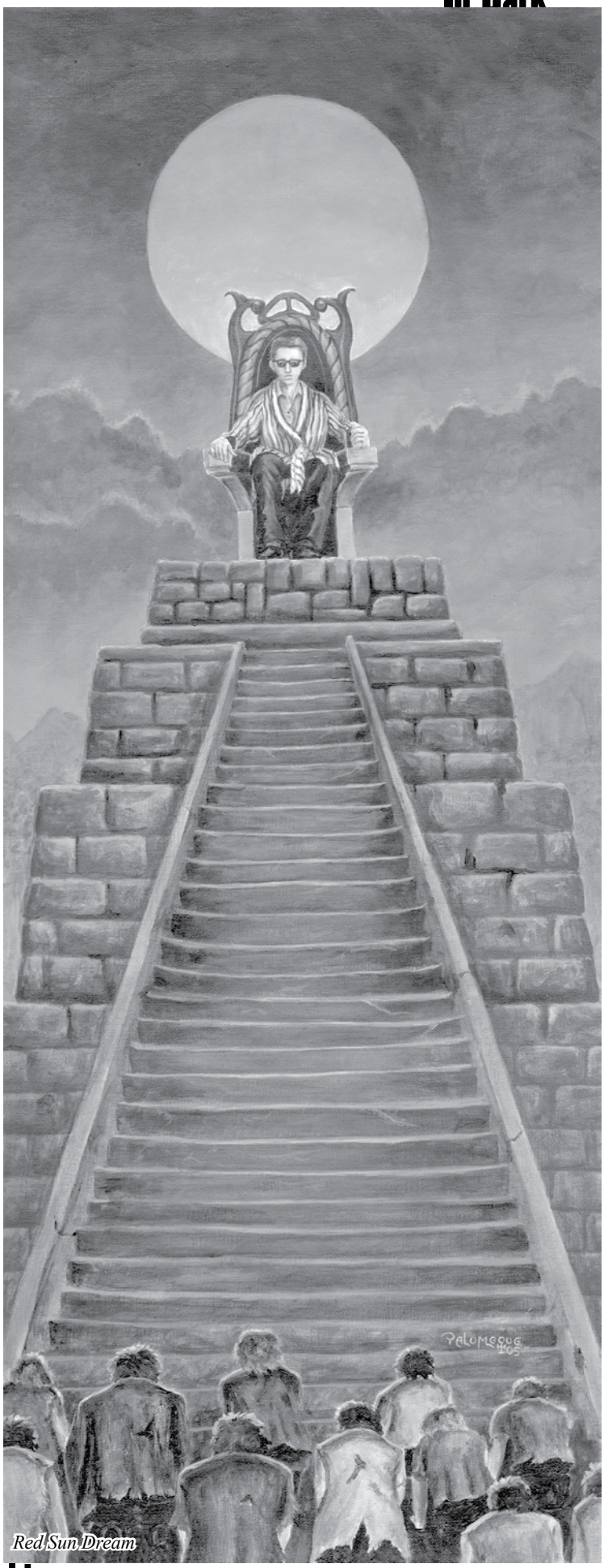
In the hundreds of thousands of years since this happened the Red Sun has been trying to find its way home so it can regain its place as cruel overlord of this world. It is capable of faster-than-light travel. Right now it is in the empty spaces between galaxies, nearing this galaxy. It does not remember which solar system is ours and knows it would take thousands of years to search us out.

To the end of finding out exactly where to go, the Red Sun has been contacting people via their dreams, trying to form pacts with them. It cannot speak human languages so it must communicate via images. The dreamer sees himself or herself drawing star maps, then images of the arrival of the Red Sun, it engulfing our sun, and then the dreamer high on a throne, with a red sky in the background, surrounded by legions of slaves and worshippers.

So far the Red Sun has not been able to find and sway an astronomer capable of visualizing Earth's place in the galaxy in his or her dreams. Yet it has hundreds of loyal servants in other walks of life: homeless people, adolescents, blue collar workers, criminals, office workers, even a doctor and a cop. All of them believe that when the Red Sun arrives they will be made god-kings of this earth. Some have been given missions of finding and coercing astronomers (e.g. by kidnapping their families) or of going back to school and studying astronomy. Others have been assigned to protect those on missions and to sabotage any investigation into the Red Sun and its agents.

The powers-that-be know about the servants of the Red Sun. They don't know exactly what it is they serve, but they do know that it is imperative that they be stopped. Several servants of the Red Sun have been killed by Professionals in the act of trying to gain the astronomical knowledge they needed.

Servants of the Red Sun are given a terrible dream where they are engulfed in the fire of the Red Sun. Thereafter the servants run a constant fever, are partially-immune to heat (+20 to save vs. heat exhaustion, burns do half damage) and can will things to burst into flames. They can make easily flammable things burn as one action or they can set a human on fire with two rounds of concentration (humans take 4 burn damage per round as long as the servant keeps concentrating).



Red Sun Dream

H-Tech

In Brief- Accidentally created technology that exploits flaws in the rules of physics and has supernatural powers.

Short for Heretic-Technology, this term encompasses suppressed or lost technology which works by taking advantage of minor flaws in the laws of physics of this reality. Since scientific and mathematics research which would reveal these flaws is ruthlessly suppressed, H-tech is rarely created via mainstream scientific reasoning. It is created by pure accident, mostly by eccentric loners who misunderstand the science they are basing their technology on. Most H-Tech is created by college dropouts working out of basement labs. Most H-Tech creators are killed when their inventions activate.

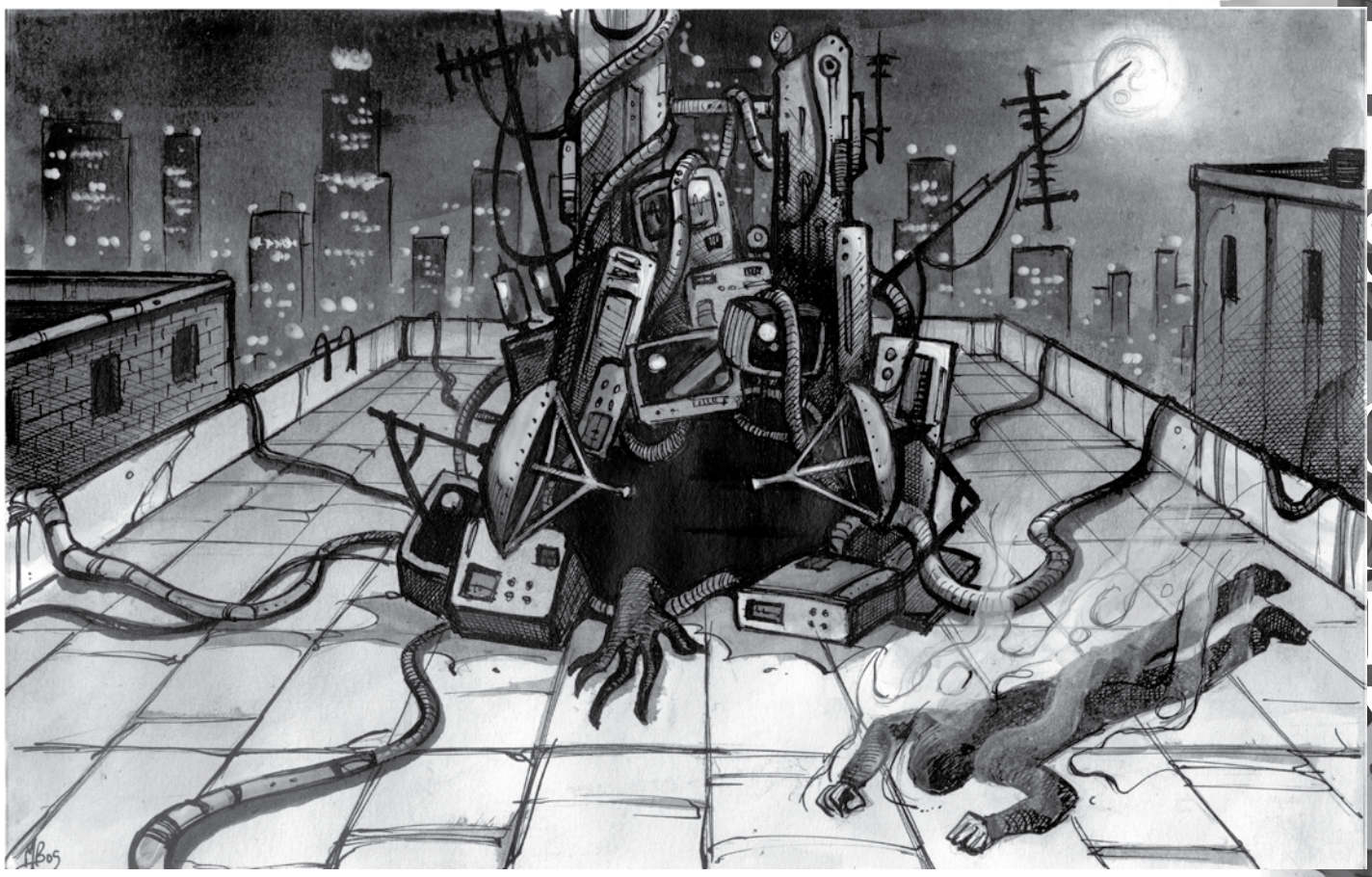
Because H-Tech does what it does by accident, it is usually very inefficient. It is usually very bulky because most of the parts have no actual function. It also tends to use copious amounts of electricity, most of which is wasted (released into the environment as static electricity, radio waves or heat).

The earliest H-Tech comes from experiments with electrical devices in the 1890s. Yet as technology becomes more powerful and more people with no financial backing are able to afford private laboratories, the occurrence of H-Tech becomes more common.

Necrophone- This is one of the earliest piece of H-tech. It was invented during the early days of radio. The necrophone allows people to hear the invisible world. The most common sounds are the unintelligible chattering of the insect-like Wrigglers. One may also hear the sounds of Crying Girls (p.230) sobbing, the panicked cries of the newly dead still trapped in their bodies, bad talkers and haunters spewing out insults and threats, and occasionally intelligent agents of the powers-from-beyond conversing in alien languages. Those who discover such devices often believe they have discovered a means to listen to 'the afterlife.'

Invisible Scope- There are several devices that show the invisible world. Some show a picture on a small television monitor, more recent versions show the invisible through thick electronic goggles. The picture is usually grainy, blurry, monochromatic, showing motion trails and giving little sense of depth. Invisible scopes typically draw a lot of power and the few systems that are portable can only run a few minutes before running out of juice.

Tangibility Cage- This device is capable of temporarily rendering entities from the invisible world both visible and tangible. It takes the form of an electrified metal cage. The entities which are made visible and tangible go back to normal if they exit the cage or if the power is cut off. While the power is on they can see and interact with both the visible and invisible. They move as they would in the invisible (wrigglers squirm through the air, unaffected by gravity) yet they find themselves unable to move through real-world objects. They can physically attack humans in this state.



GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Immortality Harness- This is a series of straps, filled with electrical equipment, that surround the head and body and prevent reapers (p.216) from removing the soul from a body after death. If a person wearing it dies, that person will become a Survivor (p.215). Like most H-Tech it uses massive amounts of electricity and it not very portable.

Portal- This is one of the most complicated pieces of H-Tech. It requires a special transformer and a room full of various devices. A small oval portal is opened between this world and another realm. The portal is barely large enough to crawl through. The portal cannot be seen through, so travelers don't know where they're going until they get there.

Other instances of H-Tech are discussed under Soul H-Tech (p.238), Awakening (p.238) and Jekylls (p.240).

Cracks in the Facade

Shatters

In Brief- Powerful combinations of emotions can break reality, turning the rules of physics upside down, usually killing everyone around.

Throughout the history of the illusion, there have been Shatters, accidents where a person 'woke up' enough to damage the illusion.

Shatters happen when a person is experiencing not just one strong emotion, but strong lust, joy, fear, hatred and sadness all simultaneously. There are very few experiences which can trigger strong levels of all these emotions at once.

In a shatter the mechanisms of reality break and the laws of physics are turned upside down. Impossible things happen: water flows up walls, non-flammable objects burst into flames, solid objects become intangible, etc. Shatters can also cause portals to open up to other realms. Most Shatters change the local laws of physics past the tiny range of variation within which human biology can operate. In other words, they usually kill everyone nearby.

The broken reality often conforms in part to what was going through the head of the person who caused a shatter. A shatter caused by a person who was being burned by a cigarette, for instance, might cause burns to appear on any flesh in the area.

It doesn't take long for the powers-that-be to hear about most shatters. They quickly clean up the bodies as best they can without putting themselves in danger. They arrange to have the area condemned, locked up and surrounded by a barbed wire fence. Often a Haunter (see p.229) comes to live in the place to keep explorers out. Often times local urban legends develop about the place being haunted.

For a sample shattered place, see A Portal to the Deserted City, p.225. For a sample shattered person, see Richard Bailey, Elder Hero, p.199. For sample shattered objects see Shatter Relics, p.243.

Atomic Ghosts

In Brief- People whose bodies are completely destroyed, e.g. in a nuclear bomb, don't go to the afterlife but travel around this world possessing living humans.

Usually the system of death is flawless: the body dies, a mechanism built into the human body summons reapers, reapers arrive almost instantly, reapers take the soul to the Land of the Dead. Sometimes a soul escapes from its body, but Reapers who see it escaping can track it down wherever it goes. The only way a dead soul can escape its body without being hunted by Reapers is if the body is instantly and completely destroyed, giving the body no chance to call a reaper. Only nuclear weapons, the most powerful conventional explosives and shatters (see above) can accomplish this. Like Animists who leave their bodies via the Journeying skill, the soul floats around this world able to observe it but not easily able to effect this world. They lose many of their memories and knowledge with the loss of their physical brains. Many ghosts learn to possess humans. Missing life as a human, most take over people's lives and live out lifetimes as the people whose bodies they have taken over.

There are only a handful of Atomic Ghosts in the world today. Most come from the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Most atomic ghosts like to possess the bodies of rich and powerful businessmen. Some retain a grudge against America and Americans. Like most rich Japanese people, many own property in L.A.

Soul Misfits

Just as the system that removes the souls of the dead from this reality sometimes fails (see Survivors, Atomic Ghosts) the system that gives every human a human soul (and some animals an animal soul) sometimes fails. Common failures include:

No Soul

In Brief- 1 in 10 humans born with no soul, do whatever is expected of them, sometimes cluster in small towns.

This is the most common type of soul mistake, and it becomes increasingly common as the world's population grows. Today, one in ten babies is born without a soul. Soulless babies are less likely to make it to adulthood, so about 1 in 14 adults worldwide is soulless. The ratio is 1 in 11 in the L.A. area.

Hideo Nakazawa, Atomic Ghost

Appearance- Hideo's soul appears to be a Japanese teen male wearing a white shirt and grey slacks. His current body is a handsome, thirty-something Japanese man who typically wears tailored black business suits and has an expensive gold watch.

Attributes- AGY 12, AWR 8, CHM 12, END 9, INL 13, SPD 16, STH 16, WIL 14, BLD 5, BDY 5, INCY 3.

Social Status- Hideo is currently in the body of Taki Nakano, a rich real estate investor who owns several important office buildings in the L.A. area and who sits on the boards of directors of three major Japanese real estate development corporations. He has a beautiful wife and family in Tokyo that he almost never sees and he keeps mistresses in Tokyo, New York and L.A.

History- Hideo grew up in WWII era Japan in the city of Hiroshima. He wanted to join the Japanese army but was too young. When America dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima he was near ground-zero and was killed instantly. He waited to be reincarnated (he was brought up as a Buddhist) but nothing happened. He wandered around as a disembodied spirit and eventually learned to interact with the material world in minor ways. Life as a spirit was torturously boring and within a few years after his death he learned to possess human beings. He was angry with the Americans and he would usually possess Japanese and make them attack Americans or possess Americans and make them commit suicide. After a few years he started to yearn for a real life and so he took over the body of the son of a wealthy industrialist. He drank, did drugs and got in several motorcycle accidents. When the body was in poor condition he abandoned it and found another. He went through several bodies, each time choosing handsome young men with access to money. He has been in his current body for five years.

Personality- Hideo is immature, immoral and cruel, yet he is a good actor and can hide it well. He feels that he was 'robbed' of his life and there's nothing wrong with stealing parts of people's lives, spending all their money, ruining their relationships, damaging their bodies with drugs, getting them in legal trouble and then leaving them to think they've suffered from unexplained amnesia. He is too selfish to ever be truly in love, although he often feels possessive about his mistresses. Although he has come to enjoy much about American culture he still has a deep hatred of Americans and he likes to torture them and ruin their lives.

Methods- On a trip to America, Hideo gets the business out of the way quickly, buys drugs, visits his mistresses, drinks and drugs himself into a stupor and then leaves his host body. He finds random Americans, possesses them, and forces them to do terrible things (e.g. rape family members, attack their workplaces with automatic weapons). His goal is to ruin American lives and have fun doing it. His host body, no longer possessed, is in danger of sobering up and figuring out what's happening to him, so Hideo returns to his body quickly.

Special Abilities- As a spirit, Hideo has minor telekinesis (can effect real world objects with 1 STH). He can possess humans at a roll of 1d20 + WIL (14) +12 (skill) vs. 20 (or 1d20 +6 vs. 0).

Special Skills- Body Invasion (4), Tae Kwon Do (4).

Typical Attack- Strike with feet at STH (16) + AGY (12) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +15 vs. 0) doing 1½ blunt damage if successful.

Typical Reaction- Simultaneous Pain/Stun attack with fists at INL (13) + AGY (12) + WIL (14) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 45 (or 1d20 +6 vs. 0).

Humans without souls have the same working brains that humans with souls have. They are capable of learning, thinking and adapting. However, they aren't truly conscious nor do they have true free will. They act exactly as their instinct, culture, upbringing and social situation dictates. They don't have the ability to act contrary to their conditioning. They are social chameleons, adept at acting 'normal'. Yet they are incapable of acts of creativity, philosophical understanding, self-directed personal change, or of any of the interesting forms of mental illness. They tend to populate the middle levels of society: they are too good at following orders to be poor but not creative, ingenious or ambitious enough to become rich. They are easy to manipulate because they take their cues from those around them, acting as they are expected to act.

The soul-less can never become aware that they are soul-less.

Wrigglers don't see the Soulless. They are virtually invisible to Dances, who neither fear nor have any use for them. Their deaths trigger Reapers, who go away when they see there's nothing for them.

People who live with the soul-less quickly become aware that these people are soul-less, although they can rarely ever point to a reason why. Divorce, running away from home, suicide and murder are common where the soul-less and souled live together. It's especially painful for a parent with a soul-less child. The parent knows the child isn't a real person and can't love the child, but feels like a monster for feeling this way.

Some of the soul-less are diagnosed with personality disorders when some psychiatrist notices a lack of self-consciousness.

In small towns where, by chance, a large percentage of the population is soul-less, those with souls are uncomfortable and leave the town as soon as they can. In the end, these towns end up almost or completely soul-less. If a person with a soul remains he or she has incredible power: everyone in the town acts as the one souled person expects them to act. When the person can't control this power, the people in the town end up acting as the souled person most fears they will act, making them a town of scary and cruel monsters who would rather kill the souled person than let him or her leave. When the souled person controls the power he or she ends up the dictator of the town, able to do or make others do as he or she wishes but still just as lonely and miserable.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Identical Twins

In Brief- Sometimes share one soul, have telepathic connection.

When twins have the same DNA, storks often have trouble telling them apart and they often put the same soul into two bodies. The twins have two minds and two consciousnesses, but there is copious leakage of thoughts, emotions, sensations and knowledge. In many cases the leakage is so great that the two share one subconscious. Anything that damages the soul of one (e.g. Spirit Blade) damages the other. If one twin dies before the other, the surviving twin is often haunted by dreams and visions of the Land of the Dead.

Two Souls

In Brief- One person with two souls, one usually becomes part of the subconscious, can arise as a 2nd personality.

Occasionally, two or more souls are put into one body. Usually one soul dominates, controlling the body, and the other soul takes charge only when the first soul is incapacitated (e.g. asleep, drugged, in shock, psychotic). The second soul often develops to take the place of a psychodynamic, although it is much more self-aware and knowledgeable than a normal psychodynamic and it may attempt at some point to stage a coup where it forces the other soul into hibernation and takes over the body.

Example: *Carlos is born with two souls. One soul quickly dominates and controls the conscious self. Forced to the periphery, the second soul takes up residence in the subconscious and takes on the part of Carlos' shadow. Carlos has a particularly powerful, intelligent and self-conscious Shadow that takes over whenever Carlos is weakened and that seeks an opportunity to take over the conscious mind altogether.*

Humans With Animal Souls

In Brief- Some humans given animal souls, may have powers and animal drives.

Sometimes an animal soul is put in a human body. The person may manifest strange powers (see Familiar, p.198), will often feel and act differently from their peers (e.g. enjoy nothing so much as chasing after things) and will have limited abilities of creativity and abstract thought (better than a soul-less person but worse than someone with a human soul). They are usually free from attack by wrigglers.

Animals With Human Souls

In Brief- Some animals given human souls, are smart and can achieve human level intelligence.

Sometimes the soul of a human is put in an animal, typically a cat, dog or horse. Such animals are usually especially bright, willful and self-conscious. Some break free from the limits of their animal brains, learning to think with their souls, and achieve intelligence equal to or greater than that of normal humans (like Algernons, p.240). Despite their intelligence they are still driven by animal instincts and drives.

See The Dog King of L.A., p.224, for a sample animal with a human soul.

Cancer Souls

In Brief- Some cancers have human souls, are hard to kill.

Some cancers resemble fetuses enough that storks mistakenly put human souls in them. The cancers become tough to kill and may gain limited intelligence despite the lack of brain tissue. Cancer intelligences, not subject to human instincts or experiences, are alien intelligences with no understanding of the human world. They rarely fear death. They do enjoy the feeling of freedom as the cancer they are trapped in grows.

Soul H–Tech

H-Tech can create soul misfits.

Biotechnology researchers, both the legitimate researchers and the crazies working in basement labs, have discovered ways to cause storks to make mistakes. For instance, adding in non-human DNA can create a soulless human or a human with an animal soul. Putting human DNA in an animal can create an animal with a human soul. Few of these researchers understand what they've created.

Awakening

In Brief- Extreme experiences can awaken lost potential of humans.

In the story of Goldilocks, the mama-bear's bed was too soft, the papa-bear's bed too hard, the baby-bear's bed was just right. This world is like baby-bear's bed. It is a compromise between torture and boredom.

Alleys

If this world were a perfect paradise the people here would have nothing to fear and thus nothing to motivate them besides the pleasures of this world, which they would quickly grow bored with. Once bored of this world their minds would reach to seek pleasures beyond this flesh and this would lead an unacceptable number of humans to awakening.

If this world were nothing but unceasing fear and pain, humans would have nothing to look forward to. Their souls would seek an escape from the pain outside this reality and an unacceptable number of humans would awaken.

The ratio of pleasure and pain, fortune and misfortune in this world is the best the powers-from-beyond have been able to find to keep humans from awakening. The powers-from-beyond use wrigglers and their control over society via the powers-that-be to constantly re-adjust this rate. Yet human experience is a bell curve. At the extreme ends there are a few people who experience no suffering or nothing but suffering and are thus in danger of becoming semi-awakened.

Humans can also be semi-awakened by various h-tech experiments (see H-Tech, p.235). Brain stimulation, psychoactive drugs, sensory deprivation, hypnosis and near-death experiments can cause semi-awakening, especially if more than one of these techniques are used at once.

Semi-awakened humans have a random assortment of the same powers that the Touched have. Unlike shattered people the semi-awakened usually have control over their powers. They also have scattered memories of their past lives (including times spent in the Land of the Dead) and a few strange memories of the time before this reality. Since the human mind, even semi-awakened, is incapable of fully comprehending memories from before this reality those memories are 'converted' to memories of people-like-things in a place resembling a physical world.

Semi-awakened humans are usually psychologically damaged by whatever caused them to become semi-awakened. Those who became awakened via a lack of suffering are usually amoral and apathetic, not caring about anyone or anything, including themselves, and using their powers only to gain a brief respite from boredom. Those who gained their powers through torture are usually psychotic: scared, confused, angry and with little or no idea who they are or where they are. They use their powers most often to attack real or imagined pursuers. Those who were experimented on suffer from a broad range of seemingly random psychological disabilities.

Olesya Dekanozov, Semi-Awakened Killer

Appearance- Thin, naked Caucasian female with long, tangled blonde hair, long fingernails, covered in black grime and dried blood, hovering with her toes brushing the floor, her arms and legs slack, head down, eyes glowing faintly.

Attributes- AGY 4, AWR 17, CHM 0, END 20, INL 16, SPD 4, STH 2, WIL 20, BLD 6, BDY 6, INCY 10.

History- Olesya spent the first few years of her life in one of Russia's worst Orphanages where she received very little care or attention. Members of the Russian mafia arranged to have her adopted by an American so she could be sold to a pedophile. The pedophile kept her locked in a basement, fed her barely enough to survive, and he beat and tortured her (most often burning her with cigarettes). She lost the few language skills she had. After a near-escape he severed the tendons on her arms and legs, leaving her nearly unable to move or care for herself. When she was thirteen an infection led to a raging fever which caused a psychotic state, leading to her becoming partially awakened. She regained spotty memories of her previous lives and her life as a resident of what is now the Deserted City, and she realized she had incredible power. It took her time to learn to use this power, and in the meantime her abuser began to realize something was going on and tried to kill her by suffocating her under a mattress. Olesya resisted dying and killed her abuser. She stayed in the basement until the police came to investigate the abuser's disappearance, at which point she used her Lost-like abilities to leave the basement. For the last five years she has been living in basements and other dark, underground places.

Psychology- Olesya knows little about the world: she does not know how to speak or understand any language, she does not remember life before the basement, she does not know why her abuser abused her or that there are fundamental differences between humans (e.g. that some are pedophiles and some aren't). She doesn't know that her abilities are supernatural. She lost or never developed most of the psychodynamics normal people have (she only has an Id and Reptile). She does not know that she is one of the most powerful human beings on the planet. Instead, she lives in fear of being abused. A door opening or light send her into a wild panic, as these are both associated with the coming of her abuser. She does not know that she is a scary monster (or, more accurately, she thinks everyone is a scary monster).

Methods- Olesya does not need food or water. She only want to sit in the darkness, sing little songs to herself, play games with random items, and be left alone. She uses her Lost-like abilities to travel between basements. If someone opens a door to whatever basement she is in, she will flee. If unable to flee (e.g. surprised while sleeping) she will panic and use her telekinesis to wring their necks. If she encounters a crying child her empathy will be aroused. She will keep the child from screaming (by paralyzing his or her vocal cords), will hold and caress the child, will wait for the adults to come down into the basement, at which point she will kill them. She thinks she is doing the child a favor. She is unable to realize that the children might not want their parents killed.

Special Abilities- She can live without food, water or oxygen, she has telekinesis (25 STH within 100 ft.) and she has the equivalent of the skills: Flesh Control (4), Get Lost (6), Homing (3), Nihilist Rage (5), Revive (6) and Untouchable (6).

Typical Action- A Grab: Strangulation at STH (25) + AGY (4) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 1) which also lifts the victim into the air. The grab uses invisible tendrils of Olesya's soul and thus can only be broken by something capable of effecting souls (e.g. Spirit Blade, a missing limb) or by causing Olesya to fail a save vs. pain.

Typical Reaction- She uses Untouchable to take less damage at WIL (20) + 20 (skill) -10 (using Untouchable with a reaction) vs. 30 (one-tenth damage) or 40 (no damage) (or 1d20 vs. 0 or 10).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Random Semi-Awakened Powers

00-03: +10 AGY, +5 SPD
04-07: +10 END, +7 BLD, +7 INCY
08-11: +10 INL, +5 AWR
12-15: +10 STH, +5 SPD
16-17: Ability to live without food, water or oxygen
18-19: Ability to touch and interact with the invisible
20-21: Automatic Writing (5)
22-23: Be Other (5)
24-25: Change Gender (5)
26-29: Command Inanimate (5), Command Animals (2)
30-32: Command Misfortunes (5), Command Reapers (2)
33-35: Command Will-Less (5)
36-37: Dreaming (5)
38-39: Enter Playland (5)
40-44: Flesh Control (5)
45-50: Get Lost (AWR) and Homing (WIL)
51-52: Grab Bag (5)
53-55: Journeying (5)
56-60: Nihilist Rage (5)
61-62: Psychometry (5)
63-64: Read Minds (5)
65-70: Revive (5)
71-76: See Invisible (5), See Reapers (2), See Souls (2)
77-79: See Souls (5)
80-82: Spirit Speed (5)
83-85: Spirit Strength (5)
86-87: Summon Imaginary Friend (5)
88-89: Switch Bodies (5)
90-93: Telekinesis (25 STH, 100 ft. range)
94-97: Untouchable (5)
98-99: Visions (5)

Awakened Animals

In Brief- Animals with souls can become awakened, have powers.

Just as humans can become semi-awakened, gaining some of the knowledge and power of their lives before this reality, so can animals with animal souls. Animals are easier to awaken than humans, yet they have less knowledge and power once they become awakened. Like humans, animals can be awakened by prolonged torture, prolonged sensory deprivation or by h-tech experiments. The psychology and abilities of partially awakened animals are profiled on p.27. Fully awakened animals have those abilities, plus:

-They are as intelligent as humans.

-They can heal from injuries and resist death as per Flesh Control (3) and Revive (3).

-They have faint memories of their lives before this reality.

Unfortunately, most of the things that are capable of fully awakening an animal will also drive that animal insane. Those who have been tortured into awareness by humans are often scared and hateful of humans.

Supernatural Serial Killers

In Brief- Some people gain powers, use them for murder.

Each year thousands of people across the globe, dozens within the L.A. area, gain supernatural abilities. Many accidentally kill themselves with their powers. Many try to forget that they have supernatural powers and never use them except under extreme duress. About one in ten decides their powers allow them to fulfill a dream of being a hero and saving people. About one in ten decides their powers allow them to fulfill their dream of being a serial killer.

The likely sources of a supernatural serial killer's powers are the same as those of Heroes (see p.27).

The psychological profile of supernatural serial killers is very similar to that of regular serial killers. They can be broadly divided into two types:

-The sexual serial killers, who rape victims or perform necrophilia on the bodies, and who often use torture or mutilation. They usually choose victims they find sexually attractive.

-The assassin serial killers, who see themselves as efficient hunters, they kill with minimal contact with the victim (often as snipers). They usually choose victims they think don't deserve to live.

Jekylls

In Brief- Some humans allow psychodynamics to take over their bodies.

These are humans who use h-tech or occult techniques to let a psychodynamic take control of their bodies. Some do this to gain enhanced abilities, others as a form of self-experimentation. Most become dependent on their psychodynamic to take care of things that they are unwilling or unable to take care of themselves. For most it follows the same course as a drug addiction. The Jekylls grow weaker and more dependent while the psychodynamic grows stronger.

When embodying a psychodynamic the Jekyll gets the same enhances abilities that Soul Linked Heroes do, see p.29.

The psychodynamic has access to all of the Jekyll's knowledge and memories. Jekylls usually don't look different, but their mannerisms are different when the psychodynamic is in control. The Jekyll's conscious self has little or no memories of what the psychodynamic did while it was in control.

After a number of appearances the psychodynamic becomes able to assert itself without the aid of h-tech or occult ceremonies.

Algernons

In Brief- Some humans with damaged or malformed brains exceed the capacity of their physical brains, become geniuses.

When people are born with little or no mental capacity, intelligence sometimes develops spontaneously. The soul begins to think for itself without depending on the neurons of the physical body. It is this tendency to develop intelligence where there is none that forced the powers-from-beyond to lock human souls in the bodies of intelligent animals (it is safer for humans to have limited intelligence than to develop nearly unlimited intelligence).

An Algernon goes quite suddenly from being profoundly sub-normal to being a genius. The more retarded they were, the more likely they are to become Algernons. The change can happen at any time, but it is most likely to happen during a trauma or extreme stress.

Unfortunately, becoming so smart so fast does not give Algernons the time to learn wisdom. In other words, they become intelligent but they don't know how to use that intelligence. They become immoral, obsessive, paranoid and/or anxious. Some turn their intelligence inward, creating fabulously complex internal worlds but not having the courage to deal with the real world.

Leanne Coates, Algernon

Appearance- Short, chubby Caucasian, curly dirty-blonde hair in a ponytail, round slack face with large forehead and mouth, deeply sunk, slit-like eyes and thick glasses. Wears yellow flower-print blouses and bluejeans. Scabbed-over scratch marks on her face.

Attributes- AGY 15, AWR 7, CHM 1, END 5, INL 28, SPD 5, STH 3, WIL 1, BLD 6, BDY 3, INCY 3.

Social Status- Leanne lives alone. She is distant from her family. She hires people to drive her places or run errands for her. Many neurologists consider her a very interesting case and long to study her.

History- Leanne as born profoundly mentally retarded. She never learned language or problem solving skills beyond the level of a two year old. When her parents became too old to care for her she was put in a residential care home. When she was thirty-six she was in a car accident. She was not injured but was badly frightened. At that point her mind started to grow beyond the confines of her brain. Her intelligence increased steadily and within a week she had left the home. She made some money doing talk shows and lectures. She invested this money in the stock market and made enough to get her own place and live comfortably.

Psychology- Leanne's mind is incredibly fast, her memory in nearly perfect, the complexity of thoughts she is able to have is virtually limitless. Yet she had no more maturity, restraint, willpower or wisdom than a two year old.

Leanne has not learned to force her intelligence to work for her. Instead, her intelligence controls her, forcing her to do things that hurt her. She gets so caught up in abstract thought that she forgets to eat, bathe or sleep for long periods of time. If she is crossing a street and a particularly interesting thought hits her she wills top in the middle of the street, oblivious to any danger. It is only when personal crises are about to come to a head (e.g. she is about to become homeless) that she is able to force her intellect to attend to mundane matters.

Leanne has a very short temper and when she loses it she screams incoherently, breaks things and scratches her own face. She knows how illogical it is to lose her temper but this does not help her stop. Leanne hates that her body is not as precise as her thoughts are. The clumsiness of human flesh is a constant frustration and a source of many temper tantrums.

Leanne is extremely selfish and she assumes other people are the same way. If someone is nice to her she assumes it is part of some plot against her. She also finds other people boring and annoying. If forced to listen to someone she finishes their sentences to try to get the to convey the information faster. She is curt and rude to most people, including her family.

Leanne thinks in words, but most of the concepts she thins about either have no English language equivalent (not that she ever took time to learn) so she has created her own extensive vocabulary.

Leanne is obsessive, demanding that everything around her be precisely ordered and engaging in pointless repetitive rituals.

Leanne does not know why or how her intelligence suddenly increased.

Methods- Leanne rents a small house in the Santa Monica hills. She pays her bills via dividends from stock market investments. She screens her calls with an answering machine, ignoring family, doctors who want to run tests on her and journalists who want to interview her. She spends most of her time in mathematical pursuits, yet she has no interest in reading what other mathematicians have discovered or in sharing her discoveries with other mathematicians. She spends most of her day wandering around the house with a utility blade carving tiny slits into every available surface, each slit branches off into many more. To another person the more than a million slits look like incredibly detailed and beautiful abstract art. To Leanne it is an ever-evolving complex non-linear geometric computation. From her calculations she has learned that this world is an imperfect machine, a simulation that aspires to but cannot perfectly match the perfection of mathematical abstractions.

Special Abilities- +5 to initiative, +5 to split actions/reactions.

Typical Attack- She will pick up two small, heavy objects (e.g. rocks) and make split Blinding Strikes, one with each hand, each at INL (28) + AGY (15) -4 (paired) -5 (split) -1/3 ft. +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 -1/5 ft. +4 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- A split Dodge at AWR (17) + INL (2) -5 (split) vs. 25 (or 1d20 +15 vs. 0) and simultaneous Pain/Stun Attack (with fingernails) at INL (28) + AGY (15) + WIL (1) -5 (split) +1d20 vs. 45 (or 1d20 vs. 7).

Maria Alvarado, Jekyll

Appearance- Thirty-something Hispanic woman, black hair in a bun with chopsticks, neatly applied and conservative makeup, round wire-rim glasses, darkly colored business suit and skirt. When her shadow takes over she usually takes her glasses off, bares her teeth and allows strands of hair to fly from the bun.

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 13, CHM 3 (10 when Shadow), END 8, INL 16 (21 when Shadow), SPD 9, STH 8 (13 when Shadow), WIL 4, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Social Status- Maria is a young professor of psychology at UCLA. She runs a psychology lab and depends upon government and big business grants to fund her salary. She is feared by her staff and peers. She is single with few friends.

History- Maria grew up a shy, bookish girl in a middle class Mexican-American family in East L.A.. She pursued an academic career because school was the only thing she ever really excelled at. When she finally got a teaching job she found she wasn't suited for it: students could get away with anything, other professors picked on her, the grad students in her lab were lazy and tardy and she couldn't even speak highly enough of her own work to get a grant. A mentally ill student brought her a homemade device that he claimed would induce altered states of consciousness by means of strobing lights and pulsing sounds. She tried it out and awoke the next day to find that, among other things, she had fired members of her lab's staff and had frightened the rest into working overtime for free. In subsequent uses of the machine she faked experimental data to get herself published, lied on grant proposals, murdered the device's inventor and disposed of the body, threatened colleagues, coerced a student into a sexual relationship, and more.

Personality- In normal life Maria is shy, timid, easily startled, unassertive, polite, speaks quietly, has no vices, is a devout Catholic and obsessively avoids even the smallest moral transgression. When the Shadow takes over she becomes curt, short tempered, fearless, arrogant and completely amoral.

Methods- Whenever Maria finds herself in a situation she can't deal with (which is increasingly often) she locks herself in her office puts on a football helmet with electronics built into it. She emerges from her office controlled by her Shadow. She yells at, insults, threatens and even murders people to get her way. In addition to doing what needs to be done to fix Maria's problems, the Shadow adds in extra cruelty for its own pleasure. In emergencies the Shadow will take charge without need for the device.

Special Abilities- While controlled by Shadow: boosted attributes (see above), +7 to crippling, slash and pain/stun rolls, -5 to save vs. anger.

Typical Attack- While under the influence she makes a Crippling Attack (kicking people's kneecaps) at INL (21) + STH (13) +7 (Shadow special ability) +1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 +11 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- Entangles with her jacket at INL (21) + STH (13) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 +4 vs. 0).

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAME MASTERS ONLY

The benefit to intelligence is greater than that received by Cannibals who remove their brains, since the Algernons are not limited by as many habits in their use of intelligence. Algernons have increased intelligence (20-30 INL), increased awareness (+5 AWR) and perfect photographic memory. They can also think at superhuman speed, making the world seem to 'slow down' (+5 AGY, +5 initiative, +5 to split actions/reactions).

People who grew up with very limited abilities of movement (e.g. paralyzed from the neck down at a very early age) may also spontaneously develop the ability to either leave their bodies, heal the damage done to them or manipulate the world via spirit limbs or telekinesis.

Creepy Kids

In Brief- Kids can have powers like the touched.

Most of the events that can give humans supernatural abilities can also happen to children. Children's supernatural abilities tend to be much stronger than those of adults, because children are less indoctrinated into the limitations of the physical world. Children are also more dangerous than adults because they use their abilities with less wisdom and restraint. Most kids with supernatural abilities will lose them when they grow up as they either suppress their powers or stop believing in them.

Children may be able to give commands to inanimate objects (as many children go through a stage of animistic belief), may have spirit limbs replacing amputated limbs (like Cannibals), many can perform Automatic Writing while they draw (like Scribblers), and some are able to revive themselves after a fatal accident (becoming Survivors).

Dances may use children as servants since they are easier to manipulate than sane and sober adults. However, most kids don't have the depth of experience to perceive emotions in the same way adults do and thus they are unsuitable as vessels for the Dance. This general rule is broken in the rare case where a Dance is made up entirely of the thoughts, perceptions and emotions of children, in which case a Dance may have child Faustians.

The majority of kids with supernatural abilities, however, are Lost, Outcasts and Wonderlanders.

Lost Kids- Most Lost children are latch-key kids or the kids of alcoholics or drug users who are allowed to wander around urban areas unsupervised.

Lost children are powerful because small children spend so much time not knowing where they are. Lost children usually have no idea that they have supernatural powers since they don't know, for instance, that Tokyo isn't a place one might pass by while walking home from school. Some Lost children come to believe that there are secret passages in their homes and they wander through cabinet doors or holes under a hedge into basements, vaults, caves, etc. all over the world.

Misty Lopez, Creepy Lost Kid

Appearance- Looking about seven years old, half-Hispanic and half-Asian, dirty, with stained clothes, long unkempt black hair, pink dress, light-brown button-up sweater, pink backpack with stars on it.

Attributes- AGY 12, AWR 7, END 8, INL 7, STH 2, SPD 10, BLD 1, BDY 1, INCY 4.

Social Status- Misty is on nationwide missing-children lists. Her parents don't know where she is. She lives alone in shopping malls around the world. She is known to many mall security guards who think she is just a street-urchin and want to catch her so they can remove her from the mall.

History- When Misty was 5 her mother kidnapped her from her father, who was abusive, and ran away with Misty. Misty was warned by her mother never to talk to police officers because they would take Misty back to her father. Misty and her mother traveled the country living out of a car. One day when Misty was in the mall with her mother, Misty and her mother became separated. Misty tried to find her mom but got Lost, moving randomly between the world's shopping malls. For the past 6 months she has been in a Lost state, although she does not know it.

Psychology- For the most part Misty is afraid: she is afraid she will be caught by security guards and sent to her father and her mother will be put in prison. She is afraid her mother will be mad at her for wandering off. Most of all she is afraid that her mother has given up looking for her and left 'the mall' (Misty believes she is wandering around one gigantic mall) and Misty will never find her mother. Most nights Misty cries herself to sleep. She does sometimes have fun, losing herself in the moment while playing with other kids of playing pranks on mall employees and patrons. She has no idea that she is moving around between every shopping mall in the world. She does know her dolly is unusual and thinks it might be 'magical.'

Methods- Misty eats food that people haven't finished and have left on food-court tables, fishes coins out of fountains to buy food with and shoplifts candy from stores. She knows to hide when the mall is closing (usually inside of a clothing rack) and she usually sleeps on a pile of clothing in some back room. She stays away from cops and security guards and runs if they try to come within grabbing range of her. If cornered she will show her dolly to the person as she knows it will scare them off. Her dolly is her main source of companionship (she talks to the white half, never the black).

Special Equipment Once Misty wandered into a part of the mall that was empty and deserted (really it was part of the Deserted City) and found a doll there. The dolly looks like a rag-doll with a blank face. It is white on one side and black on the other. It feels like it is filled with some kind of jelly. When the white side is shown to someone, that person hears a voice in his or her head telling that person whatever it is he or she most desires to hear. When the black side is shown it tells people whatever they most fear to hear (e.g. 'you're going to die,' 'you have cancer,' 'everyone hates you,' 'soon everyone will know your secret,' etc. If anyone fails a save vs. fear while facing the black side (a hard or legendary difficulty for someone with no supernatural experience) the voice will grow louder until the victim can hear nothing else and must make a moderate save vs. distracting pain. The voice is a crackling, distorted version of a young girl's voice.

Special Skills- Get Lost (5), Grab Bag (3).

Typical Attack- Besides showing her dolly to people (see above), Misty will bite (usually on the hands as they are trying to grab her), a hard Pain/Stun Attack at AGY (12) + INL (7) -4 (hard) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 10).

Typical Reaction- Jump (out of range) at SPD (10) + AGY (12) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 3).

Alleys

One of the most dangerous things a Lost child can do is wander to other worlds, collect artifacts from them, and place them in this world where they will cause trouble (see Artifacts of the Deserted City, p.245, Subconscious Artifacts, p.247, etc.).

Outcast Kids- Outcast kids are perhaps the most numerous. A child will be able to see the invisible, read minds, see souls, see the past, etc., until he or she learns that these aren't the kinds of things people are supposed to see or hear. Until then, they remain a useful (although eerie) source of information. Most Outcast kids don't know that the things they see are supposed to be scary. An Outcast kid may, for instance, have a "pet" Wriggler that she teaches to do tricks (via the Command Misfortunes skill).

Wonderlander Kids- Most children form playlands at some point in their childhoods. The amount by which those playlands are connected to the kids' subconsciouses varies from child to child. Some children, even in the absence of any manipulation by adult Wonderlanders, will spontaneously create a strong connection to their playlands. The difference is that a spontaneous Wonderlander will lose that connection while a made Wonderlander will keep it due to continuing interference by the older Wonderlander.

A young Wonderlander's powers peak when they start to believe that their playland is a place as real as this world. They don't have any problem with summoning creatures from that world or traveling into it. A child Wonderlander is typically not dangerous, but the playland friends who travel to this world to 'help' the Wonderlander are.

Cults

In Brief- People who all believe the same thing can make it come true.

As we've seen, belief has power, but is usually too widely dispersed to overcome the limitations of physical reality. Some cults, however, are able to focus the belief of cult members powerfully enough on one set of beliefs that the rules of this world can be overcome.

Cults aren't capable of destroying the world or other massive changes. They are capable of giving themselves supernatural powers, altering the laws of physics in a small area or causing shatters.

In 1889 the Ghost Dance religion began. It was a cult of Native Americans who believed that by doing a ritual dance they could wipe White people from the country and restore all the dead Native Americans to life. Cult members also believed that those who wore "ghost shirts" made by the cult would be protected from White people's bullets. The cult was never able to wipe out the White invaders, but some members did gain the immunity to White bullets from the strength of so many people believing so strongly that this would happen. This ability made it more difficult for agents of the powers-that-be to wipe out the cult.



Ghost Dancers

Artifacts

Shatter Relics

In Brief- When strong human emotions shatter reality, objects which warp reality around them remain. Most of these objects come from Christain martyrs, repressed Victorian girls or homosexual sex in public restrooms.

Relics are objects which were present at a Shatter (p.236) and carry with them a little bit of 'broken' reality that warps the laws of the universe around it.

Shatters can happen anywhere at any time, yet there are three historical periods that were host to many shatter and so a majority of the relics of the Western world are from these three eras:

Relics of the Martyrs

These relics come from early persecution of Christianity. Most of the martyrs were celibate women who died simultaneously fearing death, hating their executioners, joyful that they would be martyrs and lustful for an idea of Jesus upon which they had projected their repressed sexuality.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Finger of St. Raphael- A finger bone wrapped up in an old cloth in a wooden box. A person clutching this relic cannot be harmed by any amount of heat. However, he or she is also unable to combine sugars and oxygen to create chemical energy, so he or she loses 2 pooled END per round.

Arrow of St. Germaine- An arrow covered with blood which is still red and slightly damp. Within 50 ft. (15 m.), all light sources put out four times as much light as usual. Within 5 ft. (1.5 m.) physical matter becomes transparent, allowing for an "x-ray" view of the inside of people and objects. Since pupils become transparent, anyone within 5 ft. (1.5 m.) sees only a dim fog.

Tooth of St. Oglethorpe- A tooth, with a hole drilled in it, on a chain. Any human or animal corpse within 20 ft. (6 m.) of the tooth will scream and burst open, revealing a swarm of locusts which will attack humans and eat crops. A human body will create a swarm of about 500 locusts. Only about 200 locusts can attack a human at once, doing a total of 2 bladed damage per round. The swarm can move at SPD 15.

The Victorian Girls

At the height of Victorian England's prudishness, a few women were unlucky enough to grow up without any knowledge of their own sexuality or female anatomy. They were from very religious upper middle-class-homes. Their mothers died at an early age and they were never lucky enough to make friends with servant girls who could have explained things to them. They grew to adulthood with no knowledge of sex, masturbation, procreation or menstruation. They only knew that there was something about their anatomies so sinful that nobody would dare speak about it. Many were so unprepared for menstruation that they believed they were dying. Shatters occurred when joy and lust (at discovering the potential for sexual pleasure) coincided with fear and hatred (of their own bodies). The shatters were quickly covered up by the powers-that-be in the Victorian government and the relics were confiscated and hidden away.

Eliza Preston's Fetus- A dead, badly malformed fetus preserved in a jar. When anyone comes within 10 ft. (3 m.) the fetus animates, becoming a mouthpiece for that person's Shadow. Although its lungs are filled with formaldehyde , it can speak and be heard clearly.

Mary Sutton's Bloody Rags- Off-white rags, damp with blood. At random intervals (1 in 20 chance each day), if not kept in an airtight container, blood will pour out of the rags. The blood will spread along the area, moving at SPD 5, ignoring gravity and flowing up objects to cover everything with a layer of blood. The blood film will eventually envelop everything in a 100 ft. (30 ft.) radius. If any humans are in the area and they don't completely cover their mouths and nostrils, a film of blood will coat their lungs and kill them.

Elizabeth Hartford's Labia- Two strips of leathery dried flesh. If placed on either side of a human orifice they will attach, becoming living flesh. The orifice will become lined with teeth. If any part of any living thing (save the owner of the orifice) is placed within the orifice, the living thing will be devoured. The orifice pulls the creature towards it at 40 STH, strong enough to break bones. Once the mouth has caught hold of a piece of flesh, there is no way to save the victim without tearing or cutting off the captured parts. The mouth does 2 BLD damage per round to the victim. The mouth can consume any amount of flesh and consumed flesh is never seen again.

Tea Room Saints

These relics date from the 1920s to the 1950s, a time when most homosexuals lived their lives pretending to be straight except for brief, anonymous sexual encounters in public restrooms ('tea rooms'). Shatters occurred when participants felt hatred (of their own desires), fear (of being caught) and lust and joy (at finally expressing their sexuality).

The Glory Hole- A rectangular section of wall with a 3.5 inch (9 cm.) wide hole drilled in it. Looking through the hole, one can see the invisible world. Anything pushed through the hole becomes temporarily invisible and intangible and capable of effecting the invisible world. E.g. a knife blade pushed through the hole comes back looking like a bladeless handle, but is really a knife that can stab invisible creatures. Objects made invisible revert to normal within 24 hours.

Vertigo Card- A yellowing, folded index card with dried bodily fluids inside. Time moves twice as fast within 25 ft. (7 m.) of the card. People within that range experience two minutes passing for every one in the real world. When the card is moved, the whole world within 25 ft. (7 m.) seems to move with it. If the card is spun, things are thrown against the walls by centrifugal force. If the card is shaken, everything in the room jumps up and down.

Finger of Doom- A desiccated finger with a long fingernail and red nail polish. The finger is kept wrapped in gauze and stored in a steel thermos. Within 50 ft. (15 m.) of the finger beads of perspiration form and water drips down every object. If the finger is lain directly on the floor, the ground or building will begin to vibrate. The vibration will grow steadily more powerful and within minutes it will be equivalent to the worst earthquake.

Blessed Objects

In Brief- Objects blessed by powers-from-beyond to aid the powers-that-be.

At times throughout history, the powers-from-beyond have blessed objects belonging to the powers-that-be in order to give them subtle aid in ruling the world or destroying their enemies. The modern powers-that-be still possess and use most of these artifacts.

Alleys

CEO's Table Leg- An ornately carved leg from an old wooden table. People who spend most of their day in proximity to the table leg gain the following advantages: half normal sleep need, healing rate doubled, longevity, +10 to save vs. disease contraction and mortality, +10 to save vs. effects of drugs and poisons, +5 BLD and +5 INCY. The leg can be used as a 3 blunt damage club (range 1-2).

Inquisitor's Whip- An old leather whip. Each time someone is struck with the whip, a different psychodynamic surfaces, each having total control of the person's body (see p.258). The whip is ideal for interrogation: cycle through psychodynamics until you find one willing to tell the truth.

Black Rock Sword- An old, curved, Arabic style sword. Inlaid into the interior curve of the blade is a long thin shard of black stone. This is a shard of the stone that, according to Muslim belief, was give to Abraham by God. The stone was cracked when it was stolen by Ismali warriors in 930 AD, and slivers were built into eight swords, three of which ended up in European hands during the crusades. The black rock's edge has the ability to cut through anything, visible or invisible. It can cut through a pillar of solid steel as easily as it can cut through a stream of water. The sword does 10 bladed damage to visible and invisible beings (range 1-2, very easy vital strike), is not effected by armor and the only way to block or entangle it is to block the parts of the sword that do not have the black-rock inlay.

Mausoleum of Life- An old marble mausoleum with a stone flower-vase in front. If a freshly dead body is placed in it and if a person is killed on the steps of the mausoleum, the body inside will come back to life. This only works if the freshly dead body is in fairly good shape. The revived person has disturbing memories about the Land of the Dead (p.255).

Lord's Cane- An old redwood cane with a gold bulb on top. Anyone who holds the bulb gets +10 to CHM rolls to inspire awe, fear and respect in others. People who can see the invisible will see the image of a seven-foot-tall, handsome, muscular Caucasian man in the costume of a king superimposed on the holder. Also, the cane will do 6 blunt damage to any object struck with it (range 1-2) and humanoid creatures hit with the cane will be thrown back 5 ft. (1.5 m.) per point of success.

Skull Cup- A cup made from the top of a human skull. When any liquid is drunk from it, the drinker's soul is expelled from his or her body and can float around this world observing as per the Journeying skill. The soul is automatically drawn back to the body within an hour.

Dance Pieces

In Brief- Parts of dead Dances, have déjà vu powers.

When a Dance is born, the desires it is made from are very weak, too weak to do much more than prompt subtle sensations in the subconscious of drunks and psychos. However, some Dances grow more powerful and so do the impressions left on the inanimate objects in the dance's environment. If a powerful dance is killed, the impressions left on objects can be strong enough to be used as tools or weapons. The objects radiates thoughts, sensations or emotions strongly enough to effect anyone who comes into contact with them.

Nihilistic Pillow- A small pillow, yellowed with age and smelling of dust, fringed with lace. People must make a save vs. delusion (difficulty 20 if they are nearby, 30 if they are touching the pillow). If they fail the save they will believe that they are dying (particularly that they are succumbing to old age and respiratory disease and only have a few minutes to live).

Ball of Abuse- A red rubber ball. Anyone nearby must make a save vs. hallucination (difficulty 20 if nearby, 30 if touching) or will feel a strong hand grab them by the back of the neck and a powerful male voice shout "What the hell do you think you're doing?" Anyone not expecting this sensation must make a save vs. fear to avoid being startled.

Plaster of Comfort- A ragged piece of yellowing plaster glued to a round steel plate, with a round glass cover on hinges. Anyone who touches the plaster must make a moderate (20) save vs. euphoria and a hard (30) save vs. psychological addiction. It causes a sensation of happiness, relief and comfort, as if some trusted and beloved person has returned after an anxiety-provoking absence and now everything will be all right. The person touching the plaster feels almost like they are being stroked or comforted and all they want to do is curl up and go to sleep. The plaster has a sordid history: almost everyone who touches it becomes addicted to it and their lives waste away until they have nothing left but the plaster.

Artifact of The Deserted City

In Brief- Powerful and dangerous things from the Deserted City. Can have useful powers, remind humans of their lives before this world, or eat holes in mundane reality.

These are the rarest, the most powerful and the most dangerous artifacts. With most artifacts, the powers-that-be dispatch Professionals to retrieve them and keep them. With artifacts of the Deserted City, the powers-from-beyond personally show up to remove these artifacts from this reality. Artifacts of the Deserted City show up when a human manages to travel physically to the Deserted City, find one of the rare loose objects and then make it back to this reality without being killed. Deserted City Artifacts come in three types: tools, mementos and parts of the city.

Tools will continue to work if brought to the mundane world just as well as they do in the Deserted City. Parts of the city take on new powers in this world that they do not have in the Deserted City. Mementos will quickly decay and crumble to dust in the mundane world.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Mementos- Mementos take the form of postcards, photos, touristy-souvenirs, greeting cards with sound chips, photo slides, old 8mm film reels, etc. The mementos don't have any writing on them. The mementos show the Deserted City except it is daytime and not deserted. The people look like androgynous humans of indeterminate ethnicity and culture. The people all seem genuinely happy, all are mid-twenties people in perfect health without a single scar or blemish and all seem to be playing, creating art, doing sports or romancing each other.

Staring at the mementos will begin to awaken feelings of déjà vu in viewers. The will start feeling like they remember being in the Deserted City before it was deserted. The longer they stare, the stronger the feeling will grow. After a round of staring the PC will have to make a moderate (20 difficulty) WIL roll to stop.

For every minute spent staring at a memento, a viewer gets +4 to supernatural skill rolls and +1 to all attributes (these plusses will fade away in about a month) and the viewer's soul burns noticeably brighter to anyone with the See Souls skill. In the person's subconscious, strange multi-dimensional geometric shapes will start bursting from the halls of memory, doing random damage to psychodynamics (each minute a random psychodynamic takes 1d6 damage).

After 5 minutes the persons' soul will begin to burn so brightly that it is visible even to those without the See Souls skill. The viewer's eyes will seem to glow. At the same time the viewer will start suffering from burns to his or her internal organs doing 1 BLD damage per minute and requiring 30 difficulty saves vs. pain every minute.

Eventually the strange shapes will kill the Ego and the barriers between the subconscious and conscious will begin to dissolve. The viewer will start having memories that the human brain is unable to process. The result will be bizarre hallucinations and delusions (40 difficulty to save).

If the viewer can keep staring at the memento despite the pain, hallucinations and delusions, the human body will eventually burn to ash and fall to the ground, leaving only a glowing soul behind. This will summon reapers who will try to take the soul to the Land of the Dead.

Parts of the City- Parts of the city looks like ordinary pieces of the environment: a brick, a clump of weeds, a piece of broken glass, etc. While in the Deserted City they do nothing, but if taken to any other world they have the following special properties:

Colorless: They are all black, white, grey, clear or mirrored.

Eye Catching: In darkness they tend to shine, in the light they tend to be unusually dark.

Unbreakable: The artifacts cannot be destroyed by any earthly or known occult means.

Aura of Pain: People nearby the object will hallucinate hearing faint sobs of pain from nearby. They will also dream of a voice sobbing loudly.

Destructive: If kept in one place the artifact will slowly destroy the physical world around it, much like the Nihilistic Rage skill. Inanimate objects will start to warp, crack or corrode. Within a day everything will be severely weakened. Within a week structures will collapse into dust and portals will start opening to other realms. Within 2 weeks the entire area will disappear from this reality, the fabric of space will constrict to fill the gap, leaving the earth a little bit smaller.

Shape Shifting: When nobody is looking, the object will change into whatever the people nearby most fear or most want it to be. The artifact will only change into similar objects (e.g. a knife may turn into a sword, a sword into a spear, a spear into a crowbar, etc.). The artifact will not change into any living being and will not lose its special abilities.

Moving: When nobody is looking, the object may move short distances (e.g. teleport from a wall safe and on top of a person's bed while that person is sleeping).

Hopes vs. Fears

A part of the Deserted City will turn into whatever the people near it hope or fear, depending on whether hopes or fears are stronger. Other aspects of Deserted City (e.g. where they move to when they spontaneously change location) are controlled by the same mechanism. Generally, if people can beat a moderate save vs. fear then their hopes win, if they fail then their fears take charge. Anyone who knows what's going on can try to control the shape the artifact will take with a hard WIL roll.

Tools- These artifacts appear to humans to be tools, electronic or mechanical devices, toys, appliances, vehicles, etc. These are things that the residents of the Deserted City created to make their lives easier. Humans, with their limited perception, cannot use the full abilities of these objects. However, the objects do what a viewer would expect them to do (and exceptionally well), and have other abilities related to that function. For instance, a key might be able to unlock any lock and even open doors such that they that lead to any place the user wishes to go. A vending machine might be able to produce any mundane non-living item a user might wish for, e.g. a pistol, a gold bar or a bag of chips.

Some sample tools include:

The White Fluid- This is a small clear glass vial with attached stopper. When nobody is looking, the bottle, no matter what it was filled with before, will become filled with a white fluid resembling milk. The fluid is impervious to chemical testing. If a human swallows the fluid then he or she will immediately start vomiting up blood, then pieces of organs, shards of bone, fat, muscle, pieces of skin, hair, etc. Over the next few hours the person will vomit up his or her own weight in shredded flesh and blood. Hours of vomiting will use up 3d6 pooled END. When nobody is looking the materials will assemble themselves into a perfect copy of the vomitor. The copy will be alive, conscious, have all of the vomitor's memories and believe it is the vomitor. The copy will have no soul, so can't use any supernatural abilities (see No Soul, p.236).

Alleys

The Black Knife- A pure black knife made of a material which is cold and hard. The knife is incredibly sharp (3 bladed damage, pierces armor as 15). Any cut the knife makes opens a hole into blackness that sucks in matter. The matter sucked in is never seen again. The hole will not suck in that it is a hole in (e.g. a hole cut in a piece of paper will not suck in the paper itself). The hole closes within 24 hours. The hole will drag objects towards it (30 difficulty STH to resist, this difficulty is halves every 4 ft. away from the hole).

The Grey Book- A large leather-bound book with a grey cover. It is warm to the touch. People reading the book will find that it contains whatever they most hope or fear to read. The book has a limited ability to make whatever people read in it come true. It can not cause the sun to explode, history to rewrite itself completely or a human to become awakened, but it can kill someone, or make someone win the lottery or make a terrible new plague sweep the earth.

Subconscious Artifacts

In Brief- Change to match psychological state of the person they come from.

Artifacts removed from a person's subconscious or dreams and brought to this world look and behave like ordinary objects except that their nature changes to mirror the psychological health of the person whose mind it comes from. If the person is intoxicated, the objects appears dirty, fraying or scratched. If the person is growing senile the object will appear rusty, tarnished or faded. If the person is mentally ill with many psychodynamics corrupted the object will appear to have sharp barbs and splinters and be smeared with toxic muck. If the person is psychotic the object will appear deformed, cracked or broken. If the person dies the object will break down to dust and disappear within a week.

Chloe Berber's Knife- This knife was taken from the subconscious of a woman named Chloe Berber by a Wonderlander who wandered into her mind by accident. It's a folding knife with a 4 inch blade. Most of the time the blade is ragged, with sharp splinters of metal sticking up, covered with poisonous, foul smelling black grime. It also oozes blood if left in one place for too long. The bladed does 2 ragged bladed damage, has easy pain/stun, and anyone who takes damage from it suffers from the following: fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), weakness (halve STH and SPD) and progressive necrosis (1 BLD damage per day). The only cure is to find Chloe Berber and improve her psychological state, even if only temporarily, or kill her.

Chloe works as a bartender in a trendy West Hollywood club. Most who know her think she is attractive, fun, energetic, confident and a little wild. Although she hides it well, Chloe doesn't like herself. She cuts herself, she has a serious drinking problem, she has unprotected sex with strangers, she has paranoid delusions that her friends hate her, she spends money compulsively whenever she has it, she imagines terrible flaws in anyone who seems to like her and she thinks she's ugly. Chloe's problems started because of her parents ambivalent attitude towards her and her failure to form a strong self-identity. Her problems are enforced by her bad habits: the fact that she does 'bad things' kept her feeling like a bad person which keeps her wanting to hurt herself by doing bad things.

Annotated Volumes

in Brief- Old Scribbler books, can teach supernatural skills to some.

These are relics from the days when Scribblers conversed in the margins of library books. Most were destroyed by the powers-that-be but a few were hidden away. Each one contains decades of Scribbler discussion of the work of a particular philosopher. Each volume has one or more supernatural skills that they can teach. Scribblers can learn any skill a book has to teach. Non-Scribblers don't always have the background knowledge or outlook necessary to learn a supernatural skill from an annotated volume; they can only learn skills already in the list of skills available to their Secret Life.

Learning a skill from an annotated volume has two advantages. First, it fulfills the learning-something-new-about-the-univere requirement for gaining new supernatural skills. Second, it cuts the normal skill cost in half (or makes it 10 skill points if the learner is a Scribbler and this is not a standard Scribbler skill). PCs who already have the skill can also use the volume to let them increase the skill at only half skill cost.

Some annotated volumes are as follows:

Heart Sutra- This is a 1924 English translation of the Buddhist sutra. It is an oversized paperback whose cover has been recently laminated. The pages are yellowing and brittle. Can teach Untouchable.

Plato's Republic- A hardbound book with a dark-brown leather cover with gold-leaf lettering. This is the second volume of a book containing the original Greek text. Can teach See Invisible and Get Lost.

Thus Spake Zarathustra- By Nietzsche. In the original German, hardbound with gold-edged pages. Old bloodstains on many of the pages. Can teach Nihilist Rage.

Interpretation of Dreams- By Freud. First edition of the 1913 English translation of the book. Hardbound with grey cover. Can teach Dreaming.

The Ego and The Id- By Freud. 1923 version. In German. Rebound with a drab-brown hard cover and library call-numbers stamped on the spine. Can teach Enter Playland and Playland Geography.

Surrealist Manifesto- By Breton. 1935 edition, in French. Pocket-sized paperback. Can teach Automatic Writing and Visions.

Symbols of Transformation- By Jung. 1952 edition in German. Photocopied pages in a binder (the original has been destroyed). Can teach Dreaming and Possession Trance.

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

CHAPTER SEVEN – SECRETS OF OTHER WORLDS

The Rules of Other Worlds

in Brief- In some worlds, all form is dependent upon perception, supernatural powers are generally stronger, and human will can more easily effect reality.

Our realm, and the tiny labs of Surgeons (p.232) are the only worlds dominated by constant laws of physics. All other realms are non-material worlds.

In the mundane realm, a thing can only be one size, or in one location, or have one shape. Outside this reality, things and places are more like ideas than physical matter: they can be interpreted in different ways. Yet when humans travel outside this reality, we are unable to deal with multiple possibilities and so, through our expectations, we create a static world of more-or-less static places and things. We don't see 'what's actually there' because 'what's actually there' is not something that can be seen.

Supernatural Abilities in Non–Physical Realms

In Brief: Most powers enhanced except those dealing with the invisible.

In the non-physical world, since reality is more pliable, it is easier for those with supernatural skills to use them to warp reality. PCs get +20 to +60 to supernatural skill rolls (see table, next page) and all skills have at least double the effect.

Animists, Androgynes and Scribblers- Androgynes, Animists and Scribblers generally find their powers increased in the non-material realms, as most of their powers are the application of will to change reality. The only exceptions are the skills Command Misfortune and Blood Sigils, which deal with controlling things that don't generally exist in the non-material worlds.

Cannibals- There is no distinction between the visible and invisible in the non-physical realms. Thus a Cannibal with a phantom hand would find he or she has a visible tangible arm. The phantom parts remain physically superior but not selectively intangible.

Faustians- Faustians take the Dances in their minds with them into the non-material realms. Dances find it easier to manipulate reality in the non-material-worlds. They may use this ability to try to make parts of the PC's surroundings resemble the Dance's abode. The Faustian's primary powers are based on the ability to effect or read the minds of humans and are rarely useful in other realms where there are few humans. The realm will likely be as alien to the Dance as to the Faustian and thus the Dance can offer little useful advice.

Heroes- Heroes with non-supernatural origin stories will experience no difference in their powers. Heroes with familiars will find their familiars slowly growing more powerful and looking less like a normal animal. Heroes who are soul linked will begin to morph into the psychodynamic that is projected onto them and will slowly find their personality subsumed by the psychodynamic. Shattered people and Heroes with Supernatural Objects will lose their abilities (since their powers represent damage to the mechanisms of the mundane realm).

Lost- The Lost will be in their element, since spatial continuity only exists in the non-material realms so long as visitors believe in such continuity. A Get Lost roll is unnecessary for the Lost. A Homing roll is the most practical way to navigate the non-material realms.

Outcasts- Outcasts with See Invisible will find that there is no invisible in the non-material worlds. Any invisible creatures that followed them will suddenly be visible and tangible. Other supernatural senses will work. Psychometry can be dangerous if a realm has alien or supernaturally-intense memories.

Professionals- Professionals will find some of their powers useful but not others. Ecstatic Rage and Untouchable will work exceptionally well. Blood Sigils and Soul Blade will be useless. Truth Ordeal will work, but everyone will be able to see the normally invisible creature living inside the Professional in action (see p.209).

Survivors- Survivors will remain immortal and will have their powers over their own flesh increased dramatically. If a reaper has followed them into the non-material realm that reaper will suddenly be tangible and visible (or as visible and tangible as a reaper ever gets, see p.216) and will attempt to physically attack the Survivor and throw the Survivor's body and soul into the Land of the Dead.

Wonderlanders- Wonderlanders will find their powers and playland phenomena dangerously strong. Summon Imaginary Friend will always bring a physical manifestation of the psychodynamic and Masks will physically transform a thing into what it is disguised as.

Varying Levels of Reality

In the mundane world, things either exist or they don't. There are other realities, though, that sort of exist. These include bubbles, dreams and subconsciouses. They vary in existence depending on the number of human souls believing in them and the intensity of belief. The more a place exists, the easier it is for that reality to effect our physical reality. Bubbles tend to be the most real and they quite often suck people physically from this reality. Subconsciouses are the next most real. Physical beings can emerge from the subconsciouses of ordinary individuals, but it is rare. Dreams are the least real and the things that happen in dreams are the least likely to effect this world.

Imposing Will on Non-Physical Realms

In Brief- Anything can be changed by a strong enough will.

When in a non-physical realm, a visitor either contributes to or is fully responsible for (depending on the realm) how that realm is experienced. The experience of the realm is based on what the visitor believes will happen and is capable of comprehending. When a visitor runs into a brick wall they bounce off because that's what they're used to.

However, even untrained individuals can use their WIL to change how things work in the non-physical realms. The easiest thing to change is how one's body acts: change one's appearance, strength, become able to fly or walk through walls, etc. The next most difficult (+10 difficulty) is to change the environment, e.g. make a wall suddenly have a door. The most difficult to change is how another intelligent being's body behaves. Changing another being is +20 difficulty and the being that is effected can make an opposed WIL roll.

The difficulty of changing the environment depends on the malleability of that realm (see table).

Realm	WIL + 1d20 difficulty to change self/environment/others	+ to supernatural skill rolls
Land of the Dead, Deserted City, Void, Citadel	40/50/60	+20
Subconsciouses, Bubbles	30/40/50	+30
Dreams	20/30/40	+40

Example: *Ginny and Amanda are stuck in a bubble. Ginny decides that this place must not be real and tries to effect the bubble. First she tries to conjure a pistol out of thin air. She rolls WIL +1d20 but doesn't meet the 40 difficulty. Next she tries to will herself the ability to fly but this time her difficulty is only 30 and she makes it.*

Encouraged, Amanda tries to use her Nihilistic Rage skill. She rolls WIL + 1d20 and gets 23. Because of the malleable nature of the realm she is at +30 to her roll, meaning she gets a total success of 53. Instead of just making the surroundings crumble, this level of success destroys the entire bubble.

Dying in Non-Material Realms

In Brief- Dying in the non-material worlds is bad.

Dying as a Physical Being- In the larger non-material realms there are Reapers, mostly ones who came here by accident and couldn't find their way back. When someone dies in the non-material realms, a reaper comes for them, but it is visible to any observers, and it tears a transparent semi-physical soul from the dead body, stuffing it into a visible portal to the Land of the Dead. In other words, it's the same thing that happens when someone dies in this world, except anyone around can see it.

Dying as a Disembodied Spirit- When a persons' consciousness leaves his or her body and flies around this world (see the Journeying skill) or travels through the other worlds (most often in dreams and the subconscious) a small part of the spirit remains in the body. The soul is located in two places at once and the body, although unconscious, keeps breathing and pumping blood.

Even though a soul is immortal, it will, out of habit, respond to injuries the same way a human body does. The soul won't die, but it can become temporarily incapacitated and, worse still, loose its connection to the physical body. This leaves the soul stuck outside of its body (unless the PC has the Body Invasion skill) and the body will be brain dead.

Random Otherworldly Destination

01-17: Deserted City
18-29: Void
30-42: Citadel
43-59: Land of the Dead
60-62: Surgeon's Lab
63-79: Subconscious
80-92: Dream
93-00: Bubble

GAME MASTERS ONLY

The Deserted City

In Brief- Strange deserted city with occasional monsters and powerful artifacts.

The city will appear differently to each group that travels there. To a group of hunter-gatherers that have never seen a city it would look like a massive deserted encampment, in an endless forest clearing, filled with huge huts. To a group from Japan, the city would take on a slightly Japanese flavor. For instance, some of the rooms inside buildings would have sliding screens and tatami mats. However, to those familiar with Western cities (even if they're kids from the countryside who have only seen cities on TV), this is how the deserted city appears:

It is always night. It is cold enough to be unpleasant but not enough to pose a serious danger. There are streetlights that provide enough light that the PC's don't need a flashlight unless they go underground or inside a building. The city is almost completely silent. If one holds still one can hear the wind whistling through the streets, and when the wind pauses one can hear faint sobs of pain that sound like they are coming from every direction. The ground also seems to vibrate or pulse slightly.

The architecture of the city is grand, gothic and beautiful. All the buildings are solid colors, mostly grays, whites and blacks. The architecture is complex with many crenelations, ledges, balconies, spires and fire escapes. The style of architecture is indeterminable, but definitely old. The buildings are grand, like a city that was once very wealthy before being hit by a prolonged depression. The city seems haphazardly built: no two buildings are the same. Residential, office, shopping and industrial buildings are intermixed. Buildings are squeezed awkwardly into small spaces. New additions hang off of buildings.



GAME MASTERS ONLY

Alleys

The whole city looks like it has been abandoned for decades. Windows are cracked. Paint is peeling. Signs are faded to unreadability. Doors are barely hanging on to rusted hinges. Dead weeds choke every crack in the pavement. Dried mud on the sidewalks and the sides of buildings show evidence of past floods. Inside buildings, everything is covered with dust. Except for the dim and flickering streetlights, there is no power anywhere. Phone lines are all dead.

There are no vehicles and almost no personal belongings. There is not even much trash. It looks like everybody in the city packed up everything that wasn't nailed down and left.

Visitors might be able to convince themselves that this is an ordinary city which was deserted because of some sudden economic downturn. The observant, however, will notice many abnormal things about the city.

Writing: When the PCs can find a sign that's not too faded to read, the text is just words like "pain" "horror" and "death" repeated over and over again.

Inconstant Space: Buildings are sometimes smaller or bigger on the inside than they are on the outside. Visitors trying to map the city or keep track of their route will find that when they come back to a place it will be completely different.

No Contact: GPS systems, compasses and cell phones don't work. Radios play a woman sobbing on every frequency.

Generic: PCs will be unable to find a brand name, serial number or barcode on any item, even on appliances. In fact, there is very little writing on anything.

No Street Signs: There are no readable street signs. They are all rusted through or missing.

No Day: No matter how long the PC's wait, day will never break.

Despite the observer-relative nature of the Deserted City, it is not a hallucination. Everything there means something, no matter how a human happens to perceive it. Every inch of road, every building, every torn poster, every piece of trash blowing in the wind is part of the Deserted City.

Treasures of the City- PCs who search through the city may find intriguing things. Some things the PCs will find in plain view look like nothing special (e.g. a piece of trash, an old nail, a handful of dead weeds). Others are personal items, tools or mementos, of the people who lived in the city. Not one is in plain view. Most are hidden away. They may be in a box on top of a rafter, wrapped up in paper under a floorboard, taped to the underneath of a shelf, etc.

See Artifacts of the Deserted City, p.245, for more.

The Wound

In Brief- A big black, toxic thing pierces part of the city.

Somewhere in the Deserted City is an area where blood and puss oozes out of cracks in the streets. The ground is warm to the touch and the whole area has the sweet, pungent smell of an infected wound. At the center of this area is a ring of ruined buildings that look like they were decimated by an earthquake. Inside that ring is a patch of shattered rubble, in the middle of which is a pool of blood and puss which is pierced by a huge, black, tree-trunk shaped thing sitting at an angle. The thing is three stories tall and 20 ft. (6 m.) in diameter. Its surface is covered with bumps, cracks, barbs and jagged outcroppings. It is very hot (one can see steam bubbling up where it touches the blood and puss). People who touche it will have their body slowly necrotize (die, turn black and rot) starting at the spot where they touched the thing and slowly consuming the rest of their body.

Deserted City Sewers

In Brief- Blood, black poison, mysterious figures stuck in sewer walls.

The sewers are made from concrete and large enough for humans to walk through. The walls are warm and seem to pulse gently. The air is warm and moist. The tunnels are an endless maze of forks, gates, sudden drops, smaller tunnels branching off or emptying into bigger tunnels, ladders leading up and down and tiny control rooms with old-style gauges and dials that have no power going to them. Old yellow bulbs light the sewers dimly. Warm blood flows along the bottom of the tunnels, in some places a trickle and in others a gushing stream. PCs can follow the blood upstream or downstream forever and will never find its source or final destination. Interspersed in the tunnels are Deserted City creatures. The sounds of a woman sobbing in pain are louder here than above, though their source is still unidentifiable. There is occasionally a rumbling sound and the tunnels shake as if a subway train is passing but the sewer tunnels never lead to any subway tunnel or station.

Occasionally explorers will hear a noise of something breaking in the distance. A black fluid which smells of rotting flesh will start to displace the blood. The speed of the flow and level of the liquid will rise quickly. Like the black thing from the Wound (above) if visitors touch the liquid they will die of progressive necrosis. The flow will slow down and stop within a few minutes.

If visitors travel very far down into the sewers they stand a chance of discovering a tall chamber or tunnel with what looks like a naked human half-embedded in the wall. The human might be of any race or gender and will appear physically perfect, despite being coated with mud, grime and mold. The figure is gasping and jerking as if in terrible pain, eyes unfocused and mouth open. If visitors scream at it or attack it the figure may look at them briefly before forgetting they are there. The body will not communicate in any way. The bodies cannot be freed from the walls they are sticking out of and any injuries they take will heal instantly.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Creatures of the Deserted City

In Brief- Strange alien things in the city.



The vast majority of the Deserted City is empty, but if one wanders enough one may encounter a strange, inhuman creature.

Although most will appear to the PCs as flesh-and-blood entities, the creatures of the Deserted City are more like robots: they were built by the city's inhabitants as either an experiment, as a work of art or to do a job. When the city was emptied they were left behind. Some are still going about their duties, or trying to, others are waiting for commands or for whatever event will trigger their behaviors. For the most part they are completely oblivious to everything except that which they were created to do. Some will confuse PCs with their masters, others will see them as strange beings, others won't notice the PCs at all. Some are frightened of everything and will hide if they see a human. A minority are openly hostile, attacking any intelligent being on sight.

Their actions and their motives are almost always incomprehensible to PCs, whose understanding of the Deserted City is so shallow that the creatures seem to be doing random nonsense, if anything at all. It is as if they were robots programmed by an insane person.

This randomness makes them dangerous: they might kill a PC by accident because a PC happened to get in the way as they were doing their duty, or because the PC looked to them like something they were meant to eliminate. What a Deserted City creature might think is just a playful jab or a poke to get attention might kill a fragile human. Deserted City creatures certainly aren't concerned with the safety of humans, since those who created them were immortal. A PC might accidentally 'activate' one of these creatures by touching it or saying something near it. A Deserted City creature might, for no discernible reason, reach out and kill a person. Or, a dozen children might play on a Deserted City creature like a jungle gym for a year with no reaction.

Some Deserted City creatures can be damaged by heat, cold, radiation, electricity and poison, others can't.

Every Deserted City creature is unique in appearance, behavior and abilities. They do have some things in common:

-Most are around human size (between 4 and 10 ft. tall).

-None look human, although most have at least some human-looking parts.

-Although they have what appears to be biological anatomy, a biologist would find their anatomies either pointless or impossible. One may, for instance, have a head floating inches from its body, or have no orifices for eating and breathing, etc.

-They do not necessarily obey the laws of gravity, momentum and conservation of mass and energy.

-None speak any human language. Many speak in an alien tongue.

-They can be killed by bladed or blunt damage, although it takes several times more damage than it would take to kill a human.

The Triangle, A Deserted City Creature

Appearance- When folded up it appears to be a 5 ft. (1.5 m.) tall triangular-shaped column, floating about a foot off the ground. The column is made up of human-like flesh which shows many veins, pockmarks, pimples, wrinkles and grime. It bulges and contracts slowly in a breathing rhythm. When it opens it unfurls into a roughly square sheet of flesh that is covered with faces on one side. The faces are androgynous and somewhat misshapen. They all make a gurgling whining noise and they drool. The eyes stare, tracking humans. The facial muscles are slack.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 5, CHM 0, END 20, SPD 25, STH 25, WIL 15, BLD 10, BDY 0, INCY 10.

Behavior- If anyone comes near enough to touch it the triangle will open up, waiting to interact. If the person nearest it turns away from the triangle it will spin through the air so that it stays directly in front of that person. If the person backs away the triangle will not follow and after a while it will fold itself up again. If the person speaks while facing it, the triangle will fold around the person and the faces will start screaming gibberish at the person at increasing volume until the person, first, goes permanently deaf, second, dies of brain hemorrhaging and, finally, liquefies entirely and pours out the bottom. The whole time the volume outside the triangle does not surpass that of a normal human scream. The triangle does not think it is hurting the person. It is merely interacting as it was designed to. If the PCs inflict significant damage (e.g. 5+ bladed damage) to the inside or outside of the triangle, it will think it has done something wrong. It will release the individual and start again from the open position. It will not get angry or scared.

Abilities- Immune to pain/stun, blinding, knockout, knockdown, crippling and vital strike attacks.

Typical Attack- First it will enfold around the person, a grab at AGY (10) + STH (25) +10 (paper beats rock) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +20 vs. 0). Then it will start a sonic attack which will temporarily deafen within 1 round, permanently deafen within 2 rounds, do 1 BLD damage within 3 rounds and double damage every round thereafter (2, 4, 8, 16, etc.).

The Void

In Brief- Infinite empty blackness surrounds the city.

Surrounding the Deserted City is a tall brick wall. Beyond the wall is the Void: unending blackness that stretches on into infinity in every direction. Anyone who ventures into the Void will find it has a floor. The floor is perfectly smooth (although not slippery), makes no noise when one steps on it and is invisible because it is as perfectly black as the sky. The void is room-temperature, there is no wind, and despite there being no light sources, all non-void objects or beings are illuminated by a moderately-bright, diffuse light.

The Void is nearly empty, but every once in a while a wanderer may find personal items dropped by Deserted City explorers (see p.245) or Deserted City creatures that wandered out there and got lost (see previous page). Some of the creatures in the void have been hiding there since the city was deserted.

The Citadel

In Brief- Also in the void is a huge concrete citadel containing monsters and a deformed giant overlord.

Apart from the Deserted City there is one other major island in the void's sea of emptiness: a huge concrete structure that looks like a cross between a castle and a prison. It's made up of several attached buildings with several very tall towers. The architecture is part gothic, part utilitarian industrial, part insane angles. There are coils of razor wire under every window and along every roof. The only entrance is a huge metal gate, itself the size of the house, which is almost always closed.

Inside are huge halls, large enough for a giant to move through. Along the ceilings are railings with sliding casters that attach to huge metal hooks. Floating through the citadel at random intervals are citadel servants. These are androgynous creatures of vaguely human appearance. They are about twice the size of a human. They have no legs or genitals and float along the ground. Their heads revolve 360 degrees, making a complete turn about once every 2 seconds. Their faces look like human faces except their mouths and eyes are open wide. Their skin is pale. If they should happen to see a human they will start screaming loudly, causing more to appear. When the humans are greatly outnumbered they will descend upon the humans, grabbing them and tearing them apart.

At the center of the complex is a circular throne room with a giant throne. Jutting out of the floor in front of the throne is an oval metal pedestal with a hole in the top.

At most hours of the day there is a giant creature sitting on the throne, hunched over the pedestal with its one eye pressed up to the hole. The creature is about 100 ft. (30 m.) high. It's human shaped. It wears long black robes that cover everything other than its head and hands. Its head is covered by a white porcelain mask showing a beautiful androgynous face with a beatific expression. There's a single eyehole in the mask and behind it a lidless bloodshot eye supported by a mass of red gore. One sleeve ends in a porcelain hand, the other ends in a scabby, bony, deformed claw.

DO NOT READ

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

A steady procession of citadel servants float up to the figure, speak to it in an alien language and receive terse, angry replies from the figure. The figure talks in a cracking voice that alternates between low and high tones. Having received their replies the citadel servants float away.

If the figure notices the human explorers it can kill them instantly with a thought and paralyze their souls with pain until a servant can drag the souls off to the land of the dead.

There are several doors scattered throughout the citadel, each about 20 ft. (6 m.) tall, which lead to different locations in our realm, the invisible, the deserted city, the void, and the land of the dead.

The Machinery

In Brief- Filled with anachronistic machines, spider-like workers and impaled sleeping giants.

There are several pits in the floor around the citadel that lead to a massive underground space. The space is sweltering, filled with steam and smoke, and there is an omnipresent roar of machinery. As far as the eye can see in every direction (including down) there is a lattice-work of machinery that combines every type of tech known to the human visitors: steam pipes, gears and chains, old vacuum tubes, computer circuits. Ladders and walkways criss-cross the space, giving access to all the machinery. Yellow light bulbs give a diffuse light to the space. At intervals are binocular shaped viewers attached to a circuit boards. Looking through one a person will see pixilated, amber-and-black, bird's-eye views of our world.

Explorers who are not careful about what they touch will be badly burned or electrocuted. Even careful visitors can be killed by an unexpected gout of steam or arc of electricity.

Crawling around the machinery are 'engineers': shambling spider-like masses of the same technological anachronisms that the machinery is made of. Engineers will attack any human they see, impaling them and welding or bolting them to the machinery.

Occasionally one might see a part of the machinery that looks like a bomb went off: the machinery is twisted, melted, charred and shattered. These places are usually swarming with engineers trying to fix them and stop the escape of steam and fluids.

Dozens of stories down is a blood-soaked concrete floor covered with rows of huge bodies. They're about 20 ft. tall, naked and have human anatomy. The rows of bodies merge into the vanishing point in every direction. Each body has hundreds of wires, pipes and gear shafts impaling them through blood encrusted holes. The bodies appear asleep and are breathing slowly. They look like a random selection of every age, ethnic group and physical condition. Every once in a while a body will shudder, sometimes make a groan, and the movement will cause machinery around and above it to break, bringing a horde of engineers.

If visitors are lucky, they may see the body of someone they know or they may see giant versions of their own bodies. Bodies of the Touched seem slightly more restless than most of the others (as do the bodies of babies and children). The bodies cannot be awakened or killed. Injuries heal almost instantly.

Typical Engineer

Appearance- A human sized spider made out of a jumbled mass of rusty iron beams, engines, pneumatic pistons, circuit boards, vacuum tubes, etc. At the end of its many arms are buzz-saws, pincers, arc-welders, pneumatic wrenches and other tools.

Attributes- AGY 25, AWR 2, CHM 0, END 50, INL 7, SPD 10, STH 35, WIL 20. Will stop working after taking 15 bladed or 20 blunt damage.

Behavior- Engineers spend every hour of every day crawling around the machinery, using their multiple limbs to adeptly move in the three-dimensional space, looking for broken machinery to fix. If they see humans they are programmed to attack.

Psychology- Engineers know how the machinery is supposed to work and they are very creative about working around problems. They do not communicate but will work together to fix large problems. They do not understand what humans are or what they are capable of, they only know that humans are a danger to the machinery and should be stopped and disassembled.

Special Abilities

-Can climb at full SPD (no roll required).

-Has tools capable of doing 7 bladed or 5 burn damage (range 4).

-Immune to pain/stun, knockout, vital strikes. Only weapons capable of doing 5 damage can do Crippling Attacks.

-Can repair damage to itself at a rate of one point per round.

Typical Attack- An impaling strike (does 5 damage and makes the victim unable to dodge or jump) at 1d20 vs. 5, then strikes with weapons at 1d20 vs. 0.

Typical Reaction- A block at 1d20 vs. 10.

The Land of the Dead



GAME MASTERS ONLY

In Brief- Souls of recently deceased humans forced to march down a cold dark canyon, harassed by monsters if they stop, until they forget everything they know.

The souls of the recently deceased find themselves dropped, without comment, in this place. The Land of the Dead is always dark: there is no sun, moon or stars, yet somehow there is enough light to allow people to make out each others' silhouettes. A roaring wind blows constantly, making so much noise that people can rarely make themselves heard.

The dead find themselves on a rock-strewn dirt road. The road is wide and filled with people, all naked. On the sides of the road, rocky outcroppings rise up into darkness. All the traffic on the road is going in one direction. Anyone who stops, falls behind, goes in the wrong direction or tries to scale the rocks is attacked by a monster that swoops down from the air, bursts up from the ground or scampers down from the rocky outcroppings. The monsters don't kill but they do carry victims away, torture and mutilate them and then drop them back on the road later.

As people head down the road they begin to forget things: at first its old memories, but then they begin to forget things like their name, and then it's things like their language. As their minds dissolve so do their physical features. Their faces become nothing more than open mouths and staring eyes. The skin becomes pale, then translucent. By the end of the journey the person has become nothing more than a human shaped wisp floating down the road, ignorant of nothing but the desire to keep moving. At the end the wisps walk over an edge into a pit and are pulled through into our realm.

The purpose of the Land of the Dead is to keep people too distracted to think about themselves and what's happening to them. Without physical neurons to keep knowledge, memory becomes an act of will. If they weren't distracted they could concentrate on keeping what they are losing. Instead their memories, knowledge and personality simply fade away. By the time they reach the end they are ready to be put into a fetus.

A few have managed to fight against the Land of the Dead. Most were mystics who were able to overcome the discomfort, confusion and fear and keep their minds on what they wanted to remember. Most make it with only a few scattered memories. One in a million is able to retain enough memories that in the next life they can retain skills, knowledge and personality from one life to the next.

Subconsciouses

In Brief- People's internal subconscious worlds are, to a degree, real.

Everyone has a subconscious. Wonderlanders have their subconsciouses frozen into a theme so that throughout a lifetime the places and things there look the same to visitors. For non-Wonderlanders the subconscious is more like a dream: a surreal mishmash of old memories, recent memories and imagination. The subconscious and its inhabitants change in form as years pass.

Subconsciouses are bubbles of semi-reality floating in the void outside this reality. Every person with a soul and a conscious self that interacts with this world has a subconscious. They contain everything which the conscious self is not conscious of. It is a non-physical realm: it only takes physical shape when a viewer or visitor from the physical realm forces it to do so.

There are a few people, including the severely autistic, who do not have a conscious self. Instead they live in what we would call a subconscious. Since the person knows little of the laws of this world, the subconscious and what happens in it are extremely surreal when viewed by a person more versed in the laws of this world.

Geography

In Brief- Psychodynamics have their own realms; there is a place where memories are kept and a gateway to consciousness guarded by the Ego.

Space and location are not constant in the subconscious. For example, a forest clearing may appear only a few hundred feet from the outside, a hundred miles from within. However, places tend to have the same relationship with each other: the doors of perception, hall of memories and Super Ego's realm are all near each other and are on the edge of the subconscious. One the opposite end of the subconscious are the Reptile and Id's realms. In most cases this geography is vertical, with the doors of perception at the very top and the Id's realm at the bottom of an underground labyrinth.

Each psychodynamic (except the Stranger) has its own realm. A psychodynamic's realm matches the personality of that psychodynamic. Psychodynamics spend most of their time in their own realms, but can travel anywhere in the subconscious they want. The majority of the subconscious is not the realm of any psychodynamic.

The Halls of Memory- All the person's memories are stored here. The halls of memory typically take the form of a long hallway. Behind each door a memory plays itself out over and over again. Details that cannot be remembered are dark or hidden behind a grey mist. Actors in the memory will try to ignore visitors. If visitors forcefully change the way the memory is going then that person's memories become permanently altered. The doorways are not marked, yet the doors tend to open up on the memories the visitors are looking for. Some doors have locks, bars, booby-traps and/or alarms on them. These are repressed memories and the Ego patrols them whenever it gets a chance.

Doors of Perception- The Ego guards a gateway to the conscious mind. This is often represented by streams, pneumatic rubes, conveyor belts, phone lines, mail slots, etc., that pass through a wall that represents the end of the subconscious. Streams of information coming from every realm of the subconscious (these are emotions, drives and intuition) and streams of information from the sense organs and the halls of memory all meet at the Doors of Perception. A psychodynamic or visitor who steals a sensation or memory can keep the conscious self from becoming aware of or remembering something. Alternately, by forcing the sensation or memory through one can make sure the conscious self becomes aware of that thing. Tampering with information from the halls of memory of sense organs will cause hallucinations or delusions.

The Ego runs back and forth trying to control what goes through. Sometimes the Ego panics and locks up whole sections of the doors of perception, causing hysterical blindness or deafness (stopping sensory input), dissociation (stopping emotions) or psychogenic amnesia (locking down the halls of memory). Getting something past the Ego means either convincing the Ego to allow it through, sneaking past the Ego or fighting past the Ego.

Any visitor or psychodynamic who can manage to force themselves through the doors of perception can force the conscious self into unconsciousness and take control of conscious self's body. The conscious self gets an opposed WIL roll to resist.

Alleys

The Reptiles Realm- Somewhere in the subconscious is a realm where nature rules. It could be a swamp, forest, grassland, etc. The ecosystem may be fantastic and not resemble any on Earth, but there are a few constants: there is edible plant life, there are animals and there are predators large enough to hunt visitors.

The Id's Realm- The realm of the Id is one in which physical pleasures are everywhere. There is always food (usually candy) available in copious quantities, everything is soft and comfortable, and the weather is perfect. Yet as one goes further into the realm, the semblance of physical reality breaks down: the number, size, location, color and other physical attributes of things are constantly changing, first slowly then, as one travels deeper, more quickly. Objects start to blur together, sticking together or passing through each other. Next bodies begin to merge into their environment: visitors become unable to tell where they end and their surroundings begin. Knowledge of the self as a unique entity begins to dissolve until the person is lost forever, consumed in a wash of meaningless sensation. PCs can fight the 'melting' with WIL rolls, but doing so requires uninterrupted concentration and the difficulty rises as visitors near the center of the realm.

At the very center (or bottom) everything is a wash of chaotic and unconnected sensations. To keep one's body intact requires a legendary (40) WIL roll and to keep one's sense of self requires a hard (30) WIL roll. If one can find a way to go below (or beyond) this zone, however, one will find oneself moving through the void of dreamless sleep: a black, silent, windless space. If one can traverse this then one will emerge from an orifice in a body at the bottom of the machinery of the Citadel (p.252) that resembles the subconscious' conscious self.

Troubles- Miscellaneous worries that the person has not dealt with consciously take the form of small predatory monsters that roam the subconscious. They will attack anyone they come across. Individually, they are rarely a danger to visitors, but sometimes they swarm. Their form is dependent on the themes of the subconscious, yet most are the size of a dog or cat and have an ugly or monstrous appearance with some sort of natural weapon. They have the intelligence of a small animal.

Major traumas, secrets and fears take the form of giants. They are malevolent, happy to smash anyone they can, but their size makes them clumsy and imprecise. Each giant has a unique appearance and personality.

Typical Trouble

Appearance- A severed head with an angry, brutish face and sharp teeth. Moves by hopping.

Attributes- AGY 7, AWR 4, CHM 0, END 10, INL 1, SPD 5, STH 7, WIL 4, BLD 2, BDY 2, INCY 0.

Psychology- The Trouble is mean. It chases after and attacks anything it can, even if that thing is bigger and meaner than it. It will only flee if nearly dead. It has no life other than bouncing around the subconscious looking for things to bite.

Typical Attack- A split jump (into range), strike and grab with its teeth at 1d20 vs. 5. A successful strike does 1 bladed damage. Once grabbed the Trouble will continue chomping (doing 1 bladed damage per round, no roll needed) until removed.

Typical Reaction- A jump (out of range) at 1d20 vs. 0.

Dreams

In Brief- Dreams slightly real; can be dangerous for lucid dreamers; can be a window on the subconscious.

When humans dream, the belief of their souls in these scenes create transitory pockets of semi-reality. These pockets are impermanent, disappearing quickly after the person stops believing in them. What happens in them usually has little effect on our world. They are the most malleable of realities: any being in them with a WIL can change their shape.

For most dreamers, dreams are not dangerous. Dreamers can be hurt and killed in their dreams and the worst that will happen is that they will wake up with a fright. The reason they are relatively immune is that only a limited part of their consciousness, and thus a limited part of their soul, is in the dream world. Similarly, although Dreams often contain portals to other realms, ordinary dreamers cannot travel through them because not enough of their souls exist in the dream body to differentiate it from the rest of the dream.

However, lucid dreamers (those who are aware that they are dreaming and can exert their will on the dream world) have more of their soul in the dream world and can actually be killed if their dream bodies are killed (see Dying in Non-Material Realms, p.249) and can travel through portals into other realms.

Dreamers can become lucid in three ways: by learning to become lucid (see the Dreaming skill), by a visitor to the dream realm who reminds the dreamer that he or she is dreaming, or, rarely, by a spontaneous accident.

There is no wall between dreams and the subconscious as there is between the subconscious and consciousness. Messages from psychodynamics, troubles and traumas, and sometimes even psychodynamics themselves can slip into dreams. The Ego is almost powerless to stop them from getting through to dreams, but can throw up disguises over them, turning them into something else. A trauma may become a ticking bomb, a psychodynamic may become an old friend, etc. Lucid dreamers who grab ahold of disguised dream objects and characters can tear off the disguises, revealing their true natures.

STOP GO AWAY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Psychodynamics

In Brief- Live in the subconscious, make up elements of human personality, can become diseased/insane.

Psychodynamics are as intelligent as the conscious self (sometimes more so), although their personalities and behaviors are completely one-sided. They only care about one thing and are unable to understand anyone who cares about anything else. The relationship between psychodynamics is like that between nations: when they have interests in common they work together and when their interests are counter to each other they try to hurt each other. There is no law in the subconscious, only the Ego who tries to act as a mediator.

Corruption- Sometimes psychodynamics become corrupted. Psychodynamics can become corrupted by being severely injured in combat, by exerting themselves to complete exhaustion, or by being brutally and ruthlessly suppressed by the other psychodynamics for long periods.

A corrupted psychodynamic looks ill or crazy and acts insane. Specifically it's paranoid, delusional, cruel, hateful and prone to extreme and suddenly shifting moods. A corrupted psychodynamic's realm is filled with rot, poison, insects or whatever else represents corruption and disease to the conscious self.

Psychodynamics can usually heal themselves from any injury, but corruption is an injury they are unable to heal. The injury takes the form of something poisonous or pestilent stuck in the psychodynamic or in the heart of the psychodynamic's realm. Removing it will allow the psychodynamic to heal (a process that can take weeks) but doing so is so painful that the psychodynamic will resist in every way possible.

Fighting Psychodynamics- If one can travel into a person's subconscious it is possible to hurt that person's psychodynamics. The psychodynamics can be hurt by attacking them physically or by doing extreme damage to their realms. Combat in the subconscious is virtually the same as combat in the real world, except that a psychodynamic's "BLD" is a function of its Psych STH. Hitting a psychodynamic with a club, for example, will reduce its Psych STH, making it less able to assert its will over the conscious self's behavior. If the psychodynamic is brought to 0 psych STH it will appear to die and that element of the person's personality will cease functioning.

As long as the psychodynamic's realm remains, that psychodynamic, even one brought to 0 psych STH, will heal 1 point of Psych STH per week. The only way to permanently kill a psychodynamic from inside the subconscious is to incapacitate it and completely decimate its realm.

Visitors to a subconscious can also temporarily trap or tie up a psychodynamic and thus keep it from doing its job.

Visitors can also corrupt a psychodynamic. This can be done by finding some terrible, poisonous, diseased or cursed object (usually a part of or refuse from a Trauma) and impaling the psychodynamic with it or burying it in the heart of the psychodynamic's realm.

From outside the subconscious, psychodynamics can be destroyed via H-Tech (see Fulfillment Dynamics, p.222), brain surgery or by completely integrating that part of one's personality into one's conscious mind (see p.259).

The Origin of the Subconscious and Psychodynamics

At first you had no knowledge of self or not self. There was only comfort and discomfort. The desire to have physical pleasures and avoid discomforts was the Id. The Id was thoughtless, shapeless, primeval desire, willing to do anything no matter the consequences.

Yet when you left the womb, some sensations excited the knowledge that was programmed into you by evolution. You had basic drives that were beyond the simple hedonism of the Id, and these drives formed the Reptile.

As you grew older you learned that doing some things got you yelled at or spanked. You memorized your parents' rules and to remind you of them you created a little internal parent to nag you. This was the Super Ego.

Yet you were at war with yourself. The Id, Reptile and Super Ego all wanted you to do different things. As the Super Ego grew more sophisticated it started getting angry, not just at things you did but at things you wanted and felt. A mediator was created, the Ego. The Ego built a wall between you and the unacceptable thoughts and desires so you could still have them but not upset the Super Ego by being conscious of them. It also created your first ever self-concept: the idea of a single unified person rather than a chaos of conflicting desires.

As you got older you became more sensitive to what was expected of you. You learned you were one gender and you were supposed to act like that one gender and not the others, so you created an internal model of the opposite gender, the Animus or Anima, that would contain all those thoughts and feelings you were not allowed.

Similarly you learned certain thoughts and feelings were "evil" and you learned to suppress them behind the subconscious, where they formed the Shadow.

Later, you learned that life contains suffering, but that life can end. While your Reptile told you to fear death, some other part of you grew to want what it hoped would be an end to life's trials. That part was quickly suppressed into your subconscious and became your Thannatos.

Finally, at some point you became aware of your own ignorance. You learned there was a world of things out there you did not yet understand. This knowledge led to fear of the unknown, but it also created a new source of hope: that the solution to your problems might lie in the dark reaches of that which you do not yet know. This commingled fear and hope became your Stranger.

Integrating Psychodynamics- A few very extreme mystical and psychological practices can integrate the knowledge and desires of a psychodynamic into consciousness. Once the conscious self takes responsibility for everything that a psychodynamic does, that psychodynamic ceases to exist. The psychological energy that the psychodynamic was made from is transferred to the conscious mind. The conscious self's WIL increases (approximately +1 WIL per 5 psych STH freed). If the WIL is increased to superhuman levels (more than 20), then other attributes rise as well. Each point above 20 gives 5 additional attribute points that can increase other non-WIL attributes above the 20 maximum.

Advanced Androgynes can integrate their Anima or Animus. Advanced practitioners of ascetic mystical systems (including Cannibals) may be able to eliminate the Id. People who practice unrestrained fulfillment of their desires become complete sociopaths and lose both their Shadows and Super Egos.

Example: *An advanced Androgyne completely eliminates hir gender identity. The Anima had 5 Psych STH, the Animist gains 1 WIL. This changes the Androgyne's WIL from 20 to 21, giving hir 5 additional attribute points.*

For an example of someone with no psychodynamics see Cleans, p.224.

Typical Id

Most Common Appearance- A house-sized, obese baby with a mouth full of sharp fangs.

Attributes- AGY 1, AWR 1, CHM 0, END 100, INL 1, SPD 15, STH 40, WIL 2, 5 BLD per psych STH.

Social Status- Other psychodynamics know they cannot negotiate with the Id. They try to stay out of its way and they ready themselves to try to fight it off if it corners them. Mostly they try to misdirect it: offering it some little thing it wants to keep it away from what they don't want it to find.

Behavior- It stomps around the subconscious eating anything it can find and relieving itself wherever it wants. It can talk using simple language but will be unwilling to say anything except demands for things it wants. It is curious. It hates pain and discomfort and will flee from anything that hurts it.

Psychology- The Id is pure and unrestrained desire. It is completely selfish, only caring about its own pleasure and comfort. It does not plan for the future, has no fear of death and does not try to make allies.

Special Abilities- The Id can heal 1 psychic STH (5 BLD) per round. The Id has a bite that does 4 bladed damage.

Typical Attack- First a Grab at STH (40) + AGY (1) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +16 vs. 0), then, as the next action, a bite (no roll necessary if the grab has been maintained) doing 4 bladed damage.

Typical Reaction- The Id makes a simultaneous Knockaway at STH (40) + AGY (1) + WIL (2) +1d20 vs. 45 (or 1d20 vs. 2). Note: the Id is at +20 to hit because if its size.



Id

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

DO NOT READ

Coming to This Realm- Psychodynamics can come to this realm in three ways. The easiest is to force their way past the Ego, through the doors of perception and take over the conscious self's body. The conscious self gets an opposed WIL save unless it is mentally incapacitated. The next easiest way is to find a portal leading to another person's subconscious, fight their way past that person's Ego and take over the body of that person. In either of these two cases, the presence of the psychodynamic gives the body increased physical abilities (see the Soul Linked plusses on p.29).

The most difficult way is for the psychodynamic to find a portal leading to the physical world. The psychodynamic emerges as a physical being with the same form and abilities that it has in the subconscious. Despite being in this world, the psychodynamic still exists, in part, in the person's subconscious. It performs its normal functions, although not as well, and it can still influence the conscious self (see Using Psychodynamics, p.129) at half its normal psych STH. Killing the physical manifestation will not destroy the psychodynamic inside the subconscious, only temporarily weaken it. Killing the conscious self, however, will cause the physical manifestation of the psychodynamic to fade out of existence.

Typical Super Ego

Most Common Appearance- A large, angry version of whichever parent had the worst temper, or occasionally of both parents melded together into a single being. It stands about 7 feet (2.1 m.) tall, has a booming voice and glaring eyes.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 20, CHM 5, END 20, INL 15, SPD 15, STH 30, WIL 20, 3 BLD per psych STH.

Behavior- It travels around peering over people's shoulders, rifling through their belongings, glowering at them and demanding to know what they have been doing and are planning on doing.

Psychology- The Super Ego is the internalization of society's laws. It grows angry at any transgression of those laws. It doesn't really know why certain thoughts and behaviors are wrong, just that they are. It believes that all transgressions must be punished.

Social Status- The Super Ego finds every psychodynamic except the Ego to be suspect and thinks of them as enemies. It hates the Shadow worst of all. The Super Ego has a stormy relationship with the Ego: sometimes friendly with it and sometimes hating it.

Special Abilities- The Super Ego can tell when people are lying or doing something they feel guilty about. It grows temporarily larger (+5 STH, +3 BLD) each time someone it faces fails a save vs. fear. It has the equivalent of the skills Torture (3) and Brain Washing (2).

Typical Attack- A Grab: Pain at STH (30) + INL (15) +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 +10 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- A simultaneous Knockout with fists at STH (30) + AGY (10) + WIL (20) +1d20 vs. 50 (or 1d20 +10 vs. 0).

Typical Reptile

Most Common Appearance- A human-sized, lizard-like being with some human features (e.g. large head, prehensile hands, ability to walk bipedally) and cold, unmoving eyes.

Attributes- AGY 20, AWR 20, CHM 1, END 1, INL 5, SPD 15, STH 10, WIL 5, 2 BLD per Psych STH.

Behavior- It spends most of its day sitting still in the sun somewhere warm, moving only to grab a piece of food or escape from a predator. When it moves, it moves very quickly, showing ease with its surroundings. It never shows emotion. It can speak, if forced to, and speaks with quick, emotionless brevity.

Psychology- The Reptile is a being of pure instinct. The closest it has to emotions are "fight" and "flight" (neither of which are experienced with the same depth as anger or fear). It does not think in abstractions, concepts or ideals. It does not want anything other than its own survival and the survival of the conscious self.

Social Status- The Reptile keeps to itself in its own realm whenever possible, only occasionally venturing to the Ego's realm to try to push something into the person's consciousness. It rarely comes into conflict against anyone but the Super Ego.

Special Abilities- The Reptile reacts with incredible speed, giving it +20 to initiative and +10 to all actions/reactions. It has claws which do 2 bladed damage.

Typical Attack- Paired Slash with its claws at INL (5) + AGY (20) +10 (special ability) -4 (paired) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +6 vs. 0). If successful the victim takes a total of 1 point of bladed damage and must make 2 opposed saves vs. distracting pain (difficulty 20).

Typical Reaction- Dodge at AWR (20) + AGY (20) +10 (special ability) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +25 vs. 0).

Typical Ego

Most Common Appearance- The Ego looks like its owner. It wears simple conservative clothing and has a dour expression on its face.

Attributes- AGY 15, AWR 20, CHM 15, END 15, INL 15, SPD 10, STH 10, WIL 20, 2 BLD per Psych STH.

Social Status- The Ego is the guard of the gates to the person's consciousness and all other psychodynamics need to petition or fight the Ego to get something to the person's consciousness. If the Ego is incapacitated, the gates between the conscious and subconscious begin to crumble.

Psychology- The Ego is a peacemaker and negotiator, always trying to figure out what others want and to find solutions that fit everyone's needs. The Ego is also a secret keeper. It won't tell people things that might upset them and it feels like it has the right to do anything in its power to protect people from things they don't need to know. The Ego is an accomplished liar, actor and manipulator.

Behavior- In the subconscious, it patrols the Gates of Perception, waiting for others to come petition it, fight it or try to sneak past it. It is calm and observant. It speaks in a dry, slightly annoyed tone as if explaining something to an idiot.

Special Abilities- The Ego can make anything or anyone, including itself, appear to be anything or anyone else of roughly equal size or shape, just by waving its hand at the thing.

Typical Attack- The Ego will make a surprise attack whenever possible, making itself look like an ally and attacking with a weapon that doesn't look like a weapon. The Ego will make an extended Vital Strike with a bladed weapon at AGY (15) + INL (15) +5 (extended) +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- A dodge at AWR (20) + AGY (15) -10 (extended action) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 0).

Typical Anima

Most Common Appearance- A woman in a thin white dress. Her appearance is constantly shifting depending on her mood. At times she is young, beautiful and voluptuous, her lips so full that they part involuntarily. At other times she looks plump and kindly. At other times grey streaks appear in her hair, her lips scowl and her eyes have a cruel glare.

Attributes- AGY 15, AWR 20, CHM 20, END 15, INL 15, SPD 15, STH 10, WIL 15, 2 BLD per psych STH.

Behavior- She seeks out males, yet when she interacts with them she vacillates between flirting with them, comforting them and insulting them. She mostly ignores other females, unless they have done something to make her jealous.

Psychology- This is the repository for suppressed 'feminine' thoughts and behaviors, yet because Western cultures subdivide feminine into several disparate roles, the Anima has a split personality with a seductive side, a mothering side and a cruel side all trying to make themselves heard.

Social Status- Other psychodynamics both love and fear the Anima. They seek out her advice often and stand by to let her take control when the conscious self is dealing with women, yet they make ready to defend themselves when she comes near in case she flies into a sudden rage.

Special Abilities- The Anima is at +15 to seduction rolls. She has sharp fingernails capable of doing 2 bladed damage per swipe.

Typical Action- A Paired Slash with both hands at INL (15) + AGY (15) -4 (paired) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +1 vs. 0). Does a total of 1 bladed damage and victims must make 2 moderate (20) difficulty saves vs. pain.

Typical Reaction- A Simultaneous Vital Strike with her fingernails at INL (15) + AGY (15) + WIL (15) + 1d20 vs. 55 (or 1d20 vs. 10) doing 4 bladed damage if successful.

Typical Stranger

Most Common Appearance- A larger-than-average mixed-breed housecat with shaggy hair, no collar and intelligent green eyes.

Attributes- AGY 30, AWR 25, CHM 1, END 20, INL 20, SPD 25, STH 5, WIL 20, 2 BLD per 1 psych STH.

Behavior- The Stranger does not have its own realm and instead wanders at will through other's realms. The Stranger does not speak, nor does it acknowledge human speech (it won't, for instance, nod yes or no to a question no matter how much it is begged to). It comes and goes as it pleases, appearing out of and disappearing back into shadows or greenery. It often disappears while the person who was talking to it is in mid-sentence. It will yowl or scratch to get a person's attention and will lead the person along, not bothering to look back to see if the person is actually following.

Psychology- The Stranger has no interest in common sense, popular wisdom or anything the conscious self already knows. It is constantly searching for new connections, new ways of interpreting things, new points of view and new sources of wisdom. It is a ceaseless explorer. It rarely thinks in words, although it is capable of understanding language. It is never satisfied with any answer; it always searches for an even better answer. Once if finds an answer that it thinks is valuable it tries to lead the conscious self to the same realization.

Social Status- The Stranger only rarely communicates with the other psychodynamics but when it does it is typically trying to help them solve some problem. When it goes to the Ego to have something pushed through to consciousness the Ego rarely has reason to say no.

Special Abilities- The Stranger can prowl, climb and jump at 1d20 +40 vs. difficulty. It can see and hear at no penalties in any conditions.

Typical Attack- Split Jump (into range) and Pain/Stun Attack with its claws at INL (20) + AGY (30) -10 (split) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +15 vs. 0).

Typical Reaction- Jump (out of range) at SPD (25) + AGY (30) + 1d20 vs. 25 (+10 per extra range unit) or 1d20 +30 vs. 0.

Typical Shadow

Most Common Appearance- The shadow is usually the opposite of the conscious self. If the conscious self dresses conservatively, the shadow has tattoos and a mohawk. If the conscious self has tattoos and a mohawk then the shadow dresses in a business suit. Most commonly the Shadow is a dirty, disheveled man with greasy dark hair hanging in his face. The hair hides most of his face in shadow, yet one can see angry eyes and a permanent sneer. He has various piercings and tattoos of demons, skulls, swastikas and pentagrams. He wears black leather pants and a leather jacket with an exposed chest. Various weapons are displayed proudly on his belt.

Attributes- AGY 17, AWR 20, CHM 15, END 25, INL 17, SPD 20, STH 30, WIL 15, 2 BLD per psych STH.

Behavior- The Shadow is aggressive and cruel to anyone it meets. Whenever it finds someone it circles them, threatening and insulting them, trying to provoke a reaction. It doesn't actually torture and kill unless the victim has done something to offend or hurt the Shadow or its conscious self.

Psychology- The Shadow is a compilation of all the suppressed traits that would have made the conscious self feel like a 'bad person.' Cruelty is most common among these traits. Also common are arrogance, sexual 'perversion,' prejudice, atheism, jealousy, dishonesty and self-hatred. The Shadow will never attempt to hide any of these traits from anyone, it is intensely proud of them.

Social Status- The Shadow feels that many of the other psychodynamics are its kin. The Id, Thannatos, Animus/Anima and Reptile all represent thoughts, desires and feelings that the Ego and Super Ego are constantly trying to suppress. The Shadow is always trying to help and form compacts with those psychodynamics. The Shadow considers the Super Ego its arch enemy and will attempt to sabotage anything the Super Ego does.

Special Abilities- The Shadow is adept at hurting people and gets +15 to crippling, slash and pain/stun attacks. The Shadow always has at least one weapon on its person.

Typical Attack- Crippling attack with a rusty knife at STH (30) + AGY (17) +15 (special ability) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 +32 vs. 0) doing 2½ ragged damage.

Typical Reaction- A Parry with brass knuckles at STH (30) + AGY (17) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +22 vs. 0).

DO NOT READ

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Typical Thannatos

Most Common Appearance- A thin, pale, handsome young man with dark eyes and long black hair, wearing a black suit and a black top-hat.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 15, CHM 15, END 15, INL 15, SPD 10, STH 15, WIL 15, 2 BLD per psychic STH.

Behavior- The Thannatos spends most of its time sitting somewhere overlooking scenes of death, destruction or decay with calm satisfaction. The Thannatos is moody: cheerful and boyishly charming when talking about death, dour and depressed when talking about life.

Psychology- The Thannatos believes that life is suffering with no redeeming features and that the best any being can hope for is a quick and painless death. It likes to hear about anything that has ended: lost civilizations, extinct species, burned-out stars, etc.

Social Status- The Thannatos feels like an outcast in the psychodynamic, that none of the other psychodynamics can understand it. The Ego, who shares the Thannatos' desire to protect the conscious self from suffering, often listens to the Thannatos' arguments for death but is rarely ever convinced.

Special Abilities- While killing someone, the Thannatos can cause Hard (30) difficulty Euphoria.

Typical Attack- An extended Grab: Strangulation at STH (15) + AGY (10) +5 (extended) vs. 25 (or 1d20 +5 vs. 0). Once grabbed, the victim must make a hard save vs. Euphoria (WIL + 1d20 vs. 30) to resist.

Typical Reaction- A simultaneous Grab: Strangle at STH (15) + AGY (10) + WIL (15) -10 (extended) vs. 45 (or 1d20 vs. 15).

Typical Animus

Most Common Appearance- A large, muscular, hairy man with broad shoulders and a cleft chin. He is handsome but has cruel, brutish eyes. He is wearing a white tank top and blue jeans. He emits a strong, musky scent.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 10, CHM 5, END 20, INL 10, SPD 15, STH 25, WIL 20, 2 BLD per psych STH.

Behavior- The Animus struts around, flirting with any female he finds and challenging any male to a fight.

Personality- The Animus is a caricature of what the conscious self's culture considers masculine. He is stubborn, bullying, impatient, arrogant, quick to anger, crude, brave and has a huge sexual appetite.

Social Status- The Animus is mostly well liked by the other psychodynamics except the Super Ego, which is at constant war against the Animus' attempts to make the conscious self act 'manly.'

Special Abilities- The Animus gets +10 to seduction rolls.

Typical Attack- First a Knockdown at STH (25) + AGY (10) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 +5 vs. 0) then, on the next action, a Stomp at SPD (16) + STH (25) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +15 vs. 0) doing 3 blunt damage.

Typical Reaction- Simultaneous Knockdown at 1d20 +5 vs. 0.

Bubbles

In Brief- Pockets of reality that suck people in, try to make them take part in scripted dramas and then destroy them.

When humans imagine a scene, that scene 'exists' to some limited degree somewhere outside this reality. The more strongly the scene resonates with the person, and the more aspects of the person's consciousness and subconsciousness are excited by the scene, the more 'real' the scene becomes. Few scenes are anything more than a ghost, hovering briefly in the void outside this reality before fading away. They never have a chance to effect any other reality. When scenes are shared between minds, each mind interprets them slightly differently and this discrepancy creates a 'fuzziness' that bleeds the reality out of most imagined scenes. Thus a scene in a book read by a million people has less reality than a scene imagined strongly by a single person.

Only a very tiny minority of imaged scenes ever increase in 'reality' over time. These scenes have the following properties:

-They are extremely simple, leaving little room for interpretation.

-They are limited in geographic scope and never refer to things happening outside the bounds of the scene (leaving no room for conjecture about what is happening elsewhere).

-They are repetitive and never refer to things happening before and after the scene (leaving no room for conjecture about what happened before or after).

-They are emotionally and aesthetically gripping.

-They are either capable of being easily transferred from person to person (e.g. by a story, a poem, a piece of artwork) or they can occur independently to different people.

These scenes, called bubbles, accrue such reality that they can effect this world. They float around outside this reality, attracted to people who imagine or experience things like the scene in the bubble. Once they attach to a single human mind they slowly invade this reality.

The bubble is not intelligent, nor are the actors in it. The bubble follows the laws of the universe, drawn mindlessly to minds that imagine things like the scene in a bubble. The actors inside the bubble are only following a script.

Infection- First the scene invades the person's subconscious. The person will have nightmares of the bubble and will find himself or herself doodling icons from the bubble. Next the scene invades the conscious mind and the person starts hallucinating scenes from the bubble in the middle or his or her regular life. These are mostly short glimpses: a fleeting glimpse of something down an alley, a voice from behind that says a single word, a fleeting touch on one's hand, etc. It is very hard to tell the difference between these and real stimuli.

Next, the bubble starts to effect volatile media around the person. Audio tapes, TV static, undeveloped film, etc. will start manifesting images or sounds from the bubble.

Next, small physical things that are prominent in the bubble will begin to manifest in the real world: e.g. ants, leaves, water, etc. At this point the person could, at any time, be swallowed up whole into the bubble. The victim disappears from this reality and finds himself or herself the main character in the scene that repeats infinitely in the bubble. The scene usually involves the death of the victim or the loss of his or her individuality (he or she become another will-less mechanical actor in the bubble).

Actors from the bubble can occasionally come to this world, usually in pursuit of a victim who managed to escape from the bubble before the completion of the plot.

Bubbles usually attach themselves to one victim at a time, but they have been known to attach themselves in parallel to a small group of people who are in close proximity to each other and who are sharing thoughts and feelings.

Surviving a Bubble- If, while a bubble is still infecting a person, the victim gets another person to think about the scene, the bubble may detach itself from the first person's mind and reattach itself to another. However, after the new victim dies, the bubble will once again be floating freely and if the original victim is reminded of the scene then he or she will once again become a target. Example: *Abe reads a poem and finds himself being sucked into a bubble. He gives the poem to a friend and the bubble detaches and goes after the friend.*

Being placed in a dreamless coma can keep one from being sucked into a bubble, but only until the person re-awakens.

Alternately, if a victim can completely rid his or her mind of imaginings of the scene then the bubble will detach. This would mean not only complete distraction (or a superhuman act of will) during waking hours, but also destroying instances of the scene in one's subconscious and dreams.

A victim can avoid being absorbed completely by staying in the company of people who are not targets of the bubble. Their awareness of the victim's location in this reality helps keep that location from changing.

If one is sucked into to a bubble, the only way one can survive is to create an experience, both in action and emotion, that is radically different from that scripted by the bubble. This will cause the bubble to eject the victim back into this world. So, as the terrible monster closes in on the victim if the victim can feel joy and pleasure, instead of fear, the victim will be ejected. If the victim can resist the script and change the outcome of the scene (e.g. fight back against the monster) the victim will also be ejected. Normally victims enjoy free will within the bubble unless they try to do something which will radically change the 'script' at which point the bubble tries to take control and the PC must make a hard (30) difficulty WIL roll to retain freedom of movement.

If one can find a way out of the geographic confines of the scene, or can destroy the bubble (e.g. with a legendary Nihilistic Rage roll) one will find oneself back in this reality.

Bubbles vs. Dances

Bubbles	Dances
Created from strong scenes imagined by people.	Created from unexpressed emotions left in places.
Powered by the 'reality' given to them by imaginers.	Powered by the wishes for self-expression of the people who had the emotions.
Not intelligent (move around randomly, attracted to people thinking certain thoughts).	Intelligent ('steal' mental resources from the infected).
Attack people who imagine things similar to the scene in the bubble.	Attack people who are nearby and who are weak or willing.
Exist outside this reality.	Exist in old abandoned buildings.
Suck in humans, dissolve their free will.	Try to repel humans (except those with no free will).
Cause hallucinations in victims.	Cause 'remembered' thoughts, sensations and emotions in victims.
Effect physical reality easily.	Only the most powerful can effect the physical world.
Have 'characters' that rarely leave the bubble.	Have servants (Faustians) and will-less slaves.
Nearly impossible to destroy (requires a shatter or high-level Nihilistic rage).	Easy to destroy (destroy the building or walk around inside) but has many defenses.
Completely independent and autonomous.	Selfish and independent, but occasionally work with other Dances.

Battleground

The Scene- The victim is walking in a field covered with dead soldiers in European WWII uniforms. The field is wet, muddy and has many pools of muddy water. It is cold and there is a patchy fog. There is no sound, only an annoying ringing noise. The victim is overwhelmed with a feeling that there is no point in doing anything (30 difficulty save vs. dysphoria), sinks to his or her knees, lies down in the mud and dies.

Transmission- For decades is was only survivors of a certain WWII battle that were preyed upon by this bubble. Recently, though, a major motion picture had a very similar scene in it and since then the bubble has sucked in dozens of people.

Infection- The ringing noise can be heard on audio recordings, while photos may show grainy black-and-white images of dead soldiers. Hallucinations are of the ringing noise blocking out all other sound. Physical manifestations include pools of muddy water and fog.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

STOP GO AWAY

Journal

Sept 3rd- Had a horrible nightmare last night about being chased through the woods. It must have been because of Eddie's pitiful attempt to tell a campfire story the other day.

Sept 4th- Fucking Eddie. His story was so lame – why is it getting under my skin like this? Yesterday I spent all day in class doodling these creepy eyes. I didn't even realize I was doing it – drew all over my class notes. Then I had the same nightmare again last night. Woke me up – twice. I'll try having a few beers before I go to bed tonight.

Sept 5th- Got to make an appointment with Health Services, get me some Xanax or Prozac or Ritalin or whatever will make me less jumpy. I keep thinking I'm hearing growling noises from behind me. And last night I got up in the middle of the night to pee and when I looked down the hall and it was all dark and there were those creepy glowing eyes. I almost shit myself. I came back a few minutes later and the lights were on at the end of the hall and there was nothing there.

Sept 6th- Something is seriously fucking wrong. I couldn't sleep hardly at all last night. I was listening to some Interpol on my mp3 player and I kept hearing this growling and panting. I made Lupe listen to it and she heard it too. She's all 'that's what you get for stealing music off the internet.' I and I was like 'It wasn't like that before,' and she said 'well someone's fucking with you.'

Sept 7th- I'm carrying a knife around. Can you believe that? Like what am I'm supposed to do with a knife if that thing from my dreams jumps out at me? I drank like 50 energy drinks so I wouldn't fall asleep last night because I didn't want to have that nightmare again. I stayed up all night with the lights on listening to music at full blast. Even with all that I kept getting this feeling like something's breathing on the back of my neck.

I can't even go to the fucking campus convenience store. I went to get some more energy drinks and I made the mistake of looking up at the monitor for the security camera. As I'm looking at it the picture of the store behind me gets all dark and then I see those fucking eyes.

I skipped class today. My nerves are so shot. I wish there was someone I could call who wouldn't think I was crazy. I can't listen to mp3s anymore – the music is all gone and there's just this panting like a big dog. I'm still doodling. Drew these evil fucking eyes on my arm just a minute ago. I bit eyes into my microwave burrito earlier – I just looked down and the fucking thing was staring at me.

Sept 8th- I wish I could believe this was someone fucking with me. This morning there were these muddy footprints in the hall like a big giant dog just wandered through. They're totally real: Lupe saw them. They scared her. She went back in her room real fucking quick.

I kind of want to go where there's people, but I don't want to spaz out in public and have someone call the campus cops. They'd just take me to the psych hospital, like they did with Chris when he was talking about suicide. They'd take my knife away from me – that's for damn sure. Whatever this thing is I'm sure it can get me in a padded cell as easily as it can get me here.

And why do I keep finding leaves in my hair?

Sept 9th - It's so late. I'm so tired. How many days has it been since I slept? I wish I could just sleep, but I'm afraid to close my eyes for even a second or I'll end up in those woods. I already feel like I'm halfway there. It smells like trees, and when I walk it feels like dirt under my feet and I feel this cold breeze even though I turned the heater up as far as it would go.

Why me? Why is this happening to me? Because I laughed at Eddie's stupid story even though it was actually kind of scary? But it was so lame. I mean it's not even a story – it doesn't make sense. I mean it's just these people lost in the woo….

Hunted in the Woods

The Scene- Victims are lost in the woods at night. There is a full moon. Victims hear growls, scrapes, breathing and footsteps that indicate something large and non-human is in the darkness following them. The victims eventually break into a run and the thing chases. Victims trip, fall and are seized by the thing, which kills them instantly. The 'thing' is never seen in the light, it is only a large (pony sized) black shape with glowing eyes and a large mouth full of sharp teeth.

Transmission- Although it is sometimes told as a campfire story, most victims independently imagine the scene that attracts this bubble, usually while in the woods at night.

Infection- Common hallucinations and media manifestations include eyes in the darkness and growls. Physical signs include leaves and muddy footprints of huge paws.

Actors- The hunter is a huge black shape with glowing eyes and fangs. It has AGY 25, AWR 25, CHM 0, END 40, INL 2, SPD same as the victim's, STH 35, WIL 20, BLD 7, BDY 15, INCY 15. The hunter can prowl at 1d20 +33 vs. difficulty (although it is part of the script that the hunter always makes its presence known). Typical first action is a jump into range and, next action, a Vital Strike at 1d20 vs. 0 doing 10 bladed damage (pierces armor as 15).

Puppet Attic

The Scene- In a dusty, dimly lit attic, the victim lies on his or her back, unable to move, hyperventilating with a look of terror on his or her face. Two old-fashioned marionette puppets are doing a wordless dance (sometimes to the sound of an old music box). They both have little knives attached to their hands. The shadows of the puppets fall on the face of the human as they dance. They pause in their dance to menace the human with knives. At the end they stop dancing, slowly lower their knives towards the human's face and then slice the human's eyes open.

Transmission- The scene is played out in a short black-and-white silent film created by a French Surrealist filmmaker in 1931. There are several copies of this film floating around, mainly among collectors of antiquities, weird films or occult objects (or in the estate sales of those collectors after they disappear). Shortly after it was made there were rumors in the Surrealist community that is was a cursed film, but few are left alive who remember those rumors.

Infection- Snippets of the film may find their way onto video or photos. Hallucinations are often of the shadows of puppets or audio hallucinations of a music box. Physical manifestations can include dust or little knives.

The Actors- The puppets have AGY 2, AWR 5, CHM 0, END 15, INL 10, SPD 2, STH 2, WIL 7, BLD 1, BDY 1, INCY 1. They attack with little knives, doing a Blinding Strike or 2 damage Vital Strike at 1d20 vs. 10. As a reaction they jump-out at 1d20 vs. 5.

A LITTLE STORY

STOP GO AWAY

Before anything happened there was GrandPa. GrandPa was real smart and he knew everything. But he was all alone. There weren't any people he could talk to or things he could look at. Worst of all, there wasn't anything GrandPa didn't know, and that made life very boring. GrandPa realized that the only way to experience something new was to have some children. He made 32 children. Each was very smart and wise, though not so much as GrandPa.

The first thirty-one thought enough things to fill a million books, and felt enough feelings to write a billion poems about, and they did it all in less time than it takes to blink an eye. When they had thought every thought they could possible think, and felt every feeling they could possibly feel, they crawled inside of GrandPa's body and went to sleep forever.

The thirty-second child was named Sophie. She thought that she could make the world even more interesting for GrandPa if she had children of her own.

Sophie wasn't sure how to make children, so she tried cutting out parts of herself and forming them in to a person. This person she named Demi. Demi only had part of a brain, so he couldn't think straight. And he only had half a heart, so he couldn't feel anything except hate. As soon as she finished making Demi she realized she had made a really big mistake. She tried to take Demi apart and put the pieces back inside her, but she was very weak from all the missing pieces and Demi couldn't [illegible] her take him apart.

Sophie thought about it and realized what she'd done wrong. GrandPa hadn't cut out parts of himself, he had made little baby copies of himself. Sophie realized she needed to do the same thing. Except she couldn't because she was no longer a complete person, what with

DO NOT READ

all the parts she had pulled out to make Demi. She wasn't strong enough to take Demi apart, but she could grab Demi and hold Demi to her close enough to make babies together. Demi didn't want to make babies but Sophie made him do it anyway.

They made a whole lot of grandkids, and she made them a wonderful place to live where they could play and explore all day long.

Demi was mad at Sophia and mad at the grandkids. He came up with a plan to get revenge. First, he built a trap. Then he built a spear. He went to Sophia and when she wasn't looking he stabbed her with the spear. It didn't kill her, but it caused her such terrible pain that she couldn't move. Sophie was the one who kept the grandkid's home nice, and with her paralyzed with pain, the playground turned in to a very dark and cold place. The grandkids didn't like it at all and they didn't know what to do. Then Demi came to them and said 'Hey. I've got a place you can live.' The grandkids said 'okay,' and they followed Demi. Demi led them in to the trap.

They followed Demi into his house and when each one came through the door he bonked him or her on the headand knocked each one out. Then, while they were sleeping, Demi attached dream machines to them that made them all dream the same dream. They dreamed that there had never been a grandpa or a Sophie or a Demi. They dreamed that the dream world was the only real world. Because they never knew they were dreaming, they could never wake up. They're still dreaming even though they don't know it.

The End

CHAPTER EIGHT - ADVENTURES

The Horror Movie Test

A good way for a GM to gauge what his or her players might like is to ask them what horror movies have scared them in an enjoyable fashion. Here are some ideas to grab based on some of the player's favorite movies:

Alien- Monsters should be faster and more agile than humans, should be just as smart, and should act completely alien. Monsters should never talk. Medical problems can be scary if they're associated with a supernatural horror. Good villains: Torturers or Deserted City Creatures.

Blair Witch Project- Giving horror an air of realism is important. Plots and supernatural dangers don't have to be fancy or complicated: trap the PC in a situation, let them know some unexplained supernatural danger is after them, and then sabotage their every attempt to get out of that situation. Good villains: Bubbles.

Exorcist- The fate of an innocent can be enough motivation to drive an adventure. Face to face interaction with pure malevolence can be frightening. Good villains: Rogue Psychodynamics or Atomic Ghosts.

The Grudge/Ju-On- Forget that tripe about waiting before showing the monster. 'Show' the monster quickly and often, but keep its behavior and motivations alien. Let the players see or find out about people being slaughtered by the monster, despite the fact that they ran away and despite the fact that they were capable of fighting back. Death doesn't need to be gory to be scary. Good villains: Dances and Deserted City Creatures.

Hellraiser- Villains should be unexplained, alien things from an unexplained, alien place, but they should be well spoken and self-confident. We shouldn't understand them but they should understand us. Have them torture and kill humans in gory and imaginative ways just because they feel like it. Good villains: artifacts that open portals to other realms and Torturers.

Night of the Living Dead- Take something ubiquitous and relatively harmless and turn it into something dangerous and malevolent. Let players know that even if they survive the current danger their world will never be the same again. Even weak monsters can be scary if there are enough of them. Good villains: Wrigglers or Troubles.

The Ring/Ringu- Avoid horror clichés or, better yet, make players think you are using a horror cliché and have it turn out to be something very different. Don't use physical monsters that can be fought with physical weapons. For each supernatural danger or class of dangers, choose a few icons that tell of their arrival: dripping water, laughter, pieces of paper flying in a breeze, etc. Use media (photos, TV, phone, etc.) as a window on alien forces and realities. Good villains: Dances and Bubbles.

The Shining- Isolate and trap the characters. Steadily build tension higher and higher and then have a frenzy of action at the end. Throw in a lot of unexplained weird stuff and a creepy kid (p.242). Good villains: Supernatural Serial Killers and Dances.

Silence of the Lambs- Old fashioned serial killers can be scary if they're capable of insinuating themselves into the PC's minds. Mysteries are good. Good villains: Supernatural Serial Killers, Evil Touched or Escaped Psychodynamics.

Sixth Sense- The lesson is that ghosts aren't scary because they're dead, they're scary because when you see them and they see you there's no knowing what they're going to do next or even what they're capable of doing. Also, the more plot twists the better. Beneath the obvious horror add other things that aren't what they seem. Good villains: Dances and Denizens of the Invisible.

Monsters and Typical Enemies

Animal Forms, p.80
Birth Servants, p.81
Cat Familiar, p.27
Dog Familiar, p.27
Horse Familiar, p.27
Reapers, p.216
The Apartment 3B Dance, p.198
The Elizabeth Lake Monster, p.227
The Jefferson Park Killer, p.233
The Triangle, p.253
Typical Anima, p.261
Typical Animus, p.263
Typical Clean p.224
Typical Crying Girl, p.230
Typical Dog, p.90
Typical Ego, p.260
Typical Engineer, p.254
Typical Grey Man, p.231
Typical Horse, p.91
Typical Id, p.259
Typical LAPD Swat Team, p.169
Typical Reptile, p.260
Typical Shadow, p.261
Typical Starer, p.230
Typical Stranger, p.261
Typical Super Ego, p.260
Typical Surgeon, p.232
Typical Thannatos, p.262
Typical Trouble, p.257
Typical Wolf, p.229
Typical Wriggler, p.229

NPCs

Agatha Hartford, Wonderlander Elder, p.220
Carlos Ortega, Elder Lost, p.202
Cho'Taweh, Elder Animist, p.190
Duong "A.K." Bui, Devil Boys Leader, p.226
Father Garibaldi, Elder Cannibal, p.191
Henry Dewitt, Elder Outcast, p.204
Hideo Nakazawa, Atomic Ghost, p.237
Karl Rimbaud, Elder Scribbler, p.215
Killer, Dog King of L.A., p.225
Lawrence Myers, Elder Professional, p.210
Leanne Coates, Algernon, p.241
Maria Alvarado, Jekyl, p.241
Misty Lopez, Creepy Lost Kid, p.242
Octavio Hidalgo, Elder Survivor, p.217
Olesya Dekanozov, Semi-Awakened Killer, p.239
Regina Hamilton, Elder Faustian, p.196
Richard "Mr. Death" Bailey, Elder Hero, p.199
Tom Abernathy, Fulfillment Dynamics Director, p.223
Vox Free, Elder Androgyne, p.186
Wallace Holloway, Member of the Powers-That-Be, p.211
Yeng Kha, Hired Animist, p.226

GAME MASTERS ONLY

Railroading

Since In Dark Alleys is a horror game, it is important to put PCs into dangerous situations. Yet many players will feel either that it is their duty as players to fight the GM's attempt to put characters in danger or that it is 'good roleplaying' to have the characters avoid dangerous situations.

Thus, unless the GM and players want to have the adventure end at "So you avoid going in the creepy house and you live happily ever after," it may be necessary to take away some of the players' free will and force characters along a certain path. There are two ways of doing this: covertly and explicitly.

Covertly railroading characters means making it appear that the players have choices for their characters, but making it so that every choice the characters make ends in the same outcome. This method is liable to piss-off players when they realize what's going on. If nothing else, players who discover they are being covertly railroaded will fight back harder than ever against the path the GM has set out for them.

Explicitly railroading involves telling players how their free will has been shortcut. The easiest way to do this is to simply start the adventure in the dangerous situation and then fill in the back story. E.g. "You're in a creepy house, and this is how you got here…" GMs may even enlist the help of players to come up with a creative solution for why their characters ended up in this dangerous situation, thus giving the players a sense that they do have input and that they have not violated their characters' concepts. Explicit railroading is less likely to cause player anger than covert railroading.

Payphone

Synopsis- Someone the PCs know, Paul Buchannan, has lapsed into a sudden and unexplainable coma. As they are visiting him in the hospital one of the PCs gets a call on Paul's wife's cellphone. It's Paul, claiming to be lost and alone in a strange deserted city. PCs will have to find out how to get him back before he is killed by one of the city's inhabitants.

Player Introductions- If the PCs all know each other and are comfortable calling on each other for help with a supernatural situation, then it is only necessary that one PC have a relationship with Paul Buchannan. Otherwise, a relationship should be established for each.

The best relationship is for Paul to be one of the PC's bosses. This makes the PC concerned enough about Paul to visit him in the hospital but doesn't make Paul part of the complicated family history that PCs may have. Other possibilities are to make him the father of a PC's boyfriend or girlfriend, a client/patient if the PC's day job is doctor, lawyer or alternative health, or an in-law (e.g. uncle-in-law).

PC(s) with a relationship to Paul will get a call from a mutual acquaintance, saying that Paul would not wake up this morning and that he was taken to the hospital in a coma. The doctors can't figure out what's wrong with him. The PC(s) will be told that he is in Northridge Hospital.

Visiting the Hospital- Paul is in Northridge Hospital. He has recently been moved from the ICU to a private room on the 6th floor. Signs everywhere ask visitors to turn off cellphones.

Mandy Buchannan is waiting in the room, sitting at her husband's bedside. She will be happy that Paul has visitors, even if she does not know them. If any of the PCs look unconventional she will say something like "Paul never mentioned you" (meaning 'I didn't know Paul associated with any weirdos.')

After explaining Paul's condition (there's not much to tell: Paul wouldn't wake up this morning and neither she nor the doctors know why) she will ask if the PCs can stay with Paul while she goes out to get 'a bite to eat' (really she wants a drink). If PCs agree she will get her purse and quickly leave, forgetting her jacket.

Before long after she leaves, her cellphone, hidden in her jacket pocket, will ring. If PCs look they will see the caller ID showing only black squares. If PCs answer they will hear Paul Buchannan, sounding like he is on a very bad connection, asking for Mandy. He will be surprised to reach the PC's, but will be glad to speak to anybody.

Paul's Story- Paul remembers waking up in an unfamiliar city. It was, and still is, dark out, with no stars or moon visible. It didn't look like L.A.: there were too many old buildings. It looked to him like a European city. He wandered around trying to get help but the whole place was deserted and empty. He saw a shadowy figure moving down one block, but something about the way it was moving scared him and he ran away. After walking all day, thoroughly exhausting himself, he found an old payphone. He didn't have any change, and it wouldn't call an operator, so he tried just dialing his wife's cellphone number. It worked (although he hadn't dialed the area code) and he was connected to the PCs.

Investigating the Phone Call- The phone company will have no record of any of Paul's calls. The phone will show the incoming calls on the call history but will only show the number as black boxes. Dialing *69 to call the last caller will ring up one of Mandy Buchannan's friends.

Anyone who pays special attention to the background noise, or beats a 40 difficulty AWR roll, or records and enhances the audio, will hear a woman weeping in the background static.

Paul Buchannan, Coma Patient

Appearance- Fifties, Caucasian, pudgy but not obese, round face, balding, salt-and-pepper stubble, wearing either a powder-blue hospital gown (this world) or blue-and-white striped boxers and a white t-shirt (abandoned city).

Attributes- AGY 6, AWR 9, CHM 12, END 4, INL 12, SPD 6, STH 6, WIL 7, BLD 3, BDY 3, INCY 4.

Social Status- Paul Buchannan is upper-middle management in a corporate or government office. He does his job well and is liked by both his superiors and inferiors. He has been happily married for 30 years and has two adult children (not living at home) and two grandchildren.

Personality- Paul is friendly, easy going and enjoys a good joke (he doesn't consider himself 'witty' enough to make jokes but he likes to hear them). He used to be a little 'wild' in his youth, but he got it out of his system. He's now a law-abiding and honest person. He's not especially brave and avoids bad neighborhoods and tough looking young people. Paul is mildly prejudiced against non-conformists (e.g. people with tattoos) in the workplace, believing that if they were serious about their jobs they would do more to try to fit in.

Paul is unprepared to deal with danger or the supernatural. He freezes up, cries and begs for someone to help him. He does not take proactive measures. Right now he is lost, confused and scared. If anyone asks him what he wants to do or gives him more than one option he will be indecisive. If anyone tells him what to do he will do it, so long as it doesn't sound like it will put him in more danger.

Motivations– Paul takes pride in his work and he enjoys going to the office every day. He knows what he does isn't going to change the world, but at least he can make the job pleasant for those who work under him. His main motivation in regular life is to rise through the ranks of the company and get the biggest retirement package before he retires so he and his wife can enjoy cruises and fine wine in their retirement. His main motivation right now, however, is to find a way out of the strange city he's in and to get home.

Special Skills- Dreaming (1).

Typical Action- A punch at AGY (6) + STH (6) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 13) that does ½ blunt damage if successful.

Typical Reaction- A Jump out of range at SPD (6) + AGY (6) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 13).

Mandy Buchannan, Paul's Wife

Appearance- Short, pudgy, older Caucasian woman with curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a turquoise shirt and black slacks.

Attributes- AGY 7, AWR 8, CHM 10, END 5, INL 14, SPD 4, STH 3, WIL 9, BLD 4, BDY 3, INCY 3.

Social Status- Mandy is a retired schoolteacher and wife of Paul Buchannan.

Personality- Mandy is pleasant, enjoys spending time with her friends and with her husband. She has a lot of fears and insecurities but she hides them well. She has a minor alcohol problem: she drinks a few drinks every evening. Like her husband she is scared of, and stays away from, homeless people and tough looking young people. When she gets nervous she tends to babble about inane things.

Motivations- Right now Mandy would do just about anything to make her husband well again. The problem is that she doesn't know what she should do.

Investigating Paul's Body- Outcasts with the See Souls skill will see that Paul still has a soul but that it is weak (the same way an Animist looks when he or she Journeys). Mind Reading will reveal that there is no mind there. If anyone attempts to enter Paul's playland they will find themselves at the edge of a huge black pit that seems bottomless. They are on a thin rim of earth which disappears into the distance, their backs to a featureless black wall. Trying to move will cause bits of earth to fall down and the PCs will have to make saves vs. loss of balance to avoid falling in. Anyone who falls or jumps in will find themselves in the Deserted City.

Anyone with medical knowledge can find out that Paul's heart, respiration and metabolism seem normal, as do those parts of the brain that control those functions. Yet there is no higher brain activity whatsoever. The doctors thought it might be a massive stroke, but a PET scan showed no impedance of blood flow.

There are no reapers waiting for Paul. Switching bodies with him will only leave the PC's original body in a coma. The Visions or See True Face skills will show a black pit where his face should be.

Investigating Paul's Past- Paul has no criminal record. His past is all rather boring: growing up in the Midwest, going to college, moving to L.A. to get a job, working in a few boring companies, having kids, reaching middle management.

His medical record shows some ailments that are perfectly normal for a man his age: a few broken ribs after trying water-skiing 15 years ago, a prescription for Viagra, removal of a cancerous growth his chest. There were also problems with insomnia in his 30s, and a referral to a sleep clinic associated with USC called "Southern California Sleep Research Associates."

Investigating Paul's Home- Paul lives in a nice suburban house in the valley. If PCs go there while Mandy is visiting her husband there will be nobody in the house except a small dog. The house has a security system based on sensors on the doors and windows.

Everything in the house is consistent with a quiet suburban upper-middle-class family. It is nicely decorated, kept clean, and has an impressive store of liquors and nice wines. The only unusual thing the PCs will find is a little black journal Paul keeps on his nightstand. The book is a dream journal, detailing whatever Paul could remember of his dreams over the last few months. PCs will find other journals in a box in the attic dating back to 1985.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Reading all of Paul's dreams would take days. PCs who read his first dreams will notice that the writing is very neat, the descriptions very detailed and there are quite a few nightmares. They are written like a paper one is going to turn in to a college professor. There are notations indicating when Paul became lucid (aware that he was dreaming) and able to effect the course of the dream (usually avoiding a nightmare).

Recent entries are short, not written neatly and contain few references to nightmares. Recent entries are as follows:

Two weeks ago: "*?? Something about my old house in Ohio, something about burying my dog ?? Became lucid, went for a walk. Found hole in side of building, crawled through it. Was in weird city at night – no people. Found a black marble. Got bored and crawled back through the hole to Ohio."*

Then, two days later, amid another dream description: "*Found black marble in my pocket. Didn't know why I had it so I threw it out."*

Then, three days after that: *"Was in a restroom somewhere, there were no urinals so I worried it might be women's room. Saw that black marble on floor. Floor around it was cracked."*

A week ago: *"I was arguing with Mandy and all of the sudden the house started falling down."*

Six days ago: *"Came upon a crater where the street was all broken up. Something little and black at the bottom. Street started to crumble under my feet and I ran away."*

Four days ago: *"My neighborhood, everything in ruins, ground kept breaking under my feet. Was worried I would slide down into a big crater."*

Two days ago: *"??something about hanging on a tree so I didn't fall in some hole??."*

Investigating the Sleep Clinic- The clinic is now closed, the records are in storage in the basement of the psychology building at USC. Thy patient records are confidential, though patients did sign a release allowing the information to be shared for research purposes. One of the professors involved in the project, Dr. Amrita Shasharami, is still at USC and can tell PCs about it and show them the records.

The program Paul was in was a research project to try to treat insomnia (especially insomnia associated with nightmares) by teaching lucid dreaming. The process included instruction on lucid dreaming, repeating words to oneself before sleeping ("If anything uncomfortable happens I will remember I am dreaming and that I am in control of the dream") and keeping a dream journal (the pages of Paul's dream journal from the beginning of his days in the clinic are photocopied in the files). Dr. Shasharami won't find it strange that Paul continued keeping a dream journal, saying that it can be a fulfilling way to remember dreams and that she keeps one herself.

Paul's records reveal nothing unusual about his case. The lucid dreaming training helped put him at ease and helped him sleep through the night.

If PCs ask Dr. Shasharami about an abandoned city she will say that it seems to be a common dream theme, although nowhere near as common as showing up for a test one hadn't studied for or realizing one is wearing underclothes in public. Now that she thinks about it she realizes that she's only heard of lucid dreamers having the deserted city dream.

Further Conversations With Paul- Paul will stay at the payphone and continue to call his wife's cellphone as long as there is still someone to talk to on the other end. He will avoid going to sleep as long as he can (until at least 9 pm the next day) because he is afraid something will attack him in his sleep. He will notice that day never comes.

He will remember his dreams if prompted. He will acknowledge a similarity between the deserted city where he found the black marble and the city he is in now. If pressed he will remember having a dream about falling into a hole before waking up in a strange place.

Paul will be reluctant to stray too far from the phone. If he goes more than a couple of blocks away from it he will get lost and never be able to find it again.

At some point while the PCs are talking to him, Paul will gasp in terror, and then stammer "I see something! It's coming this way! What do I do? What do I do?" If asked to describe it, Paul will say "I don't know, I don't know, it's all dark. It's not shaped like a person and it moves… I don't know… not normal. And it's big." Then, about 30 seconds later: "Oh god! Help me! It's coming right at me! I think it saw me!" If PCs suggest Paul run and/or hide he will do so. If the PCs don't suggest anything like that then the creature will grab Paul and kill him. His body in the hospital will never awaken.

If Paul runs he will leave the phone off the hook. PCs will hear a scraping, shuffling noise approaching the phone, then the phone clattering, then they will hear several hissing voices all speaking at once, talking in an alien language, all saying nearly but not exactly the same things as each other. Then the phone will clatter and the scraping noise will move away. Paul will come back several minutes later saying that he hid in an abandoned building until the thing moved on.

Getting to Paul- There are several ways PCs can get to the abandoned city:

-A member of the Lost can use Homing to get to Paul (at 30 or 40 difficulty depending on how the PC tries it).

-A Wonderlander who can make a 30 difficulty Playland Geography roll can find the empty pit that was Paul's playland. Jumping in will send PCs to the Deserted City.

-An Outcast who can make a 30 difficulty Area Knowledge: Supernatural roll can find a portal to the Deserted City. There are two problems to this, though: the portal itself is a dangerous place (see A Portal to the Deserted City, p.250) and the portal will not lead directly to Paul – PCs will have to find their way through the city to him.

-An Animist with the Journeying skill can leave his or her body and go to the place described by Paul at 30 difficulty.

-PCs can use the Dreaming skill to become Lucid and find their way into Paul's dreams. Like his playland, Paul's dreams will be a giant black pit and if they jump in they will find themselves in the Deserted City.

Dr. Shasharami can give the PCs a crash course in Dreaming (1 level) and if the PCs can convince her of the paramount importance of what they are doing she will give them an experimental drug that will give them +20 to Dreaming skill rolls. The drug has the following side effects while awake only: Seizures (10), sensitivity to light (must save vs. distracting pain in bright lights), Hallucinations (20). PCs with the Herbal Medicine or Ethnogens skill know that Mugwort can help Lucid dreaming (gives +5, plusses do not stack with those from the experimental sleep drug).

In most cases the PCs should be able to get back, with Paul, the same way they got there: using the Get Lost and Homing skills, walking through a portal or flying through worlds via the Journeying skill.

If PCs used Enter Playland to get there they won't be able to come home via Paul's playland (remember, it's a black pit) but if they can get to the Wonderlander's playland they can go from there to the mundane realm.

If PCs get to the Deserted City via the Dreaming skill, however, they will be stuck, just like Paul, as they can neither dream their way out nor wake up. Their only hope is to wander the Deserted City until they find a portal that leads home (and hope that nothing kills them in the meantime).

If Paul can get back into his body, the damage caused by the black marble will be repaired: his playland and dreams will be back where they're supposed to be, he will wake up and be fine.

If PCs enter the Deserted City with their physical bodies (e.g. via Get Lost, a portal or going physically into a playland) they can come back the same way but when Paul attempts to follow them he will become a disembodied spirit (it wasn't his body in the Deserted City, only his mind). If they enter as a spirit (e.g. via Dreaming or Journeying) they will return as spirits, the same as Paul. A person with the Journeying skill will know that all Paul needs to do is get to his body and jump in.

Dangers in the Deserted City- One danger to PCs is getting lost. Unless they take extraordinary measures to keep their route from changing (e.g. spacing themselves out a block at a time, tying a string to their starting point, posting a lookout on top of a tall building, making hard WIL and INL rolls to remember and concentrate on where they've been, etc.) the route will change and they will have to wander until they find their starting point.

Finding anything in the Deserted City can be a challenge, since the distance between any two things can vary from infinite to a few feet depending upon luck and the PCs' states of mind. Maintaining a clear image in their minds of the thing or place they want will make it show up faster. When someone screams for someone else in the Deserted City, that scream will find its way to the target. So, if Paul screams for the PCs or the PCs scream for Paul it will allow them to find each other, but it will probably also attract Deserted City creatures.

Cellphones will work in the Deserted City if the PCs believe strongly enough that they will. Mandy Buchannan's cellphone will certainly receive calls from Paul's payphone.

The Monster

Appearance When it approaches, street lights and other light sources blink out, leaving it (in the Deserted City at least) nothing more than a shadow. It's about 7 feet (2 m.) tall, shrouded in multiple layers of torn black rags. Its body looks like a large grayish tongue which propels it along with rhythmic movements, like a cross between a snake and a slug. Its face is in constant motion: one human looking face opens its mouth to reveal another smaller face inside. As the mouth of the outer-face opens wider, the inner face grows larger. Eventually, the outer-face recedes into the darkness of the shroud, leaving nothing but the inner face. The cycle repeats itself about once every five seconds. When it speaks one can hear several scratchy voices at once saying almost identical things in an alien language. If cut it appears to have blood and organs, although a biologist will not be able to determine the function of the organs.

Attributes- AGY 7, AWR 2, CHM 0, END 20, INL 5, SPD 10, STH 40, WIL 15, BLD 20, BDY 10, INCY 10.

Abilities

-While in the Deserted City the monster can disappear into one shadow and reemerge, a round later, from any other shadow.

-The monster cannot feel pain or fear.

-The monster causes light-sources to short or snuff out within 20 ft. (6 m.).

-The monster can see in the dark at no penalties.

Psychology- The monster is incapable of fear, joy, anger or pain. It only acts out of curiosity. It investigates that which interests it and leaves when its curiosity is satisfied. It will not fight back or flee out of dislike of being injured. It does not recognize the PCs as intelligent beings and it does not understand or care that its investigations hurt and kill humans. It is interested by anything it doesn't see everyday (like the PCs) and will become more curious if the PCs run or fight back.

Typical Attack- It lifts its front up in the air and wraps its slug/tongue body around the victim, a Grab: Wrestling at STH (40) + INL (5) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 +15 vs. 0). It immobilizes all four limbs, does 1 blunt damage from crushing the victim and the victim must make saves vs. hypothermia (10 difficulty the first round, 20 the second, 30 the third, etc.). If PCs stay perfectly still and don't move it will examine each one for about 5 rounds, then move on to the next. If the PCs struggle, scream or fight then it will examine them longer.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

The monster that nearly attacked Paul is the primary danger to Paul and the PCs. If PCs are able to show up right where Paul is and bring him home immediately then they will probably not run into the monster. However, if the PCs wander the Deserted City, if they stay by the phone for awhile or if Paul shouts for them (or visa versa) the monster will show up

Killing or escaping from the monster is possible. If PCs leave via a portal and don't close it behind them then the monster may follow them into this world as a physical entity with all the same abilities it has in the Deserted City.

Outcomes- If the PCs save Paul Buchannan he will be eternally grateful and will pledge that he owes each PC a favor. If he is a boss of one of the PCs he will try to have the PC given advancement (or at least a bonus or small raise). He will be wary of telling anyone his story (he's afraid people will think he's crazy).

If Paul dies, nobody but the PCs will know that it was their failure.

Revenge of the Black Marble- If the PCs came to the Deserted City via Paul's dreams or playland, then after all else is done (perhaps even during another adventure), one of the PCs should notice a black marble in one of his or her dreams. If the PC can make a Dreaming roll to become lucid, the PC can try to deal with the marble. Unfortunately, the only way to get rid of the marble is to find a portal to another realm and throw it through. Otherwise the same thing will happen to the PC as happened to Paul Buchannan.

Experience Points

	Player:	Player:	Player:	Player:
Paul Buchannan is brought back alive: +15				
All the PCs survive: +15				
Paul Buchanan dies: -10				
PC made friends with another PC: +5 XP				
PC scared other PCs/Players: +5 XP				
Discovered a secret about the game world: +5 XP				
Personal Growth: +5 XP				
Good Roleplaying: 2 XP				
Made the world a better place: +1 to +10				
Clever Plan: +4 XP				
Worked Well as a Group: +4 XP				
Motivation Success: +4 XP				
Secret Life Success: +5 XP				
Split up Group: -5 XP				
Made the world a worse place: -5 XP				
PC died: -5 XP				

Darkness

Synopsis- The PCs will trace a shocking DVD to an abandoned building controlled by a cult who are trying to destroy the world. The PCs will arrive at the abandoned building just after the cult attempted their ceremony. The cult failed to destroy reality, but they did cause a shatter which will cause the PCs to end up trapped in a pitch black basement. In the basement the PCs must contend with a young girl who needs their help, various physical obstacles and a horror from the shatter. Complicating matters, PCs will find that the complete darkness that hampers them is supernatural and indispellable. PCs will have to complete this adventure without using their sight.

PC Introductions- The PCs will get a hold of a DVD. A Scribbler may find one hidden in a book or a Professional may be asked to open a case file on the disk, but for other PCs it's most likely that a friend who knows the PC is into 'weird stuff' gives the PC a bootlegged copy of the DVD.

The DVD has no menus. It immediately starts playing a short video clip that looks like it was filmed with a consumer camcorder.

A mid-twenties Caucasian man, shirtless, wearing dirty blue jeans, with shaggy hair and needing a shave, stands in what looks like an abandoned building, in a narrow hallway with wood doors on either side. The lights are off and the only lighting looks like sunlight coming from somewhere behind the camera.

He holds a manila folder, from which he holds up various pictures, saying "say goodbye to this" and throwing each over his shoulder. There are pictures of starving children, wounded soldiers, protesters being beaten by the police and homeless people. "Say goodbye to this story, this lie, this fiction that we forgot wasn't real." A hand from off the screen hands him a machete. His voice rises to a crescendo as he says "goodbye dirty hand!" and chops his hand off.

Then he looks at the camera, his face looking ecstatic. "This world is a mistake," he says, "It's time to throw it away and start over. On (insert date here*) at dawn, the Church of the Path of Truth is going to destroy the world."

*Note: Make the date be a few days from now in your campaign's timeline. The day should be on a Saturday.

The young man chops his left arm off at the elbow. A moderate AWR roll will let PCs notice that, as he chops his arm off, a large crack suddenly opens in the linoleum under his feet.

"If you want to join us in closing this world and opening the new, follow your hearts. If you are one of the chosen you will find us in time."

He takes the machete in his remaining hand, raises it up, and with a smile he buries it deep in the top of his skull. He falls to the floor and the recording ends.

Investigating the DVD- Trying to trace back where the DVD came from will lead from person to person, each of whom copied or passed the DVD to their friends, and eventually, back to some college student who saw it sitting on a desk in the UCLA college library with "watch me" written on it in felt-tip marker.

Analysis of the DVD will show that it was created by a fairly simple DVD authoring program that ships with a lot of new computers that have DVD burners. The file creation date was four weeks ago. The registered owner's name is in a file as Hope Ministries, a homeless shelter in Skid Row. If PCs investigate Hope Ministries they will find the shelter has a computer made available to homeless people. One of the staff remembers some young people coming in with a videocamera and burning a DVD. They claimed they were squatting in an abandoned hotel on Skid Row.

Video analysis (or use of the Filmmaking skill) will tell PCs that the video was made with a fairly generic digital video camera, handheld with all the default options (auto-focus, auto-volume adjust, etc.) turned on. In other words, a strictly amateur job. There are no telltale signs of special effects.

The picture can be enhanced enough to show that the doors all have numbers and locks on them. From their distance to each other they must lead to fairly narrow (no more than 10 ft. or 3 m.) rooms. The end of the hallway is lost in darkness. A PC with knowledge of history or architecture could place the building's style as something cheap from the 1950's.

Sound analysis will reveal the cameraman breathing and the faint sounds of two drunk people arguing from far away, and no discernible traffic noise.

There is graffiti on the walls. One readable phrase is "Aryan Wolves." A moderate Organized Crime or Research: Law Enforcement roll or a hard Research: Internet or Research: Academic roll will show that the Aryan Wolves were a White supremacist group that ran a major meth lab out of Skid Row during the late 90s.

Finding the Hotel- Hopefully there should be enough clues in the video for the PCs to know they have to search around Skid Row for an abandoned hotel that has been taken over by a cult.

There are a lot of hotels in the area so it might take the PCs days to find the right one. In fact, it should take the PCs just long enough for them to arrive shortly after dawn on the day the cult promised to destroy the world.

Inside the Hotel- The cult is squatting in an old abandoned hotel in Skid Row called the McClelland Hotel. The hotel is 5 stories tall and has 20 small rooms on either side. The hotel's doors have been broken open and stand ajar. Homeless people nearby know that someone is squatting in the hotel and some know that the squatters are some kind of 'religious freaks.'

Inside the hotel is a cage where the manager sat when the hotel was running. Next to it a hallway leads to a set of rooms and a stairwell leads up to higher floors and down to the basement. There is also an elevator. There is no power in the hotel (the power has been cut off at a box under the street).

In the hallway, a number of dismembered people lie on the floor in pools of blood. There are candles burning on the floor. There are skull cups overturned with remnants of a foul smelling brown liquid inside. There are bloody machetes lying everywhere. There's weeping coming from somewhere and several of the bodies are moaning.

If the PC's approach, one of the bodies will reach for the PCs and whisper "is this the next world?" The eyes are open and unfocused.

Then, the body of a dismembered black man wearing a grey turtleneck, glasses and slacks starts screaming and writhing. There is a sudden earthquake and the PCs (even those who have stayed outside) feel themselves lifted into the air along with everything else in the hotel. Any part of the hotel the PCs try to grab will crumble in their hands. PCs that are outside will be pulled inside. PCs will tumble through the air, watching as huge fissures open up in the ceiling and floor and pieces of the building join the objects floating in the air.

Then, abruptly, the screaming ends and the PCs are plunged down, feel themselves smash through the floor and hit the ground.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

PCs will fall two stories and can make AGY saves not to take falling damage (10 difficulty for the first point, 20 for the second). If a PC takes 2 blunt damage the GM can choose, instead, to break one of the PC's ankles (crippling that limb). Every PC has a 1 in 4 chance of being hit by an object heavy enough to do 2 blunt damage. Every PC who takes damage from falling objects has a 1 in 2 chance of finding themselves trapped under that object (most likely a beam) which will take a moderate (20) difficulty STH feat to move.

In The Dark- PCs will find themselves in absolute darkness. Everything they learn will be described in terms of what they hear, feel, smell and taste. The darkness is supernatural and cannot be dispelled by lighting a lighter or turning on a flashlight (though they will be able to feel the heat of the fire or light bulb). The darkness will also disappear for a split second any time they hurt Erik's Corpse.

If PCs move to the farthest corner of the room from where Erik's Corpse is they will be able to see the light of a flashlight or match, but that light will dim and disappear if they go towards Erik or Erik goes towards them.

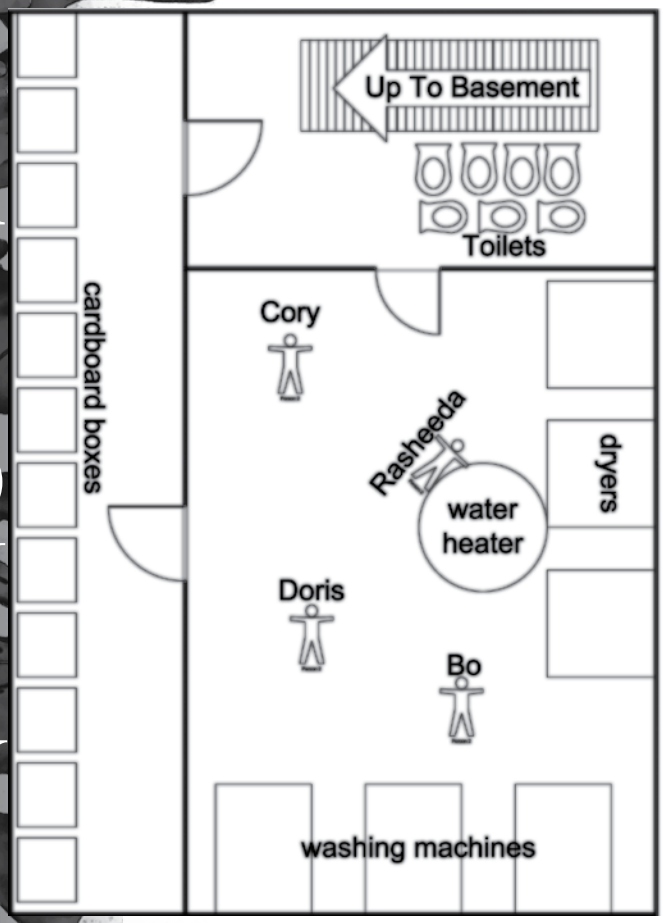
The PCs are in a sub-basement, two stories below the surface. There is some rubble and dust on the level the PCs are on, but it's not that bad (most of what fell through to this level was bodies, not rubble). Yet it's bad enough that if the PCs try to walk they will have to do so slowly to avoid tripping on rubble or banging their heads on beams and pipes that are hanging from the ceiling.

The rubble is made up of foam insulation, cracked and bent pieces of linoleum, wooden boards and breams, heaps of plaster, large bent pieces of chicken wire, pipes, pieces of glass, doors, toilets and sinks. Some bits of rubble are sharp enough to cut the PC if the PC puts an unprotected hand, foot or knee down onto them. It is unlikely to cause bladed or crippling damage, but it will cause distracting pain.

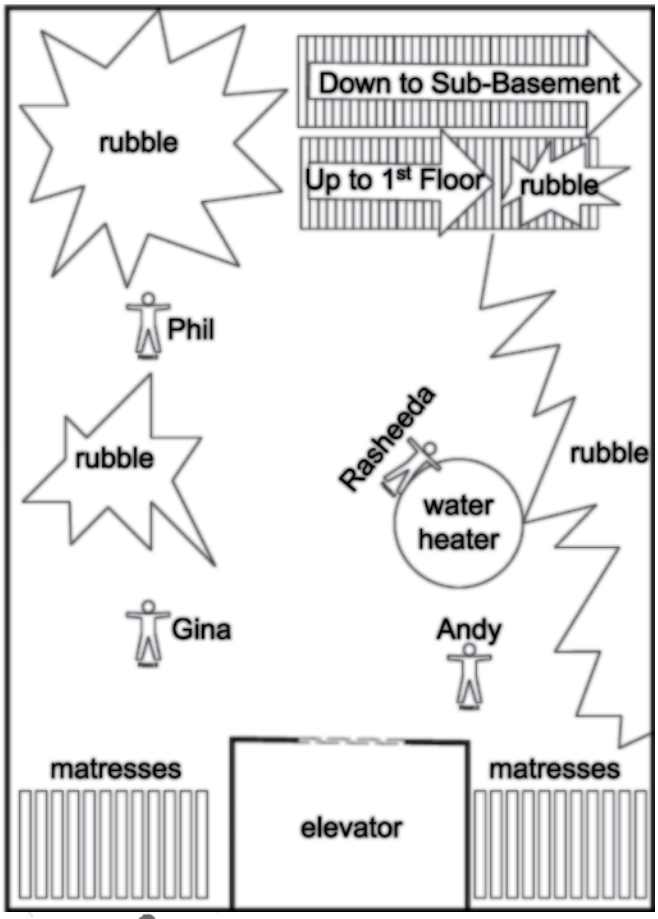
The basement is in much worse shape than the sub-basement. Some parts are completely blocked off by rubble. In other parts the PCs must crawl over piles of rubble. If they don't feel around carefully they will cut their hands on sharp pieces. Even if they are careful a part of the rubble pile may collapse under them, causing scrapes or bruises (½ point blunt or bladed damage). The PCs can't stand up straight because the ceiling above them is sagging too low.

There are five corpses of cult members and bystanders (curious people who attended the ceremony but did not subscribe to the cult's beliefs) in the basement and sub-basement. Some died in the fall, others bled to death from their self-inflicted wounds shortly after the fall. There are machetes near the bodies.

Sub-Basement



Basement



Survivors- There are eight survivors besides the PCs. Gina is the only one who has a good chance of being saved by the PCs. All the cult members will be bleeding to death. All the cult members, and some of the bystanders, are on hallucinogens, which will make them hard to deal with. The survivors are as follows:

Sub-Basement

-Doris, cult member, unconscious, trapped under a pile of rubble, crippled (legs broken), bleeding to death (will die within 10 minutes). In the sub-basement.

-Cory, cult member, conscious, crippled (leg & arm broken), bleeding to death (will die within 10 minutes). In the sub-basement.

-Bo, bystander, on hallucinogens, trapped under a pile of rubble, crippled (ankle broken), conscious. In the sub-basement.

-Tara, bystander, sober, crippled (paralyzed from neck down), unconscious. In the sub-basement.

Between

-Rasheeda, cult member, conscious, trapped (stuck in a hole between sub-basement and basement), bleeding to death (will die within 30 minutes).

Basement

-Andy, cult member, conscious, trapped under a pile of rubble, crippled (paralyzed), bleeding to death (will die within 30 minutes). In the basement.

-Phil, cult member, unconscious, trapped under a beam, bleeding to death (will die within 30 minutes). In the basement.

-Gina, child of cult member, sober, conscious, trapped under a pile of rubble. In the basement.

Gina Teller

Appearance- Adolescent Caucasian female, long brown hair, grey t-shirt and blue jeans, no makeup.

Attributes- AGY 6, AWR 8, CHM 9, END 6, INL 10, SPD 10, STH 4, WIL 8, BLD 2, BDY 1, INCY 1.

History- Gina is the daughter of Doris, a member of the cult. Although Gina was indoctrinated into the cult beliefs, her mother didn't think she was ready to witness the ceremony and had her stay in the room they were squatting in at the hotel. Gina fell through when the floor gave way and her legs became trapped under a pile of rubble. She immediately started calling for help.

Personality- Right now Gina is on the verge of complete panic. If one more bad thing happens to her (like she finds out her mother is dead or that the darkness is supernatural or that a monster is prowling the ruins) she will become unable to do anything except make weak, frightened sobs.

Name	type	Crippled?	Trapped?	Conscious?	Basement or Sub-Basement
Doris	cult	Y	Y		S
Andy	cult	Y	Y	Y	B
Cory	cult	Y		Y	S
Rasheeda	cult		Y	Y	B/S
Phil	cult		Y		B
Bo	bystander	Y	Y	Y	S
Tara	bystander	Y			S
Gina	child		Y	Y	B

Getting Up- In order to get out, the PCs will have to find a way from the sub-basement to the basement and from the basement to the first floor. If they can do that and can cross the pile of rubble on the first floor to the entrance they can get out.

The easiest way to get out of the sub-basement is the stairs. The door that would lead directly to the stairs is jammed shut, so the PCs can either force it (do 4 blunt damage or make a 30 difficulty STH feat) or take a side door into the storage area. A door from the storage area leads to the room that has the stairs. The stairs will lead up to the basement, but above that there is a giant pile of rubble on the stairs that blocks the way. Another way to get from the sub-basement to the basement is to find a hole in the ceiling (there are several, especially where a beam or the hot water heater have forced their way through). Climbing up can be dangerous: the things the PC is holding onto can give way. PCs can take blunt and bladed damage from the rubble below them that they fall on and the things above them that collapse on top of them.

The only way from the basement to first floor that isn't completely blocked by rubble is the elevator shaft. The doors need to be pried open, which requires something with a sharp edge (a broken piece of wood or a machete, for instance). Unfortunately, the elevator is parked at the first floor. There is a small space between the elevator and the shaft, but only a very small person (Gina or any PC who happens to be tiny) can fit through. Anyone who can get through this space can get on top of the elevator and into the light. From there they can either exit onto the second floor (most of which is empty space but there's enough left for someone to get to a room and a fire escape) or release the safety on the elevator and send it down to the basement (once PCs can get in, they can climb through the trap door in the top and exit on the first floor).

The Monster- Erik, the cult leader, managed to gain control over his physical body as it lay dying, making him a Survivor. However, his brain was damaged, leaving him insane. His body is broken, leaving him only able to shuffle and squirm along the floor. He was at the nexus of a shatter and his body now warps the reality around it, causing darkness within 30 ft. (9 m.). He is drawn to noise and will grab a hold of living or dead people. His touch burns human flesh, causing sizzling sounds, the smell of burning flesh and leaving behind hard, cracked skin on the victims. The monster can also crawl on walls and ceilings as well as it can on the ground, making it able to follow the PCs nearly anywhere. It can also imitate, perfectly, anything it has heard, although it no longer understands human language. It may trick PCs into coming to it by echoing sobbing noises or calls for help or it may give itself away by echoing snatches of conversation out of context.

GAME MASTERS ONLY

GAMEMASTERS ONLY

Psychometry can give a PC visions of the past which have nothing to do with what's currently happening but which can help the PC get a sense of the place's layout.

Read Minds can help identify PCs and survivors. Erik's Corpse has emotions (a confused urge to destroy) but does not think in words.

Visions will give a PC sporadic information about what's happening around him or her, but those visions are not fast enough or spatially accurate enough to let the PC overcome the disadvantage of operating in the dark.

See Invisible will allow a PC to see cracks in reality and damaged misfortunes hobbling about.

See Reapers will show reapers hovering around those who are bleeding to death.

See Souls can help a PC find PCs and Survivors. Erik's Corpse does have a soul, although unlike the soul of a Cannibal his soul has 'retracted' to fit the new, mutilated form. His soul burns brightly like that of one of the Touched.

Command Inanimate can be extremely useful if used to make crumbling pieces of buildings less likely to break under a PC's weight or more likely to break when the PC is trying to get them out of the way.

Control Will-Less will work on Erik's Corpse (hard difficulty) although since the PCs cannot see Erik's Corpse the PC would have to touch it, and risk being grabbed and burned.

A **Dance** may be able to advise a Faustian about the layout of the basement and sub-basement, since Dances know a lot about the architecture of old buildings, but knows little else that might help the PCs.

Skills that increase strength (Ecstatic Rage, Flesh Control, Imaginary Powers, Spirit Strength) can allow PCs to remove rubble that they would not otherwise be able to remove. PCs must be careful or smart or they will cause more damage and bring more rubble down on themselves. It may be possible to create another route to the first floor.

The Get Lost skill can be used without too much difficulty to escape from the basement. The PC is indoors, but being blind in an unfamiliar place facilitates being lost. A PC who gets Lost will find himself or herself traveling through completely dark places (darkrooms, bank vaults, sewers, basements, etc.). The problem with escaping by use of this skill is that trapped survivors (e.g. Gina) cannot follow the PC but Erik's corpse can.

Erik's Corpse

Appearance- It feels like a human body, wearing clothes, covered in warm sticky blood. The neck is broken, the head hanging limply, the top of the skull caved in. The left arm is missing at the elbow; both legs are missing at the knee. The heart beats sluggishly and slowly and it takes slow gurgling breaths about once every minute. It lies perfectly still except when moving towards a victim, then it ambles and squirms along with random movements of what remains of its limbs, the limp head dragging along the ground. The eyes and mouth are open wide and unmoving.

Attributes- AGY 3, AWR 4, CHM 0, END 30, INL 0, SPD 3 (crawling), STH 30, WIL 15, BLD 0, BDY 2, INCY 15.

Abilities

-Erik's Corpse can crawl on walls and ceilings.

-Erik's Corpse can imitate any sound that it's heard.

-Erik's Corpse does not lose END at 0 BLD, won't stop moving until it loses all INCY.

-Erik's Corpse creates un-pierceable darkness within 30 ft. or 9 m. (fading out at the edges).

-Erik's Corpse is +10 to save vs. pain. It makes simultaneous strikes at no penalty.

-The touch of Erik's Corpse's palm causes human flesh to burn, doing 2 burn damage per round.

Psychology- Erik's Corpse has lost all self-consciousness, understanding of language or capacity for rational thought. Its intelligence is like that of an animal. It feels an urge to hurt living things (which it can recognize by the sounds they make) and attacks the only way it knows how: by grabbing them with its remaining hand. If it can't find any human people it knows that repeating human noises might draw them out (but does not know how or why).

Typical Action- A Grab with its remaining hand at STH (30) + AGY (3) -15 (blinded) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 7).

Sensations

Hear

Water dripping

Ragged breathing

The building creaking

People moaning in pain

Gina calling 'help' hoarsely

Small thumping and cracking noises from above

A sizzling sound like meat frying

Smell

Dust

Mold/Mildew

Vomit and excrement

Burning flesh and hair

Feel

Cold concrete floor under a layer chunky powder

Cold liquid dripping on one's skin

Warm thick liquid falling in large drops

A puddle of thick, cold liquid on the floor

A puddle of thick, warm liquid on the floor

Warm flesh

Cardboard boxes, soft and bulging outwards

A large wooden beam rising up at an angle from the floor

A piece of flat metal with a sharp edge with something warm and sticky on it

Warm flesh, ragged, wet and sticky, with splinters of something hard sticking out

A warm human chest, expanding and constricting rhythmically

A mound of materials rising up in front of you: some brittle and powdery, some hard and cracked, some wooden and splintery, some rough and metallic.

A cold hard wall with little cracks running up and down it.

A large metal box, coming up to about shoulder height, with hinges, a handle and dials.

A shattered piece of something hard and cold with sharp edges.

A small, sharp sliver.

Something small and furry scurrying over one's skin.

You put your hand down on something warm. It's got a hard exterior that cracks under your weight but is soft underneath. Warm liquid oozes up where the hard surface has cracked. You can feel little spherical bumps on the hard surface. They break as you touch them, filled only with air. Then you hear, less than a foot from where your hand is touching, the sound of someone or something hyperventilating. As rapidly as a heartbeat, and without pause or vocalization, the person is sucking in and pushing out shallow little breaths. With each breath the cracked, oozing surface jumps a little.

The **Get Lost** skill can be used without too much difficulty to escape from the basement. The PC is indoors, but being blind in an unfamiliar place facilitates being lost. A PC who gets Lost will find himself or herself traveling through completely dark places (darkrooms, bank vaults, sewers, basements, etc.). The problem with escaping by use of this skill is that trapped survivors (e.g. Gina) cannot follow the PC but Erik's corpse can.

Possible Outcomes- Gina can be freed by a STH feat of 40 difficulty (PCs can combine their STH or find levers to make the job easier). Other fall-survivors may be able to be saved if the PCs can free them, tourniquet their wounds and protect them from Erik's Corpse.

If PCs make it to the first floor without taking care of Erik they may find themselves in glorious daylight streaming through empty window frames, only to see everything quickly growing darker and going completely black as they hear the shuffling sounds of Erik's Corpse moving towards them.

"Killing" Erik's Corpse (destroying it enough for Reapers to take the soul away) will dispel the darkness.

If one or more PCs escape without killing Erik's Corpse and try to get a mundane rescue crew, that crew will be mystified by the darkness and before long a hazmat team under the control of the powers-that-be will 'take over' the rescue effort. They'll blow up the building, sealing in Erik's remains and anyone left alive inside.

If PCs can get Gina out it will not be hard to find her father (who has filed a missing person's report on Gina) and the father will thereafter owe the PCs a favor.

Experience Points

	Player:	Player:	Player:	Player:
PC Survives: +25 XP				
PCs Die: -10 XP/ea.				
Gina Survives: +10 XP				
Other fall-survivors survive: +7 XP/ea.				
PC made friends with another PC: +5 XP				
PC scared other PCs/Players: +5 XP				
Discovered a secret about the game world: +5 XP				
Personal Growth: +5 XP				
Good Roleplaying: 2 XP				
Made the world a better place: +1 to +10				
Clever Plan: +4 XP				
Worked Well as a Group: +4 XP				
Motivation Success: +4 XP				
Secret Life Success: +5 XP				
Split up Group: -5 XP				
Made the world a worse place: -5 XP				
PC died: -5 XP				

GAME MASTERS ONLY

APPENDICES

Glossary of Game Terms

#D#- A code for rolling dice, the first number means the number of dice rolled and the second number is the denomination of the dice. 2D6 means that you must roll 2 six-sided dice and add the values.

Action- In combat, anything the character initiates (as opposed to a Reaction). An action could be anything from a strike (a fighting action described in the rules) to reading a book as combat rages.

Adventure- A story characters play in, with a beginning, end, conflict, drama and a chance for the characters to succeed and a chance for them to fail and perhaps die.

Armor Rating (AR)- A numeric rating of the amount of the character's body a piece of armor covers. One is the smallest amount and twenty is coverage of the entire body. A strike must have a success greater than the armor rating in order to hit an unprotected portion of the victim.

Attributes- Numeric ratings for each character that enumerate their abilities in mental and physical areas. Although base attributes are relatively stable over time, events can temporarily change any of them.

Bladed - Damage that cuts or pierces flesh such as a knife or pick-axe. Does damage to Blood Points.

Blunt - Damage that crushes flesh, such as a club or punch. Blunt damage subtracts first from Body Points, then when (they are gone) it does double damage to Blood Points.

Chance Action- An action that the GM determines is heavily influenced by chance (a 1 on the 1d20 roll will always fail, a 20 will always succeed). Typically a spur-of-the-moment activity.

Character- A character is a fictional person created by a player or GM. The character has his/her own personality, past, characteristics, experiences and life.

Character Creation- The process of describing a character before game-play starts. Points are used to buy attributes, skills, advantages and disadvantages. Equipment is also bought.

Damage- A rating of the capacity of a weapon to do damage to humans. Specifically, it is damage which will move a person progressively closer to being dead.

Deliberate Action- An action that has no automatic success or failure (as a Chance Action does). This is typically a well-considered action that leaves as little as possible to chance.

Difficulty- The rating of the difficulty for anything a character attempts to do. To succeed, a character must make a roll of the applicable attribute plus 1d20 and get a result higher than the given difficulty. Typical difficulties: Easy (10), Moderate (20), Hard (30) and Legendary (40).

Easy- A difficulty rating of 10 for an attribute + 1d20 roll (or -4 difficulty when dealing with weapon specific difficulties).

Experience Levels- As a PC does more he or she gains more experience, and through experience and practice the character becomes more powerful. The system of Experience Levels is an easy system for rating this growth. Characters start out at an experience level of 1 and as they do more and experience more they gain experience points and raise experience levels.

Experience Points (XP)- As a PC completes each adventure the GM assigns them Experience Points based on their performance in that particular adventure. Each adventure should have a checklist of things PCs can do to gain or lose XP. XP can be spent at the end of an adventure to buy skills and to raise attributes.

Functional Range (FR)- A unit of distance in which a projectile weapon suffers a -1 penalty. For instance, if a weapon has a functional range of 3 ft., the character is at -4 to hit a target 12 ft. away.

Game Master (GM)- The Game Master is a player but does not have a PC. The GM is an impartial intermediary between the game as it appears on paper and the game as played by players. The GM is the universe: he or she decides what happens for whatever action the players take based on his or her knowledge of the game universe.

Hard- A difficulty rating of 30 for an attribute + 1d20 roll (or +4 difficulty for weapon specific difficulties).

Incapacity- When a PC is at 0 END or 0 INCY and can no longer stand, initiate communication or make any roll.

Legendary- A difficulty rating of 40 for an attribute + 1d20 roll.

Maximum Range- For a projectile weapon this is the range that the weapon can not do damage beyond (compare to Functional Range).

Moderate- A difficulty rating of 20 for an attribute + 1d20 roll.

Non Player Character (NPC)- This is a character. Can be a friend or an enemy, both or neither. Has a personality and intelligence, but is not a player character. He or she is controlled by the GM.

Player- The player is the real human being that participates in the role playing game as a character.

Player Character (PC)- A character created by and controlled by a player. It is through the character that the player plays the game. A character is a participant in the adventure.

Protection Rating (PR)- A numeric rating that describes how much damage a piece of armor is capable of protecting from. Any damage that hits the armor has the Protection Rating's worth of damage removed from it.

Reaction- Something a PC can do once in a combat round in reaction to being attacked (e.g. dodge).

Roll- A dice roll with an attempt to get the highest number possible. An "agility roll," for example, is the character's AGY plus 1d20 with an attempt to get higher than the difficulty for the given action.

Role Playing Game (RPG)- A game where people play fictional characters (roles) having adventures together. Players narrate what their characters do and the GM narrates what happens in response.

Save Vs.- A roll made of 1d20 plus appropriate attributes in an attempt to avoid something that would otherwise happen, such as falling down or catching a disease.

Scenario- A scenario is a series of adventures linked together by a common plot element or group of PCs (much like a book trilogy).

Simultaneous- When a character reacts to being attacked by making an action of his or her own (e.g. let someone punch you, but stab that person at the same time).

Skill- A level of training or knowledge that allows the character to do something they would be otherwise unable to do. The majority of skills are INL based (roll 1d20 + INL + any plusses from having more than one level in the skill), yet there are skills based on other attributes.

Skill Roll- A roll of 1d20 plus the appropriate attribute plus four for every level the character has in the skill above the first.

Split- When one action or reaction is turned into two, at +10 difficulty to each (e.g. do a split action jump and strike).

IN DARK ALLEYS
Character Sheet

Persona

Player Name _____ Character Name Maggie Hernandez Age 29
Gender FM Neighborhood East L.A. Day Job Medical Professional x2
Appearance Young, Hispanic, short straight black hair, blue denim jacket & jeans

Attributes

	Base	Current	Plusses/Minuses
AGY	12	11	-1 from ballistic vest
AWR	14		Poor Introspection
CHM	8		Good w/ Plain Folk
END	7		
INL	13		
SPD	8		
STH	6		
WIL	12		
Health Attributes			
BLD	5		
BDY	3		
INCY	4		

Mundane Skills

Skill	Attribute	Type	Levels	AV
Science: Chemistry	INL	ACAD	●○○○○○	13
Science: Pathology	INL	ACAD	●○○○○○	13
Science: Genetics	INL	ACAD	●○○○○○	13
Research: Academic	INL	ACAD	●●○○○○	17
Diagnosis	INL	MEDI	●●●○○○	21
Emergency Medicine	INL	MEDI	●●●○○○	21
Pharmacology	INL	MEDI	●●●○○○	21
Psychopharmacology	INL	MEDI	●○○○○○	13
Surgery	INL	MEDI	●●○○○○	17
Self-Defense Weapons	CMBT	CMBT	●○○○○○	
Research: Internet	INL	TECH	●○○○○○	13
Crime Scene Forensics	INL	INVS	●○○○○○	13
Forensic Pathology	INL	INVS	●○○○○○	13
Local Geography	INL	TRAD	●○○○○○	13
Tracking	AWR	TRAD	●○○○○○	14
			○○○○○○	
			○○○○○○	
			○○○○○○	

Skill Costs: ACAD 4, ATHL 7, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, CRIM 15, TECH 7, INVS 10, LABR 6, MEDI 3, PEOP 7, TRAD 8

Equipment and Money

Income $300/wk Recurring Costs $20/wk Money (Cash) $200 Money (Bank) $343

Denim Jacket; Area; Control: On-Off Switch(1), Control: Aimable(1), Nullify: Momentum(1), Warp: Weight(1); Blockable(2), Noisy(1), Heat(1). Field Surgical Kit, 1st Aid Kit (EMT), Anti-Psychotic, Sedative, Palmtop Computer + Internet access card, Basic Cell, Books (Search), Backpack, Flashlight, Gasmask, Nightvision, 2x Restraints, Lockpick Gun

Secrets

Secret Life Hero
Motivation Self-Defense
Advantages Multilingual (2BP), Ethnic Group (4BP), Contact: Locals (3BP)
Disadvantages Bad Temper (1BP), Hunted: Serial Killer (4BP), Post Traumatic Stress (10BP)
Unspent XP 0 Total Earned XP 0
Supernatural Skill Costs N/A

Supernatural Skills

Skill	Attribute	Levels	AV
		○○○○○○	
		○○○○○○	
		○○○○○○	
		○○○○○○	
		○○○○○○	
		○○○○○○	
		○○○○○○	
		○○○○○○	

Psychodynamics

ANIM 8 EGO 12 ID 9 REPT 13 SEGO 13 SHAD 9 STRA 9 THAN 7

IN DARK ALLEYS
Combat Sheet for Maggie Hernandez

ARMOR

Armor Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	PR	Penalties
Ballistic Vest	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	6 Blunt, 2 Vest	-1 AGY, +1 Heat
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		

COMBAT SKILLS

Skill	Levels	Actions/Reactions
Self-Defense Weapons	1	+4 to Pain/Stun, +4 to Blinding

UNARMED

Punch Dmg 1/2 Kick Dmg 1 Unarmed Plusses

Action/Reaction	Att1	+ Att2	+ Skill	+ Miscl	= Total	+ 1d20 vs. Difficulty
Pain/Stun Kick	13	11	0	0	24	25
Strike (Kick)	6	11	0	0	17	25
Grab	6	11	0	0	17	25
Dodge	14	11	0	0	25	25
Drop	14	11	0	0	25	20
Jump	8	11	0	0	19	25

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon Pepper Spray Dmg 0 Range ___ Pierces As ___

Action/Reaction	Att1	+ Att2	+ Skill	+ Miscl	= Total	+ 1d20 vs. Difficulty
pain/stun	13	11	+4	+8	36	25
blinding	13	11	+4	+8	36	30

Weapon Taser Baton Dmg 8 blunt / 3 electric Range 1-2 Pierces As ___

Action/Reaction	Att1	+ Att2	+ Skill	+ Miscl	= Total	+ 1d20 vs. Difficulty
Pain/Stun	13	11	+4		28	25
Crippling	6	13			19	25

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

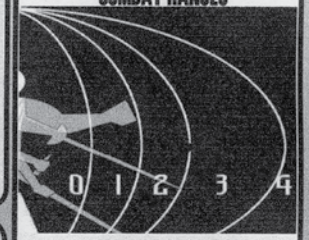
Weapon ___ Dmg ___ FR ___ MR ___ ROF ___
Pierces As ___ Clip Holds ___ Amount of Ammo ___

Action/Reaction	Att1	+ Att2	+ Skill	+ Miscl	= Total -1/FR+1d20 vs. Difficulty

Weapon ___ Dmg ___ Range ___ Miscl ___

Action/Reaction	Att1	+ Att2	+ Skill	+ Miscl	= Total	+ 1d20 vs. Difficulty

COMBAT RANGES



COMBAT MODIFIERS

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

ACTIONS

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 10+area in ft. (or +3/m.)
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

REACTIONS

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 23
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

IN DARK ALLEYS
Character Sheet

Persona

Player Name _____ Character Name _____ Age _____
Gender _____ Neighborhood _____ Day Job _____
Appearance _____

Attributes

	Base	Current	Plusses/Minuses
AGY	_____	_____	_____
AWR	_____	_____	_____
CHM	_____	_____	_____
END	_____	_____	_____
INL	_____	_____	_____
SPD	_____	_____	_____
STH	_____	_____	_____
WIL	_____	_____	_____
Health Attributes			
BLD	_____	_____	_____
BDY	_____	_____	_____
INCY	_____	_____	_____

Mundane Skills

Skill	Attribute	Type	Levels	AV
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	_____	OOOOOO	___

Skill Costs: ACAD ___, ATHL ___, CMBT ___, CRTV ___, CRIM ___, TECH ___, INVS ___, LABR ___, MEDI ___, PEOP ___, TRAD ___

Equipment and Money

Income _____ Recurring Costs _____ Money (Cash) _____ Money (Bank) _____

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Secrets

Secret Life _____
Motivation _____
Advantages _____
_____
Disadvantages _____
_____
Unspent XP _____ Total Earned XP _____
Supernatural Skill Costs _____
_____

Supernatural Skills

Skill	Attribute	Levels	AV
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	OOOOOO	___

Psychodynamics

ANIM ____ EGO ____ ID ____ REPT ____ SEGO ____ SHAD ____ STRA ____ THAN ____

IN DARK ALLEYS

Combat Sheet for _____

ARMOR

Armor Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	PR	Penalties
_____	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	_____	_____
_____	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	_____	_____
_____	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	_____	_____
_____	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	_____	_____
_____	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	_____	_____

COMBAT SKILLS

Skill	Levels	Actions/Reactions
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

UNARMED

Punch Dmg _____ Kick Dmg _____ Unarmed Plusses_____

Action/Reaction	Att1	+	Att2	+	Skill	+	Miscl	=	Total	+	1d20 vs. Difficulty
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ Range____ Pierces As_____

Action/Reaction	Att1	+	Att2	+	Skill	+	Miscl	=	Total	+	1d20 vs. Difficulty
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ Range____ Pierces As_____

Action/Reaction	Att1	+	Att2	+	Skill	+	Miscl	=	Total	+	1d20 vs. Difficulty
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ FR____ MR____ ROF_____

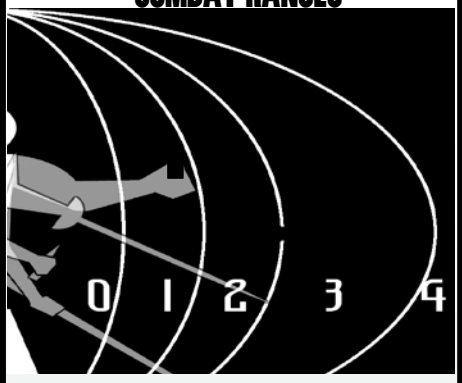
Pierces As_____ Clip Holds_____ Amount of Ammo _____

Action/Reaction	Att1	+	Att2	+	Skill	+	Miscl	=	Total	-1/FR	+	1d20 vs. Difficulty
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____	____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____	____		_____

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ Range____ Miscl_____

Action/Reaction	Att1	+	Att2	+	Skill	+	Miscl	=	Total	+	1d20 vs. Difficulty
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____
_____	____		____		____		_____		_____		_____

COMBAT RANGES



COMBAT MODIFIERS

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

ACTIONS

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 10+area in ft. (or +3/m.)
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

REACTIONS

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon Specific Difficulties

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)
Easy (-4 difficulty)
Hard (+4 difficulty)
Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

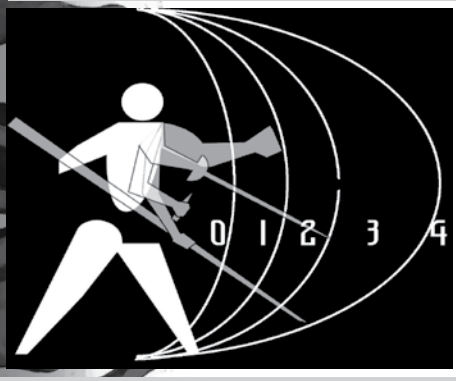
Size	to hit
Bee	-20
Rat	-10
Cat	-5
Human	0
Horse	+5
Elephant	+10
House	+20

Improvised Weapons

Slashing Weapons:
1 bladed damage, -8 to actions except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: ½ point bladed damage, -8 to actions except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: 1 to 3, -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.



Combat Modifiers

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

Actions

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 10+area in ft. (or +3/m.)
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Reactions

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 – Character Concept: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, drives, etc.
Step 2 – Psychodynamics: Spread 80 pts. across 8 personality elements.
Step 3 – Attributes: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).
Step 4 – Secret Life: Choose a source of supernatural knowledge and ability.
Step 5 – Day Job: Choose occupation. Some cost or give Bonus Points. This sets income and cost for mundane skills.
Step 6 – Skills: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by Day Job and Secret Life. Can buy 1 to 5 levels of any skill.
Step 7 – Equipment: Buy stuff with money from Day Job. Can't buy illegal things without the Black Market skill.
Step 8 – Bonus Characteristics: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages. Max. 30 BP of disads.
Step 9 – Character Advancement: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC. Gaining supernatural skills require dangerous experimentation.

Spending BP/XP

3 skill pts.	= 1 BP	=10 XP
1 attribute pt.	= 1 BP	=10 XP
1 BLD/BDY/INCY pt.	= 3 BP	=30 XP
$500	= 1 BP	N/A

Sample Difficulties

0- Automatic Success
5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)
10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)
15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)
20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)
25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)
30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)
40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

Save vs. Psychological Shock Difficulties

10: Seeing a small child driving a car.
20: Seeing a dog driving a car.
30: Seeing a mass of spiders driving a car.
40: Seeing floating globs of congealed blood connected by chains driving a car.

Kick Damage

SPD	1-5	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	½ blunt	1	1½	2	3	4	5

Plus to Damage With Blunt Weapons

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	40+
+ to DMG	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

Punch Damage

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	25-30	31-40	40+
DMG	0	½	1	2	3	4	5

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	WIL
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Physiological Shock	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Psychological Shock	WIL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL

Other Types of Damage

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:
-BLD damage (1 pt. per pt. of burn damage).
-Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/pt. of damage).
-Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage).
-Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/pt. of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Dropped Objects: Does blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs or 5 kg) times number of stories. E.g. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:
-Paralysis (WIL+1d20 vs. 20/pt. of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.
-Unconsciousness (WIL/END+1d20 vs. 10 per pt. of damage)
-Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (p.133).
-Burn Damage: 1 pt. of burn damage for every 4 pt.s of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all three of the following:
-Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)
-Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)
-Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins do END damage. Every pt. of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor typically cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every day without food: -1/4 BLD, -2 END.

Radiation: For every pt. of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per pt. of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.146). For each pt. of ragged damage taken the PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). Resting will not bring back any lost END. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Effecting Non-Material Realms

Realm	WIL + 1d20 difficulty to change self/environment/others	+ to supernatural skill rolls
Land of the Dead, Deserted City, Void, Citadel	40/50/60	+20
Subconsciouses, Bubbles	30/40/50	+30
Dreams	20/30/40	+40

Random Get Lost Results

01-50: Different block (same neighborhood)
51-75: Different neighborhood (same city)
76-92: Different city (same nation)
93-98: Different nation
99-00: Different world

Invisible Encounter Table

For each 1 city block, there are 2d20 common wrigglers, plus the following (on 1d100):
01-10: None
11-17: Crying Girl
18-24: Starer
25-31: Bad Talker
32-68: Rare Wriggler
69-72: Very Rare Wriggler
73-80: Stork
81-81: Rumbler
82-86: Haunter
87-93: Wolf
94-00: Reaper

Random Otherworldly Destination

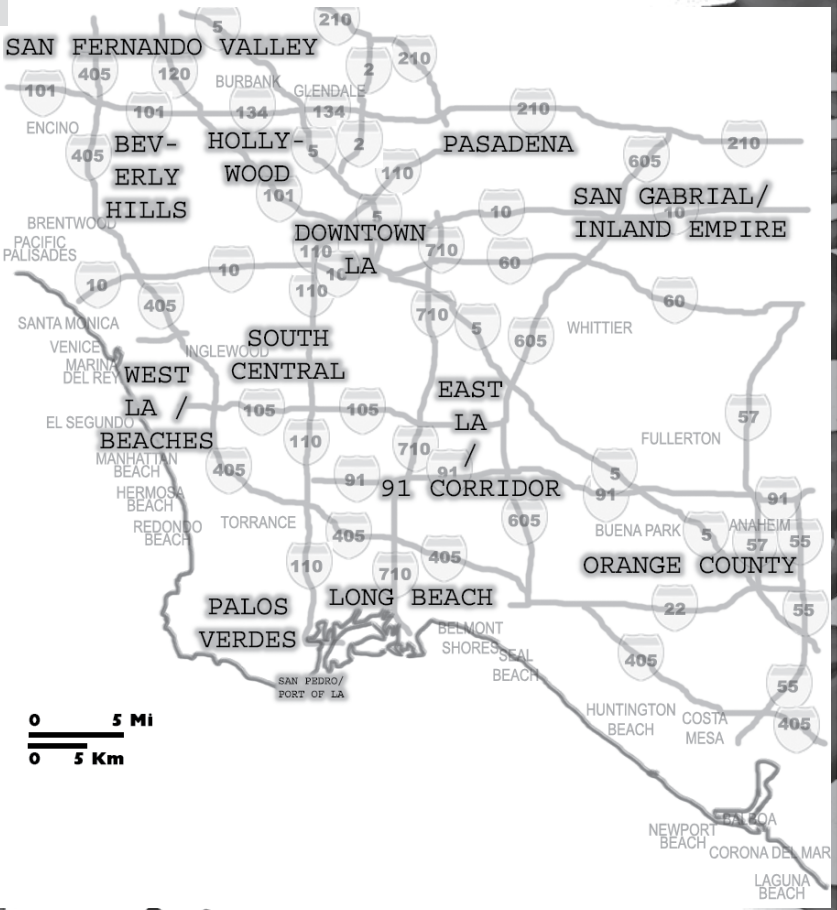
01-17: Deserted City
18-29: Void
30- 42: Citadel
43-59: Land of the Dead
60-62: Surgeon's Lab
63-79: Subconscious
80-92: Dream
93-00: Bubble

Random Misfortune Table

01-05: Asthma
06-09: Clumsiness
10-14: Coughing
15-18: Cramps
19-23: Dizziness
24-27: Fatigue
28-32: Forgetfulness
33-36: Headaches
37-41: Indigestion
42-46: Infertility
47-51: Insomnia
52-56: Nervousness
57-61: Nightmares
62-66: Nosebleeds
67-71: Poor Temper
72-76: Tinnitus
77-78: Anemia
79-80: Epilepsy
81-82: Erotomania
83-84: Exhaustion
85-86: Extreme Vertigo
87-88: Fetishism
89-90: Hallucinations
91-92: Sourceless Pain
93-94: Tooth Loss
95-96: Weakness
97-98: Weight Loss
99-99: Heart Attack
00-00: Stroke

Random Urban Neighborhood Table

00-01: Beach (Surfers, partiers, dog-walkers, restaurants, expensive homes.)
02-04: Campus (Grass, pathways, big school buildings, dorms, students on bicycles.)
05-10: Commercial Park (Large complexes of one-or-two story office buildings and doctor's offices, used car dealerships, virtually abandoned at night.)
11-13: Docks (Docked ships, warehouses, bars, industrial lots running 24/7.)
14-20: Downtown Commercial (Big office buildings, parking structures, cheap lunch places.)
21-25: Ethnic Enclave (Non-English signs, old apartment buildings, import grocery stores, tiny restaurants.)
26-32: Ghetto (Blocks of cheap apartments, drug dealers on the corners, overpriced grocery stores.)
33-37: Historical Residential (Old, nice looking houses, trees, parks.)
38-43: Industrial: Active (Railyards, gated industrial complexes, warehouses.)
44-48: Industrial: Run Down (Abandoned factories, unused railyards, homeless camps.)
49-56: Main Drag (Gas stations, fast food, liquor stores, motels, heavy traffic at all hours.)
57-59: Mansions (Huge lots, perfectly landscaped lawns, wrought iron fences, regular drive-bys by private security.)
60-64: Park/Graveyard (Grass, trees, people walking dogs.)
65-69: Projects (Row after row of identical, cheaply built apartment buildings with an occasional community center.)
70-75: Shopping District (Strip malls, chain restaurants, huge parking lots.)
76-80: Skid-Row (Liquor stores, cheap hotels, shelters, vacant lots, homeless people sleeping on the sidewalks.)
81-89: Suburb (Nearly identical, brand new middle-class houses with perfect lawns and SUVs in the driveways.)
90-94: Touristy (Antique and novelty shops, overpriced cafes, historical landmarks, small museums and parks.)
95-99: Trendy Downtown (Night clubs, coffee shops, bars, trendy clothing stores.)



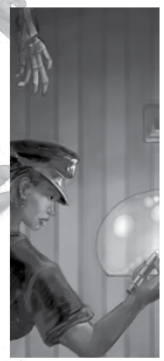
YOU ARE INVITED TO AN OPEN GAME OF

IN DARK ALLEYS

WHAT IS IT?

In Dark Alleys is a modern day horror game.
Everything we think we know about our society, our universe and ourselves is a lie. Heretical philosophies and religions hold pieces of the truth, yet no living human knows the whole truth about this world.
Players play members of the 'touched,' people who have peeked behind the curtain. The experience has left them with powerful supernatural abilities but it has also put them in terrible danger.

Visit www.InDarkAlleys.com to learn more.





IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

Contact me to discuss times & locations:
My Name: _____
My Email:_____
My Phone: _____
(only call between ____ and ____)





MATURE PLAYERS ONLY, PLEASE



This flyer is copyright 2006 Vajra Enterprises.

YOU ARE INVITED TO AN OPEN GAME OF

IN DARK ALLEYS

WHAT IS IT?

In Dark Alleys is a modern day horror game.
Everything we think we know about our society, our universe and ourselves is a lie. Heretical philosophies and religions hold pieces of the truth, yet no living human knows the whole truth about this world.
Players play members of the 'touched,' people who have peeked behind the curtain. The experience has left them with powerful supernatural abilities but it has also put them in terrible danger.

Visit www.InDarkAlleys.com to learn more.





IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

Contact me to discuss times & locations:
My Name: _____
My Email:_____
My Phone: _____
(only call between ____ and ____)





MATURE PLAYERS ONLY, PLEASE



This flyer is copyright 2006 Vajra Enterprises.

Index

Abandoned Buildings. 24, 41, 193, 225, 250

Addiction..... 94, 96, 110, 114, **134** 170

Animals..... 27, 80, 88, 145, 225, 240, 238

Armor..... 92, 131

Children..... 54, 57, 82, 116, 121, 219, 242

Combat..... 41, 69, 137, 138, **139**

Crime..... 71, 88, 118, **170**, 183, 224, 225

Cults..... 206, 221, 243, 272

Damage..... 9, 32, 92, 106, 131, 132, 133, 145

Dances..... 23, 193, 242, 243, 248, 263

Death..... 8, 52, 131, 215, 219, 236, 256

Deserted City, the..... 225, 245, **250**

Dreams..... 83, 155, 166, 168, 196, 234, 249, **257**

Drugs..... 36, 72, 94, 96, 105, 114, 133, 170, 172

Firearms..... 107, 145

Gangs..... 20, 161, 168, **170,** 174, 178, 181, 225

Government..... 62, 111, 167, 176, 211

History..... 18, 150, 159, 206, 243

Homelessness..... 42, 60, **164**, 167, 176

Homosexuality..... 12, 164, 179, 182, 185, 169, 207, 244

H-Tech..... 37, 222, **235**, 238, 241

Immigrants..... 13, 112, 161, 163, 168, 172, 178, 226

Internet..... 72, 213

Invisible, the..... 44, 188, **227**, 235

LAPD..... 160, 161, 167, **168**

Mental Illness..... 7, 42, 155, 169, 204, 247, 258, 162

Native People..... 16, 17, 150, 159, 188, 206, 243

Natural Disaster..... 81, 86, 160, 166, 229

Nature..... 16, 150, 158, 182

Occultism..... 15, 28, 49, 151

Organized Crime..... 48, 72, 118 170, **172**, 224

Philosophy..... 50, 150, 213, 247

Poison..... 105, 133, 206, 247

Politics..... 153, **167**

Pollution..... 166, 180

Psychodynamics..... **7**, 29, 116, **129**, 155, 195, 219, 222, 238, 240, **256**

Reapers..... 86, 215, **216**, 236, 249

Religion..... 17, 19, 21, 49, 150, **164**, 188, 206, 222, 243

Science..... 15, 67, 207, 235

Sex..... 7, 11, 82, 127, 153, 155, 157, 173, 185

Shatters..... 28, 225, 229, **236**, 243

Skid Row..... 41, 164, 167, 173, **176**, 183

Subconsciousness..... 155, 157, 193, 219, 247, 249, **256**

Return to Arkham ... Online



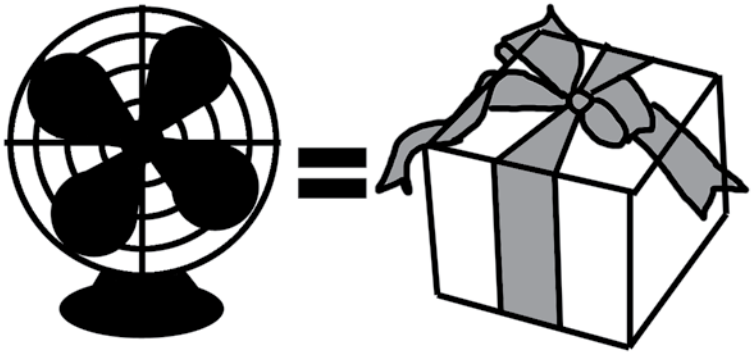
- Become a Student at M.U.
- Fully Developed City of Arkham
- Dream, Insanity, and Teaching Systems
- Numerous Plots and Stories
- Open 24x7, But It's Always Night

Where the Horror Continues

WWW . LOVECRAFTCOUNTRY . COM

Lovecraft Country

The Vajra Enterprises
Fan Rewards
Program
visit www.InDarkAlleys.com



Gain Points by GMing our games, playing our games, talking about our games, submitting fan-created game material and more.

Spend points on posters, game music CDs, DVDs, postcards, GM screens, game books and more.

If you're a fan then you deserve a reward. Log-on to claim your reward today.



The future is you sleep on a cot filled with rusty springs.
The future is that you fight with knives and can die of simple infections.
The future is that you have to walk up four flights of stairs to get home
and you're lucky to have hot water to take a shower.

The last hundred years of scientific discovery, technological innovation, philosophical and academic discourse, art and literature, wars and political movements, and what do you have to show for it? A dozen more ways to die and a few things far worse than death.

Welcome to the future. Welcome to the city.

Fates Worse Than Death the RPG

Go to www.fatesWorseThanDeath.com to download the free 291 page lite version

TIBET

the role playing game



magic, mysiticism and war in 1959 tibet

www.tibetrpg.com



YOU CAN STICK US IN FORGOTTEN,
RUINED CITIES.

YOU CAN FILL THOSE CITIES FULL
OF DRUGS, DISEASE AND INSANE PEOPLE.

YOU CAN LET THE COPS GO CORRUPT
AND USELESS SO THAT WE HAVE TO FORM
GANGS FOR OUR OWN PROTECTION.

YOU CAN TAKE ALL THE MONEY AND
POWER AND RETREAT IN TO YOUR
GATED COMMUNITIES TO
WAIT FOR US TO DIE OUT.

WE WON'T DIE OUT, WE WILL SURVIVE.
WE HAVE PRIDE, WE HAVE PASSION,
EVERYTHING WE DO MEANS SOMETHING.
UNLIKE YOU, WE AREN'T AFRAID OF VIOLENCE
OR TORTURE OR DEATH. THE ONLY
THING WE ARE AFRAID OF IS BEING LIKE YOU.

FATES WORSE THAN DEATH

THE ROLE PLAYING GAME

WWW.FATESWORSETHANDEATH.COM





If you look down the wrong alley in the middle of the night, you may see something happening which is terrible, inexplicable, alien. If you are like most, you will keep driving and try to forget what you've seen.

Yet some pain or hunger inside you may drive you to turn back, to try to gain another glimpse. You may spend sleepless nights peering down dark alleys, reading heretical texts, performing strange rituals, exploring abandoned places, trying to grasp the sensations that squirm at the back of your mind. Along the way you will discover that you are developing incredible and dangerous powers.

And there will come a day when you catch a glimpse of something that sees you looking at it, that realizes that you know things that you're not supposed to know. And without a word it will rush at you...

-A complete game – no other products needed to play.

-Play 'the Touched,' those who have gained incredible power by peeking behind the curtain of this reality.

-A unique, fully detailed horror cosmology.

-Los Angeles detailed as a default campaign setting.

-Two complete introductory adventures.

-Fan Rewards: Get free stuff just by playing at www.InDarkAlleys.com

Proud Member GPA Game Publishers Association

Velish Enterprises

Organic Rule Components

ISBN 0-9713095-4-X

U.S. $37.95
VAJ004

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES