SEACAT

Brĕve Rules & Things
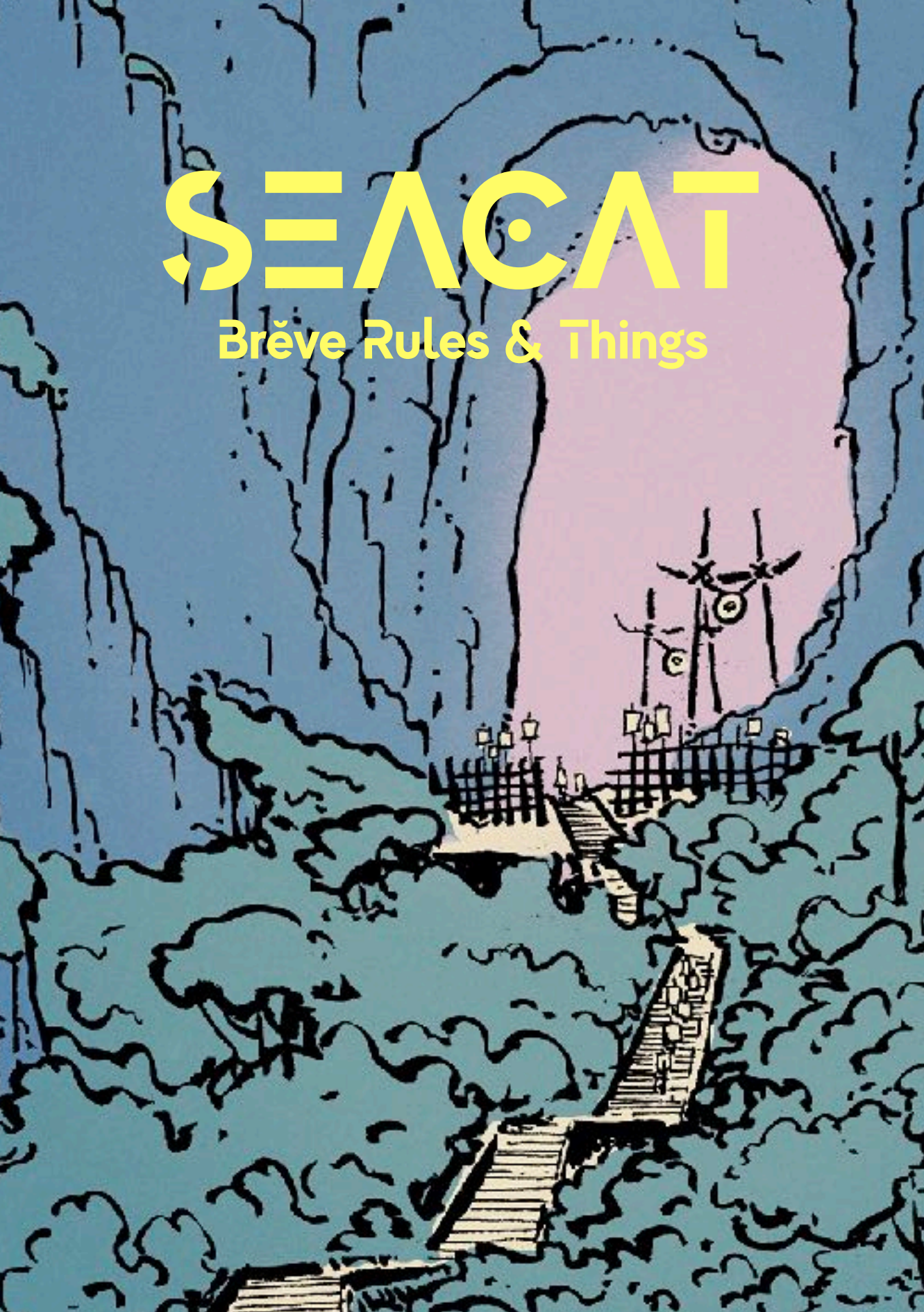
SEACAT

BRĔVE RULES & GLOSSARIUM

for ULTRAVIOLET heroes

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TO DO

RULES AND THINGS

estimating at 25% complete
> add cleaned up basic mechanics
> add cleaned up conflict and combat
rules
> add scene and encounter section
> add cleaned up XP mechanics
> add abilities, skills, spells
> add equipment!
> add creatures!

So … there's a lot left.

THE
PART
WITH
THE
RULES

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

This book is a toy-box for friends [role]playing games of heroes exploring strange worlds.

Mercenary merchants embarking into half-forgotten wastelands to trade or scavenge, machine humans awakening from aeons of sleep to seek lost masters, cultists determined to end this latest godless age, telepathic cats and body-stealing ghosts. Pompous nobles and revolutionary activists in a battle to define the future of their small civilization. Motes of dust in the eyes of Time and Space, the twin deities that make all people small.

The Rule Book is for every player, not just the referee. It contains core mechanics for different games, suggestions for improvising during play, and optional modules for expanding the scope of your roleplaytime.

ROLEPLAYTIME

Seacat is written for the social games of roleplay. It assumes the players are a group of friends (or people who might want to become friends) gathered together to spend time running unexpected heroes, imagining strange worlds, using different games to explore those worlds, to survive and thrive in them, to struggle against challenging threats, and be surprised by the the stories that grow out of the interplay of ideas and dice, successes and failures.

That is why it is arranged as a toy-box of rules and games that fit together loosely, giving space for improvisation, communication, and invention.

DESIGN GOALS

1. Quick setup, low prep, and short campaigns of 3–12 sessions.

2. Melodramatic, cinematic, and unexpected outcomes.

3. Imagination stimulator, players co-create the world on the fly.

4. Moderately crunchy system with levelling, items, abilities, modifiers, and other fiddly knobs and switches.

5. Compatible with *UVG* and similar minimalist modules and settings.

Breve Seacat is a miniseries subset of Seacat. It is covers the equivalent (with some jiggery-pokery) of levels 3–6 in *Old School Essentials* or *The Most Famous Fantasy Game*. It is suitable for adventures in the anti-canon worlds of the *Ultraviolet Grasslands* or *Witchburner* or *Longwinter* or *Red Sky | Dead City*. It also works with other fantascientific settings that handle odd abilities, strange items, and ridiculous technologies.

PLAYERS

Alliteration makes everything at least 15% better"

—AdamB

TWO PLAYER ROLES

In a classic tabletop roleplaying game, which this mostly is, each session has two kinds of player. There is the player running the playtime (aka. the Referee) and there are the players running the protagonists (aka. the Runners).

Neither of these terms is perfect, but they will do for now. A game table can choose other terms.

The referee player sets the stage for the playtime, lays out the narrative hooks and themes, then runs the games and arbitrates the interactions of the heroes with the world through a mix of common sense, rules, and rulings.

The runner players take control of the protagonists of the playtime: heroes, sidekicks, and sometimes even extras. They play their various characters and use them to explore the world, overcome challenges, win against the odds or die, and in the process discover their stories through a mix of blind luck (dice) and fate (decisions).

One thing to reinforce: all the players in a roleplaying game are *playing*. The referee isn't an official outside of the game, like in football, or a master in control of the narrative. This is play time, not work. If someone forgets a rule or fails a quest, if players abandon a story arc or switch genres, it's no big deal. Dust the story off and keep playing.

Also, a group of players can switch around who is the referee and who are the runners from session to session. Or even during a game, maybe from scene to scene. The referee doesn't have to complete an immense, epic arc for it to be a proper roleplaying experience. A one-shot or five good scenes in a row may be enough.

Finally, it is possible to play a session with multiple referees or just a single player. It's just not as common.

TASKS AT THE TABLE (OR ONLINE)

Players perform multiple tasks during a roleplaytime session. Traditionally many systems bundle them together with the roles of referee (game master or what have you) and runner (player, protagonist). Often this means that the referee is tasked with much more work than the other players, which can lead to exhaustion, burnout, and failed roleplaying groups. It's also a big reason why many players avoid refereeing sessions. By unpacking the tasks and talking about them it might be easier to divide the labor fairly.

1. **Organizing a session**: finding a time and place for the group to meet. This can be any player, but it's good to make sure somebody is responsible for making the call.

2. **Hosting a session**: often roleplaying takes place at somebody's home. This can be any player, but it's important to realize that as the host, they are also have a special social role beyond just play. Thus, while the host has an obligation to make the group feel welcome, the other players also have a responsibility to be good guests and not abuse the host's

hospitality. If playing outside of a home, say at a cafe, the player organizing the session takes on some of the social role of a host.

3. **Taking care of food and drinks**: roleplaying is a social event and this often involves eating and drinking. Whether there will be food and drinks at the table is a group decision, but it's worth respecting the host player's preferences. Some groups make every player responsible for their own food, others do potlucks, yet others prepare communal meals like the traditional frozen pizza. The players should decide who will bring what, who (if anyone) will handle preparation during the sessions (e.g. who's handling the frozen pizzas and making sure they don't burn in the oven, who's making sure the glasses don't run dry), and it's absolutely a good idea to collect food money up front so nobody's left holding the tab.

4. **Cleaning up after a session**: especially if there is food involved, there will be cutlery and things to clean up. All the players should pitch in to help the host clean up after a session. Ideally, the players won't leave until the home is as clean as they found it.

5. **Generating characters**: often a new hero or sidekick will be introduced to the story. There should be one player who knows the rules for making new characters well enough that they can help others. It is helpful if this is not the referee, letting them focus on keeping the session rolling along.

6. **Introducing new players to the rules**: when a new player joins the group, it helps if there is another player who is not the referee who can guide them through the rules.

7. **Roleplaying the heroes**: this is the primary task of the runners. The referee should absolutely not roleplay their heroes or make their decisions for them.

8. **Roleplaying the antagonists**: this is a primary referee task, since obstacles to the heroes' desires is where stories are born.

9. **Roleplaying the extras (NPCs) and sidekicks**: any player can take over the extras or sidekicks in a scene. Usually, a runner will roleplay their hero's sidekicks, but they can assign them to other players too. Likewise, a referee can assign an extra along with a one or two-line description to a player not directly involved in a scene. The referee can call for tests to determine the extra's reactions, but beyond that sharing them out keeps all the players playing and makes outcomes unexpectable for everyone, including the referee themselves. Who knows, maybe the runner will suddenly turn the stat-less invented-on-the-spot shopkeeper into a beloved recurring character?

10. **Preparing hooks, plots, and modules for a session**: this is almost always the referee's task. Ideally it should be fun, not a chore. As a rule of thumb, the preparation should not take more time than running the session itself, and ideally take less. The more a referee listens to the other players during a session, and riffs off that, the more dynamic it should be.

11. **Making up lore, names, and backstories**: a large part of the fun of roleplaying is invention and imagination. Any player can and should do this. Traditionally, this task falls almost entirely on the referee (or on pre-written tomes), however it's a good to share it out among all the players. When the group encounters something new in the game the referee can take an exquisite-corpse improv approach. The referee roughly describes the new encounter, then point to the one runner and asks them to add some detail, then the next runner and asks them to add some contrast, and so on, varying the questions a little bit. The runners may pass an improv totem from one to another, to make sure each of them gets their fair turn adding to the world's lore. Additionally, the referee can declare the runners to be experts in things related to their heroes, so the runner of a dwarven hero takes the driver's seat when it comes to describing dwarven lore.
If the referee takes this approach, they should wield a soft veto to maintain some consistency in the shared world and to keep it balanced, so that a single player's ideas don't steamroll over everybody else.

12. **Running the environment, sandbox, and adventure module**: this is another primary referee task. Keeping the imaginary world ticking over, setting the stage for the heroes.

13. **Running antagonists in combat**: this task usually falls to the referee, but they could outsource it to a runner who's heroes aren't present, or even a secondary referee player.

14. **Refereeing conflicts and combat between heroes and antagonists**: this is a primary referee task, but insofar as it deals with rules, an impartial runner well versed with the rules of the game, or whose heroes are not involved, could also handle this task.

15. **Keeping track of the heroes' resources**: this is a task for each runner individually when it comes to their own heroes, but one player might also handle the resources of the whole group, for example their caravans or possessions.

16. **Rules arbitration**: this task usually falls to the referee, but it is easy to outsource to any player so long as they are fair and impartial.

17. **Referencing existing books and lore**: another task that usually falls to the referee, but could be assigned to anyone.

18. **Keeping a campaign journal**: again, a task that often falls to the referee, but could go to any player. A group can even decide to skip it altogether, and the sessions will still be fun. Ideally, the player taking on this task likes to write.

19. **Drawing characters, scenes, and maps**: this is a task that really helps bring the game alive and every group should encourage as many players as possible to participate. In practice, many groups will usually have one or two players really get into the craft aspect of play. That's fine. Having a session art journal is a fun activity in itself.

20. **Buying dice**: this isn't really a task, but a 20th line item was mandated.

SKILLS

Skills represent **what your hero is good at**. They are a descriptive bundle of learning, practice, and experience. You can always try to do something, but if you are **skilled** it means you are good enough to make a living with what you know, while as an **expert** you would be good enough to teach that profession.

There is no mechanical difference between what other games call professions, proficiencies, tools, and saves. This is a little fuzzy on purpose! There is overlap in the daily tasks of an accountant and a plumber, and there is difference. The same holds for a soldier and a spy, a tinker and a tailor.

ANATOMY OF A SKILL

Street Magician (title)
#thief #trickster #performer (tags)
Strange sound of piping wafting. (fluff)
Bring joy to children. Perform magic tricks and sleight of hand. Use cold reading and cunning to dupe marks. (three sentences)

The **title** gives a first impression, a cliche to start roleplaying from.

The **tags** are useful for searching and categorization. A bit meta, I know.

The **fluff** sets a bit of mood and setting.

The **three sentences** give a practical outline for using the skill in play.

WHEN TO USE SKILLS

Use your wits and imagination to figure out how your hero's skill might **reasonably apply** to a situation.

In most cases, dialogue between players will resolve the situation. When an outcome is uncertain and there are stakes to success or failure, the dice should come out.

HOW SKILLS WORK

Your hero will find themselves in one of three possible situations:

1. No relevant skill.

2. Skilled (one rank in a skill).

3. Expert (two ranks in a skill).

If the **hero has no relevant skill**, you do not add their Bonus to the test and make the roll with disadvantage.

If the **hero is skilled** in a relevant skill, you add their Bonus to the test and roll normally.

If the **hero is an expert** in a relevant skill, you add double their Bonus to the test and roll normally.

OPTIONAL RULE: PERFECT MATCH

When your hero's skill perfectly matches the specific circumstances, the game runner may allow you to roll with advantage. For example, a plumber trying unblock a trash compactor's outlet before it crushes the party, or a soldier trying to figure out if their weapon has been tampered with.

This is a very subjective rule, so communicate with one other and be willing to compromise.

WHAT COUNTS AS A SKILL?

When you make up new skills, consider:

1. Does it sound fun to roleplay?

2. Is it something a person could do for a living or as a hobby pursuit?

3. Can you describe it in three sentences?

4. Can you give it a memorable title?

If the answers are yes, you probably have a good skill on your hand. Example:

'Sleight of Hand' isn't a very good skill. It describes a very specific task, with very narrow application. 'Street Magician' or 'Party Clown' would be a better, broader and memorable skill.

'Melee Combat' would be a bit dull and mechanical. 'Gladiator' or 'Infantry Soldier' makes for better stories.

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

When a hero gains xp and advances, they sometimes gain new skills automatically (and usually somewhat randomly!). This represents a culmination of their individual training and practice.

In most other circumstances, to **gain or improve skills** a hero must visit different locations and mentors and **collect successes**. At the end of a week of study at a location or with a mentor, they make a moderate Thought test (that's a roll over 11). Each location or mentor can only provide one success, but a hero can keep studying at the same location if at first they don't succeed. After achieving four successes the hero gains their new skill.

Simpler or more difficult skills are possible. Something like "the Dark Arts of Irshe Dalgba" might require six locations and tests. On the other hand, something like learning to "drive an automatic [cargo wagon]" might require as little as two.

LIMITED SPACE FOR SKILLS

The hero sheet has limited space for skills (just 6 in Breve Seacat). This is on purpose, to discourage overflowing kitchen-sink heroes and encourage a little bit of specialization.

If you run out of space, you can:

1. Appropriate an ability or inventory slot for the new skill.

2. Replace an existing skill.

ADJUSTING SKILLS

You might discover that some skills just don't fit any longer, that they are profoundly overpowered or underused. In that case, discuss with the other players and rewrite the three sentences.

ABILITIES

Perks, traits, mutations, divine gifts. The fire resistance of a salamander. An ur-plant-derived ability to feed on sunlight. Cyber-telekinetic augmentation. Folk hero celebrity status. A parasitic symbiont that grants superhuman strength.

Abilities can get weird and are a bit of a catch-all category. Still, whatever they are and however they are acquired, they allow a hero to function outside the human norm and are beyond the skill an ordinary human could acquire through theory and practice. They are all treated the same way and go in the same section of the hero sheet.

ANATOMY OF AN ABILITY

Death Hunger (title)
#fighter #demon (tags)
Death awakens the blood demon within. (poetic description)
Rank 1: Track the enemies take out of the fight (or kill) in a battle scene. Each enemy you take out gives you a cumulative +1 to attacks until the end of the scene. (rank and effect)
Rank 2: You also gain a cumulative +1 to damage for every enemy you take out. (rank and effect)

The **title** gives a colourful first impression of the ability.

The **tags** are, again, mostly for searching and categorization.

The **poetic description** gives a thematic idea of how the ability manifests during play. It also often goes into a bit of world-building and background, giving a hero more hooks for roleplay.

The **rank and effect** give the mechanical effect of the ability at each rank. Abilities can have different numbers of ranks.

HOW ABILITIES WORK

Abilities are almost always passive and beneficial. They change how a hero interacts with the rules, but don't require tests, sacrifices, ammunition or other equipment. Of course, there might be exceptions, and many abilities combine benefits and penalties.

The most common types are:

1. Simple augmentations to a hero, for example increased Stats or the ability to go without food.

2. Situational modifiers or actions, for example increased damage when cornered or advantage to tests when using cold iron items.

3. Social status that gives access to resources, sidekicks, and extras.

4. Miscellaneous bonuses, augmentations, and abilities that are available at certain times, intervals, or locations.

5. And things that just sounded cool, but might be a bit useless actually.

Some abilities have ranks. If a hero randomly generates the same ability multiple times, or chooses it again, they gain higher rank effects.

Social abilities increase a hero's resources and ability to influence the world around, but these are not super powers. They are subject to a referee's soft veto, which demands dialogue and trust between referees and runners. Approach them in good faith, and they are great fun.

INVENTING NEW ABILITIES

When you make up new abilities, consider:

1. Can you give it a one line poetic description?

2. Can you describe its effect in one or two sentences?

3. Are you sure it's not completely overpowered or something that would bore players whose heroes don't have the same ability?

4. Can you give it a memorable title?

If the answers are yes, you probably have a good ability. Example:

'Detector of Evil' isn't a very good ability. It makes a hero the ultimate arbiter of morality. This removes choices from the other players. Something like 'Desire Detective' would be more interesting.

'Gill Implants' is a bit mediocre, but fine. A water-breathing hero expands the group's reach, but can lead to solo adventures. If the referee is comfortable assigning extras to the other players, this can become more interesting.

'Biomechanical Intestinal Upgrades' is kind of cool. Maybe it lets the hero digest any organic matter. This reduces their dependence on food supplies, but makes for mildly humorous situations ("Hansel eats what? *Again*?").

ACQUIRING NEW ABILITIES

When a hero gains xp and advances, they sometimes gain new abilities automatically. Think of this as the result of a longer process.

The usual other way heroes will gain abilities is through exposure to strange technologies, weird radiation, by purchasing horrifying augmentations, pushing dangerous red buttons, and exploring terrifying elder lingish ruins.

There is no other way to train or study for new abilities, so they also make good rewards for completing quests, or as ways for heroes to burn a lot of resources (ahem, cash).

LIMITED SPACE FOR ABILITIES

The hero sheet has limited space for abilities (just 6 in Breve Seacat). This is on purpose, to discourage overcomplicated heroes and encourage a little bit of specialization.

If you run out of space, you can:

1. Appropriate a skill or inventory slot for the new ability.

2. Replace an existing ability.

ADJUSTING ABILITIES

You will almost certainly discover that some abilities just don't fit within the game. Maybe they are completely useless or profoundly overpowered. In that case, discuss with the other players and rewrite its description and effects.

MAGIC

Magic is everywhere in Breve Seacat. The world is enchanted. Awash in energies. Alive with *Ka*. Vibrating with *Lei*. Gushing with *Vir*. Threaded with radiations and information spheres and tiny wave-particle machines. Woven into the very structure of the universal simulation of reality.

Or, at the very least, the world of Breve Seacat is deep and old. Layers upon layers of misinformation and disinformation, reality alteration, and mad distortion coat the world like the filth of aeons. There are wheels and processes churning madly just beneath the skin of the ordinary and everyday. Where does the line between technology and magic and religion lie?

The line is a lie.

It is a truth: there are great powers waiting to be plucked free by a careless fool styling themselves wizard.

What are they? How do they work? Humans seek patterns. Invent explanations. Time passes. The theories are forgotten but the practices remain.

Those half forgotten powers promise so much. To overcome life and death, to ascend to the heavens like the prophets of old, to reawaken the glittering sky cities, to journey beyond the veil of night into the lands of Everlight and Neverfade.

So many promises.

So many fools.

So much pain, corruption, mutation, change, and death in their wakes.

HEROES AND SPELLS

WHAT ARE SPELLS?

Spells are practical recipes, rituals for ripping mundane reality open and changing it to serve the hero.

At best, they are naive and flawed. At worst, they are dangerous, garbled mistakes, misused and misunderstood.

CASTING SPELLS

Magic rips reality, imposing otherworldly wrongness on the mundane, so spells hurt. Heroes pay the spell price to begin casting a spell.

Spell Price (in Life or Stat points) = Magic Cost x Spell Power

Different types of hero incur different magic costs.

	Magic Cost
Wizard, Witch, etc.	1
Thief, Explorer, etc.	2
Fighter, Warrior, etc.	3

Example: an explorer summoning a 3rd power *Thornstone Obelisk* pays 6 Life or any mix of Life and Stat points. A wizard, with their magic cost of 1, pays 3 Life.

The player whose hero casts a spell narrates the details of the procedure. Maybe the hero casts a spell by reading it out loud from a magic book, maybe it's a dance routine that summons a demon, maybe it's dribbly candles.

EVERYONE CAN CAST SPELLS

Any hero can try to cast spells, whether they have a relevant skill or not, so long as they pay the spell price.

If they lack skill, spell casting is harder:

1. The **spell price is doubled**.
2. All spell **die rolls are with disadvantage**, including corruption rolls.

SPELL POWER

Some spells are more powerful than others, or can be prepared in more effective (and expensive) ways. Higher power spells have a higher spell price and are more dangerous to cast. A hero can cast any spell of any power, but it is **dangerous to cast a spell of a higher power than the hero's level**.

DANGEROUS MAGIC

When a hero casts a **dangerous** spell (marked with a dangerous tag), or they cast a **spell whose power is higher than their level**, they must test their relevant magic skill to see if the magic corrupts them.

The spell price is the test target.

If the hero lacks a relevant magic skill, they test with disadvantage.

If the hero's level is higher than the spell power of the spell they're casting, they test with advantage.

Dangerous magic **corrupts** a hero, twisting their body, abrading their soul, and changing their personality.

SPELLS GO IN THE INVENTORY

Each spell a hero can cast goes in their inventory. This is the **spell burden** and is usually equal to 1 stone.

Most spells are not just recipes and bundles of words a hero carries in their head. They are a burden that weighs them down. This might be ritual equipment and manuals, warding charms and protective clothes, ancient tools and body paints. Maybe even creepy skulls and newt juice. Maybe just the weight of malign knowledge and the pain of an ontogenic nanite injection.

The burden isn't used during casting. after casting. It can stored elsewhere, for example in a library, but a hero can't cast a spell that is not in their inventory.

Some rare tomes are valuable simply because they let a hero carry multiple spells in a single inventory slot.

STARTING SPELLS

Starting spells are listed in the Gear section of each Hero generator.

ACQUIRING NEW SPELLS

Heroes usually gain new spells by adventuring and studying strange artifacts, as treasure or payment for their work. Casting a new spell without studying it first is always dangerous.

Learning how to use a new spell somewhat safely requires a week's study. After that time, when the hero casts the spell for the first time, they make a moderate Thought test. If they fail, they misunderstood how the spell actually works and it is dangerous. The hero then tests to see if the spell corrupts them. If the spell was already dangerous, the hero makes the corruption test with disadvantage.

SPELL ATTRIBUTES

ANATOMY OF A SPELL

Anastasiya's Charged Hand (title)
#electric (tags)
The wizard rubs their hands together without rhythm and builds up an offensive electromagical charge. Their hands stay charged for several minutes or until they touch an object that conducts electricity. (casting description)
Power 1: Their next touch or unarmed attack deals 1d10 electric damage. (power and effect)
Power 2: Their touch also stuns the target for 1d4 rounds or knocks it back. (power and effect)

The spell **title** is like a song title. It's catchy and metaphoric, not a dry encyclopaedia entry.

The **tags** categorize the spell. Skills with matching tags can be used to cast a spell. If a hero's skills don't match a spell, they might still hack the spell and learn to cast it some other way.

The **casting description** sets up the spell: what the hero does, how they prepare, and how long it takes.

The **power and effect** describe the results based on how much power the hero feeds into the spell.

SPECIAL SPELL TAGS

#attack #dangerous #focus #imbue #item

#ATTACK

This spell is cast as an attack action. A hero uses their relevant magical skill to test against their foe's defense and affect them.

When a spell targets other attributes than defense, this is spelled out.

#ANCHOR

The spell creates a physical **anchor** which the hero stores in their inventory to keep the spell active and controlled. Destroying or losing the anchor ends the spell or worse.

#DANGEROUS

A spell that forces a test to avoid magical corruption every time it is cast (see Dangerous Magic).

Applying this tag to more spells is an easy way for the players to restrict certain spells in a setting.

#FOCUS

This spell require **focus** to stay active. A hero must spend an action every turn, or the spell ends.

A hero can always pay double the spell price to imbue the spell with their vital essence, keeping it active without focus. This is usually dangerous and requires a test against magical corruption.

#IMBUE

A spell that is kept active indefinitely, so long a hero **imbues** it with their vital essence (Life or Stat points). The imbued points are reserved and cannot be recovered until the spell ends.

#ITEM

When a hero creates a magic **item**, they use the spell to lock their life force (Life

or Stat points) within a physical object. They can only recover the locked attributes when the magic item is disenchanted or destroyed.

Simple examples of magic items are magic sword, ring, and wicker fetishes.

CASTING PARAMETERS

Individual spells can deviate from these parameters.

CASTING TIME

Unless otherwise specified, a hero takes only a single action to cast a spell.

A hero cannot cast a spell with a longer casting time (a few minutes, an hour, etc.) in the heat of battle.

ENDING A SPELL

Unless otherwise specified, a hero does not need to take an action to end a spell, even if it is focused or imbued.

Disenchanting a magic item is always at leas a single action.

SPELL DURATIONS

Unless otherwise specified, a spell is nearly instantaneous in its effect.

Most other spells have durations described in minutes, hours, days, and other real-world units of time. The only exception are some combat spells with durations listed in rounds. Out of combat, a round lasts several seconds.

Some spells last until a specific condition is met (e.g. until the next sunrise, until the door is opened).

When a spell's duration runs out, the spell fades away with a mildly hallucinatory dissonance.

SPELL RANGES

Spell ranges are abstracted to the same zones as the rest of the game. The phrasing in the description may vary.

1. **Self, Zero, Nil**
   The spell only affects the hero themselves.

2. **Melee, Touch, Adjacent,**
   The spell only affects a space, object, or creature the hero touches or could touch with just a step or two (a very short range of about 2 metres or 5–7 feet).

3. **Close, Near**
   The spell has a middling range of about 10 metres or 30 feet. In an indoor environment, this is enough to cover most rooms or corridors.

4. **Far, Long**
   The spell has a range of about 40 metres or 120 feet. Enough to roughly cover a football pitch.

5. **Distant, Extreme, Other**
   The spell has a longer or somehow different range. A hero using this spell is outside the normal flow of battle.

CREATURES AFFECTED, AREAS OF EFFECT

Since areas of effect are abstracted, just like ranges, the relevant question is usually how many creatures does a spell affect?

1. **Single, One**
   The spell affects one creature.

2. **Small Area, Adjacent**
   The spell affects 1d6 creatures in a small area (about 2–4 metres across) or surrounding the hero.

3. **Middling, Medium**
   The spell affects 2d6* creatures in a mid-sized area about 10 metres across.

4. **Large, Big**
   The spell affects 4d6* creatures in an area about 40 metres across.

5. **Massive, Immense, X Targets**
   The spell has some other, more specific area or creatures.

A lot of parameters affect these numbers and the game runner will often have to adjudicate.

If creatures are tightly packed, the number affected might double.

If they are keeping their distance from one another, the number affected might be rolled with disadvantage.

If they are particularly small, a fireball might engulf more of them, while a storm of daggers would injure fewer. If they were particularly large, the effect might be reversed.

TARGETS

Unless otherwise specified, a spell affects all creatures and inanimate objects in its area of effect.

UNWILLING TARGETS

If a hero casts a spell on an unwilling target, they must always succeed at a suitable test for it take effect.

The exception is if the target is bound or restrained, for example a vampire bound in silver or a xenoform safely embedded in an artificial chest.

HACKING AND CREATING SPELLS

HACKING SPELLS

If a hero has a skill, which could potentially (with some explanation and hand-waving) also be used to cast a spell with a certain tag, they can **hack the spell**. This means they spend 2d4 weeks of game time tinkering with the spell, then roll a Thought test to successfully adapt the spell to their skillset. A relevant ability, like fool's luck, may apply.

[d20] Spell Hacking Test
1 — the hero failed. They will never succeed. They are gain a random mutation from the corruption table.
2–3 — the hero failed and cannot try again. Moderate test against corruption.
4–7 — the hero failed. Moderate test against corruption.
8–11 — the hero failed. Easy test against corruption.
12–15 — partial failure. Roll the next spell hacking test with advantage. Trivial test against corruption.
16+ — success! The hero has hacked the spell adapted it to work with their existing fantascientific skills! Add a new tag to the spell so it fits with the hero's skills!

When a hero successfully hacks a spell their player should narrate how it works and how they modified it. Each other player then suggests a quirk of the hacked spell. The hero's player chooses the best quirk (using popular acclaim as a guide) and writes down the new, modified spell. The player may name it after their hero.

CREATING NEW SPELLS

When inventing new spells, consider:

1. Is it an idea that creates fun solutions and novel situations?

2. Is it something that **isn't** a universal 'I win' button?

3. Can it be described in three sentences?

4. Does it have a memorable name?

If the answers are yes, then it might be a good spell. Worth trying, anyhow.

To come up with ideas players can use a book or movie or song title for the initial creative jolt, then mix it with another title (or just their imagination) to reinterpret what kind of spell the titles could give. Example:

Take an album title like 'Nonadaptation' and a song title like 'Enter Sandman'. The second title suggests elements silicon, sand. Not organic. Perhaps something like:

Nonadaptation (title)
#elemental #focus #nature (tags)
The wizard rocks back and forth for several seconds, then decoheres into a silicate sand cloud held together by strange forces. (casting description)
Power 3: The wizard can withstand severe heat and cold and survive without oxygen while in this silicon cloud form. They still get thirsty, tired, and hungry as normal. (power and effect)

This is an interesting spell because it lets the hero bypass the normal commonsense rules of being an organic creature. Instead, they function as a floating cloud of sand. On the other hand, there is a significant drawback: since the hero has to focus, they can

only take one action per round. The spell is also quite expensive: it costs most heroes 6 Life. Enough to think twice about overusing it.

SETTING SPELL POWER

Spell power determines at what level a hero can cast it safely and how much vitality (Life and Stats) it costs to cast. Since hero levels cannot exceed 9 (or 6 in Breve) and the combined Life and Stat points of a true wizard will usually not exceed 42, this makes adjusting the accessibility of spells quite easy:

Power 0: This spell requires no sacrifice. It's equivalent to an ordinary action, like running or firing a pistol. If you assign a spell a power of 0, it can be used at will by any hero. Be a little bit cautious to keep it specialized (then again, you can always adjust it later!).

Power 1: A 3rd level wizard hero could use this spell about 20 times before running out of Life. It can be a little bit more powerful or useful than mundane equipment or actions.

Power 3: A 3rd level wizard could use this spell just 6–7 times before running out of Life. This is not an ability the wizard will use often, so it can be significantly more powerful than mundane actions and allow interesting local changes to the fundamental rules of reality.

Power 6: A 3rd level wizard could use this 3 times, and even a 9th level wizard might only pull it off 7 times. A spell this powerful could conceivably disable enemies automatically or make visible and semi-permanent changes to reality.

Power 10: A 3rd level wizard could cast this spell once, maybe twice. It would be dangerous to even a 9th level

wizard. Such a spell might be the stuff of fairytales: decades of slumber, exploding mountains, stars falling from the sky, and drastic changes to reality.

You may have noticed that the Life and Stats were given for wizard heroes. That's because their magic cost is 1 and so they can cast the most spells. Most heroes' magic cost is 2, doubling the price of their spells. So, even though they might have combined Life and Stat points of 54, they can only pay for 27 points of spells. A fighter hero's magic cost is 3, tripling the price of spells. Thus, their average of 70 Life and Stat points only pays for 23 points of spells.

ADJUSTING SPELLS

With descriptions that aim for natural language and poetry over technical precision, groups will invariably end up with spells that are mechanically too powerful or useful, reducing the creativity of roleplay and the utility of other characters. If that happens, the players should discuss and decide what to do. There are a lot of simple options short of simply banning the spell:

1. Make the spell dangerous.

2. Increase the spell power.

3. Adjust the efficacy of the spell: reduce its damage, range, or number of targets.

4. Add an additional cost or drawback to the spell.

The in-game narrative rationale for this kind of change is simple. Spells in Seacat are a half-understood mish-mash of fantascience, which require rare components, half-understood rituals, and appropriate conditions to activate. Just like in the story of *Jekyll & Hyde*, the wizard has found that something has changed and the experimental spell is no longer as effective. Or, perhaps, its dangerous properties only became apparent after a period of careless use: just like radioactivity was prescribed as a cure-all in the early 20th century.

SPELL ALBUMS

Mad science wizards, arcane abbots, and dabbling dilettantes alike are fond of devising tabular diagrams of spells and inventing grand unified theories. Do these collections approximate a deeper truth, or is it all correlation masquerading as causation?

It hardly matters. It's best to think of spells as songs and the various collections, canons, and catalogs as albums compiled by celebrity wizards. Some pretend to tell a coherent story, others are ripoffs in disguise, yet others compilations of greatest hits.

A hero can learn spells from different albums, or stick to just one. The only thing an album really provides is a sense of thematic consistency for a wizard.

And, of course, the greatest heroes compile their own spell albums and become rockstar wizards in their turn.

SPELL BOXED SETS [D12]

If your hero is not using the palace of memories, they need some way to carry their spells. Here are a few ideas (d12):

1. **Demon-haunted computer**. It beeps and howls with repressed rage at its slow connection to the underworld.

2. **Synthskin cyber-fiche** that fits in a pocket and comes with a handy-dandy micro-lens reader. It's very portable, but fiddly to read. Not good for reading in the heat of battle.

3. **Memory fluid**. Needs to be refilled with cognitive juices regularly, or it might drain out. Requires a syringe or potion flask for every 'reading'. Reading it is a real rush.

4. **Baked clay tablets**, man. Better have a little wagon ready.

5. **Tattoos inked on your skin**. Going to need a couple of mirrors to read the high level spells. Or a very intimate apprentice.

6. **Bone scales** of the gimlet dragon. Epic and shiny, and some stupid barbarian might think it's just 500 cash worth of gem flakes. It's not. It's an archive of ancient lore!

7. **Parchment bound in a codex bound in silver chain locked with three arcane seals**. What kind of silly demon is bound inside?

8. **Brass and crystal clockwork** that hides the spells in combinations of gears and levers, reproducing them in the sweet tones of the spheres.

9. Just like the **regular book** one imagines. Oh, well.

10. **Shoddy paperback**, barely held together by its poorly glued spine, like the individual spells just want to break free.

11. **Biocomputer**. Also a preserved head in a jar. Once a famous poet politician professor, now a spell slave.

12. **Semi-precious stone slab** laced with memory crystals. They glint with a fae abandon.

CORRUPTION

Exposure to dangerous magic, radiation ghosts, mutagenic blights, source corruption, biomancers, vomes, or other weird leftovers of the Long Long Ago can produce mutations.

Every mutation through random exposure is likely to have deleterious effects. When a hero acquires a deleterious mutation, they reduce a relevant Stat by one. Positive mutations are hard to plan and requires folks with actual biomantic skills.

First, figure out how bad the hero's exposure was. If this is already known, skip this table.

HOW BAD IS IT, DOC?

Flat d20 roll or a suitable 'Luck' skill.

1–3	It's visibly bad. Gain a deleterious and a cosmetic mutation.
4–10	It's just plain bad. Gain a deleterious mutation.
11–12	Ups and downs. Gain a deleterious and a beneficial mutation.
13	Chaos. Gain three mutations, one of each kind.
14–19	Visible but not bad. Gain a cosmetic and a beneficial mutation.
20	The biomagical lottery favors you! Gain a beneficial mutation.

A player is never forced to accept mutations. Maybe they simply don't want strange, twisted heroes. The players should figure out other options together. For example, a hero might get sick and require a week's bed rest and medical attention instead.

Some results mention eventualities. These can occur by chance (if a player rolls the same mutation twice or thrice) or choice (the player decides to deepen their hero's mutation when they gain corruption again).

DELETERIOUS MUTATIONS

Roll d20 to see what bad things happen to the hero.

1. Teeth fall out or become needle-sharp. Eventually may turn into bite attack.

2. Skin rots or develops suppurating boils.

3. Ears wither away or turn into bony horns.

4. Hand withers or locks into claw. Eventually may become a weapon.

5. Vestigial fingers or toes. Eventually they may become fully functional.

6. Vestigial gills or gas bladder. Eventually may permit breathing water or gas.

7. Vestigial wings or flagellae. Eventually they may become functional.

8. Fingers wither or become raw. Eventually they may wither away.

9. Joints stiffen or become weak, but hypermobile. Movement slowed.

10. Chronic fatigue or keratin ropes grow from body. Eventually body may become sessile mass of keratin ropes.

11. Eyes turn milky and blind. Eventually eyes may evaporate and collapse out of eye sockets. Vision reduced to astral sight.

12. Intelligence reduced or personality becomes strangely alien.

13. Feet deformed or oddly turned. Eventually may turn into hooves, paws, or bird legs.

14. Vestigial tail or arm. Eventually may become functional.

15. Bones become soft or brittle. Eventually may dissolve entirely.

16. Back becomes fused or hunched. Eventually a shell-like carapace may form.

17. Strange bones erupt from skin in odd places. May develop into spikes or armor over time.

18. Additional eye or teeth grow somewhere odd. Eye is functional. Teeth can be coaxed to grow into an additional mouth with a bit of biomancy and surgery.

19. Tongue fuses to jaw or is covered in sharp radulae. Speech becomes strange.

20. Secondary brain begins to develop, eventually achieving a semblance of independent thought.

COSMETIC MUTATIONS

Roll d20 to see how the hero's looks change.

1. Hairless or exceptionally fluffy. May end up a true fur-ball.

2. Change skin and or hair colour.

3. Ears change shape.

4. Lips grow or disappear.

5. Nose grows or disappears. Possibility of prehensile nose.

6. Eyes change colour. May end up radically weird.

7. Grow taller or shorter. May become much taller or shorter.

8. Mouth widens or narrows. Eventually it may disappear.

9. Small horns or bony plates grow. This may turn into armor.

10. Patterns appear on skin. Eventually these may begin to move and shift. Later these movements may become controlled.

11. Voice changes, becomes oddly inhuman. Eventually it becomes a cascade of colours and sensations.

12. Blood changes colour, becoming blue or green.

13. Skin becomes smooth and waxy. Eventually it becomes translucent, then flesh follows.

14. Muscles grow slimmer or bulkier. Eventually this becomes extreme.

15. Skull changes, becoming rounder or elongated.

16. Features become animalistic. Eventually they may become completely animal.

17. Eyes grow larger or smaller. Eventually they may disappear or become disembodied.

18. Fingers grow longer or shorter. Eventually they may turn into long, multi-tool like assemblages of chitin and bone.

19. Bone structure becomes bulkier or more gracile.

20. Skin becomes cuttlefish-like, changing colour at the flickering of thought and emotion.

BENEFICIAL MUTATIONS

Roll d20 to find out what unusual benefits the hero gains.

1. Stronger. Strength increases. This may increase the stat beyond human maximums, as high as 7. Maximum bonus to d20 roll remains +13.

2. Better. Endurance increases. May end up as high as 7.

3. Faster. Agility increases. May go as high as 7.

4. Smarter. Thought increases. May go as high as 6 or 7, but brain becomes progressively less human.

5. Psionic evolution. Mental ability develops or spell acquired as an innate ability usable once per day.

6. Tougher. Life increased. This can get ridiculous. Useful for a wizard.

7. Resilient. Immune system boosted, gain advantage against disease, poison, radiation, or some other environmental effect.

8. Psionic augmentation. Develop superhuman aptitude with one skill, making tests with advantage.

9. Supersoldier reflexes. Gain advantage on initiative. Always get one action during surprise round.

10. Expert mimicry. Always gain advantage to tests when copying somebody else (e.g., after seeing somebody climb the wall of the Red Tower, gain advantage on own test).

11. Cosmic channeling. When hero sees a spell cast, test Aura to see if they grab an echo of it in their ego-matrix (inventory). Echo can be cast once.

12. Mule. Carry twice as much as a normal human. Speed may eventually be reduced even as carrying capacity increases.

13. Metabolic enhancement. Derive sustenance from anything organic, and stomach is immune to organic poisons. Unfortunately, alcohol barely works anymore.

14. Optic augmentation. Eyes become sharper and more amazing than those of any normal human.

15. Sensory expansion. Develop eerie new senses: vibration sense, echolocation, electro-detection, a magnetic sense. Choose one.

16. Chosen regenerator. Every time hero is reduced to zero Life their body goes into hibernation as it reassembles itself at rate of 1 Life per day. Each reassembly reduces Endurance by 1.

17. Plastic bone structure. Can slowly adjust the shape and size of bones, squeezing through small spaces, growing taller or shorter, or mimicking other people's faces.

18. Predator. Heal swiftly by consuming biomatter close to own basic body pattern. Recover 1 Life for every stone of flesh consumed (adult humanoid is about 10 stone). For humans: chimps and lemurs are good, pigs less so. In healing-frenzy consume a stone of flesh per action.

19. Precognitive mutation. Occasionally see glimpses of the future. It hurts, but it works. Spend 1 Life to gain advantage on a test to avoid damage.

20. Secret weapon. Natural weapons hidden in body. Claws in fingers, blades in arms, or fangs in mouth. Hero now has natural weaponry.

SIDEKICKS

Every player running a hero can also control secondary characters: sidekicks. These can be pets (say a cat), something more magical (say a butterfly-winged color-changing laser-emitting unicorn), human companions (perhaps John the Undertaker's Apprentice), or even vehicles (the Heromobile).

Each sidekick is 'owned' by one hero, and usually one player runs both their hero and their sidekicks, making decisions and rolling dice for all of them. But this doesn't mean that the different characters communicate telepathically or that animal pets magically have human levels of intelligence—unless such abilities are discovered or chosen during play.

ANATOMY OF A SIDEKICK

Flunky (L1, secretary) (title, level, and noun)
Def: 9, Life: 5, Stat: +1 (attributes)
A loyal but cowardly sidekick who does research and secretarial tasks, carries out the hero's orders and brews a mean (roll d6): (1) coffee, (2) tea, (3) beer, (4) sleeping tincture, (5) mind-numbing draught, (6) storm in a teacup. (description and quirk)

The **title** (Flunky) describes who the sidekick is and the **noun** (secretary) adds color to help roleplay them. The **level** (L1) is a clue to their relative power. For most extras (NPCs), this is all you ever need.

The **attributes** flesh out the sidekick in case they're caught in combat: their Defense (Def) if they are attacked, Life if they take damage (or are used as a spell-casting battery), and Stat to represent their generalized aptitude. Their attributes are also a baseline from which they can advance if a player spends xp on them.

The **description and quirk** round out the sidekick, describing how they behave, their skills, and traits.

HOW SIDEKICKS WORK

Mechanically sidekicks are very simplified heroes.

1. The main benefit of sidekicks (besides comic relief) is that they give access to additional actions and abilities that the heroes might not themselves possess. When a sidekick makes a test, their runner **rolls d20, adds the sidekick's Stat and the hero's Bonus**. This means that the more inspiring a leader a hero is, the better all their followers will perform.

2. They may not be good fighters, but if caught in combat they get two actions on their turn, just like heroes.

3. Defense mashes together relevant stats, skills, and equipment. When heroes equip them with better gear, some eyeballing is required.

4. If a sidekick has an ability victims have to test against, like a venomous bite, their default target number is the same as their starting Defense.

5. Unless otherwise specified, sidekicks are humans, hurting, bleeding, and using tools and weapons like everyone else.

SHARING SIDEKICKS

Players can also lend sidekicks to one another. For example, in a group with three players, one player's wizard hero with a pet cat and a floating skull companion goes on a side quest. It's a good idea for the player to pass the cat and skull to the other players, who play them in scenes and combat. This keeps all the players engaged in every scene.

Note: when one player controls another player's sidekick this is like playing with a borrowed instrument. Handle others' sidekicks with care and in good faith. Breaking another player's sidekick is akin to breaking their action figure. The referee should support every player's veto over their sidekicks' actions.

A sidekick can also become a group character, shared by all the players. Maybe they're a favorite donkey who somehow survived a half-dozen battles, or a trusty old main-line battle golem. In this case, regardless of which player is running the sidekick at a given moment, they use the highest Bonus of the heroes present.

SUICIDAL SIDEKICKS

The sidekick's player doesn't always have complete control of their sidekicks: they are not full protagonists. The referee can exercise a soft-veto to stop them doing something entirely out of character, utterly stupid or suicidal. For example, no sane human will agree to walk through a minefield to clear it for their friend or mentor. A brain-neutered slave might, however.

That said, over time, through play sidekicks naturally tend to become more like heroes, and players may even promote them to full heroes. That's fine. Players can have stables of heroes. If a sidekick becomes a hero, their player will probably flesh them out with a full suit of Stats and other attributes.

PROMOTING SIDEKICKS

Almost all sidekicks are xp parasites. Though they can gain levels, they do not gain their own experience points. Instead, the player chooses how to apportion the xp their hero has earned among the hero and their sidekicks.

Sidekicks cannot be promoted beyond fifth level. If players want to turn them into heroes at that point, that's fine.

Some sidekicks, like the Tourist's Friendly Mimic or the Skeleton's Fellow Skeleton cannot be promoted. This is either because they are already too high level (the mimic is level13) or cannot learn (the brainless skeletons). They get a #nopromotion tag.

- Level 1: nil
- Level 2: 500 xp, +1 Def, +1d8 Life, +1d4-3 Stat (minimum 0), +1d4-3 Abilities or Skills (minimum 0).
- Level 3: 1,000 xp, +1 Def, +1d8 Life, +1d3-2 Stat (min 0), +1d3-2 Abilities or Skills (min 0).
- Level 4: 2,000 xp, +1 Def, +1d8 Life, +1d2-1 Stat, +1d2-1 Abilities or Skills.
- Level 5: 3,500 xp, +1 Def, +1d8 Life, +1 Stat, +1 Ability or Skill.

SIDEKICK BONUS

When without a hero, the sidekick uses their own bonus.

- Levels 1–4: +2 bonus
- Levels 5–8: +3 bonus.

EXTRAS & OTHER CREATURES

Most other characters encountered in scenes, extras and antagonists alike, are mechanically even simpler than sidekicks. The referee usually runs the extras in a scene, but they can also assign them to other players.

These might be zebra (L2, pseudohorses) grazing on the side of Pynchon's Lens, the three-mile-high gravity-shifted force-plate sticking out of the Parmezzan Peninsula, or goblins (L1, virulent) brandishing *yunja* sticks. Or just about anything else.

They are encountered in two situations.

IN THE TEXT: MINIMAL ATTRIBUTES

In the text an **extra** (L1, pig) or a **creature** (L4, extra-imperial), only gets their title, level, and noun (or adjective).

The **title** (extra) describes who or what it is. The **noun** (pig) adds color to help roleplay them. The **level** (L1) is a clue to their relative power. For most extras this is all you ever need, because combat shouldn't be the default option.

When combat occurs, it helps the players to have a few more attributes. They can generate them randomly, using the creature generator, or check the creature's expanded attributes.

IN BESTIARIES: EXPANDED ATTRIBUTES

War Pig (L3, cunning)
#pig #mammal #biomodified (tags)
Def: 13, Life: 13, Sum: +6 (attributes)
Attack: gore (2d6*) and trample (1d4 to all adjacent) (attack)
Ability: when the war pig runs out of Life there is a 50% chance it is faking and actually still has 7 life. (ability)
At some point a biomancer general in the Bloodiron Legion Free Democracy came up with the brilliant idea of creating bioenhanced warpigs. Over the years most of them lost their venomous bites and hypnotic gazes, but their herds continue to terrorize remote free-steads in the Glazed Reach. (description)

The **tags** help with categorizing, searching, and figuring out what to do with an extra at a glance.

The **attributes** flesh out the creature for combat. Their Defense (Def) if they are attacked, Life if they take damage (or are used as a spell-casting battery), and Sum combines their Stat and Bonus into a single number that is added when they roll tests.

The **attack** lists how they commonly fight and how much damage they deal.

The **ability**, if any, describes the creature's quirks and special attributes in combat.

The **description** rounds out the creature or extra, giving a bit of background, some behaviors, common skills if any, and so on.

HOW EXTRAS WORK

Mechanically, extras are simplified sidekicks, usually run by the referee.

When extras make tests there are two possible situations:

1. They **know what they're doing** and roll **d20 + sum**.

2. They **don't know what they're doing** and roll a naked **d20**.

Unless otherwise specified, they get two actions, just like heroes.

If, for some reason, an extra's Stat or Bonus are required, and not just the sum, their bonuses are always equal to one plus their level divided by 4, rounded up. So:

- Level 1–4: +2
- Level 5–8: +3
- Level 9–12: +4
- Level 13–16: +5
- Level 17: +6

TURNING EXTRAS INTO SIDEKICKS

Often players will run across a particularly friendly farting marsh dragon (L1, highly explosive), lost puppy (L1, lucky), or sovereign quadrodont (L6, mammoth), and decide they want to adopt it.

This is easy enough and mechanically the players have three important tasks:

1. Split the Sum into the new sidekick's Stat and Bonus attributes.

2. Assign the new sidekick a hero owner.

3. Give the new sidekick a name, nickname, or other term of affection.

This done, the players can invest xp to raise the new sidekick's level.

THE
PART
WITH
THE
THINGS

Breve Seacat tosses players into a psychedelic metal RPG world of extravagant heroes and reckless science fantasies. With histories layered upon one another like mouldering stacks of books and pancakes and VHS tapes and gelatinous membranes, how does it all fit together? With worlds older and newer than expected, how to bring back actual stories? As heroes explore forgotten times, become vagabonds of alien dimensions, and befriend cultists of half-imagined sentiences, how does the center hold?

Simple. There is no center. It's wheels and turtles all the way down.

The implied worlds of the UVG and Witchburner and other modules I've written are purposefully incomplete and incompleteable. They are anti-canonic. Both the in-fiction knowledge of "how it all fits together" and player knowledge of "what it's really about," are flawed. Individual facts disagree. It is in play, through player choices and decisions, that truth-at-the-table is found.

There is no encyclopedia or gazetteer to memorize. There is a profusion of parts and toys to assemble into the world of your choice. Sure, there are some construction guides available, but like with branded plastic bricks, those guides do not describe one true way to play and build.

SKILL LIST

This is an alphabetical list of skills. Pick random hero skills here or generate them with the hero book.

1. **Acolyte of Mother Electricity**
   #priest #engineer #wizard
   All creation hums the song Electric.
   Practice the old rites of electric equipment maintenance and repair. Use heavy energy weapons and ka batteries. Cast electric spells with blueprint scrolls.

2. **Apparatchik**
   #bureaucrat #trickster #aristocrat
   The highly trained bureaucrat reproduces the bureaucracy.
   Navigate arcane institutions and access secret locations. Pass the buck and avoid blame. Use office supplies as improvised weapons.

3. **Archaeologist**
   #adventurer #explorer #thief
   Behold, the golden idol!
   Discover lost artifacts, climbing and jumping, dodging boulders. Detect traps and hidden doors. Crack a neural whip and handle small weapons.

4. **Athlete**
   #adventurer #sports
   Run, rabbit, run.
   Run the extra mile, stretch reserves further, go faster. Climbing walls, jumping ditches, doing a triathlon. All of that.

5. **Auxiliary Captain**
   #fighter #soldier
   They led the cannon fodder.
   Lead the forces of civilization to victories over monsters of the wild. Understand soldiers' bellies and boots, morale and logistics. Handle reconnaissance and field fortifications. Wield standard issue weapons and navigate the military bureaucracy.

6. **Bounty Hunter**
   #thief #detective
   It's just like hunting hogs.
   Track down humans and figure out what they're thinking. Use concealed weapons and non-lethal weapons. Navigate the grey areas between the law and the underworld.

7. **Burglar**
   #thief
   Door, window, wall. Same thing.
   Breaking into and out of places. Disarm locks and traps. Move very, very quietly. Appraise treasures.

8. **Chemist**
   #engineer #wizard
   It's supposed to explode.
   Understand chemical processes and equipment. Make explosives, cook drugs. Transmute worthless garbage (like urine) into valuable goods (like gunpowder).

9. **Doctor**
   #bio #wizard
   Doctor what?
   Fix damaged humans, diagnose injuries and diseases, and use medical equipment. Recognize poisons and potions, even curses and charms.

10. **Driver**
    #adventurer #mechanic
    Speed in the sign of yellow.
    Handle land vehicles, manoeuvring at speed and over obstacles. Repair and keep them running. Pack them surprisingly well.

11. **Energy Warrior**
    #fighter #electric #energy

An elite order of laser monks?
Use and maintain ancient energy weapons in the field. Master wands, lasers, and death orbs. Peruse the holy manuals and recite the operation mantras.

12. **Engineer Electrical**
#engineer #wizard
Not magic, technology! Abrakazzam!
Use an actual oldtech education to build, maintain, and fix complex electrical artifacts. Apply technology, construction and physics without relying on dusty rituals. Improvise weapons from electrical and electrician tools.

13. **Fisher**
#explorer #water
Understand rivers and lakes and shores. Know your fish, boats and hooks, lines and poles, nets and yarns. Handle a harpoon and some basic navigation.

14. **Forager**
#explorer #wilderness
Food wriggles everywhere!
Find berries and nuts and mushrooms and grubs. Trap a rabbit, tickle a trout, start a fire. Keep you dry and warm in the wilds.

15. **Gladiator**
#fighter #performer
Let blood soothe the decadent fools.
Thrive in arenas, put on shows. Impress crowds and intimidate opponents. Master showy weapons and gladiatorial mainstays. And dirty tricks, those too.

16. **Gunner**
#fighter #soldier
Take care of the general's big toys.
Use and maintain really big ranged weapons, like cannons, catapults,

and null walkers. Pretty good at ballistics too.

17. **Heavy Infantry**
#fighter #soldier
Break on through to the other side.
Master heavy weapons, armors, and shields. Fight in formation, resist charges, and endure long periods in armor. Storm enemy lines and fortifications, and more.

18. **Hunter**
#explorer #adventurer #wilderness
It doesn't know it, but it's already food.
Think like andimals and hunt them. Track them, set traps, and hide in ambush. Skin them, prepare furs, and the rest. Use hunting weapons.

19. **Investigator**
#detective #thief #professional
Elementary, my dear sidekick.
Gather clues and piece together answers. Discreetely interrogate people. Use a couple of small, easily concealed weapons.

20. **Mechanic**
#adventurer #machine #engineer
Did you try plugging it in?
Understand machines and listen to their woes. Care for them, lubricate them, and fix them. Given time, even bring them back from the grave. Wield a mean blow torch and throw a sharp spanner.

21. **Navigator**
#explorer #professional
When the seven signs align.
Master maps and telescopes and cartography. Avoid getting lost and track down lost treasures and new discoveries.

22. **Negotiatior**
#explorer #thief #trickster
They think *they got the better deal.*

Read people and listen to them. Figure out what they want, and how to get it for them. Get your way in the process. Do a bit of discrete espionage. Handle organizations and bureaucracies.

23. **Performer**
#trickster #artist
For my next trick.
Play to audiences and sway masses, whether with politics or music. Shift opinions and turn black into white. Fast talk and avoid blame.

24. **Pilot [in the Void]**
#explorer #navy
Listen, the ship knows where to go.
Pilot really big vehicles and machines. Understand them and their maintenance needs. Keep their synthetic personality constructs happy.

25. **Priest**
#wizard #thief #daimon
The will of the world is written in the wind and the seed.
Read the omens of wind and sky and water and grass. Divine the desires of the gods and their immutable laws. Adjust those laws to help others (and themselves).

26. **Rider**
#fighter #explorer
Ride animals and riding machines. Wield light ranged weapons and lances. Take care of keeping steeds happy and working nicely.

27. **[Oldtech] Scientist**
#researcher #sage #wizard
It's how they did things Long Ago.
Understand the fantascience of Oldtech. Activate or deactivate nearly anything. Reverse-engineer how to use ancient technomagical artifacts. Jury rig a feeble emulation of the glories of the Long Ago.

28. **Professor [of Field X]**
#academic #wizard #sage
Practical applications coming soon.
Expound theories and histories. Navigate cloisters and libraries. Fight academic battles, and browbeat foolish opponents. Memorize one narrow field of lore.

29. **Singer of Lost Songs**
#poet #fighter #mystic
The Old-World will never die.
Memorize the heroic songs of the desperate land and perform them to please a crowd. Navigate the mythic wilderness of forgotten times by the landmarks of ancient days. Soothe wild beasts and rouse the blood rage in the breasts of humans.

30. **Skirmisher**
#fighter #thief
Go, go, guerrilla.
Irregular tactics and guerrilla combat. Sniping, ambushes, and shooting on the run. Light weapons and armors. Hiding and deception. And running away for long periods.

31. **Steppe Survivor**
#nomad #fighter #wilderness
Slept in the belly of a dead bear.
Survive and thrive in the endless steppe. Fish and hunt, track and hide, move quiet as the long-stripe cat. Shoot from horse and autowagon like a true child of the riding lands.

32. **Street Magician**
#thief #trickster #performer
Joy of the many, coin of the few.
Bring joy to children. Perform magic tricks and sleight of hand. Use cold reading and cunning to dupe marks.

33. **Ur-War Programming**
    #fighter #supersoldier #created
    They made champions to win the eternal war.
    Understand battle and struggle at an almost instinctual, cellular level. Utilize body and environment as weapons (a vase might deal d4, a table d8, a decorative stone pillar d12). Endure stress, hardship, and fatigue as though designed for it.
    Rank 1: Unarmed attacks also deal d6 damage.
    Rank 2: Unarmed also deals d8.
    Rank 3: Unarmed d12.

34. **Veteran [of the Psychic Wars]**
    #fighter #trickster
    They've seen a fire of unknown origin take their friends away.
    Use psychic and oldtech weapons. Maintain archaic and golem armors. Close the mind to incomprehensible alien intruders. Stave off boredom. Survive and recognize strange nootropics developed by long lost corporate kingdoms.

35. **Wilderness Explorer**
    #adventurer #wilderness
    Over seven rivers and seven hills.
    Organize expeditions into the unknown and survive in the wild. Navigate by stars and landmarks, hack your way through jungles and cross deserts. Negotiate with strange cultures and write popular travel literature. Wield rifles and machetes.

ABILITIES LIST

An alphabetical list of abilities. Pick random hero abilities here or generate them with the hero book.

1. **Action Boosted**
   #fighter #speed
   Rank 1: Once per turn the Hero can spend 1 Life to gain one additional action. This boost is not an action.
   Rank 2: Or they can spend 3 Life to gain two additional actions.

2. **Activate Everything**
   #thief #adventurer
   The red button will be pushed.
   Rank 1: Ignore all restrictions (level, stat, species, etc.) on all magic and ancient devices. Somehow activate all of them. Does the hero understand what they do? Unlikely.
   Rank 2: Once per day, when the hero touches a dead machine or artifact, it sparks to life and gives off one last gasp of utility. A dead autowagon rolls forward a last few meters. A visual calculator's last output glows dimly on its cathode sphere for a few minutes. An electronic lock reactivates and bolts a door.

3. **Artificial Organism**
   #machine #strange
   Rank 1: Hero is not actually alive. They do not need to eat, breathe, drink, or sleep. They gain energy from the sun, or from magical batteries.

4. **Blood Is Armor**
   #fighter #rage
   Action hero style.
   Rank 1: When below half Life, the hero only takes half damage. They're just tougher when covered in their own shiny blood!

Rank 2: When below half Life, the hero can shrug off one attack every round (announced before the enemy's die roll).

5. **Break The Weak**
   #fighter #destroyer
   Cut them down like wheat.
   Rank 1: When the hero strikes an opponent of lower level than themselves, the opponent is out of the fight (and probably dead).
   Rank 2: When the hero knocks an opponent out of the fight they get a free attack.

6. **Chosen of the God Factory**
   #trickster #archaeologist
   The great giving machine.
   Rank 1: Charisma increases by 1 point. Additionally, once per day hero can ask God Factory for guidance and receive a true answer or advantage on their next test (often, the player may simply narrate something they "know", subject to the referee's soft veto). Once per week, they can receive a mysterious package, no larger than a small coffin, containing a non-magical machine or item of their choice.

7. **Combat Monster**
   #fighter #rage
   Fight alone. Fight dirty.
   Rank 1: When hero fights an opponent by themselves, they have advantage to attacks and tests to trip, trick, or otherwise hinder their enemy. But they never benefit from flanking.
   Rank 2: When fighting alone, the hero's opponent never gain no advantage from flanking them.

8. **Critical Mastery**
   #fighter
   Know where to hurt them.

Rank 1: Hero's critical hit damage multiplier is now equal to their Bonus or x3, whichever is higher.
Rank 2: The hero's critical hit damage multiplier is now equal to their Level or their Bonus or x4, whichever is higher (maximum x6).

9. **Death Hunger**
#fighter #demon
Death awakens the blood demon within.
Rank 1: Track enemies the hero takes out of the fight (or kill) in a battle scene. Each enemy taken out grants a cumulative +1 to attacks until the end of the scene.
Rank 2: Also gains cumulative +1 to damage for every enemy taken out.

10. **Dosemaster**
#medic #bio #wizard
Measured in all things.
Rank 1: Hero knows their doses. They don't roll dice when healing with potions and meds, or when applying a poison. Instead they treat the maximum result as the number of charges. So a potion that normally restores 1d8 Life, always restores 8 Life in the dosemaster's capable hands.

11. **Devastator**
#fighter #destroyer
Damage is everything.
Rank 1: Hero's attacks always deal extra damage equal to their Bonus or x3, whichever is higher.
Rank 2: Hero's extra damage is now equal to their Level or their Bonus or x4, whichever is higher (maximum x6).

12. **Earth Eater**
#machine #strange #augmented
Rank 1: Hero has a matter converter installed in their body and derives sustenance from inorganic material.

13. **Echolocator**
#biomech #strange
Rank 1: Hero can use echolocation. Gain 1 Agility.

14. **Empty Shell**
#machine #strange #ka
Rank 1: Hero has no soul or *ka*. All fear or charm spells always fail against them. They have resistance against all other mind-affecting attacks. They can never be restored to life if they die.

15. **Electromagic Hacker**
#electric #focus #wizard
Talk long enough into the machine and it will talk back.
Rank 1: Hack adjacent oldtech creatures and equipment. In combat, hacking is one action, each command is another action.
Rank 2: Advantage to oldtech hacking when touching target.
Rank 3: Give hacked target one free command per turn.

16. **Expert Sidekicks**
#gang #thief
They are the best.
Rank 1: A number sidekicks equal to the hero's bonus can be experts. This means they use double the hero's bonus when testing their skills.
Rank 2: The number of possible expert sidekicks increases to the hero's level or bonus or 4, whichever is highest.

17. **Famed Explorer**
#social #adventurer
A name synonymous with the federal geographic society.
Rank 1: Advantage in some social situations. Impress people with credentials. Open social doors. Raise private contributions. But, the hero is easily recognized, making

subterfuge difficult.
Rank 2: A member in good standing of an Official Association. Advantage raising official funding and equipment for expeditions.

18. **Fluid Anatomy**
#biomech #strange #liquid
They have organs they shouldn't have in places they shouldn't be.
Rank 1: Hero's insides rearrange and rebuild themselves to keep them going despite dreadful trauma. Spend 1 Stat point to turn a critical hit into a normal hit.
Rank 2: Spend 1 Stat point to turn a regain Life equal to the hero's level.

19. **Influential Academic**
#social #academic
An esteemed, learned person in the community. And very much aware of that esteem.
Rank 1: If the hero's research 'helps' the community, they gain access to detailed information and basic supplies. Also gains a **protege** (L1, eager) sidekick to do research, make coffee, and runs errands.
Rank 2: Hero has built up a network of dedicated seekers after ancient truths. Gain two additional sidekicks: **money** (L2, noble backer) to fund research and **guns** (L2, ex-mercenary) to keep hero safe from evil goons after their divine knowledge.

20. **Infraoptics**
#machine #strange
Rank 1: Hero sees heat signatures and traces. Gains advantage on survival and investigation tests.

21. **Lightning Rider**
#electric #metal
Stormbrother he knows me. *Rank 1*: The hero crackles with the Stormbrother's power and has advantage to all electric damage.
Rank 2: Hero also makes all electric attacks with advantage.

22. **Rubberskin**
#electric #resistance
*S*kin laced with symbiotic insulating caucho-fungoid.
Rank 1: The hero is resistant to electromagical and energy attacks (halving all damage).
Rank 2: The caucho-fungoid is interwoven with whole body. Immune to electromagical and energy attacks.
Rank 3: No longer fully human but an evolved caucho-fungoid chimera. Electromagic and energy attacks heal the hero. Note: they don't repair broken bones or open wounds. Those still need surgery.

23. **Memory Palace**
#memory #wizard
A wizard's mind is like a scary old palace, full of dark holes where magical parasites hide.
Rank 1: The hero squirrels away extra spell burdens in their mind as magic memories. The memory palace has a number of magic rooms equal to their level.
Rank 2: Hero also gains Memory points equal to their level. These are used to cast memorized spells as if they were Life points.
Rank 3: Hero's Memory point total is doubled.
Note: Players can invent their hero's memory palace. The more fanciful, the better.

24. **Pistolero**
#fighter #thief #guns
Only good guys wield pistols.
Rank 1: The hero always adds their Bonus to pistol and wand damage.
Rank 2: As a single action, the hero

can take two shots with a pistol or wand.

25. **Porcelain Skinned**
#biomech #oldetch
They made people prettier once upon a time.
Rank 1: Hero's uncannily smooth skin is resistant to diseases and scarring. Gain 1 Charisma.
Rank 2: Hero's skin is resistant to acid, chemicals and fire. Gain 1 more Charisma.

26. **Position of Power**
#social #aristocrat
Important, and everyone had better know it.
Rank 1: If the hero can argue they are acting in the common good they gain access to basic information and extensive supplies. Also gain a **flunkey** (L1, specialist) sidekick for secretarial duties and personal assistance.
Rank 2: Hero has built up a shadowy power network beyond their official capacity. Gain two additional sidekicks: **muscle** (L2, scary) to enforce their will and **brains** (L2, spy) to keep them informed.

27. **Protector of Innocents**
#social #fighter
Despite the gore, a noble cause.
Rank 1: Hero gains advantage to attacks and tests when they are fighting to protect an unarmed innocent.
Rank 2: Word gets around. Downtrodden communities offer meager resources and hero gains a **naive apprentice** (L1, fanatical) who won't leave them alone. The apprentice is good at cooking, cleaning, laundering, carrying things, and learning.

28. **Racer of Renown**
#social #sport #vehicle
The grand velocity trophy proves life has meaning.
Rank 1: Fame grants the hero advantage (and notoriety) in many social interactions. Also, they gain advantage during vehicular chases.
Rank 2: Some of them were death races. Gain advantage when maneuvering to attack or defend with a vehicle.

29. **Radiant Sensorium**
#machine #strange
Rank 1: Hero can "see" in full darkness using a panoply of active, electromagnetic sense organs.

30. **Sparklefingers**
#electric #unarmed
Conducting the ambient electromagic of the world.
Rank 1: The hero's unarmed attacks can deal 1d4 electric damage instead of 1d3 physical damage. Conducting materials extend the attack range.
Rank 2: Electric touch increases to 1d6 damage. Spend a few hours to recharge dead batteries.
Rank 3: Increases to 1d8 damage. In a medical setting hero's touch can give [+] or [-] restarting stopped hearts, etc..

31. **Stargazer**
#fighter #poet
Gazed upon Mother Star and see through the Veil of Ignorance cast upon humanity by the Dark Sorcerer at the top of the false heaven. See through their whips and chains, and now they are as gossamer.
Rank 1: Hero rolls all tests against magic with advantage.
Rank 2: So many died to build the barbarian empire of the Dark

Sorcerer with their flesh and bones. The moon-tide roars within the hero. They always deal double damage to magic-corrupted monsters and abominations. And to dark wizards, of course.

32. **Swift Recovery**
#fighter
Deep breaths, action hero, deep breaths.
Rank 1: Hero recovers twice as much Life when spending a hero die.
Rank 2: Thrice as much life.

33. **True Warrior**
#vvarrior #fighter
Beyond the gates of this reality there is only war. Prepare.
Rank 1: Hero's connection with the essential nature of struggle increases their Life by 2 points for each of their levels (current and future). But their magic cost is increased by one. Additionally, the hero learns to wield a new weapon. This ability is not compatible with abilities that decrease a hero's magic cost.
Rank 2: Hero's damage in combat is always increased by their Bonus.

34. **True Wizard**
#wizzard #wizard
Welcome to the universe.
Rank 1: Hero's magic cost is reduced by one. But the connection with the void of wizardry reduces hero's Life by 2 points for each of their levels (current and future). Additionally, the hero learns a new spell. This ability is not compatible with abilities that increase a hero's magic cost.
Note: magic costs can never be reduced below 1.
Rank 2: Hero reduces all spell prices by one.

35. **Trust Me, I'm a Symbologist**
#trickster #academic
There are patterns everywhere, and they all hold meaning.
Rank 1: The hero knows what every symbol means, or says they do. Anyway, they always know when a symbol is broadly positive or negative.
Rank 2: Cast or nullify spells that use symbols (e.g. magic circles of protection or magical exploding symbol traps) with advantage.

36. **Vacuum Hardened**
#machine #strange
When did *they* forget Old World?
Rank 1: Hero can survive a full day in hard vacuum due to significant nano-magical modification. Gain 1 Endurance.
Rank 2: Survive a full month in hard vacuum. Hero can derive sustenance from radiothermal batteries or other such devices.

SPELL ALBUMS AND SPELL LISTS

The spells are presented as pseudo-apocryphal spell albums or incantographies loosely arranged around different magic skills.

1. ANASTASIYA'S CANON

#electric-wizard

"The secrets of the all-magnificent, all-giving Electric *Ka* come down to us in an unbroken line of truth and symbiosis from the great Vivifex Anastasiya. They revealed that it is the contact of dissimilar primordial elements, in closes agreement with the principles of the static universe electric, that creates the radiation of motion and change and life." —Nusa the Skydread

Unless specified otherwise, all the spells in Anastasiya's Canon take mere moments, just a single action, to cast.

Roll d6 to determine hero's starting spell(s). Replace duplicates with spell of choice.

1. **Anastasiya's Arc Light**
   #electric #focus
   The wizard focuses. A small aura of shooting, crackling electric arcs surrounds them. Painfully bright blue light floods a middling area. Hair stands on end and the smell of ozone assails the nostrils.
   Power 1: All adjacent creatures suffer 1d3 damage per round.
   Power 2: 1d4 damage per round.
   Power 3: 1d6 damage/rd.
   Power 4: The aura expands and all creatures near the hero suffer 1d6 damage per round.
   Power 6: 1d8 damage per round.
   Power 7: 1d10 damage/rd.
   Power 8: 1d12 dmg/rd.
   Power 9: ... *and* every time any creature touches the hero it must pass a hard test or be knocked back and stunned for one round.

2. **Anastasiya's Charged Hand**
   #electric
   The wizard rubs their hands together without rhythm and builds up an offensive electromagical charge. Their hands stay charged for several minutes or until they touch an object that conducts electricity.
   Power 1: The hero's next touch or unarmed attack deals 1d10 electric damage.
   Power 2: Their touch also stuns the target for 1d4 rounds or knocks it back.
   Power 3: Their touch also sets the target on fire, dealing 1d6 damage per round until put out (stop, drop, and roll).

3. **Anastasiya's Electrifying Projection**
   #electric #travel
   The wizard collapses into an electromagnificent wave-particle singularity and travels like lightning to a nearby target (about 12m away) where they reappear in a sudden shower of sparks.
   Power 3: Each creature in the hero's path takes 2d6 electric damage. Every creature close to the target takes 4d6 damage. If the hero re-coalesces within a solid target, they and their target both take double damage (8d6).
   Power 5: Hero transmits themself to a far-off target (about 43m away).

Power 7: Hero deals 3d6 damage in their path and 6d6 to creatures close to their target.

4. **Kovinov's Twitching Puppet**
   #electric #mind #focus #attack
   The wizard raises their hands high and a crackling gush of electromagical bolts unerringly strikes a nearby target, dealing 1d6 electric damage.
   Power 1: Every turn test against the target's Aura. If the hero succeeds, they gain poor control of its movements for that round and make it take an action (its action has disadvantage). The target takes 1 point of electric damage per round, whether controlled or not. The spell ends if the hero stops focusing, if the target touches the hero, or if it dies.
   Power 3: Hero's control is satisfactory, target's actions do not have disadvantage. Target takes 2 points of electric damage per round.
   Power 6: Hero's control is *Ka*-enhanced and all target's actions are advantaged. Target takes 3 points of electric damage per round.

5. **Kovinov's Ride the Lightning**
   #electric #sky #travel
   When an electrical storm is imminent, or in progress, the wizard raises their arms to the sky and a bolt of lightning strikes them.
   Power 6: All creatures adjacent to the hero take 4d6 damage and they ride the current into the cloud. The next round they return to ground up to a few kilometres away on a second bolt of lighting from the same cloud. The landing deals 4d6 damage to all creatures adjacent to the second point of impact. Both impact points should be visible from the cloud.

Power 13: The lightning deals 9d6 damage at both strikes.

6. **Selbstein's E-Vivification** *or* **Galbani's Electric Parody of Life**
   #electric #creation #imbue #dangerous
   The wizard jams their Oh Mega rods into the yielding flesh of a corpse or bound creature and, over several agonizing minutes, forces an electric *Ka* elemental into the flesh prison. This creates an **electric abomination** under the wizard's command. Giving an order to the electric abomination takes an action. The spell price is imbued in the flesh prison of the abomination until it is destroyed or the wizard unlocks it with a touch of both Oh Mega rods.
   Using a living creature: bound to a non-conductive slab with solid straps, the target will experience a very painful and eventually deadly procedure. The target loses 1 Life per minute until it dies. This resets its Life total to the e-vivified abomination's normal maximum. The electro-possession is complete after 2d6 minutes and the victim is compelled to follow orders, even if they are still alive.
   Note: Most inquisitors agree this use of the spell is a vile offense against life and the sapient universe.
   Power 1: The hero e-vivifies a cat or dog-sized body, creating a Level 1 electric abomination.
   Power 2: The hero e-vivifies a pig- or human-sized body, creating a Level 2 abomination.
   Power 4: A cow- or horse-sized body, for a Level 3 abomination.
   Power 8: A rhino- or hippo-sized body, for an L5 abomination.

7. **Wired Life *or* Danse of the Flesh Electric**
#electric #creation #anchor
What is a wizard in possession of a sack of electrical supplies and a fresh corpse to do? With this week-long ritual they can create a living, electric child of Mother Electricity. Just like in the blueprint scrolls!
Power 2: The hero brings a dead body to life as a **wire ghoul** (L2). They also create a module of amber and wood and silver to control the ghoul (1 stone anchor). Uncontrolled wire ghouls descend into a mad, dangerous rage.
Power 4: Hero can create a wire ghoul in just a few hours *or* using just a stone's worth of supplies.
Power 6: Hero crafts actual, proper personalities for the dead bodies they jolt to life, creating sentient **wirefolk** (L2). These can become sidekicks without control module anchors if educated over the first 2d6 weeks. In the early days they absorb learning at a prodigious rate, so a hero with a sack of educational supplies should be able to convince their new wired sidekick that they are a good, kindly friend, not a terrifying dark master.

2. THE DISENCYPHERAE: PRACTICUM OF THE OCCULT INVESTIGATOR

#investigator #academic

It is known, as your Onka told you, that many of the Ancient Truths are bundled, hidden, condensed, tinned, filed, and cyphered to prevent the Wrongfolk and the Administrators and the Truthkillers from getting at them.

That is why the scientific rituals of Occluded Investigation were preserved as a way to unlock the cyphered truths.

Or, possibly, these spells are just a bundle of half-understood fantascientific keys used to unlock oldtech and communicate with it. In fact, that seems more likely.

1. **Kocha's Door Open Itself**
#investigator #mechane
The wizard spreads their hands wide and summons a fragment of consciousness into an object that can open, such as a door, lid, hatch, or portal. Overjoyed, the dimly sentient object burbles at the edges of the wizard's mind, begging to please.
Power 1: At the hero's gesture a nearby object opens. Shutters swing wide. At a second gesture, an open object closes. Locked objects open only if the key is already in the lock.
Power 3: A far away object opens. Alternatively, a nearby locked or barred object swings open without a key. Or locks itself shut.
Power 5: A far away locked object flies open or locks itself. Alternatively, a nearby sealed object, such as a steel door welded shut, flies open, showering all nearby with shrapnel (1d6* damage). Or a nearby object flows into its surroundings, sealing itself permanently.
Power 7: A far away sealed object opens in a shower of shrapnel, or an open one seals itself. Alternatively, the wizard summons an opening object from a platonic ur-reality, creating a door where before there was none. Or makes an opening disappear as though it never was.

2. **Skala's Blood Commandment**
   #investigator #blood #mechane
   The wizard drips their blood on a machine, artifact, treasure, or even a mundane object. Thereafter, when the wizard presses their forehead to the bloody stain, they compel the object to obey their wishes.
   Power 1: The object performs a simple mechanical action intrinsic to its nature. A wheel turns, a candle lights, a valve releases.
   Power 2: The hero doesn't have to touch their forehead to the object. So long as they are nearby, they can compel it with a simple gesture.
   Power 3: Hero's thought enhances the essential mechanical drive of the object. So long as they focus on the object, it performs with advantage.
   Power 4: Hero compels object with mere thought, no gesture required.
   Power 5: Hero overwhelms intrinsic mechane of the object. A door locks permanently, an entire candle spontaneously combusts in a small explosion, an engine block seizes up.

3. **Skala's Interrogation of Objects**
   #investigator #mechane #anchor
   In a mildly-terrifying day-long ritual, the wizard bonds their flesh and blood with an oldtech screen orb (this anchor is at least 1 stone in size, worth 100 cash). Thereafter, the wizard can spend a few hours to draw the symbols of interrogation around and upon an object with bone chalk. The wizard then bark questions at the object. As its single word answers spell themselves out on the screen orb the symbols of interrogation fade away.
   Power 1: the orb answers one question.
   Power 2: three questions.

Power 3: six questions and the spell becomes dangerous.

4. **Voyt's Lexema Siphon**
   #investigator #lex
   The wizard runs their fingers across an alien text and the fundamental units of the lexicon swiftly flow into their mind (about one paragraph or 100 words per minute).
   Power 1: This doesn't let the hero read a text, it gives them meaning units. For example "run", "dog", "terror" might derive either from "The dog ran from the Terror" or "Run! Terrible dog."
   Power 2: The wizard intuits the general intent behind a text (warning, invitation, explanation, joke).

5. **Voyt's Mental Cartography**
   #investigator #lex
   The wizard sets up a ritual investigation apparatus that lets them monitor the basal psychoelectric and homeostatic responses of a subject to questions. Obviously, it requires a subject willing to sit down and answer questions.
   Power 1: The interrogation takes several minutes. The hero asks a series of dummy questions and three key questions. They get the emotional response of the subject to the key questions (scared, confident, confused, aggressive, numb, not human).
   Power 2: The investigation takes an hour or so. Hero picks up the neuro-cognitive attitude of the subject to three key questions (helpful, obstructive, uncertain, terrified).
   Power 3: The investigation takes a few hours. Hero discerns the belief map of the subject for three key

questions: whether they think they are telling the truth or not.

6. **Voyt's Syntax Terror**
#investigator #lex #curse
The wizard analyzes the meta-grammar of a text, abstracted from its meaning, letting them discern if there are curses or mind-worms encoded in the gaps between meaning.
Power 1: The hero spends a minute per paragraph and uncovers traps laid in the text.
Power 2: Hero spends a few minutes to strip a paragraph of traps and nuance, making it safe to use.
Power 3: Hero spends an hour rewriting a paragraph-long text, encoding it with hidden emotion-curses and mind-worms. These provoke emotional reactions in the reader (fear, dread, awe, affection, laughter) if they fail an Aura test.
Power 5: Hero spends a few hours encoding a text with psychosomatic curses that provoke strong physical reactions (catatonia, bowel-loosening terror, flight, paralysis) if they fail an Aura test.

3. MANTRAS OF THE GLANCING KA AND SKIPPING MIND

#dream #ultra

Strange mantras found on a series of crumbling codices inside an artificial cave so old that the paint on its walls faded away as soon as someone looked upon it. Ever after the local artificial meat farmers called it the Pit of Fools.

1. **Asuki's Whispering Dream**
#dream #posession #charm #focus
The wizard holds a personal possession or body part of their target to their lips and whispers the six mantras of Asukuki the Mindskipper, the Glancing Ka, the Flickering Flame, as they descend into a trance, sending their *Ba* and *Ka* through the noösphere into the target's dreams. It takes the wizard a few minutes to fall into a trance, but the subsequent magical mental link lasts as long as the wizard sustains their trance (and the target remains asleep).
Power 1: The hero manifests as an alien voice-object and communicates with the target.
Power 2: They cloak themselves as somebody the target knows and communicate with the target.
Power 3: They wrench control of the target's dreams, inducing sweet restorative dreams (target heals in their sleep) or nightmares (target cannot sleep or rest that night).
Power 5: The hero slits a hole in the target's somnosphere, exposing them to the monsters of the void. Until the target receives help from a spirit doctor, they must make an Aura test every night or a **dream horror** (L2d4, violent, magenta) from beyond time and space possesses them and rides their body. The morning after a dream horror ride they have no memory of what they did and get no rest.

2. **Nonadaptation**
#elemental #focus #nature
The wizard rocks back and forth for several seconds, then decoheres into a silicate sand cloud held together by strange forces.
Power 3: The wizard can withstand severe heat and cold and survive without oxygen while in this silicon cloud form. They still get thirsty, tired, and hungry as normal.

4. MEMORIUM OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE

1. **Hidden in My Palace of Memories**
   #void #wizard
   The caster spends a few seconds swirling their arms and hands and feet in ellipses, suddenly tracing glowing afterimages in the air, then steps through an afterimage into their own memory palace, hiding themselves from harm. The wizard does not age while in the memory palace.
   This spell requires that the caster has a memory palace and enough memorized spells.
   Power 1: The wizard disappears for about a minute and erases one memory point.
   Power 2: They disappear for about an hour and erase two points.
   Power 3: For about a day, erasing three points.
   Power 4: For about a week, erasing four points.
   Power 5: About a month, five points.
   Power 6: About a year, six points.
   Power 7: About a decade, seven points.
   Power 8: About a lifetime, eight points.
   Power 9: About seven lifetimes, nine points.
   Additionally the wizard can pull guests with them into their memory palace. Multiply the spell price and memory points erased by the number of people entering the memory palace (so if the wizard brings 5 guests, multiply all the costs by 6).

5. PSEUDO-IRSHÉ'S BOOK OF NECROMANCY

#necromancer #skeleton

A fine selection of tomes to grace the offices of any respectable necromancer lawyer or necrologist.

Except for the forbidden volumes, of course.

1. **Akaula's Destruction of the Dead**
   #necromancy #purification #redsky
   The wizard releases their holy blood and with it anoints an undead abomination. This takes a couple of minutes and a lot of passionate imprecation. An assistant is helpful for holding the abomination down during this ritual.
   Power 1: The hero utterly destroys a 1st Level abomination.
   Power 2: Hero totally destroys a 2nd level abomination.
   Power 3: A 3rd level abomination.
   Power 4: etc.

2. **Akaula's Eating of the Blood of the Dead**
   #necromancy #assimilation #redsky #dangerous #imbue
   The wizard takes the powdered essence of an undead creature, mixes it with holy water and imbues it in an hour-long ritual involving robes, candles, and cryptic chanting. Drinking the (un)holy mixture is dangerous and painful, but bestows the powers of the undead.
   Warning: this spell is proscribed by all reasonable scholars and commissars.
   Power 1: Uses crushed skeleton bones. Hero loses 1d3 Endurance, then becomes resistant to slashing and piercing attacks (taking half

damage) for about a day.

Power 2: Uses dried and powdered zombie brain as key ingredient. Hero loses 1d3 Agility, then gains 10 temporary Life (or unlife) and takes half damage from bludgeoning attacks for about a day.

Power 3: Uses diced and sliced ghoul. Hero loses 1d3 Aura, then gains a paralyzing touch and can regain 1d4 Life each hour by eating a quarter-pounder of living flesh. Cheese optional.

Power 5: Uses the ash of a shadow. Hero loses 1d3 Str, then takes half damage from all physical attacks for about a day.

Power 7: Uses shredded mummy flakes. Hero loses 1d4 Cha, then gains a rotting touch for about a day. With each touch (or strike), hero deals 1 point of Charisma damage.

Power 9: Uses preserved vampire blood. Hero loses 1d4 Thought, then gains a natural attack that deals 1d6 damage and restores Life 1 for 1.

3. **Akaula's Fear of the Dark One**
   #necromancy #redsky #focus
   The wizard takes a few minutes to anoint their forehead with holy blood (or their own blood), terrifying the dead.
   Power 1: The hero's countenance terrifies several undead creatures (with a combined Level not higher than hero's Charisma + 1d6). They flee or cower if they cannot flee.
   Power 2: Hero terrifies Charisma + 2d6 levels worth of undead.
   Power 3: An undead creature of hero's level or lower prostrates itself in abject terror and follows their instructions. Giving each instruction is an action.
   Power 4: Hero terrifies Charisma + 4d6 levels worth of undead.

Power 8: Hero terrifies Charisma + 8d6 levels of undead.
Power 16: Charisma + 16d6 levels.

4. **Esbeen's Animation of the Mummified Dead**
   #necromancy #UVG #imbue
   The wizard exhales their soul into a mummified corpse, imbuing it with a semblance of vital force.
   Power 1: After a few hours the corpse awakens into a slow, shambling parody of life and follows the hero's instructions. The slow corpse (L1, zombie) takes only a single action each round.
   Power 3: After a few minutes the hero shakes the corpse into lurching, jerky life (L1, zombie).
   Power 5: After mere seconds the hero exhorts the mummy to unlife. It grows supple and strong again. The mummy (L2) takes two actions per round.
   Power 7: In a flash of soul fire hero transforms the corpse into a swift and ravenous ghoul (L4). It springs up, faster and stronger than in life. It acts immediately and takes three actions per round.

5. **Esbeen's Recalling of the Lost Soul**
   #necromancy #energy #UVG
   The wizard uses a corpse as bait to summon its soul, its *Ka*, back from the All-Fire. After an hour-long ritual a coiling serpent of ectoplasmic fire erupts from the corpse's orifices. The wizard can easily capture the soul to animate a golem or recharge a golem battery. This kind of soul abuse is possibly reprehensible.
   Power 2: The hero summons back a Level 1 soul.
   Power 4: Recalls a Level 2 soul.
   Power 6: A Level 3 soul. Etc.

6. **Esbeen's Recalling of the Lost Soul and Reanimation of the Corpse**
#necromancy #UVG
The wizard uses a corpse as a focus to summon its soul back from the All-Fire. After an hour, the soul is bound back to its own corpse—essentially creating a corpse golem. The reanimated abomination is not imbued. Depending on time of death, very little of the original personality might remain. Unless somehow preserved, the corpse continues to decay. This kind of soul abuse is certainly reprehensible.
Power 3: The hero summons back a Level 1 soul.
Power 6: A Level 2 soul. Etc.

7. **Esbeen's Turning of the Mill Wheel of Essential Existence**
#necromancy #chronomancy #UVG #dangerous
With the half-mythic Turning spell the wizard replaces one individual creature that survived an event (accident, battle, or other incident) with another that did not; swapping who lived and who died.
Power 5: The hero spends a week painting a grand four-dimensional design of soul lines, world memories, possibility matrices, and erotic essentialisms. The design is large enough to cover a courtyard or patio. When the spell's target enters the central area of the design it is instantly dispersed into a probability cloud. The previously-dead creature then coalesces in a shower of sparks. The incident must have occurred no more than a month ago.
Power 10: No more than a year ago.
Power 15: A decade ago.

8. **Esbeen's Words With the Dead**
#necromancy #UVG
The wizard touches their forehead to that of a dead creature, summoning memory, dream, and desire back into this world. So long as the wizard maintains the touch they can hold a conversation, lending their own mouth and features to the dead and speaking in turn: first in their own voice, then the voice of the dead.
Power 1: After an hour of chanting, the hero channels the spirit's personality-memory. Enough to answer one question.
Power 2: After a few minutes the hero channels five questions.
Power 3: Hero triggers an instant connection, allowing a conversation of an hour or more.

SIDEKICKS LIST

Sidekicks are secondary characters that a player or players control. Each sidekick has a main hero they look up to.

1. **Brains** (L2, investigator)
   Def: 10, Life: 10, Stat: +3
   Razor sharp, this sidekick loves to stay in the background and has now found their perfect master. It hardly matters why they feel so little ambition, when they're so good at ferreting out secrets, planting false evidence, and finding hidden clues. Alas, they are (roll d6): (1) often depressed, (2) fond of over-eating, (3) utterly terrified of pain and violence, (4) completely without empathy, (5) a fool for games of chance, (6) saddled with a crippling drug habit.

2. **Flunky** (L1, secretary)
   Def: 9, Life: 5, Stat: +1
   A loyal but cowardly sidekick who does research and secretarial tasks, carries out the hero's orders and brews a mean (roll d6): (1) coffee, (2) tea, (3) beer, (4) sleeping tincture, (5) mind-numbing draught, (6) storm in a teacup.

3. **Guns** (L2, Recovering Mercenary)
   Def: 16, Life: 13, Stat: +3
   A gold-toothed sidekick with an evil smile. They have a well-earned reputation as a fast-draw, and go about in a travel-stained cloak that conceals a half-living armor from a fallen Scorpion Kingdom. When not on duty they (roll d6): (1) collect matchboxes, (2) go hunting, (3) read racy adventure novels, (4) garden, (5) play darts with maniacal dedication, (6) visit junk sales.

4. **Money** (L2, noble backer)
   Def: 9, Life: 11, Stat: +2
   A good-humored and slightly naive aristocrat. They were an illegitimate child who came into their fortune through the machinations of a sharp-witted aunt twice removed. Now they feel a vague urge to make the world a better place by funding ways to (roll d6): (1) bring high culture to the peasantry, (2) disprove superstitions and charlatans, (3) promote a national awakening, (4) make the citizenry see the truth of an unpopular occult practice, (5) alleviate poverty through eugenics, (6) explain the natural inequalities underpinning the aristocratic orders and thus stop the revolutionary urges that would lay waste the civilized world.

5. **Muscle** (L2, enforcer)
   Def: 15, Life: 15, Stat: +2
   A scarred sidekick with a murky past. They're scary with words, knives, guns, and other concealed weapons. They always wear a battered battle-vest under their clothes if at all possible. In a vulnerable moment they also reveal a familiarity with (roll d6): (1) dog breeding, (2) vehicle maintenance, (3) chess and strategy games, (4) miniature tree cultivation, (5) rambling and hiking, (6) watercolors and fine arts.

6. **Naive Apprentice** (L1, fanatical)
   Def: 10, Life: 7, Stat: +2
   The apprentice is good at cooking, cleaning, laundering, carrying things, and learning. They will give their life to save their (roll d6): (1) mysterious locket, (2) orphan sibling, (3) clan's honor, (4) heirloom dagger, (5) pet hamster, (6) tiny potted plant collection.

Special: the naive apprentice adds +1 to all sidekick promotion rolls.

7. **Protege** (L1, Research Fellow)
Def: 7, Life: 7, Stat: +2
An eager, short-sighted sidekick who does research, works on their thesis and brews coffee. In their leisure time they (roll d6): (1) do improv theatre, (2) re-enact historical events, (3) perform as a clown, (4) write racy accounts of your exploits, (5) experiment with psychedelic drugs, (6) dabble in the occult.

8. **Wirefolk** (L2, blank slate)
Def: 13, Life: 13, Stat: +3
New, living person created from dead bodies by an electric wizard. Their bioelectric parts make them stronger than a normal person, but also grotesque and terrifying. When first created, they are innocent blank slates, recalling nothing of their previous life. With their super-charged brain they learn at prodigious speed.
Creating a wire person usually takes a week and requires suitable organic parts harvested from fresh 'donors', a sack of electrical supplies, and a sack of educational supplies. An additional 2d6 weeks of education is common. They do not require control modules, but can kept as mind-controlled slaves if such modules are used.
An individual wirefolk will be very fond of (roll d6): (1) poetry, (2) wood-carving, (3) philosophy, (4) games of chance, (5) monastic solitude, (6) the natural sciences. In appearance, the flawed nature of their creator is always manifest and they are (roll d6): (1) lopsided, (2) red as burnt flesh, (3) apparently

skinless, (4) bloated and suppurating, (5) hard like rubber or plastic, (6) threaded with wires and metal.
Wirefolk have been reported with a variety of abilities:

1. **Electrical Healing**
They regain 1 Life point per minute when a powerful voltage is applied to them.

2. **Resilient Physique**
They have advantage to tests against unusually hot or cold environments, which would harm most humans.

3. **Redundant Organs**
Even after being reduced to 0 Life, they reanimate a couple of hours later (easy test) unless they have been mutilated or dismembered.

4. **Electric Immunity**
They take no damage from electrical attacks.

5. **Electrographic Memory**
They have almost flawless recall for electromagnetic information.

9.

LIST OF PETS, EXTRAS, AND OTHER CREATURES

1. **Emotional Support Golem** (L1–L4, Viviform Synthetic)
   #synthetic #pet
   Def: 6 + 2 × L, Life: 1 + 5 × L, Sum: L
   Attack: bite or kick (1d4* or 1d6*)
   Ability: though they look just like their organic counterpart, they are far more enduring and can carry heavier physical and emotional burdens.
   Many viviform synthetics are leftovers from the Jade Egg Wellness Corporation Cult's Age of Expansion. They are scattered around the metaverses, often still in their original packaging-cradles, still as statues, their Null-HeartTM batteries ready to propel them into motion, providing much needed emotional support and serving their new masters. Often even if their masters do not want service.
   Each of these viviforms is oddly useless in its own way (d6):

   1. **Support Skunk**
      The golem releases an overpowering, foul, muscle-relaxing odour that weakens every creature that smells it, giving disadvantage to all physical tests (Target 6 + 2 × L).

   1. **Reality Blanket Squirrel**
      The golem's skin unfurls from its synthetic frame to shield itself and its master from incoming missile attacks. All missile attacks against the two targets are made at a disadvantage and deal half damage. The golem can't really do much else while it's holding its own skin up as a shield.

   2. **Opiate Teat Swine**
      The golem releases a blue-green milk from special psychotropic glands, which helps its master forget what they just saw.

   3. **Environmental Cow**
      The golem comes equipped with a belly vesicle in which the master can shelter from extreme environments (cold, heat, vacuum).

   4. **Heat Ray Dog**
      The golem has a hidden heat ray weapon. When unfolded, the golem gains an additional attack action each round (Short range, 2d6* damage).

   5. **Alarum Goose**
      The golem's sonic attack stuns nearby targets and alerts its master (Target 6 + 2 × L).

2. **Electric Abominations** (L1–L5)
   #electric #undead #horror
   Def: 9+L, Life: 5 × L, Sum: +3+L
   Attack: amplified natural attacks (1d4* × L electric and physical damage)
   Ability: anything that touches an electric abomination suffers L electric damage and tests (Target 6 + L) or is stunned for one round.
   #electric #ka #undead
   Imbued Oh Mega monsters created by binding electric Ka spirits to mortal creatures (or their corpses).

Left to their own devices, they can follow simple orders ("Kill everyone who enters!" or "Let no one pass" or "Attack anyone who touches the Seven-Sided Cube of Ineffability"). Giving more a more precise order ("Attack the orange goblin!") is an action.

Each is abominable in its own special way (d6):

1. **Bowel-Loosening Hum**
   Nearby creatures must test Endurance every round or their muscles involuntarily relax, disadvantaging all physical activity (Target 6 + L).

2. **Explosive Overcharge**
   When struck by a critical blow, the electric abomination explodes in a shower of sparks, setting nearby objects on fire and dealing Ld6 damage to all nearby creatures.

3. **Not Life As We Knew It**
   The abomination is immune to critical hits and other special combat maneuvers.

4. **Parasympathetic Shutdown**
   On a critical hit, the abomination's target suffers a heart attack.

5. **Stunning Touch**
   Its touch stuns for 1d4 rounds (Target 6 + L).

6. **Terror Radiation**
   Nearby creatures test Aura every round or they begin hallucinating their deepest subconscious fears, causing them to cower or flee in terror (Target 2 + L).

3. **Ex Parrot** (no level, deceased).
   #joke

Def: 19, Life: no, Sum: -10
Attack: pining (1d6)
It just lays there, pining for the fjords. There is no magitech that could bring it back.

4. **Metal Steed** (L2, shiny)
   #steed #disguised #pet
   Def: 15, Life: 12, Sum: +3
   Attack: short-range flame breath (1d6*)
   Capacity: 2 sacks
   It roars like thunder and gleams like a chrome elemental. On closer inspection it is a (roll d6): (1) living metal skeleton, (2) mirror-skinned horse, (3) golem steed, (4) a null-battery powered motorcycle with sidecar, (5) an actual chrome elemental, (6) a life-drinking alien.

5. **Scruffy Dog** (L2)
   #dog #pet
   Def: 14, Life: 9, Sum: +4
   Attack: tenacious bite (1d6)
   Ability: Any creature it bites is slowed until the dog lets go or it manages to land a blow on the dog. The dog looks utterly non-descript, but within its eyes burns a fierce intelligence that has seen void ships on fire off the shores of Titan and heard the terrible song of the Zu Complex.

6. **Skeleton Otter** (L1, hyperactive)
   #otter #pet #undead
   Def: 12, Life: 4, Sum: +4
   Attack: nibbly nip (1d4)
   Ability: When the otter runs out of Life it collapses in a heap of bones. Some mysterious cosmic force always reassembles it within an hour or two.
   It's an undead otter skeleton. It still likes clams.

7. **Sleepy Cat** (L1)
   Def: 17, Life: 9, Sum: 5

Attack: none
Ability: When the cat falls asleep in someone's lap it immediately restores 1 Life and makes them feel at ease.
The sleepy cat does not believe in violence. It does wish it had prehensile thumbs so it could use can openers.

8. **Space Owl** (L4)
Def: 16, Life: 12, Sum: +6
Attack: mind-warping hoot (1d6 psychic damage to all adjacent creatures)
Special Attack: The space owl can swirl its eyes and steal part of a victim's mind (deal 1 Thought damage).
Ability: Telepathic communication.
It looks just like an ordinary little owl. But somehow it's incredibly fast. And sometimes it feels like it's saying things.

9. **Vorpal Rabbit** (L3)
Def: 10, Life: 20, Sum: +9
Attack: throat-ripping bite (3d6* terrible damage)
Ability: The vorpal rabbit lands a critical hit on 17–20.
It looks just like a wee little bunny. It's very docile unless severely provoked. Even if thrown into the midst of a battle it won't attack first.

10. **Wire Ghoul** (L2, electric zombie)
#electric #ka #undead
Def: 8, Life: 13, Sum: +4
Attack: fists (1d6* electric damage)
Ability: their touch stuns for 1d4 rounds (Target 8)
Dead bodies, reassembled and returned to life with wires and the power of Mother Electricity. Their metal-threaded bodies crackle with a mockery of life, their movement provided by the *Ka* batteries

embedded in their bellies. They are directed with control modules that weigh a stone each. The creator must always have the control module about their person, or the wire ghoul becomes undirected. The minds of undirected ghouls collapse into mad rage within days.
Creating a wire ghoul usually takes a week and a sack of electrical supplies.
Some Wire Ghouls have been reported with other unusual abilities, like:

1. **Explosive Batteries**
When struck a critical blow, the wire ghoul explodes dealing 3d6 damage to all nearby creatures. This usually kills the ghoul.

2. **Parasympathetic Shutdown**
When the ghoul rolls a critical strike, the target's parasympathetic nervous system overloads. Breathing stops. The heart stops. Death often follows.

3. **Short Circuit Ghoul**
Whenever the ghoul rolls a natural 6 with any die, whatever it touches (or the surface it is standing on) catches fire.

11. **War Pig** (L3, cunning)
#pig #mammal #biomodified
Def: 13, Life: 13, Sum: +6
Attack: gore (2d6*) and trample (1d4 to all adjacent)
Ability: When the war pig runs out of Life there is a 50% chance it is faking and actually still has 7 life.
At some point a biomancer general in the Bloodiron Legion Free Democracy came up with the brilliant idea of creating bioenhanced warpigs. Over the years most of them lost their venomous bites and hypnotic gazes,

but their herds continue to terrorize remote free-steads in the Glazed Reach.

AGAINST THE AUTHORITY OF THE DESIGNER

Hi there. My name is Luka and I'm a human being. I also wrote and illustrated the whole *Ultraviolet Grasslands*. And this book. And some others. I've also designed all the rules of Seacat. Well, when I say designed, I mean lifted those I liked from some games, house-ruled others, and hacked everything together until I enjoyed the result well enough. I tested it on core audiences of people who mattered to me, like long-time players, family, friends, acquaintances and some nice people who gave feedback, either on purpose or accidentally.

There is no magic to design. It's trial, error, and muddling. Is the result an idiosyncratic roleplaying game book? Yes, of course! Like every other such book since Gygax Arneson [sic].

Game rules are all made by ordinary people. Humans without unique insight into your game table. In the end, the only measure of the quality of this, or any, game book is whether or not you enjoy it, whether or not it is working for you and your friends.

Some of you will enjoy the rules as written, some of you will modify them to suit your tastes, some will cannibalize them for ideas All these approaches are fine. Indeed, inventing new rules and mechanics is a game all of its own.

So, I guess I'd say, this is my appeal to you: don't trust me as the final word on game design. Don't trust anyone! We're all just making it up as we go along.

—Luka, 2020