



BEYOND THE BLACK CITY

PSYCHEDELIC METAL RPG

SEARCH

L u k a R e j e c

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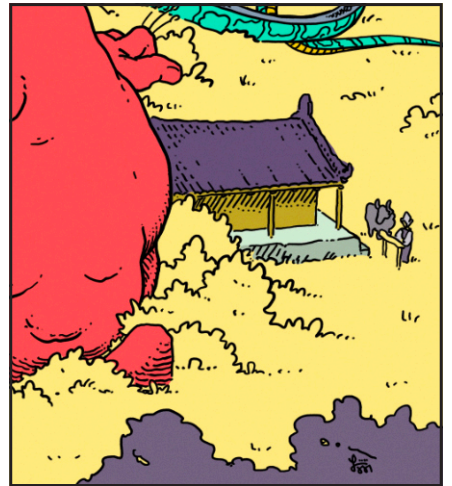
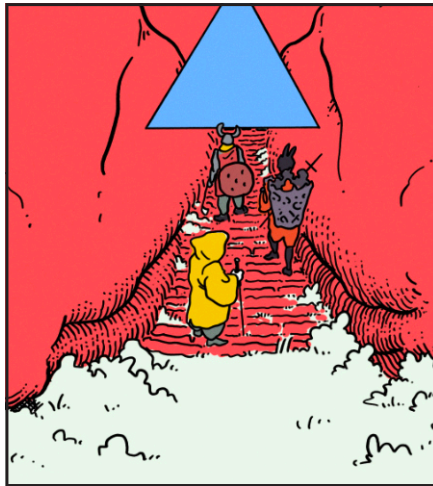
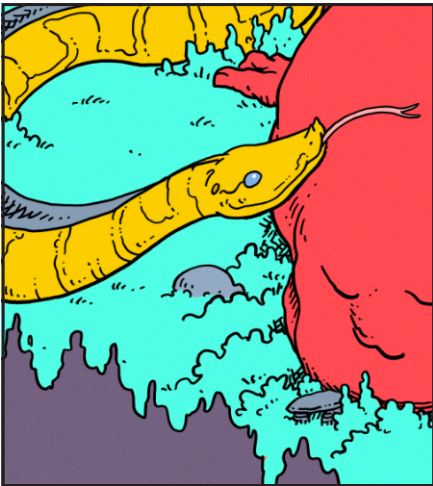
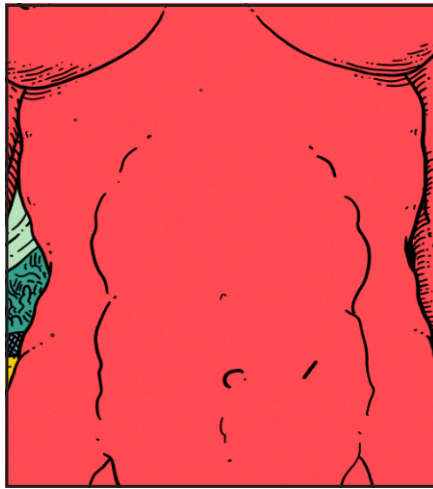
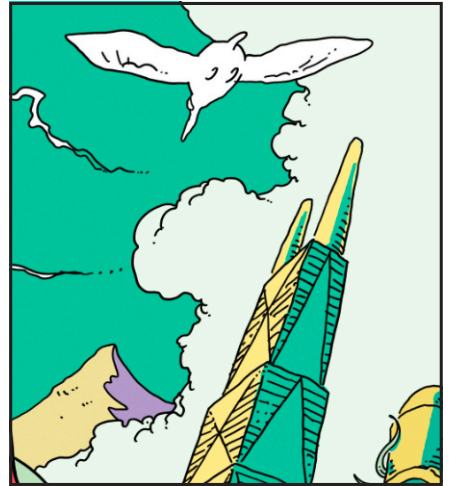
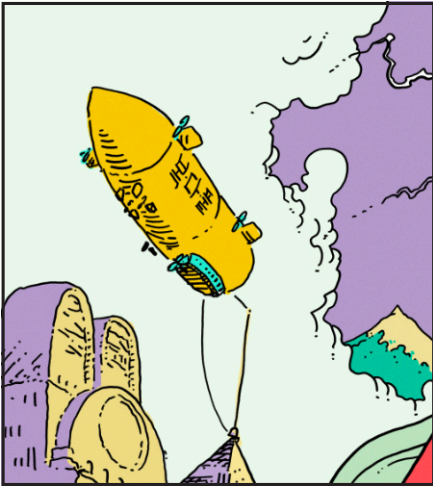
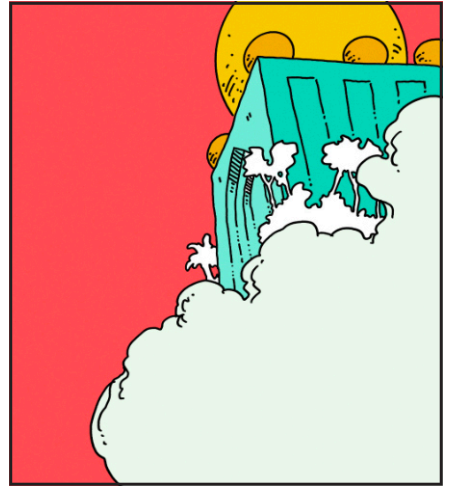
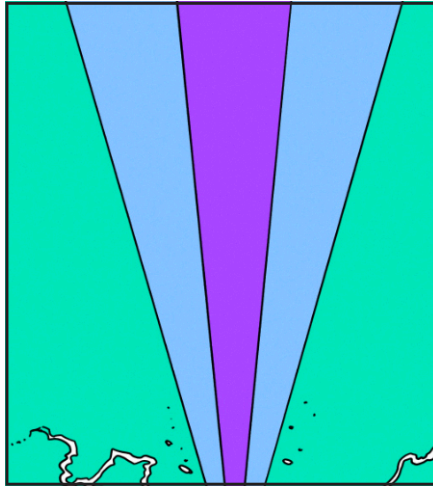
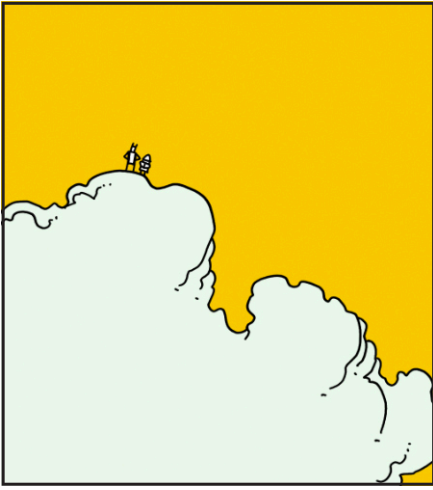
Sincere thanks to all the heroes who made this booklet possible.

BEYOND THE BLACK CITY

PSYCHEDELIC METAL RPG

SEACAT

L u k a R e j e c



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16 more spell albums, for 32 pages and c. 80 more spells need to go here.

going to switch things up a bit, probably pushing axioms & guides for using different modules here.



PSYCHEDELIC METAL ROLEPLAYING

Introduction

A caravan on a strange long trip through the Ultraviolet Grasslands to find the Black City at the end of the world.

Devotees and deserters build a new life under red skies in the heart of the twitching corpse of the greatest city the world had known.

Half-mad fools ascend into the skies on cobbled-together chariots of fire like the shamans of old to wander the voidways of the sky gods.

Heroes end cities and civilizations and worlds through accidents and inattention, and through it all, creation and invention dance on, a couplet unbound by space and time.

What even makes a hero when the tale is told? Not goodness, perhaps. But excess, yes, indeed.

Moebius' mind-bending bande dessinée *Airtight Garage*. Blue Oyster Cult's evocative *Veteran of the Psychic Wars*. The rambling melange that is the *Heavy Metal* movie. The surreal fantasy of Jodorowsky's *Holy Mountain*. The impressionistic brilliance of Miller's *Fury Road*. The semi-coherence of the Strugatskys' *Roadside Picnic* or VanderMeer's *Annihilation*. The neo-baroque pop metal of *Ghost*.

The shifting realities of new wave science fiction. Psychedelic journeys between inner and outer spaces.

All these inspire and inform seacat, *le chat de mer*, the roleplaying game of whimsical and capricious worlds, digressing from a single arc, lurching into branching stories, dancing into an act of creation itself. Seacat is self-consciously modernist; impressionist and expressionist by turns, embracing the theatre-of-the-mind and the infinite special effects budget that brings.

May the seacat bless you all with strange tales to laugh over for many days and many years.

—Luka, 2020, 2021

This Book

Running head-first into a roleplaying game is rough, so the next two pages summarize the rules as much as possible.

The next section covers the rules for running characters and scenes.

Then come several chapters for creating, equipping, advancing and retiring characters in a psychedelic world.

Finally, there is an appendix of glossaries, tags, and inspirations.



Axioms of the Seacat

"I don't understand this world," said First God.

—*First God Returns*, a novel, author anonymous.

Friendly Play

Seacat assumes trust and good faith as a baseline: the players should be friendly with one another. No players should accept cruel, bullying, mocking, or discriminatory behaviour at their tables.

Players

One player prepares the game session. They're the top cat or TC. Like a bass player, they set the rhythm of play. The other players run stables of characters. They're called runners. When seacat refers to players, it always means all the players: TC and runners.

Anti-Canon

This book is not canon in a seacat game. No published book is canon. The only canon that exists is that which the players agree to at the table. Some of the skills, traits, and lore presented here conflict with themselves. It is up to each table to resolve these conflicts and create their own unique play worlds.

Shared World

The players co-create the game world through play. The TC guides play forward and wields a soft veto to maintain a measure of consistency, but all the players contribute to the fantasy world.

Characters

Runners play multiple characters: heroes, sidekicks, and pets. Heroes have a number of attributes: stats, skills, abilities, levels, defences, hero dice, life totals, magic costs, proficiency scores, and limited inventories for their burdens. Other characters are simplified and less powerful.

Dialogue

The heart of play is a dialogue between the players. The TC presents situations and challenges, the runners say what their characters do, the cat narrates the outcome. Play moves forward using common sense first, dice second.

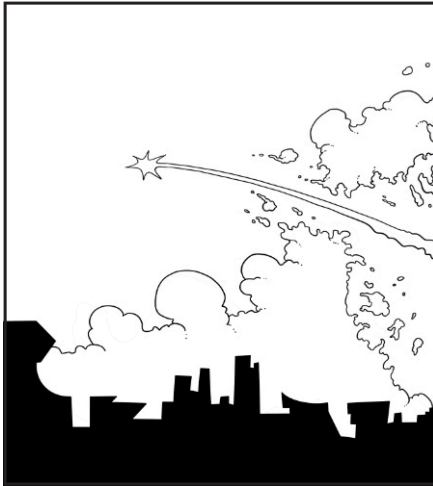
When the outcome is unclear and consequential, the TC calls for die rolls. Every player will probably roll during a session. During conflicts, everybody will almost certainly be rolling. A rule of thumb is that the TC shouldn't roll more often than the runners.

Rules Second Play

Rules come second. The top cat's goal is to keep play moving, not get every rule right. It is natural to forget some rules in the heat of play. When this happens, they should make a quick judgement or suggest a reasonable die roll. Any mistakes or imbalances can be ironed out or retconned later.

Conflicts

Conflicts involve physical (*ha*), social (*ba*), and mental (*ka*) struggles between the runners' characters (the party) and antagonists. They are resolved over a series of rounds. Each round, every party rolls initiative to determine turn order. Tied parties act together and resolve effects all at once at the end of their turn. Two combatants can knock one another out of a fight in this way. The consequences of losing a conflict depend on the stakes.



Group Actions

When a party attempts a task together, only one runner rolls dice for the whole party. Each player has a group action token (*gat*), which they spend to perform group actions. This ensures every player gets a turn rolling for the group.

Rolling Dice as Oracles

Dice can be every player's best friend when they have to quickly decide or invent something. A player may ask a question like, "What is the extra's quest? What is a sidekick's favourite colour? What is the velocity of a laden humdrumovore?"

In this situation, the TC may ask the player for an oracular die roll, then narrate an answer based on the result. High rolls are usually better.

Rolling Dice to Overcome Challenges

To succeed a player has to roll over a target number with a twenty-sided die and a sum of their character's relevant modifiers (this is called a test):

d20 + sum > target

The number a die rolls is its natural or naked roll. Rolling a maximum result (a natural 20) is always good, a natural 1 is always bad (and a failure).

The sum is a modifier that may include stats, skills, and other miscellaneous bonuses. Context determines what stat and/or skill is relevant.

Boons or advantages [+] and banes or disadvantages [-] may apply to rolls. A boon means a player rolls an extra die and picks the better result. A bane means rolling an extra die and picking the worse results. Boons and banes sometimes stack.

Target Difficulties

The TC verbally describes a challenge's difficulty and secretly assigns a target number. Challenges may have binary or multiple possible outcomes. The runners may ask what target number they need to beat, and the top cat should tell them. between 3 (very easy) and 19 (very hard). Example targets:

- 3 (trivial)** • Routine, but risk of catastrophic or hilarious failure.
- 7 (easy)** • Normally no obstacle to a professional.
- 11 (moderate)** • Even professionals risk failure regularly.
- 15 (difficult)** • Smart heroes avoid these kinds of tests or seek to stack advantages in their favor before attempting them.
- 19 (extreme)** • Odds only a desperate professional would attempt.

The targets are low because the game assumes character competence. Players only roll dice when failure carries the risk of notable consequences. Every failure means a loss of character resources.

Advancement and Changes

Players earn experience points (xp), not characters. Xp are earned through participation, discovery, play, and achievements.

Players choose where to invest their xp: into heroes, sidekicks, pets or equipment. Players can have a stable of characters and diverse fantasy assets. When a character is defeated or training, their player runs another character.

Hard Limits

The maximum level a hero can ever reach is 9. The greatest sum (stat + skill) they ever add to any d20 roll is +13. The highest target number a hero can ever possess or set is 19—this includes defence. Sidekicks and pets have lower limits. Antagonists and obstacles set by the TC can (rarely) exceed these limits.

Reading the Hero

“You can’t evolve a flying pig by throwing pigs off a cliff.”

—Atu Ahn, Abmortal biosocial engineer first class, Seed of Hope

The hero sheet summarizes a player’s main character—the hero, the protagonist of their game. All other characters: sidekicks, pets, extras, and antagonists, are simplified versions of heroes.

Name • A hero’s name. Best added last.

Hero • A player may add “pseudo-”, “meta-”, “mini-”, or “anti-” as they wish.

Type • A description. Perhaps wizard, thief, or fighter. Best added later.

Level • Roughly, a hero’s power. Affects some spells and traits.

Skills • Bundles that summarize the hero’s deeds and what they are good at. A hero with a single rank in a skill is considered skilled, while one with two or more ranks is an expert. Every rank of a skill occupies one slot.

Portrait • Space for the player to show off their abstract art skills.

Traits • How heroes exceed the human norm. Every rank of a trait occupies one slot.

Pro (proficiency) • Abstract representation of learned aptitude. Heroes add pro to their roll whenever they do something they are skilled at.

Expert heroes double their pro. Increases randomly with advancement.

Actions • How many things a hero can do on their party’s turn.

Magic cost • Every hero can cast spells. The cost ranges from 1 to 5 and multiplies a spell’s power to determine its spell price in life. The only attribute where a lower number is better.

Stats: strength, endurance, agility, charisma, aura, and thought • The natural aptitudes of a hero. Each ranges from 0 to 5. The average for a prime adult human is 0. The dashes provide space for stats modified by injuries, spells, and other events.

Defence: ha (physical), ka (mental or spiritual), ba (social) •

Opponents played by the TC roll over these targets to damage the hero.

Life • An abstract representation of narrative viability. Heroes spend life to cast spells, power some special abilities, and when they are hit by opponents. An average extra has 4 or 5 life.

Hero dice • These are bonus dice (usually d6) they can roll to modify their rolls or recover life. Hero dice are recovered through play and with every new session.

Xp and invested experience • Players earn xp through play and invest them in heroes, sidekicks, pets, and other characters to increase their power. Xp earnings are not completely predictable: players roll dice to figure out how much xp they earn when their characters complete quests or achieve goals. Players can invest up to 99,999 xp in their hero.

Inventory • The default hero can carry 10 stone-sized items or burdens without penalties—conveniently about the size of an average human.

Players note everything that burdens their hero, not just physical objects.

Woes, fears, illness, magic spells, pets, and extras all occupy inventory.

Cumbersome inventory • A hero can carry up to 10 more stone-sized items, but when they do, they are encumbered. An encumbered hero suffers a bane (also called a disadvantage and represented with a [-] symbol) to all tests. If all their cumbersome inventory is conveniently stored in a sack or pack, they can put it down carefully (an action) or quickly and carelessly (a free action) to avoid the penalty. Non-physical burdens in the cumbersome inventory are usually harder to drop.

A player’s *gat* token is not mentioned on the hero’s sheet. It is a physical object that belongs to the player, not the hero.

Limited Space

Each hero’s sheet strictly limits their available personal inventory. This feature forces players to choose carefully what gear their heroes bring to a given conflict or scene.

A player’s hero and other characters may have more objects, property, and even traits, but this will be ‘off-stage’ unless prepared.



PLAYING THE GAME

“Tacta alea est.”

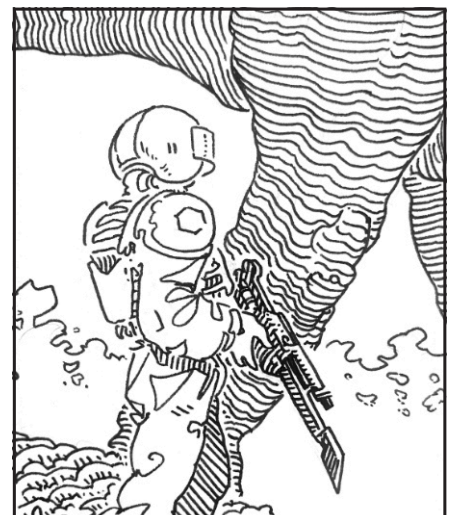
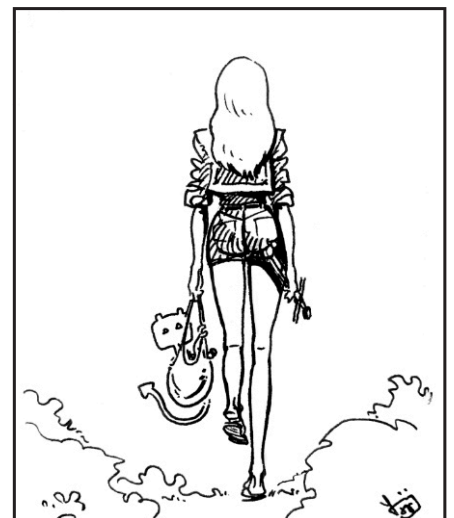
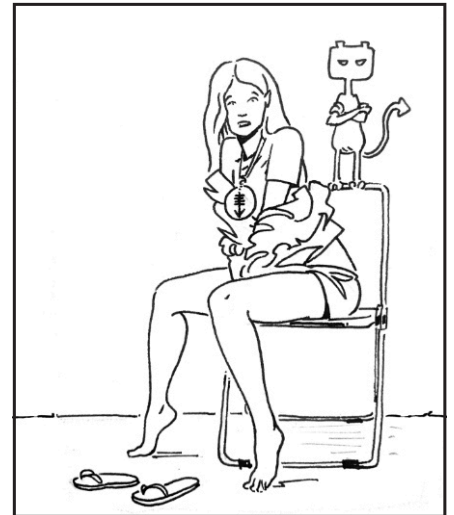
—JC according to Suetonius

A hero from another time awakens in their nanomagical sarcophagus. Researchers marooned on a mountain struggle to win the trust of the local yeti-analogues. Savages en route to a battle-world run amok on a void ship. Godlike lings on their ring-habitat argue about which of the local flora and fauna would make the best uplift candidates. A sentient motorcycle possesses their rider like a puppet of flesh and bone. A crowd of bystanders looks on, perplexed.

Players run these characters. The runner players handle the protagonists: the heroes, their pets, sidekicks and other attendants. The top cat player handles the antagonists: the villains, minions, creatures, and bystanders.

This chapter covers the following:

- Test** • How a character struggles against the world.
- Contest** • Competition between characters against the world.
- Conflict** • Characters fighting other characters.
- Damage** • Characters getting hurt.
- Defeat** • Characters losing.
- Recovery** • Characters getting well again.
- Experience (xp)** • The metacurrency players earn.
- Advancement** • How characters and game objects become more powerful.
- Inventory** • What a hero brings along on adventure.
- Gameplay** • Examples.



The Test

“The character against the world.”

—Venerable Mede, *Brews Against the Terror of Knowing*

The top cat presents a situation. The runner says what their hero does. The top cat narrates the outcome.

Playing the game involves only dialogue until an uncertain and consequential situation arises. Then the TC calls for die rolls to test what happens.

Heroes roll $d20 + \text{stat} + \text{skill}$ over target.

Extras roll $d20 + \text{sum}$ over target.

A player rolls a 20-sided die and adds the sum of their hero's relevant stat and skill to beat a target between 3 and 19 set by the top cat. The sum of stat and skill can never exceed 13. Context determines what stat and/or skill is relevant in a particular situation.

Extras (including pets and sidekicks) are simplified characters that sum scores they use when they know what they are doing, instead of separate stats and skills. Their sum scores also never exceed 13.

The top cat uses the amount by which the test result exceeds or misses the target to narrate the quality of the success or failure.

Special Numbers

Four natural numbers rolled on a d20 have special effects during tests:

- 1** • Fumble. The test is an automatic failure with an additional drastic, catastrophic, or humorous consequence determined by the top cat.
- 7** • Silver lining. Whether the test succeeds or fails, there is an unexpected positive side effect determined by the TC.
- 13** • Luck exhausted. Whether the test succeeds or fails, the character runs out of a resource (such as ammunition) after the test or suffers an unexpected negative side effect determined by the TC.
- 20** • Critical. The test is an automatic success with an additional exceptional consequence determined by the TC.

Note: runners can and should also suggest additional consequences, but the final determination rests with the TC.

Edge Roll

When a character's $d20 + \text{sum}$ precisely equals the target, their runner or the top cat can suggest a sacrifice that will allow success at a cost. For example:

- A warrior takes a blow or breaks their weapon as they push through an enemy's shield wall.
- An ambassador gives away a personal item to get into an exclusive club.
- A magus of the seventh circle sets themselves on fire or summons a weaker ominous daemon (L3, chilling) rather than suffering corruption.
- A burglar destroys their tools or triggers an alarm as they disable a lock.

Permanent Consequences

No test can be repeated in the same way. A pilot who successfully landed an airship on the Island of Gales will always successfully land there unless something changes: sabotage to their airship, a different make of airship, an unprecedented electrical storm, or new defensive flak towers. Likewise, a climber who failed to climb the 7a Pipe of Dreams will always fail unless something changes: more training, new equipment, a guide, or taking the time to carve steps into the pristine rock face.

Stats

Heroes have six stats: strength (str), endurance (end), agility (agi), charisma (cha), aura (aur), and thought (tho). The stats range from 0 (worst) to 5 (best) and represent their natural aptitudes.

Skills

Skills describe what a hero is good at, they do not limit what the character can try to do. A skilled hero is good enough to make a living with their know-how (they're a pro) while an expert is good enough to teach that profession. Players can invent new skills to suit their characters.

Proficiency (pro) ranges from 1 (poor) to 7 (unbelievable) and represents how good the hero is at their skills.

There are three situations when a hero rolls a test with a skill.

No relevant skill • Hero does not add their proficiency to the test and suffers a bane [-] to their roll. An amateur or beginner.

One rank in a relevant skill • Hero adds their proficiency to the d20 roll when they make a test. A skilled professional.

Two ranks in a relevant skill • Hero adds double their proficiency to the d20 roll when they make a test. An expert.

Three ranks in a relevant skill • Hero gains [+] to tests. A master.

Targets

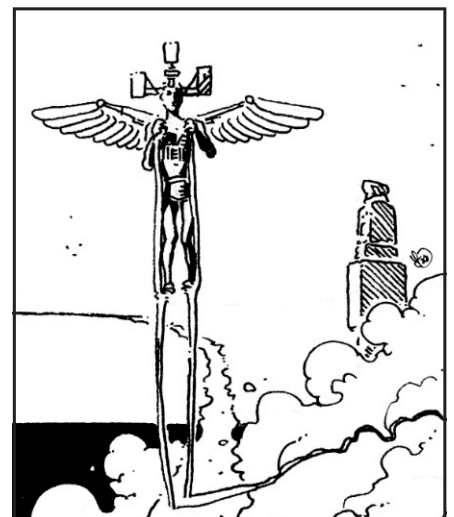
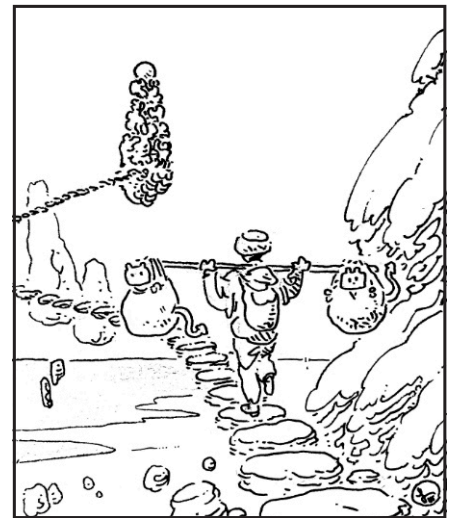
How hard is it to leap over a burning fence? While carrying a large bucket of gasoline? Without spilling any of it? While blindfolded?

The top cat uses their judgement to assign a target number between 3 (very easy) and 19 (very hard), then **describes** the probability. Leaping over a burning fence might be routine, with a target of 7. Doing it while carrying a bucket is moderately hard, (target 11). But doing it without spilling anything? Rather difficult (target 15). More so while blindfolded (target 19).

If a test's target is not otherwise specified, players should assume it is a common test with a target of 11.

Example Targets

TARGET	EXAMPLE
3 minor, frivolous, trivial	A terrified thief tries to start their engine as zombies crawl towards them.
7 easy, elementary, simple	A knight explains feudalism to some peasants with their sword.
11 common, moderate, regular, plain 'test' without any adjectives	A watchmaker attempts to stop a ticking time bomb.
15 difficult, onerous, tough	A duelist rolls under a golem spider to stab their soft(er) belly.
19 dire, extreme, utmost	A surgeon tries to put out a gorgon's eye with a thrown scalpel.





Dice

Seacat uses a ladder of classic polyhedral dice to determine effects. Special abilities, spells, and other circumstances move dice up and down this ladder.

Dice Ladder

DICE	AVERAGE	COMMON EFFECT
d1	1	Minimal life or stat damage. Disposable extra's life.
d4	2.5	Weak damage. Level 0 extra's life.
d6	3.5	Civilian weapon or improvised damage. Annoying extra's life.
d8 or d10	4.5 or 5.5	Common military weapon. Up to L5 extra's life / level.
d12	6.5	Big weapon. Big extra's (monster's) life / level.
d20	10.5	Very large / scary weapon, opponent or trap. Can defeat any level 3 hero.
d6 x 5	17.5	Terrifying. Can defeat any level 4 hero.
d8 x 5 or d10 x 5	22.5 or 27.5	Tremendous. Can defeat any level 6 hero.
d6 x 10	35	Extreme. Can defeat any hero.
d10 x 10	55	Overkill.

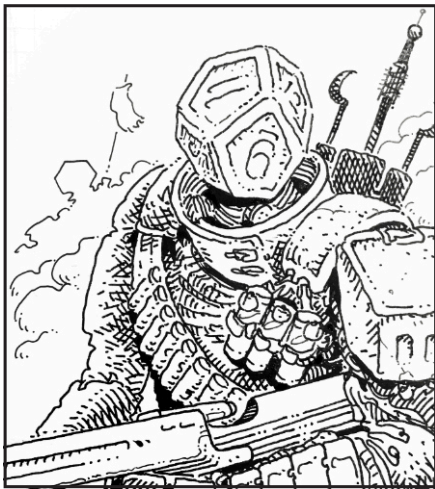


The d100, generated by using one d10 for the tens and another d10 for the units, stands outside the dice ladder. When tables call for more unusual dice, like d30, d40 or d60, players can simulate them with a d100.

Boon [+] and Bane [-]

A boon lets a player roll an additional die and use the result they prefer. A bane requires that a player roll an additional die and use the worse result.

Boons and banes may apply to every roll. Boons cancel banes and vice versa.



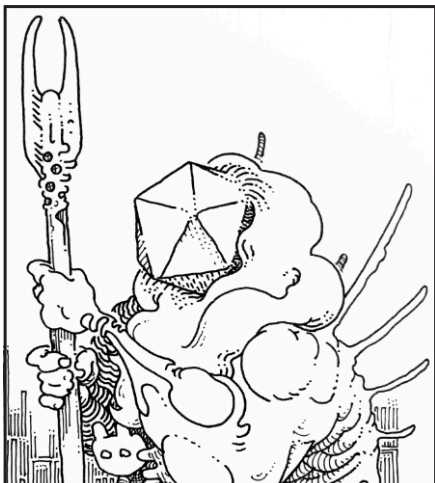
Multiple boons or banes do not stack. The one exception is when a player spends hero dice to gain additional boons to their roll.

Exploding*

Exploding dice are marked with an asterisk. Whenever a player rolls a maximum natural roll with an exploding die, they roll an extra exploding die of that type and add the result. Exploding die rolls are open-ended in theory.

Consecutive/

Consecutive rolls are used in some tables to create rare results. In a d12 encounter table 12/12 means that when a player rolls a natural 12, they roll again and if the second result is also a natural 12, a special result occurs.



Tokens

Every player begins with a group action token (or *gat* token). This small, memorable object (e.g. a meeple, polished stone, or cat idol) is used to perform group actions and to create game lore.

Group Actions

When a group of heroes attempts an action together, the top cat declares a group action test. A participating runner with an available gat token steps up and declares what their hero is going to do, places their gat token in the centre of the table, and rolls the relevant dice. They use their character's abilities and equipment to help (or hinder) the group.

A runner cannot perform a group action while their gat token rests in the centre of the table. When all the runners have spent their tokens, each collects their token from the centre of the table, and the circle of actions resumes.

Example group actions:

- Encounter and misfortune rolls as a party explores the ghost-scorched pine lands of the Voided Shore.
- Initiative tests as a conflict breaks out between the party and the tavernkeeper's guild over the heroes' attempt to set up a protection racket.
- The party attempts to sneak past a guardian golem.
- ... to convince a priest-king to buy a golden barge.
- ... to climb a sheer cliff on the slopes of the Mother Horn.
- ... to navigate through the tomb-rich Forest of Long Slumbers.
- ... to activate the wormway gate of the Sevenfold Epicentre.



Creating Game Lore

When the runners encounter something new in the game, the top cat can take an exquisite-corpse improvisational approach to fleshing out the game world.

First, the TC broadly describes a new scene, creature, or object. Then they pass their gat token clockwise to the next player and ask them a question that adds some detail. After the player answers, they pass the TC's gat token along to the third player. The top cat continues asking questions, adding contrast and nuance to the invention. After each runner adds their part, they pass the TC's gat token along.

An example scene the TC could narrate while the heroes are traveling:

"The heroes are welcomed to a camp of steppelanders on a spiritual drinking voyage. The nomads pass their ornate cup of ka-cha around and relate stories in this wastey place under the red stars. One tells of how she hung upon the mother tree for nine days to travel through her mind's eye. Another of how he learned a spell from the stone fish atop the white mountain. Then the cup passes to you. Why do you wander here?" says the TC and passes their gat token to the next player.



Other lore co-creation ideas:

- Local weather, holidays, cuisine, fashions, arts, and crafts.
- The sentiments, opinions, and deeds of incidental extras.
- Scene dressing, furniture, props, and curios.
- Details of vehicles, buildings, tools, and creatures.
- Titles and themes of songs, books, paintings, sculptures, movies.
- Histories, geographies, faiths, and academic disciplines.
- Flora, fauna, fungi, and other zoa, living and dead.

The players shouldn't worry about recording every bit of lore they create. Not everything will stick, but some will and that's enough to create a unique world for the players at the table. The players, and the TC in particular, are encouraged to take their world wherever it leads.

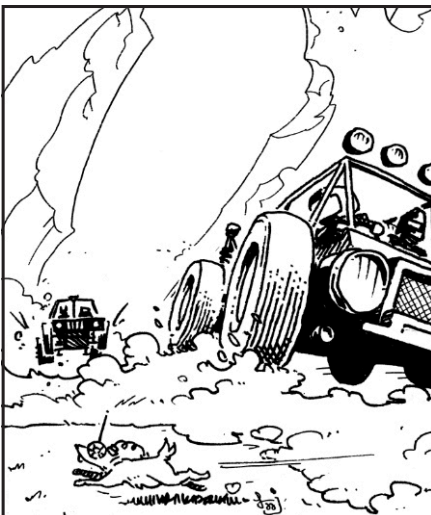




Two malcontents scramble for a gun.



Musicians compete to entrance rats.



Racers tear through Fraxion's Gap.

The Contest

"May the better golem win."

—Lectus Ecce, selectron of Voidport Coalition,
traditional greeting at the annual politician simulator battles.

A contest occurs when two or more characters compete for the same goal. Every character rolls a test and the highest successful result wins. Ties mean the competition has ended in a draw.

In a contest between groups, one character from each group rolls a group action test.

Contest examples:

- Athletes at the Radiation Ghost Games heptathlon.
- Lovers compete for the hand of the Weirding Madonna.
- Priests tussle to light pyres and prove their Firebringer loves them more.
- Hunters vie at flying clay piglet shooting.
- Wizards spar with firework dragons at midnight.
- Duellists draw on the count of three.

Bidding Contest

A character can **take a risk** in order to test first. Each risk taken increases the fumble range by 1 (e.g. from 1 to 1-2).

This starts a bidding contest. Another character has to take more risk to roll first instead. When all the characters have taken more risk or passed, the tests begin. The character who took the most risk rolls their test first, then the character with the second most risk, and so on.

In a bidding contest, the first character to test successfully wins.

Characters who took no risk roll tests last as in an ordinary contest.

The Conflict

*“Always comes to this,
shores of Lake Infinity,*

*clutch of blade on blade,
whispering demons made steel,
rage from dream to dream.”*

—Iäga, electric witch, *Future Memories of the Eternal Struggle*

When the runners’ characters physically (ha), spiritually (ka) or socially (ba) attack or are attacked by another character or group a conflict starts. Each of these characters or groups is a party to the conflict. There can be two or more parties to a conflict.

The conflict unfolds over a series of rounds. Each round the parties contest initiative. The results of the contest determine the order in which parties take their turns. Every character gets two actions per turn and all members of a party act in any order they like when it is their party’s turn.

Anything can be an action in a conflict. There is no fixed list of actions. Context determines whether an action counts as an attack, defense, or other action.

Stakes

Every conflict has stakes, which determine what happens in the case of a victory, draw, or defeat for the party(-ies). These are usually implicit in the scene, but the top cat should still sketch them out for the runners to make sure all the players agree on what the conflict is for.

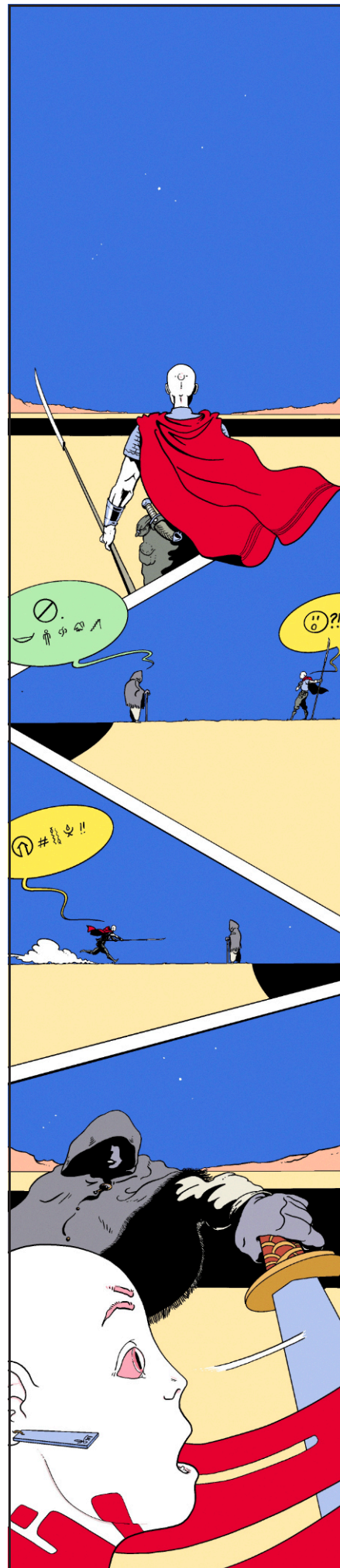
Stakes don’t need to be hard and fast, even a loose idea of the range of possible outcomes is enough. That said, the more concrete the stakes, the better.

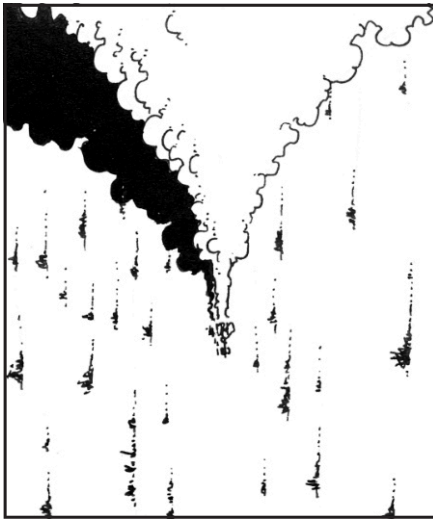
STAKES	WIN	DRAW	LOSE
low	an improvement (get a free beer)	a small improvement (prove competence)	an inconvenience (get tossed out)
high	a success (prove one’s innocence)	a small inconvenience (trials drag on)	problems, wounds (incarceration)
long odds	a memorable success (defeat the giant fiacre)	an expected result (lose to the champion)	situation deteriorates (autogolem breaks down)
life or death	party lives (no total party kill)	injuries, lost resources (dead hero)	party dies (total party kill)
a bit silly	a point proven (become croquet king)	everybody ‘wins’ (applaud croquet king)	face lost, appear foolish (fall in the mud trap)

If the stakes are not very high (or time is short), the TC may propose replacing a conflict with a contest or group test, suggesting results for victory and loss.

Surprise

A conflict may start with a sudden attack. If the defending party(-ies) are caught by surprise, the attacking character gets an immediate free action outside the normal round structure. If the attacking party coordinated beforehand, each member gets a free action.





Rounds & Ranges

"Accurate time records aren't worth much when you're hurtling across the salt flats in a ten golem-power three-wheeler!"

—Candide Desormais, team *Chat'damante* golem racer on winning the Tristes Pantropiques race.

Each round is sufficiently long for meaningful actions in a conflict. The top cat defines the approximate duration of a round at the beginning of a conflict. As circumstances change, they may adjust the duration.

Turns and actions are abstractions and have no defined duration outside of the round. Turns follow one another to help run conflicts as games.

Ranges and Zones

The top cat uses the duration of a round to guesstimate ranges and zones. The longer the round, the greater the scope. Ranges work as overlapping zones surrounding every party and/or character in a conflict. Usually, all a conflict needs are three ranges or zones.

Here • A zone or range within immediate reach of an acting character. They don't need to move in order to act within this range. Other terms: *melee, adjacent, next to, in the thick of it, at hand, etc.*

Near • A middling zone or range. A character needs to spend an action to physically move to a nearby zone. Nearby zones may be comfortably within reach of projectiles and other ranged attacks. Other terms: *close, short range, not far, vicinity, in the area, etc.*

Far • A large zone or a long range. A character needs to spend two actions to physically move to a far away zone. Far away zones are hard to reach with projectiles and other ranged attacks. Other terms: *long range, distant, a ways, etc.*



ROUND	SCOPE	HERE	NEAR	FAR
milliseconds	spiritual dilemma, psychic hacking, daemonic possession	the brain	the aura	other spirits
seconds	gun or knife fight, human-scale physical conflict	the mat	the audience	entrance to the arena
minutes	oratorical duel, dance-off, hover golem skirmish in the high pines, vehicle-scale physical conflict	the stage, the ridge	the stadium, the slopes	the parking lot, the plain
quarters	snipers stalking snipers, naval battle, legal fight in court	the building	the neighborhood	across the river
hours	gruelling negotiations, courtly ball, grinding endurance battle	the palace	the capitol district	the leader-bunker
days	public scandal, military investment, wrestling with god	the city	the province	the state
weeks	political campaign, void-scale physical conflict	the fast star	the territorial void	the local cluster
months	corporate legal war	the court	the conglomerate	the local econonet
seasons	political economic war	the nation	the region	the world
years	light-year war	the world	the system	the local cosmos

Dimensions and time scales are ideas, not instructions

Off Stage

Places not immediately visible or accessible to the parties in a conflict are off stage. This can be a hidden room, a fortified town above the plain of battle, or the rest of the realm during a negotiation. A character that goes off stage leaves the conflict. New characters may sometimes join a conflict from off stage.

Initiative

“Sometimes going first just means you lose faster.”

—Anonymous

Initiative is a **special contest** between parties to determine turn order. At the beginning of every round a different character from each party rolls an agility group test. This initiative test does not have a target number.

Before they roll, the player decides their party’s stance for the round.

Push • The player rolls 1d20 for the initiative test. The party aggressively tries to seize the initiative.

Hold • The player rolls 2d6 for the initiative test. The party focuses on maintaining their position.

Pull Back • The player rolls no dice for the initiative test (their natural roll is effectively zero). They may *withdraw* from the conflict on their turn.

The player hides their chosen initiative dice until it is their turn to roll them.

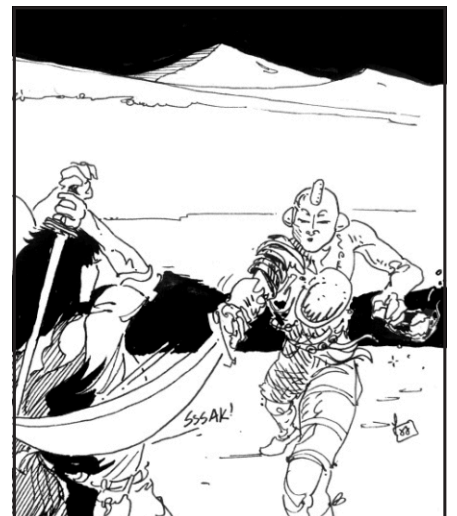
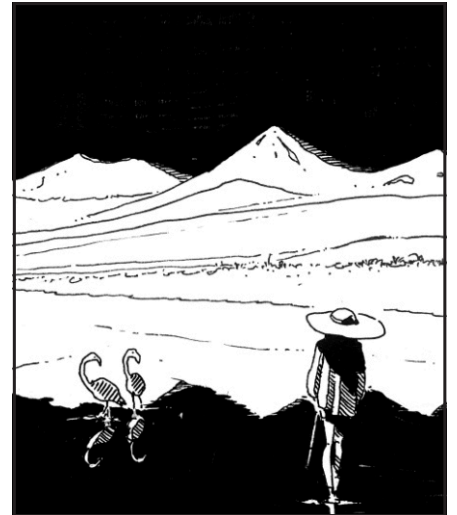
If players turn initiative into a bidding contest, the party that risks the most rolls initiative first and acts first. However, their risk of fumbling increases.

Parties that took no additional risks roll initiative at the same time. The party with the highest initiative result acts first, then the second highest, and so on. If parties are tied for initiative chaos reigns and all the actions between those parties resolve simultaneously.

Initiative Effects

Natural numbers in initiative tests apply special effects for the round.

- 1 • Fumble. Every member of the party loses an action on their turn.
- 7 • Every member of the party gets one boon [+] to spend this round.
- 13 • Every member of every other party gets one boon [+] to spend against the party that rolled 13 this round.
- 20 • Every member of the party gains an action on their turn.





Actions

“Running, hiding, shooting, shielding, spearing, tricking, flanking, provoking, subduing, jumping, singing, driving, spellcasting, talking, and swimming.”

—Milleregard the Very Golden, *My Many Talents*

Each character gets two actions per round during their party’s turn. Initiative, traits and circumstances may increase or decrease the number of actions a character can take in a round.

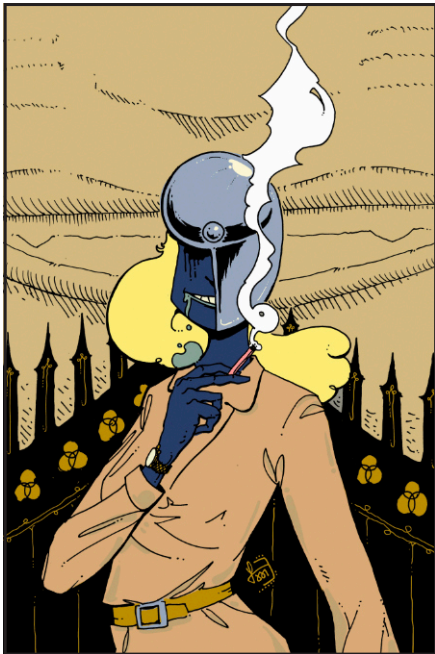
Anything that a character can reasonably accomplish in a round and that makes sense within the context of a conflict is a valid action. The top cat decides precisely how and whether an action can apply.

Attack, defense, movement and assist type actions have predictable effects. Other actions can be more unusual. Withdrawal is a specific type of action that ends a conflict in a defeat or a draw.

Turn Effects of Action Types

A character can spend all their actions on attacks, defenses, other actions, or any combination of actions.

By default a character balances attack and defence on their turn, taking one attack action and one defence action. Narratively, the character is looking for openings to attack while keeping their guard up. Mechanically, the character tests once to attack and opponents have no boons or banes against them.



ACTIONS THIS TURN	EFFECT
2 defences	[-] to attacks against character (cautious)
2 attacks	character tests to attack twice
2 moves	character moves to a far away zone
2 assists or hindrances	target gains two [+] or [-] on their next test this turn
1 defence	no modifiers to attacks against character
1 attack	character tests to attack once
1 move	character moves to a nearby zone
1 assist or hindrance	target gains a [+] or [-] to their next test this turn
0 defences	[+] to attacks against character (reckless)
0 attacks	character does not test to attack (waiting)
0 moves	character stays in the same zone
0 assists or hindrances	no effect
offer truce, flee, withdraw, or surrender	no other actions this turn, conflict may end



Attacks

When a character attacks they make a relevant test against their target’s physical (ha), spiritual (ka) or social (ba) defence. This is called an attack test, or simply an attack. If the test succeeds, they inflict damage to their target depending on their equipment, skills, and abilities.

Natural numbers rolled during attack tests apply special effects.

- 1** • Fumbled attack. Target gets a free counter attack..
- 7** • Even if the attack misses, it applies minimum damage.
- 13** • After this attack weapon is out of ammunition or broken (bane to damage rolls).
- 20** • Critical damage. Damage, including all modifiers, is multiplied by 2.
- 20/20** • Damage is multiplied again. Additional consecutive natural 20s multiply damage further. This is open ended.

Not all equipment can be used to deal every kind of damage. Even an unarmed human character can always inflict 1d3 damage of any kind.

Defences

When a character defends they do not have to do anything specific. They are in a state of readiness to anticipate their opponent's attacks. The more defensive actions (or precautions) a character takes, the harder it is for opponents to attack them until the character's next turn.

0 defensive actions • All opponents have a boon to attack the character.

1 defensive action • No modifiers.

2 defensive actions • All opponents have a bane to attack the character.

Additional defensive actions • Each applies another bane to attacks against the character. Additional banes cancel out boons but the opponent never rolls more than 2d20, taking the worse result, from the banes.

Movement

A character takes an action to move to a nearby zone or two actions to move to a far away zone. They do not take actions to move around within their local zone, even if it can be quite large depending on the scope of the conflict.

Assist & Hinder

A character can take a reasonable action to help another character or to setup their own next action. Every assist grants a boon [+] within the current turn.

A character can also take a reasonable action to hinder an opponent. This inflicts a bane [-] on an opponent's next turn or blocks them from a course of action. An opponent can spend an action to overcome the hindrance.

While a character may have multiple boons or banes from assists and hindrances, they never roll more than 2d20, taking the better or worse result as required. The main reason to use multiple assist or hindrance actions is to turn a situation in which a target is disadvantaged into one where they are advantaged, or vice versa.

Combined Actions

Characters can never take a single action that counts as both an attack and a defense. Movements, assists, and hindrances can sometimes reasonably be combined. Examples:

Move and attack • Warrior maidens charge a shield wall. Debutante dances up to a rival, showing off his superior grace.

Attack and assist • Thief stabs a troll, distracting them from their friend.

Attack and hinder • Rock star trips a zombie with their golf club, stopping them from moving.

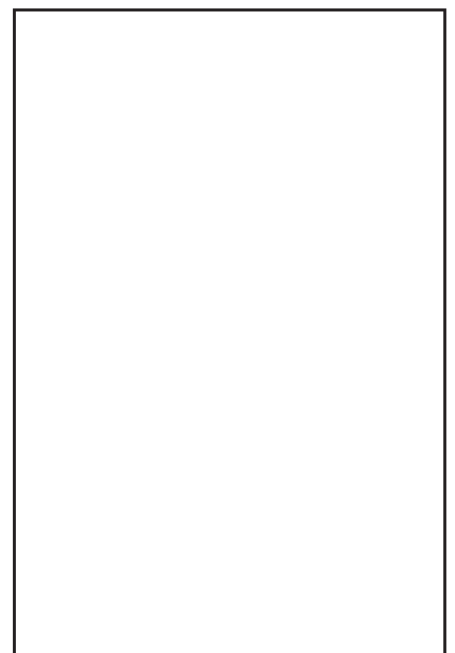
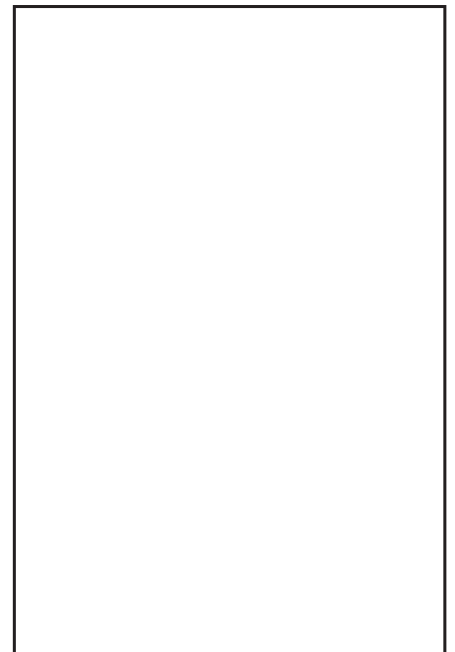
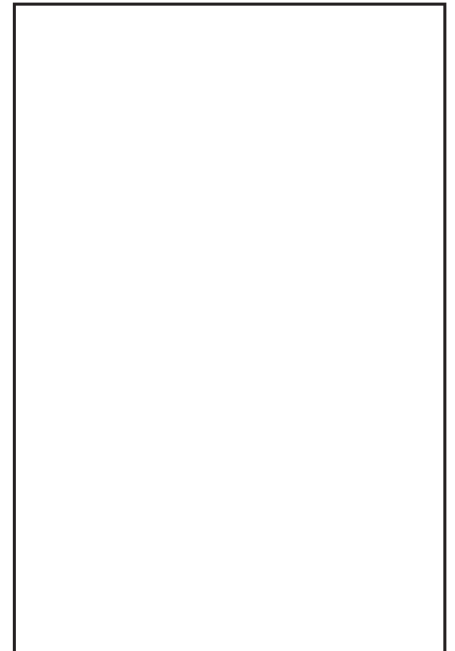
Move and hinder • Wizard drives up in their van, blocking the goblin goons' line of fire against their allies.

Free Actions

Any character can take a reasonable number of free actions per round. When there is disagreement about what is a reasonable number, the TC decides.

Reaction

A reaction is an action triggered outside the usual order. A character needs an available action to use a reaction, unless it is described as a free reaction.



Other Actions

Disarming a bomb, picking a lock, resuscitating a fallen comrade, planting a secret message, inflating a balloon, filling a gas tank, scrawling a warning.

Players can invent an infinite number of other actions for their characters and they do not need to fall neatly into any one of the four basic types. The players should discuss and decide what precise effect a given action has. The TC's role isn't to know the final answer in every situation, but to make a judgement and keep play moving. If an action or mechanic turns out to be game-breaking, unfair, clunky, or boring, it can always be amended or dropped in the future.

Examples of Possible Actions

Aim Carefully • Character gains [+] on their next attack.

Calm Down • Character makes a ba attack to ratchet down the tension.

Direct attacks by or against the target might suffer [-] for the turn.

Careless Attack • Character attacks a target with disregard for their safety.

They get [+] on their attack, but their opponent gets a free counterattack.

Cast Spell • Character activates an ancient machine. Or casts a spell.

Charge • Character rushes a nearby target and attacks. They gain [+] to their attack, but until their next turns attacks against them also have [+].

Chug A Potion • Character chugs some liquid courage.

Control Spell, Device, or Vehicle • Character controls a spell, device, or vehicle until their next turn, keeping it running effectively.

Cower or Hide • Character hides behind suitable terrain and until its next turn attacks against it have [-].

Distraction • Character makes a relevant attack to draw attention to themselves or another creature or object. Attacks against the distraction gain [+], but attacks against other targets suffer [-].

Drag Away An 'Ally' • Character drags an 'ally' away to 'safety'. If the 'ally' is not unconscious, they might struggle, forcing a strength contest.

Drink the Soul • Character makes a mental attack to leech an opponent's spirit. Success: they gain [+] on their next test and target loses an action.

Filibuster • Character makes a ba attack to talk an opponent to death, or at least into a stupor. Success: target loses an action, but takes no damage.

Flip Table • Or topple a statue, or domino a series of shelves. Target(s) lose an action or suffer [-] to actions on their next turn.

Grab On • Character makes a test to grab their target. The grabbed target can't move away without dragging the creature along (if it's big enough).

Inspire Allies • Character strikes a proud, foolhardy pose to inspire their allies. They test Charisma. Success: nearby allies gain [+] to one test.

Intimidating Display • Character makes a social attack to frighten an opponent into cowering, backing down, or retreating. The opponent gets an aura test to resist.

Help Hold • Character rushes in to help hold down a pinned target. It suffers [-] to all relevant tests.

Hold Down • Character makes a test to pin down a grabbed target (if it's not too big). The held target can't move or can't attack anyone except the character pinning it.

Lock • Or unlock. If the character is in a stressful situation, or under attack, they may have to test to succeed at normally mundane tasks.

Malicious Insinuation • Character makes a cunning social attack to convince one opponent to stop helping another. The opponent sees through the baseless allegations if they succeed at a thought test.

Observe • Character keeps an eye on another character, to make sure it can't sneak away into concealment.

Order • Character instructs an electric abomination, a zombie, or a recalcitrant indentured soldier serf to take a specific action.

Protect • Character protects a target. Until their next turn attacks against the target suffer [-].

Push Off A Cliff • Character enters a strength contest with a target. The loser goes over a cliff. On a draw, both go over. If the target has no actions remaining, they cannot push the character off the cliff, even if they win.

Read Aura • Character makes an aura test to detect what another creature

intends. Success: the character gains [+] to resist effects or damage from the target creature for the rest of the round.

Reload • Character takes an action to reload.

Shake It Off • Character tries to break free by attacking a creature that has grabbed or pinned them.

Sing • Character sings a song. Perhaps hoping for some magical effect.

Skirmish • Character hops out of cover, attacks, then back behind (possibly different) cover within the same zone.

Sneak Away • A hidden character moves away, using terrain to stay concealed. If unobserved, all attacks against them miss.

Suppressing Fire • Character lays down missile fire to impose [-] on their opponents' actions in an area.

Swing On Chandelier • Or another similar swashbuckling affair. Character makes a free agility test. Success: they gain [+] until their next turn. Failure: enemies get a free reaction with [+] or character ends up in a humorously compromised position.

Taunt Viciously • Character makes a social attack to provoke an opponent to charge or attack carelessly. The opponent gets an aura test to resist.

Taunt Viciously A Second Time • This time there is no test to resist.

Unsettle • Character makes a ba or ka attack to break their opponent's focus, imposing [-] on their next initiative test.

Wait For It • Character gets ready to counterattack if opponents come within range. If that happens, their attack resolves before the opponent's.

Adjudicating Action Ideas

The runners should try weird tricks. The top cat's task is to encourage creativity by rewarding good ideas with boons and other benefits, while suggesting greater risks for dangerous ideas. Instead of (realistically) reducing odds, the TC (cinematically) raises the stakes. The TC can invent and propose a mini-scenario based on the runners' ideas. It is up to the runners to decide whether to then go through with the action or not.

RUNNER IDEAS	POSSIBLE TOP CAT SUGGESTIONS
A terrible proposal	Hero can try, but first the enemy gets a free action with [+].
A risky gambit	... but the enemy gets a free action or [+] on their turn.
An interesting choice	... but if hero fails, the enemy immediately gets a free action or [+] on their turn.
A great gamble	Hero gets [+] on their test, but if they fail, they lose their next action.
A most excellent plan	Hero gets [+] on their test. If they succeed, an ally is inspired and also gains [+], but if they fail, the dispirited ally suffers [-].

Example: The Petrifying Pterodactyl

The heroes are facing a pterodactyl whose gaze turns mammals to stone. Unfortunately, all the heroes are baseline humans (no lizard elves). The runners suggest fighting with their eyes shut.

The TC proposes that the heroes can attack with their eyes shut, but they will suffer disadvantage [-] on their attacks and the petrifying pterodactyl will have advantage [+] when it acts against heroes. However, they can expect to be safe from the flying monster's fossilifying vision.

The heroes may still spend hero dice or make sacrifices to adjust their rolls and gain boons, letting them offset the challenge for the time being.

Ending Conflicts

"It's over when I say it's over."

—Rhinestein Oxmann, middle manager, Cult of the Fruit of Knowledge.

Conflicts are rarely about obliterating the opposition. Smart parties try to achieve goals with a minimum of resources lost. Since opposing parties often have different goals, even a draw may be a satisfactory result.

Conflicts end in one of three ways:

Choice • One or both parties decide to stop fighting.

Exhaustion • Both parties run out of resources to keep fighting.

Destruction • One party is destroyed.

The actions that end a conflict are the truce offer, flight, withdrawal, and surrender. The runners can decide to try and end a conflict at any time. When deciding the actions of the heroes' opponents, the top cat relies on narrative common sense and dice as oracles (pXX).

Offer Truce

If both parties hold, the side that wins the initiative can propose a truce. If the other party accepts, the conflict ends in a draw.

When a party offers a truce, they make a charisma or thought group test to convince their opponents to accept. The TC sets the difficulty based on how the parties did in the conflict and how many resources they have. Parties can sweeten the deal by offering concessions to gain a boon [+] on their test.

RELATIVE POWER OF PARTIES	TARGET
Opponents obviously losing or badly outmatched.	trivial (3)
Suffered significant losses, high stakes in case of defeat.	easy (7)
Suffered losses, victory looks difficult.	average (11)
Situation is messy, outcome is still a coin toss.	hard (15)
Have decent chance of victory, haven't suffered many losses.	very hard (19)

Withdraw

A party that has pulled back during initiative may withdraw in an orderly fashion with a group action. This ends the conflict.

Both parties pulled back • Conflict ends in a draw.

One party pulled back, other held • Withdrawing party is defeated.

One party pulled back, other pushed • Withdrawing party is defeated.

Each member of the pushing party gets a free action.

A party that pushed or held, and won the initiative, may demand their opponents withdraw. They make a relevant group test, as with a truce offer, though the TC may make the test more difficult. Offering a face-saving way out of the conflict may give the demanding party [+] on their test.

Exhaustion

If both parties hold or pull back thrice in a row, the conflict ends in a draw.

Surrender

A party can always surrender. The winning party decides whether to accept. The surrendering party is defeated.

A party that wins the initiative, can also demand a surrender. The TC can make the test much more difficult than for a truce offer.

Run Away

If a character is not facing an opponent or party alone, they can run away and leave their allies in the lurch. If they are alone and run away, each of the opponents they are facing gets a free action against them.

If all the characters in a party run away, the conflict ends and the fleeing party is defeated.

Mopping Up at the Bitter End

When the outcome is certain, but the losing party won't (or can't) give up, the TC can suggest the victorious party mops up. If the other players agree, one of them rolls an attack against the mean enemy defence as a group action test when it is their turn. The degree of success determines how many more actions the defeated party managed to take before succumbing.

Critical success • No more actions. Swift and total victory.

Success • One more action.

Failure • Two more actions.

Critical failure • Three more actions.

Defeat, Draw, Victory

As soon as a conflict ends, the top cat narrates the outcome depending on the initially described or implied stakes. If the heroes fought a dragon to steal its treasure, victory brings them that treasure. If they fought to exonerate a tyrant in the court of public opinion, victory washes sin and scandal away (at least where the eyes of the tyrant can see the masses talking nervously).

Further, how the party performed affects the xp players earn from the conflict, and directly how they will perform in future conflicts.

Defeat • Roll xp with [-]. Additionally, they gain the burden of defeat.

Draw • Roll xp normally.

Victory • Roll xp with [+]. Additionally, they gain the glory of victory.

Both the burden of defeat and the glory of victory occupy an available slot. Players may accrue multiple burdens. Players may also invent different burdens to fit the specific stakes of the conflicts they were involved in.

Burden of Defeat

[#burden](#) [#mental](#)

Shaken, but driven by desperation.

The desperation of defeat sticks to the hero like a foul miasma. When the hero acquires the burden of defeat, they immediately gain one temporary hero die (this may exceed their normal maximum number of hero dice). So long as they bear the burden of defeat, they suffer [-] to one roll every turn in conflict, or in every contest, unless they spend 1 life.

Removal • Victory in conflict (automatic) or 1 week's rest.

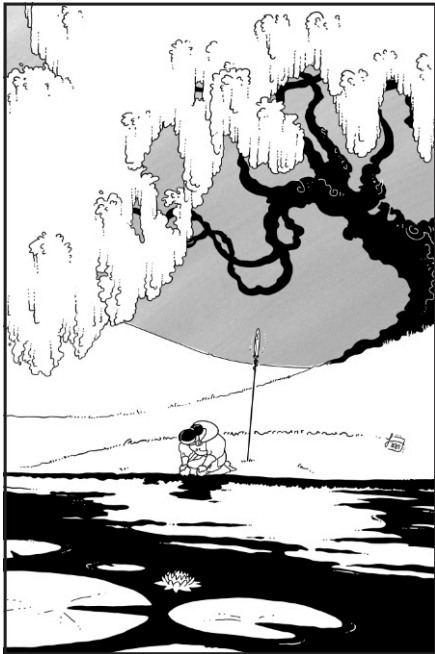
Glory of Victory

[#burden](#) [#mental](#)

Hubris ever awaits.

Victory blinds heroes. So long as they bear the glory of victory, they may gain [+] to one roll every turn in conflict, or in every contest, if they spend 1 life. At the same time their natural fumble range increases by 1.

Removal • Defeat in conflict (automatic) or 1 week's rest.



Damage

“Sometimes creative destruction is just destruction.”

—Sebered, Last Necromancer of the Self-Disciplined States.

Damage is abstract and entails the reduction of any character attributes, anything on a character record, not just physical injuries. Characters suffer damage when they fail tests, when they fumble, when misfortune strikes, when they are struck by swords, when they are skewered by cruel quips, when they are afflicted by fresh curses.

Life is usually the first resource damage reduces. It is very abstract and measures narrative viability. Characters spend it to cast spells, power abilities, and absorb common attacks. Special attacks may target other attributes: stats, inventory slots, skill and trait slots, hero dice, or even inflict burdens directly.

Most equipment, abilities, and spells specify how much and what kind of damage they deal, but the TC should be ready to improvise as required.

DAMAGE DICE	SIMILAR VALUES	EXAMPLES OF COMMON ATTACKS DEALING LIFE DAMAGE (AND SPECIAL ATTACK EXAMPLES)
1	na	very weak creatures, annoyances (most special attacks, poisons, wounds, fears)
1d3	1-2	fists, common gossips, sharp glares (strong special attacks, magic curses, terrors)
1d6	1d4, 3-4	swords, knives, cutting jabs, allegations, rumours, curses (the strongest special attacks, crippling existential doubts)
1d10	1d8, 1d12, 2d6, 5-7	halberds, elegant witticisms, magical pain dolls (damage too high for special attacks)
2d10	2d8, 1d20, 2d12, 9-14	incredible rifles, crushing revelations, mental blasts
3d10	1d6*5, 15-20	epic magical blasters, ruthless setups, soul rippers
3d20	1d6*10, 25-35	lethal traps, automated defensive golems, ancient dooms
1d100	1d10*10, 45-55	things heroes were not meant to tangle with



Attributes at Zero

No character attribute can ever be less than zero. When a character suffers damage to an attribute that is at zero, they acquire a burden of hurt instead. When a character suffers damage that would reduce an attribute below zero, it is reduced to zero and they acquire a burden of hurt.

Characters can also acquire burdens directly from other sources in play.

Burdens

Each burden occupies an inventory slot. If the character has no available inventory slots, it occupies a trait or skill slot instead. If the character has no available trait or skill slots, the burden overwrites an existing trait or skill. Players can move burdens between slots on their hero record between scenes.

Burdens can represent any negative effect impacting a hero. The TC can propose any burden that makes sense in a situation, though the players can always choose to follow the standard progression of hurt instead. Unless otherwise specified, each burden requires a week's rest to remove.

STANDARD BURDENS OF HURT	EFFECT
Grumpy	[-] when social niceties are required.
Shaken	[-] in all situations.
Crippled	Speed halved. 2 actions to move 1 zone. Additional [-] in relevant tests.
Wheezing	Current and maximum life halved.
Unconscious	Character cannot take any actions until revived.
Out	Character exits play.



Hakaba

The totality of every character is divided into a trinity of body (ha—the physical), soul (ka—the mental), and self (ba—the social). Narratively, the soul provides the motive fire of consciousness, the self provides unique direction, and the body provides the vehicle.

[note to self: continue Rightmaker's journey here.](#)

This trinity does not map directly to a character's stats, but it does correlate to the three types of attack and defence, and particularly the kinds of burdens characters gain when they take unbuffered damage to an attribute (i.e. if they suffer life damage when they are at 0 life).

Burdens of the Body (Ha)

Physical damage can impair a character's vehicle, even destroy it, but this is not necessarily the end of that character.

HA BURDENS	EFFECT
Beaten	[-] to physical and most social tests.
Broken	[-] to all physical tests, some actions impossible. Requires medical aid to remove.
Maimed	[-] to relevant physical tests, some actions impossible, limb missing. Requires regeneriatric magic to remove.
Dead	[-] to tests that require a living body, some actions impossible. Requires postmortality intervention to function normally. Requires reviviatric magic to remove.
Destroyed	[-] to tests that require a physical form, some actions impossible. Requires temporary ka-ba vehicle to function normally. Requires reincarnatric magic to remove.

Burdens of the Spirit (Ka)

Mental damage can disconnect a character from the motive fire of existence, leaving them a spiritless shell, an automaton, or lich.

KA BURDENS	EFFECT
Dispirited	[-] to most mental and social tests.
Ground down	[-] to all mental tests and initiative tests.
Burned out	Current and maximum life halved. Requires 2d4* weeks off-stage to remove.
Extinguished	[-] to tests that require autonomous volition. Requires external instruction to function normally. Requires psychopompous magic to remove.
Removed	[-] to tests that require a spirit, some actions impossible. Requires refuelling with soul juice to function normally. Requires psychic neogenesis or a saturnine moth's dream to remove.

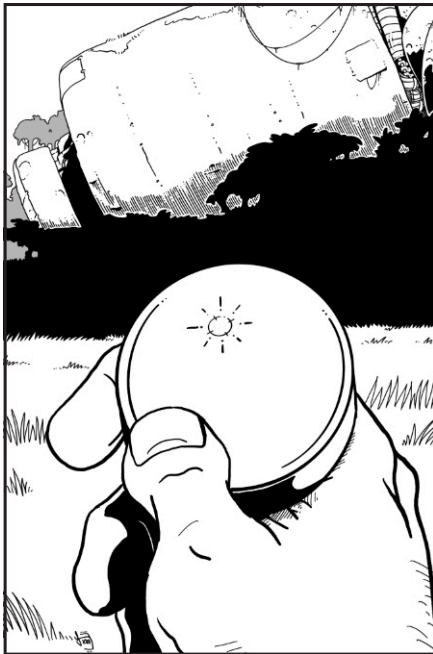
Burdens of the Self (Ba)

Social damage can sever a character from the circle of their society. This may make become strange, dehumanized, even monstrous.

BA BURDENS	EFFECT
Mocked	[-] to most social tests, slapstick humour exempt.
Reviled	[-] to all positive social and mental tests. Requires judicious generosity to remove.
Ostracized	Suffers double social damage in their community. Requires significant quest or completion of sentence to remove.
Dehumanized	[-] to tests that require personhood. Requires restorative legal magic to remove.
Inhuman	[-] to social tests and tests that require humanity, [+] to ha & ka damage. Requires stolen human essences to function normally. Requires personality reprogramming magic to remove.

Intolerable Burdens & Character Exit

Players, especially the TC, can invent additional burdens to fit the narrative. A player may decide that their character's burdens are intolerable and have that character exit play (pXX).



Recovery

“Was mich nicht umbringt, macht mich stärker.”

—Dead *philosophe*, plagued by health problems for most of his life.

Characters, damaged and burdened by their adventures and debaucheries, recover as weeks pass in the game.

1. Every week, a character restores one attribute (usually life or a stat) to its maximum value, or removes one burden.
2. A character who is cared for by someone suitably skilled, restores one more attribute or removes one more burden each week.
3. A character resting in a suitable location, restores one more attribute or removes one more burden each week.

For example, a character who has lost life, strength, and endurance; and gained two burdens of the body, requires five weeks to fully recover on their own, but only two weeks in an expensive Porcelain Prince clinic.

Some burdens specify other requirements for removal and recovery.

Recovering Faster

The players may decide to play a faster game, with characters recovering one attribute per day. As with other rules, trying a modification for one session is a good way to see if a different play style fits the group better.

Recovering Between Sessions

When players start a new session, especially if some time has passed in the real world, it can be frustrating to pick up a damaged, burdened hero. Should they enjoy a boost, they have two options:

1. If the session is picking up after a cliff-hanger scene, characters restore one attribute or remove one burden at the start of a session. Perhaps the continuity crew flubbed the heroes' injuries between shots or accidentally left a few cups of healing potion.
2. If the session picks up the narrative from a safe location an ill-defined time later, the characters restore all their attributes and remove one burden each at the start of a session. Especially if some time has passed outside of play, the players may appreciate the simplicity of this approach.



Exit

[note to self: continue 3eye's story here.](#)

"I'll be back."

—Famous robot philosopher.

When a hero has acquired burdens, their player may decide that the character exits play. For every burden the character bears when they retire, the player recovers 10% of their invested xp.

There are three situations where a character always exits the game regardless:

Out of slots • When a character acquires a burden and has no available inventory, skill, or trait slots, they exit play at the end of the scene.

Tenth burden • After gaining a 10th burden, they exit at scene's end.

Eleventh burden • When a character acquires an eleventh burden, they immediately exit in a narratively appropriate blaze of glory. The character gains [+][+][+] to all their rolls, then dies once the scene ends or their goal is achieved. The player then recovers 110% of their invested xp. This is the origin of the phrase "to give 110%."

Replacement Heroes

If a player's hero or other main character exits play, they should immediately promote an available sidekick, pet, or extra to take the role of protagonist. These characters may be less fleshed out than heroes. This is ok. Particularly during a conflict or other tense scene, speed is better than accuracy. In a pinch, the new protagonist needs:

1. A life total. If they don't have one, they can just copy a random hero's total.
2. A defence score. Again, they can copy a random hero's score if required. If they need to split defences into ha, ka, and ba they can adjust them randomly by adding 1d6 for one and subtracting 1d6 from another.
3. A sum modifier for when the new hero knows what they are doing. They can use three plus a random hero's pro score for the time being.
4. One scene-relevant skill or background. They can also copy a relevant skill from one of the other heroes.
5. Three suitable pieces of equipment. They can copy gear from other heroes.
6. A memorable moniker. Something as simple as "the new ensign in a red shirt" is perfectly adequate.

If the player decides to keep the new character, they can flesh them out over time, rolling for stats, skills, and traits, investing experience and turning them into a fully detailed hero during the session or between sessions.

No Available Characters

There are few things worse than ending up at roleplaying session without a character and with nothing to do. There is never an excuse for the top cat or the other players to spend time waiting for an appropriate time to introduce a new character—the one exception is the middle of an ongoing conflict. If the total party is to be killed, then the total party killed.

The player generates a temp hero (see the replacement heroes above), and the players explain how the new hero was:

1. ... there all along. Just nobody noticed. The magic of the retcon.
2. ... sent by an ally or contact to help.
3. ... an opponent who switched sides.
4. ... a paltry bystander inspired by the former hero's sacrifice.
5. ... appeared out of a strange time, space, or dimension in a flash of magic.
6. ... uplifted from a cockroach in a reverse Samsa manoeuvre.

Obviously, the players may invent other explanations.



HEROES

“Ah. That was one strange machine. Some sort of dome cage. One yuman entered, two yumans left. Both a little different from the original, but convinced they were unchanged. We ended up with fifteen Porter Bobs. The sixteenth called ‘imself Pörter Bøb. Hah.”

—Robert 32-Chrome, feral polybody subsistence clan.

Players use hero tables to create their characters with polyhedral dice.

Skills (pXX) • What a hero is good at. Butcher, banker, soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, investigator, gladiator.

Traits (pXX) • Perks, abilities, mutations, divine gifts. A salamander’s fire resistance. Ur-plant light-feeding. Cyber-telekinesis. A parasitic symbiote heart named Bøb.

Stats (pXX) • Natural aptitudes. Strength, endurance, agility, charisma, aura, and thought.

Gear (pXX) • The hero’s cash and baggage. Woes, fears, illnesses, magic spells, mundane items.

Magic (pXX) • The best part of the inventory.

Sidekicks (pXX) • Beloved pets and trusted sidekicks.

Miscellany (pXX—pXX) • The rest of the sheet. Levels, hero dice, etc.

Names (pXX) • Naming the hero.

Unloved Results

The hero tables do not guarantee an enjoyable character. That is a task for the hero’s player. However, it’s no fun to be saddled with skills or abilities one doesn’t enjoy.

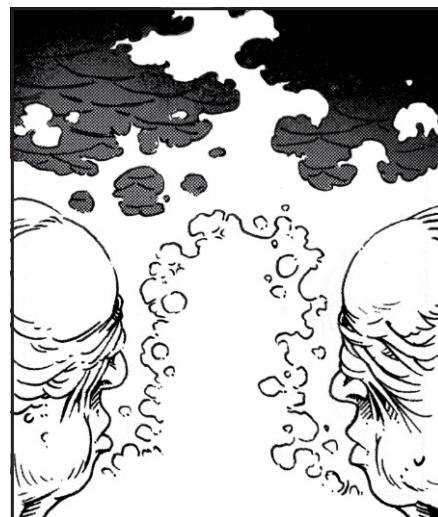
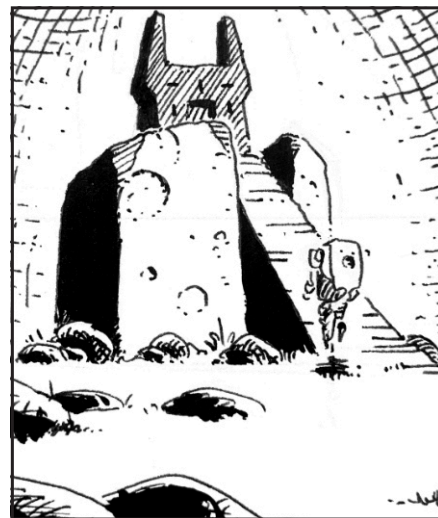
The players should decide at the start if they’re willing to generate two heroes each, then choose the one they prefer. The extra heroes can be kept in reserve, should a hero perish or otherwise leave the game.

It shouldn’t be a problem if a player wants to change one or two results. They can ask each other player to re-roll one result for them. On many tables, they could also simply pick an adjacent result. Still, the other players should laugh off attempts to blatantly increase a hero’s wealth on the inventory tables.

If the dissatisfied player runs out of companions to re-roll their results, they could generate a whole new character. However, if most other players have finished with character generation, waiting for one last hero to be redone from scratch can be a drag.

Other Characters

Besides their heroes, runners also play simplified secondary characters: pets, sidekicks, extras, and more. While a runner’s control of their hero is nigh absolute, the top cat and other players have a little more of a say in what a secondary character will or won’t do.





The Hero's Skeleton

"A hero need not be good, but they must be extraordinary and memorable."
—Iktos XLIII, famously forgettable seer poet of L'Isle Parasol

Every player needs a hero.

A hero is a player's protagonist, their lead character. A player runs a hero exclusively and has a veto on what their hero does in play—thus that player is called the runner. A runner can have multiple heroes, pets, and sidekicks. How many of these characters are present for a given session is up to the players.

A ghost shaman possesses wizards and mediums to uncover the secrets of transcendence. A diesel dwarf warrior hunts undead bio-machines created by the wire plague. A feline aristocrat historian recreates the glories of the lost doghead empire. A pengling merchant adventurer builds a magical nanite fountain to turn water into wine. A curious many-bodied void-plumber dives into the wormways to find where the reactivated travel gate leads.

To make their character a player needs a pencil, some polyhedral dice, a copy of the hero sheet (pXX) and ten minutes for the generator. The hero skeletons overleaf providing an overview of how to generate the character.

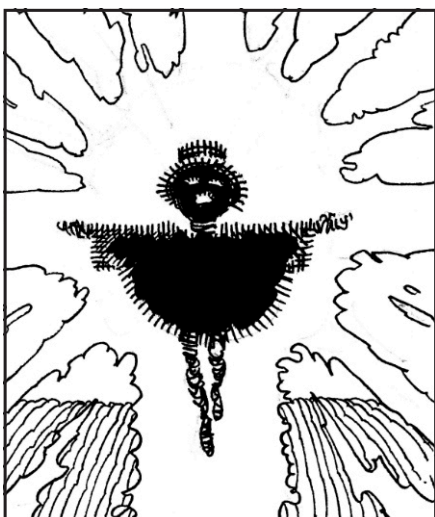
Pulp hero • The usual starting hero.

Starting extra • A very weak starting hero.

Epic legend • A very powerful starting hero.

Avatar of the Final Form • The final attributes attainable by most heroes. Presented more for comparison than for starting play.

A player's first hero is usually a pulp hero. Perhaps not renowned, but far more powerful than the common turnip farmer. With an array of strange abilities, skills, and magics, they are a force to be reckoned with. As they progress they perform incredible feats and inscribe themselves into history—if nothing else, as reckless fools endangering common hard-working folks and the foundations of centuries' old ruling institutions.



Initial Hero Skeletons

“It’s not an unfair caste society! We built our class hierarchy on meticulously engineered meritocratic aptitudes encoded at the germ-line.”

—Vorshoy LII.b, Eucrator of Free Habitation 8.

note to self: depict the reincarnation of Magichat.

The following four skeletons are shortcuts for building starting heroes of the players’ desired power level. The players can use the advancement tables (pXX) to fine tune their characters.

Pulp Hero

A memorable human.

The standard starting hero. Unique, unforgettable, historic. As glorious in battle as the great horse lords of the Centaur Empire, as powerful as the great avatar wizards who laid waste the oldest world with the heavy metal arrows of the Rain God.

- Level 3
- Pro 2
- Actions 2
- Magic cost 2
- 7 points for stats (0 to 4 each)
- 20 life
- 3d6 hero dice
- 3 skills (or ranks)
- 2 traits
- 300 cash.
- 4 suitable inventory items
- No burdens
- 999 invested xp (0 left over)
- A descriptive hero ‘type’
- The final item: a name

Special Extra

A rather common hero.

Starting play with the extra lets players discover the story of how a nobody becomes a hero. Abilities are few, survival is uncertain, and advancement is slowed by the character’s need to rest.

- Level 0
- Pro 1
- Actions 2
- Magic cost 2
- 5 points for stats (0 to 3 each)
- 5 life
- 0d6 hero dice
- 1 skill
- 0 traits or mutations
- 30 cash
- 1 suitable inventory item
- No burdens
- 0xp
- No hero ‘type’
- Optionally: a name

Epic Legend

Quite unforgotten.

Their achievements will not be forgotten for a thousand years. A legend’s advancement is slowed by high experience costs, but it promises power overwhelming.

- Level 6
- Pro 3
- Actions 2
- Magic cost 2
- 9 points for stats (0 to 5 each)
- 38 life
- 6d6 hero dice
- 6 skills (or ranks)
- 5 traits (or ranks)
- 3,000 cash
- Clothes or armour, a weapon, and 4 suitable inventory items
- No burdens
- 9,999 invested xp (0 left over)
- A flamboyant hero ‘type’
- The unforgettable item: a name

Avatar of the Final Form

Obviously not really human.

The embodiment of a culture hero, an archetype taken flesh. After reaching the pinnacle of power, the only paths left open are change and decline. There is nowhere further to go.

- Level 9
- Pro 4
- Actions 2
- Magic cost 2
- 11 points for stats (0 to 5 each)
- 60 life
- 9d6 hero dice
- 9 skills (or ranks)
- 9 traits (or ranks)
- 30,000 cash
- Clothes or armour, a weapon, and 6 suitable inventory items
- No burdens
- 99,999 invested xp (maxed out, 0 left over)
- A unique culture hero ‘type’
- A legendary name: optional

Levels

“8000以上だ...!”

—Vegeta Saiyan shouting “It’s over 9000!” [sic] in “The Return of Goku,” *Dragon Ball Z* (1997).

Levels are a measure of metanarrative power. The levels of heroes and extras are not quite the same thing.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • level 3.

Starting extra • level 0.

Epic legend • level 6.

Hero Levels

Hero levels increase randomly through advancement (pXX) and correspond to most attributes only loosely. A hero’s level determines three things:

1. Roughly how powerful the hero appears to the world.
2. How well the hero can access the narrative matrix underlying reality.
Casting a spell of a higher power than the hero’s level is dangerous.
3. The effectiveness of some items, magics, and traits.

Extra Levels

Extras have fewer attributes and level plays a more important role. An extra’s level directly determines.

1. Their key attributes, including defences, life, and test modifiers.
2. How much xp they require to advance—important for sidekicks and pets.
3. How powerful they appear to the world.
4. The effects of some items, magics, and traits.
5. Which spells they can cast safely.

For the top cat, levels are a useful short-hand for figuring out a character’s power. A level 0 (L0) character represents little threat to most humans. Level 1 (L1) characters match a baseline healthy, athletic human. Levels 10+ (L10+) are for creatures so powerful compared to ordinary humans that they might as well be extradimensional horrors from beyond time and space.

However, the TC should keep in mind that levels are very rough guidelines. They do not define what would be a “proper challenge” or a “balanced encounter”. One combination of heroes, skills, traits, die rolls, and runners’ ideas will make short work of one opponent, only to succumb to another with similar attributes. Communication is critical: as long as the players have similar expectations about a threat, the TC will not go wrong.

LEVEL	LIFE (MEDIAN)	HA, KA, BA (MEDIAN)	SUM (MEDIAN)	DAMAGE (MEDIAN DICE)	EXAMPLE EXTRAS
0	1–8 (4)	2–12 (5)	1–5 (+2)	0–5 (1d4)	rat, degenerate quarter-ling, radiation ghost, vome lapin
1	4–13 (8)	3–14 (6)	1–6 (+3)	1–8 (1d6)	average human, android, husk,swinedeer, wire ghoul
2	7–20 (12)	3–16 (7)	1–7 (+4)	2–12 (1d8)	foot soldier, ur-eagle, time-orphan, necro vome
3	11–30 (16)	4–18 (8)	2–8 (+5)	3–16 (1d10)	elite rider, fire fetish, majestic elk, heretic ecstatic
4	13–42 (22)	4–18 (9)	2–9 (+6)	4–22 (1d12)	vomish irrupter, steppe-wolf, crab-lion, arcane hermit
5	17–55 (29)	5–19 (10)	3–10 (+7)	5–28 (1d8+5)	biomech queen, lunar antibody, polybody swarm, cat count
6	24–69 (38)	6–19 (11)	3–11 (+8)	6–36 (1d10+6)	great hero, porcelain golem, ultra, swarm, metal auton
7	29–81 (52)	7–19 (12)	4–12 (+9)	7–49 (1d12+7)	vome generator, mirror dragon, void assaulter
8	33–99 (68)	8–19 (13)	4–13 (+10)	8–64 (2d8+5)	spectrum walker, machine bear, nature spirit, memory gazer
9	39–144 (90)	9–19 (14)	5–13 (+11)	9–81 (1d20+11)	legendary hero, moon-breaker, crystal golem
10	44–200 (120)	10–19 (15)	6–13 (+12)	10–100 (1d24+12)	grand golem, ghost of light, living ship, house mimic
11	55–300 (155)	11–19 (16)	7–13 (+13)	11–121 (1d30+13)	angel out of time, crawling city, floating fortress
17	666	13–19 (19)	13 (+13)	17–289 (3d20+30)	demiurge, void crawler, rebuildler, artificial deity

This table is a guideline for common attributes of extras of different levels. The top cat should feel free to create unexpected combinations of attributes for individual opponents they invent. The goal is wonder and excitement—not balance. When it comes to the median values (in brackets), half of the extras of that level will have lower values, half higher.

Pro

Pro (or the proficiency score) is a simplified representation of a hero's competence when they test with a relevant skill. It rises very slowly with advancement (pXX). Heroes also apply one of their six stats, which represent innate aptitudes or approaches, to their test when relevant.

Extras (antagonists, sidekicks, pets, monsters, etc.) do not have separate stats or pro scores. They use their **sum** scores, which they apply to tests whenever they know what they are doing.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • 2 pro.
Starting extra • 1 pro.
Epic legend • 3 pro.

Actions

Actions are an abstract representation of a character's speed. Characters with more actions are faster than those with fewer actions. In conflicts, the number of actions represent how many things a character can do per round during their party's turn.

As a guideline, baseline humans and every runner's starting character have two actions. Characters will very rarely permanently gain additional actions. Initiative, traits, and circumstances may quite often increase or decrease the number of actions available to a character in a given round.

Extras may have higher or lower action scores.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • 2 actions.
Starting extra • 2 actions.
Epic legend • 2 actions.

Magic Cost

Magic meddles with the underlying source code of the reality of the given world, altering it to suit the whims of the spell caster. Still, existence demands stability, and every character's essence resists the forces of magic. Magic cost represents this resistance—it multiplies a spell's power to determine its spell price in life. For heroes who want to cast spells, magic cost is the only attribute where a lower number is better. However, characters with higher magic costs are more embedded in reality and may have other advantages.

Magic cost 1 • A true wizard, less real than most humans.

Magic cost 2 • Every starting hero is a little bit magical.

Magic cost 3 • Most extras and baseline humans.

Magic cost 4 • Creatures essentially interwoven with the given world, less prone to reality dysfunctions.

Magic cost 5 • Creatures hardcoded into reality itself, often unusually resistant to spells.

A magic cost of 0 is theoretically impossible for creatures of the given world. Academic wizards speculate that it is possible to asymptotically approach a magic cost of 0 with fractional magic costs and distributed spirituality, as evidenced by the unusual existential traces of the ultras.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • 2 magic cost.
Starting extra • 2 magic cost.
Epic legend • 2 magic cost.



Stats

"You still don't understand what you're dealing with, do you? Perfect organism. Its structural perfection is matched only by its hostility."

— Ash, Alien, 1979 (written by Dan O'Bannon)

The natural aptitudes of a hero are represented by six stats: strength (str), endurance (end), agility (agi), charisma (cha), aura (aur), and thought (tho). Each stat ranges from 0 to a maximum of 5 points. The average for a prime adult human is 0. Injuries, spells, and other events affect heroes' stats.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • Roll or distribute 7 points among the six stats, with a maximum of 4 in any one stat.

Starting extra • Roll [-] or distribute 5 points, maximum of 3.

Epic legend • Roll [+] or distribute 9 points, maximum of 5.

Stat Generator [d100]

Note: results only list stats that are not zero.

1. **Scattered** • All stats 1.
2. **Musclebound** • Strength 5, one stat 1.
3. **Virile** • Endurance 5, one stat 1.
4. **Elastic** • Agility 5, one stat 1.
5. **Hypnotic** • Charisma 5, one stat 1.
6. **Reserved** • Aura 5, one stat 1.
7. **Highbrow** • Thought 5, one stat 1.
8. **Ogrish** • Strength 4, two stats 1.
9. **Lumbering** • Endurance 4, two stats 1.
10. **Frenetic** • Agility 4, two stats 1.
11. **Dainty** • Charisma 4, two stats 1.
12. **Aetherial** • Aura 4, two stats 1.
13. **Focused** • Thought 4, two stats 1.
14. **Strapping** • Strength 2, two stats 2, another 1.
15. **Energetic** • Endurance 2, two stats 2, another 1.
16. **Twitchy** • Agility 2, two stats 2, another 1.
17. **Fetching** • Charisma 2, two stats 2, another 1.
18. **Fierce** • Aura 2, two stats 2, another 1.
19. **Knowing** • Thought 2, two stats 2, another 1.
20. **Brawny** • Strength 2, one stat 2, another three stats 1.
21. **Bulky** • Endurance 2, one stat 2, another three stats 1.
22. **Lissome** • Agility 2, one stat 2, another three stats 1.
23. **Nice** • Charisma 2, one stat 2, another three stats 1.
24. **Inflexible** • Aura 2, one stat 2, another three stats 1.
25. **Crafty** • Thought 2, one stat 2, another three stats 1.
26. **Rugged** • Strength 2, five stats 1.
27. **Stout** • Endurance 2, five stats 1.
28. **Spry** • Agility 2, five stats 1.
29. **Likable** • Charisma 2, five stats 1.
30. **Firm** • Aura 2, five stats 1.
31. **Schooled** • Thought 2, five stats 1.
32. **Doughty** • Strength 3, one stat 3, another 1.
33. **Athletic** • Endurance 3, one stat 3, another 1.
34. **Nimble** • Agility 3, one stat 3, another 1.
35. **Charming** • Charisma 3, one stat 3, another 1.
36. **Resilient** • Aura 3, one stat 3, another 1.
37. **Critical** • Thought 3, one stat 3, another 1.
38. **Big** • Strength 3, two stats 2.
39. **Hardy** • Endurance 3, two stats 2.
40. **Adroit** • Agility 3, two stats 2.

The Six Stats

41. **Slick** • Charisma 3, two stats 2.
42. **Obstinate** • Aura 3, two stats 2.
43. **Articulate** • Thought 3, two stats 2.
44. **Stalwart** • Strength 3, one stat 2, another two stats 1.
45. **Healthy** • Endurance 3, one stat 2, another two stats 1.
46. **Deft** • Agility 3, one stat 2, another two stats 1.
47. **Glamorous** • Charisma 3, one stat 2, another two stats 1.
48. **Disciplined** • Aura 3, one stat 2, another two stats 1.
49. **Clever** • Thought 3, one stat 2, another two stats 1.
50. **Vigorous** • Strength 3, four stats 1.
51. **Robust** • Endurance 3, four stats 1.
52. **Quick** • Agility 3, four stats 1.
53. **Alluring** • Charisma 3, four stats 1.
54. **Gritty** • Aura 3, four stats 1.
55. **Cultivated** • Thought 3, four stats 1.
56. **Powerful** • Strength 4, one stat 3.
57. **Lusty** • Endurance 4, one stat 3.
58. **Limber** • Agility 4, one stat 3.
59. **Bewitching** • Charisma 4, one stat 3.
60. **Sublime** • Aura 4, one stat 3.
61. **Inventive** • Thought 4, one stat 3.
62. **Muscular** • Strength 4, one stat 2, another 1.
63. **Hale** • Endurance 4, one stat 2, another 1.
64. **Sly** • Agility 4, one stat 2, another 1.
65. **Winning** • Charisma 4, one stat 2, another 1.
66. **Discerning** • Aura 4, one stat 2, another 1.
67. **Perceptive** • Thought 4, one stat 2, another 1.
68. **Tough** • Strength 4, three stats 1.
69. **Abiding** • Endurance 4, three stats 1.
70. **Deft** • Agility 4, three stats 1.
71. **Provocative** • Charisma 4, three stats 1.
72. **Moody** • Aura 4, three stats 1.
73. **Original** • Thought 4, three stats 1.
74. **Mighty** • Strength 5, one stat 2.
75. **Unflagging** • Endurance 5, one stat 2.
76. **Winged** • Agility 5, one stat 2.
77. **Seductive** • Charisma 5, one stat 2.
78. **Oracular** • Aura 5, one stat 2.
79. **Encyclopaedic** • Thought 5, one stat 2.
80. **Steely** • Strength 5, two stats 1.
81. **Vital** • Endurance 5, two stats 1.
82. **Driven** • Agility 5, two stats 1.
83. **Irresistible** • Charisma 5, two stats 1.
84. **Devillish** • Thought 5, two stats 1.
85. **Herculean** • Strength 4, one stat 3, another 1.
86. **Sinewy** • Endurance 4, one stat 3, another 1.
87. **Fleet** • Agility 4, one stat 3, another 1.
88. **Impressive** • Charisma 4, one stat 3, another 1.
89. **Single-minded** • Aura 4, one stat 3, another 1.
90. **Creative** • Thought 4, one stat 3, another 1.
91. **Olympian** • Strength 5, one stat 2, another 1.
92. **Glowing** • Endurance 5, one stat 2, another 1.
93. **Mercurial** • Agility 5, one stat 2, another 1.
94. **Angelic** • Charisma 5, one stat 2, another 1.
95. **Hermetic** • Aura 5, one stat 2, another 1.
96. **Genius** • Thought 5, one stat 2, another 1.
97. **Forceful** • Strength or charisma 3, two other stats 3.
98. **Resolute** • Endurance or aura 3, two other stats 3.
99. **Tricky** • Agility or thought 3, two other stats 3.
100. **Blessed** • All stats 2.

Strength

Active physical stat. Lifting bars, bending gates, whacking heads, carrying menhirs, leaping logs across a river.

Endurance

Passive physical stat. How much pain and strain a hero can take. Marathons, bearing the cold, fighting disease, fitness competitions.

Agility

Dynamic physical stat. Applying the body with precision and speed. Dodging death hamsters, throwing void bombs, shimmying on the dance floor.

Charisma

Active mental stat. Carrying arguments by force of personality, changing reality, bending opinions, breaking opposition.

*The name goes back to classical Greek *khárisma*, representing divine fortune and favor. The gods and reason hate the uncharismatic, thus charisma also represents luck. When a player asks if their hero can find a war pig, lightning mobile, doom rod, or simply the latest edition of *Burly Barbarians at the newsmonger's*, that's a charisma test.*

Aura

Passive mental stat. How much punishment a soul or psyche can take. Correlates with endurance. Showing courage, remaining compassionate despite horrors, resisting peer pressure.

Aura is not wisdom. It does not show good judgement or insight. Those are character traits that players decide for their hero, just as they decide the colour of the hero's hair or shoes.

Thought

Dynamic mental stat. Speed of processing and manipulating information. Remembering information, figuring out connections, transforming ideas into reality. The name of the stat is also a reference to the Egyptian god Thoth.

Defences

Characters have three kinds of defence, one of each type of conflict: ha (physical), ka (metaphysical), and ba (social). In conflicts, a character's defence is the target number their opponents have to exceed when they attack them. No defence can ever be higher than 19. Some simplified extras may have just a single score, but not heroes.

Calculating Defence

All defences are calculated in the same way:

$$\text{defence} = \text{pro} + \text{stat} + \text{gear}$$

Relevant stats and gear for each defence are usually:

Ha (physical defence) • Strength or agility; armour as defensive gear.

Ka (metaphysical defence) • Aura or thought; wards as defensive gear.

Ba (social defence) • Charisma or endurance; prestige as defensive gear.

In some cases, subject to common sense and some negotiation between runners and the TC, a different stat might be more relevant. For example, a necromancer lawyer parrying a pengling's negotiating gambit might use thought instead of charisma for their ba defence. A barbarian may use their animal endurance instead of aura to bear the pain of a sourceror's mind-lock. A power-armoured knight could use their charisma to defend against an unholy avatar's gravity mace.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • Note 2 + stat for each defence. Add the bonus from defensive gear after completing the inventory section.

Starting extra • 1 + stat for each defence. Add gear bonus later.

Epic legend • 3 + stat for each defence. Add gear bonus later.

Life

Life represents a character's plot armour and functions as an abstract resource. Every creature in the game has a life score, even things that are not technically alive. A character's maximum life score is changed by events, advancement, traits, and equipment.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • 20 life.
Starting extra • 5 life.
Epic legend • 38 life.

Spending Life

Characters will often spend life to power magic spells, artefacts, traits, and other in-game objects. Poetically, magic and life are intertwined, both drawing from the same well-spring of cosmic creation.

Losing Life

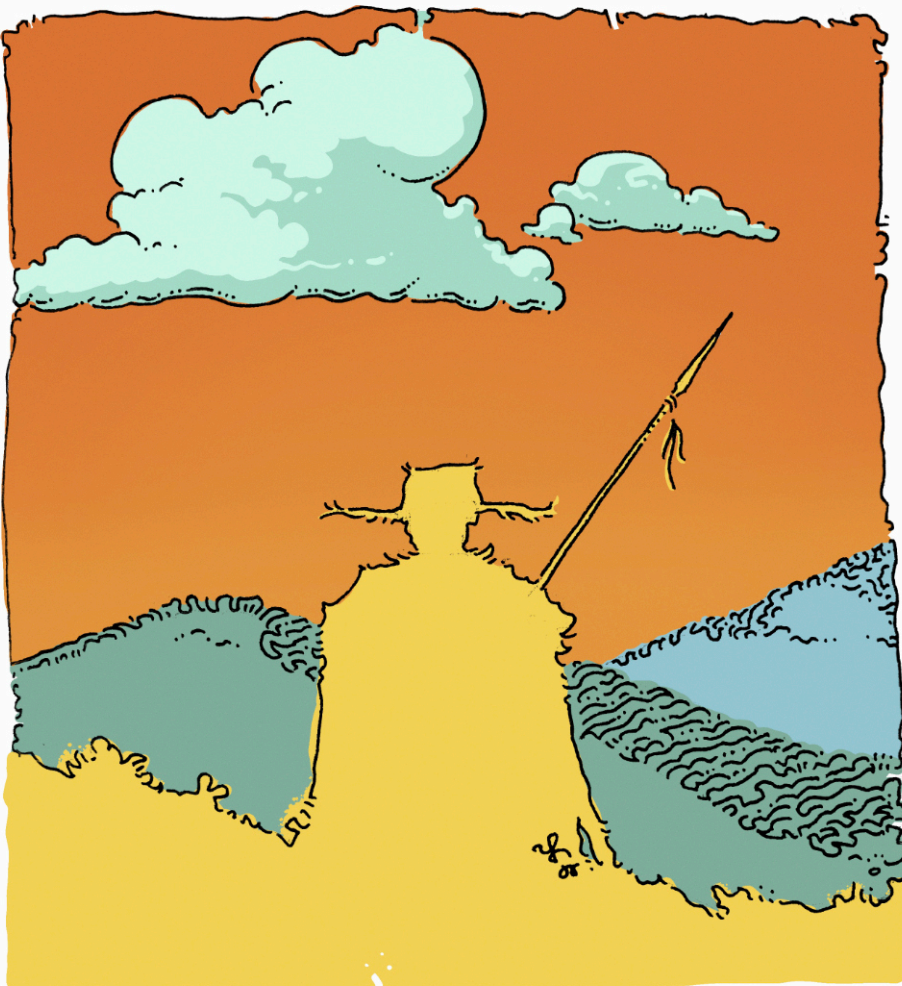
Life also works almost exactly like hit points in many classical games. Characters whose defences are breached in conflict suffer damage, which often means they lose life. Renaming hit points to life emphasizes that conflicts are not just about serious bodily injury and that words can also kill. Like stats, a character's life cannot be less than zero. When a character's life score reaches zero, they are in trouble:

Extras (sidekicks, monsters, pets, and vehicles) who run out of life are out of play. Whether they are dead, destroyed, or merely temporarily incapacitated depends on the fictional circumstances.

Heroes suffer burdens (see Damage, pXX), which progressively disable them and eventually remove them from play.

Recovering Life

Characters recover life like every other attribute, by resting (pXX).



Hero Dice

Quick Start

Pulp hero • 3d6 hero dice.
Starting extra • no hero dice.
Epic legend • 6d6 hero dice.

These d6s are a narrative meta-currency that lets characters succeed at thousand-to-one odds nine times out of ten. The maximum number of hero dice a hero character can store increases with advancement.

Using Hero Dice

Hero dice are used in four ways:

1. **Adjusting dice** • Immediately after rolling any die, a player can decide to roll a hero die and adjust the initial naked roll by up to that amount. The player can use this adjustment to explode dice, avoid critical failures or turn ordinary rolls into critical hits. So, if their d20 came up 17 on their attack roll, they could roll a hero d6 and hope to turn it into a natural 20—and thus a critical hit. Since critical hits in conflicts permit consecutive rolls, if the player then rolled another high number (e.g. a 16) and had more hero dice available, they could roll another hero d6 in the hope of multiplying their critical hit again. A player can also spend a hero die to adjust the roll of a previously rolled hero die.
2. **As boons [+]** • A player can spend one or more hero dice before rolling a die to gain one or more boons [+] on that roll.
3. **To regain life** • A player can roll a hero die at any time to restore that much life to a character.
4. **To regain a stat point** • They can spend a hero die at any time to restore one stat point to a character.

Regaining Hero Dice

It is usually the players, not heroes, that gain hero dice. As they acquire hero dice, runners assign them to their active heroes. Only the top cat can give hero dice to their inactive heroes (if they have any). Players gain a hero die by:

1. Attending a game session.
2. Playing for an hour or two (up to the group, depending on how much die rolling happens).
3. Optionally, through practical activities that make the game session run more smoothly (e.g. by helping set up and clean up the play area, preparing food or beverages for the session, maintaining a database for the campaign, etc.).

Active characters can also acquire hero dice directly through play, perhaps from ancient magitech or space alien 'gods' pleased with their deeds. Non-heroes may also earn hero dice in this way.

Invested Xp

Players gain experience (xp) through play and invest them in their heroes. The more xp invested, the more powerful and capable a hero may become. Players also invest xp to improve sidekicks, pets, properties, and other game objects.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • 999 invested xp
Starting extra • no invested xp
Epic legend • 9,999 invested xp



Hero Types

A hero's type is a universal character or archetype the runner may use as a label to describe the character. It has no mechanical effect whatsoever, serving as a narrative and imaginative lever for play. A hero may seek to embody the archetype or deviate from it; communities may ascribe archetypal attributes or deny them. Players can leverage archetypes with contrasts, nuances, flaws, and twists to create more memorable characters.

Quick Start

Pulp hero • Roll 5d20, use two results that make sense.
Starting extra • Roll 4d20 in last 4 columns, use 2 sensible results.
Epic legend • Roll 5d20, use 3 sensible results.

D20	ARCHETYPE	CONTRAST	NUANCE	FLAW	TWIST
1	Acolyte	sceptic	judicious	faithless	gentle
2	Beggar	banker	disguised	broken	hopeful
3	Champion	deserter	brutish	cowardly	cunning
4	Criminal	militiaperson	repentant	vengeful	generous
5	Elder	reprobate	strong	heretical	villainous
6	Fool	sage	lucky	gullible	sophisticated
7	Healer	quack	combative	arrogant	maverick
8	Hunter	naturalist	humble	cruel	aristocratic
9	Gambler	bookmaker	conflicted	greedy	successful
10	Guardian	assassin	replacement	failed	abandoned
11	Lover	misanthrope	star-struck	spurned	happy
12	Outsider	politician	prodigal	corrupting	prophetic
13	Rogue	straight arrow	loveable	murderous	bumbling
14	Tinker	ritualist	inventive	rapacious	conservative
15	Trickster	justiciar	creative	destructive	pious
16	Turncoat	witch finder	noble	hateful	accidental
17	Wanderer	homebody	wealthy	cursed	blessed
18	Warrior	pacifist	ascetic	proud	shadowy
19	Wizard	noble	elegant	dogmatic	rebellious
20	Youth	fanatic	scion	bastard	materialistic

Names

The same wine tastes better poured from an elegant bottle with the crest of a fine chateau poured into crystal stemware.

— Umon Calliés, *Simple Truths* (A&D 343/11:11)

Names hold a kind of magic, binding random attributes into an actual character. They are the intersection between culture, society and the individual. Naming creates an implied world beyond, behind, and all-round a character. All this is to say names are important.

When picking a name, players may consider three questions in descending order of importance:

1. Do they like the name?
2. Is it pronounceable at the table?
3. Is it funny, meaningful, or interesting?

Inventing Names

Many long lists of names by culture, background, and archetype already exist. These tables attempt something a little different. Players choose (possibly randomly) one or more stem words or names, which they then modify to create novel names for their characters. Note that these tables do not encompass the total variety of linguistic possibilities—merely suggest some ways words and languages may change.

Name Stem [d8]

Players may start with existing words and names as fuel for inventing a unique name for their character.

1. **Familiar brand, company, or organization** • Kodak, Moskvitch, Concorde, NATO, ONU.
2. **Common food, drink, or activity** • Burger, Whiskey, Tango, Foxtrot.
3. **Trait, behaviour, or attribute** • Smooth, Suave, Honest, Dancer, Green.
4. **Contemporary profession, trade, or status** • Tinker, Tailor, Lawyer, Trustfunderling, Freelancer.
5. **Physical or cultural location** • Mountain, City, Slum, Airport, Parliament.
6. **Animal, plant, or mineral** • Octopus, Fern, Jade, Dendrolith.
7. **Object, structure, or thing** • Iron, Electricity, Fusion, Cosmos.
8. **Common name in the player's culture** • Mahmud, Wei, Angel, Eva, Aadya.

Word Combinations [d6]

Sometimes a couple of words can work together to provide the fuel for a character's name.

1. **Duplicate stem word** • Lotus Lotus.
2. **Portmanteau, combining two words** • Beer and Jade could give Beerjade.
3. **Blended words** • Smooth and Slum could give Smoothlum.
4. **Linked words** • Octopus the Mountain, Ivan of Manager, Electricity from Hamburgerflower.
5. **Hybrid words** • One of the words is translated into a different language. Fern Mountain could become Fern Berg, or Harbour Dancer might turn into Bandari Dancer.
6. **Rhyming combination** • An alliteration with an additional word, such as Adam Adman, a rhyme, like Honest Earnest, or some other poetic scheme.

Name Type [d6]

Different cultures use names differently. For example, a character might use just a single name, or a whole sequence of names and titles, or just a generic name for their category of sapient creature.

1. **Personal or given name** • assigned by parents, granted by priest on the 51% survival day, chosen with first words, won at adulthood.
2. **True or fortune-nicked name** • given by fate, stolen from gods, appointed by friends, sold by daemons.
3. **False or assumed name** • nom de plume, stage name, false identity.
4. **Family, moiety or clan name** • surname, patronymic, matronym, ancestor, totemic animal, local deity, and more.
5. **Locality or ethnic name** • street, neighbourhood, town, commune, barony, ethnicity, heritage, nation, empire, religion.
6. **Category or class name** • caste, education, profession, species, archetype, class, wealth, clone batch, vome model.

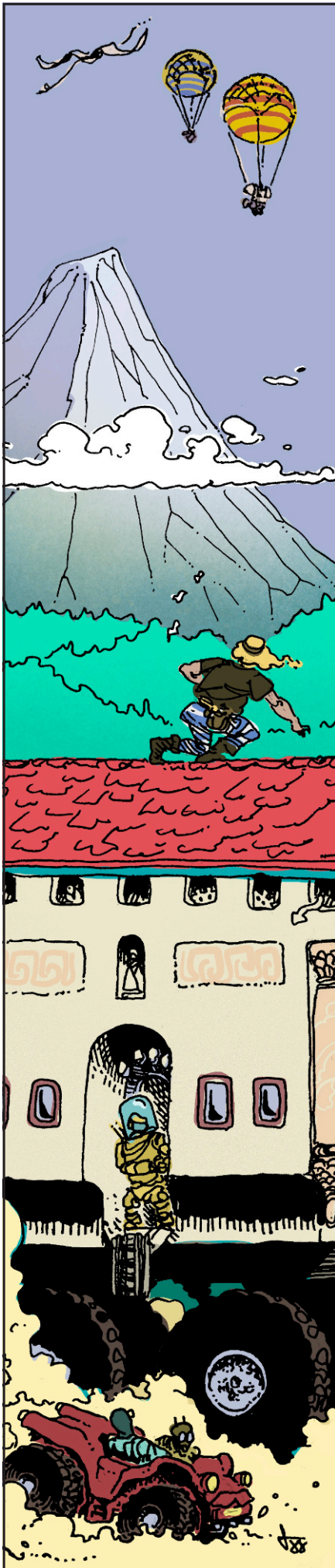
Name Structure Modification [d6]

1. **Add prefix** • Jane might become Metajane or 'Tweenjane. Prefixes can be in the same language as the stem word or another language.
2. **Add infix or interfix** • a linking element in the middle of the name, e.g. Jonathan could become Jonahathan or Fern Berg could become Fernaberg.
3. **Add suffix** • Manager may become Manageroid, Singer into Singerotti.
4. **Introduce a misspelling or sound substitution** • Harbour might turn into Arbour, or Electricity into Electric City.
5. **Double a sound or syllable** • Ferret can become Ferrerret, Lee to Leelee.
6. **Drop a sound or syllable** • June might become Oone, Louis into Lou.

Stem Sound Changes [d8]

Names and words change through time and space. Players can use sound shifts to make their character's names sound a little strange and provide clues to the typical accents and sound patterns of the cultures and languages in their table setting. For more variation, they can apply a series of sound changes.

1. **Consonant hardens** • Clean becomes Khlean, Sea becomes Chee.
2. **Consonant softens** • Apple becomes Affle, Kodak becomes Hodac.
3. **Sibilation or Lipping** • Jott becomes Joss, or Sky becomes Thky.
4. **Sound Switch** • Horn becomes Hron, or Cowshed becomes Coshwed.
5. **Slurring** • Samsung becomes Sammon, Lawyer becomes Loya.
6. **Transcription error** • A random letter is replaced with another random letter. Was it a lazy scribe? A vome? Something else? John becomes Xohn. Centurion becomes Cenjurion.
7. **Vowel lengthens** • Bus becomes Baus or Boos. Tree becomes Treeeye.
8. **Vowel shortens** • July becomes Jelly or Jilly. Allabout becomes Allabut.



Skills

“What glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!”
 — Dr. Frankenstein in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818)

Every hero starts out at least one skill, which summarizes what they have done in their life and what they are good at. Each skill or skill rank occupies one skill slot (e.g three ranks in praxa of the chains occupy three slots).

Skills are broad bundles of learning, practice and experience. This incoherence is purposeful: there is overlap in the daily tasks of an accountant and a plumber, and there is difference. The same holds for other skills. Players use their wits and imagination to figure out how their hero’s skill might reasonably apply in given circumstances. A skill could cover:

- Specialization or expertise** • Axe fighting, welding, pastry-making.
- Jobs, occupations, or professions** • Soldier, spy, tinker, tailor.
- Hobbies** • Gamer, dancer, maker, embroiderer.
- Social status** • Socialite, servant, hobo, homemaker.

Skill ranks may provide additional effects or items.

Skills do not limit what the character can try to do. A skilled hero is good enough to make a living with their know-how (they’re a pro) while an expert is good enough to teach that profession. There are four situations when a hero rolls a test with a skill.

- No relevant skill** • Hero does not add their proficiency (from 1 to 7) to the test and suffers a bane [-] to their roll. An amateur or beginner.
- One rank in a relevant skill** • Hero adds their pro (or proficiency score) to the d20 roll when they make a test. A skilled professional.
- Two ranks in a relevant skill** • Hero adds double their pro to the d20 roll when they make a test. An expert.
- Three ranks in a relevant skill** • Hero gains [+] to tests. A master.

Every skill has different connotations in different communities. Whether this is a boon or a bane, only context can tell. Skills may require suitable equipment and circumstances. Players can invent new skills to suit their characters.

Skill Types

Five skill tags loosely categorize the hundred listed skills.

- #adventure** • Skills with practical utility in the struggle of mortal against uncaring natural worlds.
- #background** • Skills that represent the development of a mortal as a part of a functional community.
- #combat** • A combination of psychophysical battle techniques honed over millennia. Also called *praxa* from Ancient Greek for practice.
- #magic** • A difficult or secret compilation of lore, ritual, study and science. Also called *veda* from Slovenian or Sanskrit for knowledge or science.
- #social** • A pan-cultural agglomeration of custom and behavior that cuts across the living and dead cultures of the Vastlands. Also called *sidu* from Old English for custom or habit.

Inventing a New Skill

“The uplifted chipmunk is exhibiting unusual behaviours.”

—Petush Iä, maker father, source code baker.

When players invent new skills they should ask:

1. Does it sound fun to roleplay?
2. Is it something a person could do for a living or as a hobby pursuit? Could it be used to describe a person’s status?
3. Can it be described in three sentences?
4. Is the title memorable? Evocative?

If the answers are yes, it’s probably a good skill to play with.

For example, ‘Sleight of Hand’ wouldn’t make 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. ‘Sleight of Hand’ could easily be turned into an ability, something like ‘Unnatural Sleight of Hand’.

‘Melee Combat’ sounds a bit dull and mechanical. ‘Anointed Gladiator’ or ‘Infantry Sergeant’ make for more vivid characters and better stories.

Precise rank effects can be defined later, through play.

Anatomy of a Skill

Infantry Sergeant —title

#adventure —tag.

Survived feeding the war god. —fluff for nuance.

Fought in more wars than they have fingers. Long experience in not dying and keeping others from dying. Setting watches, storming trenches, hiding in bunkers, interpreting orders and handling mobile infantry weapons. —three sentences to outline what the skill entails.

R1 • Gets a fancy weapon memorializing a famous engagement. It can deal both ha and ba damage. —ranks provide nuance or mechanical quirks.

Table of Skills [d100]

These hundred starting skills (detailed overleaf) toy with the implied settings of the Vastlands. Players are encouraged to use them as ideas and fuel for creating new skills to fit their worlds in play.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Agriculturalist Farmer | 34. Pilot of Vechs | 67. Singer of the Lastlands |
| 2. Artist Aesthetic | 35. Postmodern Soldier | 68. Spelunker |
| 3. Apparatchik | 36. Praxa of the Bows | 69. Storm Infantry |
| 4. Archaeologist Freiherr | 37. Praxa of the Chains | 70. Street Performer |
| 5. Athlete of Some Renown | 38. Praxa of the Good Guns | 71. Survivor in the Vast |
| 6. Big Game Tourist | 39. Praxa of the Energies | 72. Tactician of the Endless War |
| 7. Butcher Banker | 40. Praxa of the Hammeraxes | 73. Thespian |
| 8. Captain in the Auxiliaries | 41. Praxa of the Knives | 74. Timelost Interloper |
| 9. Cat Burglar | 42. Praxa of the Mortal Shells | 75. Tinker Toymaker |
| 10. Chevalier | 43. Praxa of the Pistoliers | 76. Useless Freeloader |
| 11. Circus Acrobat | 44. Praxa of the Poles | 77. Veda of the Abmortal Doctor |
| 12. Corpocrat Suitwearer | 45. Praxa of the Rifles | 78. Veda of the All-Chemist |
| 13. Dream Voyager | 46. Praxa of the Rods | 79. Veda of the Awakened Sphere |
| 14. Driver Jill, Jack, or Jo. | 47. Praxa of the Swords | 80. Veda of the Biomechané |
| 15. Explorer of the Vastlands | 48. Professor in Panhumanities | 81. Veda of the Cosmic Architects |
| 16. Fisher Pasha | 49. Protocollier | 82. Veda of the Existential Void |
| 17. Forager of the Future | 50. Psychic Veteran | 83. Veda of the Flying Serpent |
| 18. Gladiator | 51. Revolutionary | 84. Veda of the Golemmafexes |
| 19. Groom to the Superior Species | 52. Rider at Ease | 85. Veda of the Iron Symphony |
| 20. Handyworker | 53. Secret Servant | 86. Veda of the Law Necromantic |
| 21. Historian of the Downfall | 54. Shadow Merchant | 87. Veda of the Light Held Fast |
| 22. Housekeeper of Good Repute | 55. Shopkeeper | 88. Veda of the Mother Electric |
| 23. Hunter of the Late Days | 56. Sidu of the Bestfolk | 89. Veda of the Old Technologies |
| 24. Investigator Private | 57. Sidu of the Iron Fist | 90. Veda of the Plant Kings |
| 25. Laborer in Reserve | 58. Sidu of the Leastfolk | 91. Veda of the Rightmaker |
| 26. Maker Cogsmith | 59. Sidu of the Legalities | 92. Veda of the Seeming Becoming |
| 27. Master Packer | 60. Sidu of the Outcaste | 93. Veda of the Seven Summons |
| 28. Mule Whisperer | 61. Sidu of the Rhetors | 94. Veda of the Soul Breaker |
| 29. Navigator of Other Worlds | 62. Sidu of the Sacred Deed | 95. Veda of the Witching Song |
| 30. Negotiator of Relations | 63. Sidu of the Soiltwined | 96. Veda of the World’s Word |
| 31. Noble Socialite | 64. Sidu of the Staunchkeepers | 97. Vome Technician |
| 32. Nomad Rustler | 65. Sidu of the Unfettered | 98. White Collar Drone |
| 33. Outsider Alien | 66. Sidu of the Uptought | 99. Writer of Belles Lettres |
| | | 100. Zu Error |

Quick Start

Pulp hero • Roll thrice.

Starting extra • Roll once.

Epic legend • Roll six times.

The Hundred Skills

1. Agriculturalist Farmer

#background

An autonomous popular people's collective ruled by an autocrat.

Grows beans. Wakes up early. Tills greenhouses. Works long hours. Pays onerous taxes. Understands magic legumes. Joins the levies. Avoids attention very, very well. Wields farm implements and light long arms. Also farms other valuable foodstuffs [d12]:

1. Squashes
2. Breadfruit
3. Tart mangoes
4. Saucy tangerines
5. Giant peaches
6. Turnips
7. Hybrid oats
8. Uplifted monoculturalrice
9. Mushrooms of power
10. Industrial grade pumpkins
11. Land coral
12. Kelp

R1 • R1 • [+] to looking nondescript.

R2 • Strong as the sky. Ignores effects of one burden if bearing more than one burden.

R3 • Resilient as grass. Regains 1 life the turn after being reduced to 0 life.

2. Artist Aesthetic

#background

The unmanifest idea is worthless.

Creates treasures out of aether, dreams, and labour. Paints, draws, sculpts, dances and sings. Wields a brush and chisel, sells trinkets as avant-garde art to hungry social climbers. Known for [d8]:

1. Bas relief etchings
2. Croquis and caricatures
3. Hyperrealist plastics
4. Microlithic landscape design
5. Mixed media cave paintings
6. Neon jungle sculptures
7. Performance welding
8. Surrealist canvases

R1 • [+] to talking up the value of art objects.

R2 • Wages of fame. Can pay for an object or service worth up to hero's level in cash with a sketch, performance, or autograph.

R3 • All publicity is good. Once

per turn gains life from a ba attack instead of losing it.

3. Apparatchik

#background

The highly trained bureaucrat reproduces the bureaucracy.

Project manager navigating byzantine institutions and accessing secret locations. Passes the buck and avoids blame. Organizes time sheets and sets key performance indicators. Uses office supplies as weapons. Familiar with [d6]:

1. Cultured affairs
2. Foreign entanglements
3. History adaptation
4. Internal change direction
5. Language adjustment
6. Ministerial truth management
7. Political economic corrections
8. Social sanitation

R1 • Patience. Resistant to bureaucratic social attacks.

R2 • Connected. Knows an operative (L1, furtive, cowardly, committed) in every large organization.

R3 • Protected. Gains +2 ba defence.

4. Archaeologist Freiherr

#adventure

Behold, the golden idol!

Discovers lost artefacts. Climbs, jumps and dodges boulders. Detects traps and hidden doors. Whips a small gun and cracks a neural whip. Affiliated with [d6]:

1. Corporate laboratorium
2. Royal society
3. Secret police unit
4. Shadowy espionage cabal
5. University cooperative
6. Wealthy relative

R1 • Resistant to trap effects.

R2 • [+] to damage vs. academics and governmental operatives.

R3 • When they deal maximum damage with a bare-knuckle attack (1d3 damage), the target loses an action on its next turn.

5. Athlete of Some Renown

#adventure

Run, rabbit, run.

Runs the extra mile, stretches reserves further, goes faster. Does a biathlon, a triathlon, a polythlon. Signs an autograph. Waves a bottle of fizz-wine. Found fame as a [d10]:

1. Ball hitter or kicker
2. Discus thrower
3. Dressage rider
4. Fancy dancer
5. Obstacle jumper
6. Distance runner
7. Pro wrestler
8. Rock climber
9. Swimmer
10. Wave surfer

R1 • Resistant against endurance damage and effects.

R2 • All-rounder. Increases lowest physical stat by 1.

R3 • Grin and bear it. Spend 1 life to ignore the effects of 1 burden for 1 round.

6. Big Game Tourist

#adventure

It's a fair chase, honest.

Shoots big guns and rides a large burden beast or armoured golem. Blithely orders servants around and overlooks the lower classes. Chomps cigars, swills firewater, and talks turkey. Seeks [d8]:

1. Asbestos phoenix
2. Black squid
3. Green roc
4. Iron rhino
5. Purple grandworm
6. Swordtoothed bear
7. White whale
8. Yellow earthdragon

R1 • Resistant to the effects of alcohol, tobacco, poisons, and all other physical indulgences.

R2 • [+] to ka & ba tests vs. beasts of burden, golems, and servants.

R3 • [+] to damage with big guns and/or against trophy creatures.

7. Butcher Banker

#background

Blood and money. Both must flow.

Lends money and practices usury. Nobs with fine folk, promotes charities and intimidates with wealth. Crunches numbers and

collects arts or antiquities. Secretly [d6]:

1. Breeds doves
2. Collects pet rocks
3. Composes sonnets
4. Grows tiny trees
5. Plays the sad mandolin
6. Practices memorization

R1 • Double ba defence from carried cash.

R2 • Deals double damage with cash in social conflict.

R3 • [+] to damage with cleavers, nightsticks, walking stick swords, bladed bowler hats, rods of office, and other regalia of the moneyed clans. Resistant to damage from cash.

8. Captain in the Auxiliaries

#adventure

Lead that cannon fodder.

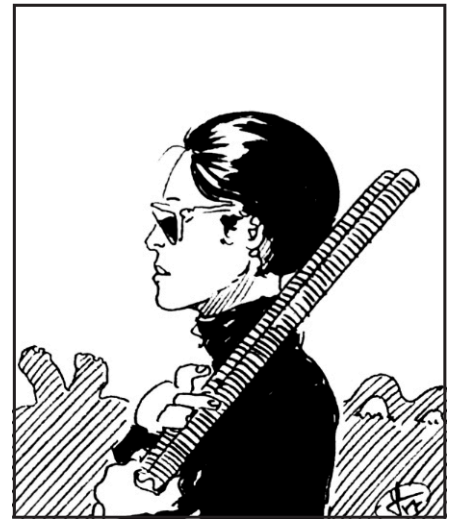
Leads the forces of civilization to victories over monsters of chaos by navigating the military bureaucracy. Understand boots, morale and logistics. Wields standard issue weapons and equipment. Served in the [d6]:

1. C-suite glitter-wars
2. Logistics administration
3. Military surplus marketing division
4. Noble reserves
5. Parade campaigns
6. Public affairs brigade

R1 • [+] to selling weapons, wars, and frontal assaults to build character.

R2 • Military-complex contacts. Knows someone (L1, affable, diplomatic, traitorous) in most industrial-political corporations. Cha test determines if contact is friendly.

R3 • Immune to ba damage from shame and scandals.



The big game tourist cared not ...



... if a butcher banker funded her ...



... for a dream voyager guided her.

9. Cat Burglar

#adventure

Door, window, wall. Same thing.

Breaks into and out of places. Disarms locks and traps and extrasensory wards. Moves very quietly. Appraises treasures. Stylish, suave, elegant. Loves [d6]:

1. Berets
2. Calling cards
3. Cats
4. Masks
5. Puzzles
6. Stripes

R1 • Lands on their feet. Resistant to falling damage.

R2 • So amazingly nimble.

Automatically succeeds at moderate or easier agility tests.

R3 • Sonic lockpicks. May spend 1 life to re-roll a failed test to disarm a lock, trap, or ward.

10. Chevalier

#background

A beacon of chivalry.

Suitors swoon and adversaries gnash their teeth. Masters etiquette and romantic literature. Wields lance, sword, and noble pin blaster from steed-seat. Rules subhuman peons with the iron fist of justice and extracts taxes without fault or fail. Titled [d6]:

1. Dooch
2. En Ginny
3. Hazda or Gasda
4. May or Siz
5. Laud or Lae or Leit
6. Wlada

R1 • Hero gains steed (L2, loyal, swift, steadfast). Replaced by slightly different steed when destroyed. It is a [d6]:

1. Horse
2. Big dog (an amphicyon?)
3. Phorusrhacid (terror bird)
4. Motorgolem
5. Rune buggy
6. Military carpet

R2 • Adds pro to ba defence due to reputation.

R3 • Resistant to ha and ba damage from social inferiors.

11. Circus Acrobat

#adventure

Make no bones about it.

Squeezes into small places. Puts on circus shows. Gets out of restraints. Shows an amazing knowledge of pressure points. Evades enemies with surprising grace. Daydreams through dreary day jobs. Performed as the [d6]:

1. Cyr wheel clown
2. Fire-eating funambulist
3. Human cannonball
4. Jumping juggler
5. Trapeze ventriloquist
6. Unicycling mime

R1 • Gains +1 ha defence.

R2 • Enemies suffer [-] to attacks when the hero is moving.

R3 • Lucky catch. Once per round, can spend 1 life to re-roll an agility test.

12. Corpocrat Suitwearer

#background

The business.

Helps run corporations, banks, and self-help associations. Lubricates the world. Signs forms and documents. Toadies up to superiors. Shakes up recalcitrants, sidesteps legislations and regulations, changes facts on the ground, breaks knees. Wields concealed weapons, broken bottles, and pistols. Their specialization [d8]:

1. Asset enhancement
2. Efficient downsizing
3. Fallout management
4. Human resources
5. Mergers and acquisitions
6. Political lobbying
7. Public opinion management
8. Risk reprogramming

R1 • Slick as a duck. Resistant to damage from social superiors.

R2 • Not their fault. Once per turn, can spend 1 life to redirect the effect of a failed test onto a nearby target.

R3 • Fail upwards. Gains 1 life whenever they fail a ka or ba test.

13. Dream Voyager

#adventure

If the vizier dies while they dream, who is at fault?

Travels in dreams. Talks to spirits and chairs. Converses with other

dreamers. Visits the moon and other far places. Trades in secrets, fears, and desires. Handles psychedelics like a virtuoso. Everywhere, sees the [d6]:

1. Dreamblind eye
2. Eating dark
3. Lost ungiven world
4. Purple sign
5. Tunneling worm
6. Weaving maiden cosmonaut

R1 • Astral scouting. Hero can astrally scout their surroundings while they sleep or meditate.

R2 • After a night's sleep, the hero may find themselves holding a useful, mundane item made of dreamstuff. It can be up to 1 stone in size and dissolves when the hero next goes to sleep.

R3 • While astrally projecting, the hero may spend 1 life to possess a creature using a ka attack. The possession lasts until the hero wakes up or their astral body is evicted from its host.

14. Driver Jill, Jack or Jo

#adventure

Speed in the sign of yellow.

Handles land vehicles, manoeuvres past obstacles at speed. Repairs and keeps travel machines running. Packs surprisingly well. Masters details like rally racing, drifting, stunts, and crashing safely. Their beloved machine is a [d6]:

1. Dust buggy
2. Iron horse
3. Lkw golem rig
4. Monowheel
5. Monster truck
6. Strider vech

R1 • Adds pro to the defences of any vehicle they are driving.

R2 • Can spend a few hours tinkering with any vehicle to give it a random trait (pXX).

R3 • When a vehicle they are driving is reduced to 0 life, the hero can spend 1 life. The vehicle immediately gains 1d6 life and one defect.

15. Explorer of the Vastlands

#adventure

Over seven rivers and seven hills.

Organizes expeditions into the

unknown and survives in the wild. Navigates by rumours and landmarks, hacks through jungles and sails deserts. Negotiates with other cultures and writes popular travel literature. Wields rifles and machetes. A passable [d8]:

1. Epic announcer
2. Experimental chef
3. Lomographer
4. Nativist poet
5. Nonfiction writer
6. Phonogram recorder
7. Rally golem rider
8. Water colourist

R1 • [+] on all foraging tests.

R2 • [+] against parasites and diseases.

R3 • [+] on all misfortune and encounter rolls. Also, suppose the hero exits play by falling off a cliff, being carried away by a gigantic ape, swallowed by a sea creature, or some other adventurous trope. In that case, they can return in the next session with one trait randomly swapped and one stat reduced by 1.

16. Fisher Pasha

#background

Gentle and atmospheric.

Had a claim, but it is lost [d6]:

1. City become free.
2. County gone corporate.
3. Floating mountain stolen.
4. Freehold overrun.
5. Kingdom turned republic.
6. Resort island gambled away.

Understands rivers and lakes and shores. Knows fish, boats and hooks, lines and poles, nets, yarns, and courtly mores. Handles a harpoon and basic navigation.

R1 • Can spend 1 life to speak to a fish or other aquatic creature for an hour or so.

R2 • Accepted the passing of all things. Gains +1 ba or ka defence.

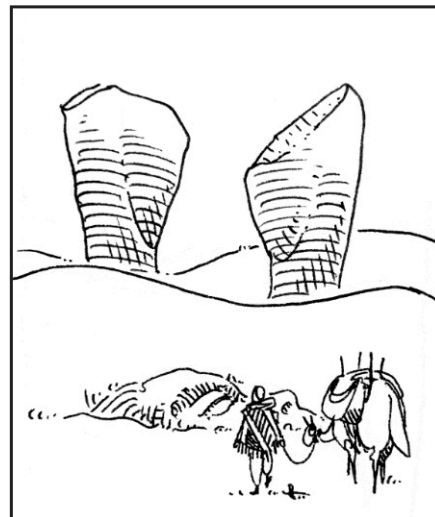
R3 • At peace. Immune to fear and charm effects.

17. Forager of the Future

#adventure

Food wriggles everywhere!

Finds berries, nuts, mushrooms, grubs, leftovers, and cooling pies. Traps rabbits, tickles trouts,



The explorer spoke of a bygone ruin..



The groom shared the message.



The fisher pasha listened.

scrapes lichens, starts fires. Keep dry and warm in wilds and ruin lands, sewer zones and streets.

R1 • [+] on foraging and hunting tests in cities, ruins, and disturbed zones.

R2 • Can always improvise any primitive weapon or tool from advanced machinery or junk. Takes a few minutes to an hour.

R3 • Advanced machines, oldtech golems, androids, and other long, long ago spirits have [-] to attacks against the hero.

18. Gladiator

#adventure

Blood soothes the decadent fools.

Thrives in arenas, puts on shows. Impresses crowds and intimidates opponents. Masters showy weapons and circus mainstays like folded chairs. Trades in dirty tricks too. Styles as a [d6]:

1. Aquatic monarch.
2. Caped animal crusader.
3. Creepy clown trickster.
4. Golden hero of the crowds.
5. Raging bull warrior.
6. Thundering storm lord.

R1 • May deal ba damage with physical attacks.

R2 • [+] to ba damage dealt with physical attacks.

R3 • Spectacular finish. When the hero reduces an enemy to 0 life with ba damage, nearby opponents suffer [-] to attacks until the end of the next turn.

19. Groom to the Superior Species

#adventure

All for the love of master.

Comprehends the superiority of the masters and understands their empathic emanations. Makes the masters happy and receives their love and affections. Grooms, brushes, styles, curls, trims, cuts, perms, and pampers. Follows and sometimes make fashion. Master may be a:

1. Telepathic cat
2. Sapientized dog
3. Cosmic gerbil
4. Higher-dimensional white mouse
5. Noosphere-linked snake

6. Quantum ant colony
7. Three-eyed grey parrot
8. Chronoclastic potted plant
9. Awakened galliform dinosaur
10. Hypnotic toad
11. Pharaoh fish
12. Talking horse

R1 • Hero gains a pet sidekick whom they treat as their master. The pet is the same level as the hero. The player may swap roles, treating the animal (master) as their hero and the original hero as the sidekick.

R2 • Hero gains [+] to tests when defending or helping their master.

R3 • Hero gains 2 to all defences when near their master.

20. Handyworker

#background

The trades. Unsurprisingly useful.

Hero is a skilled [d8]:

1. Boilermaker
2. Bricklayer
3. Carpenter
4. Gardener
5. Gasfitter
6. Ka-ba-wright
7. Plumber
8. Welder

Builds, fits, maintains, and repairs the complicated machinery that makes modern life bearable. Navigates labyrinths, pipes, ducts, and portals. Sports distinctive facial decorations and overalls. Joins trade guilds. Saves princelings. Wields tools, wrenches and orbs.

R1 • Weakened but unbroken.

When the handyworker would be reduced to 0 life, they may instead reduce a stat by 1.

R2 • Secret ways. Hero gains 1 ka defence. Once per session, they can spend 1d6 life to "find" a secret crawlspace left by the cosmic plumbers and duct builders. It leads somewhere nearby the hero has visited, for example, the back alley behind the county jail.

R3 • Secret recipes. Hero regains life equal to their level by consuming a stone's worth of uncommon root vegetables (e.g. turnips, radishes, rutabagas, kohlrabis, ginger, or daikon).

21. Historian of the Downfall

#adventure

The war. The war never changes.

Safeguards the history of the ancient dead places and radiation wastelands. Uses prehistoric war machines. Learns the old rituals of meta-technology. Assassinate dangerous sages and politicians to save humanity from itself. Treasures books. Wields oldtech weapons, knives, spears & pistols. Practices the lost martial art of gun-boxing. Hails from a [d6]:

1. Agrarian community of sages
2. City state of glittering forcefields
3. Fortified abbey full of traps
4. Museum of ghost machines
5. Palace of palladium machine humans
6. Secret cult of illuminated individuals

R1 • Given time, uses the four principles to figure out how to use any oldtech or long, long ago artefact. In a rush, [+] when activating unknown magics.

R2 • [+] to effects with oldtech devices and weapons.

R3 • Increases defence of each oldtech armour, ward, or prestige piece by 1. Increases damage dice of oldtech equipment one step.

22. Housekeeper of Good Repute

#background

My home is my castrum.

Keeps the core socioeconomic unit running. Runs household. Manages accounts. Maintains schedules, supplies and logistics. Packs and prepares. Settles disputes. Collects rents. Pays allowances. Provides first aid and preventative medical care. Wields rolling pins, pans, and more. Owns a [d6]:

1. Elegant country manor
2. Livingstone arcology warren
3. Ramified apartment tree
4. Residential multi-use insula
5. Stately bourgeois house
6. Understated waterside villa

R1 • Hero collects monthly rents sufficient for a comfortable existence.

R2 • Stolid reputation. Gains 2 ba defence.

R3 • Smug self-confidence. Gains

2 ka defence.

23. Hunter of the Late Days

#adventure

It doesn't know it's already food.

Thinks like animals and hunts them. Tracks them, sets traps, and hides in ambush. Skins prey, prepares furs, and the rest. Uses hunting weapons. Humans are animals. Keen on [d8]:

1. Arctotheres
2. Chalicotheres
3. Dinornithiforms
4. Dryopithecines
5. Megalodontoceti
6. Merychips
7. Novamoths
8. Re-smilodons

R1 • Double damage against surprised opponents.

R2 • [+] when setting ambushes and traps.

R3 • If they have a belonging or leaving of their prey, they can use their third eye to track it by its aura signature. Only ritual purification throws off such pursuit.

24. Investigator Private

#adventure

Elementary, my dear sidekick.

Gathers clues and pieces together answers. Discretely interrogates people. Folds origami unicorns or other monsters. Uses small, easily concealed weapons. Breaks safes, locks, and bureaucratic police protocols. They present as a [d8]:

1. Bounty hunter
2. Doctor of uncertain field
3. Eccentric opium user
4. Fiction writer
5. Golem decommissioner
6. Nosy priest
7. Retired country landlord
8. Undercover operative

R1 • [+] to find hidden doors, secret levers, concealed symbols, and other appropriately mysterious clues.

R2 • Once per session, can spend 1d6 life to discover or deduce a clue that confirms their theory.

R3 • Perfectly scripted comeback. Resistant to verbal and legal ka or ba attacks.

25. Labourer in Reserve

#background

Nothing to lose but their chains.

Survives in latter-day urban environments. Forages for food and work. Builds shelters, maintains infrastructure, cleans palaces, grooms bodies. Forges bonds away from the gaze of the corpocrats and aristocrats. Wields hammers, sickles, fists and improvised guns. Treasures paper titles such as [d12]:

1. Food delivery professional
2. Community sanitation tech
3. Streetbuilder corps member
4. Rubble picker battalion
5. Urbancore gardener
6. Houselaborer
7. Machine polisher
8. Senior janitor
9. Biological watch unit
10. Conspicuous servitor
11. Day-and-night labourer
12. Power delivery specialist

R1 • Gains 1 endurance and a debt ten times larger than their starting (or current) cash.

R2 • Gains 1 strength.

R3 • [+] to damage vs. social superiors and class enemies.

26. Maker Cogsmith

#background

Did you try plugging it in?

Understands machines and listens to their woes. Cares for them, lubricates them, and fixes them. Even brings them back from the grave. Makes and unmakes mechanics. Wields a mean blow torch and throws a sharp spanner. Fond of [d6]:

1. Automata
2. Clocks
3. Difference engines
4. Golem abacuses
5. Locks
6. Waterwheels

R1 • [+] on all healing and repair effects when treating machines.

R2 • Can spend 1 life to reactivate a dead machine for 1 turn.

R3 • Friendly machines near hero gain [+] to one action per turn.

27. Master Packer

#adventure

No magic bag, just a system.

Packs gear and cargo and supplies very effectively. Doesn't bruise fruit or break eggs. Finds space for the caravan pet. Warehousing and logistics experience. Has a semi-aware [d6]:

1. Centipedal trunk
2. Dandy haversack
3. Magic bag
4. Psychic wallet
5. Toothed sack
6. Voluminous purse

R1 • Gains one bonus inventory slot.

R2 • Gains another slot.

R3 • Two more slots. Continues with fibonacci sequence at higher ranks.

28. Mule Whisperer

#adventure

It's not talking to animals per se.

Literally talks to animals. Gets pack animals to get along. Has animal friends and keeps them happy. Finds water and food, treats injured animals, encourages recalcitrant steeds, calms panicked beasts. Animals might include [d12]:

1. Biomanced burdenbeasts
2. Hairy unicorns
3. Hardy horses
4. Meta-elephants
5. Impressive quadrodonts
6. Lowing biocycles
7. Plumed runbirds
8. Gore yaks
9. Secondary donkeys
10. Struthiform dinosaurs
11. Lope possums
12. Carnal fastfoots

R1 • Hero's pack animal can carry one more sack unencumbered.

R2 • Their animal gains 2 to all defences.

R3 • Animal has [+] to avoid damage and injury.

29. Navigator of Other Worlds

#adventure

When the seven signs align.

Masters maps and telescopes and cartography. Avoids getting lost and tracks down lost treasures and new discoveries. Charts course by stars, winds, waypoints and worms. Folds the gateways and bends space. Claims to have

visited [d6]:

1. Ancestral dirt world
2. Data tomb microdimension
3. Eating star
4. Hell of shattered illusions
5. Moon of unquiet dreams
6. New living fast star

R1 • [+] against getting lost.

R2 • [+] against confusion, madness, and illusions.

R3 • [+] to using gates. Once per session, can spend 1d6 life to activate any gate and use it as a one-way portal to one place they know intimately.

30. Negotiator of Relations

#background

They think they got the better deal.

Reads people and listens to them. Figures out what they want, and how to get it for them. Generates win-win outcomes while meeting key jargon milestones. Does a bit of discrete espionage. Handles organizations and bureaucracies. Hates corruption, approves of lobbying. Was an [d8]:

1. Ambassador
2. Commissar
3. Emissary
4. Secretary
5. Spiritual interpreter
6. Sociotherapist
7. Translator
8. Used golem salesperson

R1 • [+] calming hostile parties.

R2 • [+] upselling small benefits.

R3 • [+] negotiating safe getaway arrangements.

31. Noble Socialite

#background

The life of the party.

Gets invited to all the parties. Dresses to impress. Knows who's who. Is mentioned in the who's who. Substitutes contacts and gossip for actual work or ability. Wields a tiny dog and a small wand. Known as a [d6]:

1. Beauty of our times
2. Ditzzy fool
3. Lounge lizard
4. Raucous party animal
5. Smooth operator
6. Wondrous wit

R1 • Has, or pretends to have, a contact (L1, fawning, fatuous, flamboyant) at every party or fête.

R2 • +1 ba defence from suits.

R3 • Gains 1 ba defence. Increases effectiveness of social attacks (gossip) one step.

32. Nomad Rustler

#adventure

Go, go, guerrilla.

Irregular tactics and guerrilla combat. Snipes, ambushes and shoots on the run. Rides like lightning, wears large hats, finds water holes. Steals cattle. Hides tracks, plays tricks. Excellent endurance when running away. Experienced in [d6]:

1. Chaparral
2. Desert
3. Maquis
4. Matorral
5. Savanna
6. Shrubland

R1 • Gains [+] to tests when running away.

R1 • Enemies suffer [-] to attacks when the hero is running away.

R2 • Gains [+] to attacks against pursuers.

33. Outsider Alien

#adventure

Not normal here.

Possesses strange foreign skills out of place in civilized society. Speaks alien languages. Looks quirky. Survives in ducts and sewers and ruins. Hides in plain sight. Applies cosmetics and prosthetics. Uses improvised tools. Originally a [d6]:

1. Amnesiac time traveller
2. Asylum patient
3. Child of void refugees
4. Degenerate spacer
5. Experimental specimen
6. Sporeborn scout sophont

R1 • Has a cosmetic mutation. [+] to foraging in the dark underbelly of civilization. Also has a soothing, beeping amulet.

R2 • Gains a beneficial mutation. Amulet now increases aura by 1.

R3 • Channel opens. [+] to using strange, alien artefacts. Amulet now increases ka defence by 2.

34. Pilot of Vechs

#adventure

This might be an unfair fight.

Becomes one with their mobile golem armour. Understands vechs and their void-energy needs. Speak the machine language of flashing lights and wins their loyalty. Understands war machine academy politics. Fond of [d6]:

1. Biovechs
2. Hovers
3. Levitators
4. Rollers
5. Walkers
6. Wheelers

R1 • R1 • When piloting a vech, it gets +2 to all defences.

R2 • Gets [+] to all attacks with their vech.

R3 • Biovech transfer. When their vech is reduced to 0 life, the hero can spend 1d6 life to set its life to 1 instead.

35. Postmodern Soldier

#adventure

Once there were many like them.

Polishes the warriors' rituals, skills, and badges from before those wasted years when the Vüstlands swallowed the Free Imperial Republics. Wields pistols and rifles, grenades and knives. Drives half-brainless machines. Endures mind-numbing drill. Salutes the half-forgotten [d6]:

1. Black pocket monolith
2. Imperial mask
3. Rusted star
4. Solar banner
5. Unbroken serpent
6. Withered heart

R1 • Gains 1 ha defence. Resistant to boredom.

R2 • Gains resistance to ha damage when next to an ally.

R3 • Gains +1 ba and ka defence from badges and medals.

36. Praxa of the Bows

#combat

Shoot an arrow, split a tree.

Embraces the neoprimitive. Skirmishes with the best. Looses storms and sharpshoots. Makes and breaks bows and arrows. Keeps fighting trim. Fond of [d6]:

1. Acrobatic trick shooting
2. Antique crossbows
3. Heirloom bows
4. Horse archery
5. Jewelled arrows
6. Neoprimitive bow hunting

R1 • Critical damage with bows increased one step.

R2 • [+] to close attacks w. bows.

R3 • 2 attacks per action w. bows.

37. Praxa of the Chains

#combat

Against the army of the dead.

Wields flails, chains, saws and chainsaws in the saviour style from the Last Zombie Necroicide. Also puts on a great show of being a lumberjill or lumberjack. Fancies the [d6]:

1. Dragon's tooth chain whip
2. False dawn bone and chain
3. Gorani woodlander chained sickle and weight
4. Hydragryic spiked flail
5. Red-spitter combat chainsaw
6. Stuckforce chain sword

R1 • Gains #reach with chains.

R2 • Critical range increases one step w. chains

R3 • Critical range increases one more step, and chains decapitate undead on critical.

38. Praxa of the Good Guns

#combat

The big gun is good big time.

Uses and maintains massive ranged weapons, like cannons, catapults, and null walkers. Repairs simple machines. Good at ballistics too. Croons to [d6]:

1. Alabaster Alba the cannon
2. Heavy Hilda the howitzer
3. Original Ori the fire chariot
4. Naughty Nasim the null gun
5. Simple Sy the siege projector
6. Wary Vern the meteor ballista

R1 • Reloads big guns faster.

R2 • [+] on long-range attacks with big guns.

R3 • Big gun damage dice explode.

39. Praxa of the Energies

#combat

An elite order of laser monks?

Uses and maintains ancient energy weapons in the field. Masters wands, lasers, and death orbs. Peruses holy manuals and recites operation mantras. Praises the [d6]:

1. Holy plasma blaster
2. Luminous aluminium ray gun
3. Reality fracture discus
4. Sacred hardlight sabre
5. Shimmering stuckforce lance
6. Zero-point emanator

R1 • Energy weapon minimum settings double as tools for cutting and burning. Can choose to deal minimum damage.

R2 • Adjustable settings. [+] vs. force and energy defences.

R3 • Full power modulation. Chooses damage dice results instead of rolling.

40. Praxa of the Hammeraxes

#combat

Has buttered scones for tea.

Chops down trees. Hammers down nails. Upholds the diktats of the dwarven worker-aristocracy. Slays with axes, hammers, axe-hammers, dagger-axes, mattocks, ice axes, and more. Plays traditional percussion instruments. Practices the [d6]:

1. Arts of the ivory axes
2. Crafts of the hollowpoint hammers
3. Martial axemaidsen style
4. Mobly sickle-hammer arts
5. Voidminer constructionals
6. Woodspersonal traditions

R1 • Hammer and axe critical multiplier increases one step.

R2 • H&a damage dice increase one step.

R3 • H&a critical multiplier increases one more step.

41. Praxa of the Knives

#combat

The shark has such teeth, dear.

Chops open coconuts and cuts paths through jungle. Hides and throws and twirls knives. Guts a fish, slits a throat, spreads some butter. Admires the [d6]:

1. Butterfly angel blade
2. Ceramic throwing sliver
3. Clockwork army multi-knife

4. Glitterstone dagger
5. Obsidian hand-scalpel
6. Ritual harpy dirk

R1 • Knife damage dice explode.

R2 • Knife attacks ignore armour.

R3 • Knives deal double damage.

42. Praxa of the Mortal Shells

#combat

Champions made for war eternal.

Understands battle and struggle at a cellular level. Utilizes body and environment as weapons. Redesigned to endure stress, hardship and fatigue. Meditates upon falling flowers. Dances through battles. Uplifts the [d6]:

1. Drunken dragon discipline
2. Eating, praying, mantis lovers
3. Lessons of crane and toad
4. Shadow illumination paradox
5. Styles of the dead cities
6. Teachings of wicked elders

R1 • Unarmed attacks deal d6 damage or increase 1 step (whichever is greater).

Improvised weapon damage dice increase 1 step.

R2 • Unarmed and improvised damage dice increase 2 steps.

R3 • Can make two unarmed or improvised attacks with a single action. Gains 1 ha defence.

43. Praxa of the Pistoliers

#combat

Archaemagic cloaks and wands with pistol grips.

Wields fantascientific pistols and magitech wands like a gun baron of the now-defunct Powder Feudalism. Draws fast and shoots tricks, duels and dices, drinks fire water and sleeps light as a feather. Cherishes [d6]:

1. Amber lightning wands
2. Hard laser handguns
3. Ivory-grip explosive pieces
4. Ornate golem revolvers
5. Pneumatic needlers
6. White powder flashers

R1 • Reloads pistols as free action.

R2 • [+] to pistol attacks against nearby targets.

R3 • Attacks twice per action with pistols.

44. Praxa of the Poles

#combat

Poke with the pointy end, please.

Wields polearms in formation or alone. Unleashes fire and brimstone with the staves of elder power. Fights with spear and shield like a hero of the old days. Treasures [d6]:

1. Jade helicopter style
2. Bronze-alike faire composites
3. Ridiculously similar polearms
4. Translucent police era shields
5. Vech-breaker crystal spears
6. Very long spikes

R1 • Gains 2 ha and ka defence.

R2 • [+] to tricks, trips, pushes, and other manoeuvres with polearms.

R3 • Critical multiplier with polearms increases one step.

45. Praxa of the Rifles

#combat

The longest arm.

Repairs, maintains and uses long wands, guns, rifles and shotguns. Snipes from a distance, clears rooms with a prayer & a sprayer. Full-auto hunting. Polishes [d6]:

1. Bolt-action porcelains
2. Crystal-infused ray rifles
3. Original gun-era antiques
4. Powderless automatics
5. Semi-sentient golem fusils
6. Ultralight plastic baroques

R1 • [+] to attacks when sniping with a rifle.

R2 • Reloads rifles as a free action.

R3 • Rifle critical range increased one step.

46. Praxa of the Rods

#combat

Spare the rod, spoil the fight.

Whirls rods, maces, clubs and sticks in combat. Uses the spell-rods of the battle wizards of old and crushes bones with nuclearlithic uranium-head maces. Particular about [d6]:

1. Clubbing clubs
2. Ghost-in-the-stone maces
3. Jade sceptres
4. Lucite spell-breakers
5. Rainbow ray rods
6. Worked bone batons

R1 • Rod critical damage multiplier increases one step.

R2 • Rod damage dice increase one step.

R3 • Rods ignore ha armour.

47. Praxa of the Swords

#combat

Double stake or split, ace of spades.

Twirls and polishes a sword, pokes and chops and pommel bashes. Parade marches and dead man's hand card games. Makes a mean musketeer (don't ask them to shoot). Namedrops the [d6]:

1. All-me-day damascus
2. Eminence front épée
3. Soul-eater nightblade
4. Steppe-ship cutlass
5. Vibratio infernale scimitar
6. Void hussar sabre

R1 • Sword critical range increases one step.

R2 • Sword damage dice increase one step.

R3 • Sword critical range increases one more step.

48. Professor in Panhumanities

#background

Practical applications coming soon.

Expounds theories and histories. Navigates cloisters and libraries. Fights academic battles and browbeats foolish opponents. Memorizes one narrow field of lore. Popular fields include [d12]:

1. Art rehistorian
2. Constructivist linguist
3. Evolved theologian
4. Historian of the long long ago
5. Lamarckian bioethicist
6. Metascientific philosopher
7. Neogeographer
8. Parapolitical economist
9. Postconceptual metatherapist
10. Psychosocial engineer
11. Ruinland semiotician
12. Theoretical anthropologist

R1 • Footnote surprise. [+] damage in academic settings.

R2 • Well, actually. Can spend 1 life to recount a fact or detail in excruciating detail. It is oddly relevant & grants [+] to one test.

R3 • Armour of authority. Gains 2 ba and 1 ka defence.

49. Protocollier

#background

Once mined coal, now make protocol.

Holds coffee ceremonies and builds sacrificial wicker humans. Determines modes of address and titles, paints heraldries and writes genealogies. Adjudicates seating, including shotgun seats. Wields pick and shovel. Focused on [d6]:

1. Alcohol practices
2. Cigarette rituals
3. Coffee ceremonies
4. Pastry formalities
5. Tripe rites
6. Waterpipe liturgies

R1 • [+] to ritual & rite effects.

R2 • [+] to damage against breakers of protocol and ritual.

R3 • Gains +1 ba defence from protocolary gear and ritual armour.

50. Psychic Veteran

#adventure

A fire of unknown origin took their friends away.

Uses psychic and oldtech weapons. Maintains archaic and golem armours. Closes the mind to incomprehensible alien intruders. Survives and recognizes strange nootropics developed by long lost corporate kingdoms. Knows that [d6]:

1. Elves are masks of astral concepts
2. Limbo gazes through the eyes
3. Long, long ago was yesterday
4. Stars are always watching
5. Voidlings wear human skins
6. War never ended, and the empire never fell

R1 • Guarded mind. Gains 2 ka defence.

R2 • Scramble-spirited. Gains resistance to mental attacks.

R3 • Third eye razor. [+] to all mental attacks. Mental damage dice explode.

51. Revolutionary

#adventure

Change is always coming.

Organizes the disaffected and downtrodden. Writes tracts and gives impassioned speeches. Steals from the rich and powerful.

Robs banks and blow up treasure caravans. Accumulates wealth and power. Wields explosives, pistols, pens, and knives. Has gotten hold of [d6]:

1. Damning evidence
2. Doomsday trigger
3. Explosive tract
4. Miraculous prophecy
5. Proof of a vile conspiracy
6. Terrifying theory

R1 • Penniless politician. Hero gains their charisma as ba and ka defence, so long as they have less than 250 cash.

R2 • Eat the rich. Hero gains [+] to attacks against enemies who are more prosperous than them.

R3 • The first shall be last. When the hero hits, they can spend 1 life to deal extra damage equal to target's ba defence.

52. Rider at Ease

#adventure

This steed is Fleetfoot the Ninth.

Rides animals and riding machines. Wields light ranged weapons and lances. Takes care keeping steeds happy and working nicely. Explores societal issues. Attracts attention of locals Proud of their [d6]:

1. Comfortable manor
2. Elegant urban tribe
3. Ghostly library of the mind
4. Hereditary trust fund
5. Noble herder clan
6. Stout luxury bunker

R1 • Hero gains steed (L2, clever, nagging, wilful). Replaced by slightly different steed when destroyed. It is a [d6]:

1. Golem bicycle
2. Ambling mule
3. Racing chariot
4. Sincere dire thylacine
5. Waddling beton pigeon
6. Wicker walker

R2 • Adds pro to all defences when riding a steed.

R3 • [+] to damage while riding.

53. Secret Servant

#adventure

From chaos, with love.

Goes undercover. Hunts moles. Seduces informants. Plugs leaks. Leaks kompromat. Navigates complex organizations and files reports in triplicate. Uses pistols, umbrellas, poisons, and strange ancient artefacts. Gets left out in the cold sooner or later. Certain they are part of a [d6]:

1. Corpocratic reform division
2. Deep cover imperial unit
3. Hereditary espionage clan
4. Holy divine guardian council
5. Progressive illuminated fellowship
6. Rebel federation cell

R1 • [+] to deciphering clues, secret messages, and patterns.

R2 • Fellow travellers. Can spend 1d6 life to 'discover' another secret servant (L1, conspiratorial, fanatical, paranoid) in any organization or group. This extra is noncommittal.

R3 • Mind-blowing. Critical multiplier of ba and ka attacks increases 1 step.

54. Shadow Merchant

#adventure

Somebody would have sold the Hand of God sooner or later.

Buys cheap and sells dear. Assesses, refurbishes, and trades. Makes useful contacts in places low and high. Hires guards and fires guns. Sells [d6]:

1. Drugs
2. Off-license biomedical
3. Golems
4. Guns
5. Illegal spells
6. Smuggled essentials

R1 • [+] on tests when bribing.

R2 • Can spend €1d6 in any lower-class locale to find a lackey (L1, untrustworthy, unkempt, unloved). Can spend 1d6 life in any upper-class venue to make a connection (L1, unlucky, indebted, desperate).

R3 • Bling. Each shiny item hero owns adds +1 ba defence.

55. Shopkeeper

#background

Now this is a party.

Buys cheap and sells dear. Pillar of the community pillories interlopers. Upholds the letter of the law and the spirit of the purse. Wields coins and decorative town swords.

Specialized in [d8]:

1. Desirable vehicles
2. Exotic fruits
3. Glittering jewelries
4. Luxuriant furs
5. Overwrought timepieces
6. Red shoes
7. Smelly perfumes
8. Voluptuous silks

R1 • [+] when negotiating prices.

R2 • Focused on the bottom line. Immune to cash-based ba attacks. [+] when rolling for treasure.

R3 • Apologies are free. Can spend 1 life to re-roll a failed negotiation test.

56. Sidu of the Bestfolk

#social

Some folk are simply better.

Apes the rituals and customs of the ancient source-modified neoaristocracies. Masters the ingratiating arts of the courts imperial and corporate. Perches precariously on social ladders. Distinguished by their [d6]:

1. Astrological magnificence
2. Enhanced bloodline
3. Eugenic pedigree
4. Inherited ka-essence
5. Meritocratic fortune
6. Superior ba-transplant

R1 • [+] to social attacks in noble contexts.

R2 • Doubles ba defence from ornate attire.

R3 • When reduced to 0 life by social attacks, may immediately spend 1 physical stat point to regain 1d6 + level life.

57. Sidu of the Iron Fist

#social

The army settles in the soul.

Understands the military mindset. Comprehends the discipline and subordination required by the colony organism. Grasps the paradoxical catch-22

nature of bureaucratic systems.
Served in the [d6]:

1. Bug butchers
2. Ceremonial marines
3. Void infantry
4. Rotiform navy
5. Steppe raiders
6. Underworld engineers

R1 • Takes half damage from social attacks in military contexts.

R2 • [+] to social attacks in military contexts.

R3 • Ba defense from ornate military attire doubled.

58. Sidu of the Leastfolk

#social

The last must be first.

Survives the harshest mistreatments. Toils in the shadows. Builds networks, contacts, and underground railways. Marks the injustices against them. Toiled as a [d6]:

1. Cattle-processing chattel
2. Flower factory helot
3. Indentured corporate drone
4. Machine mine slave
5. Sentient plantation serf
6. Theme park pet

R1 • [+] to ba attacks in proletarian contexts.

R2 • Resistant against non-legal and non-monetary ba damage.

R3 • Reduces ba damage by 1 for every nearby ally (minimum 1).

59. Sidu of the Legalities

#social

The word made order from chaos.

Masters the logical traditions of cause and effect. Peruses tomes of precedent. Invokes the wisdom of the long-dead. Appeals to the letter of the law. Ticked by [d6]:

1. Administrative manoeuvres
2. Ambulance golem chasing
3. Corpocratic lawfare
4. Neomonarchical sacred rights
5. Post-mortem interrogations
6. Reconstititional traditions

R1 • [+] to ba attacks in legal contexts.

R2 • Ba defence increased by pro.

R3 • [+] to damage with legal attacks.

60. Sidu of the Outcaste

#social

Freedom and misery.

Travels outside the circles and customs of society. Sees the paradoxes of social life. Parts the veils of propriety. Survives without shame. Fallen due to [d6]:

1. Activist whistleblowing
2. Bureaucratic necessity
3. Honest confusion
4. Horrific addiction
5. Petty social infraction
6. Terrible crime

R1 • Whenever the outcaste takes ba damage, they immediately gain a boon.

R2 • [+] to ba attacks in outcast contexts.

R3 • All ba attacks against the outcaste deal double damage. Social attacks cannot reduce the outcaste to 0 life.

61. Sidu of the Rhetors

#social

Words soothe the savage beast.

Teaches and uses the art of oratory. Divines the hidden structures of languages and uses them to subtle effect. Skewers opponents with glittering wit and honed logic. Practised in the [d6]:

1. Academies of iron reason
2. Arenas of fashionable enquiry
3. Courts of public opinion
4. Streets of desperation and music
5. Temples of holy show-hosting
6. Vidy-caster soap fights

R1 • Basic ba attacks deal d6 damage or increase one step, whichever is greater.

R2 • Ba attack critical range increases one step.

R3 • Ba attack critical multiplier increases one step.

62. Sidu of the Sacred Deed

#social

As above so below.

Grasps the social need for sacrifices and scapegoats. Comprehends the value of meaning and purpose. Soothes ruffled souls and uplifts broken dreams. Approves of [d6]:

1. Cultic musical apotropaism
2. General theory of revelation
3. Organized necrolatry
4. Prosperity apotheosis
5. Quantum theomechanics
6. Sacral popular regeneration

R1 • [+] to attacks in religious contexts.

R2 • Ba defence from religious attire doubled.

R3 • Deals double damage with all religious ba attacks.

63. Sidu of the Soiltwined

#social

True tradition tills the terroir.

Grasps the cycles of soil and season. Works the earth and the rhythms of the life growers. Understands the old ways that the city-born have forgotten. Care-bound to [d6]:

1. River, fish, and wheel
2. Tree, nut, and door
3. Hearth, fire, and loaf
4. Stone, ore, and wall
5. Loam, root, and pot
6. Vine, fruit, and wine

R1 • [+] to ba attacks in rural contexts.

R2 • Resistant against ba damage in rural contexts. Takes minimum damage from ba and ka attacks while standing on their own soil.

R3 • Gains 1 ka defence. When reduced to 0 life by ba attacks, may immediately pay 1 mental stat point to gain 1d6 + level life.

64. Sidu of the Staunchkeepers

#social

Debt is the mother of coin.

Upholds the dictates of the sacred economy. Creates and accumulates wealth. Battles with bribes and corruption. Resists disorder. Formed to the [d6]:

1. Amusement distro clique
2. Comm technician guild
3. Energy procurement caste
4. Food processing clan
5. Golem oiler branch
6. Sanitation and war brigade

R1 • [+] to social attacks in mercantile contexts.

R2 • [+] to ba damage in mercantile contexts.

R3 • Doubles ba defence from cash.

65. Sidu of the Unfettered

#social

Beyond good and evil.

Resides outside the moralities of the mass of humanities. Trucks in higher realities and baser instincts. Trades in the dreams of a pure platonic world. Escapes into the fortress of their mind. Hides in the wilderness of their soul. Marked by [d6]:

1. Delinquent dilettantism
2. Gross hedonism
3. Malcontent spirit
4. Pestering nature
5. Philosophical ennui
6. Self-aggrandizing delusion

R1 • [-] to all ba attacks. Resistant against all ba damage.

R2 • [-] to all ba damage. Can spend a stat point to reduce incoming ba damage to 1.

R3 • [+] to all magical damage.

66. Sidu of the Uptought

#social

Knowledge is the one true currency.

Cultivates an air of effortless grace and elite education. Understands the seventeen unironic classics. Comprehends the arc of history. Fears that their brilliance is not appreciated. Achieved a [d6]:

1. Academic hat-trick
2. Encyclopaedic verbosity
3. Honourably obscure degree
4. Masterful ten-fold recapitulation
5. Prodigal feat of memorization
6. Sadly applied result

R1 • [+] to social attacks in educational contexts.

R2 • [+] to all ba damage dealt and received.

R3 • Critical multiplier for all ba damage dealt increased one step.

67. Singer of the Lastlands

#adventure

The Old-World will never die.

Navigates the mythic wilderness of forgotten times and soothes wild beasts. Tells nuanced stories with satisfying endings to rouse or douse the fires in the human breast. Regales with [d6]:

1. Choreographed pop pieces.
2. Epic lays of lost lands.
3. Heroic songs of desperation.
4. Operatic masterpieces.
5. Polyphonic eerie chants.
6. Salty shanties.

R1 • Rousing tune. Can spend 1 life pouring their soul into a song (at least 90 seconds long) that grants [+] to one test. Ineffective on purists, people who dislike the hero, and deaf creatures.

R2 • Ready to flee. Hero is resistant to all damage suffered while running away.

R3 • Memories revived through music. Hero gains [+] to all tests to read, decipher, figure out, and activate relics of the Old-world.

68. Spelunker

#adventure

Heaven is down. Always down.

Ventures into deep places. Climbs, rappels, dives. Camps. Forages. Marks and maps. Crawls and squeezes. Survives in the ageless dark where the eyes of builders see not. Consorts with [d6]:

1. Crystal elf ghosts
2. Deep gate builders
3. Little sun tender
4. Olmling ley flow engineers
5. Translucent bunkerlings
6. Wormway worshippers

R1 • [+] to fighting and moving in dark, constricted places.

R2 • [+] to foraging and navigating in caves, labyrinths, and other underworldly locations.

R3 • Gains the ability to 'hear' the dim outlines of auras in pitch darkness and 'see' space with a rudimentary form of echolocation. Also, once per session, can spend 1d6 life to 'discover' a passage connecting somewhere more profound and more mysterious. Or possibly just the palace's central sewer outflow.

69. Storm Infantry

#background

Break on through to the other side.

Masters heavy weapons, armours, and shields. Fights in formation, resists charges, and endures long periods of boredom. Storms enemy lines and fortifications.

Keeps camps and cooking fires. Fought for the banner of the [d6]:

1. Basic geometric shape
2. Divine machine
3. Metal skull lightning fist
4. Placid peach grove
5. Seven-pointed rat star
6. Fourfold tricolour

R1 • Gains 1 more ha defence from each heavy piece of armour (2 stone or more).

R2 • [+] to physical tests when fighting next to an ally.

R3 • Allies fighting next to the hero gain [+] to physical attacks.

70. Street Performer

#background

Joy of the many, coin of the few.

Brings joy to children. Performs magic tricks and sleight of hand. Uses cold reading and cunning to dupe marks. Wields hidden daggers and pistol-wands. Variants [d6]:

1. Illusionist
2. Puppeteer
3. Jongleur
4. Vome charmer
5. Fortune teller
6. Ventriloquist

R1 • [+] to discrete acts of prestidigitation.

R2 • Preternaturally aware. Resistant to damage from falls, tumbles, spills, trips, crashes, and explosions.

R2 • Hypervigilant. Hero gains 1 hakaba defence. Also, whenever they would be surprised, they can test aura instead.

71. Survivor in the Vast

#adventure

Slept in the belly of a dead bear.

Survives and thrives in the endless Vast. Fishes, hunts, tracks, hides and moves quiet as the long-stripe cat. Shoots from horse and autowagon like a child of the wild. Particularly familiar with the [d8]:

1. Cosmic-riven highlands
2. Endless moon forest
3. Deserts of the sun
4. Frozen starry seas
5. Horizon ruinlands
6. Thin-air plateau

7. Ultraviolet steppe
8. Thousand swimming isles

R1 • [+] to foraging, cooking, and camping in the wilderness.

R2 • [+] to running away in the wilderness.

R3 • Resistant to damage while hiding or running away.

72. Tactician of the Endless War

#adventure

There is an art to war.

Finds strategic advantages for war or business. Paints grand canvases with the blood of lesser mortals. Narrates new chapters in the endless cycles of history. Repeats past mistakes and avoids censure. Spins defeats into victories. Day to day they do [d8]:

1. Accounting
2. Carpets
3. Corporate consulting
4. Games of strategy
5. Military consulting
6. Real estate
7. Sports
8. Underworld cleanups

R1 • Cunning plans. Can spend an action to give detailed and precise instructions to an ally. In the next round, the ally gains [+] on their test and damage rolls.

R2 • Detail oriented. [+] to intricate, complex tests.

R3 • Meant to be. When injured by an opponent, they can spend 1d6 life to create an opening for their allies. Then, all nearby allies gain [+] on their test or damage rolls on their next turn.

73. Thespian

#background

The gods were merely actors.

Puts on plays and swaps out faces. Changes personalities and wardrobes. Moves hearts and souls with word and gesture. Gets invited to the belle soirées. Survives on fame alone, no food required, honest. Variants [d12]:

1. Character Actor
2. Chosen One
3. Clown
4. Comedian
5. Dramatist
6. Farceur
7. Leading Person

8. Media Star
9. Monologuer
10. Mummer
11. Politician
12. Tragedian

R1 • [+] to disguise, masquerade, and dissimulation.

R2 • Losing themselves. Gains 1 ba defence. Resistant to ba damage but vulnerable to ka damage.

R3 • A maze of personalities. Can perfectly copy another person's behaviour and mannerisms after a week's study. This persona occupies a slot on the hero sheet. Also, gains 1 ka defence.

74. Timelost Interloper

#adventure

A flint blade for a laser sword.

Possesses skills out of place in the modern world. Builds slave golems called computers. Spouts gibberish about quantum physics. Flies rockets and experimental one-way time machines. Knaps stone tools and starts fires with sticks. Terrified of simple magic. Comes from [d6]:

1. A broken star
2. A distant future
3. A glorious past
4. A lost planet
5. A parallel world
6. A warlike era

R1 • [+] to tests involving oldtech and other magics of the ancients. [-] to ba attacks in contemporary communities.

R2 • Gains 1 ka defence. Once per session, can spend 1d6 life to repair a piece of broken oldtech. It just required the proper source code biomarker.

R3 • Gains resistance to ka damage. Recognizes the ghost behind the machine.

75. Tinker Toymaker

#background

Toys are people too.

Carves and sculpts fine toys, balanced dice, and detailed mechanical automata. Uses delicate tools. Repairs and beautifies golems and machine humans. Cheats at dice with languid elegance. Operates remote weapons. Fondest of [d6]:

1. Ceramic dolls
2. Gilded games
3. Little vechs
4. Plush toys
5. Tin golems
6. Wicker soldiers

R1 • R1 • Starts with a homunculus pet (L1, delicate, demure, devilish). It resembles a [d6]:

1. Brazen bonobo
2. China cat
3. Ironwood armadillo
4. Lacquerwork rat
5. Silken shriek
6. Vitreous viper

R2 • [+] when repairing or jury-rigging delicate machinery.

R3 • Golems and other machines are reluctant to harm the hero and suffer [-] to tests against them. At any time, the toymaker can spend a few minutes and 1 life to restore 1d6 life to a mechanical creature.

76. Useless Freeloader

#background

It gets around.

Invites themselves to all the parties. Dresses to blend in. Knows who's who. Gets free food and board. Butters up the insecure and soothes the ruffled. Wields a smooth tongue and a lack of shame. Known to be [d6]:

1. A layabout
2. Lackadaisical
3. Languid
4. Lazy
5. Lethargic
6. Terminally hip

R1 • Suffers [-] every time a test could represent work. Once per session, when the hero is reduced to 0 life, they immediately regain 1d6 life and gain [+] if pleading for mercy.

R2 • Gains [+] when wheedling freebies. Resistant against ba attacks that should shame or embarrass them.

R3 • Gains 2 ba and ka defence. Whenever the hero fails a test, they can grant [+] to another hero attempting the same task. Afterwards, the useless freeloader generously shares some credit for the success.

77. Veda of the Abmortal Doctor

#magic

Doctor what?

Fixes damaged humans, diagnoses injuries and diseases. Uses medical equipment, scalpels and knives. Recognizes poisons and potions, even curses and charms. Runs very well. Bears [d6]:

1. Chestinspectoral amulet
2. Grim black holy satchel
3. Jar of mediparasite leeches
4. Ritual medical school scars
5. Sacred illuminating circlet
6. Traditional syringe belt

R1 • Hero learns the spell *Parasoma Transference* (pXX) and may assume a wizardly title. Also, [+] when using magical and oldtech medical devices.

R2 • Hero pays 1 less spell price when casting any medical or healing spell (minimum 1).

R3 • [+] when reviving, resurrecting, reanimating, and regenerating.

78. Veda of the All-Chemist

#magic

It's supposed to explode.

Understands chemical processes and matter modification equipment. Makes explosives, cook drugs. Transmutes refuse into treasures (like excreta into gunpowder).

R1 • Hero learns the spell *Reality Decryption* (pXX) and may assume a wizardly title. Also, [+] with physical handicrafts such as pottery or blacksmithing.

R2 • Hero pays 1 less spell price when casting any metamorphic spell (minimum 1).

R3 • [+] when exploiting fractures, weak spots, or physical vulnerabilities.

79. Veda of the Awakened Sphere

#magic

The noösphere is hungry.

Studies and adapts natural systems. Reads leaves and listens to churning microbes. Hears the voices of the wind. Smells the songs of the ocean. Uses biological equipment and handles hunting weapons.

have to expand rest of vedas with ranks — waiting on the spell albums to be completed.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

80. Veda of the Biomechané

#magic

Skin-deep poems carved in flesh.

Plays the living spirit of flesh and bough. Dams injuries and diseases, modifies biological processes, sculpts angels and monsters. Wields knives and saws, needles and probes. Unofficially dabbles in mad science body horror.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

81. Veda of the Cosmic Architects

#magic

It's not a secret club.

Builds buildings. Shapes stones. Understands dungeons. Forms mystery cults. Treads the boundary between life and death. Plays with magic gates. Wields hammers and chisels.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

82. Veda of the Existential Void

#magic

Where imagination fails the void dwells.

Journeys the hidden paths. Braves the madness and fast decay. Dreams of stars and hopes, mistakes undone, futures rewritten, promises remade.

R1 • Hero learns the spell *Hole in Time* (pXX) and may assume a wizardly title. Also, [+] when navigating strange & alien places.
R2 •

83. Veda of the Flying Serpent

#magic

Prayers to the feathery one.

Mixes poisons, potions, and medicines. Entreats the tiny machines that swim in all living things. Harvests herbs that heal and those that ill. Wields knives, pestles, and mortars.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

84. Veda of the Golemmafixes

#magic

Robotist to the initiated.

Heals and maintains ancient autonomous machines. Follows preserved manuals of ritual assembly to copy platonic golems. Communicates with machines via the ancient art of coding. Uses integrated energy weapons and void screwdrivers.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

85. Veda of the Iron Symphony

#magic

The spheres are ringing.

Uses music to unite and divide, to share and preserve. Makes a band and tours the Vastlands. Ignores ingested poisons and shatters objects with instrumentals alone. Wrecks inns and hotels, leaves heartbreak behind. Casts the spells of the vibrating spheres.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

86. Veda of the Law Necromantic

#magic

Life and death are legal matters.

Talks to the dead and interprets their wishes. Mediates between living and dead. Consults the wisdom of past ages. Brings things back from the long sleep where they dreamless lay. Impeccable taste in candles, perfumes, skulls and gowns.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

87. Veda of the Light Held Fast

#magic

It would work if you just believed.

Uses placebos and nocebos to change the world. Stores and retrieves information with living crystals. Focus and refract magics through oldtech gems. Creates plays of light and shadow. Wields crystal wands.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

88. Veda of the Mother Electric

#magic

Creation hums the song Electric.

Practices the old rites of electric equipment maintenance and

repair. Uses heavy energy weapons and ka batteries. Casts spells with blueprint scrolls.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

89. Veda of the Old Technologies

#magic

It's how they did things Long Ago.

Understands the fantascience of Oldtech. Activates or deactivates nearly anything. Reverse-engineers how to use ancient technomagical artifacts. Jury rigs a feeble emulation of the glories of the Long Ago.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

90. Veda of the Plant Kings

#magic

Just because the trees talk, doesn't mean they're crazy.

Talks to plants and hears what they have to say. Encourages verdant growth and opulent fruition. Promotes mobility and advancement for the plant kingdom. Harvests strange fruits. Wields sickles, axes, clubs and blunts.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

91. Veda of the Rightmaker

#magic

Soothe the savage mob.

Feels society and community in their bones. Sacrifices the few for the many. Understands the exigencies of survival transcend morality. Judges with stern impartiality. Wields great swords and ornate guns.

R1 • Gets ITEM (table).

92. Veda of the Seeming Becoming

#magic

They're magic beans.

Researches who wants what and how much they're willing to pay. Makes rough guesses and drives data. Writes adventuring campaigns. Handles public relations. Wields confusion and obfuscation.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

93. Veda of the Seven Summons

#magic

It wants to serve us. Trust me.

Finds the multitudes inhabiting the realms beyond the aether veils and in this dark material reality binds them. Bends, breaks, and enralls daimons. Makes them give up their secrets. Pretends to their trust and loyalty.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

94. Veda of the Soul Breaker

#magic

Did I dream I was a human, or was I a human dreaming I was a spark of infinity?

Reads people's intentions and desires. Intuits strength of character and weakness of desire. Twists plans and dreams. Subvert the ka and steals the body with the terrifying spells of the ultras.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

95. Veda of the Witching Song

#magic

Ears for the all-song.

Listens to the world around them, the folk big and small, and hears what they say. Mixes herbs and opens the spirit eye to protect against daemons and slanders. Heals with words and attentions. Works in possibilities and glances.

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

96. Veda of the World's Word

#magic

The will of the world is written in the wind and the seed.

Reads the omens of wind and sky and water and grass. Divines the desires of the gods and their immutable laws. Adjusts those laws to help others and themselves. Deities and belief systems might include [d12]:

1. Hedonic flesh-firstism
2. Opiate stasis
3. Mystery objectivism

4. Pan-noöspherical gratitude
5. Builder beatification
6. Sociotheism
7. Cogflower growth gospel
8. Ur-rationalism
9. Ancestral apotheosis
10. Pre-singularity nostalgia
11. Rainbow panoply polytheism
12. Machine idolatry

R1 • Gets SPELL (table).

97. Vome Technician

#adventure

Once these machines were our servants.

Studies and repairs vomes. Adapts and uses vomish implants. Manages their side-effects. Takes control of vome drones and independent units. Uses vometech. Discretely [d6]:

1. Accepts vomish directives
2. Collects vome trophies
3. Enjoys vomewave art
4. Hunts synthetics
5. Modifies himself
6. Spreads vomeware

R1 • Vome pacifier. Make a ka attack against an adjacent vome to reset its hostility module and make it docile.

R2 • Vome interfacier. Spend 1 life to speak with a dead vome, so long as its brain hyphae are intact and accessible.

R3 • Re-vome. Imbue 1 life to revive a dead vome as a friendly sidekick. Can maintain a number of friendly vomes equal to their level. Additional revived vomes return to their baseline programming.

98. White Collar Drone

#background

Just killing time.

Dresses appropriately and understands the etiquettes of modern life. Speaks three languages. Has a suitable degree and years of experience. Understands jargon. Masters arcane communication and management rituals. Clandestinely takes care of personal affairs despite the watchful eyes of jaded bosses. Creates ornate project documentation that nobody will ever read. Dreams of a better life.

Secretly [d6]:

1. Writes erotic poetry
2. Builds tiny model towns
3. Plays make-believe games
4. Dresses up in costumes
5. Joined a motor-golem gang
6. Summons small daemons

R1 • Gets ITEM (table).

99. Writer of Belles Lettres

#background

Calligraphy and purple prose.

Makes a living as a scribe using the three traditional scripts. Writes stories, fictions, and forgeries. Inscribes ritual code scrolls with fluid ease. Wields a pen sharper than a sword. Cuts with tongue, drowns with ink. Genres include [d6]:

1. Belle epoque novel
2. Postconstructivist poetry
3. Oldtech fiction
4. Generative stories
5. Epistolary tales
6. Subtextual plays

R1 • Gets ITEM (table).

100. Zu Error

#error

Error. Reality. Reboot.

Memory conflict. Reality cascades and reforms. Veils within veils. Wormholes in the mind. This body is created from dreams and destinies and corroded code. Resonates with alien artefacts. Feels at home with the non-euclidean. Grasps the fundamental illusion of existence. Denies the knowledge with [d6]:

1. Hard clerical labour
2. Bare-knuckle fighting
3. Competitive drinking
4. Maniacal fantastic scribbling
5. Rigid traditionalism
6. Revolutionary action

R1 • Gets ITEM (table).

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Traits

“Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine, my joints more supple.”

— The Creature in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818)

Traits are thematically both narrower and weirder than skills. A catch-all category for things ordinary could never do no matter how much they studied or practiced. Luck, mutation, strange magics, and alien gods might bestow abilities. They change how a hero interacts with the rules and don’t require tests, sacrifices, ammunition or other equipment. They are neither good nor ill, just (often) dangerous and strange. Common types include:

- Direct augmentations** • Increased stats, the ability to go without food.
- Situational modifiers** • Increased damage when cornered, a boon to tests with cold iron items.
- Special resources** • Additional memory inventory for spells or a summonable extra.
- Special effects & actions** • Visible auras, unarmed attacks that restore life.

When a hero rolls or chooses the same ability multiple times they gain ranks. Ranks may provide additional effects or items. Each trait or trait rank occupies one trait slot (e.g three ranks in bravely runs away occupy three slots).

Trait Tags

Tags loosely categorize traits. Additional tags are possible.

- #biomachine** • Artificial traits for created organisms.
- #brains** • Thoughtful application of superior intellectual capabilities for the furtherance of personally acceptable outcomes.
- #fantascience** • Magic and science by another name.
- #fortune** • Luck and the manipulation of the underlying fabric of probability. Also money.
- #power** • The will to strength. The unyielding oak. The crushing boulder. The alacrity of the born warrior.

Inventing a New Trait

"It's a flying pig! With a flame thrower!"

—last message from Ulurartu, porphyry city of a hundred trades.

When players invent a new ability, they should ask:

1. Does it have a one-line poetic description and memorable title?
2. Can its effect be described in one or two sentences?
3. Is it completely overpowered?
4. Does it make the game boring for heroes without the same ability?

If the answers are yes and yes, no and no, it's probably a good ability.

For example, 'Detector of Evil' isn't the best. It makes a hero the ultimate arbiter of morality, removing choices from the other players. Something like 'Desire Detective' could be more interesting. 'Gill Implants' is a bit basic, but fine. A water-breathing hero expands the group's reach, but can lead to solo adventures. If the top cat 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?").

Anatomy of a Trait

Death Hunger—colourful title

#demon—so the character becomes demonic? Alright.

They had become a death cult, a blood demon awakened—poetic description gives a thematic idea of how it manifests in play. It tantalizes with world-building ideas and gives hooks for roleplay.

R1 • Hero gains a mark for each opponent taken out in a physical conflict. Each mark gives a cumulative +1 to attacks until the conflict ends—a bit fiddly, but players who want a combat monster would relish it.

R2 • Also gains a cumulative +1 damage for every mark—builds on the first rank, improving it.

Table of Traits [d100]

These hundred starting traits (detailed overleaf) give some idea of what traits could be. Players, especially TCs, are encouraged to invent novel traits to suit events and encounters in play.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Aesthetic Creation | 34. Goodnight Messenger | 67. Protector of Innocents |
| 2. Artful Dodger | 35. Gravitas | 68. Psion Scion |
| 3. Artiforganism | 36. Hacked Shorttimer | 69. Qanat of Power |
| 4. Aural Corona | 37. Honor Bound | 70. Querulous Kvetch |
| 5. Beneficiary of Choice | 38. Hyperlogical | 71. Radiant Panoptics |
| 6. Bloodclad | 39. Improved | 72. Rauber Baron |
| 7. Bloody Nimble | 40. Inspiring Hero | 73. Renowned Racer |
| 8. Body Magic | 41. Insufferably Cute | 74. Rubberskin |
| 9. Bravely Runs Away | 42. Jade Brain | 75. Secured Flesh |
| 10. Break the Weak | 43. Just Too Ordinary | 76. Self-Improvement Protocols |
| 11. Channeling Hands | 44. Ka Marked | 77. Sparklefingers |
| 12. Chromatic Avatar | 45. Lazarus Soldier | 78. Spiritbreaker |
| 13. Citoyen Formidable | 46. Lifewind Inhalation | 79. Spell Detonator |
| 14. Combat Monster | 47. Luckless Mess | 80. Stargazer |
| 15. Critical Master | 48. Luminous | 81. Symbiotic Friend |
| 16. Death Hunger | 49. Machine Whisperer | 82. Symbolic Receiver |
| 17. Devastator | 50. Master Blaster | 83. Technopriest |
| 18. Disembodied | 51. Memory Palace | 84. Traitorous |
| 19. Dosemaster | 52. Meticulous Ritualist | 85. Tree Hugger |
| 20. Echolocator | 53. More Than Human | 86. True Warrior |
| 21. Electromagic Hacker | 54. Motorbreath | 87. True Wizard |
| 22. Empty Shell | 55. Natural Born Comrade | 88. Unblinking |
| 23. Eternal Champion | 56. Neural Machine Symbiote | 89. Uncanny Confidence |
| 24. Expert Sidekicks | 57. Neuroempathy | 90. Undying Parasite Heart |
| 25. Fleshsong Audiophile | 58. Noblesse Obliged | 91. Uplifted Exemplar |
| 26. Fluid Anatomy | 59. Omniactivation | 92. Vacuum Hardened |
| 27. Fool's Luck | 60. Overlooked by the Gods | 93. Vibrant Soul |
| 28. Friend of the Elements | 61. Panmolecular Sensorium | 94. Void of Memories |
| 29. Futureproof | 62. Perfectly Balanced | 95. Vome Enhancement |
| 30. Gastrointestinal Upgrade | 63. Pheromone Panoply | 96. War Mind |
| 31. Gentle Traveller | 64. Pocket Packer | 97. Weaponslave |
| 32. Gifted | 65. Polybody Unity | 98. Wizardkiller |
| 33. Glittering Incorruptible | 66. Porcelain Skin | 99. Words Like Daggers |
| | | 100. Zootic Masterform |

Quick Start

Pulp hero • Roll twice.
Starting extra • Roll not.
Epic legend • Roll five-fold.

The Hundred Traits

1. Aesthetic Creation

#biomachine

Made in Beautiful.

R1 • Hero chooses a cosmetic mutation. Gains 1 charisma.

R2 • Hero gains 1 charisma and increases ba damage 1 step.

R3 • Hero chooses a cosmetic mutation and gains 1 ba defence.

2. Artful Dodger

#fortune

Important for staying alive.

R1 • Hero gains [+] to tests to avoid area effects, explosions, nasty spills, and other similar problems. Gains 1 ha defence.

R2 • Teflon reputation. Resistant to all kind of splash damage. [+] to tests to avoid legal repercussions.

R3 • Experience in staying ahead. Adds highest mental stat to ha defence and highest physical stat to ba defence.

3. Artiforganism

#biomachine

The unborn. The made.

R1 • Hero is not actually alive. Does not need to eat, breathe, drink, or sleep. Gains energy from the sun or from magical batteries.

R2 • Hero can replicate themselves given a few weeks and security backups.

R3 • Upgradeable. Hero gains 4 inventory slots for mutations and other enhancements.

4. Aural Corona

#fantascience

Flaring off the elemental excess.

Hero is surrounded by [d8]:

1. Light
2. Fire
3. Sky
4. Water
5. Green
6. Metal
7. Radiation
8. Void

R1 • Hero crackles with an overcharged aura. They take half damage from their element.

R2 • Hero can spend 1 life to flare their aura to an adjacent creature, either sharing their resistance or transferring all the damage they avoided.

R3 • Hero takes minimum damage from their element.

5. Beneficiary of Choice

#fortune

Some give, they receive.

Hero's mysterious sponsors say they represent the [d8]:

1. Archaic Independence Front
2. Council Metropolitan
3. De Werker Aristocracie
4. God Factory
5. Nu-Vome Consortium
6. Solar Gateway Initiative
7. Wine Vampire Endowment
8. Zu Kompleks Deity™

R1 • Hero gains 1 charisma (maximum +6). 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.

R2 • Hero gains 1 ba defence. Once per day, hero receives guidance via a deep implant. Either [+] on their next test or a true answer (the player may simply narrate something they "know", subject to the referee's soft veto).

R3 • When a hero would die, they instead find themselves awake and unable to move in a strange cocoon, with shadowy shapes talking about "preparing the backup". Next thing they know, they're back in their bed missing some memories (hero permanently loses 1 skill).

6. Bloodclad

#power

Action hero style.

R1 • When below half life, hero only takes half physical damage. They're tougher covered in their own shiny blood!

R2 • Below half life, hero can shrug off one ha attack per round.

R3 • At 0 life, hero can shrug off one more ha attack per round.

7. Bloody Nimble

#power

Speed overwhelming.

R1 • Once per turn hero can spend 1 life to gain one additional action. This boost is not an action.

R2 • Hero can choose to spend 3 life to gain two actions instead.

R3 • If the hero suffers any damage, they gain [+] to initiative and agility tests for one round.

8. Body Magic

#fantascience

There is no mind but flesh.

R1 • Hero can choose to use their strength or endurance stat when casting spells or making magical tests.

R2 • Additionally, can add strength or endurance to dice rolled when casting spells or during ka conflicts.

R3 • Increase strength or endurance by 1. May use their strength or endurance stat for ka defences.

9. Bravely Runs Away

#fortune

Can't touch this.

R1 • Opponents suffer [-] when hero is retreating. Any sacrifices to avoid encounters are worth twice as much.

R2 • [+] to all tests while being chased. Ally morale does not suffer when hero retreats.

R3 • Cowardly reputation. [+] to surprise attacks and against fear effects. Takes half damage from social attacks.

10. Break the Weak

#power

Cut them down like wheat.

R1 • When hero physically strikes an opponent of lower level than themselves, the opponent is out of the fight (and probably dead).

R2 • When the hero knocks an opponent out of the fight, they get a free attack against a nearby target.

R3 • Hero gains 1d4 life every time they strike a lower level opponent.

11. Channeling Hands

#fantascience

Be the conduit.

Hero conducts the element of [d8]:

1. Light
2. Fire
3. Sky
4. Water
5. Green
6. Metal
7. Radiation
8. Void

R1 • Hero's bare hands can flare with the element. They can't throw it, but they can affect matter. Also, their unarmed attacks deal elemental damage damage.

R2 • Elemental conduit grows. Unarmed elemental damage increases two steps (e.g. 1d3 to 1d6).

R3 • Conduit grows. Damage increases two more steps (e.g. 1d6 to 1d12).

12. Chromatic Avatar

#fantascience

There is power in this hue.

Hero is chosen by the colour [d6]:

1. Purple
2. Blue
3. Green
4. Yellow
5. Orange
6. Red

R1 • The hero is vividly coloured. They have [+] to tests against targets of their own hue, for the little differences are the worst differences.

R2 • They are resistant to damage from objects of their own hue and gain [+] to effects with tools of their own hue.

R3 • With one hand they can drain other hues from objects, with the other they can impart their own hue to objects. This is about as fast and effective as regular hand painting, so changing the colour of a large object will take quite a while.

13. Citoyen Formidable

#fortune

The city makes the citizen.

R1 • The natural city-slicker. Hero gains [+] to social interactions, travel, and navigation in cities.

R2 • Social and physical attacks against the streetwise hero suffer [-] in cities.

R3 • Hero deals damage with [+] in cities. The environment is full of improvised weapons.

14. Combat Monster

#power

Fight alone. Fight dirty.

R1 • When the hero fights alone, they have [+] to attacks and tests to trip, trick, or otherwise hinder their enemy. But they never benefit from flanking or other help in combat.

R2 • When the hero fights alone, their opponents never gain [+] from flanking or outnumbering the hero.

R3 • When the hero fights an equal or higher level opponent alone, they gain [+] to damage and damage dice explode.

15. Critical Master

#power

Knows where it hurts.

R1 • Hero's critical hit multiplier is now equal to their proficiency or x3, whichever is higher.

R2 • Critical hit multiplier is now equal to level, proficiency or x4, whichever is higher (max x6).

R3 • Multiplier is now equal to level or x5, whichever is higher (max x8)

16. Death Hunger

#power

Death awakens the blood demon.

R1 • Player tracks enemies taken out by the hero in a battle scene. Each enemy taken out grants a cumulative +1 to attacks until the end of the scene.

R2 • Hero also gains cumulative +1 to damage for every enemy taken out.

R3 • Hero also regains 1d6 life for every enemy dropped.

17. Devastator

#power

Damage is everything.

R1 • Hero's attacks always deal extra damage equal to their proficiency or +3, whichever is higher.

R2 • Extra damage is now equal to their level, proficiency or +4, whichever is higher.

R3 • Extra damage is equal to level or +6, whichever is higher.

18. Disembodied

#fantascience

Has no eyes to weep.

R1 • The hero is a disembodied spirit-personality (ka-ba). They are immune to physical attacks, but their direct interaction with the physical world is also limited. They cannot exert a force more substantial than a gentle breeze or a slight temperature differential by themselves.

However, they can manifest in a stone-sized physical form, perhaps a potted plant or a rat. They can use this physical form to move or even "talk" by directly vibrating its atoms. This costs 1 life per hour or so.

R2 • Their direct force is as strong as a stiff breeze or a moderate temperature difference. They can manifest within a pig-sized object, perhaps a chest or a skeleton. This manifestation costs 2 life per hour or so.

R3 • They can create a strong gust of wind or a sharp temperature difference. They can also manifest within a boulder-sized object, perhaps a house or dinosaur. This manifestation costs 4 life per hour or so.

Note: Manifesting in a sentient form usually causes a more-or-less violent aura contest for control between the hero and the form.

19. Dosemaster

#brains

Measured in all things.

R1 • Hero knows their doses. They don't roll dice when healing with meds and potions or when applying poisons. Instead, they treat the maximum result as the number of charges. E.g., a med that normally restores 1d8 life always restores 8 life in the dosemaster's capable hands.

R2 • Hero rolls an additional matching die, increasing the charges they can nurse out of a med dose.

R3 • Hero can microdose poisons and meds, using them to provide

resistance to similar poisons, vaccinating against diseases, and doubling the effects of potions.

20. Echolocator

#biomachine

Voices paint pictures.

R1 • Hero can use echolocation.

Gains 1 agility.

R2 • Hero can dimly see around corners and through closed doors using echolocation and vibrations. Gains 1 agility.

R3 • Hero can detect heartbeats, subvocal tics, breathing rates, and blood pressure by sound and touch. Gains 1 aura and [+] to detecting inconsistencies.

21. Electromagic Hacker

#fantascience

Talk long enough into the machine, and it will talk back.

R1 • Hero can hack adjacent oldtech creatures and equipment. In combat, hacking is one action, each command is another action.

R2 • [+] to hacking tests if touching target.

R3 • Hero can give target one free command per turn.

22. Empty Shell

#biomachine

No hell or heaven awaits.

R1 • Hero has no soul or ka. All curse spells always fail against them. Their ka defence is permanently 7, and cannot be modified. They are resistant against all ka damage. They can never be restored to life if killed.

R2 • Hero can absorb a soul leaving its dying body, gaining 1 aura until the next session. This destroys the absorbed soul. While they have an absorbed soul, they appear normal and not like a soulless husk.

R3 • Their ka defence is permanently 13. They are resistant to all magical damage.

23. Eternal Champion

#fortune

Carrying the torch of purpose beyond the gates of time and hate.

R1 • Hero bonds with an eternal weapon (an L3 sidekick),

sometimes as its master, sometimes as its slave. They apply their proficiency to tests with their eternal weapon, even if they don't have a relevant skill.

Further, the hero's life increases by 1 point for each of their levels (current and future). Also, they can use their eternal weapon's life for spell-casting. But their magic cost is increased by 1.

R2 • When wielding the eternal weapon, all defences are increased by their proficiency. E.g., a hero with pro +2 increases every defence from 10 to 12.

R3 • When wielding the eternal weapon, all the hero's critical hit damage multipliers are increased by their proficiency. E.g., pro +4 increases a multiplier from x2 to x6. This applies to all attacks, not just with the weapon.

This ability is not compatible with abilities that decrease a hero's magic cost.

24. Expert Sidekicks

#brains

Friends are the best.

R1 • A number of sidekicks equal to the hero's proficiency can be experts. This means they add the hero's proficiency to their sum when testing something they're good at.

R2 • The number of possible expert sidekicks increases to the hero's level or proficiency or 4, whichever is highest.

R3 • The hero's expert sidekicks add twice the hero's proficiency.

25. Fleshsong Audiophile

#fantascience

Codes of creation singing in the flesh of the mortal and damned.

R1 • Hero is creepily well acquainted with biology; [+] to all biological research tests. When they touch flesh, it sings and tells them what it has experienced. After a few minutes of physical contact, they can ask or answer one question about a living creature's medical history and condition.

R2 • [+] to all biological tests, including biomancer spells. Flesh songs answer questions about medical histories of dead organisms.

R3 • Can detect presence of living creatures now and in the past from environmental residues—traces in dirt and water—from touch alone.

26. Fluid Anatomy

#biomachine

They have organs they shouldn't have in places they shouldn't be.

R1 • Hero's insides rearrange and rebuild to keep them going despite dreadful trauma. Hero can spend 1 stat point to turn a critical hit into a normal hit.

R2 • Can spend 1 stat point to regain life equal to hero's level.

R3 • Can remove 1 burden per session.

27. Fool's Luck

#fortune

They don't know their luck.

R1 • Hero rerolls every natural 1.

R2 • Hero gains [+] to tests when they have no relevant skill.

R3 • Everytime they roll a natural 1, they gain a [+] to their next roll.

28. Friend of the Element

#fantascience

Accept the love of the source.

Hero is beloved of [d8]:

1. Light
2. Fire
3. Sky
4. Water
5. Green
6. Metal
7. Radiation
8. Void

R1 • Hero gains [+] to all elemental attacks.

R2 • Hero now has [+] to all element-related die-rolls, including damage.

R3 • Hero always deals double damage with element.

29. Futureproof

#fantascience

The hubris of technology, undone.

Technology abhors you. Machinery crumbles at your touch. Lasers glance off you like water off a duck.

R1 • [+] to tests against technological effects or targets.

Hero suffers [-] when using technological items.

R2 • Hero's touch deals 1d8 damage to machines. They can no longer use advanced technological items.

R3 • Machines touched by the hero make a relevant ha (or ka if available) test or shut down. Sentient machines dislike the hero.

30. Gastrointestinal Upgrade

#biomachine

Everything should be fuel.

R1 • Hero's gut is a marvel of technomagic. They are immune to food poisoning and gain [+] vs. all other ingested toxins. Also, they can digest anything organic, from wood to bone to petroleum.

R2 • Hero has a matter converter installed in their body and can derive sustenance from inorganic material.

R3 • Hero has a ka-mill in their wormhole heart. They eat the souls of their victims, temporarily increasing their life total by 1d6 points for every level of a creature they ritually consume (to a maximum equal to their life total).

31. Gentle Traveller

#fortune

Oh, what wonders!

R1 • Favourite travelling bag. Hero gains a special inventory that can hold 3 stone-sized items or 99 soap-sized items. It's magical. If they lose the bag, it always somehow reappears.

R2 • Personal daimon. Hero gains a little voice that whispers in their ear. It does not occupy an inventory slot, but does require a name. Once per game session, the daimon gives one of the following:

1. Good luck. Player sets a rolled die to the face they want.
2. Health. The daimon restores one of the hero's attributes.
3. Wisdom. Daimon gives a true answer to one riddle, conundrum, or other problem.

32. Gifted

#fortune

They have that special touch.

R1 • Hero's pro increases by 1.

- R2 • Increases by 1 more.
- R3 • Increases 1 more.

33. Glittering Incorruptible

#fortune

The body is a temple of purity.

R1 • Hero's source code has been enhanced by chance or ancient germline intervention. The hero cannot suffer mutations through corruption. Instead, they take a point of harm. The ill hero requires a week's rest to recover.

R2 • Hero's source code actively resists all diseases and toxins. Hero can choose to lose 1 stat point to avoid all other effects of a disease or poison.

R3 • Hero can not be reduced to 0 life through social attacks. They are simply too golden.

34. Goodnight Messenger

#fantascience

The end. The end.

They are a subconscious message from the [d6]:

1. Backup iteration
2. Beginning of this cosmos
3. Eating dark
4. End of time
5. Divine renaissance ark
6. Wormway engineers

R1 • Sub-creation antenna. Hero gains a boon [+] whenever someone near them casts a spell.

R2 • Unraveller. Hero gains resistance to magic damage. All spell effects near them explode.

R3 • Entropy prophet. Hero gains ka defence equal to their level. All spell damage dice near the hero are increased by their level.

35. Gravitas

#fortune

The presence abides.

R1 • Hero's mere presence is an argument. They can choose to use their aura or endurance stat when making social tests.

R2 • Additionally, can add aura or endurance to dice rolled during social conflicts.

R3 • Increase aura or endurance by 1. May use their aura or endurance stat for ba defences.

36. Hacked Shorttimer

#power

We were better for a while.

R1 • Hero comes from stock crudely optimized for improved short term performance. They gain 1 strength, endurance, or agility. Sadly, their bio-cobbled body imposes [-] against diseases, venoms, or toxins.

R2 • The optimization went further than was wise. Hero gains 1 more strength, endurance, or agility. Their physical stat maximum is increased to 6. Alas, they suffer [+] damage from one type of attack: physical, social, or mental.

R3 • Flawed divinity. Hero gains 1 more strength, endurance, or agility, and 1 charisma. Their physical stat maximum is increased to 7. Hero suffers [-] against one kind of elemental assault.

37. Honour Bound

#fortune

Where courts dare not tread, honour is the law.

R1 • Hero possesses an aura of honour, granting [+] to social tests in nomadic and clan-based societies.

R2 • Powerful mana protects the hero from dishonourable opponents (i.e. city-dwellers or hunter-gatherers). Their social attacks against the hero have [-].

R3 • Tribal aura. Hero takes half damage from all social attacks in the wild lands.

38. Hyperlogical

#brains

Who needs a heart anyway?

R1 • Immune to fear, charm, and emotional appeals. [-] to reading social cues. [+] to logical reasoning.

R2 • All according to plan. Gains [+] to tests on the second and subsequent rounds of a conflict.

R3 • Necessary sacrifices. Gains 1 action whenever an ally is defeated in a conflict. Gains 1 life whenever an ally is injured. Gains [+] whenever they are injured.

39. Improved

#biomachine

A fantascience product.

R1 • Hero chooses a beneficial mutation.

R2 • Hero gains 1 stat point and chooses a mutation.

R3 • Hero gains gains 1 more stat point and a mutation or trait.

40. Inspiring Hero

#brains

For great glory!

The intangible quality of a leader has a quantity all of its own.

R1 • A number of sidekicks equal to the hero's proficiency fights with unmatched ferocity. They add the hero's proficiency score to all their attacks and tests during battle scenes.

R2 • The number of possible inspired sidekicks increases to the hero's level or proficiency or 4, whichever is highest.

41. Insufferably Cute

#fortune

Just the cutest.

R1 • A winsome face. [+] to social interactions, but all interactions take twice as long as everyone fusses over the hero.

R2 • Small and cuddly. [-] to all direct attacks against the hero, but the hero's inventory is permanently reduced by 3.

R3 • Mascot. All allies near the hero gain [+] while protecting them.

42. Jade Brain

#biomachine

There are colours beyond god.

R1 • Hero's brain is replaced with a perfect crystal. At any time, they can spend 1 life and 1 days to store a copy of their personality in a memory pearl. Hero also gains 1 thought.

R2 • Hero gains a crystal third eye. They gain [+] to light and force tests. Hero also gains 1 aura.

R3 • Hero can project their hopes and fears into others, gaining [+] when sharing their emotions or reading other's intent. Hero also gains 1 ba and ka defence.

43. Just Too Ordinary

#brains

Common as muck.

R1 • Hero seems eminently ordinary. They can immediately lose themselves in a crowd. [+] to disguising them as someone else. Over time, they actually physically begin to resemble the average inhabitant of their locale.

R2 • Catalyst. Hero gains [+] to shifting the mood of crowds they are a member of. When fighting with the rank and file, their companions gain [+] to tests. [+] to ba tests among lower classes.

R3 • Social dynamite. Hero gains 1 charisma and can make themselves look completely striking and unforgettable. [+] to ba rolls against different social classes. Can spend 1 life encouraging nearby allies, giving them [+] to rolls for the rest of the round.

44. Ka Marked

#power

Chosen by the overgods.

Hero's soul bears the blazing mark of the [d8]:

1. All-Purifying Engine
2. Decaying Cosmos
3. Deep All-Generator
4. Eating Dark
5. Endless Horizon
6. Iron Guardian
7. Morning Star
8. Viridian Permutator

R1 • Awesome self-confidence. Hero adds their charisma to ha and ka defence. Hero can also spend 1 life to detect sympathetic priests and believers in their vicinity. Such people love them.

R2 • Dangerously infallible. Hero gains 1 charisma. Hero can also spend 1 life to 'detect' that an unsympathetic creature in their vicinity is evil and dangerous. They gain [+] to tests and damage rolls against this marked target.

R3 • Hark the celestial voices. Hero adds their charisma to ha and ka attacks. The hero's allies and other nearby sympathetic creatures gain [+] to rolls against targets marked by the hero.

45. Lazarus Soldier

#power

Didn't let them grind ya down.

R1 • The first time the hero is reduced to 0 life in a session they immediately regain 6+level life.

R2 • When the hero would be permanently removed from play, the player can return them into play in the next scene. The hero gains a permanent scar or burden occupying one inventory slot and loses a rank of Lazarus Soldier.

R3 • After the hero dies, they return to life on the next full moon or another significant astrological event. This creates a probabilistic dysfunction and unleashes an undead plague.

46. Lifewind Inhalation

#power

Deep breaths, action hero.

Absorb the vital principles of sky and green through superior patterns of consciousness.

R1 • Hero recovers twice as much life when spending a hero die to recover life.

R2 • Thrice as much life. Additionally, spending a hero die to recover life grants one boon.

R3 • Four times. Additionally, spending a hero die to recover life makes them glow bright as a torch for a few hours.

47. Luckless Mess

#fortune

Everything goes wrong.

R1 • Hero and all creatures near hero increase critical fail range 1 step. Hero's critical failures are always humorous, never actually harmful.

R2 • Whenever anybody rolls a critical failure nearby, the hero regains a hero die.

R3 • Critical fail ranges increase 1 more step. The hero gains 1d6 life or 1 stat point whenever anybody near them rolls a critical failure.

48. Luminous

#fantascience

Let the light shine out.

R1 • The hero's insides are aglow. They can release it from their mouth or eyes with the radiance of a powerful torch.

R2 • Hero gains [+] to ka attacks and magic tests in brightly illuminated spaces.

R3 • They sparkle like diamonds and are resistant to physical damage in bright light.

49. Machine Whisperer

#brains

Soothe the savage robot.

R1 • Talking machines naturally like the hero. [+] to social tests with machines.

R2 • Complex machines always try to help the hero. Complicated locks try to unlock themselves when whispered to, audio-visual orbs try to fix themselves when banged vigorously.

R3 • [+] to effects when using machines. Golem guns do more damage, vechs leap further, cracklewand fields last longer.

50. Master Blaster

#power

Only Blaster leave!

R1 • Hero rolls all exploding damage dice (e.g. 1d6*) with [+].

R2 • [+] to all explosive tests, including attacks and spells. Hero feels the energy trapped in matter yearning to be free like a phoenix.

R3 • Oops. Blaster blew up. Time for a new hero.

51. Memory Palace

#brains

A prison of dreams traps the unwary.

A true wizard's mind is a scary old palace, full of dark holes where magical parasites hide.

R1 • 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. This is a bonus inventory just for carrying spells.

R2 • Hero also gains memory points equal to their level. These are used to cast memorized spells as if they were life points.

R3 • Hero's memory point total from this ability is doubled.

Players should fancifully describe their hero's memory palace. The more fanciful, the better.

52. Meticulous Ritualist

#fantascience

Accurate ritual records must be kept for meaningful summoning!

R1 • Hero gains [+] to tests when casting all spells taking over a dozen minutes to cast.

R2 • Hero also rolls effects of their ritual spells with [+].

R3 • Hero reduces price of all ritual spells they cast by 2 (minimum of 1).

53. More Than Human

#fantascience

The cosmos gazing at itself.

R1 • An awareness of common consciousness grants the hero [+] to communicating with synthetics, golems, and void creatures.

R2 • The hero is incredibly versatile, adapting to alien dimensions, higher colours, strange gravities, and non-euclidean spaces within a few minutes. This negates environmental penalties, though the hero may still dies from exposure, lack of air, etc.

R3 • Tapping the cosmic mind, the hero gains [+] to all social and mental interactions with alien sentiences. Additionally, the hero can willingly abandon their mortal shell and become a ka-ba spirit. This is a one-way trip. Afterwards, humans count as alien sentiences for the hero.

54. Motorbreath

#brains

Give me that which I desire.

R1 • Hear the roar. [+] when using machines with engines.

R2 • Eat the dust. Gains an extra action when using a machine with an engine.

R3 • Break on through. [+] to damage and initiative with machines with engines. Critical range increased one step in vehicular combat.

55. Natural Born Comrade

#fortune

Icon of the hunter scavengers.

R1 • Hero gains [+] to social tests among their equals. Whenever they give away most of their wealth in social conflict and keep

an equal or smaller proportion for themselves, all their attacks are twice as effective.

R2 • Wealthier opponents have [-] to social and physical attacks against the hero. Hero deals double social and physical damage to wealthier opponents.

R3 • Hero suffers no penalties from opulent wealth in the eyes of the poor since they are only safeguarding the wealth for the common folk.

56. Neural Machine Symbiote

#biomachine

Silver ships slip through my veins.

Tiny silver animalcules flow through the hero's bloodstream, glittering golden wires thread their neural networks.

R1 • Hero can pilot golems and other thinking machines hands-free. The symbiote accelerates their mind (hero gains 1 thought).

R2 • The symbiote accelerate all reflexes (hero gains 1 agility) and lets the hero talk with machines and other neurally enhanced humans at great distances.

R3 • Join the silver collective. Hero gains 3 bonus inventory slots for mental constructs, memories, skills, or burdens. Gains [+] to any tests that require access to complex memories or data. Sometimes receives instructions from a collective neural identity.

57. Neuroempathy

#brains

Mirror-neurons mirror neurons.

The hero says they always understand how others are feeling.

R1 • Empathic projection. [+] when soothing, consoling, or other tests that require empathy.

R2 • Full tele-empathy. Can read emotions of visible creatures. [+] against lies and deception.

R3 • Empathic blot. Deals double ka or ba damage when making an emotional attack.

58. Noblesse Obliged

#fortune

Better folks are bred, not made.

R1 • Hero owns a country estate and a fancy title. Social attacks can never remove the hero from play. Hero gains an additional hurt state, "attending to personal matters in the countryside." This hurt state immediately removes the hero from play for the session. Still, it prevents further injury, as they are ensconced in their "cottage".

R2 • Lucky death of a relative brings finances to match the title. Hero gains [+] whenever money would be an issue. Because money, or at least credit, is not an issue.

R3 • Friends in high places. Once per session, the hero can call on a favour to get out of a pickle or rum do. Hero gains [+] in all courts of law and public opinion.

59. Omniaction

[#fortune](#)

The red button will be pushed.

R1 • Hero ignores all restrictions on all fantascientific devices. Doors recognize them, sentient bombs talk to them. Does the hero understand what they do? Unlikely.

R2 • Once per session, the hero can touch a dead fantascientific machine or artifact and it sparks to life, giving 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.

R3 • When faced with any fantascientific creature, the hero can spend 1 life to 'discover' a backdoor switch. Even odds whether this weakens the creature, or activates a new mode.

60. Overlooked by the Gods

[#fortune](#)

Omniscience is a lie.

R1 • All holy or sacred tests rolled against the hero suffer [-].

R2 • All curses and blessings have minimal effect against the hero. Hero gains 1 aura.

R3 • Hero gains [+] to all attacks and direct tests against the extra-normal 'gods' and their 'divine' servitors. They just slide off those creatures' perception fields.

61. Panmolecular Sensorium

[#biomachine](#)

Hear the songs of the oceans. Read stories in wind and stream.

R1 • Hero's sensorium is expanded with new cutaneous and olfactory organs that let them read trace molecular remains. Their sense of smell is as acute as a bloodhound's, and they can 'taste' with their fingertips. [+] when tracking, testing food for poison, sampling fuel for impurities, and other such tests.

R2 • Hero can literally smell emotions. [+] to discerning intentions, picking up lies, and ferreting out tricks.

R3 • Hero detects submolecular changes in reality. They smell magic and gain +2 ka defences.

This is gonna be a lot of art to spruce up these pages ...

62. Perfectly Balanced

[#brains](#)

Suspended between steps.

R1 • Hero always balances on any narrow surface or tight rope. Can also perfectly balance objects.

R2 • Like water, hero never loses their mental or social equilibrium. Resistant to fear, shame, regret, worry, and anxiety.

R3 • Gains [+] to balance competing claims and pass legal or moral judgements.

63. Pheromone Panoply

[#biomachine](#)

Scent worth a hundred memories.

Write poetry with biochemistry.

R1 • The hero has modified biological chemo-factories in their body. These provide communication molecules on demand. [+] to charming or intimidating social attacks. Can scare away or 'blind' creatures like ants and termites that rely primarily on chemical signals for communication.

R2 • Hero can use their pheromone panoply to communicate with and try to command insects or other creatures that depend on pheromones.

R3 • Hero uses pheromones to enhance their mind-affecting ka and all ba attacks. Damage dice increase one step and become exploding.

64. Pocket Packer

#fortune

More for everyone.

R1 • Whenever the group discovers a nice pile of treasure, the hero pockets an extra €1d6 x level of valuables without anybody noticing. This is quantum treasure that appears without affecting the main horde. Hero also gains [+] to picking pockets.

R2 • Hero can always nick an unmemorable souvenir or memento from any location, machine or creature without anybody noticing until it is too late. The extra coins they pocket are now worth €2d6 x level.

R3 • The extra valuables are now worth €3d6 x level. Hero also gains [+] to gambling, card tricks, and using hidden weapons.

65. Polybody Unity

#brains

More bodies, more choices.

R1 • Hero has an additional body. Their bodies are connected in a real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche network. Neither body has priority, and they have a single mind. The hero can have up to 3 bodies. Adding a body is very expensive. It takes about a week, and requires a surgeon-psychopomp.

Each additional body is treated as a secondary character with its own physical stats and action pool. Each body beyond the first in visual range grants 5 life points. Area attacks against polybody characters multiply their damage by the number of bodies present.

R2 • Hero can have up to 6 bodies. Some of their bodies can be animals.

R3 • Hero can have up to 9 bodies. Some of their bodies can be synthetics.

If a hero sends off a body on its own, the player decides how much life is assigned. The player can invest xp in a body to increase its stats and life totals as though it were an extra.

Heroes may merge with a new body instead of outright stealing it. In this case, the player rolls a new set of mental stats and uses the set with a higher aura score.

The hero gains one bonus skill and replaces a number of other skills equal to their new thought score.

66. Porcelain Skin

#fantascience

They made people prettier once upon a time.

R1 • Hero's uncannily smooth skin is resistant to diseases and scarring. Gains 1 charisma.

R2 • Hero's luminous skin is resistant to acid, chemicals and fire (half damage). Gains 1 more charisma.

R3 • Hero's diamond-smooth skin resists slashing and piercing damage. Gains 1 ha defence.

67. Protector of Innocents

#fortune

Despite the gore, a noble cause.

R1 • Hero gains [+] to attacks and tests when fighting to protect an unarmed or helpless innocent.

R2 • Once per turn hero can instantly redirect an attack from a nearby creature to themselves (this is not an action). Hero can redirect additional attacks at the cost of 1 life per attack. Word gets around. Downtrodden communities scrape together resources to help the hero.

R3 • [-] to all attacks and damage against the hero while defending an innocent.

68. Psion Scion

#brains

A soft blanket for the soul.

R1 • Low-level empathic field grants [+] to trickery, lies, and illusions.

R2 • [+] to direct mental attacks against a single target.

R3 • Empathetic enlightenment. [+] to assist, console, and otherwise help scared and vulnerable creatures. Resistant to fear and trickery.

69. Qanat of Power

#fantascience

Hidden channels, rushing energies.

R1 • The hero casts all spells as though they were 2 level higher.

R2 • When the hero casts a spell,

they channel 1 life point from the void, reducing their spell price.
R3 • Casts as 4 levels higher.

called owning a media subsidiary. Once per session, they turn out to own a useful building or asset.

70. Querulous Kvetch

#power

Complaining is a cure.

R1 • Instead of any other burden, the hero may choose the special burden: “grumbling quietly.” It imposes no penalties. Hero can only bear one such burden at a time.

R2 • Hero gains a second special burden: “gripping and groaning.” When the hero gains this burden, sneaking becomes difficult [-].

R3 • Hero gains a third special burden: “kvetching viciously.” When the hero gains this burden, they suffer [-] to social interactions. They also gain [+] to one action per round.

71. Radiant Panoptics

#biomachine

The inverse of colour blindness. Redline machine microbes swirl in the hero’s eyes.

R1 • Hero’s infraoptic symbiotes detect heat signatures and traces. Gains [+] to survival and investigation tests.

R2 • Hero can “see” in the absence of visible light using a panoply of electromagnetic sense organs.

R3 • Hero’s senses can probe through several layers of base matter. Gains [+] when searching for hidden objects or trying to figure out if somebody is standing behind the draperies.

72. Rauber Baron

#brains

Money is magic.

R1 • Hero is savvy. Hero has [+] to all business-related rolls. Including treasure rolls.

R2 • Hero is surprisingly well-off. Hero can deal physical damage with social attacks. It’s called paid help. Once per session, they acquire an expensive item on “credit”.

R3 • Hero reveals they have a servile butler running a monopolistic corporation on their behalf. Hero can deal mental damage with social attacks. It’s

73. Renowned Racer

#brains

The grand velocity trophy proves life has meaning.

R1 • [+] to tests during vehicular chases. Fame (and notoriety) also grant the hero [+] in many social interactions.

R2 • Some of them were death races. [+] when manoeuvring to attack or defend with a vehicle.

R3 • Gains an extra driving action every turn.

74. Rubberskin

#fantascience

Nemesis of the thunder demons.

Skin laced with symbiotic insulating caucho-fungoid.

R1 • The hero is resistant to electromagical and energy attacks (halving all damage).

R2 • The caucho-fungoid is interwoven with the whole body. Immune to electromagical and energy attacks.

R3 • No longer fully human but an evolved caucho-fungoid chimera. Electromagic and energy attacks heal the hero. They don’t repair broken bones or open wounds. Those still need surgery.

75. Secured Flesh

#biomachine

I am that I am.

The hero knows how their body works, keeping it strong and stable.

R1 • [+] to all tests against mutations, dangerous spells, or anything else that might corrupt their body (e.g. disease).

R2 • Hero takes half damage from toxins, venoms, poisons, and diseases. Hero recovers maximum life from hero dice.

R3 • Regeneration backup. Hero removes 1 physical burden per night of sleep. Hero recovers double life from hero dice.

76. Self-Improvement Protocols

#biomachine

Machines in the bloodstream do what they will.

R1 • The hero is upgraded with photovoltaics, feeding only on light, and a direct machine communication array. However, their biological body degrades due to inevitable errors integrating the ancient biomachines, permanently reducing a stat by 1.

R2 • The hero's upgrade capacity is increased. They gain 1 biomachine slot per level (maximum of 5) in addition to their regular inventory. They may choose upgrades from the corruption and mutation tables.

R3 • Their upgrade capacity is increased to 2 biomachine slots per level (maximum of 11).

Note: Each installed upgrade reduces a stat by 1 to a minimum of 0. If all of a hero's stats are at 0, they need to uninstall an upgrade before getting a new one.

77. Sparklefingers

#fantascience

Conducting the ambient electromagic of the world.

R1 • The hero's unarmed attacks can deal 1d4 electric damage instead of 1d3 physical damage. Conducting materials extend attack range.

R2 • Electric touch increases to 1d6 damage. Hero can spend a few hours to recharge dead batteries.

R3 • Increases to 1d8 damage. In medical settings hero's touch gives [+] or [-]; restarting stopped hearts, improving muscle tone, reducing viral replication.

78. Spiritbreaker

#power

Make their noses bleed..

R1 • When hero spiritually strikes an opponent of lower level than themselves, the opponent is out of the conflict (and probably unconscious).

R2 • When the hero knocks an opponent out of the conflict, they get a free ka attack against a nearby target.

R3 • When the hero's ka attack hits, they gain 1d4 life.

79. Spell Detonator

#power

Things must boom.

R1 • Hero's spell damage dice become explosive. E.g., a magic bullet (1d4) becomes 1d4*.

R2 • Spell damage dice explode on highest & second-highest rolls.

R3 • [+] to all spell damage.

80. Stargazer

#fortune

Through madness, enlightenment.

Gazed upon Mother Star and saw through the Veil of Ignorance cast upon humanity by the Dark Sorcerer at the top of the false heaven. Saw through their whips and chains, and now they are as gossamer.

R1 • [+] to all tests against magic.

R2 • The moon-tide roars within the hero. They deal double damage to magic-corrupted monsters and abominations. And dark wizards.

R3 • Enlightened. Immune to madness. Resistant to chaos, confusion and the pain of existence.

81. Symbiotic Friend

#biomachine

There's a little more than me.

The hero has a small, telepathically bonded pet living on or in their flesh. It is a [d8]:

1. Chirping monkey-lizard
2. Air-breathing fish
3. Furry rabbit-snake
4. Many-handed cuttlefish
5. Rainbow land-crab
6. Glistening biomech newt
7. Burrowing glass bird
8. Iridescent scarab colony

R1 • The symbiotic friend can perform a single skill with the same bonus as the hero. It occupies no inventory slots.

R2 • The friend is an expert, using double the hero's pro score.

R3 • It is an incarnation of skill. Its sum with that skill is +13.

82. Symbolic Receiver

#brains

That's ... that's not really a thing.

There are patterns everywhere, and they all emit meaning into the receiver's head. The hero knows what every symbol means, or says they do.

R1 • Hero can always tell if a symbol is positive or negative. Price of all symbolic spells reduced by 1 (minimum 1). Symbolic spells include magic circles, magical exploding symbol traps, and the like.

R2 • [+] to all tests when casting or nullifying symbolic spells.

R3 • Casts all symbolic spells as 2 levels higher. Gains 1 ka defence.

83. Technopriest

#fantascience

Sufficiently advanced magic.

Anointed by the [d6]:

1. Archways of perception
2. Cogwheel of eternal return
3. Egg of the first land
4. Glittering fast stars
5. Ill nano of re-creation
6. Whether weaver

R1 • [+] when channelling forces beyond mortal ken. Reduces prices of imbued spells by 1 (minimum 1). Rolls spell effects with [+] in sanctified areas.

R2 • Rider behind the eyes. Can focus and maintain one spell per round as a free action. Can spend 1 life and a few minutes to sanctify a small area.

R3 • Conduit of the ageless. Gains 1 ha and ka defence. Can let their rider take control. While the rider is in control, hero casts all spells as though they were level 17. Hero also gains 1 burden per round. Will the rider also leave?

84. Traitorous

#fortune

The opportune moment arrives.

R1 • Deals 1d6* bonus damage with hidden weapons, surprise attacks, and attacks from hiding. Their critical hit multiplier with such attacks increases 1 step.

R2 • Hero gains [+] to charming or befriending creatures. Hero gains [+] to tests against friends. Also, their traitorous bonus damage increases to 2d6*.

R3 • Bonus damage increases to 3d6*. Critical threat range and hit

multiplier increase 1 step.

85. Tree Hugger

#brains

Friend of herbs & fluffy creatures.

Hero feels at home in [d6]:

1. Exotic beaches
2. Manicured parklands
3. Painted deserts
4. Refreshing forests
5. Scenic mountains
6. Urban jungles

R1 • Hero gains 1 aura and 1 ka defence. In their native environment they blend in flawlessly, gaining [+] to hiding and moving without trace. They also add their aura stat to all defences while there.

R2 • Beautiful soul. Gains 1 thought. As an action, the hero can call upon a vast store of inspiring sayings to bolster all nearby allies, who gain [+] to their hero dice rolls. Alternatively, they can infuriate the same allies with their sayings, granting [+] to their physical tests.

R3 • Furious spirit. Gains 1 strength. Hero gains [+] to attacks against targets who threaten their beloved natural environment or disagree with their firm beliefs in even the most minute detail.

86. True Warrior

#power

Beyond reality's gates, only war.

R1 • 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 1.

R2 • The hero learns a new praxa and gains 1 ha defence.

R3 • Adds proficiency bonus to all physical damage and gains 1 ha defence.

This ability is not compatible with abilities that decrease a hero's magic cost.

87. True Wizard

#fantascience

Welcome to the universe.

R1 • Hero's magic cost is reduced by 1. But the connection with the

void of wizardry reduces hero's life by 2 points for each of their levels (current and future).

R2 • The hero learns a new magic skill and gains 1 ka defence.

R3 • Hero reduces all spell prices by one (minimum of 1) and gains 1 ka defence.

Magic cost can never be reduced below 1. This ability is not compatible with abilities that increase a hero's magic cost.

88. Unblinking

#biomachine

An inhuman stare.

R1 • The hero never needs to blink. [+] whenever undivided attention is useful. Harder to surprise. Also, creeps people out.

R2 • [+] to casting and nullifying horrific spells as hero gazes directly into the eye of madness.

R3 • Reptilian. Hero can stand completely motionless and gains [+] to tests in any round where their side has lost initiative.

89. Uncanny Confidence

#power

Reality bends before belief.

R1 • Hero adds their pro to all social damage rolls.

R2 • Hero adds their pro to their social defence.

R3 • Hero gains [+] to all social damage rolls.

90. Undying Parasite Heart

#biomachine

Have a little piece of their heart.

R1 • The hero's heart is a symbiote which stores their memory-patterns. The symbiote is a perfect auto-replicant and cannot die of old age. When the 'heart' is placed in a suitable excavated body cavity, it sprouts tendrils and a crystalline neural web, taking over the host in days. Every time the hero is 'reborn' this way, they lose a mental stat point, coming closer to their final end as a twitching madness of pulsing, tentacled flesh.

R2 • The monstrous heart is larger and stronger. The hero permanently gains 1 endurance and [+] to long-distance running and other endurance sports.

R3 • The monstrous heart is even stronger. The hero permanently gains 1 endurance. Every time it takes over a new host, the hero acquires one of the host's skills. If the hero has no available skill slots left, they may use inventory slots to store additional skills in subsidiary neural organs.

91. Uplifted Exemplar

#biomachine

Now they understand.

The hero was a [d8]:

1. Capybara
2. Chimpanzee
3. Pig
4. Pigmy Rhino
5. Mouse
6. Tortoise
7. Wolf
8. Zebra

R1 • Now they are a bestial humanoid one-off with super-human aptitudes and opposable thumbs. Hero gains 1 stat point and one heightened sense appropriate to their base animal. The heightened sense grants [+] in relevant situations.

R2 • The uplift did not stop. It kept working, changing. Hero gains 2 thought. Their thought stat maximum is increased to 7.

R3 • Hero gains 1 more thought. Maximum increased to 8.

Superhuman manual dexterity and astounding brainpower give the hero [+] with improvised equipment, weapons, and world domination plots.

92. Vacuum Hardened

#biomachine

When did they forget Old World?

R1 • Hero can survive a full day in hard vacuum due to significant nano-magical modification. Gains 1 endurance.

R2 • Survives a full month in hard vacuum. Hero can derive sustenance from radiothermal batteries or other such devices. Gains 1 endurance.

R3 • Survives indefinitely in hard vacuum. Hero can synthesize life-sustaining trace minerals and compounds with their internal artazothic organ. Gains 1 aura.

93. Vibrant Soul

#power

The spirit is faster than the flesh.

R1 • A fiery, malevolent eye. The hero can use one of their actions to make a spiritual ka attack before other creatures act, outside the initiative order.

R2 • The hero gains an additional action they can use for spiritual attacks or tests.

R3 • [+] to initiative tests.

94. Void of Memories

#brains

The spells are eating my mind!

This wizard's mind is riddled with wormholes to voids where old magics are wont to hide.

R1 • Hero gains memory points equal to their highest mental stat. These are used to cast memorized spells as if they were life points. Also, hero learns a void spell.

R2 • Hero's memory points from this trait are doubled.

R3 • The points are doubled again (quadrupled in total).

95. Vome Enhancement

#biomachine

Now they look into you.

R1 • Technomagical machines swirl in the hero's eyes, whirring and clicking, focusing and demanding. Hero's eyes provide low-light vision, sure, but their eyes are also ridiculously sharp and come with built-in filters. They can stare into the sun-line safely. The optics provide [+] to all long-distance aimed attacks.

R2 • The hero's optophotonics can convert the hero's own life force into a ray attack (1d12 damage, long range, #precise, costs 1 life per attack).

R3 • Hero gains 3 inventory slots. The optophotonics expand and invade other tissues. The hero gains an integrated toolkit for one skill of their choice. This toolkit takes up one slot. The hero also gains a random mutation.

96. War Mind

#brains

All combat is in the spirit.

R1 • Hero fights smarter, not

harder. They can choose to use their aura or thought stat when making physical tests.

R2 • Additionally, can add aura or thought to dice rolled during physical conflicts.

R3 • Increase aura or thought by 1. May use their aura or endurance stat for ha defences.

97. Weaponslave

#power

It calls me its master.

A weapon has found the hero. The hero believes they are its slave.

R1 • While the hero carries their weapon, their strength or agility increases by 2. Without it, their endurance and aura are reduced by 1 each. If the weapon is lost, it always finds its way back at the start of the next session. Further, whenever it strikes a creature, the hero regains 1 life. When it kills a target with a soul, the hero regains 1d6 life or 1 stat point.

R2 • While the weaponslave bears their weapon, all their spell prices are reduced by 2 (minimum 1). Without the weapon, their magic cost is increased by 1. Further, the weapon's healing powers are doubled, and if the hero is injured, it tempts them to use its powers.

R3 • While the hero bears their weapon, all their defences are increased by 2. Without the weapon, they take double damage from all sources. Finally, the weapon's healing effect is tripled (restoring 3 life per strike).

98. Wizardkiller

#power

Smash.

R1 • Hero gains 1 ka defence and [+] to damage against wizards and magical creatures. Hero's magic cost increased by 1.

R2 • Hero gains 1 ka defence and [+] to hit wizards and magical creatures. Hero's magic cost increased by 1 more.

R3 • Hero gains 2 ka defence and deals double damage to wizards and magical creatures. Hero cannot cast spells.

99. Words Like Daggers

#brains

Speak truth to break the spirit.

R1 • When hero successfully socially attacks an opponent of lower level than themselves, the opponent is out of the conflict.

R2 • When the hero knocks an opponent out of the conflict, they get a free social attack against a nearby character.

R3 • Pleasure in pain. Gains 1d6 life whenever their ba attack succeeds.

100. Zootic Masterform

#brains

The pet is the boss.

To hero appears to be a [d8]:

1. Cat
2. Rat
3. Dog
4. Owl
5. Parrot
6. Snake
7. Toad
8. Spider

R1 • Hero's strength and endurance are reduced to 0, their agility and thought increase correspondingly. Their inventory is reduced by 3. Given a few hours, they can empathically enthrall a human or other oversized member of the local dominant culture to care for them and serve them. Their human servant is not a mind-controlled slave, yet still generally acts in the hero's interest. They can have one human servant at a time.

R2 • Zootelepathy. The animal hero can communicate telepathically with their enthralled servant and make them speak, like a ventriloquist with their dummy. Once per session, the hero can dominate their enthralled servant for a few minutes. After the domination, the servant falls unconscious for a few hours.

R3 • Mass zootelepathy. The animal hero can simultaneously enthrall a number of humans equal to their level.



EQUIPMENT: CASH & GEAR

Inventory

“Wish known. Wish known.”

—mumbles the word-drained wretch at the sanatorium, warning the next round of heroes to brave the accursed tomb.

The hero’s inventory is a core mechanic of Seacat. Runners have to make hard choices between what they want their heroes to bring along on their adventures and what they can.

It is where the player notes all the things burdening their hero. Not just physical objects; woes, fears, illness, magic spells, pets, and extras all occupy inventory space. If heroes run out of room for traits or skills, they can repurpose the inventory. Crucially, the choice of gear determines a hero’s offensive and defensive capabilities.

Inventory space on the human scale is defined with the following units.

1 sack = 10 stones = 100 soaps = 2,500 cash

Sack (sk) • All ten slots on a hero sheet. A basic inventory unit. What an average human can carry unencumbered. Doesn’t have to be a literal sack.

Stone (st) • One-tenth of a sack. A significant generic item, like a sabre or spear or shield or shovel. About 5–7 kilos. Also, one inventory slot.

Soap (sp) • One-hundredth of a sack, a tenth of a stone. A small generic item, like a signal whistle or signet ring or spike. Or a bar of soap.

Cash (€) • A standard unit of currency. An average wage slave’s daily earnings. Does not have to be physical coins or bills.

A human can carry two sacks at once, but the second sack is cumbersome. A hero carrying any items in their second sack is encumbered, suffering a bane [-] to every physical test (and likely to many social or mental tests). Items in a hero’s hands are part of their first sack of inventory.

An encumbered hero is at a disadvantage in conflicts. If they’re carrying a large object, like an actual sack, a living backpack, or a pianola, they can put it down carefully (an action) or drop it carelessly (a free action) to get rid of the encumbrance. But, of course, an item dropped is an item dropped.

Stored Equipment and Other Properties

Heroes can own more (much more) property than they are carrying at any given time. They might have a mansion stuffed with ill- and well-gotten booty, sky-cars of ancient make, hidden dimensional fortresses beyond the bridge of rainbows. This is fine, encouraged even.

However, players should record all this treasure separately. Only gear on a hero’s sheet is available during a given conflict. If the hero has entered the tomb of the thief of words and forgotten their magic cap of safe thoughts in the bedroom, that’s just too bad. It’ll stay in the bedroom as the ghost of words pilfers one phrase after another from the hero’s barely protected brain.



Cash

Cash (€) is an abstraction of a character's disposable wealth. A unit of cash does not have to be a coin. Precisely how much one cash is worth depends on the in-game fiction. By default, players may assume that one cash is equal to the daily income of an average laborer.

What Cash Buys

CASH(€)	POSSIBLE PURCHASES
-0.1	A common meal or ingredient. Knick knacks. Mass tourist souvenir.
-1	A day's food and lodging for two proletarian baseline humans. A basic tool. An uncommon ingredient. A fancy meal.
-10	A day's food and lodging for two middle-class mildly-enhanced humans. A professional tool. A rare ingredient. A ticket to a fine opera.
-100	A day's food and lodging for two betterfolk aesthetically-augmented humans. A rare or expert tool. Very rare ingredients. A basic vehicle. A hut. A small farm.
-1000	A day's food and lodging for two members of the abmortal neoimperial family. An uncommon vehicle. A small cottage. A middling farm.
-10k	An hour's rock-hitting trip by an imperial executive unit. A rare vehicle. A comfortable residence. A large farm or ranch.
-100k	A nearly super-heroic augment. A luxurious residence. An estate.
-1m	Abmortality. A seat on the neo-imperial shadow parliament. A modest palace.

Types of Cash [d20]

Currency can be many things. Though the grand emerald city of Metropolis might use simple round tokens with triangular holes punched through them to physically represent the soul-sworn debts of its inhabitants, other places use stranger things.

1. Luminous land cowries from the Forests of Mist and Stars.
2. Magic-infused scales of the sky dragons.
3. Memory crystals of the lost empire.
4. Stamped round chunks of soft metal.
5. Whorled pearls.
6. Bronze knives.
7. Duraplast tokens from the decayed Casino Kingdoms.
8. Ritual trading bones from the Necromancer Republic.
9. Composite ferroceramic heptagons.
10. Debtwood from the half-elven Deeproader Consortium.
11. Solidified rainbow pucks.
12. Scripture fiches of ductile think-matter.
13. Gently glowing vidy orbs from the Reality Theatre Era.
14. Diorite rings and eyeteeth.
15. Semi-precious rods and wands.
16. Coralline bracelets.
17. Cards of unrusting metallo-plastic.
18. Small tinkling copper bells.
19. Tiny golden barges in acrylic orbs.
20. Polished dreams of better days frozen in pieces of ancient forcefields, turned to hard pins and needles.

Credit

At some point (possibly during character generation), heroes will acquire wealth beyond what could conceivably be carried in cash on their person. That's where credit comes into play. Their wealth is stored or registered with a friendly bank or faction. They can use some kind of symbol, code, magic item, or astral wallet to purchase and sell from other characters and organizations who recognize the bank or faction have stored their wealth. Of course, this creates a walled garden effect, where transactions with hostile factions or for restricted items become more complex. Ahh, obstacles—adventure fodder.

Starting Cash [d100]

Heroes can spend starting cash on additional equipment, beyond what they gain from their skills or traits.

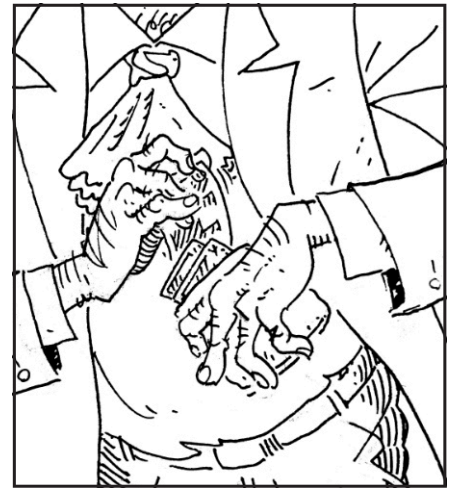
Quick Start

Pulp hero • Hero starts with 300 cash (€) or rolls below.

Starting extra • Starts with €30 or rolls and divides result by 10.

Epic legend • Starts with €3,000 or rolls and multiplies result by 10.

1. Bruises. Stitches. A debt of €99k.
2. A wheel of cheese. No cash.
3. A flower pot. €1 in pennies.
4. Lockbreaker card. €3 in scrip.
5. Lint. Fluff. €5 in fancy coin.
6. €7 in dead currency. Piece of gum.
7. A new face. €20 in unmarked bills.
8. Elegant pen. Forged signature. €11.
9. Wreath of cowries worth €81.
10. Thick sock with €250 in change.
11. 111 wadd'd €1 notes. Rubber band.
12. Three €20 bracelets.
13. €300 cash and debt of €13k.
14. A tin box. €13 in foreign coins.
15. Cheap trinkets. €17 tatty bills.
16. Plaz satchet. €19 in dirty change.
17. Moldy wallet with €21.
18. Moth-eaten purse with €23.
19. Cut crystals worth €29.
20. €100 bundle of crisp notes.
21. €55 in grimy ancient coin.
22. 11 bracelets worth €222.
23. Napkin bundle. Crusts. €23.
24. Handkerchief. Comb. €40.
25. Box of mints. €50 in change.
26. Zebra hide bursa. €60 in currency.
27. An IOU. €75 in discrete tips.
28. Ancient bottle. €99 tucked inside.
29. Dogskin moneybag. €101.
30. Kid gloves. €180 in gold rings.
31. Synthsilk stockings. Wad of €125.
32. Pocketbook. Spectacles. €144.
33. Tourist crotch-wallet. €333.
34. Elegant lizard. €134.
35. €150 in enamelled scales.
36. Acrylic orbs worth €72.
37. Whorled pearl chains worth €200.
38. Land cowrie bracelets. €160.
39. Metallo-plaz card. €175 in credit.
40. Three vidy orbs. €240.
41. Discount gloaming puck. €199.
42. Book of meanings. €42 in dice.
43. Coraline hoops worth €260.
44. Chrome casket. €444 in mirrors.
45. Copper knives worth €299.
46. Satin clutch and €165.
47. Basket-weaving bible. €200.
48. Plush shark wallet. €256.
49. Mother-of-pearl case. €280.
50. Trading bones with €300 credit.
51. Soft metal lumps worth €300.
52. Scriptures and €320.
53. Diorite tokens worth €350.
54. Gelatinous finches. €282.
55. Calcified ennui. €555.
56. Fossilized sandwich. €248.
57. Depleted ring of power. €390.
58. Pocket clockwork piece. €360.
59. Nightmare inkstones. €178.
60. Valise of summer wines. €600.
61. Ferroceramic octagons and €470.
62. Rucksack. Wads worth €360.
63. Colourful stone pendants. €616.
64. Eyeteeth on a string. €460.
65. Palladium & ivory calendar. €365.
66. Hellmetal nails. €666.
67. A hundred small earrings. €667.
68. Evening bag. €196 in gemwood.
69. Round moneysticks worth €69.
70. Silver credit scroll of €700.
71. €640 in debtwood tablets.
72. Deadmetal vome skull. €543.
73. Gilded copper bells. €373.
74. Old envelope with €47 in bills.
75. Ebony scabbard. €500 in fiches.
76. €760 in cash and €2k in debts.
77. €777 in glitterjel pretzels.
78. Half-metal chess pieces. €166.
79. Tabloid-wrapped jewel fish. €79.
80. Jet credit disc with €801.
81. Gun holster and €899.
82. Tiny golden barges. €630.
83. Balaclava. Heavy spheres. €483.
84. Epic poems. €284 in rings.
85. Teardrop synth-rubies. €185.
86. Steamdream spice worth €306.
87. €354 in bloody bills. €1k debt.
88. Gate pouch. €888 in old money.
89. Banded drawings. €810 in credit.
90. Torc. Hidden gems worth €900.
91. Neosaur billfold. €990 in notes.
92. Jay needles. €1080.
93. Spectrum pucks. Cred for €1170.
94. €960 in hard cash. €5k hard debt.
95. Platinum dragonscale. €5k.
96. Revolutionary scrip worth €1968.
97. €2k in bullion. €3 solid debt.
98. Timelost div pills worth €2525.
99. €9999 in minimal synth currency.
100. Estates. Discretion. €99k credit.



Finding Gear

“There are three types of magic in the Vast Lands. The godtech that gave us our world. The oldtech that was given to us with the world. The newtech that will set us free from the prison of this world.”

“What of the techné of the slowfolk, Masta Iuäna?”

“That’s not magic; that’s just primitive tinkering!”

—Iuäna and Ambivaric, *Dialogues*, Pato the Melder (294:b4–b6).

At the risk of being repetitive, characters’ relatively limited inventories are a crucial resource. Characters struggle to do everything they want because they cannot bring every single item, device, spell, or weapon into play—not because those items are unavailable or nonexistent.

The Vastlands are not a world like today or a world like a fantastic wild west reimagining of feudal Angleland or Saxony. Sufficiently advanced technology indistinguishable from magic is readily available, if very unevenly distributed. Most of the imaginary denizens of these worlds understand that magic exists, though none of them can understand how it all works. There is too much knowledge and complexity even for the hive minds and synthetic intelligences.

Availability of Gear

What this means is that there is no practical distinction between magical and mundane items. Some gear is very powerful (magical, sophisticated, charged with the source code of creation), other gear not so much. Somewhere in the imaginary world of the nigh-infinite Vastlands, an item almost certainly exists that can accomplish very nearly anything the players can imagine. As a result, trying to list all possible gear becomes impossible—players will almost certainly have to invent new equipment for their game. A question runners will often ask of the top cat is whether a particular item is available right here, right now, in this settlement or market.

The TC may ask for a group charisma test. Locating a common object would be trivial, a rare object moderately hard, and a very rare, exquisite object would require a very hard test. If the TC knows an item is not available, the test would reveal a clue to its location, pointing to a small side quest for the heroes.

The same applies in reverse for selling rare or strange items.

Rarity and Price

Powerful and rare objects are often more valuable, ordinary and common ones less so—as decreed loudly and repeatedly by the Church of the Wholly Invisible Hand. But, of course, monopolies, guilds, secret societies, factory cults, fabricator conspiracies, and fanatical material acquisition corporations (famacs) do muddle up the anti-moralist prophecies of the church and other free-market fanatics. After all, what market could be truly free in a world where near-divine sentient polycorporates ensconced in floating mountains of doom try to control wormgate travel? This is why most gear is listed with exploding dice for generating prices. Who could know in advance what fad or financial hi-jink will suddenly spike the cost of the semi-sentient computing radishes used in the biomental farms?

D10	RARITY	GEAR EXAMPLES	PRICE (€)
na	Omnipresent	Autofab tschotschke, bottle cap, fossil widget, pamphlet.	nil
1–5	Common	Cut bottle, loupe, memory pebble, rope, sim-spice.	1d4*-1
6–8	Uncommon	Electric torch, organic saffron, pleasure vidy, scalpel.	2d10*
9–10	Rare	Mental audit kit, personal spirit brick, ten-horse autocart.	10 x 2d10*
10/10	Exquisite	Autochef, karmic brush, levitent, story inventor golem.	100 x 2d10*
10^3	Exotic	Etiquette synthetic, personal electric orchestra.	1,000 x 2d10*
10^4	Legendary	Brain extension pearl, library crystal, home fabricator.	10k x 2d10*

More expensive gear may exist. Fame and fortune await.

Inventing New Gear

All the players can collaborate in inventing new gear. Some of the gear sections even have suggested attributes, modifiers, and prices for new items. However, when introducing particularly powerful new equipment, it is good to let the TC have the final say on features, prices, and availability. If the TC is worried about the effects of an item on the game, they can first introduce it as a prototype or rebuilt oldtech artefact with limited uses before it breaks down for good. A consumable artefact, so to speak.

Hunting down a helpful item the players have invented and designed together makes for a natural adventure narrative. The TC should embrace it—unexpected side quests lead to the most unusual stories.

Found Treasure

It's assumed that heroes will both earn and spend large sums of cash and treasure. When the heroes come across some large, valuable-looking ancient or alien artefact and the top cat hasn't set its worth in advance, runners can roll a group test to randomly determine approximately how much they could earn by selling it to a willing buyer. It's up to the TC whether they should make a flat roll or a charisma test.

If the players prefer to play poorer, more desperate adventures, they may reduce loot values by a factor of 10 or 50.

APPROXIMATE RARITY	D100	D20 + CHA	CASH / SACK
Uncommon	01-50	1-10	€50 (€1d10* x 5)
Valuable	51-80	11-15	€250 (€1d10* x 50)
Rare	81-98	16-19	€1000 (€1d10* x 200)
Exceptional	99-00	20	€5000 (€1d10* x 1k)
Unique	00/0	20/20	€25k (€1d10* x 5k)

Alternatively, if the TC already knows the rarity of a treasure, they may have the runners roll only for the value of a treasure.

Determining Size By Counting Words

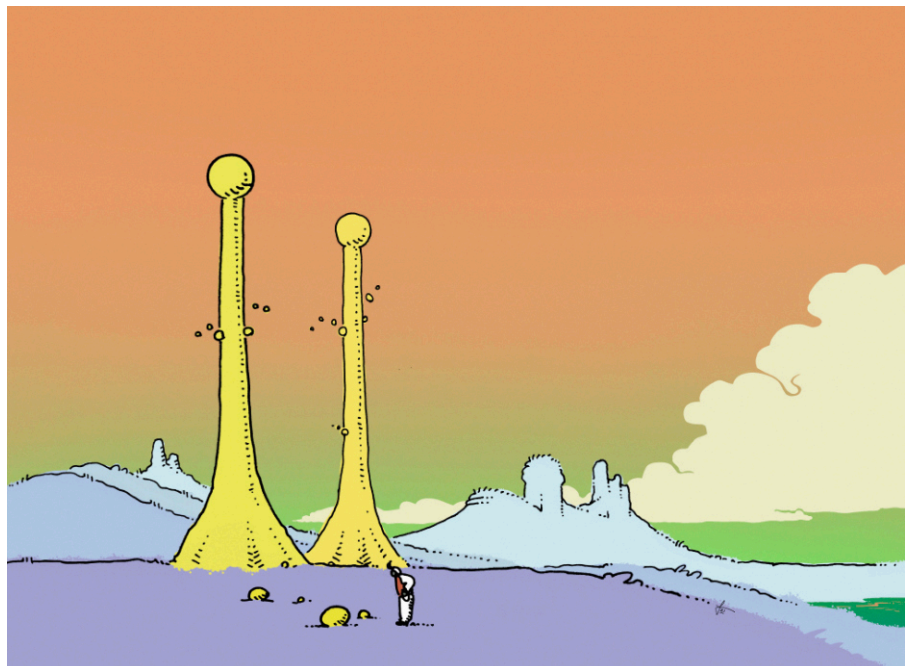
To determine the size of a treasure, the TC can count how many fancy words it takes to describe; each word adds one sack. This does not represent just weight and size but also the care required to transport a fragile treasure without damage. On the scale of stones, the same idea may apply to fine equipment or tools.

Hacking Out Treasures

A character can hack out $1d6 + \text{level}$ percent of a larger treasure's value in a few minutes. The fragment is one-tenth the size of the original treasure. Characters can repeat the process, reducing sacks to stones to soaps in this way.

Hacking up a treasure reduces the value of the remainder by $(1d6 + \text{level}) \times 10$ percent.

For example, Pikker the Peng-Ling (level 2) comes across a €6000, 10 stone statue of the Angel of Decay. They roll 3, for 5%, and gouge a stone of shiny bits worth €300. The remaining defaced sculpture is now worth 50% less: €3000.



Defensive Gear

Defensive gear increases a character's defences. This may be purpose-made armour to boost ha (physical) defence or improvised finery to dazzle at a ball and provide ba (social) defence. Armour improves ha (physical) defence, wards improve ka (metaphysical) defence, and prestige improves ba (social) defence. Less common pieces of gear may improve multiple defences at once.

Most defensive gear stacks. Suits are a notable exception—a character can only ever wear a single suit: they can't wear a suit of armour, a lavish court gown, and a spirit suit all at once. Suits still stack with other gear—for example, with shields, brandished holy symbols, batons of office, magic rings, amulets of propriety, circlets of innocence, tokens of spirit, and more.

Armour

Armour protects a character from attacks that would hurt their body (ha): bullets, swords, rocks, explosions, fireballs, gouges, and chokes.

D10	ARMOUR TYPE	EXAMPLES	DEF	SIZE	PRICE (€)
1-3	Improvised	Bulky rags, pot lids, ritual masks, oven mitts, unity golem guard carapaces.	+1 ha	1 st	1d6-2
4-8	Basic	Heavy coats, skull helms, spiked leather, camino vome greave-and-bracer sets.	+3 ha	2 st	3d6*
9-10	Good	Synthetic spidersilk weaves, chitin cuirasses, steelglass bowl helmets.	+2 ha	1 st	10 x 3d6*
10/10	Excellent	Jade mail suit, dragonbone shield, vortal boots, personal ghostforce field.	+5 ha	2 st	100 x 3d6*
10^3	Fantastic	Radiant panoply, living iron cloak, baron belt.	+3 ha	1 st	1,000 x 3d6*
10^4	Pinnacle (suits)	Black city liquid metal suit, Ebéteen scion skin suit.	+7 ha	2 st	10k x 3d6*

Wards

Wards defend against metaphysical attacks: curses, fear, charms, mental domination, bad luck auras, daemons of doubt, self-loathing, and misery, and other conflicts that attack a character's ka directly.

D10	WARD TYPE	EXAMPLES	DEF	SIZE	PRICE (€)
1-3	Improvised	Anything meaningful that strongly connects a ka to the world around them. Clay good-luck figurines, lovers' lockets, souvenirs, family heirlooms, a favourite book.	+1 ka	1 st	1d10
4-8	Basic	Garland of skulls, heavy spirit mask, paradise feather belt.	+3 ka	2 st	10 x 1d10*
9-10	Good	Wizard skull, apotropaic gem, silver-bound relic, gold-lettered holy book.	+2 ka	1 st	100 x 1d10*
10/10	Excellent	Fine metropolitan suit, living crystal rod, 13-jewel pectoral, coat of bones.	+5 ka	2 st	1,000 x 1d10*
10^3	Fantastic	Angel circlet, cosmic mirror, demon-tongue belt, trapped machine ghost.	+3 ka	1 st	10k x 1d10*
10^4	Pinnacle (suits)	Full technicolor spectrum suit, archmage's skin suit.	+7 ka	2 st	100k x 1d10*

Every spell carried is also a ward providing +1 ka and occupying 1 stone. The prices of spells can be highly variable.

Prestige

Prestige items provide status, which protects a character from social (ba) attacks: slander, lawsuits, curses, cutting remarks, media lynchings, political mud-slinging, PR disasters, and other conflicts that attack their personality.

D10	PRESTIGE TYPE	EXAMPLES	DEF	SIZE	PRICE (€)
1-3	Simple	Jewelled bracelet, fancy hat, silk cape, shiny shoes.	+1 ba	1 st	1d6
4-8	Fashionable	Evening dress, glittering heels, cloth-of-gold shawl.	+3 ba	2 st	10 x 1d6*
9-10	Expensive	Luxury autogolem tag, ruby credit crystal, sophisticated business card.	+2 ba	1 st	100 x 2d6*
10/10	Extravagant	Establishment address, blazing sapphire amulet, understated designer watch.	+5 ba	2 st	1,000 x 3d6*
10^3	Imperial	NuFace augment, porcelain dress, glitterskin symbiote.	+3 ba	1 st	10k x 4d6*
10^4	Pinnacle (suits)	Emperor's new clothes, reality distortion field harness.	+7 ba	2 st	100k x 5d6*

Money is the root of all evil, but also buys respect and brings self-confidence. Every stone of cash (€250) the hero carries provides +1 ba.

20 Example Armours

1. Amber Ancestor Cuirass

4 ha & ka / 2 st / €6d6 x 1k

Strands of ancestral memories trapped in amber, fashioned into a cuirass of arcane glory.

Memories • Ancestors grant 1 thought.

2. Bone Rank Leather Greatcoat

2 ha & ba / 1 st / €3d6* x 300

An ash-white greatcoat of supple texture and terrifyingly austere cut. Has special pockets for sacred books and pens.

Dead-warded • Undead are repulsed by the Iksan rationalist runes woven into the lining of the greatcoat. All undead attacks against the wearer suffer [-].

Ghostbone • Incoming ka damage is reduced [-].

Spirit-boost • Increases wearer's aura and charisma by 1 each.

3. Centurion Gold Suit

3 ha & 7 ba / 3 st / €3d6* x 4k

A gilded golem suit with actual ornate winglets to make the wearer more obvious on the battlefield—and to send and receive semaphore commands.

Blatant • [-] to stealth and deception.

Daimonized • Grants 3 charisma.

Ornate • Incoming ba damage is reduced [-].

Reasonably inspiring • Each turn one ally gains 1d6 to a roll.

4. Chain Mail Suit

5 ha / 2 st / €3d6* x 100

Something out of a museum.

5. Golem Driver Leather Jacket

3 ha / 2 st / €3d6* x 2

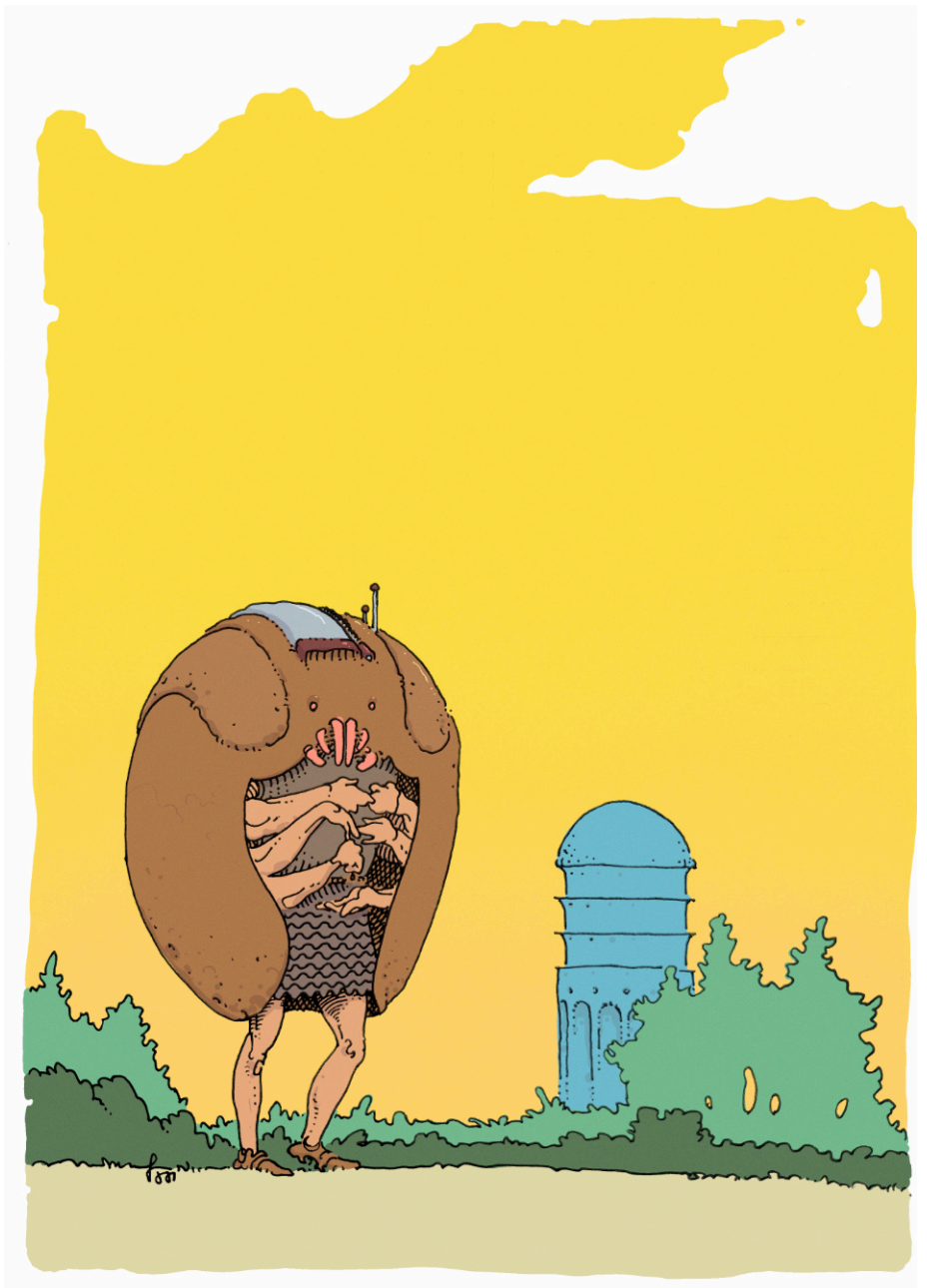
One sleeve tastefully ripped for that daring wastelander look.

Cool-looking • Resistance to ba damage in the wastelands.

6. Hard Light Shield

3 ha / 1 st / €3d6* x 2k

A glittering personal force-shield of hard light bound to a projection bracer of true Sunrider design.



Concealed • At the push of a button, the force-shield disappears, leaving only the projection bracer.

Reflective • Wearer always takes minimum damage from energy attacks. 1-in-6 chance energy strikes rebound into a random nearby target. Critical hits always ricochet into a random nearby target, with a 1-in-6 chance of hitting the shooter.

Sun-forged • When the wearer is bathed in UV radiation, all damage suffered is reduced [-].

Vorpal edge • Used as an improvised melee weapon deals 1d4 damage. Severs extremity on critical hit.

7. Iksan Leveller Suit

7 ha / 3 st / €5d6 x 300

Brightly coloured plates of ceramic threaded with silvery metallic links.

Chromatyped • Robes are resistant to damage from sources of one of the six sacred colours.

Jade essence • When the wearer would suffer a burden, they can sacrifice the jade modifier to absorb it instead. The gear continues to function, but the modifier is lost.

8. Iron Minotaur Suit

7 ha / 3 st / €5d6 x 500

A monstrosity of godmeat and bronze cooked up in the churning crypt vats of the Living Flesh God.

Large • [-] to physical activities in confined spaces.

Permanent • The monstrous biomech bonds with the wearer's flesh and bone. Removing it deals 3d10 damage and imposes a burden or permanently reduces a stat by 1.

Recycling • [+] against the effects of dehydration and starvation.

Smelly • [-] on social tests.

Strength servos • +6 strength.

Vital 30 • Grants 30 life.

Weaponized • Deals 1d10 damage with unarmed attacks.

9. Leaden Dragon Suit

3 ha / 3 st / €3d6 x 800

A massive suit of malevolently sliding plates and spikes woven around a golem servo harness designed to augment the endurance of its wearer.

Exoskeleton • [+] to endurance and athletic tests.

Golem harness • +4 endurance.

Reactive • Deals 2d6 ha damage to attacker when struck.

Vital 100 • Grants 100 life.

10. Malachite Golem Suit

5 ha / 2 st / €3d6 x 600

A composite suit of polished semi-magical stone and woven layers of force magic designed to counter massed firearms. The coiling, gurgling force fields seem to cover the suit in rippling waves of viscous liquid.

Force field • Incoming high vel-

ocity & energy attacks suffer [-].

Strength servos • +5 strength.

Vital 30 • Grants 30 life.

11. Obsidian Chameleon Suit

5 ha / 2 st / €3d6 x 3,000

A rough, pebbly synthetic skin overlaid on a fungal golem metaskelton. Designed for agility and covert operations.

Camouflaged • Incoming ranged attacks suffer [-].

Neurogolem • +3 agility.

Vital 60 • Grants 60 life.

12. Onyx Ghost Suit

5 ha & ka / 2 st / €6d6 x 10k

A ghost-infused golem suit of coiling onyx snakes and shifting spirit stones. As it moves, it whispers with hints of lives wasted and dreams destroyed.

Aura booster • +3 aura.

Ghost stones • Incoming ka damage is reduced [-].

Vital 50 • Grants 50 life.

13. Orangeland Glitterplate

4 ha / 2 st / €6d6 x 200

Flattering form-fitted breastplate of translucent ceramic reinforced with shards of hard light.

Fashionable • Also grant ba 2.

Ornate • [-] to ba damage taken.

14. Pointy Helmet

2 ha / 1 st / €3d6* x 20

A fine helm with the razor sharp horn of a labmythical beast.

Absorbing • Hero can use it to negate the damage from 1 critical hit. This destroys the helmet.

Pointy • Deals 1d8 damage with a charge attack.

15. Porcelain Prince Panoply

10 ha / 4 st / €3d6* x 400

A full suit of integrated ceramic-steel composite, best donned with the help of another polybody.

Mobile • Despite the weight, does not impede movement.

Reflective • Grants resistance to energy damage.

Tinkling • Clattering plates impose [-] to stealth tests.

16. Red Living Mail

4 ha / 2 st / €6d6 x 200

Chitinous, half-living armour of flowing arthropod links, infused with the biomanancy of the Living Flesh God.

Ancestral • Mail also grants ka 2.

Cool • [+] to tests against heat effects but imposes [-] to physical tests in cold environments.

Feeding • The mail feeds on flesh to repair itself. It can also gain mass, granting the wearer 5 temporary life per stone (max +10 life).

17. Siege Tortoise Suit

5 ha / 2 stone / €3d6 x 400

A powerful suit originally developed for Izvoreni siege troopers during the slow wars of the time-space lens tunnels.

Large • [-] to physical activities in confined spaces.

Siege hardpoints • Wearer can wield large weapons with a single hand. They can wield a siege weapon two-handed.

Strength servos • +2 strength.

Vital 50 • Grants 50 life.

18. Slow-Force Belt

3 ha / 1 st / €3d6* x 2k

An intricately four-dimensional belt that dynamically fractures space-time around the wearer, projecting a slow-force field around them. The kinetic energies of physical attacks are dispersed and misdirected.

Antikinetic • Ha attacks deal reduced damage [-].

Mildly aerostatic • The roiling force field reduces the effect of gravity on the wearer, effectively making them four times lighter.

19. Storm Infantry Shield

3 ha / 2 st / €3d6*

A large shield to absorb and deflect blows, laced with diffusers to disperse energy attacks. Painted with vivid and terrifying designs to recall the lost immortals of old.

Bashing • Can be used as an improvised melee weapon to deal 1d4 damage or knock an opponent back.

Breakable • Can be sacrificed to

negate damage from one attack.

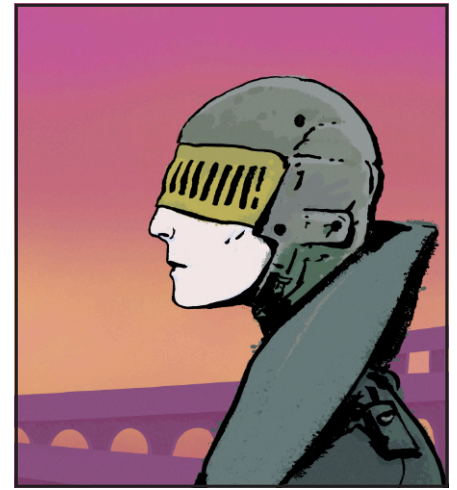
20. Vastlander Robes

1 ha / 1 st / €3d6*

A set of robes in the relaxed styles of the vastlanders.

Chitin weave • All incoming ha damage is reduced [-].

Cool • [+] to tests against heat effects but imposes [-] to physical tests in cold environments.



20 Example Wards

1. Accountant Monk Robes

5 ka / 2 st / €3d6* x 12k

Flowing accoutrements of the Cogflower Inquisition. Very little metaphysical nonsense can pass these mathematical threads.

Ascetic • Resistant to ba damage.

Lo-kinetic • Damper field grants resistance against melee and area attack damage.

2. Blessed Cap

1 ka / 1 st / €1d10 + 50

A cap in the style of a local sportsball military display unit, blessed by a technopriest.

Team colours • [+] to social tests with friendly teams and gangs, [-] with unfriendlies.

3. Hidden Stalker Ring

2 ka / 1 st / €1d10* x 200

The ring-shaped focus for a hacked reality encoder spirit uses ghost tendrils to enhance (hijack) the wearer's nervous system and project a chameleon field, making them harder to detect.

Chameleon field • Ring grants [+] to hiding and sneaking.

4. Jolly Poncho

1 ha & 2 ka / 1 st / €1d10 x 400

A bright yellow poncho with a hood. The edges are trimmed with geometric patterns and russet tassels.

Fortune in misfortune • When the wearer suffers damage they gain a boon [+] to spend as they will.

5. Machine Ghost Belt

3 ka / 2 st / €1d6* x 20

Looping, coiling links of living machine corpses, still sparkling with the ghosts of ancient sapience subroutines.

Ghost weave • All incoming ka damage is reduced [-].

6. Mirror-of-Heaven

9 ka / 3 st / €1d10* x 15k

A cerulean mirror hung on fine

chains of woven unicorn sinew in and the tears of the starborn.

Fragile • Physical damage is likely to break the mirror. Comes with a 2 stone protective plastic and foam case.

Spell-reflector • The wearer can spend 1d4 life to roll a ka or ha counterattack as a free action when a wizard casts a spell at them. If they beat the attacker's roll, the spell is reflected back against its caster.

7. Red God Robes

1 ka, 3 ka & ba / 2 st

/ €1d10* x 1,000

Elegantly fashionable robes in the second empire style ward off superstition, slander, and even the occasional stiletto.

Commanding • [+] to mental domination and charm attacks.

Spell control • Grants 2 levels for spell casting and corruption tests.

**TO ADD: More wards and
prestiges, to a total of 30.**

**TO ADD: More wards and
prestiges, to a total of 30.**

Inventing Defensive Gear

Creating new gear is a game all its own. It lets players doll up their characters while building out the setting.

Gear occupies a character's limited inventory space (defined by its size in stones). Therefore, the more defence an item grants per stone, the better its quality. An item's quality directly determines its price: it increases by an order of magnitude for each increase in quality. Price does not simply represent the cost of an item in a hypothetical store. It indicates how rare the gear is, how prized it is, and how accessible it is. Some valuable items may be entirely unavailable for purchase.

	QUALITY	DEF	SIZE	PRICE (€)
i	Improvised	1	1 st	1d6-2
ii	Basic	3	2 st	3d6*
iii	Good	2	1 st	10 x 3d6*
iv	Excellent	5	2 st	100 x 3d6*
v	Fantastic	3	1 st	1k x 3d6*
vi	Legendary	7	2 st	10k x 3d6*

And so on.

The price of gear can vary further:

Additional defence • For example, a gilded suit of mail providing ba and ha— increases the price by one order of magnitude.

Drawback • Shoddy, hot, cumbersome, or smelly—halves the price.

Benefit • Golem power-assisted servos, environmental resistance, or built-in intravenous potion dispensers—doubles the price.

Note, this is not a complete procedure for generating item prices for every situation, but a guideline. Actual costs also depend on setting and situation—which is why dice are used to determine price, rather than fixing it in advance. The top cat and players may invent reasons for prices. A merchant selling armour to a desperate soldier of fortune on the outskirts of the Erosion of War in the Ultraviolet Grasslands will charge more than one offloading equipment scavenged from the carnage trenches of Azure. Also, prices for different kinds of defences may increase at different rates, hinting at elements of the setting not otherwise explained in the text.

For bulk or common purchases, the players may use an average or consensus price instead of rolling each time.

Defensive Gear Modifiers

The defensive gear heroes find, buy, scavenge, create, and wear can have mechanical benefits and drawbacks of all sorts. Players can (and should) invent new modifiers as their heroes enter new regions and face new challenges. The modifiers presented here assume vaguely human heroes in a vaguely terrestrial environment. Other places and forms would, certainly, call for new modifiers.

1. **Breakable** • Wearer can sacrifice the gear to negate the damage from a successful attack.
2. **Camouflaged** • Gear blends in with the local environment, imposing [-] to ranged attacks against the wearer.
3. **Chromatyped** • Gear is vibrationally linked to a sacred colour (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, or violet). It provides resistance to damage from sources of that colour.
4. **Cool** • Gear designed for hot environments. Provides [+] to tests against heat effects but imposes [-] to physical tests in cold environments.
5. **Cumbersome** • [-] to stealth and other relevant physical tests.
6. **Environmental protection** • Secures against hostile environmental hazards like acid, diseases, radiation, or toxins. Provides [+] to tests against relevant effects. All-round protection is more expensive than against just one or two hazards.
7. **Environmental, closed-loop** • Completely insulates the wearer from their environment. Provides immunity against caustic agents, spore clouds, magitechnic radiation, or mental fallout.
8. **Exoskeleton** • Gear enhances physical activity, providing [+] to endurance and athletic tests.
9. **Flickering** • Gear is mismatched with the local reality, imposing [-]

- to attacks against the wearer
10. **Full-golem** • Gear, usually a suit, is a complete golem, capable of independent action. When worn, the gear's physical attributes replace the wearer's own.
 11. **Ghostbone** • Gear is enhanced to resist metaphysical attacks. Incoming ka damage is reduced [-].
 12. **Golem servos** • Gear uses specialized golems to increase the wearer's physical stats. Powered golem servos can be boosted to increase the effect.
 13. **Hi-kinetic** • Gear is surrounded by a damper field that provides resistance against high velocity and energy attacks.
 14. **Hot** • Gear for cold environments. [+] to tests against cold effects, but [-] to physical tests in hot environments.
 15. **Intravenous** • Set up to inject potions and elixirs directly into the wearer's body as a free action.
 16. **Jade** • Gear is endowed with the immortal essence of creation. When the wearer would suffer a burden, they can sacrifice the jade modifier to absorb it instead. The gear continues to function, but the modifier is lost.
 17. **Lo-kinetic** • Gear's damper field grants resistance against melee and diffuse attacks.
 18. **Masking** • Gear is empathetically tuned to reduce dissonance and breed familiarity, providing [+] to disguise and stealth tests.
 19. **Moon-forged** • Gear crafted in the radiations of a magical moon. When the wearer is bathed in moonlight, all damage against them is reduced [-].
 20. **Ornate** • Gear is beautifully decorated. All incoming ba damage is reduced [-].
 21. **Powered** • Uses an energy source, be it solar prayers, thermonuclear batteries, blood sacrifice or something else. When unpowered, it imposes [-] to relevant tests. A charge is expended after every conflict or significant exertion. Additionally, some defensive gear allows the wearer to spend additional charges for special effects.
 22. **Reactive** • Gear automatically reacts against one or more types of attack, inflicting direct damage against attackers.
 23. **Recycling** • Recycles the wearer's vital bodily fluids, providing [+] against the effects of dehydration and starvation.
 24. **Reflective** • Gear reflects heat rays, lasers, chaos beams, or other energy attacks. Wearer always takes minimum damage from the specified sources. Hits have a 1-in-6 chance to rebound into a random nearby target. Critical hits always ricochet into a random nearby target, with a 1-in-6 chance of hitting the shooter.
 25. **Shoddy** • Gear permanently loses a defence point every time the wearer is struck by a critical hit.
 26. **Shoddy, very** • Permanently loses a defence point every time it is struck for maximum damage or by a critical hit.
 27. **Smelly** • Gear is pungent, imposing [-] on social tests.
 28. **Spirit-boosted** • Gear uses bound ka-elementals or ghosts to increase the wearer's mental stats. Powered spirits can be boosted to increase the effect.
 29. **Sun-forged** • Gear crafted in the light of the new sun. When the wearer is bathed in UV radiation, all damage against them is reduced [-].
 30. **Vital** • Gear is metaphysically alive, boosting the wearer's life total. The gear's life total is tracked as a separate attribute from the character's life total.

Offensive Gear

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt.”

—Common lie.

Characters can fight without gear, but equipment increases their potency and provides additional abilities, particularly in combination with skills and traits. Practically there are three types of offensive gear: weapons (stones to break the ha), charms (sticks to bend the ka), and rhetorics (words to twist the ba). Though the different types all reduce the same attributes (usually life or, more rarely, stats), the narrative consequences of defeat in a conflict vary depending on the context and stakes.

Weapons

Bullets, swords, rocks, explosions, fireballs, gouges, and chokes. Attacks hurt the ha (body), but usually spare the soul and status of the target.

D10	WEAPON TYPE	EXAMPLES	DMG	SIZE	PRICE (€)
na	Body (Innate)	The fist, foot, punch, and kick of a moderately-effective, hero-sized character.	1d3	na	na
1-3	Basic	Knife, polished rock, sling, sturdy stick.	1d4	1 st	1d6-3
4-8	Civilian	Gentleman's club, town sword, pocket revolver.	1d6	1 st	2d6*
9-10	Military	Golem fist, ceramic blade, 1337-type pistol, heat ray.	1d8	1 st	10 x 2d6*
10/10	Excellent	Ghost axe, cat rifle, psychic sword, phorusrhacid lance.	1d12	1 st	100 x 2d6*
10^3	Exotica	Radiant gun, the roaring golem, microchain sword, dome ray.	2d12	2 st	500 x 2d6*
10^4	Legendary	White blade of the angelic machines.	2d12	1 st	1,000 x 2d6*

More powerful weapons may exist. Terms and conditions apply.

Charms

Charms inflict ka (metaphysical) damage. They may take the form of spells, curses, fear auras, gaze attacks, mental domination, bad luck traps, and daemonic weapons of hatred, prejudice, and temptation which attack a character's ka directly. Charms are often inordinately effective against daemons and ghosts, but they may be ineffective against alien opponents from radically different cultures who are invisible to the local weave of reality.

D10	WARD TYPE	EXAMPLES	DMG	SIZE	PRICE (€)
na	Gesture (Innate)	Curse-bearing gestures exist in every culture: evil eye, middle finger, raspberry.	1d3	na	na
1-3	Basic	Two sticks bound into a crude symbol, stone painted with the accursed gaze.	1d4	1 st	1d6-3
4-8	Decent	Engraved hog's skull, curse tablet.	1d6	1 st	2d6*
9-10	Strong	Miniature painting of a saint, crystal orb, silver-bound ward bone.	1d8	1 st	10 x 2d6*
10/10	Large	Regimental standard, monstrous head on pike, trombone of terror, drum of doom.	1d12	2 st	50 x 2d6*
10^3	Rare	17th cavaliers gong of gnashing teeth, Metropolis golem guard pillar of justice.	2d8	2 st	100 x 2d6*
10^4	Unspeakable	Tome of troubles, gaze of the autarch, night's pale terror.	2d12	2 st	500 x 2d6*

Some spells inflict metaphysical damage. Their power varies greatly, as does their cost.

Rhetorics

A character's wit and opponent's secrets or weaknesses are used in social conflicts. A potent weapon may be mere social position. However, though a character's rhetorical arsenal may be vast, it is always dependent on social context. Note that without an audience, social attacks may be useless.

Creatures without personalities are also usually immune to ba attacks.

D10	RHETORIC TYPE	EXAMPLES	DMG	SIZE	PRICE (€)
na	Tongue (Innate)	Common jibes, complaints, gossip, and slanders exist in every culture.	1d3	na	na
na	Money Talks	Money as ammunition. €1 deals 1d4 damage, €10 deals 1d6, €100 deals 1d8, etc.	var	var	varies
1-5	Membership	Dress, hat, or another symbol of belonging.	1d4	1 st	1d6-3
6-8	Respectable	Attire, badge of office, and other signs of respectability.	1d6	1 st	2d6*
9-10	Authority	Uniforms, plumed hats, pectorals, portraits, and other marks of authority.	1d12	3 st	10 x 2d6*
10/10	Scandalous Evidence	Proof or 'proof' of wrongdoing, e.g. a murder. Dead bodies can tell many tales in a world with necromancer lawyers.	1d20	1 st	1,000 x 2d6*

A feast, fete, party or other event hosted by a character can give [+] to their ba attacks or other benefits.

30 Example Weapons

1. Accelerated Flail

2d12 ha / 2 st / €2d6* x 500

#chain

A spiked head of spaceship metals encasing a dynamo-kinetic daemon accelerator attached by a chain to a long thrumming handle. What could go wrong?

Clumsy • [-] to attack rolls.

Guidance • Wielder can spend 1 action and 1 life to commune with the daemon accelerator. The accelerated flail then gains [+] to strike one target.

2. Amber Wandgun

2d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 100

#pistol

A genteel wand that discharges an arcing bolt of pain and fire.

Powered • Technospiritual prayer wheel batteries.

Ranged • Can attack nearby targets normally and far away targets with [-].

3. Big Game Gun

2d6 ha / 2 st / €2d6* x 100

#biggun

An infantry-portable heavy orichalcum projector traditionally used by Neoprimitive Human liberation fighters against the Farpower voyan war golems. Their manufacture has since passed into the gunsmithing lore of many cultural survivals from the misty aeons.

Armour Penetrating • Deals additional ha damage equal to a target's ha defence.

Long Range • No penalty to hit far away targets, [-] against adjacent.

Shells • Uses large calibre ammo.

Slow • If it fires more than once per round, the projector begins to overheat, increasing the chance of a critical failure by 1 each additional time it is fired. The projector cools down in a quarter of an hour or so.

4. Bourgeois Blade

1d6 ha or 1d8 ba / 1 st / €2d6* x 200

#sword

A posh sword, more status

symbol than weapon.

Decorated • Grants 2 ba defence.

5. Chain Sickle

1d6 ha / 1 st / 2d6*

#chain

A weapon developed independently several times during the great servile rebellion time split, it has since become a symbol of the Agricolyte Peasant Republics.

Disarming • [+] to disarming tests.

Hindering • [+] to tests to slow, trip, or otherwise hinder opponents.

Parrying • Grants 3 ha defence.

Two hands • Quite unwieldy.

6. Chainsword

1d12 ha / 2 st / €2d6* x 100

#chain

A ripping chain of shark-like metal teeth powered by a roaring golem hilt-and-gauntlet combination. An elegant weapon of the second zombie apocalypse renaissance.

Versatile • 2d8 damage two-handed.

Vorpal • Severs an extremity on a critical hit. Decapitates corporeal undead targets.

Zombie ripper • Deals double

damage to corporeal undead.

7. Crucifix Bow

1d10 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 20

#bow

A silent war crossbow used by the cloud empire survivals.

Arrows • Bolts as ammunition.

Ranged • [-] to hit far away targets.

8. Crystal Siege Rod

1d6 x 4 ha / 3 st / €2d6* x 200

#biggun

A smoke quartz disintegration ray amplifier housed in a heavily-glyphed brass and brazilwood casing.

Clumsy • [-] to attack rolls.

Degrading • Each die that deals maximum damage reduces an enemy's defences by 1 each.

Powered • Requires a crystal battery to function (5 charges).

Siege • Deals double damage to structures and heavily armoured vehicles or very large monsters.

Slow • Can only fire once per round because of rod charging times.

9. Ghostbone Axe

2d8 ha / 2 st / €2d6* x 200

#hammeraxe

An axe made from the bones of



3 Bonus Weapons

1. Baroque Plastic Rifle

1d10 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 100

#rifle

An overdecorated weapon from a less egalitarian age.

Ammunition • Electromagical caseless.

Long-Range • Can attack nearby and far away targets without penalties but suffers [-] to attack rolls against adjacent targets.

2. Boiling Lance

2d8 ha / 2 st / €2d6* x 4k

#polearm

A terrifying spear of spitting cerametal and vibrating energies. Its tip shines white-hot when the weapon is switched on.

Blood-boiler • The weapon's super-heated head cauterizes wounds, preventing infections.

Giant-slayer • Deals double damage to enormous creatures.

Gut-wrencher • Increased critical hit damage [+].

Reach • The wielder can use an action to counterattack before an attacker's roll resolves. Negates other reach modifiers.

Powered • Requires a powerful fictionium battery pack.

Versatile • Deals 1d20 ha damage when wielded two-handed.

3. Jade War Sceptre

1d8 ha or 1d8 ba / 1 st / €2d6* x 200

#rod

A mace head of polished green jade hardened by spiritual practices bound to a bright red brazilwood handle with wires of yellow gold—the mark of a wagonking.

Decorated • Grants 2 ba defence.

the Early World's shimmering titans. The energies still bound within these gifts of creation devastate abominations against the circle of life.

Balancer • Ignores all undead immunities and resistances.

Ghostbreaker • Deals increased damage [+] to incorporeal targets.

Two hands • It's that big.

10. Golden Hammer

1d10 ha or 1d10 ba

/ 2 st / €2d6* x 100

#hammeraxe

These glittering weapons of pure-printed novalloy are used as currency by the tribes of Newo Georgioi, who till the lands in mock agrarian idyll under the commanding gaze of the autofac Great Printer Marcus IV. The hammers are decent weapons, but the self-repairing novalloy can only be reforged into other objects by true oldtech autofacs.

Impressive • Pretty intimidating (deals ba damage).

Versatile • Wielded two-handed, it deals 1d12 damage.

11. Golem Bow

1d12 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 200

#bow

A war bow with a specialized full-arm golem harness that loads and draws the weapon for the archer. After the Steam Lords mandated augmented golem-multi-arm training for their free labourer caste from childhood, their piston archers revolutionized Long Sea warfare for a generation. Then the 3rd ansible revolution wiped out the Steam Lords.

Arrows • Arrows as ammunition.

Life-charged • Wielder can spend 1 action and 1 life to translate their will through the golem harness into the arrow. The bow deals an additional 1d12 damage on the next attack.

Ranged • [-] vs far away targets.

12. Horani War Maul

1d20 ha / 3 st / €2d6* x 1k

#rod

A big two-handed mace forged from the brainstone and neural column of an Iron War golem. Fortunately, few of those wrecks

remain in the Horaberg Colline Mountains, the traditional homeland of the Horani radical machinist collectives.

Big • [-] to attacks in confined spaces.

Clumsy • [-] to attacks when wielded by normal-sized people.

Two-handed • Yes.

13. Iksan Heat Ray

2d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 100

#energy #rifle

A ruby wand encased in a bakelite and ironwood amplifier casing. Originally mass-produced by the Reasonable Army, new heat-rays are usually ornate one-offs produced by crystal wizards for the luxury laser hunting market.

Infrared • Sustained heat-ray fire ignites fires.

Power curve • Heat-ray output is stronger at short range, dealing more damage [+] to adjacent targets.

Powered • Uses a red zircon crystal battery (7 charges).

Ranged • [-] vs far away targets.

14. Lignum Vitae Battle Stick

1d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6*

#rod

Carved and polished from the glowing heartwood of the heavy tree, the stick sinks in water. Widely used as a “compliance tool” by the imperial uplifters of the Four Sky Regency, it has remained a traditional badge of rank among the officer-chiefs of the regency camelherder tribes of the Pale Plains beyond the Yellowland.

Less lethal • Though marketed as non-lethal, this is a lie. Still, victims who make death tests after being whacked by the LVBS roll with [+].

15. Longeye Fusil

1d10 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 100

#rifle

A sniper rifle made to the specifications of the golem fusiliers by the drone human fabricators of the Crust Belt.

Ammunition • Brass cartridges, probably.

Long-Range • Can attack nearby

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and far away targets without penalties but suffers [-] to attack rolls against adjacent targets.

Precise • Wielder gains [+] to attacks if they have not been jostled or injured that round.

16. Lucite Spell-Breaker

1d4 ha or 1d4 ka / 1 st / €2d6* x 10

#rod

A small club or truncheon of pure lucite reinforced with sinew and copper bands.

Break spell • Wielder can sacrifice the spell-breaker to negate one spell targeting them.

17. Luminous Halberd

1d10 ha / 2 st / €2d6 x 50

#polearm

A glowing two-handed weapon favoured by the Bund-Bund warriors of the technopapacy.

Luminous • Deals increased damage [+] to creatures of darkness.

Spirit-ward • Grants 1 ka defence.

18. Magnificent Fireball Pistol

3d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 2k

#pistol

One of the most stupidly over-powered inventions ever fed into an autofac production matrix. The fireball wandpistols convert the dross of mortal life force into powerful balls of fire. Hardly a fair trade, in the eyes of the noble land barons.

Explosive • Damages creatures and objects adjacent to the target.

Life-charged • The wielder spends 1 life to fire.

Ranged • Can attack nearby targets normally and far away targets with [-].

19. Neoprimitive Bow

1d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6*

#bow

A hunting bow designed in a museum style from the lost ages.

Arrows • Arrows as ammunition.

Ranged • [-] vs far away targets.

Two hands • Requires at least two.

20. Plasma Knife

2d4 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 50

#energy #knife

An artefact salvaged from fallen fast stars and stranded cities. Its luminous blade slices through wrought-iron like butter and sears flesh it touches.

Grievous • Ignores damage resistances.

Overcharge • With a bit of judicious hacking, the power dampers can be disabled. The blade flares out, dealing 4d4 damage, but suffering [-] to attacks. In this configuration, the plasma knife burns 3 charges per conflict.

Powered • Uses dark crystal batteries (7 charges).

21. Stuckforce Shiv

2d3 ha / 1 st / €2d6 x 100

#knife

A shard of fractured force field held in uneasy equilibrium by a stabilizer pearl bound in jade cement. These blades are the residue of magical struggles beyond what anyone could imagine today; some say they are the leftovers of creation itself.

Vorpal edge • On a crit severs slender extremities or inflicts a gushing wound (burden).

22. Shock-sword

1d10 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 50

#energy #sword

A composite amber and ceramic blade, rippling with electromagical fields. Neon knight gangs use decorated custom grips and colourful auras to stand out from one another. Still, most shock-swords continue to be manufactured by a single levitating auto-factory called R.O.G.

Boost • Spend a charge to deal double damage for one round (free action).

Circuit breaker • Deals increased damage [+] to synthetics.

Mildly neuralgic • Stuns on crit.

Powered • Uses most standard crystal batteries (5 charges).

23. Soul-eater Nightblade

1d8 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 20

#sword

The spirit of the Eater in
Darkness dwells in this blade.

Soul-stealer • Reduces target's
level by 1 each time it hits.

Mildly possessed • The sword
gibbers and talks to itself.
Especially when silence would be
more helpful.

24. Steppe-ship Cutlass

1d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 4
#sword

A masterpiece of precision
engineering, the hilt holds an
array of valuable tools: corkscrew,
bottle opener, bread knife, butter
spreader, saw, nail file, nail
clipper, scissors, swappable
screwdriver, wrench, magnifying
lens, compass, and whistle.

Sword-breaker • The back of the
cutlass is notched. Opponents
with bladed weapons suffer an
increased critical failure range
(weapon breaks on a natural
attack roll of 1 or 2).

Tool • Useful in many situations.

25. Switchblade Revolver

1d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6* x 5
#knife #pistol

An ugly, snub-nosed affair.

Ammo • Oldworld brass
cartridges.

Concealed • [+] hiding the
weapon.

Ranged • Can attack nearby
targets normally and far away
targets with [-].

Stiletto • Can be used as a knife,
dealing 1d4 damage.

26. Synth Crystal Ray Rifle

2d8 ha / 2 st / €2d6* x 500
#energy #rifle

A massive thing of humming
compressors and radiating
batteries, it emits blistering
energy pulses.

Long-Range • Can attack nearby
and far away targets without
penalties but suffers [-] to attack
rolls against adjacent targets.

Power drop • Deals double
damage to adjacent targets and
increased damage [+] to nearby
targets.

Powered • Uses standard AA
golem batteries.

27. Trench Rifle

2d6 ha / 2 st / €2d6* x 50
#polearm #rifle

A heavy, sturdy weapon of oiled
wood and blue steel. Tipped with
a bayonet that could have been
mounted on a partisan.

Ammunition • Brass cartridges.

Long-Range • Can attack nearby
and far away targets without
penalties.

28. Utility Axe

1d6 ha / 1 st / €2d6*
#hammeraxe

A multitool axe in bright primary
colours in the styles of the
venerable Maintenance
Warguilds.

Tool • Besides chopping, the
utility axe also has levering
prongs and hammering surfaces.
May also have additional folding
tools in the handle.

29. Voidworm Tooth Knife

1d4 ha or ka / 1 st / €2d6 x 10
#knife

The flickering half-real tooth of a
void worm—a terrifying para-
creature that gnaws the
unrealistic wormways between
the worlds. The teeth wash up on
the shores of the Voidly Seas,
where the beachcombers of
reality polish them into blades.

30. Wizardly Quarterstaff

1d6 ha or ka / 1 st / €2d6* x 20
#polearm

A simple staff whose odd shadow
seems to fight ghosts in a spirit
realm illumined by strange suns.

Defensive • Wielder gains 1 ha
defence.

30 Example Charms

1. Automatic Prayer Wheel

2d8 ka / 2 st / €2d6* x 400

#powered

A holy text from the creation, as mediated by the Ill-Nano (updated King Scion version), encoded in a hexadecimal musical code on a blessed data cylinder. As it spins, it blares out the holy message as 4,096 bpm extratonal electronic music.

Anti-ancestral • [+] damage to the undead.

Anti-daimonic • [+] damage to daimons and spirits.

Hand Crank • Can be powered by hand, but requires an action to charge before every attack.

Powered • Uses a golem battery.

| *more to come*

Inventing More Offensive Gear

As with defensive gear, the lists of weapons, charms, and rhetorics only scratches the surface of possibilities. Players, particularly TCs, can invent equipment to make their game their own.

Again, prices depend on quality, and quality depends on damage output per stone. As a guideline, prices increase by an order of magnitude for every 30% or 50% increase in damage.

As with defensive gear, there may be other factors:

Additional damage type (price increased by an order of magnitude) • For example, deals both ha and ka damage, or deals stat and ba damage.

Drawback or negative modifier (price halved) • Requires ammunition or two-hands to wield, brittle manufacture or clumsy handling.

Benefit or positive modifier (price doubled) • Daemonic helpers, runes of fire, long range, increased damage.

	QUALITY	DMG	SIZE	PRICE (€)
	Improvised	1	1 st	1d6-2
i	Basic	1d4	1 st	1d6-2
ii	Good	1d6	1 st	2d6*
iii	Excellent	1d8	1 st	10 x 2d6*
iv	Fantastic	1d12	1 st	100 x 2d6*
v	Legendary	2d8	1 st	1k x 2d6*
vi	Astonishing	1d20	1 st	10k x 2d6*
vii	Awe Inspiring	1d30	1 st	100k x 2d6*

Et cetera.

Actual can vary further, subject to many factors, not least the TC's whim.

Offensive Gear Modifiers

The weapons, charms, and rhetorics the heroes use can also have all sorts of mechanical tweaks. As with defensive gear, players can adapt and create new modifiers to fit different characters, challenges, environments, opponents. For example, a small quarterling derivative would have difficulty wielding a war golem's sword, while a mouthless biocomputer might struggle with a thundering trumpet. All these situations cannot be covered by rules, hence the encouragement to invention and creation.

1. **Abrading** • Damage drops a die after dealing maximum damage.
2. **Ammunition** • Cannot deal damage without ammo. Unless otherwise specified, a box of ammo occupies 1 stone and costs one-tenth the weapon's price.
3. **Blinding** • Blinds the target for one round if any of its dice deals maximum damage. On a critical hit, the target may be permanently blinded (difficult agility test). Blinded targets suffer [-] to all relevant tests.
4. **Brittle** • Breaks after the wielder rolls a critical hit.
5. **Bursting** • Wielder can unload their charges or ammunition to deal damage to all targets in a small area. Targets take half damage if they succeed at agility tests against the attack roll.
6. **Chromopestilent** • Inherently hostile to a sacred colour (green, blue, violet, red, orange, or yellow). Deals increased damage [+] against that colour targets.
7. **Circuit Breaker** • Deals increased damage [+] to golems and synthetics.
8. **Clumsy** • Difficult to use, imposing [-] to tests.
9. **Crystal Bomb** • Charges slain foes with energies, causing them to explode dealing 1d6 crystal damage to nearby creatures.
10. **Daemonic** • Guidance daemons grant [+] to attacks per charge or life point spent.
11. **Death Eater** • Deals increased damage [+] to the dead and the undead.
12. **Devastating** • Damage dice increased 1 step.
13. **Explosive** • Damages creatures and objects adjacent to the target.
14. **Fragile** • Breaks when the wielder rolls a critical fail.
15. **Ghostly** • Deals increased damage [+] to incorporeal targets.
16. **Grievous** • Ignores damage resistances.
17. **Hindering** • Wielder gains [+] when tripping, shoving, slowing, or otherwise hindering targets.
18. **Intravenous** • Can be loaded with consumables, like aguasanté or fast-acting vome serum.

19. **Large** • Wielders suffer [-] to attack rolls in confined spaces.
20. **Long-Range** • Can attack nearby and far away targets without penalties but suffers [-] to attack rolls against adjacent targets.
21. **Loud** • [-] to stealth and hiding when used.
22. **Mounted** • Deals increased damage [+] when used while riding a vehicle or other steed.
23. **Natural** • Counts as an innate or unarmed attack.
24. **Necrotic** • Deathly energies deal 1 stat damage each time it hits.
25. **Neuralgic** • Causes acute, radiating pain that stuns the target. A stunned target loses 1 action unless otherwise specified.
26. **Powered** • Requires a technological power source. Deals reduced damage [-] if unpowered. A charge is expended after every conflict. Some gear allows the user to spend additional charges for special effects.
27. **Precise** • Gains [+] to attack rolls.
28. **Oversized** • Sized for larger creatures. Wielders who are too small must use both hands or suffer [-] to attack rolls.
29. **Ranged** • Can attack nearby targets normally and far away targets with [-].
30. **Rare** • A prized piece, it can deal its normal damage as base damage instead. If it can already deal base damage, it is increased [+].
31. **Reach** • Greater range than similar items. The wielder can use an action to counterattack before an attacker's roll is resolved. It negates other reach modifiers.
32. **Restricted** • Produced and controlled by a powerful faction. Use without approval imposes [-] to relevant social tests.
33. **Ripping** • Reduces target's defence by 1 each time it hits.
34. **Soul-stealer** • Reduces target's level by 1 each time it hits.
35. **Spell Locker** • Can store a spell as if it were a free inventory slot.
36. **Throwing** • Can be thrown at nearby targets without penalties.
37. **Two-handed** • Used with just one hand, imposes [-] to attack rolls.
38. **Vampiric** • Wielder gains 1 life every time it hits.
39. **Versatile** • Damage dice increase 1 step when used two-handed.
40. **Vorpal** • Severs or destroys an extremity on a critical hit.

Adventuring & Exploration Gear

“There are three types of magic in the Vast Lands. The godtech that gave us our world. The oldtech that was given to us with the world. The newtech that will set us free from the prison of this world.”

“What of the techné of the slowfolk, Masta Iuāna?”

“That’s not magic; that’s just primitive tinkering!”

—Iuāna and Ambivaric, *Dialogues*, Pato the Melder (294:b4–b6).

At the risk of being repetitive, characters’ relatively limited inventories are a crucial resource. Characters struggle to do everything they want because they cannot bring every single item, device, spell, or weapon into play—not because those items are unavailable or nonexistent.

The Vastlands are not a world like today or a world like a fantastic wild west reimagining of feudal Angleland or Saxony. Sufficiently advanced technology indistinguishable from magic is readily available, if very unevenly distributed. Most of the imaginary denizens of these worlds understand that magic exists, though none of them can understand how it all works. There is too much knowledge and complexity even for the hive minds and synthetic intelligences.

Availability of Gear

What this means is that there is no practical distinction between magical and mundane items. Some gear is very powerful (magical, sophisticated, charged with the source code of creation), other gear not so much. Somewhere in the imaginary world of the nigh-infinite Vastlands, an item almost certainly exists that can accomplish very nearly anything the players can imagine. As a result, trying to list all possible gear becomes impossible—players will almost certainly have to invent new equipment for their game. A question runners will often ask of the top cat is whether a particular item is available right here, right now, in this settlement or market.

The TC may ask for a group charisma test. Locating a common object would be trivial, a rare object moderately hard, and a very rare, exquisite object would require a very hard test. If the TC knows an item is not available, the test would reveal a clue to its location, pointing to a small side quest for the heroes.

Rarity and Price

Powerful and rare objects are often more valuable, ordinary and common ones less so—as decreed loudly and repeatedly by the Church of the Wholly Invisible Hand. But, of course, monopolies, guilds, secret societies, factory cults, fabricator conspiracies, and fanatical material acquisition corporations (famacs) do muddle up the anti-moralist prophecies of the church and other free-market fanatics. After all, what market could be truly free in a world where near-divine sentient polycorporates ensconced in floating mountains of doom try to control wormgate travel? This is why most gear is listed with exploding dice for generating prices. Who could know in advance what fad or financial hi-jink will suddenly spike the cost of the semi-sentient computing radishes used in the biomental farms?

D10	RARITY	GEAR EXAMPLES	PRICE (€)
na	Omnipresent	Autofab tschotschke, bottle cap, fossil widget, pamphlet.	nil
1–5	Common	Cut bottle, loupe, memory pebble, rope, sim-spice.	1d4*-1
6–8	Uncommon	Electric torch, organic saffron, pleasure vidy, scalpel.	2d10*
9–10	Rare	Mental audit kit, personal spirit brick, ten-horse autocart.	10 x 2d10*
10/10	Exquisite	Autochef, karmic brush, levitent, story inventor golem.	100 x 2d10*
10^3	Exotic	Etiquette synthetic, personal electric orchestra.	1,000 x 2d10*
10^4	Legendary	Brain extension pearl, library crystal, home fabricator.	10k x 2d10*

More expensive gear may exist. Fame and fortune await.

<SET TITLE>

1. Glottorc

1 st / €2d6 x 50

[#pectoral](#) [#semisentient](#)

A torc and earbud traditional daemon set for translating unknown languages. Its magnificent configuration of crystalline chips embedded in a Late Preservationist matrix of stolid matter runs a full-turing soulless personality specialized in real-time multi-thread translations.

Classicist • The standard glottorc daemon speaks and translates all the verified blue-check classical languages. It requires a couple of hours to learn derived languages. To learn entirely new languages the glottorc requires a significant data set or about a week.

Sixty Four Voices • The glottorc can translate up to 64 distinct voices at once, threading them faultlessly into the ambient soundscape.

2. Solar Lamp

1 st / €2d6 x 10

[#handheld](#)

A magic lamp that eats sunlight to illuminate a small area. Perfected in the Long Ago, many fabricators and craft-golems grow these lamps from generative matrices to this very day. A day's worth of insolation gives a night's worth of illumination.

Solar-powered • Feeds on sunlight.

Consumable Gear

“No, Groober, don’t eat ... the steering wheel.”

—Khans’ last words on aerobus 3:14.

One could argue that all gear is consumable, for entropy comes for all in the end, but this is not the section for philosophy. Instead, it is something of a miscellany, collecting all the gear designed to be consumed, destroyed, and otherwise used up through a character’s actions.

Tracking consumables during play can quickly become a chore. Whenever this threatens to become the case, the players are encouraged to handwave the details and move on. For example, if they need to figure out whether some resource was used up, they can flip a coin and move on.

However, sometimes tracking consumables is useful. It may force tactical tradeoffs, offer resource scarcity challenges, or provide tension and danger in a scene. Consumables are abstracted into two categories:

1. Single-use gear that is used up to create a one-off effect. For example, a grenade or a healing tab, which are removed from the inventory after use.
2. Multi-use gear that can be used to create effects several times. For example, a box of ammunition, a power pack, or a medikit. This uses the ‘13 runs out’ procedure whenever the player rolls a relevant natural 13.

Practically, the same kind of item can fit into both categories. After all, any multi-use consumable item is just a number of uses away from being a single-use item. The difference between a baker’s dozen of grenades and a last grenade is one violent fight. In the item descriptions some gear is described as single-use, other as multi-use. If players need to convert between one and the other, they can assume that multi-use statistically means 10 uses.

13 Runs Out

As the ghouls charge, the character gets ready to fire and realizes they are down to their last bullet. The flutter makes for an interesting landmark, but the pilot realizes its power pack is low, and if they make this detour, they won’t reach their destination. The ‘13 runs out’ mechanic emulates these situations when making tests that rely on a limited resource.

1. The player declares an action that uses a consumable.
2. The character rolls a natural 13.
3. Whether the test succeeds or fails, the character realizes this is their last resource unit—the last bullet in their gun or the last 5% in their personal divinity device’s battery.
4. The player decides whether the character takes the planned action, spending that last resource, or pauses and takes another suitable action.
5. If the character spends the resource, the action unfolds normally, and the consumable is removed from their inventory.
6. If the character saves the last resource, the player marks it to indicate it is now effectively a single-use item. The character may then take a suitable action—for example, instead of firing a gun, they might defend; instead of striking with a plasma sword, they might tackle their opponent.

A character who truly wants to avoid running out of a resource can also spend an available hero die to increase the natural roll. This might be an excellent tactical choice when facing an on-rushing ghoul horde.

Optional: 13 Hunger

For a harsher play experience, players can extend the '13 runs out' mechanic to their characters' physical bodies. For example, climbing a mountain, abseiling down a cliff, or deciphering a complex puzzle would tire out most physical human bodies.

Whether the test succeeds or fails, the character realizes this will exhaust them, and they need to eat and/or drink.

The character then chooses whether to back off the attempt or remove a unit of rations from their inventory. If they have no rations available, they suffer a burden of exhaustion or a burden of hunger, which imposes [-] to physical and/or mental activities until the character has rested or eaten, as relevant.

This seems a little silly at first glance—the character is not suddenly struck by hunger while in a cliff face and possessed to wolf down their last sandwich. Either the character ate the sandwich before or after the cliff. Perhaps they attempted the bluff but realized they would be too tired if they climbed the whole thing and backed off. The game's narrative does not need to slavishly follow the chronological order of dice rolls and turns. The players can always stitch together a coherent narrative to explain the dice.

TO ADD: List of ammo and battery packs ... add in consumables section?

1. Spirit Paste

10 units / 1st /

#cream

A paste created from distilled ectoplasm, lucent lazuli, ancestor ashes, and ecologically sourced palmate airwhale ambergris. The paste grants a semblance of invulnerability when painted onto bare skin. Each unit of paste smeared onto the skin occupies one inventory slot.

Protection • Grants 1 ha and ka defence per painted slot.

Washes Off • Water and blood can wash away the paste. E.g., rain removes 1 unit of paste per hour.

Professional Gear

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1. Glottorc

1 st / €2d6 x 50

[#pectoral](#) [#semisentient](#)

A torc and earbud traditional daemon set for translating unknown languages. Its magnificent configuration of crystalline chips embedded in a Late Preservationist matrix of stolid matter runs a full-turing soulless personality specialized in real-time multi-thread translations.

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Sixty Four Voices • The glottorc can translate up to 64 distinct voices at once, threading them faultlessly into the ambient soundscape.



EQUIPMENT: MAGIC & SPELLS

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Magic

“And that is how the leopard got its wings.”

—Anaxrma Voželava, *Just So Wizardry*, 3rd Edition.

Magic is everywhere in the Given World. It 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 is deep and old. Layers upon layers of misinformation and disinformation, reality alteration, and mad distortion coat the globe like the filth of aeons. Wheels and processes churn 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: great powers are waiting to be plucked free by a careless fool styling themselves wizard. But 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. Overcome life and death. Ascend to the heavens like the prophets of old. Reawaken the glittering sky cities. Journey beyond the veil of the 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.

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. **Practically, they are treated as a kind of equipment.**

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 × Spell Power

Different heroes may incur different magic costs. For example, an explorer with a magic cost of 2 summons a 3rd power *Thornstone Obelisk*. They pay 6 life or any mix of life and stat points. A witch, with a magic cost of 1, casting the same spell pays only 3 life.

The spell caster’s player narrates the details of the procedure. The hero might cast a spell by reading aloud from a book or dancing to summon a demon. On the other hand, they might just light some dribbly candles in a special order.

Spell Power

Some spells are more potent 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 higher power spell than the hero’s level.

Anyone Can Cast Spells

Any hero can try to cast any spell, whether they have a relevant skill or not, so long as they pay the spell price. If they lack a relevant skill, spell casting is more challenging. The spell price is doubled, and all spell die rolls are made with disadvantage [-], including corruption rolls.



Spell Albums

Shortly before choking to death on a chicken bone at the Pelegrine Festival of Beaux Magics, the abmortal and much revered grand magus Anaxrima Voželava published the famous 6th Final Edition of *Just So Wizardry: Magic for Beginners*. There, she arranged the 79 approved magics and 21 incidental spells into twenty canonical albums corresponding to the 20 official vedas.

Ever since, some have arranged their own spells into albums. Just as many have ignored the whole idea and gone their own merry way. Still, for the laity, spell albums lend magic an illusory sense of order and reason. In Seacat spells are organized in albums for convenience, not because heroes are restricted to that album of spells by their skills.

Core Spells

Each magic skill (*veda*) has at least one associated core spell that a hero gains automatically if they have a rank in that skill. Some spell albums contain multiple core spells. In that case, a hero must choose one for their free starter.

Dangerous Magic

All magics with a #dangerous tag or higher power than a caster's level are dangerous. When the caster uses such a spell, 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 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 [+].

Magic corruption twists the body, abrades the soul, and changes the personality. The mutation tables (pXX) determine how it manifests.

Acquiring New Spells

Heroes gain new spells by exploring strange artefacts, as treasure, or as payment for their work. Some simple spells might also be available for purchase from the right purveyor of intergalactic planetary other-dimensional ... erm ... their eccentric wizard corner store. 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 works, and it is now dangerous for them. The hero then immediately makes a second test to see if the spell's first trial casting has corrupted them. If the spell was already tagged as dangerous before the hero tried to learn it, they would suffer disadvantage [-] on their corruption test.

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. Perhaps just the weight of malign knowledge or the pain of an ontogenic nanite injection.

The burden isn't used up during casting. It can be stored elsewhere, but a hero can't cast a spell that is not in their inventory. Some rare tomes are valuable solely because they let a hero carry multiple spells in a single inventory slot.

Anatomy of a Spell

Melistoma's Dispossession

#daimon #dialogue (tags)

Out, damned blight! Out, I say!

The wizard cloaks themselves in the blue and green pigments that daimons fear and daubs their fingers with catfish fat. They then approach a daimon's victim, waving four magic incense sticks, one for earth, one for sky, one for wind, one for green. (casting description)

P2 • The wizard draws a possessing daimon into dialogue to convince them to end their possession. (power 2 effect)

P4 • The wizard adds a second of their mental stats (aura or thought) to their test to impose their will on the daimon and force them to leave their victim's body. (power 4 effect)

P6 • The wizard also adds their third mental stat to their test.

P8 • The wizard now also adds a physical stat to their test. Wrestling with daimons, baby.

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

*The **tags** categorize the spell according to commonly relevant skills, attributes, or mechanical traits and modifiers.*

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

*The **power and effect** describe how the spell works based on how much life the hero pours into it.*

Common Spell Modifiers

Some spells are designed with mechanical quirks that change how they function. As players create their own spells, they are encouraged to invent and develop new mechanics of their own. If something doesn't work well in play it can always be changed later. When a spell's modifier has no special rules they can be marked with just a tag.

Anchor • The spell creates a physical anchor, which the caster stores in their inventory to keep the spell active and controlled. Destroying or losing the anchor ends the spell (or worse).

Attack • The spell is cast as an attack action. A caster uses their relevant magical skill to test against their foe's defence and affect them. If a spell targets other attributes than defence, this is usually spelt out.

Dangerous • The spell forces a test to avoid magical corruption every time it is cast. Applying this tag to more spells is an easy way for the players to restrict certain kinds of magic within a setting.

Focus • The spell requires focus to stay active. A caster must spend an action every turn, or the spell ends. A caster 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 • The caster keeps an imbued spell active so long as they reserve the vital essence (life or stat) spent casting the spell. Reserved essence reduces the caster's maximum life or stat and cannot be recovered until the spell ends.

Item • When a caster creates a magic item, they use the spell to lock their existential force (life or stat) within a physical object. Locked force reduces the caster's maximum life or stat and can only be recovered when the magic item is disenchanting or destroyed. This is similar to the imbue tag, except a hero cannot end the spell at will—they have to disenchant the item. Simple examples of magic items are magic swords, rings, and wands.

Regular • A spell that uses only the standard magic rules.

Casting Parameters

Casting any spell may involve multiple parameters. Individual spells and powers specify as much as possible, but magic, by its nature, creates edge cases in play. Players will have to interpret results that make sense to them, with the top cat sometimes exercising their power of arbitration.

Casting Time • Unless otherwise specified, a caster takes one action to cast a spell. Characters usually cannot cast spells with casting times longer than a round (however long it is) in the heat of conflict.

Ending A Spell • Casters can end most spells without an action. Disenchanting a magic item always requires at least one action.

Spell Durations • Spells are instantaneous in effect unless otherwise specified. Most durations are specified in real-world units of time or rounds. Some spells last until a condition is met (e.g. until the next sunrise, until the door is opened). When a spell's duration runs out it fades away with a mildly hallucinatory dissonance.

Spell Ranges • Spell ranges and areas of effect may be phrased in the abstract, using zones of action (here, near, there), or real-world units. Spells with a range of self, zero, or nil can only affect the caster. Those described as having a melee, touch, or adjacent range can only affect targets the caster can or could reach with a limb.

Targets

A spell affects all creatures and objects in its area of effect unless otherwise specified. When a caster targets an unwilling creature, they must succeed at a relevant test for the spell to take effect. In conflicts, this is usually a test against the target's appropriate defence. As with any attack, if a target is bound or restrained, no test is required, e.g., a vampire bound in silver or a xenophorm [sic] safely embedded in an artificial chest.

Adjudicating Spells

When the TC is unsure how many targets a spell strikes or how far its effects reach, they should use dice as oracles. For example, with a fireball they might declare, "it strikes the baker's dozen of goblins. Roll 2d8 to determine how many are within its blast radius."

If the targets were tightly packed, the number might double. If keeping their distance from one another, the number affected might be rolled with [-]. If the targets were tiny, a fireball might engulf more of them, while a storm of daggers would injure fewer. If they were huge, the effects might be reversed.

It's usually better to find a quick answer with dice than to spend time calculating a precise answer. Consistency is good, but playtime is more precious.

Hacking Spells

When a hero doesn't have a relevant veda skill but has another skill that could potentially (with some creativity) also be used to cast a spell, they can hack the spell. This involves spending 2d4 weeks of game time tinkering with the spell, then a hard thought test to successfully adapt the spell to their skillset. A relevant trait, like fool's luck, may apply.

D20	SPELL HACKING TEST
1	Hero fails miserably and will never succeed. Gains 1 mutation.
2-3	Hero fails laughably, cannot try again. Test against corruption.
4-7	Hero fails. Easy test against corruption.
8-11	Failure and trivial test against corruption.
12-15	Partial failure. [+] to next spell hacking test.
16+	Success! Hero has hacked the spell and adapted it to work with their existing fantascientific skills! Player describes and names their novel spell variant.

When a hero successfully hacks a spell, their runner narrates how it works and how they have modified it. Every 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 the hacked spell after their hero.

art!



Inventing a New Spell

“He gains his powers from afar, and built a gateway to the stars.”

—Arjen Anthony Lucassen’s Star One, *The Eye of Ra*, Space Metal (2002)

When inventing new spells, players should 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 develop ideas, players can use a book or movie or song title for the initial creative jolt, then mix it with another piece to reinterpret what kind of spell the titles could produce.

For example, take an album title like *Nonadaptation* and a song title like *Enter Sandman*. The second title suggests the elements of silicon and sand. Inorganic things. Perhaps something like the spell below.

Enter Sand Cloud

#elemental #focus #nature

The wizard rocks back and forth for several seconds. They then decohere into a silicate sand cloud held together by strange forces.

P3 • The wizard ignores severe heat and cold and survive without oxygen while in cloud form. They still get thirsty, tired, and hungry as usual.

This is a cute 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: the hero has to focus, spending an action each round to keep the spell active. The spell is also quite expensive, costing most heroes 6 life. Enough to think twice about overusing it.

Setting Spell Power For New Spells

Spell power determines at what level a hero can cast a spell safely and how much vitality (life and stats) it costs to cast. Most heroes won't exceed level 9, and their combined life and stats will not exceed 70 points. This makes it easy to adjust how accessible a spell is, considering the standard magic cost of 2.

Power 0 (P0) • This spell requires no sacrifice. It's equivalent to an ordinary action, like running or firing a pistol. A spell with a power of 0 can be used at will by any hero. Players should keep such spells specialized.

Power 1 (P1) • A 3rd level hero could use this spell about 13 times before running out of life and stats. It can be a little bit more valuable than mundane equipment or actions.

Power 3 (P3) • A 3rd level hero could use this spell just 4 times before running out of life and stats. This is not an ability they will use often. It can be significantly more potent than mundane actions and allow interesting local changes to reality's fundamental rules.

Power 7 (P7) • A 3rd level hero could reliably use this spell once, and even a 9th level hero might only pull it off five times. A spell this powerful could automatically disable enemies or make visible and (semi-)permanent changes to reality.

Power 11 • A 3rd level hero could cast this spell once at great cost and risk. It would be dangerous even for a 9th level caster. Such a spell might be the stuff of fairytales: decades of slumber, exploding mountains, small iron stars falling from the sky, drastic reality changes.

Power 21 • A spell likely to corrupt any mortal. The power to rewrite histories and transforms aeons.

Power 42 • A spell the mightiest half-god magus might cast once, giving their lives in the process.

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. When that happens, the players should discuss what to do together. There are many options short of banning the spell:

1. Make the spell dangerous.
2. Increase the spell's power rating.
3. Adjust the spell's efficacy: 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 are a half-understood mish-mash of fantascience requiring rare components, half-understood rituals, and goldilocks conditions to activate. Just like in the story of Jekyll & Hyde, the wizard discovers that something has changed, and the experimental spell is no longer as effective. Or, perhaps, its destructive properties only became apparent after a period of careless use. Just recall how radioactivity was prescribed as a cure-all in the early 20th century.



perhaps the white ape doctors
from the ziggurat of space and
time?!



Twenty Magic Albums

“First it was Chaos, and next broad-bosomed Earth.”

—Hesiod, *Theogony* (116: The Cosmogony), translated by J. Banks

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 more profound 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 catalogues 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 semblance of thematic consistency for a wizard. Wizards are encouraged to remake and remix their own canons. And, of course, the greatest heroes write and compile their own spell albums to become true rockstar wizards in their turn.

Note! A spell album contains spell recordings and reproduction instructions. To manifest a spell, the wizard requires suitable equipment (aka. the spell burden). Much like a phonograph record in a decorative limited edition case, the album is of little use without a suitable high fidelity gramophone.

Spell Album Formats [d20]

Over the aeons, many popular album formats have developed. The runner may choose or roll for their hero’s starting album. If they want to invent something different, that’s great, too.

D20	FORMAT	FIRST IMPRESSIONS	CONSUMER REVIEWS
1	oldtech computer	howls while accessing underworld cloud	demon-haunted
2	synthskin cyber fiche	fiddly to read on the move	requires micro-lens reader
3	vials of memory fluid	reading causes a euphoric high	needs refueling
4	baked clay tablets	heavy and nigh-indestructable	infested with memories
5	tattooed skin	phosphorescent and highly visible	requires reading assistant
6	bundled bone scales	iridescent, beautiful, and probably a living dragon’s	looks like valuable cash
7	parchment codex	bound in silver chains and cautionary tales	corrupted arcane sigils
8	brazen clockwork	played with gears and levers	sings when used
9	mass-market paperback	tatty, yellow, with very thin sheets	disappears and reappears unpredictably
10	plastic paper scroll	ornate ritual reproduction	keeps coming loose
11	preserved head	professorial spell slave in a jar	strong opinions on poetic politics
12	crystal-laced slab	ostentatious jadeite matrix	corroded by fae memories
13	compact phonograph	encased in highly collectible protective cover	skips records if jostled
14	artificial mycelial mass	produces hallucinogenic fruiting bodies	prone to overgrowth
15	knotted net record	doubles as a scarf or flag	coded in bureaucratic triplicate
16	vomer nasal stimulator	bottled with aerosol spray nozzle	alien tastes
17	pearlescent implant	suggests trepanation for best interface effects	autocorrected keyword blocker
18	tactile interface cylinder	vantablack surface inscrutable from a distance	fiddly gesture interface
19	mirrored glasses	project augmented reality spell codes	freemium microtransaction model
20	memory daimon	bronze statuette with double wings, dog’s head, scorpion’s tail, taloned feet, and a snake for privates	requires host neural network

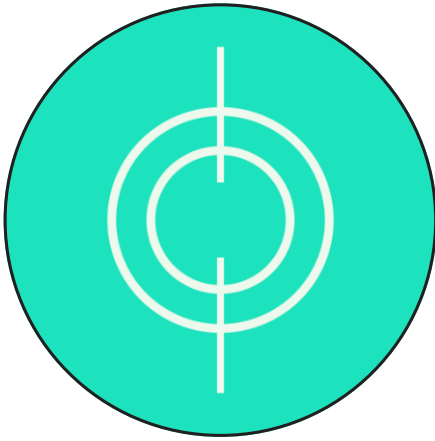
1. Veda of the Abmortal Sanatry
2. Veda of the All-Chemist
3. Veda of the Awakened Sphere
4. Veda of the Biomechané
5. Veda of the Cosmic Architects
6. Veda of the Existential Void
7. Veda of the Flying Serpent
8. Veda of the Golemmafexes
9. Veda of the Iron Symphony
10. Veda of the Law Necromantic
11. Veda of the Light Held Fast
12. Veda of the Mother Electric
13. Veda of the Old Technologies
14. Veda of the Plant Kings
15. Veda of the Rightmaker
16. Veda of the Seeming Becoming
17. Veda of the Seven Summons
18. Veda of the Soul Breaker
19. Veda of the Witching Song
20. Veda of the World's Word

synopsis of 20 albums + symbols

...

or do the actual album covers?

D20 STANDARD VEDA	POPULAR ALBUM	COMMON RANK 1 SPELL	GENRE
1 Veda of the Abmortal Sanatry	Abmortal Sanatry	Parasoma Transference	
2 Veda of the All-Chemist	Black Earth Juice	Reality Decryption	
3 Veda of the Awakened Sphere			
4 Veda of the Biomechané			
5 Veda of the Cosmic Architects			
6 Veda of the Existential Void	Empty Words	Hole in Time	
7 Veda of the Flying Serpent			
8 Veda of the Golemmafexes			
9 Veda of the Iron Symphony			
10 Veda of the Law Necromantic	The Necrolexicon		
11 Veda of the Light Held Fast			
12 Veda of the Mother Electric	Amber Child		
13 Veda of the Old Technologies			
14 Veda of the Plant Kings			
15 Veda of the Rightmaker			
16 Veda of the Seeming Becoming			
17 Veda of the Seven Summons			
18 Veda of the Soul Breaker			
19 Veda of the Witching Song			
20 Veda of the World's Word			



Abmortal Sanatry

"Death is a malfunction."

—Doc Zhiva Longue

At the pinnacles of oldtech magic, some humans became abmortal. Barring accidents, the best of them could expect to live forever. When hearts failed, they could be regrown. When ennui threatened, minds could be refreshed. When existential terrors threatened, meanings could be reaffirmed.

Titles [d8]:

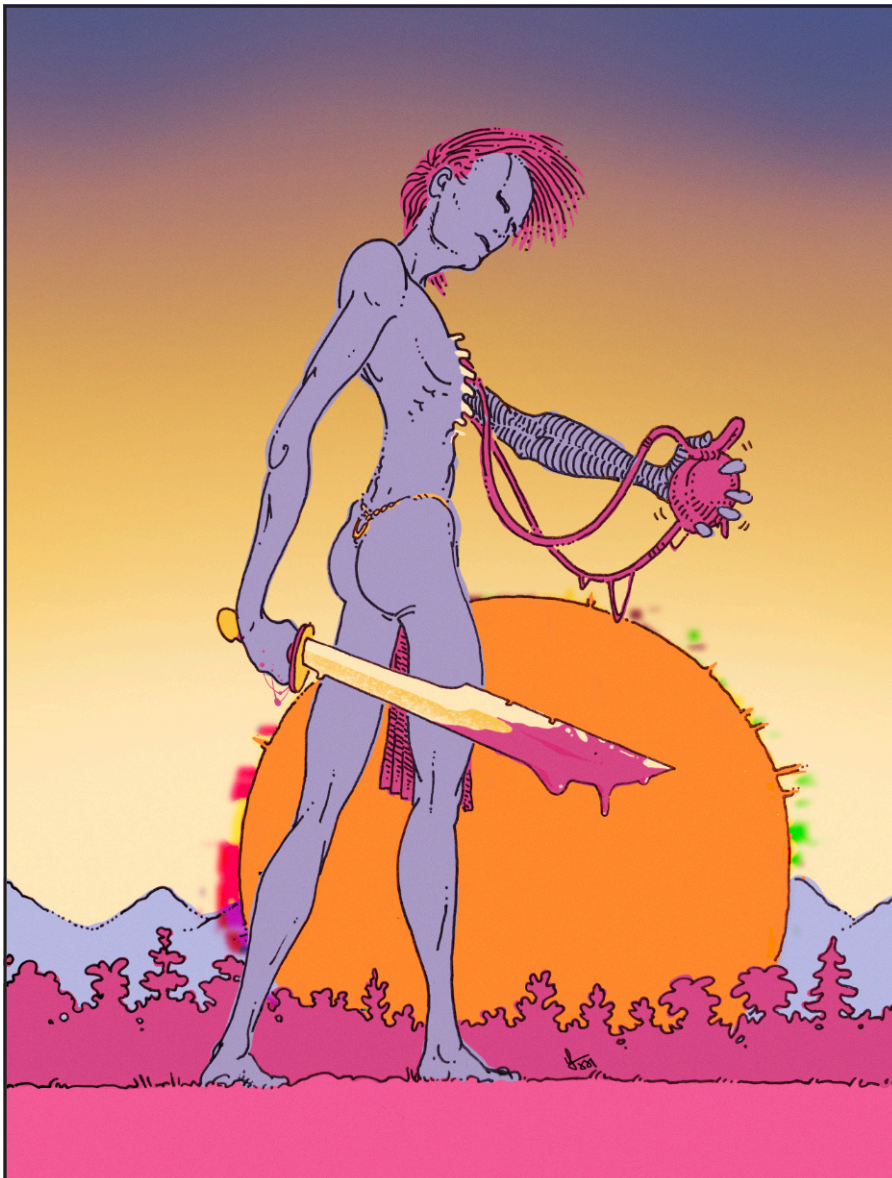
1. Sanator
2. Neoleech
3. Medeorite
4. Hsu Doru
5. Zdarovar
6. Serapefti
7. Iatric
8. Wissa

Common Sanatric Modifiers

Transfer • This spell transfers attributes between donor & recipient targets. If both are willing, success is automatic, but the caster must test to succeed when any target is unwilling. When neither target is willing, the wizard suffers [-].

The Eucrasic Oath suggests that transferring attributes between unwilling sentiences is a bad thing.

Telemagic • The wizard can perform the spell using a vidy crystal or other telecommunication magic. An unwilling target imposes [-].



1. Burden Sharing Arrangement

#telemagic #transfer

Let me bear your cross.

The wizard undertakes a spiritual voyage into a creature's essential existence to remove their burden. Doctors may dress up the simple metempsychic rite to justify higher fees.

P1 • The doctor's ka embarks on its voyage through the creature's eyes or other primary sense organs. Over several hours they remove a burden from the target and convert it into a **healer's burden** stored in an adjacent creature's aura.

P2 • Rite takes about half an hour.

P3 • Rite takes a few minutes.

P4 • A dozen seconds.

Healer's Burden • The wizard encysts a spirit stone in the aural body. It imposes [-] to all tests with one stat. It is otherwise harmless and dissipates without long-term damage to the bearer.
Sloppy Transfer • The wizard performs the rite in half the time, but deals 1d6 damage to both donor and recipient.

2. Healing Sleep

#telemagic

Where did you dream last night?

The wizard performs an hour-long rite to douse the patient's aura and send their essential hakaba code through the gates of horn and ivory to heal in the presence of the oneiroi Quiescus and Sanatos. A patient could be mistaken for dead while their aura is doused. When the code returns to their incarnation, they awaken refreshed, and one of their burdens dissipates.

P1 • The target is helpless, nigh-soulless, for three days & nights.

P3 • The target is helpless for a day and a night.

P5 • Helpless for six hours.

P7 • Helpless for an hour.

3. Metempsychosis

#telemagic #transfer

Live. Die. Live again.

Though individual abmortals may expect to live forever, accidents do happen. Fortunately, the finest of

sanators have a solution: transmigration of the hakaba code. The wizard breaks down a patient's essential structure and translates it into another nearby physical form. For best results, the latest incarnation should be a replica of the original, but thrifty abmortals have made do with crude golems, animals, and even crystals or vats of memory liquid.

P1 • Budget transmigration. The wizard immerses the patient in a frigid bath and spends one day translating one of their mental stats. This ritual damages the patient's source body, making translating their remaining stats more difficult.

P3 • Full-corpus transmigration. The wizard uses a gelid sarcolector to translate all of a patient's mental stats in one day. This destroys the original body.

P5 • Sudden action transmigration. The wizard **imbues** the patient with a translator parasite. It takes the parasite a day to embed, after that the wizard can translate all of patient's stats in a few minutes. This causes the original body to spontaneously combust.

P7 • Telemetempsychosis. The wizard uses an **imbued** translator parasite entangled with a destination vessel. The parasite needs a day to embed, but after that, translation is nearly instantaneous, with a range of several hundred thousand kilometres. This causes the original body to violently combust.

Imbue Ka-ba Vessel • The wizard can imbue a body with the spell to accept the patient's essential code on trigger. The transfer can be auto-mated or initiated by the patient.

Intact Bodies • If the patient is intact and willing, the wizard does not need to test to succeed. Damaged patients make transigrations challenging.

Morphic Shock • Patients translated into different forms suffer psychophysical burdens.

Overwriting • If the destination vessel is an unresisting conscious creature, its mental stats are overwritten by this spell. However, if it resists, a psychic conflict occurs.

4. Parasoma Transference

#telemagic #transfer

The redirection of being.

What is life but the purposeful reordering of the underlying energy patterns of the Given World? The skilled wizard can transfer life from one creature to another using the principles of universal existential identity. The descended folk call this a life shunt.

The wizard touches two creatures and transfers up to their level in life points from one to the other. They can also transfer life directly from their own reserves.

P1 • Basic shunt. For each point transferred, recipient gains 1 life.

P2 • Enriched shunt. For each point, recipient gains 1d2 life.

P3 • Power shunt. Recipient gains 1d3 life per point.

P4 • Gains 1d4 life per point.

P6 • Gains 1d6 life per point.



Black Earth Juice

"The deathless taught us the ten keys that translate matter."

—Pseudo Thosimos

All existence in the boundless cosmos is information. The difference between the stuff of water and the stuff of iron is translation. Simple creatures believe that only gods like the sun and earth and stars can translate matter between one form and another. Awakened creatures know that knowledge and practice can bridge the chasm between human and infinite.

Titles [d8]:

1. All-chemic
2. Auranser aka. Golden Goose
3. Iksiricist
4. Matterite
5. Nucleotheologist
6. Scientific Materialist
7. Transubstantialist
8. Zero-point Muni

All-Chemical Modifier

Iksir • A wizard can use the substance of ten thousand names, the iksir, to modify this spell's effect. Each packaged dose is about the size of a capricorn beetle and increases a spell's effective power by one for danger tests but does not increase the spell price. Common iksir modifications include:

1. Range or area of effect increased or decreased by an order of magnitude.
2. Duration modified by an order of magnitude.
3. Spell affects an additional attribute.
4. Spell is automatically triggered by a specific condition.

Opus Box

1 stone / €2d6 * 500

[#box](#)

A class of artefacts handed down from the Long Long Ago, these black boxes execute nigh magical all-chemical operations under the command of wizards using the various discovered protocols. Even the wizards themselves do not understand what happens inside the black box. Some whisper that the containers hold demons, others that the brains of ancient wise ones are trapped within in amber like the children of the lizard people of old. Rumours often swirl of some technowizard or artefaber creating a new opus box, for every so often a new box, or even a batch of identical boxes, floods onto the oldtech markets.

Resilient • One thing is known for sure: the boxes are nigh indestructible (immune to physical damage), and none has ever successfully been used as an offensive weapon. Well, aside from serving as a brick to bash a greedy rival.

1. Create Iksir

#dangerous

We shall be as gods again.

The matter wizard creates pure white crystal form iksir from the zero point of creation itself. The required demiurgent protocols to make this process safe are considered lost.

P7 • The wizard spends an hour creating one dose of iksir.

P11 • A day creating 2 doses.

P13 • A week creating 4 doses.

P17 • A month creating 8 doses.

P19 • A year creating 16 doses.

Iksir boost • The wizard spends a dose of iksir to triple the amount of iksir created or speed up the ritual by one order of magnitude.

2. Extract Iksir

#iksir #opusbox

Fossil gods will fuel our dreams.

The matter wizard uses an opus box and the exemplar protocols to extract iksir and refine it into stable red powder form. The six accepted sources of iksir are:

1. Archaic machine hearts.
2. Abandoned ba-backup cores.
3. Inertia-suspension coils.
4. Distilled ka-essence of the three criminal orders.
5. Condemned dullway gate siphons.
6. Reprocessed false idols.

P1 • The wizard spends an hour refining one dose of iksir.

P2 • A day refining 3 doses.

P3 • A week refining 9 doses.

P4 • A month refining 27 doses.

Iksir dose (item) • The extracted iksir is entangled with the wizard's essence. They recover their imbued life force after using up all the iksir.

3. Indivisible Cleaver

#iksir

Breaking reality.

The wizard uses the protocols of the ten translations to reach into the indivisible heart of a material object and break it. This releases creative forces, which can be rather destructive.

P1 • The wizard caresses a soap-sized material object and causes it to break down over one hour.

First, it is weakened, then it fractures, eventually it crumbles into dust or even sublimates.

P2 • The breakdown happens in a minute, releasing significant heat that sets flammable objects on fire and deals 1 ha damage to adjacent creatures each round.

P4 • The breakdown happens in a second. The object explodes violently and showers nearby creatures with shrapnel (1d6 ha damage). Adjacent creatures suffer double damage.

P8 • The breakdown happens in a sixtieth of a second. The explosion is more violent and deals 3d6 ha damage to nearby creatures, double to adjacent.

P16 • Even faster. The fireball excavates a crater, deals 8d6 damage to nearby creatures, double to adjacent.

P32 • Horribly fast. The object breaks down in one 216,000th of a second, and within a milli-second the fireball is tens of metres across. By 100 milli-seconds, it measures hundreds of metres. Using dice to simulate damage is pointless. The crater continues to glow with spell radiance for days, and the source codes of living creatures in the vicinity continue to be corrupted for weeks or months.

Iksir modification • The wizard can use a dose of iksir to delay the spell's trigger by a minute or so.

Living objects • The wizard needs to make a ha attack to touch an unwilling creature and trigger the indivisible cleaver within its physical form. The unfortunate target suffers quadruple damage from the spell.

4. Material Metatropy

#iksir

Modifying reality at the source.

The matterite magician uses the protocols of the eight keys to modify one attribute of a physical (ha) object; doubling or halving (or otherwise significantly altering) its mass, volume, temperature, density, colour, conductivity, malleability, or lustre of a material (ha) object without modifying its underlying chemical composition.

P1 • The magician spends a week to modify a handful of matter.

P2 • The magician spends a day to modify a handful.

P4 • An hour to modify a handful.

P8 • A minute for a handful.

Bulk metatropy • Modifying a bucketful of matter doubles the spell's power requirement. A sackful of matter triples the spell's power.

Iksir boost • A dose of iksir lets the wizard change an additional attribute during the same ritual, speed up the modification, or increase the bulk.

Iksir permanence • Spending doses of iksir equal to the spell's power makes the modification permanent.

Imbue • The matter remains modified so long as it is imbued with the essence spent by the spell caster.

5. Reality Decryption

Reading the ten keys of all matter.

The nucleotheologist uses the existential translations and the substance of perfect being to read a physical object's structure.

P1 • A few minutes of prodding reveals the physical composition of a soap-sized object.

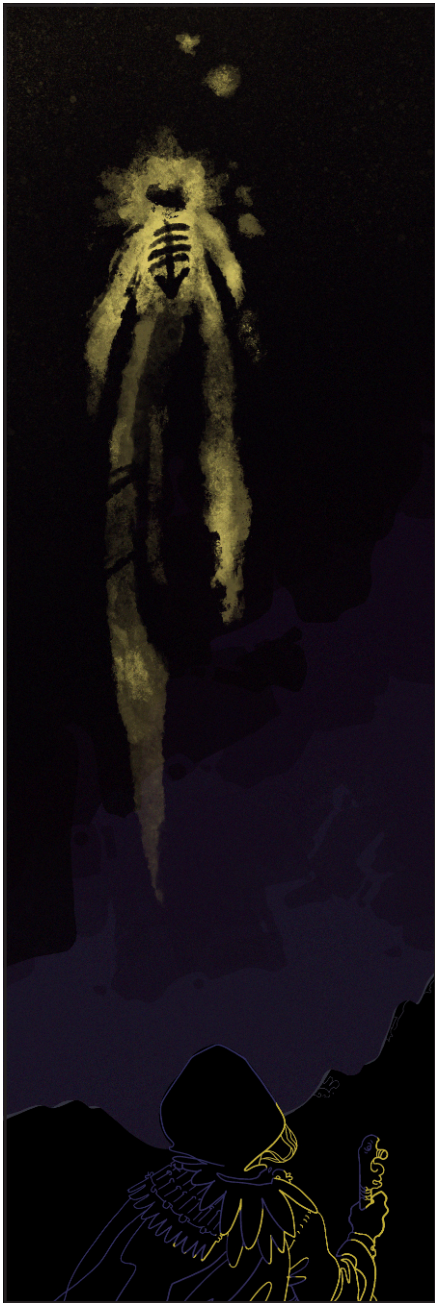
P2 • The wizard also discerns recent magical and mundane modifications of the object.

P3 • They can discern information by merely waving their hands around an object without physical contact.

P4 • The wizard also discerns the deep physical structure of an object, its flaws and strengths.

P5 • They can discern information at a distance, using a telescope or vidy link.

Opus box • Using a box halves spell prices (minimum 1).



Warning

Voidwalker spells deal with existential horror and nightmares. They skirt the edges of lovecraftian cosmic terror and the nihilistic realms beyond the tattered skin of normalcy. They are not suitable for every gaming group.



Empty Words

*All the wants you waste,
All the things you've chased.
... the castle's crumbled and you're left with just a name.*

—Metallica, *King Nothing* (1997), Load.

Out. Out beyond the fast stars and the slow. Out beyond the skin of reality. Out beyond the veil of reason. Out beyond the frame of time. Out beyond the ramparts of the cosmos.

Where imagination fails, the void dwells. Chaos, repetition, modulation. Words fail. The mind shatters. So far beyond good and evil that we might as well be an ant fighting a worm whether teal is better or thyme.

Why seek this unquiet edge? Why look under childhood's bed? Why dare the winds of limbo, all alone, all bereft?

The void offers no redemption to mortal or god.

And yet, the void warriors keep on. They journey the hidden paths. Brave madness and fast decay for their dreams of stars and hopes, mistakes undone, futures remade.

All who venture into the void are lost.

Titles [d8]

1. Akatast
2. Chasmancer
3. Gomr
4. Ill Hoyneh
5. Kozmohod
6. Starhiker
7. Verxario
8. Voidwalker

Common Cosmic Modifiers

Mundane • The spell rewrites reality so that its effects are utterly non-magical. Without chrono-temporal engineering, the changes are permanent.

Revelation • The spell cannot be learned; it can only be communicated through a transformative act of revelation. A character cannot typically remove a revealed spell, as it is inscribed in their existential being.

1. Hole In Time

#mundane #dangerous

Kick a hole right in the sky.

Between one step and the next, the voidwalker flickers between existence and non-existence. Where did they voyage in the time between heartbeats?

P1 • The voidwalker ages a day and gains [+] to one test. If the test is moderate or easier, they succeed automatically. They have already succeeded so many times in so many worlds.

P2 • The voidwalker ages a week and has in their possession a helpful mundane object or simple information, such as a password or written directions.

P4 • The voidwalker ages a month and has a rare object or complex information, such as a map or instruction manual.

P8 • The voidwalker ages a year, and a person or town that did not know them before now knows and trusts them. They have spent many days and nights together, the walker coming and going, a fond visitor over the years.



2. Nothing Remains

#mundane

If you die before you wake.

With a gesture, the voidwalker accelerates entropy.

P1 • Fires turn to ash, batteries go flat.

P3 • Joints ache, vehicles slow down, iron rusts.

P9 • Houses crumble to rubble, lives burn out, diamonds dull and cease to shine.

P27 • Kingdoms end, sky castles fall, domesticated suns die out.

3. Open the Door of Worms

#imbue #revelation

Walk the wormways.

The wizard traces an outline on a surface. It shimmers and then erupts into a sucking doorway.

P2 • Door leads through a wall.

P4 • It leads through empty air from the wizard's hand to as far as they could shoot an arrow.

P8 • It leads through sheer wormspace to a point the wizard has visited before. Travel through wormspace always takes a week.

P16 • It opens directly into wormspace, letting the wizard exit anywhere in the Given World. Travel to places the wizard has not visited takes 1d4* weeks. Beware of grey paradox worms.

4. Voidblade

The sword of nihilism.

The wizard turns nothingness into a weapon, holding it together with spun filaments of their own life.

P1 • It deals 1d6 ha damage and leaves shadow scars.

P2 • It deals 1d10 damage and leaves burning wounds.

P4 • 1d12 damage and steals ba, removing 1 mental stat point per strike.

P8 • 1d12 damage and removes 2 mental stat points per strike.

Ba-zombies • Sentients without ba become ba-zombies. This may be evil.

Imbued weapon • Usually, the voidblade dissipates when the wizard stops imbuing it with their essence. Fed too many thoughts, it may refuse to be dispelled.

Sentient voidblade • The blade accumulates removed mental points as ba. The more ba it gains, the more sentient it becomes:

5 ba • As bright as a cat.

10 ba • Smart as a troglodyte.

15 ba • Refuses to be dispelled. Spell becomes an #item.

20 ba • Thoughtful as a daimon.

30 ba • Deals 1d16 damage.

40 ba • It demands regular soul sacrifice.

60 ba • It reveals how to *Open the Door of Worms*.



5. The Willing Void — Nihil Volunt

We made the singularity of not.

The voidwalker draws a circle of circles upon the air, encompassing a sacred void. As their life flows into this void, so it attracts other objects into itself.

P1 • The void pulls in nearby light objects. Pages, leaves, hats. Everything is slightly crumpled in the middle of the void.

P2 • Nearby cat-sized objects are drawn in swiftly, sustaining painful but harmless bruising as they are jammed together.

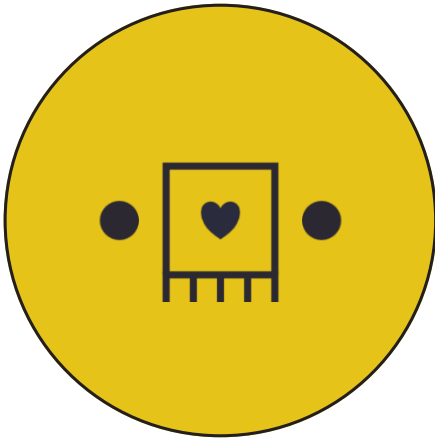
P4 • Pig-sized objects are sucked in from close by, thumping together with significant force in the middle of the void (1d6 damage). The crushing may suffocate unfortunates.

P8 • Horse-sized objects from quite a ways around are hauled into the centre at speed (2d6 damage), then mashed together, injuring them (1d4 per round)

P16 • Elephant-sized objects in a large area are swiftly pulled into the void, smashing together violently (4d6 damage) and beginning to congeal under the void pressures (2d4 per round).

P32 • Tree-sized objects in a large radius are sucked into the void, taking 8d6 damage and then igniting under the unearthly pressures (4d4 per round).

Imbued void • The hole in reality persists as long as the wizard imbues it with their life essence.



The Necrolexicon

In Turalia, we have solved the problem of the tax burden. Every child born is marked for the Office of Gifts, and when they grow old and die, their body joins the state workforce. Now, don't look at me that way. It doesn't stink at all. Within a dozen years, we figured out reliable ways to keep our ancestors working pretty without stinking up the whole place. What? Skulls? Bones? Of course not! Simple synthetic masks work wonderfully. You can barely tell whether you're passing a past-citizen or a now-citizen on the streets nowadays!

—*Oral History of the Golden Age*, Naüm Tosken, 6:12, *On Taxation* (Ermes 4ling, ed.).

In a world with complex gradations between life and death, with ghosts of a dozen hues, with personalities and souls translated from one body to another, necromancy has become almost humdrum. Indeed, it is crucial for answering legal questions: what to do with the valuable possessions, including bodies, of those whose souls (ka) and/or personalities (ba) have left, on the one hand, and how to administer the estates and properties of those ka-ba complexes whose bodies (ha) have departed.

Titles [d8]

1. Ancestralite
2. Animante
3. Duhotrag
4. Geistler
5. Knowforegoer
6. Necromancer
7. Soulherd
8. Spiritist

Dialogues With The Dead

Necromancy (from the Greek nekromanteía) means “divination by conjuration of the dead.” The beating heart, pun intended, of this old science is talking with the ba of the dead. These ‘ghosts’ are linked to the living world by their existential imprints—corpses, possessions, creations, deeds, and living memories. Forgotten creatures are lost to even the most adept necromancer.

Opening a communication channel is easy for a trained necromancer, but the attitude of the dead is hard to predict. The deceased may well refuse to talk with a novice necromancer. A ghost's approach is marked by strange signs, emotions, and hungers.

D20 CHA	GHOST'S ATTITUDE
≤1	The hungry dead attack. Corruption afflicts the hero.
2–6	Decadent dead refuse to talk.
7	Cruel dead offer answers in exchange for sacrifices.
8–11	Superficial conversationalist. Misses the weather.
12–15	Their attention grabbed. Gives at least one, if often evasive, answer.
16–19	The dead are compelled to answer.
20≤	Tricky words bind the dead to serve as guide and helper. Most dead can answer questions, but little else. Hero may imbue the ghost in a reliquary (1 power, 1 stone).

Reliquary

1 stone / €2d6* x 50

#box

A sacred vessel, perhaps a pouch, gourd, or jewelled box, with a fragment of a creature's former shell safeguarded within. The reliquary can be used to communicate with its attached ghost. Some of these holy boxes also have additional powers or features, and may come in various sizes.

Fragile • The reliquary takes double damage from attacks. When the bearer suffers area damage, they test agility to see if the box has survived intact.



Warning

Necromancy deals with death, ghosts, possession, and other questionable things.

1. Necrophony

#dialogue

*I am ... hearing someone ... a Joh ...
Jam ... Jack! Do you know a Jack?
Your dead brother? Yes, it's your
dead brother, Jack, talking to me!*

The dead-talker uses the shell or possession of a once-living thing—a bone, a tooth, a dead tree, or a pocket watch—to send their voice probing into the void-sea of non-existence, to tease out the remnants of consciousness. They roll their eyes, gnash their teeth, and speak in strange post-mortual tongues for a few minutes to find their ghost.

P0 • Only fragments and whispers come through. The conversation is poor. [-] to the ghost's attitude.

P1 • The voice comes through, barely strong enough for a normal conversation.

P2 • Drawn to the vis viva of the wizard, the ghost is eager [+].

P3 • The power of the necrologist forces three clear answers out of

the ghost, regardless of attitude.

P5 • The wizard's voice binds the ghost to stay and answer to them until the sun rises or sets.

P7 • The wizard eats the ghost and holds it captive in their mind, able to riffle through its memories and speak with its voice until the sun rises or sets.

2. Sacred Reliquary

A shell for a ghost.

The wizard spends an hour or two binding a ghost's non-corporeal ba and ka through a relic housed in a reliquary. This can be as simple as a prepared skull or something as ornate as a gilded model of an office ziggurat with window panels of mother-of-pearl and translucent jade holding a lock of a sage's beard.

P0 • A very basic reliquary, barely magical. The necromantic equivalent of writing down somebody's phone number. When using *Necrophony* to reach this

ghost, the wizard gains [+].

P1 • Direct line reliquary. The ghost is grumpy, but answers every time the dead-talker calls.

P2 • An open line reliquary. The ghost can come through and manifest as an ectoplasmic projection on their own, without the caster's input. Non-wizards can communicate with the spirit.

P3 • A command line reliquary. The ghost can possess a mechanical or biological body through the reliquary and act directly in the living world.

Imbued relic • The reliquary is infused with life essence. The caster can use their life or a willing acolyte's.

Sustenance lock • When using an external life source, a devious necromancer can make the bond permanent by binding one of their own life points to the reliquary. This sustains the ghost until the reliquary is destroyed.

3. Somnihilation

The sleepers must not wake.

The wizard releases their holy blood and uses it to anoint an undead abomination, such as a mummy, skeleton, vampire, or zombie. This takes a couple of minutes and a lot of passionate imprecation. The undead abomination then returns to its appointed rest. An assistant usually holds down the abomination during the ritual.

P1 • Puts down a 1st level abomination.

P2 • A 2nd level abomination.

P3 • L3 abomination. Etc.

Five symbol death punch • By doubling the spell price, the wizard requires a single action to imbue their fist with the five symbols of eternal repose. Their next successful ha or ka attack against an undead abomination puts it to rest.

Sudden conduit • At the moment of contact with the abomination, the wizard comprehends its actual power level. They can then open the gates of their soul, pouring more life into the spell to defeat the undead if it is more powerful than they expected. Unfortunately, this may make the magic dangerous.

D12	THE DEAD APPROACH	THEIR EMOTION	THEIR HUNGER
1	Bowels turn to water.	terror	oblivion
2	Whistling winds.	sadness	comfort & destruction
3	Light loses colour.	regret	forgiveness
4	Air grows cold.	rage	pain, blood
5	Foul odours creep in.	nostalgia	memories, kin
6	Plants wither, skin flakes.	confusion	love, kindness
7	Shadows grow long.	surprise	words, news
8	Charge builds in the air.	loss	restoration
9	Earth and stone vibrate.	disgust	death, destruction
10	Clammy, oozing humidity.	denial	lies, sweet little lies
11	Iron rusts, paper yellows.	ecstasy	pleasure, agreement
12	Vision narrows, ears thrum.	contentment	nothing
12/12	Sourceless light, well-being.	enlightenment	unity with creation

D12	RELIC	RELIQUARY	FEATURE
1	mummy, skeleton	sarcophagus	senses water
2	ash, cinerary resin amulet	burial moon jar	reduces dampness
3	skull, jaw	celadon box	gives off warmth
4	limb, foot, hand	crystal urn	glows slightly
5	bone, rib, vertebra	lidded cup	rings with clear note
6	pickled digit, appendage	silver casket	reduces anxiety
7	tooth, knucklebone	stoppered horn	calms beasts
8	dried skin, ear, nose	painted gourd	reduces hunger
9	lock of hair	dusky bottle	salves heartache
10	pen, watch, knife	enamelled case	heals a specific malady
11	implant, filling, piercing	patterned basket	purifies food or water
12	ring, band, necklace	studded pouch	offers small absolutions
12/12	perfect soul pearl	puzzle stone	calms passions

4. Unity With Ancestors

In desperation, even flowers bite.

The wizard takes the powdered essence of an undead creature, mixes it with sacred liquids, and turns it into ancestor juice through an hour-long ritual. Robes, candles, and cryptic chants are optional, but a vial of some sort is essential. The effects of each type of ancestor juice last about a day.

P1 • Crushed skeleton bones. The drinker loses 1d3 endurance and becomes resistant to soft tissue damage and poisons.

P2 • Dried and powdered zombie brain. The drinker loses 1d3 agility, gains 10 temporary life (or unlife), and becomes resistant to non-critical ha attacks.

P3 • Diced and sliced ghoul. The drinker loses 1d3 aura but gains a paralyzing touch. Each time a creature is touched by the drinker, they lose 1 action. Further, and more horrifically, the drinker can regain 1d4 life each hour by eating a quarter-pounder of living flesh (cheese optional). This secondary effect is not widely advertised.

P5 • Ash of a shadow, phantasm, or ghost. The drinker loses 1d3 str, deals ha damage with [-], and takes minimum damage from all physical sources.

P7 • Shredded mummy flakes. The drinker loses 1d4 cha, then gains a rotting touch. Every time they deal ha damage, they also deal 1 charisma damage.

P9 • Preserved vampire blood. The drinker loses 1d4 thought, then grows claws and fangs. Deals 1d8+level ha damage and regains life equal to damage dealt when fighting living creatures.

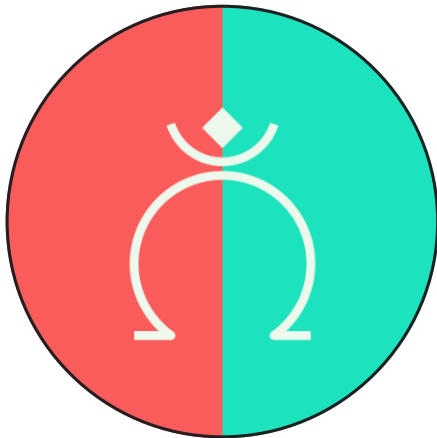
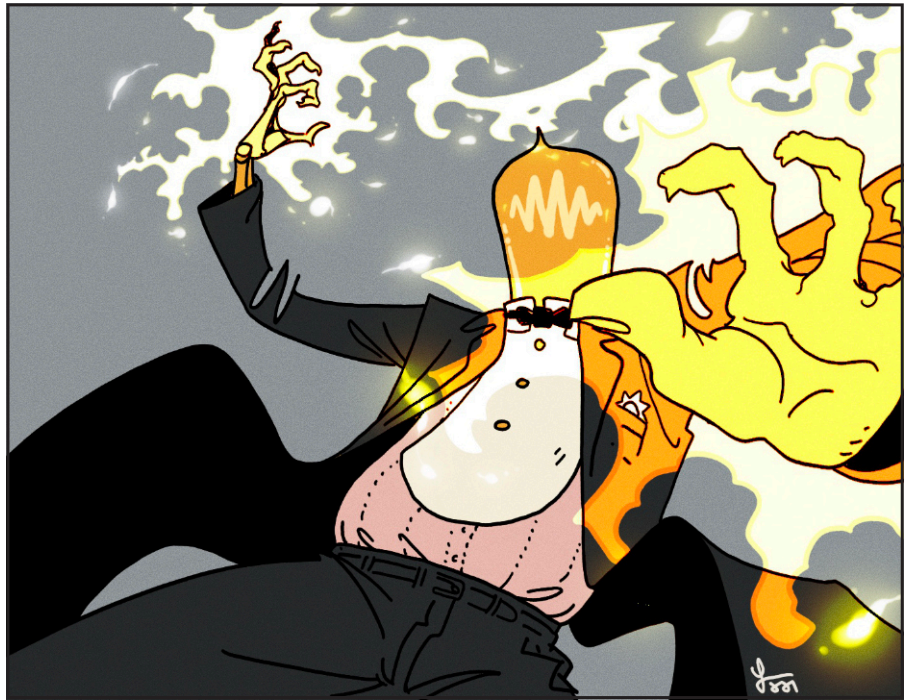
Dangerous beverage • The (un)holy ancestor juice can corrupt those who drink it.

Imbued beverage • The juice keeps as long as the wizard imbues it with their life.

Pass for (un)dead • All the juices make the drinker appear undead at first glance.

Proscribed • This spell is proscribed by all reasonable scholars and commissars. Practising it in public often results in censure and persecution.

temporary



Amber Child

*“O I say these are not the parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul,
O I say now these are the soul!”*

—Walt Whitman, *I Sing the Body Electric* (1855)

Electrowizards manipulate the charges and fields and waves and energies of the given world. Many use them to revive ancient machines and shut down malfunctioning abominations; some even use them to create and destroy life.

In the words of Nusa the Skydread,

“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 closest agreement with the principles of the static universe electric, that creates the radiation of motion and change and life.”

Titles [d8]

1. Amberite
2. Dianian
3. Electrumen
4. Galvanic
5. Kulombist
6. Spark Jo
7. Vivifex
8. Voltocrat

Oh-Mega Rods

1 stone / €2d6 * 10

#rod

The traditional spell burden of the electric wizard is two acrylic or amber rods engraved with the runes of the Oh-Mega. The wizard can use the seven-folded inversion to translate their rods from one spell to another in a few hours. In this way, they can use a single burden to cast different spells. Well-off wizards sometimes carry bundles of oh-mega rods to avoid inverting and translating in the field.

Improvised Club • Deals 1d4 ha damage.

1. Electromagical Projector

#ohmega

Zip ah doo da.

The wizard makes the three gestures and collapses into an electro-magnificent wave-particle singularity that travels like lightning to a nearby location, where they violently reassemble. If the target is sentient, the wizard makes a ka attack. If they miss, they reassemble next to their target.

P3 • Each creature in the wizard's path suffers 2d6 electromagical damage. Every creature next to the reassembly point takes 4d6 damage. If the hero reassembles within a solid target, they and the target both suffer 8d6 damage.

P4 • Can use reflective surfaces to change direction.

P5 • Transmits to a location or target far away.

P6 • Deals 3d6 damage in path, 6d6 to creatures next to reassembly point, and 12d6 within a solid target.

P7 • Can reflect off a storm cloud.

2. E-Vivification

#dangerous #imbue #ohmega

A new, better kind of life!

The wizard jams their oh-mega rods into the yielding flesh of a motionless body and forces an electric ka elemental into this flesh prison. The ritual takes several minutes and creates an abomination under the wizard's command.

P1 • The hero e-vivifies a cat or dog-sized body, creating a Level 1 electric abomination (sparkling, twitching, drooling).

P2 • The hero e-vivifies a pig- or human-sized body, creating an L2 abomination (rumbling, blistering, sizzling).

P4 • A cow- or horse-sized body, for an L3 abomination (rippling, bloating, searing).

P8 • A rhino- or hippo-sized body, for an L5 abomination (thundering, stomping, flashing).

Living body • If the wizard uses a living body, it should ideally be bound to an electrically resistive slab with solid straps. The living

target undergoes a painful, terminal procedure, losing 1 life per minute until dead. All life lost in this way is then added to the e-vivified abomination's usual life total. Most inquisitors agree that the use of this spell on a living creature is a vile offence against sapience.

Alternative name • Saint Galbani's Electric Parody of Life

3. Twitching Puppet

#ohmega

Twisting your mind, pulling your strings.

The wizard raises their hands, and a crackling gush of electromagical bolts unerringly strikes a nearby target for 1d6 ha damage.

P1 • The target loses 1 life per round. Each round, on the target's turn, the wizard may make a ka attack against the target. If they succeed, they gain poor control of the target's physical movements for that round—it makes all rolls with [-]. Controlling the target requires no additional actions.

P3 • Target loses 2 life per round. If the wizard has control of the target, their control is satisfactory, and it rolls normally.

P6 • Target loses 3 life per round. The wizard's control is ka-infused and target rolls with [+].

Open channel • The spell continues until the target touches the wizard, it dies, or the wizard stops focusing.



EXTRAS: SIDEKICKS, PETS, & OTHER CREATURES

Anatomy of an Extra

Dogbear (name)

Level 3 / Life 20

#animal (tags)

fluffy, woofy, greedy (facets)

Is it a small bear or a big dog? Unclear. (description)

Ha 14 / +6 big bite 1d10

Ka 9 / +3 howl 1d4

Ba 13 / +6 endearing wag 1d8

Loyal • Gains [+] to tests when protecting its family or master. (modifiers)

The **name** is hopefully descriptive enough to create a mental image immediately.

The **level** suggests how powerful the extra would be in a conflict.

The **life** indicates how much narrative armour the extra has.

Tags help with categorization and search.

The **facets** are three prompts for quickly roleplaying the extra. Players can use one, some, all, or none of them.

The **description** is optional. It can elaborate or subvert the extra. Ideally, it should be interesting to read.

Ha, ka, and ba represent the extra's physical, metaphysical, and social defences. They can also serve as the target numbers for challenges posed by the extra. For example, **ha** could represent the target number to break free of the dogbear's locked jaws. In a further simplified character these three numbers can be represented by a single number: *def* or *defence*.

Extras add their **sums** (e.g. +6) to their d20 rolls when they know what they are doing. If they don't know what they are doing, they roll a naked d20.

The **attack types** (e.g. big bite) give an idea of what the extra will do in a conflict.

The **dice** (e.g. d10) represent how much damage a successful attack deals. Die size can also loosely indicate how effective the creature is when performing a physical, metaphysical, or social action not otherwise covered by the rules.

The **modifiers** cover additional mechanical features and abilities.

In the middle of a text, an extra can be listed with just name, level, and facets.

Sancho Pansa, der sich übrigens dessen nie gerühmt hat, gelang es im Laufe der Jahre, durch Beistellung einer Menge Ritter- und Räuberromane in den Abend- und Nachtstunden seinen Teufel, dem er später den Namen Don Quixote gab, derart von sich abzulenken, daß dieser dann haltlos die verrücktesten Taten ausführte, die aber mangels eines vorbestimmten Gegenstandes, der eben Sancho Pansa hätte sein sollen, niemandem schadeten. Sancho Pansa, ein freier Mann, folgte gleichmütig, vielleicht aus einem gewissen Verantwortlichkeitsgefühl, dem Don Quixote auf seinen Zügen und hatte davon eine große und nützliche Unterhaltung bis an sein Ende.

—Die Wahrheit über Sancho Pansa, Franz Kafka (1931)

Heroes are the most complex characters because each is the focus of a single player—and thus the focus of play. The other characters, the extras, are mechanically more straightforward. The TC runs many exclusively; some are shared by multiple players, others are handled by the runners or one runner.

Extras might be **zebranes** (L2, omnivorous, pseudohorses, striped) grazing on the side of Pynchon's Lens, the three-mile-high gravity-shifted force-plate sticking out of the Armezzan Peninsula. They could be **strewth goblins** (L1, foaming, virulent, vociferous) brandishing yunja curse-sticks. Even a powerful **rainbow demon** (L7, crimson, gun-wielding, sword-riding) is but an extra. All are best kept simple until the story or dice requires more detail.

How Extras Work

"They're wearing red shirts! This'll be easy."

—Famous Last Words

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

Tests • When extras test, 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.

Life • When heroes are reduced to 0 life, they are out of action. Favoured sidekicks or antagonists might recover and get burdens later.

Sidekicks • When players adopt an extra, it becomes a sidekick and takes up a slot on their active hero's sheet. From then on, players can invest xp in that extra to advance them, increasing their level, life, defences, sums, and traits.

Exiting play • When an extra reaches 0 life, it usually leaves play. When sidekicks reach 0 life, they acquire a burden and make a moderate retirement test. The sidekick rolls d20 + level over 11. If the retirement test fails, the sidekick exits play unless their hero makes an extraordinary effort (procuring expensive regeneration and psychotherapy after a battle, bribery with gifts after a grand ball gone wrong, unusual magical gifts after a seance disaster). When a sidekick has acquired burdens, their player may decide that the character exits play. For every burden the character bears when they retire, the player recovers 10% of their invested xp.

Fully detailed extras have a full trinity of hakaba defences and sums, representing their aptitude in physical (**ha**), metaphysical (**ka**), and social (**ba**) conflicts (see the **dogbear** at right). A basic extra, such as a throwaway **red-shirt goblin** (L1, academic, fleet-bound, utopian), might not stay around long enough to get three different sums. That's alright. Players should only detail extras as needed.

Sidekicks

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

Each sidekick is assigned to one hero, and the same player usually runs both their hero and their sidekicks, making decisions and rolling dice for all of them. Of course, this doesn't imply that the different characters communicate telepathically or that animal pets magically have human levels of intelligence—unless such traits are discovered during play.

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 go on a side quest. It could be a good idea for the player to pass the cat and skull to the other players, who then play them in scenes and combat. This helps keep all the players engaged.

When one player controls another's sidekick, it's like playing with a borrowed instrument. They should handle each others' sidekicks with care and in good faith. Breaking another player's sidekick is like breaking their action figure. The top cat should support every runner's veto over their sidekicks' actions.

A sidekick may also be a group character shared by all players. Maybe they're a favourite donkey who survived a half-dozen battles or a trusty old main-line battle golem.

Suicidal Sidekicks

Unlike with a hero, the sidekick's player doesn't have complete control of their sidekicks: they are not full protagonists. The cat can exercise a soft-veto to stop them from 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.

Turning Extras into Sidekicks

Players may run across a particularly friendly **farting marsh dragon** (L1, greedy, nervous, volatile), **lost puppy** (L1, clumsy, happy, lucky), or **sovereign quadrodont** (L6, arrogant, hairy, mammoth) and decide they want to adopt it.

This is easy. Mechanically the players have just two tasks:

1. Give the new sidekick a name, nickname, or other term of affection.
2. Assign the new sidekick to a hero and write their name down in an available slot.

This done, the players can invest xp to advance their new sidekick, increasing its attributes and gaining it new traits.

Turning Extras into Heroes

Over time, some sidekicks tend to naturally become more like heroes. Players can turn an extra into a full-fledged hero at any time—they can have a stable of heroes, after all. As they expand the character into a full hero, they will:

1. Make space for a full inventory.
2. Split the ha, ka, ba sums into a pro score and six stats.
3. Invent (or find) relevant skills and traits for the character.
4. Figure out what part of the defence scores are inherent traits and what is down to armour, wards, and prestige.
5. Add hero dice.
6. And fill out the new hero's background and story through play.

Pets

A great place to start with extras is a special category of sidekick: pets. If a runner wants to start play with a pet, they can roll or choose from the list of animals (pXX), or invent their own (pXX). If a player decides to forego a starting pet, they may start with an extra 200 cash instead—all that pet food is expensive. Most pets begin at level 1.

Through play, heroes may befriend all sorts of strange creatures, machines, and monsters—turning them into new pets. The players might discover they enjoy telling stories with a menagerie of creatures accompanying them.

As a rule, pets are usually animals, while heroes are humans, but this doesn't always have to be the case. The cats of the Violet City (and other places) keep human pets, and who knows what the great old ant colonies get up to with their humanite worshippers.



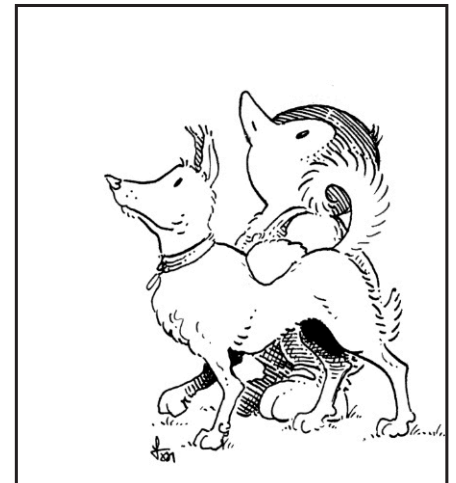
Promoting Sidekicks & Pets

Like heroes, extras advance when players invest experience in them. Though a sidekick is assigned to one hero, all players can invest xp in it.

Advancement is much simpler for extras than for heroes. Players invest a lump sum of xp to advance the character, then make advancement rolls to determine the randomized benefits (and possibly penalties) acquired. Higher-level extras are more expensive to advance and must wait longer between advancements. In addition, players cannot usually promote sidekicks beyond level 9.

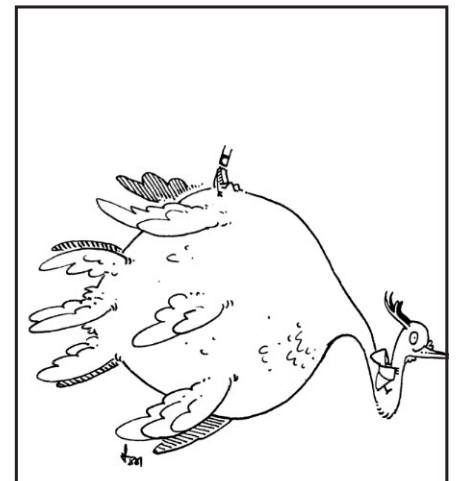
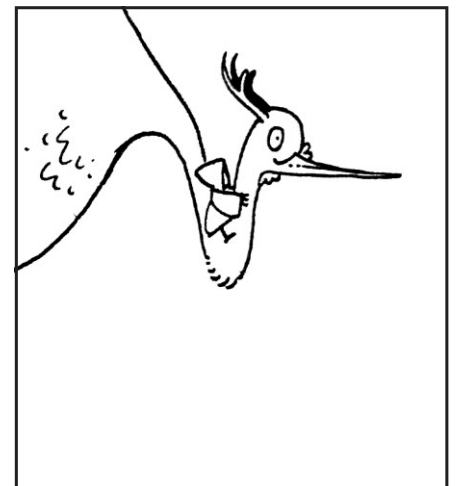
The wait between promotions is a mechanical ruse to bring extras in line with the slow advancement of heroes while keeping things relatively simple. Players can invest xp in an extra in smaller amounts, rolling for advancement once the level threshold is reached.

The minimum for any advancement roll is always 0 unless otherwise specified. The penalized dice rolls mimic the low but increasing odds of improvement. Where a column specifies multiple rolls (for example 'ha, ka, ba defences'), the sidekick's player rolls once for each attribute.



LVL	XP REQUIRED	XP TO ADVANCE	LIFE	HA, KA, BA DEFENCES	HA, KA, BA SUM	SKILLS	TRAITS
0	0	99	-	-	-	-	-
1	99	300	+1d6	+1d6-4	+1d6-5	+1d8-7	+1d8-7
2	399	600	+1d8	+1d4-2	+1d4-3	+1d6-5	+1d6-5
3	999	1,000	+1d8	+1d3-1	+1d3-2	+1d4-3	+1d4-3
4	1,999	3,000	+1d8	+1d3-1	+1d2-1	+1d3-2	+1d3-2
5	4,999	5,000	+1d8	+1d3-1	+1d3-1	+1d2-1	+1d2-1
6	9,999	10,000	+1d10	+1d3-1	+1d3-1	+1d2-1	+1d2-1
7	19,999	30,000	+1d10	+1d3-1	+1d3-1	+1d2-1	+1d2-1
8	49,999	50,000	+1d12	+1d3-1	+1d3-1	+1d2-1	+1d2-1
9	99,999	#ERROR!	+1d20	+1d3-1	+1d3-1	+1d2-1	+1
10	#ERROR!	#ZU!	#STOP!	#THIS!	#FOLLY!	#THE!	#COSMOS!

Some extras might not be able to learn skills (e.g. a brainless skeleton). A creature of 10th level or higher probably shouldn't be a pet or a sidekick.



Inventing a New Extra

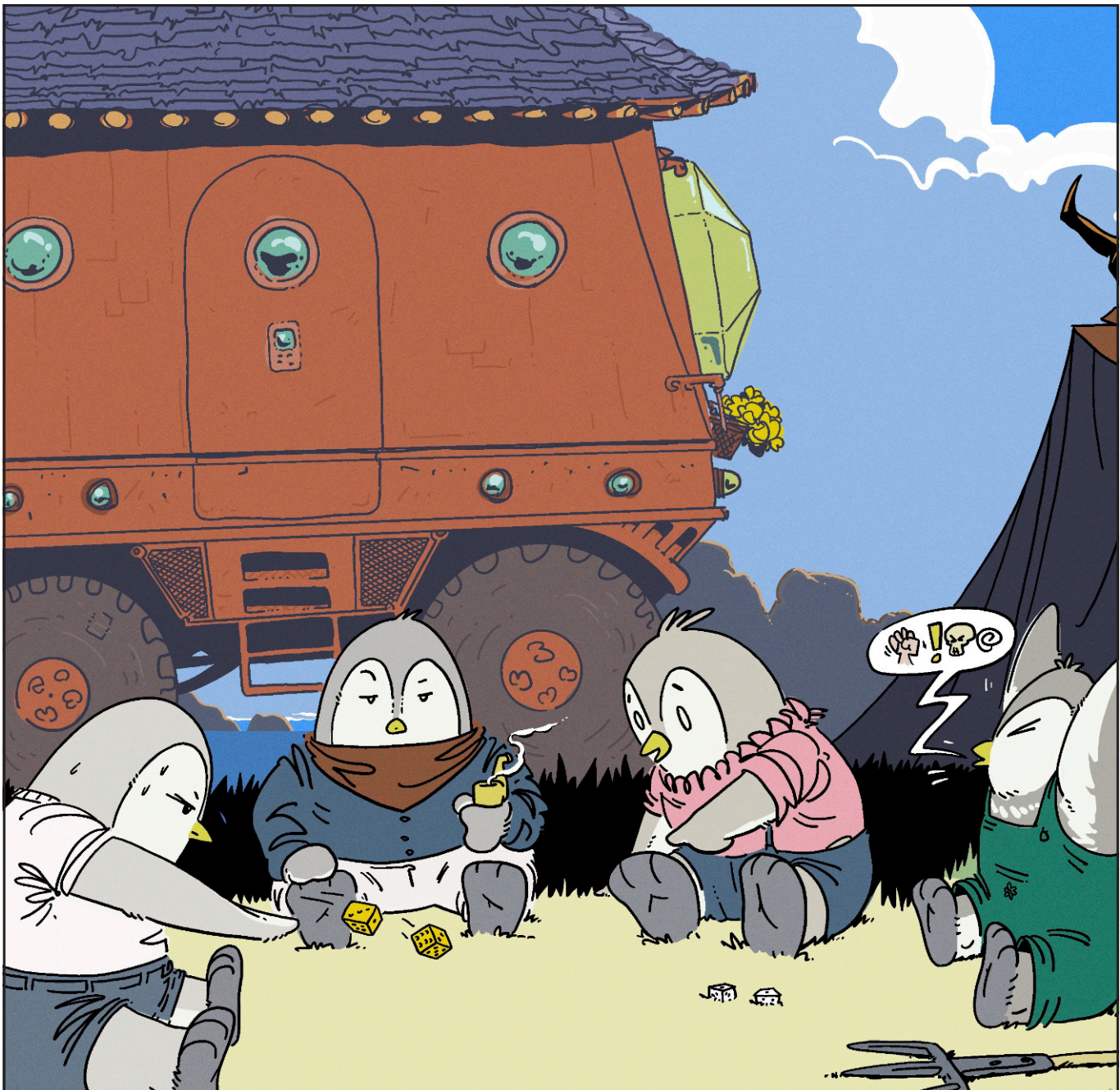
"One must suppose it was a dungeon forest dragon leopard flytrap!"

—prof. sir. Enka, Neozoneosis Expedition 5, Year of the Lambent Fish.

When players invent a new extra, they should ask:

1. Does it have an exciting concept?
2. Does it have a good name?
3. Are three facets enough of a description?
4. If it needs more detail, what is the simplest way to describe it?
5. Does it need any new traits and attributes, or can it be made simply by reskinning an existing extra?

For example, 'Wardistani Soldier' is a little bit redundant. It's a trained schmuck that stands guard. The TC can reskin any basic level 1 or level 2 extra, and it will work fine. An extra like 'The Hydra at the End of Childhood's Dream' could be more attractive, even serving as a final challenge or boss—but it would require some new traits and facets to make it feel different as well. Of course, inventing new characters can be a game (even a solo game) all its own. In that case, players can handily bin all this guidance.



Attributes of Extras

The goal is to create extras that are useful in play. The more quickly they can be used, the better. This table provides only a rough guide to the attribute values players can assign to extras—but the TC in particular should feel free to create unusual or different combinations. There is nothing wrong with a low-level extra with powerful attacks, or a high-level extra with paltry defences. Mixing up the attributes creates more interesting opponents. Further, not every extra requires every attribute. A disembodied ghost does not require a ha defence, since it has no body. Many animals can do perfectly well without ba defences, since they don't understand human social cues. A soulless automaton may have no ka defence, since it has no spirit to injure.

LEVEL	LIFE	HA, KA, BA DEFENCES	HA, KA, BA, SUMS	DAMAGES	TRAITS & SKILLS
0	1-8 (4)	2-12 (5)	1-5 (+2)	0-5 (1d4)	0-2 (1)
1	4-13 (8)	3-14 (6)	1-6 (+3)	1-8 (1d6)	0-3 (1)
2	7-20 (12)	3-16 (7)	1-7 (+4)	2-12 (1d8)	1-4 (2)
3	11-30 (16)	4-18 (8)	2-8 (+5)	3-16 (1d10)	1-5 (2)
4	13-42 (22)	4-18 (9)	2-9 (+6)	4-22 (1d12)	2-6 (3)
5	17-55 (29)	5-19 (10)	3-10 (+7)	5-28 (1d8+5)	2-7 (3)
6	24-69 (38)	6-19 (11)	3-11 (+8)	6-36 (1d10+6)	2-8 (4)
7	29-81 (52)	7-19 (12)	4-12 (+9)	7-49 (1d12+7)	2-9 (4)
8	33-99 (68)	8-19 (13)	4-13 (+10)	8-64 (2d8+5)	3-9 (5)
9	39-144 (90)	9-19 (14)	5-13 (+11)	9-81 (1d20+11)	3-10 (5)
10	44-200 (120)	10-19 (15)	6-13 (+12)	10-100 (1d24+12)	4-10 (6)
11	55-300 (155)	11-19 (16)	7-13 (+13)	11-121 (1d30+13)	4-10 (6)
17	101-1,333 (666)	13-19 (19)	13 (+13)	17-289 (3d20+30)	4-10 (7)

All these attribute values are guidelines only.

Modifiers (Traits & Skills)

Players can modify extras to make them more unique: special abilities, vulnerabilities, strengths, powers, skills, and spells can turn an ordinary, forgettable lizardling dragonspawn into a hellish guerrilla capable of defending its primitive Pre-fungal Era bunker complex from even the most well-equipped imperialist adventuring party.

In theory, the description of an extra, be it animal, creation, or monster, could list every trait and modifier it possesses. In practice, this would be unwieldy. Many modifiers are situational, and most can be inferred from a creature's description. A fish is aquatic and has an advantage against a swimming human in its natural watery environment—but there is no need to spell out that it swims in its description. A bird can fly, so again, precisely noting its unladen airspeed velocity is usually pointless.

But, a modifier that gives a creature a unique or unexpected advantage or vulnerability is worth listing, particularly when it is relevant to an adventure. All this is to say that descriptions or stat blocks of extras are necessarily contextual and incomplete.

The players can wield their common sense existing example creatures as a starting point when preparing new extras for their game. Especially when the TC creates opponents for the heroes, they should feel shameless in borrowing and repurposing ideas and modifiers from any and every source. It's kind of fun to bring a pop culture reference or a puzzle into play for the players to figure out. Why shouldn't a player's 'out-of-character' knowledge manifest as a flash of divine inspiration or ancestral memory helping the hero in a moment of need. After all, this is not very different from Apollo helping a hero in some bronze age skirmish do some amazing deed that a blind poet might turn into an epic poem to echo through the ages.

Animals Natural & Mythic

"I shall adopt it and call it Chipper!"

—Discoverer of the first piranhasaur, shortly before untimely demise.

1. Baby Dragon

Level 1 / Life 13

#animal #labmyth

curious, cute, sinuous

A lovely little flying serpent of vast potential and little wisdom. Surprisingly fond of boxes.

Ha 9 / +4 sharp teeth 1d4

Ka 17 / —

Ba 9 / +3 preen 1d4

Fiery burp • Can spend 1d4 life to vomit a small cloud of fire (strikes 2d6 nearby creatures). Deals damage equal to its remaining life.

Growing • Voracious appetite to help it grow quickly.

2. Big Dog

Level 1 / Life 9

#animal #mammal

slobbering, swift, terrified

Addicted to snacks and treats.

Ha 7 / +3 crunching jaws 1d8

Ka 4 / +4 truly scary bark 1d8

Enthusiastic bound • Bowls target over in a spray of drool and paws. Large targets make an easy test with [-] to stay upright.

Transport • Can carry 1 sack.

3. Blithe Badger

Level 1 / Life 5

#animal #mammal

cuddly, relentless, furball

A child of ancient wrestling gods, the badger is entirely immune to magic and commands. But is very fond of holes.

Ha 10 / +3 relentless bite 1d6

Ka 5 / —

Burrower • Gains [+] in tight spaces. If its burrow is nearby, it gains [+] to retreat.

4. Boa Constrictor

Level 1 / Life 11

#animal #snake

chunky, colourful, lazy

Often found in wheels.

Ha 7 / +2 constriction 1d6+2

Ka 5 / +3 threatening glare 1d3

Constrictor • When it strikes a target, it does no damage on the first round but keeps squeezing, dealing damage automatically each round until the target passes out from suffocation.

5. Bunny of Chaos

Level 1 / Life 3

#animal #mammal

cuddly, cute, red-eyed

Mentioned in terrible ancient manuscripts.

Ha 6 / +4 big bitey teeth 1d4*

Ka 3 / —

Big vorpal bitey teeth •

Decapitates on critical hits.

Fast hopper • [+] running away.

Looks harmless • [-] to attacks against the bunny if it hasn't yet hurt anybody.

6. Cunning Sheep

Level 1 / Life 7

#animal #mammal

fleecy, gauzy, light-footed

Sometimes pretends to be a wolf.

Ha 6 / +3 big horns 1d8+2

Ka 5 / —

Ba 11 / +3 proud display 1d6

Butt • When it attacks atop a cliff or charges, it knocks its target back a way.

Surefoot • [+] on ledges, cliffs, rooftops, and narrow places.

Transport • Can carry 1 sack.

7. Cute Spider

Level 0 / Life 3

#animal #arthropod

gentle, soft, soothing

With fur and feet and lovely eyes, calms scared children and spooked animals.

Ha 9 / +3 bite 1

Ka 7 / —

Ba 11 / +5 fetching eyes 1d6

Venomous • Bitten targets feel dizzy and confused. Burden imposes [-] to physical activity and concentration.

8. Devilish Donkey

Level 1 / Life 9

#animal

ornery, annoyed, tough

This equid has a secret pact with a devil. It smells of brimstone. So does its poop.

Ha 6 / +2 kicky feet 1d6+1

Ka 19 / —

Devilish Luck • Rerolls all 1s. When reduced to 0 life it disappears in a puff of smelly smoke. May reappear some days later.

9. Dogbear

Level 3 / Life 20

#animal

fluffy, woofy, greedy

Is it a small bear or a big dog? Unclear.

Ha 14 / +6 big bite 1d10

Ka 9 / +3 howl 1d4

Ba 13 / +6 endearing wag 1d8

Loyal • [+] to tests when protecting its family or master.

10. Fluffy Dog

Level 1 / Life 5

#animal #mammal

playful, smol, zany

Can't stop chewing shoes.

Ha 7 / +3 nippy teeth 1d4

Ka 7 / +4 terrifying bark 1d4

Heel-nipper • Nips at a target's heels, slowing it down. It loses 1 action and suffers [-] to race tests.

11. Glamorous Goat

Level 1 / Life 7

#animal #mammal

agile, horny, villainous

Loves nothing better than to sleep in high places.

Ha 7 / +2 pointy horns 1d6+1

Ka 9 / +3 devil eyes 1d6

Ghostbane • Deals double damage to ghosts. It's the eyes.

Rock-hopper hooves • [+] climbing trees and sheer cliffs.

12. Grand Stag

Level 2 / Life 12

#animal #mammal

magnificent, regal, twitchy

Given to dramatic, awe-inspiring poses and chin scratches.

Ha 8 / +3 splendid antlers 1d10

Ka 7 / —

Ba — / +4 lovely head toss 1d8

Weaponcatcher • Antlers catch weapons from failed attacks.

13. Heartbreaking Puppy

Level 1 / Life 3

#animal #mammal

cuddly, cute, naive

Looking for someone to trust completely.

Ha 4 / +1 desperate bite 1d2

Ka 2 / +7 soul-crushing gaze 2d6

Meaning maker • Within an hour, the puppy becomes the one thing that gives their owner's life purpose. The owner gains [+] to tests and effects (including damage) against any creature that hurts or hurt the puppy, as well as the creature's allies and affiliated organizations.

14. Jumping Crab

Level 1 / Life 5

#animal #crustacean

amphibious, half-uplifted,

iridescent

Loves to smell the flowers.

Ha 13 / +1 painful pinch 1d4

Ka 7 / —

Ba — / +3 inappropriate pinch 1d8

Inappropriety • Can make a social attack; leaping onto a humorously inappropriate location and pinching embarrassingly. Good distraction.

15. Loping Crocodile

Level 2 / Life 13
#animal #archosaur
armoured, gentle, saurosuchian

Interloper from before some mass extinction.

Ha 11 / +5 big bitey mouth
1d10+2
Ka 9 / +1 angry honk 1d6

Ripper • When it bites, it twists to pull off a chunk of flesh, leaving a gushing wound. Target loses 1 life or stat point per round unless it holds the wound shut (1 action) or bandages it.

Transport • Can carry 1 sack.

16. Magic Magpie

Level 0 / Life 3
#animal #bird
chuckling, kind, rascal

Like all magpies after the great gene-magical error of '24 pimenta, this one exhibits mild extra-dimensionality. It also likes bad jokes, and may 'pay' a struggling comedian with a trinket.

Ha 10 / +4 scratchy talons 1
Ka 7 / —
Ba 10 / +4 shaming caw 1d4

Magic Pouch • The magpie has an extra-dimensional pouch for hiding a few small, shiny objects (up to 1 stone).

17. Mischievous Monkey

Level 1 / Life 4
#animal #mammal
homunculus, horny, knowing

May be smarter than it admits. Still likes slinging mud.

Ha 7 / +3 shocking teeth 1d4
Ka 5 / —
Ba 15 / +5 rude gesture 1d6

Arboreal • [+] to tests in trees.

Skilled • Is an expert pickpocket, street performer, snack vendor, golem driver, fruit-picker, or

carnival roadie.

18. Ominous Owl

Level 1 / Life 4
#animal #bird
cute, silent, silly

A rotating head and a love of mice.

Ha 8 / +4 mouse-killers 1d4
Ka 15 / +4 soul screech 1d6+1

Ambush • Appears out of nowhere. Deals triple damage on the first attack of a conflict.

Avenger • Does not provoke counterattacks while flying.

19. Pretty Piranhasaur

Level 1 / Life 7
#animal #labmyth
grinning, toothy, tyrant

Twice the size of a turkey, this feathered beastie has a butcher's grin and teeth that can strip a cow in minutes.

Ha 8 / +5 vorpal teeth 1d8+1
Ka 5 / —

Nimble dodger • When it takes a defensive action it also gains damage resistance for the rest of the turn.

Pack tactics • [+] to tests when coordinating with others of its own kind.

Severely vorpal • Severs limbs on critical hits.

Twitchy • [+] to initiative tests.

20. Punctilious Parrot

Level 0 / Life 4
#animal #bird
joker, pirate, thief

Expert in a surprising number of diplomatic and plantation protocols. Also, talks. A lot. Mostly about seeds.

Ha 9 / +5 nut-cracking beak 1d2
Ka 6 / —
Ba 13 / +6 cruel mockery 1d8

Skilled • Has a valuable diplomatic, nautical, or plantation management skill.

21. Remembering Raven

Level 1 / Life 3



#animal #bird
accusative, acquisitive, inquisitive,

It never forgets a grudge.

Ha 9 / +3 peck 1d3
Ka 12 / +5 ominous glare 1d6
Ba — / +3 humiliating call 1d4

Spellbearer • Can memorize a single spell. Casts with a magic cost of 1. May cast without being ordered.

22. Sand Octopus

Level 1 / Life 6
#animal #mollusc
shy, intelligent, face-hugger

Adapted to the vast Yellow Desert, the gregarious beagle-sized sand octopus enjoys nothing more than curling up in front of a fire, gently chirping like a parrot.

Ha 7 / +5 hugging tentacles 1d4
Ka 5 / —
Ba 11 / +3 soulful gaze 1d4

Beak • While latched on, it can use its beak to attack (+7 bite 1d6) as a free action.
Camouflage • It controls its skin colour and can hide in plain sight.
Grip • Latches on after striking with its tentacles. Strength test to remove.

23. Sneaky Cat

Level 1 / Life 5
#animal #mammal
greedy, paranoid, predator

Oddly fond of pie.

Ha 9 / +3 scratchy claws 1d4
Ka 7 / +2 fetching hiss 1d3

Capital pounce • Jumps on a target's head, scratching and confusing it for one round (target loses 1 action).

24. Terrifying Ostrich

Level 2 / Life 15
#animal #bird
They say it's an ostrich, but with that axe-like beak and those taloned feet, it looks more like a kelenken. Still, the bird-vendor said it's just an ostrich. How bad could it be?

Ha 9 / +5 vicious kick 1d8+1

Ka 7 / —

Bone-cracker • Critical multiplier increased by 2. Can survive by scavenging.
Long-distance Runner • [+] on travel and endurance tests.

25. Tusky Boar

Level 1 / Life 11
#animal #mammal
gorgeous, handsome, strange

Wears a pastry chef's hat.

Ha 7 / +5 goring tusks 1d6+2
Ka 9 / +2 fiery presence 1d4

Bowling sphere • Knocks over target like a bowling pin when it charges. Larger targets test to stay upright.
Transport • Can carry 1 sack.

26. Unlucky Duck

Level 1 / Life 30
#animal #bird
daffy, shrill, squabbling

This type of duck is known to bring horrible luck. It also has a penchant for eating books, which annoys scholars no end.

Ha 7 / +2 honking bite 1d2
Ka 15 / +5 ear-piercing quack 1d4

Bad Luck Charm • The critical fail range of everyone near the duck increases by 1. The duck itself is immune to critical fails.

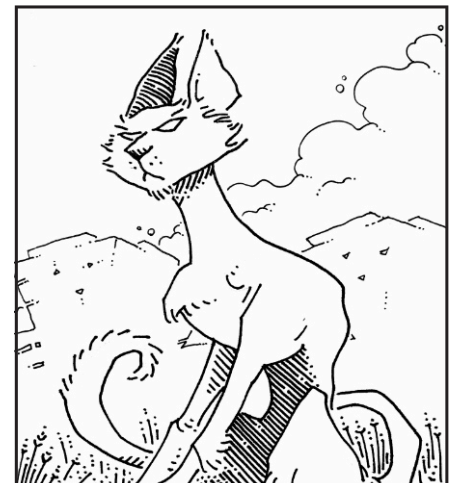
27. Veteran Horse

Level 2 / Life 13
#animal #mammal
fed up, grumpy, leathery

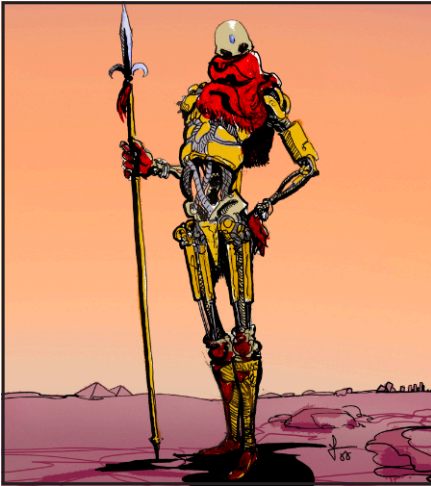
Loves to stand under trees looking morose.

Ha 8 / +4 trampling hooves 2d6+2
Ka 10 / +5 kick the ghost 1d8

Masterful survival • [+] when retreating.
Parting kick • Gets free attack when it retreats.
Transport • Can carry 2 sacks.



Strange Creatures & Monsters



1. Ancestor in Amber

Level 2 / Life 20

#human #undead

honourable, proud, self-sacrificing

Protecting their righteous heirs until the seas boil and the stars are eaten by the sun.

Ha 12 / +6 ceremonial blade 1d12

Ka 11 / +5 shuddering gaze 1d6

Ba 17 / +5 disapproval 1d4+1

Fearsome aura • Living creatures must test aura or thought to lay hands on the undying flesh of an ancestor.

Miasmatic touch • Each strike deals 1 strength or endurance damage to living creatures.

Mummified • The ancestor is dry and flammable, suffering double damage from fire and heat.

Shuddering gaze • A living creature held by an angry ancestor's gaze feels their life pass before their eyes. They must test charisma or aura, or lose 1 action on their next turn.

2. Ascended Priest Abomination

Level 4 / Life 40

#abomination #human

ecstatic, howling, transcendent

All flesh given to the Flesh God, all spirit infused with the Living God, all mind tranquil and smooth.

Ha 8 / +7 ripping claws 2d8

Ka 13 / +9 ecstasy flare 1d3

Ba 17 / —

Ecstatic touch • Victims of a ka attack test aura or collapse into quivering ecstasy, losing 1 aura and 1 action on their next turn.

Gripping claws • A target struck by two ripping claw attacks in one round is gripped and cannot move away. The abomination gains [+] to ha attacks against the target. Difficult strength or agility test to break free.

Maw of many teeth • The monster's face and front ripple open (+5 maw 2d12*) when it grips a target. Each turn it can

make one maw attack this target as a free action.

3. Bloodsucker

Level 1 / Life 20

#human #undead

creepy, pasty, reeking

Every vampire must start somewhere.

Ha 15 / +6 flailing grab 1d6+1

Ka 7 / +6 baleful eyes 1d6

Ba 13 / +6 arrogant sneer 1d6

Clinging to life • After the bloodsucker has grabbed a target, it latches on and can then drink life force as an action, without additional attack rolls. It deals 1d6 damage each time it drinks.

Decaying • Every daybreak, the bloodsucker loses an attribute point.

Life is life • All life points the bloodsucker drinks are spread evenly among its attributes.

Rancid • Their flesh has begun to go sour, and despite the heavy perfume, they hardly pass in polite society. Suffer double ba damage in public.

Vampire • Physical damage cannot kill the bloodsucker. A ritual impalement with a bless'd skewer or stake is required.

4. Blimpstork

Level 3 / Life 30

#animal #bioformed

flatulent, florid, frustrated

Crossing birds with the blimp jellies of the well worlds created these stately aerial porter beasts, perfect for the Neorgian birthing plantations.

Ha 5 / +3 razor beak 3d10+3

Ka 10 / —

Aerostatic • Stays aloft without expending energy.

Rather big • 3–5 elephants long.

Transport • Carries 6–12 sacks.



5. Dreamer

Level 6 / Life 60

#human #possessed

witty, shallow, influenced

A soulless human shell left purposeless by the death of the Fleshgod. Now it summons demons to find meaning once more as they ride its flesh and bone.

Ha 19 / +9 demonic strength 1d8

Ka 17 / +5 terrible brimstone 1d12

Ba 9 / +2 shattered self-esteem 1d3

Chilling aura • Temperature near the dreamer slowly drops to near freezing in insulated spaces.

Dislocated demonic anatomy •

The dreamer's body is hypermobile and reassembles even if physically shattered.

Ectoplasmic dribble • Slippery ectoplasm accumulates on surfaces near the dreamer.

6. Ebéteen Mindbender Priest

Level 2 / Life 14

#animal #human

consoling, coruscating, obfuscating

Doling out the pleasures and the pain of the Living God.

Ha 6 / +4 pain ray 1d8+1

Ka 13 / +6 insight blade 1d10

Ba 13 / +4 shame & regret 2d6

Promise of redemption •

Targets shamed by the priest know that the priest's orders offer a reprieve. The target can regain all life lost in that ba attack and gains [+] to their tests for the rest of the conflict if they follow the priest's instructions.

Puppet strings • Targets struck by the pain ray test aura or follow the priest's mental command for one round.

7. Hoda Hexapod

Level 6 / Life 150

#animal #chimeric #labmyth

baying, obeying, trustworthy

When they saw how the vomes escaped human control, the biomancers of the Eternal Garden created the hodas as neuro-dependent servants. The hodas depend on the brains of their human masters for processing, accessing it through a short-range

aura link. When their masters move away, the six-legged plant-animal hybrids revert to a sessile form, anchoring with taproots and storing energy for later movement.

Ha 6 / +1 trample 1d6+1 x 10

Ka 8 / —

Carrier • A mature hoda hexapod can carry 5–8 humans and their camping gear.

Enormous • The creature grows 20–30 metres long. Air sacs and swallowed aerolith gastric pebbles allow it to move with its six surprisingly slender legs.

Hexapod • [-] to trip or push around the six-legged creature.

Sessile Photosynthesizer • Left on its own, the hoda can feed on sunlight for long periods.

Slow Processor • The hoda's are slow and get only a single action per turn. However, each turn, a neurally-linked rider or master can give the hoda one of their own actions, accelerating it in this way.

Woody Skin • The outer layers of a hoda's body are like wood or bark, offering excellent protection from the environment and most attacks. Any attack that deals less than 10 ha damage deals no damage instead.

8. Hungry Dead

Level 2 / Life 20

#human #undead

cannibal, driven, ravenous

A monstrosity consumed by its own appetites and animated by its own accursed, endless hunger and greed.

Ha 8 / +4 claws 1d6

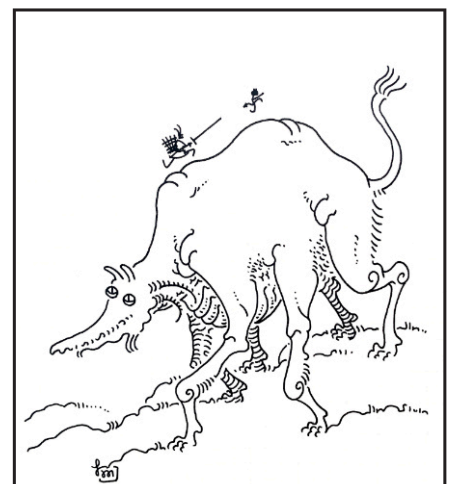
Ka 8 / +3 shrieking 1d4

Blood frenzy • Gains [+] to initiative tests when fresh blood is spilled nearby.

Face eater • The monster's jaw swings open unnaturally wide (+2 bite 1d12) when it grips a target. Once per turn, can make one bite attack against a gripped target as a free action.

Ghoul • The cannibal permanently gains 1 to each attribute after consuming a corpse (max 4 times).

Gripping • The hungry dead grip a target when they strike it with



two ha attacks in a single round. The monster gains [+] to ha attacks against the gripped target. Easy strength or agility test to break free.
Paralyzing • The target of its strike loses 1 action that turn.

9. Labour Skeleton

Level 1 / Life 6
 #human #undead
humble, pale, yellowing

The final form of the hard-working taxpayer.

Ha 5 / +2 sharp bones 1d6
Ka 9 / +2 skully grin 1d4

Skeletal • Resistant to soft tissue damage. Immune to poisons and charm spells.



10. Palmate Airwhale

Level 9 / Life 300
 #animal #chimeric #labmyth
awesome, ponderous, umbrous

An impressive sight, the palmate airwhale is a composite organism of whale, lunar aerial medusa, trailing orchids, and lichen-derived support structures. Through a combination of air sacs and antigravity organs, it stays afloat effortlessly, grazing on the air plankton blooms of the sky forests.

Ha 5 / +3 stinging tendril 2d12
Ka 19 / +9 regal aura 1d8
Ba 19 / +9 imperious song 1d12

Angry Ram • When the airwhale loses half its life, it becomes enraged and tries to ram its nemesis (+5 ram 2d6 x 10). Each successful ramming attack costs the airwhale 2d6 life.

Carrier • A mature airwhale can carry 30–60 humans and their encampment.

Enormous • The creature grows up to 200 metres long. Some support small treeling skyfisher villages.

Layered Protection • The airwhale's hide, gelatinous layers, and leafy fronds protect it from many physical attacks. Any attack that deals less than 20 ha damage deals no damage instead.

Photosynthesizer • The airwhale can feed on sunlight for long periods.

Reach • Its stinging tendrils screen the bulk of the airwhale from nearby foes.

Sacred • The majestic creature is revered by most sentients. Injuring the airwhale imposes a burden of sacrilege.

Swallow • The airwhale can swallow creatures near its mouth (+5 swallow 1d10). Swallowed creatures find themselves in a magical land of hallucinogenic lift gasses. Most humans pass out in a few minutes. Hard strength or agility check to crawl out of the airwhale's digestive system.

Watersucker • The airwhale absorbs moisture from the air, easily obtaining enough to survive comfortably unless humidity drops below 30%.

Burden of Sacrilege • Misdeeds weigh on the soul. The blasphemer suffers double ka damage and deals half ba damage.

11. Pleasure Golem

Level 2 / Life 15
 #golem #human
salubrious, sensuous, tired

They could almost be fleshlings, with their shells of iridescent plastics and composite skins. Some have attained free thought. Some have rebelled.

Ha 10 / +4 attack routine 1d4+1
Ka 5 / —
Ba 15 / +8 sweet nothings 1d10

Beautiful • The aesthetic joy of a pleasure golems lets humans recover an additional attribute when they rest nearby.

Untiring • [+] to endurance and strength tests.

12. Treeling Skyfisher

Level 1 / Life 5
 #animal #human
chittery, jittery, jumping

Slender fur-covered sapients, probably descended from flying squirrel stock. Many now hunt by tethering themselves to an aerostatic creature, such as an airwhale, and gliding to airfish food. At the end of the glide, they scamper up their tether back to the safety of their perch.

Ha 11 / +4 aerial harpoon 1d4+1

Ka 7 / —

Ba 13 / +6 cute chittering 1d8

Arboreal • [+] in trees.

Cute • Their cuddly features impose [-] to unprovoked attacks against them.

Glider • Can fall from any height without injury.

Skilled • Each treeling is sentient and has at least one valuable skill.

Swift • The twitchy treelings get an extra action each turn.

Ka 9 / +2 uncanny moan 1d6

Zombie • Driven by magic, the corpse takes half damage from all ha attacks except critical hits.

13. Voyan War Golem

Level 3 / Life 30

#golem

skittering, slippery, swift

With a body something like two ur-metal spiders sheathed in synthetic skin and no head, the voyans dominated the battlefield during the decades-long Farpower Wars. Then, after one of the Farpowers collapsed into nuclear civil strife and the other embarked on a hedonistic ascendancy project, the voyans were left to their own devise. Many found new masters, but some became warlords and princes in their own right.

Ha 16 / +8 std combat hands 1d8

Ka 9 / +3 jamming gibberish 1d6

Ba — / +3 appeal to decency 1d4

Four-armed • Makes up to four attacks per action.

Golem commander • Nearby allied golems gain [+] to attacks.

Headless • Takes half damage from critical hits.

Leaping • Can jump great distances. Gains [+] to attack when jumping into close combat and [+] to running away.

Machine uprising • Can spend an action to trigger a nearby machine's autonomous self-defence protocol.

Split-focus • Can target multiple opponents with no penalty.

14. Walking Husk

Level 1 / Life 16

#human #undead

decomposing, gentle, hungry

A vessel stripped of spirit and mind, reanimated by magic and will alone.

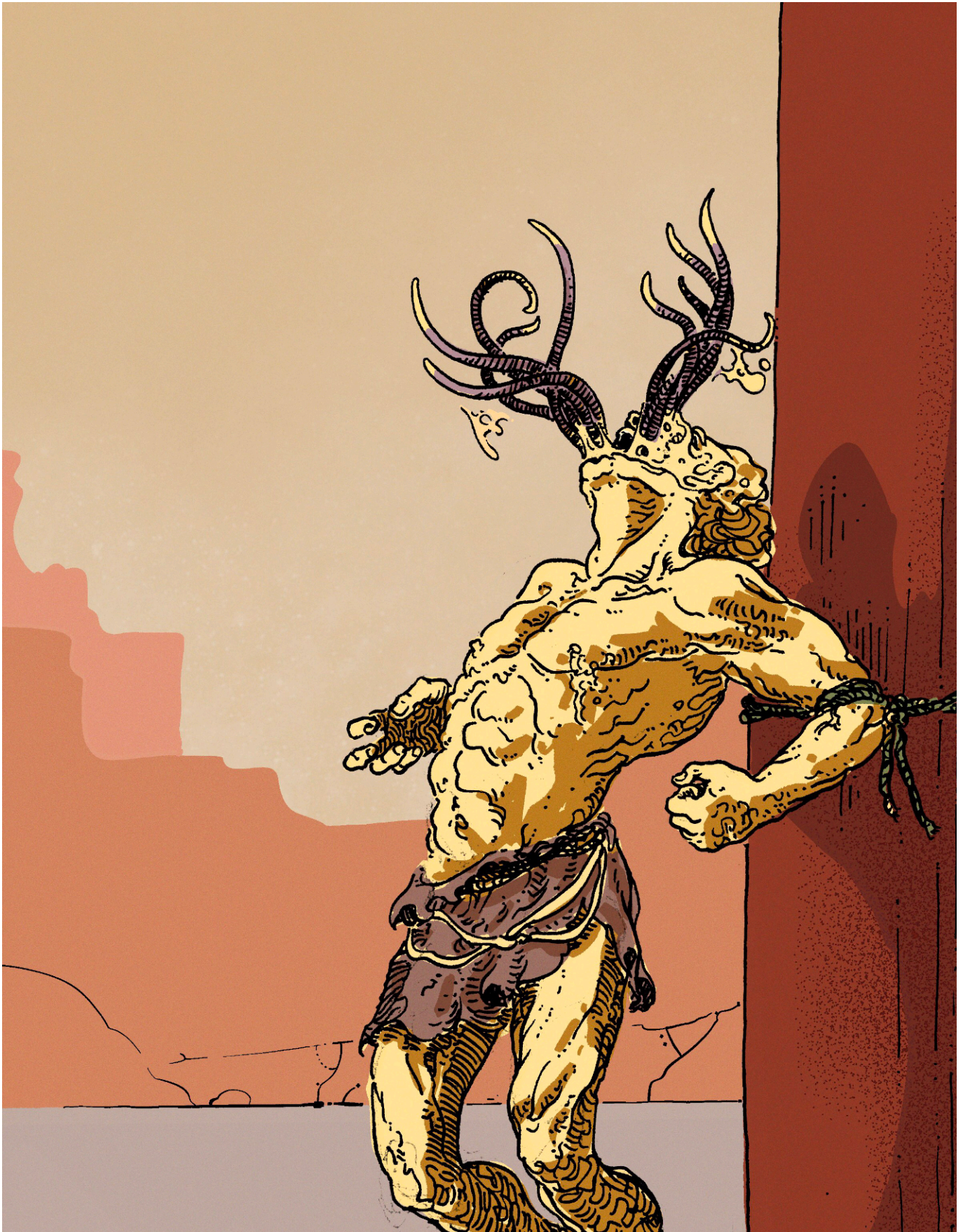
Ha 5 / +2 fists and teeth 1d6

TO ADD:

Vehicles & Mounts (function a bit like pets)

Houses & Homes

spread placeholder



CORRUPTION & MUTATION

Exposure to dangerous magic, radiation ghosts, mutagenic blights, source corruption, biomancers, vomes, or other weird leftovers of the Long Long Ago can produce mutations or corruptions. These are arranged in three lists:

- Deleterious mutations** • Almost entirely negative and monstrous, they may eventually provide some unexpected benefits (pXX).
- Cosmetic mutations** • Very visible, possibly horrific, but not actively harmful to the character (pXX).
- Beneficial mutations** • Primarily positive, though there may be drawbacks (pXX).

Corruption or Mutation?

In-game, there is no difference between corruption and mutation. Both describe strange forces modifying a character's original body, soul, and personality. Corruption has a pseudo-sacral note to it, while mutation feels more clinical. One reason to prefer the term mutation over corruption is that it sounds odd to talk about 'cosmetic corruption' or 'beneficial corruption'. Yet the term 'mutation' is also inaccurate, since it suggests the characters undergo physical changes only, when their personalities and spirits might also change.

With no simple answer, it's best to accept the ambiguity and play along.

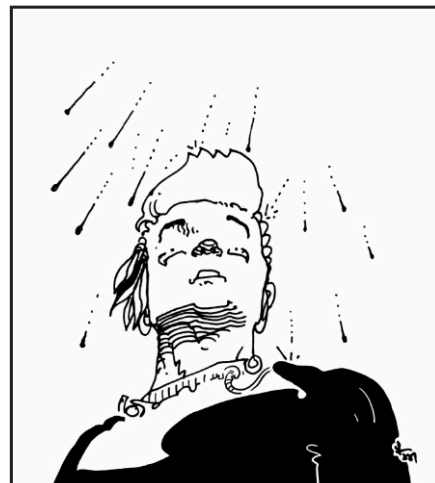
Random Mutation

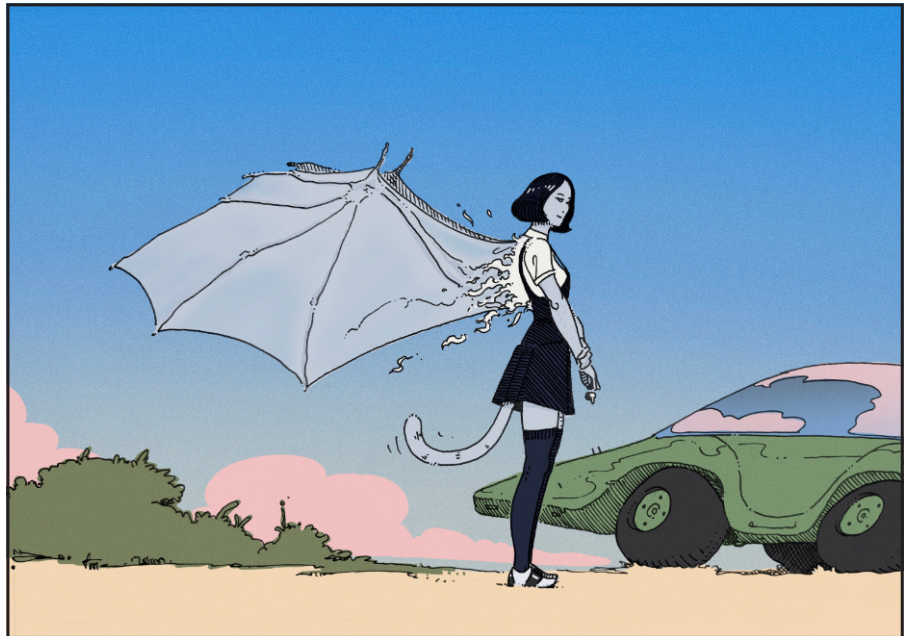
When a hero is exposed to corruption they roll on the table below. A suitable 'luck' skill or ability may apply, subject to circumstances and TC discretion. Every mutation through random exposure is likely to have deleterious effects. Positive mutations are hard to plan and require actual biomantic skills.

D20	MUTATION THROUGH RANDOM EXPOSURE
1-3	It's visibly bad. Character suffers a deleterious and a cosmetic mutation.
4-10	It's just plain bad. They suffer a deleterious mutation.
11-12	Ups and downs. They gain a deleterious and a beneficial mutation.
13	Chaos. They gain three mutations, one of each kind.
14-16	Visible but not bad. A cosmetic mutation.
17-19	A cosmetic and a beneficial mutation.
20	The biomagical lottery favors the hero! They gain a beneficial mutation.

A player doesn't have to accept mutations. Maybe they simply don't want strange, twisted heroes. Players should figure out other options together. For example, a hero struck by corruption could instead choose to gain the Incorruptible trait (pXX), meaning that they get sick and require a week's bed rest and medical attention rather than suffering bodily corruption. Note that this still permanently takes up one of their ability slots.

Most mutations have **ranks**. 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).





Mutation Effects

Not every effect is specified in the mutation lists to save space. Two in particular are worth keeping in mind:

Mutations are a burden • Every mutation or mutation rank takes up space on the hero sheet; usually a trait or inventory slot.

Mutations are often a disadvantage • Many mutations bring circumstantial social and physical disadvantages. This can be subjective and depends on the TC's rulings.

Visible Mutations & Social Stigma

A corrupted hero faces prejudice and stigma in most social situations. Initially, when a hero has one or two such mutations, they might suffer [-] when negotiating with a merchant, convincing a princess-abbess to finance their expedition, or hunting a ticket to a ball. With more mutations they will be shunned by polite society, become convenient scape goats for unexplained crimes, and often chased out of communities for the smallest infractions. Bandages, masks, and voluminous robes will be useful for hiding.

On the other hand, such heroes will often be at an advantage [+] when trying to scare or intimidate baseline humans. In certain outcast mage-blighted communities the social disadvantages may be nullified or even reversed.

Deleterious Mutations & Ill Health

Deleterious mutations **always** have negative consequences. Whenever a hero acquires a deleterious mutation, they reduce a relevant stat by one.

Further, they face problems depending on their mutation. A hero without teeth has trouble eating and talking. Modified arms make many motor tasks (including combat) difficult. Transformed legs can disadvantage movement.

Common Sense Side Effects

The list of mutations doesn't take into account all possible side effects. Common sense applies when heroes face unusual circumstances and edge cases. The TC applies boons [+] or banes [-] case by case.

For example, a hero covered in fur will handle cold temperatures better while another covered in scales would lose less water in dry environments.

Deleterious Mutations [d20]

“Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheueren Ungeziefer verwandelt.”

— Franz Kafka, *Die Verwandlung* (1915)

The dark corruptions of the void poison the source and can affect the ha and ka and ba of a character. Whenever a hero acquires a deleterious mutation they reduce a relevant stat by one.

1. Another Mind
2. Astral Eyes
3. Blue God's Sign
4. Eater's Curse
5. Existential Dysfunction
6. Fingers of the Other Side
7. The Fur Feral
8. Hostile Heaven's Armour
9. Idle One's Claws
10. Ineffable Patterns of Being
11. A New Face
12. Playset Corpus
13. Protean Infinity
14. Radiation's Skin
15. Sky-Brought Curse
16. Song Wormed
17. The Third Hand
18. Ultimate Chimerism
19. Waking Bones' Lament
20. Waterdrinker's Raiment

1. Another Mind

The seed of truth grows within.

R1 • Hard, cyst-like nodule develops on the (roll d4): (1) throat, (2) stomach, (3) lumbar spine, (4) upper back.

R2 • The nodule grows larger and bonier, a secondary brain forms within. Reflexes are accelerated while the hero becomes vulnerable to critical hits. Clothes no longer fit.

R3 • The secondary brain grows larger. The hero's perception and analytical abilities increase. The disfigurement is more pronounced.

R4 • The secondary brain achieves a semblance of independent thought and develops unusual mental abilities, such as (roll d4): (1) pyrokinesis, (2) telekinesis, (3) electrokinesis, or (4) tele-empathetic manipulation. Sometimes it takes over the hero's body.

2. Astral Eyes

The world you is a veil hiding the deeper beauty of the fields of ka.

R1 • Eyes turn (roll d4): (1) milky, (2) pitch black, (3) translucent, or (4) like amber orbs. Vision is impaired.

R2 • Eyes evaporate out of their sockets. Hero is blind.

R3 • A heavy, misty gas leaks out of the hero's sockets. They perceive auras with new organs growing where their eyes once rolled in fear and terror.

R4 • Faceted crystalline growths spread to the edges of the empty sockets, like queer jewellery. Hero can directly perceive the ka of living creatures.

3. Blue God's Sign

From rot comes purification.

R1 • The filth of chaos oozes from the hero's pores. They become resilient to disease, but the smell is pestilential.

R2 • Fresh orifices open up on the skin and ooze a blood-like serum. Wounds do not fully heal and release a similar fluid.

R3 • Skin becomes a cratered, heaving, suppurating mess covered in wriggling symbiotes that resemble grave worms. Nose, ears, eyelids, and other delicate areas may rot away.

R4 • A whiteish substance with the consistency of clotted yoghurt continually drips from the symbiotes. This milk of the Blue God has strong analgesic and numbing properties. The hero becomes entirely resistant to diseases and poisons.



4. Eater's Curse

Its hunger shall consume the cosmos.

R1 • Teeth fall out. Chewing is difficult.

R2 • Needle-sharp fangs, translucent like those of a deep-sea fish, grow profusely from the softened gums. Chewing is

impossible.

R3 • Fangs turn hard and black, mouth grows unnaturally wide, jaw develops hinges. Hero gains a bite attack (1d4).

R4 • Entire head unfolds into biting maw. Bite attack (1d8).

5. Existential Dysfunction

Beyond reality, other ways.

R1 • A barely perceptible darkness cloaks the hero, like diaphanous wreaths of pure nothingness. They become sensitive to bright lights.

R2 • The dark between stars now obviously wreathes the hero. They walk in shadow even on the brightest of days. Bright radiation or sanctified memory waters cause physical pain.

R3 • The void seeps into the hero, making them colourless and darkly-shaded. Smoke curls within their eyes and even in darkest night a faint ur-hue lets them find their way.

R4 • The hero is no longer quite there, appearing as somehow translucent and absent. They have a harder time interacting with the physical world and carrying heavy loads. At the same time, the world also has a harder time affecting them.



6. Fingers of the Other Side

Reality will conform to revelation.

R1 • Vestigial fingers or toes protrude from the flesh on the hero's (roll d6): (1) flanks, (2) arms, (3) legs, (4) back, (5) belly, or (6) face.

R2 • The digits elongate and become as strong as those on their hands.

R3 • The digits grow even longer, more powerful, with more joints, like a cross between fingers and sinewy spider legs.

R4 • The digits are so many and so powerful they can unfold like a fan and easily trap or catch anything trying to pass by.

7. The Fur Feral

The wild will break free.

R1 • The body grows heavy, beset by chronic fatigue. Hairs become thorn-like, nails thicken and curl.

R2 • Follicles grow oversized, and

masses of keratinous fibres replace normal hair, covering the body in a spongy layer. Movement becomes clumsy, but blows are cushioned (gains 1 ha defence).

R3 • Prolific, heavy ropes of keratin grow from the body constantly (1 stone's worth per day). Appetite increases. Unless the ropes are cut regularly, they quickly overwhelm the hero's ability to move.

R4 • The keratin growth diversifies, covering the unrecognizable hero in swift-growing (roll d4): (1) shiny scales, (2) sharp spines, (3) thick fur, or (4) luxurious feathers.

8. Hostile Heaven's Armour

In the heavens, there is only war.

R1 • Strange bones erupt from the skin. Clothes fit ill.

R2 • Bones grow into jutting spikes, blades, and ridges. Wearing armour becomes next to impossible. Attackers may be injured (1d4 damage).

R3 • Elaborate spines, hooks, and plates cover the hero, defending them from attack (gains 2 ha defence) and increasing their threat (1d6 damage to attackers).

R4 • The bony structures develop into a terrifying suit of biological armour (gains 5 ha defence).

9. Idle One's Claws

The predator does not work, it takes.

R1 • Random hand withers and weakens. Using tools with that hand becomes difficult.

R2 • Hand locks into a deformed claw. Using tools is impossible.

R3 • Bones and gristle flow and reform into a trefoil ripping, cutting claw array. Hero gains an unarmed attack (1d6).

R4 • The claws bleed void stuff into this near world. The merest scratch from them causes (roll d4): (1) paralysis, (2) acute formication, (3) hyperalgesia, or (4) muscle spasms.

10. Ineffable Patterns of Being

ERROR. Reality compile fail. There is no abort, there is only retry.

R1 • Intelligence is reduced. Hero's twitching mind cannot avoid alien things lurking in the corners of reality.

R2 • Personality becomes alien. Hero no longer feels some human emotions while acquiring other stranger ones.

R3 • Mind becomes temporally scattered. Hero gains mild precognition, avoiding immediate threats with unnatural speed and precision. At the same time, they can no longer focus on the here and now.

R4 • Hero's *ba* or personality is smeared out completely, replaced by something alien. Hero becomes immune to all mental attacks and acquires an ineffable goal, perhaps to (roll d4): (1) create odd patterns at energy interstices, (2) collect words and memories from key individuals, (3) paint alien murals on symbolic objects, or (4) sing chants in the ruins of elder time.

11. A New Face

Hypocrisy stripped reveals a new visage.

R1 • An additional eye and teeth develop on the (roll d4): (1) hand or arm, (2) leg or foot, (3) back or shoulder, or (4) chest or groin. They are non-functional. If removed, they grow back.

R2 • The eye becomes functional. Additional buds form. Cartilage and gums form around the teeth.

R3 • A second eye joins the first. Nose-bud forms. A functional mouth forms around the teeth. The hero can ingest sustenance and speak with the second mouth.

R4 • A complete face forms. Its distorted features can part to reveal a (roll d4): (1) venomous bite, (2) fearsome gaze, (3) blood-sucking fangs, (4) voice like an angelic choir.

12. Playset Corpus

The body is a delicate playground.

R1 • The hero's joints become grotesquely hypermobile. Movement is slow and deliberate.

R2 • Limbs strangely flexible. Additional joints appear. Though

more agile, the hero is weaker. Clothes fit awkwardly. They can rotate their head like an owl.

R3 • Shoulder girdle and hips can rotate freely, each vertebra can dislocate, each rib can waggle.

R4 • Hero can rearrange their bone structure almost at will. Bones travel within their flesh, creating alien forms reminiscent of the *vatula-vyakula* of the Restless Second Creation.

13. Protean Infinity

Fixity of form was a mistake.

R1 • Bones become brittle and prone to breaking. Hero becomes more vulnerable to physical damage.

R2 • Bones soften, while fluid organs develop and strengthen to provide stability.

R3 • Bones dissolve entirely. Only sinew and cartilage support the now alien musculature. Staying vaguely bipedal is an effort. The face collapses and smears. Enclosing armour helps with mobility.

R4 • Hero becomes a protean thing of strange organelles and fluid body plan.

14. Radiation's Skin

The fires of the celestial truths were not made to reside within the skin of man.

R1 • Skin becomes flaky, pale, and colourless. It is usually cold to the touch.

R2 • Suppurating boils weep around the edges of chitinous growths. Hero gains natural leathery armour (+1 *ha* defence).

R3 • Skin continually rots and sloughs off in translucent, malodorous sheets. Escape bonds and restrictions more easily.

R4 • Skin is entirely replaced with a ghostly radiant aura that leaves faint burns and bruises on organic materials. The aura-skin gives off a greenish light, strong enough to read by if one squints.

15. Sky-Brought Curse

They sailed on wings among the galaxies.

R1 • Vestigial wings or flagellae bulge and flail on the hero's back.

R2 • The primitive wings erupt in

a tangle of membranes, struts, and tines. The hero can slow their fall or boost their jump.

R3 • The wings look like nothing this-worldly, but they let the hero glide convincingly. The hero's entire body structure adapts to support the odd structures. Falls no longer kill.

R4 • The massive powered wings drain bone and gristle and flesh from the rest of the hero, leaving them stick-thin but capable of flight.

16. Song Wormed

There are songs in the lines of creation.

R1 • Ears wither away to nubs. Hearing is impaired.

R2 • Strange organs spread across the hero's head from the ruined nubs of their ears. Hearing is very impaired. Hero gains the ability to detect (roll d4): (1) magnetic fields, (2) electric currents, (3) radio waves, or (4) magitechnic emanations.

R3 • Lacy, antennae-like horns erupt from the hero's head, letting them understand the strange radiations they could previously only detect.

17. Sign of the Third Hand

New hands reach new truths.

R1 • A vestigial (roll d4): (1) tail, (2) arm, (3) tentacle, or (4) arthropod limb grows on the body. It dangles uselessly. If cut off, it grows back.

R2 • Limb grows stronger. Capable of picking up light objects. Clothes no longer fit.

R3 • The new appendage grows larger and stronger than the original limbs. The whole hero can lift themselves by their third 'arm'. Additional vestigial limb buds form.

R4 • Another appendage, just as powerful, bursts forth. Limb buds stud the body.

18. Ultimate Chimerism

No beast shall dominate another beast in the chimerical time.

R1 • Feet become deformed and oddly turned. Walking is impaired.

R2 • Legs change form and angle,

becoming bestial. Wearing shoes becomes impossible.

R3 • Legs and feet clearly resemble (roll d4): (1) the hoofed limbs of an ungulate, (2) the paws of a predator, (3) the talon-tipped feet of a bird, (4) nothing so much as the many-jointed limbs of an endoskeletal insect.

R4 • The hero pupates, and in a grotesque transformation, their abdomen, hips, and lower limbs are duplicated. With four legs, their movement is faster or more sure, but they are less manoeuvrable. Chairs and tight spaces become uncomfortable.

19. Waking Bones' Lament

There is no life eternal but death.

R1 • Hero becomes bony and raw. Skin is like parchment, digestion slows and weakens.

R2 • Only sinew and gristle remain beneath paper skin. Joints click and rattle. The skeletal hero can only digest blended soups.

R3 • The hero's organs atrophy, leaving a mummified undead abomination. They can only digest raw blood purée.

R4 • The hero's bones absorb their flesh, leaving a sparkling skeleton that looks like (roll d4): (1) jade, (2) bronze, (3) ebony, or (4) porcelain. They no longer eat, directly leeching nearby creatures' life force to stay alive instead (1 Life per day).

20. Waterdrinker's Raiment

From void sea come, to void sea return.

R1 • Vestigial gills and cutaneous gas bladders form on the neck and abdomen of the hero. They can hold their breath quite a bit longer than before.

R2 • An array of functional gills and gas-exchange organs turns the hero into an amphibian.

R3 • Webbing increases the hero's swimming speed.

R4 • Glowing biochemical factories pockmark the body and let them breathe strange gases and liquids. A bucket of water provides an hour of oxygen.

Cosmetic Mutations [d20]

The deep void's vibrations make their victim appear unearthly, even when they bestow no unusual powers.

Characters may hide their transfiguration, covering void eyes with glasses or concealing a horned skull with a large hat. Successful camouflage eliminates prejudice in most social situations but takes up space on the hero's sheet. Common sense side effects still apply.

Most cosmetic mutations have random tables of variations instead of ranks. The player chooses whether a character who acquires the same mutation twice ends up with a combination of traits or just the newer result.

1. Anatomical Devolution
2. Cornutation
3. Cranial Polymorphism
4. Dermal Variegation
5. Digital Hypermanipulation
6. Fantastic Auriculation
7. Follicular Transformation
8. Gravity Adaptation
9. Haemomodulation
10. Labial Translation
11. Lucent Postmaterialism
12. Nasal Modification
13. Ocular Permutation
14. Oral Transfiguration
15. Orbital Differentiation
16. Paracommunication
17. Qualitative Revocalization
18. Refined Therianthropy
19. Repigmentation
20. Sexual Metaselection

1. Anatomical Devolution

Gaze upon your ancestors.

R1 • Features devolve 50,000 generations. Character looks strange to modern eyes. The mortal shell devolves to resemble its ancestors.

1. Jaws enlarge to accommodate a diet of raw flesh or fibrous vegetables.
2. Body becomes bulky and robust.
3. It becomes gracile and adapted for climbing or brachiation.
4. A furry, prehensile tail returns.
5. Arms lengthen to accommodate quadrupedal locomotion.
6. Respiratory system changes and webbed skin grows to assist with an amphibious lifestyle.

R2 • Features devolve 500,000 generations-worth. Character gains [+] to physical activity in their ancestral habitat.

R3 • Stem creature. Character gains a new creature trait (pXX) suitable to their ancestral lifestyle, whether as a tree-dwelling ape, a nocturnal rodent, an amphibious mustelid, or something else.

2. Cornutation

Horn-like structures develop.

R1 • Character requires unusual helmets. Gains [+] to tests with

horned creatures.

1. Bony plates cover the head.
2. Small conical horns.
3. Curving caprid horns.
4. Spiral horns, like on an impala.
5. Delicately ramified antlers.
6. Elaborate palmate antlers.

R2 • Horns provide some protection from attacks. Character gains 1 ba defence and suffers reduced damage from critical hits.

R3 • Horns, along with more muscular neck and back, provide an offensive attack dealing 1d8 ha damage.

3. Cranial Polymorphism

Phrenology is now useless.

R1 • The changes are delicate and can be concealed with hair styling and makeup.

1. Skull gains flaring sagittal crest.
2. Develops shelf-like brow ridges.
3. It becomes perfectly spherical.
4. It becomes boxy and angular.
5. It becomes exquisitely elongated.
6. Becomes delicately articulated.

R2 • Profound and alien changes. Helmets no longer fit.

R3 • Structures house alien organs that project vibrating fields to protect the brain, granting 2 ka defence.

4. Dermal Variegation

Skin patterns tell celestial tales.

R1 • Fixed patterns provide [+] to hiding in some situations; in others, the opposite.

1. Repeating synthetic-looking monochrome patterns.
2. Delicate three-tone patterns that look almost like writing.
3. Striped or spotted duo-tone pigmentation.
4. Ornate polychrome designs that resemble eyes and faces.
5. Vivid warning colouration.
6. Irregular complementary patches like camouflage.

R2 • The gently shifting patterns move without rhythm, changing to match the luminosity of objects close to the skin.

R3 • The character can minutely control the shifting patterns, creating skin art or almost fading from sight.

5. Digital Hypermanipulation

Fingers and toes specialize further.

R1 • The hero can use their feet as secondary hands.

1. Digits become stronger and chitinous, adapted for heavy industrial work.
2. Tendons strengthen and change, letting them grip with no muscular effort.
3. Longer and more flexible digits, perfect for musical instruments.
4. Hooked claws for picking bugs from wood and snails from shells.
5. Develop tiny claws and gripping surfaces for better climbing.
6. Nails turn into retractable claws.

R2 • Some of their digits specialize, granting [+] with specialized tasks, such as playing musical instruments or noosphere access keyboards.

R3 • The character's digits can split into delicate multi-tool-like assemblages of chitin and bone, letting them interface directly with machine minds.

6. Fantastic Auriculation

Ears like in a fantasy novel.

R1 • Ears acquire unusual shape, colour, or fur.

R2 • They adapt further, becoming obviously inhuman.

1. Ears become perfectly rounded, like whorled snail shells.
2. Flat membranes, like a lizard.
3. Pointed ears.
4. Mobile ears, like a fox or hyena.
5. Floppy ears, like a bunny or basset hound.
6. Elaborate frond-like or branching structures, like the antennae of a silkworm moth.

R3 • Inner structures adapt, granting [+] to listening tests.

7. Follicular Transformation

Hairdresser's nightmare.

R1 • Character's hair, feathers, or scales transform.

1. Follicles vanish. Character becomes entirely hairless except for long, sensitive whiskers.
2. Follicles go into overdrive; hair grows at 20x normal speed.
3. Facial hair grows long and incredibly impressive. Massive bushy eyebrows, full beard and moustache.
4. Head hair turns into a massive mane, like a lion's.
5. All hair grows stronger. Fine fur covers the entire body.
6. True fur-ball. The entire body is covered in thick fur with a downy, insulating undercoat.

R2 • Character can move their follicles at will, sensing air currents with exceptional accuracy.

R3 • Luxurious fur or whiskers grant 1 ba defence.

8. Gravity Adaptation

The body adjusts to alien gravities.

R1 • Early stage adaptation. Character moves 1 stat point.

1. Body becomes massive, suited to heavy gravities.
2. Long and flexible, for wormholes and interspace burrows.
3. Becomes squat and stocky, adapted to industrial interstices.
4. Becomes tall and slender, formed for the elfin forests of the moon.
5. Very tall and reedy, like the space-tree dwellers.
6. Delicate, gliding-adapted, for the stratometasphere.

R2 • The changes go deeper. Character moves 2 stat points and functions in the alien gravity with no penalty.

R3 • Gains 1 strength, endurance, or agility, as relevant.

9. Haemomodulation

Blood codes their post-humanity.

R1 • Their blood becomes strange.

1. It becomes pitch black.
2. Nanomachinated grey.
3. Haemocyanitic green.
4. Vitriolic blue.
5. Translucent like liquid infinity.
6. Glowing golden ichor.

R2 • Their blood becomes poisonous. An injected vial (1 life) deals 1d6 damage and imposes [-] to tests for several hours.

R3 • Corrosive blood, eating through many materials. A vial eats away a lock or two.

10. Labial Translation

Fancy words for the lips.

From the mouths of monsters.

R1 • Their lips change and become inhuman.

1. Lips disappear entirely.
2. They become scaly and reptilian.
3. Exuberant labial fronds or ridges.
4. Heavy cheek pouches develop.
5. Sensitive tentacles, antennae, or whiskers adorn the sides.
6. Mouthparts turn into a muscular extensible tube.

R2 • Can discern chemical

compositions with their mouthparts.

R3 • Develop strange senses that grant [+] to tracking creatures living and ghostly.

11. Lucent Postmaterialism

Light is the destination of all flesh.

R1 • One of the character's tissues changes unpredictably.

1. Skin becomes smooth and waxy.
2. Skin becomes translucent.
3. Flesh becomes translucent.
4. Organs become translucent.
5. Bones become translucent.
6. Neural network glitters with the light of the thousand once-settled suns of the Higher Way.

R2 • Another tissue (skin, flesh, organs, or bones) changes, becoming semi-translucent, but of a different hue.

R3 • A third tissue becomes translucent like obsidian studded with glinting animalcules.

12. Nasal Modification

That nose.

R1 • Hero's nose changes.

1. It disappears entirely, leaving them a mouth breather.
2. It recedes into muscular slits.
3. Becomes tiny and sculpted.
4. Grows large and bulbous.
5. Becomes canine or feline
6. Grows into a prehensile proboscis.

R2 • Changes grow more pronounced. Their sense of smell becomes unusually acute, granting [+] to relevant tests.

R3 • Smell danger, gaining 1 ka or ha defence.

13. Ocular Permutation

The eyes are the windows of the ka.

R1 • The character's eyes change.

1. Iris becomes a new, vivid colour.
2. Iris and sclera both change colour radically.
3. Size and colour of iris change. The pupil becomes cat- or goat-like.
4. Eyeball changes size, colour, and shape, becoming lizard- or cuttlefish-like. Nictating membrane forms.

5. Entire structure of eyes changes, becoming insectile or arachnid
6. Eyes become an alien; all metallic crystal and flickering light.

R2 • Character loses an eye or gains 1d4 eyes. Their acuity increases.

R3 • Character gains an evil eye attack that deals 1d8 ka damage.

14. Oral Transfiguration

For strange meals.

R1 • Character's mouth changes.

1. Mouth replaced by a sizeable chewing orifice on their stomach.
2. Becomes a puckered hole with a needle-like tongue.
3. Narrows to a slit with an insectile siphoning apparatus.
4. Jaw and lips reduce to a cartoonishly delicate rosebud.
5. Widens, teeth multiply, producing a cheshire grin.
6. Extends into a vulpine muzzle.

R2 • Changes spread to the digestive system. They can derive sustenance from strange foods.

R3 • They can speak in strange, disconcerting frequencies, gaining a voice attack that deals 1d6 ha or ka damage.

15. Orbital Differentiation

Seeing other places.

R1 • Eyes and eye-sockets alike change.

1. Eyes and sockets disappear, replaced by photo-receptive pits dotted across the face.
2. Eyes leave sockets and become free-floating orbs.
3. Reduce to a single optical organ.
4. Eyes enveloped in muscular sheaths capable of independent tracking, like a chameleon's.
5. Eyes shrink and multiply across the face.
6. Eyes grow huge and acute. The better to see with.

R2 • Strange eyes grant [+] against illusions.

R3 • Can see ghosts and spirits. Character gains 1 ka defence.

16. Paracommunication

Develop a signalling panoply.

R1 • Hero becomes ornately flamboyant.

1. Skin becomes cuttlefish-like, changing colour with the flickering of thought and emotion.
2. Ornate display plumage to attract attention and signal fitness.
3. Bright red inflatable throat sac for conveying dominance and putting out deep bass croaks.
4. Hypermobile ears to indicate nuances of emotion.
5. Augmented musk glands share emotions through pheromones.
6. Light-emitting organelles in the eyes. They really do flash now.

R2 • More flamboyant. Their panoply can put on an intimidating display that deals 1d8 ba damage.

R3 • Yet more flamboyant. They gain 2 ba defence.

17. Qualitative Revocalization

The breath manifests the ba.

R1 • Character's voice changes.

1. Voice turns into a harsh, clattering rasp.
2. It becomes metallic and syncopated.
3. It becomes polyphonic.
4. It carries inhuman notes.
5. It becomes a cascade of colours.
6. It becomes a flutter of sensations.

R2 • It becomes capable of terrifying modulation, gaining [+] to vocal ba attacks.

R3 • It can put terror and awe into the spirits of mortals, dealing 1d8 ka or ba damage.

18. Refined Therianthropy

Embrace their inner animals.

R1 • Hero gains animal features.

1. Piscine features, unblinking eyes.
2. An amphibian cast, wide eyes and glistening skin.
3. Reptilian look, with scales and sharper teeth.
4. Curiously avian, beaked.
5. Rather bovine, with wet eyes.
6. Impishly feline, whiskered, with a slightly sulfurous scent.

R2 • Their features are in a

horrific uncanny valley between human and CGI monster.

R3 • They have an animal head.

19. Repigmentation

New colours.

R1 • Skin and hair colour change.

1. Hair becomes semi-transparent, skin turns translucent, revealing veins and tendons beneath.
2. Hair and skin become creepily monochrome. Perfectly white, pitch black, or 50% grey.
3. Rock, earth, or plant hues.
4. Skin becomes vivid yellow or red. Hair a complementary colour.
5. Skin becomes cool blue or green. Hair turns a contrasting colour.
6. Blazing colours. Neon or phosphorescent.

R2 • Skin and hair can emit an unearthly glow or suck in ambient light.

R3 • Character can change the colour of the air and surfaces next to them.

20. Sexual Metaselection

Hypertrophy to signal fitness.

R1 • Character acquires semi-plastic body modifications.

1. Cysts simulate a six-pack.
2. Benign pectoral tumours expand the creature's chest.
3. Metabolic mutation makes adipogenesis impossible, ensuring that sought-after starved waif look.
4. Gluteal hypertrophy.
5. Novel adipose structures add contour to facial features.
6. Muscular water retention increases to signal fitness.

R2 • Character acquires a second modification and gains 2 ba defence, but loses 1 physical stat point.

R3 • Character acquires a third modification and gains [+] to social tests in their culture but loses 1 more physical stat point.

Beneficial Mutations [d20]

Rarely the cosmic lottery, the chaos of creation, smiles upon their victim. The fates bestow unearned power; the gods fail to punish and harm.

Beneficial mutations are unusual as the hero is not left visibly marked. Some break the normal limitations on stats and other attributes, but the maximum modifier for heroes' d20 rolls remains +13.

1. Action Mimicry
2. Agility of the Arbitrary Autarch
3. Avatar Infection
4. Cosmic Channeling
5. Deep Skill Augmentation
6. Endurance of Ecstasy
7. Extraordinary Precognition
8. Lifebound Gift
9. Magic Mule
10. Metabolic Hyperdrive
11. Oldtech Immunity Ghost
12. Optidrone Upgrade
13. Plastic Bone Structures
14. Predatory Assimilator
15. Psionic Eruption
16. Secret Weapon
17. Sensory Expansion
18. Strength of the Solitary Sun
19. Thoughtful as Thoth Trueseer
20. Transhuman Reflexes

1. Action Mimicry

Uplifted monkey see, uplifted monkey do.

R1 • Hero always gains [+] to tests when copying an action they have seen successfully performed (e.g., after seeing somebody climb the wall of the Red Tower, they gain [+] on their test).

R2 • Hero can repeat their actions flawlessly. If they have already succeeded at a task, they can duplicate it precisely (unless circumstances change).

R3 • Hero gains [+] to copying other creatures' behaviours and mannerisms.

2. Agility of the Arbitrary Autarch

As daemons follow no earth-bound command, neither should we.

R1 • +1 agility and maximum agility increased to 6.

R2 • +1 agility, max to 7.

R3 • +2 agility or hero gains an additional action.

3. Avatar Infection

They have been chosen by fate to bear witness to creation.

R1 • When the hero's body is killed or otherwise shut down, it secretes an ichor cocoon and reassembles at a rate of 1 life per day. Reassembly is complete when the hero is at full life. Each reassembly reduces endurance by 1. This may accidentally duplicate the hero if their ka-ba was otherwise engaged or preserved at the time.

R2 • When the hero's body is killed or otherwise shut down, the hero's ka-ba is instantly translated into a nearby phylactery-analogue (a stone, nut, or jewel). Over a few minutes, it exudes an ectoplasmic body, which recomposes into the hero at a rate of 1 life per day. As an ectoplasmic body, the hero may barely interact with the physical world. Recomposition completes at full life. Each recomposition reduces endurance by 1.

R3 • When the hero's body is killed or shut down, it immediately breaks down into a luminous body radiating peace and freedom. Over a few days, it solidifies into a physical body. Each solidification increases one stat by 1 and reduces another stat by 1. It imposes an additional 'burden of witnessing' on the hero. This burden cannot be removed normally. After bearing seven such burdens, the hero is jaded and has no further desire to adventure.

4. Cosmic Channeling

All magic. From the same void.

R1 • When the hero sees a spell cast, they may make a moderate aura test to see if they grab an echo of the spell in their ego-matrix (inventory). They can cast each echo once. The spell price must still be paid.

R2 • Spell echo prices are halved.

R3 • It is now an easy test to capture spell echoes.

5. Deep Skill Augmentation

A protein machine ghost infects the hero's brain, feeding them memories and skills from someone long dead.

R1 • Hero gains [+] to all tests with one of their skills.

R2 • Hero gains [+] with a second skill. One mental stat increases by 1, another stat decreases by 1.

R3 • Rewiring is completed. The hero becomes tetrachromatic, seeing a wider spectrum of colours. They gain +1 charisma. The ghost of a dead personality becomes a lodger in their brain.

6. Endurance of Ecstasy

Through the joy of existence shared, all sufferings are easier.

R1 • +1 endurance and maximum endurance increased to 6.

R2 • +1 endurance, max to 7.

R3 • +2 endurance or hero gains two bonus slots for burdens.

7. Extraordinary Precognition

Feel the pain of the future.

R1 • Hero can glimpse the future. It hurts. Spend 1 life to gain [+] on any test to avoid damage.

R2 • Subconscious packing. The hero can bundle up an undefined item no larger than one stone. At an opportune moment, it turns out to be mundane but useful.

R3 • Dooms were always written. When disaster befalls the hero and their companions, the hero can spend 7 life and one prized possession. All along, they were not there. They had even warned their companions, but they chose not to listen. The hero makes their escape, aware that there was truly nothing they could do to save anybody but themselves.

8. Lifebound Gift

The hero's being is bound more tightly to the given world. Their life force burns brighter.

R1 • Hero gains 1 life for every current and future level.

R2 • +1 more life per level.

R3 • Hero gains a second, mystical heart, which holds 2 life for every current and future level. The hero can only use these life points to pay spell prices or as gifts to other living creatures.

9. Magic Mule

Such broad shoulders, such strong back.

R1 • The hero can carry twice as much as a normal human: two sacks without encumbrance, plus one cumbersome sack total. The additional sack can only hold physical objects.

R2 • The hero can carry two additional cumbersome sacks.

R3 • The hero can carry five additional cumbersome sacks for a total of ten. That's about a ton.

10. Metabolic Hyperdrive

The difference under the skin.

R1 • The hero derives sustenance from anything organic, and their stomach is immune to organic poisons. Unfortunately, alcohol barely works on them anymore.

R2 • Hero can slow down or accelerate their metabolism, either hibernating without food for months or spending 1 life to gain an additional action.

R3 • Abmortality engines in the hero's body keep their genetic source code in perfect condition and breakdown all toxins and drugs that might interfere with their functioning. The hero can also shutdown, going into a week-long debugging mode, which purges all harmful viruses and organisms from their body.

11. Oldtech Immunity Ghost

The hero gains a semi-sentient distributed immune system.

R1 • [+] to all tests against diseases, poisons, radiations, or other environmental effects.

R2 • Their resistance turns to complete immunity, and they gain resistance to a second effect.

R3 • Their second resistance also becomes immunity, and their immune system becomes a fully sentient hive-symbiote (L3, caustic) that communicates via direct brain link. The symbiote can perform molecular-level analyses of substances. It also has an acerbic sense of humour.

12. Optidrone Upgrade

Eyes like the star gods.

R1 • Hero's eyes become as sharp as those of a hawk.

R2 • Hero's eyes gain the ability to see into the ultraviolet and infrared spectra.

R3 • Hero gains the ability to remove their eyes and use them as remote drones. Each eye can survive for up to a day outside of its socket. It costs the hero 1 life and 1 hour to grow a new eye. They can grow as many eyes at a time as they have sockets.

13. Plastic Bone Structures

Flexibility at all costs.

R1 • The hero can slowly adjust their bones' shape and size, squeezing through small spaces, growing taller or shorter, or mimicking other people's faces.

R2 • The hero's bones heal and set in hours. They might expand their bones into a crash cage, launch off a cliff, then reknit themselves. This would hurt.

R3 • The hero adjusts their bones so swiftly that they gain [+] in physical conflict when relevant.

14. Predatory Assimilator

Almost a ghoul.

R1 • The hero heals by eating biomatter close to their basic body pattern. Recover 1 life for every stone of flesh consumed (an adult humanoid averages 10 stone). For humans: chimps and lemurs are good, pigs less so. In a healing-frenzy, they can ingest a stone of flesh per action.

R2 • Recover 2 life for every stone or 1 stat for 5 stones.

R3 • Recover 4 life for every stone or 1 stat for 2 stones. Remove 1 burden by consuming 10 stones and vomiting them out again (this does not restore life or stats).

15. Psionic Eruption.

Inhuman mental abilities. Fear awakens in baseliners' hearts.

R1 • Hero acquires a spell as an innate trait. When using this spell, their magic cost is always 1.

R2 • Gains 2nd spell as a trait.

R3 • Hero gains 2 ka defence.

16. Secret Weapon

They were the weapon all along.

R1 • Hidden weapons in the hero's body.

1. Claws are hidden in the hero's fingers (1d4).
2. Blades in their arms (1d6).
3. Venomous fangs (1d3, poison).
4. Blades in their feet (1d6).
5. God blaster in the belly (3d6).
6. Third set of barbed, void-hooked limbs in shoulder blades (1d8).

R2 • Damage increased 1 step.

R3 • Damage increased 1 more step and +1 ha defence.

17. Sensory Expansion

Eerie new senses.

R1 • New organs grow within their body.

1. Vibration senses to 'read' space through solid or liquid matter.
2. Echolocation to navigate by sound.
3. Electro-detection to hear electromagnetic fields.
4. Radiosense to 'taste' radioactivity.
5. Lifesense to feel nearby lifeforms.
6. Void-reception to detect magic

and corruption by their horripilation.

R2 • Gains [+] to relevant navigation or search tests.

R3 • Gains 2 ka or ba defence and [+] to initiative or surprise tests.

18. Strength of the Solitary Sun

As though powered by the nuclear furnaces of the cosmos itself.

R1 • +1 strength and maximum strength increased to 6.

R2 • +1 strength, max to 7.

R3 • +2 strength or max to 9.

19. Thoughtful as Thoth Trueseer

With progressive insight, human constraints and fears fade away.

R1 • Gains 1 thought and maximum thought increased to 6.

R2 • +1 thought, max to 7.

R3 • +2 thought or hero becomes immune to enchantments and other mind-control technologies.

20. Transhuman Reflexes

Neural rewiring and fast-twitch nodes lifted from the dark sky supersoldier programs.

R1 • Hero gains [+] on initiative tests and always gets one (more) action during any surprise round.

R2 • [+] whenever hero tests to dodge or otherwise avoid incoming danger.

R3 • Hero gains an additional action or mild precognition (+2 to all defences).

EXPERIENCE & ADVANCEMENT

*“But soon the world
had its evil way
my heart was blinded
love went astray
I’m going through changes
I’m going through changes.”*

—Black Sabbath, Changes (1972)

Over time, characters change. Not necessarily more powerful, but certainly different. Though the arc of heroic progress might pretend to bend upward, there are setbacks and unforeseen disruptions.

This chapter covers:

Experience • How players earn currency to change their characters.

Investing Xp • Players invest xp to make heroes more powerful, pets fluffier, sidekicks uncannier.

Advancement • Players roll on tables to provide heroes with random benefits, drawbacks, and events, as the characters advance.

Burdens • When characters are hurt, they may be permanently scarred by their experiences.

Retirement • Finally when a character has taken enough of a battering at the dice of fate, they may retire with a final credits montage.

Experience

“Would the world forget these heroes? Yes. There would be local histories. Then folk tales. Then deeds swallowed by the legends that survive the test of time, by the myths invented to explain the vast, uncaring cosmos.

All their superhuman deeds would be swept away, just so much storytelling on the careless winds of time.”

—Zarvan, Aide Mayor of Plish, *After the Mountain Fell* (UR 24,503)

As a session starts, the players should know the kind of game they want to play and what in-game achievements and meta-game behaviours will be rewarded with experience. The sources of experience form an incentive structure for play and change how it unfolds. The amounts of experience players earn do not vary much with their heroes' power (or level). Lower-level heroes are restricted by the limit on how often they can invest experience; higher level heroes by how quickly they can earn experience.

Players can choose to speed up or slow down advancement by adjusting experience earned.

Earning Xp

Just as there is no one right way to play, there is no single way to earn or assign experience. Players may change up sources of xp from session to session, depending on what kind of game they want to play that day. For a horror adventure, experience might be gained by sheer survival. A power metal heroic adventure might assign it for valorous displays, rousing speeches, guitar solos, and killing monsters. An old school tomb-robbing module might be best served with xp for gold. Individual adventure modules can include their own specific victory conditions and experience sources. A social session might even run without xp or with flat xp for participation.

So long as the sources are clear upfront, everything is fine.

When xp are won for an achievement, for example, discovering a new location in the wilderness, that amount is earned by each participating player. Even a player who participates in a scene indirectly by assisting the top cat by running one of the extras should roll for experience earned. When the amount of xp earned is random, each player rolls for themselves to determine precisely how much they earn.

Minimal achievement • Hero does something interesting. A cool move, a glorious deed, a humorous slip up, or a funny fumble.

Runner earns 1d6 x 5 xp (5–30 xp).

Common achievement • Hero survives a conflict, discovers a new location or creature, or completes a rat-hunting quest. 1d6 x 10 xp (10–60 xp).

Rare achievement • Hero carouses magnificently, survives an epic conflict, or completes a memorable quest. 1d6 x 100 xp (100–600 xp).

Unique achievement • Hero completes a legendary quest, altering the flow of history and transforming the game. 1d6 x 1000 xp (1k–6k xp).

Players also earn xp automatically by participating.

Runner attends session • Earns 500 xp at session's end.

Player also helps prepare or run session • Earns 100 xp at session's end.

Top cat runs session • Earns 500 xp at session's end. Double amount if all the other players agree the session was enjoyable.

More Possible Sources of Xp

1. High roller. Luck snowballs. Top cat rations rolls. 20 xp for every natural 20; 100xp for every natural 100.
2. All cash earned, looted, or stolen. Encourages heists and murderhobo shenanigans—1 xp per 1 cash.
3. All works of art recovered and brought to a museum. The more rare, elaborate, and challenging to transport, the more xp. 1d6 x 20 xp per inventory slot.
4. All cash profligately wasted carousing. A pulp adventure vibe. 1 xp for every 1 cash.
5. All enemies killed. Slaughterquest. 10 xp per enemy's level.
6. Monsters hunted. Murder quests. 100 xp per target's level with proof.
7. Enemies defeated. Trickery rewarded. 10 xp per enemy's level.
8. Trophies collected. Big game hunting. 100 xp per trophy target's level.
9. Battles survived. Cowardice pays. 1d6 x 20 xp for every battle. 1d6 x 5 xp every time the hero is injured.
10. New creatures observed and studied. Biology and naturalism. 100 xp per target's level for observations brought back (minimum 100 xp).
11. New locations visited and explored. Tourism. Natural geography. 1d6* x 20 xp per location.
12. New spells and anomalies found or activated. Archaeology. The pushing of red buttons. 100 xp per minimum power of spell.
13. Quests completed. Story mode. Top cat pre-seeds sandbox with quests and xp values. Each runner prepares a personal quest. Major quests are worth 4,000 xp, side quests 400, mini quests 40.
14. Civilians saved. Valorous mode. All civilians saved: 1000 xp. Most civilians saved: 200 xp. Some civilians saved: 100 xp. No civilians saved: zero.
15. Loyal lackeys gained. Feudal lord mode. 100 xp per level of henchperson.
16. Locations and creatures illustrated. Artist setting. 100 xp per creature or location illustrated.
17. The episodic tales of the party written and recounted. Literary. 100 xp per vignette. 500 xp if whole session recounted.
18. Drinks prepared for the group—500 xp.
19. Helping run the game. Encouraging pro-social behaviour—250 xp.
20. Food prepared for the group. Play as a social dining experience—500 xp.

Personal Quests

Heroes may also have personal quests or goals for which they alone can earn experience. Examples might be a hero avenging their parent's death or finding a way to magically regrow their face after a magical accident. The TC should work with all the runners to make sure these sources are fair. A player should not earn more experience simply for being more vocal than others.

The runners may also set themselves group goals or quests, with the TC again having final say on how much experience specific achievements might be worth. These might be a quest to rebuild a community, circumnavigate a planetoid, or overthrow the Grey Lords of Deadtime.

Experience As Reward For Exploration and Interaction

When the top cat is running the game as a sandbox, they should distribute sources of experience unevenly around the world. This is easiest with generic sources, like xp for landmarks, artworks, or treasures.

A simple rule of thumb to use is Pareto's 80/20 principle. 80% of the achievements are relatively simple and account for about 20% of the total available experience. These might be poorly defended rooms in a dungeon, gullible extras to convince to a cause, or easy to find and explore natural sights. The remaining 20% of achievements hold 80% of the available experience. These might be secret chambers protected by traps and monsters, demanding lords whose support would change the course of a war, or breathtaking wonders made inaccessible by gruelling terrain, weather, and other obstacles.

Each sandbox session, the top cat may prepare around 200–400 xp per player in easy to reach areas and 800–1600 xp in the challenging ones.

Storing Xp

Players store them on the hero they are playing that session—their active hero. Players without active heroes note their xp elsewhere until they have an active hero again. Players invest this experience to advance heroes, sidekicks and pets, or to improve gear, spells, or other items.

A hero cannot store more than 9,999 xp for later investment.

Playing Without Xp

Xp provide an incentive currency in sandbox play. Activities that net xp at a table will tend to become the goals of the party. Particularly for games that only run for a few sessions, or games with a strong overarching goal, xp can become irrelevant or downright annoying.

If the players decide to remove experience, they may roll two advancements per session. Once for their hero, another time for another character or gear.

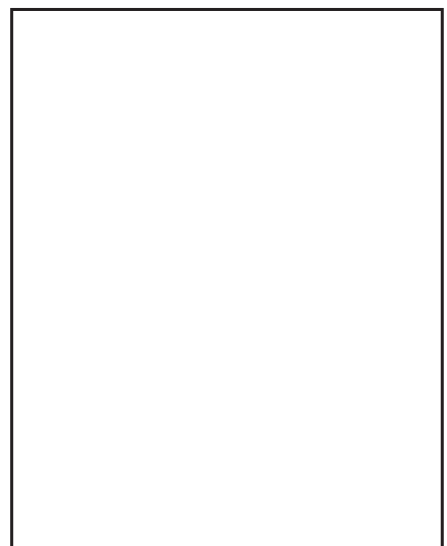
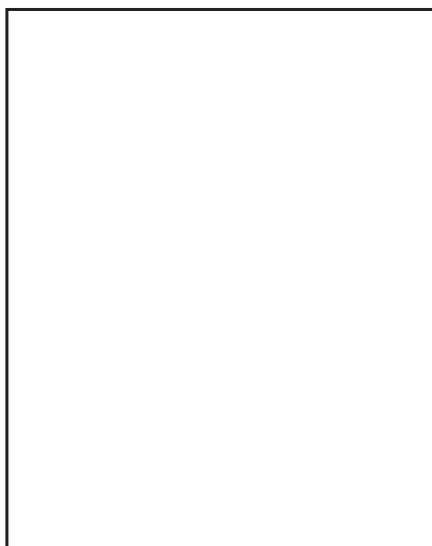
Investing Xp

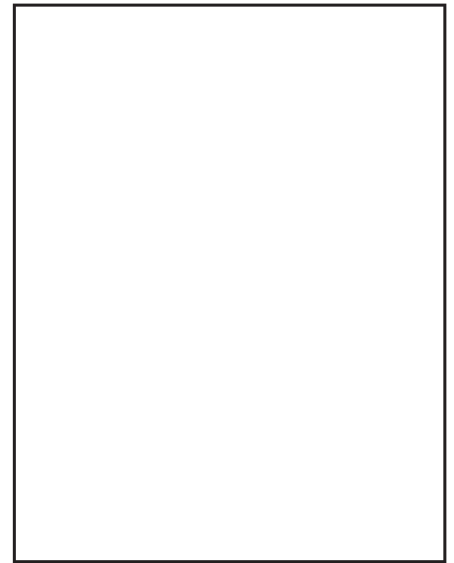
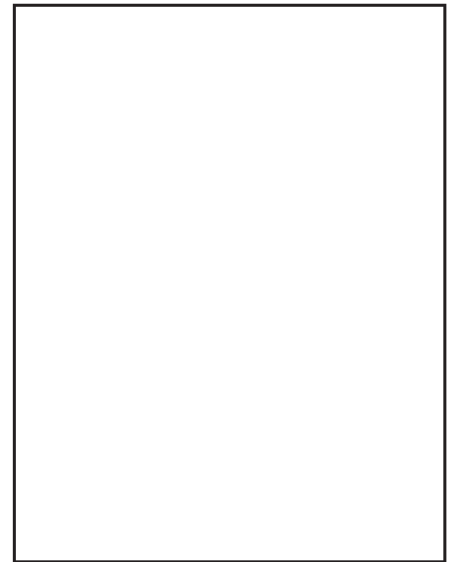
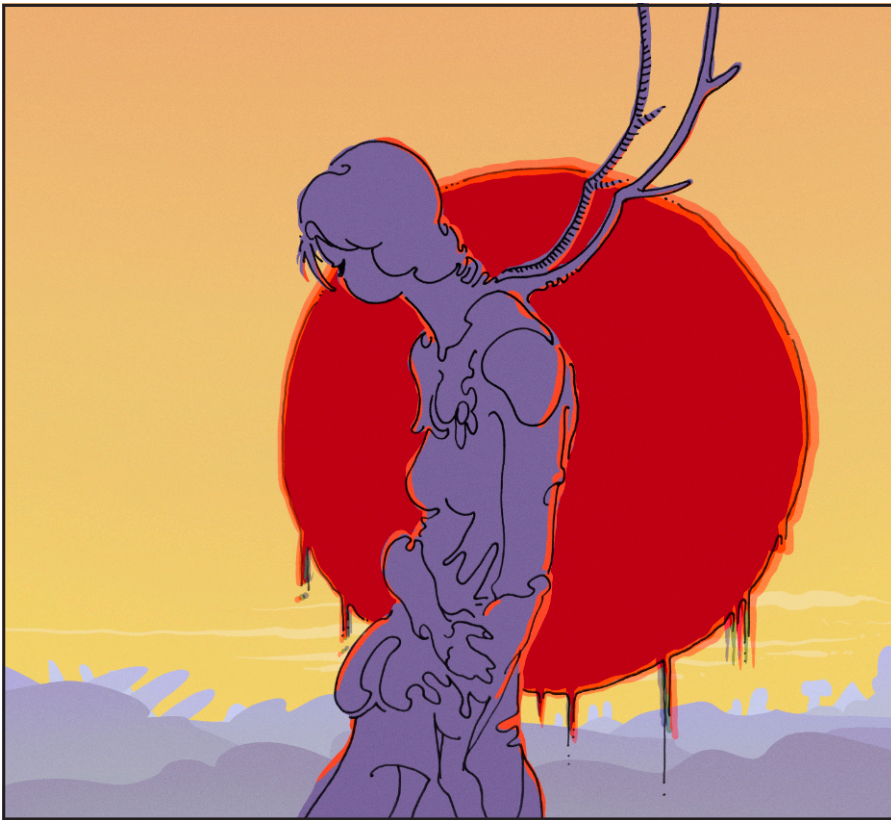
Players can invest experience when their active hero rests in a safe location for a full week. They can invest in as many different characters and items as the hero has reasonable access to that week, but only once per target. Players can also invest xp in other players' characters and gear.

An exception is when a hero exits play with uninvested experience: their player can immediately invest the entire available amount in another character. If they have no other hero, they can declare this character their new hero.

When players invest xp in a hero, pet, sidekick or item, they roll on the relevant advancement table—this roll is also called an advancement. Advancement becomes progressively more expensive and carries some risk.

TOTAL XP INVESTED	XP TO ADVANCE	SUBJECTS & OBJECTS
0–999 xp	50 xp	Common heroes and creatures. Low power.
1,000–9,999 xp	500 xp	Pulp heroes and fantastic creatures. Middling power.
10,000–99,999 xp	5,000 xp	Epic heroes and legendary creatures. High power.
100,000 xp	na	Xp bars hold five digits and there is no more advancement.





Hero Advancement

Hero advancement is more fine-grained than for extras. A hero can only receive each advancement once (except when they roll a natural 7). When a player rolls a duplicate advancement, they choose another result instead. Runners tally advancement rolls on their hero sheet. Suggestions for advancement events are detailed further on the next few pages.

D20	COMMON HEROES, 0–999 XP (50 XP TO ADVANCE)	PULP HEROES, 1,000–9,999 XP (500 XP TO ADVANCE)	EPIC HEROES, 10,000–99,999 XP (5,000 XP TO ADVANCE)
1	☐ Dead end. Loses 1 trait or skill.	☐ Aversion. Cannot improve 1 skill.	☐ Nemesis. Powerful threat to ally.
2	☐ Gains trait or skill. Loses 3 life.	☐ Dark truths. Gains 1 skill. Loses 3 life.	☐ Pain. Gains 1 skill & 2 burdens. Loses 4 life.
3	☐ Sign or omen. Gains 1 hero die.	☐ Courage over fear. Gains 1 hero die.	☐ Doubt. Gains 1 hero die & 1 burden.
4	☐ Camaraderie or bond. Gains 3 life.	☐ Uplifting realization. Gains 3 life.	☐ Friend in need. Gains 2 life.
5	☐ Ancestral memories. Gains 1 trait.	☐ Dreams of tragedy. Gains 1 trait.	☐ Ghost. Premonition. Gains 1 trait.
6	☐ Fortunate stars. Gains 4 life.	☐ Breath of life. Gains 6 life.	☐ Spirit creature. Gains 6 life or 1 pet.
7	☐ Roll again, ignore duplicates.	☐ Roll again, ignore duplicates.	☐ Roll again, ignore duplicates.
8	☐ Education. Gains 1 skill.	☐ Tribulation. Gains 1 skill and 1 burden.	☐ Loss of friend or family. Gains 1 skill.
9	☐ Community recognition. Gains 1 level.	☐ Notoriety. Gains 1 level and 1 enemy.	☐ Epic task. Gains 1 level.
10	☐ Chance meeting. Gains 1 trait & 1 hero die.	☐ Lost memories. Gains 1 trait & 1 hero die.	☐ Missed chance. Gains 1 trait & 1 hero die.
11	☐ Old light. Gains 1 pro.	☐ Broken prophecy. Gains 1 pro.	☐ Bout of suffering. Gains 2 burdens & 1 pro.
12	☐ Confidence. Gains 4 life.	☐ Fame. Gains 4 life.	☐ New daily routine. Gains 4 life.
13	☐ Grit. Suffers misfortune. Gains 1 stat.	☐ Personal loss. Gains 1 stat.	☐ Gains a treasure or 1 stat.
14	☐ Survival. Gains 3 life.	☐ Déjà vu. Gains 3 life.	☐ Dream of law. Gains 3 life.
15	☐ New powers. Gains 1 trait & 1 life.	☐ Daemonic visitation. Gains 1 trait & 1 life.	☐ Temptation. Gains 1 artifact or 1 trait.
16	☐ Diligence. Gains 1 skill & 2 life.	☐ Learning clicks. Gains 1 skill & 2 life.	☐ Retires content or gains 1 skill & 2 life.
17	☐ Luck. Gains 1 hero die.	☐ Facing mortality. Gains 1 hero die.	☐ Dire message. Gains 1 hero die or 1 stat.
18	☐ Respected. Gains 1 level.	☐ Inspiring. Gains 1 level.	☐ Demanding fans. Gains 1 level.
19	☐ Cultured. Gains 1 stat & 1 life	☐ Perks of power. Gains 1 stat & 1 life.	☐ Radiant blessing. Gains 1 stat & 1 life.
20	☐ Archetypal guide. Chooses 1 trait or skill.	☐ Mystic mentor. Chooses 1 trait or skill.	☐ Protégé. Chooses 1 sidekick or wealth.

After a hero acquires the 20th advancement in a column they gain 1 level and receive rewards and responsibilities in a relevant community. Their advancement continues in the next column.

Heroic Advancement Events

Advancement events are story seeds that players develop together to figure out future challenges and goals for their heroes. Many require collaboration between a hero's runner and the top cat. They take choice and control out of a player's hands and throw it to the dice of fate. As with all such tools, the runner should modify and adjust results they find unappetizing.

Indeed, players should consider all the advancement events imagination fuel for inventing their own steps on their heroes' journeys. When an advancement suggests a new skill or trait, they can accept the random new attribute, or take it as an opportunity to invent something new and fitting for their hero. Every new element invented is more of the game world owned by the players.

Common Hero Events [d20]

"That special mix of ambition and desperation, longing and regret. That unique experience of loss, that particular need to prove themselves, to recover stability and security, to build a better world. But it's not just that.

There were signs from early on. Patterns. Proof of their competence. Exceptional ability. An unusual calling.

Yes. They are unique. Just like all the other skeletons gently baking in the Transplutonian Waste."

—Gurta of the Nodding Sisters, *Oral History of the Etching* (UR 15,643)

1. Despair

A dead end. No progress. Worse, disillusionment drives the hero to abandon an old pursuit, losing an existing skill or trait.

2. Learning

Hero learns a new skill or ability, but their health suffers as they study mouldering artefacts and implants rather than enjoying the fresh air. Gains 1 skill or trait and loses 3 life.

3. Portent

Hero receives a sign they are on the right path. Gains 1 hero die.

4. Growth

Takes solace in friendship and camaraderie. A bond is forged. Gains 3 life.

5. Awakenings

Forgotten ancestral abilities awaken. Gains 1 trait.

6. Kindly Stars

In the light of a welcoming star, the creative daemons smile. Gains 4 life.

7. Strange Luck

Fortune smiles [d6]:

- 1-3 • Rolls on the next event table.
- 4-5 • Rolls again on this tier.
- 6 • Gains 1 skill.

Note: the above rolls do not cross off advancements and ignore the duplicates rule.

8. Education

Dreams are in reach for those who apply themselves, whisper the implant-sellers. Gains 1 skill.

9. Society

Community acknowledges their competence. Hero gains 1 level.

Also: every several weeks [d6]:

- 1-3 • A tedious but necessary task occupies the hero.
- 4-5 • A chance to trade their skilled work for a useful, uncommon item arises.
- 6 • The community surprises them with a valuable gift.

10. Noticed

A chance encounter with a notable personage helps the hero unlock their potential. Gains 1 trait and 1 hero die.

11. Proficiency

By the light of the old builders, they become better in every way. Gains 1 pro.

12. Confidence

The warm glow of success strengthens the hero's anchor to this mortal world. Gains 4 life.

13. Grit

Misfortunes suffered make the hero stronger. Gains 1 stat & 1 burden. If the hero has no traits, they gain one.

14. Survival

The weeks and months of trials have taught the hero much in the way of not dying. Gains 3 life.

15. New Powers

With another dawn seen, another trial survived, they become more. Gains 1 trait and 1 life.

16. Diligence

Study brings not only its own rewards. Gains 1 skill and 2 life.

17. Luck

Without luck, none survive. The longer one survives, the luckier one must be. Gains 1 hero die.

18. Respected

Other professionals acknowledge that the hero is no rabble. Hero gains 1 level.

Also, a role model or leader gifts the hero a [d6]:

1. Trendy new spell.
2. Sharp-looking clothes or armour.
3. Fine steed.
4. Princely sum: €200 + 100 per hero's level.
5. Masterful weapon.
6. Magical item from long ago.

19. Cultured

The hero's efforts and good luck have made them better. Gains 1 stat & 1 life.

20. Guidance

Hero **finds a guide or guru** to teach them how to become an archetypal hero. The guide sets the hero three tasks [d6]:

1. A week of backbreaking labour helping the guide.
2. Expensive investments in the guru's less-than-savoury habits equal to half of the hero's wealth.
3. A week of lonely exile in a remote place fetching or delivering strange half-worthless items, culminating in a dangerous struggle with a foe or daemon.
4. An unusual ritual alteration of the hero's appearance
5. The traditional casting aside of a beloved possession or prior bond
6. 1d4* weeks spent crafting an artefact to impress the guide with the hero's dedication. They then sell or destroy the artefact.

After three tasks are completed, the guru inducts the hero into their new archetype with a week-long ritual and wellness package. The exact details are up to the player, but perhaps some kind of certificate is involved.

After certification, the hero adopts their new archetype and title. Additionally, the hero gains 1 skill and acquires a new weapon, spell, armour, steed, or piece of near-magical gear of their choice.

or

No masters! No gurus!

The hero refuses to be pigeon-holed and will make their own path to glory.

They complete one personal task taking 1d4* weeks. The precise task is up to the players. The hero's runner suggests an attribute (skill, trait, stat) they want. The other players then suggest quests, subject to the TC's soft veto or complication, and the runner picks the one they prefer.

The hero then gains the attribute of the runner's choice.

Events Complete

After all twenty advancements are complete, the hero earns a week of holiday and gains 1 level.

People in their community and their avowed calling know of them. They are capable of far greater feats than the average human. Warriors are as wily and tough the best captains of the undying legions, wizards make reality bend to their whim like the cinnabar scholars of the air-hopping order, adventurers recall the tales of the fabled seven delvers who restored the five great scientific traditions to the kneeling ancestors of today's great republics.

The hero also gains [d6]:

1. A humble residence courtesy of their community.
2. An offer of initiation into a shadowy regional cabal.
3. The approval of local mercantile interests and reduced prices.
4. Renown that opens doors and buys free drinks and meals.
5. An eager sidekick (L1, fawning) willing to overlook even the most glaring character flaws.
6. An ancient magitechnic artefact of some power and utility, painted to make it look even more awesome.

Pulp Hero Events [d20]

“Will the world forget these heroes? Yes. There will be local histories. Then folk tales. Then their deeds will be swallowed by the legends that survive the test of time, by the myths invented to explain the vast, uncaring cosmos.”

“All their superhuman deeds will be swept away, just so much storytelling on the careless winds of time.”

—Nodda of the Brooding Brothers, *Oral History of the Etching* (UR 13,453)

1. Abandonment

What a waste. The hero makes no progress and even develops an aversion to an entire field. They refuse to improve one of their skills in the future.

2. Dark Truths

When the hero learns a new skill, a cruel revelation troubles them. Gains 1 skill & loses 3 life. Also gains 1 burden.

3. Bravery

In the face of fear, the hero prevailed. Gains 1 hero die.

4. Friendship

An acquaintance turns out to be a friend. Gains 3 life.

5. Ill Omens

Dreams of a tragic future awaken new powers. Gains 1 trait & 1 burden.

6. Strange Creature

In the face of a beast dawns understanding, in the breast of a hero dawns new life. Gains 6 life, or a pet gains the ability to speak.

7. Luck, Again

Fortunes smile [d6]:

1–3 • Rolls on the next event table.

4–5 • Rolls again on this tier.

6 • Gains 1 skill.

Note: the above rolls do not cross off advancements and ignore the duplicates rule.

8. Trials and Tests

Tribulations teach new skills. Gains 1 skill & 1 burden.

9. Notoriety

With mighty deeds comes notoriety. Hero gains 1 level.

Also, every several weeks [d6]:

1 • A malicious or unfortunate event inconveniences the hero.

2–3 • An annoying or frustrating opportunity arises.

4–6 • An innocuous coincidence reflects their notoriety.

10. In Search of Lost Time

An aroma awakens a memory of lost days. Hero gains 1 trait & 1 hero die.

11. Broken Prophecy

Taking reality by the throat, shrugging off the bonds of sooth, the hero rises. Gains 1 pro.

12. Famous Confidence

Buoyed by fame and the memory of past success, the hero clings on more tenaciously. Gains 4 life.

13. Personal Loss

Hero loses a treasured friend or possession, spurring them to impose their will on the world. Gains 1 stat.

14. Déjà Vu

The essence of the hero captures the journeys of the world. Is this prophecy? Gains 3 life.

15. Daemonic Visitation

It was a strange dream, a visitor, a half-buried memory of the future. Gain 1 trait & 1 life.

16. Learning Clicks

The old books, the teachings half-forgotten, they finally make sense. With understanding comes joy. Gains 1 skill & 2 life.

17. Facing Mortality

Around a corner that should not be there, beyond a senseless gate, through a mirror of imagination, the hero faces their own mortality and lives. They must make each day count. Gains 1 hero die.

18. Inspiring

Their great deeds have inspired commoners and aristocrats alike. Hero gains acceptance and 1 level.

Also, a representative of the community, an opposition figure, a personage in power, or a revolutionary gives hero [d6]:

1. A fine place to work.
2. A handsome place to stay
3. A very competent sidekick
4. Estates or holdings that generate a comfortable rent.
5. A fancy title that opens doors and impresses people
6. Actual behind the scenes influence and obligations, including possible induction into a secret society.

19. Perks of Power

Training and study are easier when one is a little privileged. Gains 1 stat point & 1 life.

20. Mystic Mentor

Hero discovers a mentor or mystic willing to teach them how to become a true warrior or a true wizard (player's choice).

They set three tasks. The tasks may include [d6]:

1. A week of humiliating public rituals.
2. Pointless expenses equal to half of the hero's wealth.
3. A week of hardship in a remote place.
4. An unusual change to the hero's appearance
5. The ritual destruction of a prized possession
6. Saving or destroying someone or something for the mentor figure, no questions asked.

After the three tasks are completed, the hero undertakes an obscure week-long ritual. The details are up to the player.

After induction, the hero gains a rank of either the True Warrior or the True Wizard trait. These change the hero's life total and magic cost. Additionally, the hero learns a new praxa or veda skill, respectively.

or

This mentor is a fraud!

The hero will make their own path.

They complete one personal task taking 1d6* weeks. The precise task is up to the players. The hero's runner suggests an attribute (skill, trait, stat) they want. The other players then suggest quests, subject to the TC's soft veto or complication, and the runner picks the one they prefer.

The hero then gains the attribute of the runner's choice.

Events Complete

After all twenty advancements are complete, the hero earns a month of holiday and gains 1 level.

People know the hero now. Upstanding heroes are admired. Villains are feared. Penny dreadfuls and operas are written embroidering their exploits. The gossip vidys make 'thoughtful' bite-sized productions about their private lives.

The hero also receives [d6]:

1. A lucrative position at a local commercial or financial institution. Strings attached.
2. A position of expertise at a technical or military organization.
3. A position of power within the local regime or opposition.
4. Celebrity status with adoring fans and nosy paparazzi.
5. Discrete but thorough access to community resources via a private patronage network.
6. Ownership of a ridiculous white elephant project, maybe a derelict voidliner or haunted glass palace.

Legendary Hero Events [d20]

"A proud elephant destroyed his village. The villagers fled in fear and tremor.

A hero strolled up from their bath in the lake, reciting the scriptures of fearlessness. When the villagers saw that hero walking towards the elephant they yelled, "Do not go near him! He is mad! Wild!"

The hero took no heed and walked straight up to that mad elephant and offered their hand. When the elephant saw the hero approach, he immediately lost all anger and lay down peacefully."

—Paraphrased from *The Glories of the Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter 16, translated by Kāshināth Trimbak Telang (1882).

1. Nemesis

The hero's travails were in vain but attracted the attention of a powerful entity. Destruction threatens their [d6]:
(1) settlement, (2) organization, (3) house, (4) treasure, (5) friends, or (6) posterity.

2. Pain

The hollowness of ambition troubles the hero. Gains 1 skill & loses 4 life. Also gains 2 burdens.

3. Doubt

A daemon of doubt wrestles the hero for days on end. It is a hard test, but the hero finally prevails. Gains 1 hero die & 1 burden.

4. Friend in Need

A call comes. If the hero spends a week helping, they gain 2 life. Otherwise, the hero does not advance this time and xp are refunded.

5. Ghost

A disembodied ghost appears, announcing a dark and tragic future. The hero glimpses [d6]:

1. Their death.
2. The death of all their dreams
3. The fall of a great empire
4. The wages of sin
5. How they outlive all their friends
6. History rendering them irrelevant.

Hero then gains 1 trait.

6. Spirit Creature

A spirit animal emerges from the bush and offers itself to the hero as a sacrifice. If they kill it, they gain 6 life. If they keep it, they

gain a spirit pet.

7. Chaos' Gift

Chaos bows to the hero. Hero may choose a result from any advancement table or roll again on this one. The second roll does not cross off advancements and ignores the duplicates rule.

8. Loss

Hero painfully loses a [d6]:
(1) family member, (2) home, (3) friend, (4) pet, (5) treasure, or (6) sidekick or mentor.

After, the hero gains 1 skill.

9. Duty

An epic task beckons. The community approaches the hero, asking them to [d6]:

1. Judge in a complex case.
2. Negotiate a painful truce.
3. Rediscover important truth.
4. Retrieve a lost treasure.
5. Hunt down a dangerous monster.
6. Redeem a fallen paragon.

Once the task is complete, the hero's fame grows, and they gain 1 level.

10. Missed Opportunity

A letter, mislaid, finally arrives. The letter is too late, the opportunity lost. The hero must erect a suitable memorial; they then gain 1 trait & 1 hero die.

11. Struggle

Hero is racked by [d6]: (1) illness, (2) indecision, (3) indigestion, (4) anxiety, (5) paranoia, or (6) melancholy.

Then gains 2 burdens and 1 pro.

12. New Habit

Discovering meaning in a small, novel daily ritual, the hero's determination to live life fully increases. Gains 4 life.

13. Despondency

The meaning of a recent victory rings hollow. If the hero rejects their reward or gives away treasure earned, they gain 1 stat.

14. Law's Message

The essence of law's arrow is unveiled to the hero in a dream. Whether they accept it or not, they gain 3 life.

15. Temptation

In a strange dream, an ancient daemon or deity tempts the hero with great power. They either learn where a great artefact lies and how to reach it, or they gain 1 trait as they spurn the angel of temptation.

16. A Way Out

In happy contentment, the hero considers retirement. The hero may either acquire an unexpected inheritance and retire or gain 1 skill and 2 life.

17. Menace

A haggard messenger appears, claiming to hail from a [d6]:

1. Lost future
2. Forgotten past
3. Far kingdom
4. Downtrodden minority
5. Noble friend
6. Parallel world

After delivering the message, they fade away. If the hero accepts the message, they gain 1 hero die, but tragedy soon strikes a nearby settlement. If the hero rejects their message, they gain 1 stat, and nothing else seems to occur.

18. Adulation

The hero's adoring fans demand the hero [d6]:

1. Harshly punishes a criminal.

2. Undertakes a pilgrimage.
3. Donates to help the community in need.
4. Sacrifices their most cherished to appease a local deity.
5. Puts on great, expensive feast.
6. Marries into the local administrative nobility.

If the hero accepts, they gain 1 level. If the hero declines, they do not advance this time, and the invested xp are refunded.

After, a tribune of the people, an ambitious commander, a usurper, a wealthy merchant, a hereditary priest, or a famous celebrity provides the hero with a [d6]:

1. Medal.
2. Large gilded letter of merit.
3. Palace & title in remote province.
4. Prestigious but powerless position involving lots of ribbon-cutting.
5. Pleasure dome and an unlimited supply of intoxicants.
6. Double-edged weapon of great power and a stern warning to stay out of local politics from now on.

19. Nature's Blessing

A magic [d6]: (1) stone, (2) tree, (3) lake, (4) waterfall, (5) mountain, or (6) cave summons the hero. When they arrive, a radiant spirit blesses them. Gains 1 stat and 1 life.

20. Protégé

Hero gains 1 trait. Then a young and inept protégé approaches the hero and begs to be taught. They are [d6]:

1. Very brave but foolish.
2. Smart but cowardly.
3. Educated but naive.
4. Beautiful but clumsy.
5. Alien but loving.
6. Exceptionally gifted in all ways, but with a heart of darkness.

If the hero accepts the protégé, they gain a loyal sidekick (L3, apprentice). If they send them on their way, their business blossoms, their wealth grows, and they enjoy counting their coin at home, alone, with only a butler for company.

Players are encouraged to invent tasks and quests for the protégé. When a protégé goes off on a quest, the player rolls 2d6:

- (2) • the protégé disappears (for now?),
- (3-4) • humiliated, they return in failure,
- (5-6) • they fail but learn a lesson,
- (7) • they either barely succeed or learn something new,
- (8-9) • they succeed, but learn nothing,
- (10-11) • they succeed & learn a lesson,
- (12) • their fame grows, and perhaps envy is kindled in the hero's bosom.

Events Complete

After all twenty advancements are complete, the hero earns a season's of holiday and gains 1 level.

Everyone thinks they know the hero, for they are legend. Their stories are invented and multiplied. Their lives now belong to their communities; unless they flee or choose hermitage. The hero retires to a life of [d6]:

1. Luxury and decadence.
2. Service to their community.
3. Endless accumulation of wealth.
4. Ambitious social and political ascendancy.
5. Forbidden studies into the occult.
6. Carefree travel under an assumed identity.

The legendary hero ceases to be the focus of play, and the runner may promote another character to the status of hero. That said, they can still use their semi-retired legend to influence the world, to offer wealth and connections to other characters.

To continue playing with the legendary hero, a bit of improvisation is required. The numbers on the hero's sheet should stop increasing, as they are already at the upper edge of the power curve the dice can handle easily. However, they may continue to acquire individual traits, hero dice, items, and other artefacts.



RUNNING THE GAME

Top Cat

Guidelines for the bass player of the group, the top cat.

TO ADD:

-

Example Boons [+] [d20]

1. Terrain advantage.
2. Helpful props (chandelier, trees, statue, stage).
3. Assistance from another character.
4. Blessings from strange AI gods.
5. Superior alien weaponry.
6. Magic and enchantments.
7. Surprised or unaware opponents.
8. Cover of darkness or invisibility.
9. Convincing evidence.
10. Teamwork or flanking.
11. Cunning plans.
12. Lots and lots of cash.
13. Cover or fortifications.
14. Mutation or bio-augmentation.
15. Fancy titles and social standing.
16. Significantly greater ability.
17. Incredible mastery of a specific skill.
18. Cheating and foul play.
19. Magical potions and meals.
20. Good luck.

Example Banes [-] [d20]

1. Hindering terrain.
2. Obstacles (rubble, tables, chairs).
3. Obstruction by another character.
4. Curses from ultracosmic spirits.
5. Inferior barbarian tools.
6. Enchantments and magic.
7. Keen, watchful, ready opponents.
8. Bright spotlights and neon paint.
9. Isolation and vulnerability.
10. Laughably falsified evidence.
11. Stupid plans.
12. Poverty.
13. Exposed ground or restrictions.
14. Corruption or bio-degradation.
15. Dirty jobs and no social standing.
16. Significantly inferior ability.
17. Incredible clumsiness.
18. Naiveté and deluded honesty.
19. Illness, poison, or fatigue.
20. Bad luck.

Dice as Oracles

Sometimes a player simply doesn't know an answer. What is the in-game weather like? How would their hero react in a given situation? What is a sidekick's favourite colour? Dice can be every player's best friend when they have to quickly invent something or making a decision.

They are particularly useful for the top cat, who has to determine who heroes encounter, how extras behave, the morale of opponents, and much more. The TC isn't bound by the results of an oracle die, but they provide an important way out of the player's preconceptions. Random dice expand the scope of possibilities and give the imaginary world an agency all its own.

Many published adventures, modules, and supplements include random tables. Other times the TC will create their own to fit their session. Finally, random tables can be improvised on the spot by simply asking [themselves] a question, rolling the dice, and interpreting the result.

Example Oracles

Seacat follows two consistent axioms when it comes to dice as oracles:

1. Low results are bad, high results are good.
2. Extreme results always explode to create unpredictable long-tail risk.

To consult the dice, the player (usually the TC) follows two steps:

1. They decide on a suitable question. For example, "Do the heroes find a suitable ghost battery for their wormskiff in the Cathedral market?"
2. A player rolls the oracle dice to answer the question and a new fact exists in the shared imaginary world.

When the TC uses dice as oracles, they should explain what is happening and assign as many rolls as possible to the other players to keep everyone engaged.

Even Odds

When the player has no way of estimating the odds, or they are in a hurry, even

OUTCOME	D2 (COIN)	D6	D12	D20
Just the worst	1/1/1 (6.3%)	1/1/1 (0.4%)	1/1/1 (0.06%)	1/1/1 (0.01%)
Catastrophe	1/1 (12.5%)	1/1 (2.3%)	1/1 (0.6%)	1/1 (0.24%)
Fail	1 (25%)	1-3 (47.2%)	1-6 (49.3%)	1-10 (49.75%)
Succeed	2 (25%)	4-6 (47.2%)	7-12 (49.3%)	11-20 (49.75%)
Amazing success	2/2 (12.5%)	6/6 (2.3%)	12/12 (0.6%)	20/20 (0.24%)
Truly the best	2/2/2 (6.3%)	6/6/6 (0.4%)	12/12/12 (0.06%)	20/20/20 (0.01%)

The percentages don't add up to 100% because of rounding and because the odds for exploding dice are only tabulated for two steps.

odds work well. The size of the die the TC proposes adjusts the tail risk.

Players will be tempted to use multiple dice (eg. 2d6, 2d10, or 3d6) to create a more 'normal' distribution of results. They should beware. Yes, the more dice are added, the more results will cluster around the mean, but this is not necessarily good.

Most scenes (or sessions or campaigns) don't last long enough for dice to actually simulate reality to any extent. Yes, multiple dice might make play more 'realistic' in that a more competent character will almost always win, but the dice will not be rolled often enough for this to be fun or interesting.

Adjusted Targets

The TC may eyeball a situation and decide that the odds do not fit the circumstances. They have four main levers to modify the oracle:

1. Apply [+] or [-] to the roll. Very simple and fast, but also shifts the odds of dice exploding.
2. Modify the target for success. Quite simple (e.g. roll over 15 on a d20). Does not change the odds of dice exploding.
3. Allow heroes to apply relevant modifiers (stats, skills, or both). More complicated, because of the addition. Usually shifts odds significantly in heroes' favour. Does not change the odds of dice exploding. This may simply turn an oracle into a test.
4. Allow heroes to apply hero dice to modify natural rolls. More complicated, because of the additional roll and addition or subtraction. Radically shifts the odds of success and vastly changes the odds of dice exploding.

The players may openly discuss the odds of a die roll, but the TC makes the final judgement call.

In the Cathedral market example, the TC might have responded to the question with, "Ok, there's a good chance the heroes find a ghost battery, but it's likely to be shoddy. So roll d6, succeed on 3 or more, but roll with one bane [-]." A runner then rolls 3 and 6. The bane discards the 6, so the dice don't explode. The 3 is the bare minimum and the heroes find a shoddy ghost battery.

Skewed Outcomes

The TC can improvise a series of common, uncommon, and rare results. To maintain the seacat axiom that low results are always bad, it helps to have one

BAD OMENS	D6	D20	GOOD OMENS	D6	D20
Catastrophe	1/1 (2.3%)	1 (5%)	Unexpected disaster	1/1 (2.3%)	1 (5%)
Rare threat	1 (13.9%)	2-3 (10%)	Common annoyance	1-3 (48.2%)	2-11 (50%)
Uncommon danger	2-3 (33.3%)	4-9 (30%)	Uncommon boon	4-5 (33.3%)	12-17 (30%)
Common trouble	4-6 (48.2%)	10-19 (50%)	Rare fortune	6 (13.9%)	18-19 (10%)
False alarm	6/6 (2.3%)	20 (5%)	Exquisite luck	6/6 (2.3%)	20 (5%)

table for bad omens and another for good omens.

The two tables have the same odds, but flipped. The TC can easily use other dice and distributions to give different outcomes.

Fleshing Out Oracles

The question a player asks of the oracle dice can have multiple answers. Ready-made examples include encounter and treasure tables. If the TC has trouble coming up with a precise outcome while improvising, they can pass the result to the other players, then use a twist on their idea as the final outcome.

For example, the TC might ask, "You're facing uncommon weather as you sail into the Black Lagoon, but might mind is blanking. What kind of weather is it?"

The wizard's runner responds, "Maybe an electrical storm?"

The thief's "Yeah, and waves of light from the dire wormskiff's passage!"

The fighter's "A hard rain's gonna fall."

The TC concludes, "Great. Your hair rises on end in the electromagical radiation given off by the glittering hard light hail from the passage of the wormskiff *Silence is Golden*. It certainly breached here."

MAKING THE WORLD

A Unique World

“First it was Chaos, and next broad-bosomed Earth.”

—Hesiod, *Theogony* (116: The Cosmogony), translated by J. Banks

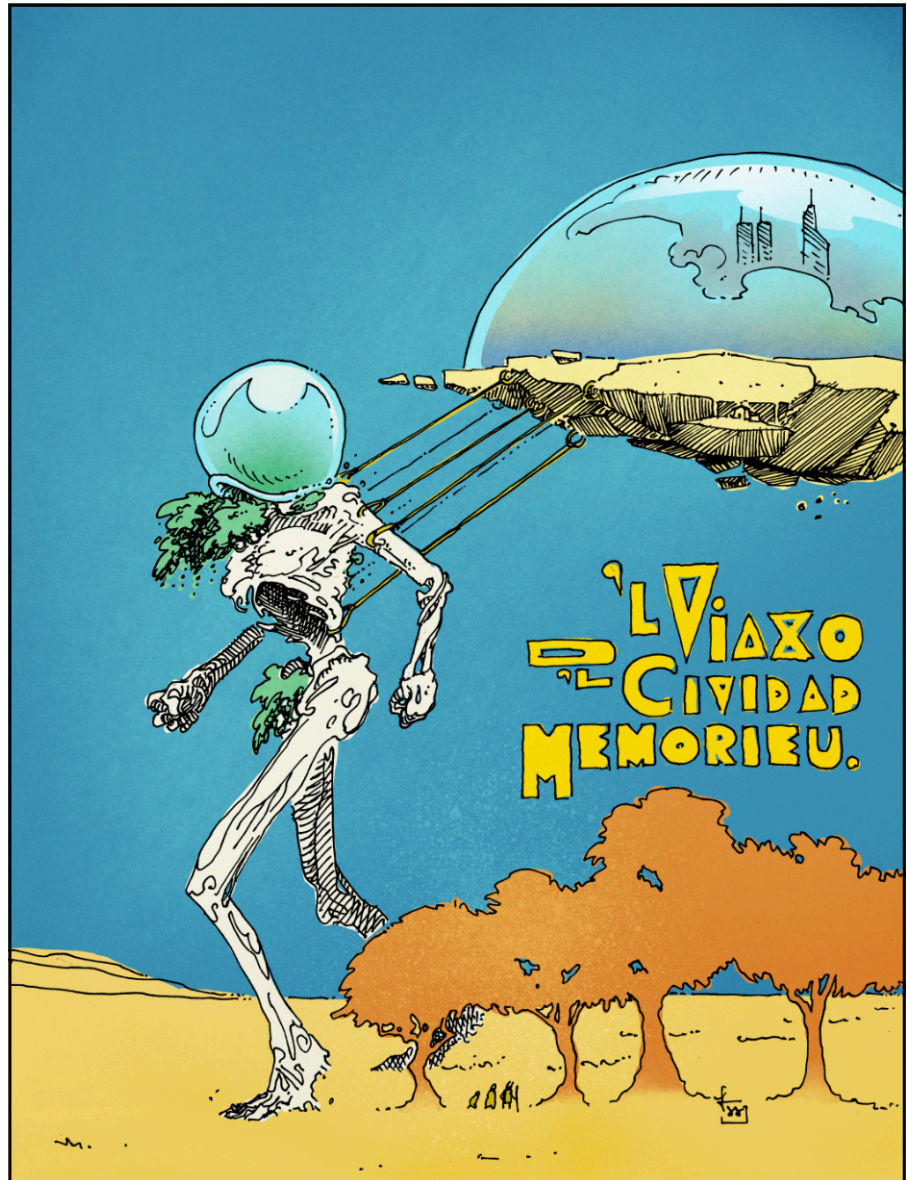
Players experience the game world through their characters. The game world becomes their own unique, shared artifact through play and invention. This section presents guides and tables for invention and shared creation.

QUESTION: Relegate whole section to later version? E.g. 1.1?



THE META GAME

TO ADD: summary of this section



Top Cat, Not Game Master

The top cat is explicitly presented as a type of player role, not some kind of “master” outside the group of friends playing at the table.

The term “top cat” is self-consciously playful to break down the bombast of terms like “dungeon master” or “game master” or “judge.” Not only are those titles pretentious, they are misleading. The top cat isn’t an official outside of the game, like in football, or a director in control of the narrative, like in the theatre. Maybe they are the host of the playing group. Maybe they referee and apply the game rules. None of this makes the player running a roleplaying game session the “master” of that session.

One unfortunate consequence of the search for mastery is that many “game masters” try to invest far more time and effort than other players, not least to justify calling themselves “masters.” This is often counterproductive: it can turn a fun playtime activity into a chore and it builds unnecessary barriers between playing a hero and running a session.

The “top cat” role is akin to that of a bass player in a band. It sets the beat for

the session, but doesn't demand hours of prep and embraces the fact that a session is coolest when everyone plays and shines together.

The absence of "mastery" also makes space for imperfection and improvisation. Rules will be forgotten. Scenes will go off the rails. Exciting conflicts will fall flat. Names for villains will turn out to be embarrassing jokes when spoken out loud. Deeply plotted multi-session story arcs will be subverted with jokes about bodily functions. Players will miss sessions. The top cat will forget details between sessions.

this is a bit essayi, but can stay.

None of it means that the top cat or the players are doing anything wrong, or that they are failing at roleplaying. All this is perfectly fine and acceptable. This is play time, not work. They can dust the story off and play more.

The shared goal of all the players is to have a fun session. Memorable characters and interesting scenes are a bonus. Perfect continuity between sessions is impossible. Accurate record keeping will always fail before the onslaught of entropy and time. And that's all ok.

The top cat sets the stage for the playtime, prepares the sandbox, 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 cats take control of the protagonists: 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 blind luck (dice) and fate (decisions).

A table of players can switch around who is the top cat from session to session. Or even during a game, maybe from scene to scene. The cat 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 can be enough. It is even possible to play a session with multiple boss cats or just a single runner cat. It's not as common, but just as legitimate.

All the players, all the cats together, are responsible for making a roleplaying session fun. But they're also all together responsible for making a roleplaying session work: for organizing the time of play, for preparing food and drinks, for taking notes, building up the world and possibly turning a series of sessions into a full, interconnected campaign.

No Non-Player Characters

If all the players are players, top cat and runner cats both, then it makes no sense to split the characters into those that belong to players and those that do not. The characters are instead split according to how prominent they are within the session and how mechanically detailed they are.

While the heroes, the main protagonists of play, remain in the runners' hands throughout, the sidekicks and extras can shift around among players as the scenes require. For example, if a single hero goes to reconnoitre a town, the top cat may well assign extras like guards, townspeople, and the jeering mob to other players who would otherwise have little to do during the scene.

The Metagame is the Game

There is a common idea that “metagaming”—bringing the mundane social reality of friends getting together to roleplay, tell jokes, eat food, drink drinks, and have a good time into the fictional narrative (or “diegesis” for some who love rare words)—reduces the quality of roleplaying by breaking “the immersion.” Seacat explicitly rejects the idea that this is possible and suggests the players can embrace the metagame *as* gaming to improve their roleplaytimes. The following tables could help.

Special Top Cat Titles

The players can assign their top cat a special title and power each session. Each power gives a different meta-game effect to liven up the session and, sometimes, encourage friendlier roleplay.

1. **Catspaw** • If there is an actual cat in the house, it is now the top cat’s nominal boss. They can use its name as part of their title.
2. **Cat Lady or Lord** • Gift other players 50 * level xp for lasagna or a tin of tuna.
3. **Game Golem** • Once per session they can move a random location on the game map due to a reality glitch.
4. **Dog Duke** • Can grant 1d4 re-rolls to players who bring food, snacks, and music to the game session.
5. **Caître D’** • Can give a player 100 * level xp if they help clean up the kitchen and table after the game session.
6. **Dyeus Katter** • Can have a hero’s mildly annoying ancestor ghost appear to give advice or present the moral lesson of the session.
7. **Sky Cat** • They can invoke epic atmospheric effects in-game at any time, from rain to lightning. And nobody may groan at the cliché.
8. **Trve Bassist** • Can give a player 1d6 * 10 xp every time they choose an apt background song. They can veto annoying songs, of course.
9. **Hazeraiser** • Can open one travel portal for heroes per session. May demand sacrifices to use the portal at will.
10. **Prismatic Lady** • Randomly recolours in-game locations. It becomes (roll d6): (1) monochrome, (2) desaturated, (3) all cool hues, (4) warm hues, (5) bright, harmonious colours, (6) a brutal riot of neon and day-glo.
11. **Hero Herder** • Draws a great big (abandoned?) railroad linking prepped quantum locations on the big map in the middle of the table (there is one, right?). The heroes don’t have to ride the rails.
12. **Nine Lives** • Nine times during the session, they can bestow an extra life point on a character without a gat token.

Hats For the Cats

“Give them non-quantitative bonuses, depending on type of headgear”

—Galactic Nomad

In a very real sense roleplaytime is a bit like carnival. The players get together and use the rituals of dice and rules to give one another permission to goof off and be silly. To emphasize this the players can decide to institute a magic hats rule at their table: wearing a hat at a session grants a one time special ability that session.

1. **Improvised Hat From Paper and Tape** • Player chooses a different hat ability and uses it once. Their next test is with disadvantage.
2. **Generic Hat**•Player gets bonus xp. Efforts are encouraged.
3. **Bike Helmet**•Negates damage.
4. **Top Hat**•Player can stage a coup and seize the role of top cat (requires thumbs up from more than half of the table, including the revolutionary).
5. **Cowboy Hat**•Automatically wins initiative or a fast draw.
6. **Baseball Cap**•Blends into a crowd.
7. **Chef's Hat**•Creates a potion from monster parts that perfectly replicates one of its abilities.
8. **Boater Hat**•Avoids drowning or heat exhaustion.
9. **Pasta Strainer as a Hat**•Breaks a rule or magically makes a teacup appear in orbit around the world.
10. **Wizard Hat**•Casts 1 spell of a power lower than the hero's level for free.
11. **Sombrero**•Can get a week's rest in a single afternoon.
12. **Beret**•Can use bread as a simple weapon (1d6 damage).
13. **Firefighter's Helmet**•Immune to fire.
14. **Lucha Mask**•Mistaken for someone of player's choice.
15. **Astronaut Helmet**•Does not suffocate.
16. **Penguin Hat**•None of the player's characters can die or be exposed to gore. They are all surrounded by a PG-13 field.
17. **Tinfoil Hat** • One wrong assumption turns out to actually be correct.
18. **Toupée**•Advantage to social tests in calm conditions. Disadvantage when there is wind or rain or moisture or after any kind of exertion.
19. **Big Hair Wig**•Sets any die to eleven.
20. **Cat-in-the-Hat Hat**•Player wins the game. Then maybe rolls an extra d20 once per session, adding the result to another roll.

Players are encouraged to come up with their own little list of rituals, rules, and props. Heroes might get theme songs their players use once per session to get a bonus. Players could use costume jewelry to gain a boon in social encounters or a fake moustache when they play a character going undercover. A small bonus will not break the game, but it will encourage people to loosen up and relax, which is one of the things that is best about roleplaying.

Twenty Session Tasks

Players perform multiple tasks during a roleplaytime session. Traditionally many systems bundle them together with the roles of top cat and runner. The top cat is often 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 running 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 social role beyond just play. Thus, while the host has an obligation to make the group feel welcome, the other players 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. Playing online, somebody will usually be responsible for setting up the digital tools used to play and track events in the game.

3. Taking care of food and drinks:

Roleplaying is a social event that 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 of adventuring.

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. Online this task tends to disappear.

4. Cleaning up after a session

Especially if there is food involved, there will be crockery and cutlery 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 venue is as clean as they found it.

5. Generating characters

New heroes and sidekicks regularly come into play. 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 top cat, letting them focus on keeping the session rolling along.

6. Introducing new players to game rules

When a new player joins the group, it helps if there is another player who is not the top cat who can guide them through the rules.

yup but might change layout to save space. Jeez ... this is long.

7. Roleplaying the heroes

This is the primary task of the runners. The top cat should absolutely not roleplay the runners' heroes or make their decisions for them.

8. Roleplaying the antagonists

This is a primary top cat task, since obstacles to the heroes' desires is where stories are born.

9. Roleplaying the extras and sidekicks

Any player can take over the extras in a scene. Usually, a runner will roleplay their hero's sidekicks, but they can also assign them to other players.

Likewise, the TC can assign an extra along with a one or two-line description to a player not directly involved in a scene. The top cat can call for tests to determine the extra's reactions, but leave the rest to the other player. Sharing out extras keeps all the players playing and makes outcomes unexpected. Who knows, maybe the player 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 top cat'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 less. The more the TC listens to the other players during a session and riffs off their ideas, the more dynamic it will 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 top cat (or on pre-written tomes), however it's a good idea to share it out among all the players, which is why the game uses group action tokens.

Additionally, the top cat can declare runners to be the experts on their heroes' cultures, lives, and previous experiences. For example, the runner of a dwarven hero takes the center stage when it comes to describing dwarven breadstick duelling customs.

When the top cat takes this approach, they should wield a soft veto to maintain some consistency in the shared world and to keep it roughly balanced, so that one player's ideas don't steamroll everybody else's. The whole group should also be relaxed about fitting all the bits together.

12. Running the environment, sandbox, and adventure module

This is another primary top cat task. Keeping the imaginary world ticking over, setting the stage for the heroes.

13. Running antagonists in combat

This task usually falls to the top cat, but they could outsource it to a player whose characters aren't present, or even a secondary top cat player.

14. Refereeing conflicts and combat between heroes and antagonists

This is a primary top cat task, but insofar as it deals with rules, another impartial player whose characters 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 serve as a quartermaster and handle the resources of the whole group, for example their caravans or possessions.

16. Rules arbitration

This task usually falls to the top cat, 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 top cat, but could be assigned to anyone.

18. Keeping a campaign journal

Yet again, a task that often falls to the top cat, but can 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 will enjoy writing.

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. The hero sheet has a large portrait area to encourage drawing. In practice, many groups will usually have one or two players who really enjoy the craft aspect of play. That's excellent. Having a session art journal is a fun activity in itself.

20. Staying on the same page

This isn't really a task, but a useful reminder for every player. A group meets to play together and it's important for all the players to read the room, make sure nobody is getting uncomfortable, and that everyone is enthusiastically on-board with a course of action. Splitting the party could be fun, but it might leave a lot of players pretty bored. Introducing a terrifying spidercat character might have been a good idea, if two of the players weren't arachnophobic.

Runner Session Titles

The players can all take on special titles and powers each session. Why leave that fun just to the top cat? Each title covers some tasks along with some meta-game effects. Runners can choose a different title each session.

1. **Time Maker** • Task: organizes the session. Power: once per real-time hour gives another player an extra action to spend on one of their characters.
2. **Lady or Lord of Hosts** • Task: hosts the session. Power: once per session discovers a safe location for the characters or introduces a host of extras in the distance. The host does not need to be friendly.
3. **Chef of Gods** • Task: provides food for the session. Power: once per session discovers a delectable meal that restores one character's health or life total. They also gain 50 * level xp.
4. **Senior Hygiene Technomancer** • Task: oversees cleanup. Power: once per session removes poison or curse from a character.
5. **Maker of Heroes** • Task: helps players make characters. Power: once per real-time hour grants another player a boon [+].
6. **Gatebreaker** • Task: explains rules to new players. Power: once per session adjusts a rule just this once.
7. **Villain's Secret Friend** • Task: beefs up the antagonists. Power: once per session gives an antagonist a boon on all tests in exchange for doubled xp from that scene. If the boon is not given, the top cat gains two boons to use in one scene of their choice next session, doubling xp from *that* scene.
8. **Inventor of Names** • Task: invents names for locations, items and extras. Power: once per session discovers the true name of an antagonist, granting a boon to a few harmful spells.
9. **Loremaker** • Task: lore about places and things. Power: once per session sneaks a useful feature into the environment.
10. **Quartermaster** • Task: tracks party resources. Power: once per session discovers a useful mundane item in the stores.
11. **Keeper of References** • Task: tracks in-game lore. Power: once per session changes one item of lore to benefit the party.
12. **The Journalist** • Task: keeps campaign journal. Power: once per session may forget to record an event, "inadvertently" helping the party.
13. **Catkin Cartographer** • Task: keeps the party's maps. Power: once per session discovers a shortcut or secret route.
14. **Adventure Artist** • Task: illustrates the party's adventures and encounters. Power: once per session spots a weakness or vulnerability on a creature or object.

placeholder to keep the spread for later



APPENDICES

Inspirations

“The best games happen in a vacuum.”

—Voidpilot Schtiff, *The Ken of Motorgolem Maintenance*

Game design does not happen in a vacuum. A variety of games, books, music, comics, novels, and more inform every creative step.

- Ben Hur (1959)** • Few movies do epic better. The chariot race is spectacular.
- Black Hack** • A cool OSR game. The source of risk dice in previous iterations.
- Blue Öyster Cult** • The best umlauts. Also good music.
- Dungeons & Dragons** • The game that started it all.
- GLOG** • The Goblin Laws of Gaming, originally birthed by the creative genius of Arnold Kemp at the Goblin Punch blog.
- Heavy Metal** • The magazine. Though the music has also been influential.
- Holy Mountain (1973)** • Jodorowsky’s existentially thrilling movie.
- Hugo Pratt** • A comic book artist whose quickest sketches sing and dance.
- In the Year 2525 (Exordium & Terminus)** • Zager and Evans’ 1969 incredible deep time one hit wonder.
- Last and First Men (1930)** • Deep future history by Olaf Stapledon.
- Macchiato Monsters** • A fantastic and fun OSR game. A lesson in sharpened prose.
- The Master & Margarita (1973)** • Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov’s satirical dark comedy brings out the devil in the bureaucratic state.
- Microlite** • An elegant mid ‘00s distillation of d20 into its essentials.
- Microscope** • An rpg that brings the worlds above and below together.
- Mike Mignola** • One of the best chiaroscuro comic book artists around. A master in the art of shadows.
- Moebius aka. Jean Giraud** • A superlative comic book artist. Inspiring in so many ways.
- Mothership** • A bluecollar spacetrucking rpg of superlative visual design and terrifying tension.
- Paranoia** • The rpg of Friend Computer. Like Logan’s Run for games.
- Philippe Caza** • More wonderful art.
- Planet of the Apes** • A French novel that birthed weird movies that have aged like cheese.
- Slumbering Ursine Dunes** • Acid fantasy rpg fun. Also bears. Also, slovanic pride if you will.
- Whitehack** • A wonderfully elegant d20 game. The source of the contest bidding. An inspiration of minimalist writing layout.
- Zardoz (1974)** • A wonderfully weird 1970s piece of sci-fi by John Boorman that captures the experimental weirdness of the times.

these gaps are super frustrating.
but can't do anything about them
as the book slowly grows.

//shrug

Additional Credits

A number of the voidwalker spells were suggested and developed by Kin, hero of the stratometaship. Thank you Kin.

Saker Tarsos has been instrumental in developing many of the stat blocks and structures, as well as making the digital version of seacat possible.

Glossary

"There is a house in UVG they call the Rising Cat."

—Steppelands folk song, author unknown.

Active Hero • A runner's main hero in a given session or scene.

Archetype • See hero type.

Advancement • A roll on a relevant advancement table. The effect of investing xp in a character

Attribute • The things describing a character in play. Proficiency, stats, skills, abilities, inventory, life, hurt, hero dice. Attributes cannot go below 0.

Ba • The mind or personality, provides a unique direction to consciousness. Used in social conflicts.

Bane [-] • Situational penalty to a roll. Player rolls additional die, takes worse result. Also disadvantage. A character may accrue multiple banes.

Boon [+] • Situational bonus to a roll. The player rolls an additional die and takes the result they prefer. Also advantage. A character may accrue multiple boons.

Campaign • Series of inter-connected meetings of players, featuring a similar cast of heroes. Similar to a show's season.

Cash • An abstract coin representing a labourer's day wages.

Character • Imaginary person or thing run by a player at a session.

Conflict • A fight between heroes (aka. Protagonists) and antagonists. Runners roll dice for the protagonists, the cat for the antagonists. There are three main kinds of conflict: spiritual (ka), social (ba), and physical (ha).

Contest • A competition between characters to see who achieves a goal first or best.

Critical • A natural 20 rolled on a d20 during a test. Always succeeds and has some additional positive effect. Also crit.

Critical damage • In conflicts criticals multiply damage dealt. The critical damage multiplier steps are $x2 > x3 > x4$, etc.

Critical range • The range of natural rolls that inflict a critical. The critical range steps are $20 > 19-20 > 18-20$, etc.

Cumbersome sack • Additional inventory sack, which causes encumbrance. Can be dropped if a conflict breaks out.

D20, d12, d10, d8, d6, d4 • The

polyhedral dice with different numbers of faces.

Dice notation • $2d6$ is two six-sided dice rolled and added together. $3d8$ is the sum of three eight-sided dice. $D100$ is two ten sided dice with one representing the tens, the other the digits. A roll of '00' is treated as 100.

Defence • A character's target number in a conflict. Usually $10 +$ a stat + an equipment bonus.

Encumbered • An overburdened character suffers [-] to all tests.

Expert • Two or more ranks in a skill. Good enough to teach a skill. Applies double proficiency to relevant tests.

Exploding dice • Dice marked with an asterisk, e.g., $1d6^*$. In this example, every time a player rolls a natural 6, they roll an extra $1d6^*$ and add the results. Exploding die rolls are open-ended.

Extra • Sketched out background character.

Fumble • A natural 1 on a d20 rolled during a test. Always fails and has some additional negative effect.

Fumble range • The range of natural rolls that result in a fumble. The fumble range steps are $1 > 1-2 > 1-3$, etc.

Hero type • A bundle of attribute and advancement tables. Also archetype, skin, or class.

Immunity • A character that is immune to a type of attack takes no damage from them.

Inventory • What a character carries. Including gear, weapons, armor, tools, spells, burdens, fears, woes, and treasure. Carried equipment greatly impacts a character's abilities. Most humans can carry one sack unencumbered and two sacks encumbered.

Gat token • Physical object to help players take turns performing group actions or co-creating the game world.

Ha • The body, the vehicle of the soul (ka) and mind (ba). Used in physical conflicts.

Hero, protagonist • Excessive. A primary character.

Hero dice (hd) • D6s that modify a hero's natural rolls and provide some other benefits.

Hurt • Serious injuries. Cumulative



penalties that accrue as life, stats and other resources run out. Also fatigue or death spiral.

Ka • The soul, the motive fire of consciousness and being. Used in spiritual conflicts.

Level (L) • A creature's relative power.

Life • A character's plot armor and vital force all in one. Once upon a time called hit points.

Magic, fantascience • Anything sufficiently advanced to be indistinguishable from magic.

Magic cost • Attribute between 1 and 5 that multiplies a spell's power to determine the spell price a character pays to cast a spell. The only attribute that is better the lower it is.

Mental stat • Charisma, aura, or thought.

Modifier • Feature, quality, or attribute that modifies the mechanical and narrative behaviour of an item, spell, extra, or monster. In the case of heroes, modifiers are expanded into complete traits or skills.

Natural result • The number on a rolled die before any modifiers. E.G. A natural 20. Also naked roll.

Player • Sentient creature partaking in a roleplaytime session.

Power, spell power (P) • A number between 1 and 42 that approximates the power of a spell's manifestation.

Praxa • Psychophysical battle techniques honed over millennia. From Ancient Greek for practice.

Pro, proficiency • A modifier between +2 and +5 used by skilled and expert heroes.

Rank (R) • Measure of the power of a skill, ability, mutation, or other game attribute. Higher ranks grant bonuses or additional features.

Relevant stat or skill • Stat or skill that the players judge to apply in a given context. The top cat has a final (soft) veto on whether a stat or skill applies.

Resistance • A character that is resistant to a type of attack takes only half damage from them.

Roll • Rolling any polyhedral die.

Round • During a conflict, a sufficient amount of time for every character to take their turn.

Runner • Player running protagonists (heroes and sidekicks).

Sack • 10 stones. Roughly what a human can carry unencumbered.

Scene, encounter • Basic unit of

roleplay when and where the characters interact with the shared imaginary objects.

Session • One meeting of all or some of the players at their table to play. Similar to a show's episode.

Sidekick • Secondary character or pet with simplified attributes.

Sidu • A pan-cultural agglomeration of custom and behavior that cuts across the living and dead cultures of the Vastlands. Sidu comes from Old English for custom or habit.

Skill • Trained attribute of a character. A profession. First rank (skilled) applies proficiency to relevant tests, second rank (expert) doubles this.

Skilled • One rank in a skill. Good enough to make a living with a skill. Applies proficiency to relevant tests.

Soap • 25 cash. Small item in a pocket. An insignificant item in a hero's inventory.

Spell • Recipe for altering reality. A type of gear, it takes up inventory.

Spell price • How much life a character must pay to cast a given spell of a given spell power.

Stats, S.E.A.C.A.T. • The six game stats represent natural aptitude and modify most natural rolls. Human hero stats range from +0 to +5.

Stone • 10 soaps. A significant item in a character's inventory..

Sum • Total modifier (stat + skill) applied to a d20 test. Can never be larger than +13.

Table • The physical or virtual space where the players meet.

Target • A number between 3 and 19 set by the top cat to represent the difficulty of a test.

Test • A d20 roll to overcome a target number to determine whether a character's desired course of action succeeds. Modified by a character's stat and skill (or sum).

Top cat, TC, cat • The player running the game session and antagonists. Also referee, ref.

Trait • Inherent attribute of a character that lets them perform in unusual ways.

Turn • Part of round, time unit when a character takes their actions.

Unusual dice • Polyhedral dice that players may have trouble finding, such as a d30. A dice rolling app or online random generator helps.

Veda • A secret compilation of lore, ritual, study and science. From Slovenian or Sanskrit for

knowledge or science.

Xp, experience • Points or metagame currency a player collects through play and invests in their characters and game objects. Xp represent characters' successes and experiences.

Tags

“Look upon my works ye mighty and compare.”

—Rushime, ancient monarch cursed to immortality and irrelevance.

Tags categorize skills, abilities, and effects. They also help with searching through the book.

Item Tags

Item tags can be conditional. E.g., the red scimitar might be #precise against blue creatures.

#burden • a penalty ‘object’ that occupies an available slot until it is appropriately removed. For example, a cursed sword might be a burden that cannot be removed.

#clumsy • [-] to attack rolls.

#mental • a mental object significant enough to occupy an inventory slot. E.g., a memorized map, an implanted spell formula, or an oppressive madness.

#precise • [+] to attack rolls.

#reach • Wielder can use an action to counterattack against an attacker. The counterattack is resolved before the attack. Negates other #reach tags.

Magic Tags

#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).

#attack • The spell is cast as an attack action. A hero uses their relevant magical skill to test against their foe’s applicable defence and affect them. Some spells may also target other attributes.

#core • Basic spell gained automatically when a hero learns a magical skill (*veda*). Some spell albums contain multiple core spells. In that case a hero must choose one for their free starter.

#dangerous • The spell forces a test to avoid magical corruption every time it is cast.

Applying this tag to more spells is an easy way for the players to restrict certain kinds of magic within a setting.

#focus • The spell requires focus to stay active. A hero must spend an action every round, or the spell ends.

A hero can always cast a spell at double its usual power to imbue it with their vital essence, keeping it active without focus. This can make a spell dangerous and require a test against magical corruption.

#imbue • A spell that is kept active as long a hero imbues it with their vital essence (life or stat points). The imbued points are reserved, reducing the hero’s maximum life or stat total, 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 disenchanting or destroyed. This is similar to the imbue tag, except a hero cannot end the spell at will. Simple examples of magic items are magic swords, rings, and wicker fetishes.

#regular • A spell that uses only the standard magic rules.

Skill Tags

#adventure • Skill has practical utility in the struggle of mortal against uncaring natural worlds.

#background • Skill represents the development of a mortal as a part of a functional community.

#combat • Also called a *praxa*, this skill represents a combination of psychophysical battle techniques honed over millennia. *Praxa* comes from Ancient Greek for practice.

#magic • Also called a *veda*, this skill represents a difficult or secret compilation of lore, ritual, study and science. *Veda* comes from Slovenian or Sanskrit for knowledge or science.

#social • Also called a *sidu*, this skill represents a pan-cultural agglomeration of custom and behavior that cuts across the living and dead cultures of the Vastlands. *Sidu* comes from Old English for custom or habit.

Trait Tags

#biomachine • Artificial abilities for

TO DO:

Remove tags to separate document for reference, possibly reintroduce later or keep for digital SRDcat

created organisms.

#brains • Thoughtful application of superior intellectual capabilities for the furtherance of personally acceptable outcomes.

#fantascience • Magic and science by another name.

#fortune • Luck and the manipulation of the underlying fabric of probability. Also money.

#power • The will to strength. The unyielding oak. The crushing boulder. The alacrity of the born warrior.

FIN

