

SHARDS

Table of Contents

Crystal Rain	Page 3
Getting Started	Page 4
Core Mechanics	Page 8
Characters	Page 17
Traits	Page 27
Skills & Actions	Page 37
Core Method	Page 58
Shard Method	Page 78
Economy and Equipment	Page 94
Building Your Game	Page 100
Encounters	Page 106
Environment	Page 112
Effects & Conditions	Page 117
Species	Page 125
Afterward & Credits	Page 135

Crystal Rain

In 597, Queen Fredegund solidified her hold over the Franks. the Avars began their siege of Tomis, and Mangelesha ascended the throne in India. In our world, the year ended quietly. In another world, the sky tore open to nothingness, and the shards first fell.

From Europe and Asia to Africa and Americas, shards fell. The first was a scattering, but more shard falls were to come. Where the event itself left people to wonder what this prodigy meant, it was nothing compared to what happened when man picked up his first iridescent black crystal.

Shards make the head swim. It's a slight heady sensation, a feeling of warmth, a feeling of untapped power. Many faiths would declare the shards anathema, for not only do the wounds from one of these dark crystals not heal but those killed during a shard fall often returned as something else. Clergy confiscated shards, but they could not destroy them. They proved indestructible. So they hoarded them in secret vaults.

Despite the stigma, or perhaps because of it, there were a few, there are always a few, who explored the shards further. They would experiment, and they would listen. Slowly they would begin to unlock the true potential of the shards.

At first, it was only a few scattered "wizards", individuals suddenly drunk on personal power. Despite the potency of their abilities, they were lone individuals just beginning to tap the shards, and they were easily overwhelmed by even groups of soldiers. Of course, armies have generals, barons, and queens. Those in power always sought more, and so it was that the shards quickly became a temptation.

Before long many faiths reversed their consideration of the shards. These faiths drew upon their crystal hoards to assume real power with the newly unlocked "divine gifts", even if they did come with occasional unfortunate side effects. Some secular powers kept pace with faiths revealing their own caches of the dark fragments. Others forged alliances, uniting personal armies with divine providence.

Man is nothing, if not greedy, and it is an unfortunate truism that power often outstrips our wisdom. Faiths fractured, barons usurped kings, wars came, and, with them, nightmares. This eleventh century Earth now scarcely resembles our own.

Shards

Resembling obsidian with a blueish purple iridescence, shards are no longer than a person's forearm and no smaller than a person's finger. They cannot be broken, refined, sharpened, or forged: they are indestructible, except through magic.

By themselves, shards are little but curiosities: they do nothing. But when you hold one its power can be unlocked. Where the wounds caused by such a shard a slow to heal, that is the least property of the crystals.

The largest shards are prized as daggers for warriors and as foci for wizards. A warrior that has attuned herself to powers within shards can move faster and cleave metal. Scholars can use them to bend reality in even more dramatic fashions. They can steal your senses, crush their foes, and, according to some, steal souls and raise the dead. The most powerful of these spells also require fragments, smaller shards, which are consumed in the casting.

Naturally, power has a price, and the more shards are used, the greater the chance of corruption, both of the mind and body. Although shard wielders have created many of the horrors that now stalk the land, the most terrifying were once shard wielders themselves.

Getting Started

SHARDS is a table top role-playing game system based on the Krendel engine. It offers simple, intuitive game play with a depth of options and combinations. You play out adventures in an alternate history Earth, a land torn apart by the injection of magic.

To play SHARDS, you need one or more **players**, who create player characters to serve as their avatars in the game world, and a Game Master, who manages that game world, presenting challenges and opportunities for the players. Of course, you'll need a few other things to play too:

- 1) **Imagination.** The game is all about using your imagination. Bring it. Flex it.
- 2) **Rules.** They're in this book. They provide a framework for how to play the game.
- 3) **Writing medium.** Where paper is traditionally used for tracking characters and elements in the game, computers and other medium can also serve well. You'll want something to write with, too.
- 4) **Randomizer.** You will need a randomizer that can provide a value from 1 through 6. Typically, this is your standard six sided die (abbreviated **1D6** or simply **D6**), but a random number generator on a computer or a phone can work as well. Even a deck of cards that only has the ace through 6 cards can work out.

Your game can benefit from other accessories, such as miniatures, maps, drawings or other visual aids, background music, and appropriate set dressing for the space you play in. As hunger can make folks cranky, it can also be a good idea to keep food and drink on hand.

Gamer Contract

The purpose of any game is for you and everyone else have fun. You ensure this by balancing everyone's interests. It is important to remember that players have just as much interest in the development of the game as the Game Master. The interests of the players and Game Master should collaborate to form the backbone of the overall story.

To ensure this happens, the players and Game Master should openly discuss their expectations and desires with regards to the story at the beginning of a game and even before individual sessions. You can stop the action any time to discuss issues to help ensure everyone is on the same page. It may help to think of the players as actors in an improvisational play and the Game Master is both the director feeding cues to the players to build the story and the audience of fans rooting for the characters and laughing along with the players; the characters are the roles the players take on during the show. Talking about the characters and the direction of the story within this framework can help all participants tailor their actions and expectations to suit the game everyone wants.

Setting forth these interests and expectations is the core of the gamer contract. Whether it is formalized in writing or just an understanding between members of the group, the gamer contract helps ensure that all participants are on the same page, or at least reading from the same book. When participants veer from the expectations set by the group, chances are someone will stop enjoying the game. Here are concepts that you may consider when discussing your contract.

Be Excellent to Each Other: All players should be respectful of each other regardless of religion, politics, sexual identity, race, and anything else. If particular subject matter becomes a point of contention, then stop and decide the limits of its discussion and inclusion in the group. Foster an atmosphere where everyone is comfortable and where they feel they can voice concerns to have a matter positively addressed. If you have a problem participant that can't get on board, then get rid of them; it doesn't matter whose friend they are.

Game Maturity: Think in terms of movie ratings: G, PG, PG-13, etc. This provides a general guideline as to what participants may expect in terms of violence, language, gore, drugs, sex, and other mature themes. Some subjects may be addressed individually (e.g. Rated R, but any themes of racism or sexuality are treated in a PG-13 manner).

Theme: What are the general themes of the game? Puzzles? Horror? Romance? Good guys? Spies? Avocados? The themes can be anything you think of. Deciding on themes at the outset helps ensure the expectations of the participants; wrong expectations can quickly cause dissatisfaction. This also helps give the Game Master direction when planning challenges.

Game Setting: Where SHARDS outlines the basic game setting, it falls to you to fill out the details. Are you in India? Spain? Greece? The *Building Your Game* chapter walks you through the process of refining the setting to your taste.

Campaign Level: This is the innate potential of player characters compared to everyone else. Higher campaign levels grant characters additional Health, more points to spend on elective traits, and a higher maximum skill level. Campaign level comes in four tiers: **low**, **average**, **high**, and **epic**. The common person is *low* or *average*. If the characters are expected to be a cut above the rest, then use a *high* or *epic* campaign level. The impact of campaign level is detailed in the *Characters* chapter.

Relative Experience: This is the trained development of the characters. Relative experience comes in six tiers: **novice**, **green**, **practiced**, **seasoned**, **regular**, and **veteran**. Where most characters begin as *green* to allow for a full spectrum of character growth, more *seasoned* characters are appropriate for campaigns that begin well into a character's career. *Novice* may be used for younger characters that are still in training. The impact of relative experience is detailed in the *Characters* chapter.

Rules: Decide if there are any rules you want to change, exclude, or add. It's your game, and there's nothing wrong with treating it as such.

Schedule: How often and where will the game take place? It may seem like a trivial matter, but it helps to keep everyone on the same page and at the game.

Food: What will each participant be responsible for in terms of food and beverages? Usually each player is responsible for their own food and drink, but an expectation can be made that players will help stock the refrigerator with drinks or the group rotates which member cooks dinner.

Intoxicants: Will alcohol or other intoxicants be allowed in the game space? If they are, what limits do you set beyond what the law requires? Always exercise safety with respect to the use of intoxicants.

Health: If any member has health issues, bring them up. The most common are food and animal allergies.

Devices: What devices will be allowed at the game? Cell phones, knitting tools, and the like can be distracting when folks are checking email or making a hat instead of paying attention to the game. At the same time, people may use cell phones to access digital versions of the rules or otherwise keep themselves busy while their characters are off-screen.

The gamer contract should always be considered mutable. Some options might not get addressed right away, and participants can always revisit things later.

To the Player

It's easy to get wrapped up in your character as it is essentially an extension of yourself. This trap can make you overprotective and myopic in your view of your character and its relationship with the world. Where your character will shape the world through its adventures, the world will also shape the character, often changing it from your original vision. The experiences of a character should dictate its growth and, ultimately, when that character's story is done. Remember, in the end, no character survives contact with the plot.

To help the game run smoothly, consider designating roles to particular players such as a mapper (draws out the map of where the characters are so that everyone has a visual aid), a quartermaster (keeps track of party inventory, especially loot), a chronicler (keeps a record of major events), and a caller (the spokesman of the players when one voice serves better to convey matters to the Game Master). Other roles may be developed as desired. These roles help streamline what is going on and help engage participants as each takes on responsibilities.

To the Game Master

The role of Game Master can go by many titles: Storyteller, Judge, Guide, Master of Ceremonies, Narrator, Duke of Pretendy-Fun-Time-Land, etc. Where a different title may be used to try and emphasize a specific role or a theme of a game, the essential purpose remains the same: to host a game that everyone enjoys.

The Game Master has the power to exalt the characters or destroy them, to make fun or to quash it. Use of this power must be guided by what is best for the game as a whole; it may make the game a great experience or a loathsome one. If the players don't appreciate the experience, they will leave.

As the Game Master, you are responsible for presenting the setting for the players' characters and weaving the characters into it. How you present the world and its reactions to the characters profoundly impacts how the players act. Give details at every turn and describe the world and its populace so the players can better visualize the setting and play their characters accordingly. Yours is a living world that exists to challenge the characters and entertain the players. Breathe life into that world, and the players will breathe life into their characters.

Do not be overly protective of your plots or characters; they exist to entertain your players and are ultimately disposable. Similarly, do not be overly protective of your players' characters; they should face the logical consequences of their actions. Remember to be flexible. The game isn't just about you, and it's certainly not about some script you have planned out to every detail. It's about the shared experience of all participants. No plot survives contact with the characters.

Regarding Mechanics

It is important to understand that the mechanics of any game system simply facilitate the telling of a story by the participants. Remember that the mechanics, be they rules or statistics on a character sheet, are guidelines to an outcome, not entitlements to an outcome. Adhere as strongly or as loosely to the mechanics as is necessary, but be consistent. Changes to the rules should be recognized and formalized. Where the Game Master has final authority on how the mechanics are implemented, decisions should be made in cooperation with the players.

Declaration vs. Intent

Interpreting a player's stated action literally is easy but not necessarily the right decision. The player doesn't have perfect insight into what the Game Master is visualizing. She may not catch something the Game Master said. She may simply not have the same knowledge as her character. Or, she may see things differently than the Game Master. Pretend the descriptions we give are like concept art: There are a few details and we are left to fill in the rest for ourselves. This means that the player is always doing a certain amount of guesswork with her character's actions and won't always take the "right" action even though she may have the right intent. The Game Master must help the player take the intent of those actions and apply them to the scene.

There are times when a player declares an outrageous action, such as killing someone for no apparent reason, or takes an action that would cause someone else to perform an outrageous action. The player may simply not know how best to realize her intent, or she may want more of the spotlight. It is incumbent upon the Game Master, and even other players, to pause the game and ask for clarification. Once the intent of the player is understood, then everyone can help guide the player.

For her part, the player needs to be understanding and flexible enough to be willing to adjust her actions with guidance from the other participants. It helps to remember that the game isn't about any one person: it is a shared experience for all participants. Additionally, the player should not hesitate to ask questions of the Game Master to help clarify subjects that weigh upon her decision making process. This open invitation to ask questions can be taken a bit far: please remember that the Game Master is trying his best and too many questions can frustrate participants and slow the game down.

Narrating Success and Failure

When adjudicating actions the Game Master should always consider the intent of the player, the possible outcomes and how those outcomes will affect the story. Outcomes that simply end the story should be avoided. Fortunately, failing an action does not necessarily mean the end of a story. When evaluating the outcome of an action there are essentially four choices: "yes", "no", "no, but", and "yes, but".

If the character performs well, she will realize the intent of her action: she climbs a wall or harms a foe. This is a **"yes"** result and is necessary to move the story along. "Yes" isn't just used when accepting the results of a die roll. Saying "yes" is accepting what another party does; appending "and" then builds the next step in the narrative. This is a fundamental building block to the role-playing experience as all participants build upon each other's actions.

Opposite this is "**no**". The character fails to achieve the intent of her action in any way. This can be detrimental to the game as it closes off avenues of the story. However, it is also a tool for keeping players in line when absolutely necessary and for enforcing rules and setting.

Often, a better alternative to "no" is "**no, but**". The character fails, but she can try again, she can try something else, she gets chased somewhere she is supposed to be, or similar. "No, but" occurs when a character does not quite succeed in her action, and the failure becomes a vehicle to move the story along. "No, but" is a powerful tool. We learn from our failures and find victory all the sweeter for them. This is what "no, but" allows.

The last outcome is "**yes, but**". The character achieves the general intent of her action, but it didn't go entirely as planned. Like "no, but", "yes, but" occurs when a character does not fully succeed in her action. Rather than declaring a failure, the character is allowed some success accompanied by a side effect or it fails to have the desired impact. For instance, a character might succeed in scaling a wall, but the guards spot her and raise alarm. Similarly, a character might succeed in getting information from a contact, but she needs to pay extra for it. The story is allowed to move forward and the character now faces some new adversity that adds to the mix.

"Yes, but" can also be used when the Game Master wishes to indicate there is more to do or to otherwise guide the players along. For example, a character succeeds in unlocking a door. Usually this is a "yes" result; however, the Game Master wishes to remind everyone that they are in danger and time is of the essence so he changes it to a "yes, but" by saying that the door unlocks, but the guards could be there any moment.

These four outcomes should be leveraged when describing the results of any action. By way of example, a character who attacks and misses could be given a simply "no" (e.g. you miss), a "no, but" (e.g. you miss, but your target is distracted a bit giving the next attacker an opening), or a "yes, but" (e.g. your attack connects, but your target's armor deflects the force of the blow). Two of these are more interesting in a narrative sense, but a quick "no" may suffice if you need to keep things moving.

Player Skill vs. Character Skill

Any gaming experience is part player skill and part character skill. **Player skill** is knowing what actions to take with your character, what questions to ask the Game Master, what mechanics to stack together to maximize chances, and general charisma. **Character skill** is what the character sheet says.

Player skill will always influence encounters: tactics are chosen by the players and puzzles almost certainly challenge the players. It is also easy to let player skill dominate encounters, overriding mechanics, if you let it. This occurs when the player does something the character would not, or could not, and the Game Master grants automatic success in response. Examples of this are when players search rooms in a more intelligent way than their characters would or when players eloquently role-play conversations when their characters are tactless at best.

The difficulty with player skill is when it overrides what the character could reasonably do. The role-play of the character should always reflect the character skill, not ignore it. Otherwise, it creates inconsistency and uncertainty for the players. However, participants are welcome to change the rules as desired. Thus, if everyone agrees at the outset that player skill can override character skill, then go for it! Another option is to grant a bonus to a character's activity for good player ideas. The more relevant details the player gives, the better the bonus.

Core Mechanics

SHARDS uses a simplified version of the Krendel game engine. All mechanics build from the same basic core. Where many actions are detailed for you, if you want to do something that is not explicitly stated, come back to the core mechanics and use them as a guide to make something up. Remember that mechanics are no true substitute for imagination; they just provide a frame work for its expression.

Performing Actions

Narration sets the stage, but actions drive the adventure. This could be researching Roman catacombs, jumping a chasm, attacking an opponent, invoking a shard, or bribing a guard. They may not all take the same amount of time, use the same tools, or have the same results, but they all follow the same core structure.

To perform an action, first **declare your intent**. Maybe you want a better price, or maybe you want to shove a bully into a mud puddle. From this intent, the Game Master and other players can help you **determine what action fits best**. If no pre-designed action fits the intent, then the Game Master can make one up, using existing actions as a guideline. If the action is so trivial as to be automatic or if the character will obviously achieve her full intent, then the action should **automatically succeed**. If not, then **make a test**. The person making the test **rolls a six sided die (1D6)** and then **chooses how she succeeds or fails**. While the Game Master typically describes how the action impacts the scene, you can get in on the act too, describing the form your success takes as the Game Master fills in the gaps.

Tests

All tests work the same way. First, **determine the target number**. The target number is equal to two plus your skill level minus the target's skill level, but it may also be adjusted with bonuses or penalties. The action sets the skill used by both you and your target. The options include **Academics, Acrobatics, Artistry, Athletics, Craft, Influence, Intuition, Medical, Melee, Mysticism, Performance, Projectile, Ranging, Reflection, Science, and Stealth**. Your target can also always defend with the same skill you used. Once you have your target number, you roll a d6 and try get as close as you can to the target number without going over.

If you roll less than or equal to the target number, then you succeed. You get **a number of successes equal to the number on the die**. The more successes, the greater the effect: you learn more information, do more damage, etc.

If you roll higher than the target number, then you fail, but you can always ask the GM for an **alternate result**, granting some success if you are willing to give something up.

If $d6 \leq 2 + \text{Your Skill} - \text{Target's Skill}$, then SUCCESS!

Difficulty reflects unusual circumstances. It could be that a lock is rusted and easily broken, that a topic of information is particularly obscure, or that a person just doesn't like you. Difficulty adjusts the target number as a bonus or a penalty. Where difficulty modifiers are often disclosed, it falls to the GM to choose an appropriate difficulty when they are not.

When the environment acts (e.g. a shard tries to corrupt you), a skill level is simply assigned by the event.

Where the action normally sets the skills used, you may want to do something that isn't listed. It's usually pretty obvious what skill to use when performing the action, but the skill you use to defend with may be less obvious. When in doubt, use the following guidelines:

Difficulty	Adjustment
Simple	+2
Easy	+1
None	0
Challenge	-1
Tough	-2
Hard	-4
Prohibitive	-6
Impossible	-10

- **Acrobatics:** You dodge a physical assault, or you maintain balance or counter force.
- **Athletics:** You withstand a direct assault on his physiology (i.e. disease) or your strength is challenged.
- **Influence:** You lie or evade questioning.
- **Intuition:** You disbelieve honeyed words and illusions.

- **Melee:** You block or parry an incoming melee assault with a weapon.
- **Mysticism:** You ward off a superstition or omen.
- **Performance:** You hide your true self or resist being cloaked by illusions.
- **Reflection:** You resist intimidation or mental control.
- **Stealth:** You hide.

Example: Rachel tries to punch Peter. Rachel's Melee is 3, increasing the target number to 5. This is defended using Acrobatics, and Peter's skill in that is 1 while his skill in Melee is 2. Defending with his Melee Peter lowers the target number to 3. Rachel rolls a 2, which is less than 3, so she hits.

It is easy to get **overwhelmed** in a charged encounter. As you react to everything you get distracted, move a little slower, and find yourself short of breath. Each time you use a skill to defend against an action, further actions against you get a cumulative +1 bonus; however, the maximum bonus is equal to the skill you are defending with. This bonus resets at the start of each round. Coins, dice, and other tokens can be used to help track the overwhelming bonus.

Using Successes

Successes measure how well you perform your action. Normally the number of successes directly equates to the result (e.g. the number of successes is the amount of damage healed), but you can always choose to spend less successes than you rolled. Here are common results for successes:

- **Achievement:** The action has a binary effect, it either succeeds or it doesn't in the manner proscribed by its description. Additional successes don't render a greater effect.
- **Armor:** The target gains an Armor Factor equal to the number of successes. This stacks with worn armor.
- **Bonus Health:** The target gains one point of Ablative Health per success.
- **Condition Removal:** The target loses one condition per success.
- **Damage:** You deal one point of damage to the target per success.
- **Damage Reduction:** You reduce damage received by one per success.
- **Difficulty:** The first success creates an obstacle of some sort, and each successive success increases its difficulty by one.
- **Equipment Bonus:** The principle advantage (AF, WF, etc.) of target's equipment is increased by one.
- **Equipment Penalty:** The principle advantage (AF, WF, etc.) of target's equipment is decreased by one.
- **Force:** The target is moved one space per success. If the number of spaces moved exceeds the target's Strength, then the target also becomes prone.
- **Healing:** You heal one point of damage to the target per success, up to her maximum Health.
- **Information:** You gain one piece of information per success.
- **Initiative Bonus:** Your initiative is increased by one per success.
- **Initiative Penalty:** Your initiative is decreased by one per success.
- **Perception:** You look for something as if your skill level was zero, and each successive success increases its difficulty by one.
- **Strength:** The target's Strength is increased by one per success.
- **Success Removal:** Each success removes a success from the other action. If all successes are removed from the other action, then it is canceled.
- **Other:** You can always come up with your own actions using existing actions and the above guidelines to determine the results.

EXAMPLE: *Jenny is researching shard ghouls, the name of a creature given to her by the town elder. Her Academics skill level is 2, and the Game Master applies a -1 penalty for difficulty. This gives her a target number of 3, and she rolls a 2. This nets her two pieces of information.*

Using Failures

Failed to *research* some information? Maybe you find a book but need to get it translated. Third missed *attack* in a row? Maybe the character trips and falls into his opponent, knocking them both prone.

If you fail a test, you can accept the failure or ask the GM for an **alternate result**. This gives you minor success for a price, changing the "no" into a "yes, but" or "no, but". The GM builds the alternate result by choosing one benefit and one cost that fit the situation. As always, you can make up your own options to better fit the situation, but the cost must always be relevant.

Benefits:

- **Minimal Success:** You get one success.
- **New Option:** Your action fails, but you think of a different feasible approach supplied by the Game Master.

Costs:

- **Attitude:** The target's attitude towards you decreases two steps.
- **Betrayal:** The target will go along for now, but she will betray you later.
- **Condition:** You gain the *crippled*, *dazed*, *fatigued*, *staggered*, or *suffering* condition for encounter or day duration, as appropriate for the action.
- **Dropped:** You lose your grip, a pouch comes loose, or similar. Whatever the reason, you drop an item.
- **Equipment:** You break the tool you are using.
- **Health:** You find a way to deal one irreducible damage to yourself.
- **Kit:** You exhaust a kit, using the last of the materials in contained.
- **Materials:** The material cost is doubled.
- **Misinformation:** You get both true and false information with no clear idea which is which.
- **Money:** The monetary cost is doubled.
- **Overwhelmed:** The overwhelming bonus applied against you is increased by one.
- **Positioning:** You move so you lose a desired line of sight.
- **Prone:** You fall prone.
- **Quality:** If attempting a Craft action, the item gains the *substandard* quality.
- **Time:** The action takes five times as long as it should.

Consequences of Using Failures

When players ask for an alternative, two problems can occur. First, players may come to feel that the Game Master is picking on them. This can easily occur if the Game Master chooses costs that are relevant to the circumstances in response to one player's request but then chooses costs that aren't relevant to circumstances in response to a different request.

Second, alternate results can put a lot of pressure on the Game Master, who will often feel a need to come up with something new. This can lead to burn out or cause her to make alternatives more punishing than they need to be to discourage players from using the mechanic.

One solution is for the Game Master to ask another player to provide the alternate result, choosing the types of benefit(s) and/or cost(s). If the Game Master thinks it's fair, then she fleshes out the end result. This approach also helps involve other players, particularly those without a character present in the encounter.

Another solution to this is for the Game Master to ask what the player is willing to give up in order to succeed. Then ask the other players if they think that is fair. If they do, then the player asking for the alternate result gets the benefit(s) and pays the cost(s).

Resolution Modifiers

Cooperation: One character takes the lead, and others assist her. Each trained assistant or every two untrained assistants grant a +1 bonus, but the maximum bonus is equal to the highest skill level of all participants. Only the lead character may spend karma for the action. In order to cooperate, you must be able to perform the action yourself, and cooperation cannot be used with any free action.

EXAMPLE: Rachel is trying to research an artifact the group just learned their enemy has. This test uses Academics. Rachel takes the lead, but she only has a skill of 2. Peter has a skill of 1, while Sam and Trevor have no skill at all. Peter contributes a +1 because he is trained. Together Sam and Trevor contribute +1 total because they are untrained. This grants Rachel a +2 bonus, which is also the maximum bonus she can get. This raises her target number from 4 to 6.

Karma: Karma twists fate. You spend it to amend your actions and those made against you. When adjusting an action that targets you only you are affected. You can spend karma at any point during the action, even after the roll is made, but not after the outcome is finalized. You can spend as much karma at once as you like.

- **Adjust Chance (1 karma):** Increase or decrease the target number by one.

- **Adjust Success (1 karma):** Increase or decrease the number of successes by one.
- **Reduce Incoming Damage (1 karma):** Reduces damage dealt by the character's Scale.
- **Re-Roll (2 karma):** Re-roll the test.
- **Cancel Action (3 karma):** You take no action instead (e.g. you did not just trigger the trap), but you "have a feeling" about how the action could have turned out.

EXAMPLE: Trying to climb a wall Peter rolls a 4 when his target number is 3. He spends one karma to increase the target number to 4, turning a near miss into a great success. Had he rolled a 6, he may have considered spending 2 karma to re-roll instead. If after scaling the wall he discovers many ill-tempered guard dogs, he may be wishing he had 3 more karma to spend to cancel that climb action.

Re-Roll: You re-roll the die for the test, but you must keep the second result in place of the first.

EXAMPLE: Rachel tries climbing the same wall Peter did. Her target number is 4, but she rolls a 6. Unlike Peter, Rachel has calisthenics core power, which grants her a re-roll should she fail her climb test. She rolls again and gets a 2, heralding success.

Health, Damage, and Recovery

Your **Health** is how much damage you can take. Base **Health is assigned by species**, and it may be increased by traits and powers. Changes in Scale also modify Health.

When a non-player character's Health reaches 0, he falls *unconscious* or dies as appropriate for the story and circumstances. Player characters become *unconscious* upon reaching zero Health, and only **die** under three circumstances:

- Permanent damage reduces Health to or below 0 Health (i.e. has more permanent damage than maximum Health).
- Lethal damage reduces Health beyond negative maximum Health.
- Lethal damage reduces Health to or below 0 Health, and the player decides it is time for the character to die.

Down But Not Out: A disabled (e.g. unconscious, dead, etc.) player character can generate one karma boost on their turn each round. These differ from normal karma as follows:

- It can be used to affect anything in the encounter.
- Its use cannot violate the character's relationships.
- These karma boosts may be saved from round to round.
- These karma boosts expire at the end of the encounter or when the character regains consciousness, whichever occurs first.

An effect may grant **Ablative Health**. This is temporary Health in addition to your normal Health. Damage absorbed by this ablative layer does not remain after the effect fades, nor can it be healed or recovered except by reactivating the power that originally granted it.

Damage

Damage reduces Health. Total damage dealt is decreased by the target's **armor factor (AF)**. Damage is described by trauma type.

Trauma type describes how hard it is to heal the wound. There are four degrees of trauma:

- All damage is **lethal damage** by default. The actor can convert lethal to subdual, but this halves the amount of damage or healing.
- **Subdual damage** is easy to recover from, and is caused by weapons designed to knockout. The actor can convert subdual to lethal, but this halves the amount of damage or healing.
- **Shard damage** cannot be recovered from and imposes a -2 penalty on healing attempts.
- **Permanent damage** cannot normally be healed, effectively reducing the character's maximum Health. Only the most calamitous of circumstances, such as losing an arm, deal permanent damage

Healing

Healing instantly restores your Health, but your current Health cannot exceed its normal maximum. Healing repairs any cosmetic descriptions of injuries such as bruised ribs, torn ligaments, and the like. Specific injuries like fractured bones and dislocated limbs are handled through conditions and traits.

Healing stresses the body: **you may be healed only once each day**. Additional healing attempts have no benefit.

Recovery

All living and undead things recover Health naturally over time. At the end of each **recovery cycle** you regain an amount of Health equal to your Scale, and the recovery cycle is based on the degree of trauma. Subdual damage recovers before lethal damage, and permanent damage does not recover at all. Items do not normally recover Health, nor does a character under continuous damage, such as heat from an environmental hazard or the suffering condition.

Trauma	Recovery Cycle
Subdual	1 Hour
Lethal	1 Day
Permanent	Not recoverable

Measurements

It can be important to know how far something is or how long an activity will take. The International System of Units lays the foundation of measurements, but additional units are used for more abstract measurements.

A **space** is a mutable measure of distance, area, and volume. Generally, a space is a square or a hex sized to fit the Scale of the characters. By default, the space is one meter across at its smallest dimension. This fits the human standard, where a human is Scale 1. If Scale 1 is used to represent 20m tall robots, then a space becomes 10m across.

The space can be used to measure distance (e.g. “the target is five spaces away from you” means the target is five meters away when working in human Scale), and it can be used to measure area or volume (e.g. “the explosion fills four spaces” or “the explosion has a radius of two spaces”). The space is the common unit of measurement in tactical situations, such as combat.

This allows the space to be easily used if you choose to use a grid to help plot the locations and movements of characters. If not using a grid, but still using miniatures, then spaces can be measured with a ruler: Simply choose an appropriate dimension (e.g. 2cm = 1 space). If not using grids or miniatures, spaces still work well to measure dimensions, providing a distance that easily scales with the size of the characters.

Area and Volume Templates

Effects use templates to describe the shape of their area or volume. In context each will be listed as [template] (X); for example, Field (2), Arc (Reach), or Aura (Reflection x 2).

Unless otherwise stated by the template, all effects are blocked or reduced by cover. They do not go through or wrap around the cover. Additionally, unless otherwise stated by the particular effect or template, all targets in the volume of the template are affected.

- **Arc:** Centered on the character, the effect extends X spaces away from the character in a half circle.
- **Aura:** Centered on the target, the effect extends X spaces away from the target in all directions. The effect remains centered on the target, moving as she does.
- **Cone:** The effect extends X spaces in a triangular shape with the character at the apex. For every space it extends outward, the base of the triangle is one space wide.
- **Stream:** Beginning at the character, the effect shoots outwards, extending X spaces in a cylindrical shape, the width of which is equal to the Scale of the character.
- **Trail:** The effect begins at the character, and as he moves each space he occupied becomes filled with the effect. The trail extends a maximum of X spaces.
- **Wall:** Within the maximum range, the effect forms a wall X spaces long. This wall is perpendicular (or near enough so for your game’s purposes) to a line extending from the target to the center of the wall.

- **Cage:** Within the maximum range, the effect occurs in a circle X spaces away from and surrounding a center space.
- **Explosion:** Within the maximum range, the effect spreads outward X spaces from a center space. Explosions are accompanied by a force rating that pushes targets away from the center. If a force rating is not provided by the effect, then it is X.
- **Cloud:** Within the maximum range, the effect spreads outward X spaces from a center space. Clouds wrap around cover where possible. Depending upon the effect, asphyxiation may also occur.
- **Field:** Within the maximum range, the effect spreads outward X spaces from a center space.

Volume Templates and Defenses: Acrobatics is the default defense for physical effects, representing your ability to dodge out of the way. Even when using other skills in place of Acrobatics, you are predicting and avoiding a trajectory or parrying a blow. This does little good against an explosion or gas cloud. If the defense for an area or volume template is normally Acrobatics, then your defense is 0 unless you are in an edge space for the template, escape the volume of effect (e.g. via a *leap*), or get behind cover that would block the effect.

Range

Actions have four standard classifications for range: **self**, **reach**, **sight**, and **earshot**.

Self range powers are centered on you.

Reach is how far you can physically reach and still touch a target. With a reach of one you can contact adjacent spaces, but with a reach of zero you can only grasp that within your own space. By default, your reach is equal to your Scale, rounded up.

Sight allows you to choose any target for which you have natural line of sight; however, the efficacy is diminished by distance, which is divided into four categories: **short** (no penalty), **medium** (-1 penalty), **long** (-2 penalty), and **extreme** (-5 penalty).

Means	Short (no penalty)	Medium (-2 penalty)	Long (-5 penalty)	Extreme (-10 penalty)
Sight	up to 20m	from 20m to 100m	from 101m to 500m	more than 500m
Quiet Sound	up to 1m	from 1m to 2m	from 2m to 5m	more than 5m
Normal Sound	up to 5m	from 5m to 10m	from 10m to 20m	more than 20m
Loud Sound	up to 20m	from 20m to 50m	from 50m to 100m	more than 100m
Booming Sound	up to 100m	from 100m to 200m	from 200m to 500m	more than 500m

Earshot is a flexible range in which you and another can easily engage one another in conversation and is based upon the volume of the speaker. It uses the **short** (no penalty), **medium** (-1 penalty), **long** (-2 penalty), and **extreme** (-5 penalty) range categories. Within short range, you and the target can hear one another clearly. At medium range you can maybe hear every other word. It is difficult to hear anything clearly at long range: conversations are usually indistinct murmurs. At extreme range you cannot hear the source.

Scale

Scale gives an estimate of the dimensions of characters within the game. A Scale value of 1 represents the range of the longest dimension for the principle actors. Other scale values are a multiple of this base line. If something is larger or smaller than the base scale, then it is also going to be stronger or weaker. In Shards, a Scale value of one is a range from 1.2 to 2 meters, and all other Scales are based upon this. A giant twice as tall as a human would then have a Scale value of 2.

Species list a Scale value, and their statistics already consider its effects. But equipment, traits, and powers may still need to be scaled to fit these species. Also, the species themselves may need to be scaled in response to effects that shrink or enlarge a target.

Changes in Scale cascade in one of three ways: linear, square, cubic.

Most changes in Scale result in a linear change in the statistic: simply multiply the statistic by the Scale. This applies to Health, damage, armor factor, values upon which area and volume templates are based, reach, speed, distance, and more. If a statistic would logically change with Scale, but is not otherwise mentioned, then assume it changes linearly. It is

important to remember that damage, caused or healed, and forced movement derived from successes are *always* multiplied by Scale.

Where length increases in a linear manner, power is multiplied by the square of the Scale, or multiplied by the Scale twice. This applies to Strength and Carrying Capacity.

Finally, as Scale increases in a linear fashion, mass increases cubically, meaning the statistic is multiplied by the cube of the Scale, or multiplied by the Scale three times. This applies to mass, Encumbrance Value, and Strength requirements.

Scale	Linear	Square	Cubic	Health Range; (ave)
0.1	x 0.1	x 0.01	x 0.001	1
0.25	x 0.25	x 0.06	x 0.015	1 to 4; (2)
0.5	x 0.5	x 0.25	x 0.125	2 to 8; (4)
1	x 1	x 1	x 1	4 to 16; (8)
2	x 2	x 4	x 8	8 to 32; (16)
3	x 3	x 9	x 27	12 to 48; (24)
4	x 4	x 16	x 64	16 to 64; (32)
5	x 5	x 25	x 125	20 to 80; (40)
10	x 10	x 100	x 1000	40 to 160; (80)

Scale also provides a base Health range and average Health to serve as guidelines for creating creatures and items on the fly.

Time

As with the real world, there are seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, and so forth. In addition to the standard units of measurement there is the **round**, the **turn**, the **phase**, the **encounter**, and the **game session**.

The **round** is about six seconds long. Rounds are used when it is important to track what multiple characters are doing during short intervals of time, like in combat.

The **turn** is when each character acts in a round relative to other characters. Your turn occurs on your **initiative**.

An **encounter** is a particular event, scene, or chain of directly related events or scenes. Prying information from a contact can be an encounter. Exploring a room can be an encounter. Fighting and then chasing foes through a maze of streets and buildings can be an encounter. The beginning and ending of an encounter is chosen by the Game Master for dramatic purposes. An effect with encounter duration lasts for the entire encounter or one hour, if not in an otherwise clearly defined encounter.

A **game session** is the time you and your friends spend playing the game. Where a game session may take several hours for you, it may last minutes or even years for your character. The game session is usually used in relation to karma or experience (e.g. violating a relationship puts your character into karma lock for the game session). If an effect that has a game session duration occurs at the end of the game session, then the Game Master may extend the effect to the next game session as appropriate.

Initiative

Initiative gives the order in which everything happens when two or more things happen at roughly the same time. Everyone has an **initiative rating**. Your base initiative rating is provided by the *initiative* development (**see Skills & Actions**) and is equal to your Intuition; though, this may be adjusted through conditions, powers, and the like.

Characters act in descending order by Initiative rating. In the event of a tie, negotiate who goes first. If there is a disagreement, then roll d10; higher acts earlier. If there is still a tie, then you act simultaneously

You can always choose to **hold actions** until a lower initiative. Held actions occur after all other actions at the same initiative rating. Holding an action does not change your actual initiative rating.

You may declare one **trigger action** each round. This action will be held until the declared circumstance is met, triggering the action. Once the trigger is met, the action immediately takes place at that initiative rating with ties resolving as normal. If your action isn't triggered, then it expires without being used at the end of the round.

EXAMPLE: Peter declares that he will fire his crossbow at the first enemy he sees. He is holding an attack action as a trigger action with the trigger being the enemy appearing. If an enemy appears before the end of the round, then his attack occurs.

Types of Actions

Actions are how you interact with the world, usually to overcome obstacles or to accomplish goals. Actions require some form of intent, even if the act itself is a reaction to something else. The **Skills and Actions** chapter lists several example actions, and powers can give you more.

Standard actions require notable thought, attention and/or motion to perform. Each round you can perform one standard action.

- **Instant actions** resolve immediately.
- **Short actions** take one minute to perform by default, but may need up to one hour if appropriate. Most short actions are performed in protracted scenes, such as conversations, or between scenes.
- **Long actions** require at least an hour to perform, but may take longer, much longer. There is no limit to the time a long action requires, but if not specified, then assume it only takes one hour.

Free actions require little thought, being second nature. Unless otherwise stated, a free action can only be performed once per round as a free action, but it can also be performed as a standard action. Notable free actions include *lore*, *read person*, *resist surprise*, and *speak*.

EXAMPLE: *Sam has the quick draw power. This allows her to perform ready item as a free action. So Sam can now draw her axe as a free action and then attack with it in the same round.*

Movement actions are special free actions dedicated to movement. You may perform one movement action each round as a free action and a second as a standard action.

Intervening actions can take place any time during a round, modifying an instant or free action. Performing an intervening action of any sort interrupts any non-instant action you were performing.

Bonus actions are additional actions granted to a character. The difference between them and normal actions is that bonus actions cannot be directly boosted; however, they can inherit the effects of a boost placed on the original action.

EXAMPLE: *Rachel activates the boosts manifold strike and jarring blow to augment her attack. Manifold strike gives her one bonus attack. Where Rachel cannot boost this bonus attack separately, since jarring blow boosted the original attack, the bonus attack inherits its effect.*

Sustained duration actions are actively maintained by a character and require her to expend a standard action each round. In a strategic environment, movement costs are instead increased by one. By default, the maximum duration an effect may be sustained for is one hour, but a shorter or longer duration may be declared by the action. For the purpose of removing a sustained condition through *cleanse* or a similar action, the duration is the amount of time the condition has been sustained for, not how long it can be sustained for.

Powers

Abilities called **powers** allow you to do extraordinary things. Each power is a permutation of some **skill** that taps into something, be it your inner strength, greater knowledge of the art, or shards. The use of powers is primarily governed by skills.

Powers are first grouped in major classifications called **methods**, which describe a general approach to a particular body of powers. Powers are then further defined by their **element**, a particular theme or field of study within the method. Next, powers are defined by their **practice**, the specific way in which a power is enacted and mechanics associated with it. Finally, powers are ranked by **tier** (*lesser*, *greater*, and *epic*) as an estimation of their strength and/or difficulty to learn.

EXAMPLE: *Oration is a power of the social element of the core method. This separates it from non-core powers by saying that it is a derivation of your mundane abilities, rather than drawing upon some esoteric force. We also see that it is primarily social in nature, as opposed to physical or mental, the other two core elements. It is a boost (practice), meaning it is a free action used to augment another action. Its tier is lesser, meaning it is relatively low powered and will have low requirements to learn.*

Methods

Methods are the overarching classifications for various approaches to powers. Each method is fundamentally different from the others, be it a source of energy, basic principles, or the means of implementation. Where multiple methods may allow for the same endpoint, at least superficially, they take different pathways. In Shards, there are two methods:

- **Core:** The most normal permutations of skills and innate biology are considered core powers. Though, some of the more advanced feats may seem preternatural. Some core powers may be exclusive to a species.
- **Shard:** Tapping into the esoteric energies and dark whispers contained within the otherworldly shards, a user can augment herself or shape reality.

Elements are thematic categories of powers within the same method. If you wish to learn a greater power you must first know four lesser powers of the same element. Similarly, if you want to learn an epic power, then you must know four greater powers of the same element.

Each method has a number of **practices**, which serve as mechanical classifications for powers within a method. All powers of the same practice will share certain common mechanical characteristics; practices also provide a label for easy classification and references.

Boosts augment other actions, providing additional effects or enhancing existing ones as an action is performed. You can apply one boost to an action plus another for every two skill levels. An action may never benefit from more than one boost that alters the number of actions (e.g. *manifold strike* lets a character *attack* twice), alters the number of targets (e.g. *oration* increases the number of targets), or applies or adjusts a volume template. Additionally, boosts may not be applied to bonus actions. Boosts are intervening free actions and must be declared when the boosted action is declared.

Developments are passive abilities that are always in affect. They are not actively used, but they may adjust how other actions or powers are.

Shouts are short lived sounds, be they actual words or simply a grunt. Despite the name, shouts need not be loud. However, the range varies by the volume used. Shouts are instant actions with earshot range. Most shouts cause an instant effect or a condition with encounter duration.

Stances shift your footing, bearing, and mindset to give you an advantage. You might be able to sneak, strike, or even command others better. *Activate stance* is a free action that turns your stances on, but you can de-activate them on your turn without cost or action. Although an active stance has encounter duration, you can only have one active at a time.

Characters

Characters are how we interact with the game. For the players, they are personal avatars: Everything you want to do in the game is done through your character. For the Game Master, they are the cast of the show that is about to unfold, with the player's characters as the stars.

Character Creation

Where process of character creation can be thought of as linear, it doesn't have to be. In fact, it rarely is. SHARDS offers many options once you start looking at traits, skills, and powers. It's a good idea to skip ahead to the power chapters and see what fits your concept. Making note of the requirements you find there, work backwards to make sure you have the skills you will need. None the less, the following checklist provides a simple map for you to follow, and this chapter is laid out as a reflection of this.

- 1) Collectively choose your **Campaign Level** and **Relative Experience** if you haven't done so already.
- 2) Create your **concept**.
- 3) Choose your **species**. By default, player characters in SHARDS are **human**.
- 4) Pick a **background**.
- 5) Select your **drives**.
- 6) Form your **relationships**.
- 7) Record your starting **Strength, Carrying Capacity, Health, Speed, Power Pool, and Power Well**.
- 8) Write down your **species traits** and choose any **elective traits**. The Campaign Level may grant you points to spend on elective traits.
- 9) Pick your **skills**. These will be based on your background and the Relative Experience of the game.
- 10) Choose your **powers**. The Relative Experience tells you how many you get to choose, and the Campaign Level may grant you one or two for free.
- 11) Adjust your Strength, Carrying Capacity, Health, Speed, Power Pool, and Power Well based on your traits and powers.
- 12) Record your starting **karma**. Each relationship you formed gives you one karma.
- 13) Ask the Game Master for your starting equipment.

Concept

What do you want to be? Start with that question and go from there. Your character concept should be summarized in one or two words, even though you could write pages about it. Think not just of your character, but also of the setting. How does your avatar fit into the world? What affect has your character had on the people and world around her? Try to imagine at least one scene from her childhood, one from her adolescence, and one from when she was a young adult. Use these to flesh out your concept, and then use your concept to guide the rest of character creation.

Species

The base genetic makeup of a character says a lot. Beyond the vital characteristics, traits, powers, and natural weapons of a species, you immediately learn the basic appearance of your character; though, all of these aspects will be customized through culture and upbringing. By default, all player characters are human, but there may always be exceptions.

Human

Scale: 1

Health: 8

Strength: 4

Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land)

Traits: Adaptable, Genetic Crossroads

Powers: none

Physically, humans stand approximately 1.5 to 1.8 meters tall at maturity; though this varies with diet and activity. Combined with their natural endurance and efficient temperature regulation, prehistoric humans could easily spy dangers while exhausting the prey they hunted. However, humans' greatest asset is their mind, with which they invent new methods and devices to shape their world and themselves.

Skin tone ranges from pale or fair to yellowed to olive tinted to deep brown, depending upon the melanin content within the skin. Eye color can span most of the color spectrum, again depending upon the melanin content. While humans nearly uniformly possess hair atop their heads, the presence and quantity of facial and body hair ranges wildly from virtually non-existent to abundant. Hair color typically ranges from white to yellow to brown to black, but red is also naturally possible.

Individually, humans can be free thinking paragons of whatever virtue they choose. However, in numbers they tend more towards group behavior than individual behavior, allowing charismatic demagogues power over them

Background

Your **background** is a summary of your training up to this point in your life. Your background may reflect informal schooling, academic learning, tutors, military training, an apprenticeship, or simply learning by necessity. Every background has a one or two word **name** and **four associated skills**, which are used when you assign your starting skills.

You may choose your background from the list below or make up your own, using the examples as guidelines.

Example Backgrounds

1. **Alchemist:** Craft, Medical, Mysticism, Science
2. **Assassin:** Athletics, Intuition, Melee, Stealth
3. **Barrister:** Academics, Influence, Intuition, Reflection
4. **Courier:** Athletics, Intuition, Ranging, Stealth
5. **Courtier:** Academics, Influence, Intuition, Performance
6. **Craftsman:** Academics, Artistry, Craft, Science
7. **Duelist:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Intuition, Melee
8. **Entertainer:** Acrobatics, Influence, Intuition, Performance
9. **Farmer:** Athletics, Craft, Medical, Ranging
10. **Gladiator:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Melee, Performance
11. **Hunter:** Intuition, Projectile, Ranging, Stealth
12. **Mariner:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Craft, Ranging
13. **Medic:** Craft, Influence, Medical, Science
14. **Mercenary:** Athletics, Crafts, Melee, Projectile
15. **Merchant:** Academics, Craft, Influence, Intuition
16. **Priest:** Academics, Influence, Intuition, Mysticism
17. **Professor:** Academics, Influence, Mysticism, Science
18. **Rogue:** Artistry, Influence, Intuition, Stealth
19. **Scholar:** Academics, Craft, Mysticism, Science
20. **Scout:** Athletics, Intuition, Ranging, Stealth
21. **Shaman:** Influence, Mysticism, Ranging, Reflection
22. **Soldier:** Athletics, Intuition, Melee, Projectile
23. **Sorcerer:** Academics, Intuition, Mysticism, Reflection
24. **Thief:** Artistry, Athletics, Intuition, Stealth
25. **Thug:** Athletics, Influence, Intuition, Melee

EXAMPLE: Rachel wants to play a bounty hunter. Talking it over with the Game Master, she agrees that the hunter background is a good fit. This is normally associated with the skills Intuition, Projectile, Ranging, and Stealth, but the Game Master also gives her the option of switching Projectile out for Melee to better tailor it.

Drives & Relationships

Why do you act when you do? Why do you hold back? It's a war between what you want and what you cannot bring yourself to do.

Your **drives** describe your personality and habitual tendencies, providing a general impetus for all your actions. They are selfish things. By pursuing them you are rewarded, but unfettered ambition will surely lead to ruin as you chase without thought of others. Our **relationships** help keep us in check, forging connections with the rest of the world to restrain our ambitions.

Drives

We each have two faces. The face we show the world is our **motivation** for taking action. Our true face is our **temptation**. Most people have the same or similar motivation and temptation. The more divergent your motivation and temptation are from each other, the more you hide your true self from the world and possibly from yourself. You should try to imagine momentous events in your history to explain both of your drives.

You may choose your drives from the list below or make up your own, using the examples as guidelines. New drives must be narrowly focused and fit a one or two word description.

Indulgence: If following your drives puts you at significant real risk (e.g. combat, loss of savings, loss of keepsake, etc.), then you gain one karma at the end of the encounter, regardless of success or failure. Both your motivation and temptation may trigger this, even at the same time, but you can only benefit from each once per game session.

Remind the GM

It's easy for the Game Master to lose track of everyone's bonds or, really, just about anything. If one of your drives keys into a scene, then speak up!

Changing Motivation and Temptation: Events may cause you to rethink your path in life. When this happens you may change any or all of your drives. You can do this immediately or after you have had time to reflect upon events.

EXAMPLE: *Upon being insulted, Rachel gives into her temptation: wrath. She attacks the person, who is not without friends. This indulges her drive and will earn her karma at the end of the encounter. First, she needs to survive the fight. Sam backs her up, but they are badly outnumbered and get beaten down. Worse, they get arrested for brawling. Afterwards, Sam gives Rachel an earful about the mess her hot headedness got them into. Given some time to think on it, Rachel comes to conclude that she needs to find a new way to live, choosing pride to replace wrath.*

Example Drives

- **Compassion:** Triggered by aiding the helpless with whom you have no relationship.
- **Curiosity:** Triggered by exploring the unknown.
- **Dominance:** Triggered by controlling others.
- **Fame:** Triggered by doing something that will make you famous.
- **Filial Piety:** Triggered by seeing to the needs of your elders.
- **Greed:** Triggered by acquiring something of worth.
- **Honesty:** Triggered by telling the truth.
- **Insecurity:** Triggered by escaping blame or by gaining approval.
- **Justice:** Triggered by righting wrongs.
- **Order:** Triggered by upholding the edicts of society.
- **Play:** Triggered by having fun.
- **Pride:** Triggered by others recognizing your accomplishments.
- **Sensuality:** Triggered by reveling in physical pleasure.
- **Sloth:** Triggered by achieving goals without doing much of anything.
- **Wrath:** Triggered by allowing anger to consume your actions.

Relationships

The strongest bonds are those forged between two people. These relationships go beyond simple declaration; they have real and abiding weight. These relationships offer security; they let you rely upon others when they might otherwise be driven against you by their nature.

Relationships aren't just between you and other player characters. Building relationships with others builds the world. You might be friends with a corporate CFO, or you might owe a debt to a village blacksmith. These relationships may be invoked as resources and story hooks.

The relationship that two characters have towards one another do not need to be the same. You might see someone as a friend where they see you as a friendly rival. This can set up false expectations. It's best to be open with the other players about the nature of your relationships with them.

Mechanically, each relationship is characterized by a name and an obligation that cannot be violated without cost; though, a relationship may have additional ancillary rules describing when it expires or a benefit it may confer.

Where a list of example relationships are provided for you to choose from, you can also make up your own, using the examples as guidelines. New relationships should be fairly broad and fit a one or two word description. You can even just change the name of an example relationship to give it the flavor you desire.

Isolation: If you have no relationships, then you have cleaved yourself from the world. All karma costs are doubled.

Historic Relationships: Forging a relationship at character creation is done by first establishing the basics of the relationship with another player (or the Game Master for non-player characters). Are you friends, allies, rivals, or something else? You create the first half of the history behind the relationship. When you're done, the other player makes the second half of the history. Each half should only be one or two sentences, and they must support the type of relationship you've agreed upon.

Forging Relationships: You can forge a relationship with another character when you have dramatic cause to do so. This can happen after experiencing an event that epitomizes the type of relationship you want or simply after the two of you have experienced enough encounters together that you agree that it is appropriate to formalize your relationship. This has no cost.

Relationship Karma: Forging a relationship grants you one karma. Where you can have any number of relationships, you cannot exceed your maximum karma.

EXAMPLE: Rachel, Peter, and Sam are forging historical relationships with each other. Sam writes down the first half of a relationship on a note card, "Friend & Ally: I came to your rescue in a street brawl, and afterwards I tried hitting on you". Rachel then finishes it, "I'm no damsel in distress and don't swing that way, but we got a good laugh out of it and have watched each other's backs since."

Sam gets a second note card from Peter, which reads, "Friend & Ally: Our parents were good friends and used to drag us with them on hunting trips." Sam adds to this, "I never liked these trips, but you kept me company so I didn't have to think about killing the animals."

Having formed relationships with two other player characters, Sam has more depth to her character and starts with two karma.

Changing Relationships: People change. So do relationships. Maybe an event makes you question a friend's integrity. Maybe time just erodes the bond. If another relationship is more dramatically appropriate, then you can change to it with the Game Master's permission. This has no cost.

Violating Relationships: If you violate a relationship's obligation, then you enter into karma lock: you cannot gain or spend karma. This lasts for one game session, but your karma lock ends prematurely if the other party forgives you.

How Did We Meet?

The method for forging historic relationships requires trust between both players, which is part of what relationships are all about. However, it is not the only approach, and it may not work for everyone. Maybe you'd prefer to develop your history through continued discussion. Maybe you'd prefer to leave the history blank until the relationship comes up in play and you want to invoke it by saying, "remember that time when..." Cool! Use what works best for your group.

New Characters

A new player may join the game or an old character might die, only to be replaced. The group dynamic should be flexible enough to incorporate these new characters without too much contrivance. It helps to establish a background relationship with the new character and at least one of the old characters or to introduce the new character in such a way that the existing characters are given a reason to trust and incorporate the new character.

EXAMPLE: Rachel gets jumped by bounty hunters. She calls out to Trevor for help, but when he sees that it's four on one, he decides to leave Rachel to her fate. Because Trevor violated the ally relationship he had with Rachel, he cannot earn or spend any karma for the rest of the game session.

Forced Violation: When someone tries to force you take an action that would obviously violate one of your relationship's obligation, you gain a +2 to your defense. If you are already enthralled so your defense is not invoked, then you may attempt to *cleanse* yourself as an intervening free action. Even if you are still forced to take the action(s), it still constitutes a violation and sends you into karma lock.

Ending Relationships: There are four ways you can end relationships.

- When you learn the other party violated the relationship, then you can end it without cost or consequence.
- You and the other party may mutually agree to end your relationship without cost or consequence.
- At any time you may simply end the relationship. This costs one karma and is considered a violation of the relationship.
- The death of the other party always terminates the relationship... unless they come back. This has no cost or consequence.

EXAMPLE: Since Trevor abandoned Rachel to the bounty hunters and violated their ally relationship after she called for help, Rachel decides to end the relationship. Now she is no longer beholden to Trevor.

Example Relationships

- **Ally:** You must aid your ally if her request is a legitimate and reasonable.
- **Debt:** You must obey reasonable instruction from your debt holder. Once you pay off the debt the relationship ends without penalty.
- **Friend:** You cannot willingly betray your friend through action or inaction, and you must aid her if the request is legitimate and reasonable.
- **Friendly Rival:** You cannot willingly betray your friend, but you must also seize opportunities for gain in the rivalry.
- **Patron:** You may give orders to your vassal, but you must also give him aid if the request is legitimate and reasonable.
- **Vassal:** You must obey orders from your patron, but you may also make reasonable requests for aid, such as equipment, lodging, and protection.

Antagonistic Relationships

The enemy relationship, and to a lesser degree the rival relationship, is not recommended between player characters in a cooperative game as it can easily be disruptive and create problems between players. A group may choose to participate in a game premise that specifically allows for enemies, patterning it off soap operas, comic books, or professional wrestling.

Strength

Strength (STR) is your physical power. It is primarily leveraged for meeting and exceeding requirements for equipment. In kilograms, you can bench press about eight times your Strength, press about thirty times your Strength, and dead lift about forty-five times your Strength. **Your base Strength is assigned by your species.**

Exceeding the minimum strength required for a weapon by 2, 5, 10, 20, etc. increases you damage dealt by one per step.

Carrying Capacity (CC) is the most you can carry, as measured by the Encumbrance Value (EV) of items. EV is a measure of both bulk and mass. Your base CC is equal to eight times your Strength, plus your Athletics skill. Carrying more than your Carrying Capacity means you cannot move or act.

$$\text{Carrying Capacity} = \text{Strength} \times 8 + \text{Athletics}$$

Speed

How far you can move with an action or in an hour is given by your speed. This is measured in movement points, which are spent to tailor how you move. Your speed is for your primary movement mode (e.g. walking, flying, swimming, crawling, climbing, burrowing, etc.) and any notable secondary movement modes. Unlisted movement modes that are possible by a species have a base value equal to your Scale or one-fifth the primary movement mode, whichever is greater. **Your base speed is assigned by your species.** There are two types of speed: tactical and strategic.

Tactical speed, or just **speed**, is the number of movement points granted by a single *move* action. Each space moved costs one point of movement; though, terrain may adjust this cost. Unused movement points do not carry over from round to round.

Strategic speed is the number of movement points granted for an hour of overland movement. Each kilometer moved costs one point of movement; though, terrain may adjust this cost. It helps to string together multiple time periods (e.g. four hours) to determine the overall distance moved.

EXAMPLE: An average human has a speed of 4 spaces and a strategic speed of 5. This changes for abnormal modes of movement: Swimming, crawling, and climbing all have a base of 1.

Power Pool & Power Well

The **power pool** and **power well** are the two resources you may drain from to empower actions. Power pool governs powers limited for an encounter, while power well governs those limited for a day and can jumpstart the power pool. Use of an action with a pool cost lowers your power pool by one. Similarly, using an action with a well cost lowers your power well by one. The power pool completely refreshes after each encounter, and the power well completely refreshes after a long rest (at least 8 hours of rest). **Your base power pool and base power well are both 5**, and they may be adjusted by traits and powers.

Drawing from the Well: By expending one point from our power well, you instantly restore two points to your power pool. You may do this once per round.

Starting Health

Your starting Health is assigned by your species, but it may be adjusted by the *frail*, *robust*, *wavering*, and *willful* traits and the *determination* and *fortitude* powers. In a **high power campaign** you automatically get your choice of *determined* or *fortitude*, and in an **epic power campaign** you get both. Both powers increase your Health by 1, and, in this case, you don't need to meet the minimum requirements.

Starting Traits

There are two types of traits: **species traits** and **elective traits**. You automatically get your species traits from your species; these are permanent. Your **campaign level** also gives you **trait points** to spend on elective traits. You can get more trait points by taking negative elective traits. You lose any unspent trait points, so be sure to use them all. Unlike species traits, you can buy off elective traits later.

Campaign Level	Trait Points
Low Power Campaign	0pt
Average Power Campaign	1pts
High Power Campaign	2pts
Epic Power Campaign	3pts

EXAMPLE: Rachel gets two trait points, which she uses to buy robust (fit as a fiddle) and strong (steel biceps). Her species also grants her adaptable and genetic crossroads.

Skill Maximums

Your game's campaign level also imposes a soft maximum skill level. After you hit this skill level, the costs to increase the skill double. Once you reach double the maximum skill level, the cost to increase the skill triple. Skill costs continue to follow this pattern, making it harder for those of less potential to advance while things come more easily for those with greater potential.

Campaign Level	Skill Max.
Low Power Campaign	Level 3
Average Power Campaign	Level 4
High Power Campaign	Level 5
Epic Power Campaign	Level 6

Starting Skills

Each **background** focuses training on four skills. You gets these skills at pre-assigned levels based on your **relative experience**. You can choose what level is assigned to which skill.

You also get **free points** that you can spend on any skill not restricted by the setting. The cost to improve a skill is equal to twice the new skill level, but you cannot increase a skill beyond the maximum allowed by your relative experience. Each skill level must be purchased sequentially.

Relative Experience	Level 1 Skills	Level 2 Skills	Level 3 Skills	Level 4 Skills	Free Points	Max Level
Novice	3	1	None	None	2	2
Green	2	2	None	None	6	2
Practiced	1	2	1	None	12	3
Seasoned	None	2	2	None	18	3
Regular	None	1	2	1	24	4
Veteran	None	None	2	2	30	4

EXAMPLE: Rachel is assigns her two level 1 skills to Intuition and Stealth and her two level 2 skills to Projectile and Ranging. She spends her six skill points on Acrobatics 1, Athletics 1, and Influence 1.

Skill Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Incremental Cost	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cumulative Cost	2	6	12	20	30	42

Starting Powers

Relative Experience	Starting Powers
Novice	2
Green	4
Practiced	6
Seasoned	8
Regular	12
Veteran	16

All characters begin with the *language* power for their native language. You also get a number of **powers** based on your **relative experience**. You can choose any power you want so long as you meet its requirements.

Your **species** may grant additional powers; these are automatic, and you don't need to meet their normal requirements.

EXAMPLE: For powers, Rachel automatically begins with her native language. The adaptable trait allows Rachel one core power of her choice. Since that choice is limited to only core powers she picks it first, going with far shot. She now has four additional powers to choose; where these can be from any method, she decides to stick to core. Rachel chooses jarring blow, quick draw, scouting, and skirmishing.

Starting Equipment

The Game Master decides what money and/or equipment that you start with. This should be based upon the setting, scenario,

Backgrounds as Skills (Optional)

Instead of levels in individual skills, you give characters levels in backgrounds to represent training in particular professions. This gives four skills per profession that all have the same skill level. If professions share the same skill, use the highest profession's level.

EXAMPLE: Keti has Gladiator 4 and Soldier 3. Both professions have the Melee skill. So when using the Melee skill, Keti uses the higher level: Gladiator 4.

You start with one profession at the highest level that would be granted to a skill. For every three full free points granted, the character gains one point that can be spent to raise profession skill levels. At this stage, the cost to improve a profession is the same as a skill. After start, the XP cost to raise a profession's level is four times normal.

EXAMPLE: A green character starts with one profession at level 2 and 2 points to buy a level in another profession with. Similarly, a veteran character starts with one profession at level 4 and has 10 points to buy levels in other professions: either one in five professions or level two in one profession and level one in two more.

characters' histories, and their skills and powers. Unless the setting or scenario calls for it, you should begin with equipment necessary to practice each of your powers. This can include weapons, kits, and gear as appropriate. Any funds granted beyond this allows you to tailor your starting equipment.

Karma

Karma manages dramatic activity in the game by allowing you to selectively adjust actions during encounters. It is both the heroic edge and a representation of cosmic favor. Karma gains are primarily managed by your drives and relationships, but powers may also play a role. The Game Master should use karma to award the group and individuals for special contributions to the story.

Gaining Karma

When you are true to yourself, life is easier. Hounding your ambitions earns you karma, and respecting your bonds lets you spend it. When your nature is in balance, karma flows like water.

- **Indulgence** (1 karma per session): You voluntarily puts yourself at risk to indulge a drive.
- **Historic Relationships** (1 karma): You form a relationship based on historic events.
- **Forging Relationships** (1 karma): You form a relationship based on events during game play.
- **Milestone Karma** (1 karma): You achieve a milestone within the story.
- **Clever Idea** (1 or 2 karma): Your idea saves the group or circumvents a substantial obstacle.

Milestone Karma: When you complete a multi-session quest or a significant milestone with such a quest, the Game Master may award you one karma. If you think of a quest in terms of a movie or play, the milestones are the ends of each act. Part of the story wraps up as more is revealed.

Clever Idea: By coming up with an idea that saves the group or circumvents an obstacle that would have otherwise caused great hardship to the group you earn one karma. If the idea is one that the GM never considered and short circuits the story in a positive way, then you should get another karma.

Karma Limitations

Karma is like water. It flows freely, but you can only hold so much at once. You can also block that flow, preventing you from earning or even spending karma.

Maximum Karma: Your maximum karma is five. Any karma granted in excess of this is lost.

Karma Lock: Karma lock is a condition that freezes the favor of fate. When in karma lock, you cannot spend karma or karma boosts and you cannot earn karma or karma boosts. Karma lock cannot be removed unless it was caused by a power.

Violating Game Theme: If your group agreed upon a particular paradigm for the game and you violate that, then you enter karma lock from the game session. For particularly egregious offenses, you may also lose karma at the Game Master's discretion.

EXAMPLE: *Everyone agrees to a noble hero paradigm where they uphold all that is good and virtuous. When a villager asks for payment in exchange for the information Trevor beats the villager until he coughs up the goods. This doesn't fit the theme everyone agreed upon, and so Trevor is karma locked.*

Dealing with Broken Paradigms

Rather than immediately leveling punishment for violating game theme, pause the game and discuss the situation. It is really easy to get caught up in the moment and do something counter to the intent of the group. You may lose sight of one of the group's goals or just need a reminder of the Gamer Contract. Maybe the group has been slowly changing direction. Each of these issues is best addressed through out of game discussion. On the other hand, maybe you fully realize what you are doing, feel that you are taking the appropriate course of action, and accept the consequences. This can lead to great in character drama. Just be sure to keep the out of character drama down.

Using Karma

You can spend karma to adjust your performance, either aiding one of your actions or penalizing an action made against you, even canceling your action to avoid the consequences of it. If karma is used to adjust an action that targets you, only you are affected, not others also targeted by the same action.

Karma may be expended at any point during an action, but not after resolution is finalized. Thus you can spend karma after you roll to determine the outcome of your action. Other uses of karma may only occur when specified. Any amount of karma may be expended at a time, and two characters may bid their karma against one another. Karma may have the following effects.

- **Terminate Relationship (1 karma):** Terminate a relationship when it hasn't been violated.
- **Adjust Chance (1 karma):** Increase or decrease the target number by one.
- **Adjust Success (1 karma):** Increase or decrease the number of successes by one.
- **Reduce Incoming Damage (1 karma):** Reduces damage dealt by the character's Scale.
- **Re-Roll (2 karma):** Re-roll the test.
- **Cancel Action (3 karma):** You take no action instead (e.g. you did not just trigger the trap), but you "have a feeling" about how the action could have turned out.
- **Plot Twist (3 karma):** Add or change something in the scene.

Plot twists are built like relationships: You write the first half, and the Game Master writes the second half. The Game Master may instead ask another player to write the second half or choose to just accept your change without modification. This change becomes a part of the fiction.

Where most plot twists should be taken at face value, in extreme circumstances, one may just not make any sense. It may break the setting's paradigm or it may violate the group's Gamer Contract. If this happens, as with other outrageous actions, pause the game to clarify the intent. Then work with everyone else to come up with a plot twist that fits better.

Finally, although plot twists can alter your history, they cannot change other player characters without their permission.

Example: *A band of brigands has gotten the drop on Rachel, Peter, and Sam and surrounded them. The leader steps forth to demand their surrender. Peter spends three karma and announces that, as a plot twist, he and the brigand leader were childhood friends, and although the leader, now named Otto, left to find his fortune, they never broke their bond of friendship. The Game Master finds this acceptable without any adjustment. Peter steps forth asking, "Otto, is that you?", and situation has changed entirely.*

Example: *Sam just interrupted the evil wizard, who in turn activates his experimental shard golem while he monologues in a thick accent. Sam calls for a plot twist where the golem malfunctions and explodes. The Game Master appends, "but you are also caught in the blast and take d6 lethal damage".*

Karma Boosts

Karma boosts may be granted to a character or the Game Master under special circumstances, and they are expended just as karma normally is. However, they may have a specific purpose which limits when they may be used. Karma boosts are always temporary, being available either until a time limit expires or some other condition is met. Any restrictions or adjustments for earning or spending karma (e.g. a violated relationship) also apply to karma boosts.

EXAMPLE: *Rachel performs the center action, focusing her energies on using Ranging to track Archibald the Left Handed. This grants her one karma boost that can only be used when using Ranging when tracking Archibald, and if she doesn't use it within one day it expires.*

Experience

Experience points (XP) measure your ability growth. As you participate in adventures, you gain experience, measured by XP, and spend this to improve skills, to remove unwanted traits, and to purchase powers.

Gaining XP

All characters should gain the same amount of XP for a given game session. Personal performance should not be awarded with XP; that is what karma is for.

General XP Award: Game sessions may vary in length and efficiency, which makes it difficult to give a concrete XP value for a single game session. As a guideline, Game Masters are encouraged to award one XP every two or three hours of gaming activity. It is common for gaming groups to get side tracked by discussions of the latest movies or books or take breaks, and this should be considered. Chances are an average afternoon of gaming would be worth two XP, but groups should set whatever pace they feel most comfortable with.

Milestone XP: The Game Master may award characters bonus XP for the accomplishment of major milestones within the overall story or campaign. This can be for general milestones such as finishing a quest or defeating a great villain. Most milestones should only be worth one XP, but a particularly meaningful and hard fought milestone, one several game session in the making, may be worth up to three XP.

Spending XP

Experience points are used to mechanically improve a character. Spending XP requires a reason: you have trained in something, read a book on a subject, worked to overcome your limitations, etc. If you do not have a valid reason for spending XP, then you must figure things out for yourself via the *innovate* action.

Improvement	Cost
Remove Trait	Trait Cost x 5
Improve Skill	Next Level x 2
New Power	2

Removing a trait costs **five experience points times the value of the trait**. Only elective traits labeled as removable may be bought off. Species traits may never be removed

Improving a skill costs a number of **experience points equal to twice the next level**.

Skill Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Incremental Cost	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cumulative Cost	2	6	12	20	30	41	56	72	90	110

New powers cost **two experience**

points to purchase, but you must meet the power's requirements. Some powers are labeled as **repeatable**; you can buy these more than once, but each purchase cumulatively increases the required skill levels by two.

Skill Maximums

Your game's **campaign level** also imposes a soft maximum skill level. After you hit this skill level, the costs to increase the skill double. Once you reach double the maximum skill level, the cost to increase the skill triple. Skill costs continue to follow this pattern, making it harder for those of less potential to advance while things come more easily for those with greater potential.

Campaign Level	Skill Max.
Low Power Campaign	Level 3
Average Power Campaign	Level 4
High Power Campaign	Level 5
Epic Power Campaign	Level 6

Traits

Traits are endemic characteristics. They may reflect a particular upbringing, training, biological mutation, or any other number of sources. **Traits may only be taken at character creation.**

All traits have some mechanical impact upon the character. Beyond this mechanical impact, each trait affects the behavior and personality of the character, just as her history, species, skills, and powers do.

Elective traits may be purchased using **trait points** allotted from the campaign level. Beneficial traits cost trait points, and detrimental traits grant trait points. Each trait may only be purchased once, unless otherwise stated.

You cannot enter play with negative trait points. If you have negative trait points then you must make up the balance through elective traits. Conversely, unspent trait points are lost when you enter play.

Some elective traits may be **removable**, eventually overcome through determination, therapy, or other means. Removal of a trait costs 5 experience points for each trait point gained or spent for that trait. Only those traits labeled as *removable* may be removed.

Species traits are natural to a species. They are automatically inherited by all members of that species and cannot be removed. Species traits cannot be purchased with trait points.

Negative traits

Several elective traits may have a negative impact upon the character, such as *addiction*, *allergy*, *prejudice*, and the like. It is very easy for clever players to find workarounds for negative traits or ignore them all together rather than actually portraying them. These traits should come up once a session. If the player is being responsible in their portrayal, then everything is running smoothly. If not, then the player needs to buy the trait(s) off with the next available XP. Remember, the role-play should reflect the mechanics and the mechanics should reflect the role-play.

Elective Traits

Trait	Points	Description
Positive Traits		
Agile	1 pt cost	Heightened dexterity.
Attractive	1 pt cost	Good looks grant a bonus to social situations.
Charismatic	1 pt cost	A naturally charming personality.
Dual Nature	1 pt cost	You have two temptations.
Intelligent	1 pt cost	Smarter than average.
Linguist	1 pt cost	Greater aptitude with languages.
Perceptive	1 pt cost	The character pays keen attention to her senses.
Robust	1 pt cost	Exceptional physique.
Schooling	1 pt cost	The character gains four skill points.
Strong	1 pt cost	Stronger than average.
Training	1 pt cost	The character gains two powers.
Twin Interests	1 pt cost	You have two motivations.
Willful	1 pt cost	Stronger will.
Negative Traits		
Addiction	1 pt gain	Addicted to a particular substance.
Allergy	1 pt gain	Adverse physical reaction to a particular substance.
Artless	1 pt gain	Social skills are impaired.
Clumsy	1 pt gain	Lack of coordination.
Deep Sleeper	1 pt gain	Will sleep through anything.
Foolish	1 pt gain	Lower than average intelligence.
Frail	1 pt gain	Poor physique.
Hideous	1 pt gain	Unattractiveness incurs a penalty to social situations.
Inept	1 pt gain	You are a near failure with two skills.
Mental Disorder	1 pt gain	Suffer a permanent mental disorder.
Poor Hearing	1 pt gain	Earshot range penalties are doubled.
Poor Vision	1 pt gain	Perception range penalties are doubled.
Prejudice	1 pt gain	Social interactions with target group suffer a penalty.

Unobservant	1 pt gain	Easily overlooks things.
Wavering	1 pt gain	Weak will.
Weak	1 pt gain	Not as strong as others.

Species Traits

Trait	Description
Adaptable	Naturally adapts to the challenges of the environment.
Amorphous	The species has no set shape.
Amphibious	At home in and out of water.
Animal	Animal intellect and behavior.
Animation	An inert object given a facsimile of life.
Aquatic	Lives in watery environments.
Bright Vision	Penalties for seeing in bright light are reduced one step.
Color Blind	The species cannot distinguish colors.
Constrictor	A powerful torso or limb aids in grappling.
Diffusion Sense	An acute sense of smell that aids in tracking.
Echolocation	"See" through sound.
Environmental Adaptation	Natural adaption to an extreme environment.
Genetic Crossroads	More susceptible to mutations; can rapidly evolve.
Hive Connection	Members are bound with a low level mental connection.
Hollow Bones	Lighter and capable of greater athletic feats.
Light Sensitive	Bright light impairs vision.
Long Stride	The species moves quickly in a forward direction but must not turn.
Lost Sense	Missing one of the five basic senses.
Mindless	No mind capable of rational or independent thought.
Multi-Limbed	Multiple limbs aid in attacking.
Natural Armor	The species has a natural AF rating.
Night Vision	Penalties for seeing in darkness are reduced one step.
Peripheral Vision	Increased field of vision grants a bonus to some Intuition tests.
Retaliatory Carapace	Natural defense mechanism automatically harms attackers.
Swarm	Members of the species are individually weak but readily form a swarm.
Tamable	The animal species may be tamed.
Telescopic Vision	Enhanced long range vision.
Undead	A now dead creature that preys upon the living.
Vibration Sense	"See" via vibrations and tremors.

Trait Descriptions

Addiction (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You must indulge a particular substance or action, which is chosen when the trait is taken. The addictive thing must be prevalent enough to have an impact.

- You have a *compulsive behavior* towards the indulgence of the substance, as per the mental disorder.
- If you do not indulge your addiction once per day, then you gain the *crippled* condition. Indulgence requires that the act or substance have an effect upon you. E.g. an addiction to alcohol doesn't mean you drink, it means you drink so much that you become impaired for a time.
- If you satisfy your addiction then the *crippled* condition is removed.

Adaptable (Species Trait): Members of the species better adjust themselves to meet the needs of a variety of climates or terrains, enabling them to spread aggressively, often at the expense of other species.

- At creation, you get one free core method power.

Agile (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You have heightened coordination.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your agility.
 - Example: *agile (flexible)*, *agile (graceful)*, or *agile (lithe)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.

- When performing an Acrobatics, Artistry, Melee, Projectile, or Stealth action in an untrained manner you get a +1 bonus.
- Your maximum power pool is increased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *clumsy*, unless *agile* was granted by your species.

Allergy (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): A substance causes a painful reaction upon contact. The allergen is chosen when the trait is taken and must have an impact on daily life.

- If exposed to the allergen, you gains the *crippled* condition. This persists for one hour after exposure ends.
- If you ingest or are injected with the allergen, then the *crippled* condition has a one day duration instead and the character also gains the *staggered* condition for one hour.
- Conditions caused by allergens cannot be *cleansed*.

Amorphous (Species Trait): The creature has no set shape. It could be a gelatinous blob, a giant amoeba, or a colony of slime mold.

- You are immune to subdual damage.
- You are immune to physical restraints (e.g. grapple, snared, etc.) that do not fully enclose you (e.g. trapped in a refrigerator).
- You can assume any Scale smaller than your own for the purpose of fitting through openings.

Amphibious (Species Trait): The species is equally at home in the water or out.

- You breathe normally in both air and water.
- You swim at their highest base speed if no swim speed is listed.
- You ignore the negative effects of flooded terrain and treat encasing terrain as flooded.

Animal (Species Trait): The species has an animal's mental capacity and mindset.

- You are driven by instinct to satisfy base, needs such as hunger, safety, and mating.
- You are incapable of full rational thought but still possess problem solving abilities.
- You may not possess the skills of Academics, Medical, Mysticism, Reflection, or Science.

Animation (Species Trait): The item is artificially animated.

- If not given a consciousness, then the animation has the *mindless* trait.
- The animation is considered to have a skill level of 1 unless otherwise specified.
- Movement is restrained by natural form: a chain may flex, but a straight bar does not bend.
- If the item was animated through a person's direct action (e.g. a power), then it is controlled by that person.
 - If the controlling character spends an intervening standard action, then for the rest of the round the animation may use the character's skills in place of its own or use the character's Method Skill for any actions the animation takes.
- Animations are immune to the following conditions: *asleep*, *crippled*, *dazed*, *fatigued*, *staggered*, and *stunned*.
- Animations are immune to *subdual* damage.

Aquatic (Species Trait): The species naturally lives in the water or other liquid environment.

- You breathe normally in water but asphyxiate outside of it.
- Your base speed is a swim speed.
- You ignore the negative effects of flooded terrain and treat encasing terrain as flooded.

Artless (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You are quite unsociable.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe how you are artless.
 - Example: *artless (blunt)*, *artless: (churlish)*, or *artless (tongue tied)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your Influence and Performance actions suffer a -1 penalty.
- Your maximum Karma is reduced by one.
- Your maximum power well is decreased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *charismatic*, unless *artless* was granted by your species.

Attractive (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You look good.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe why you are attractive.
 - Example: *attractive (perfect poise)*, *attractive (eyes up here)*, or *attractive (oh my...)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- You get a +1 bonus to non-power actions using Influence or Performance.
- Attempts to *remember* or simply pick you out of a crowd gain a +1 bonus.
- Your maximum power pool is increased by one.
- You cannot also elect to be *hideous*.

Bright Vision (Species Trait): The species can see better in brighter environments than normal.

- Blinding illumination does not provide concealment for gross actions, such as combat or spotting a person moving in an alley.
- Blinding illumination instead provides partial concealment for fine actions, such as making out details of a face or reading a book.

Charismatic (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You ooze charm.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your charisma.
 - Example: *charismatic (eloquent)*, *charismatic (loving grandma)*, or *charismatic (magnetic)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- When performing an Influence or Performance action in an untrained manner you get a +1 bonus.
- Your maximum Karma is increased by one.
- Your maximum power well is increased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *artless*, unless *charismatic* was granted by your species.

Clumsy (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You lack coordination.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your clumsiness.
 - Example: *clumsy (butterfingers)*, *clumsy (two left feet)*, or *clumsy (ungainly)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your maximum effective skill level is decreased by one.
- Your Acrobatics, Artistry, Melee, Projectile, and Stealth actions suffer a -1 penalty.
- Your maximum power pool is decreased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *agile*, unless *clumsy* was granted by your species.

Color Blind (Species Trait): The species can only see shades of grey; it has no means of distinguishing between colors.

Constrictor (Species Trait): Species, such as cephalopods and some snakes are exceptionally adept at maintaining a grapple.

- If grappling a target, actions you perform within the grapple gain a +1 bonus.

Deep Sleeper (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You sleep through almost anything.

- You suffer a -3 penalty to your *notice* while asleep.

Diffusion Sense (Species Trait): The species has an exceptionally developed olfactory sense, helping it pinpoint sources of smell with little difficulty.

- Diffusion sense allows you to "see" scents and their sources within earshot range based upon the potency of the smell. This ignores concealment unless the odor is somehow blocked or washed out.
 - An average person or animal would be equivalent to normal sound, someone without a scent or a motionless person with the same scent as the background would be treated as silent, and truly potent odors would be considered booming.
- You gain a +1 bonus to *track* unless a target's odor was blocked or washed out.

Dual Nature (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You have a complex heart.

- You have a second temptation of your choice.
- Either temptation may trigger effects, you cannot double the effect from triggering both (e.g. you gain karma from indulging either temptation, but not both).

Echolocation (Species Trait): Members of the species emit sound and gauge their geometric surroundings based upon the bounce back of the sound waves. The efficacy of this trait may be limited to a specific medium (e.g. air or water).

- You may “see” the geometry around you within earshot.
- You may ignore concealment unless it is granted by cover or specifically applies to sound.
- Emitting sound to use echolocation nullifies your concealment to those that can hear the sound.

Environmental Adaptation (Species Trait): The species has adapted to a specific environmental hazard, such as pressure, radiation, heat, cold, acids, bases, or even electricity.

- You are immune to damage from environmental hazards of the appropriate type that is less than one per round.
 - Example: A species with *environmental adaptation: heat* would be immune to damage from high temperature weather, but not lava.

Foolish (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You don’t think so well.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe how you are foolish.
 - Example: *foolish (dim)*, *foolish (um...)*, or *foolish (witless)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your Academics, Crafts, Medical, Mysticism, and Science actions suffer a -1 penalty.
- Your maximum power pool is decreased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *intelligent*, unless *foolish* was granted by your species.

Frail (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You may have an old war wound or just a weak constitution.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your frailty.
 - Example: *frail (decrepit)*, *frail (lethargic)*, or *frail (trouble running up stairs)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your Athletics actions suffer a -1 penalty.
- You regain one less Health when healed.
- Your maximum Health is decreased by one.
- Your Carrying Capacity is decreased by four.
- Your maximum power well is decreased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *robust*, unless *frail* was granted by your species.

Genetic Crossroads (Species Trait): The species has a greater degree of genetic malleability. It may evolve quickly on its own, but its members are also more prone to cancer and mutations. This same malleability affords the species a measure of corporeal elasticity.

- Tests to cause mutation or shard corruption upon you enjoys a +1 bonus.
- You may experience evolutionary mutations.
- Successful healing actions return one additional Health to you.
- The total Essence Burden from implants is reduced by one.

Hideous (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You are physically repulsive.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe why you are hideous.
 - Example: *hideous (greasy skin)*, *hideous (disfigured)*, or *hideous (malodorous)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- You suffer a -1 penalty to non-power actions using Influence or Performance, unless you use the intimidation technique.
- Attempts to *remember* or simply pick you out of a crowd gain a +1 bonus.
- Your maximum power pool is decreased by one.
- You cannot also elect to be *attractive*.

Hive Connection (Species Trait): Members of the species share an innate mental connection; though, you cannot broadcast or read thoughts. You can sense the presence of other members of your species, but not their identity.

- Concealment for those sharing the hive connection is decreased by one step if within loud earshot.
- Defending or *countering* with Intuition suffers a -1 penalty against those sharing the hive connection.
- The maximum bonus from *cooperation* is increased by one if everyone shares the *hive connection*.

Hollow Bones (Species Trait): Members of the species have hollow bones. This is a typical trademark of birds.

- The distance for a *jump* is doubled.
- Any movement bonuses are doubled.
- Attempts to remove the *staggered* or *stunned* condition from you suffer a -1 penalty when they are associated with Athletics.

Intelligent (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You're a genius.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your intelligence.
 - Example: *intelligent (precocious)*, *intelligent (creative)*, or *intelligent (sagacious)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- When performing an Academics, Crafts, Medical, Mysticism, and Science action in an untrained manner you get a +1 bonus.
- Your maximum power pool is increased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *foolish*, unless *intelligent* was granted by your species.

Light Sensitive (Species Trait): The species is notably sensitive to light; even normal light causes partial blindness.

- In normal light everyone has partial concealment from you.
- After experiencing blinding light, you are *blind* for an amount of time equal to the time you were exposed.

Linguist (Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You have a natural facility with languages.

- At character creation, you may purchase two *language* and/or *literacy* powers for the price of one, but only so long as both are in the same family or otherwise closely related (e.g. a dialect of the same language or hearing Portuguese when you know Spanish).
- You gain a +1 bonus to the *translate* action.

Long Stride (Species Trait): Many species are built for forward movement, such as horses, fish, and birds; however, this specialization has made them less maneuverable.

- When using a standard action to move you gain double the movement points, but all movement must be in a straight line.

Lost Sense (Species Trait): The species does not possess one of the five primary senses: hearing, sight, smell, taste, or touch.

- All targets are considered to have full concealment with respect to the sense.

Mental Disorder (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): The character is inflicted with a mental disorder of the player's choice. This is a permanent condition.

Mindless (Species Trait): Members of the species have no functional mind in the same sense that animals or people do. They may still react to outside stimuli, such as a Venus flytrap, or they may be under the control of someone else.

- Mindless characters are incapable of action beyond any programming they may have.
- Mindless characters cannot learn non-core powers that are not directly related to or granted by their species or an imprint.
- Mindless characters are immune to actions and powers normally defended by or conditions associated with Academics, Artistry, Craft, Influence, Intuition, Medical, Mysticism, Performance, Ranging, Reflection, and Science.

Multi-Limbed (Species Trait): The species has more than just a left arm and a right arm that it could use in a fight.

- When using multiple limbs to perform *attack*, *Melee counter*, *grapple*, *shove*, or similar unarmed actions, you gain a +1 bonus.
- If you use multiple "hands" to wield a weapon without the *two handed* quality, then your Strength is tripled, instead of doubled.
- If you use more than the required multiple "hands" to wield a weapon with the *two handed* quality, then your Strength is doubled.

Natural Armor (Species Trait): All species have some natural protection, be it armor plating, thick skin, or layers of blubber. However, it's not always thick enough or hard enough to prevent damage. This trait is assigned an armor type: **none**, **light**, **medium**, **heavy**, or **massive**. This corresponds to a granted armor factor, which is multiplied by the species'

Scale. If you wear armor or are otherwise granted an armor factor, then the natural armor factor stacks with the artificial one.

- **No Armor:** Natural Armor Factor = 0.
 - All species have this if no other natural armor is provided, but it is not necessary to list.
- **Light Armor:** Natural Armor Factor = 1.
- **Medium Armor:** Natural Armor Factor = 2.
- **Heavy Armor:** Natural Armor Factor = 3.

Night Vision (Species Trait): The species can see better in darker environments than normal.

- Dark illumination does not provide concealment for gross actions, such as seeing a road or combat.
- Dark illumination instead provides partial concealment for fine actions, such as identifying a metal by sight or reading.

Perceptive (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): Your attention to details gives you a bonus to Intuition and Ranging.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your perceptive nature.
 - Example: *perceptive (eagle-eyed)*, *perceptive (discerning)*, or *perceptive (found Waldo)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- When performing an Intuition or Ranging action in an untrained manner you get a +1 bonus.
- You get an additional +1 bonus to *resist surprise*.
- Your maximum power pool is increased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *unobservant*, unless *perceptive* was granted by your species.

Peripheral Vision (Species Trait): You have a broad field of vision, able to see to your sides with ease.

- *Search* gains a +1 bonus when vision is a factor.
- *Resist surprise* gains a +1 bonus when vision is a factor.

Poor Hearing (Elective Trait; 1 point gain): Your hearing is very poor.

- For the purpose of hearing, all earshot ranges beyond short are given partial concealment.
- You suffer a -1 penalty to all Intuition tests related to sound.
- Actions and effect(s) targeting your hearing (e.g. illusory sounds) automatically lose one success.

Poor Vision (Elective Trait; 1 point gain): Be it nearsightedness or astigmatism, you're unable to make out details at long distances.

- For the purpose of seeing, all sight ranges beyond short are given partial concealment.
 - This is canceled with corrective lenses.
- You suffer a -1 penalty to all Intuition tests related to sight.
- Actions and effect(s) targeting your vision (e.g. a blinding flash of light) automatically lose one success.
 - This is canceled with corrective lenses.

Prejudice (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): Your prejudice against a particular collection of sentient species, cultures, or social classes clouds your judgment. The prejudice is chosen when the trait is taken and must be broad enough that it will actually impact the character.

- Your default attitude towards the subject of your prejudice is *unfriendly* or *hostile*.
- Your Influence actions suffer a -1 penalty against a member of the target group, similar or related groups, or those sympathetic to the target group, unless using the *forceful* approach.
- Influence actions by members of the target group, similar or related groups, or those sympathetic to the target group against you suffer a -1 penalty, unless using the *forceful* approach.
- Influence actions or powers by others against you that are to the detriment of a member of the target group, similar or related groups, or those sympathetic to the target group receive a +1 bonus.

Retaliatory Carapace (Species Trait): The species has a natural defense mechanism that may harm attackers, this may be an array of quills, acidic blood or something else. This trait is given two descriptors: **range** and **damage**.

- **Range** is defined using the standard range categories of reach, sight and earshot, plus the addition of personal, which is reach using a personal weapon.
- If an attack made against you fulfills the defined range, then the attacker automatically takes the listed amount of **damage**; though, it may be reduced by armor, but not through actions, such as *counter*.

Robust (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): Your healthy physique helps you throw off poisons and diseases or withstand blows.

- The character's power well is increased by one.
- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your robust physique.
 - Example: *robust (energetic)*, *robust (hale)*, or *robust (toned body)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- When performing an Athletics action in an untrained manner you get a +1 bonus
- You regain one more Health when healed.
- Your maximum Health is increased by one.
- Your Carrying Capacity is increased by four.
- Your maximum power well is increased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *frail*, unless *robust* was granted by your species.

Schooling (Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You attended a formal school, were tutored or completed an apprenticeship such that you've developed a greater breadth and depth of skills.

- At creation, you gain four additional points that may be spent on skills.

Strong (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You are physically strong.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your strength.
 - Example: *strong (large)*, *strong (Mr. Universe)*, or *strong (wiry)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your Strength is increased by one.
- Your maximum power well is increased by one.
- You cannot also elect to be *weak*.

Swarm (Species Trait): The species is comparatively small, but its members can gather into a swarm, like rats or bees. For a group of creatures to count as a swarm, there must be enough of them to fill a space.

- A swarm of creatures is treated as a single creature for the purpose of actions and effects.
- When attacking, a swarm uses the *swarm attack* action.
- When a swarm is attacked, the swarm counts as one target.
- A swarm may always *counter* with Acrobatics as a bonus intervening free action against all applicable actions.
- Targeted actions deal half damage or force, rounded down.
- Actions with a volume template deal double damage or force to the swarm.
- A swarm is considered to have a single Health statistic.
 - If a swarm's Health is reduced to zero (0), then the swarm has lost enough members and momentum that it disperses. With time it is possible for it to reform if it gains more members.
 - Only if its Health is reduced to the negative its maximum are the members of the swarm truly considered dead or destroyed.
- A swarm is immune to physical restraints (e.g. grapple, snared, etc.) that do not fully enclose the swarm (e.g. trapped in a refrigerator).
- A swarm can assume the size of its largest individual member for the purpose of fitting through openings.

Tamable (Species Trait): Some animals may be tamed and even trained for use by sentient species, but not all species have the necessary temperament.

- Only species with the *tamable* trait may be tamed.
- Only species with the *animal* trait may have the *tamable* trait.

Telescopic Vision (Species Trait): The species has better than normal long range vision.

- Sight range penalties are reduced by one for non-power Intuition and Ranging tests.

Training (Elective Trait; 1 point cost): The character has received specialized training to learn additional powers.

- At creation, you gain two additional powers.

Twin Interests (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You split your motives.

- You have a second motivation of your choice.

- Either motivation may trigger effects, you cannot double the effect from triggering both (e.g. you gain karma from indulging either motivation, but not both).

Undead (Species Trait): Undead are creatures that were once alive; they have returned, but not to a wholly living state. Undead are corpses granted a parody of life and at least rudimentary sentience. All true undead hunger for life, either as sustenance or to augment their power.

- Undead species are generally templates applied to a parent species, making an undead human or an undead dog from the same template.
- Undead cannot asphyxiate.
- Undead are immune to diseases, chemical agents, and conditions that require the target be alive, unless specified otherwise.
- Undead are immune to subdual damage.
- Undead can “see” within Scale x 100 meters without hindrance from illumination, and automatically “see” living creatures through any concealment, but not cover.
- The concept of undead is alien to the living. Even the most normal looking undead make the living feel a bit uneasy. Whenever undead are knowingly encountered, they provoke horror. You can grow accustomed to the undead with repeated exposure.

Unobservant (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You are inattentive

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe how you are unobservant.
 - Example: *unobservant (absent minded)*, *unobservant (gullible)*, or *unobservant (oblivious)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your Intuition and Ranging actions suffer a -1 penalty.
- You suffer an additional -1 penalty to *resist surprise*.
- Your maximum power pool is decreased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *perceptive*, unless *unobservant* was granted by your species.

Vibration Sense (Species Trait): Members of the species may sense vibrations in the ground.

- Vibration sense allows you to “see” the geometry around you within earshot based upon vibrations those things generate.
 - Consider someone standing still as silent, a normal human footfall as normal sound, and dropping a large, loud object, such as a giant bell, as booming.
- Vibration sense ignores concealment unless the vibrations would somehow be stopped.

Wavering (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You lack a spine.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your wavering nature.
 - Example: *wavering (forgetful)*, *wavering (submissive)*, or *wavering (timid)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your Reflection actions suffer a -1 penalty.
- You regain one less Health when healed.
- Your maximum Health is decreased by one.
- Your maximum power well is decreased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *willful*, unless *wavering* was granted by your species.

Weak (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point gain): You are physically weak.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your weakness.
 - Example: *weak (flabby)*, *weak (noodle arms)*, or *weak (small)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.
- Your Strength is increased by one.
- Your maximum power well is increased by one.
- You cannot also elect to be *strong*.

Willful (Removable Elective Trait; 1 point cost): You have a strong will.

- You must choose a word or phrase to describe your willfulness.
 - Example: *willful (disciplined)*, *willful (gutsy)*, or *willful (smiles through pain)*.
 - You can change this descriptor due to story at no cost.

- When performing a Reflection action in an untrained manner you get a +1 bonus.
- You regain one more Health when healed.
- Your maximum Health is increased by one.
- Your maximum power well is increased by one.
- You may purchase this trait even if your species grants it; the effects are cumulative.
- You cannot also elect to be *waver*, unless *willful* was granted by your species.

Skills & Actions

All actions fall under one or more of the sixteen skills: **Academics, Acrobatics, Artistry, Athletics, Craft, Influence, Intuition, Medical, Melee, Mysticism, Performance, Projectile, Ranging, Reflection, Science, and Stealth**. Your level of ability in these skills describes how well you can perform them; though, some actions are so basic that they aren't associated with a skill, and others can be performed with multiple skills. The skill descriptions provide many mundane skill applications, but you may wish to perform other actions. In these cases, the Game Master chooses the appropriate skills and results.

Action Mechanics

Remember that the mechanics are always a guideline to a result, not an entitlement to a result. Where an exhaustive list of action is provided, they are ultimately just guidelines. If you want to try something else or if circumstances don't quite line up, then make up a new action. The actions below and the Using Successes section in Core Mechanics offer a guide to help you build your own actions.

Measuring Skills

Your **skill level** measures good you are at doing something and can range from zero to infinite. Having a skill level of one in a skill means you are competent.

You spend **experience points** to improve your skills, buying each level sequentially. The cost to improve a skill is equal to twice the new skill level.

Skill Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Incremental Cost	2	4	6	8	10	12
Cumulative Cost	2	6	12	20	30	42

Unskilled Actions

Unskilled actions require no test or skill to perform. They do not normally improve with training.

Activate Stance Free Action, Self

You adopt a stance you know, gaining all benefits and disadvantages that it conveys. You may only have one stance active at a time; activating a second deactivates the first. Your stance has encounter duration, but on your turn you may de-activate it prematurely at will without taking an action. Some stances have an activation cost.

Drawing from the Well - Power Well Free Action, Self

You restore two points to your power pool.

Drop Item Free Action, Reach

You drop something you were holding.

Drop Prone Movement Action, Self

You become *prone*.

Initiative Swap Intervening Free Action, Sight

You switch initiative order with an opponent for the round. If you now act earlier, then you suffer a -1 penalty to your actions, but if you now

Prone - Acrobatics or Athletics You are laying down on the job.

- Movement point costs increase by one.
- Actions requiring gross movement (e.g. physical *counters*, a *Melee attack* with a non-personal weapon, etc.) suffer a -1 penalty.
- Attempts to target you via sight or earshot range suffer a -1 penalty.
- You treat partial cover as full against volume templates (e.g. explosions).
- The Game Master may decide that other actions may or may not be performed while prone and their difficulty.
- Unless otherwise stated, this condition may be automatically lost with the *stand up* action.

act later, then you gain a +1 bonus instead. These adjustments all reset at the top of the next round.

You may only perform this on your turn or your target opponent's turn. Once you have swapped initiative once, you cannot swap again that round, either by your action or another. If a PC is the target of *initiative swap*, then they must be willing or you must expend one power well.

Load

Instant Action, Reach

You load a launcher (e.g. a bow) with a piece of ammunition.

Materialize

Instant Action, Self

If you can shift between tangible and intangible states (e.g. via the *ephemeral* trait), then you gain or lose the *intangible* condition as appropriate.

Move

Movement Action, Self

You gain movement points equal to your tactical speed. Barring terrain complications, this means you can move a number of spaces equal to your speed. These movement points are lost if not used before the end of your turn.

Pack Item

Instant Action, Reach

You sheath a knife, put a key in your pocket, or otherwise stow an item for easy retrieval. Putting something in another container (e.g. a backpack) takes as long as necessary.

Ready Item

Instant Action, Reach

You draw a weapon or get something out of a pouch or pocket. Getting something from a hard to access containers (e.g. a backpack) takes as long as needed.

Rest

Short or Long Action, Self

You are resting. While resting you may recover Health and, after one minute, all conditions with an encounter duration expire; however, you may not perform powers or physical actions; though. A long rest is at least 8 hours; essentially, it is a full night's sleep. After a long rest your power well is refilled. If you do not take a long rest at least once a day, then you are automatically fatigued, which cannot be removed until you take a long rest.

Speak

Free Action, Earshot

You say about five words.

Stand Up

Movement Action, Self

You stand up from a sitting. This removed the *prone* condition unless otherwise stated.

Trivial Movement

Free Action, Reach

You bump a table, push a button, or perform some similar trivial movement.

Universal Actions

You can perform universal actions with any skill, but you must use one relevant to the situation.

Appraise

Relevant Skill

Short Action, Sight

Using a skill associated with a person or item's use, history, or creation, you try to estimate its value, ability or skill level. If you lack information (e.g. you don't know an item is an artifact), then your estimate will be off.

Achievement: You estimate the value with 10% accuracy, but only with respect to one culture/market you are familiar with.

Cleanse

Relevant Skill

Instant Action, Self

You try to shake off conditions associated with the skill used. Where each condition is associated with the skill you use to remove it, if no skill is listed, use the following guidelines.

- **Acrobatics:** For conditions pertaining to speed, balance, and coordination.
- **Athletics:** For conditions that affect the physical form, including diseases, fatigue, injuries, and healing affects, or that restrain you by physical force
- **Influence:** For conditions pertaining to karma, deception, and force of personality.
- **Intuition:** For conditions pertaining to the influence perceptions, such as hallucinations.
- **Reflection:** For conditions that force behavior, including compulsion, fear, and control.

Condition Removal: You lose one condition per success. Conditions must have a duration of encounter or less and be associated with the skill used.

Counter

Relevant Skill

Standard Action, Self

You avoid, resist, or otherwise reduce an incoming action. The skill you use to *counter* is the same that you defend with, which can also always be the same skill used against you.

- **Acrobatics:** You dodge a physical assault, or you maintain balance or counter force.
- **Athletics:** You withstand a direct assault on his physiology (i.e. disease) or your strength is challenged.
- **Influence:** You lie or evade questioning.
- **Intuition:** You disbelieve honeyed words and illusions.
- **Melee:** You block or parry an incoming melee assault with a weapon.
- **Mysticism:** You ward off a superstition or omen.
- **Performance:** You hide your true self or resist being cloaked by illusions.
- **Reflection:** You resist intimidation or mental control.
- **Stealth:** You hide.

Success Removal: Each success removes a success from the other action. If all successes are removed from the other action, then it is canceled with respect to you.

EXAMPLE: Peter uses the pilfer action to try to snag a key from his jailor. This action is tested with Artistry against Acrobatics. While the victim can counter with Acrobatics, he can also counter with Artistry as that is the skill being used against him.

Identify

Relevant Skill

Short Action, Reach

You try to figure out what an item does and how to use it. Even though you may learn how to use an item, you may not learn particulars (e.g. you know a pass phrase is needed but not what it is). The skill used to *identify* is the skill tested to use the item (e.g. Projectile for a bow) or to create the item (i.e. Craft or Science).

Information: You gain one piece of information per success. This may be one operation of the item or hot to initiate an operation.

Lore

Relevant Skill

Intervening Free Action, Self

When presented with a new subject in game, you may automatically perform a *lore* test to see what you already know. This represents information you already know from bedtime stories, campfire tales, water cooler talk, and books read. Hidden knowledge is not known, and falsehoods may be taken as fact. The amount of information known should be adjusted for your frame of reference. You can only perform *lore* once per subject, but you can perform *lore* any number of times in a round.

Information: You gain one piece of information per success.

The Game Master may simply provide the information or you may ask the Game Master a question, the answer to which will be no more than a short paragraph.

EXAMPLE: Sam finds a collection of medals in a suspect's apartment. The Game Master offers Sam the option to use Academics for a lore test to see what she may know about them. She gets a success and asks "what is their country of origin?" The Game Master says she recognizes they are from the Principality of Hungary, which offers Sam a starting point for further investigations.

Questions Without Answers

A number of actions allow players to ask the Game Master for more information, but they also have restrictions on what answers may be available. If a player asks a question and the answer would be "you don't know" or similar, then the player can ask a different question instead. Alternatively, the player can ask the Game Master to ask the questions on their behalf, allowing the Game Master to guide the players by supplying the most pertinent and appropriate information.

Academics

Academics covers most scholastic learning, including topics such as history, law, culture, religion, politics, critical thinking, military science, and business. This knowledge extends to the institutions built around these subjects and the ability to *appraise* or *identify* related items. As such, Academics lets you *lore* almost any subject.

Insight

Academics or Science

Short Action, Self

Puzzles challenge both player and character. With *insight* you use your character's skill to get hints for a puzzle. This test is penalized by the difficulty of the puzzle, and you may only perform one *insight* test per puzzle.

Information: You gain one clue to the solution per success.

Puzzle

Academics or Science

Short Action, Self

You make a puzzle, be it a riddle, code, mathematical equation, tan gram, or something else.

Difficulty: The first success creates a new puzzle of difficulty zero, and each successive success increases its difficulty by one.

Plot Insight

It is not unusual for players to miss clues to the overall story or simply not connect the dots. This happens because everyone thinks and perceives differently. The *insight* action can be leveraged as an excuse to give clues to the players for the overall story. The mechanics work the same, the scope of the puzzle is just larger.

Research

Academics

Long Action, Self

You scour books and databases to learn more about a specific subject. The information gained is limited to that contained in the research material used. You may need *literacy* or another skill or power to perform *research*.

Information: You gain one piece of information per success. The Game Master may simply provide the information or you may ask the Game Master a question, the answer to which will be no more than a short paragraph.

Acrobatics

Acrobatics features all manner of feats of gymnastics and balance. This skill encompasses rolling with a punch and moving just the right amount so as to avoid an attack, as well as more dramatic actions like trapeze work.

Break Grapple

Acrobatics, Athletics, or Melee vs. Athletics

Instant Action, Reach

You flex and wiggle to try to break out of a grapple.

Achievement: You lose the *grappled* condition.

Jump

Acrobatics or Athletics

Movement Action, Self

You try to jump further than normal. You can increase the distance further by using the Athletics *charge* boost.

Achievement: You jump two spaces horizontally and/or vertically up one space.

Land

Acrobatics

Intervening Instant Action, Self

You contort to cushion your fall. Normally, a fall inflicts one point of bludgeoning or vitality damage for every two meters fallen, up to a maximum of twice your species base Health.

Damage Reduction: You reduce falling damage received by one per success.

Leap

Boost

Leap boosts a *counter* performed with Acrobatics, Athletics, Melee, Projectile, or Stealth.

- To desperately get out of the way, you move one space and become prone.

Artistry

Artistry is the mastery of fine motor skills. While this covers obvious aspects of theft and similar sleight of hand, it also provides proficiency with all manner of items where a fine degree of dexterity is necessary.

Conceal

Artistry or Stealth

Instant Action, Reach

You hide a person or object so it gains a Stealth rating, which is used to see if someone can *notice* it or if they find it in a *search*. Witnesses can find the person or item again automatically, unless they forget the location. If you hide yourself, then your Stealth rating is the better of your Artistry, Stealth, or what the test determines.

Difficulty: The first success creates hides the things and it has a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases its Stealth rating by one.

Escape Binding

Artistry or Athletics

Instant Action, Self

You slip or break bonds. The difficulty depends both on the type of restraint.

Achievement: You escape a binding.

Restraint	Difficulty
Net	0
Lightly tied wrists	-1
Heavily tied wrists	-2
Hog Tied	-7
Manacles	-5
Stocks	-5

Manipulate Device

Artistry

Short Action, Reach

You pick a lock, set or disarm a trap, or similar. You are penalized by the highest difficulty of all of the devices you want to manipulate with the action.

Achievement: You open one lock or disarm or set one trap.

Pilfer

Artistry vs. Acrobatics

Instant Action, Reach

You try to steal something from or plant something on a target. Pilfer relies on the target's ignorance. If the target is aware, then he sees what you are doing and gets his defense. If the target is surprised, then he won't realize what you've done unless his *notice* beats your Stealth rating. For this, your Stealth rating is the better of your Artistry or what the test determines.

Difficulty: The first success lets you filch or plant the desired item, and you have a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases your Stealth rating by one.

Circumstance	Diff.
Object fits in the palm of the character's hand	0
Object is as big as the character's hand	-1
Object is as large as the character's arm	-2
Object is inside a simple container	-1
Object hangs by one or two strings	0
Object is fastened by many strings or straps	-2
Object held in a hand or similar	n/a

Sleight of Hand

Artistry vs. Intuition

Instant Action, Reach

You can run a shell game or pull a coin out from behind someone's ear. This sort of mundane trickery may seem like magic to the uninitiated. What you can and can't do is left to the GM, and you are penalized by the size of the item(s) you are manipulating.

Observers might see through your trick via *notice*. For this, your Stealth rating is the better of your Artistry or what the test determines.

Difficulty: The first success lets you perform the deception or trick, and you have a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases your Stealth rating by one.

Circumstance	Diff.
Object fits in the palm of the character's hand	0
Object is as big as the character's hand	-1
Object is as large as the character's arm	-2
Object is as large as the character's torso	-5

Athletics

Athletics governs physical activity and exertion such as sports, games, and general movement.

Break Grapple

Acrobatics, Athletics, or Melee vs. Athletics

Instant Action, Reach

You flex and wiggle to try to break out of a grapple.

Achievement: You lose the *grappled* condition.

Charge

Boost

You run headlong, putting the full force of your momentum behind an *attack*, *jump*, *grapple*, or *shove* action.

- You gain movement points equal to your Athletics or speed, whichever is lower.
- For every four spaces moved prior to the *attack* in the same round increases your damage by one.
- For every four spaces moved prior to the *shove* in the same round, increases your force by one.
- Your grapple causes both you and your target to become prone.
- You cannot perform a *counter* using Acrobatics, Artistry, Melee, Projectile, or Stealth until next round.
- Others gain a +1 overwhelming bonus against you.

Climb

Athletics

Movement action, Self

You scramble over a wall, up a cliff, or similar. Your climbing speed is your skill level. But, its maximum is your base speed, and its minimum is one.

Achievement: You make the climb.

Circumstance	Difficulty
Ready hand holds and foot holds	+2
Slick surface	-1
Climbing by arm strength alone	-2
Following an already proven path	+1

Escape Binding

Artistry or Athletics

Instant Action, Self

You slip or break bonds. The difficulty depends both on the type of restraint.

Achievement: You escape a binding.

Restraint	Difficulty
Net	0
Lightly tied wrists	-1
Heavily tied wrists	-2
Hog Tied	-7
Manacles	-5
Stocks	-5

Exertion

Athletics Development

Exertion has the following constant effects:

- Your Carrying Capacity is increased by your Athletics.

Feat of Strength

Athletics

Instant Action, Reach

You bend bars, snap branches, break a door down, or similarly leverage your raw strength. The difficulty is set by the task you attempt.

Achievement: You perform the *feat of strength*.

Circumstance	Difficulty
Snap a brittle twig	+2
Flip a coffee table	0
Break down a light door	-2
Break down a solid door	-5

Jump

Acrobatics or Athletics

Movement Action, Self

You try to jump further than normal. You can increase the distance further by using the Athletics *charge* boost.

Achievement: You jump two spaces horizontally and/or vertically up one space.

Piloting Maneuver

Athletics

Instant Action, Self

You perform a piloting maneuver appropriate your conveyance. While some maneuvers are so simple that they are automatic, others impose a difficulty to the test. You may perform the below maneuvers and learn more maneuvers through powers. A failed *piloting maneuver* test means the maneuver does not happen. With an alternate results, the conveyance collides with something, you lose control of the conveyance, or you fall off (see below).

- **Accelerate (Automatic):** The conveyance accelerates by an amount up to its maximum.
- **Decelerate (Automatic):** The conveyance decelerates by an amount up to twice its acceleration rate.
- **Turn (Automatic):** The conveyance turns up to 90 degrees over the course of a number of move actions equal to its turn radius.
- **Hard Brake (No Difficulty):** The conveyance decelerates by an amount up to five times its acceleration rate.
 - If not successful, then you must maintain control at no difficulty.
- **Ram (No Difficulty):** The character runs the conveyance into a target with the intent to cause damage. The character performs an *attack* boosted by a *charge*. The conveyance's Scale acts as a damage bonus. While the target takes the full amount of damage, your conveyance takes half the amount. The target must be in the path of the conveyance, not lateral.
- **Piloting Counter (No Difficulty):** The character performs a *counter* using Athletics in place of Acrobatics against an action directed at the conveyance she is piloting.
- **Block In (-2 Difficulty):** You mirror the movements of another conveyance so that it cannot change position in your direction (e.g. prevent a horse from moving in front of or behind you) unless it performs a *piloting counter*.
- **Hard Turn (-2 Difficulty):** The conveyance completes a 90 degree turn in half the normal distance.
 - If not successful, then you must maintain control at no difficulty.
- **Shove (-2 Difficulty):** Your conveyance pushes a target, performing the *shove* action with the character's Athletics skill and using the average Strength for the conveyance's Scale. However, the direction must be directly away from your conveyance.
 - If successful, then the target must maintain control at no difficulty.
- **Cut-Off (-5 Difficulty):** You quickly accelerate and shift position in front of another conveyance. If the target conveyance fails to perform a *piloting counter*, then it collides with your conveyance.
- **Maintain Control (Variable Difficulty):** You maintain or regain control of the conveyance. This is also used to remain on a conveyance when you might get thrown from it. The base difficulty is assigned by the Game Master, representing the severity of the situation.

If you lose control of your conveyance, then your target chooses what happens; though, it must be something possible given the circumstances (e.g. a car cannot crash if there is nothing to hit). Similarly, if you ask for an alternate result, then the Game Master may choose one of the below options.

- **Collision:** The conveyance strikes something. Collisions are resolved as though one party rammed the other using the relative speed of both parties. Occupants take half this amount or one-tenth if secured (e.g. strapped into a wagon).
- **Damage:** The conveyance strikes debris, a minor terrain feature (e.g. a pot hole), or simply loses puts too much strain on itself. The vehicle or animal takes irreducible damage equal to twice its Scale.
- **Lost Rider:** The rider of an open air conveyance (e.g. a horse) is thrown.
- **Stall:** The conveyance rapidly loses speed. It may spin out, break a wheel, or similar.
- **Veer:** The conveyance veers off course in an appropriate direction. It may collide with a wall or another vehicle, run into a ditch, or similar.

Achievement: You successfully execute the desired maneuver.

Swim

Athletics

Movement action, Self

You attempt a difficult swim. Your swimming speed is your skill level. But, its maximum is your base speed, and its minimum is one.

Achievement: You make the swim.

Craft

Virtually any object may be created with Craft. This intimate knowledge of items allows you to *appraise*, *identify*, and *lore* almost any object. Most Craft actions require equipment of some sort, be it an oven or a hammer and anvil. This depends upon the action being performed. The more advanced the action (powers), the more advanced equipment may be necessary.

Item Qualities: While Craft allows the character to create products with certain item qualities by virtue of skill, special raw materials can also grant item qualities at the Game Master's discretion. Such materials may also impose difficulty on Craft tests.

Required Materials: All Craft actions require raw materials in addition to the tools to shape them. A fair baseline cost for materials is half what the end product would retail for. The Game Master is free to adjust this as appropriate.

Fabricate Product

Craft or Science

Long Action, Reach

You make an object from raw materials. You can make anything the Game Master allows; though, some items require powers to fabricate. Crafted items inherit all base properties (e.g. club has the *subdual* quality), but you can also add the *fragile* item quality if you want.

With Craft you may fabricate most any item that doesn't require an in depth understanding of scientific principles. With Science, your repertoire is limited to the fabrication of items based upon higher scientific principles, including chemicals, primitive electronics, steam engines, and the like.

Achievement: You craft the item.

Repair

Craft

Long Action, Reach - Requires: Equipment

You pound a part back into place, glue broken bits, replace parts, or otherwise finds a way to put an item back together. The action may take longer or shorter as the Game Master feels necessary.

Healing: You heal one point of damage to the item per success, up to its maximum Health.

Circumstance	Diff.
Each extra item quality	-2
Item is mildly complex (e.g. a clock)	-1
Item is overly complex (e.g. Prague's Astronomical Clock)	-3

Influence

Influence lets you get your way through social manipulation or force of personality. Expanded rules for managing these situations are in the Conversations section of the Encounters chapter.

Countering Influence: When performing an Influence action, you must declare the approach you are using; though, you may instead role-play your character's actions, leaving it to the Game Master to infer the approach. If you are charming or submissive, then the target defends and *counters* with Intuition. If you are forceful, then Reflection is used instead.

Convince

Influence vs. Intuition or Reflection

Short Action, Earshot

You try to get the target to do or believe something, at least until circumstances give her a chance to reconsider.

Achievement: Your target believes what you want or performs a task she thinks you want.

Circumstance	Difficulty
The target sees no challenge to her beliefs or effort or risk to perform the task.	0
The target will flirt with moral gray areas and accept small risk and even inconvenience.	-1
The target will bend her beliefs and accept moderate risk.	-2
Where the target won't betray her core principles, she will take great risks and even accept abhorrent ideas.	-5
Whatever you just said sounds like a good idea.	-10

If you don't succeed, you can leverage Using Failures. Target could agree to a lesser task, demand more leverage, betray you later, or something else entirely. A demand for more leverage be a counteroffer that you can choose to accept or decline.

Gather Information

Influence

Long Action, Earshot over 1 square kilometer

You catch the latest chatter and place discrete inquiries. This information provides starting points for investigations, not in-depth truths that you might get from an interrogation. This information may include the latest rumors, where to find something or someone, what people know about a place, person, item, or creature, who might have seen an event, or similar. The information may be false, and secrets are not revealed.

Information: You gain one piece of information per success. The Game Master may simply provide the information or you may ask the Game Master a question, the answer to which will be no more than a short paragraph.

Socialize

Influence vs. Intuition or Reflection

Short Action, Earshot

Carousing at a bar or chatting someone up at a party, you try to change their mind about a particular subject. This attitude adjustment lasts for one hour or until you or your companions act in a manner that would give the target reason to change his mind.

Achievement: The target's attitude shifts one degree up towards *friendly* or down towards *hostile*.

Talking to a Crowd

Boost - Requires: Influence 1

When using a non-power Influence action or Performance with earshot range, you address a group of people, not a single person.

- The volume changes from one target to a number of targets equal to your Influence skill.

Attitude

While difficulty is always a factor, it is especially important in conversations. The target's **attitude** towards the character and subject matter colors every conversation, but it can also be a mercurial thing, changing in response the character's actions and other events. If the target's attitude is friendly or helpful and no other modifiers reduce the bonus, then the character can choose to take the bonus as automatic successes instead of rolling.

Helpful (+2 Bonus): The target's interests and/or goals coincide and they get along well with the character.

Friendly (+1 Bonus): The target approves of the character or her objective, agreeing to trivial acts readily.

Neutral (No Adjustment): The target simply either does not care or is equally invested both in aiding and working against the character.

Unfriendly (-1 Penalty): The target has no desire to aid the character or his cause. While the target will not necessarily work against the character without cause, she is very reluctant to provide any real aid.

Hostile (-3 Penalty): A hostile target will actively work against the character, generally taking actions that are most counterproductive to the character's cause.

Intuition

Intuition provides an insight into and awareness of the world through a greater attention to details and appreciation for others' feelings. A skilled character can spy things both hidden and obvious, discerning threats and ferreting out falsehood.

Initiative Development

Initiative has the following constant effects:

- You have an Initiative rating equal to your Intuition.
- When two or more things happen at roughly the same time, you act in descending order by Initiative rating.
 - In the event of a tie, negotiate who goes first. If there is a disagreement, then roll d10; higher acts first. If there is still a tie, then you act simultaneously.
- Your Initiative rating can be altered by a number of actions and powers, such as *basic tactics*, *initiative swap*, and *reassess*.

Notice Development

Notice has the following constant effects:

- If your Intuition skill is greater than a disguised or hidden object's or person's Stealth skill, then you perceive them.
 - *Notice* may also apply to things that are simply hard to see because they are too small, too big, or just obscured as the GM deems appropriate.
 - You may only *notice* something if you have an appropriate line of sight with the sense (e.g. you might hear someone on the other side of the curtain, but you could not see them).

Reassess Intuition Instant Action, Self

You take a round to study the situation and steady yourself, allowing you to seize the initiative.

Initiative Bonus: For the encounter, your initiative is increased by one per success.

Read Person Intuition vs. Influence or Performance Short Free Action, Sight or Earshot

You watch for changes in body language and facial expressions to help you see past the façade. To do this, you must observe your target while she is socially engaged with others.

Information: You gain one piece of information per success from the following list.

- The target's actual current mood and whether or not she is being deceptive. Though, not necessarily what about.
- The cause for the target's mood if the source is perceivable by the target (e.g. the deliveryman has an extra spring in his step when he's around the store owner).

Finding Hidden Stuff

Notice is a passive means of detecting something; it is used when you enter a room and look around, when you quickly scan a crowd looking for a familiar face, or just to see if you hear the thief walking on the gravel path outside. You don't give much time or attention to what you are doing.

Search is used when you are actively looking for something. You go through a room's drawers and check from a draft around the bookcases, you carefully study each face in the crowd, or you try to focus on any sounds coming from outside. It takes the majority of your attention, which is why it takes an action.

All hidden or disguised things have a Stealth skill. This could be the person's actual skill or it could be an artificial skill level granted through an action, such as *conceal*, *obscure value*, or *disguise*. Where this skill level is simply compared to resolve *notice*, it is the defense against a *search*.

Intuition and Stealth skills aren't necessarily static. They may be adjusted by traits (e.g. *poor hearing*), conditions (e.g. *crippled*), powers (e.g. *unobtrusive*), and terrain modifiers (e.g. concealment and cover). They may also vary by sense (e.g. a person may have full visual concealment but only partial audial concealment).

Finally, remember to use all of the senses when describing what a person may perceive. Sight and sound are the two more relied upon senses, but a character may still *notice* something by its smell.

- The target's observable intent (e.g. stalling for time).
- The target's motivation.

Resist Surprise

Intuition vs. Stealth

Intervening Free Action, Self

When surprised, you normally have no defense and cannot take any action in response, but a character that resists surprise can at least react.

Achievement: You retain your defense and can perform intervening actions in response.

Search

Intuition or Ranging

Short Action, Reach

You scour an area up to Field (20) looking for hidden things. Cover and concealment are negated if the *search* would reasonably move obstructions blocking line of sight (e.g. opening drawers, looking behind paintings, etc.). Compare the better of your Intuition skill level, your Ranging skill level, or a skill level derived via your successes against all targets' Stealth ratings; you find any hidden things whose Stealth rating you exceed. Using cooperation during a *search* increases your skill level for this comparison.

Perception: You search the area as if your skill level was zero. Each additional purchase increases the skill level by one.

Medical

Medical practitioners can heal the body and the mind. They also gain a better understanding of the use of chemical and biological agents to both enhance and debilitate the living. Successful application of the Medical skill depends on your familiarity with the species at hand: while there are similarities, a veterinarian and a nurse have different applicable skills.

Defending Medical: When performing a Medical action, you are either treating the body or the mind. When treating the body, the target defends with Athletics. When treating the mind, the target defends with Reflection..

Required Equipment: By default all Medical actions treating the body require some sort of equipment, such as bandages, sutures, braces, and the like, all of which may be provided by a medical kit.

Treat Condition

Medical vs. Athletics or Reflection

Instant Action, Reach

You smother flames, shake someone from stupor, or similar to cure short term conditions.

Condition Removal: The target loses one condition per success. Conditions must have an encounter duration or less.

Treat Extended Condition

Medical vs. Athletics or Reflection

Long Action, Reach

You set bones, talk a friend through issues, or similar to cure long term conditions.

Condition Removal: The target loses one condition per success. Conditions must have a day duration or less.

Treat Injury

Medical vs. Athletics

Long Action, Reach

You suture, bandage, balm, or otherwise heal the target's injuries. An untrained character may only heal *subdual* damage, but a trained character may heal both *subdual* and *lethal* damage. A trained character heading only *subdual* damage performs *treat injury* as a short action.

Healing: You heal one point of damage to the target per success, up to his maximum Health.

Melee

Melee is the art of hand-to-hand combat, including the use of axes, knives, punches, head butts, and everything in between, even improvised weapons such as table legs and bar stools.

Melee Counter: You can block or parry, using Melee to perform a *counter* against an action with a reach range that is normally *countered* with Acrobatics.

- If using an item with the shield quality, then you can *counter* actions with a sight range as well.
- If unarmed, then you cannot perform a melee *counter* against an armed opponent.

Attack

Melee or Projectile vs. Acrobatics

Instant Action, Reach or Sight

You try to harm someone. Melee *attacks* use reach range, and Projectile *attacks* use sight range.

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success.

The weapon you can *attack* with depends upon circumstances as much as the skill used.

- Melee weapons can only be used against targets within reach.
- When *grappled*, you may only use weapons with the *personal* quality.
- Thrown weapons can be used against targets in short sight range.
- Other projectile weapons can be used against targets in medium sight range, unless otherwise provided.

Break Grapple

Acrobatics, Athletics, or Melee vs. Athletics

Instant Action, Reach

You flex and wiggle to try to break out of a grapple.

Achievement: You lose the *grappled* condition.

Dirty Move

Melee vs. Acrobatics

Physical Instant Action, Reach

You throw or kick dirt into your victim's eyes, clip his inner thigh, trip him, or just slap him upside the head.

Achievement: The target either gains the *dazed* condition with encounter duration or is knocked prone.

Disarm

Melee vs. Acrobatics

Instant Action, Reach

You knock a weapon or item away from your target.

Circumstance	Difficulty
The item is held in one hand	-1
The item is held by more than one hand	-3
The item is attached to the target (e.g. a purse)	-1
The item is well secured to the character (e.g. a backpack)	-3

Force: The target drops the item and it is moved one space per success.

Double Block

Boost

Wielding a weapon in each hand, you perform a Melee *counter* with both weapons simultaneously.

- You gain one additional success if the *counter* is successful.
- You choose which weapon to lead with; only this weapon's item qualities apply.

Grapple

Melee vs. Acrobatics or Athletics

Instant Action, Reach

You grab, wrestle, or otherwise get a hold of the target.

Achievement: Both you and your target gain the *grappled* condition. Barring death or unconsciousness, this condition continues until you release it or the target performs *break grapple*. Releasing a grapple is a free action and requires no test.

Paired Strike

Boost

Wielding a weapon in each hand, you perform an *attack* striking along the same vector with both weapons.

- Your *attack* gets a +1 bonus to damage.
- You choose which weapon to lead with; only this weapon's skill and items qualities apply.

Reach Attack

Boost - Requires: Melee 1

If you have a longer comparative reach than the target and the target is performing a Melee or Athletics action against you, then you may strike first.

- Your instant action becomes an intervening instant action.
- This intervening action occurs immediately, interrupting the target's actions.

Shove

Melee vs. Acrobatics or Athletics

Instant Action, Reach

You yank or push your target, tossing him about.

Force: The target is moved one space per success. Increase the total number of spaces by your Strength and decrease it by the target's Strength. If the number of spaces moved exceeds the target's Strength, then she also becomes prone.

Swarm Attack

Boost - Requires: Swarm trait

Swarm attack boosts a Melee action as the swarm mindlessly lashes out and envelops enemies.

- The swarm performs the action against all adjacent units.
- The swarm performs the action against all units within the same space(s) as the swarm with a +1 bonus.
- The swarm can choose to not affect some units if it is capable of such reasoning.

Swat

Melee

Boost - Requires: Larger Scale than Targets

Swat boosts a Melee action as you swipe at a group of smaller enemies.

- The Melee action affects multiple targets.
 - The total Scale of all targets must be equal to or less than your Scale (e.g. a giant with Scale 4 can *swat* up to four humans with Scale 1).
 - All targets must be within reach.
 - Each target must be adjacent to another and all targets must be contiguous within an arc (i.e. you cannot *attack* one target, skip a target, then *attack* another target).

Grappled - Athletics

You're locked in a grapple. This persists until you escape.

- You may only end the grapple via *break grapple* or *release grapple*.
- You may only use weapons with the *personal* item quality.
- You cannot perform movement actions.
- You cannot perform actions that require a great concentration, elaborate movement, or fine motion.

Mysticism

Mysticism is the study of all things magic. Principally this includes shards, but it also extends to potions, mystic tomes, and superstitions, if it is magical or simply so esoteric to be outside the bounds of science, then it is within the realm of the Mysticism. Those with Mysticism may *appraise*, *identify*, and *lore* magical items and effects as well as signs and portents, albeit with cultural bias. This can include legends, fairy tales, and folklore.

Dowsing

Mysticism or Reflection

Short Action, Self

Using some form of dowsing instrument, such as a dowsing rod or crystal pendulum, the character reads the tides and eddies of magic within Aura (Mysticism x 2).

Information: You gain one piece of information per success from the following list.

- The level of magic saturation for the area.
- The presence of a magical effect within Reach.
- The presence of a shard within Reach.

Performance

This skill governs performance art of all types including, but not limited to, acting, dancing, playing a musical instrument, and singing. Performance is used to *appraise* and *lore* performances and works of art, as well as tools of the trade. While members of every society have at least some experience with this, professionals truly excel.

Disguise

Performance or Stealth

Short Action, Reach

You disguise one person to look like another using costuming and makeup. The disguise lasts until it is removed, but if a person's notice beats the disguise's Stealth rating, then they detect the disguise. Viewers may get a bonus to their *notice* based upon their familiarity with the person that the disguise looks like.

This bonus is doubled if the target speaks: *disguise* does not affect the target's voice, only her appearance. If you *disguise* yourself, then your Stealth rating is the better of your Performance, Stealth, or what the test determines.

Knowledge/Interaction	Bonus
Regular Interaction	+1
Intimate Interaction	+2

Difficulty: The first success creates a disguise, and it has a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases the Stealth rating by one.

Impress - Power Pool

Boost - Requires: Performance 1

Impress boosts the *perform* action as you focus your performance on one member of the audience that you can perceive.

- You roll twice for *perform*. The first roll is used for the general result of the performance. If *perform* is successful, then you implement *socialize* against the chosen audience member using your Performance and the better of the two rolls.
- *Impress* may be combined with *talking to a crowd* and *oration*.

Perform

Acrobatics or Performance

Short Action, Earshot or Sight

You perform a song, dance, play, or similar. Acrobatics may only be used with dancing and gymnastic performances, while Performance may be used for any art form except gymnastics.

Circumstance	Difficulty
A simple performance.	0
A complicated performance.	-1
An intricate performance.	-3

Achievement: You complete the performance without mistake.

Projectile

Projectile is the skill of ranged combat, be it with bows, slings, or thrown spears. This skill is almost entirely oriented towards offense.

Sight Range: By default, Projectile actions all use sight range. Short range (no penalty) extends up to 20m, medium range (-2 penalty) extends from 20m to 100m, long range (-5 penalty) extends from 101m to 500m, and extreme range (-10 penalty) represents anything greater than 500m. These penalties can be offset with power and weapon sights.

Attack

Melee or Projectile vs. Acrobatics

Instant Action, Reach or Sight

You try to harm someone. Melee *attacks* use reach range, and Projectile *attacks* use sight range.

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success.

The weapon you can *attack* with depends upon circumstances as much as the skill used.

- Melee weapons can only be used against targets within reach.
- When *grappled*, you may only use weapons with the *personal* quality.
- Thrown weapons can be used against targets in short sight range.
- Other projectile weapons can be used against targets in medium sight range, unless otherwise provided.

Paired Strike

Boost

Wielding a weapon in each hand, you perform an *attack* striking along the same vector with both weapons.

- Your *attack* gets a +1 bonus to damage.
- You choose which weapon to lead with; only this weapon's skill and items qualities apply.

Toss

Projectile

Instant Action, Sight

You toss an object to a target just to get it there, not deal damage through its impact. The maximum range of your toss is Strength x 2, but if the object has the *thrown* item quality then it is short range.

Achievement: Your target can catch the item as an intervening instant action without a test.

Ranging

Ranging governs your ability to move through and find what you want in the world at large. It incorporates a high degree of interaction with the flora, fauna, minerals, and items one might encounter, be they natural or artificial.

Calm Animal

Ranging vs. Intuition or Reflection

Short Action, Earshot

You soothe or cows an aggressive, but not violent, animal. This lasts for one hour or until you or your companions act aggressively towards the target. An animal without the *tamable* trait imposes -2 penalty in addition to the animal's attitude. Like with Influence actions, the skill for defense is dictated by the approach you use: If you are charming or submissive, then the target defends with Intuition, but if you are forceful, then the target defends with Reflection.

Achievement: The target animal's attitude shifts one degree up towards *friendly* or down towards *hostile*.

Hide Trail

Ranging or Stealth

Instant Action, Reach

You cover your tracks, trying to hide signs of passage. For the duration that you sustain *hide trail*, that portion of the trail gains a Stealth rating, which is used to see if someone can *notice* it or if they find it in a *search*. The Stealth rating is adjusted by circumstance.

Circumstance	Rating
Environment preserves trail (e.g. dusty)	-1
Environment resists trail (e.g. hard stone)	+1
Environment conceals trail (e.g. raining)	+2
Group of two to four	0
Group of five to nine	-1
Group of ten to nineteen	-2

Difficulty: The first success lets you hide the trail, and it has a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases the Stealth rating by one.

Orienteer

Ranging

Instant Action, Sight

You use knowledge of terrain and guide markers to navigate to your destination. While this lasts so long as you sustain *orienteer*, one test is good for as long as the Game Master feels is dramatically appropriate: For a short jaunt through the city one test may only last ten minutes, but for a long journey through peaceful, easily navigable lands, one test may be sufficient for a full week. For most strategic movement, one test should be good for a day or until interrupted.

Orienteer does not protect the character from hazards, such as quicksand, excessive traffic, or patrols.

Achievement: You successfully navigate toward your destination.

Scrounge

Ranging

Long Action, Reach

You comb an area up to Field (200) in an effort to find a particular thing. This may be one item or enough of the type of item (e.g. food) to provide for one person for one day, and may include food, shelter, equipment, foreign objects, obvious natural constructs, or a particular mineral, flora or fauna. Some items and resources may require appropriate tools to harvest at the Game Master's discretion (e.g. a snare to trap a rabbit). Most found, free, manufactured items will be castoffs or junk. If an item is not within the searched area, then it cannot be found. All items and resources found are appropriate to the environment (e.g. a character may find a stony outcropping to provide shelter in a desert; whereas in a jungle she could put together something from broad leaves, branches and vines).

Achievement: You find the declared item or an appropriate source.

Orienteer Adventures

A failed *orienteer* test means you are lost, and the Game Master needs to decide what happens. Do you need to camp overnight and *scrounge* for food, must you take refuge in the dilapidated mansion, or do you wind up in a wrong city? This is a good opportunity to make characters feel the pinch of supplies running low, introduce colorful non-player characters, or to run a side trek. Of course, players can always ask for an alternate result: Let them to reach their destination but have the trip take more time or have them run into an ambush or other hazard.

Circumstance	Diff.
Common Thing	+1
Uncommon Thing	-1
Rare Thing	-3

Search

Intuition or Ranging

Short Action, Reach

You ransack an area up to Field (20) looking for hidden things. Cover and concealment are negated if the *search* would reasonably move obstructions blocking line of sight (e.g. opening drawers, looking behind paintings, etc.). Compare the better of your Intuition skill level, your Ranging skill level, or a skill level derived via your successes against all targets' Stealth ratings; you find any hidden things whose Stealth rating you exceed. Using cooperation during a *search* increases your skill level for this comparison.

Perception: You search the area as if your skill level was zero. Each additional purchase increases the skill level by one.

Tracking

Ranging

Instant Action, Sight

You examine your surroundings for signs of passage. While *tracking*, compare the better of your Ranging skill level or a skill level derived via your successes against the trail's Stealth ratings; as long as you sustain tracking, you can follow the trail if you exceed its Stealth rating.

All trails have a default Stealth rating of zero, but this is adjusted for the circumstances (see *hide trail*).

Perception: You follow the trail as if your skill level was zero. Each additional purchase increases the skill level by one.

Reflection

Reflection measures a person's will and inward force of personality. A character experienced in Reflection possesses strong mental defenses and is usually more self-aware.

Center

Reflection

Long Action, Self

You turn your thoughts inward to find peace and rhythm to your actions. This grants you a karma boost that may only be used with respect to one skill performed in the course of the one general task that you concentrated on. The task must be narrow and well defined. If task is too broad, then you can't reasonably center on it. If not used, this karma boost expires after one day. You may only gain a karma boost from *center* once per day.

Achievement: You gain one karma boost.

EXAMPLE: *Rachel uses center, concentrating on the use of her Ranging skill to "to bring down the conspirators we've been dealing with". When Peter uses center, he declares that he is concentrating on his Melee skill "to act in my best interest". The Game Master agrees that Rachel's use was appropriate. However, Peter's was far too broad, and he must choose a different purpose.*

Dowsing

Mysticism or Reflection

Short Action, Self

Using some form of dowsing instrument, such as a dowsing rod or crystal pendulum, the character reads the tides and eddies of magic within Aura (Mysticism x 2).

Information: You gain one piece of information per success from the following list.

- The level of magic saturation for the area.
- The presence of a magical effect within Reach.
- The presence of a shard within Reach.

Meditate

Reflection

Long Action, Self

The character reflects inwards to purge herself of unwanted conditions.

Condition Removal: You lose one condition per success. Condition must have a day duration or less.

Remember

Reflection

Long Action, Self

You attempt to recall a forgotten, hidden, or muddled memory. This may be used when the player forgets something that is relevant, even necessary to the story, allowing the character to recall it. The information gained is limited to what you may remember from past experiences.

Circumstance	Diff.
It's been a month	-1
It's been a year or more	-3
Mentioned in passing	-1
Memorable event	+1
Adrenaline fueled event	+3

Information: You gain one piece of information per success. The Game Master may simply provide the information or you may ask the Game Master a question, the answer to which will be no more than a short paragraph.

Science

From biology to chemistry to physics, Science concerns itself with discovering the truths of the physical world through observation and experimentation and with the practical application of its discoveries. Science is responsible for the fabrication of complex chemicals, genetic strands, and microscopic machine components.

Fabricate Product

Craft or Science

Long Action, Reach

You make an object from raw materials. You can make anything the Game Master allows; though, some items require powers to fabricate. Crafted items inherit all base properties (e.g. club has the *subdual* quality), but you can also add the *fragile* item quality if you want.

With Craft you may fabricate most any item that doesn't require an in depth understanding of scientific principles. With Science, your repertoire is limited to the fabrication of items based upon higher scientific principles, including chemicals, primitive electronics, steam engines, and the like.

Achievement: You craft the item.

Innovate

Science

Long Action, Self

Over the course of at least a month, you experiment with myriad hypotheses and theorems in order to create a new experience point improvement. This may be a new skill level, a new power, or the removal of a trait; so long as she meets all requirements. The thing being innovated must be set before the test is made, and only one thing may be created per test.

Circumstance	Difficulty
Innovating a Skill	- Skill Level
Innovating a Lesser Power	-2
Innovating a Greater Power	-4
Innovating an Epic Power	-6
Innovating how to remove a Trait	-5

Achievement: You may spend XP to learn the desired item.

Insight

Academics or Science

Short Action, Self

Puzzles challenge both player and character. With *insight* you use your character's skill to get hints for a puzzle. This test is penalized by the difficulty of the puzzle, and you may only perform one *insight* test per puzzle.

Information: You gain one clue to the solution per success.

Puzzle

Academics or Science

Short Action, Self

You make a puzzle, be it a riddle, code, mathematical equation, tan gram, or something else.

Difficulty: The first success creates a new puzzle of difficulty zero, and each successive success increases its difficulty by one.

Stealth

Stealth is the ability to hide and move clandestinely. It lets you conceal yourself from all senses, be it to keep from being seen at all, or to make others believe you are something else.

Conceal

Artistry or Stealth

Instant Action, Reach

You hide a person or object so it gains a Stealth rating, which is used to see if someone can *notice* it or if they find it in a *search*. Witnesses can find the person or item again automatically, unless they forget the location. If you hide yourself, then your Stealth rating is the better of your Artistry, Stealth, or what the test determines.

Difficulty: The first success creates hides the things and it has a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases its Stealth rating by one.

Disguise

Performance or Stealth

Short Action, Reach

You disguise one person to look like another using costuming and makeup. The disguise lasts until it is removed, but if a person's notice beats the disguise's Stealth rating, then they detect the disguise. Viewers may get a bonus to their *notice* based upon their familiarity with the person that the disguise looks like. This bonus is doubled if the target speaks:

disguise does not affect the target's voice, only her appearance. If you *disguise* yourself, then your Stealth rating is the better of your Performance, Stealth, or what the test determines.

Knowledge/Interaction	Bonus
Regular Interaction	+1
Intimate Interaction	+2

Difficulty: The first success creates a disguise, and it has a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases the Stealth rating by one.

Hide Trail

Ranging or Stealth

Instant Action, Reach

You cover your tracks, trying to hide signs of passage. For the duration that you sustain *hide trail*, that portion of the trail gains a Stealth rating, which is used to see if someone can *notice* it or if they find it in a *search*. The Stealth rating is adjusted by circumstance.

Difficulty: The first success lets you hide the trail, and it has a Stealth rating of zero. Each successive success increases the Stealth rating by one.

Circumstance	Rating
Environment preserves trail (e.g. dusty)	-1
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Group of two to four	0
Group of five to nine	-1
Group of ten to nineteen	-2

Sneak

Stealth

Stance

While *sneak* is active:

- You are hidden and have a Stealth rating equal to your Stealth.
- You cannot be targeted except as follows:
 - Someone with line of sight can target you.
 - Someone that exceeds your Stealth rating via *notice* can target you.
 - If attention is drawn to you (e.g. moving from cover to cover, moving over clamorous terrain, whispering, someone pointing you out, etc.), then your Stealth rating is decreased appropriately.
 - If you are within a volume of effect, you are still affected.
- If someone doesn't *notice* you, then you should surprise them.
- Your movement is halved.
- Taking aggressive action (e.g. *attack*) ends the *sneak* stance.

Core Method

Core powers tap into the most fundamental potential of the character. Rather than calling upon or channeling outside or esoteric forces, core powers rely upon a honing of the mind, a sharpening of wit, or a strengthening of the body. As such, core powers rarely provide new actions that a character can perform. Instead, most core powers augment existing actions, relying heavily upon developments, stances, and boosts. These powers all use thought and/or motion as their means.

Repeatable Powers

Remember that some powers are labeled as **repeatable**. They can be purchased more than once, but each purchase cumulatively increases the required skill level by one.

To learn lesser core powers, a character must simply meet the listed requirements for the individual power. Some lesser powers may not have any requirements (e.g. *karmic favor*).

To learn greater core powers a character must have four lesser core powers of the same element in addition to the listed requirements for the individual power.

To learn epic core powers a character must have four greater core powers of the same element in addition to the listed requirements for the individual power.

Core Elements

Each core power belongs to one of three elements: *mental*, *physical*, or *social*. These in turn are generally associated with particular skills; though, these are not necessarily strict demarcations.

Skill	Element
Academics	Mental
Acrobatics	Physical
Artistry	Physical
Athletics	Physical
Craft	Mental
Influence	Social
Intuition	Mental
Medical	Mental
Melee	Physical
Mysticism	Mental
Performance	Social
Projectile	Physical
Ranging	Mental
Reflection	Mental
Science	Mental
Stealth	Physical

New Practices

The core method boasts **abilities**, which are more powerful than normal actions. They conform to the standard rules for actions, but cannot be augmented by some effects that would otherwise enhance an action.

Mental Power	Tier	Practice	Requirement
Abiding Soul	Lesser	Development	Mysticism 2 or Reflection 2
Alertness	Lesser	Development	Intuition 2
Basic Tactics	Lesser	Development	Academics 2
Chemist	Lesser	Boost	Science 2
Determined	Lesser	Development	Reflection 2
Erudite	Lesser	Development	Academics 2 or Science 2
Familiar Domain	Lesser	Development	Ranging 2
Forgery	Lesser	Ability	Artistry 2
Indomitable Breath	Lesser	Boost	Reflection 3
Medic	Lesser	Boost	Medical 2
Mental Power Font	Lesser	Development	Reflection 2
Mental Power Stream	Lesser	Development	Academics 2
Opportunist	Lesser	Boost	Intuition 2
Pour Water from the Well	Lesser	Development	Reflection 2
Quartz Reflection	Lesser	Stance	Mysticism 2, Reflection 2
Scouting	Lesser	Development	Ranging 2
Smith	Lesser	Boost	Craft 2
Squad Tactics	Lesser	Development	One of Academics 2, Melee 2, or Projectile 2
Analyst	Greater	Development	Science 3 and either <i>chemist</i> or <i>erudite</i>
Artisan's Familiarity	Greater	Boost	Craft 3
Beast Master	Greater	Development	Ranging 3, <i>scouting</i>
Coordinated Tactics	Greater	Boost	Academics 3, Influence 2, and either <i>basic tactics</i> or <i>squad tactics</i>
Craftsman	Greater	Boost	Craft 3 and <i>smith</i>
Empty Vessel	Greater	Boost	Reflection 3 and one of <i>abiding soul</i> , <i>mental power font</i> , and <i>pour water from the well</i>
Explorer	Greater	Boost	Ranging 3 and one of <i>animal bond</i> , <i>familiar domain</i> , <i>scouting</i>
Physician	Greater	Boost	Medical 3, <i>medic</i>
Scholar	Greater	Boost	Academics 3 and one of <i>basic tactics</i> , <i>erudite</i> , or <i>mental power stream</i>
Sieve the Soul	Greater	Development	Reflection 3
Surgeon	Greater	Development	Medical 3, <i>medic</i>
Thaumaturge	Greater	Boost	Mysticism 3 and either <i>abiding soul</i> or <i>quartz reflection</i>
Third Eye	Greater	Development	Intuition 3, <i>alertness</i>
Watcher	Greater	Boost	Intuition 3, and one of <i>alertness</i> , <i>lip reading</i> , or <i>social power stream</i>
Predictive Tactics	Epic	Development	Academics 4, <i>basic tactics</i> , <i>coordinated tactics</i>
Quartz Mirror	Epic	Development	<i>quartz reflection</i> , Intuition 2, Mysticism 4, Reflection 4

Physical Power	Tier	Practice	Requirement
Addling Strike	Lesser	Boost	Melee 2 or Projectile 2
Armor Use	Lesser	Development	Athletics 2
Bank Shot	Lesser	Boost	Projectile 2
Citrine Perch	Lesser	Stance	Projectile 2, Reflection 2
Diamond Leaf	Lesser	Stance	Melee 2, Athletics 2
Displacing Step	Lesser	Development	Acrobatics 2 or Ranging 2
Diver	Lesser	Development	Athletics 2 or Ranging 2
Emerald Hail	Lesser	Stance	Intuition 2, Projectile 2
Far Shot	Lesser	Boost	Projectile 2
Fierce Lunge	Lesser	Boost	Melee 2

Flensing Strike	Lesser	Boost	Melee 2 or Projectile 2
Fortitude	Lesser	Development	Athletics 2
Iron Palm	Lesser	Development	Melee 2
Jarring Blow	Lesser	Boost	Melee 2 or Projectile 2
Light Step	Lesser	Development	Artistry 2, Intuition 2
Obstruct	Lesser	Development	Athletics 2 or Melee 2
Opal Wind	Lesser	Stance	Acrobatics 2, Athletics 2
Pearl Tear	Lesser	Stance	Acrobatics 2, Athletics 2
Physical Power Font	Lesser	Development	Athletics 2
Physical Power Stream	Lesser	Development	Acrobatics 2
Precise Strike	Lesser	Boost	Melee 2 or Projectile 2
Quick Draw	Lesser	Development	Athletics 2, Melee 2, or Projectile 2
Ruby Waters	Lesser	Stance	Athletics 2, Melee 2
Skirmishing	Lesser	Boost	Acrobatics 2 or Ranging 2
Takedown	Lesser	Development	Melee 2, Stealth 2
Topaz Mist	Lesser	Stance	Athletics 2, Melee 2
Armor Focus	Greater	Development	Athletics 3, <i>armor use</i>
Armsman	Greater	Boost	Melee 3, and two of <i>flensing strike</i> , <i>jarring bow</i> , or <i>precise strike</i>
Ascending Step	Greater	Boost	Acrobatics 3, <i>displacing step</i>
Calisthenics	Greater	Boost	Athletics 3, and one of <i>armor use</i> , <i>diver</i> , or <i>obstruct</i>
Deft Hands	Greater	Boost	Artistry 3 and one of <i>forgery</i> , <i>light step</i> , or <i>lip reading</i>
Disarming Shot	Greater	Boost	Projectile (Any) 3, <i>precise strike</i>
Endure	Greater	Boost	Athletics 3
Fading Step	Greater	Development	Acrobatics 3, <i>displacing step</i>
Follow Through	Greater	Development	Athletics 2, Melee 2
Gymnast	Greater	Boost	Acrobatics 3, and one of <i>displacing step</i> , <i>physical power stream</i> , or <i>skirmishing</i>
Hide in Plain Sight	Greater	Boost	Stealth 3, <i>longer shadows</i>
Longer Shadows	Greater	Boost	Stealth 3 and either <i>takedown</i> or <i>unobtrusive</i>
Marksman	Greater	Boost	Projectile 3, and one of <i>bank shot</i> , <i>far shot</i> , or <i>quick draw</i>
Sapphire Flame	Greater	Stance	Acrobatics 3, Athletics 3, Intuition 3, Reflection 3
Shrug Off	Greater	Ability	Athletics 3
Snatch Projectiles	Greater	Boost	either Melee 3 and <i>iron palm</i> or Projectile 3 and <i>snaking strike</i>
Vanishing Strike	Greater	Boost	Stealth 3
Weeping Strike	Greater	Boost	<i>flensing strike</i> and either Melee 3 or Projectile 3
Citrine Lens	Epic	Development	<i>citrine perch</i> , Intuition 2, Projectile 4, Reflection 4
Concussive Blow	Epic	Boost	<i>addling strike</i> , <i>jarring blow</i> and either Melee 4 or Projectile 4
Diamond Oak	Epic	Development	<i>diamond leaf</i> , Intuition 2, Melee 4, Athletics 4
Emerald Shower	Epic	Development	<i>emerald hail</i> , Acrobatics 2, Intuition 4, Projectile 4
Manifold Strike	Epic	Boost	either Melee 3 or Projectile 3
Opal Tempest	Epic	Development	<i>opal wind</i> , Acrobatics 4, Athletics 4, Intuition 2
Pearl Dew	Epic	Development	<i>pearl tear</i> , Acrobatics 4, Athletics 4, Intuition 2
Ruby River	Epic	Development	<i>ruby waters</i> , Acrobatics 2, Athletics 4, Melee 4
Topaz Spray	Epic	Development	<i>topaz mist</i> , Athletics 4, Intuition 2, Melee 4

Social Power	Tier	Practice	Requirement
Animal Bond	Lesser	Ability	Ranging 2
Carnelian Sentinel	Lesser	Stance	Influence 2, Intuition 2
Confident	Lesser	Boost	Performance 2 or Reflection 2
Cry of Warning	Lesser	Shout	Influence 2, Intuition 2
Deprecation	Lesser	Boost	Influence 2, Medical 2
Flourish	Lesser	Boost	Performance 2

Hypnotize	Lesser	Ability	Influence 2, Intuition 2, Reflection 2
Impersonation	Lesser		either Performance 2 or Stealth 2
Inspire	Lesser	Shout	Influence 2
Karma Slave	Lesser	Development	
Karmic Favor	Lesser	Development	
Language	Lesser	Development	
Lip Reading	Lesser	Development	Artistry 2, Intuition 2
Oration	Lesser	Boost	Influence 2
Social Power Font	Lesser	Development	Influence 2
Social Power Stream	Lesser	Development	Intuition 2
Taunt	Lesser	Shout	Influence 2
Think of Me	Lesser	Boost	Influence 2 or Performance 2
Unobtrusive	Lesser	Development	Performance 2 or Stealth 2
Artistic Talent	Greater	Boost	Performance 3, and one of <i>confident</i> , <i>flourish</i> , or <i>impersonation</i>
Impassioned Deed	Greater	Boost	<i>karma slave</i> and one of Influence 3, Performance 3, or Reflection 3
Rally	Greater	Shout	Influence 3, <i>inspire</i>
Reshape Memory	Greater	Ability	Influence 3, <i>hypnotize</i>
Silver Tongue	Greater	Boost	Influence 3 and one of <i>deprecation</i> , <i>oration</i> , or <i>taunt</i>
Suppress Memory	Greater	Ability	Influence 3, <i>hypnotize</i>
Carnelian Directive	Epic	Development	<i>carnelian sentinel</i> , Academics 2, Influence 4, Intuition 4
Conditioning	Epic	Ability	Influence 4, Medical 3, <i>deprecation</i> , <i>hypnotize</i>
Terrifying Roar	Epic	Shout	Influence 3 and either <i>cry of warning</i> or <i>taunt</i>

Core Powers

Abiding Soul

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Mysticism 2 or Reflection 2
Repeatable

Abiding soul has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum Essence Burden is increased by one.

Addling Strike - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Melee 2 or Projectile 2

Addling strike boosts an *attack*.

- If your action succeeds, the target also gains the *dazed* condition with encounter duration.

Alertness

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Intuition 2
Repeatable

Alertness has the following constant effects:

- You reduce the overwhelming bonus against you by two.
- You gain a +1 bonus to *resist surprise*.

Analyst - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Science 3 and either *chemist* or *erudite*

Analyst boosts any non-power action or core power using your Science *expertise*.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Animal Bond - Power Well

Ranging vs. Reflection

Lesser Long Social Ability, Reach - Requires: Ranging 2

You form a lasting bond of friendship and loyalty with a *tamable*, friendly animal. The animal must have the *tamable* trait and must have the same or smaller Scale as you. You can only have one bonded animal at a time, and if you repeatedly act abusively towards or make an earnest attempt to kill the animal, then the bond breaks.

Achievement: You bond with the animal, which must have the *tamable* trait and a *friendly* or *helpful* attitude.

Once an animal is bonded, the following benefits apply:

- Animal's base attitude towards you is always considered *helpful*.
- You may direct the animal's actions; though, the animal cannot act beyond its normal abilities.
- If the animal is within Aura (20) of you, then:
 - Both you and the animal gain a +1 bonus to all Intuition and Ranging tests,
 - The animal can use your skill levels in Academics, Artistry, Craft, Influence, Medical, Mysticism, Performance, Ranging, Reflection, and Science in place of its own to *counter* or *cleanse*.

Armor Focus

Greater Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 3, *armor use*

Armor focus has the following constant effects:

- Add your armor's AF to your Strength when resisting force (e.g. *shove*).
- Your worn armor gets a +1 AF bonus.

Armor Use

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 2

Repeatable

Armor use has the following constant effects:

- Damage from wearing armor is reduced by one.

Armsman - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Melee 3, and two of *flensing strike*, *jarring bow*, or *precise strike*

Armsman boosts any non-power action or core power using your Melee *expertise*.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Artisan's Familiarity - Power Pool

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Craft 3

Artisan's familiarity augments actions using an object that you fabricated.

- You gain a +1 bonus when using the item as intended by its nature (e.g. a writing kit a +1 to forge documents, but not a +1 when used as a makeshift weapon).

Artistic Talent - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Social Boost - Requires: Performance 3, and one of *confident*, *flourish*, or *impersonation*

Artistic talent boosts any non-power action or core power using your Performance *expertise*.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Ascending Step - Power Pool

Greater Physical Development - Requires: Acrobatics 3, *displacing step*

Ascending step boosts a *move* action.

- You may move across any surface that you would otherwise need to *climb*.
 - Your movement may be any combination of vertical and horizontal.
 - You ignore elevation based movement costs.
 - If you end your turn on a vertical surface, then you fall unless you hold onto it somehow.

Bank Shot - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Projectile 2

Bank shot boosts a Projectile action using a small thrown or ranged weapon.

- The *attack* gains one of the following benefits:
 - Any cover the target benefits from is reduced by one degree so long as the weapon could wrap around the cover (e.g. around a tree the target is hiding behind).
 - The target's Melee *counter* is ignored.

Basic Tactics

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Academics 2

Repeatable

Basic tactics has the following constant effects:

- You gain a +1 bonus to *initiative*.
- You gain a +1 bonus to *resist surprise*.
- Your targets suffer a -1 penalty to *resist surprise*.

Beast Master

Greater Mental Development - Requires: Ranging 3, *scouting*

Beast master has the following constant effects:

- You gain a +1 bonus against targets with the *animal* trait.
- When using animal bond, you may bond an animal up to twice your Scale or a normal sized animal without the *tamable* trait.

Calisthenics - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Athletics 3 and one of *armor use*, *diver*, or *obstruct*

Calisthenics boosts any non-power action or core power using Athletics.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Carnelian Directive

Epic Social Development - Requires: *carnelian sentinel*, Academics 2, Influence 4, Intuition 4

Carnelian directive has the following constant effects while *carnelian sentinel* is active:

- You may expend your karma to affect those under your command.
- If you have *squad tactics*, then those under your command are treated as though they have it too.

Carnelian Sentinel - Power Pool

Lesser Social Stance - Requires: Influence 2, Intuition 2

While *carnelian sentinel* is active:

- Choose up to five willing targets within short earshot. So long as they follow your commands, they may use your *initiative* instead of their own.
- If you have *basic tactics*, then those under your command are treated as though they have it too.
 - The initiative bonus from *basic tactics* does not stack on top of the loaned *initiative*.

Chemist - Power Well

Lesser Mental Boost - Requires: Science 2

Chemist boosts the *fabricate* action.

- You *fabricate* one dose of one of a chemical agents.
 - The material cost is one-tenth the listed value.
 - The action takes one day to complete.
 - The chemical agent has a shelf life of one week or that provided in the chemical agent's description, whichever is shorter.
 - You may fabricate the following chemical agents.
 - Antidote (also requires the chemical agent it will counter)
 - Cure All
 - Diarrhetic
 - Healing Poultice
 - Pain Killer

Citrine Lens

Epic Physical Development - Requires: *citrine perch*, Intuition 2, Projectile 4, Reflection 4

Citrine lens has the following constant effects while *citrine perch* is active:

- Your Projectile actions ignore all partial concealment and partial cover, including that from acting into a crowd.

Citrine Perch - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Stance - Requires: Projectile 2, Reflection 2

While *citrine perch* is active:

- The sight range penalties for Projectile actions are reduced by one, to a minimum of zero.

Concussive Blow- Power Pool

Epic Physical Boost - Requires: *addling strike*, *jarring blow* and either Melee 4 or Projectile 4

Concussive blow boosts an *attack*.

- If your action succeeds, the target also gains the *stunned* condition with encounter duration.

Conditioning - Power Well

Influence vs. Reflection

Epic Long Social Ability, Earshot - Requires: Influence 4, Medical 3, *deprecation*, *hypnotize*

You change the way someone thinks through brainwashing and/or means of positive and negative reinforcement. This process takes a week. *Conditioning* may also be used to reverse the effect of a prior *conditioning*.

Achievement: The target gains the *charmed* condition with respect to a subject you choose. This has a one month duration and is associated with Reflection.

Confident

Lesser Social Development - Requires: Performance 2 or Reflection 2

Confident boosts any action performed in an untrained manner.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.
- Once per session, if the boosted action succeeds and was in the pursuit of your motivation or temptation, then you gain one karma.

Coordinated Tactics

Greater Mental Development - Requires: Academics 3, Influence 2, and either *basic tactics* or *squad tactics*

Coordinated tactics has the following constant effects:

- When either assisting or leading cooperation to perform an action, those assisting can contribute boosts and the maximum number of boosts is increased by two.

Craftsman - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Craft 3 and *smith*

Craftsman boosts any non-power action or core power using Craft.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Cry of Warning - Power Pool

Influence

Lesser Intervening Free Social Shout, Earshot - Requires: Influence 2, Intuition 2

If you're not surprised or if you resisted surprised, you may deliver a *cry of warning* to alert nearby allies.

Achievement: Up to five willing targets within short or medium earshot may re-roll *resist surprise*.

Deft Hands - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Artistry 3 and one of *forgery*, *light step*, or *lip reading*

Deft Hands boosts any non-power action or core power using Artistry.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Deprecation - Power Well

Lesser Social Boost - Requires: Influence 2, Medical 2

Deprecation boosts a non-power Influence action based upon the approach the character uses.

- If using the *charming* approach, you remind the target of his failures so he can barely think of anything else: he gains the *fixation* mental disorder. This condition has a one hour duration and is associated with Reflection.
- If using the *forceful* approach, you break the target's psyche granting him the *posttraumatic stress disorder* mental disorder, which is triggered by further yelling or arguing. This condition has a one hour duration and is associated with Reflection.
- If using the *submissive* approach, you stoke the target's fears and suspicions so he gains the *paranoia* mental disorder. This condition has a one hour duration and is associated with Reflection.

Determined

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Reflection 2

Repeatable

Determination has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum Health is increased by one.

Heroic Determination & Fortitude (Optional): The campaign level may grant characters *determination* and/or *fortitude* for free. With this optional rule the granted powers are given the heroic prefix: *heroic determination* and *heroic fortitude*. These function exactly the same as *determination* and *fortitude*, but they don't count as a purchase of either *determination* or *fortitude*.

Diamond Leaf - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Stance - Requires: Melee 2, Athletics 2

While *diamond leaf* is active:

- You may perform a Melee *counter* to protect someone else within your reach.
- When performing a Melee *counter* to protect yourself, the bonus from the shield quality is increased by one.
- You may use Melee and a shield to *shove* a target.
- When using a weapon with the shield quality, you get +1 bonus to perform or defend against *shove*.

Diamond Oak

Epic Physical Development - Requires: *diamond leaf*, Intuition 2, Melee 4, Athletics 4

Diamond oak has the following constant effects while *diamond leaf* is active:

- Each round you may perform a Melee *counter* as a bonus intervening free action.

Disarming Shot - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Projectile 3, *precise strike*

Disarming shot boosts a Projectile *attack*.

- The action changes from *attack* to *disarm*.

Displacing Step

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Acrobatics 2 or Ranging 2

Displacing step has the following constant effects:

- Once per round, you may *stand up* or *drop prone* as a free action.
- Movement costs are reduced by one to a minimum of one.
 - This does not apply to flooded or encasing terrain.

Diver

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 2 or Ranging 2

Diver has the following constant effects:

- The penalty to actions imposed by flooded and encasing terrains is reduced by one.
- You can hold your breath twice as long as normal.

Emerald Hail - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Stance - Requires: Intuition 2, Projectile 2

While *emerald hail* is active:

- When performing a Projectile action you gain a new sight range category: point blank. This extends from 0 to 5m, and you gain a +1 bonus if your target is within point blank range.

Emerald Shower

Epic Physical Development - Requires: *emerald hail*, Acrobatics 2, Intuition 4, Projectile 4

Emerald shower has the following constant effects while *emerald hail* is active:

- Each round you may perform a Projectile action as a bonus free action.
- If *load* is a free action, then each round you may perform it as a bonus free action.

Empty Vessel - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Reflection 3 and one of *abiding soul*, *mental power font*, and *pour water from the well*

Empty Vessel boosts any non-power action or core power using Reflection.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Endure - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Athletics 3

Endure boosts a *cleanse* performed with Acrobatics, Artistry, Athletics, Melee, Projectile, or Stealth.

- The *cleanse* becomes a free action.

Erudite

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Academics 2 or Science 2

Erudite has the following constant effects:

- You may use Academics for any *appraise* or *lore* test.
- You may use Science for any *identify* test.
- You gain a +1 bonus to the *research* action.

Explorer - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Ranging 3 and one of *animal bond*, *familiar domain*, *scouting*

Explorer boosts any non-power action or core power using Ranging.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Fading Step - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Acrobatics 3, *displacing step*

Fading step boosts an Acrobatics *counter* so long as you are not surprised and not wearing armor that would impose a penalty, regardless of whether or not the penalty is offset by powers:

- If you successfully perform the *counter*, then you gain one additional success.
- If you fail the *counter*, then you are considered to have succeeded with one success.

Familiar Domain

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Ranging 2

Familiar domain has the following constant effects:

- When resolving initiative ties, your roll gets a +5 bonus.
- You automatically awaken to normal sounds and similar triggers at your discretion.
 - If you have the deep sleeper trait, you cancel its effect instead.
- You gain a +1 bonus to *resist surprise*.

Far Shot - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Projectile 2

Far shot boosts a Projectile action.

- The weapon's range is increased to the next category (e.g. a thrown weapon can strike at medium range).

Fierce Lunge - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Melee 2

Fierce lunge boosts a Melee *attack*.

- Your attack gains +1 reach.

Flensing Strike - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Melee 2 or Projectile 2

Flensing strike boosts an *attack*.

- If your action succeeds, the target also gains the *crippled* condition with encounter duration.

Flourish - Power Pool

Lesser Social Boost - Requires: Performance 2

Flourish boosts any action.

- If your action succeeds, then you did it with such flamboyance that you inspire two targets within full earshot and line of sight. These targets gain a +1 bonus the next time they perform the same action in the same encounter.

Follow Through

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 2, Melee 2

Repeatable

Follow through has the following constant effects:

- Once per round, if you disable a target with a *Melee attack*, then you may immediately make another *Melee attack* as a bonus free action

Forgery - Power Well

Artistry

Lesser Mental Long Ability, Reach - Requires: Artistry 2

You create a forgery of an item or someone else's handwriting. This requires a sample of the original and any skill, power, or specialized equipment needed to make the object. Onlookers assume the forgery is the original unless they succeed in an *appraise* test.

Difficulty: The first success a forgery with a difficulty of zero, and each successive success increases its difficulty by one.

Fortitude

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 2

Repeatable

Fortitude has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum Health is increased by one.

Gymnast - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Acrobatics 3 and one of *displacing step*, *physical power stream*, or *skirmishing*

Gymnast boosts any non-power action or core power using Acrobatics.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Hide in Plain Sight - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Stealth 3, *longer shadows*

Hide in plain sight boosts a *conceal* or *sneak* action:

- Witnesses to your *conceal* action cannot automatically find the hidden person or item and must search for it like everyone else.
- Taking aggressive action does not automatically end the *sneak* stance.

Hypnotize - Power Well

Influence vs. Reflection

Lesser Social Short Ability, Earshot - Requires: Influence 2, Intuition 2, Reflection 2

Speaking with a soothing, almost monotone, voice no louder than normal volume while attracting the target's attention to a simple repetitive motion (e.g. swinging watch), you hypnotize your target. For this to work, you must have the target's attention for the entire action cycle, and the target must remain within short earshot.

Achievement: The target gains the *controlled* condition with a one hour duration. You are the controller, using your voice to give commands. While this condition is associated with Reflection, any violence to or by the target immediately ends receptive state and any conditions caused through *hypnotize*.

Impassioned Deed - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Social Boost - Requires: *karma slave* and one of Influence 3, Performance 3, or Reflection 3

Impassioned deed boosts any action that triggers one of your drives.

- You gain a +1 bonus to the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

- Your motivation(s) may only trigger impassioned deed once per day, but your temptation(s) is not limited.

Impersonation

Lesser Social Development - Requires: either Performance 2 or Stealth 2

Impersonation has the following constant effects:

- You may alter *disguise* your voice: target familiar with whom you disguise yourself as do not get a bonus to see through your disguise when you talk.
- You disguises can generally fool anyone: a viewer's bonus to see through your disguise based on familiarity is reduced by one..

Indomitable Breath - Power Pool

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Reflection 3

Indomitable breath boosts a *cleanse* performed with Academics, Craft, Influence, Intuition, Medical, Mysticism, Performance, Ranging, Reflection, or Science.

- The *cleanse* becomes a free action.

Inspire - Power Pool

Influence vs. Reflection

Lesser Instant Social Shout, Earshot - Requires: Influence 2

You extol up to five targets, steadying them so they do not break. A target can only receive the effect of one use of *inspire* at a time.

Achievement: Targets gain a +1 bonus to their next *counter* in the encounter.

Iron Palm

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Melee 2

Iron palm has the following constant effects:

- You basic weapon no longer suffers a -1 penalty to damage.
- You may perform *Melee counters* against armed opponents.

Jarring Blow - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Melee 2 or Projectile 2

Jarring blow boosts an *attack*.

- If your action succeeds, the target also gains the *staggered* condition with encounter duration.

Karma Slave

Lesser Social Development

Karma slave has the following constant effects:

- You may indulge one drive an additional time each game session.

Karmic Favor

Lesser Social Development

Karmic favor has the following constant effects:

- If you have less than two karma after a long rest, then you gain one karma.

Language

Lesser Social Development

Language has the following constant effects:

- You may speak and comprehend a specific language.
- When *language* is purchased, the exact language learned must be chosen (e.g. *language: ქართული*).
- You may purchase *language* multiple times, once for each language.
- All characters know their native language for free.

Light Step

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Artistry 2, Intuition 2

Light step has the following constant effects:

- If a trap surprises you, you may re-roll *resist surprise*.
- If a trap has a physical trigger, then you may re-roll your *counter* against it.

Lip Reading

Lesser Social Development - Requires: Artistry 2, Intuition 2

Lip reading has the following constant effects:

- You can read a person's lips if he is within Aura (Short Sight).
- You can only read lips speaking a language you understand.
- You cannot read lips if you engage in a standard action.

Literacy

Lesser Mental Development

Literacy has the following constant effects:

- You may read and write a specific language.
- When *literacy* is purchased, the exact language learned must be chosen (e.g. *literacy: ქართული*).
- You may purchase *literacy* multiple times, once for each language.

Longer Shadows - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Stealth 3 and either *takedown* or *unobtrusive*

Longer shadows boosts any non-power action or core power using Stealth.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Manifold Strike - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: either Melee 3 or Projectile 3

Manifold strike boosts an *attack*.

- The character gains one bonus *attack*.
 - Each *attack* is considered a separate action for resolution and counters.

Marksman - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Projectile 3 and one of *bank shot*, *far shot*, or *quick draw*

Marksman boosts any non-power action or core power using Projectile.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Medic - Power Well

Lesser Mental Boost - Requires: Medical 2

Medic boosts non-power Medical actions.

- Short Medical actions become instant Medical actions.
- Long Medical actions become short Medical actions.
- When performing *treat injury* you may automatically apply a chemical agent to the target as part of the action. The application of this chemical agent does not count as a healing attempt even if it normally would.
- Barring gross negligence, the character has no chance of accidentally applying a chemical agent to herself (e.g. the character won't spill a drug on herself).

Mental Power Font

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Reflection 2
Repeatable

Mental power font has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum power well is increased by two.

Mental Power Stream

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Academics 2
Repeatable

Mental power stream has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum power pool is increased by two.

Obstruct

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 2 or Melee 2

Obstruct has the following constant effects:

- The difficulty of moving through a space you occupy is increased by one.
 - Normally, simply occupying a space increases the difficulty by one (e.g. clear to difficult). Obstructing a space increases the difficulty another step (e.g. clear to arduous).
 - You may choose when and who this bonus applies against.

Opal Tempest

Epic Physical Development - Requires: *opal wind*, Acrobatics 4, Athletics 4, Intuition 2

Opal tempest has the following constant effects while *opal crescent* is active:

- You may also gain the normal benefits of *opal crescent* so long as one weapon is a light weapon.
- Once per round, when wielding at least one personal weapon, you may use it to perform either a bonus free *attack* or a bonus intervening free Melee *counter*.

Opal Wind - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Stance - Requires: Acrobatics 2, Athletics 2

While *opal crescent* is active:

- When wielding a weapon in each hand, you gain the following benefits so long as one is a personal weapon:
 - The *double block* and *paired strike* boosts do not count against your maximum number of boosts.
 - You gain a +1 bonus to your Melee defense once per round.

Opportunist - Power Pool

Lesser Mental Boost - Requires: Intuition 2

Opportunist boosts any instant action with a one target volume.

- If your target is overwhelmed, then you get a +1 bonus against him.

Oration - Power Pool

Lesser Social Boost - Requires: Influence 2

Oration boosts any core action or core power with earshot range and a volume defined by a number of targets.

- The action or power affects twice the number targets or five additional targets, whichever is more beneficial.

Pearl Dew

Epic Physical Development - Requires: *pearl tear*, Acrobatics 4, Athletics 4, Intuition 2

Pearl dew has the following constant effects while *pearl tear* is active:

- Each round you may perform an Acrobatics *counter* as a bonus intervening free action.
- The damage reduction bonus from *pearl tear* is doubled when not wearing any armor.
- When you *leap*, you may move an additional space.

Pearl Tear - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Stance - Requires: Acrobatics 2, Athletics 2

While *pearl tear* is active:

- So long as your speed is not reduced and you are not penalized by armor, incoming damage is reduced by your attacker's Scale.
- When you perform an Acrobatics counter, you may move one space into clear terrain (adjusted for powers, such as *displacing step*).
- When you *leap*, you don't become prone unless you want to.

Physical Power Font

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 2
Repeatable

Physical power font has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum power well is increased by two.

Physical Power Stream

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Acrobatics 2
Repeatable

Physical power stream has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum power pool is increased by two.

Physician - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Medical 3, *medic*

Physician boosts any non-power action or core power using your Medical *expertise*.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Pour Water from the Well

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Reflection 2
Repeatable

Pour water from the well has the following constant effects:

- When *drawing from the well*, the character regains two more power pool.

Precise Strike - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Melee 2 or Projectile 2

Precise strike boosts a Melee or Projectile action.

- The action gains one of the following benefits:
 - The weapon is considered to have the *armor piercing* quality.
 - Reduce the penalty for *Targets of Unusual Size* by two.

Predictive Tactics

Epic Mental Development - Requires: Academics 4, *basic tactics*, *coordinated tactics*

Predictive tactics has the following constant effects:

- You may declare boosts before or after you make your test, but not after the target reacts (e.g. chooses to *counter* or not).

Quartz Mirror

Epic Mental Development - Requires: *quartz reflection*, Intuition 2, Mysticism 4, Reflection 4

Quartz mirror has the following constant effects while *quartz reflection* is active:

- The sight range penalties for Mysticism actions are reduced by one, to a minimum of zero
- Your Mysticism actions ignore one instance of partial cover.

Quartz Reflection - Power Pool

Lesser Mental Stance - Requires: Mysticism 2, Reflection 2

While *quartz reflection* is active:

- You double the maximum distance of your sight range Mysticism powers.
 - If your effective skill level is two or more greater than the requirement for the power, then the maximum range is multiplied by five instead.

Quick Draw

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Athletics 2, Melee 2, or Projectile 2

Quick draw has the following constant effects:

- Once per round, you may apply one of the following benefits:
 - If *ready item* is an instant action, then it becomes a free action.
 - If *load* is an instant action, then it becomes a free action.
- When resolving *initiative* ties, your roll gets a +5 bonus.

Rally - Power Pool

Influence vs. Reflection

Greater Instant Social Shout, Earshot - Requires: Influence 3, *inspire*

You exhorts up to five targets so they recover faster.

Achievement: Targets may immediately perform *cleanse* using Reflection as an intervening free action. This *cleanse* is subject to all normal limitations.

Reshape Memory

Influence vs. (Reflection)

Greater Social Short Ability - Requires: Influence 3, *hypnotize*

When a target is lulled into a receptive state by *hypnotize*, you may convince the target that her memories are false. The target's other memories will try to sort out inconsistencies between the affected and surrounding memories, but if she is forced to think about the changes, she may perform a *remember* test to use inconsistencies to repair her own memory. Additionally, the target will not remember the encounter during which her memories were altered. Though, if given reason to, the character may ponder the lost time and perform a *remember* test. These conditions are permanent unless the target's memories are repaired.

Difficulty: The first success alters one identity (person, place, or thing) within one memory block, and trying to correctly remember the altered memory has a difficulty of zero. Each successive success increases its difficulty by one. A memory block is one encounter long. Each additional success increases the difficulty to restore the memories by one.

Ruby River

Epic Physical Development - Requires: *ruby waters*, Acrobatics 2, Athletics 4, Melee 4

Ruby river has the following constant effects while *ruby waters* is active:

- Each round you may perform a Melee action as a bonus free action.

Ruby Waters - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Stance - Requires: Athletics 2, Melee 2

While *ruby waters* is active:

- If you wield a melee weapon in one hand and do not use your other hand to fight with, then you gain the following benefits:
 - You get a +1 bonus to your Melee defense against the targets of your Melee actions until your next turn.
 - You get a +1 bonus to your Melee actions against targets who did not target you since your last turn.

Sapphire Flame - Power Pool

Greater Physical Stance - Requires: Acrobatics 3, Athletics 3, Intuition 3, Reflection 3

While *sapphire flame* is active:

- You gain the benefits and penalties of two other stances you know as though you activated both at the same time.

- You may switch these stances by re-activating *sapphire flame*.
- You do not benefit from any developments that enhance the stances.

Scholar - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Boost - Requires: Academics 3 and one of *basic tactics*, *erudite*, or *mental power stream*

Scholar boosts any non-power action or core power using Academics.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Scouting

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Ranging 2

Scouting has the following constant effects:

- The volume of *scrounge* is increased to Field (1000).
- When orienteering, you spot travel hazards, such as quicksand, excessive traffic, or patrols, and can avoid them if you wish. Hidden hazards are *noticed* if your Intuition is higher than their Stealth rating.
- If you act from surprise, then your target suffers a -1 penalty to *resist surprise*.

Shrug Off - Power Well

Athletics

Greater Physical Instant Ability, Self - Requires: Athletics 3

You try to ignore your wounds. You may attempt *shrug off* while unconscious.

Healing: You heal one point of subdual damage per success, up to your maximum Health. You may convert subdual to normal healing at the rate of two points to one.

Sieve the Soul

Greater Mental Development - Requires: Reflection 3

Sieve the soul has the following constant effects:

- You may perform *cleanse* using Reflection to remove any condition with duration of encounter or less.

Silver Tongue - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Social Development - Requires: Influence 3 and one of *deprecation*, *oration*, or *taunt*

Silver Tongue boosts any non-power action or core power using Influence.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Skirmishing - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Boost - Requires: Acrobatics 2 or Ranging 2

Skirmishing boosts any standard action.

- You gain movement points equal to your speed to be instantly used.
 - The number of movement points granted is reduced by the penalty from any worn armor.

Smith - Power Well

Lesser Mental Boost - Requires: Craft 2

Smith boosts the *fabricate* action.

- You add one of the following item qualities to the item you are making, but you suffer a -2 penalty to your test.
 - Feather
 - Honed
 - Reinforced
 - Sturdy

Snatch Projectile - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: either Melee 3 and *iron palm* or Projectile 3 and *bank shot*

Snatch projectile boosts a *counter* performed with Melee or Projectile.

- The *counter* may be applied to any Projectile action.
- In addition to the normal effects of the *counter*, you catch the projectile.

Social Power Font

Lesser Social Development - Requires: Influence 2
Repeatable

Social power font has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum power well is increased by two.

Social Power Stream

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: Intuition 2
Repeatable

Social power stream has the following constant effects:

- Your maximum power pool is increased by two.

Squad Tactics

Lesser Mental Development - Requires: One of Academics 2, Melee 2, or Projectile 2

Squad tactics has the following constant effects:

- When acting into a crowd, you ignore two penalizing spaces.

Suppress Memory

Influence vs. Reflection

Greater Social Short Ability - Requires: Influence 3, *hypnotize*

When a target is lulled into a receptive state by *hypnotize*, you may lock memories away. Your target simply can't recall the suppressed facts without a *remember* test. Additionally, the target will not remember the encounter during which her memories were altered. Though, if given reason to, she may ponder the lost time and perform a *remember* test. These conditions are permanent unless the character's memories are repaired.

Difficulty: The first success suppress one identity (person, place, or thing) or an entire encounter within one memory block, and trying to remember the suppressed memory has a difficulty of zero. Each successive success increases its difficulty by one. A memory block is one encounter long. Each additional success increases the difficulty to restore the memories by one.

Surgeon

Greater Mental Development - Requires: Medical 3, *medic*
Repeatable

Surgeon has the following constant effects:

- The first time you heal a target each day does not count towards the maximum number of times he may be healed that day.

Takedown

Lesser Physical Development - Requires: Melee 2, Stealth 2

Takedown has the following constant effects when you perform a Melee action with the personal item quality.

- You ignore all penalties associated with the *personal* quality.
- If you act from surprise, then your target suffers a -1 penalty to *resist surprise*.

Taunt - Power Pool

Influence vs. Reflection

Lesser Free Social Free Shout, Earshot - Requires: Influence 2

You mock and goad one target to aggress you. This takes the place of the character's normal *speak* action.

Achievement: You force the target to aggress you on his next turn. Threats and insults are appropriate in a social atmosphere where an *attack* is appropriate for a charged scene or combat.

Terrifying Roar - Power Pool

Influence vs. Reflection

Greater Instant Social Shout, Earshot - Requires: Influence 3 and either *cry of warning* or *taunt*

With a dreadful bellow you frighten up to five targets, sending them scurrying.

Achievement: The target gains the *afraid* condition with respect to you. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Reflection.

Thaumaturge - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Development - Requires: Mysticism 3 and either *abiding soul* or *quartz reflection*

Thaumaturge boosts any non-power action or core power using your Mysticism *expertise*.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Think of Me - Power Pool

Lesser Social Boost - Requires: Influence 2 or Performance 2

Think of me augments a non-power Influence or Performance action.

- You command such attention that your target focuses on little other than you: Your target suffers surprise versus the next aggressive action against her during the encounter.
 - Surprise may be triggered by any appropriate event, be it a knife in the back or tap on the shoulder.
 - When the target attempts to *resist surprise*, you may apply your Influence as the defense instead of Stealth.
 - Your target won't be surprised by obvious actions you perform, her attention is focused on you after all, but she may still be surprised by more subtle actions.

Third Eye

Greater Mental Development - Requires: Intuition 3, *alertness*

Repeatable

Third eye has the following constant effects:

- Using your other senses, you reduce the visual concealment of others within your short and medium earshot by one.
 - You gain no benefit if your other senses would not detect the target.

Topaz Mist - Power Pool

Lesser Physical Stance - Requires: Athletics 2, Melee 2

While *topaz mist* is active:

- When wielding a Melee weapon with two (or more) hands, you gain the following benefits
 - You gain a +1 bonus to comparative reach.
 - When you *charge*, you gain a +1 bonus.

Topaz Spray

Epic Physical Development - Requires: *topaz mist*, Athletics 4, Intuition 2, Melee 4

Topaz spray has the following constant effects while *topaz mist* is active:

- Each round you may *attack* a target as a bonus intervening free action when she enters or leaves your reach.
- Your *attacks* with two handed melee weapons deal one additional damage.

Unobtrusive

Lesser Social Development - Requires: Performance 2 or Stealth 2

Unobtrusive has the following constant effects:

- You gain a +1 Stealth rating when in a crowd unless attention is drawn to you.

- If you act from surprise, then your target suffers a -1 penalty to *resist surprise*.

Vanishing Strike - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: Stealth 3

Vanishing strike boosts an action performed while hidden via the *sneak* stance.

- Instead of aggressive actions ending the *sneak* stance, your Stealth rating is cumulatively decreased by 1.
 - Your Stealth rating recovers by 1 each round you do nothing.

Watcher - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Mental Development - Requires: Intuition 3 and one of *alertness*, *lip reading*, or *social power stream*

Watcher boosts any non-power action or core power using Intuition.

- You may re-roll the action.
- The drain depends on the action cycle.
 - Instant actions have a power pool drain.
 - Short and long actions have a power well drain.

Weeping Strike - Power Pool

Greater Physical Boost - Requires: *flensing strike* and either Melee 3 or Projectile 3

Weeping strike boosts an *attack*.

- If your action succeeds, the target also gains the *suffering* condition with encounter duration.

Shard Method

The shard method unlocks power through the shards. There are two paths for willing practitioners. Accession teaches you to turn the power inward, augmenting your abilities. Thaumaturgy instead allows you to release the power outward, creating new, sometimes unbelievable effects. A third path to power is denied save in backroom whispers. Those who have been mutated by over use of shards can master putrescence powers, new, unnatural abilities.

To learn lesser shard powers you must have either Mysticism 2 or Reflection 2, as provided by the power.

To learn greater shard powers you must have four lesser shard powers of the same element and either Mysticism 3 or Reflection 3, as provided by the power.

To learn epic shard powers you must have four greater shard powers of the same element and either Mysticism 4 or Reflection 4, as provided by the power.

Method Skill: The skill used for shard powers varies by element. Accession powers harness Reflection while thaumaturgy powers use Mysticism. Putrescence powers can use any number of skills depending on the exact form of the mutation.

Shard Elements

The shard elements are classifications based upon how the shard power is used. Is it turned inward or outward, or have the shards twisted you so much that your body tries to purge itself of the poison? Shard elements are not mutually exclusive, but each is a unique path to power.

- **Accession** focuses the power of a shard inward, augmenting the wielder.
- **Putrescence** harnesses the corrupted power released from the soul by a shard mutation.
- **Thaumaturgy** unleashes the energies within a shard upon the world, shaping it to a new design.

Implements

Accession and thaumaturgy power always require you to use a shard to invoke. Putrescence powers require no additional implement, just the shard mutation itself.

Many shard power either require a fragment or are augmented by one's use. Whenever a fragment is used, it disappears, its energies suffusing into you. This always forces a test for *shard corruption* against you.

Shard Corruption

Environment vs. Athletics

Environmental Action

The otherworldly energies try to twist you into something else. The skill for this test is equal to the number of fragments you have used and is increased by one for every ten shard powers activated. The skill level resets after a long rest.

Achievement: You gain a *shard mutation seed*. If you already have a *seed*, then it becomes a *core*. The mutation occurs over the course of an hour during which you have the *crippled* condition due to the pain. Undergoing shard corruption also triggers a *horror* test, which, if successful, imparts *alien susurrations*.

New Practices

Where shard powers include boosts and developments, most shard powers are either fractures or incantations.

Fractures require the release of the energies contained within fragments. The first time, a practitioner typically tries to eat the fragment, or at least hold it in her mouth while it sublimates, but it is only necessary to hold onto it. Incantations may be instant or short actions. Instant incantations have a pool drain while short incantations have a well drain; however, all

incantations also require a number of fragments equal to their tier. All incantations with a sight or earshot range have a maximum range of medium range.

Incantations rely upon words and gestures to unlock the power from within a shard. Incantations may be instant or short actions. Instant incantations have a pool drain while short incantations have a well drain. All incantations with a sight or earshot range have a medium range.

Tier	Fragments
Lesser	1
Greater	2
Epic	3

Accession Power	Tier	Practice	Requirement
Buffeting Sentinel	Lesser	Incantation	<i>climatize</i>
Climatize	Lesser	Incantation	<i>puissant foundation</i>
Enervating Strike	Lesser	Boost	<i>tempo</i>
Puissant Foundation	Lesser	Fracture	Reflection 2
Sustenance	Lesser	Fracture	<i>climatize</i>
Tempo	Lesser	Incantation	<i>puissant foundation</i>
Thorns	Lesser	Incantation	<i>puissant foundation</i>
Aura of Strength	Greater	Incantation	Reflection 3, <i>puissant foundation</i>
Death Field	Greater	Fracture	<i>enervating strike, shard armor</i>
Dissection	Greater	Boost	Reflection 3, <i>enervating strike, thorns</i>
Fragmented Aegis	Greater	Fracture	Reflection 3, <i>buffeting sentinel, thorns</i>
Vampiric Strike	Epic	Boost	Reflection 4, <i>dissection, fragmented aegis</i>

Putrescent Power	Tier	Practice	Requirement
Unnatural Appendage	Lesser	Development	shard mutation seed
Unnatural Beam	Lesser	Ability	shard mutation seed
Unnatural Carapace	Lesser	Development	shard mutation seed
Unnatural Intellect	Lesser	Development	shard mutation seed
Unnatural Rending	Lesser	Boost	shard mutation seed
Unnatural Resilience	Lesser	Development	seed imprint and either Athletics 2 or Reflection 2
Unnatural Retaliation	Lesser	Development	shard mutation seed, Athletics 2
Unnatural Vapors	Lesser	Development	shard mutation seed, Athletics 2
Unnatural Mortar	Greater	Ability	shard mutation core, and either <i>unnatural beam</i> or <i>unnatural vapors</i>

Thaumaturgy Power	Tier	Practice	Requirement
Calming Lull	Lesser	Incantation	Mysticism 2
Castigate	Lesser	Incantation	<i>calming lull</i>
Clamoring Force	Lesser	Incantation	Mysticism 2
Clattering Cry	Lesser	Incantation	<i>clamoring force</i>
Climatize	Lesser	Incantation	<i>preservation</i>
Cow the Craven	Lesser	Incantation	<i>calming lull</i>
Crush	Lesser	Incantation	<i>implacable pressure</i>
Decay	Lesser	Incantation	<i>wrack</i>
Distortion Patterns	Lesser	Fracture	<i>illusion</i>
Draw from the Depths	Lesser	Fracture	<i>murmur of lassitude, silver lens</i>
Drifting Feathers	Lesser	Incantation	<i>clamoring force</i>
Empower	Lesser	Boost	<i>calming lull, clamoring force, preservation silver lens</i>
Extension	Lesser	Boost	<i>drifting feathers</i>
False Echo	Lesser	Fracture	<i>silver lens</i>
Fictive Oculus	Lesser	Fracture	<i>illusion</i>
Forget	Lesser	Fracture	<i>castigate</i>
Glacial Guard	Lesser	Fracture	<i>clamoring force, fictive oculus</i>
Glimmer	Lesser	Incantation	<i>silver lens</i>
Heavy Purse	Lesser	Fracture	<i>implacable pressure</i>
Hollow Craving	Lesser	Fracture	<i>cow the craven, wrack</i>
Illusion	Lesser	Fracture	<i>glimmer</i>
Implacable Pressure	Lesser	Incantation	<i>clamoring force</i>
Murmur of Lassitude	Lesser	Incantation	<i>calming lull</i>

Phantom Limb	Lesser	Incantation	<i>drifting feathers</i>
Preservation	Lesser	Fracture	Mysticism 2
Pulse of Insanity	Lesser	Incantation	<i>castigate, draw from the depths</i>
Rippling Earth	Lesser	Incantation	<i>clattering cry, crush</i>
Silver Lens	Lesser	Fracture	Mysticism 2
Wail of Ruin	Lesser	Fracture	<i>clattering cry</i>
Wrack	Lesser	Incantation	<i>preservation</i>
Borrowed Senses	Greater	Fracture	Mysticism 3, <i>cow the craven, silver lens</i>
Clutching Darkness	Greater	Fracture	Mysticism 3, <i>draw from the depths, illusion</i>
Crystal Blister	Greater	Boost	Mysticism 3, <i>crush, extension, illusion</i>
Depth of Desire	Greater	Incantation	<i>cow the craven, pulse of insanity</i>
Dermal Skein	Greater	Incantation	<i>mother's kiss</i>
Deteriorate	Greater	Incantation	Mysticism 3, <i>implacable pressure, wail of ruin</i>
Entrance	Greater	Fracture	<i>depth of desire, forget</i>
Folded Journey	Greater	Incantation	Mysticism 3, <i>extension, implacable pressure, phantom limb</i>
Hypnotic Pattern	Greater	Incantation	Mysticism 3, <i>distortion pattern, forget</i>
Mother's Kiss	Greater	Fracture	Mysticism 3, <i>preservation</i>
Prism Shard Cocoon	Greater	Incantation	Mysticism 3, <i>fictive oculus, preservation</i>
Ravaging Dreams	Greater	Incantation	Mysticism 3, <i>draw from the depths</i>
Shard Slave	Greater	Fracture	<i>phantom limb, prism shard cocoon, rippling earth</i>
Slivered Psyche	Greater	Incantation	Mysticism 3, <i>pulse of insanity</i>
Sublime Burden	Greater	Fracture	Mysticism 3, <i>crush</i>
Tangled Journey	Greater	Incantation	<i>borrowed senses, phantom limb</i>
Whispers	Greater	Fracture	Mysticism 3, <i>draw from the depths</i>
Arterial Void	Epic	Fracture	Mysticism 4, <i>deteriorate, folded journey</i>
Consensus	Epic	Fracture	Mysticism 4, <i>entrance</i>
Defy Gravity	Epic	Incantation	Mysticism 4, <i>folded journey, sublime burden</i>
Dolorous Vice	Epic	Incantation	Mysticism 4, <i>mother's kiss, castigate</i>
Ethereal Hunger	Epic	Fracture	Mysticism 4, <i>phantom limb, rippling earth, sublime burden</i>
Pandemonium	Epic	Fracture	Mysticism 4, <i>slivered psyche</i>
Repeal the Dermal Shell	Epic	Fracture	Mysticism 4, <i>climatize, decay, dermal skein</i>
Shard Land	Epic	Fracture	Mysticism 4, <i>rippling earth, shard slave</i>

Shard Powers

Arterial Void - Power Well

Mysticism

Epic Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 4, *deteriorate, folded journey*

You teleport a number of whole objects up to your Mysticism to another point within sight range. The largest penalty amongst all targets and the destination is applied. Objects must be the same Scale or smaller as you, and, if sentient, they must be willing, otherwise *arterial void* fails. The matter occupying the space at the end of the effect appears where the objects were. Objects are teleported safely and in one piece: they may not be sent into a solid object, in whole or in part and may not be sent piecemeal. Targets worn, held, or otherwise on another person cannot be teleported separate of the person.

- **Achievement:** The target is teleported to another point within range.

Aura of Strength - Power Pool

Reflection

Greater Instant Accession Incantation, Self - Requires: Reflection 3, *puissant foundation*

Those around the target gain greater strength and energy.

Achievement: The target and a number of willing persons up to your Reflection within Aura (Reflection x 2) of the target gains one bonus success for any action tested with Acrobatics, Artistry, Athletics, Melee, Projectile, or Stealth.

- Those benefitting from *aura of strength* are chosen by the target, and the target may change who they are. However, they must remain within Aura (Reflection x 2) of the target to gain the benefit.
- This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Influence.

Borrowed Senses - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *cow the craven*, *silver lens*

You share a target's senses.

Achievement: You perceive the world as the target does, interpreting the target's senses naturally, even if you does not possess those senses (e.g. a bat's sonar seems natural to you).

- You are still fully aware around and in control of your body.
- The target has no concealment from you and may be targeted by you with other powers of the same element as though the range were zero and without need of line of sight.
- This condition has a one hour duration and is associated with Reflection.

Buffeting Sentinel - Power Pool

Reflection vs. Acrobatics

Lesser Instant Accession Incantation, Self - Requires: *climatize*

Winds whip around the target to deflect projectiles

Armor: The target gains an Armor Factor equal to the number of successes, but only against actions using the sight range and that are defended with Acrobatics or that have a volume template of explosion or cloud. *Buffeting sentinel* stacks with existing armor. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Acrobatics.

Calming Lull - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Intuition

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 2

The target is wreathed in an aura of tranquility that calms animals.

Achievement: Animals within Aura (Mysticism x 2) of the target will not engage in aggressive action unless attacked. If attacked, an affected animal will direct its aggression only against the attacker. An animal whose Reflection is greater than your Mysticism is not affected. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Reflection.

Castigate - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *calming lull*

The target's perceptions are blurred as pain flays her mind.

Achievement: The target gains the *dazed* condition. This has encounter duration and is associated with Reflection.

Clamoring Force - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Acrobatics or Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 2

You push the target with a gust of wind or burst of telekinesis.

Force: The target is moved one space per success. Increase the total number of spaces by your Mysticism and decrease it by the target's Strength. If the number of spaces moved exceeds the target's Strength, then he also becomes prone.

Clattering Cry - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *clamoring force*

You jab an item out of the target's grip or off her person.

Circumstance	Difficulty
The item is held in one hand.	-1
The item is held by more than one hand.	-3
The item is attached to the target (e.g. a purse).	-1
The item is well secured to the character (e.g. a backpack).	-3

Force: The target drops the item and it is moved one space per success.

Climatize - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Accession Fracture, Self: *puissant foundation*

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Self: *preservation*

The target is granted inurement to the natural elements.

Achievement: The target gains one *environmental adaptation* trait from the options of cold, corrosive, gas (i.e. poisonous or spore filled atmosphere), electricity, heat, and pressure. This condition has a one day duration and is associated Athletics.

Clutching Darkness - Power Pool

Mysticism

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *draw from the depths, illusion*

The darkness binds and suffocates everyone within Field (Mysticism x 2).

Achievement: The enchanted area has the follows effects.

- If your Mysticism is greater than a target's Reflection, then she is *staggered* in spaces with normal light.
 - If the space is dark, then the target is also *snared*.
- The illumination level of dark terrain cannot be increased by light sources other those created or held by you.
- If your Mysticism is greater than a target's Athletics, then she gains *suffering* in spaces with normal or dark light.
- These conditions take effect immediately upon entering the affected space and end when the target leaves.

Consensus - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Epic Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 4, *entrance*

The target's mind becomes connected to and easily influenced by those around him. He views any change in opinion as a result of this to be wholly natural, as opposed to being caused by some outside force.

Achievement: The target becomes influenced by sentient minds within Aura (Mysticism x 5), including the target.

- If the majority of persons believe something, then any attempts to *convince* the target of it gain a +2 bonus.
- If at least two out of every three persons believes it, then the target is compelled to believe it too.
- This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Reflection.

Cow the Craven - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *calming lull*

The target becomes markedly timid and has difficulty mustering his will.

Achievement: The target suffers a -1 penalty to defend with, *counter* with, or *cleanse* conditions associated with Reflection. When using Influence to perform a core action or core power, a target can only use the submissive approach. This has encounter duration and is associated with Reflection.

Crush - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *implacable pressure*

The target is crushed from all sides with extreme force.

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success plus half your Mysticism, round down.

Crystal Blister - Power Pool or Power Well

Greater Thaumaturgy Boost - Requires: Mysticism 3, *crush, extension, illusion*

Crystal blister boosts any shard thaumaturgy power.

- If the power's volume is one target, then the boosted power gains your choice of the Arc (Mysticism), Cage (Mysticism), or Explosion (Mysticism) template.

- If the power has a volume template, then the dimension is doubled.
- You must expend a fragment when activating this boost.
- The drain of this boost is the same as the power it is boosting (e.g. if the base power has a drain of well, then *crystal blister* also drains the character's power well).

Death Field - Power Pool

Mysticism

Greater Instant Accession Fracture, Self - Requires: *enervating strike, shard armor*

You surrounds yourself with a cascading energy field that tears living matter apart.

Achievement: Once per round per target, when a living target enters Aura (Mysticism) or during your active phase if a target is already within Aura (Mysticism), that target automatically suffers an amount of damage equal to your Mysticism minus the target's Athletics. This damage may be further reduced by armor or similar, but the *death field* has the *armor piercing* item quality.

Decay - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *wrack*

The target rots as time frays its very existence.

Achievement: The target gains the *suffering* condition. This has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Defy Gravity - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Epic Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Self - Requires: Mysticism 4, *folded journey, sublime burden*

Gravity becomes mutable.

Achievement: The target may levitate and move vertically through air or vacuum at her highest base speed. Though she does not gain horizontal movement, she may push off from surfaces. The target may make a controlled fall that will result in no damage. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Depth of Desire - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *cow the craven, pulse of insanity*

You twist the target's desires with regards to one thing until it becomes an *obsession*. This thing can be a single person or item or a broad category.

Achievement: The target is *compelled* to obtain and/or control the thing chosen by the character. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Reflection.

Dermal Skein - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Reach - Requires: *mother's kiss*

The target becomes wrapped in a layer of hard, almost keratin like cutaneous growths.

Bonus Health: The target gains one point of Ablative Health per success. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Deteriorate - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *implacable pressure, wail of ruin*

All of the target's equipment becomes dull and weak.

Achievement: Any advantage (e.g. damage dealt, armor factor, skill bonus, etc.) of any equipment on or used by the target is halved, round down. This extends to natural weapons and armor. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Dissection - Power Well

Greater Accession Boost - Requires: Reflection 3, *enervating strike*, *thorns*

Dissection boosts an attack made with a shard.

- The damage you deal is converted to permanent damage.

Distortion Pattern - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Intuition

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: *illusion*

The appearance of the target becomes blurred and his movements indistinct.

Achievement: The target's concealment is increased one step (e.g. from none to partial) with respect to sight and sound. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Influence.

Dolorous Vice - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Epic Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 4, *mother's kiss*, *castigate*

You magnify pain and debilitation.

Achievement: All numerical aspects of common conditions are doubled (e.g. *crippled* inflicts a -2 penalty instead of -1). This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Reflection.

Draw from the Depths - Power Well

Mysticism

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Self - Requires: *murmur of lassitude*, *silver lens*

You open your mind to the voices of dreams and other realms to learn knowledge regarding a particular subject. The connection through which you seek answers may leave you unhinged. Some information is hard to come by, even in the realms of dream and shadow, imposing a difficulty.

After *draw from the depths* is resolved, the Game Master tests for *horror* against the character using the number of successes gained on *draw from the depths* as the environment's skill. The *horror* check is otherwise resolved normally.

Circumstance	Difficulty
Could get information through gossip.	0
Information would require library research.	-1
Information is secret, but not personal.	-3
Information is secret and personal.	-6
Information is beyond comprehension.	-12

Information: You gain one piece of information per success. The Game Master may simply provide the information or you may ask the Game Master a question, the answer to which will be no more than a short paragraph.

Drifting Feathers - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *clamoring force*

The target feels lighter, almost as if he could fly.

Achievement: The target's jumping distance is doubled, and, if he falls, he only takes one point of Health damage for every ten meters (10m) fallen. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Acrobatics.

Empower - Power Pool or Power Well

Lesser Thaumaturgy Boost - Requires: *calming lull*, *clamoring force*, *preservation silver lens*

Empower boosts any non-core power so long as you meets the requirements for *empower* for the boosted power's method.

- The boosted power gains two additional successes.
- The drain of this boost is the same as the power it is boosting (e.g. if the base power has a drain of well, then *empower* also drains your power well).

Energating Strike - Power Pool
Lesser Accession Boost - Requires: *tempo*

Energating strike boosts an action taken with an implement.

- If your action succeeds, the target also gains the *fatigued* condition with encounter duration.

Entrance - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: *depth of desire, forget*

You ensnares the target's mind, bending him fully to your will. At any given time, you can have no more thralls than your Mysticism.

Achievement: The target becomes *charmed* with respect to a person of your choice. This has a one day duration and is associated with Reflection.

Ethereal Hunger - Power Pool

Mysticism

Epic Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 4, *phantom limb, rippling earth, sublime burden*

You conjure a point of hyper-gravity that tries to suck everything in over a volume of Field (Mysticism x 5).

Achievement: Spaces with the volume take on a current rating equal to your Mysticism. This current pulls all unsecured objects and persons towards the center of the volume. Within Field (1) of the center of the *ethereal hunger* is a continuous environmental hazard that deals damage equal to your Mysticism each round. This has an encounter duration.

Extension - Power Pool or Power Well

Lesser Thaumaturgy Boost - Requires: *drifting feathers*

Extension boosts any non-core power so long as the character meets the requirements for *extension* for the boosted power's method.

- The maximum range of the boosted power becomes long range.
- The drain of this boost is the same as the power it is boosting (e.g. if the base power has a drain of well, then *extension* also drains the character's power well).

False Echo - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Intuition

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: *silver lens*

You create an auditory illusion. Sound generated through *false echo* must be something you could conceivably experience (e.g. a human cannot simulate a dog whistle).

So long as you maintain line of sight with the target location, person, or item, once per round as a free action, you may change and control the created sound or you may add a trigger that will elicit a change in the generated sound. There is no limit to the number of triggers that may be added.

If you know both *illusion* and *false echo*, then you may freely combine the effects of both. The combined power inherits all effects of the parents, and only a single test is made to determine success.

Achievement: You create one of the following illusory sounds.

- You create illusory sound of up to loud volume emanating from within Field (Mysticism). *False echo* cannot cancel sound or create silence. This condition has a one day duration.
- The target's natural sounds are altered in some cosmetic fashion (e.g. a person could speak with a higher pitch). This cannot change the volume of the target's natural sounds. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Influence.

Fictive Oculus - Power Well

Mysticism

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Reach - Requires: *illusion*

You conjure a construct to act as her eyes for up to one day. You can only have one instance of *fictive oculus* in effect at any given time. Additional uses end previous uses.

Achievement: You create sliver spy. You may see through sliver spy and direct it anywhere within Aura (Mysticism x 50). You cannot project actions or powers through the sliver spy.

Folded Journey - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Intuition

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *extension, implacable pressure, phantom limb*

Your target and those within Aura (Mysticism) find travel to be much easier. They do not actually move faster, but Their journey does become notably shorter.

Achievement: Targets' Strategic Speed is doubled. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Intuition.

Forget - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Reach - Requires: *castigate*

You edit information in one of the target's memory blocks. The target's other memories (e.g. the memories before and after the affected memory block) will try to sort out inconsistencies between the affected and surrounding memory blocks, but if the target is forced to think about them, she may perform a *remember* test to use inconsistencies to repair her own memory.

Difficulty: The first success suppress one piece of information within one memory block, and trying to remember the suppressed memory has a difficulty of zero. Each successive success increases its difficulty by one. A memory block is one encounter long. Each additional success increases the difficulty to restore the memories by one.

Fragmented Aegis - Power Pool

Reflection vs. Acrobatics

Greater Instant Accession Fracture, Self - Requires: Reflection 3, *buffeting sentinel, thorns*

The target's skin ripples with shard like particles that harden to turn away blows.

Armor: The target gains an Armor Factor equal to the number of successes. This stacks with worn armor. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Acrobatics.

Glacial Guard - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Acrobatics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: *clamoring force, fictive oculus*

Droplets of water and shards of ice come to swirl about the target and congeal to ward off incoming attacks.

Achievement: The target gains a *glacial guard*, which is treated as a shield. The target may use *glacial guard* to perform a Melee *counter* once per round as a bonus intervening free action. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Acrobatics.

Glimmer - Power Well

Mysticism

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Ritual, Sight - Requires: *silver lens*

Glimmer creates light. The light sources may be positive or negative and of any color or illumination level. These variables must be chosen when the power is used. This power cannot directly affect a living target.

Achievement: You conjure light in one of the following ways.

- You temporarily enchants an object so that all or part of it becomes a light source over Field (Mysticism). If the object is a shard, then the radius is doubled but it casts darkness that absorbs other light. This condition has a one day duration.
- You generate a ball of light in your hand. The ball is a light source over Field (Mysticism), and you may direct it anywhere within Aura (Mysticism). This condition has a one day duration.
- You alter the overall ambient light in a volume of Field (Mysticism x 2), raising or lowering the illumination level one degree. This condition is associated with Influence. This condition has a one day duration.

Heavy Purse - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Reach- Requires: *implacable pressure*

You augment a container's ability to hold items, lightening the load.

Achievement: You temporarily enchant a container no larger than your Scale. An object within the container is treated as though its encumbrance value is half was it actually is. This has a one week duration and is associated with Athletics.

Hollow Craving - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: *cow the craven, wrack*

You nurtures an addiction towards a substance or course of action you chose. The target does not necessarily know that she is suddenly addicted, but she does gain a growing, gnawing craving for the chosen substance or course of action. Thus, she intuitively knows how to satisfy the addiction.

Achievement: The target gains the *addiction* trait. This condition has a one week duration and is associated with Athletics.

Hypnotic Pattern - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *Mysticism 3, distortion pattern, forget*

The target becomes captivated by a swirling, hypnotic pattern of lights.

Achievement: The target gains the *controlled* condition. However, if the character gives no command, then the target acts as though under the *stunned* condition. *Hypnotic pattern* has a one day duration and is associated with Reflection. However, when the target is obviously aggressed against (e.g. the target of *attack*, slapped around via *treat condition*, or takes damage), the duration becomes encounter. If the condition already has encounter duration, then once per round, if the target is obviously aggressed against, then he may automatically attempt to *cleanse* himself of the condition as an intervening free action. The target does not remember anything that occurred while under hypnotic pattern.

Illusion - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Intuition

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: *glimmer*

Illusion creates a false visual image in one of two ways: targeted location or targeted person or item. This image looks real in all ways. However, it is not solid, it carries no scent, and it creates no sound. The image must be something that you could experience (e.g. a human cannot simulate a pattern only seen under UV light unless he has a way to see UV light). The *illusion* is introduced in a believable manner that may include animation (e.g. a pile of rubble may be introduced by appearing to fall from the ceiling or illusory wings may be seen to grow from a target's back).

So long as you maintain line of sight with the target location, person or item, once per round as a free action you may change and control the image or you may add a trigger that will elicit a change in the generated image. There is no limit to the number of triggers that may be added.

If you know both *illusion* and *false echo*, then you may freely combine the effects of both. The combined power inherits all effects of the parents, and only a single test is made to determine success.

Achievement: You create one of the following illusions.

- You cast an illusory image over Field (Mysticism), negative space cannot be created (e.g. you cannot make a hole). This condition has a one day duration.
- You change the appearance of the target's surface by changing color or adjusting designs. It cannot remove apparent mass from the target (e.g. it cannot make a person look smaller). This *illusion* moves with the target in as natural a manner as possible. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Influence.

Implacable Pressure - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *clamoring force*

The target's limbs become leaden, and her breathing becomes shallow and uneven.

Achievement: The target gains the *staggered* condition. This has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

***Mother's Kiss* - Power Well**

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *preservation*

You caress the target's wounds, transforming cuts and gashes into mere bruises. This counts as *healing*.

Healing: Each success converts one point of lethal damage to subdual.

***Murmur of Lassitude* - Power Pool**

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Spell, Sight - Requires: *calming lull*

The target becomes drained, sapped of all energy and warmth.

Achievement: The target gains the *fatigued* condition. This has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

***Pandemonium* - Power Pool**

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 4, *slivered psyche*

You inject madness into the minds of a crowd within Field (Mysticism x5).

Achievement: All targets in the volume of effect gain a mental disorder of your choice; the mental disorder may be different between targets. Only targets within the volume of effect when *pandemonium* is invoked are affected, but it remains in effect even if they leave the area. Once per round as a free action, you may use *pulse of insanity* on a target without drain or line of sight, and the range is treated as zero. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Reflection.

***Phantom Limb* - Power Pool**

Mysticism

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Self - Requires: *drifting feathers*

You gain limited telekinesis for up to an hour, so long as you sustain *phantom limb*. If you changes the drain to well, then you may sustain *phantom limb* as a free action.

Achievement: You may perform physical actions upon anything within an area of Aura (Mysticism x 2) as though you were performing the action yourself. When performing these actions, you may substitute your Mysticism for your normal Strength. Only gross motor actions may be performed, such as lifting an object or performing a *shove*. *Phantom limb* cannot perform fine motor skills, such as picking a lock.

***Preservation* - Power Well**

Mysticism

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Reach - Requires: Mysticism 2

A single target or volume of material no greater than your Scale enters a state of suspended animation. The target's natural function and deterioration are suspended. Autonomic systems continue to function normally. The target will not age nor have any awareness or knowledge of experiences around him.

Achievement: You preserve the target(s). If used on a living target, that target must be unconscious or willing. Otherwise the power fails. If the target is harmed in any way, then *preservation* automatically ends. This condition has a one year duration and is associated with Athletics.

***Prism Shard Cocoon* - Power Pool**

Mysticism vs. Acrobatics

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *fictive oculus*, *preservation*

You encase the target in a cocoon.

Achievement: The target gains the paralyzed condition, but he is also protected by the cocoon, which has Health equal to that of target and an Armor Factor equal to your Mysticism. The target cannot be directly harmed until the cocoon is destroyed, which ends the power prematurely. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Puissant Foundation - Power Pool

Reflection

Lesser Instant Accession Fracture, Self - Requires: Reflection 2

The character augments her physical strength with her will.

Strength: The target's Strength is increased by one per success.

Pulse of Insanity - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *castigate, draw from the depths*

You trigger a mental disorder possessed by the target, taking the place of the environmental actor and obviating the need for usual circumstances that usually triggers mental disorder. You may choose the mental disorder if you know one possessed by the target. Otherwise, it is chosen at random. The target may still choose to indulge, resist, or act out the mental disorder as normal. If the target has no mental disorders, then *pulse of insanity* automatically fails.

Achievement: The target must enact the mental disorder as described to the fullest of her ability where applicable; usually this is simply a common condition. Unless otherwise stated, this has a one day duration, but it expires prematurely if the mental disorder is completely satisfied. This condition is associated with Reflection for the purpose of removal.

Ravaging Dreams - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *draw from the depths*

You twist the target's dreams into a trap of hellish nightmares.

Achievement: The target's sleep is anything but restful. He struggles with nightmares to the point of writhing about and screaming in his sleep, which will wake anyone near the target who is not a *deep sleeper*.

- Adverse conditions on the target don't toll while resting. These conditions still take full effect. Their durations simply pause while the target is asleep and under *ravaging dreams*.
- The target gains no benefit from *rest*.
- *Ravaging dreams* does not itself wake the target. It traps him in sleep unless he is woken by outside forces, which may wake him normally.
- This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Reflection.

Repeal the Dermal Shell - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Epic Long Thaumaturgy Fracture, Reach - Requires: Mysticism 4, *climatize, decay, dermal skein*

The target's flesh and mind permanently warp with mutation.

Achievement: The target mutates. Choose one of the following effects.

- The target gains a mutation *seed*. You choose the type of mutation, but not any specifics.
- You remove a mutation *seed* of your choice.
- You advance an existing mutation *seed* to a *core*.
- You reduce an existing mutation *core* to a *seed*.

Rippling Earth - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Acrobatics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *clattering cry, crush*

The ground in an area up to Field (Mysticism x 2) ripples and shakes.

Achievement: The target(s) is knocked *prone*.

Shard Land - Power Well

Mysticism

Epic Long Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 4, *rippling earth, shard slave*

You weakens the membrane of reality over a volume of Field (Mysticism x 5).

Achievement: You bathe the land in magical energies from beyond.

- The degree of magic saturation is increased by one (e.g. *normal* to *vibrant*).
- If the area reaches *vibrant* saturation, then you can choose to create a minor shard fall.
- If the area reaches *immerse* saturation, then you can choose to create a minor or major shard fall.
- Shard falls start over the course of ten minutes and last up to an hour. You have no control over the shard fall, and these forced shard falls leave no shards behind, only fragments.
- *Shard lands* has a one day duration.

Shard Slave - Power Well

Mysticism

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: *phantom limb, prism shard cocoon, rippling earth*

You animate a mass of material with shards. You can only have one instance of *shard slave* in effect at any given time. Additional uses end previous uses.

Achievement: You create and control one of the following for one day.

- Sand Walker
- Splinter Swarm
- Stone Simulacrum

Silver Lens - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Intuition

Lesser Short Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 2

The target's eyes adjust to light that would cause others to squint or look away.

Achievement: Any visual concealment not granted by cover is reduced one degree (e.g. complete to partial), and sudden changes in illumination have no adverse effect beyond the illumination levels themselves. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Intuition.

Slivered Psyche - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *pulse of insanity*

You invokes *horror* upon the target, taking the place of the environmental actor that usually causes *horror*.

Achievement: The target gains a mental disorder chosen by the Game Master. The mental disorder should be appropriate for both the target and the current circumstances. Different characters can get different mental disorders from the same encounter. This condition has a one week duration and is associated with Reflection. If the target suffers horror again within the one week duration, then the duration becomes one month. If the target suffers horror again within the one month duration, then the duration becomes one year. If the target suffers horror a final time within the one year duration, then it becomes permanent.

Sublime Burden - Power Well

Mysticism

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *crush*

You alter the effect of gravity over a volume of Field (Mysticism x 5).

Achievement: You either increase or decrease the gravity, and consequently the difficulty of terrain by one step (e.g. difficult becomes clear or arduous). Impassible terrain is unaffected.

Sustenance - Power Well

Reflection

Lesser Instant Accession Fracture, Self - Requires: *climatize*

You draw upon the powers of the shard to sustain your body beyond its normal needs

Achievement: For one day you do not need sleep, food, or drink.

Tangled Journey - Power Well

Mysticism vs. Intuition or Ranging

Greater Short Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *borrowed senses, phantom limb*

The target cannot find her way, likely getting lost in the process.

Achievement: The target simply cannot get to where she wants to go. She fully believes she is going the right way, but she will find herself backtracking, going in circles, and/or simply getting turned around. Even if actively following directions, the target will go the wrong way as she will find a way to misinterpret the directions. Though, this does not preclude the target from being led on the right path, she will believe that she is being led the wrong way. You have no control over how the target wanders; it is random. This condition has a one day duration and is associated with Intuition.

Tempo - Power Pool

Reflection vs. Acrobatics

Lesser Instant Accession Incantation, Self - Requires: *puissant foundation*

The target's movement is accelerated.

Achievement: Your Tactical Speed is doubled. This has encounter duration and is associated with Acrobatics.

Thorns - Power Pool

Reflection vs. Acrobatics

Lesser Instant Accession Incantation, Self - Requires: *puissant foundation*

The target appears to be covered with thorns that automatically impale attackers.

Achievement: The target gains *retaliatory carapace (Reflection/2)* trait. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Acrobatics.

Unnatural Appendage

Lesser Putrescence Development - Requires: shard mutation seed
Repeatable

Unnatural appendage has the following constant effects.

- You gain one of the following effects:
 - Extra Arms: You gain the *multi-limbed* trait.
 - Horns: You gain a new natural weapon: Horns (no special properties).
 - Extra Legs: You gain the *long stride* trait.
 - Extra Pseudopods/Tentacles: You gain the *constrictor* trait and a new natural weapon: Pseudopod (subdual, +1 Reach).
 - Tail: You increase your swimming Movement by one and gains a new natural weapon: Tail Lash (Personal, Subdual)
 - **Core:** Shark Maw: You gain a new natural weapon: Shark Maw (Personal, +2 Damage)
 - **Core:** Stinger: You gain a new natural weapon: Stinger Tail (+1 Damage)
 - **Core:** Wings: You gain a flying speed equal to twice your base Movement, but only when carrying less than half your Carrying Capacity.
- This power prevents you from wearing armor that is not specifically tailored.
- Repeated purchase do not increase requirements.
 - The same limbs cannot be chosen twice, nor can limbs overwrite one another (e.g. cannot have both tail and stinger).

- With Game Master permission one set of limbs may morph into and replace a like set over time (e.g. extra arms become tentacles).

Unnatural Beam - Power Pool

Projectile vs. Acrobatics

Lesser Instant Putrescence Ability, Sight - Requires: shard mutation seed

You projects a beam charged with the essence of your mutation up to medium sight range. The beam can shoot you're your eyes, mouth, hand, or similar, but the form is set when the power is purchased.

If you sublimate a fragment when activating *unnatural beam*, then the range becomes reach and the volume becomes Stream (Short Sight Range).

With a shard mutation core you can strike targets within long sight range.

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success.

Unnatural Carapace

Lesser Putrescence Development - Requires: shard mutation seed

Unnatural carapace has the following constant effects.

- Your skin twists outward exposing your corrupted being to the world: The outward signs of your mutation are dreadfully obvious now.
- Your natural armor is increased one step (e.g. none to light).

Unnatural Intellect

Lesser Putrescence Development - Requires: shard mutation seed

Unnatural intellect has the following constant effects.

- If you have the mindless trait, then it is replaced with the animal trait.
 - **Core Imprint:** Both the mindless and animal traits are removed.
- If you have the animal trait, then it is removed.

Unnatural Mortar - Power Pool

Athletics or Projectile vs. Acrobatics

Greater Instant Putrescence Ability, Sight - Requires: shard mutation core, and either *unnatural beam* or *unnatural vapors*

You ejects a globule of aberrant sputum that explodes and splatters over an area Explosion (Strength) within medium sight range.

If you sublimate a fragment when activating *unnatural mortar*, then the area becomes Explosion (Strength x 2).

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success.

Unnatural Rending

Lesser Putrescence Boost - Requires: shard mutation seed

Unnatural rending augments any unarmed Melee action.

- The weapon is considered to have the *armor piercing* quality.
- If your action succeeds, the target also gains the *staggered* condition with encounter duration.

Unnatural Resilience

Lesser Putrescence Development - Requires: shard mutation seed and either Athletics 2 or Reflection 2
Repeatable

Unnatural resilience has the following constant effects.

- Your Health is increased by one.
 - **Core Imprint:** Your Health is increased by two instead.

Unnatural Retaliation

Lesser Putrescence Development - Requires: shard mutation seed, Athletics 2

Repeatable

Unnatural retaliation has the following constant effects.

- You gain the *retaliatory carapace (personal, 1)* trait.
 - If the character already has the *retaliatory carapace* trait, then the damage is increased by one instead.
 - **Core Imprint:** Range of the *retaliatory carapace* trait becomes reach.

Unnatural Vapors - Power Pool

Athletics vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Putrescence Ability, Reach - Requires: shard mutation seed, Athletics 2

The character exhales a wave of infused vapor over Cone (Strength x 2).

If you sublimate a fragment when activating *unnatural vapors*, then the area becomes Cone (Strength x 5).

Achievement: The target gains the *staggered* condition. This has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Vampiric Strike - Power Pool

Epic Accession Boost - Requires: Reflection 4, *dissection, fragmented aegis*

Vampiric strike boosts an attack made with a shard.

- For each point of damage your deal you gain one Ablative Health. The Ablative Health dissipates at the end of the encounter.

Wail of Ruin - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture Sight - Requires: *clattering cry*

You match the harmonic frequency of the target's physical structure, causing it to vibrate violently.

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success plus half your Mysticism, round down. Damage is doubled against items and halved against living or undead targets. Items that are worn or held gain the same protection as the target holding them (i.e. half if held by a human).

Whispers - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Reflection

Greater Instant Thaumaturgy Fracture, Sight - Requires: Mysticism 3, *draw from the depths*

Targets within Field (Mysticism) are plagued by whispers from the reflection of reality. Most animals bolt when hearing these voices, and even humans find them unsettling.

Achievement: An animal gains the *afraid* condition; this is a general fear, and they will simply look for the nearest escape, not knowing the actual source. A sentient target gains the *staggered* condition. These conditions have encounter duration and are associated with Reflection. At the end of the encounter a horror test is made against the target with a skill equal to the number of successes gained.

Wrack - Power Pool

Mysticism vs. Athletics

Lesser Instant Thaumaturgy Incantation, Sight - Requires: *preservation*

You wrack the target with excruciating pain.

Achievement: The target gains the *crippled* condition. This has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Economy and Equipment

SHARDS takes place in an alternate history of our world. This means there are dozens of currencies to use. To simplify matters, **prices** are listed in **silver coins (s)** or **copper coins (c)**. **One silver equates to 100 copper**. Use these as guidelines for bartering goods and services. These values are estimates, so they are not a perfect reflection of an economy: feel free to change values based on transportation costs, demand, cultural bias, inflation, and other factors.

Starting Equipment

The Game Master decides the money and/or equipment that you start with. This should be based upon the setting, scenario, characters' histories, and their skills and powers. Unless the setting or scenario calls for it, you should begin with equipment necessary to practice each of your powers. This can include weapons, kits, and gear as appropriate. Granting funds beyond this, allows you to tailor your character's starting equipment.

Damage to Items

Like anything else, items have Health and can be damaged. It is unnecessary to track this damage unless you purposefully try to break something. By default, an item's Health is equal to its Encumbrance Value. However, the material and design of an item may grant it natural armor or item qualities. While examples are provided, these are simply guidelines.

Description	AF	Qualities
Paper	0	Fragile
Hardback Book	1	
Wooden Door	2	Sturdy
Solid Wood	3	Reinforced, Sturdy
Solid Metal	10	Reinforced, Sturdy
Solid Stone	10	Reinforced, Sturdy

Item Qualities

Item qualities are descriptors that give items special attributes beyond any base numbers. There are four general categories of items to which item qualities may be attached: **armor**, **implement**, **miscellaneous**, and **weapon**. Some item qualities are not appropriate for some items.

Item Quality Descriptions

Armor Piercing (Weapons): Target's armor factor is ignored.

Feather (Any): Halve the item's EV and minimum Strength, round up.

Fragile (Any): Halve the item's Health.

Glowing (Any): The item glows, emitting normal light over Field (5).

Honed (Weapons): +1.

Personal (Weapons): You can use this weapon in a grapple, and you may ready it as a free action. When used outside of a grapple, if the target's AF is greater than your Scale, then the damage is halved. Finally, when comparing reach, yours is considered one less.

Reinforced (Armor): Cancels *armor piercing*.

Shard (Implements or Weapons):

Shield (Weapons): You may use Melee for defense against sight range actions. You also get a +1 bonus to perform a *Melee counter*, and may use it against sight range actions.

Soft (Weapons): Dealt damage is halved.

Sturdy (Any): Double the item's Health.

Subdual (Weapons): The weapon deals *subdual* damage; other weapons deal *lethal* damage.

Two Handed (Weapons): You need two hands to use this properly.

Armor

No matter how good you are, sometimes an opponent's blade just sneaks past your defenses. That's when you're glad you are wearing your armor.

Armor	AF	EV	Penalty	Cost	Examples
Light	1	2	-1	100	Leather
Heavy	2	4	-2	250	Scale

Damage defended against with Acrobatics or that otherwise comes from an external source (e.g. an explosion) is reduced by the armor's **Armor Factor (AF)**.

Worn armor encumbers you by the listed Encumbrance Value (EV) amount, but, if it is carried, then the armor's EV is doubled.

Where armor is designed for use in combat, an untrained user finds it hard to move around in it. The **armor penalty** applies to Acrobatics, Artistry, Athletics, Stealth, and all non-core powers.

Armor is heavy and hot. Wearing it makes you weary. Each hour of activity while wearing armor, you suffer one point of subdual damage. The damage is doubled in hot environments (e.g. inside a volcano, in the tropics, etc.). The *environmental adaptation: heat* trait halves this damage, round down, and it may be reduced by *armor use*.

Weapons

When you finally need to fight, it helps to be armed. Where a dizzying array of weapons populates reality, most fit within several broad categories without needing to detail every point of difference. Thus a battle axe is functionally equivalent to a war hammer, even though you may describe them differently.

All weapons require a certain amount of **Strength (STR)** to use properly. If you don't meet the requirement, then you suffer a penalty equal to the difference between the required Strength required and your Strength when trying to use it.

Melee weapons can be given the subdual quality (e.g. a personal weapon becomes a sap, a light weapon becomes a club, and a reach weapon becomes a staff or whip). This halves the cost.

Adapted from large shards, **shard daggers** are frightening tools, and drawing one means you intend to kill your opponent. Not only do wounds from a shard dagger heal more slowly, but its wielder can draw power from it to enhance her fighting ability.

Weapon	Skill	STR	EV	Qualities / Notes	Cost	Examples
Basic	Melee	0	0	Personal, Subdual, -1 Damage	n/a	Fist
Personal	Melee	1	1	Personal	10s	Dagger
Shard Dagger	Melee	1	1	Personal, Shard	500s	Shard Dagger
Light	Melee	2	2		50s	Axe, Flail
Heavy	Melee	4	4	Two Handed, +1 Damage	150s	Great Mace
Reach	Melee	4	4	Two Handed, +1 Reach	100s	Spear, Halberd
Shield	Melee	3	6	Shield, Subdual	80s	Shield
Small Thrown	Projectile	1	1	Personal, Short Sight Range	15s	Kunai
Thrown	Projectile	2	2	Short Sight Range	40s	Javelin
Ranged	Projectile	2	2	Medium Sight Range	80s	Sling, Short Bow
Heavy Ranged	Projectile	4	6	Medium Sight Range, +1 Damage	200s	Long Bow, Crossbow
Ranged Ammo	n/a	n/a	1/10		1s	Arrow

Kits

Kits let you perform activities (e.g. a medical kit lets you perform Medical actions). While the description of each kit provides ideas as to contents, the exact make up of each is determined by the player and the Game Master.

Burglary Kit: Incorporating tools such as lock picks, a crowbar, a screwdriver, a hammer, glass cutter, a drill, a wrench, pliers, key molds, and/or similar, the burglary kit is intended as a single set of mechanical tools necessary for most situations that one would need to infiltrate a building artfully.

Camping Kit: A bedroll, a tent or other portable shelter, and basic cooking utensils make up the bulk of this kit. It may also incorporate a fire starter, a canteen, a spade, a lantern, tent, and/or similar.

Climbing Kit: This kit incorporates an assortment of climbing tool appropriate for the setting, including twenty meters of rope, specialized hammer or pick, chalk, grappling hook, or similar. Under most circumstances such tools are unnecessary, and when applied grant a +1 bonus to *climb* tests.

Crafting Kit: Each crafting kit applies to a specified field (e.g. carpentry, clothing, food, etc.). This field kit allows the character to perform the most basic activities for the craft, but it does not provide full facilities. It falls to the Game Master to adjudicate what can be fabricated.

Disarm Kit: Designed to aid in the disarming of alarms and other traps, this kit generally consisting of a pry bar, pliers, and wire cutters, a disarm kit may be expanded to include screw drivers, grease, cords of varying lengths, or the like.

Disguise Kit: More than just a makeup kit, a disguise kit can incorporate prosthetics, wigs, hair dyes, colored contact lenses, and cheek spacers. While a disguise kit does not include full costumes or clothing, it may include accessories, such as a fake badge or fake jewelry.

Medical Kit: More than just a first aid kit, a medical kit allows a character to *treat conditions*, *treat injury*, and provide *medical care*.

Riding Kit: This kit consists of the various tack and harness elements needed to ride an appropriate mount. It may include saddle, bit, bridle, stirrups, and the like. A riding kit can also be used for pack animals; saddle, stirrups, reigns, and the like would be replaced with a pack harness, straps, and tether.

Science Kit: Each science kit applies to a specified field (e.g. chemistry). This field kit allows the character to perform the most basic activities for the craft, but it does not provide full facilities. It falls to the Game Master to adjudicate what can be fabricated.

Writing Kit: Providing everything needed to take written notes, in most settings this will likely consist of a journal and a handful of writing utensils.

Item	EV	Cost
Burglary Kit	4	60s
Camping Kit	8	100s
Climbing Kit	4	40s
Crafting Kit	4	60s
Disarm Kit	2	40s
Disguise Kit	4	50s
Medical Kit	4	50s
Riding Kit	6	100s
Science Kit	6	200s
Writing Kit	2	45s

Item	EV	Cost	Notes
Basket	2	10s	Capacity: 6
Book	2	40s	
Bottle	1	1s	Capacity: 1
Bucket	2	4s	Capacity: 4
Candle	1	10c	Normal Light over Field (2), lasts 1 hour
Cask	16	25s	Capacity: 32
Chain, 10m	15	60s	
Fragment	1/10	20s	Shard
Instrument	3	100s	
Ladder, 3m		20s	
Lamp	1	5s	Normal Light over Field (2), lasts 2 hours
Lantern	2	10s	Normal Light over Field (2), lasts 4 hours
Lantern, Directional	2	20s	Normal Light over Cone (5), lasts 4 hours
Lock	1	16s	See description
Lock Picks	1	35s	
Manacles	1	20s	Impose -5 to <i>escape bindings</i>
Mirror	1	30s	
Pack	0	8s	Capacity: 4
Pole	4	10s	
Rope, 20m	4	20s	
Shard	1	500s	Shard
Soap	1/2	1s	
Torch	2	50c	Normal Light over Field (2), lasts 1 hour

Accessories

Nearly any useful item not otherwise covered is considered an accessory. The items included can serve as examples to build new equipment as needed.

A **light source** (*candle, lantern, torch, etc.*) creates light over a volume template.

A **container** (*basket, bottle, bucket, cask, pack, vial, etc.*) holds stuff, EV up to its capacity. Containers don't decrease contents' EV. For smaller containers, halve all values, and, for larger containers, double all values.

Where **musical instruments** come in all manner of sizes, a standard instrument is normally held and operated in two hands, such as guitars, violins, clarinets, or bagpipes. For smaller instruments, halve all values, and, for larger instruments, double all values.

If you want to keep something shut, **lock** it. Each cumulative doubling of the lock's price increases the difficulty of any *manipulate device* tests against the lock by one.

Full sized **shards** can be used to perform shard powers and even serve as a shard dagger. **Fragments** are smaller chips that serve only to fuel certain shard powers called fractures.

Rations

Rations are unprepared food stuffs as opposed to cooked meals. While full of taste, **fresh rations** generally begin to spoil within a week if not preserved. **Preserved rations** consist of smoked, salted or dried meats, hardtack, flat bread, dried fruit, pickled vegetables, and the like; this food has undergone some sort of preservation process so it can be stored. Preserved rations can usually keep for a year.

Item	EV	Cost
Alcohol, Cheap, 1 Day	2	1s
Alcohol, Quality, 1 Day	2	35s
Fresh Rations, Cheap, 1 Day	3	2s
Fresh Rations, 1 Day	3	3s
Fresh Rations, Quality, 1 Day	3	6s
Preserved Rations, 1 Day	3	4s
Sugar Drink, 1 Day	2	3s
Water, 1 Day	2	1s

Clothing

Clothing is generally treated in terms of ensembles. These incorporate all the articles of clothing appropriate for that look, including everything from undergarments to an overcoat, if appropriate.

It is assumed that normal attire has no encumbrance value when worn, and an EV of one when not worn. Heavier clothing is considered armor.

Item	Cost
Clothing Article, Plain	7s
Clothing Article, Common	15s
Clothing Article, Fine	40s
Clothing Article, Exquisite	450s
Ensemble, Plain	18s
Ensemble, Common	37s
Ensemble, Fine	100s
Ensemble, Exquisite	1125s
Ensemble, Camouflaged	75s

Chemical Agents

Poisons, drugs, herbal remedies, and the like are collectively called chemical agents, whether their effect is positive or negative. Chemical agents have an **effect**, **duration**, a **target**, a **delivery**, and an **addiction** rating. Unless otherwise stated, all chemical agents are associated with Athletics.

For a chemical agent to take effect it must be applied to an appropriate **target**: **living** (most characters), **non-living** (items), or **ephemeral**. It must also be administered through the appropriate method of **delivery**: **contact**, **ingestion**, **inhalation**, or **injection**. If either the target or delivery is wrong, then the chemical agent does not have the intended effect. If the delivery method is correct, then the chemical agent takes effect, and its effect bypasses armor and similar defenses. Note: resistances and immunities still have full impact. If an **addictive** chemical agent is administered properly, then it makes a *chemical addiction* test against the character.

Each dose of a chemical agent is assumed to be 1/5 EV unless otherwise stated, and each as a potency for a Scale 1 target. To achieve the listed effect, a dose needs to be split or multiple doses may need to be combined. Alternatively, simply divide the duration by the target's Scale.

Chemical Addiction

Environment vs. Athletics

Environmental Action

Circumstance	Skill
No Addiction	n/a
Mildly Addictive	0
Highly Addictive	2

The agent stimulates the chemical receptors in your brain so that you develop an overpowering craving for it. The chemical agent dictates the skill level.

Achievement: You become *addicted* (as per the trait) to the chemical agent. This is a condition associated with Athletics, and its duration is one day. If you are already under the effects of this condition with a one day duration, then the duration becomes one week. If the duration is already one week, then it becomes one month. If it is already one month, then it becomes one year. Finally, if the duration is already one year, then it becomes permanent.

Several example chemical agents are provided, but these should in no way be considered limiting. More specific chemical agents should be tailored to the source it comes from. For example, a particular neurotoxin may only have an ingestion delivery whereas a particularly exotic one may have a contact delivery.

Item	Cost
Antidote	500s
Arthroxin	100s
Diarrhetic	100s
Hallucinogen	50s
Healing Poultice	50s
Hemotoxin	500s
Inflammatory	100s
Mnemotoxin	800s
Narcotoxin	500s
Neurotoxin	800s
Pain Killer	200s

Antidote, [Chemical Agent] (ingestion or injection delivery; any target; instant; no addiction): Each antidote is keyed to a specific chemical agent. Upon administration, the specified chemical agent is canceled and has no further effect.

Arthroxin (any delivery; living targets; encounter duration; no addiction): You drop any held items. While you can still pick up and hold tools, actions relying on fine motor control suffer a -2 penalty.

Cure All (injection delivery; living targets; instant; mild addiction): You may immediately perform *cleanse* as an intervening free action. This cleanse can also affect powers with a day duration. Cure all only has a shelf life of one day, thereafter it is rendered inert.

Diarrhetic (ingestion delivery; living targets; 1 day duration; no addiction): You rapidly dehydrate as you are overcome by bouts of liquefied bowel movements: you suffer a -1 penalty to *recovery*, and every five hours you suffer one point of *subdual* damage.

Hallucinogen (ingestion or injection delivery; living target; 1 hour duration; mildly addictive): You perceive things that aren't actually there and have difficulty differentiating visions from reality. The Game Master may freely alter your perceptions of reality. The hallucination affects any or all of your senses, but it cannot remove things from your senses (e.g. cannot make something invisible) or allow the target any sort of real time enhanced perception of the real world. You cannot physically interact with the hallucination. Though, you will believe you do and you can "feel" a different texture on an existing object. Additionally, the target suffers a -1 penalty to Initiative.

Healing Poultice (contact delivery; living targets; 1 day duration; no addiction): You gain a +1 bonus to *recovery*.

Hemotoxin (ingestion or injection delivery; living targets; encounter duration; no addiction): You gain the *suffering* condition.

Inflammatory (contact or ingestion delivery; living targets; 1 day duration; no addiction): You break out in horrible, obvious blisters and painful rashes, which cause the *crippled* condition.

Mnemotoxin (any delivery; living targets; encounter duration; no addiction): At the end of the encounter, you forget what occurred during the encounter. Attempts to *remember* the events suffer a -5 penalty.

Narcotoxin (ingestion; inhalation; and injection delivery; living targets; 1 hour duration; no addiction): You fall *asleep*.

Neurotoxin (ingestion; inhalation; and injection delivery; living targets; encounter duration; no addiction): You are *paralyzed*.

Item	Cost
Gemstone, Precious, 1 karat	700s
Gemstone, Semi Precious, 1 karat	35s
Pearl, 2 karat	700s
Gold, 1kg	200s
Silver, 1kg	3s
Steel, 1kg	21s
Iron, 1kg	1s
Ivory, 1kg	290s
Saffron, 1kg	470s
Tin, 1kg	20s
Tobacco, 1kg	3s
Ambergris, 1kg	2100s
Salt, 1kg	1s
Sugar, 1kg	5s
Copper, 1kg	3c

Pain Killer (ingestion or injection delivery; living target; 1 day duration; mildly addictive): You are immune to the *crippled* condition.

Raw Goods / Precious Substances

Unrefined goods usually cost half as much. Gemstone values by weight increase non-linearly; a 2 karat stone may be worth 3 or 4 times as much.

Hospitality

Prices for meals and lodging help ground characters with a basic cost of living. More importantly, hospitality values add flavor to the setting by making characters pay attention to the economy. Lodging costs are for one day. Meal and drink costs are for individual purchases.

Service	Cost
Lodging, Cheap Common Room	50c
Lodging, Double	150c
Lodging, Fine	10s
Meal, Cheap	1s
Meal	2s
Meal, Quality	5s
Drink, Cheap	50c
Drink	3s
Drink, Quality	10s

Retainers

You may wish to hire employees, contract services, or hire your own services out. The values listed are for one day of work by an average member of the profession, but they should be readily adjusted for relative skill, legality, and cultural differences.

Job	Cost
Accountant / Scribe	4s
Artistic Painter	6.5s
Carpenter	4.5s
Chemist	7s
Companionship	4s
Cook	4s
Doctor	9s
Investigator	6s
Laborer	2.5s
Lawyer	10s
Leather Worker	4s
Potter	4s
Priest	3.5s
Scientist	6.5s
Servant	3.5s
Smith	5s
Soldier	4.5s
Tailor	4.5s
Teacher	4.5s
Thief	3.5s
Transporter	3s

Building Your Game

This chapter is primarily for the Game Master. It discusses the elements of settings and adventures and how to bring them together. Before reading it, you may want to revisit the **Gamer Contract** in the **Getting Started** chapter. This agreement sets forth the expectations of everyone regarding what the game will be. Referencing this helps ensure that everyone's expectations are met and avoids needless headaches that can occur when you ignore the group's wishes.

Setting

SHARDS is set in an alternate history Earth. This makes it both familiar and alien. Yet, much of the world is still left for you to create and explore, and you shouldn't do it alone. By default SHARDS is set in the eleventh century. This time period is well documented, but not necessarily well known. If all the players and the Game Master work together to build the setting, then everyone familiarizes themselves with it. It will help steep all of you in the world you are about to explore. Of course, the Game Master should make a few secrets; discovery is part of the fun of adventure. Although some broad brushstrokes, have been provided, you truly need details to plan out your adventures and make informed decisions, and this is how we will do that.

First, your group should choose a region of the world that interests you. Thinking of it in terms of the modern world is OK. Once you choose that region, say, Greece, look it up and research its history. Look at where your region was during the 11th century (or the start date for your game) and the end of the 6th century when the first shard fall occurred. It turns out that during this whole period Greece was part of the Byzantine Empire, more or less. There was an ebb and flow of borders due to invasions. Don't just end with the two basic end points, also grab a few key events between them, like the Slavic invasion of Greece during the 7th century that cast it out of the empire for a time.

Now that you have established your base line, start asking what ifs. What if Athens was a locus of shard falls? What if the invading slavs embraced the use of shards while the Byzantine Empire still outlawed them for religious reasons? Keep asking these questions and write them down on separate pieces of paper. The more questions you generate, the better.

Next, decide what ideas your group wants to keep. Voting is an easy way to decide, but make sure that everyone has a say in the matter. While you are discussing the ideas ask one key question: "does this make sense?" Follow that up with "why is it this way?" and "how did it come to be?" Write down the answers to each of these questions on the paper with the "What if?" For instance, Athens may be a locus for shard falls because it has a high level of magic saturation.

Once you have decided what ideas you are going to keep you need to finish fleshing them out. Ask yourselves what the consequences of each idea was. Continuing with Athens, the first one or two shard falls probably turned it into an abattoir. After that everyone left. Now, scavengers routinely pick the ruins clean, especially right after a shard fall. There's probably some settlements staked out around it, and the authorities try to maintain a control on the resulting shard trade. Athens has gone from a once thriving metropolis to an open air mine.

During this process, try to weave each of your remaining ideas together. It's possible that you have to drop one because it just won't fit, that's OK.

It's also possible that there are still some details that you haven't worked out. That's OK too, but if there's anything you want to know, ask! Let the group work it out.

When you're all done you will have painted a grand picture for your setting with as many or as few details as you need. It may still closely resemble our Earth's history or it may be vastly different. Feel free to shake things up. What is most important is that through this collaborative process your entire group has developed a shared sense of what your game world is like, and you can all make more informed decisions with your characters.

Points of Interest

When mapping out your setting, you probably already identified some key points of interest, but those aren't the only ones. You will want to define specific places that are pertinent for your game. These can be large (an entire city or forest) or small (e.g. a single build). Start by addressing the following points:

- **Concept:** What are a few words that summarize the location? What mood does it evoke? This should also give a sense of how large the place is: Is it just one building, or is it an entire peninsula?
- **Supply:** What does the place have in excess? What do people come to the place to obtain? If you are trading, what would be good to buy there? A fortress might supply defense, and a mining town might supply ore.
- **Demand:** What does the place need? What is a fundamental scarcity that people within it seek to fulfill? If you are trading, what would be good to sell there? An abandoned tower in a dark forest might demand hope, and a nascent colony might demand medical supplies.

From here the location can be expanded upon. Its physical layout and the psychological map of its populace will reflect each of these points. People will be on the lookout for the demands, possibly desperate for them. Conversely, the supplies of the location will be readily offered, at least if you know how to ask.

EXAMPLE: *Athens.*

- **Concept:** *Condemned Ruins*
- **Supply:** *Mutation, Mystery, Shards, Undead*
- **Demand:** *Cleansing, Rest*

This quickly tells us that Athens is not a happy place. People go in, but they will face some horrible dangers as they search for riches.

Scenarios

Once you have a setting, the players will want to dive into it. To help give them something to do the Game Master provides scenarios. These may involve exploring a haunted forest, solving a murder mystery, foiling a conspiracy, or anything else you can imagine that provides meaningful goals to the player characters.

Scenarios can be as long or as short as you want, and multiple scenarios can overlap. Campaigns are long term scenarios. They are like the plot of a television series which spans an entire season. Adventures are short scenarios, much like a single television episode. Overlapping these types of scenarios can give players a tangible sense of accomplishment as they complete multiple adventures and build the story towards the conclusion of a campaign.

The most important aspect of any scenario is its ability to engage the players' interest and allow them to make meaningful choices. If you are planning a linear story wherein the actions of the player characters have no real affect on the outcome, stop, throw it out, and start over. No plotline ever survives contact with the characters. Linear stories are always derailed, and if you try to keep it on the rails, your players can easily come to resent it.

Additionally, if you design the scenario without the players in mind, then you may fail to engage the players. If you didn't cover what sort of scenarios they are interested in while discussing the Gamer Contract, then ask them directly. One guide available to you is the characters themselves. If the events behind their relationships gave you hooks, use them. You need to make sure that each character is given importance in the story, and you need to make sure each player has the opportunity to take the driver seat.

The following points provide a good place to start when designing a scenario.

- **Concept:** What's a phrase that summarizes the scenario? What is the scenario's theme? What mood should it evoke?
- **Conflict:** What is the source of conflict? What's at stake? Is there a desire or scarcity that must be met? What are some questions that the scenario asks?
- **Hook:** Why should the player characters be interested in this scenario? Is their home threatened? Is a friend asking them for help? Are they getting paid? How are they getting paid?
- **Power Centers:** What are some forces other than the player characters that want to influence the scenario? Power centers are developed more in the next section.
- **Twists:** What are some obvious twists in the story, if any? This is optional and overlaps some with everything else. It's here to remind you of things that may unexpectedly shake up the lives of the player characters. Remember that other twists may always come up based on game play.
- **Results:** What are some of the results that might come about from the conflict? What are some answers to the scenario's questions? What if the player characters do everything you want? What if they do nothing? What if something happens in between?

How you address these points drives everything else you develop for the scenario, such as maps and personalities. Just as important, your answers affect how you run the scenario. The players can and will do unexpected things. If you have a linear story in mind, then when the players turn left, you will resist and try to force them right. If you answer the scenario's basic points, then you can instead adapt to the actions of players. By using the scenario points to guide your responses, you let the players take the lead in where the story goes.

EXAMPLE: *The setting is Greece near and in Athens.*

- **Concept:** *Treasure hunt.*
- **Conflict:** *The characters may run into mutants, undead, and rival mercenaries in the ruins of Athens to say nothing of the authorities that try to keep people from looting Athens.*
- **Hook:** *An old friend asks them to investigate the stories of a giant shard in the heart of Athens, claiming it to why shard falls appear here.*
- **Power Centers:** *Byzantine Army, Marcus's Mercenaries, Athens mutants, Athens undead, and Athens itself.*
- **Twists:** *Someone has been spying on the PCs' friend and sends a rival group to investigate too. Their first act is to alert the army to what the PCs are up to. Plus, the PCs discover that the rumor is just that: there is no giant shard, but there is a nascent army of undead...*
- **Results:** *Although there's no giant shard, but there are plenty of shards amassed in the center of Athens by the undead, and PCs' investigations should give them insight into the plan of the undead, setting up the next scenario. In the unlikely event that the PCs clear them all, they have a treasure hoard to smuggle out. If they manage to steal a few, then they will be paid for their trouble, but the undead that thrive on the shards may try to track them down. Of course, they may also end up with a powerful enemy or friend depending on how they handle Marcus.*

The above scenario can go several directions. The player characters are given a simple mystery to solve a dangled promise of a pay day, and eventually a stick to run from in the form of the army. There's potentially a lot of moving pieces that can lead to chaos and fun. Of course when play starts it is up to the players to choose how to proceed. They might turn the tables by sending the army after the mercenaries instead of the other way around. Expect any number of zany things from the players. As the Game Master, you react using the power centers at hand.

Power Centers

Without influences, the setting is a static thing. The player characters are one source of influence as their adventures change lives for good or ill. What of the rest of the world? Does the evil tyrant just wait upon her throne for the player characters to arrive or does the information broker only ever deal with the player characters? Of course not. Does the crime boss try to take over new territory or does the plague continue to spread? Yes, of course they do. These are what you use to bring the setting to life.

When devising any setting or scenarios, the Game Master needs to define the power centers that will influence it. A power center can be anything with the ability to affect the setting: a person, a group of people, a natural disaster, an object, a belief, or even a place. While at least one power center should have an antagonistic relationship with the player characters, power centers are not strictly good or evil; they simply follow their own goals and thereby exert influence that is felt by the setting and, more importantly, the player characters. As with other parts of the setting, only those power centers relevant to the scenario need to be developed. A power center is defined more nebulously than individual characters by simply addressing eight points.

- **Concept:** Who or what is the power center? While this only needs to be one or two words, the concept is critical. If the power center is a gang leader, then removing him disperses the gang, at least for a while, but if the power center is the gang itself, then removing the leader simply means that another will step up to take her place.
- **Objectives:** What does the power center want to do? Simplistic power centers, such as a disease or storm, probably only have one objective. More complex power centers, such as people, should have two or three.
- **Reasons:** Why does the power center pursue each objective? These are the motivations and temptations for the power center, but they can be more precise, describing a particular event or desire that gave birth to an objective. These reasons can be key to stopping a power center or getting it to change its objectives. If there are particular connections with player characters or other power centers, this is a good place to name them.
- **Disposition:** What is the power center's opinion toward others? While it is important to consider what the power centers think of each other, it is also very important to consider their opinions towards the player characters. This gives you an idea of how aggressively a power center might move to attack or aid someone. Disposition of intelligent power centers will almost certainly shift over time as player characters develop reputations. It can help to think of disposition in terms of attitude, which is discussed under **Conversations** in the **Encounters** chapter.

- **Tools:** How can the power center accomplish its objectives? A power center's tools do not have to be under its direct control. The plague might have rats and superstition as two tools, both of which help it, but neither of which are under its control. Each power center also has itself as a tool.
- **Schedule:** When does the power center want to accomplish each objective? This is an ideal approximation for the power center, assuming that everything goes its way, which rarely happens. The schedule will get continually revised as the player characters react to the power center and the power center in turn reacts to the player characters and even other power centers.
- **Domain:** Where can the power center exert its influence? Is the power center restricted to a particular city or quadrant? While a power center may be mostly limited to a particular area, it may still have one or two tools that it can use to reach beyond this.
- **Results:** What changes if the power center achieves an objective? What if it fails? If you work up the "yes" and "no" answers beforehand, then working up the "yes, but" and "no, but" answers on the fly will be easier. If there is not an impact on the setting and/or player characters as a result of the power center attempting to achieve its objective, then you need a new objective.

It is important to note that power centers do not have detailed statistics, like skill levels. They instead group together lists of tools with like causes. These tools, be they non-player characters, monsters, equipment, diseases, superstitions, or something else, are the ones with the detailed statistics.

Given the nature of power centers, it is quite possible for them to overlap, sharing tools. While this introduces a bit of complexity, this conflict of interest can provide interesting tension that player characters can seize upon to learn information or possibly turn power centers to their own ends.

EXAMPLE: *There's a lot of power centers in Athens. Let's look at the most dynamic among them.*

Power Center: *Marcus's Mercenaries*

- **Objectives:** *Acquire the rumored giant shard before the PCs and survive to see their pay day.*
- **Reasons:** *They've been hired to get the giant shard by a rival to the PCs' friend.*
- **Disposition:** *Professional and opportunistic.*
- **Tools:** *Seven members of varying skill. Connections with the Byzantine army.*
- **Schedule:** *If they can stay at least one step ahead of the PCs, they are happy, but they start out a day behind. They want to side line the competition as soon as possible by working their army contacts.*
- **Domain:** *In and around Athens.*
- **Results:** *Ideally, they get the goods and the pay day, but if things go badly, they will settle for survival while eking out whatever profit they can. Once they know there is no giant shard, they will be quite willing to negotiate with the PCs, no longer seeing them as rivals, but instead potential allies for getting out of Athens alive. If the PCs really do a number on them, then they may be out for blood, but only after they're safe.*

Just this one power center alone tells a story all itself. It starts as a rival with no personal issues to get in the way, and it can morph to become an ally or a true enemy as the rivalry progresses. Of course, when interwoven with the other power centers, things can get nicely complicated.

Power centers act like anything else, but most of their actions can be kept more nebulous until they get "on screen". It is important that the power center acts in a believable manner. Just because you don't need to track a smuggler's movement exactly doesn't mean you can suddenly have him appear in front of the player characters if it wouldn't make sense. It is equally important to remember that the tools of power centers don't necessarily act as a unified whole.

Just like player characters, power centers can and will change over the course of scenarios. Just because they have the ability to influence the setting doesn't mean they are immune to influence themselves. Disposition will change with respect to the player characters if the power center has more than animal intelligence and has reason to notice them. A power center may gain or lose tools. They may gain additional objectives and reasons or change existing ones. They can revise their schedule in light of actions by player characters. They may even be destroyed outright.

Power Centers and Information

It is hard for player characters to interact with power centers if they don't know anything. Think about the relationship and interactions you want between the PCs and power centers and make sure there is at least enough information in the PC's hands to allow that. Find ways to telegraph this information, be it rumors, news articles, a phone call from an old flame, or a dust storm on the horizon. If a power center is supposed to be a menace lurking in the background that doesn't get directly involved, then the PCs are not likely to learn much about it directly. But, if you expect the PCs to thwart its plans, then you need to give clues to the PCs. Remember that players don't necessarily see things the same way you do. Be patient, and don't be afraid to be obvious with your clues.

While power centers are primarily discussed with respect to scenarios, they can and should be attached to the setting as well. These power centers can be active or dormant. Active power centers function normally; the only difference is that their schedules are more long term, extending through multiple scenarios. Dormant power centers simply lie in wait. They don't need to be fully fleshed out until they are activated, and their objectives and schedules don't need to be tracked. When you need them again or when the player characters poke them simply update their points.

Non-Player Characters

Non-player characters, or NPCs, are the same as player characters: They have the same statistics, use the same powers and equipment, and perform the same actions. The only fundamental differences are who controls them and what their purpose is. NPCs are the cast members controlled by the Game Master. They are the faces attached to the setting and its power centers, and they are a tool for the Game Master to interact with the player characters.

As with the players' characters, the most important thing about an NPC is its concept. Unlike a player character, an NPC does not need to be fully fleshed out. Trying to do so makes more work for the Game Master than necessary and can slow game play.

To build your NPC use the **Backgrounds as Skills optional rule**. Simply choose a **background** and a **skill level** for that background. The NPC has that level of skill in each background skill. If necessary, more than one background can be provided, but you probably only need to do this when you want to give more depth to a particular NPC. If needed, define the NPC's **drives**.

Add additional **traits**, **skills**, **powers**, and **equipment** as necessary. If an NPC isn't going to be using powers, then don't add them. If they will be, then start with developments; their passive nature makes them easy to implement. When considering boosts and new actions, most NPCs should be limited to only one or two powers because the addition of more powers can very quickly complicate and slow down an encounter.

The more unique and important an NPC is, the more details you should add. If the NPC is a power center, then you have those details already worked up. Otherwise, start by addressing the NPC's **objectives**, **reasons**, and **disposition** as if it were a power center. While these details are often enough to give you, and consequently the players, a solid grasp of the NPC, you can go beyond this if you like.

An NPC usually only reacts to player characters and usually only for the duration of the encounter unless they are part of a power center. However, player characters can have such a profound impact upon others that an NPC may begin to influence the setting in a way that is meaningful to the scenario. When this happens the NPC either becomes part of an existing power center or becomes a new one.

NPCs on the fly

One of the simplest and yet most powerful tools in any Game Master's arsenal is a list of names. Players will encounter any number of NPCs, and it can be surprisingly difficult to provide them all with setting appropriate names on the spot. Having a list of names prepared beforehand allows the Game Master to easily assign identities to NPCs that players encounter. This same technique can be used for naming places, providing professions, or any number of easily added details.

A second list that is nigh indispensable is a list of adjectives. Simply attach one on each NPC. Suddenly you have Kelly, the smug thief, and Larry, the discerning money lender. This simple description gives the players a much more solid grasp of who the NPCs are, and it gives the Game Master easy guidance in how to portray them.

Bringing it Together

At this point you have a setting for the game to take place in, a scenario to give the players direction as a group, power centers to influence the story, and NPCs to give faces to the game. Now what? Now the toughest part is about to happen: Now you start the adventure.

The first thing you do is introduce the setting to the players. You may have already done this as part of the process of creating the setting. Now go one step further: make sure each of the player characters is placed within the setting. How did they get there? What's their day job? Where did they grow up? As with setting, if there is a question someone finds interesting, ask it! You don't need a lot of depth, no magnum opus of a character's life, but you do need enough so that everyone has a solid sense of how their character fits with everything else.

During this process, reference your scenario(s). This is a perfect chance to integrate the story hooks. If friends and family of the player characters are the ones presenting them with the scenario, then you immediately have a measure of investment by the players.

This is also an opportunity to present some of the power centers. Tying them to the characters or just making the characters aware of them makes them more real to the players and further helps ground the players in the world. You may even introduce some of the non-player characters at this point. Don't show everything, just those things that make sense to.

During this process the players are sure to ask questions. Some may even seize the initiative and start coming up with new ideas for the world and the power centers you developed. That can be a frightening thing because someone else is now playing with something you spent a lot of time to create. It's fine to feel that way, but you also need to let it happen. This is part of why you don't need to fill in details right away: You can fill them in as you go or players fill them in for you.

When you're ready, once everyone has their characters and a solid sense of how they fit in the world, you begin. Just start talking. Explain how one character's uncle contacts her or act out that uncle in conversation. Start describing things to your players and react to what they do even as they react to you, your power centers, and your NPCs. In short order, you will be running encounters.

Encounters

Encounters are where the action takes place. Multiple encounters are strung together to form the overall story. Encounters should be engaging. If players are not interested in an encounter, then the Game Master must find a way to get them engaged or to move the encounter along. While you can generate interest through description, the best means is to let the players be the stars of the show, make sure that the players' characters matter, and ensure that their choices have a meaningful impact. Learn when to ease off and when to ramp up the pace. If the players are having a good time role-playing amongst themselves as they work up a plan for the bank heist, then sit back and watch the show, but when things start to slow down, step back in and start asking questions to move the action along. When in doubt, just let them play. Although the overall story may not be about the players' characters, the game must be. The non-player characters should not dominate the scene unless it is to somehow exalt, or set the stage for, the players' characters.

It is important, as Game Master and player, to remain flexible during encounters. Things will not always go according to plan. The players may roll terribly, the antagonists may win, the players may kill a needed informant, or any number of other things could happen. While it may be easy to give up and end the story, the Game Master can adjust things so that the characters are taken captive and now must escape or that the now dead informant had the information written down somewhere. Players can also come up with ideas the Game Master never considered, things that blow the entire plot apart. Feasible ideas should be merged with the intended plot in a meaningful way that also rewards the players, but not necessarily their characters. Often times, the players' ideas will be more interesting than what the Game Master originally planned. Feel free to chuck the old plotline and run with what the players thought was "really going on".

Setting the Encounter

First, determine the **purpose** of the encounter. Part of this is: what mood you want to convey? While the purpose may shift during the course of the encounter, the initial purpose or theme will help set aspects such as environment and non-player characters.

The **environment** for the encounter can be as vast or as contained as desired. It is best to start in broad terms (e.g. in a dark forest or on a crowded street) and add to it. Only important and obvious details need to be set at the beginning of the encounter; other details can be developed as the encounter unfolds so long as this is done intelligently and coherently. The environment dictates the **maximum distance** at which an encounter will begin. Terrain features that grant cover (e.g. walls) or concealment (e.g. fog) may decrease the base maximum distance.

Non-player characters (NPCs) involved in the encounter, be they characters or creatures, should be sketched out ahead of time. It is not necessary to provide full statistics for each of them, simply what is relevant to the encounter; others can be made up as needed.

Environment	Max Distance
Clear	200 or more
Light vegetation or crowds	100
Mild vegetation or crowds	50
Heavy vegetation or crowds	20

Having a **list of names** appropriate to the culture and a **list of descriptors** (physical, mental, and social) that can be assigned to NPCs and locations as they are used in an encounter is exceptionally useful. It allows the Game Master to quickly give greater personality to the encounter.

Balancing the Encounter

An encounter must be balanced to achieve its purpose. If an encounter is intended to heighten the tension of the big showdown by wearing the characters down to about half strength, then the antagonists should be different than if the goal of the encounter is to deliver information to the characters or if the goal is to create a nail biting scene where the characters survive by the skin of their teeth. There is no single way to balance an encounter, especially as balancing points will vary by the encounter's purpose. While general guidelines can help, even most perfectly balanced encounters won't necessarily unfold as intended.

Skill is the easiest facet to look at for balance as each point of difference is a sixteen percent swing in the chance of success. **Powers** provide different means to approach circumstances (e.g. assaulting a weak mental defense rather than a strong physical one). However, it is best to limit the different powers used by antagonists for the ease of running an encounter. If every antagonist is given a unique set of powers, then that encounter will get very slow as one person can

only track so much data. **Equipment**, **numbers**, and **tactics** also serve as equalizers. Equipment may grant bonuses and penalties, characters can cooperate to solve a puzzle, and multiple foes might overwhelm any one character rather than distributing attacks evenly.

An easy way to manage antagonists is to treat the majority as minions or grunts with few to no powers. Their statistics are composed of relevant skill levels and equipment. Above them are lieutenants, who possess a small number of powers but little individuality. Lieutenants can lead minions or form their own groups. Captains are fully fleshed out characters that lead others or stand on their own.

Running the Encounter

At their core, all encounters are run the same: You all describe the scene and actions, and you resolve **actions**. If there is a question as to who acts first, **initiative** is determined, then each character is given the opportunity to perform actions on their turn. Many encounters can be role-played, and actions are usually only resolved with dice roles when interests conflict or when the outcome is in doubt and there is a consequence to failure. **Resolution rules** and **ranges** all follow the same **core mechanics**, no matter the encounter, unless specifically overwritten. Some rules are specific to particular types of encounters. They can also provide guidelines for more general situations as well.

When running an encounter, it is important to remember its purpose. This guides the actions of the non-player characters. However, this must be balanced by flexibility: player actions can change an encounter's purpose and nature entirely. It is possible that the players won't achieve the original goal of the encounter. The players may make unpredicted choices, find clever solutions, and make horrible mistakes. Even the dice can be capricious. The temptation is to protect your intended plot; this leads to railroading and can quickly kill the fun. Instead, let the encounter unfold as it will and adapt the plot to the growing shared story.

Real world props and set dressing can enhance encounters. A map with miniatures can help everyone visualize where their characters are with respect to one another. A picture can convey the appearance of a creature or environment where words would provide an incomplete image. A burnt circuit board or scroll can give the players something to pass around and wield as they talk in character. Providing background music tracks of birds chirping can set an entirely different tone than one of thunderstorms. None of these are necessary, but all of them help the players visualize the game.

As a final word on running encounters generally, remember the lessons in the **Getting Started** chapter. The **Regarding Mechanics** section is of particular value. While it has lessons for both the player and Game Master, Declaration vs. Intent and Narrating Success and Failure are of the utmost importance to the Game Master. In short, always try to address the intent of the players. They might not know how to communicate what they want, and it's your job to help them. Also, try to avoid using "no" as a result. It shuts things down. Try using "no, but" and "yes, but"; these open possibilities.

Combat

Inevitably you just want to spill someone's blood, or vice versa. At the outset of any combat, the Game Master should determine the initial set up: what's the environment, where the characters are, whether anyone suffers **surprise**, and at what **initiative** everyone acts.

Each **round**, the participant with the highest **initiative** takes her **turn** first. Other participants take their turn in descending order of initiative. In any given round, a character may perform one *standard* action, one *speak* action, one *move* action, and additional free actions on a case by case basis. All actions must be performed on the character's turn unless she holds the action or performs an intervening action.

It can be useful to track positions of participants. A square or hex grid can provide an easy visual aid. Otherwise, this can be done in a more free form, verbal fashion. Positioning can have a profound impact upon combatants, allowing power usage and granting line of sight. The impact of the environment can be found in the **Environment** chapter. Additional circumstances more specific to combat can be found below.

You are **surprised** and cannot fully react when someone gets the drop on you. You cannot take any actions in response to whatever surprised you for the remainder of that round. However, you may automatically attempt to *resist surprise* as an intervening free action. The Game Master determines if an event qualifies for surprise. Surprise is a personal thing:

you might be surprised by an event, where others are already prepared for it. Surprise may even occur well after an encounter is underway through betrayal or a new attacker revealing herself.

EXAMPLE: *An attacker surprises Peter from the shadows. He cannot take any action in response to that attack (i.e. cannot attack back or counter) until the next round, but Peter can still otherwise act normally.*

When **acting into a crowd** you can try to attack one target while avoiding those in the same or intervening spaces. However, each space with another target counts as partial cover. If you do not care about hitting intervening targets, then the first potential target within the line of effect becomes the target.

EXAMPLE: *Rachel is trying to shoot past Sam to hit her attacker. Because Sam is in the way, if Rachel wants to avoid hitting Sam, she must take a -1 penalty from the partial cover that Sam grants. If she doesn't care, then Sam automatically becomes her target.*

A **space occupied by another** is considered one degree greater for the purpose of moving through (e.g. clear terrain is considered difficult). Characters of half or less Scale do not impede a character's movement, unless there is a sufficient number to equal the character's Scale (e.g. 2 characters of half the character's Scale). Larger characters may block a space entirely.

EXAMPLE: *Peter just dropped a foe, and Sam wants to rush past him to get to another foe. The terrain is otherwise clear, but the space with Peter is considered difficult, requiring Sam to spend two movement points to move into it.*

Targets of unusual size may be easier or harder than normal. If the target is **larger** than you, then double your Scale until it is greater than or equal to the target's Scale. For each full doubling you gain a +1 bonus for actions that are defended with Acrobatics or Stealth. If the target is **smaller** than you, then halve your Scale until it is lower than or equal to the target's. For each full halving you suffer a -1 penalty for actions that are defended with Acrobatics or Stealth. The accompanying chart shows target Scale values and their modifiers with respect to a Scale 1 character.

EXAMPLE: *Peter, a human (Scale 1), is fighting a giant (Scale 3). Doubling once makes Peter's Scale 2, doubling again makes it 4, exceeding the giant's Scale. It took one full doubling and one partial one to meet or exceed the target's Scale. Therefore Peter gains a +1 bonus. Likewise, the giant would suffer a -1 penalty.*

Targets of unusual size; Scale 1 character	
Target's Scale	Modifier
1/8	-3
1/4	-2
1/2	-1
1	None
2	+1
3	+1
4	+2
5	+2
6	+2
7	+2
8	+3
9	+3
10	+3

Conversations

Conversations allow characters to accomplish goals socially. Conversations are ultimately a balance between what you are asking for and what you are willing to give up. Each conversation may be composed of a number of **exchanges**, attempts by one party of a conversation to achieve an objective.

To begin an **exchange** you must first choose your **objective**. While your objective should be narrowly defined (e.g. convince the guard to open the door), all objectives can fall in line with one of the base Influence actions.

You must then decide how to approach with your target; this is a matter of choosing to be **forceful**, **charming**, or **submissive**.

The target's **temptation** may grant a bonus or penalty depending on the **approach** used and/or what the **perceived result** would be for the target.

The target in a conversation is assigned a **difficulty**. This reflects the attitude of, risk to, and beliefs of the target. The difficulty may fluctuate during a conversation in response to you and events.

Leverage applies a final adjustment and may take many forms, including returned favors, evidence, blackmail, bribes, threats, a favorable performance, a round of drinks, presumed authority, and shared interests. Leverage is broadly categorized as **positive leverage** (e.g. favors), **negative leverage** (e.g. threats), and **insults** (e.g. violation of custom). How leverage applies to a situation determines how it is categorized, but it functions as an inverse form of difficulty.

If the net difficulty after leverage is simple (+2 bonus), then you should be granted an **automatic success**.

The **Using Failures** rule should be readily incorporated into conversations: If your test fails, the target may still acquiesce to the request for additional leverage or other personal gain. A target of a failed attempt may even agree or go along with you only to betray you later.

When making an exchange, you may use multiple **arguments**. Each argument is evaluated separately for its effect with respect to **temptation** and **leverage**. **After failure**, you and those obviously associated with you cannot attempt the **same objective** with the same target unless you use a **new argument**. This alternative line of reasoning allows for another test, but each such test suffers a cumulative -1 penalty for each failure.

Approaches

When engaging in a social action, you declare the approach you use. This may be an explicit declaration or inferred from your role play. The approach used is a description of how you use authority, but it can be nuanced through the use of facts, emotion, and reputation. The approach used dictates the skill used to defend. Forceful is defended with Reflection while all other approaches are defended with Intuition.

Approaches may also adjust the difficulty of the test depending on circumstances. If you don't just use the approach, but play to its strengths, then you might gain a +1 bonus. Similarly, if the approach used is inappropriate, then you should receive a -1 or -2 penalty or even lower the target's attitude.

Forceful (Reflection): You assume authority over the target, intimidating, commanding or simply leaning in.

- Having recognized authority grants automatic successes up to what that authority would allow unless the target intends to counter the authority.
- Intimidation relies upon the threat of force: a bonus or penalty may be applied depending upon how each side believes a battle will turn out should one occur.

Charming (Intuition): You adopts a stance of equal authority with the target, be it friendly banter or debate. This is the default approach used in most situations.

- The use of props and evidence to support an argument should provide a modifier. Incontrovertible evidence may grant automatic successes.

Submissive (Intuition): You cede authority to the target, using flattery, appeasement, and manipulation to make requests or bring the target around to her way of thinking.

- Flattering the target may grant a bonus if he would be particularly susceptible to such.
- Making an emotional appeal may grant a bonus based on the target's natural willingness to come to aid or ability to empathize with the portrayed circumstances.

Drives

Where a target's **motivation** may be used to guide how a target responds to your success or failure, his **temptation** can actually move him. If your action would trigger the target's temptation, then you get a +1 bonus, but if it opposes the target's temptation, then you suffer a -1 penalty.

Attitude

Attitude is a reflection of how a target feels towards you and the subject matter at that moment. Targets will likely have better attitudes towards characters with similar experiences, profession, or interests (e.g. a soldier is likely to be better received by a general than a banker would be). Attitude can easily shift during a conversation due to insults, gifts, or similar events.

- **Helpful (+2 Bonus):** The target's interests and/or goals coincide and they get along well with the character.
- **Friendly (+1 Bonus):** The target approves of the character or her objective, agreeing to trivial acts readily.
- **Neutral (No Adjustment):** The target simply either does not care or is equally invested both in aiding and working against the character.
- **Unfriendly (-1 Penalty):** The target has no desire to aid the character or his cause. While the target will not necessarily work against the character without cause, she is very reluctant to provide any real aid.
- **Hostile (-3 Penalty):** A hostile target will actively work against the character, generally taking actions that are most counterproductive to the character's cause.

Leverage

Each argument a character makes during an exchange may use one application of leverage. This is a measure of the social power a character brings to bear beyond skill and can take the form of items, favors, blackmail, money, evidence, threats, performances, information, and more. Each piece of leverage is applied a **degree** that represents the raw bonus or penalty that it grants. Leverage is also given one of three **types** that describe how it is applied.

Degree of Leverage: There are three broad degrees to help rank leverage: minor, major and great. This represents the impact the leverage has upon the target, be it a bonus or penalty. The raw values from all leverage are totaled to provide the net impact.

- **Minor leverage** provides a +/-1 adjustment to the character's test. This is something that would affect the target's lifestyle or livelihood in the short term, it could be the rough equivalent to a day or week's worth of work in wages, the fleeting celebrity status from putting on a good show, or a simple, unexcused insult.
- **Major leverage** provides a +/-2 adjustment to the character's test. This is something that will significantly affect the target's lifestyle or livelihood, notable bodily harm, or a prison sentence, such as a month or year's worth of work in wages or a notable, unexcused weakness that must be answered.
- **Great leverage** provides a +/-3 adjustment to the character's test. It is more money than the target is likely to ever see otherwise, the value of the target's life, or preventing her from going to prison for a very long time.

Types of Leverage: There are three categories of leverage: positive leverage, negative leverage, and insults. The characterization of leverage can have as much to do with the nature of the leverage as it can with its presentation.

- **Positive leverage** is something the target wants and commonly takes the form of goods, bribes, or returned favors. Positive leverage always provides a bonus to the character's test.
- **Negative leverage** is something that threatens the target, such as blackmail, torture, and bullying. Negative leverage always provides a bonus to the character's test, but after the test, the difficulty dealing with the target is penalized one step until the character makes it up.
- **Insults** never benefit a conversation. They can stem from attempts at positive or negative leverage that miss their mark (e.g. a bribe was too low) or simply a show of disrespect. Insults always apply a penalty to the character's test, and, after the test, the difficulty dealing with the target is penalized by -1. Insults can often be forgiven if the character makes appropriate amends.

EXAMPLE: *Peter is attempting to convince a constable to look the other way. Throughout the exchange Peter refers to the constable as "gutter trash". This counts as a minor insult and imposes a -1 penalty on the test. It will also penalize the difficulty dealing with the constable after the exchange by -1. Fortunately for Peter, he also happens to have the broach the constable gave his mistress, which he brings up as additional leverage. The Game Master counts this as major negative leverage, which grants a +2 bonus. Though, it will also penalize future interactions with the officer. The net effect is a +1 bonus for Peter's convince test.*

Puzzles

Puzzles are intended to provide an intellectual challenge to players and characters. They may contain physical or social components as well. They can encompass everything from cracking a code to knowing what levers to pull in what order to a simple crossword puzzle. Puzzles can be a dangerous addition to a game because they are normally designed to challenge the player rather than the character, which can cause frustration.

The **insight** action can provide clues or the entire solution to aid stumped players. Characters can also use **cooperation** to pool their resources for one roll. If characters are still stumped, then offer solutions through non-player characters at a price, such as a side mission. This changes the story from a puzzle that the characters cannot solve to a task that gives them the key they need.

All puzzles should possess a level of difficulty, and some puzzles will simply be impossible to solve without the right tools (e.g. a computer). A character that acquires clues or "solves" the puzzle with **insight** will have an idea of what is missing or what must otherwise be done. A classic example is a book cipher. Without the book that the code utilizes, it may not be decipherable.

EXAMPLE: *"What goes on four legs in the morning, two in the afternoon and three in the evening?" asked the Sphinx.*

"Anyone?" The Game Master looked at the players in disbelief when none of them knew the answer to the classic riddle. Each player rolls an insight test. Only Rachel and Peter succeed, both rolling a two. For hints, the Game Master relays that the time of day could relate to the stages of life and that a cane or walking stick could be considered a leg.

Traps

Traps challenge the mental and physical abilities of both characters and players. They present devices or circumstances in the environment that produce an effect when triggered. They include everything from a hidden pit to an electric fence. Traps are defined by a **trigger**, **skill**, **effect**, and **description**.

When the trigger is fulfilled, the trap tests for its effect as an environmental actor. Unless a trap is particularly shoddy, it is always assumed to succeed with one success, even if the test fails: breathing poison gas always causes problems, but you may be able hold your breath or back out of the cloud more quickly. A character can attempt to *counter* a trap's effect. Most traps benefit from surprise, which may be *resisted* first. Only effects that target you can be countered. For instance, an alarm does not target you and could not be countered.

You detect a trap if your *notice* or *search* attempt exceeds its Stealth rating, and *manipulate device* lets you disarm, disable, or otherwise find a work around. The trap's description should give ideas as to how you do these (e.g. the trap is controlled by an electronic keypad, which could be hotwired). However, these approaches can be hollow. Like puzzles, traps will challenge the players. If players are asking reasonable questions or taking reasonable actions in keeping with their characters, then they can justify bonuses to tests or obviate them all together. For instance, spilled liquid will likely find cracks revealing or at least hinting at a pit. Such creativity should be rewarded, and it makes the encounter much more interesting than simple dice rolls.

Environment

The environment is where the action occurs. It is an amalgamation of terrain, weather, lighting, and general ambiance. Environment may affect movement rates, availability of concealment and cover, line of sight, and basic survival conditions. All environment effects compound with one another. Environments are best described with reference to two categories: **tactical** and **strategic**.

Encounters use **tactical environments**, relatively small areas where individual positions may matter. The impact of the tactical environment is mainly through its effects on movement, concealment, and cover. By adjusting these effects, most common environments can be simulated. Uncommon effects, such as environmental hazards, current (forced movement), and magic saturation, help take care of the rest, but specific environments may have unique effects as well.

Strategic environments are used outside of encounters. The strategic environment is mainly set dressing, giving players a sense of immersion in a larger world. Though, it can also present challenges of its own. The strategic environment may impact the movement of characters overland or debilitate characters through extreme temperatures or similar.

All terrain is built through **terrain types** and **terrain modifiers**. Simply choose a terrain type that and any modifiers you think are appropriate. Running through bushes? That may be difficult terrain with a clamorous modifier.

Mapping your environment can help you visualize the scene and make informed decisions, but not every situation needs to be arranged on a map.

Terrain and Movement

When moving, characters gain and spend **movement points**. **Tactical speed** is the number of movement points a character gains per *move* action. **Strategic speed** is the number of movement points a character gains per hour of travel.

When moving through terrain, each distance (space for tactical movement or kilometer for strategic movement) is given a terrain type: **clear**, **difficult**, **arduous**, or **impassible**. This is a general description of the difficulty in travelling through the terrain, be it caused by poor footing or obstacles, and tells you how many movement points are required to move into the space. What constitutes a terrain type may change between tactical and strategic environments.

The basic terrain type may be modified by a terrain modifier, such as an elevation change or poor lighting, which may change the movement cost or have other effects.

Terrain	Cost
Clear	1
Difficult	2
Arduous	4
Impassible	n/a

EXAMPLE: A human has a tactical speed of 4. Each move action gives you 4 movement points. If all the spaces are clear, then you can move 4 spaces. If one of the spaces is difficult, then you can move into the one difficult space and two clear spaces.

EXAMPLE: A human has a base strategic movement of 5. Assuming you travel for ten hours, you have a total of 50 movement points. You can walk 50 kilometers over roads or plains, but if you're hacking your way through a heavy jungle (arduous terrain), then you can only travel 12 kilometers.

Terrain Types

Clear (Terrain)

The terrain is clear (e.g. road or open plain). This includes unstable or slightly slippery surfaces, such as sheets of ice or a sandy beach. On the strategic scale this includes light vegetation, such as brush and tall grasses. All terrain is considered clear unless otherwise stated.

- Movement into *clear* terrain costs one movement point.

Difficult (Terrain)

Tromping through garbage, scaling rubble, pushing through bushes, and the like makes things difficult. In the strategic scale this includes medium vegetation, such as thickets and light forest or jungle.

- Movement into *difficult* terrain costs two movement points.

Arduous (Terrain)

The terrain is nearly impassible. It may be steeped in mud or tar or the ground may be so broken that walking feels like climbing. On the strategic scale this includes heavy vegetation, such as dense thickets and heavy forest or jungle.

- Movement into *arduous* terrain costs four movement points.

Impassible (Terrain)

Hard obstacles and very sheer surfaces prevent movement. Impassible terrain may also be caused by vegetation that simply cannot be pushed through, such as thick brambles or closely grown trees.

- You cannot move through the terrain, but you may be able to go around it by climbing, flying, etc.

Concealment & Cover

Obstacles obscure lines of sight and grant protection. **Concealment** stems from intervening objects incapable of blocking or deflecting an attack, such as smoke, a curtain, torrential rain, darkness, or light foliage. **Cover** is granted by something sturdy enough to take a blow, such as a wall, a tree, or a crowd. Most obstructions that grant cover, also grant concealment; however, a transparent obstruction, such as a glass window, would only grant cover, not concealment. If you have both concealment and cover, you only get the best benefits from each.

Partial Concealment (Terrain Modifier)

Fog, smoke, torrential rain, water, snow storm, or something similar clouds your vision, making your target indistinct. Five or more spaces of light haze (e.g. light fog, rain, clear water, etc.) may also cause partial concealment.

- Actions defended by Acrobatics or Stealth suffer a -1 penalty.
- Partial concealment granted by terrain is reduced to no concealment if you and your target share the same or adjacent spaces.

Full Concealment (Terrain Modifier)

You cannot see your target. Five spaces of partial concealment also provide full concealment.

- Actions defended by Acrobatics or Stealth suffer a -3 penalty.
- If more than one target in the same space and also fully concealed, then the actual target is randomly determined.
- Full concealment granted by terrain is reduced to partial concealment if you and your target share the same or adjacent spaces.

Partial Cover (Terrain Modifier)

Half your target or less is exposed.

- Actions defended by Acrobatics or Stealth suffer a -1 penalty.
- Your target gets a +3 AF bonus against area effects unless they would wraparound or otherwise circumvent the cover (e.g. uses the cloud template).

Full Cover (Terrain Modifier)

No part of the target is exposed.

- You cannot target someone protected by full cover.
- Your target is fully protected against area effects unless they would wraparound (e.g. uses the cloud template), destroy, or otherwise circumvent the cover.

Elevation

Elevation describes of the overall relative topography, and changes in it slow you down. In strategic movement, terrain grades are based upon comparing the total up and down movement over a set distance. *For example, terrain that undulates, making for a total amount of up and down movement of two kilometers over a horizontal distance of one kilometer, has a 200% or sheer grade.*

Elevation may also grant cover. An elevation difference of one space provides partial cover for a Scale one person and a two space elevation difference provides full cover; though, the exact cover granted is situational and left to the Game Master to determine.

Steep Grade (Terrain Modifier)

Elevation changes between spaces of a half space to one space slow a character's progress. On the strategic scale this includes a total incline of 25% to 100%.

- Movement cost is increased by one point.

Sheer Grade (Terrain Modifier)

An elevation change between spaces that is greater than one space of the character can make progress neigh impossible without climbing or flying. On the strategic scale this includes a total incline of more than 100%.

- On the tactical scale, the terrain is impassible.
- On the strategic scale, movement cost is increased by five points.

Falling: Every two meters fallen inflicts one point of damage up to a maximum of twice the base Health for your species. You can reduce falling damage with the *land* action. If you take any damage from a fall, then you become *prone* unless you make an Acrobatics *counter*, but the test is penalized by the damage taken in the fall.

Footing

Surety of footing may slow you or knock you down, but if you don't contact the surface, then you are unaffected.

Flooded (Terrain Modifier)

You have to wade or swim through mud or similar thin liquid.

- The space is considered at least *difficult* terrain for walking and running.
- The character suffers a -1 penalty to all actions.

Encasing (Terrain Modifier)

You have to wade or swim through mud or similar viscous liquid.

- The space is considered at least *arduous* terrain.
- The character suffers a -2 penalty to all actions.

Unstable (Terrain Modifier)

The ground does not give solid footing. It may be covered with shifting rock shards, ice, or rain-slicked stones.

- Moving into or through *unstable* terrain costs one additional movement point or you automatically fall *prone*.
- If you have Acrobatics 2 or Athletics 2, then you are unaffected by *unstable* terrain.

Rocking (Terrain Modifier)

The ground moves erratically under the character's feet. This may be a rope bridge swinging in winds or the floor of a vehicle that is moving over rough terrain.

- Moving into or through *unstable* terrain costs one additional movement point or you automatically fall *prone*.
- The character suffers a -1 penalty to all actions.
- If you have Acrobatics 2 or Athletics 2, then you are unaffected by *rocking* terrain.

Muffling (Terrain Modifier)

The ground naturally absorbs noise, such as a thick fur carpet or a bed of moss.

- You gain a +1 bonus to Stealth actions related to sound.

Clamorous (Terrain Modifier)

The ground is prone to create noise, such as a nightingale floor or a covering of gravel or dried leaves.

- You suffer a -1 penalty to Stealth actions related to sound.

Current (Terrain Modifier)

Some force (e.g. wind, river, conveyor belt, etc.) pushes all unsecured objects in the area.

- At the start of each round, the current moves affected objects a number of spaces equal to its rating in the direction provided. This amount is halved if half or less of the character's body is exposed.
- If a ranged action's line of effect passes through a space with current, then it is penalized by the highest current rating crossed.
 - *Example: shooting through high winds would penalize the action, but shooting over a river would not.*
- On the strategic scale, each hour the current moves objects within the area a distance equal to its rating in the direction provided.
- An object's density may reduce a current's effect at Game Master discretion.

Environmental Hazards

The world is fraught with natural hazards that may bring harm to characters, such as fires, extreme temperatures, lightning bolts, sandstorms, and the like. Environmental hazards may be discrete or continuous.

Discrete hazards occur once and are resolved with a test. The hazard is an environmental actor with a skill and effect assigned by the Game Master. Any damage listed for a discrete hazard is in addition to the successes gained. Examples of discrete hazards include lightning strikes, some traps, and landslides. A character with *scouting* can recognize and avoid discrete hazards if they aren't hidden.

Continuous hazards constantly apply one or more effects, such as damage or the snared condition. Unless otherwise stated, damage is applied each round. The only way to counter, or otherwise offset this damage, is by changing circumstances (e.g. staying indoors during a sand storm or wearing warm clothing when it is cold out).

Asphyxiation: If you can't breathe, you're in trouble. You can hold your breath for five rounds or six if you have the *robust* trait. This may be doubled if you do nothing at all. After this you gain the suffering condition as you asphyxiate.

Shard Falls: In areas of heightened magic saturation shards may manifest in the air and fall to the ground in what is generally called a shard fall. These events are short lived, and are treated as discrete hazards. Most shards and fragments that manifest during a shard fall quickly disappear, as though sublimating into the ether, but enterprising souls still scour the area searching for treasures from the heavens.

Example	Damage
Bonfire	1
Dipped in Lava	20+
Sandstorm	1 / minute
Tornado	5
Lightning Bolt	10
Hot Weather (40 to 49°C)	1 / hour
Sweltering Weather (50 to 59°C)	1 / 10 minutes
Searing Weather (60 to 69°C)	1 / minute
Cold Weather (-9 to 0°C)	1 / hour
Icy Weather (-19 to -10°C)	1 / 10 minutes
Freezing Weather (-29 to -20°C)	1 / minute
High Pressure (under 10m water)	1 / hour
High Pressure (under 50m water)	1 / 10 minutes
Minor Shard Fall	2
Major Shard Fall	5

Light

Under normal lighting conditions, you can see and function normally. Outside of your normal range of vision your ability is impaired as targets gain concealment. Light is measured with illumination levels. All areas have an ambient illumination level, which may be altered through light sources. There are three levels of illumination as described below.

Blinding (Terrain Modifier)

Blinding light is simply too bright to see by.

- Grants full concealment.

Normal (Terrain Modifier)

You can see just fine.

- Grants no concealment.

Dark (Terrain Modifier)

Darkness holds no light. It is impossible to see without some aid.

- Grants full concealment.

Contrast: Light sources are obvious on the back drop of their opposite. Even a lit candle is evident in the darkness dozens of meters away. If you are holding a light source that contrasts with the ambient lighting, then you gain no concealment from light.

Details: Variations in lighting can obscure details where it might not otherwise hinder vision. A moonlit night might provide normal illumination for gross activities, such as throwing a punch, and dark illumination for fine or detailed activities, such as disarming a trap or identifying a person's face. It falls to the Game Master to adjudicate when details are so obscured. The Game Master can also declare that the details are only partially obscured, providing partial concealment, instead of full.

Light Underwater: Aquatic environments are difficult to see in due to light filtration. This effect is approximated by reducing the illumination level by one for every 20 meters of water or fraction thereof. Different liquids may increase or decrease this amount.

Sound

Sound is our second most favored sense. At normal sound levels, people can readily communicate with one another, and outside the normal range of sound it can be hard to hear, providing a measure of concealment to aural activities. Sound is measured by way of sound levels. There are five levels of sound as described below.

Sound	Description
Booming	Volcanic eruption, jet engine, Seattle Seahawks fans (101+ dB)
Loud	Shouting, active dance hall, thunderous applause (71-100 dB)
Normal	Normal conversational tones (30-70 dB)
Quiet	Whispers, normal footfalls (1-30 dB)
Silent	No discernable sound (0 dB)

All concealment granted by loud sound is in reference to the loudest sound present as it will tend to drown out or overpower other sounds. Each degree below the loudest sound increases the level of concealment by one degree. The loudest sound is always noticeable.

Example: At the end of a play the crowd erupts in thunderous applause (loud), this grants full concealment (with reference to sound only) for someone trying to sneak out.

Magic Saturation

Magic is the life essence of the universe, flowing across worlds and dimensions as rivers and oceans. It flows and ebbs as the tides, enriching the land or leaving it barren. Normal levels of magic saturation impose not benefits or penalties, but lesser or greater concentrations act as terrain modifiers. Saturation is rarely applied to only one or two spaces unless it has an abnormal source. Instead, it covers large areas much as any natural body of water would.

Dead Zone (Terrain Modifier)

There is little to no magic within the land and any living thing within the area feels drained, as though its life was being sucked from it.

- *Healing* attempts fail, and *recovery* returns no Health.
- Ephemerals cannot manifest in a dead zone and take irreducible damage equal to their Scale each round.
- Karma cannot be gained within a dead zone.
- The drain of all powers is doubled (e.g. a cost of well drains two points from the character's well).

Starved (Terrain Modifier)

The lack of energies in the land reveals itself as plants wilt and even animals seem listless; though, they can grow and survive.

- All *healing* and *recovery* is halved.
- Ephemerals must pay double the normal drain to manifest.
- Karma gains are halved.
- The drain of all non-core powers is doubled (e.g. a cost of well drains two points from the character's well).

Vibrant (Terrain Modifier)

The energies of life permeate the land, nurturing plant and animal alike.

- *Recovery* is doubled.
- The essence burden of all within the vibrant area is increased by one.
- Ephemerals may manifest without drain.
- The first use of any core power with a pool drain in an encounter within a vibrant area is free.
- Minor shard falls may occur.

Immersed (Terrain Modifier)

The land is steeped in energies. While these feed and strengthen the living, they can also be overwhelming, warping life.

- *Healing* and *recovery* are doubled.
- The essence burden of all within the immersed area is increased by two.
- Ephemerals may manifest without drain.
- Karma gains are increased by one.
- The first use of any power with a pool drain in an encounter is free.
- Minor or major shard falls may occur.

Effects & Conditions

Many things can inflict conditions on characters, for good or ill. Each condition causes one or more effects, and a condition ends when its duration expires or the circumstance causing it changes.

If a condition has a set duration, then it ends when the duration expires or when removed via actions, such as *cleanse* or *treat condition*. If a condition has a sustained duration, then it persists until the character sustaining the condition chooses to stop, but most sustained conditions offer a skill comparison: if the target's skill is greater than the character's, then the target may end the condition any time as an intervening free action, unless otherwise provided.

Many conditions are associated with one or more skills. These are the skills that are usually used when attempting to *cleanse* the condition or that are checked to see if a particular action or power can remove the condition.

Conditions

Many conditions are common to multiple sources. The cosmetic flavor surrounding an effect may vary by the cause. For instance, a character who is *dazed* may be that way after being hit on the head, coming down with a severe fever or even getting drunk.

Afraid - Reflection

Fear overwhelms you.

- You cannot be within Aura (Reach) of the source of fear. If are within the volume template, then your next action(s) must be to move away from the source by the most direct route possible.
- You suffer a -2 penalty to act against the source of fear.
- You want to avoid places where the source of fear may reasonably be (e.g. a graveyard when afraid of undead). When you are in such an area, you suffer a -1 penalty to *counter* and *cleanse* actions.

Asleep - Athletics

You are asleep.

- You are disabled.
- You are dimly aware of your surroundings.
- Each round, compare your *notice* to the values for various stimuli. If your *notice* is greater, then you wake up, but you are distracted and fatigued for the next round.
 - The value for sound is increased by range (e.g. the value for a sound at medium range is increased by 1).
- You drop anything you were holding.

Stimulus	Value
Quiet Sound	2
Normal Sound	0
Loud Sound	-2
Booming Sound	-5
Non-Physical Action	2
Physical Action	0
Vigorous Shaking	-2
Minor Damage	-2
Major Damage	-5

Blind - Athletics

You cannot see.

- All targets have full visual concealment from you.

Charmed - Reflection

You warm significantly towards the subject of the condition; this manifests in a nuanced fashion, such as strong friendship, deep abiding honor, or love as is appropriate for circumstances. The subject may be a person, an institution, a cause, or a belief.

- You are compelled to believe and do anything communicated by the person to whom the target is charmed to. But, you will not automatically do or believe something greatly abhorrent to you or that betrays the core of your being.
- You view the actions taken while *charmed* to be wholly your own and that the influenced perspective is your own, as opposed to being caused by some outside force.
- Other Influence actions against you that obviously favor the subject of the charm get a +2 bonus.

Compelled - Reflection

You must pursue a particular course of action to the fullest of her ability, even to your detriment. The course of action is described when the condition is applied.

- Your actions must be dedicated to the pursuit of the compulsion.

- You consider your actions as wholly her own. You wanted to perform them, nothing force you to.

Controlled - Reflection

Some outside force commands you. This may be due to mental domination, physical puppetry, or even possession.

- The controller chooses all of your actions.
- You are aware that some outside force is in control as you watch helplessly from within, but you may not know who or what.
- Once per round, if you are obviously aggressed against (e.g. the target of *attack* or slapped around via *treat condition* or takes damage), then the character may automatically attempt to *cleanse* himself of the *controlled* condition as an intervening free action.

Crippled - Athletics

You are in excruciating pain and have difficulty moving.

- You suffer a -1 penalty to all actions and defenses.

Dazed - Reflection

You are not fully aware of your surroundings.

- All of your non-adjacent targets have partial concealment.

Deaf - Athletics

You cannot hear.

- All targets have full audial concealment from you.

Disabled - N/A

Some other effect is preventing you from taking action. Nothing disables you directly, but you may become paralyzed, unconscious, or similar, which will disable you.

- You cannot take actions.
- Your defense is zero.
- During the encounter in which you were disabled, you gain one karma boost each round on your turn. These karma boosts may be used as follows:
 - They can be used to affect anything in the encounter.
 - Their use cannot violate your relationships.
 - These karma boosts may be saved from round to round.
 - These karma boosts expire at the end of the encounter or when you are no longer disabled, whichever occurs first.

Distracted - Intuition

Your attention is elsewhere.

- The next action against you benefits from surprise, but you may still resist surprise.
- This condition ends once an action triggers surprise.

Fatigued - Athletics

You are exhausted.

- You suffer a -5 penalty to initiative.
- The drain for all of your actions is doubled.
- You cannot regain power pool or power well, except through items and powers.
- You are considered to have the *deep sleeper* trait.
- If you do not take a long rest at least once a day, then you are automatically fatigued, which cannot be removed until you take a long rest.

Grappled - Athletics

You're locked in a grapple. This persists until you escape.

- You may only end the grapple via *break grapple* or *release grapple*.
- You may only use weapons with the *personal* item quality.
- You cannot perform movement actions.
- You cannot perform actions that require a great concentration, elaborate movement, or fine motion.

Intangible - Influence

You become ghostlike, able to pass through solid objects.

- Unless otherwise provided, you may not be affected by tangible persons, save through mental effects.
- Unless otherwise provided, you may not affect tangible persons, save through mental effects.

- You may pass through physical barriers and objects less than half a meter thick.

Karma Lock - Influence

Your destiny calcifies.

- You cannot spend karma or karma boosts.
- You cannot earn karma or karma boosts.
- Karma lock cannot be removed unless caused by a power.

Paralyzed - Athletics

You cannot move or act, but autonomic processes are unaffected.

- You are *disabled*.
- Your senses function normally unless otherwise impaired.

Prone - Acrobatics or Athletics

You are laying down on the job.

- Movement point costs increase by one.
- Actions requiring gross movement (e.g. physical *counters*, a Melee *attack* with a non-personal weapon, etc.) suffer a -1 penalty.
- Attempts to target you via sight or earshot range suffer a -1 penalty.
- You treat partial cover as full against volume templates (e.g. explosions).
- The Game Master may decide that other actions may or may not be performed while prone and their difficulty.
- Unless otherwise stated, this condition may be automatically lost with the *stand up* action.

Snared - Acrobatics or Athletics

You are bound or entangled so you can't move.

- You cannot perform movement actions.

Staggered - Athletics or Reflection

You are shaken and caught off balance.

- You suffer a -1 penalty to defenses.

Stunned - Reflection

You are shocked or confused, unable to process complex thoughts or actions.

- You lose all standard actions.
- You may attempt to *cleanse* stunned as a free action once per round.

Suffering - Athletics

You are bleeding, burning, freezing, melting, or suffering from some other dreadful malady that harms you every round.

- You take one irreducible damage at the start of your turn each round.

Unconscious - Athletics

You are out cold.

- You are disabled.
- You are unaware of your surroundings.
- You drop anything you were holding.
- This condition cannot be removed if you are at or below zero Health.

Essence Burden

As with any other substance, too much magic can have an adverse effect. Small amounts of magic can be beneficial, while large amounts can adversely impact you, overwhelming and potentially even warping your flesh and mind.

Each shard and every ten shard fragments (or fraction thereof) have an **Essence Burden (EB)**. Lands saturated with magic have a variable EB. As your EB cumulates you get a sense of warmth and headiness, eventually become more like a draining weight that makes you want to sleep. If your total EB exceeds two, then the excess energies may overwhelm you. The moment your EB exceeds this limit, the Game Master performs a *mutate* test against the character. This test is also performed whenever the EB increases further and once a day that the excess EB is maintained.

Warping

Sometimes your body or mind betray you. They twist and churn, leaving you a gibbering heap. Warpings come in to primary varieties: **mutations** and **mental disorders**.

Mutations

Mutations are alterations to a base species. They are governed by **seeds** and **cores**. Each time you receive a mutation, you gain a seed or an existing seed becomes a core, and the effects of the seed are replaced by that of the core. The effects of a mutation are static and permanent unless otherwise acted upon.

Naturally occurring mutations use the *mutate* action, and are most commonly caused by excessive essence burden. By default, these are cancerous mutations, but other mutations may occur. No matter the category of mutation, you have no control over the exact results of the mutation. Powers that cause mutations may dictate what kind of mutation and even what specific mutation occurs. When options are presented, the Game Master chooses the exact mutation that affects you.

You may only have two mutations, seeds or cores. If you gain more mutations, then you die.

Mutate

Environment vs. Athletics

Environmental Action

The energies warp your genetic structure, spiraling your biology into a new direction. The environment's default skill level is equal to the difference between your actual Essence Burden and your safe maximum (usually total EB - 2).

Achievement: You gain the *seed* of a mutation. If you already have a *seed* of this type of mutation, then the *seed* becomes a *core*. By default this is a cancerous mutation, but the source of the mutation may change this. The mutation occurs over the course of an hour. Undergoing a mutation may also trigger a *horror* test.

Cancerous Mutation

A cancerous mutation causes the body to feed upon itself. Your skin is characterized by discolorations and large bulbous nodules across your body. These develop into encompassing, irregular growths and pus-leaking splits in the skin as your body eats itself. The constant pain and stiffness makes it difficult for you to breathe, much less function.

- All healing and *recovery* for you is reduced by one.
 - **Core:** All healing and recovery for you is now reduced by two.
- **Core:** You are always under the *crippled* condition.
- **Core:** You gain the *hideous (cancerous)* trait.
- **Core:** Each day you suffer irreducible damage equal to your Scale.

Evolutionary Mutation

Species with the *genetic crossroads* trait have the capacity to undergo rapid genetic alteration, becoming the next stage along one possible pathway in that species' evolution. Child species will always list their parent species in their species profile.

- Average species assigned Scale, Health, Strength, and Speed, between the two species, round down.
- Gain any detrimental species traits (e.g. *poor vision*) of the child species.
- You may only have one evolutionary mutation seed at a time.
- **Core:** Remove all modifiers from the seed.
- **Core:** You becomes a member of the child species. Recalculate any statistics as necessary, including Health, Strength, Speed, species traits, and species powers.
- **Core:** The evolutionary mutation is removed so that it no longer counts against the maximum number of imprints.

Shard Mutation

Your blood turns an iridescent deep purple highlighting the veins near the surface of your skin. As the mutation takes stronger hold, jagged bits of crystal pierce your skin. The otherworldly energies of the shards now infuses every part of your form. Shard mutations are only caused via *shard corruption* (see the **Shard Method** chapter).

- **Core:** You gain a +1 bonus to defend, *counter*, or *cleanse* with Athletics.
- **Core:** You suffer a -1 penalty to defend, *counter*, or *cleanse* with Intuition and Reflection.

- **Core:** Your maximum essence burden is increased by one.
- Your natural weapons no longer have the *soft* item qualities.
 - **Core:** Your natural weapons no longer have the *soft* or *subdual* item qualities.
- Tissue from your heart forms a fragment when harvested. Removing it will kill you.
 - **Core:** Tissue from your heart forms a shard when harvested. Removing it will kill you.
- You gain the *hideous (shard skinned)* trait.
- **Core:** You gain the *alien susurrations* mental disorder

Mental Disorders

Mental disorders are abnormal brain functions that cause you to react in a particular fashion. All mental disorders have a **trigger**. Though, these should be construed broadly, and through cooperation between the Game Master and the player, to ensure both sides share the same expectations. **If a trigger presents itself, you have three options.**

You can **indulge the mental disorder** by acting in a manner in keeping with its spirit for the duration of the encounter or until the source of the trigger is removed. This is a relatively minor manifestation of the mental disorder. For example, a kleptomaniac may eye a fat purse and will be distracted with respect to anything else, which may let someone surprise her; she doesn't have to try to steal it, but she may.

The second option is to **act out the mental disorder**. You must enact the mental disorder as described to the fullest of your ability where applicable; usually this is simply a common condition. This lasts for the encounter or until the source of the trigger is removed. Doing so grants you one karma unless you are in karma lock. Because you have embraced your mental disorder, its effects cannot be removed via *cleanse* or other condition removal actions.

Finally you may try to **resist the mental disorder**. The mental disorder performs an *insanity* test against you.

Insanity

Environment vs. Reflection

Environmental Action

Your mental disorder has triggers and you struggle to retain full control and true perception of your faculties. The mental disorder has a base skill of 3, but it may vary based upon circumstances. The dangerous circumstance does not apply if the entire point of the mental disorder is to indulge in or cause danger (e.g. daredevil).

Circumstance	Level
Weak Trigger	0
Normal Trigger	3
Strong Trigger	6
Dangerous	-2

Achievement: You must enact the mental disorder as described to the fullest of your ability where applicable; usually this is simply a common condition. Unless otherwise stated, this has a one day duration, but it expires prematurely if the mental disorder is completely satisfied. This condition is associated with Reflection for the purpose of removal.

Where example mental disorders are included, the Game Master is free to use them as guidelines to create more. It bears mentioning that these are mechanical estimations of real world disorders for a game. They are not necessarily accurate. The portrayal of these is suggested for mature audiences only.

Alien Susurrations

You are plagued by otherworldly whispers. You may only gain this mental disorder through *shard corruption* (see the **Shard Method** chapter) or *horror* induced from shard powers.

- **Trigger:** A shard is within Aura (Intuition x 10) or a fragment is within Aura (Intuition x 2)
- **Triggered Effect:** You are *compelled* to obtain the shard or fragment. If the shard or fragment is not in your possession, then you are *dazed*, unless taking actions reasonably associated with getting it

Attention Deficit Disorder

You are unable to focus upon a specific task for very long. You are easily distracted, often finding yourself lost in thought, and you often acts impulsively. You can easily forget things and lose items.

- **Constant Effect:** You are always considered untrained with respect to aiding in a short or long action via cooperation.
- **Trigger:** Attempting a short or long action. This includes actions that require your active participation even though you may not be the one performing it, such as *treat injury*.
- **Triggered Effect:** The person performing the action suffers a -1 penalty.

Compulsive Behavior

You exert an unusual behavioral trait that compels you to perform an action, even if you know it is wrong or might get you into trouble. Maybe you're an adrenaline junkie; maybe you're just overly infatuated with a particular act.

- **Trigger:** Whenever a clear and present opportunity to fulfill the compulsion arises.
- **Triggered Effect:** You gain the *compelled* condition with respect to the proscribed behavior and trigger.

Game Masters are free to create compulsions. The following examples may be used as guidelines or used directly.

- **Cleanliness:** To groom excessively.
- **Curiosity:** To investigate the unknown, especially the forbidden unknown.
- **Cowardice:** To run away from danger.
- **Daredevil:** To experience danger and take risks.
- **Gluttony:** To eat excessively.
- **Greed:** To possess wealth.
- **Honesty:** To tell the truth.
- **Kleptomania:** To steal.
- **Laziness:** To refrain from effort.
- **Liar:** To avoid telling the truth.
- **Lust:** To indulge sexual desire.
- **Obsession:** To obtain and control something.
- **Pyromania:** To play with and start fires.
- **Short Fuse:** To get angry and lash out when opposed.

Depression

Your failures weigh you down, driving you into despair. You lose all or nearly all enjoyment from activities that would otherwise give you pleasure. This is an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and inability, such that it is not uncommon to be driven to suicide.

- **Trigger:** Failing a general task, such as a mission (e.g. failed bank robbery) or the goal for an encounter (e.g. the bad guy got away).
- **Triggered Effect:** You gain the *staggered* condition for one day.

Fixation

You obsess over your failures and compulsively seeks to prove yourself better.

- **Trigger:** Failing a general task, such as a mission (e.g. failed bank robbery), a personal goal, or even the goal for an encounter (e.g. the bad guy got away).
- **Triggered Effect:** You are *compelled* to re-attempt the task in an effort to succeed. If the task is now impossible, then you are compelled to defeat the one who prevented your success or whom you blame for the failure in an appropriate manner (e.g. having lost a challenge for the queen's favor, you may challenge the winner to a private duel).

Paranoia

You are suspicious of everyone and everything, questioning what you hear and read.

- **Constant Effect:** -1 penalty to all Reflection tests.
- **Trigger:** If a person or situation is particularly suspicious or agitates you.
- **Triggered Effect:** You gain the *prejudice* trait for one day with respect to the person and groups she represents.

Phobia

You possess an unnatural fear of something be it a type of person, an item, and animal or a situation. This extends to areas where you reasonably believe the object of your fear might be. The dread induced by a phobia overrides any sense of reason or control. It clutches your chest, stifling breathing and seizing hearts.

- **Constant Effect:** You have the *afraid* condition with respect to the trigger.

You may have a phobia towards almost anything, but it must have a reasonable impact. The following examples are acceptable phobias.

- **Achluophobia:** Fear of the dark.
- **Acrophobia:** Fear of heights.
- **Agoraphobia:** Fear of open spaces.
- **Claustrophobia:** Fear of enclosed spaces.
- **Entomophobia:** Fear of insects.
- **Ophidophobia:** Fear of snakes.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

You experience overwhelming anxiety that impairs your ability to cope with situations. This disorder can be characterized by flashbacks (waking or dreams) of the event(s) that caused the disorder and often leads you to avoid situations that might remind you of the original event(s). You will often shut down sympathetic emotions, while otherwise being prone to rage. You may experience a loss of appetite and an inability to sleep or even focus.

- **Trigger:** Circumstance that may remind you of the original event(s) that caused the PTSD. For a soldier this could be a battle, sight of a cut of bloody meat, or a smell associated with the scene. For a rape victim it could be a person's touch or revisiting the scene where the event occurred. There is no one trigger: It is highly dependent upon the individual.
- **Triggered Effect:** You gain the *stunned* condition for the encounter, and your next rest cycle will be plagued by nightmares, granting little rest.

Regression

Your mind is no longer fully capable of coping with the world around it. This inability causes you to regress to an earlier stage in your life, typically to childhood. This coping mechanism allows you to avoid situations that might bring stress or otherwise cause problems. When you regress you assume one of three mental states. The mental state you regress to will generally be the same; this base regression point should be agreed upon between the Game Master and player when the mental disorder is taken.

- **Trigger:** Stress, such as combat or when someone is attempting to intimidate you. The player and Game Master are encouraged to tailor what situations are considered stressful.
- **Triggered Effect - Childhood:** You lose the use of all training in skills and powers except for language. You may still use skills at an untrained skill level. Further, your mindset becomes that of a child. This is not something that can be represented mechanically and falls to the player and Game Master to manage. This has encounter duration.
- **Triggered Effect - Adolescence:** The regression takes you to your adolescence, rather than childhood. In this situation, your skills and powers are reduced to *novice* levels (as per character creation) and your mindset becomes that of an adolescent. This has encounter duration.
- **Triggered Effect - Fugue:** As a third option, you may regress to a state of complete inactivity and unawareness. You gain the *stunned* condition with encounter duration.

Horror

The horrors faced by characters can take a toll upon the mind. Madness creeps through the corners of the psyche and rasps over the meek. It drives the mind to seek refuge in a warped perception of reality. Generally speaking, those things that might drive a person mad impart temporary mental disorders as conditions. Though, minor events may prove to have little or no impact while truly horrific events may mark one for years.

When you experience something beyond the norms of the psyche, you have a chance of being affected by horror. The Game Master decides when and where the test is made, but it should only take place once your mind properly grasps the experience. So it may occur immediately upon witnessing an event or after an encounter fully plays out. It is very dependent upon the totality of the circumstances.

Horror

Environment vs. Reflection

Environmental Action

You have experienced something beyond your ability to rationally comprehend, and the only solace you may find is in madness. The source of the horror dictates the skill level. The below chart provides a non-exclusive list of possible sources of horror and their suggested skill level.

Achievement: You gain a mental disorder chosen by the Game Master. The mental disorder should be appropriate for both you and the circumstances that caused it. Different characters can get different mental disorders from the same encounter. This condition has a one week duration and is associated with Reflection. If you suffer horror again within the

one week duration, then the duration becomes one month. If you suffer horror again within the one month duration, then the duration becomes one year. If you suffer horror a final time within the one year duration, then it becomes permanent.

Trivial Horror (Skill 0): You kill a member of another species, endure extended solitude (e.g. a hermit on a mountain), experience a scene of carnage (e.g. a battlefield or murder scene), suffer great loss (e.g. a loved one or target of obsession), have a near death experience, or suffer permanent damage.

Minor Horror (Skill 1): You kill a member of your species, endure extended solitude (e.g. solitary confinement), endure extended deprivation (e.g. no sleep, food, or water), observe a mutation, or encounter someone with a core shard mutation.

Major Horror (Skill 3): You torture a member of another species, undergo a mutation,

Overwhelming Horror (Skill 6): You torture a member of your own species, are a victim of torture, or undergo a shard mutation.

Special (+1 Degree, max overwhelming): If the victim or cause is a friend or the experience is particularly sadistic, horrific, grand, or prolonged.

Inured (-1 Degree, min none): If you experience something and are not affected by horror, then you become inured, deadened to feelings of disgust or awe with respect to that experience.

Species

Species provide the base genetic template for any character. Some will have great strength while others possess grandiose powers. In all cases, each character is built up from the base with whatever skills and additional traits and powers are desired or needed to properly flesh it out.

Some species, notably undead, are presented as **templates**. These modify another species. So you might have a risen human or a risen bear. You use the base species and then just overlay the template.

Example Species

Aberrant Sludge

Scale: 2

Health: 16

Strength: 4

Speed: 4 / 5 kph (burrowing, climbing, land)

Traits: *amorphous, animal, hive connection, lost sense: sight, retaliatory carapace (personal), vibration sense*

Powers: *hide in plain sight, longer shadows, opportunist, vanishing strike*

Natural Weapons: Pseudopod (+1 Reach)

Colonies of slime mold soak magical radiation like few things do. They develop rudimentary intelligence and divide once they grow too large. These aberrant sludges are driven by base needs and cannot be reasoned with; they simply devour and divide, surprising prey from above or below.

Bear

Scale: 1

Health: 9

Strength: 3

Speed: 4 / 4 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, tamable*

Powers: *jarring blow*

Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal, +1 Damage), Claw (Personal)

Most bears are relatively medium sized, averaging about 100kg. This includes the inland brown bear, the American black bear, the giant panda, the Asian black bear, and the sloth bear. Larger bears, such as the Kodiak and polar bear, are not tamable, and are generally coastal creatures where fish and similar prey are plentiful. Their Scale is increased to 2, raising Health to 16, Strength to 8, Movement to 5/5, and bite WF to 3. Smaller bears, like the honey bear, subsist more on plants and honey than on protein. Their Health is decreased to seven and Strength to 2.

Boar

Scale: 1

Health: 10

Strength: 3

Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, long stride, tamable*

Powers: None

Natural Weapons: Short Tusk (Personal)

The parent species of the swine, the wild boar is nearly as large and possesses attributes and temperament better suited for self sufficiency in the wild. Where not predators, boars are defensively aggressive, capable of maddening melee if threatened.

Domesticated pigs that have been bred for mass, litter size, and speed of maturity exist only because of intervention by intelligent species and are commonly used as a source of food and leather. Swine can easily weigh in at 200kg or more. These have 11 Health and no tusk.

Bovine

Scale: 2

Health: 16

Strength: 8

Speed: 5 / 6 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, long stride, tamable*

Powers: None

Natural Weapons: Horn (+2 Damage)

Generally placid animals, bovines are the stable of most growing agricultures, supplying work, dairy products, and meat. The base line bovine can easily represents domestic cattle, buffalo, and the common eland. Larger bovines, such as the auroch, bison, water buffalo, yak, giant eland, and gaur, gain about two Health and one Strength. Smaller bovines, such as the anoa, bongo, nilgai, and tamaraw, are less useful as work animals and can be represented by lowering the Scale to 1, Health to 12, Strength to 4, and reducing the WF of all natural weapons by one.

Camel

Scale: 2

Health: 15

Strength: 8

Speed: 8 / 10 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, environmental adaptation: arid, long stride, tamable*

Powers: None

Natural Weapons: Kick (Personal)

Bactrian and Dromedary camels are massive creatures that can range from 300kg to 1000kg. Smaller cousins, such as the llama, are only Scale 1.5 with 11 Health, 4 Strength, 6/7 Movement, and WF 0 natural weapons. The comparatively dwarf like alpaca, guanaco, and vicuña would have Scale 1 with 8 Health, 2 Strength, 4/5 Movement, and WF 0 natural weapons.

Cat, Great

Scale: 1

Health: 7

Strength: 2

Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, long stride, night vision*

Powers: *displacing step, takedown*

Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal, +1 Damage), Claw (Personal)

Great cats, including the leopard, panther, jaguar, puma, cougar, and mountain lion, medium cats are ambush predators and, pound for pound, some of the strongest cats. The lion is simply a larger great cat with 10 Health and 3 Strength. The tiger is the emperor of whatever terrain it calls home, be it tundra, jungle and swamp; it has 11 Health and 4 Strength. Unlike most cats, tigers are excellent swimmers fond of water.

Crevid Swarm

Scale: 1

Health: 8

Strength: 2

Speed: 15 / 20 kph (air), 1 / 1 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, hive connection, hollow bones, long stride, peripheral vision, swarm*

Powers: *none*

Natural Weapons: Beak (Personal)

When exposed to the energies of the shards, small birds, such as sparrows, sometimes develop a stronger sense of connection. Hosts become tightknit swarms of miniature near omnivorous avians. Where individual crevids may respect large creatures, such as human, swarms are less cautious, particularly when hungry.

Crystal Siren

Scale: 1

Health: 12

Strength: 4

Speed: 4 / 5kph (land)

Traits: *animal, animation, environmental adaptation (earth, pressure), natural armor: heavy (AF 3), retaliatory carapace (reach, 1), vibration sense*

Powers: *alertness x 2, concussive blow, endure, obstruct, physical power stream x 2, precise strike, ruby waters, sonic beam, sonic scream, third eye*

Natural Weapons: Large Claw (+1 Damage)

When a shard lay amongst amethyst, salt, or even sand for too long in an area of high magical saturation, things begin growing around the shard, and eventually a primitive mind takes shape. The crystal siren appears as some sort of upright, four legged crab composed of jagged glass and crystal. The nuanced crystal structure of its body allows it to harness and direct sound waves against its opponents.

Sonic Beam - Power Pool

Projectile vs. Acrobatics

Instant Species Physical Ability, Earshot

The creature generates a beam of intense vibration up to long earshot range.

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success.

Sonic Scream - Power Pool

Athletics vs. Acrobatics

Instant Species Physical Action, Reach

The creature emits an ear piercing sonic scream over Cone (Strength x 2).

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success. The target also gains the *deaf* condition. This has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Dog

Scale: 1

Health: 6

Strength: 2

Speed: 3 / 4 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, color blind, long stride, tamable*

Powers: *opportunist*

Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal)

Most wolves, coyotes, and domesticated dogs are pack animals ranging in size from 21 to 35kg. Larger dogs can be approximated by simply increasing the Health to 8; with the exception of the dire wolf, these have been purposefully bred and include the great dane, various mastiffs, and the leonberger. Much smaller breeds and jackals have 0.5 Scale, 4 Health, and 1 Strength.

Bloodhounds and scent hounds also have the *diffusion sense* trait. They are bred for tracking large game, such as boar and deer, as well as escaped prisoners using exceptionally developed olfactory sense. Smaller scent hounds, like the fox hound or basset hound, can be made by reducing the Scale to 0.5, Health to 4 or 5, and Strength to 1.

Errant Strider

Scale: 2

Health: 16

Strength: 8

Speed: 8 / 9 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, long stride, natural armor: light (AF 1)*

Powers: None

Natural Weapons: Kick (Personal, Shard)

They may have once been horses. Now their legs are elongated, their hide bleached, and their eyes an iridescent purple or blue. Such is the change the energies of the shards brought. Running in herds, errant striders are extremely defensive and seemingly untamable.

Horse

Scale: 2

Health: 16
Strength: 8
Speed: 6 / 8 kph (land)
Traits: *animal, long stride, tamable*
Powers: None
Natural Weapons: Kick (Personal)

Horses are primarily riding and work animals, and they come in a wide variety of sizes. Larger draft horses have +2 Health and +1 Strength. While smaller ponies or mules have -2 Health and -1 Strength. Zebras, although physically statically the same as horses, do not have the *tamable* trait.

Human

Scale: 1
Health: 8
Strength: 2
Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land)
Traits: *adaptable, genetic crossroads*
Powers: None

Physically, humans stand approximately 1.5 to 1.8 meters tall at maturity; though this varies with diet and activity. Combined with their natural endurance and efficient temperature regulation, prehistoric humans could easily spy dangers while exhausting the prey they hunted. However, humans' greatest asset is their mind, with which they invent new methods and devices to shape their world and themselves.

Skin tone ranges from pale or fair to yellowed to olive tinted to deep brown, depending upon the melanin content within the skin. Eye color can span most of the color spectrum, again depending upon the melanin content. While humans nearly uniformly possess hair atop their heads, the presence and quantity of facial and body hair ranges wildly from virtually non-existent to abundant. Hair color typically ranges from white to yellow to brown to black, but red is also naturally possible.

Individually, humans can be free thinking paragons of whatever virtue they choose. However, in numbers they tend more towards group behavior than individual behavior, allowing charismatic demagogues power over them

Hyena

Scale: 1
Health: 7
Strength: 2
Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land)
Traits: *animal, long stride, tamable*
Powers: *opportunist*
Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal), Small Claws (Personal)

The average hyena ranges from 45 to 80kg. Although commonly considered to be scavengers, hyenas are pack predators that also eat carrion.

Jenka

Parent Species: Human
Scale: 1
Health: 7
Strength: 2
Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land)
Traits: *animal, lost sense: sight, vibration sense*
Powers: *ascending step, displacing step, familiar domain, scouting, takedown*
Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal)

For most, jenka are no more than tales to frighten children. They evolved in the dark places rational men rarely venture, and they do not leave the dark unless drawn by the need for food. Although intellectually jenka are barely more than animals, they are expert hunters within their domains. Their long limbs service them well as they scale wall and ceiling, and their acute sensitivity to vibration helps compensate for their blindness.

Jenka are thin bipedal humanoids whose long arms would reach down to mid-calf and whose fingers would reach past that to their ankles if they were to stand erect. The jenkan spine is naturally curved, giving a stooped profile. Their angular

head sports large, fanning ears, two vestigial, sightless eyes, and a short, almost shorn nose. A jenka's skin is pale to the point of being translucent, the veins and muscles beneath clearly visible despite a layer of very thin fur.

Jenka usually function in packs on the verge of becoming tribal units. They make use of tools that are available, but usually only that which can be carried in the mouth. The hands are almost always kept free for climbing.

Lizard, Monitor

Scale: 1

Health: 8

Strength: 2

Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land, water)

Traits: *animal, diffusion sense, long stride, natural armor: light (AF 1), poor hearing*

Powers: None

Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal, +1 Damage), Claws (Personal)

Where most lizards are relatively small, feeding upon fruit and insects, tropical environs usher in the monitors. The maws of many monitors are typically festering disease factories, and one hunting method is simply to bite its prey and then slowly track it until it collapses from fever. The most famous of these is the komodo dragon, which generally weighs about 70kg, but has been known to weigh more than twice that. Smaller monitors simply have 6 or 7 Health, whereas larger ones can have up to 10 Health.

Ravening Dead

Scale: Base

Health: x2

Strength: +2

Speed: Base

Bonus Traits: *diffusion sense, undead*

Bonus Powers: *alpha (risen), feasting of flesh, takedown*

Bonus Natural Weapons: Natural weapons lose the subdual and soft qualities

At some point, after years of feasting on the flesh of the living, the mind of a risen may return to its original state, albeit twisted by an unquenchable need to feed and an unfettered loathing for the living. These ravening dead are often smart enough to work together, and to control more limited undead. It is common for a ravening dead to cultivate a pack of risen that may eventually become ravening dead themselves.

Alpha

Species Development

Alpha has the following constant effects.

- The creature may automatically *control* (as per *controlled* condition) any or all members of a particular species within the better of Aura (Ranging x 100) or Aura (Influence x 100) so long as the creature's Influence is greater than the target's Reflection.
- The creature can receive sensory input from any or all members of the same species within the proscribed aura. This requires a standard action.

Feast of Flesh

Species Development

Feast of flesh has the following constant effects.

- When the creature eats the equivalent of a full meal worth of living or recently dead flesh, it gains the following benefits:
 - The creature is healed two points of Health. This does not count against the number of times per day the creature may be healed.
 - For one hour the creature's Strength doubles.

Remnant

Scale: Base

Health: x5

Strength: +5

Speed: Base x 2

Bonus Traits: *diffusion sense, mental disorder: alien susurrations, natural armor: light (AF 1), undead*
Bonus Powers: *alpha (undead), feasting of flesh, takedown, unnatural beam, unnatural mortar, unnatural vapor*
Bonus Natural Weapons: Natural weapons lose the subdual and soft qualities and gain the shard quality

When a person is slain with a shard on magically immersed ground, and the shard remains in her, a monstrous change begins. A day later the dead rise. Though the remnant has the full memories and skills she did in life, she is driven by alien needs that even she doesn't quite comprehend. Due to their origin, remnants are most likely to form after a major shard fall. Perhaps the only blessing of a remnant's physiology is that it cannot survive for long outside areas of vibrant or immersed areas. When it leaves these areas of enhanced magic saturation it gains the suffering condition, which can only be removed by returning to areas steeped in magic.

Alpha **Species Development**

Alpha has the following constant effects.

- The creature may automatically *control* (as per *controlled condition*) any or all members of a particular species within the better of Aura (Ranging x 100) or Aura (Influence x 100) so long as the creature's Influence is greater than the target's Reflection.
- The creature can receive sensory input from any or all members of the same species within the proscribed aura. This requires a standard action.

Feast of Flesh **Species Development**

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 - For one hour the creature's Strength doubles.

Risen

Scale: Base

Health: x1.5

Strength: +1

Speed: Base

Bonus Traits: *animal, diffusion sense, undead*

Bonus Powers: *feasting of flesh, takedown*

Bonus Natural Weapons: Natural weapons lose the subdual and soft qualities

Those who die in areas of vibrant or greater magic saturation may return as a risen after a year if their body is still intact. More likely, a risen is created through magical powers intent on animating the dead or events that carry the side effect.

No matter what a risen was when alive, in death the mind dims to instinctual levels. Now, it simply hungers for flesh and blood, that of the living being the sweetest.

So long as a risen is physically capable of eating or drinking, it may recover Health. Only when its body is completely destroyed (e.g. burned to ash) or its head separated (e.g. decapitation), is a risen truly no more.

Feast of Flesh **Species Development**

Feast of flesh has the following constant effects.

- When the creature eats the equivalent of a full meal worth of living or recently dead flesh, it gains the following benefits:
 - The creature is healed two points of Health. This does not count against the number of times per day the creature may be healed.
 - For one hour the creature's Strength doubles.

Rat, Large

Scale: 0.5

Health: 4

Strength: 0.5

Speed: 3 / 3 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, long stride, peripheral vision, poor vision, tamable, vibration sense*

Powers: None

Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal)

Most common large rodents only have a mass from 5 to 10 kg and include the mara, muskat, and pacarana, but can also include enlarged versions of smaller rodents, such as a giant rat. Variations may include additional natural weapons (e.g. a horned gopher would have, well, horns). A plethora of smaller rodents exist, with lower Scale, Health, Strength, and WF values that can be estimated as needed.

Rat Swarm

Scale: 1

Health: 8

Strength: 2

Speed: 2 / 2 kph (land)

Traits: *animal, long stride, peripheral vision, poor vision, swarm, tamable, vibration sense*

Powers: None

Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal)

A teaming hoard of small and/or medium rodents can act in near unison, overrunning and overwhelming most creatures. Despite the name, a rat swarm can be composed of any suitably sized rodent.

Echimyidae, like the bolivian bamboo rat and mesomys, can swarm just as easily as their cousins, only these rodents have hairs that have formed into keratin spines, much like porcupines, making such a swarm more difficult to deal with. Such swarms add the *retaliatory carapace (personal)* trait.

Sand Walker

Scale: 1

Health: 12

Strength: 4

Speed: 4 / 5kph (land)

Traits: *amorphous, animation, environmental adaptation (earth), natural armor: light (AF 1), vibration sense*

Powers: *endure, flensing strike, sand aura, scouring breath*

Natural Weapons: Punch (Personal, Subdual, +1 Damage)

Composed of loose sediment (e.g. sand, gravel, or ash), the sand walker takes on a form that looks vaguely like its creator; however, as it moves, it readily shifts and adopts other shapes as needed. It is most strongly characterized by a near constant aura of swirling ash or sand that scours the flesh of all nearby, save its controller.

Sand Aura

Species Development

Sand aura has the following constant effects.

- You exude an omnipresent miasma of swirling sand that affects anyone within Aura (Athletics x 2).
- If your Athletics is greater than the Athletics of someone within the aura, then she gains the suffering condition. This remains in effect so long as she is within the aura.

Scouring Breath - Power Pool

Athletics vs. Acrobatics

Instant Species Action, Reach

You exhales heat and sand over an area up to Cone (Strength x 2).

Damage: You deal one point of damage to the target per success plus you Scale.

Shard Spider

Scale: 1

Health: 7
Strength: 2
Speed: 4 / 5 kph (climbing, land)
Traits: *animal, natural armor: light (AF 1), poor vision, vibration sense*
Powers: *poisonous bite - hemotoxin, webbing spit*
Natural Weapons: Bite (Personal, Shard, +1 Damage)

About the same size as a large dog or a cougar, shard spiders have been horribly mutated by exposure to shards. Now they don't just hunt insects or the occasional small rodent. The shard spider's lair is covered in webbing that increases the terrain difficulty one step for non-spiders. The shard spider can also ball up its webbing and spit/throw it at target. If killed, an undigested fragment may be found in a shard spider's stomach.

Poisonous Bite - Hemotoxin - Power Pool
Species Boost

Poisonous bite augments a bite attack.

- One does of hemotoxin is injected.

Hemotoxin (ingestion or injection delivery; living targets; encounter duration; no addiction): You gain the <i>suffering</i> condition.
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Webbing Spit - Power Pool
Projectile vs. Acrobatics
Instant Species Action, Sight

The creature spits a wad of webbing within short sight range that roots the target to a surface.

Achievement: The target becomes *snared*. This condition has encounter duration and is associated with Athletics.

Sliver Spy
Scale: 0.1
Health: 1
Strength: 1
Speed: 4 / 5 kph (climbing, jumping, land)
Traits: *animation, telescopic vision, vibration sense*
Powers: None
Natural Weapons: n/a

Small enough to fit in the palm of your hand, a sliver spy is an artificial construct crafted from light, dreams, nightmares, or just magic. Although sliver spies present of no physical threat, one can relay all it sees to its creator.

Splinter Swarm
Scale: 1
Health: 12
Strength: 4
Speed: 4 / 5kph (climbing, land)
Traits: *animation, retaliatory carapace (reach, 1), swarm, vibration sense*
Powers: *endure, furious swarm, precise strike, weeping strike*
Natural Weapons: Small Claws (Personal, +1 Damage)

Composed of a multitude of wood chips and crystals, the splinter swarm is directed as a hive mind with the controller giving it direction. These splinters run, crawl and jump as needed, and when they encounter targets they burst into a flurry of activity that resembles a tornado or wooden splinters.

Furious Swarm
Species Development

Furious swarm has the following constant effects.

- *Swarm attack* and *charge* do not count towards you maximum number of boosts.

Stone Simulacrum
Scale: 1
Health: 12
Strength: 4

Speed: 4 / 5kph (land)

Traits: *animation, environmental adaptation (earth, pressure), natural armor: heavy (AF 3), vibration sense*

Powers: *endure, iron palm, jarring blow, shrug off*

Natural Weapons: Punch (Personal, +1 Damage)

The basic animation of earth and stone creates a large, rocky copy of its creator. The features are not crisp. At best, it is a vague representation. The stone simulacrum is not a solid statue. Rather it is a collection of stone and dirt that was nearby. If there is not rubble to draw from, then it is more solid, its parts chiseled from surrounding earth by the power that created it.

While stone simulacra are most commonly created through earth magics or spirits, they can occur in the wild when lightning strikes stone in areas of high magic saturation and in the depths of the earth where churning magma moves a stone heart to beat.

Tissue Swarm

Scale: 1

Health: 10

Strength: 2

Speed: 4 / 5 kph (land, water, climbing)

Traits: *undead, swarm*

Powers: *feast of flesh, flesh puppet*

Natural Weapons: Tooth and Nail (Personal)

A tissue swarm is a curdling mass of body parts from risen and other undead that were not properly destroyed. These parts come together to try to reform, but lacking a true body and potentially being from different creatures, they simply created a churning pile of undead tissue hungry for life. If a tissue swarm successfully grapples a target of the same Scale, then it can attempt to possess him by forcing its component parts into his body, thereby regaining a body of sorts. If the possession lasts ten days, then the tissue swarm is completely absorbed into the target, and the two become a ravaging dead.

Feast of Flesh

Species Development

Feast of flesh has the following constant effects.

- When the creature eats the equivalent of a full meal worth of living or recently dead flesh, it gains the following benefits:
 - The creature is healed two points of Health. This does not count against the number of times per day the creature may be healed.
 - For one hour the creature's Strength doubles.

Flesh Puppet - Power Well

Influence or Mysticism vs. Reflection

Instant Species Action, Reach

The swarm clamors its way into the victim, controlling its motions and eating away from within.

Achievement: The swarm creature enters the target's body through wounds and orifices. The target gains the *controlled* condition.

- Any attempts to harm or affect the swarm first affect the target, unless otherwise stated.
- A *controlled* target can only be freed by forcing the tissue swarm out of the body (e.g. by grappling the victim and then using *treat condition* to perform a Heimlich maneuver or similar).
- This condition is associated with Reflection.

Species Creation

Many of the species provided here, even the more imaginative ones, can be tailored to the needs of the setting. The three primary means of doing this are: adjusting vital characteristics, adjusting traits, and adding powers.

Adding or subtracting a point or two of Health and/or Strength can easily account for variances in size of a particular species and for dimorphism. More drastic changes, such as island gigantism, can be accomplished by adjusting Scale.

The *environmental adaptation* trait lets you adjust any species to any environment. *For example, a polar bear is just a large bear with environmental adaptation: cold.* Adding other traits, such as constrictor or multi-limbed, can quickly change a normal creature into something more exotic.

Scale	Health Range; (ave)	STR Range; (ave)
0.1	1	Treat as zero
0.25	1 to 4; (2)	1/8
0.5	2 to 8; (4)	1/2 or 1
1	4 to 16; (8)	1 to 4; (2)
2	8 to 32; (16)	4 to 16; (8)
3	12 to 48; (24)	9 to 36; (18)
4	16 to 64; (32)	16 to 64; (32)
5	20 to 80; (40)	25 to 100; (50)
6	24 to 96; (48)	36 to 144; (72)
7	28 to 112; (56)	49 to 196; (98)
8	32 to 128; (64)	64 to 256; (128)
9	36 to 144; (72)	81 to 324; (162)
10	40 to 160; (80)	100 to 400; (200)

Where some powers may be appropriate for a species, new powers can and should be created as warranted for species. Existing powers can be used as a guideline. Additionally, the *imprint* method and powers from other non-core methods can truly take a species from the natural to the supernatural.

When creating a species whole cloth, your imagination is the only limiting factor. Start with a concept, maybe combine or alter real world animals. Then decide how big it is by choosing its Scale. From there, choose its base Health and Strength using the guidelines for its Scale. Using existing species, as a guideline, pick an appropriate speed. Then just start assigning traits, powers, and natural weapons that fit the concept. Feel free to make up traits and powers if there aren't already some that suit your creature.

Afterward and Credits

SHARDS was written and developed by William J. (B.J.) Altman and is based on the Krendel engine. The horrible layout is also my fault, and I confronted the fact that I lack both the software and the skills to put it all together right.

In February 2016, Brent Newhall announced a fantasy RPG design challenge on G+ with less than a month to put everything together. The contest was essentially a list of things to not include, which I won't mention here just yet because that might violate the rules ;). In short, contestants had to design around a series of tropes common to many fantasy games. My first quip was to describe dagger fighters in the arctic who all spoke Greek. Where amusing, it got me thinking.

First, I could use Krendel and just release a setting guide, but that seemed like it would not fit with the spirit of the contest. Since Krendel has a lot of options and complexity and since I had already been working on some tweaks, I felt a better approach would be to repackage everything. Krendel was designed to be as flexible as possible, and during its development I experimented with many different types of resolution, including different types of dice using Krendel's resolution system. So there's always been a d6 and a d20 version of Krendel kicking around.

For SHARDS, I just switched things to d6, I stripped a number of sections out (e.g. superstitions, mists, expertise) to simplify it and focus the aim of the game more, and then worked in several tweaks I had already written. A lot of the original text is still there, but that is because I didn't have time to rework everything. Even with all that, there wasn't a setting to play in, and to really meet the spirit of the contest there needed to be a setting.

One of the ways Krendel works as a modular system is the plug and play nature of power methods. I had already sketched some ideas for the shard method. The concept behind it is what happens to stuff drawn from another universe, a place that operates on a completely different set of scientific principles. Do these items turn into goo and melt away, explode, or something else. The idea here is that the dreamscape, that interstitial tissue between worlds, coats the items in a crystal like cocoon, shielding our physics from its physics. Of course, the dreamscape is also a conduit for conscious minds. So when you grab a shard, your mind becomes a conduit for those alien physics. Indestructible crystals that channel power and made folks want to be dagger fighters seemed like a good fit for the contest.

Of course a single power method does not make a setting. You need more than that, and using Earth just made things easier. It also makes you ask questions. After all, if shards have always been around, then so has magic and Earth won't look at all like Earth anymore. So there needs to be an artificial date for their inclusion. It raised lots of fun questions, lots of what ifs. It's great to pose these questions and let people come up with their own answers.

Naturally, there is one question that looms above the rest: Why did magic and the shards suddenly come to Earth? Everyone will have their own theory. Maybe some extra-dimensional demon is priming Earth for conquest, letting humans change the laws of physics through their use of shards. Personally, I like the idea that some alien, magic rich world has a junk problem. So its folks just started tossing their crap into portals. The smaller items slip through cracks in reality, which just happen to open up on Earth. Now after centuries of this, Earth is populated by people wielding daggers and talismans that are essentially amber sealed apple cores and toy cars.