

## House Games Player's Guide

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Note: Please send questions, comments, and suggestions to [eterry@highacres.net](mailto:eterry@highacres.net).

### 1.0 The Games

#### 1.1 House Games

What are "House Games"?

**"If life were a game, and you could play and wreak large changes in the world, at great risk to yourself... would you? Would you wield the Lever of Archimedes to weal or woe? For that is what is being offered - A Place to Stand. Answer."**

House Games is a role-playing game set in a collectively-modified version of the real world drawn from fiction and folklore. House Games generally fall into the "Horror/Action" genre. House Games was designed to solve two common problems with role-playing games:

##### 1) Absenteeism

A common problem of extended campaigns is that there is always some player who can't make it. With House Games, that's not a problem. That person's character simply was not invited for a particular Game by the Harbingers. You can always play with whatever players shows up so long as you have at least two players and a GM.

##### 2) GM Responsibility

No one wants to be stuck with the responsibilities of the GM all the time. House Games allows an easy method for round-robin refereeing duties in order to allow everyone to take turns playing and running Games. With this format, everyone takes turns (in no particular order) running Games to challenge other players.

The concept began in a small town in California, but now there are players all over the world.

Who are "High Rollers"?

The individuals who play in House Games are called "High Rollers." Due to the deadly risks they take by participating in the Games, they are often gambling with their lives (or worse) at stake.

Wiki: <http://housegames.wikidot.com>

Now defunct will use Xander's creation

Use Housegames.pdf: <http://www.mediafire.com/file/cx01tnq4ji634lq/Housegames.pdf>

and this Particular document

Alternatively use the wiki but look for the "old" tag or look on pages that share names and click on

history then go back to around 2015 when the last edits were made  
<http://housegames.wikidot.com/old-old-system-for-gifts>

Myspace Page: <http://groups.myspace.com/housegame>

Implying

Implying

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=124762007533835>

We should make our own however I obviously won't be in it

The disco never stops

Online House Games are conducted via the combination of Traipse (<http://www.knowledgeareana.com/download-traipse>) and Skype (<http://www.skype.com>) and are announced on the Forum (<http://housegames.wikidot.com/forum:start>). (Previously, online House Games were conducted at <http://www.roleplaymarket.com>.)

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

## 1.2 Lexicon

### Frequently Used Terms

Character: A fictitious persona adopted by a player in order to participate in a story. Each character is controlled by one player. Characters under the control of the GM are known as Non-Player Characters or NPCs.

Player: A real person who adopts the persona of a character. Each player controls one character at a time and decides what that character does.

Gamemaster (GM) (aka Referee or Storyteller): The person who referees the game and controls the non-player characters. The GM must arbitrate rules and engage the players as best he or she can. Ideally, a person gets to be a player at least once between running Games. House Games is designed to make it easy to take turns like this.

Ringer: A player-controlled NPC. The player of the Ringer generally works with the GM to fulfill a certain role within the Game (often by dying).

Don't know if this comes up later but their reward and restriction should be explored further

Gifts: Offered powers, effects, or tools that might be sufficient to motivate a High Roller to participate in the Games. The GM decides what Gift is offered by a Harbinger, though if they are incautious or show poor judgement, a Gift may go on the block to be Voided. Likewise, the Gift must be in keeping with a character's style and ambition.

Change this to a desired player effect but it may be undesired in character for whatever reason

If there is no explicit section defining what a gift is and can do then make one

Voided is better known as "Vetoed"

Introduction: Everything that happens to a character up to the point where he joins the other characters

for a Game. This usually includes the Harbinger's (or representative's) pitch to the High Roller before the Game commences.

Once again if no parameters given make explicit section

No idea what I was addressing here probably vagueness in this ruleset

Side Game: Scenarios using House Games characters outside of the typical format (i.e., not sponsored by a Harbinger for a Gift). Side Games may be used to eliminate enemies, acquire resources and allies, investigate leads, or anything else. They often become necessary or beneficial for High Seasoned Contractors.

Explicit section

May address later

Secret Masters (aka The Powers That Be): The mysterious powers behind the Games. Their powers seem infinite and their interests obfuscated. Perhaps the Games are merely an amusement, or perhaps they are part of a grander scheme.

Now this is one that can remain mysterious though they should be a tiny bit more explained

If you don't know you don't know

Harbinger: Representative of the Secret Masters sent to coax, lure, or intimidate characters to participate in the Games. They typically offer the Gifts available to characters. Harbingers need not appear in person, often working through third parties, writing, or other methods. Whether or not the Harbinger chooses to present it in this way, the characters usually have a choice and may "opt out" if the challenge involves something they won't do. Harbingers are always controlled by the GM.

This is actually pretty alright but we should put down the assumed in an explicit section

High Rollers: Characters who accept the challenge of participating in the games. Characters have been known to adopt their own terms such as Imbued, Chosen, Contractors, Doornails, and many more.

Fine

Novice: A Chosen with fewer than 10 Gifts.

Seasoned: A Chosen with 10 to 20 Gifts is considered Seasoned.

High Seasoned: A High Roller with at least 20 Gifts is considered High-Seasoned.

Veteran: A High Roller who occasionally attempts Games without the aid of other High Rollers. Veterans typically have more than 30 Gifts.

This shit needs to be revised either eliminating the veteran-not dichotomy or fixing veterancy

The Games

Formal: ~~The Test, The Gauntlet, The Grand Guignol, The Great Experiment~~

Nobody calls them this; change

Slang: ~~Slaughterhouse 5, Finals, Missions, Contracts, Go-Time, Casting Call~~

Replace this with actual colloquialisms

The Powers That Be

Formal: The Secret Masters, ~~The Ascended, The Faceless Ones~~

Slang: ~~Puppet Masters, The Producers, Little Green Men~~

Same as above

Harbingers

Formal: ~~Messengers, Seraphim, The Elite, The Inner Circle~~

Slang: ~~The Directors, Handlers, Sadists, Puppets, Pimps~~

Same as above

The Characters

Formal: ~~The Chosen, Contractors, Specialists, Aspirants~~

Slang: ~~High Rollers, Door Nails, Expendables, Head Hunters, Masochists~~

Same as above

## 1.3 The Worlds of House Games

~~The Games take place on a number of parallel Earths: The worlds of House Games.~~

Let's ignore this marvel multi-universe garbage outside of transporting high rollers to other dimensions and they get stuck; assume everything is in the same world until explicitly otherwise and even then multi-universe really detracts from the setting as a whole

For those that are interested in learning more and how this is possible, examine the Book of Madness, the Velvet Shadows, the Spirit Ways, and the Infinite Tapestry. The worlds are all one in the same, however each one may be a *reflection* of the "real" world or may simply be a weird part of it. Simply parallel earths do not exist but earthlike environments that pass the Turing Test exist which can and will fool characters and players into thinking they're the real world. You get imbued in the real world, after your first game, all bets are off but it shouldn't matter too much to you as a high roller.

### 1.3.1 History of the Games

To date, the earliest recorded Game was set in AD 1200. Every ten years, the hidden powers select ordinary folks from all walks of life to engage in these secret struggles. The mortality rate is high, and for the first half of the decade many will be replaced by newcomers, keeping the number of active players around one thousand worldwide. After the fifth year of that decade, no new people (contestants? victims?) are sought. By the end of that ten-year period, typically less than five come out as hardened Veterans, so transformed by their experiences and ambitions as to be largely unrecognizable from where they began.

No one knows why these events transpire, although theories abound among Vets. Some believe they are purely entertainment (and many games are quite sadistic), others believe they are being readied as an army for some trans-dimensional apocalypse. Thus far, no one has produced a lead on the puppet masters.

The only linking factor with all those chosen is a bright and burning drive to somehow be/do more than what they have now. The "Secret Masters" have an uncanny ability to seek out these people and aid them in this pursuit, but like the Monkey's Paw, they never quite offer complete satisfaction. Thus the Chosen, through unknowable hardship and terrors, are forged into some of the most formidable beings

ever to exist.

Acceptable flavor text however we should have some alternative perspectives that permeate the community of high rollers and known harbingers

I'm actually quite neutral about adding such lore now that we've expanded the knowledge of the setting to its true home. The mystery shall remain.

### 1.3.2 The Secret Masters

The Games are organized by a shadowy conspiracy that is seemingly all knowing and all powerful. Their direct servants, the Harbingers, are powerful enough to stagger the imagination, yet even they don't know the true identity of The Powers That Be. That does not mean that theories do not abound however . . .

Some think they are highly evolved aliens, or the ascended masters of Shamballah. Some think the Games are a contest between God and The Devil. No one knows, and most likely no one ever will. What is known is that they reward a rare few, and reward them well. The purpose for that, as well as how they pick candidates, is likewise unknown. Some think the Chosen are being prepared for some sort of Apocalypse. Others think the "Masters" are merely sadists . . .

Good stuff but once again a revision based on held views by *us*

### 1.3.3 Harbingers

Harbingers are the most accomplished servants of The Powers That Be. Most are former High Rollers who have achieved a plateau of power that places them as far beyond Veterans as Veterans are beyond Novices. Harbingers are all highly unique individuals, and often represent all that is wicked about the ruthless pursuit of power.

I do enjoy this scale of power

Harbingers are utilized primarily to collect the characters, dole out Gifts, and see to it that the Games proceed without interference.

The interference part is generally not enforced these days but it's good to still have it there

In most cases the interference *is* the game, but I've never seen anyone try to get in the way of a game before that wasn't meant to be there.

As part of the jump from Veteran to Harbinger, Harbingers gain the ability to channel The Powers That Be to a limited degree. This can only be done in the fulfillment of their duties, and allows for effects even Harbingers would be hard pressed to obtain. Clearly, as in the case of King Willy and certain others, the degree to which they may be channeled varies.

Literally who? Also this channeling idea may benefit from actual rules for GMs to give their harbingers concrete stats instead of "I can do everything and am invincible"

Better idea is to grant harbingers a degree of freedom in what they manifest, clearly individuals who GM need to take care to put together feasible failsafes all around however having hard and fast rules for those of the fifth generation to create harbingers of their own may help as well.

When Harbingers bestow Powers, they instill an intuitive understanding of those Powers by tapping the power of the Secret Masters. This is why Harbinger-bestowed Powers are learned so much more efficiently than those taught by High Rollers. A Harbinger who bestowed a Power without drawing on

the power of the Secret Masters would do so no more effectively than a High Roller.

This bestowing business clearly denotes an unspoken mechanic not shared by us which we may or may not benefit from making/discovering although it may lead to ugliness as everyone teaches everyone all of the powers they have learned

I think it is fine to denote when a character crosses from regular high roller to harbinger that they gain this ability to impart their knowledge (in whatever way seems thematically correct to their character) as a part of the out of character change from PC to GMPC.

Each regular GM will typically keep a unique Harbinger or two to add spice to his Games. Often the players will become embroiled with undermining or defeating the Harbinger, which can lead to interesting "Final Boss" situations.

This should happen more often and GMs should be willing to let their harbinger be defeated and even die

On that, a tangent about Housegames: every character should expect to die at all times and their players should not be absurdly upset that their character has perished, and this can be prevented by not making characters that would devastate you if they die in the canon of the housegames slice of the World of Darkness and leaving them to their own canon. And I am not without empathy either as I am very guilty of this myself so just don't start, remember the World of Darkness is a terrible, awful place to exist in general, don't condemn a favorite character to live in that hellhole unless you recognize that they *will* die. Then if they don't it's all fine and if they do you saw it coming.

Remember this young ones, expys and original the character donut steals will end their days painfully and full of nightmares if they live in the World of Darkness™

## 1.4 Game Format

All House Games follow the same basic formula.

\* There must be a minimum of two players (with the exception of Veteran Games).

\* Anyone may run a Game, and everyone who plays should at some point.

\* A Game or Event is subject to "Tribunal Void" if necessary.

Also known as a veto. Which, like most things, will require two GMs to warrant.

A character who is invited to participate in a House Game typically has the option of refusing. Ideally this won't happen, and GM's should strive to make their introductions enticing. The Harbingers use "Gifts" to lure characters to Games. In the event the character cannot be induced to play, he sits out that Game.

Particular invitations don't occur very often anymore but it still should be a thing as sometimes GMs may wish to design a game for a particular set of characters instead of ad hoc because it will lead to challenges for all characters involved and overall a better experience

Not a problem yet, but tailor making games for particular player characters (or at least their "type" of character) is a nice touch that can make individuals feel more useful than they might otherwise be. Example being spirit shaman being placed in a bank robbery is not at his full potential.

If he accepts, he is brought to the location where the Game is set, typically meeting the other players (which can include NPC's) at the "starting point." Depending on the nature of the Game, he is instructed in whatever details are deemed relevant and sent on his way. Early Games are usually straightforward, while later Games can have all sorts of complications. Most early scenarios are

"closed" to outside influence (the "House" in House Games), requiring the characters to overcome the scenario without interference. The most standard types of House Games operate as follows.

We should have more open house games as opposed to universe hopping so often as most backgrounds lose their use outside of WoD earth

Bug Hunt: Just what it sounds like: Find and neutralize the monster. This sort of Game strongly favors fighter types, but can be cast in numerous layers of subtlety. These Games tend to be the most predictable.

A bit too many of these are done without thought and largely unsatisfying, should be a preventative warning section

Try to avoid these or at least obfuscate them. It is far too easy to kill something outright than it is to interrogate, rob, or otherwise get something out of it besides its skull.

Puzzles: These Games involve a variety of riddles and complex problem solving. Clearly favoring the cerebral characters, at no point should players be allowed to simply "roll" a solution. Investigative rolls and skills should provide clues, not answers. For obvious reasons, these Games can be the most frustrating, but also very rewarding when solved.

These are hard to write but there should be more and I think the way to instigate more is to provide examples. However overly specific solutions also lead to boring games as it becomes trial and error

After literally half a decade I'm still unsure how to put together a game like this that feels rewarding and isn't just a series of dice rolls. Murder mystery feels like the best application since you have the most ways of approaching it but perhaps I am not a creative man.

Hybrid: The combination of the above styles, these Games tend to run like the first Resident Evil: A combination of Antagonists and Problem Solving that ultimately leads to the finale. These Games are undeniably the best, in spite of the difficulty in producing them.

Honestly these are hard to do because combat generally takes up the majority of time or the puzzles do so it depends on a good GM's intuition of how to make a game last the right amount of time

Life of the Party: These Games revolve around social interactions that require charm and wit for characters to get themselves out of sticky situations. Again, characters should not be allowed to "roll" their way out of situations, but with a high persuasion roll they should be presented with what makes the target tick. These Games favor social characters and failure often ends in a pretty nasty fight. This type of Game is great for chatty characters, and gives many great opportunities for character development.

Need more of these because they are what is at the heart of the storyteller system

In my opinion, of the fourth generation, no games were more memorable or significant than those with heavy social elements while every other one seemed to fall under the rug as "just another game"

Obstacle Course: Simple and often brutal, these Games send the characters through a series of traps, tests, and challenges with the objective of surviving to reach the goal. They are best when used sparingly, as a series of death traps and little in the way of flexibility can wear on players when used too often, yet can be refreshingly straightforward after several more cerebral Games.

Can see these being good and bad once again examples

Complications: You can stir up the normal House Game by adding other elements such as the following.

\* Time Limit: characters only have a set time to achieve specific goals.

- \* Hostages: An NPC must be safely retrieved or brought along.
- \* Open Door: The Game takes place in a public setting; local institutions may help or hinder.
- \* Rivalry: Individual characters have different, or even opposing goals. Alternately, a rival team may be after the same goal.
- \* Highlander: Only one character can win.

This type of brutalism should be used more often keeping in mind that this is done for the laughter of thirsting gods not for the enjoyment of the characters

I expect many more "Open Door" games but my opinion remains the same on these, elements should be used and used sparingly, but still used.

## 1.5 Downtime

As a result of being Imbued, High Rollers learn more rapidly than normal in the month following a Game. (This includes Games in which the character plays, Games the player referees, and Games in which the player runs a Ringer, as long as the XP is assigned to the character in question.) This month is known as Downtime. ~~Characters may go on additional Games during Downtime if desired, but do not receive additional Downtime for doing so. Once their Downtime ends, they are eligible to receive another one by going on another Game. Thus, each character may only receive one Downtime per week of real time.~~

These real-time/game-time notions are garbage, games are "once" "a" "month" to the dismay/relief of any high roller

Basically each character exists outside of a continuum and they get a downtime for going on a game themselves or they get awarded one (1) when their player runs a game. No real-time meat-space complications.

During Downtime, a character may receive Study Points, teach another character, or conduct research. These activities are mutually exclusive; it is not possible to do more than one in a single Downtime. We need more details on what one can do with a downtime including creation rules (which aren't in here)

I'm sure they are you faggot, and even if not then they *are* in housegames.pdf

### 1.5.1 The Passage of Time

~~One week of real time equals one game month.~~

~~If a character is inactive, one month of real time equals one game month for that character.~~

~~Generally, an inactive character is one who does not go on Games or receive ringer XP or GM XP, is not engaged in side activities, and is not with an active character. Becoming inactive is optional; you may choose for your character to remain active if you don't mind aging.~~

No

## 1.6 Characters

Individuals who accept the challenge of participating in the Games are often called High Rollers. Due to the deadly risks they take by participating in the Games, they are gambling with their lives (or worse) at stake. Harbingers sometimes refer to them as Imbued or Chosen. Characters have been

known to adopt their own terms such as Contractors, Specialists, Aspirants, Doornails, Expendables, Head Hunters, and many more.

Change names

Mark maintains a file on everyone who has played a High Roller, including each character made, Gifts awarded, current status, and other errata. Here is why:

Honesty: He can back track a character to their first Game by tracking the Gifts. This is much easier if he already has a record. This fact is the only element that keeps characters honest in the House Games setting.

While impossible to do this kind of thing I think we can trust one another to have *enough* honesty to not lie and if not we accomplish this through Xander's website cataloging unique gifts and who approved them

Lmao as if that's happening. Just be honest or I'll krump you.

Consistency: While Powers are often unique and varied, ideally two players with similar Powers (such as Magic) should be able to "talk shop" rather than being completely confounded. Maintaining consistency gives House Games the illusion of a shared setting, even though it is in fact modular.

This is slightly relevant in the case of universal things such as the futuretech creation rules and other such things that are not subject to deviation, magic is a bad example because in World of Darkness alone there are many very different and equally valid kind of "magic"

We may have to put together a list of things once they get hairy enough but we'll hold off on that for now while we establish the basics in this book and I search for old rules later on

Rewrites: Often early Gifts end up utterly inappropriate to the character as they evolve. If he has a head count on Gifts, he can more easily suggest and revise alterations to keep things more in line. Revision is definitely a thing that should come up and something we should have a procedure for

Evolution: Every new character is ideally breaking new ground in the overall setting. As it becomes necessary to record their Gifts, we get closer to working out the remaining flaws and finalizing the Player's Guide.

Oh how the mighty have fallen. Nevertheless we can learn from their mistakes and make the rules concrete and comprehensive and save this setting from the clutches of casuals and morons who know nothing of game mechanics

Pride comes before the fall. In an attempt to save the setting and rules we destroyed it, but we have discovered the truth behind their origins, and in that, a rebirth!

### 1.6.1 Newbies

New High Rollers know virtually nothing about the Games, Gifts, Harbingers, and the like.

Important, I know there is a large turnover rate and lots of new kids, but we should strive for ignorance until educated as new characters

Newbies seldom understand the concept of Games and objectives, and have only the vaguest conception of Gifts. A new High Roller will typically meet a Harbinger at some point within his first few Games, but will have little understanding of the significance of the event (or of the subsequent Imbuing).

Imbuing is a term I do not like for many reasons but mainly because of the implication that the high

rollers are changed by simply becoming high rollers when in reality the only thing that changes high rollers is the gifts they receive (should also be a fluff section on this subject)  
Complete opinion change on this. It is necessary to impart a moment of change to a high roller in order to allow them to do what they do.

### 1.6.2 Novices

Characters with a couple of Games under their belt are full-fledged Novices. They typically have a limited understanding of the nature of the Games (though they at least know enough to ask questions) and a high mortality rate.

Vague and irrelevant

Mostly irrelevant, just establishing a stratus

### 1.6.2 Seasoned Characters

Most characters become Seasoned after winning about ten Games. This is not a sharp cutoff, but a measure of power and ability.

Vague and irrelevant

Same as above

### 1.6.3 High Seasoned Characters

High Seasoned Characters typically have twenty or more Gifts. They are allowed to play in Games with Veterans, but may not play with Novices. They may not play in Solos.

These "levels" essentially come down to powerlevels and our convention of only having characters within 5 gifts of one another to ensure balance effectively replace it but this should be replaced by a section explaining it is not a hard cap and always GM discretion

The general "within five gifts" should be enforced, we do not want carries and the weight mixing.

### 1.6.4 Very High Seasoned Characters

"Veteran-level" Characters are considered Very High Seasoned. Any non-Veteran with at least thirty Gifts is Very High Seasoned.

Very High Seasoned Characters are allowed to play in Games with Veterans, but may not play with Novices. They may not play in Solos.

See above.

### 1.6.5 Veterans

A Veteran is a character who has received the Veteran Template and is recognized as mechanically sound. Most have thirty or more Gifts. Characters usually receive a revision upon achieving the Veteran Template.

Will explain autism about templates when it is relevant but simply put I do not like them however this

one is less of what I dislike about the others since it is exclusively

Veterans (and only Veterans) can engage in Solo House Games. Vets may only play in Solos or with Veteran and High Seasoned (or Very High Seasoned) Characters; they may not play with Novice or Seasoned Characters.

Veteran Test: A character who wishes to declare himself a Veteran should complete a grueling Veteran Game entirely by himself, with no assistance.

The Veteran Template raises the cap on all Backgrounds from 5 to 8. A Gift may raise this limit to 10 in a specific Background.

This is actually a good part of Veterancy

Veterans gain the following Merits.

Veteran Nerves: All Virtue rolls are -2 Difficulty. Always in effect.

Fine

Grim Resolve: You can burn a permanent point from any Power pool with a Permanent Rating (Willpower, Psion, Gnosis, Tao, etc. NOT Blood, Pathos, Mana, or similar temporary pools). You immediately regain all your temporary points up to your new adjusted rating. May be used at will.  
Fine I guess, I do not know who would do this however

All Veterans receive a free subscription to all episodes of "You Bet Your Life," which they may watch at their leisure. Vets may consider themselves "in the know" about any occurrences within such Games, and may act accordingly.

Haha so fahnnny, although this is actually extremely relevant and weird because GMs do run games multiple times so it complicates things a lot

Perhaps a less gay version of this that allows veterans to know about what happens in the games may be more appropriate.

## 1.6.6 The Endgame

Characters involved in the Endgame are exempt from all rules about characters with different levels of experience going on Games together. Thus, Novices may go on Veteran Games. As always, the GM decides which characters may participate in a given Game.

Not a thing in our setting as far as I am concerned and I'm sure everyone else agrees

Perpetually denied this ending, I doubt we shall reach it either, although GMs are encouraged to have their own plot threads that threaten the world, high rollers, and humanity as a whole.

## 1.7 Character Revision

Characters are typically revised upon becoming Seasoned, and again if they reach Veteran status. Revisions are intended to weed out early Gifts that were either poorly thought out or no longer match the emerging pursuits of the character. Contact [wintereise@hotmail.com](mailto:wintereise@hotmail.com) if you feel your character needs revision.

This is a thing that should be done amongst our group more often than when characters become broken

or plain useless

There is a tendency to view the various potential Powers as building blocks for your character; nothing could be further from the case. While certainly, some archetypes and designs overlap, each and every character is deliberately designed to be as unique in their range of abilities as possible. This is by intent: Each character should be an ambitious little snowflake of carnage, that must be sought out for his or her individual talents because no one else has them.

That being said, we are obviously strained to provide a unique design from the beginning. Bearing that in mind, players are advised to take Gifts in stride; sometimes you will be shorted, confused, or left hanging. To address that, we offer a "Character Revision" at each level of evolution past Novice.

**It should just happen whenever GMs have time and a player notices their character is borked**

~~You should request the Revision as close to the transition point as possible, and submit all details on Gifts received to the Admin doing the Revision (usually Mark). Include any thoughts or opinions you have on abilities you think need special attention. The Admin will look it over, make whatever changes are advisable, then submit the proposed change to you and your Regional GM. If everything looks in order, you have two choices:~~

1) Take the Revision, changing all abilities as suggested and pretending they were always that way where possible.

2) Decline and continue to play your character as is (though particularly broken mechanics may still be altered).

~~You may NOT decide to use some of the Revision, but ignore other parts. It is a "from the ground up" rebuild, and once applied it remains static till your next "upgrade point."~~

**Bunch of burocratic garbage however whatever the GMs decide is effectively law unless other full GMs disagree**

**My vitriol is lessened against the concept once I saw what unstopable brokenness looked like, revision is an idea we can examine at a later date when it becomes relevant. It is on the table.**

## 1.8 Site Authority

~~Each active cell will have a Primary GM, who will keep records of all players in the cell, Gifts given, Side Game action, etc. Responsibilities include revising Gifts and characters in that cell as needed, establishing paradigm boundaries, and communicating with other cells.~~

**Overall GM: Mark Maloy (Bratovich) <[wintereise@hotmail.com](mailto:wintereise@hotmail.com)>**

**Regional GM's:**

~~Alabama: Edward Terry (Falthon) <[eterry@highaeres.net](mailto:eterry@highaeres.net)>~~

~~Northern California: Speneer Steeko (Shady Tradesman)~~

~~Oregon/Washington: Chauncey Parsons (X marks the spot)~~

~~Southern California: Corey Holden (Captain Luckey)~~

~~Texas/Missouri: Jon Zorie (Foreverdragon)~~

**Local Regions:**

~~Davis, CA: Spneer Steeko (Shady Tradesman)~~  
~~Los Angeles, CA: Peter Hoff (ZenBastard)~~  
~~Nevada County, CA: Michael Hoff (Hawful)~~  
~~Plaeer County, CA: Dylan Hoy-Bianchi (BobDylan530)~~  
~~Portland, OR: Chauney Parsons (X-marks-the-spot)~~  
~~San Franciseo, CA: Corey Holden (Captain Lucky)~~  
~~Texarkana, TX: Jon Zorie (Foreverdragon)~~  
~~Tusealoosa, AL: Edward Terry (Falthon)~~

~~The Wiki Tribunal consists of three individuals who will determine what is to be added, altered, or deleted from the shared Paradigm as a whole. These individuals will have full access to the site, and the authority to Void any regional decission. The Tribunal consists of Mark Maloy, Edward Terry, and Spneer Steeko.~~

~~Los Angeles Region answers to itself and no one else. The fools running this grand game have made a defiled ruin of it and clearly do not understand how things work~~  
~~Amen, no one tells us what to do with our insane pretend game.~~

## 2.0 Character Creation

~~Characters are created using either the Standard Build System (aka the Build Point System) or the Alternate Build System (aka the XP System), as determined by the Regional GM.~~

~~We use build point system, whatever that is, i.e. standard World of Darkness~~

### 2.1 Standard Build System

You may spend Build Points as follows.

ATTRIBUTES: 7/5/3

Attributes are divided into three groups: Physical, Social, and Mental. Each Attribute begins at 1. Spending one point increases an Attribute by 1. You may spend seven points in one group (Physical, Social, or Mental), five points in one group, and three points in the remaining group.

ABILITIES: 13/9/5

Abilities are divided into Talents, Skills, and Knowledges. Each Ability begins at 0; spending 1 point increases an ability by 1. You may spend thirteen points in one group (Talents, Skills, or Knowledges), nine points in one group, and five points in the remaining group.

VIRTUES: 7

Each of the three Virtues (Conviction, Self-Control, and Courage) begins at 1; spending 1 point increases a Virtue by 1. You may spend seven points on Virtues.

~~We begin with three less virtue points than is standard, we should change both the character sheet and this guide to reflect this~~

~~The curse of the Fourth Generation was three less virtue points, hence the horrible monstrocities we~~

brought to the tellurian. May the Fifth live better lives as more virtuous monsters take the mantle of the High Roller.

BACKGROUNDS: 5

You may spend five points on Backgrounds. Spending 1 point increases a Background by 1.

MORALITY begins equal to Conviction + Self-Control. Note that increasing Conviction or Self-Control later does not increase Morality.

WILLPOWER begins equal to Courage. Note that increasing Courage later does not increase Willpower.

MERITS: Standard cost.

FLAWS provide additional Freebie Points. A character may have a maximum of 7 points of Flaws, or two Flaws totaling any amount.

Should be a bit better explained as per the two 5-point flaw business being allowed  
It's explained fine you idiot.

FREEBIE POINTS: 15 + Flaw value. The cost to increase a Trait by 1 point using Freebie Points is as follows.

Attributes: 5

Abilities: 2

Virtues: 2

Morality: 2

Backgrounds: 1

Willpower: 1

Merits: Normal cost to acquire.

Any Trait may be raised to a maximum of 5 at character creation, except Morality and Willpower, which may be raised to 10.

Good section

## 2.2 Alternate Build System

~~Regional GMs may choose to use the following system instead of the Standard Build System. The Alternate Build System discourages min/maxed and overspecialized characters. It also helps new players learn how to advance their characters, since the build costs are the same as for advancement.~~

~~You may spend the following amounts of XP.~~

~~Abilities: 100~~

~~Attributes: 100~~

~~Backgrounds: 26~~

~~Virtues: 28~~

~~Freebie: 107~~

Freebie Points may be spent in any category. Freebie Points may be saved for later use only if they cannot be used during character creation (such as when 1 point is left over and there is nothing on which to spend it).

Morality begins equal to Conviction + Self-Control. Note that increasing Conviction or Self-Control later does not increase Morality.

Willpower begins equal to Courage. Note that increasing Courage later does not increase Willpower.

Attributes and Virtues begin at 1; everything else begins at 0.

Merits cost Rating x 3.

Flaws provide a number of Freebie Points equal to Rating x 3. A character may obtain no more than 21 XP from Flaws, or two Flaws totaling any amount.

Any Trait may be raised to a maximum of 5 at character creation, except Morality and Willpower, which may be raised to 10.

Costs are the same as for advancement.

We don't do this so I'm not going to analyze it

### 2.3 Equipment

You should maintain a detailed equipment list. While some GM's are easy on this, the going rule is:

**If you don't have  
it written down,  
you don't have it.**

Your Backgrounds should give you a decent idea of what is reasonable for you to start with.

We should try our damnest to avoid abuse of the storyteller rule of cool on equipment both as players and as GMs by holding people responsible to their equipment and resources

## 2.4 Driving Goal

Each character must have a reason for participating in House Games at great risk to life and limb. Most High Rollers have a Driving Goal.

Determining your Driving Goal is the most critical element to the process of detailing your character. As a potential High Roller, your Driving Goal should be infinite in depth, and zealously pursued. If your character would not be willing to face down a biker gang for even a marginal step towards his ambition, you're not trying hard enough.

Your back story may be as detailed or blank as you like. Generally if you are looking for specific rewards for your character, you should make note of these goals to your GM and ideally reflect them on your character sheet in some manner.

**Fine**

## 3.0 Attributes

Attributes are the basic building blocks of your character and give you a rough estimate of what you're naturally good at. The majority of dice rolls in the game will be based on one of your Attributes. When you choose which ones to advance, choose wisely.

Normal humans have Attributes ranging from 1 to 5.

- 1 – Very poor
- 2 – Average or a bit below average
- 3 – Above average
- 4 – Superb
- 5 – World-class

### 3.1 Physical Attributes

Physical Attributes reflect what kind of shape you are in and what you can accomplish with your body. They comprise the power in your arms, the speed of your feet and your overall hardiness. If you are a warrior, professional athlete, or have rugged demands placed on you, you'll want to pay special attention to Physical Attributes.

#### 3.1.1 Strength

Strength governs how much damage your character can inflict with a kick or a battle axe. It also determines how much weight you can carry without being slowed down.

- 1-You are as strong as a 12 year old girl and can carry up to 25 pounds without being encumbered.
- 2-You're completely average and can carry up to 50 pounds without being encumbered.
- 3-You're a regular at the gym and can carry 75 pounds without being encumbered.

4-If you aren't a professional wrestler, you should be. Carry up to 100 pounds without being encumbered.

5-There may be people as strong as you, but no one stronger. Carry up to 125 pounds without being encumbered.

These carry weights are garbage, but we should make parameters that better reflect strength  
I mean regular soldiers carry over 200 pounds of equipment and I surely do not think that soldiers  
everywhere have over 5 strength

Use reasonable ideas of what is a good sample carry. Don't go crazy



### 3.1.2 Dexterity

Dexterity determines how quick and agile you are. If you need to run fast, dodge effectively, or fire a gun accurately you use Dexterity.

1-You can catch a fly, if it's dead and you're having a good day.

2-You don't impress anybody with your tennis skills, but you don't embarrass yourself either.

3-You can juggle two tennis balls with one hand.

4-You set the state dart throwing record. Blindfolded.

5-You're lightning made flesh, no one can catch you.

Needs movement rate but that probably comes later

### 3.1.3 Stamina

Stamina reflects how tough and resilient you are. It determines how easily you shrug off punches, how likely you are to contract diseases, and how long you can maintain strenuous activity.

1-You get sick three times a month and get worn out walking across the room.

2-You use up your sick-days, but don't go over them.

3-You live on the sixth floor and take the stairs everyday.

4-You were once punched by a Kung Fu master and didn't notice.

5-You could eat month old pizza off a dorm-room floor and survive.

FIne

### 3.2 Social Attributes

Social Attributes determine how personable you are, how often you get what you want, and how flat out sexy you are. If you're a lawyer, politician, news anchor, or have to deal with people on a daily basis, you'll want to pay special attention to Social Attributes.

#### 3.2.1 Charisma

Charisma is how likable and inspiring you are. If you want to make a friend, calm an animal, or rally the morale of your troops you use Charisma.

- 1-You're either socially awkward or a total jerk. Either way you don't have many friends.
- 2-You know a couple of good jokes and have a few good lines.
- 3-You are the life of the party and you know it.
- 4-If you aren't a politician or a cult leader, you've missed your calling.
- 5-Coma patients wake up just to talk with you.

Fine

#### 3.2.2 Manipulation

Manipulation is what you use to get what you want without force. Sleazy lawyers who twist the truth, conmen who graft honest people, and mob bosses who terrify with a raised eyebrow are all master manipulators. Manipulation is also a reflection of how well your character can manipulate energy and supernatural forces, and as such, is the basis of many Power rolls.

I've heard a lot of arguments against manipulation as an attribute for use in magic but I am fairly neutral on it as no other attribute really fits except maybe wits (and yes I realize it's because of the confusion between one's ability to manipulate the magic layline highways and manipulate people's opinions, I mean it's a social stat for crying out loud)

I still agree with my assessment here, but hey what can one do? Stick to world of darkness rules and everything else is fanfiction, better they use manipulation than dexterity to make it a further godstat.

- 1-You couldn't lie to a corpse and get away with it.
- 2-You can usually convince your buddy to share his beer.
- 3-You are a feared man in the courtroom.
- 4-You've convinced cold hearted thugs to give you their money and feel guilty they didn't have more.
- 5-You get what you want. Period.

#### 3.2.3 Appearance

Appearance is how attractive you appear. If you're an actor, model, or public figure, Appearance is vital. Sad to say, but beautiful people are treated better and are fawned on by those around them.

- 1-Children point at you and adults refuse to make eye contact. You are ugly enough to stand out in a crowd.
- 2-No one really notices you. That can be a good thing.
- 3-People turn to watch you walk by, and they should.

4-You are a sexy beast and everyone knows it.

5-You have to be careful where you walk, so as not to cause car accidents.

This should receive more creative uses, as often High Rollers are ugly as sin because no one ever rolls appearance or appearance+anything

Best usage for this is when you want to make yourself "look" like something, example being "I wish to look innocuous" or "I try to look as shady as possible" and not just outright attractiveness. A better description of the stat being control over appearance and ability to recognize how to do that. A makeup artist for example can make someone look beautiful or look like a monster and for this stat to be more useful then I feel that approach is the best.

### 3.3 Mental Attributes

Mental Attributes flesh out how fast your mind works, how sharp your senses are, and how vast your knowledge is. Scholars, snipers, and trivia geeks all have significant Mental Attributes.

#### 3.3.1 Perception

Perception is how astute you are at noticing the things around you. Do you smell blood under the chemical stench or see what the license plate was on that passing van? If so, you likely have high Perception.

1-Huh, the sun's out.

2-You notice the canary yellow semi that's following you around.

3-Strange, that's the third person today wearing the same perfume.

4-Win every touch-screen game at the bar.

5-See that guy on the other side of the stadium? He has dandruff and is cheating on his wife.

#### 3.3.2 Intelligence

Long story short, Intelligence is how smart you are, how well you can work through complex equations and how infallible your memory is. Professors, scientists, and engineers all have high Intelligence.

1- You were held back in kindergarten. Twice.

2- Meh. You're a B student when you can be bothered to try.

3-You've corrected your teacher's grammar more than once.

4-You can recite every line of a movie weeks after seeing it.

5-Einstein was a chump.

Well he was.

#### 3.3.3 Wits

Wits determines how quickly you think, and for some characters may determine when you can act in combat.

1-You have to have jokes explained to you.

- 2-You always think of the perfect comeback a few days too late.
- 3-You should try out for “Wheel of Fortune.”
- 4-You are completely unflappable and can adapt to any situation.
- 5-Oscar Wilde would weep with envy.

Fine

## 4.0 Abilities

While Attributes are the basic building blocks of your character, Abilities show the specific tasks in which you excel. They represent skills you have learned and knowledge you have acquired.

Are you a long distance runner? You need Athletics and Endurance. How about a master violinist? Performance is a must. Are you a Hollywood stunt driver? Then you better have some ranks in Pilot.

Normal humans have Abilities ranging from 1 to 5.

- 1 – Competent
- 2 – Skilled
- 3 – Professional
- 4 – Master
- 5 – World-class

### 4.1 Fields and Specialties

When relevant, you have a number of fields determined by your ranks in an Ability.

Abilities that require a high degree of specialization, such as Science and Academics, allow one field per rank.

Seems like a cursory mark, these should be listed

Check out Guide to the Technocracy for exhaustive lists of fields to go into.

Other Abilities, such as Culture and Linguistics, allow a greater number of fields, as follows.

Same needs to be listed

- \* One rank allows one field.
- \* Two ranks allow a total of two fields.
- \* Three ranks allow a total of four fields.
- \* Four ranks allow a total of eight fields.
- \* Five ranks allow a total of sixteen fields.

Once you have reached 4 in an Ability, you may specialize in a certain field. Write this down next to the Ability in question. When rolling in your specialty field, you may reroll 10's. Ones rolled on these rerolls are not subtracted from the number of successes.

Choosing a specialty is free and can be done as soon as you achieve four ranks in an Ability; however, it cannot be changed. As always, choose wisely.

## 4.2 Talents

Talents are Abilities that rely on natural aptitude.

Alertness  
Athletics  
Brawl  
Dodge  
Endurance  
Intimidation  
Intuition  
Legerdemain  
Persuasion  
Subterfuge

### 4.2.1 Alertness

Some Abilities cover a broad range of minor tasks you can perform. Alertness does one, and only one, thing: It shows your awareness of your surroundings. This is important! If you don't want to get mugged by rednecks, ambushed by werewolves, or attacked by Plombies (don't ask), you need a high Alertness. The upside of this Talent is that it's passive. You never have to say, "I'm rolling my freaking Alertness." The GM will just get an evil grin and tell you to roll, and to roll high.

Ignoring the faggotry in this but, the passiveness bit is important to include because it is

It should also be noted that this is reflexive, that is, that it does not require an action or split dice pools to dedicate to.

Alertness is most often paired with Perception. It's the standard roll to notice something that is hidden, but it is not used for active searches (which require an Investigation check).

- 0-There isn't a bulldozer in the world that can sneak up on you.
- 1-You know when Billy is about to break out the spitwads.
- 2-You always see 'em coming so long as you can see 'em at all.
- 3-Not bad. You give sneaky people a run for their money.
- 4-You notice even the most minute changes around you.
- 5-Ninja Masters hate you.

### 4.2.2 Athletics

Do you run, climb, jump, or swim? Then you need Athletics. This Talent covers a broad set of skills centered around using your body effectively. If you are attempting any physical feat not specifically covered by another Ability (such as Brawl or Dodge), you will probably roll Athletics. Athletics also covers thrown weapons, including everything from spears to grenades.

Thrown weapons better have rules in here as well as running chase rules rather than movement rates

Remember, you don't have to outrun the Mythos monster trying to eat you. You just have to outrun your friends . . .

Athletics is usually paired with Dexterity.

- 0-You played golf. Once.
- 1-You go for the occasional jog around the block.
- 2-You play a wicked horseshoe game.
- 3-You almost always win those pick-up games in the park.
- 4-You could be a circus knife-throwing act and not lose a single assistant.
- 5-Football scouts would sell their children to recruit you.

#### 4.2.3 Brawl

Whether you are a mixed martial arts professional or just a drunken thug, if you know how to punch, kick, and bite, you know how to Brawl. This Talent showcases how easy it is for you to connect with a target while unarmed. A great many people have self-defense training, including military veterans, old farmers, and female activists. Don't let a sweet smile and a button nose fool you...

Brawl is most often paired with Dexterity.

- 0-You had older brothers.
- 1-You joined a gym boxing league to impress women.
- 2-You joined a gym boxing league and knock women out.
- 3-You are a disciplined student of the martial arts.
- 4-You should have your own dojo.
- 5-Mafia thugs use your name to scare children.

The two most common Secondary Skills associated with Brawl are Hard Martial Arts (punching, kicking, and striking) and Soft Martial Arts (blocks, locks, sweeps, and throws).

**Fine**

#### 4.2.4 Dodge

Dodge covers, well, dodging. Sooner or later something is going to try and kill you by stabbing, shooting, punching, shooting, or burning. Dodge is how you keep from getting killed to death. If you have any intention of surviving you'll want to take a few levels of Dodge.

Dodge is most often paired with Dexterity.

- 0-You can successfully dodge little old ladies with shopping carts.
- 1-You weren't half bad at Tag when you were a kid.
- 2-Regional dodgeball champion.
- 3-You start bar fights so drunks will take swings at you and make themselves fall down.
- 4-If you can see the shooter, you can dodge the bullet.
- 5- You can dodge death rays. Usually.

**Fine**

#### 4.2.5 Endurance

Endurance reflects your fitness. If you are exposed to disease, running a marathon, or dragging your unconscious friends for three straight hours, Endurance is what you roll. If you perform a strenuous activity for more than a few moments, your GM is likely to call for an Endurance roll. It also comes in handy for all those times some really nasty monster tries to infect you with really nasty spores (this happens more often than you'd think).

Endurance is paired with Stamina for poison, disease, and feats of endurance.

0-You were a sickly child.

1-You can hike for miles without chafing.

2-You can hike for miles and get up the next morning without aching.

3-You run 5Ks every summer.

4-Doctors would sell their souls to know the secrets of your fortitude.

5-You could go a month without sleep. You wouldn't want to, but you could.

Fine

#### 4.2.6 Intimidation

You know that guy at the laundromat with the evil grin? Yeah, he's got Intimidation down to a science. Intimidation is the art of cowing others to do your bidding, breaking the morale of the enemy, or getting the angry mob to run away screaming. If you're a bookie's collector, a cop, or a torturer, you very likely have ranks in Intimidation.

0-You scare the hell out of squirrels.

1-You were the terror of the 3rd grade lunch line.

2-Locals cross the street to avoid passing by your house.

3-You're a freelance witness tamperer.

4-Special Forces operatives shudder at the sight of you.

5-You send crowds into fits of terror with a whispered word.

To make an Intimidation check (including torture and the like), the two parties make opposed Intimidation rolls using the Attribute appropriate to the situation. The target's Willpower provides the base Difficulty, but base Difficulty may be modified by circumstances. Whoever gets successes equal to the other's Courage first wins. Merits such as Jaded apply normally.

Needs suggested attributes but this mechanic is actually good

#### 4.2.7 Intuition

Intuition is that itch on the back of your neck and the twist in your guts that lets you know something is wrong. Interrogators, phony psychics, and jealous girlfriends all have high Intuition. In addition, many true psychic powers use Intuition as their default roll.

Intuition is most often paired with Perception.

0-You get the feeling that the half starved cannibal isn't as harmless as he claims.

- 1-You're never taken in by phony e-mails.
- 2-You're the king of the Saturday night poker game.
- 3-You could consult with law enforcement as an interview specialist.
- 4-When you get a bad feeling, everyone runs.
- 5-You guessed the ending of every M. Knight Shyamalan movie before the opening credits rolled.

**Fine**

#### 4.2.8 Legerdemain

This Talent covers a broad category of Abilities that are less than legal, or at least a little shifty. If you want to pick mechanical locks, pick pockets, or hand-forge documents you want Legerdemain. (Deactivating electronic locks is covered by Engineering, and digital forging is covered by Computer.) Legerdemain is a must have for thieves, stage magicians, and anyone at least a little bit shady. It also covers sleight of hand, escapology, magic tricks, cheating at cards, and similar skulduggery.

Legerdemain is most often paired with Dexterity.

- 0-You could pop the lock on your sister's diary.
- 1-You were kicked out of school for running a Three Card Monty.
- 2-When they kicked you out they thought you were one of the teachers.
- 3-Your homemade money passes inspection at two out of every three convenience stores.
- 4-You are a master of disguise.
- 5-You could steal the "Bill of Rights" if you could only find someone to buy it...

**Fine**

#### 4.2.9 Persuasion

You want to make a friend? How about seducing that waitress? Persuasion is the art of being likable and gently bringing people around to your way of thinking. Any character who talks for a living lives and breaths Persuasion. Politicians, social workers, and Army recruiters all rely heavily on Persuasion.

Persuasion is usually paired with Charisma.

- 0-You can get a few people to come to your birthday party.
- 1- When you walk into the bar everybody's day gets better.
- 2-Singles crowd your table when you're a wedding guest.
- 3-The surliest hobos and most cold-hearted killers can't help but like you.
- 4-Run for office, it's yours for the taking.
- 5-That psychotic woman who blames you for the death of her child is three sentences away from sleeping with you. She just doesn't know it yet.

**Fine**

#### 4.2.10 Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the dark twin of Persuasion. Where Persuasion is about making friends, Subterfuge is about using misinformation, lies, and half-truths to get what you want. A sleazeball lawyer who turns a

victim's testimony on its head, a reporter who "spins" the truth, and a criminal that blames a patsy for his crime are all examples of Subterfuge.

Subterfuge is also used to tell when someone is lying or trying to mislead you.

Subterfuge is most often paired with Manipulation or Perception.

0-No one believes your fishing stories.

1-You've scammed old folks for their savings.

2-You should have been a used car salesman.

3-Why aren't you a televangelist?

4-You've scammed CFOs for their corporation's savings.

5- You could sell the Statue of Liberty for scrap parts to MENSA.

Should define whether lying is an opposed manipulation+subterfuge versus perception+subterfuge or if it is just manipulation+subterfuge at the difficulty of the target's perception+subterfuge

I've seen both in World of Darkness books, however in this case I think it depends on whether the target is a PC or NPC for terms of speeding up the game, however both should be considered.

#### 4.3 Skills

Abilities that fall into this category rely on natural aptitude and intense training in equal measure.

Animal Ken

Crafts

Engineering

Firearms

Meditation

Melee

Performance

Pilot

Stealth

Survival

##### 4.3.1 Animal Ken

Animal Ken is in essence how much of an "Animal Person" you are. It lets you sooth savage beasts, train pets, and identify animals by spoor, sign or smell. (Actual tracking falls under Survival.) Lion tamers, hunters, and K-9 cops all have this skill. If you want to get that grizzly to leave you alone or figure out what creature left that tuft of fur, Animal Ken is the skill for you.

Animal Ken is most often paired with Charisma.

0-You know a Chihuahua when it humps your leg.

1-Your cat will sometimes sit in your lap when called.

2-You've taught your cat to a dance to Aerosmith tunes.

3-You can differentiate cougars, mountain lions, and lynxes by the sound of their cry.

4-You could get rabid wolves to roll over for a tummy scratch.

5-Jane Goodall, eat your heart out.

One rank signifies you at the very least owned a dog. At five ranks you're likely famous for your knowledge of animals, or you might be a vet who can handle even the most stubborn of patients, or a cowboy who can break a mustang just by looking at it, or possibly just a person who has something about him that animals innately trust.

Your ranks in Animal Ken determine the number of animals with which you are familiar.

- \* One rank allows one type of animal.
- \* Two ranks allow a total of two types of animals.
- \* Three ranks allow a total of four types of animals.
- \* Four ranks allow a total of eight types of animals.
- \* Five ranks allow a total of sixteen types of animals.

Okay so it does get explicit, that is good

#### 4.3.2 Crafts

You are handy to have around. With Crafts, you can create and build a wide variety of useful things, from making your own bow and arrows, to throwing together improvised explosives. If a neighbor needs help with laying tile or building a secret compartment in their garage, Crafts is what you use. Construction workers, house painters, and mechanics all have significant ranks in Crafts.

Crafts runs the gauntlet from building bombs to sculpting clay, from making beaded bracelets to forging blades. If it takes a gentle hand and a keen eye, then Crafts is probably a good bet.

Note: The primary difference between Crafts and Engineering is the difference between doing and understanding. For example, a Crafts user can swap broken car parts with store-bought new ones, while an Engineering user understands the machine and can design custom parts for the car – but may not be able to actually build or install them. Most characters who fiddle with things have ranks in both Crafts and Engineering.

Useful

Crafts combines WoD "Technology" and "Repair" as well as normal Crafts for clarity.

Crafts is most often paired with Dexterity.

- 0-You made a birdhouse in shop class and managed to get a passing grade.
- 1-You volunteered to build houses with Habitat for Humanity.
- 2-You're the neighborhood go-to guy for all domestic repairs.
- 3-Everyone in the department uses your hand-cast bullets.
- 4-You could be the greatest sword-maker of your era.
- 5-Your work is infallible.

You have a number of fields equal to your ranks in Crafts.

"Fields" I guess it's helpful but this skill is a bit broad in my opinion

#### 4.3.3 Engineering

With Engineering you understand machines, architecture, and how natural forces interact. If you need to design a bridge that'll survive a monsoon or know where to put the charges to bring down a skyscraper, Engineering is what you use. Demolitions experts, architects, and, of course, engineers have Engineering as their primary skill.

Note: The primary difference between Crafts and Engineering is the difference between doing and understanding. For example, a Crafts user can swap broken car parts with store-bought new ones, while an Engineering user understands the machine and can design custom parts for the car – but may not be able to actually build or install them. Most characters who fiddle with things have ranks in both Crafts and Engineering.

Engineering covers the design and understanding of electronic and mechanical devices. It can be used to circumvent electronic locks and security systems, but not to hack into a computer. Engineers understand how things operate and are masters of practical application, but they don't understand the theory behind it unless they also have Science.

Also useful

Kind of a lie, but an engineer without Science is probably a backyard DIY kind of guy

Engineering is most often paired with Intelligence.

- 0-You could probably replace a fuse if you knew what one was.
- 1-Your first memory is being spanked for taking apart dad's electric shaver.
- 2-You were the only guy in your high school to put Nitro in a Ford Fiesta.
- 3-You're making a name for yourself in the world of architecture.
- 4-You've managed to design an engine that runs off salt water.
- 5-You could change the world with two paperclips and a rubberband.

You have a number of fields equal to your ranks in Engineering.

Once again fields should have examples

#### 4.3.4 Firearms

Firearms denotes how good you are with a gun. In the world of House Games, it's pretty rare to come across somebody who doesn't have at least some training and pack a pistol. If you don't have any ranks in Firearms you may want to come up with a reason why. But remember, some monsters are bulletproof . . .

When shooting a gun, you roll Dexterity with your Firearms score.

- 0: You learned all about guns from watching the A-Team.
- 1: You've played a first-person shooter.
- 2: You go to the range with buddies every so often.
- 3: You go to the range every day after work, for five hours, and you are very likely a professional soldier, law enforcement officer, or hunter.
- 4: The only reason you're not special ops is because they were too scared to ask.
- 5: That guy who made the world record sniper shot of over two miles? He turns to you for tips.

Fine but there should be difficulty for ranges, types of firearms and such somewhere

#### 4.3.5 Meditation

Meditation is used to center oneself and find peace. It is a must for Buddhists, hippy chicks, and dedicated martial artists. Several Powers use Meditation as the primary roll, and some Pools such as Chi are replenished by it. The most common use of Meditation, however, is recovery of Temporary Willpower. Think very carefully before skipping this skill; it could make all the difference in the world.

This had better be somewhere

Meditation is usually paired with Manipulation.

- 0-You tried finding your still place once and woke up three hours later in a bar in Tijuana.
- 1-You can focus for a few seconds, if there are no distractions.
- 2-Getting better. You can block out minor distractions.
- 3-You can block out major distractions and find inner calm with little effort.
- 4-A marching band of naked cheerleaders couldn't divert you from seeking enlightenment.
- 5-You reach a state of Nirvana at will.

#### 4.3.6 Melee

Knowledge of and the ability to use melee weapons, such as knives, axes, clubs, swords, tonfas, maces and anything else that you need to be standing next to your opponent to use.

If you fight with a rapier, a chainsaw, or a sharpened spoon, you are in need of the Melee skill. Melee determines the accuracy of your attack with a handheld weapon; the higher the skill, the more likely you'll make contact. Fencers, samurai, and commandos know their way around swords, spears, or knives, and thus Melee.

Melee is paired with Dexterity.

- 0-You can cut your own meat most of the time.
- 1-You had a switchblade as a kid.
- 2-You joined the college fencing team to prove your manliness.
- 3-You've received knife-fighting training from a professional.
- 4-You were the baddest Viking to ever swing an axe.
- 5-You are the reincarnation of Miyamoto Musashi.

Parrying should be an explained mechanic somewhere  
It is.

#### 4.3.7 Performance

Rock stars, poets, dancers, and speech-making politicians use Performance to sway and captivate the crowd. If you live life in the public eye, you'll need Performance.

Performance is usually paired with Charisma.

- 0-Your karaoke set always ends in violence.
- 1-Drunks usually don't jeer your singing voice.
- 2-You don't have a bad stand up act on open mike night.
- 3-People will actually pay to see you perform.
- 4-If you're not a household name it's because you've been hiding your light under a bushel.
- 5-You could move the gods to tears.

You have a number of fields equal to your ranks in Performance.

**Fine**

#### 4.3.8 Pilot

Do you drive stick? How about a helicopter? If you're escaping the scene of the crime through the woods on an ATV, you'd better have some ranks in Pilot. This skill is vital to Motor Cross riders, police officers, and, you guessed it, pilots.

Pilot is usually paired with Dexterity.

- 0-You can successfully back out of your own garage. Unless you're drunk.
- 1-You can drive Granny's stick-shift without stalling out or crashing.
- 2-You could make a living as a truck driver.
- 3-You're almost ready for Nascar.
- 4-If it has an engine, you can drive it.
- 5-Blue Angels, here I come!

**Important to note that those without pilot can still drive a car, just not with great skill**

You are skilled with a number of vehicles determined by your ranks in Pilot.

- \* One rank allows one vehicle.
- \* Two ranks allow a total of two vehicles.
- \* Three ranks allow a total of four vehicles.
- \* Four ranks allow a total of eight vehicles.
- \* Five ranks allow a total of sixteen vehicles.

#### 4.3.9 Stealth

If you have ranks in Stealth you can move quietly and hide effortlessly. An enemy can't kill you if they don't know you're there, so you might want to bone up on your vanishing act. Stealth is vital to thieves, assassins, commandos, and anybody who doesn't want to be noticed by terrible monsters that are sure to eat you.

Special Note: When sneaking around the woods, you can only use as many ranks in Stealth as you have in Survival. That means if you have a Stealth of 5 and a Survival of 2, you only get two dice when creeping through a national forest.

**I don't know if this is a good idea but it does make a bit of sense**

Stealth is most commonly paired with Dexterity.

0-When sneaking in a group you keep asking whether you're being quiet enough.

1-You weren't the first kid found when playing Hide and Seek.

2-Your parents never caught you slipping out to party.

3-You are a promising adept of the ninja clan.

4-Special Forces snipers come to you for training.

5-You are a ghost.

Should provide example difficulty, in fact, every skill should have examples and there should 100% be a sidebar about what difficulties over ten entail and to NOT overuse absurd difficulties

#### 4.3.10 Survival

Survival reflects your ability to sustain yourself in the wild. It covers a broad range of skills such as tracking, foraging, setting snares, and navigating by the stars. If it is a wilderness skill not detailed elsewhere, it falls under Survival. Hunters, soldiers, and backwoods serial killers all have Survival.

Survival is often paired with Perception or Dexterity.

0-You spent a week in the Boy Scouts.

1-You're still a Boy Scout.

2-You're an experienced hiker.

3-You've taken serious survival training.

4-You're either a Green Beret or a seventh generation hillbilly.

5-The wilderness is your home.

Your ranks in Survival determine the number of terrain types with which you are familiar.

\* One rank allows one terrain type.

\* Two ranks allow a total of two terrain types.

\* Three ranks allow a total of four terrain types.

\* Four ranks allow a total of eight terrain types.

\* Five ranks allow a total of sixteen terrain types.

Fine

#### 4.4 Knowledges

Knowledges are trained mental skills, learned through intense study. It doesn't matter if you used the local library or went to a university, as long as you had a source of information and put in the necessary time and effort.

Academics

Computer

Culture

Investigation

Linguistics

Management

Medicine

## Occult Psychology Science

### 4.4.1 Academics

Academics covers a broad range of knowledge that you have mastered, including the humanities, the social sciences, and the formal sciences (such as logic and mathematics). It incorporates such skills as writing, teaching, and research. (It excludes anthropology, however, which falls under Culture.) Historians, mathematicians, and scholars all have ranks in Academics. If you want your character to know who won the Battle of Hastings, quote Shakespeare, or argue philosophy, you need ranks in Academics.

Academics is most often paired with Intelligence.

- 0-And you were so close to getting your GED...
- 1-Yay! You made it through high school and managed to remember something.
- 2-You're either a college graduate or a voracious reader.
- 3-You just took out a loan so you could earn a second graduate degree.
- 4-Jeopardy is scared to call you.
- 5-You are a world-renowned expert in your field.

You have a number of fields equal to your ranks in Academics.

Fine although I do not like that the implication of 0 ranks is that you did not pass basic education because there is an uneducated flaw that reflects such a situation

### 4.4.2 Computer

Knowledge of computers, programming, and the Internet, including researching via computer.

You know those rumors you hear about hackers who can get people thrown in jail, steal identities, and drain bank accounts in mere moments? Well, those people have dedicated time and money to learning Computer. Hackers, programmers, and graphic designers are just a few of the people that use computers on a regular basis. This Ability covers almost any use of a computer or similar device including, but not limited to, research, digital forgery, hacking, programming, photo editing, and contributing to the House Games wiki.

Computer is most commonly paired with Intelligence.

- 0-You called tech support and they told you to plug your computer in.
- 1-You can check your email without getting bombarded by porn. Usually.
- 2-You modify and tweak programs regularly.
- 3-You could make a living as a graphic artist.
- 4-You are a guru of cyberspace.
- 5-No data is safe, no firewall unbreachable, for you are the dark messiah of the digital world.

I'm tempted including programming languages or fields of expertise but there is no one I know in the tech world who isn't vaguely aware of everything to one degree or another

#### 4.4.3 Culture

Knowledge of other cultures and their workings, including both foreign cultures and subcultures such as street cultures. Includes etiquette as well as a certain amount of area knowledge.

Anthropologists, world travelers, and foreign correspondents all need Culture to help navigate the customs and etiquette of other lands. If you need to know how to find the market, if it's legal to chew gum, or whether it's polite to tip the bellhop, you need Culture. Culture gives you an understanding of a number of foreign societies. Be sure to check with your GM to determine if your choice is appropriate, too general, or too specific.

Your ranks in Culture determine the number of cultures with which you are familiar, in addition to your native culture.

- \* One rank allows familiarity with one culture, in addition to your native culture.
- \* Two ranks allow a total of two cultures, in addition to your native culture.
- \* Three ranks allow a total of four cultures, in addition to your native culture.
- \* Four ranks allow a total of eight cultures, in addition to your native culture.
- \* Five ranks allow familiarity with a total of sixteen cultures, in addition to your native culture.

This is one of those skills that rarely sees use because GMs take players off of earth so often  
Otherwise this entry is acceptable

#### 4.4.4 Investigation

You find things other people don't: That footprint leading from the crime scene, the hidden bullet casing, the wallet that fell out of the perp's pocket.

When you look for clues or search for a secret panel, you're using Investigation. Unsurprisingly, this is an Ability mastered by police detectives and private investigators, but it is also common for investigative journalists, treasure hunters, and archaeologists. If you want to find what you're looking for, you need Investigation.

Investigation is usually paired with either Intelligence or Perception.

- 0-You just now found out that Lost finished its run.
- 1-You were a Nancy Drew fan.
- 2-You've watched your fair share of detective shows.
- 3-You have real world training and are probably a professional.
- 4-If you can't find somebody, they don't exist.
- 5-Sherlock Holmes has nothing on you.

Fine

#### 4.4.5 Linguistics

Whether you're a professional translator, an effete polyglot, or a professor of languages, Linguistics

represents how many foreign tongues you can speak fluently. The first rank in Linguistics gives you one new language, and every rank thereafter increases the total number of languages you speak. Linguistics can sometimes be used to decipher unfamiliar speech or writings.

Linguistics determines the number of languages you speak, in addition to your native language.

- \* With one rank, you speak a total of 1 language in addition to your native tongue.
- \* With two ranks, you speak a total of 2 languages in addition to your native tongue.
- \* With three ranks, you speak a total of 4 languages in addition to your native tongue.
- \* With four ranks, you speak a total of 8 languages in addition to your native tongue.
- \* With five ranks, you speak a total of 16 languages in addition to your native tongue.

Of course, newly acquired languages are not mastered overnight. As a rule of thumb, it takes about six months to become fluent (assuming immersion and constant study).

A character who has achieved Linguistics 6 (via Ability Mastery) and wants to learn more languages can learn Secondary Abilities (perhaps by type such as Dead Languages and Alien Languages, or by relationship).

Fine

#### 4.4.6 Management

General management and leadership ability. Includes general knowledge of government and business bureaucracies, knowledge of finance, and political skill and knowledge.

Even thought leadership is a talent in the rest of WoD I guess we'll use this for it then

Management is a reflection of how much you know about the inner workings of business, bureaucracy, politics, and formal events. Maitre d's, business tycoons, politicians, and IRS agents all have some familiarity with Management.

So basically this combines Leadership, Politics, Finance and Bureaucracy into one skill. . .

- 0-You wore tie-dye to a funeral.
- 1-You do your own taxes and usually get a refund.
- 2-It's a struggle, but you can keep your small business afloat.
- 3-You have Amnesty International on speed dial.
- 4-You could be an infomercial millionaire.
- 5-You could run any government and maintain a balanced budget.

You have a number of fields equal to your ranks in Management.

Fine

#### 4.4.7 Medicine

Medicine is how much you know about treating physical diseases and wounds. It's a must-have for doctors, veterinarians, and field medics. Medicine does not necessarily mean Western medicine. It could reflect your knowledge of folk cures, acupuncture, or Ayurveda.

Medicine is usually paired with either Intelligence or Perception.

0-You faint at the sight of blood. The word, too.

1-You took a CPR course in high school.

2-You've attended more than one class with the Red Cross.

3-You are probably a med student or a paramedic.

4-If you have a practice, it's thriving.

5-You've been a part of major medical breakthroughs. Medical students whisper your name with awe and jealousy.

Healing mechanics and the extent of mundane medicine should be explored, if I recall it just lowers the recovery period table one step (which may not even be here)

Medicine is usually pretty narrative but I recall some mechanics in some books about "stabilization" wherein if someone takes a certain number of lethal that they have a chance of going further down the chart as they bleed out

#### 4.4.8 Occult

Occult is a broad spectrum knowledge concerning the supernatural. Occult contains a wide variety of hearth wisdom and clues, but little practical application. It provides insights into cults, rituals, and other nasty things that no one should have to deal with. It is also the jumping off point for specialty knowledge known as Lores (see Secondary Skills).

Occult is most commonly paired with Intelligence.

0-You've seen a few vampire movies.

1-You've done some research but it's hard to tell truth from fiction.

2-You're starting to get a handle on this and it scares you.

3-You're the one who recorded that footage of the Sasquatch.

4-You are a leading scholar, but no one wants to hear it.

5-It amazes you that humanity exists at all. There are just so many baddies out there waiting to eat us...

Later on there's business about lores and not starting higher than 3 at max if even being allowed (also GMs looking over a character before them entering play needs to happen again) however I've heard the same about occult but it may be worth letting it slide because occult is oh so very broad

I still agree with myself here that occult should be as unregulated as the rest of the abilities but lores (if the players even know them OOC) should be restricted depending on background.

#### 4.4.9 Psychology

Psychology is the study of the human mind and its inner workings. It can be used to calm the hysterical, gauge a person's mental health, or help your favorite combat specialist cure his phobia of children. Psychologists obviously have this Ability, but so do high school counselors, sexual assault counselors, and FBI agents, among a great many more.

This is another skill that sees limited use but this is a good one

0-There's something about that blood-spattered homeless guy that worries you. Hmm...

1-Your summer volunteering with the Girl Scouts has given you deep insight into the human mind.

2-Your summer volunteering with the local asylum has given you deep insight into the warped human mind.

3-You're probably a practicing professional.

4-You've presented ground-breaking and controversial theories about behavior and human will.

5-Froyd and Jung were nothing compared to you.

Reading this again this seems to be an offshoot of Subterfuge and Empathy in application, which to me is a fairly negative thing as it limits the usage of a basic skill in the rest of the World of Darkness to a knowledge.

#### 4.4.10 Science

Where would the world be without Science? Back in the Dark Ages waiting for some genius to invent indoor plumbing and Twitter, is where. This Knowledge covers the natural sciences, the fields of science engaged in the careful study of the natural world (as opposed to the supernatural world, which falls under Occult, or human society, which falls under Academics and Culture). It includes chemistry, botany, anatomy, physics, and a host of other fields (all of which make excellent Secondary Skills). Scientists all have training in Science, but so do conservationists, inventors, and even some bartenders (not kidding).

Science is most commonly paired with Intelligence.

0-You paid attention to your fourth grade science teacher. You know, sometimes...

1-You used your Lil' Tyke Chemistry Set to do more than kill ants.

2-You have a solid understanding of the difference between gravity and the weak nuclear force.

3-You could build an atomic bomb... theoretically.

4-You can't watch an episode of CSI without cringing from their mistakes.

5-Yeah, String Theory. Right...

You have a number of fields equal to your ranks in Science.

Fine although crafting may be less buffed by placing bombs and drugs under this category

#### 4.5 Secondary Abilities

Any skill imaginable is available as a Secondary Ability; there are an infinite number of them. The XP cost is the same as for Primary Abilities.

A character using a Secondary Ability to perform an action gains a -1 Difficulty adjustment in combat situations, or -2 in non-combat situations. This is cumulative with the adjustment from Ability Aptitude or Ability Mastery and any adjustment from a Maneuver. The dice pool used is that of the appropriate Secondary Ability, not that of the Primary Ability.

It is often necessary to raise the relevant Primary Ability to 5 before a Secondary Ability can be learned.

Often is not a word you use when defining mechanics in a rulebook

Amen, I think I'll set as a precedent that those with secondary abilities must have 5 dots in the primary ability before they buy into secondary abilities.

Some of the more common Secondary Abilities include Artillery (secondary to Firearms), Bureaucracy (secondary to Management, and covering intimate knowledge of navigating bureaucracies such as

governments and megacorps), Business (secondary to Management, and covering the inner workings of running your own company, finances, and so forth), Bomb Making (secondary to Crafts), Demolitions (secondary to Engineering, and providing knowledge of demolitions and explosives), Toxicology (secondary to Medicine), Cosmology, Lore, and Martial Arts. There is no need to list or detail most Secondary Abilities, since there are an infinite number of them, but the last three are worth expanding on.

Cosmology, a Secondary Ability of Occult, is a rare knowledge concerning the "Worlds other than these." Where do ghosts come from? Or Faeries? Or Spider-Aliens? What is this "Bleed" the Harbingers mutter about?

A starting character may not begin with Cosmology unless the character's backstory justifies it. Even then, a starting character may not begin with more than three ranks.

Cosmology seems foolish to even exist (especially since most of our alt. universes we whisk away player characters to are from popular enough media that most know what it is anyways)

It is important to have however perhaps it may be considered a "roll to know" skill wherein people use it to know about the different settings they get thrown into.

Lore is a Secondary Ability of Occult which offers precise answers. There are an infinite number of Lores: Bygone Lore (mythological creatures), Psychic Lore (psychic powers), Sorcery Lore, Mythos Lore (Cthulhu Mythos), Wyrm Lore, Demon Lore, Vampire Lore, Werewolf Lore...all separate skills. Lores should be more useful in games so that people actually buy them and also preventing meta knowledge

A starting character may not begin with Lore unless the character's backstory justifies it. Even then, a starting character may not begin with more than three ranks.

Mythos Lore: The character's potential Morality will be 10 - Mythos Lore.

Kay

Wyrm Lore: When a rank of Wyrm Lore is acquired, the character must make a Conviction check at a Difficulty of the new rank + 3.

Or what?

Degeneration Check I assume, which comes down below

Hard and Soft Martial Arts are Secondary Abilities of Brawl. Hard Martial Arts (karate, taekwondo) and Soft Martial Arts (judo, aikido) are separate skills. Kicks and punches would be considered Hard Martial Arts attacks; sweeps and throws would be considered Soft Martial Arts attacks.

Note that these attacks can still be done with Brawl but they receive -1 difficulty when using these Secondary Abilities

## 5.0 Characterization

Nice.

### 5.1 Nature, Demeanor, and Concept

#### 5.1.1 Nature

Nature is a one or two word description of who you are at the core. Are you a Thrill Seeker, a Scoundrel, or a Puzzle Solver? Maybe you're Cold Blooded or Passionate? What is the filter through which you see the world? Choosing the right phrase will act as a touchstone for deciding what actions you would take and why.

Ignores that this is how you generally regain willpower

### 5.1.2 Demeanor

Whatever you are really like, Demeanor is a one or two word description of how you present yourself to the world. This is the mask you wear when interacting with other people. Are you a Concerned Citizen, a Smooth Operator, or a Drunkard? The possibilities are endless, but choosing the right phrase provides a touchstone for how to roleplay your interaction with other characters.

Outward expression of self versus true self

### 5.1.3 Concept

This is a one or two word phrase that encapsulates the entire idea of the character. Are you an Effete Aristocrat, a Wannabe Ninja, or a Sainted Serial Killer? Keep it short and specific. Also keep in mind that House Games is about creating unique Powers for unique characters. The better your initial Concept, the easier it will be for your GM to tailor Powers.

Concepts are not optional. Every character must have a clearly explainable Concept, and will only receive Gifts appropriate to that Concept.

They will anyways in our traditions so why state this?

Because in the Fallen Cells GMs would make the powers for their players and not the other way around.

## **Starting High Rollers are always fully human, with no magic and no special supernatural abilities.**

Abilities with a little *a* meaning powers, supernatural knowledge (such as through lore) is allowed.

## 5.2 Virtues

Virtues and Morality measure the relative sanity of a character.

Virtue rolls are among the few on which you may not spend Willpower. They are always flat rolls, typically with Difficulty of 4 to 8. Average Difficulty is 7. Virtue rolls with Difficulty higher than 8 are always the product of supernatural powers. If you botch a Virtue roll you not only fail but also gain a Derangement.

Note that this applies to all of the virtues however derangements are probably not given so we must make due with what we can

### 5.2.1 Conviction

Conviction determines the mental fortitude and overall conviction you have for your ideals. Conviction rolls are made whenever you contradict your ethics, are required to make a Sanity check, or feel you must justify your actions.

Sanity and derrangements.

### 5.2.2 Self-Control

Self-Control measures your composure in stressful circumstances, as well as your ability to resist temptation or confusing stimuli. You may roll Self-Control when confronted with a horrifying scene, to resist base urges, or when subject to a powerful craving.

Resisting instincts.

### 5.2.3 Courage

Guts. Bravery. Moxy. That's what Courage is. You may need to roll Courage when faced with a terrifying situation, or when you decide to act in an extremely dangerous manner (dive off a cliff, run through a gunfight, etc.).

Roll before doing stupid shit.

Virtues should be tested more often than they generally are (in reaction to supernatural garbage) as this will prevent murder-hoboing and generally off the wall shenanigans (although if the character has high virtues they earn the right to do this)

## 5.3 Morality

Morality represents your ethical values, as well as your overall sanity. While there are many potential systems of Morality one could follow, almost all characters begin with Humanity. Your Morality score has the following effects.

- \* Your Morality rating determines when you need to make Degeneration checks.
- \* Your Morality rating determines the XP cost to "buy off" a Derangement.
- \* Many Powers and effects target Morality.

The XP bit is the only part I have quarrels with, Derrangements should just be flaws in my opinion that or have a separate place to put derrangements

Having derrangements be special things bought off dependent on morality is a good way to encourage monsters like High Rollers to keep their humanity up or to abandon it altogether if they don't want to be contrived messes of mental illness.

Degeneration Checks: Whenever you act contrary to your ethics (per your Morality score), you must roll Conviction (typically Difficulty 6-8). If you fail, either your Morality drops by 1, or you gain a Derangement, as appropriate. (A botch results in both, or two Derangements at the discretion of the

GM.) If you consistently act contrary to your ethics, the GM may rule that you may forfeit a point of Morality without a Conviction roll.

Should hold people to this more often the degeneration into a twisted monster should be earned in this game of life and death

If your Morality drops to 0, you bounce back to a rating of 1 and gain a Derangement. Some Flaws and Templates cause more frequent Degeneration checks, and will cause you to forfeit your character should you reach 0 Morality.

Most Derangements can be “bought off” at a cost of  $(11 - \text{Morality})$  XP. This is discussed in detail under Derangements, below.

This ignores that some derangements are of higher import than others (i.e. nightmares as opposed to a constant onset seizures)

**Changing Ethics:** You may select a new ethical system during any Downtime. You begin your new Morality at 1. Obviously, this will leave you dangerously vulnerable while you gain resolve in your new ethics.

**Increasing Morality:** Morality can only be increased through roleplay. To increase your Morality, you must actively follow the new, higher Morality, ~~and must post a special journal documenting this (separate from Journal Entries and Downtime Reports, and not eligible for XP)~~. You may post one such journal per game month. If it is approved by the GM, you may roll Conviction + Morality (Difficulty: 6-10). You need a number of successes equal to the new rating (thus, 6 successes to achieve Morality 6). This may be made as an extended roll, with successes accumulating over time, as long as you qualify for a roll every month.

This is an interesting mechanic (besides the journal) and I can see it occurring at the end of a game but the XP method may be better to use

Just buy the damn thing at 2x CR, save everyone the hassle of upkeep rolls on something you may as well pay for in the first place.

**Paths of Morality:** The following are ethical paths often pursued by High Rollers. You may create your own with GM approval.

Humanity

A Bygone's Nobility

Anti-Human

Chivalry

Dark Justice

Death's Soft Whisper

Harmony

Hedonism

Holy Slayer

Mad Scientist

Ninja-Guy

Overseer of the Years

Power and the Inner Voice

Road of Heaven

Road of Hell

Ruthless

Scorched Heart

Scoundrel

Übermenchen

Worthless without the scales (some of which I know were on the old wiki)

Most are present in Housegames.pdf so check there.

## Inverse Morality

Some Powers have a Difficulty of the Inverse Morality. Inverse Morality is equal to 11 - Morality. Thus:

Morality	Inverse Morality
10	1
9	2
8	3
7	4
6	5
5	6
4	7
3	8
2	9
1	10

### 5.3.1 Humanity

Humanity is a system of Morality representing the standard Western value system. It is the most common system of Morality. If you do not specify, your character begins with Humanity.

The following table gives examples of acts that trigger Morality checks for characters with Humanity. For example, a character with a Humanity of 7 would be required to make a Conviction check on committing any theft, mass property damage, manslaughter, or murder. This is not comprehensive by any means.

Humanity	Action
10	Allowing any of below actions to occur
9	Deliberate emotional injury to another
8	Deliberate physical injury to another
7	Petty theft (shoplifting)
6	Grand theft (burglary)
5	Intentional, mass property damage (arson)
4	Impassioned crime (manslaughter)
3	Planned crime (murder)
2	Casual/callous crime (serial murder)
1	Utter perversion, heinous act (mass murder)

### 5.4 Derangements

A Derangement represents a mental quirk, instability, or illness. There is no limit to how many Derangements a character can possess, but a character may become nearly unplayable after a point.

There are several ways to acquire Derangements, such as:

- \* Failing or botching a Virtue roll
- \* As the result of a spell or Power
- \* Mythos Casting
- \* As specified in a Template

Most Derangements are Temporary Derangements. A Temporary Derangement can be “bought off” at a cost of  $(11 - \text{Morality})$  XP. You must have access to a good psychologist and spend the appropriate time and money for treatment. If the Temporary Derangement was a starting Flaw, then the cost is either  $(11 - \text{Morality})$  or  $(3 \times \text{Flaw points})$ , whichever is greater.

Glad this is addressed.

Indefinite Derangements cannot be bought off. They can only be removed through specific supernatural means. Removing an Indefinite Derangement requires intervention from a character with appropriate abilities or at least one Side Game involving finding a cure.

Mortal Derangements cause the character to become unplayable until cured. A Mortal Derangement is even more difficult to remove than an Indefinite Derangement, and always requires intervention from another character, since a character with a Mortal Derangement is incapable of useful action (and may well be catatonic).

Permanent Derangements are not truly Derangements; they are fundamental aspects of the character's personality. A Permanent Derangement can only be removed by an effect that can alter a personality.

### Examples of Derangements

\* Compulsion: A primal urge that you find difficult to resist. Resisting such an impulse requires a Self-Control roll. Examples include compulsive desires to steal, interact with technology, or stalk strangers.

\* Phobia: An overwhelming fear. Phobias are always unreasonable or taken to an unreasonable level, and a character with a phobia will typically need to roll Courage or Self-Control upon encountering the subject of the phobia. Common phobias include snakes, needles, small places, being alone, and the dark.

\* Curiosity: A compulsion to explore the unknown. Self-Control rolls are required when a mystery presents itself. This can be extremely dangerous and has led to the deaths of many characters who just couldn't resist messing with things they shouldn't have.

\* Delusions of Grandeur: The unswerving belief that you always have moral authority and legal jurisdiction, and are rightfully in charge.

\* Paranoid Megalomania: The belief that others are conspiring against you because of your (often newfound) power or wealth.

\* Schizophrenia: You hear voices that are not there. Besides being frightening, these voices may fuel other Derangements, increasing the difficulty of related Virtue rolls.

\* Distrust: Characters with Distrust are unable to trust others. It should be noted that just walking on the street requires a certain amount of trust in the strangers around you, and certainly participating in a Game with armed teammates requires even more.

\* Trusting: You are on the opposite end of the spectrum from those with Distrust. You are likely to accept anyone as an ally, even when it is obvious that they intend harm.

\* Hallucinations: At the GM's discretion, you suffer visions or sensations of things that are not there.

Derrangements all together should be looked at and reworked, they are uniquely a Housegames mechanic as they exist now as far as I know of World of Darkness

Well you knew little of it in 2013 so I do not blame you, however yes, this list should be expanded to include more derrangements found throughout the gamelines and those not listed so we have a healthy grab bag of insanity to give players.

\* Amnesia: Parts of your past disappear into the haze of the games. Some Backgrounds may become defunct if they require constant upkeep (Did I go to work on thursday? Do I even have a job?) and certain elements of your actual background may fade into obscurity (Who were my parents? What was my childhood like?). Curing this kind of derrangement is especially pertinent if your character's home is armed with traps or hidden away from the rest of the world.

\* Choromania: The character never stops dancing and moving with perceived rhythm. This can be intentional for some contrived reason or simply spasmodic. Either way this will create complications in almost any situation.

\* Habromania: You cannot help but laugh in the face of the utter perversion of reality that broke your mind, in fact you laugh at everything for no discernable reason. Things are amazing and hilarious and you are lost in this state of delerium.

\* Hallucinations: Much more nefarious and subtle than the movies portray, you see, hear, and feel things that are not there. Movement around corners, people out of your direct observation having a conversation when they are sitting in silence, small insects crawling over you when there are none. The best/worst kind of hallucinations are the believeable ones that confuse and confound the possessor into thinking they are real and believeable.

\* Body Dysmorphia: Something is wrong with the physical expression of your body. Maybe you're too fat, or too male, or not full of enough metal. Your desire to correct the shape of your body leads you to some dangerous operations or maybe life-saving alterations (no werewolf wants to eat a guy's pierced head to toe with silver jewlery). Either way, you are perpetually uncomfortable with the way your body looks or dealing with the consequences of trying to change it manually, never quite getting "the real you" right. (Note that with this derrangement nothing is ever enough, if you, for example, spend a gift on changing genders then you fixate on the lack of experience as the opposite gender and/or not being feminine/masculine enough. Pay the XP if you wish to be cured.)

\* Insecurity: Nothing you ever do is enough, there exists in you a certain real or perceived weakness that robs you of all satisfaction when things go your way and when things fail it is clearly because of

this weakness. You do not deserve to stand among humanity's best as a High Roller, so why do they keep calling you back?

\* Klazomania: You feel a compulsion to shout instead of normal speech. Very dangerous in stealth situations and most formal ones at that.

\* Mania: Everything you do, you do to the hilt and with obsessive energy, which sometimes causes you to burn out with exhaustion before you want to. Pray for a short and simple game of "kill the thing."

\* Masochism: Everyone who accepts the Harbingers' offers is aware that they put their comfort and lives on the line, but the thought of losing it all is a risk to them, to you it is a win/win as the new pains you experience are just as valuable as the opportunity to grow stronger and more powerful. No one but the masochist is so ready to head into a game which threatens to torture them.

\* Misomania: Through your experiences you have learned to despise everything to the core of its being regardless of its background or context. Anthrocide truly is the only answer to you. Hatred is the gift that keeps on giving.

\* Dissociative Identity Disorder: You have one or more personalities that take over at random or with triggers, sometimes both. There is no longer a true "You" but rather a council of broken, incomplete minds trying to keep you moving. Come up with creative backgrounds and personalities for each and scenarios where they come through.

\* Obsession: Something (usually related to the trauma that granted this derrangement) has caught your eye and causes some kind of sick satisfaction to look at, learn more about, and possibly recreate. For example, a High Roller who allows an innocent to get run over by a train and botches his conviction roll may be obsessed with watching people die by being run over by vehicles on liveleak and other websites and wouldn't dare pass up the offer to see it in person while one who gets his mind warped by a K'llasshaa Adsinistratus finds himself steeped in lore about the Elder Gods and utter darkness, ever ready to learn more about them to either join or stop them.

\* Overcompensation: Similar to insecurity, something about you is weak, and it kills you inside to know that, but instead of wallowing in it, you attempt to cover it up with either something preferable like your skills and powers or an "acceptable" weakness like your lack of education or merciless treatment of bystanders.

\* Phagomania: You are obsessed with stuffing your craw, regardless of your natural hunger. There's a hole left inside you by something and you feel the best way to fill it is with food.

\* Sadism: The makings of a future Harbinger; you love to see suffering in all forms but none so much as the kind caused by your direct actions. While you may not seek to torture every puppy you come across, if you can get away with it, you'll take up the opportunity to hurt people as deeply as you can.

\* Tempermental: You are subject to frenzy with none of the benefits. Test Self Control in situations that would anger you or anyone with a short fuse and if you fail you fly off the handle and attack the cause until someone can remove you from the source of your rage. If you botch nothing short of being knocked out or killing the source will end the frenzy.

## 5.5 Willpower

Willpower measures your drive, dedication, and overall life force. Willpower rolls are extremely common.

~~If you botch a Willpower roll, you lose a Permanent Point in addition to all other consequences (but you may repurchase it).~~

I think we should omit this as that is extremely costly in the long run

Temporary Willpower Points are regained through rest (1 point per full night's sleep, no more than once per day) or through Meditation (meditate for 1 hour and roll Manipulation + Meditation at Difficulty 7; you recover 1 Temporary Willpower per success).

In other games you are limited to the number of points you get back by the number of hours you meditate (e.g. you roll 3 successes but only meditate two hours so you only get back 2 willpower points) but given the extremely limited nature of the games, a free hour alone is hard enough to come by so I am fine with allowing this buff of meditation.

You may spend Temporary Willpower in the following ways.

- \* To activate a Power. Each Power will specify its cost.
- \* To gain one automatic success on a given roll. The expenditure must be declared before dice are rolled, and only one point may be spent per action.
- \* To attempt a Feat of Strength.
- \* To ignore Wound Penalties for 1 turn.

Willpower checks may also be required to resist mind control and mental attacks.

It is not possible to spend a Willpower Point for an automatic success on a Virtue roll, a soak or damage roll, or a Background roll. Also, it is not possible to spend Willpower for an automatic success if you are not aware you are making the roll (as is often the case with Perception + Alertness rolls, for example).

I think this is important as willpower being spent represents a character giving their all to do that thing and when they are unaware it shouldn't be allowed

A variety of effects (including Willpower contests) may cause the loss of 1 or more points of Permanent Willpower. (Some beings are capable of sacrificing their own Permanent Willpower.) Reduction of Permanent Willpower to 0 results in death.

This should be temporary willpower because that is very very high risk mechanically

While it should not be restricted, I've never seen any case of burning permanent willpower in a contest of any kind, not even dot 5 custom powers.

### 5.5.1 Willpower Contests

Some beings are capable of attacking a target's Willpower with their own. Certain spells and effects may also trigger a Willpower contest.

In a Willpower contest, each combatant rolls a number of dice equal to their Permanent Willpower.

The Difficulty is 6 unless otherwise noted. The consequences of failure depend on the effect being used.

In an extended Willpower contest, each party rolls a number of dice equal to their Permanent Willpower. In most cases, the party with fewer successes loses 1 Temporary Willpower. This usually continues until one party's Temporary Willpower drops to 0. Depending on the power being used, there may be no further consequences, or the loser may suffer unpleasant effects such as possession.

## 6.0 Advancement

Nice.

### 6.1 Gaining Experience

A character who accepts an offer to participate in a Game is Imbued by the sponsoring Harbinger. Imbuing alters how a person learns; they learn faster than normal from Games, but lose the capacity to learn from anything other than a Game. High Rollers who retire lose their Imbuing and begin learning at a normal pace.

~~I do not like the imbuing being a setting thing as it is largely unnecessary~~

~~I recant that simply because it is an efficient way to manage xp among other things.~~

A character who loses his Imbuing, for whatever reason, is no longer a High Roller and can never become a High Roller again through any means – even through the efforts of Harbingers.

Characters receive 10 XP and a Gift if they win. They get 5 XP but no Gift if they lose but survive. They receive a Downtime whether they win or lose (but each character can receive only one Downtime per week of real time).

~~If you post a Journal Entry at least half a page in length recording your character's perspective of a Game, your character may be awarded an additional 2 XP. This must be done within one week.~~

~~If you post a Side Game Report at least half a page in length recording your character's perspective of a significant Side Game, your character may be awarded an additional 1 XP. This must be done within one week.~~

~~If you post an Interlude at least half a page in length describing your character's activities between Games, your character may be awarded an additional 1 XP. This must be done within one week of the Game.~~

~~Characters involved in the Endgame can receive an additional 1 XP each for Journal Entries, Side Game Reports, and Interludes.~~

GM's receive 10 XP and a Downtime for any single character for each House Game they run, plus 1 to 3 XP per full House Game scenario submitted (or 1 to 5 XP if the character is participating in the Endgame). Games must be approved, and must be submitted as open source. Unlike Journals, these points may be received retroactively, as this encourages people to write up their Games.

~~To receive XP for submitting a Game:~~

~~-It must be approved by an Admin.~~

- Only original scenarios can receive full XP. Modifying an existing scenario to House Games is worth only 1 XP (or 2 XP if the character is participating in the Endgame).
- It must be in a readable format. (OpenOffice works best for Portland, Alabama, and Northern California.)
- It must be submitted to other active cells. (Admins will handle this for you.)

~~Optional Rule by Region: You must submit your last Game before running another one.~~

~~Normally, XP is not awarded for running a Side Game. However, GM's can receive 10 XP and a Downtime for any single character for running a critical Side Game related to the Endgame.~~

If you are allowed to play a "Ringer" (an NPC who furthers the plot), you gain 5 XP for any single character, or 10 XP if you fulfill the designated plotline for which the Ringer was created (usually by dying). You also receive a Downtime.

**Basically you have your own "Win" scenario, complete it and get 10xp otherwise you get 5xp.**

If you allocate XP from running a Game or playing a Ringer to a character with Fast Learner or Study Points, the character receives both the extra XP for Fast Learner and the Study Points as normal.

**Either we allow players to allocate to multiple characters and get rid of this rule or keep it and enforce this**

**If anyone reads this far then it is enough that they know this. Spend it all on one character and get the boons of extra xp or split it up and lose such bonuses.**

Characters other than High Rollers and Retainers do not receive Experience Points from Games or any other source.

## 6.2 Study Points

You can receive Study Points from a Mentor, Library, or Laboratory, or from being instructed by another character. Retainers and NPC's cannot teach or provide Study Points. Study Points do not stack; you can only receive them from one source for a single Downtime.

For Mentor, Library, or Laboratory, roll a number of dice equal to your rating; you receive a number of Study Points equal to the number of successes. Difficulty is 7 unless you have a trait that reduces it, such as Apt Pupil. If you botch, you lose all accumulated Study Points.

If another character is instructing you, they must roll Manipulation + the skill being taught, at a Difficulty of 11 minus the student's Intelligence. (This Difficulty may be further reduced by traits such as Apt Pupil.) The student receives one Study Point per success. An instructor can only teach one student during a single downtime. The instructor's rank in the subject being taught must at least equal the rank the student is trying to attain. If the instructor botches, the student loses all accumulated Study Points.

It is possible to spend a Willpower Point on an Instruction roll, but not on a Study Point roll.

Study Points can only be spent in a specific area, which is determined by the source of the Study Points. For example, if your Mentor is a psychic, you can only spend Study Points on psychic abilities. A Library provides Study Points which can be spent on Knowledges, and possibly on spells (but only if

it is an Occult Library). When another character instructs you, you must spend the Study Points on the subject they were teaching you.

Depending on the source, it may be possible to spend Study Points on Abilities, Powers, spells and rituals, Maneuvers, or buying off Derangements and certain other Flaws (such as Shy). It is never possible to spend Study Points on Attributes, Backgrounds, Pools, Virtues, or Ability Mastery.

You cannot receive Study Points, conduct research, or be taught if you instruct someone during that Downtime (even if you don't provide Study Points). Therapy (to reduce Humanity Index loss) is considered instruction for game purposes. A Study Point roll must be made whenever one character teaches another; if the roll is failed, the student did not learn the subject matter, and the time was wasted without benefit.

Only one subject can be taught per Downtime. Mythos spells can be taught in almost any number, but during that time nothing beyond Mythos spells can be taught. It is not possible to teach more than one Power at a time. As a result of being Imbued, it is not possible to learn from anyone but a Mentor or a High Roller.

i.e. buy the damn background or make friends.

You must spend at least 1 XP along with Study Points. For example, if you receive Study Points for Psychology and wish to advance from rank 1 to rank 3, you can spend 1 Study Point and 1 XP to advance to rank 2, and then spend 3 Study Points and 1 XP to advance to rank 3.

You cannot save more Study Points than your Willpower.

Good section, I support everything here.

### 6.3 Advancement Cost

The cost to increase a Trait by one is as follows.

Attributes: Current Rating x4

Abilities: 3 for the first rank, then Current Rating x2

Backgrounds: 7 for the first rank, then Current Rating x3 (but Restricted Backgrounds must be received as Gifts).

Virtues: Current Rating x2

Willpower: Current Rating x1

Pools: Current Rating x2

Merits: Rating x3 to acquire; requires approval of two GM's

Flaws: Buying off Flaws costs Rating x3 and requires approval of two GM's

Maneuvers: 2 each

Sorcery Rituals: 2 each

Generally these are 3xp but a reduction is welcome so whatever.

Mythos Spells: Complexity x2

Powers vary in cost. Most cost Current Rating x6 to advance and may be raised to 5. If the Power has some dramatic flaw it will cost Current Rating x5.

Magic typically costs Current Rating x7 to advance.

Same as hedge magic.

Templates may alter all these costs; if so, this will be indicated in the Template's description.

#### 6.4 Trait Maximums

Any Trait may be raised to a maximum of 5, except Morality and Willpower, which may be raised to 10. If you receive a Gift that changes this, you will be informed and the change will be specifically delineated. Do not assume anything applies unless you have a written copy of changes made. That is the method we use to keep track of the revolving cast of characters.

Novice and Seasoned Characters may raise Backgrounds to 5. They may request a Gift to raise the cap for a single Background to 8. Veterans may raise Backgrounds to 8, and may request a Gift to raise the cap for a single Background to 10. (A character who raises the cap on a Background to 8 while Seasoned and later attains the Veteran Template must still spend a Gift to raise the cap on that Background to 10.)

#### 6.5 Scientific Research

To conduct scientific research, you must first make an extended Intelligence + Science check, followed by an extended Intelligence + Engineering check. The given Difficulty applies to both rolls. The listed number of successes must be achieved on each roll.

Each roll requires one Downtime. A botched research roll results in the loss of all accumulated successes. You cannot receive Study Points or teach or be taught by another character in any Downtime in which you conduct research.

If you spend your Downtime in research, you begin the next Game at half Willpower, as you spend Willpower on a daily basis in the course of your research.

Similar rules are used for other types of research (psychic, magic, etc.).

#### Improving a Device

Type of Device

Best commercial quality

Custom-made

Difficulty

8

9

Cutting-edge prototype (unusual and extraordinary devices)	10
Degree of Improvement	Successes
Minor (up to 20%) improvements in speed or other easily modified characteristics	5
Major (50-100%) improvements in some easily modified characteristic	10
Adding new capabilities to the device	20
Inventing a Device	Difficulty
Successes	
moderately improved version of existing cutting-edge device	8
significantly improved version of existing cutting-edge device	9
device based on completely new and revolutionary principles like the first laser or transistor	10

Building a device requires an extended Dexterity + Crafts check, with the same rules as above.

Building a Device	Difficulty	Successes
Complex mechanical or electric device (automobile, complex clockwork device)	7	5
Personal computers or other complex electronic devices	8	10
Very large, extremely complex device (mainframe computer, jet fighter)	9	20
Complex experimental prototypes (unusual and extraordinary devices)	10	30

These rules are suitable for creation of a single device, but not for mass production. Mass production must be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Note that research is limited to what is possible within the field and within the setting. For example, it cannot be used to produce Black Tech, unless an exception is detailed by the GM – in which case the character would need to develop multiple incremental improvements of each component and each technology involved. Such a character must have rank 6 in all relevant Abilities, and is likely to expend huge amounts of downtime.

For example, a player wishing to develop the James Webb Space Telescope must identify each component and each technology involved, and must then research each component and each technology. From Universe Today (9/2/2011) (<http://www.universetoday.com/88605/james-webb-space-telescope-nearing-completion>):

“Ten technologies that are required for JWST to function did not exist when the project was first planned, and all have been successfully achieved. These include both near and mid-infrared detectors with unprecedented sensitivity, the sunshield material, the primary mirror segment assembly, the NIRSpec microshutter array, the MIRI cryo-cooler, and several more,” said the James Webb Space Telescope’s Deputy Project Scientist Jason Kalirai. Kalirai holds a PhD in astrophysics and carries out research for the Space Telescope Science Institute. “The new technologies in JWST have led to many spinoffs, including the production of new electric motors that outperform common gear boxes, design for high precision optical elements for cameras and cell phones, and more accurate measurements of

human vision for people about to undergo Laser Refractive Surgery.”

“... The James Webb Space Telescope was initially estimated at costing \$1.6 billion. As of this writing an estimated \$3 billion has been spent on the project and it is has been estimated that the telescope is about three-quarters complete.”

(Estimates indicate the cost of the telescope may exceed \$8.7 billion, including five years of operation.)

Further details:

[http://scienceblogs.com/startswithabang/2011/09/how\\_the\\_us\\_government\\_chose\\_to.php?utm\\_source=networkbanner&utm\\_medium=link](http://scienceblogs.com/startswithabang/2011/09/how_the_us_government_chose_to.php?utm_source=networkbanner&utm_medium=link)

There exists somewhere out there the rulings we had on making futuretech, if I am able to I will translate them here but if not that will be an ongoing mystery and these subpar rules will be used.

## 6.6 Soundtrack and Questionnaire of Doom

### 6.6.1 Soundtrack

You can receive extra XP by providing a ten-song "Soundtrack" that represents the character in question. Songs may be symbolic, what your character might like, or similar. To qualify for the bonus, you need to post a link to the song and provide a brief description relating its significance as applied to the character.

XP awards:

Novice: 3 XP

Seasoned or Veteran: 10 XP

Making the thing on your own is its own reward

### 6.6.2 The Character Development Questionnaire

This questionnaire can assist you to develop your character's personality, history and future plans, as well as helping you to develop a symbology unique to the character. Experience Points will be awarded per section adequately filled out. (Your Regional GM will "grade" them.) XP awards will vary according to the complexity of the Character.

Novice: 3 XP per section completed

Seasoned: 5 XP per section completed

Veteran: 10 (!) XP per section completed

These things **should** be answered as the game progresses. Those with investment into their character should develop them appropriately. In lieu of experience, particular mercy may be given to characters with developed opinions and *character*, for example in the case of a random choice between a group of highrollers to afflict with horrors, being a developed character will remove that High Roller from the random choice.

Obviously, Veterans will be expected to write a book to properly record their history and opinions...

If you fill out your quiz but later achieve a new plateau (Novice, Seasoned, Veteran), you can be awarded the difference in experience points after suitably expanding your results.

### Part I. Clubs

Assume all questions are presented in such a way that the character is feeling unusually talkative, with no desire to lie. Perhaps they were given sodium pentothal. Make the answer as long as you like but unless otherwise stated the minimum is one paragraph. You will be asked to elaborate on one word or one sentence answers (it is everyone else's sacred duty to do so).

1. What was your childhood like? (One paragraph each: (1) baby, (2) child, (3) teenager.)
2. If you were a weather pattern or meteoric phenomenon, what would you be? Why?
3. What is(are) your most prized possession(s)? What makes it(them) so special?
4. Do you know any songs? What kind? How did you learn them?
5. Have you ever been in love? With who? What happened? If not, why not?
6. If you were going somewhere special that you wanted to look your best for, what would you do to prepare? What would you wear? How long would it take you to get ready?
7. What will you do for next birthday?
8. What are your worst fears? Why? (Min. three paragraphs.)
9. Which historical figure do you look up to the most? Why?
10. When would you decide to retire? Where would you settle down at? What would you do?
11. If you had theme music, what would it sound like?
12. Describe your ambition. What makes you want it so bad that you would risk your life for it? (Min. three paragraphs)
13. Do the ends justify the means?

### Part II. Diamonds

If people would like more questions to further develop their character they can continue:

14. As you grow, how do you think your Ambition will evolve?
15. If you could meet any fictional character (TV, books, comics, etc.) which one would you choose? Why?
16. Chocolate or vanilla? Why?
17. How do you feel about spirituality? Are you religious? What do you believe? (Min. three paragraphs)
18. What could inspire you to dance? How would you describe your style?
19. What would you consider selling your soul for? (Note that considering does not mean deciding!)
20. What would your aura look like (if someone were to be able to see such a thing)?
21. What do you try hardest to keep secret?
22. Provide a personal opinion on each of the High Rollers in your Region? Do you get along?
23. What kind of things can make you angry? Why? (Min. three paragraphs)
24. How do you feel about democracy as a form of government?
25. What is your favorite food? How often do you eat it?
26. What do you dream about? Why do you think you have those dreams? (Min. three paragraphs)

### Part III. Spades

Wow. You are hardcore. If you want you can keep answering questions:

27. What is your beverage of choice? Why?
28. Do you believe in aliens from outer space? Do you think they have come to Earth? Why?
29. Describe someone from your family in detail (and family doesn't end at blood). What did they look like? What were they good at? What was his or her personality like? How often did you see this person?
30. Describe a typical Sunday morning.
31. If you were an animal, what kind would you be? Why?
32. What are your political views?
33. Describe the perfect room.
34. What attracts you? Do you have anyone "on your radar"?
35. Where do you get your news? What topics are of interest to you?
36. Magic or science? Why?
37. Is there anything that you are irrational about?
38. What is your sex life like?
39. Define what is evil to you. (Min. three paragraphs)

#### Part IV. Hearts

You are sick. This is just a game. Keeping investing in this imaginary person:

40. What would you kill for? What would you die for?
41. Describe any enemies or vendettas you have made. Who do you think considers you an enemy? Provide some detailed plans about how you intend to "settle the score".
42. Have you ever had a pet? What was it and how did you take care of it?
43. Where does your money come from? Where does it go?
44. What purpose do you think the "Games" serve? Who is behind them? Why did they choose you?
45. If you were a vehicle, what kind would you be? Why?
46. Do you do drugs? Which ones? How often? What about caffeine, alcohol and other everyday medications? Why?
47. Everyone excels at something. What is your philosophy about the thing you are best at?
48. What comforts you when you are feeling sick for an extended period?
49. How do you feel about other races?
50. How do you feel about your mother? Would you defend her honor?
51. Describe the room where you sleep most often.
52. Why?

#### 6.7 Sample Character

This is an example character for illustration.

Player: Corey Sadface

Name: Jean-David Perreux (pronounced 'zhahn dah-veed' or just 'J.D.') Master's of Science in Archeology, pursuing Doctorate.

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Architect

Concept: The armchair seeker of lost civilizations.

Sex: Male

Age: 24

Residence: Flat near a prominent Paris university.

#### -Description-

Generally dressed for academia with sweater vest and necktie, Jean David is in poor shape, with a developing pot belly. He is friendly and often inspires people to look to him for advice and criticism. French Caucasian, he has a long nose that has a small cleft in the tip. His dull brown hair is always neat and tidy and parted on the side. He wears thick glasses with black plastic frames. His skin is quite pale because he doesn't go outside very often for long. He speaks a wide variety of dead languages and his English has a thick French accent (he likes it that way).

#### -Background-

J.D.'s grandfather believed in the lost civilization of Atlantis and had all kinds of theories about where it was, how it vanished and the power of its technology and even magic. J.D. believes too and has pursued a Doctorate in Archeology to better hunt for it. He has shunned teaching in favor of research and already has a number of papers that are press worthy, but thus far has kept all his findings to himself. He has a small inheritance from his grandfather that allows for a comfortable life.

J.D. is running out of useful resources in the libraries of Europe and his thoughts have been turning to field work in order to question some of the evidence that others may have misinterpreted. Thus far J.D. has not found any incontrovertible evidence, but he has found several fragments similar to what his grandfather had pieced together and is beginning to wonder if the legend of Atlantis arose from the story of another place. He's begun scrutinizing sites in southern Africa.

#### -Quote-

"Great scholars the world over, since time immemorial, have tried and failed but they did not have my Grandfather's notes. Ever since he told me that first story when he put me into bed, I could feel it; my proverbial finger was caught in the gears and I knew what I had to do.

Therefore, let us take another look at what this Sanskrit tablet is trying to say. Hold this, if you please. Merci."

#### -Ambition-

To uncover the lost power and glory of Earth's forgotten civilizations, especially Atlantis or another civilization that may have encouraged the legend and to make that power and glory his own.

Eventually, he is likely to become fascinated with magic as well as quite skilled with technology, eventually blending the two. He also may come to fear demons, vampires and other monsters and begin to hunt them.

#### -Attributes-

#### -Physical- (3 total)

Strength: 2

Dexterity: 2

Stamina: 2

-Social- (7 total)

Appearance: 2

Manipulation: 4

Charisma: 4

-Mental- (5 total + 1 from freebies)

Intelligence: 4

Wits: 1

Perception: 4 (-5 freebies)

-Abilities-

-Talents- (9 total)

Alacrity:

Alertness: 3

Athletics:

Brawl:

Dodge:

Endurance:

Enigmas:

Expression: 1

Intimidation:

Intuition: 1

Larceny:

Leadership:

Persuasion: 1

Subterfuge: 3

-Skills- (5 total)

Animal Ken:

Artillery:

Crafts:

Demolitions:

Engineering: 1

Etiquette: 3

Firearms:

Meditation:

Melee:

Performance: 1

Pilot:

Security:

Stealth:

Survival:

-Knowledge- (13 total + 2 from freebies)

Academics: 3

Bureaucracy:

Business:

Computer: 1

Cosmology:

Culture: 2

Investigation: 2 ( $2 \times (-2) = (-4)$  freebies)

Linguistics: 4 (French, English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian)

Lore:

Medicine:

Occult: 1

Psychology:

Research: 3

Science:

-Backgrounds-

Resources: 3 (Flat near university, good credit, and decently invested small inheritance.)

Library: 2 (Grandfather's notes, and fragments unearthed through his own work)

-Merits-

(2pt) Eidetic Memory - Mind like a steel trap.

(1pt) Aptitude: Linguistics (-2 Difficulty to rolls involving Linguistics)

-Flaws-

(1pt) Defective Sense: Sight (uncorrectable; +2 Difficulty to Perception rolls relying on sight)

(2pt) Phobia: Spiders - Their physical presence has his attention, their close proximity is uncomfortable, and touching them is much too terrifying. Ask someone else to squish it.

-Virtues- (7 total)

Conscience: 3

Self Control: 4

Courage: 3

Morality (Humanity): 7

Willpower: 8 (-5 freebies)

( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

-Health Levels-

( ) Bruised

( ) -1 Hurt

- ( )-1 Injured
- ( )-2 Wounded
- ( )-2 Mauled
- ( )-5 Crippled
- ( ) Incapacitated

-Experience-

None

-Freebies-

- +15 Freebies
- +3 Flaws
- 4 for Investigation x 2
- 5 for +1 Perception
- 5 for +4 Willpower
- 4 Merits

-Equipment-

eye glasses (Gucci, thick black frames and reacts to darken in brighter light)  
eye glasses carrying case (Gucci)  
dress shirt and slacks  
brown leather belt  
brown leather loafers  
red and white necktie  
checkered sweater vest  
black dress socks  
black underwear  
handbag (Louis Vuitton, strap over one shoulder)  
3 ball-point, black pens  
1 felt tip black permanent marker  
3 mechanical pencils  
a netbook (a mini laptop: 2 GHz, 2 GB RAM, 750GB HDD, Wireless or Wired network, Bluetooth, Windows Vista, 4 hour battery life, large collection of digital documents for translations, dictionaries, historical reference, digital copies of Grandfather's notes (encrypted), OCR software, scanning and digital image enhancement and manipulation software, media players, collection of music and anime, email client, browser, )  
power supply with Universal adapter  
extra netbook battery (charged)  
2 x USB flash drives, 16GB  
a USB scanner-in-a-rod - he can swipe this over a document to create a quick digital image scan of any relatively flat surface.  
2 notebooks (three ring binders full of paper, notes and school documents)  
folio with photocopies of Grandfather's notes (originals in a safe deposit box)  
variety of homework assignments, handouts, etc.  
2 text books, 3 smaller books (required reading)  
red laser pointer

world atlas  
cellular phone (Bluetooth, digital camera/video/mic, 40GB storage)  
cell phone charger  
Mass Transit Card (40 Euros worth)  
1000 Euros  
university student ID  
EU ID card  
6 credit cards  
2 bank cards  
check book  
scissors  
French passport  
breath freshening chewing gum  
toothbrush, toothpaste (cover on bristles of brush)  
iPod MP3/MPG player with headphones (100GB, mostly European techno music and anime videos)  
USB cable for iPod  
key chain (Pepper spray, LED light, keys to flat, and safe deposit box key)  
wrist watch (Chopard)  
ear plugs  
.5 L mineral water  
4 granola bars  
2 chocolate bars  
small, collapsible umbrella  
magnifying glass  
brush for dusting  
tweezers  
plastic sample bags  
comb  
deodorant

-Games played-

None!

-Gift mechanics-

None yet...

(Suggest some good paths for this character's Powers to take for future Gifts.)

## 7.0 Action Resolution

### 7.1 Basics

To attempt an action, roll a number of ten-sided dice (a dice pool) equal to the total of the relevant Attribute and the relevant Ability. For example, to sneak down an alley, roll Dexterity + Stealth. (If your Dexterity is 3 and your Stealth is 2, you should roll 5 dice.) Each roll equal to or greater than the Difficulty is a success. If the Difficulty is 6 and your results are 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8, you have 2 successes.

Difficulty 6 indicates average difficulty.

For example: Smitty the hacker wants to access a restricted website. His GM tells him to roll Intelligence + Computer at Difficulty 6. This means Smitty takes his Intelligence (3) and adds it to his ranks in Computer (5) and rolls the appropriate number of dice (a total of 8). Any die that comes up equal to or higher than the Difficulty (in this case 6) is considered a success.

~~If you do not have any ranks in the relevant Ability, you may roll using only the Attribute, but the Difficulty is increased by 1. For example, if you are attempting to sneak down an alley but do not have any Stealth, you may roll only Dexterity, but the Difficulty will be 7 rather than 6.~~

Ignore this ruling. Rolling an untrained Talent has no penalty, rolling an untrained skill has a penalty of +2 difficulty, and untrained knowledges cannot be rolled at all.

When you roll a 1, one success is subtracted from your total successes. (Exception: 1's are not subtracted from successes with damage rolls and soak rolls, or when rerolling 10's.)

The more successes you roll, the better you succeed. One indicates you barely or only partially succeed, three indicates average success, and five indicates complete success.

If the modified Difficulty is greater than 10, the number of successes required is increased by a number equal to (Difficulty – 10). If the number of successes required is greater than you can possibly obtain, you cannot succeed.

This should be better explained. Success "thresholds" are what is used for difficulties beyond 10. For example say that someone is backflipping over a flaming pit of tar but they are also dealing with blaring horns giving them +2 difficulty. This example "difficulty 12" roll means that they are "in debt" two successes before they can even succeed. So on their roll they must get three tens (3 successes normally) to get one success, each additional success is another success as normal meaning the person who rolled five tens for this roll would get 3 successes total on the test.

If you have 0 successes, you fail. If you roll more 1's than successes (giving you an end result below 0), you "Botch" and something goes horribly wrong with your attempted action.

A character who fails an action may be permitted to try again at the GM's discretion, but the Difficulty increases by one for each unsuccessful attempt.

Some (but not all) rolls may be made as extended rolls, with successes accumulating over time.

When taking a contested action, both parties roll, and the party with the greater number of successes is the victor. The successes of the loser are subtracted from those of the winner. A tie goes to the defender (because the winner has 0 successes).

In a contested action, the Difficulty is 6 unless the rules or the GM indicate otherwise.

If two characters are able to work together, each rolls separately and their successes are totaled.

## 7.2 Actions

You have one action per three-second turn. You may attempt to multitask this action (dodging and

shooting for example) by splitting your dice pool. This is done by dividing the LOWER dice pool of the two (or more) actions you want to take between the rolls. A dice pool must consist of at least two dice. Roll all actions at the reduced number of dice. While split actions are simultaneous, they are subject to interruption. If this occurs, you may lose the other split actions.

While I am aware of and prefer the other way of doing things I will say that this is far less complicated and easier to run.

If an action cannot be split, it is referred to as “committed.” For example, spells are always committed. Also, extra actions from any source are committed and may not be split.

### 7.2.1 Lifting/Breaking

A character with the listed Strength can perform the feats or lift the weight given below.

Strength	Feats	Lift
1	Crush a beer can	40 lbs.
2	Break a wooden chair	100 lbs.
3	Break down a wooden door	250 lbs.
4	Break a 2'x4' board	400 lbs.
5	Break open a metal fire door	650 lbs.
6	Throw a motorcycle	800 lbs.
7	Flip over a small car	900 lbs.
8	Break a 3' lead pipe	1000 lbs.
9	Punch through a cement wall	1220 lbs.
10	Rip open a steel drum	1500 lbs.
11	Punch through 1" sheet metal	2000 lbs.
12	Throw a sedan	3000 lbs.
13	Throw a station wagon	4000 lbs.
14	Throw a van	5000 lbs.
15	Throw a truck	6000 lbs.

### 7.2.2 Feats of Strength

A character may make a Willpower check at Difficulty 9 to perform at a higher Strength for a single action, with each success increasing their effective Strength by 1 point for that action (with a maximum increase of his Trait maximum, which is normally 5). Doing so costs 1 Willpower.

### 7.2.3 Memory Checks (Optional)

The GM may wish to allow characters to roll Intelligence + Alertness to determine if they remember a specific fact, such as a name or address.

## 8.0 Movement

### 8.1 Movement Speed

Walking: 7 meters per turn

Jogging:  $(12 + \text{Dexterity})$  meters per turn

Running:  $(20 + [3 \times \text{Dexterity}])$  meters per turn

If you act while moving, each meter moved requires you to spend one die for a Dexterity + Athletics check. If you move more meters than you have dice, then you are spending the entire turn moving (unless you have an appropriate Maneuver or special ability).

The GM should bear in mind that a character who wins initiative begins his action first, but does not complete it before other characters are able to begin their actions. In a chase, for example, both pursued and pursuer are moving simultaneously; the loser does not stand idly for three seconds waiting for the winner to complete his action. Thus, moving characters reach their destinations at the end of the turn, after all actors (including those who lost initiative) have taken their actions. Similarly, a character who dives for cover which is not very close may not reach that cover before attackers fire their weapons, and a character who charges a pistol-wielding attacker may not reach the attacker before being fired upon.

## 8.2 Jumping and Climbing

A character can jump 2 vertical feet or 4 horizontal feet per success.

Under ideal conditions, a climbing character moves 10 feet per success during a climb of average difficulty, 15 feet per success in an easy climb, or 5 feet per success in a difficult climb.

## 8.3 Driving

The table below gives the safe driving speed in miles per hour and the maximum speed in miles per hour. For each ten miles per hour over the safe speed, the Difficulty is increased by 1.

Vehicle	Safe Speed	Max Speed
6-Wheel Truck	60	90
Tank (modern)	60	100
Tank (WW II)	30	40
Bus		60 100
18-Wheeler	70	110
Sedan		70 120
Minivan		70 120
Compact	70	130
Sporty Compact	100	140
Sport Coupe	110	150
Sports Car	110	160
Exotic Car	130	190+
Luxury Sedan	85	155
Midsize		75 125
SUV	70	115
Formula One Racer	140	240

## 8.4 Encumbrance

A character can carry 25 pounds per point of Strength with no penalty. If over this weight, the difficulty of all physical actions is increased by 1. Every 25 pounds over this amount halves the character's base movement. Total encumbrance cannot be more than 50 pounds per point of Strength.

## 9.0 Combat

### 9.1 Surprise, Stun, and Ambush

#### 9.1.1 Ambush

A character who is ambushed or caught flat-footed automatically loses initiative. This is usually dictated by the tactical situation rather than by dice rolls. For example, if you round a corner to find guards waiting for you with rifles leveled, you've been ambushed.

#### 9.1.2 Surprise

Surprise is a resisted skill check of the attacker's Stealth versus the defender's Alertness. The surprising characters gain a free attack which takes place before initiative. This attack is committed. A surprised target cannot take a defensive action. Effectively, the surprised character is unable to react to the first swing.

##### 9.1.2.1 Surprise against Sleeping Targets

A sleeping character suffers +4 Difficulty to the Alertness roll to avoid surprise (normally a base Difficulty of 6, adjusted to 10).

5 successes: You are not surprised; you wake up in time to roll initiative normally in most cases, though in some circumstance the tactical situation might dictate that you have been ambushed.

4 successes: You are not surprised, but you have been ambushed even if the tactical situation would not otherwise require it.

0 successes: You are surprised and have also been ambushed.

Botch: You are stunned for this turn only (not the following turn).

##### 9.1.2.2 Surprise against Meditating Targets

A meditating character suffers +2 Difficulty to the Alertness roll to avoid surprise. With a single success, you emerge from meditation in time to roll initiative normally (unless the tactical situation dictates that you have been ambushed). 0 successes indicate that you are surprised. A botch indicates

that you are surprised and have also been ambushed even if the tactical situation would not otherwise require it.

### 9.1.3 Stun

If you take a number of health levels of damage greater than your Stamina from a single attack (not attack sequence), you are stunned. A stunned character loses any remaining actions for the current turn and is unable to act in the following turn.

## 9.2 Initiative

To determine initiative, each character rolls 1d10 and adds Dexterity and Wits.

Initiative = Dexterity + Wits + 1d10

For example, if you have Dexterity 5, Wits 3, and roll a 6, your initiative is 14.

The Nerves of Steel background provides a bonus to initiative.

All characters go in sequence from highest to lowest. All characters take their initial actions, then second actions are taken in the same sequence, then third actions in sequence, and so forth. However, you may take a defensive action at any time, provided you have actions remaining. Any action which is instant and purely defensive is considered a defensive action.

## 9.3 Combat Resolution

Combat is a contested skill check. The attacker uses Dexterity + Brawl, Melee, or Firearms; the defender uses Dexterity + Dodge (to dodge) or Dexterity + Brawl or Melee (to block or parry). To score a hit, the attacker must have at least one success remaining after subtracting the defender's successes.

Combat Difficulties cannot be reduced below 3. Non-combat Difficulties cannot be reduced below 2.

### 9.3.1 Automatic and Semiautomatic Fire

Firing a 3-round burst adds 3 dice to each attack (even if the dice pool is divided between multiple attacks), but increases the Difficulty by 1.

Automatic fire empties the clip (unless the clip is very large) and adds 10 dice to the attack, but increases the Difficulty by 2. The clip must contain at least 10 rounds. One turn of automatic fire usually expends 20 to 30 rounds.

When strafing with automatic fire, successes must be divided evenly between targets; only half of successes are applied if there is only one target. Base Difficulty of strafing is 5, increased by 1 for every five feet covered by the spray. The attacker must fire at least 10 rounds per five feet. Dodge

rolls against strafing are at +2 difficulty.

### 9.3.2 Shotguns

Shotguns usually affect a single target. If the tactical situation indicates that a shotgun would affect multiple targets, damage is divided evenly between targets.

### 9.3.3 Miscellaneous Modifiers

Recoil: When firing a gun more than once per turn, recoil increases the Difficulty by 1 for each attack after the first (+1 for the second attack, +2 for the third, +3 for the fourth).

This rule makes me think that recoil compensation should be a background.

Aiming: +1 die for each turn spent aiming at a target who is not moving faster than a walk, to a maximum of the character's Perception; a scope adds an additional +2 with at least one turn of aiming. The total bonus for aiming cannot exceed +5.

If someone has mythic perception, they are free to have up to 8 dice for aiming.

Firing from behind a wall: +1 Difficulty

Firing with only head exposed: +2 Difficulty

Using off-hand: +1 Difficulty

Target is blind or partially immobilized: +2 dice

Blind: -4 dice to all actions; when shooting blind (or otherwise unable to aim), successes are not added to damage. Difficulties of all Dexterity-based rolls are increased by 2.

Flank attack: -1 Difficulty

Rear attack: -2 Difficulty

Small target: +1 to +3 Difficulty

Called shot (targeting a specific area): +1 to +5 Difficulty; no extra damage, but may bypass armor

Point blank range (within 2 meters): -2 Difficulty

Long range: +2 Difficulty

## 9.4 Damage

When a character is injured, a damage roll must typically be made to determine the severity of the injury. This roll is at Difficulty 6. Each success on the damage roll inflicts one health level of damage.

Most dice penalties are not subtracted from the damage dice pool, which cannot be reduced below one except by a soak roll.

1's are not subtracted from successes with damage rolls and soak rolls.

**Bashing Damage:** Battering and bruising, including unarmed and blunt wooden weapons. (However, an attacker with Strength 4 or above using a blunt wooden weapon may choose to inflict Lethal Damage.) Some poisons and diseases deal Bashing Damage.

**Lethal Damage:** Cuts, piercing, non-blunt weapons, blunt weapons wielded by attacker with Strength 4 or above (at attacker's option), some poisons and diseases.

**Aggravated Damage:** Burns, attacks by supernatural creatures, some magic.

A character who suffers 4 levels of Lethal or Aggravated Damage from a single attack (not attack sequence) is likely to suffer permanent injury or maiming. Hit location should be determined.

#### 9.4.1 Hit Location

Following is a Hit Location chart which can be used if the GM wants to randomly determine where a character has been injured.

#	Location
1-5	Left Foot
6-10	Right Foot
11-15	Left Lower Leg
16-20	Right Lower Leg
21-25	Left Upper Leg
26-30	Right Upper Leg
31-35	Groin
36-40	Lower Chest
41-45	Middle Chest
46-50	Upper Chest
51-55	Left Hand
56-60	Right Hand
61-65	Left Lower Arm
66-70	Right Lower Arm
71-75	Left Upper Arm
76-80	Right Upper Arm
81-85	Right Shoulder
86-90	Left Shoulder
91-95	Neck
96-00	Head

#### 9.5 Armor and Soak

Armor does not stack; when two pieces of armor overlap, only use the highest rated piece. That means that wearing two kevlar jackets does not provide four dice of armor, and wearing three does little more than make you look like an idiot.

### Armor Chart

Class	Armor Rating	Penalty
Class One (reinforced clothing)	1	0
Class Two (armor shirt)	2	0
Class Three (Kevlar vest)	3	1
Class Four (flak jacket)	4	2
Class Five (full riot gear)	5	3

The Armor Penalty is subtracted from all active dice pools (those which involve significant bodily movement, including Strength-based attacks such as Melee but not including firearm and missile attacks if the character takes no other actions).

Bashing Damage can be soaked with Stamina and Armor. Armor, but not Stamina, can soak Lethal and some types of Aggravated Damage.

To soak Bashing Damage, roll Stamina + Armor at Difficulty 6. To soak Lethal Damage, roll Armor at Difficulty 6. 1's are not subtracted from successes. Each success subtracts one level of damage.

~~If a combatant can soak damage due to different abilities or items, the abilities or items usually do not stack. Typically, general categories don't stack. Items do not stack. Spells and other forms of augmentation do not stack with the same type of bonus unless it provides an entirely different type of effect. (For example, Hardened Flesh of any sort will not stack with any other kind of soak except a deflection bonus.) Magical Augmentations of any source do not stack.~~

If you can determine its origin, things of the same nature do not stack. For example, a flak jacket and a breastplate will not stack as mundane armor. However if they make sense as stacking or have different "layers" of protection then they may stack. e.g. vampiric fortitude, mythic stamina, enchanted armor, and a futuretech shield all stack as they are distinct and separate from one another. However if that same blessed bloodsucker were to have hexagramic warding placed over it, then the holographic shield or the enchanted armor would not stack with that. In general all incarnate, worn, and enveloping sources of soak are exclusive (including receiving them as gifts) though some exceptions may be made.

## 9.6 Weapons

### 9.6.1 Melee Weapons

Melee weapons are categorized by size. The Difficulty of the attack roll is either 6 or 7, as specified below.

Size	Used with:	Examples	Difficulty	Damage
Concealability				
Small	1 hand	knife, pipewrench	6	Strength +1
	P or J			
Medium	1 hand	machete, hatchet	6	Strength +2
Large	1 hand	katana, wood axe	7	Strength +3
	N			
	2 hands		6	T

Very Large +4	2 hands N	halberd, greatsword	7	Strength
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Large weapons may be used with one or two hands. When employed with one hand, their base Difficulty is 7; when employed with two hands, their base Difficulty is 6.

Concealability:

P: Can be hidden in a pocket.

J: Can be hidden under a jacket.

T: Can be hidden under a trenchcoat.

N: Not concealable on one's person.

On a hit, melee weapons deal a number of damage dice equal to the wielder's Strength, plus 1 to 4 dice depending on the size of the weapon (listed under Damage, above).

### 9.6.2 Firearms and Missile Weapons

The base damage dice dealt by firearms and missile weapons is determined by the type of weapon, as specified below. The number of successes on the attack roll is added to the damage dice pool.

Type	Rate	Clip	Example	Conceal	Damage	Range		
Revolver, Light	6		SWM640 (.38 Special)	P	4	12	3	
Revolver, Heavy	6		Colt Anaconda (.44 Magnum)	J	6	35	2	
Pistol, Light	17		Glock17 (9 mm)	P	4	20	4	
Pistol, Heavy	J		SigP220 (.45 ACP)		5	30	3	7
Shotgun	5		Ithaca M-37 (12 Gauge)	T	8	20	1	
Shotgun, Semi-auto	T		Fiachi-Laul 12 (12 Gauge)		8	20	3	8
SMG, Small	30		Ingram Mac-10 (9mm)	J	4	25	3	
SMG, Large	3	32	Uzi (9mm)	T	4		50	
SMG, .45	N		Thompson (.45 ACP)		5	25	3	30
Assault Rifle	32	N	Steyr-Aug (5.56mm)		7	150	3	
Rifle	N		Remington M-700 (30.06)		8	200	1	5
.408 Rifle	N		.408 CheyTac Intervention		10	750	1	7
.50 Rifle	1	10	Barrett M82 (.50 BMG)	N		12		700

Crossbow	5	20	1	1
T				

Range is in meters. The figure given is for medium range. Weapons can be fired at up to twice this distance, but anything over the listed distance is considered long range.

Rate is the maximum number of times the weapon can be fired in one turn.

Clip gives the number of rounds in a clip.

Range and clip size may vary depending on the specific model of firearm.

Crossbows require 5 turns to reload. (Specific types of crossbows may have different stats.)

### 9.6.3 Special Rounds

Hollow-point rounds add 2 damage dice but double the target's armor.

Armor-piercing rounds reduce armor by half (rounded down), but subtract 1 die of damage.

Armor-piercing incendiary rounds are treated as normal armor-piercing rounds, but deal 1 level Aggravated Fire damage (Difficulty 7 to soak, if able to soak Aggravated damage) the turn after the bullet strikes, presuming it does damage.

Explosive rounds add 2 damage dice. Explosive armor piercing rounds add 2 damage dice and reduce armor by half (rounded down).

Tasers and other devices which deal non-lethal electrical damage require a Stamina + Endurance check (Difficulty 6 for pistol, 7 for rifle, 8 for shotgun), with failure resulting in stun. Self-contained single-charge taser shells (with no cable attached) require a single check (one turn of stun if failed). Battery-powered taser shells, and those with a cable attached, require a check each turn until removed, with Difficulty increasing by 1 each turn. Range for traditional tasers (with cables) is typically 10 meters.

### 9.6.4 Explosives

Explosives	Damage	Decrease with distance
stun grenade	12 Bashing	-1 per meter
concussion grenade	8 Lethal	-1 per meter
fragmentation grenade	12 Lethal	-1 per meter
napalm grenade	8 Lethal + fire damage in 7 meter radius	-1 per meter
Claymore mine	2 Structural + 12 Lethal in kill zone	
light rocket	6 Structural + 6 Lethal	-3 per meter
plastic explosives (per half ounce)	1 Structural + 1 Lethal	-3 per meter
anti-tank rocket	6 Structural + 12 Lethal	-3 per meter

With the exception of shaped charges, damage from explosives is capped at 20 levels. Shaped charges typically damage or destroy a single target (depending on the size of the charge, one person, one small

group of people, one vehicle, one building or one part of a building, etc.).

Napalm grenades burn for 30 seconds.

Thermite grenades affect a 1 meter diameter and burn for 40 seconds. They are placed rather than thrown, and are designed for destroying equipment. Thermite follows the rules for fire damage, with the amount of the body exposed to the thermite determining damage. Soak difficulty is that of molten metal (10). In the case of actual direct exposure to thermite, the normal damage applied by exposure may be doubled at GM discretion (2, 4, and 6 per turn respectively). After the thermite has burned out, the target will still probably be on fire, but at an intensity no higher than their normal combustibility.

Claymore mines have a range of 100 meters and a 60 degree arc. Anyone directly behind a Claymore when it detonates will suffer 1 level of Lethal Damage from backblast. A character at the center of a ring of Claymores which detonate simultaneously is effectively at the center of a shaped charge, and will suffer backblast of 1 Lethal from the first mine, 2 Lethal from the second, 3 Lethal from the third, and so forth. (Thus, a ring of 4 Claymores would deal 10 Lethal in backblast.)

Backblast from shaped charges of plastic explosives deals 1 Structural from the first 3.5 ounces, 2 Structural from the second 3.5 ounces, 3 Structural from the third, and so forth. (Thus, 14 ounces would deal 10 Structural in backblast.)

**Structural Damage:** Trinity and Abberant use the WW Structural (Vehicle) Damage scale. It is pretty sensible, and works rather well to avoid gobs of dice; it can be grafted out of those books as an optional system.

Structural Damage is automatic to non-structures; no damage roll is made.

## 9.7 Falling

Falling is considered a Bashing attack which delivers 1 level of Bashing Damage per 5 feet fallen, up to a maximum of 20 levels at 100 feet (the damage cap for most catastrophic events). Armor does not apply. No attack roll is made; damage is automatic. If a character falls 100 feet or more, falling damage is Lethal Damage.

## 9.8 Fire and Electricity

The following table gives damage per turn from electricity. No attack roll is made; damage is automatic. Electrical damage is usually Lethal Damage, but may sometimes be Aggravated or Bashing.

Damage Per turn	Electrical Source
One level	Minor; wall socket
Two levels	Major; protective fence
Three levels	Severe; vehicle battery, junction box
Four levels	Fatal; main feed line, subway rail

The following table gives damage per turn from fire. No attack roll is made; damage is automatic. Fire

damage is Aggravated Damage.

Damage per turn	Size of Fire
One level	Torch; a part of the body is exposed to flame
Two levels	Bonfire; half of the body is exposed to flame
Three levels	Raging inferno; entire body is engulfed in flame

Note that it is sometimes appropriate to double exposure damage.

The difficulty to soak fire damage (if able to soak Aggravated Damage) is as follows.

Size of Fire	Difficulty
Candle Flame	4
Torch, most fires, napalm	6
Hot chemical fires, phosphorus	9
Molten metal	10

## 9.9 Drowning

Characters can hold their breath for 30 seconds x (Stamina + Endurance). Each Willpower Point spent grants another 30 seconds. This assumes no strenuous activity. Characters then suffer 1 level of unsoakable Bashing Damage per turn until they drop below Incapacitated/Lethal, at which point they begin dying per the rules on Death.

## 9.10 Poison, Disease, and Climactic Conditions

### 9.10.1 Alcohol

Alcohol reduces Dexterity and Intelligence by 1 for every 2 drinks. One point is recovered per hour.

### 9.10.2 Poison and Disease

Mundane poisons, toxins, diseases, radiation, and the like have a Severity Level from 1 to 5 (or higher for the supernatural or Black Tech). They also have an onset time. Most deal Bashing Damage, repeated every period of onset time. Likewise, they have a certain duration, represented by a toxicity rating. The initial Stamina + Endurance roll (usually at Difficulty 8) only slows the onset time, by a factor equal to successes. Example:

Curare: Severity: 5, Onset: Immediate, Toxicity: Terminal

By this rating, you would suffer 5 Bashing every turn after being hit, until you die or are cured. If your Stamina + Endurance roll is fairly successful, then you would suffer 5 Bashing every couple of turns instead of every turn.

Nonlethal poisons and diseases are limited by a "cap" in how much damage may be applied. The common cold would be limited to Bashing/Wounded, as it won't kill you. Tranquillizers would have an

upper limit on how much effect they can have within the specified time frame unless they have a significant lethal factor.

Knockout gas such as BZ and Kolokol-1 require a Stamina + Endurance check at Difficulty 9 each turn spent in the area of effect, plus the turn after leaving it. 3 successes allow full action. 1 success allows the character to crawl out of the gas, with no other action possible. 0 successes indicate the character is overcome by spasms that turn, and a botch indicates the character is Incapacitated from Bashing damage.

### 9.10.3 Climactic Conditions

Extreme temperatures and adverse climactic conditions use the mechanic for poison and disease. Climactic conditions should be rated in Severity from 1 to 5 (adjusted for protective gear), or higher for supernatural or extraterrestrial conditions.

## 9.11 Health

Most humans have seven Health Levels. As you take damage, mark off Health Levels on your character sheet. If you drop to Incapacitated, you lose consciousness.

Lethal Damage and Bashing Damage are tracked separately. If a character is Incapacitated from Bashing Damage, any additional Bashing Damage taken is Lethal Damage. Lethal and Aggravated Damage stack, while Bashing Damage does not. Thus, one column is provided for Bashing Damage, and one column for Lethal and Aggravated Damage.

Some characters may have more than seven Health Levels. Extra columns are provided to the right of the Bashing and Lethal/Aggravated columns. If your character has an extra Health Level of a certain type, check one of the extra boxes when this extra level is expended.

Injuries reduce a character's effectiveness, resulting in Wound Penalties which subtract dice from most actions.

Health Levels	Wound Penalties
Bruised	none
Hurt	-1
Injured	-1
Wounded	-2
Mauled	-2
Crippled	-5
Incapacitated	unconscious

Pain medication can reduce Wound Penalties by 1 (-5 becomes -4, -2 becomes -1, and a penalty of -1 is eliminated).

You may spend 1 Willpower to ignore Wound Penalties for 1 turn.

**In addition, when you go into or past incapacitated, you may spend willpower each turn to stay**

conscious using the same rule as "ignoring pain penalties" but in this case it is ignoring the infinite pain penalty of going unconscious from the pain, this is a decision you must make as soon as you hit that level of health. If you choose to not begin spending willpower when you reach incapacitated, you drop unconscious as normal and **may not** spend the willpower to "become conscious" when it is convenient to do so (such as to dodge an enemy double tapping your unconscious body). It is either you put your will and adrenaline towards getting to safety or killing that one last threat or you fall like a sack of rocks and hope that should your comrades fail or abandon you that you are overlooked as just another corpse by whatever knocked you down.

Wound Penalties do not apply to soak rolls, Virtue checks, or Willpower checks. They apply to any action that involves significant bodily movement, including Strength-based attacks such as Melee but not including firearm and missile attacks if the character takes no other actions.

#### 9.11.1 Death

If a character is Incapacitated from Lethal Damage and takes additional damage (Lethal or Bashing), the results are as follows.

- 1 past Incapacitated: Die in 10 turns per point of Stamina.
- 2 past Incapacitated: Die in 5 turns per point of Stamina.
- 3 past Incapacitated: Die in 1 turn per point of Stamina.
- 4 past Incapacitated: Die instantly.

A dying character can be stabilized with 5 successes on a Wits + Medicine check. The Difficulty would typically be 7, but may vary with circumstances.

A character who takes more Lethal or Aggravated Damage than his health levels from a single attack (not attack sequence) dies instantly.

#### 9.11.2 Resurrection

A Gift cannot be used to resurrect a dead character. By definition, the Harbingers consider dead characters to be "losers" not worth the effort, regardless of what the players want.

Resurrection abilities, when allowed at all, involve Morality loss. ("Look, I can't die!" has that effect.)

Resurrection after a week or more results in reduction to 1 Permanent Willpower. This is almost exclusively the province of Mythos casters.

#### 9.11.3 Recovery Time

The following table gives the amount of time required to recover one level of Bashing Damage.

Health Level	Recovery Time
Bruised	One hour
Hurt	One hour

Injured	One hour
Wounded	One hour
Mauled	Three hours
Crippled	Six hours
Incapacitated	12 hours

The following table gives the amount of time required to recover one level of Lethal or Aggravated Damage.

Health Level	Recovery Time
Bruised	One day
Hurt	Three days
Injured	One week
Wounded	Two weeks
Mauled	One month
Crippled	Three months
Incapacitated	Five months

A character who suffers 4 levels of Lethal or Aggravated Damage from a single attack (not attack sequence) is likely to suffer permanent injury or maiming.

Lethal or Aggravated Damage of Mauled or beyond will worsen by one level per day if not treated.

A character who takes more Lethal or Aggravated Damage than his health levels from a single attack (not attack sequence) dies instantly.

Mediocre medical care (up to 3 ranks in medicine, limited supplies) can reduce healing times for Bashing or Lethal (but not Aggravated) Damage by one degree. Excellent medical care (4+ ranks, excellent facilities) can reduce it by two degrees.

Excellent medical care costs \$50,000 per month.

Even with excellent medical care, it is entirely possible that a character will suffer permanent scarring or even maiming, depending on the nature of the injury.

~~Thus, a character who is Incapacitated from Lethal Damage and receives excellent medical care will require two months to recover. Such a character will miss a game, unless he chooses to begin the game Crippled.~~

So my opinion on this and the general operations of the games has always been to heal to full by the start of the next game. This is for two reasons: eliminating the blatant disadvantage of entering a game with pre-existing pain penalties and to avoid the upkeep of yet another stat between games. However believe it or not, neither of these are the reason I actually support this idea. I am of the opinion that tracking health and recovery times is something that is completely impossible to monitor and enforce on an individual level. Not only that, but according to these rules you have the opportunity to skip games in order to heal. Not only does this conflict with the chronological incontinuity that makes up the High Roller lifestyle but it is also incompatible with the downtimes of them as well. I do understand that for some reason High Rollers are limited in their gains of XP by their imbuing, however to say that they do not get "downtimes" because they have not gone on a game is moronic and

thematically pointless. If it is the case that High Rollers cannot gain downtime XP because they did not go on a game then all that means is that every single time someone gets knocked down, they just wait the appropriate amount of time until the next game and are healed to full *anyways*. The only time they are at a disadvantage to do so is if they have the flaw of mayfly curse or other such time-sensitive malady.

Simply, the ruling will be for now as a hotfix that as a part of imbuing they are granted a slight regeneration that brings them out of any bodily injury within a month. Maiming, amputation, and other such permanent and non-abstracted injuries will remain as they do on normal humans. Should another solution be found besides this that addresses *all* of the previous observation then it will be considered.

## 10.0 Maneuvers

In general, when you make an attack or take an action, it is assumed your character is doing so in whatever manner is most effective under the circumstances. For example, when you swing a machete at an opponent, you don't specify that you're cutting off his right hand. When you shoot at him, you don't specify that you're shooting him in the head. Instead, your character judges what will work best in the tactical situation and acts accordingly.

There is, however, a way to cut off your opponent's hand, shoot him in the head, or knock him off his feet. This is done by using a Maneuver. Basic Maneuvers such as Grappling and Kicking have no cost and can be used by anyone, trained or untrained. Specialized Maneuvers (such as Disarm, Crack Shot, and Spear Catching) cost 2 XP each. This represents the fact that you must practice a particular move intensively before being able to use it effectively. Knocking down an opponent is not as easy as it seems; if you haven't practiced doing so, you're likely to be the one who ends up on the ground.

As with Secondary Abilities, there is not a list of all possible Maneuvers; there are an infinite number. It's possible to devise a Maneuver (or a sequence of Maneuvers) to cover whatever action you want to undertake. Examples are provided.

The listed Difficulty is the base Difficulty, and may vary with the situation.

When a Maneuver can be performed using either Brawl or Martial Arts, the listed Difficulty is for Brawl. As with any Secondary Ability used in combat, Martial Arts reduce the Difficulty by 1.

Note that it is possible to incorporate spells and Powers into Maneuvers.

### 10.1 Basic Maneuvers

All characters use Basic Maneuvers, such as the Punch. Other Basic Maneuvers include Kick, Grapple, Body Slam, Block, and Dodge.

All Maneuvers are resolved as Basic Maneuvers, regardless of the character's skill level or the player's description of the move, unless the character has a Specialized Maneuver.

### 10.2 Examples of Basic Maneuvers

### Punch

Dexterity + Brawl (or Hard Martial Arts)

Difficulty: 6

Damage: Strength

### Kick

Dexterity + Brawl (or Hard Martial Arts)

Difficulty: 7

Damage: Strength + 1

### Smashing Blow

Dexterity + Brawl (or Hard Martial Arts)

Difficulty: 6

Damage: Strength

Description: A one-handed overhand blow.

### Body Slam

Dexterity + Brawl

Difficulty: 6

Damage: Strength

Description: The attacker picks up his opponent and throws him to the ground. In addition to taking damage, the target is knocked down.

### Grapple

Dexterity + Brawl (or Soft Martial Arts)

Difficulty: 6

Damage: None

Description: You need more successes than the target's Strength. Fewer successes means you have grabbed the target, but they can pull away at their Initiative. (Multiple attackers pool their successes.) While Grappled, it is only possible to attempt to escape (by rolling Strength or Dexterity + Brawl at Difficulty 6 and scoring a number of successes equal to the attacker's Strength) or Grapple. Hand attacks, short Melee weapons, and pistols may be used while Grappled at +2 Difficulty. Unless you have a special Maneuver, most defensive actions are impossible for both grappling combatants. If you spend your action preventing the target from breaking loose, make an opposed Strength + Brawl or Soft Martial Arts roll and beat your opponent's successes to prevent him from breaking loose.

### Garrote

Dexterity + Melee

Difficulty: 8

Damage: Strength + 2

Damage Type: Bashing (if cloth garrote) or Lethal (if wire garrote)

Description: A garrote is a Grapple attack. A successful Grapple indicates the target is trapped, in which case damage of Strength + 2 is inflicted each turn (including the first). An action is not required to continue inflicting damage, though one hand is occupied. The attacker can use his action to make an additional attack, if desired.

### Slash

Dexterity + Melee

Difficulty: By weapon  
Damage: By weapon  
Description: A slashing attack.

Thrust  
Dexterity + Melee  
Difficulty: By weapon  
Damage: By weapon  
Description: A thrusting attack.

Shoot  
Dexterity + Firearms  
Difficulty: 6  
Damage: By weapon  
Description: Shooting a firearm or missile weapon.

Dodge  
Dexterity + Dodge  
Difficulty 6  
Damage: None  
Description: Successes are subtracted from the assailant's attack roll. The difficulty is increased by 2 if attempting to dodge firearms. If the dodging character already has cover, difficulty is reduced by 2. If the dodging character already has at least half cover, the difficulty is reduced by 4.

Block  
Dexterity + Brawl (or Soft Martial Arts)  
Difficulty 6  
Damage: None  
Description: Successes are subtracted from the attacker's Brawl roll. Cannot be used against Melee or Firearms attacks.

Parry  
Dexterity + Melee  
Difficulty: By weapon  
Damage: None  
Description: Successes are subtracted from the attacker's Melee or Brawl roll. Cannot be used against Firearms or Thrown attacks.

Ready Melee Weapon  
Wits + Melee  
Difficulty: Normal for attacking with the weapon being drawn  
Description: Drawing and readying a weapon which is readily accessible (e.g., in a sheath on your belt). A roll is required if taken as a multiple action, but not if a full turn is used. If the weapon is inaccessible, the Difficulty may be higher, or more than one turn may be required.

Ready Firearm  
Wits + Firearms  
Difficulty: Normal for attacking with the weapon being drawn  
Description: Drawing and/or readying a weapon which is readily accessible (e.g., in a holster on your

belt). A roll is required if taken as a multiple action, but not if a full turn is used. If the weapon is inaccessible, the Difficulty may be higher, or more than one turn may be required.

#### Stand Up

Dexterity + Athletics

Difficulty: 6

Description: If a full turn is used, no roll is required. If taken as a multiple action, it requires an Athletics check and gives -2 to initiative.

### 10.3 Specialized Maneuvers

Some Specialized Maneuvers become Basic due to a Template or Power (such as a Claw Maneuver or Touch Attack). All others must be purchased. Each Specialized Maneuver costs 2 XP.

Each Specialized Maneuver is based on a certain Basic Maneuver, and will enhance or alter that Basic Maneuver. Almost all Specialized Maneuvers other than Miscellaneous Maneuvers require 5 ranks in a Secondary Ability as a Prerequisite.

Non-fighters seldom learn offensive combat maneuvers, but most characters learn various defensive or non-combat Maneuvers, such as Evasion, Shield Use, and Speed Drinking.

A Maneuver can include only a single action. If you want to take three actions in rapid sequence, you are actually combining three Maneuvers (by splitting your dice pool).

#### 10.3.1 Limitations

A Specialized Maneuver grants a +1 modifier to the Basic Maneuver on which it's based. Each additional Limitation provides another +1. For example, the Heavy Punch adds +3 to damage: +1 because it is a Specialized Maneuver, +1 because it has a Prerequisite, and another +1 because of the Committed limitation. Evasion subtracts 3 from the Difficulty. Limitations always provide +1; it is not possible for a Limitation to provide a greater modifier (though multiple Limitations stack).

Most Maneuvers have one or more prerequisites. Complex unarmed combat moves typically require either Soft or Hard Martial Arts 5. A Maneuver to decapitate your opponent with a single blow of your greatsword might require Greatsword 5. Complicated Maneuvers such as Spear Catching may require you to learn simpler versions first. Simple moves (typically represented as Miscellaneous Maneuvers) may not have a prerequisite, but the best Maneuvers require mastery of the underlying skills.

A character may ignore prerequisites for a number of Maneuver Limitations equal to their rank in the relevant Primary Ability. Thus, a character with a two in Brawl could have Flying Kick (2 Limitations) or Power Sweep and Block Blade (1 Limitation each) without the specified prerequisites.

Possible Limitations include the following.

Committed: The Maneuver may not be used in split dice pools.

Two-Handed: The Maneuver requires both hands.

Prerequisite: One or more Maneuvers must be learned before this one, or one or more skill must be at 5 before this Maneuver can be acquired, or both. Note that having prerequisites only provides a +1 modifier, no matter how many prerequisites a single Maneuver may have.

Difficult: Difficulty is increased by 2.

Inaccurate: -2 dice.

No Defensive Actions: No defensive actions may be taken the turn this Maneuver is used or the following turn (a total of two turns).

Minimum Damage: A minimum amount of damage must be achieved before the effect is initiated.

Exhausting: You take a level of unsoakable Bashing Damage each time you use this Maneuver.

Follow Through: The Maneuver can only be used immediately after a designated Maneuver is used successfully.

Taxing: The Maneuver can only be used once every three turns.

Focus: You act at -3 initiative when using this Maneuver.

### 10.3.2 Benefits

Modifiers gained from Limitations may be used to reduce the Difficulty of the Maneuver or to increase the amount of damage inflicted. A single such positive modifier grants a bonus of at least 1 and no greater than 5. Thus, it is not possible to reduce the Difficulty by more than 5 or increase damage by more than 5.

Some Benefits, such as Destroy Organ and Decapitate, must be accompanied by certain Limitations.

Possible Benefits include the following.

Threshold: A second effect is initiated if the character's successes exceed the opponent's by a certain amount, typically 3 or 5. Primarily defensive. The cost is 1.

Accurate: +2 dice. The cost is 1. This can only be taken once (i.e. only two dice can be added).

Knockdown: A successful attack knocks your opponent to the ground. The cost is 1.

Stun: The target is stunned. The cost is 4.

Cripple: One limb is rendered useless (hamstrung or broken) through Lethal damage. The target must be reduced to at least Wounded; otherwise, the limb is dislocated rather than crippled. The cost is 2.

Dislocate: One limb is dislocated through Bashing damage, and is temporarily immobilized. At least one level of damage must be inflicted. The cost is 2.

Break Joint: A single joint is broken. The cost is 3.

Lethal Damage: An attack that would normally inflict Bashing damage instead inflicts Lethal. The cost is 4.

~~Reduced Soak: The target's soak is reduced by a number of levels equal to the cost (reduced by 1 at a cost of 1, reduced by 2 at a cost of 2, etc.). The attacker must be familiar with the target's anatomy.~~  
An established rule of high rollers is to not negate soak wherever it appears similar to not reducing damage. For balance purposes and not waking the sleeping dragon we shall continue this tradition.

Destroy Organ: The attack automatically destroys one specified organ (brain, heart, lungs, etc.). This may have limited or no effect on certain targets. Note that destruction of an organ cannot be cured by healing/regenerating health levels. The cost is 5. Mandatory Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3.

Decapitate: A Crippled result causes the head to be severed. The cost is 2 (assuming a large bladed weapon). Mandatory Limitations: Committed, +2 Difficulty.

Called Shot: Targets a specific area, but does not kill, disable, or disarm, only increases damage. The cost is 1 for an arm/leg, 2 for a hand/head/foot, 3 for heart/eye.

Leap: The character jumps with his full dice pool in addition to his primary action. The cost is 1.

Fast Draw: Success allows you to begin the round as if your weapon were already in-hand. Does not require an action. The cost is 1.

Environmental Adaptation: Penalty for a single unfamiliar environment, such as fighting underwater or fighting blind, is reduced by 2. The cost is 2.

## 10.4 Examples of Specialized Maneuvers

The name of the Maneuver is followed by its total cost.

### 10.4.1 Dodge Maneuvers

Evasion (3)

Dexterity + Dodge

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Description: Evasion is an all-out attempt to avoid being hit

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Dodge 5

Benefits: -3 Difficulty

Flanking Evasion (3)

Dexterity + Dodge

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Description: If you get 3 successes above the attack, you flank your opponent. If you get 5 successes above the attack, you are behind your opponent. Otherwise, it becomes a normal Dodge attempt.

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Dodge 5

Benefits: -2 Difficulty, Threshold

Running Dodge (2)

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Limitations: Committed

Description: You can run and dodge without splitting your dice pool. You can use your full Dexterity + Dodge dice pool to dodge and your full Dexterity + Athletics dice pool to run, but cannot do anything else.

Leaping Dodge (2)

Dexterity + Dodge

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Limitations: Committed

Description: You move your Jump distance when you Dodge.

Flying Dodge (2)

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Telekinesis 4

Description: You can fly and dodge without splitting your dice pool. You can use your full Dexterity + Dodge dice pool to dodge and your full Wits + Alertness dice pool to fly, but cannot do anything else.

Masterful Dodge (2)

Dexterity + Dodge

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Prerequisites: Dodge 5

Benefits: -1 Difficulty (1), +2 dice (1)

#### 10.4.2 Martial Arts Maneuvers

Heavy Punch (3)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Punch

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: +3 Damage

Stunning Punch (4)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Punch

Description: If you deal at least 3 levels of damage, the target is stunned.

Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: Stun (4)

### Hammer Blow (4)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Smashing Blow

Description: A two-handed overhand blow.

Limitations: Committed, Two-Handed

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: +4 Damage

### Power Kick (3)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Kick

Difficulty: 7

Damage: Strength + 4

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: +3 Damage (included)

### Power Sweep (2)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Kick

Difficulty: 7

Damage: Strength + 2

Description: A successful attack results in a knockdown against your opponent.

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: Knockdown (1), +1 Damage (included)

### Flying Kick (3)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Kick

Difficulty: 7

Damage: Strength + 3

Description: You leap at an opponent and kick him at the end of your leap. You can use your full Dexterity + Athletics dice pool to jump and your full Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts dice pool to kick, but cannot split either dice pool.

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: Leap (1), +2 Damage (included)

### Stunning Flying Kick (5)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Kick

Difficulty: 7

Damage: Strength + 1

Description: You leap at an opponent and kick him at the end of your leap. You can use your full Dexterity + Athletics dice pool to jump and your full Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts dice pool to kick, but cannot split either dice pool. If you deal at least 3 levels of damage, the target is stunned.

Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage, No Defensive Actions

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: Leap (1), Stun (4)

Block Blade (2)

Dexterity + Soft Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Block

Difficulty: 6

Description: You may attempt to block Melee weapons with your bare hands.

Prerequisite: Soft Martial Arts 5

Benefit: Block Blade (1), -1 Difficulty (included)

Spear Catching (2)

Dexterity + Soft Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Block

Difficulty: 8

Effect: You may attempt to block thrown weapons or arrows. If you gain at least 3 successes beyond what is required, you may catch the item rather than merely block it.

Prerequisite: Block Blade

Benefits: Block Blade (1), Threshold (1)

Damage Block (2)

Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Punch

Description: If you get 3 successes above the attack, you deal damage in addition to Blocking.

Otherwise, it becomes a normal Block attempt.

Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5

Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty

Unarmed Disarm (2)

Dexterity + Soft Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Grapple

Description: On a successful attack, roll your Strength. The target rolls Strength. If you get more successes than your target, the target is disarmed.

Damage: None

Prerequisite: Soft Martial Arts 5

Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty

Lightning Sweep (2)

Dexterity + Soft Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Grapple

Description: A successful attack results in a knockdown against your opponent.

Damage: None

Prerequisites: Soft Martial Arts 5

Benefits: Knockdown (1), -1 Difficulty

Break Grapple (3)

Dexterity + Soft Martial Arts

Basic Maneuver: Grapple

Description: You are practiced at escaping Grapples.

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Soft Martial Arts 5  
Benefits: -2 Difficulty (2); +2 dice (1)

#### 10.4.3 Melee Maneuvers

Fast Draw (2)

Wits + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Ready Melee Weapon

Difficulty: Normal for attacking with the weapon being drawn

Description: Drawing and/or readying a weapon which is readily accessible (e.g., in a sheath on your belt). Success allows you to begin the turn as if your weapon were already in-hand and ready to use.

Does not require an action.

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Cleave (4)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Limitations: Committed, +2 Difficulty

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Decapitating (2), +2 Damage

Flying Guillotine (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Description: A decapitating leap. The target must be Crippled by the blow to be Decapitated.

Limitations: Committed, +2 Difficulty

Prerequisites: Weapon 5

Benefits: Leap (1), Decapitating (2)

~~Improved Flying Guillotine (7)~~

~~Dexterity + Sword~~

~~Basic Maneuver: Slash~~

~~Description: A decapitating leap. The target must be Crippled by the blow to be Decapitated.~~

~~Limitations: Committed, +2 Difficulty, Prerequisite, Inaccurate (-2 Dice), Taxing, Exhausting~~

~~Prerequisites: Flying Guillotine~~

Benefits: Leap (1), Decapitating (2), Reduced Soak x4

Revise and create new maneuver without reducing soak.

Tendon Slice (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefit: Crippling (2), +1 Damage

Stunning Blow (4)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Description: If you deal at least 3 levels of damage, the target is stunned.

Limitations: Minimum Damage, Two-Handed

Prerequisites: Weapon 5

Benefits: Stun (4)

Sweeping Blow (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Description: A successful attack knocks your opponent to the ground.

Limitations: Two-Handed

Prerequisites: Weapon 5

Benefits: Knockdown (1), -1 Difficulty, +1 Damage

Power Blow (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Limitations: Two-Handed

Prerequisites: Weapon 5

Benefits: -1 Difficulty, +2 Damage

Focused Power Blow (9)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Description: You must deal at least 3 levels of damage for this Maneuver to be effective.

Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3, Two-Handed, No Defensive Actions, Focus, Exhausting, Taxing

Prerequisites: Weapon 5

Benefits: -1 Difficulty, +8 Damage

Counter-Thrust (2)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Parry

Description: If your parry exceeds your opponent's attack by at least 3 successes, you deal your weapon's damage modifier to your attacker. Cannot be used against Firearms or Thrown attacks.

Damage: Base Damage for Weapon (without Strength or other modifiers)

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty

Counter-Strike (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Parry

Description: If your parry exceeds your opponent's attack by at least 3 successes, you deal 2 damage plus your weapon's damage modifier to your attacker. Cannot be used against Firearms or Thrown attacks.

Damage: Base Damage for Weapon +2 (without Strength modifiers)

Limitations: Exhausting

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Threshold (1), +2 Damage

### Brutal Parry (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Parry

Description: If your parry exceeds your opponent's attack by at least 3 successes, you deal your weapon's damage modifier to your attacker. Cannot be used against Firearms or Thrown attacks. If the target is reduced to at least Wounded, the attacking limb is rendered useless (hamstrung or broken) through Lethal damage; otherwise the limb is dislocated if you inflict damage.

Damage: Base Damage for Weapon (without Strength or other modifiers)

Prerequisite: Counter-Thrust

Limitations: -2 Dice

Benefits: Threshold (1), Cripple (2)

### Spear Parrying (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Parry

Difficulty: 6

Description: You may attempt to parry thrown weapons or arrows.

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Limitations: Two-Handed

Benefits: Spear Parrying (1), -2 Difficulty (included)

### Entangle (2)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Grapple

Damage: None

Description: The attacker must use a weapon such as a whip, net, rope, or cloak. If the attacker gains a successful Grapple, the target's weapon arm is grappled.

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty

### Cape Parry (2)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Parry

Damage: None

Description: You must use a cape, whip, net, rope, or similar weapon. If your parry exceeds your opponent's attack by a sufficient number of successes to grapple (using the rules for the Grapple Basic Maneuver), the target's weapon arm is grappled. Otherwise, it becomes a normal Parry attempt.

Prerequisite: Entangle

Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty

### Disarm (2)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash or Thrust

Damage: None

Description: On a successful attack, roll your base weapon damage only. If using a weapon that does not inflict damage (such as a net, whip, rope, or cloak), roll your Strength. The target rolls Strength. If you get more successes than your target, the target is disarmed.

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty

Stranglehold (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Garrote

Description: An incredibly accurate use of the garrote employing both hands.

Limitations: Two Hands

Prerequisites: Garrote 5

Benefits: -3 Difficulty

Critical Strike (5)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Slash

Description: A slashing blow targeting a vital area.

Limitations: Committed, Two-Handed, Minimum Damage 3

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: +3 Damage, -2 Difficulty

Destroy Brain (5)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Thrust

Description: A precise thrust that destroys the brain. This may have limited or no effect on certain targets. Note that destruction of the brain cannot be cured by healing/regenerating health levels.

Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3, +2 Difficulty

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Destroy Organ (5)

~~Penetrating Destroy Brain (11)~~

~~Dexterity + Weapon~~

~~Basic Maneuver: Thrust~~

~~Description: A precise thrust that destroys the brain. This may have limited or no effect on certain targets. Note that destruction of the brain cannot be cured by healing/regenerating health levels. Also, the target's soak is reduced by 6 levels. The attacker must be familiar with the target's anatomy.~~

~~Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3, Two-Handed, +2 Difficulty, -2 Dice, No Defensive Actions, Focus, Exhausting, Taxing~~

~~Prerequisite: Weapon 5~~

~~Benefits: Destroy Organ (5), Reduced Soak (6)~~

~~Revise~~

Destroy Heart (5)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Thrust

Description: A precise thrust that destroys the heart. This may have limited or no effect on certain targets. Note that destruction of the heart cannot be cured by healing/regenerating health levels.

Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3, +2 Difficulty

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Destroy Organ (5)

~~Penetrating Destroy Heart (11)~~

~~Dexterity + Weapon~~

~~Basic Maneuver: Thrust~~

~~Description: A precise thrust that destroys the heart. This may have limited or no effect on certain targets. Note that destruction of the brain cannot be cured by healing/regenerating health levels. Also, the target's soak is reduced by 6 levels. The attacker must be familiar with the target's anatomy.~~

~~Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3, Two-Handed, +2 Difficulty, -2 Dice, No Defensive Actions, Focus, Exhausting, Taxing~~

~~Prerequisite: Weapon 5~~

~~Benefits: Destroy Organ (5), Reduced Soak (6)~~

**Revise**

**Penetrating Blow (4)**

**Dexterity + Weapon**

~~Basic Maneuver: Thrust~~

~~Description: The target's soak is reduced by 4 levels. The attacker must be familiar with the target's anatomy.~~

~~Prerequisite: Weapon 5~~

~~Limitations: +2 Difficulty, -2 Dice~~

~~Benefit: Reduced Soak (4)~~

**Revise**

**Focused Penetrating Blow (10)**

**Dexterity + Weapon**

~~Basic Maneuver: Thrust~~

~~Description: The target's soak is reduced by 10 levels. The attacker must be familiar with the target's anatomy.~~

~~Prerequisite: Weapon 5~~

~~Limitations: Committed, Two-Handed, +2 Difficulty, -2 Dice, No Defensive Actions, Focus, Exhausting, Taxing~~

~~Benefit: Reduced Soak (10)~~

**Revise**

#### 10.4.4 Firearms Maneuvers

**Fast Draw (2)**

**Wits + Weapon**

**Basic Maneuver: Ready Firearm**

**Difficulty: Normal for attacking with the weapon being drawn**

**Description: Drawing and/or readying a weapon which is readily accessible (e.g., in a holster on your belt). Success allows you to begin the turn as if your weapon were already in-hand and ready to fire (safety off, cocked, etc.). Does not require an action. Does not include reloading.**

**Prerequisite: Weapon 5**

**Rapid Reload (3)**

**Wits + Weapon**

**Basic Maneuver: Ready Firearm**

**Difficulty: Varies with location of magazine. Readily accessible bandoleer: 6; exposed on your person: 8; concealed on your person: 10.**

**Description: Changing magazines of a weapon which is already in hand. Roll your full Wits +**

Weapon dice pool. If you get at least 3 successes, you begin the turn as if your weapon were already loaded. Does not require an action.

Limitations: Threshold

Prerequisite: Fast Draw

Benefits: Rapid Reload (3)

Counterfire (2)

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Description: If your weapon is already in hand and your Dodge exceeds your opponent's attack by at least 3 successes, you are able to snap off a single shot at the attacker with half your dice pool (or with your full dice pool if your Dodge exceeds your opponent's attack by at least 5 successes). If you hit, you deal your weapon's base damage only. Can be learned for a pistol or bow, but not for a rifle.

Damage: Base Damage for Weapon (without adding successes)

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty to your Dodge

Crack Shot (5)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Shoot

Description: The attacker targets a vital area.

Limitations: Committed, Two-Handed, Minimum Damage 3

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: +3 Damage, -2 Difficulty

Head Shot (5)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Shoot

Description: The attacker targets the opponent's head.

Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3, +2 Difficulty

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Head Shot (2), +3 Damage

Brain Shot (5)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Shoot

Description: A precise shot that destroys the brain. This may have limited or no effect on certain targets. Note that destruction of the brain cannot be cured by healing/regenerating health levels.

Limitations: Committed, Minimum Damage 3, +2 Difficulty

Prerequisite: Weapon 5

Benefits: Destroy Organ (5)

## 10.5 Miscellaneous Maneuvers

Miscellaneous Maneuvers are Specialized Maneuvers which don't specifically effect a combat or defensive action.

Some examples follow. As with all Maneuvers, the list of possibilities is endless.

### Resist Stun (1)

Description: If you score at least 3 successes on a Stamina + Endurance check at Difficulty 8, you may take defensive actions while stunned. Does not require an action. (No Limitations or Benefits can be applied to this Maneuver.)

### Kick Up (1)

Basic Maneuver: Stand Up

Description: You may immediately get to your feet from the ground by taking a -2 die penalty to your next action. No roll required.

### Pub Brawling (1)

Description: Reduces the Difficulty reduction gained by attackers flanking or attacking from behind by 1, provided you are aware of them.

### Sidearm Throw (2)

Basic Maneuver: Throw

Description: Increases Strength by 2 for determining the distance and damage of thrown objects.

Limitations: Committed

### Reach (1)

Description: When armed with a weapon at least three feet in length, you may constantly force opponents with shorter weapons to close ground, imposing a dice pool penalty of -2 on all attacks.

### Knees and Elbows (1)

Description: You may use Punch and Kick Maneuvers even while Grappled.

### Shield Use (1)

Description: You may impose a +1 Difficulty on all frontal attacks by proper use of a shield in your off-hand.

### Speed Drinking (1)

Description: You may consume one dose of alcohol per turn without splitting your dice pool, assuming it is readily available.

### Blind Fighting (1)

Description: Reduces the penalty for blindness by 2.

### Underwater Fighting (1)

Description: Reduces the penalty for fighting while underwater by 2.

### Slippery Footing (1)

Description: Reduces the penalty for fighting on slippery ground by 2.

### Ground Fighting (1)

Description: Reduces the penalty for fighting while prone by 2.

### Blind Man's Sight (Touch) (1)

Description: For purposes of spellcasting, the requirement to "see" the target may be considered to refer to "touching" the target, provided all other requirements are met.

### Blind Man's Sight (Hearing) (1)

Description: For purposes of spellcasting, the requirement to "see" the target may be considered to refer to "hearing" the target, provided all other requirements are met.

## 10.6 Power-based Maneuvers

### Flying Dodge (2)

Basic Maneuver: Dodge

Limitations: Committed

Prerequisites: Telekinesis 4

Description: You can fly and dodge without splitting your dice pool. You can use your full Dexterity + Dodge dice pool to dodge and your full Wits + Alertness dice pool to fly, but cannot do anything else.

### Bullet Parrying (3)

Dexterity + Weapon

Basic Maneuver: Parry

Difficulty: 5

Description: You are skilled at parrying projectiles (including bullets) and directed energy (such as lasers). Parrying directed energy is at +2 Difficulty (resulting in a modified Difficulty of 7).

Prerequisites: Weapon 5, Spear Parrying, and the ability to parry projectiles and directed energy

Limitations: Two-Handed

Benefits: -3 Difficulty (included)

## 11.0 Backgrounds

### 11.1 List of Backgrounds

#### General Backgrounds

Alias

Arsenal

Cipher

Citizenship

Clear Conscience

Contacts

Database

Fame

Hands of Death

Laboratory

Lethal Accuracy

Library

Mentor

Nerves of Steel

Precision Striking

Resources

Status

Restricted Backgrounds  
Ancestors  
Arcane  
Arcane Connection  
Channeling  
Counter-Magic  
Fast Casting  
Favored Prey  
Headquarters (or Sanctum)  
High Ritual  
Horoscope  
Geasa/Contracts  
Retainers  
Retention  
Rites  
Signature Item  
Signature Vehicle  
Signature Weapon  
Spell Layering  
Tolerance

Adversarial Backgrounds  
Blacklisted  
Debts  
Hunted  
Notoriety  
Uncanny  
Wards

### 11.1.1 Backgrounds as Gifts

Extremely specific mundane Backgrounds (Database, Alias, Cipher) are typically awarded at 5.

Very useful general ones are usually awarded at 3 to 4 (e.g., Resources), or 5 in total if two are awarded (such as Fame and Status).

Study Point generators are typically awarded at 3 to 5 depending on how broad they are (what the Study Points may be spent on).

Restricted Backgrounds are usually awarded at 1 (Arcane, Favored Prey).

Novice and Seasoned Characters may raise Backgrounds to 5. They may request a Gift to raise the cap for a single Background to 8. Veterans may raise Backgrounds to 8, and may request a Gift to raise the cap for a single Background to 10. (A character who raises the cap on a Background to 8 while Seasoned and later attains the Veteran Template must still spend a Gift to raise the cap on that Background to 10.)

### 11.2 Background Descriptions

#### 11.2.1 Alias

For every level in this Background, you have a fully documented and maintained alternate identity. You may combine this Background with others such as Citizenship, Contacts, Resources, and similar as desired.

If one of your Aliases is exposed, the number of Aliases available to you will drop by one. However, your Aliases will gradually regenerate; typically you will recover one every three months or so.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 5.

#### 11.2.2 Ancestors

Characters possessing this Background have a powerful link to their Past Lives, Racial Memory, Universal Unconscious, or what have you. You may roll your Ancestors rating once per session (Difficulty: 7) to add a number of levels to a single selected Ability equal to your successes. This roll may raise the Ability above the usual maximum of 5, and the increase lasts for the scene.

Ancestors is awarded as a Gift at Level 1.

#### 11.2.3 Arcane

You are by nature enigmatic, unknowable, and entirely forgettable. Mortals will always pass you by, and even the supernatural denizens of the world are hard pressed to keep track of you.

Your rating in Arcane is subtracted from any Perception checks to look for you, including supernatural methods. However, Arcane does not apply to those who know you. Also, it no longer applies once you have been located unless you manage to break contact.

To remember details about you, strangers must roll Wits + Alertness (Difficulty: Your Arcane +3).

Arcane is a Restricted Background; characters may not start with it. It may only be received as a Gift, and only at 1.

#### 11.2.4 Arcane Connection

Legendary Items (those of such power and singularity that they are widely known) cannot be taken as Signature Items, Weapons, or Vehicles. Examples include The Silver Key, Excalibur, The Dust Machine, The Gae Bulga, The Horadric Cube, and The Magic Mirror. These items are already so powerful that they cannot be attached to the destiny of any one person. However, when "attuned," an Arcane Connection will exist: Until the previous owner is killed, the full powers will remain dormant to anyone else, and the owner has some idea of where the item is.

Multiple Arcane Connections create "static," hampering use of the device until all other Connections are eliminated.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Arcane Connection can only be obtained as a Gift and is awarded at 1.

#### 11.2.5 Arsenal

Arsenal represents either a stockpile (or multiple stockpiles) of weaponry or hard to find items that you personally own, or a stockpile to which you have access (e.g., a military arsenal from which you are able to draw). Your Arsenal is assumed to remain consistent with use.

- 1) Large number of conventional weaponry. Any conventional equipment within your Resource range.
- 2) Restricted Items. Modified Weaponry. Police Equipment. Specialty Gear.
- 3) Illegal Items. Military Firearms. Antique Weapons. Improvised Explosives.
- 4) Highly Illegal Items. Specialty Firearms. Hand Grenades. Military Armor.
- 5) Anti-Tank Mines. Plastic Explosives.
- 6) Small Artillery. Nerve Gas.

In any given Downtime, you can obtain two of each type of grenade (or mini-grenade) and 20 ounces of C-4 without having to roll (assuming you have Arsenal to the appropriate level). You can also obtain small quantities of firearms, ammunition, and the like (but not explosives, gas, or anything that affects multiple targets) without having to roll. For any additional items, you must make an Arsenal roll at Difficulty 7. If you succeed, you obtain one item or 20 ounces of C-4. If you fail, you can't roll again for that type of item until the following Downtime. If you botch, you can't draw from your Arsenal until the following Downtime.

An Arsenal is often comprised of a series of stashes. Thus, establishing a new stash does not allow you to obtain items without rolling; you are only moving part of your stash from one location to another.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 4.

#### 11.2.6 Blacklisted

### 11.2.7 Channeling

Channeling (also called Bata'a, Destrier, or Medium) is a rare Background typically practiced only by Psychics, Priests, and Shamans. Essentially, it makes it easier for entities to possess you, and increases the power they can wield while in control.

For every level in this Background, the Difficulty for an Entity to possess you is reduced by 1. Additionally, entities possessing you gain +1 die to all powers used per level in this Background. This is a dangerous ability to have, but many spirits/wraiths will recognize the incredible value of it and respect you accordingly.

This Background may be awarded as a Gift at 5, or less if the player wishes.

### 11.2.8 Cipher

In a world where data flows at the speed of light, sometimes being anonymous is difficult indeed. Cipher determines how well your information is hidden from the world. For every level in Cipher, anyone investigating you adds +1 Difficulty and deducts -1 die from their rolls.

- 0) Available: Your public documents/identity are available to anyone who should care to look.
- 1) Covered: +1 Difficulty/-1 dice pools
- 2) Hidden: +2 Difficulty/-2 dice pools
- 3) Secure: +3 Difficulty/-3 dice pools
- 4) Buried: +4 Difficulty/-4 dice pools
- 5) Invisible: +5 Difficulty/-5 dice pools

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 5.

### 11.2.9 Citizenship

Sometimes getting your foot in the door is all it takes. For every level in this background, you are recognized as a legal citizen of a given country. You are entitled to all the benefits being a citizen entails.

- 0) Only your home country claims you.
- 1) Citizen of your home country plus 1 additional country
- 2) Citizen of 2 additional countries
- 3) Citizen of 3 additional countries

4) Citizen of 4 additional countries

5) Citizen of your home country plus 5 additional countries

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 5.

#### 11.2.10 Clear Conscience

This Background represents a certain amount of iron will and sanity even when exposed to madness or forced to make tough morality calls.

Each time you receive a Derangement, you may roll your rating in Clear Conscience at Difficulty 8. Success negates the Derangement. If you Botch a Conviction check, you still lose the point of Morality, even if you negate the Derangement.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3.

#### 11.2.11 Contacts

Do you have friends in the police force? Were you once a Catholic altar boy? A journalist? Could you find a fence if you needed one? How about some hired muscle? Contacts covers who you know and what you can get out of them. For each level in Contacts you have one major area of influence (which must be detailed at character creation). These individuals are not your friends per se, but can get you what you need when you need it (though they will often require return favors or cash payments).

Players must roll Contacts at Difficulty 7 to reach useful contacts in their area of influence. A botch indicates that Contact cannot be used for the remainder of the game. For example, if a character with Contacts 5 who has Military contacts botches an attempt to reach a Military contact, he will not be able to Military contacts for the remainder of the game, but will still be able to use his other four contacts.

It is possible to acquire an Arms Dealer contact. With an Arms Dealer, nothing is acquired without rolling (as with Arsenal); you must roll for each item. If you fail a roll, you can't obtain anything else that month (as if you had botched with Arsenal). You must pay your Contact for all items.

0) You just fell off the turnip truck, no contacts

1) One major contact

2) Two major contacts

3) Three major contacts

4) Four major contacts

5) Five major contacts

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 5.

### 11.2.12 Counter-Magic

Counter-Magic is available to anyone with Occult Knowledge. It is in fact possible to know protective charms and the like without being a spellcaster. It can be taught, but must be learned from an appropriate source, and may not be learned from a Mentor unless specifically a caster Mentor. An Instruction roll is required, but no Study Points are provided (since Study Points cannot be spent on Backgrounds), and Study Points cannot be received from any other source for any purpose in the same Downtime.

Use of Counter-Magic requires a physical action, and involves a visible, obvious technique (such as a gesture or phrase). The spell does not have to target the user; for example, Counterspell can be used against Summoning spells.

Some method of perceiving the spell is also required. If you have a means of perceiving the spell (for example, you can see the caster and the spell has a verbal, somatic, or material component), you may make a Wits + Intuition check to notice it.

#### 1) General Counterspell

The caster spends 1 Willpower and rolls Wits + Occult at Difficulty 8, with every 2 successes detracting 1 from the oncoming spell. (If there is no roll from which to deduct, the spell's effectiveness is degraded in some other way, typically by 1 for every 4 successes.) This may be used on any effect deemed "magical," with no understanding required by the caster. May be used as a Defensive Action.

#### 2) Tuned Counterspell

The caster spends 1 Willpower and rolls Wits + Occult at Difficulty 7, with successes detracting from the oncoming spell on a 1 for 1 basis. (If there is no roll from which to deduct, the spell's effectiveness is degraded in some other way, typically by 1 for every 2 successes.) To use a Tuned Counterspell, the caster must have at least 1 level in an appropriate Knowledge having to do with the incoming spell (Demon Lore for Dark Thaumaturgy, Faerie Lore for Cantrips, Mythos Lore for Mythos spells, etc.). Simple Occult scores will not help, unless the character has a specialization in the appropriate field.

\*Note: The "Jack of All Trades" Merit WILL allow the caster to be considered knowledgeable in all magical techniques, and is a powerful tool in Counter-Magic. May be used as a Defensive Action.

#### 3) Unweaving

By spending 1 Willpower Point and rolling Intelligence + Occult at Difficulty 8, the caster may pick apart existing effects. The number of successes required is determined by the original spell's caster (Willpower in the case of spontaneous spells, + Intelligence + Occult in the case of rituals), with the Unweaving accumulating enough successes to pick apart the effect. Wards, Circles, and the like may be disabled in this way. This is a slow and arduous process, with every roll representing an hour of toil. If during the process any roll comes up with no successes, the difficulty increases by 1. If there is a botch, all successes are lost and that particular caster may not attempt Unweaving again on the targeted spell for 24 hours. Multiple casters can pool their efforts to Unweave a spell.

#### 4) Wards

Basic Wards alert the wielder when a specific criteria is met. Most Wards activate when a specified supernatural occurrence occurs in the Warded area. Setting up a Ward takes 1 hour per die of Perception the Ward will have (maximum of 5). Spend 1 Willpower and roll Intelligence + Occult at

Difficulty 7, with every 2 successes raising the ward rating by 1. Wards must be keyed to a specific material component, and the caster must have some idea of what the ward is to watch for. Whenever a proscribed event occurs in the Warded area, the Ward rolls its rating (Diff: 6) to detect it. Confounding effects are resisted by the ward's rating as usual (a level 5 Ward is immune to powers less than level 5). If the Ward succeeds, it activates a preset alarm (usually rings a bell or chime). The area to be Warded must be clearly marked and upkept if the Ward is to remain functioning.

### 5) Spell Tracing

By using the appropriate tools, the master of Counter-Magic can locate places of magical power, active spells, or even identify the properties of encountered spells/items. You must have appropriate paraphernalia to use Spell Tracing, and each attempt takes 1 hour. Spend 1 Willpower and roll Perception + Intuition at Difficulty 7. Successes will indicate direction of active spells or places of power within 1 mile. If multiple targets exist, the strongest/closest will typically be indicated. When used to identify a spell, a greater number of successes will provide an increasingly detailed description of the spell/item.

Spell Tracing can be used to backtrack scrying attempts. The tracer must gain successes equal to the scryer's Occult score to learn the direction of the scryer at the time of the scrying attempt. More successes may obtain the distance.

When received as a Gift, Counter-Magic is awarded at 1.

### 11.2.13 Database

Database allows access to private records. The time required to obtain information increases with the rating. Thus, a phone number could be obtained almost immediately, but accessing CIA records might take weeks.

You have access to information at your rating or below, as follows.

- 1) Phone numbers and addresses.
- 2) Credit checks, driving records, employment history.
- 3) Criminal history, local and state government records.
- 4) Records of some federal agencies, such as the FAA and the IRS.
- 5) You have a variety of "keys" to almost every major database in the world. Includes access to the records of highly secure national and international agencies, such as the CIA, FBI, Interpol, and the military.

Database may be awarded as a Gift at 5.

### 11.2.14 Debts

### 11.2.15 Fame

- 1) Local Name
- 2) Subculture Hero
- 3) Regional Figure
- 4) National Recognition
- 5) International Celebrity

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3.

Fame and Status are often awarded together, as they are related. In this case, one would be awarded at 3 and the other at 2.

In every case, events must justify the award. This could require a Side Game, if events and the character's actions in the Game do not fully justify the award.

Fame can only be increased one rank per Downtime, and each increase must be fully justified by roleplay.

### 11.2.16 Fast Casting

An essential tool for Sorcerers and Mythos casters, this Background reduces the time required to cast a spontaneous spell by 1 turn per level, to a minimum of 1 turn.

Fast Casting may be awarded as a Gift at 1 or purchased by a character who already knows at least one spell.

### 11.2.17 Favored Prey

You are particularly adept at taking down certain quarry.

You have one Favored Prey per rank. Initially, with one rank, you have a bonus of 1 die to attack and damage rolls versus the selected target.

Each time you gain a rank, you add one Favored Prey. You have a +1 bonus against the new Favored Prey. Your bonus against each existing Favored Prey increases by one. Thus, at level 2, you would be at +2 against the first enemy and +1 against the new enemy; at level 3, you would be at +3 against the first enemy, +2 against the second, and +1 against the new one; and so on.

Favored Prey are defined largely by appearance; it should be possible to identify them at a glance. For example, you couldn't select Arachnids, but you could select Eight-Legged Critters. You gain a "Hatred" flaw for each target selected. Thus, if you select Humans, you hate anything that even looks human. This Hatred cannot be removed.

Below is an example of this Background at level 5.

#### Favored Prey or Grudge Match

- 1: Monsters (Definition: No way resembling humanoids. Example: Most Mythos Creatures) +5
- 2: Undead (Definition: Clearly dead but moving. Example: Zombies) +4
- 3: Beasties (Definition: Creatures that blend animal traits and human traits, Example: Werewolves) +3
- 4: Suits (Definition: Humans wearing formal suits, Example: Men In Black) +2
- 5: Skinheads (Definition: Humans with shaved heads, Example: Vin Diesel) +1

Favored Prey can only be obtained as a Gift, and is awarded at 1.

#### 11.2.18 Hands Of Death

This trait represents years of experience consistently dealing out damage through unarmed combat. Bare knuckle boxers, martial artists, hard core brawlers, and similar will have Hands of Death.

For every level you have in Hands of Death, one damage die resulting from a Brawl or Martial Arts attack will be considered an automatic success. Note that this Background does not add damage; it just makes the damage you would deal more likely to "stick." If you make more than one attack in a round, this applies in full to every attack. Example: If you have Hands of Death 2, five damage dice, and make four attacks (all of which hit), you would roll three damage dice for each attack; the other two will automatically be successes and need not be rolled.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3.

#### 11.2.19 Headquarters/Sanctum

The Headquarters background represents two elements: A highly secure, elaborate, or luxurious mansion, compound, fortress, corporate headquarters, or the like; and local political influence. Thus, a character who has Headquarters 5 in Topeka, Kansas, probably has a very nice (and extraordinarily secure) compound as well as a great deal of political influence in Kansas.

Headquarters can only be taken once. It is possible to have more than one Headquarters, if appropriate to the character. However, more Headquarters mean that each one is either less secure/less elaborate or represents less political influence, or a combination of both. In essence, a character with Headquarters 5 could have a single 5-point Headquarters, one 3-point and one 2-point Headquarters, or any other combination totaling five points.

Headquarters can be awarded as a Gift at 1, or can be purchased with XP with appropriate roleplay. It can only be increased one rank per Downtime, and each increase must be fully justified by accomplishments in Games or Side Games. This roleplay makes you eligible to purchase one rank. The XP expenditure then represents the time you are dedicating to building or expanding your compound, schmoozing local politicians and businesspeople, etc.; you're consolidating your accomplishments and using them to build political capital. This works essentially the same way as Fame and Status, and Fame-based characters often develop Fame, Status, and Headquarters in tandem.

It is possible for characters to pool their points to build truly elaborate fortresses/mansions.

Future Changes:

Headquarters will use a build point system based on systems derived from certain White Wolf books, mainly found in The Book of Chantries and most of the "Year of the Hunter" supplements, as well as the exhaustive list of Influences found in the LARP books.

Essentially, when you get Headquarters, you total up all your Background points. This number reflects how elaborate your Headquarters can be. Modifiers exist for everything from size, security, node, gauntlet, and even private armies. All the common Influences found in the LARP books are contained here as well, centered on the location of your Headquarters. There are negative modifiers that may be applied as well, changing the end total. For every rank you have in Headquarters, you may use your full total to create multiple headquarters. There are so many modifiers that the process has been slow going, but that's how it will work when complete.

Building a Santum based on the Book of Chantries would be fairly comprehensive, this may be a future endeavor to examine

#### **11.2.20 High Ritual**

~~High Ritual is on the drawing board right now...primarily it will function by making Rituals cast more potent, either by extending the cap of extended rolls, or by increasing the number of successes required to Unweave your rituals.~~

#### **11.2.21 Horoscope**

#### **11.2.22 Hunted**

Hunted can be awarded as a 4-point Flaw or as an Adversarial Background. If awarded as a Background, 1 rank represents a minor punishment, 3 represents a major punishment, 4 indicates the Hunter wants to kill the character or imprison him for life, and 5 indicates a very powerful Hunter who wants to kill the character or inflict a fate worse than death.

#### **11.2.23 Laboratory**

When received as a Gift, Laboratory is awarded at 3 to 5 depending on how elaborate it is (what the Study Points may be spent on). It may be received at 5 if very specialized (and thus usable only in a very narrow range of areas), or at 3 if fairly general.

An Occult Laboratory contains more extensive paraphernalia and grants Study Points on subjects that otherwise would not be covered, usually in reference to magic. For example, points from a conventional Laboratory cannot be used for Sorcery or other magic, but points from an Occult Laboratory can. Converting a conventional Laboratory to an Occult Laboratory is considered the equivalent of a 2-point Merit. However, characters may not begin with an Occult Laboratory, since no character begins

with access to magic.

Occult Laboratory may be awarded as a Gift at 1. A character who already has a conventional Laboratory may have it converted to an Occult Laboratory and raised 1 level as a Gift. A character who has both a conventional Laboratory and a conventional Library may have them both made Occult for a single Gift, but only one of the two will be raised 1 level.

A character who already has Occult Library 5 may receive Occult Laboratory 5 as a single Gift, but it will only provide Study Points for his specific form of magic (his Legacy Paths, Sorcery Paths, or Mythos spells), and may only be used for research and laboratory work in his specific form of magic.

#### 11.2.24 Geasa/Contracts

For each level you may select one Benefit/Ban that must be related somehow. When you suffer the Ban, you typically regain a point of the pool to which this Background is attached. Not all pools are viable, GM's should use their discretion when allowing this Background.

Examples:

1) Blood Rage: The character is filled with a deep and abiding fury during fights. To retreat from a fight, you must roll Willpower (Diff: 7, 3 successes required). This applies to even the most suicidal odds.

Boon: Whenever you win a fight, you gain a Glamour point.

2) Drunken Revelry: You like your liquor. Consult the rules for Alcohol to determine the effects of your drinking habit. Passing up an available source of booze requires a Self-Control check (Difficulty: 6).

Boon: Whenever you suffer an attribute penalty due to intoxication, you gain a Glamour point.

3) Forbiddance: You may not enter a residence unless invited first. Anyone may do this, but until someone does, you may not come inside.

Boon: Gain a point of Glamour when you are invited in for the first time.

4) Warding: Anyone may become completely impervious to your faerie magic by throwing salt over their shoulder. You may not affect them with your magic (directly at least) until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first.

Boon: Whenever this is done in your presence, gain a Glamour point.

5) Service: Anyone knowing your full name or a special phrase may command three tasks of you. You must obey the letter, if not the spirit, of these tasks, although certain commands (wankery that does not fall under "tasks") may be ignored. Each person may only use this ability once per year.

Boon: Every time you are commanded, gain a point of Glamour.

This background is only available as a Gift, awarded at 1.

#### 11.2.25 Lethal Accuracy

This trait represents years of experience consistently dealing out damage through Ranged combat. Snipers, hunters, gunfighters and similar will have Lethal Accuracy.

For every level you have in Lethal Accuracy, one damage die resulting from either a Firearms or Thrown attack will be considered an automatic success. Note that this Background does not add damage; it just makes the damage you would deal more likely to "stick." If you make more than one attack in a round, it applies in full to every attack. Example: If you have Lethal Accuracy 2, make three attacks (all of which hit), and have eight damage dice on each attack, you would roll six damage dice for each attack; the other two will automatically be successes and need not be rolled.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3.

#### 11.2.26 Library

Library represents a body of research material that you personally own. While your library may cover many subjects, it is only assumed to relate to mundane subjects unless specifically noted. After a Game, you may roll your Library rating (Difficulty: 7) to earn Study Points for purchasing specified traits. You may only make one such roll per Game, and it does not stack with Mentor/Instruction rolls. Your Library rating may be used in some research rolls as bonus dice or similar if you have access to it.

An Occult Library contains more accurate reference material and grants Study Points on topics that otherwise would not be covered, usually in reference to magic. For example, points from a conventional Library cannot be used for Sorcery or other magic, but points from an Occult Library can. Converting a conventional Library to an Occult Library is considered the equivalent of a 2-point Merit. However, characters may not begin with an Occult Library, since no character begins with access to magic.

- 1) Extremely limited
- 2) Some useful data
- 3) Research Library
- 4) Extensive Data
- 5) Vast resource of rare and useful data

When received as a Gift, Library is awarded at 3 to 5 depending on how elaborate it is (what the study points may be spent on). It may be received at 5 if very specialized (and thus usable only in a very narrow range of areas), or at 3 if fairly general.

Occult Library may be awarded as a Gift at 1. A character who already has a conventional Library may have it converted to an Occult Library and raised 1 level as a Gift. A character who has both a

conventional Library and a conventional Laboratory may have them both made Occult for a single Gift, but only one of the two will be raised 1 level.

A character who already has Occult Laboratory 5 may receive Occult Library 5 as a single Gift, but it will only provide Study Points for his specific form of magic (his Legacy Paths, Sorcery Paths, or Mythos spells), and may only be used for research in his specific form of magic.

#### 11.2.27 Mentor

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3 to 5 depending on how comprehensive it is (what the study points may be spent on). It may be received at 5 if very specialized (and thus usable only in a very narrow range of areas), or at 3 if fairly general.

#### 11.2.28 Nerves of Steel

This Background represents a lifetime of tight situations and violent encounters. You are probably a soldier, cop, or similar. When Initiative rolls are made, add your rating in Nerves of Steel as a bonus.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3.

#### 11.2.29 Notoriety

#### 11.2.30 Precision Striking

This trait represents years of experience consistently dealing out damage through Melee combat. Samurai, butchers, barbarians and similar will have Precision Striking.

For every level you have in Precision Striking, one damage die resulting from a Melee attack will be considered an automatic success. Note that this Background does not add damage; it just makes the damage you would deal more likely to "stick." If you make more than one attack in a round, it applies in full to every attack. Example: If you have Precision Striking 2, five damage dice, and make four attacks (all of which hit), you would roll three damage dice for each attack; the other two will automatically be successes and need not be rolled.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3.

#### 11.2.31 Resources

Resources covers your sustainable income and gives an overview of what sort of gear you may acquire. Resources are received once per Downtime.

If you spend more than your Resource limit, you are out of money, though you may roll Resources at Difficulty 8 to attempt to borrow against future income. If you fail a Resources roll, your credit is frozen. If you don't have Resources, you begin with  $1d10 \times 10$  in cash, and will be unable to replace

equipment or afford transportation, etc.

- 1) Part Time Job-Resource Limit: \$150
- 2) Lower Class-Resource Limit: \$1000
- 3) Middle Class-Resource Limit: : \$10,000
- 4) Upper Class-Resource Limit: \$100,000
- 5) Wealthy-Resource Limit: \$1 Million
- 6) \$5 Million
- 7) \$10 Million
- 8) \$20 Million
- 9) \$50 Million
- 10) \$100 Million

Of course, the normal cap applies, per section 6.4 (Trait Maximums).

Resources is awarded as a Gift at 4. A character who already has at least two ranks in Resources may have it raised to 5 as a Gift.

Resources cannot be awarded through roleplay. Obtaining money through roleplay only results in the appropriate amount of money; the character does not receive an increase in Resources.

#### 11.2.32 Retainers

- 1) You have 2 mooks.

~~Be it a Vampire's Herd, a Skinchanger's Kinfolk, a Wizard's Cult, or even an Angry Lynch Mob, the uses for a gang of loyal mooks are infinite. You have a number of "extras" you can drag around with you. Your exact relationship and influence over these mooks should be delineated. Mooks are \*not\* run by the player, and the GM is \*not\* required to even give them rolls. On the plus side, your mooks "recharge" after every Game (so if your Lynch Mob got wiped out fighting Aliens, you'd have a new one by next Game). It is assumed that the individual mooks change from Game to Game, even if they aren't killed; they do not earn XP or otherwise improve. It is up to you to move and deal with your mooks, and you may not be able to earn them all to Games. Be warned, you have no additional influence over them beyond your own abilities . . . .~~

- 2) You have 5 mooks.

~~3) You have 12 mooks and a single Retainer. You may choose each Game whether to bring mooks (if permitted) or your Retainer.~~

~~Retainers are your assistants, aides, and expert henchmen. They may be any profession: Bodyguards, hackers, bankers, or whatever is desired. Retainers are generally loyal; it is assumed you have a working relationship. Retainers can usually accompany you on a Game, but this is not guaranteed and is not always the case.~~

~~Retainers are created using the same rules as High Rollers, but can only have internal Backgrounds such as Hands of Death and Nerves of Steel. They cannot take external Backgrounds such as Contacts, Resources, or Arsenal. They can never teach or provide Study Points.~~

~~You should maintain a character sheet for your Retainer, who will improve over time. If you bring your Retainer and win the Game, your Retainer receives 5 XP. Like High Rollers, Retainers cannot receive XP from Side Games. If your Retainer dies, you receive a new one at some point after the Game (but roleplay may be required).~~

~~Note: Retainers are YOUR responsibility to play, not the GM's! Further, a Retainer who leaves your side effectively becomes an NPC until you regain direct contact. Retainers not in your immediate vicinity or direct control are subject to the whims of the GM, who needn't even roll for them (any more than for any other NPC).~~

~~4) You have 25 mooks. You may choose each Game whether to bring mooks (if permitted) or your Retainer.~~

~~5) You have 50 mooks. You may choose each Game whether to bring mooks (if permitted) or your Retainer. Alternately, you may bring both (with GM approval), but in this case losses to the mooks may result in this Background being downgraded (though not below level 1, and you will not lose a Retainer in this way, though they may become inactive until you restore the Background to level 3). For example, if half your mooks are killed, leaving you with only 25, Retainers drops from 5 to 4; but if you have 26 mooks left, it does not drop.~~

~~Your Retainer now receives the same amount of XP as a High Roller (10 XP for a win, 5 XP for a loss). You can also invest your own Gifts in Retainers, within limits (in which case the Gift will be selected by the Harbinger for appropriateness to the Retainer).~~

~~It is also possible for this Background to be customized to your character, with the approval of two Regional GM's.~~

~~Retainers must be awarded as a Gift, and is received at 1.~~

~~Retainers and Retinue are addressed in Housegames.pdf however in essence, the two are separate backgrounds. The former is individual characters that accompany the High Roller, and the latter is ten mooks per dot.~~

#### 11.2.33 Retention

#### 11.2.34 Rites

#### 11.2.35 Signature Item

You have a few selected tools of your trade. These are reliable items, of personal significance. You are more willing to part with your head than with these items, and it shows. Signature Item covers rings, armor, wicker baskets, tuning forks, your lucky rabbit's foot, or what have you.

You may have one Signature Item per level in the Background. Signature Items can never be permanently lost or destroyed. Signature Items do not receive any other benefit (as do Signature Weapon or Signature Vehicle).

If applied to items such as gloves which come in pairs, it applies to both items of the pair.

Signature Item can only be obtained as a Gift and is awarded at 1.

#### 11.2.36 Signature Vehicle

You have a few selected tools of your trade. These are reliable vehicles, of personal significance. You are more willing to part with your head than with these items, and it shows.

You may have one Signature Vehicle per level in the Background. Signature Vehicles receive +2 dice to Piloting and can never be permanently lost or destroyed.

Signature Vehicle can only be obtained as a Gift and is awarded at 1.

#### 11.2.37 Signature Weapon

You have a few selected tools of your trade. These are reliable weapons, of personal significance. You are more willing to part with your head than with these items, and it shows.

You may have one Signature Weapon per level in the Background. Signature Weapons deal +2 damage dice and can never be permanently lost or destroyed.

If applied to items such as gloves which come in pairs, it applies to both items of the pair.

Signature Weapon can only be obtained as a Gift and is awarded at 1.

#### 11.2.38 Spell Layering

Item-enhancing effects can be broken into two basic types: Charms and Enchantments. Enchantments offer a permanent or "on demand" effect, Charms offer a limited effect (either limited in "charges" or by a specific condition, such as striking a target).

Typically, an item can have 1 Enchantment and any number of Charms.

Gifts: Items with Attunement ratings can be further enhanced normally. Likewise, Gifts may augment items in virtually any manner, ignoring the effects above.

Spell Layering is the art of combining multiple spells into a single item. Spend a number of weeks equal to the number of non-Gift enhancements on the item researching it, afterwards, roll Intelligence + Occult at Difficulty 8. If you succeed, enchant it as normal, if you fail, the time is lost. The maximum number of enhancements is 1 + your rating in Spell Layering. If you practice multiple kinds of Magic, you must purchase Spell Layering for each type.

Available as a Gift at 1 or Casters may purchase as normal.

#### 11.2.39 Status

Depending on the scope of your Status (what organization you belong to) and in-game circumstances, Status may be awarded as a Gift at 1 to 5.

Fame and Status are often awarded together, as they are related. In this case, one would be awarded at 3 and the other at 2.

In every case, events must justify the award. This could require a Side Game, if events and the character's actions in the Game do not fully justify it.

Status can only be increased one rank per Downtime, and each increase must be fully justified by roleplay.

#### 11.2.40 Tolerance

This is a Background designed for Augmented characters. Every level gives you a "buffer zone" of 10 additional Humanity Index. Tolerance should only be awarded after at least 5 Augmentation Gifts have been received, and then only at a rating of 1.

#### 11.2.41 Uncanny

#### 11.2.42 Wards

### 12.0 Merits and Flaws

#### 12.1 Merits

Light Sleeper: (2-4) You need less sleep than average. For 2 points, you need only 4 hours sleep per night. For 3, you need only 2 hours. For 4 points, you are truly sleepless: Come up with a reason why!

Pain Tolerance: (2-6) You can function under intense pain. 2 points reduces Wound Penalties by 1, with every additional point reducing them further (up to 5 at 6 points).

Acute Sense: (1) One of your senses is exceptionally sharp. The difficulties for all tasks involving the

use of this particular sense are reduced by 2.

Ability Aptitude: (1) You have a knack for one selected Ability. Difficulty of rolls with this Ability are reduced by 2. Cannot be applied to Combat abilities. Does not stack with Ability Mastery.

Ambidextrous: (1) You have a high degree of off-hand dexterity and can perform tasks with the "wrong" hand with no penalties. You must still split your dice pool when performing multiple actions, but suffer no Difficulty penalties. This Merit may be purchased for 3 XP.

Common Sense: (1) You have a significant amount of practical, everyday wisdom. Whenever the character is about to act in a way contrary to common sense, the referee can make suggestions or warnings about the implications of said action. This is a very useful merit to give to beginning players unfamiliar with the game.

Double-Jointed: (1) You are unusually supple. Reduce the difficulty of any Dexterity roll involving body flexibility by 2. Squeezing through a tiny space is one example of a use for this Merit.

Higher Purpose: (1) You have a goal that drives and directs you in everything. You gain +2 dice on all rolls related to this higher purpose. You need to decide what your higher purpose is. Make sure you talk it over with the referee first. (This Merit cannot be taken with Driving Goal.)

Lightning Calculator (1): You have a natural affinity for numbers, and all relevant rolls are at -2 difficulty.

Perfect Pitch (1): You can always recognize every tone in any chord. You can accurately hit any note (for example C sharp) without any instrument or anything to take reference from. If you have heard the song before, you always know when someone has shifted the song they are playing/singing from the original key. You can memorize complex songs from hearing them only once or imitate telephone tones with ease. Music related rolls are reduced by 3, however, this only reflects your accuracy in hitting notes and none of the "soul" that goes into performance. You must have at least 2 ranks in Performance or music-related secondary skills to take this Merit.

Apt Pupil: (2) Difficulty of checks to learn from a Mentor or instructor are reduced by 2.

Book Learner: (2) Difficulty of checks to learn from a Library are reduced by 2.

Concentration: (2) You have the ability to focus your mind and shut out any distractions or annoyances. Characters with this merit are unaffected by any penalties stemming from distracting circumstances.

Code of Honor: (2) You have a personal code of ethics to which you adhere. The specifics of this code must be worked out with the referee prior to play, and the character must follow it strictly. Characters with this merit gain +2 dice to all Willpower or Virtue rolls when acting in accordance with their code or when attempting to avoid situations that might force them to violate their code.

Dual Nature: (2) You have two distinct Natures, both of which have an influence on your personality and behavior. When you pick these Natures, be sure they are somewhat compatible; Dual Nature does not mean schizophrenia. You may still choose a demeanor.

Eidetic Memory: (2) You remember, with perfect detail, things seen and heard. Documents,

photographs, conversations, and so forth can be committed to memory with only minor concentration. Under stressful conditions involving numerous distractions, you must make a Perception + Alertness roll (Difficulty 6) to summon enough concentration to absorb what your senses detect.

Enchanting Voice: (2) There is something about your voice that others cannot ignore. When you command, they are cowed. When you seduce, they swoon. Add 2 dice to all rolls involving the use of your voice to persuade, charm, or command.

Mad Scientist: (2) Difficulty of checks to learn from a Laboratory are reduced by 2.

Hard to Kill (3): You have an extra “Incapacitated” health level. This health level is treated as per normal in all other fashions.

Morality Shift (3): You begin play with a Morality path other than Humanity (or other than the Morality held by the majority of the population where you grew up). The ethics of this path must be fully detailed and approved at character creation. Your initial rating is unchanged (Conviction + Self-Control).

Steady Learner: (3) You do not roll for Study Points. Instead, the number of Study Points you receive is equal to: (Number of Dice) \* (10 - Difficulty) / 10. This method is used regardless of the source of the Study Points (a Background such as Mentor, Library, or Laboratory, instruction by another character, etc.). The result is rounded down. Thus, a character with Difficulty 7 receives 0.3 Study Points per die, while a character with Difficulty 5 receives 0.5 Study Points per die. This Merit may be purchased for 9 XP.

Daredevil: (4) You are good at taking risks, and even better at surviving them. When attempting exceptionally risky actions, add an additional three dice to their rolls, and ignore a single “1” that may result from such a roll. Generally, such actions must be at least difficulty 8 and have the potential to inflict at least three health levels of damage if failed.

Knowledgeable (4): You have a large pool of miscellaneous knowledge. You automatically have one rank in all Knowledges. This is an illusory level, used only to simulate a wide range of knowledge. If the character trains or spends experience in the Knowledge, he must first buy one rank, then two.

Tough as Nails: (4) You are unnaturally resilient and hardy. You have an extra “Bruised” health level. This health level is treated as normal in all other fashions.

Luck: (4) You have the Luck of the Devil. Three times per session, you can “re-roll” a roll. After your three tries, you strike out for the rest of the session.

True Love: (4) You have discovered, but may have lost, a true love. Whenever you are suffering, in danger, or dejected, the thought of your true love is enough to give you the strength to persevere. In game terms, this love gives you 1 automatic success on any Willpower roll made under the above conditions. However, your true love may also be a hindrance, and require aid from time to time.

Charmed Existence: (5) You do not seem to suffer the misfortunes others are plagued with. You may ignore a single “1” every time you roll.

Fast Learner: (5) You learn very quickly, and pick up on new things faster than most do. You gain one

extra experience point at the conclusion of each story.

Jack of All Trades: (5) You have a large pool of miscellaneous skills. You automatically have one rank in all Talents and Skills. This is an illusory level, used only to simulate a wide range of abilities. If the character trains or spends experience in the Talent or Skill, he must first buy one rank, then two.

Jaded: (5) You are decidedly not impressed. You never have the emotional outbursts common to others. Any attempt to sway your emotions is +3 Difficulty, and even if you are affected, you may spend a Willpower point to cancel the effect.

Iron Will: (5) When you are determined and your mind is set, nothing can thwart you from your goals. Any attempt to control your thoughts is rolled at +3 Difficulty, and even if you are affected, you may spend a Willpower point to cancel the effect.

Self-Confident: (5) When you spend a point of Willpower to gain an automatic success, your self-confidence may allow you to gain the benefit of that expenditure without actually losing the Willpower point. You do not lose the point when you spend it unless you end the roll with only one success. You can use it only when the Difficulty of your roll is 6 or higher.

Ageless: (5 or 10) You are not immortal by any means, but you simply don't age like other mortals. You are no more hearty than other humans and are still susceptible to disease and injury; however, the passage of time doesn't take the same toll on you. Likewise, effects that would age you (such as the touch of a wight) are reduced proportionally. At 5 points you age only 1 year for every two years and have a life expectancy of 150 years. At 10 points you age 1 year for every 4 years and have a life expectancy of 300 years. Come up with an explanation for why you are this way.

Clear Sighted (6): You are not fooled by illusions, and you get a Perception + Alertness roll (of a Difficulty equal to the opposing power's level +3) to see through supernatural illusions, such as those created by Obfuscation, Chimerstry, Chicanery, Gifts, etc.

Unbondable: (6) You are immune to any effect that Binds or Suppresses your Loyalty (Blood Bond, Magical Oaths, Fascination, Incubi/Succubi, etc.).

#### 12.1.1 Restricted Merits

Grim Resolve: You have the ability to spend a permanent point of any Pool with a permanent rating (including Willpower) to refresh that pool. (Does not apply to temporary Pools such as Blood, Pathos, or Mana.) Veterans only.

Imbued: You have been Imbued. You learn more rapidly than normal in the month following a Game (known as Downtime), and much more rapidly if you win. (If you win a Game, you receive 10 XP; if you lose, you receive 5 XP.) However, you do not learn at all from other experiences; you gain no XP from Side Games. Imbuing can be revoked, but if it is, then you can never be Imbued again.

Phylactery: It is not possible to begin with this Merit; it must be received as a Gift. If you are a Sorcerer, your cost for Sorcery Paths becomes Current Rating x6 instead of Current Rating x7. If you are a Mythos caster, your Difficulty in contested Willpower checks against your target is reduced by 1. If you are a Legacy caster, the number of points of your personal reserve that you can spend each turn

is doubled. However, you are linked to a place, object, living being, concept, secret, or true name. If a place, object, or being, you must be in contact with it to perform magic. If a secret or true name, anyone who learns it can gain power over you or destroy your ability to perform magic.

Veteran Nerves: -2 Difficulty to all Virtue rolls. Veterans only.

## 12.2 Flaws

Brittle Bones (1-4): Your body just isn't capable of deal with impacts effectively. Difficulty to soak Bashing damage is 6 + Flaw rating.

Cursed (1-5): You have been cursed by someone or something. The curse is specific in nature and cannot be easily dispelled. Level of the flaw reflects how bad the curse is; a 1 point curse is annoying, a 5 point curse is likely life-threatening to you and/or to the people around you, and will at least make you and them incredibly miserable.

Echoes: (1-5) You display some of the signature characteristics of your unusual heritage/background. Perhaps milk curdles in your presence due to your Demonic blood, or electronics go haywire ever since you were abducted by Aliens. The value of this Flaw is determined by the referee, not the player.

Enemy: (1-5) You have an enemy, or perhaps a group of enemies, who seek to harm you. The power of the enemy depends upon how many points the player wishes to spend.

Tainted: (1-6) You are Tainted (or Damned) in the eyes of creatures who can detect such things, including those wielding True Faith and the like. You start with between 1 and 5 points of Permanent Taint; if 5 points are taken, the Flaw is worth one extra point. This includes susceptibility to further Taint, as is usual for Tainted beings, and is nearly impossible to remove. It is best if your particular Taint is of a unique nature. It must be approved by the regional GM.

Dark Secret: (1) You have some sort of secret that, if uncovered, could pose many problems for you. this could be a torture dungeon in the basement, or the actual gunman of the grassy knoll.

Deep Sleeper: (1) When you sleep, it is very difficult for you to awaken. You are -2 dice on all rolls if you get less than 8 hours sleep, and are likely to sleep through all but the most jarring events.

Defective Sense: (1) One of your senses is very poor. This is a non-correctable condition, and all Perception rolls relying on that sense are +2 Difficulty.

Nightmares: (1) You experience horrendous nightmares every time you sleep, and memories of them haunt you during your waking hours. Upon awakening, you must make a willpower roll (Diff: 7) or lose a die on all actions for that day. A Botched willpower roll indicated that, even when awake, you still believe that you are locked in a nightmare.

Prey Exclusion: (1) You refuse to harm a certain class of prey. You might refuse to harm children, women, mothers, policemen, accountants, or rich people. If you accidentally harm such an individual, you must make a conviction roll or lose a point in Morality. (This Flaw was added for specific cases such as hunters, serial killers, would-be vampires, and other such predators. Referees may wish to disallow this Flaw if it does not fit the particular character.)

Shy: (1) You are distinctly ill at ease when dealing with people and try to avoid social situations whenever possible. Difficulties for all rolls involving social interactions with strangers are increased by +2. If the character becomes the center of attention in a large group, difficulties are increased by +3.

Soft-Hearted: (1) You cannot stand to watch others suffer. You avoid any situation that involves causing someone physical or emotional pain, unless you make a Willpower roll at Difficulty 8. You must have an Morality of 7 or above to take this Flaw.

Speech Impediment: (1) You have a stammer or other speech impediment that hampers verbal communication. the Difficulties of all die rolls involving verbal communication are increased by 2. You must roleplay this flaw whenever possible.

Twisted Upbringing (1): Maybe your parents were cruel, or you spent a good deal of time in prison. Regardless, you are callous to the suffering of others. At character creation, you use Self-Control only to determine Morality; do not add Conviction.

Amnesia: (2) You are unable to remember anything about you past, yourself or your family, though your past might well come back to haunt you. your origins and the circumstances behind your amnesia are for the referee to determine, and she is encouraged to make it as interesting as possible.

Anosmia (2): You possess no sense of smell.

One Eye: (2) You have only one eye - which eye is missing is up to you. The difficulties of all perception rolls involving eyesight are increased by 2, and the difficulties of all die rolls requiring depth perception are increased by 1. (This includes ranged combat.)

Phobia: (2) You have an overpowering fear of something. Spiders, snakes, crowds, and heights are examples of common phobias. You must make a courage roll every time you encounter the object of your fear. The difficulty of the roll is determined by the referee, and if you fail the roll you must retreat from the object.

Disfigured: (2) A hideous disfigurement makes your appearance disturbing and memorable. The difficulties of all die rolls relating to social interaction are increased by two. You may not have an Appearance rating greater than 2.

Territorial: (2) You are extremely territorial, staking out a particular area as your home and react aggressively to trespassers. If another person enters your territory uninvited, you must roll Self-Control or immediately attack the interloper and continue attacking until the intruder is dead or has left your land. You are reluctant to leave your territory except in desperate circumstances.

Short: (2) You are well below average height - four and a half feet tall or less. You have difficulty reaching or manipulating objects designed for normal adult size, and your running speed is one-half that of a normally proportioned human

Vengeful: (2) You are vengeful by nature. Whenever you are wronged, you become obsessed with taking your revenge, and it is your overriding priority in any situation where you encounter the object of your malice. You may temporarily resist your need for vengeance by spending a Willpower point. Note that your vengeance does not have to be disproportionate, and you do not have to avenge trivial

slights (such as being short-changed by a cashier).

**Absent Minded:** (3) This Flaw may not be taken with the Merit Concentration. Though you do not forget such things as Knowledges or skills, you do forget names, addresses, and when you last ate. In order to remember anything more than your own name and the location of your home, you need to make a Wits roll or as a last resort, spend a Willpower point.

**Anachronism:** (3) You are an anachronism. You must subtract 3 dice from any action that requires you to interact with modern technology.

**Deformity:** (3) You have some kind of deformity - a misshapen limb, hunchback, clubfoot, etc. - which affects your physical abilities and interactions with others. A hunchback, for instance, would lower a character's Dexterity by two and increase the difficulty of die rolls relating to social skills by one. It is the responsibility of the referee to determine the specific effects of the deformity chosen.

**Driving Goal:** (3) You have an obsessive, driving goal which takes precedence over everything else in your life.

**Easy to Kill (3):** You have one less Dying health level than normal. You die at 3 levels below Incapacitated, rather than at 4 levels below Incapacitated.

**Lame:** (3) Your legs are damaged, which prevents you from running or walking easily. You are forced to walk with a cane or possibly leg braces, and have a pronounced limp to your stride. Your walking speed is one-quarter that of a normal human, and running is impossible.

**Lifesaver:** (3) You believe that every person (every sentient being) has an inalienable right to life. You automatically lose a point of Morality if you cause a person to be killed, by action or inaction. (Note that it is possible to have a very high regard for life WITHOUT taking this Flaw. This is a serious, character-defining Flaw that should not be taken lightly.)

**One Arm:** (3) You have only one arm. Choose which, or determine randomly at character creation. It is assumed that you are accustomed to using your remaining hand, so you suffer no off-hand penalties. However, you do suffer a two-dice penalty to any Dice Pool where two hands would normally be needed to perform a task. A character may not take this Flaw along with the merit Ambidextrous.

**Glass Jaw:** (4) You have a 50% chance of being knocked out for 1-10 minutes any time you do not successfully soak all damage taken to your head. You're the guy who always misses the battle, or gets eaten by the victorious monsters afterward. Don't worry though, if they eat you: you're unconscious! Shan't feel a thing.

**Hemophilia (4):** Your blood does not clot normally. When reduced to Hurt from Lethal damage, you begin to degenerate. If reduced to Wounded or below, you lose one health level every 30 seconds until you receive proper medical attention.

**Mute:** (4) You cannot speak. You may communicate with the referee and describe your actions, but cannot talk to player or referee characters unless everyone concerned uses Linguistics to purchase a commonly understood sign language or you write down what you wish to say.

**Deaf:** (4) You cannot hear, you may not listen to electronic or vocal media, and the difficulties of many

Alertness rolls are increased by three.

Oath Breaker: (4) You have violated a sacred vow. You are marked as an Oath Breaker to ANY effect that determines even cursory elements of your nature (Aura, Telepathy, Empathy, etc.). Entering into future contracts, pacts, bargains, and similar agreements of a supernatural nature is next to impossible and almost always ends horribly. The laws of neutral grounds, depending on the area, may not apply to you, putting you at a distinct disadvantage in such areas. Depending on the nature of your Vow, there may be some remaining antipathy with the holder of the broken Oath. Oath Breakers may also find it difficult or impossible to progress in rank beyond a certain point amongst many factions and organizations.

Tough as Fluff (4): You do not have a Bruised health level.

Wyrm-Tainted (4): You are touched by the force of Corruption called the Wyrm, and can be detected as a Wyrm creature. This makes you Werewolf bait, and particularly sucks if you are a Werewolf. You also suffer nightmares and are called by Wyrm-creatures to join its side. Get your ass cleansed if you can (this is going to take quite a quest).

Dark Fate (5): You are doomed to suffer a horrible demise, or otherwise have some sort of icky unpleasant fate. You are aware of this, and it can kinda make you rather depressed... (Dead within ten games, otherwise, knock yourself out!). The referee can declare any single roll of yours a Botch once per session. You may not have Luck or Charmed Existence.

Outsider (5): You are not established in society. Perhaps you were raised by wolves, grown in a clone vat, or ended up in this dimension by mistake. You start with no external Backgrounds, you do not have citizenship in any country, and you have no official identity or license of any sort. You might not speak a relevant language as your native tongue (perhaps you only speak an obscure alien dialect, Latin, or some other useless language).

Weak-Willed (5): You are highly susceptible to mind-affecting magic and social abilities such as Intimidation and Management. All Difficulties to resist such effects are increased by 2. Your Willpower may never rise above 4.

Mayfly Curse (5 or 10): You age at a faster-than-normal rate. If under a 5-point Mayfly Curse, you age 1 year for each month that passes. If under a 10-point Mayfly Curse, you age 1 year for each week that passes.

Blind (6): You cannot see. Characters can compensate for the loss of vision by becoming more sensitive to other sensory input, but visual cues and images are lost to them. Actions involving hand-eye coordination are very difficult to perform, especially under stressful conditions. Difficulties of all Dexterity-based rolls are increased by 2. You also suffer -4 dice to all actions which call for sight. Furthermore, when shooting blind, you may not add your successes to your damage dice pool.

Paraplegic (6): You can hardly move without assistance, such as a pair of crutches or a wheelchair. Even then it can be painful and cumbersome to do so. You and the referee should take care to roleplay this Flaw correctly, no matter how difficult it makes things. A character may not take this Flaw along with the Merit Double-Jointed.

Degeneration (9): You do not heal naturally. Instead, you degenerate; you lose health levels over time

unless action is taken to prevent the Degeneration. (A zombie that is gradually rotting would be an example of a creature with this Flaw.)

**Giftless (9):** You have some pressing need to spend every single one of your Gifts just to see the next House Game. Perhaps you are a terminal cancer patient with a month to live or made a bad deal that has come due with the wrong guy from Hell. Whatever the reason, you'd better be a resourceful desperado since you aren't getting anything like the kickbacks the other High Rollers get. You can never get Gifts for anything other than the privilege of seeing the next game.

## 13.0 Ability Mastery

This power must be paired with an Ability (Firearms, Piloting, Underwater Basket Weaving). As you raise it, it complements the affected ability, bringing it to superhuman proportions.

Ability Mastery must be received as a Gift; it cannot be purchased. It costs Current Rating x 4 to increase. It is received at level 1, and can be increased to level 5.

Ability Mastery applies to one specific Ability, such as Firearms, Dodge, or Linguistics. It can be received multiple times (once for each Ability), and may be extended to Secondary Skills at a cost of 10 XP per extension (e.g., Firearms Mastery could also cover Archery Mastery for 10 XP).

- 1) The cost of purchasing the Ability is reduced by half (typically to Current Rating x 1).
- 2) The Difficulty of all rolls involving the Ability by is lowered by 2 for non-combat situations or by 1 for combat and similarly stressful situations.
- 3) Add a number of dice to all rolls involving the Ability equal to your rating in Ability Mastery.
- 4) Re-roll 10's on all rolls. Considered Specialized in all applications of the skill.
- 5) You may now raise the affected Ability to 6.

## 14.0 Pools of Power

Pools are supplementary power sources used for a wide range of effects, such as activating Powers, or daily sustenance. A few have passive effects. Some even carry primarily negative effects.

Willpower is the most common Pool; every character has it. Generally, other Pools are awarded as Gifts. Some Pools (most often Metabolic Pools) may be awarded alongside a relevant Power in some cases.

## 15.0 Magic

### 15.1 Sorcery

Sorcery draws on ambient power and belief to function. It is slow to develop and is the most difficult

form of magic to raise, but the most powerful and flexible overall.

## 15.2 Mythos Magic

The spells of the Cthulhu Mythos consist of hyper-geometric equations that when properly cast, cause a specified effect. The magic labeled "Mythos" (sometimes called Hypergeometry) is by far the easiest form of magic to learn, but has the direst costs. The power of the Mythos involves forcing the mind to encompass alien/extradimensional physics to produce an effect in this world.

## 15.3 Legacy Magic

Legacy Magic has forms similar to Sorcery, but is powered from within, usually by burning life force directly. It can be very powerful and easy to learn, but is also very rigid in use. Wielders of Legacy Magic can usually trace its source to a particular bloodline or lineage, or a particular Template (Vampiric Blood Magic, Faerie heritage, etc.).

# 16.0 Powers

Powers are typically paths of five levels. These should be tailored to the individual, and should avoid replication of "canon" abilities (Obtenebration, say) or of Powers possessed by other players except in the most generic circumstances. A major point of the Games is to develop characters that are utterly unique from all others.

Powers are considered supernatural but not magical.

Acute Senses and similar abilities do not provide a Difficulty reduction for most Powers.

A character who receives a Power as a Gift begins with one level. Most Powers cost Current Rating x 6 to advance.

Characters involved in the Endgame (only) may spend a Gift spent to advance an existing Power by one level.

Characters involved in the Endgame (only) may spend a Gift to improve a Power. Generally a single level of a Power is improved in some way. This primarily involves expanding the scope of an ability to cover related elements that are not currently included. A good example might be the Iatrosis power "New Prometheus" which allows animation of freshly dead corpses. Investment of a Gift could allow wider application of this principle. As an exception, Telekinesis could gain a +1 Strength buff per Gift invested (Physical Psions only). Celerity, Potence, and Fortitude cannot be further enhanced with Gifts.

## 16.1 Psychic Powers

If a Power includes a distinction between "Sensitive" or "Physical" in its description, then it is a Psychic Power.

## 16.2 Will-Shaper Powers

If all levels of a Power which is not defined as falling into another category only have a Willpower cost, you're a Will Shaper. To be a Will Shaper you must maintain a Willpower of 5 or higher. If your Willpower falls below 5, you lose the ability to use your Powers until it is restored to 5. This only applies to Will-Shaper Powers, and does not affect other types of Powers possessed by a Will-Shaper.

## 16.3 Chi Powers

## 16.4 True Faith Powers

## 16.5 Pathos-based Powers

## 16.6 Blood Powers

Blood powers are not generally considered magic (Vampiric Thaumaturgy, Koldunism, and Necromancy being exceptions). Those which are magic are classified as Legacy Magic.

## 16.7 Other Pool-Specific Powers

Many Powers are fueled by other Pools.

## 16.8 Learning Powers

In certain circumstances it may be possible for a character to teach a Power to another character, but they cannot do so as well as a Harbinger; the character learning the Power will begin at level 0 and must spend 10 XP for the first level. In most cases, the cost of further developing the Power will be one higher than normal. (A cost of Current Rating x6 becomes Current Rating x7; a cost of Current Rating x7 becomes Current Rating x8; and so forth.)

With the exception of Psychic Powers, a student can only learn a Power to the level the instructor is willing to teach, and only to the level the instructor currently possesses. The student must immediately spend XP to advance the Power at least one level. A student who later wishes to further advance the Power must either return for further instruction, with Instruction rolls as normal, or remain in regular contact with the teacher, who can choose to terminate instruction at any time. (If they remain in regular contact, further Instruction rolls are not needed; it's assumed they frequently discuss the subject matter.) If the instructor dies or does not continue teaching, the student probably will not be able to advance the Power any further.

Whether one character can teach a Power to another must be judged on a case-by-case basis. Generally, whether there is any possibility of success depends on two factors: Pool and paradigm.

If two characters have different paradigms, they won't be able to teach each other Powers, even if they have the same Pool. If their paradigms overlap but don't match precisely, they may be able to teach each other Powers, but only inefficiently, and only with considerable difficulty.

Anyone can theoretically learn Sorcery. Sorcerers can, of course, belong to different paradigms. For example, a scientific Sorcerer and an arcane Sorcerer wouldn't be able to teach Sorcery Paths to each other. Sorcerers whose paradigms overlap at least partially can teach each other Sorcery Paths. Those whose paradigms are closely aligned can teach each other Sorcery Paths quite efficiently, with further development costing Current Rating x7 rather than Current Rating x8. The 10 XP cost for the first level must still be paid.

Anyone can learn any Mythos spell to which they have access, so long as they have Mythos Lore equal to the Complexity of the spell.

You can only learn Legacy Magic if you have the associated Pool and a similar bloodline, lineage, or Template (an essentially identical paradigm). Some Legacy paradigms, such as Mirror Magic, are unique, and thus cannot be taught.

Psychic Powers can only be learned by potential Psychics (those who have a Psychic Power or somehow gain Latent Psychic potential). Psychics may teach each other Powers as they like; they are generally considered to belong to a common paradigm. The cost of further development is not increased by one (and thus is normally the standard cost of Current Rating x6), but the 10 XP cost for the first level must be paid. Also, the student will suffer a -2 die penalty on all rolls with the new Power until it is advanced to level 3.

Anyone with a Willpower of at least 5 can learn Will-Shaper Powers. However, Will-Shapers never have the same paradigm. Will-Shaper Powers are more specific than most because they are almost always highly customized. For one Will-Shaper to successfully teach a Power to another requires a detailed written explanation by the player of how the Power works and of the method of instruction being used.

Powers based on Chi (by any name) can be taught to anyone. Chi users whose paradigms overlap at least partially can teach Powers to each other. Those whose paradigms are closely aligned can teach each other Powers quite efficiently, without an increase in the cost of further development (which is thus typically Current Rating x6). The 10 XP cost for the first level must still be paid.

Powers which require a specific Pool other than Psion or Chi are usually character-specific; check with an Admin before you start trading them: It may not be as simple as it seems. Most of these powers are Template-specific, and can only be learned by characters with a particular Template. (E.g., Vampires may teach each other Vampires Disciplines, but no one else, not even a "Blood Mage" or carnivorous plant that used Blood Points, since they don't have Vampiric Blood Points.)

## 17.0 Augmentation

An Augmentation is any integral enhancement to a character that does not come with an XP cost and is not part of a Power, Template, or Advantage. Augmentations may include cybernetics, genetic manipulation, and magical tattoos. While typically limited in scope, they allow conservation of XP.

However, there is a Humanity cost to Augmentation, without exception. Since characters whose primary powers are Augmentations do not need to spend XP to improve them, they tend to excel at everything. Furthermore, they are often further enhanced by other players. Humanity loss serves to balance this.

## 17.1 Humanity Index

Your beginning Humanity Index is (your Conviction + Self-Control) multiplied by ten. Whenever you receive an Augmentation, roll the indicated number of dice to determine how well you handle your new capabilities. The result is deducted from your Humanity Index. If your Humanity Index drops to 0, you lose control of your character (going utterly mad and becoming an NPC until you can be stopped and your Augmentation forcibly removed up to the point that you reach at least 1 Humanity Index).

## 18.0 Templates

The rarest Gifts of all, Templates redefine the base nature of the character. For example, the character may achieve the Vampire Template and become a Vampire. They cannot typically be achieved in a single Gift, and will usually be assigned a "rating" of Gifts and Quests that must be dedicated before they can be attained (3 to 10 being average). Once attained, the Template applies in full.

## 19.0 Black Tech

Technology beyond the reach of human science, commonly referred to as "Black Tech," is generally either obtained from aliens or the product of specific Powers and the invention rules. Assume that Black Tech is impossible to mass produce. The only exception would be characters with a 6 in the relevant skills that have gone through the trouble of using huge amounts of Downtime (sacrificing Study Point options while doing so) to employ the invention rules. Likewise, a story arc may contain as much "super tech" as desired, although GM's should be sourcing that as well.

Most characters who can produce Black Tech are PC's. NPC's with similar abilities should be uncommon (though still present).

## 20.0 Source Material

### 20.1 Largely Unchanged

Call of Cthulhu

Delta Green: Also includes X-Files and similar.

Devil's Due: Assume all elements apply unchanged. Worth the investment as a general pointer for Gifts as well as much needed rules for Fallen that are less chintzy than the ones in Demon.

Immortal: The Quicken

Vampire: The Masquerade

Werewolf: The Apocalypse – The New World of Darkness version is MUCH better than the old.  
Wrong.

Wraith: The Oblivion

## 20.2 Some Elements Used

Aberrant and Trinity: Both have some useful qualities, much needs re-tooling.

Fantasy Settings: D&D, Palladium, GURPS, Falkenstein, etc. are usable only as source material.

Hunter: The Reckoning – Mostly scrapped into True Faith and general High Roller fragments.

Pop Culture: Books and movies are usable only as source material.

Mummy: The Resurrection

The only immediate failing I find in this system is the Balance score. It seems to easy to find a friendly GM who will schmooze you through the Judges.

Also, I dislike the Attribute cap changing. As Attribute augmentation (and Mythic Attributes at that) are a core component of Hekau, I don't see the relevance of potentially increasing Attributes to 10. Dodgy and poorly thought out. I would recommend Ability caps being extended by the Attribute rating, as the semi-immortal can learn far more about a skill than a mortal.

Balance functions much like Dharma in Kindred of the East, except KoE includes a much needed time limit: You need to have lived a certain amount of time before it is possible to reach higher awareness. Rajhad (who is effectively a KoE currently) & Harold (with his assigned role as the Sin eater) currently use this formula. It is more ideal for our purposes than the Balance chart for several reasons, among them being:

-Dodgy Roleplaying is simply avoided: You must reach the minimum time before a test of Dharma will even be considered.

-Mummies can only raise Hekau/Sekhem in accordance with there Balance rating. The Dharma design allows for reasonable power levels (Max. of 5) at inception, which is properly balanced to the power levels we deal with.

A variation of the Dharma system is what I intend for Balance. We do have a Novice in Portland who is shooting for Taoist Immortal. I will apply the changes there, & see how they fly.

## 20.3 Disallowed

Changeling: The Dreaming – Mostly scrapped. Primarily worthless; some parts retooled. The New World of Darkness version is MUCH better than the old.

The New Changeling is actually ideal. With a dose of Castle Falkenstein it is perfect. For those poor saps lacking in Falkenstein, I would suggest modeling Fey on the New Changeling regardless.

Demon: The Fallen is disallowed. The Dark Ages supplement Devil's Due is by far superior.

Exalted is disallowed.

Kindred of the East is disallowed. Should be usable after VAST editing.

New World of Darkness: Currently defunct; some elements may be salvaged.

#### 20.3.1 Mage: The Ascension

Mostly banned, but some elements are salvageable.

True Magick (as Mage the Ascension) is actually not banned because it is powerful. It's banned because it's too easy and flexible. In a setting that relies essentially on "dungeons" the ability to infinitely perceive every element of creation through multiple level 1 spheres kills the suspense. In fact, Magic as it exists in House Games currently is far MORE powerful than any Mage has ever conceived. Don't think so? Allow me to demonstrate:

Harold wants to destroy a Manhattan. He accesses his Horadric Cube for Sin beyond his normal spending limit, Activates Way of the Spirit (Koldunic Sorcery) at level 5, uses Koldunic Mastery to double the effect area (Total Awareness over 10 miles), activates Quantum Multitasking, maximizes his rolls through willpower and Dormant Wisdom (16 dice, every success grants an additional mental action per turn), then proceeds to use Way of Fire to cause Volcanoes to erupt simultaneously throughout his effect area. If he had the foresight to activate level 3 Blood Magic as well, he could create as many as 20 full blown volcanoes over a 20 mile radius, using Koldunic Mastery to double the size or duration of each one as desired.

In one 3 second turn, Harold has consigned most of Manhattan to destruction. Show me any Mage who can do the same (even with a Forces 10) and not explode just for thinking about it.

A more accurate example would be another Vet, Titania Weiss, who is effectively a "Mage" using the Sorcery rules we devised.

"We" they say as they outright steal the Sorcerer mechanics and some botched abortions of homebrew.

Spending 1 Willpower and rolling Dexterity + Occult with Conjuration 6 she is capable of causing up to 16 semi trucks to fly through the air and strike multiple targets of her choosing. On the street, with witnesses if desired. Can a Forces or Correspondence score do that? Decidedly not.

The point of these examples is to illuminate why Mage was banned. The Perceptual abilities and flexibility make games involving Mage characters downright uninteresting. No more does an equipment list make a difference when Matter conjures up any item. Conversely, while the above examples are gross in their horrifying power, they don't allow characters to circumvent good problem

solving with Game Mechanics. Harold can certainly burn the world down in a lazy afternoon, but he can't map out a fortress while he sips tea a 1000 miles away.

On the vampire question, that is really quite simple. An Elder Vampire with less than 60-100 levels in Disciplines is a disservice to your players. A Methuselah would be around 5-10 times that. Even Neonates should typically field 10-15 points. (Shapechangers are not immortal, and already fairly overpowered, so no serious modification is required.) Why?

*Because House Games are supposed to be Lethal.*

An Elder Vampire has seen Magi, High Rollers, and most everything else before. He recalls quite distinctly when the world was actually flat, and when it changed. We are not using the norms presented in the White Wolf World of Darkness, we are using The High Roller World of Darkness, where if you are weak, you die. Also bear in mind that a Vampire can combine Disciplines, Invent new Discipline Effects and even New Disciplines over time. Essentially an elder can do anything a True Mage can do only better and without Paradox, provided he has the time and inclination. That's why elders are among very few things that can raise Traits up to a max of 10.

If you want to use Mage, go right ahead. The conversion template is easy enough:

Select 3 Sorcery Paths that best reflect your Paradigm (A Son of Ether might have Enchantment, Alchemy, and Hellfire, say). These cost Current Rating x5. All other paths cost Current Rating x7 as usual. Paths may be raised to 6. Starting Magi have 5 points to initially place in Paths.

A Mage has a Mana Pool of 20, usable as usual.

Paradox is not a factor. We use the more favorable system of Magic rules presented in Sorcerer, with some tweaks that will be codified as soon as I enlist some assistance.

Gaining the "Mage" template takes about 8-10 Gifts, but is better if partitioned out.

On a 500-year-old vampire: 300+ is an Elder. Extremely powerful, but in a flexible, realistic fashion. Old & powerful enough to NEVER stand & fight without loaded odds & no prayer of loss.

By WW standards, he would be a 6th Generation vampire, meaning a Blood Pool of 30, spending up to 6 per turn, with a Stat Limit (Powers included) of 7 across the board. He could invent & combine powers over time. Still, he is not likely to be able to withstand a series of High Roller attacks, & would know it (he's just a blood drinking corpse, after all).

Well, it has been a long time coming, however I think it is time to finally examine the nature of High Rollers in the context of the World of Darkness and what exactly they are.

For the longest time I felt that the hand waving explanation of "they are simply homebrew" or "they are outside of the World of Darkness" was unsatisfactory. Surely there was a place for them in this setting of wide variables where anything can and does happen. However it is now that I present my own opinion, approved by my sire and his sire.

High Rollers and the setting of House Games is that of the faction of Willworkers known as the

Marauders, those who are so lost in their source of magick's delusions that they lose sight of reality as we know it.

Many observations about the nature of what both Marauders and High Rollers do line up in a similar fashion. Both have a seeming immunity to the corrective power of paradox. Both have the potential for excessively destructive power with nearly no drawbacks (see above in the tirade about mage inferiority (the irony)). Both also are drawn this way and that by self-made missions that their twisted sources of magick tell them is the right thing to do.

If we separate out the perspective our High Rollers have on their own,