Character Concept

A Wiki for High Rollers » Character Creation » Character Concept

In House Games, there is no class system or pre-set character progression. Additionally, because the storytelling responsibility rotates each session, there is no real overarching plot that gives the games a story arc. Because of these things, there is a large emphasis on Character Concept as a means of driving a character's growth and progression in both flavor and mechanics. Your concept will inform all of the decisions you make as your character progresses through the Games.

House games characters are required to be:

1. Rich in style, unique, and individual
2. Driven by a goal or ambition that encourages them to risk their lives every month
3. Extremely capable and competent

Let's break each of these points down into a bit more detail.

1. Snowflakes of Carnage

The most characteristic element of the House Games system is the ability for players to make absolutely any character they want. There are no classes to choose from. Instead, each character can be completely unique in terms of their supernatural element. Want to make a were-puma? Sure! How about a chef that can influence people through the food that he cooks? Of course! How about a magic-is-science professor who uses complicated devices to control and influence the elements? No problem.

But while supernatural paradigm is an important aspect to consider, personality, background, morality, theme, and flaws are just as important. A well-developed house games character is just like a well-developed character in any other work of fiction. They each have flaws that define them, childhoods that have shaped them, regrets that haunt them (or if they don't yet, they soon will), and strengths they draw on. Characters have moralities that shape their lives, and beliefs they hold dear or find shattered.

Of course characters take time to develop. While it is a good idea to have a pretty clear inclination of what you want your character to be when you start (personality, ambitions, beliefs, flaws, potential powers, etc), you will find that the longer you spend with a character, the more they begin to find their voice. Don't feel obligated to front-load a 20-page bio into a character that might die on their first game.

2. Ambitious and Tenacious

As unique as all characters are, there is one thing they all must have in common: their insatiable drive and ambition. Each character has a unique goal, or perhaps set of goals, that defines them. These are individuals who will shape the world in their image, protect it from the dangers that face it, or rule over it with an iron fist. These grand ambitions are what drives the character to risk their lives month after month for even a small step down the path to their ultimate goal.

However, many new players have a very difficult time choosing a good ambition. In fact, developing good House Games goals is very challenging. Goals should fit the rest of the concept and encourage interaction with the world, setting, and other characters in some way. A good place to start is to consider what YOU would do if given the opportunity to change the world in any way you want. Would you end all wars? Would you erase religion? Would you drive all the non Native American people out of North America?

A common trap that people fall into is choosing an inward-facing goal such as "being the best at [insert any skill here]." This includes "Be the most dangerous man in the world," "Be the best warrior ever," "Make people weep at the sound of my music," or any number of other permutations. These goals aren't ideal because they are not only boring and generic but they also lack any inherent interaction with the rest of the world. They don't produce conflict, and they don't challenge the setting at all. Think about what ends a character means to achieve by acquiring power; don't focus on them gathering power itself. Ask yourself what your character wishes to achieve by being the best warrior in the world. Does he wish to conquer the world? Does he want to someday kill the dragon that burnt down his village? Does he want to eventually enslave all non-human species in the universe? Get more specific.

Also make sure that your ambition, while grounded enough to affect the world and setting, is also lofty enough to not be truly achievable. Characters become very powerful, and you would be surprised what a 30-game vet can do... Scale-able goals that will likely bring your character into conflict with other characters are best.

Examples of good ambitions: Blow up the world, create a new religion and convert everyone to it, replace humanity with its successor, become the leader of the entire world, usher in a new era of technology where computers reign supreme, return the world to the garden of eden, eliminate sex from all culture, explore space and colonize new worlds, etc.

Although ambitions can change over time, you should have a clear idea of your character's ambition before they go on their first game. It should be on your character sheet.

3. The Best of the Best of the Best

The games are a trial by fire designed to separate the wheat from the chaff. Only the most competent, dangerous, resourceful, and skilled individuals are even chosen to participate in the games themselves. Though there may be an initial pool of hundreds, only a dozen or so will survive their first decade in the games, shaped into the most formidable creatures that ever existed. Your character has been invited. They're not just some bum that's never applied themselves. They're probably the best in the world at at least one thing, if not more. They're the leaders of their fields, and they're willing to sacrifice almost anything to accomplish their goals.

The story of an average everyday Joe who is thrust into the world of the supernatural is not necessarily one that can be told in House Games.

At creation, you are given enough skill points and attribute points to be the strongest, smartest, or most disciplined person in the world. You could be an Olympic athlete that shatters records, a brilliant scientist, or the world's most renowned surgeon. Perhaps you are not famous, but that makes you no less competent.

Some Character Concept Examples

These are a few totally acceptable character concepts. If you've got about this much figured out, you're definitely ready to start filling out your character sheet.

These characters are admittedly a little same-y. More examples incoming. . .

Johnny Profigliani

- Concept: Famous Italian boxer with serious Mafia ties. Is a raging (but high functioning) alcoholic, and practices new-agey spiritual bullshit centered around drinking.
- Ambition: Drink the Nectar of the Gods and ascend into divinity as the God of Brawling.
- Possible Powers: Drunken Master-type stuff - alcohol fuels his powers and enhances him physically, Super Powered Fists - Can punch so hard he can manipulate sound, light, etc... eventually punch rifts in space to teleport.

Zhang Zhongjing

- Concept: Wealthy and well-respected practitioner of Chinese Traditional Medicine. Also poaches for business and for the thrill of the hunt.
- Ambition: Create "holy grail" level medicine drawing from ingredients sourced in supernatural creatures. Arrange for mass production of new treatments by hunting/ranching the populations of those creatures.
- Possible Powers: Chinese traditional medicines of all types (cupping, acupuncture, etc), Poaching / hunting powers, population control powers

Arnold Segal

- Concept: Major action hero (not a movie star, IRL). Was Special Forces, is now a bounty hunter because he refuses to play by the rules.
- Ambition: End war by destroying all armies.
- Possible Powers: Standard shooter type stuff, camouflage powers, tracking and stalking, powers centered around fighting as a lone wolf, or possibly commander powers, depends on roleplaying experiences.

Questionnaire of Doom!

A Wiki for High Rollers » Character Creation » Character Concept » Questionnaire of Doom!

The Character Development Questionnaire

This was designed for characters in the House Games setting. It 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.

1-9 games (Novice):
2 Improvements possible: questions 1-24 and/or 25-48

10-29 games (Seasoned):
3 Improvements possible: questions 1-16, 17-32, 33-48

30+ games (Vet):
4 Improvements possible: questions 1-12, 13-24, 25-36, 37-48

Novice characters can get away with writing a small blurb for most questions. Seasoned characters should be writing at least a paragraph in response to every one.

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

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?
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. How do you feel about spirituality? Are you religious? What do you believe? (Min. three paragraphs)
17. What would you consider selling your soul for? (Note that considering does not mean deciding!)21. What do you try hardest to keep secret?
18. Provide a personal opinion on each of the High Rollers in your Region? Do you get along?
19. What kind of things can make you angry? Why? (Min. three paragraphs)
20. How do feel about democracy as a form of government?
21. What is your favorite food? How often do you eat it?
22. What do you dream about? Why do you think you have those dreams? (Min. three paragraphs)
23. What is your beverage of choice? Why?
24. Do you believe in aliens from outer space? Do you think they have come to Earth? Why?

25. 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?
26. Describe a typical Sunday morning.
27. If you were an animal, what kind would you be? Why?
28. What are your political views?
29. Describe the perfect room.
30. What attracts you? Do you have anyone "on your radar"?
31. Where do you get your news? What topics are of interest to you?
32. Magic or science? Why?
33. Is there anything that you are irrational about?
34. What is your sex life like?
35. Define what is evil to you. (Min. three paragraphs)
36. What would you kill for? What would you die for?

37. 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".
38. Have you ever had a pet? What was it and how did you take care of it?
39. Where does your money come from? Where does it go?
40. What purpose do you think the "Games" serve? Who is behind them? Why did they choose you?
41. If you were a vehicle, what kind would you be? Why?
42. Do you do drugs? Which ones? How often? What about caffeine, alcohol and other everyday medications? Why?
43. Everyone excels at something. What is your philosophy about the thing you are best at?
44. What comforts you when you are feeling sick for an extended period?
45. How do you feel about other races?
46. How do you feel about your mother? Would you defend her honor?
47. Describe the room where you sleep most often.
48. Which of your missions(s) have been the most impactful / memorable for you?

Character-creation-version-1.5

Old Stuff » Character-creation-version-1.5

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.

Click here to download a character sheet.

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.

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/FLAWS: See the approved list of Merits and Flaws for costs and effects. A character may have a maximum of 7 points in Flaws (or two Flaws totaling any amount).

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
Humanity: 2
Backgrounds: 1
Willpower: 1
Merits: Normal cost to acquire.

With either the Standard or Alternate Build System:

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

Select Nature, Demeanor, Concept, and so forth.

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.

Lastly you should maintain a detailed equipment list. While some GMs 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.

Useful resources for character development:

To see an example House Game character, click | here.

As an aid for character development, as well as for bonus XP to the character, you may fill out the Questionnaire in a manner consistent with your character.

Backgrounds

Old Stuff » Character-creation-version-1.5 » The Old Character Sheet » Backgrounds

GMs may at their discretion award up to 5 ranks in Backgrounds (of the Beneficial or Adversarial variety) to characters during a Game. For example, good roleplay can (and has) won players superior Retainers, at reduced or no cost, depending on how your GM rules. Otherwise they cost current rating x 3 to advance.

General Backgrounds

▲ Aliases

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.

▲ Arsenal

Arsenal represents a stockpile of weaponry or hard to find items that you personally own. 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.

▲ 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 there 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.

▲ 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 2 countries
2) Citizen of 3 countries
3) Citizen of 4 countries
4) Citizen of 5 countries
5) Citizen of 6 countries
When received as a Gift it is awarded at 5.

▲ Clear Conscience

This Background represents a certain amount of iron will & sanity even when exposed to madness or forced to make tough morality calls.

Each time you take a derangement, you may roll your rating in Clear Conscience Diff: 8 Success negates the derangement. If you Botch a Sanity check, you still lose the point of humanity, even if you negate the derangement.

When received as a Gift it is awarded at 3.

▲ 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. Players should roll Contacts (Diff: 7) to get a hold of useful contacts in their area of influence.

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.

▲ 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.

▲ 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.

▲ 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 given as a Gift, Hands of Death is awarded at 3.

▲ Laboratory

Laboratory represents the equipment and tools that you own for purposes of experimentation. Laboratories are fairly specific, due to the wide range of scientific fields to choose from, and do not come with experimental subjects. During Downtime, you may roll your Laboratory at difficulty 7 (5 with Mad Scientist) to gain one study point per success. This does not stack with other Study Point Generators, and may be applied to abilities which may be covered by the laboratories specified field.

1) Basic lab equipment set
2) Advanced lab equipment set
3) High school lab
4) University Lab
5) Professional level laboratory

When received as a Gift it is awarded at 3-5 depending on how elaborate it is (what the study points may be spent on).

▲ 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

▲ 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 at 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 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 3-5 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.

▲ Mentor

A Mentor rating determines the efficacy of your character's teacher. Dependent upon what your mentor specializes in, study points generated here can be applied to almost anything that is not purely internal. During downtime, you may roll your Mentor at difficulty 7 (5 with apt pupil) to receive one study point per success. You may make one such roll per downtime, and it does not stack with other Study point generators.

1) Limited teachings
2) General purpose instruction
3) Highly useful and broad education abilities
4) A Master in their field
5) Grandmaster

When received as a Gift it is awarded at 3-5 depending on how comprehensive it is (what the study points may be spent on).

▲ 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 (Wits + Dexterity + 1d10), add your rating in Nerves of Steel as a bonus.

When received as a Gift, it is awarded at 3.

▲ 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

▲ 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 x10 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 Experience.

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.

▲ Status

Status is the regard of your peers in a professional capacity, such as a lawyer's reputation among other lawyers, and the like.

1) You are a competent individual, though you do not stand out.
2) You seem to have a knack for this, people look forward to your future exploits.
3) You are well regarded as an expert in your field.
4) When you talk, your coworkers listen.
5) People hang on your every word.

Depending on the scope of your Status (what organization you belong to) Status may be awarded at 1-5 as a Gift.

Normal Human Character Creation

Old Stuff » Character-creation-version-1.5 » The Old Character Sheet » Backgrounds » Normal Human Character Creation

Retainers who are not received as Gifts are considered "normal humans" (or normal animals). Most non-High Roller NPC's are also considered normal humans.

Retainers can be considered a background which can be bought up as per usual approval (usually the character build itself is more important than the circumstance of obtaining a retainer).

Normal humans are created using the Standard Build System for Normal Humans (if your region is using the Standard Build System) or the Alternate Build System for Normal Humans (if your region is using the Alternate Build System).

Retainers can only have internal Backgrounds such as Hands of Death and Lethal Accuracy; they cannot take Backgrounds such as Contacts, Resources, or Arsenal.

Retainers gain 5 XP per game regardless of if the game is won or not. Retainers gain one gift per 5 games survived.

Standard Build System for Normal Humans

You may spend Build Points as follows.

ATTRIBUTES: 6/4/3

ABILITIES: 11/7/4

VIRTUES: 7

BACKGROUNDS: 5

MORALITY begins equal to Conviction + Self-Control. Note that increasing Conviction or Self-Control later does not increase Morality. Standard humans begin with Humanity as their moral system.

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

MERITS/FLAWS: See the approved list of Merits and Flaws for costs and effects as they apply in House Games. A character may have a maximum of 7 points in Flaws (or two Flaws totaling any amount).

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
Humanity: 2
Backgrounds: 1
Willpower: 1
Merits: As per cost

Any Trait may be raised to 5 at character creation, except Enlightenment and Willpower, which may be raised to 10.

A player who is awarded normal human Retainers as a Gift may choose to receive Retainers at a lower level than is offered. For every level sacrificed, the Retainer receives an extra 5 Freebie Points. For example, if a player offered Retainers 3 chooses to take Retainers 1 instead, that Retainer would have an extra 10 Freebie Points. Similarly, every Build Point invested in a single Retainer during character creation provides that Retainer an extra 5 Freebie Points. No more than 5 Build Points may be invested in Retainers (thus providing no more than 20 Freebie Points).

Alternate Build System for Normal Humans

You may spend the following amounts of XP.

Attributes: 82
Abilities: 87
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 Enlightenment.

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 Enlightenment and Willpower, which may be raised to 10.

Costs are the same as for advancement.

A player who is awarded normal human Retainers as a Gift may choose to receive Retainers at a lower level than is offered. For every level sacrificed, the Retainer receives an extra 25 Freebie XP. For example, if a player offered Retainers 3 chooses to take Retainers 1 instead, that Retainer would have an extra 50 Freebie XP. Similarly, every level invested in a single Retainer during character creation provides that Retainer an extra 25 Freebie XP. No more than 5 levels may be invested in Retainers (thus providing no more than 100 XP).

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 must have at least 2 dots in Expression, Performance or music related secondary skills. 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.

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 careful to choose archetypes that 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 two 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 normal in all other fashions.

Morality Shift (3): You begin play with a different Morality/Enlightenment path than Humanity. The ethics of this path must be fully detailed & approved at character creation. Your initial rating in 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 negate a single botch die 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.

Tough as Nails (4): You are unnaturally resilient and hardy. You have an extra “Bruised” Health Level. This health level is treated as per 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 allows you an 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 illusionary 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 six of 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 result in aging you (like the touch of a wight) will have to work equally harder to age you. 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.).

Restricted Merits

Grim Resolve: You have the ability to spend a permanent point of any Pool (including Willpower) to refresh that pool. 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 it if 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.

Flaws

The approved list of Flaws as they apply to House Games.

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.

Brittle bones (1-4): Your body just isn't capable of deal with impacts effectively. Bashing damage is +flaw rating to soak

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 similar powers. You start with between 1-5 points of permanent taint, and if 5 points are taken, the flaw is worth one extra freebie point. This includes susceptibility to further taint, as is usual for tainted beings, and is nearly impossible to remove. Few creatures can survive with a permanent taint greater than their enlightenment. It is best if your particular taint is of a unique nature and cleared with the GM first.

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 humanity (or corresponding path). (This Flaw was added for specific cases such as hunters, serial killers, would-be vampires, and other such predators. referees are free to deny a character 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 (diff 8). You must have a humanity rating 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.

One Eye: (2) You have only on 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.)

Anosmia (2): You possess no sense of smell.

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 make a self-control roll 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 dots 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 has an inalienable right to live. You automatically lose a point of Enlightenment if you cause a person to be killed, by action or inaction. [Note to new players: It is possible to have a very high regard for human 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 you 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.

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 dots 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.

Glass Jaw: (4) You have a 50% chance of being knocked out for 1d10 minutes any time you do not successfully soak any 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! Shant feel a thing.

Hemophilia (4): Your blood does not clot normally. When reduced to hurt in 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.

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. Oath Breakers may also find it difficult or impossible to progress in rank beyond a certain point amongst many factions and organizations. Depending on the nature of your Vow there may be some remaining antipathy as well.

Tough as Fluff (4): You do not have a Bruised health level.

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 have not established yourself in society. Perhaps you were raised by wolves, grown in a clone vat, or ended up in this dimension by mistake. You start with 0 points in all backgrounds, you do not have citizenship in any country, and you have no official identity or license of any sort. You may or not speak a relevant language as your one "given" language (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 at Intimidate or Leadership. All difficulties to resist such effects are increased by +2. Your willpower trait may never raise 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.

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. The referee and you 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.

Morality

Old Stuff » Character-creation-version-1.5 » The Old Character Sheet » 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 Experience Point cost to "buy off" a Derangement.
- Many Powers and effects target Morality.

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 forfeit a point of Morality without a Conviction roll.

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 - Morality) XP.

Changing Ethics: You may select a new ethical system during any downtime. You begin your new Morality score 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.

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

▲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)

▼ A Bygone's Nobility
▼ Anti-Human
▼ Bodyguard
▼ Chivalry
▼ Dark Justice
▼ Death's Soft Whisper
▼ Harmony
▼ Hedonism
▼ Holy Slayer
▼ Mad Scientist
▼ Mandate to Rule
▼ Ninja-Guy
▼ Overseer of the Years
▼ Power and the Inner Voice
▼ Road of Heaven
▼ Road of Hell
▼ Ruthless
▼ Scorched Heart
▼ Scoundrel
▼ Taoism
▼ Ubermenchen

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

▲ A Bygone's Nobility

A Bygone's Nobility (Could potentially be used by someone insanely racist/xenophobic also. Still up for revision.)

Nobility Rank	Action
10	Not killing something of another species that offends you in any way.
9	Responding to another species of any kind for any reason.
8	Responding to another species of any kind for any reason other than immediate personal gain.
7	Responding to another species of any kind for any reason other than immediate or long term personal gain.
6	Sacrificing personal pleasures for the sake of another species.
5	Asking a member of another species for assistance.
4	Risking your life or goals to save a member of another species.
3	Being proven weaker in any area by a member of another species.
2	Taking orders from a member of another species.
1	Groveling to another species.

▲Anti-Human

Your existence is defined by your dogged persuit and opposition of all of humanity. It is your personal purpose to seek out and destroy the human blight in all of its forms. The idea of living in a human social structure and using technology disgusts you. Were humans ever destroyed completely, you may find yourself directionless and confused.

Anti-Human is a very restrictive path of enlightenment, and merely being a human limits your rating in Anti-Human to six.

Minimum action required to make a conviction check:

Anti-Human	Action
10	Allowing any human to survive an encounter with you
9	Speaking a human language
8	Allowing human technology to survive an encounter with you
7	Using any man-made object
6	Using any mass-produced object
5	Using human transportation
4	Helping the whole of humanity directly
3	Allowing a human to abuse you in any way.
2	Allowing an emotional bond with a human to influence your actions.
1	Taking orders from a human

▲Bodyguard

For some, bodyguarding is a job. But there are others who are on an entirely different level, no more comparable to a wage-earner than a commando is to a minimum-wage security guard.

To such as you, bodyguarding is your life.

Bodyguard	Action
10	Passing up an advantage
9	Allowing your effectiveness to be impaired
8	Helplessness
7	Permanent injury to yourself or your ward
6	Negligence; failing to maintain discipline or professionalism or to perform duties
5	Rape, torture
4	Death of your ward
3	Capture of your ward
2	Incompetence
1	Disloyalty

10. Passing up an advantage

The safety of your ward is of utmost importance; failing to ensure that safety is the worst thing you could possibly do. Therefore, forgoing an advantage that could help ensure your ward's safety is unacceptable. Of course, the consequences of pursuing an advantage must also be considered. For example, it would be counterproductive to make an enemy who might present a threat in the future; this would actually be a disadvantage rather than an advantage.

9. Allowing your effectiveness to be impaired

The more effective you are, the more likely you will be able to protect your ward. Therefore, you cannot allow your effectiveness to be reduced in any way. You do not drive; you do not carry baggage; you do not help old ladies across the street; you do not give the time of day to passing strangers; you do not allow your weapon arm to be hindered; you do not allow your senses to be hampered; you do not step outside to allow your ward a private conversation with a potential adversary. Nor do you skip meals, take drugs, drink alcohol, overeat, or otherwise impair your performance.

8. Helplessness

You do not allow yourself to be rendered helpless, by injury, imprisonment, circumstance, or any other cause. You do whatever is necessary to prevent yourself from being incapacitated. You do not submit to arrest. You never surrender your weapons.

7. Permanent injury to yourself or your ward

Any permanent injury to either yourself or your ward reduces your ward's chances of survival, and is therefore unacceptable. Such injuries are to be avoided through any means necessary. If unavoidable, they must be cured as quickly as possible.

6. Negligence; failing to maintain discipline or professionalism or to perform duties

The least negligence or inattention, even concerning seemingly trivial matters, threatens your ward and is not to be tolerated. Discipline, attention to detail, flawless professional standards: These are your life.

A bodyguard should always be prepared and ready to work. You should have what you need to do the job. If it could have been planned for, it should have been.

5. Rape, torture

When you kill, do it cleanly; do not torment the victim. Such things would besmirch your honor. More importantly, they are distractions.

4. Death of your ward

Your ward's death would render your life meaningless (as well as ending it; if you somehow survived, you would die avenging him). You must not fail.

3. Capture of your ward

Allowing your ward to be captured is the ultimate disgrace, worse even than allowing him to be killed. Better to risk his death than his capture.

2. Incompetence

A bodyguard worthy of the name has the skills necessary to do his job. You train yourself rigorously on a daily basis. If you ever find yourself lacking, you do what it takes to overcome the lack.

1. Disloyalty

Loyalty is the cardinal virtue. Being disloyal in any way is unthinkable. Betraying your ward is inconceivable.

▲Chivalry

▲Dark Justice

This path is a variation of Humanity; behaviors generally considered immoral under Humanity are usually considered immoral under Dark Justice, unless otherwise specified.

Where "poetic justice" is listed, these behaviors are permissible only in responding to a criminal's actions and cannot exceed the severity of the criminal's own acts. Murdering a thief isn't allowed under poetic justice, for example, but robbing one blind would be.

Level	Requirements	Killing justified?
10	Defend all life, protect the innocent, always turn the guilty in to proper authorities	Never
9	As above but you may take justice into your own hands if a criminal cannot be safely caught	Only to protect an innocent
8	You can't always trust the law: Take justice into your own hands as seems justified Poetic Justice: Theft, fraud	Self-defense, to protect lives of sentient beings (murderers excepted)
7	Poetic Justice: Property damage, planting false evidence, mild physical abuse	To protect murderers, too
6	Poetic Justice: Any injury short of death, threats to innocent relatives (but not carried out)	To protect animals
5	You can't trust the authorities at all: Avoid working with them when possible Poetic Justice: Murder	To protect monsters, to prevent a criminal's escape
4	You now act preemptively: If you are certain a criminal will commit a worse crime, you may act as if it were already committed (so you may murder someone planning murder) Poetic Justice: Other felonies aimed exclusively at criminal(s)	To protect property
3	Certainty of criminality excuses torture Poetic Justice: Torture	Arbitrarily, but only to stop someone who might become a criminal
2	All criminals should be put to death	Arbitrarily, against anyone not clearly an innocent
1	Torture of witnesses acceptable (only way to learn the truth)	Always

▲Death's Soft Whisper

▲Harmony

▲Hedonism

Hedonism: a school of ethics which argues that pleasure is the only intrinsic good; the pursuit of pleasure as a matter of ethical principle. Those on the path of Hedonism would identify themselves as party-goers instead of fathers, or lovers instead of workers. Beings on this path of enlightenment are not frequently seen outside of a party or event, but in some very rare cases Hedonists are private or solitary. Being on this path of enlightenment indicates that the character in question is, at the very root of their being, more of a hedonist than a human.

The following table gives examples of acts that trigger Enlightenment checks for characters with Hedonism. For example, a character with a Hedonism of 7 would be required to make a Conviction check when going a day without serious recreation, holding a steady job, refusing help out of empathy, or depriving his/her self of basic personal needs.

Hedonism	Action
1	Forgoing basic personal needs (fasting, Staying awake for far too long)
2	Going a week without serious recreation
3	Inflicting dreaded emotion or sensation upon self (for example a non-masochist cutting himself to draw blood)
4	Refusing an offer of help out of empathy
5	Partaking in a dreaded substance
6	holding a steady job
7	Going a day without serious recreation
8	Not ending misery of others when easily doable (either by curing or killing)
9	Refusing an enjoyed substance (particular substances that are known to be poisoned are exempt)
10	Partaking in non-pleasurable work or chores (better get someone to carry you around)

▲Holy Slayer

A Holy Slayer serves God by killing monsters. Some monsters are human, but most are not, and those which are monstrous physically as well as morally have a higher priority. The Unholy have the highest priority of all: Undead, evil spirits, and especially Demons.

A Holy Slayer does recognize, however, that some monsters are not evil. Even monsters can repent. Such enlightened monsters should be spared. Evil monsters are termed Abominations.

Priority is as follows: Demons, spirits and incorporeal undead, corporeal undead, supernatural creatures, technologically created monsters (genetically engineered, mutated, etc.), non-human cultists, human cultists, casters, others with special abilities, normal humans.

In most cases, a Holy Slayer should avoid killing any but the guilty. However, it is sometimes necessary to kill those who do not deserve to die, such as soldiers on the opposing side in battle. Most importantly, Abominations cannot be allowed to spread. If an outbreak of Abominations cannot be stopped otherwise, then the area must be sterilized; otherwise, Abominations will overrun the Earth.

Killing the innocent is to be avoided. However, all sins are equal, and without repentance all are deserving of death.

Holy Slayer	Action
10	Impure motivations (anger, hatred, envy, lust, greed, sloth, pride, despair, contempt, impatience, etc.)
9	Avoidable unpreparedness, incompetence, or incapacitation
8	Failing to pay debts, support dependents, honor parents, provide for survivors
7	Failing to protect an innocent, unjustly harming a reputation
6	Sexual sin (adultery, fornication)
5	Theft, unnecessary property damage
4	Failing to destroy an Abomination
3	Unjustified killing (intentional or not)
2	Torture, rape
1	Blasphemy, denying God, worshiping other gods

Explanation:

10. Impure motivations (fear, anger, hatred, envy, lust, greed, sloth, pride, despair, contempt, impatience, etc.)

Whatever is done must be done in a state of grace. Actions which are otherwise perfectly acceptable become unacceptable if taken for the wrong reasons or in the wrong frame of mind. After all, motive is more important than deed. For example, killing may be done for justice but never for revenge. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Fear, anger, hatred: These lead to the Dark Side.

9. Avoidable unpreparedness, incompetence, or incapacitation

The Boy Scouts have it right. Be Prepared.

A monster hunter should always be prepared and ready to work. You should have what you need to do the job. You should never incapacitate yourself, whether through drink, drugs, dissipate emotions, or overwork. You should train yourself rigorously and acquire the necessary skills to succeed.

No one is perfect; no one can be prepared for every contingency. If it could have been planned for, however, it should have been.

8. Failing to repay debts, support dependents, honor parents, provide for survivors

The commandment to "honor your father and your mother" goes hand in hand with the responsibility to pay your debts, support your family, and look after your employees. Noblesse oblige: With power comes responsibility. The lord of the manor must ensure the well-being of his people; an officer must look after his men, in combat and out. He must leave no man behind. He must also make sure his men receive health care and free tax advice.

7. Failing to protect an innocent, unjustly harming a reputation

Innocents should be protected, insofar as that can be done without compromising the mission. If it isn't possible to protect the innocent and also kill the monster, then killing the monster takes precedence. After all, you're a monster hunter, not a cop; it's better to do your own job adequately than someone else's well. This does not mean you can disregard collateral damage, however; you must minimize civilian casualties and keep civilians out of the line of fire whenever possible.

Do not bear false witness against your neighbor. Slander is a sin, as serious as any other. Nor is this limited to explicit slander; failing to correct a false impression or come forward with relevant information is to lie by omission. Similarly, you must testify when your testimony is needed; you may not refrain due to fear of retaliation or dislike of the defendant.

6. Sexual sin (adultery, fornication)

Do not commit adultery. Do not have sex outside the context of marriage.

The family is the foundation of civilization. In times of danger, a strong family can ensure the survival of its members. Sex within marriage strengthens the family, but sex outside marriage weakens it.

5. Theft, unnecessary property damage

Thou shalt not steal.

Avoiding property damage certainly isn't as important a concern as avoiding civilian casualties, but it's not trivial by any means. You must do what you can to avoid or at least minimize property damage without jeopardizing the mission.

4. Failing to destroy an Abomination

Abominations exist to be destroyed. Destroy them.

Generally, only evil monsters qualify as Abominations. Truly alien creatures – those so alien that peaceful coexistence is not possible – may as well be evil, and are considered such for all practical purposes. Creatures which seek to destroy or displace humanity are also considered Abominations. Finally, mutants and similar which seek to reproduce in large numbers and spread prolifically are also Abominations, even if not evil. (Responsible mutants don't reproduce.)

3. Unjustified killing (intentional or not)

The Sixth Commandment is generally translated as "Thou shalt not kill" or "Thou shalt not commit murder." A more accurate translation would read, "Thou shalt not commit an unjustified killing." A justified killing is not a sin. An unjustified killing is a sin even if unintentional. You must live with the consequences of your actions, and of your mistakes.

Killing enemy soldiers in battle is not a sin. This does not mean, however, that you are free to kill as long as the target is shooting back. You may not kill for convenience. All too often, perpetrators claim necessity when they didn't seriously look for other options. Life is sacred and may not be lightly squandered.

2. Torture, rape

The proverbial fate worse than death is surprisingly common. Many things are worse than killing. If you must kill, do it cleanly; do not torment the victim.

1. Blasphemy, denying God, worshiping other gods

You shall have no other gods before me.

Do not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Do not test the Lord your God.

There is only one God; all others are lesser beings, angels, demons, spirits, and the like. They are not worthy of worship. Moreover, by accepting God, you reject all other would-be deities. Do not attempt to play both ends against the middle.

By accepting God, you accept his teachings. Do not attempt to make God more palatable to those who dislike his precepts – or to yourself. Avoid legalism; seek the true meaning of God's Word, not the meaning you would give it.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to faith. If you believe, you believe; you realize nothing can ever be proven beyond all possible doubt, and you don't need such proof. You are secure in yourself.

▲Mad Scientist

Mad Scientist	Action
10	Doing anything unrelated to your research
9	Defining relationships on any basis other than a person's use to your research
8	Valuing a non-scientist's opinion
7	Allowing someone to discount your research or chosen field
6	Allowing emotions or subjective opinions to alter your research methods
5	Discounting a possibility without checking it
4	Failing to pursue an experiment
3	Relying on a thesis you have not personally verified
2	Considering anything to be truly 'complete'
1	Allowing data to be destroyed

The Mad Scientist Path of Morality focuses on a scientist's dedication to science, to the exclusion of all else. Nothing is as important as gathering data and furthering your mastery of your chosen field. A Mad Scientist will only have 'friends' who are scientists in similar fields, as they may (sometimes) be more useful as colleagues than as test subjects.

The worldview of the Mad Scientist is marked by unquestioning belief in the paramount importance of science, and disdain for non-scientists. Society should be organized around science, with the vast majority of people (humans, monsters, Great Old Ones, and everything else) relegated to test subjects (they're worthless dross anyway). All other considerations are meaningless, and all other persons are irrelevant save as they can benefit science - be it as a test subject, or as potential lab assistants (or both). There are no limits to what science can accomplish, given adequate time and resources. Science will save the world (or at least that portion worth saving, which means scientists). Engineers are inferior to scientists, mechanics are inferior to engineers, those lacking skills useful in scientific research are entirely lacking in value. The people should believe what you tell them to believe, and your peers (those contentious idiots) should too.

A Mad Scientist recognizes that there is no end to his studies. It is possible to be the leading expert in your field, but impossible to know everything about that field. Thus, in order to remain at the peak, you must constantly research new data and monitor colleagues' work for useful tidbits of data. All scientific fields are intertwined to some extent, so no venue should be ignored.

Such extreme focus on one field does engender arrogance. It is extremely dangerous to insult the field a Mad Scientist has chosen to study, as they will often try to prove that their field is above reproach. Such proofs will depend on the scientist's chosen field, and may be quite lethal. It is important to remember that while the Mad Scientist may profess to follow a code of ethics, this is a convenient fiction.

A Mad Scientist cares little for the opinions of others. Non-scientists have neither the dedication nor the education to have informed opinions. Even the opinions of other scientists are of questionable value; they are certainly more educated about how the world works, but unless they are in the same field, they simply do not see the world in the same way.

Information is vitally important. Data destruction is incomprehensible. Moreover, there is no such thing as 'tainted' data. All information is useful, regardless of the source. To completely discount information from any source, be it a questionable journal or one's greatest enemy, is foolish, and may well lead to faulty conclusions. At the same time, reliability is important, so it is vital to verify any data received, even if it comes from a source you trust implicitly.

Mercy and compassion are not considerations for a Mad Scientist. In the pursuit of knowledge, there are few other considerations, even to the point that you won't hesitate to risk your own life when necessary. Nor is consent a factor in your experiments. After all, it's for the good of science ...

10: Doing anything unrelated to your research

Anything and everything that is not directly associated with your research or your ability to conduct research is irrelevant. You only pursue enemies if they directly interfere with your work and you know where they are. You only eat when absolutely necessary, and you seldom bathe.

9: Defining relationships on any basis other than a person's use to your research

People are only important as far as they are useful to your research. Enemies are those who threaten your research time, 'friends' are those who assist your research from a contributory standpoint. Others are research subjects, and have little to offer beyond their minds and bodies – though some may have the potential to become scientists.

8: Valuing a non-scientist's opinion

What do they know? They aren't scientists. They haven't dedicated years of their lives to scientific understanding. Their opinions couldn't possibly be as well-informed as your own.

7: Allowing someone to discount your research or chosen field

Only a fool would find fault with science, especially the field you have deemed worthy of becoming your life's work. Insults against your field must be answered. Professional pride will accept no less.

6: Allowing emotions or subjective opinions to alter your research methods

Prejudging a conclusion is a fast track to false data. The scientist can be hopeful, but must never allow his hopes to color how he goes about collecting or testing data. Friendship, compassion, empathy: Such things could easily compromise your methodology, forcing you to begin again. Wasted time is intolerable.

5: Discounting a possibility without checking it

Information can come from the strangest places. Sometimes even the most unlikely possibility is the correct one, and all possibilities should be checked. If you already have a fully workable thesis, you can put other possibilities aside, but only long enough to test that thesis.

4: Failing to pursue an experiment

There are very few grounds on which a scientist can fail to follow through on a study. Typically, you can only justify putting the research off until you have the necessary equipment, and even then you can usually improvise basic tests. Any research subject will do. Anyone finding themselves in your care is likely to regret it.

3: Relying on a thesis you have not personally verified

The only way to verify a thesis is to test it. Even if proposed by a scientist who is reputable and known for accurate judgment, you must always confirm for yourself that their theses are reliable, especially if you plan to build on them.

2: Considering anything to be truly 'complete'

There is no such thing as perfection. Nothing is ever truly complete. Even should you live thousands of years, you could never hope to know everything. Thus, further testing is always needed.

1: Allowing data to be destroyed

Never destroy something that provides you with data. Never cut yourself off from information. A highly specialized lab, or a rare sample of a creature relevant to your studies are examples of proper sources of data. These must be protected to the best of your ability.

▲Mandate to Rule

A rightful Ruler has a clear mandate to rule, both from Heaven and from the people, and always acts with the good of the nation firmly in mind. A true Ruler is motivated by love of God and country, not by personal gain.

Of course, acting for the national good need not mean harming the interests of other nations. The pie is not limited; taking a piece does not necessarily reduce the amount left for others. In international relations, cooperation can produce synergies that far exceed the products of individual labor. Furthermore, a Ruler must be far-sighted, acting with the long term in mind. It is often necessary to sacrifice short-term interests for long-term ones. And, of course, the day approaches when world government will become a reality, and the Earth will be one nation ... though this does raise the question of who will rule it.

In the end, there can be only one.

Mandate to Rule	Action
10	Unjustly harming a reputation
9	Failing to neutralize a threat to the nation
8	Avoidable unpreparedness or incapacitation
7	Failing to keep your word and give loyalty for loyalty received
6	Perjury, undermining the justice system
5	Undermining marriage or society
4	Rape, torture
3	Corruption, disloyalty, or incompetence
2	Blasphemy, denying God, worshiping other gods
1	Treason

10. Unjustly harming a reputation

As a Leader, your reputation is your lifeblood. The same is true for others – individuals and nations alike. You do not bear false witness; you do not slander. Nor is this limited to explicit slander; failing to correct a false impression or come forward with relevant information is as bad as sabotaging a reputation yourself.

9. Failing to neutralize a threat to the nation

Defending the nation is the most fundamental purpose of government. However, it is not enough to overcome dangers as they present themselves. Threats must be systemically eliminated, lest they grow greater over time. When the opportunity to neutralize a threat arises, it should be taken; and if no opportunity arises, one should be created. Of course, threats must be prioritized, with the most serious or most urgent addressed first.

8. Avoidable unpreparedness or incapacitation

The Boy Scouts have it right. Be Prepared.

A Leader should always be prepared and ready to work. You should have on hand what you need to do the job. You must never incapacitate yourself, whether through drink, drugs, dissipate emotions, or overwork. You must train yourself rigorously and acquire the necessary skills to succeed.

No one is perfect; no one can be prepared for every contingency. If it could have been planned for, however, it should have been.

7. Failing to keep your word and give loyalty for loyalty received

Responsibility flows two ways. Your followers owe you loyalty, and you owe them loyalty in return.

As a Leader, your word is sacrosanct, and you always fulfill your obligations. Your honor is beyond reproach. Followers and allies trust you absolutely. You pay your debts, protect your people (without sacrificing the mission), and provide for dependents and survivors. Your employees receive pensions, health care, and free tax advice.

Noblesse oblige: With power comes responsibility. The lord of the manor must ensure the well-being of his people; an officer must look after his men, in combat and out. He must leave no man behind.

A Leader is responsible. Always.

6. Perjury, undermining the justice system

Perjury is one of the most serious crimes – easily as serious as murder or torture – because of its pernicious effects on the justice system. Even today, witness testimony is the cornerstone of the law. If witnesses believe they can lie to the court with impunity, the entire justice system unravels.

And the justice system is one of the most critical elements of a civilized society, second only to national defense and law enforcement. If criminals are not given swift and decisive justice after being arrested, then arrest becomes pointless and crime becomes rampant. Civilization cannot survive without order.

5. Undermining marriage or society

Do not commit adultery. Do not have sex outside the context of marriage.

The family is the foundation of civilization. In times of danger, a strong family can ensure the survival of its members. Sex within marriage strengthens the family, but sex outside marriage weakens it.

Sex defines society; it can strengthen or destroy it. The appearance of the first humans 2 million years ago was marked not by larger brain size (which came later) but by permanent mating, which resulted in stable societies with strong social bonds. The loss of permanent mating would inevitably lead to the loss of societal stability, and with it, the loss of civilization.

Civilization is built on a stable society. Nothing can be allowed to undermine it, for a collapse of civilization would threaten the very survival of the human race.

4. Rape, torture

The proverbial fate worse than death is surprisingly common. Many things are worse than killing. When you must kill, do it cleanly; do not torment the victim.

There is a reason rape is so often used as an instrument of warfare and oppression. It humiliates the victims, damages familial bonds, and weakens the enemy's culture or class. Its harm lasts far beyond the conflict which engendered it.

3. Corruption, disloyalty, or incompetence

Effective government does not require exceptional civil service, or brilliant leadership. It does not require genius. It does not require the above-average. It requires only competence; the ability to get the job done, if not particularly efficiently, not too inefficiently, either. Slow, plodding progress is sufficient to guarantee a successful bureaucracy; and a successful bureaucracy is the one element that no government can do without.

Of course, success also requires the desire to succeed. Before a problem can be solved, both civil servants and leaders must genuinely want to solve it; they must be honest and loyal. Again, no great dedication is required, simply a desire to make progress. Government thrives on mediocrity.

There are always those who wish to subvert government programs, to ensure they fail and do not threaten the status quo. Corruption – particularly low-level corruption – is without question the gravest threat to a government's ability to serve its people. Outright treason is rare, but even mostly honest civil servants can succumb to the temptation to accept a bribe and sabotage, or just fail to promote, the smooth functioning of a particular program. Often, such an action seems relatively harmless, particularly compared to the rewards. But when corruption becomes common, the people lose faith in their government and begin to work around it, or even against it. This becomes a vicious circle which is almost impossible to break. Low-level corruption, building up slowly over a long period of time, can neutralize the government and poison society more effectively than almost anything else.

The solution is simple. Corruption cannot be tolerated, in any degree, for any reason. Even a single incidence of corruption must be stamped out harshly and without delay. Even the appearance of corruption is unacceptable, because it undermines the people's confidence in government just as much as the real thing. The appearance of impropriety is as bad as impropriety itself.

2. Blasphemy, denying God, worshiping other gods

You shall have no other gods before me. Do not take the name of the Lord in vain. Do not test the Lord your God.

There is only one God; all others are lesser beings, angels, demons, spirits, and the like. They are not worthy of worship. Moreover, by accepting God, you reject all other would-be deities. Do not attempt to play both ends against the middle. Avoid legalism; seek the true meaning of God's Word, not the meaning you would give it.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to faith. If you believe, you believe; you realize nothing can ever be proven beyond all possible doubt, and you don't need such proof. You are secure in yourself.

1. Treason

Nothing can be worse than betraying your country. If your country is on the wrong track, then you should work to change it. If the government is corrupt, you should overthrow it. You should never, under any circumstances, betray your country; nothing can ever justify that.

▲Ninja-Guy

Ninjas always win. If you back off a deal, drop a contract, or otherwise pussy out, you're not ninja material. To be a ninja, you have to be able to set aside little things like morality and conscience to become truly great. Or at least, mostly great.

Anyway, ninjas get the job done. End of story.

Ninja-Guy	Action
10	Allowing any of below actions to occur
9	Endangering the job for mercy to teammates (We don't have time for bandages)
8	Endangering the job for mercy to outsiders (Umm...Why am I giving this kid my water?)
7	Getting captured (Major Suckage)
6	Betraying information to the enemy (Like anybody'd do that)
5	Failure to kill an enemy in a timely fashion (Research allowed, excuses not)
4	Failing to complete a mission (Ninjas always win)
3	Refuse a job because of moral dilemma (Exception is Prey Exclusion)
2	Refusing to kill a target after accepting the mission (No take backs)
1	Killing for fun (Freaking icky)

In the void is purpose, and non-existence of good and evil.
Myomoto Musashi,
The Void,
The Book of Five Rings

Ninja Philosophy Mash-Up

The Way of Stalking Alone

While the Ninja-Guy Morality Code is based on accomplishing the mission, the outlook it is derived from is based on the works of (who else) Myomoto Musashi, legendary samurai.

It mainly concerns itself with training and self-denial. The following is the Ninja-Guy take on the work "The Way of Walking Alone."

Re-Heated Precepts:

Accept everything just the way it is.

It's a big ugly world out there, and a ninja's gotta understand that he's not here to save it from itself. Know that good things happen, bad things happen, and when all else fails, ninjas happen. Long story short, you need to be able to look at the world and see what's really there instead of what you want to be there.

Do not seek pleasure for its own sake.

It's easy to get lost in the world of Super Nacho flavored potato chips and instant porn but those that do, never come back. Even a momentary lapse of self control can expose you to your enemies. Just ask Molly Hatchet's victims.

It's important to point out that you shouldn't avoid pleasurable experiences as long as they're instructive or beneficial, and you're going mostly for the benefit, such as learning history and fighting techniques from anime.

Do not, under any circumstances, depend on a partial feeling.

Star Wars was close to right. You have to trust your gut, but only when it's screaming at the top of it's lungs. Also, don't waffle. Make a decision and see the frickin' thing through.

Think lightly of yourself and deeply of the world.

Okay, so ninjas are the baddest of the bad, but not because they hide under their beds and hope for the best. Ninjas put themselves on the line all the time. They have to not just think of themselves lightly but completely forget about themselves to accomplish the mission.

Be detached from desire your whole life long.

Serious impulse control. Control so good you don't even have the grabby impulses to begin with.

Do not regret what you have done.

This is an important one; "Get over it." You have to do what you have to do, and when done, you have two options. Either you chalk it up as a mistake and learn from it or you file it as a success and learn from it. One way or the other everything that you do is a success of a kind.

That said, the less you screw up, the better.

Never be jealous.

You are a ninja. You are the baddest of the baddest of the baddest. What could you possibly be jealous of? Sure, rich guys have cool stuff, hot women, and loads of money, but you drop a rich guy onto a desert island with some crazy monster and see what he can do. I guarantee you he won't miraculously learn killer archery and return to the world as a poor man's Bruce Wayne.

Never let yourself be saddened by a separation.

You are and will ever be alone, even with friends. You have to be, or you get into that whole crap about being there just for company, which is the whole pleasure-for-it's-own-sake junk that tops the list.

You are alone. Suck it up, tough guy.

Resentment and complaint are appropriate neither for oneself nor others.

Quit bitching. Simple, right?

Do not let yourself be guided by the feeling of lust or love.

There are a lot of hotties out there and a ninja's got to be careful about getting caught in there web-o'sexiness. Be vigilant. A weak moment here could get you killed, STD'd, or baby-daddy'd on Springer. None of these are ninja worthy outcomes.

In all things have no preferences.

This is about everything and nothing (deep right?). Mostly weapons and tactics. You can't get too reliant on using the same thing over and over again or somebody is going to spot a way to use it against you. You've got to use a lot of techniques, weapons, aliases, and fast food joints so that enemies don't find a pattern.

Be indifferent to where you live.

So already here. Though this doesn't just mean, move around a lot, it also means don't be afraid to rough it in the woods. That said, probably won't being seeing Baltimore again soon.

Do not pursue the taste of good food.

Again, this is about being utilitarian. You don't have to seek out the worst tasting food on the planet, but food is food. If you have to eat Fear Factor chow to not starve, do so. Don't ever get in the habit of fine dining. The waiters are probably trying to kill you.

Do not act following customary beliefs.

Most idiots choose their religion and beliefs by what's popular. It's like fashion for the soul. Ninjas choose the beliefs that get the freaking job done. Just because everybody jumps off a cliff, doesn't mean ninjas should. Ninjas should be occupied looking like everyone else while pushing their target off the cliff.

Do not hold on to possessions you no longer need.

You left your crib and teddy bear behind a long time ago, this is no different. Note that need is the key word here. Don't ever be afraid to ditch equipment, possessions, or people that are unnecessary.

Do not collect weapons or practice with weapons beyond what is useful.

If a weapon doesn't have a use it's not a weapon, it's a trinket. Carry what you can use and use what you carry.

Do not fear death.

This one is kind of redundant when you look at the rest of the list, but I guess we should chat about it. Ninja's stalk alone. In a lot of senses, the stuff we deny ourselves to become what we are is what most people consider life to be made of. In some senses, we're already dead. So this means more than just, "Don't get scared of being killed or dying" it also means that super-badass ninjas walk the path of self-denial. We are the dead.

Cool, huh?

Do not seek to possess either goods or fiefs for your old age.

Couple things here. First, you're a ninja. Keep your freaking eyes on your target and your free time on your training. Don't get lost in fantasies about living to get old and wrinkled. You're not gonna make it.

Second, land and comfort and wealth is for people that are fat and stupid. You're a ninja. You're after immortality in legend and having a killer rep, not tending a garden in some freaking old fart's home.

Yeesh.

Respect Buddha and the gods without counting on their help.

Okay. I honestly don't care about the Buddha or gods, but this is about being polite. If a giant world-killing monstrosity comes calling, it's perfectly appropriate to use "sir" and "ma'am" in a sentence. By the same token, don't expect some divine force to save your ninja-booty when things go bad.

Ninja-booty saves itself.

Never stray from the Way.

You are a ninja, this is your code. Well, this is a samurai code that been converted to ninja purposes, but since we're thieves as well as assassins, it's pretty appropriate that we stole our honor code instead of building it from scrap. We're just that good.

▲Overseer of the Years

Jake's Morality, as such. Note that it can only go to 5, as suitable for Mythos Lore 5.

Path of the Overseer	Action
5	Vulgar displays of power
4	Claiming to "know" anything as a fact
3	Refusing to question belief structures, religious conviction or authority whenever encountered
2	Refusing to pursue any knowledge considered "forbidden" or "taboo"
1	Refusing any opportunity to test one's Will

▲Power and the Inner Voice

▲Road of Heaven

▲Road of Hell

▲Ruthless

Characters on the path of Ruthless are driven, ambitious, and unstoppable. Everything and everyone that gets in their way is an obstacle to be circumvented, navigated, or destroyed as appropriate. Many characters or beings that act in line with this path of enlightenment are not actually on such, and instead have low Humanity scores. This indicates that said being is more of a broken shell of a man than an enlightened, zen killing machine. (Tony Montana from Scarface, for example, would have been on the path of Humanity, not Ruthless)

When on the path of Ruthless, at all times, you must have a short term and long term goal written down. A short term goal is usually mission/game oriented like "Surviving a stay on the island" or "Killing the main target monster." A long term goal is lofty and difficult to accomplish, but not impossible. Good examples of long term goals would be "Destroying PISCES" or "Colonizing the Moon." Usually, you will also have an immediate goal ("Climb this mountain," "Kill this monster"). Immediate goals should be kept clearly in mind, but don't need to be written down.

The following table gives examples of acts that trigger Enlightenment checks for characters with Ruthless. For example, a character with a Ruthless rating of 7 would be required to make a Conviction check if they allow living obstacles to get in their way, get distracted from their goals, take a vacation, or change a long-term goal on the fly.

Ruthless	Action
1	Changing or failing a long-term goal
2	Taking a vacation
3	Taking orders from some mamsy pamsy wuss who can't get the job done
4	Favoring shorter-term goals over longer-term goals.
5	Getting significantly distracted from your stated goals (e.g. Starting a campaign against cancer while having an unrelated long term goal)
6	Changing or failing a short-term goal
7	Allowing an entity that you could kill to get in your way
8	Taking an indirect approach because of possible personal harm
9	Failing an immediate goal
10	Participating in an activity that doesn't immediately bring you closer to completing your goals

▲Scorched Heart

▲Scoundrel

Scoundrel is a variant of the Humanity Morality Path. It is based on a few basic principles. First, don't instigate violence. If you're looking for a Path that lets you murder children and eat the hearts of virgins, look elsewhere. Second, don't stop people from exercising their free will, especially when it helps you.

Scoundrels can't be bothered to follow the petty laws about property and ownership. They respect their marks too much (sort of). See, who is a scoundrel to stop you from handing over your life savings? Sure, you may have been told it's going into a trust fund for your kids, or that it's off to help starving children in Africa, or even that it's helping build a temple to the Lord so everyone can get to Heaven. But that doesn't mean said scoundrel is a thief, just a liar. He wouldn't dare dream of taking away your God-given right to make decisions, especially the bad ones...

Scoundrel appeals to a wide variety of rapscallions such as conmen, televangelists, politicians, gamblers, and hustlers.

Scoundrel	Action
10	Getting scammed (you should know better)
9	Consequences (even the best scoundrel trips up; just be sure that you're out the door and never caught)
8	Moral objections (never turn down a mark you could scam for "moral" reasons)
7	Take a hit (never accept the most dangerous task)
6	Trickster's code (never interrupt another scoundrel's scam as long as it doesn't impede you)
5	Better part of valor (never fight when you can get what you want another way)
4	Provoked violence (assault, manslaughter)
3	Planned violence (premeditated murder)
2	Callous violence (serial rape)
1	Utter perversion, heinous act (mass murder)

▲Taoism

Taoism is a complex school of thought that is difficult to express in words. Understanding of the Tao cannot be explained; it must be felt and experienced. Many Taoists who seek to instruct do so through example, and through careful questioning, designed to bring their students to come to a realization on their own. Taoists tend to be strongly contemplative, looking for hidden meanings in all things, constantly seeking to learn more of the natural flow of the Tao.

The above style of teaching also follows a major principle of Taoism – that of Wu Wei, action through inaction, or doing things without actually doing anything. A Taoist will try to apply the minimal amount of effort necessary to accomplish a goal, as seen with the style of instruction above. The Taoist could give precise and clear instructions about how to understand the Tao, but that is not of the Tao. Telling the student just enough for him to draw his own conclusions, however, is of the Tao.

Because of the principle of Wu Wei, a Taoist is incredibly patient. Acting just enough to create a situation for the problem to solve itself often results in the problem taking time to resolve itself – often taking far longer than others are willing to accept. But where others will seek faster options, a Taoist will typically stay his course, waiting until an ideal opportunity presents itself.

Another major principle of Taoism is that of yin yang. Simply expressed, this is the concept of dependent balance. There cannot be light without dark, life without death, what goes up must come down. There is balance in all things – there must be balance in all things, because the Tao is everything that is. It is comprised of all things, equal and opposite.

A Taoist judges all beings by whether they are acting in harmony with the Tao. There are few other considerations; even a past history or an obviously inhuman appearance will make no difference to the Taoist. If the being is acting in accordance with the Tao, they are existing harmoniously. If they are not acting with the Tao, or are actively acting against it, then an appropriate correction of some sort must be rendered.

In the unlikely instance that a Taoist becomes a leader of men, he will always rule with a light hand. A Taoist does not seek to control others, but to guide them. The ideal for a Taoist 'state' would be to have influenced and instructed the people such that the governing hand of the ruler is unnecessary, and the people essentially self-govern.

Taoists usually take the long term view in regard to achieving their goals. Their aim when solving a problem is to not only solve the immediate problem, but to ensure that it continues to solve itself in the future, such that it never becomes an issue again.

Of the Virtues of Taoism, one of the most important is harmony with the universe. To exist with the world, rather than in spite of it, is one of the ultimate goals of a Taoist. This desire engenders great respect for elders, and for spirits especially. Elders are considered to typically understand more of the Tao, and therefore are closer to being in true harmony with it. Taoist spirits are typified as the final state of a true Taoist, living eternally in harmony with the universe, able only to act with great precision and care, and possessed of great wisdom to instruct those that follow them on the path.

Moderation, too is a desirable virtue in a Taoist. To go beyond what is necessary is not a harmonious act, as you are pushing beyond the bounds of what the universe requires of you. A perfect example of this would be in sharpening a knife - hone it to a razor's edge edge, and you are done. If you try to improve on what is already sufficient, you will blunt the blade, and possibly even do more harm than good.

This tendency towards moderation leads toward another Taoist value: humility. A Taoist does not care what he can do, beyond being able to do what he must do. Pride clouds one's perspective of one's own abilities, giving a person unrealistic views of himself. Being willing to acknowledge ones flaws and accept the truth for what it is is of the Tao. Denial is not.

Humility, in turn, fuels compassion. A Taoist is always compassionate, because a Taoist harbors no sense of superiority. He is equal to all living things in all ways; even age and mastery of the Tao do not elevate one being higher than another. This absolute equality means that there is no reason not to be concerned for the well-being of another.

Taoism	Action
10	Seeking to change the world
9	Refusing to acknowledge one's faults
8	Impatience
7	Failure to respect one's elders
6	Overachieving
5	Intolerance
4	Arrogance
3	Greed
2	Inflexibility
1	Controlling

10. Seeking to change the world

"Do you want to improve the world? I don't think it can be done. The world is sacred. It can't be improved. If you tamper with it, you'll ruin it. If you treat it like an object, you'll lose it."

Acting to change the world, to move it from its current course, is to act against the natural flow and harmony of the universe. What will happen, must happen. Any attempts to turn the world from its natural course will only make things worse in the end.

9. Refusing to acknowledge one's faults

"A great nation is like a great man: When he makes a mistake, he realizes it. Having realized it, he admits it. Having admitted it, he corrects it. He considers those who point out his faults as his most benevolent teachers."

Wisdom can come from anywhere; one must always be willing to pay heed to the words of others in the journey to understand the Tao. Even a child can lend a new viewpoint that his elders have not considered.

8. Impatience

"Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?"

With time, all things come to pass. If nothing presents itself for your current task, wait for a time; seek out other possibilities. An option will present itself.

7. Failure to respect one's elders

"The ancient Masters were profound and subtle. Their wisdom was unfathomable."

Your elders have lived longer than you, and have had more time to learn the ways of the world. Even if you disagree with them, they are to be accorded respect for this knowledge.

6. Overachieving

"Fill your bowl to the brim, and it will spill. Keep sharpening your knife, and it will blunt. Chase after money and insecurity, and your heart will never unclench. Care about people's approval, and you will be their prisoner."

Do what must be done, and no more. Acting above and beyond what is necessary can be just as damaging as refusing to do what must be done. Precision is desirable.

5. Intolerance

"The Tao doesn't take sides; it gives birth to both good and evil. The Master doesn't take sides; he welcomes both saints and sinners."

Do not judge a person on their actions of the past; judge them on their actions of the present. A Saint can sin, and a Sinner may yet become a Saint.

4. Arrogance

"The Master views the parts with compassion, because he understands the whole. His constant practice is humility. He doesn't glitter like a jewel but lets himself be shaped by the Tao, as rugged and common as stone."

The Taoist is not unique, he is not glorious. The Taoist is but a man who does what he can and must, just as all should.

3. Greed

"If you overvalue posessions, people begin to steal."

Materialism is not of the Tao. Use what you need, and no more. What you have that is left over, give it to those in need, but only so much as they need.

2. Inflexibility

"Men are born soft and supple; dead, they are stiff and hard. Plants are born tender and pliant; dead, they are brittle and dry. Thus whoever is stiff and inflexible is a disciple of death. Whoever is soft and yielding is a disciple of life."

Change is a part of life. Refusal to change and learn is a refusal to live and grow.

1. Controlling

"Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course? Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things?"

To seek to control others is not of the Tao. The world weaves as it will. You must know when to lend your advice, and when to simply watch events unfold.

▲Ubermenchen

Rejecting Master-Slave Morality and embracing "The Path of The Ubermenchen"

A favorite motto of Nietzsche, taken from Pindar, reads: ***"Become what you are."***

Master-morality is the original system of morality in which value arises as a contrast between good and evil, or between 'life-affirming' and 'life-denying': wealth, strength, health, and power are the sort of traits counted as good; while evil is associated with the poor, weak, sick, and pathetic, the sort of traits conventionally associated with slaves.

Slave-morality, in contrast, comes about as a reaction to master-morality. Here, value emerges from the contrast between good and evil: good being associated with other-worldliness, charity, piety, restraint, meekness, and submission; evil seen as worldly, cruel, selfish, wealthy, and aggressive. Nietzsche sees slave-morality born out of the slave's own sense of inferiority before the (better-off) masters. It does so by making out slave weakness to be a matter of choice, by, e.g., relabeling it as "meekness."

The establishment of moral systems based on a dichotomy of good and evil are a calamitous error and the individual should strive to bring about a new, more naturalistic source of value in the vital impulses of life itself.

Nietzsche calls for exceptional people to no longer be ashamed of their uniqueness in the face of a supposed morality-for-all, which he deemed to be harmful to the flourishing of exceptional people. However, Nietzsche cautions that morality, per se, is not bad; it is good for the masses, and should be left to them. ***Exceptional people, on the other hand, should follow their own "inner law."***

The Inner Law	
10	Thou shalt not deny the greatness of thyself.
9	Thou shalt not make excuses for thine own actions.
8	Thou shalt not make excuses for the actions of lesser men.
7	Thou shalt prize truth in all matters and strive to be correct.
6	Thou shalt pursue undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit.
5	Thou shalt pursue your vital existence and spurn spiritual pipe dreams.
4	Thou shalt avoid petty laws and useless officials.
3	Thou shalt rule thy passion – faith – tradition – and all things with tempered reason.
2	Thou shalt reproduce wisely bearing the next generation of Ubermenchen.
1	Thou shalt not squander thy existence.

Explanation:

10: Allowing any of the below actions to occur. Abandoning the Path of the Ubermenschen to lead a mundane life of 'Normalcy.' (Conceding to the ultimate failure of one's true existence and settling for less – total capitulation to Slave Morality.)

9: Appearing to make excuses. Or accepting any personal failures short of catastrophic 'Acts of God' beyond anyone's control that could not be potently successful through diligent pursuit or by going 'back to the drawing board' for a new approach. Nothing comes easy, some things take time...

8: Accepting excuses from others, or defending their actions and failings because of emotional ties, friendships, and the like. Occasional failure is a fact of life, but when it becomes the norm ... "The definition of insanity is repeating the same actions but expecting different results every time."

7: Lying, or allowing yourself to be only partially accurate or partially successful; being sloppy. Strive for perfection! Less than complete success is not acceptable.

6: Lying to yourself; accepting adulterated knowledge. (Study Sorcery – high magic – rather than Mythos Magic – low magic; be conservative rather than liberal; develop personal power rather than 'siphoning power' off a greater being.)

5: Failing to focus on the here-and-now. Life is to be lived in the context of what can be achieved in the reality of the present rather than occupying one's self with flights of fancy offered by an uncertain future. (Let's concern ourselves with what we can do now and surviving to the next Game rather than daydreaming about what we could do 20 Games from now and losing oneself in delusions of grandeur.) "Why worry about the wolves ranging outside the fence when you are ignoring the ones at your door!"

4: Obeying laws that don't make sense or officials who aren't serving a meaningful purpose. Being in servitude to persons or ideas that are beneath you - embracing 'Slave Morality.' These are things you will be forced to work 'around' rather than for.

3: Losing your temper, being emotional, or acting based on faith or tradition rather than logic. Never let the Heart rule the Mind.

2: Failing to arrange suitable consort or consorts and produce children of good blood. The program must continue to the next Generation!

1: Risking your life for an unworthy cause or for insufficiently important individuals. It would be insane to sacrifice assets for the sake of saving a liability! (If that guy wants to run off on his own and later you find him unconscious ... he stays where he fell!)

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

Experience

A Wiki for High Rollers » Guide for New Players » "Leveling Up" » Experience

Building a Better you...

Spending Experience

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
- Merits: Rating x3 to acquire; requires approval of two GMs
- Flaws: Buying off Flaws costs Rating x3 and requires approval of two GMs
- Maneuvers: 2 XP each
- Sorcery Rituals: 2 XP each
- Mythos Spells: Complexity x2

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

Magic typically costs Current Rating x7 to advance.

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

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.)

Earning 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.

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 for every Game 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).

In addition to Experience Points, characters may earn Study Points through the Mentor, Laboratory, or Library backgrounds or by being taught by another player character. See the Study Points page for more details.

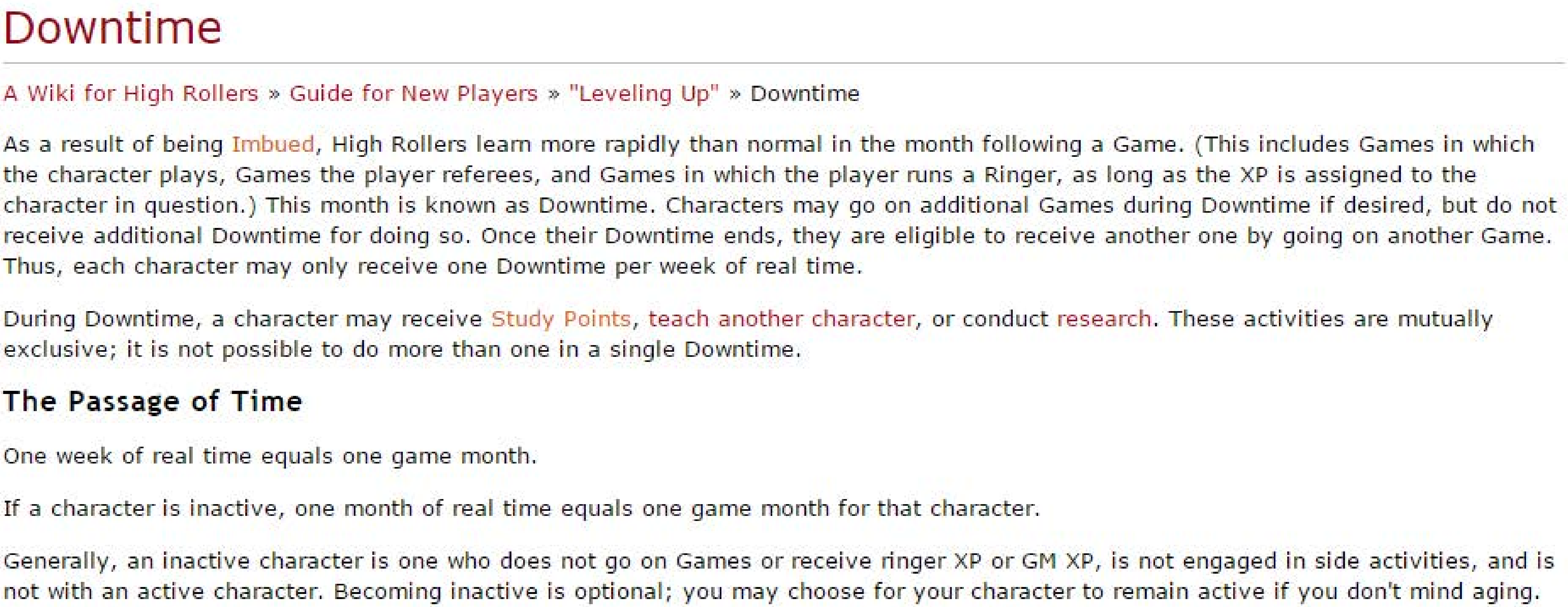
GM's receive 10 XP and a Downtime for any single character.

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

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.

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.

Retainers receive 5 XP for winning a Game. Characters other than High Rollers and Retainers do not receive Experience Points from Games or any other source.



Downtime

A Wiki for High Rollers » Guide for New Players » "Leveling Up" » 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.

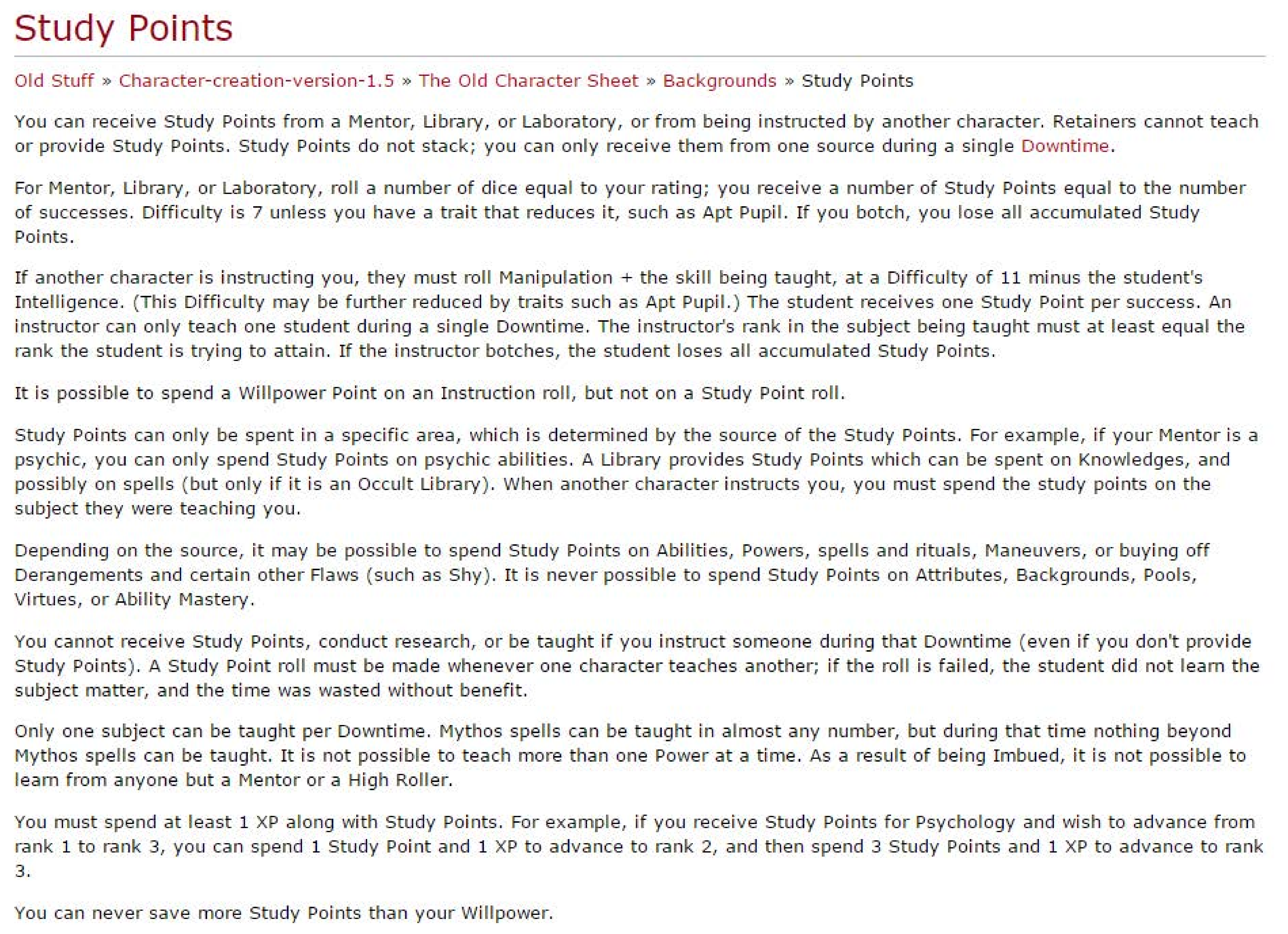
During Downtime, a character may receive Study Points, teach another character, or conduct research. These activities are mutually exclusive; it is not possible to do more than one in a single Downtime.

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.



Study Points

Old Stuff » Character-creation-version-1.5 » The Old Character Sheet » Backgrounds » Study Points

You can receive Study Points from a Mentor, Library, or Laboratory, or from being instructed by another character. Retainers cannot teach or provide Study Points. Study Points do not stack; you can only receive them from one source during 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). 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.

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 can never save more Study Points than your Willpower.

Maneuvers

A Wiki for High Rollers » Guide for New Players » Optional Systems » 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 can't specify that you're cutting off his right hand. When you shoot at him, you can'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 your 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 Powers into Maneuvers.

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.

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 (or Hard Martial Arts)
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 round (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.

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.

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).

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.

Each Specialized Maneuver is based on a certain Basic Maneuver, and will enhance or alter that Basic Maneuver.

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.

Many Maneuvers have one or more prerequisites. Complex unarmed combat moves often 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 may not have a prerequisite, but the best Maneuvers require mastery of the underlying skills.

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.
- +2 Difficulty: 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.
- 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.

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 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.
- Destroy Organ: The attack automatically destroys one specified organ (brain, heart, lungs, etc.). This may have limited effect 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 an unfamiliar environment, such as fighting underwater or fighting blind, is reduced by 2. The cost is 2.

Examples of Specialized Maneuvers

▲ Dodge Maneuvers

Evasion
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
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
Basic Maneuver: Dodge
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
Dexterity + Dodge
Basic Maneuver: Dodge
Description: You move your Jump distance when you Dodge.

▲ Martial Arts Maneuvers

Heavy Punch
Dexterity + Hard Martial Arts
Basic Maneuver: Punch
Limitations: Committed
Prerequisites: Hard Martial Arts 5
Benefits: +3 Damage

Hammer Blow
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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 dice

▲ Melee Maneuvers

Cleave
Dexterity + Weapon
Basic Maneuver: Slash
Limitations: Committed, +2 Difficulty
Prerequisite: Weapon 5
Benefits: Decapitating (2), +2 Damage

Tendon Slice
Dexterity + Weapon
Basic Maneuver: Slash
Limitations: Committed
Prerequisite: Weapon 5
Benefit: Crippling (2), +1 Damage

Counter-Thrust
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

Brutal Parry
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)

Entangle
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
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
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.
Damage: None
Prerequisite: Weapon 5
Benefits: Threshold (1), -1 Difficulty

Penetrating Blow
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)

Critical Strike
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
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)

Destroy Heart
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)

▲ Firearms Maneuvers

Fast Draw
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
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
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
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
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
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)

▲ 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
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
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
Description: Reduces the Difficulty reduction gained by attackers flanking or attacking from behind by 1, provided you are aware of them.

Sidearm Throw
Basic Maneuver: Throw
Description: Increases Strength by 2 for determining the distance and damage of thrown objects.
Limitations: Committed

Reach
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
Description: You may use Punch and Kick Maneuvers even while Grappled.

Shield Use
Description: You may impose a +1 Difficulty on all frontal attacks by proper use of a shield in your off-hand.

Speed Drinking
Description: You may consume one dose of alcohol per turn without splitting your dice pool, assuming it is readily available.

Blind Fighting
Description: Reduces the penalty for blindness by 2.

Slippery Footing
Description: Reduces the penalty for fighting on slippery ground by 2.

Ground Fighting
Description: Reduces the penalty for fighting while prone by 2.

Blind Man's Sight (Touch)
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)
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.

Old System for Gifts

Old Stuff » Old System for Gifts

The method used to lure characters to games are the "Gifts" presented by the Harbingers. These also represent the primary means of advancement for high-rollers. Each gift empowers a character based on their core concept and ambition. While these rewards will vary wildly from character to character, some generalities can be observed.

Ideally Gifts should be evocative as possible as well as internally consistent. Characters should be able to understand how their Powers function, as well as be able to to discuss the "metaphysics" of their Powers to some degree.

Common Gifts

- Powers: The most powerful and common gifts are Powers, typically represented as 1 to 5 paths. These should be tailored to the individual, and should avoid replication of sourced abilities or Powers possessed by other players except in the most generic circumstances. A major point of these Games is to develop characters that are utterly unique from all others.
- Magic: There are three dominant types of magic - Mythos, Sorcery, and Legacy magic. Magical tomes, teachers, and spells can be awarded to casters. Such characters will often have spells that only they can cast in lieu of very unique powers.
- Generic Gifts: Various generic bonuses and effects; this includes Advantages, Ability Masteries, and rarely Merits
- Mythic Attributes: Receiving a Mythic Attribute as a gift allows you to use experience to advance an attribute as high as 8. Each level after 5 comes with a standard power as well. Mythic attributes are fitting for characters that could be described as having otherworldly "super" attributes. For example, Superman and Hercules would qualify for mythic strength, whereas an extra-strong cyborg generally wouldn't. There are ways to advance attribute scores above 5 without mythic attributes.
- Items: Enchanted or superior items (such as Black Tech) are perfectly acceptable Gifts. A few Items may be so powerful that they require "attunement" before their full abilities can be unlocked. Such artifacts are usually represented by a Background rating.
- Augmentation: Be it in the form of cybernetics, genetic manipulation, or magical tattoos, Augmentation covers any integral enhancement to a character that does not come with an XP cost. While typically limited in scope, these Gifts allow conservation of points. However, there is a "Humanity" cost to Augmentation. Players familiar with Cyberpunk can guess what this entails.
- Pools: Supernatural Pools are often used to activate Powers, and can have effects of their own.
- Templates: The rarest of all, Templates redefine the base nature of the character (e.g. becomes a vampire). They cannot typically be achieved in a single Gift, and will usually be assigned a "rating" of Gifts and quests dedicated before they can be attained (3 to 10 being average). Once attained, the Template applies in full.

Gift Guidelines and Limitations

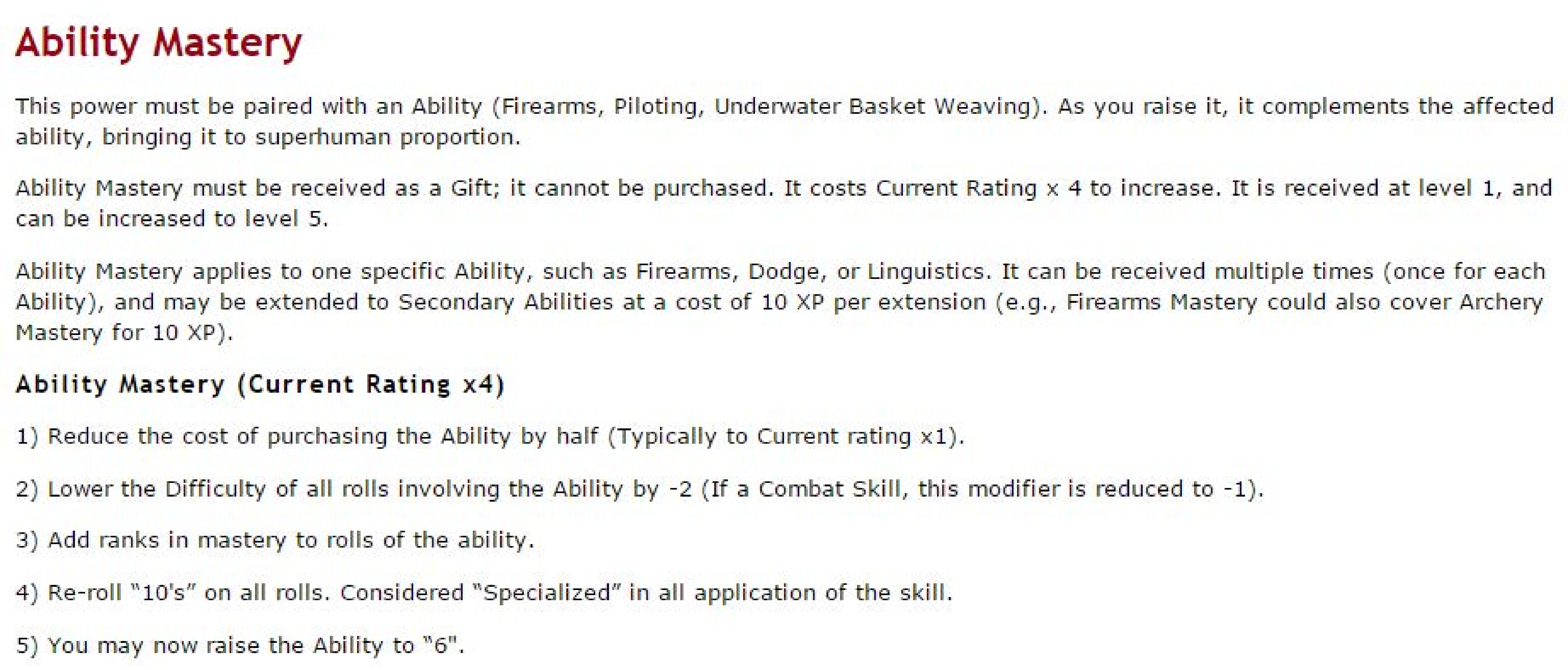
While Gifts can achieve almost any effect, some things are not possible, either because the Powers that be will not grant them, or because they rely on systems/templates that are outlawed.

- All gifts must enhance a character's core concept. For example, a private eye character is unlikely to get healing powers out of left field, while a military commando character is unlikely to learn mythos magic. These restrictions are relaxed (but never removed) for high seasoned and vet characters.
- 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.
- An integral weakness of a Template or concept can never be entirely eliminated (vampires will never become Immune to Sunlight as a Gift).
- Sphere Magick (as per Mage: The Ascension) is not possible. Sorcery is used instead.
- Gifts should never solve problems directly. Rather, characters should be given abilities that give them a chance to solve their own problems (if they're good enough).
- Don't request Gifts based on your character's perceived weaknesses, or on what you need to be able to do something. Rather, request Gifts based on what your Concept should logically have.

Refusing Gifts

Players are NOT required to accept a Gift they feel damages their Concept. In the event this comes up, contact an impartial GM and discuss it with them. You always have the option to receive no Gift for that Game, but GMs should make an extreme effort to grant a fitting gift when a character is owed one.

Characters are typically revised after their first 10 successful Games 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.



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 proportion.

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 Abilities at a cost of 10 XP per extension (e.g., Firearms Mastery could also cover Archery Mastery for 10 XP).

Ability Mastery (Current Rating x4)

1) Reduce the cost of purchasing the Ability by half (Typically to Current rating x1).

2) Lower the Difficulty of all rolls involving the Ability by -2 (If a Combat Skill, this modifier is reduced to -1).

3) Add ranks in mastery to rolls of the ability.

4) Re-roll "10's" on all rolls. Considered "Specialized" in all application of the skill.

5) You may now raise the Ability to "6".

Restricted Backgrounds

These Advantages are gifted at level 1 and cost current rating x 3 experience to advance.

Common Advantages

▲ 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, & the increase lasts for the Scene.

▲ 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. To remember details about you, strangers must roll Wits + Alertness (Difficulty: your Arcane +3).

▲ Channeling

Channelling (also called Bata'a, Destrier, or Medium) is a rare Background typically practised only by Psychics, Priests, & Shamans. Essentially, it makes it easier for entities to possess you, & increases the power they can wield while in control.

For every level in this Background, the Difficulty for an Entity to possess you is -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, & respect you accordingly.

This Background may be awarded at 5, or less if the Player wishes.

▲ 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 or somatic component), you may make a Wits + Intuition check to notice it.

1) General Counterspell
The caster spends 1 Willpower and rolls Wits + Occult (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 (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 Countermagic. May be used as a defensive action.

3) Unweaving
By spending a Willpower point and rolling Intelligence + Occult (Diff: 8), you may pick apart existing effects. The number of successes required is set 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 (Diff: 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 (Diff: 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, the 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.

▲ 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.

▲ 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 & 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

▲ Geasa

This background is only available as a Gift, awarded at 1. For each level you may select 1 Benefit/Ban that must be related somehow. When you suffer the Ban, you typically regain a point of the pool this Background is attached to. 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 & 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 there 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 3 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. One person may only use this ability once per year.

Boon: Every time you are commanded, gain a point of Glamour.

▲ Headquarters

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.

▲ Signature Item

Magic Rings, Body Armour, Tuning Forks, or your lucky rabbit's foot all fall into this category.

Signature Items cannot be permanently lost or destroyed. No other benefit is gained, & you may select 1 Signature Item per level you have in this Background.

▲ Signature Vehicle

Be it a trusty steed, tricked out motorcycle, rusty pick-up or flying saucer, you have certain vehicles you have come to rely on.

For every level in this Background, 1 vehicle of your choice is "Signature" (cannot be permanently lost or destroyed). You gain a bonus of +2 dice while piloting your Signature Vehicles.

▲ 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.

▲ Spell Layering

(Current Rating x 3) (available as a Gift: 1, or Casters may purchase as normal)

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 Int. + Occult against difficulty 8. If you succeed, enchant it as normal, if you fail, the time is lost. The maximum number of enhancements is 1+rating. If you practice multiple kinds of Magic, you must purchase Spell Layering for each type.

▲ 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.

Mythic Attributes

Mythic Attributes allow a character to extend their Attributes to legendary levels. They represent a supernatural mastery over a particular aspect of themselves. For a character to qualify for a Mythic Attribute, both the character's mythic quality and the Attribute's mythic nature for that character must be clearly apparent (Strength for Hercules, Appearance for Helen, Dexterity for William Tell or Robin Hood). As such, not all characters qualify for Mythic Attributes.

Beyond flavor, there are a few other restrictions on who can receive Mythic Attributes:

- Body-Swappers are generally not fit for Mythic Attributes.
- The few characters who fall under the "near-immortal/demigod" category cannot be granted Mythic Attributes.
- Characters using a Template that offers superhuman Attributes as part of its build cannot be granted Mythic Attributes.

When a Mythic Attribute is received as a Gift, that Trait's maximum is raised to 8. The Trait itself is not increased; the character must spend XP to raise it, as normal. The "Mythic" bonus only occurs when the Attribute is raised to the appropriate level.

Mythic Attributes are very rare and are limited to Mummy Hekau (already integrated into the Mummy Template), Faeries (likewise), or specific Gifts (which should be uncommon to avoid replication and redundancy). No character can ever have more than two Mythic Attributes, and these Attributes can never be raised above 8. (Items may be awarded normally.)

Mythic Attributes cannot be achieved through Enchantment or similar means. When you are awarded an item that grants a bonus to an Attribute, it should provide +1 to a single Attribute for each Gift invested, and will not provide Mythic Attributes. (However, if a character who already has a Mythic Attribute has that Attribute boosted by an item, the appropriate Mythic benefits are received.) Obviously, you must have the talisman on your person for it to work, and further limitations may apply in the individual item description.

Mythic Attribute modifiers do not stack with any other effect that does the same thing. For example, extra mental actions from Mythic Intelligence would not stack with Mentat's Quantum Multitasking, and a Difficulty reduction from a Mythic Attribute will not stack with Ability Mastery. (The extra dice provided by Masteries always apply, regardless of whether the Difficulty reduction from the Mythic Attribute is greater than that from the Mastery.)

Mythic Strength

Attribute	Effect
6	The Difficulty of physical damage rolls (Brawl, Melee) is reduced by 1. Slide 2 levels up the Feat of Strength chart. You can carry up to 200 pounds without being encumbered.
7	The Difficulty of physical damage rolls (Brawl, Melee) is reduced by 2. Slide 4 levels up the Feat of Strength chart. You can carry up to 275 pounds without being encumbered.
8	The Difficulty of physical damage rolls (Brawl, Melee) is reduced by 3. Slide 6 levels up the Feat of Strength chart. You can carry up to 350 pounds without being encumbered.

Mythic Dexterity

Attribute	Effect
6	You may take 1 additional action per turn. You receive a +4 bonus to initiative rolls.
7	You may take 2 additional actions per turn. You receive a +8 bonus to initiative rolls.
8	You may take 3 additional actions per turn. You receive a +12 bonus to initiative rolls.

Mythic Stamina

Attribute	Effect
6	You gain an additional Bruised Health Level. You can hold your breath for two times your Stamina plus Endurance minutes. You soak Lethal Damage at Difficulty 8.
7	You gain 2 additional Bruised Health Levels. You are Immune to mundane poisons and diseases. You may soak Lethal Damage at Difficulty 6, and Aggravated Damage at Difficulty 8.
8	You gain 3 additional Bruised Health Levels. You are immune to fatigue, and soak all types of damage at Difficulty 6. You can go three times longer than a normal human without food or drink, and need consume only half as much as a normal human.

Mythic Charisma

Attribute	Effect
6	People are easily swayed by your presence and usually obey you reflexively. When you make a request, be it to your secretary for a cup of coffee, a call to the masses to enlist for a coming war, or even orders to charge the machine gun entrenchment, anyone who fails a Self-Control check (Difficulty: Your Charisma + 2) does your bidding without a thought.
7	Anyone interacting with you must roll Willpower (Difficulty: Your Charisma) or be overcome by fear or awe as you desire. Individuals will perform most commands without thinking first, especially if it does not go against their Nature. Those with supernatural abilities may spend 1 Willpower to remain unaffected for the scene.
8	As 7, but now usable on crowds and gatherings. Those with supernatural abilities may spend 1 Willpower per turn to remain unaffected.

Mythic Manipulation

Attribute	Effect
6	You may void personality-based Merits and Flaws for one character for a scene. Roll Manipulation + Persuasion at Difficulty 6 in an opposed check against the target's Willpower for an unwilling subject. The net successes gained determines how many points of Merits or Flaws may be voided. Possible Merits/Flaws include Short Fuse, Driving Goal, Higher Purpose, Daredevil, etc.
7	You are immune to any mundane method of lie detection, and may substitute your Manipulation score for the Difficulty of any effect that would discover your Nature or determine if you are lying.
8	You can now Bond a target by speaking to them for an hour. Roll Manipulation + Subterfuge (Difficulty: Target's Self-Control + 3) in an opposed check against their Willpower. The effect lasts for a number of months equal to your successes. Alternatively, you may send a Frenzy-prone target into that state or add a Derangement of your choosing by making the same roll.

Mythic Perception

Attribute	Effect
6	You can isolate and track specific scents, see for a full mile, and 'feel' objects from a number of feet away equal to your Perception. You can hear people speaking through anything less than a perfectly soundproofed room. You are no longer impaired by natural darkness.
7	You may roll Perception as Passive Counter-Magic against any effect that clouds, obscures, or deceives the senses. You can now perceive things beyond normal human senses; infrared, ultraviolet, and sonar are just a few examples. You can see for two miles.
8	You can see for three miles. You may substitute Perception for Dexterity in combat, and are immune to any sense-confounding effect of level 5 or below. Additionally, you are impervious to Arcane.

Mythic Intelligence

Attribute	Effect
6	Lightning Calculator (you have a natural affinity for numbers, and all relevant rolls are at -2 Difficulty) and Eidetic Memory (you remember, with perfect detail, things seen and heard; documents, photographs, conversations, etc., can be committed to memory with only minor concentration; under stressful conditions involving numerous distractions, you must make a Perception + Alertness roll at Difficulty 6 to summon enough concentration to absorb what your senses detect). Always in effect.
7	You gain the ability to utilize intuitive knowledge. You may roll Intelligence at Difficulty 7 to gain temporary levels in a Skill or Knowledge not possessed or at less than 5. Each success on this roll gives a temporary level, up to 5. The maximum number of intuitive Abilities you may have is equal to your Intelligence. Intuitive skills last for the scene.
8	You gain the ability to form a mental collective. You may absorb the memories of a target and use any knowledge, applicable ability, or magic as if it were your own (but only if you are capable of learning it), as well as access deep memories. Roll Intelligence at Difficulty 7, and spend several hours near the target uninterrupted. At least 3 successes are needed for complete success. An unwilling target may resist with a Willpower roll at Difficulty 7. If you succeed, you may hold the memories for one day per point of Intelligence. Holding memories longer than this requires Self-Control rolls each day thereafter, with a failure resulting in a Derangement.

Mythic Wits

Attribute	Effect
6	You receive a +5 bonus to initiative rolls. You may go into an autistic state, shutting out all distractions. While in this state, add your Wits to your dice pool for any Mental Attribute roll. Other levels of Mythic Wits are suspended while this trance is maintained, and if attacked you are automatically surprised.
7	You receive a +10 bonus to initiative rolls. You cannot be surprised; even if attacked unaware, you instantly react.
8	You receive a +15 bonus to initiative rolls. You may go simultaneously with the highest initiative, if desired.

Powers, Pools, and Templates (Old System)

Old Stuff » Old System for Gifts » Powers, Pools, and Templates (Old System)

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.

A character who receives a Power as a Gift will begin with one level. Most Powers cost Current Rating x 6 to advance.

Acute Senses and similar abilities do not provide a Difficulty reduction for most Powers.

Powers are considered supernatural but not magical.

In certain circumstances it may be possible for a character to teach a Power to another character.

A number of relatively generic Powers are available as examples.

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.

Pools

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.

▲Autonomy/Sentience

Autonomy or Sentience is a system we use to measure the control of a Symbiote, Parasite, Possessing Spirit or similar.

The Entity becomes steadily more self-aware. It is quite possible that it may eventually subvert the host. Events that threaten the life of both Entity & Host will hasten this process, as will mental degeneration of the host.

System: You now have a new trait, rated 1-10. You start with a Permanent rating of 1. For every 10 temporary points you gain, you immediately trade them for a Permanent Point of Sentience. Temporary points are gained in the following manner:

-Whenever you gain a derangement
-Whenever you are reduced to incapacitated (Lethal)
-Whenever you completely expend your temporary Willpower or related Pool
-Whenever you go 24 hours without food/regaining pool in some cases

If you ever have more Permanent Sentience than Permanent Willpower, you lose control of your character. It is not generally possible to remove Sentience, barring certain Powers that specifically do so.

▲Bedlam

Marauders only

▲Chi

Chi - A User's Guide

Yang Chi: You have a number of Yang points equal to your Courage. Yang is active, volatile energy, and powers effects that require intense performance and bursts of activity. Anytime you spend Yang Chi, you take unsoakable Bashing damage equal to the number of points spent.

Yin Chi: You have a number of Yin points equal to your Self-Control. Yin represents passive energy, and powers effects that require focus and stillness. Anytime you spend Yin Chi, you take unsoakable Bashing damage equal to the number of points spent.

Tao: Tao represents your ability to draw on the ambient Chi that permeates the world. You have temporary Tao points equal to your Permanent Tao rating. Tao points may be spent in place of Yin or Yang points. Spending Tao does not inflict Bashing damage. You may choose to substitute your Tao rating for any activation roll of a Chi power.

Regaining Chi: You regain 1 Yin, Yang, and Tao per full night of rest. By meditating for an hour and rolling Manipulation + Meditation (Difficulty: 7), you may regain a number of Yin, Yang, or Tao equal to your successes scored.

Anyone who has a Chi-wielding Power is capable of spending Yin or Yang Chi. Tao must be awarded as a Gift. When awarding Tao, the Character receives 1 Permanent point, and may raise Tao to a maximum of 10 points at an XP cost of Current Rating x2.

▲Glamour

Glamour - A user's guide

To raise permanent Glamour, you must spend experience equal to your current rating x2. Temporary Glamour is restored in a variety of ways, with each individual having their own methods (for Morgan, the Geasa Background is most likely). Glamour is the raw stuff of dreams, magic, & faerie. It defies easy quantification, & those who can perceive it will no doubt see numerous variations.

The basic qualities of Glamour are:

Countermagic: For every point of Permanent Glamour, you may roll 1 die (Difficulty: 6), to resist any magical effect. Each success on this roll subtracts -1 success from the magical effect. This roll is automatic, & takes effect whether you are aware of the magic or not. You may suppress this effect if desired.

Faerie Magic: Most Faerie Magic is powered by Glamour, as listed in the individual power description.

Cold Iron: If in contact with Cold Iron, all Glamour dependent rolls are raised in Difficulty by +2. If actually bound with Cold Iron, all Glamour abilities & magics are totally suppressed.

High Glamour: Glamour ratings above 5 cause certain side effects in mortals, such as:
6- Personality Shift: You must select two Natures, a "Seelie" & "Unseelie" personality archetype. You may pick them, as well as decide the terms under which your shift occurs.

7-Blood of Ages: Your blood & flesh is twice as potent to vampires & flesh eaters. However, any creature feeding on you will suffer severe side effects from the Glamour coursing within you.

8-Changeling Eyes: Your eye color mutates to suit your mood. Under extreme circumstances, your eyes may even change shape or glow.

9-Faerie Eternity: Your aging is divided by your Permanent glamour from this point forward. Cold Iron deals Aggravated, Unsoakable damage to you.

10-The Mists: Mortals witnessing your Faerie Magic may forget the experience entirely. Viewers must roll Wits + Occult (Diff: 8) or forget the details of what they witnessed at the end of the Scene. Other beings with Glamour are immune to the Mists.

▲Gnosis

Gnosis: A User's Guide

Gnosis is supernatural energy tapped from nature & the Spirit World (Astral Plane). It is a highly ephemeral force but in those few attuned to it, can produce miraculous effects.

Gnosis has a Permanent Rating ranging from 1-10. For each point in Permanent Gnosis, you have a potential number of temporary Gnosis points. Gnosis is most commonly regained by Meditation, usually in a forest glen or other place close to the Spirit World. The Difficulty to regain Gnosis points through Meditation is equal to the Local Gauntlet. You may regain 1 point of Temporary Gnosis per success scored on a Manipulation + Meditation roll, up to your Permanent rating.

Gnosis Usage:
-You may be required to roll your Gnosis rating or spend Gnosis to activate Powers. This will be described in the individual Power.

-You may use Gnosis to attune & activate Fetishes (items with bound spirits inside). Roll Gnosis at a Difficulty of the Fetish's Gnosis to activate it.

-You may communicate with spirits in the area provided the gauntlet is lower than your permanent Gnosis rating.

Gnosis is only available as a Gift. It is awarded at 1 Permanent Dot, & is Current Rating x2 to raise.

▲Mana

Ahh, sweet nectar of the gods ... Chi, Prana, Kundalini, or electrolytes are all known names of Mana. Sorcerers instinctively use Mana to fuel their spells, drawing small bits from the world around them to power their spells. Those Gifted with the Mana pool are now able to store this energy in themselves as a reservoir to work with.

Mana is represented as a pool Gifted at 10 points. Most sorcerers will only be able to hold a maximum of 10 points at any given time, whereas those with the Mage Template will be able to hold 20. Points typically don't automatically regenerate during a Game, but it is assumed that the Sorcerer will restore their pool between Games, and will start a Game with a full pool; those with the Mage Template will start with 10 +1d10.

A Sorcerer may use up to three (3) Mana points per spell/ritual cast to do any combination of these effects:

(a) lower the difficulty of any spell cast (to no lower than 3)
(b) buy additional successes
(c) reduce the threshold needed to complete the spell/ritual by one

Example: Lydian is getting ready to blow something up with a *Hellfire 5* spell. He chooses to use 3 Mana to add two automatic successes to his pool, and to lower the difficulty of the spell by one. He could have also used those same points to lower the difficulty by 3, or to have 3 additional successes to his total.

Recovery of Mana is very personal and specific to each Sorcerer. A Sorcerer will start every Game with a full pool of Mana. As Mana points are spent during the Game, each Sorcerer should have a detailed description of a ritual they can use to recover Mana. Most of these rituals are quite lengthy (minimum of 10 minutes in duration) and may be difficult to do "on the fly." After the ritual is completed, the Sorcerer will recover an amount of Mana equal to the number of successes on a Perception + Meditation (Difficulty 7) roll.

There are Sorcery Paths and Rituals which can speed up the recovery of Mana.

▲Metabolic Pools

"Metabolic" pools is a catch-all reference to any pool of points that is derived from a unique biological process. Blood Pools are technically Metabolic, as are numerous other unique ones ("Flower Power", "Infection", "Nourishment","Sin" & similar).

They essentially follow 2 patterns.

- A 1-10 non-permanent rating that is filled as you perform the functions of the unique metabolism in question (Eating, Hibernating, etc).
- An ascending 1-10 pool that accumulates points but is weaker as you spend them (Example: You gain 1 point per day, some effects cost points, but the overall effects are diminished as you burn points).

No one has a Metabolic pool unless awarded as a Gift. When you are awarded one (typically as part of a Template or Power) you will be told what the points may be spent for & how they are regained.

Common Side Effects: The strain of metabolic consumption often has serious side effects. Common ones include:
*Altered Diet (Must subsist on some unusual substance, must eat twice as much as before, etc.)
*Hibernation: When you sleep, you enter a state of hibernation, becoming almost impossible to awaken.
*Physical Strain: You suffer Bashing damage under certain conditions from physical strain on the body.

Example: Blood Pool

A temporary pool rated 1-10, which enables you to store the blood you require for sustenance. There is no permanent score, and the temporary rating will fluctuate wildly with usage and replenishment. Roll 1d10 at the beginning of each Game to determine starting Blood Pool. It can be filled by draining blood.

Points are spent to fuel supernatural abilities as indicated in individual Power descriptions; this will vary according to Template and Gifts. Typically, one point will sustain your hunger for one day, averting the need to feed on fresh blood daily. It has no other use (unless awarded).

▲Pathos

Passion. Intensity. Ecstasy. These represent the nature of the emotional energy represented by Pathos. Characters with Pathos are effectively emotional vampires, experiencing transcendental moments of sheer passion that allow them to overcome the limitations of less enlightened individuals.

Pathos Points
Pathos is represented by a temporary pool rated 1-10. There is no permanent Pathos score, & the temporary rating is expected to fluctuate wildly. Pathos points are spent to fuel supernatural abilities as indicated in individual Power descriptions. It has no other use (unless rewarded).

Passions
Pathos is fueled by Passions. Passions are effectively Backgrounds reserved for Characters who use Pathos as a Power Source. As Backgrounds, they cost 7 x.p. for level "1" & Current rating x3 to raise. Passions dictate the actions that give the Character Pathos. A Passion describes a specific action that causes peak emotion for the Character. It should be written describing the Act required, then the core emotion behind it, like so:

Destroy Monsters (Hate): 5

Protect Children (Love): 3

Anytime you actually perform the listed act, you may roll your rating in the Passion (Difficulty: 6), with each success gaining a point of Pathos. Anytime you witness someone experience one of the Core emotions behind one of your Passions, you may roll it's rating (Difficulty: 8), with each success scoring a pathos point.

Example
You Destroy a Vampire, & roll 5 Passion dice at a difficulty of 6. You get 2 successes, thus gain 2 Pathos (up to a max of 10). Later you see a mother tuck in her child for the night & roll 3 Passion (Love) dice at a difficulty of 8, gaining 1 success (and thus one Pathos).

Penalties
A side effect of constantly experiencing such extremes of mystical emotion is a tendency to be a "Pathos Junkie" always craving the rush of gaining Pathos energy. Characters with Pathos suffer the following side effects:

At 7+ Points, the Character is on top of the world, happy & talkative. No penalties.

At 3-6 points, the Character is a bit edgy, and will actively seek out there Passions if not immediately dangerous to do so. Self-Control rolls are at +1 Difficulty.

At 0-2 points, the Character is actively terse & grim. They are moody, irritable, & will deliberately try to manipulate others into experiencing there Core Emotions. Self-Control rolls are at +2 Difficulty.

Awarding Pathos
When the Pathos pool is awarded as a Gift, the Character receives the 1-10 temporary pool & 5 points in Passions of there choice. New Passions may be awarded or purchased as desired.

▲Psion

Psion is a 1-10 rating that determines the overall power & potential of a character with Psychic Abilities. Psion costs Current rating x2 to raise, & is awarded as a Gift at 1 point.

Temporary Psion points are regained through rest (1 point per 8 hours sleep) or through Meditation (Manipulation + Meditation (Difficulty: 7) each success regains 1 temporary point after one hour of meditation).

Uses of Psion

- You may roll your Permanent Psion score in place of the normal activation roll for any Psychic Power.
- You may spend temporary Psion points to pay the activation cost of Psychic Powers in place of Willpower points.

▲Rage

The province of Berserker Warriors, Werewolves, & Mad-Dog Killers, Rage is the mark of lunatic fury & the unstoppable (& uncontrollable) power it brings.

It is a Permanent 1-10 Rating, awarded at 1 level. It costs C. R. x2 to raise. You may never spend more Temporary points than half your Permanent rating per turn.

Rage has the following effects:

*Rage based Powers may require you to roll your Permanent rating or spend Rage points.
*Rage may be spent to gain extra actions, 1 per point spent at the beginning of the round.
*A rage point may be spent to ignore a "Stun" result.
*If reduced below incapacitated, you may spend a w.p. & roll Rage (Diff: 8) to instantly recover a number of health Levels equal to your successes (including Aggravated, but not lost limbs). You suffer a permanent debilitating Battle Scar when you employ this ability, & automatically enter Frenzy. Regardless, this may only be attempted once per Scene.

Rage points are regained whenever something occurs that would infuriate you. Whenever this occurs, you may Roll Rage (Diff: 6) & regain a number of Rage points equal to the successes rolled. If you ever get 3+ successes on a Rage roll, you automatically enter Frenzy targeting the source of your anger.

Rage has the following side effects:
*Frenzy: As mentioned, anytime you gain 3+ successes on a Rage roll, you enter a homicidal, berserk frenzy aiming to kill the target of your anger, & ANYONE who gets in your way. While in this state, you may only use Talents, lacking the focus for Skills & Knowledges.
*Degeneration: If you ever fall to "0" Enlightenment, you lose your character to a permanent Frenzy.
*Inner Beast: For every point your Rage rises above your Enlightenment score, you lose -1 die to all social rolls, as people sense the bloodthirsty mani lurking just beneath.

▲Resolve

Demons & Thralls only

▲Sekhem

A power source for certain types of Legacy Magic.

▲Taint

Taint measures the extent of your spiritual corruption. It is rated as a 1-10 pool that begins with 1 Permanent point & no temporary. When 10 Temporary points are gained, you "trade" the 10 points for another Permanent point. In the event you reach 10 Permanent points, further levels have an acidic effect on the Trait the Taint is paired with, typically Enlightenment. This is almost always fatal.

The effects of Taint are as follows.

*Corruption: The more Taint you have, the more tainted you are to abilities that detect such. You are "Tainted" for the purposes of True Faith at 1 point. You are "Damned" if your rating should ever rise above 5.
*Taint determines the effect of many Infernal/Wyrm/Oblivion Powers.
*If your permanent Taint should rise higher than your permanent Enlightenment, you suffer unsoakable, Lethal damage equal to the difference. This damage cannot be healed while your Taint is ascendant, & accumulates each day the condition remains.

Temporary Taint is gained:
-Whenever you gain a Derangement
-Whenever you succumb to Frenzy
-Whenever you Botch the activation of a Power
-As noted in your Power/Template description

*Note: The Blackheart template has a different method of processing Taint (or Angst, as it is sometimes called). See that Template for differences.

▲Torment

Similar to Taint, for Demons & Thralls

▲True Faith

True Faith
Not all followers of a religion are considered to possess True Faith, for only the most devout can bring to bear the strength of belief necessary to carry that faith into the outer world. True Faith is a deep abiding connection that often pays little heed to mortal institutions. One need not belong to an organized religion to wield Faith.
True Faith has a potential rating of 10. You must have a Morality of 8+ to wield the powers of Faith. If you fall below this score, your abilities are rendered defunct until you restore your Path rating.

True Faith costs Current Rating x2 to raise. Temporary True Faith is restored through acts of pious devotion to one's religious calling, with points being awarded by the GM. There are a number of Powers available only to the wielders of True Faith.

True Faith has the following effects:

- You may spend a point of temporary True Faith in any way that a Willpower Point may be used
- True Faith may be rolled as Passive Countermagic (Difficulty: 6) against any hostile magic that targets the wielder. This Countermagic will not stack with other Passive sources.
- True Faith may also be used to ward off the Damned,. To do this, the wielder presents his holy symbol & commands the Damned to retreat. Make a True Faith roll (Difficulty: Target's Willpower score). If the wielder scores at least 1 success, the Damned must stop. If 3 or more successes are scored, the Damned must flee. This effect may be utilized against a number of targets equal to the wielders True Faith score per attempt. Against the Tainted, they may resist this effect by spending a number of WP points equal to your successes.

Holy Symbols
Normally, any application of True Faith Numina requires the presentation of a holy symbol (crucifix, Star of David, sprig of mistletoe) appropriate to the priest's religion. After reaching Beatific Faith (6+), such crutches are no longer required.

Holy Ground
An area that is determined Holy Ground has a Faith rating from 1 (weak but continual devotion) to 5 (The center of a powerful faith). While standing in holy ground, the wielder may add this rating to his own for all True Faith rolls.

Damned
The term "Damned" will hereafter refer to any creature fully subject to the effects of True Faith. Individual GM's will decide if there own creations count into the following, which are ALWAYS considered Damned (The "Humanity" law for Vampires no longer applies).
The Damned include: Demons, Banes, Vampires, Wraiths, Specters, Fiends, Risen, Kuei-Jin, Cursed Zombies

Tainted
The term "Tainted" applies to any being that has been touched by the Damned in some way, but is not Damned themselves.
The list of Tainted includes: Fomori, Vampiric Ghouls, Possessed, Infernalists, Nephandi, Dhampyr, Some Zombies

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 (3-10 being average). Once attained, the Template applies in full.

Several relatively generic Templates are available as examples.

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).

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.)