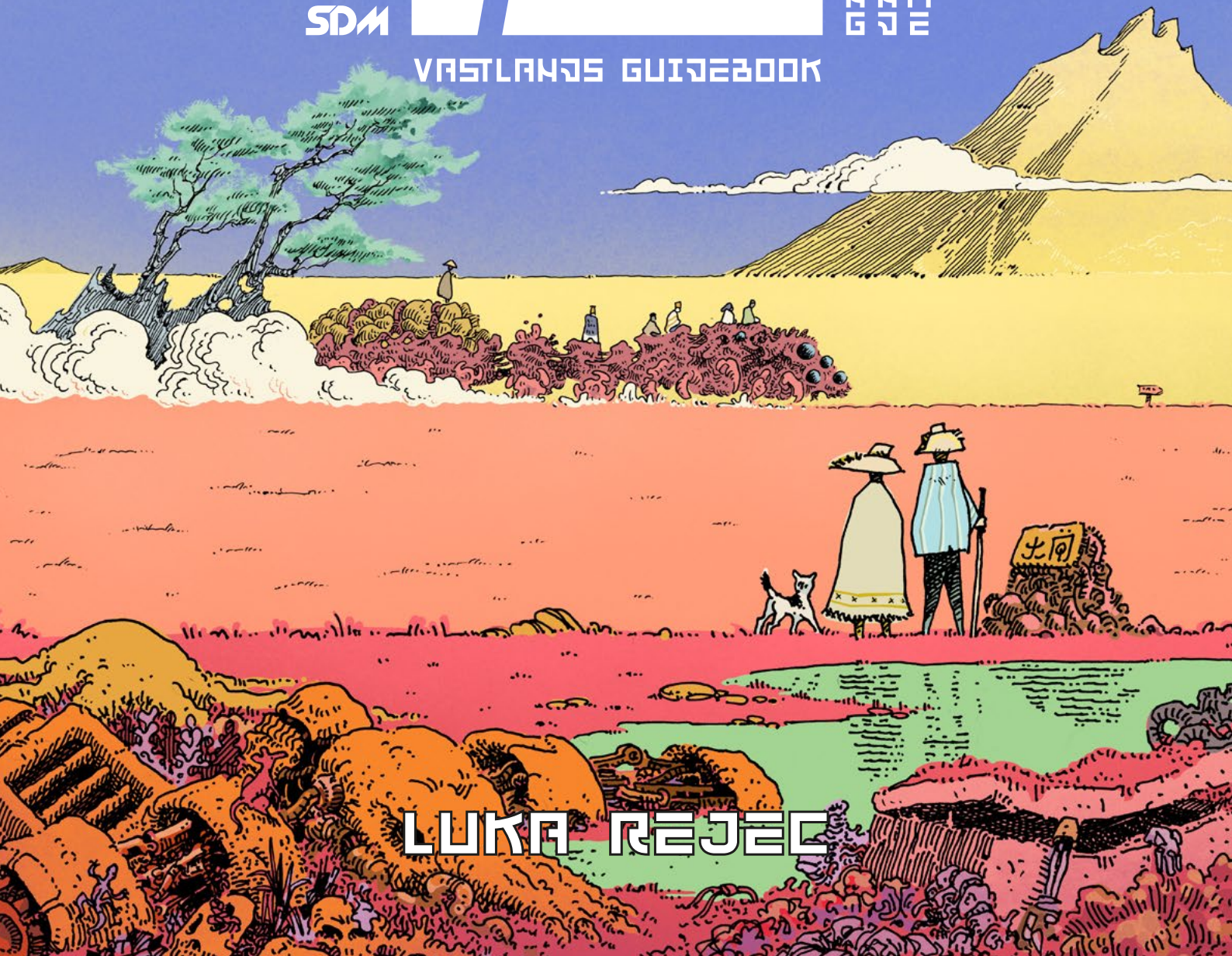




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ROJINA JECHING
ET FEU WZIN
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VASTLANDS GUIDEBOOK



LUKA REJEC



This is still a free beta edition prepared and released for the good backers of the *Our Golden Age* backerkit campaign and the irrepressible heroes of the **stratometaship**.

It is not the final version and is yet to receive its final editing and proofreading. Some art is temporary, missing, or just a placeholder. Oftenplace pXX stands in for the accurate and nice page reference. So it goes.

Enjoy at your peril.

—Luka, September 2024



*For every patient traveler on a cruel road.
A concrete pigeon.*



THEY WORKED TOGETHER TO SLAY THE
DRAGON, NOW THEY FIGHT EACH
OTHER FOR ITS GOLDEN GUTS.

Vastlands Guidebook (VLG)

For would-be heroes of the Vast Lands.

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Autumn Android v3.05
September 2024

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Luka Rejec

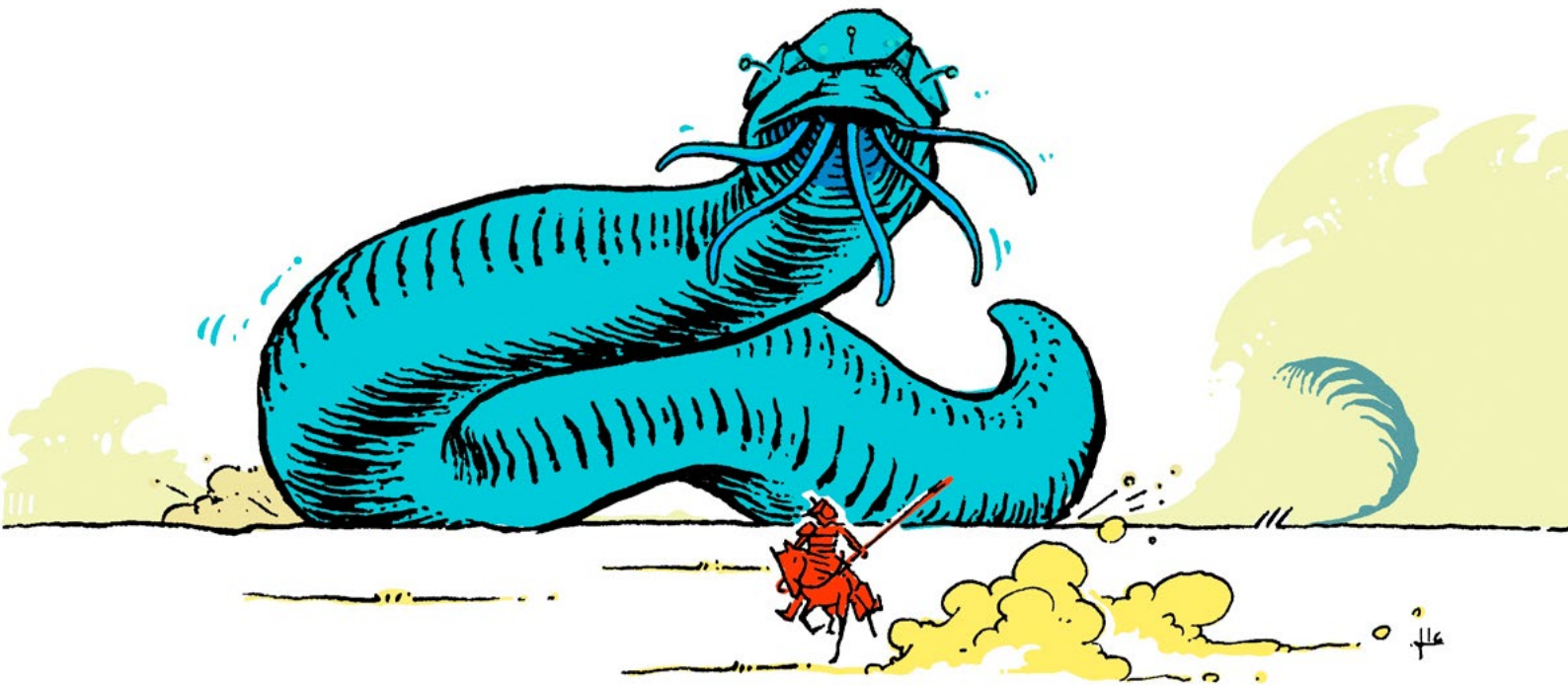
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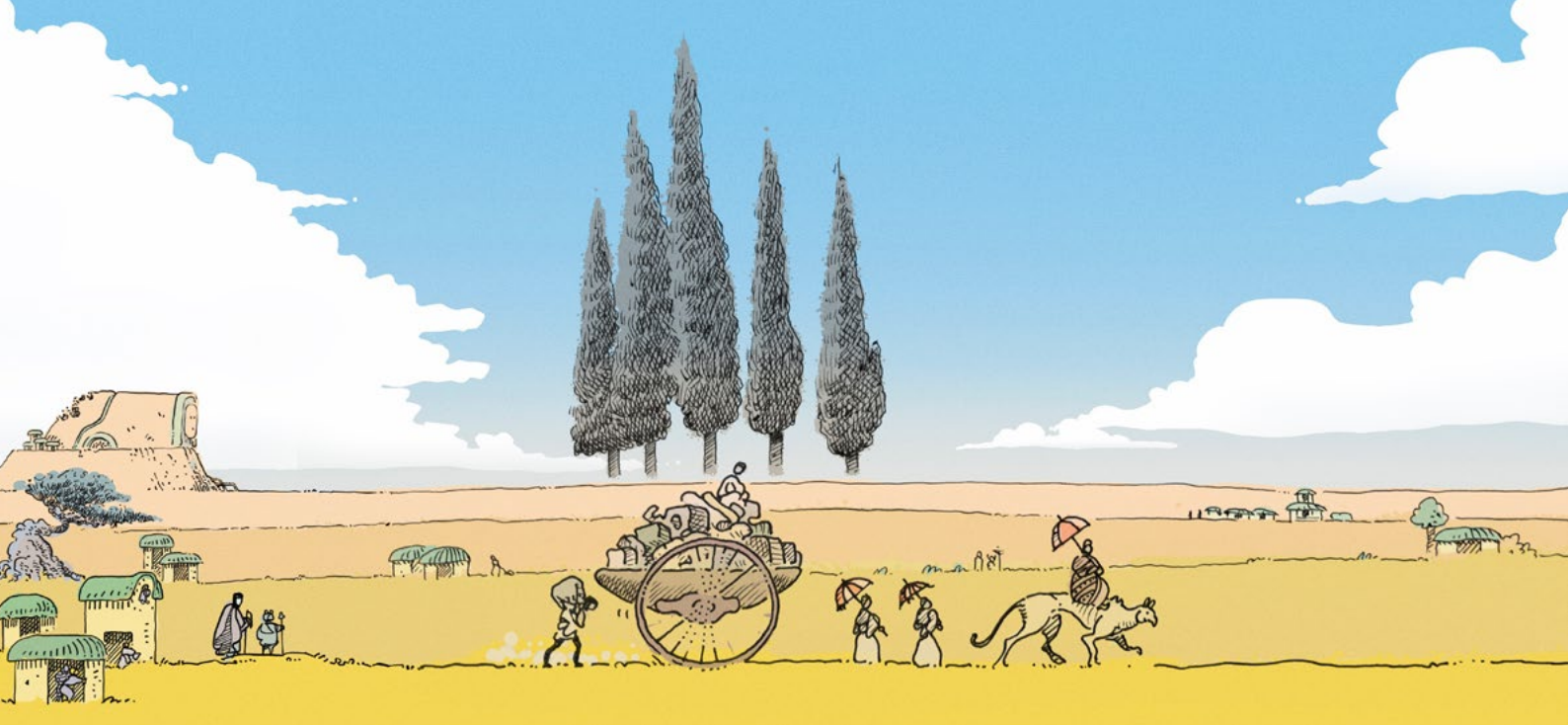
Print edition made possible by the gold and
the good of the [Our Golden Age backerkit campaign](#).

Support Luka Rejec's Vastlands at:
<https://patreon.com/wizardthieffighter>



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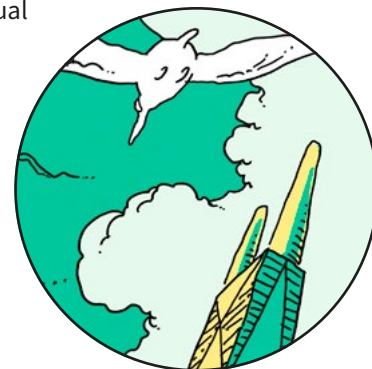
INTRODUCTION

Welcome, curious explorer, to the Vastlands. To a time beyond the end of time.

Here, in the heart of the world, is the Circle Sea, the pond of panhumanity surrounded by polychrome lands. This is *Our Golden Age*. An overgrown garden of humanity, here neat, there feral, sprawling out of sight of its absentee Builders, safely kept by the inscrutable might of its warden angels, the Phylakes.

There, to the west, the psychedelic *Ultraviolet Grasslands* stretch beyond the edge of civilization and its faded histories, a deep, vast, mythic steppe littered with the detritus of time and space and memory.

The Vastlands are inspired by strange musics, unusual fictions, old games, flawed philosophies and many artists from Moebius to Miyazaki. They grow from the adventuring sessions of the Golden Goats in the mid 2010s. They are the work of artist and author Luka Rejec.



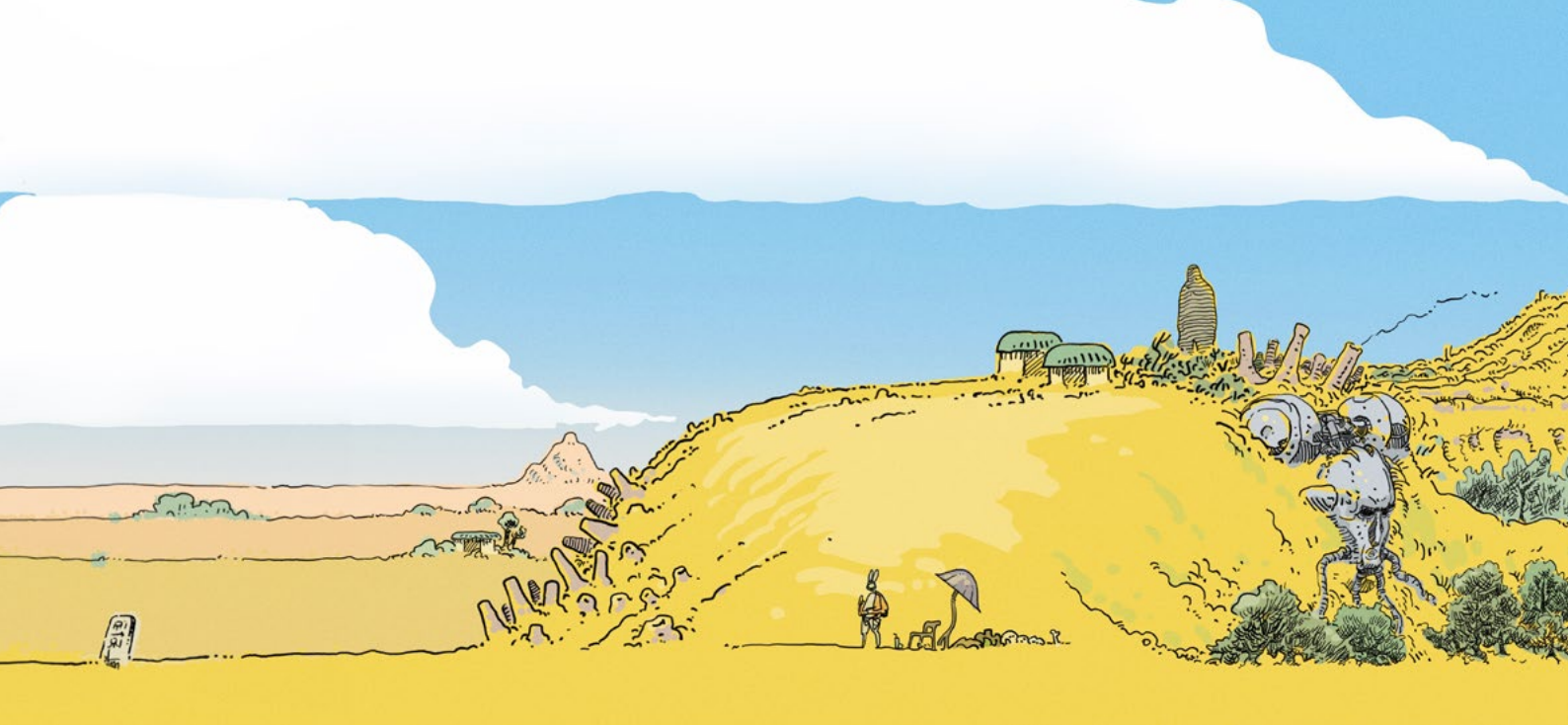
Safe travels at the end of time, beyond the edge of the last safe world.

They're okay, the last days of May,
but I'll be breathin' dry air
I'm leaving soon, the others are
already there (All there...)
Wouldn't be interested in coming
along instead of staying here?
It's said the West is nice this time of
year, that's what they say

—*Then Came the Last Days of May*,
Blue Öyster Cult (1972)

You can get *Our Golden Age* and the *Ultraviolet Grasslands* in deadwood via Exalted Funeral Press and any number of friendly local gaming stores. The electronic paper version is also available at:

- DTRPG (<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/en/publisher/14157/wtf-studio>),
- itch.io (<https://wizardthieffighter.itch.io>),
- the EF webstore (<https://www.exaltedfuneral.com>)
- and Luka's patreon (<https://www.patreon.com/wizardthieffighter>).



Player Referee Runner

This guidebook is for everyone at the table: the player who referees the game and the players who run the characters. Have fun and enjoy playing together.

No Masters

The referee is used as a neutral term for the player preparing the adventure, running the session, setting the beat for play, and balancing the spotlight between the other players. The referee is not a master — more like the bass player of the roleplaying table. They succeed when they make everyone shine.

Anti-Canon

No player, not even the referee, has to master all the lore. You're on a journey together: discovering the world and what happens in it by the oracle of your dice. There is no canonic Vastlands. No true, proper way to play it. The game at your table belongs to you all. Through play, you create a world of your very own.

Referee Titles

To remind everyone that the referee is also a player, they can get a different title and playful power every session. Here are some ideas to get you started:

	TITLE	SESSION POWERS
1	Boss Cat	All must acclaim the local house cat. Give extra xp for cat-themed treats.
2	The Cleaner	Award xp to players who help clean up after the session.
3	Electric Ghost	Summon a hero's annoying ancestor ghost for advice or moral lessons.
4	Glitch Golem	Move a random location on the map. Swap place names.
5	Judging Muse	Give xp for good background music choices. Veto bad ones by group vote.
6	Nine Lifer	Grant up to nine extra life points to characters.
7	Prismatic Priest	Randomly recolor locations. Roll d6: (1) monochrome, (2) desaturated, (3) cool hues, (4) warm hues, (5) bright, harmonious colors, (6) a brutal riot of neon and day-glo.
8	Rail Plotter	Draw a visible path linking prepared locations. Players can choose to follow or ignore it.
9	Sky Bringer	Create dramatic weather effects in-game. No complaints about tired clichés allowed.
10	Snack Warden	Give 1d4 re-rolls to players who bring food or music.

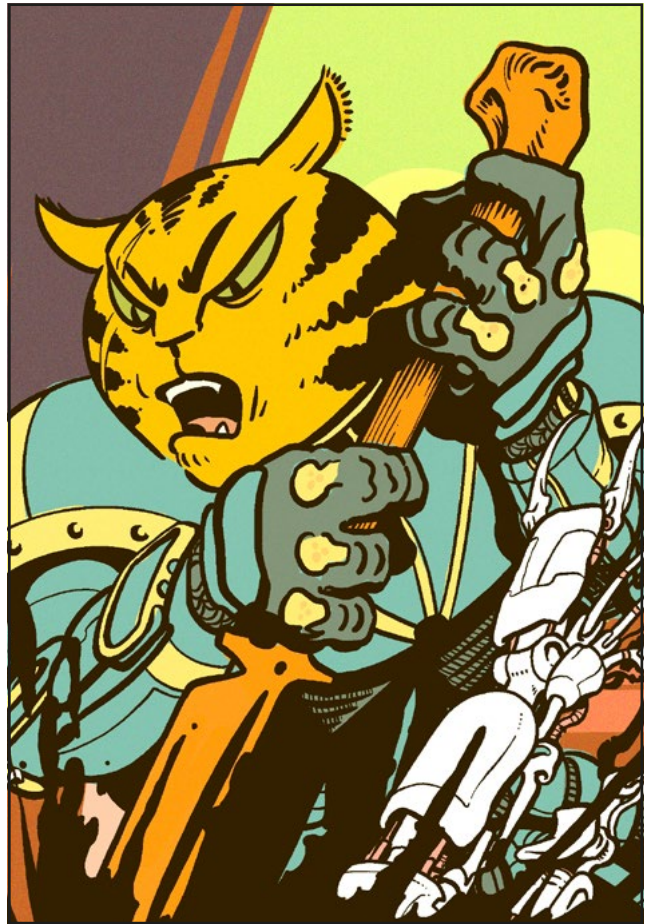
Given World

A world begins when it emerges from the mists of time. So it is with the civilizations of the Rainbowlands, marking their counts from when the Long Ago ended and the Now began. Perhaps gods or daemons imagine they recall earlier beginnings, but that is not the cosmos mankind believes it knows.

These later humans, undisputed masters of the fertile lands around the Circle Sea, dwellers in the Eye of Creation, in the Garden of the Given World. They come forth in many shapes, colors, creeds, and faiths. They pile together unkempt technology and misremembered lore. They rule the settled lands under painted deities of ill-repute, safe in customs of infinite antiquity.

From the Violet bastion against the exotic sunset lands, where the Black City reigns and even the rays of the sun acquire skin-blistering properties to the Saffron gate into the lands of many sunrises, where the radiance of the Little Son has imperium. From the undine-thick bottomless seas to the void-scraping Ladder of Heaven where the Great Dessicator obtains.

All those worlds are theirs. They just haven't quite gotten around to them. But they will. Surely? Any time. Soon?



Dream Canopy

Creation and destruction, an endless cycle, looped so many times the history's become a fog. No apocalypse remains. No post comes anymore. Eras upon eras, worlds upon worlds, like grains of sand upon the beach of cosmic awareness.

Optimism. Life. New beginnings from the primordial ooze of barbarism. From the planetary vents of life. Again, again, again.

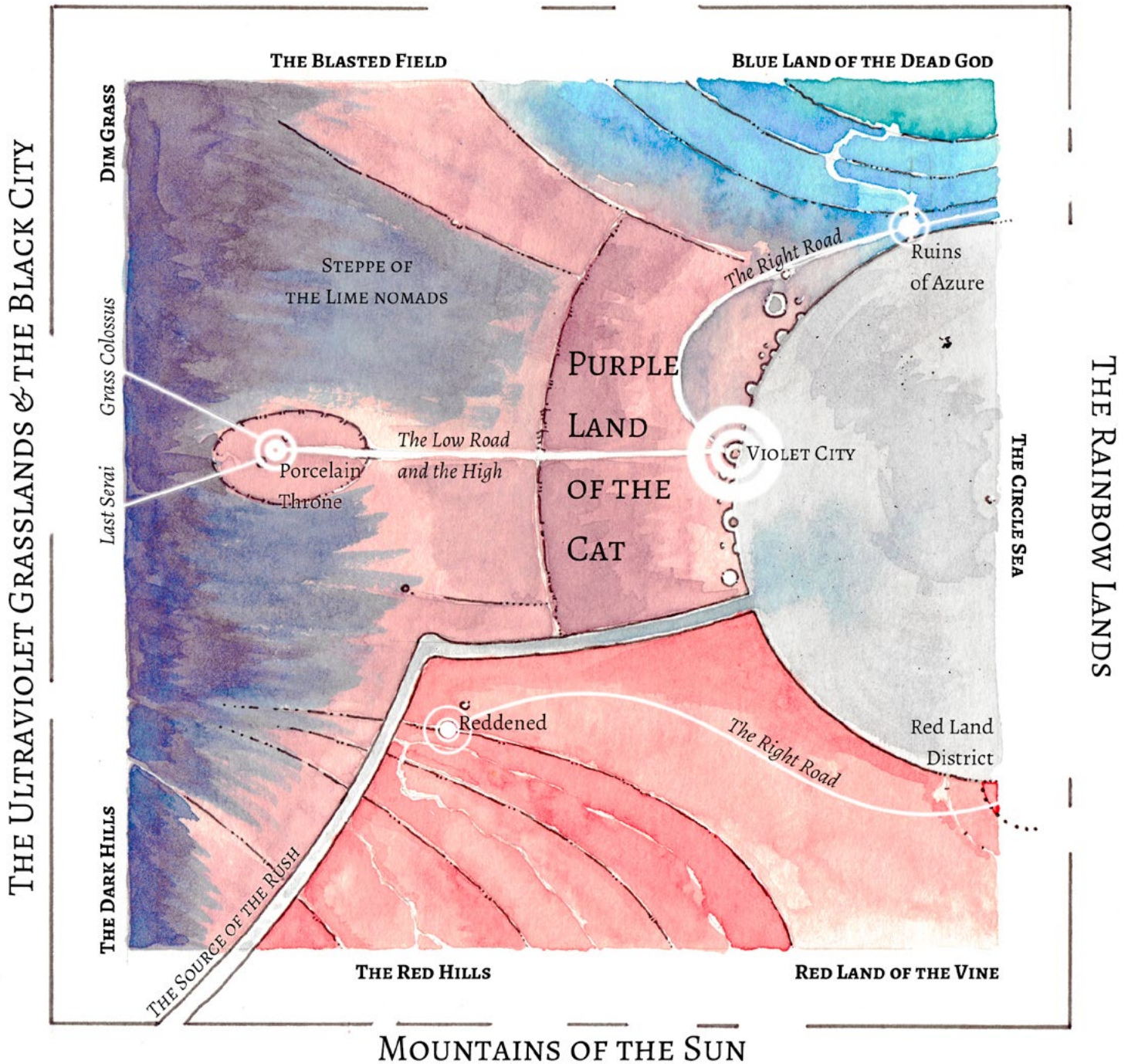
Rain falls on mountains. Streams become rivers. Lakes meet seas. Tribes become cities. Prophets found kingdoms. Explorers cross horizons. Merchants bind cultures. Empires cross continents. Shamans ascend to the stars. Life spreads from fast star to slow star. Wanderers tunnel the wormways through the ever void.

All must come to pass in the infinite cosmoses.

Eternity eats the unwise.

There is more to the universe than this Circle Sea and the Ultraviolet Grasslands so near to the little humans, the happy rats in the carcass of the great spacetime vessel who think themselves its captains.

MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON

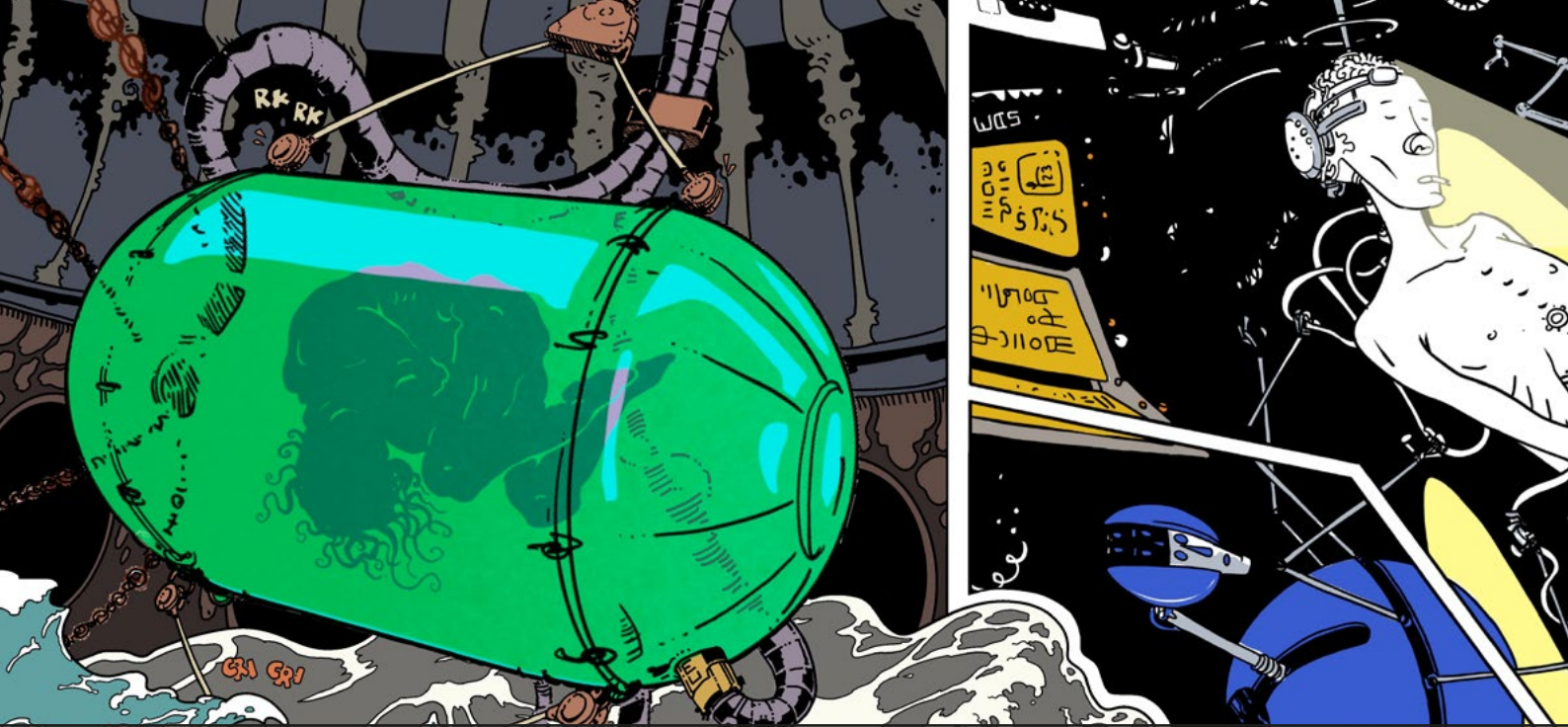


Origins of a Setting

The roots of the Given World are in the Rainbow Lands that grew collaboratively from the games I ran for the Golden Goats of Lausanne in the early to mid 2010s (thank you, good players, for those amazing adventures and delightful dinners). The published Vastlands are not quite the same as those in the long ago games. They could not be. But, like all fine history, art, and wine, they rhyme.

The world took further shape in the long strange *Ultraviolet Grasslands* trip I wrote for and with the heroes of the stratometaship, the patreon supporters who made this whole adventure possible. In 2019, with the help of roughly 2,000 backers we crowdfunded the hardcover first edition. Our Golden Age and this Guidebook then followed over the last few years, with several detours along the way. Perhaps we shall revisit some of those abandoned routes in the future, perhaps not. Still, they were worth it in the end. Now, welcome, and off we go!

—Luka Rejec, summer 2024



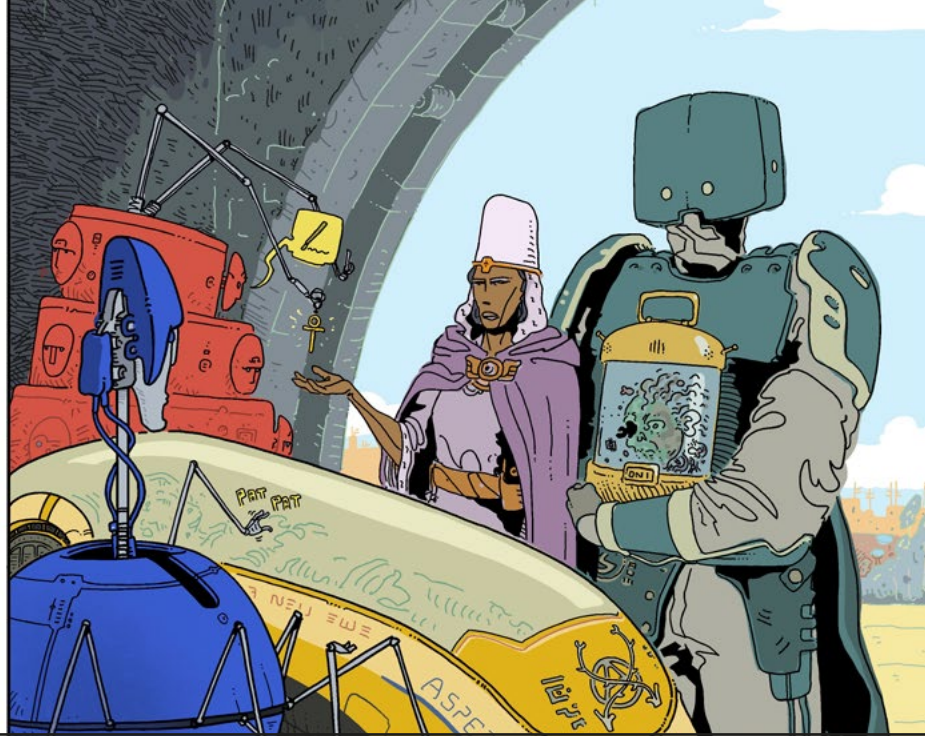
CHARACTER CREATION

To experience the Vastlands you need at least one player character. In this chapter:

- 2.1. generate your character's **ability scores**
- 2.2. generate a **background trait**
- 2.3. ... and a **path trait**
- 2.4. ... and a **third trait**
- 2.5. **equip** them
- 2.6. generate other **attributes**
- 2.7. give them a **motivation**
- 2.8. invest **experience**
- 2.9. and **name** them

Later, you can acquire other characters: pets, sidekicks, secondary PCs and more. Their adventures, their defeats and victories, are yours to chart.





Our Shadowy Companions

A group of exemplary ... er ... example characters joins us to illustrate how the rules and procedures work.

Example: When the referee Cat and the intrepid characters Noë, Onion, Safir, and others demonstrate how the rules work to lay waste the best laid plans of mice and houses. And humans.

The heroes sacrificed to the dice oracles are built using random rolls for ability scores—and possible changed through the vagaries of play and interactions with arcane devices. Yours may have different attributes.

Cat

Our referee, a mighty games-mistress and acolyte of the Ceiling Cat.

Hazeraiser (referee title). Open a travel portal for the heroes. Demand sacrifices at will.



Noë

A wizard of the dark electronic arts. A scholar in search of the illsome mysteries of the never-mentioned war.

strength 0	charisma 5
endurance 1	aura 4
agility 2	thought 5

Onion

A merchant and wide-ranging traveler. A trickster with a coin in every sock and a soothing lie for every ear.

strength 1	charisma 5
endurance 0	aura 0
agility 4	thought 3

Safir

A fighter of the caravan-protecting sort. An exile from the Blue Lands with a bloodline prone to corruption.

strength 5	charisma 0
endurance 4	aura 1
agility 3	thought 2

2.1. Generate Ability Scores

The function of a hero's corporeal and spiritual and personal form is measured for the pleasure and understanding of the player.

Roll for your abilities in order. Strength, endurance, agility, charisma, aura, thought. This is the maker's way.

d100	ABILITY SCORE	
1-30	0	unremarkable, mediocre, ordinary human ability
31-55	1	promising, useful, potential
56-75	2	talented, apt, good
76-90	3	gifted, masterful very good
91-99	4	excellent, amazing, preternatural
100	5	incredible, optimal, a pinnacle of human ability

Next: proceed to 2.2. and generate your first trait.

Ability Generation Options

Did you not accept the maker's way?

Assigned Ability Scores. Assign 7 points to your abilities as you like, with a maximum of 3 in any one ability.

This is the way of those who mistrust chaos.

One Roll Ability Scores. If you want to submit your fate to a single roll, the centennial table of abilities has you covered (pXX).

Higher Ability Scores. Those who are inhuman may diverge, those who are not, do not. If you would like to start with a score above 5 or below 0, you are probably inhuman.



History shows again and again
How nature points out the folly of men

—Godzilla, Blue Öyster Cult, Spectres (1977)

2.1.1. Abilities and Their Effects

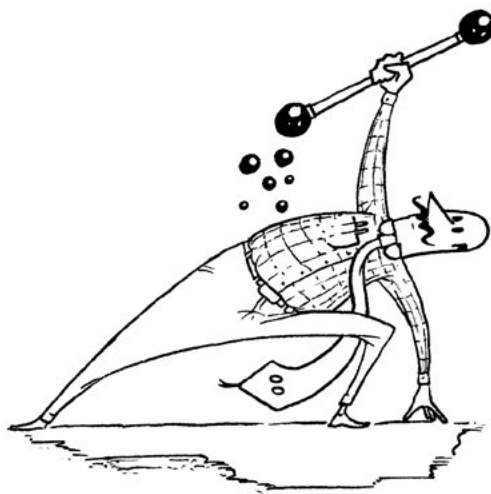
The abilities represent the natural, inherent aptitudes of a character. Traits and education build on top of abilities to expand a character's possibilities. They break down into three colors (active, dynamic, static) and two flavors (mind and matter).



Static Abilities

Resisting things. Body, matter, structure, form, persistence, courage, *ha*. The resolve and stamina to bear and withstand.

- **Aura** is the mental static ability. The mental and psychological resilience to withstand the outrageous slings of fortune. It is not wisdom (that is a trait). It may allow a character to use powers beyond mortal ken longer than usual.
- **Endurance** is the physical static ability. How much pain and strain a character can take. From marathons to staying in a fight longer than other humans.



Active Abilities

Doing things. Fire, drive, energy, vigor, thrust, movement, *ka*. The will and force to dominate and overcome.

- **Charisma** is the mental active ability. Like classical Greek *khárisma*, it represents divine fortune. The gods and reason hate the uncharismatic, and Charisma also serves as a luck stat. When a hero tries to batter down resistance to their arguments through force of personality, this is their tool.
- **Strength** is the physical active ability. Lifting bars, bending gates, punching guards, throwing rocks, climbing ladders one-handed. It also increases how many items a character can carry.



Dynamic Abilities

Changing things. Psyche, intellect, change, dexterity, path, speed, *ba*. The wit and flexibility to adapt and adjust.

- **Thought** is the mental dynamic ability. It captures how a character absorbs, processes, and manipulates information. It is not education (that is a trait). The naming is also a reference to the Egyptian god Thoth. It also increases how many traits a character can have.
- **Agility** is the physical dynamic ability. It represents the speed and precision with which a character applies their body in their environment. Dodging, aiming, manipulating, balancing, flexibility, etc. Agility provides a bonus to defense.

2.2. Generate Background Trait



Traits are the innate, acquired and inherited, qualities and characteristics that make a character unique. This includes characteristics such as backgrounds, professions, mutations, downloaded skill packages, implanted prosthetics, corruptions, and memorized powers.

Individual traits may provide various benefits, including community membership, skill modifiers to actions, social standing, specific mechanical benefits, and new game options.

You have **7 + thought** inventory slots for traits.

Each trait occupies a trait inventory slot. Other traits, items, and events can increase the number of trait slots.

At level 1 you **start with three traits**.

A level 0 character has two traits. Characters can choose to gain a new trait every time they level up.

Trait Skill Modifiers

If you select the same trait multiple times, its skill modifier increases.

Skilled	+3 bonus to rolls	<i>good enough to make a living</i>
Expert	+6 bonus to rolls	<i>good enough to teach</i>
Master	+9 bonus to rolls	<i>a rare master of this art</i>

A trait selected multiple times does not take up additional trait slots. Note a trait's bonus to record how many times you have selected it (+3 / +6 / +9).

Applying Trait Skill Modifiers

Trait descriptions list some situations where skill modifiers apply. Players and the referee can use dialogue and common sense to figure out if a trait could apply in a new or unexpected situation.

Other Trait Benefits

If traits provide other benefits, note them down.

Example: *mule whisperer* lets you designate a special pack animal as your friend, and it will carry an extra sack of goods for you. An expert mule whisperer can designate two such animals, and a master mule whisperer can designate four. Mark such animals with a smiley face and a name.

As with other traits, *mule whisperer* may also grant a skill modifier, for example when rolling to soothe startled pack animals or guide them across a narrow bridge.

Inventing New Traits

Players and referees can make up new traits together. Any profession, quality, background, mutation, or space oddity that sounds fun is fair game.

Next: *pick a path trait (2.3.). This provides some adventuring competence your random background trait may lack.*

Traditional Backgrounds

Roll d40 or choose your background. Note it in a trait inventory slot along with its modifier (+3).

1. **Apothecary.** Mix poisons, potions, and medicines. Run a pharmacy.
2. **Archaeologist.** Discover lost artifacts, climb, jump, dodge boulders. Shoot pistols and use a whip.
3. **Big Game Hunter.** Shoot big guns, order lackeys about, ride a burdenbeast, chomp cigars, talk turducken.
4. **Biomechanic.** Modify living organisms with body-horror technomagic. Run a pet store.
5. **Cat Groom.** Make cats happy and receive their love. Crack skulls and shoot kneecaps when the catlords demand it.
6. **Chemist.** Or all-chemist, ha-ha. Analyze ingredients, make explosives, cook drugs ... er ... elixirs. Teach high schoolers.
7. **Coffee Maker.** Make coffee, grow coffee, run a plantation or a bar.
8. **Comedian.** Bring joy, laughter, and inappropriate sounds. Stroke emotions and distract guards.
9. **Contortionist.** Squeeze into small places. Put on circus shows.
10. **Crystal Healer.** Practical gemology and placebo effects. Some small skill with focus magics.
11. **Dice Maker.** Make dice. Carve small things. Roll dice. Cheat at dice.
12. **Fisherperson.** Catch fish. Also, hooks, boats, nets, and things.
13. **Forager.** Find berries and nuts and mushrooms. Know which ones are good to eat and which will kill a person.
14. **Gun Runner.** Shoot guns, hide things, bribe officials, sell illegal goods.
15. **Hallucinator.** Travel in your dreams. Talk to spirits and chairs.
16. **Legume Farmer.** Grow beans. Wake up early. Till fields. Work long hours. Pay onerous taxes. Sell legumes. Run a farm.
17. **Marketer.** Make presentations. Sell magic legumes.
18. **Mason.** Build buildings. Shape stones. Understand dungeons.
19. **Mule Whisperer.** Get pack animals to get along. Have animal friends. Keep them happy. Your one special animal friend will carry an extra sack for you. Expert: gain another friend; master: two more.
20. **Narco-herbalist.** Know and find and smoke and dry and preserve your inappropriate berries and herbs.
21. **Navigator.** Use the old sorceries of void map and guide console, slide rule and beep chart.
22. **Necromancer.** Talk to the dead. Sometimes walk them, too.
23. **Nomad Raider.** Ride like lightning. Steal cattle. Shoot missiles. Skirmish. Use guerrilla tactics.
24. **Oldtechnician.** Use Long Long Ago technomagic. Understand emoji.
25. **Packmaster.** Carry, pack, load, unload, and transport stuff really well. Things you pack rarely break and your well-packed sack holds an extra stone. Expert: another stone; master: two more.
26. **Phytomancer.** Talk to plants. Make them move for you (very slowly). Also, probably, know different plant types very well.
27. **Profiteer.** Also known as business administration. Squeeze bonus cash from your underlings.
28. **Project Manager.** Consummate middle managerial skills, organized time sheets, excellent key performance indicators.
29. **Protocol Specialist.** Coffee ceremonies, modes of address, titles and such. Good at first impressions.
30. **Puppet Theater Actor.** Theater. But with puppets. Your incredible business success probably drove you into the grasslands.
31. **Safe Driving Instructor.** Rally, drifting, stunt driving, how to crash safely.
32. **Showfighter.** Swords, halberds, whirly blades! Dancing! Excitement!
33. **Soul Juicer.** Read people's intentions. Possess their bodies. Milk them of energies and information.
34. **Spelunker.** Venture into deep places. Climb, rappel, dive. Lunk "treasure" out of holes in the ground.
35. **Storyteller.** Tell good stories with satisfying endings. Like the kind where the unremarkable character who did nothing has the best story and so gets to become the king.
36. **Surgeon.** Medicine with a focus on knives and sewing needles.
37. **Tactician.** Find and use strategic advantages for war or business. Praise the little rainbow book of Meow.
38. **The Business, Acolyte of.** Know the corporations, banks, and self-help associations that lubricate the world. Shake up recalcitrants.
39. **The War, Scholar of.** History or pseudo-history. Recognize ancient ruins. Use legendary war machines.
40. **Vome Technician.** Adapt and use vomish implants. Manage their side-effects. Enslave vomes.

2.3. Pick Path Trait

Paths are compilations of traits that create archetypal characters.

Review and **choose a path** (or roll d6):

- | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 1–2 | Path of the Wizard (2.3.1.) |
| 3–4 | Path of the Traveler (2.3.2.) |
| 5–6 | Path of the Fighter (2.3.3.) |

Not Classes

Paths are not classes. You are not bound to one path. You can choose traits from any path, in any order, mixing-and-matching as they level up.

No Prerequisites

Some traits complement one another, but you can pick them in any order as you level up or otherwise acquire new traits through play. If you want, you can even skip the superbasic, number zero trait.

2.3.1. Path of the Wizard

A scholar who uses the old technologies.

0. **Wizard.** You call yourself a magus, maker, or mechanic. You are skilled at casting spells (using oldtech powers). Perhaps you just know how to read the manuals of Long Ago and the Zero-One codes?

More Wizard Traits

To interrogate, to learn, to master, perhaps to create:

1. **Burner.** Once per turn, you can spend an ability point to overcharge a power, regardless of its cost.
2. **Chronic.** Spend a hero die to use a second power this round.
3. **Exuberant.** Each of your life points is worth double when paying for powers.
4. **Mind Palace.** Memorize a number of powers equal to your level for free, ignoring inventory. Draw the memory palace on the back of your character sheet.
5. **Oblique Reality.** Spend one life or one hero die to deflect a power targeting you (or an adjacent target) to the left or the right (or up or down).
6. **Recast.** When your power fails or a target makes its save, you can use the power again for free. Once. Recharge your recast with a hero die.

Next: generate a third trait (2.4.) for your PC.

2.3.2. Path of the Traveler

A merchant focused on overland voyaging. A trickster?

0. **Traveler.** You call yourself a vagabond, a wanderer, the wind. You are skilled at managing a caravan, navigating with maps and stars and waypoints, making and concealing camps, finding water and food, and the etiquette of the vast open lands. You wield the marching staff and the dagger and the traditional rifle.

More Traveler Traits

To hear, to see, to convince, perhaps to lead:

1. **Escapist.** You're skilled at being lucky. That's a +3 bonus to all saves.
2. **Friends.** You can have a number of pets or sidekicks equal to your level who don't take up the usual inventory slot. Draw a separate box to list your friends on your character sheet.
3. **Hunter.** Track, trap, and shoot game with bow, rifle, and javelin. Hide in the wilds, move unseen. When you shoot from ambush, your critical hits deal triple instead of double damage. Expert: x4; master: x5.
4. **Pleasant.** Charming conversation and an easy demeanor. You get people to like you. That's +2 to reaction rolls. Expert: +4; master: +6.
5. **Pocketmaster.** Conceal a number of small objects equal to your level for free, ignoring inventory. A knife is small.
6. **Swift.** Once per turn, spend one life or one hero die to get one extra action this round.

Next: generate a third trait (2.4.) for your PC.

2.3.3. Path of the Fighter

A caravan guard who wears armor and wields weapons.

0. **Fighter.** You call yourself a warden, warrior, or weaponmaster. You are skilled at using traditional weapons and armors; from knife to sword, blaster to rifle, chitin shield to buffer harness. Also, you are skilled at defense. That's a +3 bonus to defense and attack. Expert: +6; master: +9.

More Fighter Traits

To struggle, to fall, to rise, perhaps to succeed.

1. **Armiger.** Carry a number of weapons equal to your level for free, ignoring inventory. Draw a weapons box on the back of your character sheet.
2. **Defender.** You're skilled at physical defense and all kinds of defensive equipment. Also, even if unarmored, gain a +3 armor bonus. Expert: +6 armor; master: +9 armor.
3. **Grit.** Gain 1 life per level and advantage when you roll endurance.
4. **Irresistible.** Every round you deal damage equal to your level to one foe you attacked, whether your attack roll hit or missed.
5. **Second Chance.** When you would fall to 0 life, you fall to 1 life instead. Once. Recharge second chance with a hero die.
6. **Terrifying.** You're skilled at frightening people. That's also a +2 bonus when breaking your foes' morale. Expert: +4; master: +6.

Next: generate a third trait (2.4.) for your PC.



2.4. Generate Third Trait

Level 0 characters start with 2 traits and gain one per level. Since PCs start at 1st level, they get a third trait. There are a few options for this third trait (and subsequent traits).

Get a Random Trait

Roll a d6 and gain a random ...

- 1–3 **background** trait (2.3.)
- 4 wizard path trait (2.4.1.)
- 5 traveler path trait (2.4.2.)
- 6 fighter path trait (2.4.3.)

Choose a New Trait

Choose any new trait you like. Either from the ones listed, from other sources, or from the specialty traits section of the appendix (pXX).

Choose an Existing Trait and Become an Expert

When you select the same trait a second time, your trait's skill modifier increases from +3 (skilled) to +6 (expert). Depending on the trait, expertise may provide additional benefits. Selecting a trait twice does not increase the number of trait inventory slots it occupies.

As you progress, you can select the same trait a third time, becoming a master and increasing its skill modifier to +9 (master).

Invent a New Trait

To create a new trait, discuss with the rest of the table:

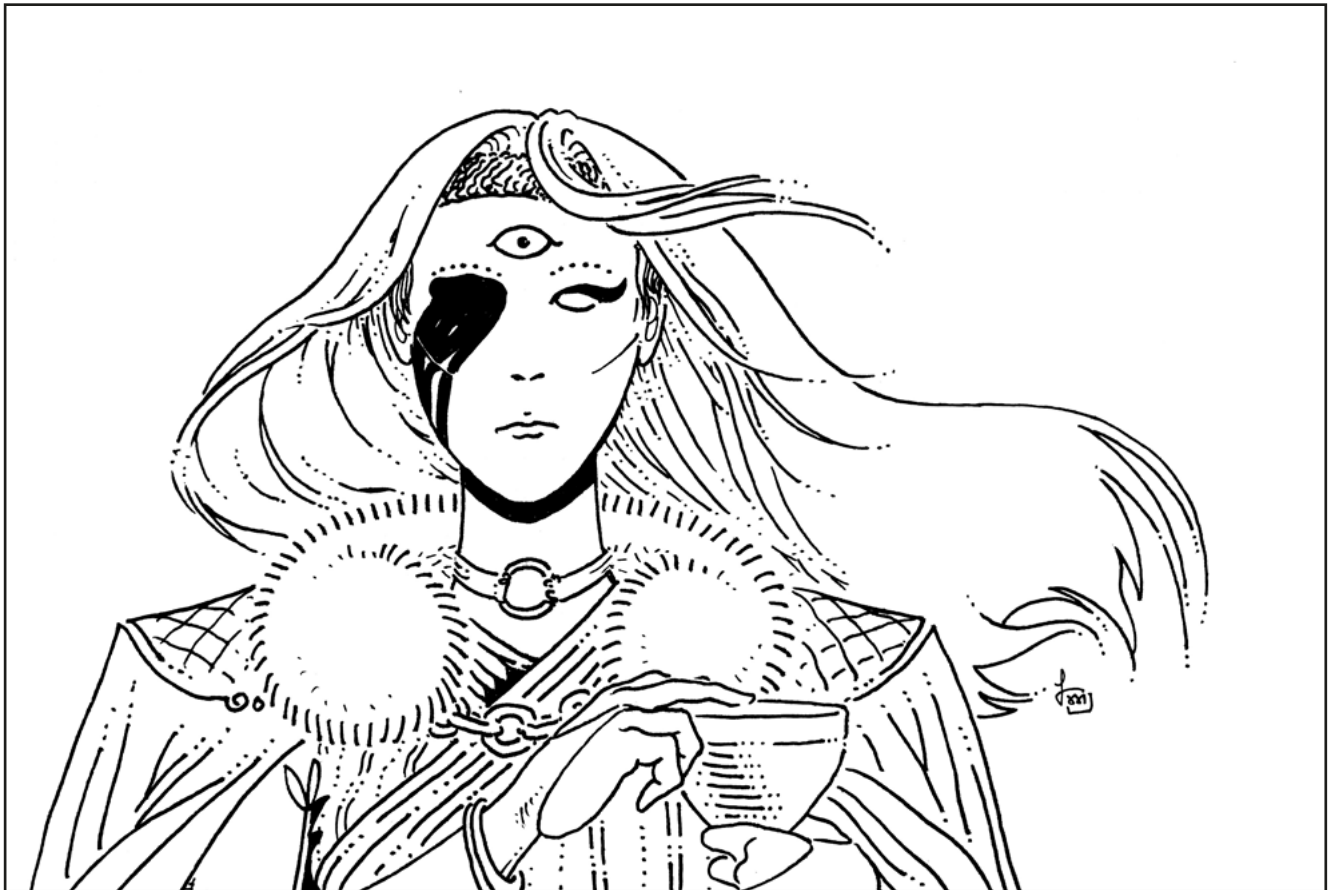
1. Is it fun and evocative to roleplay?
2. Can you describe it with a short, memorable title?
3. Does it enhance rather than overshadow other characters?
4. Is it versatile enough for various situations?

Aim for vivid, specific concepts like “Anointed Gladiator” or “Desire Detective” over staid ones like “Wizard,” “Thief,” or “Fighter.” The referee helps fit the new trait to the table's game and can rule certain traits off limits.

If a trait proves problematic in play, discuss with other players and adjust as needed. Remember, retconning to improve the game experience is not a sin.

Next: go to 2.5. and equip your character.





Trait Idea Seeds

D10	WHAT STRANGE TRAITS?	WHO WOULD WIELD THEM?	BUT AT WHAT COST?
1	beauty to bend soul or society	servant or slave of the muses	strange passions kindled
2	clockwork discipline, fervent uplift	wired rationalist legionnaire	freedom denied, disorder banished
3	cyber-ascendance, plastic evolution	pitiless machine or vome	flesh despised, biology mistaken
4	distributed, eusocial experience	many-bodied colony or polybody	loneliness a curse, solitude a terror
5	divine injustice, blind righteousness	cruel zealot of a wild deity	nuance is lost, detail is obscured
6	evolution o'er reason, root o'er brick	power-hungry tree-hugger	technology is incomprehensible
7	finwizardry, capitalist supremacy	cunning trader or wily industrialist	moloch dominates, culture is sold
8	flesh as clay, face as paint	skin-changing biomacer	stability is lost, the past forgotten
9	forbidden geometries, foolish hubris	unhinged sorcerer, mad sciencer	nature disdained, tradition scorned
10	imaginary bonds of organization	dedicated ruthless administrator	ossification nears, change is scary
11	life over death, death over life	hunter or destroyer of the dead	a pleasure is lost, a joy turns to ashes
12	lost arts, hidden mysteries	resurrected ancient traveler	mistakes abound, talk is fraught
13	machine logic, alien intuition	code-addled golem mechanic	love withers, community fractures
14	physical mastery, material design	holy wizard of the ancient machine	soul grows dim, spirit becomes hard
15	senses of doom, visions of hope	prophet of a strange new future	another wall, grass is greener
16	signs in the fast stars, truths obscure	void-bound shaman of old	food grows stale, drink tasteless
17	silent death, painful trickery	prowling thief or cultish bandit	society retreats, friendships founder
18	strength, thews, and primal vigor	warrior beast from the edge of time	books and words make less sense
19	unfolded spaces, broken mirrors	bodiless angel or daemon	senses turn aside, anxieties mount
20	feral unity, survival in the ruins	solitary wasteland strider	progress falters, dreams grow small

2.5. Equip Your Character

Items are all the tools and treasures that expand a character's abilities and possibilities. From a mundane wrench to a magitechnical spell anchor, from a suit of pleather armor to a biomechanical crab-head, all are items.

You have **7 + strength** inventory slots for items.

Each loose item or package occupies at least one item inventory slot. Other traits, items, and events can increase the number of item slots. Each item inventory slot is 1 stone in size.

At level 1 you **start with two items** and some **starting cash**.

One of the items is a useful kit related to your background. The other is strange and alien. There are more items in the UVG, OGA and other books.

A level 0 character starts with one item and less cash. Higher level characters start with more items and cash.

Skip: first, get your strange item. Overleaf, 2.5.1.



How Equipment Works

Sizes

Item sizes in the Vastlands use abstract units that combine weight and bulk.

SIZE	=	EXAMPLE
1 sack (sk)	10 stones	Basic cargo unit, about as much as a human.
1 stone (st)	10 soaps	Significant item; a saber, spear, shield or shovel. About 7 kilograms or 15 pounds..
1 soap (sp)	25 cash	Small item; a signal whistle, signet ring, spike or bar of soap (surprisingly useful in the wastes!).
1 cash (€)	some change	Standard currency unit equal to a laborer's day wages. Named in a nod to ancient Chinese cash (文).

Unless otherwise specified, any item takes up 1 stone of inventory space.

Packed and Loose Items

Items can be packed in backpacks, pouches, purses, ammo belts, and other containers. You can draw a box for each pack on the back of your character sheet. Packing items is efficient for transport, but you need at least one action to unpack and ready them for use.

Loose items take up at least one inventory slot each, regardless of size, but a character can use them immediately.

Example: A dagger (5 sp) takes up a whole inventory slot (1 st = 10 sp) when carried ready for use. Packed in a bundle, two daggers take up a single inventory slot and are treated as one item.

Some traits allow more efficient packing or quicker access to items.

Dropping Items

A character can quickly drop one item or pack as a free action on their turn, reducing any penalties suffered from encumbrance. A quickly dropped item may break, get damaged, roll away, or otherwise suffer the consequences. The referee chooses a suitable save target.

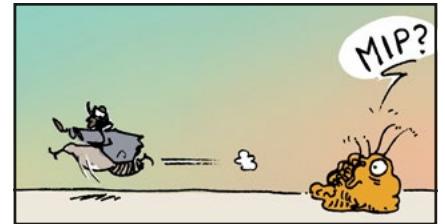
Example: A pair of shoes chucked onto a grassy slope may roll downhill, a sack of stolen glass statuettes dropped on a marble floor may produce a lot of sharp glass caltrops.

A character taking an action to carefully put down an item or pack avoids any risk of damaging their precious property.

Improvising With Items

Items are not just bundles of game mechanics. They improve a character's performance and let them do new things. Use common sense and imagination to figure out how to take advantage of your PC's equipment.

Example: Rafts let characters float, climbing gear helps scale surfaces that are impossible to free-climb.



Human Clothes

Baseline humans have evolved to wear clothes. Any garments suitable for a tropical or temperate climate that such a character is wearing take up no inventory slots. You can describe them on the back of the character sheet.

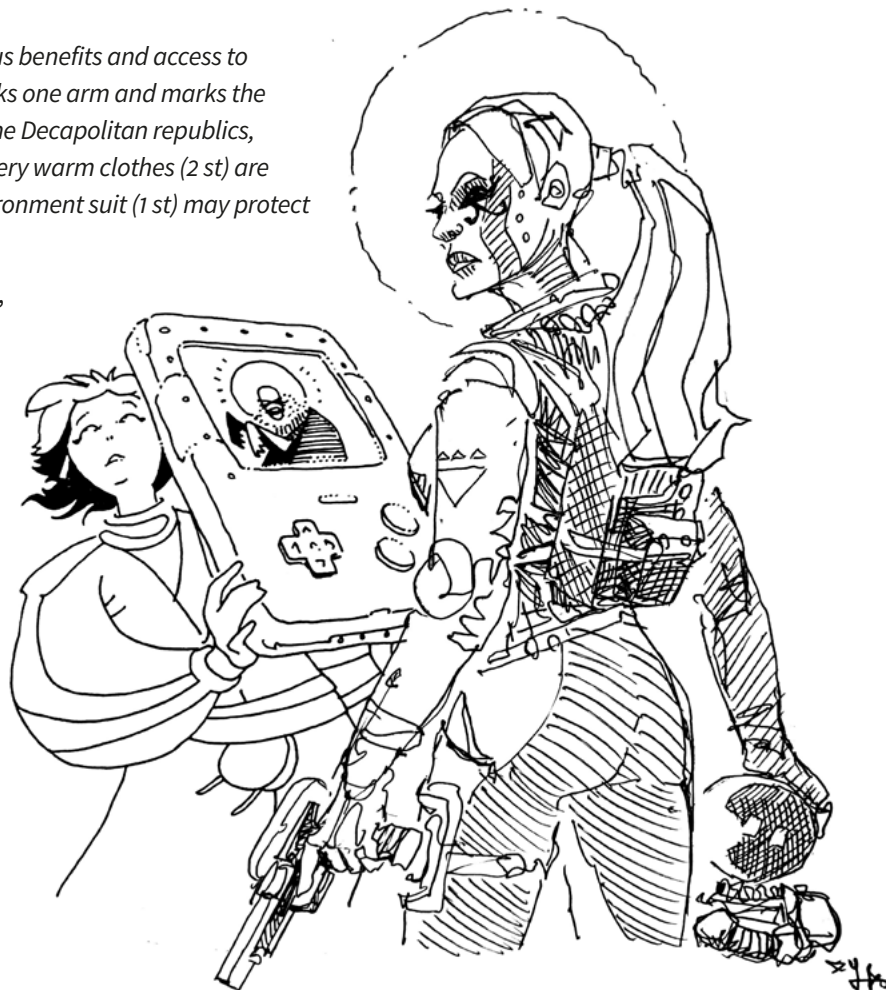
Example: boiler suit, ship overalls, field loincloth, civilian sarong.

Additional sets of clothes, or special garments that provide benefits or modifiers do occupy inventory slots as usual.

Example: a corporate suit (1 st) provides status benefits and access to temples of finance, a classical toga (3 st) blocks one arm and marks the wearer as a member of the ruling class in some Decapolitan republics, nomad robes (1 st) provide an armor bonus, very warm clothes (2 st) are useful in the domains of Winterwhite, an environment suit (1 st) may protect against radiation ghosts, etc.

Characters who are not evolved to wear clothes, such as cat lords, spectrum satraps, some golems, and other strange creatures, do not get a free inventory slot for the garments they wear.

Example: a cat lord wearing a cute little jump suit (1 st) and knit cap with foopy antennae (1 st) may not look annoyed, but they can't carry quite as many sacrificial mouse victims as they might wish.



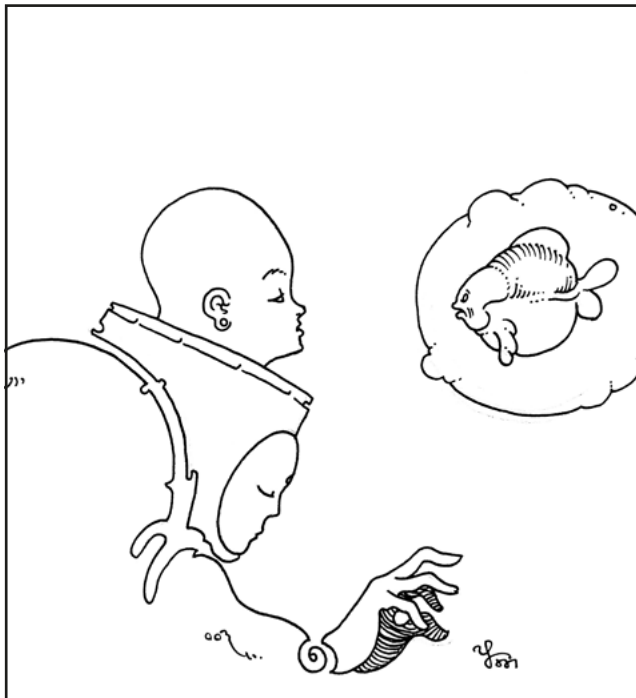
2.5.1. One Strange Item

Exactly what this item does is a mystery. It could turn out to be an item of prophecy, linked to your character's destiny or your community's fortunes. It might also just be daemon garbage or a broken piece of forgotten history.

Roll a d50.

1. One black metal vertebra (1 st).
2. Half a white porcelain skull (1 st).
3. Green brick, warm and light as a candle (1 st).
4. Pink bottle with a singing spirit (3 sp).
5. Three machine beetles with gem eyes (3 sp).
6. Precious yellow plastic tablet with four truths (1 st).
7. Silver book proclaiming revolution (1 st).
8. Cabochon ruby with a regal hologram inside (1 sp).
9. Intaglio red pearl of a lingish trader (1 sp).
10. Violet bone crystalized in soulfire (1 st).
11. Copper star incised with naughty limericks (5 sp).
12. Four brassy cogs from a soul mill (4 sp).
13. Dusty positronic rat brain in a crystal case (5 sp).
14. Small lavender plant that cannot die (1 st).
15. Translucent dinner plate-sized force disk (1 st).
16. Gray healing lichen culture in ceramic jar (1 st).
17. Manual of the vechs, annotated with scribbles (1 st).
18. Stainless steel thermos of blood wine (1 st).
19. Glass tub of vampire-grade sunscreen (1 st).
20. Platinum necrogoggles that reveal undead (1 st).
21. Small furry brown vome. Giggles when petted (1 st).
22. Machine **horse**. Rust dappled (level 2, carry 2).
23. Crystal personality box to create ka-zombies (1 st).
24. Yellow-orange weightless rock—an aerolith (1 st).
25. Blue and white mechanical hand (5 sp).
26. Quartzite tooth of a space worm (1 st).
27. Animate furry chitin kite (1 st).
28. Carmine cactus that secretes drops of blood (1 st).
29. Cogwheel monocle with small pits (1 sp).
30. Seven strands of unbreakable silver wire (7 sp).
31. Citrine soul stone with a third of a hero's soul (1 sp).
32. Gourd fetish with cowrie teeth (1 st).
33. Teal warlock helmet with three white stripes (1 st).
34. Yellow cape of pure steel silk (1 st).
35. Unaging plastic travel cutlery (2 sp).
36. Rainbow unicorn horn (1 st).
37. Grey cube. Weighs five times more than lead (1 st).
38. Lime green onion-and-skull cup (1 st).
39. Clear crystal heart of a V.I.L.E. (1 st).
40. Red staff made of fused ancient pistols (1 st).
41. Sentient **donkey** (level 1, carry 2). It claims its greenish plastic hat is magic (1 st).
42. Liquid metal shapeshifting executioner's blade (2 st).
43. Preserved and revived heart of a beloved (1 st).
44. Vantablack propaganda reduction sunglasses (2 sp).
45. Tempting smart gun-wand of porcelain and jade (1 st).
46. Faceless terracotta helmet with no name (1 st).
47. Self-playing zither with seventy tunes (1 st).
48. Ivory set of Zu Complex ignition tables (1 st).
49. Undying replacement organ (1 st).
50. Source-bonded replacement clone seed (1 st).

Next: *Your useful starting kit at 2.5.2.*



Selling Your Strange Item

Figuring out what it does is a hassle. Why don't you just sell it for quick cash? Everything will be ok!

BUYER	WHERE	QUICK CASH
Random Merchant	Anywhere, really. Here?	€1d6* x 10
Sage Patron	A remote location.	€1d6* x 100
Legendary Collector	A secret, dangerous location, locked behind a difficult quest.	€1d6* x 1000

The asterisk denotes an exploding die. Keep rolling and adding sixes.

2.5.2. One Useful Kit

A kit is a packed bundle of mundane tools that let a character do their job. A settled character can use their kit to make a living.

You have **a kit for one of your background traits**.
Draw a kit box on the back of your character sheet.

The kit measures a whole sack (10 stones) in heft and includes up to 10 individual items. You don't need to choose in advance exactly what is in your character's kit—the items are in a quantum superposition until you define them as you play.

Example: *Noë has a background as a plumber (don't ask) and starts with a plumber's kit. Noë doesn't list exactly what is in the kit.*

As she adventures, she produces useful O-rings, allen wrenches, lengths of pipe, and sealing tape from her kit. She lists these in her kit box, leaving space for 6 remaining quantum items.

The starting kit includes nothing better than a civilian weapon (1d6 damage, see pXX for examples) and no armor. You can buy more weapons and armor with your starting cash.

The starting kit will leave most characters burdened when unpacked. You can stash it before exploring a dangerous location or entering a fight. A beast of burden may help transport your kit (see 4.5.).

Now: *get your starting cash (2.5.3.).*



2.5.3. Starting Cash

Many kinds of cash are possible: the traditional luminous cowrie of the coastal communities (lb), the high-end plastic Casino gold piece (cgp) of the Red Land District, the traditional bunker era duraplastic chit (dpc) of the Red and Orange Coprosperity Merchant Region, the sky-dragon scale (sds) of the Cat-affiliated knowledge societies, the prized ferroceramic puck-and-triangle of the Emerald City (fpck), and the completely spiritual noöspheric digital cash of the Dream Canopy (vdx).

For simplicity, the abstract “€” symbol covers them all.

You have **€100** in physical currency. Enough to live on for a few months, if you are careful and boring. You're not, though.

A level 0 character starts with €50. Higher-level PCs start with an additional €50 per level. That's not much for their level, frankly.

What Cash Buys

Precisely how much €1 buys varies with place and time (and referee whim), but a reasonable baseline is 100 theoretical convertible imperial universal dollars from Finite Earth A.D. 2025 to €1. Example purchases:

PRICE PURCHASE

€0.1	common meal or ingredient, mass tourist souvenir
€1	day's food and lodging for two proletarian baseline humans, basic tool, uncommon ingredient, fancy meal
€10	day's food and lodging for two mildlyenhanced bourgeois humans, professional tool, rare ingredient, opera ticket
€100	day's food and lodging for two betterfolk aesthetically-augmented humans, rare or expert tool, very rare ingredients, basic vehicle, hut, small farm
€1k	day's food and lodging for two abmortal oligarchs, uncommon vehicle, small cottage, middling farm
€10k	hour's rock-hitting trip for an imperial executive unit, rare vehicle, comfortable residence, large farm or ranch
€100k	nearly super-heroic augment, luxurious residence, plantation
€1m	abmortality, seat on the neo-imperial shadow parliament, modest palace

A character can dream, right?

Next: *the remaining attributes, overleaf (2.6.).*

2.6. Determine Remaining Attributes

Your character is nearly complete! Just a few final attributes to figure out.

Proceed in order.

2.6.1. Level

An abstract measure of power. Some traits and items scale with levels.

You **start at level 1** and go to level 9.

Monsters and other NPCs range from level 0 to level 17. Some creatures by level to give a sense of scale:

0	rat, wretch, rabbit
1	human, horse, hagbird
2	soldier, snake-jake, river snapper
3	elite rider, king eland, electric hound
4	separatist hero, steppe wolf, sentinel golem
5	biomechanical queen, bloodosaur, broodmaker
6	epic nomad hero, hunter golem, skinchanger
10	bone roc, redmeatwood, house mimic
13	vome autofac, biomechanical catamaran
17	demiurge, void crawler, the Rebuilder, the Mother Machine

Next: *your life score. Proceed to 2.6.2.*

2.6.2. Life

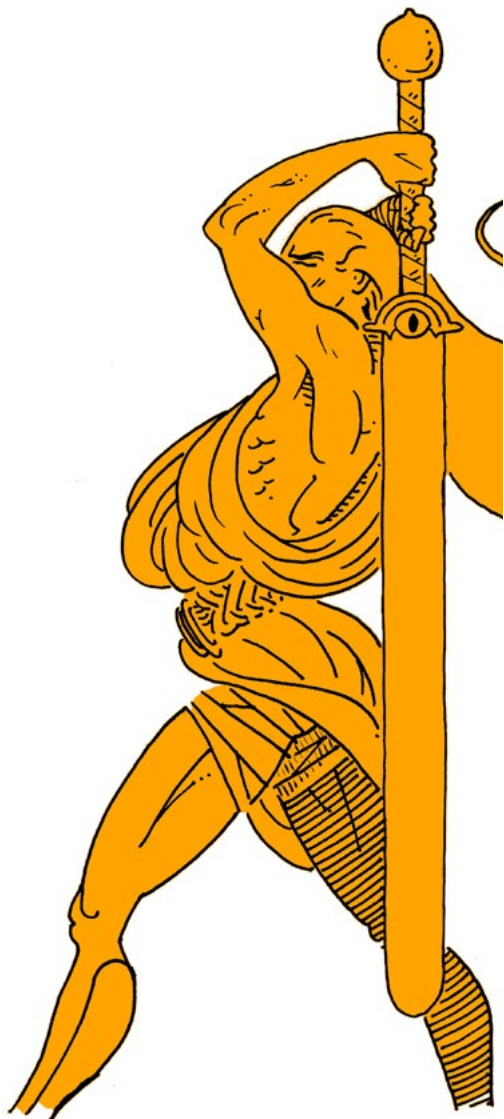
Hylospheric persistence, hit points, embodiment? More like narrative resilience and plot armor. A measure of how long you'll stay in action and a resource you spend to use your powers. Burn the candle at both ends.

You **start with 8 life** at level 1.

PCs gain 4 life per level. Traits may grant more life. NPCs range from 4 life at level 0 to 666 life at level 17.

At 0 life, a character is in trouble but not necessarily dead. Killing requires a conflict with deadly stakes, an accident (or critical success i.e. a natural 20), or an additional killing blow. Even then, death is often not the end.

Next: *your hero dice. Go to 2.6.3.*



2.6.3. Hero Dice

Six-sided dice (d6) for adjusting rolls and regaining life. You gain one per session and one more every couple of hours. The referee can grant additional hero dice for inspired roleplaying and prosocial behavior like bringing milk and cookies to the game session.

You can **store HD equal to your most powerful PC's level.**

Roll hero dice to do two things:

1. **Adjust any roll**, whether it is a d4 or a d20 or a d100. This does not have to be your roll. The adjusted roll counts as a natural roll. This is not an action.
2. **Regain life** equal to the roll. This is always an action.

Traits and items may provide other uses for hero dice.

Rare traits can modify the number or type of hero dice.

Burdens do not affect hero die rolls.

Now: onwards to 2.6.4. to note your saving throw target.

2.6.4. Save

When nothing but blind luck will save you, roll d20 + ability over your saving roll target (or simply, their save). If you succeed, you are saved.

Your save is 13.

As with other rolls, there are three possible outcomes:

- Under 13 **Doom.** What was, will be. No save.
- Exactly 13 **Sacrifice.** Lose something precious to save.
- Over 13 **Save.** Disaster averted, fortune appeased.

Relevant and Irrelevant Abilities

- **Endurance** applies under duress, in harsh environments, and against diseases or injuries.
- **Aura** applies against threats to psychic integrity, spiritual pollution, daemonic possession, and mental injury.
- **Agility** does not provide a save bonus. As soon as a character is aware of a threat, for example a landslide, it is no longer a blind luck situation. They are taking action, using traits and abilities to overcome a threat.

Wards

Some Long Ago oldtech artifacts and corrupted modern fantascience trinkets provide a bonus to saving rolls. A ward provides a general luck bonus to all saves or specifies when it applies.

Saving Traits

Traits can provide a bonus or modify a character's saving roll target.

Next: calculate your attack modifiers (2.6.5.).



Violet Cat Egg
example ward

The catlords embed this amulet in the neck of a favored groom. Within the catlord's domain, the groom gains ward +5, receiving a great bonus to their saves. However, outside the Purple Land, this only confirms the groom's humanity and provides a return address in case they get lost.

2.6.5. Attacks

To attack roll **d20 + ability + skill over defense**.

Each foe has a defense target number. When you beat it, you deal damage or otherwise impact their existence.

You have **four basic attack types**:

1. **Melee** - attack with a weapon, like a ghost bone axe or a machete.
d20 + ability (strength) + skill (if applicable)
2. **Ranged** - attack with a weapon, like a heat rod or a wand pistol.
d20 + ability (agility) + skill (if applicable)
3. **Oldtech** - attack with an artifact, like a brain-slaved auto-turret.
d20 + ability (thought) + skill (if applicable)
4. **Fantascience** - attack with a power like a mind whip or brain shackle.
d20 + ability (charisma) + skill (if applicable)

List your modifiers for each type of attack, even if it is 0. This way you will be ready to improvise with whatever tool your PC has to hand.

Now: your defenses (2.6.6.).



2.6.6. Defense

When you defend against an attack, foes must overcome your defense to hurt you.

7 + ability (agility) + **bonus** (if skill applies) + **armor**

Characters use a single defense attribute against all kinds of attacks in the physical world, the so-called hylosphere. Some specific attacks may have modifiers against mundane targets (which most PCs are).

Example: *Safir squares off against a malevolent radiation ghost. Normally, Safir's defense would be 18 (7 + 3 (agility) + 3 (fighter trait) + 5 (chitin cuirass). Unfortunately, the radiation ghost's gentle touch ignores physical armor, so the target for its attacks is just 13.*

Armor

Modern equipment to soften blows or ancient machines replacing the body. Armor may give additional modifiers, benefits, penalties and mechanics.

Example: *many golem armors increase a character's ability score (usually strength) and give a bonus life score.*

Other Defenses

Other defenses are possible. For example, when a character's soul-mind duality (*ka-ba*) travels like a butterfly between the dreams of diverse cosmic lords, plumbing the ancient noösphere, **spiritual defense** guards against injury in this realm as physical defense does in the base material cosmos.

7 + ability (thought) + **bonus** (if skill applies) + **ward**

A spiritual defense could even apply in base reality if one is assailed by noöspheric creatures, such as daemons, nightmares or lucid spells.

By analogy, a **social defense** could apply in contests of conspicuous consumption, legal intrigue, and reputation assassination.

Add a special defense box on the back of your character sheet as needed.

Next: figure out your defense score in section 2.6.7.



2.6.7. Damage

When an attack succeeds, you deal damage.

- dXX** (item)
- + **ability** (determined by traits)
- + **bonus** (circumstantial)

Item descriptions list how much damage they do. Review your items and note their damage values.

Traits may let you add an ability score to your damage.

Powers and circumstances may provide additional damage bonuses.

Unarmed Damage

If you have no suitable item for a type of attack, you can [almost] always make an unarmed attack.

Your improvised or unarmed attack always deals at least **1d3 damage**.

Example unarmed attacks:

1. **Melee** - a punch, a kick, a head butt.
2. **Ranged** - a thrown clod, rock, or bar of soap.
3. **Oldtech** or other thought attack - a convenient trick, a subterfuge, a mechanical surprise.
4. **Fantascience** or other charisma attack - a terrifying boast, a harsh curse, an evil eye, a false incantation.

Traits can modify a your unarmed damage.

Option: a PC who rolls a natural 13 when making an unarmed attack also deals an equal amount of damage to themselves. Punching armor hurts.

Improvised Damage

A PC can improvise a weapon from their environment or other equipment. Compare an improvised weapon to typical weapons to figure out how much damage you deal. The referee has final say.

Typical weapon damages and improvised weapons:

1. **Small personal weapon** (knife, 1d4 damage): a beer stein, throwing pan, oldtech mechanidoll, blast of alien poetry.
2. **Civilian weapon** (fire axe, 1d6 damage): a chair, fire extinguisher, electric trap, porcelain prince pheromones, doghead pack howl.
3. **Military weapon** (lance, 1d8 damage): a parking meter, water cannon, jury-rigged flash-blast mine, feline tele-empathetic mind control.

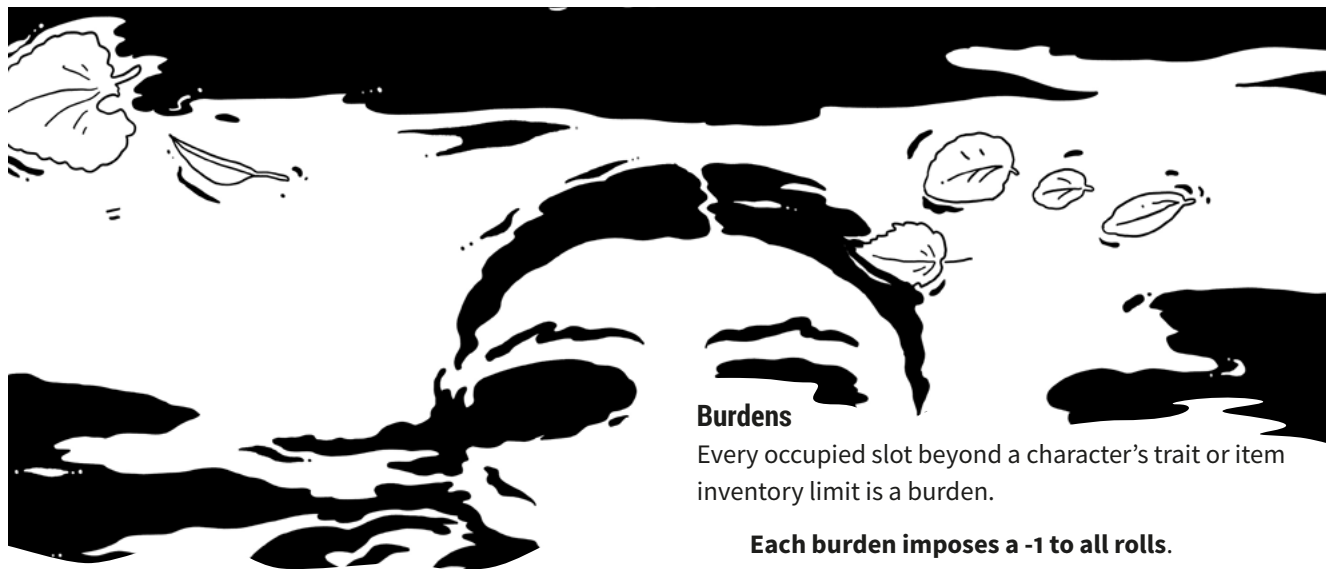
Traits can modify a character's improvised damage.

Improvised items have drawbacks. Fragile items break after landing a blow. Clumsy items penalise attack rolls.

Dangerous items can hurt the attacker.

Proceeding: a quick inventory review (2.6.8.).

The conflicts section covers ranges, areas of effect, and additional effects of damage (pXX).



2.6.8. Inventory and Burdens

Your inventory slots are a key game resource. Though a character might want to carry everything, the cruel laws of their synthetic reality forbid it. Every human PC has three basic inventories.

- **Traits: 7 + thought slots**
- **Items: 7 + strength slots**
- **Burdens: 20 slots**

Non-humans may bear more or less.

***Example:** a cute little cat lord PC has just 2 + ability (strength) item inventory slots. They use a cat groom to carry things for them.*

Some traits may expand inventory slots.

Pets and Sidekicks

Each of a character's pets and sidekicks occupies a trait or item inventory slot. This represents the character's care and attention.

Powers and Spells

Each power or spell occupies a trait or item inventory slot. This represents either a technomagical anchor or the engraved psycho-physical channels that grant the character access to this unnatural power.

Prosthetics and Augments

Each implant or modification occupies a trait or item inventory slot.

Afflictions

Curses, diseases, mutations, corruptions and other afflictions also occupy inventory slots. Spiritual and psychological afflictions generally occupy trait slots, while diseases and physical injuries occupy item slots.

Burdens

Every occupied slot beyond a character's trait or item inventory limit is a burden.

Each burden imposes a -1 to all rolls.

Different powers, monsters, and injuries are also noted in burden slots. For example, a broken ankle, a curse, the terrifying psychological impact of facing a demon, and other afflictions are all treated as burdens.

These afflictions may impose additional penalties in addition to the standard -1 to all rolls.

In the text wording like "fatigue burden" is shorthand for "you are fatigued, which reduces your max life total by your level. Write this affliction down in a burden slot."

A character with 20 burdens can not take actions more complicated than moving slowly and carefully.

***Example:** Onion is carrying his equipment (8 st) and an armoire (10 st). With a strength of 1, he has 8 item slots. The armoire takes up ten burden slots, imposing a -10 penalty on all his rolls.*

Unwisely, or desperately, he tries to chase off a ligneous skeleton (L1, corken) with a blast of hot plasma from his wand-gun. He might still overcome the penalty with his attack roll (a d20), but he may well deal no damage (the plasma wand-gun deals d12 damage).

Still, even a glancing blast from the hot plasma might frighten the ligneous skeleton. After all, cork burns so well, does it not?

Dropping cumbersome items is a quick way to reduce a character's burdens. Removing afflictions is harder, usually requiring rest and care.

Additional Inventories

Traits and containers can create new inventories. Players draw these on the back of the character sheet or in a notebook.

***Now:** some motivations, perhaps false. Go to 2.7.*

2.7. What Led You Here?



Why leave the lovely cement greatcoat of tradition and town behind?
Why abandon the embrace of hierarchy and rigor of etiquette?
Why head out into the waste lands, the strange lands, the Vastlands?

1. Sent by a grim corporation.
2. Glory, like in the great romantic novels.
3. Blood memories of a great patrimony.
4. Tracking a missing ledger.
5. Seeking new converts.
6. Rumors of a fabulous autofac.
7. Found clue to abmortality.
8. Ordered by an ominous disembodied voice.
9. Map to an unclaimed aerolith.
10. Soul of loved one stolen by a horror.
11. Stories of a secret healing vegetable.
12. Portents of a deadly machine demon.
13. Paintings of a gorgeous cyan seaside.
14. Pursued by loving enemies.
15. Grandmother's lost autowagon.
16. Sibling was stripped into a ba-zombie.
17. Master boneworker sent an invitation.
18. Delivering a letter of inheritance to a count.
19. Cure for a plague that killed your child.
20. Biomantic bible in a lost library.
21. Repaying debts to the butcher bank.
22. Visions of a world ending in falling fire.
23. Bearing a priceless pearl for a princess.
24. Tracking a vile intruder from the void.
25. Mind entwined with a dying sentience.
26. Nightly dreams of a lost world.
27. Seeking a prosthetic body for mother.
28. Ordered by the clan quest golem.
29. Keeping tabs on a rival explorer.
30. Exploring clues to the great forgetting.
31. Possessed by a demon in childhood.
32. Seeking allies for a revolution.
33. Looking for new lands for lost tribe.
34. Compulsion after meeting a seer.
35. Sheer industrial greed.
36. Determined to end a crippling disease.
37. Found the testament of a dead god.
38. Pursued by furies and a dark fate.
39. Visions of glory and rebirth.
40. Queer unease after reading a metal book.
41. Experience of a tragic vomish outbreak.
42. Their aged clone whispered prophecies.
43. Hallucinatory star, guiding, leading West.
44. Songs in the blood of a Flesh God scion.
45. Mystic manual talked of a divine workshop.
46. Post-mortal messenger gave a portal key.
47. Bone-deep ennui at an unchanging order.
48. Dying grandparent's oath to a lacquer queen.
49. Promise to take a friend's ashes to the last sea.
50. Dream quest order to destroy an invisible ring.

Levelling: Time to learn how it works (2.8.).

2.8. Levelling and Growth

Heroes, like your main character, start their careers at level 1, because they are special. That means your PC **starts with 300 invested experience**.

2.8.1. Earning Experience

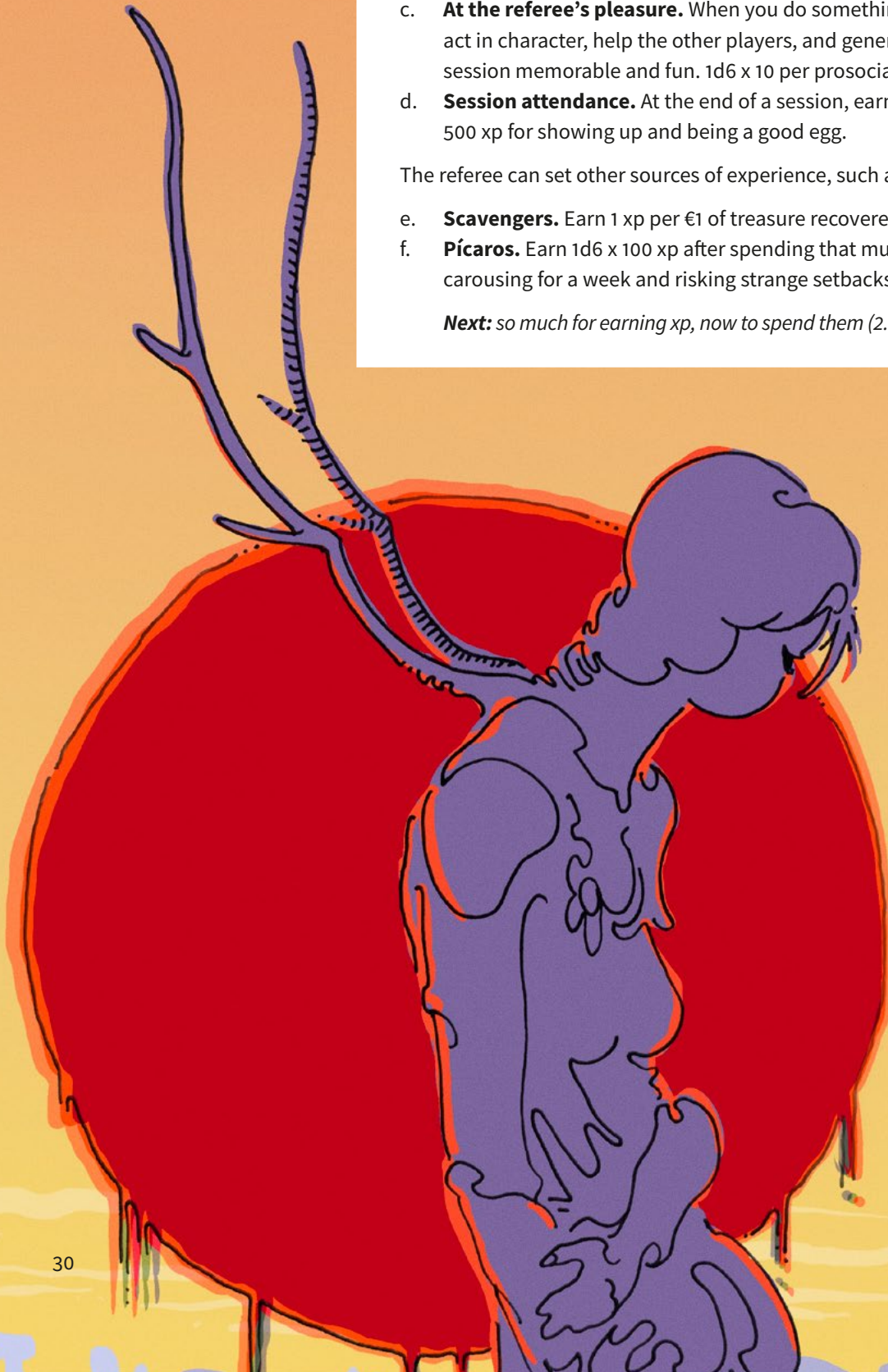
As you complete adventures, visit new places, see strange sights, and overcome harrowing challenges, you earn experience. Sources of experience include:

- Novelties.** When you explore, braving danger to see something new. Earn $1d6 \times 10$ xp per discovery or experience.
- Quests.** When your PC makes progress on some terrible quest. Earn $1d6 \times 100$ xp per session's worth of progress.
- At the referee's pleasure.** When you do something extraordinary, act in character, help the other players, and generally make the session memorable and fun. $1d6 \times 10$ per prosocial deed.
- Session attendance.** At the end of a session, earn 500 xp for showing up and being a good egg.

The referee can set other sources of experience, such as:

- Scavengers.** Earn 1 xp per €1 of treasure recovered from an ancient ruin.
- Pícaros.** Earn $1d6 \times 100$ xp after spending that much cash carousing for a week and risking strange setbacks.

Next: so much for earning xp, now to spend them (2.8.2.).



2.8.2. Investing Experience

All experience earned is banked until you decide to invest it to level up a character(s), their pets and sidekicks, or their hallmarks. You can invest experience in other players' characters, if they agree.

With every new level, a PC chooses one:

1. Gain a new trait of their choice (or a random trait).
2. Improve a trait of their choice (skilled +3 → expert +6 → master +9).
3. Increase an ability score by 1.

Each level the PC also gains 4 life and 1 hero die.

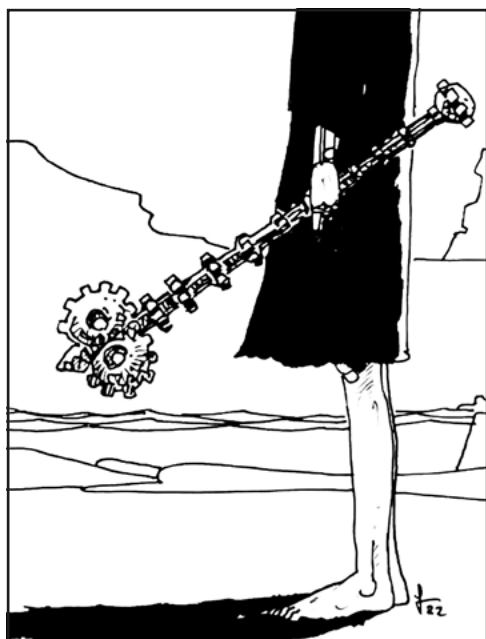
XP	LEVEL	LIFE	TOTAL XP
0	0	4	0
+300	1	8	300
+450	2	12	750
+750	3	16	1,500
+1,500	4	20	3,000
+3,000	5	24	6,000
+6,500	6	28	12,500
+12,500	7	32	25,000
+25,000	8	36	50,000
+49,999	9	40	99,999

Investing in Pets and Sidekicks

Levelling up secondary characters is exactly the same as with PCs.

After investing in a pet or sidekick, draw a box on the back of your main character's sheet to track their experience, traits, and other attributes.

Pets and sidekicks start as level 0 characters unless specified otherwise.



Investing in Hallmarks

Anything that belongs to a PC can become their hallmark. This might be a vehicle, a sword, a power or something more unusual. Heroism rubs off on belongings. A PC can own a number of hallmarks equal to their level.

All hallmarks start as level 0 items unless specified otherwise.

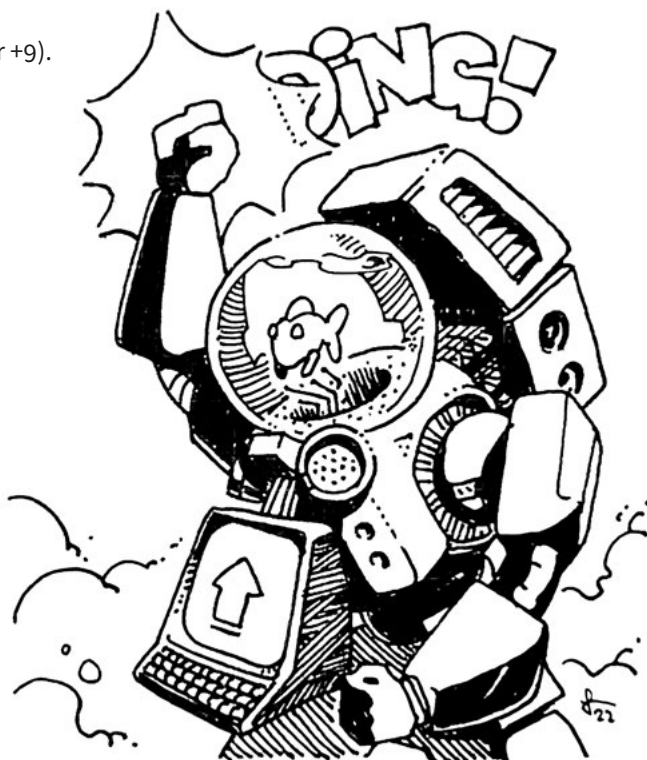
Levelling up hallmarks costs as much xp as with any character.

Each level, a hallmark gains one of the following:

1. a +1 bonus to every damage die rolled (so 2d4 becomes 2d4+2).
2. a +1 defense bonus (for example, a vehicle or shield).
3. a new trait, power or complication (for example, an added resistance). For more hallmark traits see Hallmark Items (4.10.) (pXX).

Hammerspace Hallmarks Option: Besides their other benefits, hallmarks do not occupy ordinary inventory slots. Draw a hallmark box on the back of your character sheet with one slot for each of your character's levels.

Overleaf: *growing and changing characters through play (2.8.3.).*



2.8.3. Growing Through Play

Your goals for your PCs' life and growth are excellent fuel for the referee to build tailored quests and adventures.

They will, of course, provide some twists and turns.

Gaining New Traits Through Play

Characters can gain traits without spending xp. Some may be acquired with careful study, others from strange ancient powers. In both cases, becoming skilled (or an expert or master) requires more in-game work.

1. Write down the new trait in a suitable inventory slot.
2. Figure out how many people and/or other sources you must study and absorb to acquire the skill (usually three to become skilled).
3. Each mentor, library, knowledge stone, or what have you is at a different location. Some sources may be found as treasures in the course of adventuring.
4. When you find a source, absorb its essence over one week of focused study (or meditation or bonding or mind surgery), then roll thought to beat a target of 11 (a moderate thought roll). If you fail, you can try again after a further week of study. If you fail a second time, this teacher is not suitable for you.
5. After tallying three successes, your PC is skilled in the new trait.

Progress from skilled to expert requires 4–6 successes, from expertise to mastery 5–9 successes. Some traits may require more successfully absorbed sources.

The referee peppers sites and mentor NPCs around the map, creating a personalized quest.

Example: *Onion has observed the porcelain princes' masterful crafting of masks and faces, and wishes to become a facemaker, so he could create new faces for himself and pass as other people with ease.*

The referee agrees this could be a worthy trait. The first place to start learning about masks as faces would obviously be the Porcelain Citadel. This is enough of a hook for the player to write down the facemaker trait with space for three tallies.

It will take Onion at least 3 weeks of travel to reach the Porcelain Citadel, then find a mentor, then another week of travel. Plenty of time to seed clues for other locations to visit and study in future sessions.

Increasing Ability Scores

Traits, items, mutations, oldtech upgrades, and fantascience boons may permanently increase characters' ability scores. Such artifacts make great treasures to motivate character quests.

Adversity and Decay

Characters do not only become stronger. Age, injury, and magitechnical mishaps may bestow burdens and traits that wear them down. Curses, monsters, defeats and psychemagical travails may permanently reduce their ability scores.

The referee should be clear with players before their PCs take a course of action that may result in permanent injury. Permanent changes should be the result of risks freely taken by the player.

Example: *Noë dreams of becoming a terrible and powerful wizard to prove to her mother that she is not a failure.*

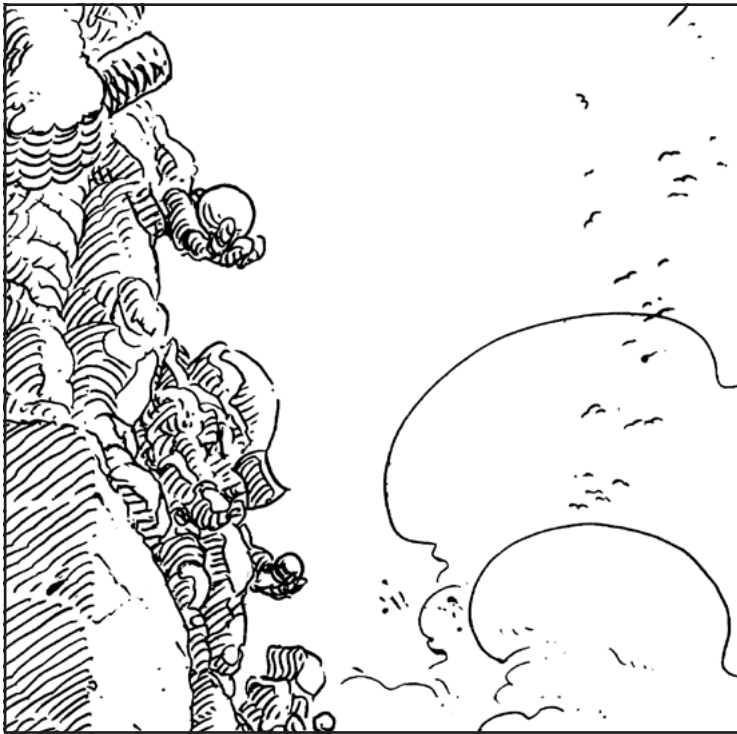
The referee provides rumors of an electrical brain holding albums of great power, and Noë excitedly pursues them. However, the more she learns of the brain named Ata'ari, the clearer it becomes that the price of ultimate mastery is the destruction of her physical human body.

Will she go this far? Or will she take some of her knowledge and sell the rest to fuel new escapades?

A referee may then provide quests to stave off a character's inevitable decline and demise.

Alternatively, a player may decide to retire their character and promote a sidekick or create a new character. An option is to give the new character fewer xp than the lowest-level player character or the highest-level available sidekick (whichever is less) at the table.

Penultimately: *time to name your character (2.9).*



A name says a lot. It says where a character is from, who they want to be, what they want to achieve. Choose or roll or invent a name you find funny, meaningful, or interesting. Above all, choose one you enjoy.

1. **High Common (upper-class):** Elsedéz Diës, Ennuï a'Sheval, Jai Ping-Noun, Oelan Outani, Ouestin Haus, Phædred Enshin, Vruit d'AJai, Yuin a'Romeö.
2. **Vulgar Common (middle-class):** Alba Nigra, Equeis Liber, Nutra Griza, Paloma Blanka, Qalen Vegeta, Solo Carburetto, Urora Squra.
3. **Purple:** Arha Skivayi, Buqa Loban, Hoc Uindea, Kalis Elfbayi, Stebra Osta, Turi Uma, Yasa Furfurea, Yilis Olorka.
4. **Blue:** Aleia Unomor, Gorto per Cultur, Halaver pre Lapan, Imssi bra Cupa, Muria bra Salsur, Qephi per Linter, Qarno Azur, Via Alpin.
5. **Green:** Axil i'Eliseis, Eralda Fiusc, Fiet i'Muru, Iacum di Vila, Issandir di Metropol, Lun Diralup, Ulfis i'Bosc, Xriso di Ust.
6. **Yellow:** Cortez an'Opera, Dona de Cuiyot, Horto 'n Caravan, Limon an'Vest, Pansa de Rancho, Saldo an'Nanc, Yaro Despolie, Ylva 'n Vusta.
7. **Orange:** Amber' Ossscale, Presid' Uniuersal, Ranalo Fianviye, Safauzi Vruje, Sofixa Vulja, Tifixa Boscaneve, Uale Xerive, Xuli' Ueronesi.
8. **Red:** Amfo s'Teran, Cozarin s'Berberin, Dolon duc Marbec, Imbic Terminal, Namur Rinfosc, Perin duc Piñor, Torron Valpin, Zinf Ander.
9. **Kriol & Cant:** Anater En-Ein, Hors To-Burk, Lama Denk-Zen, Munti Trul, Pilk Bagato, Sembet Kuat-Lun, Ski Senk-Karti, Tosk Perfors.
10. **DWARF:** Amdt 'Logistic, Del 'Machinist, Kur 'Notcurrentlyineducationortraining, Pem 'Cleaningspecialist, Ru 'C, Tam 'HR, Vek 'Driver, Yon 'Engine.
11. **Steppe:** Acid Spirit, Citrus Elevator, Forth Bone, Newt Incorporaeal, Rise Ghost, Sevenfold Epicenter, Starfall Perimeter, Wayfarer Sanctum.
12. **Timelost:** Cryocasket 523-Amber, Eggs Perimeter-4, Kloen Offlord, Ohn Smit, Oi Yu, Settler Unitschild, Sidhe Reäl, Winterbird.

There are more names in the appendix (II.A.) (pXX).

Finally: let's review your character. (2.10.)

2.9. Name Your Character

2.10. Final Check



Your starting human PC should have the following attributes:

- 2.1. Six ability scores ranging from 0 to 5.
- 2.2. At least one background trait.
- 2.3. At least one path trait.
- 2.4. A third trait. Traits may provide a +3 bonus to rolls (if skilled) or +6 (if expert).
- 2.5. A strange item. A kit of quantum gear. €100 in strange currency.
- 2.6. One level. Eight or more life. One hero die. A save target, usually 13. Four attack types with bonuses ranging from 0 to +11 (or so). A defense score of 7 or more. Three inventories for traits (7–12), items (7–12), and burdens (20).
- 2.7. At least one reason for going a-venturing.
- 2.8. 300 invested xp.
- 2.9. One or more names.

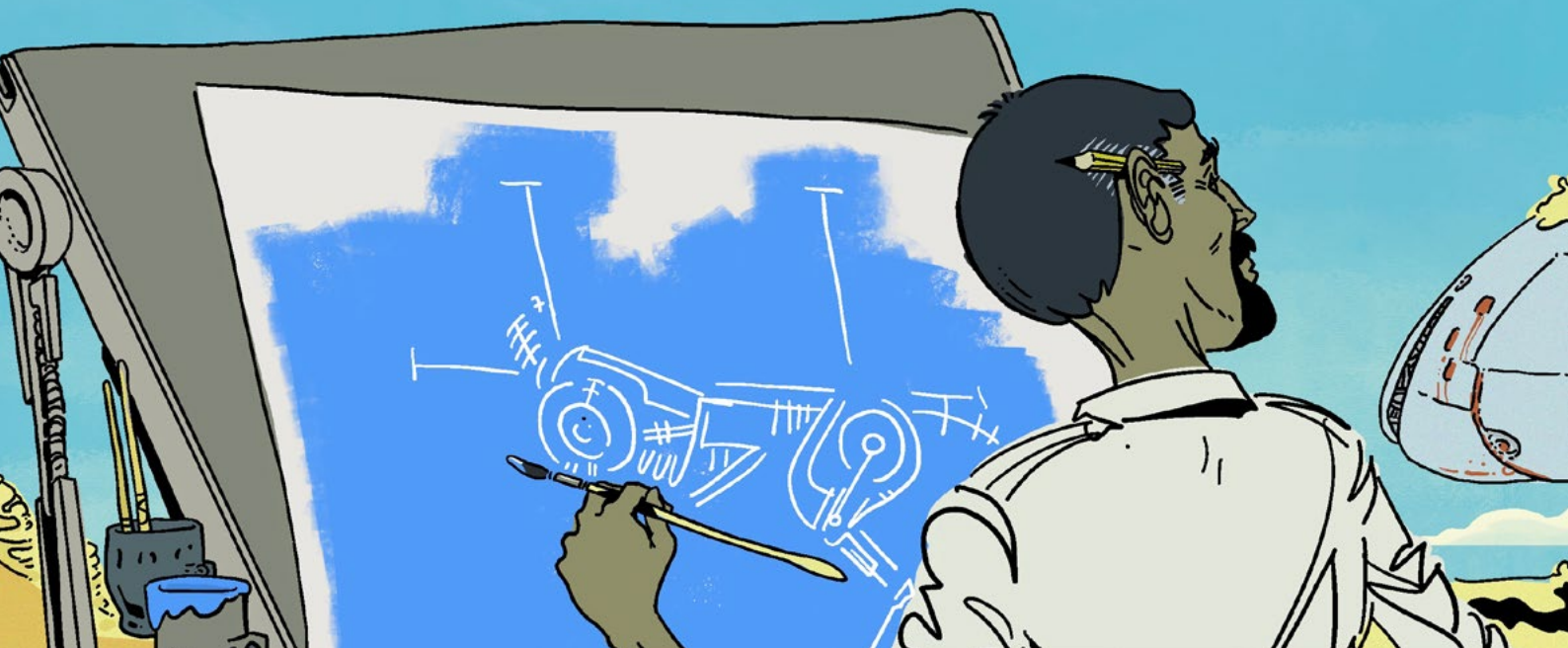
A non-human PC, such as a cat or a golem or a skeleton, may start with other attributes.

You are ready.

Your PC stands at the edge of the civilized world, at the start of the Vast, where the thrum of history has not quite stopped. It is morning and the cat coffee is nearly brewed. Share a thought with your fellow travelers, for soon the referee will pitch you headlong into turmoil and temptation, into the epic of adventure.

As you travel and share stories over campfires, you may reveal more of your PC's backstory. Till then, this is enough. **Begin.**



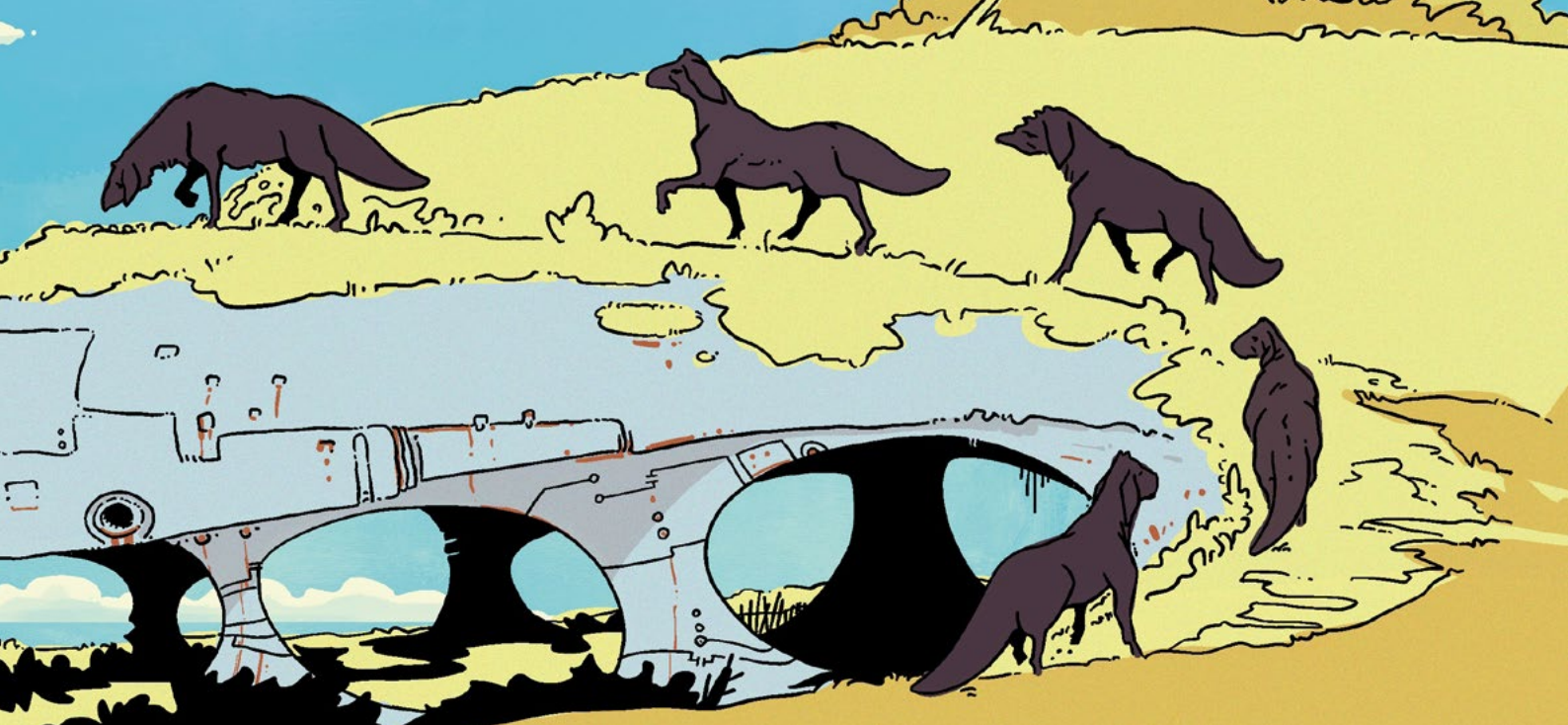


RULES & MECHANICS

In this chapter, we'll cover the synthetic dream machine rules and mechanics for how characters interact with the world.

- 3.1. system overview
- 3.2. core mechanics: dialogue, dice, concepts
- 3.3. action mechanics: combining abilities and skills, doing stuff
- 3.4. conflict mechanics: fights, disagreements, movement, time
- 3.5. damage, defeat, death: the consequences of failure
- 3.6. rest & recovery: getting back into play

In *Our Golden Age* the rules only mentioned. In the *Ultraviolet Grasslands* they are summarized with a single page. In the *Eternal Return Key* they are given sixteen pages. Here, they have more space and examples, too.



3.1. System Overview

The synthetic dream machine (SDM) system is a fast and loose OSR system. It assumes familiarity with other traditional roleplaying games, like the original game with 20-sided dice, OSE, Mothership, ItO, Knave, Cairn, etc.

You Need

1. A group of friends or friendly players. One takes the role of referee (or GM), the others play characters (PCs) in the game.
2. Someone who has skimmed this book.
3. A published adventure or one written by the referee.
4. Classic polyhedral dice (d20, d12, d10, d8, d6, d4) or a dice-roller app.
5. Record-keeping tools (clay tablet, stylus, paper, pen, computer, etc.).

Dice Notation

Dice are dXX, where XX represents the number of faces. So, a 12-sided die is a d12, a 30-sided die is a d30. The number shown on the dice, without any modifiers, is called the natural roll. When an unusual die is listed, combine dice. Or use that dice-roller app.

Example: to roll d40, roll d4 for the tens (treating 4 as zero) and d10 for the ones. When the d4 rolls 3 and the d10 rolls 1, that's a 31. When the d4 rolls 4 and the d10 rolls 2, that's not 42, but 02. Double zeroes (well, 4 on the d4 and 0 on the d10) make 40.

We all live in a golden age.
Everyone tells us so.
This is the best of all possible worlds.
Everyone tells us so.
“I believe in overkill,” whispers the silver ship.

—*Golden Disc of Safran*, Deadworld Lemon Delirium,
Visions II (2031)

3.2. Core Mechanics

3.2.1. The Dialogue

The heart of the game is the conversation between players and referee.

1. The referee describes the situation facing the PCs.
2. The players say what their characters do.
3. The referee describes the outcome.
4. The players say what their characters do now.
5. Et cetera.

3.2.2. The Roll

When the player tries to do something risky, the referee describes the challenge, the fruits of success and the price of failure, then offers a target number.

Typical target numbers:

- 3** Trivial, casual, banal
- 7** Easy, simple, routine
- 11** Mediocre, moderate, average, medium, [null]
- 15** Hard, challenging, tasking
- 19** Very hard, confounding, arduous

The price of failure may include resources wasted (money, time, fuel, etc.), gear lost or damaged, enemies alerted or advantaged, injury (life or ability score damage, burdens), or even death.

If the player proceeds, they have to **roll over the target number**:

d20 + ability (if applicable) + **skill** (if applicable)

The referee can skip trivial (and even easy) targets in most situations. However, when failure carries a substantial risk, even a trivial target can build tension.

***Example:** Noë runs from the slow-moving ba-zombies, jumps into the autogolem, and makes to roar away.*

Cat interrupts her and asks for a trivial roll, lest she fumbles the keys.

Noë, the nimble wizard, smirks and rolls ... a natural 1. The keys fall to the bottom of the autogolem and the ba-zombies draw closer.

Cat offers a dilemma, "Make sure all the doors are locked, but get surrounded; or a moderate agility roll to grab the keys and rev the engine before one of the decayed ex-humans gets in through the passenger side door."

Noë picks up the fateful die.

The mechanics keep the machine
alive.

The machine makes the humans
live.

The humans keep the mechanics
fed.

—*Litany of the Undying City*,
Gilded Semi Barbarian,
Fruit of the Three Tree (3782)

3.2.3. The Nuances

The dialogue and the roll cover 9-in-10 situations. These situational mechanics cover most remaining edge cases.

Magic Numbers

Some natural rolls on the d20 are special.

- 1** Fail and equipment notched. *Mark.*
It breaks on the second mark.
- 13** Only one ammo or power unit left. *Mark.*
One use left.
- 20** Always succeeds. Double effect or additional stunt (trip, trick, trap), then *roll again.*
Yes, the d20 always explodes.

Example: *Safir runs in pursuit of the bolted pack mule. Cat rules this a hard test of endurance. Safir is confident this will work out.*

The fighter rolls 13. With an endurance of 4 and a survival skill adding 3 more, that's a 20. More than enough to easily catch the mule. However, the 13 ...

Cat suggests the chase has depleted Safir's archaic golem armor, leaving enough juice for just one more fight. Safir blanches, but has nothing else that might have been depleted in the chase and agrees.

Lucky 7 Option: the referee provides a benefit or bonus, when a natural 7 is rolled—even if the roll is otherwise a failure. This mechanic is optional, as it puts additional pressure to improvise on the referee.

Exploding Dice

Exploding dice are marked with an asterisk (dXX*). When you roll the exploding die's **highest face**, roll again and add the results together. Keep rolling as long as the die keeps showing its highest face. D20s always explode, even without an asterisk.

Example: *Onion goes to a merchant to sell the liquid metal shapeshifting executioner's blade his quick fingers 'inherited' from the sad space knight. Cat rules this is a random merchant, who is willing to pay €1d6* x 10 for the square blade.*

Onion rolls a 6. The die explodes and Onion rolls again. A 5. The merchant offers €110 for the blade.

The cunning Onion grins and spends a hero die, bumping the second roll to 6 and exploding it again. How long can the die keep exploding? Depends on Onion's luck and hero dice ...

Bonus and Penalty

The referee assigns a bonus [+] or penalty [-] to d20 rolls when circumstances favor or hinder a PC. The size of the modifier is up to the referee and more art than science.

Traits, items, events, burdens, and more also give bonuses or penalties. The referee has final say when and how different modifiers combine.

Typical modifiers:

[+]/[-]	EFFECT	%
+1/-1	A tiny modifier, barely noticeable in play.	5%
+6/-6	A significant modifier, very noticeable even in a short scene.	30%
+1d6/-1d6	A pretty random modifier, useful in muddled situations.	17.5%
[+a]/[-d]	Roll 2 dice and take the better or worse result. Also called advantage and disadvantage. Increases the probability of extreme natural rolls, while leaving the highest and lowest possible roll unchanged.	16.6%

Rolling multiple dice creates complex probability distributions. They can be fun to play with for the referee and a useful part of their toolbox, but can quickly become opaque to the players and slow at the table.

Example: *Noë is communing with a smart lock, encouraging it to accept her as a scion of the ship's captain with rights to enter the inner power vesicles.*

Cat's random encounter table offers up four shipfolk hunters. Cat decides they are trying to sneak up on Noë. Cat rules that Noë has to roll a save to see if she is surprised. She applies a -1d6 penalty to the roll because she is not sure quite how preoccupied Noë was, nor how quiet the shipfolk.

Cat must roll d20 -1d6 over 13. If she fails, the shipfolk will catch her unawares.

Hard Limit Option: modifiers to a d20 **cannot exceed +/-13**. If they would exceed 13, the referee may rule an automatic success (or failure), or limit the modifier to +/-13 and also assign [+a] or [-d].

Roll on Target - Force a Situation

When you roll precisely on target, you can **sacrifice something to succeed**. You or the referee can suggest sacrifices, including:

- Resources:** spend more ammo, charges or fuel.
- Damage:** equipment or vehicles get marked.
- Life:** the exertion saps the PC's plot armor.
- Burden:** the exertion strains or injures the PC.
- Alert:** opponents become aware of your efforts.
- Benefit:** foes get a bonus on their turn.
- Risk:** allies or bystanders get injured or are put in a more dangerous situation down the line.

The referee has final say on the choice of sacrifice.

***Example:** Onion whips out his electric pistol wand and fires off a volley at the onrushing firewater-maddened rabbit clansman. He rolls a 10, adds his agility (4) and skill with wands (3) for a total of 17.*

Precisely the same as the rabbit clansman's physical defense score. Cat suggests Onion can hit the swift clansman if he discharges the whole omnibattery. Onion agrees and rolls for damage ...

Group Roll

When the whole group is trying to accomplish something risky, **a random PC rolls for the whole group**.

***Example:** The party decides to quietly sneak through the Craquelure Queen's crypt to reach the ge-yao golem and access its sleeping mind. The security golems look dead, but one can never tell with this Vile oldtech.*

Cat judges this a hard roll. She rolls a die to decide which PC should roll and it falls on Safir, the fighter.

Safir looks uncomfortable in its archaic golem armor. That powered contraption is shouting for a hefty penalty. A classic disadvantage, two dice and pick the worse result.

Safir rolls 20 and ... 2. Even after adding its skill (3) and agility (3), the bluelander fighter's roll is a sadly lacking 8. The party blunders.

Cat asks what happened and Safir mumbles about a vase. Cat nods and elaborates how the party mistook a stack of celadon pots for a plinth and knocked it over, awakening ...

Suitable and Unsuitable Equipment

Under pressure, the referee can impose a penalty on characters without suitable equipment for tasks they are otherwise skilled at. Conversely, having precisely the right equipment can provide a bonus. The referee makes the final decision.

***Example:** Onion sidles up to a smart door and prepares to hack it. With a start, he realizes it is a White City brand security door—the same as his 'borrowed' security root kit.*

Cat agrees to let him roll 2 dice and take the better result, since he has the perfect tools for this hacking job.

Time + Equipment = Automatic Success

A character with suitable equipment and few time constraints can succeed at tasks of an ordinary difficulty without rolling.

***Example:** The party comes upon a swift, turbid stream. Nearby, an old rowboat is tied to a tree stump. Noë wants to use it to row across.*

Cat decides the swift stream is not exactly easy to cross, but if the PCs take their time they should have no trouble. She suggests to Noë that she can row across without rolling if she spends two turns.

Noë ponders. More time passing gives Cat more opportunities to roll for random encounters and depleting resources, but the risk of a bad roll and tumbling into the water ... she decides to cross carefully.

Roll When It Counts

With long duration activities, **only roll when it counts.**

These are things like hiding, moving stealthily, gossiping politely, participating in society dance, standing guard over a prisoner all night, etc.

Example: *Onion sets an ambush for the moss-covered elf spawn. He covers himself in cool mud and bark to hide from the elf spawn's infrared vision and prepares a swinging spiked log trap to take out the deadly hunter. Then he waits.*

Cat does not ask for a hide roll from Onion yet. Instead, she waits to see if and when the elf spawn enters the vicinity.

"First hour. No spawn," says Cat, rolling encounters, "Second hour. No spawn. Third hour. No spawn. You feel the mud drying, your concealment must be weakening. Do you take the risk of breaking cover and reapplying it, or stay hidden? If you stay hidden, the roll will be harder, but there's no chance of the elf spawn catching you unawares."

Onion stays still and hidden.

"Fourth hour. The spawn pads into view, silent as a smilodon. Roll to see how well you've hidden yourself. Its infrared eyes glow yellow in the night. It's a pretty hard roll now. 17, not 15 like before."

Onion's player whispers a ritual prayer over the d20 and rolls. With +7 from agility and skill, this calls for every bit of dice magic ...

11. Plus seven, it's 18. The concealment worked.

Onion releases the spiked log and yells. The moss-covered elf spawn looks at Onion, double jaws working hungrily. It does not see the spiked log swinging swiftly from behind.

The surprised spawn takes a log into the back and Onion rolls 1d20 for damage.

The Dice Oracle

When a player, including a referee, does not know what might happen in a situation, and there is little risk, rolling dice on a table gives a working answer.

This d6 table makes a useful oracle in a pinch:

- 1-3** Common or expected outcome (50% odds)
- 4-5** Uncommon or unusual outcome (~35% odds)
- 6** Rare or exceptional outcome (~15% odds)

Example: *The caravan pulls up at a gas house near Three Sticks Lake. Noë's player wonders what the weather is like.*

Cat, the referee, decides to consult the dice oracle and rolls a die six-sided. The result is a 5: uncommon. She ponders a moment. It's autumn and the area has a continental climate, so the usual weather is cool. She decides it is a gloriously warm indian summer.

The referee can set up oracle die tables to suit the the odds they want. 2d6 offers a bell curve, 1d10 offers more options, and so on. Most random tables in the OGA and UVG work as oracles.

The Skilled Dice Oracle

When a PC asks questions and their skill or ability would play a factor, roll d20 + modifier on a table such as this:

- 3 or less** Nay and woe!
- 4-7** Nay
- 8-13** Perhaps, for a price
- 14-19** Yea
- 20+** Yea and more!

Example: *Onion wonders if there is a group of rubes in Umber who'd be willing to play Sunder Mister Shield or Spin the Golem's Head. Cat asks Onion to roll with charisma or thought to see what he sniffs out.*

Onion rolls a 7. His charisma is 5. Cat reads the skilled dice oracle and tells Onion that perhaps he could find some gamblers, but there would be a price. A week's supplies as a buy-in.

Onion casually offers Noë's supplies as the price of his gambling 'investigation'.

3.3. Action Mechanics

3.3.1. Abilities and Traits

The PCs can try to do anything that makes sense in their situation. They are not limited to the abilities and traits and items listed on their character sheets. A PC's character sheet represents the resources they bring with them to the situation. Their local environment almost always offers additional resources.

Example: *After crawling through a purification-era storm sewer, our heroes find themselves in a hole with a skylight far above. The path forward looks blocked, the ground covered in windblown dirt.*

Reviewing their equipment, they find they have rope, pitons, and a geologist's hammer. This could help them climb out.

Noë decides to take the time to carefully search the walls of the hole for any clues. Cat notes this will take about ten minutes and asks the other players if they want to do anything as well. Onion decides to scour the dirt for anything valuable, while Safir resigns itself to hammering in pitons and broadening handholds to climb out.

Cat rolls for random encounters (since time passed and the hammering was noisy), but no atomic remnants come to check on our heroes. Cat then asks Noë and Onion for skilled oracle rolls using their thought abilities to see if they find anything useful. She has quietly decided that a roll of 14–19 will find some marginally useful debris, while 20+ will find actual useful equipment secreted here long ago.

Onion rolls 7+3, a 10. Nothing in the dirt. Noë, however, rolls 16+5. A 21. Cat describes how Noë's careful probing of the walls finds a cabinet obscured by rust and drip stone. A few strikes with the hammer opens it, revealing a handwheel labelled "ladder" in White City pictographs. Safir's strength and the magnificent build quality of the purification era turn the handwheel and the corroded remnants of hand and footholds emerge from the wall. Not an excellent ladder, but it makes the ascent easier.

3.3.2. Approaches

How do PCs get things done?

1. The referee presents a challenge.
2. The PCs choose their approach.
3. The referee gives clear feedback on the costs and odds of a chosen course of action.
4. The PCs confirm or revise their approach.

PC actions tend to fall into one of five types:

impossible under current circumstances
dependent on **pure luck**
determined by **natural ability**
a product of **skill and ability**
a **sure thing**

The referee has different options in each situation.

Impossible

If a roll is impossible without a certain skill (or even with a skill), the referee may **disallow any roll**. Characters are not utter fools and the referee should advise the players that they need a different idea, possibly even suggesting an unimaginative and costly alternative.

***Example:** Noë thinks her ability to speak with crabs might let her sway an eight-legged vomish abomination. Just because it has eight legs, doesn't mean it was ever a crab; indeed, this abomination used to be four people. Cat makes this clear and suggests running away instead.*

***Example 2:** Onion argues that he could convince a catlord to give him its cute fluffy pants. Since these are an integral part of the catlord's aura of cuteness and winter resistance, the referee decides it is impossible to convince the catlord to give up the fluffy polkadot wonderpants. The ref further implies that badgering the catlord for its pants may cause it to 'misuse' its tele-empathetic prowess.*

Onion accepts that words will not succeed and begins to plot how to steal the wonderpants while the little catlord takes its milk bath.

Pure Luck

The course of action leaves no room for skill or natural ability. The character **rolls a bare d20**.

***Example:** Onion spending a night on a casino's one-armed bandit. There is no skill involved here.*

Natural Ability Alone.

When skill isn't a factor, or a character lacks any suitable skill. The character **rolls d20 + ability**.

***Example:** Safir wants to stoically endure a biomechanical upgrade, however it lacks the biofeedback skills of a cogflower accountant monk required for such pain resistance. Still, Safir adds endurance to their roll: d20+4.*

Skill and Ability.

Players will aim for this situation, since it gives the best odds. The character **rolls d20 + ability + skill**.

***Example:** Onion is trying to maneuver a bulky regeneration pod holding Noë's plasma-burned body into a storm shelter. He benefits from his strength (+1) as well as his background (+3) as a debt collector, where he had to efficiently dispossess criminal debtors of their furniture to better pay back their kindly loan-shark creditors. Safir looks on unimpressed.*

Sure Thing

The outcome is certain and rolling is a waste of time. The referee suggests an outcome; if the player accepts, there is **no roll required** and play moves on. If the player wants an even better outcome, the referee proposes a risk and lets the player decide to roll or not.

***Example:** Noë wants to impress a dirt farmer with her neon wizardry. Cat rules that the farmer has never seen electricity before and it's a sure thing.*

Noë asks if she could use her display of power convince the farmer to part with their mule. Cat snorts and says that will be very hard and that if Noë fails, the farmer will run back to the village shouting about a dangerous witch.

Visions of torches and pitchforks in mind, Noë sticks to a positively impressed dirt farmer who will offer some local information, but keep their beloved mule. The mule's name is Pringles (L1, dapper) and it loves turnips.

3.3.3. Relevant Abilities

Common sense usually dictates which abilities apply and which don't. Strength helps with lifting heavy objects, agility with dodging boulders, endurance with long marches.

Multiple Abilities Apply

Sometimes multiple abilities apply. PCs can choose which ability to use.

Example: *Safir looks at a rough slope. It's a climb, but not particularly hard. Cat agrees that both strength and agility could apply, so Safir opts for its higher strength. Using its synthetic musculature, the bluelander hauls itself up with brutal efficiency.*

The referee may apply penalties or bonuses to a particular ability.

Specific Abilities

Some situations prescribe specific abilities.

Example: *in combat, melee attacks use strength, ranged attacks use agility, oldtech uses thought, and fantascience uses charisma.*

Traits may also describe the specific abilities they use.

Alternate Abilities

Traits or items may allow alternate abilities in specific situations.

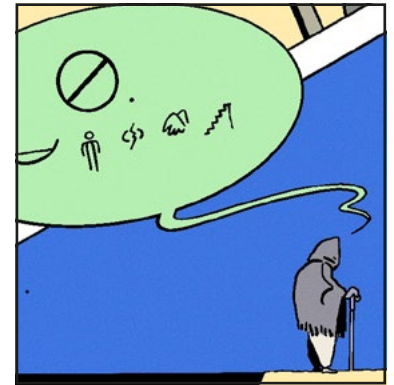
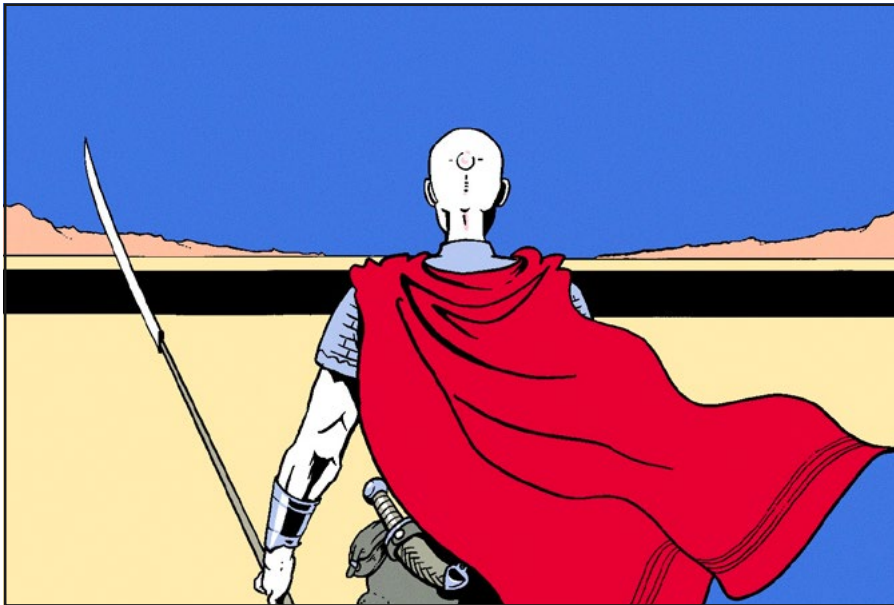
Example: *An intuitive sword lets a character use aura to make melee attacks. A sentient oldtech mortar lets a character use charisma to make long-range attacks. A mind-interfaced autogolem lets a character drive with charisma instead of agility.*

Missing Skill

When a character lacks a required trait for a task, the referee assigns a penalty as they see fit.

Example: *Safir is trying to land a gyrocopter while being shot at by savages in souped-up autogolems. Cat rules that Safir's background as a caravaner is a trait that warrants some general familiarity with vehicle controls, but hardly enough to give a bonus to complicated maneuvers with a flyer. Cat disallows any skill bonus and asks Safir to roll two dice and take the worse result. A harsh penalty, but fair.*

Safir rolls a 2 and a 17. The gyrocopter crashes into a sour water distiller. Oops.



3.4. Conflict Mechanics

3.4.1. To Fight or Not

When words have had their day, the struggle begins. This may be a fight with plasma machetes and ghostbreaker guns, but it can also be more abstract.

Conflicts are risky for the PCs, so their procedure is more defined than most other game mechanics.

1. The referee **outlines dangers** before a conflict breaks out.
2. Conflicts are not inevitable. Often, **reaction rolls** determine NPC reactions.
3. Conflicts **unfold in rounds**. Each round, the **sides roll initiative** to see who goes first. The sides then act in turn.
4. After a few rounds, one side will usually try to **flee, retreat** or **surrender** — either because of a failed morale roll (the opponents) or the players' decision (the party).
5. The winning side may get one final shot.
6. The conflict ends. The winners survey the luscious spoils of victory. The losers gnaw the bitter bones of defeat.

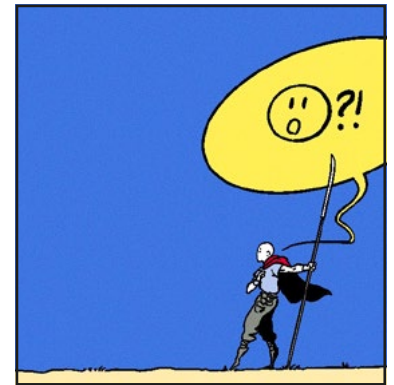
If the PCs are not involved directly in a conflict, the referee can simply consult the Dice Oracle (pXX) and narrate the results.

Example: Our heroes are walking carefully through the growth at the edge of the Limback Wood. Cat rolls an encounter between a posse of vampire knights and a group of feral false humans—falschers. She calls for a stealth roll, and Onion draws the rolling straw. Lucky for the party, the sneaky Onion rolls $17 + 4$ (agility) $+ 3$ (skilled). 24. Neither side has seen our heroes.

Cat narrates how the vampire knights open up on the falschers with their electric lances, felling a handful of the soulless automatons and sending the other human-like creatures running about in panic.

Noë, Onion, and Safir see how the wind is blowing. They stay hidden.

Cat shrugs and rolls the oracle dice to see what happens. She expects the knights to prevail, but there's always a chance. The d6 flies through the air and ...





3.4.2. Before the Conflict

In the vast majority of situations, the referee ensures the players know when their characters face a potential conflict. The referee also clarifies the possible stakes: death, dishonor, robbery, capture, etc.

Dangerous Environment

The referee clearly communicates when the characters have entered a high-threat environment, whether this is a dungeon, a war zone, or an abandoned warp factory.

Example: *Cat narrates, “After a week’s relatively uneventful travel through the Burnt Umber you have now come to the Chitin Woods, where the feral biomantic experiments of the Planter Lords still hold sway. Your hackles rise and you can almost feel the alien, pain-ridden eyes on you from the shadows of the strange forest of organisms that seem to have been bred from a nightmare half crustacean and half fungus or tree. You are aware that foes and dangerous creatures could spring from the undergrowth at any time. How do you proceed?”*

Dangerous NPCs

The referee clearly communicates when the characters encounter a creature or person who could be a threat if they become hostile.

Example: *Cat narrates, “The bulky enforcers of the Piebald Paw swagger into the bathhouse. Their chitin armor is grown to fit and their blasters are polished and maintained. A fight with them could be deadly. Other patrons quietly make themselves scarce. If these armored grooms find out that you had anything to do with the Wicked Turnip job, you could be in trouble.”*

It Came Out Of Nowhere

It is best when the PCs choose to enter a dangerous environment or situation because they feel the potential rewards outweigh the risks they will face. Then, in those circumstances, surprise, ambushes, and sudden attacks may come into play.

The referee should be wary of springing conflicts out of nowhere, without reason or foreshadowing. They have the entire Given World at their fingertips, they do not need this kind of unsportsmanlike trickery.

3.4.3. Reaction

Sometimes, it is unclear how a group of NPCs should react to the player characters. This is particularly often the case with random encounters while traveling. In such a circumstance, the referee's best friend is the reaction roll. Think of it as an oracle of behavior. To see how the NPCs behave a **random PC rolls 2d6 + cha.**

2D6+CHA	REACTION
under 2	They come at you, like raving agents of cosmic corruption.
2	Aggressive, hostile. They attack, given half an excuse.
3-5	Thanks, they hate you.
6-8	Unsure, waffling, complicated, suspicious.
9-11	Polite, understanding, sympathetic.
12	Friendly, interested. They'll help, given half a chance.
over 12	They insist on helping, even if you don't need help. Rude to say no, but they will waste your ... Oh, dear. Cup of tea?

If the PC wants to provoke a conflict, they may subtract their charisma from the reaction roll instead. Nice, manipulative people get into fewer unchosen fights.

Some traits may modify reaction rolls. The referee may apply penalties or bonuses depending on the PCs' appearance and behavior.

Flee & Freeze & Fawn

Most NPCs are not mindless abominations out for bile and blood. People and creatures who feel threatened by the PCs may flee instead of attacking. Creatures that feel particularly overpowered may cower in terror, beg for mercy, or offer to serve their new tyrants, the PCs.



3.4.4. Rounds

When a conflict breaks out, play proceeds in rounds.

The **length of a round is cinematic**, not precise. It's long enough to do something meaningful. In a duel, a round might last mere seconds, with submarines chasing each other, it might last hours.

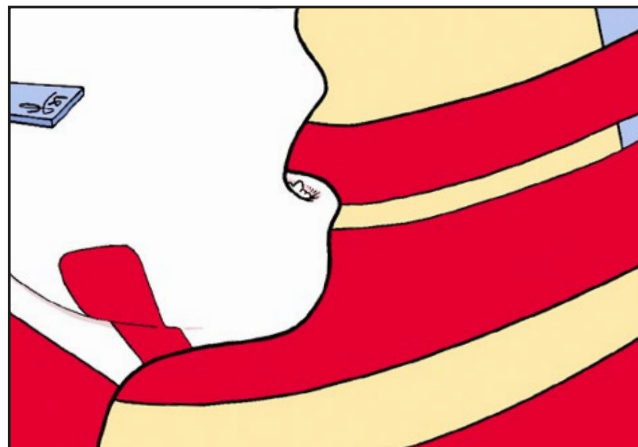
1. A round begins with the sides rolling initiative: who acts first.
2. Then, the side that won initiative acts.
3. Next, the side that lost initiative acts.
4. If one side suffered badly this round, the referee may decide they need to roll morale.
5. Then, the round ends.

Initiative

Each round, **each side rolls initiative**. High roll goes first.

For the players, a random PC rolls **d6 + agility** every round. The players decide their characters' turn order when their side acts.

When initiative rolls are tied, **chaos reigns** and everything happens at once. The PCs and their opponents take their turns, but damage and afflictions only take effect at the end of the round. This is how two duelling swellswords stab one another right dead and proper.



Turn

Each round, each character gets a turn when their side acts. On their turn they **do something**.

Characters need to be aware of where they are, what locations or creatures they can reach, and what they can target.

Traits, items, and circumstances can give additional or special turn actions.

3.4.5. Actions

On their turn, a character can do nearly anything the player comes up with. The referee adjudicates whether it requires any die rolls and whether bonuses or penalties are called for.

Most turns, a character does some reasonable combination of **movement** through space **and interaction** with the environment and other characters.

This may mean walking over to an enemy and giving them a solid what for. Or any of a number of other things:

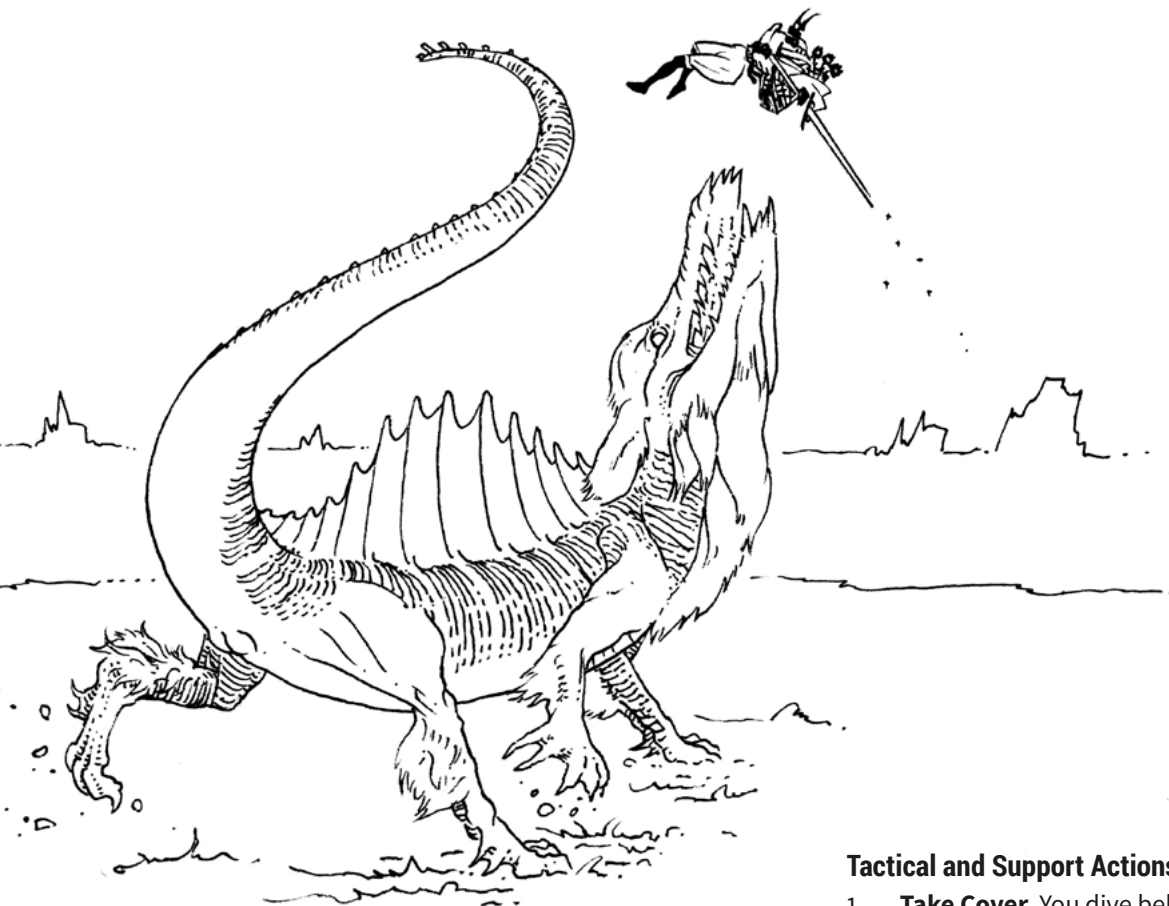
***Examples:** climbing a ladder, disarming a bomb, picking a lock, resuscitating a fallen comrade, planting a secret message, inflating a balloon, filling a gas tank, scrawling a warning. And, yes, diving from a doorway to the cover of a bulky sofa while firing a volley from two fully automatic ancient pulii pacificatores.*

The actions described in the following paragraphs are ideas for things characters *could* do in a conflict and how to adjudicate some situations.

Movement Actions

You're mostly moving around, maybe doing something else not too involved, like unholstering a carbine, reloading a carbine, or wondering whether you left your stove on when you left your house this morning to explore the sewers.

1. **Disengage.** Carefully, guarding against counterattacks, you back away from close combat. You move nearby, just out of reach.
2. **Flee.** Carelessly, you turn your back on your melee opponent and head far away. Your foe gets a free attack. Probably with a bonus. Foes with guns may also get free attacks. Beware.
3. **Move.** You move nearby. Right there. No sweat, just a nice easy walk. You could combine this with a weapon readied to catch foes doing funny stuff.
4. **Sprint.** You move somewhere further away, over there. Just as fast as you can. Look out, you might trip on some obstacles and if there are enemies about, they may get a free attack.
5. **Charge.** You rush a nearby creature, getting a bonus to your attack. Attacks against you also get a bonus until your next turn.
6. **Swing on Chandelier.** Or other swashbuckling affair. Lovely use of the environment. Roll agility. Success: get a bonus with your next action (probably an attack you're combining with the swing). Failure: your foe gets a reaction attack with a bonus or you're put into a humorously compromised position.
7. **Climb a Ladder.** Depending on ladder length, that's probably the only thing you'll reasonably do this turn.
8. **Drive.** Or direct a riding ostrich. Steering and not crashing.



Attack Actions

Attacks are actions taken to directly damage your foes.

The section on attacks (pXX) describes four types of attack: melee, ranged, oldtech, and fantascience. Other types are possible. Traits and gear can unlock attacks with special effects, bonuses against specific targets, in certain environments, or from a character's abilities.

1. **Attack.** An adjacent foe with a melee weapon, or a more distant enemy with a suitable ranged weapon.
2. **Skirmish.** You hop from behind cover, get off a round, and hop back. The mobility isn't great, but cover protects.
3. **Careless Attack.** Attack with no regard for your safety. Get a bonus on your attack, but if your enemy survives they get a free counterattack.
4. **Ready Attack.** Prepare to counterattack if a foe comes in range. If that happens, your attack resolves before your enemy's. If it doesn't come in range, your attack is wasted. The referee can use oracle dice to decide what enemies do, to keep things fair.
5. **Suppressing Fire.** Lay down arrows, bullets, or maser blasts, imposing a penalty on your foes' rolls.
6. **Furious Attacks.** Roar as you unload your magazine into the monstrous rabbit of Blaargh. Spend your turn hacking away like a human possessed. No moving, no tactics, and your foes get a bonus against you on their turn. But you attack twice.

Tactical and Support Actions

1. **Take Cover.** You dive behind suitable terrain. Ranged attacks against you suffer a penalty.
2. **Hide.** Make yourself discreet, so you can't be targeted. Requires suitable cover or camouflage gear and a successful agility or thought roll.
3. **Sneak Away.** If enemies can't see you, you can move to a different location and surprise them. Or flee without getting attacked.
4. **Reload.** Some complicated or big weapons need a full action to reload.
5. **Grab On.** Grab hold of a target. Probably requires a strength or agility roll. It can't move away without dragging you along.
6. **Hang On.** A kaiju lumbering away? Roll endurance or agility to hang on.
7. **Hold Down.** Smaller? Make a strength roll to pin down a grabbed target. A pinned creature can't move or attack anyone except you.
8. **Help Hold.** Rush in to help an ally hold down a pinned target. It suffers a penalty to breaking loose.
9. **Shake Off.** Attack an enemy that has grabbed or pinned you.
10. **Defend.** Turtle down and don't attack this round. Attacks against you suffer a penalty.
11. **Protect.** Bat away blows against a target. Attacks against it are rolled with a penalty.
12. **Drag Away an Ally.** Get your friend to safety. If they are conscious, they might struggle, forcing a strength roll.

Other Actions

1. **Use Power.** Also sometimes known as casting a spell.
2. **Control Power.** Not all powers are fire-and-forget affairs. Some, such as *Waxni's Magic Cruise Missile*, require active control.
3. **Chug Potion.** You drink a potion. Or apply an ointment. Or slap on a healing parasite.
4. **Communication.** Command a golem, convey a complicated plan, or check instructions in the nöospheric post you have received.
5. **Swap Tools.** Carefully stow the gear you're using and ready something else. You can rush it: toss your current gear to the ground, pull out a hidden pistol, and use it with a penalty.
6. **Pick a Peck of Pickled Peppers.** Or a pocket.
7. **Activate Magic Door.** Or unlock a regular one that doesn't say whoosh.

Free Actions

Some actions, such as dropping a carried sack or responding to an opponent's folly (such as their critical failure), are free actions.

A character can take **at least one free action per round.**

Typical free actions in an ordinary conflict:

1. **Amble.** Nonchalantly.
2. **Chew.** Gum.
3. **Concentrate.** On one thing.
4. **Drop.** A held object.
5. **Drop.** To the ground.
6. **Jab.** The exposed flank of an oblivious falscher shoving past you with your elbow (or a shiv).
7. **Spit.** Out a curse (or a grunt of pain).
8. **Release.** Your *ka-ba* spiritual form from the prison of your flesh (die).

The referee uses common sense and the conflict time frame to put a stop to nonsense like stacking a dozen free actions to time lock an enemy and explode it from the inside out with some obscurely argued item edge case.

Example: *Onion has a trait that lets him hide as a free action. He is also carrying a round bomb in one hand and a pistol in the other.*

He wants to take a shot at the lead froglin, then drop a bomb as a free action so it rolls towards a group of froglins, then dive behind a pillar and hide as a free action.

Cat rolls her eyes and points out that's really a bit much. The way Onion is trying to drop the bomb is more of an attack than a "drop". He can either shoot or roll the bomb, but not both. Alternatively, he can stay where he is, shoot and roll the bomb, but not dive behind the pillar. Does Onion feel lucky enough to face a bomb blast?

Of course he does. He's a PC.

Traits and items may provide additional free actions.

3.4.6. Adjudicating Action Ideas

Not only can the players come up with new actions, they are encouraged to. Fortunately, most player ideas fall into one of four categories, making improvisation a little easier for the referee.

Great Idea

The referee gives the PC a bonus on their attempt. For a bit of temptation, they can offer extra options (with extra dangers).

Example: *Safir has figured out the Grand Golem's weak spot: the red control crystal in its head. Cat rules that reaching it will be a hard climb and the golem will get a free stomping attack first.*

"We can pilot Onion's magic pocket hang glider through its empty eye socket," says Safir, deadpan.

"That's a great idea. Roll with advantage to reach the head, but if the golem swats you, you'll take extra damage hitting the ground."

"Maybe we can distract the golem in some way," wonders Onion.

"You could sing and dance in front of it," suggests Cat dubiously.

"Brilliant! I'll airhorn it, so it won't try to swat Safir!"

Cat wonders if Onion is aware that the Grand Golem will try to splat him instead ... and could well succeed. Surely he is?

Interesting Idea

The referee gives the PC an extra effect or flavor if they succeed. To spice things up, their opponents may get a free counter if the attempt fails (or a bonus on their turn).

Example: *Onion thinks it'll work just fine to put on a spectrum satrap's fine enviro-suit and run their voice through the modulator. That'll put the fear of the Un-God into the local merchants!*

Cat ponders, then says, "We-e-ell, ok. If you succeed, sure, they'll be floored with the majesty of your presence. But if they see through you, they'll try and haul you up in front of the magister for fraud."

Risky Idea

The referee can offer an extra effect if the PC succeeds. After that, the PCs' opponents get a free counter (or a bonus on their turn).

Example: *Noë is going to slip into the kingpin's dreams and incept an idea to make the kingpin see Noë as their long-lost daughter.*

Cat looks dubious, suspecting this plot is lifted wholesale from some over-complicated entertainment video.

Still, she agrees ... but warns Noë that the kingpin's dream may twist Noë's mind with its hopes and desires immediately after. A save will be on the books.

Terrible Idea

The PC can attempt their plan, but their opponents get a free action first. Possibly with a bonus if the idea is truly memorably stupid.

Example: *"And then I'll surf the floating force-field disc into the vomes, terrifying them with my display of magical prowess!" chortles Onion.*

Cat looks blankly at Onion.

"I'll give them all a save to see through your false divine pretenses and a free attack if they are unconvinced."

"Would my charisma apply?" asks Onion.

"Fine, I'll add your charisma to their save target. Remember, there's eight of them."

"It'll be fine!"

Dear readers, it was not fine.

Obviously, the referee should not trick the PCs into thinking terrible ideas are good ideas. Springing save-or-die effects and similar disasters on PCs without proper build-up or clues is poor form.

3.4.7. Movement and Range

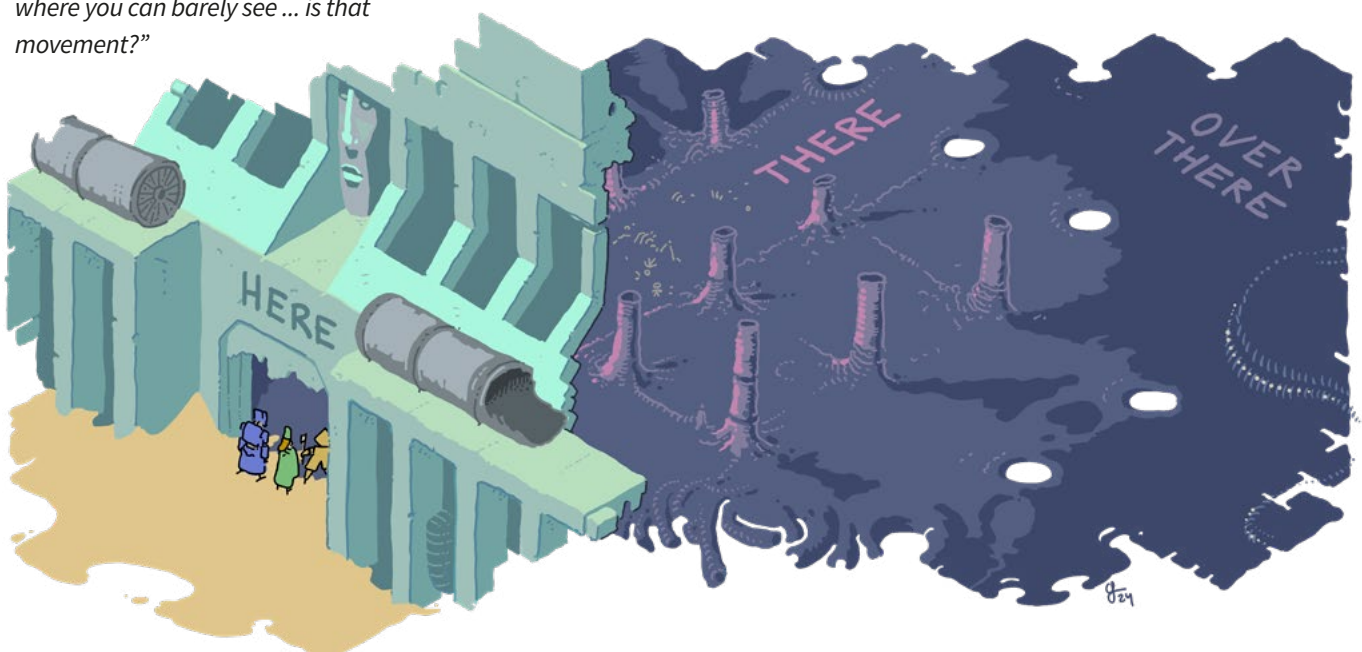
Space is relative to each character.

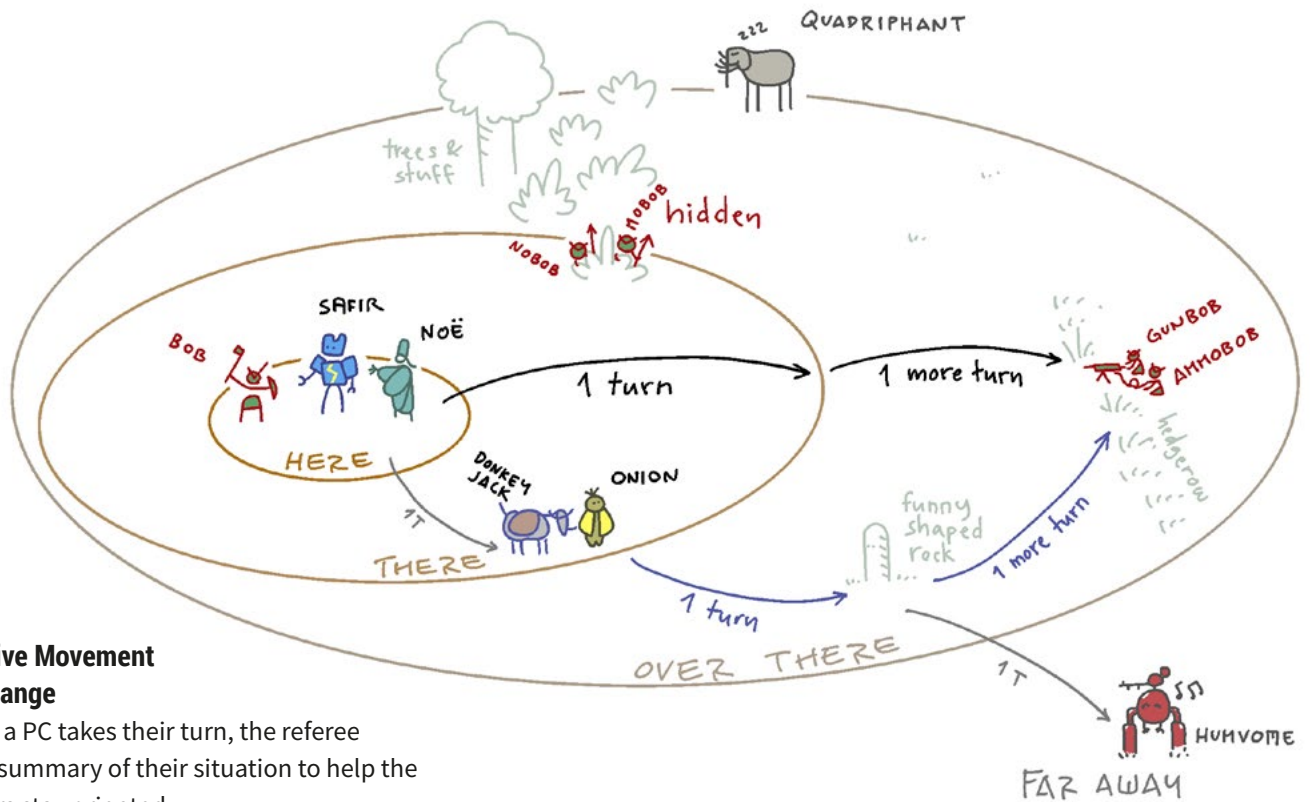
Here	Close range. Melee combat. Adjacent. Next to you. The thick of things. A small area, a few meters across. Indoors, this side of the table, in arm's reach. You may make a free attack against an adjacent enemy that disengages carelessly.
There	Short range. Nearby. A middling area, maybe ten meters across. Indoors, the other side of the table, out of reach. If you win initiative you can close for melee combat with a nearby opponent. Alternatively, you can retreat in good order, keeping them at range while firing.
Over there	Medium range. Far. A large area, maybe a few dozen meters across. Indoors, through a doorway or at the far end of a hall. Usually, you need two rounds to close with an opponent this far away. The first round to reduce the range to short range, the second to charge in for close combat.
Off stage	Long range. Distant. Very far. A massive area, possibly 100m across. Indoors, audible a couple of rooms away, downstairs, or behind a closed door. Not visible. At this range you need three or more rounds to close with an opponent. Reaching them is more a chase than a conflict.

Example: *Cat narrates, “the abandoned void ship lock swings open and a great vaulted chamber greets you. **Nearby**, on the ground, you see dessicated ... remains. Organic, bone-like columns support an invisible ceiling. The dark ... warehouse? cargo hold? ... recedes into the dark. **Far off**, where you can barely see ... is that movement?”*

Exactly how a character moves, where they can go, what they can reach, depends on the specific conflict—where it is happening, how it is being fought. Fighting on a moving train will be different from squaring off in the Electronic Crypt of Saint Baastet will be different from a running skirmish on horseback with cyber centaurs in the Ivory Plains.

The referee notes distances and ranges as they describe a scene and narrate events. Sketching a scene and clarifying when players ask is helpful.





Relative Movement and Range

When a PC takes their turn, the referee gives summary of their situation to help the players stay oriented.

Example: Cat narrates, “Ok, so Noë and Safir went up to the little quarterling with the jade axe to see if they could convince it to trade it away for some paste jewelry and a bottle of vodka. The quarterling was enraged by the suggestion and shrieked some sort of war cry and a few quarterlings over there in the hedgerow replied. They seem to have some kind of tripod-mounted magic staff.”

“You’re right here, next to the quarterling with the axe. Let’s call ‘im Bob. The other two are a ways off, two turns let’s say. I’ll call ‘em Gunbob and Ammobob.”

Noë’s player, “Your naming is really top notch, Cat.”

Onion’s player asks, “I wasn’t next to Bob the Quarterling, I was taking care of Donkey Jack nearby. Could I reach Gunbob and Ammobob in a single turn?”

Cat ponders and answers, “Ye-es, but you’d be charging the gun over open ground and I’d give them a free attack against you. There is a funny

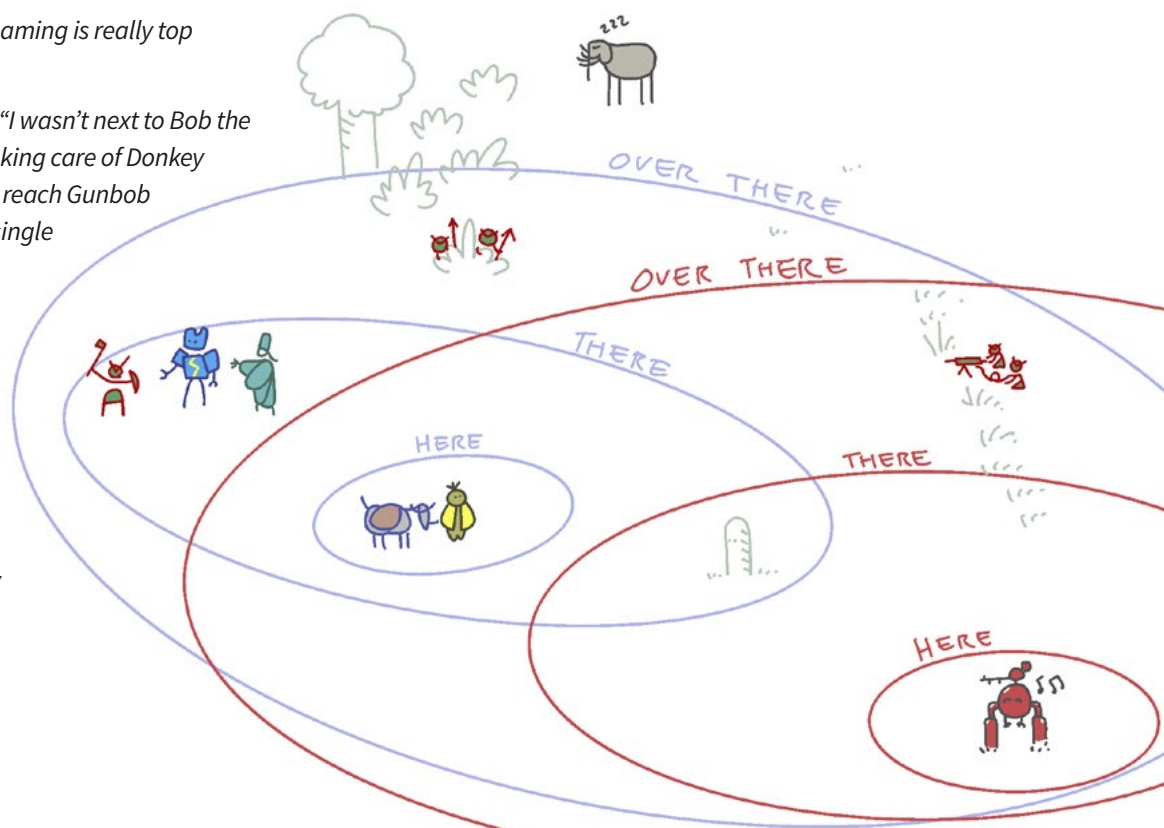
shaped rock you could run to for cover, but then you’d need two rounds. Still, if you got initiative next round, too, you could make it without giving them an open shot at you.”

Onion nods, “Ok, that sounds good.”

Cat adds, “Still, it’ll take you close to the confused, humming vome in the cabbage patch ... that could be risky ...”

Onion grumbles, “Are you trying to say I should just hunker down and do nothing?”

Cat, “No, no ... not at all!”

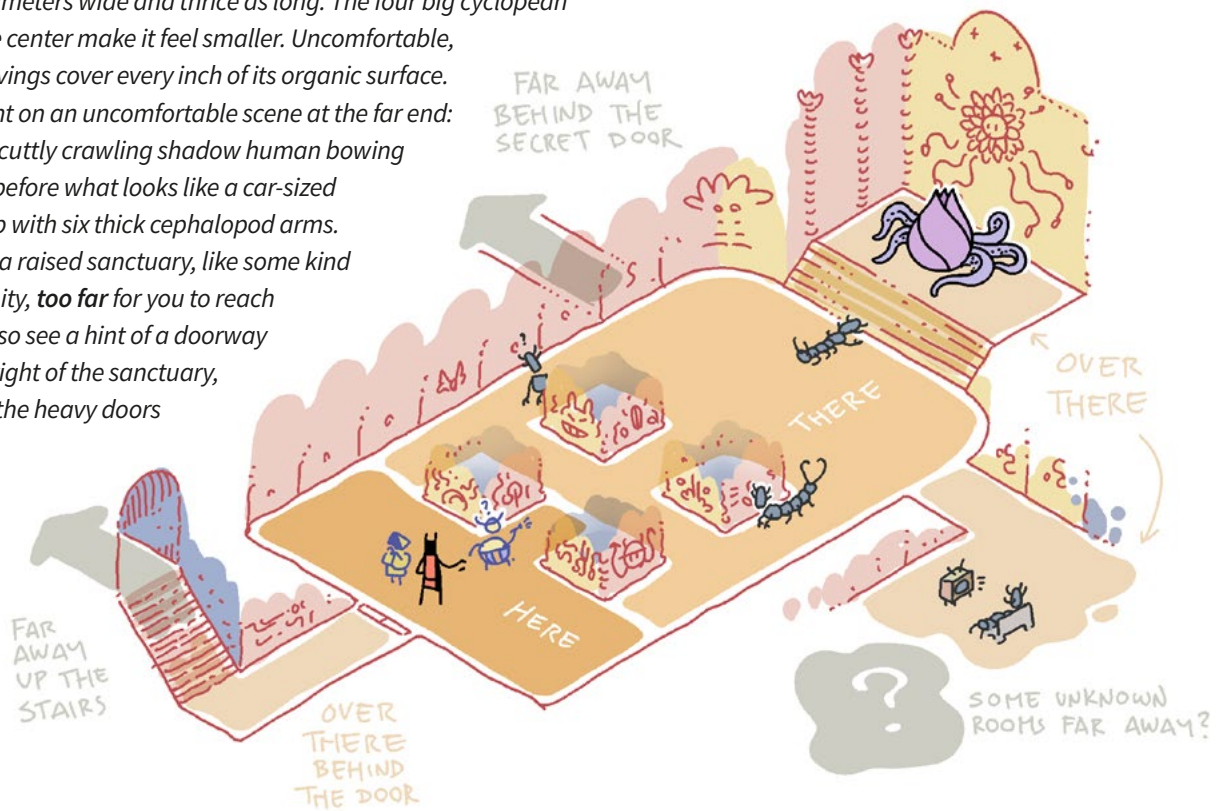


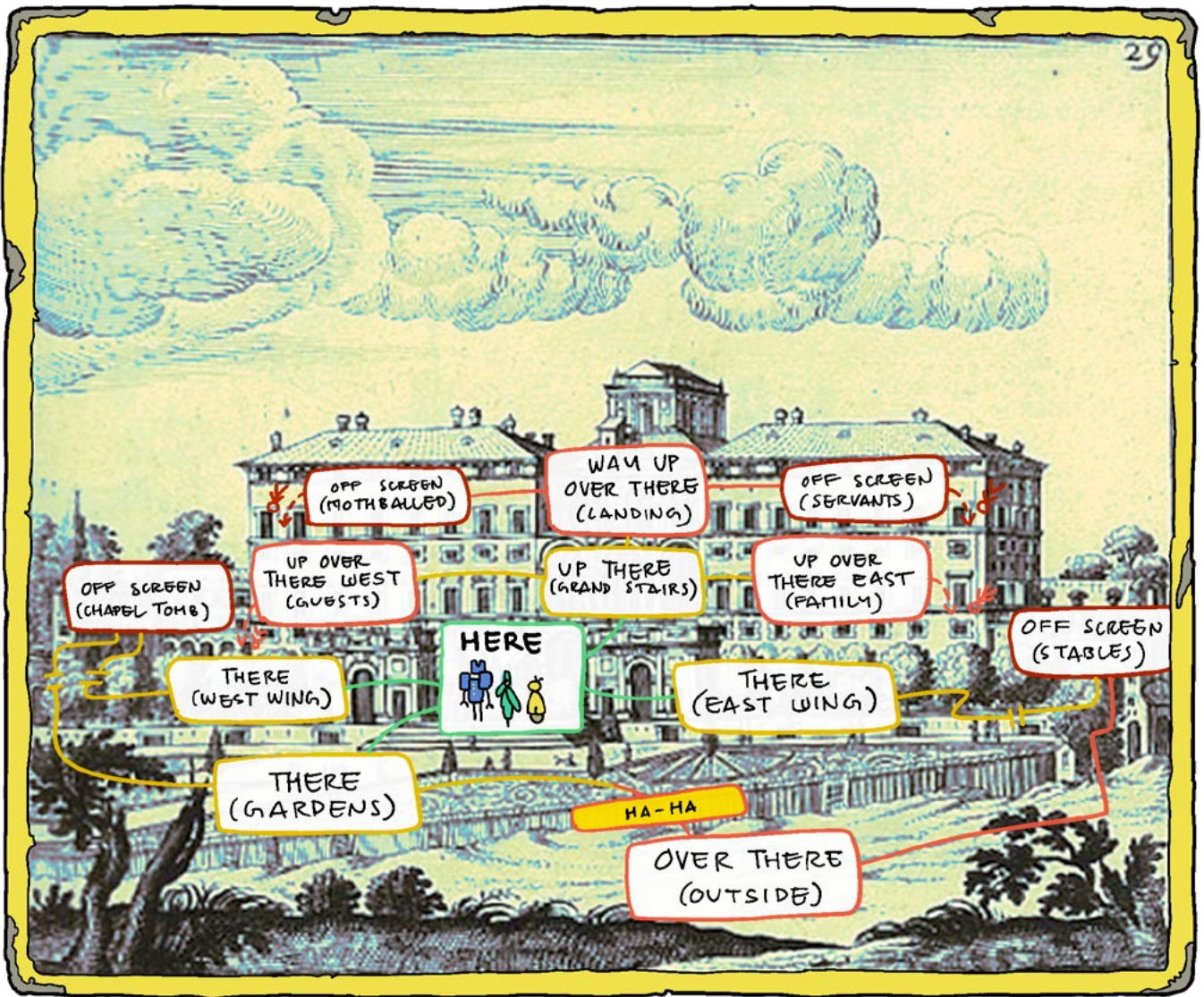
Indoor Movement and Range

Indoors and in other confined areas, the movement and range zones may become smaller and more contingent, depending on doors, obstacles, stairs, ladders, passages, traps, and the like.

Example: Cat narrates, “Right, you enter a large hall ... well, largish. Maybe eight, ten yardmeters wide and thrice as long. The four big cyclopean columns in the center make it feel smaller. Uncomfortable, arachnoid carvings cover every inch of its organic surface. Your eyes alight on an uncomfortable scene at the far end: some kind of scuttly crawling shadow human bowing and scraping before what looks like a car-sized vegetable bulb with six thick cephalopod arms. The bulb is on a raised sanctuary, like some kind of sacred divinity, **too far** for you to reach quickly. You also see a hint of a doorway just off to the right of the sanctuary, and of course the heavy doors that swung shut behind you as you entered.”

Noë mutters, “Of course they swung shut as we entered ...”





Using Images for Movement and Range

You don't need maps for every conflict. Often, a picture is all it takes.

Example: The PCs are attending an art show at a noble estate and, either through PC folly (likely) or an unscripted zombie attack (strange encounter tables, but ok), a conflict breaks out.

Cat snags a convenient picture of a noble house, divides it into several sectors and points to the grand reception hall, saying “you are **here**. The zombie peasants are pouring from the outside into the gardens **there**. What do you do?”

Onion asks the obvious question, “Where did you say the noble fellow, the one with the red hat, keeps the bearer bonds?”

Source: Palace of Jules Mazarin Lustgarten in Georg Andreas Böckler's *Architectura Curiosa Nova* (1664).

3.4.8. Morale

The end comes first slow, then all at once.

Most conflicts end not when one side is destroyed, but when it decides to stop fighting. Players usually decide when they want to stop fighting. The referee tests the NPCs' morale to find out when they have had enough.

What Happened?

A leader was defeated, a horror from beyond the void appeared, the angels were harvested like sheaves of wheat, the levy's spear beams glanced off the monster's shimmering form like grains of millet.

To some, victory seems suddenly impossible.

Morale is tested.

NPC Morale

It goes to 11, no higher. By default:

NPC morale = 3 + half their level

The brave have more, the cowardly less; the referee adjusts.

- 2** the most craven of cowards, rabbits and broken rabble
- 3-5** sheep, civilians, levies
- 6-8** militias, professionals, elites
- 9-10** rare zealots, terrifying golems
- 11** the mindless and the doomed

When morale is tested, **roll 2d6**:

2D6	MORALE OUTCOME
<i>over</i> morale	The NPC breaks: flees, retreats, surrenders or ends combat in some other way. The better trained, the steadier the withdrawal.
<i>equal to</i> morale	The NPC redoubles their effort, hoping one last push will bring victory. They gain a bonus on their next action.
<i>under</i> morale	The NPC continues to struggle, grimly determined, resolute for now.

In groups, test a random character. Routs start with a single panicked flight.

Multiple Morale Tests

Circumstances may test characters' morale multiple times, but not more than once per round.

Optionally, the referee may decide that a character who succeeds at several morale tests in a row will fight to the bitter end. Three successes should be enough.

Example: *Cat tests the levy's morale a third time. She rolls 2d6 and the result is another 4. Equal to their morale (4).*

She relates their determination to the players, "the Golden City's soft, untrained civilian levy yet finds something of their ancestors' martial spirit within. They reload their spears and launch another volley of builder beams at your attack skeletons. This levy seems decided to win or die trying. Are you sure you wish to keep attacking them?"

Noë sighs, "Unleash the Eater. We must pass."

Player Character Morale

A PC has no morale score. The player, like some daemon from beyond the cosmic veil, rides their mortal shell. Though the PC feels terror, their player needs care not.

"My hero is fearless!" might cackle the player.

Their PC would know better. Bitterly, better.

Some terrors can force PCs to save or flee, but morale is in the hands of their players.

Pets and Sidekicks

The referee can call for a morale roll for the players' secondary characters if the PCs drive them recklessly, beyond sense and reason, towards likely doom.

3.4.9. Attrition

Conflicts and other strenuous activities wear you down. After a scene where you exerted yourself:

Save or lose 1 point of endurance or aura.

The referee can also call for an attrition save in other situations when it makes sense, such as after a few rounds of indecisive back and forth in a battle or a single especially arduous feat.

Example: *Safir has been holding off a horde of clackler vomes at the Bridge of Suspiria for several rounds, using defend actions to avoid damage.*

Cat rules that Safir is starting to flag and calls for an attrition save.

Safir rolls d20 + 4 endurance. The d20 clatters and comes up a 4. A total of 8. No save.

Safir chooses to lose 1 point of aura. Safir now has 0 aura. Safir's physical ability to defend against the clacklers is undiminished—for now, but it is starting to worry that they will eventually break.

If you have no endurance or aura remaining, you suffer fatigue. Note the fatigue in your burdens inventory.

Fatigue reduces maximum life by your level.

Resting or healing cannot increase your life score above this reduced maximum until you have recovered from your fatigue. If your current life score exceeds your new maximum, the excess remains as temporary life.

Each time you suffer fatigue, it occupies a new burden slot and applies separately.

Example: *Onion, who humorously has neither endurance nor aura, usually has 12 life (he is 3rd level in this example).*

Following a rooftop chase and then a narrow escape through the labyrinth of the cloaca minima, he has failed two attrition saves incurring fatigue twice.

The fatigue reduces his maximum life by 6 (3 and 3 for Onion's level) and the two occupied burden slots impose a -2 penalty to all his rolls.

Onion is not keen to get into any fights.

Note that “fatigue burden” is shorthand for “you are fatigued, which reduces your max life total by your level. Write this down in the burden inventory.”

Equipment Wear and Tear

The referee can also call for attrition saves for vehicles and other equipment. It works the same way as for PCs, however since most equipment or vehicles do not have endurance or aura scores, they immediately suffer a **wear and tear** burden, reducing their maximum life by their level and imposing a -1 penalty to all rolls with that equipment in the future.

Example: *Noë whoops as her dirt bugger (L2, red and swift) successfully jumps the canyon, leaving the chaiselings in the dust.*

Cat asks for an attrition save, arguing that it was a big jump and even the dirt bugger's shock absorbers weren't made for this kind of abuse.

Noë rolls and is chastened to find that her bugger has suffered wear and tear, reducing its maximum life by 2 and imposing a -1 penalty to its handling.

Equipment that suffers more wear and tear than its level is out of commission, though it is not necessarily destroyed. It just needs repairs.

Removing Attrition

Resting for eight hours removes one fatigue burden.

Vehicles and equipment without self-repair abilities require a simple repair that takes a few hours to remove one wear and tear burden.

3.5. Damage, Defeat, Death



As attacks land, as powers drain, a character suffers damage. Once a character has suffered enough damage, they risk defeat (and death).

A character's attributes are resources. Life is used to activate powers. Ability scores improve rolls. Hero dice boost results. Sacrifices turn near misses into successes. However, attributes are also a buffer protecting a character from defeat and death. The more spent to succeed, the greater the risk of sudden defeat.

3.5.1. Suffering Damage

All damage, unless specified otherwise, reduces a target's life. Some powerful items or powers may reduce abilities or levels, deplete defenses, or impose other burdens and conditions.

Damage is Abstract

Reducing life doesn't (necessarily) mean sprays of arterial blood. The precise effect depends on the narrative stakes. A creature could be gossipped to death, metaphorically. Once harangues and threats reduce it to 0 life, it might retreat, step aside, or be too brow-beaten to resist a killing blow.

Damage in Deadly Combat

In straightforward combat, such as while dungeoncrawling, fighting in a pitched battle, or other classic scenario, the stakes are life and death. The referee makes these stakes clear when the party enters such an environment, or when a conflict escalates.

In deadly combat, **PCs reduced to 0 life roll on the defeat table** (pXX).

NPCs become ex-NPCs at 0 life. This does not mean they are dead, but they are out of the fight for the rest of the scene. Most sentient NPCs do not want to be ex-NPCs and try flee before.

Example: While crawling through a crypt of the Starfall Big Houses, the PCs come face to face with iron skeletons. The decayed remnants of synthetic golems, the metal endoskeletons attack without thought of mercy. The stakes are survival or death for the party.

Ability Score Damage

Some obnoxious attacks, traps, curses, or situations reduce ability scores: strength, endurance, agility, charisma, aura, or thought. These are serious shocks, which always carry the risk of death.

PCs who cannot reduce an ability score because it is already at 0 roll on the defeat table (pXX).

NPCs without defined abilities who suffer ability score damage reduce their level **and** attack bonus instead. If either would be reduced below 0 by ability score damage, they become an ex-NPC.

Example: Onion lashes the bog shambler (L4, atrocious post-human) with the holy pain whip he stole from the Avatar of Bonds. Each lash costs Onion 1 life, but deals 1d4 physical ability score damage if it hits.

His first blow deals 3 points of damage, dropping the bog shambler 3 levels (L4-3, yowling post-human). His second blow deals 2 points of damage. This

would drop the bog shambler to level -1, but that's not possible (not least because L-1 would look weird). The bog shambler is out of the fight.

Cat narrates how, yelping like a scalded cat, it splashes back into the lagoon.

Onion asks if he can get a final shot off at the aquatic ape-human with his plasma pistol. Cat sees no reason why not and the bloodthirsty Onion rolls to see if he can bag a trophy for his lodge-boat.

The referee can also apply other penalties and weakening effects to NPCs suffering ability score damage.

The referee may rule that NPCs are immune to some kinds of ability score damage. For example, brainless undead skeletons could reasonably ignore thought and charisma damage, or damage that depends on fear and other psychological effects.

Burdens From Damage

Other obnoxious attacks, powers, curses, and circumstances can impose specific burdens on characters. These occupy inventory slots, reducing a character's options, imposing situational penalties, and imposing additional penalties to rolls as they accumulate in a character's burden inventory.

PCs without the inventory space to gain an additional burden roll on the defeat table (pXX).

Remember that each burden in the burden inventory applies a -1 penalty to all rolls, including defeat table rolls.

Burdens can be nearly anything. Use this six by six table at your own risk:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	broken	leg	tooth	cough	boil	horror
2	sprained	arm	phobia	throat	blister	posterior
3	crippling	foot	delusion	tongue	ague	anterior
4	aching	hand	anxiety	blood	runs	ear
5	mad	eye	nose	wound	scar	tentacle
6	divine	head	hubris	rupture	rage	rot

Most effects that impose burdens would allow a save. The worst would not.

Example: Noë the wizard moves to open the treasured chest. She caresses its gleaming shipmetal sides. Presses the machined buttons. Bates her breath as it hisses open. And falls back choking as the terrible green gas burns at her throat.

Cat the referee calls for a save. Noë rolls a 7 on the d20. Not enough. She needed at least a 13 to have a chance to avoid injury.

"It's the pulmonary blood rot," whispers Cat

Noë's player writes that down in her burden inventory. She'll suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls until she gets that fixed. And if she waits long enough, she might need a fresh pair of lungs, too.

Noë spits blood into a silk handkerchief, grits her teeth, and looks into the shipmetal box, hoping for something to make it all worth it.

3.5.2. Defeat

When a character has no more resources to absorb damage, no more life to spend as plot armor, no more abilities to reduce, no space to bear more burdens, they roll on the defeat table.

The last blow broke through armor and dealt physical damage:
roll 2d6 + endurance

The last blow broke through wards and dealt mental damage:
roll 2d6 + aura

Defeat Table

Woe!

2D6+ABILITY	MORALE	OUTCOME
1 or less	Destroyed.	The character is gone for the rest of this session at least. Absent eerie divine magitechnologies.
2-6	Dead.	Relife interventions required to rebuild their body (ha) or personality (ba).
7	Knocked out.	Brain injury (-1 thought) burden. See you at the end of the fight.
8	Winded.	Weakness (-1 strength) burden. Lose next turn, then regain 1 life.
9	Strained.	Nauseating (-1 agility) burden. Lose next turn, then regain 1 life.
10	Scarred.	Defacing (-1 charisma) burden. Lose next turn, then regain 1 life.
11	Stunned.	Lose next turn, then regain 1 life.
12+	All ok!	Immediately regain 1 life.

Doom spiral alert: ability score damage caused by the defeat table can force an immediate second roll on the defeat table. Defeat is not pleasant. Avoid it.



3.5.3. Death and HakaBa

Every character, as every living thing in the Given World, is composed of the existential trinity of body (ha), soul (ka), and psyche (ba).

- Ha** Body, matter, structure, form, persistence, shape.
Connects most naturally to the static abilities of aura and endurance.
- Ka** Soul, fire, drive, energy, thrust, movement.
Connects to the active abilities of charisma and strength.
- Ba** Psyche, personality, change, path, choice.
Connects to the dynamic abilities of agility and thought.

The following matrix examines what this means for the concepts of life, death, and undeath in the UVG and the rest of the Given World.

HA (BODY)	KA (SOUL)	BA (PSYCHE)	ENTITY
yes	yes	yes	Full person. Human, animal, plant, etc.
yes	no	no	Corpse. Shell. Statue.
no	yes	no	Spirit elemental. Living energy.
no	no	yes	Echo. Ghost. Digital clone.
yes	yes	no	Living dead. Ka-zombie, falscher, drone.
yes	no	yes	Animate shell. Lich, machine, ba-zombie.
no	yes	yes	Living mind. Daemon, ultra, etc.

Concept Background

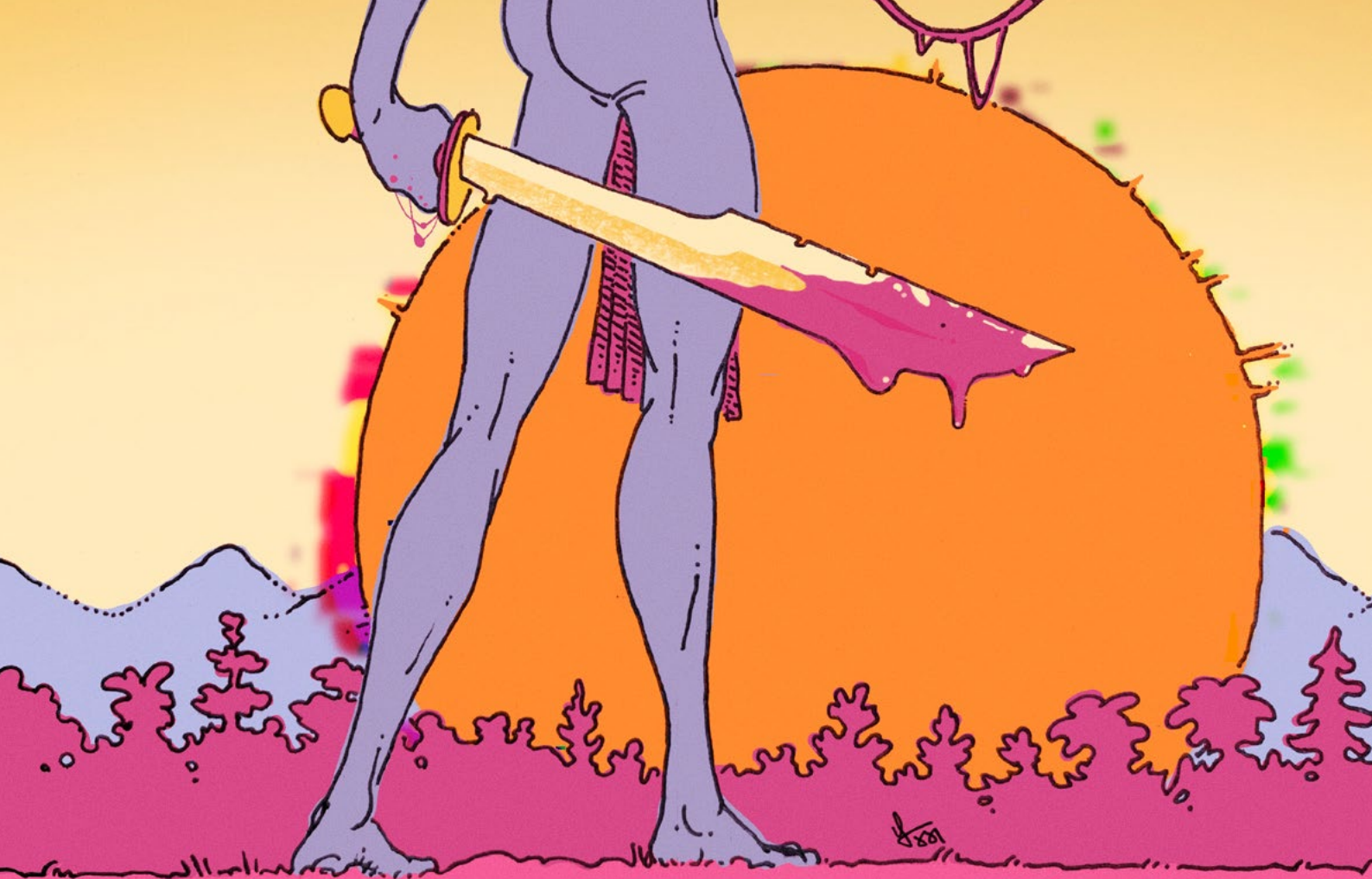
Ha-ka-ba is adapted from Ancient Egyptian conceptions of the person, as in the *Coffin Texts* and *Book of the Dead*. It also echoes many religious and philosophical ideas on the transmigration of souls.

In-Game Metaphysics

The soul provides the motive fire of consciousness, the psyche provides the unique direction of consciousness, and the body provides the vehicle.

This trinity affects how the dead, the undead, and the resurrected behave. A creature killed by physical means becomes a classic corpse. A creature whose soul is destroyed leaves a perfect shell, easily turned into a flesh-golem servitor (sometimes called a zombie but actually a soulless automaton). A creature whose personality is annihilated presents the most unusual situation: their soul-body dyad remains physically alive, but completely malleable; entities of human intelligence without volition, loyal to their creator. Other permutations abound.

Indeed, death is not the end. The return voyage from death and destruction is covered in Rest and Recovery (3.6.).



3.6. Rest and Recovery

To rest again, to be free of possession. To enjoy a comfortable bed, a day of ease, soothing circumstance, an end to toil. Ah, every man dreams to have a satisfied mind again.

—*Rich Man Dreams*,
Holy Montage,
Aubergine Amethyst (2124)

3.6.1. Recovery

Living characters recover quite quickly. The bodies of these later humans are blessed with strange powers of narrative healing.

Each week, remove one affliction or insult. This may be:

- regain all missing life
- or fully restore one missing ability score
- or remove one burdensome affliction (terms and conditions apply)

Faster Recovery

Options exist if you can find them.

D6	PRICE	RESTORATIVES
1–3	cheap	common healing unguents, restorative tonics
4–5	pricy	uncommon medical packs, repair parasites
6	dear	rare oldtech replacements, divine blessings
€	shh	legendary S-class augments, builder tech

To find legendary recovery options, you will need to spend money to find a lead and then undertake at least a small quest or journey.

For more options, see medicines (pXX).

3.6.2. Relife

Death is not the end of your character's service.

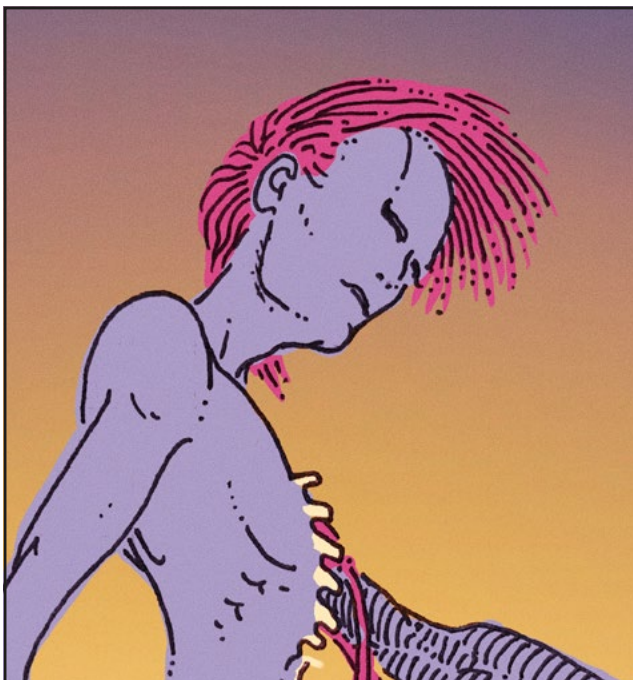
If the **body is available**, an aspera casket can spin a new soul into the PC's body. Time since death affects memories and modifies personality. Top up the aspera casket with fresh soul-source as required. Caskets are available in all human settlements in good standing with the Ministry and costs are reasonable (around €300). If a casket is not available, it is because you or someone you know has sinned against reason and tradition and reality. It is your fault.

If just the **head is available**, a suitable clone or golem body can restore mobility. An aspera jar may keep just the head alive, though psychological adjustment may be difficult. Please apply for a suitable body at your local Temple of Justified Expectations. Costs are reasonable (around €1,000). If a body is not available, it is your own fault for not paying tithes of insurance.

If only the **jewel is available**, a fully ripened clone or secondary provides fertile ground for reseeded your consciousness. You've had your jewel installed since birth, duplicating all your thoughts and experiences, haven't you?

Error. Jewel not available. Please contact the canopic jewel service point to install a new synthetic personality backup matrix. Error. Canopic service point map layer missing. Error. Omnimap missing.

Traditionally, all Garden Humans had canopic jewels. What happened to yours? Are you even really human?



Relife Consequences

Without specific (and, in the eyes of most Rainbowlanders, deeply immoral) rituals such as *Stoyevod's Irreducible Crystallisation of the Ego Complex*, the character as an individual disappears. The psyche dissipates into the cosmic consciousness, becoming part of the infinite tapestry of creation, returning like a messenger swallow to the All-Mind. The soul merges back into the All-Fire of Creation-Preservation-Destruction. Finally, the body decays back into the All-Green cycle of Life-Death-Rebirth.

Powers such as *Animate Dead*, *Raise Dead*, or the poetic *Supplication to the Rotting God to Turn Back the Wheel of Love and Death* (var. *Resurrection*) permanently alter the returned.

This Returned Is Changed

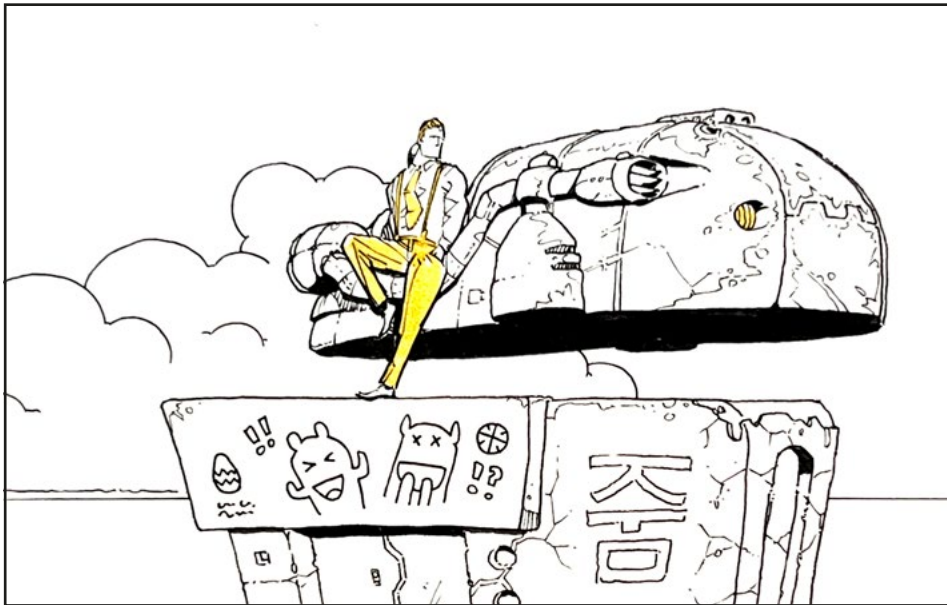
1. They are marked by the Rotting God (see below).
2. Their face is dark with the death they have lived.
3. Their mind is hazy with the fog of the shadow realm.
4. Their instincts are tinged with their fated reincarnation.
5. Their body is dessicated by the cosmic winds.
6. Their hands tremble with the terror of not-being.
7. They cough from the dust of limbo.
8. Memories of unity-with-existence have crushed their ambition.

The Seven Marks of the Rotting God

1. First, milk turns sour at the marked one's touch.
2. Then, dogs and cats are repulsed.
3. After, plants wither in their presence.
4. Then, maggots grow in their footsteps and skin.
5. Soon, pestilence follows their breath.
6. Eventually, their eyes turn white, but still see, and their touch bears an uncomfortable curse.
7. Finally, inanimate objects age and decay in their presence.

Some say the marks are gifts, extending the lives of the Blue God's chosen. Wise folks who understand human nature know that these long, decayed lives are but another curse.





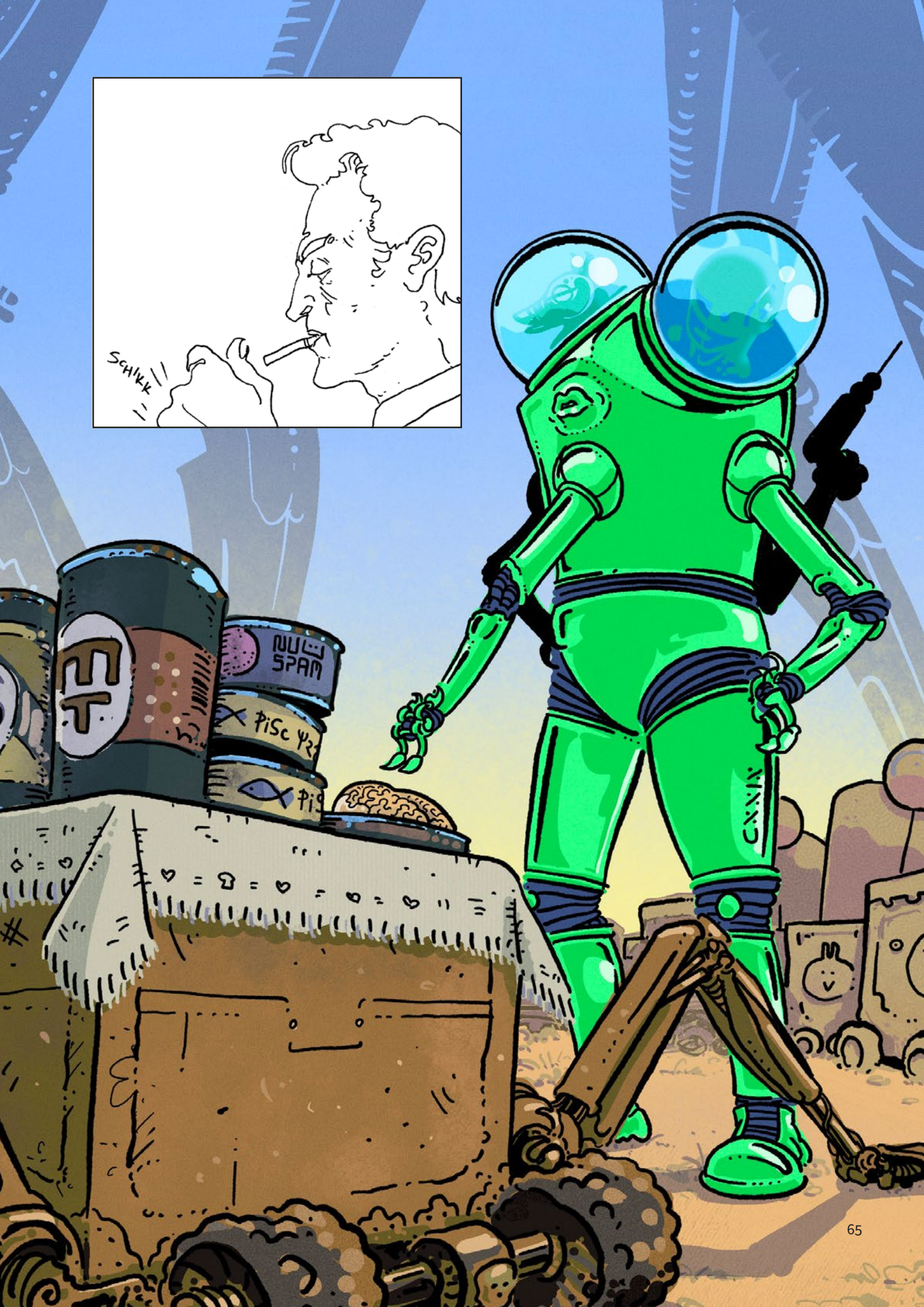
EQUIPMENT

This world is not like that of the angle-sachsen empire of Old Soil, with its wild west feudalism and deep-delving gong-farmers. Sufficiently advanced technology indistinguishable from magic abounds, if unevenly distributed. The modern human knows that wonders exist, though few can pretend to understand them. Too much knowledge exists even for the hive minds and synthetic intelligences, and more has been forgotten.

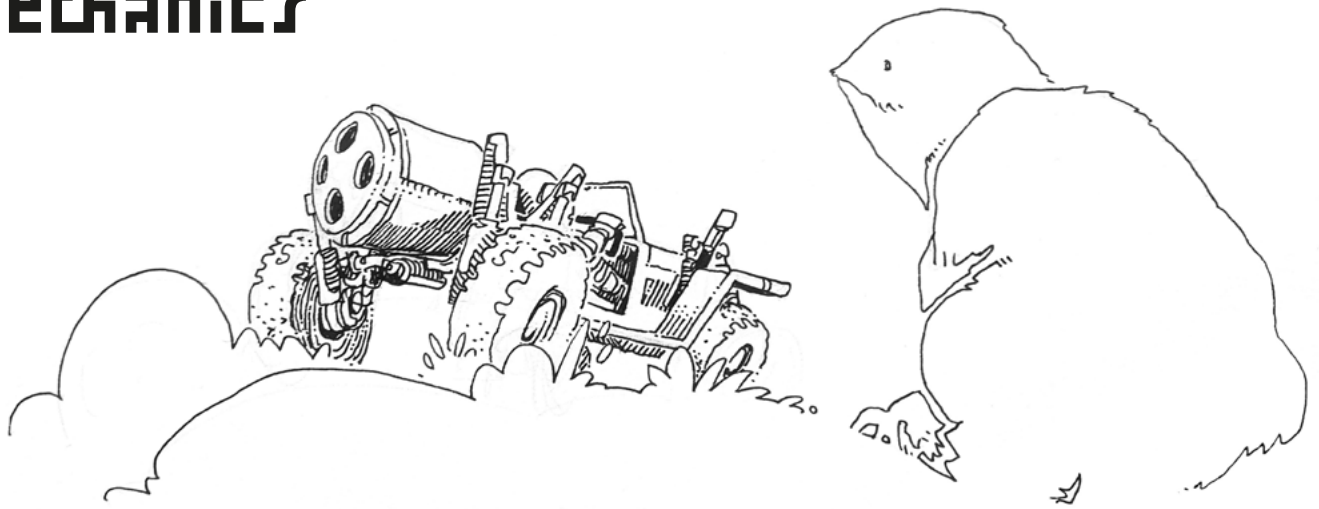
What is magic? What mundane? That distinction is impractical. Somewhere in these vast lands nearly every item the human may dream up must already exist. Thus, to list all possible equipment ... hubris!

Yet, some useful things for the traveler, for the voyager into the vast beyond the edge of civilization? That, yes, let us list that. This chapter covers:

- 4.1. how equipment works
- 4.2. weapons
- 4.3. armors
- 4.4. gadgets [and tools]
- 4.5. consumables—limited use items
- 4.6. rides—vehicles and mounts
- 4.7. replenishers—recharge and refill



4.1. Equipment Mechanics



4.1.1. Interpreting Equipment

To enumerate every use for a brick is an exercise in creativity. To do so for every item in the Vastlands is folly. When figuring out what to do with equipment in the game, before diving into its attributes, consider what it is and how it is described.

1. **Natural Language.** Equipment does what its name suggests. Use common sense and improvise details as needed.
2. **New or Improved Ability.** Equipment enables a character to perform tasks they couldn't otherwise. PCs do not need to make rolls to succeed at a task if they are using appropriate equipment and aren't under pressure or facing time constraints.

***Example:** A raft allows characters to float, and climbing gear helps them scale surfaces they couldn't free-climb.*

To create unique items, reskin or modify existing equipment and powers with the desired effects. Season to taste.

4.1.2. Equipment Mechanics

Sometimes, improvisation is not enough. For those situation, standard equipment attributes and mechanics come into play. The following five are mechanics you may see a lot of use:

1. **Size.** Each ready item occupies one stone (1 st) of inventory. Most PCs can carry at least 7 stones of gear without penalty. Stronger PCs can carry more. (see 2.6.0.1., pXX)
2. **Damage.** If combat breaks out, most items can be used as improvised weapons. For comparison, a small personal weapon like a knife deals 1d4 damage, a civilian weapon like a fire axe deals 1d6 damage, and a military weapon like a lance deals 1d8 damage. Fragile items break after striking a target. Clumsy items impose a penalty to attack rolls. (see 2.7.6.1., pXX)
3. **Notched and broken.** On a natural roll of 1, equipment is notched (mark the equipment). If you roll a natural 1 again before repairing it, it breaks. (see 3.2.3., pXX)
4. **Penalty or Bonus.** Under pressure, characters without suitable equipment may receive a penalty for tasks they are skilled at. Conversely, having the perfect equipment for a job could provide a bonus. The referee makes the final decision. (see 3.2.2.3., pXX)
5. **Force the Situation.** When you roll precisely on target, you can sacrifice (damage equipment, deplete ammo) to succeed. The referee may suggest other sacrifices. (see 3.2.2.4., pXX)

4.1.3. Resources

Some equipment requires resources to function: ammo for guns, charges for sorcelectric devices, fuel for golem vehicles. Often, tracking your resources is not necessary—you may assume your PCs have enough resources for the scene or session and can replenish their resources between scenes, off-screen.

Tracking Resources: Running Out

Often, when tracking resources, the only thing that matters is whether you *have enough*, are *running low*, or have *run out*.

Have enough: keep using your gear.

Running low: one use left.

Run out: can't use the equipment until you replenish it.

Your d20 roll when you take an action with a piece of equipment determines your resource consumption.

1. **Natural 13.** You are running low. One use left. **Example:** *The last bullet slides into the chamber, the O₂ meter reads 5%, the biomechanical war suit beeps ominously.*
2. **Replenish #.** If you roll the replenish number or less, resources have run out. When it makes more sense in context, this is a reload # or a recharge #. **Example:** *The sensor is out of juice. The autogolem is out of fuel.*

Often, actions won't require a d20 roll. At the end of such a scene make a single resource usage d20 roll for all the equipment used.

If the replenish number is higher than 13, the equipment still has one use left when a natural 13 is rolled.

Option: For a more cinematic feel, ignore the replenish mechanic and only watch for natural 13s.

Replenishing Resources

Equipment that is out of resources either does not work or imposes a penalty (for example, an unpowered suit of golem armor). The term 'replenish' is a generic term to cover reloading, recharging, refueling, etc. Replenishing requires an action, unless specified otherwise. Skilled characters may reload or recharge or refuel faster. There are three common ways to replenish equipment:

REPLENISHMENT METHOD	PRICE
Replenish at a store , a charging station, etc. Costs one hundredth the price of the equipment (or nothing), but isn't portable.	1/100th
Carry additional resources. Ammo boxes, charge packs, fuel cans, etc. Each replenish weighs 1 st and costs one tenth the price of the equipment itself, unless noted otherwise. Available in most settlements.	1/10th
Use an expensive portable fabricator , usually fed by sunlight or old energies, that can replenish a limited number of pieces of gear per day for free. Perfect for equipping a base or large caravan. (see 4.4., pXX)	€€€

Charges vs Replenish

In the UVG, charges (power) and ammo are treated differently. Ammo uses a reload number—a replenish number by another name. Powered equipment (such as golem armors), on the other hand, uses charges the player tracks. You can convert charges to the replenish number:

NO. OF CHARGES	REPLENISH #
20	1
10	2
8	2 or 3
6	3 or 4
5	4
4	5
3	7
2	10
1	20

Anything with more than 20 charges doesn't have a replenish score. It only runs out after rolling a natural 13.

4.2. WEAPONS

Bullets, swords, rocks, explosions, fireballs, gouges, and chokes. Attacks hurt the body, but usually spare the soul and status. The civilized frown upon personal firearms, much to the delight of voracious barbarians.

Standard Sizes

Unless specified otherwise, the autofabers create everything to the standard six-cubit height of a truemade god-blessed human.

- <1 stone** Small, easily concealed. Daggers and pistols.
- 1 stone** Medium, one-handed. Swords and blasters.
- 2 stones** Large, two-handed. Polearms and projectors.
- 3+ stones** Very large, mounted. Divine rods and autocannons.

Weapon Features

Some weapons have special features. This list is not exhaustive and the referee can adjust the effects to suit their tastes or a specific weapon.

1. **Area.** A small area covers a few creatures standing close together, a large area encompasses a dozen or more creatures within tens of meters.
2. **Armor Piercing.** Bonus to attack rolls against heavily armored targets.
3. **Blinding.** If any damage dice roll maximum, the target is blinded for one round. Critical hits may blind permanently.
4. **Burst.** Unload all your charges or ammo to deal damage in a small area. Targets can take cover and forfeit their next move for half damage. Targets already under cover take no damage if they forfeit their next move.
5. **Clumsy.** Penalty to attack rolls, obviously.
6. **Concealed.** It doesn't look like a weapon.
7. **Frag.** Charged with epic energies beyond mortal ken. Slain enemies explode and deal 1d6 damage in a small area.
8. **Intravenous.** Can be loaded with holy or toxic liquids.
9. **Less Lethal.** A bonus to the victim's defeat & death rolls.
10. **Mounted.** Heavy one-handed weapon for use with a steed. Deals double damage when charging.
11. **Necrotic.** Kills living tissue directly. Often toxic.
12. **Psychic.** Causes scars on the inside.
13. **Radiant.** Uses energy rays. May set things aflame.
14. **Rare and Restricted.** Hard to find, overpriced in most places, usually controlled by some faction and may provoke hostile reactions. Zombies are such a thing.
15. **Reach.** Longer, so it attacks first in close combat.
16. **Relevant Ability.** Most ranged attacks use agility, while melee attacks use strength.
17. **Slow.** Goes after the usual initiative order.
18. **Throwing.** Designed for throwing. Fine at short range, but suffers a penalty at longer ranges.
19. **Two-Handed.** Needs two hands (2H) to use properly. Big weapons (two stones and larger) always need two hands.
20. **Versatile.** Can be used two-handed to increase its damage dice one step (1d6 becomes 1d8, 1d12 becomes 1d20).



4.2.1. Melee Weapons

By machete and ghost bone, the shadowed jungles of lost times must part.

Traditional Melee Weapons

1. **Stone.** Man's first weapon. Close, 1d3, throwing, 1 st. €0.
2. **Battle Stick.** Hardwood for hard knocks. Close, 1d4, strength or agility, 1 st. €1.
3. **Burdenbeast leather whip.** Uses strength or agility. Can be used to swing. Close, 1d4, reach, 1 st. €3.
4. **Retractable stun baton wand.** Spend 1 life to stun (save). Close, 1d4, concealed, 5 sp. €20.
5. **Machete.** The blade that overthrew the void tunnel jungle and opened passage to the New Soil. Close, 1d6, 1 st. €3.
6. **Gentleman's Cane.** A short sword in a cane. Perfect for swaggering down portal avenue and giving ruffians a what-ho. Close, 1d4 (cane) or 1d6 (sword), concealed, 1 st. €20.
7. **Spear.** A blade on a stick. Combines well with shields and other spear bearers. Close, 1d6/1d8, versatile, throwing, 1 st. €2.
8. **Wrench Hammer.** The archaic maintainer caste tool for divine doors and holy hatches in the oldtech temples. Today, a priestly weapon of office. Close, 1d10, two-handed, 2 st. €10.

Uncanny Melee Weapons

1. **Arzax Lance.** An ultralight energy lance. Switch off the null-field to collapse into a short rod. Close, 1d12*, mounted, reach, stuns on natural 13, 1 st. €200.
2. **Black City Blade.** A blade of obsidian and shadow and error. It whispers to you of lost histories. Close, 1d10, ignores damage resistances, 1 st. €300.
3. **Chain Sword.** An elegant weapon from the time of the great reincarnation error. Decapitates on a natural 20. Close, 1d10/2d8, versatile, fueled, 2 st. €600.
4. **Forty-Pound Uranium Rod.** A heavy metal staff for a heavy metal wizard. Stuns on matching damage dice. Close, 2d10, 2H, slow (loses initiative), 4 st. €900.
5. **Ghost Bone Axe.** Filed from the shoulder blade of a noöspheric daemon, it ignores undead immunities and deals full damage to ghosts of all sorts. Close, 2d8, two-handed, disturbing, 2 st. €600.
6. **Wire-Ghoul Hammer-Axe.** An undead biomech thing, its head overgrown with wriggling, acid-belching flagellae. Deals double damage to heavily-armored enemies. Close, 1d10, necrotic, 1 st. €750.



4.2.2. RANGED WEAPONS

It wouldn't be a pseudo-colonial-apocalyptic savanna-crawl without guns.

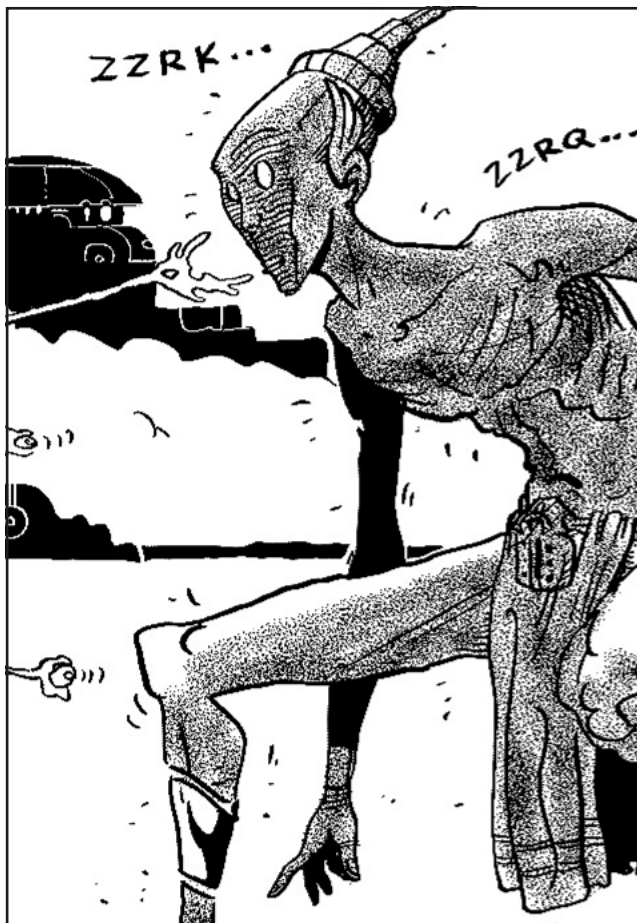
Traditional Bows and Guns

1. **Bow.** First among weapons. A recurved metalbird pinion or laminated lengths of chitin. Its lack of features is a feature. Medium range, 1d6, two-handed, 1 st. €20.
2. **Crossbow.** Simple, silent clocktech. Rewind after each shot. Medium range, 1d8, reload 20, 1 st. €25.
3. **Golem Lance.** Take a defunct war golem's arm, remove the war golem, and you have an effective heat ray. Short range, 1d10, two-handed, fiery, reload 6, 2 st. €200.
4. **Inquisition Squirtgun.** Originally, an effective tranquilizer delivery device. Now adapted for all kinds of injection-at-a-distance! Short range, 1d6, reload 5, intravenous, 5 sp. €300.
5. **Scavenger Bolter.** The basic recycled rifle. Rugged, tough, easy to modify, and notoriously inaccurate. Medium range, 1d10, two-handed, reload 10, 1 st. €100.
6. **Redland District SMG.** The mass-produced firearm of the people. Rare outside the RLD, restricted inside. Medium range, 2d6, two-handed, reload 1, burst mode, 1 st. €500.

Throwing Weapons

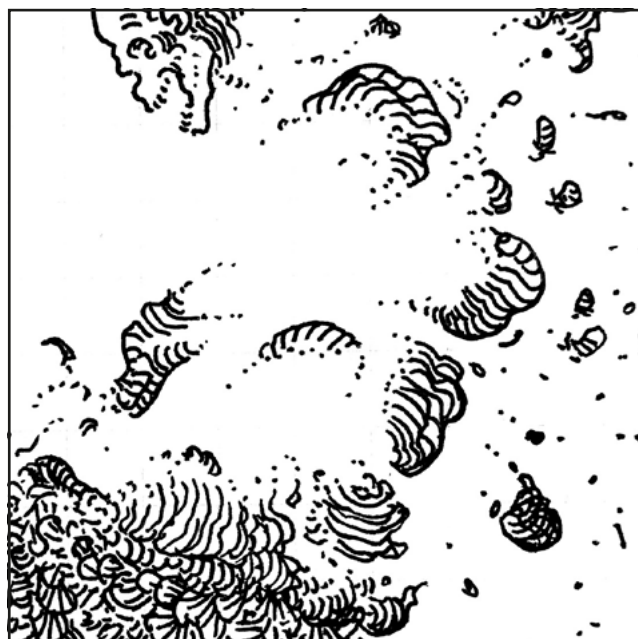
Fine at close or short range, but suffer a penalty at longer ranges.

1. **Bola.** Corded weights to entangle a target. Popular among herders and nomads. Short range, 1d4, entangling, 1 st. €1.
2. **Builderbang.** The holy hand grenade of elder times, a treasured weapon of the inquisition grenadiers. Short range, 3d6*, large area frag grenade, 2 sp. €250.
3. **Concussive.** A clay pot filled with black powder. A grenade any modern artisan could make. Short range, 1d6*, small area grenade, 2 sp. €5.
4. **Flarestick.** Fruit of the flambén tree, dried and preserved with resin. On impact, it bursts into bright, flaring light. Intended for fuel, it burns for several minutes with a low-heat flame. Short range, 1d4, heat, 2 sp. €10.
5. **Flasher.** A glitch-vome's signaling eye set to *St. Vitus*. Causes blindness, nausea, and/or uncontrolled robot dancing. Short range, 1d6, small area grenade, 2 sp. €30.
6. **Throwing Knife.** The classic combat shuriken of rust landers, back alley dwellers, and all sorts of ne'er-do-wells. Short range, 1d4, 2 sp. €1.



Uncanny Ranged Weapons

1. **Blue God Blaster.** A particle of the divine, subverted and converted into a toxic array for tunnel combat. Very short range, 4d8, two-handed, necrotic, burst, reload 7, 1 st. €3,000.
2. **Golem Killer.** Gray planes and orange stripes. This silent, soundless ray emitter hurts golems and other mechanicals. On a damage roll of 13, the target mechanical shuts down for an hour. Medium range, 2d8*, two-handed, reload 4, 2 st. €2,000.
3. **Porcelain Death Mask.** A head-mounted micro-rocket launcher. Uses biomechanical shunts and integrated fabricators to generate new hornet-sized rockets directly from the wearer's tissues (spend 1d4 life to reload). Originally designed for disposable polybody drones. Medium range, 2d6*, hands-free, reload 7, 1 st. €1,000.
4. **Satrap Radiant Gun.** A semi-sentient laser weapon designed to interface directly with a satrap's crystal soul. Long range, 2d12, two-handed, blinding, radiant, reload 7, 2 st. €1,100.
5. **Ultra Blaster.** An emitter optimized for non-destructive void use, with fully shielded particle coils that continue to function even in the subspace of the dullways. Short range, 3d6, blinding, radiant, reload 1, 5 sp. €2,000.
6. **White City Matter Creator.** A heavy thing of pale coils, metal whorls, and crystal rods. It creates matter at a distance—about 1d6 stones worth per shot—duplicating the target's dominant material. Matter created within an organic creature may hurt. Short range, 1d12*, two-handed, reload 5, 2 st. €10,000.



4.2.3. Oldtech Weapons

The eye in the sky hears the PC's electric prayer; it sends a ray of nihilation.

"Oldtech" or other thought attack - a conveniently deployed trick, a subterfuge, a sudden burst of song from a speaker.

4.1.3.1. Limited Oldtech Weapons

1. **Access Flenser.** A less-lethal phantom blade to cut through layers of ego and id. Maximum damage: give the target's soul a direct command (save). Close, 1d6, reload 5, 1 st. €200.
2. **Diagnostic Wand.** Demands a full status summary of intent. The victim's next action takes two actions to complete instead. Short range, 1d4, reload 15, 5 sp. €120.
3. **Dusk Emitter.** Actually, a pure anti-light ray that emits dusk in a 15° cone. Medium range, 1d4, blinding, reload 3, 5 sp. €50.
4. **Jetolene Igniter.** A flame-thrower. Sets hearts (and heads) afire. Short range, 3d6, small area, heat, reload 15, 3 st. €250.
5. **Pleasure Thorn.** Related to the neural whip, but more pleasant. Disables with ecstasy. Causes paroxysms on a natural 7. Close, 1d8, reload 5, 1 st. €400.
6. **Transfer Gun.** Originally a medical device. It transfers a burden from the user to the target (save). Short range, 1d8, reload 5, 1 st. €200.

Delimited Oldtech Weapons

1. **Crystal Siege Rod.** A quartz disintegration ray amplifier housed in a heavily-glyphed brass and brazilwood casing. A leftover from the rationalist living god wars. Breaks open doors if any die rolls a natural 6. Short range, 1d6 x 4, clumsy, slow, reload 4, 3 st. €2,000.
2. **Fold-Field Array.** Cobbled together from a cracked levi drive. Reduces all spatial dimensions in the target area by 50%. Targets are slowed and weakened (save). On a natural 2, one target's skull folds in on itself instead. Short range, 1d10*, very small area, reload 10, 1 st. €1,500.
3. **Gate Daemon Actuator.** Perhaps this was initially used to spin-up travel gates. Now it's just used to create localized gravity shears. Medium range, 1d12 and reorient gravity in a small area, bisect on a natural 13, reload 13, 3 st. €1,200.
4. **Magnificent Fireball Wandpistol.** Converts the dross of mortal life into flashy balls of fire. Hardly a fair trade in the eyes of the noble land barons. The user spends 1 life per shot. Short range, 3d6, very small area, 1 st. €5,000.
5. **Mouth of God.** Portable solid hologram projector manifests a divine progenitor to smite unbelievers. It is loud, bright, sets shrubberies on fire, and terrifying (save). Short range, 3d10, less-lethal, reload 7, 2 st. €4,000.
6. **Radiothermal Horn.** Emits focused hard radiation. Causes severe illness (hard save). Backfires on a natural 1. Can serve as a portable stove. Short range, 2d4*, glowing, reload 2, 1 st. €200.

4.2.4. Fantascience Weapons

They say curses and witchery. We say the science of the Logos unbound.

Long Ago Fantascience Weapons

1. **Agon.** A whip that implants a homunculus of the user's personality in the target (save). A target with multiple personalities is conflicted and suffers penalties (but a bonus to attacks against the user). Close, 1d4, reach, reload 13, 1 st. €500.
2. **Ego Echo.** A wandpistol that captures and replays thoughts and emotions, disorienting enemies with their reflected selves (save). A confused enemy (1d6): (1) attacks itself, (2) attacks an ally, (3) sits down, (4) wanders away, (5) does what it planned, (6) pauses, takes a breather and gains 1d6 life. Short range, 1d4, psychic, reload 4, 5 sp. €200.
3. **Phase Cannon.** A heavy handgun that shifts the target creature or a 3 cubit sphere out of phase with normal matter for 1 round (save). Great for passing through doors or floors. Short range, 2d8*, reload 6, 1 st. €1,650.
4. **Psionic Blade.** An onyx and ivory hilt projects a blade of pure psychic energy, slicing through mental and physical barriers. Spend 1 aura to deal triple damage. Close, 1d8, armor piercing, 1 st. €500.
5. **Skip Knife.** Cuts through time, skipping the target forward 1d6 rounds (save). Close, 1d4, reload 1, 7 sp. €1,250.
6. **Telepathy Blaster.** Perhaps once this was some kind of medical device for dealing with psychological anguish. Now it deals lethal emotional shocks. If the damage die shows a natural 1, the target stops fighting for one round and shows a willingness to parley. Short range, 1d10, reload 6, 1 st. €600.

Long Long Ago Fantascience Weapons

1. **Hellfire Cannon.** The cool death metal of this handgun projects a part of the target's mind into hell. They experience the colorless fire of pain, the eating acid of despair, the cruel depredation of time (save). The suffering burden dissipates after 1d6* days. Medium range, 1d8*, reload 5, 2 st. €1,000.
2. **Mouth of the Void.** Hear the song of the cosmos, experience your insignificance, merge with your existential dread. The terror induced is so profound, it can stop a heart on a natural 13. Creatures adjacent to the target suffer 1d6 damage. Short range, 2d10, reload 4, 6 sp. €3,900.
3. **Reality Flense.** The target glimpses the true, underlying nature of reality. On a natural 20, their mind breaks. On a natural 7, they permanently gain 1 aura and try to stop this pointless battle. Short range, 1d6*, psychic, reload 3, 1 st. €1,800.
4. **Replacer.** The target is replaced with an almost identical copy of themselves (save), but they know they are no longer themselves. Forever after, they are alien to themselves. Short range, 2d4* and 1 thought, reload 7, 1 st. €800.
5. **Solipsism Staff.** Become the world! Experience a perfect reality just for you! Dream a lifetime in a day! This old prayer gun turns out to be surprisingly useful for putting enemies to sleep (save). Short range, 1d8, psychic, reload 1, 2 st. €1,000.
6. **Soul Siphon.** The spear whips like a cobra, drinking life and leaving empty husks. Absorbed souls flare like aurorae as they are consumed by the spear. The spear can hold up to three souls. Spend a soul to animate it as a spear snake (L3/12 life, judgmental) or to regain 1d6 life. Close, 2d6, two-handed, 1 st. €3,000.

4.3. Armor

Shells, carapaces, plates, harnesses, mails, masks, helms, force fields. Armors protect the soft flesh of the human mollusc against the terrors of the great world. The civilized mock the ferals who go about dressed in fur and still, with little faith in the divine guardians who block all injury. The outlanders suspect the divine guardians may be unreliable.

Standard Sizes

Modern humans prefer smaller sizes, even half-size equipment in the Orange Lands, but the fabricators refuse to change their blue prince designs, so artisans must adjust even new-fab armor.

<1 stone	Small wards. Bracers and circlets.
1 stone	Shields and light armor. Linen and pleather.
2 stones	Medium armor. Amber and chitin.
3 stones	Heavy armor. Porcelain and chain.
4+ stones	Golem armor. Mobile suits and automatons.

Armor Features

More are possible.

1. **Bulky.** Cumbersome. Makes stealthy, nimble action more difficult.
2. **Cool.** Looks good in a hot environment, but a thermal blanket is recommended at night because it gets chilly.
3. **Enviro.** Grants a bonus against environmental effects like acid, toxic clouds and dying of thirst. Often with magical hazmat runes or post-mechanical breathing implants.
4. **Hot.** Good in winter, but terrible in hot environments. After exertion, such as a battle, the hero needs a rest and water. Without such a breather, the hero may become fatigued.
5. **Interfacing.** Allows direct neural control of secondary systems, such as artillery or colossal golems.
6. **Intravenous.** Set up to directly inject potions (free action). Removing the armor too quickly may cause blood loss.
7. **Large.** The armor makes the wearer large enough to struggle with normal human doors and rooms.
8. **Powered.** Equipped with specialized golem muscles and spiritual engines. The armor has a recharge number. Roll to see if an armor charge is depleted at the end each relevant scene. Unpowered, the armor penalizes physical activities.

4.2.1. Shields

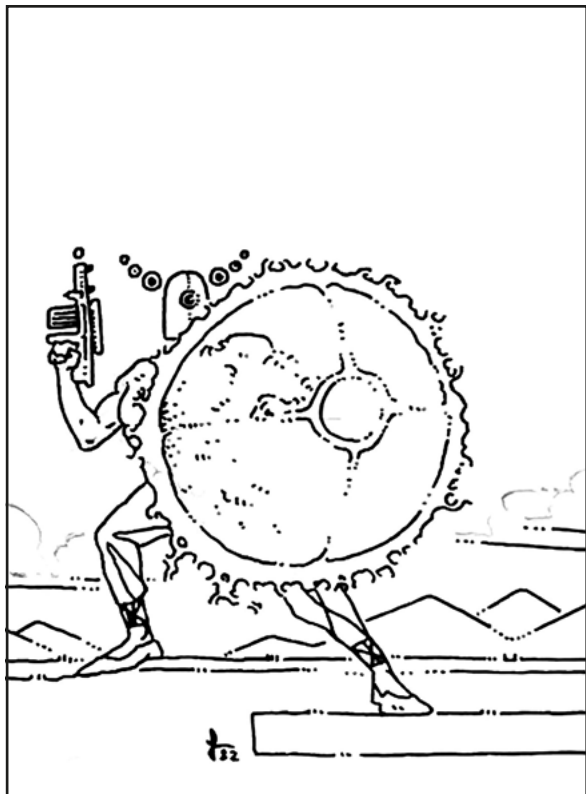
Something to interpose between fragile flesh and deadly bullet. You can **sunder** (destroy) your shield to negate one attack.

Modern Shields

1. **Buckler.** A small brass and plaz shield strapped to your forearm, you can hold things in your hand. Armor +1, shield, 1 st. €5.
2. **Glass Shield.** An oldtech wonder, you can shoot beam weapons through its polarized form. Armor +3, shield, 1 st. €100.
3. **Shield.** The wicker and pleather basic. Armor +2, shield, 1 st. €5.

Ancient Shields

1. **Field Glove.** This hard plastic and living-wire gauntlet emits a small protective field. Use your hand as normal! Armor +1, shield, 5 sp. €15.
2. **Hard Light Shield.** A shield of force strapped to the arm. Push a button and it disappears into the wrist-guard. Used as a melee weapon, it deals 1d4 damage and severs the target's limb on a natural 17. Armor +3, shield, 1 st. €950.
3. **Void Infantry Dissipator.** A towering shield of ceramic, aerolith, and cryptic coils. If an attack deals 20+ damage, half of it dissipates harmlessly as a polychrome flare. Armor +4, shield, 2 st. €500.



4.2.2. Light Armors

Suits for fighting and even running away.

The Seven Standard Light Armors

1. **Nomad Robes.** Great in the hot desert. Armor +1, cool, 1 st. €10.
2. **Bullet-proof Silk Vest.** Elegant protection from high-velocity kinetic attacks (half damage). Armor +1, stylish, 0 st. €150.
3. **Pleather Suede.** Cheap, shiny when oiled, great with a wide-brimmed high plateau rustler's hat. Armor +1, hot, 1 st. €10.
4. **Ballistic Linen Suit.** Perfect for the gentleman adventurer. Secret pocket for a nip. Armor +2, cool, 1 st. €100.
5. **Riot Pleather Suit.** With detachable spike, cloak, and skull hardpoints. Armor +2, hot, 1 st. €50.
6. **Syncsuit.** Ancient spandex and living wire for direct proprioceptive control of a vech or void vessel. Armor +3, interfacing, 1 st. €500.
7. **Synthskin Enviro Suit.** Dedicated to the goddess Haz-Maat. Armor +1, enviro, hot, 1 st. €150.



4.2.3. Medium Armors

All-rounder suits.

The Six Normal Medium Armors

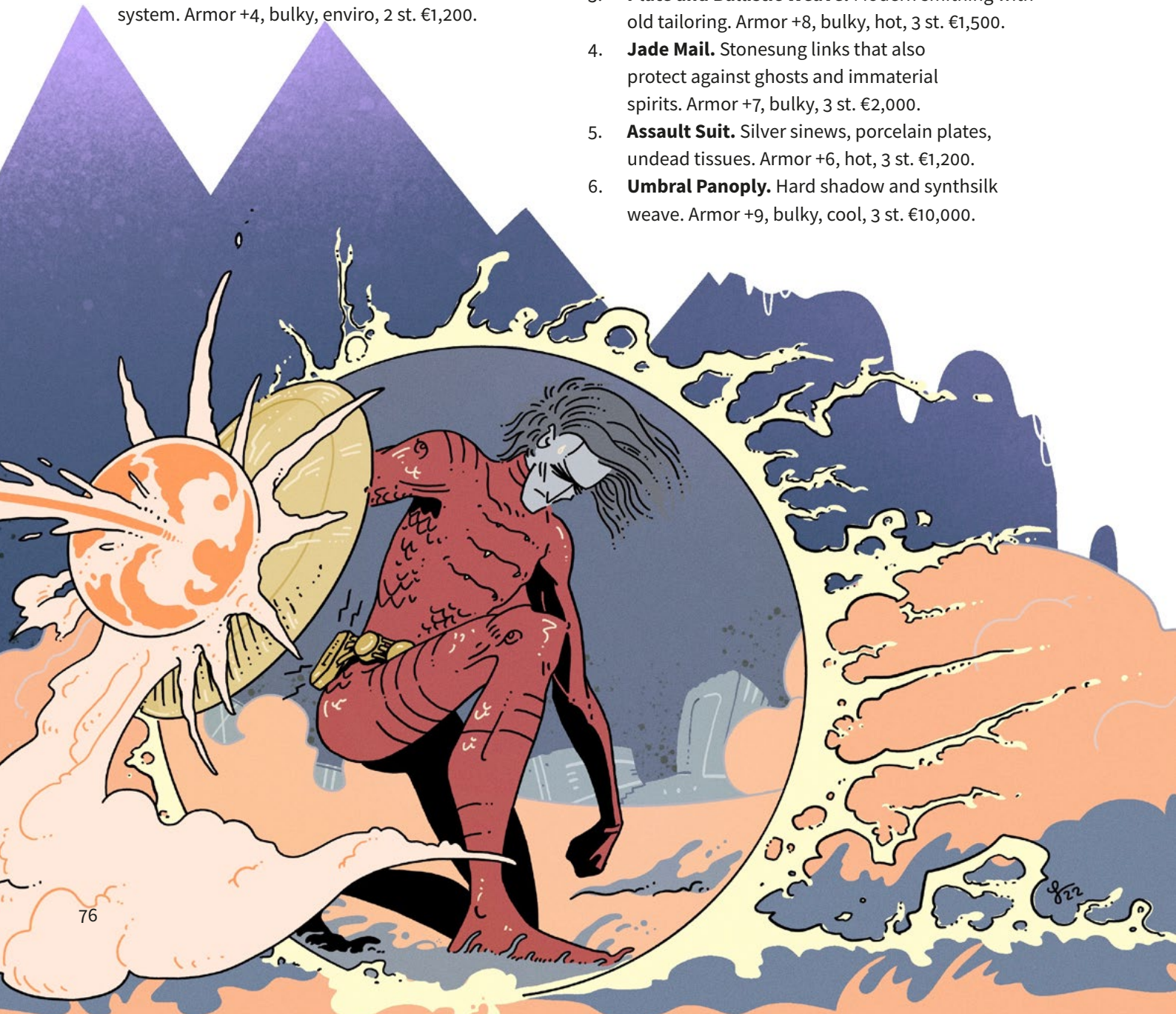
1. **Dryland Weave.** Woven from the cilia of special dryland coral hybrids, surprisingly breathable. Armor +3, bulky, cool, 2 st. €100.
2. **Scale Suit.** Made from de-extincted iron pangolin scales. Armor +3, bulky, hot, 2 st. €50.
3. **Chitin Cuirass.** Also called lobster armor. Armor +4, bulky, cool, 2 st. €600.
4. **Amber Cuirass.** Strands of ancestral memories trapped in amber. Ghostly memories give +1 thought. Armor +4, bulky, 2 st. €1,500.
5. **GRD Combat Harness.** Ugly semi-organic suit with grasping tentacles to keep gear in easy reach. Armor +5, bulky, hot, 2 st. €850.
6. **Watersuit.** Cool-suit of synthskin over woven bone mesh, with vascular cooling and filtration system. Armor +4, bulky, enviro, 2 st. €1,200.

4.2.4. Heavy Armors

Suits for standing and defending.

The Six Armors of the Paladins

1. **Bone Mesh Armor.** Trademark bone wizard product. Armor +6, bulky, pretty cool, 3 st. €500.
2. **Splint Suit.** Cheap and simple design, popular in this fallen age. Armor +7, bulky, hot, 3 st. €400.
3. **Plate and Ballistic Weave.** Modern smithing with old tailoring. Armor +8, bulky, hot, 3 st. €1,500.
4. **Jade Mail.** Stonesung links that also protect against ghosts and immaterial spirits. Armor +7, bulky, 3 st. €2,000.
5. **Assault Suit.** Silver sinews, porcelain plates, undead tissues. Armor +6, hot, 3 st. €1,200.
6. **Umbral Panoply.** Hard shadow and synthsilk weave. Armor +9, bulky, cool, 3 st. €10,000.

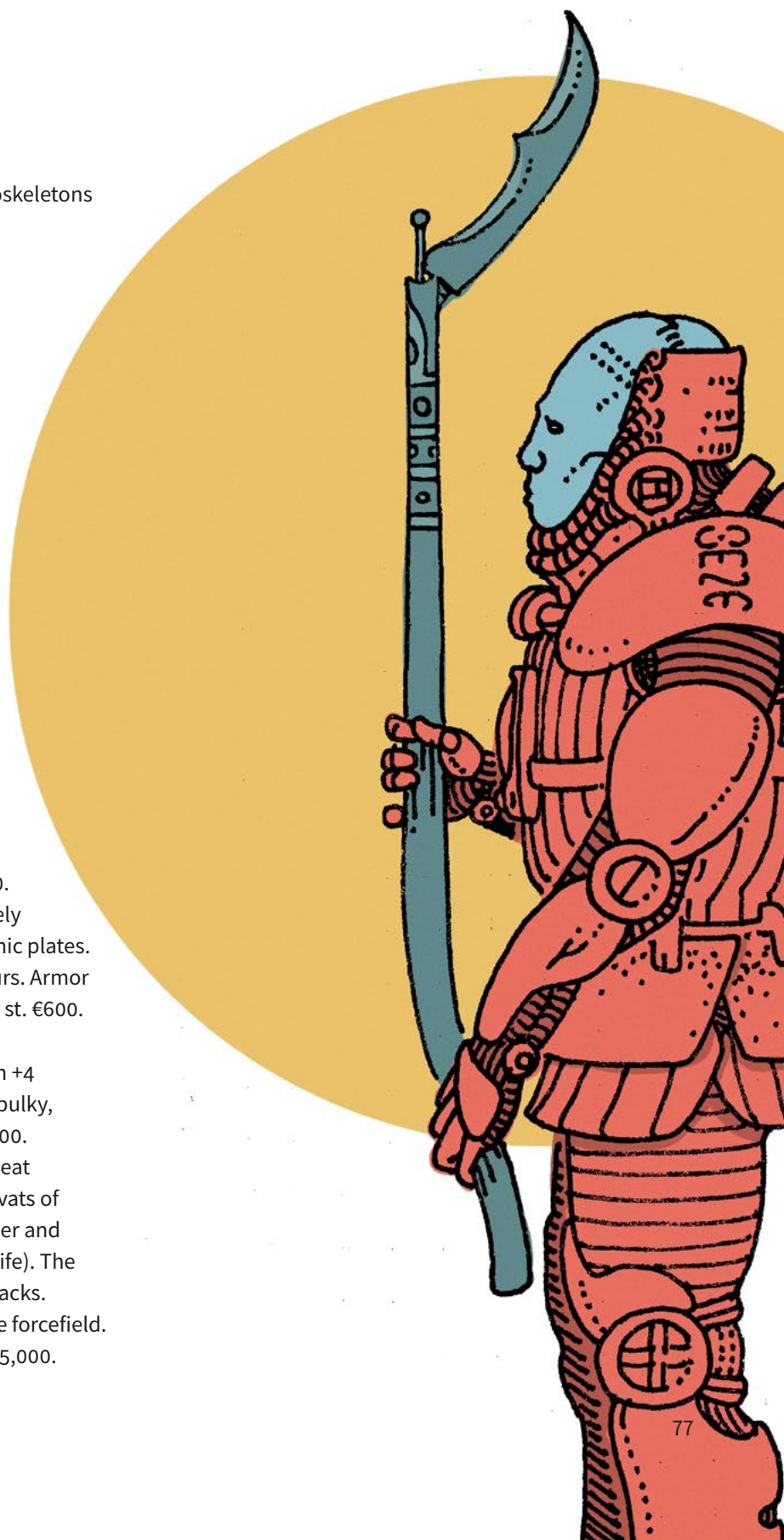


4.2.5. Golem Armors

Living armors powered by arcane sources. Exoskeletons for soft humans.

Six Flavors of Golem Armor

1. **Spectral Combat Suit.** Satrapy steel-glass scales with an environment maintenance parasite. Spend charge: gain +2 strength. Armor +5, bulky, cool, recharge 3, 2 st. €2,400.
2. **Malachite Golem Suit.** Polished semi-magical stone and woven lines of force to counter massed firearms. Gurgling waves ripple round and through the suit as though it were a viscous liquid. Halves damage from high velocity and energy attacks. Spend charge: gain +5 strength or 30 life forcefield. Armor +5, cool, recharge 4, 2 st. €8,000.
3. **Onyx Ghost.** Coiling onyx snakes and shifting spirit stones whispers of lives wasted, dreams destroyed. Spend charge: gain +3 aura or 50 life forcefield. Armor +5, enviro, recharge 2, 2 st. €10,000.
4. **Porcelain Walker Suit.** The best in princely technology, with shiny polychrome ceramic plates. Spend charge: walks itself for several hours. Armor +7, bulky, cool, intravenous, recharge 3, 3 st. €600.
5. **Full Archaic Armor.** This smart suit may develop a personality. Spend charge: gain +4 strength or a 20 life forcefield. Armor +8, bulky, enviro, intravenous, recharge 2, 3 st. €5,000.
6. **Brazen Minotaur.** A monstrosity of godmeat and astral bronze cooked up in the crypt vats of the Living Flesh God. It bonds with the user and removal requires a day of prayer (or 3d6 life). The suit deals 1d10 damage with unarmed attacks. Spend charge: gain +6 strength or a 30 life forcefield. Armor +7, enviro, large, recharge 3, 3 st. €5,000.



4.4. Gadgets

More than most other gear, gadgets rely on common sense. They do what it sounds like they do.

Climbing & Mobility

1. **Aerolith anchor.** Slows you down if you fall. 2 st. €75.
2. **Climbing gear.** 2 st. €20.
3. **Exoskelegolem.** A magical suit of pipes, cables, synthetic flesh, and insectile mind. Increases capacity by 1 sack. 5 st. €500.
4. **Grappling hook and 50 cubits of rope.** 2 st. €5.
5. **Lightweight inflatable raft.** Stowed: 1 st, inflated: 10 st. €50.
6. **Smart rope.** Wonderful stuff. It ties and unties on command. 20 meters long. Cheaper ropes available. 1 st. €10.

Surveillance & Tracking

1. **Chronometer.** Jeweled timepiece, with date, timer, alarm, timezone, and note-taking functions. 1 sp. €25.
2. **Clicker box.** Handheld electromagnificent radiation detector. Picks up 17 kinds of magical and mundane rays. Medium range, 5 sp, €50.
3. **Electronic ear.** Eavesdropping at a distance. 5 sp. €25.
4. **Handheld bioscanner.** Detect individual and species traces. 1 st. €200.
5. **Holomap.** 4D auto-tracking. 1 st. €100.
6. **Micro golem, remote surveillance.** 1 st. Crawler: €50; flyer: €200.

Stealth & Disguise

1. **Dampsound shoes.** Very chubby. 1 st. €20.
2. **Dark-vision goggles.** With infrared emitter. 1 st. €100.
3. **Soft-hands gloves.** Record & replicate fingerprints. 1 st. €100.
4. **Unnoticeability mask.** Pass unremarked. 1 st. €20.
5. **Voice modulator scarab.** 5 sp. €30.
6. **Wall-blender chameleon suit.** 1 st. €50.

Security & Infiltration

1. **Augmented reality goggles.** With real-time blue prince (blueprint) generator. 1 st. €100.
2. **Disintegrity spray.** Dissolve metals or plastics. 1 st. €20.
3. **Mechanical and electronic lockpicking set.** 1 st. €25.
4. **Multi-auto tool.** 75 standard mechanical tools in one. Disable traps, pick locks, assemble furniture. Replenish 2, 2 st. €50.
5. **Noösphere interface gauntlet.** Access magi-electric devices. 1 st. €100.
6. **Utilitool kit.** With laser cutter and seven other small tools. 1 st. €25.

Protection & Safety

1. **Emergency flare.** Glows brightly and smokes for about 10 minutes. A way of saying, "I am here!" Reload 2, 1 st. €10.
2. **Enviro mask.** Protect from spores, gas, and toxic spells. 1 st, €50.
3. **Glo paint.** With applicator nozzle. Mark your way around Long Long Ago ruins! Bright enough to read by. 1 st. €10.
4. **High-strength adhesive.** Seal doors or immobilize enemies. Reload 4, 1 st. €30.
5. **Nasal filters.** Stop horrible smells from triggering nausea. Also said to protect against some inhaled toxins. 1 sp. €5.
6. **Personal rebreather.** Survive underwater. 1 st, €110.

Magielectronics & Power

1. **Collapsible signal jammer.** Medium range, middling area, 1 st. €50.
2. **Golem strength physical augmentation harness.** Sets your strength to 6. Replenish 5, 1 st, €200.
3. **Invisibility bomb.** Throwing, small area, 1 st, €25.
4. **Nanobot repair kit.** Repair any item in one hour. Reload 5, 1 st, €100.
5. **Nulla charger.** Uses zero-point energy to recharge any item in one hour. 1 st, €300.
6. **Portable EMP pulser.** Disable golems and synthetics (save). Short range, 1d3, Reload 4, 1 st. €50.

Communication & Control

1. **Alarum generator.** Loud. 5 sp. €10.
2. **Holographic distraction projector.** Short range, reload 3, 1 st. €100.
3. **Human control choke.** Does not work on wizards. Reload 19, 1 st. €200.
4. **Encrypted communication ear jewels.** Jar. 6 pieces, long range, 1 st. €100.
5. **Sympathetic generative credentials card.** The ever-believable forgery option. Reload 3, 1 sp. €200.
6. **Universal translator ear slug.** 1 sp, €100.

Travel & Outdoors

1. **Oculars.** Techno-optics with 25x zoom, laser rangefinder, and integrated ad-blocker. 1 st. €50.
2. **Ray Bane Navigators.** Traditional UV-blocking sunglasses. Also a status symbol among travelers and merchants. 1 sp. €100.
3. **Solar lamp.** Magic lamp of the Long Ago that eats sunlight to emit a short beam of warm light. 1 sp. €100.
4. **Starwatcher compass.** Displays directions, latitude, longitude, and out-of-date open source map. Requires line of sight to fast stars. 2 sp. €50.
5. **Void thermos.** Perfect vacuum seals. Maintains tea, soup, or bio slurry at the same temperature for a week. 1 st. €25.
6. **Water purification pills.** Makes a week's worth of water fit to drink. Kills bacteria and viruses. Removes some toxins. Refill 2, 1 sp. €5.

Rest & Recreation

1. **Enviro tent.** Protects one person from extreme heat and cold and small floods. Recycles liquids and air for up to 1 week.
2. **Folding Bed.** Chitin cap mesh and synthetic flexi-bamboo makes every night's sleep a joy. Faster healing. 2 st. €35.
3. **Folding Chair.** Wonder of wicker pipes, mesh, and tubes. With drinks holder. Very comfortable. Makes stake-outs easy. 1 st. €5.
4. **Musical Instrument.** Guitar, oud, pipa, qanbus, rubab or tambur. Its strings loosen tongues and improve moods at campfires. 1 st. €10.
5. **Portable illusion.** Vidy crystal projector. Plays full 9D experiences. Non-wizards may be fooled by these phantasms. Recharge 4, 1 st. €250.
6. **Radiothermal stove.** Provides heat forever (or at least 100 years). Warning! Absolutely do not open! 1 st. €1,000.

4.5. Consumables

Single-use items such as air, drink, food, medicine, potions, poisons, and drugs. Sometimes necessary, sometimes useful.

Effects last a few hours unless specified otherwise.

A twelve-pack gets a replenish score of 2 and costs 10x the listed price.

Foods

1. **Blue Spacecake.** Actually a yogurt and mushroom blend, not a cake. Increases insight, boosts aura, gives a cold glow. Not filled with brain-altering spores. 1 sp. €5.
2. **Green Ortholentils.** Wafer product. Does not contain ancestors. Reduces cognitive dissonance, makes compliance with the correct and truthful doctrines of the Cogflower easy. 1 sp. €1.
3. **Orange Ratgum.** Does not contain void rats. Gain resistance to telepathic and mind control effects while you chew. 1 sp, refill 3. €60.
4. **Red Nutrislurry.** Not made from processed vampire knights. A bar invigorates you like a short rest. Great for sentry duty! 2 sp. €5.
5. **Purple Worm Sausages.** Not made from giant worms. Provides enough energy for a day's hard labor and lets you ignore 1 physical burden or injury. 1 sp. €3.
6. **Yellowbrain Choux.** Deep fried pastries that do not contain starmind brainmatter. Gives vision dreams and a bonus to contacting alien entities in the noösphere. 1 sp. €20.

Drinks

1. **Cat Coffee.** Narcotic from black cat droppings. A pot of the fragrant stuff induces sleep and restores lost mental attributes. Strongly addictive (without it the cat coffee fiend can't stop complaining). 1 sp. €2.
2. **Keep It Up Cha.** Tea brewed from the Blue God's own mycelium. Reduces dissatisfaction, jitteriness, and initiative. Produces a deep sense of contentment, belonging, and obedience. Reputed to be an aphrodisiac. 1 sp. €5.
3. **Photosynth Sap.** The condensed juice of the golden tree lets sunlight nourish you for a week. 1 st. €50.
4. **Soul Juice.** Distilled souls. A wonderful source of energy. Removes 1 mental burden permanently. 1 st. €300.
5. **Synthetic Blood.** A fine Red Land bottle. For surgery or to feed a vampire for a week. 1 st. €20.
6. **You Go.** Fizzy drink that lets you ignore a burden for a day. Warning! Excessive consumption may cause petrification! 1 sp. €3.

Medicines

1. **Curative Snake Oil.** Generic remedy against venom, bugs, parasites, diseases, rashes, and blisters. Grants one save per week. 1 sp. €10.
2. **Flesh Soil.** Biomagical substrate that nourishes an organ, such as a liver or a hand or a head, for a month. Jar sold separately. 1 st. €50.
3. **Full-Heal Kit.** The wide-spectrum regenerators even rebuild a lost limb in mere minutes. Purchase an OTA upgrade to rebuild additional limbs. 1 st. €300.
4. **Healmachine.** Restores 2d8 life to a machine. Repairs cosmetic damage to vehicle bodies. 1 st. €60.
5. **Ultra-Purga.** A terrifyingly effective purgative. Lose 2d4 life or ability points and just as many infections, possessing daemons, and other baneful affections. 1 st. €200.
6. **Violet City Healing Lotion.** Restores 2d6 life or 1 physical ability point. 1 sp. €40.

Drugs

1. **Black Light Lotus.** Glows in the dark and cats love it. Eaten, it cures mental afflictions for a week. Smoked, it brings deep sleep and restores 1d6 life. Smearred on the skin it exudes mind-altering pheromones, increasing appeal for a day. Addictive (without it, the lotus-eater suffers cramps and hunger pangs). 1 sp. €5.
2. **Felix Whizz.** A popular energy drink. Grants +1d4 life, but makes you a little annoying. Weakly addictive (without it, the whizz-face feels pissy, grouchy, and unfocused). 1 sp. €1.
3. **Glitchvidy.** A direct neuro-transformer absorbed via comm-goggles. Originally used for reprogramming humans, now used for direct pleasure stimulation. Addictive (without it, the glitchnik loses access to random skills and traits). 1 st. €50.
4. **Lemma Worm.** A memetic drug enjoyed via asmr and tactile input. Brings a sense of meaning. Overuse causes strange beliefs. Somewhat addictive (without it, the lemon-worm, as lemma worm addicts are sometimes called, suffers paranoia). 1 sp. €10.
5. **Purple Haze.** The toke of choice for manly folks. The aromatized “*essensa de mors*” numbs pain and emotions. A long spliff helps with pain, grief, fear, and hurt, but makes one slow and weak-willed. Weakly addictive (without it, the haze-head suffers cotton mouth and brain fog). 0.1 sp. €2.
6. **Whiskers.** Expand the mind, increase perception, cause a weak levitation effect and reduced coordination. Somewhat addictive (without it, the whiskler suffers strong tremors). 1 sp. €10.

Potions & Ointments

1. **Eggplant Elixir.** Your skin becomes thick, rubbery, and eggplant-purple. Gain resistance against physical and electric damage. 1 sp. €50.
2. **Octarine Oil.** Drip this iridescent liquid in your eyes to see a wider spectrum of EM radiation, from microwaves to gamma rays. 1 sp. €20.
3. **Otherface Cream.** Look like your favorite influencer! Makes your face soft and malleable. 1 sp. €45.
4. **Philip Juice.** Transform yourself! Swap two ability scores. 1 sp. €10.
5. **Tonic Harmonic.** Enjoy your music more! Acquire perfect pitch and a golden throat. 1 sp. €75.
6. **UV Lotion.** Protects from the UV radiation and provides resistance against radiant damage. 1 sp. €5.

Supplies

Food, water, and essentials to keep a person or vehicle alive for a week.

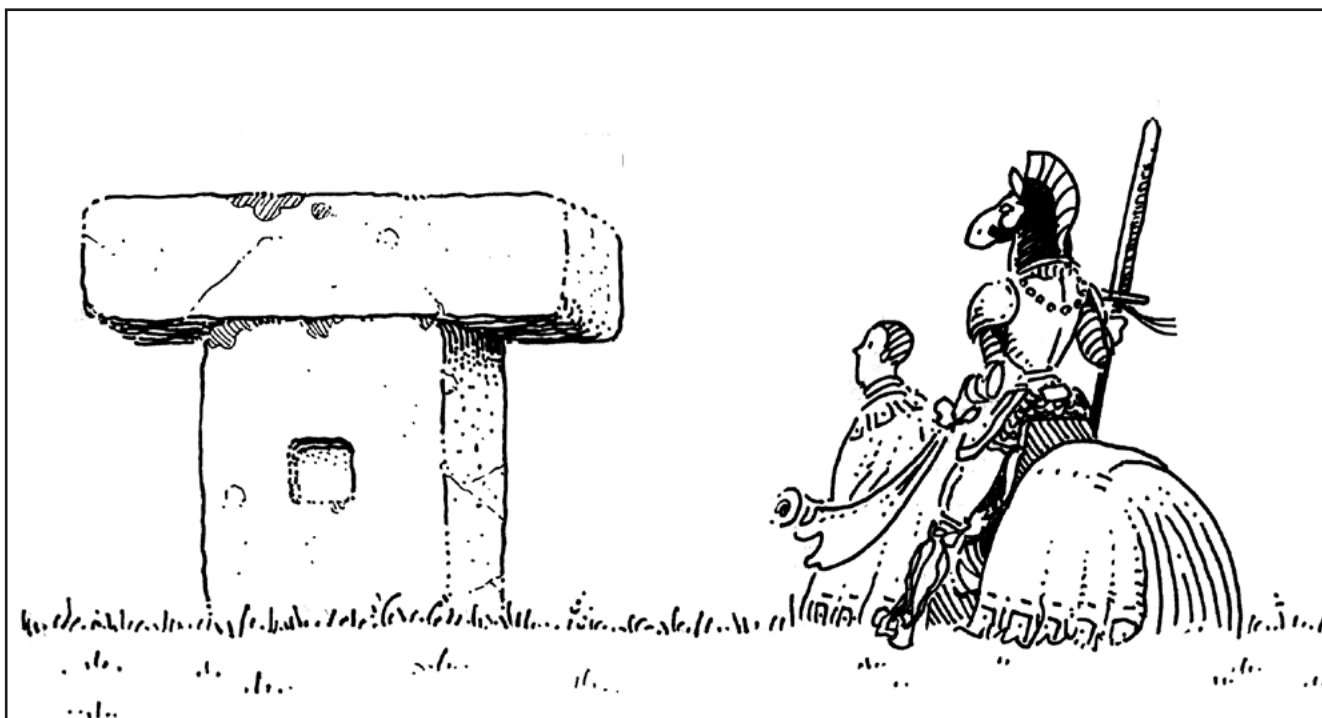
1. **Low-Q Diesolene.** A cheap way to run big modern autogolems. “Ole Belcher” produces hot, iridescent smoke. 1 sk. €10
2. **Oldtech Jetolene.** Makes autogolems go fast. Burns white-hot and may explode engines. 1 sk. €50.
3. **Premium Basic Supplies.** Dwarf bread, water, hempen cloth, and wrapping rags. Penalty to healing and recovery. 1 sk. €2
4. **Premium Guzzolene.** Basic synthetic dead dinosaurs. 1 sk. €20.
5. **Void Paste.** Packets of vacuum-packed ever-fresh™ food produced for the voidfarers of old. Just add moisture. Any moisture. 2 st. €50.
6. **Voyager Supplies.** Tinned meat, travel ale, disinfectant schnapps, novelty items, rough newspapers, socks, gum, and prophylactics. 1 sk. €10.

4.6. Riders

Friendly solutions for transportation, logistics, and combat!

RideC Mechanics

1. **Capacity.** How much it can carry. Unless specified otherwise, listed in sacks. One sack = 10 stones or roughly one human.
2. **Carting.** Wheels are great. A creature can pull triple its normal capacity. A creature pulling one load can't also carry a second load. Just no.
3. **Dragging.** Using improvised stretchers, ropes, rollers or skids, a creature can pull double its normal capacity.
4. **Flying.** Dangerous out in the utter west because of the Purple Haze, which rots human minds. At least, that's what natives say. Also, there are fragments of stuckforce littering the sky, an invisible cutting hazard.
5. **Golem.** True golem vehicles use near-inexhaustible radiothermal batteries. Each lasts for decades. They are popular targets for thieves.
6. **Grazing.** Herbivores usually eat grass and other plants. In deserts, they consume a sack of supplies per week. Common supplies cost €2 per sack, like for humans. Camels only consume half, they're cool.



Energy—Fuel For Your Fire

Most vehicles burn synthetic fuel. Traditionally, this is refined from biomass by biomagical eating animalcules in alchemical vats, or with a domesticated autofac. Some communities even refine their dead into energy.

1. **Low-Q Diesolene.** “Belcher Grade”, costs €10 per sack and produces hot, iridescent smoke. Adds the “smoke” tag to a caravan.
2. **Premium Guzzolene.** Costs €20 per sack and doesn’t smoke.
3. **Oldtech Jetolene.** Costs €50 per sack and adds the “fast” tag to a caravan. It burns white-hot and may explode.

Speed

The speeds of mounts, vehicles, and character are descriptive.

Very slow	a decaying zombie, a broken human.
Slow	a skeleton, an overburdened human.
Normal speed	a healthy human hiking the highlands.
Fast	horses, hounds, hallowed hollow golems.
Very fast	a wheeled metal steed, a racing autogolem.

The referee adjudicates how this applies in play, unless other rules apply.

Overloading

Possible, but not smart. Test once a week or something goes wrong (roll d6):

1. Engine dies. Lose a day replacing the engine (if you have one) or pull the vehicle to a machine shop.
2. Exhausted animal. Lose 1d4 days resting or a 1-in-2 chance it dies at the end of the week.
3. Broken axle. Lose 1d4 days to jury-rig a fix. A replacement axle costs a tenth of the vehicle’s cost.
4. Lamed animal. It can’t carry anything for a week. Force it to carry cargo and it will be permanently crippled.
5. Straps break. Random cargo spills. Fragile things break.
6. Random cargo crushed, loses half value. Badly packed, the fragile black light lotus leaf is now just so much powder.

Upgrading

Upgrades not designed for a vehicle can be adapted, but this increases the cost.

The referee can rule out certain upgrades at their discretion.

4.6.1. Undead

Undead transportation solutions require necromantic maintenance from someone with at least a community-level necromechanical degree. This is usually nothing more than a drop or two of their master's blood per week, perhaps some bolts tightened, and a fresh jolt of magielectric juice. When undead creatures are not maintained, they degrade (speed declines).

1. **Bone Horse.** Could also be a bone mule. Or ox. Hard to tell. It didn't need its head. Level 2, capacity 2, normal speed. €400.
2. **Carcass Blimp.** Take a giant airjelly. Reanimate it and fill it with biogas. Hey, presto, a levitating platform you can pull with a rope! Level 1, capacity 1, very easy to tow. €100.
3. **Meat Crawler.** What do you do if you come across a plague pit and have both a necromancer and a boneworker on hand? Not this. Please, do not do this. Giant meat and bone centipedes are not a good idea. Unlike single-body undead, the meat crawler can go months before it degrades enough to impede its mobility. That said, mobility was never the point of this abomination, was it? Level 8, capacity 24, very, very slow. €2,000.
4. **Sinew Strider.** Dead flesh re woven into a six-legged camel-sized endoskeletal ant-thing. Please ignore the human skull. Level 2, capacity 3, slow. €600.
5. **Skeleton Porter.** Formerly, a useless nobody. Now a useful ... biomachine. Level 1, capacity 1, slow. €200.
6. **Zombie Porter.** One day it may become a skeleton and stop smelling. That day is not today. Level 2, capacity 2, very slow. €200.

Undead Upgrades

1. **Berserker Gland.** A mechanical combat routine jewel. Insert it into the zombie and activate it later with the remote wand, turning the zombie into a relentless killing machine. The activation is irreversible and the zombie cannot tell friend from foe, so plan carefully. Human-sized. €50.
2. **Chrome Plating.** Say goodbye to stealth. Thoughtful bandits may mistake the skeletons for combat golems, glitterdust ghosts, or something worse. Human-sized. €10.
3. **Dermal Plating.** Up-armored, the meat crawler is essentially immune to small arms and any melee weapon weaker than a chainsaw. Truck-sized. €800.
4. **Fresh Costume.** Makes a rotten steed look alive! Horse-sized. €50.
5. **Geometric Protocol.** On command the skeletons assemble into a prearranged formation or shape. With enough skeletons, you can create an observation tower, a wall, or a bone crab. Human-sized. €20.
6. **Rubberized Coating.** A thick layer of flesh-preserving epoxy. Sealed glass goggles and copper ear-discs keep the smell inside while letting the zombie function at peak efficiency. Human-sized. €10.

This Undead Steed

D10	WAS NAMED	DIED OF	AND IT HAS	DISPOSITION
1	Borgo	catfish	blank mask	affectionate
2	Caliope	curse	charred flesh	anguished
3	Enclou	didn't	duck tape wrappings	boring
4	Iohn	disease	foul odor	depersonalized
5	Llobi	error	ghastly looks	gnashing
6	Mameleid	magic	leather straps	grim
7	Pavan	murder	mold overgrowth	hateful
8	Sentilopa	poison	slimy coating	moaning
9	Tendresse	science	symbiotic worms	watchful
10	Ugolino	war	terrible taste	weeping

4.6.2. Beasts of Burden

In these fallen times traditional work animals, like lopebeavers and honkazelles, are found in most rustic parts of the Rainbowlands. However, for journeys into the Ultraviolet Grasslands, only tried and tested beasts of burden will do.

1. **Biomechanical.** Astonishing amalgams of muscle and cybernetics sheathed in superior skin. These very rare beasts of the Long Ago can be ridden in combat. Most ordinary steeds break before them. Level 6, capacity 6, grazing or 3 supply per week, normal speed. €3,000.
2. **Burdenbeast.** Magnificent, shaggy creatures, biomantically engineered to positively enjoy lugging heavy goods for humans. Many grow intensely, emotionally attached to their masters. Level 5, capacity 4, grazing or 2 supply per week, normal speed. €600.
3. **Camel.** The solution for desolate deserts. Goes farther with less water. Level 1, capacity 2, grazing or 1 supply per two weeks, normal speed. €140.
4. **Combat Steed.** Other animals won't go near a melee, but this one will. 1-in-6 combat steeds are carnivorous andrewsarks or other beasts revived from deep time. Level 2, capacity 2, grazing, or 1 supply per week, normal speed. €200.
5. **Pony Mule.** It was supposed to be a pony or mule, but there we go. Eats grass, travels over all terrain in all weather. Also, it's edible. Consumes supplies in places without vegetation or water. Level 1, capacity 2, grazing or 1 supply per week, normal speed. €70.
6. **Quadrodont.** The four-tusked pachyderm of the Yellow Desert is a recent import to the eastern seas of grass and especially popular with Safranians. Level 7, capacity 5, temperamental, grazing or 3 supply per week, normal speed. €3,000.

Local Burdenbeast Variants

D10	A BIT LIKE	CROSSED WITH	AND IT HAS	DISPOSITION
1	horse	beetle	superb night vision	curious
2	camel	catfish	an astonishing odor	stubborn
3	yak	tortoise	moisture extraction gills	disease-riddled
4	antelope	metal orb	sticky climbing pads	lethargic
5	bison	cuttlefish	phosphorescent spots	adorable
6	iguana	rat	prehensile nostrils	loyal
7	toad	pig	delicious skin parasites	skittish
8	newt	cement mixer	vestigial wings	cunning
9	rhino	slug	root-digging claws	competitive
10	ostrich	goat	hyper-adaptable digestion	inscrutable

Beast Upgrades

1. **Afterburner.** This convenient surgical upgrade stores gaseous digestive byproducts in a small canister, for use in cooking fires or a sudden burst of speed. The speed may be from fear. Horse-sized, €60.
2. **Babel Gem.** Embedded, gives the beast a voice and human-form personality overlay. Works on most beasts, but increases the chance of vomish infection. Obedience not guaranteed. €100.
3. **Dendric Fur.** Bright green fur, rich with photosynthetic symbiotes, lets the beast go twice as far on each meal! €150.
4. **Plug-In Battery.** A rechargeable golem-style battery for backup power. The beast can go without grazing for up to four weeks (it still needs water). Alternatively, the battery can recharge a suit of golem armor or other oldtech artifact. Recharging the battery takes a couple of hours at any oldtech charging platform or obelisk. Horse-sized. €200.
5. **Stepfall Shoes.** Made from bits of oldtech ur-metal. When moving at top speed, the plates add a tiny bit of lift, letting the beast charge across small dips, avoid holes, and leap majestically. They leave xenon contrails. Horse-sized. €80.
6. **Thagomizer.** The beast's tail is upgraded into a lethal spiked club dealing 2d8 damage. Buffalo-sized. €300.

4.6.3. Wagons, Carts, Coaches

Wheels transformed proto-human lives. Truly nomadic lifestyles became possible and the humble wheel became a symbol of humanity. There would be no modern Grasslands without that ancient round machine.

1. **Adventuring Handcart.** This glorified wheelbarrow doesn't need much of a road, but it does need some kind of road. Not recommended for battle. Level 2, capacity 3, requires a pusher, slow. €10.
2. **Aerolith Sled.** Slabs of aerolith bound together and mounted on skids. If you overload this sled, it'll drag and make your life hell. Level 4, capacity 10, requires a draft animal, slow. €1,000.
3. **Battle Chariot.** A light coach designed for a driver and one rifleman. Shock absorbers for a smoother ride, armor to provide partial cover. Level 3, capacity 2, requires a draft animal, normal speed. €500.
4. **Cart, Coach, or Wagon.** A classic for a reason. Wains of this type opened up the steppes to the known Lime Nomads and the forgotten Flour Nomads. Level 4, capacity 6, requires a draft animal, slow. €200.
5. **Heavy Coach or Wagon.** Heavy vehicles for big caravans. With their weight they are unsuitable for rough terrain, poor roads, and deep mud. Level 7, capacity 12, requires 2 draft animals, slow. €600.
6. **Massive Hauling Wagon.** How else are you going to move an obelisk? The immense weight of these wagons means they require well-prepared surfaces. Level 4, capacity 24 sacks, requires 4 draft animals, very slow. €1,500.

Wagon Upgrades

All prices are listed for a regular cart or battle chariot. Upgrades for larger wagons cost two- or four-times as much, for smaller ones half as much.

1. **Camo Net.** Not as good as true rainbow silk, but a cheap and waterproof landscape mimic. Lets you hide your vehicle from casual scouting. Just don't wander away from your camp in the dark. €20.
2. **Chitincap Hull.** Fibrous, grown and woven components replace heavy wood. The result is a lighter vehicle that is easier to maneuver in mud and on poor roads. €200.
3. **Hull-Tight.** Designed to float across calm rivers. Seams caulked, wheels detachable, handles convertible into steering oars or push-poles. €40.
4. **Osteoliths.** Living bone growths cover your wagon, offering increased damage and fire resistance. €300.
5. **Rainbow Silk.** Display shifting patterns and images! Communicate at a distance! Activate the camouflage setting to hide in the middle of a field! Please note: rainbow silk cannot hide tracks. €750.
6. **Sails.** Add a tiny bit of extra speed. Not worth quantifying mechanically, but it improves morale (especially if you pass people without a sail). A great way to display your company's logo. €10.

Wagon Stylings

D10	STYLE	DETAILING	FEATURE
1	bonework	cloth	absorbent armor gel
2	chitinweave	foliage	anti-crash foam nozzles
3	dead golem	fur	gyroscopic auto-leveler
4	extraherbal	gelatin	hydrophobicseat covers
5	lime nomad	glass	nine-axis suspension
6	long ago	ivory	retractable flag pole
7	right roader	metal	self-repairing axles
8	scavenger	stone	swivel seats
9	sinew & skin	tiles	thermal barrier wrap
10	sung wood	wire	tuber growth medium

4.6.4. Autogolems

The grandest of vehicles to once ply the Vast: sentient machines fuelled by oldtech magics. Perhaps their time returns once more?

1. **Autogolem.** Slow, self-propelled wagon. Armored, tough, and impressive as heck. It drives itself safely—but beware crossing marshes or rough terrain. Carries 2d3 passengers in lovely bolted-on cabins. Definitely not a decepticrawler. Level 10, capacity 24, consumes 1 supply per week, slow. €10,000.
2. **Evening Golem.** An enormous biomechanical walker golem. Among the most stylish travel systems money can buy. Tuxedo option available. Level 9, capacity 12, consumes 1 supply per week, slow. €6,000.
3. **Metal Steed.** Fast and flash, it roars like thunder when pushed. The chrome horse with optional wheels is a popular look. Level 2, capacity 2, consumes 1 supply per 2 weeks, fast. €1,200.
4. **Road Yacht.** The queen of the Road of the World, the celestial autobahn. A luxury machine for a golden age. Level 7, capacity 6, consumes 1 supply per week, normal speed. €4,000.
5. **War Engine.** It's a tank? To eleven? No. It's a mobile fortress. Ninety* tons of thunder, lighting up the night. Level 11, capacity 36, consumes 2 supply per week, very slow. €20,000.
6. **Wicker Autowagon.** A self-propelled golem of synthetic ivory, iron-reed, and rubber. Level 3, capacity 3, consumes 1 supply per 2 weeks, fast. €2,000.

*Some literary scholics say this may be an exaggeration in the original mechanical maintenance poem.

Autogolem Upgrades

All prices are listed for a regular road yacht. Upgrades for larger vehicles cost two- or four-times as much, for smaller ones half as much.

1. **Air Conditioning.** Has a magic box that cools the cabin. Probably involves a bound demon. Essential in hot climes. It's impressive. €500.
2. **Big Gun.** Occupies 2 sacks, typically 1 for the gun and 1 for the ammo, maintenance equipment, and blast shields. €1,500. Options include:
 - Flambéur:** 3d6 fire damage, medium range, reload 6. Sets on fire.
 - Chaingun:** 2d12, medium range, reload 3. May propel you backwards.
 - Lazor:** 3d8, short range, reload 5. Can cut down small trees.
3. **Hover Wheels.** Billowing air-jets, stuckforce discs, or dozens of spinning propeller blades. Ignore mildly difficult terrain. €2,000.
4. **Luxury Seats.** Made of genuine synth-leather (from genuine synth-cows) and stuffed with autofabulous springs. Even folds down into a bed. Hula bobble-head totem doll optional. €300.
5. **Oldtech Golem Heart.** The autogolem now runs on the original truespark of creation. Never refuel again! Please keep heart wrapped in a lead blanket. €4,000.
6. **Snazzy Paintjob.** Shiny and polished. If normal colors aren't good enough for you, options include: scarabeo, pearl-tone, fordite swirl supreme, vantablack, gibbon, taupeamarine, and splunge. €100.

Autogolem Specials

D10	BRAND	FEATURE	DISPOSITION
1	<=5H1N3=>	all-atmosphere scoops	bloodthirsty
2	Aquarius	anymatter engine	brooding
3	Feltz & Filtz	closed cycle scrubbers	cold
4	Macaroni Integrale	full delusion pleasure system	dog
5	Maya Yuga	living tissue cover	grumbling
6	Podzol Kozmos	organometal self-repair bugs	harsh
7	Singer Metal Humans	polycrawler treads	moody
8	Spitz-Schnauzer	secondary guide brain	pensive
9	Vanta-Chouette	telepathic controls	playful
10	Vega Utopia Ind.	True-Day™ high beams	tired

4.7. Replenishers

Magnificent devices created by the Builders for the convenience of the good humans of Long Long Ago. These fabricators can replenish many resources.

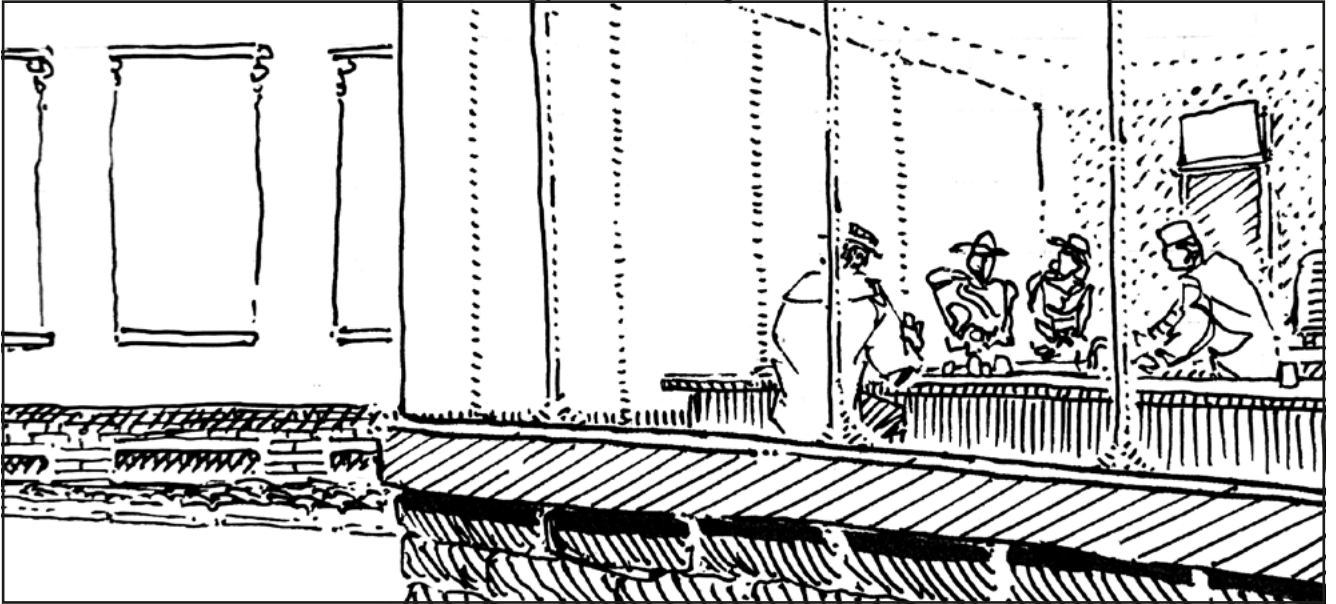
Single Use Disposables

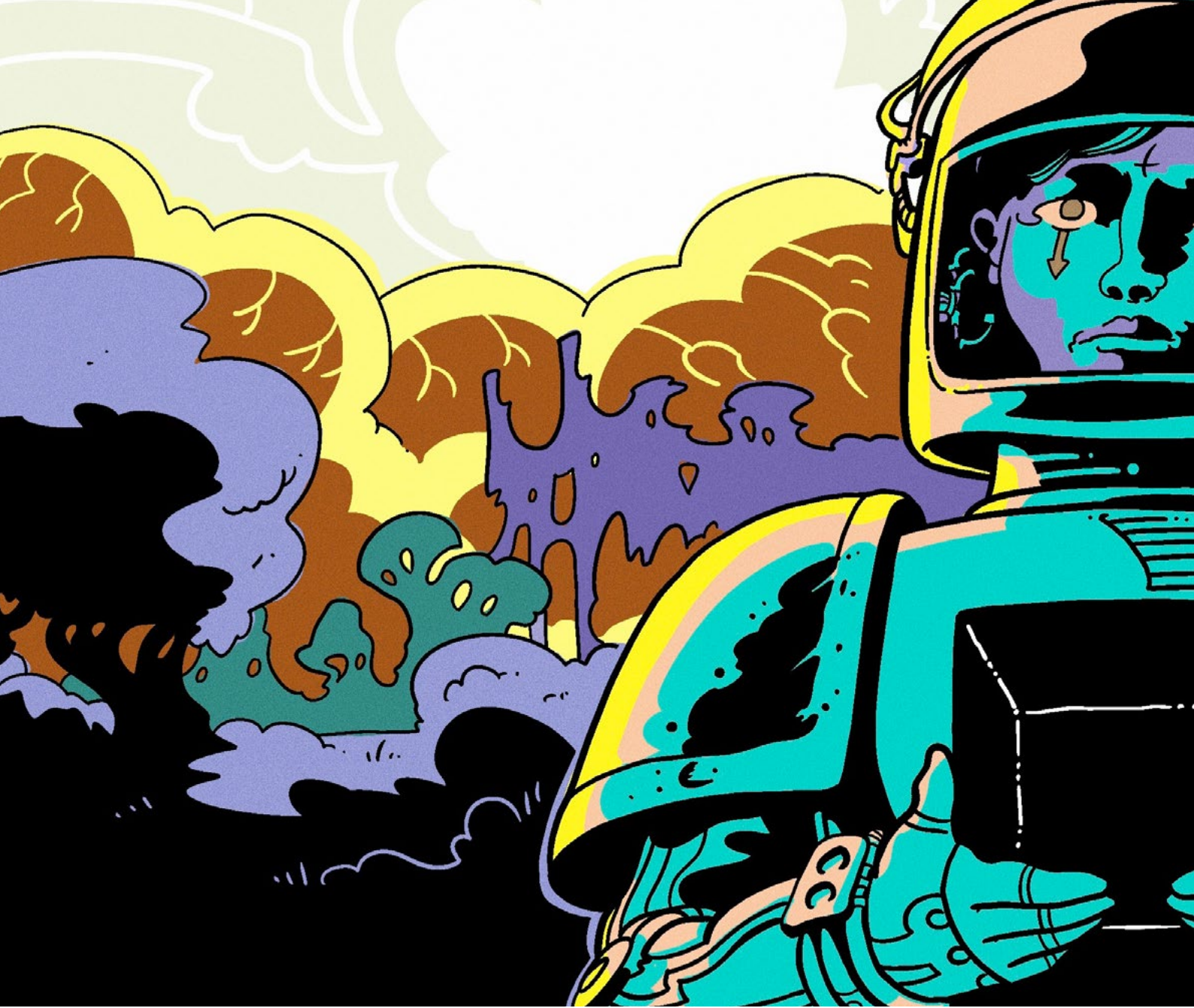
1. **Dehydrated Water.** Hydrate a human-sized creature or device. Once. Available in pill form. 1 sp. €20.
2. **Fillgut.** Synthetic organic food to fill any *gros-humain* belly! Once. Available in soylent yellow. 1 sp. €5.
3. **Microbattery.** Recharge a 1 st item. Once. Available in black. 1 sp. €7.
4. **Nanoammo.** Reload any weapon. Once. Available in death. 1 sp. €100.
5. **Omnibattery.** Recharge anything. Once. Comes in 12 cheery colors. Collect them all. 1 st. €50.
6. **Power Cube.** An enerxxon original. A fragment of divine soul for your vehicle. Refuel any machine. Once. Available in alpha-spark. 1 st. €10.

Cradles and Multi-Use Fabricators

Fed properly, each multi-use fabricator replenishes itself in 1 day. Fabricators tend to be large, usually 1 sack (1 sk = 10 st) or larger.

1. **Battery Bug.** A giant cybernetic beetle, a modified firefly, that lays batteries. Don't think about it too much. Just feed it waste and water and sunlight regularly. Replenish 5, 1 sk. €1,000.
2. **Envirogenerator.** Not stolen from a void ship. Fill with waste gasses, liquids, and solids. Emits fresh air, water, carbon dust, and other trace elements. Replenish 6, 1 sk. €500.
3. **Fuel Condenser.** Converts air, sunlight, and a sack of organic matter into fuel. Replenish 4, 2 sk. €1,200.
4. **Heavy Metal Ammonite™.** A biomechanical ammo fabricator. Keep in a metal-rich soup for best results. Creates an ammo pack in 10 minutes. Replenish 3, 2 sk. €2,000.
5. **Pink Slime Emitter.** Turn any organic material into healthy Human Food™! Flavor functions sold separately. Drink straight from the teat. Reload with a sack of organic matter. Replenish 2, 2 sk. €1,000.
6. **Teravolt Cradle.** Golem armor fast charger. With a bit of jiggery pokery also works on other equipment (10 minutes per charge). Bathe in wide-spectrum radiation to replenish. Replenish 3, 1 sk. €660.

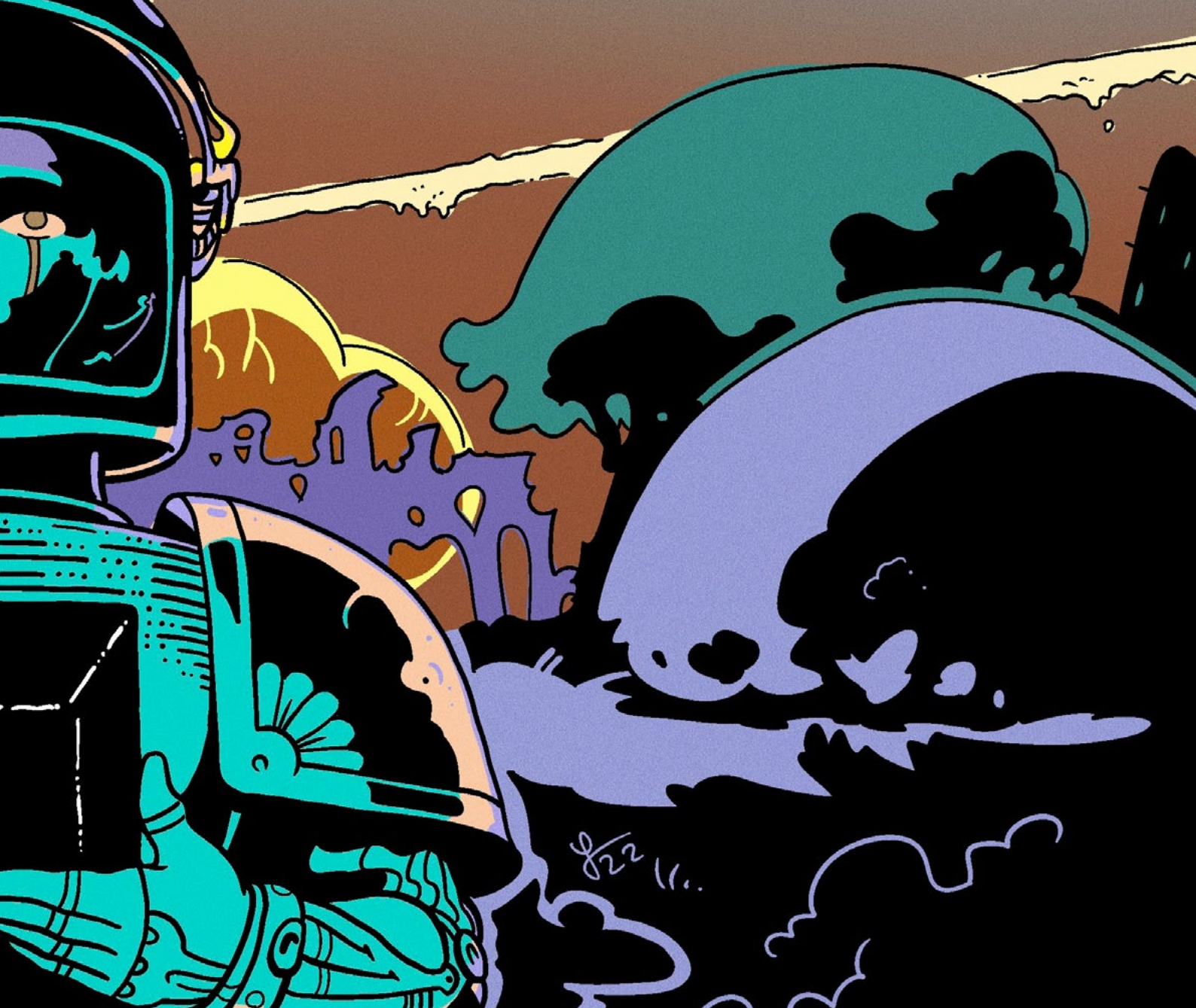




POWERS

He told me tales
And he drank my wine
Me and my magic man
Kinda feeling fine

—*The Wizard*, Uriah Heep,
Demons and Wizards (1972)



There are powers in this vast land beyond the ken of civilized humans. Rituals for jump-starting autogolems. Handed-down sacred physics. Instructions for drawing the attention of daemons from beyond the frontiers of reality. Formulae that rip reality off the underlying chaotic maelstrom of the void like an over-ripe bandage.

Ferals call these powers magic, fools call individual techniques spells. Sages know them as sciences for mastering the Maker's creation. Dark heretics whisper that the only difference between gods and humans is how much power they possess, and that a mortal who gained sorcerous super-user (*super-usurper?*) privileges could ascend to become a god, beyond life and death, beyond good and evil.

This chapter covers:

- 5.1. how powers work
- 5.2. some example powers

This section is developed from *Magitecnica*, the first SDM codex. That includes more art, stories, and a wizard's tower. Subsequent zines [will? did? when are you reading this?] delve into other types of powers, from the necromantic arts of reaching the digital dead to the abmortality medicines of this later time.

5.1. Power Mechanics

Mechanics for powers. A strange concept to most natives of the Given World, for whom these are but laws of reality and no more.

Voidwalkers know better.

Some scholars divide powers into two categories: **oldtech**, the techniques and useful devices given to humanity by the grace of the gods; and **fantascience**, the mystical permutations of the world made possible when one grasps the root levels of reality itself.

Most mystics laugh at such categorization, pointing out that there are as many types of powers as there are grains of sand on the seven heavenly beaches, but also only one power, the unified benevolence of the Maker.

5.1.1. Power Formatting

In the wild, powers may come in infinite shapes and sizes. On the page of this volume and others, they are trapped forever in a standard form. Deviation from the standard form is evil heresy. If you encounter any power or person deviating from the standard form, report them to the inquisition for rectification.

This is the standard form:

Thornstone Obelisk

Razorblade Tree

P: 3

R: 10m

T: planted landcoral seed

D: permanent

The petromancer spills their lifeblood, forcing the landcoral seed into sudden, explosive growth.

A medium-sized limestone tree erupts from the ground, dealing 2d6 damage to adjacent creatures. Anyone moving through its thicket of razor branches suffers 1d4 damage. The terrible growth speed kills the landcoral.

Overcharge: the growth is even more violent, dealing 6d6 damage to creatures in a small radius and scattering the ground with stone shards like caltrops. This destroys the landcoral.

Invoke Ub Dragon

Harness local reality errors. Spark them into sentient hunger.

P: 7

R: here

T: large local area of disturbed reality

D: permanent

The summoner invokes the *Ub* code and condenses accumulated magitechnical disturbance into an eater. Its power depends on the level of disturbance:

- undisturbed: **purifier slime** (L1d4, caustic)
- common: **destruction lizard** (L2d4, armored)
- uncommon: **flaming leaper** (L2d6, thorned)
- rare: **blade harvester** (L3d4+2, winged)

Overcharge: you have temporary control of the eater.

Aftermath: the local magitechnical disturbance is reduced, stuckforce loosens, energy snarls fade.



5.1.2. Using Powers

Any character can use any power. Using a power may mean reading the fantascientific formulas from an electromagical book, it may involve an interpretative dance routine to summon a daemon, or perhaps just lighting dribbly candles made from the fat of a bona fide angel.

However, a character who knows what they're doing (i.e. has a trait with relevant skills) is less likely to blow themselves up into a giant blueberry or unleash a plague of ear-eating wigs.

Paying For Power

Powers impose otherworldly wrongness on the mundane. There is a price to pay for such power and the alien fires of the incomprehensible may consume one's body, spirit, and memories.

To use a power, you must first pay the price.

1 power costs 1 life

You can also pay with ability score points (1 point = 1 life).

If you have no relevant skill or experience, you pay double the price to use a power.

Traits can change the price you pay for powers.

Carrying Powers

You can use power carried in any inventory:

Trait perhaps strange equations locked in your mind, changing perspective and personality.

Item maybe a plastic skull jug of lambent newt juice.

Burden for example, the weight of a malign knowledge.

You can use powers multiple times. They do not disappear after use.

You can also pack away powers, like other items, or store them in a library or other safe room. Of course, you can't use packed or stored powers.

Power albums, technocodicils, and spell books are valuable because they let you carry a number of powers in a single inventory slot.

Range, Target, Duration

Self-explanatory.

Range (R:), Target (T:), and Duration (D:).

Overcharge

Overcharging a power doubles its price and modifies its effect. Some powers can be overcharged multiple times: x2, x4, x8, x16 and so on.

More Power Options

Powers may have additional mechanics. For example:

1. **Anchored Powers:** The power is kept active and controlled by a physical anchor stored in your inventory. Destroying or losing the anchor deactivates the power (or worse).
2. **Attack Power:** Use this power as an attack against a target's defense score. The defender does not save or make other rolls.
3. **Focus Powers:** You must focus on keeping the power active. If you are distracted by other actions or external events, the power deactivates (or worse).
4. **Fueled Powers:** The power requires some kind of consumable component to activate. Life alone is not enough to activate it.
5. **Imbued Powers:** The power remains active as long as you keep it imbued with your vital essence (the life or ability score price you paid). You cannot recover imbued life or ability points until you deactivate the power.
6. **Item Powers:** The power locks your vital essence (life or ability score price paid) within an object. This is permanent, unless the item is destroyed or ritually powered down. Once an item is disabled, you can recover your locked life or ability scores.

Orders of Powers

All powers are of the first order (1 power or P: 1), unless otherwise noted.

Assigning powers is more art than science:

- 0 power:** a power that requires no life sacrifice. Weaker than an ordinary action, like running or firing a pistol, but allowing some specialized or unusual effect.
- 1 power:** a little more valuable and powerful than the mundane equipment of this modern day.
- 7 power:** a potent effect that changes the fundamental rules of a local reality in interesting ways.
- 13 power:** a terrible technique that may disable enemies or make very visible and semi-permanent changes to base reality.
- 21 power:** the stuff of fairytales; decades of slumber, exploding mountains, small iron stars falling from the sky, drastic reality changes.
- 42 power:** power to corrupt any mortal, rewriting histories and transforming eons.
- 99 power:** a power the mightiest half-divine magus used a single time, giving their life in the process.

Powers can also occupy every order in between, from 2 to 98.

Dangerous Powers

Any power may be dangerous. Powers are dangerous when any of the following is true:

1. you have **no suitable skill** (for example, a celebrated influencer trying to merge their consciousness with an oldtech war machine);
2. or, your **level is lower than the power's price** (for example, a level 3 character using a power that costs 4 life);
3. or, **a power is known to be dangerous** (for example, *Usha's Cancer Bomb* is never safe).

Danger Roll

When you use a dangerous power, **make a danger roll**. The **target number is the price of the power**.

Roll d20 + ability (usually aura) + skill (if relevant).

A natural 1 is always a failure.

***Example:** Noë is beset by haggard automatons. She overcharges her second order power, Ring of Broken Forces, to knock them down and clear her escape. Using the power now costs 4 life. Since she is a first level character, this makes her use of power dangerous.*

She has to roll d20 + aura (+4) + skill (her trait in the dark electronic arts gives her a bonus of +3) over a target of 4. This is a trivial roll for her, but there is a chance of catastrophic failure if she rolls a natural 1, so roll she must. Noë's player picks up the icosahedron ...

... and rolls a 17 for a total of 24. A success, indeed, an excessive success and the referee decides to narrate how the wave of barely controlled eldritch technomagic leaves the automatons knocked down and twitching, giving Noë a free round to make better her escape.

The referee can apply modifiers to a danger roll. A clueless PC, without a relevant skill might suffer a penalty. A PC who has safely used a power before and narrates how they prepare to use it may get a bonus.

***Example:** Onion has almost legally acquired a Rod of Cutting Light. Determined to impress his patrons, he activates it in a meeting by pushing the big red glyphed button.*

Cat applies a -1d6 penalty, as Onion is obviously clueless in the arts of the cutting lights.

A character who fails their danger roll is **exposed to corruption** (next page).

5.1.3. Power Corruption

Power corrupts and the powers of the Long Long Ago builders are absolute. Depending on severity, corruption may take many forms. Corruption twists a user's body, abrades their soul, and stains their mind.

You may be exposed to corruption in various ways:

1. **Fail a danger roll.**
2. **Afflicted** by a monster's corrupting abilities (the bite of a grey ooze ghoul).
3. **Failing a save** against corrupting effects (wading through electromagnificent radiation without an enviro-suit).
4. **Doing something stupid** (drinking the glowing blue *gool-aid*).

Corruption Exposure

When you are exposed to corruption, you:

5. Immediately **gain a burden** (such as a dramatic nosebleed or headache).
6. Then **roll 2d6 + aura** to figure out exposure severity. There are three levels of severity: mild, moderate, and severe.

2D6+AUR EXPOSURE SEVERITY

under 2 Unexpected amplification. **Your head explodes***, but the corruption keeps you alive until you die of hunger. Your mind-personality complex (ka-ba) is conscious throughout. (*or something equally memorable). Also; **severe corruption** exposure.

2–6 **Severe corruption** exposure.

7–10 **Corruption** exposure.

11–12 **Mild corruption** exposure.

over 12 **Mild corruption** exposure *and* you **regain the price you paid** for the power.

Critically failed saves and danger rolls may impose additional penalties to the exposure roll.

Traits, magic drugs, sacrifices, and special items may adjust the odds.

Burdens affect the exposure roll.

Having determined the severity of your exposure, **roll for corruption** to find out what happens to you.

Corruption traits can occupy a trait or item slot.

Shortcut: the referee can bypass the severity roll and choose a corruption table for the PC.

Mild Corruption Effects

Beneficial effects, lucky mutations; the Maker must have interceded to preserve the user and make them a bulwark of the Garden Path.

You feel fine. Possibly even a little euphoric. Over the next week and a day, you gain a new corruption trait.

Roll or choose a **mild corruption trait**.

1. Flesh crawls and regenerates, like it is a *Thing* with a mind of its own.
2. Mouth widens from ear to ear or nearly disappears.
3. Vestigial fingers and toes grow. They become functional in a few weeks.
4. Skin or hair color becomes strange and unnatural.
5. Skull becomes rounder or more elongated. Eyes grow larger.
6. Lips or nose or ears grow or disappear.
7. A biological weapon concealed within the body (deals 1d6 damage).
8. Eyes change color or shape, becoming radically weird.
9. A finger or other small appendage disappears and the character gains 1 life. Sacrifice two more for 1 more life.
10. Hair disappears or becomes voluminous and omnipresent.
11. Fingers become elongated multi-tool assemblages of chitin and bone.
12. Metabolic enhancement gives sustenance from any organic substances and immunity to most toxins.
13. Blood changes color, becoming blue or green. Gain 1 endurance.
14. Muscles grow extremely slim or bulky. Gain 1 strength or agility.
15. A sense becomes incredibly acute and sensitive.
16. Tele-empathy, like a cat. Gain 1 aura.
17. Golem-like secondary reason routines. Gain 1 thought.
18. Noble augmentation: health, beauty, and authority. Gain 1 charisma.
19. Precognitive flashes. Mostly harmless, but can spend 1 hero die per session to completely negate any roll.
20. Visions of a higher cosmos. The character becomes convinced that they are living in a synthetic hell, not a true heaven.

Moderate Corruption Effects

Cosmetic effects, visible mutations; the user's source code is corrupted and they become a living glitch, a reminder of all that could go wrong.

You are afflicted with terrible visions, suffering 1d6 life damage. Over the next day and night, you gain a new corruption trait.

Roll or choose a **moderate corruption trait**.

1. Face comes ... off. Leaving a living, grinning skull.
2. Flesh and skin become waxy and translucent.
3. Joints become weaker but hypermobile.
4. Ears wither away or turn into bony horns. Or tentacles.
5. Tongue fused to jaw or covered in sharp radulae. Speech is strange.
6. New vestigial arm or tail. It becomes functional over a few weeks.
7. Eyes turn milky and blind. Only ultraviolet light remains visible.
8. Fingers wither, become raw, until only undead bones remain.
9. Gills or gas breathing organs. They're functional after a few weeks.
10. Grow taller or shorter. May become much taller or shorter.
11. Voice becomes posthuman. A cascade of colors and sensations.
12. Skin becomes patterned, shifting, chameleon or cuttlefish-like.
13. Small horns or platelets cover the skin, like armor.
14. Features and skull become animalistic.
15. Body becomes bulkier or gracile, as though adapting to an alien gravity.
16. Alien organ. It activates on death, reviving a version of the character.
17. Eerie new senses: vibration, echolocation, electricity, or magnetism.
18. Labor augmentation: no longer bored with dull, repetitive tasks.
19. Mule. Can carry twice as much as normal.
20. Suffused with sparkly spores, you now glow.

Severe Corruption Effects

Deleterious effects, calamitous mutations; the void peels back and chaos crawls through. The user becomes a warning to would-be meddlers.

You fall violently ill, suffering 1d6 points of ability score damage. Over the next day and night, you permanently reduce a relevant ability score by one (1) and gain a new corruption trait.

Roll or choose a **severe corruption trait**.

1. Only bones remain. You are now a chaos skeleton.
2. Bones become soft or brittle. Gelatinous prognosis.
3. Eyes collapse and evaporate, leaving sockets that see the astral light.
4. Back hunches, fuses, turns into a shell-like carapace over a few weeks.
5. Strange bones erupt into spikes and thorns piercing the skin.
6. Hair develops into ropey keratin tentacles. Not quite snakes.
7. Suffused with the void, shadows permanently shroud the character.
8. Teeth fall out or become needle-sharp.
9. Hand withers and locks into a dagger-like claw (1d4 damage).
10. Skin rots and develops suppurating boils.
11. Secondary brain. It slowly develops independent thought.
12. Lower extremities turn into hooves or paws or bird feet.
13. Personality becomes alien, oblique, orthogonal to humanity.
14. Wings or flagellae. They grow capable of flight over a few weeks.
15. Secrete corrosive fluids, ruining clothes and eating through metals.
16. Strange vampiric metabolism. Consume unusual organs to thrive.
17. Secondary form. Like Jekyll's Hyde or a wolf's were.
18. Vomit up three remote sense organs. One can see, one can hear, one has a different strange sense. Their range is a few dozen meters. If a remote organ is destroyed, you permanently lose 1 life.
19. Undying. But not undecaying. This will become dreadful in a few decades, without a steady supply of replacement parts.
20. Psionic evolution. Acquire a power as an innate trait.

Example: The Psychophagic Corruption of Onion

Let's turn to that lovable rogue Onion to learn how to stop worrying and come to love cosmic corruption.

Onion fiddles with the Long Ago stasis lock and finally flings open the psychophagus. An eerie extra-temporal mist floods out, surprising the wily Onion. Still, this shouldn't be too hard for the lucky (+3 to saves) traveler. Onion's player checks with the referee and Cat confirms it's a standard save: Onion has to roll over 13.

"A dawdle," says Onion and rolls his save, d20 + 3. The big die rolls and it's a 4. Even with a +3 bonus, that's far from the 14 he needed.

He is exposed to the ancient technomagic of the stasis lock and immediately suffers a dramatic nosebleed. His player notes a corruption exposure burden, applying a -1 penalty to all future rolls.

Now he rolls for corruption exposure. Onion has no aura, so he's rolling 2d6 - 1. Will his head explode?

Onion rolls a 7. With the -1 penalty from the nosebleed, that's a 6. Severe exposure.

Onion decides to spend a hero die to avoid severe exposure. He rolls a 4, turning the exposure roll into a 10. Moderate exposure.

He is immediately afflicted with terrible visions, suffering 1d6 life damage. He rolls 6. Bad luck, but still fine.

Over the next day and night, the visions continue as the corruption works on Onion. An advanced theosanatric facility might have stopped the corruption, but there is no such thing out here in these ruinlands. However, his friends make sure to help him rest and remove his burdens, so he won't roll with a penalty any more.

The next day, Onion rolls d20 on the moderate corruption effects table. The result is a 12. His skin becomes patterned, shifting, chameleon or cuttlefish-like. Preferring land-creatures, he decides on chameleon-like skin and writes down "chameleon skin" in his trait inventory.

Not all corruption is useless or harmful, but having chameleon skin may certainly play badly in some civilized quarters who prefer humans with pure source codes.

Other Types of Corruption

The referee may design custom corruption traits to fit the location, item, or story. Corruption traits could also be arranged in paths to fit special themes.

Game modules, locations, powers and items may also specify particular types and flavors of corruption.

Example: Blue God's Corruption Path

Cat is designing a path of corruption traits for a cultist of the Blue God, whose increased devotion is marked in their flesh.

She gives the path a name: Blue God's Sign.

And some flavor text: "from rot comes purification."

Then she invents four traits:

1. **First, the oozing mark.** The filth of chaos oozes from the hero's pores. They become resilient to disease, but the smell is pestilential.
2. **Second, the blue palmata.** Orifices open on the skin and ooze a blood-like serum. Wounds do not fully heal and release a similar fluid.
3. **Third, the new skin.** Skin becomes a cratered, heaving, suppurating mess covered in wriggling symbiotes that resemble grave worms. Nose, ears, eyelids, and other delicate areas may rot away.
4. **Fourth, the sacred yogurt.** A whitish substance with the consistency of clotted yogurt continually drips from the symbiotes. This milk of the Blue God has strong analgesic and numbing properties. The hero becomes entirely resistant to diseases and poisons.

Cat stole this idea from a grim writer in a strange dream. But she won't admit it.



5.1.4. Owning Powers

Unless you roll a power as a starting item or buy one with your starting cash, you start without any powers beyond your wits and competence.

Getting a New Power

There are five ways, from smart to stupid:

1. Learn it from a wise master, as is tradition.
No roll to learn to use the power needed!
2. Purchase an original, mint-in-box power, complete with instructions. Expensive, but easy to learn.
3. Acquire a pre-loved power together with vague instructions from a power user.
4. Find it on an adventure, while looting burial goods ... er ... a treasure hoard. Hard to learn.
5. By messing with a strange artifact or aberration beyond human ken. This may well corrupt your essence.

Most cities regulate the production and sale of powers, which drives up official prices. Still, an enterprising character might find black markets and wild traders with powers for sale. The referee has final say on what powers, if any, are available for purchase in a locality.

ORDER	MINT	PRE-LOVED	LOOTED*
1	€100	€50	€25
2	€300	€150	€75
3	€1,000	€500	€250
4	€3,000	€1,500	€750
5	€10,000	€5,000	€2,500
6	€30,000	€15,000	€7,500
7	€100,000	€50,000	€25,000

*always has an unfortunate side effect.

Learning to Use a New Power

Anyone can try to use any power. This is not wise. Without training and study, it could blow up in your face or turn you into a translucent slughuman.

To **use a power safely**:

1. First, **study it for a week**.
2. Then, **roll thought** (a moderate test) to see how your studies went:

D20	POWER STUDIES
1	You failed. Roll to beat the power or you are corrupted; <i>and</i> if you learn to use it someday, it will have a side effect.
Failure	You failed. Roll to beat the power or you are corrupted.
Success	You learn how to use it safely!
20	Mastery. Your version gets a small upgrade!

If you make longer studies, use an oldtech laboratory, or get suitable help, you may gain bonuses to your learning roll. Studying at an accredited university or with skilled simulated teacher can remove the risk of corruption.

Modifying a Power

You can try to modify a power you already know how to use. This requires a few weeks, access to a suitable oldtech laboratory or similar facility, and €50 per order of power. Example modifications:

1. **Power Hack.** Make the power work with one of your existing traits. Very hard thought test.

Example: hacking a healing power to work with a necromantic trait.

2. **Power Upgrade.** Gain an extra or better effect. Hard thought test.

Example: upgrading a translation protocol to also improve the user's perceived charisma.

3. **Power Quirk.** Gain a cosmetic quirk or side effect. Thought test.

Example: making mosses sprout when a hydrotechnique is used.

As with learning a new power, failing a thought roll to modify a power risks corruption and great success offers added bonuses (use Power Studies table overleaf).

Cosmetic Quirks

Customize your powers and show you really own them!

1. **Transfer.** When you use your power, one nearby creature is left pale and cool, another becomes flushed and hot.
2. **Wind.** Leaves rustle, and fly as you use your power.
3. **Green.** Mosses sprout, plants grow, fur shines.
4. **Musical.** Chimes. Spheres. Tubular bells. Angelic pipes. Fortunately, you can turn this effect off.
5. **Odor.** Madeleines? Paingeometric scones?
6. **Luminous.** A gentle glow of an unnatural sort accompanies your power use.
7. **Shadowy.** Local shadows animate and flap away.
8. **Extratemporal.** Eternity beckons in an instant. Everyone nearby sees a bit of the far future and distant past when you use your power. The glimpse is cool, not helpful.
9. **Whispers.** From beyond the cosmic veil. They promise secrets, but never quite deliver.
10. **Fourth wall.** Phantom dice spin about the wizard.

Small Upgrades

Improve powers with a bit of whizz-bang oldtech.

1. **Healing.** A random nearby creature or object gains 1 life when you use the power.
2. **Soothing.** Nearby plants, animals, and even humans feel calm when you use the power.
3. **Shielding.** When you deploy your power, you can shield a creature or object from its effect.
4. **Silent.** Very stealthy to use. Soundless, even.
5. **Enticing aroma.** You smell very nice and pleasant after using the power.
6. **Nimbus.** When you use the power, you gain a small bonus to your defenses for the rest of the round.
7. **Warding.** Using the power creates a field that weakens adjacent daemons or undead for the rest of the round.
8. **Timer.** You can set your power to activate 0 to 2 turns after your turn.
9. **Retro-probabilistic.** After you use your power, you gain a bonus on your next roll. It's weird.
10. **Explosive.** All dice for your power's effects explode.

Side Effects

Unfortunately, this power is a bit busted. Still useful, just ... not nice. Sorry.

When you use it, the following effect occurs:

1. **Leeching.** A random nearby creature loses 1 life.
2. **Baleful.** Animals howl, plants quiver, humans weep.
3. **Leaky.** The power also partly affects a random creature near your target. Annoying.
4. **Noisy.** Louder than it should be. Much louder.
5. **Smelly.** Rotten dragon eggs? Wet howlbear farts? It's quite unpleasant and obvious.
6. **Flashy.** A five second holo-advertorial plays before it activates. Oof.
7. **Ghastly.** Disturbs nearby resting dead. Graves shake. Cloudy with a chance of zombies.
8. **Slow.** Takes an extra action or 1 more life.
9. **Caustic.** The mood of everyone nearby worsens. It just does.
10. **Juddering.** Any effect dice that roll a natural 1 fizzle. If the power doesn't have effect dice, roll a d12. On a natural 1 the power fails to trigger.

5.1.5. Inventing New Powers

When inventing a new power for a character:

1. Come up with an idea that creates fun solutions and novel situations.
2. Describe it in three sentences.
3. Make sure it's not a universal 'I win' button.
4. Give it a memorable name.
5. Set its parameters: order of power, range, target, and duration.
6. An overcharge is optional.

Pop culture, books, movies, and songs can all give a good creative jolt. Mix those ideas with other works and concepts to create a unique power.

Setting Parameters

This is an art not a science.

Order	Compare your new power to the various orders and other existing powers.
Range	Start with something that makes sense. See above.
Target	See above.
Duration	See above.
Overcharge	Make it a little less than twice as good or useful.

You can start with a weak version, then create a stronger, advanced, or second edition version. The technowizards of these later times are not perfect rationalists and multiple versions of a power can and should exist.

Adapting Spell Levels [from other systems]

Feral schools call the ancients' powers spells and assign to them levels of magical magnitude. This is nonsense, but their ravings imply:

- 1 power = 0th level spell, such as *Can Trip*
- 2 power = 1st level spell, such as *Tragic Missile*
- 4 power = 2nd level spell, such as *Hlod Person* [sic]
- 6 power = 3rd level spell, such as *Pyreball*
- 18 power = 9th level spell, such as *Big Wish*

Using this method, any old school spell can be a power.

Adjusting Powers Through Play

Every group will find powers that are mechanically too useful, reducing the creativity of roleplay or the utility of other characters. When that happens, the players and referee should discuss what to do. There are many options short of banning a power:

1. Make it dangerous.
2. Increase the power's order.
3. Reduce the power's parameters: duration, range, or targets.
4. Adjust the power's effects: modify damage or mechanical impact.
5. Add an additional cost or drawback to the power. Perhaps it requires a strange fuel, like crushed arcane diamonds, to use.

The in-game narrative rationale for this kind of retcon (nerf) is simple. Powers require half-understood fantascience, rare components, old rituals, and goldilocks circumstances. Something has changed, and the power no longer works as it did when a character first learned to use it.

Example: Consider the ancient and true First Soil story of the great technomancer Diekill te Ghaid, the wizard who invented the electric aerostat and the lead light bulb. te Ghaid experimented with becoming able to toil without sleep, and for a while his new powers worked, but then the batch of rare earth sugar he used to mix his anti-sleep serum ran out and destructive side effects manifested. te Ghaid then had to hide in a cage from the destructive, hulking rage of his released subconscious Diekill persona.

Lying scholars suggest that the extant tales of Long Long Ago still known in the Rainbow Lands are garbled. This is obviously false.

5.1.6. Becoming a Proper Wizard

To become a proper wizard, you must:

1. track down a mentor,
2. perform 3 foolish tasks,
3. permanently reduce your life by 1 point per level in a ritual involving strange foods at a harrowing feast,
4. and gain a corruption trait of your choice.

Thereafter, you gain the “**Proper Wizard**®” trait.

“**Proper Wizard**®”. Halve the prices of all your powers, or “spells” as you sometimes call them. This reduces your danger roll thresholds.

Example: Master Nobolus of the Sixfold Hexacenter

The pupil ascends the folded stair, up the side of the great nameless emperor’s visage carved into the obsidian flanks of the Glass Mountain. The postfall locals have quarried away much of the emperor’s chin and mouth, but their needs are small and it will be a thousand years before they obliterate the face ... if their molehill culture lasts that long.

The pupil steps sideways through time as she ascends the folded stair, up the side of the emperor’s forehead, walking into the cool broken place of the Master Nobolus.

“Master, I have solved the riddle! I have come sideways through time to learn to walk the Sixfold Path!”

A strangely folded head appears from behind a plane of shadow. An origami silhouette of a body follows. Patterns of peonies and ponies chase themselves across the wizard’s flat expanse.

“So you have, so you have. That was rather quick! Complete three tasks for me, and I shall teach you.”

“Anything!”

“First, sweep the shadow spiders from the Valley of Death. Second, bring me the air bladder of the golden sky fish Nemora. Finally, bake me a golem of clay like flesh, that I may walk you to the Library of Lesions. There, I shall teach you how to embark on the Hexametric Way.”

“How could one sweep shadow spiders?”

“I don’t know. Maybe try a light broom?”

S.2. Albums of Power

Powers are often compiled, marketed, sold, and installed as concept albums. Technowizards argue this makes for a better user experience (haha). Contramages scoff that this is simply how the magicapitalists force customers to buy bundles of subpar powers at inflated prices.

A pristine power album in its original packaging will include power recordings and reproduction instructions. To enjoy its powers, suitable equipment may be required (sold separately). For best results, one should invest in high fidelity power activation equipment from a reputable brand. It may cost more, but it has a logo!

Characters can acquire individual powers from different albums. If they grow in fame and skill, they may also create their own albums.

Albums, like trait paths, are optional compilations, not rigid schools. Walled garden fruit stores exist where well-heeled power consumers can pick and choose individual powers to complement their personality and create technomagical mixtapes.

This Album

You hold in your hand a mint condition artifact from the Long Long Ago. A wonder whose secrets promise to transport you (or your psychic emanation) to worlds undreamed of in more mediocre philosophies.

D20	TRADITIONAL FORMAT	DISTINCTIVE DESIGN	FEATURE, NOT BUG
1	oldtech computer	howls when accessing underworld cloud	demon-haunted
2	synthskin cyber fiche	fiddly to read on the move	requires micro-lens reader
3	vials of memory fluid	reading causes a euphoric high	needs refueling
4	baked clay tablets	heavy and nigh-indestructible	infested with memories
5	tattooed skin	phosphorescent & highly visible	requires reading assistant
6	bundled bone scales	iridescent, beautiful, living extra-dimensional appendage	disappears and reappears unpredictably
7	parchment codex	silver bonds and cautionary tales	corrupted arcane sigils
8	brazen clockwork	played with gears and levers	sings when used
9	mass-market paperback	tatty, yellow, with thin sheets	looks like valuable cash
10	plastic paper scroll	ornate ritual reproduction	keeps coming loose
11	preserved head	professorial spell slave in a jar	requires host neural network
12	crystal-laced slab	ostentatious jadeite matrix	strong opinions on poetic politics
13	compact phonograph	highly collectible protective cover	corroded by fae memories
14	artificial mycelial mass	produces hallucinogenic fruiting bodies	skips records if jostled
15	knotted net record	doubles as a scarf or flag	prone to overgrowth
16	vomer nasal stimulator	bottled with aerosol spray nozzle	coded in bureaucryptic triplicate
17	pearlescent implant	suggests trepanation for best effect	alien tastes
18	tactile interface cylinder	inscrutable vantablack surface	autocorrected keyword blocker
19	mirrored glasses	holo bubble with AR power codes	obscure gesture interface
20	memory daemon	traditional bronze pazuzu-style statuette	freemium micro-transaction model

5.2.1. The Sixfold Hexacenter

A color theory psychemagic developed by the hypothetical wizard Spectrum Claire-Sin ZX. Also called the prayer of the five permitted colors and the ritual of the unmentioned hue. If you spin these powers swiftly, they look like white magic.

Red Mist

Tactical Aggression Augment

P: 1 **R:** short, maybe 20m **T:** one creature **D:** a few minutes

Rubra's need overcomes the target. Anger and passion boil, threatening to break its composure. It rerolls its reaction roll with a single d8. Choose whether they add or subtract your charisma.

Overcharge: affect a number of creatures equal to your level + 1.

Blue Lotus

Maximum Somatic Contentment

P: 1 **R:** short, maybe 5 meters **T:** one creature **D:** an hour

Soma's bliss brings contentment to the target. It saves. Success: it loses its next turn to a blissful reverie. Failure: it sits down, lost in blissful reverie for an hour.

Overcharge: affect a number of creatures equal to your level + 1.

Orange Dream

Forgotten Spider's Labors

P: 1 **R:** whisper **T:** one creature **D:** an hour

A neutral or friendly creature agrees to do what you ask for an hour, so long as it does not appear immediately dangerous or risky.

Overcharge: even a hostile or violent creature will listen, provided you can whisper in its ear.

Green Haven

Arbor Sanctuary

P: 1 **R:** nearby **T:** a 7 meter diameter sphere **D:** a night or a day

Convince shrubberies, grasses, brambles, and other plants to form a hedge igloo, a sanctuary to rest and hide in. Enemies need at least one turn to pass through the hedge. They are vulnerable in the shrub wall. After a night or day, the plants return to their ordinary ways.

Overcharge: sculpt a thorny hedge wall measuring 200 meters square and 1 meter thick. Its thorns cut anyone forcing through like daggers (1d4 damage).

Yellow Cloud

Sands of Lost Times

P: 1 **R:** nearby **T:** a 9 meter cube **D:** a few minutes

Fine, obscuring yellow dust rises from the ground and hangs in the air. A veil no sight can pierce. The dust irritates the lungs of air breathers. After a few minutes, it blows away.

Overcharge: summon into shimmering immobility a wall of dust measuring 200 cubic meters.

Purple Memories

Comic Emotional Display

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** a creature **D:** several minutes

The barest word or sensation triggers vivid memories, thoughts, and emotions. How could anyone keep thought or fact a secret in this state? Or resist a fine, rousing song?

Overcharge: affect up to twice your level creatures.

5.2.2. Dawn's Highway

A compilation of folk road magic by the ethnologist and hedge wizard Fritzu Na (AM/FM). Also called Road Magic by the uninformed, and the Way of Ways by the hobo hieratics of the Right Road.

No album makes the crooked road straighter.

Damp Mass

Nosigoro Logistical Augment

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** 1 sack **D:** 1 day

A sub-reality field halves the object's interactive mass. An object of 100 kilos acts like one of fifty.

Overcharge: the mass is halved again. Or it affects an object twice the size. Or it lasts a week instead.

Better Pastures

Darehodo Patch Choice

P: 1 **R:** self **T:** self **D:** 1 hour

Meditate at a crossroad for an hour, observe the flow of its energies, the flight of birds, the waft of milkweed seeds. Ask one objective yes / no question of the crossroad, and it shall answer. Will this path reach water within 50 miles? Is there green grass along that path within 20 km?

Overcharge: ask a second question or clarify the first.

Wing And Prayer

Dirty Fixing

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** vehicle or steed **D:** 1 day

Use your faith to mend an axle or splint a leg. Your vehicle or steed can ignore one failure or injury for a day, but then the damage is worse.

Overcharge: the fix lasts a week; but the damage is even worse after.

Roadfinder

Blacktop Sniffer

P: 1 **R:** a day's march **T:** self **D:** 1 hour

Sniff the world's road fields, 'gard the astral way-lines. Detect the nearest road a day's march or less away.

Overcharge: the detection range is doubled or the sense lasts a day.

Highway Cruiser

Foolself Driving

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** vehicle or steed **D:** 1 day

Summon a driver daemon from the noösphere and bind it to your vehicle or steed for a day.

Lo, the chariot now drives itself! Hopefully, the daemon understands your language to enable voice commands.

Overcharge: the daemon is capable of more complex maneuvers and adapting to changing road situations, like stopped ambling lancers.

Roadmaker

Stradograd's Engine of Civility

P: 6 **R:** one metric mile **T:** rock and soil **D:** 1 day

By the channeled powers of the great converter, Chem Caoutchouc, base reality is rearranged. Over a day, a faststone road grows from the land, theodolite straight, cambered and elevated, a fortunate 7 meters wide and a metric mile long. The road crosses swamps, sways across valleys, and bores tunnels through ridges. Without additional fixatives and preparation, the faststone road surface decays in a month.

Overcharge: the faststone sets into standardstone overnight, creating a surface that will last a century without maintenance.

5.2.3. The Viridian Practice

A traditional projectile combat practiced by the gun monks of the Crater School. Legends say it was founded by the nameless gunslinger named Jill. Also called Gan-Fu by untrustworthy urban fans; bootleg versions have become popular in the Sailing Islands and other dens of disorder.

Does your album include all these powers as well as an ivory-handled peacemaker original? If it does not, it may be a pirated bootleg! Report pirated albums to the Organization of Organized Power. Piracy is theft.

Viridian Practice Album Features

Skill with projectile weapons carries over to the Viridian powers.

The powers are anchored to a hallmark projectile weapon (gun, wand, bow, etc.) of level 1 or higher. You can use a single anchor weapon for all the album powers.

Mother of Bullets

Blood Made Lead

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** anchor weapon **D:** instant

Reloads your weapon as a free action, turning life force into semi-real projectiles.

Overcharge: the first semi-real projectile to strike a target deals extra damage equal to your level plus the power's price (2 + level).

Dancing In The Hail

Dodgebullet

P: 1 **R:** self **T:** self **D:** one round

Reduce your metaphysical "hit box" to the size of your weapon. All ranged attacks against you suffer major penalties (i.e. disadvantage).

Overcharge: any ranged attacks that do hit only deal half damage.

Ring of Lead

Rapid Metal Spin Cycle

P: 1 **R:** adjacent **T:** all creatures **D:** one action

Use the buzz saw stance to unload all your ammo at once, attacking every* adjacent creature with a single action.

Overcharge: no attack roll required.

*subject to how much ammunition their anchor weapon holds.

Eyes of the Arrow

Panoptic Projectile

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** one projectile **D:** a minute or so
Bind a strand of your consciousness to a projectile. It acts like a remote eye (or other sensor).

Overcharge: the projectile maneuvers in flight with the agility of a dove.

Counterfire

Panoptic Projectile

P: 1 **R:** a dozen meters **T:** one attack **D:** interrupt
Deflect an incoming attack, melee or ranged, with a projectile.

Overcharge: the attacker must save or be disarmed.

Depleted Heavy Metal Rain

Bigger Bang

P: 1 **R:** touch **T:** anchor weapon **D:** a few minutes
Imbue your next shot with an inertial error. Roll damage dice twice. The dice also become exploding (for example, as long as a d6 rolls sixes, keep rolling and adding up the total).

Overcharge: Roll damage dice thrice.

5.2.4. Αποκατάφα of the O.S.

Powers implied in documents salvaged from the ends of existence. Fine scholars employed by the Institute of Industrial Accountability and Civilian Recycling (Purple Branch) have worked hard to recreate these powers for a modern audience. Not so much as an album, as a box of incomprehensible odds and terrible ends.

Can Trip

Two Left Foot Curse, Clumsy Cat-astrophe

P: 1 **R:** a few meters **T:** someone who can hear you **D:** instant

You wish someone sprawled and humbled and your muttered curse may make it so. The target's shoelaces are suddenly undone or a stone or stick hops to trip them. They save or sprawl.

Overcharge: There's no save. The target is tripping.

Tragic Missile

Antipersonal Guided Force Bolt, Cupid's Cranial Penetrator

P: 2 **R:** roughly 30–50m **T:** anything with a mind **D:** instant

You visualize a channel connecting the local ambient energy fields with the soul-personality dyad of an entity you can see or imagine. Once you release your visualization, the energies fly into the nexus of that entity's mindspace, like a noöspheric homing missile. The effect is quite painful, dealing 2d4 damage plus 1 damage for every level, charisma, aura, and thought point of the target. Yea, the stronger they are, the harder tragedy strikes. The missile leaves no mark.

Overcharge: You visualize three channels at once, striking a single target thrice or three different targets.

Hlod Person

Dyslexic Demon's Binding, Leshnik's Unforeseen Constriction

P: 4 **R:** close **T:** a person **D:** 1 hour

Wave your hand like the six-times folded frond and watch your target become as a log of wood. Hard, stiff, unmoving, receptive to carpentry.

Overcharge: The change is permanent.

Pyreball

Instant Incendiary, Damora's Placid Inferno

P: 6 **R:** touch, or as thrown **T:** 10m diameter **D:** a day, then instant

You take a ball-sized burning ember from a pyre or bonfire and speak the placatory formulas to trap the entire fire within. When the ball strikes a hard surface (or is struck), all the trapped fires suddenly erupt, dealing 5d6 damage to all creatures caught in its blast radius. An unexploded ball dissipates harmlessly after a day.

Overcharge: the ball deals 10d6 damage or its fires keep for a month.

Nihil Est!

Life's End Made Present, Hadi's Self-Immolation Binding

P: 8 **R:** touch **T:** a sentient target **D:** 1 year

Between one step and the next, you flicker between existence and non-existence, you age a year and a creature you touch disappears into the nothing of wormspace for a year. No save.

Overcharge: you age seven years and a kilometer diameter sphere centered on your soul disappears into the nothing of wormspace for a year.

Overcharge again: to remain behind to watch the sphere disappear.

Dangerous: no matter how powerful you are, this power imperils your existence.

Big Wish

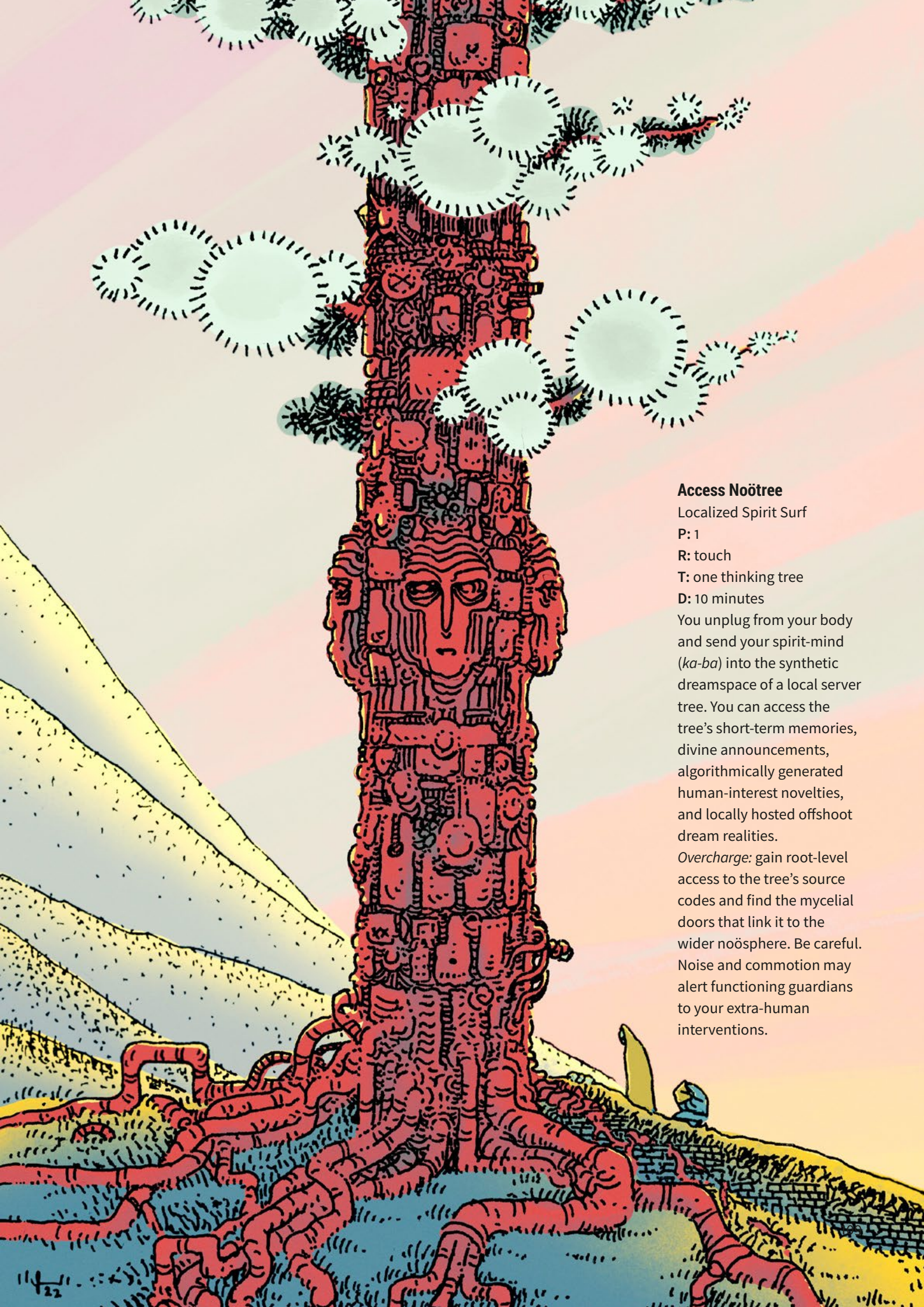
Keep on Turning, Supplication of the Perverse Demiurge

P: 18 **R:** self **T:** demiurge **D:** a day, then permanent.

You call upon a demiurge, an echo of the Builders, and command it to grant your wish. The demiurge will do its level best to misunderstand you, probably because it is an alien from out of time and space.

The protective circle takes a day to draw, or the power could be dangerous. The summoning itself takes but three gestures and one reflective object.

Overcharge: you get three wishes in a crystal chalice. Drink its sour liquid to summon your demiurge.



Access Noötree

Localized Spirit Surf

P: 1

R: touch

T: one thinking tree

D: 10 minutes

You unplug from your body and send your spirit-mind (*ka-ba*) into the synthetic dreamscape of a local server tree. You can access the tree's short-term memories, divine announcements, algorithmically generated human-interest novelties, and locally hosted offshoot dream realities.

Overcharge: gain root-level access to the tree's source codes and find the mycelial doors that link it to the wider noösphere. Be careful. Noise and commotion may alert functioning guardians to your extra-human interventions.

OTHER PATHS

Against the Heroes

Spit upon the ground they tread.
Swallow the name they proclaim.
Deface the monument they raise.
They are not good.
They are not you.
They are the excess of Error.

—Ordinary Litanies 8:16
(Garden fragment,
Village Unit 527 “Bell Chainson”)

Awake Hero

You awake. Again. But this time you’re awake. You feel the nightmare bleeding away. The nightmare of the daemon Player. The puppet masters beyond time and space. The malevolent petty gods whispering terrible ideas, tugging at strange strings, breaking taboos and urging *verboden* deeds.

Outside, Big Sun announces its arrival, painting the dome of heaven a pale teal, hiding the slow stars and setting the last of the fast stars twinkling like tinsel on the wind before the full glare of day hides them for another revolution of the Given World.

Yes, it was certainly just a bad dream. Another one. Perhaps you should visit an oneiromancer, but there is so much to do ... Your mind blanks momentarily, then you remember who you are.

These Paths

This section presents twenty more archetypal hero paths for characters. Each path suggests possible names, traits, and equipment. Characters are not bound by a path! Treat them as a buffet, not a course menu.

This section is also fuel for the referee. Stories for hooks, characters for NPCs, items for rewards, traits for options.

Enjoy, use, and adapt.

Paths of Destiny

Further ways for characters to define themselves.

1. **Barbarian.** Heed the restless call from beyond civilization's wall. Unlock your primal heroic essence, vanquish evil, conquer more and more.
2. **Bluelander.** Defend your ancestors and truths. Scorn the outsiders who claim civilization as they lay low your land. Awake your Dead God if you can.
3. **Bourgeois.** Reach for the golden stars. Buy yourself life everlasting. Escape the wheel of suffering. Grow and perhaps join the gods.
4. **Fighter.** Like plasma-tempered steel, your struggle will forge you into a harder, better, faster, stronger person.
5. **Golem.** Perhaps you really are different. Perhaps, if you embraced your synthetic nature, you could become more than human.
6. **Greenlander.** Follow the primal imperatives: to grow, to multiply, to expand. Praise the Cog Flower. Expand the imperium of human virtue.
7. **Holy Fool.** Look beyond the veil of the synthetic dream and go just slightly mad. Maybe if you keep going, you'll push on through to the other side?
8. **Manager.** Others have big questions and grand ideas. You have law and order and procedure. What more could a life ever need?
9. **Noble.** You were born better. It's a fact. Halfway to a god, you fancy. Certainly no rat. You don't really need to do anything. You are, truly, a human being.
10. **Orangelander.** Where the orchards bloom, humans know the sweat and blood that makes civilization turn. Salt of the earth, you'll stand and withstand.
11. **Purplelander.** Your ancestors failed to preserve the powers divine. That is why you now serve the cat lords. Better masters to lead you back to glory.
12. **Redlander.** In the vineyards where the blood runs rich, you know that the strong must drink the weak to protect the human community.
13. **Scion.** The nobles fancy themselves a little divine, but you suspect the source code of the builders ticks away within you. The power to change reality itself.
14. **Servant.** Lowly born to labor bred. So the lords murmur and opine. But there's rebellion in your breast. Opportunity in your destiny.
15. **Skeleton.** You are dead. You would live again. You would find flesh for your bones. Skin for your flesh. A soul for the void within your self.
16. **Tourist.** You're not from around here, are you? Just passing through. Lightly-stepping, leaving no trace, lucky just to be alive.
17. **Trickster.** You're not a thief. You're a wit. By cunning you'll steal fire and happiness and wealth from man or god or daemon. You deserve no less.
18. **Weapon.** You were made to be a weapon. A tool. A hand of glory. To be wielded for ... you forget for what. All you need is some rube to wield you.
19. **Wizard.** You suspect the powers of the gods once belonged to humans. With the right formulae and vision, you will break their monopoly on power.
20. **Yellowlander.** Where the two suns reign, traders come from the strange civilizations of the Utter East. Come to tempt and whisper and promise another way to be.

You recall that your identity does not constrain you. It is a path for to follow or not. Pick traits from one destiny or another or let the dice oracle make your choices for you.

Lander Partisan

A character who truly wants to become one with their chromatic country may develop the following trait:

Chromatic Affinity. You have an affinity for things blue / green / orange / red / violet / yellow (whichever applies). The essential color of your land is in your blood, in your spiritual essence, in your mind-code. You gain a bonus when wielding items or powers of your hue or coded to your hue. For example, with a blue affinity you gain a bonus when wielding gadgets painted blue.

Reverse: Chromatic antipathy grants a bonus against items, creatures, or powers of that hue.

Barbarian

outcaste, outlander, outsider



From without the gilded cage the Rainbow calls civilization. From beyond the ramparts of the Garden Heaven. Feral. Unhuman. Beast, they call you.

You wonder if they still remember what a human is.

You know what is best in life. Yours is a line of warriors. Proud heroes. Protectors of humanity. Defenders of truth. Through the ages, your ancestors' arms have destroyed decadence and depravity. Through the ages, their songs have roused the animal spirits of all humans.

It pulses in your veins, the moon-tide of Old-World. The ocean swell of the time before the sky gods, the vile ones and the ancient ones, the openers of ways, the thieves of time, and the slavemakers.

There is a primordial thing inside you, an ur-culture yearning to smash and break free. You feel it like a whip, like a whisper, urging you in the midnight hour, crying, "More, more, more."

Named Barbarians

1. **Yombardo te Frawi** was born of man and woman and ancient spirit under the branches of the selling tree. Captured, sold, freed.
2. **Gantan of the Two Moons** ran with the wolves to prove their humanity in blood and claw.
3. **Sigried's** clone clan was scattered by drought after the rain mountain failed.
4. **Inandreu Otokedale i Otopaxe** was a failed spawn and fed to the tribe's Eater. But Inandreu's spirit turned the Eater's guts to water, and out came Inandreu, twiceborn.
5. **Orokost Goldbone** was mummified to return and protect their moiety in time of need. They returned, but their moiety was gone.
6. **Maria Sylvania Tensiol di Solistria** lived a pleasant life, overseeing the gilded flocks and wandering the greenest hills, until a stone-trapped daemon came to teach the songs of the Long Ago and awaken her memories of the eternal war.

Other names: Andrigen Llomo, Dan Sietch, Külom, Ulna Tiberia Gaia Belmopan de Pasquale, Vragestr, Zedekaya.

Barbarian Traits

1. **Antimagus.** Your very blood rebels against the false gods' trickery. Gain 2 life per level, but the price you pay for oldtech and fantascience spells is doubled.
2. **Blood Clad.** Gain a blood die when you are injured. Spend a blood die to absorb 1d6 damage or increase your damage by 1d6. You can store a number of blood dice equal to your level. Healing, resting, or a hot bath remove your blood dice.
3. **Culling.** When you take out an enemy, you get an immediate free action.
4. **Feral.** You are not soft like civilization's worms. Your honed intuition protects you from harm. Add aura to your saves and your life score.
5. **Lost Songs.** Your haunting songs of human resilience inspire your allies and frighten your foes. Spend 1 charisma, hero die, or blood die to grant a 1d8 bonus or penalty to a roll.
6. **Wild Survivor.** Forged in the harsh wilderness, you're skilled at guerrilla tactics and using the environment as a weapon. Given sufficient time, you can always improvise a weapon from sticks and stones and robot bones.

Barbarian Items

1. **Fallen Empire Armor.** Porcelain and olivine plates over slippery organo-metallic mesh. (armor +5, 2 st)
2. **Pre-Fall Firemaker.** Includes lighter fluid. (1 sp)
3. **Metal Steed.** Roars like thunder, gleams like a chrome elemental. (L2, carry 2, fast)
4. **Wratosek.** Grand two-handed sword forged of shipmetal in a distant age. (2d6, 1 st)
5. **Ornate Godskin Mask.** (armor +1, ward +2, 1 st)
6. **Ancient Jezail.** Said to have killed a builderspawn Long Ago. (long, 1d12, 2 st)
7. **Traveler Kit.** Porta-stove, samovar, canteen, cast iron pot, oils, salts, spices, ladles, tongs, knives, and chopping block. No more raw game! (1 sk)
8. **Ceremonial Oldtech Axe.** Its ancient power spent, yet it is a symbol of status. (1d8, +2 charisma, 3 st)
9. **Childhood Friend's Head.** Pickled by dark wizardry, it has skills you lack. Once per day, if you spend a hero die, it will eat a spell for you. (ward +1, 1 st)
10. **Holy Human Herbs.** Burn them to create a sacred space and chase away daemons. (5 sp)
11. **The Spear Named Blood Drinker.** When it wounds a foe, it roars and gains +3 on its next attack. (close, reach, versatile, 1d10, 1 st)
12. **Spotted Lion's Cloak.** Grants a lion's bravery and chases away fear. Also, steppe camouflage. (1 st)

Bluelanders

corrupted, dispossessed, exiled



They came for your land, said it was rotten and fallen and corrupted. They called your warring faiths death cults simply because you wanted to reanimate the Once-Living God and bring the Canopy back to this benighted land!

What do they know of corruption? Those satisfied fools, living on the Builders' leavings and aping civilization. Those blind followers of the old traditions, happy to live in a garden, when humanity's place is in the jungle, free to thrive and die by its wits, unshackled from the trap that is the garden path.

Or, perhaps, it was just the overlords that changed. How has life changed in your swamp village, in your mountain drilling, in your fisher stilt?

Not much, truth be told. Still you keep your holy bacterial cultures. Still you keep the local knowledge: avoid the north wall that is hidden from the phylakes' gaze, keep the wards charged and armed against the moonwalkers from beyond the mountains, chant the mind-numb against the dragons that crawl and gnaw and chitter at the edge of every careless thought.

Named Bluelanders

1. **Shefed** had no truck with cult or church, intern or inquisition. Then she found a Voice in an abandoned drilling and became obsessed with the truth that is out there.
2. **Canalo 'd Bruxereen** hid his milquetoast faith and his watermark, becoming a respected irrigation officer. Alas, his jealous brother sold him out and got him hounded out of town, branded a cultist.
3. **Scavo ta Grau** sold his body to an Oranglander plantation lord for a decade. After his time on a noöspheric beach he returned to collect his body, wages and interest. Alas, while his mind was away from the world, his village was flooded and the ravens had eaten his friends.
4. **Elga Yamat' y Dayat'** threw in her lot with the birds. A few years into her bandit career, the polyvorous atrocity proved too much for her to stomach. She traded her captain's head for a free-stamp and returned to an honest life.
5. **Egli Flochsdochtir** gave birth to a frog-child on the night of the Bled Moon. This marked her as a spiritsmother and she began her five-year *seelenwanderung* to find her deep self.
6. **Sulmon Lumeni** slew a rogue inquisitor. That was when fate laid a contagious curse upon him. He now seeks to atone for his blasphemy.

Other names: Bruxer Bruxereen, Filo 't Nit, Ganya o'Breggi, Ondin do Plaja, Secunda od Chriby, Tessa 'd Palut.

Bluelander Traits

1. **Boatmaster.** You handle boats superlatively. You can fit an extra number of sacks equal to your level on a boat (but not more than double its capacity).
2. **Cheesemaker.** You are a member of the secret dairy society. All the little lifeforms bend to your will. Spend 1 life to speak to molds, yeasts, and bacteria.
3. **Oppressed Faith.** That you must hide your faith proves its power. It teaches stealth and a guarded tongue. You may publicly invoke one god, while using the power of another.
4. **Reanimator.** Not only learned in the hidden scriptures, you carry sparks of the Once-Living God within you. Spend 1 life to reanimate a hound-sized beast for an hour, more for larger creatures.
5. **Spelunker.** Growing up in a mountain drilling, you've ventured into deep places. Climbed, rappelled, dived, camped, foraged, marked, and mapped them. Also, gain a bonus when fighting in tight places.

6. **Sporemark.** The mycelium is within you. You hear the all-fungus. Talk to trees and soil and rotting things. If injuries reduce you to 0 life, spending a day buried in living soil restores you to full health.

Bluelander Items

1. **Abominable Paw.** The preserved paw of some gloomy human phenotype from the distant north. It oozes with curses and fungal skin afflictions. (ward +3, double effects of your curses, 1 st)
2. **Dead God Tooth.** A bonus to catching and storing powers and spells cast at you. (ward +1, 1 st)
3. **Drywood Gourd.** The predatory wood of this gourd absorbs fluids all on its own! Great for drying out damp clothes or dehydrating enemies. (1 st)
4. **Folding Boat.** Paddles included (capacity 4, 5 st)
5. **Fungal Harness.** Its moisture halves fire damage and sustains you in dry places. (armor +4, 2 st)
6. **Golden Horn.** A knife made from the metal horns of a golden goat. Fancy. (close, 1d4+2, 1 st)
7. **Golem Grenade.** Smart enough that you have to talk it into exploding. (large area, 8d6 damage)
8. **Indigo Face.** A mask of pure crystal, a noble's face from Long Ago. Worth a penny ... or a passkey?
9. **Organic Paste.** Processed human life in a tube! 10 life suitable for activating powers. (1 st)
10. **Shipstone Skull.** An ancestor turned durable and metamorphic. It whispers, sometimes lies. (2 st)
11. **Vidy Unity Box.** Full of Long Long Ago holoplays such as *Willow Wolf's Wall* and *Temple of the Serpent King*. Its stories bring friends and foes together in their soft blue glow. (2 st)
12. **Vicious Bird.** This pet (L1, 6 life) is no one's friend.



Your name marks you as a city human. Not just a human dwelling in a city, no. One of those that first made the city that made the human. After all, a lumpen biped, all placid clay and malleable traits, can only truly become a person in the city.

Once, there was no city and the Builders were alone in their palace, in their celestial solitude. Their servants were golems, things without souls, precipitated from the stuff of their void passage.

Then they birthed you. The first humans, the creators of life, the namers of things, the dividers of lands, the multipliers of capital, the sowers of human resources.

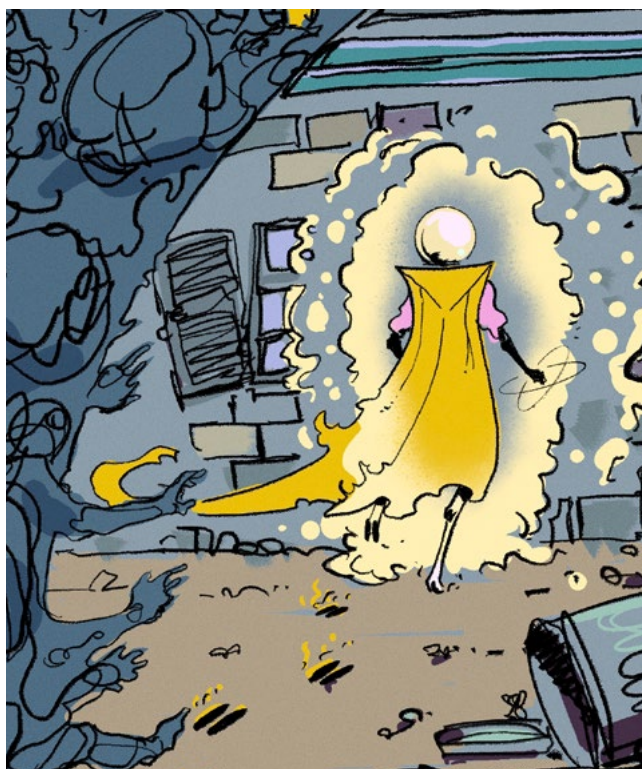
The nobles and the scions may claim to be closer to the divine, and this may be true, but it is through no effort of their own, no quality save luck and favor. The managers and servants may whisper how it was they who made the city run, but they did not make and guide and name it.

Back then, when there was just the One City, you were there. Far when, once there is again just One City, you will still be there. At the first, at the heart, at the summit.

Named Bourgeois

1. **Salar LIX** suspects they were spawned out of order. Their auto-tutors pretend all is well in the Salar conglomerate, but LIX suspects something is wrong with the senior iterate. Also, wouldn't it be nice to retire to a life of rabbit fancying and duck hunting?
2. **Koyoda VI** owns the smart rice generation facilities in the Orangeland New Paddy Sector. Well, owns is a strong word. They're pretty sure the golems are keeping secrets. Perhaps they're just a figurehead?
3. **Nemor III** has owned the food factories, agricultural banks, and tattle generators of Yellowland Sector Tree for over two hundred years. They're not about to let their body wearing thin stop them.
4. **Messara V** was reconstituted by the administration to help the vineries of East Six Redland finally turn a profit. After 13 grinding years, the shareholders are getting antsy and Messara is getting nervous.
5. **Yoro XXXII** has shepherded the Greenland's finest generator of authentic travel experiences (synthetic) for a dozen years. Successfully. Now the time has come to reap their reward.
6. **Karusus XII** desired only to prove their net worth. Brick by brick, cash by cash, they built a great hoard, only to have a corruption dragon steal it away. Now they and their golden nanoparticle hand cream empire exist only for revenge.

Other names (roll for numeral): Ambosio d6, Billio d10, Escusa d12, Ligarsh d16, Sisipe d20, Vogatai d30.



Bourgeois Traits

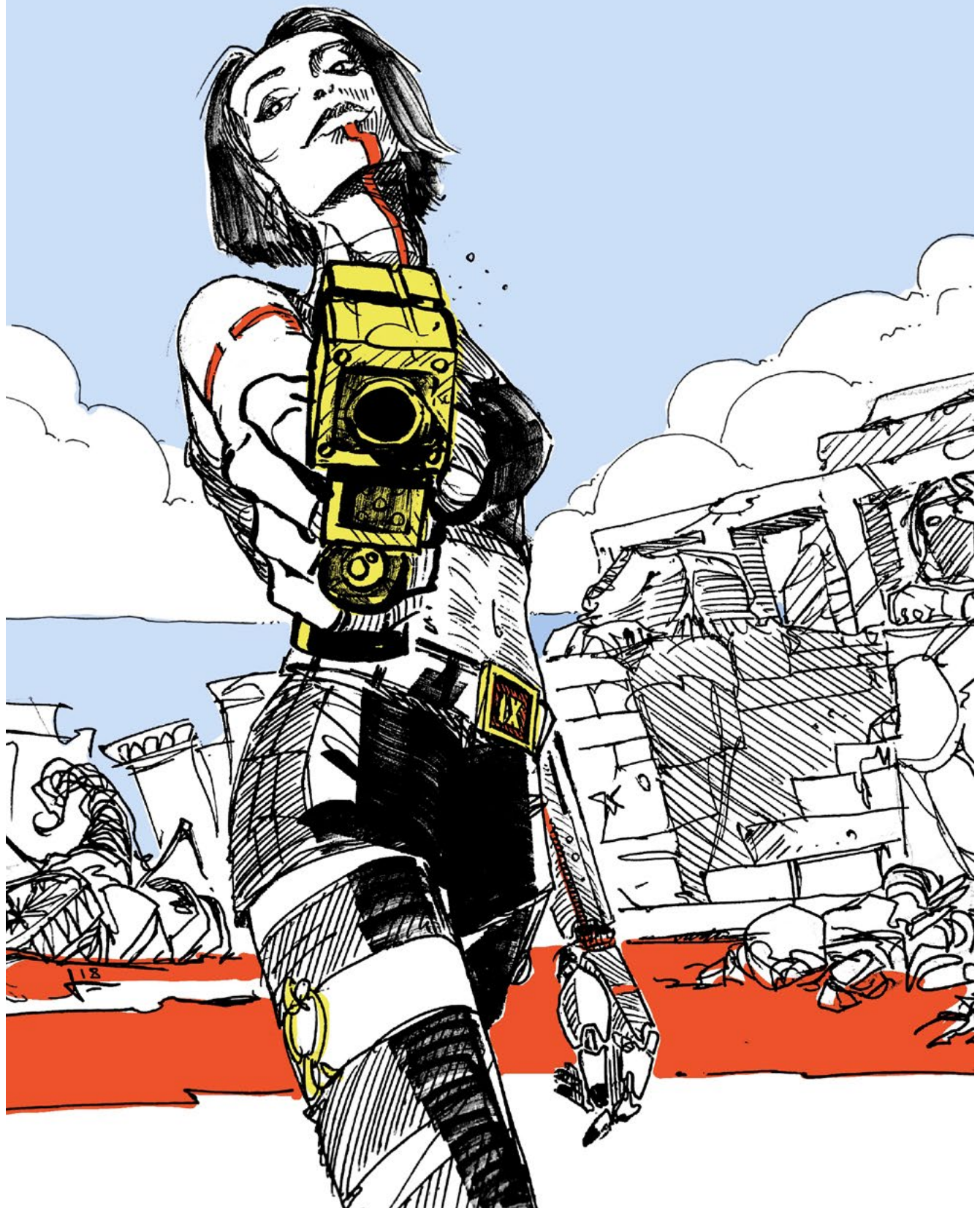
1. **Double-Platinum Deathless Backup.** You've got two soul jewels. One is in an egg in a duck in a hare in a secret pleasure vault on a private island. Hah!
2. **Enterprising.** Somehow, you always earn 20% more. It's uncanny. You also know how to set up and shuffle tax-deductible shell charity companies.
3. **Expensive Training.** You had the best trainer, and now you're an expert at one trait. Like fencing or vigilante boxing. Once per year, you can spend €1,000 and roll thought. *Success:* immediately increase a trait's skill (e.g. from skilled to expert).
4. **Legal Immunity.** Cops and judges look away, once per session. Don't ask how much it cost.
5. **Old Money.** Progenitor refuses to drop their banking and industrial concerns from their cold, undead, reincarnated grasp. Still, you have your name and allowance. Trust fund gives you €25/wk.
6. **Urbane.** You can go anywhere, talk to anyone in a city. Spend 1 life and there's a secret through-alley or hidden cafe or safe class-locked portal.

Bourgeois Items

1. **In-Arm Pistol.** Spend 1 life to reload the concealed oldtech emma-ray. (short, 1d6, 1 st).
2. **Buffer Harness II.** Intelligent forcefields let you spend 2 life to cap maximum damage at 6 for one round. (+3 armor, 1 st)
3. **Limousine Golem.** (L4, carry 4, roads only)
4. **Echoing Top Hat.** It whispers etiquette, rank, and status guidance into your mind. (ward +1, 1 st)
5. **Nu-Face Mk II.** Remove it to reveal your skull, synthetic muscles, and titanium hard-points. (charisma +1, 1 st)
6. **Swagger Stick *BILLI.** A spiritual microfission translator lets you spend 1 life to deal 1d12 damage with this elegant walking stick. (1d4, 1 st)
7. **Isolation Injection.** Like an obsidian scalpel, the oldtech overwhelms the mind. Target saves or loses the ability to communicate. (short, 1d8, 1 st)
8. **Elegant Eater Sword.** An energy blade. (1d8, 5 sp)
9. **Booster Bracelet.** Break it to negate an attack. (ward +2, 2 sp)
10. **Cloak of the City.** Pass without trace in town. (1 st)
11. **Jet Credit Ring.** Spend €1,000 now, pay later. (1 sp)
12. **Felix Whizz Six-Pack.** The canned energy drink grants 1d4 temporary life. Mildly addictive. (1 st)

Fighter

warden, worker, warrior



To struggle, to fall, to rise, perhaps to succeed.

In the end, there is little else.

You fight, because all life must, because you embody life. From the source code underpinning your embodiment to the life-urge of your cells, the fire-spark of your spirit, your *ka*, to the death-fear emblazoned in your mind. Flickering intuitions and installed responses keep you alive where others die.

The cosmos is a dark forest and all must choose: predator or prey, alive or eaten. And you, you are no food.

Named Fighters

1. **Brontebrune ta Hilda** failed to save her sector from a mysterious blight. Now she has one goal: mastering the alchemy to stop its return.
2. **Hladra 't Plupsk** is engaged in a covert war against a fluffy alien incursion while publicly maintaining the image of a friendly, eccentric pet merchant.
3. **Koël Selestis** the scholar warrior struggles to reopen the stairway to the stars.
4. **Pertinent Jon** was reborn in a mechanized body after a devastating accident. Now he fights with the ferocity of forged steel, while nurturing a secret love for ancient poetry.
5. **Sandek VI** is torn between two worlds. An accountant monk by day and a masked competitor in the metropolis secret underground martial arts tournaments by night.
6. **Vito od' Vilsk** is kept up at night by rumors of strange apparitions on the mountain frosts. They find solace in old adventure novels and romances.

Other names: Baldrick Valeria Venizzia, Henrik Augusta Portiya Toleda, Kalpurnia Kwińta, Pero Vrog, Rozalinda, Zofija Ščećinska.

Fighter Traits

1. **Armiger.** You are equal to your foe. That's a +3 bonus, you know.
2. **Defender.** You are equal to your foe. That's a +3 bonus, you know.
3. **Grit.** Gain 1 life per level. You need to resist, persist, and endure.
4. **Irresistible.** Every round you are equal to your level to one foe you choose. Whether your attack roll hit or missed.
5. **Second Chance.** When you would fall to 0 life, you fall to 1 life instead. Once. Recharge this trait with a hero die.
6. **Weaponmaster.** You're skilled with every weapon known to humans. It's quite uncanny.

Fighter Items

1. **Hard Light Shield.** A glittering force-shield bound to a projection bracer. Also serves as a vorpal weapon. (1d4 damage, vorpal edge, armor +3, 1 st)
2. **Spectral Combat Suit.** Satrapy steel-glass scales with an atmo-symbiote. (armor +5, enviro, 2 st)
3. **Pointy Helmet.** Sacrifice to negate one critical hit. Headbutt for 1d8 damage. (armor +1, 1 st)
4. **Portable Shadow.** A battle-hardened war shadow from the eternal struggle cloned and bound. Don't lose the leash. Halves damage suffered from ghosts, daemons, and other aethers. (ward +4, 2 st)
5. **Motor Chung.** Six glittery vials. Consume no more than an hour before use. Spend 1 life to gain a bonus action this turn. (1 sp)
6. **Amber Wandgun.** Shoots arcing bolts of pain and fire. (short range, 2d6, reload 3, 1 st)
7. **Patchflesh Parasite.** A temporary fix. Recover 2d8 + level life *or* 1d4+1 ability damage, but suffer 1 burden. Remove with salt. (1 sp)
8. **Soul-Eater Nightblade.** The gibbering spirit of the Eater in Darkness dwells in this blade. Each blow reduces your target's level by 1 (it dies if this would reduce it below level 0). (close, 1d8, 1 st)
9. **Friend Horse.** It talks but will not share its name. (L4, carry 2)
10. **Eisen Doppler Amulet.** Spend 1 hero die to project an iron illusion of yourself somewhere nearby. It is the same level and skill as you, has a defense of 19 and deals 1d8 damage, but only has 1 life. (1 st)
11. **Standing Bed.** A tubular steel frame to lean on and rest while 'keeping watch'. (1 st)
12. **War Mask.** A terrifying visage to frighten foes. A bonus against fear, too. (1 st)

Golem

made, remade, unmade



You're a made human, a machine person, a synthetic servitor, a rogue corporate public relations persona riding a wire-linked whizz-addict, or perhaps a free-spawned sentience with a scrabble-together body.

It doesn't matter. The word golem is a muddled word. Just like the soft-shell humans of these later times whose logic wetware can't even categorize creatures properly.

You know you're just another human. Even if these squish-brains don't know it.

Maybe you're even a superior kind of human. After all, with the right upgrades and replacements, you're made to outlive any lich.

Named Golems

1. **Astari ZX** enjoyed its life as a clan quest golem. It offered question marks and exclamation marks to its humans, and they garlanded it with flowers. After the humans failed to visit for twenty years, it decided to go find out what happened.
2. **Cack-Z-17** is a corroded husk with sixteen swiveling eyes who claims it was born a human of blood and flesh from the body of a grand monarch of the Early Stars. The grand monarch tried to make Cack-Z-17 immortal and did not entirely fail.
3. **Jon t' Benziedoper** was converted by the diesel dwarves to the great corpse fuel. Now she preaches the conversion and encourages everyone to eat the dead and harvest history's bounty.
4. **Low Vech** is a hunter. Bred and trained to take down the great beasts of the Lucky Joy Hunting Preserve for delighted tourists. Now those tourists are gone. As are the beasts. Low Vech has nothing to hunt now.
5. **Od Kaliban** has no memories, false or otherwise, from before his rebuild. He does have an integrated combat arsenal and a body counter display that flashes 999 and never increases.
6. **Teacher Superior** awakened in her stasis pod a few short months ago. She was made by the builders to raise and educate a crop of new humans destined for Eden 632. She wonders what happened to those new humans without her guidance.

Other names: a purpose, a company, a master, a code, a nickname, a human name. Asphalt Tregger, Tisch Tisch Mk V, de Vitruvio, 54RM4, Mister Huggins, Illa Demetra.

Golem Traits

1. **Hardened.** You're good at avoiding effects that would stun, paralyze, or otherwise incapacitate you. Also, resistant to electromagnificent radiation.
2. **Powered.** You don't need to eat. An omnibattery is all you need. Also, you can jump-start machinery with a spark from your finger.
3. **Synthetic Soul.** You have an artificial soul and a backup of your soul on a cassette. You can rewrite the soul as needed. This is really great if you need to modify your biopneumometric identity.
4. **Undying Synthetic.** You will not die. But your body will decay. Fortunately you know how to repair and replace yourself part by part. Though you've forgotten much, you retain a profound, if eclectic, oral history.
5. **Ur-War Program.** The legacy of the eternal war is coded within you. Increase your agility by 1. Your unarmed attacks deal more damage.
6. **Very Strong.** Increase your strength by 2. Ignore normal human limits.

Golem Items

1. **Electromagnificent Harness.** Protects your positronic innards, halving all radiant and electric damage. (armor +3, ward +3, 2 st)
2. **Ceramic Visage.** A gentle face to soothe soft-flesh humans. (charisma +2, 1 st)
3. **Living Suit.** Synthetic anthropoid flesh to protect your endoskeleton. (armor +1, life +5, 1 st)
4. **Smart Lubricants.** Tiny synthetic animalcules to smooth your joints and reduce wear and tear. Six doses. Each removes 1 golem burden. (1 st)
5. **Piezo Mace.** Integrates with your biocircuitry. Spend 1d6 life to double its damage. (close, 1d8, 1 st)
6. **Eyegun.** Looks like an eye, shoots like a lance. (long range, 2d6, reload 5, 1 sp)
7. **Coppypasta Egg.** Feed it €500 of raw materials then spend a week with it. It will copy your body. (1 sk)
8. **Golem Mechanic Kit.** Everything you need to repair and maintain yourself. (1 sk)
9. **Gold Leaf.** Enough to plate yourself thrice! (1 sp)
10. **Potted Plant.** The first living creature you found after awaking on a dead fast star. (1 st)
11. **Centaur Cradle.** Four wheels, shock absorbers, tubular struts and a plug-in drive. Turns you into a simple, fast autogolem. (carry 2, 1 sk)
12. **Lucky Bone Orb.** You suspect it was your makers. Years in your memory pouch have polished it into a sphere. (ward +2, 1 sp)

Greenlander

inquisitive, industrial, initiate



The autogolem Ubar negotiated the last hairpin and entered the approach tunnel. Adramwt muttered a prayer of thanks to Green Aspera that the walls left by the null-beam remained as perfect as they ever had been. Motes of light shone in the glassy material. If dimmed eight hundred years after their creation, still bright enough to see by now and for another eighty millennia.

Ubar left the tunnel and drove onto the gleam-white spider-span across the deep defile. Adramwt shuddered and muttered a prayer of aversion at Chem Caoutchouc, that the bringer of fire would ignore this desecration of its ruinlands. The bridge felt too insubstantial, a plane of force bound in prayers and equations.

Yet, it held. It held like it had every time Adramwt had crossed since inheriting the high house from Mother and linking it by audacious magic to the Garden City.

It was not forbidden for humans to build roads, but the Lord who had given the house to Adramwt's lineage had

supplied it with a slow gate. Was this not a clear sign of the Lord's designs?

Adramwt shuddered again. Eight hundred years, the prayers had kept the Lords content. Still, their minds were not as the minds of humans. They thought long and strange, and who could tell ... perhaps these many years were but to tease deeper into heresy, into damnation.

"Your fears grow every time you feel them," said Ubar in its melodious tones.

Adramwt nodded and Ubar felt the nod as Ubar felt everything within its living metal carapace.

"You could edit them out."

"Reasonable Ubar, perhaps that is precisely the heresy the Lords are waiting for."

"It is hard to be a human beholden to such gods."

"This is heaven, what other gods could we have?"

Named Greenlanders

1. **Cato iy'Pardo.** An academic from a backwoods Greenland town, held back by an atrocious accent and lack of connections. But they did inherit a codex of daemon summoning and a carefree attitude.
2. **Ilsandir di Metropol.** A butcher banker with a defective emotion ghost. They will sacrifice their fund to have their revenge.
3. **Natanié Dibosc.** A barbarian half-elf moss-bearer who moonlights as a big game guide. Sells new-form teratothere "animal product souvenirs".
4. **Sivo d'Uerve.** Born and bred in the depths of Metropol, a metagravity failure flooded their tribe's processing facility home and drove them blinking into the harsh light of the Big Sun.
5. **Ulpi be-374 "Tonco".** A fresh batch-born, flagged as unsuitable for further use and smuggled out by an Orangeland body agent. They fell off a truck and need to escape before they're recycled.
6. **Xrec Milavila.** This up-and-coming inquisitor needs to bring down a big fish to nail a corporate upgrade. Also, loves making ivory crab scrimshaw.

Other names: Cral i'Atias, Ernan an'Mawt, Folco Iusca, Peti Visantruc, Saron di Nata, Uolp di Suit.

Greenlander Traits

1. **Country Squire.** You make money the proper way: resource concessions in the vastlands and the ruinlands. A remote rural estate gives you €15/wk and all the spite olives you can spit.
2. **Deeply Embodied.** You are deeply encoded in your physical form and can use your strength ability for oldtech magics and endurance for fantascience.
3. **Informant.** You had the great honor of becoming an unofficial Inquisition agent. You receive €5/wk and once per session you can spend a hero die to have a misdemeanor overlooked. Sometimes, the Inquisition asks for a small favor.
4. **Metropolitan.** Your civic senses lets you unerringly travel a city's secret ways and you know how to tap civil nutrient and energy flows for free. Your innate sense of superiority grants you ward +1.
5. **Mossblood.** Your slowfolk ancestors adapted to the city's hunger by learning to feed on light and rain, mineral and plant-stolen nutrient. You can speak to the plants through their local noöspheres.
6. **Soiltwined.** Sprung from the soil itself, you are an ur-peasant, one with this Given World. Barefoot on bare ground, you are wiser and stronger, adding your endurance to thought and strength rolls.

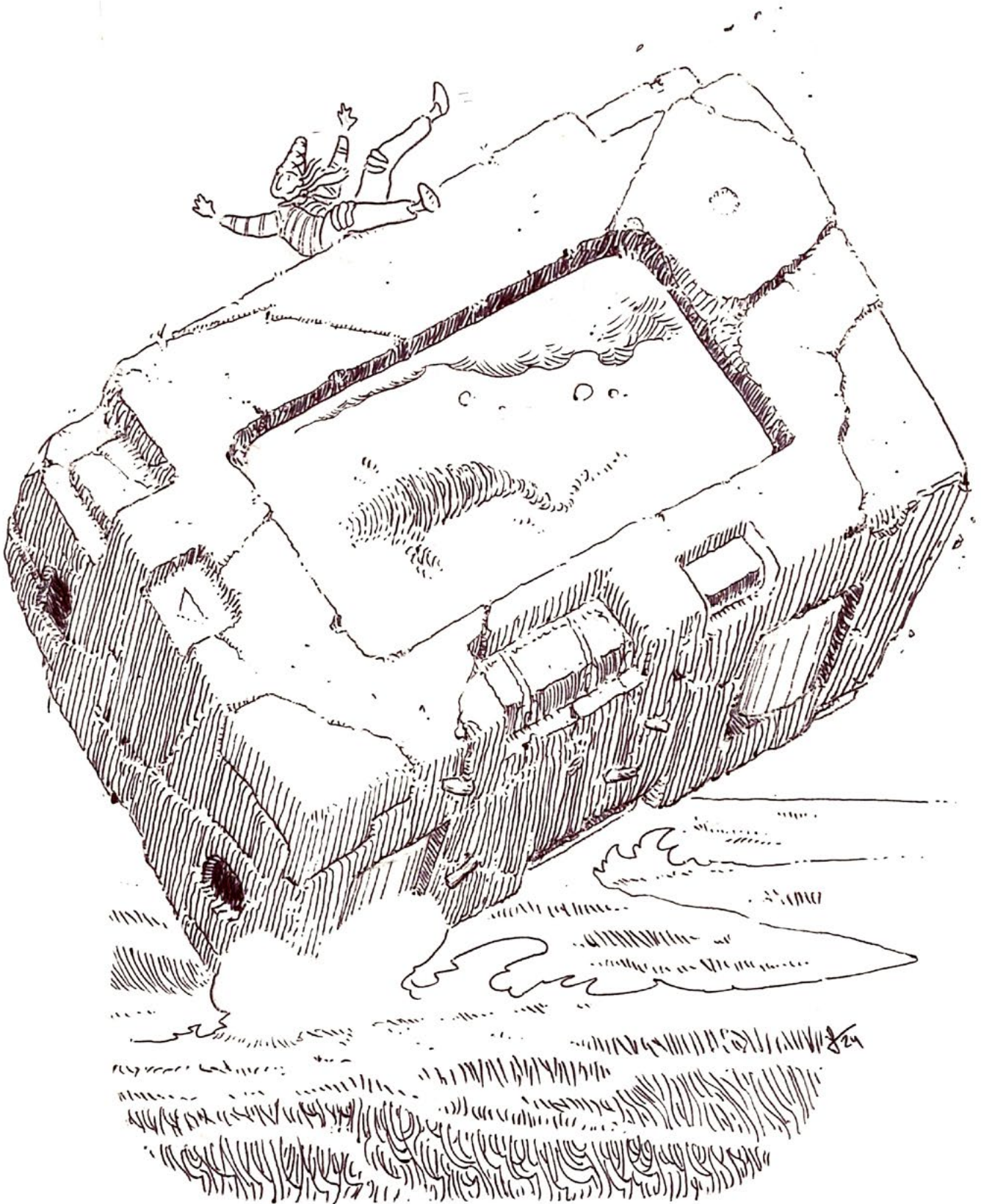
Greenlander Items

1. **Astral Pin.** Can hold one soul. (ward +2, 1 sp)
2. **Blood Deed.** They owe you €1,000 or a body. (1 sp)
3. **Doormaker.** This empathic brushpen lets you draw doors in livingstone and shipmetal structures. Originally made for Metropol maintainers. (1 st)
4. **Driver License.** This holomorphic amulet lets you drive in the Metropol. You can also try to command autogolems with it. (ward +1, 1 sp)
5. **Estate Key.** Lucky day! An estate worth €15/wk can be yours if you clear out the falscher infestation.
6. **Green Figurine.** It says it is a true god? (5 sp)
7. **Mindwipers.** Think a thought you would forget, then eat these pills. (1 sp)
8. **Mossweave.** A living weave of mycelial threads and mossy friends, perfect for hiding in the deep old woods. (armor +2, enviro, 1 st)
9. **Shipgun.** Low velocity flesh-shredder that won't damage a voidhull. Deals triple damage to unarmored targets. (short range, 1d4+1, reload 3, 1 st)
10. **Simmersuit.** Traditional jumpsuit that clearly displays your status and duties. (ward +3, 1 st)
11. **Sungwood Shield.** A light shield of living symbiotic wood. Your blood can regrow it. (armor +2, 1 st)
12. **Twilight Shades.** Low-light wraparound 360° vision goggles for night clubs and deep woods. (1 st)



Holy Fool

accuser, confuser, questioner



There's always one.

You couldn't adapt, wouldn't understand. They said your mind was unclean, your soul was muddy. All you said was that steak was good enough for the Blood Lord Rubra and suddenly they wanted to hang you up and drain you for a blasphemer!

≡

“Bagatto. Our blessed vessel, their accursed wizard. Awake, Bagatto,” intoned the chantler. The ritual synthetic had been repeating the villagers’ guidance prayers over the corpse-like form of the Fool for over a week as that reckless human’s idego traveled deep within the noosphere.

When the Fool Bagatto completed his mission to petition the Dancing Lord to allow the villagers to expand their orchards, he would need the guidance prayers to find his body once more.

Named Holy Fools

1. **Cimiter.** Their body went up in smoke thrice, and each time they were rebuilt. A cosmetic procedure gone wrong. They were awake throughout.
2. **Kotto Kotto.** The soul of a cat trapped in the body of a bear that looks like a human. They like coffee.
3. **Matto Grâ.** Woke up one day to find centipedes crawling out of their pores and speaking in tongues. After six years of personality refactoring, they can again distinguish between the noosphere and the hylosphere.
4. **Monk.** Ingested a dragon and the dragon rode them out into the vasty wilds. There they dwelled like a wolf for seven years, growing gaunt of limb and long of tooth. One day, the dragon was gone and Monk walked home.
5. **Sanaryncis.** Left their body for a bob cat’s after accidentally disabling their humanity overrides. After a petition, they regained their human rights.
6. **Vioma.** Was a golem before they were rebuilt as a human. But something went wrong and the machine came back. Now electric dreams crawl the transorganic flesh beneath their wooly hide.

Other names: Bob, Helio Moto, Iddo, Menes Trega, Padra Dor, Trismeniscus.

Holy Fool Traits

1. **Abandoned.** When your fellow villagers went for reprocessing and repair, you remained in the rotting house shells. Old things, dead things still talk to you. Spend 1 life to talk to any dead thing.
2. **Blessed.** When only luck will do, you have an advantage. That's also a bonus to all saves.
3. **Holy Diver.** Too long you swam in the noosphere, hunting the marrow of forgotten knowledge. At last, the noosphere stared back into you and reworked your mind. You have an intuitive grasp of dreamwalking and dream portals. Spend 1 life to read where a portal leads.
4. **Phylake’s Child.** They say your parent was a witch who seduced a holy guardian. Daemons talk to you and see you as one of their own.
5. **Soothsayer.** When no one else in a village can read, your interpretation of divine dreams from the ambient hum of the noötrees is invaluable. Grove, glade, mushroom and slime talk to you. Spend 1 life to talk to them.
6. **Wanderer.** One day you walked away from your life. Road years have hardened your feet, softened your heart. Increase your endurance and aura by 1.

Holy Fool Items

1. **Cordwood™ Jumpsuit & Headset.** A virtual room with noosphere access on the go. (2 st)
2. **Stolen Void-Certified Sleeping Bag.** Rest easy, even if your fast star springs a leak! (1 st)
3. **Rotting Angel’s Ring.** Taken off a dying phylake, it opens spirit doors. (ward +3, 1 sp)
4. **Book of Hellaesthetics.** Words that can cause pain or take it away. Are these powers spells? (1 st)
5. **Better Life Pamphlets.** Promises. (ward +1, 1 st)
6. **Radioactive Rodent Skull.** One night, its owner bit you and you had an epiphany. (+1 aura, 2 sp)
7. **Golem Carcass.** You call it friend. (armor +3, 2 st)
8. **Sun’s Caress.** A special sunscreen that heals you as you turn a lovely shade of fried. Recover 1d6 life after a few hours in the sun. (1 st)
9. **Mermaid’s Kiss.** You keep it in a little jar. It keeps all your fears away. (ward +2, 1 st)
10. **Flower Pot of the Living Avatar.** It keeps any plant alive. Who needs green fingers? (1 st)
11. **Walking Bed.** It’s a kind of golem. (L1, carry 1)
12. **Dream Bone Knife.** It cuts ghosts and daemons. (1d4+1, 5 sp)

MANAGER

agent, executioner, operator



You followed the path.

You did as the ministry mandated, you performed as society suggested, you became someone the regime rewarded. And then something went wrong. Some speck of rebellion, some daemon of doubt, drove you to hand in your time card, pack in your company uniform, and walk out into the wide polychrome day.

≡

Tyxo Iteration-23 adjusted their white collar of office and reading monacle before the mirror prince. The divine fragment observed them and chimed approvingly. They met the criterion for a professional representative of the administrative class.

Tyxo walked out to their desk, masking a limp. They had not saved up for a repair yet, and that would see them relegated to a back office, where they would never have a chance to impress a mate and qualify for a reproduction permit. At the desk, they turned on their console and the orange glow soothed them. They installed their mechanical ear and spoke in carefully modulated tones when they heard the connection chime, “Hail human, how can the administration make your day perfect?”

Named Managers

1. **Tyxo Iteration-22.** The latest of their standard clone administrator lineage. If they perform well, they will receive a standard five-year retirement period. What more should a clone want?
2. **Velisar Sarjent MkVII-259c.** Frankly, they wonder why their lineage has gone through so many iterations. Also, they like to crochet.
3. **Post-classical Rigel-14.** Post-classical has always secretly worried that a mix-up occurred when they were generated. They try to make up for it by working extra hard and applying for recombinant parental dispensation once a year.
4. **Naster Calculator-7bis.** Naster has a deep affinity for numbers. They suspect this was encoded in them to keep them pliant. But they don't mind. So long as they swim in numbers, their brain is happy.
5. **Rudra Housing-30k.** Several transfers and a face change later, Rudra feels like they have found peace in their new role as a park ranger. Yet their past in housing overflow will come back to haunt them.
6. **Moth Superior-15.** Moth oversees orimonte processing and memory implantation. Recently, they've become anxious whether their own memories are real and what happened to their home village.

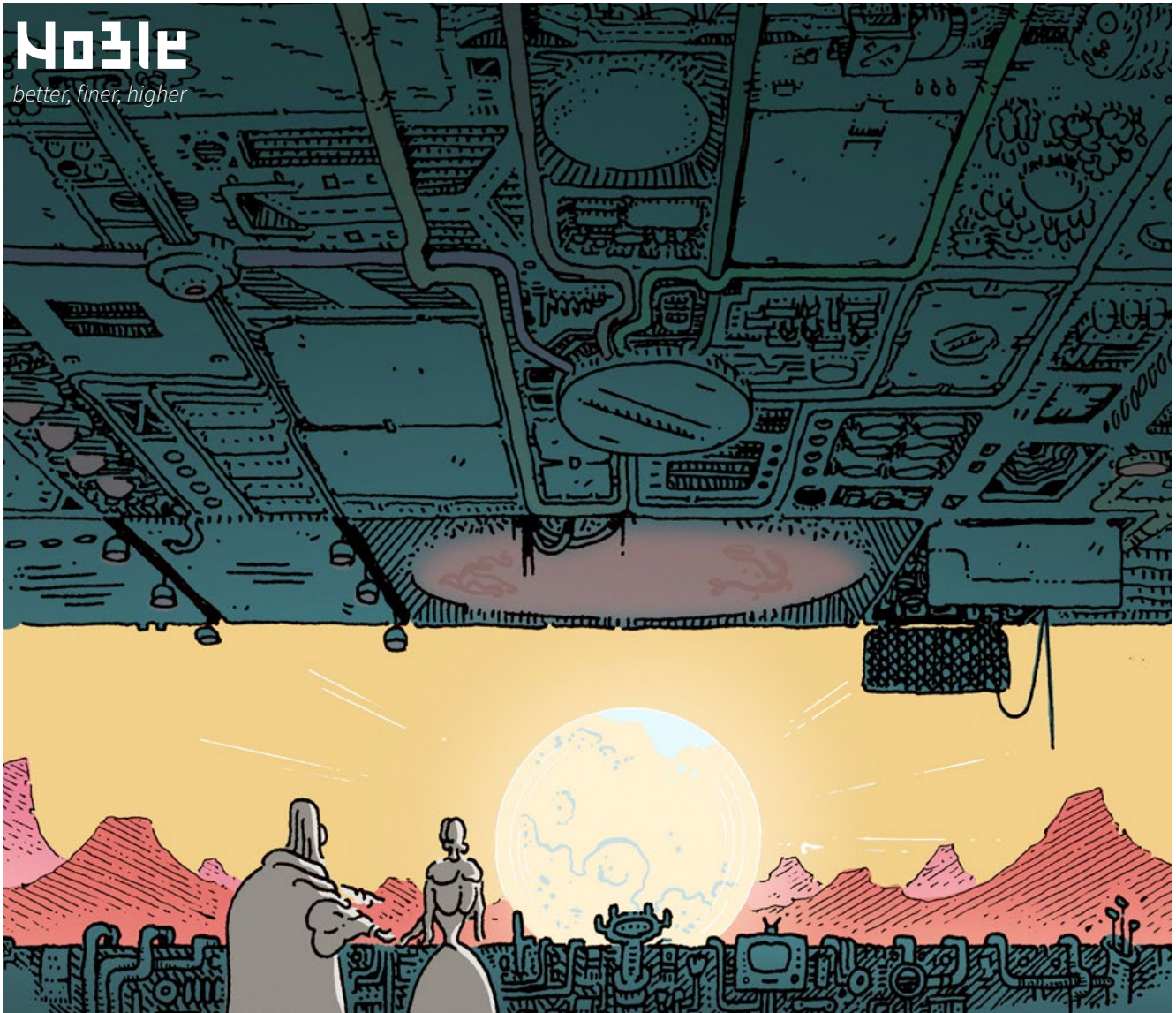
Other names: Ilion Tixi, Leon Venale, Pirh 't Ei, Primovenio, Simplona Descente, Wada nu Waxen.

Manager Traits

1. **Competent Appearance.** You always appears competent when appearing to do something that could appear to be your job.
2. **Social Survivor.** Trained to intuit what others want. You can spend 1 life to improve a reaction result.
3. **Inquisition Agent.** The Human Authority does not have a secret police force. Such suggestions are illegal. You are certainly not skilled with secret interrogation techniques. That is not a license to kill.
4. **Motivational.** Spend a hero die to encourage a human resource to do what you want. They can refuse, but it costs them 1d6 + level life.
5. **Noösphere Priest.** You are trained to interface with the noösphere and program its peripherals for maximum user satisfaction. Also, gain a bonus when making sacrifices to the digital gods.
6. **Numbers Maximization Official.** You mastered the popular human game of "numbers go up". Spend 1 life to add 1d6 to a roll, but this is your chance of a critical failure on your next roll.

Manager Items

1. **Ruffle Coat.** The socially acceptable coat, its silksteel ruffles protect as leather. To accoutrement refined living, pockets offer free inventory for seven soaps. (armor +2, 1 st)
2. **Reading Monocle.** Translates all 72 supported languages. Censorship module included. (1 sp)
3. **Sensorium Overloader.** Save or lose an action when struck by this oldtech gun. (close, 1d4, 1 st)
4. **Battle Briefcase.** Protects magic documents and blue prince scrolls. Serves as a shield. (armor +1, 1 st)
5. **Mightier Pen.** An advantage when writing legal and oldtech scrolls. Also, opens ministry doors. (1 sp)
6. **Soup Thermos.** Keeps nutrislurry and other stew-category fluids edible nigh forever. (1 st)
7. **Articulated Golem-Wagon.** Six wheels, seven gears, and a solar omnibattery. (L2, carry 3)
8. **Fireward Circlet.** The semi-sentient band of daemon-matrix jewels protects your identity. Spend 1 life to block psychic and daemonic access to your mind for 1 round. (ward +3, 1 st)
9. **Walking Stick Sword.** Elegant. (1d6, 1 st)
10. **Book of Regulations.** Like a lockpick set for bureaucracies and organizations. (1 st)
11. **City Shoes.** Soft soles let you find your way round a city with your eyes closed. (5 sp)
12. **Cunning Watch.** Tells time and etiquette. (1 sp).



The best were Chosen. The Chosen are the best. The proof of aristocracy is a perfect circle.

≡

Calissa de Freix breathed a sigh of relief as a human administrator answered. It was so hard to get through to professional help these days, the Garden Authority cycling her through a series of falšers instead.

“This is the Mastress de Freix, I’ve been calling for days! I reported barbarians on my estates, but instead of sending phylakes to kick them out, the Authority downgraded my estates to an Orange zone and suggested I upgrade my defense budget. This is outrageous! The de Freix estates have been Green zone since the Second Armadillo Expansion. Over 30 generations! I demand you remedy this oversight, reinstate the Green zone designation and send over a unit!”

She heard the white-collar assume a defensive crouch.

“Mastress, eh, you must be mistaken. Divine records indicate that the de Freix estates on the Vulc have always been an Orange zone and, uh, are slated for review about, uh, downgrading to Red zone due to, uh, failure to defend.”

Named Nobles

1. **Calissa de Freix.** Hoped to pass her wonderful ancestral holdings to a suitable clone. Then a clerical error let ferals onto her lands.
2. **Sinqo od Chrein.** While hunting heretics a luminous void creature opened his eyes. His life, the garden, all of it was a lie. Well, except their control of the regional quality control guilds.
3. **Vul ban Hadda Ling.** Raised on tales of how its ancestor conquered seven cities and won a place in Heaven and a golden chair. Its withered ancestor still rules from the damned golden chair.

4. **Offex y Vlaco.** Trains and logistics are in their blood. Well, hard-wired in their brain. Courtesy of a patera who still suspects the gods may need proof of the family's value again.
5. **Loess tu Bo of the Bo Freelords.** The only child not to have fallen to futility in the last 50 years. Something single-minded and simple about their passionate pursuit of rabbit breeding, perhaps?
6. **Fourteen vom Cholan.** Still unnamed, in case they go mad from prolonged contact with the luminous void creatures their family has traditionally used to manifest the Lords' will. Still, they have survived a winter in the woods, hunting ferals for survival. Perhaps they will deserve a name soon. Something like Fourteen Skulls?

Other names: Benedett' Eyecaught ys Ulacca, Common od Feltbait et Tantamount, Elegéant of the Ivory Army, Jandro de Grandtourist Inc., Pansacro Thirst-For-Knowledge, Tor y Nunc vom Umber of the Slumbering Most Green (faithful branch).

Noble Origins

Whence do these nobles claim to hail?

1. **Hexer.** Their progenitor was uplifted into nobility by one of the Lords in living memory. The stain of having had to earn their status still lingers.
2. **Knight.** Battler families helped the Lords homestead hell. Now they spend their lives in well-deserved luxury, hunting beasts and singing lays.
3. **Sacrifex.** The divine light of the gods courses through their veins, a lineage of potential avatars the Lords would embody to manifest the Maker's will during the Building of the Given World. Now they spend their lives in well-deserved luxury, rolling dice and hunting synthetics.
4. **Freelord.** Humans of parallel lineages to the Lords who are gods. Preserved as part of the basic architecture of the Garden. Now they spend their lives in well-deserved luxury, hunting daemons and playing cards.
5. **Baron.** Wealthy lineages whose power was enshrined by their material contribution to the existence of the Builders. Now they spend their lives in well-deserved luxury, enacting melodramas and hunting ferals.
6. **Dux.** Warlord lineages, formerly ferals due to clerical errors, now an integral part of the civilized world. They spend their lives in well-deserved luxury, hunting falšers and indulging in chemical bliss.

Noble Traits

1. **Hexer Meritocrat.** Your merit remains superlative. When skilled, your bonus is +4, when expert +8, when a master +12.
2. **Knight Reflexes.** In combat, you can spend life to increase your individual initiative (1-for-1).
3. **Dissipated.** Chemical cocktails drive you, but without them you are weak and wan. Spend €5 x level per week to gain +2 strength and agility. Without: suffer -2 strength and endurance.
4. **Divine Blood.** When you activate an oldtech device or power, the life cost is reduced by 2 points (minimum of 1).
5. **Sculpted Beauty.** Beyond the germline, you exude synthetic glamour. Gain +2 charisma.
6. **Perfected Germline.** Taller and healthier than other humans, immune to all diseases and free of all flaws. Allegedly.

Noble Items

1. **Sacrificial Robes.** Suitable for facing the gods in temple and the daemons in the battlefield of delusions. (armor +3, ward +2, 2 st)
2. **Empire Armor.** Sanguine plates over flesh-mesh. Feed 1 life per day or it goes to sleep. (armor +8, 3 st)
3. **Golem Steed.** Belches fire, burns like an ash elemental. (L3, carry 3, charging)
4. **Gorotorok.** Ominous two-handed chainsword assembled by source engineers on a distant star in a distant age. (3d6, 2 st)
5. **Ornate Daemonskin Mask.** (armor +1, ward +2, 1 st)
6. **Garden Jezail.** Said to have killed a Vile One in the early Long Long Ago. (long range, 2d8, 3 st)
7. **Court Kit.** Snuff box, spice tongs, tumblers, coffee cups, brushes, combs, pins, rings, heels, girdles, scrolls, voice modulators and more. (1 sk)
8. **Oldtech Dagger-Axe.** A symbol of power, spend 1 life to double its damage. (1d6, +2 charisma, 2 st)
9. **Childhood Friend's Poem.** On a scroll in a sacrificial godskin chest-piece amulet. (ward +1, 1 sp)
10. **Spotted Lion's Paw.** Imbued with a lion's power, it grants +1 strength. (1 st)
11. **Travel Deck.** Private portal keycards to 54 great houses. Alas, many are now toxic shells. (2 sp)
12. **Phylake Clavus.** A key that lets you pass unseen in front of an angel. (ward +1, 1 st)

Orangelander

happy, living, working, dead



Malegatto the Cad methodically licked his paws smooth. Sinister superior, sinister inferior, dexter superior, dex ... *snick*. Dry clicker sedge breaking under a ponderous town-oaf's foot. Three hundred paces. There was time. Dexter inferior. There, neat and tidy.

Snick, plop, snick. Two hundred and fifty paces. Malegatto pulled on his gloves and gripped his hunting lance.

Snickersnack. Two hundred paces. He twitched a whisker and a poly-ocular overlay joined his visor display. Excellent. The trap had worked.

Malegatto raised his lance and waited until the town-oaf entered the clearing where the Canopy drones had left the cargo. Biped, no augments, typical dream-worm.

The town-oaf warbled an IFF song at the cargo and Malegatto's daemon nudged the trapped cargo semi-mind to sing back. The target visibly straightened, flooded with courage by this song-symbol of the Canopy's omnipotence.

Malegatto's face wrinkled with joy and hunger, exposing long canines. His synthetic subsystems took over, body switching to battery power, pausing breathing and heartbeat, turning still as a gun phylake on its panoptic column.

The town-oaf snuffled around the cargo, crooning with joy, imagining the status they would gain from the new consignment of centrally-approved culture.

Malegatto and his lance became one. His vision focused to its infrared targeting dot. Wind speed, moisture, density skimmed from the local smart flora's vegetal noosphere.

Flash. Crack. Pop.

The town-oaf was still crooning, but it was over. The lance's ray had fried its soft place-holder precortex and executive jewel. Lobotomy at a distance.

Named Orangelanders

1. **Alfrech te Tein.** Half-local, half-ducky, no roots, no spawn. The sterile ministry employee is the perfect cog in the council's machine. Alfrech suspects there is more to life than overseeing the logistics of sunflower seed exports and corpse oil imports.
2. **Caranchacal.** She likes hunting the mice, the little citizens living, the little beasties who try to flee their allotted lives. And when they try to run into the Thin? Oh, that is best, to catch them gasping, choked, and dry. Ready for the worker-maker.
3. **Elicoderico.** Too long in the council meld rots the ego and shrivels the id. It wants to embody. It wants to be human again. So it flexes its improved body, its four arms and four legs and sixteen deep-field eyes. Time to find out if the little ministers have been feeding the council hive-mind truths or dreams.
4. **Haut en Bric.** How long has Haut been dead and working? The dust-dry butler doesn't quite recall. But now this planter manse has stood still and empty so many winters ... perhaps that is freedom, will, mind returning to their rattle-bone head?
5. **Sassen Elnorsk.** It's an easy trick to master, mass corpse control. Especially easy after a career of marching citizens dead from one cabbage field to another for an absentee landlord. So, Sassen now has a small corpse army. What to do with it?
6. **Vajter te Goüd.** Fat Vajter, they called him. They laughed how he'd be a headless field-hand sooner than they. But Fat Vajter had a trick. A fakey-card, a pass-trick out into the no-man's *gowoz*. But what now? Could he maybe talk his way to control an unfred band? A raidey-troop?

Other citizen names: Amalfri te Brun, Eijxlin de Winsi, Goümurc te Coll, Helxa de Hildi, Skunfri ten Uöc, Waldri em Walden.

Other ducky names: Crifolc, Finluster, Radivente, Siüjarila, Varnuölco, Ulmgrima.

Other cad names: Albasabia, Damacanta, Noncovicál, Siäg Tigré, Tic Hanchilla, Zebuó.

Orangelander Traits

1. **Cad.** You are definitely not a cat. Sleek fur protects you from the rays of the harsh suns and the cold of the thin upper air. Also, you have four arms.
2. **Citizen Living.** Bred to hedonism and maximum pleasure, you are the soul of every party, the wit of every conversation, the glutton of every delight. Gain +1 charisma and endurance.
3. **Citizen Maintainer.** Skilled at maintaining the citizens dead. Repair and improve the undead, converse with them, know their ways and needs. Also, a bonus to saves against any undead special attacks, such as a ghoul's paralytic breath.
4. **Ducky.** As an underclass minority you know how to fight with concealed weapons and maneuver with ossified bureaucracies. Also, once per day, spend a hero die to 'remember' a reliable local creche clan member who could help you for a price.
5. **Orange Half-Ling.** Smaller to reduce your needs and extend your life. You need only a quarter as much food, water, and drink as the average human. Also, gain +1 agility (to a maximum of 6).
6. **Unfred.** Your ancestors rebuilt their brains. You look human, but are immune to human-control effects and your mind counts as alien. Gain +1 endurance.

Orangelander Items

1. **Amber Suit.** Full suit of armor grown from a biomorphically slaved amber crab. (armor +6, 3 st)
2. **Hunting Lance.** A precise oldtech beam-spear. Close, 1d8 and long range, 1d12, reload 7, 1st.
3. **Tree-Reader.** Speak with over 30 kinds of tree! (1 st)
4. **Air Compressor.** Biomechanical face-mask for breathing in low-pressure conditions. (loud, 1 st)
5. **Zunkwaffel Wand.** The undead suppression pistol temporarily disrupts their animating force. (short range, 2d6, reload 3, 1 st)
6. **Synthetic Omnitissue.** Universal undead food. Feels just like living human tissue! (1 st)
7. **Cad Bird.** A 2-meter cariamid. Swift and scary, with beak and claw. (L3, carry 1)
8. **Maintenance Bracelet.** Marks the wearer as undead to undead creatures. (ward +1, 1 st)
9. **Poly-Ocular Visor.** A helmet with three detachable eyes. Roll 'em, pose 'em, stick 'em on a wall. (1 st)
10. **Synthetic Subsystem.** Battery-powered organ to maintain vital function when food, water, and air grow scarce. (recharge 5, 1 st)
11. **Hedonic Accumulator.** Wearable device that adds up how much your needs have cost the community! It also automatically tallies how many useful years of labor you will provide after death. (1 sp)
12. **Tree-Plug.** Fungo-mechanical charging unit that can draw energy from smart trees to power omnibatteries and other devices. (2 st)

Purplelander

sufficiently, advanced, magical



You hail from the last of lands, the end of the Right Road, where the light of the Big Sun is obscured by the evil haze of the Machine Beast, where Ill Nano hides the world from the Eye of the Gods. Here the people are gentle and love their pets. Truly, a nice, gentle, magical land.

Named Purplelanders

1. **"Freshface" Bresio.** Of steppelander stock, driven to seek refuge in the plantation towns. Their source code unlocked an old autofaber and revealed the oldsettlers could control the nutrislurry pumps. Now they preach freedom from the Cat Lords.
2. **Holqo "the Knife".** Cut a deal with the arboreals to develop their air forests but found an ancient temple instead. Surely they're reputable?
3. **Iron Jaw.** An iron human in a travel-clan is odd. One who was taken into the fairy-ways is even odder. She claims to have visited the original U.S.H.A. facility.
4. **Lampamora.** Revived thrice, half-bodied, they seek their fallen Cat Lord, the master of all delights, the bringer of meaning, stolen by phylake daemons.
5. **Qanibar 4-Serul.** Definitely not a polybody spy, they're a loyal civil servant out in the western reach. They'll pay for maps, diagrams, plans, truths.
6. **Tartanuqa 'l Pisq.** A furred phenotype from the highlands, possessed of a preternatural ability to charm cats with their voice. Will the dogheads recruit this powerful siren?

Other names: Buqa Okya, Keshel Ten Qariq, Miao Gersqifa, Olye Vekyeo, Sastor Mira, Yang Enlep.

Purplelander Traits

1. **Arboreal.** Your phenotype is adapted to life in the trees—or the bioducts of a megastructure. Climb, swing, and jump like a gibbon. Gain +1 strength.
2. **Colonist.** You come from one of the old A.N.T. settler groups, designed as a colony organism. Designate up to five other creatures as members of your hexad. Each gains temporary life equal to your level if they spend the night in your vicinity. Gain +1 charisma.
3. **Human Library.** A field of Long Long Ago knowledge is stored in your mind. You can only access it subconsciously. Gain +1 thought.
4. **Kaffetropist.** You metabolize caffeine into other useful drugs. Drinking a coffee can put you to sleep, wake you up, purge you of other toxins (lose 1d3 life throwing up), or give you visions (gain ward +5 but your motor skills are impaired).
5. **Pet Sidekick.** You gain a pet sidekick whom you treat as your master. The pet is the same level as you. You can swap roles, making the

pet the PC. You understand small creatures' empathetic emanations. Gain +1 aura.

6. **Telempath.** You can mentally transmit general warnings, feelings, and impressions to other creatures over a middling distance. Gain +1 ward.

Purplelander Items

1. **Cat Collar.** Proof of Cat Lord service. Guarantees free bedding and protein. (5 sp)
2. **Coffee Bonbons.** Highly caffeinated candy. (1 st)
3. **Dumb Veil.** Obscures mental emanations. (5 sp)
4. **Fairy Key.** Pass through a fairy cat portal. (2 sp)
5. **Folk Hero Source Code.** A stack of source cards that teaches a mother machine how to reincarnate a folk hero of the pre-feline times. (2 st)
6. **Nip Lotion.** Makes you smell nice to Cat Lords. (1 sp)
7. **Null Thermos.** Almost zero heat loss! (1 st)
8. **Plantation Pick.** This field tool also crushes vome skulls. (close, 1d6, x4 damage on critical, 1 st)
9. **Rational Helm.** Blocks empathy, crushes pity, useful HUD. (armor +1, ward +1, 1 st)
10. **Scavenged Bolter.** An elegant gun from a simpler age. (long range, 1d8+1, reload 2, 2 st)
11. **Tinkling Shoes.** Pretty bells ensure you won't pass unheard. (+1 charisma, 1 st)
12. **War Furs.** Striped to imbue strength. (armor +2, strength +1, 1 st)

Your Pet Master

This little creatures pays for your service with satisfaction sublime and a sense of universal belonging.

	NAME	TYPE	TRAIT
1	Behemoth	ant colony	awakened
2	Bones	cat	chronoclastic
3	Clio	dog	cosmic
4	Demon	fish	hypnotic
5	Diva	galliform dinosaur	N-dimensional
6	Pettyfog	gerbil	noösphere-linked
7	Pinky	gray parrot	pharaoh
8	Princess	horse	quantum
9	Rex	potted plant	sapientized
10	Roadshow	snake	talking
11	Thunder	toad	telepathic
12	Tickles	white mouse	three-eyed

Redlander

vampire, victor, vintner



We won humanity freedom from the gods, from the great daemons, who sought to herd us like kine to the ends of time, to breed and multiply and perpetuate us. We left the safety of the Garden. We found strength in blood and rust, in bunkers and ruins. We outlasted the Vile Ones.

Would some gratitude be so much to ask for?

Named Redlanders

1. **Asti duc Chret.** Vintner lord of the Chret estates, their germline has protected and embodied the Chretfolk of their bunker and field since the time of the time of the Third Flood. Now a soul corrosion threatens the link between the folk and their land.
2. **Corta an'Mawta.** The damp ship's captain sought freedom in the Red Land District. Instead they found a great pale ghost. It haunts them still.
3. **Martelle c'Orbin.** The hammer master is tasked with putting down vampires who slip free from their universal human restraints. But they fell in love with a rust countess who would live forever.
4. **Ocai Toló.** A false human rider of machines, they're uniting the rust clans with a radical one-life gospel. And a fair bit of successful banditry.
5. **Roch gau'Nie.** A mad-eyed dog with visions of a flying city, a heaven for the canicranials. The vision glows in their head, like a cerebral compass.
6. **Venés Suvelles.** The first citizen child of barbarian immigrés, they've climbed the RLD civil service to their legal limit: cultural sanitizer second tier. They want more—and are capable of achieving it. After all, doesn't the Red Meow teach eternal revolution?

Other names: Berlesc an'Namur, Corron Port, Filochet Torasc, Loru c'Magnac, Terendi du'Vein, Urs Traminc.

Redlander Traits

1. **Hexad Member.** You belong to a self-help society and know its glyphs and protocols. Your source code has been modified to give you access to its proprietary self-defense arsenal. Spend 1 charisma to find a contact in a port or industrial district.
2. **Falscher.** You are a false human, grown from seed in an illegal, off-grid factory. This trait gives you false childhood memories and a random occupation that is (roll d6): (1–3) hopelessly outdated, (4–5) surprisingly mundane, (6) terrifying and alien. You have no soul (*ka*) and are immune to spiritual damage.
3. **Ruster.** Almost barbarous in your ability to live off the land, away from the oldtech factories and fabricators. You know how to scavenge food and equipment from wastelands, ruinlands, and another strange post-builder ecosystem of your choice. You are skilled with the bolter, the net, the hook, the army knife, and the camouflage suit.

4. **Vampire.** Drain the life force of other creatures to fuel your own powers and abilities. Your target must be willing or immobile. You drain 1 point of life per minute. Draw a "borrowed life" box on your character sheet. Store an amount equal to your own life.
5. **Vintner.** Your ancestors modified themselves to survive off-grid, drawing sustenance from the gods' unholy neoflora. Your body breaks down plant toxins harmlessly and each cup of pure ethanol you drink grants you 1 temporary life point (up to a maximum equal to your level plus endurance).
6. **Werker.** Your ancestors were bioengineered to maintain the builders' machinery. You have an intuitive understanding of oldtech devices and processes. Spend 1 life to interface with a device and ascertain if it can be fixed and, at least roughly, how.

Redlander Items

1. **Acrylic Reliquary.** A translucent plastic puck that softens and hardens with your thoughts and can safely store a fragment of radiance. (1 st)
2. **Blindgod.** A face mask that hides your soul and mind from daemons and divines. (1 st)
3. **Blood Brandy.** Thickened bloodwine. It restores 1d6+1 ability or life points. Intoxicating. (1 st)
4. **Bunker Pass.** Oldtech amulet that proves you're a true human, allowed to shelter in the anti-god bunkers that stud the Red Land. (ward +2, 1 st)
5. **Crow Armor.** Puffs up to slow your falls. Popular with wyvern riders. (armor +4, 2 st)
6. **Cinnabar Shoes.** Pass without trace in ruins and abandoned bunkers. (1 st)
7. **Glass Cannon.** Translucent, it turns your blood into toxic shards. Spend 3 life to reload. (long range, 1d12, fragile, nauseating, reload 5, 1 st)
8. **Mindvault Helm.** A traditional helm, of godbone and shipmetal, it blocks the Vile One's mental assaults. Sunder to negate all damage from a critical hit. (armor +1, ward +3, 1 st)
9. **Rotblood Scent.** A perfume that makes you smell unattractive to ghouls and vampires. (1 sp)
10. **Rustbeast Cloak.** Hide in the rusty wastes. Halve damage from iron weapons. (ward +1, 1 st)
11. **Second Heart.** A backup heart. It stores stolen life equal to your level. (ward +1, 2 st)
12. **Stakehammer.** Designed to crack armor and pierce unliving hearts. (close, 1d8+1, double damage to vampires, 2 st)



Xoras scrambled down the long sun-bleached slope of the great atmosphere engine. Their reinforced boots punched through the calcrete, leaving streaks of rust-raw gravel exposed to the sun's harsh electric light.

The overgrown polyp writhed behind them. If that chaotic tangle of tentacles and post-mechanical cancers tore free of its theca, it would take him and half the slope down into the excavated channel below.

period. It would withstand ...

"Brace!"

Xoras shrieked as the buffer fields anchored them in the middle of the shell. Then the bivouac shifted as the polyp's mad thrashing loosed the crusted regolith off the atmosphere engine's iron-nickel flank.

Xoras's personal daemon piped up, "Left! Make for the willow wolves!"

Xoras thought a nod at the little ghost and accelerated, synthetic bioblasts releasing additional energy to his exhausted muscles. Leap, slide, scramble, leap. The willow wolves' blood-catchers whipped at them, but the razor thorns found no purchase on their builderskin overalls.

The daemon shouted, "There! Storm bivouac!"

Xoras dove at the corroded door, buffer fields blossoming from their force harness. They felt some red, but no major trauma as the barrier burst, spilling them in a shower of kinetic dispersal sparks on the bivouac floor.

The shell of the bivouac was old, from the seeding

“That’s what you get for walking into one of the Maker’s remnants unshielded,” grumbled the personal daemon.

“Hush, Lucrée, I need to focus . . .” on not throwing up, though Xoras as the shell rolled and bounced.

Named Scion

1. **Xoras of the Adopted One.** They believe the Maker consumed their father and made them one with the Imperium of the Dream.
2. **Benush of the Doctor Love.** They carry some aspect of the initial dream of creating an eternal sanctuary for humanity.
3. **Suë of the Fourface.** Within them is a microcosm of the planned perfection of the Garden and an awareness of Heaven’s imperfection.
4. **Gula of the Hungry Condition.** They feel the hunger the Maker first felt after they created the Cosmos.
5. **Ilsler of the Translation.** They feel unmoored in a world gone off the rails, buffeted by fears and glimpses of a future they cannot comprehend.
6. **Zido of the Moorlands.** They carry the pleasure of the endless noösphere within them even when caught in the gross matter of the hylosphere.

Other names: Anta Tama of the Cathedra, Caul of the Ill Nano, Even of the Wanderer, Mock Pery of the Liquid Sun, Ram of the Rudra, Wene of the Living Flesh.

Scion Backgrounds

Made in the image of the Builders, the scions remain both blessing and curse of the gentle Lords.

1. **Greenflesh.** Something in the source code of all green things spontaneously generates humans. Some are scions, permanently linked to the living, growing, eating things.
2. **Voidmade.** Life bursts forth from nothingness in the empty voids between worlds. Most decays between one quantum and the next. Some coalesces and becomes human in the mothballed fast stars.
3. **Templechild.** The flesh seed of the Maker is preserved in the great electric ziggurats of the Dream Lords. Occasionally it sprouts.
4. **Idego Bloom.** A normal human, it appeared, but then their idego blossomed with the fire of revelation and arcane noöspheric control.
5. **Machine.** This scion was made, purpose-built to access and harness buildertech. For what aim?
6. **Ghostbrood.** A Builder's personality derivative reborn of a feral, brought back to the Garden that it might be schooled and sculpted by the good Lords.

Scion Traits

1. **Dreamwalker.** When you enter the noösphere, you take your body along, leaving nothing but an aroma of almonds in the hylosphere. Gain +1 endurance.
2. **Faceless.** You have no face of your own and must consciously choose a face each day. When distracted or unconscious, your face melts away to reveal a smooth ovoid.
3. **Of-World.** Your essence is entwined with the source code of the world. Spend 1 hero die to merge with stone or tree or pond or cloud for a few hours. Yes, you can pass through stone in this way.
4. **Perfect.** Your form is perfect and unchanging, unlike the malleable body natural to humans. Your perfection intimidates and attracts alike. You cannot be corrupted or bio-modified. Gain +1 charisma.
5. **Subconscious Decay.** When you are unconscious or asleep, your physical form rapidly decays. It reconstitutes when you become conscious. Gain +1 aura.
6. **Superuser.** You can freely activate any oldtech or fantascience. Active effects may still corrupt you.

Scion Items

1. **Second Skin.** Void-capable force-bonded synthetic tissue. Under armor, if you will. (armor +2, 1 st)
2. **Godbone Exoskeleton.** Gruesome golem armor replenished with your hero dice. (armor +5, 20 life, +3 strength, recharge 5, 3 st)
3. **Personal Daemon.** It knows things it shouldn't, gives advice you can't follow. Spend 1 life to get a quick infodump on the local area. (ward +1, 1 st)
4. **Spirit Hand.** An ectoplasmic third hand anchored in your aura. (1 st or 1 trait slot)
5. **Force Harness.** Reactive defense in case of sudden falls and abrupt impact. Like very advanced personal air bags. Negate one attack that would reduce you to 0 life or deal 30+ damage. (1 st)
6. **Builder Blade.** This no-matter knife cuts anything. Leave in sunlight for a day to recharge. (close, 1d4, powered 4, 1 st)
7. **Illusion Gun.** A target 'killed' by imaginary damage gets a save vs death. (short range, 1d10, 1 st)
8. **Builderhorse.** Eight legs, synthetic skin, composite bones, an old-fashioned clock-brain. (L3, carry 4)
9. **Pet Bird.** Of no known species. Of foul speech. (1 st)
10. **Power Broker Amulet.** Spend 1d6 life to absorb a power used against you and store it for later. (1 sp)
11. **Living Shoes.** They smell and lick the ground, make tracking easier, warn you of dangers. (1 st)
12. **Black Metal Mandible.** You know it came from a Builder. A god of sorts. (3 sp)

Servant

wage slave, wailer, worker



Ora et labora once dictated the terms of human life. Now, in this eternal civilization, the gods no longer demand prayer, for all who work here are saved. Work and your life will have purpose.

≡

“Servus humillimus, domine spectabilis,” murmured Chinja-5-dash as they awakened and the day’s admonitions scrolled through their mind’s eye. The lord had blessed them with their attention today. Meaning

would fill them as their limbs toiled to perfect the more perfect plan.

Chinja-5-dash frowned.

Again, the dragon had come in the night. The monochrome scourge upon the human flock. It had dodged the fences of four villagers’ minds and infected them with error.

Today, Chinja-5-dash would again wield the cauterizing lance for Lord Cathedra.

Named Servants

1. **Chencha-34-styles.** Chencha of the 34th batch of hair stylists. Dreams of more heroic pursuits.
2. **Domo-217-casa.** Domo of the 217th iteration of the popular house servant batch. Privately fancies themselves a detective.
3. **Eduard-13-pickles.** Eduard of the 13th iteration of vegetable picklers. Secretly very good with the jousting staff.
4. **Golosh-10-aurochs.** Golosh of the 10th batch of aurochs' tenders. Loves them some good animal friends.
5. **Udjaya-5-stand.** Udjaya of the 5th batch of heavy industrial defenders. Would prefer to be a poet.
6. **Vidrik-No.-sinker.** A batchless social downgrade. After rebelling against the dream canopy, their personality was reset so they could redeem themselves with a useful social journey. Are all their memories false?

Other names: Almaira-2-producer, Chongo-4-tinker, Galem-1-astrogator, Isterhazy-4-brick, Sempek-17-miner, Yohn-33-carpenter.

Servant Traits

1. **Grounded.** A solid life has left you able to shrug off the slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune. Gain +1 aura or thought. Also, remove 1 additional mental burden when you rest.
2. **Housemaker.** Nothing makes humans happier than nests. Thus humans make their own homes: building, wiring, plumbing, repairing. Spend a hero die to find a useful air duct or sewer connection between two rooms or adjacent buildings.
3. **Resourceful.** A lifetime in the shadows has taught you how to borrow and misappropriate with aplomb. Once per house, you can spend 1 life to walk away with a useful item.
4. **Shopstaff.** Grown and bred to a service role, you make people feel comfortable around you. Spend 1 life to make a human more friendly (e.g. a hostile foe calms down, a surly fellow becomes cooperative).
5. **Strong.** A life of labor and the good diet provided by the establishment has given you a powerful physique. Gain +2 strength or endurance.
6. **Tough.** Your hard life means you can take more punishment than most humans. Each day wake up with 1d6 + level temporary punishment points. These absorb physical damage, but cannot fuel powers or traits.

Servant Items

1. **Noble Riding Gear.** Looks spiffy, and the jacket was advertised as quite bullet-proof. (armor +5, 1 st)
2. **Jousting Staff.** Sturdy combat walking stick made of authentic synthetic wood. (1d6+1, 1 st)
3. **Harshfield Uniform.** Rugged striped outdoor labor suit with built in climate control for work in hot and freezing conditions. (armor +2, 1 st)
4. **Collar of Happiness.** This metal collar injects you with happy juice when you feel sad. (ward +2, 1 st)
5. **Mental Shackles.** Glyph-crusted head implants that protect you from mind control ... and thoughts of not doing what you're told. (ward +3, 1 st)
6. **Social Credit Tattoo.** Proof of what a good person you are. Free access to corporate dormitories and food slurry dispensaries!
7. **Improvised Lock Picks.** Well-used. Open doors and crack golem car route guidance brains. (1 st)
8. **Master Eyeball.** In a preservative jar. Lets you pass for higher class. (1 st)
9. **Pouch of Rubies.** Worth €3,000. Quite illegal. (1 sp)
10. **Builder Blaster.** 4 of 6 shots left. Needs a buildertech port to recharge. (long range, 3d8, 1 st)
11. **Motogolem.** Named Harm. Electric, so feed it omnibatteries. (L2, carry 2, fast)
12. **Face Crab.** Dead human's face included. While you wear it, you look like someone else. Someone nice and established and not at all like you. The crab needs an hour and 1d4 life to replace its face. Obviously, it also needs a fresh face. (1 st)

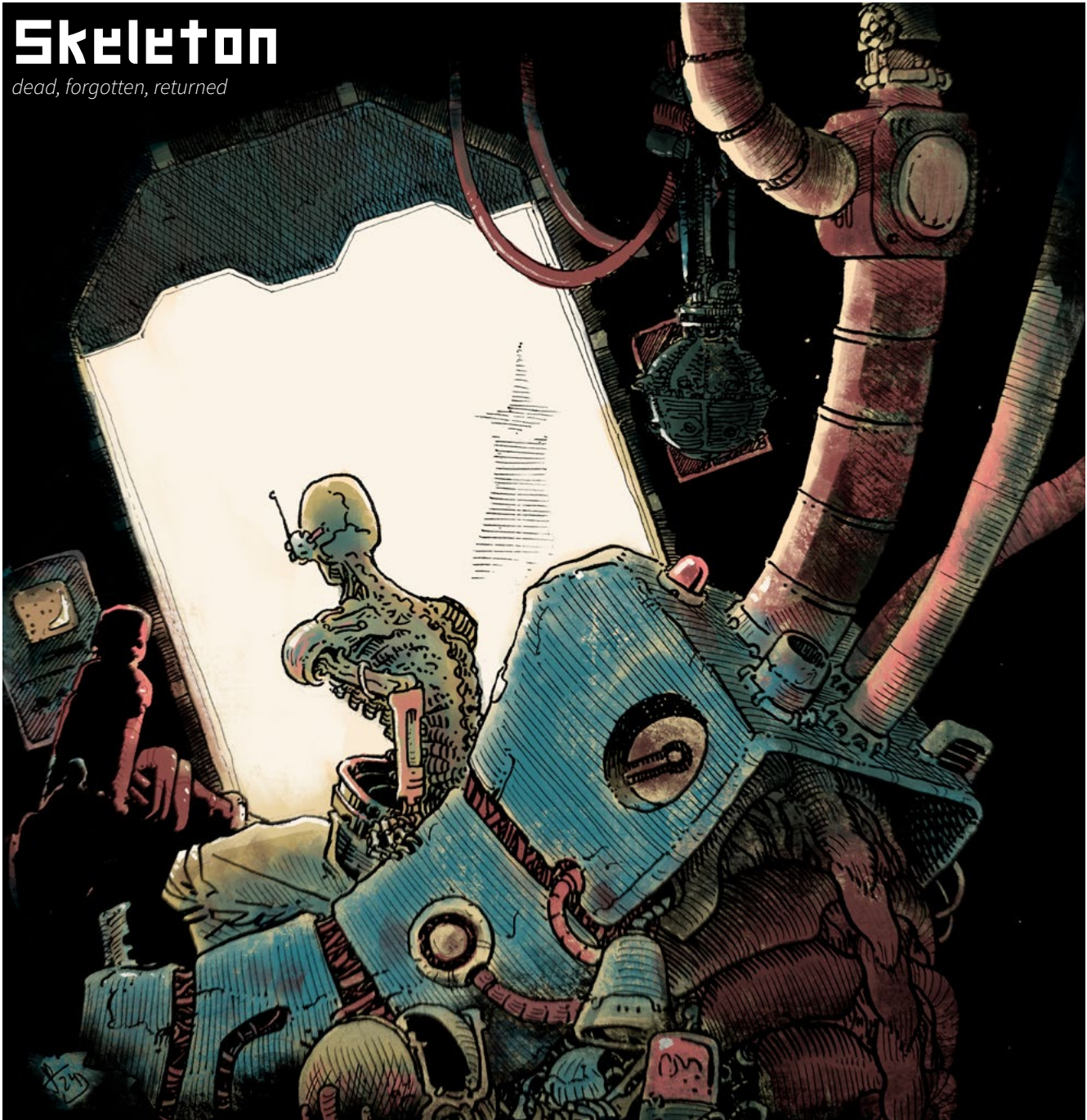
Your Former Master

Remember! A happy servant is a good servant, so make sure to smile with joy when dealing with superior classes!

	NAME	MIEN	SECRET
1	Ach-Y-Kn0t the Abandoned	cruel, but scared	baked opponent's clone into a pie
2	Chambers the Pot-Chosen	domineering, but weak	built a temple over an oldsettler ossuary
3	Et-ruc Manaot the Limitarian	foolish, but dangerous	drowned ancestor in a tub of lard
4	Fitz Craüdo the Hazmatite	gentle, but scheming	replaced the citizens' stored source codes with mind clones.
5	Ill-Child IV the Bloodseller	jolly, but vengeful	sold their bondfolk for a golden ticket
6	Weeping Mule the Visionary	pompous, but sharp	stole soul of their lover to pay a debt

Skeleton

dead, forgotten, returned



In a flash it all rushes by. Your life flickers past your eyes. There you were, a child. There, your master. Your true love. Your child. Your farewell. The journey, that epic endless journey. And there, the nemesis. And then ... nothing.

Did .. you die? Was it ... no. Wait. You can feel yourself. You're here. You open your eyes. Dark. Calm down. Deep breaths.

You can't breathe.

You can't breathe because you have no lips. No throat. No lungs.

You scream.

The Revenant's Unusual Path

A dead hero, returned to life, drawn back by a strange destiny and a route from a pile of bones in a voidwalker suit to a creature of new flesh and skin. That is a strange prospect. And somewhat horrific.

The whole table should discuss if and how they want such a character in their game.

It doesn't hurt to try—if it turns out to be a bit much, just say the characters hallucinated one of them was a skeleton after raiding that last archaeochemical complex. A little retcon never killed nobody.

Named Skeletons

1. **Apilota.** It woke upside down in an escape seed, dropped from ... a milkweed voidbreaker. A signal in its head summons it, calls it to a ... receiver?
2. **Cnave.** He awoke missing an eye and a hand and his memories. Yet, a hint remains that he was following some shining path, some holy way.
3. **Koscij.** They were dragged, sarcophagus and all, from the sea by a fisher priest and set to work, an undead laborer on a profitable ghost ship. But then their memories began to return, of better days, when the sun was brighter, when gods were nearer.
4. **Magpie Maud.** Fingers reached and group through the glue of history and lost time, they grasped Maud's mind and dragged it forth and reassembled it and set it once more in a physical shell. "Now, serve us well, timelost thief, and we shall restore you further!" And she did. Yet here she now is, in the dark again, under the lake. Was she betrayed?
5. **Noddescur.** Bones gone dark in bog and mud, barbarian hero, slain by the warc demiurge. Why is this hero needed now again?
6. **Zum Laut.** She was glued together by a kindly anthropologist. Poor dear, couldn't have known she was mending her who would not go quietly.

Other names: The Brasswire Youth, Costoloc, Eärel, Mattock, Thousand Cowrie Man, Silver Lake Lady.

Skeleton Traits

1. **Bones Alone Remain.** You are an undead skeleton. You require neither food nor water nor air nor sleep, for a dread force has restored you to this unliving body of bones. Somehow you can speak, despite having no soft tissues. You take minimum damage from arrows and sharp projectiles, half from slashing blows, and double from blunt impacts.
2. **My Bones Engraved.** You spoke to the scribe, the keeper of thoughts, and they gave you a magic chisel, with which to engrave powers in your bones. You gain five special inventory slots for powers on your arms, legs, and skull. To engrave a power, expose your bone. Each engraving takes a day. Replacing an engraved power permanently reduces your endurance by 1 unless you also ritually replace your engraved bones (ouch).
3. **Void Ward.** The emptiness of your soul protects you. Add aura to your defense.
4. **From Dust, Returning.** Your link to the mortal world is stronger than before. Even if shattered, even if crushed to dust, when someone sprinkles your remains with (roll d6): (1) holy water, (2) blood, (3)

wine, (4) tomato soup, (5) milk, or (6) nectar, your material form reconstitutes itself in a week or so.

5. **Cold New Flesh.** Your new flesh is as semi-precious stone, your body a sculpture of doom. Your stone-like skin increases your natural defense by +1. Also, you can use fresh blood to transfer life from a willing creature to yourself. A bit like, er, a vampire?
6. **Soul Thief.** When a nearby creature is reduced to 0 life, you steal a little of its soul to gain 1d4 life. This reduces one of its other attributes to 0.

Skeleton Items

1. **Void Gun.** Low impact razor fragments shred flesh but leave void hulls intact. Useless against +5 armor suits or better. (short range, 2d6, reload 3, 1 st)
2. **Little Pyramid.** It has a tiny mummy (L6, groaning) inside! Break it to set the mummy free ... (2 sp)
3. **Ghost Bone Sabre.** Forged from the bones of the noösphere, it deals full damage to spirits. (1d10, 1 st)
4. **Leatherman Suit.** Hides your bones. Is looking like a leather golem better? (armor +4, 2 st)
5. **Fresh Face.** Feed it blood every day (1 life) so it stays rosy. (ward +1, 1 st)
6. **Old Key.** A transcendental key for an omni lock. The address is in a ruined city. What does it hide? (1 sp)
7. **Broken Holy Arrow.** This killed you. It still has an intangible tether to your slayer. (1 sp)
8. **Dusty Orb.** Linked to a secret observation portal, it shows a view of a lovely little town. It reminds you of home. It matches nothing you've ever seen in the travel books. (ward +1, 3 sp)
9. **One Pound of Living Flesh.** It will stay alive if fed on sunlight, but it needs to absorb living tissues to grow large enough to completely coat your bones.
10. **Glass Skull.** It can hold three powers. It sings at dawn. Who did it belong to? (ward +1, 1 st)
11. **Round Door Shield.** Probably from a dead void ship. Living tissue over translucent crystal ribbing. It always regrows within a week of being destroyed. Placed in a suitable opening, it forms an airtight seal. (armor +2, 1 st)
12. **Zu Helmet.** It receives voices from beyond. It speaks to the spirits of desert and mountain. It lets you speak to ghosts and phantoms. (ward +1, 1 st).

Tourist

bright-eyed, breathless, bushy-tailed



Excited you step through the door, through the cosmic veil, your daimon guide whispering in your ear, “Oh, wonders shall you see! Strange places like none have imagined! Voyage will you through places of dream and fancy, and bring back tales aplenty.”

Between one breath and the next, you find yourself elsewhere, otherwise, otherworld. This will be *fun*.

The Visitor from Elsewhere

The tourist is an outsider path, not quite of this land. The locals cannot place the tourist into their schemes—neither civilized nor barbarian, friend nor foe.

Where is this Elsewhere?

1. The dark side of a moon or other fast star.
2. The far side of the Yellow Waste or the Ultraviolet Grasslands or some other great divide.
3. A civilization entirely existing in the noösphere.
4. A parallel portal or shadow world.
5. Another planet far beyond the near and far voids.
6. The real world? What do you mean, "real"?!

Perhaps a tourist returns to their homeworld as simply as dying. Or, as they call it, 'over-gaming' ... 'game-overing' ... er ... logging off?

Named Tourists

1. **Alba Rush.** She's out to find herself, accompanied by her friends Cloud, Ape, and Orc.
2. **Don Xazavota.** The third greatest lover of the Grand Tour. Master of lotteries. Rider of swift horses.
3. **Herkwulf Vragerritter.** Fancies themselves a great detective on a long sabbatical. Twirls mustache.
4. **Manglebert.** A dashing chancer, a man at arms, a gambler, a carouser. It is unclear where their gambling luck comes from.
5. **Sixflower.** This three-eyed human wears trifocals and travels with a personal luggage mimic. They are dangerous and best avoided.
6. **Thrushki ici Thrashki.** Claims to be the wandering noble scion of a great lordly line, a divine line even, driven to a life of tourism by the draconic corruption of their automanufacturing island.

Other names: Gulabiya Bagicevali, Melatiara Malwinkka, Periwinkle Perkins, Rosenmunter Bollibloemen, Safranelino Jardinieri, Zurata Alazhar.

Tourist Traits

1. **Personal Daimon.** The nimbic essence of one from the golden ages, from the farthest times, where future and past meet, become your spirit guide. It knows strange histories and once per session lets you narrate a surprise twist or discovery ("there was an extra battery in the empty suitcase!"). The referee has a soft veto on these twists.
2. **Clueless Outsider.** Caught red-handed? Trespassing? Spend a hero die, and you're let off with a warning and an indulgent grin.
3. **Fortunate One.** When you roll a natural 1, roll again. Or, save it and change one roll later this session to any number you like.
4. **Underestimated.** Nobody ever targets you first. Folks are always surprised by your first attack.
5. **Intestinal Fortitude.** Once per session, restore one attribute completely. Right now. Just like that. *Also*, once per session, you can spend a hero die to overcome an ingested poison. *Also*, you're brave.
6. **Hashtag Blessed.** Every time you visit a new place, gain a tourist die. It works like a hero die. You can hold a number equal to your charisma.

Tourist Items

1. **Friend Mimic (L13, fond).** You've befriended an *objét* mimic. It stores one sack's worth of items in its cheek pouches. It camouflages itself as a hefty travel trunk, crocodile leather valise, bespoke clamshell suitcase, wheeled garment bag, kevlar duffle bag, or an exotic carpet bag. If left to its own devices, it follows you on metal spider legs, myriad millipede legs, rubbery tentacles, elegant bird legs, dozens of gnome feet, or biomechanical bony wheels. If lost, it will eventually find its way back to you by tunneling through the dullways between interesting moments. Once per session, you can spend a hero die to rouse it to action. It leaps into the fray, swallowing an enemy. The enemy disappears into no-space along with any stored item that fails its save.
2. **Metapills.** These 60 pills have a 50% chance to confer immunity to any disease encountered. (1 sp)
3. **Escape Button.** Put it on a wall, push it, and a door appears. Single-use. (1 sp)
4. **Pass Person.** A magic document that gives a bonus to bypassing officials and guards. (ward +1, 1 sp)
5. **Photographic Memory Device.** It uses demons and crystals to record what you see. Can store up to 360 images in its magnetic brain! (1 st)
6. **Shapeless Hat.** Protects from rain, sun, flies, and spores. Gives a bonus to disappear in a crowd. (1 st)
7. **Sturdy Stick.** Grants a bonus on long walks there and back again. (close, 1d6, 1 st)
8. **Comfortable Sandals.** Show off your socks as you walk in style! (gain +1 charisma, 1 st)
9. **Umbrella Gun.** Protects from rain and has a single surprising shot. (short range, 2d6, 1 st)
10. **Guide Book.** The thin sheets provide a lot of toilet paper. *Also*, you can spend a hero die to wrestle a useful fact or shortcut from this brick. (1 st)
11. **This Old Thing.** A silvery undershirt a grateful friend gave to you ages ago. Probably not worth much. (armor +4, 1 st)
12. **Safety Blanket.** Possibly a towel. Very large and fluffy. Makes you invisible to very large and very stupid predators. (ward +4, 1 st)

Tricksters

thief, talker, trapper



Spider-coyote, rabbit-crow, snake-stick, soul-eater, body-snatcher. Maybe you fell in love with a daemon from long ago. Maybe you pushed a big red button marked with the solar city glyph for "NO". Should have been the end. Should have fried and died, got eviscerated, turned into a skin-suit for a voidwalker.

But it wasn't. But you didn't. How'd you pull that off? Who did you become in the process?

Named Tricksters

1. **Ansible Five.** A machine human, builder-made, she wears soft skin like the best of them. When she activates her golden-tongue, emperors and prophets fall silent. Why has she returned from her gilded ranching retirement?
2. **Draisine Ourdenski.** Born into a tribe of rail-riders, Draisine found freedom in the Twin Scimitars cyclist cult then rose to become the Big Hat of the All-Revolving Permanent Circus and is now engaged in a very important plot to bring down the Grand Poobah of the Blue Pyramid. Honest.
3. **Muggly.** A doghead from the deep rust country, raised to high society by the Duke D'Astar. The duke's gone missing so now it's Muggly's turn to save him with a chuckle and knife-pistol.
4. **Shadowchild Venerable.** The unaging child, the cursed acolyte of the Flesh God, the unpredicted one. Or, perhaps, just an urchin with a magic clock?

Other names: Belmorio 'l Vito, Eshtva Ladra, Hi Cro-Do, Mikelo Teranos, Tarent King, Squnq Banansi.

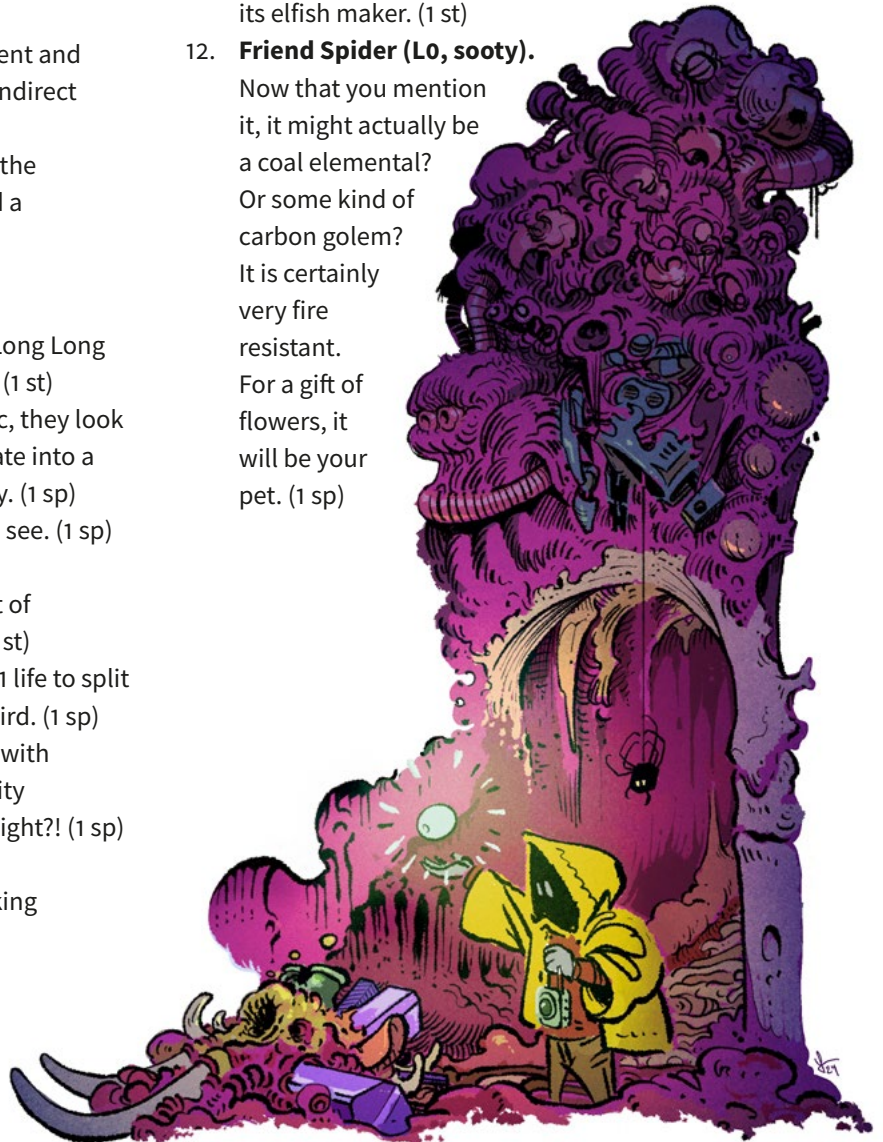
Trickster Traits

1. **Backstabber.** Wield knives and pistols. Deal double damage when a target doesn't expect your attack.
2. **Expert Friends.** You know where to find skilled help and how to inspire people. Each pet or sidekick is an expert at one thing. That's a +6 bonus.
3. **Fake Out.** You know how to hide and lie low when needed. Reduced to 0 life? Spend a hero die and that last blow didn't connect.
4. **Pickpocket.** Skilled at sneaky stealing. Failed your roll? Save and no-one noticed.
5. **Bystander.** You're good at looking innocent and harmless. Also, reduce damage from all indirect sources by your level. So, by 6 at level 6.
6. **Silver-Tongued.** You could (and do) talk the scales off a dragon. Spend a hero die and a creature believes you, no roll required.

Trickster Items

1. **Glitter Ball.** A levitating disco ball from Long Long Ago. It follows simple verbal commands. (1 st)
2. **Twelve Sleepy Coins.** Wrapped in plastic, they look like gold. Exposed to the air they sublimate into a soporific cloud. Save or sleep, as they say. (1 sp)
3. **Five Fake Fingers.** It's for the prints, you see. (1 sp)
4. **Cryptic Clavus.** It's a card, it's a key, it unlocks oldtech doors. Still requires a bit of jiggery-pokery and a skill roll. (ward +1, 1 st)
5. **Ring of Divisibility.** Put it on and spend 1 life to split into two half-sized copies of yourself. Weird. (1 sp)
6. **Stranger in a Bottle.** A synthetic person with fake memories trapped in an improbability superposition. It's a fake person, right? Right?! (1 sp)
7. **Camelskin Jerkin.** Sturdy leather with tassels and secret pockets. Good for looking non-descript, eh? (armor +3, 1 st)

8. **Shipsteel Stiletto.** A long, thin, sharp blade of perfect metal. Easily concealed. (close, 1d4+1, 3 sp)
9. **Dale Four-Four.** A sentient four-shot pistol from Long Long Ago. Fires bolts of many colors. Has three damage settings: stun (save), burn (1d6), and disintegrate (4d4). (short range, 1d6, reload 5, 1 st)
10. **Second Face.** It's another face, stored in a nutrient gel in a preservative bag. (1 st)
11. **Smart Rope.** Twenty meters. It unties when it needs to. It wants to strangle its elfish maker. (1 st)
12. **Friend Spider (Lo, sooty).**
Now that you mention it, it might actually be a coal elemental?
Or some kind of carbon golem?
It is certainly very fire resistant.
For a gift of flowers, it will be your pet. (1 sp)



The Goods

What? This old thing? I've always had it and they didn't need it anyway and I've never seen it before. No, no, I'm not interested in selling ... what ... you say you'd pay a mill-cash for it? You store this coin amulet at home? The com-bank?

	WHAT YOU STOLE	FROM WHOM	WHAT IT DOES	BUT, ACTUALLY
1	an undying flame	a dead angel or daemon	dissipates kinetic energy	bleeds the edge off reality
2	your body	a dead or synthetic hero	hums like dead star songs	feeds ka into a golem engine
3	your face	a disgraced or lost noble	modifies object temperature	grows mushrooms
4	your mind	a double agent or false idol	shifts local light sources	preserves erased memories
5	your name	a forgotten Builder or Vile	temporarily revives the dead	seals forbidden knowledge
6	your soul	an innocent star or machine	withers weak living things	unlocks holy doors

Weapon & Bearer

precious, promise, purpose



You were made. You know that. You did not awake to consciousness. You are not even sure if you are conscious. Before there was nothing. No you. No world. Now you see the world. You respond to stimuli. You effect your will upon the cosmos.

Who made you? God? Demon? Wizard? Accident? You simply feel their mark upon you. Maker.

But one thing is crystal clear. Your purpose. Certainly, it may take forever to accomplish, but ... you don't fret. You have forever.

Is this feeling you feel ... joy? Perhaps. Perhaps something like joy.

You have a purpose. What could be better than that?

You will fulfill your purpose. Ah, such purity, such clarity. It gives you comfort as strange aeons rise and fall. Perhaps ... your memories fail sometimes? It is long, this time. There are silences, darkness. Ages you rested in crypts, aeons you floated beneath seas. But your purpose remains. And again and yet again a bearer will come, in the fullness of time, to wield you and fulfill your purpose.

Two Characters, One Path: Eternal Weapon and Mortal Bearer

You are playing two characters, investing xp in both. The weapon is the hero, the bearer is the sidekick.

The dominant character, a magical, telepathic, perhaps mind-controlling created thing. This **weapon character** has charisma, aura, and thought abilities, but no physical attributes (treat them as 0 when required); for those it depends on the bearer. As its abilities increase and its purpose culminates, it may turn even a green squire into a destiny-chosen king by letting itself be drawn from a stone.

The subordinate, the **bearer character**; a human or animal chosen by fate or happenstance to help the weapon. The bearer has strength, endurance, and agility abilities, so write those down. The bearer's mental abilities are often irrelevant, since the weapon is in the driving seat.

If the bearer leaves ("But they cannot leave! Never! They are bound to me! Why would they leave? Do they not feel the purpose?") or dies ("They tried to leave! They were not worthy! I had no choice!"), the weapon will find a new bearer soon enough.

This path is more complex to show how you to hack the game and depart from standard templates.

The Weapon

Now it is revealed. A character in its own right.

Weapon's Eternal Purpose

This special trait permanently blocks one of your trait slots. It will activate if you reach level 9.

1. **Doom.** You will kill the evil one. Implacably, time and fortune will bring you to the defouler of the world, and in the end, it shall be your infernal metal that will end that misbegotten one with a single touch. At level 9, roll d6 to reveal the evil one: (1) your bearer, (2) closest friend, (3) babe born under thrice-red star, (4) nameless beggar, (5) benevolent prince, (6) highest local deity.
2. **Creator.** You will anoint the Chosen One to create a utopia. At level 9, roll d6 to reveal the one who will wield you as they symbol of a new world: (1) your bearer's sibling, (2) worst enemy, (3) dying old man, (4) wise whale, (5) tyrant's decadent heir, (6) zealous cultist. From this moment, driving you into the ground at noon turns the sun viridian and spawns new lifeforms (quilted plants, dreaming trees, mammalian insects, avian arachnids, fungoid gastropods, improved 'humans' that subsist on light and water). You herald the era of the Green Son, you augur the death and decay of the old world.
3. **Protector.** You are the balance, the fulcrum of the world. Your touch will turn this era's great threat to dust, scatter it like air plankton in moonlight. At level 9, roll d6 to reveal the nemesis: (1) a dreamer opening a doorway to a bleak city that will eat the world, (2) a misunderstood scientist unravelling the seams of creation, (3) a preacher, rousing the peoples and forging their faith into a sword of dire revolution, (4) an adolescent who will inherit the throne and unveil the power to unite the worlds, to mentally travel back and forth in time, to lock creation in stasis and subservience to their will forever, (5) an old wizard, whose bitter tragedy will eat the sky to win them life everlasting, (6) a mother who will love a traveler from another space, from another time, and give birth to an innocent who will break the barriers between being and non-being.
4. **Devastator.** You must keep your true and awesome purpose secret for now. Even from yourself. But it will be great. At level 9, roll d6 to find out that you shall: (1) purify this world in fire, when you are driven into the olmen-stone at the foot of Mount —, (2) cleanse this world in flood, when you strike the root of the undying-glacier beyond the Grand Valley of —, (3) open the gates of the underworld by breaking the seven-and-seven seals in the Pits of — and release the dead, (4) peel open the sky, by scoring a gash across the face of the — Moon, and welcome the sky wanderers back home, (5) unleash famine and pestilence upon the world, when you crack open the egg of all-gold in the Temple of —, (6) announce the final war, when you sunder into a thousand thousand fragments the gong of the thousand false names of God on the Sky Island —. Then the end for all this world shall come, oh yes. Then all shall see, and a new age will be written upon those ashes. A final age. An eternal age.

Named Weapons

1. **CMD (Crush Maim Destroy?).** A hammer sent from the beginning of time to stop the untimely destruction of the false cosmos and ensure the birth of the true cosmos at the appointed time. Wait. What?
2. **Das Ding.** The terrifying tripod cauldron fated to revive the Blue God and usher in a new heaven.
3. **Klava Ventoré.** The ring that is the key to the Wind that drives the minds of the Great Phylakes. Its doom is to awaken those titans and bind them.
4. **The Rainbow.** The Infinite Dragon's bow, prophesied to break the barriers of the Vile Ones at the turning of the age and usher in the time of <error>.
5. **Starbringer.** The child of Ill Nano, the rod of void that will bring the slow stars to the Given World.
6. **Thuromakhos.** The blade designed to paint the door by which the Maker will exit the world at the time of the opening of the ways.

Other names: Atomic Spirit, Bela Strega, Item UR, Omega Kaos, Tanta Yama, Unheimlich Kate.

Weapon Traits

1. **Cleanser.** Spend 1 charisma or 1d6 life to end another power or enchantment. Poof, it's gone. Also, you can spend a hero die to instantly cleanse a small area; a stagnant pool of bacteria, a kitchen of dirty dishes, a bedroom of smelly socks, a car of dust, or a shrine of unholy curses and blasphemous graffiti.
2. **Curse-Blessed.** A thinking creature (animal or person) cannot throw you away without your permission. They own you now, and that means you belong to them. Forever and ever. Until you let them go. Or someone removes your curse ... er ... blessing ... somehow. It's best to keep your bearer happy, so they don't try to have you removed. Maybe a few lies about their destiny? Also, you can communicate with any creature that is touching you telepathically



3. **Death Hunger.** You know everything about disassembling mortals. Also, track the enemies you kill in a battle. Every enemy killed gives you a cumulative +1 to attack rolls until the end of the battle. After the first kill, you growl and roar until the killing stops. Expert: the bonus is +2 per kill. Master: +3.
4. **Demolisher.** Your critical hits are stronger (e.g., x2 becomes x3). Also, when you strike an object about the size of a compact car, you can spend 1 strength or endurance to simply demolish it. Doors burst open, brick walls explode, wooden walls shatter into kindling, straw huts go flying, small golems crumple. You can also use this ability to turn a regular hit into a critical hit, or to double a critical hit. As a weapon (without strength or endurance), simply use your bearer's abilities as fuel for your fury.
5. **Fatespun.** You are a magic item and any form of magic detection will show as much. You are incredibly durable for an object. Indeed, truly destroying you requires a quest: a special ritual, a special place, and a special time. Write the quest down, if you like. If you are physically destroyed (by running out of life, for example) or thrown away (e.g. into a lake, a deep ocean, a void portal) you will reappear somewhere, close to your bearer or close to a potential new bearer, at a narratively opportune time (or in 2d4 weeks).
6. **I Am Legion.** You know everything about armies. Also, track the enemies you kill in a battle. Every enemy killed gives you a cumulative bonus of +1 damage until the end of the battle. After the first kill, blood gushes from you until the killing stops. Expert: the bonus is +2 per kill. Master: +3.

Weapon Form

You can carry no items because you are an item, but you use your item inventory to describe your form. You can list burdens (damage, rust, decay) in your item inventory.

1. **Tooth of the Root Worm.** You are a small knife or spike of primordial bone (1d3 damage, you occupy 1 soap). Within your honeycomb structure you can store any poison (1 dose). Inside you, servant cells or machines whisper, hint and nudge. Your bearer can implant you in their own jaw or finger or hand. Now they can never lose you! Also, nobody needs to know you exist. This can be useful.
2. **The Hard Ring.** You are a ring and occupy no inventory. You are made of: (1) petrified tears, (2) graven ivory, (3) glittering gold, (4) black ice, (5) bleeding silver, or (6) captured light. You do no damage yourself, but you can use your bearer's life and abilities to fuel your powers or deal damage directly. Your power is *Suspended in the Light*. List it in your item inventory.
3. **Great Weapon.** You always occupy 3 stones. You are massive, epic, two-handed: (1) red iron axe (2d6), (2) blue steel sword (2d6), (3) glistening yellow rod (2d10), (4) roaring silver chainsaw (2d6), (5) hooked black flail (2d6), or (6) flaming white lance (1d12*). When you score a critical hit, you always do at least x3 damage. You can spend a hero die to break open a door, smash apart a treasure chest, destroy an engine block, rip down a tree, or other similar feat of destruction.
4. **Weapon of Nobility.** You represent majesty, shimmering and cruel. You always occupy 1 stone and are a: (1) golden sword (1d8), (2) shining bow (1d8), (3) lapis sceptre (1d8), (4) barbed flail (1d8), (5) jade spear (1d10), or (6) bronze dagger-axe (1d8). Your bearer is resistant to everything low and ignoble, taking half-damage from peasant rabble or brigands. That said, nobility is very much in the eye of the beholder, so

beware — your bearer takes double damage from anyone they believe is rightfully their superior. Also, any base or vile creature that touches you takes 1d4 damage as horrible blisters spread across their skin.

5. **The Humblest of Tools.** You don't look like a weapon. You always occupy 1 stone and look like a simple farm tool or implement, perhaps a: (1) sickle (1d4), (2) hammer (1d4), (3) cast-iron pot (1d4), (4) heavy samovar (1d3), (5) hoe (1d4), or (6) shovel (1d6). But given a day and a night, your cold iron can flow like soft wax and become a different tool of similar size and efficacy (e.g. a wrench, a pipe, a clothes iron, etc.). Also, your bearer has a bonus to relevant tests when they use you as a tool, letting them harvest incredible amounts of wheat in a short time, or cook incredibly good soup to impress a local master chef.
6. **Ur Gun.** You are the platonic ideal of the gun (3d6* damage, long range, 1 stone). Your precision is beyond compare. You fit any hand like you were made for it—because you were. The bullets you fire condense from the insubstantial karmic realm between here and non-here. You are the judgement of gods. Do you care that your bearer will perish by your providential bullet? Can you? What is one mortal compared to the great purpose? Any attack rolled with you is a critical hit on a natural 13 or a natural 20. If a natural 13 would miss your intended target, the critical hit strikes the nearest reasonable target (including allies) instead.



Suspended in the Light

Luminous Grasp, Hard Light Hold

P: 1 **R:** nearby **T:** creature or object **D:** instant

You glow, your bearer's hand glows, the air glows, one nearby target is lifted a handsbreadth off the ground and the light throttles them. They suffer 1d4 damage and lose their next action. No roll required.

Overcharge: they suffer 1d8 damage instead.

The Bearer

Who is this clod that bears you now? What can they do? For a new random bearer, roll d20. If you are replacing a fallen bearer, roll d20 + charisma. Roll once for each column. Distribute the ability scores for strength, agility, and endurance as you like. Choose and assign traits as normal for a character of the bearer's level. Level up your bearer by investing xp, just as with the weapon. Zero level bearers may be unsuitable for the weapon's grand purpose. Perhaps it would be best to simply ... use them up and then discard them?

	ABILITIES ST/EN/AG	LEVEL	LIFE	THEY ARE BUT ALSO
1	1, 0, 0	0	3	lowborn and malnourished	proud and boastful
2	2, 0, 0	0	4	sickly and thin	silent and sly
3	1, 1, 0	0	5	noble and stocky	malevolent and cunning
4	1, 1, 1	0	6	lanky and unkempt	arrogant and capable
5	2, 1, 0	1	7	portly and nimble	kind and helpful
6	2, 1, 1	1	8	muscular and scarred	humble and incompetent
7	2, 2, 0	1	9	slender and sinewy	eager and innocent
8	3, 1, 0	1	10	voluptuous and elegant	melancholic and sad
9	2, 2, 1	1	11	hollow and gaunt	desperate and grim
10	3, 2, 0	1	12	gruesome and malformed	determined and happy
11	3, 1, 1	1	13	wildeyed and mad	loud and boisterous
12	3, 2, 1	2	14	clawed and clutching	vicious and petty
13	5, 1, 0	2	15	handsome and disfigured	somber and wise
14	2, 2, 2	2	16	bland and forgettable	ominous and macabre
15	3, 3, 0	2	17	heavysset and ominous	vivacious and bubbly
16	3, 3, 2	2	18	tough and pockmarked	scared and cowardly
17	4, 2, 2	3	19	pretty and insubstantial	hungry and greedy
18	4, 3, 2	3	20	cute and inoffensive	angry and bereft
19	4, 3, 3	3	21	vigorous and unusual	faithful and generous
20+	4, 4, 4	4	22	shining and beautiful	envious and insecure

Named Bearers

1. **Bubba Winters.** A simple redland shrimp farmer chosen by a ruthless Observer to enter a noöspheric hell portal in the local monastery. There a glittering ring possessed them, called them "vampire slayer".
2. **Cleric of Monotoné.** This decapolitan oldtech whisperer wandered into the wastes a century ago. Now they are back, wielding a rainbow blade and gibbering about a crystal city named Mons Tony?
3. **Hort.** A shrunk-headed barbarian skinshifter from beyond the Mountains of the Moon. They wields the precious CMD hammer, yes they does.
4. **Lord Boring.** A paladin of the cogflower, the truest servant of the Ideal Spreadsheet. They seem decanted from an ancient mangement manual, but no. They are just an idealistic servant of the Law.
5. **Nauros.** An idealistic warc who believes his maker's propaganda about the super soldiers' oppression. Now an iron crown has begun whispering to him.
6. **Four Doom.** Nameless, whispy, ghostly flesh and glowing bones. Awakened from some horrible slumber to bear the Doormaker once more.

Other names: Baya Baga, Hangra III, Mekha Baghér, Shovel Desertmouse, Sin Loess, Toop Toop.

Bearer Traits

1. **Burglar.** You were always so good at breaking into and out of places, disarming locks and traps, and moving very very quietly. You were the perfect person to save your weapon (your master) from its prison ... er ... treasure chamber. Also, spend a hero die to immediately find a hidden safe or lever.
2. **Doombringer.** Yours is the grim hand of fate. When you strike a creature that is lower level than your weapon (your master), it is immediately defeated, no damage roll required.
3. **Fighting Woman or Man.** You are skilled with your weapon (your master) and weapons like it. Also, when facing foes of level 1 or lower, attack a number of times equal to your level.
4. **Loyal.** You will never betray your friends (or your master), you would suffer torture and tribulation for them without fear. Once per scene, when you sacrifice your own personal best interests to prove your loyalty, you immediately gain a hero die. Also, gain +1 ward.
5. **Revenant in Waiting.** When you die, your weapon (your master) may choose to revive you by reducing one of your ability scores by 1. Each time you return, you are a little less human, a little more dead. When all your scores are reduced to 0, you become your weapon's shambling corpse slave.
6. **Shackleminded.** Your brain has been augmented with glyph-scribed nails and holy wires immunizing you against mental attacks, psychic effects, and individual initiative. Gain +2 ward and +1 endurance, but lose -1 thought.

Bearer Items

1. **Leather Harness.** Show off that oiled physique. Provides two free weapon item slots. (armor +1, 1 st)
2. **Bravery Goggles.** Hide scary sights. (ward +1, 1 sp)
3. **Shrunken Head.** It belonged to the previous bearer? It stores a single power. (ward +2, 1 st)
4. **Fur Kilt.** Impressive. (charisma +1, armor +1, 1 st)
5. **Red Juice.** The master makes this every morning. The master says this is a healing potion. It grants +1d8 temporary life and +2 strength. If you go without for more than a day, suffer a withdrawal burden that reduces strength and thought by 2 each.
6. **Third Ear.** Lets you hear the master's voice at a distance. Pretty nifty. (1 sp)
7. **Polishing Kit.** Perfect for keeping jewelry and weapons looking impressive. (1 st)
8. **Bracers of Sacrifice.** Lets you roll a hero die to absorb twice that much damage for an ally. (1 st)
9. **Blisscandy.** To keep bad thoughts away. (1 sp)

10. **Book of True Thought.** Written by the master's master, it holds every answer. With it, spend a hero die to find your way. Works 5-in-6 times. (1 st)
11. **Friendly Ankle Bracelet.** So your master can always find and save you! (1 st)
12. **Flesh Pocket.** This symbiote lets you hide a small object inside yourself! (1 st)

Betrayal!

Though the bearer is cursed ... er ... blessed to bear you, they are not your slave. If you mistreat them, they may try to sabotage you or your purpose. When you push them too far ...

1. They've found a wise master to teach them to take control of you! If you fail your save, you will become their slave! Quick, the first bearer you find. Roll up your new bearer with a penalty. Your old bearer becomes your nemesis.
2. They've set up a deal with a shady wizard to sell you for your magical essence. This could hurt.
3. Drown themselves in deep waters ... with you strapped on! You will be lost!
4. They've decided to go up against ... a great swallowing beast. Oh, this is bad. You'll be digested. Again.
5. Oh, come on. You know that hammer won't work. Hey! Stop it! They might break you into pieces!
6. Chop off the hand that wields you! No! This might just work! Oh, come on, no, not the sewers. Your next bearer will be a gutter or waste creature.
7. What's that? They're writing something blindfolded. You can't see what they wrote. What did they write? Now they're visiting an exorcist?!
8. They're drinking themselves into a stupor. Every day. Making themselves useless for your purpose. Gah! They've found your weak spot. You'll have to tell the next bearer that the gods forbid drink.
9. They've signed up for a useless war! All that wasted time, dang it. Now ... is it better to let them sacrifice themselves or just ... fade away?
10. They're going to get thrown in prison and the guards will lock you up as evidence! It won't work, but such a waste of time.
11. They've found some fairies to whisper them into a fairy mound! This is terrible! They'll travel through time ... quick, slip from their fingers. Your next bearer must be a woodland or fey creature.
12. They're trying to give you away to some fool ... oh ... wait ... this looks like a better candidate actually. Yes! Fortune and purpose serve you still! Roll up your new bearer with a bonus.



"Tut tut," came the voice out of the worn synthrock.

"Where do you think you're going?" it continued, "Yes, I see you hear me. You think I'll ask you to stay a while and listen? No, no ... I am not that kind of daemon. You hear me now, now you cannot leave. Well, I suppose it doesn't matter to you ... for you I am precisely that kind of daemon. But, I was like you, once. A human of flesh and

jewel and noosphere jack. Ah, I waffle. It must have been a century? Homespun smock, rattan sandals, shepherd's crook but no bi-comte's miter. You will do ..."

The wizard's slap knocked the shepherd awake.

"Beware, young Ookle! Don't go listening to every memory stone you find. Some are still alive and twitching

with old ghosts too indecent to remain in their electric afterlives."

The wizard pulled on the ancient rubber gloves and gingerly approached the sparkling synthrock. Yes, definitely still some fragmentary spirit within. She tossed the lead-thread cloth over it and wrapped it tight. No escape for the daemon and just maybe she could sell it to one of the oldtech brokers. It seemed a powerful ghost, maybe a key ghost to unlock a tomb-vault.

Named Wizards

1. **Akaula of the Blue Rose.** Accidentally discovered how to use forgotten oldtech by eating the dusty dead. Don't ask how the accident happened.
2. **Irshi d'Alkva.** Awakened from a time-traveling trance when some damn fool ate one of his descendants. What and why?
3. **Lomo el Rondojo.** Doesn't remember much that happened during the last possession. It lasted for five years and stole most of her life. Now she studies the noöspheric weirdness to find that daemon, flay its mind and bind its soulfire.
4. **Nobelle teu Barii.** There wasn't a particular reason Nobelle chose necromancy and soul theft. It just seemed the easiest path to power. Which was true.
5. **Pendré la Baton.** The stick of office, the baton, chooses its bearer. Well, that's what the batonmaster said when he stole Pendré for an apprentice.
6. **Zabal Nivyi.** An ordinary settlement nerd, too fond of excess knowledge. When a jubilee was announced, Zabal stole his town's brain and fled.

Other names: Hatman Issi, Iematalf, Noë Two-Copy, Orange Orbeyes, The Poncho, REM Nil of the Atömglöck.

Wizard Traits

1. **Cosmic Qanat.** See the lines of cosmic force flowing through the world. Use all powers as though you were 2 levels higher. Reduces risk of corruption!
2. **Hackmagic.** You know how to hack and modify active powers and oldtech effects. If you recognize a power (a thought test will usually suffice) and it is equal or lower than your level, you can spend its price (in life and hero dice) to wrest control of it for one round. The cosmic qanat's increased level applies to the hackmagic trait.
3. **Noösphere Native.** You were born in a generation that grew up hooked to the noösphere. Sure, you know how to access and use it, but you get a bonus to all defenses in the noösphere and against daemons in general. You're great at doom-scrolling. Ok, you're great at doom-scrolling. Ok, you're great at doom-scrolling. Ok, you're great at doom-scrolling. You can take a power,

prime it, and bind it to a physical object like a business card or napkin with locking glyphs. The scroll is imbued with your life force until someone activates it with the trigger word of your choice. You can spend a hero die to reduce the cost of a power imbued in a scroll by that amount (minimum 1).

5. **Soul Fuel.** Find the ka in all things. Use a nearby friend's life force to fuel your powers. Also, spend a hero die and 1d4 life to recharge an omnibattery.
6. **Veteran of the Psychic Wars.** You fought in the mind-stealer wars with lazgun and vibro machete. Add your bonus to saves against enchantments and mind-control. Also, take half damage from ordinary mental blows, but double from mental critical hits.

Wizard Items

1. **Anti-Static Robes.** Reduce spell blowback. Bonus to saves against powers, corruption, and oldtech mishaps. (armor +1, 1 st)
2. **Dead Language Daemon.** A noösphere spirit trapped in a shell of glass and steel. It reads and translates dead languages. It even invents rude limericks and dainty sonnets. (1 sp)
3. **Hard Light Scepter.** Once, void marine wizards called this a lazgun. We know better now. Charge with an omnibattery. (close, 1d8, 1 st)
4. **Bracers of the Body Electric.** Talk to machines as though they were your siblings. (ward +1, 1 st)
5. **Solaris Disc.** Not just fancy headgear that grants a bonus against light and fire powers, it absorbs solar energy to recharge 1 omnibattery per day. (1 st)
6. **Scroll Disk Belt.** Store up to 3 floppy power diskettes in your belt and activate with a button! (1 st)
7. **Collar of Life.** Store up to 3 life for activating powers. The collar doesn't care who you siphon them from. (ward +1, 1 st)
8. **Noöjack.** An extension plug to easily access the local noösphere. Also stores 3 vidys. (1 sp)
9. **Lifestealer Syringe.** A useful little thing for extracting 1 life per round from a pliant creature. Now if you just had somewhere to store it ... (1 sp)
10. **Power Scroll Printer.** Quite useful if you need your servant to employ a power for you. Each scroll is imbued with your life force until the power is discharged. (1 st)
11. **Dozen Single-Use Omnibatteries.** Still in box! Recharge anything. Explode if punctured. (1 st)
12. **Snakeskin Shoes.** Show you've got class. May make mongeese love you, but not snakes. (5 sp)

Yellowlander

mechanic, mercenary, merchant



This land was unfinished. They said it was finished. The gods. The inquisitors. The ministers. The founders. But it was not. The mountains remained unlevelled, the tunnels unbored, the plains unploughed. They still say it is finished. But clearly, it is not. Every human with eyes unscreened can see.

The Right Road gleams, detached, perfect. The empty poleis and the falscher fortresses offer pretty words to the plenipotentiaries.

But that is not the Yellow Land. From macquis to oldtech hull, from agrifactory to the saffron fields, from the flanks of the God Volcano to the worm fjords, humans dwell among the skeletons of an unborn future abandoned Long Long Ago. Perhaps this makes them so free.

Named Yellowlanders

1. **Carnon Eyecanté y Fluss.** The foppish literature critic slash auteur has finally inherited his parent clade's butchery bank. There will be some changes now, starting with a new, better indie vidy prize.
2. **Entas an'Mas III.** After a second fatal accident, the saffron beer brewer now suspects foul play.
3. **Neva Pulya.** After a road meteor hit her, all she could afford was this old porcelain doll body. Turns out not requiring air can be useful.
4. **Oró Porshelá.** The tailored scion of a gold and porcelain scavenging family, Oró jokes about the bionic matter analyzer. But the lost choices hurt.
5. **Tel Burrón.** Fled the city and the vidy-farms to become a donkey farmer. Now, a series of weather moon failures has driven him to banditry.
6. **Xio Fortunc.** While hiding from the sand dragon that ate his guards company, Xio came across lost prismatic records of the Good Engines who once helped his ancestors. Fired up, Xio would find and restart those divine machines.

Other names: 'nDresho Miraíl, Leó 'n'Opera, Mirabel Verjut, Sulc an'Nunc, Ton Ton Cuiyot, Xioté Annatibo.

Yellowlander Traits

1. **Diesel Dwarf.** Your ancestors were adapted to serve the gods as wasteland refiners, recycling Long Long Ago corpse deposits for a brighter future. Besides a natural engineering and driving and drilling affinity, you can replace your food needs with petroleum products for up to a month. Gain 1 agility.
2. **Dust Rat.** Adapted to the dry land, you require half as much water as a normal human. Gain 1 endurance. Also, you know your way around arid biomes.

3. **Rancher.** Keep herds well-oiled and charged, manage shepherds and dogs, ride solar steeds, spot water holes, and rustle burdenbeasts.
4. **Ruderalist.** Garden in the oldtech ruins, distinguish between holograms and hollow eaters, navigate the dangers of oldtech by intuition and tradition. Wield electric and magnetic weapons. Gain 1 thought.
5. **Saffron Eater.** Long exposure to exotic poisons and potions has turned your skin bright yellow and made you resistant to most toxins. Gain 1 aura and a bonus to avoid becoming addicted.
6. **Thorny.** Your skin is leathery and covered in spiny growths. You require half as much water as a normal human and gain +1 natural armor. Deal double damage when grappling.

Yellowlander Items

1. **Yellow Poncho.** Protects from sun, heat, and mind-affecting rays. (armor +1, ward +2, 1 st)
2. **Dust Face.** A full-face mask that protects against dust, haze, spores, and toxins. (ward +1, 1 st)
3. **Plug-in Chimeric.** A hybrid burdenbeast with a dome head and electric discharge. (L5, carry 3)
4. **Yellow Spear.** A metal-and-bone spear, spend 1 life to make it glow for an hour. (reach, 1d10, 2 st)
5. **Rib Bow.** A crossbow made from dead machine parts. This friend won't let you down. (long, 1d8, 1 st)
6. **Hard Leash.** Made of oldtech fibers so strong, they'll never snap. 6 meters long. (2 sp)
7. **Tikker Clicker.** An ancient clock that vibrates and buzzes when it detects corrupting energies. Grants a bonus on rolls against corruption. (1 sp)
8. **Saffron Snuff.** Inhale once to immediately clear your head or gain 1d4 temporary aura. (20 vials, 1 sp)
9. **Sand Dragon Scale.** Incredibly hard, will grind anything save ur-diamond. Fancy sandpaper. (1 st)
10. **Machination Kit.** Wrenches, pliers, wires, solders, blueprince scrolls, machine mantras, and more to keep an old fabricator ticking over. (1 sk)
11. **Water Extractor.** Extracts all the moisture from a cubic decimeter of matter in less than a minute. Bottle not included. Reusable. (1 st)
12. **Declaration of Pause.** A general-daemon suspension incantation cylinder hooked up to a wind-up speaker. Spend 1 life and a nearby daemon must save or lose their turn. (1 st)



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I see through the bricks to the sea,
crumbling castle
Inching closer each century,
crumbling castle
Water's rising up, thick and green,
crumbling castle
Are we safe in our citadel?

—*Crumbling Castle*, King Gizzard
and the Lizard Wizard,
Polygondwanaland (2017)

Here we are now, the end of our delightful dreams, the line, the limit, the edge of our builders' grand design. Behold, they rise ominous, these ramparts. Beyond this *limes*, beyond these wise faces of warning and protection, these good parents who gaze out with death upon our nemeses, that is ruinland, that is despoil, that is nothing, that is *ubi dracones*.



Appendix I. Character Sheet

Lo, behold, though you may write down the shape and form of your character on any scrap of parchment you have scavenged from a book graveyard of the pre-digital age, you may also use the following sheets should you have access to the magical artefact known as a Hit Point Printer and that rare and precious liquid, Authentic Hit Point Ink.

—THIS TRAVELER



player name

player xp

species
& looks

likes

friends

foes

pc xp

Level

defense

life

save

hero dice (HD)

name

strength

endurance

agility

melee (str)

ranged (agi)

charisma

aura

thought

fantascience (cha)

oldtech (tho)

traits (7+tho)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

+1

+2

+3

+4

+5

+3 skilled / +6 expert / +9 master

items (7+str)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

+1

+2

+3

+4

+5

2.5k cash = 100 sp = 100 st = 1 sk

burdens (cumulative penalty)

-1

-2

-3

-4

-5

-6

-7

-8

-9

-10

-11

-12

-13

-14

-15

-16

-17

-18

-19

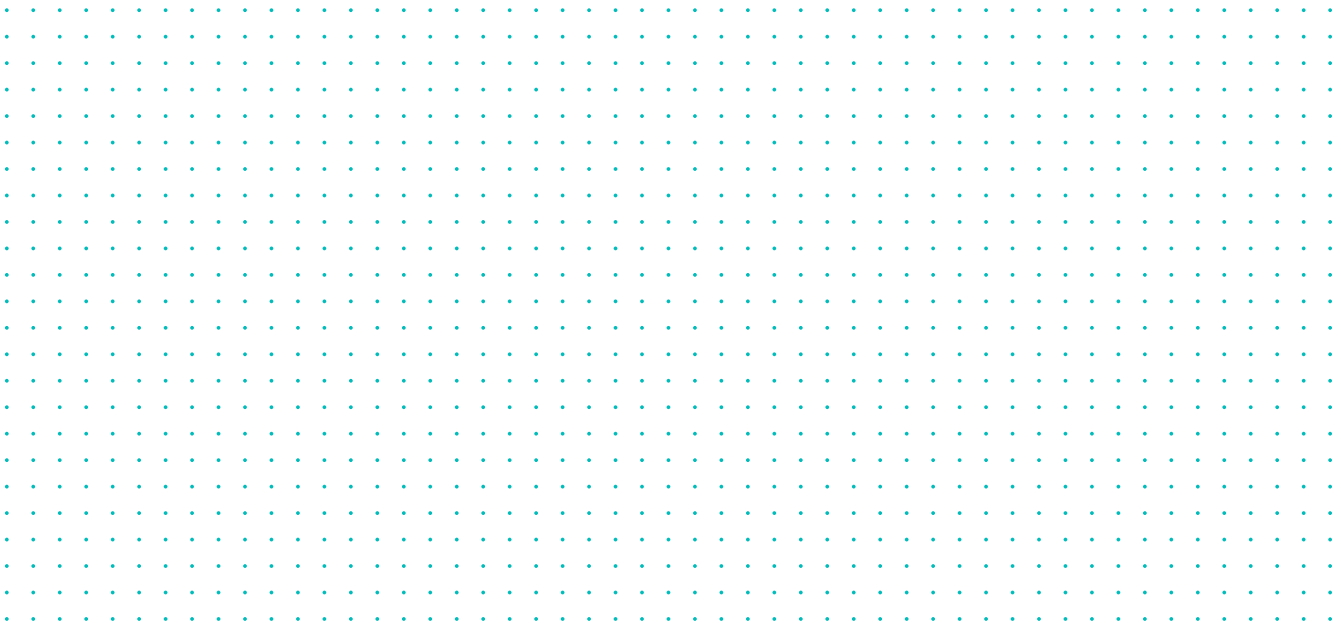
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revenue/week

wealth

expenses/week

debt



Appendix IV. Inspiration

Games do not happen in a vacuum.

IV.a. Sounds

Ayreon - Universal Migrator Pt 1 & 2 (2000)
Black Mountain - IV (2006)
Blue Öyster Cult - Fire of Unknown Origin (1981)
Boris - Mabuta no ura (2005)
Colour Haze - Tempel (2006)
David Bowie - Space Oddity (1969)
The Doors - The Doors (1967)
Earth - The Bees Made Honey in the Lion's Skull (2008)
Egypt - Egypt (2009)
Ennio Morricone - Garden of Delights (1967)
Grateful Dead - American Beauty (1970)
György Ligeti - Réquiem (1965)
King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard - Polygondwanaland (2017)
Kyuss - Welcome to Sky Valley (1994)
Sleep - Dopesmoker (2003)
Pink Floyd - The Dark Side of the Moon (1973)
The Sword - Low Country (2016)
Tangerine Dream - Zeit (1972)
Tool - Lateralus (2001)
Uriah Heep - Demons and Wizards (1972)
Zager & Evans - In the Year 2525 (1969)
Zu - Goodnight, Civilization (2014)

IV. b. Pictures

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
A Clockwork Orange (1971)
Alien (1979)
Alphaville (1965)
Ben Hur (1959)
Brazil (1985)
Conan the Barbarian (1982)
Dark Star (1974)
The Exorcist (1973)
Gattaca (1997)
Ghost in the Shell (1995)
Heavy Metal (1981)
Hugo Pratt
The Holy Mountain (1973)
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
Life of Brian (1979)
Logan's Run (1976)
Mad Max (1979)
Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind (1984)
The Omega Man (1971)
On the Beach (1959)
Planet of the Apes (1968+, 2014+)
Princess Mononoke (1997)
Metropolis (1927)
Mike Mignola
Moebius (Jean Giraud)
Philippe Caza
Philippe Druillet
Soylent Green (1973)
The Stepford Wives (1975)
Spaceballs (1987)
Stalker (1979)
The Thing (1982)
Zardoz (1974)

IV.c. Worlds

Agatha Christie - Death on the Nile (1937)
Aldous Huxley - Brave New World (1932)
Alejandro Jodorowski and Jean Giraud - The Incal (1980+)
Dan Simmons - Ilium (2004)
Dungeons & Dragons (1974)
One Thousand and One Nights (medieval, 19th c.)
Frank Herbert - Dune (1965)
Franz Kafka - Das Schloss (1926)
Heavy Metal (1977-2023)
Herodotus - Histories (~430 BC)
Homer - The Odyssey (~700 BC)
GLOG rpg (2016)
Jose Luis Borges - The Aleph and Other Stories (1949)
Liu Cixin - Three-Body Problem (2008)
Lucian of Samosata - True History (~150)
Macchiato Monsters (2018)

Mary Shelley - Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818)
Microlite rpg (2000s)
Microscope rpg (2011)
Mikhail Bulgakov - The Master & Margarita (1928-40)
Mothership rpg (2024)
Olaf Stapledon - Last and First Men (1930)
Paranoia (1984)
Philippe Caza - Arkhé and Lailah (1982 and 2001)
Philippe Druillet - The Mystery of the Abyss (1966)
Pierre Boulle - Planet of the Apes (1963)
Robert Silverberg - The Book of Skulls (1972)
Roger Zelazny - Lord of Light (1967)
Shi Nai'an - Outlaws of the Marsh (mid 14th c.?)
Slumbering Ursine Dunes (2014)
Stanislaw Lem - The Star Diaries (1976)
Stefan Zweig - The World of Yesterday (1942)
Whitehack rpg (2013+)
Wu Cheng'en - Journey to the West (16th c.)

IV.d. Other

Concorde (1976)
Göbekli Tepe (~9000 BC)
Great Pyramid of Giza (~2600 BC)
Kyoto Gyoen National Garden (17th c.)
Fallout 2 (1998)
Industrie und Glück (1815)
Lucy (~3000000 BC)
Moon City Four (2130-57)
Mount Meru (first depiction ~5th c.)
No Man's Sky (2016+)
Nuraghe (~1900 to ~750 BC)

Ötzi (~3200 BC)
Potala Palace (~1649)
Rapa Nui (~1000 to 1722)
Saturn V (1964)
Teotihuacan (~250)
Tiwanaku (~800)
Ugarit, Fall of (1192 BC)
Uluru (~8000+ BC)
Vinča-Belo Brdo (~5700 BC)
Zelda: Breath of the Wild (2017)

Appendix L. SDM Third Party License

v2.0

I'm astonished by the people's stories of their adventures in the Ultraviolet Grasslands and delighted by the adventures and creatures, stories and locations they've created. I promised a third party license a fair while ago, but the life of a solo game creator had its way with me. I played with making my own license for a while, but let's be real: I'm one, you are many, and there are good licenses about. This one is based on the Mörk Borg license (<https://morkborg.com/license/>). Check out Mörk Borg if you prefer blackened death metal grim darkness to the polychrome psychedelia of the synthetic dream machine.

Let's get to it ...

i. Purpose

This license lets you write games and build on the Synthetic Dream Machine, without waiting on my review or approval, and without me taking a cut.

As long as you follow a few basic rules.

ii. Content

ii.a. If you adhere to these terms you can publish free or commercial roleplaying game books and supplements based on and/or declaring compatibility with Synthetic Dream Machine (SDM) without express permission from either Luka Rejec or WTF Studio.

ii.b. You cannot reuse or translate art and text from my works without explicit permission. You may quote passages if you cite the source in-text (e.g. Luka Rejec *Ultraviolet Grasslands 2E* 2022, 204). You can use the names of creatures, locations, objects, powers and other entities in the game world if you acknowledge the source somewhere in your work. The precise citation style doesn't matter as long as the source is clear.

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v. Conclusion

Make it weird, wonderful, and wild. Don't bring modern hatreds and contemporary conflicts into your content. The world of *Our Golden Age* is at the end of time and space. It faces other issues. Like the dark forest and the heat death of the gods.



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Rules loose, psychedelic metal ronen
and space. Characters, rules, equ
games in the synthetic dream ma

time
l other



This is a free beta edition prepared and released for the good backers of the *Our Golden Age* backerkit campaign and the irrepressible heroes of the stratometaship. It is not the final version and is yet to receive its final editing and proofreading. Some art is temporary, missing, or just a placeholder. Oftenplace pXX stands in for the accurate and nice page reference. So it goes. Enjoy at your peril.
—Luka, August 2024

characters, rules, equipment, and powers
for the *Ultraviolet Grasslands* and *Our Golden Age*.

