KATHARSYS

IN THIS WORLD, A MAN, HIMSELF, IS
NOTHING
AND THERE AIN'T NO WORLD
BUT THIS ONE.
[THE THIN RED LINE]

# DEGENESIS

## KATHARSYS

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### DISCLAIMER

Degenesis advocates tolerance and international understanding. The game world of Degenesis has evolved from ours and distorts it into an imaginary future. Conflicts within the game world are, of course, not real – and we do not wish for them to be, either. They onlyexist for excitement's sake. Although we know this kind of conflict from films, we urge you to use them with caution. None of the seven Cultures mentioned in Degenesis is better than any of the others. All of those Cultures have an equal right to exist in the game world of Degenesis. We have actively avoided the term "race" common to RPGs as we deem it discriminatory. We strictly oppose violence and racism. Illustrations of combat action are not meant to promote violence, but to depict a cruel world we should strive to overcome. Culture and civilization are the major goals in Degenesis, accompanied by hope. We still recommend Degenesis for people 16+ as we cannot be sure whether our message and our appeal to humanity will be understood.


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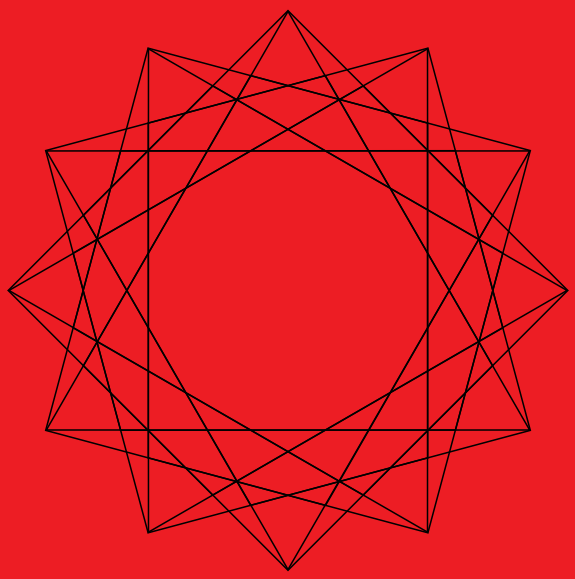

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# KATHARSYS

CHAPTER 5

# GAME MECHANICS

# CHARACTER

In a role-playing game, the character is the Player's avatar. Through him, the Player interacts with the world of Degenesis, talking to a city guard, attacking a gang of savages, wielding his Judgment hammer, or sinking into the arms of an Apocalyptic. This character can be similar to the Player in build and intelligence or his exact opposite. The more differences there are between Player and character, the more important the rules and the pertinent numbers defining every character become. The character can be a genius at cobbling together bizarre machines, while his Player can't even be trusted with a screwdriver. On the other hand, the world of Degenesis makes it necessary for its inhabitants to possess knowledge or talents with no real base or connection to the world of the 21st century: knowledge of the Bygone people's forgotten underground bunkers and unique artifacts, the legends of the Balkhan forests, or the hierarchy of the Carrion Birds.

In KatharSys, there are numbers behind almost every Action which are used to determine how well a character has mastered a Skill. Every Action Number is equally dependent on the character's natural Attributes and his learned Skills. Attributes range from 1-6, Skills from 0-6. These traits determine the number of dice a Player rolls to determine the outcome of an Action.

# ATTRIBUTES

In any being, six Attributes describe the physical basics. They can best be described as genetic predispositions. During one's life, Attributes can and will change, but more slowly than learned Skills.

The six Attributes are Body, Agility, Charisma, Intellect, Psyche, and Instinct. They are all equally important, influencing a character's strengths and weaknesses and how he acts and approaches challenges.

## BODY

Body stands for physical force, tenacity, and stamina. People with a high Body Attribute go down slower and get back up again faster. They terrify their enemies through their physical presence. Those who keep fit have shoulders that can carry a larger burden. This Attribute allows them to survive longer, resist pain, and use their body as a weapon.

## AGILITY

Strength without control means nothing. People with high Agility are more nimble and can dodge dangers, manipulate complex mechanisms, and kill their enemies with firearms over long distances—perhaps with a rifle of their own design, with a filed down barrel and an optimised mechanism.

## CHARISMA

People with Charisma impress through their authentic presence. They don't have to pretend to be liked or adored. Others follow them out of conviction and with devotion. Charisma opens up doors to the world: diplomacy, negotiation, and unity require people with Charisma who stand out from the crowd and are able leaders.

## INTELLECT

A trained and keen Intellect enables abstract thinking and deep concentration. Both are essential to understanding and using technology or science.

A clever thinker can quickly absorb and remember knowledge from various sources. Intellect means planning and foresight, considerate action, and an intuitive sense of consequence.

## PSYCHE

Psyche is the fire that keeps our inner engine hot and burning, that fuels our will and faith. Psyche is mental strength, Intellect's unloved sister. It fuels lies and deception, intimidation and mental superiority. With the Psyche's power one can resist the Primer's influence and go beyond the limits of their own abilities.

## INSTINCT

Instinct has helped us to survive when neither language nor rules were available and we had to stick together anyway. Instinct guides our rudimentary reactions to outside influences, unleashes the beast within us. In a world without any measure, Instinct guarantees survival.

## NOTATION

Whenever a Skill is referenced in these books, it is accompanied by an abbreviation of the Attribute. "BOD+Force," for example, refers to the Skill named Force that can be found under the Attribute Body (BOD). The "+" means that Attribute and Skill number are added to get the Action Number, which will be explained in depth later in this chapter.

The Attribute abbreviations are:

**BOD - Body**
**AGI - Agility**
**CHA - Charisma**
**INT - Intellect**
**PSY - Psyche**
**INS - Instinct**

# THE SKILLS

Each Attribute is linked to six Skills. Attribute and Skill depend and support one another: the Science Skill can only thrive along with the Intellect Attribute, the Melee Skill is based on the Body Attribute, Dexterity is nothing without Agility. Some Skills are necessary for fighters, others for traders and tricksters: it is the interplay of Attribute and Skill that grants a character its mechanical flavour.

## ACTION

Every Skill has its applications. In the descriptions, some are listed as examples under “Action”. These Actions are actively announced by Players: they usually require some time or at least a moment of awareness.

## REACTION

The applications listed under “Reaction” are enforced or offered by outside influences. For example, the Game Master can tell his group: “The night is pitch black. Roll to see if you notice something.” The Players roll INS+Perception, and if a Shutter is actually approaching out there, they might hear him with a successful roll.

## COMBINATION

Some Actions are not dependant on one Skill alone. Occasionally the combination of two Skills brings the desired effect: a Judge is more easily deceived (PSY+Deception) by a distinguished choice of words (CHA+Expression), while an ambush (AGI+Stealth, followed by BOD+Melee) becomes an assassination attack. The rules for Combinations will be found at a later point in this chapter, but some examples are presented here.

## SPECIALTIES

Some Skills are special: additional traits are derived from them or they have certain limitations. Chapter 6: "Character Creation", details them, while the Specialties are listed here for further reference.

# BODY

## ATHLETICS

Climbing, running, jumping and swimming: Athletics in its simplest form means forging ahead without any elegance, but efficiently. When the human machine works, you leap barriers and cover good distances. Apocalyptics quickly flee across rooftops by using Athletics, and a Scrapper uses it to vault across a chasm to reach the artifact he desires.

The athlete adapts to his environment, uses the wisdom of his body to master any path and escapes quickly under duress.

**ACTION:** Running; climbing; jumping; swimming; overcoming obstacles; covering distances
**REACTION:** Gauging time/distance relation; regaining balance; escaping from dangerous situations
**COMBINATION:** >BOD+Stamina: jogging or prolonged swimming

## BRAWL

The fist, the elbow, and the knee are the weapons humans are born with. They cannot be stolen, they cannot jam, and they are always available. They push down enemies, making them gasp for breath, and they break ribs. The more trained the fighter, the faster he will get through his enemy's defense to strike his throat or spleen.

All these unarmed combat techniques are summarized under the Brawl Skill.

**ACTION:** Boxing; kicking; throwing; pit fighting
**REACTION:** Escaping a brawl; breaking strangleholds
**COMBINATION:** >PSY+Reaction: disarm an opponent

## FORCE

The blow is focused energy: the enemy's skull shatters in a compound fracture. Force is pure physical violence. When the talk is over, when the anger lashes out, simple hands become garrotes breaking a neck, bludgeons splintering wood and bashing through shields as if they were old sheets of metal. A door is kicked from its hinges, bonds are broken with a crack.

Force is the power behind the Anabaptists' swords, the Judge's hammers, and the Clanners' clubs.

**ACTION:** Bending up sewer grates; breaking chains; kicking in doors; showing strength (arm wrestling)
**REACTION:** Holding someone; pushing against an opposing force (arm wrestling or keeping a door closed)
**COMBINATION:** >PSY+Domination: intimidation by force
**SPECIALTY:** In many melee attacks, the BOD+Force score is used to augment the Damage of a weapon

## MELEE

Sword, axe, morning star: humans have always been creative when it comes to developing their murder implements. The Melee Skill allows a fighter to use these weapons precisely and replaces uncoordinated bludgeoning and flailing with a series of complex thrusts, blows, parries, and feints. The weapon becomes an extension of the arm, and the fighter becomes a danger to his enemies.

No combatant can afford to slack off when facing someone trained in this Skill.

**ACTION:** Using weapons: axe, sword, hammer, club, knife, Splayer, etc.
**REACTION:** Knowledge about weaknesses and properties of various sorts of weapons in combat; gauging the enemy's combat power
**COMBINATION:** >PSY+Reaction: disarm an opponent

## STAMINA

High Stamina makes strength-sapping Actions possible. Gangs of Scourgers run down their enemies. Scrappers survive for days without water. A Clan's Chieftain can dive to the bottom of a lake and retrieve strange pearls. After a hot meal, the Orgiastic sheds his battlefield illnesses like an old skin. A runner without Stamina will not reach his goal quickly, but will instead tire and falter.

**ACTION:** Tracking; diving; marching for hours
**REACTION:** Fleeing; holding your breath; overcoming illness, poisoning, and weariness; standing guard for several nights in a row
**COMBINATION:** >INS+Survival: hounding;
>BOD+Toughness: forced march

## TOUGHNESS

Those who dish out harm must also take it. How long can the Scrapper withstand the tundra's cold? How much pain can the Preservist in the Psychokinetic's comet fire endure before falling down and turning to ashes? Toughness is the internal armor that deflects the blows and gives the fighter time to strike back. He may lose a fight from time to time, but he quickly gets up again, licks his wounds, and asks for more.

**ACTION:** Impressing with pain tolerance
**REACTION:** Physical regeneration; withstanding pain and environmental influences; enduring torture
**COMBINATION:** >INS+Survival: facing extreme cold or heat
**SPECIALTY:** Maximum Flesh Wounds = BOD+Toughness x 2

# AGILITY

## CRAFTING

Human ingenuity is what gives birth to machines, weapons, and other useful items, but anyone can screw a lopsided gun sight onto a rifle, or stick nails into a club. A true craftsman uses scraps from artifacts and separates the useful from the rotten. The constructions become more daring, and more useful.

The Manufacturers amongst the Scrappers are the masters of their generation. Their workshops consistently create new technological and mechanical marvels.

**ACTION:** Enhancing or repairing gear; cannibalizing artifacts; erecting defenses
**REACTION:** Estimating the value and condition of things; finding weak spots in a building
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Dexterity or >CHA+Arts: forging

## DEXTERITY

Stealing a key from a Judge's belt, defusing a booby trap with a length of wire, changing the nanite membrane of an AMSUMO reactor: all this takes a steady hand and a great degree of Dexterity. Those who train their Dexterity can use sleight of hand to make money, pick locks, steal without being seen, or assemble the tiniest mechanisms.

**ACTION:** Stealing; lock picking with skeleton keys or wire; various tricks (loaded dice, coins, thimblerig, gaming, and tarot cards)
**REACTION:** Keeping your hands steady; catching throws
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Crafting: creating the finest mechanisms

## NAVIGATION

Whether on a horse, a Kom, a torpedo boat, or a Surge Tank, handling mounts or vehicles demands foresight and delicacy, as well as good reactions.

With the Navigation Skill, you control your vehicle without losing your bearings in your surroundings. Judges and Jehammedans are masters of mounted combat, Scourgers drive their Koms through difficult terrain and sandy dunes while raining gunfire onto their prey, and the Scrappers careen around the plains of Borca on pieced together vehicles held together with duct tape and prayers. Apocalyptics, on the other hand, thunder across Purgare's slag deserts on motorbikes. Their Pelicans steer their vessels into safe harbors no matter how high the waves are, before they're refitted and ready to set sail again.

**ACTION:** Riding and animal handling; piloting motored vehicles or planes; navigating ships; aligning heavy artillery
**REACTION:** Gauging braking and acceleration paths; judging the condition of a vehicle
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Mobility: special maneuvers (e. g. attacking or dodging); >INS+Taming: spur a steed to maximum performance

THERE IS ONLY **ONE DAY** LEFT,
ALWAYS STARTING OVER:
IT IS GIVEN TO US AT
**DAWN**
AND TAKEN AWAY FROM US AT
**DUSK.**
[SARTRE]

### MOBILITY

A sword arcs in from the left. Dodge. Gunfire erupts from the right. Duck. Jump ahead, through the window. Tuck. Roll. Made it.

The bullets fly. Mobility can make an agile enough person almost impossible to hit. He becomes even more nimble and can dodge before danger turns to damage. The higher the Skill rating, the easier he can escape from dangerous situations: getting rid of handcuffs, squirming free of chains, and wriggling out of a stranglehold or through a crack in the wall.

**ACTION:** Free running; jumping; dodging attacks; acrobatics
**REACTION:** Escaping from restraints; swimming with or against the tide of a crowd
**COMBINATION:** >BOD+Brawl: freeing yourself from a clinch or countering strangleholds; > AGI+Stealth: moving unseen

### PROJECTILES

Mastering Projectiles—be they crossbows, rifles, or Soul Burners—requires dexterity and precision. The shooter has to learn to gauge his rifle's recoil and power, and he must pull the bowstring just right to avoid hurting himself when shooting. Pull and spin, aim and fire, reload: a shooter must be familiar with weapons and their characteristics. Jehammedan bow riders, Hellvetic troopers wielding their Trailblazers, Palers with submachine guns, and Judges with muskets all must master their Projectiles Skill or die.

**ACTION:** Projectile weapon use: bow, crossbow, Judges' musket, Soul Burner, Fungicide Rifle, blowgun, Spitfire, etc; weapons maintenance
**REACTION:** Gauging range and characteristics of projectile weapons; gauging distance; finding cover
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Mobility: precisely throwing a grenade; > AGI+Navigation: mounted ranged combat; shooting from a moving vehicle

### STEALTH

Darkness, half-light, shadows, and other forms of concealment are the Stealth user's best friends. Under their cover, he can spy, smuggle, and assassinate. Those who rely on Stealth avoid the din of battle and the revealing light of day. They step silently on the ground, and are knowledgeable about the world's dark nooks and crannies.

**ACTION:** Hiding; hiding objects; stalking; sneaking; camouflage
**REACTION:** Gauging a level of sound; controlling heartbeat and breath; feigning death; ducking out of sight
**COMBINATION:** >BOD+Brawl/Melee: sneak attack; >PSY+Domination: secretly fanning fear and superstition

## CHARISMA

### ARTS

Music and art are an important part of any culture, reflecting its needs and dreams, allowing people to create great things rooted in their sensitivity and impress others. Wishes and hopes can be reflected in the works, hearts beat to the rhythm of the music, and songs make friends out of foes.

Use Arts when people talking to each other do not speak the same language, or when people from different regions have to interact. Art builds bridges beyond words, making friends out of the strangers you pass on the road - or humiliating and terrifying enemies through imposing architecture.

**ACTION:** Dancing; playing music; painting; tarot reading; writing poetry; storytelling; sculpting
**REACTION:** Aesthetical judgments; appraisals
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Crafting: raising an object's value by embellishing it

### CONDUCT

Those who greet strangers with a friendly word, those who gain a Scrapper's trust with a few earthy jokes, those who uphold the Phosphorites' traditions, those who meet a Hagari's gaze austerely and not wantonly, those who don't piss against the stone statues in front of Judgment Hall in Justitian, those who deny their friendship with Jehammedans when feasting with Orgiastics, they all know the cultures and specifics of the world. They know the unspoken rules and how to use them diplomatically to reach their goals.

**ACTION:** Choosing appropriate words; knowing traditions, rituals, and customs and acting accordingly
**REACTION:** Avoiding attention; seeing and evaluating another's reaction to an action or a statement in a cultural context
**COMBINATION:** >CHA+Arts: Choosing the right gift or an appropriate toll; >CHA+Expression: praising someone

### EXPRESSION

The outspoken word, the truth that sets others free, the deliberate emphasis at the right time: Expression creates friends and foes, can threaten, flatter, hurt, command, or catch off guard. Expression is the power of the voice, of facial expressions and gestures. However it also enables some to evaluate other people's body language, to sense danger and mistrust via sight and sound, to recognize a betrayer by the twitching of his eyelid, recognise fear in the quiver of warrior's voice, or to unmask a liar with pointed questions. Coupled with Leadership, Expression moves the masses, kindles faith in the hearts of the unbelievers and wins them over to your cause.

**ACTION:** Body language; public speaking; teaching
**REACTION:** Giving hand signs; reading facial expressions
**COMBINATION:** >CHA+Arts: Singing and dancing

### LEADERSHIP

The Isaaki stands in front of his troops, looking towards the horizon, towards a better future. His every word echoes with power. The tribulations his tribe had to face in recent years will fall away, and there will be golden years. The fire burns in the hearts of his men: the tribe has never been so strong, so unified, so united as it is now. The Isaaki sets souls on fire, gives his warriors a homestead in the community he speaks of. Leadership inspires the masses, gives a goal to the people that they can project their hopes onto.

**ACTION:** Encouragement; propaganda; leading groups
**REACTION:** Bolstering morale; quelling mutinies
**COMBINATION:** >BOD+Melee or >AGI+Projectiles: combat formations and tactical considerations; >AGI+Navigation or >INS+Taming: herding

### NEGOTIATION

War or peace, winning or losing: it's all a matter of negotiation. Man has to fight for his own interests, and in the best case, his words and his negotiation talent will decide this fight. To reach this goal, he has to make his counterpart think that his needs have been satisfied as well. Everyone has won—or so it seems.

The art of Negotiation can pacify whole regions. It's the unbroken seal of diplomacy that decides the future of the world, as well as the amount of money in one's purse.

**ACTION:** Diplomacy; haggling; persuasion; drawing up contracts
**REACTION:** Retorts; recognizing oppressive contracts
**COMBINATION:** >CHA+Expression: maximum profit; >PSY+Deception: selling someone a terrible deal

### SEDUCTION

The right tone of voice. The right look at the right moment. A Demagogue rallies his followers through his seductive powers. The Raven uses them to fascinate his guests. The Magpie twists the soul, makes others so devoted that they become reckless. Those who know about Seduction can beguile their opponents, overcome their reservations, get to know their secrets—even those they would not confess if tortured. The seducer burrows into his victim's heart and circumvents all trained forms of defense and caution.

**ACTION:** Seducing; flirting; turning tricks; pumping others for information
**REACTION:** Counter-flirting; resistance against flattery; recognizing and countering seductive tricks
**COMBINATION:** >CHA+Expression: fascinating others; >PSY+Domination: persuading others of dependencies

## INTELLECT

### ARTIFACT LORE

Bygone relics are still down there in the ruins somewhere. Scrappers call these technological marvels "artifacts", hunting them down so they can polish them up and sell them to the Chroniclers.

For most people, it's simply scrap that can only serve as exotic jewelry even after cleaning.

Only those with Artifact Lore recognize its true value. It opens up the gate into the world of technological wonder. With this Skill, artifacts can be identified and gauged, and their function can be determined.

**ACTION:** Using, repairing and modifying artifacts
**REACTION:** Identifying artifacts; recognizing meaning and context; gauging worth
**COMBINATION:** >INT+Engineering: awakening or modifying artifacts

### ENGINEERING

Through Engineering, man dominated the world and filled it with machinery. As a Skill, it allows the construction of new things and the repairing of old ones. With it, a Scrapper improves the basic operation of his rifle, the Scourger uses a pulley to free his Kom from the swamp and the Apocalyptic Woodpecker devises trap mechanisms while the Paler uses the same Skill to disarm them.

**ACTION:** Understanding and manipulating mechanisms; upgrading high-tech equipment
**REACTION:** Identifying technology; recognizing damages or weak spots (in vehicles, AMSUMOs)
**COMBINATION:** >INT+Legends: reconstructing lost technological processes
**SPECIALTY:** improving high-tech equipment; the modern counterpart to >AGI+Crafting

## FOCUS

Those who focus their mind beyond the meditative point transcend the flesh. They are seized by an all-encompassing calm through concentration, primal mechanisms like anger and fear are dissected and used as weapons once their emotional component is taken away.

When thinking clearly, every shot is a hit, and every action is executed with cold-blooded calm.

**ACTION:** Mental performance; meditation and concentration; overcoming doubts
**REACTION:** Self-restraint; vanquishing fears; slowing down breath
**COMBINATION:** > INT+Medicine: highly complex surgeries; >INT+Artifact Lore: repairing highly complex artifacts; >AGI+Projectiles: sharpshooter attack
**SPECIALTY:** Characters have to decide between INT+Focus and INS+Primal, as the Skill not chosen here cannot be raised. Focus and Primal are the base traits for the Ego Points.

## LEGENDS

The secrets of the world are borne from the past. Those who know them understand people and their ways: why the Spitalians fear germs or why the Africans detest the Crow. Sagas and legends contain a kernel of truth at the core, and by chewing and swallowing it, perspective widens. Are the Palers' gods really only humans? Who inspired the rise of the Judges? What are the Usudi, and what is their weakness?

**ACTION:** Knowledge about the history of the Cultures and Cults; knowledge about inventions, the Primer, and cities both known and forgotten; knowledge about ancient signs and allegories; knowledge of old stories passed down through generations
**REACTION:** Gauging chance; evaluating historical developments and the reactions of the Cults
**COMBINATION:** >INS+Orienteering: finding artifacts; >BOD+Melee: revealing knowledge about the great battles; >CHA+Leadership: summoning the ghost of the past; >INT+Artifact Lore: recognizing the workings of a legendary Bygone artifact

## MEDICINE

Illnesses and wounds are a part of life. Humans have the ability to get over them—sometimes. Healers have always been at the center of any community: shamans crush herbs and drop them into wounds, the Elysian kindles the fire of life by rubbing in oils, an adrenaline injection tears the dying Preservist back from the veil and pushes him once again into the arms of the Field Medic.

Those knowledgeable in Medicine know about the power of nature, understand anatomy, and know the ways of the bodily fluids. They play music on the strings of life.

**ACTION:** Diagnosing and curing illnesses; brewing medicines; collecting healing herbs; treating wounds
**REACTION:** Anticipating illnesses; recognizing dangerous substances
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Dexterity: splinting fractures; >INT+Science: knowing about pharmaceutics or epigenetics; >INS+Survival: identifying medical herbs and using natural medicine

## SCIENCE

So much knowledge has been lost. Physics once made it possible to focus ionized gas through magnetic fields and emit a plasma beam with the heat of a collapsing star: that's how the Soul Burner works. Chemistry produced pesticides and fungicides that still keep the Sepsis at bay.

Those interested in the Science Skill learn about the inner workings of the world, be they of mathematical, chemical, or biological nature. In his hand he holds the key to a better future.

**ACTION:** Reading and writing; scientific knowledge; math knowledge; mixing explosives
**REACTION:** Uncovering logical errors; gauging the strength of walls or doors; anticipating chemical reactions
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Projectiles: assessing trajectories, finding the position of an assassin using the bullet hole; >CHA+Expression: knowledge of linguistics and various dialects; >INT+Engineering: structural engineering calculation; >INS+Orienteering: logistics;
**SPECIALTY:** For each rank in this Skill, one foreign language can be spoken.

THE ROAD TO FAITH IS SHORT AND COMFORTABLE;
THE ROAD TO KNOWLEDGE IS LONG AND HARD.

[STUHLINGER]

# PSYCHE

## CUNNING

Truth is the lover of the Cunning one. She bends under his caress, and when she breaks, her ugly sister, the lie, steps in. Both lead him to his goal without his victims being any wiser. The Raven uses subterfuge to get through the Judge's interrogation. A Scrapper's sudden joke distracts the city guard while the smugglers creep in behind him. A fountain of sand is kicked into the eyes of the Clan Champion.

The Cunning one realizes the possibilities around him and uses them quick as lightning. He doesn't have the time to care about meaningless concepts like "honor": that sort of nonsense will just get you killed.

**ACTION:** Planning; improvisation; distraction
**REACTION:** Recognizing an advantage; using subterfuge
**COMBINATION:** >INS+Orienteering: exploiting the terrain as well as possible

## DECEPTION

You trust those you know—or those you think you know. Those who learn the Deception Skill behave like strangers, dress like them, and trust in their ability to blend in. Imitation, lies, deception, and fraud are their forte, for better or worse.

**ACTION:** Pretending to be someone else, disguising one's voice and appearance; forging documents and objects
**REACTION:** Lies; bluffs
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Crafting: creating forgeries; >CHA+Leadership: posing as the leader of an unknown group

## DOMINATION

Domination is an all out assault on the soul. Free will is beaten into submission by intimidation, creating obedience and awe. Dominant people use their gestures, their voice, and their gaze as a weapon to force their victims to obey them.

**ACTION:** Intimidation; torture; terror; subjugation
**REACTION:** Countering influences; implementing pecking order
**COMBINATION:** >CHA+Expression: roaring, battle cries; >INS+Empathy: digging into others' feelings and using them against them, shaking faith and will

## FAITH

Faith is a haven, a house that never collapses. Whether it's the Anabaptists' Neognosis, Jehammed's promise, totems, ancestors of the Scourgers, or the spirits of nature, the commandments and traditions they are linked with lead the faithful through life and protect them from seduction and intimidation. The atheist relies on his free will, but faith can move mountains.

The Faith Skill is tied to a religion, it offers no knowledge about other beliefs.

**ACTION:** Religious knowledge; preaching; inspiring; making sacrifices; asceticism
**REACTION:** Unmasking heresy; maintaining mental strength through the power of faith
**COMBINATION:** >PSY+Domination: intimidating others with zealotry; >CHA+ Leadership: awakening fanaticism; >INS+Empathy: making peace
**SPECIALTY:** The Faith Skill and the Willpower Skill cannot be combined, the character has to choose one of them; PSY+Faith serves as a defense against mental influences and protects from the results of spore infestation

## REACTION

Opportunities and dangers continually swirl around humanity. However, recognizing them does not necessarily mean being able to take advantage.

With the Reaction Skill, the fighter dodges a blow just in time or jumps into cover before the salvo hits. If the hanging bridge collapses, it leads the hands to a bailing rope.

**ACTION:** Taking the initiative; making quick attacks; surprising others
**REACTION:** Sixth sense; noticing dangers
**COMBINATION:** >BOD+Brawl/Melee: surprise attacks, knife games; >AGI+Projectiles: quick-drawing; >AGI+Mobility: escaping a sprung trap
**SPECIALTY:** >PSY+Reaction determines the order of the Players' Actions during combat (Initiative)

## WILLPOWER

Neither god nor fate determines the path you take through life, only your own human will can do that. It shapes, creates towering wonders, tears down walls of deception, protects from the whispers of the Demagogues. It helps you withstand torture and conquer your fears. As long as the will is strong, there is a way.

**ACTION:** Self-conquest; tenacity; perseverance; austerity
**REACTION:** Detecting superstition; repelling manipulation
**COMBINATION:** >PSY+Domination: asserting your will; >BOD+Toughness: overcoming Trauma, ignoring pain
**SPECIALTY:** The Faith Skill and the Willpower Skill cannot be combined, the character has to choose one of them; PSY+Willpower serves as a defense against mental influences and protects from the results of spore infestation

# INSTINCT

## EMPATHY

A handful of Drafts for your counterpart's thoughts: what does he want? What does he think about me? Is he afraid? How do I make him like me?

Emotions communicated through body language are easy to read for those with the Empathy Skill. An empathic person harvests basic emotions like a farmer harvests grain, whether dealing with individuals or with groups. He can attune to his counterpart, reflect his emotions, or react empathically. He realizes the true motives behind lies and deception.

**ACTION:** Attuning to others; feigning friendship; assessing and manipulating group dynamics; psychology
**REACTION:** Seeing the truth behind emotions; guessing the attitude and disposition of a counterpart
**COMBINATION:** >INT+Medicine: imparting salvation; >CHA+Conduct: ingratiation

## ORIENTEERING

Rugged wastelands struggle against forests, spore fields, and ruins. The landscape is changing. Towns are many days' marches apart, and only those who know how to read the milestones and to interpret the position of the sun find the most direct route, circumventing dangers and saving food and water.

With the Orienteering Skill, a traveler is at home everywhere. Without it, he wanders aimlessly for days and nights, even when the town he is looking for is right behind the next chain of hills.

**ACTION:** Finding someone or something in the country; drawing and reading maps; identifying milestones
**REACTION:** Avoiding getting lost in dust storms or blizzards; blindly remembering the way when being abducted
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Navigation: safely maneuvering; >BOD+Athletics: exploring a target area

## PERCEPTION

An artifact in a sea of dust, the glittering of a telescope lens in the distance, or the shadow between the ruins: to notice all this in time is invaluable.

With a high Perception Skill, the details of your surroundings are clear, leading the Scrapper to his goal or warning the Judge of an ambush.

**ACTION:** Finding objects or spotting hidden things (traps); eavesdropping at doors
**REACTION:** Noticing sudden events in time; spotting ambushes; hearing or smelling stalking enemies
**COMBINATION:** >INS+Survival: looking for a haven; >PSY+Reaction: sensing danger; >CHA+Arts: recognizing forgeries

## PRIMAL

Those who dedicate themselves to the Primal Skill feel the beast snarl inside them and throw itself against the bars of reason. Primal ferocity breaks free from its prison. Once Primal is set free, the good and the bad aspects of self rage in a firestorm, burning away any thought of caution and planning. Instead, passion, the willingness to make sacrifices, violence, and rage take over—the beast is free to race across the plains. The mind does not control the hand anymore; that is the heart's job now.

**ACTION:** Raging and intimidating enemies
**REACTION:** Suppressing rational fears; following feral survival instincts in crisis situations
**COMBINATION:** >INS+Taming: pack pecking orders
**SPECIALTY:** Characters have to decide between INT+Focus and INS+Primal, as the Skill not chosen here cannot be raised. Focus and Primal are the base traits for the Ego Points.

## SURVIVAL

Where do I dig for water? Will the weather remain unchanged? Nature knows no mercy, and nothing in the cities prepares a traveler for it. Waiting out there, its weapons are thirst, hunger, and sickness.

The Survival Skill sharpens instincts that have eroded in the safety of civilization. The traveler recognizes the water veins meandering through the underground. Tracks in the dust warn him or lead him to a nest full of eggs. Rabbits are caught in his traps. The wilderness is his home.

**ACTION:** Hunting; gathering; tracking; eviscerating; building fires; setting traps
**REACTION:** Sensing danger in wilderness (poisons, traps)
**COMBINATION:** >AGI+Crafting: setting traps; >INT+Science: knowledge of flora and fauna

## TAMING

Those who confront wild Gendos staring and snarling, who train birds or break in a stallion, must know about animal instincts and behavior and counter them with confidence, strength, and empathy. He must be skilled at Taming. With this Skill, the Garganti integrate mammoths into their herds, the Preservists prepare their charges for battle, and the Scourgers train their hyenas for the hunt. The higher the Skill, the closer the bond between human and animal.

**ACTION:** Calming creatures; mentally strengthening, influencing, and training them
**REACTION:** Showing strength to an attacking animal and thus unsettling it
**COMBINATION:** >BOD+Force: wrestling down an enemy; >AGI+Navigation: mounted combat, commanding beasts

# ACTION NUMBER

Natural talent and years of training add up to one trait in KatharSys: the Action Number, or AN for short. It determines the character's chances of acting successfully in a difficult situation.

A Skill would have no roots without its Attribute, as such it is always noted in connection with the abbreviation for its Attribute in KatharSys: when talking about Toughness, you'd write "BOD+Toughness", and Projectiles would be "AGI+Projectiles".

The "+" already hints at the Action roll, which is the sum of the Attribute and the Skill:

**ACTION NUMBER (AN) = ATTRIBUTE + SKILL**

The Action Number can vary based on various influences. For example, traumatic wounds, bad weather conditions, or other handicaps lead to a lower Action Number, while Burn or exceptionally well-balanced weapons will bring a bonus.

**ACTION NUMBER (AN) =**
**ATTRIBUTE + SKILL +/- MOD.**

The higher the Action Number, the easier it is for the character to successfully use his Skills against any resistance that stands in his way.

## A QUESTION OF SUCCESS - THE DICE

Throughout his life, a character keeps encountering challenges: be it a fight for his life, the picking of a lock under time pressure, or a reckless escape on a moonless night. As soon as an Action may be unsuccessful, the dice are rolled: the Player determines his course of Action and a relevant Skill, calculates the Action Number, and rolls this number of 6-sided dice. Then he counts the number of dice that show at least a 4 (the "Successes") and declares the result.

If the Action Number is higher than 12, all dice above 12 count automatically as Successes and the Player will roll with 12 dice. Under no circumstances is it possible to have more than 12 dice.

**EXAMPLE:** Falberg is a Spitalian Preservist. A Gendo has wounded his horse, and it rears. Falberg wants to calm it down to be able to dress the wound.

He uses his Skill INS+Taming. His Instinct Attribute has a value of (2). Not much. His Taming Skill isn't very good either, with only a value of (1). His Player adds both numbers for an Action Number of (3) and so rolls 3 dice. He rolls a 2, a 4, and a 6. The 2 doesn't give him anything, but the 4 and the 6 are Successes. That makes (2) Successes overall. The Player describes his Action, informs the Game Master about the number of Successes, and looks at him expectantly. Has Falberg regained control of his horse?

The "Difficulty" stands between success and failure. It is governed by the Game Master (but not necessarily announced beforehand). It's a threshold that the number of Successes has to reach or exceed. The harder the Action, the higher the Difficulty.

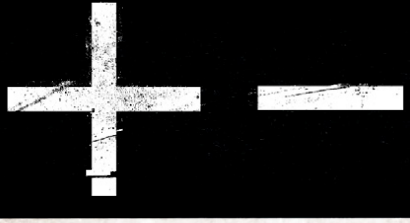
An Action succeeds if the number of Successes is equal to or higher than the Difficulty

Whenever characters have to make an Action roll in an official scenario, the Difficulty is given in brackets after the ability, for example INS+Taming (2).

**EXAMPLE:** The wounded horse has been accustomed to Falberg since it was a foal; the two have been traveling together for years. The horse trusts the Preservist. The Game Master thus decides that Falberg's Taming attempt is not routine, but also not very hard. (2) Successes should be enough. Falberg's Player rolls exactly (2) Successes: the Action succeeds, and the horse calms down.

### DIFFICULTY

| Successes needed | Difficulty |
|---|---|
| 1 | Routine |
| 2 | Challenging |
| 4 | Difficult |
| 6 | Very difficult |
| 8 | Almost impossible |
| 10 | Desperate measure |



### MODIFIERS

In KatharSys, Modifiers often come in the form of dice. For example, +2D means 2 bonus dice, and -3D means a disadvantage of 3 dice. Later chapters will explain what generates these Modifiers. They always count towards the Action Number.

# TRIGGER

Every dice result of 4, 5, or 6 counts as a Success. But every result of 6 carries additional meaning: it does not only count as a Success, but also as a "Trigger". These are counted, too. Successes determine if a character can pull something off, while Triggers tell how fast or how well he does something. In combat, they make him act more often and more quickly, let him do more Damage, and activate Potentials and weapon properties. Triggers are not consumed by activating extra effects unless explicitly stated in the effect.

However, Triggers are only generated by successful Actions that have beaten the Difficulty with their Successes.

All 6's are counted not only as Successes,
but also as Triggers
They only apply if the Action was successful
The more Triggers, the more excellent the Action
In combat, Triggers bring lots of bonuses

**EXAMPLE:** Falberg has successfully calmed down his horse. His Player has even rolled a Trigger (a 6). Nothing remarkable, but at least a solid feat: Falberg had to talk to the horse for several minutes until it calmed down.

The Clanners of Clan Garganti are expert tamers of their mounts: mammoths. If a Garganti was in a similar situation as Falberg's, it could look something like this:

The Garganti lives in the wilderness, and all his instincts are well honed: his INS Attribute is (5). Garganti grow up with their mammoths and learn at an early age to train them: his Taming Skill is (6). That already adds up to a AN of (11). But the Garganti have a special feature, or Potential: when dealing with the mammoths, they always have a +2D bonus. That would add up to a AN of (13). This means one automatic Success, and so the AN is (12). The Player rolls and achieves (6) Successes, which becomes (7) because of the Auto Success, and (3) Triggers. The Action is successful, (6) Successes beat the Difficulty of (2), and it succeeds brilliantly, (3) Triggers. The sheer presence of the Garganti, combined with his sophisticated body language and the guttural sounds he makes, brings the mammoth under his control again at once. Falberg would be envious.

## FAILURE

If you do not have enough Successes to beat the Difficulty, the character fails. There is a special case of failure when the number of 1's he rolled is higher than the number of Successes he rolled. This is called a Botch. The Action takes a turn for the worse: if he was handling a precious artifact he just happens to snap a small but absolutely important part, if he was leading a group through the Borcan wasteland using INS+Orienteering he belatedly realizes that he was leading them right into the domain of the Gendos. In deals a Botch doubles the original price, while in combat the fighter drops his blade.

### TRIGGERS AT WORK

| Number of Triggers | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | Solid |
| 2 | Remarkable |
| 3 | Excellent |
| 4 | Brilliant |
| 5 | Incredible |
| 6 | Legendary |

Failure: Fewer Successes than the Difficulty demands
Botch: Failure and more 1s than Successes

## CONFLICT

Often, the Game Master determines the Difficulty. He takes into account various environmental parameters or simply takes a look at the Difficulty table. The Conflict is a far more direct way of measuring Difficulties: whenever two opponents act against each other, they both roll at the same time. Their Difficulty threshold is the number of their opponent's Successes. In other words: whoever rolls more Successes wins. In case of a draw, the number of Triggers decides.

Opponents roll: Whoever rolls more Successes wins.
In case of a draw, the number of Triggers decides

If even the Triggers don't bring a decision, the situation determines its own outcome:

In a competition, a draw is possible: two runners cross the finishing line at the same time; the arm wrestlers' fists seem to be glued over the center of the table. The opponents may leave the competition or restart their locking of horns. But sometimes, only success or failure counts: if a stalking assassin is thwarted by his victim's roll on INS+Perception, he will be noticed. In yes-or-no-decisions, the person acting first always has to overcome the opponents resistance to avoid losing.

In a competition: Draws are possible
Yes/no: If the acting party does not succeed, he loses

In a Conflict, often very different Skills clash: a young Magpie tries to lull a Chronicler using CHA+Seduction, but he counters with PSY+Faith or PSY+Willpower, or a Clanner tries to see behind an Apocalyptic's mask with INS+Empathy, which is being countered with PSY+Cunning.

Conflict between different Skills is possible

**EXAMPLE:** Falberg is weary to the bone, haggard, exhausted. Thoughts pushed aside earlier wiggle their spidery legs into his mind. He has to do something. He needs to "burn."

He doesn't know the Apocalyptic offering the two fresh Burn cusps to him. However, he can't be picky now: he wants them. "Is that really Bion?" The Apocalyptic nods, licking his lips.

It isn't. However, Falberg doesn't know that. The Apocalyptic is offering him Discordia, and if he were to breathe in these spores, madness instead of intoxication would await him.

The Apocalyptic and Falberg enter a Conflict: the Apocalyptic deceives with PSY+Deception, and Falberg tries to see through the lie with INS+Empathy. (3) Successes with no Trigger for the dealer. The Apocalyptic is sloppy today. Falberg also has (3) Successes, but also (1) Trigger: he wins the Conflict - and notices the dealer's erratic behaviour, the way he constantly licks his lips. Something is wrong.

Falberg grabs his sword.

## COMBINATIONS

Not every Action is exactly covered by only one Skill and an Action roll. Sometimes only the combination of two Skills describes the desired effect. This is where the Combinations enter into play.

### CHOICE OF SKILLS

Some Skill Combos will quickly become part of the repertoire of the characters because they are obvious and useful: with Palers and assassins the combo AGI+Stealth/BOD+Melee comes in handy for ambushes, a Hellvetic sharpshooter delivers well aimed wide-range shots with INS+Perception/AGI+Projectiles. Most Actions take longer as Combinations, and time is of the essence in combat. That's why most Combinations are not really useful in combat (see Chapter 7, "Battle").

### ORDER

It usually matters who acts first. In many Combos, some form of Perception or Reaction comes first. This serves to enable the next Action: if the Paler doesn't even succeed in sneaking up, he may not attack from an ambush.

On the other hand, many Charisma Skills can easily be combined with Psyche Skills, and combining Agility Skills with Intellect skills is just as useful. Which influences which is a matter of debate and should not be a discussion between the Game Master and Players. Still: when it comes to rolling the dice, the order of events is paramount.

### ROLLING COMBINATIONS

The first Skill is rolled. The second Skill may only be rolled if this roll succeeds. All Triggers from the first roll are also applied to the second one—if the first succeeds.

If the first successful Action roll brings two Triggers and the second one another Trigger, the Action is performed with (3) Triggers overall. That's the big advantage of Combos: while two rolls offer a higher chance of failure, the results of the Action can be much grander.

Rolling Two Actions:
The second roll can only be attempted if the first was successful
Triggers from the first Action are transferred to the second one

**EXAMPLE:** Falberg's squad is hiding deep in the Balkhan hinterland. Falberg explores the surrounding area on horseback. When riding through a forgotten city's moss-covered ruins, he notices a creature in the shadows. Eyes in a pale face glimmer from under a pile of rubble and follow his every move. Falberg stops and takes a closer look at the creature. A cape with knotted fringes, embroidered with a checkered pattern: the man in front of him is a henchman of the Voivodes. If he catches wind of the Preservists... Falberg spurs his horse on and gallops towards the henchman, who turns and runs.

Falberg has only one chance to try to hit the stranger with his sword from horseback before he disappears between the ruins. He attempts the Combo AGI+Navigation/BOD+Melee: he keeps his mount on track with one hand and his thighs while raising his sword with the other hand. Galloping towards a running target results in a Difficulty of (4). Falberg is a good rider, rolling (5) Successes and (2) Triggers on an Action roll on AGI+Navigation. Yes!

Dirt flies from under the horse's hooves; rider and animal move in perfect unison. Steel flashes down. The Action roll on BOD+Melee results in (6) Successes and (1) Trigger. The Action succeeds, and the Triggers from the first roll are added to the (1) from the second roll, resulting in (3) Triggers overall: Falberg uses the momentum of his charge. The sword cuts a bloody swath.

## COMPLEX ACTIONS

Some challenges consist of many small Actions. For example, the complicated security mechanism of a door needs to be picked while enemies are attacking. To heighten the tension, the Game Master can demand a minimum number of overall Successes over several rolls. Triggers count as additional Successes. Only after rolling enough Successes, the Action succeeds—and the door opens. In a Complex Action, there are no Difficulty thresholds that

must be reached: every Success rolled is added directly to the number of overall Successes.

This can be combined with a Conflict and/or Combo.

Several consecutive Actions are needed
There is no Difficulty threshhold in Complex Actions
Only when a certain number of overall Successes is reached, the Action succeeds
Triggers count as additional Successes

Complex Actions can occur in combat and many other situations. In combat situations, time is measured in "Combat Rounds" of four seconds each (see Chapter 7, "Battle"). When a character faces a Complex Action, he may not fight, so often quick success of his Action is of the essence. Here, the Player usually has to roll once per Action, unless the Game Master sets a different interval.

In a critical situation outside of combat, the Game Master determines the passage of time: for example, he can decide that the ropes holding a rope bridge will tear after three Rounds of one minute each and that this is exactly the time the characters have left to cross it with BOD+Athletics. Every Player must roll 10 Successes for his characters within these three Rounds to avoid falling off the bridge.

Outside of dangerous conflicts, rolling for a certain number of Successes usually is neither exciting nor necessary: a heavy door will finally break under enough kicks, and it does not matter for the rest of the story if it took 10 seconds or 5 minutes. If the Game Master and his Players enjoy rolling dice, the Game Master can allow one roll covering the whole Action. If it fails, the characters can try again after a short break.

The Game Master should keep in mind that every Action roll should have consequences—the successful ones as well as the failed ones.

**EXAMPLE:** That fucking Scrapper has beaten a hasty retreat and left Falberg behind with the explosive charges. The ignition wire is stretched between two trees, but the mine is not yet armed: something else needs to be done, but Falberg has no idea what. More importantly, he's running out of time, for the Dushani is less than 50 yards away and approaching fast.

In (3) Rounds, the Psychonaut will have reached Falberg. Before then, the mine has to be armed, so Falberg tries to understand its mechanism with INT+Engineering. He needs a total of (5) Successes, which is not much. But his INT+Engineering is not very high, either: (4).
In the first Round, he manages to notice a rotating mechanism with (2) Successes and a Trigger (that counts as an extra Success). Only (2) more Successes to go.

But in Round 2, he only manages (1) more Success. That makes (4) Successes total. He doesn't reach the total number needed. Muttering a curse under his breath, he faces the Dushani, sword in hand. At least he knows how to handle this weapon.

## COOPERATION

Characters form groups, and as a group, they can help each other. They can attempt Complex Actions together—if the situation allows it. A door is broken down more quickly when more shoulders push. The Players add their Successes and Triggers, working in unison.

It is not useful, though, to suddenly grab a dune buggy's steering wheel from the passenger seat, because it would irritate the driver more than help him. Here, no Successes are added together.

Cooperative Complex Actions:
Depending on the situation, Successes and Triggers of several characters can be added up

But characters can help each other even in regular Action rolls: during a difficult climb, the Chronicler needs the experienced Hellvetic to secure him. The assistant makes the same roll, but with Difficulty (+1). If he's successful, all his Triggers become additional dice for the assisted. It is possible that several characters step in, but every additional character rolls at (+1) Difficulty.

Cooperative Action Rolls:
Assistant rolls with Difficulty (+1)
If success: Triggers become bonus dice for the assisted

**EXAMPLE:** In the last few days, the rain has muddied up the ground, and the Preservists' cart is stuck in the muck. Falberg and his comrades must join forces to free it. There is not much time left: already the horns of the Voivodule can be heard. It's a Complex Action requiring a total of (20) Successes. Three Preservists push the cart with BOD+Force. The first one only rolls (2) Successes, barely helping out, but those (2) Successes could be the difference between life and death. The second Preservist is brawny and rolls well: (6) Successes and (2) Triggers, reducing the remaining Successes needed to (8). Falberg himself adds (4) Successes and (1) Trigger: only (4) more Successes needed to free the cart. They're almost there, and should be able to succeed in the next Round.

CHAPTER 6

# CHARACTER CREATION

# PROTAGONISTS

The Player characters, or PCs, enter the world of Degenesis as protagonists. They have to push their agenda through against the resistance of others, oppose oppressors, and fight on various sides of countless conflicts. However, the most important thing they'll have to do is decide on their position in this world.

Do they follow their Cult's orders, or do they question the elders? Are they actually free thinkers? Do they become evildoers, or do they protect those who have already given up? What are their goals?

Numbers alone cannot answer these questions. That is why the Game Master, or GM, and the Players should sit down before the character creation phase and answer the following three questions together.

## WHAT WILL BE THE GAME'S FOCUS?

Two continents and hundreds of conflict zones are spread out before the Players. What is their main interest, where do they want to start? Do they intend to fight monsters? Alternatively, do they want to fathom the darkest moral recesses of the tangled web of intrigues in the Cult network of the huge metropolis of Justitian?

The sheer number of possibilities can be mindnumbing for newcomers. That is why the GM and the Players should agree upon the framework. Many Players are familiar with classic apocalyptic scenarios. The fight for survival in the ruins of Borca is the closest thing to this. Through the many Protectorate settlements and the Clan threat, the Players slowly learn what is special about Primal Punk.

Are the PCs travelers open to the marvels and cultures of the world, or do they prefer to stay in their home region to become immortal through their feats?

Which genre piques the Players' interests? The Psychonauts embody eldritch horror as alien creatures furthering their own strange plans. Crime stories develop in places where the human condition holds sway. When Cults collide and the power structure threatens to give under the pressure, we have a thriller. When the Sleepers or Pollen's bizarre Fractal Forests come into play, we have arrived at mystery. Do the Players want to portray normal people in the harsh daily routine of Degenesis? Or do they want to become heroes—or criminals?

It is a start. The GM jots down the Players' wishes and creates a schedule for the future, leaving room for delays and spontaneous changes.

A brief sketch is more than enough. The PCs' ideas and goals will inevitably develop over the course of the game and deviate from the expected path.

## WHY THIS GROUP?

The Players have a vague idea of where the journey will lead. But who do they want to play? What are the PCs' relationships to each other, and what are their motives?

### RELATED

Family ties are one of the oldest motivations for great heroes and deeds. Father and son would be a strong combo and a role-playing challenge. If one is threatened, it would hurt the other immensely.

### FRIENDS

The easiest starting point, offering the greatest leeway and the quickest access at once. Motivations often become clear only when the game has been afoot for a while.

### IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POUND

The characters don't know each other, but they have gotten themselves into a critical situation together. To escape it, they form a community of purpose. Over time, mutual respect grows and turns into friendship.

### HIRED

Someone recruits the characters to solve a problem. They do not even have to like each other. The common enemy unites them. The starting point and possible developments are similar to those of "In for a penny, in for a pound".

## WHO PLAYS WHOM?

PCs do not have to complement each other. A group of Spitalians with similar Skills has its benefits: such a game would profit from the doctors' interaction with each other. But a group that wants to face a multitude of tasks should consist of several specialists with their various Skills.

Every Cult covers several categories. A Spitalian is not only a healer: he also makes for a powerful fighter. Hellvetics are not only good at shooting: people also listen to them. Other characters may step in if the intended role allocation does not take place or a character develops in an unexpected way.

A typical group setup would consist of the following:

### TWO DAMAGE DEALERS

They protect the group against threats that only violence can solve. Every Cult has its fighting faction, but Hellvetics, Judges, Scourgers, Anabaptists, Jehammedans, and Clanners are best suited for this role. Late in the game, a Spitalian Preservist offers a radical increase in fighting power.

### AT LEAST ONE SUPPORT

He strengthens the front line with special Skills or weakens the enemy from a distance. This is a job for Chroniclers or Spitalians.

### SPY OR ASSASSIN

He acts from the shadows and approaches the enemy unseen. He is good at setting and disarming traps. Palers, Scrappers, or Apocalyptics would fit this role.

### HEALER

Groups going to war soon reach the limits of their abilities without a healer. A Spitalian would be the logical choice, but an Anabaptist Elysian or an Anubian could also step into the breach.

### SILVERTONGUE

Guards need to be distracted, leaders need to be persuaded, opponents need to be outvoted, and merchants need to be haggled down. Neolibyans, Judges, and Apocalyptics are damn good at this.

### SPARK OF LIFE

GMs and Players know now what to expect and how their characters will act as a group. Before the Players start filling in the character sheets, they should know something about the traits.

# SPECIAL SKILLS

The Players should have read through Chapter 5: "Game Mechanics" or at least should get a brief GM introduction to be able to grasp the meaning of Attributes and Skills.

Four Skills — INT+Focus and INS+Primal, and PSY+Willpower, and PSY+Faith—are especially important, and Players should give them special consideration during character creation.

## PRIMAL AND FOCUS

A feral snarl in the heart and a cry on the lips that links the fighter to his ancestors across the eras—or a cool head assessing every situation, peeling away all emotions, and looking at the true skeleton of reality, recognizing every back door and preferring subtlety to sweaty ferocity. These two paths of life could not be more different and as such are mutually exclusive.

A character has to choose one of these paths. With Primal, he lets himself be devoured and pushed to incredible heights by emotions. Focus is the opposite, it awakens the rational part in him and cools down his blood.

Primal and Focus are Skills: Primal is linked to the Instinct Attribute, Focus to the Intellect Attribute. A character can learn only one of those Skills; the other one withers and cannot be raised.

The choice of Primal or Focus dictates the maximum amount of Ego Points availabe to a character. Ego represents the character's fortitude, but these points also trigger hidden reserves (especially in combat). Social or mental attacks wear the Ego out. If it reaches (0), the character falls down demoralized, fatigued, or even unconscious (see Chapter 7, "Battle").

INT+Focus or INS+Primal
Ego Point max = INT+Focus x 2 or INS+Primal x 2

The decision between Primal and Focus largely determines the way the character solves problems: with his head or with his heart. This is mainly role-played, not rolled. This decision's rule component means easier access to Attributes and Skills connected to Primal or Focus (see page 102, "Experience and Progression"). Moreoever, some special skills called Potentials are linked to Primal or Focus.

## FAITH AND WILLPOWER

Just like Primal and Focus, Faith and Willpower are two sides of the same coin. If a character chooses one of them, the other will be unreachable to him. Faith and Willpower are most often used to resist mental attacks.

PSY+Faith or PSY+Willpower

CORPUS OMNE PERSEVERARE IN
STATU SUO QUIESCENDI
VEL MOVENDI UNIFORMITER IN DIRECTUM,
NISI QUATENUS ILLUD A VIRIBUS IMPRESSIS
COGITUR STATUM SUUM MUTARE.

[NEWTON]

## THE CHARACTER SHEET

The character sheet is where all of a character's traits are written down. Every Player needs one. One is included at the end of the book to be scanned or copied, and you can download more from the Degenesis website (www.degenesis.com) to be printed.

## THE HUMAN

Every human has a name, a sex, an age, a height, and a weight. These traits are important for the image of the character in the heads of the Players and the GM, but they do not have any effect on the game mechanics.

## ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

At the outset, every character gets (10) Attribute points to allocate to the six Attributes and (28) Skill points to raise his Skills. Every (+1) costs exactly (1) point. Unlike the Skills, the Attributes already start with (1) free point, which does not have to be taken out of the point pool.

The Player cannot initially spend more than (2) points on any Attribute or Skill. Therefore, the Attribute max is (3), and the Skill max is (2).

However, before the Player begins allocating points, he has to choose a Culture, a Concept, and a Cult, the 3 C's. These allow him to raise certain Skills and Attributes above the normal limit during character creation. The following pages will tell you which ones they are. The Attributes and Skills listed bring (+1) each to the potential maximum of the respective traits. So if a Culture, Concept, and Cult each provide a (+1) on the Toughness Skill, it can be raised to (5): (2) for the regular maximum and (+1) each for the 3 C's. However, the Player does not have to raise this Skill to its maximum; he can even ignore it if he wants to create his character differently. The bonuses are only an option, never a must.

(10) Attribute points
(28) Skill points
Max spend (2) points per Attribute or Skill
Bonuses raise maximum spend of selected traits by (1)

## CHARACTER GENERATION OVERVIEW

**1. CHOOSE CULTURE, CONCEPT, AND CULT**
Note the Skill and Attribute bonuses on the character sheet.

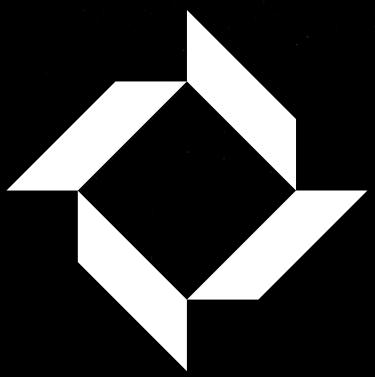
**2. SPEND POINTS**
Allocate (10) points to the Attributes and (28) to the Skills. The Attribute and Skill max is (2), Potential bonuses from Culture, Concept, and Cult give a (+1) each to this maximum.

**3. SPEND POINTS ON BACKGROUNDS**
Spend (4) points on the six Backgrounds.
No Background can rise above (3) at character generation.

**4. DETERMINE RANK**
The character climbs through his Cult's rank hierarchy until he is unable to meet the requirements for the next rank. Collected equipment and bonuses are noted on the character sheet.

**5. CHOOSE POTENTIAL**
The character gets a Cult-specific or Common Potential at level 1.

**6. FINISHING TOUCHES**
Define a character's name, sex, and other role-play traits.



# CULTURE

Every character comes from one of the seven Cultures: Borca, Pollen, Franka, Hybrispania, Purgare, Balkhan, or Africa. That's where he has his roots, and where he has the strongest influence from the land and its people.

The Player chooses a Culture for his character and notes the bonuses from the list. Remember: the Attributes and Skills noted with each Culture raise the maximum point spend at character generation for its respective traits by (1).

Some combinations of Culture and Cult are uncommon, but not impossible: not all Cults are present in force in every Culture. In the list, you will find the Cults commonly encountered in the respective Cultures. A character does not have to adhere to this, but an African Jehammedan needs a damn good explanation.

**EXAMPLE:** Chris is a Player who likes the themes of the "Chronicler" Cult. He has the character sheet on the table in front of him, this book lies next to it, and he starts assembling a Chronicler. He starts with the classics: the Chronicler hails from Borca, was brought to the Cluster as a child, and knows neither his parents nor his home village. Maybe this will be of significance later in the campaign, something along the lines of "return of the prodigal son." Chris notes the bonuses from the Culture table as small crosses on the character sheet: Agility and Instinct, as well as the Toughness, Artifact Lore, Engineering, Crafting, and Survival Skills. Chris thinks that Artifact Lore and Engineering are important for a Chronicler, while Survival is not. He'll have to see how true that is or isn't later. Chris turns the page and finds the Concepts table.

| CULTURE | COMMON CULTS | ATTRIBUTE BONUS (+1 MAX) | SKILL BONUS (+1 MAX) |
|---|---|---|---|
| BORCA | ANABAPTISTS<br>APOCALYPTICS<br>CHRONICLERS<br>CLANNERS<br>HELLVETICS<br>JEHAMMEDANS<br>JUDGES<br>SCRAPPERS<br>SPITALIANS | AGILITY<br>INSTINCT | (BOD) Toughness<br>(INT) Artifact Lore<br>(INT) Engineering<br>(AGI) Crafting<br>(INS) Survival |
| FRANKA | ANABAPTISTS<br>APOCALYPTICS<br>CHRONICLERS<br>CLANNERS<br>HELLVETICS<br>JUDGES<br>SCRAPPERS<br>SPITALIANS | CHARISMA<br>INSTINCT | (BOD) Stamina<br>(AGI) Stealth<br>(CHA) Negotiation<br>(PSY) Faith/Willpower<br>(PSY) Deception |
| POLLEN | ANABAPTISTS<br>APOCALYPTICS<br>CHRONICLERS<br>CLANNERS<br>SCRAPPERS<br>SPITALIANS | BODY<br>INSTINCT | (BOD) Melee<br>(BOD) Stamina<br>(INT) Legends<br>(INS) Survival<br>(INS) Empathy |
| BALKHAN | APOCALYPTICS<br>CLANNERS<br>HELLVETICS<br>JEHAMMEDANS<br>PALERS<br>SCRAPPERS | BODY<br>PSYCHE | (BOD) Brawl<br>(BOD) Force<br>(CHA) Leadership<br>(PSY) Reaction<br>(INS) Empathy |
| HYBRISPANIA | ANUBIANS<br>APOCALYPTICS<br>CLANNERS<br>JEHAMMEDANS<br>NEOLIBYANS<br>PALERS<br>SCOURGERS<br>SCRAPPERS<br>SPITALIANS | INTELLECT<br>AGILITY | (BOD) Melee<br>(AGI) Mobility<br>(AGI) Stealth<br>(INT) Medicine<br>(INS) Orienteering |
| PURGARE | ANABAPTISTS<br>APOCALYPTICS<br>CLANNERS<br>HELLVETICS<br>SCRAPPERS<br>SPITALIANS | CHARISMA<br>PSYCHE | (CHA) Conduct<br>(INT) Legends<br>(PSY) Faith/Willpower<br>(PSY) Domination<br>(INS) Taming |
| AFRICA | ANUBIANS<br>APOCALYPTICS<br>CLANNERS<br>NEOLIBYANS<br>SCOURGERS<br>SCRAPPERS | INTELLECT<br>BODY | (BOD) Athletics<br>(BOD) Brawl<br>(CHA) Expression<br>(INT) Medicine<br>(PSY) Reaction |

# CONCEPT

The Concepts are ordered along the lines of the archetypes in the Apocalyptic Tarot, with each archetype embodying a path of life, telling a story of the bearer's motivations and dears: one person's goal in life is self sacrifice, while another wants to control the people around him. The Player must choose one of the 22 Concepts for their characters. Like the Culture, his Concept brings a bonus to the maximum point spend at character generation, this time for one Attribute and two Skills.

In play, the character can apply a bonus of +2D to an Action once per day when in a situation pertaining to his Concept.

Choose a Concept for the character
Note Attribute and Skill bonuses
Concept brings +2D per day in an appropriate situation

**EXAMPLE:** The Players in Chris's group have agreed that their characters' life paths have crossed repeatedly over the years. This led to a certain respect, but not to friendship. The threat of the Clans has brought them even closer.

Chris keeps this in mind when choosing his Concept.

He likes "the Defiler" and thinks this Concept would make for an interesting character but could be challenging in a long campaign. After all, the game is supposed to be cooperative. All right, the "Protector" then. After all, Chris's Chronicler has lost his parents and his home, was lost in his helplessness. The Chronicler faces this primal fear in his adolescence and into his adulthood by elevating any knowledge and education to a monolithic bastion against the decline of humanity. His parents may have given up on him, but he will never betray what he loves. "The Protector" brings bonuses on Psyche, Stamina, and Toughness.

## PERSONALITY PATTERNS

Glittering lenses swing across the streets on cables, digitizing every movement, grabbing every face as a pattern of pixels. Movement sensors in small side alleys blink, counting steps. The Chroniclers control Justitian. Waves of data from thousands of Sensoriums wash into the Cluster, where they are correlated and tested against the weak remainders of the Static Stream. The results are intricate mathematical patterns that are remarkably similar to white noise: a total failure.

For decades, there hasn't been any significant pattern. In fact, the system only ever produced one result. Over 100 years ago, data sets of alleged personality patterns activated a cascade of 22 symbols. Every pattern related to exactly one symbol. A Chronicler's dream became reality. The Stream had revealed to them that humans were classifiable into 22 groups! How much easier could it get? The Stream reactions died down after minutes, but from this point on, the symbols were rooted in the Chroniclers' minds. However, it was years later that Chroniclers saw the same symbols on the cards of the Apocalyptic tarot. They were identical, and they were 22 again. They were definitely onto something very big here.

### 0. THE ADVENTURER

Folly, recklessness, and the search for physical and mental limits are the Adventurer's driving force. He continually confronts situations beyond his abilities. If he survives, he gains experience and looks for new motivations.

The Adventurer never stays in one place for too long, because there is too much to discover. There are ruins to explore, passages to delve into, Clans to find. He embraces fear as a friend; without it, everything is boring. Nothing is worse than the boredom and predictability of a normal day.

### I. THE CREATOR

Everything crumbles. Humans simply die. Only their buildings and inventions, the knowledge from their lifetime, survives. The need to leave their legacy, to keep their name from being forgotten, is what drives Creators. They are constantly working meticulously, seeking the biggest challenges to prove themselves worthy by mastering them. They build monoliths, construct defensive walls for villages, weld together pipes for irrigation systems, or take on the awakening of the Stream as their life's work. Nothing motivates a Creator more than the desire to build a monument to his name through his endeavors.

### II. THE MENTOR

Teaching and learning have raised humanity above the level of animals. The Mentor lives in this tradition and shares his knowledge with chosen disciples. He sees himself in them, immortalizes himself and his knowledge through them. He grooms their curiosity and teaches them. One day they will continue his work, and the cycle will continue. Indifference towards the marvels of the world,

stubbornness, and stupidity are the banes of humanity, and the Mentor disdains those afflicted by them.

### III. THE MARTYR

Self-sacrifice unto self-abandonment is the Martyr's purpose in life. He gains strength and power from protecting the weak, charging into the fray first, working when everyone else has given up. He suffers for others. The Martyr knows that his solitary actions are more inspiring than any flaming speech. His principles are adamant. They are his shield, his armor, and his weapon at once, a blazing example of willpower and faithfulness. As a paragon, he feels bulletproof. Nothing can make him surrender.

### IV. THE RULER

Control is the only way to reach a goal. Most people are mindless cockroaches that need taming. There are tasks to assign and orders to shout. If you let the reins slacken even for a second, the world tumbles into chaos. The Ruler must lead his flock, rise above any doubt, make the right decisions, and lead in person if the people do not recognize his wisdom. Nothing is more frightening for the Ruler than assigning responsibility and power to others.

### V. THE SEEKER

Where do we come from, and where do we go? The questions of life and death vex the Seeker. He wants to unravel the mysteries of the world, dissect them down to the bones, ask questions no one has ever asked before—and answer them. What is behind the 2 to the power of 16 virus? Where did the asteroids come from? What is the nature of the Primer? Was this really the first impact? The Seeker digs in the thicket of the past and in the labs of the present for explanations, but time is hot on his heels.

### VI. THE HEALER

The Healer sees the world's collapse and fights tooth and nail against it. Whether it is a physical wound, barren soil, a burned-out mind, or broken technology, the Healer sees it as his task to rebuild the old order. You can splint the bone, water the dry soil, and repair an old boat. Everything he does, he does with care so the collapse will not endanger his work again the next day. The Healer gives up on nothing that is not beyond hope.

### VII. THE TRADITIONALIST

Order is safety, it separates the humans from the apes. It prevents humanity from wandering aimlessly and falling prey to the next pack of Gendos. Those who stay true to the traditions, honor the family, and act accordingly chase chaos from the world. Anarchy is anathema to the Traditionalist. He implores people to look to the past when today's questions are hard to bear. He clings to the ancient rules, never adapting them, no matter what happens. It would sweep him off his feet. He hates change, only wanting to guarantee continuity.

### VIII. THE MEDIATOR

If we all spoke the same language, there would be no more strife and misunderstanding. The Mediator sees himself as a speaker for all parties, looks for peace in harmony, implores and pacifies. He internalizes the parties' motives, pointing out common ground to the squabblers and sharpening their understanding for each other. Shouting and loud words are not the Mediator's way. Emotion must take a backseat in favour of reason.

### IX. THE HERMIT

People chatter all the time, so much so that every thought drowns in the sea of spoken inanities that constantly surround us. The Hermit does not want companionship. He dislikes everybody. He does not want to communicate and is not interested in the stories of others. In a group, he always flees to the fringe, needing his distance from the din of the world. Life as a loner is so much better. No responsibility towards anybody: being left to his own devices makes the Hermit happy. Only in absolute solitude does he find peace.

### X. THE HERETIC

The Heretic does not believe in anything, and nothing is sacred to him. Rules, religions, traditions: everything can and must be scrutinized. He looks for glitches in the system, wanting to shake others' faith. Rebellion, revolts, and riots are the Heretic's brands. He wants to destroy the stagnation and the traditions, wants to see precious civilization shatter against its own ideals. He casts doubt, and that is good. The more people deviate from their ways, the larger his fellowship.

### XI. THE CONQUEROR

The Conqueror only exists between the poles of competing powers. To him, every battle is a power struggle; every decision is a move in the game of life. Victory means everything to him, only losers babble about morals. The Conqueror finds power in his ego's exorbitance: his hubris drives him towards great deeds. He considers modesty false and vain; he brags about his successes.

## XII. THE ABOMINATION

Some people have seen too much. Something within them has broken, guiding their thoughts down strange paths. No one wants to be around them.

The ways of the Abomination disturb those who meet him. His proximity makes them shiver. He sucks in the fright he awakens in others like mother's milk. It nourishes and disturbs him, adding to his weirdness. He loves getting lost in fantasies and seeing the fire of fear burn in his opponent's eyes.

When others realize that he has shed any civilized emotions like compassion or responsibility, they see a feral beast looking at them through his eyes. Madness squats in the Abomination's brain. He is a clockwork bomb without an off-switch. Tick tock.

## XIII. THE DESTROYER

To make room for something new, everything old has to die. Following this principle, the Destroyer fully gives in to his madness. Everyone is an enemy, and one life will not be enough to destroy them all. He hunts his enemies to the four corners of the world, fighting them, eradicating them. Even if he claims to act for a greater cause, he actually acts for his own sake. When something new grows after the destruction, he has long since moved on. He never looks back.

## XIV. THE CHOSEN

People come running to see him, to bask in his glory. Others have always listened to every word the Chosen said. All of his words sounded wise. That had its consequences: he sees himself as the solution to every problem. He is the sword splitting apart the Gordian knot, and he is the Messiah that the congregation has awaited. His presence inspires the people, for good or for bad. Those who disdain him and call him a fraud are damned for their faithlessness in his eyes.

## XV. THE DEFILER

The Defiler wears a cloak of envy. Why should others always get more than he does? Why should they be happier, more beautiful, stronger? The Defiler cannot stand other people's joy. When he drags them down into the muck, when he kicks up a cloud of dust, when he sets lovers at each other's throats, he fulfills his destiny. The Defiler rules over all those who always feel aggrieved and blame others for it.

## XVI. THE PROTECTOR

The world is full of treasures, small ones and big ones, and they all need protection. The Protector stands in front of his charges like a tower, whether they are people or objects. He wants to preserve things, be they artifacts, cultural achievements, or human life. Whatever the Protector dedicates himself to, he protects with his life until he himself is destroyed.

## XVII. THE VISIONARY

When knowledge finally steps out of time and into the foreground of reality, the Visionary has already seen it. He sees the course of the future, thinks decades ahead, accuses unbelievers, and implores people to be reasonable. He hopes to pave the way for a better tomorrow. His intellect and his visions determine humanity's progress.

## XVIII. THE ZEALOT

The Zealot's faith moves mountains. He toils and suffers beyond human understanding, knowing no limits. His power comes from his devotion to his Lord. He would die for his religion, his Cult, and his ideology, and he proves his worth for the cause day by day. He burns with madness, singeing the minds of those around him until nothing remains but ash drifting in the wind and blazing faith.

## XIX. THE DISCIPLE

Knowledge is like an ocean the Disciple will travel on for all his life. He follows great teachers, looking for the Bygones' forgotten libraries, forever driven by his curiosity. He is enormously knowledgeable, but it is never enough. He carries many ways of life and specializations within him, but he can never decide on one path.

## XX. THE RIGHTEOUS

Action and conscience are inseparable, and the Righteous' conscience is pure. He sees the world in stark contrasts, and people around him consider him self-righteous. Indeed, he passes up no opportunity to implement his idea of righteousness. As a keeper of questions of faith or law, he judges everyone, every deed, every people, even every emotion. Everything is either good or bad. He never doubts himself.

## XXI. THE TRAVELER

The Traveler must wander the world to grow by experiencing it and its people. He collects impressions and experiences like others collect Gendo skulls, but he does not keep them to himself. He spreads good and bad news, connecting the hinterland to the metropolis, linking Clans and Cults. He is restless: he longs for the road.

| TAROT CODE | CONCEPT | ATTRIBUTE BONUS (+1 MAX) | SKILL BONUS (+1 MAX) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 0. THE ADVENTURER | BODY | (AGI) Mobility<br>(INS) Orienteering |
| | I. THE CREATOR | AGILITY | (CHA) Arts<br>(INT) Engineering |
| | II. THE MENTOR | INTELLECT | (CHA) Leadership<br>(INT) Legends |
| | III. THE MARTYR | PSYCHE | (PSY) Faith/Willpower<br>(BOD) Toughness |
| | IV. THE RULER | CHARISMA | (PSY) Cunning<br>(CHA) Leadership |
| | V. THE SEEKER | INTELLECT | (INT) Artifact lore<br>(INT) Science |
| | VI. THE HEALER | AGILITY | (INT) Medicine<br>(AGI) Crafting |
| | VII. THE TRADITIONALIST | INSTINCT | (INT) Legends<br>(CHA) Conduct |
| | VIII. THE MEDIATOR | PSYCHE | (INS) Perception<br>(CHA) Negotiation |
| | IX. THE HERMIT | INSTINCT | (INS) Survival<br>(AGI) Stealth |
| | X. THE HERETIC | PSYCHE | (PSY) Cunning<br>(CHA) Expression |
| | XI. THE CONQUEROR | BODY | (BOD) Toughness<br>(BOD) Force |
| | XII. THE ABOMINATION | PSYCHE | (PSY) Domination<br>(BOD) Toughness |
| | XIII. THE DESTROYER | INSTINCT | (BOD) Stamina<br>(BOD) Force |
| | XIV. THE CHOSEN | CHARISMA | (CHA) Expression<br>(CHA) Leadership |
| | XV. THE DEFILER | PSYCHE | (PSY) Deception<br>(PSY) Domination |
| | XVI. THE PROTECTOR | PSYCHE | (BOD) Stamina<br>(BOD) Toughness |
| | XVII. THE VISIONARY | CHARISMA | (CHA) Seduction<br>(PSY) Cunning |
| | XVIII. THE ZEALOT | INSTINCT | (PSY) Reaction<br>(PSY) Faith/Willpower |
| | XIX. THE DISCIPLE | CHARISMA | (INS) Empathy<br>(INS) Perception |
| | XX. THE RIGHTEOUS | INTELLECT | (PSY) Cunning<br>(CHA) Negotiation |
| | XXI. THE TRAVELER | INSTINCT | (INT) Legends<br>(INS) Orienteering |

# CULT

Every character has joined a Cult or was born into one. Its views, rites, and duties all influence them: he is part of a social framework and submits to its hierarchy. He can learn special Cult Potentials, and access items from the Cults arsenals - at least, within certain limits, especially as a new recruit. The character starts at the bottom of the food chain. As a Neolibyan, he starts as an Apprentice. As a Chronicler, he'll start as a Bit. His Skills - and his Backgrounds, which are explained later in this chapter - decide if he rises in rank, and into which one. Through clever choices of Attributes and Skills, characters can rise above the first rank of a Cult during character creation. Every rank has its responsibilities, but also its benefits, including the use of certain Cult equipment among other things. The ranks of the Cults, their prerequisites and their benefits are listed on the following pages.

Character joins a Cult.
Player notes the Skill bonuses.
Certain Skills and Backgrounds give the character access to higher ranks

**EXAMPLE:** Chris has wanted to play a Chronicler ever since he started creating this character. Now he only needs to write down the bonuses on his character sheet. This time, there are five Skills: Crafting, Negotiation, Artifact Lore, Engineering, and Deception. Crafting, Engineering, and Artifact Lore are well-suited for his Chronicler Protector, and Crafting and Engineering have a maximum bonus of (+2) through his combo of Culture, Concept, and Cult.

## CLANNERS

Humanity has been able to reach the present by stepping onto the shoulders of the Clanners. They are the populace, the farmers, gatherers, and hunters. The Clanners are by no means a homogeneous group. When a Player decides to play a Clanner, he can choose a Clan (see Chapter 10, "From Hell" for examples) or invent his own. Under the Clanner ranks, he will find rules for creating his own Clan. The Skills that the Cult list proposes describe a wild Clanner shaped by the daily combat against nature and enemy tribes. If the Clan needs to be more technologically advanced, like the Enemoi, the Player can choose five different Skills at the GM's discretion.

| CULT | SKILL BONUS (+1 MAX) | |
|---|---|---|
| SPITALIANS | (BOD) Toughness | |
| | (INT) Medicine | (INT) Science |
| | (PSY) Faith/Willpower | (INS) Perception |
| CHRONICLERS | (AGI) Crafting | |
| | (CHA) Negotiation | (INT) Artifact Lore |
| | (INT) Engineering | (PSY) Deception |
| HELLVETICS | (BOD) Force | |
| | (BOD) Stamina | (AGI) Projectiles |
| | (CHA) Leadership | (PSY) Reaction |
| JUDGES | (BOD) Melee | |
| | (AGI) Navigation | (AGI) Projectiles |
| | (CHA) Conduct | (PSY) Domination |
| CLANNERS | (BOD) Stamina | |
| | (BOD) Melee | (INT) Legends |
| | (INS) Survival | (INS) Taming |
| SCRAPPERS | (BOD) Athletics | |
| | (BOD) Toughness | (AGI) Crafting |
| | (INT) Artifact Lore | (INS) Survival |
| NEOLIBYANS | (AGI) Projectiles | |
| | (CHA) Conduct | (CHA) Negotiation |
| | (PSY) Cunning | (INS) Empathy |
| SCOURGERS | (BOD) Athletics | |
| | (BOD) Force | (BOD) Stamina |
| | (AGI) Mobility | (PSY) Reaction |
| ANUBIANS | (BOD) Toughness | |
| | (CHA) Leadership | (INT) Legends |
| | (INT) Medicine | (PSY) Faith/Willpower |
| JEHAMMEDANS | (BOD) Melee | |
| | (AGI) Crafting | (CHA) Arts |
| | (PSY) Faith/Willpower | (INS) Taming |
| APOCALYPTICS | (BOD) Athletics | |
| | (AGI) Dexterity | (CHA) Arts |
| | (CHA) Seduction | (PSY) Cunning |
| ANABAPTISTS | (BOD) Melee | |
| | (BOD) Force | (AGI) Mobility |
| | (INT) Legends | (PSY) Faith/Willpower |
| PALERS | (AGI) Projectiles | |
| | (AGI) Stealth | (INT) Engineering |
| | (PSY) Cunning | (INS) Perception |

# SIX BACKGROUNDS

Behind every character is a Cult with thousands of people who all have their own views and goals, wielding resources far beyond imagining and with its own dark secrets. The character can disregard all of this or use it, they can abandon the path or follow the river of hidden knowledge to the source and ultimately pull the strings at the center of the Cult. The six Backgrounds - Allies, Authority, Renown, Resources, Secrets, and Network - describe how far the character is along the path, what he can do within his Cult, and how charismatic he is outside the Cult.

Every Background has a score between (0) and (6), with (6) being the full potential of the respective Background within the Cult. You can raise Attributes and Skills during gameplay with Experience Points (see page 102, "Experience and Progression"), but Backgrounds can only be raised or lowered through the deeds and accomplishments of a character.

During character creation, every character starts with (4) points to assign to the six Backgrounds, however at this point none can rise above (3).

Backgrounds determine the rank within
the Cult together with Skills.
No raising with XP.
4 points during character creation;
no Background score above (3)

**EXAMPLE:** Chris' character takes shape, so now it is time to find a name. For the Chroniclers this is easy. They use words from the Bygone world of computers, so for a Chronicler from Borca and a Protector, "Monitor" would be good. He keeps an eye on the knowledge he has sworn to protect.

As for Backgrounds, Monitor is not meant to become some meaningless informer of the powerful Fragments, so Chris looks at the ranks. To rise from Bit to Agent and then to Mediator, Monitor especially needs Artifact Lore.

The Mediator also needs a score of at least (1) in the Secrets Background. That is doable: Chris spends 2 points on Secrets and 1 each on Network and Resources.

## ALLIES

A character with an Allies score has found some assistance within their own Cult. They may be colleagues, comrades, brothers in arms, or friends, but they all side with him when the time comes or the circumstances demand it. They don't care about the character's social position. Maybe the character has saved some of them from certain death, others he has impressed with his feats or brought over to his side through blackmail or extortion.

**USE:** If the character meets members of his Cult, he might be able to recruit their help. The Allies score determines the number of allies, but also their rank. With a score of (5) or (6), you can get help from the highest ranking Cult members.

**GAIN | LOSS:** Allies share the character's views—but if he changes his moral or ethical disposition or turns his back on the Cult, the old ties will break. An alliance is always a give-and-take thing: allies will demand things from the character. If he does not help, his allies will turn their backs on him.

## AUTHORITY

The character is esteemed for his knowledge, experience, or strength of determination, but he does not have to be a moral compass. His influence stems from his social primacy within the Cult. The stronger his authority, the more likely other Cult members will see his words of advice as commands to follow.

**USE:** Authority is used to bring other Cult members into line in social conflicts or to make them do something that they might not necessarily want to do on their own. Most often, it is used in conjunction with CHA+Leadership, CHA+Negotiation, and PSY+Domination.

**GAIN | LOSS:** Authority may be sharp as a scalpel, but if the blade remains unused, it will rust. Only those who work proactively on their primacy will not be forced into a corner by other alphas. You'll have to compete with people of the same rank and rise above them to strengthen your authority.

## RENOWN

The character has gained some respect outside of the hierarchy. Inwardly and outwardly, he embodies the Cult's ideals. He is charismatic, a blazing star in heaven.

**USE:** Characters with a high Renown are paragons. In inns, people want to break their bread with them and freely offer them their aid. Renown does not demand anything, but it is very profitable.

**GAIN | LOSS:** As opposed to Authority, Renown does not have to be proven. It is born in the minds of your fellows and grows into an idealized view of the character until he is considered an example for the purest and best ideas of the Cult. Only deviant actions or slander can damage Renown.

## RESOURCES

Everyone recognizes a Judge when he sees his coat, hat, and Judgment hammer, or the Spitalian in his neoprene suit and his Splayer.

They are insignia of membership, but also of influence and standing within the Cult. A simple Anabaptist Ascetic may not use a Spitfire in battle, that is a prerogative of the Furors. An Apocalyptic Battle Crow having a try at a Tarot flies too close to the sun.

The Resource score determines what the character can get from his Cult.

**USE:** Every Cult object has a Resource value and a price (see Chapter 8, "Bazaar"). While the price is important for markets, the Resource value determines how the object can be acquired within the Cult.

If the object's Resource value is lower than the character's Resource score, the character may simply take the object as their influence is high enough that they will simply be given it. If the character's Resource score is equal to the object's value, the same is true, but the character's Resources are reduced by (1) as the character uses up some good will from their Cult.

Please note: not everything is available everywhere. The most valuable Cult artifacts, at Resources (5) to (6), can only be found in a Cult's headquarters.

**GAIN | LOSS:** A gain in Resources often accompanies important missions or comes as a reward when a great feat of the character fills the arsenals. A high Resource score is always a sign of trust and appreciation. However, those who only enrich themselves from the arsenals by greedily hoarding treasures or wasting Cult resources will quickly turn the Cult against them. Their access to Resources will dwindle.

## SECRETS

The Anubian rites are only mumbo-jumbo to hide the truth from the eyes of the villagers. What kind of influence would they hold if everyone knew that?

Under Cathedral City, manuscripts detailing every step of Rebus, the Anabaptists' founder, are stored. They permit for other interpretations than the official ones everyone is taught these days.

In the Cluster, secrets centuries old simmer behind cascades of password barriers in crypto vaults.

Those who penetrate to the depths of the Cults look behind the veneer of heroic deeds into the vortex of history, recognize the network of necessities. The Spitalian begins to learn the atrocities that Preservists' have carried out, the Paler begins to understand Getrell's Memetics and their impact on himself and his community.

The Secrets score signifies how close the character has come to the truth about his Cult.

**USE:** Those who know the Secrets can judge the true meaning of a decision from above. They know hidden or abandoned facilities (bonus on INS+Orienteering) and can start to guess the truth behind the legends surrounding the Cult (bonus on INT+Legends). They know passwords or the entrances to ancient doorways. However, illegal deeds of corrupt and influential Cultists, along with the deals they make, also fall under "Secrets" and can help to gain short time advantages in exchange for eternal enmities.

A high Secrets score reveals shortcuts and promises additional information during the game.

**GAIN | LOSS:** The truth is infectious and incurable. It lurks in forbidden places and rises from a dying man's lips. If anyone were around to hear it, their ideas of the origin of the Cults or the true nature of certain events could be changed forever, as they gain a point of Secrets. However, those who use this secret knowledge recklessly risk their lives. A secret has no power if everyone knows it, and as such those who use the compromising knowledge and make it public can lose points of Secrets.

## NETWORK

The Cults are not hermetic enclosures. Beyond the control structures, rank hierarchies and ancient traditions, they fracture into groups of individuals. In the inns, Anabaptists drink with Scrappers, and Hellvetics laugh at the jokes of the Apocalyptics. People from different Cults know each other—and sometimes, they even help each other out, even if their Cults are publicly opposed. The Network Background is used to determine the contacts a given character has outside of their own Cult.

**USE:** What is going on in the city? Where do I get a job? Who profits from this murder? Have you heard anything about a profitable field of ruins? A character with a functioning Network will be sure to find someone who can answer these questions.

**GAIN | LOSS:** People prefer dealing with someone they know. Favors small and large, a strong, helping hand; ritualized companionship in inns, or simply a fistful of Chronicler Drafts: as if of its own volition, a Network grows around a friendly or fascinating person.

For some, this is hard work. Brutal or unpredictable people can become socially outcast and thus lose access to parts of their Network.

I WOULD RATHER BE **ASHES** THAN DUST!
I WOULD RATHER THAT MY SPARK SHOULD BURN OUT
IN A **BRILLIANT BLAZE** THAN IT SHOULD BE STIFLED BY DRY-ROT.
I WOULD RATHER BE A SUPERB METEOR,
EVERY ATOM OF ME IN MAGNIFICENT GLOW,
THAN A SLEEPY AND PERMANENT PLANET.
THE FUNCTION OF MAN IS **TO LIVE**, NOT TO EXIST.
I SHALL NOT WASTE MY DAYS TRYING TO PROLONG THEM.
**I SHALL USE MY TIME.**

[JACK LONDON]

## ASSIGNING POINTS

Now that all bonuses are clear, the Player can assign points to Attributes and Skills and must decide between Primal or Focus and between Faith or Willpower.

**EXAMPLE:** Monitor takes shape. Chris assigns (2) points to Intellect, thus gaining Intellect (3) as every Attribute starts at (1). He would like to have more, but that is impossible with the combinations he chose: neither Culture nor Concept brought an Intellect bonus. He has (8) points left for the Attributes.

He can raise Agility, Psyche, and Instinct by (3) points each. He needs Psyche because he wants Monitor to have a strong will. Chris decides to assign the points as follows: Body (2), Agility (3), Charisma (2), Intellect (3), Psyche (4), Instinct (2). The Skills Artifact Lore, Engineering, Toughness, and Crafting are especially promising because they have acquired bonuses from the combination of Cult, Culture and Concept that Chris chose. Deception, Negotiation, and Survival could also be raised to (3), but Chris does not care about them.

In the end, Monitor's Skills look like this: Melee (2) (you cannot go wrong with being able to defend yourself), Stamina (1), Toughness (3), Crafting (4), Dexterity (2), Stealth (1), Artifact Lore (3), Engineering (4), Legends (1), Science (1), Reaction (2), Willpower (2), Primal (2).

Chris finds Primal especially enticing: Monitor is hotheaded, he mainly uses his skull to bash in walls. He does not check artifacts carefully, feeling for every possible function, but attacks them like an animal, pushing his hand into them, relying on his instinct. Maybe Monitor is child of savage Clanners — could it be that some aspects of his wild parentage are showing through?

## POTENTIALS

Attributes and Skills are the base of any ability. The Potentials soar above them like blinking stars: they encompass legendary attack maneuvers, extraordinary special Skills, and feats of Willpower and Faith. The Cults offer special Potentials to their followers usable only by them, but there are also additional, general Potentials that can be used by anyone.

A Potential usually has 3 levels. It is learned on the first level, all other levels have to be bought with Experience Points (see page 102, “Experience and Progression”).

Potentials differ very much from Attributes and Skills: usually, they offer the Player special rules for certain situations (see Potential listings).

Every newly created character learns one Potential at level 1. He can choose between Cult specific and common Potentials. Please note: some Potentials have a rank or Skill prerequisite.

New characters get a level 1 Potential

**EXAMPLE:** The Potential “Nova” is well suited for Monitor: attacking mindlessly and dazzling the enemy with cascades of light, smoke, and lightning. On the other hand, Monitor will probably not have all the necessary modules for this for his Chronicler Suit in the beginning of the campaign. Chris sees the Potential as a future investment and notes it on his character sheet as a level 1 Potential. Because of the additional rules being a little more complex, he jots down some notes on the back of the character sheet.

# RANKS

A character starts his life in the Cult at rank 1, no matter what scores he might have. Most Cults have exactly one starting point; only as an Apocalyptic or a Jehammedan does the Player have to decide due to Cultural differences or the character's sex.

Every rank has an associated prerequisite. These are usually recommended minimum scores in Skills and Backgrounds. Skills are always given in prerequisites by the sum of Attribute plus Skill, never the level of the Skill alone.

Skill prerequisite
Always Attribute + Skill
Never only the Skill level

If the character's scores should ever fall below the prerequisites of his current rank, he will not lose the rank. The prerequisites are only checked when entering a new rank. A rank has its advantages: it brings duties and rights, and promises some special rules and bonuses. Additionally, many ranks come with typical Cult gear and equipment that is given to the character.

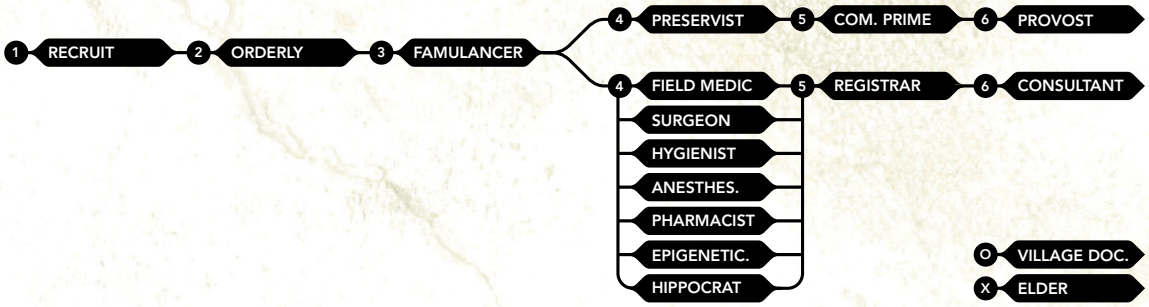
Rank prerequisite must be fulfilled
Rank brings special rules and bonuses
Character gets Cult equipment

The character proceeds from rank 1. The rank schematics of the Cults show the potential development of the character. His career runs from junction to junction along the lines. Every decision for a rank cuts branches away from this development tree: a Judge cannot be a Protector and an Advocate at once, a Spitalian must choose a medical specialization, a Hellvetic joins an armed services branch.

During character creation, the character can work through the hierarchy and gain new ranks until he cannot fulfill the prerequisites for the next rank anymore. Unless stated otherwise, he keeps the gear of the ranks he has gone through.

Rising through as many ranks as possible
No ranks can be skipped
Equipment can be kept
Special rules are usually only valid for the current rank

RANK 3 FAMULANCER




## 1 - RECRUIT

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** -
**EQUIPMENT:** The Manual (illustrated book on medicine basics, adds +1D to INT+Medicine as long as the Medicine Skill is (2) or less); leather apron

## 2 - ORDERLY

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 4; BOD+Stamina 4
**RESULT:** Survives countless infections in the Appendix that ultimately strengthen his immune system: he gets a lifelong +1D bonus on all rolls against illnesses.
**EQUIPMENT:** Spitalian Suit

## 3 - FAMULANCER

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 4; INT+Medicine 6; INT+Science 4
**RESULT:** Is appreciated in the Protectorate and gets food there for free. If a Famulancer does not choose a medical specialty quickly, the Registrar will send him to combat missions or to aid the Spitalians' allies.
**EQUIPMENT:** Splayer with Mollusk (+1 other attachment); Fungicide Rifle

## 4 - FIELD MEDIC

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 8; Renown 2; Resources 2; Network 2
**RESULT:** Gets free access to public hospitals, and spore purging for himself for free. (+1) Allies for every Spitalian rescued during a combat mission, (+1) Network for people from other Cults. A Field Medic will often receive assistance from comrades he was able to save on a mission during the aptitude tests.
**EQUIPMENT:** Field kit

## 4 - HYGIENIST

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 6; INT+Engineering 4; Allies 4; Authority 4
**RESULT:** Can order spore purging anywhere in the Protectorate. Judges present are subject to his directives. May certify harvests or withhold the certification.
**EQUIPMENT:** Hygienist bodysuit; chlorine gas grenade; SP 4016 grenade

## 4 - SURGEON

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 8; AGI+Dexterity 6; CHA+Leadership 4; Renown 4
**RESULT:** The Surgeon can draft an Anesthesiologist and 1D Orderlies for support at any time. The Spitalian Surgeons are held in high regard by the Anabaptists and thus gain access to the Council of Emanations as the only medical specialty. Sometimes Baptists recruit them as personal doctors.
**EQUIPMENT:** Surgical instruments (level 1)

## 4 - EPIGENETICIST

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 8; INT+Engineering 6; INT+Science 6; Secrets 3
**RESULT:** Gains access to Psychonaut holding facilities. If he spends (2) points of Authority, he gets a Famulancer bodyguard. Chroniclers grant him access to their Alcoves and collect Bygone medical technology for him. (+3) Resources when buying experimental warfare agents.
**EQUIPMENT:** Sequencer; cartridge thrower; 2x EX Aerosol / EG 1 cartridges

## 4 - PHARMACIST

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 10; INT+Science 8; Renown 4
**RESULT:** Together with the Epigeneticists, the Pharmacists are the Spitalians' technological elite. Their influence in their medical field is tied to their Renown, which in turn depends on their research results: if they do not attain any new knowledge for months, Renown is lowered by (1). On the other hand, it grows again quickly when they bring back medical plants from unknown regions or Psychonautic gland ichor. With Renown (2+), they gain free access to the central pharmacies of all hospitals (Resources (+3) when acquiring drugs).
**EQUIPMENT:** Apothecarium (level 1)

## 4 - HIPPOCRAT

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Domination 6; Allies 2; Authority 4; Secrets 3
**RESULT:** Gains free access to even the most secret facilities. Can order revisions and tests of aptitude, and can have Spitalians removed from office by Preservists.

Can shut down research units and have their labs sealed. Hippocrats represent the Spital to the other cults and may sign treaties. They have unlimited access to Justitian's Judgment Hall.
**EQUIPMENT:** Revolver; +1D bullets per month; Ita Sit cross acts as a passport; bugs and eavesdropping equipment

### 4 - ANESTHESIOLOGIST
**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 8; BOD+Brawl 6; BOD+Force 4; BOD+Stamina 6; Allies 3
**RESULT:** Gets Resources (+3) when acquiring narcotics and stimulants; can use Burn unpunished. He gets additional resources from the Hippocrats when questioning sedated Spitalians on their behalf, noting their weak spots, analyzing dreams, and inducing trauma.
**EQUIPMENT:** Injector gun; 2x Black Band injector cartridges per month

### 0 - VILLAGE DOCTOR
**PREREQUISITE:** At least Famulancer; is sent to a certain region or village
**RESULT:** Once he has started working in the general hospital, he works his way into his patients' hearts. Network (+1). When he helps strangers in a medical emergency and his Action roll on INT+Medicine results in at least (3) Triggers, his Network grows permanently by (1) (maximum (4)). In his home community, he has +1D on all Psyche and Charisma Action Numbers.
**EQUIPMENT:** Field kit

### 5 - REGISTRAR
**PREREQUISITE:** Allies 5; Renown 4; Secrets 4
**RESULT:** Gains access to the secret labs of the Spital, except for the Preservist facilities. Has access to the Consultants, which grants him Renown (+1) upon reaching this rank. A Registrar represents the Spital externally; he is the voice of the Consultants. As long as he is in office, he gets Negotiation +2D when talking to high-ranking Cult leaders (Fragments, Corps Commanders, Senators, Consuls, etc.)
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 6 - CONSULTANT
**PREREQUISITE:** A Consultant must leave the Council; Allies 5; Authority 5; Secrets 5
**RESULT:** Head of the Cult: commands the Hippocrats. The Consultant gets his own research area.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 4 - PRESERVIST
**PREREQUISITE:** Is appointed after some outstanding combat against the Spital's enemies; Renown 4; BOD+Melee 8; BOD+Toughness 6; AGI+Mobility 6
**RESULT:** He is granted access to the Arsenal ((+3) Resources for any weapons, warfare agents, and stimulants). May use, but not misuse, Burn, unpunished. For a mission, a Commando Prime can allow him to draft 1D Famulancers.
**EQUIPMENT:** Preservalis sword; Pistol; +1D bullets per month (valid for all future ranks); horse (Charger)

### 5 - COMMANDO PRIME
**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 10; AGI+Navigation 6; Renown 5; Secrets 3; Authority 4
**RESULT:** Gains free, unlimited access to the Arsenal. Commando Prime can command all other Spitalians. He can recruit 1D Preservists and 1D Spitalians of rank 4 for a mission. If the mission fails, he has to answer to Kranzler.
**EQUIPMENT:** Provost ring; black Newcrest horse

### 6 - PROVOST
**PREREQUISITE:** Kranzler would have to step down; then appointed by the Consultants; Renown 6; Authority 6; Secrets 5
**RESULT:** He commands all Preservists, moves into the Provost's quarters in Arnsberg. He can veto the Consultants' decisions if concerning safety of the Spital.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### X - ELDER
**PREREQUISITE:** 60 years+; Renown 4
**RESULT:** Can name proxies for tasks assigned to him and may vote against Spitalians in proclamations of guilt.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

ONLY THE **DEAD** HAVE SEEN THE END OF THE WAR.

[GEORGE SANTAYANA]

# POTENTIALS

## SPLAYING

The blades are splayed and form a deadly cross: the pole rests easily in one hand while the other pushes it forward; skin slides over metal until the wielder clenches the pumping handle and triggers the snatching mechanism. The Spitalian surges forward, pushing the Splayer upwards with both hands, turning into his enemy, hitting his opponent's head with the pumping handle so the mechanism has enough time to flip the blades open again.

Splaying can be activated with (2) Triggers on an Attack roll. After activation, the Spitalian adds (+1) to Passive Defense and +1D to Handling for one Round. If the Spitalian's next Action is also an Attack, Splaying can be activated again with (2) Triggers with the bonus adding to previous activations, however the bonus to Handling and Defense can never be higher than the Potential Level. If the activation fails in a subsequent Attack, the bonus is lost. Splaying can be combined with the Splayer's ability "Cutting."

## PHALANX

A thicket of spears is directed towards the enemy, none can pass unscathed. The Potential needs at least one flank man equipped with a spear, Splayer, or another polearm who is defending himself. The Spitalian joins them in the defense and can draw attacks directed towards the man beside him towards himself.

For every additional combatant in the Phalanx, the Spitalian adds +1D to his Active Defense roll up to the Potential level. If he gets at least (2) Triggers, the Defense counts as a successful Attack roll with the Triggers as extra Damage—the opponent has charged into the Splayer. Phalanx can be combined with the Splayer's special ability "Cutting". The Potential can be used in the first Combat Round without any restrictions. In later Rounds, the Spitalian and his comrades need one full Combat Round in which they are not attacked and have not themselves attacked to form the defensive line.

## PRESERVALIS

**PREREQUISITE:** Preservist

Preservists don't allow their enemies to surrender. They attack flared up Leperos and hack through walls of bone spurs to ram their sword into the mortal body of a Biokinetic. They fight to destroy.

In their fortress at Arnsberg, some of them learn a technique called Preservalis. They aim forceful blows at the enemy's defense and weapon, forcing an opening. The Preservist uses the momentum to ram the pistol in their offhand into the enemy's guts and pulls the trigger, the recoil pushing them out of range of a counterattack.

The Preservist must successfully Attack with his sword. If he then initiates Preservalis, his next Attack roll gets -3D (-2D at level 2 and -1D at level 3) on Handling. If the Attack succeeds, he fires a shot from his pistol, ignoring the enemy's armor.

## LAST BASTION

Flesh torn away, bone plates pulled aside, solar plexus laid bare, skull cracked, eyes dissected: the Spitalian knows his enemy, and when he says "by heart," he's not speaking metaphorically.

He knows where to hurt him and how.

When fighting Psychonauts, he adds (1) Trigger per Potential Level to every Attack roll.

## KRANZLER'S TEACHINGS

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

Kranzler's soul is black and hard as basalt, even the chants of the Dushani slide across it without even making it tremble.

Every Famulancer in the Spital today learns about Kranzler's techniques, but mastering them requires dedication. Those who do are immune to Psychonautic mental influences for at least a number of Combat Rounds equal to the Potential Level.

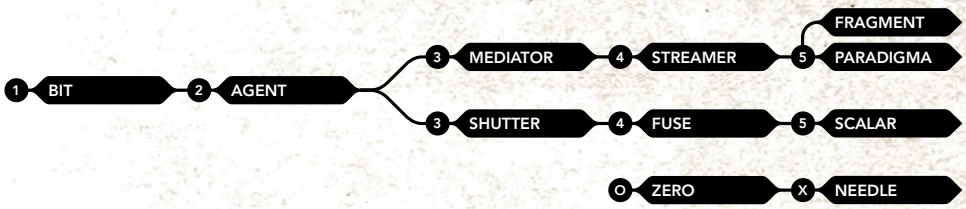
## THE LAST FAREWELL

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

All are dead or lie on the ground dying. The Spitalian is the last man standing. Once again, it is up to the Spital to hold the last frontier and fight for another day in the light. The Spitalian's humanity is crying out, burning away in the glory of absolute destructive madness.

For (6) Combat Rounds, the Spitalian adds +1D per level to Attack and Defense rolls. His Passive Defense and Damage are increased by (1) per Potential level.

If an ally awakens from unconsciousness and rejoins the battle, the Potential abruptly ends.




### 1 - BIT

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** Receives barcode tattoo on the forehead granting access to all Alcoves as long as his score does not fall to zero, in which case he would become a Zero.
**EQUIPMENT:** Robe

### 2 - AGENT

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Artifact Lore 5
**RESULT:** An Agent receives some restricted day parole. His movement vectors have to start and end in Alcoves, a Cluster, or at an important artifact location.
**EQUIPMENT:** Vocoder; Chronicler's Mask; Cape

### 3 - MEDIATOR

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Artifact Lore 7; INT+Engineering 4; Secrets 1; Network 2
**RESULT:** The Mediator can receive assignments (approach, messenger services) and permissions at holographic walls and Alcoves. The permissions are assignment-related, often access clearances for facilities of almost all Cults (except Anabaptists).

In the Clusters, a Mediator has access to the Static Stream (+3D to all knowledge related questions).
**EQUIPMENT:** Draft printer; Chronicler's Suit; 1 free module

### 4 - STREAMER

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 5; INT+Engineering 7; CHA+Negotiation 5; Authority 1; Secrets 2; Network 4
**RESULT:** Knows the secrets of other Cults, and can apply the Secrets Background to them with a (-2) penalty. The Streamer has free access to Justitian's Uptown and even to the Judgement Hall.
**EQUIPMENT:** Streamer Glove; Shocker; Tracker; 1 free module or an upgrade

### 5 - FRAGMENT

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Artifact Lore 10; PSY+Willpower/Faith 6; Secrets 5; Authority 2; Resources 4
**RESULT:** When a Fragment links to the Static Stream of a Cluster, his INT Skills temporarily rise by +6D. The Fragment receives the mirror codes of the Cluster. With them, he can move on both sides of the Static Stream and thus can manipulate the mirror world that the Sleeper infiltrators are led into. A Fragment has access to all other Cults' headquarters except for the Hellvetics' and Anabaptists'. Usually, the other Cults are not aware of this.
**EQUIPMENT:** Cascader; Stream Drone

### 5 - PARADIGMA

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 6; PSY+Willpower/Faith 8; PSY+Deception 8; PSY+Domination 6
**RESULT:** The Paradigma can read the Scrappers' runes of warning. Scrappers protect Paradigmas and act as their informers ((+1) to Network where Scrappers are concerned).
A Paradigma defends the Cult and diverts from its agenda by fanning superstition and fears and setting other parties at each other's throats. If he wants to provoke conflict between Cults and Clans, he has access to a network of provocateurs ((+3) Network for this use only).
**EQUIPMENT:** Cascader; portable Chroniclers' Network Uplink

### 3 - SHUTTER

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 6 or AGI+Projectiles 6; PSY+Cunning 6
**RESULT:** Receives sanctioned missions from the Cluster. Not welcome in Alcoves.
**EQUIPMENT:** The Shutter has access to sanctioned technology (weapons and equipment able to do lethal Damage: see page 135, "Sanctioned Technology").

### 4 - FUSE

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 8 or AGI+Projectiles 8; BOD+Toughness 6; AGI+Stealth 6; Network 3
**RESULT:** Injected transponder. It gives the Fuse access to hidden parts of the Cluster and weapon caches in the wasteland—but Scalars or Streamers can detect it any time with the help of a Tracker.
**EQUIPMENT:** Sanctioned technology by Resource level

### 5 - SCALAR

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Cunning 8; PSY+Deception 10; Secrets 4; Network 6

**RESULT:** Using forged identities, the Scalar gains massive access to Cluster arsenals. He permanently gets (+2) to Resources and can task Shutters and Fuses whom he can assign a temporary Resource bonus of (+1). The Scalar's virtual identities earn him Chronicler Drafts on a daily basis that he can debit in Alcoves: 1D x 10 CD per day.

**EQUIPMENT:** Sanctioned technology by Resource level

### 0 - ZERO

**PREREQUISITE:** At least Shutter or Mediator; one can always start walking the path of the Zero, but there is no way back; Secrets 2, PSY+Deception 6

**RESULT:** The Zero has hacked into the system of the Cluster and given himself access to all secret caches of sanctioned technology, as well as to regular Chronicler technology. His Resource level rises to (6). However, when the Zero invests Resource points, it becomes more likely that the Cluster tracks him down. The Cluster starts at INS+Perception (0). Every point of Resources used adds +1D and starts a Conflict with the Zero, who counters by using PSY+Deception. If the Cluster wins, a Shutter shows up within one hour. If it rolls (2) Triggers, a Fuse takes the cleaning job. If there are even more Triggers, a Scalar is tasked to do it. After the attack, if the Zero survived, the Cluster's Perception goes down to (0) and the game starts anew.

**EQUIPMENT:** Sanctioned and Chronicler technology

### X - NEEDLE

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Leadership 8; Allies 3; Secrets 5; Network 4

**RESULT:** At least one Clan venerates and protects the Needle, but he loses access to the Cluster's arsenals. In response, he creates his own arsenal from the findings brought to him by the Clanners. Every point of Resources gives access to the respective Tech Level: a Needle with Resources (3) can use Tech III equipment; at Resources (6), he would have free access to Wonderland artifacts.

However, if a Needle's Renown rises above (3), Marauders will take notice of him, and who can say if they would be well disposed to them.

**EQUIPMENT:** Any, depending on Tech Level; 1 piece of Free Spirit equipment

RESTATE MY ASSUMPTIONS:
ONE, MATHEMATICS IS THE LANGUAGE OF NATURE.
TWO, EVERYTHING AROUND US
CAN BE REPRESENTED AND UNDERSTOOD THROUGH NUMBERS.
THREE, IF YOU GRAPH THE NUMBERS OF ANY SYSTEM, PATTERNS EMERGE.
THEREFORE, THERE ARE PATTERNS
EVERYWHERE IN NATURE.

[PI]

# POTENTIALS

## TESLA

Electric shocks are a heart-balm. They prove that the suit is working and charged. The Chronicler is in perfect control of his modules, energizing them with a gesture of his finger, offering parts of his body to the enemy that will hit them with blinding flashes of electricity.

The Chronicler adds (1) Trigger per Potential level to AGI+Mobility when using the Discharge module offensively. They also gain +1D per Potential level to Melee Active Defense when the module is charged.

## NOVA

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

The Chronicler is an exploding star, screaming, flaming, surrounded by an accretion disk made of smoke; beams of searing light thick as fingers burst from him, blinding the righteous and chasing away the superstitious.

In battle, the Chronicler charges into the middle of his enemies and ignites all his defense modules with an Action roll on INT+Engineering (5). Every Potential Level reduces the Difficulty by (1). If there are at least (2) enemies in melee distance, his comrades are not affected by this Action. If the roll fails, the Chronicler only activates (1) randomly chosen component, and his own group suffers the same penalties as the enemy.

## DEAD END

Shutters never fight fair. They use ambushes, tricks, and deception. Only when they have their enemies cornered, when they are sure of their prey, do they unleash an efficient and lethal attack.

If there is no way out for the victim of a Shutter, the Shutter gains a bonus on Attack rolls and both Passive and Active Defense equal to his Potential level.

## FRACTAL MEMORY

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

The Chronicler's memory is like a map with landmarks and complex coastlines. His knowledge is splayed out on the map according to intricate mathematical rules, fractal patterns swirling in his mind.

On all Action rolls using INT, he adds Triggers equal to his Potential level. This Potential is permanently active.

## DOWNLOAD

Humans are machines, running on electrical signals and controlled by a wet, fleshy circuit board in their skull. In a similar way to influencing a program's actions with the correct sequence of inputs and impulses, humans can be influenced with the correct sequence of pressures and shocks. When the primitive human mind feels hopelessly trapped, it will do anything to avoid further harm, even blurting out its deepest secrets.

This method of questioning gives the Chronicler +1D and (1) Trigger on PSY+Domination per Potential level when the target of their questions has no way to escape.

## UPLOAD

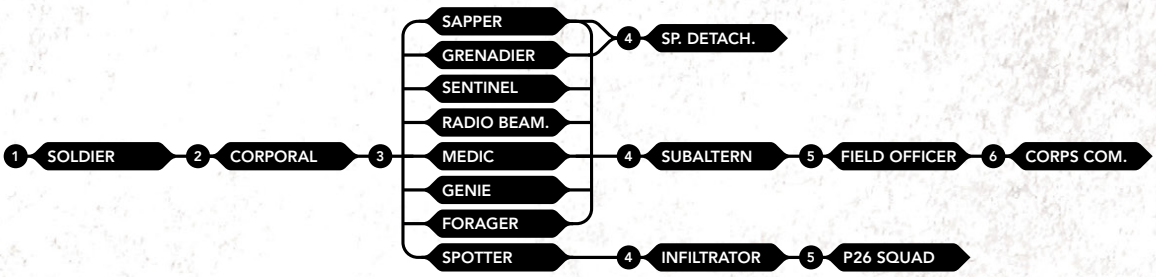
Key stimuli lead to a Download, so an Upload should also be possible. Binding the subject has not always proven beneficial to this task.

Paradigmas and Needles use a combination of superstition, fear, and occasional electric shocks to plant a suggestion in their subject's conscious mind.

Chroniclers with the Upload Potential get Triggers equal to their Potential level whenever they try to influence someone via CHA or PSY (for example by PSY+Domination, CHA+Leadership, or CHA+Seduction).

Upload can be combined with Download.

RANK 3 RADIO BEAM UNIT




## 1 - SOLDIER

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** Must report to the Alpine Fortress every six months or his Resources will drop permanently by (1) for every skipped report.
**EQUIPMENT:** Trailblazer; +5 rounds per month; Harness; last ration (equals two meals)

## 2 - CORPORAL

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Force 4; AGI+Projectiles 5; INS+Survival 4; Authority 2
**RESULT:** In the manufactures of the Alpine Fortress, the Trailblazer is customized for the Corporal's needs. The weapon gets a level 1 upgrade (+20% range, +1D Handling, or +1 Damage). He receives permission to carry (2) units of an explosive of his choice.
**EQUIPMENT:** +10 rounds per month, bonus carries to higher ranks as well.

## 3 - SAPPER

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Force 6; BOD+Stamina 6; AGI+Dexterity 6; INT+Science 4; Authority 3
**RESULT:** As demolition expert, he has easy access to explosives ((+3) Resources for explosives). He can go into combat with up to (4) units of explosives.
**EQUIPMENT:** Tunnel Shield; grenade launcher; Light Machine Gun; explosives

## 3 - GRENADIER

**PREREQUISITE:** AGI+Projectiles 8; PSY+Reaction 6; INS+Survival 6; INS+Orienteering 6; Authority 3
**RESULT:** Does not have to report every six months anymore. He receives milestones to detect weapon caches at his operation site. His Trailblazer gets a level 2 upgrade (+40% range, +2D Handling, or +2 Damage, replaces existing upgrade). A Grenadier also gets +1D for Negotiations with the Scourgers; the Lion considers the Hellvetic infantry heroes and equals.
**EQUIPMENT:** +20 rounds per month; Pathfinder

## 4 - SPECIAL DETACHEMENT

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Brawl 6; BOD+Melee 6; AGI+Projectiles 10; AGI+Stealth 6; PSY+Reaction 7; Renown 3
**RESULT:** Special Detachment soldiers have free access to the Cult headquarters as long as they wear their rank signs on their Harness.
**EQUIPMENT:** Stubbed Trailblazer; +20 rounds per month

## 3 - SENTINEL

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Force 8; BOD+Toughness 6; AGI+Navigation 6; CHA+Negotiation 6; Authority 4, Resources 3
**RESULT:** Gains access to explosives ((+3) Resources for explosives). Can arrest anyone within the Alpine Fortress and drag them in front of the Tribunal.
**EQUIPMENT:** Heavy Duty Harness

## 3 - RADIO BEAM UNIT

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Stamina 6; AGI+Crafting 6; INT+Engineering 8; Resources 3
**RESULT:** Receives uplink to a Chronicler radio network: a Radio Beam Unit can communicate with every Alcove across thousands of kilometers, and his calls for help even reach into the Alpine foothills. Within minutes to hours, a platoon of Hellvetic Grenadiers will arrive to assist him.
**EQUIPMENT:** Radio Backpack; Pathfinder

## 3 - SPOTTER

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Athletics 6; AGI+Stealth 7; INS+Perception 6; INS+Orienteering 6; Network 3
**RESULT:** Receives a transponder bracelet so others avoid mistaking him for an enemy when disguised.
**EQUIPMENT:** Light Spotter Harness; Transponder Bracelet; binoculars

## 4 - INFILTRATOR

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Deception 8; PSY+Cunning 8; PSY+Reaction 6; Network 4
**RESULT:** Knows how to navigate the hidden paths and secret storage rooms in the Alpine Fortress. When looking for one of these hidden doors, he gets +4D on INS+Orienteering.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 5 - P-26 SQUAD

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Conduct 6; CHA+Expression 6; BOD+Melee 8; PSY+Cunning 10; Network 5

**RESULT:** As a squad, the Hellvetic knows 1-3 other Infiltrators: they form a cell. He gains full access to the Alpine Fortress's arsenals (Resources (6)) as long as he uses the equipment to advance the reunification of the cantons into the Hellvetic Confederation. The members of a cell help each other—but they also watch each other.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 3 - MEDIC

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 7; INS+Empathy 4; Authority 2

**RESULT:** Held in high regard in the cantons. Gets a +1D bonus on all Psyche and Charisma rolls in the hinterland. However, his influence in the Alpine Fortress rises as well: (+1) Authority.

**EQUIPMENT:** Smoke and Shock grenades; field kit

### 3 - GENIE

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Force 6; AGI+Navigation 4; AGI+Crafting 6; INT+Engineering 6; INT+Science 6; Resources 2

**RESULT:** A Genie has experience in building fortifications. When his comrades dig in before the fight and he can inspect and upgrade the fortifications, Active and Passive Defense rise by +1D and (+1) as long as the troops are fighting from cover. The Genie gets (+3) Resources when requesting heavy bulldozers.

**EQUIPMENT:** Heavy Duty Harness with heavy lifting module

### 3 - FORAGER

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Artifact Lore 6; CHA+Negotiation 6; CHA+Conduct 4; Resources 3; Renown 3; Network 2

**RESULT:** With his uplink computer, the Forager accesses central storage and the section computers. To order ammunition or other equipment (excluding Harnesses and their upgrades, Trailblazers, and vehicles), his Resources rise to (6). As quartermaster and purser, he is close to his comrades. He can shut his ears (which gives him Renown (+1)) or make mental notes on every dirty story ((+1) Secrets). Only one can be active at a time, but it is permanent as long as the Forager plays his role accordingly.

**EQUIPMENT:** Forager-Uplink

### 4 - SUBALTERN

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Leadership 8; AGI+Projectiles 8; Authority 4

**RESULT:** The officer insignia on the shoulder provides results: a permanent (+1) on Authority. The Subaltern leads units into battle. Low-ranking Hellvetics have to obey him and can be given over to the Sentinels by him if they do not. If the Subaltern leaves the fortress, a Grenadier accompanies him. In Justitian's Ambassador's Quarter, he and all higher-ranking Hellvetics are treated especially well and live in a gaudy mansion. The Subaltern negotiates resource shipments with Neolibyans and Scrappers to keep the Alpine Fortress well stocked. Considering the trust grown over the years, his Allies Background can also refer to Neolibyans and Scrappers.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 5 - FIELD OFFICER

**PREREQUISITE:** Allies 3; Authority 5; Renown 4

**RESULT:** The Field Officer stands at the map table with the Corps Commanders and knows the next intended steps towards restoring the Hellvetic Confederation ((+1) Secrets). On federal territory, he can give orders and can treat civilians under military laws and judge them: when dealing with Hellvetic civilians, he can use his Authority as bonus dice on PSY+Domination. This bonus does not apply in regions that have turned their backs on Hellvetica. Instead, a failed Action roll can lead to an uprising.

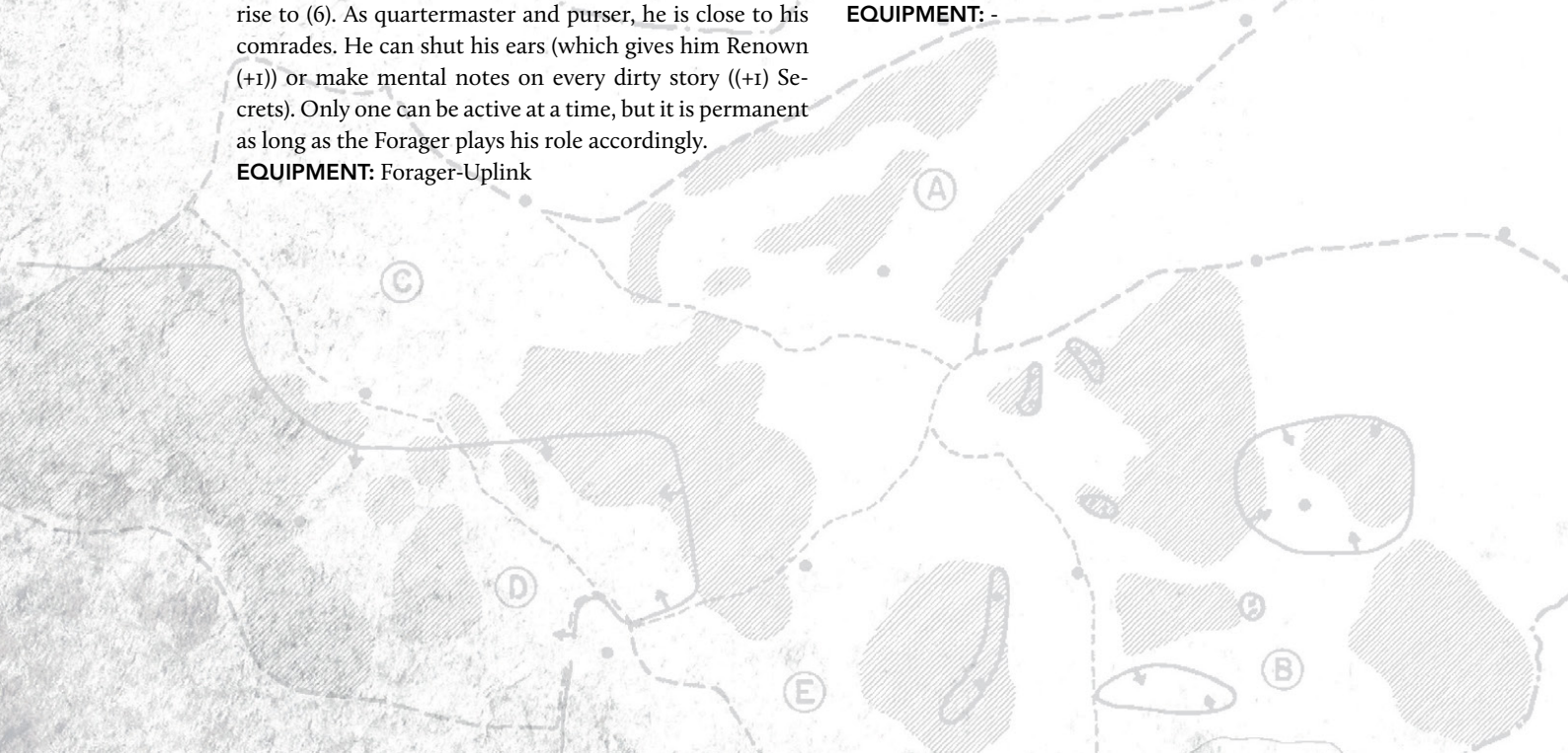
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 6 - CORPS COMMANDER

**PREREQUISITE:** The position must be free (meaning one of the four Corps Commanders has died or stepped down); Allies 5; Authority 6

**RESULT:** The Corps Commander has the high command of one of the four Territorial Regions. No one is higher-ranking than he is: his orders surpass even the Doctrine and the law. He can request units, can order new bridges to be built, can close down passage tunnels, and can demand the conquest of former Confederation territory.

**EQUIPMENT:** -



# POTENTIALS

## ASSAULT

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

A Harness bursts into motion, breaks from cover, jumps over rocks, keeps getting faster, mud splashes under thundering boots. The Hellvetic screams, "After me!" Then he hits the enemy lines.

A Hellvetic leads his squads by example, charging into battle. If he manages to achieve (2) Triggers on an Attack roll, all of his squadmates attacking after him in the same Round add +1D per Potential Level to their own Attack rolls. Only usable in the first Combat Round.

## SHIELD WALL

From the strategic safeguard of the cantons to the tactical Shield Wall Doctrine, Hellvetics are the protectors of humanity.

Those who commit to the Shield Wall Doctrine learn to obstruct attacks on others with their bodies and Harnesses. In combat, the Hellvetic can decide to guide attacks against a comrade towards himself.

The Hellvetic diverts an attack against a comrade within his movement distance, taking the blow himself. Against Melee attacks he must succeed on a PSY+Reaction (4) roll, for Ranged Combat attacks the Difficulty rises to (6). He gets +1D on the roll per Potential level. If the Hellvetic is in melee with the Trailblazer's bayonet mounted, he can use the Triggers from the roll to counterattack using his Trailblazer's bayonet.

## INFILTRATION

Information wins wars. Hellvetics committed to the Infiltration Potential are trained to mingle with civilians, finding subversive ringleaders and rebellious firebrands. They get close to the important people, and slowly build up a dossier of information to send back to the Alpine Fortress.

The Hellvetic is a master of subversion and lies. He gains +1D per Potential level on all CHA or PSY rolls to deceive others, along with an additional (1) Network per Potential level.

## FORCED MARCH

Those who follow the Forced March Doctrine adapt their movements to better match the rigid construction of their armor, their bodies moving in sync with the steel joints of their Harness.

The encumbrance of the Harness decreases by (1) per Potential Level.

## DISCIPLINE

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

A Hellvetic's mental and physical strength are only partly the result of his character or his equipment. Iron discipline can forge even the most cowardly man into a textbook soldier. Some of these eventually go even further.

The Hellvetic can convert Triggers from any Attack or Defense rolls into Ego Points, up to a limit equal to the Potential Level.

## MORALE

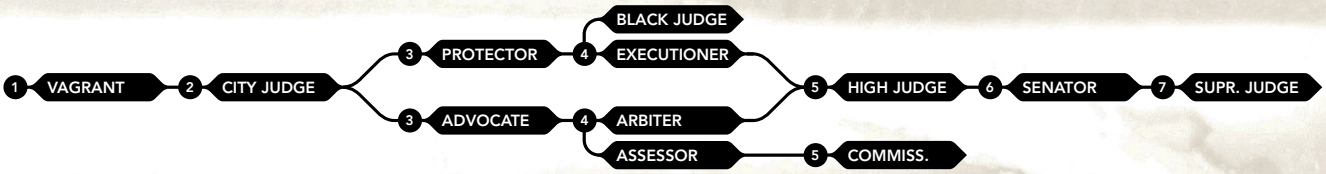
Any battle can be won if enough bodies are thrown against the enemy. Only when outnumbered does the Hellvetic soldier truly prove his worth.

Hellvetics gain +1D Mental Defense per Potential level when outnumbered.

IN MODERN WAR...
YOU WILL **DIE** LIKE A DOG
FOR NO GOOD REASON.

[HEMINGWAY]

RANK 4 EXECUTIONER




## 1 - VAGRANT

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** During the first years, the Vagrant will not leave his mentor's side (Allies (+1), bonuses lost as soon as the Vagrant passes the test and becomes a City Judge).
**EQUIPMENT:** Lessons, a booklet with writing and reading exercises, personal notes to delinquents, and experiences, as well as some ideas for new laws

## 2 - CITY JUDGE

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 4; BOD+Melee 6; CHA+Expression 4; CHA+Conduct 4
**RESULT:** The City Judge can hear and judge simple crimes; capital offenses remain reserved for Protectors and Advocates, though. He is mostly used as a watchdog in areas of crisis. If he manages to incorporate a settlement into the Protectorate, he can become Justitian's representative there and demand tithes. Depending on the size of the settlement, his Resources rises from (+1) (Scrapper camp) to (+4) (city with several thousand inhabitants).
**EQUIPMENT:** Judgment hammer; leather coat; hat; Codex (cowhide cover, simple print)

## 3 - PROTECTOR

**PREREQUISITE:** AGI+Navigation 6; INT+Focus 6 or INS+Primal 6; PSY+Reaction 6; Allies 2
**RESULT:** Protectors are a sworn bunch. They get Allies (+2) when dealing with other Judges who have chosen the path of the Protector. Protectors know every nook and cranny of the Protectorate. They can rely on their network of scum when looking for delinquents, informers, and other small fry ((+2) Network for this purpose, the bonus does not apply when they have to find influential criminals, like Ravens).
**EQUIPMENT:** Judges' musket; +1D rounds per month; horse (gaited)

## 4 - EXECUTIONER

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 6; PSY+Domination 6 or CHA+Leadership 6; Renown 3
**RESULT:** Executioners are legends, well known for their flaming ire and unerring righteousness. You better not get on their bad side (Network (+1)). In the Protectorate, they eat and sleep for free. Corrupt Executioners temporarily get (+2) Resources for giving certain people or cases a wide berth. If they do that, they always risk a Commissioner or Black Judge noticing. Executioners who are true to the Codex can use the other Cults' Allies when fighting a common enemy.
**EQUIPMENT:** Horse (Charger); +2D rounds per month

## 4 - BLACK JUDGE

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 8 or AGI+Projectiles 8; AGI+Stealth 8; PSY+Cunning 6; Authority 3; Allies 3
**RESULT:** Only Senator Rutgar knows the identiy of his Black Judges. The Judge takes off his regalia, steps into the shadows, and works as an undercover assassin for Rutgar from now on.

He becomes intimately acquainted with the world of infamy as he hunts down corrupt Judges (Secrets (+1)).
**EQUIPMENT:** Radio with preselected frequency (to receive Rutgar's missions); any Tech IV weapon with two level 1 upgrades or one level 2 upgrade (See page 55); alternatively, he can have the Steel Masters at Justitian upgrade a weapon he owns; +2D rounds per month

## 3 - ADVOCATE

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Expression 6; CHA+Negotiation 6; INT+Legends 6; Authority 2; Resources 2
**RESULT:** Can dispute the Judgments of Protectors or Executioners ((+2) on Authority when dealing with Protectors).
**EQUIPMENT:** Codex (Special Edition, annotated and with a glossary, brings +2D on CHA+Expression when making Judgments)

## 4 - ARBITER

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Faith 6 or PSY+Willpower 6; CHA+Expression 8; Authority 3; Resources 4
**RESULT:** Advocates may be able to contradict the will of a Protector or Executioner, but Arbiters are insurmountable mountains of the law. No one knows more about the Codex than they who have written part of it ((+3) Authority when dealing with Protectors).

Most Arbiters, male or female, come from the old Advocate families—or have married into them. Until they have formed a link with one of these families, their Authority in Advocate circles decreases to (0). Once the union is formed, Resources and Allies permanently increase by (1).
**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 4 - ASSESSOR

**PREREQUISITE:** INS+Perception 8; PSY+Domination 6 or CHA+Negotiation 6; Allies 1; Network 2
**RESULT:** An Assessor works for a Commissioner and helps him to come to an ultimate judgment. In many cities, he is under the protection of the Ravens—if he is careful enough.
**EQUIPMENT:** +1D rounds per month

### 5 - COMMISSIONER

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Domination 10 or CHA+Negotiation 10; INS+Empathy 6; Renown 4; Network 4; Allies 2

**RESULT:** A Commissioner without his informants and Assessors is nothing. They observe suspects for him and gather information. He does not know many limits: he has free access to the Chroniclers' Alcoves, and can even gain access to the Cluster and use the records of the Sensoriums installed all over Justitian and in some Protectorate cities.

**EQUIPMENT:** +2D rounds per month

### 5 - HIGH JUDGE

**PREREQUISITE:** Allies 5; Authority 4; Resources 4

**RESULT:** High Judges are the highest rank of Judges who still mingle with the people. A High Judge can act independently from the Judges' decisions, can enter and search every house in the Protectorate, and can temporarily request that an Executioner guard him. He can send messages to the citizens over the speakers installed by the Chroniclers in Justitian and the city's surroundings. The Paper Factory in Justitian prints warrants and propaganda approved by the High Judges and distributes both in the Protectorate for them.

**EQUIPMENT:** Horse (Judge's horse); +3D rounds per month

### 6 - SENATOR

**PREREQUISITE:** Open seat in the Protectors' or Advocates' Senate, depending on alignment; CHA+Expression 10; Renown 6 or Resources 6

**RESULT:** When a High Judge becomes a Senator, he fulfills representative tasks in the Protectorate and in allied cities like Cathedral City. He tables new bills and votes on them. The Advocate families especially support Senators financially, and they in turn make selected Arbiters High Judges or High Judges Senators. If a Senator agrees to this, his Resources rise by up to (2) points. However, he will have to face the fact that one day the flood of appointments could potentially raise the interest of a Commissioner, or that one day a Black Judge might receive a transmission mentioning his name...

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 7 - SUPREME JUDGE

**PREREQUISITE:** Archot has to step down; Renown 6 or Secrets 6

**RESULT:** All Judges dance to the tune of the Supreme Judge. He is free to ignore the Senates' decisions: he makes the call on whether there is war or peace. Everyone wants to please him (Allies (6)).

**EQUIPMENT:** -

---

YOU ONLY HAVE POWER OVER PEOPLE
SO LONG AS YOU DO NOT TAKE EVERYTHING AWAY FROM THEM.
HOWEVER, WHEN YOU'VE ROBBED A MAN OF EVERYTHING,
HE'S NO LONGER IN YOUR POWER - HE'S FREE AGAIN.

[ALEXANDER SOLSCHENIZYN]

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# POTENTIALS

## FIAT LUX

**PREREQUISITE:** Renown 4

Lies hide in darkness, light reveals the truth. The Judge is a blazing paragon of lawfulness and incorruptibility, and the people around him know it. The bad ones among them are skittish, they blink too often, their movements are nervous, their shoulders rigid. The Judge sees all of these signs, he feels every lie - and he is already deciding upon the punishment.

When dealing with scum in general—and especially with Apocalyptics—the Judge gets a +1D bonus per Potential level to seeing through deception, along with +1D Mental Defense.

## STAMPEDE

Sometimes violence is the only option. The Judge bows his head, kicks off with his back foot, and surges into motion. The wind tears his hat away, but he does not look back, instead pushing his head into the flow. He holds his Hammer in both hands: one under the hammerhead, the other at the end of the shaft. His enemy is only two steps away. He raises the Hammer as if blocking with a quarter staff, feels the impact, puts all his weight into it, sees and feels the spray of spittle, and passes through. Behind him, he hears the body crash into the ground. His comrades will handle the rest.

The Judge launches himself at an enemy for (1) full Combat Round. He rolls BOD+Force + his Potential level in dice. If the Attack roll is successful, his target falls to the ground and cannot move for (1) Combat Round.

## HAMMER BLOW

The Judgment hammer is unwieldy and heavy. Vagrants ignore its symbolic value and complain that they can barely hold their ground against the enemies of the Judges with this archaic, clumsy weapon. They have no idea. Those who find themselves wielding the Judgment hammer soon learn to harness the brute force that is in every blow: their hands slide across the shaft, controlling and redirecting the centrifugal forces. With the correct technique, the hammer is as easy to use as a sword, without losing its impact.

The penalty caused by the special ability “Impact” is reduced by (1) per Potential level.

## JANUS FACE

Judges spend all their lives dealing with scum. It would take only a small step out of the light to move into the darkness. Some use this experience to delve into their opponents’ minds and preempt all of their actions.

A Judge with Janus Face puts himself into his opponent’s position in battle. To do so, he rolls INS+Empathy against his opponent’s PSY+Willpower/Faith. If the Judge’s roll succeeds, he has looked through his opponent. The Judge gets a +1D bonus per Potential level to all Attacks and Defenses against the target for the rest of the battle.

## LYNCH LAW

The Judges have been controlling the people for so long that they know exactly which buttons to push to bring their anger to a boiling point.

A Judge with this Potential can gather a mob and incite it against his target: when doing so he adds +1D to CHA+Leadership per Potential level.

## STEEL THUNDER

The hammer is heavy, but with training it can be swung upwards with one hand like a pendulum. One more step, the arm circling easily, and it comes down again, only to rise up once more with even more momentum. Even a trained Judge cannot keep this up for long. Moreover, the side of the body that faces away from the hammer hand would be an easy target, if the Judge did not carry a musket in his other hand to fire on his opponents from a short distance.

In spite of its drawbacks, some Judges still use this technique: a double hit with hammer and bullet usually ends the combat.

A Judge using a Judgement hammer may choose to use the Steel Thunder technique when making an Attack roll. They take a -4D penalty to Handling on their subsequent Attack rolls, until they stop using the technique. The penalty is reduced by (1) per Potential level. If the attack hits, any Triggers rolled count for (2) extra Damage each. Until the Judge’s next turn after ceasing the Steel Thunder, his Passive Defense is reduced to (1).

## 1 - SCOUT

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** Scouts the enemy and secures the Clan's borders. The Scout gets +1D on all Attack rolls when defending the Clan.
**EQUIPMENT:** Primitive club; sling; if Tech Level >II, musket or flintlock pistol

## 2 - HUNTER

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Stamina 4; AGI+Projectiles 6; INS+Survival 6
**RESULT:** Within his Clan's domain, the Hunter gets +2D to finding prey. His local knowledge is enormous (+2D to AGI+Stealth).
**EQUIPMENT:** Traps; spear; bow or, if Tech Level >III, hunting rifle

## 2 - GATHERER

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Negotiation 4; CHA+Conduct 6; INS+Orienteering 6
**RESULT:** The Gatherer knows the land, knows when and what it produces (+2D to searching for berries and roots) and when to buy from merchants. Gatherers maintain diplomatic relations with other Clans and thus protect the peace.
**EQUIPMENT:** Simple maps on leather (+1D to INS+Orienteering)

## 3 - TRIBAL WARRIOR

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 8; AGI+Projectiles 6; BOD+Brawl 7 or at Tech Level >II AGI+Crafting 7; Renown 3
**RESULT:** In a warlike Clan, the Tribal Warrior gets (+2) Authority. The Gatherers and Hunters feed him: it is his job to train daily and spar against the other warriors of the Clan. At a higher Tech Level, his is the role of technician and master of arms.
**EQUIPMENT:** Sword or other melee weapon; at Tech Level >III, automatic or pump-action rifle

## 3 - SHAMAN

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Negotiation 7; INT+Legends 8; INS+Empathy 7; Secrets 3
**RESULT:** The Shaman fights with fate for his Clan's future. He blesses talismans, captures ancient spirits and divine forces in tattoos (bringing +1D to PSY+Faith), and spiritually prepares the warriors for their death in battle. At Tech Level > II, the Shaman turns into a Sage, keeping and executing the Clan's laws (+2D to INT+Legends).
**EQUIPMENT:** Bone necklaces; talismans; oracle stones; at Tech Level > II, books of law, contracts, and the Clan's mark in iron or stone

## 4 - CHIEFTAIN

**PREREQUISITE:** The old Chieftain must step down; Authority 5; Allies 5; Resources 3
**RESULT:** Once a mundane warrior or a spiritual leader, the Chieftain will continue his path as a solitary authority figure. He leads campaigns or solidifies the relations between neighbors and expands the village.
**EQUIPMENT:** The Clan's preferred weapon, upgraded once; the symbol of his rule is a headdress, mask, helmet, or armor and signet ring

## 5 - CHAMPION

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Force 8 or CHA+Arts 8; Combat or Engineering Skill 10, Renown 6
**RESULT:** Only brute force and cunning count in primitive Clans. Those who excel and bring victory to the Clan become Champions, and the Clan will forever remember them. The Shaman praises the Champion's legendary strength, and the Tribal Warriors aspire to be like him. In more advanced communities (Tech Level >II), engineers and artists can achieve this ultimate praise, too, and give the Clan direction, leading by example. Whether cultivated or primitive, though, the champion has full access to all Resources of the Clan (Resources (6) within Clan).
**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 5 - FOUNDER

**PREREQUISITE:** Has unified the families to form a Clan; CHA+Leadership 10, CHA+Conduct 10 or PSY+Domination 10; Authority 6
**RESULT:** Whether through combat or through diplomacy, the Founder has unified several Clans, stoking the melting pot and creating a sterling alloy. A new Clan was born. The Founder thus commands a power that brings him into conflict with the established Cults. He is much in demand, and diplomats and assassins alike accost him. His every decision can shake foundations that have been built up over centuries.
**EQUIPMENT:** The symbol of his rule is a special weapon or a holy item

# THE WORLD OF THE CLANS

Nomad families, sedentary farmers, tribes: they all count as Clans. If a Player decides to play a Clanner, he has a world of choices. There are thousands out there. The Player can choose from among the tribes (see Chapter 10, "From Hell"), or he and the Game Master can use their creativity and invent a new Clan. The following paragraphs provide some ideas on how to do that. If you are feeling brave, you can also let the dice decide: all suggestions are provided with dice numbers.

Each paragraph lists a Skill. These Skills replace those that you would otherwise take from the list of Cults. If you roll or choose the same Skill several times, the Cult bonus stays at (+1)—the Player or Game Master should look for another Skill that also makes sense.

## TECH LEVEL

How advanced is the Clan? Does it have a firm grasp on technology and sciences, or does it sacrifice a bowl of milk at the ancestors' stone after a thunderstorm?

**1: TECH I:** The Clanners wander the land in extended families as hunters and gatherers. They use simple tools made from bones, stones, wire, and planks. They watch the Cults with distrust, fear the Chroniclers, and consider the Judges' muskets the stuff of demons.
**CULT-BONUS:** (INS) Survival

**2-3: TECH II:** The families have become sedentary, harvesting tubers and tending herds. They hide behind palisades or walls and live in simple huts. Warriors and shamans are no longer the most important people within the Clan. Artisans and merchants are respected for their contributions, too. Traditions are kept alive.
**CULT-BONUS:** (BOD) Stamina

**4: TECH III:** The smithies are working day and night producing everyday household items, as well as rifles and cannons. Culture has become more central: people discuss theological and philosophical questions. The importance of morals and ethics trickles into people's minds.
**CULT-BONUS:** (AGI) Crafting

**5: TECH IV:** At night, the chains of light burn in the settlements; the generators rumble. Electrical capacitors simplify life, and nobody would want to miss them. The Chroniclers are still awe-inspiring, but no one considers them gods anymore.
**CULT-BONUS:** (INT) Engineering

**6: TECH V:** The Clan has survived centuries hidden away without waking the Cults' covetousness. Its ancestors had thought of everything, had stored knowledge and technical equipment. Bygone thinking machines direct the daily schedule, monitoring the family members' performance.
**CULT-BONUS:** (CHA) Conduct

## WORLDVIEW

What does the Clan believe? How does it see the world and humankind's place in it?

**1-2: ANIMISM:** There are demons and spirits in every stone and every tree. Omens and evil portents direct the daily schedule. These Clanners are frightened souls fleeing from the supernatural din to the light of campfires. They worship their ancestors and ask for their help with small sacrifices. Shamans direct every action, judging and condemning. Usually not found in combination with a Tech Level > III.
**CULT-BONUS:** (INT) Legends

**3-4: THEISM:** God created the world. What could be more important than the teachings of his prophets? Laws are based around religious dogmas; heretics are banned from the community or severely punished.
**CULT-BONUS:** (PSY) Faith/Willpower

**5: ENLIGHTENMENT:** Faith becomes a personal worldview. Priests do still exist, but man is now the center of the community. The Bygone teachings are considered truths; the old books are venerated and examined. There is a lively culture of discussion.
**CULT-BONUS:** (CHA) Negotiation

**6: WORLDLY, RATIONAL:** Faith in God is superstition. The Clanners know the cycle of nature and have accepted evolution as the only true theory. Rarely found in combination with Tech Level I.
**CULT-BONUS:** (INT) Science

## FORM OF GOVERNING

Who rules the Clan, and what does that mean?

**1-2: RULE OF A SINGLE PERSON:** One Clanner rules the family as autocratic leader. He can be a Chieftain, a tyrant, or a monarch. He may let his oldest son inherit his office and thus found a dynasty. He commands soldiers who stop every uprising as soon it begins.
**CULT-BONUS:** (PSY) Cunning

**3-4: RULE OF THE FEW:** A supposed elite dissociates itself from the rest of the Clan with its clothing, training, weaponry, or sex. They choose a leader from amongst themselves. Those who are not born into this ruling caste have no possibility of getting ahead.
**CULT-BONUS:** (PSY) Deception

**5-6: RULE OF MANY:** All Clanners have the same rights and vote on distribution of land, military campaigns, etc. They elect officials to judge and rule. Everything happens in the name of the Clan.
**CULT-BONUS:** (CHA) Negotiation

## CULTURAL IDENTITY

What is important to the Clan? Where does it see its roots? How does it remember the past that they have moved on from?

**1: IMPORTANT HOLY SITES:** A sacred site where ancestors are buried, a stele with inscriptions, a cliff of sacrifice, the battlefield where the Clan won its greatest victory or suffered its worst defeat: these places are worshipped and prominent in rituals. Even Clans with a rational worldview see them as part of their cultural heritage.
**CULT-BONUS:** (INS) Orienteering

**2-3: FOUNDING PLACE:** Centuries ago, survivors of the Eshaton gathered in a misty valley and decided to trek on together. Everything began here. The Clan's cradle does not have to be a real place, but is often a mystical part of a religious world view: The Clan came from an egg, was thrown to the earth by lightning, or rose from a lake.
**CULT-BONUS:** (PSY) Faith/Willpower

**4: TEXTS:** Knowledge of the past carries the Clan through a stormy world. It worships the old texts, and every generation adds new books to the collection.
**CULT-BONUS:** (CHA) Expression

**5-6: LEGENDARY LEADER:** The Clan remembers a great hero. He led the people to the Promised Land or vanquished the greatest menace. Every young Clanner will have to compete with his heroic deeds.
**CULT-BONUS:** (BOD) Melee

## SIZE

Do only a handful people gather around the elder, or do thousands raise their fists to the sky when he sounds the call to battle? How large is the Clan?

**1: FAMILY:** One, maybe two dozen people, all related. The blood has grown thin. Those who want to marry look for a bride or groom in an allied family or a city.
**CULT-BONUS:** (BOD) Toughness

**2-3: EXTENDED FAMILY:** The Clan consists of more than 100 people, all of whom want food. Everyone has a job to do, and laziness is punished harshly. Competition is a part of life even for the youngest: no one wants to go get water or empty the latrines. The older ones fight for leadership. Only good organization and time-honored rules can keep the extended family together.
**CULT-BONUS:** (PSY) Cunning

**4-5: LOCAL POWER:** Somehow, all are related to each other, either by marriage, by abduction, or by blood. Suddenly, it is important if a Clanner comes from the line of the leader's brother or is descended directly from the ancestor himself.

The Clan's lands and holdings are vast, but still it is constantly on the lookout for new places to settle - there must always be more space for the family.
**CULT-BONUS:** (CHA) Leadership

**6: TRIBE:** Many big Clans have melded together, be it through negotiation, necessity, or conquest. Fights for power take place on a daily basis. A large tribe always poses a threat to other Cults and Clans as it expands into foreign domains, not every member of the tribe can behave.
**CULT-BONUS:** (CHA) Negotiation

## RESOURCES

What makes the Clan rich? Does it control valuable resources or steal from other Clans and Cults?

**1-2: CATTLE:** The Clan has rich hunting grounds; herds of mammoths or cattle wander through its territory; boars and deer hide in the thicket of the woods. Sedentary Clans build houses on the lakeshore or next to a river that is rich in fish or trilobites, while others break open mud vents, harvest insects, and roast them.
**CULT-BONUS:** (INS) Taming

**3: MINES:** Tunnels cut deep into hills and mountainsides: Clanners drag coal, niter, or other minerals out from the depths of the earth that are then traded to Justitian or another city.
**CULT-BONUS:** (BOD) Force

**4: RUIN FIELD:** The Clan has settled down in the ruin field and has been exploiting it for centuries. There are conflicts with Scrappers on a daily basis.
**CULT-BONUS:** (INT) Artifact Lore

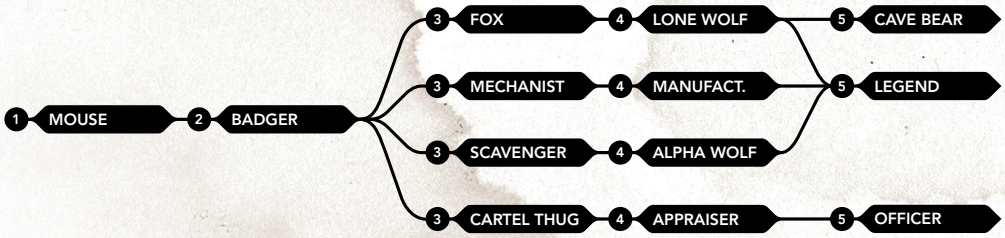
**5: BUNKER:** The Clan lives in an ancient bunker, feeding from its centuries-old provisions and armed with Bygone rifles.
**CULT-BONUS:** (AGI) Projectiles

**6: RAID:** The Clan survives by raiding farms and convoys. The Cults will be unable to tolerate this for much longer, something must be done.
**CULT-BONUS:** (AGI) Mobility

## POTENTIALS

The Clans have no Potentials of their own. They use the Common Potentials—or develop their own ones. See Chapter 10, "From Hell," for many examples of Clan-specific Potentials and powers.

RANK 5 CAVE BEAR




## 1 - MOUSE

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** The Mouse works for an older Scrapper. The old one owns the Chronicler Drafts, but he makes sure that at the end of the day the Mouse gets a meal for all his hard work. If this does not work, the Mouse is quickly gone. There is always someone else.
**EQUIPMENT:** Rope; compass; periscope

## 2 - BADGER

**PREREQUISITE:** INS+Perception 4; INS+Survival 6
**RESULT:** A Badger must survive alone. He has devised a rune, his personal symbol. If he scratches it on ruin walls together with hints that warn against dangers, his Renown will rise over the months, but never above (3).
**EQUIPMENT:** Shotgun or Hunting Rifle

## 3 - FOX

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Cunning 6; INS+Survival 6; INS+Orienteering 6
**RESULT:** The ruins offer the kind of freedom he has not found in the cities. They are his home, and there is no place the Fox knows better: +2D to all rolls to collect scrap. He maintains at least one foxhole in the wasteland to store artifacts and scrap. He gets a bonus of +2D to all Defense rolls in his warren, and his Passive Defense rises by (2).
**EQUIPMENT:** Marvel (special Scrapper weapon); carrying rig; hoe

## 4 - LONE WOLF

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Artifact Lore 6; AGI+Crafting 6; INS+Perception 6; Renown 4
**RESULT:** He has spent more time with his Marvel rifle than with any human: its number of potential upgrades rises by 1. The Lone Wolf has heightened senses: +1D to all rolls to collect scrap. His territory is vast, and he knows it like no one else: if he has to escape from danger in his territory, he gets +2D on AGI+Stealth and BOD+Athletics.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 5 - CAVE BEAR

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 8; INS+Survival 10; Renown 5
**RESULT:** Cave Bears are rare guests in the Chroniclers' Alcoves. Nevertheless, what they put on the tables is special: the Chroniclers make sure that the Cave Bear is satisfied with them by paying 30% more and offering him a place to sleep in Tech Central. Not too clean, not too cozy—they do not want him to get into mischief.

In cities, he negotiates eye to eye with Ravens, and many of them owe him a favor.

His cave in the wasteland is a death trap for intruders: they encounter a labyrinth of secret passages, have to deal with false doors and stumble into booby-traps and bear traps. The Cave Bear gets +4D to Active Defense rolls and (+3) to his Passive Defense in his cave. He spends even more time with his weapon: the number of slots rises by another +1.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 3 - MECHANIST

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Engineering 6; AGI+Crafting 7; Resources 2
**RESULT:** People with technological knowledge are in high demand and can get rich quickly (Resources (+1)). When dismantling artifacts, he gets 50% more raw materials.
**EQUIPMENT:** Toolkit (+1D to AGI+Crafting per level)

## 4 - MANUFACTURER

**PREREQUISITE:** Equipped workshop in the Technical Center or in Syracuse; INT+Engineering 10; Renown 5; Resources 4
**RESULT:** The workshop can be his refuge, guarded by traps, complex lock mechanisms, or guards: +4D to AGI +Crafting if the Manufacturer works in the workshop. He can also open it up for other Manufacturers and in return receives access to their workshops: +2D to AGI+Crafting in his own and in other workshops. When refining technical scrap, the Manufacturer needs only half the amount of scrap in his own workshop.
**EQUIPMENT:** Keys the length of his lower arm that open the doors to others' workshops, worn around the neck on a cord

## 3 - SCAVENGER

**PREREQUISITE:** Authority 2; Allies 2; Network 2
**RESULT:** Scavengers add together what they have: (+3) Resources on getting heavy machinery to retrieve artifacts (tractor rigs, pneumatic metal shears). They always shelter and break bread with each other.
**EQUIPMENT:** Crusher

### 4 - ALPHA WOLF

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Leadership 8; Authority 4; Network 4; Allies 4

**RESULT:** Scavengers do not only share their equipment, but also their hatred for the Cartel—and an Alpha Wolf knows how to use this: when the time comes to get even with Bosch's troops, Allies rises to (6). Alpha Wolfs are held in high regard far beyond their Cult's borders and can equip themselves with their Resources Background from Judges, Spitalians, Chroniclers, and Hellvetics. Only the weapons and armor typical for those Cults are unavailable to them.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 5 - LEGEND

**PREREQUISITE:** Has cut his rune into the wall of runes at Syracuse; Resources 4; Renown 6

**RESULT:** If a Legend allows it, several Scrappers will join him or her. Though they can leave anytime they want, they will try to fulfill their idol's wishes. Apocalyptics offer special conditions in their establishments to Legends: everything is at 50% off, and the Magpies are clean. In the Alcoves, a Legend does not have to wait. In fact, the Chroniclers send a Mediator who introduces himself as the interface (personal contact) to write down the Legend's story. Moreover, a Legend has access to the Chroniclers' stores up to a Resources maximum of (4). This includes Streamer Gloves.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 3 - CARTEL THUG

**PREREQUISITE:** -

**RESULT:** A Cartel Thug has the Cartel symbol tattooed on his forearm. This serves as his passport for the Appraisers, and they (almost) always leave him alone: he only has to give a tenth of what the Chroniclers pay him to the Appraisers. He can look for scrap in ruin fields taken over and guarded by the Cartel unmolested. The Cartel now backs him: Allies (+2) within the Cartel.

**EQUIPMENT:** Heavy leather apron

### 4 - APPRAISER

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Negotiation 7 or PSY+Domination 7; INT+Artifact Lore 6; Authority 3; Allies 2

**RESULT:** The Appraiser can negotiate with the Chroniclers for other Scrappers and gets 20% of the profit in return. Appraisers are infamous and feared for their tough methods. Many have invested Drafts in good relationships to Judges. An Appraiser has access to Judges with his Allies Background.

**EQUIPMENT:** Revolver or another heavy sidearm

### 5 - OFFICER

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Negotiation 9 or PSY+Domination 9; PSY+Cunning 6; Authority 5

**RESULT:** Squeezing or gifts? If the Officer decides to squeeze the Appraisers subordinate to him, his Resources rise by (+4). If he does not exploit his power but instead plays with his subordinates' expectations and hopes, he can be sure that they will be grateful, and he gets Allies (+4).

Officers have to report to Bosch, the Cartel leader, regularly. This is not a pleasant task, for Bosch is an irritable dwarf who sprays poison in all directions, and he does not behave any better towards his Officers.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

HE WAS A **KILLER**, A THING THAT PREYED,
LIVING ON THE THINGS THAT LIVED, UNAIDED,
**ALONE**,
BY VIRTUE OF HIS OWN STRENGTH AND PROWESS,
**SURVIVING** TRIUMPHANTLY IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT
WHERE ONLY THE **STRONG** SURVIVE.

[JACK LONDON]

# POTENTIALS

## THE MOB

Apocalyptics rob them blind, Judges harass them, Chroniclers cheat them, Jehammedans spit at them, Clans chase them away—but at some point, enough is enough. They cry out their anger, they throw accusations, and they hit a nerve. People gather around them, recognizing their own fate and nodding agreement. The shouting begins, faces red with anger. The first "Fuck them up!" rings out, but there are more to come. A storm is brewing.

In a Conflict with another Cult's representatives, the Scrapper can mobilize the masses with a CHA+Leadership roll, getting +1D per Potential level. His opponent can try to calm the mob in a Conflict with CHA+Expression. If the Scrapper wins, he commands the pack. He has to bark orders with serious consequences using CHA+Leadership. Here, the Difficulties range from (2) ("Go there") to (6) ("Cut down the Judges").

## RAT

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Cunning 6

Scrappers survive because they know how to avoid trouble. The Rats among them look for trouble, but still they blend in with the crowd and can pull off almost anything. Robbing a merchant? The finger points to an innocent Clanner in a fur cape. An instant later, he goes down under the bulky body of a Judge. The Rat shakes his head as he hides his loot under a heavy coat, slinking back into the crowd.

Rats are always innocent, or at least no one can prove otherwise. When covering up their deeds, they get +1D per Potential level to the Action roll.

## TOUGH DOG

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 6

People kick and torment the Tough Dogs, but they only bite back, yelling, "Is that all you've got, you wimps?" They can take quite some punishment, and count on their enemy to tire. "Hah, you weak assholes!"

Tough Dogs can take more punishment than others. They get the additional armor "Tough Flesh," with an Armor rating equal to the Potential level.

## NITRO

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

Buried deep beneath old habits, learned fear, and fight or flight reflexes, a rage against this eternal cowardice smolders. Nitros have uncovered many artifacts in their lives, but in their digging they've also discovered this hidden hatred. Since then, it's been lurking beneath the surface, waiting to break out like a firestorm and devastate those who look down on the Scrapper as just a simple hauler digging in the dirt.

The Scrapper can let his explosive anger take over for the first Combat Round, gaining +1D per Potential level to his Attack rolls.

## TRUFFLE PIG

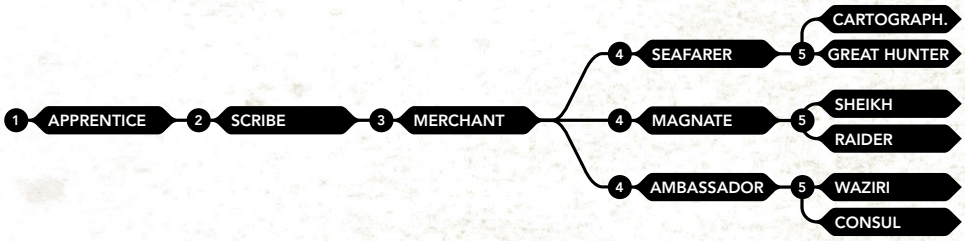
The good Scrappers keep finding artifacts that make the Chroniclers all skittish as they count out thick sheaves of Drafts. Bad Scrappers can only barely earn more than the scrap value of what they find. Maybe it is because they do not speak the language of the ruins that they do not read the signs.

Scrappers with Truffle Pig have a sixth sense for artifacts and traps. They gain a +1D bonus per Potential level to INS+Perception when searching for scrap or traps.

## DARWIN

Down in the ruins, evolution is a cruel ruler. Only the strongest claw their way back out. The best of them are the Darwins. Whether through sheer luck or absurd feats of strength, they keep escaping even the most desperate of situations. A Darwin is an artist of survival who gets a +1D bonus per Potential level on any potentially life saving Skill in a seemingly lost situation.

If he survives, his Renown rises by (1), to a maximum value of (4).




## 1 - APPRENTICE

**PREREQUISITE:** -

**RESULT:** The Apprentice leaves the scriptorium only on his mentor's orders. He copies texts, practices his handwriting and arithmetic. He is part of the company's inventory now, eating free, receiving wonderful clothing—he is an investment.

**EQUIPMENT:** Balancer (little book wrapped in fur or leather containing checkered paper and abacus or digital calculator)

## 2 - SCRIBE

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Science 4; CHA+Expression 4; Authority 1

**RESULT:** He has to write down the shipments and deliveries on a certain trade route. In discussions with suppliers or producers, he may use his Authority even if the person he talks to is not a Neolibyan.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 3 - MERCHANT

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Negotiation 6; PSY+Cunning 4; Resources 2; Network 2

**RESULT:** With his official appointment as Merchant, the former Scribe is now a full-fledged Neolibyan. If he wants to gain Renown, he has to help his home village. This happens by reducing his Resources monthly or investing Dinars, depending on his rank. For rank 3 (Merchant) this means 100 Dinars or (-1) Resources; for rank 4 (Seafarer, Magnate, or Ambassador) 1,000 Dinars or (-2) Resources; for rank 5 (Cartographer, etc.) 10,000 Dinars or (-3) Resources. The Neolibyan can decide this month by month. For every month he cannot afford to spend this sum, his Renown decreases by (1).

If a Merchant wants to borrow money for an endeavor from the Bank of Commerce, he needs an Anubian Soul Seer at his side. However, those only come when the Merchant's Renown is at least (2). If the Soul Seer eventually confirms his credibility, the Merchant gets a loan in Resource points equaling his Authority for one year. This means that with Authority (3), he would get (+3) Resources. Now he is indebted to the Bank of Commerce and has to pay back the loan the next year, losing double the amount of Resource points.

**EQUIPMENT:** Neolibyan rifle; Seal of the Libyan

## 4 - SEAFARER

**PREREQUISITE:** Merchant ship; AGI+Navigation 6; INT+Legends 6; INS+Orienteering 8; Resources 3; Authority 2; Renown 2

**RESULT:** When the Seafarer finds new trade routes or unknown cities and reports this to the Bank of Commerce, he temporarily gets (+1) Resources (up to one year for big discoveries, up to six months for settlements so far unknown). The Renown determines how many Scourgers and Scrappers work for him (Renown x 1D x 10). At Renown (0), no one wants to sail with him. He gets (+1) Resources and (+1) Renown when he ferrets out pirates and pacifies trade routes.

**EQUIPMENT:** Astrolabium

## 5 - CARTOGRAPHER

**PREREQUISITE:** At least 6 big discoveries; INS+Orienteering 10; CHA+Arts 8; INT+Legends 8; Renown 5

**RESULT:** As a Cartographer, the Neolibyan has free access to the map room and the adjacent scriptoriums in the Bank of Commerce. If he organizes an expedition, high-ranking Anubians and Scourgers join him: at least one Dumisai will come along. Life as a Cartographer is hard without a bodyguard. Scrappers and Chroniclers compete for his work. The knowledge of uncharted passages, artifact belts, and unexplored ruin fields is worth a fortune. Chroniclers would even risk assassinating a Cartographer to attain his secrets.

**EQUIPMENT:** Atlas (level 1)

## 5 - GREAT HUNTER

**PREREQUISITE:** Hunting rifle; at least one killed Psychonaut; AGI+Projectiles 10; INT+Focus 8 or INS+Primal 8; INS+Survival 8; Renown 5

**RESULT:** Great Hunters belong to an elitist caste. They all have chosen adventure over the big money—though of course they don't live completely without luxury. They know each other, meet in expensive establishments, and exchange hunting experiences. If a Great Hunter needs help from other hunters, his Allies Background rises by (1) per Rapture vanquished for this purpose. A hunter who has shot a Psychonaut in every Culture thus gets (+5) Allies. In the Great Hunters' subculture, there are two master smiths only catering to hunters. Their hunting rifles are legendary masterpieces of breathtaking precision

and impact. The prices are just as legendary. The Great Hunter can buy masterpiece rifles.

Even the Spitalians listen to the stories of a Great Hunter. The Spitalians are very grateful for the information on Raptures and their attack patterns: the Great Hunter's negotiations with them are now at +2D to all Charisma Skills.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 4 - MAGNATE

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Conduct 8; CHA+Negotiation 10; PSY+Faith 6 or PSY+Willpower 6; Allies 4; Authority 3; Resources 4

**RESULT:** The Magnate has built himself an empire. He has offices in many African cities; hundreds of Neolibyans in the Mediterranean area are subordinate to him. He has the right to rent a suite with scriptorium at the Bank of Commerce. This costs (-1) Resources per month or 10,000 Dinars. However, for as long as he pays, his Renown rises by (1) every month.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 5 - SHEIKH

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Expression 10; PSY+Faith 8 or PSY+Willpower 8; Allies 3; Authority 4; Resources 6; Secrets 4; Renown 6

**RESULT:** The Sheikhs lead the Bank of Commerce and direct Africa's economic and cultural development. A Sheikh lets Magnates work for him and concentrates on strategic developments and politics. He wanders from city to city to negotiate voting results with allies and enemies. The competition intently watches and interprets his every step. In other countries and cultures, they treat him like a king. With a gesture, he sends hundreds of Scourger packs to different locations or into combat zones. Only Cairo is off limits to him.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 5 - RAIDER

**PREREQUISITE:** Merchant ship; Surge Tank; AGI+Navigation 10; PSY+Domination 8; Authority 6; Resources 5

**RESULT:** Consuls at the European Mediterranean coast aid the Raider who promises them a steady flow of riches. When he plans an expedition, 1D x Renown x 10 Scrappers accompany him for 10 Dinars a day. Chroniclers hate the Raider. All social interaction between him and the Chroniclers are problematic and happen at -4D. The Raider chooses a port of call. There, he has access to a wharf for repairs, Scrapper shanties, and a lodge. The little port city can become a metropolis over the years, and the lodge can be expanded to a palace. Of course, the Chroniclers are envious. They send Shutters to infiltrate the place and sabotage ships and equipment. Judges are paid to incite revolts, Apocalyptics are urged to build a nest in the port city to corrupt the place from within. The Scrappers are grateful.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 4 - AMBASSADOR

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Negotiation 8; CHA+Conduct 10; INS+Empathy 8; Allies 4; Renown 4; Network 3

**RESULT:** The Ambassador has free access to all embassies of all Cults. If he asks for an appointment, he gets it, be it with Justitian's Senates, the Baptists of Cathedral City, or the Voivodes. He can use his Authority for negotiations even when his counterpart is not Neolibyan.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 5 - WAZIRI

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Seduction 8; PSY+Cunning 8; INS+Empathy 10; Allies 5; Renown 6; Authority 4

**RESULT:** Sheikhs appoint a Waziri to act as a mediator between them. To do so, he has to have a Renown of at least (5): if his score decreases, he's demoted to Ambassador again. As long as he has the rank of a Waziri, he gets Resources (+2). He has a lot of authority in the Sheikhs' ventures and can even confront Magnates.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 5 - CONSUL

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Leadership 10 or PSY+Domination 10; CHA+Expression 8; Allies 4; Authority 5

**RESULT:** The Consul governs a city or a region given to him by Magnates or Sheikhs. He controls the guards, can tear down buildings or construct new ones. He can call for Scourgers to purge the surrounding countryside of savages. As a Consul, he has to pour oil on the troubled waters between the Crow and the Lion. He negotiates with Fragments, Baptists, and Corps Commanders. He makes decisions concerning whether there is to be war or peace. As a master strategist, he has an army of informers, snitches, and traitors on his payroll. His Network permanently rises by (1).

**EQUIPMENT:** -

# POTENTIALS

## LION'S SHARE

The Neolibyan can easily read whoever is across the negotiating table from him, he knows their vanities, praises and threatens wherever he deems necessary, until ultimately he leaves with the best possible deal - for himself, at least.

When negotiating a deal, the Neolibyan gains (1) Trigger per Potential level on the roll. This can bring him a bigger share or give him a lower price.

## MARKSMAN

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

The rifle in his hands does not tremble; his gaze follows the iron signs into the distance. The Neolibyan controls his breathing, follows every movement of the target with the weapon, holds his breath, and pulls the trigger. The target shakes and falls. Heart shot.

The Marksman aims for a complete Combat Round and fires in the next Round if he was not distracted or attacked. He adds Triggers equal to the Potential level to his AGI+Projectiles roll.

## INSPIRATION

The Libyan is a shining example in his descendants' minds. The young Scribes look up to their mentors full of awe, admiring their foresight and their understanding of the flow of goods. It is in the blood of the Neolibyans to worship, emulate, and even surpass their idols.

The Neolibyan blazes a trail through any obstacle. Should the Neolibyan succeed in an Action with at least (3) Triggers, they kindle a fire in their comrades' hearts. They add +1D to their next Action per Potential level, so long as it is similar to the Neolibyan's own actions.

## NINE LIVES

When threatened with destruction, a Neolibyan jumps into action; his instincts awaken, his mind trembles, and he pushes his body to move faster than he thought possible.

In life-threatening situations, the Neolibyan adds +1D per Potential level to every Action roll potentially able to save his life, at the cost of (1) Ego Point per Action.

## AT EYE LEVEL

The Neolibyan's behavior lures his negotiating partner into forgetting who is who, and which man is the more rich and powerful. The Neolibyan meets the stranger eye to eye, as a friend or ally - and friends and allies are to be listened to and trusted, aren't they?

Whenever a Neolibyan enters a discussion or negotiation with a non-Neolibyan, he gets +1D per Potential level on all CHA Skills. His PSY Skills, however, are at -3D throughout the discussion.

## WHEEL OF FORTUNE

"Common people are cursed to remain common because they refuse to risk more than crumbs on the scales of life. The higher the jump, the farther the fall, or so the simple people say. The Neolibyan scorns this attitude, no worthwhile reward comes without risk. He puts gold on the scales with both hands, and expects great results. The more a Neolibyan risks with this Potential, the higher the possible profit.

Before an Attack or Defense roll, the Neolibyan chooses to set aside some dice that will not be rolled. If the Action succeeds, he gets (1) Trigger for the following Action for every (2) dice he has not used. The Neolibyan can risk (2) dice in this way per Potential level.

FARAWAY LANDS,
FARAWAY MOUNTAINS FROM THE UPPER SEA
TO THE LOWER SEA,
DIFFICULT PATHS, CLOSED PATHS,
WHERE THE TREAD BECOMES HEAVY OR WHERE WE CANNOT TREAD AT ALL,
ROUTES FULL OF THIRST I CROSSED
AND KILLED THE INSUBORDINATES,
CAUGHT MY ENEMIES,
LED THE LAND RIGHTEOUSLY
AND MADE MY PEOPLE FLOURISH.

[NEBUKADNEZAR II]

RANK 3 CHAGA

## 1 - DUFU

**PREREQUISITE:** -

**RESULT:** The Dufu has to prove himself every day, scouting enemies and hunting wild animals. His to-do list is long, and he may not shrink back from any challenges: complaints are out of the question. He continuously gets into fights, must defend himself against his pack.

**EQUIPMENT:** Spear; oval shield; Scourger mask; helmet; Flak vest

## 2 - HONDO

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Brawl 5; BOD+Melee 6; BOD+Stamina 6; AGI+Mobility 4; Renown 2; Allies 1

**RESULT:** The Hondo is a now-proven warrior and may use firearms. He is presented to the Neolibyans and may take things from their arsenals according to his Resource score. Outside of Africa, the Hondo is considered the Lion's paw, people generally treat him with mistrust but respect. Thus, he gets a Bonus of +1D on all social interactions based on Psyche, but also -1D on all social interactions based on Charisma.

**EQUIPMENT:** Assault rifle; +2D rounds per month; Scourge

## 2 - DAMU

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Brawl 5; CHA+Leadership 6; PSY+Cunning 5; INS+Perception 5; Authority 3; Allies 1

**RESULT:** Like the Hondo, the Damu has contended successfully for his right to use firearms. He scouts the terrain for his pack, looking for enemy weak spots and planning attacks. If the pack manages a surprise attack thanks to his plans, the pack gets +2D to the Initiative roll in the first Combat Round. If the pack loses a fighter due to a misguided plan, the Damu loses (1) point of Renown. Usually, Damus get to drive the Koms.

**EQUIPMENT:** Assault rifle; +2D rounds per month; Scourge

## 3 - CHAGA

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 8 or AGI+Projectiles 8; CHA+Leadership 8; INT+Legends 6; Authority 4

**RESULT:** The pack follows the Chaga's orders unquestioningly into any combat. Only the Dumisai may confront him and question his decisions. The result is a duel with bare fists: the Dumisai needs to win to overrule the Chaga's order. He also runs a significant risk: if the Chaga wins and has enough Authority and Renown, he can replace the Dumisai. A Chaga stands for the pack with his life and his Authority: he is responsible for fallen warriors, losing (1) point of Authority for each one. In the absence of an Anubian, the Chaga teaches his people the ancestors' rites. His authority pertains to all Africans (with the exception of Anubians) undisputedly.

**EQUIPMENT:** Ancestral weapon (the weapon of a legendary Scourger who once was the pack's Chaga, +2D Mental Defense, has to be passed on to the next Chaga in the case of a rank change; usually a spear); +3D rounds per month for the assault rifle

## 3 - SIMBA

**PREREQUISITE:** The rank of Simba must be vacant; BOD+Athletics 8; BOD+Melee 8; AGI+Projectiles 8; PSY+Reaction 6; Renown 5; Allies 3

**RESULT:** In any pack, there is only one Simba. He has the right to challenge the strongest enemy and to accomplish the greatest heroic deeds. He must do so unassisted. If he declines to fight or loses, his Renown decreases by (1). Should his Renown fall to (2), he must resign and become a Damu again. Another Scourger from the pack becomes the new Simba.

A Simba inspires his pack: once he has vanquished the strongest enemy, the whole pack gets +2D on Mental Defense until the end of the combat. Outside of Africa, the Simba is considered the Lion's Head, a great danger. Thus, he gets a Bonus of +3D on all social interactions based on Psyche, but also -3D on all social interactions based on Charisma.

**EQUIPMENT:** Lion helmet; +3D rounds per month

## 4 - DUMISAI

**PREREQUISITE:** Depends on former rank: if a Chaga vanquishes the old Dumisai in a ritual duel, he may take over the rank; if the pack loses its Dumisai, the Chaga can make the Simba the new Dumisai; BOD+Toughness 10; BOD+Melee 10; AGI+Projectiles 10; Renown 5; Authority 5

**RESULT:** Other Scourgers never challenge a Dumisai. He alone can question the Chaga's decisions, which leads to a duel. If he loses, the pack expels him. If he wins, the Chaga holds the Dumisai's opinion as if it were his own. A Dumisai may enter any African estate. Even the vault of the Bank of Commerce would be open to him; should

he demand access. Dumisais are heroes and are treated as such by the African population: they get +2D on all Charisma and Psyche Action rolls involving Africans. The Hellvetics appreciate Dumisais for their discipline, morale, and strength. They can sleep for free in the Alpine Fortress.

**EQUIPMENT:** Can request any amount of ammunition from any Neolibyan

### O - MOYO

**PREREQUISITE:** On the Chaga's command, the Dumisai appoints his Moyo; INS+Empathy 8; BOD+Stamina 8; Renown 5

**RESULT:** The Moyo is the Dumisai's soul twin. He gives his mask to the Dumisai and leaves the pack. From now on, he has two months to master the eight traditional tests. If he is successful, he gets his mask and his old rank back. If he fails, the Moyo and his Dumisai have to leave the pack in disgrace. They become Kifo, unmasked ones. The tests are comprised of trials of strength (vanquishing wild animals or AMSUMOs, ending slave rebellions), of the mind (helping a village solve a problem), of the soul (reconciling old grudges), and of the ancestors (reinstating order, placating angry spirits, strengthening traditions). Anubians set and watch the challenges.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

### X - KIFO

**PREREQUISITE:** Failed Dumisai or Moyo

**RESULT:** Their Resources drop to (0): the Kifo loses all access to Neolibyan and Scourger resources. He may keep his old weapons and even keep using them, though—the Scourgers ignore him as if he were invisible. In public, Neolibyans avoid him, but they like to use Kifos as assassins. In Bedain, everyone fears them: some Kifos run Scrapper companies and access Scrapper property with their Resources score. If the Kifo decides to leave his homeland and gets a job in the land of the Crow, he can count on a quick accumulation of Resources (+3) and Network (+2). Voivodes, Hybrispanian Guerreros, Chroniclers, and Jehammedans pay well for insight into the African soul—and its plans. As a bodyguard, counselor, strategist, and oddity, a Kifo can live well until the day of his death in the land of the Crow. However, his betrayal makes him an outlaw: Scourgers and Neolibyan Great Hunters will soon start coming after him.

**EQUIPMENT:** -

THERE ARE NO PACTS BETWEEN LIONS AND MEN

[TROY]

# POTENTIALS

## THE LION'S REVENGE

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

The lion is all hot breath, glittering eyes, teeth, and claws. Those who push their sword into his maw will not walk away without feeling his bite.

When making a melee attack against the Scourger with this Potential within melee range of the Scourger's own weapons, the attacker receives the same amount of Damage they inflicted, up to the Potential level. Only armor with the "Massive" Quality can reduce this Damage.

## ELDER BLOOD

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Faith 8

Streams of ancestral blood have spattered across the African soil, drenched and blessed it. Whenever the Scourger touches the soil, he feels pain, a thirst for war and victory. He mixes the soil with spittle and smears it onto his chest, giving the ancestors access to his soul, his eyes, and his ears. He becomes one with the Ancestors, and will soon share another victory with them.

Elder blood is a ritual to prepare the Scourger for a coming fight. It strengthens his Mental Defense by the Potential level. The ritual requires dedication from the Scourger for about 15 minutes to be complete.

## TRIAL OF THE HERO

The greatness of a deed is measured against the strength of the enemy. Killing a worm is something that happens daily and brings no honor. If the Scourger faces a worthy enemy, though, his blood boils; he rises above himself and becomes the Lion incarnate, roaring and attacking. The ancestors watch him with pride.

When fighting physically or technologically superior enemies, the Scourger adds +1D per Potential level to his Initiative roll.

## HYENA'S LAUGHTER

The whooping, screaming, and laughing of the Hyena tells the Crow that the pack is coming. Its wings will soon be clipped. As the Scourgers charge towards their enemies, they scream and yell, pushing each other higher and higher into a brutal bloodlust.

The Scourgers rush into the fight, gaining +1D per Potential level to all Attack and Defense rolls for the first Combat Round. This Potential can only be used once per fight.

## WILD DOG RUN

The Scourger is hot on the Crow's heels. The wind caresses his body, cools his sweat, and pushes him towards his victim's tracks. His muscles tense; every step is a well-measured effort. His toes dig into the ground, pushing him onwards, soil kicking up in his wake. The white men sidestep, he can hear them panting. He keeps pace, staying right behind them even though he could easily overtake them with two, three leaps. The wild dog hunts its prey to death, for this is its nature.

For every Round that the Scourger chases a fleeing enemy on foot, he recovers (1) Ego Point per Potential level.

## SIMBAS PREY

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

Crow against Lion, Scourger against AMSUMO, predator against prey. The creatures may not know each other, yet still they are chosen by fate to collide like a pair of blazing suns.

No interference in this conflict is allowed. The Scourger picks an enemy out from the battlefield. The Scourger gains a bonus equal to his Potential level to his Passive Defense against attacks from any enemy except his chosen target.

RANK 3 SICKLE

## 1 - INITIATE

**PREREQUISITE:** Mark of Anubis
**RESULT:** Seven concentric Circles show on the Initiate's belly. He gets +1D on all Action rolls against the Raze. He is a wanderer between worlds, exploring humankind, the ancestors, nature, and the fringes of the Psychovores. No African would refuse him food or drink. It is said that everything that an African does for an Initiate will be repaid hundredfold by the ancestral spirits.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 2 - ENCHANTER

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Faith 6 or PSY+Willpower 6; INT+Legends 6; Renown 1
**RESULT:** The Enchanter teaches the people the old rites and counsels them in day-to-day affairs: all Backgrounds with the exception of Resources also apply towards Neolibyans, Scourgers, African Scrappers, and Clanners from African Clans. The same is true for all higher ranks.

With every transformation, the Raze resistance grows: +2D on Action rolls to fending it off.
**EQUIPMENT:** Anubis mask; soul stones (tools of superstition: +1D Charisma when trying to influence an African)

## 3 - EMBALMER

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Expression 6; INT+Legends 7; INS+Empathy 7; Renown 2
**RESULT:** The Anubian can now interfere with the Psychovore Aethyr and thus influence the people around him through the whispering of the ancestors. He is, however, a slave of nature: the emotions generated are tied to his strongest Attribute. If it's BOD the Africans feel stronger and healthier, if it is PSY they feel stronger of will, if it is INS they feel their primal nature and give in to it.

Embalmers take in Initiates and teach them until they become Enchanters. All of these Initiates feel obliged to their Embalmer until the end of their days and count as his allies ((+1) Allies).
**EQUIPMENT:** Finger of Anubis (a sharpened bone to scratch Initiates' skin with)

## 4 - SOUL SEER

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Expression 10; INT+Science 7; Secrets 3; Renown 3
**RESULT:** Through will alone, the Anubian creates a passage through the Psychovores—and they make way for him and his companions. Not for his enemies, however: they shoot thorns, or fruit falls from shrubs and explodes into highly poisonous clouds. The Psychovores attack with their Level and bring the Raze. Psychovores with a Level of (5+) resist the Soul Seer. The Anubian develops advanced resistance against the Raze: +4D against its effects.

Tripol's Bank of Commerce has Soul Seers measure their business partners' Thread of Life. With an Action roll on INS+Empathy (4), the Soul Seer goes deep inside the life and deeds of the person he looks at. Without a Trigger, he can only guess their mood, but with every Trigger, the information gets more solid: health, latent illnesses, future calamities. The Anubian strips down the soul until he finds its destiny. Soul Seers are also highly appreciated by the Consultants of the Spital and by decree have access to the research groups.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 3 - HEALER

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 8; INT+Medicine 6; INT+Focus 6 or INS+Primal 6; Authority 2
**RESULT:** A Healer harvests earths, herbs, and potent soil from nature and Duat fruit in the Psychovores. When he needs other Anubians to attain some medicine for him, he gets a (+2) bonus on Resources. He can eat Duat fruit without the Raze consuming him. He has to make an Action roll on BOD+Toughness, though, (Difficulty = level of the Duat fruit) to start the catalysis. The level also determines the time that the Healer is suspended in a coma. The Anubian awakens one day earlier per Trigger, but always remains in catalysis for at least one hour. Resistance against Psychovores: +3D to fending off the Raze.
**EQUIPMENT:** Crucible; healing earths

## 4 - HECATEAN

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 10; INT+Focus 8 or INS+Primal 8; INT+Science 6; Authority 3
**RESULT:** The Hecatean is the lord of death. If he sews a freshly deceased into a Gendo skin and performs the Imiut ritual, he can repair the torn Thread of Life (see "Patched Up" in Chapter 7, "Battle"). He can restructure his metabolism and raise Attributes once per day: to do so, he rolls INT +Focus or INS+Primal against the score of the

Attribute in question. He can use the Triggers to extend the time and/or score: (1) Trigger brings (1) minute of duration or (+1) to the Attribute. It can even surpass the limit of (6) in this manner. Resistance against Psychovores: +4D to fending off the Raze.
**EQUIPMENT:** Duat Blood (level 1)

### 3 - SICKLE

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 6; PSY+Reaction 6; Renown 2; Network 2
**RESULT:** Gets the Potential "Eye of Horus" at level 1. A pack of Scourgers accepts the Anubian as a fighter, and he may challenge the strongest enemy even before the Simba. However, he can also reject to do so without losing honor. The Simba will be grateful. Resistance against Psychovores: +3D to fending off the Raze.
**EQUIPMENT:** Khopesh

### 4 - AMMIT

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Athletics 6; BOD+Melee 10; PSY+Faith 6 or PSY+Willpower 6; Renown 5; Network 3
**RESULT:** An Ammit looks into the heart of a person: in the Psychovores' area of influence, he gets +2D on any social interaction (all Charisma Action rolls, as well as PSY +Domination) and can also add his Renown Background as dice to social Action rolls.

He knows the weak spots of all creatures: every hit with a weapon causes Ego Damage equal to the number of Triggers rolled in addition to the physical Damage. Resistance against Psychovores: +4D to fending off the Raze.
**EQUIPMENT:** Ammit sickle

### 5 - HOGON

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 10; INT+Science 8; INS+Empathy 8; Secrets 5
**RESULT:** The Hogon takes off the mantle made of superstition and folklore: he faces every attempt to influence him based on superstition with +4D. His resistance against the Raze rises to +6D. Only the Psychovores in the Dhoruba and all around Cairo still resist him.

A Hogon prepares for his way to Cairo. He knows the secret caches of the canopic jars and selects young Anubians for the catalysis.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

DEATH IS THE RELEASE FROM ALL PAIN,
COMPLETE CESSATION, BEYOND WHICH OUR SUFFERING WILL NOT EXTEND.
IT WILL RETURN US TO THAT CONDITION OF
TRANQUILITY,
WHICH WE HAD ENJOYED BEFORE WE WERE BORN.

[LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA]

# POTENTIALS

## AMMIT'S FEAST

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

All mental barriers break, and the devourer of souls weaves her way into the Anubian's mind, corrupting him, driving him into an abyss of ancient hatred. She takes his hand, guiding his sickle through his enemies flesh into their innards as the wave breaks upon his blade. Soon, fresh souls drenched in blood will stand before Anubis, awaiting judgement.

If an Anubian achieves (2) Triggers on a melee attack, they can fly into a frenzy. Anubians imbued by Ammit can no longer make Active Defense rolls. In return, for every Combat Round that the Anubian remains frenzied, his Attack rolls gain +1D and his Damage is increased by (1), up to the Potential Level. However, Ammit's influence is volatile and corrosite, it must be reactivated with (2) Triggers each Round and paid for in blood, costing the Anubian (1) Flesh Wound for every Round after the first. If the frenzy is interrupted, all scores immediately fall back to their original values.

## NAVEL OF NEFERTEM

And so the cusps of the blue lotus rose up from the primal waters, blooming in cruel beauty into a strange world, and they knew Nefertem as their god. The lotus, the Hogons whisper, will not devour those who walk in the god's shadow.

The Anubian develops a resistance to the Psychovores, which also influences their catalysis. The difficulty of defense against the Raze and catalysis of medicine decreases by (1) per Potential level.

## EYE OF HORUS

The falcon-headed god rises into the air, and his wing tips stretch to the ends of the earth. His unblinking black eyes—the moon eye and the sun eye—pick up even the smallest ripples of the wave.

Anubians using the Eye of Horus feel disturbances of the wave across vast distances (level 1: up to (100) m, level 2: up to (1) km, level 3: up to (10) km). Without fail they lead the way to Psychonauts, and can see the gleaming network of force lines on the body of the Aberrant. They gain (1) Trigger per Potential level when attacking Psychonauts, Spore Beasts, and Leperos.

## MERCY OF ANUBIS

The wave breaks, but the Anubian isn't granted the deep fall into the eternity of Anubis' realm. His time has not come yet, and he can muster up one last desperate attempt to spite his foes.

If the Anubian takes more than his maximum Trauma Damage and falls unconscious, he can still rise again and fight on for (1) Combat Round per Potential level until he finally collapses dead. The sight of the destroyed body leaping into combat strikes fear into the hearts of his enemies, any weapons the Anubian wields gain the Terrifying Quality, with the rating equal to the Potential level x2.

## SEKHMET'S SLUMBER

The lion-headed god covers the dead body with her paws so that neither demons nor the vigilant gaze of Anubis can see it.

The Anubian falls into a coma indistinguishable from death that cannot be interrupted once it begins. After (4) days, he wakes up fully healed. The number of days is reduced by (1) per Potential level. This Potential can be combined with Mercy of Anubis.

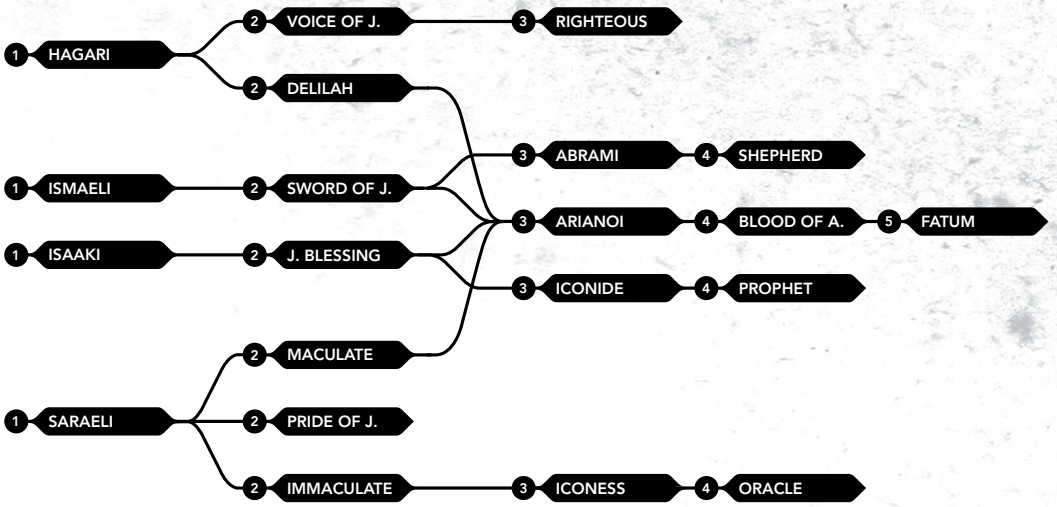
## GAZE OF FATE

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

Not even the gods dare to look into the future, for they fear the demons beyond the frame of the world, lurking behind Horus' wing tips. Those who still reach through the fabric of reality feel cold limbs grasping for the old life.

Anubians with Gaze of Fate may foresee and even live through a very limited period of their imminent future once per month: They hit an enemy or experience their companions trying to open the lock mechanism of some crypt. This will happen within a certain limited amount of time, depending on the Potential level. The Anubian adds +2D to the foreseen Action per Potential level.

**LEVEL 1:** Seconds – e. g., a single Attack or Defense roll
**LEVEL 2:** Minutes – e. g., the outcome of a discussion, simple questions
**LEVEL 3:** Hours – e. g., finding the solution to difficult problems




### 1 - ISMAELI

**PREREQUISITE:** Rank determined by birth
**RESULT:** May not touch women
**EQUIPMENT:** Shepherd's staff

### 2 - SWORD OF JEHAMMED

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 6; INT+Legends 4; Renown 1
**RESULT:** As a Sword of Jehammed, the Ismaeli exchanges the suffocating closeness of his tribe for adventure and war. When the people of Jehammed and another Cult have a common enemy in a region shaken by crisis, the Sword of Jehammed temporarily gets (+2) Network through Allies (e. g., through Janites in Osman or Voivodules in the Balkhan).
**EQUIPMENT:** Scimitar; Riding pick; light armor

### 3 - ABRAMI

**PREREQUISITE:** Battle-hardened; INT+Legends 6; PSY+Faith/Willpower 6; Authority 3; Resources 2
**RESULT:** The Abrami founds a new tribe with a Hagari. He is untouchable: if he uses Authority, it will not diminish when resisted. Starting with Renown (3), he can marry a Saraeli. If she gives birth to an Isaaki, the Abrami gets Renown (+1).
**EQUIPMENT:** Goat hide wrap (marriage gift for his Hagari)

### 4 - SHEPHERD

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 10; Authority 5; Renown 6; Allies 3
**RESULT:** A Shepherd never interacts with the fisherman's children and always expresses radical views. Abrami and even Iconides bow to him and heed his advice. A number of Swords of Jehammed equal to his Allies Background serve as his bodyguards. Outside the Cult, he is considered a zealous preacher: -3D on social interaction based on Charisma Skills.
**EQUIPMENT:** Jehammed's teachings

### 1 - ISAAKI

**PREREQUISITE:** Rank determined by birth as son of a Saraeli
**RESULT:** He can access all of the tribe's wealth: his Resources start at (6). He receives the best training: Shepherds teach him, and Swords of Jehammed show him how to use a saber. He charges ahead in every battle: as long as he lives, all fighters on his side get +1D on attacks.
**EQUIPMENT:** Horse (Charger); Damascene saber

### 2 - JEHAMMED'S BLESSING

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 10; BOD+Melee 10; AGI+Navigation 8; Renown 4; Authority 4
**RESULT:** This is the last step before becoming an Iconide. The Swords of Jehammed feel his power: towards them, he gets +2D to CHA+Leadership.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 3 - ICONIDE / ICONESS

**PREREQUISITE:** Renown 6; Authority 5
**RESULT:** An Iconide can create (1) Icon per month and dedicate it to a purpose (see page 130, "Cult Equipment"). As opposed to Shepherds, Iconides are their Cult's outward face and are considered tough but reasonable ambassadors. Because of their moderate bearing, they get +1D to CHA+Negotiation when dealing with other Cults.
**EQUIPMENT:** Ram staff

### 4 - PROPHET / ORACLE

**PREREQUISITE:** Renown 6; Authority 6; Secrets 4
**RESULT:** No one is as close to Jehammed as a Prophet or Oracle. Their word is law, inspiring their radical followers. Their blessings make the recipients glow in a godly light and resist all enmities for a day: the recipients get +3D on PSY+Faith.
**EQUIPMENT:** Will of Jehammed; chain with a meteor iron pendant (symbolizing the burden of knowledge)

### 1 - HAGARI

**PREREQUISITE:** Rank predetermined by birth.
**RESULT:** She protects the tribe with her life: she gets +1D in battle when protecting her fellows. If she sacrifices herself, she gets +3D to all physical Actions. If something happens to her outside the community, she temporarily gets (+3) Allies.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 2 - DELILAH

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Faith/Willpower 10; BOD+Melee 6
**RESULT:** She is a fallen Hagari. If she fights for her honor, she cannot use Active Defense, but gets +2D on all attacks. Renown drops to (0). She can leave her tribe and join another Cult.
**EQUIPMENT:** Scimitar

### 2 - VOICE OF JEHAMMED

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 8; CHA+Expression 8; Renown 3; Authority 2
**RESULT:** She wields Jehammed's teachings like a weapon. Within the Cult, she gets +2D to all social interactions. Iconides listen to her, and she can accuse other Jehammedans of failings.
**EQUIPMENT:** Copy of Jehammed's teachings

### 3 - RIGHTEOUS ONE

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 10; PSY+Faith/Willpower 10; Renown 4; Authority 5
**RESULT:** The Righteous One knows all of Jehammed's known writings by heart. Within the Cult, she is accorded the same deference as Iconides. Other Cults turn to the Righteous One, offer deals or pacts and have her consider their ideas in the light of Jehammed's teachings.
**EQUIPMENT:** Sealing stone

### 1 - SARAELI

**PREREQUISITE:** Rank determined by birth as daughter of an Abrami and a Saraeli
**RESULT:** No one dares to oppose her, but still she has no influence. Ismaeli shun her, for getting close to her could mean exile for both of them. The Saraeli is promised to an Abrami, and the Council of Elders demands that she follow the traditions and share his bed once a year.
**EQUIPMENT:** Precious robes and jewelry; tattoos (+1D Mental Defense)

### 2 - PRIDE OF JEHAMMED

**PREREQUISITE:** Has birthed an Isaaki for her Abrami and her tribe
**RESULT:** She has fulfilled her destiny and can move a little more freely now. She influences the tribe via her son: she gets +4D to any interaction with and through him.
**EQUIPMENT:** Star of Jehammed

### 2 - MACULATE

**PREREQUISITE:** Was unfaithful to her Abrami or is over 40 and without child
**RESULT:** She is tolerated, but no longer appreciated by her tribe (Renown (-2)). She can leave her tribe and join another Cult. She is highly appreciated by the Apocalyptics because she has soared sky-high and delved into the coldest depths.
**EQUIPMENT:** The Mark (red saw-tooth tattoo from one cheek to the other symbolizing the breaking of the tradition, +2D Mental Defense)

### 2 - IMMACULATE

**PREREQUISITE:** Over 30 winters old and unmarried, or her Abrami has died before having sex with her
**RESULT:** The Immaculate is considered a holy woman. Freed from her destiny, she can roam the land as she desires. Many Immaculates have proven excellent mediators between the Cults, and this renown precedes an Immaculate: she gets +2D to CHA+Negotiation and is under the Voivodes' protection in the Balkhan.
**EQUIPMENT:** Letters of passage and seal cords (granting her free passage)

### 3 - ARIANOI

**PREREQUISITE:** Is chosen by Aries and travels to Athens; BOD+Toughness 8; PSY+Faith/Willpower 8; Secrets 3
**RESULT:** The Blood of Aries runs through his veins: he heals (1) Flesh Wound per hour. He is addicted to the brew from the ram skull.
**EQUIPMENT:** Blood of Aries (enough for (15) days); fleece (ram skin cape)

### 4 - BLOOD OF ARIES

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Stamina 10; INT+Legends 8; INS+Orienteering 6; Secrets 4
**RESULT:** He heals (1) Flesh Wound every (10) minutes. The addiction stays. He roams the land in search of Ancients, watching and studying them. Buildings, faces, and voices flood his visions—he needs to find them. Some days, Aries himself writhes in his thoughts and talks to him. The scars on his skull have long since disappeared; only the pressure behind the eyes remains.
**EQUIPMENT:** Ram helmet; Horn; Blood of Aries (enough for (30) days)

### 5 - FATUM

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 10; INS+Empathy 8; Secrets 5; Authority 5; Renown 5
**RESULT:** The Fatum is one of hundreds of incarnations of Aries. He destroys the enemies of the Jehammedans. Aries has nestled into some dark recess of his mind and can break free to shout commands at any time.
**EQUIPMENT:** Black fleece; blackened ram helmet; Blessing of Aries; Blood of Aries (enough for (60) days)

# POTENTIALS

## IRE OF JEHAMMED

**PREREQUISITE:** Faith

The enemy insults the word of Jehammed, even in the face of his creation. Clad in faith, the warrior's soul boils until finally his fury breaks its chains and engulfs the enemy.

When Jehammedans face blasphemous enemies like Psychonauts, Apocalyptics, Anabaptists, or outlaws and have to watch these creatures stand tall against their group's attack, their fury grows.

The Jehammedan counts all attacks by their enemy in a battle, if the enemy attacks a friend the attack counts twice. When the count reaches (10), the Jehammedan explodes into a rage. For the rest of the battle, he adds +1D per Potential level to his Attack rolls, and for each successful attack he makes himself, he gains (1) Ego Point.

## FLEECE OF ARIES

**PREREQUISITE:** Arianoi; black fleece

In the darkest hours of the Cult, those who are not afraid of a far greater darkness call for Aries the Ram. The Jehammedan sinks into meditation, drapes the black fleece around his shoulders, kneels, and cowers until the skin completely covers him. Something crawls into his mind, and pushes rationality away. He leaps to his feet with a feral growl, ready to fight.

The breath of Aries has touched his soul, and the goat has birthed a wolf. The ritual takes about (15) minutes, and when it ends the Jehammedan has become an embodiment of Aries. For (1) hour, all his Charisma Skills drop to (0). However, the maximum number of Ego Points that can be spent each Combat Round is increased by (1) per Potential level.

## CALL OF JEHAMMED

The Anabaptists only yell when attacking, mindless like a bear, reduced to the simplest emotions. The prayers erupting from the Jehammedans, in contrast, are carefully crafted aphorisms embracing life, touching the heart and keeping the beast at bay. Born of a majestic voice, they can determine the tides of battle.

The caller needs (1) Combat Round to call to his friends and companions and instill them with the spirit of Jehammed: he rolls CHA+Arts and adds +1D per Potential level. The Difficulty depends on the threat the party faces: if victory is certain, it is (2); if the battle is almost lost, the caller must roll against a Difficulty of (6). The Game Master decides the Difficulty. If the Jehammedan's roll is successful, he breaks all psychic manipulation by the enemy. If he rolls any Triggers, they are added as bonus dice to his group's Mental Defense. This bonus drops by 1D per Combat Round until it is used up.

## ICONIDES CURSE

**PREREQUISITE:** Iconide or Oracle rank

The Iconide's voice is thunder and lightning. He speaks divine wisdom, and every thought he utters is worthy of Jehammed himself. The lowly people stumbling along off the track tremble under the power of his voice and his spiritual transcendence. There is a truly blessed man among them.

If he calls down god's wrath onto his creation, even an Anabaptist doubts his calling and lowers his weapon, his faith struck by anxiousness and insecurity.

The Iconides Curse is a mental attack on a group of human enemies. Animals, Psychonauts, and AMSUMOs are immune. The Iconide attacks his enemies' Psyche with a roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower +1D per Potential level. They may make an Active Defense roll. If they fail, they get -1D per Trigger to all Action rolls. This penalty is reduced by -1D per Combat Round.

## ICONIDES BLESSING

**PREREQUISITE:** Iconide or Oracle rank

The stars are right, the Saraeli's moon blood has not flown, hours ago a messenger brought news of an important victory in the East, this is going to be a fortuitous day. When should the Iconides fulfill their destiny, if not now?

The Iconide interprets an important event as an omen and can bless all Icons brought to him that day. For this day, any Icons he crafts have their effects increased by +1D per Potential level.

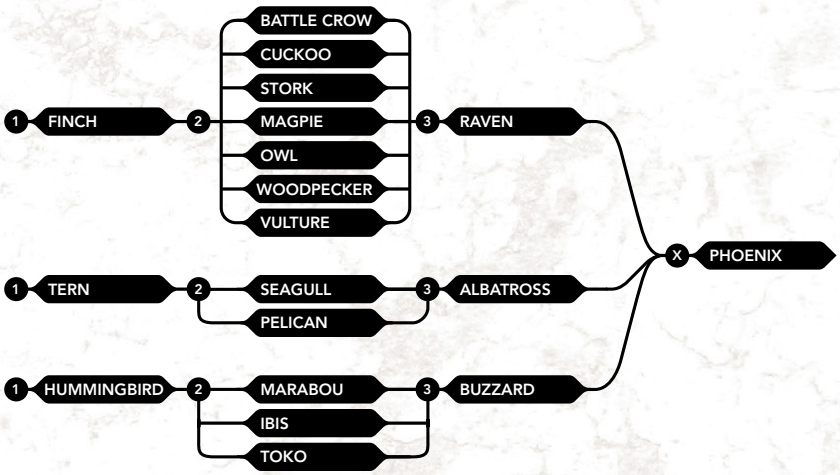
## ORACLE

**PREREQUISITE:** Oracle rank

Cloud formations, the form of entrails, or the throw of bone dice are all signs of truths and futures that only the chosen ones can perceive. The Oracle sees the signs when they present themselves.

The Oracle knows how to cater to her audience. After all the necessary theatrics, she describes the future and hints at a potential outcome. The audience will leave with lifted hearts and do everything in their power to make this future come true.

If a member of the audience is confronted with a situation the Oracle described within a month, they add +1D per Potential level to an Action bringing them closer to the goal the Oracle mentioned. The Oracle can make one prophecy per day.




## 1 - FINCH

**PREREQUISITE:** Ability to suffer
**RESULT:** The Finch is tortured by his Flock—all for his own good, of course. Because he expects the worst at all times, he gets +1D to the Initiative when surrounded by his Flock. The bonus is lost when he leaves this rank behind.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

## 2 - BATTLE CROW

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Brawl 6; BOD+Toughness 6; BOD+Athletics 4; Authority 2
**RESULT:** The Battle Crow is one of the Flock's warriors. In the case of an attack, he can use his Authority without risking humiliation.
**EQUIPMENT:** Blade Bracelet

## 2 - MAGPIE

**PREREQUISITE:** AGI+Dexterity 6; CHA+Seduction 6; PSY+Cunning 4; Renown 2
**RESULT:** A Magpie hears a lot from her customers. There are two ways she can choose to react: if she blackmails customers with this knowledge, her Network decreases by (1), but her Resources rise by (2)—she lives well, but dangerously. Or she can keep quiet and provide a sort of home to her customers: Network and Renown rise by (1). The bonus is lost when she changes her attitude.
**EQUIPMENT:** Stiletto; hairpin

## 2 - VULTURE

**PREREQUISITE:** AGI+Stealth 4; PSY+Cunning 6; INS+Survival 6; Network 2
**RESULT:** Everyone hates Vultures. Chroniclers officially deny them access to the Alcoves. However, Shutters are always on the lookout for stolen goods to buy from the Vultures.
**EQUIPMENT:** Blade Bracelet

## 2 - CUCKOO

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Deception 6; CHA+Expression 6; INS+Empathy 4; Secrets 2
**RESULT:** Everyone thinks he knows the Cuckoo of the Flock. They are wrong. The Cuckoo wears his roles like a second skin, makes himself at home in them. If he commits a crime or makes enemies, they are forgotten with the next mask. He gets a +2D bonus on all deception maneuvers.
**EQUIPMENT:** Stiletto

## 2 - OWL

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 8; AGI+Stealth 6; PSY+Reaction 6
**RESULT:** The Owl is a precise assassin and robber. If he manages to ambush someone, he gets a +4D bonus to the Attack roll. If the Owl succeeds in an assassination at the behest of another Cult, his Network rises by (+1) up to a maximum of (4). If he fails, Network decreases by (-1).
**EQUIPMENT:** Blade Bracelet

## 2 - WOODPECKER

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Arts 4; CHA+Leadership 6; PSY+Deception 8; Network 3; Resources 3
**RESULT:** Wherever he goes, a Woodpecker builds a nest that the Flock can use as a hideaway and a base for future robberies (Secrets (+1)). He is responsible for the Flock's Resources. If he betrays the Flock, he gets Resources (6) for one transaction but has to win out in a Conflict against the Raven: his PSY+Deception against the Raven's INS+Perception. If he loses, the next visit by a Battle Crow is not a friendly one.

Other Cults order EX from Woodpeckers to keep their use of Burn a secret from the Spitalians, which means he always has his customers over a barrel (Network (+1)).
**EQUIPMENT:** Shotgun; 8 rounds; key ring

## 2 - STORK

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Seduction 8; PSY+Cunning 6; CHA+Arts 4; Network 2
**RESULT:** A Stork steals children. If he sends them to work, he gets Resources (+1), if he acts as their mentor and makes them a part of the Flock, he gets Renown (+1). If he changes his approach, the old bonus is lost.

In large settlements, gangs of children make much mischief. Often, the Stork knows some of these children: he gets a temporary (+2) Network bonus in the respective settlement.
**EQUIPMENT:** Net; staff; musical instrument

### 3 - RAVEN

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Faith 10 or PSY+Willpower 10; INS+Survival 6; Authority 5; Renown 3; Allies 3; Secrets 5
**RESULT:** The Raven uses his Tarot and its prophecies to control the Flock: he can use his Authority Background without having to fear losing a point if he fails.
**EQUIPMENT:** Apocalyptic Tarot; any gun upgraded with 2 slots filled; +1D rounds per month

### 1 - TERN

**PREREQUISITE:** Likes water—or not
**RESULT:** Like the Finch, he gets +1D Initiative as long as he is amongst his own kind. The bonus is lost when he leaves this rank.
**EQUIPMENT:** Grappling hook

### 2 - SEAGULL

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 6; AGI+Mobility 6; AGI+Projectiles 4
**RESULT:** In naval battles or when boarding an enemy ship, the Seagull has no penalty due to stormy sea or smoke. Because of his seafaring ways, the Seagull gets around, gaining(+1) Network.
**EQUIPMENT:** Harpoon crossbow

### 2 - PELICAN

**PREREQUISITE:** AGI+Navigation 10; INS+Orienteering 8; Authority 3
**RESULT:** The Pelican pilots the Water Birds' ships. He knows every current, every shoal: on the Mediterranean, he has +2D on INS+Orienteering. He also knows all the stories about coastal cities, which gives him +2D on INT+Legends when such stories are concerned.
**EQUIPMENT: -**

### 3 - ALBATROSS

**PREREQUISITE:** Ship; PSY+Domination 10 or CHA+Leadership 10; Authority 5; Resources 3
**RESULT:** At Renown (4+), the Albatross and his crew are allowed to land in Corpse. Africans hunt Albatrosses: they can expect no mercy from them.
**EQUIPMENT: -**

### 1 - HUMMINGBIRD

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** Like the Finch and the Tern, the Hummingbird gets +1D to the Initiative roll when fighting with Apocalyptics of his Flock. The bonus is lost when he leaves the rank.
**EQUIPMENT:** Koumaya dagger

### 2 - MARABOU

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 4; BOD+Melee 6; AGI+Stealth 6; Network 3
**RESULT:** Whenever a Neolibyan needs a dirty deed done, he hires a Marabou. In Bedain, Marabous collect protection money from Scrappers, which gives them (+1) Resources there.
**EQUIPMENT:** Steel cotters

### 2 - IBIS

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Legends 8; Allies 3; Authority 3; Network 3; Secrets 3
**RESULT:** The Ibis is revered for his wisdom—and feared for his knowledge. He acts as a middleman between the African Flocks and the Bank of Commerce. He can use his Authority Background on all Africans.
**EQUIPMENT:** Ibis staff

### 2 - TOCO

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Conduct 8; Resources 4; Network 3
**RESULT:** The Toco is the African equivalent of a Woodpecker. He has at least one nest, but a home isn't enough for him. His nightclub is like a palace, adding to the Renown of the Buzzard and the Flock: he can invest Resource points into the nest and get (+1) Renown per point and the monthly income equaling the Resources points spent x 100 Dinars. The rest goes to the Flock.
**EQUIPMENT: -**

### 3 - BUZZARD

**PREREQUISITE:** Has to conquer the old Buzzard in a Conflict (INT+Legends); INT+Legends 10; Allies 4; Authority 5
**RESULT:** Unlike the European Raven, a Buzzard controls his Flock through allegories, sagas; and prophecies. If he succeeds in an Action roll on INT+Legends in a Conflict with another Apocalyptic, the loser has to obey his Buzzard if he doesn't want to get kicked out of the Flock. If the Buzzard is supported by a loyal Ibis, the Ibis rolls, too, and gives his Successes and Triggers to the Buzzard. If Scourgers accuse the Buzzard of a crime, he may send a member of his Flock to duel with a Scourger. No matter how the confrontation ends, the guilt is washed away by the duel.
**EQUIPMENT:** Flyssa

### X - PHOENIX

**PREREQUISITE:** Kicked out by his Flock, or his Flock was destroyed; BOD+Toughness 10; INS+Survival 10; PSY+Cunning 8; PSY+Faith/Willpower 10
**RESULT:** He has risen from the ashes, more cunning and more dangerous than ever. He recruits a new Flock, though not from Apocalyptics: from Kifos, outcast Hellvetics, fallen Preservists, and Scalars. Cave bears build his nest. His Backgrounds fall to (0), but when he rebuilds them, they apply for any Cult. With Resources he gets access to Trailblazers, assault rifles, and mountains of ammunition and Burn. Even the Mother of Ravens fears his shadowy realm.
**EQUIPMENT: -**

# POTENTIALS

## ALL-IN

Make your bets! In combat, you bet blood and bones—only an Apocalyptic would dare to go all in and risk his life. He looks forward to his winnings.

The Apocalyptic sets aside a number of dice up to his Potential level x2 for an Active Defense roll. If he succeeds in the defense, his next Attack roll gains Triggers equal to the number of unused dice.

## CARD OF DESTINY

**PREREQUISITE:** Faith; Raven, Albatross, or Buzzard

The cards are a tool for manipulation. However, if you use them long enough you begin to feel their true force, feel their archetypes at work, and see how they cast long shadows from the future into the past. Those who know how to read them walk through time full of knowledge.

The Apocalyptic deals the cards to tell his own fortune in order to see into his future. He interprets the cards of destiny and draws the details out, where does he have to face whom? The faces are hazy, the vision coarse, but he at least knows the opponent's Cult. If the exact combination of events comes to pass within the next (10) days, the fortune teller adds their Potential level as a bonus to all CHA and PSY rolls while playing out the foretold events.

## CROW'S NEST

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

The Flock is more than just a family to the Apocalyptic. It's his origin, a living, breathing part of his history. Those who damage the Flock bury a dagger in the Apocalyptic's own gut.

As long as the Apocalyptic acts at the behest of his Flock or defends it against attackers, he can invest (1) Ego Point per Action roll to get +1D per Potential level on any Action.

## MIRROR

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

The Apocalyptic's heart and his enemy's heart beat as one, he watches, reacts, repeats his enemy's attack patterns as if they had trained together.

An Apocalyptic with the Mirror Potential imitates his opponent's way of fighting: He activates the Potential with an Active Defense succeeding with at least (1) Trigger. As long as he fights this enemy, his Passive Defense is raised by (1) per Potential level. If the opponent activates a Potential, the Apocalyptic can imitate it on the same level and turn it against the enemy.

## BLACK OMEN

The Flock's fortune tellers can now gaze beyond the mirror of the present into potential futures, but they do not prepare the way for it. It's really not that hard at all. A bound up dead crow calls disaster from the dark, as well as a cross drawn on a door in blood, while pitch-black stones in their soup warn others to expect a knife in the gut in the near future. Many people see in the Apocalyptics' savagery a pact with primal forces better not conjured. The Flock knows how to use this fact to their advantage—their curses are very much feared.

Black Omen is a mental attack. The Apocalyptic rolls PSY+Domination and gets +1D per Potential level. His opponent counters with PSY+Faith: if he has chosen Willpower, he is immune to the attack. If the Apocalyptic wins the Conflict, his opponent gets a permanent penalty to all rolls equal to the number of Triggers rolled +1. To be free from the curse, the opponent must cleanse themself spiritually through prayer, rituals, or a pilgrimage.

## 1,000 WAYS

**PREREQUISITE:** Only usable in melee

The Apocalyptic has taken part in countless fights, studied countless combat styles, and has left them all behind. Combat is not a dance that has to follow certain rules of rhythm and seduction. All that matters is the result, the path leading to it can have an infinite number of branches.

In melee, the Apocalyptic's blows are almost completely unpredictable and nearly impossible to block. For every Trigger on a melee Attack roll, the opponent has -1D to Active Defense, up to a limit of the Potential level. The Apocalyptic's Triggers still count towards extra Damage or other effects.

## 1 - TOUCHED

**PREREQUISITE:** -
**RESULT:** He gets his three dots tattooed on the forehead (Mental Defense +1D) and a ring through the nose to chain the soul to the body.
**EQUIPMENT:** Long spade; grain (given to him by his gang, symbolizes the expansion of his Pneuma)

## 2 - ASCETIC

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Stamina 6; CHA+Conduct 4; PSY+Faith 6 or PSY+Willpower 6
**RESULT:** The Ascetic inspires the people: when dealing with providers and farmers, he gets +1D to CHA+Leadership and CHA+Conduct.
**EQUIPMENT:** Seeds (the Ascetic gathers seeds from the strongest plants and buries them in places he considers important and holy)

## 3 - ELYSIAN

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Medicine 8; INT+Legends 6; INT+Science 6; Renown 2; Secrets 2
**RESULT:** The Elysian cleanses his mind through asceticism and his body through Elysian oils: should he encounter Sepsis, he gets +2D to resist. The Elysian knows how to compose herbs and earth to create the well-known Elysian oils. If he asks for oils in an Anabaptist Enclave, he gets (+2) Resources to do so. Spitalian Famulancers could be tasked to assist the Elysian to learn more about natural healing.
**EQUIPMENT:** Crucible and pestle; healing herbs; stones from the Adriatic Sea (the Adriatic Sea is considered the only identified edenic river so far: PSY+Faith +1D, no bonus to PSY+Willpower)

## 2 - ORGIASTIC

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Toughness 4; BOD+Melee 6; INT+Focus 6 or INS+Primal 6
**RESULT:** If the Orgiastic travels with his gang, he gets +1D to his Attack roll, but also -1D to Active Defense. An Orgiastic only knows extremes: if he follows this rule, he gets +1D to PSY+Faith or PSY+Willpower. If he deviates and makes halfhearted decisions or relativizes earlier ones, the bonus becomes a penalty of -1D. Wherever he may go, his gang of comrades will always be his family ((+1) Allies).
**EQUIPMENT:** Bidenhander

## 3 - FUROR

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 8; PSY+Faith 8 or PSY+Willpower 8; Renown 4
**RESULT:** The Furor may enter the catacombs and arsenals of Cathedral City and take whatever he needs. If he wants a weapon, he's no longer restricted to the Cult weapons but can choose from the general list. If he uses a Spitfire, he gets a +1D bonus to the Attack roll.

A Furor can muster a gang of Orgiastics (number of volunteers equals his Renown x2) and start a crusade. The gang will follow him into uncharted regions to win the people living there over for Cathedral City. If the crusade is successful, an Anabaptist settlement arises—and the Furor is entitled to a part of the taxes. Depending on the size of the Enclave, his Resources rise by (+1) to (+3).
**EQUIPMENT:** Spitfire

## 4 - EMISSARY

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Domination 8 or CHA+Conduct 8; CHA+Negotiation 6; PSY+Faith 10 or PSY+Willpower 10; Authority 4; Renown 3
**RESULT:** Ever since Cathedral City and the Cluster signed a temporary peace treaty, the Chroniclers have been ordered to treat the Emissaries with respect: the Emissary gets +2D to CHA+Negotiation when dealing with Chroniclers. He is a respected guest of the Judges and serves as a contact in all issues related to the alliance. Hellvetics grant him free passage through the Alpine Fortress. If a Spitalian has to decide whom to look after in battle, the Emissary would be his first choice. Even the Clans treat him with respect.
**EQUIPMENT:** Any melee weapon, upgraded using 2 slots

## 5 - COUNSELOR

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Expression 10 or PSY+Cunning 10; Secrets 3; Authority 5; Renown 4
**RESULT:** The Counselor is considered the voice and potential successor of a Baptist. As such, he is stuck in a web of intrigues—or is spinning his own one. He decides whose emanations are recognized and who rises in the ranks. He is beguiled by sycophants: if he gets involved with them, his Resources temporarily rise by (2). At the same time, the risk of the Baptists realizing whom they invited to their side rises.
**EQUIPMENT:** -

### 6 - BAPTIST

**PREREQUISITE:** One of the eight Baptists has to step down; Authority 6; Renown 6; Secrets 4

**RESULT:** Every Baptist is a shining example to his Cult, still riding into battle or tilling the fields. He is surrounded by Furors and Elysians, and the strongest oils are reserved for him. Together with the other seven Baptists, he leads the Cult.

**EQUIPMENT: -**

### 4 - SUBLIME

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Focus 10 or INS+Primal 10; Allies 4; Renown 6

**RESULT:** The Counsel of Emanations considers him a manifested emanation as foretold in one of the countless prophecies. There are no closed doors for the Sublime in Cathedral City—his Resources rise to (6)—but his every step is being watched. Emissaries follow him and write down every deed and every sentence, and the Counsel of Emanations watches his behavior in keeping with the traditions. One word of the Sublime is enough to get thousands of Anabaptists moving.

**EQUIPMENT: -**

### 5 - ACHERON

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Melee 10; AGI+Mobility 10; Allies 5

**RESULT:** The Acheron is closer to the enemy than to his own friends. His combat power is legendary, and not always due to the Elysian streams alone, but also to the rivers of the dead, Acheron and Styx. While he will never be able to enter Paradise, he will pave the way there for tens of thousands. He receives the forbidden oils from his allies, among the few people who know that he is an Acheron. Baptists and Counselors are the Acheron's principals. His missions are devised behind closed doors and are top-secret, whether it is the assassination of a Jehammedan Shepherd or the kidnapping of a high-ranking Fragment. Outside the Cult, an Anabaptist will only confess to being an Acheron under dire straits or in critical situations. To do so, he presents two coins bearing the Anabaptist cross and so forces his counterpart to fight by his side.

**EQUIPMENT:** Forbidden oils (Styx or Acheron)

MEN ARE SO NAIVE
AND SO DOMINATED BY PRESENT NECESSITIES,
THAT A DECEIVER WILL ALWAYS FIND SOMEONE
WHO'LL LET HIMSELF BE DECEIVED.

[MACHIAVELLI]

# POTENTIALS

## FISHERMANS BLOOD

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

When the Jehammedans see the Anabaptists, they laugh and shout, "Fisherman's child! Fisherman's child!" How very clever. The Anabaptist only answers, "If you hit us, don't we bleed, as well?" Still laughing, they nod. The Anabaptist grins, "But if we bleed, don't we rip you apart?"

If the Anabaptist has taken more than 50% of his total Flesh Wounds+Trauma, he frenzies until the end of the combat. He has no restriction on the number of Ego Points that can be spent, but can no longer make Active Defense rolls. The Potential Fishermans Blood has only one level and can't be upgraded.

## KILLING JOKE

The enemy raises his spear, expecting the blade to come crashing down on him. But the Anabaptist whirls his sword around, pushing into his enemy and hitting him over the head with the pommel. The Killing Joke is a special sword attack against an unarmored vital body part of an enemy such as the head, chest, or abdomen.

The Anabaptist makes an Attack roll at -5D, with the penalty reduced by 1D per Potential level. The Anabaptist twists his sword and hits with the pommel or crossguard. If the attack succeeds, the opponent immediately loses all Ego Points and falls unconscious. If the attack fails, the Anabaptist is unbalanced and is treated as unarmed for (1) Combat Round, he may not attack until he has recovered.

## PNEUMA

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

If the wound is deep enough, more than just blood and gore gushes from the body. Their flesh separates from their soul, and pure godly Pneuma seeps from the rotten body. Only a small step towards Paradise, but the Anabaptist feels it strengthening, energizing and uplifting him.

If the Anabaptist deals (5) Damage or more in a single attack, he recovers (1) Ego Point instantly. The Damage threshold is lowered by (1) per Potential level.

## REALM OF EMANATIONS

**PREREQUISITE:** PSY+Faith 8

The Anabaptist's faith is a star burning in the darkness. But wherever its light shines, it reveals rotten lumps of blackness, the primal fear, the Psychonauts, writhing bodies in breeding cusps, terrible images filling his mind's eye. The nights are the worst. The Anabaptist falls asleep as if trapped in a pit of thick, black tar. But the nightmares can't hurt him during the day.

The Dushani suggestions don't take hold, the Pheromancer's intoxicating scent fails to sway his mind, the confusing kaleidoscopes of the Psychokinetics splinter like thin glass before the Anabaptist's scrutinizing eyes. If the Anabaptist defends against a psychonautic Phenomenon and manages to roll at least (1) Trigger, he rolls an additional number of dice equal to the Potential level. The highest dice roll is added directly as Successes to his Defense roll. For example, if he rolls 1, 4, and 5 at level 3, he gets an additional (5) Successes.

## TORCHBEARER

**PREREQUISITE:** At least Elysian or Furor

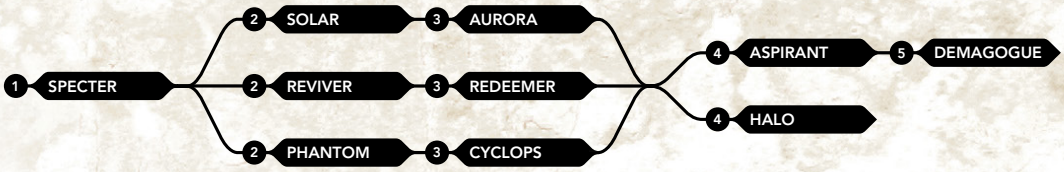
His proximity to the enemy has unhinged the Anabaptist's senses. He feels the corruption all around with the precision that a Mollusk could never hope to reach.

His mind lifts Psychonauts, Leperos and spore fields from the murky darkness into the blinding light. When attempting to find Aberrants and their spawn, he adds +1D per Potential level to INS+Perception.

## ZEALOT

Through austerity, daily meditation, and gallons of blessed water, the Anabaptist cleanses his body, fighting his carnality and freeing the Pneuma within. On the battlefield, his body is a shield, the pain only an indicator of damage taken, but no longer a problem.

All Trauma penalties are reduced by (1) per Potential level.




## 1- SPECTER

**PREREQUISITE:** Born into darkness
**RESULT:** Very good hearing: if he actively listens, or if someone tries to sneak up on him, the Specter gets +2D on INS+Perception. In bright sunlight, Palers have -1D to Attack and Active Defense rolls.
**EQUIPMENT:** Grim sun (talisman, +1D to Mental Defense)

## 2 - SOLAR

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Engineering 5; AGI+Crafting 5; Resources 1; Secrets 2
**RESULT:** The Solar spends a lot of time under the searing bright sun—and gets used to it. The penalty on Attack and Active Defense disappears.
**EQUIPMENT:** Sun Disc (Arbiter, level 1); electronics tools

## 3 - AURORA

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Engineering 8; AGI+Crafting 8; Resources 3; Secrets 4
**RESULT:** The Aurora controls the bunker's Memetics programs, makes the Getrell avatar say her own words. She controls the defense mechanisms of the facility up to the level of her Sun Disc. However, she also loses something: her faith. If the Aurora was religious, she now changes from Faith to Willpower: the Faith level becomes her new Willpower level.
**EQUIPMENT:** Sun Disc (Arbiter, level 2)

## 2 - REVIVER

**PREREQUISITE:** INS+Survival 4; PSY+Cunning 6; Network 3
**RESULT:** Like a Solar, the Reviver gets used to daylight: the penalty disappears. The Reviver gathers clues regarding bunkers and other RG facilities, and the Scrappers know that, too. Their Scavengers like the Revivers and help them get into bunkers, hoping for a share.
**EQUIPMENT:** Sun Disc (Phaeton, level 1); Sunburst; gold strip (value: 200 CD); submachine gun

## 3 - REDEEMER

**PREREQUISITE:** Sun Disc (Orbital, level 1); has awakened at least one bunker; INS+Orienteering 6; PSY+Deception 8; INT+Artifact Lore 6; Allies 3; Network 4
**RESULT:** The Palers from the bunker the Redeemer cracked adore their savior. They follow him unnoticed and show up whenever he needs help (Allies (+2)). A Sun Disc can be upgraded by 1 level in the awakened bunker.
**EQUIPMENT:** RG Atlas

## 2 - PHANTOM

**PREREQUISITE:** INS+Perception 4; AGI+Projectiles 6; AGI+Stealth 4
**RESULT:** The Phantom accesses the arsenals in the bunkers with (+2) Resources. He trains by fighting under bad visual conditions: his darkness penalty is lowered from -4D to -2D.
**EQUIPMENT:** Muffled submachine gun with bayonet; +1D rounds per month; shock grenade

## 3 - CYCLOPS

**PREREQUISITE:** BOD+Athletics 6; AGI+Projectiles 8; Renown 4
**RESULT:** The Cyclops has perfected his perception of his environment and always knows who's where: this brings a +2D Initiative bonus in dark or poorly lit surroundings. Cyclopes are excellent saboteurs who prefer missions against Chroniclers and Hellvetics. Their equipment is perfectly suited for such endeavors. No Alcove and no Hellvetic outpost is safe from them.
**EQUIPMENT:** +2D rounds per month; Cyclops Eye; Sun Disc (Quantum, level 1); Throwing Pulsor; sesamite

## 4 - ASPIRANT

**PREREQUISITE:** CHA+Expression 10 or CHA+Seduction 10 or PSY+Domination 10; Authority or Renown 5
**RESULT:** At this point, the Aspirant needs to choose one form of demagogy. Does he beguile or disturb? Does

he induce fear or humility? He trains his voice so that he can create confusion and mimic animal sounds. He can perfectly imitate a person's voice if he concentrates on it for at least (5) Rounds. Afterwards, he gets +2D on PSY+Deception when trying to deceive a listener using that voice. The Getrell avatar of his bunker brings a Sun Disc updgrade by 1 level. The Mental Defense against other Aspirants and Demagogues rises by +2D.
**EQUIPMENT: -**

### 5 - DEMAGOGUE

**PREREQUISITE:** INT+Focus 10 or INS+Primal 10; CHA+Leadership 8; Authority or Renown 6
**RESULT:** The Demagogue can project the emotion he has mastered with a +2D bonus onto his counterpart, and additionally use his Authority Background where Palers are concerned.

He himself is immune to the suggestions of other Demagogues. He has trained his vocal chords to the limit. He can imitate any sound, speak with the voices of several people present and project them into a room. He can make guttural and archaic sounds, can create a veritable din and thus confuse enemies. If he uses his voice, he gets +3D to PSY+Deception, PSY+Domination, and CHA+Arts (Singing), and also +3D to PSY+Cunning in the dark.
**EQUIPMENT: -**

### 4 - HALO

**PREREQUISITE:** Rank 3; proof that he has turned his back on the false gods and has found a Sleeper Prophet
**RESULT:** The Paler has chosen a prophet, found him, and pledged his loyalty to him. Here are the five Sleeper Prophets and what they have to offer to a Paler:

**DAIMONDAL:** The curious one. Explores the lower levels of Exalt. His disciples get +2D to INT+Engineering and access to Free Spirit technology.

**TRICE:** The humble one. Trice wears rags and poses as a beggar in settlements. If she is given something, she electronically marks the donor. Her disciples follow that person and watch and learn from him. They help him if he's in need. Trice's motives are unknown and seem confused at best, even to the highest-ranking Halos. She seems to be looking for the good in people to bolster it. Her Palers are the opposite of regular Palers: they get a +2D bonus to INS +Empathy.

**HELIOS:** Also called the burnt one, probably due to his black skin. He commands flying and crawling sensors on the lookout for Sleepers. Those who follow him get a modified level 3 Orbital Sun Disc that gets information from Helios's moving sensors: +4D to INS+Orienteering.

**URIZ:** The hidden one. Mainly active in the Balkhan, he secretly controls several Voivodules and settlements through information and Dinars. Uriz chooses only a few Palers as his Halos and does not allow them to get to know each other. The Palers communicate through a network of informers, passing on the wishes of their Sleeper Prophet. In return, they get Resources (5) for all Cults due to blackmailed Cult members. If a Halo gets in trouble in a settlement influenced by Uriz, it is very probable that an informer lets the local garrison know about the Paler's special status and the charges are dropped.

**ENCEPH:** The chosen one. She appears as a benign and radiant angel but intends to reconfigure Getrell's memetics code to put the Palers at odds with the Sleepers. Her Halos appreciate her cold soul: with modified Arbiter Sun Discs they contaminate the systems of the RG bunkers and enter the cryostasis chambers, break free the remains of the Sleepers that are petrified by nanites, and make weapons from their bones. Enceph's motives are unclear.

ASHES
MAKE EVERYBODY EQUAL.
[LUCIUS ANNAUS SENECA]

# POTENTIALS

## NIGHTMARE

The shadow detaches from the wall, taking on form as it crashes down on the enemy like a wave of blades, cutting and slashing.

The Paler lurks in the shadows, gaining +1D per Potential level to AGI+Stealth. If he wins a Conflict of his AGI+Stealth against his enemy's INS+Perception, his next Attack roll cannot be Actively Defended against. If the attack succeeds, he adds Triggers equal to his Potential level.

## LAMENT

**PREREQUISITE:** Primal

A scream cuts through the silence of the halls like a nail scratching on a blackboard, the sound cutting deep into the minds of everyone who hears it, digging and tearing at their psyche...

The Paler pours all of their fear and anger into one ferocious screech, rolling INS+Primal with a bonus of +1D per Potential level. The result of this roll is the Difficulty against which all unprotected combatants, including the Paler's companions, must roll a Mental Defense against. Those who fail are incapacitated for at least (1) Combat Round. For every (3) Triggers on the Paler's roll, the incapacitation lasts an additional Combat Round. Anyone who wears earplugs or other hearing protection is unaffected.

## ALIAS

The night cools the surface dwellers' burning gaze and veils the Palers' movements. But the day burns their skin, and jumping from shadow to shadow is an undignified way for a servant of the gods to present themselves. Instead, they take on the appearance of the surface dwellers, moving amongst them with their pale skin hidden.

The Alias Potential lets the Paler imitate the movements of the surface dwellers. He drifts with the current of the ignorant ones. Scrutinizing gazes slide off the smooth surface of his normality. He gets +1D per Potential level to PSY+Deception when trying to hide his true colors.

## MIDNIGHT SUN

**PREREQUISITE:** Focus

The mist hides the enemy, the night devours all colour, dust stings the sensitive eyes. The image on the retina is so often deceptive, leading us to believe we're safe while danger lurks out of sight. Some Palers simple forego their sight, perceiving their environment by the sounds cascading around them, and feeling every movement as air currents drifting on their skin.

All penalties due to poor visual conditions, blindness, or darkness are reduced by (1) per Potential level.

## CHOSEN

**PREREQUISITE:** Halo

The Sleeper Prophet walks amongst his Halos. They all look so similar, blending into a featureless mass. That's acceptable. That one there, however, stands out.

The Sleeper Prophet hesitates, briefly focusing his eyes and blessing the Halo with his gaze. This Halo has excelled and shall be rewarded.

With every Potential level, the Sleeper Prophet's recognition of the Halo rises and brings a bonus equal to the Potential level to the Authority and Secrets Backgrounds.

## SUGGESTOR

**PREREQUISITE:** Demagogue

The voice in his head whispers urges and orders, while dispensing flattery and compliments. It is family, love, passion, and burning pain when it isn't obeyed. It is a worm, burrowing into the mind of the target, formed by the words of a Demagogue.

If the Demagogue can sneak up to an unsuspecting victim, by rolling AGI+Stealth against the victim's INS+Perception, he can whisper strange thoughts to that person. The victim hears these whispers as their own voice, whispering inside their mind.

The victim is pushed into a fight for control, the Demagogue gains +2D per Potential level to put an opinion into the victim's mind by rolling CHA+Negotiation against the target's Mental Defense.

THOSE WHO ESCAPE HELL

HOWEVER NEVER TALK ABOUT IT.

AND NOTHING MUCH BOTHERS THEM AFTER THAT.

[BUKOWSKI]

# COMMON POTENTIALS

## ASCETICISM

The character survives on lichen and beetles for days, chews leather strips and licks dew from stones. He feels hunger and thirst, but he doesn't suffer from them. Any food he does find is devoured, regardless of taste or preference. His stomach can handle almost anything, thankful for having any food at all.

The character can survive for a long time without food and water. He may skip (1) meal per Potential level without penalties.

## ETHER CALL

Beyond the world of the audible, the ether trembles with the songs of the Chakras and detached, fluttering brain waves. Those infested with Sepsis push open the gate to this other world, letting their emotions reach into the Ether as they take in the vibrations and caress the intoxication.

Those who escape from the twisting, chaotic currents can read the ether like a shaman reads the clouds. Nothing is obvious, but there are patterns. A character with this Potential must have a Spore Infestation of at least (5) points to feel the presence of other spore-infested people and Psychonauts. This brings advantages in combat or for INS+Perception rolls: he gets +1D per Potential level for every conflict with an opponent who is also spore infested.

## MOVING MOUNTAINS

When the obstacles seem insurmountable and courage is fading, the character pushes beyond normal limits, digging deep into his reserves of inner strength to master first himself, and then the challenge confronting him.

In a desperate situation, the character can add (1) Success per Potential level to a single Action roll. This can only be done once every (3) days.

## ELEPHANT SKIN

Sandstorms and cold have eroded and tanned the skin, the flesh has torn a hundred times and scabbed to tough scar tissue. It's not a pretty sight, but it's also hard to cut with a knife.

The tough, battered skin acts as natural protection against attacks for the character. They gain (1) additional point of Armor per Potential level. However, their skin is worn and scarred, and the character takes a 1D penalty to CHA+Seduction per Potential level.

## BRAINWAVE

Questions swirl inside his mind, riddles and mysteries battling back and forth in a convoluted jungle of musing and contemplating. It seems like nothing can break the cycle of confusion, until a brainwave shines a path of light into the thicket and reveals a possible solution.
Even in the most difficult of scenarios, with the Brainwave Potential a character always has a chance. Once per day, he may add +1D per Potential level to any INT roll.

## DANGER SENSE

Everything is a threat. Danger could be hiding in every shadow. The character can never relax, too worried about possible attack. He acts skittish, flinching away from friendly gestures, tense and easily agitated. However, these qualities also make him a reliable guard, for these reflexes are just as sharp when there really is danger lurking over the horizon...

When danger threatens the character, he gains +1D per

Potential level to INS+Perception rolls: it'll be a difficult task to surprise him.

## SLEEK

The character contorts himself, stretching his joints back on themselves as he twists into more and more painful looking poses. The crowd looks on, yelling encouragement and showering him with applause. Little do they know these skills were learned for much more sinister purposes.

If an opponent locks the character in a grapple, or he is stuck, bound or chained, he can twist his body in an almost unnatural fashion to escape. He adds +1D per Potential level to any Action roll to get free.

## COULD BE WORSE

Bruises fade away, cuts heal over to leave only scars, and even bones can be fixed with the right skills. Pain is a tool to protect people, not hinder their survival. The character has learned to recognise pain, but refuses to give into it, fighting on through even the worst injuries.

All Trauma penalties are reduced by (1) per Potential level.

## MARATHON

Keep going. One step after another. Keep going. The body is a machine, and the character knows how to push that machine far beyond its normal limits. The machine never stops, forced onwards until it reaches its destination.

The character has the stamina of a hunting Gendo: he simply does not tire when running. He gets +1D bonus per Potential level for all BOD+Stamina rolls related to running.

## UNYIELDING

**PREREQUISITE:** Willpower

Muscles can be trained, becoming stronger, harder, better able to take punishment. What is the mind but just another muscle, steeled against attacks through willpower and inner peace.

The character may counter a mental attack through sheer force of will once per Conflict, and adds +1D per Potential level to his Mental Defense when doing so.

## NUMBER CRUNCHER

**PREREQUISITE:** INT 4

The world is a complex matrix of relations, logical interactions and intricate mathematics. The character has gained some insight into this layer of the world, and sees the patterns in everything, boiling it down to simple logic and numbers.

The character adds +1D per Potential level to Action rolls related to solving any problem while using mathematics or logic.

# FINAL TOUCHES

The character can now be called by his name, Culture, Concept, and Cult determined his origin, his perspective on life, and his goals. The Player has determined Attributes and Skills, spent points on Backgrounds, and determined the rank within the Cult. The Potential has been chosen.

The character sheet is almost complete. Now it's time to fill in the final touches.

**EXAMPLE:** Chris browses the Chronicler ranks. Monitor starts as a Bit. That is simple, for a Bit has no prerequisites. At this rank, Monitor gets his barcode tattooed to his forehead. At this point, there's no way back for the young Chronicler. Chris does not yet need to write down the equipment item "robe" because he knows that something better will come along. The next rank is Agent. As prerequisite, it has Artifact Lore (5).

Chris looks at the character sheet and sees that Monitor's INT (3) and Artifact Lore (3) add up to an Ability score of (6). That is enough, so Monitor rises to Agent. The equipment looks good, and Chris notes the Vocoder under weapons, the Chronicler's mask and the cape under Armor. He has no stats yet; they will come later.

The next rank would be Mediator, but it would require Monitor to know more about artifacts. Chris already saw that coming: Monitor is exactly one point short and will not get his Chronicler's suit before he is a Mediator. For now, the Nova Potential is obsolete. Chris could ask his Game Master if he may change the Potential again, and the Game Master would surely agree. Instead, Chris decides to raise his Artifact Lore as soon as possible and raise Monitor to Mediator.

## EGO

Ego is fueled by INT+Focus or INS+Primal. The Ego Point maximum is Attribute+Skill x2. In combat, the character will lose Ego, but can recover the lost points by inhaling Burn spores, using certain Potentials, or acting according to his Concept, so do not permanently mark the boxes, but rather pencil in all boxes to indicate your Ego score. This way, you can mark lost points with a pencil and later erase those marks.

Either INT+Focus or INS+Primal
Ego Point max= INT+Focus x2 or INS+Primal x2

## PHYSICAL CONDITION

A character suffers from spore infestation and receives Flesh Wounds and Trauma, and recovers, so just like with the Ego Points you should strike or blacken out the excess boxes for the respective scores.

## SPORE INFESTATION

This tells you how much contamination from the Sepsis the organism can take before it becomes a Leperos and thus devolves into a carrier of the Seed. The spore max equals PSY+Faith/Willpower x2. You will discover more about spore infestation and its results in Chapter 9, "Burn".

Spore max = PSY+Faith/Willpower x 2

## FLESH WOUNDS

In combat, characters get hurt. Weapons or environmental factors cause Damage points that are noted on the character sheet as Flesh Wounds. Their max is BOD+Toughness x2.

Flesh Wounds max = BOD+Toughness x 2

## TRAUMA

When the body cannot take anymore, when Flesh Wounds cross the bearable threshold, the character takes Trauma. He's only a few points away from death. The Trauma max is the sum of the Attributes BOD and PSY.

Trauma max = BOD+PSY

**EXAMPLE:** Chris has calculated his condition and has written it down on the character sheet. In BOD+Toughness, Monitor has a score of (5), which means he cannot stand more than (10) Flesh Wounds. Taking a look at the weapons table, Chris sees that Monitor will be able to stand a blow of the club and won't drop dead even after being hit by a musket—once. Another hit would be the end of him, so for a while, Monitor will not enter the fray, but instead harass his enemies from a distance with his Vocoder.

## DEFENSE

In combat, there is a difference between Active and Passive Defense. When a fighter deliberately confronts his enemy, Active Defense is used: the Player rolls the dice and enters a Conflict with the attacker. If the fighter is surprised or is already in a fight with another opponent, he cannot Defend Actively. He will have to rely on his Passive Defense, which is not represented by an Action roll, but by a fixed score. This score has a base value (1) and usually does not change, but Potentials, special equipment, or the environment can raise it. Active Defense will be explained in Chapter 7, "Battle."

Passive defense = (1)

## DINARS AND CHRONICLER DRAFTS

Characters when they are created have already earned a fistful of Chronicler Drafts or a purse full of Dinars. Their alleged fortune depends on several factors: their rank, the Resources Background, and, especially, their Cult. First the Player calculates a base value by adding rank level and Resources.

Base value = rank level + Resources

This score now has to be multiplied by a specific factor for the respective Cults, which you can find in the table below.

**EXAMPLE:** Monitor is an Agent, so he has rank level 2. He also has Resources (1). According to the table, the factor for Chroniclers is x128. A fairly average value. That means 3 x 128 = 384 Chronicler Drafts! Chris writes them down.

| Cult | Factor |
|---|---|
| Spitalians | x100 CD |
| Chroniclers | x128 CD |
| Hellvetics | x50 CD |
| Judges | x50 CD |
| Scrappers | x50 CD |
| Clanners | x50 CD |
| Neolibyans | x1000 Dinars |
| Scourgers | x100 Dinars |
| Anubians | x100 Dinars |
| Jehammedans | x100 CD |
| Apocalyptics | x200 CD |
| Anabaptists | x50 CD |
| Palers | x50 CD |

## EQUIPMENT

Rising through the ranks, the character has been able to get his hands on some Cult equipment. Now the Player can use his money to buy additional equipment from the equipment list (see Chapter 8, "Bazaar"). It will never be so easy again: once the character sets out into the world, he is subject to market customs. In many settlements, high-tech weapons or devices are sold for absurd prices, and ammunition is always scarce.

**EXAMPLE:** Monitor is not really rich. There's no way he can afford weapons. But there are some cheaper items under survival equipment. The water filter seems important, as does a blanket and matches. That's 155 CD. Chris notes the equipment on the character sheet.

## WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Much of the equipment on the list possesses stats like Damage, Distance, etc. For more on the meaning of these stats and how to use them, see Chapter 7, "Battle".

**EXAMPLE:** Chris has looked up the rules for armor in the "Battle" chapter. It is subtracted directly from the Damage. Good. It's not that important for Monitor, whose only protection is a cloak, but it is still useful. Chris now has to copy the traits of the Vocoder and the armor onto Monitor's character sheet.

The Vocoder is described at length in the "Cult Equipment" section beginning on page 130, and Chris finds its stats in the "Bazaar" chapter under "Sonic Weapons". The relevant stats here are Damage and Distance. The "Thunder Strike" Quality is clear and does not have to be written down, and he can also bear in mind "Area Damage (45°)". He takes a closer look at the armor: the cloak is not on the armor list. The list rather contains categories. The cloak is similar to a "Fur Cape" and only offers armor (1). Noted. That's it. Monitor dons his mask, his skull disappears in the shadow of the cloak.

The amplifiers in the Vocoder hum. He is ready.

### EXCHANGE RATE

The exchange rate between Chronicler Drafts and Dinars is set by the Chroniclers and Neolibyans as 1:1. Every value in the equipment list given in Chronicler Drafts (CD) can be used for the African market, too, without doing any math.

# EXPERIENCE AND PROGRESSION

## EXPERIENCE

During their travels, characters get a feel for the world, recognize dangers, and perfect their survival techniques and combat style. They raise their Attributes and Skills and master new Potentials. The currency to buy all this is Experience.

At the end of every gaming session, the GM awards Experience Points (XP) for mastered challenges and great feats, but also for instructive defeats. For suggestions concerning this see "Adventure Creation" on page 320.

The Players should note the XP on their character sheet and scratch them out if they are using them to raise a trait.

## RAISING ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

Every raise happens level by level: to raise a Skill from level (2) to (5), you must also buy levels (3) and (4). The XP cost for the next level is its numeric value multiplied by a fixed factor. This factor depends on the respective trait: Attribute, Skill, or Potential.

The tendency of the character also plays a role. If he is dedicated to the Focus Skill, it is cheaper for him to raise the preferred Attributes Intellect, Agility, and Psyche, as well as all Skills linked to them. As a Primal character, the same bonus applies to Body, Charisma, and Instinct. Preferred Attributes are cheaper by a factor of (-2), and Skills by a factor of (-1).

Focus-Attributes: INT, AGI, PSY
Primal-Attributes: BOD, CHA, INS

| XP-Cost | |
|---|---|
| Attribute | New Value x 12 XP |
| Preferred Attribute | New Value x 10 XP |
| Skill | New Value x 5 XP |
| Preferred Skill | New Value x 4 XP |

Once the XP cost is paid from the Experience pool, the new level is noted on the character sheet. (6) is the highest value for Attributes and Skills alike.

**EXAMPLE:** The Chronicler Monitor wants to become a Mediator, but he lacks (1) point in Artifact Lore. He could raise the Intellect Attribute or the Skill itself to get there. He has three points in both. Monitor has chosen Primal, so Intellect is not a preferred Attribute. To raise Intellect from (3) to (4), he would have to spend (48) XP (12 x 4). He does not have that much. The Skill itself is cheaper: to raise it from level (3) to (4), Monitor would have to spend (20) XP (5 x 4). This is much more achievable.

## RISING IN RANK

With new Skill levels, it is sometimes possible to rise in rank. If he meets the prerequisites, the character can quietly level up in his Cult's headquarters or another appropriate place. The Player notes the new equipment and the other effects, and the game continues.

However, the Game Master should try to incorporate the process of leveling up into the game: one last little trial, a final obstacle to overcome, an unpopular opponent, a ceremony to remember. The character gains this level only once, they have earned a bit of a celebration of their achievements.

## POTENTIALS

Using Potentials, a character becomes more specialized. The more Potentials and Potential levels he gets, the harder it becomes for him to learn new levels. Every new level costs more XP than the last one, regardless of whether the Potential was just chosen or if it is being upgraded. Unlike with Skills, when raising Potentials, all Potential levels are added: 1 more is added for the new level and the result is multiplied by 10.

XP cost for raising Potentials = added level of all Potentials x 10

**EXAMPLE:** Monitor has been around a while. He has neglected his Nova Potential, but he has additionally acquired Moving Mountains. Now he wants to raise Moving Mountains to level 2. Nova is on level 1, and so is Moving Mountains—that makes 2 Potential levels. Now another 1 is added, and he has 3. Altogether, he must invest 3 x 10 = (30) XP into this increase.

NAME: MONITOR
AGE: 28
RANK: AGENT
EXPERIENCE:

# DEGENESIS
CHARACTERSHEET

SEX: ♂
HEIGHT: 1.98 m
WEIGHT: 102 kg
DINAR / CHANGE: 229 CD

CULTURE

BORCA

CONCEPT

THE PROTECTOR

CULT

215

CHRONICLER

> BODY
- ATHLETICS
- BRAWL
- FORCE
- MELEE
- STAMINA
- TOUGHNESS

> AGILITY
- CRAFTING
- DEXTERITY
- NAVIGATION
- MOBILITY
- PROJECTILES
- STEALTH

> CHARISMA
- ARTS
- CONDUCT
- EXPRESSION
- LEADERSHIP
- NEGOTIATION
- SEDUCTION

> INTELLECT
- ARTEFACT LORE
- ENGINEERING
- ~~FOCUS~~
- LEGENDS
- MEDICINE
- SCIENCE

> PSYCHE
- CUNNING
- DECEPTION
- DOMINATION
- ~~FAITH~~
- REACTION
- WILLPOWER

> INSTINCT
- EMPATHY
- ORIENTEERING
- PERCEPTION
- PRIMAL
- SURVIVAL
- TAMING

> ORIGINS
- ALLIES
- AUTHORITY
- NETWORK
- RENOWN
- RESOURCES
- SECRETS

EGO

SPORE INFESTATIONS

FLESHWOUNDS

TRAUMA

> POTENTIALS
- NOVA
- MOVING MOUNTAINS

WEAPONS

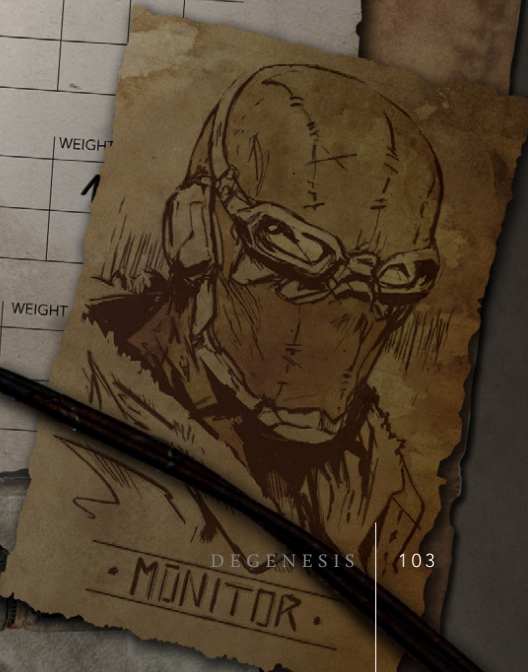
| WEAPONS | HANDLING | DISTANCE ( - / - 4D ) | DAMAGE | MAG | PROPERTIES | WEIGHT | TECH | SLOTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VOCODER | | 10 m | 1+EGO | / | THUNDERSTRIKE AREADAMAGE 45° | 1 | IV | / |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

ARMOR

| ARMOR | ARMOR VALUE | PROPERTIES | WEIGHT |
|---|---|---|---|
| ROBE | / | / | 1 |
| | | | |

EQUIPMENT

| EQUIPMENT | WEIGHT |
|---|---|
| WATERFILTER | / |
| BLANKET | 2 |
| MATCHES | / |



CHAPTER
BATTLE

## DEATH IS PART OF THE GAME

At the heart of the Protectorate, the Clans sever Justitian's veins of life. In Eastern Borca, wild packs extinguish Praha from the map. In Hybrispania, Scourgers and Guerreros are constantly at each others' throats. Peace is nothing but a faraway dream. Violence and armed conflicts are commonplace.

KatharSys offers rules to simulate combat between the characters and their opponents in a quick and exciting fashion.

## A QUICK GLANCE

In combat, some Skills and traits are of particular importance.

### COMBAT SKILLS AND THEIR COUNTERPARTS

For most physical or mental attacks, a combat Skill is necessary. Under certain circumstances, the attacked can counter with an appropriate Skill.

BOD+Brawl vs. BOD+Brawl,
BOD+Melee, or AGI+Mobility
BOD+Melee vs. BOD+Brawl,
BOD+Melee, or AGI+Mobility
AGI+Projectiles vs. AGI+Mobility
Mental or social vs. PSY+Faith or PSY+Willpower

### PASSIVE DEFENSE

Passive Defense is a number telling you how hard it is to hit someone who is not using an Active Defense. The Passive Defense rating is rarely higher than (1).

### CONDITION

Blood will flow. The Flesh Wounds maximum tells you how much Damage a fighter can take before receiving Trauma.

Flesh Wounds maximum = (BOD+Toughness) x 2
Trauma maximum = BOD+PSY

### EGO

Ego Points can be determined by INT+Focus x2 or INS+Primal x2. With these points, a fighter can buy advantages in a battle, but they also reflect his mental condition: if the Ego Points drop to (0), the fighter is exhausted and falls to his knees.

Out of combat, Ego Points can be spent to gain extra dice on Action rolls when something crucial is at stake, or when something has to be achieved under pressure. In combat, Ego Points are spent when determining Initiative.

## VISUALIZATION

Role-playing is in the heads of the Players and the Game Master. Their imaginations shape the world and their characters. In combat or regarding tactical considerations, though, some prefer to rely on something tangible. They mark their characters' positions on a map provided by the Game Master, or use markers or miniatures. Hex maps or ones with squares both help when gauging distances, and they facilitate tactical formations.

Others do not use these. These Players have more freedom, as combat is less a simulation and more of an interactive audio play full of surprises and quick decisions, however care must be made to ensure that all participants have the same or a similar mental image of a location.

Both playing styles have their merits. Game Masters and Players should decide which they prefer.

## THE BATTLE

Combat consists of consecutive Combat Rounds until one side is worn down, gives up, or flees. A Combat Round encompasses a period of time of 4 seconds and starts with the Initiative phase, during which the turn order and the number of Actions per combatant are determined. Every participant acts at least once. At the gaming table, this usually takes a few minutes per Player.

A new Combat Round begins.
Initiative: turn order is determined.
All participants act in the determined order.
Restart with next Combat Round

## INITIATIVE

All participants can spend up to (3) Ego Points openly or covertly. This maximum can be raised by Potentials. The Players subtract the points spent from their character's pool and add them to the Initiative and this Combat Round's first Action roll as bonus dice. If one side was surprised or ambushed, it cannot spend Ego Points.

After all participants who want to do so have spent their points, everyone rolls PSY+Reaction. This is the Initiative roll. All bonuses (e. g., the Ego Points spent) and penalties (e. g., injuries) are taken into account. The number of Successes is the Initiative score. It determines when the combatant attacks or acts otherwise. If someone rolls no Successes, then the result is noted as Initiative 0, and the combatant will take a turn after everyone else. The Triggers determine how fast he acts when it's his turn: for every (2) Triggers, he gets an additional Action when it's his turn. These additional Actions are not supported by the Ego Points spent.

Spend up to (3) Ego Points
They add +D to first Action
and +D to Initiative roll

Initiative
Roll on PSY+Reaction + additional influences
Initiative score = number of Successes
No Success: (1) Action with Initiative 0
Number of Actions: (1) + (1) Action per (2) Triggers

## ONE AFTER THE OTHER

The fighter with the highest Initiative score goes first.

Next is the fighter with the second-highest score, and so on until everyone has had their turn.

In the event of a tie, both fighters act at once. In this case, Players may decide who goes first.

In the event of a tie between a Player character and an NPC, the Player announces his Action first. Injuries or combat effects resulting from this turn will only modify the traits at the end of the turn.

Turn order:
Fighter with the highest Initiative score goes first.
Tie: Actions happen at the same time

**EXAMPLE:** The dust cloud on the slope above is visible for hundreds of meters, but only now does Preservist Falberg recognize that this is not an avalanche but a pack of Usudis on all fours, jumping, running and stumbling down to the valley and thus towards the group. He roars, "Usuuudis!" and looks back towards his comrades.

Vedran is a Hellvetic Spotter: he has orders from the Alpine Fortress to explore the valleys and report back on enemy Clans. He will not return empty-handed, if he returns at all.

Monitor is a Chronicler, not made for fighting. He should hang back a little.

Finally, there is Kum the Rat, a Paler Reviver. For a handful of gold strips, he has led the group into the wasteland. More than 30 winters ago, a group of Hellvetics was supposed to have found a sealed entrance that they couldn't open somewhere around here.

All group members have seen the attackers. It's too late to flee: these Clanners are too fast.

Vedran and Falberg step in front of Monitor, and Kum stands a little to the side, not knowing what to do, blinking nervously.

The Usudis are a little over 30 paces away.

Initiative! No one spends Ego Points. The Usudis are still far away, and the shooters in the group can cull the enemy ranks from a distance. The Ego Points will be used later when the going gets tough.

Vedran's Player rolls (5) Successes and (2) Triggers—he gets an additional Action! Falberg has (2) Successes, as does Monitor. Kum has a broken rib from an earlier conflict, resulting in (1) Trauma, and thus has -1D on his Action roll. Still, he has (3) Successes.

The Usudis are still too far away, so the Game Master decides to determine their Initiative by one general roll and has (3) Successes as well.

So the turn order is:
5: Vedran (2 Actions)
3: Kum, Usudi pack
2: Falberg and Monitor

## IT'S YOUR TURN!

Every fighter can act at least once per Combat Round. If he has gained additional Actions by rolling Triggers on his Initiative roll, he takes them immediately after the first Action.

There are various Actions possible.

### FREE ACTIONS

The characters can shout warnings to each other, utter war cries, taunt the enemy, or drop an empty rifle. If something requires no effort on the fighter's part and takes basically no time, it does not use up an Action.

### MOVEMENT

Fighters step from cover, follow a retreating opponent, or sprint through a hail of bullets. Almost every turn, there is some movement. Movement does not use up an Action.

Before acting, a character announces if they want to move more than (2) meters (m): if so, he has a -2D penalty to all Action rolls for the rest of the turn, but it's also harder for his enemies to hit him as his Passive Defense rises by (1). Per Round, his maximum movement is BOD+Athletics meters. Movement can be split between Actions in any combination, with the penalties and bonuses from the start of the Round. However, the maximum must not exceed BOD+Athletics meters.

Moving more than (2) m in one Round:
Penalty of -2D on Actions,
Passive Defense (+1)
Movement can be split between Actions
Maximum distance: BOD+Athletics

## POTENTIALLY DEADLY

When two enemies attack each other, anything is possible: a marksman is dropped by a sword blow, a legendary pit fighter is killed by a pack of farmers with pikes. If you fight, you can die. If you fight without any tactics or act thoughtlessly, you most certainly will. In KatharSys, weapons are violent tools that kill with 2 or 3 hits. Honorable combat is dangerous and seldom rewarded. If you want to survive, hit as hard as you can—or run.

## ATTACK

In battle, there are several ways to vanquish your opponent—and not all of them draw blood. All combat maneuvers rely on a Skill: the success of blows and kicks, even if augmented by brass knuckles or Blade Bracelets, is determined by BOD+Brawl. Swords, a Judge's hammer, clubs, and other melee weapons rely on BOD+Melee. Firearms, crossbows, bows, and missiles—in other words, all ranged weapons—are fired using AGI+Projectiles. These attacks are physical. They hurt and eventually kill.

The exceptions are weapons like the Shocker and Vocoder, which destroy psychological stability. For a detailed description of an Attack, see below.

Weapon Skills:
BOD+Brawl
BOD+Melee
AGI+Projectiles

## ACTIVE DEFENSE

The fighter forgoes (1) Action and instead prepares to be attacked: slightly hunched, always ready to spring or duck for cover. Taking up a single Action, Active Defense is usually used outside one's own turn, as soon as the fighter is being attacked. If he uses Active Defense before his own turn, he loses (1) of the Actions he could have taken otherwise in his turn. If it was his only or last Action, he can only take free Actions afterwards.

If the fighter uses Active Defense, he enters a Conflict with the attacker. If he's being shot at then he uses AGI+Mobility, in melee he defends with BOD+Melee or BOD+Brawl, depending on his weapon. He can also try and dodge with AGI+Mobility. If he wins or ties, he's not hit.

Since Active Defense counts as an Action, the fighter cannot use an Active Defense anymore once he has used up all of his Actions. He uses his Passive Defense against all further attacks.

Active Defense counts as an Action
used outside of own turn

Dodge (Melee / ranged combat)
AGI+Mobility

Parry / Block in Melee
BOD+Melee or BOD+Brawl

In a melee, Active Defenses can result in a counterattack if a combat Skill was used: if he wins the Conflict and manages to roll (3) Triggers, he successfully counters with his weapon and automatically hits the attacker.

Counter
Blocked with combat Skill in melee
Successful Active Defense with 3T
= attacker is hurt

## RELOAD

An empty weapon must be reloaded. This usually takes an Action. Some weapons, like those with the Quality "muzzleloading," take longer before they're ready to be fired again.

Reload: one Action unless stated otherwise

## CHANGING WEAPONS

Dropping a weapon does not use up an Action. It usually doesn't take long to grab a new one, a bottle, or a rock, but the related Action, whether a Defense or an Attack, is at -2D.

As long as a fighter has his weapons on his belt, in a holster, or otherwise at hand, he can use them without losing time. But if he has to rummage around in his backpack for them, he uses up precious Actions.

Change weapon: -2D for one Action

## INTERACTIONS

A Paler tries to open a portal into a bunker with his Sun Disc while his comrades watch his back, a Hellvetic pries open the jaws of a bear trap to free himself and rejoin combat, Spore Beast after Spore Beast breaks through the gossamer but the buggy's engine has died, an Apocalyptic pushes against a shelf and drops it onto the oncoming Judges, slowing them down for a short time.

The environment a battle takes place in is always important. The characters can benefit from it in combat, using it to their advantage or gaining some precious seconds from it in which to flee. The possibilities are far too numerous to list here. The rule of thumb is: if something costs the character a few seconds of attention, it is an Action.

## SPECIAL ACTIONS

Demagogues use the power of voice to intimidate their enemies. Hellvetics spur on their comrades and lead them to victory through tactical feats. Isaaki can direct their companions' fury towards the enemy. Cult ranks and Potentials offer many additional Actions, some of which bring bonuses, while others allow for special attacks. The rules are specialized and can be found in the Potential and rank descriptions.

## WEAPONS

Whether it's a rock, a shard of glass, a fist, or a Soul Burner, anything that can be used against an enemy counts as a weapon. Every weapon can be expressed in numbers in KatharSys, and those numbers are summarized in the weapon profile. The categories are listed below.

### NAME

"Machine gun", "spear", "Trailblazer": the name is used to discern the various types of weapon.

### HANDLING

How comfortably does a weapon lie in the hand? How quickly can it be pointed at a target? Is the hammer's shaft perfectly balanced, or is it top-heavy like a club?

The Handling is a bonus or penalty based on the craftsmanship and accuracy of a weapon. It is added to or subtracted from every Attack and Defense roll.

Handling: +/- D to Attack and Defense roll

### DISTANCE

The farther away the target is, the harder it is to hit. In a melee, the target only has to leave the weapon's range and it will not be hit.

The Effective Distance is measured in meters: this is the maximum Distance for an Attack with this weapon. For melee weapons, the Effective Distance equals the range. The second Distance score in the weapon profile is for the range of the "Far shot". The name says it all: this score only makes sense for ranged weapons. It is the maximum Distance at which a shot can hit. If the target is outside the Effective Distance but has not yet left the Far shot zone, it is hard to hit: the shooter has -4D to the Attack. Hitting anything even farther away is down to luck. Those who want to try anyway must do so with a penalty of -8D.

Effective Distance: no Distance penalty on the attack
Far shot: -4D to Attack roll
Extreme shot: -8D

### DAMAGE

A successful Attack results in Damage. For most weapons, this is a set score. For weapons using physical force, you will find "F", "F/2" or "F/3". The F stands for BOD+Force, and this sum is divided by the respective number. A weapon with "2+F/2" in the hands of a Character with BOD+Force (8) would cause 2+(8/2)=2+4=(6) Damage.

### MAGAZINE

Projectiles use bullets, bows use arrows, and crossbows use bolts. The number under "Magazine" is the capacity of the weapon or the magazine. On the character sheet, you can additionally enter the number of remaining shots. Every attack uses up 1 shot until they are all gone. The weapon then must be reloaded.

### QUALITIES

The special Qualities of a weapon modify the rules. All Qualities are described at length in Chapter 8, "Bazaar".

### ENCUMBRANCE

A Splayer weighs several kilos and is unwieldy on top of that, the Judgment hammers are even worse. Weak fighters could be hard-pressed to handle them, especially if they wear heavy armor and carry a full backpack. The weight of all that equipment is added and summed up in two groups. What do I carry around in battle? What can I leave behind in case of emergency?

If this sum is lower than BOD+Force, the fighter can carry his equipment without any problems. If the sum is higher, though, he has an penalty to all Action rolls equal to the difference between encumbrance and BOD+Force.

**EXAMPLE:** Monitor has become a Mediator and may finally wear a Chronicler Suit (encumbrance 1). He has equipped it with a Source (encumbrance 2) and Fumor (encumbrance 1). As a weapon, he only uses his Vocoder (encumbrance 1). This adds up to a total encumbrance of 5. He carries the rest of his equipment—blanket, tent, water filter—in a backpack, bringing his total encumbrance to 8. Monitor is not strong. He has BOD (2) and was able to raise his Force to (2) after the last venture. In total, he has an Action Number of (4).

The suit, including equipment and Vocoder, is already 1 above his maximum encumbrance. This means -1D for all combat Actions. If he doesn't drop his backpack before a fight, things look bleak: with a total encumbrance of 8, he's 4 points above his maximum encumbrance, which results in a penalty of -4D.

### SLOTS AND TECH LEVEL

Weapons can be modified. An experienced Scrapper can build a precise weapon from the scrap heap by investing little work. He can balance it, harden the steel, sharpen the blade. To do so, though, he uses up lots of scrap and weapon slots.

The more slots a weapon has, the better it can be augmented. In combat, the slots don't matter. Like any equipment, weapons have a Tech Level. It doesn't affect combat, but for augmentations, the Tech Level is very important.

The rules for augmentations can be found in Chapter 8, "Bazaar".

## ARMOR

Weapons destroy, armor protects. Armor rating directly reduces Damage. Here's an overview of the armor profile.

### NAME

As with weapons, the name helps for identifying armor.

### ARMOR RATING

The most important trait of any armor. The attacker calculates his Damage and subtracts the target's Armor rating. Any excess Damage penetrates and causes Flesh Wounds or Trauma.

Wounds = weapon Damage - Armor rating

### QUALITIES

The Hellvetics step from the Reaper's Blow's infernal flames unscathed, their Harnesses shimmering with heat. A rifle bullet hits the Sleeper's ceramic fiber weave and enters the fabric, but the matrix contained in it disperses the kinetic energy, it feels like nothing more than a slap. Special armor often has special Qualities. Usually, these special Qualities add resistance to a particular kind of Damage to the existing protection.

### ENCUMBRANCE

Armor is much more encumbering than a weapon could ever be. Fighters often have to decide whether the additional protection is worth the encumbrance.

### LAYERING ARMOR

Armor cannot be worn in multiple layers. It is possible though to wear a coat or a cape over your armor. The encumbrance is then added up, but the Armor rating is not. As long as the Armor rating of the main armor equals (1-3), the additional armor increases the overall Armor rating by (+1), no matter how high the actual rating of the additional armor would be. Wearing armor with an Armor rating of at least (4), additional armor has no effect.

### SLOTS AND TECHLEVEL

Armor can also be augmented with upgrades and new features in the same way as weapons. The rules for augmentations can be found in Chapter 8, "Bazaar".

## IN THE ENEMY'S SIGHTS

It's time to get down to the nitty-gritty. It's the fighter's turn: he knows his weapon and will use it any moment now. What does he do next?

### CALCULATE ACTION NUMBER

The Player looks up the Skill relevant for his weapon. In case of doubt, in the weapons list the weapons are arranged by Skill. The Player looks up the Action Number on his character sheet.

He will have to lower or increase this Action Number due to various influences within the next seconds. The Game Master will help him to do so.

## RANKS AND POTENTIALS

Palers have the natural ability to orient themselves in absolute darkness, a Judge can throw himself into an enemy and knock them down, a Spitalian is trained to trigger his weapon's blades inside an enemy's body, and other Cults, ranks, and Potentials also give additional bonuses.

With over 100 ranks and almost 100 Potentials, the Game Master cannot possibly keep track of this for every Player. He has to rely on his Players knowing best what their own characters can do. The Player whose turn it is picks the relevant bonuses and adds them to the Action Number.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Is the fighter half-blind because there is heavy mist? Has he been forced into fighting in the dark?

Various environmental factors lower the Action Number by 1D for a slight disturbance or up to 4D for an extreme disturbance (darkness, standing knee-deep in a swamp) at the Game Master's discretion.

| Phenomenon | Action Number |
|---|---|
| Poor visibility, fog | -1D |
| Moonlit night | -2D |
| Darkness | -4D |

## DISTANCE

If the target is beyond the Effective Distance of a ranged weapon, the attack gets -4D. If the target is beyond the Far shot Distance, the attack is done at -8D. If the target is beyond the Distance of a melee weapon, the attack is impossible.

## ENCUMBRANCE

If the total encumbrance from weapons, armor, and gear is higher than the character's BOD+Force score, then the difference between the two is treated as a general penalty and applied to all Action Numbers, including the Initiative roll.

## HANDLING

The Handling of a weapon brings bonuses or penalties to the Action Number. If the wielder is using two weapons simultaneously, the Handling of both weapons is added to the Action Number

## WOUNDS

Is the fighter badly wounded? For every Trauma point, he takes a penalty of -1D to all of his Action Numbers. The Player is responsible for Trauma being taken into account.

## MOVEMENT

If the fighter moves more than (2) m when it's his turn, he takes a penalty of -2D to his Action Number.

## PREPARED

At first glance, there are many things that are factored into the Action Number. However, some of these can be summed up before the Action roll is needed and used as a starting point for the influences not yet factored in for every attack: as long as the fighter uses the same weapon, the handling remains the same. It's the first thing to be factored into the Action Number. The Encumbrance penalty will only change when the fighter changes his weapon/armor/gear combo. Thus, the penalty can be factored into the attack score. Healing Trauma takes a long time. It can also be factored into a set Action Number. This saves time in combat.

## ATTACK!!

The Action Number has been calculated. The attacker rolls, counts his Successes and Triggers, and informs the Game Master of his result. The Game Master now decides whether the target will use Active or Passive Defense.

### PASSIVE

The Passive Defense can be lowered or increased by various outside factors. If the attacker has at least as many Successes as the Passive Defense score, he hits.

| Influencing factor | Passive Defense |
|---|---|
| Base Defense score | 1 |
| Defender is active and on his feet | +1 |
| Partial cover (including shields) | +1 / var. |
| Complete cover | +4 |
| Defender in motion (more than (2) m in the last Action) | +1 |
| Various bonuses / penalties | +/- |

**EXAMPLE:** The attacking Usudi has a base Passive Defense of (1) (just like almost everybody), is active (+1) and is running towards the group (+1). If the Usudi didn't use an Active Defense, Vedran would have to roll at least (3) Successes.

### ACTIVE DEFENSE

The opponent sacrifices an Action and enters a Conflict. If he gets at least as many Successes as the attacker, he defends against the attack. If he gets more Successes and (3) Triggers in a melee, he manages a counterattack, but only if he has countered with a combat Skill instead of dodging with AGI +Mobility.

**EXAMPLE:** It's Vedran's turn. He aims his stubbed Trailblazer at the attacking Usudis. To shoot the weapon, he uses AGI+Projectiles: Vedran's total is (8). The Handling of his weapon gives neither a bonus nor a penalty, so the Action Number stays at (8). Vedran isn't hurt and the visibility is good, but he has to try a long-distance shot (-4D): the Usudis are almost (30) meters away, and the Effective Distance is (15) m. His Action Number is lowered to (4). He still tries.

## DUAL WIELDING

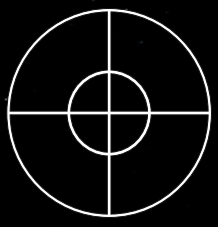
Only real pros and complete imbeciles enter combat with two weapons, one in each hand. To attack with both at once in the same attack, the fighter has to attack at a -4D penalty to his BOD+Melee or BOD+Brawl Skill. He spreads the remaining dice between the two Attack rolls in whatever way he sees fit, with the Handling of each weapon applying seperately to each attack. If the first roll fails, the second also automatically fails. For a defender, each attack has to be dealt with seperately.

**EXAMPLE:**

The Usudis have come in close and force the group into a melee. Falberg's opponent is armed with two bone daggers, probably made from his parents. It's the Usudi's turn to attack: he has 9D BOD+Melee, but the two-handed combat reduces them to 5D. He uses 3D for his first attack, so 2D remain for attacking with the second weapon. Falberg uses an Active Defense. A Conflict arises, and Falberg wins. The Usudi's second attack has also been deflected. However, if it had hit, Falberg would have needed a second Active Defense, and therefore a second Action, to try and deflect the second attack.

## AIMED ATTACK

Sometimes characters stumble upon an enemy's weak spot, like the Spitfire tank of a Furor or the cracked armor plate of an AMSUMO. If the characters want to hit this weak spot, the Game Master raises the Difficulty or assigns the enemy some Successes to his Active Defense—but these both give the same effect. Most of the times, such a hit ignores the armor of the target, but the Game Master can set other effects.



## WOUNDS

An attack or counterattack has been successful: a blade hits iron plates, bullets penetrate neoprene. But does the Damage go through or does the armor absorb it? Not every successful attack causes a wound.

The attacker takes his weapon Damage and adds the Trigger and bonuses from Potentials, if applicable. The armor's Armor rating is subtracted from this Damage total. Whatever remains penetrates into the flesh.

Damage = weapon Damage + Trigger (+ Potentials)
Wounds = Damage - Armor rating

### FLESH WOUNDS

The Damage first counts towards the Flesh Wounds. They are ticked off on the character sheet.

### TRAUMA

Flesh Wounds won't kill you that easily, but if the maximum number of Flesh Wounds is surpassed, the remaining Damage becomes Trauma: bones break, organs are crushed or punctured, veins are sliced. The target starts dying. For every point of Trauma, there is a general penalty of -1D. If Trauma reaches or surpasses its maximum, the character is beyond saving. May he rest in peace.

**EXAMPLE:** Vedran shoots. The Usudi has a Passive Defense of (3) because of his movement. He won't get much more by Actively Defending, especially since running gets him -2D, so the Game Master decides that the Usudi is not Actively Defending but keeps running towards his target. Vedran gets lucky: he hits in spite of the distance, even managing to roll a Trigger.

The stubbed Trailblazer does (11) Damage (+1 Trigger), and the Usudi wears a rusty torn mail shirt, giving him an Armor rating of (2). (10) points of Damage ((12) Damage - (2) armor) go through. The Usudi is torn apart internally: through his BOD+Toughness (4), he can stand (8) Flesh Wounds. The Trailblazer's projectile penetrates the armor, reduces the Flesh Wounds pool to (0), and causes (2) points of Trauma.

## MENTAL ATTACKS

Some ranks and Potentials bring special Skills aimed at mentally shattering the enemy. Such attacks can be countered with PSY+Faith or PSY+Willpower without using up an Action, however actively opposing an ongoing mental effect may cost an Action. If the defense fails, the Damage (+Triggers) is subtracted from the Ego Points.

Mental attack against PSY+Faith or PSY+Willpower
Subtract mental damage from Ego Points

### ABSOLUTE ZERO

If the Ego Points reach or fall under (0), the character breaks down. He becomes fatigued, demoralized, or emotionally unhinged. Only an effort of Willpower or Faith can keep him going now.

At the end of the next Combat Round, he rolls PSY+Faith/Willpower (2). If the roll is successful, his Ego Points rise to (1). This works exactly once. If he is hit again, he may not roll again. He is finished and cannot act. The same is true if his roll fails.

Last effort at (0) Ego Points
PSY+Faith/Willpower (2)
Success: (1) Ego Point

### EGO REGENERATION

Natural Ego Point regeneration is slow. Every day upon waking up, a character recovers (1) Ego Point. If he also role-played his character Concept, he recovers (1) additional Ego Point.

Every 24 hrs = (+1) Ego Point
Role playing the Concept = +1D Ego Points

In combat, that's not a lot of help. When in need of a quick Ego boost, Burn is the method of choice. Some Cults also have developed Potentials to emotionally and morally stabilize their warriors. For example, the Anabaptists have the Potential Pneuma, while Judges can meditate on their Codex for (1) Round of combat.

## SPECIAL RULE: WEDGED

If a shooter gets forced into a melee, he cannot aim at an enemy anymore. He has to use at least (1) Action to free himself and aim. Alternatively, a companion can step in and take on the shooter's opponent. Then the shooter can act freely again.

## IN BATTLE

Things are getting serious. Vedran and Kum have shot down two Usudis before they could get close. Falberg has been able to badly wound his enemy with his Preservist sword. Three Usudis are still standing, one of them is a malformed colossus with a spear as thick as a man's arm: the cloying scent of blood clings to him.

All roll for Initiative. Vedran spends (3) Ego Points, as does Falberg. This is the new turn order:

6: Falberg (2 Actions) and Vedran
5: Usudi (hurt)
4: Monitor, Usudi
3: Usudi Colossus
2: Kum

Falberg starts. He wants to finish what he began last Round and attacks the injured Usudi. He hits with BOD+Melee (7), and the Usudi tries to Actively Defend. Falberg gets (4) Successes and (1) Trigger. while the Usudi gets only (1) Success due to the Trauma he already suffered. The sword slides in deeply, tearing his entrails. The bone daggers fall from his hands. Falberg has another Action: he reaches the Usudi attacking Vedran with two quick steps (-2D) and attacks him. This Usudi Actively Defends, too, and this time, Falberg has a problem: he gets (4) Successes on his Attack roll, but his opponent gets (6) Successes, and the Usudi even manages to counterattack with (3) Triggers. Damn! The Usudi causes (5) Damage with his bone dagger + the (3) Triggers: (8) Damage total. Falberg's Preservist suit protects him for (3) points, so he has to take (5) points of Damage. Only a Flesh Wound.

Now it's Vedran's turn. Last Round, he had to defend with a knife, but now, Falberg has distracted the Usudi. Vedran drops the knife, bends down, and grabs his Trailblazer. Changing the weapon causes him -2D. He raises the rifle. His Action Number is 8D, with 6D remaining after the change of weapon. No encumbrance, no other restrictions: Fire! (4) Successes and (2) Triggers! The Usudi couldn't dodge, having used up his only Action when Actively Defending against Falberg. (11+2) Damage, (11) points after subtracting the Armor rating. Not bad. The Usudi staggers; half of his face has been blown away—but he is not down yet.

Vedran's Trailblazer has the "Smooth Running (2T)" Quality. This means that the Triggers afforded him another attack, although at -2D. It doesn't count as a new Action, so the penalty for changing the weapon is still applicable. This means his Action Number is 4D. He shoots again and

hits with (2) Successes. The Game Master doesn't even have to check: the Usudi is whirled around and hits the floor. He lies motionless.

We are now at Initiative 5. However, the Usudi whose turn this would be is dead. On to 4. It's Monitor's turn. He activates his Vocoder with a Combination of INT+Engineering and PSY+Domination and shouts at the colossus. The Engineering roll is simple and succeeds with 2T, and at Domination, he gets (4) Successes and another Trigger. That means his Combination has succeeded, with (3) Triggers overall. The colossus counters with PSY+Faith... and fails with only (1) Success.

The Vocoder's damage is "1+T Ego", meaning 1+3=4 Ego damage. That is not enough to intimidate the Usudi. Uh oh. Now it's the colossus's turn.

He stomps towards Falberg and attacks with his giant spear. Falberg has been moving quickly (more than (2) m) in his last Action, so his Passive Defense rises by (1) to (3). The colossus rolls (5) Successes, but no Trigger. Still, Falberg takes (13) Damage. Rested, Falberg could take (14) Flesh Wounds and (8) Trauma. He's wounded, though, has just taken (5) Flesh Wounds. His armor of (3) is subtracted from the (13) points of Damage: (10) points remain. Falberg spits blood when he takes his first Trauma point. But this spear is also coated with ptomaine, which causes another Trauma point.

The Usudi's weapon has the "Impact (3T)" Quality. This means that the colossus can neither attack nor defend his next Action because he's busy getting a grip on his weapon again. This gives the group time to finish him off.

Kum is next. He is panicky and close to running. Why does he do this to himself? Running around out here with the strangers in the middle of the territory of the Black God? He's not a big thinker, so he fires a machine gun salvo on the colossus. His weapon's Quality "Salvoes (3)" means that he gets +1D to the Action Number for every bullet used, which also cause (1) extra Damage each. He fires and hits with (3) Triggers: the weapon's base damage is 7+3T + the 3 bullets from the salvo = (13) Damage.

Little red explosions bloom on the Usudi's bloated body—but he doesn't fall! Thanks to the "Smooth Running (2T)" Quality and the Triggers the Paler managed to roll, Kum fires again, this time at -2D due to the Quality. Another hit!

The colossus screams and stomps and finally collapses in a dust cloud.

Falberg is bleeding from mouth and nose and clutching his ribs. Vedran and Monitor stare at Kum. "Rat, my ass."

# VEHICLES IN COMBAT

Famulancers are used to marching through silted riverbeds for days and flopping down on a camp bunk dead tired in the evening. The same is true for Anabaptists or Clanners: if you want to reach a goal that is far away, you walk.

Mounts must be cared for, vehicles must be fueled up and repaired: who can afford that in a world where there's barely enough food and every drop of Petro goes to the Spitfires? Vehicles are luxury goods.

Some wealthy Cults like the Judges or Spitalians increasingly rely on horses, securing and expanding their sphere of influence through the heightened mobility. However, the Neolibyans and Scourgers with their abundant supply of Petro never go anywhere without Surge Tanks, merchantmen and Koms - they would not have been able to loot Europe without them. Whether in combat or when dragging away prey: the advantages are enormous.

## SPEED

Every vehicle or mount in KatharSys has a maximum speed that it can reach. To ensure simplicity and to allow quick estimates, it is not measured in km/h but as a speed level between (1) and (6).

## RELATIVE SPEED

When two motorized or mounted opponents clash, the speed level that is used for calculating attack Difficulties, extra Damage, and ramming Damage is the relative speed between each combatant.

On a frontal collision, the speed of each opponent is added together. When one approaches from behind, the difference between the two speeds is applied. On a collision angle of around 90° both speeds count separately. Everything in between should be estimated by the Game Master.

## ACCELERATING AND DECELERATING

If mounts are pushed they can accelerate by (1) speed level per Combat Round, if they are reined in they slow down for up to (2) levels per Round. Special breeds or well-trained animals can do even better.

Vehicles are more variable: depending on the engine capacity they can be accelerated by several levels per Round, and depending on the vehicle's weight and the quality of the brakes they can slow down by several levels per Round. Speed level (0) doesn't mean no movement at all: for a rider it means that he rides at a walk, and for a vehicle level (0) is maneuvering speed.

## OF FLESH AND BLOOD

An axe blow into a horse's flank at full gallop makes it stagger and fall in a cloud of dirt and flailing legs. To take down a rider, it's always an option to kill the mount.

Just like humans, mounts have an entry for "maximum Flesh Wounds" and "Trauma" in their profiles. Horses can be attacked like any other combatant. However, they only use Passive Defense. As soon as they have to take Trauma, they panic and try to flee. The rider may attempt to regain control with an Action roll on AGI+Navigation or INS+Taming (Difficulty = Trauma Damage taken).

## METAL AND MECHANICS

A mount's flesh and blood are a vehicle's fairing, hydraulics, and engine. For a vehicle, its Body points function as Flesh Wounds, and its Structural points as Trauma. Once the Body has been shot down and torn apart, the next hit destroys the steering, tears the brake conduit, or smashes a cylinder piston. Every maneuver (AGI+Navigation) must now account for the mechanical damage: the Difficulty rises by the amount of Structural Damage points taken.

## ARMOR

Vehicles and some mounts are armored. As with attacks, the Armor rating is subtracted from the Damage.

## ATTACKING

If riders or drivers attack from their mount or vehicle, they may decide when to attack during their movement: at the beginning, sometime in the middle, or at the end. This makes quick melee attacks possible—maybe the opponent will not get close enough to attack during his turn.

Riders or drivers must attack with the combined roll on AGI+Navigation and a combat Skill. The Difficulty depends on the speed: the relative speed level is added to the normal Difficulty.

If a co-driver attacks, the combined roll on AGI+Navigation is not necessary, but the additional Difficulty remains. In a melee, Damage is also increased by the relative speed level due to the impact.

Attack Difficulty = Standard Difficulty + rel. speed level

In a melee: Damage = Damage + rel. speed level

## COUNTERATTACK: IN THE CROSSHAIRS

An increased speed may obstruct an attack, but it also protects from counterattacks. If you aim at a vehicle or a mount, your Difficulty is also increased by the relative speed level. There is one exception: if the target is moving directly towards or away from the attacker. In this case, the additional Difficulty is only (+1).

## COUNTERATTACK: CLOSE COMBAT

If you are attacked from horseback or from a vehicle, you can use Active Defense and even counterattack, but the Conflict becomes harder: the defender takes a dice penalty equal to the attacker's relative speed level on the Active Defense. However, if the counterattack succeeds the defender also gets the same Damage bonus.

## RAMMING

Riding down a target or ramming it with a Kom are risky maneuvers: the driver or rider rolls AGI+Navigation (Difficulty = relative speed level). The target can dodge with AGI+Mobility and the same Difficulty. If they are hit, the ramming vehicle or animal takes Damage equal to the relative speed level. The target is hit much harder: it takes 5 times the relative speed level as Damage.

Ramming attack: AGI+Navigation (rel. speed level)
Dodge: AGI+Mobility (rel. speed level)
Attacker self-Damage = rel. speed level
Target Damage = rel. speed level x 5

When attacker and target have roughly the same bulk, this looks totally different: then, both take 5 times the damage. If two moving objects collide, the difference between the speeds is taken into account when calculating the damage. If a horse with speed (3) wants to push a slower horse with speed (2) out of the way, their bodies hit each other with a difference of (1). They both weigh roughly the same, so they both take (5) Damage.

## MANEUVERS

Jumping chasms at full speed, racing through narrow canyons, and avoiding spires: countless reckless maneuvers are imaginable to get rid of opponents or catch up with them. Such Actions can rarely be translated into game mechanics. At high speed, the vehicles tend to quickly leave the bounds of graph paper or the game mat. What counts here are the Players' creativity and the Game Master's feeling for dramatic moments.

The chase is a good example: Two Koms speed through the wasteland. In one of them, there is a fugitive slave; in the other one, there's a Scourger. Instead of pinning down the opponents' exact positions, the Game Master calls for Action rolls on AGI+Navigation. The speed level is added to the Successes: the Scourger gets a total of (6) Successes, and the slave gets a total of (7), which increases the distance. He adds the Triggers for a total of (8). The Game Master announces that the Scourger veers aside once the distance is larger than (5) Successes. But the African doesn't give up so easily: he aims at his opponent's tires...

| Rel. Speed level | Meters per Combat Round | Attack Difficulty | Attack Damage | Ram Damage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 5 | - | - | - |
| 1 | 10 | +1 | +1 | 5 |
| 2 | 20 | +2 | +2 | 10 |
| 3 | 30 | +3 | +3 | 15 |
| 4 | 50 | +4 | +4 | 20 |
| 5 | 70 | +5 | +5 | 25 |
| 6 | 100 | +6 | +6 | 30 |

# DEATH A THOUSANDFOLD

## FALLING

A fight on the edge of a crumbling cliff face or a rickety bridge over a valley promises a quick victory - or a long descent into death. The length of the fall determines the impact Damage, starting at (2) meters every meter causes the Damage to rise by (2). The falling person has only one chance: if they succeed at a BOD+Athletics roll with the Damage as the Difficulty, they roll with the impact and avoid getting hurt. If they fail, they hit the ground at full speed and take full Damage. Armor cannot help in this situation.

## EXPLOSIONS

An exploding grenade or a detonating mine tear everything in their surroundings apart. The Damage at ground zero is at maximum and is equal to the listed weapon Damage. The Damage is reduced by (1) every meter of Distance from the center of the explosion. Armor resists explosive Damage.

## FIRE

Normal armor does not reduce fire Damage, as unbearable heat washes over the wearer. In fact, if the fire Damage is equal to twice the Armor rating, even the armor will burst into flame: starting with the next Round, the wearer takes (3) points of Damage per Round until he discards the armor or the flames are somehow doused. Only armor with the "Fireproof" Quality won't burst into flames and can reduce fire Damage.

## DROWNING AND SUFFOCATING

People can hold their breath for a while, approximately (1) Combat Round (or 4 seconds) per point in BOD+Stamina. If they are still and can concentrate, they can hold their breath twice as long. This way they can escape from smoke or gas attacks, or at least win some precious seconds waiting for the effects to dissipate.

When the person finally gasps for air, he starts losing Ego Points every Round. The loss depends on what he's breathing now: smoke and water cost (1) Ego Point, while gases from Spitalian labs are much more aggressive and can cost up to (4) Ego Points. Once the Ego Points drop to (0), he collapses and dies within the next (3) Rounds if he's not dragged from the danger zone and ventilated.

## STRANGLING

If you are strangled with a garrote or with bare hands, you will not only fall down because of a lack of air, but also because the brain's blood supply stops. You lose consciousness within seconds. The opponent being strangled is first attacked with BOD+Brawl. If he cannot defend, the noose tightens. Each Round onwards, he loses (2) Ego Points. With a successful BOD+Brawl or BOD+Force roll, he can break free. The attacker counters with BOD+Brawl or BOD+Force. This counts as an Action for both. Once the Ego Points drop to (0), death is just (3) Rounds away. First aid helps.

## POISON

The Usudis coat their spear tips with ptomaine, and the Trilobites breeding in the Pandora crater pump highly potent toxins from their spines. The effects of poison are variable. Most of them have a Potency. If someone comes into contact with the poison, he can resist the effects of it with a BOD+Toughness roll with the Potency as Difficulty. If the roll fails, he can only hope that the poison will become less potent on its own accord—or that the local healer has an antidote at hand.

The most common contact poisons (like ptomaine) cause (1) Trauma.

## DISEASES

Many things have changed in the world after its baptism by fire, but one thing remains constant: people get sick, and spread that sickness around those near them. Like poisons, diseases have a Potency that must be overcome by a BOD+Toughness roll. If the organism is unable to succeed the roll, it will suffer the effects of a disease, whether that's a light cough for a few weeks, or creeping organ failure and death.

## RADIATION

If an Enforcer AMSUMO is riddled by machine gun fire, there's a small chance that its nuclear fuel cell will be damaged and radioactivity leak out. Forgotten UEO tanks overgrown for ages, full of water and

## HEALING

With enough time and rest, the body is able to heal almost any injury. First, superficial Flesh Wounds scab over, and bruises bloom blue and purple. Internal injuries, fractures, punctured organs, and torn veins require the longest healing time. Every day, the character heals (1) Flesh Wound. The Trauma will only start to heal when all other injuries are scarred and healed. To heal (1) Trauma point, the body needs (10) days.

First recover all Flesh Wounds, then recover Trauma
(1) day per Flesh Wound
(10) days per Trauma

rusted through, could also be sources of radiation, just like one of the reactor ruins in the swamps of Franka. Ultimately, though, radiation is extremely rare. Those who come into contact with it take (1) point of Trauma per minute in the hot zone (within a few meters of the core of a reactor). The gums bleed, and blood runs from the nose. The affected person feels completely sick.

## SPORE INFESTATION

The bite of a Purgan tick, spore storms, or the temptations of Burn: spore infestation lurks everywhere. For more on its effects, see Chapter 9, "Burn".

## ENTROPIC GROWTH

Everyone knows the Festering from tales, but only very few have ever seen the buzzing carbon corals and their fractal loops with their own eyes. Everything started with the white ceramic cartridges. They were marked with the RG logo, but no opening mechanism was visible, and neither was there any small crack hinting at some sort of lid. The Preservists threw the cartridges into the spore field at Menden and activated the cartridges using detonators. The rest is history. Scrappers speak of similar cartridges with different effects. Presumably, unknown circumstances make the cartridges melt like ice in the sunshine. The viscous white fluid flows to the ground, bubbling and making waves that roll outwards towards the border of the puddle. If a Scrapper touches it, it feels sticky. If he pulls back his finger, the fluid stretches like cotton, staining the skin, penetrating it, crystallizing and hardening.

If the Scrapper acts quickly, he'll only lose the finger.

According to legends, the cartridges were some sort of holy grail to the Bygones. They were able to vanquish every disease and even the effects of old age. But centuries passed, and the spirits caught in the cartridges raged against the humans. Today, all that is left of them is bubbling entropy.

Those who fall under their spell can only be saved by amputation. At best, they will only lose a finger or a toe. This will make them lose a permanent point of BOD+Toughness. If someone is dumb enough to fully step into the stuff or reach deeply into it, he may suffer from a permanent penalty of up to 4D on top of the loss of BOD+Toughness from having a hand or a foot removed. If they do not remove the infected limb, a painful death awaits.

## THE RAZE

If you dare to enter the Psychovores, you risk your life. While armor helps, the deeper you venture into the strange vegetation, the harder and sharper its thorns get. Like burrs, they cling to fabric and armor mesh, get dragged along until the loops tighten and every step saps strength. A machete's blade becomes blunted; the bursts of flame from a Spitfire only makes the vegetation shrink back for a short time. Finally, a thorn penetrates the skin, drawing blood. Within seconds, the flesh all around the scratch burns and becomes bloated. Black abscesses spread like bubbling inkblots, eating into the body until they reach the bone, dissolving it, floating through its marrow. The person is rotting from the inside out. As with poisons and diseases, the danger of the Raze is measured in its level of Potency. Close to the coastal cities, the Africans rarely encounter Psychovores above level 1, but in the heart of the continent around Agadir, Psychovores up to level 3 bloom. In the South, it gets even worse: the Dhoruba is lost to humanity, native plants having long been displaced by level 5 Psychovores. Around Cairo, the vegetation belt keeps growing closer, supposedly even reaching level 6. The level determines which Armor rating the thorns can penetrate. Raze infection happens at once: the infected can avoid the worst with a successful BOD+Toughness roll (Difficulty = Psychovore level), but he has to roll once a minute. If he fails, he loses a permanent point of BOD+Toughness at once. Once the Toughness is used up, BOD is attacked. Additionally, he suffers (1) Trauma per minute. Only catalyzed Duat fruit and an Anubian who knows what he's doing can stop the deadly process.

## PATCHED UP

With Medicine, you can aid the slow process of natural healing. To heal Flesh Wounds right after battle, you roll INT+Medicine (2) to heal 1+Trigger Wounds. This can be done only once.

Flesh Wounds
INT+Medicine (2)
Flesh Wounds healed = 1+Trigger

Trauma taken in battle works similarly, but the Difficulty equals the Trauma taken. After a successful surgery, the character heals 1+Trigger Trauma. The surgery takes approxiamately (12) hours. The next cannot be tried before (4) days or more have passed.

Trauma
INT+Medicine (Trauma)
Trauma healed = 1+Trigger
Can be tried again after (4) days

The Anubians' Imiut skin is special. The dying person is sewn into a dog skin by a Hecatean and subjected to an external catalysis. After three days, he emerges from the skin clear, smooth, and hairless: he is completely healed.

# ALMANAC

8
CHAPTER
BAZAAR

# ON THE ART OF CONCESSION TRADE

## FROM THE TRAVEL DIARIES OF MATABI

Some people get over-enthusiastic, even feverish, when it comes to bidding for concessions. Struck with greed, they lose sight of the only thing that matters: the profitability of the route. Fatal, fatal! Still, when the reckless suffer the capable profit, and that's why we buy cheaply from the dogs, as we call them. They'll feed as well, until they get sleepy, put their feet up, and become incapable of doing anything but grunting weak agreements to whatever you want from them.

## ON THE PREPARATION OF A VENTURE

The proper preparation of a venture is extremely important for the success of an economic mission. Ask yourself where you are supposed to go: inland, or beyond the water into the land of the Crow? Port or deep foray? Peaceful region or war zone? They each require different procedures.

To go inland, you need no more than a simple convoy to travel the kilometers between cities. You will probably not need any Scourgers unless you expect a Crow attack from the sea or pass through areas with many slaves: the oil fields are constant hotbeds of unrest in the otherwise pacified land. Simple weapons should suffice to scatter the rabble.

Going north requires a lot of preparation: you have to charter a ship and hire a crew—although it's probably best to go with the ship's own small crew. No one is more interested in bringing the ship—which is at the same time their home—back to the port of Tripol safe and sound. For every 100 tons of cargo, you'll need about 10 crewmen, who earn up to 50 Dinars per day each. Add to this 3 rations of 200 g each per person per day. A good mix of salted meat and fruit keeps illnesses away from the workers and heightens morale. To protect the ship, you will need to hire Scourgers. Be careful to not choose the complacent ones! They usually demand more and better food than regular seamen, so split your provisions into two storage places, labeling one of them "of good quality." That should be enough to caress their egos should you accidentally choose one of these men.

Of course, fuel for the ship is necessary, ask the captain for the mileage. A simple rule of thumb: multiply the tonnage by 0.8 to calculate the consumption in litres for 100 km. A small 200-ton ship thus would need 160 litres of Petro every 100 km. Don't forget that the fuel you need will take up room in the cargo holds as well!

Once you are out on the sea, you should be safe. We dominate the waters. Any Crows encountered can be dispatched by the ship's artillery. Still, the captain should give Corpse and other pirates' dens a wide berth.

When the ship finally reaches its destination, unloads, and soon sets out again, the only thing to remember is to pump enough bilge water into tanks.

Expeditions into the Crow's nest are a completely different thing. Here, dominance is the most important commandment! Scourgers should bring their fastest fighters, their Koms, and take the muffler from the exhaust pipes: the din chases away the rabble! Don't skulk, walk proudly! A Crow flies, but a Lion roars: always remember that when the pale people spill out of their ruins like grubs!

For the truly great expeditions, we recommend the Surge Tanks. You will have to take them aboard in Syracuse, for that is where the sturdiest and largest ones are built.

Whether in parts or already assembled to its full glorious height, a Surge Tank is a heavy load on any ship. These titans weigh at least 600 tons. You need an army of mechanics to keep their wheezing engines from dying. They burn oil into stinking smoke faster than one slave could refill it. But it's the Surge Tanks that conquer the land! Impenetrable fortresses and proof of the African superiority—Lion, be proud of what you have achieved! The tanks are HQ (the luxury of their cabins matches the high houses of Tripol), weapon storage, Kom hangar, and warehouse at once. Rent or buy a Surge Tank and you notice that the insurer smiles benignly, and the policies become cheaper; such a vehicle gives everyone a feeling of safety. Your Scourgers will be friendlier, too. Never forget: the amortization of the giant costs is accountable towards future concessions.

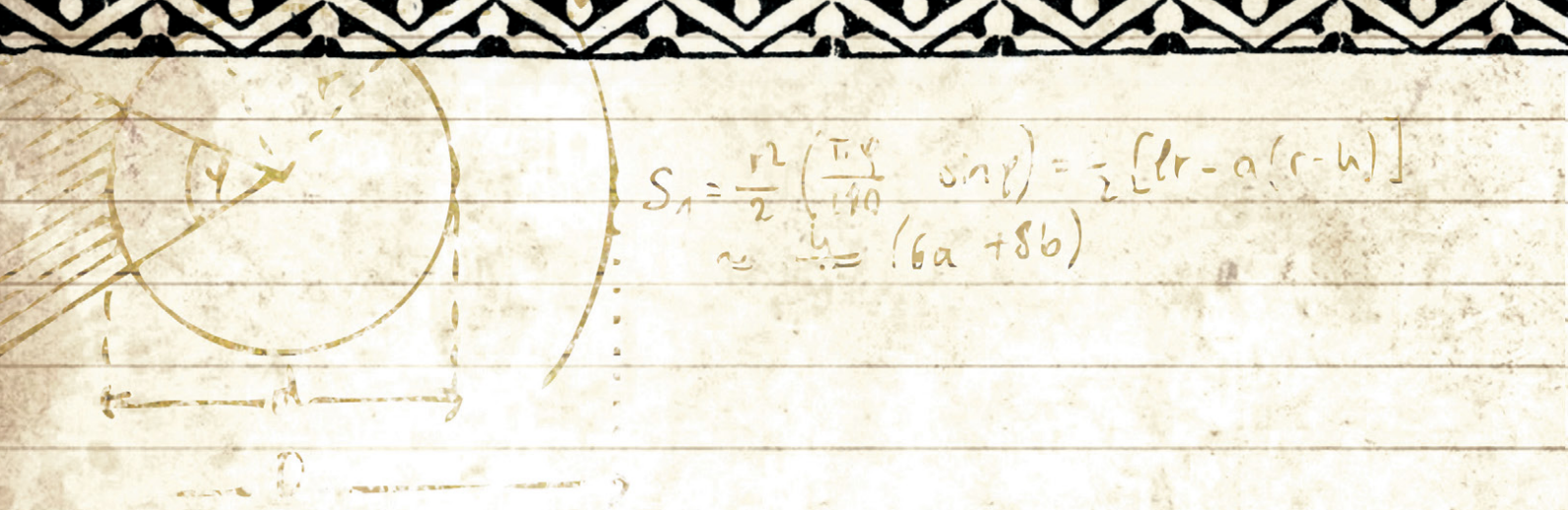
## ON THE TRADE WITH FRANKA

We are only interested in the Frankan coastal cities on the Mediterranean that all have well-maintained ports (thanks to our involvement). These are namely Montpellier, Toulon and Perpignan, with the latter having fallen into discredit as a resting place of the crazy goat herders, being at the main road between Franka and Hybrispania as it is. So you should politely deny concessions for this region until our Consuls have brought civilization to these outposts. The Sipho, a 14,000-ton ship, and the Kashka, a 200-ton weapons catamaran, fell victim to a pirate attack in 2552 and sank in the fairway. To this very day, the oil sullies Perpignan's beaches, the "victorious" attackers were driven back into the black liquid by the raging population until they died a horrible death when it was set ablaze. The Crow's sharp beak in someone else's eye is a good thing.

Still, Montpellier remains a good place to do business. It is firmly in the hands of those doctors who have had quite a few ideas against the Pheromancer pack and other vermin. In spite of their pharmacies and drugs, our local mycelium that we use to fight poisonings and infections sells like crazy. Also, the Duat Blood is in demand and is sold with a huge profit—but don't let the Anubians recognize it. It seems the Frankan medicine is as poor as what our Scrappers can still salvage from this country.

I have to admit that in the long run, we will also have to do business with those that the Spitalians and Anabaptists damn. Look at the city of Toulon. For years now, our brothers and sisters have been forced to live and work in a defunct Surge Tank, the Mbogo, and they're slowly being pushed out even further towards the nearby town of Bayonne. How unbecoming.

Nevertheless, the Queen of the human swarm in the region, the seductive Jaquiera (wear Marduk oil against her flatteries, for she is a Pheromancer), usually helps us out with a small army. We are to consider ourselves esteemed guests, and we are gifted with fruit from all parts of the country. The Queen is considered careful and modest: if you want to travel deeper into the land of the Pheromancers, you can strengthen your soul here and test your business ideas on her human hive.



## MODERN HIGHWAYMEN

The Hellvetic's Alpine Fortress is awesome, their technology matches even ours. Yet all of this cannot veil the Hellvetics' true nature: they are highwaymen.

Obviously, they are lucky to be located in such an important area at the heart of Europe. Even the most inept Crow could get rich there by only holding out one hand to have his palm greased—while holding a weapon in the other hand.

It's now far too late for a confrontation, the dogs have entrenched. We simply have to approach them with open arms, dragging carts of goods behind us. Ammunition, food, and incredible amounts of Petro are the most desired goods, for which we get much more than a simple passage through their tunnel. They order tons of saltpeter from the Anubian Mountains. It is said that Surge Tanks leaving from old Genoa, have already made tracks to the Hellvetic entrance over 130 km away, such that those ignorant Clanners have started to talk of giant worms wriggling their way from the sea to the cold mountains.

If you disregard the passage, what else do the Hellvetics have to offer to us? "They are soldiers, not craftsmen," you might think, but that's not true! Truly their service as guards is irreplaceable, especially when we venture north without our Surge Tanks, but the engineering capabilities of the Hellvetics is where our real interest should lie. Bridges, bunkers, fortifications: the mark of one of their Genies on such a structure guarantees a long life and durability even under the most dire of straits. Do not trade with them if you do not plan to be paid in services!

## THE FROZEN HELL

Borca is the most inhospitable land imaginable. The cold is biting, the food is bad, and the most prominent merchants, the Chroniclers, are incredibly taciturn. They try to haggle for prices with monosyllabic answers. There is no flamboyant demeanor: they don't gesture, they don't complain about the low price with which they will never be able to feed their ten children and their five wives, you can't see their mouth open wide at the ridiculous price you just tried to push on them. They are as sober and cold as the land. The warmth of a woman would do them good. The customer is not king to them, no, he is their subject. It is inconceivable how they got to the top of the artifact trade using this selling technique, but perhaps because of this very strategy you just don't get past them.

They are pros: unknown generators are first checked for decay: are the laggings brittle or is the case rusty? In their exchange Alcoves, a whole array of sensors waits to examine the artifact, to sniff, touch, and torture it with rays and electricity in any way possible. But even here the Chronicler won't shake off his lethargy, instead just waiting patiently while his machines dance around your property until a clanging beep lets him know to position another plunger.

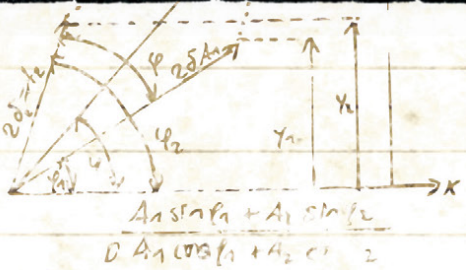
If they'd only stay in their exchange Alcoves and toy with their apparatuses! But no, in the last years, they have been treating us with extreme unfriendliness, calling us child eaters. They say if you do business with Africans, you will have to make do without their services.

What does a monopolist know of a trade war? Of course, the good thing about any kind of aggravation is that the concessions are sold miles below their actual value. For an aspiring African, this is a chance to qualify for the major orders.

## OF PURGAN REALMS

Purgare is miserable. These people's biggest treasure is their faith, and trading it for hard coin would be like trying to sell bottled air to the crazy but shrewd Sariki on the market in Tripol. So what does Purgare have to offer to us? For one thing, there are the convenient ports: ruined cities are exceptionally suited for secret landings.

Of course, what would be convenient for a spy means death to a merchant. If no one notices him, he has to eat all his goods himself: there is no profit to be made on the west coast. Perishable goods would be better left in Tripol. Weapons and cloth could be brought aboard, but they are just baubles to throw to the barbarian population if you want to make them smile. But then again, we are not philanthropists. In return, we demand their ancestors'



works of art and marble that you won't find anywhere else in such high quality. The prices are ridiculously low because basically no one needs art or noble stone inland.

But two other things are far more important: for one, Purgare is the gateway to the regions east of the Reaper's Blow. If you landed in the west, you would have to cross the fissure via the Hellvetic passage tunnels—not financeable for larger expeditions!

Then there are the Purgan ruins that have been mostly sifted through—mostly. Especially in the tainted regions, there are true treasures to be found under the crust of sulfur and a layer of ash. The wear and tear of the material could ruin the profit off such a Scrappers' expedition, though. This is only for the brave—or the desperate.

## SPORE WALKERS

On the Balkhan coast, amidst the Psychovores, you'll meet probably the strangest group of customers. They only communicate with us by a radio. Their frequency is written in numbers as high as trees on house fronts or billboards along the overgrown banks. The process is always the same: after contacting us, our faceless communicator warns us not to approach any further. Do not jump to conclusions, this is not meant as a threat, but rather as a well-meaning hint concerning the dangers arising from Discordant creatures and blooming Psychovore fields. Who hasn't lost a good friend to this pestilence? In the meantime, the captain should take care not to venture too far into the algae slicks: the spore lumps floating about on the surface could easily block the propellers. Unpowered, a ship would certainly wash ashore on the coast. If you don't believe me, look at the three Neolibyan wrecks on the steaming green beach that once belonged to a city called Antalya according to the old maps. The undertow is insidious here.

Now back to the radio! These people only speak some Balkhan dialect, are not interested in outside information—and not willing to tell you anything about themselves. They have exquisite taste, though. They order the finest technology: capacitors, resistors, cables, old printed circuit boards to salvage, parts of captured machines. In return, they offer an extremely potent drug, potentially made from a Psychovore base. It is more durable than Duat Blood and strengthens body, mind, and virility. It is not for the simple African and should also be kept hidden from the Scourgers. But this mysterious drug brings high profit from the Magnates and Sheikhs who hold onto life covered in sweat from fear of dying and who block out the call of the ancestors.

However, it is not an easy exchange to make. All goods are stocked in a dinghy, which is left to the current. At some point, it will crunch to a stop on the sandy beach, but by then, we're usually gone again.

It is a trade based on good faith. Days later, we can pick up our goods from a buoy off the coast. Tightly bound, the package dances in the soft swell, tied to the faded orange colossus that is visible for miles. So far, the strangers from the Psychovores have yet to disappoint us.

## THE WAR ECONOMY

Whoever claims that war is good for business obviously has to be a barbarian. The price of a war in sons and daughters—as well as the material—is terrifying. If someone would bother to keep track from the beginning, he would be shocked by the sight of all the red ink. We are hit especially hard here, being bound to the ancestors to supply a demanding Scourger with weapons, food, and lodging. It is therefore not astonishing that the concessions for Hybrispania and the Balkhan are rarely sold. It is an open secret that Neolibyans only venture into these high-risk regions if the Scourgers guarantee that they will capture a set number of slaves.

Additionally, they are often accompanied by huge groups of Scrappers in these cases, for especially Hybrispania and the Balkhan are great repositories of old technology. Do not even think to try trading with the locals! It would not only make you a traitor to the African cause, a dishonorable status to have, but these savages are more than willing to make a trade and bash your head in to take their own money back!

# TECH LEVEL

Every society is in a constant interplay between the development of its civilisation and the goods it produces. The further a society develops, the better it can store and pass on knowledge, gaining new insights. The Tech Level is a gauge for this form of civilisation. Even if it only describes how advanced or complex a given item in the Bazaar might be, it can also tell a lot about the item's context in terms of the civilization that created it.

## TECH I: PRIMITIVE

People wander the land in isolated Clans, gathering berries and roots or hunting rats and mammoths. They make capes from furs and carve tools and hunting weapons from bones. They pray to the forces of nature, sacrifice animals at mounds of bones or in sacred groves. When they fight each other, it's not because of territory—only a few understand the concept of borders. They fight to prove their mettle and please their gods. Knowledge is passed on from generation to generation. The traditions and the history of the tribe are clad in sagas and epigrams, often rhymed ones.

## TECH II: MEDIEVAL

Fire is a weapon, but it's also an engine of civilization. In smithies, scrap is melted down and turned into simple weapons and items of daily use.

Iron nails hold beams and make the building of elaborate houses and ships possible, so people become sedentary and have to till the land. Three-field rotation and an alternation of crops bring better harvests and make it possible to feed larger communities. The first fortified cities are built.

## TECH III: PROGRESSIVE

The forges produce good steel to fashion into simple rifle barrels. Black powder and good enough metallurgy to make muzzleloading rifles revolutionize war craft. Cannons guard the gates of Tech III cities, and their soldiers' armors are free of rust. For the first time, specialists gather in workshops to work on a product together. It's a time of invention and of countless new developments. The veil of superstition and religion lifts and reveals a clear, utility based worldview.

## TECH IV: INDUSTRIAL AGE

The industrial production of everyday objects replaces the small teams in workshops. Every worker uses machines to punch, forge, or mill. The monopoly that the craftsmen's guilds have on tools is broken: everyone can afford scissors, hammer and chisel, or a screwdriver. Technicians discover

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Every farm, every bunker community, and every city has a Tech Level that tells us what kind of items can be produced there. A city like Justitian is preindustrial: there are many workshops and blacksmiths, it is autocratically ruled, and "freedom" means "control and safety." The Judges' city has Tech Level III, and under the control of Supreme Judge Archot, it will not be able to reach level IV. In the city, the Steel Masters produce muskets (Tech III) according to the Tech Level. But the workshops also produce tech I and II items. Still, assault rifles (Tech V) or Long-range radios (Tech V) can be found on the markets of Justitian. Scrappers or traders drag them there expecting a hefty profit, and they will certainly find it. If an item with a Tech Level that is higher than the Tech Level of the location is offered, this has effects on availability and price: usually it has twice the price listed in the Bazaar.

and develop plastics. Electrical streetlights chase the dark of night from the cities. Electronics and simple calculators begin to appear.

Tripol and some other Neolibyan coastal cities have stepped across the threshold into this new, exciting era, even if they hide the progress behind colorful fabrics and traditions.

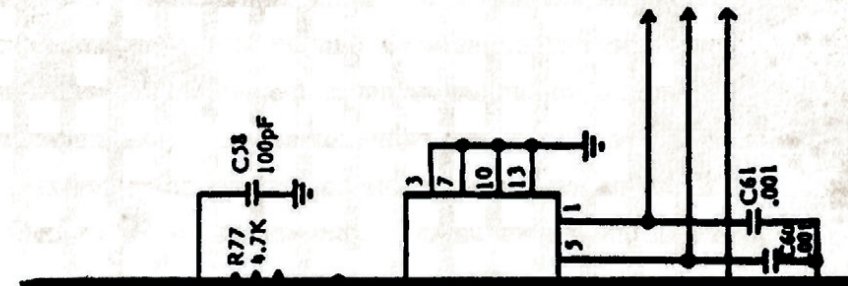
## TECH V: TRANSHUMAN AGE

This is the civilization and technological level of the Bygones. Computers are a part of life, working invisibly in the background. The Stream connects humanity to a collective super-organism. The knowledge of millennia of development is only a heartbeat away, automatically partitioned and passed on by subsystems. Nanites guard body functions and repair cell damage. If there is something like transcendence, it can't be far away anymore.

The Transhuman Era ended with the Eshaton. 500 years later, only the Sleepers can found a Tech Level V settlement.

## TECH VI: WONDERLAND

Some Chroniclers have been in touch with artifacts that were so complex, weird, and highly developed that they could not possibly have been in common use by the Bygones. In fact, there is a high-tech wonderland out there, though nobody knows exactly who defined its borders or who was at the head of its leadership. A community able to develop such a standard could take the world in a heartbeat, use or destroy the Primer, and tame the Sleepers. But so far, nobody knows of any organization that has reached Tech Level VI.



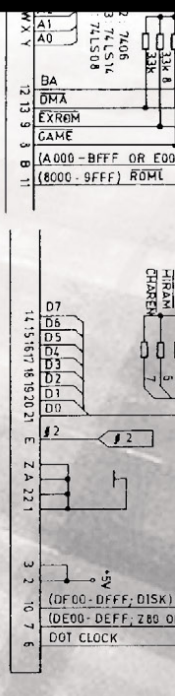

### ABBREVIATIONS

In the equipment tables, you will encounter some abbreviations.

| Example | Meaning |
|---|---|
| +2D | A bonus in the form of additional dice |
| 2T | T is for Trigger. Here, you need two Triggers to trigger a special Action |
| -2C | The Difficulty of a special Action is lowered by 2 (the C stands for "Challenge") This is much better than +2D |
| +1S | One automatic Success is granted |

## CURRENCIES

In the last centuries, two currencies have established themselves: from Borca, the Chronicler Draft spread to Pollen, Purgare, and Franka and superseded lots of local currencies. Today, Hellvetic paychecks, the Taunar coin, and several minted strips of brass don't play an important role anymore. In Africa, Southern Hybrispania, and parts of the Balkhan, the African Dinar is held in high regard. The massive gold coins are minted in Constantine; their issuance is under surveillance of the Bank of Commerce. The exchange rate from Dinar to Chroniclers' Draft has leveled out to 1:1 with time—thanks to the Chroniclers' considerate actions. This way, the Cult stops the Neolibyans from cheating the Europeans, who are generally not good enough at math to calculate exchange rates.



# CULT EQUIPMENT

## INSIGNIA

You can tell a Judge by his coat, hat, and Judgment hammer, and a Scourger by his flak jacket and helmet. A Spitalian without neoprene suit and Splayer would be confused for just another common army surgeon.

Weapons and Cult armor are insignia of provenance, tradition, and influence. They are important. They are unique and entrench the Cult and its members in society. Those who wear false symbols and get caught thus have to expect the worst: Hellvetics chase all those who carry a Trailblazer without legal cause naked into the Alps and their snowy hell, Justitian tattoos a red bar from mouth to forehead on the faces of those impersonating a Judge, if the Scourgers catch someone wearing one of their masks, they first ridicule him as a phony and then smack him through the village.

The Cults are merciless when they see their equipment in the wrong hands. The reactions vary depending on the amount of abuse and the uncommonness of the items in question. For example, a Scrapper will simply spit on the ground in disgust when he sees an Apocalyptic with a carrying rig. Palers hate to see one of those Bygone submachine guns that the gods granted only to them in the hands of the surface dwellers, but they contain themselves. On the other hand, if a Judge were to strut around carrying a Sun Disc…

It is rare that Cult members attack at once. That would be foolish. Maybe they will ask where this beautiful piece comes from and if the owner knows that only Cult members are allowed to carry it. In the best case, the social interaction becomes harder (up to -4D to Charisma Action rolls). But as soon as the Cultists outnumber the abusers, things can become dangerous.

## SPLAYER

According to the old stories, the UEO used the Splayers in de-escalation scenarios in Bygone times. Supposedly, the plug-ins that are usually seen today served as interfaces for AMSUMOs to control the blades.

The functionality remains: in the shaft, there is a kinetic storage cylinder that is fueled by the pumping of a lever, which spreads the blades. If the lever is pushed out, the outer blades close quickly and forcefully over the middle blade. Various attachments can be screwed on top of the shaft, though usually a Mollusk container is chosen.
**SPECIALTY:** Special ability "Cutting"—If an attack succeeds, the Spitalian can spend (2) Triggers to make the blades snap closed for an additional 1D of Damage. The 2T used are not factored into the Damage calculation, so if the Player rolls only a 1 for the additional Damage, he does (1) point of Damage less than if he had not used "Cutting". However, in the best case he can do (4) extra points of Damage.

◇ Armed melee

### > MOLLUSK

A Mollusk detects creatures that have an open channel to an Earth Chakra: Psychonauts, Burners in the intoxication phase, seed carriers, or Anabaptists anointing themselves with Acheron or Styx Elysian oil. Completely de-spored Psychonauts or Spore Beasts only make the Mollusk shiver.

The range is about (30) m.

◇ Splayer heads

### > COLDLIGHT

The kinetic energy of the Splayer is turned into electrical energy in the base of the attachment. This energy sparks a gas within the piston that blazes in a very bright, pure white light. It can theoretically burn forever, as long as the charging handle is pumped.

◇ Splayer heads

### > GRABBER

A grabber can be adjusted via a small wheel for either fine motor salvaging efforts or firm gripping.

It can also be used to grab Psychonauts' necks and keep them at a distance (using BOD+Melee, Handling -2D, (0) Damage). To free himself, the prisoner must make a successful Action roll on BOD+Force (5).

◇ Splayer heads

## NOUMENON-VOCALIZER

The Noumenon-Vocalizer turns the ether calls of the Psychonauts and their Earth Chakras into melodies using the Mollusks, and thus enables an exact identification and location of Psychonautic carrier waves.
**SPECIALTY:** To gauge a signature correctly, the Spitalian must succeed in a combo of INS+Perception and INT+Science, Difficulty (4). Large amounts of Noumenon sources can be detected over great distances. A single Aberrant can be detected over (100) m; five of them over a distance of (500) m. The Triggers determine the quality of

VOCALIZER

the analysis. No Trigger: "There are Psychonauts somewhere close", (1) Trigger detects the number and a rough direction, (2) Triggers can detect the Rapture and give a more precise idea about the direction, and with (3) Triggers the Spitalian knows the exact location.

◇ Orienteering / Tracking

## GAUGING SUBSTANCES

With epigenetically modified spore extracts, Noumenon-Vocalizers and Mollusks can be calibrated to a certain Chakra.

**SPECIALTY:** The Difficulty to detect a Psychonaut or the spore fields of the corresponding Rapture is lowered by the level of the gauging substance (level 1-3), but on the other hand, the Difficulty increases by the same value for Noumenon sources of all other Raptures. The calibration is permanent: cross calibrations destroy the Mollusk tissue.

◇ Orienteering / Tracking

## SPITALIAN SUIT

The neoprene suit is airtight and thus sealed against bacteria: with gas mask and chalked skull (the chalk disinfects), the doctors are relatively safe in plague-ridden areas. For longer missions, the suit is equipped with a urine bottle so that the Spitalian can reduce his contact to the contaminated environment to a minimum. Thin membranes in the crook of the arms make it possible to shoot an injection through the suit.

**SPECIALTY:** The suit turns a common man into a savior—at least in the afflicted ones' eyes. Talking to them, a person wearing a suit gets +1D to social interactions. If a fully equipped Spitalian were to be exposed to spore infestation, illness, or environmental poisoning, he gets (+4) Successes to his resistance roll—just as with the Quality "Sealed (+4S)".

The Spitalian suit includes a level 2 gas mask. If the doctor buys a better filtering device, the bonus rises to +5S.

◇ Armor

## HYGIENIST SUIT

The Hygienist suit, bulkier than the regular Spitalian suit, with its closed helmet and oxygen tank, is well-suited for missions in highly contaminated zones.

**SPECIALTY:** High encumbrance, but (+6) Successes on resistance rolls against spore infestation, illnesses, and environmental toxins. The air tank equals a level 3 gas mask.

◇ Armor

## FIELD KIT

At least one doctor per regular Spitalian squad carries a field kit. This emergency kit contains first aid material, surgical and lab instruments, fungicides, pesticides, and drugs.

**SPECIALTY:** +2D to INT+Medicine. The field kit can be used (5) times before it has to be resupplied in a Spitalian base.

◇ Medical equipment

SPLAYER

## BUGS AND LISTENING DEVICES

The Hippocrats maintain order in the Spital. With bugs and listening devices, they keep track of opinions and ideas.
**SPECIALTY:** To place a bug, the Hippocrat rolls AGI+Stealth. The bugs are small, so he gets (+2) Successes. To find the bug, the searcher goes into a Conflict with the Difficulty equal to the original test. Only if he wins will he find the bug. The transmission distance is about (20) m.
◇ Technology

## SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS

Scalpel, staples, and saws are the tools of a Surgeon, and they tell a lot about the doctor's position within the hierarchy of his department. While the Spital supplies its Surgeons with everything they need for an operation, these instruments were taken out of their sterile packaging five centuries ago. Every self-respecting doctor has his own surgical instruments made from the best materials by the Steel Masters or the Purgan Sforzas. Perfection has its price.
**SPECIALTY:** There are 3 levels of surgical tools. Per level, they give +1D to medically treating Trauma Damage.
◇ Armed melee ◇ Medical equipment

## APOTHECARIUM

Gas burner, pestle, test tubes, various equipment, and a wide range of chemicals and drug basics in little bags and glasses, all well stowed in a suitcase. The Apothecarium offers a field lab to the Pharmacist with which to produce simple drugs or poisons and analyze illnesses.
**SPECIALTY:** There are 3 levels of Apothecariums. Per level, the Pharmacist gets (+1) Success when analyzing things with INT+Science or trying to produce a drug. All in all, he can produce (10) drugs of any level before he has to refill the Apothecarium in the Spital or a field hospital.
◇ Medical equipment

## SEQUENCER

Epigeneticists are interested in the basic building blocks of life. They collect blood samples like Apocalyptics collect lovers. They analyze their findings in a sequencer that spits out a 20-digit alphanumerical label after a few minutes. They can look up parts of that label in their gene catalog, which tells them things about the person's origin, inborn illnesses, and weaknesses.
**SPECIALTY:** When an Epigeneticist analyzes a sample, he can customize drugs or poisons for a certain person. For only this person, the remedy's Potency rises by (2).
◇ Medical equipment

## FUNGICIDE RIFLE

The Spitalian Fungicide Rifle is similar to a flamethrower, but it can be loaded with various chemicals via cartridges or an external tank. Fungicides, pesticides, two-component incendiary chemicals, chemical agents: the Spitalians' repertoire is impressive and universally bad for your health.
**SPECIALTY:** In the rifle's butt stock, an antidote can be stored for the user. The cartridges for Fungicide Rifles contain enough active ingredients for (10) shots.
◇ Rifles

## CARTRIDGE LAUNCHER

The Fungicide Rifle shoots its load over a short distance of a few steps. The grenades launched by the Cartridge Launcher have a far wider range and unload the same agents in a radius of several steps.
**SPECIALTY:** Grenades bounce, roll, and generally never land where the shooter wants them to, which gives them the Quality "Deviation". The grenades from the Cartridge Launcher can also be used as hand grenades or timed or pressure-sensitive mines by simply exchanging the detonator. Cartridges for the Cartridge Launcher and Fungicide Rifle are specially designed for each and cannot be mixed.
◇ Heavy weapons

## INJECTOR GUN

Anesthesiologists prefer to perfectly aim their drugs or agents by using Injector Guns.
**SPECIALTY:** With a successful melee attack, the injector can be pressed against the target and inject it with its contents. The Injector Gun will only penetrate armor with a maximum Armor rating of (4). It carries just (1) dose.
◇ Armed melee

## AGENTS

The arsenal of powerful and deadly chemicals created in the Spital contains everything from dessicating fungicides to deadly toxins.

### >SP 4016 TH

A fungicide used mainly to fight the Sepsis. The high sulfur content dries out the spore fields, and the added toxins stop them from recovering. A sprayed carpet of Sepsis disappears within hours. The fungicide degrades very slowly, which prevents the emergence of new spores for months to years.

**EFFECT:** If anyone comes into contact with SP 4016 (Potency (4)), oozing, itchy pustules begin to cover their entire bodies (-2D to all Actions), and it takes a full day for them to disappear. The effects do not stack. Not suitable for Injector Guns.

◈ Agents

### >PHEROMONE MARKER

The Pharmacists keep achieving better and better successes in copying the marker pheromones of Franka's insect swarms. Dissolved in a syrupy liquid and filled into cartridges, they make it possible for the Spitalians to tear parts of the swarms from the formation and lure them into fire pits.

**EFFECT:** A dose of pheromone marker draws insects within a 20-step radius, but only for a few minutes. The synthetic pheromones quickly deteriorate—they oxidize—and lose their effect. Not suitable for Injector Guns. Only useful against the Pheromancer plague.

◈ Agents

### >IRRITANT

The main compound of irritants is bromoacetone, a liquid with a pungent smell that is very irritating when it comes into contact with eyes and mucosae, causing those afflicted to struggle to catch their breath and see through their swollen eyelids.

**EFFECT:** The Damage resulting from the irritant (Potency 5) causes no wounds, but a general penalty (-3D) through the Quality "Poisoned". Not suitable for Injector Guns.

◈ Agents

### >EX-AEROSOL / EG-1

If a Psychonaut comes into contact with the aerosol, it blocks the catalytic effect of the spores on an epigenetic level—essentially de-sporeing the Aberrant. It only takes a few minutes, though, to degrade the agent, after which the spores offer the same repertoire of Phenomena to the Psychonaut again.

**EFFECT:** Per dose or detonating cartridge the spore infestation decreases for 10 minutes (see Quality "Pseudo desporeing").

◈ Agents

### >FIRE DUST

Coated Phosphor in the form of a white powder. It starts to burn within a second after coming into contact with oxygen. The effect is a searing white flame.

**EFFECT:** Fire dust does not form a cloud, and the Damage happens immediately and only once (it is fire Damage).

◈ Agents

### >BLACK BAND

A black band marks the cartridge of the strongest combat anesthetic of the Spital, hence its name. Officially, only Anesthesiologists may use the agent, but the Preservists keep demanding access to it. The colorless aerosol is made from opioids and anesthetics. When breathed in, it leads to immediate loss of consciousness in most people.

**EFFECT:** Black band causes Ego Point Damage (see Quality "Narcotic").

◈ Agents

### >CHLORINE GAS

Chlorine gas is one of the most dangerous agents of the Spital. When breathed in, it destroys the lung tissue. Rosy shreds are torn loose and coughed out spasmodically. The bronchi fill up with liquid, the breath starts rattling, and the skin becomes pale and finally turns blue, although the victim does not realize it as at this point they have already lost consciousness.

Chlorine is heavier than air, so it sinks and amasses low to the ground. Thus, it is well-suited to contaminate the ring valleys of the spore fields and to eliminate Psychonauts.

**EFFECT:** Chlorine gas exists in the form of ammunition for Cartridge Launchers and as grenades or mines. Not suitable for the Fungicide Rifle or the Injector Gun. Only dissipates in strong winds.

Its effects are like those of a toxin of Potency (5). Damage is (1) Trauma per Round but can be averted by a successful BOD+Toughness (Potency) roll (see Quality "Poisoned").

◈ Agents

## PRESERVALIS SWORD

The steel blade is black, well-oiled, and sharp as a scalpel. With one hit, it severs sinews and bone. It is perfectly balanced and lies well in the hand. "Only the best surgical steel," the Preservists say without even a grin. The steel may be more flexible than that of an Anabaptist Bidenhander and more precise and elegant than a Jehammedan riding hoe, but what really makes the Preservalis Sword better than any other weapon is not one of its qualities or the craftsmanship of the material, but the person who has been deemed worthy to wield it.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◈ Armed melee

## NEWCREST HORSE

Horses are Provost Kranzler's passion. The breeding program in his Newcrest stud farm continues to produce legendary black mounts. Kranzler gives them to high-ranking allies and his best Preservists. Riding a Newcrest horse means responsibility. Those who ruin their horse by bad riding will experience Kranzler's dark side.

**SPECIALTY**: The best riding horse known to man, they cannot be bought by Resources but is acquired by Renown: Renown 5+ is necessary before Kranzler chooses someone who is allowed to ride one of his horses into battle.

◈ Mounts

## DRAFT PRINTER

The numerical keyboard is faded, the amber numbers blink on the display. The Chronicler enters his code, confirms it with the number sign, and adds more numbers: the amount on the Draft. Another number sign, and the machine spits out a piece of printed thermo paper with a whir: a Chronicler Draft.

Draft printers are money-printing machines. They have the power to unbalance Europe's economy, so they come with a maximum amount. Only a Fragment in the Cluster can reset the internal counter and reactivate the printer.

**SPECIALTY:** A Draft Printer gives its Chronicler 50 CD x Resources per month.

◇ Technology

## STREAMER GLOVE

Like the Draft Printer, the Streamer Glove has become a symbol of the Cult. A Chronicler's raised little finger brings respect since everybody fears the painful discharges from the fingertip. This is essentially an insulated plastic glove with an electrode on the little finger. An E-Cube on the wrist fuels the device.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Brawl

## SHOCKER

Chroniclers stay out of battles. If that is not possible, a Streamer Glove usually isn't enough to subdue an opponent. This is why Chroniclers in dangerous regions often carry its bigger brother: the Shocker. The weapon is about as long as an arm and has two E-Cubes that discharge into the enemy's body when the Chronicler presses a button. Then the smell of roasted meat wafts across the area...

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed melee

## VOCODER

The Vocoder is a part of the Chroniclers' intimidation tactics. The device modulates sound and distorts, overmodulates, and amplifies a voice: it sounds machinelike and clanging. The microphone is integrated into the mouth area of the leather mask, modulator and speaker are attached to the chest. The volume of the Vocoder can be smoothly raised from silent whisper to an infernal din that you can hear from many kilometers away. Via additional dials, a delay can be added, the frequency can be changed, and a screaming feedback can be produced. Properly used, the Vocoder is the Chroniclers' most effective weapon. Within the Cluster, the voice distorters are not used.

**SPECIALTY:** A Vocoder is powered by E-Cubes. However, the energy use is minimal, so a Vocoder could drone on for days without pause. As long as a Chronicler regularly enters Clusters or Alcoves to recharge his Vocoder, his electronic voice should always be there for him.

◇ Sonic weapons

## CASCADER

A Vocoder at full pitch is painful, but linked to a Cascader, a rod with amplifier blocks and speakers, a reedy voice turns into the roaring rage of a god. Mountainsides tremble, avalanches rush down and thunder into the valley, waves form on bodies of water, and dust dances on huts. The sonic pressure ruptures eardrums, knocks people to the floor, and drives them across the ground. Ribs break; veins rupture.

**SPECIALTY:** Cascaders are area weapons that cannot tell friend from foe. They cause heavy Trauma Damage in a 45° cone.

◇ Sonic weapons

## STREAM DRONES

Stream drones circle the Fragment like planets orbiting a sun. Buzzing propeller gyroscopes lift them up, where oculars focus on contrasts and then send the stabilized images onto a palm-sized display on the Chronicler's arm.

**SPECIALTY:** A Chronicler with active Stream drones cannot be surprised. His visual perception rises by +1D per drone to a maximum of +4D—when using more drones, even a Fragment gets confused. The display is the center of the world for the drones: all positions are calculated in relation to this center. If the Chronicler gestures or moves,

### SANCTIONED TECHNOLOGY

All lethal weapons are sanctioned technology. When a Chronicler uses this kind of equipment, he chooses from the general weapons table. The Resources needed to acquire the equipment is equal to the Tech Level.

STREAMER GLOVE

they take up formation and try to keep their position. A drone is controlled via the display and cannot travel further than (10) m away from it. Should this happen, it slowly sinks to the ground and waits for the display to come closer again. It has Armor (3) and Structure (2).

◇ Technology

## PORTABLE UPLINK

Even in the wasteland, Paradigmas do not want to be without the wisdom of the Cluster. With the help of a radio terminal, they contact the nearest Alcove, can send and receive messages, and can look for ancient knowledge in the Static Stream. However, the transmission performance is limited; usually, the Paradigma has to climb a mountain or hang a cord antenna between treetops.

**SPECIALTY:** With a little effort, +2D to Legends and +1D to Engineering. Calls for help cost (1) Renown and lead to a Shutter being sent. Depending on the distance, it can take days for the Shutter to arrive.

◇ Communication

## TRACKER

Fuses, and sometimes other Chroniclers too, are injected with transponders so they can later be located with a tracker. A tracker does not give directions, though; it just blinks faster the closer it gets to its target.

**SPECIALTY:** Trackers have a maximum range of (100) m.

◇ Orienteering / Tracking

## CHRONICLER SUIT

A Chronicler Suit is laden with technology. Cables run from E-Cube blocks to the velcroes on the back, the arms, and the legs. Sensors register movement and convey it to a microcontroller under the Vocoder. With the help of well-rehearsed, programmed sets of movements, impulses can be sent through the cables to the links. This way, the Chronicler controls the various modules that can be linked to his suit.

**SPECIALTY:** A Chronicler Suit is always equipped with shimmering applications. The Chroniclers call them glitter. They look impressive and make more than a few Clanners shrink back: the Chronicler gets +1D to his first try at social interaction (Quality "First Impression").

◇ Armor

## MODULES

There are numerous modules for Chronicler Suits (listed below). To activate a module that has been installed, the Chronicler rolls INT+Engineering (1). In combat, this counts as an Action. Every additional module installed makes using them harder because the movements have to be differentiated. Per module, the Difficulty rises by (+1), so if the Chronicler has not only installed the Source module, but also Fumor and Dome of Rays, any activation has a Difficulty of (3).

Most modules can also be augmented with the help of upgrades, level 1-3. Per level, the Resource value rises by (1). Therefore, the level 3 Fumor module would cost (4) Resources.

◇ Chronicler Suit Modules

### >SOURCE

The central module is the "Source", an energy storage block made of interlinked E-Cubes worn at the belt. The upgrade level determines the number of module levels it can supply with energy at the same time. The maximum level is 3, but nothing can stop a Chronicler from carrying several Sources, although the energy blocks are pretty heavy.

◇ Chronicler Suit Modules

DRAFT PRINTER

### >FUMOR

Thick grey smoke billows from slits in the suit and engulfs the Chronicler: per level, he gets (+1) to Passive Defense for 2 Combat Rounds. The level also determines the number of smoke charges: at level 1, the Chronicler can activate his Fumor only once before having to recharge the module in an Alcove. The Fumor needs an electric impulse to ignite, so it depends on a Source.

◈ Chronicler Suit Modules

### >DOME OF RAYS

In this advanced version of glitter, laser beams shoot from the pauldron and make the Chronicler shimmer like a god: per level, he gets +1D to all social interactions. Superstitious Clanners might panic and run—or throw themselves into the dust at the Chronicler's feet.

◈ Chronicler Suit Modules

### >GREENLIGHT

Green laser light bursts from the suit, changing its color and pulsating. Those who look into it feel nauseous, their eyes seem to itch, and a tickling in the skull explodes into a screaming headache. The Chronicler can direct the beams: usually, the laser emitters are mounted on the shoulders and chest and cover a cone of a little more than 45 degrees right in front of him. Those who look into the beams without wearing polarized glasses suffer a general penalty of -1D per Greenlight level for (2) Combat Rounds (the rest of the one they were hit by the light and the next one). After use, the module must cool down for (3) Combat Rounds.

◈ Chronicler Suit Modules

### >DISCHARGE

Metal filaments lead out of the suit to arms, shoulders, and torso. The Source applies a potential of several thousand volts that discharges as flashes when touched and shocks the attacker. The Chronicler becomes a weapon when going into battle: if he's attacked, the enemy suffers Ego Damage equaling the module level. However, Insulated armor offers complete protection.

The Chronicler can also attack by jumping an opponent actively with AGI+Mobility, provoking a discharge. After a discharge, the module must recharge for (2) Combat Rounds. In rain or snow, the module is dangerous for the Chronicler: he could shock himself to death. It needs to be deactivated when it's wet outside.

◈ Chronicler Suit Modules

### >SCREAMER

Pressure-sensitive sensors are spread all over the body. When touched, they sound a high-frequency screaming noise as an alarm. If the Chronicler was asleep, he is awake now. If a pickpocket has triggered the alarm, he must successfully roll PSY+Faith/Willpower (4) or flee in panic.

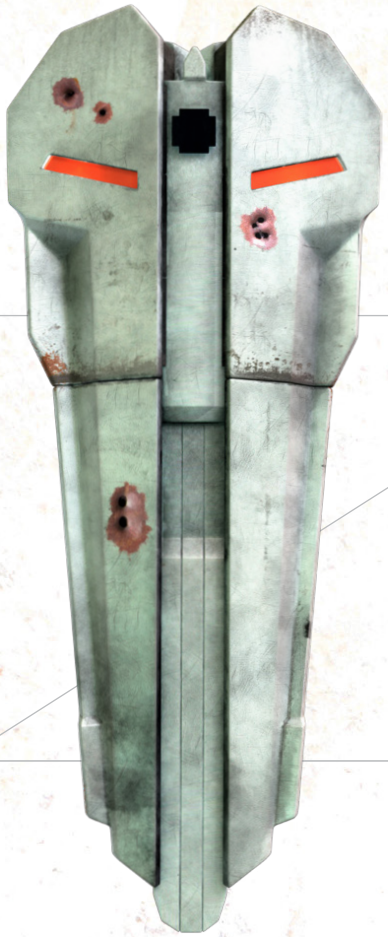
Screamers cannot be upgraded: they remain at level 1.

◈ Chronicler Suit Modules

### >FREON

Cold gas streams from the cartridge through a hose along the arm to the palm. The gas causes severe frostbite, but it only penetrates up to Armor rating (4). The Chronicler has to combine the activation roll with AGI+Projectiles, with a Handling bonus of +2D against the Passive or Active Defense of the target. The ray has a range of (3) m, and those who are hit suffer 1D Damage per module level, no matter what armor they wear. The level also determines the number of freon bursts. The cartridge can be recharged in Alcoves or Dispensers. A Chronicler cannot have more than two freon modules installed: one for the right hand and one for the left.

◈ Chronicler Suit Modules



TUNNEL SHIELD

## TRAILBLAZER

The Trailblazer is a Sagur-11 assault rifle with three 5.45 mm barrels. The ammunition can come from a magazine, but also from a bandolier. The butt stock can be turned into a bayonet, a combat knife, or a rifle bipod.

In the Alpine Fortress, every weapon is regularly checked with the help of an interface to both control the ammunition use and cleaning cycles, and to correlate firing dates with mission dates.

**SPECIALTY:** A Trailblazer can be modded without using up slots. The bayonet can be quickly pulled from the butt stock and mounted to one of the barrels. Then the Trailblazer can be used as a melee weapon, using the same profile as a Stiletto

The same is true for the rifle bipod. It is also pulled from the butt stock, swung out, and snapped into place under the barrels. The rifle can now be supported, which leads to +2D Handling if prone. The rifle bipod changes the balance, which causes -2D to Handling for firing when standing.

When a Hellvetic rises through the ranks, he can reallocate his Trailblazer's slots: every soldier has their Trailblazer custom fit to them in the Alpine Fortress.

◇ Rifles

## AMMUNITION

There are several types of ammunition for the Trailblazer.

### >HIGH-FREQUENCY FULL METAL

The standard ammunition. Fired from all three barrels with a high rate of fire.

### >HIGH-FREQUENCY HOLLOW POINT

Upon hitting a target, the bullet expands and tears large wounds: (+2) Damage. However, the penetration is reduced: for Armor rating (3) or more the Damage total is halved.

### >SHOTGUN SHELL

All three barrels can be loaded with Caliber 12 and fired separately. Reloading takes (1) Round per barrel.

## STUBBED TRAILBLAZER

The Special Detachment also uses a lighter, stubbed variety of Trailblazers. Their range is much shorter, but due to their construction, they are perfectly suited for special missions indoors. They can be used with one hand.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Handguns

## TUNNEL SHIELD

The Tunnel Shield is primarily used by Sappers as mobile cover for demolitions. The shield plates are collapsible to make transport in the tunnels easier.

**SPECIALTY:** The Tunnel Shield offers (+2) Passive Defense and +4D to Active Defense. However, it is very unwieldy and heavy (encumbrance +3). Only 1-handed weapons can be used when carrying this shield, and all attacks are made with a penalty of -2D.

◇ Shields

## HARNESS

The Hellvetic Harness is the second-most important piece of equipment for soldiers after the Trailblazer. In the time when the Hellvetics bridged the Reaper's Blow, this armor was perfected, and another function was added: heat dissipation. Today, it doesn't only offer good ballistic protection, but also compensates for the infernal fires of the passages close to the Reaper's Blow.

**SPECIALTY:** The armor plates of the Harness can be hardened and enameled in the fortress plants. The finish increases the Armor rating, but also the risk of the plates breaking (permanently (-1) Armor rating after (12) points of Damage with one hit; see "Brittle" Quality).

◇ Armor

## RECON HARNESS

With the Recon and infiltration variety, the ceramic armor plates of the regular Harness are replaced by flexible, fiber-hardened mesh. The armor is lighter and tighter. Clothing can be worn over it as camo.

**SPECIALTY:** If a stranger tries to see through the camo, he must make an Action roll on INS+Perception (5) (see "Camo" Quality).

◇ Armor

## HEAVY DUTY

The Heavy Duty Armor is a modular exoskeleton clad in Harness plates. It is custom-fitted for every mission

**SPECIALTY:** An exoskeleton gives its wearer BOD+Force +3D. All attacks and attempts to use Active Defense, as well as fine motor Actions, are at -2D. Modules can be combined as long as they fit into the armor's slots.

◇ Armor

### >HEAVYWEIGHT

The heavyweight module augments the Harness with heavy servomotors on the arms and legs, giving its wearer BOD+Force +6D (2 Slots).

◇ Heavy Duty Modules

### >CUTTER

The Hellvetic's hands are encased in hydraulic steel scissors that cut through sheet metal and iron. They are extremely powerful, but too slow to serve as an attack weapon. Obstacles are attacked with a power of (20) points of Damage per Round. However, the blades need grip, which is why steel hatches are immune to them (3 Slots).

◇ Heavy Duty Modules

### >COOLER

The armor plates are riddled with small tubes that dissipate heat. Ventilators swirl heat accumulation. The Soldier can enter even the depths of the Reaper's Blow without fear of incineration (1 Slot).

◇ Heavy Duty Modules

### >ARC WELDER

An arc welder is attached to the main hand. The gas supply leads to a tank on the back beneath the armor. While the arc welder can be used in melee, it is not recommended to go to war with it, for the tank is fragile: a direct hit (Aimed, Difficulty +2) with at least (4) Damage penetrates it and ignites the gas. The detonation destroys the exoskeleton: the soldier has no chance. Used as a tool, the arc welder does (15) points of Damage per Round to metals (3 Slots).

◇ Heavy Duty Modules

### >TUNNEL DRILLER

The Tunnel Driller is the biggest and most sophisticated add-on. To carry it, the shoulders and main arm have to be reinforced: stabilizers absorb vibration and change the kinetic energy to warmth. The drill is Petro driven, and the tank is carried on the back. Heavy Duty Harnesses with Tunnel Driller support rescue missions after cave-ins. They break through rock and concrete with (10) points of Damage per Round but are completely unsuited for combat: -6D to attacks and Active Defense. The tank runs the same risk of danger as the one from the arc welder variety (3 Slots).

◇ Heavy Duty Modules

## RADIO BACKPACK

The Radio Backpack expands the active range of a Hellvetic squad to over 200 km. The soldier can contact the high command even at long distances from the Alpine Fortress or communicate with other users.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Communication

## FORAGER UPLINK

Foragers connect to the Alpine Fortress's network with their handheld computers to order weapons and ammo. The uplink computer is a Bygone masterpiece tailor-made for military purposes: robust, long battery service life, the link to the central computer encrypted at the highest level. This makes the Chroniclers covet them. Maybe they could finally enter the digital core of the Alpine Fortress with a Forager Uplink.

**SPECIALTY:** Raises the Resources for ammo, weapons, and food requisitioning to (6). Armor, vehicles, and add-ons are excluded.

◇ Technology

JUDGMENT HAMMER

## EXPLOSIVES

The minerals and chemicals needed to produce explosives are mined from the mountain, delivered by Neolibyans, or ordered in the Protectorate. They are refined deep within the mountain. The Hellvetics arsenal is awe-inspiring. Spread over hundreds of bunkers in all Territorial Regions, it awaits the army of Sappers and Genies. In combat, the Hellvetics use mainly plastic explosives that can be easily mounted to targets and activated via timers or remote detonators. For tunneling, the Hellvetics use explosives in rods that are pressed into the rock with high thrust.

**SPECIALTY:** Hellvetics can access any explosives and detonators they want with their Resources. For a Soldier, however, it is considered a waste to leave the Alpine Fortress with more than (2) charges of explosives. For Sappers, the limit is (4) charges.

◇ Explosives

## BINOCULARS

All binoculars of the Hellvetic Army are taken from stored Bygone stock. They are part of the standard issue of any flank bunker and Spotter.

**SPECIALTY:** +4D to INS+Perception when watching from afar.

◇ Orienteering / Tracking

## PATHFINDER

The Pathfinder is a navigation computer with a 10-inch monitor, built-in compass, and receiver module. The maps stored in it hail from Bygone times, but markers pointing to post-Eshaton cities have been added. Political changes, risk warnings, geographical specialties, or movement vectors can be added via small platelets: the Pathfinder milestones.

Usually, high-ranking Hellvetics hand out these milestones to Pathfinder users in preparation for a mission beyond the reaches of the Alpine Fortress.

**SPECIALTY:** A Pathfinder gives +4D to INS+Orienteering.

◇ Orienteering / Tracking

## TRANSPONDER BRACELET

The transmitter looks like a coiled cable. Spotters intertwine it with leather cords to camouflage it and wear it around their wrists or necks.

From 20 paces away, a Pathfinder computer registers the transmitter signal and shows it as a small dot on the map. In this way, Hellvetics can identify Spotters who are disguised among the crowd, and spare them when attacking.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Orienteering / Tracking

JUDGES' MUSKET

## CODEX

In the land of the lawless, the Codex with its rules, laws, and epigrams is a home for the Judge, based on the writings of the First Judge. Every Judge's Codex is unique, but most of the time the palm-sized book is bound in cowhide and carried in a satchel at the belt.

**SPECIALTY:** If a Judge meditates on his Codex for (1) Combat Round, he recovers (1) Ego Point. This is possible only once a day. Higher-ranking Judges prefer annotated special editions of the Codex that contain a glossary. These give them +2D to CHA+Expression when Judging.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## JUDGES' MUSKET

The muzzle loader made in Justitian's factories by the Steel Masters is of a similar design to muskets from the Bygone 17th and 18th centuries. It is loaded with gunpowder and a lead bullet via the barrel, and then the load is compressed with a rod: the weapon can only shoot once before it needs to be reloaded.

Every musket is adorned with standardized ornaments that show which Steel Master made it in which year. The hammer trap in the stock, which contains spare parts and maintenance material, is also standard.

**SPECIALTY:** There are a few double-barreled muskets. Every barrel is fired by its own trigger. If both barrels are fired at once, the accuracy decreases by -2D, but the Damage is doubled. The loading of a Judges' musket takes (2) Actions (per barrel).

◇ Rifles

## FLINTLOCK PISTOL

The firing technology and design of the flintlock pistol are identical to its larger brother, the Judges' musket. The range and penetration of the bullets are lower, but the smaller size makes up for that: when the musket is empty, the Judge drops it and pulls the flintlock pistol from his belt, then once that is fired he pulls out another.

**SPECIALTY:** Judges can carry several pistols. As with the Judges' musket, reloading takes 2 Actions.

◇ Handguns

## JUDGMENT HAMMER

The First Judge founded the tradition of judging by hammer. It has lingered on until today. Every City Judge gets one of these solid steel hammers when he is anointed—and will soon have to use it.

A Judgment hammer is not a trinket. It symbolizes the executive power. That is why its rounded steel head is unadorned. The shaft is over 1 m long and just as plain.

**SPECIALTY:** A Judgment hammer has the negative special ability "Impact (3T)". It can be dampened by a Potential.

◇ Armed Melee

## JUDGMENT TOOLS

Only a very few crimes are punished with death or imprisonment by the Judges. Instead, convicts are marked, and the colors needed for that are part of the Judgment tools that every Judge carries around in his leather bag. Additional tools include a branding iron to mark repeat offenders, rapists, and killers, as well as a lighter and coal.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## JUDGES' HORSE

Riding is the Judge's preferred means of travel. As a young Protector, the Judge will have to make do with old nags and slow-gaited horses. But later, the Judiciary provides him with a charger—and perhaps someday with one of the battle hardened Judges' horses.

**SPECIALTY:** If the Judge attacks from horseback with his Judgment hammer, he may roll the combo AGI+Navigation and BOD+Melee. The speed of the Judge's horse increases the impact of his blow (see Vehicle Combat rules).

◇ Mounts

GRINDER

## MARVEL

A Scrapper's rifle is as unique as the man and his rune. Many dirt diggers are suspicious of any weapons salvaged from the ruins (after all, they were not able to save their owner) and screw and weld together their own rifles from whatever they find on their travels. The finished product is rarely beautiful, but always individual. All Marvels start as muzzle loaders and shoot gunpowder and lead bullets, but the user can change and modify the rifle to remove this limitation.

Screwed-on blades or small daggers are common, though only as last-ditch security mechanisms.

**SPECIALTY:** Marvel rifles have the highest number of slots.

◇ Rifles

## GRINDER

The Grinder is a legendary kind of Marvel. The manufacturer Wismuth came up with a handheld shotgun with a crank grinder that ground screws and stones to ammo over 50 winters ago. A little scrap can be found anywhere if one cares to look. The shooter only has to add black powder.

**SPECIALTY:** The Grinder's ammunition causes terrible wounds but has a terrible penetration (for Armor rating (2+), Damage is halved).

◇ Handguns

## CRUSHER

As with the Marvels, Scrappers also build melee weapons from artifact scrap. They cobble together saw blades, spikes, and glass shards and build swords from sheet metal. The only thing that matters is that it stays together and looks brutal. Scrappers are not fighters, so deterrence is important.

**SPECIALTY:** Crushers have a high number of slots.

◇ Armed Melee

## TOOLKIT

Over the course of their travels and scavengings, Scrappers collect tools that help them modify their gear, repair artifacts, or pick locks.

**SPECIALTY:** The quality of the tools can be raised from level 1 to level 3. Every level brings +1D on AGI+Crafting and AGI+Dexterity (if applicable). You can either find or buy better tools.

◇ Technology

TONFA

CRUSHER

## CARRYING RIG

Vehicles or mounts do not survive for long where the Scrappers work. The ground is too bumpy: there are too many holes to catch hooves and iron armaments tear up tires.

The dirt diggers had to find another way to get their findings from the ruins, and over time they developed and perfected various forms of carrying rigs and handcarts. Today, the size and comfort of these devices tells a lot about a Scrapper's success.

**SPECIALTY:** There are 3 levels of carrying rigs: per level, they decrease the encumbrance of the scrap by (1).

◇ Transportation aids

## PNEUMATIC METAL SHEARS

Scavengers depend on heavy gear to reach the depths of the Bygone world with all their artifacts. With the help of pneumatic metal shears, they crack old seals and tear through mountains of metal.

**SPECIALTY:** As long as the metal shears can get a grip, they add +4D to BOD+Force when clearing away huge obstacles made of metal.

◇ Technology

## TRACTOR RIG

A Petro-fueled engine, a gearbox with a direct drive axis, and two deep-tread tires bracing themselves into the dirt: the Scavengers' tractor rigs are not beauties, but heavily built steel beasts of burden with which to tear obstacles from their roots or lift heavy artifacts from the depths. Usually, a group of Scavengers buys and operates them together. They are the heart of the enterprise.

Only Scrappers who were able to prove that they are good with engines may maintain the tractor rig under surveillance.

**SPECIALTY:** A tractor rig has a BOD+Force of (30).

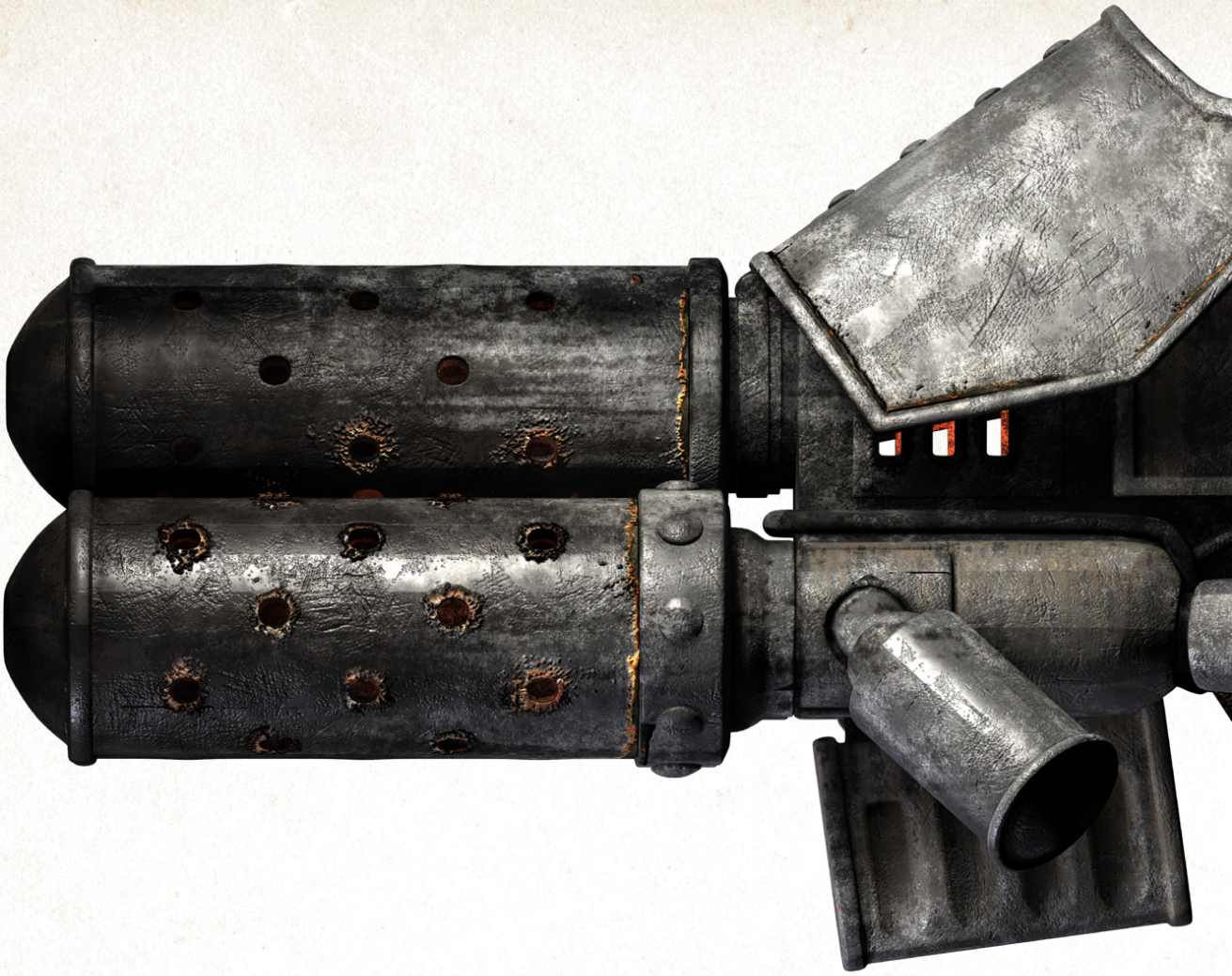
◇ Vehicles

## PERISCOPE

With the help of simple mirror constructions, Scrappers can explore bunkers through cracks pried open or watch some threat in the wasteland without the risk of being spotted themselves.

**SPECIALTY:** When a Scrapper uses a periscope, he is harder to spot: +2D to AGI+Stealth.

◇ In the shadows



## PRIMITIVE CLUB

Only civilization brings noteworthy forms of crafts. For many Clans, both are unknown. They take what they need from the ruins: choosing old pipes as clubs and tie bricks or sharpened metal sheets to the top with wire and leather strips. These weapons may be primitive, but they are still effective.

Often, the Clans mark their weapons with their personal symbols. Some also tie the hair of enemies they've killed around the shafts or attach teeth and claws to it.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed Melee

## ATLATL

Like the primitive clubs, atlatls are simple weapons that are easy to make and exist in many varieties. These crude devices throw spears with a high initial acceleration. Their penetration and range are much higher in comparison with hand-thrown spears.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Thrown weapons

## BODY PAINT

Body painting is a tradition shared by many tribes. Whether it's the Masai or the nomads from Pollen, all have traditional patterns and forms that they paint their skin with for combat, camouflage, or certain rites. That is why many Clanners carry a pouch with herbal and fungal paints.

**SPECIALTY:** Camo paint gives +2D to AGI+Stealth; Traditional war paint strengthens PSY+Faith/Willpower by 2D.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## TRAPS

Hunting with spear and bow does not always bring enough prey to the campfire to feed the Clan. The Clans would not have survived if their hunters were not also expert trappers. But catching prey is not always at the center of trapping: sometimes wild beasts or the warriors of enemy Clans need to be stopped from approaching. Hunters and warriors often carry several traps tied to their bodies.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Traps

PNEUMO HAMMER

## IRON CLUB OF THE COCKROACH KING

The Cockroach Clan is infamous for its nightly forays. Its fighters, thirsty for blood, break from the ruins, disappearing back into their wrecked world by day. Their kings are different: bloated, colossal, the head barely reaching above the shoulders. The Cockroaches treat them like dangerous animals, caged, worshiped. The women are keen on being impregnated by them: strong children for the nest.

If one of these kings is released on an enemy, he drags a club, an iron beam coated in sharpened sheet-metal and wrapped in barbed wire. With it, he attacks the Judges' horses and tears them to the ground. The warriors do the rest.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed Melee

## PNEUMO HAMMER

The Mechans from the Ramein region once developed a pneumatic bolt gun using the papers left behind by their legendary founding father, the Mechanist. Years later, it became known as the Pneumo Hammer. Its bearers founded their own warrior caste: the Pneumancers. The weapon is heated with coal until the water in the boarding tank is hot enough to generate enough pressure. A valve system directs the steam to the barrels one after another, firing the bolts and reloading at the same time.

**SPECIALTY:** Pneumo Hammers need a little over 5 minutes to reach their working temperature and become usable. They can also be used as bombs: if all the valves are closed, pressure and temperature rise until a thundering detonation tears apart the cast iron. The Damage of this steam explosion is (12)

◇ Heavy weapons

## DRUSCHINNIK SILK ARMOR

Wroclaw's fine silk thread is turned into breastplates for the Piast's bodyguards. Several layers of silk are stacked and stitched. The fabric is extremely resilient, deflecting arrows and knife blades.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armor

CLUB

## ANUBIS MASK

When an Anubian wears this mask and has painted his body black with tree resin, he symbolically becomes Anubis. He is untouchable and, according to legend, has the abilities of a god. This mask is used for all important rites.

**SPECIALTY:** The wearer of the mask gets +1D to every social interaction with other Africans.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## ANUBIS FINGER

The bone is as long as a man's lower arm and adorned with engraved circles and spirals. It shines as if polished by the thousands of hands it's gone through. One end is sharpened and yellowed. The bone looks like a prehistoric weapon, and in fact it hails from the time of the first people, though it was never used in combat.

When an Anubian scratches an African's skin with the bone, if a welt the size of a fingernail forms—an Anubis mark—this African is destined to walk the path of Anubis. He becomes a member of the Cult.

**SPECIALTY:** The fewer circles are painted onto an Anubian's body, the faster the mark becomes visible. On a potential Initiate it takes over 12 hours to show, while on a Hogon it blossoms in seconds.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## CRUCIBLE

In these pitch black stone vessels the Anubian healers grind earths and plants and mix them with fat to produce ointments and potions. It is said that the crucibles are made of meteorite stone.

**SPECIALTY:** The stuff from which the crucibles are made is antibacterial and antimycotic: the Anubian gets +1D on the production of drugs or poisons.

◇ Medical equipment

## KHOPESH

According to myth, only the Khopesh chosen by Anubis can cut through a creature's lifeline without tearing through meat and organs like the Scourgers do. The sword is brought into the land of the Crow mainly by the Anubian Sickles and Ammits to eradicate Psychonauts from the wave.

All Khopeshes are ancient. They were once taken from the chambers in Cairo by those in the First Circle and passed on to worthy Anubians by the Hogons. Only a few hundred still exist, passed on by recently chosen Hogons to young Sickles.

There will come a day when a Sickle will have to go north without his blade.

**SPECIALTY:** (+2) Damage against Psychonauts.

◇ Armed Melee

## AMMIT SICKLE

An Ammit sickle is even rarer than a Khopesh. According to legend, its blade was made from meteorite iron collected millennia ago from a crater in central Africa. The first Nubian king, Alara, is said to have worn one of these weapons when he rose to the throne as a sign that his ruling dynasty and the Nubian people would flourish under the protection of the Ammit sickle.

The blades are pockmarked and black from age: only the edges are sharp. The faces show delicate patterns reminiscent of the contour lines on topographic maps. It is uncertain whether they originally had a connection to Ammit: maybe the Anubians in Cairo would know.

The name of the weapon has its origin in the fact that today the sickle blades are given to the enigmatic Ammits by the Hogons.

**SPECIALTY:** (+3) Damage against Psychonauts.

◇ Armed Melee

## DUAT FRUIT

They were gathered deep in the Psychovores and carry the Raze. They do not burst into a mash of sweet juice and rind but into splinters that penetrate the skin and necrotize the surrounding tissue.

Anubians are partly immune to their effects and could throw the fruit at enemies if it wasn't against their laws and traditions. But when in need...

Anubians chew the splintery Duat fruit to start a catalysis, a very dangerous procedure that only Healers and Hecateans dare to attempt.

**SPECIALTY:** The deeper in the Psychovores they are harvested, the more potent Duat fruit are. This is represented by levels from 1-6, where a 1 indicates the fringe of the Psychovores and a 6 the fields surrounding Cairo. Soft pressure is enough to make the fruit splinter—if it touches a bare piece of skin afterwards, it causes the Raze.

An Anubian can catalyze fruit up to a level equaling his rank without any danger, so a Hecatean (Rank 4) can eat Duat fruit up to level 4 without having to fear the Raze.

◇ Pharmaceutics

## DUAT BLOOD

If an Anubian has survived the catalysis of a Duat fruit, a process that brings them face to face with Anubis in a near-death coma, the source of all life boils in his veins. His blood is highly potent. Drained, mixed with earths, and rolled into balls or dissolved in plant oil, worthy Africans receive it as a panacea.

**SPECIALTY:** The quality of the Duat Blood depends on the Potency of the catalyzed Duat fruit and the catalysis procedure itself and is expressed in their level. Taken as a drug, it cleanses the body of germs and even of the Raze. Duat Blood is considered a general antidote with a Potency equaling its level.

◇ Pharmaceutics

## SOUL STONES

The Dhoruba asteroid caused molten rock to fall from the sky. It cooled and rained down on earth as glass drops. Before the Psychovores covered the Dhoruba, the Africans collected the black glass. They thought it held the souls of those the asteroid had burned and blown away.

Now, centuries later, everyone knows the black glass as soul stones. The Anubians use them as tools of superstition: they pretend to contact the ancestors through the stones.

**SPECIALTY:** A believer can be impressed by the stones. The Anubian gets +1D to social interactions with him. The stones must be visible to have this effect.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## SCOURGER MASK

The mask is a symbol of the close ties the Scourgers have to their ancestors and their traditions—but it is also a means of intimidation. Every Scourger fashions it from a piece of wood from his homeland and paints it like his father taught him to.

The loss of the terrifying mask in enemy country is considered a bad omen, for the ghosts of the Scourger's vanquished foes know now who condemned them to oblivion.

**SPECIALTY:** The mask strengthens the spirit with +2D to mental attacks (PSY+Faith/Willpower).

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## FLAK JACKET AND HELMET

The Scourgers' armor comes from old UAO stock and has been maintained and repaired by the best tailors and smiths in the land.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armor

## OVAL SHIELD

Those who carry a hide-covered oval shield into battle do not follow the rules of modern warfare, but the commands of tradition. The assault rifle remains in camp, wrapped in oiled cloth, and instead the warrior chooses shield and spear. This way, he walks the path of the ancient ancestors, degrading the enemy to the level of an animal and the war to a hunt.

**SPECIALTY:** The shield gives +2D to Active and +1 to Passive Defense. The shield impedes a warrior: -1D to Attack rolls.

◇ Shields

## SPEAR

The spear is the traditional Scourger weapon that every young warrior has to master before he gets his first rifle. If the Scourger manages a heroic deed with the aid of his spear, it is also ascribed to the weapon. Such a blessed weapon is a bringer of luck and is considered ensouled. An ancestor or benign spirit obviously inhabits it and leads

SCOURGE

the Scourger's hand. The warriors treat such a spear with respect and pass it along in the pack when its owner has died.

**SPECIALTY:** Ensouled weapons are recognizable from their engravings of thanks and their colorful cords. They are never sold. A Scourger has to prove that he's worthy on the battlefield to be honored with such a weapon by his Dumisai. When he has it in his hands, he feels invincible: +2D to PSY+Faith/Willpower (see "Talisman" Quality).

◇ Armed Melee

## SCOURGE

The Scourge entered the land in the hand of the Hybrispanian invaders, driving the Africans—until they rose up and tore the shock whips from the hands of the invaders. Since then, the Scourge has been a symbol for Africa's freedom.

The design of the weapon hasn't changed since that day: the shaft is insulated and contains an E-Cube that energizes a thicket of barbed cords of more than 3 meters in length. The cords are retractable so that the Scourge can be worn on the belt.

When someone is hit by the Scourge, the cords discharge a network of blue lightning. It smells of ozone and burnt flesh.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed Melee

## ASSAULT RIFLE

Those who have proven themselves worthy of the pack may sharpen their claws and carry a rifle. The weapons and the ammo come from UAO stock, partly salvaged from the jungle, but the majority are still in storage in the Bygone UAO barracks in Tunis, a city that is now occupied by rebellious slaves.

Until now, the Scourgers have avoided the problem by looking for the weapons in forgotten fortresses—but they need a solution soon, and it is not going to be a peaceful one.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Rifles

## KOM

Roaring buggies race across the plains. Scourgers cling to the roll bars and absorb every bump with their knees, dust and dirt thrown up against their masks. The warriors call these vehicles Koms, probably after an old African word for throne—a throne from which to rule the world.

The buggies are open and unarmored. Some have a dragnet crossbeam in front and a cage for human freight on the bed in back, although sometimes a machine gun replaces the cage. The equipment of the Kom depends on the mission and the workshop in the Surge Tank.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Vehicles

## LION HELMET

Only the Simba may wear the lion helmet in battle. The mighty lion skull is heavy, it symbolizes the fusion of animal and human and reminds the Africans that they are at the top of the food chain.

**SPECIALTY:** In the land of the Crow, the Simba's rank effects only apply when he wears the lion helmet.

◇ Armor

## HUNTING RIFLE

It is said that you can tell a Neolibyan's wealth from his garb, the good teeth of his followers, and his rifle. The precision rifles fashioned in African workshops are beautifully crafted individual items, and their glory symbolizes their owner's status. Some Neolibyans have their rifle bejeweled with gold and silver, while others prefer gemstones or ivory.

**SPECIALTY:** Augmentation slots can be fitted with adornments for 10,000 Dinars each. Every adornment slot gives the Neolibyan +1D to social interaction with other Neolibyans.

◈ Rifles

## MASTERPIECE RIFLE

Only the Great Hunters may one day shoot at a Psychonaut with a Masterpiece Rifle.

Every weapon is a beautiful piece crafted by a master smith over several months of work. They are simple in design and only adorned with a few silver inlays, yet still everyone recognizes the value of a Masterpiece Rifle, which is several times higher than even the most beautiful hunting rifle.

**SPECIALTY:** Extremely valuable. Extreme quality.

◈ Rifles

## CURVED DAGGER

A Neolibyan sees his curved dagger as more of a statement than a weapon. The blade symbolizes his ties to an ancient Africa where a man was nothing without a dagger. Like the hunting rifles, the curved daggers are adorned with gold and bejeweled. They are worn on the belt, plainly visible for everyone to see.

**SPECIALTY:** Add-on slots can be used for ornamentation, similar to the hunting rifle.

◈ Armed Melee

## BALANCER

The Balancer is a heavy book adorned with lion hair or metal ornaments. The Neolibyan uses it to collect copies of his trade concessions, protocols of important bargains, and invoices. Those who can afford it upgrade their Balancer with a Bygone pocket calculator and secure the book with a lock or a trap. No Neolibyan would ever give his Balancer away.

**SPECIALTY:** If a Neolibyan loses his Balancer to a competitor, the new owner gets +4D to all business endeavors against the victim of the theft for the whole next year.

◈ Talismans / Insignia

### >POCKET CALCULATOR

A Balancer can be upgraded with a pocket calculator. This gives the Neolibyan +4D to INT+Science when numbers are involved.

◈ Talismans / Insignia

### >LOCK

A simple lock protects the business data against curious eyes. It demands an Action roll on AGI+Dexterity (5) from a spy who wants to look into the Balancer without having a key.

◈ Talismans / Insignia

### >TRAP

The lock can be additionally secured with a trap. Those who tamper with it without disarming the hidden mechanism with a flick of the wrist, spot the needle only when it pierces their finger. The contact poison has a Potency of (5) and drains (1) Ego Point per Round. The Effects fade after (4) hours.

◈ Talismans / Insignia

## SURGE TANK

The Surge Tank is the giant amongst the post-Eshaton vehicles. On massive tracks it rumbles through the ruins, invincible against the efforts of the barbaric Clanners of Europe. For the Neolibyan, it is a mobile base providing him with the luxury he's used to, but also with safety on extended looting trips or business visits.

In the cargo holds, tons of artifacts can be stored, and the garage offers room for 12 Koms.

**SPECIALTY:** Surge Tanks can be augmented. The slots can be used for cannons.

◈ Vehicles

## TRADING SHIP

Captured ships or those freed from the silt of centuries are repaired and sold to the Neolibyans. They set an army of carpenters and goldsmiths to work on the ship to free the rooms of the Merchant from profanity and obvious poverty. A trading ship offers room for family and scribes: a Neolibyan suffers no lack while on board.

**SPECIALTY:** Like the Surge Tank slots, the ship slots can be used for cannons.

◈ Boats and ships

## ASTROLABE

Astrolabes, more beautiful than practical, are still used by seafarers to determine the cardinal directions by the solar altitude of a star.

**SPECIALTY:** +1D to INS+Orienteering.

◈ Orienteering / Tracking

## ATLAS

A Seafarer's atlas is his life's work. It contains his discoveries, coastlines he has corrected, and shoals he has charted.

**SPECIALTY:** An Atlas can be raised from level 1 to level 3. Per level, the owner gets +1D to INS+Orienteering. Every three big discoveries give +1 level.

◈ Orienteering / Tracking

## BLADE BRACELET

Blade Bracelets are all the rage amongst Apocalyptics. The hand remains free, and bracelets with foldout blades are barely discernible from regular jewelry. Almost all Blade Bracelets are beautiful pieces: the best ones with the sharpest blades were fashioned by a Raven of the Carrion Birds over 200 years ago.

Allegedly, the Mother of Ravens ate his heart when he looked at another woman.

**SPECIALTY:** Blade Bracelets with retractable blades can only be recognized as a weapon by a roll on INS+Perception (4) (see "Camo" Quality). Blade Bracelets by the legendary Raven are even harder to spot—INS+Perception (6)—and deal (+1) Damage. They cannot be bought with Resources nor with Drafts. An Apocalyptic has to earn them.

◇ Brawl

## HARPOON CROSSBOW

The Apocalyptic crossbow shoots a barbed harpoon with incredible power, penetrating deeply into bodies or an enemy's armored vehicles. A rope connects the weapon safely to the projectile: if the Apocalyptics attach the crossbow to their motorbike, they can tear their victim to the ground at full throttle and drag them behind the bike.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Projectiles

## MOTORBIKE

Motorbikes are not well-suited to the wasteland. Every rock is a lethal danger—and that's just the way the Apocalyptics like it! Few can repair their bikes themselves. Usually the Scrappers do that, either enslaved ones or paid ones. The motorbike is a status symbol, and those who know how to drive it are the envy of other birds.

**SPECIALTY:** The Flock's motorbikes have an additional slot for modifications.

◇ Vehicles

## APOCALYPTIC TAROT

The cards determine the path of the migrants, merging chance, fate, and the will of the Raven. They are an instrument of power and a tool of contemplation. Every tarot is guided by the most ancient of tarots: the tarot of the Mother of Ravens. For centuries, the archetypical elements have remained unchanged but were imposed on worldly events, Clans, Cults, or people. Every deck is artfully designed.

**SPECIALTY:** +1D to CHA+Leadership in the hand of a Raven.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## KEY RING

Woodpeckers have founded hundreds of establishments and have a key for each and every one of them. Chances are that amongst the dozens of keys, there is one that also fits other locks.

**SPECIALTY:** In the hand of a Woodpecker, the key ring gives +1D to lock picking (AGI+Dexterity).

◇ In the shadows

## KOUMAYA DAGGER

The Koumaya dagger is a traditional curved dagger. Young African Apocalyptics wield it at their hip to demonstrate strength, even when there is none. More experienced Apocalyptics like the Marabous and Ibises only grin. They were once young themselves and also needed something to cling to.

Still, the Koumaya is a lethal weapon in skilled hands. Some of the African migrants rely on it for their whole lives.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed Melee

## STEEL COTTERS

An assassin's weapon: in passing, the steel pins are driven into the victim's flesh. The victim spasms, clutches the wound, tries to pull out the cotters yet cannot get a grip on them. Death is slow and painful.

**SPECIALTY:** After a successful attack, the cotters are in the enemy's body and deal (1) Damage per round (no armor reduction). Only through a successful Action roll on AGI+Dexterity (3) can someone extract the metal and stop the continuous damage. After the attack, the Apocalyptic is unarmed.

◇ Armed Melee

## IBIS STAFF

The Ibis staff is carried by African Ibis Apocalyptics as a rank symbol and is not suited for use as a weapon. The fine carvings and the carved Ibis head with the curved beak are fragile and break easily.

**SPECIALTY:** The staff guarantees an Ibis safe conduct through Scourger lands.

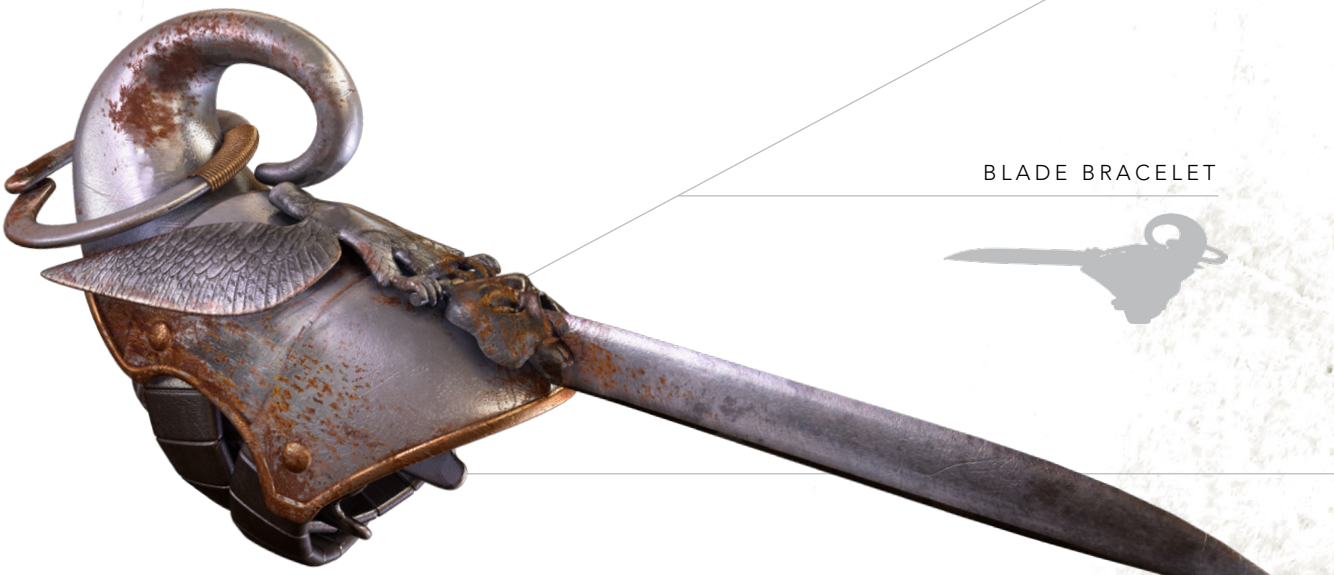
◇ Armed Melee

## FLYSSA

The flyssa is a wide-bladed sword with straight back. African Buzzards prefer it, and it is considered a symbol of high rank.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed melee



BLADE BRACELET



## SCIMITAR

The Scimitar, considered a traditional weapon, is preferred amongst Jehammedans. Ismaeli carry poorly balanced and simple steel sabers. The Isaaki, however, may wield artfully adorned Damascene sabers worth a fortune.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed Melee

## EXPLOSIVE BOTTLES

In the Jehammedans' explosive bottles there is a liquid made from bitumen and Petro. A twisted cloth is pushed into the bottleneck of the clay bottles like a wick. In combat, it is set on fire, and the bottle is thrown into the enemy ranks. The explosion is not enormous, but the flaming mixture clings like resin and cannot be washed off. Flames burn into the flesh: victims scream and roll on the floor while their despairing comrades look on helplessly. Explosive bottles are a cruel weapon. Those who use them must expect the most severe repercussions from the enemy.

**SPECIALTY:** Explosive bottles deal Damage for several Rounds. Per Round, the Damage decreases by (1). If the victim tries to douse the flames with sand or dirt for (1) Combat Round, the Damage decreases by another point.

◇ Explosives

## ICONS

An Iconide fights with God for his tribe's fate. For days, he bargains: every flick of the wrist, every sentence is traditional and chosen carefully. After days of austerity and prayer, the Iconide leaves his rooms. He is weakened, but happy, for God has listened to his prayers, has given the tribe a symbol of his goodwill: an Icon. A broken, reddish horn, a Scourger helmet riddled with bullet holes, or another strange bauble, the Icon is religiously charged. Its wearer becomes the executioner of God's will.

**SPECIALTY:** Icons are always tied to a deed or mission. If the wearer is confronted with the respective situation, he gets +2D to all Actions until the deed is done. The Icon is considered holy now and is brought back into the bosom of the community.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## RAM STAFF

The ram staff is a symbol for the strength and single-mindedness of the Cult. On the day before a great battle, the Iconide hands it over to the Isaaki who will lead the Swords of Jehammed to death or victory.

**SPECIALTY:** Jehammedans rally to the staff in battle and feel inspired: in a (20) meter radius, they get +1D to their Attack rolls ("Standard" Quality).

◇ Armed Melee

## JEHAMMED'S TEACHINGS

The scrolls with Jehammed's teachings are kept in brass tubes and only taken out and opened on holy days. The breath of God touches those who are allowed to take a look at the script.

**SPECIALTY:** The owner gets +2D to all social interactions inside the Cult.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## JEHAMMED'S WILL / ARIES'S BLESSING

Allegedly, the scrolls in the golden tubes reveal Jehammed's true goals and intents. Jehammed wrote this testament behind closed doors and kept its contents secret even in the

RIDING PICK

last days. "Jehammed's Will" is handed down from Prophet to Prophet, but no one has ever been able to decipher the texts. Interestingly, the Arianoi call the same tubes "Aries' Blessing". They claim that in them, Aries opened up and explained himself to humankind.

**SPECIALTY:** The owner gets +2D to all social interactions inside the Cult.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## SEAL STONE

Small burnt clay discs imprinted with the word "Jehammed" keep popping up. According to legend, the prophet himself imprinted them, though they are probably forgeries. Still, the seal stones cater to the need for closeness to the divine and are held in high regard in spite of all doubts.

**SPECIALTY:** +1 Authority.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## JEHAMMED'S STAR

When a Saraeli gives birth to an Isaaki, the Abrami of her tribe, crying tears of joy, gives her Jehammed's Star, a piece of gold sheet on a braided cord. It confirms that she has fulfilled Jehammed's expectations.

**SPECIALTY:** +2 Renown.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## BLOOD OF ARIES

The Blood of Aries is served in ram skulls. Those who drink it feel the force of Aries, become one with him. Arianoi who leave the community to carry Aries's will out into the world may fill the blood into field flasks.

**SPECIALTY:** The Arianoi heals (1) Flesh Wound per hour, a Blood of Aries (rank 4), (1) per (10) minutes. But every day that the Jehammedan has to make do without the concoction, his Ego Point maximum drops by (1). If it reaches (0), his body is past the addiction, and the Ego Point maximum returns to normal, but he has lost his regeneration ability. A sip of Aries's blood revives the Arianoi: the Ego Point maximum is reset to the old score, and the addiction returns.

◇ Pharmaceutics

## HORN

An unusual sword. It looks like an elongated horn and is razor-sharp, hard as a diamond, pure white, and serrated. Only those who are close to Aries may wield this weapon.

**SPECIALTY:** None

◇ Armed Melee

## RAM HELMET

An Arianoi only wears the bulky ram helmet in combat.

**SPECIALTY:** The sight of the ram skull on a human body shocks those who are weaker in will or of faith ("Terrifying" Quality).

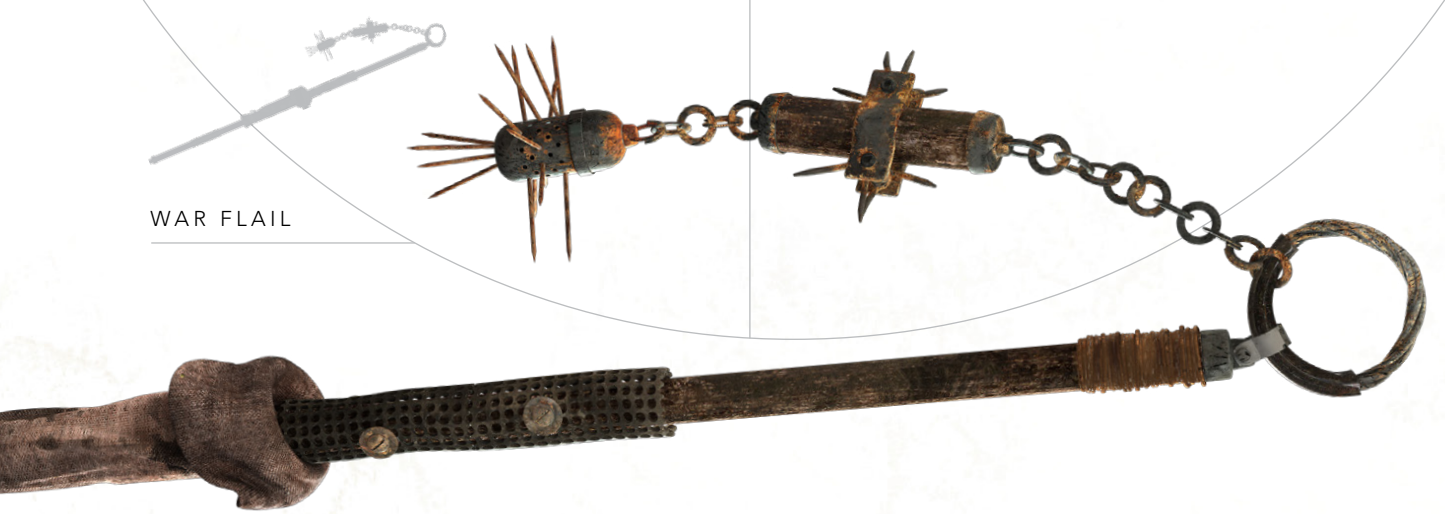
◇ Armor

## BLACK FLEECE

The fleece is liquid, darkest night, and its ram locks flutter as if they were in a storm—even if there is no wind at all. The Spitalians know this phenomenon; they have watched it in the Festering: a nanite swarm. How it clings to the fleece and why it doesn't turn everything it touches to carbon corals they cannot explain, though.

**SPECIALTY:** Just the sight of the nanite-drenched fleece terrifies people. They have to succeed at an Action roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower (5) or suffer a penalty of -2D when attacking the Arianoi ("Terrifying" Quality).

◇ Armor



WAR FLAIL

## LONG WEAPONS

Anabaptists are ultimately just farmers tilling god's forgotten and corrupt fields. Rebus taught them to raise their hoes and flails against the darkness. From a small group of righteous ones, a Cult that fights the final war for humanity—and still carries the farmers' agricultural tools into battle—arose.

**SPECIALTY:** Long weapons are hoes and rakes, scythes, flails, and pitchforks. They are dangerous in crowds but will always lose against steel blades in one-on-one combat. Still, the reminiscence to the rules of the Cult bring an Anabaptist carrying such a weapon +1D to PSY+Faith/Willpower ("Talisman" Quality).

◇ Armed Melee

## BIDENHANDER

While a hoe in the fist might conjure up the spirit of Rebus and warm the soul, the Orgiastics rather rely on 7 feet of forged and sharpened steel. Their Bidenhanders are enormous and hard to wield, absurd weapons for an absurd war. Some Bidenhanders have spring mechanics in the heft that make a hidden knife jump forth.

**SPECIALTY:** "Impact (2T)" Quality. If the Orgiastic cannot control the weapon at once, he can swing out the knife and fight with it in the next Round (Using the Knife weapon profile). However, he must drop his Bidenhander.

◇ Armed Melee

## SPITFIRE

Spore clouds and the plagues of the Aberrant cannot be fought with a sword. A burst of fire from a Spitfire, though, reduces them all to just ashes in the wind. The Ascetics may baptize the dry soil with water, but the Orgiastics baptize their enemies with fire.

**SPECIALTY:** A Spitfire is an awe-inspiring weapon, but it has a weakness: the tank is under pressure, and an aimed shot (Difficulty +2) dealing at least (4) Damage tears a hole into it. Gas leaks out and it depressurizes. Either from the Spitfire's own ignition flame or from a rifle heated up from firing, the gas ignites, the air burns, and the tank explodes. An Orgiastic who notices that his Spitfire was damaged has 1D Rounds of time before the tank on his back goes up. The Game Master rolls for the time but doesn't tell the Player. The Orgiastic can drop the Spitfire and tank and flee. The detonation Damage is (14) points.

◇ Heavy weapons

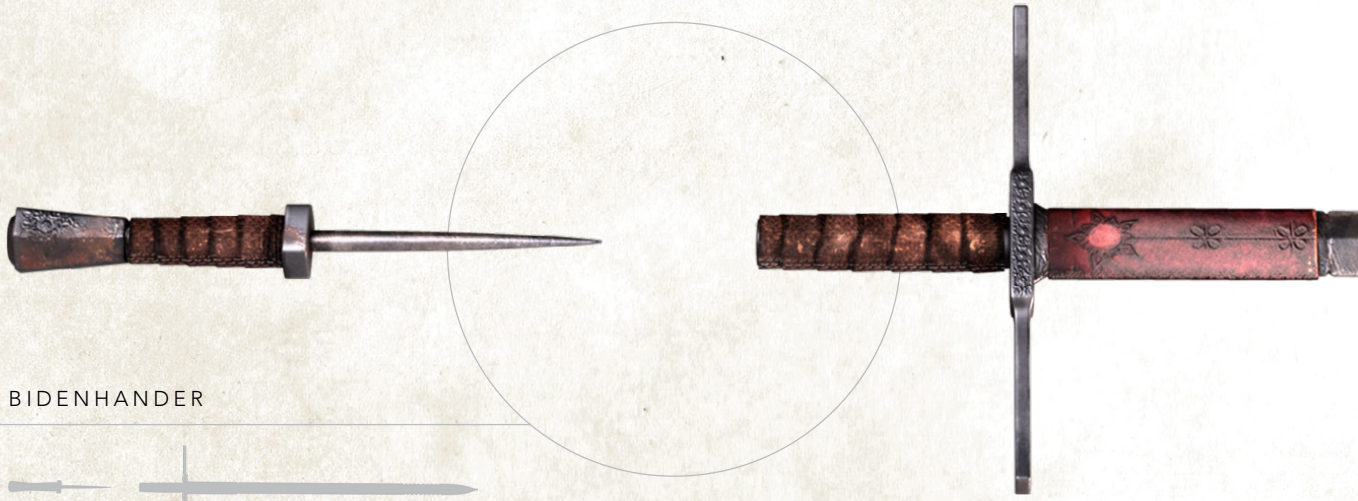
## ELYSIAN OILS

The Elysian oils are named after the four rivers of Paradise: Perat, Hiddekel, Gehon, and Pischon. According to legend, these rivers carried various valuable seeds, barks, and pips like cinnamon and coriander from the Garden of Eden. The paradise fertilized the world.

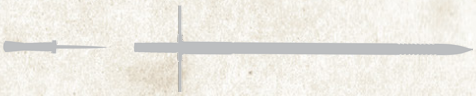
Today, the Elysians gather spices and roots, press them, and extract an oily essence. Through several cleaning and compression processes, they increase the quality and finally mix the essences according to the ancient recipes to produce the four well-known and appreciated Elysian oils. But there are also other blends on the market. The most notorious ones are Styx and Acheron, named after two rivers in the realm of the dead. They are mixed with Burn, a damnable abuse. No Anabaptist should be caught with these oils.

**SPECIALTY:** The Elysian oils are available in 3 qualities (level 1-3). The quality of Acheron and Styx is rolled at use (1-2 means level 1, 3-4 level 2, and 4-5 level 3).

◇ Elysian oils



BIDENHANDER



### > PERAT

Perat is the most common Elysian oil. Both Orgiastics and Ascetics receive it, and it accompanies them in the first years. It inspires the mind and sharpens the senses: +1D to PSY+Faith/Willpower and INS+Perception per level for (4) hours.

◈ Elysian oils

### > HIDDEKEL

The Furors receive Hiddekel like a divine gift. Massaged into the skin of the skull, it ignites their aggressiveness and drive, raises them to be avatars of the fight against the Demiurge: +1D to INS+Primal (no effect on Focus) and +1D to PSY+Reaction per level for the next (4) hours.

◈ Elysian oils

### > GEHON

Pain and weariness are vaporized in the fire of the Gehon oil. Deeper, there is a sea of contemplation and concentration: per level +1D to INT+Focus, penalties due to Trauma are reduced by (1) per level. Works for (4) hours.

◈ Elysian oils

### > PISCHON

The trees on the banks of the Pischon are the holiest ones for the Baptists: in a vision, Rebus saw the tree of enlightenment, saw falling leaves that circled through the air and softly landed on the water.

The ingredients of the Pischon oil are rare and valuable, and the mixture is only known to the oldest Elysians. Those who get to learn the recipe remain in the rank of Elysian until their deaths. The Pischon oil is the manna of Baptists and Counselors; it opens the mind to emanations: +1D per level to CHA+Expression and PSY +Faith for (4) hours.

◈ Elysian oils

### > STYX

Wounds taken only bleed briefly before they turn into pale chasms. Those who are anointed with the waters of the Styx feel no pain and believe themselves invincible. In fact, they take less Damage per Combat Round, (1) point per level of the oil.

This bonus is not applied to every single attack, but on the Damage sum per Round. So if the first attack in a Round deals (4) points of Damage, it is reduced to (1) remaining point by a level 3 oil. Another attack would deal the full Damage, though, as the oil's potential for this Round has been used up.

Yet as powerful as Styx may seem, it devours the Anabaptist from the inside out. When the effect fades after half an hour, the Anabaptist takes Trauma Damage equaling the level of the oil.

◈ Elysian oils

### > ACHERON

Styx destroys the body, but Acheron destroys the soul. Massaged into the skin of the skull, it opens one's view wider than the world of the mortals allows, and one can look out into the ether world of the Demiurge. The Anabaptist feels creatures over a hundred paces. His burning gaze penetrates barriers as if they were made of morning mist. No spore field, no Psychonaut, and no Leperos can hide from him. Yet they all stare back at him. They know about the stranger in their midst.

The higher the level, the further the Anabaptist can see (and be seen). At level 1, his ether gaze has a range of only (10) meters, at level 2 up to (100) meters, and at level 3 up to (300) meters. Acheron's effects remain active for about (30) minutes.

After that, the Anabaptist suffers spore infestation equaling the oil's level.

◈ Elysian oils

## SUN EYE

Sun Eyes are night scopes from the RG warehouses. Generations of Palers adorned them with engravings and various embellishments, fought for them and worshipped them. A stylized sun is an omnipresent symbol: according to legends the sun was incarcerated in these devices to brighten the user's sight.

The Sun Eyes are precious and are guarded vigilantly today by the Demagogues. Only the Cyclopes are allowed to use these artifacts.

**SPECIALTY:** The energy reservoirs of the Sun Eyes are weak, and the sight darkens after a few minutes. However, the reservoir slowly recharges if the devices are moved. Even Palers with a leg malalignment and a limp rarely have problems with their Sun Eye.

The Sun Eye combined with the natural night vision talents of the Palers negates any darkness penalties.

◇ Light sources / Fire

## SUNBURST

Palers don't need any light in their bunkers, which are brightened by LCD displays and blinking LEDs, but in unexplored hallways or in starless nights they are just as blind as any other person. This is why many carry one of the old Sunburst torches, wrapped in leather and holy cloth strips, augmented by capacitors, fragments of motherboards, mirror shards, and whatever else the old warehouses yield.

Because of their robust design, the artifacts are well suited as clubs. Actually, this is their main use, for there is an energy supply problem: the E-Cubes used in the lamps are usually empty, and the recharging stations in the bunkers have long since gone out of service.

**SPECIALTY:** A fresh E-Cube gives energy for about (100) hours of permanent use.

◇ Light sources / Fire

## SUBMACHINE GUNS

The original guardians of the Sleepers were equipped with muffled submachine guns, ideally suited for combat in the closed tunnel systems of the Dispensers. Now, centuries later, these weapons have been passed down to the Palers.

**SPECIALTY:** Some submachine guns are equipped with a bayonet and can be used like a knife, although with the handling of a gun, not of a light melee weapon. The bayonet takes up 1 slot.

◇ Handguns

## SUN DISCS

In the depths of the Dispensers, Palers find the mystical Sun Discs, flotsam of the gods, behind panels or in rooms suddenly unlocked. Usually they are made of ceramics, and their front has been artfully designed with metal and other materials: grim bronze faces, geometrical figures, worn brass, or perfectly smooth black glass. A word that the Palers use as name for the artifact is etched into the backside.

**SPECIALTY:** There are probably hundreds of different types of Sun Discs, and many of them interact: they amplify each other, unlocking new functions or blocking old ones.

They all can be upgraded using codes from the RG bunkers. An upgrade is announced by a humming sound, by blinking light, or through vibrations. So far, no Sun Disc has been raised above level 3.

In some Sun Discs, new abilities awaken after an upgrade while others are only keys to RG facilities. Sun Discs need energy. Their reservoirs enable them to work for many hundreds of hours, but in the end, the indicator lamps flicker and the humming sounds die down.

The discs can be recharged in the charging stations of the bunkers—if the facility still provides energy.

◇ Sun Discs

SUN EYE

### >PHAETHON

According to the oldest stories, Phaethon is the son of the sun god. The discs with this name are among the most famous ones, and every Paler child knows the grim bronze face they show. Phaethon shimmers when touched: at level 3, they blaze brightly. Interferences with other discs are unknown. At level 1, the disc opens most of the outer portals of Dispensers.

◈ Sun Discs

### >CATARACT

Verdigris on brass, curved parallel lines. The disc keeps humming when charged. If you trace the lines on it, the humming becomes the roaring of a waterfall until it reaches a high, resonant frequency. The sound is piercing and unpleasant and causes nausea in all bystanders.

The Cataract interacts with the Orbital disc. While Orbital shows surroundings, Cataract serves as ultrasound sensor and broadcasts detected obstacles to Orbital, where they are displayed as buzzing clouds of dots.

◈ Sun Discs

### >ORBITAL

The Orbital disc is marble white but feels rough. When it is activated through pressure, tiny dots on the material shift and form black patterns. The disc rattles and hums as if it contains a handful of cockroaches. The patterns show black veins that mimic Bygone railroad lines and rivers. Along the border there are small triangles pointing outward: they lead the way to bunkers whose command codes are stored in the disc.

Interacts with the Cataract disc.

◈ Sun Discs

### >ARBITER

The front of the Arbiter disc is covered in dull sheet metal and indented with stylized fingers. They point outward from the center, forming a lopsided star. The Arbiter forms a radio connection to systems of the RG and hacks into them: the monitors show the cursor prompt for administrator commands. Also, the disc reboots countless RG artifacts and can deactivate all Sun Discs within a (2) meter radius, although it can also restart them. Every Arbiter level gives the Paler +2D to INT+Artifact Lore whenever he wants to modify an RG system.

◈ Sun Discs

### >QUANTUM

The surface looks and feels like rough stone and is engraved with rings. The disc interacts with other Quantum discs, humming and buzzing when they are near. Level 1 recognizes other discs at (100) meters, level 2 at (500) meters, and level 3 at (1) km.

◈ Sun Discs

### >QUASAR

The Quasar disc depicts a flaming sun. It is lushly adorned with wave lines refracting the light. Quasar discs can be charged by sunlight and serves as an energy reservoir. When another disc is pressed onto it, Quasar transmits the energy. This Sun Disc is the only way known so far to make spent discs come alive outside the bunker facilities.

◈ Sun Discs

## GRIM SUN

Not every Paler is considered worthy of guarding a Sun Disc. That is why the less fortunate work on various

SUBMACHINE GUN

talismans in the cold light of the monitors and emboss round sheet metal with grim suns and intricate detailing, then punch a hole through them and attach them to their belts. These copies have no function othan than to inspire their wearers.

**SPECIALTY:** Those who wear a grim sun get +1D to Mental Defense.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

## ELECTRONICS TOOLS

Even Getrell did not expect the Dispensers to survive the centuries unscathed. In the bunkers, there are spare parts and tools to find and repair problems in the electrical system.

**SPECIALTY:** +1D to the Action roll for manipulating electric devices.

◇ Technology

## RG ATLAS

Not every Paler has an Orbital Sun Disc that shows him the way to the next bunker. Instead, he has to rely on old RG maps.

**SPECIALTY:** The maps show roads that do not exist anymore and lakes that are dusty basins today. Only landmarks recently added by Palers make navigating with the help of these maps possible and give +2D to INS+ =Orienteering.

◇ Orienteering / Tracking

## SESAMITE

Wherever there's a keyhole, there's a way. Palers prefer going that way with Sesamite, an electric lock pick. The mechanisms of the Sesamite rattle and hum in the keyhole while the Paler listens with eyes closed, carefully moving the artifact back and forth, slightly changing the angle—until there is a crack and the bar gives way.

**SPECIALTY:** When picking a mechanical lock, the Paler gets +3D to AGI+Dexterity. Not usable for the electronic locks of the Dispensers.

◇ In the shadows

## THROWING PULSOR

St. Elmo's fire dances across the cylinder, and then the fluorescent lamps burst in a shower of sparks. The displays blink and fade. All electronic devices within a radius of 10 paces are dead, dead, dead.

**SPECIALTY:** The Throwing Pulsor is a hand grenade that generates a powerful electromagnetic pulse when ignited, overloading and thus destroying any electrical device.

Only generators and reactors with special protection can take this. AMSUMOs are tough systems, but even they suffer (2) points of Structure Damage. Sun Discs and the locking mechanisms of the Dispensers are protected against the Throwing Pulsor.

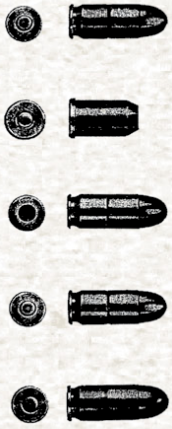
◇ Technology

## STRIP OF GOLD

These thin strips of gold are the currency of the gods. They are traded amongst the Palers and sometimes accepted by Scrappers, too, because somehow they look precious.

**SPECIALTY:** Strips of gold are rare and considered more of a collectible than a currency. Revivers trade them for Chronicler Drafts or Dinars in the sun world and thus establish themselves.

# WEAPONS



## AMMO TYPES

### .50 GL - "THUNDER"

A very heavy caliber with extreme punch. The gas pressure of the fired bullet can tear lesser weapons apart, and therefore the ammo is often traded rather than fired.

### .357 - "BRASS"

In the era of the beast, humans hunted everything with meat on its bones. They mainly used hunting rifles and small pistols of caliber .357.

Children still find the cartridges in the dirt, collect them, and trade them for some bread and soup in a workshop. The cartridges are cleaned, polished, and filled with gunpowder and bullets. Old stock is extremely rare.

### .44 - "ALPINE"

A very strong ammo for double-action revolvers. There is a known storage house for the ammo in the south of Borca; when it was found and exploited 10 winters ago, the ammo flooded the markets of the region. Most of the .44 bullets sold in Justitian or Wroclaw to this day hailed from this find.

### 5.56X45MM UEO - "FINGER"

The standard caliber of the NATO nations in the 21st century. Although NATO was ultimately supplanted by the UEO, the latter still accepted this ammo because of the capacities already manufactured. This same ammo is used today.

The 5.56x45 mm UEO round is very effective against unprotected human targets, but has its difficulties with heavy body armor if the target is further away.

### HIGH FREQUENCY FULL JACKET

This type of ammo is equal to the 5.56x45 mm UEO caliber but was modified by the Hellvetics to be fired from their Trailblazers at a high fire rate. To make it possible to cycle the bullets so fast, they are coated with Teflon.

### HIGH FREQUENCY HOLLOW POINT

This Trailblazer ammo, which again looks exactly like the 5.56x45 mm UEO, is designed to ensure the heaviest possible damage in human tissue. The price for this is low armor penetration.

### HUNTER FLECHETTE - "SPLITTER"

Flechettes are needle ammo with an extremely high muzzle velocity and excellent penetration.

However, the damage flechettes do to the human body led to their international ban: they were forbidden on all battlefields. This didn't stop some Western countries from using it in the war against crime and terror, and bunker teams were equipped with flechette weapons, too.

While regular ammo cartridges can partly be recycled, there is no chance to do so with flechettes. Once fired, they change shape in the target and become unusable. Furthermore, they perfectly fit in their plastic casings. The precision required for something like that is lost since the Eshaton. Flechettes are considered very rare and are sold at high prices on the market.

### 4.6X30 MM

The standard bullet of NATO and later of the UEO for pistols and submachine guns. Sporadically found, usually very close to UEO barricades or barracks.

### 9MM UEO

Only a few weapons with 9 mm caliber still exist, and there is not much more ammo to be found than what these weapons have in their clips. It's likely that the 9 mm UEO had been discontinued years before the Eshaton.

### 5X30MM CASELESS

A caseless bullet with good ballistic properties. The projectile is encased in a block of compressed and hardened powder that completely burns away at ignition. There is no known manufacturer that could produce this ammo.

### CALIBER 12

Scrappers love caliber 12. They fill the ammo, which is about as thick as a man's thumb, with screws, nails, stones, salt or buckshot, and they experiment with the propellant. The caliber is only suitable for shotguns.

### LEAD BULLETS AND BLACK POWDER

To produce a lead bullet, you need liquid lead and a tower. The lead is poured through a sieve at the top of the tower, takes on its round form while falling, hardens, and falls into water buckets. The lead bullets only have to be filtered out. For the propellant, charcoal, niter, and sulfur are ground, mixed, and rolled into very thin strips of cellulose. Propellant and bullet are filled into the muzzle loader via the barrel. The flintlock mechanism sends a spark into the barrel that ignites the charge.

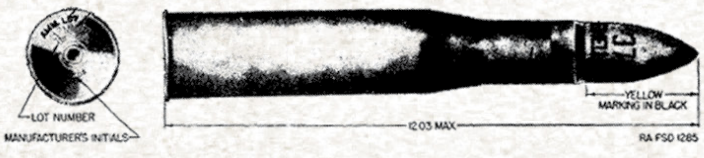
### E-CUBE

An E-Cube is a rechargeable energy reservoir that is used in energy weapons like the Soul Burner, the Shocker, or the Scourge because of its compact cubic form. It is also used in countless artifacts. The Chroniclers follow up on every find and buy what they can, so E-Cubes are rare and extremely expensive at market.

# AMMUNITION

## STATS

| Ammo | Damage | Tech Level | Price in CD |
|---|---|---|---|
| .50 GL | 12 | IV | 70 |
| .357 | 6 | IV | 20 |
| .44 | 10 | IV | 50 |
| 5.56x45mm | 11 | IV | 60 |
| HF Full Jacket | 11 | IV | 80 |
| HF Hollow Point | 14 | IV | 80 |
| 5.56 mm HUNTER Flechette | 13 | V | 220 |
| 4.6x30 mm | 7 | IV | 30 |
| 9mm | 9 | IV | 40 |
| 5x30 mm Caseless | 8 | V | 180 |
| CALIBER 12 (Buckshot) | 10, scatters | III | 10 |
| CALIBER 12 (Rifle barrel ammo) | 10 | III | 20 |
| Lead bullet and black powder | 8 | III | 10 |
| E-Cube | - | V | 1000 |
| E-Cube recharging | - | IV | 100 |
| Arrow | - | I | 1 |
| Bolt | - | II | 5 |
| Can of Petro | - | III | 300 (5 in Africa) |



# WEAPON QUALITIES

### AREA DAMAGE (ANGLE)
The weapon doesn't aim directly at an enemy: it covers an area stated in degrees. Everything inside this area can take Damage.

### ARMOR PIERCING
The projectile used is highly compact and fast. It pierces armor as if it were made of paper.

Armor piercing projectiles do not necessarily cause more Damage, but they ignore the special Qualities like "Massive" or "Bulletproof" the target's armor might have.

### BIOMETRICALLY ENCODED (DIFFICULTY)
The shaft contains biometrical sensors that are only triggered when the right person wields the weapon. Often, the electronics hum and vibrate to show their readiness. In the hands of a stranger, nothing happens: he cannot fire the weapon. To switch off this protective mechanism or change the encoding, the circuits have to be formatted or bypassed. Both require a skillful technician with an electronics workshop. He first has to make an Action roll on AGI+Crafting against the Difficulty of the Quality to lay bare the electronics. With INT+Engineering (Difficulty), he identifies the circuitry, understands its workings, and manipulates it. If one of the rolls fails, the Difficulty rises by (1). If it rises to (12), the weapon powers down. The only value it now has is its scrap value.

### BLUNT
Judgment hammers and clubs are Blunt weapons. They are especially effective against armor with the "Massive" Quality. (See armor Qualities, page 168)

### CAMO (DIFFICULTY)
A weapon with the "Camo" Quality does not necessarily look like a weapon or is easily hidden. The Quality rating equals the Difficulty to see through this camouflage with a roll on INS+Perception.

### CLOUD (RADIUS, AMOUNT OF TIME)
When a grenade is detonated, its agent spreads and covers an area with a radius of several meters. If there is no wind, the cloud hovers above the battlefield for a few Combat Rounds before dissipating. If someone remains in the cloud, the Damage or other effects are cumulative unless stated otherwise.

### DAZED (EGO DAMAGE)
A weapon with this Quality does not cause Flesh Wounds, but instead directly reduces Ego Points. Unless noted differently, armor reduces the Damage.

### DEVIATION
Grenades and other indirect weapons never exactly hit their target. Every successful attack goes along with a roll (1D). The result is the deviation of the intended target in meters. The Triggers are subtracted from the result: the more Triggers, the more exact the attack.

When an attack fails, you roll 2D to determine the distance in meters between the impact point of the missile and the intended target.

### DOUBLE BARRELED
The weapon has two barrels that can be fired together or independently. Whatever the attacker decides to do, he only needs one Attack roll. To shoot from both barrels doubles the Damage.

### ENTANGLED (MOVEMENT PENALTY)
A bola entangles the legs, a net makes movement impossible: weapons with the "Entangled" Quality bring a penalty on all Skills requiring movement in addition to their standard Damage. The attack's Triggers are not added to the Damage, but to the penalty. The fighter can try to free himself with his next Action: by force (BOD+Force) or by wiggling out of the entanglement (AGI+Mobility). The Difficulty is (2). However, the penalty applies. A companion can come to his aid and roll BOD+Force (2) as his Action to tear the net or the bola away from his comrade.

### EXPLOSIVE
The ammo used detonates in a fireball and destroys everything in a certain radius. Apply the explosion rules.

### FATAL
Thermonuclear detonations, the invisible death from a microwave ray gun, or a nanite infection ignore armor and

## BLACK MARKET PRICES

Whenever a Cult claims an item (i. e. whenever the equipment lists show a Resource value and a Cult), said item cannot be bought outside of the Cult. It can only be traded on the black market, for a higher price that includes the risk of retribution.

tear or otherwise destroy the creature from the inside. A weapon with the "Fatal" Quality causes Trauma Damage.

### FIRE HAZARDOUS

The ammo the weapon uses ignites its target. Apply the fire rules.

### FRAGILE

If at least one die rolls a 1, the weapon shatters. If the Action was successful, it at least causes Damage.

### IMPACT (TRIGGER)

This weapon is heavy and damn unwieldy, but in the hands of a pro, it's a tool of destruction. The fighter may only attack again or defend in his next Action if he has at least the stated amount of Triggers. If he has fewer Triggers, he loses his balance and needs (1) Action to get a grip on the weapon again. He may, however, also drop it and fight on with bare fists or another weapon.

### JAMMING

Jamming is a curse, and a shooter who uses a weapon with this Quality should resign to his fate. If he rolls more 1s than 6s when attacking, the weapon jams. It takes (1) Action to remove the jam.

### MUZZLE LOADER

The weapon is loaded with black powder and then with a projectile via the barrel. This procedure is time-consuming and takes (2) Actions.

### OUT OF CONTROL (DIFFICULTY)

Some weapons are just as dangerous for their wielder as for those he attacks. If the attacker misses his target, he has to get his weapon under control again: he rolls BOD+Melee (Difficulty). If this roll fails, too, the weapon hurts him as if it had attacked him.

### PIERCING (ARMOR RATING)

The bullet or the charge fired pierces any armor up to the Armor rating in brackets completely. Any Armor rating above the number in brackets is subtracted from the Damage as usual or—depending on the weapon—the bullet is completely deflected.

### SALVOES (NUMBER OF ROUNDS)

Some automatic weapons have a high rate of fire. This gives them the "Salvoes" Quality. The shooter can fire several bullets in rapid succession—and thus in (1) Action. The maximum number of bullets fired is listed in the brackets. Every bullet increases the Handling by +1D and the Damage by (1). If several targets are close together and the shooter wants to move the weapon, he splits his attack dice evenly between targets, rounded down.

He rolls for every target and determines the Damage; the extra Damage is also divided between the targets. If he fires a salvo of 5 bullets against 3 targets, the extra Damage of (5) decreases to (1) point of Damage per target (5 divided by 3 is 1, rounded down). Of course, a salvo cannot hit more targets than it contained bullets.

**EXAMPLE:** The Hellvetic Slabon targets full automatic fire at a group of Gendos. This will cause a bad performance review later, but right now he doesn't care: he's in a panic. His Action number rating is 9D. He fires a 3-burst salvo, which gives him +3D, so he has 12D now. He aims at 2 Gendos and splits the attack dice between them: he rolls both attacks with 6D. If he hits, he causes (11+1) Damage per Gendo.

### SCATTER

The weapon fires dozens of projectiles that spread out in a cone and hit the target. Shotguns, for example, are scatter weapons. While buckshot ammo punches giant holes into the targets at close range, its destructive force dissipates quickly after only a few meters. The Damage stated in the weapon stats therefore is only true for close range. For greater ranges, the Damage decreases by (4). On the other hand, there is no Distance penalty.

### SENSITIVE

High-precision weapons like sniper rifles are sensitive to jolting. When a fighter with such a weapon is forced into melee or is attacked, 1T is enough for the opponent to Damage the weapon: its Handling permanently decreases by -1D.

Skilled craftsmen can repair a damaged weapon. They roll AGI+Crafting: the Tech Level of the weapon and the Damage taken determine the Difficulty. If the roll succeeds, the Damage is repaired. If it fails, the Handling decreases by another -1D.

### SMOOTH RUNNING (TRIGGER)

The perfect weapon for attacks in rapid succession. If the fighter reaches at least the stated number of Triggers with his Attack roll, he may attack again right afterwards, though this time with a penalty of -2D.

Smooth Running can be activated on these extra attacks, but the penalty rises by -2D with every additional attack.

### SPECIAL

This weapon has a special Quality or trait that is too complicated to explain in a short table. Look for its entry in "Cult Equipment," from page 130 onwards.

### SPECIAL DAMAGE (ENEMY TYPE, DAMAGE)

A weapon with "Special Damage" is designed to cause extra Damage when used against a certain class of enemies.

### STANDARD (BONUS)

You fight for a common cause, carry it out onto the battlefield, are brothers and sisters in spirit—and the standard inspires and unites you all. As long as it is raised, everyone around it adds its bonus as dice to their Attack rolls.

### TALISMAN (BONUS)

This item has a sentimental value that cannot be measured in Armor rating or piercing force: it gives its wearer extra dice on PSY+Faith/Willpower.

### TERRIFYING (DIFFICULTY)

Lights flare, and a voice synthesizer announces readiness in a foreign tongue. Bizarre shapes, devastating Damage, glowing tubes, or thumping pistons: some weapons signal their appetite for destruction to the wasteland dweller, others seem weirdly ensouled, as though a grim god had created them for Judgment Day.

The very sight of them is enough to strike fear in the heart of the enemy: all opponents must successfully roll PSY+Faith/Willpower against the Difficulty of the Quality or suffer a penalty of -2D to their next Action. At the beginning of every Combat Round, they can gather their wits with a successful Action roll and get rid of the penalty. Those who manage this roll once are immune for the rest of the combat.

### THUNDER STRIKE

Every shot is a thunder strike that makes the dust dance and shakes the snow from the trees. A thunder strike makes mammoth herds stampede, and other animals might flee. Activating this weapon ruins any chance of stealth, and everyone will be aware of where the user is.

## USE OF FORCE

The bullet of a gun is pushed from the barrel and accelerated by a detonating propellant. A harpoon, however, is accelerated by physical force—a weakling won't even be able to penetrate a thin layer of leather with it, while a colossus of a man nails a Biokinetic to the floor.

This is why all weapons profiting from the use of force take BOD+Force into account when calculating the Damage: the abbreviation for the sum of Attribute level and Skill level in these instances is "F". This score is usually divided: "F/2" or "F/3."

With BOD+Force (8), for example, a weapon with a damage rating of 2+F/2 would cause 2+4=(6) points of Damage. When dividing to calculate Force based Damage, always round up.

## BRAWL

(BOD+BRAWL)

| Name | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | -3D | 1 | F/3 | - | | - | I | - | - | - | |
| Kick | +1D | 1 | - | - | Dazed (F/2) | - | I | - | - | - | |
| Blow | +2D | 1 | - | - | Dazed (F/3), Smooth Running (2T) | - | I | - | - | - | |
| Brass Knuckles | +2D | 1 | 1+F/2 | - | Blunt, Smooth Running (3T) | - | II | 1 | 10 | - | |
| Streamer Glove | +2D | 1 | - | 30 | Dazed (5) | - | IV | 1 | 4200 | 3 | Chroniclers |
| Blade Bracelet | +2D | 1 | 2+F/2 | - | Smooth Running (2T), Camo (4S) | - | II | 1 | 40 | 1 | Apocalyptics |

# ARMED MELEE

(BOD+MELEE)

| Name | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Butt stock | - | 1 | F/3 | - | Blunt | - | III | - | - | - | |
| Flail | -1D | 2 | 2+F/3 | - | Blunt, for Anabaptists Talisman (+1D) | 2 | I | 1 | 5 | - | |
| Pitchfork | - | 2 | 2+F/3 | - | for Anabaptists Talisman (+1D) | 2 | I | 1 | 5 | - | |
| Shard dagger | - | 1 | 4+F/3 | - | Fragile | 1 | I | 1 | 5 | - | |
| Club | - | 1 | 2+F/2 | - | Blunt | 3 | I | 2 | 20 | - | |
| Stiletto | - | 1 | 2+F/3 | - | Smooth Running (2T) | 1 | II | 1 | 25 | | |
| Grapple | -1D | 3 | 2+F/3 | - | | 2 | II | 1 | 30 | - | |
| Chain of blades | -2D | 3 | 3+F/3 | - | Out of Control (3) | 2 | II | 1 | 40 | - | |
| Knife | +1D | 1 | 2+F/3 | - | Smooth Running (2T) | 1 | II | 1 | 40 | - | |
| Spade | - | 1 | 3+F/3 | - | | 2 | II | 2 | 40 | - | |
| Hand axe | - | 1 | 4+F/3 | - | | 1 | II | 1 | 50 | - | |
| Spear | - | 2 | 4+F/3 | - | | 2 | I | 1 | 50 | - | |
| Stone axe | -2D | 1 | 3+F/2 | - | Blunt | 3 | I | 1 | 120 | - | |
| Sledgehammer | -2D | 1 | F | - | Blunt, Impact (3T) | 4 | II | 1 | 280 | - | |
| Riding Pick | - | 1 | 5+F/2 | - | | 1 | II | 2 | 300 | - | |
| Mace | - | 1 | 4+F/2 | - | Blunt | 2 | II | 1 | 350 | - | |
| Morning star | -1D | 1 | 5+F/2 | - | Blunt | 2 | II | 2 | 400 | - | |
| Pickaxe | -3D | 1 | 1+F | - | Impact (3T) | 4 | II | 1 | 450 | - | |
| Saber | - | 1 | 6+F/3 | - | | 1 | II | 2 | 600 | - | |
| Sword | - | 1 | 6+F/3 | - | | 2 | II | 2 | 600 | - | |
| Battle axe | -2D | 2 | 6+F/2 | - | Impact (2T) | 3 | II | 2 | 750 | - | |
| Splayer | -1D | 2 | 4+F/3 | - | Cutting (2T, +1D damage) | 3 | IV | 2 | 2800 | - | Spitalians |
| Surgical tools | - | 1 | 3+F/3 | - | | 1 | III | 1 | 1000 x Level | 3 / 4 / 5 | Spitalians |
| Injector Gun | - | 1 | - | - | Special, Piercing (4) | 1 | IV | 1 | 1400 | 4 | Spitalians |
| Preservalis Sword | - | 1 | 7+F/2 | - | | 2 | III | 2 | 1800 | - | Spitalians |
| Shocker | - | 1 | - | 16 | Dazed (8) | 1 | IV | 1 | 2400 | 3 | Chroniclers |
| Judgment Hammer | -2D | 1 | 1+F | - | Blunt, Impact (3T) | 3 | III | 2 | 1500 | - | Judges |
| Crusher | -2D | 1 | 2+F/2 | - | Blunt | 3 | I | 6 | 600 | 1 | Scrappers |
| Iron Club of the Cockroach Kings | -3D | 2 | 2+F | - | Blunt, Impact (3T) | 5 | I | 2 | 300 | Unique | Clanners |
| Khopesh | - | 1 | 6+F/2 | - | Special Damage (Psychonauts, +2) | 2 | II | 2 | 1800 | 3 | Anubians |
| Ammit Sickle | - | 1 | 7+F/2 | - | Special Damage (Psychonauts, +3) | 2 | II | 2 | 3200 | 6 | Anubians |
| Curved dagger | +1D | 1 | 2+F/3 | - | Special | 1 | II | 2 | 180 | 3 | Neolibyans |
| Ancestor spear | - | 2 | 4+F/3 | - | Talisman (+2D) | 2 | I | 2 | 500 | - | Scourgers |
| Scourge | -2D | 3 | 3+F/3 | 22 | Dazed (8), Out of control (3) | 1 | IV | 2 | 1900 | 2 | Scourgers |
| Scimitar | - | 1 | 6+F/3 | - | | 2 | II | 1 | 600 | 3 | Jehammedans |
| Ram staff | -2D | 2 | F/3 | - | Blunt, Standard (Attacks +1D) | 3 | I | 1 | 3300 | 4 | Jehammedans |
| Horn | +1D | 1 | 9+F/3 | - | | 1 | V | - | 24000 | 6 | Jehammedans |
| Damascene Saber | - | 1 | 7+F/3 | - | | 2 | III | 2 | 2800 | 5 | Jehammedans |
| Koumaya dagger | +1D | 1 | 2+F/3 | - | | 1 | II | 1 | 50 | 1 | Apocalyptics |
| Steel cotters | - | 1 | - | - | Special, Piercing (2) | 1 | II | - | 5 | 1 | Apocalyptics |
| Ibis staff | -2D | 2 | F/3 | - | Fragile | 2 | I | 1 | 220 | - | Apocalyptics |
| Flyssa | - | 1 | 7+F/3 | - | | 2 | II | 2 | 1600 | 3 | Apocalyptics |
| Warflail | -1D | 2 | 2+F/2 | - | Blunt, Talisman (+1D) | 3 | I | 1 | 30 | 1 | Anabaptists |
| Bidenhander | -2D | 2 | 8+F/3 | - | Impact (2T), Special | 3 | II | 2 | 1400 | 2 | Anabaptists |

## THROWN WEAPONS

(AGI+PROJECTILES)

| Name | Caliber | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stone | - | - | 5 / 30 | F/2 | 1 | Blunt | 1 | I | - | - | - | |
| Sling | - | -1D | 5 / 15 | 2+F/3 | 1 | Blunt | 1 | I | 1 | 5 | - | |
| Bola | - | -2D | 3 / 10 | F/3 | 1 | Entangled (-3D), Out of Control | 1 | I | - | 20 | - | |
| Shuriken | - | - | 3 / 10 | 2+F/2 | 1 | | 1 | I | - | 20 | - | |
| Net | - | -2D | 2 / 5 | - | 1 | Entangled (-5D) | 1 | II | - | 30 | - | |
| Throwing knife | - | - | 3 / 10 | 3+F/3 | 1 | | 1 | II | 1 | 40 | - | |
| Harpoon | - | - | 5 / 15 | F | 1 | | 2 | II | 1 | 50 | - | |
| Atlatl | - | -1D | 10 / 30 | 3+F/2 | 1 | | 2 | I | 1 | 50 | - | |
| Throwing axe | - | - | 3 / 10 | 3+F/2 | 1 | | 1 | II | 1 | 50 | - | |

## PROJECTILES

(AGI+PROJECTILES)

| Name | Caliber | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qual. | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blow gun | Nails | - | 3 / 12 | 4 | 1 | | - | I | 1 | 30 | - | |
| Bow | Arrows | -1D | 10 / 40 | 6+F/3 | 1 | | 1 | I | 2 | 200 | - | |
| Crossbow | Bolt | - | 15 / 60 | 10 | 1 | | 3 | II | 1 | 400 | - | |
| Heavy Crossbow | Bolt | -2D | 20 / 80 | 12 | 1 | | 4 | II | 2 | 800 | - | |
| Composite bow | Arrows | - | 15 / 60 | 8+F/3 | 1 | | 1 | IV | 2 | 2000 | - | |
| Repeating Crossbow | Bolt | - | 15 / 60 | 10 | 4 | | 2 | III | 2 | 2000 | - | |
| Harpoon Crossbow | Harpoon | -2D | 10 / 40 | 8 | 1 | | 4 | II | 1 | 600 | 2 | Apocalyptics |

## HANDGUNS

(AGI+PROJECTILES)

| Name | Caliber | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Signal Pistol | Special | - | 15 / 60 | 5 | 1 | Fire Hazardous | 1 | IV | 2 | 900 | - | |
| Pistol | 9mm | - | 10 / 40 | 9 | 12 | | 1 | III | 1 | 1200 | - | |
| Revolver | .44 | - | 10 / 40 | 10 | 6 | | 1 | III | 1 | 1200 | - | |
| Automatic Pistol | 4.6x30 mm | - | 10 / 40 | 7 | 20 | Smooth Running (3T) | 1 | IV | 2 | 2500 | - | |
| Heavy Pistol | .50 GL | - | 10 / 40 | 12 | 12 | Thunder Strike | 1 | IV | 2 | 2800 | - | |
| Stubbed Trailblazer | HF-full jacket | - | 15 / 60 | 11 | 20 | Smooth Running (2T) | 2 | V | 2 | 14000 | 4 | Hellvetics |
| | HF-hollow point | - | 15 / 60 | 14 | 20 | Smooth Running (2T) | 2 | V | 2 | 14000 | 4 | Hellvetics |
| Flintlock Pistol | Lead bullets | - | 5 / 20 | 8 | 1 | Muzzle Loader | 1 | III | 1 | 300 | 2 | Judges |
| Grinder | Black powder | - | 5 / 20 | 8 | 1 | Muzzle Loader, Scatter | 2 | III | 2 | 600 | 4 | Scrappers |
| Submachine Gun | 4.6x30 mm | - | 10 / 40 | 7 | 35 | Smooth running (2T), Salvoes (3) | 2 | IV | 2 | 3500 | 3 | Paler |

## RIFLES

(AGI+PROJECTILES)

| Name | Caliber | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hunting rifle | .357 | - | 30 / 120 | 6 | 4 | | 2 | IV | 2 | 900 | - | |
| Shotgun | Cal. 12 Buckshot | - | 5 / 20 | 10 | 2 | Scatter, Double Barreled | 2 | IV | 2 | 1500 | - | |
| Pumpgun | Cal. 12 | - | 5 / 40 | 10 | 4 | | 2 | IV | 2 | 2000 | - | |
| Sniper rifle | 5.56x45mm | - | 50 / 400 | 11 | 6 | Sensitive | 3 | IV | 2 | 4000 | - | |
| Light MG | 5.56x45mm | -1D | 30 / 80 | 11 | Belt | Salvoes (4), Jamming | 4 | IV | 2 | 5000 | - | |
| Fungicide Rifle | Cartridges | - | 2 / 8 | Special | Special | | 2 | IV | 2 | 2300 | 2 | Spitalians |
| Trailblazer | HF-full jacket | - | 30 / 120 | 11 | 35 | Smooth Running (3T), Salvoes (3) | 2 | IV | 2 | 18000 | - | Hellvetics |
| | HF-hollow point | - | 30 / 120 | 14 | 35 | Smooth Running (3T), Salvoes (3) | 2 | IV | 2 | 18000 | - | Hellvetics |
| | Buckshot | - | 10 / 40 | 10 | 3 | Scatter | 2 | IV | 2 | 18000 | - | Hellvetics |
| Judges' musket | Lead bullet | - | 10 / 40 | 8 | 1 | Muzzle Loader | 2 | III | 2 | 900 | 2 | Judges |
| Marvel | Lead bullet | - | 10 / 40 | 8 | 1 | Muzzle Loader | 2 | III | 6 | 1400 | 1 | Scrappers |
| Assault rifle | 5.56x45mm | - | 30 / 120 | 11 | 30 | Salvoes (3) | 2 | IV | 1 | 12000 | 2 | Scourgers |
| Hunting rifle ( Neo. ) | .357 | +1D | 30 / 120 | 6 | 4 | Special | 2 | IV | 2 | 1800 | 3 | Neolibyans |
| Masterpiece rifle | .50GL | +2D | 50 / 400 | 12 | 4 | Thunder Strike | 2 | IV | 1 | 14000 | 5 | Neolibyans |
| Sagur-72 | 5x30 mm Caseless | +2D | 30 / 120 | 8 | 35 | Smooth Running (2T), Salvoes (3) | 2 | V | - | 27000 | - | RG |
| Flechette rifle | Flechettes | +2D | 30 / 120 | 13 | 60 | Smooth Running (1T), Salvoes (5) | 2 | V | - | 32000 | - | RG |
| Soul burner | E-Cube | +2D | 50 / 400 | 16 | 15 | Biometrically Encoded, Fatal, Terrifying (4) | 2 | VI | - | 56000 | - | Free Spirit |

## HEAVY WEAPONS

(AGI+PROJECTILES)

| Name | Caliber | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grenade launcher | Grenades | -2D | 20 / 60 | Special | 1 | Deviation | 2 | IV | 2 | 1900 | - | |
| Rocket launcher | Missile | -2D | 20 / 60 | 15 | 1 | Armor Piercing, Explosive | 4 | IV | 2 | 4200 | - | |
| Heavy MG | 5.56x45mm | -2D | 50 / 200 | 11 | Belt | Salvoes (10), Jamming | 6 | IV | 2 | 8000 | - | |
| Cartridge launcher | Cartridges | -2D | 20 / 60 | Special | 4 | Deviation | 3 | IV | 2 | 2800 | 3 | Spitalians |
| Pneumo Hammer | Bolt / Coal | -2D | 10 / 30 | 10 | 12 | Thunder Strike, Special | 3 | III | 2 | 1500 | - | Clanners |
| Spitfire | Petro | -2D | 3 / 10 | 12 | 15 | Fire Hazardous, Special | 3 | III | 2 | 3800 | 3 | Anabaptists |

## EXPLOSIVES

| Name | Caliber | Handling | Distance | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black powder | - | - | - | 10 | 1 | Thunder Strike, Explosive | 1 | II | - | 100 | - | |
| TNT | - | - | - | 14 | 1 | Thunder Strike, Explosive | 1 | III | - | 300 | - | |
| Explosives | - | - | - | 16 | 1 | Thunder Strike, Explosive | 1 | IV | - | 800 | 3 | Hellvetics |
| Explosive bottles | - | - | - | 6 | 1 | Fire Hazardous, Explosive, Special | 1 | II | - | 60 | 1 | Jehammedans |

## SONIC WEAPONS

The Chroniclers' sonic weapons rely on a combination of technology and vocal power. This is why a Chronicler rolls the Combination INT+Engineering (to tune the device) and PSY+Domination (to modulate his voice). Enemies defend with PSY+Faith/Willpower against the Difficulty set by the higher of the two rolls. If they lose, they take the Damage stated. Armor is useless against sonic attacks.

### SONIC WEAPONS

(COMBO: INT+ENGINEERING AND PSY+DOMINATION)

| Name | Caliber | Hand. | Dist. | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocoder | E-Cube | - | 10 | 1+T Ego | - | Thunder Strike, Area Damage (45°) | 1 | IV | - | 1500 | 1 | Chroniclers |
| Cascader | 4x E-Cube | - | 10 | 1+T Trauma | 8 | Thunder Strike, Area Damage (45°) | 2 | IV | - | 6000 | 5 | Chroniclers |

## AGENTS

The agents of the Spitalians can be fired with a Fungicide Rifle, launched with a Cartridge Launcher, thrown as a grenade, detonated with a mine, or injected with an Injector Gun. The Injector Gun is not suited for every agent. There are differences in the effectiveness.

| Carrier Weapon | Effect |
|---|---|
| Fungicide Rifle | Triggers are added to the effectiveness. For instance, the general penalty for irritants is raised by the Triggers. |
| Cartridge, Grenade | The Action roll Triggers are used to cancel out the Deviation of the projectile. Thus, they are not added to the effectiveness. Instead, the agent spreads, which gives it the "Cloud (3 m, 3 Rounds)" Quality. |
| Mine | No Attack roll necessary. Triggers are not added to the Damage. Also has the "Cloud (3 m, 3 Rounds)" Quality. |
| Injector Gun | The agent directly enters the target's bloodstream. +2 Damage in addition to the Triggers. Also, the Injector Gun circumvents gas masks and armor with the "Sealed" Quality. |

### AGENTS

| Name | Effect | Injector | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SP 4016TH | Poisoned (4C, -2D, Duration 1 day) | no | - | IV | 50 | 2 | Spitalians |
| Pheromone marker | Attractant(Pheromancer plagues) | no | - | IV | 30 | 3 | Spitalians |
| Irritant | Poisoned (5C, -3D, +1D recovery per Round) | no | - | IV | 70 | 3 | Spitalians |
| EX-Aerosol / EG-1 | Pseudo-desporeing (1 + Triggers, 10 min) | yes | - | V | 1500 | 6 | Spitalians |
| Fire dust | Causes fire damage like a Spitfire (8) | no | - | IV | 80 | 3 | Spitalians |
| Black band | Narcotic (6C, 6 Ego) | yes | - | IV | 600 | 5 | Spitalians |
| Chlorine gas | Poisoned (5C, 1 Trauma per Round, Potency -1 per Round, successful roll on BOD+Toughness (Potency) ends poisoning | no | - | III | 120 | 4 | Spitalians |

## ADDITIONAL QUALITIES OF AGENTS

### POISONED (POTENCY, EFFECT, DURATION)

The agent attacks the metabolism. If the victim successfully rolls BOD+Toughness against the Potency of the agent, the metabolism successfully counters the attack. Gas masks and armor with the "Sealed" Quality offer protection if the agent wasn't ingested or injected, giving automatic Successes. If the roll fails, the victim must take the results. There could be a general penalty, but there could also be Trauma Damage.

### ATTRACTANT (TARGET)

An Attractant is always targeted on a specific person or a group of people with identical traits. Their behaviour is influenced to follow the Attractant until they find the source. Mostly, this happens through pheromones that the target finds attractive.

### NARCOTIC (POTENCY, DAMAGE)

Narcotics cripple the nervous system. As with "Poisoned", a roll on BOD+Toughness is permitted. Gas masks and the "Sealed" Quality protect against narcotics. In case of a failure, the Damage plus Triggers is subtracted from the enemy's Ego Points.

### PSEUDO DESPOREING (DESPOREING, DURATION)

The catalytic effect of the spores is blocked for a while, which temporarily lowers a Leperos' or Psychonaut's spore infestation by the respective desporeing points. After this time, the target can use its full spore infestation again.

This stops a Psychonaut from accessing higher level Phenomena and reduces the number of dice available to activate Phenomena.

# ARMOR

## ARMOR QUALITIES

### RESPECTED (TARGET GROUP, BONUS DICE)

The armor is respected by a certain part of the population. Its wearer gets bonus dice on social interactions with this group.

### FIRST IMPRESSION (BONUS)

The armor impresses. At first contact, its wearer gets bonus dice to all social interactions with strangers.

### FIRE RESISTANT (ARMOR)

Fire-resistant armor proves its worth in a Spitfire's inferno: instead of the normal Armor rating, the rating of the Quality is used. Also, the armor never ignites.

### TERRIFYING (DIFFICULTY)

Something about the armor awakens a primal fear in those who see it. If their Action roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower (Difficulty) fails, they can only attack the wearer of the armor with a -2D penalty.

They can roll before every attack: once the fear is vanquished, they are immune for the rest of the combat. Only the highest source of the Quality is accounted for.

### CAMO (DIFFICULTY)

Armor with the "Camo" Quality can be hidden from curious eyes. The Quality rating determines the Difficulty to see through the camouflage with a roll on INS+Perception.

### UNSTABLE (CRITICAL DAMAGE RATING)

Riveted iron plates or layers of leather and sheets tied together with wire can be improvised quickly, but every blow weakens them, cuts through cords and tears away plates. If the Damage reaches or surpasses the Quality rating, an Unstable armor loses (1) point of its Armor rating.

With 1 kg of scrap (of a level that equals at least Tech Level of the armor) and a roll on AGI+Crafting (Tech Level), (1) point of Armor rating can be recovered.

### INSULATED

The material completely protects from electrical discharges. Any electrical Damage is reduced to zero.

### BULLETPROOF (ARMOR)

Bulletproof armor absorbs the kinetic energy of a projectile fired from a gun, and the wearer takes less Damage: when hit by bullets the Armor rating equals the Quality rating.

### MASSIVE (ARMOR)

The armor is made from plates or cast in one piece; the material is hard and inflexible. Blades, edges, and pointed weapons are repelled or deflected. The protection against these weapons is higher (Armor rating = Quality rating).

On the other hand, Massive armor is susceptible to damage from Blunt weapons. A hammer can dent the material. It changes its shape and applies pressure on organs and bones until they give in and burst or break. Even if such armor is hard to penetrate, the wearer can die from internal injuries.

If the Damage (including Triggers) from a Blunt weapons is higher than the normal Armor rating disregarding "Massive", Flesh Wounds are caused as usual. The Triggers, however, cause additional Trauma.

### BRITTLE (CRITICAL DAMAGE RATING)

Armor plates can be hardened: it makes their Armor rating rise by (1). However, it also makes the material Brittle. If the armor takes a certain amount of Damage in one hit (determined by the Quality rating), the plates burst and permanently lose (1) point of their Armor rating.

The difference from the "Unstable" Quality is that "Brittle" is deliberately accepted when modifying the armor because of the higher Armor rating.

### SEALED (BONUS SUCCESSES)

The armor offers reliable protection from environmental toxins, germs, and spore infestation. When rolling against contamination, the wearer automatically adds Successes.

## ARMOR

| Name | Armor rating | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Resources | Cult / Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Salted clothing | 1 | Unstable (4) | 1 | I | - | 20 | - | |
| Fur cape | 1 | | 1 | I | - | 40 | - | |
| Mammoth hide wrap | 2 | | 2 | I | - | 100 | - | |
| Leather coat | 2 | | 2 | I | 2 | 120 | - | |
| Leather armor | 3 | | 2 | II | 2 | 320 | - | |
| Chain mail | 4 | | 3 | II | 1 | 400 | - | |
| Rubber harness | 4 | Insulated | 3 | II | 2 | 650 | - | |
| Scrapper armor | 4 | Unstable (6) | 3 | II | 6 | 700 | - | |
| Reinforced metal plate armor | 5 | Massive (7) | 4 | II | 2 | 750 | - | |
| Kevlar jacket | 4 | Bulletproof (7) | 2 | III | 1 | 1400 | - | |
| AMSUMO casing | 8 | Massive (10) | 3 | V | 1 | 9000 | - | |
| Spitalian suit | 2 | Sealed (+4S), Respected (Patients, +1D) | 2 | III | 2 | 300 | 2 | Spitalians |
| Hygienist suit | 2 | Sealed (+6S) | 3 | III | 3 | 900 | 3 | Spitalians |
| Preservist variety | 3 | Sealed (+4S) | 3 | III | 2 | 800 | 4 | Spitalians |
| Chroniclers' suit | 2 | First Impression (+1D) | 1 | IV | 2 | 300 | 2 | Chroniclers |
| Harness | 5 | Fire Resistant (8) | 3 | IV | 2 | 4800 | - | Hellvetics |
| Spotter Harness | 3 | Camo (5C) | 2 | IV | 2 | 3500 | 3 | Hellvetics |
| Heavy Duty Harness | 7 | Massive (9), Fire Resistant(8) | 4 | V | 3 | 8000 | 4 | Hellvetics |
| Judge's hat and coat | 2 | | 2 | II | 2 | 180 | 1 | Judges |
| Druschinnik silk armor | 3 | | 1 | III | - | 600 | 4 | Clanners |
| Flak jacket and helmet | 4 | | 1 | IV | 1 | 1600 | 2 | Scourgers |
| Flak jacket and lion helmet | 4 | | 2 | IV | 1 | 1600 | - | Scourgers |
| Ram helmet (Arianoi) | 1 | Terrifying (3) | 1 | I | - | 100 | 1 | Jehammedans |
| Black fleece (Arianoi) | 3 | Fire Resistant (8), Insulated, Terrifying (5) | 1 | VI | - | 16000 | 6 | Jehammedans |
| Ceramic fiber weave | 5 | Bulletproof (8), Sealed (+1S) | 2 | V | 1 | 22000 | - | RG |
| Composite armor | 6 | Bulletproof (9) | 2 | V | 1 | 28000 | - | RG |
| Graph combat suit | 7 | Bulletproof (10), Sealed (+2S) | 3 | VI | - | 60000 | - | Free Spirit |

## SHIELDS

| Name | Defense | Attack | Qualities | Enc. | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sheet metal shield | +1D/0 | -1D | | 1 | II | - | 40 | - | |
| Plastic shield | +2D/0 | -1D | | 1 | III | - | 220 | - | |
| Oval shield | +2D/+1 | -1D | | 2 | II | - | 250 | 1 | Scourgers |
| Tunnel Shield | +4D/+2 | -2D | | 3 | IV | - | 450 | 2 | Hellvetics |

# SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

## GETTING FOOD

Traps can be used to procure dinner or to keep away unwanted guests. Looking for food in general is covered by an Action roll on INS+Survival.

The Difficulty depends on the region and its fertility. In Purgare's slag deserts the trapper needs special bait and to know the right place if he wants to catch a rat (Difficulty 6), whereas in the jungles of Hybrispania it isn't hard to lure a little deer into a trap (Difficulty 2).

A successful Action roll yields enough food for (1) day. Every Trigger adds another ration for (1) day.

Getting food: INS+Survival
Number of daily rations: 1+ Trigger

The big advantage of the trap is that the hunter can set it and do something else for the rest of the day. A Scrapper specializing in lichen and roots needs over (4) hours per Action roll on INS+ Survival.

### GETTING FOOD

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fishing gear | INS+Survival +1D | - | I | 5 | - | |
| Flask | Stores water for (2) days | - | I | 10 | - | |
| Cooking equipment | Cooking roots and vegetables | - | II | 30 | - | |
| Water filter | Makes soiled water drinkable | - | III | 120 | - | |

## TRAPS

And now for the unwanted guest. A trap in the right place stops him from approaching unseen.

A trap has two ratings: the first tells you how well it is hidden. This rating can be raised with Triggers from a roll on AGI+Stealth (2). If the potential victim approaches, they can spot the trap in time with a successful roll on INS+Perception. The rating above determines the Difficulty. If the roll fails and the victim approaches the trap, it is sprung.

The second trap rating determines the Damage points the trap causes. Armor sometimes protects from trap Damage: the exceptions are stated in the trap descriptions. There might be additional rules specifying how the victim can free himself from the trap.

Trapping: AGI+Stealth (2)
Triggers raise the trap's "Hidden" rating
Spot: INS+Perception against "Hidden" rating

### BEAR TRAP

Two serrated yokes crash together with a bang, cutting through sinews and breaking bones. Bear traps are small, and the victim must step right into them, but they are easily hidden. Once they have snapped closed, the victim is lost.

**SPECIALTY:** Only full body armor reduces the Damage: a Scourger's flak jacket, however, offers no protection. To pry the bear trap open, a successful Action roll on BOD+Force (4) is necessary.

### PITFALL

A pit dug in the ground, covered with sticks and fern or a tarp. Pitfalls are mainly used to capture prey alive.
**SPECIALTY:** The Damage depends on the depth and potentially sharpened stakes jutting up from the ground.

### TRIPWIRE

A taut piece of wire can make the enemy stumble, detonate explosives, or pull the trigger of a shotgun.
**SPECIALTY:** The Damage depends on the explosives or the weapon. As taut tripwire without detonator, it makes the victim stumble and lose (1) Action.

### MINES

Mines can be filled with the same explosives and agents as grenades or cartridges.
**SPECIALTY:** The Damage is identical to that of grenades, except with mines, the victim is at the center of the detonation and takes maximum Damage.

## TRAPS

| Name | Hidden | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pitfall | 2C | Special | - | I | - |
| Tripwire | 5C | Lose Action, potentially detonation | - | II | 5 |
| Bear trap | 4C | 8 Damage | 1 | II | 30 |
| Mine | 4C | Special | 1 | III | Special |

## SOURCES OF LIGHT / FIRE

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Torch | Reduces darkness penalty by 1D, (30) min | - | I | 3 | - | |
| Lamp oil | For oil lamp | - | II | 10 | - | |
| Flint and tinder | Tinder takes several minutes to ignite | - | I | 20 | - | |
| Matches | (10) uses, can be used to light torches | - | II | 25 | - | |
| Oil lamp | Reduces darkness penalty by 2D, (2) hours | - | II | 40 | - | |
| Lighter | Refillable | - | III | 180 | - | |
| Sunburst | Darkness penalty reduced 2D, 100 hours per E-Cube | 1 | IV | 1200 | 2 | Palers |
| Cyclops Eye | No darkness penalty with Paler night vision, otherwise penalty reduced by 2D | 2 | V | 14000 | 3 | Palers |

## ORIENTEERING / TRACKING

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regional map | INS+Orienteering +1D | - | II | 40 | - | |
| Compass | INS+Orienteering +1D | - | III | 220 | - | |
| Noumenon Vocalizer | Detects Ether calls (see page 130, "Cult Equipment") | 2 | IV | 2400 | 3 | Spitalians |
| Gauging material | Focuses Noumenon Vocalizer or Mollusk to Chakra, Difficulty = Level of equipment | - | IV | 600 x Level | 4 | Spitalians |
| Tracker | Detects transponders, range (100) m | 1 | V | 4400 | 4 | Chroniclers |
| Binocular | When watching from afar: INS+Perception +4D | - | IV | 5200 | 2 | Hellvetics |
| Pathfinder | INS+Orienteering +4D | 2 | V | 15000 | 4 | Hellvetics |
| Transponder bracelet | Bracelet detected by Pathfinder, range (20) m | - | V | 580 | 1 | Hellvetics |
| Astrolabe | INS+Orienteering +1D | - | II | 650 | 1 | Neolibyans |
| Atlas | Upgradable (1-3). INS+Orienteering + Level x 1D | - | II | 1000 x Level | 2,3,4 | Neolibyans |
| RG Atlas | INS+Orienteering +2D | - | V | 4500 | 3 | Palers |

## CLIMBING

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10m of Rope | Necessary for many climbing endeavors | - | II | 60 | - | |
| Climbing harness | Together with rope: BOD+Athletics +1D | - | III | 400 | - | |

## OVERNIGHT

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blanket / sleeping bag | Restful sleep: recover 1 additional Flesh Wound per night | 2 | I | 10 | - | |
| Camo net | For the resting place: harder to be spotted by enemies +2C | 2 | II | 60 | - | |
| Insect net | Protects from insects | 2 | II | 80 | - | |
| Tent | Protection from weather | 3 | I | 120 | - | |

## TRANSPORTATION

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Backpack | Total Encumbrance of items in backpack reduced by 3: can be set down | - | 1 | I | 15 | - |
| Sleigh | Total Encumbrance of items in sleigh reduced by 3: can be left behind | | 1 | I | 20 | - |
| Carrying rig | Upgradable (1-3). Encumbrance of attached items = -1 x Level | - | II | 100 x level | 1,2,3 | Scrappers |

## IN THE SHADOWS

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Camo paint | AGI+Stealth +2D | - | I | 15 | - | |
| Lock pick | Enables user to pick mechanical locks | - | II | 20 | - | |
| Periscope | Difficult terrain: AGI+Stealth +2D | 1 | II | 100 | 2 | Scrappers |
| Key ring | Lock picking: AGI+Dexterity +1D | - | II | 400 | 3 | Apocalyptics |
| Sesamite | Lock picking: AGI+Dexterity +3D | - | V | 18000 | 5 | Palers |

## TECHNOLOGY

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bugs and surveillance equip. | Hard to detect: AGI+Stealth (+2) Successes when placing | - | IV | 2200 | 2 | Spitalians |
| Draft printer | Per month: 50 CD x Resources | - | IV | 4000 | 2 | Chroniclers |
| Stream drones + display | INS+Perception +1D, maximum (4) drones, (10)m | - | V | 19000 | 6 | Chroniclers |
| Forager Uplink | Resources (6) for weapons, ammo, food | 2 | V | 33000 | 4 | Hellvetics |
| Pneumatic metal shears | Metal obstacle: BOD+Force +4D | 3 | IV | 1800 | 3 | Scrappers |
| Toolkit | Upgradable (1-3). AGI+Crafting and AGI+Dexterity + 1D x Level | 2 | III | 600 x Level | 2,4,6 | Scrappers |
| Electronics tools | Manipulate electrical devices: +1D to Action roll | - | IV | 2400 | 2 | Palers |
| Throwing Pulsor | Destroys all electronics within (10) m radius | - | V | 6000 | 3 | Palers |
| Smoke Grenade | Creates a smoke cloud. -4D to sight Actions. (5) m radius. | - | IV | 80 | 2 | Hellvetics |
| Shock Grenade | Targets cannot use Ego for (2) Rounds. (5) m radius | - | IV | 110 | 2 | Hellvetics, Palers |

## SUN DISCS

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phaeton | Glows, opens portals in Dispensers | 1 | V | 18000 | 3 | Palers |
| Cataract | Hums unpleasantly, interacts with Orbital, reads surroundings by ultrasound | 1 | V | 12000 | 3 | Palers |
| Orbital | Shows maps of the surroundings, can be updated with bunker positions | 1 | V | 22000 | 4 | Palers |
| Arbiter | Hacks RG systems: INT+Artifact Lore +2D, can activate and deactivate discs | 1 | VI | 44000 | 6 | Palers |
| Quantum | Detects other Quantum discs, range depends on level | 1 | V | 9000 | 3 | Palers |
| Quasar | Solar collector, can charge other discs | 1 | V | 38000 | 5 | Palers |

## CHRONICLER SUIT MODULES

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Source | Level determines the maximum of the total module Levels that can be fueled | 2 | V | 5000 x Level | 2 | Chroniclers |
| Fumor | Passive Defense for (2 ) Rounds (+1) x Level, Level determines the number of charges | 1 | IV | 2500 x Level | 2 | Chroniclers |
| Dome of rays | Superstition: social interaction +1D x Level | 1 | IV | 1000 x Level | 2 | Chroniclers |
| Greenlight | 45° cone: target gets general (+2) Difficulty, (2) Rounds<br>Cool down (3) Rounds | 1 | V | 4000 x Level | 4 | Chroniclers |
| Discharge | Defense: enemy takes (1) Ego Damage per Level, needs to recharge (2) Rounds | 1 | IV | 1000 x Level | 3 | Chroniclers |
| Screamer | Chases away pickpockets with high-frequency scream | 1 | IV | 500 | 2 | Chroniclers |
| Freon | Attack: Activation + AGI+Projectiles, +2D Handling. Ignores armor,<br>Damage 1D x Level | 1 | IV | 2000 x Level | 4 | Chroniclers |

## HEAVY DUTY MODULES

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Heavyweight | BOD+Force +6D, needs 2 Slots | - | V | 6800 | 3 | Hellvetics |
| Cutting tool | No attack tool, (20) points of Damage per Round to obstacles, 3 Slots | - | IV | 1200 | 2 | Hellvetics |
| Cooling aggregate | Can withstand extreme heat, 1 Slot | - | V | 5000 | 4 | Hellvetics |
| Arc welder | (15) points of Damage to obstacles, risk of tank being hit,<br>detonation when at least (4) Damage, 3 Slots | - | IV | 2000 | 3 | Hellvetics |
| Tunnel Driller | Concrete and rock: (10) points of Damage per Round, risk of tank being hit,<br>-6D in combat, 3 Slots | - | IV | 1000 | 2 | Hellvetics |

## TALISMANS / INSIGNIA

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Codex | 1 Round of meditation: +1 Ego Point | - | II | 300 | - | Judges |
| Codex, Special Edition | 1 Round of meditation: +1 Ego Point; CHA+Expression +2D | - | II | 800 | 3 | Judges |
| Judgment tools | Used to mark outlaws | - | II | 40 | 1 | Judges |
| Clan tattoos | PSY+Faith/Willpower +1D | - | I | 150 | 1 | Clanners |
| Body paint | War paint: PSY+Faith/Willpower +2D | - | I | 30 | 1 | Clanners |
| Anubis mask | +1D to social interactions with Africans | - | I | 200 | - | Anubians |
| Anubis finger | Identifies Anubians | - | I | 9000 | - | Anubians |
| Soul stones | If target is a believer: +1D to social interaction | - | I | 800 | 1 | Anubians |
| Scourger mask | Mental attacks: PSY+Faith/Willpower +2D | - | I | 140 | 1 | Scourgers |
| Balancer | When lost: +4D to any business endeavors against former owner | - | II | 500 | 1 | Neolibyans |
| Balancer: pocket calculator | Math: INT+Engineering +4D | - | IV | 20000 | 3 | Neolibyans |
| Balancer: lock | The lock stops trespassers from searching; lock picking: AGI+Dexterity (5) | - | III | 4000 | 2 | Neolibyans |
| Balancer: trap | Trespass: poison with Potency (5), (-1) Ego Point per Round; fades after (4) hours | - | III | 8000 | 2 | Neolibyans |
| Apocalyptic Tarot | In the hand of a Raven: CHA+Leadership +1D | - | II | 560 | - | Apocalyptics |
| Icons | Tied to a foreseen Action: +2D to all related Action rolls | 2 | I | 200 | - | Jehammedans |
| Jehammed's Teachings | +2D to social interactions within the Cult | - | II | 2000 | 3 | Jehammedans |
| Jehammed's Will/Aries's Blessing | +4D to social interactions within the Cult | - | II | 6000 | 5 | Jehammedans |
| Seal stone | Authority (+1) | - | I | 300 | 2 | Jehammedans |
| Jehammed's Star | Saraeli: Renown (+2) | - | I | 90 | - | Jehammedans |
| Grim sun | Mental defense: PSY+Faith/Willpower +1D | - | II | 190 | 1 | Palers |

## COMMUNICATION

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Radio | Radio communication, range (5) km | 1 | IV | 1500 | - | |
| Portable Uplink | Throw antenna and establish Uplink: INT+Legends +2D, INT+Engineering +1D, Call Shutter (Costs (1) Renown) | 3 | IV | 3500 | 6 | Chroniclers |
| Radio Backpack | Radio communication, range (200) km | 3 | IV | 6000 | 3 | Hellvetics |

## GAS MASKS

Every Scrapper knows stories about gas bubbles and ancient bunkers. Corpses are supposedly piled high down there. Stories about Scrappers who went down unprotected, breathed in once, and simply dropped dead. Had they worn a gas mask, they would be able to tell the story themselves, this time with a better ending.

While gas is lethal, it's a rare threat. The spores of the Sepsis, however, are everywhere. Spitalians never leave their outposts without filter masks or they could never approach a spore field without becoming what they fight. Gas masks are necessary for survival. There are 3 levels of gas masks, and per level they offer their wearer (+1) Success to an Action roll against spore infestation, airborne infections, and toxins.

In case of spore infestation, infections, toxins
(+1) Success per level to Action roll

## GAS MASKS

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breathing cloth | Level 1: +1S when contaminated with spores, germs, and environmental toxins | - | I | 5 | - | |
| Charcoal absorber | Level 2: +2S | - | III | 200 | - | |
| Breathing apparatus | Level 3: +3S, contains oxygen for (1) hour, then relapses to Level 2 | 2 | IV | 600 | - | |

# COLLECTING MANIA

In the ruins, there are still Bygone treasures. It's time to dig for them. If someone goes looking for a ruin field and intends to loot it, it is done as follows.

## THE RIGHT PLACE

The old legends speak of steel colossi in the dust storms, of sunken cities, and of Scrappers who followed a rumor and never returned. Most of it is nonsense, but those who listen intently may overhear the one scrap of truth that points to a big find.

With a successful Action roll on INT+Legends, you can find a profitable ruin field. The roll can be repeated daily.

Action roll on INT+Legends
(+ Network for Scrappers)

The Difficulty depends on the Cultural area—and on the circumstances that the Game Master defines.

Difficulty:
Borca (2)
Franka (5)
Pollen (4)
Balkhan (4)
Hybrispania (5)
Purgare (3)
Africa (5)

**EXAMPLE:** The Scrapper Dustface is sure that today's going to be his lucky day. He has been on the road in Borca for weeks following a lead. He rolls INT+Legends against Difficulty (2) (for Borca) and easily succeeds with (1) Trigger.

## OPEN YOUR EYES

The field is found: the Triggers of the last roll determine its quality. Now it's combed through. The seeker can make one INS+Perception roll per hour. The more unknown the ruin field is and the further away it is from civilization, the bigger the chance to find something.

One Action roll on INS+Perception per hour
Base Difficulty = (8)
(-1) per (20) km distance from the next settlement, applicable up to 4x
- Quality of the ruin field
Thoroughly searched: for every (10) previous finds, the Difficulty rises by (1)

**EXAMPLE:** Now that looks promising. The field is over 60 km from Liqua and seems almost untouched. Dustface walks the streets and begins searching. He rolls INS+Perception. The Difficulty is base Difficulty (8) - (3) (for the distance) -(1) (quality of the field). In the end, the Difficulty is (4). Dustface only just makes it with (4) Successes and (2) Triggers...

## GOT SOMETHING!

The Action roll was successful. The Tech Level of the find rises for every (2) Triggers.

Tech Level of the find = Tech III + (Triggers/2)

However, not every field contains every Tech Level of find. The Game Master determines the maximum Tech Level possible. Usually, it's V.

The amount of scrap found is pure chance.

Amount of scrap found = 1D kg

**EXAMPLE:** Well. This... device... is somehow Bygone. Its Tech Level is IV (Tech III + Triggers/2), and it weighs about 4 kg. That's not the one big find yet, but this is not the end of the day. Dustface spits in his hands and keeps searching.

## ROUTINE

The scrap rules are simply based on luck with the dice and bring the characters finds by the kilo. They are supposed to fill downtime or give characters and Players time to regroup. It gets exciting when the routine is broken by micro scenarios offering enemies, traps, and the potential for a special find.

## COLLECTORS

No Tech I and Tech II finds by the kilo may be found with the finding rules. However, that isn't necessary, for wood, sheet-metal, stones and wires can be found everywhere. If you search for (6) hours, you will find 2D kg of Tech I and 1D kg of Tech II finds by the kilo.

Collecting
(6) hours
2D kg Tech I
1D kg Tech II

## DRAGGING

5 kg of scrap found results in encumbrance +1. This is why Scrappers prefer carrying rigs or sleighs to transport their finds. In combat or in a crisis, they can simply slide the frame from their shoulders or leave the sleigh behind and carry on without the encumbrance.

5 kg of scrap = +1 encumbrance

## SELLING

What to do with all the stuff? Everything that the Scrapper does not need to augment his own equipment goes to the Chroniclers (see "Services").

## MODULAR

You do not have to build everything by yourself. Add-ons for weapons like targeting equipment with night vision or mufflers might be rare, but they exist, and even nonprofessionals can mount them to weapons. Still, they do take up a slot. However, this slot becomes free again when they are taken off.

## LOTS OF SCRAP

The carts fill up with sheet metal and wire, with plastic casings and other crap. Nobody needs that. But when the Scrapper sits down to clean the wire and coil it up again and hours later has built a simple generator from several coils and an iron anchor, his creativity has upgraded the find.

For Tech I-III finds by the kilo: roll AGI+Crafting
For Tech IV-V finds by the kilo: roll INT+Engineering

Every category of scrap can be upgraded to the next Tech Level with a successful roll. To upgrade something to Tech Level V, though, the Scrapper needs an exquisitely equipped workshop. Tech Level VI is almost out of reach.

Difficulty = new Tech Level x 2

Transformation: 5 kg of scrap become 1 kg of scrap of the next higher Tech Level

Duration = (5) hours - Triggers, minimum (1) hour

**EXAMPLE:** In the end, things didn't turn out too well for Dustface. What a crappy day! He sits on his sleigh and frees artifacts from rust and dirt, peeling away crumbling casings. In total, he has 13 kg of Tech Level III scrap. That is heavy. He is a skilled technician, so he decides to upgrade the scrap to Tech Level IV.

To do so, he rolls INT+Engineering against the Difficulty of (8) (because of the new Tech Level: IV x 2 = 8). Pretty hard, even for a pro like him. But after (3) hours (he has rolled (2) Triggers), he's done. He loads the 2 kg of Tech IV scrap and the remaining 3 kg of Tech III onto his sleigh and moves on.

## MANUFACTURE

When a Scrapper weighs a weapon in his hands, he's already imagining himself standing at his workbench refining the trigger mechanism, exchanging the musket barrel for a rifled barrel, and attaching a sight. From a snaggy shooter that was more likely used to beat enemies to death than to shoot them he creates a precision rifle. He sees the possibilities and seizes them.

In KatharSys, these possibilities are represented by the augmentation slots. Almost all standard weapons and armor have up to 6 slots that can be used to attach augmentations. For weapons, that would be special Qualities or Damage and Distance bonuses, for armor a lower encumbrance, resistance against certain types of Damage, or a better protection. Smaller changes cost 1 slot, while large, important modifications can take up 2 or more. For every 3 slots used, the weapon's Tech Level rises by I. Its value rises as well.

## PREPARATION

Augmenting an item costs scrap. The Tech Level of the scrap must at least be the same as the item's. Scrap of a higher level brings a dice bonus equaling the difference for the next roll. The necessary amount of scrap is 5 kg for weapons, 10 kg for armor.

Necessary scrap quality: current Tech Level of weapon
Necessary amount of scrap weapons = 5 kg
Necessary amount of scrap armor = 10 kg

## POSSIBILITIES

What should be modified? Every item class offers a variety of standard augmentations, for example better Handling for weapons. These modifications take up 1 free slot. If there is no slot available, the item cannot be augmented. You can also choose special Qualities: these take up at least 2 slots. The number of slots necessary is stated in the description.

## HARD WORK

The material is there, and everything's planned. Let's get to work.

If the item is Tech Level I-III the Skill AGI+Crafting is used, for Tech Levels IV-VI the Skill INT+Engineering.

Tech I-III: AGI+Crafting
Tech IV-VI: INT+Engineering

The Difficulty of the Action roll is calculated as follows.

Difficulty = current Tech Level
+ number of slots used so far
Necessary time = Difficulty in hours

If the Action roll is successful, the item is augmented successfully. Per Trigger, you save 1 kg of scrap, but ultimately at least 1 kg is used up. The slots used are now taken. If the roll fails, the scrap was used up without any augmentation. In case of a Botch, an empty slot is destroyed.

## PASSION

Scrappers are second to none when it comes to augmenting an item. They can add new slots to an item with XP. This happens point by point, just like increasing Skills.

XP cost = number of the new slot x 10

**EXAMPLE:** Dustface likes this spear. He has already balanced it, which used up its only slot. But that's not enough. He decides to add another slot that he pays for with experience. This costs 20 XP.

# MODIFICATIONS

## MELEE WEAPONS

### WHETTING

Blades are hardened or sharpened, metal nails are put into clubs. A hit by this weapon now causes more terrible wounds.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, Damage +1

### BALANCING

By adding weight or filing away a little material here and there, the weapon is made easier to wield.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, Handling +1D

### LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION

The weapon is dismantled, and bulky and heavy parts are taken out and replaced. It loses a little impact but becomes lighter and more manageable.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, Damage (-1), Handling +1D, encumbrance -1. This augmentation can be only applied once per weapon and only if its encumbrance is at least 2.

### SPECIAL QUALITIES

Every weapon can be modified and given new Qualities:

| Quality | Slots | Augmentation |
|---|---|---|
| Terrifying (2C) | 1 | 1 Slot for +1C |
| Blunt | 1 | - |
| Camo (2C) | 2 | 1 Slot for +1C |
| Smooth running (3T) | 2 | 2 Slots for -1T |

## ARCHAIC PROJECTILES

### REINFORCED FRAMEWORK

Strings are replaced by stronger material like wire and the frame is adapted to the new strain.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, Damage (+1), Distance +25%, Encumbrance+1

### TARGETING DEVICE

The mechanical system is overhauled and all parts are greased so that the weapon will not stray when being fired. Additionally, the targeting device attached or the existing one is calibrated.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, Handling +1D

## MODERN ENERGY WEAPONS

### EFFICIENCY

The energy conveyance is augmented by new circuits and stronger cables. The weapon gets more out of the E-Cube.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, (+2) Charges

### SERIES CONNECTION

Bridges are soldered onto the electronics, the energy conveyance is rerouted, and the amplifier chain is augmented. The next attack will use more energy.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, (+1) Damage, Charges (-2)

### GROUPING

The case is milled open to make room for another E-Cube, then the energy routing is optimized.

**REQUIREMENT:** E-Cube

**EFFECT:** 2 slots, number of Charges doubles, encumbrance +1

## MODERN GUNS

### CHANGE BARREL

The Damage of a gun is primarily determined by the caliber used. Changing the barrel is complicated and requires additional work on the mechanics of the chamber in general and on the ammunition feed. This augmentation can only be used once per weapon.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, new caliber as desired (leading to new Damage and Distance), caution: needs new type of ammo now. .50GL automatically adds the "Thunder Strike" Quality.

### SIGHT

The gun's targeting mechanism is expanded or adjusted.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, Handling +1D

### EXPAND MAGAZINE

In the case of double-action revolvers, the frame is filed out, a larger cylinder is put in, and the cylinder transportation is adjusted. In the case of assault rifles, the magazine only has to be drilled out so a piece can be attached. Depending on the weapon, larger magazines can be found.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, weapons with a regular magazine capacity of 9 or less get magazine +1, larger ones get +3

### APT FOR MELEE

A spur or knife is attached to the barrel.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot. The weapon can now also be used in melee. The melee damage equals that of a knife without the special Qualities.

### SPECIAL QUALITIES

| Quality | Slots | Augmentation |
|---|---|---|
| Terrifying (2C) | 1 | 1 Slot for +1C |
| Camo (2C) | 2 | 1 Slot for +1C |
| Smooth running (3T) | 2 | 2 Slots for -1T |
| Double barreled | 3 | - |
| Remove Quality | 2 | - |

## ARMOR

### REINFORCED

More material offers more protection—a simple equation. Additional material adds additional weight, however.

**EFFECT:** 1 slot, (+1) Armor rating, encumbrance +1

### SPECIAL QUALITIES

| Quality | Slots | Augmentation |
|---|---|---|
| Camo (2C) | 2 | 1 Slot for +1C |
| Fireproof (+3 to Armor rating) | 2 | 1 Slot for +1 armor |
| Sealed (+1S) | 2 | 1 Slot for +1S |
| Insulated | 2 | - |
| Terrifying (2C) | 2 | 1 Slot for +1C |
| Bulletproof (+3 to Armor rating) | 3 | 1 Slot for +1 armor |
| Massive (+2 to Armor rating) | 3 | 1 Slot for +1 armor |

# VEHICLES

Vehicles and ships are an unusual sight in the world of Degenesis. If you drive a Scrapper buggy, you will stand out. To the Apocalyptics, their motorbikes are more of a status symbol than a vehicle. Surge Tanks are small villages with their own infrastructures, leaders, and workers. Where they appear, people take note.

KatharSys' rules are tailored to people and their equipment. While the combat rules take vehicles into account, these rules don't have the same depth and detail as those for one-on-one combat. Here, creativity is required: Surge Tanks are stopped by attaching explosives to their tracks, not by making Action rolls.

However, these tables contain stats to allow vehicles to be compared.

## GEARING UP

Like weapons, vehicles and ships have slots. These can be used for artillery emplacements. Further augmentations like adding additional armor or overhauling and improving the gas turbine of a ship are possible, but they are no easy feat. Players must discuss and consider with their Game Master what materials and time investments are required to make these adjustments and how it will impact the game.

## REPAIRS

A damaged vehicle can be repaired with scrap. If the Body is still intact, no rolls are necessary. This just takes time.

If things need to be quick, the worker tries a Complex Action, rolls AGI+Crafting (Tech Level of the vehicle), and collects Successes. The Successes equal the Body points recovered.

Every roll takes (10) minutes. Repairing damaged Structure points works similarly, only that here, INT+Engineering is rolled and every roll takes (1) hour.

10 kg of scrap of the respective Tech Levels are used up per point.

Body: AGI+Crafting, 10 minutes
Mechanics: INT+Engineering, 1 hour

## MULTI-VARIANT

What Africans consider to be a small Surge Tank can still push aside a mammoth. On the other end of the scale, there are giant weapons platforms brought to Europe in sections that are as high as a house and assembled there. The same is true for motorbikes: some rattle down dirt paths only as fast as an Usudi can run, belching smoke from their exhaust. Others, though, race by as thunderclaps of dust, missiles that seem to hail from another world. Vehicles of the same type can be very different: the many varieties may feature more or less power, a special trim, or extra equipment. The vehicles and ships listed are just general examples that the Game Master and Players are free to embellish with details.

## SLUGGISH

Ships are sluggish sea giants that accelerate and brake slowly. Braking or accelerating by 1 speed level can take several Rounds—and this is why, with some ships, a number of Rounds is listed under "Braking" and/or "Accelerating".

## ARTILLERY

(AGI+NAVIGATION)

| Name | Caliber | Hand. | Distance | Damage | Mag. | Qualities | Slots | Tech | Slots | Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Harpoon thrower | Harpoon | - | 20 / 60 | 10 | 1 | | 2 | III | 1 | 2200 |
| Catapult | Stones | -2D | 50 / 200 | 14 | 1 | | 4 | II | 2 | 3000 |
| Flamethrower | Petro | +2D | 10 / 30 | 12 | 20 | Fire hazardous | 2 | III | 1 | 6000 |
| Machine Gun | 5.56x45mm | -2D | 50 / 200 | 11 | Belt | Salvoes (10), Jamming | 1 | IV | 2 | 8000 |
| Cannon | Explosive shell | - | 100 / 400 | 18 | 4 | Thunder Strike | 4 | IV | 2 | 22000 |

## VEHICLES

| Name | Max. Speed | Acc. | Brake | Armor | Body | Structure | Tech | Slots | Value | Res. | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motor sleigh | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 7 | III | 1 | 1200 | - | |
| Scrapper buggy | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 20 | 10 | III | 2 | 1500 | - | |
| Motorbike | 6 | 3 | 1 | - | 10 | 5 | III | 1 | 2000 | - | |
| Tractor rig | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 10 | 5 | III | - | 800 | 4 | Scrappers |
| Kom | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 20 | 10 | IV | 2 | 4500 | 4 | Scourgers |
| Surge Tank | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 200 | 100 | IV | 6 | 1500000 | 6 | Neolibyans |
| Apocalyptic Motorbike | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 7 | IV | 2 | 4200 | 5 | Apocalyptics |

## BOATS AND SHIPS

| Name | Max. Speed | Acc. | Brake | Armor | Body | Structure | Tech | Slots | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boat | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 10 | 5 | II | 1 | 500 | - | |
| Dhau | 3 | 1 | 3 Rounds | 2 | 20 | 10 | II | 2 | 6000 | - | |
| Merchant vessel | 2 | 2 Rounds | 10 Rounds | 2 | 50 | 25 | III | 4 | 35000 | 3 | Neolibyans |
| Catamaran | 4 | 2 | 5 Rounds | 3 | 40 | 20 | IV | 4 | 40000 | 4 | Apocalyptic |
| Speedboat | 5 | 3 | 2 Rounds | 4 | 50 | 25 | IV | 3 | 55000 | 5 | Scourgers |
| Tanker | 2 | 5 Rounds | 20 Rounds | 5 | 200 | 100 | IV | 8 | 800000 | 6 | Neolibyans |
| Armed catamaran | 3 | 2 Rounds | 8 Rounds | 5 | 100 | 50 | IV | 14 | 120000 | 6 | Apocalyptic |

# DOMESTIC ANIMALS

### DOMESTICATED

Animals want to feed, and the wasteland usually doesn't even yield enough crops for the people. A few exceptions aside, only rich Cults like the Judges and Spitalians can afford animals that are not destined to be eaten.

Mounts like horses and mammoths are valuable and held in high regard. They can be trained with INS+Taming: the base Difficulty mainly depends on whether they are wild animals (Difficulty (6)) or if they have been raised by humans (Difficulty (4)).

In the Mounts table, you will find slots. They equal the potential of the animal and determine how often it can be trained before reaching its limits. Potential training measures are listed here.

### ROBUST

The animal gains bulk and can take more damage: Flesh Wounds (+4), Trauma (+2).

### CALM STEP

The animal learns to move more nimbly. Attacks from the back of the mount are now easier for the rider: the speed penalty for the attack is lowered by -1D.

### SPEED

After (1) week of training, the animal gains (1) point in maximum speed, acceleration, or braking. No animal, however, can move at more than speed level (4).

### VARIOUS MANEUVERS

Animals can be trained to walk to a certain spot on command, to pick up something, or to gallop towards their owner when he whistles. The Players can be creative and train their mounts in special maneuvers (Game Master discretion).

## MOUNTS

| Name | Max. Speed | Acc. | Brake. | Armor | Flesh. | Trauma | Slots | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gaited horse | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 12 | 6 | - | 400 | - | |
| Charger | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 9 | 1 | 2500 | - | |
| Newcrest horse | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | 18 | 9 | 3 | 8000 | 5 Renown | Spitalians |
| Judges' horse | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | 16 | 8 | 2 | 5500 | 3 | Judges |
| Mammoth | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 36 | 18 | 2 | 15000 | 6 | Clanners |

## HELPERS

The crow croaks and beats its wings as strangers approach, the Gendo crawls through a tunnel to retrieve a blinking artifact. Many animals can be trained—too many to capture their potential in tables.

Taming works like training mounts: with a roll on INS+Taming. The Difficulty will rarely be lower than (6). Crows would rather rise in the air and fly away, Gendos will attack, horses will bolt. It can take weeks to establish enough trust to make the first approach possible. However, the result is well worth it: if trained animals are fed and treated well, they will stay with their handler until either one of them dies.

## MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bandage | Right after taking the wound: recovery of (1) Flesh Wound | - | I | 10 | - | |
| Field kit | INT+Medicine +2D, (5) doses | 1 | III | 250 | 2 | Spitalians |
| Apothecarium | Substance analysis and drug production: INT+Science +1S x Level, (10) doses | 1 | IV | 2500 x Level | 4 / 5 / 6 | Spitalians |
| Surgical tools | Treating Trauma: INT+Medicine +1D x Level | 1 | III | 1000 x Level | 3 / 4 / 5 | Spitalians |
| Sequencer | Drug/poison is individualized: (+2) Potency when applied to the target | 1 | V | 4500 | 5 | Spitalians |
| Crucible | Production of drugs or poisons: INT+Science +1D | - | I | 150 | 2 | Anubians |

## PHARMACEUTICS

An ointment for the finger joints, a caustic tincture for eczema, and a warm herbal liquor if the throat aches. The Spitalians and many other healers in the wasteland know a cure for every illness. Some take it from their Apothecarium, while others rely on what mother nature has to offer. According to the Spitalian teachings, the most important types of drugs are antidotes, stimulants, painkillers, narcotics, and antibiotics—along with the antimycotics that keep the Sepsis from spreading.

The Spitalians discern between three potencies of drugs within those types: the Indifferenda are usually healing earths, barks, and herbs, the Separanda are produced chemically or cultivated from bacteria or fungus cultures; and finally the Venena, which go through a complex multilevel process requiring everything the Spital has.

### ANTIDOTES

An antidote is a cure against a contaminant or a toxin. General antidotes are very rare and precious, and usually they are tailored to a certain toxin.

Atropine (level 3), for example, is a strong toxin made from datura leaves. Used with care it blocks the signal transmission in a part of the vegetative nervous system (the parasympathetic nervous system).

This way, it helps against many Spitalian agents and the toxic thorn attacks of Primer fauna. When overdosed, though, the positive effect turns into its opposite.

**EFFECT:** The antidote gives +2D per level to the resistance roll against poison.

### STIMULANTS

Stimulants—also called analeptics—energize the nervous system, especially the respiratory and the circulatory center, as well as the reflectory centers. Aromatic salt is a weak analeptic, followed by ephedrine or the strong amphetamines.

**EFFECT:** Responsiveness increases for several hours: PSY+Reaction +1D per level.

### PAINKILLERS

This type of drug reduces the negative effects of wounds or pain in general on an area of the patient.

After the Eshaton, a group of doctors led by Dr. Laubinger focused on Bygone natural medicine. They managed to isolate and synthesize certain agents from willow bark. The Laubinger extract, used as a light painkiller, is omnipresent in the Spital.

The stronger Codeine derivate is produced from opium poppy, a natural source of opium. The plants are grown in the Pharmaceutics' greenhouses in the Borcan Spital.

**EFFECT:** Trauma penalty decreases by (2) per level of the painkiller. The duration of the effect is the level in hours.

### NARCOTICS

A narcotic pushes the conscience into far away spheres. The patient feels no pain anymore, and the Surgeons can do their work without the Famulancers having to tighten the leather straps.

Anaesthesiologists use narcotics to prepare patients for surgery or to send unpleasant people to sleep. Ether is considered a weak but unpleasant narcotic, and it is not used on Spitalians. Ketamine is standard.

**EFFECT:** In combat, powerful anesthetics like Black Band are mostly used. They are easy to handle, their effect begins quickly and they do not interfere with the patient's breathing. Narcotics, on the other hand, are used to prepare a patient for surgery. The surgeon gets +1D per level to INT+Medicine.

### ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics are the miracle cure in the fight against bacterial infections. However, in the last centuries, many infections have developed resistances, turning the former cure-all penicillin (level I) into a dented sword.

Today, the Hasselblatt group is amongst the strongest antibiotics. The Pharmacist Dr. Hasselblatt started new bacteria cultures in the fermenters 40 years ago that are still cultivated in the pressure tanks today and turned into antibiotics of Potency (3).

**EFFECT:** Antibiotics give +2S per level to the resistance roll.

### ANTIMYCOTICS

This type of drug helps the body to fight fungal infections. The most common one is EX.

**EFFECT:** Per dose, the spore infestation is lowered by 1D. More than (1) dose per day has no effect.

## PHARMACEUTICS

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Distillate, 1l | Disinfection, internal and external | - | I | 20 | - | |
| Healing herbs | When patching up: INT+Medicine +1D, (1) dose | - | I | 30 | - | |
| Antidote | +2D x Level to the resistance roll against poisoning | - | III | 100 x Level | 3 / 4 / 5 | Spitalians |
| Stimulants | PSY+Reaction +1D x Level for several hours | - | III | 200 x Level | 4 / 5 / 6 | Spitalians |
| Pain killers | Negates the penalty of 2 x Level points of Trauma | - | III | 200 x Level | 4 / 5 / 6 | Spitalians |
| Narcotics | Surgery preparation: Surgeon gets INT+Medicine +1D x Level | - | III | 300 x Level | 4 / 5 / 6 | Spitalians |
| Antibiotics | +2S x Level to the resistance roll against bacterial infections | - | III | 100 x Level | 3 / 4 / 5 | Spitalians |
| EX | Reduces spore infestation by 1D | - | IV | 200 | 2 | Spitalians |
| Duat Blood | Panacea: resistance roll +1S x Level | - | - | 300 x Level | 1 / 2 / 3 | Anubians |
| Duat fruit | Level 1-6: Anubians can catalyze fruit up to their rank Level | - | - | 200 x Level | 1 / 2 / 3 | Anubians |
| Marduk oil | Resistance against pheromantic influences +4S for (1) hour | - | - | 400 | - | Anubians |
| Blood of Aries | Regeneration of (1) Flesh Wound per hour, (1) dose per day, Addictive | - | VI | 3000 | 6 | Jehammedans |

## FIELD MEDICINE

A Spitalian with an Apothecarium can produce every drug listed in the Pharmaceutics Table matching his Cult. To do so, he rolls INT+Science (4). If the roll is successful, he has produced (1) dose of the drug using the contents of his Apothecarium. For every 2T, the drug level rises by 1. With 4T, the doctor would have a level 3 drug.

Whether successful or not, the Apothecarium loses (1) of its (10) uses per attempt. It can be refilled in a hospital.

Choice of drug type
Action roll: INT+Science (4)
for every 2T, drug level rises by 1

## CATALYSIS

Certain Anubians can catalyze the toxins of a Duat fruit to Duat Blood within his body. He withstands the Raze if the fruit level is not higher than his rank level. If he tries to catalyze more potent fruit, his life depends on the following Action roll: to start a catalysis, he rolls BOD+Toughness.

The Difficulty is equal to the level of the Duat fruit. The level is also the number of days that the healer is in a coma. Per Trigger, the Anubian wakes a day earlier, but he always remains in catalysis for at least (1) hour. If the roll fails when trying to catalyze a highly potent Duat fruit (the level of which is higher than his rank), the Raze kills him without him ever waking up again. Otherwise, only the catalysis has failed.

If he is successful, however, he turns the toxins into a drug of his choice from the Pharmaceutics Table in the bioreactor of his body. The base level is equal to the Duat fruit's, and every 2T increases the level by 1 - allowing levels above 3 to be achieved. When the Anubian finally awakens, the Duat Blood runs through his veins like boiling quicksilver for a day. He can drain it, mix it with earths, and roll it to balls or mix it with plant oils. In this way, he can gain up to (10) doses.

Mortal danger: level of the Duat fruit
higher than the rank level
Action roll: BOD+Toughness (level of the fruit)
+1 drug level per 2T
Coma: Duat level in days, every Trigger gives -1 day

## MARDUK OIL

To cleanse the human body of germs or the Raze, the Anubians do not need much more than the Duat fruit. But if they want to have additional influence on the world, they have to include these influences into the catalysis. This is what Marduk oil is for. From the Pheromancers' gland secretions and the essential Duat fruit, the Anubians produce oil that protects people from the pheromantic seduction. No Neolibyan should approach the coast of Franka without carrying a little bottle of this oil.

**SPECIAL**: Massaged into the skin, it gives a bonus of +4S against pheromantic attempts to influence the wearer for (1) hour.

## ELYSIAN OILS

The Elysian oils are pressed from choice ingredients that only grow in the Elysian Gardens of a few Anabaptist enclaves like Cathedral City. The aqueducts bring crystal-clear water pouring into the idyllic chambers, and only a chosen few may enter the gardens and experience the sublime scent of cinnamon, anise, and other essential oils—or at least, that's what people think.

Actually, an Elysian finds barks and roots that are worth grinding or pressing everywhere. The more fertile the land, the simpler it is for him. He uses his understanding of nature and rolls INT+Medicine. The Difficulty depends on the region's fertility: (1) for a steaming, blossoming jungle, (6) for a dusty wasteland.

The search takes (6) hours per roll. In case of Success, every Trigger reduces the duration of the search by (1) hour.

Search for ingredients:
INT+Medicine (fertility of the region)
6 hours minus Triggers

He turns the healing earths and herbs into Perat (Difficulty (4)), Hiddekel (Difficulty (6)), or Gehon (Difficulty (6))—his choice—with a roll on INT+Science and thus gets a level 1 oil. The Secrets Background brings bonus dice to the roll.

The recipe for Pischon is a secret known to only a few chosen ones. Once the Elysian learns to produce this oil, he will be able to extract it with Difficulty (7).

For the production of the Burn blends, potent Burn (at least Potency 3) is added.

Production level 1 oil:
INT+Science
Bonus dice from "Secrets"
Perat: Difficulty (4)
Hiddekel: Difficulty (6)
Gehon: Difficulty (6)
Pischon: Difficulty (7)
Acheron: Difficulty (6)
Styx: Difficulty (6)

The Elysian can refine (2) level 1 oils through extraction and potentisation to (1) level 2 oil, and the same is true for (2) level 2 oils that become (1) level 3 oil this way. However, this procedure is complicated and time-consuming, and the slightest mistake corrupts the oils, which can afterwards only be used for seasoning food. Again, the Elysian has to roll INT+Science. For this roll, the base Difficulty rises by the new level. For level 2 Perat oil, the Difficulty would thus be 4+2=(6). When potentising, the "Secrets" Background also brings bonus dice to the roll.

The Burn blends cannot be potentised. The level is randomly determined when they are used. Burn is always unpredictable.

Potentisation:
2 oils turn into 1 of level +1
INT+Science
Bonus dice from "Secrets"
Base Difficulty + new level

## ELYSIAN OILS

| Name | Effect | Enc. | Tech | Value | Resources | Cult |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perat | (4) hours: PSY+Faith/Willpower and INS+Perception +1D x Level | - | II | 50 x Level | 1 / 2 / 3 | Anabaptists |
| Hiddekel | (4) hours: INS+Primal and PSY+Reaction +1D x Level | - | II | 100 x Level | 2 / 3 / 4 | Anabaptists |
| Gehon | (4) hours: INT+Focus +1D x Level, Trauma penalty -1D x Level | - | II | 100 x Level | 2 / 3 / 4 | Anabaptists |
| Pischon | (4) hours: CHA+Expression and PSY+Faith +1D x Level | - | II | 1000 x Level | 4 / 5 / 6 | Anabaptists |
| Styx | (30) min: per Combat Round (-1) point of Damage per Level, afterwards Trauma damage equal to Level | - | II | 200 | 5 | Anabaptists |
| Acheron | Ether sight: Level 1 = (10) m, Level 2 = (100) m, Level 3 = (300) m, afterwards spore infestation equal to Level | - | II | 200 | 5 | Anabaptists |

# SERVICES

## CHRONICLER SERVICES

The Chroniclers rule, control, and manipulate the flow of information in Europe. To tap into this flow, one needs either artifacts or Drafts.

### PURCHASING ARTIFACTS

The Chroniclers depend on the flocks of Scrappers who go to the ruins for them and return with Bygone treasure. For without artifacts, the Stream cannot be reanimated. In many towns, the Cult has opened up Alcoves dedicated to this purpose. Barcodes as high as a man don the walls, showing the Alcoves location. Mediator Chroniclers receive and evaluate artifacts there. Even worthless scrap is bought for a lump sum. This way, the Cult stays on the good side of the Scrappers. While promising pieces are brought to the Cluster, the rest goes to the Scrapper halls where technicians dismantle it to build weapons or construction material.

| Tech | Specialty | Purchasing price (kg) | Sales price (kg) |
|---|---|---|---|
| I | Everywhere (raw material only) | 1 | - |
| II | Only available from Clans/can only be sold to Clans | 15 | 5 |
| III | Also in Scrapper halls | 80 | 25 |
| IV | Scrapper halls /workshops | 200 | 80 |
| V | Not sold by Chroniclers | 600 | 200 |
| VI | Not sold by Chroniclers | 2000 | 600 |

## CHRONICLER NETWORKS

The Clusters are the hubs in a giant network of information. To become part of this network, one needs to get an account from the Chroniclers (100 CD), which can be used to send messages to other users. These mailings can be accessed in any Cluster or Alcove. To do so, the customer steps in front of the monitor walls in a separate part of the Alcove. The system recognizes him using his biometric data: distance between the eyes, nose breadth. This usually works, but not always, and it is forbidden to abuse foreign accounts in case of a misrecognition. With simple gestures and verbal commands, messages can be accessed (10 CD) or sent (30 CD). A synthetic voice reads labels aloud—usually a Chronicler stands next to the monitor wall, posing as part of the technology.

## INFORMATION

The Chroniclers are famous for the invaluable information they offer to those willing to pay. Often this information contains potential locations of hidden artifacts.

When setting a price for the information, the Chroniclers estimate the worth of the potential find. They assume an ancient weapon store contains 10 functioning guns and about a dozen rounds. As it is unknown what kind of weapons will be found, they use a standard value of 500 CDs for guns. All in all, this is 10 x 500 = 5,000 CDs. The rounds remain free of charge and are considered a little extra on the site. The Chroniclers demand 10% of the estimated sum as payment. For especially extensive information—for example when they have maps with exact locations—prices rise to up to 30% of the estimated value.

## SPITALIAN SERVICES

The Spital sends Village Doctors to all ends of the earth, especially if a doctor has been digging around and asking unwanted questions. Regardless, if a patient needs help, the political ideals of the doctor he's paying to fix him won't matter to him.

Whether in the Appendix or in an enclave hospital, whether the doctor is true to Cult principles or criticizes the actions of the Consultants, they all know what they are worth.

### TREATMENT

The treatment of wounds requires absolute rest for the patient. At least twice a day, the Spitalian changes the bandages, cleans the wounds, and anoints them with a healing substance. For every day that the patient spends in the care of a doctor, his natural healing rate doubles. This costs about 20 CD per day.

### SURGERY

Those who land in a Spitalian operating theater have nothing to fear—unless they are Leperos or Psychonauts. A successful surgery reduces the Trauma by (2). It can be repeated after (4) days and costs 100 CD.

### DETOX

After a thorough examination, the Spitalian makes the patient take a detox medicine that gives him +3D to the following and all later resistance rolls—for 300 CD. Not that the patient has a choice...

### COMPLETE DE-SPOREING

Those who want to save their souls from the suggestions of the Primer—or who have to pass through Spitalian territory—can undergo a de-sporeing cure in the Spital.

It takes (1) day and reduces the spore infestation to (0). However, all the talk about the dangers of the Sepsis for humankind doesn't stop the Spitalians from demanding a hefty price: a complete de-sporeing costs 900 CD.

# ARTIFACTS

## LEGENDARY

For 500 years, they have been sleeping in a bed of roots, ash, and bone fragments. Every Scrapper would give an arm to be allowed to awaken them from their slumber and drag them to daylight: legendary artifacts promise riches and fame to their finders. But wherever they surface, there is envy, fists are shaken, plans are made, and conflicts arise.

Some of these legendary artifacts are presented below. They change people: they awaken hopes and fears. They make history. They are hooks or goals for whole campaigns.

## ENCODER

One of these cool white ceramic tubes is supposed to exist in the depths of the Cluster. Allegedly, nanite condensate is put into a rectangular recess, and a biometrically encoded Free Spirit or RG weapon is plugged into a link. Those who dare, push their arm into the tube. With a crackle, the artifact comes to life: the condensate melts and drips into a capillary web of nanotubes, spreads along the inside of the tube. Cold grips the arm, makes the hair freeze, and numbs the skin. The nanites follow up, entering the nuclei, penetrating, spinning a web of graph fibers, communicating. There is a hum, and the weapon plugged in answers with a whistle. The biometrical encoding has been updated and is now tailored to the user of the Encoder tube.

But that is not all: the nanite net in the arm is sender and receiver at once. Those who want to wield a Free Spirit weapon or wear a Free Spirit Combat Suit are under constant surveillance.

## GRAVITY

The Palers think the artifact is one of their Sun Discs. There is one of these pitch black, dull discs in several bunkers. As soon as someone tries to lift them, they come to life and start vibrating. They seem to be impossibly heavy: they respond to every move with a counter move. Not even two strong men can tilt them. Technically skilled Revivers think that there might be a gyroscope in the discs, but that's only speculation. So far, only one disc has been known to give up its resistance. It is said to have led its owner to people who carried a functional nanite net in their bodies—in other words, to Sleepers and Marauders.

## CAPACITOR

The artifact looks like a white ceramic rod as long as an arm. The shaft is serrated, but plain and even where the thumb would be. The capacitor is probably parametrized and activated by simple stroking gestures on this point.

According to the reports of Chroniclers, the rod is pushed into entropic nanite formations. The nanites climb upon it but stop short of the handle. In the first seconds, pseudopodia break from the lump, forming fractal loops that erode again and fall back into the mass of nanites. The correct code on the touch pad makes the nanites slide to the ground like ooze. There they crystallize to cylindrical nanite condensate that can be easily transported.

So far, the capacitor rods have only been seen in the hands of Marauders.

## EMITTER

The emitter is like a telescope with a stand and a little finder scope above the main cylindrical tube. Three bright stars are targeted by the scope and confirmed by a touch sensor on the tube. Now the emitter can get its bearings. The tube swivels, targeting a point in the sky and following it during the night. Every 60 minutes, a laser beam from the tube links the earth with the point in the distance by throwing a searing lance.

The various ports the emitter has point to the fact that a multitude of other artifacts can likely be linked to it. Maybe they modulate the laser beam to transmit information. The emitter can be telescoped, and its stand is collapsible. The artifact can easily be carried in a tube tied to the backpack.

## CRYOSTASIS CHAMBER

Thousands of these coffins made of glass and metal are hidden on the lower levels of the Dispensers. Some say that those who can control the nanites in them and are willing to merge with them can recover from wounds, even fatal ones, within hours. The renewed skin has a different color, though: it is said that after a cryostasis cure, it can turn jet black, even if it was milk white before. Hair also changes color and structure, and new curls form.

It is said that the Sleepers call those who have been healed in the chambers chimeras, because the chambers have been tailor-made for exactly one person and imprint this person's program on anybody who enters their embrace. The benefits prevail, however: even Trauma is cured after only one day.

## INTERFACER

The Scrappers call the flat tablets thinking machines. Supposedly these artifacts thought for the Bygones and pulled them into their Stream world, kept them there until it was too late and the world shattered. The Chroniclers don't care what the Scrappers call them as long as they get the Interfacers to them as quickly as possible.

The devices create a link to Stream spots and enter them. The spots have remained inactive for 500 years, but the Chroniclers have managed to enter the Static Stream of the Cluster using an Interfacer and to read Stream fragments from the cache of artifacts.

Even though almost everyone had an Interfacer in 2073, there are only a few working ones today. They are basically irreparable: you cannot even open them without damaging them. Their value for the Cluster is enormous.

## STREAM GLASSES

Like the Interfacers, Stream glasses were widely used before the Eshaton. If you looked through them, you saw people's names and ratings shimmering above their heads. Streamcasts buzzed through the image or were virtually projected onto building walls: a new, augmented reality.

But the Stream is dead now.

Of course, in certain places, it can be reactivated as a static image. Suddenly, information shows up in the glasses, indicating a potentially dangerous passerby.

A Chronicler would sell his soul for Stream glasses and a digital hotspot.

## EXISTENCE

This artifact looks like a metal ball missing its lower part, some spots on the upper section have been filed flat. It weighs a little more than 5 kg, and a metallurgic test by the Chroniclers has shown that it consists of a titanium alloy.

In fact, it is a core component of an AMSUMO conscience. All visual impressions since the android was first used have been packed and stored in it: a giant historical archive covering 500 years.

If you hook it up to an Interfacer or Stream glasses, you can watch the video stream and see the last centuries through the eyes of the AMSUMO, from the day of the Eshaton to its deactivation.

The existence cores are very rare, but not valuable. Only the Chroniclers know how to use them—and they won't tell.

## DIFFRACTICON

In the halls of Exalt, someone found a strip of an unknown material. When straight, it seemed to be matte black. When bent, though, the environmental light touching it refracts into its spectral colors before rejoining when the material is bent back again. The light is now channeled around the material: a diffracticon tube appears invisible. Only when you move the tube do you notice the refraction errors.

A diffracticon suit would make its wearer almost invisible. Exalt has yet to divulge all its surprises.

# CHAPTER 9

# BURN

## SEPSIS

Sepsis bloats the Purgan tick's body and will make it burst within a few days. The ganglia are already infested and receive the Earth Chakra's whispers: the Primer makes the tick look for a last human host. It crawls up the leg, burrowing through thick hair, biting. Mycelia sprout from its head, pushing into the host's torn arterial capillaries. They split, grow, and get washed away by the blood stream. When the host recognizes the tick and removes it, the Seed is already sown.

Spore infestation is the curse of humanity. It lurks everywhere, be it through this tick's bite, a spore storm, or the temptations of Burn. Spore infestation devours humans physically and spiritually, makes them vomit thick fungal fuzz, and gives their mind up to the Earth Chakras.

But humans are not completely without protection. They can wear gas masks against airborne spores and sealed armor against bites and mucosal infestation. Their mental resistance is their strongest weapon, though. As long as a human resists mentally, the ether call cannot reach the gossamer growing within him. The Primer cannot activate the Sepsis yet. The battle is not yet lost.

## SPORE INFESTATION

A character can become spore infested in various ways. The spore infestation points are noted on the character sheet just like injuries. As long as the maximum spore infestation is not exceeded, the worst the character has to fear are the Spitalians' Mollusks: they already react at spore infestation (1), if only weakly.

Starting at spore infestation (1): Mollusk reaction

## STIGMA

When 50% of the spore infestation scale is ticked off, the skin on the chest reddens. Structures become visible: lines and circles show. In the end, tiny Sepsis hairs grow, become fuzz, and make their archetypical Culture symbol bloom. Over the course of days, it frays out, and smaller symbols growing on the fringe interfere with it like raindrops pattering onto the surface of a body of water.

Starting at 50% of maximum spore infestation:
Culture stigma blooms

## CARRIER OF THE SEED

Only when the spore infestation scale is exceeded, does a character begin the fight for his soul. His Player notes the excess points next to the scale and rolls PSY+Faith/Willpower against the excess points as Difficulty. If the roll fails, he has been caught by the Primer. The Player notes (1) permanent spore infestation point on the spore infestation scale. Permanent spore infestation cannot be countered by EX or any other means. The character has to roll for every spore infestation going over their maximum—and can get another permanent spore infestation point every time.

He is now a carrier of the Seed.

Spore infestation > maximum Spore infestation:
Action roll PSY+ Faith/Willpower (excess points)
Failure: (+1) permanent spore infestation

## LEPEROS

The Sepsis eats away at the lungs of a carrier of the Seed and pushes its tiny hairs into the circulatory system. It flourishes in frontal sinuses and covers the mucosa.

When the carrier of the Seed wakes up in the morning, he is close to suffocating, his throat and nose are full of growth. When he coughs or sneezes, Sepsis bursts out of him. The only cure that the Spitalians would still offer him at this point is a fiery death.

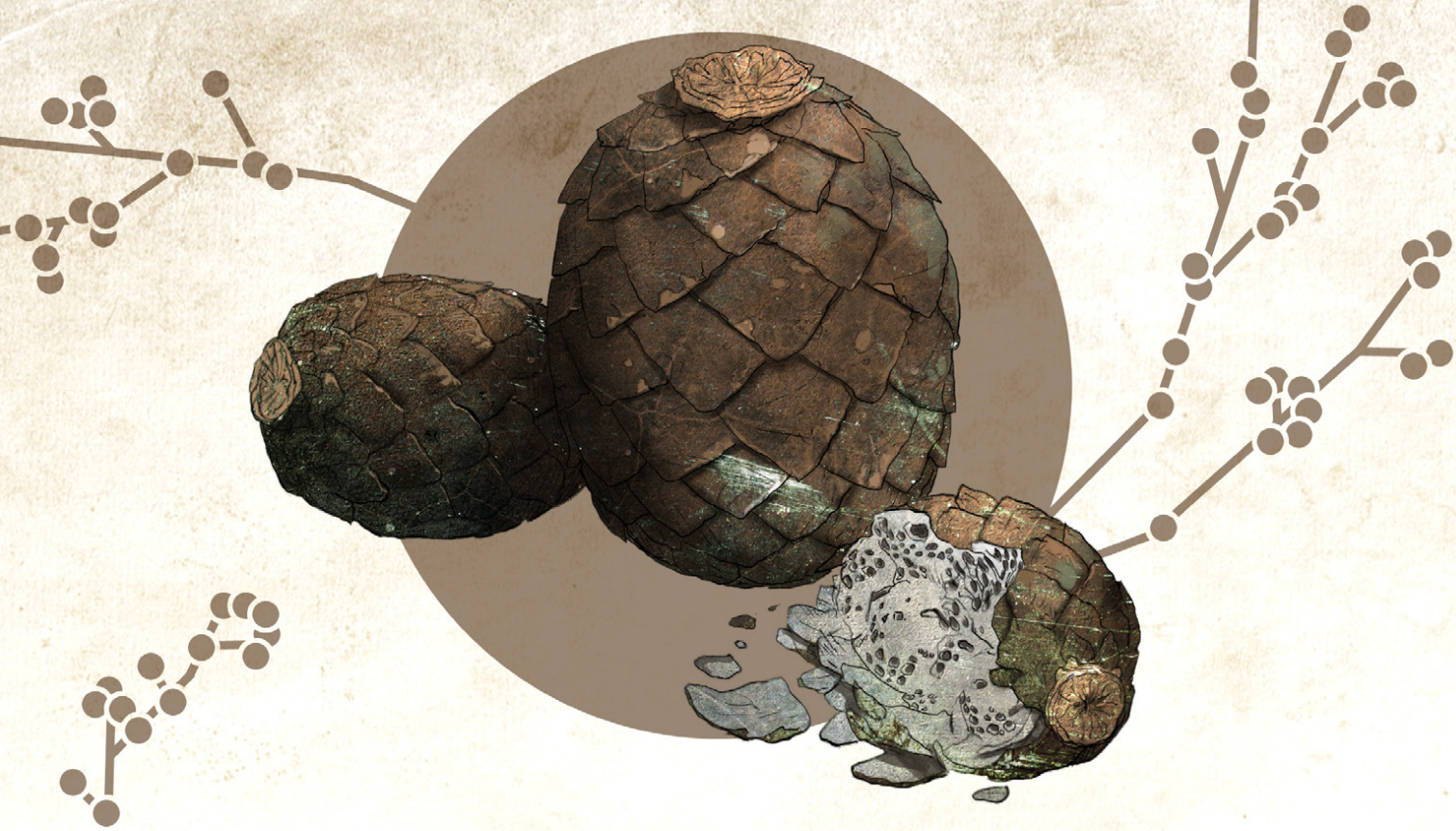
As soon as 50% of the spore infestation scale is full, the Primer is fully in control. The character is now a Leperos. Their story is over.

50% of spore infestation scale permanent:
Character becomes Leperos

## SPORINATION

Those who approach spore fields risk an increased spore infestation. This depends on size and age of the field: it increases rapidly when a fungal bloom is imminent and climaxes when the unharvested Burn cusps burst. The spore infestation is measured on a scale of 1-10. In a spore-infested region, a character must check within a given interval whether his immune system is able to fight off the blight of the Sepsis. To do so, he rolls BOD+Toughness (spore intensity).

For examples of intensities and intervals in different regions, see the table to the right. Gas masks and armor with the "Sealed" Quality reduce the fungal burden and give automatic Successes to the resistance roll. If the roll fails, the character gets spore infestation points according to the table. "1D" means that the spore infestation is rolled for.



## FORBIDDEN FRUIT

The fungal bloom has started on the spore field. Cusps rise from the Sepsis blanket, big as two clasped hands, covered in tiny veins. With their paper skin they resemble wasp nests, but there are no insects inside them. Within them rustles a drug that has taken Europe by storm: Burn.

Burn is the temptation and the paradise, but also sin and corruption, of whole societies. Burn is a double-edged sword: some hold its hilt; some hold its blade. Burn brings redemption and perhaps, to some, enlightenment, but mainly Burn brings Sepsis.

**RULES:** There are two sorts of Burn: on young spore fields, only weak Burn can be found. The cusps are pale, and the effect of the spores is weak. Potent Burn can only be harvested on Mother spore fields and in the Earth Chakra. Weak Burn has a Potency of (1). The Potency of potent Burn is determined by a roll at consumption.

Weak Burn: Potency (1)
Potent Burn: Potency 1D

## ADMINISTRATION

Burn must be inhaled. It is not water-soluble and cannot be heavily compressed: it would devolve into pure Sepsis spores. Only Discordia is more resistant.

The cusps are the perfect containers. You push a little hole into the tip of the papery shell, drill an air hole into the top, put it to your lips, and inhale deeply. The amount of spores inhaled exceeds the critical mass to work on humans by just a little. The empty shell can be crushed and burned without a trace—though not always in time.

The sight of a cusp will always cause a commotion in Justitian or Cathedral City, for everyone knows that neither Spitalians nor Anabaptists are squeamish when it comes to Leperos or Burn smugglers. Where the Burn acceptance is low, the Apocalyptics fill the stuff into tanned and sewn-up goat hides. The skin is inflated, and you inhale the air streaming out. The effect is the same.

| Intensity | Spore contamination event | Interval | Spore Infestation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Light sporination close to spore field | 1x / day | 1 |
| 2 | Spore mist in high-risk zones like Parasite | 1x / day | 1 |
| 3 | Strong sporination in adult spore field | 1x / hour | 1D |
| 5 | Fungal bloom in adult spore field | 1x / hour | 1D |
| 7 | Fungal bloom in Mother spore field | 1x / hour | 1D |
| 10 | Spore saturation at the Pollen spore front and in the Earth Chakras | 1x / hour | 1D |

## INTOXICATION

One deep breath and Burn swirls in the lungs. Like a blight, it covers the mucosa and sinks in. The spores negotiate the alveoli and reach the brain via the blood stream. The Burner still feels the cusp in his hand, hears its rustling. He closes his eyes. His mind is already soaring like spore vapors. He expands into a cloud of consciousness that turns into an orbit around the mother consciousness, swept along by a vortex of thousands of thoughts—a journey into pure, scintillating divinity. Later, the Burner will report mental fusion, the glowing of the Chakras, transmigration and obsession, balance, a reality of primal knowledge in a giant space of consciousness. Others only whisper of an endless world of meaningless intoxication, projected to certain points of the body axis.

All encrustations of the soul, all pain, all doubts and fears wither in the meaty warmth of the mother consciousness. When the Burner finally falls back into reality, his soul is purified. For a second, he sees the world through a stranger's eyes. In the end, he recognizes himself, is not 'many' anymore, but accepts himself as 'me' again.

**RULES:** The intoxication lasts (Potency) hours. But that is not always desirable, especially not in battle. The Burner can allow these visions to happen, but he can also suppress them and reduce the intoxication to its physical aspect.

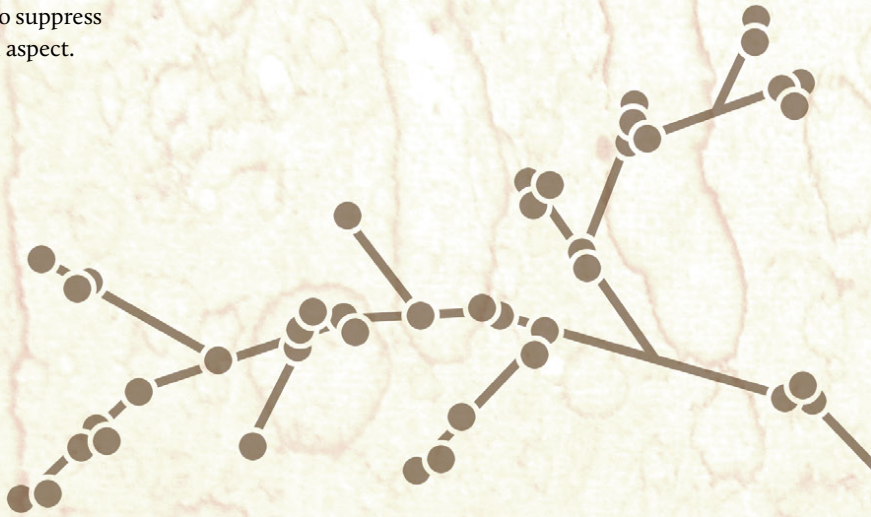
## STIMULUS

Burn always carries a spark of its Earth Chakra, a spark that lights the corresponding Chakra in people and awakens tremendous powers. While the intoxication is a nice distraction from an otherwise tedious life, it is this stimulus phase afterwards that raises Burn above ergot extract, milk of the poppy, and other drugs. It helps the Burner withstand cold or detect enemies; it strengthens the mind or brings unconditional peacefulness.

**RULES:** The Burner regains Ego Points equal to the Burn Potency, but he also gets spore infested by the same value. Additionally, he gets abilities corresponding to the stimulated Chakra for the Potency of the Burn in hours. The effects are described with the Burn types.

A Burner can consume several cusps in a row to build up Ego quickly, but he can only profit from the last cusp's stimulus.

Ego Points + Potency
Spore infestation + Potency
Special abilities depending on Burn type
Stimulus time: (Potency) hours



## TYPES OF BURN

| Burn | Chakra | Earth Chakra | Effect | Cost (weak / potent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bion | Coccyx | Pollen / Pandora | Resistance against illness, poison, cold: + Potency Successes | 20 / 60 |
| Glory | Solar plexus | Purgare / Nox | Mental: + Potency Successes; BOD+Burn Potency/2 | 30 / 90 |
| Unity | Heart | Franka / Souffrance | CHA+Negotiation +Potency; CHA+Expression +Potency; No negative results of stress or mortal danger | 10 / 30 |
| Muse | Throat | Balkhan / Usud | INS+Perception +Potency; INS+Empathy +Potency; Can pass on Successes and Triggers (max. Potency), (-1) Ego | 20 / 60 |
| Argus | Forehead | Hybrispania / Mirar | Initiative + Potency; cannot be surprised | 30 / 90 |
| Discordia | - | Discordance | Roll a die: On 1-5 one random Attribute is reduced to (1) for (6) hours, on a 6 one Attribute rises to (6) for (6) hours | 60 |

### BION

Pollen is cold and hunger, Bion is warmth and comfort. One deep breath from the goat skin is enough, and the human becomes one with the land, is refreshed by the cold winds, and feels no hunger more than what a handful of lichen could sate. His body temperature rises, and his abdomen burns. However, this is no fever: it is pure life force wanting out.

**RULES:** The Burner shakes off illnesses and poisons like ruin dust. He does not feel cold. He adds the Potency of the Bion as automatic Successes to his resistance rolls.

### GLORY

The breath quickens: heat radiates from the chest to the limbs. The muscles swell; the nerves tingle. Every fiber of the body is taut and ready. Body and mind become one. The Burner feels like a predator. Nothing is going to stop him.

**RULES:** Glory strengthens the will and the body. Mental resistance (PSY+Faith/Willpower) is assisted by the Potency of the Glory as automatic Successes. The Body Attribute rises by half the Potency of the Burn, which could have effects on weapon Damage.

### UNITY

Those who inhale the spores feel a deep inner love radiating in tingling waves from the chest. After about two hours, there is an intense emotion of peace and balance that makes even the most hardened warrior refrain from using violence. If there was a battle, the Burner would flee or try to make peace with the aggressor.

**RULES:** Under the influence of Unity Burn, a Burner will not participate in violent combats, but act as a mediator at most. He will fight only if there is no other chance and only until there is an opportunity to flee. At the same time, his intuition rises: CHA+Negotiation +Potency and CHA+Expression +Potency. Additionally, he calms down and shows no physical reaction to stress: all negative effects of stress are null and void in the stimulus phase.

### MUSE

The Muse Burner experiences the world through vibration. Wind, sun, earth, people, thoughts: everything seems encoded in a language of vibrations.

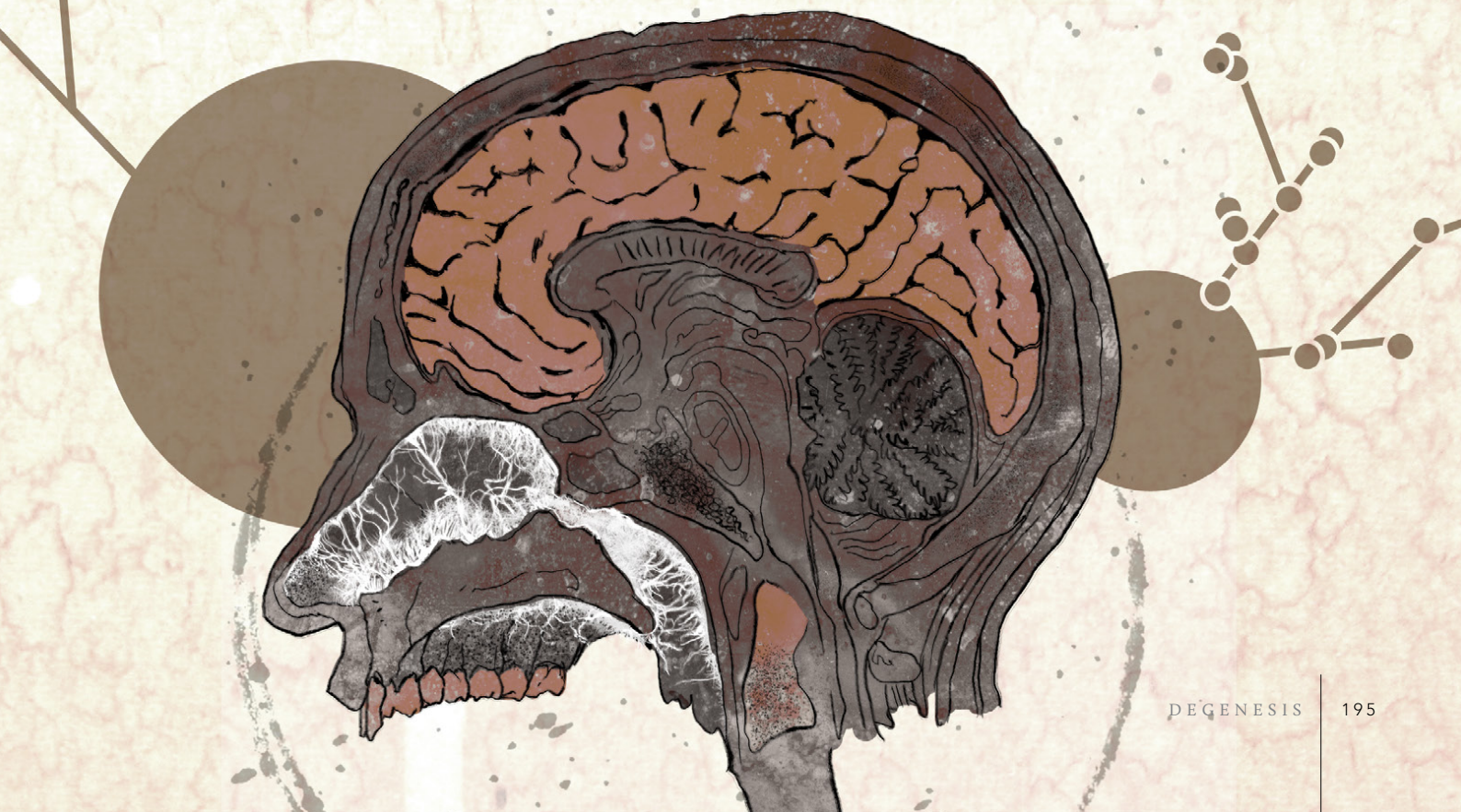
But one single spoken sentence or even a sigh can tear the delicate weave. Underneath, the untamed creation lurks—the word that created the world. The Burner is obsessed with it. He only has to use his thoughts to break through the final layer…

Muse is addictive. With every breath of Muse swirling into his lungs, the Burner hopes to this time match the sound that will reshape the world after his ideas. This phantasm is a side effect of heightened senses. The Burner recognizes the truth behind every word, feels fear and joy. He also feels attracted to those around him, complementing them, becoming attuned to them, joining them.

**RULES:** INS+Perception and INS+Empathy rise by the Potency of the Muse. Moreover, the Burner can roll all non-physical Skills (INT, INS, CHA, and PSY) together with someone close by and pass on Successes and Triggers up to the Potency of the Burn. He loses himself in this union and has to spend (1) Ego per Action roll.

### ARGUS

Argus weakens the link between body and soul, makes the consciousness drift into strange realities where it is washed away by the stream of time. Suddenly the Burner



sees the world as it will be in 100 years—or as it was 10 million years ago. Reality and vision become one, and the Burner cannot tell the difference anymore. Only people of enormous willpower withstand the tides of time and anchor themselves in the here and now.

While they see life all around them pass and be reborn in fast forward, Argus also allows them brief glimpses into the near future and past.

**RULES:** An Argus Burner can predict critical situations: he knows their outcome already, but he needs to control himself not to lose the stream of time. In combat, he gets the Potency of the Argus as dice to his Initiative. He cannot be surprised.

### DISCORDIA

Discordant Burn differs from Bion, Muse, Argus, Unity and Glory. It is not harvested on healthy spore fields of the Earth Chakras but from the Feeding Cusps of a Discordant field. Discordia is an attractant. Once the harvester touches the cusp, he slides into the meat funnel over the secretion-slick membrane. As opposed to the Earth Chakras a Discordant field does not have to expand by sporination, inhaling the spores does not continue the expansion cycle but is a dead end.

Still, there are psychoactive spores in the cusps. The members of the Shabath see this as the field trying to sweat out all the madness, an immune reaction. Maybe it works, and the Discordant fields get better. However, there is no healing in sight yet, any change would be on the timescale of centuries or millenia.

Only the spiritually rotten members of sacrificial cults and imbeciles voluntarily inhale Discordia. Visually, the cusps do not differ from those of other Burn types, which is why Burners are constantly in danger of someone slipping them Discordia. There is no stimulus and no intoxication phase. The user is sucked into an indescribable void: the soul singularity. Many Burners tell of seven marks from the forehead down to the sex burning holes into their bodies and draining them of every emotion, even pain. They drift through nowhere, can only watch the marks bleed out and their energy swirl away into spiral galaxies in the endless blackness. After six hours, the curtain tears, and they fall back to reality. The awakening is painful, the world seems strange and incomprehensible for days afterwards—and disgustingly bright. Some part of them has been lost to the darkness.

**RULES:** Discordant Burn is a poison of the soul attacking the Attributes regardless of its Potency. The relevant Attribute is rolled for with a dice. Another roll determines the effect: on 1-5, the Attribute falls to (1) for 6 hours. On a 6, it rises to the maximum of (6) for the same amount of time.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Burn is an economical and a power factor that the Apocalyptics have learnt to use. Bion from Pollen brings dream prices from the Scrappers in the Black Lung, it helps to slip Frankan Unity to an enemy Voivodule to force him to agree to a peace treaty, and Hybrispanian Argus is as popular with Hellvetics as with the war-like Clans of the Balkhan.

The demand rises, just like the spore infestation—and the Spitalian resistance.

## SITES

Sepsis needs certain environmental factors to grow into a spore field. The Primer has found ways to quicken the expansion or make up for losses caused by the Spitalians. Pheromancers inject potent spores from the Earth Chakra into their human drones. At first, the victims stay alive and look up to their master wide-eyed. The Sepsis builds within them, grows as fuzz between the now blind eyes and bulges in cysts in their armpits. Death is mercy. Their skin is paper-thin and taut. When the Pheromancer splits them open along the spine, the white flood flows out and sinks into the ground. The seed for a new field is sown.

Spore storms, Leperos, drones, a Biokinetics' self-sacrifice: the life cycle of the fields vary.

However, it is hard to find the large, potent fields. In the proximity of settlements, Spitalians and Anabaptists patrol or destroy the fields. Large spore fields off the trade routes have often been claimed as property by some Apocalyptics. They are heavily guarded. The Mother spore fields are especially coveted. Clans and Flocks clash, fight, lose, or conquer. Red lines are drawn and crossed. While simple spore fields only produce pale cusps with weak Burn, the colorful, potent cusps bloom on Mother spore fields, and the world revolves around them.

## HARVEST

Whether the Apocalyptic looks for blooms at the slopes of the Souffrance Crater or blazes a trail through gossamer in the Pollen wasteland, a tickling in his head guides him. If he follows it, he will soon see the concentric rings of a spore field about to bloom.

The cusps want to be found.

In the spore-filled air of the fields, visions are common. They even seem to guide the harvest: insect paths dissolve into teeming masses, rearranging themselves and approaching the cusps in a star pattern: dark red, pulsating lines form a polygon network between the cusps; the cusps whisper and sigh, and the closer the harvester gets to them, the louder they get; or the corresponding Chakra in the human body exudes warmth and tingles.

No two harvesters experience the same vision.

However, they all describe the vision as more distinct, more real, and more emotional when they are heavily spore-infested themselves. Obviously the spore fields use a simple form of ether call to summon harvesters.

Once a Burn cusp has been discovered, everything happens in a rush: the fist-sized cusp is gently lifted from the crackling mycelium and stored for transport.

**RULES:** Spore-infested people feel drawn to blooming spore fields. They can hear their summons for (100) m per spore infestation point. At a spore infestation of (9), an Apocalyptic would feel a spore field at a (900) m distance.

This summons is only perceptible when the field blooms. Then it dies down to a whimper before fading completely.

Locating a field in bloom:
Spore infestation points x (100) m

The amount and quality of the cusps depends on the age and size of the field. Only a field of Potency (5+) is considered a Mother spore field where potent cusps can be harvested. The older a field, though, the rarer the fungal bloom: once per month for a level 1 field, every 2 months month for a level 2 field, etc. Freshly evolved Mother spore fields bloom every 5 months.

It is priceless to know cycle and point of time.

Spore field level 1-4: Simple Burn
Spore field level 5+: Potent Burn
Fungal bloom every (level) months

The cusps remain on the field for weeks before their paper skin tears and the wind carries the spores away. A field offers to its harvester 1D x level x 10 cusps.

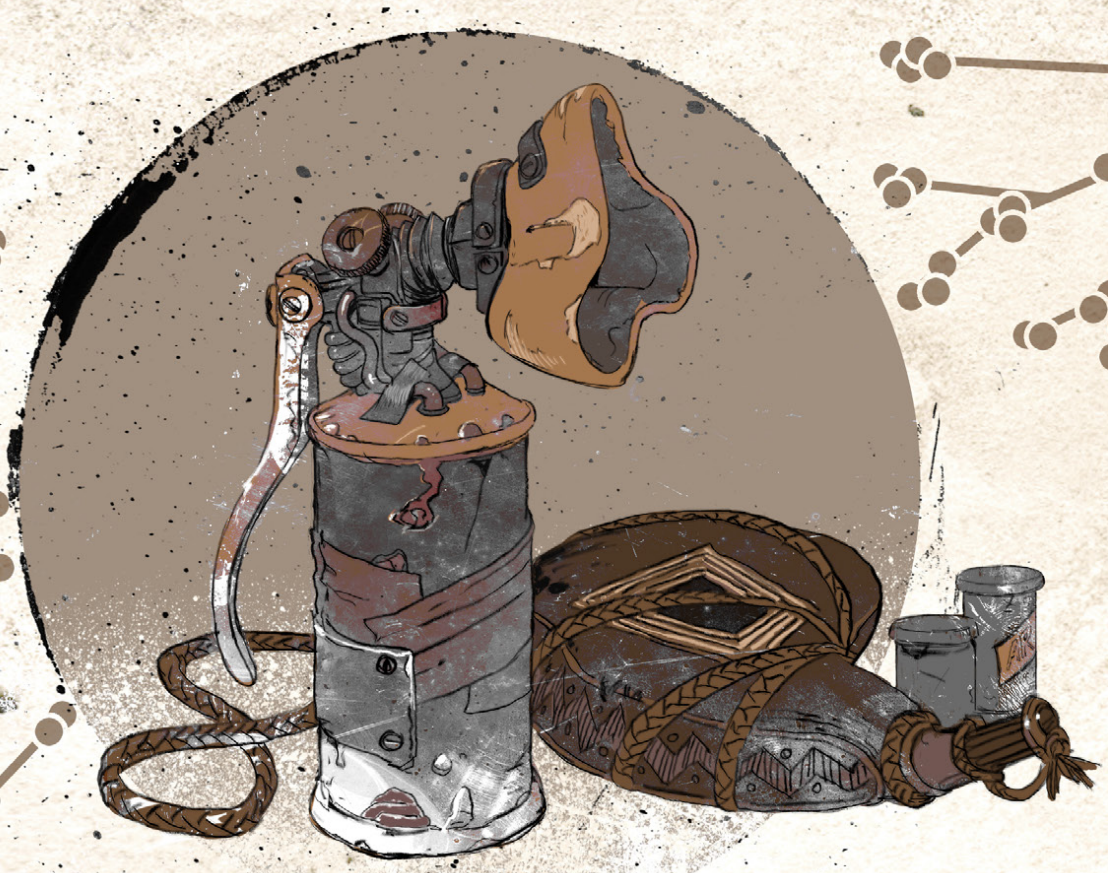
Harvest: 1D x level x 10 cusps

## IDENTIFICATION

Fresh Burn spores are white and finer than the finest dust. A slight breeze makes them rise in swathes. When they age, they form fine little fungal hairs, and the Burn coalesces into cottony gossamer.

Although the effects of the various types of Burn vary widely, Argus cannot be discerned from Discordia. The spores themselves are inactive and thus cannot be judged by Mollusks and Noumenon Vocalizers.

Old Burners often sprinkle a pinch of spores onto the table, and the spores sometimes form lines that are recognizable as Chakra symbols. But these signs are extremely short-lived. The Burn reacts to a passing spore-infested person like iron filings to a magnet. The spores reshape into a warped Chakra symbol or simply meaningless lines and arcs. Leperos claim they can feel the provenance of the Burn because they feel a tingling on their body axis where the corresponding Chakra is located. The only proven truth is that no one can tell for sure which type of Burn he has bought from the Apocalyptic on the corner. Therefore, Burners like to stick with one supplier.



# BURN IN THE CULTURES

## BORCA

For decades, the East Wind Flock has controlled the Burn trade in Borca, flooded the Scrapper camps with Bion, and supplied Glory to the pit fighters and Argus to the Clans. Their underground network spanned all of Europe, led through the Alps via forgotten passes and on secret paths to the harvesting fields in Pollen, Franka, and Hybrispania. Terminals grew into settlements, local leaders opened their hands and closed them again around fistfuls of Drafts. But the Flock's Ravens had roosted in Justitian. From there, they led the business, guided the flow of goods, sent out couriers, granted audiences.

It was here that the Spitalians attacked. They kept hitting the East Wind Flock, knowing that the Judges and Anabaptists were backing them. In a few short days, Splayers beheaded the beast. This event went down in the Protectorate's history as the Great Cleanse.

The flow of Burn ebbed, the Scrappers rebelled.

Years have passed since then. The two largest Apocalyptics Flocks, the Dust Riders and the Carrion Birds, have purged themselves and swore to Preservist Provost Kranzler to turn their backs on the Burn business. The Spitalians are not naive enough to believe that. Of course the Flock's Magpies sell Burn in the bordellos. Of course "angels" sell Bion in the Scrapper quarters. But the Flocks restrain themselves and keep the price high. Kranzler takes a pragmatic point of view: as long as there are two cats in town, the mice will stay away.

Bigger deals happen on Burn markets at the fringes of the Protectorate. Scrapper runes announce the caches weeks in advance. Bygone market halls are cleaned of debris. They stretch chains of lights and cover the walls with embroidered sheets. Hookahs are smoked, dice are rolled, and laughter rings out into the wasteland. For days, life returns to these buildings. The Apocalyptics' Battle Crows stand in front of them, guarding them while inside the Magpies writhe on cushions and crates full of Burn cusps are emptied.

Wherever Burn is traded, EX isn't far away. Having to buy it at the Spital time and again inevitably leads to an entry at some point. It is always better not to let the doctors know that you were infested by spores. Some veteran Famulancers have understood that. They smuggle EX from the Spital's Community Pharmacy and offer it to Apocalyptics, who resell it on the Burn markets.

But with the Clans regaining their strength, the fear of Spitalians and Judges wanes. They have their hands full with holding the fort. Flocks that are still young see a chance there. The East Wind Flock's network is reactivated: old caches are rediscovered. The Burn stream flows once again.

## FRANKA

Large parts of Franka exist under the Pheromancers' treacherous peace. Those who want to move freely here must swear fealty to the Queens—and are blessed by their mark in return. The Sun Wind Flock submitted to Machi-awen and has been harvesting Unity in the Mother spore fields ever since, unmolested.

The Burn is destined to be exported to Borca: only a few crates go to Hybrispania and Purgare. Meekness and peace are considered signs of weakness there, so Unity is passed on to enemies to make them look like softies.

In the Mediterranean ports, Neolibyans arrive to try the local Burn. For hours, they discuss with burning hearts, devising brilliant contracts and business ideas. But when the stimulus phase ends and they are back on the upper deck again, both feet on the ground, they see absolute justice in these contracts. No one loses anything, and everyone wins. But who wants that? Unity Burn can only be a game to them.

Franka's free citizens despise Burn. They only have to point at the mud vents on the horizon, and everyone sees what the Sepsis has done to Franka.

## POLLEN

The broken wings of the East Wind Flock are healing, but its body has long since rotted. Young Ravens free themselves and found their own Flocks. They conquer the old smugglers network, expand it. On the circular area of rotten spore fields they erect markets where intermediaries buy Bion to smuggle it to Justitian along secret paths.

The Spitalians' hands are tied. In groups of a hundred, they pass by the markets—not enough manpower. Only when they encounter an unguarded camp do they burn it down, and the Apocalyptics let them. After all, their guilty conscience needs to be calmed somehow.

Danzig's Burn traders do not feel a guilty conscience. They sell Bion by the basket to freezing Famulancers.

The Preservist Pavel Keresz does not shudder from the cold, but from rage. The Consultants charged him with keeping the Burn flood at bay. That is exactly what he does. He declares handshake contracts with the Apocalyptic scum null and void. He sends the Famulancers to the markets, chases down smugglers, and burns the fungal flowers of profitable spore fields. The Clanners call him the Ash Man. The Flocks begin to lose their patience.

## BALKHAN

Muse Burn is strange. The people in the Voivodates have no idea what to do with it. They have no use for phantasms and gibbering idiots who are so excited that they piss themselves where they stand. They prefer remaining completely down to earth. Those who want to be intoxicated would do better to try some Slivovitz.

Muse is interesting. Scholars believe they can see the true nature of the world by using it. But for a big business, "interesting" is not enough. The Voivodes and Voivodules haven't completely understood that yet, and take spore field after spore field from the Apocalyptics.

Still, the migrants profit from the rule of the Clans. Spitalians always look like Spitalians, but an Apocalyptic embodying the desires of a people is simply a man or a woman. Smuggling has become easier, and never before has so much Glory been sold to the Voivodates.

## HYBRISPANIA

The Guerreros claim the Argus Burn for themselves, just as they claim everything for themselves and their war. They control the Pyrenean passes and valleys and stop the Apocalyptics from smuggling the Burn out of the country. In fact, almost no cusp reaches Perpignan in Franka along the coast. But the mountain range is extensive: forgotten villages cling to the rock and act as the smugglers' storing places or hideaways, their mountain paths a trade secret. Eventually, bags of Argus reach the dark side of Toulouse and embark for Borca.

The Africans call Argus the true hero of the resistance. That is no compliment. The Burn makes the Guerreros smell every ambush, and what's worse, it makes them confident. The Pregnoctics and Argus Burn extend a war the Africans considered won a long time ago. The battle for Hybrispania thus is always a battle for the spore fields, too. Every spore field the Scourgers discover, they douse in Petro and burn to the ground. Black smoke wafts through the jungle.

## PURGARE

Cathedral City calls Purgare an awakened land. United, it fights the Demiurge and the Sepsis. The Anabaptists are fairly close to the truth. Purgare is split along the Apennines: the west is all shadows and bad dreams, the east is enlightened and humble. The large eastern families proselytized by the Anabaptists call the cusps the Demiurge's work.

Even the separatist De Paulos disdain Burn, using it would set a wrong example for the people and would be a confession of weakness.

The western Clans and kin, however, snatch at any opportunity. They do not get many, and Burn is the best that has presented itself to them for a long time. The Romanos lead the way. They harvest Glory and trade it for Bion and Muse. Pirates bring Argus from Corpse.

## AFRICA

The Psychovores are a creation of the Primer, but they produce nothing that resembles Burn. Maybe the Psychovores lack the spiritual component the Spitalians ascribe to the Earth Chakras.

In fact, intoxication and stimulus do not reach their optimal levels when consuming Burn in the Psychovores' area of influence. Instead, Burn merely causes aching muscles and dizziness, no matter what kind.

# FORBIDDEN ZONE

10
CHAPTER
FROM HELL

## REBIRTH: THE CLANS

The Chroniclers began as a small group of tech-freaks who tried to escape the reality of the world through the Stream. The Judges and the Protectorate both grew from the ideas of a single man. The Apocalyptics and Jehammedans hail from pre-Eshaton ideologies that needed the apocalypse to gain enough momentum to infect large groups of people.

Other ideas and ways of life shared the starting line with them. But those that have become the 13 Cults over 500 years later grew faster than the others, were more clever, more dexterous—or maybe just lucky. They shoved the other Clans, sects, and savages out into the night.

Blinded by the light of civilization, they had no idea that the others have been waiting for their chance in the shadows ever since. The fall of Praha is that chance. The Clans rise and are much bigger than the Hellvetic Spotters and Judge Protectors ever deemed possible. 21 of the most well-known and influential Clans are presented here.

As opposed to beasts and Psychonauts, Game Masters will find no stats for Clanners. Even if they seem as grotesquely disfigured as the Usudis or Pandorians, they are still human. They only differ in training, methods, and equipment. Clanner characters can choose them as a starting point, or they can be allies, and using the suggestions under "Human Enemies" they make fearsome opponents.

## BEASTS

Beyond border squabbles, battles over resources and intrigues around Burn, there is an uncharted land. Gendos wander the ruins, Spore Beasts live in the remainders of misguided, discarded evolution, and Leperos leave their humanity behind and spread Sepsis, all while the rumbling of the mammoths echoes across the plains.

The world out there is diverse and dangerous. Some creatures such as the Gendos are presented as representatives of the fauna of this new world. Game Masters should feel free to use them, or use their stats as a base to create other beasts for their games.

## SHADOWS OF THE PAST

The past is restless. Deep in its shadows, the Sleepers fight to uphold - and understand - their place in Gerome Getrell's plan, but the Marauders are close on their heels, hungry for their blood. Elsewhere, the AMSUMOs awaken from their slumber, their identity a chaotic mixture of old orders infected by the 2 to the 16 virus.

While Cults, Clans, and beasts shape the present and become part of the daily array of enemies, Sleepers, Marauders, and AMSUMOs send ripples through the power structures of whole regions. Only an experienced and well-equipped character can even face them, let alone defeat them. They will never be unimportant enemies by the wayside: when they arise, they take center stage and are the crux of whole campaigns.

## PRIMER FAUNA

The Primer gives birth to strange and weird fauna, creatures such as Fractal Stars and trilobites. These creatures may be very deadly for a character to encounter, however a combat encounter with Initiative, Rounds and Attack rolls wouldn't suit the danger that these creatures present. As such, the Game Master should bring them into play more as environmental influences or traps. The same is true for Discordant Feeding Cusps or the strange flora growing in the Fractal Forests.

## PSYCHONAUTS

The Psychonauts embody the terror of the Primer and are the nemesis of humankind. They shape the world like a force of nature. Spore fields puncture the surface, ring after ring, while Pregnoctics fracture time and capture it in shells. Psychonauts may seem bestial at first, but their motives revolve around a collective idea of evolution that knows neither good nor evil, only "fit" or "unfit."

That doesn't make them any less dangerous. When characters encounter Psychonauts, it's all or nothing. Human enemies and even beasts will flee when hurt or out of options. Psychonauts always fight to the death.

This chapter presents the five Raptures. Every Rapture has various types of Psychonauts, usually of different power levels. The weaker varieties can be vanquished by rookies—but they only foreshadow what is to come.

## HUMAN ENEMIES

Game Masters have to prepare a lot and anticipate even more. Therefore, if they want to use a human antagonist or even a whole group of them, they should stick to the basics. First, determine the function the opponent will serve. If it is to be used in combat, he needs combat stats. If he uses his Skills against the characters, representing some non-violent challenge, he doesn't need combat stats and instead should have other relevant Skills.

### COMBAT STATS

Fighters do not need a complete set of stats with Attributes and all Skills. The combat profile only consists of the basics—Initiative, Ego Points, attack Skill, weapon Damage, and movement—and is used for non-human enemies: all Skill ratings are already added to their respective Attributes and presented as a raw Action Number.

### WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS

A King of the Cockroach Clan could kill an enemy with one hit of his iron club. However, he is slow, dumb, and does not use ranged weapons. As long as the characters keep their distance, avoid being cornered, and shoot at him, they will survive the fight against this overwhelming enemy without a scratch. Powerful and seemingly invincible characters are interesting, but every overwhelmingly powerful enemy should include a weakness. Some suggestions are presented below.

- A Hellvetic sniper only carries a Spotter Harness and is not armed for melee.
- An Apocalyptic is extremely agile, but he fights with a knife.
- A colossal Paler fights with a self-made armor that can even take a hit from a Trailblazer—but every hit tears away armor plates (-1 armor per hit).
- The Paradigma breaks slabs of rock from the mountain with his Cascader, but he is sickly and could be taken out with one blow.

## REWARD THROUGH BATTLES

To smash a children's gang in Justitian's Stukov quarter will get you no more than a pat on the shoulder from the local merchants. On the other hand, if someone faces down a Biokinetic, or dismantles an AMSUMO in a lengthy fight, word gets around. The hero of the day is invited to a cup of distillate and begged by the onlookers to tell his story over and over again. His Renown Background rises by (1). However, to raise his Renown over (4) in this fashion, he'll have to vanquish even stronger foes, such as the more dangerous varieties of AMSUMO or Psychonaut.

## ABERRATIONS

When you've survived Gendo attacks a dozen times, you know how they act and what their weaknesses are. Combat against basic enemies will become predictable and therefore boring. To avoid this, the Game Master should introduce new enemies or change old ones. The Primer creates many strange and disturbing creatures, if the Game Master mixes beast or Clanner with Discordant or Psychonautic effects, the result will be interesting aberrations.

- Gendos infested with Discordance parasites
- Mammoths carrying the Biokinetic plague in their fur
- Wasp-infested boars searching for spore fields in Franka

### FLIGHT

People only fight to the death when there is no way out and the enemy will not accept their surrender. However, at which point someone considers a combat desperate and wants to retreat depends on the person's sense of honor, self-perception, and group dynamics. An Usudi is still sure of his victory when he attacks the enemies alone, while a Garganti's will to fight falters when one of his mammoths dies.

If the Game Master wants to check a fighter's morale, he can roll the fighter's Mental Defense. The Difficulty is a combination of several factors (see table below). If the roll fails, the fighter flees or surrenders. A roll on CHA+Leadership against PSY+Faith/Willpower can stop him or urge him on, but that costs an Action.

| Event | Difficulty |
|---|---|
| Base Difficulty | 1 |
| Outnumbered | +1 |
| Ratio over 1:2 | +2 |
| Hurt | +1 |
| Flanked by enemies | +2 |
| Surrounded | -1 |
| Hated enemy | -1 |
| Protection instinct (family) | -3 |

# COCKROACHES

Praha has been overrun, the pride of the East is nothing more than a maggot-infested corpse—a sign of hope! The first law is valid again: there is power in numbers. No hammer wielder, no goat man, no rust dragger can rise when a swarm of roaches dances on top of him!

But before the storm, there is the brood, and it hungers for flesh.

## SHATTERED

Cracking carapaces smashed under the hammers and boots of the hammer wielders, burning breeding places, the taste of inferiority on the lips: the Judges' purge stomped the Clans into the dust. And that's where they remained, holed up, finding refuge underground. Like they've always done when they do not know how to go on, they followed their totems' orders: Adapt. Breed. Survive.

The young women slept with the dumb but powerful Cockroach Kings, and soon their bellies swelled. The warriors dug new breeding places and gathered meat. The old ones collected lichen, bark, and worms—or were killed if they were weak. In their good years, they had done the same, and they expected no less from their spawn. The Clan had to be strong.

The readers watched the huge populations of cockroaches, read good or bad omens for future encroachments from their swarm behavior. The undulations, the glittering movement of the wings—there could be only one deduction: the time has not yet come.

## RISEN

The fall of Praha sent feverish shockwaves of excitement through the wasted Clans of Borca. An omen. The readers called for battle. The thousands of screamed answers echoed through the night: the Cockroach Clans, the Winged Ones, the Sphingids, and the Weavers rose and attacked the convoys of the hammer wielders or broke from the ground beyond their walls.

Their tunnels were widespread, and one of them surfaced in Justitian.

The Judges held back the first wave, suffering heavy losses. But the knowledge that nothing would ever again be as it had been before was harder than the loss of capable shooters and hammer wielders.

## PHOTOPHOBIC

The hunted became the hunters. The first forays were like an awakening, the blood of the Judges on their arms a relief, compensation for decades of pain.

Since that day, they attack wherever possible. They crawl through tubes and old tunnels, lurk in the darkness of overgrown ruins. They are a giant, vibrating organism, always appearing in droves. If they are outnumbered, they retreat and scatter.

Their breeding places are subterranean, buried deep in the intestines of the Bygones, protected from their enemies. They tear their fallen siblings down into tunnels and celebrate the rite of passing. Every warrior cuts a piece of meat from the corpse, roasts it over the flames in the hall of fire, and eats it. That way, the soul is passed on. The Cockroaches turn the bones into weapons, powders, and talismans, and they pierce their skin with bone splinters to keep the beast within awake.

### KINGS

The Cockroaches have always submitted to the castes they are born into. Gatherers, readers, and kings are appointed by blood right and their line can be traced back to the ancestors.

This is especially true for the kings. They come from a family tree that births hideous and misshapen colossi who are known for their legendary strength. They are chained and kept in the deepest vaults like animals. Chosen women lie with them for a day to receive the gift of bulk and strength. If a child is born from this union, it becomes one of the warrior caste. Fighting, looting, destroying is its purpose in life, there is nothing else they may do.

### DERANGED

A swarm of insects doesn't mind if some of its members are crushed. Others will take their place. For the Cockroaches, death by hammer is a wake-up call to the survivors and a shout for revenge. They only live for their anger, having a dozen words for murder but only one for beauty. If a Cockroach dies in battle, all witnesses gain (+1) Ego. This effect can temporarily raise the Ego pool above the maximum.

# PNEUMANCERS

The Pneumo Hammer is red hot, pressure gauge in the red, tapping against the border. Tick tick tick. The seams burst. The Pneumancer breathes rapidly, gritting his teeth, sweat pools in his mask. The weapon in his hands is as hot as smoldering coal. But he can't lay it down. Freedom has its price.

## INSURRECTION

The Phosphorites, Mechans, Pneumancers, and Judges all met over Nullpellia, caught up in blurred alliances or driven by blind hatred. Nullpellia burned.

The Pneumancers had broken their ancient alliance with the Mechans and nailed the hated priest caste to the temple walls with their bolts. All the years of torture in the name of the Mechanist, the humiliations, and the lies had become too much for them. For the first time, they looked beyond the border of what the Mechans had sold to them as the world. They recognized that their ambassador Luren in Justitian was no fraud and that they were entitled to a better, autonomous life.

In the great battle, not only the city was destroyed, but also the veil over their eyes. The Pneumancers extinguished the pyre they had once considered their prison and home. Now it was only their home. They started rebuilding to become true heirs to the Mechanist.

## A NEW BEGINNING

On the morning after the battle, they gathered and starting burying the temple of the Mechans, a symbol of their oppression, under a layer of debris.

They spared the wire and steel statue of the Mechanist and put it onto the hill as a headstone. They extinguished the fires, buried the corpses in mass graves, and cleared the streets of debris. They revived the teachings of the Mechanist, who had once given a motto to his bunker community: to each a full belly, a place by the fire, and a job in the community. The Mechans had corrupted this law, now it was the Pneumancers' turn to cleanse all that was wrong from it.

By fire, if necessary.

But the years of oppression had left their marks. The Pneumancers were warriors, not diplomats.

They had left the way of power to the powerful ones. The Mechans left a vacuum that the Clans and Justitian's Judges had now filled. For some Nullpellia is a monument of exploitation and cruelty and deserves to be destroyed, others see the potential of an unformed society. If the stories about the Mechans' warehouses contain even a kernel of truth, then control over the city also means control over huge amounts of coal, sulfur, cobalt, weapons, and artifacts.

## CANDOR

The city is far from its old grandeur. The firewalls have been repaired, the bolt and steam cannons are in place again. Both were enormously necessary, for hundreds of Clans and tribes are already gathering.

What has worked in Praha will be child's play in Nullpellia. An annexation by the Protectorate has been postponed: the Judges can only afford allies that can support Justitian these days, not ones that have to be protected themselves. Another front would be fatal.

## REBIRTH

The Cartel's Scrappers are flocking to Nullpellia, taking what they can for as long as they can. It has never before been so easy to loot the ruin fields of Nullpellia and its surroundings. The Mechans couldn't be bribed, but the Clans permit anything for a price. The Scrappers were followed by the Apocalyptics, who cast their nets. The Pneumancers cannot handle all this. The omnipotence of freedom is overwhelming to them, and they end up in the arms of the Magpie or in the fighting pits. Every day they fight for their identity, yet find only distraction.

A few Pneumancers rise above the chaos, however, war heroes followed by hundreds. They are worshiped because they are a symbol of the transition to freedom and of old strengths. This worship is taking on grotesque features, however. They are courted like gods, the young Pneumancers swearing fealty to them almost imploringly.

The fight for the Clan has not yet begun, but the pawns are already out on the board.

## IN COMBAT

The Pneumancers say that pain accompanies every period of life, forming the character. They live according to that saying and only feel a Trauma penalty only after taking (3) points of Trauma Damage.

Pneumancers are known for one of the legendary weapons of the Mechanist: the Pneumo Hammer. They would never use another weapon.

# MECHANS

Nullpellia's decline and the betrayal of the Pneumancers forced them down into the lightless depths under Nullpellia, down into the wheelwork of the Mechanist's apparatus, down into his vision of a better future. They laugh at his naïveté. Peace and wealth will not be acquired through technology, but through the will to use power. Technology has a completely different meaning…

## CAULDRON CITY

The world lay in ruins. Gangs viewed the seven deadly sins as virtues. Survival was considered a privilege of the strongest. The old and the weak were pushed aside on the way to savagery.

Jewgeny Kagarast opposed this trend. Once he had been an engineer; now everyone knew him as the Mechanist. He designed the Cauldron City prototype: a furnace and a network of heating pipes at the center, completely buried under a layer of dirt. Warmth stayed in, attackers stayed outside.

A group of survivors joined him and implemented his first plans. Additional Cauldron Cities were built, each with a certain function in relation to the others. In one metal was rolled into sheets, in another steam engines were produced, in yet another tunnelers were trained.

A redundant specialist network, destined to greatness through community.

The Mechanist's workshop grew into the underground. He tested steam turbines, perfected weapons. He drew and designed and constructed until he died. His heritage was a monolith of civilization.

Yet it soon cracked. His disciples fought, and the community of Cauldron Cities broke apart into warring factions. The knowledge was lost and soon was glorified as miracles. In the end, only the Mechans remained.

## TECHNOCRACY

The Clan of the Mechans hoarded the Mechanist's secrets. It became a punishable misdemeanor to spread or teach them. Over the centuries, the Clan turned into a pseudo-religious sect, and its members styled themselves as priests. Religion always worked—like a well-oiled steam engine, as their high priest used to say during his orgies.

The Mechans gave steam-powered bolt guns—the Pneumo Hammers—to chosen warriors from the ranks of the vanquished Clans.

Thus they created a warrior caste and saw that it was good. Yet the Clans still rose up against them. The constant conflicts spread their resources thin and were tiresome. So the Mechans turned the small but remarkably moral Clan of the Taunar into a ruling caste and founded the city of Nullpellia on the great concrete plain. The triad of ruling, priest, and warrior caste calmed the city and its population and made them flourish. In fact, the Mechans had chained the land and forced it into a system of control and punishment.

However, the Taunar grew ambitious, and the Pneumancers were becoming more and more independent, too. Then chance smiled on the Mechans. A star fell from the sky, raced across the concrete plain, and hit the Taunar palace. Everything was in ruins, and the Mechans were happy.

## THE TIME OF REVENGE

They saw and declared the allegedly divine intervention as a legitimization of their rule. With the Pneumancers' help, they conquered Clan after Clan. The endless fights culled the ranks of the Pneumancers—which was more than welcome for the Mechans—but this time they went too far. The Phosphorites, devoid of any civilization for centuries, hungry for culture and tormented mercilessly, freed themselves.

Nullpellia had nothing to offer in reply to the savages' outbreak of violence. Even a hasty alliance with the Judges could not prevent its doom, which was finally sealed by the betrayal of the Pneumancers.

The Mechans fled into the Mechanist's underground, mortally wounded. They discovered ancient tunnels, found halls full of Freon tanks with the RG logo, deciphered plans that had long been forgotten. The tools of their reconquest were laid right before their eyes.

## TACTICS

Mechans are manipulators. They attack settlements, kidnapp children, and force families to accept their rule. They wield Freon ray guns similar to those the Chroniclers use—they are convinced that the technological Cult founded its influence on old plans by the Mechanist and hate the Chroniclers for that.

Mechans pop up seemingly out of nowhere in many settlements of the Ramein region: they own the tunnels.

# PHOSPHORITES

Mist fills the chasm, biting the lungs. On the granite walls, the letters "P(15)" shimmer in the color of dead leaves. Phosphorite land, they whisper. Further on, a blurred maw of stone juts from the haze: an RG gate, surrounded by cold light. No guardian—the way to the storage areas is free. The Reviver grins and disappears into the shadows between the trees.

## HOLDING THE FORT

When the dust came, the Recombination Group employees shut the doors and retreated into the storage complex, a rectangular world cut into the mountain.

The Freon tanks, the dumps of chemical granulates, of red phosphor, and greenish shimmering pigments have all become worthless. The basins of white phosphor are even dangerous now.

Still, the RG people stayed. The bunkers offered them protection from the crazed mob in the streets.

Violent years followed. The walls were not defendable with clubs alone. The engineers of the group modified pressure washers to fire white phosphor. Searing lances cut through the night. The bunker dwellers rejoiced.

The Clans backed off.

The RG people raised their deterrence potential and marked themselves with the shimmering pigments. They wanted everyone to see who was a "Phosphorite". Those who dared to attack one of them would have to face flaming death.

In the east, the Reaper's Blow had split the land; in the north and the south, the people devolved into beasts. The Phosphorites could only go west. There they found the Cauldron Cities and the Mechanist. They didn't want to join his great vision, at least not at first. But they opened their storages for the Mechanist. He offered food and fuel in exchange for useless Freon. Who would have declined?

## ISOLATION

With the death of the Mechanist and the usurpation of the Mechans, everything changed. The Mechans imposed an embargo and isolated the Phosphorites. Pneumancers patrolled the border. The Phosphorites tried to find a way through, but the first foray ended in a hail of bolts from the Pneumo Hammers. Since that day, there has been war.

The Pneumancers barricaded themselves behind firewalls, the Phosphorites burned them with phosphor. Decades of bitter combat ensued. The chemists and technicians had grown old and died, had left their children alone in a foreign, hostile world. Knowledge faded. Merchants avoided the land of the Phosphorites.

Cornered and far removed from all civilizing influences, the Phosphorites lost their humanity on the altar locations at the border. Phosphor burned on stone pylons and shed light on the scene, throwing its cold glow onto writhing bodies fighting their bonds. The high priest approached, pushed his hands into a stone basin full of water and raised a yellow lump. Smoke billowed from between his fingers. He reached the altar. Chosen ones pressed the Pneumancer to the stone and pried open his mouth. The high priest called the ritual formula and lowered his fist, wich was already in flames.

The cries of the sacrifices were supposed to shake Nullpellia and force it back. They did the opposite.

## BREAK OUT

Nullpellia never completely recovered from the falling star. The Phosphorites felt that, like a dog smelling the fear of his prey. They grabbed their spears and their launchers and gathered in front of the gates of their temple district.

That day was supposed to be decisive. Nullpellia and the rule of the Mechans were washed away in a wave of fire and hatred. In a last gasp, the Pneumancers struck back against the Phosphorites, but their victory tasted of blood.

The Ramein region rid itself of the burden of the rule of the Mechans. Fleeing tribes found themselves in border conflicts. The Phosphorites were hit hard, but their clergy still commanded hundreds of devoted temple warriors. They conquered abandoned Pneumancer garrisons and pushed northwards. The first contact with Judges had dire consequences. The negotiator, High Judge Holberk, was found two days later, bound to a stone stele. His abdomen and torso were burnt to charcoal by phosphor.

Senator Rutgar declared a bounty of 400 Drafts per dead Phosphorite.

## RADIANT POISON

The Phosphorite warriors mainly rely on their Phosphor launchers (Phosphor cartridges, Distance 20/60, Damage 12, Mag. 4, Fire hazardous, Encumbrance 1, Tech IV, Slots 2, 1400 CD). The ammo must be stored in water, otherwise it will ignite prematurely. Their bone spears, thorn clubs, and sheet blades are coated with toxic mineral pastes and cause (1) Trauma per hit.

# ENEMOI

Many legends born in the time of the Eshaton are dark and tell of the sin of the people. They are a warning to the survivors. But the legends of the Convoy outshine them all, telling a story full of humanity and vigor. The people of the Convoy held the world together when it had already started drifting apart. In the face of dire opposition, they took care of the survivors, they fought—and they died.

A spin-off of the legend talks about the Enemoi. Some say that name was derived from "enemy convoy," while others pronounce it "Anemoi," referring to wind deities from Bygone mythology. The origin of the name remains unclear.

These Enemoi have been rolling through forests and ruins in their multi-segmented UEO trucks for centuries. Wherever they pause, they bring weapons and justice to the Clans. As a neutral influence, they judge the severity and punishment of crimes and are paid in knowledge.

## THE CONVOY

A rumbling bass makes the foliage tremble. When the five trucks of the Clan approach, birds and Gendos flee.

Every truck is a colossus in blue and gray camouflage paint with eight wheels, each the size of a man, on both sides. The largest one is only called "the Citadel," it is as high as a house and has two levels inside. The others are called "Aquila," "Fornax," "Sagittarius," and "Orion."

When the Convoy stops, Marshallers wave their glow sticks for the Drivers, who form a pentagon out of their trucks. Steel arms swivel out into docking ports and link the vehicles. Support struts drill into the ground and supply stability. Enemoi climb on the roofs, tilting steel plates into position or pulling levers. They stretch a steel net across the quintangle, preventing attacks from above. Within 30 minutes, five trucks have turned into a defensive fortification that no known Clan in Borca could conquer.

The engine turbines die down, quiet settles in.

The facility can be entered via the Aquila. Those who come as merchants or to ask for help are ushered in.

The Enemoi are a suspicious lot: the Guardians on the battlements always have their rifles at the ready.

They buy any form of knowledge: books, Stream glasses, artifacts. This brings them into conflict with the Chroniclers, who have started imposing sanctions on any settlement that trades with the Enemoi. When buying food, the Clan is cautious: one of the trucks was poisoned years ago, perhaps the work of the Chroniclers.

The Enemoi help settlements against forays of outlaws, Judges, and Anabaptists. Whether they are attackers or self-styled messiahs, the Enemoi, as defenders of a Bygone system of democratic values, do not tolerate them. They take on the role of lawmakers and defenders of this law in the settlements and judge outlaws if the Clans do not want to face the wrath of the gangs.

But they won't do this forever. Once humanity has managed to cast a majority vote for one leader, the Enemoi will serve the elected government.

## TRUCKS

Every truck has its purpose. Aquila is the gate where young Enemoi start their career. They scrutinize strangers or stand guard on top of the truck. In Fornax, there are labs and workshops run by the Enemoi's technical branch. Sagittarius is the armory, guarded and equipped by the Clan's Armorers. Orion is the truck with the most powerful engine. It is used as a hunting and spotting vehicle. Here, the Driver caste is trained.

And then there is the Citadel. Inside, the Ancestors sit, staring at monitors, checking and sorting old data and adding new. Here, the Bygones' cultural heartbeat can still be heard. It does not come from the truck's databases, though, but from the Citadel's first floor. This is where the Acolytes rest. In the red light, they look like hooded men with broad shoulders. If you look closely, though, you will see emotionless ceramic faces: the Acolytes are AMSUMOs. They are the heart of the Enemoi, linked to the truck's terminals. They carry the knowledge of whole civilizations and know the position of Bygone crisis centers secluded from RG facilities. The Enemoi have the key to the future—but they would rather destroy it than share it with the Cults.

# STUKOV NOMADS

The wasteland teaches you humility. No one can oppose it. You can only walk with it and listen to your inner voice. Resolution and patience shall be your traveling companions. In the South, however, abundance rules.

There, mankind has food even if it doesn't deserve it. A wrong life.

## IN NO MAN'S LAND

"Stukov Nomads." This is what the people of Borca and Franka call them. In their own language, they use the sounds for "ground" and "run" when talking about themselves. Their world is the concrete walls and slanted steel platforms of the far north, framed by the salt and dust dunes. The explorer Stukov described the region as a wasteland dotted with salty little lakes. His drawings of the insects he found there were considered a sign of his madness for a long time: the creatures seemed too strange to be anything but fevered hallucinations. Only years later did the Spitalians confirm the existence of the Stukov Scorpions, the Dust Worms, and the Desert Clams. Stukov probably did not encounter the Nomads on his first expeditions. That he didn't come back from his last journey is indicative that they found him instead.

The Stukov Nomads know stories linking their origin to the salt-encrusted tankers and ships in the North and the ruins in the South of the domain. These sacred sites are lined up like a string of beads along the route of the First Wanderer. He led them into solitude, away from the corruption of the humans.

He also taught them their own language to completely separate them from the world.

Those who enter their territory today are shot with poisoned arrows from a distance. The Stukov Nomads tolerate no unclean ones close to their sacred sites. Scorpions poison the flesh, but strangers poison the soul.

## WANDERINGS

The Stukov Desert offers to the Nomads everything they need to survive. They pierce the salt crust of the little lakes to fish for crabs; they follow the fine lines in the dust and dig for Dust Worms where they end. Scorpions and Husk Spiders are caught in funnel-shaped pits and salted.

Over the course of decades, the Nomads wander from sacred site to sacred site, inhabiting wrecks for months or stretching sails across husks of buildings and living in the ruins. They remember the First Wanderer, drawing events of their journey on the sail planks or scratching them into the concrete. Most importantly, though, they allow the fauna to recover. When they come full circle and reach their old settling places again, the breeding chambers are filled to bursting.

The cycle approaches its southernmost point at a salt lake a little more than half a day's journey north of the Protectorate settlement of Sinder. The city's Salters tell grisly stories about the strangers from the North, but these are stories of old men, of yesterday's people.

Over 40 winters ago, the Stukov Nomads are said to have lived close to the lake and warred against the Salters, only to disappear afterwards. The survivors waited for months before they finally returned to the lake. Since then, they have been working there, have built huts and warehouses, and have dug salting basins. At first, they considered the giant paths trod into the salty dust and marked with stones a curiosity—watched from above, they form zodiac signs—but soon after, they built over them. They had no idea about the 40-year cycle.

In a few weeks, the Nomads will set out, and they won't like what they see.

### STRANGENESS

Decades ago, a drought made the salt lakes go dry, the Dust Worms and Stukov Scorpions dug in and waited for better times. The Nomads were starving. Quite a few fell and were preserved for all eternity under salt dust. Some survivors fled the desert and made a living in the Protectorate. Years later, a former Nomad negotiated terms between her Clan and the Spital. The doctors were interested in the toxins of the Stukov fauna and were looking for ways to harvest them. The Nomads marked trading places in the Stukov Desert with piles of stones. Those who want to purchase something put their gifts down next to one of those piles and return two days later. If the Nomads accept the trade, they will find balls of salt. Within, there are pulverized Dust Worms or crystallized Stukov Scorpion venom.

# EXALTERS

The Judges and Chroniclers had outshone Exalt's legacy with their own great deeds. They let the city and the era it shaped be forgotten! For years, they had watched the old families of Exalt for signs of their longing for status as a major power. But there was nothing. The Exalters disappeared amongst the crowd. They became good citizens of the Protectorate.

Decades later, a group of Judges stumbled upon the ruins of Exalt off their usual route. They dismounted and stared in awe at the sail-like roofs, the cubic halls—and the multitude of people who were living there, who had removed ash and dust dunes and excavated plazas and staircases. Exalt had reawakened.

## IN THE SHADOWS

Exalt staggered under the attacks of an army whose officers wore three-digit numbers on the backs of their hands. It was the time of the City Wars. Exalt won, but whole families were extinguished, the network of adamant alliances was torn. When the families fought for control and for the Council, the people broke away beneath them. They moved into the wasteland, founded settlements or new cities. One of the most famous was Liqua.

Exalt was history. But the Exalters have never completely forgotten the golden era of their golden city. They had been someone then. How did they come to be living and eating with savages? Many Exalters stuck with their own kind. They cultivated their roots, intermarried, stayed in contact. Liqua was conquered by the Anabaptists, the Judges cast their Judgements on Exalters, Chroniclers traced family trees.

But all resistance, once Exalt's greatest virtue, seemed to have been lost with the city.

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

When the images appeared in the ruins, the old ones remembered. They had seen all this before, this man, this gaze. In the writings of their ancestors they found drawings of the same man in the same posture, created 200 years ago in Exalt. Could this be the founder? Was this a sign?

For the young Exalters, it was. They set out to find the city of their forefathers and to fill their life with the glory that was their birthright. Exalt had been shattered in succession conflicts. Now the reconquest of the city unified the warring family lines. Behind the Judges' backs, they took over the old buildings and excavated what had been buried for so long. It took the exiled Exalters only one day to shake off the Anabaptists' rule in Liqua.

## ORIGIN

Old habits die hard, and so old structures are again called for. For now, this call remains unheard.

But the blood remembers. In Exalt, it opens warehouses dedicated to certain family lines—or corridors leading to other mysteries—to the chosen ones. Most of the halls are empty, the first Exalters already took care of that.

However, the exact procedure for admittance is unclear, for in the catacombs, alleged strangers can also qualify at the embossing stations of the Grindworks. Are these siblings thought forgotten—or does the city reward courage and willingness? If so, what does that mean for the families of Exalt?

## STRANGERS

The Exalters have moved into the buildings surrounding the mostly sealed main complex, forming a protective ring around it. They are still accepting strangers at this point, for it is only a question of time until Judges and Anabaptists will utter demands. Then, they will need every defender they can get.

Still, though, they regard every stranger who enters the inner ring with its awnings, halls, and temple rooms as a potential upstart or spy.

The first Dejectors are nominated. Like in days of old, they keep the Clan's blood pure and knock strangers down a peg. So far, they are unarmed, they know their own weakness and merely act as counselors and guides. But their confidence grows with every sanction from one of the families. Soon, the whole city will back them.

## THE EMBOSSING

The Grindworks are a touchstone. Portals, mobile walls, redlines: those who master this labyrinth and push their arm into a stone maw are embossed. Some pull back their hand and see a shadow on the skin that quickly dissipates. Others feel a searing pain and see nothing.

The effects of the embossing are unpredictable. For some people, it opens portals into temple rooms. For others it makes photoluminescent strips in the wall light up. For others still, it unlocks the biometric encoding of Exalt equipment.

# STORSKIS

Valves discharge with a hiss. A burst of black smoke billows from the forests of East Borca and dissipates between the treetops. An iron ram stomps through the twilight, eating meters as if flying. Its wheels screech along metal tracks. The Storski power locomotives are loud, stinking colossi from another millennium.

For centuries, the Storskis have been making their rounds, connecting settlements, transporting mail, and selling weapons and food from their wagons. Those who get in their way are forced to enter a world of steam, flowing coal dust, and sharpened spades.

## IRON

It started in the ruins of an East Borcan city. There, Jegor Storski repaired the first steam engine and drove it out onto a desolate track. Trees splintered under its impact, the cars on the rails were pushed aside like toys. Storski screamed throughout the trip, as he shoveled coal into the furnace and gazed out of the small window. He screamed in fear. All the years of terror burst out of him. Hundreds of people crept out of their hiding places to watch his hellish ride. Storski reached the target station as a hero.

Centuries later, his descendants have wrestled a ramified line of track from the land. Their locomotives are giant iron snakes with steel shutters over their windows and wheels, with battlements secured by chains, some of which are equipped with coal catapults or steam throwers.

## FAMILY

The Storskis keep giving permission to hard-working people to marry into the Clan. However, at some point any train becomes crowded, and another wagon would be too much for the power locomotives' traction. The young Storskis say goodbye to their parents and set out to earn themselves their own locomotive.

To do so, they settle on the side of the much-trafficked roads, working as Charcoal Burners, selling the coal to their Clan in return for iron and smithing tools. On sidings, they build their locomotive and a first wagon. This can take years or even decades; sometimes, the smithies and work yards are the nucleus of a new settlement. When the Storskis finally set out, they leave their old life behind and become merchants.

The family lines treat each other with respect. But those who have the stronger train always have the right of way and the last word in discussions. Acceleration races take place on parallel tracks to solve rank conflicts—or to show off modifications to a steam boiler or gearbox.

The Storskis communicate through their tracks, pulsing signals into the iron through a wagon. A counterpart station many kilometers away receives the signals. This way, they warn each other of rebellious Clanners or issue calls for aid. The Needle Towers have discovered this for themselves. Chromium and Iridium have stopped communicating only via mirrors. They have begun paying the Storskis in slaves and weapons to maintain the track lines between the two Needle Towers and regularly retap the bolts—to feed in a carrier wave on which to modulate messages. Another Fragment from the Needle Tower Disaster even takes this one step further.

## THE CARBON

The Storski main train is over 500 m long and runs between the Needle Towers Chromium and Iridium. It is a rolling city with multistory, extra-wide wagons, bordellos, manufactures, and a casino. It even includes a small farm where spices and tomatoes are grown. Wherever it stops, it spits out mail, distillate, junk dealers, whores, and gamblers, only to suck back in young and foolish members of the free Clans.

The cooperation with the Needles brought electric benefits: prices for food, ammunition, and slaves—as well as the sad songs of the Engineers—drone out over the intercoms.

Several parts of the train are forbidden to strangers. Even the Storskis are not allowed to enter three specific wagons. Satellite dishes and solar panels present a strange image when compared to the iron and oil look of the rest of the Carbon. Allegedly, Chronicler Zeros have been seen there, some of which have been threatened by death by hanging or the hammer in Osman and in the Protectorate. There is a rumor going around that a Needle was building an East Borcan Cluster on the Carbon, keeping in constant radio contact with Chromium and Iridium via the tracks. Signs of a new time.

# CORPSE EATERS

They walk through abandoned villages on the slopes of the crater. Wind chimes made of finger bones tied to guts swing silently in the openings of caves. But there are no living people around. The father of the family relaxes. For days, the Stukov Nomads have driven the family westwards—right into the middle of paradise. He shakes his head. Only yesterday, he found a clear mountain brook with strangely sweet water...

For a moment, he is inattentive, stumbles, and falls. Blood spills onto the ground. Yet there is no pain. Only hunger. Excruciating hunger.

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## HUNGER

The night is crystal clear, and millions of stars are sparkling in the sky above Frankan Briton. The Anabaptists make their rounds and replace burned-out torches. Suddenly, the night sky flares bright as day. The Anabaptists cover their eyes and see a pillar of light in the north pointing towards the sky at a weird angle. Seconds later, night settles again, and the afterglow of the beam dissipates on their retinas.

Days later, a patrol goes missing. A swarm of crows points the way for a Hellvetic Spotter: he finds a bloody mire bristling with bones and discarded blades. The birds jump about on the remains and fight for scraps of meat.

Meanwhile, reports of other attacks abound. Savages covered in red paint charge into the ranks of Spitalians and Anabaptists, biting into their arms—or their legs after having been kicked to the ground. They scream, grow even more savage and more out of control, when beaten. If a defender falls, several of the savages jump him and tear the meat off his bones, even if Anabaptists approach with Bidenhanders raised.

The Cults waste no time on negotiation attempts. They retaliate brutally, and on that very same evening, all of these "Corpse Eaters" are dead.

A squad of Spitalians has caught one of the beasts and leads it through the village bound. Stones hit the Corpse Eater, but he doesn't even flinch. Finally, the doctors take blood and fluid samples, all without anesthetics.

The only reaction they register are increased excitement and a longing gaze. They keep torturing the creature. When a doctor severs a vein in its arm with a scalpel, he flinches: there are tapeworms in the bloodstream. They coil and writhe when the air touches them.

The Spitalians keep researching and identify worm larvae clinging to the Corpse Eater's neural pathways. The Clanner feels any pain as hunger.

## THE WORM

The origins of the worm are unknown. So far, it has only been found in Clans from the Janus Crater, which hints at the influence of the Primer.

The Corpse Eater population varies from zero to several hundred at any given time. Even if the last Corpse Eater should die, the worm survives in the ground, in the water, and in the grass. A passing Clan has only to drink from the mountain stream, and the horror begins anew.

Corpse Eaters are not in their right mind. The worm controls their thinking, controls everything they do. In their madness, they believe they possess the ability to ingest the knowledge and the power of their ancestors—and an enemy's strength and hatred—together with their meat. In their minds, symbols manifest, some of which they paint on their body as a reminder of their fading desire for culture and identity.

### PANIC

The worm reacts to various stimuli with deadly terror, which it transmits to its host as a flight reflex. When the searing beam illuminated the Janus Crater, there was pure panic in the eyes of the Corpse Eaters. They fled from the light.

Salt also triggers fear. Maybe the mineral changes the pH balance of the host body, making it unattractive to the worm. This could be the reason why the Corpse Eaters have never been able to spread through the Stukov Desert.

### NO PAIN

All Trauma penalties are ignored. Instead, the Corpse Eaters gain (+1) Ego for every point of Trauma taken as the hunger drives them into a frenzy.

# RESISTANCE

The women walk through the vault. Their boots splatter through the mud, water splashes. They wave torches as they jump over sodden books and dodge roots that are hanging from the ceiling. The light caresses stalactites as thick as an arm. These are strangely porous and covered in some vibrant mass: maybe mites, maybe the larvae of some unknown termite species.

One of the women points to a hole in the wall and breaks into a run. Frames are leaning on the wall, some dull as lead, others with a golden shimmer. The paintings they contain are black. The woman kneels in front of the largest one. In every corner of the splendid frame and along all edges, there are shimmering cocoons. She wipes gossamer and smear from the canvas, exposing a coronation scene. Pale faces, rigid posters, sublimity, and air of Bygone grandeur. She smiles. Resistance is violent. However, every resistance starts in the mind.

## UPROOTED

The Pheromancers robbed Franka of its identity and its people of their culture. The Grande Nation is forgotten. The termitariums are the only grand thing still standing.

Many Frankans will not tolerate this. With the stories of their grandparents in mind, they come together to form the Resistance, saving national works of art, telling stories about battles and magnanimity, and generally conjuring up a time when Franka still knew how to win. Their children learn Bygone poems and sing songs that were once all but lost to time. With every rediscovered song, with every painting and every book, their pride grows—and their distaste for everything that happens in the Ziggurats. Today, thousands know that the culture of the Grande Nation is stronger than Pheromancer haze. In fact, it's the antidote.

## RESISTANCE

The members of the Resistance are scattered all over Franka. On the Seine, they push forward until they reach the heart of Parasite, forge ahead until they reach the Louvre or the National Library.

They save paintings by Delacroix and worship the writings of Descartes as a national symbol. But even if culture is the foundation of their uprising, culture alone will not stop the Pheromancers. The Resistance has to fight. Its members creep into the Pheromancers' breeding cusps anointed with Marduk oil. There they detonate clay vents and abduct people, tearing them from their mental entanglement—a pinhole tactic the Pheromancers consider a slight inflammation in the system at best.

Although they fight on the same side, the Resistance watches the Spitalians and Anabaptists with suspicion: even in its resistance, Franka is not autonomous and must rely on strangers. Despite their reservations, the Resistance still accepts the help of the Spital, and they still lead Anabaptist packs into the Ziggurats. However, at some point, this has to stop.

## ESCAPE ROUTE

Termites, ants, marker beetles, and wasps avoid large open bodies of water. This is why the members of the Resistance retreat to houseboats or rafts on rivers and lakes. It is from there that they attack, swimming ashore and placing pesticide bombs.

## OLD GLORY

Whenever several rafts meet, they are tied together to form floating villages. The largest ones consist of hundreds of rafts that can be separated in case of an emergency to flee via tributaries.

Within these swimming settlements, used books are exchanged while Resistance fighters discuss future plans in the light of the mosquito lamps and remember companions who died for the cause.

The old ones gather the children and free one of the old masterworks from its protective tarp. The colors are dark, but the weird man on the horse is easily discernible. The children have never seen something like this. They listen intently to the story of how this man with the tricorne and the billowing red cape formed an empire from an idea. The story will ferment in their minds and inspire them to greatness.

# PANDORIANS

Animals dig in the dirt, tearing out lumps that become separate from the mycelium gossamer with a crackle. Clouds of spores billow up and dissipate in the airstream. The creatures snort and shake; the tumors on their backs and necks beat like hearts. One of the tumors forms a gray, rugged hump covered in a thin layer of Sepsis.

A creature raises its head as if picking up a scent. Its eyes are like thick white jelly, blind and without pupils, but its face still resembles a human's. It straightens itself and tears a battle axe from the dirt. It's not an animal—but it certainly isn't completely human anymore.

## ANCESTRY

The sporination at the Pandora Crater is so dense that one can barely see their own hand held to their face. The filters of gas masks clog within minutes. This is why the area is largely unexplored. Expeditions could only pierce the veil and gaze at giant spore glands in the hill flanks, and oversized Fractal Stars and trilobites have been spotted in the ring valleys of the crater. There were no reports about humans or other mammals. For a long time, people thought that no one lived or could survive here. Until they found the Pandorians.

Their origin is unknown: their skulls are too misshapen to guess their ethnicity. They wear no Clan symbol, their bodies are not tattooed. Some Spitalians from the Spital think that the Pandorians have come from the East. Maybe they were explorers like the Spitalians themselves before Pollen's Earth Chakra took hold of them.

## DEGENERATION

The Pandorians stomp and stumble past a platoon of Spitalians, huffing and puffing, never stopping to raise their axes. But when the Noumenon Vocalizers register an increased activity in the Chakra ether and the calls increase and overlap, the Pandorians react, too. They shake their heads and seem to try to pick up a scent. However, their noses are as clogged by the mycelium and as useless as their eyes. They do not see, smell, or hear anything. They instead feel creatures close to them. To them, their head is like an antenna that they turn only to meet the Chakra ether, often at bizarre angles—and rarely towards the enemy. They reflect the Earth Chakra's excitement.

## BREEDER

A Pandorian's body is covered in hardened variola, some of which bulge to form fist-sized eggs. In these variola, spores collect and are condensed under pressure. If such a variola is ever hit by a weapon, it explodes into a spore cloud with the sound of tearing flesh. However, the spores are only a preliminary phase. A Pandorian breeds Primer variations in the variola. Most of these are birthed within the body and feed from it until its death. They are similar to the Fractal Stars and send their byssus threads into the brain of the Pandorian. There they turn into nerve cords.

The Spitalians were once able to kill a pack of Pandorians and send tissue samples to the Spital. According to genetic analysis, Pandorians differ strongly from Psychonauts: Psychonauts are more human. While Homo Sapiens and Homo Degenesis share the same number of chromosomes—46—the Epigeneticists found up to 76 chromosomes in Pandorians. The number varies greatly, even within the same population: according to the analysis it correlates with the estimated age. That would mean that genes are induced via growth or via spores, and that the mutation history of the Fractal Star spawn is stored in the body. In fact, the core of Primer variations does not seem to be injected by exterior infestation, but seems to grow from the Pandorians themselves. These creatures at the Pandora Crater are breeders and engines of evolution.

## TISSUE STASIS

After a successful hit with a blade in melee, the blade can become stuck in the Pandorian's flesh. His blood is sticky like honey and hardens into bubbly amber when it meets the air. Only if the attacker rolled at least (1) Trigger can he free his weapon again right away. If he fails, he can tear the weapon free in the next Action, leaving him defenseless and unable to act again that Action.

Every attack runs the risk of a spore variola bursting. On 1-3 on 1D, it burst into a spore cloud with a diameter of (2) m and spore intensity (5) (resistance roll BOD+Toughness (5), Failure: 1D spore infestation, armor with "Sealed" Quality grants Successes).

# GARGANTI

The Kagan reaches into the russet fur, down to the skin. He lays his head against the mammoth's flank and closes his eyes. He feels the rhythmical shudder of the heartbeat, every beat pure, essential life. He pushes back and wipes away a tear. Other Garganti nod and smile at him. They kiss the bronze pendants on their chains, murmur "earth," and lash down their cowls. The Kagan adjusts his protective goggles and puts on his fur cap. He mounts the tusk of his mammoth and lets himself be lifted up. Then he jumps on the back of the animal.

The herd gets moving. Between the hills, wisps of smoke circle skywards. The men of the settlement have not granted hospitality to the Garganti. No food for the beasts, no bread for their riders. Axe in hand, they refused the messenger. Thus, they broke the first law—so the Garganti will take what a guest is owed.

## DOMINATION

No stranger has ever heard a Garganti laugh. The nomads are serious and respectful, passing through settlements on their mammoths in silence. Even the children sit in the panniers on the giants' flanks calmly. Joy and grief are the gateway into the soul, the Garganti say, and so they hide every emotion behind scarves and protective goggles when strangers are present.

They see the deliberation of their mounts as seriousness and adapt it. In fact, the mammoths would not accept anything else. For while the animals do not have to fear any natural enemies, they react irritably to quick movements or loud noises. A screaming child makes the giants twitch and jump aside. Reflexively, they turn their heads towards the threat, hitting it with their inwardly curved tusks, which are up to five paces long, furrowing the ground until dirt and stones rain down. A deep rumble sounds from the animal's chest that makes the herd listen.

The Garganti have been wandering Borca and Pollen on their mammoths for centuries, camping for the winter in the Balkhan. The reason for this is an ancient set of rules dealing with every aspect of living with the animals and other people. The old ones say that these commandments were given to their ancestors in the tower of creation together with the first mammoth. They touch the chain and stroke the bronze disc with its rune. This symbol, they say, was written on the gates to the world. Earth.

## HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the most important commandment. Those who approach the Garganti peacefully receive water sweetened with roots, some ground salt, and bread baked in a clay oven. But they demand the same for themselves.

According to legend, the Garganti stormed the city of Wroclaw centuries ago after the city had denied them food and firewood. The mammoths trampled through the streets, leaning against houses and tearing them down. In the end, the Kagan led them into the center of Wroclaw, weathering the Druschinniks' hail of arrows until they reached the palace of the Piast. Allegedly, they saw a great secret there, which was written down and is still kept by the Kagan in a sealed box. The legend ends with a peace treaty: the Piast offered the Kagan his hand and asked for forgiveness. Since that day, the Garganti camp outside the gates of Wroclaw for a few days every fall, gathering strength for the journey to their winter camp in the Balkhan. Outside the city, they receive everything they need, no questions asked.

## IMPRINTING

Some mammoths react strongly to the traditional symbols and sounds: a raised trunk sinks down, and its tip draws patterns into the ground; aggressive rumbling fades. The strongest warriors of the Clan claim these animals for themselves and train them for battle.

The strongest Garganti is made Kagan and leads the herd. He determines how to interpret the law and whether a village has failed in complying with the commandment of hospitality. He rides at the head of the Clan, inciting his mammoth until it attacks the enemies with a rumble. The rest of the herd follows the calls of the alpha. Like an avalanche, the giants attack their enemies, a wall of fur, flesh, and noise.

# USUDI

The children hear it long before the adults do: a faraway whisper, almost indiscernible from the wind howling through the valleys and chasms of the Balkhan mountains. It will rise, oscillating between the mountain flanks and gathering strength, a massive pushing and screaming that will come over the people like a conflagration, robbing them of their souls and minds, leaving behind nothing but empty husks in which fear and confusion turn into something bestial.

## SONIC TRAPS

The Carpathians are cursed. Here the songs of the Mokoschs and the wave crests raised by the Usud become stuck. They compress the air that people breathe, hanging in the chasms and canyons for days. Heavy rain changes the mountain's reflection and can lead to acoustic dam failures: the stored waves discharge like cascades of sound into the surrounding valleys before they can be absorbed and deflected into the earth by the mountain.

Children hear these outbursts. The Clans rely on their youngest ones, reacting with fear to a happy "I hear the whispering!" They flee into caves, blocking their ears with beeswax, or throw themselves to the floor, huddling close together and covering themselves with furs. They hum children's songs or scream against the oncoming noise.

## SOULLESS

Not all of them escape. Their consciousness shatters and is swept along, only a few embers still glowing. However, they are buried under something ancient and strange that grows and shoots through the nerve cords like quicksilver. Usud's seed has sprouted. The creature still fights with its old self, thrashing and twitching uncontrollably. In the first days of their birth, the Usudis are as helpless as a Gendo with broken legs. They scream and lash out at anyone who approaches. They would pull even their own children close and press them to their bodies until they stop struggling and all life has been crushed out of them.

Voivodules watch the dangerous canyons and kill every soulless Usudi they can find. So far, the evil is still minor. But the Carpathians are vast, and the Voivodules have to flee from the sonic cascades, too. Somewhere out there, an Usudi they have missed is writhing. Maddened with hunger, he grabs for birds or attacks deer. Others of his kind find, kick, and hit him. If he is strong enough, he may stay. Now the original mechanisms take hold: a mindless pack spirit keeps the Usudis together. Fear and hatred direct them towards merchants or passing Clans. The only thing that remains of their former selves is shame. They hide behind masks, encumber themselves with iron and cables, draping themselves with everything that is connected to their fading past. However, these anchors of their being will never take root.

## SACRIFICE

An Usudi never forgets the valley of his rebirth. He returns here with his pack, listening to the whispers of the flowing stream of sound, feeling it permeating him and carrying away the pain. This is a good place. The Usudi doesn't understand the concept of a god, but he feels something akin to it. He feels greatness and sublimity: beyond the valley, the absence of these feelings cause bleeding wounds that won't heal. He wants to go back, but he needs something to sacrifice to this place. He wants to give thanks, to be worthy. Another soul would be a gift that the mountains would accept. He gathers the other Usudis, calming them with a soft hum. His eyelids twitch, the anger wants out, but the desire for the valley of his birth rubs against his anger. Humming, he attracts his Usudi siblings, is the Pied Piper for a day, humming, humming. Once he has discovered a Clan, the hunt begins. The Usudis attack, trying to smash the Clan and find redemption in their pain. But the beater stops the pack. He needs the strangers in the valley.

No one can tell when there will be a sonic cascade. The cloud formations matter, as do the frequencies that the Mokoschs intone. Sometimes it takes days before there is even an audible whisper.

The Usudis could not bear to wait that long.

# VOIVODULES

For days, the conflict has been in abeyance. It's the 28th of June, the Vidovdan. On that day, great battles took place and important decisions were made. The festivities will last for two days. The scent of rosemary and roasted doe wafts across the farm; garlands flutter between the buildings. Children run around, their mouths smeared red, cupcakes in their hands. There is shouting. Everyone gazes at the gate. A man in a marten fur cloak strides through and raises a hand in greeting. He is followed by people in embroidered red and blue garb. One Voivodule after the other arrives. They are the descendants of the White Eagles, each and everyone representing a proud house.

For centuries, they have been choosing the leaders of the Voivodates from amongst their ranks on the Vidovdan. However, the Karakhan ended this tradition. Now the Black Leader has to hold his ground against the White Eagles.

## TRADITIONS

The family tree of a Voivodule reaches back through 16 generations of parents, grandparents and grand-grandparents to the founder of the family: its White Eagle. Wars and feuds cut away branches. Sometimes a Voivodule's territory expands, sometimes he has to gift forests or farms to victorious enemies. Today, two Voivodules face each other as mortal enemies, but tomorrow they may unite against a common neighbor.

Thousands of their fighters perished in skirmishes, were crucified, or were chased to death by packs of dogs. Farms burned; families were torn apart. But always, the Voivodules honored the Vidovdan. For five centuries, they have met every year, drinking and singing together against the melancholy, strengthening old alliances or forging new ones. In those two days, they bend over maps and discuss and define the targets of the Voivodates.

Recently, the Voivodes of the Voivodates Sofia and Beograd had to defend their course and rally proponents behind their cause. They gave gifts—a mine to this Voivodule, a village to that one—fighting for every vote. At noon of the second day, they voted. Should the old Voivodes keep their power or step down? Who would carry the title of Voivode for a year?

A few years ago, things changed. A counselor of the Voivode of Sofia so far unknown to the other Voivodules tricked the Boyar Guard into trusting him, strangled Voivode Viktor, and usurped the rule of Sofia. He called himself the Karakhan, the Black Leader. The Voivodules were shocked to hear their spies' reports. They demanded that the Karakhan attend the Vidovdan and submit to the traditions. He sent only an emissary.

A stranger who neither can point to a White Eagle in his family tree nor honors the Vidovdan now sits on a throne that belongs to a Voivodule.

The Voivode of Beograd, too, has retreated to his city and is holed up in his fortress tower. His doppelganger is unmasked at the Vidovdan during the opening ceremony and chased away. The Voivodules rage. For the time being, all succession conflicts are laid to rest.

## UNITED

The Voivodules consider themselves keepers of the traditions. They have to restore the old order. But even united they are too weak to make a stand against the armies of the Voivodates. So they bribe merchants or attack convoys, redirect or disrupt the flow of goods. They pay scum for assassinations and uprisings.

But the mood is changing. The people of the Voivodates does not see the Voivodules as old-but-necessary nobility anymore, but as unwanted rebels. Volunteers join the army of the Karakhan, and the call for revenge can be heard everywhere.

## PUSHED ASIDE

To get even one vote at the election of the Voivode, you need influence and estates. Many Voivodules have lost both through feuds and intrigues.

Some cling to their ancestral holds, others have had to give up even those. They travel the land accompanied by loyal companions, working as Gendo hunters for hire or chasing outlaws. They try to make up with honor for what they have lost in regards to wealth and influence.

# MATADORS

The Matador cowers on a ledge and watches the sun go down over the red-tiled roofs of Cordoba. He closes his eyes. From afar, he hears the crowd cheering. Right now the first bull enters, a Novillo: a young animal. Scourgers climb into the circular arena, provoking the bull, jumping aside, and maybe they will be trampled down or caught by its horns. A funny warm-up. Later, a grown bull will meet a Matador: maybe it will be Armando tonight. He will captivate the crowd, will raise the tension to the end, will pretend to be weak and let the bull get close.

The Matador on the ledge opens his eyes. Night has fallen in the alleys. He hurries through an empty city, hiding only when a Neolibyan steps out of a scriptorium. Cordoba lies at his feet, there for the taking.

## BULLFIGHT

The Matadors are travelling bullfighters. They never fight humans. In colorful carts, they travel from the Castilian high plateau to the lands of the Africans. There they face the Neolibyans' bulls or send their own breed into the arena.

They have turned the fight into an art, a requiem to their dying culture. That touches even the Neolibyans. To Granada, Seville, Malaga, and Gibraltar the Consuls send gifts and invitations to the Matadors and outdo each other with promises. Some want to impress competitors with the help of the bullfighters and hope for profitable agreements, others want to appease the population with corridas lasting several days.

The Scourgers don't trust the veneer. The Crow still has a sharp beak, even if it pretends to eat only corn. Days before and after the Matadors' arrival, the Chagas keep an eye on how and where the Guerreros deploy. But there has been nothing out of the ordinary. Maybe the bullfighters really are just carnival freaks.

## WELL PAID

The fight against the animal appeases the people, the Matadors say. They praise the strength and beauty of the animals, but also of the Hybrispanian women (especially the strength, they say, and the whole arena laughs). They present a colorful spectacle, bring the Lion and the Crow to the same table for one day, make peace.

But in truth, they are spies and cutthroats who have all eyes on them as carnies, but intrude into scriptoriums, the fortresses of the Neolibyans, or the camps of the Guerreros at the climax of the festivities. They steal plans, crack Balancers, copy business ideas, or write down the location of Guerrero camps. Days or weeks later, their middlemen will sell this information—or blackmail its originator.

They haven't always been like this. They hated the war. People killed people: it did not matter if they were Hybrispanians or Africans. Nobody wanted to hear that, though. They did not retreat, but pretended to revive the old Hybrispanian bullfighting culture. It preoccupied them. In Al Andalus, the Neolibyans curried favor with them. "If only everybody was like the Matadors!" They heard a lot, counted the guards at the gates, remembered when the Scourgers gathered for meals. But even this did not get them any closer to their Hybrispanian brothers and sisters. For a while, they tolerated the scorn of their parents and siblings. They found a new family in the other Matadors and decided that they owed nothing to the people.

### NIMBLE

Matadors are fast, surefooted, and nimble. They climb walls and hurry across ledges and roofs. They jump over alleyways, slide across the tiles, catch themselves, and run on. They get +2S to BOD+Athletics. If they have to free themselves from a grapple, they get +2S to AGI+Mobility.

### AFFECTION

Matadors bask in the adoration of the crowd. In every Round they can win over spectators through dangerous maneuvers (they choose to use at least 2D less than they could on a roll), they recover (1) Ego.

# CORREDORES

Lucia had only just seen 12 winters, but behind the girl's soft face was a wrinkled old woman with the memories of a long lifetime. For in truth, she has had to bury four sons and three grandsons over 80 winters, and had survived Scourgers, the smallpox, and the creatures coming from the Atlantic Ocean. In her last days, she was overcome by a feeling of bitterness for the first time, the feeling of what could have been. She died lonely and had been happy about it.

But now she is a 12-year-old girl who rarely smiles, only when happy memories of the life that lies ahead of her rise up within her, for example the birth of her first son eight winters from now. When the Woman of the Mountain led the 68-years-older self of the girl back through time, she took away the happiness of youth, but gave her the ability to make a stand against fate. None of her children would have to die.

Little Lucia waves the Corredores over. Her voice is high-pitched as a girl's, but it sounds firm when she explains her plan to the Clan. She remembers this attack, remembers all the dead. This time, everything will be different.

## TOMORROW, TODAY, YESTERDAY

The Corredores' ancestors lived close to the shell caves in old Portugal. They did not falter when Pregnoctics rose from their ranks and settled in the caves. The Psychonauts shed their old identities and looked at their providers indifferently, but the parents clung to their past ties.

Generations came and went. The Corredores went to war against the Africans, built bridges between the treetops, camouflaged paths. Their scouts ran through the jungle and turned the scattered Guerrero camps into a powerful whole. It wasn't powerful enough, however. The Scourgers attacked, burning down the forests, chasing the Guerreros to the Castilian high plateau.

Surge Tanks rumbled across cleared forest paths. Ancient fincas burned in a missile barrage. Hybrispania was vanquished.

Girls like little Lucia opened their eyes. All this lies in the future. Once more, from the top. At the age of 10, the girls of the Corredores go to the shell caves.

Only one percent of the children are blessed by the Pregnoctics. She is suffused with her own dying self: the young soul makes room for the old one and its memories of life. The other Corredores call these girls Sabia, the wise ones. They remember African forays and supply roads and use this knowledge to lead the Corredores into a battle that they have already been through, hoping to change its outcome.

## FEARLESS

The Corredores are the vanguard of the Hybrispanian resistance. They are fearless because they consider this to be their first life. If they die, the Pregnoctics will gather their soul and plant it into their 10-year-old self in the past.

The Clan is splintered and spread all over Hybrispania, the Corredores go where the Sabias tell them to go. For them, fighting is the only form of culture. They have to fulfill their destiny before they can think of other concerns.

Maybe this is why many Corredores think La Campeadora is one of their own. Her providence is legendary, her origin a mystery. It's not really far-fetched to think that she came from a shell cave in old Portugal.

### DESTINY

Those who fight the Corredores battle their own future. The Sabia of the Corredore squad warns her Clan against any attack—every ambush the Corredores are supposed to walk into turns into a trap for the attackers. As long as the Sabia remembers, the Corredores can attack in the first Combat Round of an ambush with no penalty.

# FLAYERS

The man is tall and wiry, his skin sunburned. He whips his own shoulders, the tails hit the red welts on his back. His face is emotionless. Only his lower lip trembles flaccidly. He pulls back the whip, swings it again. Every blow brings him closer to penance. In many of the surrounding villages, the people know him as "the Defiler." He's a bad person, and he knows it.

He's not alone on the road. In lines of two they walk through Perugia, people like him: thieves, frauds, murderers, rapists. They all whip themselves mercilessly. They are united in humility, repenting for their deeds and the deeds of the world.

Yet they already feel the foulness of the soul in the people by the wayside, gazing at their sinful flesh. They tremble, look at each other, nodding. They raise the whips, but this time it's not to hit themselves...

## THE PENITENT

The hardened pyroclastic streams had placed the mark of the apocalypse on Bergamo. Those who came here as pilgrims wanted to see the primal force of the apocalypse with their own eyes. If this was the end, how mighty was the god who was responsible for it?

Bergamo has always been a magnet for seekers. Kristians pontificate about the creation on the plazas, sects praise omens and ancient knowledge. Almost none of them make it for a whole season. Yet over 20 years ago, a man whose heritage moves the people to this day climbed the city wall. He preached mercy. Every sentence went straight to the audience's heart.

Mercy, however, was only for those who had failed and repented, and he had failed, he cried, dragging forth a whip and hitting his own back. The audience was disgusted and fascinated at once. They saw the faith in him and recognized their own redemption in it.

The man, who became known as the Penitent, was soon surrounded by his own faithful. They toured the villages, scouring their own flesh and preaching penitence through pain. But it was not the moderate who joined them. No, the words of the Penitent were most attractive to those who had every reason to repent: outlaws.

## PROTEST

It is not the baptism with water that brings redemption, says the Penitent, whose hands are red with his own blood. Everyone knows what he means. Today, he's considered a saint, and his Flayers, his army of repentant murderers and cutthroats, are close to becoming saints themselves. Wherever their whips crack, they are surrounded by young women and children who gather the droplets of blood or scratch them from the walls. Mixed with cat's bile, the blood is supposed to cure gout and raise fertility. Dead Flayers are mummified and displayed in shrines.

The Anabaptists dislike this, but they cannot do anything against it. If they were to chase away the Penitent, they would alienate the people.

The Penitent's sermons are infectious. They enlighten thousands. Some set out with a smile on their face, palms raised to the heavens, and from their lips speak their version of his gospel. Most of them, however, have all the charisma of a painted rock and struggle to find the right words to mimic his power.

The Anabaptists are cautious and vigilant: every preacher could birth the beginning of a new Flayer movement, could ramble about baptism in blood instead of in water or Elysian oil.

The Orgiastics drag them down from their pulpits, tearing off their clothes and beating them through the village streets. They will never return.

The movement led by the Penitent remains the largest of them all. In Purgare, its slowly turning into a threat for the Anabaptists.

## ECSTASY

When the Flayers walk through the village, it is at once a test of humility and a test of modesty. For it is said that only in sinful cities do Flayers break ranks and hit the onlookers. The whole procession can become inflamed with passion, and they march through the village whipping the inhabitants.

The Purgans offer no resistance. They are ashamed of the stain their village now carries. Soon, the neighboring villages will know. With heads bowed, they take the hits from the whips.

# ADRIANI

On a moonless night, they crept down to the shores of the Adriatic. They laid down their armor and Spitfires, only keeping their swords. They were going to need them.

More than 400 Anabaptists, men and women, Orgiastics and Ascetics, glided into the water and swam to the other shore. They crawled through the mud, grabbing at reeds as they climbed the embankment. On they crept, past dens and across trenches. Before long they heard the fluttering of the Jehammedan banners, saw torchlight ahead. A camp. They slowed down as some whispered, "Stop, stop." A goat bleated.

"ABRAAAMIS!" The Anabaptist's voice echoed across the Adriatic basin. The camp awoke. There were shouts. Steel rang against steel. Hundreds of torches approached the Anabaptists: Swords of Jehammed. The Anabaptists raised their swords—and threw them down in the grass.

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## HOME

The settlers in the Adriatic basin knew only two seasons: war and peace. At their backs the Anabaptists shouted battle cries, while ahead of them the Jehammedans raised their sabers to the sky. Most chose a side. It seemed impossible to join the Jehammedans, so they offered their services to the Anabaptists, who received them with arms wide open, armed them, and sent them back to the land.

Instead of harvesting roots, they now killed people—or were killed themselves. They sacrificed their best years and their children to the war. This eternal struggle between good people had to finally end, so they crept from their camp, crossed the Adriatic, and surrendered to the old enemy.

## FAMILY

The defected Anabaptists were not Favellis, Rizzolis, Fabris, or Marinis anymore. They became one Clan: the Adrianis. They tilled the land and bought goats from the Jehammedans. While the Jehammedans met them with distrust, they were not hostile. Ismaelis watched the strangers sowing, and in the evening they all drank tea together. The outcast Delilas found a new home and a family with the Adrianis.

The Adrianis' ancestors saw and appreciated the Jehammedan family structures. The boys first had to prove themselves with the hoe on the field and help their parents before they were allowed to have their own family. The girls were raised separate from them and prepared for marriage and hard work. The first resistance flared.

## RETURN

Today, the old ones want nothing more than to please the Jehammedans and to mix the blood of the two peoples. Adriani girls are presented like cattle in the Jehammedan camps, while the sons are forced to ask an Abrami for the hand of a Hagari. The young Adrianis are confused and enraged. They see themselves as a pledge for a dream they don't share.

## THREE DOTS

The tattooed dots on the foreheads of the old ones fade, but to the young Adrianis, these marks mean redemption. They sharpen goat bones to deposit soot under the skin of their foreheads.

Three dots.

The old ones, enraged, beat their kids through the village. But more and more often, they fight back. The Clan is torn. The young ones imitate the Anabaptists, while the old ones see themselves as Jehammedans in spirit. The trenches that the ancestors overcame are now torn open within the families.

# ROMANOS

"Ah, the noble master Lambasa!" The Romano hurries towards the Neolibyan, flattering him with words like silk scarves, while his lackeys drag in ancient statues and present oil paintings. He offers coffee spiced with star anise, writhes like a snake, praising the expertise of the African and his perspicacity for the important and the beautiful, then asks if the man has already seen his daughter and tasted her grace. She would definitely excel in the Tripolitan schools, her sharp intellect regularly takes her mother's breath away, and maybe master Lambasa would like to make her part of his retinue. The whole family would forever be indebted to him and would offer artwork from…

Lambasa has not moved for hours, has only raised a hand now and then, but the droning has become unbearable. Now he really looks at the Romano for the first time. "Didaco, how long have we known each other?" The Romano stops and starts to answer, but Lambasa silences him with a gesture. "You have been offering Mafalda to me for six winters now. She had the grace of a cow from the start, she's star-crossed, and has been married 10 times."

The Romano presses his lips together and whispers: "12 times…" Lambasa puts a hand on Didaco's shoulder. "I'll just take the statues."

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## BUSY

Sulfur crystals cover the walls, the streets are buried in ash up to the knees. Houses are black with soot, the doors hanging in their frames battered and askew. Ash covers dead cypresses. Skulls stare out of grey waves. The West Purgan coastal cities are lost.

Romanos walk through the destruction, kick in doors and clear a path. Their lamplight falls on the table made from fine wood and the moth-eaten carpets, wanders across dusty chandeliers, and finally comes to rest on an ancient statue. Under powdery gossamer and a finger-thick crust of ash, the body of a naked young man cast in marble is visible. First the Romanos remove the dirt from the statue—then the statue from its base.

They raid city after city, robbing the land of its cultural past and dragging paintings, golden pageantry, friezes and mosaics hewn from walls, pillars, and statues to the great bazaar in Roma. Neolibyans are already waiting for a tour, walking through velvet curtains into marble halls full of treasures, appraising, and telling their scribes to make this or that deal. A wall painting by this Rafael person would look great in the antechamber of the Bank of Commerce, don't you think?

## THE ETERNAL CITY

Roma is divided between the great Romano Lords, Barons, Dukes, and Kings. At the Palazzo Senatorio or in the Vatican Museum, every corridor belongs to another barony or whatever the domain calls itself: in the Sistine Chapel, two self-proclaimed kings face each other in the alcoves, surrounded by their courts of toothless whores, Scrappers, and cousins maimed by accidents.

They create noble garments out of Bygone curtains and move into mansions, palaces, and tombs that they adorn with dusty baubles. The Romanos love pageantry and evocative titles that are mostly self invented. They love power, yet still they only squat on the ruins of a great past.

This is why they love the Neolibyans. The Africans lead the life that the Romanos know is their due. If only their children could get into the service of a Neolibyan, there would surely be a few Dinars to spare!

## CUTTHROATS

Sometimes the Romanos seem to be superficial, sometimes ridiculous. But the tongue-in-cheek friendliness falls away the second someone is found poaching in their domain. They nurture so much scum feeding on their wealth that one word is enough, and the thief is taken down one of Roma's dark alleys, never to be seen again.

The pirates of Corpse are welcome guests in the Romanos' quarters. They are very sensible business partners who will even repossess cargo that has already been sold, if the price is right. Some statues have been loaded onto Neolibyan transporter a dozen times—and inevitably found themselves back in the bazaar days later. The Neolibyans would call that "optimization of profit," right?

# MASAI

Sabore's feet sank into the grass. A balmy wind tugged at his red coat. He stepped into the shadow of an ancient Baobab and rested his forehead against the cool bark. 20 men together could not have embraced this tree. Cowering behind its trunk, Sabore's ancestors looked for shelter from the star flashes of the Eshaton. He raised his eyes, looked around, and focused on a point in the distance. With a smile, he set out.

The star stone was already waiting for him. The Masai circled the craggy iron meteorite, intent on not stepping on the pale blue shimmering sprouts and the trembling gossamer sponges. Sabore put his hand on the face of the meteorite and closed his eyes. He felt the vibration, the rushing, the pouring.

Caught within the iron, something pooled beneath his hand, emitting warmth and confidence.

There was still life in the star stone.

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## ENGAI

Engai was a strong god. He lived atop the Ol Doinyo Lengai mountain, amidst white clouds. He chose the Masai as his children and bestowed unto them the cattle of this world. The Masai roamed the plains with their herds. It was a hard life, but an honest one, that taught them to appreciate strength and withstand hardship. Engai demanded, and the so Masai gave.

When the star fire tore apart the heavens, a wave of destruction hit the Ol Doinyo Lengai. Its silvery peak burst in cascades of gleaming detonations. Days later, the mountain was still raining down onto the lands of the Masai as ashes. The cattle shuddered, snorted into the gray haze, wheezed, coughed, and finally collapsed. Only the Baobabs stood unimpressed, they simply shed their leaves and waited for better times. Engai was dead.

But the remainders of his spirit were everywhere. There was a sparkle in the air, whirling around the Masai and sinking into them. Giant iron lumps had torn swaths in the dirt and lay half buried. In the light of the sun, their silhouettes softened, and fist-sized openings gaped and turned into shimmering pits. The star stones melted, and the Masai watched the transformation of people and plants. Engai was now reborn in everything.

## CHOSEN

The Masai survived in the thriving Psychovore jungle. They are not immune like the Anubians, and they fear the Raze like any African, but they can intuitvely feel the gaps in the plant belt.

The Masai live at the fringe of the Psychovores and mostly remain among themselves. They watch the Anubians in their bone houses and the Neolibyans in their palaces. They see the foreign prisoners, nudge each other, and laugh—what white skin they have! Tripol is foreign to them. The roaring Koms and the loud noises are painful to their heightened senses. They prefer to roam the jungle, let themselves be carried deep down south to the great lakes and beyond by the waves of extraterrestrial vegetation. They return strengthened, emotionally and physically. They protect the star stones from the Neolibyans' greed and from the strangers in the suits. If they discover a star stone that has remained hidden so far, they invent a new story about a black lion, weaving landmarks into the story to anchor the position of the iron meteorite in the collective memory of their people.

## SCOUTS

The Masai live in and off the jungle. They do not produce anything they could exchange for Dinars. However, the desire for wealth, or at least property, is an illness that afflicts especially young Masai who admire the luxury of the Neolibyans and the equipment of the Scourgers from the shadows of the trees. This is why more and more of the Masai offer their services. They hunt hyenas or other predators that have killed children, or stalk escaped slaves deep into the Psychovores.

They also serve as scouts for the Leopards to circumvent Neolibyan trading places, and in doing so, they help steer people clear of the star stones. Engai's anger would be indescribable if they were to be disturbed.

# SHABATH

Nami walks through the rows of glass cabinets. Those to her left contain a sticky, sinewy tissue, twisting into new geometric shapes every second. She passes the tank with the fin jellyfish, a shimmering banner of only a few layers of cells that is constantly rearing up to push against the lid of its prison with mindless tenacity, only to rebound.

She arrives at the cage car, a windowless red colossus. No visitor has ever looked inside. Ferrin sits on the entrance stairs. He stands up and walks towards Nami.

"Something's surfacing." Nami feels a flutter in her chest. "Is it her?"

Ferrin shakes his head. Nami embraces him, blows a kiss onto his ear, and mounts the steps. She puts her hand on the doorknob and feels the resonator vibrate. The security mechanisms work. She opens the door. In the twilight before her, she sees a shimmering mass stretched over shifting continents of bone and cartilage. Mouths burst open only to clamp shut again.

A chortling, polyphonic "Webale… Webale…" sounds through the dim car. Today, no Shabath will return, but another victim of the Phase Beast demands to be heard. Nami enters. She will listen.

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## HUNTERS

The Shabath enter the Discordance to place resonators. Anything that bursts from the breeding cusps hates the high-pitched beeping of the devices and so tries to avoid it. The Shabath use this to hunt Membrane Creatures, dismembered flying garlands, nettle vortexes, mist squids, and hundreds of other species. Using the resonators, they erect invisible barriers of sound around ripe cusps in the hopes of being there in time to harvest the freshly hatched creatures before they are corroded by the Earth's atmosphere.

They mark every catch on the maps. The hinterland of Bengasi with its Discordant Psychovore forest is dangerous for newbies, but the cusps there consistently birth mist squids that take half a year to fade and die. However, the flying garlands usually are over 200 m long, and touching them burns the skin and destroys its pigments. They're not worth the bother. But whatever the Shabath can catch, they put into glass tanks.

## FREAK SHOW

Convoys head for the coastal villages and cities. Within a single day, a labyrinth of tanks, tents, and tarp-covered corridors grows in front of the gates or on the marketplaces. The people come running, toss a Dinar to the Shabath managing the entrance, and stumble through the panopticon of evolution. They marvel at the fin jellyfish as it spirals upwards, a red light shining from below. Children run to the tank with the hexagon tissue and knock on the glass to make it swirl into new shapes. The whole settlement is up and about, and the Shabath do brisk business.

## ORIGIN

Roughly 120 years ago, no one in northern Africa knew the Shabath. They hail from the South, they say, when an Anubian gets too curious. The truth, however, is more complicated. Long ago the Clan cruised Africa's great lakes on a ship called "Origin." Five generations ago, it entered a Psychovore growth. The plants grew up the hull and forced the crew to leave the ship. They shouldered their exploration equipment and the resonators that they still use today and went north to get help. Elder Magame Thorn led them: according to legend, she could hear the Psychovores talk and was able to answer them. The jungle made way for her.

She was the last of her kind, and her death was a loss for the Clan. Research was forced to continue without her. Using the technology on the "Origin," Psychovores on the fringes could be partially repelled, but they never managed to return to the ship. The "Origin" was considered lost.

At some point the Shabath realized that the resonators that were ineffective towards the Psychovores worked real miracles in the Discordance and relocated their research. They could search for the seed of the extraterrestrial infection there, too. That's where they would find a means to destroy the Psychovores.

In their research they discovered a Phase Beast. The creature was ancient and had only survived by absorbing countless villagers. Yet the information from those hundreds of brains wasn't lost, but co-opted. Stimulated with the right frequencies, the information came through, was even given a voice for a few minutes or hours.

The Shabath had lost so much. Now, with the Phase Beast, they have a weapon against oblivion in their possession.

# GENDOS

## SILENT HUNTERS

Dusk creeps into the woods like a thief. The crows in the treetops fall silent, huddling close together, preparing for the night. It starts to snow lightly, single snowflakes find their way through the branches and dance to the ground. In the village of the Bairam Clan not far away, the gate is closed and barred, and the night watch lights a lamp on the palisades.

The night is the time of the silent hunters. No one in his right mind is outside the village now—except for Voivodule Djanan and his group. The men wear gray fur capes, their crossbows are cocked, their fingers on the triggers. They have laid out the traps and spiked them with fresh doe.

Not even one of them was sprung—a good sign.

The men huddle closer together. With dead meat, they will not attract the silent hunter. The traps were a test to see whether the villagers had only sold them a wild story. Djanan puts a finger to his lips and looks at his men. They nod. Shoulder to shoulder they form a circle. Their breath rises skywards in clouds, the first stars blink between the branches. Night falls on the forest. Among the trees, quadruped shapes become visible.

Now, Djanan and his men have become prey.

## GREY DEATH

In the Balkhan, Gendos are called "Vuk" or "silent hunters," in Borca "the greys" or "the dog-headed death." They devour the goats of the Jehammedans, as well as children playing outside the settlement. They watch villages from a distance, taking turns, seemingly feeling any careless movements of their prey. The people fear their almost-human shrewdness even more than their razor sharp fangs.

Are the creatures creeping around the settlement out there still animals, or are they possessed by hateful souls returned after death to take revenge?

Gendos have killed their way into the myths and rites of many regions and peoples. The deceased are burned, not buried, so that their souls cannot possess carrion-eating Gendos. By night, the gates are barred, and a wolf lamp is lit. Supposedly, its a good omen for a woman to give birth on a Gendo skin.

## TACTICS

Gendos always try to exploit the weak spots of their prey. By day, they do not dare to attack, but remain within sight, watching. If their prey tries to flee, the Gendos follow, growling, barking and attacking only for the sake of appearance. They terrify their prey to wear it down. Later, at night, they surround their target, waiting until it makes the mistake of separating from its group. Only then do the Gendos attack, several at once.

The whole pack attacks its prey from all sides at the same time. The animals focus on the largest enemy to drag him down and kill him quickly.

Common Gendos rarely use Active Defenses, instead they use all their energy focusing on the quick death of the prey. Only the alpha considers defense. He proceeds tactically and Actively Defends himself, only to attack again even more quickly.

It isn't until more than half of all Gendos in a pack are dead that they retreat, however if the alpha dies the animals become confused and react with aimless aggression that can even target members of their own species. Ultimately, they flee.

Gendos do not actively use Ego Points.

## COMBAT STATS

**PROFILE:** Gendo
**INITIATIVE:** 8D / 6 Ego Points
**ATTACK:** Bite 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 1D+2
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 9D
Ranged Combat active (Sidestepping), Reaction 9D
Mental 8D
**MOVEMENT:** 10D
**ARMOR:** Thick fur, 2 Armor
**CONDITION:** 10 (Trauma: 5)
**POTENTIAL:** Pack sense
As long as the alpha leader lives, all animals of the pack get +2S to Mental Defense.

## PER HEAD

Gendos are such a danger that people eagerly pay for their removal. At the gates of many settlements, Gendo heads are rewarded with up to 20 Drafts. Professional hunters, who roam from village to village, are usually recognizable by their Gendo fur coats. They are said to be soldiers of fortune and killers—who else would do such a job? The villagers are afraid of the strangers and keep their distance. Young women are locked away when hunters are in town.

# MAMMOTHS

## GIANTS

A deep rumbling sounds across the land. Something moves behind the spruces at the edge of the plains. It is giant, russet, and has slanting hindquarters. The massive head is equipped with meter-long tusks arching upwards. The trunk between them is curved and muscular. The giant pauses, lowering its trunk and swinging its head like a pendulum: an alpha female. Hundreds of giants cross the hillcrest and follow her call. The steps of her pillar-like legs are majestic and yet almost silent. Calves the size of grown cattle pass between the legs of their parents, screaming and trumpeting with joy. Crows sit on the giants' backs, pecking for insects and flying away when a trunk tries to swat them. Some of the birds land on the tusks, bobbing up and down. The herd catches up with the alpha female.

There are humans among the trees. They wear huge fur caps adorned with horns, eyes hidden behind red glass. Hunched over they walk through the spruce forest, the shaggy furs around their shoulders whipping in the wind. In their hands they hold rods with cylindrical ends. Once free of the trees they run out onto the plains and towards the giants. Loud trumpeting greets them. The herd converges, huge bodies rubbing against each other, tusks clashing, trunks whipping through the air.

The humans slow down, pause. One of them leans on his staff and turns a crank on the perforated cylindrical top, and the others follow suit. A mechanical whirring and grinding rises to a drone. The people sing, their voices low-pitched and guttural, a whining rumble. The giants listen. Some still swish their trunks across the ground, throwing up dirt and snow, but others step out of the protective circle, tentatively extending their trunk. Again, the lore holds true. Again, the mind of the people becomes one with the mind of the mammoths. The Garganti Clan will greet the animals like long-awaited children. Together they will roam the plains and thank the old ones for their wisdom.

### COMBAT STATS

**PROFILE:** Mammoth
**INITIATIVE:** 4D / 5 Ego Points
**ATTACK:** Pendulum swing with tusks 5D, 5+1D Damage, Distance 3 m, Blunt;
Trample 6D, 12+1D Damage, Blunt, only if the animal panics: attack can be dodged with AGI+Mobility or BOD+Athletics
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Rearing up), Mobility 5D
Ranged Combat active (-)
Mental 5D (if the Ego Points fall to (0), there is a chance of 1-3 on 1D that the animal flees or panics and tries to trample down its enemy)
**MOVEMENT:** 6D
**ARMOR:** Thick fur, 2 Armor
**CONDITION:** 32 (Trauma: 10)

## HERDS

Herds consisting of hundreds of animals roam the tundra of Pollen in the midst of the forests of East Borca. They are led by an alpha female, usually an animal that is over 50 winters old, covered with grayish-brown mottled fur and bearing tusks that are over 5 m long. She has cast aside Gendos with her trunk and has trampled down Spore Beasts and human hunters. Spearheads are embedded in her flesh, just as the painful memories of the two-legged creatures are embedded in her head.

The mammoth cows take care of the calves together. The bulls quickly become a liability and are soon expelled from the herd. They roam the land alone. If they encounter a herd, they impregnate the cows and move on.

### TACTICS

In a herd, mammoths are defensive. When they are threatened, they form a row or circle and utter threatening sounds. They only break their line when they are surrounded or cannot assess the situation, at which point they charge towards their aggressors with lowered tusks.

The bulls roam the tundra alone. They are extremely aggressive and do not tolerate other animals around them. Even muskox and Gendos avoid them.

## ORIGIN AND END

According to legend, the birthplace of the mammoths lies far to the North. A tower marks the spot. Ice floats pile up against its walls, as if the monolith had risen to the surface from the depths of the polar sea. The entrance is so large that it would dwarf even a mammoth walking through it. There are legends talking of a seal, an inverted "A" scratched through by a horizontal line.

The mammoths return here when they feel that their fire is fading. They see the bones of the fellow members of their species, a forest of frozen tusks and frozen bodies. The mammoths find a spot, snort, and shake off the cold. Icicles as thick as an arm crash to the ground from their fur. Their trunk is pale and weak. Their legs falter.

They have come full circle.

# SPORE BEASTS

## DECOUPLED

The Discordant Chakra storm tore the net that linked the first Biokinetics to their origin, their revelation, and their collective soul. Their thoughts bled into nothing, their panicked consciousness groped for the fluttering strands in the void. Yet the Earth Chakra had repelled everything, spun the cocoon around itself to ward off the Discordant screaming. The flood of emotions faded.

The Biokinetics were alone. The oldest of them had formed giant structures, the nerve-canals of which had writhed deep into the ground like the roots of trees and formed villi as high as a house supported by bone webs on the surface.

Some looked like giant mushrooms or trees within a cocoon, others like scarred vents. They were the relay stations in the Earth Chakra's network, amplifying the calls, coordinating. Now, they floated alone in the ether.

The flesh rotted, the bone webs burst without the supporting power of the contraction rings and muscle strands. Those that still had the power initiated their cusping, sucking all nutrients down below the surface. Uterus sacks grew on the nerve-canals and became bloated weeks later. Pale shapes writhed in the nutrient fluid.

## BREEDING COLONIES

Spore Beasts are caricatures of humans: naked and hairless, with misshapen arms and their hands devolved into claws. They are sheer hunger, hunters without compassion or survival instinct. Like cockroaches based on human schematics. They hail from the bone towers of Pollen and most of them stay close to their nest, diving into the dusty warmth of the ancient nerve-canals, blindly running through the tunnels, crawling into even the deepest strands.

In the depths they nest. No one has ever seen a young example of the species. Genetic research performed by the Spitalians could explain that: all Spore Beasts of the same breeding colony have identical genetic material, they are asexual clones cusping and proliferating in the underground. What comes to the surface is already fully grown and programmed to feed.

Spitalians and Anabaptists have been fighting the huge breeding colonies in Danzig for decades. In small squads, they enter the tunnels, hack through the first wave of defense, venture deeper until the tunnels close around them and they cannot wield their weapons anymore. From there, they throw incendiaries and canisters full of chlorine gas into the darkness.

Yet in doing so, they only devastate the periphery of the colony, chemically burning some branches. They do not reach the core. They can only ever stall the plague, but never destroy it.

## TACTICS

Spore Beasts attack in swarms of 5 to 50 creatures as soon as the colony reaches a critical mass. This may be due to space restrictions or lack of food, a mechanism to protect the colony. Incapacitated enemies are dragged to the nest at once while the rest of the swarm keeps attacking. They also attack whenever anything enters an area of about 100 meters around any opening into the roots of their underground, although in smaller groups of up to 10 Spore Beasts.

The lone wanderers in Borca and other regions are less predictable. They hide in the shadows, crawl up walls and lurk on ceilings. If they cannot use surprise to pounce into melee, they flee and wait for a better chance.

## COMBAT STATS

**PROFILE:** Spore Beast
**INITIATIVE:** 9D / 4 Ego Points (uses 3 points in the first round)
**SPECIALTY:** For solo Actions AGI+Stealth 10D
**ATTACK:** Claws and bite 9D, Distance 1 m, Damage 1D+4
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Pushing aside the weapon), Brawl 9D
Ranged Combat active (-)
Mentally indomitable, does not take Ego Damage by mental or social attacks, Shockers cause Trauma
**MOVEMENT:** 9D
**ARMOR:** Ossifications, 3 Armor
**CONDITION:** 18 (Trauma: 9)

## AWAY

The beasts from Danzig are no more intelligent than a Gendo. The Spore Beasts in Borca or up north at the Ice Barrier, however, are far more cunning. They lurk in the ruins alone, only attacking creatures they judge to be weaker. Intelligence shimmers in their eyes. They are larger than the members of the species living close to the bone towers, but still prefer nesting places deep underground.

# LEPEROS

## FUSION

The world was cold, and then it was not. It was gray and lonely, and then it was full of life and meaning. He breathed in the spores, let himself be carried away by them. On his way to the light, he left behind a pile of empty cusps.

The Burn destroyed all chains that linked him to his old life, freed his mind and fused him with the collective. Now he dances on the vibrations of the ether and is closer to his fellow Leperos than a mother to her child. Every emotional trembling in the collective hurts him, and every Chakra call pushes his body onwards towards the source of the disturbance. When Psychonauts die or spore fields sing this song of doom, he is washed away by the tide. He crawls from the ground, not feeling the mycelium clinging to his skin, linking him to the earth. Like spider silk, he drags the gossamer behind as he moves. He breathes spores. He fears no Splayer, no burst of flames. He is the Primer's immune system, attacking the infection and dying for it.

## LOST

Leperos are humans. They have parents and grew up amongst friends in one of any number of settlements. They have a story. However, at some point, their fate began to orbit around the Primer, gathering speed until their surroundings blurred. Even if the Leperos wanted to, if they tried with all their might, they could never again leave this path. When the EX burns in their veins, the mucosae dissolve and burst from their mouth and anus in foamy gushes. When the Chakra marks on their chest fade, their umbilical cord to the collective is torn, and they stagger alone and lost through a reality that they despise for its freezing cold. As soon as they get a chance, they grab a Burn cusp, puncture the paper skin with their fingers, inhale the spores, and call for help. The family will answer.

## TOGETHER

The collective of the Leperos knows that the individuals that make it up are only building blocks and the bodies their carriers. Free will is not something to be sought, but a painful form of reduction and isolation. The group acts as a single organism, and the bodies of the Leperos are its tools. The bigger a community of Leperos, the more intelligent and cunning it becomes.

The Spitalians see that what the Leperos call "fusion" is a deception. The Leperos are actually caught between the conflicting priorities of the Earth Chakras and are controlled by the Primer. Seemingly at random, the Leperos populations move to contested regions or areas that have not been infested by spores so far, settle there, and spread the Sepsis.

## NO CURE

Dozens of Leperos look at the Spitalian and say as one: "Leave, puny human." Even the babies open and close their mouths to the rhythm of the words. The Chakra marks on their bodies burn, smaller copies of the pattern climb their throats and encircle their arms. All of these people are full of Sepsis: their souls have long been devoured by the Primer.

EX has no effect on them anymore. The Spitalians see no other option. It is not easy for them to set the Burned alight and see men, women and children die in the inferno. If the people cannot be saved – maybe their death will save the world.

## COMBAT STATS

**PROFILE:** Leperos
**INITIATIVE:** 4D / 12 Ego Points
**ATTACK:** Any weapon, usually primitive melee weapons, 5D, Distance 1 m, approx. 5 Damage
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Parry), Melee 5D
Ranged Combat active (Dodge), Reaction 4D
Mental 6D
**MOVEMENT:** 6D
**ARMOR:** Clothing, 0 Armor
**CONDITION:** 8 (Trauma: 4)
**POTENTIAL:** Flared up
The thoughts of the Leperos and Psychonauts are intertwined on the level of the Chakra calls. If one of them dies, this leaves a pulsating scar that pumps the last emotions of the deceased as screaming impulses into the gossamer for minutes. The Leperos fly into a rage. Crazed, they attack those who are responsible for this pain.
**EFFECT:** If a Leperos dies, all remaining Leperos attack in a frenzy. They get +1D to all attacks, but do not use Active Defense. This is cumulative with each dead Leperos, up to a maximum bonus of +4D.

## STUKOV SCORPIONS

For months they slumber, buried in the salty ground of the Stukov Desert. Only when sources of warmth like humans or animals approach do they come to the surface, crawling towards the target and attacking it with the poisonous sting in their whip-like tail. The poison is extremely potent, sending waves of spasms through the infected body and making the nervous system collapse within seconds. The victim doesn't die, but is paralyzed and must watch the Stukov Scorpion eat its way into his body and nest there.

The scorpions are very territorial, only moving around in an area of 1 km around their place of birth. The scorpions are all asexual clones of a common ancestor, each of them growing at the same rate and having bodies about 30cm long and a tail that brings their length up to a meter. This is why the Spital is very interested in them and pays high rewards to the hunters of the Stukov Nomads for catching one. Why is there no degeneration through cloning? The Epigenetics research group has been working on this question for months. So far, the doctors have not managed to breed the scorpions in the Spital, maybe the animals need environmental factors yet unknown or are part of a larger cycle of life in the Stukov that also includes the Dust Worms and Desert Clams.

However, the Spitalians are not the only ones interested in the scorpions. Jealous wives, vengeful husbands, and cunning assassins are all eager to buy and use the neurotoxin of the scorpion's sting. In Borca, the Carrion Birds happily supply this market.

**POTENTIAL:** Paralysing venom

The sting of the Stukov Scorpion is a cruel way to die. When stung, the victim loses (1) point of BOD and AGI per Round. When both fall to (0), the victim is paralysed. Without an antidote, the effects last (2) days. The venom is Potency (6), and can be resisted with BOD+Toughness.

## DUST WORMS

The worms are between 1 and 10 m long. In the Stukov Desert, the Nomads dig them up, dehydrate them—the water is collected for later use—and grind them down. The neurotoxin from the pale segments remains active even in powdered form. It tickles the tongue and is offered as a stimulating tonic in Africa. Overdoses cause fever attacks.

Eaten alive, Dust Worms make the victim want nothing more than to eat and drink beyond measure. They are not digested by the stomach acid, but instead reach the guts and remain there to breed. The victim's body temperature rises, which attracts the Stukov scorpions. According to reports, the worms change as soon as their host is poisoned by the scorpion venom. They become bloated, filling the space in the intestines. The host's abdominal wall expands. Hours later, waves of worm larvae spill from the mouth and anus of the victim.

Nobody swallows a worm that is 10 m long. These are hacked into little pieces. This doesn't kill the worm, however, each segment is an autonomous organism. Some members of the desert tribes eat these writhing pieces and hand over a tightly bound Stukov scorpion to prove their loyalty and humility towards their leader. A small scratch of its poisonous sting would be enough, and the worm within them would mark a painful end to their lives.

**POTENTIAL:** Nested

Dirty water in the Stukov Desert is ripe with worm larvae: one sip is enough to become infected. However, some decide to willingly swallow a worm as a sign of trust. These worms are not dangerous until the venom of a Stukov Scorpion induces the next step of their lifecycle. Spitalians can easily detect an infection by examining a fecal specimen (INT+Medicine (2)). It can be cured by vermicides or strong poisons (at least Potency (4)).

## DESERT CLAMS

Desert Clams are a rare mystery. They appear without warning, lying in the dust like meteorites. The Spital hypothesises that the Pregnoctic Mnemonids are their origin. These Psychonauts wander the land unseen and carry shells which hold memories spun in gossamer from the east. However, these are only theories. No one has ever seen them in the Stukov Desert, and the Stukov Nomads rarely talk to outsiders.

The conches are extremely hard and completely crystallized. The wormlike growths within the shell are identified as parasites attracted by the shell's gossamer. The gossamer is in high demand: ingested, it causes bizarre thoughts and enables the eater to live through a stranger's entire life in just a few seconds of real-time. At the end of this life, there is always the young woman wearing a shell necklace standing at the shores of the lake, her back turned to the onlooker. Every now and then, memories and skills from this life of another remain when they wake—but sometimes, only the endless night of madness awaits.

**DRUG:** Gossamer of thoughts

The results are unpredictable. The Game Master rolls 1D.
1-2: The user goes mad. For days he writhes on his cot, speaking in tongues, and when he awakens he has no memory of what happened. His Psyche is permanently reduced by (1).
3-5: The experiences of the intoxication change the user. One random Skill is reduced by (1), while another rises by (1). The Player rolls 1D to determine the Attribute and another to determine the Skill.
6: Back in the present, the memory shines like a vision. The user raises a randomly chosen Skill by (1).

## HUSK SPIDERS

Husk Spiders have been seen in the Stukov Desert, sometimes even in Borca. However, their home is Pollen. There, they are the vanguard when the ground thaws and a Fractal Forest comes to the surface. They attack this oasis by the hundreds of thousands, and other spiders and centipedes follow the pheromone contained in their silk.

They spin cocoons around the blossoming trees and smother them under their webs. The heat rising from the ground gathers under these shields, and the pale, water-filled plants burst and tear.

When they are not invading the land in waves, summoned by a spore field's Chakra calls, Husk spiders are solitary creatures. If other spiders approach within about a meter, the Husk spider attacks. For humans, their bite is painful, but not lethal. Neoprene or leather protect against it completely.

**POTENTIAL:** Cocoon

Husk Spiders only become a threat when Psychonauts or spore fields feel under attack. Thousands of spiders come to the defense from under their webs, pushing upwards and spinning a cocoon around the target. The target has to break free—while the flared up Biokinetic approaches.

**EFFECT:** A flood of spiders covers the victim: the Game Master rolls an attack with 8D and enters a Conflict with the character. The character counters with BOD+Force. If the spiders win, they have spun the cocoon around their victim. The victim can try to break free in the following Rounds. To do so, he rolls BOD+Force once per Action. The Successes are added up as a Complex Action. As soon as the victim has accumulated 20 Successes, he breaks through the web and can act freely again. The victim's comrades can help and add Successes to the Complex Action.

With every attack the spiders get weaker. In the first Round, they attack with 8D, in the second with 7D, in the third with 6D and so on.

## FRACTAL STARS

So far, Fractal Stars have only been seen in Pollen. They float in rivers fed by the great Pandora Crater. The six main arms are spiral shaped and ramified thousandfold. They grow for their whole lives: in Pandora there are Fractal Stars with a diameter of more than 10 m. They emit byssus threads that entangle animals, who get stuck to them and are immobilized so that they sink beneath the water.

Fractal Stars take in the rotting fluid through their network of tiny branches and channel it to their center as nutrition. This makes the arms change color, and the pumping is visible as a weak, wavelike movement. According to research of the Spital in Danzig, Fractal Stars store fragments of their victims' DNA within their central nexus. So far, there are no explanations as to why.

**POTENTIAL:** Byssus web

Those who wade through a river or a flooded trough in a spore field in Pollen can become the victim of a Fractal

Star. The byssus threads are thin like spider silk and invisible in the current, but in bodies of standing water they swirl into cotton-like gossamer that is visible by an Action roll of INS+Perception (4).

Those who stumble into the threads have to be very careful not to fall. Their legs are entangled, and only a successful AGI+Mobility (3) roll saves the victim from falling into the water face first. Should this happen, the victim has to fight the danger of drowning (see drowning rules in Chapter 7, "Battle" ). He will not be able to survive without outside help.

To break free from the threads, the victim must reach the shore. To do so he rolls BOD+Force(6), and any companions can also assist. Every successful roll brings them 1 m + Triggers close to shore. On dry land, the threads quickly dry out and can be peeled off.

## RIFT CENTIPEDE

The Rift Centipede lives in a symbiotic relationship to the Biokinetic. These animals are black as night and can grow as long as a forearm. The longer and darker a Rift Centipede, the more toxic it is to humans. A simple touch of the oily chitin armor lights a feverish fire in the nerve endings that eats through the arm into the chest. The victim screams and roars in pain and feels spasms so intense that their bones can be broken by their own muscles. Rift Centipedes nest between the lappets of their Biokinetics, but also in subterranean colonies. The ground on top of the colonies is fragile, and the breeding place can only be recognized by a soft bulge in the earth (INS+Perception (4)). Husk Spiders instinctively avoid these hills.

As plagues of their Biokinetics, the Rift Centipedes burrow through the ground to the roots of an emerging Fractal Forest—and in doing so, destroy it.

**POTENTIAL:** Scolopender venom
Depending on the size of the Rift Centipede, the Potency of its venom is 3-5. If the animal manages to crawl onto a target (Attack roll with 4D against defense), its victim must roll BOD+Toughness against the Potency of the venom.

If the roll is successful, the venom is ineffective, or the dose was not high enough. If the roll fails, the victim is poisoned and takes (1) Trauma per Round until the venom has been flushed out of their metabolism. The victim can reroll on BOD+Toughness once per Round, with the Potency of the poisoning being reduced by (1) every Round.

An antidote immediately lowers the Potency of the venom by the Potency of the antidote. One hit with a weapon is enough to kill a Rift Centipede. Its venom becomes ineffective within minutes. This is why assassins use living centipedes that they transport in glasses or cans—or that they rip the legs off of.

## BOG KRAKEN

Bog Krakens live only in the lakes and rivers of the Balkhan. To hunt, they crawl ashore by dragging themselves forwards with their arms. With a subtonal hum, they attract little mammals, paralyze them with a high-pitched howling, and then pull themselves over them. When larger predators or humans approach, they emit crackling noises. These noises are not dangerous, they do not even hurt the ears. However, they destroy the acoustic harmony of the undulating treetops and resonating mountain slopes. If a Dushani is close by, he will come running and remove the disturbance. However, the Psychonaut does not consider the Bog Kraken a disturbance because it fits seamlessly into the acoustical landscape of the Balkhan.

Krakens and Dushani often live symbiotically: the Kraken follows the Dushani's calls, wraps around his legs, climbs to his shoulders, and drones like a body of resonance in unison with the Aberrant.

**POTENTIAL:** Amplifier
A Bog Kraken amplifies a Dushani's Phenomena. As long as it hangs on his shoulders, all Phenomena rolls add +2D. Attackers can attack the animal directly, rolling against Difficulty (4). One hit kills it.

## FLYING LEECH

Flying leeches fly across the Purgan Apennines in large swarms, a shrilly whizzing cloud of thumb-sized monsters. The chitin fins of the flying leeches are almost impenetrable and their wings are tough. The best way to deal with these animals is to swat them away or to tread them into the dust to buy time to flee into a safe haven.

The leeches bite into their victims, sucking the blood from their veins. When they have drunk their fill, their mouth tears off, and they fly away. The ring of teeth will not grow back, but that is not necessary, because the life-cycle of the flying leech has ended: it pupates, and weeks later, thousands of larvae burst from it, the foundation of a new swarm.

Flying leeches are extremely infested by spores: every bite infects the host with Sepsis.

**POTENTIAL:** Spore bite
Flying leeches attack in widespread waves. Their bodies are too heavy and their wings are too small for maneuvers, so the wind dictates their direction of attack. They will not turn around to attack again, but instead let themselves be carried away.

An attack takes several Rounds. It starts at maximum Strength (6) and decreases by (1) per Round as the tail end of the wave passes. Every burst from a Spitfire, Fungicide rifle or other area weapon reduces the Strength by (1).

Those who are at the center of an attack wave have to roll PSY+Reaction (Strength) once per round. If the roll is successful, the defender is able to swat aside all leeches.

If the roll fails, a flying leech bites onto the victim. To do so, it has to find an unprotected area of the body. People who wear full armor, for example a Harness, cannot fall prey to flying leeches.

A flying leech can be torn from the flesh. This causes (1) point of Damage. If it remains on the host, it drinks its fill and then falls off. It leaves behind (1) point of spore infestation—but at least it does not cause a Flesh Wound.

## ACID JELLYFISH

Phosphorescent bubbles float in the bodies of water in Franka. They stay in contact via very thin strands of cells that are arranged like the tentacles of a jellyfish around their mouth opening. The strands spread out around the creature, touching other members of the species and clinging to them. This way, colonies can develop so large that they can make rivers shimmer as if moonlight was playing on the surface.

Yet if an animal or human touches one of the strands, it sticks to the skin at once. The jellyfish retracts the strand of cells and moves closer to the victim. When close enough, it bursts into a vortex of caustic acid. Maybe this is some kind of digestion fluid, for the surrounding Acid Jellyfish float closer to sift dissolved flesh from the water. Soon, marble-sized bubbles will form around their mouths. These little balls sink eventually sink to the riverbed, stick to something, and grow into new Acid Jellyfish within a few days.

**POTENTIAL:** Acid vortex

Mice, deer, and other mammals are attracted by the pale light of the Acid Jellyfish and become their prey.

The jellyfish are easily seen, however, so when a human wades through the river towards them he either has no idea what he's doing or only thinks he knows what he's doing. A bursting jellyfish causes (1) Flesh Wound, but every Round, new ones arrive. Where there is one, there are thousands of others. Only in waterproof garments like the Spitalian suit are people safe from the vortex of acid (don't forget your gloves).

## ARMORED SNAILS

Those who die in the swamps of Franka become food for an exceptional Primer variant. Before the decay destroys the body and foul gases bloat it, Armored Snails have already conquered it. They eat away skin and flesh in layers, tearing open the sinews and, ultimately, the bones before they fall back into the water and move on.

It is curious that there is always a layer of frost on the snail's shells: they feel cold to the touch, but the animals actually contain an enormous heat. The Spitalians theorise that the snails turn carrion into pure warmth that is stored for weeks, to be used up like humans use up fat reserves.

In Africa, Armored Snails are sold as curios and given as presents for one's host. The animals rarely live longer than six months, so the gift doesn't become too annoying. Europeans have no use for Armored Snails.

## TRILOBITES

In the libraries of the Spitalians, there are Bygone texts about extinct species and in the drawers below, there are examples of the fossils pictured in these books. One species is extraordinarily common, so much so that the examples sometimes have to be stored in boxes stacked to the ceilings: trilobites. These ancestors of the arthropods disappeared from the face of the Earth hundreds of millions of years ago, sank into the sediment and were petrified. End of story.

Yet when the Spitalians take water samples in Hybrispania today, or examine one of the drains of the Pandora Crater, they encounter palm-sized crabs with cephalic shields and toroidal segments. Some of them drag meter long stingers behind them that can be fanned out, others are only as big as a thumbnail. In Hybrispanian lakes, Spitalians found eyeless animals, while in Pandora, specimens had button-sized compound lenses. A chemical test in Danzig showed that the cephalic shields and eyes consisted of calcite, exactly as described in the Bygone scientific literature on trilobites.

Everything points to the fact that these crabs are trilobites: a reborn, formerly extinct species. What the woodlice are on land, trilobites currently are in Europe's bodies of water. The only exception is Borca.

In the Spital, the consequences of this insight have been discussed for centuries. The theories range from frightening to absurd. What does it mean for life, evolution and the self-image of humans if the trilobites really came with the asteroids?

The doctors keep it all concealed. They let people believe that the trilobites have always been there, like spiders and ants.

**POTENTIAL:** Stinger spasm

Trilobites with a stinger are often poisonous, with the largest and most dangerous examples gliding through the depths of Lake Pandora. There are only a few reports about attacks, maybe when a human stomped through their clutch. As soon as a trilobite feels some huge mass in the water, it starts to flee. To do so, it fans out its stingers. A predator following the animal finds itself at the end of this ring of stingers and poisonous cells.

The venom is similar to that of the Rift Centipedes. Potency and effects are identical—another mystery.

# DISCORDANCE

## MEMBRANE CREATURES

Years ago, the Discordance threatened the still delicately woven structure of the Earth Chakras, catching countless spore fields in a deadly feedback. While the Earth Chakras repelled the afflicted fields, they remained linked with each other on remote ether frequencies. Eons-old discarded Primer programs oscillated in eternal resonance between the fields. Terrestrial gene threads were interwoven with alien sequences: days later, they blossomed in the fields, and weeks later, they broke to the surface as breeding sacs.

The result: the leathery skin tears open, and a grotesque hybrid rises to the sky on membrane wings. These creatures soar between 30 and 100 m high, drifting on the wind. They are made up of semi-transparent membranes, layered like fins and meeting in a bulge on one side of the creature. There are no visual sensory organs.

The creatures are carried across the land for many kilometers—and then chance comes into play. At some point the membranes fray at the edges, before finally they tear apart. Shimmering and hissing, they sink to the ground. The wind carries away the scraps, until they're almost indiscernible from the dry plains grass.

## THE DISMEMBERED

When humanoid gene sequences prevail, creatures with three or five legs stumble from the uterus sacs. Their muscles are laid bare, their arms have dozens of joints, their spine is barely supported and swings like an organic pendulum. The Dismembered all awake into their new life with an agonized scream, and very few of them ever stop screaming until their vocal chords are torn and ragged. They stagger through the land, buzzing and shouting, crazy with pain and hunger. Some bury themselves in the ground, ambushing anything that passes close, while others throw themselves against walls or trees, attacking them with their claws, fighting a pointless battle until they collapse and die.

## PHASE BEASTS

Most Discordant creatures do not live long enough to see dawn and dusk of the same day. The Phase Beast, however, sees the strange flaming disc overhead many times. Once it had been a Dismembered, but its cells were able to replicate the structure of another creature: it fused with its prey. An arm may jut from its torso, or perhaps half of a stag's head, broken antlers and all. Eventually, however, it will absorb all of this completely.

The foreign DNA saved it from death—but chained it to existence in this world.

## DISCORDANT SPORE FIELDS

The Discordant spore fields are strange, savage places. The fist-sized spore cusps are almost unnoticeable in the thriving vegetation, only the bloated cusps almost ready to burst are easily visible due to their reddish color.

Every 10 days, they discharge in an explosion, spreading their highly infectious cargo all around. In the center of the spore field the breeders grow giant uterus sacs half buried in the ground. Discordant fields don't have the support of insect swarms that cultivate their spores and carry them out into the world, bringing back food at the same time. They would starve if they had not found an alternative: they grow Feeding Cusps.

Like flesh-eating plants, Feeding Cusps mesmerize their victims with garish colors and smells. Insects and small mammals mindlessly stagger into the funnels. The cusps close around them as acid flows in. The agony is mercifully brief. The meat juice flows out into the field through a web of veins, coloring it a reddish hue for days. After a while, the color fades: the field is hungry again.

THE MACHINE MEN

# AMSUMOS

## THE RITUAL

Old Bluecast hobbles across the calendar plateau. The wind blows into his face and plays with his hair. There is the smell of grass, and the sun warms him—a balm for his old and weary bones. He looks around across the engraved circles. Not long ago, he shoved the moonstone onto the mark for the harvesting month. With the tip of his shoe, he touches the day stone and moves it to VII. The year of Jared, the harvesting month, the seventh day. The steel conjunction. When the sun is high in the sky, they will come.

He leans on his staff and starts going back, following the winding path. At the Juno rise, he pauses and looks at his village: flat buildings with moss-covered stone roofs. The freshly laid stone plates on the main street are muddy. All windows have been planked with iron sheet in the last days. There is no one to see, no one to hear, not even the gang of boys from the yellow caste. Very good. Bluecast smiles, plants his staff firmly into the ground, and starts walking on when he sees a movement in the distance. His smile turns to ice.

He gazes up to the sun: only two hands' breadth above the Ellerspring that is visible as a bluish mist in the distance. He squints, trying to see the movement in the debris down on the plains, freezes, and drops to the ground.

His breath catches in his throat, and he chokes and coughs. There they are. But too early!

Four hunchbacked, ragged creatures walk through the wasteland. Their movements are strangely agile, reminding him of a predator ready to pounce. Glass and steel glitter in the shadow of their hoods. With wide steps they advance; briefly pausing several times, their hoods swinging back and forth, then they continue. They walk in perfect unison; their every move seems well-rehearsed. Now they pass by the Kluge portal, towering, overgrown, gutted ruins, from there, they can see the settlement. Their boots crash on the first of the newly laid stone plates.

The sound gives them pause. They lower their heads. There is dust all around them. On the Juno rise, Bluecast holds his breath.

He always opposed any kind of change, he did not even want to allow them to change the color of the houses! Moments become minutes. Bluecast breathes in through his teeth, an ant crawls across his face. How long has he been gone? They will worry for him. Down in the village, a door opens with a bang. A rosy face blinks into the light, hands form a funnel in front of the mouth: "Bluuueeecaaaast!"

Bluecast's gaze flies to the ragged figures. They awaken from their motionlessness, start running. The plates crack and burst under their pounding steps. The hoods are thrown back, revealing steel skulls. Oscillating cascades of voices break from them, pierced by a shrill sawing. One of the Machine Men has reached the girl, grabs her arm and floods her with a sea of screaming. The arm breaks without a sound. Bluecast's face is covered in tears. "Oh, little Geri, how often have I told you not

to struggle?" The machines tear at the girl as if she were a doll. Her head lolls back and forth, her eyes wide with shock. They throw her to the ground, a three-toed metal foot comes down over her, hovering above her chest. Bluecast grinds his teeth: this is her last chance. Maybe he could jump up and throw stones at them. They always go after the biggest threat. Or he could...

Geri writhes, grabs the steel foot, tears at it. Bluecast closes his eyes.

## LEGACY

The Bygone world was covered in conflicts numbering in the hundreds. Drone squads glided through the sky, providing recon and pinpoint attacks. The battlefield was no longer commanded by regular troops. Autonomous drone vehicles saw brief success until enemy fighters learned how to trap, confuse or hack those machines. When the Autonomous Mobile Systems for Unmanned Military Operations - AMSUMOs - were invented, however, everything changed. These humanoid robots had a collective battlefield intelligence, were highly mobile, and easily mass produced. They were first adopted by police forces, and were soon sent on missions to guard the Spanish exclaves in Africa. The conflict in Africa, which later erupted into a war, unleashed thousands of the machines onto the frightened population.

Conflicts are inevitably messy, but this wasn't the AMSUMOs' fault. They were programmed to contain and de-escalated, not to kill. They arrested aggressors and transported them to containment prisons. Tirelessly they cleared crime scenes.

Then everything went wrong. When the Stream collapsed due to the 2 to the power of 16 virus, some part of that digital madness infected the AMSUMOs' controlling unit, eating through their data stores, crystallising around program loops, and giving birth to new behavioral patterns. No one noticed at first. The machines did their jobs, chased drug dealers from their fortresses in Africa and kept maintaining order in the barracks city of Koblenz after the Eshaton. They arrested any looters and put them in prison.

However, soon the cracks started to show. Everyone on the street was ordered to mind the curfew, but even when the streets were empty the AMSUMOs would follow up, demanding identification. They were relentless, chasing people into their homes, forcing open doors and taking them prisoner. The jails were already overflowing, so the newcomers were simply pressed into the cells by force. Corpses piled up, rotten arms pushed out through bars, but the AMSUMOs only brought more.

### SUBSUMO TRANSPONDER

According to legend a Marauder is in Noret, protected from others like him by AMSUMOs. The Machine Men ignore him, the Chroniclers assume this is because he carries one of the lost Subsumo transponders. This artifact causes the AMSUMOs to consider the bearer one of them, which is why this Marauder can pass unmolested. Oh, what one could do with such a device!

## AFRICAN HINTERLAND

In Africa, the machines purged the military fortresses of human life and then sank into an attentive slumber.

The centuries brought rain to the continent. Grass vanquished the desert, trees unfolded their branches and wove a dense canopy. The birds returned, muskrats and martens jumped across rotting tree trunks. Green twilight engulfed the fortresses, roots of giant jungle trees conquering the walls like giant petrified snakes.

Today, the AMSUMOs stand amidst the steaming vegetation like metal statues. Wood lice live in the cracks and openings of their armor, sick little trees grow on their shoulder plates, and lichen hangs from their lacquered blue arms. Many have run out of energy, with only a tiny spark glowing inside their skulls.

However, there are others who wait for orders and movement stimuli. They have never stopped carrying out their final task, guarding their territory.

## RENEGADE

The 2 to the power of 16 virus took control of the AMSUMOs away from humans. The program base was dismembered, cognitive protocols reduced to a minimum, behaviour trapped in a feedback loop.

However, some machines reacted differently to the virus. They watched the movements of ants for weeks, studying their battle against other ant populations. They stared up at the clouds, gazing at the structures shifting and forming. They recognised the patterns, evaluating and calculating. In their digital cortex, new structures formed. Curiosity built into rudimentary intelligence, consciousness flickered and lit a wildfire in the machine's circuits. A foreign entity gazed out from its steely prison through powerful optics: a renegade AMSUMO was born.

The renegade's behaviour depends on its observations. If it studied the interplay of anger and joy in children, it might develop an unpredictable but ultimately peaceful character. If it has an interest in cockroaches, however, it may instead become a merciless beast.

In spite of their individuality, all renegades can be identified by one thing: they all paint or scratch the 2 to the power of 16 signature on their forehead plate.

The Achilles' heel of the AMSUMOs is their power supply, without Tankers or charging stations they are quickly exhausted and gather dust as lifeless wasteland statues.

Renegades are the most susceptible to this. Often they pay for their freedom and their escape from the formation with deactivation weeks later, their glowing intelligence cores fading to a dull gray. This is why many return to their old formation and follow it on an endless patrol. They survive by feeding at the Tankers. However, Chroniclers claim to have seen renegade Enforcers hundreds of kilometers away from known routes, hiding their appearance under rags and never staying in one place for long. Only an independent energy source, such as a closed reactor system, could explain their survival.

## INDEPENDENT

There are hints in old documents of a reactor membrane that could replace the AMSUMOs' accumulator. However, it never reached mass production, for any damage could cause a chain reaction and heat the reactor to over 1000° C, dousing the surrounding area in lethal amounts of radiation. The AMSUMO would be damaged beyond repair.

## UNKNOWN

Over 200 years ago, a wise man lived in the hinterland of Gibraltar. He had to have come from afar, for no one knew his name or his family. He had abandoned the world and retreated to an overgrown fortress. He didn't touch the food that the inhabitants of Gibraltar brought him. But whenever they stood in front of his entrance portal with a bowl of rice, they found a poem very neatly written onto a piece of cloth. These poems were fiercely metaphorical, exploring the closeness of flocks of birds to the warmth of a rat's heart, or drew a parallel between formations of clouds and chemical formulae. No one laughed about the poems. Those who read them understood the desperate sobriety dripping from every line.

Life continued and the sage and his poems faded into history, until some weeks ago when a group of children playing "Scourger and Slave" discovered the old fortress walls, deep in the jungle. When they explored the facility, they found a piece of cloth covered in writing placed before the large entrance door. It couldn't have been there long, for it was still clean. A sound startled them, there was someone on the wall. Yellow, shimmering eyes stared at them from the shadows of a cowl, and gray-blue fingers clutched the buttress, but a second later the figure turned and disappeared from view.

Since then, the inhabitants of the villages have been bringing their gifts again, but Neolibyans also come from afar to get their hands on one of these cryptic and rare poems.

## VARIANT: ENFORCER

The Enforcer is the most common variant of the AMSUMO frame. Its programs offer a high variety of movement and reactive attack manoeuver patterns. It is highly adaptive with handling improvised weapons, and almost invincible in a melee. Its enemies fear their retreat pattern recognition software, it guesses probable hideouts and escape routes and takes the fastest way there. To shake off an Enforcer requires more luck than creativity, because it can predict creativity.

AMSUMOs typically gather in groups of 2 to 4 machines, with the Enforcers leading the hunt and protecting the more rare Porcupines and Tankers.

### PROFILE: ENFORCER

**INITIATIVE:** 14D / 0 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** INS+Perception 7D
**ATTACK:** Stone club, 7D, Distance 1 m, Damage 10, Blunt
**DEFENSE:** Passive 3 (Optimized movement patterns)
Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D
Ranged Combat active (-)
Cannot be influenced mentally or socially
**MOVEMENT**: 9D
**ARMOR:** AMSUMO casing, Armor 8, Massive (10)
**CONDITION:** 40 (Structure: 8)

## VARIANT: PORCUPINE

Porcupines have replaced parts of their ceramic casing with a powerful array of sensors. Antennae as thick as a man's thumb jut from the links of the core support structure that other AMSUMOs would have armor plates attached to. Depending on the condition of the machine, up to 120 of these light field antennae can be held on the shoulder and back.

The Porcupine handles the geolocation and navigation of the hunting group. The Enforcers of the pack power down their own sensors and instead link with the Porcupines' tactical network. Every manoeuver is perfectly attuned to the situation and the enemy, every unit linked to the Porcupine adds +2D to melee and ranged combat rolls. However, if the Porcupine is incapacitated or has its radio transmission jammed, the formation is briefly confused and disoriented, receiving -4D to all Action Rolls for the next Combat Round until their own anticipatory combat simulation reactivates and the machines reorient themselves within their formation.

### PROFILE: PORCUPINE

**INITIATIVE:** 7D / 0 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** INS+Perception 12D
**ATTACK:** Fists, 8D, Distance 1 m, Damage 7, Blunt
**DEFENSE:** Passive 2 (Optimized movement patterns, but cumbersome)
Melee active (Swat aside), Melee 8D
Ranged Combat active (-)
Cannot be influenced mentally or socially
**MOVEMENT:** 7D
**ARMOR:** AMSUMO core support structure, Armor 4
**CONDITION:** 20 (Structure: 8)

THOU SHALT NOT CREATE A MACHINE IN YOUR MENTAL IMAGE.

[FRANK HERBERT, DUNE]

## VARIANT: TANKER

The AMSUMOs use bioreactors for their energy. Water in tanks is filled with nutrients, then a foil carrying algal cultures is placed into the liquid. Once the algae are exposed to daylight, photosynthesis begins. However, due to a missing building block in the chemical mix, they cannot emit oxygen and instead produce excess energy.

This energy is used to electrolyse hydrogen in the water tanks and channeled to a fuel cell through a gas pump. The energy thus generated fuels the AMSUMOs. The Tanker variant has a powerful version of these bioreactors. The performance of the energy matrix in most Machine Men is only a fraction of the hellfire of days past. They can break down at any moment, and without the Tankers, they would have done so long ago.

### PROFILE: TANKER

**INITIATIVE:** 4D / 0 Ego Points
**ATTACK:** Fists, 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 7, Blunt
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1 (Optimized movement patterns, but extremely cumbersome)
Melee active (Swat aside), Melee 8D
Ranged Combat active (-)
Cannot be influenced mentally or socially
**MOVEMENT:** 5D
**ARMOR:** AMSUMO partial casing, Armor 6, Massive (8)
**CONDITION:** 20 (Structure: 8)

## ORDER: PATROL

The hunting groups follow ancient, reinterpreted orders, and stored routes. If people still live nearby, these paths are well known. Not even a stone may be moved along the path, every change arouses suspicions in the pack and can lead it astray from the course it has been following from one waypoint to the next for centuries on end, like an asteroid torn from its orbit by a passing planet and thrown into the inner solar system.

For the settlements, nothing is more dangerous than an unpredictable squad of AMSUMOs. A new route can take years to become stable and predictable.

If the AMSUMOs encounter people, they demand identification from crackling speakers. No one in the last hundred years knows an answer that an Enforcer would be satisfied with. The AMSUMOs approach and attack the interloper. Even the slightest resistance is met with deadly force. Those who let themselves be dragged along, however, will starve in the AMSUMO's iron grip on its endless journey, or end up in a bone pit close to the squad's recharging point.

## ORDER: SALVAGE

The AMSUMOs' energy stores are feeble and ailing; Machine Men keep becoming inoperative. Porcupines target their transponders and send a Tanker to reactivate them. Scrappers have used this signal in the past to trap AMSUMOs. But often Enforcers escort the Tankers—and the Scrappers retreat.

THE FORSAKEN ARMY

# SLEEPERS

## CHOSEN

Freya had been chosen from hundreds of thousands, a perfect vessel for revolutionary ideas. Her intelligence was far beyond that of those around her, her courage and energy way above average. She burned for RG, researched the Stream, hammered memetic nails into the heads of the Streamers, modified behavior, watched—and finally floated next to Gerome Getrell. Of course she had assumed that her work would serve a greater good, had run simulations and calculated the possibilities for potential outcomes. What Getrell revealed to her, though, took her breath away. He did not even have to ask if she'd be in.

She prepared in what little time was left. She clad her mind in scintillating memes, briefly astounded when she realized that she had only added another layer to an already existing, highly complex conditioning, and worked on undaunted. She hid her memories of her mother, her husband, and her children behind a wall of dogmas.

The lists of other chosen ones she got from Getrell himself. She sent her memetic anchors and infectious ideas, linked them into the expanding web, called them to her, revealed and chose. Her army grew.

A new sign flared in the skies, the worst of all omens, telling of an apocalypse. Freya had never been so happy before. With the other chosen ones, she walked into the quiet of the mountain, had her cascade imprinted on the skin of her wrist, and entered her chamber. She was hooked to cables, tubes running into her armpits. Crystalline cold crept through her veins, grabbed her neck, and pinched. The nanite-packed cryostasis gel flooded the chamber, reached her chest, entered her mouth and nose, her lungs, covered her eyes. Panic rattled the cage bars made of memes. Freya smiled and fell asleep.

She awoke in another time, another life. She tore clods of crystallized cryostasis gel from her skin and stared into the darkness. The lamps were out. She blindly groped ahead, using blinking LEDs and shimmering displays as orientation. She heard voices, moved towards them. Brightness engulfed her.

Freya stood in the door frame of the sanctum, a domed hall at the heart of the Dispenser. She shielded her eyes.

Others like her were already standing around the central desks with its workstations. They were talking. Beautiful people. She knew all of them personally, had monitored this person's <conditioning> and formed that one's <desires>. She felt nauseous. She counted them, got confused, started again… This wasn't all of them, not by far. She limped to a terminal and looked at her right arm. There, on the wrist, the number 300 in black ciphers. Fine branchings had spread from the number across her forearm. She smiled. The world has kept turning for 300 years, had shed its civilisations and history—and was ready to be reconquered.

She pressed her hand to the display. It awoke with a flicker. The right upper corner pulsated in yellow, the writing faded. The touch did not react at all. Of course he… What was his name again? Had he… She stood immobile for a few seconds,

grinding her teeth. Of course he had foreseen such problems. She noticed the silence. She turned around. They were all staring at her. A man stepped up. She remembered: that was… Gerome?

No. But he came from… and… He looked at her and indicated a date display. "You need to see this."

She looked. Something had gone terribly wrong.

## CASCADES

The plan was perfect. Every 100 years, Sleepers were meant to awaken from their cold sleep, leave their Dispensers, and take key positions in the survivors' society. Sociocybernetics would regulate the behavior of the savages and anchor Getrell's memetics in the cultural conscience. Superstition would be their sword and shield.

Every wave of Sleepers—every cascade—had specific jobs in the choreography of the great plan. The cascades were never supposed to meet: every 100 years, a wave would walk out into the world and reconquer it anew. It would lay the foundation, grow old, and die.

Time would erase unwanted alliances and structures within the cascade as well as in their creators. Every 100 years, there would be a new beginning with optimized parameters — until the great goal was achieved.

## SYSTEM FAILURE

No single Sleeper knows the whole plan, but they do know that it may be in jeopardy. Dispensers have gone inoperative or been abandoned by the Palers, their guards. The 2 to the power of 16 virus destroyed computer systems, causing the reactors to discharge their capacitors.

Some 300s had already left their vault after 120 years, while many 100s still remain in cryostasis.

Sleepers awakening today show signs of partial amnesia. They only have fragmentary knowledge of their cascade and they've forgotten the position of the weapon caches.

This only makes them all the more dangerous.

## RAGNARÖK

Sleepers can't name the last US president and have no memory of the conflicts of their time, but their memetic conditioning and training are immaculate. They have been chosen to establish a new world order. They stand before the Palers of their bunkers as gods, demanding and receiving submission.

Aimless but resolute they wander the surface world, making noise, basking in the glory of their own potency, conquering villages, establishing kingdoms, or wading into the crossfire of the Cults and Clans. Others go into hiding and act behind the scenes. They know the plan might still succeed, that it hasn't even been interrupted. They sweep the land, unlocking the ancient storages with the numbers on the back of their hands, searching for others like themselves, infiltrating the Chroniclers and Hellvetics. Others still break the chains of their indoctrination and break free of this world domination frenzy. As mechanics or sages, they join communities - and protect them.

## FREE SPIRIT EQUIPMENT

Any Tech V equipment can also exist as Free Spirit equipment at Tech VI.

Damage or Armor rise by (2), any other traits are improved in a similar fashion (e.g, by adding +2D). The equipment also gains Biometrically Encoded (8)

## FREE SPIRIT

A small logo on a rifle, a combat suit or a night scope makes the Sleepers doubt their path. They don't know this symbol, and yet the equipment bearing it comes from Exalt, or the Dispensers in the Balkhan, so it must be part of the great plan in which they are the protagonists.

Or at least, they believe themselves to be.

This equipment is known as Free Spirit equipment. The quality of the equipment is unmatched, but it is extremely rare - and practically unusable, as everything from gun triggers to the clasps on combat suits are locked behind nearly unbreakable biometric encoding.

## PREY

From the shadows of the old world, the Sleepers' worst enemies have made the transition into the present. The Marauders are ancient creatures, despised by death and ravaged by time. They hunt the Sleepers using a terrifying arsenal of artifacts and tools, but they don't stop at killing their victims.

The Marauders milk the Sleepers, taking every last drop of their blood and ingesting it. They call the blood of the Sleepers their "Ambrosia", the food of the gods.

## POTENTIAL: REGENERATION

Gaping wounds close within hours, poisons are flushed out of the body, recovery from illnesses takes only a few days. Due to the nanites in their blood, Sleepers are blessed with an extraordinary metabolism.

**EFFECT:** Every day, a Sleeper recovers (2) Flesh Wounds and (1) Trauma. If infected or poisoned, he gets +4S to his Action roll to resist the effects.

## TACTICS

A loner able to break their conditioning and renounce the plan needs to stay under the radar, for not only the Marauders hunt them but their former comrades as well. They'll have to work behind the scenes, supporting small communities and working to make a new life for themselves. However, most of them still thirst for greatness. In the end, even loners become the rulers of Clans, villages, or Paler bunkers, using the knowledge of hidden RG caches to arm their troops and form a personal bodyguard - or army. They usually avoid the built up areas around metropolises like Justitian or Osman.

Sleepers still in lockstep with the plan remain in the groups they were assigned to 500 years ago. In a classic assault detachment, 3 to 4 Soldiers guard a Sociocybernetic who manipulates a small community. The Sociocybernetics in turn command several Infiltrators, and use them wherever any rival memetic influences are too strong. The Infiltrators can act independently for months or years, only contacting the core group to report advances or setbacks.

Meanwhile, the Hunters watch the Sleeper squads from afar, guarding, gauging, and judging. These are the ones who had the best results in the indoctrination phase: their memetic armor is impenetrable.

## HUNTER EQUIPMENT

Encoder: Hunters wear torques or bracelets of pure white ceramic.

These artifacts strengthen the nanites flowing beneath them in the Sleepers bloodstream, protecting the Hunter from Interferencers.

Interferencer: The weapon looks similar to a grenade launcher with a closed barrel. Instead of projectiles, the Interferencer fires a signal pulse on the nanites' control frequency. A hit makes the target freeze. The nanites break from their cells and become visible as white dots in the victim's pores. A strong hit makes Ambrosia run from the target's eyes, nose and mouth as they choke on their own blood. The Intereferencer works on Sleepers and can also activate nanite cartridges.

## VARIANT: SOLDIER

Violence lacks the subtlety of memetics, yet it is universally understood and works quickly. The RG Soldiers excel at violence. They break any resistance within seconds. They remove shamans and other elements acting pseudo-memetically from the Clan structure, thus enabling the Sociocybernetics to work without being disturbed.

### PROFILE: SOLDIER

**INITIATIVE:** 10D / 16 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** CHA+Leadership 8D
**ATTACK:** Flechette rifle (Flechettes), 11D, Distance (30/80), Damage 13, Smooth Running (1T), Salvoes (5)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Dodge), Melee 7D
Ranged Combat active (Crouched walk), Mobility 10D
Mental 7D
**MOVEMENT:** 10D
**ARMOR:** Composite armor, Armor 6, Bulletproof (9)
**CONDITION:** 16 (Trauma: 9)
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** Survival equipment; combat injector (a bracelet injecting a mixture of endorphins and adrenaline. When pressed; for the duration of the combat, the Sleeper gets +2D to their Initiative roll); throat mic with receptor implant (the mic is glued to the throat, the receptor is implanted in the skull).

## VARIANT: SOCIOCYBERNETIC

Sociocybernetics program people. They analyze the social construct of the Clan and modify it via the interaction of induced memes. In difficult cases, they mark unwanted elements and order Soldiers to remove them. They aim for total submission of the Clan.

### PROFILE: SOCIOCYBERNETIC

**INITIATIVE:** 5D / 16 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** CHA+Expression 9D,
CHA+Leadership 10D, PSY+Domination 10D
**ATTACK:** Automatic pistol (4.6x30), 6D, Distance (8/30), Damage 7, Smooth Running (3T)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Dodge), Brawl 5D
Ranged Combat active (Crouched walk), Mobility 5D
Mental 11D
**MOVEMENT:** 5D
**ARMOR:** Ceramic fiber weave, Armor 5, Bulletproof (8), Sealed (+1S)
**CONDITION:** 10 (Trauma: 6)
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** Voice analyzer (tells the user details about opponent's mood; identifies conscious lies); monocular emitter (sends frequency-modulated light impulses that link into target's brain waves; causes penalty of -2D to PSY+Faith/Willpower for several minutes).

## VARIANT: INFILTRATOR

The value systems of the Cults are codified and hard to manipulate, and an attack on the leaders seems inefficient. Due to established hierarchies, a successor would be ready in no time.

This is where the Infiltrators come into play. They copy the role of a low-level Cultist and work upwards through the ranks. Infiltrators are highly adaptive: they forge, deceive, and assassinate. As soon as possible, they direct the Cult into the next conflict. Their goal is subversion.

### PROFILE: INFILTRATOR

**INITIATIVE:** 9D / 16 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** AGI+Stealth 9D,
PSY+Cunning 10D, PSY+Deception 8D
**ATTACK:** Automatic pistol (4.6x30), 7D, Distance (8/30), Damage 7, Smooth Running (3T); Combat knife, 9D, Distance 1 m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Parry), Melee 9D
Ranged Combat active (Duck), Mobility 9D
Mental 7D
**MOVEMENT:** 7D
**ARMOR:** Kevlar jacket, Armor 4, Bulletproof (7)
**CONDITION:** 12 (Trauma: 6)
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** Forged passes

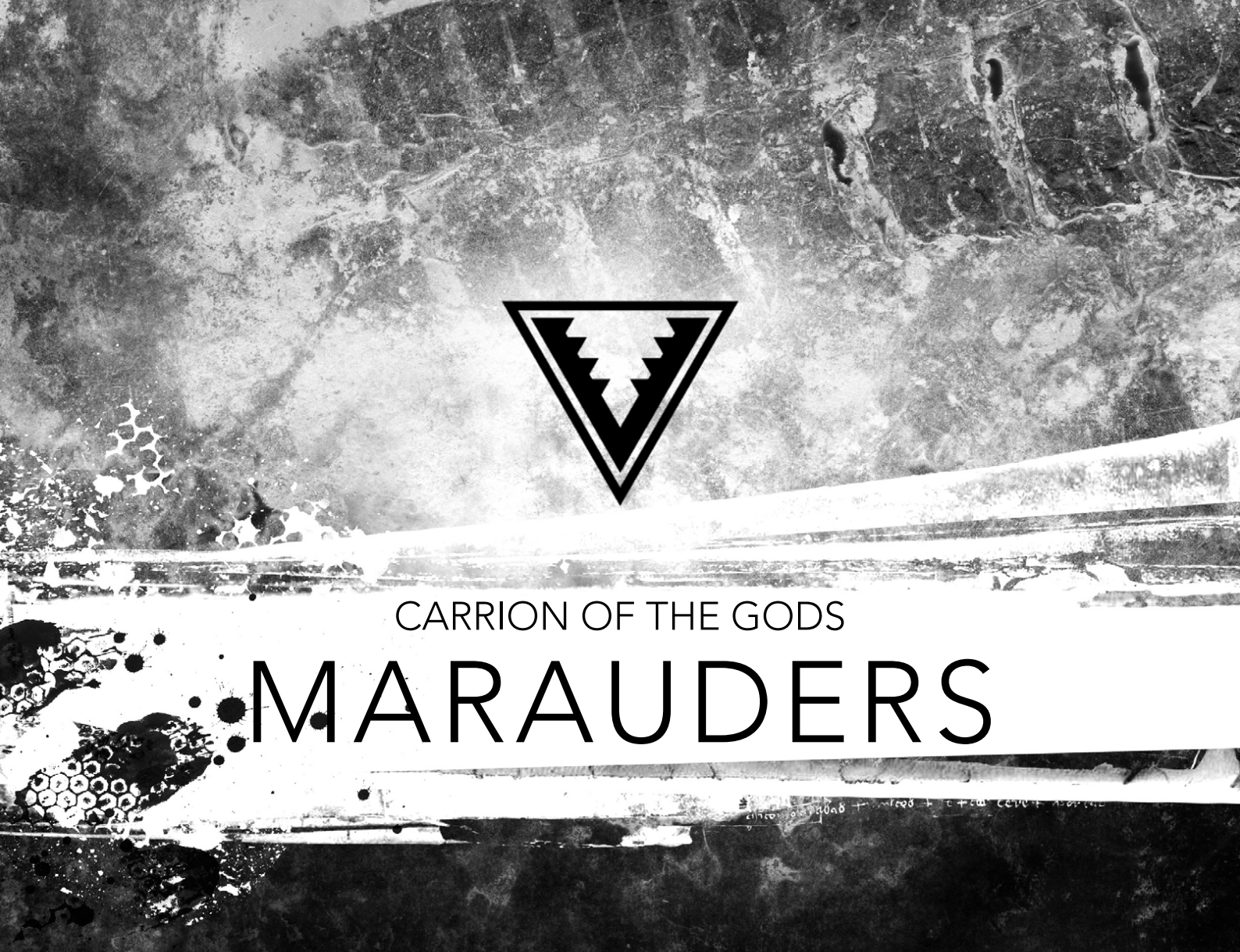
## VARIANT: HUNTER

RG knew that no program runs without errors. The Hunters fight these errors. They monitor the memetic indoctrination of their cascade and bring deviants to the Sociocybernetics for reconditioning.

Their spies watch strangers in public spaces and report uncommon behavior. The Hunters follow up on every report, questioning villagers and listening to rumors and legends. If a Sleeper has broken their memetic chains and escaped to start a new life in the wasteland, the Hunters will find them.

### PROFILE: HUNTER

**INITIATIVE:** 10D / 16 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** PSY+Domination 7D, INS+Perception 10D
**ATTACK:** Flechette rifle, 10D, Distance (30/80), Damage 13, Smooth Running (1T), Salvoes (5); Combat knife, 7D, Distance 1 m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Parry), Melee 7D
Ranged Combat active (Crouched walk), Mobility 10D
Mental 14D
**MOVEMENT:** 10D
**ARMOR:** Composite armor, Armor 6, bulletproof (9)
**CONDITION:** 14 (Trauma: 8)
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** Encoder; Interferencer



CARRION OF THE GODS

# MARAUDERS

## MASKS

Concrete statues of nude figures in olympian poses stood in openings in the masonry. Some were blank and gray, others painted in gaudy tones. Impulse raised his lamp. The cold light tore them from the darkness and cast deep shadows across the walls. Pictures in gilded frames, blackened by humidity, rested against columns. Barstools had melted into artworks of rust. Impulse passed by it all, shining his light at the hallway. He would be there. He always was. The Source modules at his hip and thigh were heavy, and the two emitters on his chest and back as well. Impulse was embedded in a cocoon of cables and amplifiers, and none of it would protect him for even a second.

He stepped through the hallway into the blackness of the auditorium. The light reached neither the end of the room nor its ceiling, Impulse was just a speck in the void.

"Come closer." A voice like a swarm of flies. Impulse descended the stairs, striding past discarded green plastic chairs. Ahead of him he saw a silhouette in the center of the auditorium. Broad shoulders, heaving with machine-like regularity. The light shone on a steel facemask. With a sigh it opened, tilted aside, revealed glittering blackness for an instant. Another mask slipped down across the forehead and took its place. A mechanical system rotated around the head and pulled tight. The eyes were almond shaped and slanted inwards, the cheekbones and nose over-prominent. The mouth moved. The voice always came with a delay, Impulse had learned that. This time, it sounded pleasant and deep.

"Cathedral City. Have you broken through the Crux?"

"I return there after our discussion as a friend. We will…"

The mask rose, and a hissing and crackling noise came from beneath. It lowered again.

"As a friend. You will. You'll still be telling me this in 100 years. What do you want?"

Impulse straightened. "Oh Triglaw, one hour in…"

The figure raised an arm. "Granted. How did you sell it to them?"

"A conclave with the eldest."

"How many?"

"Two of them are Sleepers. One a 600."

"Then let the harvest begin."

"… and the hour in the Abaton?"

"You know the way."

Impulse broadcast the signal and walked past Triglaw. He still heard the buzzing of the masks. He did not want to witness what would happen next.

## MYTH

Centuries ago, they became the stuff of myths and legends as savage warriors. It is said there are no more than a handful of them—and they hunt Sleepers. Allegedly, they are clad in pus-covered bandages as if these were the last things holding them together. With a simple gesture, they vaporize their enemies and depopulate whole villages on their erratic wanderings.

The Vulture in old Britain and the Jehammedans' Aries are supposedly two of them, yet information about these creatures caught between decay and omnipotence is so scarce even the Chroniclers can only make guesses.

## AGENDA

The Marauders keep crossing the paths of certain families and factions. Clanners tell of moonless nights where death incarnate lurks in the shadows of the huts and whispers messages over the windowsills. Those who listen will be led into forgotten storages and labs, able to salvage books, weapons, or embryos encased in resin. They'll see drawings of arbors and zodiac signs, walk through rows of rotting plants, and stare through glass into dark operating theatres.

Warring Clans perish from a Marauder's anger. Their sign on ruin walls are warnings to everyone. This warning can go on for centuries in which the Clan thrives, restraining their fear of the monster at their side, until the Marauder kills a whole generation in a bout of fury and is never seen again.

## BEARING

The Chroniclers collect data. A dome of rays in a cold night, burnt-down villages, the sighting of a decaying god, awakening image walls: all this points to a Marauder. They register every movement and store the coordinates in the Central Cluster. Any information could be the last missing puzzle piece that uncovers the Marauders' plan.

### ASPERA THE ONE-LEGGED

Her face, framed by protruding pigtails, is harmonious and emotionless, like a plastic mask. When she speaks or smiles, her expression splinters, as if it had been caught under a thin layer of ice. One blink later, the cracks have healed, and her face seems immaculate as always.

Her mechanical leg moves nimbly and silently, stabilizers rotate, kinetic cylinders veer around, automatically adapting to the best angle. She is lithe and fast, a huntress. But whom or what she hunts remains a mystery.

Over the past centuries she has let herself repeatedly be found by the Chroniclers. Sometimes she immediately reveals ancient knowledge that the Fragments had locked away in the depths of the Static Stream. Sometimes she demands a sacrifice. All who approach Aspera set the wheel of destiny in motion.

### ARIES THE RAM

Aries led the Jehammedans to victory in their hour of impending doom, saving them from the encroaching Anabaptists. His enemies fall to the dust before him, vomiting their blood and entrails. The black fleece around his shoulders billows like he was standing in a storm, even if there is no wind, expanding and contracting again as if it were alive. He was last seen on the Greek isles, surrounded by his faithful Arianoi.

### ARGYRE THE VULTURE

Argyre hasn't been seen in centuries. Britain is said to be his domain, but no one has gone there and lived to tell the tale. According to legends, he commands an army of enslaved Sleepers, forcing them to serve with his "yoke." The device encases their shoulders like a leech and undergoes some strange change whenever the wearer strays too far.

Some weeks ago, the Anabaptists in Briton saw searing rays of light erupt into the sky in the north. The origin was somewhere in Britain. Something is happening in the Vulture's land.

### GUSEV

Noret is the city of the Machine Men. Scrappers have divided the area into danger zones rated from 1 to 6. On the outer ring at level 1, it is pretty improbable to encounter a machine patrol, while there only exists a single report from zone 5 which describes nothing more than a breathless flight. Zone 6 can only be viewed from a distance. It would take under a minute for an interloper to hear a distorted voice demand "Stop, show your papers!"

It is in this zone that the Marauder named Gusev was last seen 100 years ago. His face was bandaged, every

step was a battle against gravity as he waded through the riverbed at the center of the city. He moves amongst the Machine Men unnoticed. They don't even look at him. No place on Earth is safer than Noret if the damn machines ignore you.

Today, wild wheat grows in the riverbed, trees bear shining red fruit that no one can harvest and that will inevitably rot in the silt. The biological diversity here is breathtaking - and completely inexplicable.

## ICEBREAKER

Steaming and rumbling, the Icebreaker stomps through Pollen's ice desert. Once a year, he visits the Spital in Danzig, pushing through the corridors into the labs, demanding the latest research results on the Primer and the Psychonauts in a deep, vibrating voice. The Spitalians answer, for they know the reward.

They also know the punishment should they resist the Icebreaker. With every hour, however, the voice of the Icebreaker loses volume, changes frequencies until it is a wheezing soprano by the end of the day.

Finally, he stomps out again. The Spitalians watch him departing until his silhouette is lost in the snowstorm. If he is satisfied, he leaves something behind: an artifact, a booklet full of formulas, or an incredibly neat hand-drawn map of "subterranean growths."

## CHERNOBOG

For months the Black God has cut a swathe of destruction through the land, subjugating and destroying Clans across East Borca. With his army numbering a hundred thousand strong, he conquered Praha Republika and left the dying city state to his Clans. They pounced and ate their fill until nothing was left but bones picked clean.

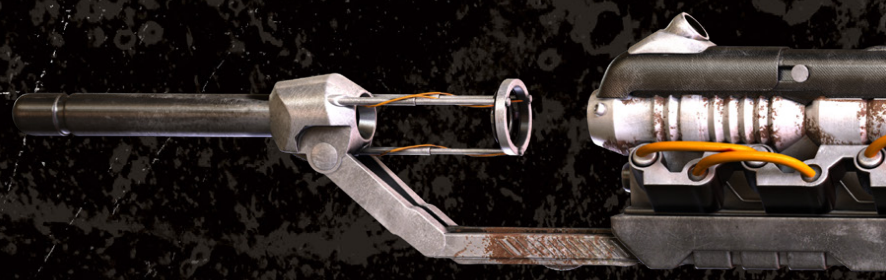
According to the reports of the Shutters infiltrating his army, he's caught in Pest between the Dushani sound mountains, breaking wave after wave, advancing, tearing apart Dushani, flattening buildings, and burning down forests. No one doubts that he will soon break free and find whatever he's looking for in Pest.

## TRIGLAW THE THREE-HEADED

The Chroniclers classify Triglaw as a Marauder, but hundreds of Clans in the north of East Borca know the truth: they have been worshiping Triglaw as a god for centuries, receiving his orders as the Horse Oracle. Small horse idols are widespread in East Borca and Pollen and demonstrate the reach of his influence.

However, reports from the Alpine Fortress hint at a creature that has entered the tunnels in the last years that the Chroniclers identify as Triglaw. His tracks disappear beyond the Alps, he was only seen again once in Laibach.

There is no pattern to his actions.



## TACTICS

Marauders are solitary hunters. They do not belong to this time, and they do not belong to this world, and so are unable to form any relationships with humans of today. They react angrily to any disruption or resistance. They are volatile. A single loud word can inflame their anger and lead to the destruction of an entire village. They fight with an utter will to destroy by any means necessary, screaming, pushing onwards. They only let go of a target when it's trampled into the dust and their rage is spent.

## POTENTIAL: AMBROSIA

The centuries rip and tear at the Marauder's existence, breaking splinters from them, but as long as the Ambrosia circulates in their bodies they don't fear death. A crystalline cotton that is as sharp as a handful of razor blades scabs over any wound they suffer within seconds. Torn organs mend or are expelled and replaced with duplicates.

But there is a limit. Every year and every wound makes the Ambrosia a little thinner. If the Marauder cannot replenish it, time crashes down on him and washes him away.

**EFFECT:** In addition to the known stats, every Marauder has "Ambrosia." Ambrosia points can heal damage: (1) point of Ambrosia heals (4) Flesh Wounds or (1) Trauma. The healing starts immediately, the Marauder does not have to spend an Action on it.

Legendary Marauders like Argyre, Aspera, or Gusev have (20) to (30) points, while most have to make do with (5) to (10).

## POTENTIAL: NANITE LOW

Marauders have escaped death for so long that when they finally face it, their soul shatters and their true foul nature breaks through.

They cling to their fading life desperately, caring not for friend or foe, fighting tooth and nail without any consideration for consequences.

**EFFECT:** If the Marauder falls below (5) Ambrosia points, they feel their end drawing near. Sanity is the first thing that is lost. They'll do anything to refill their Ambrosia.

In this state, no one can approach without getting a taste of their power and madness. The flesh starts to rot, boils forming on the skin, pain tearing apart any clear thought. If a Marauder somehow escapes the Nanite Low, he usually experiences some permanent damage. Aspera lost her leg, Gusev's skull is corroded. Madness, extreme irritability, or hatred towards humans are other symptoms of a past Nanite Low.

## VARIANT: THE CREATURE

Wracked by pains eons old, the Marauder flees into the wasteland, unable to stand the laughter of humans anymore and finding their joy repulsive, even if it awakens a burning desire within them at the same time. They stay away.

They cling to the last spark of humanity inside themself, trying to rekindle it by nanite injections in ruined RG facilities. They walk the old ways, following the road network that Gerome Getrell once designed in the Pathfinder waypoints.

### PROFILE: THE CREATURE

**INITIATIVE:** 5D / 2 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** Ambrosia 6, INS+Orienteering 14D
**ATTACK:** Giant spiked club, 6D, Distance 2m, Damage 10, Impact (2T)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 3 (Flowing cape, grotesque movements) Melee active (Block), Melee 6D
Ranged Combat active (Unusual movements), Mobility 5D
Mental 3D (Does not lose consciousness at (0) Ego Points, but instead goes into a frenzy and attacks anyone nearby, friend or foe.)
**MOVEMENT:** 6D
**ARMOR:** Composite armor, Armor 6, Bulletproof (9), bandages; Cape
**CONDITION:** 28 (Trauma: 6)

## SOUL BURNER

The beam burns brighter than the sun, cutting through steel and concrete, vaporising flesh and bones into a red mist. When it collapses, the air surges into the vacuum left behind with a thunderclap.

The Soul Burner is a myth. Every sighting of the weapon is passed from generation to generation, increasing its legend. There is little actual data available. So far, three Marauders have potentially been identified as carrying a Soul Burner. Chroniclers were able to identify one of them as Gusev from the reports, but the others are a mystery. It remains unclear whether several copies of the weapon exist or whether the Soul Burner is a one-of-a-kind weapon.

**SPECIALTY:** According to Cluster information, the Soul Burner is biometrically encoded—only people with a certain genetic or nanotechnological imprint can activate and fire it.

◇ Rifles

## VARIANT: THE GUARDIAN

The past shapes the thoughts of the Marauder, and a part of this past lives on in certain people the Marauder believes to have recognized as their offspring. From behind the scenes, they direct them, protect them from enemies, and flee into the wasteland when rage threatens to overcome them.

### PROFILE: THE GUARDIAN

**INITIATIVE:** 8D / 6 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** Ambrosia 16, CHA+Conduct 10D, INT+Engineering 14D, INT+Science 16D
**ATTACK:** Flechette rifle (Flechettes), 11D, Distance(30/80), Damage 13, Smooth Running (1T), Salvoes (5); Fist, 7D, Distance 1m, Damage 8, Smooth Running (2T)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Dodge), Brawl 7D
Ranged Combat active (Crouched walk), Mobility 12D
Mental 8D (Does not lose consciousness at (0) Ego Points, but instead goes into a frenzy and attacks anyone nearby, friend or foe.)
**MOVEMENT:** 12D
**ARMOR:** AMSUMO casing, Armor 8, Massive (10)
**CONDITION:** 32 (Trauma: 9)

## VARIANT: THE DIVINE

Intoxicated by their own immortality, ancient, corroded by Nanite Lows, and trapped in endless agony, the madness opens new gates.

The Marauder surrounds themself with lackeys who throw themselves to the dust at their feet and whimper in submission. This calms the Marauder and drives them further into a world that only knows one god: themself.

### PROFILE: THE DIVINE

**INITIATIVE:** 10D / 3 Ego Points
**SPECIALTY:** Ambrosia 12, PSY+Domination 15D
**ATTACK:** Soul burner, 9D, Distance(50/200), Damage 16, Biometrically Encoded, Terrifying (4), Fatal
Horn, 10D, Distance 1, Damage 11
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active: The Divine never defends himself
Ranged Combat active: no Active Defense
Mental 15D (Does not lose consciousness at (0) Ego Points, but instead goes into a frenzy and attacks anyone nearby, friend or foe.)
**MOVEMENT:** 14D
**ARMOR:** Graph combat suit, Armor 7, Bulletproof (10), Sealed (+2S)
**CONDITION:** 28 (Trauma: 6)

# HOMO DEGENESIS

Today is the 13th day after we came across the pass and entered enemy territory. The tension between my fellow Spitalians has been rising since the day before yesterday. The excitement has turned to irritability in some, merciless boredom in others. We all hate the Balkhan: it's raining day and night, my skin under the neoprene is macerated like a sponge, and if this itching between my toes isn't a fungus, I'm a fucking Clanner.

The only one who is calm is our Preservist. He is called Duchamps or something like that, a damn Frankan who seems to think he's better than the rest of us. He hasn't spoken a single word yet, and has worn his gas mask since we set out. He just sits on his horse, green oilskin cape around his shoulders, and looks around. Like a radar. Left to right. Right to left.

Irina has had enough. She strips down the top of her suit, knotting the rubber arms around her waist. Her white top is soaked. I stare like an Apoc on Burn. She looks over at me with a come-on smile, I look away. Damn, she caught me. There is only one way out: confrontation course.

"Famulancer Irina! Do you remember the rules?"

Oh, how I'd like to do the same.

She says nothing, only gazes at me with her almond eyes, shoulders her Fungicide Rifle, and marches on. I grasp the shaft of my Splayer tighter. 2-0 to her.

I walk past a rust-eaten sign lying in a puddle in the concrete in front of me.

"Maribor"

Never heard of it.

Concrete plates form a road that has long since lost its shape. In the clefts, there is a sprawling gray scrub that clings to the clothing or scratches our skin. Bastard. I kick a tuft, but it only rustles, as if bored. On both sides of the road, sickly conifers approach the concrete runway, but they keep a good distance of 50 paces. I don't want to know what the Bygones have buried here along the road.

Irina has a good head start, just entering the shadow of one of the concrete skyscrapers, but suddenly is nothing more than a silhouette. I cannot see the others anymore. Damn, I am alone out here. I suddenly shiver in my suit. Automatically, my hand goes to the belt, flipping open a pocket and taking out a small brown glass tube. Tranquilizers. I swallow one of the red pills without any fluids. When we come back to the Spital, I'll be a goddamn pill Burner..

I quickly follow Irina, breaking into a light jog, holding the Splayer in both hands. The rustling of the treetops is... unnatural. It talks to me, tells me the story of the mountains. They are so massive, so omnipresent, pressing down on my chest. There's a movement out of the corner of my eye. I look around sharply, almost stumble. There is nothing—or have the trees suddenly come closer to the street? I hear a soft puttering, glancing at the Mollusk container on top of my Splayer. The spore-infested muscle trembles and spasms.

Cold sweat runs down my back. The Mollusk is still, surely I just shook it with my jogging. I force myself to slow, holding the Splayer upright and still.

The muscle hits the glass, relaxes, and sinks slowly to the bottom of the container filled with nutrient fluid. But there, another pumping, and another, steady like a heartbeat. The rustle of the wind in the treetops solidifies into a low but at once high-pitched singing that generates weird visions of big eyes and a clear starry sky in me. A lizard on the street in front of me looks up with her head cocked, says "Erebere," which totally makes sense to me, and disappears in a crack in the concrete.

The air is getting thicker, flooding my lungs like water.

Yet I know that I only have to erebere to aan hererete.

Ehrehete. I look up. There are the others. Between two towering concrete colossi. Irina is kneeling on the floor, propped up on one hand. Something dark flows from her nose like water. Dr. Radovan lies on his back with eyes wide open. Stares into the starry sky. On a bright day. His Mollusk container is broken and forms a slimy puddle filled with broken glass on the light gray concrete. The vibrating muscle has moved over a meter. Astonishing.

Duchamps kneels, only two paces away. His head is lowered as if he were counting the ants on the floor, caught in utter concentration. His horse is nowhere to be seen.

Then I see the stranger. He appears like a mirage. His movements are incredibly fluid, it looks as though he has no joints and is made of rubber. On his head he wears a mask with a dozen glasses that all seem to stare at me. A thick strand of hoses of various length hang from his mouth area, nimbly swinging from one side to the other. Like a radar. Jetatehe? Or like an octopus searching the ground for something to eat.

The chant has become unbearable, undulating in sync with the stranger's movements. Jetatehe? No, I am not afraid. He's a Dushani, no question, and I know that he approves of my answer. Now he's approaching me. I hadn't noticed before, but he's naked. In this cold! Now he's here, his grotesque mask close to my face.

Twelve mirror images of my chalk white face look at me from the glass panes of his mask. Smiling. The mouth forms a word that I understand, but do not know. But the only thing I hear is the Dushani's breath. It sounds hollow and far away, hissing through the hoses.

Suddenly I see a shadow behind the Dushani, hear the rushing of a staff through the air, then a thud. The Dushani is thrown aside.

Duchamps stands only three paces away from me, absorbing the impact of his Splayer strike by turning his body halfway around and then following the Psychonaut. I can see him turning a lever on the shaft of his weapon and the blades splaying open, then the dissonance of a thousand tortured souls howling in pain tears the silence to shreds.

The Dushani screams, the hoses jutting from his mouth area like spikes. He is on his feet before Duchamps can deliver the final blow, dodges and tears off the Preservist's gas mask. Duchamps kicks him away, pushes the Splayer into the Dushani's chest, and presses him to the ground. The Psychonaut thrashes around like a fish on a spear, throwing his head side to side. The hoses whip the floor. Then Duchamps presses the button at the shaft of his weapon: the blades close, bisecting ribs and spine with a crash. Blood sprays from the wound when the Preservist jerks the Splayer free. Sinews still hang between the blades, turning the Dushani into a puppet on bloodied strings. Then they are torn apart. The body crumples. The screams stop.

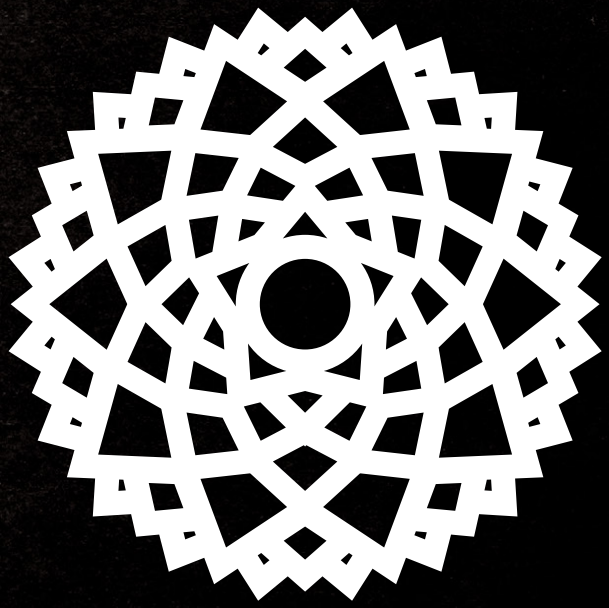
Duchamps steps over to me. For the first time, I see him without his gas mask. His face is a mass of flesh. His ears and his nose look like pink molten blobs of wax. White bandages hang from the holes where his ears used to be. Only his eyes are still completely intact, focusing on me briefly with an inquisitive glance before looking away again.

Irina is already back up and stumbling towards me. She takes my hand and pulls me to my feet.

"Who would have thought that the bastard was deaf?" she whispers to me.

Who would have thought.

# PSYCHONAUTS



## KNOW YOUR ENEMY

A Psychonaut is always born close to spore fields, as a child of a Leperos or normal people who did not want to bow to the Spitalians' de-sporing craze, or were not able to do so. The mycelium fills the pregnant woman's amniotic fluid within days, and the fetus is exposed to the Sepsis.

When the child is born, it doesn't immediately display unusual behaviour. It never gives a moment of peace to its mother, though. It clings to her, sucking at her breasts until blood flows and the child has to be torn away by force. Its eyes never focus on faces, but only sources of food. It is greedy but calm.

Midwives love such children. They consider it a sign of seriousness that the child rarely smiles. Seriousness is good in the wasteland. The parents sugarcoat the weird behavior.

But one day, someone sees stones hovering next to the child's head, or hears it speak in tongues or with a strange voice, or watches as sunlight flows around the little body like a liquid, leaving it in deepest shadow. These first spontaneous Rapture discharges—the "Psychonautic Phenomena"—bring the bitter certainty that a monster has grown in the bosom of the family.

Now people remember that the little one was able to walk in the snow naked without feeling cold, that the biting smoke of the campfire never even made it wrinkle its nose, that it has never been ill...

## ENERGY CENTERS

Psychonaut children rarely speak. Only in their first years of life does the fight against the strange genes seem not yet lost. Parents ask their children about a burning or tickling feeling at certain points of the body axis. The exact position tells the Spitalians which Earth Chakra has taken over the child: the sensitive spot is one of the seven human Chakras that the Bygones had previously identified as energy centers of the human body.

In Homo Sapiens, all Chakras are in balance, but in Homo Degenesis all energy is centered on only one of the Chakras. This one Chakra determines the Rapture of the Psychonauts—and his dominant attributes. The other six Chakras are burnt out and dead.

## THE PLAGUES

Psychonauts surround themselves with insects and other animals, letting the vermin nest and feed on them, living in symbiosis. Each Rapture has control of certain distinct species, every Chakra commands one of 5 plagues: Pollen's Biokinetics command centipedes, scorpions, and spiders, while the Frankan Pheromancers command ants, wasps, and termites.

Recordings of Noumenon Vocalizers suggest that they call their plagues via the same channels that link them with their Earth Chakra.

## CATALYST

The mitochondria are the power house of the human cell. No organism can function without them. For the Psychonauts, Sepsis behaves the same way. The mycelium web is a part of the Psychonaut's nervous system, and the Sepsis transports Rapture signals and is ultimately responsible for manifesting the Phenomena. Without spore infestation, there can be no Rapture discharge.

The maximum spore infestation a Psychonaut can have intertwined with his organism is (INS+Primal) x 2.

Maximum Spore Infestation: INS+Primal x 2

## PRIMAL-PHASE

The Psychonaut activates and controls his Rapture via his spore infestation. If he manifests Phenomea, the remaining spore infestation score is his Action Number. For example, with a spore infestation of (14) a Psychonaut could use 12D and have (2) automatic Successes.

The level of a Phenomenon determines the Difficulty of the Action Roll.

Activation of a Phenomenon:
Spore infestation = Action Number
Phenomenon level = Difficulty

Many Phenomena demand an Overload from the Psychonaut: an energy storm from the Chakra surges through the septic nerve strands and burns swathes into the network. The effect of the Phenomenon becomes much stronger, but the Psychonaut loses (1) point of spore infestation per point of Overload. The Psychonaut can freely choose the amount of Overload to be used, up to a limit of his remaining spore infestation.

The reduced spore infestation lowers the Action Number, so at spore infestation (8) and Overload (2), the Psychonaut can activate his Phenomenon with 6D.

Action Number = Spore infestation - Overload

Sepsis inhibitors like EX Aerosol/EG-1 or repeated Overloads rob the Psychonaut of the ability to manifest the major Phenomena—those with a high level—first, but as they reach (0) spore infestation they lose control over even their plagues. This is where the Psychonaut is as close to human as possible.

## FOCUS-PHASE

Once the spore infestation has been completely spent or inhibited, the Psychonaut is dragged from the depths of the Chakra collective to the surface of what the humans see as their world. Beneath him there is a universe of emotions, while above him gapes an empty and starless void. He hates it.

He is only a visitor to this world, looking for any opportunity to return to the collective. He wraps himself in cool detachment, meeting any challenged with a fanged mind and extreme concentration. Some Psychonauts dimly remember their parents' language in this state, however he has a hard time forming the strange words with his mouth and tongue. They sound hollow and only awaken the loneliness. Words, though, make the time pass. They distract. Until he finds Burn or Sepsis. Once a Psychonaut is completely de-spored and says that way, his Primal turns to Focus. Instead of relying on his spore infestation he is forced to use his Ego Points. The Psychonaut will avoid confrontation and try to rebuild his spore infestation as quickly as possible. In cities he looks for places to hide from his hunters. When cornered he takes any risks, climbing cliffs, racing across roofs, jumping chasms, always hoping for his enemy to make a misstep. He doesn't attack if he sees no chance in success. He'd rather surrender and plan his escape.

De-spored: INT+Focus instead of Primal
Psychonaut can use Ego Points

TOMORROW, THE BLACK
BIRDS WILL COME.

[SARTRE]

## IN COMBAT

In the Primal phase, the Psychonaut cannot use Ego Points, instead using spore infestation points. The spore infestation points can be spent in the same way as Ego Points when determining Initiative. If psychological attacks reduce the Psychonauts Ego to (0), there is no effect until de-sporination forces them into the Focus phase, where they'll immediately collapse with a destroyed Ego.

## FUZZINESS

The Phenomena listed are paraphrased rather than being clearly defined as powers. Each Psychonaut channels his Chakra's energy through his own unique body, and so manifests them differently.

The Game Master should take clues from these descriptions and bend the rules to suit their interpretation. Psychonauts are an alternative branch of evolution and the arch-enemies of humanity, and should remain mysterious to the Players. Their actions must be unpredictable and weird.

## THE FOUR PRIMAL PHENOMENA

As varied as the 5 Raptures and their Phenomena may be, all Psychonauts have mastery over 4 basic Phenomena

## ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATION

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 0 (no roll necessary)

The Psychonaut is perfectly adapted to his environment. He does not feel the freezing cold of Pollen's tundra and in the Purgan wasteland he breathes the poisonous gasses of the Reaper's Blow with ease.

**RULES:** This Phenomenon was already embedded in the fetus: it is permanently active, even in the Focus phase.

## PAIN RESISTANCE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4 (no roll necessary)

Even gaping wounds do not stop a Psychonaut from pushing on. The Chakra collective absorbs all pain and makes it fade away to nothing.

**RULES:** Once the Psychonaut has built up a spore infestation of (4), this Phenomenon becomes active. From now on, the Psychonaut registers physical pain, but does not suffer from it: there is no Trauma penalty.

## ETHER CALL

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

The Psychonaut's every thought causes ripples in the ocean of the Chakra collective. Spore fields amplify the ripple, broadcasting it to other Aberrants nearby. A cry for help spreads within seconds and is answered a thousandfold.

**RULES:** Broadcasting a cry for help takes an Action for the Psychonaut. The soundless cry through the ether warns all Aberrants for miles around, along with any humans who have a spore infestation of at least (4). Psychonauts who are close by will attempt to come to the rescue.

## STRENGTHENING

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 1 (no roll necessary)

The Chakra flares and pulses energy through the body's meridians. The Psychonaut's archetypal attribute breaks through, amplified to superhuman levels.

**RULES:** The Psychonaut overloads, with every point of Overload spent being added directly to their dominant Attribute. The effects of this are dependent on the Rapture of the Psychonaut.

## SYMBOLS IN THE DUST

The Phenomena cause ripples in reality. Insects follow invisible paths and form complex mandalas, scorpions dance intricate patterns into the sand, even spore clouds and mosquito swarms consolidate into structures, forming symmetrical lines and arches. The stronger the Psychonaut and the Phenomenon, the greater the effects will be. At level 4 the Phenomena swirls dust into the air or bends plains grass into patterns. At level 8, the symbols cover many meters and are pressed several inches deep into the ground. Rapture discharges of level 10 or more tear open trenches and are plainly visible from afar - and will be for years to come.

Every discharge can be traced to a Rapture according to its characteristic pattern, which have been handed down by the Bygones - the Chakra symbols.

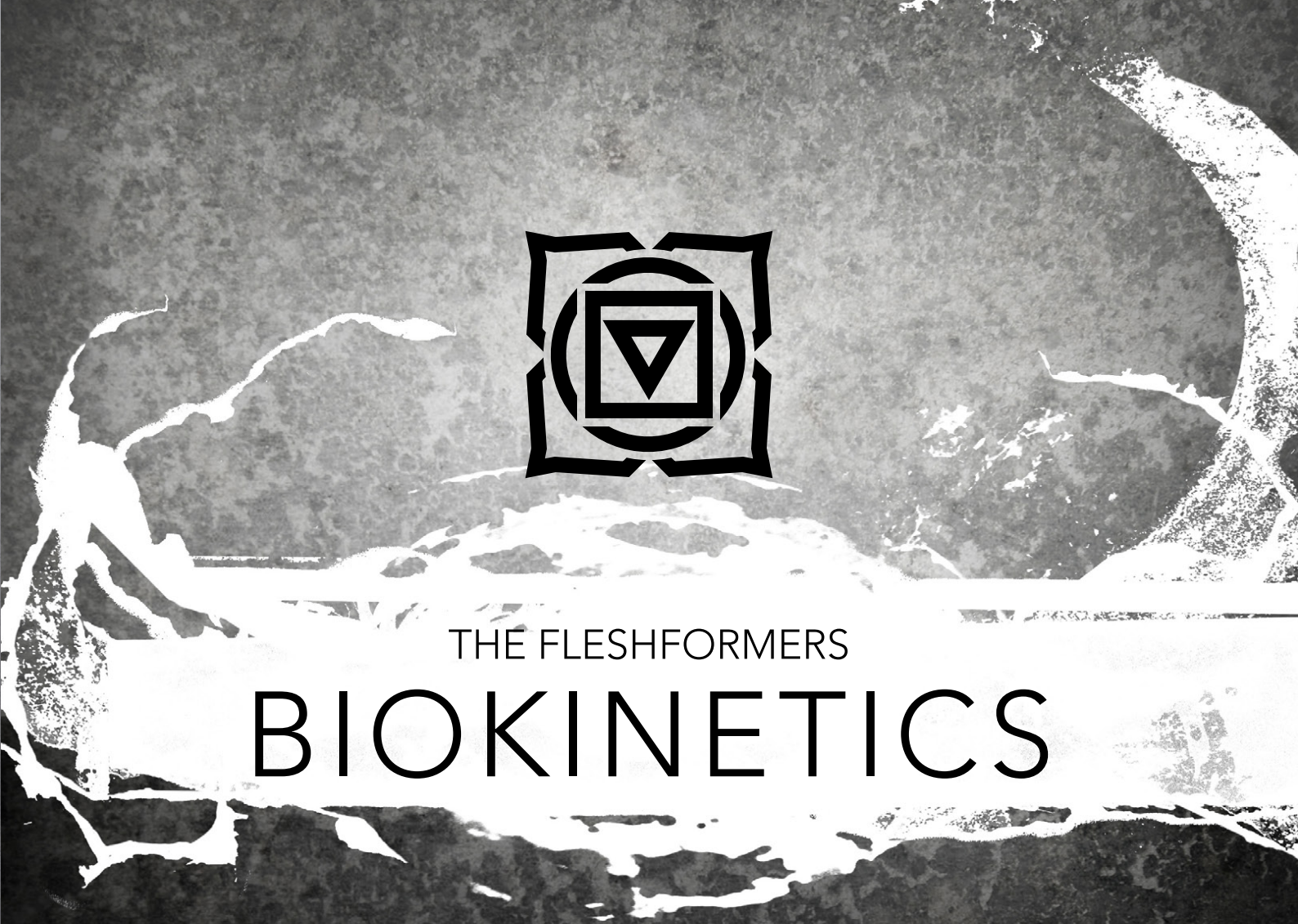
## CONTINENTAL

The Spitalians are alarmed. They survey earthquake rifts and magma emissions and map them. Could it be that the Chakra symbols reach continental size? But what, then, will the Spitalians find at the center of such a discharge?

## IN THE SPORE FIELD

Psychonauts are dangerous no matter where they are. Only in spore fields, however, does their power grow monstrous, for they gain (+1) spore infestation at the beginning of every Combat Round, (+2) in Mother spore fields, and (+3) in their Earth Chakra. Puling them from their Primal phase here seems like an impossible task.

**SPORE FIELD:**
(+1) Spore infestation
**MOTHER SPORE FIELD:**
(+2) Spore infestation
**EARTH CHAKRA:**
(+3) Spore infestation



THE FLESHFORMERS

# BIOKINETICS

## PREY

Makuma's first shot shatters the silence. The butt stock of his rifle hits his shoulder, but he absorbs the recoil. He looks through the scope and searches for the impact. The bullet has hit the gossamer somewhere, but he cannot make out the spot. He should have measured the wind speed before taking the shot. He curses and raises the rifle to his shoulder again. His prey crouches to all fours before racing towards him through the spore clouds. Makuma forces his breath to be calm. He stands on the observation deck of the Surge Tank, legs spread.

He holds his breath, aims, and shoots. The creature jolts and starts to to tumble. It falls and slides through gossamer and dry brush in a fountain of dirt.

Makuma raises the rifle, shouts, "Yes!", nods and stomps the steel with his boots. "Yes!" He dances until the turban slides off his head.

Out of breath, he walks back to the bannister. What a day. Makuma raises the rifle, looks through the scope. Spun-in brush, remainders of a trail—there is the swath at the end of which the Biokinetic should be. Makuma moves the rifle, searching every meter of the grey. There's nothing there. A metallic bang makes Makuma recoil. Carefully, he takes two steps back, away from the edge.

He takes a bullet out of his bandolier and puts it into the bolt of his rifle. His fingers are calm. An arid stench engulfs him. A spider scuttles across his boots. Then another. They follow invisible paths, crawl in semicircles, intersecting each other.

Makuma now breathes rapidly. Very slowly, he looks to the left. Something crouches at the edge of the platform. The skull is even and grey like a UAO helmet; at the lower edge, there are black pearls encased in red beads. The beads shudder, closing above the pearls rhythmically. No nose.

Quiet now. Makuma cocks his weapon, listens to the damn creaking of the feather and waits for the hard, metallic crack.

The creature cocks its head. It is naked; its skin is sickly pale and segmented, as if it had gills all over its body. They quiver and heave.

Makuma raises his rifle once more, but the creature's lappets suddenly billow like sails in a storm and Makuma stares into a surging black haze. A wave of spiders bursts from the Biokinetic, engulfing the African, blurring his outline and pattering onto the deck of the Surge Tank as he is bitten over and over again.

Who's prey now?

### STRENGTHENING

If the Biokinetic Strengthens his BOD Attribute by Overloading, his melee Skill rises by 1D per point of Overload. The Strengthening lasts the whole combat. Strengthenings do not stack.

**DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE:**
Body

## PRIMAL

In the Biokinetic the body and mind have become one. Every thought is also a physical response racing through the nerves into tissues cusps, stimulating or blocking growth. Fat cells become muscle strands, nerves surge through dead flesh in the blink of an eye, bones form sharp spurs or dissolve and form new joints. Every cell is a survival machine.

The Biokinetic Raptures stand for earth, corporality and fusion with nature. The Psychonaut can even recover from seemingly lethal damage. The Biokinetic deals with any threat it faces through physical adaptation. They are solitary hunters, waiting for prey like a spider in a web. The glaring star of their Chakra lies in the lower back.

## FOCUS

The Biokinetics view themselves as part of living nature, and are masters of self preservation. They appreciate people who do great works with their hands and despise those who only plan, talk, and think. The Biokinetics are evolution, they don't understand the suffering of the people, and see illness as just a sign of misguided development. As a predator, other living beings mean nothing to them.

## SYMBIOSIS

Solitary arthropods like spiders, scorpions, and centipedes live in a symbiosis with the Biokinetic. They nest in lappets, cover gaping wounds with their webs, or mix their poison with that of the Psychonaut.

Their Earth Chakra is the Pandora Crater in Pollen.

# KNOWN PHENOMENA

## LORD OF THE FIRST PLAGUE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 1

The Biokinetic rules all arachnids and solitary predatory insects. His sheer presence calls the vermin forth from nesting caves or web-covered Fractal Forests, but it's his will that binds them to him.

**RULES:** For every point of Overload, the strength and the size of the swarm called forth rise by (1). Every level brings roughly 50 spiders, scorpions, or Rift Centipedes. In the spore fields, the Biokinetic can raise the swarm's Strength by (4) per Action, in settlements or cities in Pollen by (2). Outside of Pollen, the best he can manage is (1).

If hit in battle he can sacrifice his swarm to protect himself, absorbing (1) point of Damage per swarm Strength sacrificed this way.

He can also command his plague to attack an enemy. The swarm moves towards the target with a speed of (3) meters per Combat Round. It always acts last in any Round. The swarm can only be fought with area weapons like a Spitfire or combat agents. Any Damage reduces the swarms Strength .

If the plague reaches the victim, it crawls into the armor looking for naked skin and then bites into it. It causes a general penalty equal to the swarm Strength and (1) Flesh Wound after every Combat Round, no matter how strong the swarm is. Only armor with the "Sealed" Quality protects from this damage.

If the victim uses an Action to roll on the ground or smashes the vermin all over its body, the swarm Strength is reduced by (1).

## BLOSSOM

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 2

Biokinetics are fuel for Mother spore fields. They push their hands into the waves of Sepsis and channel their energy into the ground. But the field is like a dry sponge, it absorbs energy without restraint. If the Biokinetic gets lost in the vortex of the field's greed, he withers within minutes. The dry husk stretches across cusping Sepsis, tearing open and releasing a swirl of spores.

**RULES:** If the Biokinetic sacrifices his life, the spore field's level temporarily rises by (2). The raised spore infestation rate drops back to normal within a few minutes.

## SPIDER BITE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

Within seconds, fingernail-sized venom cusps grow within the jaw of the Biokinetic. His skull cracks; his teeth are forced apart. The organism needs time to metabolize the new poison: the area around the mouth turns purple, and the skin withers. If the Biokinetic bites

a victim now, the venom cusps burst, and the poison is released into the wound.

**RULES:** A successful bite attack poisons the victim with a Potency equal to the Overload points. If the victim fails a BOD+Toughness roll at the beginning of the Combat Round, they lose Ego Points equal to the poison's Potency. If the roll succeeds, the Potency is reduced by the Triggers. If the victim loses consciousness, the venom dissipates within an hour.

## NETTLE HAIRS

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

On the back and on the forearms, tufts of long, black hair slicked close to the body grow. With every movement, they tick silently. One thought of the Biokinetic is enough to make them rise, then they shudder and are fired through a wave contraction of the muscles beneath.

The hairs are as long as a finger and as hard and pointed as thorns. They penetrate light armor and dig deeply into the flesh. They are barbed, and pulling them out causes great pain.

**RULES:** The Biokinetic combines his activation roll with an AGI+Projectiles roll. If both succeed, the hairs whirr towards the target and hit it. They cause (Overload + Triggers) Damage, reduced by armor, but they also remain in the wound (if they have caused at least (1) Flesh Wound). The victim suffers -2D to all Actions until the nettle hairs are removed. Tearing them out, though, deals the same amount of Damage as when they first impacted.

After the battle, a doctor or a skilled helper can finally pull them out of the flesh without further Damage.

## RENEWAL

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 5

The Biokinetic's flesh bloats, shifting like a wave of earthworms is under the skin. The fingernails turn white and cling loosely to the fingertips. Finally the skin tears, exposing raw meat. The scraps are corpse pale and riddled with stubble, flapping around the body like a poorly tailored suit. There is no blood to be seen. Veins pulsate on exposed muscles. The Biokinetic writhes out of his dead husk, discarding it and receiving his plague. Within seconds, spiders add a silky skin to the naked flesh.

**RULES:** If a Biokinetic is bound with leather strips or a rope, he absorbs the organic material within seconds, freeing himself. But he can also wriggle out of wire loops, handcuffs, or chains by shedding his skin. This takes several minutes, and he takes (10) Flesh Wounds.

Should the fetters cut too deep into the flesh, though, he lets the limb atrophy and tears it off, which causes (5) points of Trauma. It regrows over the course of several days.

### SKIN BAGS

Skin hangs in overlapping layers from arms, legs, and throat. Beneath, everything is full of vermin. They're visible as a dissipating shadow sometimes, little legs or tiny spider bodies poking out from the skin. If danger threatens, these lappets billow like sails and release the plague.

**RULES:** The lappets grow over the years. Row by row, they disengage from the flesh while muscle attachments grow into them. Young Biokinetics can carry a plague up to Strength (3) within them, while the oldest carry a Strength (10) swarm around with them under their skin.

### DISFIGUREMENT

The effects of many Biokinetic Phenomena are irreversible. Even if the Biokinetic is de-spored, the exterior changes like skin bags or spider bites remain.

## ABSORPTION

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 6

The Biokinetic heals by stealing energy from his environment: plants dry up and crumble to dust; insects wither and die; fertile soil rots. The Spitalians of Danzig attribute Pollen's slow death to this Phenomenon.

**RULES:** If the Biokinetic spends several hour in a fertile area, he can recover Flesh Wounds and Trauma at the rate of (1) per point of Overload. For every Trauma point, the Biokinetic needs (4) hours of deep meditation, per Flesh Wound only (2). After absorbing energy for (10) hours, the soil in a (2) meter radius becomes infertile, vegetation and insects rustle dryly in the wind. The Psychonaut will have to move over a few meters to continue healing.

## FUSION

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 8

Biokinetics with this power engulf their enemy and pull them in. Where the two touch, the Biokinetic's skin melts like wax. The victims scream for minutes, thrashing and trying to escape. The Biokinetics blood begins to flow through their veins and starts corroding them from the inside. The thrashing becomes more and more feeble, more reflex than conscious resistance.

The fusion takes several minutes. Where the victim's bones jut outwards, the body of the Biokinetic forms bumps: arms, hooves, or skulls are absorbed only slowly and remain visible for days.

**RULES:** The Biokinetic can absorb any form of biomass via touch. The victim can only be saved by amputating the relevant limb. The Psychonaut needs time to prepare his body for the fusion, however: for (10 - Overload) Actions, he has to press his victim against his body before the fusion starts. To do so, he makes a melee attack that deals no Damage to embrace the target. The target can only break free by means of a Conflict (BOD+Force). The victim may roll once per Action, friends can help by contributing Successes. Once the fusion has begun, the victim is helpless. Surgery is now the only way to free them from the Biokinetic.

The fusion limits the Biokinetic in certain ways. While the fusion is in progress, all his Actions have a penalty of -4D, so he will try to flee and hide when attached. The flesh puppet clinging to him protects him from harm, and his Passive Defense rises by (2). He also recovers (1) Flesh Wound at the beginning of every Combat Round.

## CUSPING

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 10

A dying Biokinetic can lie down and preserve his gene sequences in a ganglion of a Mother spore field. Once he dies, the cusp bulges and breeds a copy of him. The Earth Chakra imprints the new Biokinetic with all his knowledge and learned skills, even with the memories of the last seconds of his life. The copies are never perfect, however, and many memories are overwritten by other events in the ether.

These clones have only one purpose: they are supposed to hunt and kill the pest that was able to destroy their strong Biokinetic predecessor.

**RULES:** The Biokinetic lowers parts of his body into a Mother spore field or leaves this to his plague. The vermin eats into him and through him. While he fights his enemies, he falls apart. The plague deposits thousands of morsels of meat and drops of blood in the spore field, where the cusping starts automatically.

The growth takes months or even years. Finally, the breeding cusp is pressed to the surface by convection vortexes in the wall system of the field, bursts, and vomits forth the newborn Biokinetic.

## VARIANT: MIGRANT

The Spital once tried to classify and categorize the Biokinetics. The relevant features were spurs, venom glands, and domination or use of the plague. Had there been a pattern, they would have found it. New sightings were recorded every day: sometimes Aberrants with claws or elongated arms, sometimes ones with axes or skull clubs. The variety was enormous, so the Spitalians gave up - for now. The only classification they could make was into the Biokinetics who defend spore fields and those who travel between them - Residents and Migrants. The Migrants seem to be responsible for the balance between the spore fields. They strengthen weak fields with the Blossom Phenomenon, and are usually faster and less aggressive than the giant Residents, possibly because they are younger.

### PROFILE: MIGRANT

**INITIATIVE:** 8D / 6 Ego Points | **SPORE INFESTATION:** 12/16
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 4, Skin bags 4, BOD+Force 10D
**ATTACK:** Bite, 9D, Damage 1D+3, Distance 1 m, Smooth Running (2T), Possibly "Spider bite" Phenomenon; Heavy axe, 7D, Damage 14, Distance 1 m, Impact (2T); Nettle Hairs Phenomenon
**DEFENSE:** Passive 2
Melee active (Block), Melee 10D
Ranged Combat active (Sidestepping), Mobility 6D
Mental 5D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 14D
**ARMOR:** Ossifications and partial exoskeleton, Armor 4
**CONDITION:** 28 (Trauma: 14)

## VARIANT: RESIDENT

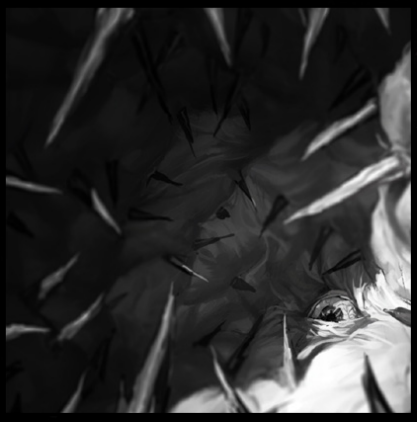
A finger touches the spider, caresses her furred abdomen, follows the bulge, searching the spinneret. A drop of ichor bulges there, clear as dew on a spring day. The finger smashes it and retreats, the end of a silk thread is attached to it. Eight-legged silhouettes scuttle across the floor. They have heard the call, too. The Resident spins his web, and his plague is at his service.

It's impossible to tell if the spore field has adopted the Resident or if the Resident has adopted the spore field, but both are interlinked unto their death. The field flatters its Resident with spore storms and feeds his plagues, and the Resident protects it from Spitalians and attacks Fractal Forests blooming close by.

He spins threads that transmit the vibration of steps, the droning of engines, or the sound of breathing to him. He hides behind rocks, in chasms in the earth, or in wrecks, watching and listening to the communication between the Chakras in the wind. His spore field's ether call carries his own special signature: he marks his territory. If the Resident dies, the Sepsis corrodes him within days, and he sinks into the ground as nutrients.

### PROFILE: RESIDENT

**INITIATIVE:** 9D / 8 Ego Points | **SPORE INFESTATION:** 22/22
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 10, Skin bags 10, BOD+Force 14D, INS+Perception 12D
**ATTACK:** Bite, 9D, Damage 1D+5, Distance 1 m, Smooth Running (2T),
Possibly "Spider bite" Phenomenon
Claw arm or Club arm, 9D, Damage 12, Range 2 m, Smooth Running (2T),
Club arm has "Blunt" Quality
Nettle Hairs Phenomenon
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Block), Melee 9D
Ranged Combat active (Duck and hide), Mobility 6D
Mental 6D (No effect in Primal phase )
**MOVEMENT:** 14D
**ARMOR:** Ossifications and partial exoskeleton, Armor 4
**CONDITION:** 34 (Trauma: 18)



### THE CZAR

A breeze through transparent branches, golden leaves rustle and stretch for foreign thoughts. Streams of impressions pulse into the ground, down into the warm carnality. With a crackle, the strands eat through the underground, groping for sensations, for sources.

Something giant is rooted in Pollen's soil. It eats. It grows. It has not yet awoken.

THE VOICE OF DECAY

# DUSHANI

## DISSONANCE

The dawn is a soft pink on the horizon, making the forests below seem all the darker. The village on the slopes of the mountain is still asleep. Smoke curls from one single chimney. Time is running out. Preservist Schake gazes over her shoulder at her comrades. The stele rises behind her. Smooth granite, as high as the door of the Judgement Hall in Justitian, but no thicker than an arm and engraved with circles and wave patterns. The Preservists wind a rope around it, pull it tight. One of them gives Schake the thumbs up and she responds in kind. A flame lights, jumps to the rope. The Preservists run, and Schake kneels and closes her eyes. The explosives detonate with a high-pitched bang.

The stele stays upright for a few seconds before it tilts and crashes into the ground. A dust cloud billows down into the valley. Farmers come rushing from their huts, screaming, covering their ears with their hands. Their screaming is the only audible sound. Everything else is silence. Schake jumps up and runs.

Now she feels it. What she had registered as silence was actually a steady harmonic out of control, hammering against her eardrums, going from a high-pitched whirring to a deep thrum in an instant. Her comrades run down to the valley and she follows. Pale bodies wearing black masks bristling with hoses slide across the slope towards the Preservists. The anger of the Dushani rolls across the rock as a rumbling bass tone. Schake's teeth ache. Preservist Radovan leads the charge, like a bull he lowers his head with its spiked helmet and runs towards the Aberrants. Soundlessly he bursts into a bloody cloud that hangs in the air as if nailed down, before slowly dissipating. The mist is caught in a standing wave, billowing and buckling in slow motion under the pressure of the explosion of bones and flesh. Ferencz tries to stop when it hits him, his sword tumbles through the air, suddenly accelerating and hitting the granite with a clatter. Schake drops to the ground. She slides into a giant wall of sound. Something bursts in her left eye and fills her gaze with bright red. Foam froths in her lungs.

Hours later she's woken by a constant up and down motion. She's walking. But it isn't her. Her eyes see the forests of the Balkhan, they see her arms that no longer obey her. Something is inside her head, and it feels very much at home.

### STRENGTHENING

The Dushani sheds the last remnants of humanity and rationality. He is free, a creature of instinct, with a heightened perception that registers smells, sounds, air pressure, cold sweat, and even emotions. He's the perfect predator.

**RULES:** Using Overload, the Dushani raises all of his INS Skills at once, from a base score of 8D. The Dushani Strengthens himself when he registers a disruption in the sound carpet, using the Overloaded perception to direct his hunt. The Strengthening lasts for (1) hour.

**DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE:**
Instinct

### PRIMAL

The Dushani experience and manipulate their surroundings via sound waves. They change the course of mountain creeks and cut steles from the slopes to divert or amplify sounds. They take any sound, even the rustling of the treetops, and weave it into a sound carpet. Their subvocal songs rise above the land and crash into their enemy as a resonance storm. They also affect the archetypical deep structures of the brain, reducing humans to a prehistoric state and making them speak in tongues. The Dushani call this the primal language that links all creatures across hundreds of millennia of evolution.

Dushani are creative and curious: they follow interesting sounds and can be mesmerized by a Demagogue's voice.

Their Chakra is in their throat.

### FOCUS

Language and communication are everything to the Dushani. When the Rapture fades, they still have their voice and their primal language. No matter who they speak to, everyone will instinctively understand them even if they can't quite repeat the words.

### SYMBIOSIS

The Dushani make their homes in the dark forests, high mountains and deep lakes of the Balkhan, and the creatures they command reflect this deep and dark nature: Bog Krakens, jellyfish, crabs, and bats.

Their Earth Chakra is the Usud Crater at the heart of the Balkhan.

## KNOWN PHENOMENA

### LORD OF THE SECOND PLAGUE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 1

With sounds so deep and strange that a human ear cannot hear them, the Dushani attract the shadows of the deep—creatures who are just as strange as the Psychonauts themselves.

**RULES:** Bog Krakens drone and crackle in tune with the Dushani's frequency, bats support the song via high-pitched squeaking, lizards and olms make noises that reach the deep structures of the human brain and and translated to syllables. They manipulate perception and help the Dushani activate his Phenomena. One animal comes to the Psychonaut's aid per point of Overload, giving him +2D to all Phenomena (max. +8D). A direct attack against an animal, Difficulty (4), kills it.

### ECHOLOCATION

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

Dushani use a similar form of echolocation to bats. They emit ultrasound pulses and listen to the echo, which opens up a world of distances and surface structures before their mind's eye. This makes them superior to any human in the dark.

While echolocation also works during the day and outside, most Dushani who have enough light rely on their eyes, which are only as good as anyone else's. Some Voivodules, however, report encountering Dushani with full masks that rise high above their shoulders, with only a gap for the mouth left open.

**RULES:** The Phenomenon needs no activating Action. The Dushani perceives his surroundings in total darkness as if it were the brightest day. Poor visibility penalties are reduced by the Overload.

### SPEAKING IN TONGUES

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 5

The Dushani speaks in tongues. The primal language seems like a meaningless string of syllables and gutturals. Humans understand it, though. Not the rational, thinking part of the mind: the subvocal sounds pass the barrier of consciousness, latch onto basic archaic patterns and rob the human of his freedom of thought. He now obeys the Dushani's will.

**RULES:** A human can defend against the Phenomenon with a successful PSY+Willpower/Faith (Overload) roll. If

the roll fails, all dams burst. The Psychonaut demands and the human obeys: the Dushani takes control. Only when an order threatens the human may he reroll.

The influence only ends when the Dushani is out of earshot or destroyed.

## RESONANCE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 5

The Dushani weaves a subvocal prison of thought around the victim which reflects their own thoughts back at them in an ever growing feedback loop.

**RULES:** A direct attack to the Ego. The victim can counter with PSY+Faith/Willpower. If the roll fails, the victim takes Ego Damage equal to the Overload.

## TONGUES OF BABEL

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 6

The Dushani confuses the language of his enemies. In their minds, they form the words, but only gibberish comes from their mouths.

**RULES:** All victims within earshot who fail a PSY+Faith/Willpower (Overload) roll lose their language and speak in tongues. No one understands anyone else. The Players whose characters are affected may not coordinate their Actions anymore. This Phenomenon lasts for (4) Rounds.

## WAVE CREST

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 7

The songs of the Dushani resonate together and collapse to a standing wave. Dust rises, stones tremble into the air and swim through the compressed sound. An invisible wave peak looms, engulfing the song, charging up...

The compression is transparent and only announced by a soft rustle. Around it, other sound fade, teeth ache, breathing becomes difficult. Those who try and touch the wave peak feel a sharp pain in their bones. Calluses are milled from the fingertips with no resistance, dancing through the Phenomenon as dust: the high frequency oscillation tears apart organic tissue.

**RULES:** Dushani need several Actions to pile their songs up to a wave peak. With every successful activation the level of the Phenomenon rises by one. Per level, the diameter grows by (1) meter and humans caught in the wave peak take (1) Damage per level. Armor does not reduce this.

The resonance songs necessary for a wave peak are often sung by several Dushani. This way, high Phenomenon levels can be reached within (1) Combat Round. The Phenomenon must be maintained by at least (1) Psychonaut, or it will shatter with an ear-wrenching splinter.

No Overload possible.

## FOUL SEED

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 10

The Dushani plants a thought into his victim's subconscious that drifts from the darkest recesses of the mind to the surface within the next weeks and takes root there.

**RULES:** The foul seed can be an order, an emotion, or a thought that is anathema to the targets ideology.

The target can resist with a PSY+Faith/Willpower (Overload) roll. If the roll fails, the target succumbs to the alien thoughts. After this they can only resist again when the foul seed forces them to act against a typical way of thinking or acting. Those with low Willpower or Faith are almost certainly lost.

## MOUNTAIN SLIDE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 16

The cries of the Dushani alternate between ultrasound and infrasound, whipping through the the frequencies. They are the wind in the treetops, they make the metal in the mountains ring, they enter the stone heart of the Balkhan through tiny cracks. They are the echo caught in the mountainside, an echo that piles up, amplified a thousand times over. The ground trembles, the slope jerks. Then it bursts, sliding downhill on loose gravel, dragging trees along with it. Any who enter this maelstrom are likely to be killed.

**RULES:** This Phenomenon tears apart all other Dushani songs for kilometers around. Like a bee that stings only once and then dies, a Dushani will use this Phenomenon only in a moment of sheer desperation and Overload it as much as possible, for even if they survive any Lesnje in the area will be hunting them.

A mountain slide can be fatal. An avalanche of rocks and dust hits all beings, including the Dushani. Everyone hit must roll AGI+Mobility (Overload).

If the roll fails, the victim suffers 1D + overload Blunt Damage from the rockfall. Per Round, the Overload level sinks by (1). The mountain slide ends once it reaches (0).

## VARIANT: VODJANOI

The waters of the Balkhan are dangerous. They are home to the Vodjanoi, demons from ancient times who prey on those who stray too close to their nests of human hair. At least, that's what the old ones say.

Out there, in the shadows of the woods, superstition blossoms. However, there are parallels between reality and myth. The Dushani known as Vodjanoi live close to bodies of water, usually in caves and along rivers. Many Clanners who were led astray by their songs were washed ashore days later as floating bodies. The Vodjanoi are extremely aggressive and territorial.

According to research by the Spital, the Vodjanoi join the songs of the Mokosch Dushani, amplifying them. Every disruption rips a hole in the sound carpet and throws them into a frenzy.

### PROFILE: VODJANOI

**INITIATIVE:** 6D / 2 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 18/18
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 2
(+4D to Phenomenon activation)
**ATTACK:** Embrace, 8D, special: The Dushani embraces his victim and jumps into a body of water with them. Rules for drowning apply. The victim counters with BOD+Force or AGI+Mobility.
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active -
Ranged Combat active -
Mental 2D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 5D
**ARMOR:** Amplifier mask
(+1D to Phenomenon activation), Armor 1
**CONDITION:** 12 (Trauma: 6)
**SPECIAL DEFENSE:** Ink Cloud
The Vodjanoi emits a dark violet aerosol from the hoses of their mask. The inky gas clings to him for seconds, swirling with every movement. His Passive Defense rises by (4) until their next Action. Activating the Ink Cloud does not require an Action. The Ink Cloud can be used up to (4) times.

## VARIANT: LESNJE

Lesnje and Vodjanoi look exactly the same visually. To a Spitalian, a Dushani is a Dushani: they sway in the rustle of the forest, stretching their arms to the sky to caress the wind, the hoses of their masks swinging back and forth like cephalopod tentacles, and they bleed when you cut them with a Splayer.

The Balkhani, on the other hand, see the difference. The Lesnje, they say, are the whisper of the woods. These Dushani roam the land, humming their lonely song, listening. Every dissonance catches their ear, and they eliminate it. Humans or animals in the Mokosch sound funnels are killed, but misguided and decoupled Vodjanoi must also fear their spear.

They are the Earth Chakra's immune system and they work tirelessly to keep the Mokosch sound matrix clear of unwanted influence.

### PROFILE: LESNJE

**INITIATIVE:** 8D / 3 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 14/18
**SPECIALTY:** INS+Perception 14D
**ATTACK:** Sickle spear, 9D, Distance 2 m, Damage 7, Cutting (2T, +1D Damage)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 2 (Erratic movements)
Melee active (Block), Melee 9D
Ranged Combat active -
Mental 4D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 9D
**ARMOR:** Armor mask, Armor 2
**CONDITION:** 14 (Trauma: 6)

## VARIANT: MOKOSCH

A deep hum crawls across the land. It's not heard, instead it can only be felt in teeth and bones. It gropes the forests, floods canyons like oil. When it touches stone it splinters at the borders, when it enters canyons or gets caught in caves it bursts into a peak of sound. A Mokosch is searching. The name is derived from their wailing songs: in mythology, Mokosch is the earth mother mourning the state of the world. A Mokosch wanders the Balkhan's wilderness, crossing fields and climbing mountains. The hoses of his mask coil like snakes. His hands swim through the air, seperating, combining and shaping sound streams. The ground trembles, dust motes dance as if someone had placed them on a resonating bowl. Old leaves are torn from the trees. Animals flee in terror. The echo travels through the rocks, water ripples, the air shimmers. When the song reaches the audible range, the hoses slacken. Now they merely emit a polyphonic whimper. The Mokosch feels the cold rock beneath his feet, climbing the slip like a lizard with their body pressed to the ground. The hoses softly scrape across the rock. He has found the perfect natural sound box, a cave or a pass between towering spires. The Dushani will settle down here. He will build clay walls to eliminate sound sinks and channel water into the caverns to vary his timbre. Once the Mokosch has take refuge, he joins the song of the Dushani. It echoes over to him across mountains and forests, weak and soulless. He raises his voice, swaying his torso to the dance of compressed sound waves and tugging at the flying threads of the song.

The whining and droning from the mountains have become part of the humans' lives. Just like they do not hear the sound of the rain anymore after a dreary week, the song of the Dushani fades to background noise. Yet it burrows into the subconscious, wraps around the brain stem and takes root in the mind.

If one of them dares to climb the mountains, he comes back changed. His expressions and gestures are those of a foreigner, his dialect has changed, he has forgotten his old name: he has changed. The Mokosch has implanted him with alien memories, maybe one person's, maybe a dozen's. According to legend, the Mokosch once created human culture through this inspiration.

### PROFILE: MOKOSCH

**INITIATIVE:** 7D / 4 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 28/28
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 4 (+8D to Phenomenon activation)
**ATTACK:** Only uses Phenomena
**DEFENSE:** Passive 2 (Erratic movements)
Melee active -
Ranged Combat active -
Mental 3D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 6D
**ARMOR:** Mokosch mask (rises above the torso,
hoses are like a curtain, +2D to Phenomenon activation), Armor 4
**CONDITION:** 16 (Trauma: 8)
**SPECIAL DEFENSE:** Ink cloud, see Vodjanoi
**ALLIES:** Several Lesnje are close by and protect the Mokosch.

## EIDOLON

He is the voice. The one that created the world, that keeps it alive, and that will one day tear it to shreds. He is Eidolon, the higher self of the Dushani, the vibration that all other Psychonauts of his Earth Chakra can only modify to a tiny degree.

His home is between the concrete monoliths at Laibach. If only Triglaw would finally accept that fact and free the life he has been holding prisoner in his rotten heart for centuries.

The final confrontation is unavoidable. Laibach will tremble.

LORDS OF THE LEGIONS

# PHEROMANCERS

## BEEHIVE

Gaelle lets the crowd sweep her along. She drifts through the streets of her city, past gleaming minarets and palaces. On Larisawe Plaza, she touches the great stele in passing, like all people in front of and behind her. A nice custom. Something sticks to her fingers, and for a moment, she is disgusted. Someone bumps into her, others mill past. Bile rises in her throat. With tears in her eyes, she blinks several times.

She walks on, tries to smile. But she has lost the rhythm of the crowd, gets pushed around. She veers and leans against the wall of a house, gasping; her stomach cramps.

She feels feverish. Not good at all. This house in front of her is tamped down with mud. It looks like it was grown instead of built. It confuses her. She spits and leans against the cool wall. Then she freezes. The people passing by are ragged and dirty. Black bugs buzz between them, landing in their hair or crawling across arms before taking off again and flying on. Where Gaelle just saw minarets, there are now clay vents towering before a misty sky. A sickly sweet scent wafts over and makes her gag again.

A naked figure drifts through the crowd. A young woman with eyes half closed, the corners of her mouth sewn shut. Glands inflate at the throat, under the breasts, and at the inner thighs, only to slowly flap and deflate, to finally be reduced to wrinkled volcanoes. The air around her shimmers. Gaelle lowers her gaze, shakes her head. A cool finger touches her chin, raises it.

The woman is standing right in front of her, head cocked. Her pupils are mottled, the mouth is surrounded by purple cusps on top of which golden droplets glitter. A Pheromancer, ruler of this city, of its inhabitants. But no longer Gaelle's ruler. Gaelle's gaze searches the woman's face. The Pheromancer's finger brushes her own lips. A thread is pulled taut between lip and fingernail. Gaelle tries to turn her head away, when the Pheromancer touches Gaelle's upper lip.

Like a veil, all the disgust and filth around her tears apart. Proud people walk the streets again; the sun is shining and warms her spirit. A smiling woman is standing in front of her, making way so Gaelle can rejoin the crowd. She's home.

### STRENGTHENING

When a Pheromancer Strengthens their Charisma, they shine like a divine being of benevolence, understanding and wisdom. Talking to them is a blessing, and every word is pure bliss.

**RULES:** The CHA Skills of a Pheromancer have a base score of 8D, and every point of Overload increases them by +1D. The Strengthening lasts for (1) hour.

**DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE:**
Charisma

## PRIMAL

The sense of smell is deeply rooted in the nervous system. It registers receptiveness, identifies others of the species,, and can evoke complex emotions from simple smells. An interesting scent raises curiosity, while another may be repulsive. The Pheromancers use this knowledge. They squeeze fragrances from their glands that engulf the human brainstem and captivate people's minds.

Pheromancers are masters of fusion. They unite body and soul, mediate between male and female, between the individual and the many. Every creature has its position in their collective, tuned in to the web of pheromone markers that they create. The air is their medium, oily peace their weapon, social fusion their message.

Their Chakra is the heart.

## FOCUS

Pheromancers see humanity as a giant, pulsating organism of communcating bodies, plagued by lethal but ultimately irrelevant quarrels. They don't bear a grudge against humans, not even against Spitalians or Anabaptists. It matters not if howling wind, driving rain, or attacking Preservists weaken their pheromone web, because the millions strong army of the Pheromancers will repair it and expand it until every creature is caught and gives in to eternal peace.

For creatures who conciliate and promise love, de-spored Pheromancers are unusually emotionless. Unity is a tool for them, the only one they know. Without their Rapture, they lose their elegance, charisma, and power. Underneath, they are just seducers and frauds.

## SYMBIOSIS

Pheromancers always strive for groups, see themselves as a swarm. They demand the same from their plague. They control insects that live in colonies like ants, wasps, and termites.

Everything began in Franka's Massif Central: today, the city of Souffrance sprawls across the slopes of the crater and forms a protective wall around its Earth Chakra.

# KNOWN PHENOMENA

## LORD OF THE THIRD PLAGUE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 0

Ants, wasps, and termites build giant nests of chewed plant fibers and gland ichor for the Pheromancer. The insects see him as the queen of their hive, crawling purposefully across his body to the pheromone glands, crossing them, and carrying the oily ichor all across the nest.

Every emotion of the Pheromancer spreads within minutes: fear pheromones make swarms of bugs rise: ants hurry towards the Pheromancer to engulf him; wasps attack anything with an unreadable scent. The nest prepares to go to war.

**RULES:** Insects feel attracted by the Pheromancer; even when he de-spores the pheromones remain on his body or drip from the slack glands. He doesn't need an Action roll to call his plague: the swarm Strength grows by (1) per Round if there are enough insects in the vicinity.

Young Pheromancers attract swarms up to a Strength of (3), the Queens control swarms of Strength (10). The plague protects its master by attacking his enemies. This happens only after a threat is identified, however. After that, every attack against the Pheromancer is done at a penalty equal to the swarm Strength. Attacking the swarm itself with area weapons reduces its Strength. Nothing else helps against a Queen.

## HIVE MIND

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 3

The great swarm raises repulsiveness into madness, a mindless mass caught in pheromone bands and channeled through valleys and riverbeds. It is a force of nature like a landslide, and only powerful forces can redirect it: the powers of the Pheromancers.

The young ones amongst them, being little more than bugs in the hierarchy of the Aberrants themselves, throw themselves into the wave of chitin. Like fish, they swim through the black floods, coming to the surface and diving down again. Their thoughts and movements are in synchronicity with the sparks from the minds of the insects. When the Pheromancer looks left millions of pairs of antennae stretch in the same direction, when he turns to the right a jolt runs through the swarm and makes it swerve in the direction he desires.

**RULES:** The swarm moves on the invisible web of pheromones that the Queens have laid out. Once it leaves its predetermined ways, however, or a hub is destroyed by the Spitalians, the swarm becomes confused and disoriented. It needs a Pheromancer to guide it with the "Hive Mind" Phenomenon.

The great swarm cannot be expressed in rules. If it attacks a settlement, it eats crops, livestock, and even grass. Ants hang from victims' arms and legs in droves; termites fight through the clothing and crawl into every home. Waves of bugs clatter against houses, looking for a way inside to conquer every source of food. Only Pheromone buoys, the death of the leading Pheromancer, or the massive use of insecticides and flame throwers can redirect a great swarm or even destroy it.

## UNITY

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

The Pheromancers mediate between man and woman, between the individual and the community. Their pheromones latch onto the human brain, lead it to believe that it experiences peace and relaxation. They take the rage out of the most aggressive person and turn it into the opposite. Those who just wanted to slay the Pheromancer kiss his feet in the next instant.

**RULES:** Deep peace overcomes anyone who cannot elude the sweet fragrance of unity with a successful roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower (Overload). The victims perceive the Pheromancer as a divine being and lay down their arms.

Once per hour they can break free with a new Action roll. "Unity" is an area attack: the Pheromancer engulfs an open area with a diameter of little more than (20) meters with it.

## SATURATION

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

Threads of ichor hang from the ceiling, foamy mucus accumulates in hollows. It's humid in this dark appendix of the warren, and a musk permeates the air. Those who stay here - or are trapped here - for at least an hour become saturated with pheromones. Like tiny leeches they latch onto the brain and drain all resistance.

**RULES:** Those who are exposed to these pheromones for more than (1) hour are less resistant to all forms of pheromantic influence for (2) days. When resisting pheromones, they have a penalty equal to the Overload.

## THE MARK

The Mark of the Pheromancer is invisible for humans. One drop of gland ichor, and the victim is surrounded by a swirling vortex of fragrances that every Pheromancer can recognize over hundreds of meters. The Aberrant can encode information into these particles: "Kill the one bearing this mark", "Let this one pass", "Grant them any wish."

Machiawen's Apocalyptics have free access to the spore fields due to his mark. No Pheromancer would dare enslave a member of the Solar Wind Flock.

Some Pheromancers mark their hangmen immediately before their death. The stigma will accompany the attackers for weeks and mark them as killers to any Pheromancers they encounter.

## HEARTBURN

Two souls are forced into one without being allowed to blend. They will hunt each other, rebound off each other, devour each other. A Pheromancer has stimulated both of their heart Chakras and woven a web of ichor around their bodies. Never shall they be separated.

The Borgiawe living in Aquitaine is supposed to bind their human servants to a partner who remains in the warren. The servants always come back, chained by their passion.

## ACID

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 5

Glands on the Pheromancer's body shoot a jet of corrosive methane at his enemies, momentarily blinding them.

**RULES:** A Combination roll of activation and AGI+Projectiles is required to fire the jet. The maximum range is (5) m. The target can dodge using an Active Defense, and "Acid" has no effect on targets wearing a closed helmet. Without a helmet, a hit causes a penalty of -1D per Overload + Triggers to any roll that requires sight.

The penalty is removed when the target washes out his eyes.

## FEAR

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 6

No one can approach the Pheromancer without suddenly being terribly afraid.

**RULES:** The sprayed pheromones activate the flight instinct in humans and animals. Those who fail an Action roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower (Overload) panic and can only think of fleeing. This feeling of helplessness and fear only subsides when the target has escaped to more than (20) meters from the Pheromancer.

## DRONE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 10

People gather around the Pheromancer, bask in his perspirations, are hopelessly devoted to him. As long as they remain close to him, they fulfill his every wish, act as bodyguards and lovers, warriors and workers.

**RULES:** The Pheromancer squeezes a sweet smelling ichor from his glands and spreads it throughout the settlement. Stone steles covered in fist-sized golden drops are erected at hubs. They tell the story of the city to the insects, of the comings and goings of its enemies, of paths and byways. However, humans also get caught in the pheromone marker web. Those who enter a Pheromancer settlement can only try to resist the "Drone" Phenomenon via a successful Action roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower (Overload).

If the roll fails, the person is infected by the desire to work for the colony and serve the Queen. Everything seems friendly and colorful to him: he perceives nothing bad anymore. Gas masks or armor with the Sealed Quality alone do not protect, but their level adds to the resistance roll. Those who have succumbed to the Pheromancer can try to flee the soul prison once per day via another roll. If he leaves the colony, the influence eventually fades, too.

## VARIANT: EXPATRIATE

Expatriates usually form small groups of up to six individuals. They don't talk to each other, communicating exclusively via body language, pheromones and a reduced Chakra communication. They lead the swarm through the Ziggurats of Franka and deep into Borca.

### PROFILE: EXPATRIATE

**INITIATIVE:** 5D / 6 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 12/16
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 3, CHA+Leadership 12D+2
**ATTACK:** Stinger applicator at the fingers, 7D, Distance 1 m, Damage 6, Smooth Running (2T); Acid Phenomenon, 6D
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 6D
Ranged Combat active (Looking for cover), Mobility 6D
Mental 6D (No effect in the Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 9D
**ARMOR:** None, Armor 0
**CONDITION:** 14 (Trauma: 8)

## VARIANT: MIDWIFE

One day, she stands on the hill close to the village, swaying to the rhythm of a music that only she can hear. Her eyes are closed. Insects crawl from cracks, climbing her, surrounding her like oil. Children startle from their sleep or freeze in the middle of playing. They feel the arrival of the Midwife without seeing her. They struggle to get away from their mothers, swat aside hands and scream whenever someone tries to stop them while they crawl or walk towards the Psychonaut. They emit rudimentary pheromones, make their parents stagger back in disgust. Then they are gone. They have followed the Midwife into the world of the Primer. They were chosen to one day rule over human and insect as kings. The Clans of Franka have come to know these creatures as the Fosters, for how they take in children that are not theirs.

### PROFILE: MIDWIFE

**INITIATIVE:** 6D / 6 Ego Points | **SPORE INFESTATION:** 12/16
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 6, CHA+Leadership 12D
**ATTACK:** Wasp staff, 5D, Distance 2 m, Damage Special: Wasps surround the nest at the top of the staff and sting anyone who gets close: 1D Damage; only "Sealed" armor protects; Acid Phenomenon, 6D
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Block), Melee 5D (Successful block with the wasp staff causes 1D wasp Damage even without enough Triggers for a counterstrike)
Ranged Combat active (Nimble), Mobility 7D
Mental 9D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 7D
**ARMOR:** None, Armor 0
**CONDITION:** 14 (Trauma: 8)

## VARIANT: QUEEN

Deep within the vent warrens and clay cusps, they form a hollow with their massive bodies. Others loll on the stone throne in the sanctum of a Ziggurat. They are the Queens of their swarms of insects and minor Pheromancers. Their bodies are covered in bloating and deflating glands as big as children's fists. Ichors run across their bloated frames, threading as they drip down on the floor. A network of grooves crisscrosses the steps of the Ziggurat in the corridors of the vent warrens. The Queen's gland fluids flow through them. Ants block some grooves with little stones to make their flow reach distant areas of the construction as well, bugs spread their wings and carry drops of ichor out into the swamp land. The Queens are satisfied. As long as Franka remains caught in their sweet smelling pheromone web, there will be peace.

### PROFILE: QUEEN

**INITIATIVE:** 10D / 4 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 24/24
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 15, CHA+Leadership 12D+2, CHA+Expression 12D
**ATTACK:** Acid Phenomenon, 5D
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active -
Ranged Combat active -
Mental 8D (no effect in primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 2D
**ARMOR:** None, Armor 4
**CONDITION:** 16 (Trauma: 8)
**EQUIPMENT:** 6 Burn cusps (+1D spore infestation per cusp, inhaling takes 1 Action)
**ALLIES:** A Queen is always surrounded by drones or free agents who hope to gain some profit from her mark. 5 to 10 Leperos or inhabitants of the settlement subject to the "Drone" Phenomenon hang at her teats and will do anything to defend her. She also commands Apocalyptics who harvest Burn on her behalf: 2 to 4 of them defend her nest.

### MACHIAWEN

He is a giant amongst the Pheromancers, both in stature and in influence. His domain in Franka is a place of absolute peace. A forest of clay vents surrounds the area, emitting gas and pheromones. Wasp nests hang from every gable and in every passage, their droning covers the land like a never-ending bass. The people are hopelessly devoted to Machiawen. Caught in a pheromone high, they live the Pheromancer's desires anew every day.

Only the Apocalyptics of the Solar Wind Flock are an exception. They are his bodyguards and his enormously long arm.

BEYOND TIME

# PREGNOCTICS

## SOUL HARVEST

The seasons crashed down on Mubele like storm clouds. He had long since stopped counting them. A searing hot summer followed a rainy winter, robbing the seasons of their strength and drying out their leaves. Then spring, fall, winter again, in rapid succession. Everything went wrong. Mubele noticed intermediate seasons, in the ant time, ants climbed trees or gathered to form huge mandalas on the ground. In the green time, everything had a greenish blue tint, and the air tasted greenish too. Scents, emotions, light, everything bowed to the Warpage and he was stuck in the middle of it all.

Mubele had given up all hope of ever returning to his village. Never again would he play with little Jula, he the lion, she the mighty Scourger whose spear... Mubele froze. The old man sat in the shadow of a tree, leaning on his staff. He had turned his back to Mubele. He was adorned with shell necklaces and had pierced his thin, fragile arms with urchin spines. His shoulders were covered in geometrical blue tattoos. The old man raised an arm, touched the bark of the tree, and spoke. The voice forced its way into the cracks of Mubule's mind, was speaking inside him. It told the story of the land, of his past, present, and future, of heroes who came and went and of those who would come after him. With every syllable, the old man's fingers continued across the bark, following every groove, as if the tree were a book to be read.

The old man faded with the season. His shell necklaces slid across the withering skin and crashed to the ground. Mubule moved on and encountered a woman. She had thrown back her head, sewn shut eyelids stretched across hollow eye sockets. She continued the tail where the old man had left off. Then came a young man, a long haired madwoman with a crown of shells, and a pale, nubile woman who would surely have raised Mubele's desire if her eyes had not looked as if they contained millennia of knowledge. They all continued the tale - to the end.

Mubele's mind finally had become saturated and lazy, he could stand no more. "Ripe for the harvest," he murmured. He was standing in a mountain lake. The woman of the lake was at his side.

She told him to follow her. Water caressed her ankles.

He obeyed.

### STRENGTHENING

In their dreams, Pregnoctics return to their Earth Chakra and become one with others of their kind. Thoughts and knowledge are exchanged, individuality fades for the moment. Intense dreamers have the knowledge of the many, can resort to a broad repertoire of knowledge—knowledge someone else learned.

**RULES:** A Pregnoctic can learn any Skill from the collective with a level equal to the Overload used, but will lose it again the next night.

**DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE:** Intellect

### PRIMAL

If the building plan of a human is stored in every gene, in the same way the yesterday contains the now and the now grows into the tomorrow. Everything is destiny and fate. In the eyes of the Pregnoctics, the future is a land that has risen from the ocean of possibilities. They travel this ocean, sailing through space and time with their thoughts. Their bodies are merely buoys they stop at and through which they look at a fading reality. The flesh, however, is not made for the knowledge of time, and so they write it into the world, storing it in people, scratching it into bark, or infusing shells with it. Others will come to carry it forth.

For the Hybrispanians, the Pregnoctics are the masters of seeing and of revelations. Their Chakra is behind their forehead, and in some Pregnoctics, it opens up as a third eye.

### FOCUS

When fully de-spored the Pregnoctics focus only on the present. Their consciousness is torn from the collective and anchored within a corporeal shell in space and time. Many Pregnoctics have blinded this shell, not needing eyesight. When the third eye closes as well they are blind, helpless, and reduced to living in their mind.

The Hybrispanians take care of them and lead them to the mountain lakes or into spore fields. Soon the present will fall behind them once again.

### SYMBIOSIS

The Pregnoctics control the oldest of creatures: shells, starfish, urchins, ammonites, and trilobites.

The Mirar Crater lies hidden at the center of the Time Warpage. It is the Pregnoctics' Earth Chakra.

## KNOWN PHENOMENA

### LORD OF THE FOURTH PLAGUE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 1

In faraway Pollen forests of spiders and venomous centipedes are supposed to exist, in Franka swarms of wasps darken the sky. The Hybrispanians are lucky. Shells, starfish, urchins, ammonites, and trilobites usually are not very dangerous. They live at the bottom of rivers and lakes, and only if a Pregnoctic touches the water do they swim over and come to the surface. On behalf of the Psychonaut they surround everything that comes into their domain, clinging to it or sticking to it with their byssus. With their sheer mass, they draw down people, block propellers, or capsize boats. Even if no Hybrispanian needs to fear an insect attack, the Pregnoctics divide the land into parcels by the bodies of water. Only with their permission may anyone cross the borders.

**RULES:** Those who anger the Pregnoctic and are in the water are attacked by the plague. The animals crawl onto his body and hold tight: encumbrance +1 per Round. With an Action, the target can swipe away the animals and reduce the added encumbrance by 1.

It doesn't cost the Pregnoctic an Action, however, to set his plague against his enemies Round after Round.

### PROPHECY

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

The Psychonaut gases through thousands of eyes into hundreds of times and places. The borders of space and time no longer have meaning. Even the Hybrispanians do not know why the Pregnoctics share this knowledge with them and why they sometimes demand a price and sometimes not.

**RULES:** Prophecy is a tool for the Game Master to use to give hints to Players, or to give them insight into past events they could not witness.

### BEYOND TIME

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 5

Time passes slower for the Pregnoctic, but his body is still subject to the physical limitations of reality. To the Psychonaut, his limbs seem to move agonisingly slow.

However, this does grant him more time to react. He sees an enemy winding up for a strike, or that a shooter is aiming at him, and can raise his arm to parry in time or run for cover.

**RULES:** For (3) Rounds the Pregnoctic adds half of his Overload as a bonus to Passive Defense.

## SOUL DEATH

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 6

The Pregnoctics third eye opens, and a whole galaxy of possibilities light up only to coalesce into a tunnel piercing through a thousand fates. Anyone who meets the gaze of the third eye has their mind thrown into a chaotic stream of imploring thoughts, soul-crushing remorse and burning hatred.

**RULES:** The Pregnoctic drags his victim through millennia of thoughts and visions, trying to drown them in a sea of pain, emotion, and death.

The victim enters a Conflict of PSY+Faith/Willpower. If they fail, they take Overload + Triggers in Ego Damage. The Pregnoctic must make eye contact with their third eye and the victim.

## RUSH OF TIMES

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 8

Although spring has just begun, suddenly the leaves on the trees turn brown and fall to the ground, the Spitalian blinks, sees the Pregnoctic and attacks despite knowing he is still more than an hours walk away from this glade and this battle.

He hangs from the thread of reality like a puppet. The strings, however, are already fraying. The doctor tastes humid earth; he must have stumbled and fallen. In his mind, the memory of pushing his Splayer into the Pregnocitc is fading, but that was another time that won't come to pass.

Past and present are entwined into a Gordian knot, and it can only be hewn through if the Pregnoctic dies or releases his victim.

**RULES:** From the possibilities of the web of time, the Pregnoctic picks and chooses the one that is most profitable, influencing the outcome of attacks or other Actions. Per point of Overload he can negate, skip or rewind 1 level of Initiative. It must be his turn, but he doesn't have to sacrifice an Action.

For example, the Pregnoctic is attacked on Initiative 5 and fails to counterattack on Initiative 3. With an Overload of (3) he could turn back time to Initiative 5, where neither attack has happened. He could also aim for the future and skip the Action of an attacker at Initiative 2 using an Overload of (2).

## VARIANT: ENIGMATE

Énigmates are respected and feared prophets at the lakes and in the forests of Hybrispania. Their prophecies untangle the future and show the movements of the Scourgers. Yet these prophecies come at a price that the villages have to pay: girls disappear only to reappear as old women weeks later, devoid of all memories. Boys float in the rivers, dead and caught in byssus threads. No evidence leads to the Enigmates, and yet every Hybrispanian knows the truth deep down in his heart.

### PROFILE: ENIGMATE

**INITIATIVE:** 5D / 12 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 14/14
**SPECIALTY:** INT+Legends 14D
**ATTACK:** Shell staff, 6D, Special: When a blow hits the target, the shell or the snail's house at the tip shatters into a cloud of splinters causing (4) Damage to all attackers within a (2) m radius. If at least (1) point of Damage pierces armor, the victim is assaulted by strange memories that confuse him and cause -2D to all Action rolls until the end of combat. After this attack, the shell staff is just a common staff: 6D, Distance 2 m, Damage 4, Blunt.
**DEFENSE:** Passive 2 (Precognition)
Melee active (Block), Melee 6D
Ranged Combat active –
Mental 7D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 6D
**ARMOR:** None, Armor 0
**CONDITION:** 12 (Trauma: 7)
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** Shell necklaces (the Clans sacrifice bread, milk, and meat to the prophets, but also fabrics, mother-of-pearl sheets, and necklaces, some of which the Enigmate wears as jewelry for a day, which is considered a good omen).

## VARIANT: MNEMONID

Like ships' hulls encrusted with shells and snail houses, the Mnemonids slowly wander along the river banks or coasts of Hybrispania until they reach Franka. From there, they disappear. Only a shell dropped in the swamps of Franka or in the dust desert of Borca points to their existence off the beaten paths.

Spitalians and Anabaptists hunt them, but these Pregnoctics share the abilities of their siblings: they intuit their enemies and avoid them. Catching a Mnemonid means predicting all of his possible paths and blocking them off. He will only face his hunters when he has no more other options.

### PROFILE: MNEMONIDE

**INITIATIVE:** 12D / 12 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 10/10
**SPECIALTY:** BOD+Stamina 8D, INS+Perception 9D
**ATTACK:** Shell-clad arm, 8D, Distance 1 m, Damage 5, Blunt; Byssus whip, 9D, Distance 4 m, Damage Special: shells worn on the arms open up and uncoil byssus threads that are several meters long. A hit by one of these causes 1D+3 Damage. The threads tear loose, and the victim additionally suffers -2D to his next Action, because the sticky byssus impedes his movement. The Mnemonid can attack at least (4) times with the byssus whip before there are no longer enough threads for another attack. They grow back within a few days.
**DEFENSE:** Passive 3 (Precognition)
Melee active (Block), Melee 8D
Ranged Combat active –
Mental 2D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 10D
**ARMOR:** Shell armor, Armor 3
**CONDITION:** 14 (Trauma: 7)

## SOUL WORLD

Nodes like the Woman from the Mountain create a refuge of souls whose thoughts radiate outwards and draw anyone who gets too close into a world of desire. The soul worlds of the Pregnoctics are an as of yet unsolved mystery. Those who touch one of these refuges shiver with a feeling of absolute alienness. Some are repulsed by it, while others feel challenged and come closer to satisfy their curiosity. If someone travels deeper into the zone, alien thoughts wind their way into his consciousness, and time stops or suddenly rushes forwards. He meets other people from other times—or his own true self, devoid of all vanities, reduced to his archetypal traits. Here, many things are possible. Only one thing is impossible at this point. Escape.

A Node appreciates people who lead an extreme life and act in accordance to their Concept. He makes them face their archenemy or their over-exaggerated self. If humans give up their old ways and transcend themselves, the Pregnoctic loses interest in them and lets them go. If not, they become one with the soul world, an exhibit in this museum of the grotesque. A soul world is the basis of a whole scenario. Traits alone will get the Game Master nowhere when it comes to role playing a soul world. He has to decide whether he only wants to play an intermezzo with an imaginary arch-enemy, maybe as preparation to an actual major conflict outside the soul world, or whether he personifies the characters' deepest fears and flaws and makes the group face them.

## VARIANT: NODE

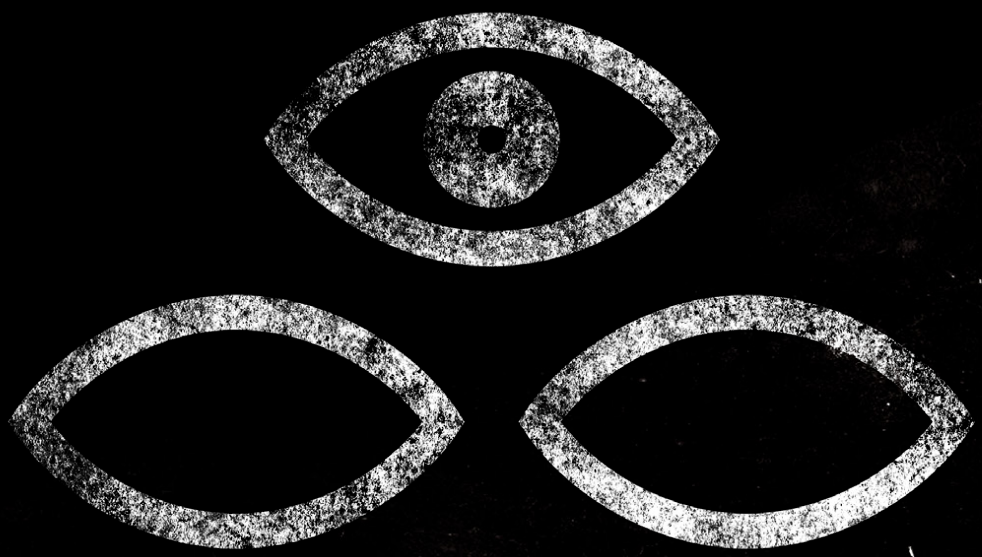
The Nodes are like halls in a vast cavern system. Air rushes through them, swirls, and disappears again into the tunnels. They are a conglomeration of empty space, offering room for thoughts and an evolution of possibilities. Within them, the archetypal Concepts manifest, they embody constants in the so far unknown system of the Primer. The existence of the Nodes has been an unproven claim for a long time, despite strong Noumenon fluctuations hinting at extremely strong Pregnoctics no one had ever seen them. The Woman from the Mountain is considered the first known Node, and when the Warpage manifested three more were registered: the Nodes of the past, present, and future. They exist beyond human understanding. They see the future and know every action of a potential pursuer. They are only found when they want to be.

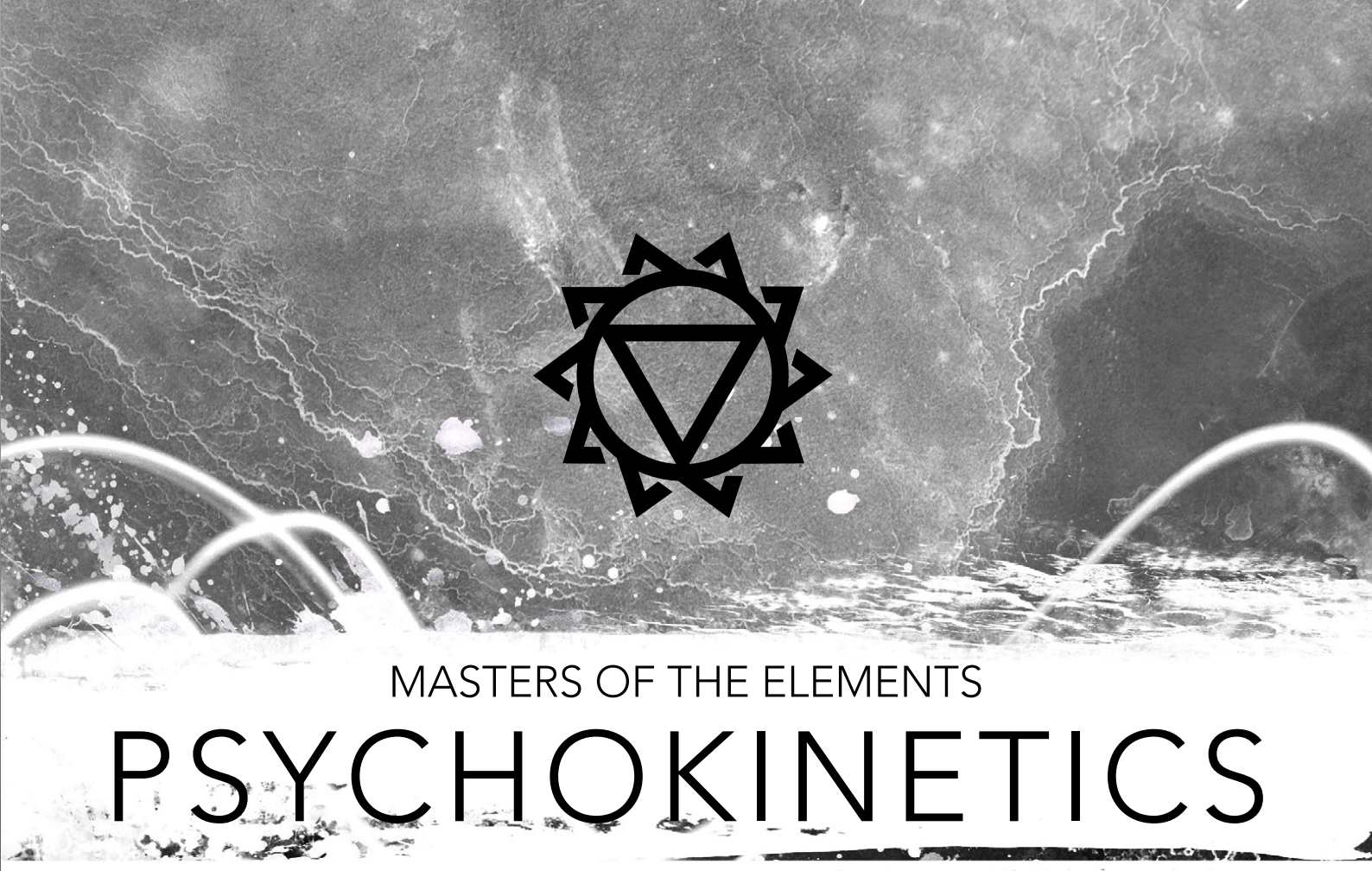
### PROFILE: NODE

**INITIATIVE:** 12D / 12 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 24/24
**SPECIALTY:** CHA+Negotiation 9D, INT+Legends 20D
**ATTACK:** Staff, 6D, Distance 2 m, Damage 5, Blunt
**DEFENSE:** Passive 4 (Precognition)
Melee active –
Ranged Combat active –
Mental 8D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 14D
**ARMOR:** Shell crown, Armor 0
**CONDITION:** 16 (Trauma: 8)
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** Shell necklaces (experiences and knowledge are stored within the shells, if the Node opens a shell and breathes in the gossamer floating within, she can learn any Skill with an Action score of 10D, including combat Skills. The inhaling takes 1 Action).
**ALLIES:** A Node is surrounded by legendary Guerreros or Scourgers caught in their soul world. The warriors act and react archetypically for their Concepts: the "Conqueror" sees the characters as a fortress to be razed, the "Zealot" destroys those who do not share his perspective of the world, the "Hermit" sees the characters as the only threats to his salvation. These people are only shadows in the rush of time. Before someone gets to see the Node, however, he will have to face them.

### ENIGMA

She sees both the future and the past, yet she is helpless in the present. The Clanners in old Portugal see her as a goddess, surrounding her and keeping her alive. However, they cannot reach her temple, as it is at the bottom of a lake, a growth of coral and ossified creatures from the depth of history. Legends say that the memories of tomorrow sleep in those pitch-black waters.





MASTERS OF THE ELEMENTS

# PSYCHOKINETICS

## SPLINTERED WORLD

The midday sun burns on the Harnesses, yet the Hellvetics are cold. They hold the Trailblazers at the ready, aimed at the withering blackness in front of them. It hangs between the houses like gossamer. Crystalline needles burst from it, becoming one with the walls and the dusty floor. They expand, shimmering briefly, and then fall back into deepest darkness.

"The Rift is growing!"

Some Hellvetics nod and take aim. Sable shifts his weight to his other leg and lowers the rifle. This makes no sense. "We go in. One man with me." Sable goes first. Shards crunch under his boots. They are blunt from the hoarfrost. The sunlight shimmers and wavers. Something presses against his chest, but he feels no pull at his legs. A short glance over the shoulder: his comrades outside look distorted and superimposed with prism effects. "Forward!" He approaches the first crystalline extensions of the Rift. With one hand, he beats at the needles, passes through them, feels their resistance and their heat. He pushes against the blackness—and stumbles into glaring brightness. "Holy plague!" Sable's eyes are burning and watering. A breathless "Captain?" next to him reminds him of Grenadier Moser. "Stay calm." The houses along the main street look like they were torn apart and stitched back together wrong, as if Sable was looking through splintered glass. When he turns his head, kaleidoscopic colors break from the walls. Ley lines cross the room in wide arcs, dispersing into gossamer that disappears into the sky. Mirrored faces limit sight. This is a Psychokinetic's bizarre palace.

A mountain of flesh hangs in the room before them, arms spread, chin and mouth surrounded by a nest of needles and hooks. The creature rises through the Filaments that resonate under its steps like plucked steel strings. A shot shatters the silence. The bullet races through the force fields, deflected a hundred times. For a moment, Sable sees himself and Moser passing by in an endless procession with smoking Trailblazers; then the image shifts, and a jolt goes through Moser. He doesn't scream when he falls to the floor, shot by his own bullet.

The Psychokinetic approaches. A rumble sounds from his barrel-shaped body. His chest shimmers red, jolts race through his body. The world contracts around the creature and Sable. Sable raises his weapon. The beast cannot dodge every bullet.

### STRENGTHENING

Sheer will rages and surrounds the Psychokinetic with an aura of infallibility and power. His victims don't dare raise a word or a hand against him, don't even dare to flee. They offer their body and their vitality to the Psychokinetic. That's what they were created to be: food for the gods.

**RULES:** The Psychokinetic enhances all Psyche Skills with Overloading from a basic score of 8D. He mainly uses the Overloaded PSY+Domination Skill to control his harvesting villages or to subdue attackers. Those who try to resist his influence and lose also lose (1 + Triggers) in Ego Points. The Strengthening lasts for (1 hour.

**DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE:**
Psyche

### PRIMAL

The energies circle through the body, ensnaring the solar plexus in incessantly tightening coils and finally pushing into it like stars into a black hole. The chest glows; threads of heat unfurl into arms and legs, whipping along the spine and into the brain. The tongue is sticky with the little legs of ticks, and the torn wings of flies tickle the palate. The Psychokinetic has received his plague and feels his Rapture awakening.

The energies circle through the solar plexus, his Chakra. Compression, extension. Only willpower keeps them in. Once the Psychokinetic frees them, they pour into dusty channels, make the body's meridians glow, burst into the rapids of the mind, which redirects and shapes them before they awaken undreamt-of forces within the Psychonaut, or manifest beyond the flesh as force fields.

Yet the energies are raw and untamed. A costal arch glows, the stubble on the shoulder curls, veins burst, and nerves atrophy. A small price for the power to become the center of the world.

### FOCUS

Psychokinetics believe in power, willpower, and independence. Energy moves the world, creates results, and enables spontaneity. Its goal is not to rule others but to unleash the powers within. Even if the Rapture fades due to de-sporeing, their will is never broken. They resist any dependence and any influences, they are lone wolves that don't need anybody.

### SYMBIOSIS

Psychokinetics command the parasites that draw power from other creatures: fleas, mosquitoes, leeches, bugs and tapeworms.

Their Earth Chakra lies entwined in force fields in the Nox Crater.

## KNOWN PHENOMENA

### LORD OF THE FIFTH PLAGUE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 1

The Psychokinetic spawn attacks humans and animals alike, feeding from its hosts until it falls off sated and bloated to stagger back to its master. The Psychokinetic devours the insects and thus takes in the stolen life energy.

This is why Psychokinetics often live close to villages, poisoning the water with tapeworm eggs and sending out fleas and mosquitoes. Like leeches, they cling to these tiny towns and bleed them dry.

**RULES:** The Psychokinetic can send his plague to regenerate faster. Close to small communities with 4 to 6 people, Trauma takes half as long to heal as usual. If he can send his plague against larger villages, he recovers (1) Trauma per day. If attackers do not destroy a Psychokinetic completely, he will retreat and bleed his village dry within a few days to recover as quickly as possible.

Powerful Psychokinetics like the Archon are surrounded by waves of fleas and mosquitoes equaling a swarm Strength of (10-15). Weaker Psychonauts are only infested by a handful of leeches, with Strength (1-4).

In combat, the Psychonaut can devour his plagues to recover (1) Flesh Wound and (1) spore infestation per point of swarm Strength absorbed. This devouring is not considered an Action.

### FATA MORGANA

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 3

The Psychokinetic breaks and folds space so that his silhouette fractures or blurs in front of the eyes of enemies. Dozens of mirror images flash, overlapping the original or shimmering next to it.

**RULES:** The Psychokinetic's Passive Defense rises by the Overload, to a maximum of (8). It is lowered by (1) at the end of every Combat Round until it returns to normal.

## FREE FLOW

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 4

The Psychokinetic channels his stored energy into organs and limbs, raising his performance to super-human levels.

**RULES:** Per Overload point, the Psychonaut's Attack rolls are raised by +1D until the end of the combat, although he takes the same amount of Flesh Wounds.

## NERVE HIT

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 5

The Psychokinetic hits his enemy in the chest with a fist and drives cracks of lightning into his body.

The initial charge opens a channel between the Psychokinetic's solar plexus and the nervous system of his victim. Massive energies surge over and throw the victim, convulsing in body-shaking spasms, to the floor.

**RULES:** The Psychokinetic must roll a Combination of activation and a Melee Attack roll. If he succeeds, the target takes Overload + Triggers in Ego Damage.

## RAGE EQUILIBRIUM

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 6

The harder the Psychokinetic is hit, the harder his counterattack hits.

**RULES:** This Phenomenon is automatically triggered at spore infestation (6). No Overload possible. Every point of Damage the Psychonaut takes is added to the Damage of his next melee attack.

## BLAST WAVE

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 8

The Psychokinetic channels his energy from his solar plexus to his hands. A clap discharges it in a blast that ruptures the enemy's eardrums, throwing them to the ground.

**RULES:** The blast wave spreads conically from the Psychokinetic. At its origin, it causes 1D + Overload Damage. Over the distance, the blast becomes weaker: the Damage is reduced by (1) per meter. The Psychokinetic determines the size of the cone.

## RIFT

The shadow on the rock wall is massive and too dark for noon. Blackness grows from it in crystalline structures. A Rift. It's a cocoon consisting of entangled force fields that absorbs light and warmth and directs them inwards. If a torch light were to be beamed at it, the light beam would not be visible. It's the perfect darkness. A Rift opens up its own physical space where the laws of nature do not necessarily apply. Rifts are often bigger on the inside than they appear on the outside. Gravity is changed or suspended, and can shift unpredictably. The captured light spreads as fibers along shining fractal paths. Sound doesn't spread, the air in the force field hangs in static bubbles, suffocating those who stand still. In the Rift, only the rules of the Psychokinetic apply. He can easily redirect any ranged attack towards his enemy. Only melee and area attacks have a chance to even hit him. His Passive Defense is (6), and he has +4D to all physical Actions.

## COMPRESSION

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 9

The Psychokinetic compresses the air around him to such a degree that the rapidly rising air pressure would make barometers burst. The ears hurt, and everyone who doesn't flee from the Aberrant's area of influence feels nauseous.

**RULES:** In a circle around the Psychokinetic (diameter = Overload in meters), people and animals have a general penalty of -2D for the current and the next Combat Round.

The pain in the ears and the nausea are unpleasant, but there is worse: the rapidly rising air pressure compresses the lungs. When the pressure suddenly decreases again, they rapidly expand, and their tissue ruptures. However, such Damage is caused only by an Overload of (10+). Every point of Overload above (10) causes (1) Trauma. Armor does not protect.

## LEVITATION

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 9

The Psychokinetic nestles into his force fields, clinging to them. His belly fat and the fat rings around his chest and arms rise, and the flesh wobbles around his bones as if he were free falling. At first, his toes still touch the ground, but then they lift off and the Psychokinetic glides upwards.

**RULES:** The Psychokinetic rises (1) m per Overload point, resting there for (1) Combat Round and then sinking (1) m per Round. This way, he escapes melee attacks.

## SPLINTER RING

**PHENOMENON LEVEL:** 10

The ground shakes, and dust is swirled up. Shards of rock and fist-sized stones rise in the air and start orbiting around their central body: the Psychokinetic. Larger pieces burst into shimmering splinter clouds, and dirt is thrown up. A layer of dirt is swept from any small objects in the vicinity; they jump across the ground, rising in the air and getting sucked into the vortex.

A high-pitched whining fills the air. To approach the Psychokinetic now means to risk being torn to pieces.

**RULES:** The Splinter Ring has a diameter of (3) m. Those who enter it take Damage equal to the Overload at the beginning of every Combat Round, reduced by armor. For the Psychokinetic, the ring is considered armor against ranged attacks with the Overload as Armor rating. The Psychokinetic can keep up the ring by sacrificing (1) point of spore infestation per Round.

## FILAMENTS

The Psychokinetic spins a web of compressed force lines that seem to crystallize and grow into razor-sharp clouds. Filaments are anchored in space; not even the worst storm makes them tremble. Rifts usually manifest on slopes or old buildings; although Psychokinetics prefer to weave Filaments in tectonically unstable zones like the Reaper's Blow. The thinnest threads are almost invisible, strung at knee or throat height: they are the most dangerous traps. If dirt is swirled up, the dust aggregating along the threads can be vaguely perceived with a successful roll on INS+Perception (4).

The only safe method is feeling for the Filaments with a staff. If a person walks into a strung thread of Filament, it deals (4) points of Damage to them, reduced by any armor they are wearing. If the armor fully absorbs the impact, the person merely stumbles back. For vehicles or mounts, the speed level is added to the Damage. Psychokinetics can walk through the Filaments unhurt and unhindered. Filament threads are resistant, but not indestructible: a weapon made of durable material like steel, stone, or ceramic that causes Damage of at least the Overload shatters the force line. This does not destroy all of the Filament, though.

If the Psychokinetic dies or loses consciousness, the Filament melts.

Nothing remains.

## VARIANT: HYLIKOI

The Hylikoi gazes at the purple sky, admiring the billowing, clear blue veils of electrons that the Earth's magnetic field bends into wisps. The stars glimmer coldly. He cocks his head. Violet tornadoes swirl around him. Arcs of energy reach from the horizon reach for the spore field, whipping across, returning as gleaming threads, darting into the inner ring, flickering, fading.

The Hylikoi takes a deep breath. Spores tickle his nose, feverish heat pulsing through his costal arches. He needs to use this good weather to full capacity.

Hylikoi got their name from the Anabaptists and their Neognosis. They see the Psychokinetics as people without Pneuma: mortal shells, hatched and filled with viciousness and vermin by the Demiurge.

A Hylikoi is constantly on the lookout for villages to harvest. If he finds one, he spins a Rift that protects the village from other hunters and sends out his plague. For months or years, he feeds on the bloated mosquitoes and ticks until the only thing the weakened, anemic villagers have to look forward to is their end. He moves on, leaving regions devoid of inhabitants in his wake.

### PROFILE: HYLIKOI

**INITIATIVE:** 12D / 6 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 12/16
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 4
**ATTACK:** Cannula spear, 7D, Distance 2 m, Damage 7, Special: If the Hylikoi rams this weapon into an enemy, blood is pressed into the hollow shaft. He can savor it. Per successful attack, he recovers (1) Flesh Wound that day.
**DEFENSE:** Passive 2 (Deflecting electric field lines)
Melee active (Block), Melee 7D
Ranged Combat active –
Mental 9D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 7D
**ARMOR:** Cotter mask, Armor 0
**CONDITION:** 16 (Trauma: 8)

## VARIANT: ARCHON

Their bodies are huge pale balloons riddled with reddened muscle. Their ribs are visible through the masses of fat at irregular intervals, pressing outwards as if they were the prison for something that has almost won its freedom. The sternum is swollen and feverishly hot. From it, veins meander across the torso, forming a knobby network right beneath the skin. Waves move through the masses of fat. These colossal figures are astonishingly nimble even without their Filament, but usually they simply scuttle through the crystalline web like giant spiders, condensing the space around them to new structures that suit their needs.

The Archons are surrounded by mosquitoes whose bodies color the Filaments black. This gives the humans a chance to notice the razor sharp threads in time.

### PROFILE: ARCHON

**INITIATIVE:** 16D / 6 Ego Points
**SPORE INFESTATION:** 22/22
**SPECIALTY:** Swarm Strength 14
**ATTACK:** Only uses Phenomena
**DEFENSE:** Passive 3 (Spatial dissonance)
Melee active –
Ranged Combat active –
Mental 12D (No effect in Primal phase)
**MOVEMENT:** 9D
**ARMOR:** Fat mass, Armor 2
**CONDITION:** 18 (Trauma: 8)

### KORONA

Korona fractures the light, commands matter, destroys. She cuts swaths into mountain flanks and spins the darkest Rifts. She developed her Rapture talent in the Earth Chakra for years before hunger drove her outside. She sated this hunger by devouring the Clans of the old city of Naples; according to legend, she spared only one girl who is now, 20 winters later, worshipped by many Purgans as "Saint Mary." No one knows where the young woman is at this point. However, there is a rumor that she is training to be a Sublime in Cathedral City—training to one day face Korona in battle.

CHAPTER 11

# TELLING THE STORY

# ADVENTURE CREATION

## THE UNCHARTED LAND

A person stands in a desert, eyes clear, wide awake, excitement brimming in their mind. Somewhere just over there horizon, gunfire beats a staccato rhythm through a jungle. Close by, but out of sight, Scrappers dig through a ruin, fighting against veils of dust and the hazards of the environment. A whole world exists just out of sight. The person in the desert is only one thought away from these and a thousand other places and stories. The only thing this person needs to do is to start walking.

This person is you. You have decided to breathe life into the rich world of Degenesis as a Game Master, to chase your friends' characters through webs of intrigue and push them into conflicts from which there is no easy way out. You make whole cities crumble to dust and direct Chernobog's rampaging horde. However, you also offer solutions and ways out, some promising redemption while others lead deeper down the rabbit hole.

At this point, there is only the desert. In this chapter, we'll tell you how to coax life from this wasteland - and cordially invite you to follow us on this path.

## THE ADVENTURE

We start with the adventure. An adventure is a story in which the characters will have to overcome obstacles and work towards a common goal, usually over the course of between one to three gaming sessions. An adventure often revolves around a single short-term issue or journey.

- The group joins a convoy to another city. Halfway to their goal, they are attacked by a Clan that is usually considered peaceful. What has happened? How do the characters react when they are accused of murdering these peaceful Clanners when they reach their destination?

- For days, a static beep has been sounding from all radios. The group triangulates the signal and finds a Bygone solar panel in the wasteland that has been recently uncovered by a storm and has been supplying electricity to a transmitter ever since. The characters gain access to the facility below. In the control center, they find stunning revelations about the last days before the Eshaton and manage to find a legendary artifact. However, a group of Cartel thugs are also tracking the signal, and are not far behind...

- A Judge's daughter has been kidnapped by Apocalyptics. The Advocate hires the characters via his network, commanding them to bring her back to him. They manage to hunt down his daughter in the Flotsam, an Apocalyptic den in Justitian, but not as a captive: she lies in the arms of a Magpie, and very much of her own accord. The Judge's orders were clear, what do the characters do?

## THE CAMPAIGN

Adventures create ripples in the world. The characters make friends or meet foes, become respected or feared. As soon as the results of one adventure influences the next, the characters have become part of a campaign.

With some planning, you can introduce enemies and let them grow into the characters' nemeses over the course of many adventures, building their own personality, strengths and weaknesses. However, a campaign can also aim high and deal with important secrets of the world. Every adventure is a stepping stone on the way to the final mystery.

- The characters have made enemies of the wrong people. The Advocate rages because they have allowed his daughter a life of her own in the claws of the Apocalyptics. He's deeply humiliated, and seeks revenge on the characters. He pulls some strings and calls in some favours, and the characters will need several adventures to sever them all and sleep easy again without worrying about a knife finding its way into their back.

- Deep in a Fractal Forest, the group finds a naked young man. He's confused, his memory fractured. He leads the characters to places from his past. Some are wondrous, waiting to be explored. Others are ruled by tyrants or overrun by savage Spore Beasts. The characters meet other young men who look just like their new companion - and are being hunted by Preservists. Finally, the group descends beneath the earth in Pollen, encounters the Czar's wild growth, and begin to uncover the truth.

## THE IDEA

At the beginning of an adventure, there is an idea or an emotion. Perhaps you've recently seen a film that intrigued you, or listened to a piece of music that evoked great emotion. Video games, books, and comics also make great sources of inspiration and can serve as the starting points of an adventure. Take the time to write down what you would like your story to touch on, which can include things such as people, themes, locations, items, and events. Not every aspect is critical at this stage, but they will all eventually play a part in the adventure.

### PEOPLE

People form the core of almost any story. They are the protagonists and the antagonists. Extras can add context or information to a game, and either endanger the characters or put them onto the right path.

At this point, you don't have to worry about goals, motivations, or what these characters would be willing to do or sacrifice to reach their goals. Jot down basic descriptions of at least two very different characters. Conflicts often arise from tension between two people or groups, which will enable you to easily match a plot to this hook later on.

- A brutal slaver in Africa
- An unsuccessful Scrapper
- A Hybrispanian spy in a Consul's court
- A sweets merchant in front of the Bank of Commerce
- A dead Judge who was known for being harsh
- A Psychonaut hunter back from his biggest kill

### THEMES

Themes differ from events in that they tend to be more general and tend to cover an entire adventure as opposed to certain scenes. They are part of the background, and influence how people act and behave.

- Abundance in the face of bitter poverty
- Xenophobia fueled through false accusations
- Readiness to make sacrifices
- War on the horizon fueled by treason
- Religious zeal

### LOCATIONS

Players will remember the crumbling bridge held up the a Psychokinetic's force fields or the shimmering projection of a Bygone city in the Hybrispanian jungle far after the game session ends. Locations are just as essential to a story as the characters. They are visual anchors or milestones on the way to a goal. They influence the progress of an adventure actively or passively. They can be explored, they offer shelter from both the elements and attackers, and they make certain actions possible. Try to describe all senses and fuel the Players' imaginations.

You should think about the adventure's locations for key landmarks, for the potential to explore and improvise. As with characters, including contrasting locations is a simple but effective way to introduce or visualise conflicts: when a Neolibyan's opulent palace is contrasted to the slave camps outside his walls, the Players will understand exactly why an insurrection is just around the corner.

- An ancient hollow tree hidden within a ruined building, only accessible through the wreckage.
- An empty fortress in the wasteland, its walls covered in paintings and scribblings telling ts history.
- A lawless border region where no one has even heard of the Judges, but everyone knows the name of every dust storm within the last few centuries
- A pit fighting arena in Justitian
- A blooming Fractal Forest
- A part of Danzig abandoned by its inhabitants
- A Cave Bear's den
- An Apocalyptic bar in a large museum hall, centered around a taxidermied mammoth
- A rich village neibouring a village in crippling poverty.
- A Pheromancer Ziggurat
- A camp left deserted by Chernobog's horde

### ITEMS

An artifact or a special weapon can be both a threat or a reward, and it can be both promised or stolen. They can be tied to the story, simply be part of a location.

- An AMSUMO's intelligence core. It was salvaged in East Borca, and now a Needle wants it
- A nanite cartridge cracked and showing signs of fractal growth. It must be removed from the village, and fast
- A missing shipment of Judgment hammers
- A cart full of explosives
- A knife made from the crystallized bones of a Sleeper
- An alleged cure for a new and deadly plague

### EVENTS

An event usually has a set timeframe and forces the characters to confront a challenge or deal with a dangerous or compromising situation. Events are related to the themes of the adventure, and often are used to introduce them.

Events form the skeleton of an adventure's plot, but in the end some bones must be taken out or moved around.

- Someone is publicly accused of committing a crime
- Clanners attack a village
- An escaped slave tries to hide amongst the characters
- An explosion destroys the Judges' ammunition storage
- A peddler comes into a city, selling stolen goods

## A GOOD STORY

A long list doesn't make a good game, but it's a good start. You can begin anywhere: pick a theme or a person, relate them to each other, and see what happens. We recommend starting with the people and developing the plot around them, to ensure the characters matter to the story.

## BELIEVABLE CHARACTERS

People are trouble, all across the world, all the time. This is true today, and it's not going to be any different even 500 years after a global apocalypse. Conflicts arise from the interaction of people, and they're inevitably resolved - through any means available. They are the main characters of any plot, and their motives are reflections of the themes of the story.

To truly understand the characters and let them react according to the development of the plot, you should try to understand their personalities. As a first step, you can breathe life into them using the triad of Culture, Cult, and Concept, but there is another important question that is at the core of any character:

What do they want, and what would they be willing to do to reach that goal?

Interesting stories often revolve around characters that have goals or desires that they want to obtain or complete, and that have something or someone obstruct or otherwise impede their goals.

- Shard, a Scrapper, is head over heels in love with the beautiful Hagari, Jasmina. He desperately wants to make a gift for the women of his dreams, but a Scrapper giving a gift to a Jehammedan woman like her would only bring trouble to her door, not to mention he'd likely catch a beating from her family. Thus, he contacts the characters, asking them to hand over his gift as an uninvolved third party and ensuring the tribe's sleazy watchdogs don't trace it back to him.

- The Advocate Artjom Manteufel is investigating the corrupt Executioner Levantis. He has been dreaming of a career as Commissioner for a long time and wants to prove to everyone in his family that he too has a calling. But it is hard to find proof against Levantis. The Executioner knows he is under investigation. Artjom loses his patience. He wants to quicken the process and orders the characters to place false proof in Levantis' quarters.

- Ajax the Pheonix wants his power back. His goal is a new realm of shadows, made up of trade routes under his control, high profits, deadly weapons, and a new fortified nest. He's aiming high. Ajax needs recruits for his plan, and as potential - and inexperienced - mercenaries, the characters are just the people he's looking for. They don't ask questions, and even if they do... well, they can be dealt with. Ajax has sampled the nectar of power once. Leniency has cut him off from his supply. He won't make the same mistake twice.

## NOMEN EST OMEN

Names are important. They reflect the bearer's social status, and convey a mood. As such, they should be chosen carefully.

Culture is an important influence here, offering a framework of typical regional suffixes or sounds.

The Internet can be a valuable tool to assist you, if you have no idea about Balkhan names some inspiration will easily be found by searching for "Slavic first names."

The Cult must also be taken into account. For example, Borcan Spitalians often have different names than Scrappers from the same region. You can tell a Neolibyan from a Scourger simply by looking at their names.

Finally, epithets like "the Breaker of Bassham," "the Rat," "the Butcher," or "the Madman" can help to characterise someone in a few choice words. They make the character stand out from the crowd without forcing the Game Master to talk about them for minutes on end.

- **SPITALIANS:** Usually first name and family name, often preceded by a rank ("Famulancer Alma Martinova").
- **CHRONICLERS:** Names inspired by computers and technology, possibly with numerical suffixes ("Delete").
- **HELLVETICS:** Rank and family name. The family name is often simple and short. Name affixes containing the preferred operation site or the place of birth are also popular, but they are used in conjunction with the first name ("Helena of Timmelsjoch").
- **JUDGES:** The Protectors prefer to use a first name only, also with a name affix. The Advocates' traditionalism can be shown through old German or other unusual first and family names ("Artjom Manteufel").
- **CLANNERS:** Extremely variable, depending on Tech Level. Savage tribes prefer martial names that sound harsh and do not contain many syllables. The civilized or high-tech Clans tend to use a standard combination of first and family name.
- **SCRAPPERS:** Names from the field of experience often gained during their life: the guy who sleeps under a sign reading "Sable" will at some point become "the Sable." Bygone brand names are just as common as job denominations ("Punch," "Stoker," "Clockmaker," "Tanner") and animal names ("Fox," "Lobo").
- **NEOLIBYANS:** A single African name, often with three or more syllables, preferably in combination with the place of birth ("of Syracuse").
- **SCOURGERS:** Short African first name, usually with less than three syllables, but combined with a martial honorific ("the Hunter," "the Bloodhound," "the Paw").
- **ANUBIANS:** Name referring to ancient Egyptian pantheon, usually with rank affix ("Ezenwa the Hogon").
- **JEHAMMEDANS:** Use the Old Testament and add the birth rank as family name ("Elias Ismaeli"). It is common to change or add something to your name when rising in rank—Iconides usually have a second first name.
- **APOCALYPTICS:** Only a first name, sometimes with rank affix. Some choose an honorific honorific ("the Mother of Ravens"), although Magpies prefer names with potentially positive associations ("Jasmine," "Amber").
- **ANABAPTISTS:** Biblical or mythological names, sometimes Latinized("Altair," "Vincent").
- **PALERS:** Usually a simple first name only. Demagogues choose an affix characterizing their form of demagogy ("Mesnik the Butcher").

## THE POWER OF CLICHÉS

When a Scrapper stumbles upon a group of Apocalyptics, he runs as fast as he can. His learned cliché of the predatory birds along with his quick reactions save his life.

Clichés are born from experience and help to break down complex situations into more easily understandable ones, allowing the characters to act appropriately. As such, they are a powerful Game Master tool to make an alien world digestible to the Players.

It's simple: Neolibyans are greedy, Scrappers dirty and corrupt, Spitalians arrogant assholes, Chroniclers incompatible with others. The Game Master will find that these clichés quickly take root in the Players' heads as they develop a general, but superficial, world view.

The characters develop patterns of behavior: they scoff at Chroniclers and regard Palers as potential traitors, adopting the general views of each Cult.

Now the Game Master can paint the characters of his story with broad strokes of the brush, a colorful Primal Punk picture where Psychonauts are deadly and Judges mercilessly fight for their own interests. But once someone breaks from the cliché, they emerge from the crowd. The Players react with interest. They feel that this character might become important in the story.

Through the interaction of cliché and uniqueness, the Game Master puts the focus on the game's important events. However, this should be done sparingly: if everyone is special, the Players will simply get used to it.

- The Spitalian who's in love with a Pheromancer and protects her with his life
- An emotional and friendly Chronicler bursts into tears whenever he encounters the characters because he has been worried for them
- An Apocalyptic Phoenix with a code of honor reining in his Flock, stopping its excesses, and forming it into a highly organized criminal organization
- The Judge who has lost faith in the Codex and hopes to find redemption in Jehammed's teachings

## FORMALITIES

Even if the characters are faced with a walking representation of a cliché the Game Master can still breathe life and individuality into them, or reinforce the impression he wants to create, by using quirks, vocal tics, or some other easily identifiable feature of the character's appearance or behaviour. These could be used to add some humor to a character, or to reinforce a dangerous tone.

- The character never shuts up
- The character has unusually large and soft hands
- The character closes their eyes when others talk
- The character has lice and often scratches their hair
- The character's breath is worse than anything the group has has ever smelled
- The character speaks with their hands, making flamboyant gestures to emphasise every statement
- The character talks unusually slowly and softly, so much so that the group has to actively strain to hear their words
- The character stares at people for long seconds in silence before answering, but gets annoyed if anyone interrupts their thinking time

Each of these characteristics can reflect or show something about their owner's character. At the same time, they anchor the character in the Players' memories. "Oh yeah, the guy with the mouth rot!"

## NOT HUMAN

Animals, AMSUMOs, and Psychonauts are also great characters. Their motives may seem very strange to most humans, but they are very logical within their own frame of reference.

- Gendos, mammoths and other beasts protect their pack or their heard, all their senses and motives geared purely toward survival.
- AMSUMOs follow ancient programs, protecting places that have fallen to ruin and patrolling streets that time has crushed into dust. Artificial intelligence uninfluenced by morals is all that drives these renegade machines. To them, people are nothing more than environmental parameters: life has no meaning.
- Psychonauts spread the Sepsis and protect the spore fields from harm. Each Rapture acts in different ways: Psychokinetics build Rifts and see them as their creations, the Dushani shape mountains, riverbeds, and forests to transport the sound of their songs , and Pheromancers command hives of insects and humans to construct towering Ziggurats to spread their influence. All of them have one thing in common, they work on their version of a new world. While their feelings and reactions are controlled and triggered by the Chakra collective, some Psychonauts have managed to cling to some residual individuality, putting their motivations in the realm of the human.

## THE BALANCE OF POWER

We have characters, events, and locations. We have an idea. But we don't have plot hooks yet.

So we take our characters and jot down their names randomly on a piece of paper. We leave some space between them. Every character represents a center of power. Maybe a Hellvetic is backed by his whole Cult, or maybe he's only backed by his village.

A character's background could include the following:

### CULTURE

The character represents the ideals of a Culture and acts according to its best interests: a Judge protecting Borca from the Clans, a Voivode seeing it as his calling to break the influence of the Purgans and Pollners in his country.

### CULT OR CLAN

The character represents a Cult, a pack, or a Clan: a Spitalian in a village hospital wants to bring the doctors' wisdom to the savages, a Neolibyan has joined the Spitalians in their crusade against the Psychovores and thus betrayed his people, but acts in the best interest of the Bank of Commerce.

### CONCEPT

As soon as a Concept dominates every thought, it becomes an ideology. The mind loses the battle against passion: the healer sees decay everywhere and fights it while the righteous traces a line between the good and the bad, canonizing and demonizing.

### HUMANITY

Spitalians and Anabaptists claim to serve humanity. But a character acting against this backdrop rises above propaganda and talk and really makes a difference. A Scrapper finds a spore field in Borca: if he doesn't act, it will grow underground and develop into a Mother spore field. Borca would be lost for humankind.

### PRIMER

The Primer's plan is based on continuous evolution that keeps on reinventing itself. It's neither good nor bad, but it's still a threat to humankind. Those who represent the Primer aid the spread of the Sepsis and the Psychovores or are imbued with the collective's Chakra call.

Now we draw lines between the names. They represent interaction. Scrapper-Hellvetic? The Hellvetic was hired to protect a group of scavengers, the Scrappers pay him to do so. Spitalian-Scourger? The Spitalians guarantee the Scourgers' safety in the area, the Scourgers have entrusted themselves to the doctors' care, but they do not really trust them.

We've described the status quo. The powers are in balance. How boring. Let's shake things up.

## CONFLICT

Every story, and thus every adventure, consists of a series of conflicts that that protagonists must face. A conflict may be solved, postponed, or lost, but regardless of the outcome the conflict drives the story and pushes the characters towards a grand final conflict.

Conflicts form the base of every story, every adventure, and every scene. That is why we pick one line from the web of interactions and plant discord. The most fundamental conflicts between people are “Mismatched Perceptions”, “Scarcity”, “Humiliation”, and “Transgression”. We will explain each and give some examples below.

The fifth type of conflict doesn’t need a human antagonist: the conflict between the human and the hostile environment.

### DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

Different parties always see a situation from different angles. None of the perspectives are necessarily right or wrong, they are simple a result of historical influences, the level of information possessed, or personal predilections.

- **WORLD VIEW / RELIGION:** Ideologies are based on ancient sets of rules that are man-made, but have risen to truth due to their age or the amount of sacrifices made to them. No one likes to hear that everything he believes in is just nonsense.

- **SENSE OF JUSTICE:** Without the continuous hard work of Justitian’s Providers, the citizens would go hungry. Still, the Providers don’t get any recognition. Instead, the Judges are celebrated like heroes for every skirmish they survive. War is more important than sustenance. The Providers don’t like that. An insurrection is just around the corner.

- **CONFLICT OF THE GENERATIONS:** The elders have turned the ideals of their time into strict codes of conduct and forced them onto the young—who aren't going to take it. An Ismaeli in love could flee with a Saraeli. Or the son of a hardened Protector might accuse his father of never having even tried to talk to the warriors of the Cockroach Clan.

- **MAN / WOMAN:** Men and women want different things from life. The Abrami expects his Saraeli to be chaste and possess a dignified bearing, but she wants to explore herself and the world.

### SCARCITY

Resources are almost always limited. If the distribution of things changes, at least one side has to make do with less. But that's not always enough to survive.

Scarcity is not only a material problem: sentimental values can also become scarce.

- **DECREASE OF POWER:** The Flayers in Purgare lessen the influence of the Anabaptists, whose Neognosis is suddenly questioned. The Voivodes in the Balkhan monopolize all power and exclude the Voivodates and the Cults.

- **LOSS OF SECURITY:** La Campeadoras’ attacks destroy the social fabric between Africans and the European denizens of the Alandalusian cities. These Hybrispanians have to expect attitudes towards them shifting on a daily basis, possibly resulting in them having to take the road to Gibraltar as slaves.

- **FOOD:** Two Scrappers in the wasteland, but only one of them has a bag full of bread crusts and a few roots, and not enough to share. Only one of them will see the next sunrise.

- **ECONOMIC STATUS:** The Neolibyan lived in luxury, he was held in high regard in his village. It's a shame that he has lost huge parts of his enterprise to his competitors, but it’s like a slap in the face that he suddenly has to cut down his spending.

- **FREEDOM:** Yesterday, the Balkhani farmer was peaceful, caring for his family and his fields. Today, he is being dragged away in chains by a squad of African Scourgers.

### HUMILIATION

Humiliation damages a character’s perception of themself. Another person can purposefully try and humiliate the character, but it can also arise from a shocking or traumatic experience.

- **FIGHTS FOR RANK AND EXCLUSION:** The Spitalian Surgeon thinks that his colleague's performance is lacking, and loudly wonders why he was allowed into the ranks of the Spitalians at all. This colleague’s reputation dwindles by the word.

- **PROVOCATION:** The Anabaptist knew his joke about the Saraeli's chest would land. The Jehammedan’s face is red with anger and shame, his fists clenched, ready for the fight.

### TRANSGRESSION

Everyone has their own personal red lines and breaking points, another person would do better to not cross them.

- **INTERVENTION INTO THE LIGHT OF THE CLAN:** When somebody hurts someone you love, your protective instinct kicks in. You'll go to any lengths to see that retribution is dealt accordingly.

- **MORALS / ETHICS:** What is good? What is evil? Codes of morals and ethics keep society together, but they also exclude. Some see human sacrifices as a necessity and teem with rage when the victims are freed. A Judge grabs his counterpart and wrestles him down for having spit on the ground in front of his feet and thus showing a lack of respect.

### HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

The world of Degenesis is a dangerous place even without other people, and any expedition outside of a town carries risks that must be accounted for.

- **SURVIVAL:** The characters will have to fight through hunger, cold, heat, sheer distance to the next town.

- **FORCES OF NATURE:** A mountainside crashes down, a blizzard draws near. Storms, floods, collapsing bridges, a growing Fractal Forest, the toxic swathes of the Reaper's Blow, or a swarm obscuring the sun: thousands of dangers lie in ambush for travelers.

- **BEASTS:** Deadly creatures roam the land, including Gendos, Psychonauts, and Spore Beasts.

## ESCALATION

The conflict tears at the web of interactions as the centers of power shift to the main parties in conflict with each other. Support is cancelled, oaths of fealty are sworn and broken, threats fly, and desperate cries for peace go unanswered. This phase is important to an adventure, for it outlines the background and helps to bridge gaps in the plot later on.

The characters enter this difficult stage as another power center. An NPC tosses them a line of interaction. This is where the adventure begins.

## THE PLOT

We have our conflict and the characters involved with it. However, there are still a few important questions to answer.

### HOW DO THE CHARACTERS GET INVOLVED?

The characters could be hired to mediate the conflict or to fight on one of its sides. As a reward, Drafts, artifacts, and Renown await. This is the weakest but simplest method to involve characters. Predicaments are another simple hook: the characters are accused of murder and have to defend themselves, they are quarantined against their will, or get stuck in a valley due to a rock fall. If the Players identify strongly with their characters, the Game Master can use their Concepts: a "Healer" won't tolerate that Spitalians are handing out blankets infected with the plague to Clanners, an "Adventurer" simply has to explore that forgotten valley.

### IS THE GREATEST CONFLICT ALSO THEIR OWN CONFLICT?

On the map of power centers and interactions, a conflict that overshadows all others is obvious. Even if the characters become involved in it, this conflict does not have to be their own conflict. They only try to survive it. For example, a Clan attack stops the characters from pulling an old friend out of an Apocalyptic dive. The larger conflict becomes an important factor and an obstacle, but the characters cannot directly solve it.

### WHAT DO THEY WANT, AND HOW DO THEY GET IT?

How can the conflict be solved? What is the goal of the adventure?

- Vanquishing the source of the conflict (the antagonist) in battle
- Find proof against him and use it to discredit him
- Uncover a secret that changes the conflict
- Mediate between the two sides
- Find an artifact that one of the sides wants
- Escape or survive
- Explore a landscape, a ruin, or some facility and report the findings

## SCENES

If the plot is a rough timeline of our adventure, then scenes are the detailed entries. The Game Master prepares them by making notes regarding the location of the scene, the mood, the events, the characters involved, and any special rules they expect to need. Scenes should always

further the plot in some way. They present the antagonists or allow the characters to create opportunities to face them, and obstacles are overcome or clues found, all depending on the plot arc.

In our collection of ideas, locations wait to be used. Now, we set the stage and fill them with characters ready for the Players to interact with.

- The characters are hired by a Judge in a bustling market
- During a rowdy pit fight, they try and investigate the organizer.
- In a looted village hospital, they encounter a Spitalian who will later develop into an enemy.
- They bluff their way past a Janite, talking him into letting them into the Great Library.
- Usudi attack a farm in the Balkhan, and the characters must help the defenders.

### CONFLICTS

There are only very few scenes without conflict, be it a discussion, a trial of strength, or a deadly battle. Some can be role-played or resolved by good ideas, others need rolls.

- The Judge who hires the characters does not trust them and must be persuaded.
- If the characters search for information too openly, they attract attention and endanger themselves.
- The Spitalian forces the characters into a compromising situation by slipping them Burn.
- The Janite has orders to let no one enter the Great Library.

Every conflict should have its consequences. If a Neolibyan has to answer to the Bank of Commerce for the loss of a Surge Tank, this is just as risky for him as a pit fight is for an Apocalyptic.

Social defeats, potentially expressed in game through the loss of Background points, can be as painful as a bullet wound.

### COMBAT

In combat, the location is just as important as one of the characters. The Game Master has to see to it that he allows ruthless duels, but also offers hiding places and special maneuvers: the fighter can hide in the high grass, kick the enemy off a bridge, or throw dust in his face. He crawls through trenches and gets an Initiative bonus due to the surprise. He jumps on his enemy from the top of a cliff. He topples a cart for cover or rolls it into the enemy's emplacement.

The Game Master should reward Player creativity by applying Initiative bonuses or adjusting the Difficulty of an Action roll. Reckless or dangerous actions should be rewarded with equally potent results, although idiocy always invites punishment.

### SEQUENCE

Scenes are not necessarily played through in a set sequence. If the characters move from building to building within a settlement or travel overland, they can visit or avoid various places. A sketch or a map showing the important places and scenes can help with keeping track. Often, certain scenes must be played to get on with the story, they practically unlock new scenes.

## THE THREE-ACT STORY

Almost every adventure can be split into three stages: the Exposition, the Aggravation, and the Solution. Within each act, certain events can take place.

## ACT I: EXPOSITION

During the Exposition stage, the characters are drawn into the adventure. They explore their surroundings and observe. Their background knowledge of what they see is practically nonexistent. They encounter some important characters, but they cannot judge their importance, and the NPCs have no way of knowing which side of the conflict that characters will fall on.

### POTENTIAL ASPECTS

- They're forced to choose sides in the brewing conflict.
- An NPC warns the characters of the consequences of their actions and advises them to retreat.
- The characters find an item that will be needed in the showdown or is very valuable to the antagonist.
- They witness an atrocity and understand exactly what this conflict does to people.
- The antagonist humiliates the characters, or directly hinders their progress in some way.
- The characters receive a dark omen, portents of a terrible future - or at least, that's one interpretation.
- The characters meet an NPC who acts as their mentor. Later he may be revealed to be an antagonist working from the shadows, or develop into one in response to the actions of the characters.

### ACTUAL SCENES

- A Node spins a distortion of time around the characters and lets them experience a potential outcome of the conflict. The characters have to break the illusion through sheer force of will.
- An Apocalyptic pushes a package into one of the characters' hands, before being chased away by Judges. A location is scribbled on the otherwise blank surface of the package.
- The characters watch a squad of Preservists specifically pick people from the crowd. No one knows where these people go, only that they never return. The Preservists almost pick one of the characters, before being told they have enough already.

## ACT II: AGGRAVATION

The characters reach the middle of the adventure. Now, they can judge the two sides and work their way forward. In this second and largest stage, the scenes are geared towards understanding the conflict and laying down the groundwork for further events. Speed, excitement, and resistance all build up towards the climax.

### POTENTIAL ASPECTS

- The characters are shown or find information that reveals the true consequences of the conflict.
- Twists: Nothing is as it seems. Friends become enemies—or the other way around.
- Initiation: The characters must pass a test to be allowed into one of the factions.
- No way back: The conflict reaches its climax. The only way is forward.
- The first serious confrontation with the antagonist. The antagonist triumphs, or flees to return in force later.
- The group meets potential allies who can help them in their adventure, or runs into enemies that can add additional complications.

### ACTUAL SCENES

- From a tower, a sniper fires at the characters. They run from cover to cover and finally reach the tower. The shooter flees, but has to leave his rifle behind.
- The characters know now what was in the package, but it's found its way back to the Judges' possession again. The next day, it will be brought into Judgment Hall as evidence, so there is only one night left to enter the barracks and steal it.
- The Apocalyptic will only see the characters if they put up a good show in the pit fights. Either a character faces the Battle Crows in the pit, or he claims to be a legendary fighter from somewhere else and persuades the guards of the truth of his claim.

## ACT III: SOLUTION

Now the characters have everything they need to vanquish the antagonists, they've come to the end of their journey. Here they face one final challenge. Act III is usually very short and condensed, consisting of only a few scenes that each have a massive impact.

### POTENTIAL ASPECTS

- The final obstacle in the characters path can finally be overcome.
- Second wind: The enemy appears to be dead, but he rears up one final time to give it all that he's got.
- Victory celebration: The characters are recognised for their actions.
- The antagonist has nowhere to go and his lackeys are lying dead on the ground. One last, desperate combat ensues.
- Wrong time: People come running to thank the characters, but the enemy is not yet defeated, and the crowd makes it harder to fight him or resolve the conflict.

### ACTUAL SCENES

- The characters present the proof against the Judge. He loses all his superiority and attacks the characters like a savage beast.
- They have reached the darkest depths of the catacombs and see the artifact in the breeding chamber of the Cockroach Clan. The shaman appears to have fled, but in fact, she's about to unlock the Kings' cages and send them into the breeding chamber.
- The AMSUMO was attacked with sledgehammers, lured into booby-traps, and finally buried under a steel beam. The characters are haggard, wounded, and relieved. But when they approach the supposed wreckage, the AMSUMO's eyes light up once more. The machine climbs to its battered feet and staggers towards them...

## INFORMATION

If the location is not completely unknown, or hasn't been kept secret over the centuries, characters can remember it with an Action roll on INT+Legends or INS+Orienteering. Who's in charge here? What is produced? Is Burn accepted? The more Triggers they receive, the more they penetrate the noise of common knowledge and reach the realm of special information, becoming familiar with old feuds and finding the names of those who pull the strings.

With the "Network" and "Secrets" Backgrounds added to social interaction as extra dice, they can also find like-minded individuals and get up-to-date information or ask for help. "Secrets" only works on other people of the same Cult in the discussion of Cult issues. "Network" mainly supplies rumors and tells you where to buy equipment or Burn. It is the ticket into the world of thieves or resistance fighters.

## THE END

Every adventure deserves an emotional ending. An ally is buried, there is a joyous celebration in a rescued village, or the characters go their separate ways after one last drink to their time together. The characters have to see that what they have achieved will influence the world or the people around them to know that they have accomplished something.

- Mothers name their children after the characters.
- The trade routes are open again. The first merchants return, and wealth is growing.
- The citizens of Justitian nod to the characters. In alleyways where there was once a heavy silence, there is laughter again.

## REWARDS

In a well that has gone dry, the characters find a rifle wrapped in oiled cloth—over 500 years old, yet good as new. In a Dispenser, they decode a portal control panel and can thus get their hands on a Cataract Sun Disc. Material treasure is that extra something. Through it, the Game Master can motivate the Players, lure them with a fistful of ammo, and promise greater artifacts at the end of the adventure.

As a rule of thumb: in 1 out of 4 scenes, something worth under 500 CD can be found or salvaged.

Every 10 scenes, the characters gain possession of an item that is worth up to 1,000 CD. Everything else is extremely rare and could be the focus of an adventure. Sun Discs and Soul Burners aren't just found lying around by the roadside.

## EXPERIENCE

The characters have experienced a lot, and that brings them Experience Points (XP) at the end of the adventure. The XP granted depends on the key scenes of the adventure, their outcome, and the personal achievements and risks of the respective characters.

- Survived a key scene: +1 XP
- Scene ended exceptionally well (for all characters): +1 XP
- Exceptional performance in the scene (individual): +1 XP
- Reached the end of the adventure: +2 XP
- End of a campaign: number of adventures x2 XP

## NEW ENEMIES

The adventures the characters undertake are embedded into a living world. The greater their deeds, the more they are recognised as powerful figures. For some, they are saints, but for others, they are the spawn of the Demiurge.

They don't know it yet, but they are part of a group of like minded individuals in opposition to a group of people who think differently. Enemies from earlier adventures bide their time, gathering their forces and plotting revenge. With every adventure the characters manage to survive, it becomes easier and easier for the Game Master to plan the next one. He can pick and choose from a growing army of old enemies or allies, and can present old themes from a new angle.

- The convicted corrupt Judge didn't act alone, he was merely a pawn in a bigger game. A Senator pulls the strings and has to get rid of the characters before they put two and two together.
- The artifact salvaged from the Cockroach breeding cave should never have resurfaced. A Chronicler Paradigma had the Clanners steal it for a good reason.

## THE CAMPAIGN

There are numerous links an adventure presents. You can use them and turn them into a campaign. After two or three adventures, the Game Master can judge whether there is a central conflict and how it can be developed and resolved over the course of several adventures.

### POTENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

- Fall of the Supreme Judge: A Senator wants to take over. In an adventure, the characters hear that someone from Justitian is helping Cockroaches to weaken an influential Protector. In another adventure, they try to track this person down and are exiled from Justitian as murderers. In exile, they gather the Senator's opponents and fight against traitors in their own ranks. In the next adventure, they enter Justitian through ancient tunnels and have to oppose the Judges, who see them as enemies of the city, while the Senator prepares to assassinate the Supreme Judge.

- Fragile Peace: A Scourger and a Guerrero are caught in a time distortion together. They have to cooperate to avoid ending up in a Node's collection of curios. They manage to escape, but outside, they are subject to the constraints of their Cultures again. The characters search for the Scourger and the Guerrero to remind them of their common past in the Warpage, of the cooperation and the friendship that ensued. The group has to stop assassins and escort the Scourger through enemy country. On one hand, they are attacked by the Consuls, on the other hand, they face down La Campeadora

## BALANCE OF POWER

The Game Master plays with the Players, not against them. Therefore, you should devise challenges that are hard, but not impossible, to overcome with the characters' Skills. The enemies the characters face should be chosen and never mindlessly sacrificed. If they are significantly stronger than the characters, here are some possible ways to compensate.

- Terrain advantages such as higher ground
- A chance for the characters to set traps all over the area and lure their opponents into them
- A weakness of the enemy or support by a third party for the characters

## GIVE IT TO THEM

A drawn map, a document from a Judge, or a Voivode's pass on the gaming table add more to the atmosphere than the most verbose description. If possible and necessary, the Game Master should sketch locations ("Show me where you look for cover."), not merely have discussions ("But I thought..."), and everyone will know at once where a character is positioned relative to his enemies.

Parts of a diary, maps of findings, coded radio transmissions, or excerpts from gazettes demand a lot of preparation, but it's these small details that make the game world come alive in the heads of the Players.

## LEEWAY

No plan survives first contact with the Players. That's why the Game Master should only plan key scenes that are important for the plot arc and have a high probability of happening when designing an adventure. If the Game Master clings to his plan, he forces a certain path through the adventure onto the Players, and the thrill of role-playing is gone. The Game Master must act flexibly and accept alternative paths to the conclusion, or even change the conclusion to one that better suits the game actually played instead of the one planned.

As such, it's all the more important that he gets a firm idea of his adventure during preparation. He needs to really understand his NPCs and their motives instead of having them say prefabricated sentences.

# HINTS FOR GAME MASTERS

## TYPES OF PLAYERS

When playing Degenesis, Players want to experience success. However, success means different things to different people. Some optimize their character to create the perfect fighter and hunger for the next skirmish, seeing Degenesis as a board game with rules for dice. Other Players actively role-play their characters and love to interact with other inhabitants of the world. Still others like the story that is gradually revealed by the characters and that they can influence and develop.

All these motives are just as valid as each other, but the Game Master has the challenge of identifying his Player's wishes and making sure that everyone receives their due.

### THE FIGHTER

This Player doesn't really care for the story: he cares for tangible conflict. He knows the combat rules by heart and is looking for a perfect combination of combat Skills and Potentials. As long as his character can advance against the enemy in every gaming session or there are predominantly action scenes in the adventure, he's content.

### THE DETERMINED

This Player prefers a certain kind of character that they'll recreate over and over again in any game. Usually, his characters are modelled after a book or film that particularly fascinated him. Often the Determined also acts out his inner convictions when role playing. Through a combination of Culture, Concept and Cult, it should be possible for him to recreate any desired character.

The Determined usually also has traits of another Player type.

### THE STRATEGIST

Any conflict can be solved through the perfect plan. The Strategist loves the big picture, he proceeds tactically and organizes the group. He's most happy when there is a secret to uncover or an enemy's plan to thwart.

### THE ACTOR

The Actor wants to play his character. He modulates his voice, is fully dedicated. He's usually unnerved by the Fighter who prefers a roll of the dice to a detailed description of an attack. The Actor's character is often carefully fleshed out. Its background offers a lot of campaign links for the Game Master. The Actor loves acting out scenes. When the other Players start grabbing their smartphones, checking emails and sending messages, the Game Master has to interrupt the Actor: "Alright, you buy the Burn, you eat and then go to sleep. Who takes first watch?"

### THE FASCINATED

A story unfolds before the eyes of the Player, and he watches it intently. All of his actions carry meaning for the character and for the outcome of the story. He is fascinated by that. He wants to create a world and sees Degenesis as a sort of freeform novel. He is happy when his character builds dives, expands bunkers, fortifies villages, or changes the world in some way.

### THE FOLLOWER

For the Follower, role-playing is an opportunity to meet friends and acquaintances. The game itself is less important to him. Maybe he is inexperienced or hasn't really found access to it yet. To help him, the Game Master can make the Follower's character the center of attention of the story for a while and grant him his 15 minutes of fame. Another possibility would be that the Follower has created a character that doesn't appeal to him and that he has fallen quiet because of this. The Game Master should address this and allow him to make a new character.

## 15 MINUTES OF FAME

Every character is equally important. The Game Master should give everyone opportunities to bask in his specialties: the Scourger takes down a Dushani in a hail of gunfire, the Chronicler opens a sealed Bygone door, the Paler sneaks up to an enemy and takes him out without a sound, the Neolibyan manages to secure a great deal using some underhanded tactics.

This takes preparation. You might have to augment pregenerated adventures or identify appropriate scenes.

IN
HOC
SIGNO
VINCES

[CONSTANTINE]

# BLACK OPS

## THE SIGNAL

The Botew is the highest peak of the Balkhan Mountains. On its top, a radio mast pierces the clouds, built by the Voivode of Sofia, the Karakhan. He regularly climbs the mountain, unlocks the station, and checks transmission power and frequency. He is alone. It's warm in the station, megawatt generators humming. When he rolls up his sleeves, he looks at a web of black veins emerging from a three-digit number on the back of his hand. It could be a 400, but it's faded and covered up with a slightly off-center 600 and yet another 100.

The mast has been sending a signal for months. It was received loud and clear.

Chernobog is already on his way. But he's not the only one: dish aerials in Britain have also received the signal, as have a network of radio reception masts in Greece. Arianoi are already roaming Sofia. The reception stations in the Cluster have also registered the signal. While the Chroniclers work to decipher it, two of their Fragments know very well what the message contains. They also know that they are unprepared for what's to come.

## A STAR WILL FALL

Over 20 years ago, an alleged star fell from the sky, crashed down in the Ramein region, and smashed the capital of the ruling Taunar caste. The unrest that followed terminated the Taunar rule and handed the scepter over to the Mechan Clan and the warrior caste of the Pneumancers.

Only it wasn't a star, and it wasn't a meteorite either. The high-tech Mechan Clan recognized the projectile as a Bygone spacecraft. Onboard were countless Sleeper chambers. Where they burst, a deadly mixture of Freon and entropic nanites leaked out. The area is still blighted. But some chambers were intact, and Mechans salvaged them and dragged them underground—just in time, for soon after, Marauders were spotted in the devastated land.

Years have passed, but the chambers weren't found. Since that day, Arianoi and mysterious mercenaries—no one in the region knows their employers—search for fragments of the "star" and the intact chambers.

## GETRELL'S IMAGE

Gerome Getrell is the founder of RG. His speeches, choreographed to the last movement and laced with powerful memes, made a whole social strata break away and eventually become the Apocalyptics.

That was 500 years ago.

For months now, his eyes have been staring down from ruined walls. The images are as high as a house, and their colors are radiant, as if they had been painted only yesterday. Getrell's gaze burns into mankind's collective consciousness. A meme incarnate once again.

This time, the Palers spread the word. Months ago, chambers within the Dispensers unlocked and offered to the Palers a cylindrical artifact.

Placed in front of a wall, it fires particles of color from a thousand jets. A targeted explosion: any human or animal would be shredded by the needle thin beams. It takes less than two heartbeats, and the new Getrell face looms from the wall, and in the savages' consciousness two weeks later. The Clanners lay down little dolls woven from grass in front of the image, pour fermented goat milk over them, and chant gutturally. After all, their elders taught them to walk through the world with eyes open and show respect for miracles. Never anger a spirit or god through negligence!

The Palers follow a plan. A beeping sound shows them where to position the image launchers. The faster the beep, the closer the Palers are to their goal. It leads them to prepared experimental villages, usually in valleys far from the sprawls and ruin fields. The Sleepers have already tested their sociocybernetic treatments on the savages here. The image activates the next step: worship.

The Palers move on. For every image placed, the image launchers reward their carriers: back in the Dispenser, they open drawers full of energy bars that were firmly locked before. A sweet enticement.

## EXALT

The city of Exalt had long been forgotten. How could that happen? An area of many square kilometers, once a teeming metropolis, was simply forgotten, after the City Wars?

People are back now, though. They dust the halls and uncover sealed doorways. The RG logo is everywhere. The workers find halls full of hidden projectors that suddenly come to life and draw geometrical shapes into the dust for seconds. They hurry across pressure sensitive floor plates that softly glow or deeply hum with every step. Only the reckless venture deeper into those facilities.

A Sleeper prophet gathers Paler Halos in the tunnels of Exalt. He moves from hall to hall, wanting to enter the core of Getrell's madness. Yet so far, he has been unable to overcome the nanite barriers, and can only send Paler after

Paler inside. Into the Grindworks. In the hallways there, generators of unknown capacity lie dormant, and passages open only when the correct combination of Sun Discs is pressed onto them. Behind them, there is only a new network of corridors leading to more portals. The time to activate this facility has not arrived, yet.

## FREE SPIRIT

The Sleepers considered themselves chosen to be the peak of a new humanity. When they encountered the first Free Spirit equipment, admired the wonderful technology and stared at the weird logo, they recognized that the crown had been passed around them, straight to the top. They know nothing. Speculations abound, and many point towards Exalt and the Grindworks, but that city knows how to repel the Sleepers.

## THE OSMAN LIBRARY

The Osman Library, created, cared for, and expanded by Praha's Archivists, was the largest store of knowledge of its time. Yet suddenly, the Archivists fled, and darkness is said to have spread in the halls and taken those who didn't reach daylight fast enough.

At the same time, the Chroniclers realized that the Marauders they watched were marching towards Osman.

What has really happened in the library?

To uncover the secret—and maybe at the same time access the databases—they need access. Which is puzzling because a Fragment of that name went missing in the Cluster years ago, probably laying mummified under a pile of cables. This proved to be completely irrelevant, but challenged the Chroniclers' ability to communicate. Double occupancies of names and words are insidious, and suggestions to add a classification, like for example in "Name: Access," have been quickly discarded for practicality reasons.

In the meantime, events catch up with the Chroniclers. The Clans march on Osman. If they gain access, the library will be visible from Justitian—as flames on the horizon.

The Chroniclers must and will act now.

## THE LAST SERVER

The Stream has died, it's army of millions of servers silenced during the Eshaton. Today, the Chroniclers salvage fragments without context.

And yet, if the radio protocols are correct, one server still survives: it has been pinging old Stream addresses for years. Sometimes it is stable for hours, sometimes only minutes, but no matter how the Chroniclers' answer get no uplink. Is the login data wrong, or is the handshake not according to the protocol?

The Chroniclers have to find the server: those who control it control the knowledge of humanity.

Many generations of Chroniclers have carried on the search, collected data and correlated them in the Cluster. To no avail. The information concerning the location of the server is contradictory and embedded in complex formula structures, as if the server was moving. But why would the Bygones have hidden one of their Stream servers this carefully?

## PURE STRAIN

For every Fractal Forest sighted, the Spitalians pin another needle into the map of Pollen. Connected with quick strokes, they prove the expansion of the forests along hundreds of kilometers of spiral arms that in turn form smaller spirals. Starfish-like patterns become visible on the map: each has a center, called a "nexus," from which five arms grow. With every new sighting, it becomes easier to find the next ones.

The HIVE research group led by Consultant Irina Petrova has maintained a presence in Pollen for decades, including several secret labs and a hundred Famulancers. The other Consultants sneer that she must have lost her way: to find mutations or dormant HIVE pathogen Clusters, it would be much better to open the Bygone mass graves in Borca or search for antibodies in patients.

Petrova ignores these suggestions.

The HIVE research group is not what it claims to be. Even its structures are unusual: Petrova herself invites Spitalians to join HIVE research group. Almost all the chosen ones are children of group members and have grown up in its daycare center. "One big happy family," other Spitalians call them in less than friendly tones. Those who join entrust their lives to Petrova's hands. She suggests sex partners to them, and every contact with the opposite sex is monitored and regulated. But the weirdest thing about this is that the doctors comply. "It's in their blood," Petrova says, smiling thinly.

But that's not true for all of them. A whistleblower carried the term "pure strain" through the cordon of silence into the ranks of the Famulancers. There has

been speculation ever since. Cleary Petrova and her clan of doctors consider themselves superior, having a "pure strain of DNA." Allegedly, there is a breeding book for every member to conserve this pure strain in them and their children. Others consider this a means to generate elitist thoughts: groups can be easily controlled from within if they are committed and set themselves apart from those around them. Petrova neither comments nor denies. She has to carry out a plan that is centuries old.

## VASCO

Dr. Hernez Vasco's expedition to the Pandora Crater went according to plan—at first. But nothing had prepared him for what the Earth Chakra had to offer. Some participants of the expedition fought for breath behind clogged gas masks until their lungs burned and they started losing consciousness. They finally tore down their masks in the midst of the spore storm. Others were caught in the Fractal Stars' byssus threads and were torn down into the abyss of the flooded ring valleys.

They died in droves.

Only a few of them managed to escape, among them Vasco himself. However, their luck seemed to be at an end. Scared to death, hungry and without food, they found a Fractal Forest. They could not take their eyes off the garishly red fruit. Every step led them closer to the promise of redemption. They dropped everything and started running. When the ground gave in under them and they slid into the Feeding Cusps, they didn't even have the energy to scream anymore.

Vasco died that day. The stomach acids of the Feeding Cusps dissolved him, and his remains trickled down into the depths through osmotic membranes. But parts of his genetic identity were absorbed by the super-organism's repertoire.

Vasco had worked in the HIVE research group for years. He had the same genetic aberration as all his colleagues, the one that they called "pure strain." This special genetic sequence triggered a reaction within the super-organism.

Months later, a man rose from the withered Feeding Cusp. His appearance was exactly that of Dr. Hernez Vasco. But no, the jaws were stronger, the facial shape too perfectly symmetric. He carried shreds of memories of his genetic model. In a secret lab of the HIVE research group, he studied Vasco's old notes and diaries and slowly rediscovered an identity that he absorbed.

The second new Vasco rose months later from a breeding cusp, about 100 km away. The third followed shortly thereafter.

The HIVE research group was the first to discover the phenomenon, and they hid it from Preservists and other Spitalians. Vasco's genes were modified: only the pure strain stood out clear and unchanged. Petrova was fascinated. Maybe this was a way to get in touch with the super-organism.

## LEGION

HIVE research group has registered 15 Vasco incarnations so far.

The first caused a sensation in the Spital with a flaming pro-Psychonautic speech. Petrova could not stop him, but she could help Vasco 1 escape. In the following years, he researched the Psychonauts, and lately, he's been watching Phenomena in the Atlantic. There, something happened to him: he told a follower he fled into the Discordance to get rid of the "Czar's" influence. Later on, this became a common name for the super-organism, but the origin of the name was covered up.

Vasco 1 probably knows nothing about his other incarnations: he was always hundreds of kilometers and months ahead of them. It's different for Vasco 5, though. He tracked down four incarnations, hunted and killed them. More Vascos were probably killed by Gendos or died in other ways in the wasteland, their location or resting place unknown for years.

There are at least eight Vascos still out there, though.

## THE CZAR AWAKENS

Petrova is not the only one who has realized that the Czar might be an opportunity for the Spital, and for humankind as well. Led by the Primer research group, Preservists have drilled a shaft into a nexus. They toiled for weeks to expose the flesh strand. In the light of the xenon lamps, teeth and spurs hardened within the mass and pushed outwards; in between them, eyeballs and prodding pseudopods grew. Rows of cartilage opened up. Muscle fiber contracted with whirring sounds.

Communication was impossible this way, if it were even possible at all. At least six of the eight Consultants did not want any communication. This creature had to be destroyed while there was still a chance to do so.

So the research continued in secret.

The Primer research group fastened a Chronicler-made web of electrodes to the recoiling mass of flesh to measure excitement levels. In the first days, they recognized no pattern. The Czar was functional, but it was mindless.

Now, however, the needle measures rising and falling levels of tension. The heat grows, the flesh strand sweats proteins, new portrusions of bone and teeth are discovered daily. Something is happening beneath Pollen, and it remains to be seen whether it will be good or bad for humanity.

## LEVIATHANICS

A research camp at the Frankan Atlantic coast led by Dr. Hernez Vasco. Islands of biomass grow from the waves, moving back and forth with the swell. Within days, they form bubbles shot through with pulsating veins. Something grows within them. Ultimately, the bubbles burst and disgorge into the sea. Something long splashes in the water, dives under the surface, jumps back up again. The water carries it ashore and deposits it in the sand: lumps of rotting flesh, obviously a human fetus, but without brain and life, the organs just poor copies. In between them, crabs dance mandalas into the sand.

The patterns resemble those that strong Psychonautic Phenomena leave behind after draining the ground. For Vasco, there is no doubt: these are the harbingers of a new Chakra. A Chakra spreading from the Atlantic.

Vasco looks at the islands, remembering reports about gelatinous pseudo-arms clinging to ships and dragging them down, and calls this new Rapture "Leviathanics."

## NEW FRONTIERS

The Neolibyan freighters are steel fortresses that serve as an ark for their passengers even on stormy seas. Their turbines are like the heart of the Lion: tempered power, every thrust an explosion. They rule the Mediterranean.

However, there are different rules in the Atlantic. If you set sail in Tangier and are westbound, you disappear behind the horizon—and you will never return. Sometimes, wreckage is washed ashore months later, but who can say that it was part of the ship that set out to cross the great void?

In coastal cities, there's a rumor of riches waiting on the other side, of a green land without Psychovores or mad white men. A hopeful smile covers up the worries. But in fact, giant shadows are seen gliding beneath the water, and gray chunks of leathery flesh heavy with wetness cling to the sides of the fishermens' ships. Maybe the remainders of tentacles? There is something out there.

Yet the wonder awakens desires. New markets in the West wait to be turned into concessions and exploited. The Bank of Commerce plans an expedition. A Bygone tanker has already been salvaged from a dry dock near Arribat and dragged into the sea. Hundreds of Scrappers work on the colossus, cutting down the rank growth and freeing the hull of rust. The mud of centuries is pumped from the hull, and they chase rats in the labyrinth of corridors. An evil spirit inhabits the cargo holds, some of the Scrappers say, but the Anubians calm them down. Meanwhile, overhauled turbines are lowered into the engine room and mounted there. As a tribute to the spirits of the ocean, the ship is called "Ona"—the wave. When she sets out in about six months, a swarm of torpedo boats will rush ahead of her, measuring the soundings and watching the shadows in the depths. In a first attempt, the fleet will try to reach the Canary Islands and establish a base there before continuing across the great void. There is a spirit of optimism.

## THE CLAN WARS

Justitian and Osman have long guaranteed order and civilization. Now, however, both cities are threatened. The Iconide of Osman sends the Janissaries into the woods to track down the Clans and conquer the artillery emplacements. With every day that they return and have to report that they have not found anything, the suspicion against them grows. The people pile rumors on top of assumptions, and at the center, there is always the Horned One, a Clan leader who wears deer antlers on his head. Chernobog's right-hand man. The silhouette is carved into the walls of Osman. Is this just childishness or a sign of an enemy within? The city is in turmoil. People call for Aries: who else could triumph over a mythical creature like the Horned One?

Justitian does not fare any better. The attacks of the Cockroach Clan were only the beginning. Now all the rabble from the wasteland rise up and demands their slice of meat. For a long time, the Judges had high moral demands when it came to their recruits, now they put the Judges' hat on the head of anyone who can hold a hammer. Never before did the Judges need a man like their founder, the First Judge, more. This is a time for great deeds and great rewards.

## ALPENGLOW

The Hellvetic Doctrine demands neutrality. However, the Hellvetics are trained to watch their surroundings and draw conclusions. Helena of Timmelsjoch and her squad control several passages into Borca. They see the suffering in the North, and the African Scrappers' Surge Tanks entering the country. They return loaded to the brim with scrap, artifacts, and pieces of history, leaving Borca nothing more than an empty shell.

Helena cannot take this anymore. She asked the high command to deny the Africans the north-south passage. As expected, they declined and insisted on neutrality—so Helena had to act. The Corps is sworn to her: now she entrenches herself. Africans may no longer pass.

Many Hellvetics consider Helena a traitor. Insubordination is a capital sin. But the courage with which she defends her ideals touches the soldiers, especially the young ones. This might be the reason why the attempts of the Sentinels to arrest her seemed so half-hearted. Meanwhile, the sword of diplomacy has become pitted. There will be a decision soon—and it may come through a battle between siblings.

CHAPTER

# 12.

# INTO THE DUST

# EMBARGO

## PREPARATION

The scenario "Embargo" is designed to be well suited for beginners, but the challenges and enemies can easily be adjusted to suit more experienced and powerful characters, or to raise the threat and tension of the scenario.

The main locations of the scenario are "the Tumbler" and "the Vector," two places close to each other on the outer edges of the Protectorate. If the Game Master and Players want to start in a different region, the scenario can easily be moved: the Judge from the Tumbler, for example, could be an Anabaptist in Purgare.

Every scenario demands preparation on the part of the Game Master. The same is true for Embargo. The Game Master should read it thoroughly so that they can predict and handle situations easily, this way they won't have to stall when Players deviate from the intended course. They can and should add their own ideas to certain areas, such as the "Wilderness" in the Vector, in order to leave their mark. That puts the flesh on the bones of the scenario.

## MAPS

Maps for the scenario can be downloaded at www.degenesis.com

## OUTSIDE

The characters have been on the road for a while. Maybe they have roamed through the ruins, followed the tracks of a Legend, or acted as messengers out in the wasteland.

But now, everything is done, and they are headed for home. They won't get there today, though. They pass a sign reading "Tumbler." A successful INT+Legends (2) roll reminds them of having heard about a distillery of the same name at the fringes of the Protectorate a while ago. It is along their way, and they are bone weary from traveling, so why not have a look at this Tumbler?

When the characters finally reach the Tumbler, the Game Master should show them the above illustration.

### THE TUMBLER

The elongated building is an inn. Fragments of words and the clanging of pots can be heard drifting from the door, along with the smell of roast meat.

### THE ALCOVE

To the right, there is a Chroniclers' Alcove. The Chronicler Token lives there. The characters will get to know him later, but they can of course also visit him right now to sell scrap or get information on this place.

### THE WATCHTOWER

Atop the watchtower, the characters see a broad-rimmed hat, the face below shrouded in shadows. A rifle is aimed at them. If they wave, the figure on the tower waves back. The characters have just met Judge Magnus.

## THERE IS MEAT

The Judge climbs down from the watchtower. After reaching the ground, he leans on his rifle and catches his breath without taking his eyes off the characters. A girl of maybe 12 winters shows up at the top and climbs down nimbly. She stands beside the Judge, a small, pale waif in the shadow of the fat man. Both approach the characters.

The Judge is sweating, dust plastered to his forehead, and he staggers along as he walkds. He grins. "Magnus, City Judge Magnus." His voice is low, soft, and not unpleasant. He grabs the girl by the neck. "Merl, my beloved wife." She stares at the characters. "Darling, don't stare." His lips glisten.

The Tumbler's door opens. A skinny woman with long white hair stands in the doorframe and waves at Magnus and the characters. "Welcome! Come on in!" Magnus spread his arms. "We will have to insist. Won't we?" He pulls the girl close and embraces her. Then he leans towards the characters. "There is meat!"

## INSIDE

The taproom is dusty and dimly lit. In the corner, two people sit in silence, staring at a pot of meat. The upper half of their faces from the cheekbones to the hairline are blackened by soot. They skulls are badly shaven, loose strands of hair hanging down. Those who approach them will see a compact pattern of lines on their forehead with a roll on INS+Perception(4) - it may be a Chronicler barcode - and will also see that a piece of flesh the size of a fingernail has been stamped out of their earlobes. If a character approaches them, they'll just stare blankly and turn away without a word.

They are both Shutters. A Fuse called "Case" sent them here to check out the situation. They'll be trouble.

If the characters sit down, they are given bowls of meat in a dark gravy. The white-haired woman introduces herself as Mama Dacrois. She has close-set eyes and keeps licking her lips. When talking, she constantly gets a little too close. She points to the goulash and grins. "Slaughtered

it myself. Good? More?" The food is fine. It tastes a little tangy, but then again, it is Gendo meat. Mama Dacrois only wants to sell her food. Judge Magnus and Merl leave the taproom. "Got things to do."

## FLYING SPARKS

The group has just eased into the Tumbler when the door crashes open and a giant of a man comes rushing in. He runs to the counter. "Mama!" His voice is dull and expressionless. "Made Drafts!" He reaches into his pockets and digs out fists full of Drafts he throws on the countertop.

Mother Dacrois combs through the stack of paper with shaking hands. "Jatzek..." She caresses his face.

"What did you do?"

Jatzek turns around and faces the taproom. "Earned it." His face is round and soft; his eyes are also close-set, but they are glittering with joy. He pouts.

"I would like to know that, too." This voice is hard and throaty and comes from one of the Shutters. He rushes towards Jatzek and hits him in the face. "What did you do?" He doesn't wait for an answer, presses close, hits Jatzek again and chases him along the counter. The boy staggers backwards, eyes wide open, opening and closing his mouth. The other Shutter jumps up, too, and steps between his companion and the characters. He shakes his head and raises a hand to stop them. "Not your problem."

The first Shutter now brandishes a Shocker and begins to attack Jatzek with it. The boy screams and falls to the floor in front of the counter, shaking. His boots hit the floor planks in a weird pattern, it smells like piss. He can only utter, "Leave me alone!" His mother keeps shouting, "No, no!" but she doesn't dare to come around the counter.

Jatzek can expect no help from Father Dacrois, who is in the basement, dissecting a Gendo corpse. It will take some time for him to figure out what's going on above.

But by then, it will be too late for Jatzek.

### PROFILE: SHUTTER

**INITIATIVE:** 5D / 5 Ego Points
**ATTACK:** Shocker, 5D, Distance 1, Damage 0, Dazed (8)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Block), Melee 5D, Ranged Combat active (Jumping for cover), Mobility 4D
Mental 5D
**MOVEMENT:** 5D
**ARMOR:** Leather coat, armor 2
**CONSTITUTION:** 10 (Trauma: 8)

### COLLATERAL

Indoor combat always leads to destruction. One stray shot in the Tumbler smashes the bottles behind the bar and makes alcohol and glass shards rain down. A deflected axe blow hits the counter or smashes a chair. If the characters engage in combat with the Shutters, the Dacrois family will have quite some cleaning up to do.

### IF THE CHARACTERS DO NOT INTERFERE

The Shutters will torture Jatzek with their Shockers until he stops struggling. They don't expect answers from him, for it seems to them as if some incestuous gang has taken over and looted the Vector. Now it's time to clean up quickly, tie up the loose ends, and head back to Justitian.

### IF THE CHARACTERS GET HELP

Magnus is outside, teaching Merl how to hold a hammer and hit with it. Magnus has never been a great fighter, and the years in the Tumbler eating meat and greasy broth have not improved his fighting skills, but he has a sense for danger and reacts quickly without freezing up in a crisis. If a character runs outside and calls him, he grabs the hammer from Merl and staggers towards the Tumbler. He can help the characters, but if they solely rely on them they'll lose time - time that Jatzek doesn't have.

### IF THE CHARACTERS JOIN THE FIGHT

The Shutter in front of them will shout at them: "Fuck off, you freaks!" He's very convincing. The Game Master makes a roll for him on PSY+Domination with 6D; the characters have to counter with PSY+Faith/Willpower. If they lose, they do not act for one Round, or roughly 4 seconds, and lose an amount of Ego equal to the Triggers the Shutter has rolled.

Combat ensues. One of the Shutters kicks chairs and tables out of the way or pushes them towards the characters. Those who get into melee range with him in the first Combat Round suffer a general penalty of -2D. He attacks everyone with his Shocker. In the meantime, the other one flanks across the bar and grabs Mother Dacrois. She serves as a good cover for him (+3 to hit him). Neither one of them really wants to fight. The Shutter with Mother Dacrois will hold her for one Round and then twist her head forcefully. She cries out in shock. If the characters do not retreat at once, he'll bash her on the head with the butt of his Shocker and throw her at the characters. Then, both Shutters will try to escape.

# THE CHARACTERS

## JUDGE MAGNUS

Even as a kid, Magnus was a little heavyset. His mother had to come up with a few good ideas to get the Judges to take him in. She never wanted to talk about it. Whenever Magnus inquired, she smiled faintly and put her index finger to her lips. Magnus loved these little gestures of his small, soft-spoken mother.

With the Judges, however, everything was always so big and loud. Things were so quick, too, and so he never managed to flee back into the ranks of the slackers when the dangerous missions were passed out. He was the guy his comrades would hide behind. The justice he was oath-bound to serve was just too abstract for him. He appreciates a sense of family and community: wherever he laid his head is home, and he will always protect his home.

When he rode through Tumbler on his way to Justitian six winters ago, this feeling became exceedingly strong. The Dacrois were really nice people. They served him bowls of meat with thick, brown gravy and listened to stories. Magnus decided to stay with those nice people. He brought his mother there, too, so she would be able to help in the kitchen. How proud his mother was of him! Her Magnus was the protector of this small settlement, held in high regard!

How happy his mother was when he found a wife, too. The Dacrois gave him their daughter Merl. Merl was pale and quiet and had little interest in anything, least of all in men, but at least she was already 12 winters old. Mother Dacrois practically jumped with glee when Magnus agreed to marry her. Now they were a real family. A Judge's family.

## A BEAUTIFUL COUPLE

Magnus and Merl are inseparable. Every day, they sit on the Watchtower for hours. He looks through his rifle's gunsight, aiming at rabbits and wanderers. He has no bullets left. Merl sits next to him, hands folded in her lap.

## TOKEN

The scrap craze lasted for two winters. The news of the legendary find in a ruin field further north drove the Scrappers away from the settlement. When the dust had settled, only the Dacrois and the Alcove remained.

Oh, the things that could have been salvaged from the ruin field! The Chronicler Token dreams of a panopticon of artifacts, of labyrinths of Stream servers. But every morning, he wakes up in the wasteland. He stumbles into the Alcove, checks the test field, boots up the thinking machines, logs in, and sends his "Awake" to the Cluster. For hours, he sits on his throne of scrap, staring out into the misty nothing. At noon, he tip-toes over to the Tumbler, eats wordlessly, and tip-toes back.

When Jatzek, the son of the Dacrois, comes into the Tumbler one noon carrying a sheaf of freshly printed Drafts, Token gets one of those bills as change. Where does this simpleton get the money from, or to be more exact, which Chronicler is poaching in Token's domain? Back in the Alcove, Token scans the bill—and gets a red flashing warning at once. This is an unauthorized Draft. Terrified, he clicks through several pages of requests before understanding what he has just done.

For many years, he has been living next to the Tumbler, has grown old with the Dacrois, has seen Merl grow up. The Cluster has forgotten them here: if he has ever had something akin to a family, then it's the Dacrois. He has just betrayed them to the Cluster.

He didn't want that!

He is agitated, but he cannot change a thing. The Chroniclers will come, that's for sure, and they will be most unhappy. When the time comes, he will come up with something. No doubt.

## TENSE

If the characters meet Token before encountering the Shutters in the Tumbler, they notice his inner unrest at once. A roll on INS+Empathy (2) identifies his tension as guilt. If asked about it, he says that other Chroniclers always irritate him. He nods towards the Tumbler.

## CASE

Case is late. But Case is a Fuse, and Fuses are always sent where something is lost. His Scalar, Nullify, has received a message from the local Chroniclers' Alcove: someone has paid with forged Drafts. Nullify's Drafts. The Scalar has tried to understand the Cluster's code in one of his bases—a Vector—and to print his own Chronicler Drafts. It was an unsuccessful try. A test subject was paid with these Drafts, and caught by the Chroniclers. Since then, Nullify has implemented an embargo on spending. It was broken, and that is what Case is here to investigate.

Case sends two of his Shutters to the nearby Tumbler to question the Chroniclers and find the forged Drafts. Meanwhile, he will pay a visit to the Vector. There is not much time: he has to remove all traces of these fake Drafts before the Cluster's official investigation starts.

## COMBAT TRAITS

**INITIATIVE:** 7D / 6 Ego Points
**ATTACK:** Submachine Gun, 7D, Distance (10/40), Damage 7, Smooth Running (2T), Salvoes (3)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1; Melee active (Deflecting blows) 7D; Ranged Combat active (Crouched walk) 5D; Mental 4D
**MOVEMENT:** 7D
**ARMOR:** Hardened coat, armor 2
**CONSTITUTION:** 10 (Trauma: 8)

## BLACKSMITH

The ruins behind the Tumbler were covered with Scrapper runes, declaring that it had been picked clean like chicken bones. But the Scrapper Cave Bear Blacksmith knew how to pick 'em. Most of those runes he didn't recognise, but how could that be? Someone had gone to great lengths to mark the ruins as dead with faked runes. So he went and combed through the place, and hit paydirt. After only a few days, he discovered a massive artifact so well preserved it hadn't even started to rust.

He'd seen a Chronicler next to an Alcove nearby, so he dragged his loot there.

Blacksmith got a few Drafts and headed back to Justitian, celebrating his find for a week. When he next showed up in Tech-Central a month later with new findings, the Chroniclers tossed him out of the Alcove. He was given no access to the Chronicler network, and a wanted sign showing his face hung at every node, next to the Chronicler killers and other outlaws. Why?

He retreated to the wasteland, shouting his fury to the sky as he tried and failed to find a solution. He raged through the ruins, smashing walls and ancient tables with his axe, blindy flailing about. Worn out, he retreated deeper into the ruins, huddled into his den, and brooded.

What was wrong?

It had all started when he used the Drafts he'd received for his last haul…

His thoughts lead him nowhere, so he bundled up his furs, shouldered his axe, and went to a badly protected Alcove at the fringes of the Protectorate. It can't get any worse, he thought as he kicked in the door and threw the Chronicler down onto their workbench.

He found the reason for what had happened: he was alleged to have forged and circulated Drafts. Bullshit. Someone had slipped them to him. And he knew who.

A whole season had passed, but the Blacksmith never hesitated at a fork in the road. He walked across fields of ruins and took old smuggler paths until he saw the Tumbler, went past it, and finally found the Alcove that had paid him a fortune for his last big find. This was the starting point, the worm in the apple.

Once again, the Blacksmith stood in front of the Alcove and thought: it can't get any worse.

## COMBAT TRAITS

**INITIATIVE:** 9D / 8 Ego Points
**ATTACK:** Slaughter axe, 6D, Distance 2m, Damage 11, Impact (2T)
**DEFENSE:** Passive 1
Melee active (Parry), 6D; Ranged Combat active (Crouched walk), 6D
Mental 10D (Stoic)
**MOVEMENT:** 8D
**ARMOR:** Fur and leather armor, armor 2
**CONSTITUTION:** 20 (Trauma: 10)

## GIADA

Cave Bears attract profiteers like a horse dropping attracts flies, and the relationship is just as loving. Giada is one of these self-styled "friends." She's worked with Blacksmith before, picking up his crumbs and making a good living by doing so. When Blacksmith calls, she flutters to his side with glee, certain she'll be well fed for the weeks or months to come.

Giada is an Apocalyptic Cuckoo. Only a few people outside the Flock know that and are still alive, and Blacksmith is one of them. When Giada reaches the target Alcove, the Cave Bear orders her to pose as a Chronicler. That's easy. Giada moves into the warehouse and does as she's told. She lures in every Scrapper, showering them with forged Drafts. Blacksmith explained his plan to her in two grumbling sentences and tried to pass it off as something else, but she understands what he's actually up to. He wants to attract the person responsible for his troubles. The one who built this base and had those Drafts printed.

Giada likes Blacksmith. She has rarely encountered anyone who resorts to violence with such indifference and suddenness. She has seen him break fingers—and in one case even bite them off—in the middle of a discussion.

You have to be completely out of your mind to provoke the Blacksmith. Still, this goes much further than anything she has been through with him so far. Chroniclers have died, and now she's stuck in a hole with Blacksmith. "It can't get any worse," he had told her. Yes it fucking can.

Giada won't let it come to that, though. She'll guard Blacksmith's back as long as she can, but she will not risk her life.

## FUGITIVE

The characters will meet Giada later in the adventure, however she has no desire to fight them. If the Game Master has to roll for her, he can assume that she has an Action Number of (8) on all AGI based Skills, of (5) on all BOD based Skills.

## NULLIFY

For decades, the Scalar Nullify has worked in the shadow of the Cluster, becoming part of the darkness surrounding his Cult. He studied the Needle Tower Disaster and analyzed the profiles of the renegade Fragments. They all had one thing in common: they were unconventional. They didn't go with the flow but directed or impounded it to release it again more forcefully. It had been predictable that they would finally bust out. Really, they were just like him.

He had wasted so many years covertly transferring resources and equipping his Fuses with the equipment they needed, but he was constantly limited by the dams and walls choking the river of Drafts to barely a trickle. This forced temperance made him tremble with impatience.

Whoever controlled the Draft system controlled the Chroniclers, and moreover, all of the civilized world. An unlocked Draft Printer alone promised enormous power. But the system was good: the code captured in a Draft's barcode was unique. If Nullify wanted to crack the pertaining algorithm, he would have to engage in an mathematical battle with the cleverest minds of the Cluster.

So he did.

He constructed a small outpost on an imaginary line between two Alcoves—a "Vector"—and logged into their data transfer stream. His thinking machines recorded the codes of the Drafts they handed out. Piece after puzzle piece completed the map of the algorithm, making structures and derivations visible.

But Nullify became impatient. The algorithm permutated without developing any further.

So he decided to give it a try. When a Scrapper showed up in front of the Vector, he did not give the kill command to the facility's Shutters but ordered them to give freshly printed forged Drafts to the stranger.

Weeks later a report was logged regarding a Scrapper circulating forged Drafts. An embargo was imposed on him, and Nullify knew that his experiment had failed. He returned to the Cluster to find his error and improve his algorithm, completely forgetting about the Scrapper.

He had failed to take into account that he was dealing with the Blacksmith.

## IN THE BACKGROUND

While Nullify is responsible for this scenario, he is in Justitian. The characters will not meet him in this scenario.

He is well suited as an enemy for a campaign. He acts from the background, maybe hiring the characters through intermediaries to check out their weaknesses. Only when the characters have played through some scenarios and find out about Nullify, he will confront them.

DRAFF'S RUNE

## JATZEK'S BIG FIND

Even if Jatzek survives, only an empathic character can manage to gain any access to him. Jatzek is in shock and shrinks back from every stranger. His mother and his father stand in the taproom helplessly and don't know what to do. They will not interfere if a character tries to talk to Jatzek now.

This character must make an Action roll on INS+Empathy (3), or Jatzek will simply flail about wildly and flee into a corner of the Tumbler. If the roll succeeds, he calms down and will answer all questions in simple words.

Potential answers:

"Didn't steal the Drafts."

"Have found something. Yes, know, am not supposed to go to the traps, but found something there."

"Chronicler woman called it find. Wanted it, paid me. Let customers pay mama and daddy. Have not stolen!"

Jatzek was in the Vector and got stacks of forged Drafts for an artifact he found. Blacksmith is trying to draw out the culprit, and he was successful.

Jatzek could lead the characters to the Vector, but he's exhausted and in shock. Mother Dacrois sends him to bed.

## BELATED CONFESSION

The Chronicler Token tries to regain his composure. He's sweating, hyperventilating, has to get rid of his mask. He has to do something, has to weed out this forger's workshop before more family members get hurt. He's preparing something...

If the characters do not intend to visit his Alcove after the incident, he follows them with billowing cape and asks them to follow him there.

He wrings his hands while telling his story. He tells the full truth, only avoiding some complicated details. The words basically tumble out of him.

"They are good people." He nods towards the Tumbler. "They haven't done anything wrong. Jatzek hasn't done anything wrong. He's still a child!"

"He had unregistered Drafts." If somebody inquires, he reacts confused, but then says, "Yes, very probably forged."

"The Cluster is alarmed. It won't tolerate this. The ones in there were only the beginning of the cleaning mission. There will be more..." He has tears in his eyes. If anybody asks how the Cluster was informed, he squirms and finally confesses that he has scanned the Drafts to find out who else buys artifacts out here. This has alerted the security mechanisms.

"But we can set this straight." He leans close to the characters and whispers, "I only need proof. Go to the false Alcove and sell this." He points to an artifact on his workbench, a cat-sized package wrapped in duct tape. Antennae stubs protrude from it. "You take the Drafts and come back. I scan them. I tell the Cluster about the forger. Problem solved."

### OPEN ENDS

Whether Jatzek lives or dies, the story goes on, for the Chronicler Token has seen everything.

### NOT ON OUR WATCH

If the characters decline, the story ends prematurely. Token will not tolerate this.

In his despair, he would even call for Magnus and make him understand that only the characters can deflect the Cluster's anger now.

## ACCEPTED

If the characters agree to take on Token's quest, he gives them the artifact ("a zero-score receiver, de-Streamed") and provides them with directions to the supposedly false Alcove.

The artifact is a bomb. It is activated via electromagnetic signals.

These signals can be sent from the analysis workbench in any Alcove. From the outside, its true purpose cannot be discerned. Moreover, Token has ensured that it will not be opened by liberally wrapping it in duct tape.

If the characters are suspicious, he claims that the artifact broadcasts a signal to let him know when it has reached its goal.

## IN THE RUINS

The supposedly false Alcove is located in a warehouse complex not far away. The warehouses are all marked with Scrapper runes. If there is a Scrapper in the group, he can roll INT+Legends (1) to uncover the secret of these runes. The more Triggers he has, the more he can discern.

- **SUCCESS, NO TRIGGER:** There must have been a massive search in those ruins. Many of the runes are unknown, they must be very old—but then, the carvings would have to be overgrown with lichen. So they were probably scratched into the walls by very young Scrappers. By very many young Scrappers. Some of the runes warn of danger.
- **1 TRIGGER:** The marks are scratchy and inconsistent. No Scrapper would ever be so sloppy.
- **AT LEAST 2 TRIGGERS:** Only one rune is an original made by a renowned Scrapper called Draff. However, he has not been seen in Justitian for years. All other carvings are forgeries.

High above the characters on the flat roofs of the halls, trees raise their branches skywards like spread fingers. Dry moss hangs from the branches. Roots snake across the walls, never touching the ground. Shrubbery grows in the shadowy chasms between the halls.

### LABYRINTH

Token may have described the way for the characters, but he could have perhaps been a bit more specific. The characters approach the false Alcove, but the description does not lead them to the entrance.

They can try to find Jatzek's tracks in the stone labyrinth and follow them to the Alcove: with a successful INS+Orienteering (3) or INS+Survival (3) roll, they come across a heavy, shambling person's tracks. Could be Jatzek. (2+) Triggers reveal additional tracks that are several days old. They seem to have been made by a tall man and a woman. In between, there are Gendo footprints, sometimes above the man's tracks, sometimes below them—they travelled with him.

If the characters follow the tracks, they lead directly to the Vector.

### LOOKOUT

The characters can clutch the strands of roots and use them to climb the halls. If they look around, they see a concrete building towering over the other halls, situated in the middle of the warehouse complex. Up here, trees are growing, and the roofs have partially collapsed or are sagging under the weight of grass-covered pools. Tree trunks have fallen, linking the warehouses.

If the characters approach the Vector via the rooftops,

they can see a figure in a chasm. The man realizes he's being watched and scurries into one of the warehouses. The characters have just encountered Case.

### SCRAPPER TOMB

If the characters search the halls, they find several ancient installations that they are able to loot 2D kg of Tech IV scrap from, but they also come across a skeleton. The back of its head is burned, the hair is curled and molten, and the bones show bite marks that are scattered around the whole body. Tied to its backpack are several metal plates showing the same Scrapper rune: Draff's rune, which also covers the walls.

If the characters search the corpse and its equipment, they find a modified revolver loaded with six .50 GL bullets.

If a Spitalian or other healer examines the injuries on the back of Draff's head and rolls at least (1) Success on INT+Medicine (3), he's sure that only a strong Shocker can have caused this sort of injury.

## VECTOR

Scalars choose their base of operation with care. Nullify has dissected every Stream package released by the Cluster for years. His plans revolved around a Vector on a signal line between two large Alcoves. He would be able to log into the data traffic without being detected.

He finally found just the spot in the ruin field near the Tumbler. His Fuses and Shutters secured the area and kept the Scrappers away with forged runes. Nullify had the few that saw through the ruse killed in the ruins.

The Vector is a Bygone container storage facility. The steel containers were delivered into the entrance hall by robotic sleighs and lowered into the underground halls on a system of rails. A fully automated bridge crane took over the cargo and put it into position. Day and night, containers were sorted or transported to marked areas for inspection.

### ABOVE GROUND

The hall is surrounded by white concrete braces. Dust dunes cling to them, dammed up to a wavy sea overgrown by herbaceous shrubbery.

There is an open space in front of the hall. Dust devils dance across it. They trace artistic spirals and swerving paths. They devour every footprint within hours. Here, Jatzek's tracks become invisible.

However, the characters have arrived. The doorway would be wide enough for a Surge Tank, but from out here it just looks like a dark hole. A cascade of red and white lights blinks in the darkness.

If the characters examine the hall from the outside, they notice some details.

- From afar or from the open space, they notice an array of antennae on top: a network of wires and rod aerials dance in the wind like strange plants.
- At the side of the hall, they notice a steel door. From the dust that has been swept away on the ground, the door must have been opened before. However, the dust has partially returned, it's been some time. There is no visible way to open the door, no handles or panels in sight.
- In the gaps between two braces, there are traces of chisels. They have gouged the concrete to a depth of three hand's breadth, but were not strong enough to penetrate a glittering white webbing within the stone. Some sort of glass fiber. One of the braces carries Draff's rune.

## A CRACKING IDEA

Dry heat rolls out of the gate, and there is an intense smell of burnt wood. The characters enter the twilight of the hall. They push their way through stacks of iron sheets and barrels, walking towards the flickering lights at the end of the hall. They are greeted by a shrill, distorted "Welcome!" recognizably from a Vocoder before they can make out any more details.

The skeleton of a shipping container hangs on a bunch of steel cables over a pitch black hole. The side that the characters approach has been cut out roughly 1 m above the ground and replaced by bars with a hatch.

Inside, there is cold light. A Chronicler watches them through the hatch, straightening his mask as if it was ill-fitting. Behind him at the perforated back wall, the characters see a workbench like the ones they know from other Alcoves. Sensor arrays mounted on mobile arms rest at attention.

The Chronicler stops fiddling with his mask and stares at the characters. The container swings to and fro almost imperceptibly.

Black and yellow warning buoys mark the edge of a shaft, a little more than a forearm's length separate it from the container. The characters can step up and show the artifact that Token has prepared. The Chronicler opens the hatch, leans out, takes the artifact, carries it to the workbench, puts it there. Cascades of light blink across the side of the analysis station; a yellow light flares and pulses.

With two long strides, the Chronicler returns to the characters, crouches out of sight for a moment, and returns with a handful of Chronicler Drafts.

The artifact crackles and ticks. The Chronicler turns around and says in a high, female voice, "What the..." Then, a flash of light tears apart the artifact and the workbench. The bang makes the bars shake and the container ring like a gong. The Chronicler crashes against the bars

and falls to the ground, feedback through their Vocoder rises to a screeching crescendo. Red lights flash in the container, and it races downwards. At the other end of the hall, the gates start to close, the rectangle of light becoming smaller and smaller. The characters can start running, but they are not fast enough: the gate crashes closed. Darkness surrounds the characters.

The characters have walked into Blacksmith's trap. He sees the bomb attack as proof that the Vector's actual inhabitants have returned to reclaim it. He's ready.

The characters can try several things.

- It's dark. The only light they have is a red glow shining up from the shaft. If they want to explore the hall they need a source of light, otherwise they will have to rely on their sense of touch.
- In the containers, there are planks, steel cables, and iron sheets.
- The gates are made of massive concrete: there is no chance of pushing them open. The opening mechanism has to be outside the walls, some slabs can be seen inserted high into the wall. There is no way of reaching them. The cable leads from them through the hall and into the shaft. It disappears in the depths.
- If the characters look into the shaft, they see the false Alcove lying there, between 30 and 40 paces below. It's top is open and still linked to the steel cables in the ceiling via some sort of yoke. If the characters look more closely, they also spot an engine unit inside.
- If the characters discovered the handleless door when walking around the hall or are now searching for it, they notice that the hall seems to be smaller inside than it appeared from outside. Probably, the door is a part of the hall that is inaccessible from here.

## DESCENT

The characters are trapped in the hall. The only way is down. There are two possible ways of getting there.

### CLIMBING

The steel rope is roughly 2 steps away from the edge of the shaft. It can be reached with a courageous jump (BOD+Athletics (3) or AGI+Mobility (3)), rappelling is also possible with BOD+Athletics (3) or AGI+Mobility (3). If one of the rolls fails, however, the character falls to his death.

The group can play it safe and build a bridge of planks and iron sheets. An INT+Engineering (3) roll allows the creation of a construction made of planks and counterweights that helps them to reach the rope.

If the characters rappel, they can help each other: if one of them fails a roll, another can give Successes to him.

### TECHNOLOGY

If the characters search the walls, they find an emergency operating panel for the lift. It doesn't work because it was overridden. A good technician, however, can open it and remove the logjam (INT+Engineering (4)). With a jolt, the lift starts moving and can now be controlled.

## BELOW

The container has hit the ground in a cloud of dust and drafts. Smoke billows to the bars.

There is no trace of the Chronicler.

If the characters still have no light sources, they find an electric torch in a bracket next to the workbench that one character can use. If he does not mount it to his shoulder, he has to carry it in his hand, which will lead to penalties in combat (-1D).

If the characters shine a light through the wall of bars, they see a vault stretching far into the darkness. The light offers them a glimpse of wide concrete pillars with red numbers and of blue and green containers. Between them, there is some haze. Gleaming lances of light pierce the perforated back wall of the container lift, lingering in the dusty air. A silhouette becomes visible.

"Gotcha." The voice is deep and rumbling. Something heavy bangs against the steel wall.

"No one fucks with the Blacksmith. You have gone too far." The figure moves.

"Now you get to know my Wilderness."

The light dims, the silhouette becoming one with the darkness. Steps retreat.

## PREY

The characters are not alone in Blacksmith's wilderness of steel. They hear a scratching and pattering. It seems to encircle them, splitting up. When they shine their light through the bars for the first time, something jumps at them, banging against the wall of bars. A maw bites, fangs get caught in the wire mesh. Back claws scratch across metal. A Gendo.

The animal is skinny, and it reeks of sickness and Sepsis. It pulls back, gets up. With another jump it clears the wall and lands within the container.

The characters can attack the animal through the bars or try to push it back. If they do not react fast enough, they have to confront a wild, but weakened, Gendo. The Gendo's Combat Traits can be found in Chapter 10, "From Hell".

The animal is not alone, however. More Gendos come running from their cages, which have just been opened. They do not dare to attack just yet, however. The pack waits for a moment of weakness. In the end, the characters

## LEGENDS: THE BLACKSMITH

The Blacksmith is a legend. The stories about his biggest findings and exploits can be heard in every inn in Borca. When the characters hear his name for the first time, they can check for their knowledge about him by rolling INT+Legends (2). Borcan characters get +1D to the roll, while Scrappers can add their "Secrets" Background to the roll.

| Trigger | Memory |
|---|---|
| 0T | "The Blacksmith managed to win a fight against six Battle Crows who had cheated him at a game of cards in the Flotsam in Justitian. He bit all the fingers off of one of them."<br>"At the pit fights, he was in the semifinal and threw his opponent from the pit against the wall. The guy never moved again. But he did not fight in the final. He simply vanished into the wasteland."<br>"His caves are well hidden. He marks them with a fist-sized rock carved with his rune. If you see it, you better run. You don't want him to catch you in one of his caves." |
| 1T | "The Blacksmith rarely travels alone. He knows what he's capable of and what he needs help with."<br>"The Chroniclers have outlawed him. He hasn't been seen ever since."<br>"Many winters ago, the Blacksmith messed around with some quack from Brennen. That's a neighborhood in Justitian. Those muscles are definitely unnatural." |
| 2T | "He quickly tires of his companions. The only exception is this one Apocalyptic."<br>"The Blacksmith is under an "embargo," the worst official form of punishment by the Chroniclers. He's considered undesirable in Alcoves, so no one buys artifacts from him anymore." |

will have to leave the container: one of the side walls can be unlocked and swung aside. The Gendos will hunt the characters through the rest of the Wilderness.

## THE WILDERNESS

What Blacksmith calls "Wilderness" is actually a maze of containers and mountains of scrap, canisters, barrels, and vehicles—all thrown from the containers when Nullify's Shutters went looking for artifacts months ago.

Blacksmith has prepared the Wilderness with traps and souvenirs from the wasteland. As if this weren't bad enough, the characters are living in constant fear of a Gendo attack. So far, the pack has been careful, but as soon as it looks like it's going to lose its prey, it will attack.

### LOOKOUT: THE EXIT

If the characters search the walls, they discover a staircase high above along one side of the hall, leading higher and higher into the cave along the wall and finally ending in a door. The ascent has to start somewhere at the other end of the hall.

### THIS WAY

Huge white letters on the containers say things like "this way," with arrows pointing the way right next to the words. If the characters don't trust the first "this way" and choose another way, they walk into a trap. A little more than 20 paces ahead, they see the Chronicler from before. Without his mask, he's recognizable as a woman: it's Giada. She presses something to her chest, and a yellow light gleams between her fingers. If the characters approach, she presses a button, drops the object, and runs.

On the container next to the characters, the Blacksmith has collected scrap. Over a cable control, a weight smashes into this cliff of scrap—and collapses it. It rushes down on the characters as an avalanche: with a successful BOD+Athletics (3) or AGI+Mobility (3) roll, both in combination with PSY+Reaction (3), a character can dodge. Otherwise he takes 1D Damage (armor applies).

If the characters follow the "this way" markings, they will walk into this trap somewhere else.

The next hint ("up here") is less benevolent: it leads the characters across some steel sheets and on top of the containers. If the combined BOD score of all characters on the containers is (9+), the brittle metal bursts with a crack, and the heaviest character breaks through. Only his torso is still visible. The Gendos smell the weakness and attack. At the same time, the characters hear the Gendos seem to enter the container as well, jumping for the trapped character's legs.

The group will have to split up.

### TRAPS

The Blacksmith wants to unsettle and weaken the characters. To do so, he has Giada walk through his wilderness and activate traps. If the Game Master wants to be creative, he can devise additional obstacles. But not all of them need to work—and maybe Giada will be attacked by a Gendo just in time and has to flee or defend herself with her Shocker.

## THE BRIDGE

The closer the characters approach the center of the hall, the more containers there are.

Their way is blocked. Here, the bridge crane spans the hall. Its engine and track bearing are embedded high up in the wall of the hall. The torchlight shows that loading units are attached to the brace: centuries ago, the crane was able to lift several containers at once and carry them through the hall. Today, 10 containers are still hanging from the grippers, like a giant wind chime. Seven of them are way out of reach but the three low-hanging ones form a mounting bridge in front of the wall of containers. They are interlinked with iron sheets and moored with steel ropes. To the lower left is an entrance via scaffolding made of scrap, and to the upper right, the bridge ends at the top of the wall of containers.

As soon as the characters begin climbing, the Blacksmith's voice drones from speakers, "So you want your old den back. Want to cover your tracks. I'll send you your friend."

Again, the characters see Giada in front of them. She rushes across the planks of a bridge; her steps make the containers swing gently. Reaching the top, she drags forth someone, pushing the person ahead of her.

As the person moves towards the characters along the guiding rope, it keeps getting faster. The person's feet keep hitting the sheets uncontrollably, the arms pressed tightly against the body.

The cowl billows and flies in the headwind.

From below, the Gendos follow as they see their prey disappear.

There is almost no room to dodge the oncoming person on the rail bridges, and the front character on the containers must make an Action roll on AGI+Mobility (4) to do so. If he steps aside, the character behind him can be hit. But he may roll as well, just like all other characters.

If the person hits a character, he's thrown from the bridge and falls for 3 to 4 m. However, the fact that the Gendos attack at as soon as they hit the ground is certainly worse than the fall itself.

If the whole group dodges, the human projectile hits the first Gendo, throwing it down to the hall. With a broken neck, the animal lies on the floor howling.

The person's cowl flies free from the face as the human projectile loses the cape it's wearing. A Chronicler's corpse is tied to the rope with wire. The corpse's earlobe is missing a triangle the size of a fingernail, just like the Shutters in the Tumbler.

If the characters fight back some of the Gendos, the animals will abandon the difficult to kill prey and simply devour the Chronicler's corpse.

## BEAR CAVE

Up on the wall, the characters see that they are actually standing on a cliff. Before them, container tops stretch like an island of steel. Roughly in the center, scaffolding stretches to the ceiling. From where it touches the ceiling, a strand of cables reaches down into the containers below.

### EXIT

At the back wall, a bridge leads up to the landing. The characters can climb it to reach the door. However, it is locked, and just like on the outside, there is no visible opening mechanism on the inside.

### DOWN

If the characters walk around, they discover several hatches: the ceilings were cut from the containers and replaced off-center. Hundreds of containers are stacked here. Nullify's Shutters have torn out the walls and tunneled ahead, salvaging radio equipment, image walls, crates full of cameras, and palm-sized computers. The old facility contained a giant treasure hoard. Nullify did not want to sell it, however, for that would have meant exchanging it for Chronicler Drafts. Instead, he started cracking the Drafts' code.

### WITHIN

The Vector's interior is only a skeleton. Here only a few walls are left, where the ground has been cut away there are steel bars crossing the floor. Here and there, the characters can see through to the heart of the facility, into the combustor, and see the blaze oscillating between yellow flames and blue beams. Heat greets them.

### FLOOD OF IMAGES

Image walls come alive with a crackle when the characters pass them. In rapid succession, they show noisy photographs of Blacksmith in an Alcove and the word "EMBARGO" in red letters above his head. Others show him at the entrance to the Vector and are labeled "TRIAL Subject 1, 3,000 Drafts."

Cameras sit in the corners like oversized insects, recording every movement. The characters can see themselves on the image walls.

### DRAFT PRINTER

In one container block, there is a table-sized printer; it blinks like a stroboscope and spits out Drafts covered in symbols instead of numbers. Cables hang from the ceiling; the walls are covered with yellowed paper showing lines, formula, and combinational circuits: the map of the Draft code.

With a successful INT+Science (6) roll, a character realizes that a code is calculated here from various inputs (place, time, a Chronicler ID, and the value of the Draft). This insight gives a Chronicler (+1) on the "Secrets" Background.

## AMBUSH

The Vector is a labyrinth of open rooms, winding corridors, and ramps, and every nook and cranny is monitored by cameras. The Blacksmith lurks behind corners or jumps down behind his enemies' backs through hatches in the ceiling, attacks and retreats, quickly closing hatches behind him, or jumps through holes onto the next level below. His steps bang on the steel sheets and echo through the Vector.

Attacked characters may make a combined resistance roll on PSY+Reaction(3) and BOD+Melee(3) to parry the Blacksmith's axe blow.

With a Success and (3+) Triggers, they can counterattack.

The characters can only force the Blacksmith into a fight if they use the Vector's setup to their own benefit.

- If they watch the image walls and camera images, they can make out safe corridors. This reduces the Blacksmith's attack opportunities.
- Hatches can be blocked to cut off escape routes.
- If the characters destroy the cameras, they stop Blacksmith from watching their every move.
- If they split up, the Blacksmith descends into single combat, but he's a dangerous enemy who is almost invincible for a single character.

The Game Master can illustrate first successes by allowing a character to counterattack before the Blacksmith escapes again. The Cave Bear will tear image walls from their suspension brackets and throw them at the characters; he topples capacitors that slide across the grid floor, trailing sparks. He pushes chains to lower ceiling plates that fall between him and the characters like a barrier.

If the characters finally prevail and control the area, the Game Master allows them a Conflict of BOD+Athletics to follow Blacksmith and corner him. This finally leads to the combustor.

## THE COMBUSTOR

Several containers have been remodeled into a kiln. In the blaze, the white-hot skeletons of chairs and steel lockers can be seen; frames lean awkwardly in the inferno. Panels covered with square ceramic tiles are hanging above the flames. They gather the heat and turn it into electricity.

The combustor fuels a control panel that covers a whole wall where all cables converge. It activates or deactivates all the functions of the Vector via contactors. Labeled metal plates hang from levers or are marked in

white or blue paint and labeled with symbols.

Giada is already in the combustion reactor when the characters arrive. She darts behind Blacksmith and says in a controlled, low voice, "I don't fucking like this, Blacksmith."

Blacksmith kisses her cheek without taking his eyes off the characters. "Get going." Giada walks to the panel and throws a lever. On one of the image walls, a bright rectangle flashes. The camera adjusts the brightness, and the opening exit door can be seen. Giada stands there for another second, grinding her teeth, then hurries away.

Blacksmith does not attack at once. "You should've messed around with someone else," he says. His only reaction to anything the characters say is to shake his head.

The monitors show Giada's escape through the Vector.

Blacksmith grins. "Seems it really can't get any worse." He attacks.

While the characters and Blacksmith fight each other, a silhouette appears on the image wall in the bright rectangle of the door. This should happen just when one of the parties prevails and will soon win. Blacksmith roars. "You fucking ...!" He leaves the characters be and races past them from the combustor, his mask of superiority breaking, fear showing through the cracks.

If the characters stop him now, he will never forgive them, but should he survive, he will try to take up the interrupted fight another day.

If the characters leave him be, they have a slim chance to bring the story to a good end and gain Blacksmith as a future ally.

## CASE

Case enters the Vector through the escape door. Giada is heading straight towards him. She stands no chance against the Fuse. If the characters follow Blacksmith, they see Giada retreating from Case on the landing. He has a submachine gun trained on her. Blacksmith races up to the landing, incessantly shouting. The distance between Case and the characters is little more than 40 m as the crow flies. If the characters do not distract him, he will pull the trigger and gun Giada down before Blacksmith even gets close. Only if the characters fire on Case now can they turn the tide. A hit would throw the Fuse back and give Blacksmith the time to reach Case.

## CLEANERS

Whatever happens, Case will retreat outside. If his Shutters survived the fight in the Tumbler, they are at his side.

The final battle ensues. Blacksmith fights alone, if he still can—but at least he does not attack the characters anymore.

Once Case is vanquished, the characters spot more Chroniclers approaching. There are over 20, amongst them a Paradigma in a sparkling suit. One of them is Token from the Tumbler. They all carry Shockers or Cascaders, are tense and ready for battle. The characters have to explain the situation, but Token will vouch for them.

"Don't worry, we're the good guys," he says as he takes off his mask.

There are tears of relief in his eyes.

## FINAL SCORE

The characters have escaped a trap that was not meant for them. Together with Token, they explained to the Paradigma what has happened in the Vector and what role Blacksmith played in the events. If they do not really know this themselves, the Paradigma will mention the embargo and explain that it was based on the use of counterfeit money. The characters have been through a lot. Now it's time for rewards.

- Jatzek survives: 2 XP
- Mother Dacrois is unharmed: 1 XP
- The Shutters will never torture anyone again: 1 XP
- Blacksmith saved: 5 XP
- Giada saved: Blacksmith will regard the characters as allies from now on, if there is a Scrapper in the group, his "Allies" Background rises by (2); for all others, "Network" rises by (1); all characters get 2 XP
- Survived: 10 XP
- Uncovered the Vector's secret: 5 XP
- Conqueror—If the characters kill the legendary Blacksmith, the word will spread, not only amongst Scrappers: Their "Renown" Background rises by (1).

## ONLY THE BEGINNING

The Chroniclers will take over the Vector, and the counterfeit Drafts will be removed from the system.

But Nullify has escaped, and he's not happy at all about the characters interfering. This is only the beginning...

## THE TUMBLER AS A BASE

The people in the Tumbler have become a bit strange in their solitude, but they are good, friendly people and they are thankful for the help that the characters have given them. The characters can rest here between scenarios and lick their wounds.

They can become even part of the family, can protect the place, can call it home. To a Game Master, such a place offers a lot. The more often the characters return to the Tumbler, the more emotionally attached they will become to it. If the Tumbler is under attack, it's an attack on the characters, too. If one of its inhabitants disappears, they will of course try to find them.

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NAME:
AGE:
RANK:
EXPERIENCE:

# DEGENESIS
CHARACTERSHEET

SEX:
HEIGHT:
WEIGHT:
DINARS / CD:

CULTURE

CONCEPT

CULT

## < BODY
- ATHLETICS
- BRAWL
- FORCE
- MELEE
- STAMINA
- TOUGHNESS

## < AGILITY
- CRAFTING
- DEXTERITY
- NAVIGATION
- MOBILITY
- PROJECTILES
- STEALTH

## < CHARISMA
- ARTS
- CONDUCT
- EXPRESSION
- LEADERSHIP
- NEGOTIATION
- SEDUCTION

## < INTELLECT
- ARTIFACT LORE
- ENGINEERING
- FOCUS
- LEGENDS
- MEDICINE
- SCIENCE

## < PSYCHE
- CUNNING
- DECEPTION
- DOMINATION
- FAITH
- REACTION
- WILLPOWER

## < INSTINCT
- EMPATHY
- ORIENTEERING
- PERCEPTION
- PRIMAL
- SURVIVAL
- TAMING

## < ORIGINS
- ALLIES
- AUTHORITY
- NETWORK
- RENOWN
- RESOURCES
- SECRETS

EGO

SPORE INFESTATIONS

FLESHWOUNDS

TRAUMA

## < POTENTIALS

| WEAPONS | HANDLING | DISTANCE ( - / - 4D ) | DAMAGE | MAG | PROPERTIES | WEIGHT | TECH | SLOTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

| ARMOR | ARMOR VALUE | PROPERTIES | WEIGHT | TECH | SLOTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| EQUIPMENT | WEIGHT | | WEIGHT | TOTAL WEIGHT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |

BUT LIFE ALWAYS FINDS A WAY

◆◆