KATHARSYS

DEGENESIS

KATHARSYS

IN THIS WORLD, A MAN, HIMSELF, IS
NOTHING.
AND THERE AIN'T NO WORLD
BUT THIS ONE.

[THE THIN RED LINE]

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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 only exist 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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KATHARSYS

CHAPTER

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 embankments, unique artifacts, legends of the Balkhan forests, or the hierarchy of the Carrion Birds.

In the KatharSys, there are numbers behind almost every Action. They determine how far a Character has mastered a Skill. Every Action Number is equally dependent on the Character's Attributes (or natural talents) 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 is supposed to act.

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 impress 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 whose barrel they have filed down and whose mechanism they have readjusted.

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 a keen sense of consequence.

PSYCHE

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

INSTINCT

Instinct has helped us to survive when neither language nor rules did 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 the 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; you will find out what this is later in this chapter.

The Attribute abbreviations are:

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

THE SKILLS

Six Skills belong to every Attribute. Attribute and Skill depend upon and support one another. The Science Skill can only thrive on 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 or tricksters.

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 perception, and if a Shutter is actually approaching out there, they might hear him with a successful roll.

COMBINATION

Some Actions are not derivable from 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 can be found at a later point in this chapter.

SPECIALTIES

Some Skills are special: additional traits are derived from them or they have certain limitations. The Character Creation chapter details them and lists the Specialties 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 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 escape 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 weapons humans are born with. They cannot be stolen, they cannot jam, and they are always at hand. They push down enemies, make them gasp for breath; 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: Quitting a brawl; breaking strangleholds
COMBINATION: >PSY+Reaction: disarm

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 start.

Force is the power behind the Anabaptists' swords, the Judgment 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, force is added to the damage

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 with a series of complex thrusts, blows, parries, and feints. The weapon becomes an extension of the arm; the fighter becomes a danger to his enemies.

No combatant can afford to slacken when training 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: disarming an enemy

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 tire and dawdle.

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 must also take. 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 interior 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 of Flesh Wounds = BOD+Toughness x2

AGILITY

CRAFTING

Human ingenuity creates machines, weapons, and other useful items. But anyone can screw a gun sight on top of a rifle or put nails into a club. A true craftsman uses scraps from artifacts and separates the useful from the rotten. He enhances things, combining old parts in new ways. The constructions become more daring, more useful.

The Manufacturers amongst the Scrappers are the masters of their generation. Their workshops give birth to technological and mechanic 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 aggregate: 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 mechanics

NAVIGATION

Whether on a horse, a Kom, a torpedo boat, or a Surge Tank, riding 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 buggies through difficult terrain while firing at their prey.

Apocalyptics, on the other hand, thunder across Purgare's slag deserts on motorbikes. Their Pelicans steer vessels into safe harbors no matter how high the waves are, vessels dismantled and refitted for the next ocean voyage by the Seagulls.

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

Blow from the left. Dodge. Blow from the right. Duck. Jump ahead, tuck, roll.

The bullets fly. Mobility makes an agile person almost impossible to hit. He becomes more nimble and can dodge before danger turns to damage. The higher the Skill rating, the easier he can escape from dangerous situations, get rid of bonds, and wriggle out of a stranglehold or through a crack in a wall.

ACTION: Free running; jumping; dodging; acrobatics
REACTION: Escape artist; 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 fighter has to learn to gauge his rifle's recoil and power; he must pull the bowstring just right to avoid hurting himself when shooting. Pull and spin, aim and hit, reload: a shooter must be familiar with weapons and their characteristics. Jehammedan bow riders, Hellvetic Sappers, Palers with submachine guns and Judges with muskets all must master their Projectiles or die.

ACTION: Projectiles use: bow, crossbow, Judges' Musket, Soul Burner, Fungicide Rifle, blowgun, Spitfire, etc; weapons maintenance
REACTION: Gauging range and characteristics of Projectiles; 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 mind 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 Art when enemies do not speak the same language, when people from different regions have to interact. Art builds bridges beyond words, making friends out of strangers on the road—or humiliating enemies through the use of imposing architecture.

ACTION: Dancing; playing music; painting; tarot reading; writing poetry; storytelling; sculpting
REACTION: Esthetical 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 steles in front of the Hall of Judgment 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, and catch off guard. Expression is the power of the voice, of facial expressions and gestures. But 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 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.

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; avoiding mutinies
COMBINATION: >BOD+Melee or >AGI+Projectiles: combat formations and tactical considerations; >AGI+Navigation: 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 red dust to Stukov Nomads

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 host. 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

In the ruins, Bygone relics can still be found. Scrappers call these technological marvels "artifacts", look for them to polish up or sell 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 expanding 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; the Apocalyptic Woodpecker devises trap mechanisms; 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 out of the past. Those who know them understand people and their ways: why the Spitalians fear germs; 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 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
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 the known 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 body 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 pharmacy 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; this is how the Soul Burner works. Chemistry produced pesticides and fungicides that still keep the Sepsis at bay today.

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

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 realizes the possibilities around him and uses them quick as lightning. He doesn't have the time to consider concepts like "honor".

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 attack on the soul. Free will is culled by intimidation; this creates obedience and awe. Dominant people use their gestures, their voice, and their gaze as a weapon to make their victims 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: the zealot; >CHA+Leadership: awaken 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

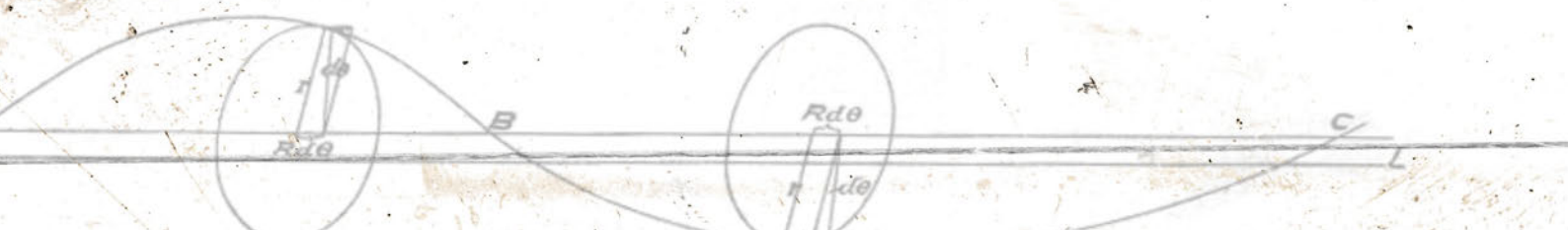
Opportunities and dangers continually swirl around humanity. However, recognizing them does not necessarily mean being able to take advantage. With the Reaction Skill, the fighter dodges a blow just in time or jumps into cover before the salvo hits. If the hanging bridge collapses, it leads the hands 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 a god nor fate determines the path, only the human will. It shapes, creates great things, tears down walls of deception, protects from the whispers of the Demagogues. It helps people withstand torture and conquer their 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: Willpower precludes the Faith Skill; PSY+Willpower is useful for countering mental manipulation and protects from the effects 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?

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 way markers 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 way markers
REACTION: Avoiding getting lost in dust storms or blizzards; blindly remembering the way when being abducted
COMBINATION: >AGI+Navigation: safe 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. 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, setting animals on enemies

ACTION NUMBER

Natural talent and years of training add up to one trait in the 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; thus, it is always noted in connection with the abbreviation for its Attribute in the 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 bring a bonus.

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

The higher the Action Number, the easier it is for the Character to successfully use his Skills against resistance.

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 dice that show at least a 4 (the "Successes") and proclaims the result loudly.

If the Action Number is higher than 12, all the 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 1 Point. His player adds both numbers for the result of 3 and 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 top. The harder the Action, the higher the Difficulty.

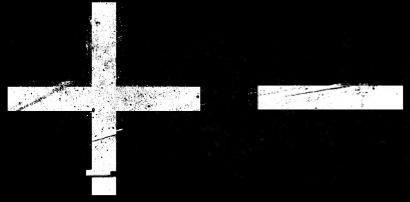
An Action succeeds if the number of Successes is equal to or higher than the Difficulty.

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 the KatharSys, Modifiers always 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

A 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; 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.

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 would look like this:

The Garganti lives in the wilderness, and all his instincts are well honed: the respective Attribute is 5.

Garganti grow up with their mammoths and learn at an early age to train them: his Taming Skill is 6. That adds up to a AN of 11 already. But the Garganti have a special feature: when dealing with the mammoths, they always have a +2D bonus. That would add up to a AN of 13. This means an Auto Success, and the AN is 12 again. The player has 7 Successes (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 quality 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; 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 ones 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 part 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 actively deceives with PSY+Deception, and Falberg tries to notice the lie with INS+Empathy. Three Successes and no Trigger for the dealer: The Apocalyptic cannot control himself today. Falberg also has three Successes, but also a Trigger: this means he wins the Conflict—and notices the dealer's erratic behavior, the way he constantly licks his lips. Something is wrong.

Falberg grabs his sword.

COMBINATIONS

Not every Action is exactly covered by a 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 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, "Combat").

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. Which influences which is a matter of debate and should not be handled strictly by the Game Master. Still: when it comes to rolling the dice, there needs to be an order.

ROLLING COMBINATIONS

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

If the first successful Action roll brings two Triggers and the second one another Trigger, the Action is performed with three 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 hinterland of the Balkhan. 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 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 complex 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.

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

Several successful Actions are needed
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, "Combat"). When a Character faces a complex Action, he may not fight, so often quick success of his Actions is of the essence. Here, the player has to roll, because the outcomes matter.

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 1 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: The damn Scrapper has beaten a hasty retreat and left Falberg behind with the explosive charges. The ignition wire is stretched between two trees, but something more has to happen to arm the mine. Falberg has no idea. More importantly, he's running out of time, for the Dushani is less than 50 yards away.

In 3 rounds, the Psychonaut will have reached Falberg. Before then, the mine should 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 get the last one. With a curse, 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 try 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 gets a +1 Difficulty.

Cooperative Action Rolls:
Assistant rolls with Difficulty +1
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 (3). The first one rolls only 2 Successes; he doesn't even reach the threshold of 3. Those 2 Successes are lost. The second Preservist is brawny and rolls well: 6 Successes and 2 Triggers, which reduces the remaining Successes needed to 12. Falberg himself adds 4 Successes and 1 Trigger. 8 more Successes are needed to free the cart. That should happen 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. However, they will primarily have to position themselves.

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 TOPIC?

Two continents with 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 Cult network in a huge metropolis?

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 horror. 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 weird 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 develop over the course of the game and deviate from the scheduled path.

WHY THIS GROUP?

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

RELATED

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 in 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. 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 decent 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 Apocalyptic 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 looked into the "game mechanics" or should get a brief GM introduction to be able to grasp the meaning of Attributes and Skills.

Four Skills—INT+Focus, INS+Primal, PSY+Willpower, and PSY+Faith—are especially important, and players should consider them 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 preclude each other.

A Character has to choose one of these paths. With Primal, he lets himself be devoured and pushed 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. 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 and fatigued (see Chapter 7, "Combat").

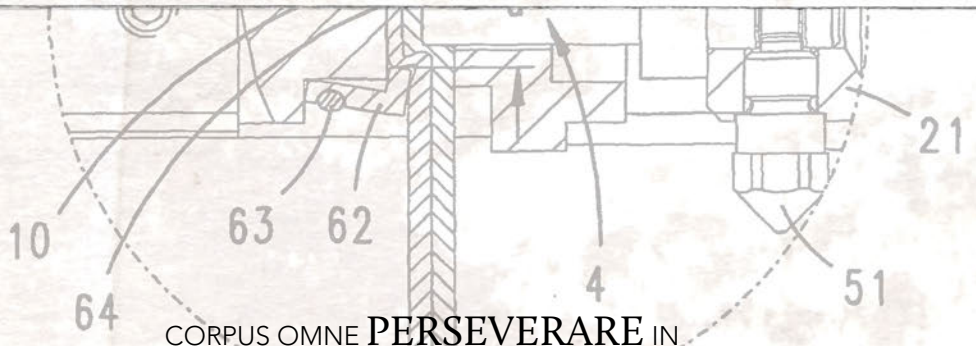
INT+Focus or INS+Primal
Ego Point max = INT+Focus x 2 or INS+Primal x 2

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 96, "Experience and Progression"). Moreover, they add some special abilities called Potentials 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 deflect 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 you write down all traits. Every player needs one. One is included at the end of the book, and you can download more from the Degenesis website.

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. They do not have any effects on game mechanics.

ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

At the outset, every Character gets 10 Attribute points to allocate to the 6 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 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 special 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 Culture, Concept, and Cult 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
2 points max per Attribute or Skill
Bonuses raise the maximum of selected traits by 1
PSY+Willpower or PSY+Faith
INT+Focus or INS+Primal

CHARACTER GENERATION OVERVIEW

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

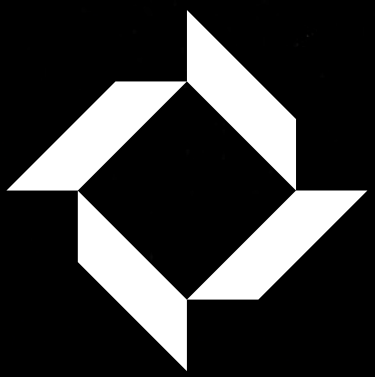
2. SPEND POINTS
Allocate 10 points to the Attributes and 28 to the Skills.
The Attribute and Skill max is 2; Potential bonuses from Culture, Concept, and Cult give a +1 each to this maximum.

3. SPEND POINTS ON BACKGROUNDS
Spend 4 points on the 6 backgrounds.
No trait can rise above 3.

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



CULTURE

Every Character comes from one of the seven Cultures: Borca, Pollen, Franka, Hybrispania, Purgare, Balkhan, or Africa. There he has his roots, was influenced by the land and the 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 for its respective traits by 1.

Some combos of Culture and Cult are uncommon, but not impossible; not all Cults are present 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 with a penchant for the Chroniclers 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 classically: 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. "Artifact Lore" and "Engineering" are important for a Chronicler; "Survival" is not. Or is it? Chris turns the page and finds the Concepts table.

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

CONCEPT

The Concept is organized along the lines of the archetypes from the Apocalyptic Tarot, each archetype embodying a path of life, telling about its motivations and fears: one person's goal in life is self-sacrifice, another wants to control the people around him. The player must choose one of the 22 Concepts. Like the Culture, his Concept brings a bonus, this time for 1 Attribute and 2 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.

Choosing Concept for the Character
Noting Attribute and Skill bonuses
Concept brings +2D in an appropriate situation

EXAMPLE: The players in Chris's group have agreed that their Characters' paths of life 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 as an adolescent and an adult by elevating any knowledge and education to a monolithic bastion against the decline. 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 oculars swing across the streets on cables, digitizing every movement, grabbing every face as a pattern of pixels. Movement sensors in small side alleys react, 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 fascinating mathematical patterns that are remarkably similar to white noise: a total failure. For decades, there has not been a 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. Years later, 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 take, 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 consider the awakening of the Stream 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 state 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. 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 once, the world tumbles into chaos. The Ruler must lead his flock, be beyond all question, 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 phenomenon? 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 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 splinter the bone, water the dry soil, and repair an old boat. Everything he does he does meticulously 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, strife and misunderstandings would be no more. 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 second place to 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, wants 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 blather about morale. 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 clockwork. Tick tock.

XIII. THE DESTROYER

To make room for something new, everything old has to die. According to this principle, the Destroyer fully gives in to 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 in 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's 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 (INS) Orienteering
	I. THE CREATOR	AGILITY	(CHA) Arts (INT) Engineering
	II. THE MENTOR	INTELLECT	(CHA) Leadership (INT) Legends
	III. THE MARTYR	PSYCHE	(PSY) Faith/Willpower (BOD) Toughness
	IV. THE RULER	CHARISMA	(PSY) Cunning (CHA) Leadership
	V. THE SEEKER	INTELLECT	(INT) Artifact lore (INT) Science
	VI. THE HEALER	AGILITY	(INT) Medicine (AGI) Crafting
	VII. THE TRADITIONALIST	INSTINCT	(INT) Legends (CHA) Conduct
	VIII. THE MEDIATOR	PSYCHE	(INS) Perception (CHA) Negotiation
	IX. THE HERMIT	INSTINCT	(INS) Survival (AGI) Stealth
	X. THE HERETIC	PSYCHE	(PSY) Cunning (CHA) Expression
	XI. THE CONQUEROR	BODY	(BOD) Toughness (BOD) Force
	XII. THE ABOMINATION	PSYCHE	(PSY) Domination (BOD) Toughness
	XIII. THE DESTROYER	INSTINCT	(BOD) Stamina (BOD) Force
	XIV. THE CHOSEN	CHARISMA	(CHA) Expression (CHA) Leadership
	XV. THE DEFILER	PSYCHE	(PSY) Deception (PSY) Domination
	XVI. THE PROTECTOR	PSYCHE	(BOD) Stamina (BOD) Toughness
	XVII. THE VISIONARY	CHARISMA	(CHA) Seduction (PSY) Cunning
	XVIII. THE ZEALOT	INSTINCT	(PSY) Reaction (PSY) Faith/Willpower
	XIX. THE DISCIPLE	CHARISMA	(INS) Empathy (INS) Perception
	XX. THE RIGHTEOUS	INTELLECT	(PSY) Cunning (CHA) Negotiation
	XXI. THE TRAVELER	INSTINCT	(INT) Legends (INS) Orienteering

CULT

The Character has joined a Cult or was born into one. Its views, rights, and duties influence him; he is part of a social framework and submits to its hierarchy. He can learn special Cult Potentials and get items from the Cult's arsenals—at least within certain limits, especially as a newbie. The Character starts at the bottom of the food chain. As a Spitalian, he starts as a Recruit. As a Chronicler, he starts as a Bit. His Skills—and his background (explained later in this chapter)—decide if he rises in rank and into which one. Through clever choice of Attributes and Skills, Characters can rise through the first two levels during Character creation. Every rank has its duties, but also its benefits. Among other things, the use of certain Cult equipment. The ranks of the Cults and their prerequisites and results 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 always wanted to play a Chronicler. 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, "The More Danger") or invent his own. Under the Clanner ranks, he will find hints 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, there is a Cult with thousands of people who all have their own views and goals, with resources beyond imagining, with its own secrets. The Character can disregard all of this or use it, can abandon the path or follow the river of ancient knowledge to the source to 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 has gotten, what he can do within his Cult, which rank he has, 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 96, "Experience and Progression"), but background is unraisable. If you want to gain more influence, you have to work to advance within the Cult.

During Character creation, every Character starts with 4 points to assign to the 6 backgrounds. No trait can rise above 3 at this point, though.

Backgrounds determine the rank within the Cult together with Skills.
No raising with XP.
4 points for the 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, a Protector, "Monitor" would be good. He keeps an eye on the knowledge he has sworn to protect.

As for background, 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 feasible: 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 the Cult. They may be colleagues, comrades, brothers in arms, or friends; they 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. 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 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 with 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 gets 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 Characters Resource score, the Character may take the object. If the Character's Resource score is equal to the object's value, the same is true. However, the Character's Resources are reduced by 1.

Please note: not everything is available everywhere. The most valuable Cult artifacts (level 5-6) can only be found in headquarters.

GAIN | LOSS: Resources accompany important missions or come 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. Those who enrich themselves from the arsenals, though, greedily hoarding treasures or wasting Cult resources, disqualify themselves. 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 the Cathedral, manuscripts detailing every step of Rebus, the Cult's founder, are stored. They permit for other interpretations than the official ones lived these days.

In the Cluster, the secrets of centuries 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 gets to know about the Preservists' atrocities; 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 gotten 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 guess the truth behind the legends surrounding the Cult (bonus on INT+Legends). They know passwords or the entrances to ancient portals. However, illegal deeds of corrupt influential Cultists and the deals they make also fall under "Secrets" and can help to gain short time advantages or 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 or rises from a dying man's lips. Those who use this secret knowledge recklessly risk their lives. Those who use compromising knowledge and make it public can lose one point of Secrets.

NETWORK

The Cults are not hermetic systems. Beyond the control structures, 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 help each other. The Network background sums up contacts outside the 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 finds someone who can answer these questions.

GAIN | LOSS: People prefer dealing with someone they know. Favors small and big; a strong, helping hand; ritualized companionship in inns, or simply a fistful of Chroniclers' 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 (every Attribute starts at 1). He would like to have more, but that is impossible with the combo 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 bonuses. Deception, Negotiation, and Survival could also be raised to 3, but Chris does not care about them.

In the end, the 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 the child of wild Clanners—genes cannot be suppressed.

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.

A Potential always has 3 levels. It is learned on the first level; all other levels have to be bought with Experience points (see page 96, "Experience and Progression").

Potentials differ very much from Attributes and Skills; usually, they offer to the player special rules for certain situations (see Potential listings). Every newly created Character learns 1 Potential on 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. Chris sees the Potential as a future investment and notes it on his Character sheet on level 1. 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 a prerequisite. These are usually minimum scores in Skills and backgrounds. For the Skills, we always give the sum of Attribute plus Skill, never the level 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 are equipped with typical Cult gear.

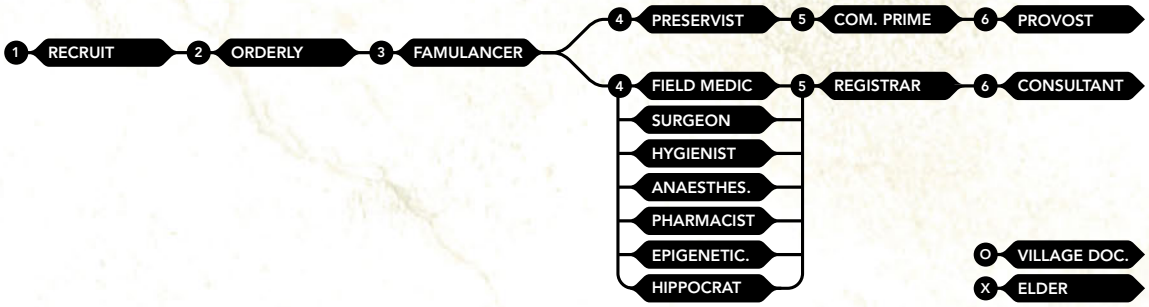
Rank prerequisite must be fulfilled
Rank brings special rules and bonuses
Character gets Cult equipment

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; brings +1D on INT+Medicine as long as the Medicine score 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 free there. If a Famulancer does not choose a medical specialty quickly, the registry 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 those 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. Hippocrates represent the Spital to the other cults and may sign treaties. They have unlimited access to Justitian's Hall of Judgment.
EQUIPMENT: Revolver; +1D bullets per month; Ita Sit cross acts as a passport; bugs and eavesdropping equipment

4 - ANAESTHESIOLOGIST
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 Hippocrates 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 Hippocrates. 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, 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 the jab; the other hand pushes it forward; skin slides over metal until the jab grabs the pumping handle and triggers the snatching mechanism. The blades close with a snap. The Spitalian jumps forward, pushing the Splayer upwards with both hands, turning into his enemy, hitting the man's head with the pumping handle so the mechanism has enough time to flip open the blades again. One side step, and he's back in his original position. He can change his attack, can push the Splayer into his enemy's weapon in a circular movement, can counter with the foot peg and disarm the enemy. The man's eyes seem glued to the blades. The trained Famulancer uses this fact and fights with every part of his weapon.

The Splaying Potential is activated with 2 Triggers and can't be combined with the Splayer's special ability "Cutting". After the activation, the Spitalian gets defense +1 and handling +1D for one round. If he immediately attacks again with 2 Triggers (in this or the next round), this adds another defense +1 and handling +1D—if the Potential level permits it: Defense and handling bonus cannot be higher than the level. At level 3, for example, the maximum Potential bonus is +3 Defense / +3 Handling. If the activation fails in a subsequent attack, the bonus is lost.

PHALANX

A thicket of spears is directed towards the enemy, and he will not be able to pass through without a scratch. The Potential needs at least one flank man equipped with a spear, Splayer, or another pole arm who is defending himself. The Spitalian is also defending and can draw attacks on the man next to him to himself. For every neighbor, he gets +1D to his defense roll up to the Potential level. If he gets at least 2T, the defense counts as a successful attack and the Trigger as special damage—the opponent has charged into his Splayer. Combinable with the Splayer's special ability "Cutting". The Potential can be used in the first round of combat without any restrictions. In later rounds, the Spitalian and his comrades at his flanks need one round in which they are not attacked and have not themselves attacked to regroup.

PRESERVALIS

PREREQUISITE: Preservist

Preservists don't force 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: the forceful blows aim at the enemy's defense and weapon; the Preservist uses the momentum to turn into him, rams the secondary hand carrying the pistol into the enemy, and pulls the trigger. The ricochet separates the combatants.

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

LAST BASTION

Sickle through flesh, bone plates levered away, 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 gets Triggers equaling his Potential level for every attack.

KRANZLER'S TEACHINGS

PREREQUISITE: Focus

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

Every Famulancer in the Spital today learns Kranzler's techniques, but mastering those techniques requires dedication. Those who do are immune to Psychonautic influences—at least for a number of combat rounds equaling the level of the Potential.

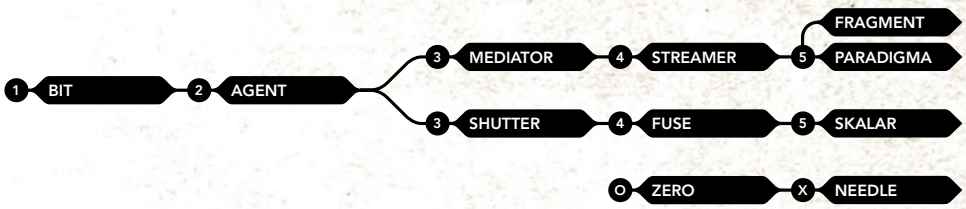
THE LAST FAREWELL

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. Everything human is crying out from the Spitalian, burning away in the glory of absolute destructive madness.

For 6 combat rounds, he gets +1D per level on attack and defense rolls. His passive defense rises by +1 per level, as well as the damage he does.

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 (as for the Zeros).
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 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 (with -2, the background "Secrets" is not restricted to the Chroniclers only, but can also apply to all Cults). The Streamer has free access to Justitian's upper city and even to the Hall of Judgment.
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 of the Sleeper infiltrators. A Fragment has access to all other Cults' headquarters except for the Hellvetics' and Anabaptists'. Usually the Cults are not aware of this.
EQUIPMENT: Cascader; Stream Drone

5 - PARADIGMA

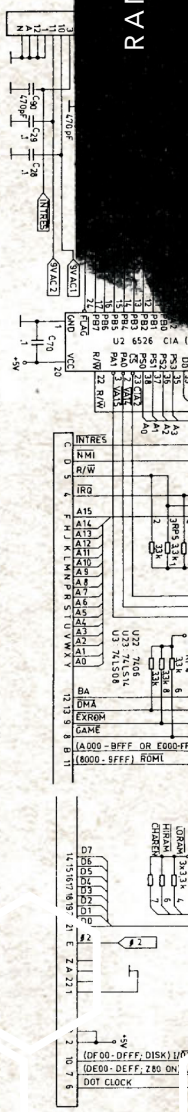
PREREQUISITE: INT+Legends 6; PSY+Willpower/Faith 8; PSY+Deception 8; PSY+Domination 6
RESULT: The Paradigma can read the Scrappers' runes of warning. Scrappers protect Paradigmas and act as their informers (+1 to Network where Scrappers are concerned). A Paradigma defends the Cult and diverts from its 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 129, "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 Skalars or Streamers can detect it any time with the help of a Tracker.
EQUIPMENT: Sanctioned technology by resource level



5 - SKALAR

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

RESULT: Using forged identities, the Skalar 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 Skalar's virtual identities earn him Chroniclers' 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 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. In the case of 2 Triggers, a Fuse takes the cleaning job. If there are even more Triggers, a Skalar is tasked to do it. After the attack, the Perception goes down to zero 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 3 equipment; at Resources 6, he would have free access to Wonderland artifacts. If a Needle's Renown rises above 3, Marauders will take notice of him. Will they be well disposed towards him?

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 the modules, energizing them with a gesture of his finger, offering parts of his body to the enemy that will hit him with discharging flashes. The spontaneous activation of the discharge component gets easier by -1T. +1D on the defense roll per Potential level.

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 level of Potential reduces the Difficulty by 1. If there are at least two enemies in melee distance, his comrades do not suffer from this Action. If the roll fails, the Chronicler only activates one component (randomly chosen), and his own group suffers the same penalties as the enemy.

DEAD END

Shutters do not fight fair. They use ambushes, tricks, and deception. Only when they have their enemies cornered, when they are sure of their prey, do they attack, efficiently and vehemently. If there is no way out for the victim of a Shutter, the Shutter gets a bonus on attack and defense (active and passive) equaling his Potential level.

FRACTAL MEMORY

PREREQUISITE: Focus

The Chronicler's memory is like a map with landmarks and complex coastlines. On it, he has arranged his knowledge according to mathematical rules taken from fractal theory.

On all Action rolls on INT, he gets Triggers equaling his Potential level. This Potential is permanently active.

DOWNLOAD

Humankind runs on electricity. Those who command it also command humankind. With the right amount of electricity—on the right spots of the body—a Download specialist asks reluctant subjects for pertinent information.

This method of questioning gives to the Chronicler +1D and +1T on PSY+Domination per Potential level when applied to a bound victim.

UPLOAD

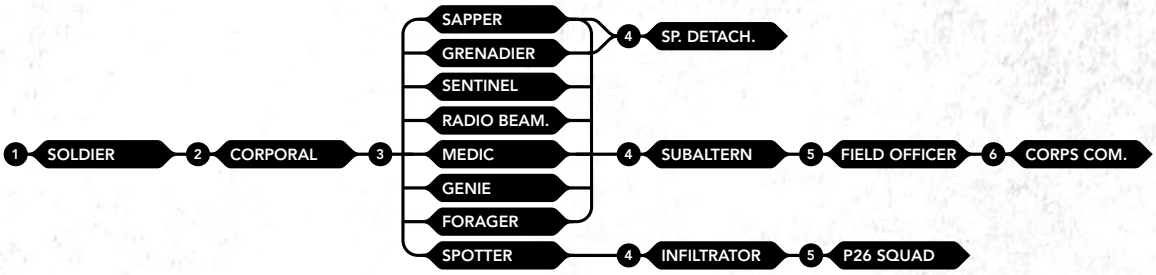
Key stimuli lead to a download, so an Upload should be possible, too. Binding the subject has not always proven fruitful for this.

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

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

Combinable 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 (range, damage, or handling). He receives permission to carry 2 units of an explosive of his choice.
EQUIPMENT: +10 rounds per month (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). As opposed to other soldiers, he can go into combat with up to 4 units of explosives.
EQUIPMENT: Tunnel Shield; grenade launcher; 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 way markers to detect weapon caches at his operation site. His Trailblazer gets a level 2 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: Short-barreled 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 him or her 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 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 grenades and flash bangs; 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 or +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). The bonus is unique, but 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: permanently +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 embassy 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 background "Allies" 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 on 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 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 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

DOCTRINE: ASSAULT

PREREQUISITE: Primal

A Harness gets moving, 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.

If a Hellvetic calls his squads to attack, he leads by example, and if in doing so he manages to attack with 2T, all comrades attacking after him in this combat round get +1D per Potential level to their attack. Only usable in the first combat round.

DOCTRINE: SHIELD WALL

From the strategic safeguard of the cantons to the tactical Shield Wall Doctrine, Hellvetics protect people.

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

For 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. In melee, he can use the Triggers with the bayonet mounted to activate the Trailblazer's special ability "Bayonet."

DOCTRINE: INFILTRATION

Information wins wars. A Hellvetic committed to the Infiltration Doctrine mingles with the people, finds ringleaders, and checks them out. He is a master of subversion and lies. With every level of Potential, he gets +1D on all deception rolls (CHA and PSY) and +1 Network.

DOCTRINE: FORCED MARCH

Those who follow the Forced March Doctrine change their movements to better match the rigid construction of their armor and to keep them from working against the steel joints. The weight of the Harness decreases by 1 with every Potential level.

DOCTRINE: DISCIPLINE

PREREQUISITE: Focus

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

A Hellvetic with the Discipline Doctrine can turn Triggers at a rate of 1:1 to Ego Points whenever he attacks or actively defends himself, up to a limit equaling the Potential level.

DOCTRINE: MORALE

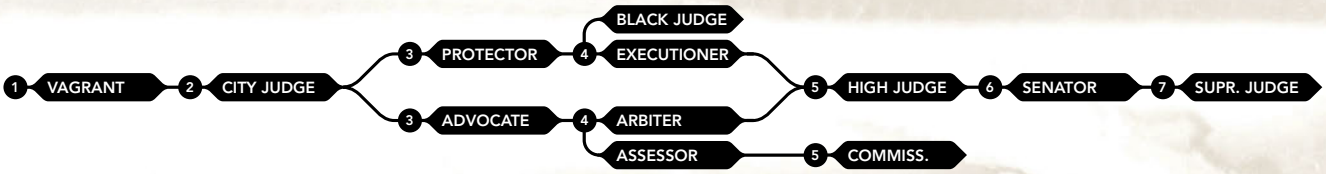
Anyone can win a battle if he throws enough soldiers against the enemy. Only when outnumbered does the Hellvetic soldier truly prove his worth.

Outnumbered Hellvetics get +1 mental defense per Potential level.

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 rise 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 (when used like this, +2 Network; the bonus does not apply when they have to find influential criminals like Ravens).

EQUIPMENT: Judges' Musket; +1D round 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 Rutgar knows the Black Judge's identity. The Judge takes off his regalia and works as an undercover assassin for Rutgar from now on. He gets to know the world of infamy (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; 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 cancel Judgments of Protectors or Executioners (+2 on Authority when dealing with Protectors).

EQUIPMENT: Codex (limited 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 mill in Justitian prints warrants and propaganda approved by the High Judges and distributes both in the Protectorate for them.
EQUIPMENT: Horse (Judgment 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 receives 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]

POTENTIALS

FIAT LUX

PREREQUISITE: Renown 4

Darkness hides the lie; light births truth. The Judge is a blazing example of lawfulness and incorruptibility, and the people around him know it. The bad ones among them are skittish: they blink too often, and their movements are nervous, the shoulders rigid. The Judge sees all that: he feels every lie—and is already considering the punishment.

When dealing with scum in general—and especially with Apocalyptics—the Judge gets a +1D bonus per Potential level to every deception attempt and his mental defense.

STAMPEDE

Sometimes violence is the only option. The Judge bows, kicks off, and starts running. The wind tears his hat away, but he does not look back, instead pushing his head into the draught. He holds his Hammer in both hands: one hand 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 a bulky body hit the floor. His comrades will do the rest.

The Judge throws himself into an enemy in one combat round. To do so, he rolls BOD+Force plus his Potential level in dice. If the Judge's attack is successful, his opponent falls down and cannot move for a whole round of combat.

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 or redirecting the centrifugal forces. With the right technique, the Hammer is as easy to use as a sword, without losing its impact. The deductions for the special ability "Impact" are reduced by 1 per Potential level.

JANUS FACE

Judges spend all their lives 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 for the rest of the battle as long as he fights this enemy.

LYNCH LAW

The Judges have been controlling the people for so long that they know very well which buttons to push to raise their anger.

A Judge with this Potential can gather a mob and incite it against perpetrators: in doing so, he gets +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 do this very long. Moreover, the side of the body that faces away from the Hammer hand would be an easy target for enemies—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 poor positioning, some Judges still use this technique: a double hit with Hammer and bullet usually ends the combat.

The Steel Thunder technique brings -4D to handling (the Judgment Hammer is the main weapon). The Potential level reduces this deduction. In case of a hit, only the Hammer's damage counts, but the Triggers count double. Until the Judge's next turn, 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 >2, simple gun

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 >3, hunting rifle

2 - GATHERER

PREREQUISITE: CHA+Negotiation 4; CHA+Conduct 6; INS+Orienteering 6

RESULT: The Gatherer knows the land, knows when it produces what (+2D to searching for berries and roots) and when to buy from merchants. Gatherers keep up politically unproblematic 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 >2 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 >3, 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 > 2, 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 > 2, 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 >2), 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.

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, "The More Danger"), 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—better 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 demon stuff.
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 morale 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 aggregates 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 think 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 worshiped. 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 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?

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 calls 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.
CULT-BONUS: (CHA) Leadership

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

RESOURCES

What makes the Clan rich? Does it control valuable resources?

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; others break open mud vents, harvest insects, and roast them.
CULT-BONUS: (INS) Taming

3: MINES: Tunnels cut deep into hills and mountainsides; out of these Clanners drag coal, niter, or other minerals that are 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

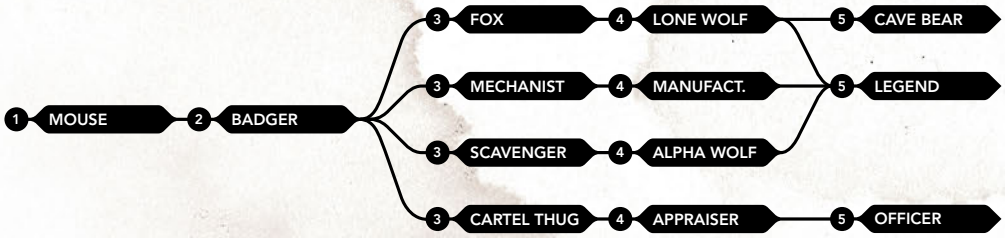
5: BUNKER: The Clan lives in the bunker, feeding from its provisions, armed with Bygone rifles.
CULT-BONUS: (AGI) Projectiles

6: RAID: The Clan survives by raiding farms and convoys. The Cults will not tolerate this.
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 Chroniclers' 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: 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 the Technical Center. Not too clean, not too cozy—they do not want them 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 defense rolls and +3 to his passive defense in his cave. He spends even more time with his weapon: the number of possible upgrades 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)

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 tin snips). 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 it comes time to give a wipe to 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 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 nice task, for Bosch is a hysterical dwarf who sprays poison in all directions. 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 discontentment, they accuse, and they hit a nerve. People gather around them, recognizing their own fate and nodding assent. The shouting begins, faces reddened with anger. The first "Mess them up!" resounds, 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 down the mob in a Conflict with CHA+Expression. If the Scrapper wins, he commands the pack. He has to back orders with serious consequences with 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 do not stand out 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 under his coat what he has found and leaves.

Rats are always innocent, or at least they successfully claim to be. 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 moan, "Is that all, you wimps?" They can take quite some punishment, and count on their enemy to tire. "Hah, you weak assholes!" Tough Dogs can take more than others: they get the additional armor "Tough flesh" with an Armor rating equaling the Potential level.

NITRO

PREREQUISITE: Primal

Buried deep beneath old habits, learned fear, and flight reflexes, a hatred against this eternal cowardice smolders. Nitros have uncovered many artifacts in their lifetimes, but also this special hatred. It only waits to break out and devastate those who see the Scrapper merely as a hauler and digger in the dirt like a firestorm.

The Scrapper can give in to his explosive anger in the first combat round, getting +1D per Potential level to his attacks.

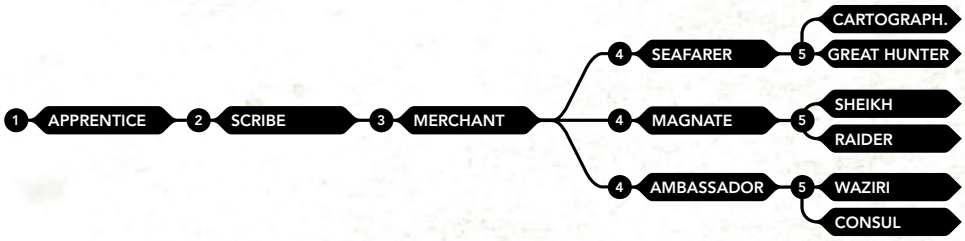
TRUFFLE PIG

The good Scrappers keep finding artifacts that make the Chroniclers all skittish as they count out thick sheaves of Drafts. Bad Scrappers retrieve nothing that earns them more than the scrap value. 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. INS+Perception gets a +1D bonus per Potential level while they look for scrap or traps.

DARWIN

In the ruins, evolution rules cruelly. Only the strongest survive. The best of them are the Darwins. Whether through sheer luck or absurd feats of strength, they keep escaping desperate situations. A Darwin is an artist of survival who gets a +1D bonus per Potential level on the lifesaving Skill in a seemingly lost situation.

If he survives, his Renown rises by +1, to a max 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, eating free, receiving wonderful clothing—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. 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 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. Network permanently rises by 1.

EQUIPMENT: -

POTENTIALS

LION'S SHARE

The Neolibyan knows his opposite, knows the ropes of his vanities, praises and threatens wherever he deems necessary to ultimately get a good deal for himself.

With every deal, the Neolibyan gets Triggers equaling the Potential level on the roll. This brings him a bigger share or a lower price.

MARKSMAN

PREREQUISITE: Focus

The rifle in his hands does not tremble; his gaze wanders far away along the iron sights. The Neolibyan controls his breathing, follows every movement of the target with the weapon, holds his breath, and shoots. 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. For the attack roll, he gets Triggers equaling the Potential level.

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 comprehension of the flow of goods. It is in the blood of the Neolibyans to worship, emulate, and even surpass a model. Some of them have an especially winning manner (and the Potential "Inspiration"): if they succeed extraordinarily in an Action (at least 3 Triggers) and invest 1 Ego Point, they kindle a fire in their comrades' hearts.

These get +1D bonus per Potential level for the next Action—as long as it is similar to the Neolibyan's.

NINE LIVES

When threatened with destruction, a Neolibyan jumps into action; his instincts awaken, his mind trembles, and he gets his body moving. In life-threatening situations, he gets +1D per Potential level on every Action roll potentially able to save his life—for a price: he loses 1 Ego Point per Action.

AT EYE LEVEL

The Neolibyan's behavior makes his opposite forget who is who, which man is rich and powerful. The Neolibyan meets the stranger at eye level, as a friend or ally—and friends and allies are listened to, are trusted.

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

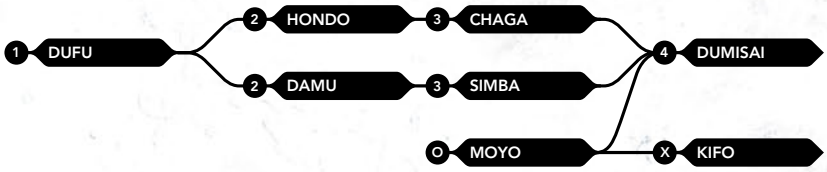
WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Normal people are normal and will remain normal because they only put crumbs on the scales of life. The higher the jump, the farther the fall, the simple people say. Whatever. The Neolibyan rises above this, because he enjoys risks, puts gold onto the scales with both hands—and he expects great results. The more a Neolibyan risks with this Potential, the higher the possible profit: before an attack or defense roll, the Neolibyan determines how many dice he will not roll. When the Action succeeds, he gets +1 Trigger for the following attack for every 2 dice he has not used. Per Potential level, the Neolibyan can risk 2 dice—that means up to 6 dice at Potential level 3, which would bring him 3 Triggers.

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, as well. 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, +2 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 ask for any ammunition

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 dropped 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. On 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 unblemished. When making a melee attack against the Scourger with this Potential (on short distance, without pole arms), the attacker hurts himself depending on the amount of damage he was able to cause; up to the Potential level, he takes the same damage. Therefore, at level 3, the attacker cannot take more than 3 points of damage. Only armor with the "hardened" 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 them, will soon share another victory with them.

Ancestral blood is a ritual to prepare the Scourger for a coming fight. It strengthens his mental defense by the Potential level. The ritual needs dedication—and a little over 15 minutes of time.

TRIAL OF THE HERO

A great deed relies upon 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, becomes the Lion incarnate, roaring and attacking. The ancestors watch him with pride. When fighting physically or technologically superior enemies, the Scourger gets a bonus equaling his Potential level to his Initiative roll.

HYENA'S LAUGHTER

The chuckling, screaming, and laughing of the Hyena tells the Crow that the pack is coming. Its wings will soon be clipped.

Actually, it is not Hyenas making those sounds but Scourgers inciting each other and screaming their tension into the face of the enemy.

Those who have mastered this technique get +1D per Potential level to attack or defense at the beginning of the first combat round. The 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 flying. The white men sidestep; he hears them panting. He keeps up, staying right behind them even though he could overtake them with two, three leaps. The wild dog hunts the game to death, for this is its nature.

For every round that the Scourger chases a fleeing enemy on foot, he recovers Ego Points equaling the Potential level.

SIMBAS PREY

PREREQUISITE: Focus

Crow against Lion or Scourger against AMSUMO: creatures, strangers to each other—yet still chosen by fate to collide like two blazing suns.

No interference with this conflict remains unpunished. The Scourger chooses an enemy and separates him from the crowd. He gets a bonus on his passive defense equaling the Potential level that applies to all enemies except for the Chosen One.

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. The same is true for all higher ranks.

With every transformation, the Raze resistance grows: +2D on Action rolls to fight off infections.

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 ether 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; fruit falls from shrubs and explodes into highly poisonous clouds. The Psychovores attack with their Force and bring the Raze. Psychovores with a Force of 5+ resist the Soul Seer. The Anubian develops advanced resistance against the Raze: +4D against infections.

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 = quality 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 infections.

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). 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: 1T brings 1 minute or +1 to the Attribute. It can even surpass the limit of 6 this way. Resistance against Psychovores: +4D to fending off infections.
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 infections.
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 use his Renown background for Action rolls. He knows the weak spots of all creatures: every hit with a weapon causes Ego damage that equals the Trigger level in addition to the physical damage. Resistance against Psychovores: +4D to fending off infections.
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 winds her way into the Anubian's mind, corrupting him, driving him into an abyss of ancient hatred. She guides his hand, makes the sickle cut through innards and break the wave. Soon, fresh souls dripping with blood will be standing before Anubis, waiting to be judged.

Triggers received from a melee attack (2T needed) can make the Anubian frenzy. Anubians imbued by Ammit do not defend themselves actively anymore. However, Ammit's mindset is volatile and corroding: it must be re-achieved (activated by Triggers) every round and paid in blood every round after the first (1 Flesh Wound). With every round that the Anubian stays in frenzy, his attack dice rise by 1D and his damage by 1. The Potential level determines the maximum: at level 3, +3D and +3 damage are possible. If the frenzy is interrupted, all scores fall back to the original value.

NAVEL OF NEFERTEM

And the cusps of the blue lotus rose from the primal waters, blooming in cruel beauty into a strange world, and Nefertem was their god. The lotus, the Hogons whisper, will not devour those who walk in the god's shadow. The Anubian develops a resistance against Psychovores, which also influences the catalysis: every level of Navel of Nefertem lowers the Difficulty when dealing with Psychovores (defense against the Raze and catalysis of medicine) by 1.

EYE OF HORUS

The falcon-headed one rises into the air, and his wing tips touch the ends of the earth. His unblinking black eyes—the moon eye and the sun eye—miss no disturbance of the wave.

Anubians using the Eye of Horus feel disturbances of the wave across kilometers (level 1: up to 100 m; level 2: up to 1 km; level 3: up to 10 km). Unerringly, they find Psychonauts—and see the gleaming network of force lines on the Aberrants' body (+1T per level when attacking Psychonauts, spore varieties, and Leperos).

MERCY OF ANUBIS

The wave breaks, but the deep fall into Anubis's realm is not granted to the Anubian. He is not ready yet.

If the Anubian falls into a coma because of his injuries (Trauma damage above maximum), he still rises again and fights on (1 more round per level before he collapses dead). The sight of the destroyed body strikes fear in his enemies' hearts: every round that the Mercy of Anubis imbues the dead body, they must make an Action roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower, Difficulty = (number of rounds x 2).

SEKHMET'S SLUMBER

The lion-headed one protects the dead body with her paws so that demons and Anubis's vigilant gaze cannot see it.

The Anubian falls into a rigor mortis that cannot be interrupted once begun. After (4 - Potential level) days, he wakes up fully healed. Combinable with Mercy of Anubis.

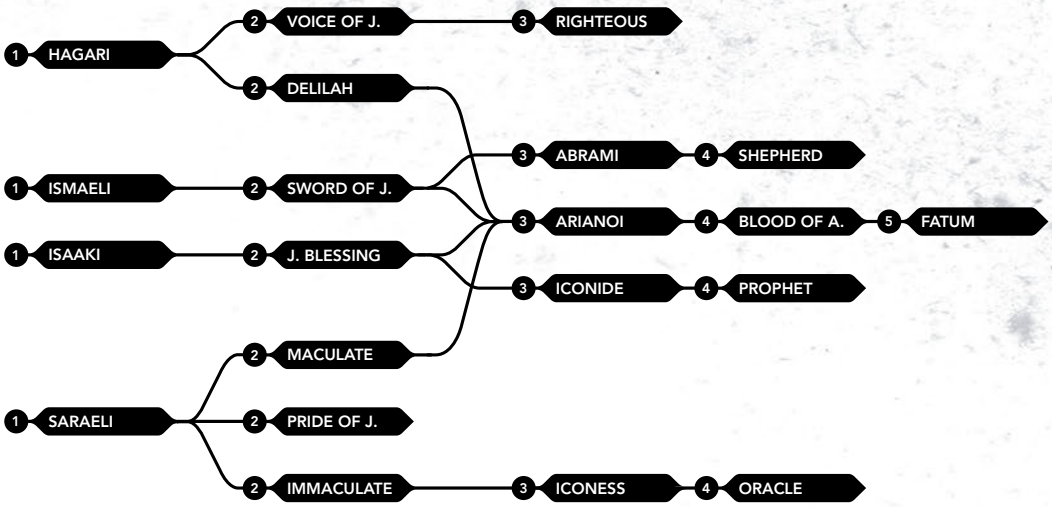
GAZE OF FATE

PREREQUISITE: Focus

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

Anubians with Gaze of Fate foresee and even live through a very limited period of their imminent future once a 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 Anubian's level. The Anubian gets +2D to the foreseen Action per Potential level.

LEVEL 1: Seconds – e. g., an attack or defense
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; rider's hoe; 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 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 124, "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 - DELILA

PREREQUISITE: PSY+Faith/Willpower 10; BOD+Melee 6
RESULT: She is a fallen Hagari. If she fights for her honor, she cannot actively defend, 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; 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 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 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; the 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 spoils the renown of Jehammed, even the face of 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. They count all attacks by the enemy; if they damage a friend, they count twice. At 10, the Jehammedan bursts out.

For the rest of the battle, he has attack +1D per Potential level. For every successful attack in frenzy, he gets +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 enters his mind, makes him growl and leap up.

The breath of Aries has touched his soul, and the goat has birthed a wolf. The ritual takes roughly 15 minutes. The Jehammedan now embodies Aries. For 1 hour, all his Charisma Skills drop to 0. However, he can spend more Ego points than otherwise possible: the potential to spend Ego points rises by his Potential level.

CALL OF JEHAMMED

The Anabaptists only yell when attacking, mindless like a bear, reduced to the simplest emotions. The Jehammedans' shouted prayers, though, are carefully crafted aphorisms embracing life, touching the heart and keeping the beast at bay. Born by 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 gets +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 Triggers, they are added as bonus dice to his group's mental defense. This bonus drops by 1 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, infected 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 defend actively. If they fail, they get -1D per Trigger to all Action rolls. The 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 blissful day. When should the Iconides fulfill their destiny, if not today?

The Iconide interprets an important event as an omen and can bless all Icons brought to him that day. For this day, their effect rises by the Potential level.

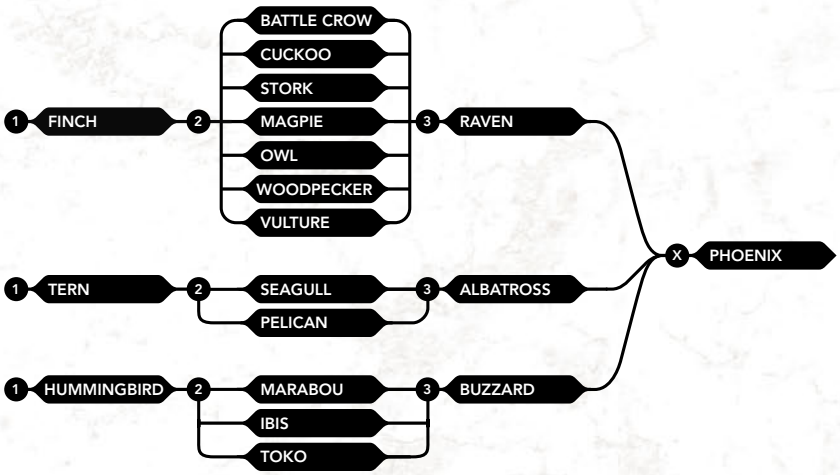
ORACLE

PREREQUISITE: Oracle rank

Cloud formations, the form of entrails, or the throw of bone dice all entail 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 his audience. After all the necessary hubbub, she describes the future and hints at a potential outcome. In fact, the audience will leave uplifted and try to make this future come true. If a member of the audience is confronted with the situation the Oracle described within a month, he or she gets +1D per Potential level to an Action bringing them closer to the goal the Oracle mentioned. The Oracle can make one prophecy per day.

RANK 3 BUZZARD



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 by 2 points; +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 (+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. On 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 Skalars. 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 tons of ammunition and Burn. Even the Mother of Ravens fears his shadow 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 the payback. The Apocalyptic decides not to use all his dice for an active defense, foregoing a number of dice up to 2x his Potential level.

If he still manages to defend himself, his next attack roll gets Triggers equaling the amount of unused dice. At Potential level 3, this can be up to 6 Triggers.

CARD OF DESTINY

PREREQUISITE: Faith; Raven, Albatross, or Buzzard

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

The fortuneteller tells his own fortune and thus determines his future. He interprets the card of destiny and names its cornerstones: where does the fortuneteller have to face whom? The "whom" can remain sketchy, but at least names the opponent's Cult. If the exact combination of "where" and "whom" comes to pass within the next 10 days, the fortuneteller gets the Potential level as bonus to all Charisma and Psyche rolls in the situation foretold.

CROW'S NEST

PREREQUISITE: Primal

The Flock is more than just a family to the Apocalyptic. It's his origin, the living, widely pulsating part of himself. Those who damage the Flock bury a dagger in the Apocalyptic's entrails. 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 1 T. 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 fortunetellers can now gaze behind the mirror of presence into potential future, 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; pitch-black stones in the soup let one expect abdominalgia pretty soon. Many people see in the Apocalyptics' savagery a pact with primal forces better not conjured. The migrants know 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 equaling the number of Triggers rolled +1. To get rid of the curse, the opponent has to cleanse himself spiritually through prayer, rituals, or a pilgrimage.

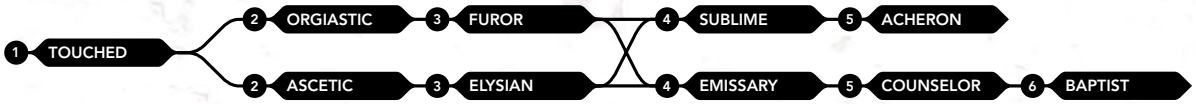
1,000 WAYS

PREREQUISITE: Only usable in melee

The Apocalyptic has taken part in so many fights, has studied so many combat styles and left them behind. Combat is not a dance that has to follow certain rules of rhythm and seduction. What matters is the result; the path to this result can branch 1,000 times.

The Apocalyptic's blows are virtually unpredictable and thus hard to block: for every Trigger, his opponent has -1D to his active defense. 1 Trigger can be used per Potential level. Therefore, on level 3 he would have a maximum of 3 Triggers leading to -3D to the opponent's defense.

The Triggers also keep counting as extra damage.



1 - TOUCHED

PREREQUISITE: -

RESULT: He gets his three dots tattoo 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 press the well-known Elysian oils from. 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 Result on 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 the 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, improved by 2 points

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, too?" Still laughing, they nod. The Anabaptist grins. "But if we bleed, don't we tear you apart?"

If the Anabaptist is hurt and suffers more than 50% of his bearable fleshwounds, he frenzies until the end of the combat. He can use any number of Ego Points; all restrictions are off. He may not defend actively anymore. 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 tearing down on him. But the Anabaptist whirls his sword around, pushing into his enemy and hitting him over the head with the heft. 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 attack roll is made at -5D, but the Anabaptist gets +1D per Potential level. The Anabaptist turns the sword around and hits with heft or crossguard. If the attack succeeds, the opponent loses consciousness at once: he loses all his Ego Points. If the attack fails, though, the Anabaptist becomes unbalanced: he counts as unarmed for 1 combat round and cannot attack.

PNEUMA

PREREQUISITE: Focus

If the enemy is hit, more than blood and gore gushes from his body. His flesh becomes separated from his 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 causes a wound with at least 5 - Potential level points of damage, he recovers 1 Ego Point at once.

REALM OF EMANATIONS

PREREQUISITE: PSY+Faith 8

The Anabaptist's faith is his star amidst the darkness. But wherever its light shines, it reveals rotten lumps of blackness, the primal fear, the Psychonauts, writhing bodies in breeding cusps, anointed with infamy. The nights are the worst. The Anabaptist falls asleep as if lying in a bed of liquid tar. But what happens to him at night no longer touches him by day.

The Dushani suggestions don't take hold; 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 activates the Potential: he rolls an additional number of dice equaling the Potential level. He can add the highest result as Successes to his defense roll. For example, if he rolls 1, 4, and 5 at level 3, he gets another 5 Successes.

TORCHBEARER

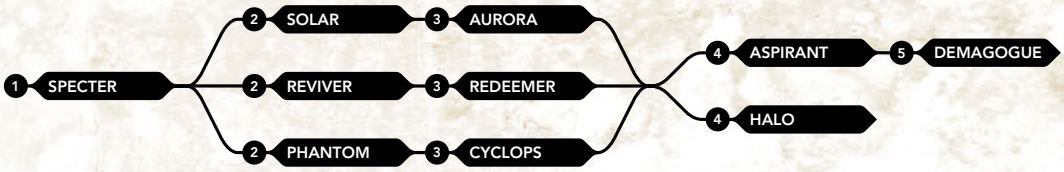
PREREQUISITE: At least Elysian or Furor

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 darkness to the light: to find them, he gets +1D per Potential level to INS+Perception.

ZEALOT

Through austerity, daily meditation, and lots 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 is only an indicator of damage taken, but no longer a problem.

The Trauma penalty is reduced by the 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 defense.
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 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: the 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. Cyclopses 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. The Getrell avatar of his bunker brings a Sun Disc update 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 best-known Sleeper Prophets and what they have to offer to a Paler:

DAIMONDAL: 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. Commands flying and crawling sensoria on the lookout for Sleepers. Those who follow him get a modified level 3 Orbital Sun Disc that gets information from Helios's moving sensoria: +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 (godsbone weapons) from their bones. Enceph's motives are unclear.

ASHES
MAKE EVERYBODY EQUAL.

[LUCIUS ANNAUS SENECA]

POTENTIALS

NIGHTMARE

The shadow takes shape and mass, crashing down on the enemy like a wave of blades.

The Paler has to lurk in the shadows and win a Conflict of his AGI+Stealth against his enemy's INS+Perception. His next attack cannot be actively defended against, and if it succeeds, he gets a number of Triggers equaling his Potential level. Also, a Nightmare is almost inaudible at night: he gets +1D per Potential level to AGI+Stealth.

LAMENT

PREREQUISITE: Primal

A scream like fingernails on a blackboard echoes through the halls, the nails penetrating deeply into the brains of the people all around, digging and tearing. The Paler pours all of his fears into this scream and rolls INS+Primal +1D per Potential level. The results are the Difficulty against which all unprotected combatants have to defend mentally. Those who fail are incapacitated for at least 1 combat round. For every 3T the Paler has, this incapacitation lasts another combat round. Fighting companions are subject to the scream as well and have to protect themselves with earplugs.

ALIAS

The night cools the surface dwellers' burning gaze and veils the Palers' movements. But the day is difficult, and jumping from shadow to shadow is rather undignified for a servant of the godlike ones. The Alias Potential lets the Paler imitate the movements of the surface dwellers. He floats with the current of the ignorant ones. Scrutinizing gazes glance off his ostentatious normality. He gets +1D per Potential level to PSY+Deception when trying to hide his true colors.

MIDNIGHT SUN

PREREQUISITE: Focus

Mist veils the enemy; the night devours all color: the image on the retina is so often deceptive, leading us to believe we're safe. Some Palers simply close their eyes. They now perceive their environment with their ears, feel every movement as a breeze on their faces.

All penalties due to bad 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 alike, which is okay. That one there, however—well, if that isn't…

The Sleeper Prophet hesitates, briefly closing 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 rises and brings a bonus equal to the Potential level to the Authority and Secrets backgrounds.

SUGGESTOR

PREREQUISITE: Demagogue

The voice in his head urges and flatters. It is family, love, passionate pain. It is a worm burrowing into the cerebral gyri, formed by the words of a Demagogue.

If the Demagogue manages to sneak up on an unsuspecting victim (AGI+Stealth), he can suggest strange thoughts to the person. The victim "hears" these thoughts as a voice in the head—the victim's voice.

The victim fights for control: the Demagogue gets +2D per Potential level to suggest an opinion by pitting CHA+Negotiation against the victim's resistance.

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. When he does find something to eat, he is not picky, and his stomach is not very sensitive.

The Character can survive for a long time without food and water: he may skip one meal per Potential level (at least once per day) without penalties.

ETHER CALL

Beyond the world of the audible, the ether is trembling with Chakra songs and detached, fluttering brain waves. The spore-infested push open the gate, let their emotions reach into the ether, take in the vibrations, caress the intoxication.

Those who escape from chaos and separate the currents read the ether like a weather interpreter reads the clouds. Nothing is obvious, but there are probabilities. A Character with this Potential must have a spore infestation of at least 5 points to feel the action of other spore-infested people and Psychonauts. This brings advantages in combat or for perception rolls: he gets +1D per Potential level for every conflict with an opponent who is spore infested.

MOVING MOUNTAINS

When the obstacles seem insurmountable and courage is fading, the Character first controls himself and then the challenge through sheer willpower. In a desperate situation, he gets +1 Success per Potential level for exactly 1 Action (can only be used once in 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 nice sight, but also hard to cut with a knife. This elephant skin acts as a natural protection against attacks for the Character: +1 armor per Potential level. He also has -1D per Potential level on CHA+Seduction.

BRAINWAVE

The convoluted jungle of musing makes thoughts go in a circle. Only a brainwave sheds some light into the thicket and shows a possible solution. With the Brainwave Potential, the Character can bet on this saving grace: once per day, he gets a +1D per Potential level bonus on an INT roll.

DANGER SENSE

Everything is a threat to the Character. This makes him act skittishly and counter friendly gestures with defensive blows. He is considered tense and easily agitated, but also a reliable guard, for his reflexes also work when there is real danger on the horizon. With +1D per Potential level on INS+Perception, it's hard to surprise him. This is only applicable when a danger threatens.

SLEEK

The Character overstretches his joints in a way that brings him outcries and applause when out in public. If an opponent grapples him or he is stuck or chained, he has a chance to get free: he gets +1D per Potential level to the respective Action roll.

COULD BE WORSE

Pain is supposed to protect people, not hinder their survival. A Character with the Could Be Worse Potential may realize the wound and the pain, but will not give in to them. Trauma penalties are reduced by the Potential level.

MARATHON

The body is a machine that forces onward, unstoppably going its intended way. 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

What is the mind but a muscle that can be steeled through vehemence and inner peace? The Character can counter a mental attack by an effort of will once per conflict and gets +1D per Potential level when doing so.

NUMBER CRUNCHER

PREREQUISITE: INT 4

The world consists of relations and logical images, and the Characters sees correlations everywhere that can be expressed in numbers. He gets a +1D bonus per Potential level for everything that can be solved mathematically or logically.

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. 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, is hurt and recovers, and 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 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 find 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 disturb his enemies 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 effective: 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 is 1 at the beginning and usually does not change, but Potentials or special equipment can raise it.

Passive defense = 1

DINARS AND CHRONICLER DRAFTS

Characters 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. That's typical. 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

Some equipment on the list has stats like damage, range, 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 still, Chris 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 124, and Chris finds its stats in the "Bazaar" chapter under "Sonic Weapons". The relevant stats here are damage and range. The "Thunderbolt" 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 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 Development" on page 314.

The players 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 other Attributes and Skills are easier to get. Preferred Attributes are cheaper by a factor of -2, Skills by a factor of -1.

Primal-Attributes: BOD, CHA, INS
Focus-Attributes: INT, AGI, PSY

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).

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 GM should incorporate the process of leveling up into the game: one last little trial; an obstacle to overcome; an unpopular opponent; a ceremony to remember: a Character gains this level only once and has earned the hubbub.

POTENTIALS

With Potentials, a Character becomes more specialized. The more Potentials and Potential levels he gets, the harder it becomes for him to learn new levels. Each new level costs more XP than the last one, regardless of the Potential just chosen or its level. 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

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

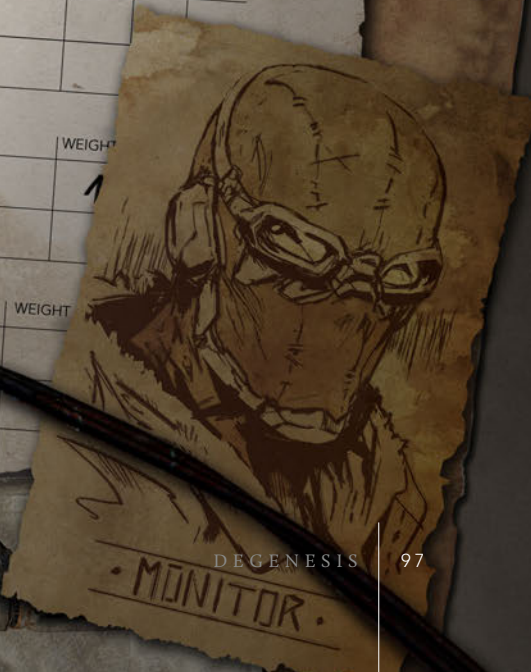
WEAPONS	HANDLING	DISTANCE (- / - 4D)	DAMAGE	MAG	PROPERTIES	WEIGHT	TECH	SLOTS
VOCODER		10 m	1+EGO	/	THUNDERSTRIKE AREADAMAGE 45°	1	IV	/

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 a faraway dream. Violence and armed conflicts are commonplace.

The KatharSys offers rules to simulate combat between the Characters and their opponents quickly and excitingly.

A QUICK GLANCE

In combat, some Skills and traits are of special 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
or BOD+Melee
BOD+Melee vs. BOD+Brawl
or BOD+Melee
AGI+Projectiles vs. AGI+Mobility
Mental or social vs. PSY+Faith or PSY+Willpower

DEFENSE

Defense is a number telling you how hard it is to hit someone who is not actively defending. The 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. They also reflect his mental condition: if the Ego Points drop to 0, the fighter is exhausted and falls to his knees.

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 whipped up 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.

Both playing styles have their merits. Game Masters and players need to 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 are determined. Every participant acts at least once. At the gaming table, this 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 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. 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 anymore.

Spend up to 3 Ego Points
They add +D to first Action
and +D to Initiative roll

Initiative
Roll for PSY+Reaction (1) + additional influences
Initiative score = number of Successes
No Success: one Action with Initiative 0
Number of Potential 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 acted once.

In the event of a tie, both fighters act at once. In this case, the players can come up with a plan.

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 stripes, he has led the group into the wasteland. More than 30 winters ago, a group of Hellvetics is 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 (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 1 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 turn. 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.

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. As soon as the fighter covers more than 2 meters (m), he has a -2D penalty for the turn, but it's also harder for his enemies to hit him. Per turn, his maximum movement is BOD+Athletics meters.

Moved at least 2 m:
Penalty of -2D on Actions,
but also passive defense +1
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 tactic or act thoughtlessly, you most certainly will. In the KatharSys, weapons are violent tools that kill with 2-3 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 Shockers and the Vocoder, which destroy psychic 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. A single Action, active defense is usually used outside one's own turn, as soon as the fighter is being attacked. If he defends himself actively before his own turn, he loses 1 of his 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 defends himself actively, he enters a competition with the attacker. If he's being shot at, 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 actively block anymore once he has used up his Actions. He defends passively 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, an active defender can counterattack if he has blocked using his fighting ability: if he wins the competition and manages to roll 3 Triggers, he successfully counters with his weapon and hurts the attacker.

Counter
blocked with fighting ability
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

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, and his comrades watch his back; a Hellvetic pries open the bows 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.

Environment 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 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 the 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; 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 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 overall penalty equaling 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: an additional encumbrance of 6. 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 a Skill level 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 11, he's 7 points above his maximum encumbrance, which results in a penalty of -7D.

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, sharpen the blade… To do so, though, he uses up tons 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 damage; armor protects. Armor rating directly opposes damage. Here's an overview of the armor profile.

NAME

As with weapons, the name helps for classifying and identifying the armor.

ARMOR RATING

The most important quality of any armor. The attacker calculates his damage and subtracts the target's Armor rating. Any excess points penetrate and cause wounds.

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 combat suit and enters the fabric, but the matrix contained in it disperses the kinetic energy; it feels like a slap. Special armor has special qualities. Usually, they 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.

SLOTS AND TECHLEVEL

Armor can be augmented, too.

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.

HANDLING

The handling of a weapon brings bonuses or penalties to the Action Number.

WOUNDS

Is the fighter badly wounded? For every Trauma point, he loses 1D of his Action Number. 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 loses 2D of his 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; Game Master discretion).

RANKS AND POTENTIALS

Palers have the natural ability to orient themselves in absolute darkness; other Cults and other ranks and

Phenomenon	Action number
poor visibility, fog	-1D
moonlit night	-2D
darkness	-4D

Potentials give other bonuses. With over 100 ranks and over 80 Potentials, the Game Master cannot keep track of this for every player. He has to rely on his players knowing best what the Characters can do. The player whose turn it is picks relevant bonuses and adds them to the Action Number.

DISTANCE

If the target is beyond effective distance, the attack gets -4D.

ENCUMBRANCE

If the total encumbrance from weapons, armor, and gear is higher than the Character's BOD+Force, the difference is treated as a general penalty.

PREPARED

At first glance, many things are factored into the Action Number. However, some of these can be summed up 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 be factored into a set Action Number.

ATTACK!!

The Action Number has been calculated. The attacker rolls, counts his Successes and Triggers, and informs the Game Master about them. The Game Master has already decided whether the target will defend actively or take the attack.

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 last Action)	+1
various bonuses / penalties	+/-

EXAMPLE: The attacking Usudi has a base defense of 1 (just like almost everybody), is active (+1) and runs towards the group (+1). If he didn't defend actively, Vedran would have to roll at least 3 Successes.

ACTIVE DEFENSE

The opponent sacrifices an Action and enters the 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 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 Skill is 8. The handling brings neither a bonus nor a penalty, so the Action Number stays at 8. Vedran isn't hurt and visibility is good, but he has to try a long-distance shot (-4D): the Usudis are almost 30 paces away, and the effective distance is 15 m. His Action Number is lowered to 4. He still tries.

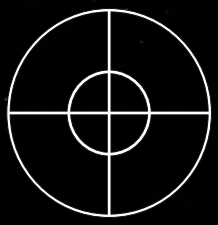
TWO-HANDED COMBAT

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. He spreads the remaining dice to the two attack rolls the way he sees fit. If the first roll fails, the attack stops. For a defender, every attack is a single Action.

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' bones. 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 defends actively. A conflict arises, and Falberg wins. The Usudi's second attack has also been deflected.

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 it makes no difference. Most of the times, such a hit ignores the armor.



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 defending actively, especially since running gets him -2D, so the Game Master decides that the Usudi is not defending actively but keeps running towards his target. Vedran gets lucky: he hits in spite of the distance, even with a Trigger.

The stubbed Trailblazer does 11 damage (+1 Trigger), and the Usudi wears a rusty torn mail shirt, giving him a protection 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 sustainable Flesh Wounds 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. If the counter fails, the damage (+Trigger) 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

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.

Ego Point regeneration
Every 24 hrs = +1 Ego Point
Role playing the Concept = +1D Ego Points

In combat, that does not help a lot, though. 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.

IN BATTLE

Things are getting serious. Vedran and Kum have shot down two Usudis before they could get close. Falberg was been able to badly wound his enemy with his Preservalis 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 corpse liquid 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 can only defend actively. Falberg gets 4 Successes and 1 Trigger; 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 defends actively, 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 + the 3 Triggers with his bone dagger: 8 damage total. Falberg's Preservist suit protects him for 3 points, so he has to take 5 points of damage. Just 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. 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 the 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. 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 "stun (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 corroded? 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, but also causes +1 damage. 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, 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. Neolibyans and Scourgers never go anywhere without a 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 in the KatharSys has a max speed it can reach. It is not measured in km/h but as a speed level between 1 and 6.

ACCELERATING AND SLOWING DOWN

If mounts are pushed, they can accelerate by 1 speed level; if they are reined in, they slow down for up to 2 levels. 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, by the way. For a rider it means that he rides at a walk; for a vehicle, level 0 is maneuvering speed.

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

OF FLESH AND BLOOD

An ax 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 defend passively. 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 (Difficulty = Trauma).

METAL AND MECHANICS

A mount's flesh and blood are a vehicle's fairing, mechanics, and engine. 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 even out the mechanical damage; the Difficulty rises by the amount of damage points.

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 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 speed level due to the impact.

Attack Difficulty =
standard Difficulty + speed level
In a melee: damage + 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 speed. 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 defend actively and even counter. But it becomes harder in conflict: the defender's Difficulty is raised by the attackers speed when defending actively.

If the counter succeeds, the defender gets a damage bonus based on the speed

RAMMING

Riding down a target or ramming it with a Kom are risky maneuvers: the driver or rider rolls AGI+Navigation (Difficulty = speed). The target can dodge with AGI+Mobility and the same Difficulty. If they are hit, the vehicle or the animal take damage just as high as the speed level. The target is hit much harder: it takes 5 times the speed level as damage.

Ramming attack: AGI+Navigation (speed)
Dodge: AGI+Mobility (speed)
Attacker's damage = speed
Target damage = speed 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 conceivable 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 quadrille 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…

DEATH A THOUSANDFOLD

FALLING

A fight on top of a cliff or on a swinging bridge promises a quick victory—or a long descent into death. The fall determines the impact damage: per meter, it rises by 2. The falling person has only one chance: if he succeeds at an Action roll on BOD+Athletics with the damages Difficulty, he rolls with the impact without getting hurt. If not, he hits the ground at full speed and takes full damage. His armor is useless in this situation.

EXPLOSIONS

A detonating grenade or mine tears apart everything in its surroundings. The damage at ground zero is at maximum and equals the listed weapon damage. The damage is reduced by 1 for every m of distance. Armor helps against explosive damage.

FIRE

Normal armor doesn't help against bursts of flame. If the fire damage is twice the Armor rating, even the armor bursts into flame. Starting with the next round, the wearer takes 3 points of damage per round until he gets rid of the armor or the flames are doused. Only armor with the "Fireproof" quality does not burst into flames and can reduce fire damage.

DROWNING AND SUFFOCATING

People can hold their breath for a while, roughly 1 combat round (or 4 seconds) per point in BOD+Stamina. If they aren't moving, they can hold their breath twice as long. This way, they can get away from smoke and 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; 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. In his next turn, 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 counter with a BOD+Toughness roll with the Potency as Difficulty. If the roll fails, he could only hope that the poison will become less potent on its own accord—or that the Spitalian has an antidote at hand.

The most common contact poisons (like ptomaine) cause 1 Trauma.

DISEASES

Like poisons, diseases have a Potency that must be overcome with BOD+Toughness. If the organism cannot do so, it suffers from the effects of the disease.

RADIATION

If an Enforcer AMSUMO is riddled by machine gun fire, there's a small chance that its nuclear fuel cell will be damaged

HEALING

With enough time and rest, the body heals almost any injury. First, superficial Flesh Wounds scab over, and bruises bloom blue. Internal injuries, fractures, punctuated 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 Flesh Wounds, then recover Trauma
1 day per Flesh Wound
10 days per Trauma

and radioactivity leak out. Forgotten UEO tanks overgrown for ages, full of water and 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 (at the core of the 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.

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 5. 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 nature. 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)
1+Trigger Flesh Wounds healed

Critical wounds work similarly, but the Difficulty equals the Trauma taken. After a successful surgery, the Character heals 1+Trigger Trauma. The surgery takes 12 hours. The next surgery cannot be tried before 4 days or more.

Trauma
INT+Medicine (Trauma)
1+Trigger Trauma healed
Can be tried every fourth day

The Anubians' Imiut skin is special. The dying person is sewn into a dog skin by a Hecatite and subjected to an external catalysis. After a month, he emerges from the skin. His flesh is white, smooth, and hairless; no scar mars his body. 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 incautious suffer, the capable profit, and it is for this reason that we buy cheaply from the dogs, as we call them, for they feed, too, until they rest fatigued, putting their feet up, incapable of anything but grunting weakly.

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 safely and soundly. For every 100 tons of cargo, you need 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. Bear in mind not to 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 0.0008 to calculate the consumption in tons for 100 km. A small 200-ton ship thus would need 160 l. 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 silencers from the exhaust pipes: the din chases the rabble! Don't skulk; walk proudly! A Crow flies; 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.

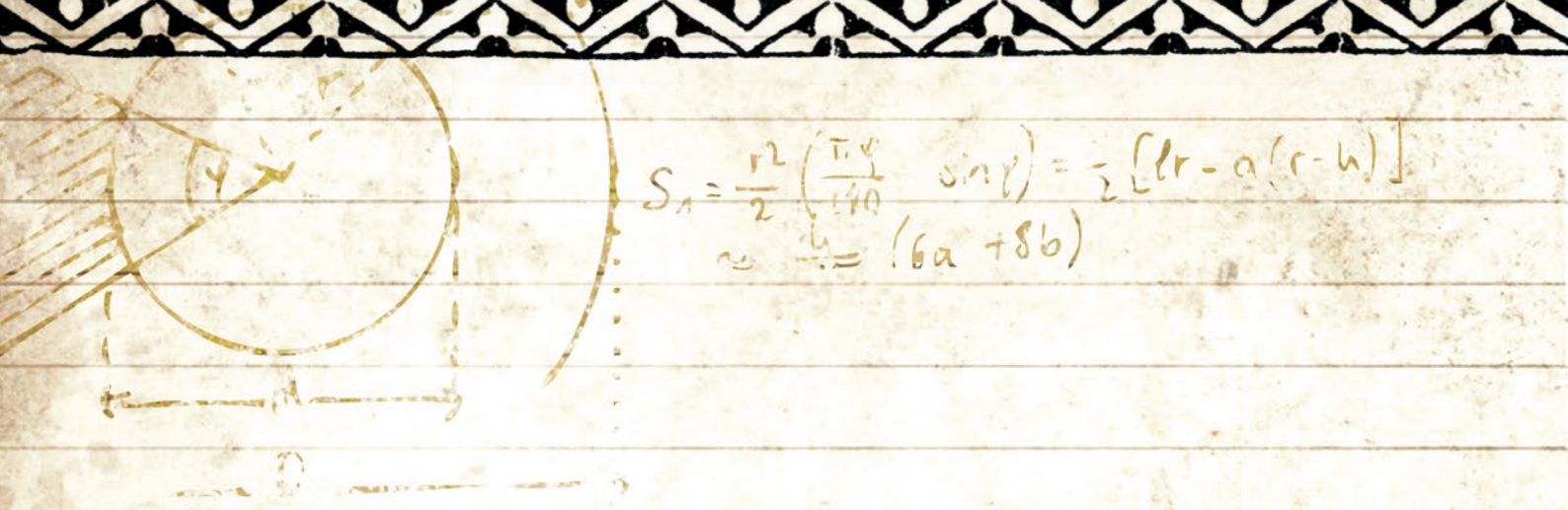
Whether in parts or already assembled to its full glorious height, a Surge Tank is a heavy load on any ship. These titans weigh at least 600 tons. You need an army of mechanics to keep their wheezing engines from dying. They burn oil into stinking smoke faster than one slave could refill it. But it's 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 and Perpignan, with the latter having fallen into discredit as a resting place of the crazy goat herders, being at the main road between Souffrance and Hybrispania as it is. So you should politely deny concessions for this region until our Consuls have brought civilization to those 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. The Crow's sharp beak in someone else's eye is a good thing.

Still, Montpellier is 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. Just look at Toulon: our brothers and sisters have always resided in a defunct Surge Tank next to the port authority. The queen of the human swarm, 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 as 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 the human swarm.



MODERN FOOTPADS

The Hellvetic Fortress is awesome; their technology matches ours. Yet all of this cannot veil the Hellvetics' true nature: they are footpads.

Obviously, they are lucky to be located in such an important area at the heart of Europe. Everyone would get rich there by only holding out his hand to have his palm greased—while holding a weapon in the other hand.

It's now too late for a confrontation; the dogs have entrenched. We have to approach them with open arms, dragging carts of goods behind us. Ammunition, food, and incredible amounts of oil 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 the Surge Tanks, starting in old Genoa, had already made a furrow to the Hellvetic portal 130 km away, such that the Clanners believed a giant worm was wriggling its 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: surely their services as guards are irreplaceable, especially when we venture north without Surge Tanks. But the engineering abilities of the Hellvetics should also be of interest for everyone. Bridges, bunkers, fortifications: their mark on such a structure guarantees a long life and durability even under dire straits. Do not trade with them if you don't want 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. They are 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 technology trade using this selling technique. But maybe because of their habits, you just don't get past them.

They are pros: unknown aggregates are first checked for decay: are the laggings brittle or is the case rusty? In their exchange offices, 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 don't expect that the Chronicler shakes off his lethargy while doing so. Acquiescently he waits for the clanging beep of his analysis machines to then calmly position the next plunger.

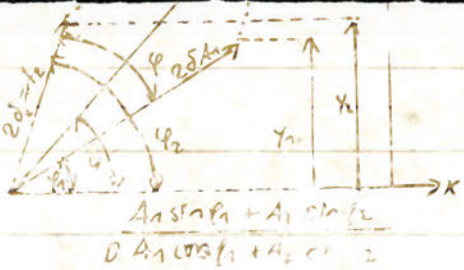
If they'd only stay in their exchange offices and toy with their apparatuses! But no, in the last years, they have been treating us extremely unfriendly, calling us child eaters. They say if you do business with Africans, you will have to make do without their services.

But 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 under worth. 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 interlocutor warns us not to approach any further. 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 swimming spore lumps could 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! The interlocutors 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 Psychovore basics. 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.

WARCRAFT

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. But don't even try trading with the locals! It would not only make you a traitor to the African cause: the savages are also more than willing to bash in your heads.

TECHLEVEL

Every society is in a constant interplay of civilization with the goods it produces. The further a society develops, the better it can store and pass on knowledge and gain new insights. The Tech Level is a gauge for this form of civilization. Even if it only describes the technological level of an item in the Bazaar, it tells a lot about the item's context in terms of civilization.

TECH I: PRIMITIVE

People wander the land in 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 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 simple rifle barrels from. Muzzleloaders and black powder revolutionize war craft. Cannons guard the gates of Tech III cities, and soldiers' armors are free of rust. For the first time, specialists gather in manufactures 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, determinist worldview.

TECH IV: INDUSTRIAL AGE

The industrial production of everyday objects replaces the manufactures. 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,

MANUFACTURE

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 lots of manufactures, it is autocratically ruled, and "freedom" means "control and safety." The Judges' city has Tech Level III, and with Supreme Judge Archot, it will not be able to reach level IV. In the city, the masters of steel produce muskets (Tech III) according to the Tech Level. But the manufactures also produce tech I and II items. Still, assault rifles (Tech IV) or Bygone radios (Tech IV) can also be found on the markets of Justitian. Scrappers or traders drag them there expecting a hefty profit. 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.

hammer and chisel, or a screwdriver. Technicians discover and develop plastics. Electrical streetlights ban the 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.

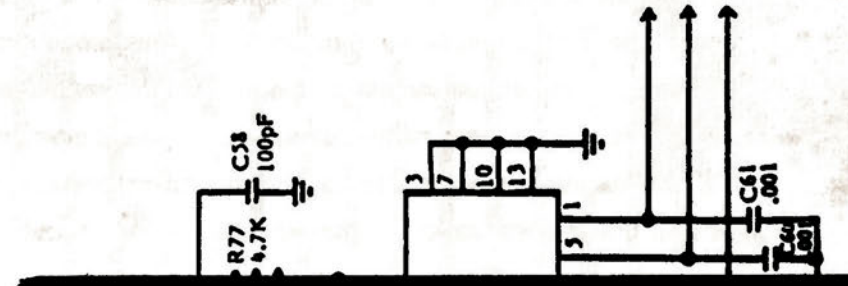
TECH V: TRANSHUMAN AGE

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 be possibly attributed to the Bygones. In fact, there is a high-tech wonderland out there, though nobody knows exactly who defined its borders. The 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.



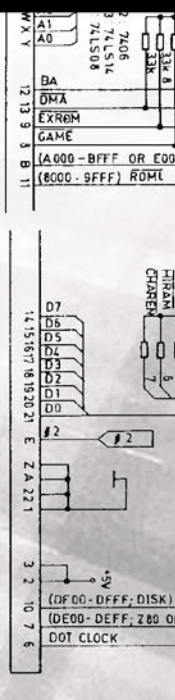
ABBREVIATIONS

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 Chroniclers' 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 a 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' world of snow; 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 out 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. But if a Judge were to strut around carrying a Sun Disc…

It is rare that Cult members attack at once. That would be dumb. 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 interface to control the blades for AMSUMOs.

The functionality remains: in the shaft, there is a kinetic storage cylinder that is fueled by constant pumping of the 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 with 2 Triggers, the Spitalian can 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 the "Cutting". In the best case, though, he can do +4 damage.

◇ Armed melee

>MOLLUSK

A Mollusk indicates creatures that have an open channel to an Earth Chakra: Psychonauts, Burners in the intoxication phase, seed carriers, or Anabaptists anointing themselves with Acheron's 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 kinetics storage fuels it, i.e. is being pumped.

◇ Splayer heads

>GRABBER

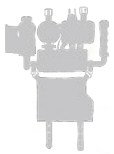
A grabber can be adjusted via a little wheel for either fine motor salvaging efforts or firm gripping.

It can also be used to grab Psychonauts' necks and keep them at a distance (using BOD+Melee, handling -2D, no 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, as well: a single Aberrant can be detected over 100 m; five of them over a distance of 500 m. The Triggers determine the



VOCALIZER

quality of 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 distance.

◇ 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 II gas mask. If the doctor buys a better filtering device, the trade 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 III 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 Hippocrates maintain order in the Spital. With bugs and listening devices, they keep track of opinions and ideas.

SPECIALTY: To place a bug, the Hippocrate rolls AGI+Stealth. The bugs are small, so he gets +2 Successes. To find the bug, the searcher goes into a Conflict. 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 masters of steel or the Purgan Sforzas. This 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 a Spital.

◈ 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 strength 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 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 antidote for 10 uses.

◈ 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 "Divergence". The grenades from the Cartridge Launcher can also be used as hand grenades or timed or pressure-sensitive mines by simply exchanging the detonator.

◈ 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 always carries just 1 dose.

◈ Armed melee

AGENTS

The arsenal of the Spitalians contains everything from de-sporeing aerosols to experimental agents.

>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 damage does 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.

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—it basically de-spores 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 de-sporeing").

◈ 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 bronchia fill up with liquid, the breath starts rattling, and the skin becomes pale and finally turns blue, although the victim does not realize it at this point: the person has 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 get rid of 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 (Force) 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. "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, 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: Best riding horse known to man; cannot be bought by Resources but is acquired by Renown: Renown 5+ is necessary before Kranzler chooses a Preservist 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 Chroniclers' 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 basically an insulated plastic glove with an electrode on the little finger. An E-Cubed 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 six E-Cubed 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-Cubed. 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 enemy. They cause heavy Trauma damage in a 45° conus.

◇ 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, they take up formation and try to keep their

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 equal the Tech Level.

STREAMER GLOVE

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 (equaling the Trauma damage) 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-Cubed 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 I-III. Per level, the resource value rises by 1. Therefore, the level III Fumor module would cost 4 resources.

◇ Chronicler Suit Modules

>SOURCE

The central module is the “Source”, an energy storage block made of interlinked E-Cubed 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 Fumor only once before having to recharge the module in an Alcove. Fumor needs an electric impulse to ignite, so it depends on the 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 bulge, 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 polarization 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.

An insulated armor offers complete protection, though. 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.

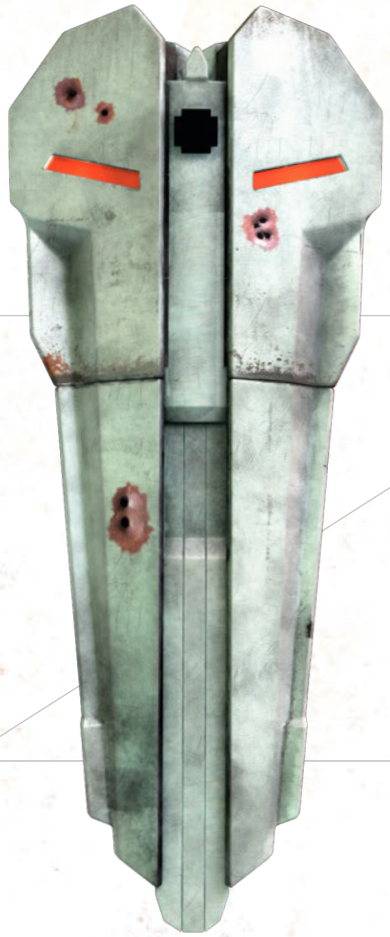
Screamers cannot be updated,; they remain level 1.

◈ 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 armor up to Armor rating 4. The Chronicler has to combine the activation roll with AGI+Projectiles; handling the freon thrower is +2D. The Difficulty is like the one of a normal attack. The ray has a range of a little more than 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 actually 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 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 pulled from the butt stock and mounted to one of the barrels in no time. Then the Trailblazer can be used as a melee weapon, causing damage like 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. The rifle bipod changes the balance, which brings -2D to handling for firing when standing.

When a Hellvetic rises through the ranks, he can reallocate his Trailblazer slots. The weapon is custom fit to him in the fortress plants.

◇ 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 3+, the damage total is halved.

>SHOTGUN SHELL

All three barrels can be loaded and fired separately. Reloading takes 1 round.

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 melee 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 these weapons get a penalty of -2D on attacks.

◇ 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: refractoriness. Today, it doesn't only offer good ballistic protection, but also compensates for the infernal heat 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 after 12 points of damage with one hit; see "Brittle" quality).

◇ Armor

RECON HARNESS

With the recon and infiltration variety, the ceramics 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 Force +3D. All attacks and attempts to defend actively, 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 gives its wearer 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/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 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 dmg 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/round to metals (3 Slots).

◇ Heavy Duty Modules

>TUNNEL DRILLER

The Tunnel Driller is the biggest and most sophisticated add-on. To carry it, shoulders and main arm have to be reinforced; stabilizers absorb vibration and change the kinetic energy to warmth. The drill is Petro driven; the tank is on the back. Heavy Duty Armors with Tunnel Driller support rescue missions after cave-ins. They break through rock and concrete with 10 points of damage/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 from far away from the Alpine Fortress or communicate with other users.

SPECIALTY: None

◇ Communication

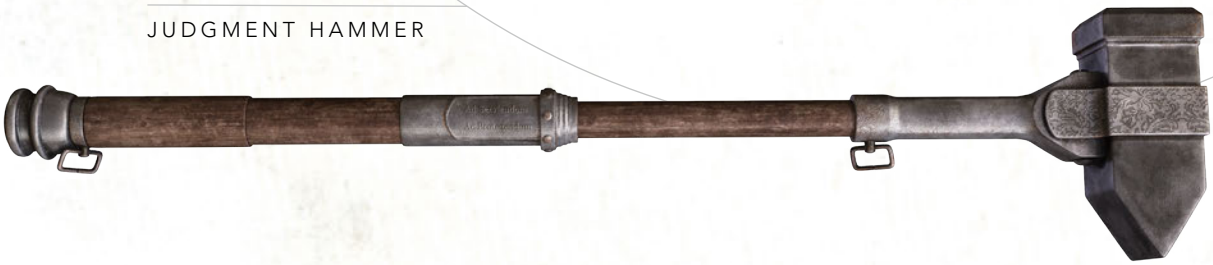
FORAGER UPLINK

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 pressed into rods 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 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-eschatological cities have been added. Political changes, risk warnings, geographical specialties, or movement vectors can be added via small platelets, the Pathfinder way markers. Usually, high-ranking Hellvetics hand out these way markers to Pathfinder users in preparation for a mission.

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 registers the transmitter signal and shows it as a dot on the map. In this way, Hellvetics can identify Spotters in 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. The palm-sized book is bound in cowhide and often 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 Masters of Steel is a replica of 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 Master of Steel 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 basic 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. Range and penetration 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; once he has fired it, he takes another pistol.

SPECIALTY: Judges can carry several pistols. As with the Judges' Musket, reloading takes 2 Actions.

◇ Handguns

JUDGMENT HAMMER

The Supreme 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 cylindrical steelhead 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 repeaters, rapists, and killers, as well as a lighter and coal.

SPECIALTY: none

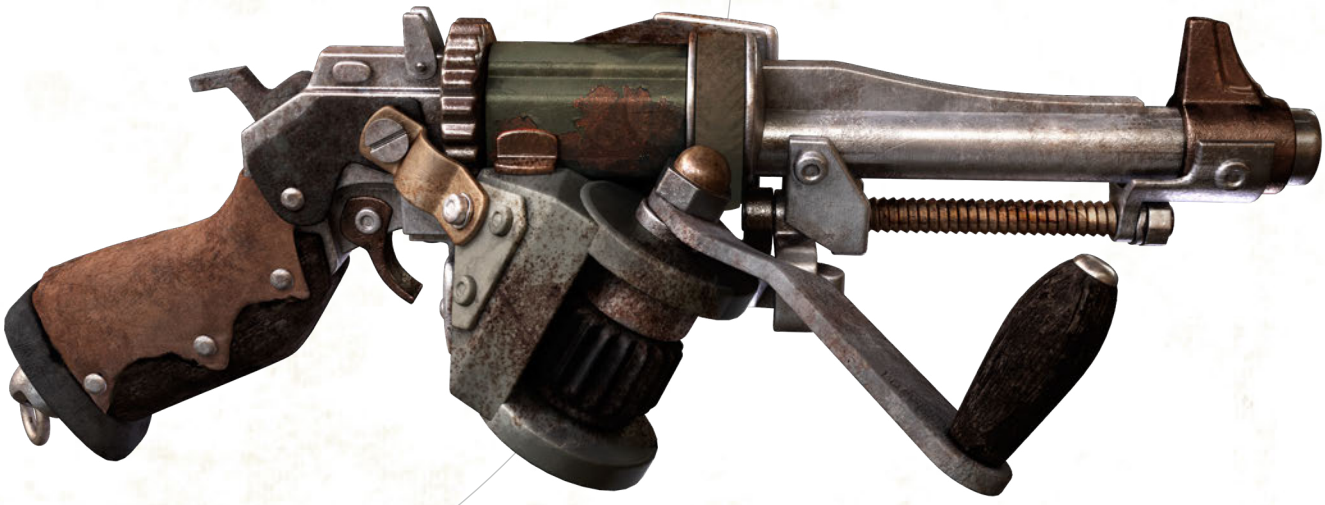
◇ Talismans / Insignia

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 Combat rules).

◇ Mounts



GRINDER

MARVEL

A Scrapper's rifle is as unique as the man and his rune. Many dirt diggers are suspicious against weapons 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. Most Marvel rifles are muzzle loaders and shoot gunpowder and lead bullets, but it is said that there are also varieties that shoot customized Bygone bullets.

Screwed-on blades or misericords are common, though only as security mechanisms.

SPECIALTY: Marvel rifles have the highest number of slots.

◇ Rifles

GRINDER

The Grinder is a legendary kind of Marvel weapon. 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 lower 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 more slots than any other weapon.

◇ 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 always 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; 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 tell 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 get a grip, they bring +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 an average Force of 30.

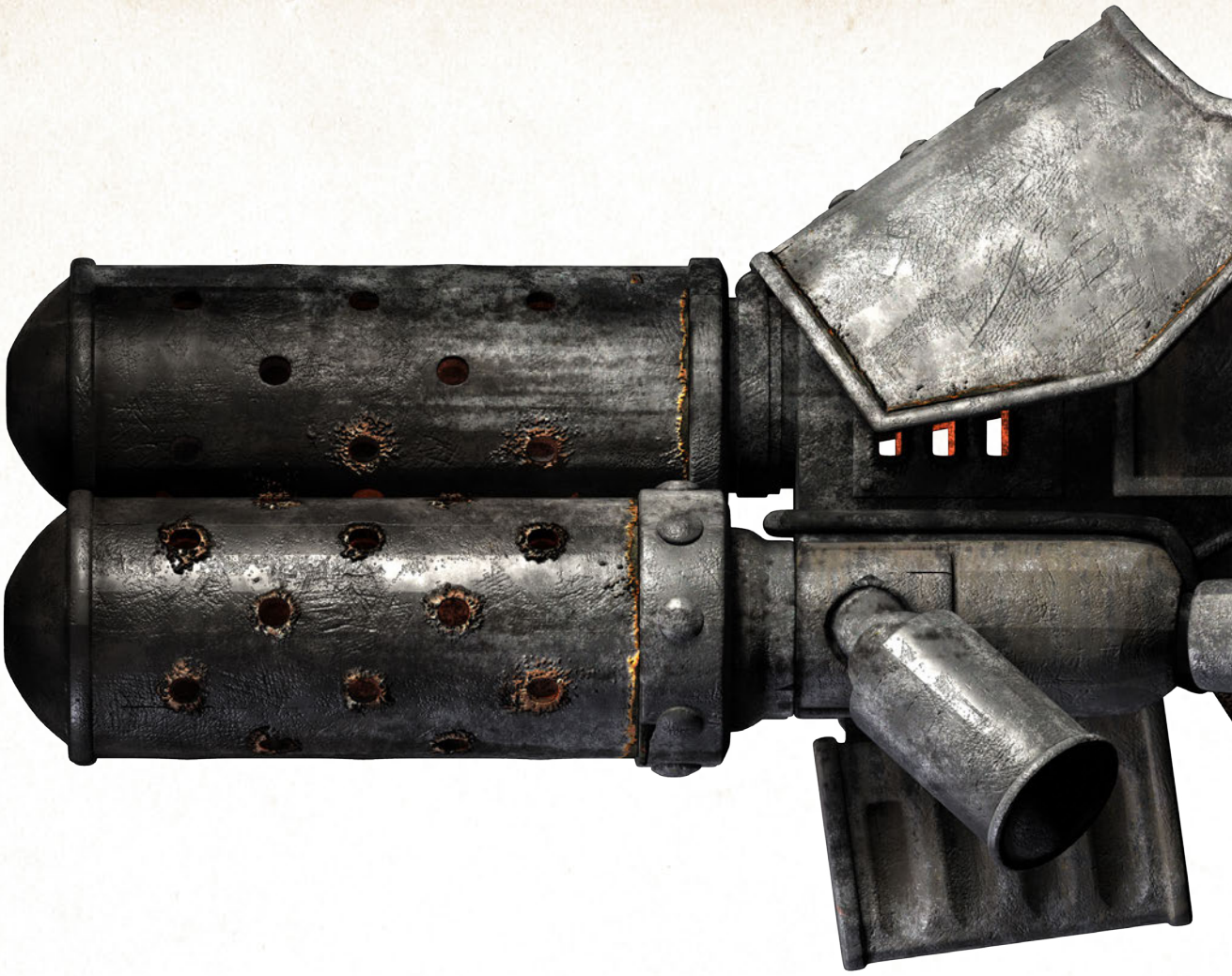
◇ Vehicles

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: choose 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 certain 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 faunal 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 tend 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 detonation force 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 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; 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 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 sword.

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. These 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 from 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 Aberrants.

◇ 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 rules 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, 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 second face 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

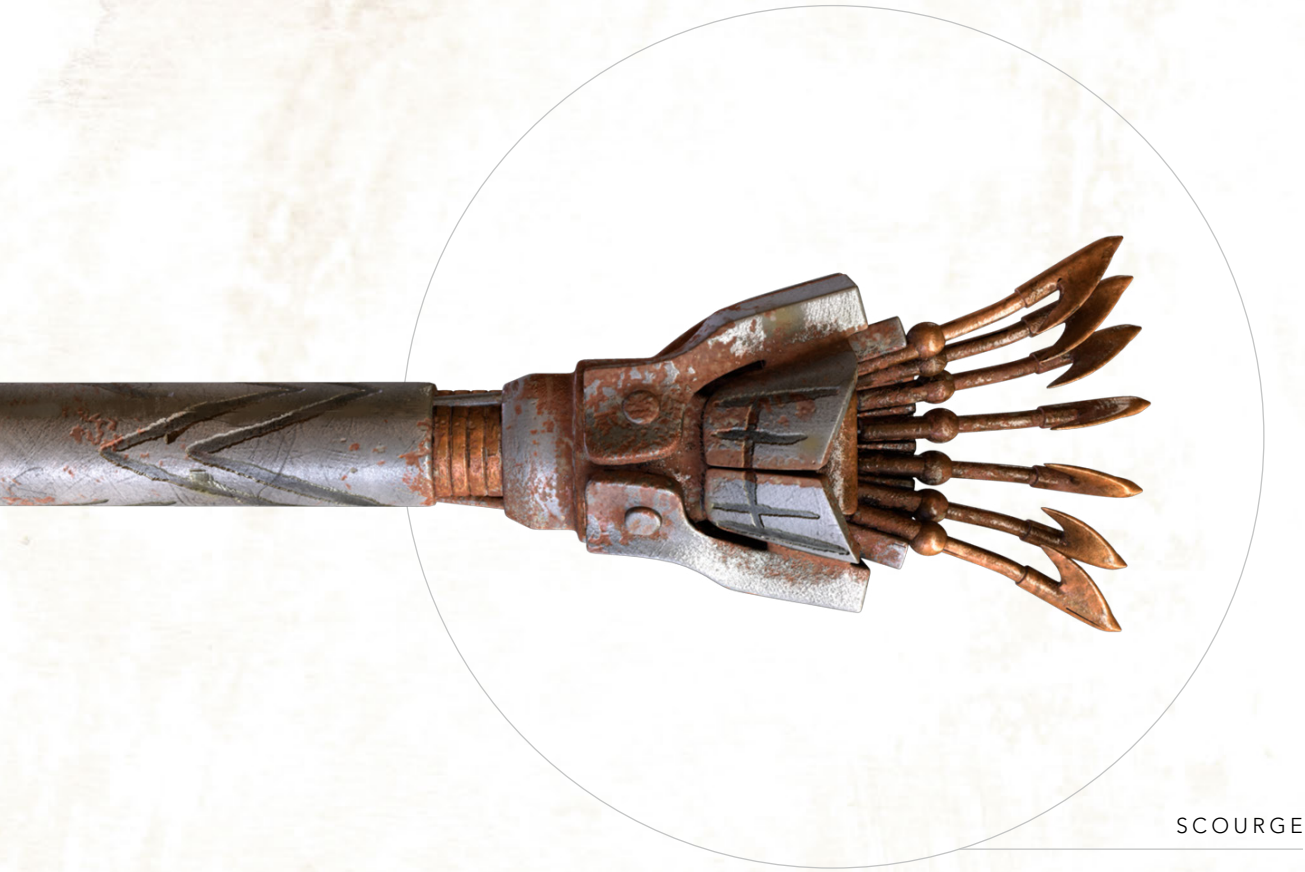
Those who carry a hide-covered oval shield into battle do not follow the rules of modern warfare, but the commands of tradition. The assault rifle remains in camp, wrapped in oiled cloth, and instead, the warrior chooses shield and spear. This way, he walks the path of the ancient ancestors, degrading 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 the Scourger's hand. The warriors treat such a spear with



SCOURGE

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-Cubed that energizes a bunch of barbed cords of more than 3 m 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 is still in store in the Bygone UAO barracks in Tunis, a city that is now occupied by rebellious slaves. To this point, 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 are thrown 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; 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, and 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 manufactures 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 a 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: Here, too, add-on slots can be used for ornamentation.

◇ 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 results fade after 4 hours.

◇ Talismans / Insignia

SURGE TANK

The Surge Tank is the giant amongst the eschatological vehicles. On massive chains it rumbles through the ruins, invincible against 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 or 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 corrected and shoals he 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 Raven Mother 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, neither 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 migrants.

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 Raven Mother. 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 to demonstrate strength where there is none. Experienced Apocalyptics like Marabous and Ibises only grin. They were once young themselves and needed something to cling to.

Still, the Koumaya is a lethal weapon in skilled hands. Some African migrants rely on it for their whole lives.

SPECIALTY: None

◈ Armed Melee

STEEL COTTERS

An assassin's weapon: in passing, they are driven into the victim's flesh. The victim spasms, touches 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 by 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.

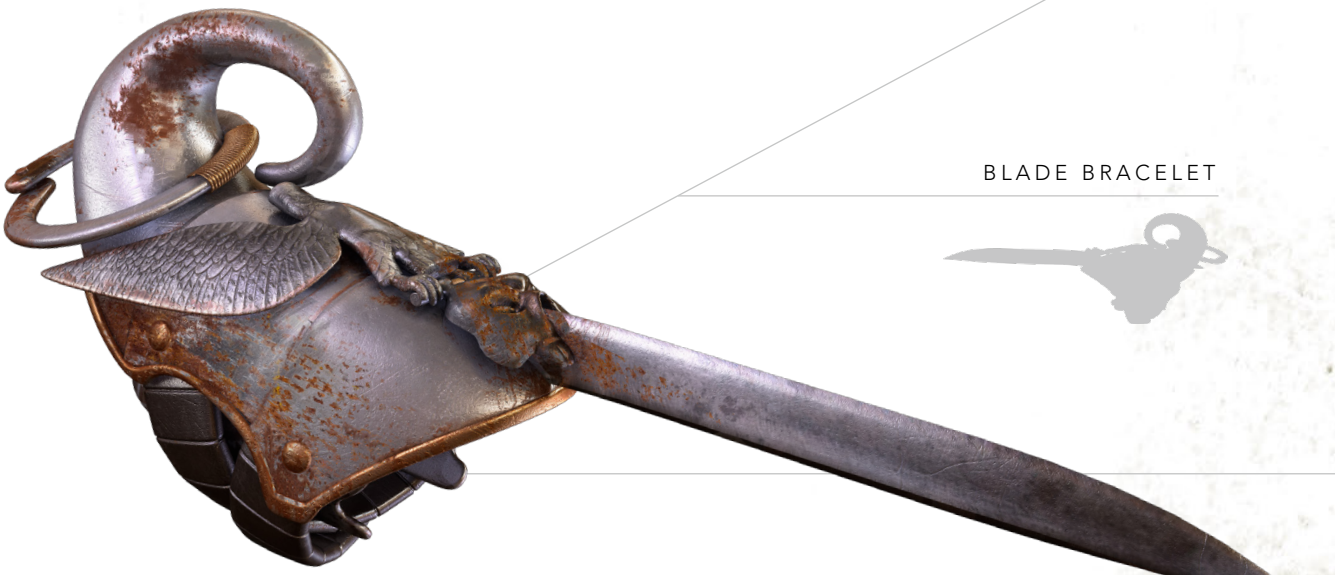
◈ Armed Melee

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 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-pace 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 later. "Jehammed's Will" is handed down from Prophet

RIDING HOE

to Prophet, but no one has ever been able to decipher the texts. Interestingly, the Arianoi call the same tubes Aries's Blessing. They claim that in them Aries had opened up 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 increases again, 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).

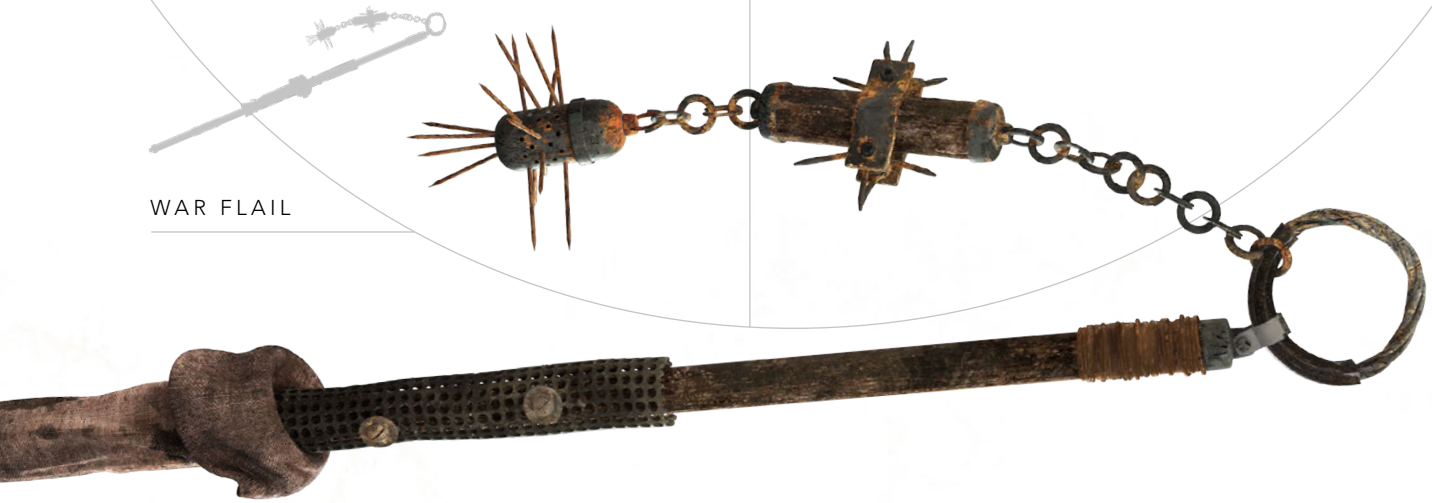
◇ Armor

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 basically 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 dagger jump forth.

SPECIALTY: "Impact (2T)" quality. If the Orgiastic cannot control the weapon at once (less than 2 Triggers), he can swing out the dagger and fight with it in the next round. He has to drop the Bidenhander, though.

◇ 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 to ashes in the wind. The Ascetics baptize the dry soil with water; 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. This leaks out and degases. 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

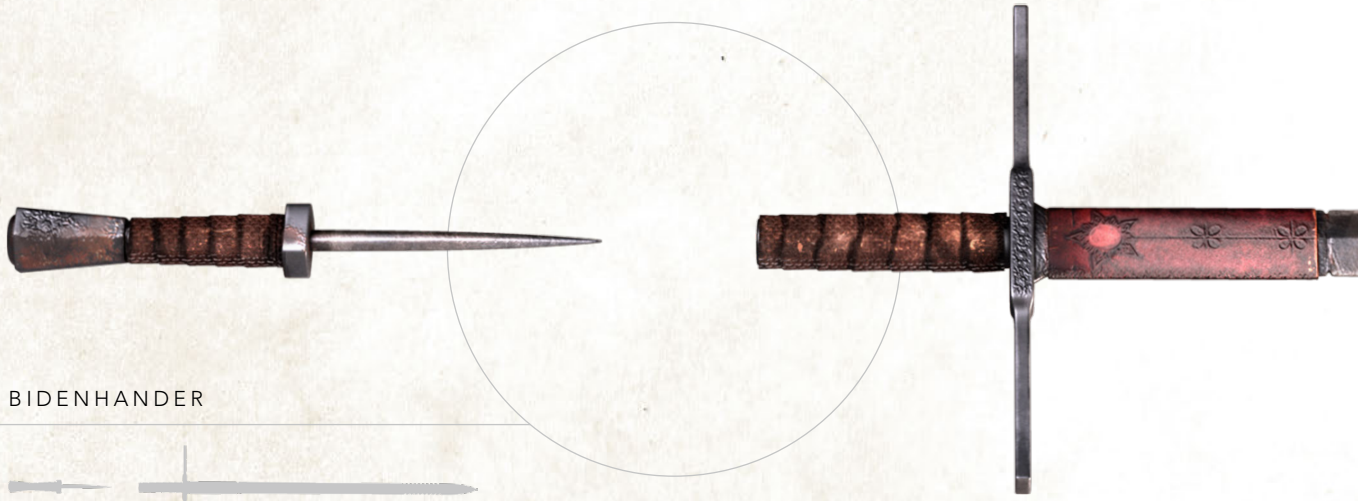
ELYSIAN OILS

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 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: per level +1D to PSY+Faith/Willpower and INS+Perception 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: per level +1D to INS+Primal (no effect on Focus) and +1D to PSY+Reaction 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; 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 paces, at level 2 up to 100 paces, and at level 3 up to 300 paces. 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 Cyclopses 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. Palers with a leg malalignment and a limp rarely have problems with their Sun Eye.

The Sun Eye combined with the natural night vision talent 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 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-Cubed 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-Cubed gives energy for about 100 hours of permanent use.

◇ Light sources / Fire

SUBMACHINE GUNS

The 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, the Palers have these weapons.

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; 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 are blazing 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 commando 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 weird 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 m radius; 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 paces distance, level 2 at 500, 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 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, then punch a hole through them and attach them to their belts. These copies have no function, but they 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 issues a strong electromagnetic pulse when ignited, overloading and thus destroying any electrical device.

Only aggregates with a special protection can take this. AMSUMOs are tough systems, but they suffer 2 points of Trauma, too. Sun Discs and 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 the ammo is therefore traded rather than fired.

.357 - "BRASS"

In the time 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 manufactory. 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 discovery site in the south of Borca; when it was found and exploited 10 winters ago, the ammo flooded the markets of the Canton. Most of the .44 bullets sold in Justitian or Wroclaw hailed from this find.

5.56X45MM UEO - "FINGER"

The standard caliber of the NATO nations in the 21st century. Although the NATO was ultimately supplanted by the UEO, the latter still accepted this ammo because of the capacities already generated. 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 equals the 5.56x45 mm UEO caliber but was modified by the Hellvetics to be fired from their Trailblazers at a high fire rate. The cartridges are coated with Teflon to make this possible.

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 a low thrust.

HUNTER FLECHETTE - "SPLITTER"

Flechettes are needle ammo with an extreme muzzle velocity and excellent penetration.

However, the damage Flechettes do to the human body led to their international ban; it was forbidden on 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-clad casings. The precision required for something like that is lost since the catastrophe. Flechettes are considered very rare and are sold at high prices on the market.

4.6X30 MM

The standard bullet of the 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 fitting 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 pelts onto panels of fabric. The lead bullets only have to be swept 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.

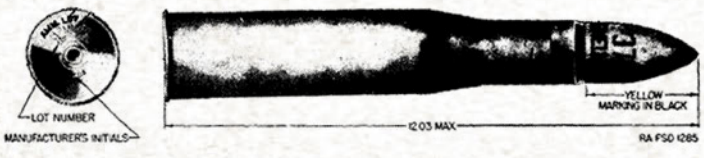
E-CUBED

An E-Cubed 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-Cubed 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-Cubed	-	V	1000
E-Cubed charging	-	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.

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 is cumulative unless stated otherwise.

DAZED (EGO DAMAGE)
A weapon with this quality does not cause Flesh Wounds, but attacks the 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 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 1 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 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 price that includes the risk.

tear or otherwise destroy the creature from the inside. A weapon with the "Fatal" quality causes direct Trauma.

FIRE HAZARDOUS

The ammo the weapon uses ignites its target. Apply the fire rules.

FRAGILE

If at least one 1 is rolled, 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. At no or less 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.

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 in the next round. 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 (number stated in 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.

He rolls for every target and determines the damage; the special damage is also divided between the targets. If he fires a salvo of 5 bullets against 3 targets, the special 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 bring him bad reviews later, but not right now; he's in a panic. His Skill 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 distances, 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. This can happen several times in a row, but the penalty rises by -2D with every additional attack.

SPECIAL DAMAGE (ENEMY TYPE, DAMAGE)

A weapon with "Special Damage" is designed to cause special damage for 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 gets a bonus.

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.

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 penetrate a 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, always round up.

BRAWL

(BOD+MELEE)

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	-	II	1	10	1	
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
Grapple	-1D	3	2+F/3	-		2	II	1	30	-	
Flail	-1D	2	2+F/3	-	Blunt, for Anabaptists Talisman (+1D)	2	I	1	5	-	
Butt stock	-	1	F/3	-	Blunt	-	III	-	-	-	
Hand axe	-	1	4+F/3	-		1	II	1	50	-	
Club	-	1	2+F/2	-	Blunt	3	I	2	20	-	
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	
Pitchfork	-	2	2+F/3	-	for Anabaptists Talisman (+1D)	2	I	1	5	-	
Morning star	-1D	1	5+F/2	-	Blunt	2	II	2	400	-	
Riding hoe	-	1	5+F/2	-		1	II	2	300	-	
Saber	-	1	6+F/3	-		1	II	2	600	-	
Shard dagger	-	1	4+F/3	-	Fragile	1	I	1	5	-	
Battle axe	-2D	2	6+F/2	-	Impact (2T)	3	II	2	750	-	
Mace	-	1	4+F/2	-	Blunt	2	II	1	350	-	
Sword	-	1	6+F/3	-		2	II	2	600	-	
Spade	-	1	3+F/3	-		2	II	2	40	-	
Spear	-	2	4+F/3	-		2	I	1	50	-	
Pickaxe	-3D	1	1+F	-	Impact (3T)	4	II	1	450	-	
Stone axe	-2D	1	3+F/2	-	Blunt	3	I	1	120	-	
Stiletto	-	1	2+F/3	-	Smooth Running (2T)		1	II	1	25	
Sledgehammer	-2D	1	F	-	Blunt, Impact (3T)	4	II	1	280	-	
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 (Aberrants, +2)	2	II	2	1800	3	Anubians
Ammit Sickle	-	1	7+F/2	-	Special Damage (Aberrants, +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
Bola	-	-2D	3 / 10	F/3	1	Entangled (-3D), Out of Control	1	I	-	20	-	
Harpoon	-	-	5 / 15	F	1		2	II	1	50	-	
Net	-	-2D	2 / 5	-	1	Entangled (-5D)	1	II	-	30	-	
Sling	-	-1D	5 / 15	2+F/3	1	Blunt	1	I	1	5	-	
Atlatl	-	-1D	10 / 30	3+F/2	1		2	I	1	50	-	
Stone	-	-	5 / 30	F/2 1	-	Blunt	1	I	-	-	-	
Throwing axe	-	-	3 / 10	3+F/2	1		1	II	1	50	-	
Throwing knife	-	-	3 / 10	3+F/3	1		1	II	1	40	-	
Shuriken	-	-	3 / 10	2+F/2	1		1	I	-	20	-	

PROJECTILES

(AGI+PROJECTILES)

Name	Caliber	Hand.	Dist.	Damage	Mag.	Qual.	Enc.	Tech	Slots	Value	Resources	Cult
Crossbow	Bolt	-	15 / 60	10	1		3	II	1	400	-	
Blow gun	Nails	-	3 / 12	4	1		-	I	1	30	-	
Bow	Arrows	-1D	10 / 40	6+F/3	1		1	I	2	200	-	
Composite bow	Arrows	-	15 / 60	8+F/3	1		1	IV	2	2000	-	
Repeating Crossbow	Bolt	-	15 / 60	10	4		2	III	2	2000	-	
Heavy Crossbow	Bolt	-2D	20 / 80	12	1		4	II	2	800	-	
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
Automatic Pistol	4.6x30 mm	-	10 / 40	7	20	Smooth Running (3T)	1	IV	2	2500	-	
Pistol	9mm	-	10 / 40	9	12		1	III	1	1200	-	
Revolver	.44	-	10 / 40	10	6		1	III	1	1200	-	
Heavy Pistol	.50 GL	-	10 / 40	12	12	Thunder Strike	1	IV	2	2800	-	
Signal Pistol	Special	-	15 / 60	5	1	Fire Hazardous	1	IV	2	900	-	
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 run. (2T), Salvoes (3)	2	IV	2	3500	3	Paler

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.

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	-	
Sniper rifle	5.56x45mm	-	50 / 400	11	6	Sensitive	3	IV	2	4000	-	
Shotgun	12mm Buckshot	-	5 / 20	10	2	Scatter, Double Barreled	2	IV	2	1500	-	
Pumpgun	12mm	-	5 / 40	10	4		2	IV	2	2000	-	
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
Flechette rifle	Flechettes	+2D	30 / 120	13	60	Smooth Running (1T), Salvoes (5)	2	V	-	32000	-	RG
Sagur-72	5x30 mm cl	+2D	30 / 120	8	35	Smooth Running (2T), Salvoes (3)	2	V	-	27000	-	RG
Soul burner	E-Cubed	+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	-	
Pneumo Hammer	Bolt / Coal	-2D	10 / 30	10	12	Thunder Strike, Special	3	III	2	1500	-	Clanners
Cartridge launcher	Cartridges	-2D	20 / 60	special	4	Deviation	3	IV	2	2800	3	Spitalians
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 combo INT+Engineering (to tune the Vocoder) and PSY+Domination (to modulate his voice). Enemies defend with PSY+Faith/Willpower. 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
Cascader	4x E-Cubed	-	10	1+T Trauma	8	Thunder Strike, Area Damage (45°)	2	IV	-	6000	5	Chroniclers
Vocoder	E-Cubed	-	10	1+T Ego	-	Thunder Strike, Area Damage (45°)	1	IV	-	1500	1	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 efficiency.

Carrier Weapon	Effect
Fungicide Rifle	Triggers are added to the efficiency. For instance, the general penalty for irritants is raised by the Triggers.
Cartridge, Grenade	The Action roll Triggers are used to level out the "Deviation" of the projectile. Thus, they are not added to the efficiency. 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 plague)	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 and 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, successfully 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. They bring 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. It influences ways of behavior. 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's 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 Phenomenons 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 a bonus to 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.

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 (off a quality 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: for this attack, 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) through 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 has to take a certain amount of damage (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 gets 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	-	
Rubber harness	4	Insulated	3	II	2	650	-	
Scrapper armor	4	Unstable (6)	3	II	6	700	-	
Chain mail	4		3	II	1	400	-	
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	7	Massive (9), Fire Resistant(8)	4	V	3	8000	4	Hellvetics
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 combination	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 slack 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 is not hard to lure a little deer into a trap (Difficulty 2).

A successful Action roll yields enough food for 1 day. Every Trigger brings 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	-	
Cooking equipment	Cooking roots and vegetables	-	II	30	-	
Flask	Water for 2 days	-	I	10	-	
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, it 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: 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
Bear trap	4C	8 Damage	1	II	30
Pitfall	2C	Special	-	I	-
Tripwire	5C	Lose Action, potentially detonation	-	II	5
Mine	4C	Special	1	III	Special

SOURCES OF LIGHT / FIRE

Name	Effect	Enc.	Tech	Value	Resources	Cult
Matches	10 uses	-	II	25	-	
Torch	Reduces darkness penalty by 1, 30 min	-	I	3	-	
Flint and tinder	Tinder takes several minutes to ignite	-	I	20	-	
Lighter	Refillable	-	III	180	-	
Oil lamp	Reduces darkness penalty by 2, 2 hours	-	II	40	-	
Lamp oil	For oil lamp	-	II	10	-	
Sunburst	Darkness penalty -2, 100 hours by E-Cubed	1	IV	1200	2	Palers
Cyclops Eye	No darkness penalty with Paler night vision, otherwise penalty -2	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 124, "Cult Equipment")	2	IV	2400	3	Spitalians
Gauging material	Gauges Noumenon Vocalizer or Mollusk to Chakra, Difficulty –Level	-	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	Hellvetcs
Transponder bracelet	Bracelet detected by Pathfinder, range 20m	-	V	580	1	Hellvetcs
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
Rope 10m	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 Flesh Wound per night	2	I	10	-	
Insect net	Protects from insects	2	II	80	-	
Camo net	For the resting place: harder to be spotted by enemies +2C	2	II	60	-	
Tent	Protection from weather	3	I	120	-	

TRANSPORTATION

Name	Effect	Enc.	Tech	Value	Resources	Cult
Backpack	Encumbrance -2 for everything in the backpack; can be set down	1	I	15	-	
Sleigh	Encumbrance -3 for everything on the sleigh; can be left behind	1	I	20	-	
Carrying rig	Upgradable (1-3). Encumbrance -1 x level	-	II	100 x level	1,2,3	Scrappers

IN THE SHADOWS

Name	Effect	Enc.	Tech	Value	Resources	Cult
Lock pick	Enables user to pick mechanical locks	-	II	20	-	
Camo paint	AGI+Stealth +2D	-	I	15	-	
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
Stream drones + display	INS+Perception +1D, maximum 4 drones, 10m	-	V	19000	6	Chroniclers
Draft printer	Per month: 50 CD x Resources	-	IV	4000	2	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
Tool bag	Upgradable (1-3). AGI+Crafting and AGI+Dexterity + 1D x level	2	III	600 x Stufe	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

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 equals 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° conus: target gets general +2 Difficulty, 2 rounds Cool down 3 rounds	1	V	4000 x level	4	Chroniclers
Discharge	Defense: enemy takes 1 point of 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. Piercing (5), Damage 1 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, detonation when at least 4 damage, 3 Slots	-	IV	2000	3	Hellvetics
Tunnel Driller	Concrete and rock: 10 points of damage per round, tank at risk, -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	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 the Raven: CHA+Leadership +1D	-	II	560	-	Apocalyptics
Icons	Tied to foreseen Action: +2D to all 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 (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 Sepsis, however, are everywhere. Spitalians never leave their outposts without filter masks, could never approach a spore field without becoming what they fight. Gas masks are necessary for survival. They exist in 3 levels, 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, he can do it like this.

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 sphere—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 1 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 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.

Quality of the find = Tech III + (Triggers/2)

However, not every field contains every quality 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 +2 Triggers), 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 engine 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 the 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 range 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 1. Its value rises as well.

PREPARATION

Augmenting an item costs scrap. The quality must at least be the same as the current Tech Level. 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 has 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+Technology

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 cotters 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
Camo (2C)	2	1 Slot for +1C
Blunt	1	-
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, range +25%, Enc +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-Cubed.
EFFECT: 1 slot, +2 charges

SERIES COLLECTION
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-Cubed, then the energy routing is optimized.
REQUIREMENT: E-Cubed
EFFECT: 2 slots, number of charges doubles, Enc +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 range), caution: needs new type of ammo now. .50GL automatically conveys 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, encumbrance +1

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Quality	Slots	Augmentation
Fireproof (+3 to armor)	2	1 Slot for +1 armor
Terrifying (2C)	2	1 Slot for +1C
Camo (2C)	2	1 Slot for +1C
Insulated	2	-
Bulletproof (+3 to armor)	3	1 Slot for +1 armor
Massive (+2 to armor)	3	1 Slot for +1 armor
Sealed (+1S)	2	1 Slot for +1S

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 with leaders and workers. Where they appear, people take note.

The 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 chains, not by making Action rolls.

The tables contain stats anyway because vehicles need to be comparable.

GEARING UP

Like weapons, vehicles and ships have slots. These can be used for artillery. 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 reinforced, no rolls are necessary. This just takes time.

If things need to be quick, the worker tries an "extended 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 mechanisms works similarly, only that here, INT+Engineering (Tech Level) 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 (Tech Level), 10 minutes
Mechanics: INT+Engineering (Tech Level), 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. 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
Flamethrower	Petro	+2D	10 / 30	12	20	Fire hazardous	2	III	1	6000
Harpoon thrower	Harpoon	-	20 / 60	10	1		2	III	1	2200
Canon	Explosive shell	-	100 / 400	18	4	Thunder Strike	4	IV	2	22000
Catapult	Stones	-2D	50 / 200	14	1		4	II	2	3000
Machine Gun	5.56x45mm	-2D	50 / 200	11	Belt	Salvoes (10), Jamming	1	IV	2	8000

VEHICLES

Name	Max. Speed	Acc.	Brake	Armor	Body	Structure	Tech	Slots	Value	Res.	Cult
Motorbike	6	3	1	-	10	5	III	1	2000	-	
Scrapper buggy	3	2	1	4	20	10	III	2	1500	-	
Motor sleigh	2	1	1	4	15	7	III	1	1200	-	
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	Apocalyp.
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	Apocalyp.

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 issues are listed here.

ROBUST

The animal gains bulk and can take more damage: flesh +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 1.

SPEED

After 1 week of training, the animal has 1 point in maximum speed, acceleration, or braking. No animal, however, can have 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	Scrappers

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. It can take weeks to establish enough trust to make the first approach possible. But the result is well worth it: if trained animals are fed and treated well, they stay with their handler until they die.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Name	Effect	Enc.	Tech	Value	Resources	Cult
Bandage	Right after taking the wound: recovery of 1 Flesh Wound	-	I	10	-	
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
Field kit	INT+Medicine +2D, 5 doses	1	III	250	2	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; 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—and 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 the poison.

STIMULANTS

Stimulants—also called analeptics—stimulate 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, combat 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	-	
Antibiotics	+2S x level to the resistance roll against bacterial infections	-	III	100 x level	3 / 4 / 5	Spitalians
Antidote	+2S x level to the resistance roll against poisoning	-	III	100 x level	3 / 4 / 5	Spitalians
EX	Reduces spore infestation by 1D	-	IV	200	2	Spitalians
Narcotics	Surgery preparation: Surgeon gets INT+Medicine +1D x level	-	III	300 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
Stimulants	PSY+Reaction +1D x level for several hours	-	III	200 x level	4 / 5 / 6	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 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 Spital.

Choice of drug type
Action roll: INT+Science (4)
for every 2T, drug level rises by 1

CATALYSIS

An Anubian 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 equals the quality 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 it remains in catalysis for at least 1 hour. If the roll fails trying to catalyze a highly potent Duat fruit (the quality level of which is higher than his rank), the Raze kills him without him 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 equals the quality of the Duat fruit, and for every 2T, the level rises by 1. This way, levels above 3 can be reached. 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: quality of the Duat fruit
higher than the rank level
Action roll: BOD+Toughness (quality 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 +4D against pheromantic attempts to influence the Anubian 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, and only a chosen few may enter the gardens and experience the scent of cinnamon, anise, and other essential oils—or so 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 level 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; 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, 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 brings bonus dice to the roll, too.

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	-	II	200	5	Anabaptists
Acheron	Ether sight: level 1 = 10 m, level 2 = 100 m, level 3 = 300 m, afterwards spore infestation	-	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 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 to this end. Barcodes as high as a man don the walls, showing where they are. 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 /manufactures	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 asked unwanted questions before. Regardless, if a patient needs help, the doctor's political ideas won't matter to him.

Whether in the Appendix or in an enclave Spital, 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 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 lands—can undergo a de-sporeing cure in a Spital.

It takes 1 day and reduces the spore infestation to 0. 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. Probably the capacitor is 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; the 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 one day.

INTERFACER

The Scrappers call the flat tablets think 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 do not 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 Clusters 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. Stream casts 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 Titan 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, 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 artifacts 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 matt 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 Burn's temptations. Spore infestation devours humans physically and spiritually, makes them vomit thick fungal fuzz, and gives their mind 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 the 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:
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 noted next to the scale—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

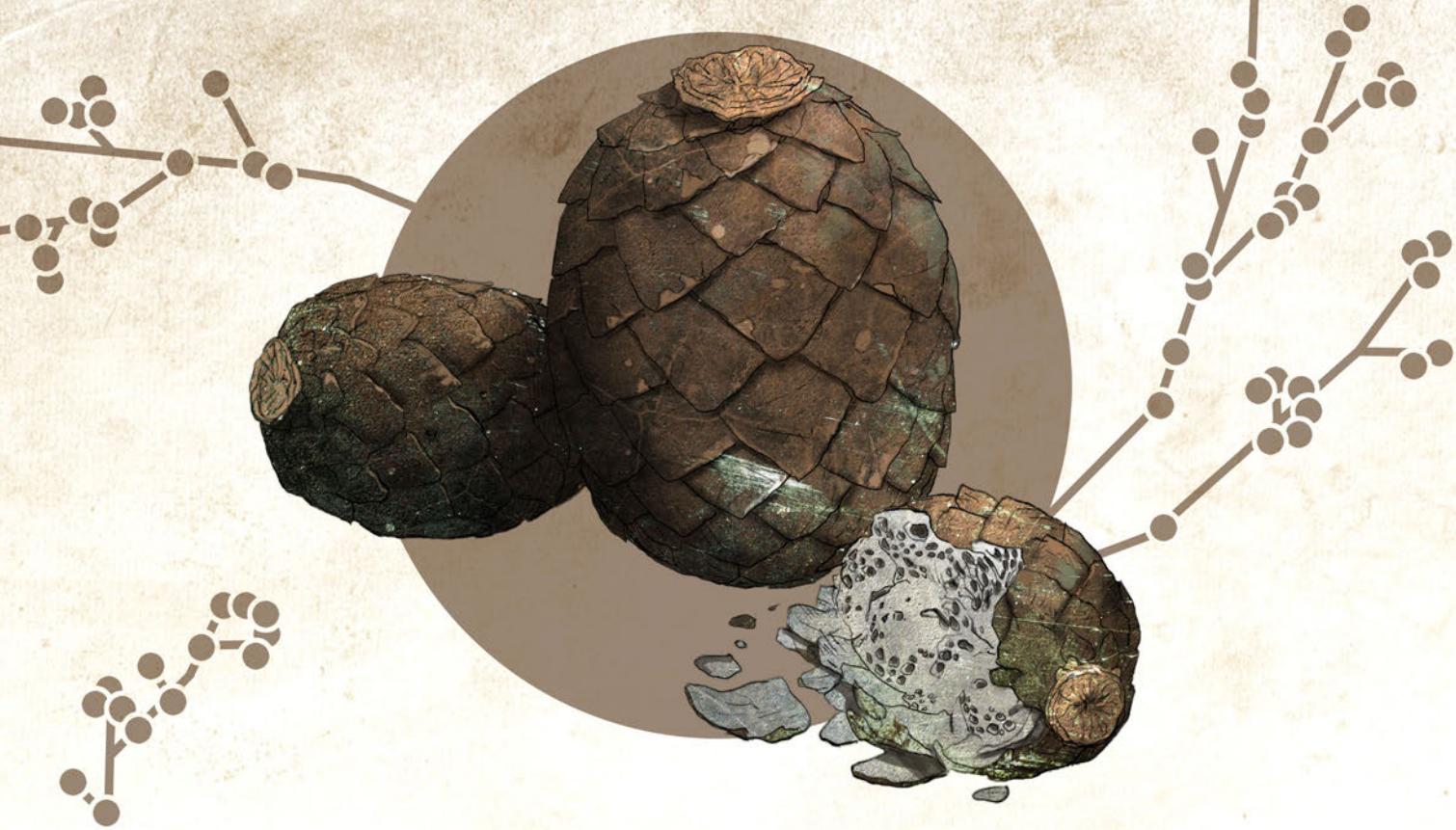
The Sepsis eats away at the lungs of a carrier of the Seed and pushes its tiny hairs into the circulatory system. It flourishes in frontal sinuses and covers the mucosa.

When the carrier of the Seed wakes up in the morning, he is close to suffocating; 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.

50% of spore infestation scale permanent:
Character becomes Leperos

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



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 peoples. 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. 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 can cause a commotion in Justitian or Capital 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.

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 blights the Sepsis. To do so, he rolls BOD+Toughness (spore infestation). For intensity and interval, see the table to the left. 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 below. "1D" means that the spore infestation is rolled for.

INTOXICATION

One deep breath and Burn swirls in the lungs. Like blight, it covers the mucosa and sinks in. The spores negotiate the alveolus 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 incrustations 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.

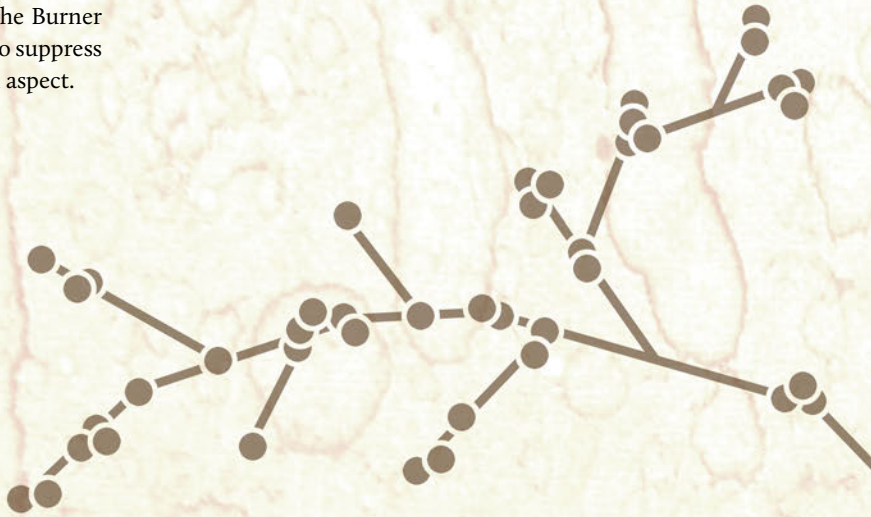
STIMULUS

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
Diskordia	-	Diskordance	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 coziness. 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 anymore that a handful of lichen could not 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 gets 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 the 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.

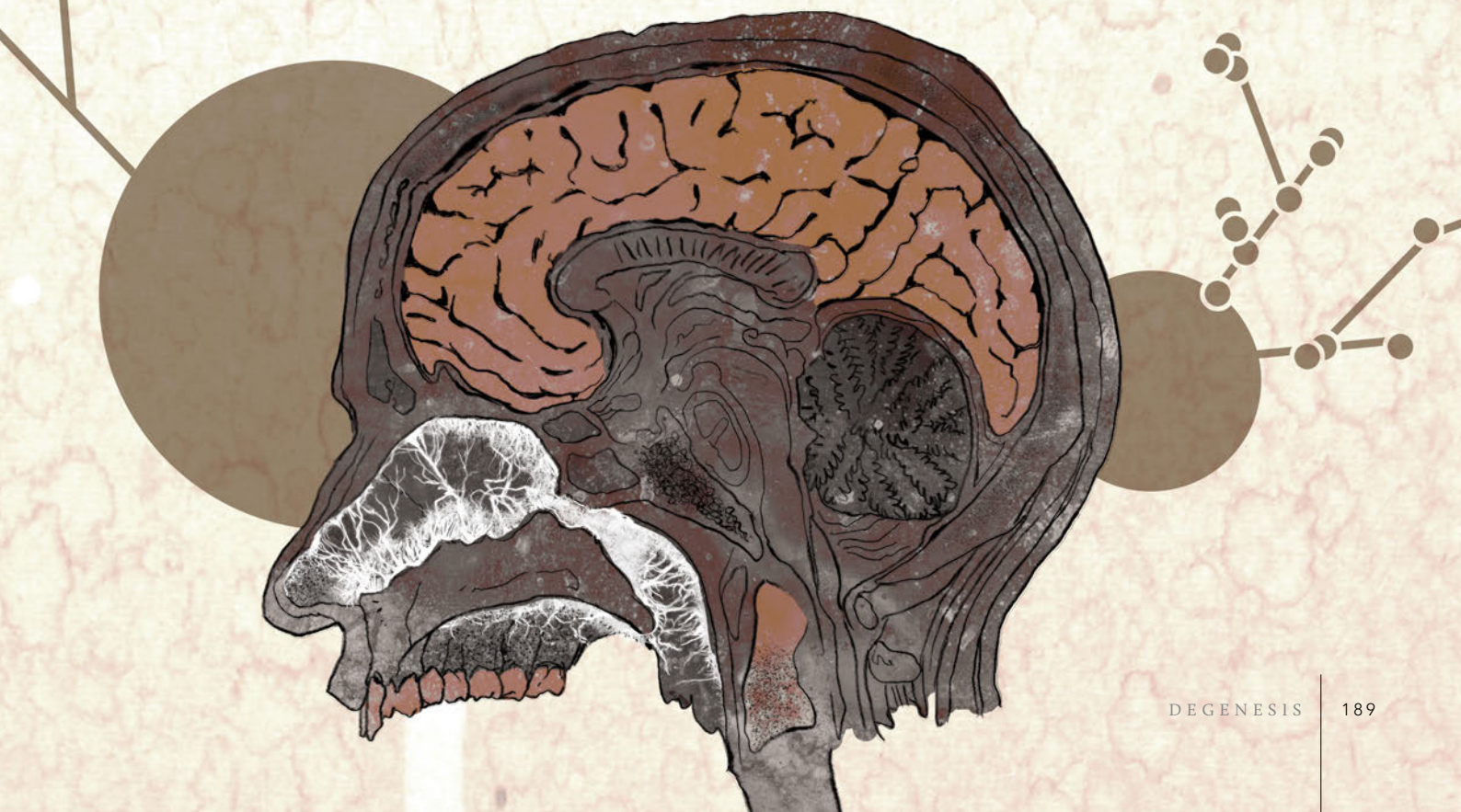
But one single spoken sentence or even a sigh can tear the delicate weave. Underneath, the untamed creation lurks—the word that created the world. The Burner is obsessed with it. He only has to use his thoughts to break through the final layer…

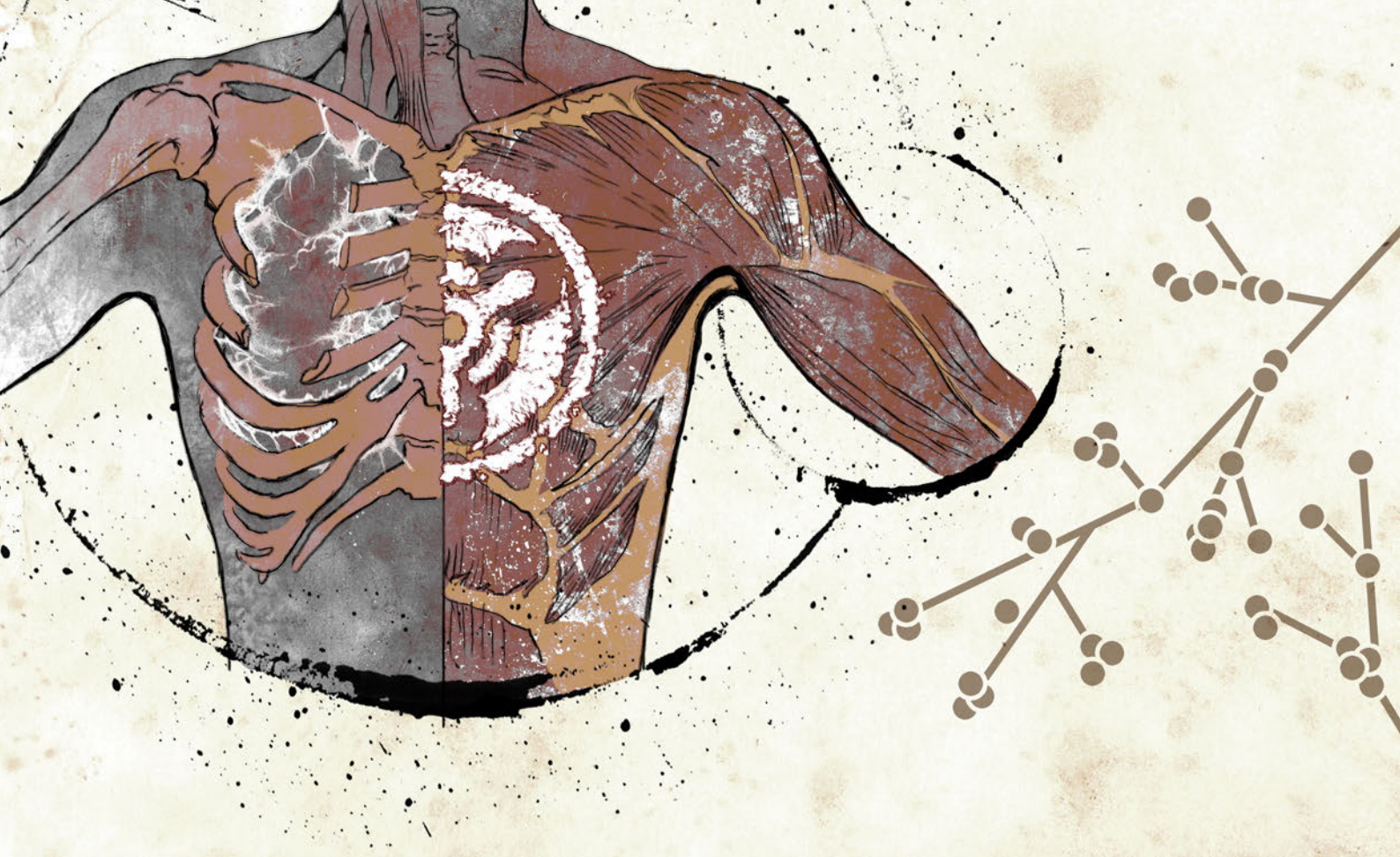
Muse is addictive. With every breath of Muse swirling into his lungs, the Burner hopes to this time match the sound that will reshape the world after his ideas. This phantasm is a side effect of heightened senses. The Burner recognizes the truth behind every word, feels fear and joy. He also feels attracted 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 lose 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; we are talking spans of centuries or millennia here.

Only the spiritually rotten members of sacrificial cults and imbeciles voluntarily inhale Discordia. Optically, 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 (1D). 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; 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 completely taken out of the crackling mycelium.

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.

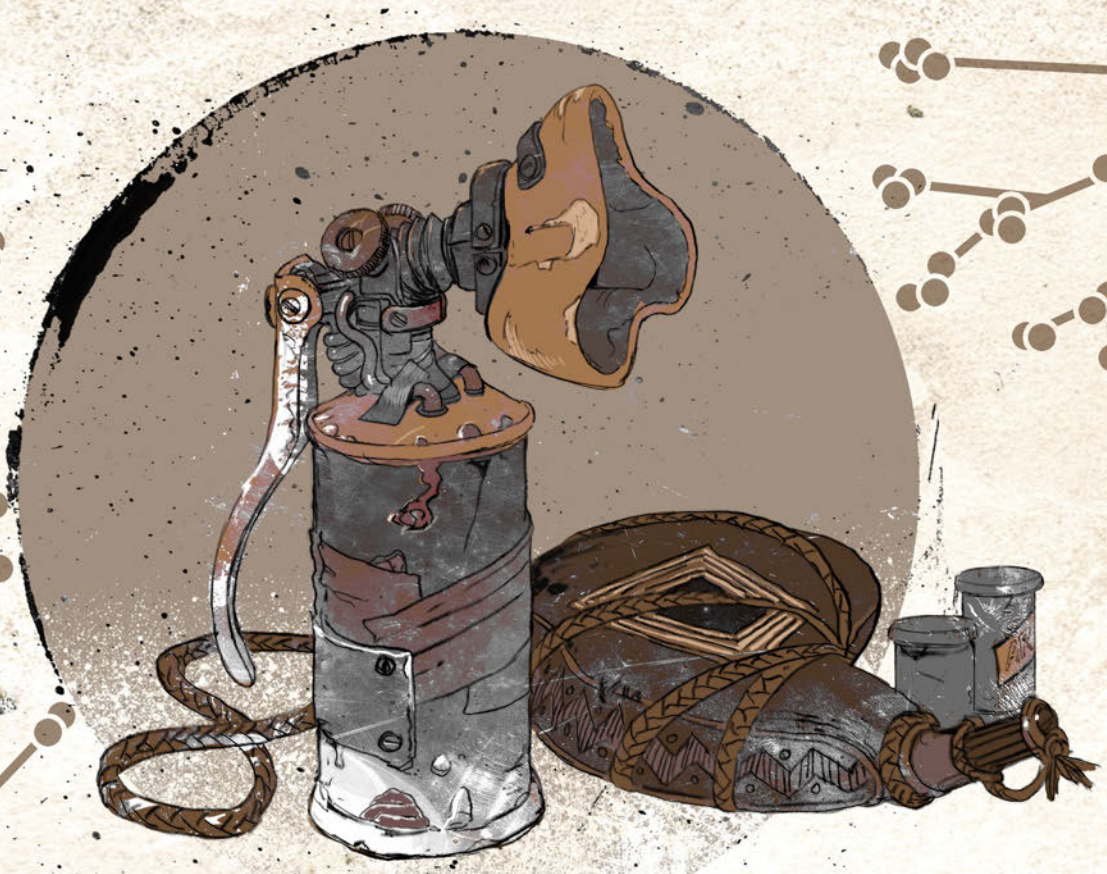
Harvest: 1D x level x 10 cusps

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 Purge.

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 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 waxes 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 the Machiawen 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; 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 did 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.

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 start 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 be 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 place or hideaway, 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. Pregnoctics and Argus 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 devil's work.

Even the separatist De Paulos disdains 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 the 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 hoped to escape from this world through the Stream; the Judges and the Protectorate each grew from the ideas of one man; Apocalyptics and Jehammedans hail from pre-eschatological ideologies that needed the apocalypse 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 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 Spotters of the Hellvetics and Judges ever deemed possible. The 21 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 good opponents.

BEASTS

Beyond the border conflicts, distribution battles, and Burn intrigues, there is uncharted land. Gendos wander the ruins, Spore Beasts live in the remainders of a misguided, discarded evolution, and Leperos leave the human community behind and spread Sepsis. The rumbling of the mammoths echoes across the plains.

The world out there is diverse and dangerous. Some creatures like the Gendos are presented as representatives of the Primal Punk fauna. Game Masters can use them and their stats to create other beasts for their rounds.

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

The past is restless. In its shadows, Sleepers fight to uphold—and understand—their place in Getrell's plan. Marauders are already onto them. Elsewhere, AMSUMOs awaken from their torpor; their identity is a seething permutation of old orders and 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 beat them. They will never be unimportant enemies by the wayside; when they arise, they take center stage and are the stuff of campaigns.

PRIMER FAUNA

The Primer fauna gives birth to weird creatures like Fractal Stars and trilobites. An encounter with them may be deadly, but a combat including Initiative rounds and attack rolls would be too much. The Game Master should bring them into play as environmental influences or traps. The same is true for discordant Feeding Cusps and Fractal Forests.

PSYCHONAUTICS

The Psychonauts embody the terror of the Primer and the nemesis of humankind. They change the world like a force of nature: spore fields reach the surface and generate ring after ring; Pregnoctics fracture time and capture it in the present. Psychonauts may seem bestial, but their motives submit to a collective idea of the rebirth of evolution that knows neither good nor evil, only "fit" or "unfit."

This does not make them any less dangerous, though. When Characters meet Psychonauts, it's all or nothing. Human enemies and even Gendos 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 newbies—but they only foreshadow what is to come.

HUMAN ENEMIES

A Game Master has to prepare a lot and watch out for even more. Therefore, if he wants to use a human antagonist or even a whole group of them, he should stick to the basics. First, he should ask himself which function the opponent should have: if he wants to use him in combat, he needs combat stats; if he uses his Skills against the Characters, representing some kind of challenge, he does not need combat stats but does need 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.

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 enemies are interesting. The Game Master should include a weakness for every overwhelming Skill or weapon, however. There are many options.

- A Hellvetic sniper only carries a Spotter Harness and is not armed for melee.
- An Apocalyptic is extremely fast, 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).
- The Paradigma breaks slabs of rock from the mountain with his Cascader, but he is sickly and could be taken out with one hit.

REWARD THROUGH BATTLES

To smash a children's Clan in Justitian's Stukov quarter will get you no more than a pat on the shoulder from the local merchants. If someone faces a Biokinetic, though, or dismantles an AMSUMO in a lengthy fight, word gets around. The hero of the day is invited to a cup of distillate and has to tell the story repeatedly. His Renown background rises by 1. To raise his Renown over 4 this way, he has to vanquish the strongest varieties of Psychonauts or AMSUMOs, though.

ABBERRATIONS

When you've survived Gendo attacks a dozen times, you know how they act and what their weaknesses are. Combat will be predictable and thus boring. The Game Master should introduce new enemies or change old ones. If he mixes beast or Clan with discordant or psychonautic effects, the result can 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 PSY+Faith/Willpower. 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)	-2

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 10 roaches dance 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 trod 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 cockroach populations, 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; 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, they can be traced back to the ancestors. Especially the kings. They come from a family tree that births misshapen colossi with legendary strength. They are chained and kept in the deepest vaults like animals. Chosen women lie with them for a day to receive a gift of bulk and strength. If a child is born from this union, it becomes one of the warrior caste. Fighting, looting, destroying: there is nothing else he 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, have 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; the pressure gauge is beyond the red area, touching the border. Tick tick tick. The seams burst. The Pneumancer breathes rapidly, gritting his teeth, sweat is pooling within his mask. The weapon in his hands is like smoldering coal. Yet he cannot lay it down. Freedom has its price.

INSURRECTION

Phosphorites, Mechans, Pneumancers, and Judges 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, that they were entitled to a better, autonomous life.

In the great battle, not only the city was destroyed, but also the veil. 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 of 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 headstone. They extinguished the fires, buried the corpses in mass graves, and freed the streets from 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 it from all that was wrong.

By fire, if necessary.

But the years of oppression had left their marks.

The Pneumancers were warriors, not diplomats.

They understood the way of power to the powerful ones. The Mechans left a vacuum that the Clans and Justitian's Judges now filled. For some, the city 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 Nullpellia 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 these days that support Justitian, not ones that have to be protected themselves. Another front would be fatal.

REBIRTH

The cartel Scrappers are flocking to Nullpellia, taking what they can as long as they can. It has never before been so easy to loot the ruin fields of Nullpellia and its surroundings. The Mechans can not be bribed, but the Clans permit anything as long as you pay 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—and then 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 swear 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 get a Trauma penalty only after 3 points of Trauma.

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 apparatuses, down into his vision of a better future. They laugh about 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 turned the seven deadly sins into 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 aggregates were built from them; in yet another, tunnelers were trained.

A redundant specialist network, destined to greatness in community.

The Mechanist's workshop grew into the underground. He tested steam turbines, perfected weapons. He drew 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 a miracle.

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 the high priest used to say during his orgies.

The Mechans gave steam-powered bolter 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 to a ruling caste and founded the city of Nullpellia on the great concrete plane. The triad of ruling, priest, and warrior caste calmed down the city and its population and made them flourish. In fact, the Mechans 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 helped the Mechans. The star fell from the sky, raced across the concrete plane, 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 interception 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 okay 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 tool of reconquest was spread 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 RG 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 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 modded pressure washers to fire white phosphor. Searing lances cut through the night. The RG people 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 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 shot 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 burnt 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 tendered 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, clip 4, fire hazardous, encumbrance 1, Tech IV, Slots 2, 1400 CW). The ammo must be stored in water; otherwise it will ignite. 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 infamy of the people. They are a warning to the survivors. But the legends of the convoy outshines 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 severity and punishment of torts 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, 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 stories 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 viewers, 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. In it, 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" 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 with their frames of 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 weird. 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 poisons the soul.

WANDERINGS

The Stukov Desert offers to the nomads what 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 important, 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 supposed 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 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 fall dry; 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 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

Judges and Chroniclers had outshone Exalt's legacy with their own great deeds. 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 awoken.

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 visited 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, know about their weakness and act as counselors and guides. But their confidence grows with every okay 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, as he looked 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 of 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, 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. Yet there is no pain. Only hunger. Excruciating hunger.

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 Spotter: he finds a bloody mire from which bones and swords are jutting. The birds jump about on the remains and fight for scraps of meat.

Meanwhile, reports of other attacks abound. Savages covered in red paint run 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 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 get +1 Ego for every wound because the hunger causes them to frenzy.

RESISTANCE

The women walk through the vault. Their boots splatter through the mud; water splashes. They are waving 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 combat. 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. Only the termitariums are grand now.

Many Frankans will not tolerate this. With the stories of their grandparents in mind, they get 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 Routing Hubs. 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 resistance, 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. Yet despite their reservations, the Resistance still accepts the help of the Spital, and they still lead Anabaptist packs into the Routing Hubs. 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.

In these swimming settlements, used books are exchanged, and 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 resembles a human's. It straightens itself and tears a battle axe from the dirt. It's not an animal—but neither is it human anymore.

ANCESTRY

The sporination at the Pandora Crater is so dense that one can barely see a hand before one's own eyes. The filters of the 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; in the ring valleys of the crater, Fractal Stars and trilobites have been spotted, all oversized. 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 got 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 rather 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 Epigeneticist 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 gains at least 1 Trigger can he free his weapon again right away.

If he fails, he can tear loose the weapon in the next Action, but then he cannot defend.

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 2m and a spore encumbrance of 5 (resistance roll BOD+Toughness [5], failure: 1W 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 amidst 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 during these days.

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 dammed-up 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 glow. 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 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, a soulless one they have missed is writhing. Maddened with hunger, he grabs for birds or attacks does. 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. It is an anchor of their being that will never touch the ground, though.

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 that 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 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.

MATADORES

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 tonight, it will be Armando. He will captivate the crowd, will raise the tension to the end, will try to seem 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 sometimes 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 are really just carnies.

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 Hybrispaniards 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 Alandalus, 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 affection of the crowd. In every round they can win over spectators through dangerous maneuvers (they use at least 2D less than they could), 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 in 80 winters, 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 was 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 Corredore over. Her voice is high-pitched as a girl's, but it sounds firm when she explains her plan to the Clan. She remembers that 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 the missile barrage. Hybrispania was vanquished.

Girls like little Lucia opened their eyes. All this lies in the future. Once again, from the beginning. 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. It is suffused with its 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 12-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 the 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 round of combat without any resistance.

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 pairs of two they walk through Perugia, people like him: thieves, frauds, murderers, rapists. They all whip themselves mercilessly. They are united in humility, repenting of their deeds and the deeds of the world.

Yet they already feel the foulness of the soul in the people by the wayside, gaze at 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 put 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, mortifying 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.

The Orgiastics drag them down from their pulpits, tearing off their clothes and beating them through the village streets. They will never return.

The one led by the Penitent remains the largest of the movements. In Purgare, it slowly turns 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.

HOME

The settlers in the Adriatic basin knew only two seasons: war and peace. At their backs, the Anabaptists shouted battle cries; in front 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 nodules, 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, and 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; 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 mingle their own blood with theirs. 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 introduce 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 been knowing 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 in the beginning; 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 only take the statues."

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 is perceivable. 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 out of 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.

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 sit 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 that feeds 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 repossess cargo that has already been sold if the price is right. Some statues have already been loaded on board of a Neolibyan transporter a dozen times—and were back in the bazaar days later. The Neolibyans would call that "optimization of profit," right?

MASAI

Sabore's feet dug into the grass. A balmy wind played with his red garment. He stepped in the shadow of an ancient Baobab and rested his forehead against the cool bark. 20 men could not have embraced this tree. Behind its trunk, Sabore's ancestors looked for shelter from the star flashes of the Eschaton. 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 Sabore. 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 top 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.

ENGAI

Engai was a strong god. He resided on top of the Ol Doinyo Lengai amidst white clouds. He chose the Masai as his children and gave them the cattle of this world. With their herds, the Masai roamed the plains. It was a hard life, but an honest one that taught them to appreciate strength and withstand hardship. Engai demanded, and the Masai gave.

When the star fire tore apart the heavens, giant blows 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 shroud, wheezed, coughed, and finally collapsed. Only the Baobabs stood unimpressed; they 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 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 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 hurt 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. They weave 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. Yet 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 Masai offer their services. They hunt hyenas or other predators that have killed children or stalk escaped slaves deep into the Psychovores.

They serve as scouts for the Leopards to circumvent Neolibyan trading places, and in doing so, they help steer people clear from the star stones. Engai's anger would be indescribable.

SHABATH

Nami walks through the rows of glass cabinets. Those to her left contain a sticky, sinewy tissue, forming rhombi and hexagons by the 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 a cage car, a windowless red colossus. No visitor has ever looked inside.

Ferrin sits on the entrance stairs. He gets 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 covering moving continents of bone and cartilage. Mouths burst open only to grow shut again.

A chortling, polyphonic "Webale… Webale…" sounds through the twilight. Today, no Shabath will return, but another victim of the Phase Beast demands to be heard. Nami enters. She will listen.

HUNTERS

The Shabath enter the Discordance to place resonators. Whatever bursts from the breeding cusps, it hates the high-pitched beeping of the devices and tries to avoid it. The Shabath use them to hunt membrane creatures, dismembered, flying garlands, nettle vortexes, mist squids, and hundreds of other species. Using the resonators, they erect invisible barriers 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 dependably birth mist squids that take half a year to fade and die. The flying garlands usually are over 200 m long, and touching them burns the skin and destroys its pigments. It's not worth the bother. But whatever the Shabath can catch, they put into glass tanks.

CARNIES

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, pay a Dinar to the Shabath at 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 create new shapes. The whole settlement is up and about; 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, though, 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 are still in 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 plant belt 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 in the fringes could be partially repelled, but they never managed to return with the ship. The "Origin" was considered lost.

At some point the Shabath realized that the resonators that did not work in the Psychovores worked real miracles in the Discordance and relocated their research. They could search for the seed of the extraterrestrial infection there, too. Then 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 had 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. They huddle 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 told 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.

Once gain, 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 every careless movement of their prey. The people fear their almost-human shrewdness 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, a woman giving birth on a Gendo skin is a good omen.

TACTICS

Gendos always try to exploit 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, groaning, barking and attacking for the sake of appearance. They harrow 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 defend actively; they use all their energy focusing on the quick death of the prey. Only the alpha considers defense. He proceeds tactically and defends actively, only to attack again even more quickly.

It isn't until more than 50% of all Gendos are dead that the pack retreats. If the alpha dies, the animals become confused and react with aimless aggression that can also target fellow 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, damage 2+1D, Range 1 m

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. Majestic and almost soundless are the steps of her pillar-like legs. 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. With a stoop they walk through the spruce forest, the shaggy furs around their shoulders whipping in the wind. In their hands, there are rods with cylindrical tops. 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.

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 and has grayish-brown mottled fur and tusks that are over 5 m long. She has cast aside Gendos with her trunk, 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.

ORIGIN AND END

According to legend, the birthplace of the mammoths lies way up in 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 portals are gigantic; if a mammoth were to walk through, it would seem small. There has been talk about 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.

COMBAT STATS

PROFILE: Mammoth

INITIATIVE: 4D / 5 Ego Points

ATTACK: Pendulum swing with tusks 5D, 5+1D damage, range 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)

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 run 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 musk oxen and Gendos avoid them.

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 panicky 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 in the void.

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 the cusping, pulling all nutrients into the depths. 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, the hands devolved into claws. They are sheer hunger, hunters without compassion or survival instinct. Like roaches, only based on human schematics. They hail from the bone towers of Pollen. 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.

Down there, 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 unisexual clones cusping and proliferating in the underground. What comes to the surface is already grown-up 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 branchings. They do not get to the core. They can only ever curb the plague, but never destroy it.

TACTICS

Spore Beasts attack in swarms of 5-50 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 paces 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 initiate a melee at once, they flee and wait for a better chance.

COMBAT STATS

PROFILE: Spore Beast

INITIATIVE: 9D / 4 Ego Points (uses 3 points right in the first round)

SPECIALTY: For solo Actions AGI+Stealth 10D

ATTACK: Claws and bite 9D, damage 4+1D, range 1 m

DEFENSE: Passive 1
Melee active (pushing aside the weapon), Brawl 9D
Ranged combat active (-)
Mentally unimpressed, does not take 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 not any more intelligent than a Gendo. The Spore Beasts in Borca or up north at the Ice Barrier are, though. They lurk in the ruins alone, only attacking creatures they consider 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 in the depths.

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, is closer to his fellow Leperos than a mother to her child. Every emotional trembling in the collective hurts him; every Chakra call pushes his body onwards, towards the source of the irritation. When Psychonauts die or spore fields sing this song of doom, he is washed away by the tide. He crawls from the ground, doesn't feel the mycelia 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 with 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 Leperos wanted to, if they tried with all their might, they could never again leave this orbit. When the EX burns in their veins, the mucosae dissolve and burst from 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, perforate the paper skin with their fingers, inhale the spores, and call for help. The family will answer.

TOGETHER

The manifoldness 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 anticipatory it acts.

The Spitalians consider that which the Leperos call "fusion" 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: "Go, puny human." Even the babies open and close their mouths in the rhythm of the words. The Chakra marks on their bodies burn, smaller versions of them 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 light the Burners 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, approx. 5 damage, range 1m

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 flare up. 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 defend actively. This is cumulative, up to a maximum bonus of +4D.

STUKOV SCORPIONS

For months, they slumber buried in the salty soil 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 highly potent; within seconds, it sends waves of spasms through the infected body and makes the nervous system collapse. 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; they only move around in an area of 1 km around their place of birth. They are unisexual: all scorpions are clones of a common ancestor. 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 Dust Worms and Desert Clams.

The Spitalians are not the only ones interested in the scorpions, however. Jealous wives, vengeful husbands, and assassins are all willing buyers of the neurotoxin from the scorpion's sting. In Borca, the Carrion Birds cater to this market.

DUST WORMS

The worms are between 1 and 10 m long. In the Stukov, nomads dig them up, dehydrate them—the water is collected—and grind them. The neurotoxin from the pale segments remains active even in ground form. It tickles the tongue and is offered as a stimulating tonic in Africa. Overdoses cause fever attacks.

Eaten alive, Dust Worms awaken the desire in their victims to eat and drink beyond measure. They are not digested by the stomach acid, but reach the guts and remain there to breed. The victim's body temperature rises, which attracts Stukov Scorpions. According to reports, the worms change as soon as their host is infected by the scorpion venom. They become bloated, filling the guts. 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. The worm does not die, though: the parts are now autonomous organisms. Some 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 set 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 willingly to 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 sees the Pregnoctic Mnemonites as their origin. These Psychonauts wander the land unseen and carry shells to the East in which memories are spun. 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 considered 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 life within 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—but sometimes, the long night of madness waits.

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 Skill is reduced by 1, another rises by 1. The player rolls for each Attribute and 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, 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 hundred 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 loners. If other spiders approach within 1 m, 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 an extended 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 extended 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. The animals get stuck to them and immobilized so that they drown and sink.

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; the pumping is visible as a weak, wavelike movement. According to research of the Spital in Danzig, Fractal Stars store DNA fragments of their victims in their central nexus. So far, no one has any idea 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; in bodies of standing water, they swirl into cotton-like gossamer that is visible by an Action roll on INS+Perception (4).

Those who stumble into the threads have to be very careful not to fall. The legs are entangled, and only a successful AGI+Mobility 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 byssus threads, the victim has to reach the shore. To do so, he rolls BOD+Force (6), but it can get support. Every successful roll brings it 1 m + Triggers closer to shore. On dry land, the threads quickly dry out and can be peeled away.

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 spasms intensely until bones break and sinews snap. 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 (INS+Perception [4]). Husk Spiders instinctively avoid these hills.

As plagues of their Biokinetics, the Rift Centipedes burrow through the underground 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 the 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 inefficient 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 only live 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 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 the disturbance because it seamlessly fits 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 get +2D. Attackers can attack the animal directly (Difficulty 4). One hit kills it.

FLYING LEECH

Flying leeches come 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; their wings are tough. The best way of dealing with the animals is to swat them away or tread them into the dust to buy time to flee into a safe haven.

The leeches bite into their victims. 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 lifecycle 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 let themselves be carried away.

An attack takes several rounds. It starts at maximum strength (6) and decreases by 1 per round (these are the tail ends of the wave). Every burst from a flamethrower or a pesticide rifle reduces the strength by 1.

Those who are at the center of an attack wave have to roll PSY+Reaction (swarm 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 around the mouth opening like the tentacles of a jellyfish. The strands cast about, touching other members of the species and clinging to them. This way, colonies can develop, that 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 thus gets closer to the victim. 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 to the ground in the end, 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 well visible, though, 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 (do not 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, laying open the sinews and, ultimately, the bones before they fall back into the water and move on.

It is an interesting fact that often there is hoarfrost on the snails' shells. Those who touch them feel the cold. The animals themselves give off an enormous heat, though. The Spitalians think that armored snails turn carrion into pure warmth that they can store for weeks. They use it up like humans use up fat reserves.

In Africa, armored snails are sold as curios and given as present for one's host. The animals rarely live longer than six months, so the gift cannot become too annoying. Europeans have no use for armored snails.

TRILOBITES

In the libraries of the Spitalians, there are Bygone texts about extinct species; in the drawers below, there are examples of the fossils pictured in these books. One species is extraordinarily common, so the examples sometimes have to be stored in boxes: trilobites. These ancestors of the arthropods disappeared from the face of the earth hundreds of millions of years ago, sank into the sediment and 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 shield and torus segments. Some of them drag behind stingers that are meters long that they can fan out; others are only as big as a thumbnail. In Hybrispanian lakes, Spitalians found eyeless animals; in Pandora, specimens had button-sized compound eyes. A chemical test in the Spital in Danzig showed that cephalic shields and eyes consisted of calcite, just as described in the Bygone scientific literature on trilobites.

Everything points to the fact that these crabs are trilobites: a reborn, formally 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; the largest and most dangerous examples glide 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 for the Spitalians.

DISCORDANCE

MEMBRANE CREATURES

Years ago, the Discordance threatened the still finely 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, circling on the wind. They consist of semitransparent membranes layered like fins that meet 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 borders, before finally they tear apart. Shimmering and hissing, they sink to the ground. The wind carries away the scraps, which are almost indiscernible from dry plains grass.

THE DISMEMBERED

When the humanoid gene sequences prevail, three- or five-legged creatures roll from the uterus sacs. Muscles are uncovered, and the arms have dozens of joints; the spine is freely movable and swings back and forth like a pendulum. The Dismembered awake into their new life with a scream, and very few of them ever stop screaming. They stagger through the land, buzzing and shouting, crazy with pain and hunger. Some bury themselves, ambushing everything that comes close, while others throw themselves against walls or trees, hitting them with their claws, fighting a mad fight until they fall down 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 it randomly, or half a stag's head, including broken antlers. Eventually, however, it will absorb all of this completely.

The foreign DNA saved it—and 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 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 miss 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; acid flows into them. The agony is 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

The old Bluecast hobbles across the calendar plateau. The wind blows into his face and plays with his hair. There is a smell of grass, and the sun warms him—a balm for the old 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 the boy from the yellow ones. 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 planes, 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 swing 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 world of the Bygones was covered in hundreds of conflicts. Drone squads glided across the sky. They provided recon and made isolated attacks. The battlefields could no longer be commanded by regular troops. Autonomous vehicle drones saw a brief boom until the enemy fighters realized how to trap those machines or hack them. When the Autonomous Mobile Systems for Unmanned Military Operations—or AMSUMOs—were invented, though, everything changed. These humanoid robots had a collective battle intelligence, were highly mobile, and were ready for serial production. The police used them, and they were sent on missions to guard the Spanish exclaves in Africa. The conflict in Africa, which later became a war, unleashed thousands of the machines onto the frightened population.

Conflicts are always dirty, but that was not the AMSUMOs' fault. They were programmed to contain and de-escalate, not to kill. They arrested aggressors and transported them to container jails. Tirelessly they cleared the scene.

Then, everything went wrong. When the Stream collapsed under the 2 to the power of 16 phenomenon, some part of the digital madness got into the AMSUMOs' controlling unit, ate through their data stores, crystallized around programs, and gave birth to new behavioral patterns. At first no one noticed. 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 Eschaton. They arrested looters and put them into prison.

Yet their protocols seemed modified. Now, everyone on the street was asked to mind the curfew. Even when people did, the AMSUMOs followed up, demanding identification. They did not let go, chased people to their houses, forced open doors, arrested them. The jails were already overflowing; newcomers were pressed into the cells by force. Corpses piled up, rotten arms stuck through bars—and still they brought more.

SUBSUMO TRANSPONDER

According to legend, there is a Marauder in Noret, protected from others like him by AMSUMOs. The Machine Men ignore him. The Chroniclers assume that he carries one of the lost Subsumo transponders. The artifact lets the AMSUMO consider him a machine, and this is why they let him pass unmolested. Oh, what one could do with such a device!

AFRICAN HINTERLAND

In Africa, the machines purged the military fortresses of humans. Then they sank into an attentive slumber.

The centuries brought rain to the continent. Grass vanquished the desert; trees unfolded their branches and interwove them to a dense canopy. The birds returned; musquashes and martens jumped across rotting tree trunks. Green twilight engulfed the fortresses, roots of jungle giants conquered the walls like paralyzed giant snakes.

Today, the AMSUMOs stand amidst the steaming vegetation like statues: wood lice live in their cavities; sick little trees grow on their shoulder plates: lichen hangs from their lacquered blue arms. Many have no energy anymore, only a spark that glows within their skulls. However, there are others. They wait for orders and movement stimuli. They have never stopped guarding their territory.

RENEGADE

The 2 to the power of 16 phenomenon took control of the machines away from humans. The program base was dismembered, cognitive abilities reduced to a minimum, behavior caught in a feedback loop.

However, as mentioned, there are others. They watch the movements of the ants for weeks, studying their battle against other ant populations. They recognize the patterns, evaluating and choosing. In their digital cortex, new structures form. Curiosity becomes rudimentary intelligence; consciousness flickers and lights a wildfire in the controls of the machine. A foreign intelligence gazes out of its steely prison through the optics: a renegade AMSUMO is born.

The behavior of the renegade depends on its observations. If it studies the interplay of anger and joy in children, it can develop an unpredictable but peaceful character. If it has an interest in cockroaches, on the other hand, it develops into a merciless beast instead.

In spite of their individuality, all renegades have one thing in common: they paint or scratch the 2 to the power of 16 signature onto their forehead plate.

The most important Achilles' heel of the AMSUMOs is their energy supply. Without tankers or charging stations, they are quickly exhausted and gather dust as statues in the wasteland.

Renegades are the most susceptible to that. Often, they pay for their freedom and their escape from the formation with deactivation weeks later. Their glowing intelligence cores fade.

This is why many return to the old formation and follow it on its endless patrols. They feed at the tankers and survive. However, Chroniclers claim to have seen renegade Enforcers hundreds of kilometers off the known routes. These Machine Men hide their appearance under rags, never staying in one place for long. Only an independent energy source like a closed reactor system could guarantee their survival.

INDEPENDENT

There are hints in old documents of a reactor membrane that could replace the accumulator. However it was never ready for series-production, for any damage could have caused a chain reaction and heated the reactor module to over 1000° C. For some seconds, it would emit enormous amounts of radioactivity. 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 where metaphorical and explored the closeness of Flocks of birds to the warmth of a rat's heart or drew a parallel between formations of clouds and chemical formulas. Yet nobody laughed about them. Those who read the poems apprehended the desperate sobriety of every line.

Life went on, and the sage and his poems faded into oblivion—until some weeks ago, when children playing "Scourger and Slave" discovered the old fortress walls in the jungle. When they explored the facility, they found a piece of cloth covered in writing in front of the entrance portal. It could not have been there for long, because it was clean. A sound startled them: there was someone on the wall. Yellow, shimmering eyes stared at them from the shadows of a hood, and gray-blue fingers lay on the buttress. But only for a second. The figure turned around and disappeared from view.

Since then, the inhabitants of the villages have been bringing their gifts again, but Neolibyans come from afar, too, to get their hands on one of these cryptic poems.

VARIANT: ENFORCER

The Enforcer is the most common variant of the modular AMSUMO basic model. Its programs offer a great variety of movement maneuvers and reactive attack patterns. It is highly adaptive when handling improvised weapons and practically invincible in melee. His enemies fear its recognition of flight patterns: it guesses probable hideouts and routes and takes the fastest way there; if unsuccessful, it expands the search routine and systematically walks the grid. To get rid of an Enforcer takes more luck than creativity, for it can predict creativity.

AMSUMOs gather in hunting groups of 2 to 4 machines. The Enforcers of the formation lead the hunt, but they also protect the rare Porcupines and Tankers.

PROFILE: ENFORCER

INITIATIVE: 14D / 0 Ego Points
SPECIALTY: INS+Perception 7D
ATTACK: Stone club, 7D, range 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 are missing parts of their ceramic casing, which have been replaced by a sensor array. Antennas as thick as a man's thumb jut from the links of the core support structure that hold armor plates in other AMSUMOs. Depending on the condition of the machine, shoulders and back carry up to 120 of these light field antennas.

The Porcupine takes care of the geolocation and navigation of the hunting group. The assisting Enforcers power down their sensors and link up with the Porcupines tactical network. Every maneuver is perfectly attuned to the situation and the enemy: +2D to melee and ranged combat. If a Porcupine is incapacitated or if the radio transmission is jammed, the formation is briefly confused and disoriented: all AMSUMOs have -4D to their Actions in the next combat round.

But one round later, their own anticipatory combat simulation is active again, and the machines reorient themselves within their formation.

PROFILE: PORCUPINE

INITIATIVE: 7D / 0 Ego Points
SPECIALTY: INS+Perception 12D
ATTACK: Fists, 8D, range 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' energy technology uses bioreactors. Water in tanks is vaccinated with nutrients, and then a foil carrying algae cultures is put into the liquid. Once the algae are hit by daylight, photosynthesis starts. Yet they cannot emit oxygen due to a missing building block in the chemical setup: excess energy is produced.

To make up for this, hydrogen is dissociated, caught in the gas pump nozzle, and channeled to a fuel-cell. The energy thus generated fuels the AMSUMOs. The Tanker variant has one of these bioreactors. The performance of the energy matrix in most Machine Men is only a fraction compared to the hellfire of days past. They can break down any time. And without the Tankers, they would have long since.

PROFILE: TANKER

INITIATIVE: 4D / 0 Ego Points
ATTACK: Fists, 8D, range 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 are still living nearby, these paths are well known. Not even a stone may be moved in their vicinity: every change arouses suspicion in the hunting group and can lead it astray from its course—which it has been following, from one way marker to the next, for centuries—like an asteroid that a passing planet tears from its orbit and throws into the inner solar system.

For the settlements, nothing is more dangerous than an unpredictable squad of AMSUMOs. It can take years for a new route to become stable and predictable.

If the AMSUMOs encounter people, they demand identification from crackling speakers. No one knows an answer that an Enforcer would have been satisfied with in the last hundred years. So they 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 year-long journey or end up in a bone pit close to the squad's recharging station.

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 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 she got from Getrell himself: other chosen ones. She sent her memetic anchors and infectious ideas, linked them into the dimensioning web, called them to her, revealed and chose. Her army grew.

A new sign flared in the skies, the worst of all omens, speaking of an apocalypse. Freya had never been so happy before. With the other chosen ones, she walked into the quiet of the mountain, had the cascade imprinted on the back of her hand, and entered her chamber. She was hooked to cables; tubes came out of her armpits. Crystalline cold crept through her veins, grabbed her neck, and pinched. The nanitated 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 and goals). She felt nauseous. She counted them, got confused, started again… These were not all of them, not by far. She went to a terminal and looked at her right hand. On the back of her hand, there was 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 ancient civilizations—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 realized 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 shield and weapon.

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, the 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 premises — until the great goal was reached.

SYSTEM FAILURE

The Sleepers do not know all of the plan. But they do know that it might not reach its goal: dispensers have gone inoperative or been abandoned by their guards, the Palers. The 2 to the power of 16 phenomenon destroyed computer systems; the computing efforts have discharged the accumulators of the reactors.

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. Their knowledge about their cascade is fragmentary; they have forgotten the position of the weapon storages.

That makes them all the more dangerous.

RAGNARÖK

Sleepers cannot name the last US president and cannot remember the conflicts of their time. Their memetic conditioning and their training, however, are immaculate. They have been chosen to establish a new world order. As gods they stand before Palers of their bunkers, demanding and receiving submission.

Aimlessly, but resolutely they walk the surface world making a lot of noise, basking in the glory of their own potency, conquering villages, establishing kingdoms, or perishing in the crossfire of the Cults and Clans. Others go into hiding and act behind the scenes. They know that the plan might still work, has not even been interrupted. They sweep the land, unlocking the ancient storages with the number on the back of their hands, searching for others like themselves, infiltrating Chroniclers and Hellvetics. Some break the chains of their indoctrination and step out 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 with Tech VI.
Damage or armor rise by 2, other traits are improved accordingly (e. g. by +2D). The biometrical encoding is level 8.

FREE SPIRIT

A small logo on a rifle, on a combat suit, or a night scope makes the Sleepers doubt their vocation. They do not know this logo. But the equipment bearing this logo comes from Exalt and probably from dispensers in the Balkhan, too, so it must be part of the great plan of which they are the main actors. Or believe to be. This equipment is known as Free Spirit equipment. It's quality is unmatched, but it is extremely rare—and practically unusable: gun triggers and even the clasps on combat suits are biometrically encoded.

PREY

From the shadows of the old world, the worst enemies of the Sleepers 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 whole arsenal of artifacts. Yet they do not only kill their victims: they milk them, taking the 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.

TACTICS

A loner who was able to break his conditioning and has renounced the plan needs to remain under the radar. For not only do Marauders hunt him, but his comrades are on the prowl for him as well. He will act from behind the scenes, supporting small communities and working at creating a new life for himself. Yet most of them still thirst for greatness: in the end, even loners become rulers of Clans, villages, or Paler bunkers, using the knowledge of hidden RG caches to arm their troops and form them into their personal bodyguard. They usually avoid the built-up areas around metropolises like Justitian or Osman.

Sleepers still acting according to the plan remain within the groups they have been assigned to 500 years ago. In the classical assault detachment, 3 to 4 soldiers guard the Sociocybernetics who purposefully manipulate villages. The Sociocybernetics command several Infiltrators and use them wherever the Xenomemetics are too strong. The Infiltrators act independently for months or years and only contact the core group to report advances or setbacks.

Meanwhile, the Hunters watch Sleeper groups from afar, guarding, gauging, and judging. Each and every one of them had the best results in the indoctrination phase: their memetic armor is impenetrable.

HUNTER EQUIPMENT

Encoder: Hunters wear torques or bracelets of pure white ceramics. These artifacts strengthen the encoding of the nanites flowing past beneath them within the blood of the Sleeper. They effectively protect them from interferencers.

Interferencer: The weapon is similar to a grenade launcher, only the barrel is shut. Instead of grenades, the interferencer shoots interference pulses on the frequency of the nanites. A hit makes the target freeze. The nanites break out of their cells and become visible as white dots in the victim's pores. In case of a strong interference, the Ambrosia runs from eyes, nose, and mouth. It only works for Sleepers. An interferencer can also be used to activate a nanite cartridge, though.

VARIANT: SOLDIER

Violence lacks the subtlety of Memetics, yet it is universally understood and works quickly. The RG soldiers are good 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, 11D, range (30/80), damage 13, smooth-running (1T), salvos (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 adrenalin when pressed; for the duration of the combat, the Sleeper gets +2D to the Initiative roll); throat mic with receptor implant (the mic is glued to the throat, the receptor part is implanted in the skull).

VARIANT: SOCIOCYBERNETIC

Sociocybernetics program people. They analyze the social construct of the Clan and modify it via the interaction with induced memes. In difficult cases, they mark unwanted elements and ask soldiers to execute 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, range (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 combo, Armor 5, bulletproof (5), 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; brings 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 not very efficient. 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, range (8/30), damage 7, smooth-running (3 T); combat knife, 9D, range 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), simple clothing
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. When a Sleeper has settled down in the vicinity, they'll find him.

PROFILE: HUNTER

INITIATIVE: 10D / 16 Ego Points
SPECIALTY: PSY+Domination 7D, INS+Perception 10D
ATTACK: Flechette rifle, 10D, range (30/80), damage 13, smooth-running (1T), salvos (5); combat knife, 7D, range 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 naked people in olympic poses stood in masonry openings. Some were blank and gray, others painted gaily. Impulse raised his lamp. The cold light tore them from the darkness, made giant deep shadows dart across the walls. Pictures in gilded frames, blackened by humidity, rested against columns. Bar stools had melted to artworks made of rust. Impulse shone his light at the hallway. He would be there. He always was. The sources at the hip and on the thigh were heavy, the two emitters on chest and back as well. Impulse was embedded in a cocoon of cables and amplifiers. None of this would be able to protect him.

He stepped through the hallway into the blackness of the auditorium. The light reached neither the end of the hallway nor its ceiling, was simply a glow in the void.

"Come closer." A voice like a dispersing swarm of flies. Impulse went down some stairs, past green plastic chairs. In front of him, he saw a silhouette in the center of the circle. Broad shoulders, heaving like a machine. The light shone on to a facemask made of steel. With a soft sigh, it opened, tilted aside, revealed glittering blackness for a second. Another mask slipped down across the forehead and pressed to the face. A mechanical system rotated around the head and pulled tight. The eyes were almond-shaped and slanted inwards, the cheekbones and nose were over-prominent. The mouth moved. The voice always came with a delay. Impulse knew 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 cackling noise came from underneath it. It lowered again.

"As a friend. You will. You will 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. 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 not much 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, depopulate whole villages on their erratic wanderings.

The Vulture in old Britain and the Jehammedans' Aries are supposed to be two of them. Yet the information about these creatures caught between decay and omnipotence are sparse; even the Chroniclers can only guess.

AGENDA

Some Marauders keep crossing the paths of certain families. Clanners tell about moonless nights when death incarnate lurks in the shadows of the huts and whispers messages into the windowcases. Those who listen will soon be led into forgotten storages and labs, can salvage books, weapons, or embryos encased in resin. He sees drawings of arbors and zodiac signs, walks through rows of rotting plants, and stares through glass into dark operating theatres.

Warring Clans perish in a Marauder's anger. His sign on the ruin walls is a warning to everyone. This can go on for centuries, centuries in which the Clan thrives, restraining their fear of the monster at their side—until the Marauder kills a whole generation in his fury, never to be 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 plan of the Marauders.

ASPERA THE ONE-LEGGED

Her face, framed by laterally protruding pigtails, is harmonious and emotionless, like a plastic mask. When she speaks or smiles, her countenance 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. In the past centuries, she has kept letting herself be found by Chroniclers. Sometimes she immediately revealed ancient knowledge that the Fragments hid and locked away in the depths of the static Stream. Sometimes she demanded a sacrifice. Those who approach Aspera set the wheel of destiny into motion.

ARIES THE RAM

He led the Jehammedans to victory in the hour of impending doom. His enemies fall to the dust before him, vomiting blood and entrails. The black fleece around his shoulders billows like a sandstorm even if there is no wind, expands and contracts again as if alive. He was last seen on the Greek Isles, surrounded by his faithful Arianoi.

ARGYRE THE VULTURE

No one has seen him in centuries. Britain is supposed to be his domain, but no one goes there and lives to tell the tale. According to legends, he commands an army of enslaved Sleepers; he forces them to serve him with the "yoke." The device encases their shoulders like a leech and… changes… whenever the wearer strays too far. Argyre does not need chains. Some weeks ago, the Anabaptists in Briton saw searing rays of light in the north. The origin was somewhere in Britain. Something is happening up there.

GUSEV

Noret is the city of the Machine Men. Scrappers have divided the area into danger zones from 1 to 6. On the outer ring at level 1, it is pretty improbable to encounter a machine patrol; from zone 5, there is only one report, containing nothing more than the description of a breathless flight. Zone 6 can only be watched from a distance. It would take under a minute for an interloper to hear a distorted, "Stop, show your papers!"

It is in this zone that the Marauder called Gusev was last seen 100 years ago. His face bandaged, every step a battle against gravity, he waded through the riverbed at the center of the city. He moves amongst the Machine Men without being molested. They don't even look at him. No place on earth is safer than Noret when the damn

machines ignore you. Today, wild wheat grows in the riverbed; trees bear shining red fruit that no one harvests, that ultimately rot in the silt. The biological diversity here is breathtaking—and completely unexplainable.

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 look after him until his silhouette is lost in the snowstorm. If he is satisfied, he leaves something behind: an artifact; a booklet full of formulas; a hand-drawn map of "subterranean growths."

CHERNOBOG

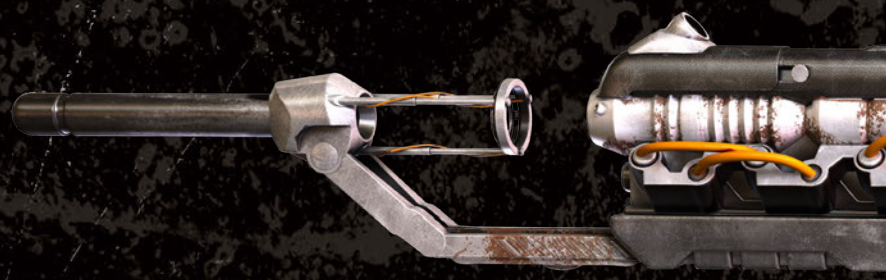
For months, the Corroded has cut a swath of destruction through the land, subjugating this Clan and destroying that one. With his army of the hundred thousand, he conquered Praha Republika and left the dying city-state to his Clans. They pounced and ate their fill until nothing was left but bleak bones.

According to the reports of the infiltrating Shutters, he's caught in Pest between the Dushani sound mountains, breaking wave after wave, advancing, tearing apart Dushanis, flattening buildings, burning down forests. But no one doubts that he will break free and will find whatever it is he's looking for in Pest.

TRIGLAW THE THREE-HEADED

The Chroniclers classify Triglaw as a Marauder, but hundreds of Clans in the East Borcan North know the truth: they have been worshiping Triglaw as a god for centuries, receiving his orders through a horse oracle. Small horse idols are widespread in East Borca and Pollen and demonstrate the reach of his cult.

However, reports from the Alpine Fortress hint at a creature that has entered the tunnels in the last years and that the Chroniclers identify as Triglaw. His tracks disappear beyond the Alps; he was seen once again in Laibach. There is no pattern to his actions.



TACTICS

Marauders are loners. They do not belong to this time, and they do not belong to this world, so they are unable to form relationships with today's humans. They react angrily to any disruption and any resistance, are volatile. One loud word can raise their divine anger and lead to the destruction of a village. They fight with an utter will to destroy by any means, 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 scratch and scrape and manage to break splinters from the Marauders' existence here and there. But as long as the Ambrosia circulates through their bodies, they don't fear death. A crystalline cotton that is sharp as a handful of razor blades scabs over any wound they suffer within seconds. Torn organs mend or are repelled and replaced by duplicates.

But there is a limit. Every year and every wound makes the Ambrosia a little thinner. If the Marauder cannot fortify 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 heels 4 Flesh Wounds or 1 Trauma. The healing starts at once; the Marauder does not have to spend an Action on it.

Legendary Marauders like Argyre, Aspera, or Gusev have 20-30 points, while most have to make do with 5-10 points.

POTENTIAL: NANITE LOW

Marauders have escaped death for so long that their soul tears apart when they finally face it and their foul nature breaks through. They cling to the escaping life madly, know neither friend nor foe, fight by all means and without any consideration.

EFFECT: If the Ambrosia falls under 5, the Marauders feel their end drawing near. Their sanity is the first thing that is lost. They would do anything to refill their Ambrosia level.

In this state, no one can approach them without getting a taste of their power and madness. The flesh starts rotting; sarcomas form on the skin. Pain tears apart any clear thought. If a Marauder manages to escape the nanite low, he usually retains some permanent damage. Some are visible and cannot be undone: Aspera lost her leg; Gusev's skull is corroded. Madness, extreme irritability, or hatred towards humans are other symptoms of a weathered nanite low.

VARIANT: THE CREATURE

Torn by eons-old pains, the Marauder flees into the wasteland. He cannot stand the laughter of humans anymore, finds their joy repulsive—though it awakens a burning desire within him at the same time. He steers clear.

He clings to the last spark of humanity within him, tries to rekindle it by nanite injections in RG facilities. He walks the old ways, follows the road network that Gerome Getrell once designed and captured in Pathfinder way markers.

PROFILE: THE CREATURE

INITIATIVE: 5D / 2 Ego Points
SPECIALTY: Ambrosia 6, INS+Orienteering 14D
ATTACK: Giant spiked club, 6D, range 2m, damage 10, impact (2 T)
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 goes mad and attacks savagely)
MOVEMENT: 6D
ARMOR: Composite armor, Armor 6, bulletproof (9), bandages; Cape
CONDITION: 28 (Trauma: 6)

SOUL BURNER

The beam is brighter than the sun, burns through steel and concrete, vaporizes flesh and bones into red mist. When it collapses, the air enters the vacuum it leaves 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 not much actual data available. So far, people have seen three possibly different Marauders carrying a Soul Burner. Chroniclers were able to identify one of them as Gusev according to the reports. It remains unclear whether there are several copies of the weapon or whether the Soul Burner people have seen 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 shoot 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 his offspring. From behind the scenes, he directs them, protects them from enemies, and flees into the wasteland when rage threatens to overcome him.

PROFILE: THE GUARDIAN

INITIATIVE: 8D / 6 Ego Points
SPECIALTY: Ambrosia 16, CHA+Etiquette 10D, INT+Engineering 14D, INT+Science 16D
ATTACK: Flechette rifle, 11D, range (30/80), damage 13, smooth-running (1 T), salvos (5); fist, 7D, range 1m, damage 8, smooth-running (2 T)
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 goes mad and attacks savagely)
MOVEMENT: 12D
ARMOR: AMSUMO casing, Armor 8, Massive (10)
CONDITION: 32 (Trauma: 9)

VARIANT: THE DIVINE

Intoxicated by his own immortality, ancient, corroded by nanite lows, and trapped in endless agony, the madness opens up new gates. The Marauder surrounds himself with lackeys who throw themselves in the dust in front of him and whimper in submission. This calms him and drives him further out into a world that knows only one god: him.

PROFILE: THE DIVINE

INITIATIVE: 10D / 3 Ego Points
SPECIALTY: Ambrosia 12, PSY+Domination 15D
ATTACK: Soul burner, 9D, range (50/200), damage 16, biometrically encoded, terrifying (4), Fatal
Horn, 10D, range 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 goes mad and attacks savagely)
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 Spitalian colleagues has risen in the last days. Until 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 the toes isn't a fungus, I'm a 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. Hasn't said a word yet. He wears his gas mask all the time. 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 all wet. 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 50-paces distance. I don't want to know what the Bygones have buried here along the road.

Irina has a good head start, is just entering the shadow of one of the concrete skyscrapers, suddenly is nothing more but 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. Tranquilizer. I swallow one of the red pills without any fluids. When we come back to the Spital, I will be a goddamn pills Burner.

I quickly follow Irina. I start jogging lightly, 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 hastily, almost stumble. There is nothing—or have the trees suddenly come closer to the street? I hear a soft puttering, glance at the Mollusk container on top of my Splayer. The spore-infested muscle trembles and spasms.

Cold sweat runs down my back. The Mollusk doesn't twitch; it surely has only been shaken by my jogging. I force myself to go slower, holding the Mollusk container upright.

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 associations 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.

Hererete? Something has linked to my mind and is changing it. Simplifying it. My feet move. 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 in to 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 had no joints and was 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 glasses. Smiling. Then 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 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 half way around and then following the Psychonaut. I can see him turning a lever at the shaft of his weapon and the blades splaying open, then the dissonance of a thousand tortured souls tears the silence.

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 out the Splayer. Sinews are still hanging 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 okay, 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 bastard is deaf?" she whispers to me.

Who would have thought.

PSYCHONAUTICS

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

A Psychonaut is always born close to spore fields, as a child of Leperos or normal people who did not want to bow to the de-sporeing craze of the Spitalians or were not able to do so. The mycelium fills the pregnant woman's amniotic fluid within days, and the fetus is exposed to it.

When the child is born, it does not display any unnatural behavior at first. 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 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 it speaks in tongues or with a strange voice, or sunlight flows around the little body like a liquid, leaving it in deepest shadow. The first spontaneous Rapture discharges—the "psychonautic Phenomenons"—bring the bitter certainty that a monster grows 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

Psychonautic 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 already identified as energy centers of the human body.

In homo sapiens, all Chakras are in balance, but all energy is centered in one particular Chakra in a Psychonaut. This one Chakra determines the Rapture of the Psychonauts—and his dominant attribute. The other six Chakras are burnt out and dead.

THE PLAGUES

Psychonauts surround themselves with insects and other animals, let the vermin nest on them, feed on them, or live in a symbiosis with them. Certain Raptures control certain species: every Chakra commands one of 5 plagues: Pollen's Biokinetics command centipedes and spiders; 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 plants of the human cells. No organism can function without them. The same is true for the Psychonauts' Sepsis: the mycelium web is part of the Psychonaut's nervous system, transports Rapture signals and ultimately is responsible for manifesting the Phenomena. Without spore infestation, there can be no Rapture discharge. The maximum spore infestation a Psychonaut can have and intertwine with his organism is (INS+Primal) x 2.

Sepsis taken in: INS+Primal x 2

PRIMAL-PHASE

The Psychonaut activates and controls his Rapture via his remaining spore infestation. If he manifests Phenomena, the spore infestation score is his Action Number. Example: with a spore infestation of 14, he could use 12D and would get 2 automatic Successes.

Phenomena have a level. It 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 efficiency rises enormously, but the Psychonaut also loses 1 point of spore infestation per point of overload. He can freely choose the amount of overload; it is only limited by the 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.

Spore infestation/Action Number – 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 in the end, he doesn't even command his plagues anymore. He is now as close to being human as possible.

FOCUS-PHASE

Once the spore infestation is used up or blocked, the Psychonaut comes 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; above him, the starless void gapes. He hates it.

He is only a visitor to this world, looking for any chance to return to the collective. He wraps himself in cool detachment and meets any challenge with a fanged mind and extreme concentration. Some Psychonauts rediscover their parents' language in such a moment. However, he has a hard time forming words with his mouth and tongue. They sound hollow in his head and only awaken the loneliness. Words, though, make time pass. They distract. Until he finds Burn or Sepsis. Once a Psychonaut is completely de-spored and stays that way, his Primal turns to Focus. Instead of using his spore infestation, he has to rely on his Ego points now. The Psychonaut will avoid combat and instead try to rebuild a spore infestation as quickly as possible. In cities, he looks for places to hide from his hunters. When cornered, he takes any risk: climbs cliffs, races across roofs, and jumps chasms, always hoping for his enemy to misstep. He does not attack if he sees no chance. He'd rather surrender and plan his escape.

De-spored: INT+Focus instead of Primal
Psychonaut can use Ego Points

IN COMBAT

In the primal phase, the Psychonaut does not use Ego points. Instead, he can use spore infestation points. With regards to Initiative, they work just like Ego Points. If psychic attacks reduce his Ego to 0, he doesn't mind. Only when de-sporeing forces him into the Focus phase does he collapse with a destroyed Ego.

FUZZINESS

The Phenomena listed are paraphrased, not clearly defined as powers. Every Psychonaut channels his Chakra's energies through his body uniquely and manifests them differently.
The Game Master should only take his clues from these descriptions and use the rules liberally. Psychonauts, as an alternative branch of evolution and arch-enemies of humanity, must remain a mystery to the players. Their actions need to be unpredictable and weird.

THE FOUR PRIMAL PHENOMENA

As varied as the 5 Raptures and their Phenomena may be, they all command four Phenomena that are nearly identical.

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; in the Purgan wasteland, he breathes the gases of the Reaper's Blow without them corroding his lungs.
RULES: This Phenomenon was already embedded in the fetus; it is always active, even in the Focus phase.

PAIN RESISTANCE

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 4
Even gaping wounds do not stop a Psychonaut from advancing further. The Chakra collective absorbs all pain and makes it fade.
RULES: Once the Psychonaut has built up a spore infestation of 4, this Phenomenon becomes active (no roll necessary). From now on, the Psychonaut registers physical pain, but does not suffer from it: there is no Trauma penalty.

ETHER CALL

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 4
Every thought of the Psychonaut causes ripples in the Chakra collective's ocean. Spore fields amplify the thought and broadcast it to other Aberrants. A cry for help spreads within seconds and is answered thousandfold.
RULES: Broadcasting a cry for help is an Action for the Psychonaut. The soundless cry warns all Aberrants for miles around. Humans with a spore infestation of at least 4 feel it, too. Psychonauts who are close by come to the rescue.

STRENGTHENING

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 1 (no roll necessary)
The Chakra flares and pulses energy through the body meridians. The archetypical Psychonaut skills break through, amplified a hundredfold.
RULES: The Psychonaut overloads, and every point of overload goes to his dominant attribute. The effects depend on the Rapture.

SYMBOLS IN THE DUST

Phenomena cause ripples in reality: insects follow invisible paths and form mandalas; scorpions dance intricate patterns into the sand; even spore clouds or mosquito swarms consolidate into structures, forming symmetrical lines and arches. The stronger the Psychonaut and the Phenomenon, the greater the effects: level 4 Phenomena already swirl up dust or bend plains grass into patterns; at level 8+, the symbols cover many meters and are milled several fingers deep into the ground. Rapture discharges of level 10+ tear open trenches and are plainly visible from afar—and for years to come.

Every discharge can be matched to a Rapture according to its characteristic pattern: Those patterns have been handed down by the Bygones – the Chakra symbols.

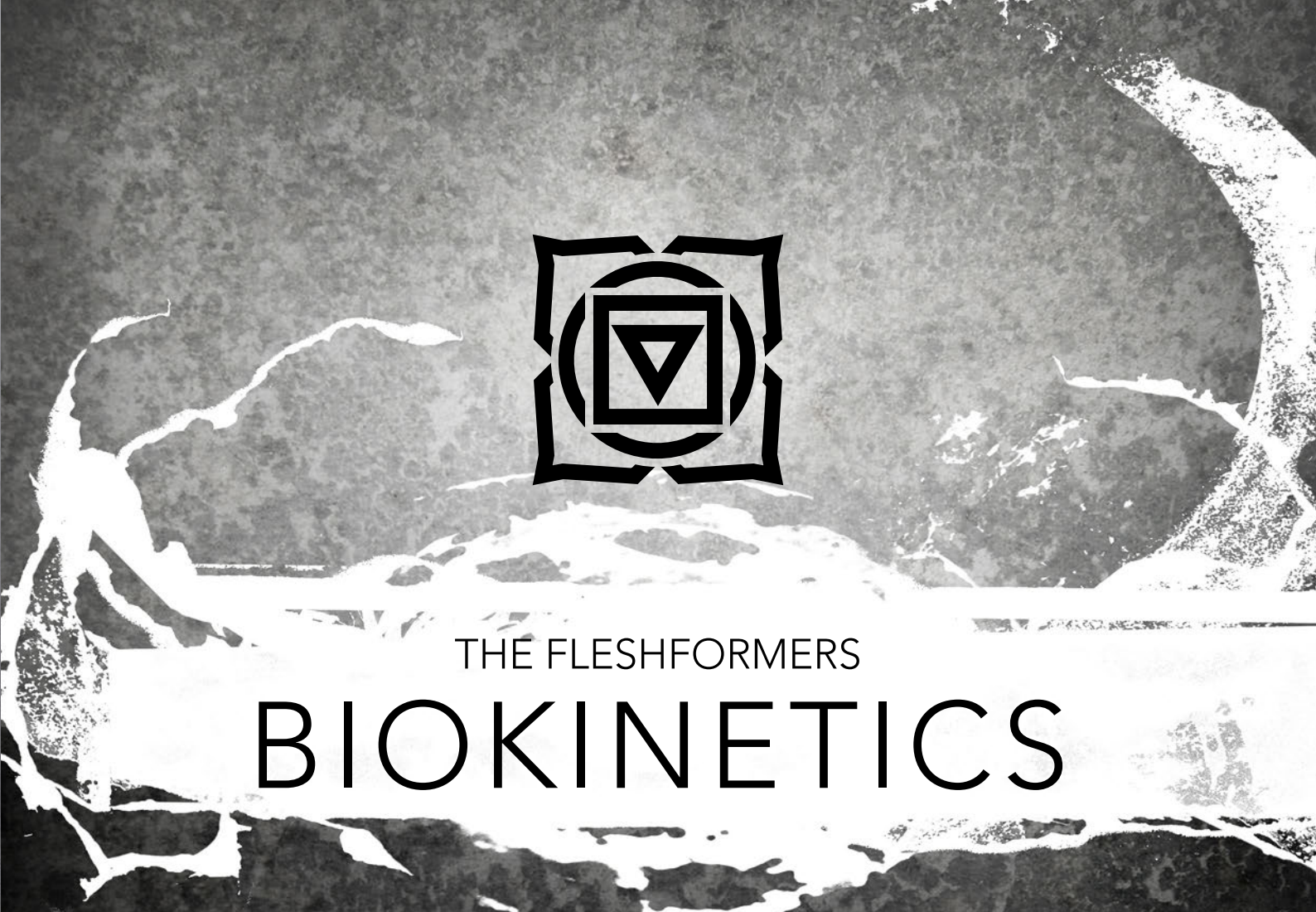
CONTINENTAL

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. Only in spore fields, however, does their power grow monstrous, for they get +1 spore infestation at the beginning of every combat round, +2 in Mother spore fields, and +3 in their Earth Chakra. It seems impossible to tear them out of their Primal phase.

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 goes down to all fours and races towards him through the spore clouds. Makuma breathes calmly now. He stands on the observation deck of the Surge Tank, legs slightly spread.

He holds his breath, aims, and shoots. The creature jolts and whirls around. 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 banister. 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 loading mechanism of the 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 an 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 the rifle again, but right then, the creature's lappets billow like sails in a storm, and Makuma stares into surging black. A wave of spiders bursts out of the Biokinetic, engulfing him, blurring his outline and pattering onto the deck of the Surge Tank.

Who's prey now?

STRENGTHENING

If the Biokinetic strengthens his BOD Attribute by overloading, his melee Skill rises by 1D per point. The strengthening lasts the whole combat. Strengthenings do not stack.

DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE:
Body

PRIMAL

In the Biokinetic, body and mind become one. Every thought is also a physical process racing through the nerves into tissue cusps, stimulating or blocking. Fat cells become muscle strands; plexus meander through dead flesh in the blink of an eye; bones form spurs or dissolve and form new joints. Every cell is a survival machine.

The biokinetic Raptures stands for earth, corporeality, and fusion with nature. It allows the Psychonaut to even recover from seemingly lethal damage. The Biokinetic encounters any threat with physical adaptation. He is a loner, waiting for prey like a spider. The glaring star of his Chakra lies in the lower back. His Earth Chakra is the Pandora Crater in Pollen.

FOCUS

The Biokinetic sees himself as a part of living nature and is a master of self preservation. He appreciates people who do great things with their hands and despises those who only plan, talk, and think. He is evolution, doesn't understand the suffering of the people, sees illness as a sign of misguided development. As a predator, other living beings mean nothing to him.

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.

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 spun-in Fractal Forests, but it's his will that ties 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 level by 4 per Action, in settlements or cities in Pollen by 2. Outside of Pollen, the best he can manage is +1.

If he's hit in battle, he can sacrifice his swarm—and he suffers 1 less point of damage per swarm point sacrificed.

He can also command his plague to attack an enemy. The swarm moves towards the target with a speed of 3 m 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. The damage reduces the swarm 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 equaling 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 fuel Mother spore fields. They push their hands into the waves of Sepsis and channel energy into the ground. But the field is like a dry sponge: it feeds and knows no measure. If the Biokinetic gets lost in the vortex of its greed, he withers within minutes. The dry husk stretches across cusping Sepsis, tears open and releases a swirl of spores.

RULES: If the Biokinetic sacrifices his life, the spore field's level temporary 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 equaling the overload points. If the victim fails a BOD+Toughness roll at the beginning of the combat round, it loses Ego equaling 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 (minus armor) damage. 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, causes the same damage again that they caused when hitting their target.

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 flesh of the Biokinetic bloats, shifts under the skin like a wave of earthworms. 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 badly 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

The skin hangs in overlapping layers from arms, legs, and throat; beneath, everything's full of vermin. It is visible as a dissipating shadow sometimes, little legs or hairy spider bodies poke out. 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 a level of 3 within them, while the oldest carry a level 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 can spend several hours in a more or less fertile area, he can recover Flesh Wounds and Trauma at the rate of 1 point per point of overload. For every Trauma point, the Biokinetic needs 4 hours of deep meditation, per Flesh Wound only 2. After a refreshment of 10 hours, the soil in a 2 m radius becomes infertile; vegetation and insects rustle dryly in the wind. The Psychonaut will have to move over a few meters to go on healing.

FUSION

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 8

Biokinetics with this power engulf their enemy and pull him into them. Wherever the two touch, the Biokinetic's skin melts like wax. The victims scream for minutes, thrash and try to escape. The Biokinetic's blood already flows through their veins, though, and starts corroding them from the inside. The thrashing becomes more and more feeble, more reflex than real 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 safe 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 causes 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 it from the Biokinetic.

The fusion limits the Biokinetic in certain ways: his Actions are at -4D, which is why he will try to flee and hide when attacked. The flesh puppet clinging to him protects him: his passive defense rises by 2. He also recovers 1 Flesh Wound at the beginning of every combat round.

CUSPING

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 10

The 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 one main use: 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 tried to classify the Biokinetics. The relevant features were spurs, venom glands, domination, or use of the plague. Had there been a pattern, they would have found it. New sightings were recorded every day, however: sometimes Aberrants with claws or elongated arms, sometimes armed with axes or skull clubs. The variety was enormous, so the Spitalians gave up—for now. The only classification they could make was into Biokinetics who got 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. They are usually faster and less aggressive than the giant Residents. Probably younger, too.

PROFILE: MIGRANT

INITIATIVE: 8D / 6 Ego Points | **SPORE INFESTATION:** max 16, currently 12
SPECIALTY: Swarm strength 4, skin bags 4, BOD+Force 10D
ATTACK: Bite, 9D, damage 1D+3, range 1 m, smooth-running (2T), possibly "Spider bite" Phenomenon; heavy axe, 7D, damage 14, range 1 m, impact (2T); Urticating hairs, 6D, see 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

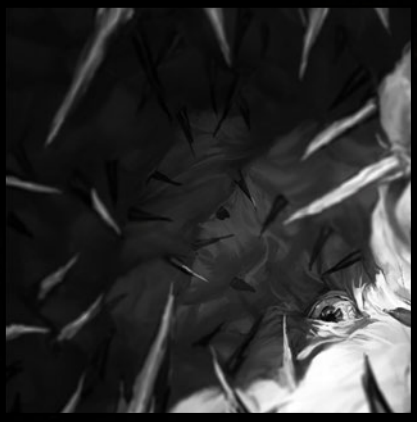
A finger touches the spider, caresses her furred abdomen, follows the bulge, searching the spinneret. A drop of ichor bulges there, clear as dew on a spring day. The finger smashes it and retreats; the end of a silk thread is attached to it. Eight-legged silhouettes scuttle across the floor. They have 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 creature 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:** max 22, currently 22
SPECIALTY: Swarm strength 10, skin bags 10, BOD+Force 14D, INS+Perception 12D
ATTACK: Bite, 9D, damage 1D+5, range 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
Urticating hairs, 8D, see 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 TSAR

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 and makes the forests below seem all the darker. The village on the slope 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 portal of the Hall of Judgment in Justitian, but no thicker than an arm, 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 does the same. A flame lights up, jumps to the rope. The Preservists run, and Schake kneels and closes her eyes. The explosives detonate with a high-pitched bang.

For a few seconds, the stele remains upright; then it tilts and crashes to the ground. A dust cloud billows down into the valley. Farmers come running from their huts, screaming with their hands covering their ears. But their screaming is the only audible sound. Schake jumps up and runs.

Now she feels it, too. What she had registered as silence was actually a steady harmonic out of control, hammering against her eardrums, now as a high-pitched whirring and then again as a deep hum. Her comrades run down to the valley, and she follows. Pale bodies wearing black masks with hoses slide across the slope towards the Preservists. The anger of the Dushani rolls across the rock as a rumbling bass sound. 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 blood cloud that hangs in the air as if nailed down and then slowly dissipates. His coat is also caught in a stationary wave, billowing and bucking 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 in 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, a constant up and down wakes her. She is walking. Only it's not her. Her eyes see the forests of the Balkhan, see her arms that do not obey her anymore. Something's inside her head, feeling very much at home there.

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: With the overload, the Dushani raises all his INS Skills.Their base score is 8D. The Dushani strengthens himself when he registers a disruption in the sound carpet. The overloaded perception directs his hunt. The Strengthening works for 1 hr.

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 hit 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 or can be mesmerized by a demagogue's voice.

Their Chakra is the throat.

FOCUS

Language and communication mean everything to the Dushani. When the Rapture fades, they still have their voice and their primal language. Everyone understands it instinctually even if he cannot repeat what has been said verbatim.

SYMBIOSIS

Their homes are the dark forests, high mountains, and deep lakes of the Balkhan. The creatures they command are creatures of the deep and dark, too: Bog Krakens, jellyfish, crab, 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, crackle, and get in tune with the Dushani's frequency; bats support the song via high-frequent squeaking; lizards and olms make noises that reach the deep structures of the human brain and are translated into syllables there. They manipulate perception and help the Dushani activate his Phenomena. One animal per overload point comes to his aid, giving him +2D to all Phenomenons (max. +8D). A direct attack against an animal (Difficulty 4) kills it.

ECHOLOCATION

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 4

Dushani use a similar form of echolocation as 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 better than 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 as good or as bad as anyone else's. Some Voivodules, however, report encountering Dushani with full masks that rise high above their shoulders, with only 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; 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 thought prison around his victim that reflects the thoughts of the imprisoned and throws them in to an ever-growing feedback.

RULES: A direct attack to the Ego. The victim can counter with PSY+Faith/Willpower. If the roll fails, the victim takes Ego damage equaling 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 combat rounds.

WAVE CREST

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 7

The songs of the Dushani superimpose each other and compress to a stationary wave. Dust rises; little stones follow trembling and swim through the compressed sound. An invisible wave peak looms, engulfing the song, keeps charging up…

The compression is transparent and only announced by a soft rustle. Around it, other sounds fade, the teeth ache, and breathing becomes difficult. Those who try and touch the wave peak feel a sharp pain in their bones. The callus is milled from the fingertips without any resistance and dances through the Phenomenon as dust: the high frequency oscillation tears 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 1. Per Phenomenon level, its diameter grows by 1 m, and humans getting caught in the wave peak take 1 point of damage per level. Armor does not protect against this damage. The resonance songs necessary for a wave peak are usually sung by several Dushani. This way, high Phenomenon levels can be reached within 1 combat round. The Phenomenon manifests within 5-20 m distance from the Dushani. A wave peak must be kept up

by at least 1 Psychonaut, or it shatters with the sound of a thousandfold splintering.

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 shatters the target's ideology.

The target can resist with a PSY+Faith/Willpower (overload) roll. If the roll fails, it succumbs to the alien thoughts. Its next chance to resist only comes when the foul seed forces it to act against a typical way of thinking or acting. People with low Willpower or Faith are lost.

MOUNTAIN SLIDE

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 16

The cries of the Dushani alternate between ultrasound and infrasound, whipping through the frequencies. They are the wind in the treetops, make the metal in the mountains ring, enter the stony heart of the Balkhan through tiny cracks. They are the echo caught in the mountainsides, an echo that piles up, amplified a thousandfold. The earth trembles; the slope jerks. Then it bursts, sliding downhill on loose gravel. It eats a nasty scar into the mountain, dragging along trees. Those who get into this maelstrom are lost.

RULES: This Phenomenon tears apart all Dushani songs for kilometers around. Like a bee that stings only once and will then die, a Dushani will use this Phenomenon only in a moment of sheer desperation and overload it to the max, for all Lesnje in the vicinity will then hunt him.

A mountain slide can be fatal. An avalanche of rocks and dust hits all beings, including the Dushani. Everyone hit may 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 the home of the Vodjanoi, demons from old times who prey on those who come too close to their nests made of human hair. At least, that is what the old ones say.

Out there, in the shadows of the woods, superstition blossoms. There are, however, 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 followed their songs were washed ashore days later downriver as floaters. The Vodjanoi are extremely aggressive and territorial.

According to research by the Spital, the Vodjanoi join the songs of the Dushani Mokosch and amplify it. Every disruption tears a hole into the sound carpet and throws them into a screaming frenzy.

PROFILE: VODJANOI

INITIATIVE: 6D / 2 Ego Points
SPORE INFESTATION: Max. 18, currently 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 it. 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 violet aerosol from his hose mask that clings to him in veils for seconds and that swirls up with every movement. His passive defense rises by 4 until his next Action. The activation takes up no Action. He can use the ink cloud up to 4x.

VARIANT: LESNJE

Lesnje and Vodjanoi look exactly the same. For a Spitalian, Dushani are Dushani: they sway in the rustle of the forest, stretching their arms to the sky to caress the wind; the hoses of their masks swing like cephalopod tentacles, and they bleed when the Splayer cuts their flesh.

Yet the Balkhani see the difference. The Lesnje, they say, are the whisper of the woods. These Dushani roam the land, humming their lonely song and listening. Every dissonance catches their ear, and they track it down. Humans or animals in the Mokosch sound funnels are killed, but misguided and decoupled Vodjanoi also have to fear their spear.

They are the Earth Chakra's immune system and keep the Mokosch sound matrix clean.

PROFILE: LESNJE

INITIATIVE: 8D / 3 Ego Points
SPORE INFESTATION: Max. 18, currently 14
SPECIALTY: INS+Perception 14D
ATTACK: Shear sickle, 9D, range 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; you feel it in your teeth and bones, but you do not hear it. 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. His name is derived from his wailing songs: In mythology, Mokosch is the earth mother mourning the state of the world. The Mokosch wanders the Balkhan off the beaten tracks, crossing forests and climbing mountains. The hoses of his masks coil like snakes. His hands move through the air, separating and modeling sound streams. The ground trembles; dust motes dance as if someone had put them onto a resonating singing bowl. Old leaves are torn from the trees. Animals flee. The echo travels through the rock, 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, climbs the slope like a lizard, pressed to the ground. The hoses softly scrape across the rock. He has hit pay dirt: a 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 blockers and channel water into caverns to vary the timbre. Once the Mokosch has taken 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 the compressing sound waves and grabbing 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, cuddles with the brainstem and becomes wedged there.

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: Max. 28, currently 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 voice that created the world, that keeps it alive, and that will destroy it one day. He is Eidolon, the higher self of the Dushani, the vibration that all others of his Earth Chakra can only modify to a tiny degree.

His home is the concrete monoliths at Laibach. If only Triglaw would finally accept that 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 rather grown than built which 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 sweetish scent wafts over and makes her gag again.

A naked figure glides 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 deflate flappingly and 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 touches her 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

If a Pheromancer overloads his CHA, he shines like a divine being full of benevolence, understanding and intelligence. Talking to him is like a blessing; every word is pure bliss.

RULES: The CHA Skills of a Pheromancer have a base score of 8D, and every point of overload brings another +1D. The Strengthening lasts for 1 hour.

DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE: Charisma

PRIMAL

The sense of smell is rooted deep in the nervous system. It registers receptiveness, identifies others of the species, and turns smells into emotions. An interesting smell raises curiosity; another may be repulsive. The Pheromancers use this. They squeeze fragrances from their glands that engulf the human brainstem and captivate people.

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, tunes 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. Everything began in the 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.

FOCUS

Pheromancers see humankind as a giant, pulsing organism of communicating bodies, plagued by lethal, but ultimately meaningless, quarrels. They don't bear a grudge against humans, not even against Spitalians or Anabaptists. It doesn't matter if wind, driving rain, or a Preservist weakens their pheromone web: the Army of millions will repair it and expand it until every creature is caught in it 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.

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 their queen, 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 gets ready to fight.

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, everyone trying to attack the Pheromancer gets a penalty equaling 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 flood to the right.

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 will 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 a free area with a diameter of little more than 20 paces with it.

SATURATION

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 4

Threads of ichor hang from the ceiling; foamy mucus accumulates in a hollow. It is humid in this dark appendix of the warren, and it smells of musk. Those who stay here for at least a day—or are arrested here for at least the day—become saturated with pheromones. Like small leech, they latch onto the brain and drain the last resistance.

RULES: Those who are exposed to these pheromones for more than 1 hour are less resistant against other forms of pheromantic influence for 2 days: when resisting Phenomenons, they lose an amount of dice equaling 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 put any information he likes into those particles: "Kill him who bears this mark," "Let him pass," "Grant him any wish."

The 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 fuse into one without the possibility to ever really blend. They will hunt each other, rebound off each other, devour each other. A Pheromancer has stimulated both their heart Chakras and woven a web of ichor around their bodies. Never shall they be separate.

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 combo of activation and attack roll shoots the jet. The maximum range is 5 m. The target can dodge with an active defense. Armor doesn't help except for those with a closed helmet. In that case, "Acid" would have no effect. Without a helmet, a hit brings a penalty of -1D per overload + Triggers to any role requiring 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 whose Action roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower (overload) fails panic and can only think of fleeing. This feeling of helplessness and fear only subsides when the target has removed itself more than 20 paces 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 presses an 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. Humans get caught in the pheromone marker web, too, however. Those who enter a Pheromancer settlement can only fight 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. 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 Routing Hubs of Franka and deep into Borca.

PROFILE: EXPATRIATE

INITIATIVE: 5D / 6 Ego Points | **SPORE INFESTATION:** max 16, currently 12
SPECIALTY: Swarm strength 3, CHA+Leadership 14D
ATTACK: Stinger application at the fingers, 7D, damage 6, range 1 m, smooth-running (2T); Acid jet, 6D, see "Acid" Phenomenon
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. Have followed the Midwife into the world of the Primer. They were chosen to one day rule over human and insect as kings.

PROFILE: MIDWIFE

INITIATIVE: 6D / 6 Ego Points | **SPORE INFESTATION:** max 16, currently 12
SPECIALTY: Swarm strength 6, CHA+Leadership 12D
ATTACK: Wasp staff, 5D, range 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 jet, 6D, see "Acid" Phenomenon
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 voluptuous bodies, 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 sweetish pheromone web, there will be peace.

PROFILE: QUEEN

INITIATIVE: 10D / 4 Ego Points | **SPORE INFESTATION:** max 24, currently 24
SPECIALTY: Swarm strength 15, CHA+Leadership 14D, CHA+Expression 12D
ATTACK: Acid jet, 5D, see "Acid" Phenomenon
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. 5-10 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; 2-4 of them guard 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 the 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 crushed down on Mubele like storm clouds. He had stopped counting them. A searing hot summer followed a rainy winter, robbed the trees of their strength, and dried out their leaves. Then spring, fall, and winter again in rapid succession. Everything went wrong. Mubele noticed in-between 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 in the middle of it all.

Mubele had given up all hope of ever returning to the village of his parents. 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 spikes. Geometrical blue tattoos covered his shoulders. The old man raised an arm, touched the bark of the tree, and spoke. The voice forcefully entered the cracks of Mubele's mind, was right within 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 them. With every syllable, the old man's fingers continued across the bark, following every groove, as if the tree were a book that he read.

The old man faded with the season. His shell necklaces slid across the withering skin and crashed to the ground. Mubele moved on and encountered a woman. She had thrown back her head; eyelids sewn shut were stretched across hollow eye sockets. She continued the tale 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 had her eyes not looked as if they contained the knowledge of millennia. 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, 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 knowledges—knowledges they have never learned.

RULES: A Pregnoctic can get any Skill from the collective, but will lose it again the next night. During the day, though, he may use it at a level equaling the overload.

DOMINANT ATTRIBUTE:
Intellect

PRIMAL

Like the building plan of a human is stored in every gene, 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 out of the ocean of possibilities. They travel this ocean, sailing through space and time with their thoughts. Their bodies are like 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 thus they write it into the world: they store it in people, scratch it into bark, or infuse shells with it. Others will come and carry it forth.

For the Hybrispaniards, 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

De-spored, the Pregnoctics focus 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; they don't need eyesight. When the third eye closes, too, they are blind, helpless, and reduced to living in their mind.

The Hybrispaniards take care of them and lead them to the mountain lakes or into the spore fields. Pretty soon, the now will fall behind them.

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 Hybrispaniards 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 Hybrispaniard needs to fear an insect attack, the Pregnoctics divide the land into parcels by the bodies of water. Only those they like may 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 animals and reduce the encumbrance by 1.

It doesn't cost the Pregnoctic an Action, though, to set his plague against his enemies round after round.

PROPHECY

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 4

The Psychonaut looks through thousands of eyes into hundreds of eras and places. The borders of space and time have stopped existing for him. Even the Hybrispaniards 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 Game Master tool. The GM can use it to give hints to players or to explain events in the past.

BEYOND TIME

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 5

For the Pregnoctic, time passes more slowly. His body is still subject to physical restraints, though: to the Psychonaut, his limbs seem to move agonizingly slow. He has, however, more time to react. He sees that an enemy gets ready to strike or that a shooter aims at him and can raise his arm to parry in time or run for cover.

RULES: For 3 rounds, the Pregnoctic gets half his overload as bonus to the passive defense.

SOUL DEATH

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 6

The third eye opens. A whole galaxy of possibilities lights up, but coalesces to a tunnel that pierces a thousand fates. A stream of imploring thoughts, endless remorse, and screaming hatred engulfs everyone who meets the Pregnoctic's gaze.

RULES: The Pregnoctic drags his victim along through the millennia, trying to drown it in a sea of pain and death. The victim enters the Conflict with PSY+Faith/Willpower. If it fails, it takes overload + Triggers Ego damage.

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. In this moment he knows that he is still more than an hour on foot away from this glade and the fight.

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 how he pushed his Splayer into the Pregnoctic is just fading... But that was in another time that will not come to pass like this.

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 web of time's possibilities, the Pregnoctic chooses the one that seems most profitable to him. This way, he can influence the outcome of attacks or other deeds per point of overload, negating or skipping 1 level of Initiative. It must be his turn, but he doesn't have to sacrifice an Action.

If he's attacked by a fighter with Initiative 5, for example, and doesn't manage his counterattack at Initiative 2, he could turn back the time to Initiative 5 with "Rush of Times" and an overload of 4.

Both attacks would not have happened yet. He could also aim for a point of time in the future and enter another reality where all enemy Actions would be in vain: for example, if it's the Pregnoctic's turn at Initiative 4, he can skip the Action of an attacker with Initiative 3 with an overload of 2.

VARIANT: ENIGMATE

Enigmates are respected and feared prophets at the lakes and in the forests of Hybrispania. Their prophecies untangle the future and show the ways 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. Nothing points to the Enigmates, and yet every Hybrispaniard knows the truth deep down in his heart.

PROFILE: ENIGMATE

INITIATIVE: 5D / 12 Ego Points
SPORE INFESTATION: Max. 14, currently 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 the 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, damage 4, range 2 m, 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 until they reach Franka. 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 intuiting 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: Max. 10, currently 10
SPECIALTY: BOD+Stamina 8D, INS+Perception 9D
ATTACK: Blow of shell-clad arm, 8D, range 1 m, damage 5, blunt; byssus whip, 9D, range 4 m, 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 in 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 not enough threads anymore 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 unsolved mystery as of yet. Those who touch one of their 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 gets deeper into the zone, alien thoughts wind their way into his consciousness, and time stops or suddenly flies. He meets other people from other times—or his own true self, devoid of all vanities, reduced to his archetypical traits. Here, many things are possible. The only thing that's impossible at this point is getting out of the soul world. A Node appreciates people who lead an extreme life and act very archetypically. 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 implicates 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

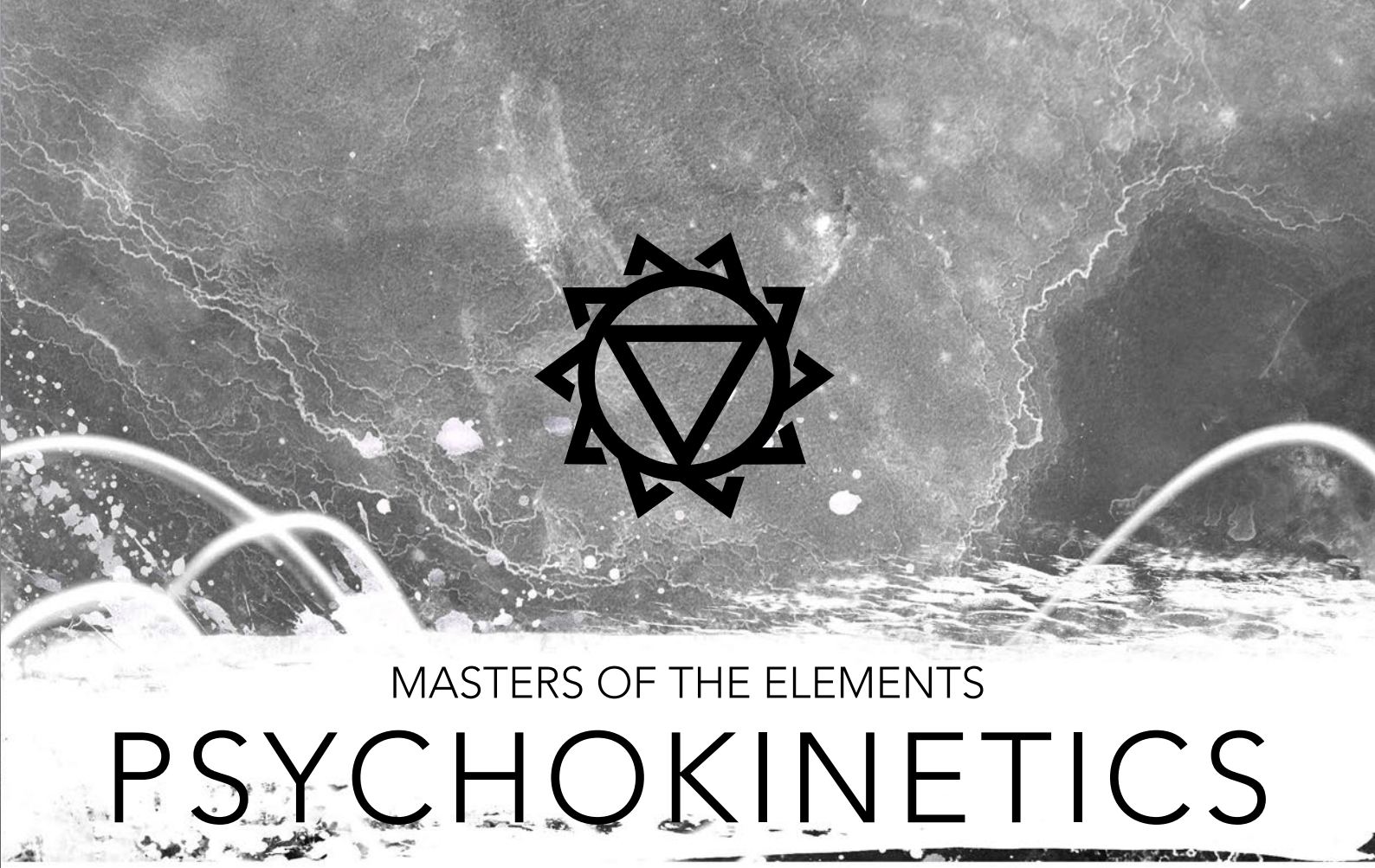
The Nodes are like halls in a vast cavern system. Air streams through them, swirls, and disappears again in the tunnels. They are a conglomeration of empty space, offering room for thoughts and an evolution of possibilities. Within them, archetypical patterns manifest; they embody constants in the so-far mostly unknown system of the Primer. The existence of the Nodes has been an unproven claim for a long time. While strong Noumenon fluctuations hinted at extremely strong Pregnoctics, no one had ever seen them. The Woman from the Mountain is considered the first known Node. When the Time Warpage manifested, three more were registered: the Nodes of the past, of the future, and of the present. They exist outside the horizon of human understanding. They see the future and know every action of a potential pursuer for months. They are only found when they want to be.

ENIGMA

She sees the future and the past. Yet in the present, she's helpless. The Clanners in old Portugal consider her a goddess, surrounding her and keeping her alive. They cannot reach her temple, however: it is at the bottom of a lake, a growth of corals and ossified primal creatures. Allegedly, the memories of tomorrow sleep in the pitch-black waters.

PROFILE: NODE

INITIATIVE: 12D / 12 Ego Points
SPORE INFESTATION: Max. 24, currently 24
SPECIALTY: CHA+Negotiation 9D, INT+Legends 20D
ATTACK: Staff, 6D, range 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 get 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.



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, become 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: the 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 trough 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 cut apart and put back together in the wrong fashion, as if Sable looked through splintered glass. When he turns his head, kaleidoscopic colors break from the walls. Ley lines hang in the room in wide arcs, dispersing into gossamer that disappears in the sky. Mirror faces limit the sight. This is the bizarre palace of a Psychokinetic.

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 the overloading. Its basic score is 8D. He mainly uses the overloaded PSY+Domination Skill to control his harvesting villages or to subdue attackers. Those who confront him and lose also lose 1 + Triggers 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 body meridians glow, burst into the rapids of the mind, which redirects and shapes them before they awaken undreamt-of forces in the body or manifest outside the body in 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, are lone wolves that need nobody.

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. Whenever attackers do not destroy a Psychokinetic at once, 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 (strength 1-4).

In combat, the Psychonaut can devour his plagues to recover 1 Flesh Wound and gets +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, but never higher than 8.

At the beginning of every combat round, it is lowered by 1 until it is has reached its normal score again.

FREE FLOW

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 4

The Psychokinetic channels his dammed-up energy into organs and limbs, raising his performance to super-human levels.

RULES: Per overload point, the Psychonaut's attack abilities rise by 1 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 flash over and throw the victim, convulsing spasmodically, to the floor.

RULES: The Psychokinetic must roll a combo of activation and attack roll. If he succeeds, Overload + Triggers count as Ego damage.

RAGE EQUILIBRIUM

PHENOMENON LEVEL: 6

The harder the Psychokinetic is hit, the harder his reflexive hit gets.

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 and sends it from his solar plexus to his hands. A clap discharges it in a blast that ruptures the enemy's eardrums and throws him to the ground.

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 in which the known laws of nature do not necessarily apply. Usually, Rifts are bigger on the inside than they appear to be on the outside. Gravitation is changed or suspended. The captured light spreads as fibers along fractal paths. Sound does not spread; the air hangs in the force field in static bubbles: those who stand still will suffocate. In the Rift, the rules of the Psychokinetic apply. He can easily throw back any ranged attack to his enemy. Only melee and area attacks have a chance to hit him at all. His passive defense is 6, and he has +4D to all physical Actions.

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 m. The Psychokinetic determines the size of the cone.

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 area of influence of the Aberrant 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 don't anymore, and the Psychokinetic glides upwards.

RULES: The Psychokinetic rises 1 m per overload point, resting there for 1 round of combat 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 equaling the overload at the beginning of every combat round. Armor protects. For the Psychokinetic, the ring is considered an 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 storm makes them tremble. Rifts usually manifest on slopes or old buildings; Psychokinetics weave Filaments preferably in tectonically unstable zones like the Reaper's Blow, though. 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 wearing armor of at least Armor rating 4 walks into strung threads of Filament, he or she stumbles and is repelled. Nothing else happens. If the armor is less resistant, the wearer takes 4 points of damage (minus Armor rating). 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 ceramics 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 magnetic field of the Earth bends into wisps. Stars blink coldly. He cocks his head. Violet tornadoes swirl around him. Arcs of energy from the horizon reach for the spore field, whip across, return as gleaming threads, dart into the inner ring, flicker, and fade.

The Hylikoi takes a deep breath. Spores are tickling his nose; feverish heat is pulsing through his costal arches. Good weather that he needs to put to good use.
Hylikoi got their name from the Anabaptists' Neognosis. Cathedral City sees the Psychokinetics as people without Pneuma: mortal shells, hatched and filled with viciousness and vermin by the Demiurge.

A Hylikoi is constantly looking for harvesting villages. If he finds one, he spins a Rift that protects the village from other hunters—and sends out his plague. For months and 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. Whole regions are devoid of inhabitants.

PROFILE: HYLIKOI

INITIATIVE: 12D / 6 Ego Points
SPORE INFESTATION: Max 16, current 12
SPECIALTY: Swarm strength 4
ATTACK: Cannula spear, 7D, range 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. Actually, these colossi are astonishingly nimble once they have lost their Filament. But usually, they 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 struttings in time.

PROFILE: ARCHON

INITIATIVE: 16D / 6 Ego Points
SPORE INFESTATION: Max 22, current 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—to face Korona one day.

CHAPTER 11

TELLING THE STORY

ADVENTURE CREATION

THE UNCHARTED LAND

A person is standing in the desert: eyes clear, wide-awake, a little excited. Somewhere beyond the horizon, there is a jungle from which gunfire resounds. Close by, Scrappers dig through the ruins and fight against veils of dust. There's a whole world waiting out there. The person in the desert is only one thought away from this and a thousand other places and stories. The only thing this person needs to do is to find the exciting ones…

This person is you. You have decided to give the world of Degenesis the breath of life as a Game Master, to chase your friends' Characters through rows of intrigues and push them into conflicts from which there is no way out. You make whole cities crumble to dust and direct the hordes of the Chernobog. But you also offer solutions and ways out: some promise redemption, while others lead deeper down the rabbit hole.

At this point, though, there is only the desert. 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 Characters have to overcome obstacles and work towards a common goal. It takes one or more gaming sessions.

- The group joins a convoy. Halfway to their goal, the caravan is attacked by a Clan that is usually considered peaceful. What has happened? How do the Characters react when they are accused of murdering the Clanners when they reach their goal?

- 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 learn earth-shaking things about the last days before the Eshaton and manage to get hold of a legendary artifact. But a group of cartel thugs is also tracking the signal...

- A Judge's daughter has been kidnapped by Apocalyptics. To rescue her, the Advocate hires the Characters via his network. They find the daughter on the Flotsam in Justitian, but not as captive: she lies in a Magpie's arms, and very much of her own accord. However, the Judge's orders were clear. What do the Characters do?

THE CAMPAIGN

Adventures create ripples. The Characters gain friends or foes, are respected or feared. As soon as the results of one's adventure influences the next adventure, the Characters are part of a campaign.

With some planning, you can introduce enemies and let them grow into the Characters' nemesis over the course of many adventures. But a campaign can also aim high and deal with important secrets. Every adventure is a stepping stone on the way to the final solution.

- The Characters have made the wrong enemies. 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 will seek revenge on the Characters. He pulls some strings, and the Characters will need several adventures to sever them.

- In a Fractal Forest, the group finds a naked young man. He's confused; his memory lies in pieces. He leads the Characters to places from his past. Some are wondrous and just wait to be explored. Others are ruled by tyrants who make humans fight 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 into Pollen's underground, encounters the Czar's wild growth and starts guessing the truth…

THE IDEA

At the beginning of an adventure, there is an idea or an emotion. Maybe you have recently seen a film that fascinated you. Video games, books, and comics also make great sources of inspiration and can serve as starting points for an adventure. Take the time to write down what you would like your story to include. This includes items, themes, places, people, and events. Try to cover every aspect.

PEOPLE

People are at the core of almost any story. They are the protagonists and the antagonists. Extras can add information to a game and endanger the Characters or lead them onto the right path.

At this point, you don't have to worry about goals and motivations and what the Characters would be willing to do to reach these goals. But jot down at least two very different Characters. Conflicts often arise from an area of social tension, which will enable you to easily put a plot to the story later on.

- Brutal slaver in Africa
- Unsuccessful Scrapper
- Hybrispanian spy at a consul's court
- Sweets merchant in front of the Bank of Commerce
- Dead Judge
- Psychonaut hunter

THEMES

Themes differ from events in that they tend to be more general. They are part of the background and influence people.

- 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 in place by a Psychokinetic's force fields or the shimmering projection of a Bygone city in the Hybrispanian jungle. Locations are essential parts of any story. 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 the elements or from attackers), and they make certain actions possible. Try and play to all senses, to fuel the players' imaginations.

You should check your adventure's locations for visual specialties, for the potential to explore and improvise. As with Characters, including contrasting locations is a simple but strong way to introduce or visualize conflicts: only when a Neolibyan's palace is contrasted to the slave camps will the players anticipate that an insurrection is just around the corner here.

- Ancient hollow tree within a ruin (via which the Characters reach other levels of the building)
- Empty fortress in the wasteland, its walls covered in scribbling telling about its history
- Border region where no one has ever heard of the Judges, but everyone knows the name of every dust storm within the last few centuries; a new dust storm looming on the horizon as a red cloud
- 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 the large room in a museum, centered around a taxidermied mammoth
- Rich village / poor village
- A Pheromancer ziggurat
- A camp deserted by Chernobog

ITEMS

An artifact or a special weapon can be a threat or a reward that can be promised and stolen. It can be tied to the story or simply part of a location.

- An AMSUMO's existence artifact; it was salvaged in Eastern Borca, and a Needle wants it.
- A Nanite cartridge already showing fractal growth. It has to be removed from the village.
- The true codex of the First Judge
- 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 confronts the Characters with a challenge or forces them into a dangerous or compromising situation. It is always related to the themes chosen or introduces them.

Events form the skeleton of an adventure's plot. In the end, some bones need to be taken out, others put in.

- Someone is publicly accused
- 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 from the neighboring village

A GOOD STORY

A long list doesn't make a good story. 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.

BELIEVABLE CHARACTERS

People are trouble—everywhere in the world, at any time. This is true today, and it won't be any different 500 years after a global disaster. Conflicts arise from their interaction, and they resolve them. They are the main Characters of any plot, and their motives mirror the conflict.

To understand the Characters and let them react according to the development of the plot, you need 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:

What do they want, and what would they be willing to do to reach that goal?

- Shard, a Scrapper, is head over heels in love with the beautiful Hagari Jasmina. He desperately wants to make a gift for the woman of his dreams, but this would mean trouble for her. Thus, he contacts the Characters. He wants them to hand over his gift as an uninvolved third party. Nothing would tell the tribe's sleazy watchdogs that Shard is behind the gift.

- 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, too. 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 uses the Characters to place false proof in Levantis's quarters.

- Ajax the Phoenix wants his power back. His goal is a new realm of shadows, trade routes he controls, high profit, weapons, and a fortified nest. He aims high. Ajax needs recruits for his plan, and the Characters as potential mercenaries and newbies are just the people he's looking for. They don't ask questions, and even if they do… well. Ajax has sampled the nectar of power once. Leniency has cut him off from his supply. He will never make the same mistake again.

NOMEN EST OMEN

Names are important. They tell the people things about a person's social status and convey a mood. This is why they should be chosen carefully.

Culture is an important influence here. It offers a framework of typical regional suffixes or sounds.

The Internet can help you in your search: if you have no idea about Balkhan names, for example, you will quickly find some inspiration when googling "Slavic first names."

You also have to take into account the Cult. For example, Borcan Spitalians 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 Destroyer of Bassham," "the Rat," "the Butcher," or "the Madman" help to characterize someone in a few choice words. They make the Characters stand out from the crowd without the Game Master having to talk a lot.

SPITALIANS: Usually first name and family name, often preceded by a rank.

CHRONICLERS: Words from the IT universe, names of computer programs.

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 the usual 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 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 ("the Raven Mother"), although Magpies prefer names with potentially positive associations ("Jasmine," "Amber").

ANABAPTISTS: Biblical or mythological names, sometimes Latinized.

PALERS: Usually a simple first name only. Demagogues choose an affix Characterizing their form of demagogy.

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 Crow and his quick reaction save his life.

Clichés are born from experience and help with breaking down complex situations into stereotypes and acting appropriately. Thus, they are a powerful Game Master tool used to make an alien world digestible for the players.

It's simple: Neolibyans are greedy; Scrappers are dirty and corrupt; Spitalians are arrogant assholes; Chroniclers are not compatible with others. The Game Master will find that these clichés quickly take root in the players' heads and they develop a superficial, but general, world view.

The Characters develop patterns of behavior: they scoff at Chroniclers and regard Palers as potential traitors.

They adapt the Cult's stereotypes.

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 massive and Judges mercilessly fight for their own interests. But once one of the Characters breaks its cliché, it emerges 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 specialness, the Game Master puts the focus on the game's important events. However, this should not be exaggerated: if all Characters introduced are special, the players' perception gets blunted.

- The Spitalian who's in love with a Pheromancer and protects her with his life
- An emotional and cordial 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 face a walking cliché, the Game Master can breathe life and individuality into that Character or reinforce the impression he wants to create by using quirks or some remarkable feature of the Character's appearance.

- Flamboyant gestures
- Talks all the time
- Has giant, soft hands
- Closes his eyes when others talk
- Reeks from the mouth
- Has lice
- Talks very softly and slowly
- Stares at people for seconds before answering

Each of these Characteristics can tell something about their owner's Character. At the same time, they anchor the Character in the players' memories. "Ah, the guy with the mouth rot!"

NOT HUMAN

Animals, AMSUMOs, and Psychonauts are great Characters, too. Their motives are very strange to humans, but very logical within their own frame of reference.

- Gendos and mammoths protect their pack or their herd; all their senses and motives are geared toward survival.v
- AMSUMOs follow ancient programs; they protect places that have fallen into ruins and patrol streets that time has crushed into dust. Artificial intelligences uninfluenced by morals and ethics are at work in those renegade machines. They see people as environmental parameters; life has no meaning for them.
- Psychonauts spread the Sepsis and protect the spore fields. Psychokinetics build Rifts and see them as their creations. Dushani form mountains, riverbeds, and forests to transport the sound of their songs across the land; they work on their version of a new world. While their feelings and reactions are controlled and triggered by the Primer collective, some Psychonauts have hung on to some residual individuality that puts their motives and targets into 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 / CLAN

The Character represents its Cult, its pack, or its Clan: a Spitalian in a village Spital wants to bring the doctors' wisdom to the savages; a Neolibyan has joined the Spitalians against the Psychovores and thus betrays 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; 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 a threat for 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. But this will change.

CONFLICT

Every story—and thus every adventure—consists of a series of conflicts that the protagonists have to face. A conflict can be solved, postponed, or lost, but regardless of the outcome, it promotes the story and pushes Characters towards a grand final conflict.

Conflicts are the flesh of every story, every adventure, and every scene. This is why we pick one line out of the web of interactions and plant discord. The most important sorts of conflicts between people are "different perceptions," "scarcity," "humiliation," and "transgression"; we will explain them below.

The fifth type of conflict doesn't need a human antagonist: it's called PvE.

DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

Different factions always see a situation differently. None of the perspectives is right or wrong: they are simply a result of historical influences, the level of information possessed, and personal predilections.

WORLD VIEW / RELIGION: Ideologies are based on ancient sets of rules that are man-made, but have risen to truths due to their age or the amounts 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 Provider Collective, the citizens would go hungry. Still, the Providers don't get any acknowledgment. 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 old ones have turned the ideals of their time into strict codes of conduct and force them onto the young—who are not 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 even having 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 usually limited. If the distribution of things changes, at least one side has to make do with less. But it'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 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 Hybrispaniards have to expect attitude changes against them 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, 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 is hard 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 stood at his farm; today, he's dragged away in chains.

HUMILIATION

Humiliation damages self-perception. Another person can purposefully humiliate a Character, but it can also arise from a shocking experience.

FIGHTS FOR RANK AND EXCLUSION: The Spitalian Surgeon considers his colleague's performance inadequate and lets everyone know. This colleague's reputation is already dwindling.

PROVOCATION: The Apocalyptic knew what he would achieve with his joke about the Saraeli's bust. The Jehammedan's face is red with anger and shame, his fists clenched.

TRANSGRESSION

Every person has their own red line that another person would do better not to cross.

INTERVENTION INTO THE LIGHT OF THE CLAN: When somebody hurts someone you love, your protective instinct kicks in. Now, anything's possible.

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 is dangerous enough without other people.

SURVIVAL: Hunger, cold, heat, days away from the next settlement: the Characters have to fight through all of this.

FORCES OF NATURE: A mountainside thunders down; a blizzard draws near. Storms, floods, collapsing bridges, a growing Fractal Forest, the gas 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 the web of interactions when the centers of power regroup around the parties of the conflict. Support is canceled, oaths of fealty are sworn, and there is threatening and pleading. This phase is important for an adventure, for it quickly outlines the background, helping to bridge gaps in the plot later on.

The Characters enter this difficult situation as another power center. An NPC throws them a line of interaction. This is where the adventure starts.

THE PLOT

We have a conflict and the Characters involved with it. There are still a few important questions to answer.

HOW DO THE CHARACTERS GET INVOLVED WITH THIS CONFLICT?

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 starter: 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 with their Characters, the Game Master can use their Concepts: a "Healer" won't tolerate that Spitalians hand out blankets infected with pestilence to Clanners; an "Adventurer" simply has to explore the forgotten valley.

IS THE GREATEST CONFLICT ALSO THEIR OWN CONFLICT?

On the map of power centers and interactions, a conflict that overshadows all others can be seen. 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 freeing an old friend from an Apocalyptic dive. The large conflict becomes a player and an obstacle, but the Characters cannot solve it.

WHAT DO THEY WANT TO ATTAIN, AND WHAT CAN THEY ATTAIN?

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
- Mediate
- Find an artifact
- Escape or survive
- Explore a landscape, a ruin, or some facility and report the findings

SCENES

If the plot is the rough timetable of an adventure, scenes are the stops. The Game Master prepares them by making

notes regarding the location of the scene, the mood, the events, the partaking Characters, and the necessary rules.

Scenes always promote the plot. They present the antagonists or create opportunities for fighting them; in them, obstacles are overcome or clues are found – depending on the plot arc.

In our collection of ideas, locations wait to be used. Now, they are staged and filled with characters with whom the player Characters can interact.

- The Characters are hired by a Judge on a market place.
- During a pit fight, they gather information on the organizer.
- In a looted village Spital, they encounter a Spitalian who will later turn out to be their enemy.
- They dupe a Janite, talking him into letting them into the Great Library.
- Usudi attack a farm, and the Characters 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 gets the Characters into a compromising situation (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 the loss of background points with regards to game mechanics, hurt like a bullet wound.

COMBAT

In combat, the location is one of the protagonists. 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 regard player creativity by applying Initiative bonuses or adjusting the Difficulty of an Action roll. Reckless Actions also should always have extraordinary results.

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 parts: the exposition, the aggravation, and the solution. Within these acts, different things happen.

ACT I: EXPOSITION

In the exposition, the Characters are drawn into the adventure. They explore their surroundings and observe. Their background knowledge is practically nonexistent. They encounter important Characters, but they cannot judge their importance, and the NPCs have no way of knowing which side the Characters are on.

POTENTIAL ASPECTS

- 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.
- The Characters meet an NPC who acts as their mentor. He can later turn out to be an antagonist.
- They witness an atrocity and what this conflict (or the antagonist) does to people.
- They are forced to choose sides in the approaching conflict (lackeys of the Voivodes chase a fugitive; whom will the Characters help?).
- The antagonist humiliates the Characters.
- Dark omen: there are portents of a terrible future—at least that's the people's interpretation.

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.
- The Characters watch Preservists specifically pick people from the crowd. Nobody knows where they send these people, only that they do not return. The Characters could oppose the Preservists.
- An Apocalyptic slips the Character a package and runs away. Judges chase him.

ACT II: AGGRAVATION

The Characters are in the middle of the adventure. They can now judge the fronts and work their way forward. In this second and largest act, the scenes are geared towards understanding the conflict and implementing countermeasures. Speed, excitement, and resistance increase on the way to the climax.

POTENTIAL ASPECTS

- The first massive altercation with the antagonist. The antagonist triumphs or flees to return in force later.
- The Characters get information showing them the consequences of the conflict ("A Judge is responsible for the murders!").
- The group meets potential allies or enemies.
- 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.

ACTUAL SCENES

- From a tower, a sniper shoots 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 in the meantime, it is in the Judges' possession again. The next day, it will be brought into the Hall of Judgment, so there is only one night left to enter the barracks and steal it.
- The Apocalyptic will only see the Characters if they have put up a good show in the pit fights. Either a Character faces the breakers 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

The Characters have everything they need to vanquish the antagonists or are at the end of their journey. Now they face the final challenge. Act III is usually very short and condensed, consisting of only a few scenes.

POTENTIAL ASPECTS

- The antagonist has nowhere to go; his lackeys are vanquished. Combat ensues.
- The last obstacle is about to be overcome (mountain, ruin, collapsed bridge).
- Wrong time: People come running to thank the Characters, but the enemy is not vanquished yet, and the crowd makes it harder to fight him or resolve the conflict.
- Last gasp: The enemy is vanquished, but he rears up one final time to survive another round.
- Victory celebration: The Characters receive thanks.

ACTUAL SCENES

- The Characters present proof against the Judge. He loses all his superiority and attacks the Characters like a savage beast.
- They have reached the deepest depths of the catacombs and see the artifact in the breeding chamber of the Cockroach Clan. The shaman seems to have fled, but in fact, she is 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 gets to its battered feet and staggers towards the Characters...

INFORMATION

If the location is not completely unknown or been kept secret over the centuries, Characters can remember it with an Action roll on INT+Legends or INS+Orienteering. Who is in charge here? What is being produced? Is Burn accepted? With Triggers, they pierce the white noise of common knowledge and reach the realm of special information, are familiar with old feuds and are aware of 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 is entitled to an emotional end. An ally is buried, or there is a joyous celebration in the saved village. The Characters have to see that they have achieved something that influences them or the people around them.

- The trade routes are open again. The first merchants return; wealth is growing.
- Mothers name their children after the Characters.
- The citizens of Justitian nod to the Characters. In alleyways where there was silence before, 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 area 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.

Rule of thumb: In 1 in 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 is the focus of an adventure. Sun disks and Soul Burners are not 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 depend on the key scenes of the adventure, their outcome, and the personal achievements and risks of the respective Characters.

- Survived key scene: +1 XP
- Scene ended exceptionally well (for all Characters): +1 XP
- Exceptional performance in the scene (individual): +1 XP
- Reached the goal of the adventure: +2 XP
- End of a campaign: number of adventures x2 XP

NEW ENEMIES

The adventures of the Characters are embedded into a living world. The greater their deeds, the more they are seen as a power factor. For some, they are saints; for others, they are spawn of the Reaper's Blow.

They don't know it yet, but they are part of a group of like-minded individuals opposing another group of people who think differently. Enemies from earlier adventures gather their forces.

With every adventure the Characters survive, it becomes easier for the Game Master to plan the next one. He can pick and choose from an army of old enemies or allies, can present old themes in a new garb.

- The convicted corrupt Judge didn't act alone; he was just 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 consider whether there is a central conflict and how it can be developed and resolved over the course of several adventures.

POTENTIAL THEMES

- Fall of the Supreme Judge: A Senator wants to take over. In an adventure, the Characters hear that someone from Justitian supports the 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 consider them 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 warp together. They have to cooperate to avoid ending up in a Node's curio collection. 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, La Campeadoras fights them.

BALANCE OF POWER

A Game Master plays with the players, never against them. Therefore, he should devise challenges that are hard, but can be overcome with the Characters' Skills. The enemies he has the Characters face should be chosen with caution and never sacrificed. If they are stronger than the Characters, here are some ways to compensate.

- A chance to set traps all over the area
- Terrain advantages like higher ground
- 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 draw 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.

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 prefab sentences.

HINTS FOR GAME MASTERS

TYPES OF PLAYERS

When playing Degenesis, players want to experience success. Alas, this does not mean the same thing for every player. Some optimize their Character to create the perfect fighter and yearn for the next skirmish. They see Degenesis as a board game with rules for dice. Other players actually 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 various motives are fine. It is the Game Master's challenge to identify his players' wishes and make sure that everyone gets 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 type of Character that he's looking for and choosing in any game. Usually, his Characters are modeled after a character in a book or film that fascinated him in childhood. Often, the determined acts out his inner convictions when role-playing, too. Through a combination of Culture, Concept, and Cult, it should be possible for him to create 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. 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 smart phones, checking emails and sending messages, the Game Master has to interrupt the actor: "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, or fortifies villages.

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; the Chronicler opens a portal; the Paler sneaks up to an enemy and takes him out without a sound; the Neolibyan manages a great deal.

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; the megawatt generators hum. 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 another 100.

The mast has been sending a signal for months. It was received.

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 was no meteorite either. The high-tech Mechan Clan recognized the projectile as a Bygone aircraft. Onboard were the 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 crossed the devastated land.

Years 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 enwrought with memes, made a whole social strata break away that finally became 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 house, it fired particles of color from a thousand jets. A targeted explosion: human or animal would have been shredded by the needle thin beams. It took 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 portals. 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, wants to enter the core of Getrell's madness. Yet so far, he has been unable to overcome the nanite barriers, can only send Paler after

Paler inside. Into the Grindworks. In the corridors there, aggregates of unknown capacity are sleeping; portals open 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 yet come.

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 the 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; 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 marched 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 and probably lies 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 Eschaton. Today, the Chroniclers salvage fragments without context.

But if the radio protocols are correct, one server has survived the apocalypse. For years, it has been pinging Stream addresses; sometimes, the connection is stable for hours; sometimes it breaks down. No matter how the Chroniclers' radio stations answer, they get no uplink. Is the login data flawed, 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 STRING

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 string" through the cordon of silence into the ranks of the Famulancers. There has been

speculation ever since. Obviously Petrova and her clan of doctors consider themselves superior, having a "pure string of DNA." Allegedly, there is a breeding book for every member to conserve this pure string 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 genetical 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 that they called "pure string." This special genetic sequence triggered a reaction in 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 symmetrical. 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 string 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 "Tsar'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 TSAR AWAKENS

Petrova is not the only one who has realized that the Tsar might be an opportunity for the Spital, as well as for humankind. 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 pseudopodia grew. Rows of cartilage opened up. Muscle fiber contracted with whirring sounds.

Communication was impossible this way, if it were 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 secretly.

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 Tsar was functional, but it was mindless.

Now, however, the needle measures growing and decreasing levels of tension. The heat grows; the flesh strand sweats proteins. Something happens 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 bad 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.

But 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 and mad white men. A hopeful smile covers up the worries. But in fact, giant shadows gliding beneath the water are seen, and gray shreds heavy with wetness cling to the fishermen's ships' sides. 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 wharf 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 put them off. 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 rises up and demands its slice of roast. 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 Hellvetics are neutral, their doctrine says. However, Hellvetics are people who watch their surroundings and draw conclusions from what they see. Helena of Timmelsjoch and her group control several pass roads on the north-south axis. They see the suffering in the North and the Surge Tanks of the african Scrappers entering the country. Heavily loaded, they return at some point, leaving a skeletonized wasteland to the Borcans.

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 well-suited for beginners. The challenges and enemies are easily adjustable to suit more experienced and powerful Characters, too, or to raise the threat in a blink.

The locations of the scenario are places called "Tumbler" and "Vector." Both are close to each other in the periphery of the Protectorate. If the Game Master and players want to start in a different region, the scenario can of course take place elsewhere: 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 have read it completely to be able to handle any situation; this way, he will not have to stall when players deviate from the intended course. He can and should add his own ideas to certain areas—for example the "wilderness" in the Vector—to leave his mark on them. That brings flesh to 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 saying "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 the illustration to them.

THE TUMBLER

The elongated building is an inn. Fragments of words and the clanging of pots can be heard. There is a 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 BARBICAN

On the Barbican, the Characters see a broad-rimmed hat; the face below is shrouded in shadows. A rifle is aimed at them. If they wave, the figure on the tower waves back. The Characters have just gotten to know Judge Magnus.

THERE IS MEAT

A Judge climbs down from the Barbican. 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 moves staggeringly. He grins. "Magnus, City Judge Magnus." His voice is low and 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 a corner, two people sit, looking at a pot of meat. The upper half of their faces from the cheekbones to the hairline is blackened by soot. Their skulls are badly shaven; single strands of hair are hanging down. Those who approach them see the compact line pattern on their foreheads with a roll on INS+Perception (4)—it may be a Chronicler barcode—and realize that a piece of flesh the size of a fingernail has been stamped out of their earlobes. If a Character accosts them, they first stare at him and then 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 too 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 quickly walks towards Jatzek and hits him in the face. "Where did you get that?" He doesn't wait for an answer, presses close, hits Jatzek again and chases him along the counter. The boy is staggering 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 affairs."

The first Shutter brandishes a Shocker now and attacks 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 of urine. He can only utter, "Leave me alone!" His mother keeps shouting, "No, no!" but she does not 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.

By then, it will be too late for Jatzek.

PROFILE: SHUTTER

INITIATIVE: 5D / 5 Ego Points
ATTACK: Shocker, 5D, distance 1, damage 0, stunned (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 lies still. They do not expect answers from him, for it seems to them as if this incestuous gang has taken over and looted the Vector here. 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, showing Merl how to hold the 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 danger sense and reacts quickly without thinking too long in a crisis. If a Character runs outside and calls him, he grabs the hammer and staggers towards the Tumbler. He can help the Characters, but if they solely rely on him, too much time that Jatzek doesn't have passes.

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). Both of them do not really want to fight. The Shutter with Mother Dacrois will feign once and then turn her head forcefully. She cries out in shock. If the Characters do not retreat at once, he will break her neck with his next Action and throw her towards the Characters. Then, both Shutters will try to escape.

THE BANNS

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, though, everything was always big and loud. Quick, too, mostly, and thus he never managed to flee back into the ranks of the slackers when the dangerous missions were given out. He was the guy his comrades could hide behind. The justice he was oath-bound to serve was too abstract for him, though. He appreciated a sense of family and community: wherever he laid his head was his home, and he protected this home.

When he rode through Tumbler on his way to Justitian six winters ago, this feeling became exceedingly strong. The Dacrois really were 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 the 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 Barbican 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 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 the think 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 need 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 Shutters always irritate him. He nods towards the Tumbler.

CASE

Case is late. But Case is a Fuse, and Fuses are always sent where everything is lost. His Skalar Nullify has received a message from the local Chroniclers' Alcove: someone has paid with forged Drafts. Nullify's Drafts. The Skalar 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 Case has to look into this.

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: MP, 7D, distance (10/40), damage 7, smooth running (2T), salvoes (3)
DEFENSE: Passive 1; melee active (mobility 5), Brawl 7D; Ranged combat active (crouched walk), Mobility 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. Picked clean like chicken bones. But the Scrapper Cave Bear Blacksmith knew how to pick 'em. Most of the runes were unknown to him, but how could that be? Someone had gone to great lengths to mark the ruins as dead with faulty runes. So he went and combed through the parts covered with the forged runes. Successfully. After only a few days, he discovered a massive artifact that had not even rusted.

Nearby, he had seen a Chronicler next to a hall, so he dragged his loot there.

Blacksmith got a couple of Drafts. Back in Justitian, he celebrated for a week. When he showed up in the technical center a month later with new findings, the Chroniclers suddenly threw him out of the Alcove. He got no access to the Chronicler network, and a "wanted" sign showing his face hung at every node next to Chronicler killers and other outlaws. Why?

He retreated to the wasteland. He shouted out his fury, considered what had happened without finding a solution. He raged through the ruins, smashing walls and ancient tables with his axe, blindly laying about. Worn out, he retreated deeper into the ruins, huddled into his den, and brooded.

What was wrong?

It had started when he wasted the Drafts he had gotten for his last finding…

He made no progress. So he bundled up his furs, shouldered his axe, and went to a badly protected Alcove at the fringes of the Protectorate. It couldn't get any worse, he thought, kicking in the door and throwing the Chronicler down on his 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 finding. This was the starting point, the worm in the apple.

Again, the Blacksmith stood in front of the warehouse and thought: it can't get any worse.

COMBAT TRAITS

INITIATIVE: 9D / 8 Ego Points
ATTACK: Slaughter axe, 6D, distance 2, damage 11, impact (2T)
DEFENSE: passive 1 melee active (parry), melee 6D; ranged combat active (crouched walk), mobility 6D mental 10D (stoic)
MOVEMENT: 8D
ARMOR: Fur and leather armor, armor 2
CONSTITUTION: 20 (Trauma: 10)

GIADA

A Cave Bear attracts profiteers like horse droppings attract flies. The relationship is similarly loving. Giada is one of those self-styled "friends." She has worked with Blacksmith before, picking up his crumbs and making a good living by doing so. When Blacksmith calls, she flutters to his side, always certain that she will be well fed in the weeks or months to come.

Giada is an Apocalyptic Cuckoo. Only few people outside the Flock know that and are still alive. Blacksmith is one of them. When Giada reaches the supposed Alcove, the Cave Bear orders her to pose as a Chronicler. That is simple. 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 can.

Giada will not let it come to that, though. She will guard Blacksmith's back as long as she can, but she will not risk her life.

FUGITIVE

The Characters will meet Giada later. She will not fight them, though. If the Game Master has to roll for her, he can assume that she has an Action score of 8 on all AGI Skills and a score of 5 on all BOD Skills.

NULLIFY

For decades, the Skalar Nullify has worked in the shadow of the Cluster, become 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. They were like him.

He had wasted so many years transferring resources and equipping his Fuses. But the source was surrounded by dams and walls narrowing the river of Drafts down to a trickle. This self-imposed temperance made him tremble.

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 IT battle with the cleverest minds of the Cluster.

So he did.

He conquered a base on an imaginary line between two Alcoves—a "Vector"—and logged into their data transfer. His think machines recorded the codes of the Drafts they gave 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 gave 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, he recorded a report about a Scrapper circulating forged Drafts. An embargo was imposed on the guy. Nullify knew that his experiment had failed. He returned to the Cluster to find his error and improve the algorithm. He completely forgot about the Scrapper.

But he had not considered 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 find 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 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:

"Have not stolen 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 inferior artifact there. This way, Blacksmith wants to draw out the culprit. Well, he did.

Jatzek could lead the Characters to the Vector, but he's exhausted. 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 will not tolerate this. The Shutters 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."

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.

Signals that 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.

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.

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 finds out.

- **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 not exact. 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, but those 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—he had them 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 roofs,

they can see a figure in a chasm. The man realizes he's being watched and runs 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 heavy revolver loaded with six .50 bullets.

If a Spitalian 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

Skalars 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 robot 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; from out here, it 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. The dust must have been pushed aside, but it has partially returned. There is no visible opening mechanism, not even a doorknob.
- In the 2 m 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. The next brace carries Draff's rune.

A CRACKING IDEA

Dry heat rolls out of the gate; there is a 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!" before they can make out any details.

The skeleton of a container hangs on a bunch of steel cables over a pitch black hole. The front 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 from out of the container; he straightens 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. Sensoria mounted on mobile arms rest at attention.

The Chronicler stops fiddling with his mask and stares at the Characters. The container swings back 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, and comes up 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 drone like a gong. The Chronicler crashes against the bars and falls to the ground; A feedback in his 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 close; the rectangle of light becomes 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 is prepared.

The Characters can try several things.

- It's dark. The only light they have is a red light 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 container 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 discover an engine unit there.
- If the Characters have discovered the door when walking around the hall or are now searching for it, they notice that the hall seems to be smaller from within than from without. 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+Technology (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+Technology [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 have no light sources, they find a 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 can 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 plays games with the Blacksmith. You have gone too far." The silhouette moves.

"Now you get to know my wilderness."

The light dims; the silhouette becomes 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, to split 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 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, "The More Danger."

The animal is not alone, however. More Gendos come running from their cages, which have just been opened. They do not dare to attack, however. The pack waits for

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 vanquished six Battle Crows who had cheated him at a game of cards in the Flotsam in Justitian. He had bitten all fingers off one of them." "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." "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 can do and what he can't." "The Chroniclers have outlawed him. He hasn't been seen ever since." "Many winters ago, the Blacksmith messed around with some quack from Brennen. That's a neighborhood in Justinian. His muscles are not natural."
2T	"He quickly tires of his companions. The only exception is this Apocalyptic." "The Blacksmith is under an "embargo," the worst official form of punishment by the Chroniclers. He's considered undesirable in Alcoves; no one buys artifacts from him anymore."

a moment of weakness. In the end, the Characters will have to leave the container: one of the sidewalls can be unlocked and swung aside.

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 live 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 landing 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 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 more 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 mobile. Seven of them are way out of reach; 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; 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 softly. 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 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 3-4 m. However, the fact that the Gendos attack at once is 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 abandon their prey and attack 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 bars now. 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 them 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 and BOD+Melee 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 involves himself into single combat. But he's a dangerous enemy who is almost invincible for a single player.

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 aggregates 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 competition in 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 platelets hang from levers or are marked in

white or blue paint and labeled with symbols.

Giada is already in the combustor when the Characters arrive. She dodges behind Blacksmith and says in a controlled, low voice, "I am afraid."

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 cannot 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 lets 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; should he survive, he will try to take up the interrupted fight another day.

If the Characters let 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 retreat 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 gets even close. Only if the Characters fire on Case now they can 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 are still alive, 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 notice 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 helps them.

"We are the good guys," he says and 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 EP
- Mother Dacrois is unharmed: 1 EP
- The Shutters will never torture anyone again: 1 EP
- Blacksmith saved: 5 EP
- 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 EP
- Survived: 10 EP
- Uncovered the Vector's secret: 5 EP
- Conqueror—If the Characters kill the Blacksmith, the word will spread, not only amongst Scrappers: +1 Renown

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 BASE

The people in the Tumbler have become a bit strange in their solitude, but they are good, friendly people. The Characters can rest here between scenarios and lick their wounds.

They can become 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 him.

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NAME:
AGE:
RANK:
EXPERIENCE:

DEGENESIS
CHARACTERSHEET

SEX:
HEIGHT:
WEIGHT:
DINARS / CD:

CULTURE

CONCEPT

CULT

> BODY		> AGILITY		> CHARISMA	
ATHLETICS		CRAFTING		ARTS	
BRAWL		DEXTERITY		CONDUCT	
FORCE		NAVIGATION		EXPRESSION	
MELEE		MOBILITY		LEADERSHIP	
STAMINA		PROJECTILES		NEGOTIATION	
TOUGHNESS		STEALTH		SEDUCTION	

> INTELLECT		> PSYCHE		> INSTINCT	
ARTIFACT LORE		CUNNING		EMPATHY	
ENGINEERING		DECEPTION		ORIENTEERING	
FOCUS		DOMINATION		PERCEPTION	
LEGENDS		FAITH		PRIMAL	
MEDICINE		REACTION		SURVIVAL	
SCIENCE		WILLPOWER		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

BUT LIFE ALWAYS FINDS A WAY

◆◆

DEGENESIS

SIXMOREVODKA