

Crystal Heart



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Additional thanks to our final-proofreaders: Brendan Ward, Evyatar Amitay, Itamar Weisberg, Joseph Thater, Laurent Maedh and Paul Hawkins

A huge thanks to the 700 people who backed this project on Kickstarter and allowed it to happen.

Most of the Heroic Agents are based on concepts created by some of our Kickstarter backers: Amit Moshe, Benjamin Lecrone, Brian Greer, Heinze & Rachel of Semi Co-op, Jeff Friedman, Kyle Raymond, Lloyd Gyan, Rob Towell and Uri Lifshitz

Based on Lev Hakristal, a world created in collaboration with Gil Breger, Roi Gaash and Ben Shalom.

Dedicated, with much love, to the best people we also get to play with: our spouses.

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Crystal Heart

A Savage Worlds Setting

by Eran Aviram and Aviv Or





Welcome, Players!

Welcome to *Crystal Heart*, a colorful adventure setting designed for the role-playing game *Savage Worlds*!

Crystal Heart is based on a webcomic by us—Aviv and Eran—which was in turn based on a setting first created for a role-playing game. Full circle! It's about exploring a fantastic world as superpowered agents of a mysterious organization. If you don't like your superpower, you can always have a change of heart. Literally!

There's a lot to tell but we're hoping most of the telling will be done by you. This is why we try to avoid long-winded expositions and focus on providing the tools and seeds necessary to craft your adventures. There's a lot of room for you to create new facts about the world, but not *too* much room, so you won't fall off the edge of the table like a stray die.

Just flip the page and get right into it. Go on and get some Crystals, brave Agents!

~Aviv and Eran

EXPLORE FURTHER

Check out uptofourplayers.com/crystalheart for additional digital content, including:

- The webcomic *Crystal Heart*, available for free. It's a great introduction to this world, of course, but as an added bonus, it also teaches you how to play *Savage Worlds*.
- A free *Starter Set*, with all the basic rules of the game, six ready Agents, and a starting adventure.
- *Full of Heart* provides additional Crystals, their feral manifestations, and shards.
- *Living in Syn* provides ways to tweak your playing experience with an emphasis on Syn: training rules, random events, mentors and services, as well as new tales and adversaries.
- *Original Syn* provides the webcomic-approved canonical explanation for all the mysteries of *Crystal Heart*.
- And several One-Sheets, adventures ready to play.

GET INSPIRED

The world of *Crystal Heart* is inspired by works such as Brandon Sanderson's *Mistborn*, where magic is consistent and ingrained into the world's story; *Pokémon*, where bundles of cool powers run around the world, waiting for you to capture them; *Final Fantasy 7*, where slotting a brightly-colored gem gives you superpowers; and many more. But most importantly, all of these worlds manage to combine the spirit of adventure with light-hearted goofs and serious tones, occasionally at the same time. They also all have deep secrets, hidden truths that shake the way their people understand their worlds.

HOW TO PLAY

Crystal Heart is meant to be used with *Savage Worlds Adventure Edition* (SWADE), which is available in your local friendly gaming store and on www.peginc.com.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Crystal Heart	6	The Five Lands	80
The Crystals	6	Setting Rules	80
The World	7	Life in the Five Lands	84
Agents of Syn	9	Bogovia	86
Creating Your Agent	10	Fjordstad	89
Step 0: Reasons to Join and Motivations to Stay	10	Islands	96
Step 1: Home Land	11	Maseia	99
Step 2: Traits	12	Zingama	103
Step 3: Edges and Hindrances	14	Adventures	107
Step 4: Gear	20	Running Crystal Heart	107
Step 5: Team Building	20	Savage Tales	119
Step 6: Starter Crystal	22	Plot Point Campaign:	131
Character Archetypes	22	Seismic Shift	
Syn	29	Adversaries and Challenges	159
Responsibilities and Perks of an Agent	29	People of the Lands	159
Syn Facilities	32	Animals of Bogovia	172
Hierarchy Within the Organization	34	Animals of Fjordstad	174
Requisition	35	Animals of the Islands	175
Gear and Equipment	38	Animals of Maseia	177
The Twelve Heroic Agents	46	Animals of Zingama	180
Crystals and Hearts	53	Crystal Manifestations	183
Crystals	53	Appendix A:	196
› Crystals in Society	53	More Crystals	
› Anatomy of a Crystal	54	Appendix B:	214
› Crystal Channeling	56	Supervisors and Mentors	
› Socketing a Crystal	58		
› The Harness	59		
› Feral Crystals	60		
Starter Crystal List	63		
Creating New Crystals	75		
Shards	78		
Human Hearts	79		





Crystal Heart

They say that a person's heart is made from their dreams and desires.

The core begins to form in our youth, growing alongside our aspirations, hardening into a solid heart as we come into our own. When we die, and our dreams are forever lost, our heart fades away as well. Each person creates their own heart; their life experiences determine its color and shape. The number of possible shapes and colors is as varied as the people of the Five Lands.

In our world there are teams of Crystal Hunters, agents of the mysterious and powerful organization Syn. They seek out and collect ancient Crystals, relics from a bygone age. In order to harness the incredible and inexplicable powers of the Crystals, the person must sacrifice something dear indeed: their own heart. The Crystal Hunters undergo a delicate surgery in which their hearts are replaced with a harness into which they can insert the Crystals.

With their fearsome powers, the Agents of Syn became a symbol of authority throughout the world. They travel the Five Lands in their never-ending search for old ruins, where they might find the mysterious Crystals—hidden behind countless traps, vicious monsters, and ancient curses.

These are the Agents of Syn. Relentless. Fearless. Heartless.

The Crystals

Crystals are power, and until relatively recently, they were uncontrolled. Created sometime during the Bygone Age by methods no one understands today, these fist-sized relics glow slightly with their own unique light and color.

Each Crystal changes the world around it in ways specific to that Crystal's *theme*, as explained in the *Crystals and Hearts* chapter, page 55. The exact manifestation depends on the environment: an orange Crystal of flame



eruption might cause surfaces around it to ignite, but the same Crystal on the ocean floor might create small volcanoes instead.

Around thirty years ago, the people that eventually created the Syn organization invented a method to control Crystals. It requires removing one's heart and implanting a special harness. Any Crystal inserted into the harness can then function as an artificial heart—and, more importantly, grants the person access to the Crystal's theme and powers.

There's one caveat, though. Each Crystal also influences its bearer's personality, making them feel unwanted emotions or think alien thoughts. This mental baggage is called "disposition" and it can usually be held back with some effort, but on occasion it might completely transform a person's personality.

Crystals have been around since at least the end of the Bygone Age, around 800 years ago. They can be found in ancient structures, deep within caves, or even in a well in the middle of a village. Many have become an integral part of their own small and strange ecosystems. In their "feral" state they tend to be dangerous and unpredictable. Syn Agents, as the only people able to safely subdue and tame a Crystal, are scouring the world in search of these dangerous objects.

Your mentor in Syn is always reminding you that Crystals are not "magical"—they are simply utilizing natural forces in ways not yet fully understood. But we're working on it.

THE HEARTS

In the world of *Crystal Heart*, human hearts are not flesh-and-blood. They are hard, gemlike objects, changing slightly in shape and greatly in color from individual to individual. At birth, the heart is only a small, colorless pebble. As the person grows, developing a personality and a world view, the heart solidifies into a unique shape and hue.

The heart "beats" slowly by shaking lightly, enabling blood circulation in a way theorized by modern medical science to be similar to a magnet creating a magnetic field. After a person's death, their heart slowly sublimates, turning into vapor.

It is important to note that animals have flesh-and-blood hearts. Weird, right?

The World

The continent is divided into five Lands, both geographically and ethnically. The denizens of each Land consider themselves part of the same "people", despite not having an actual nation (except for Zingama, which has a well-established unified government and a national identity).

THE FIVE LANDS

Bogovia is the land of dark forests and bleak swamps, of wolves howling in the night against gloomy scenery. Bogovian folk tales are all about grim endings, bitter sacrifices and Pyrrhic victories, with a stubborn hero who refuses to surrender at any cost. Bogovians dress in thick, well-worn fabrics and huddle in small villages, each with its own strange customs and superstitions.

Fjordstad is the land of ice and storms, where the Eleven Cities fight each other over resources and respect. Fjordstadians will act either behind your back, with highly trained spies engaging in industrial espionage, or in your face with mad engineers who'll blow you up with their latest death ray. Fjordstadian nobles tend to dress in elaborate multi-layered suits with various hidden compartments, whereas commoners are more likely to be seen in overalls. All of them, regardless of social status, are known for being elitist and condescending—especially toward each other.

The Islands are varied and eccentric, both culturally and geographically. Some islands are large trading hubs that are among the most cosmopolitan and pleasant places in the world, while others are remote, isolated and untamed. The islands vary in climate, but loose clothing and simple jewelry are common almost everywhere. Islanders are quick to relax, focusing on the here and now. Some of them, of course, are pirates.

Maseia is the land of open plains, countless lakes and naturally-occurring flying mountains. Dozens of Maseian clans travel the plains and valleys, focusing on self-discovery, enlightenment, and living off the

land. Their societies have tight structures, with stiff traditions and strict social mores. Maseians dress in ways that reflect their role within their clan.

Zingama is the land of slithering and poisonous things, a huge jungle criss-crossed by the longest river in the world. A massive government rules over more than a million people, who live mostly in urban settlements along the river. Zingamaians talk politics all day and party all night, proud of being a world-class cultural and industrial power. Dress, hairstyle, slang, and even pets all change on a seasonal basis, according to the latest fads. Farther from the river, the jungles are thick and dangerous.

THE BYGONE AGE

About 800 years ago, human civilization ended. Even the best experts know little about the people who came before, and no one knows why their powerful society was annihilated. The person on the street only knows that several centuries ago, history began almost from scratch.

The Bygone Age left various remnants throughout the world. Most are ancient, strange machines or structures half-buried in the ground. One island might have a Bygone Age forcefield that keeps everyone inside healthy, or a village in Bogovia might be built on a metallic platform that doesn't sink into the swamp. The most important remnants are, of course, the Crystals.

PRESENT DAY

The people of the Lands still don't know a lot about their world. After spending hundreds of years in internal strife, rebuilding society on the skeletons of the past, they have only recently began to coalesce into what might be called proto-nations.

The thirst for knowledge and progress is there, even if the means for establishing and maintaining production lines are still out of reach. One Fjordstadian city might have cars, and many of them have electric street lights, but these are seen as trade secrets to be kept hidden from rivals. There's even a train between some of the Fjordstadian cities and Maseia—but it's the only train line in the entire world. Zingamaian schol-

ars are making their first steps into the field of archeology, trying to uncover their own past. Deep within the Bogovian forests, high on Maseian mountains, in the jungles of Zingama, beneath Fjordstadian ice, and all across the Islands, countless secrets remain hidden.

One power in the world, however, seems to be ahead of everyone else by a generation at least: Syn.

THE RISE OF SYN

About 20 years ago, an organization named Syn began recruiting and training special Agents, replacing their hearts with harnesses—a never-seen-before technology. Syn existed for some time before this, but it was the arrival of the Agents that brought the organization to the public's eye.

Most Agents are trained as Crystal Hunters. Syn's intelligence team provides them with a designated route to follow for several months, usually passing through two Lands. During a hunt the Agents are expected to follow the rumors Syn has gathered beforehand, as well as to explore on their own and recover any Crystals found. At the end of a route the group returns to Syn's headquarters: a huge, high-tech flying citadel.

Syn scholars discovered the secret to utilizing Crystals safely and predictably by way of the harness, but they are far from being the only ones who try. Other organizations and individuals have an active interest in gaining control over Crystals, using and misusing them for their own ends. This usually ends tragically...but not always.





Agents of Syn

Syn is a unique organization, somewhere between a government, a commercial corporation, and a private army.

It is one of very few names that are known in all the Lands and in almost every village. It is the most respected, feared, and admired organization in recorded history. You are its Agents in the field.

Here are the five principles of the Agent, taken from Syn's Agent Manual, aka The Code. More details are available on page 30.

- Go where directed, follow the route, but show initiative.
- Help when asked by local authorities with which Syn has signed a contract.
- Avoid unnecessary violence. The world is dangerous; don't make it more so. Simply be on alert and return fire; protect Syn assets.
- Syn supplies most everything you need. Money is not an issue. Go and get Crystals.
- Represent Syn and its agenda fairly and diplomatically.

Agent Training

After being recruited (see sidebar on the next page), the Agents go through several months of training, first by themselves and later with their teammates. Teams are usually comprised of 3-4 Agents, but some groups are larger. Two-thirds of the way into training the Agents are fitted with a harness that allows them to replace their heart with a Crystal, giving them access to its powers.

The default assumption is that you begin the game at the start of your active duty, during which you will get missions and orders from Syn. You will usually be required to go hunting for Crystals, but occasionally you'll be asked to act as law keepers or specialists.

SIGNS OF A CRYSTAL'S PRESENCE

The Code advises to keep an eye for:

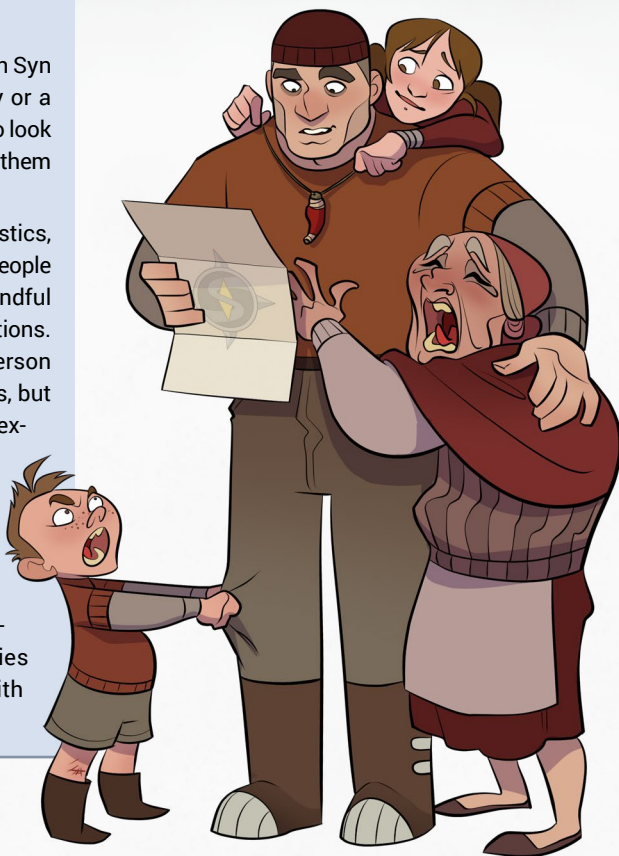
- Physical forces manifesting in odd ways
- Flora and fauna behaving suspiciously
- Cruel or unusually interesting deaths

Recruitment

Every year, dozens of people apply to join Syn by approaching the closest Syn facility or a passing Agent. Agents are encouraged to look out for potential recruits and recommend them to the organization.

Most recruits join Syn's technical, logistics, or science branches. Only a dozen or so people apply to become Agents, and only a handful of those manage to pass the first evaluations. Most tests are meant to ensure the person is healthy and can work well with others, but some are unusual, to say the least. For example, Syn doesn't explain why or how they use a person's reaction to eating a banana as a relevant data point.

Despite the careful screening process, almost every year a would-be Agent doesn't make it through the harness implantation surgery. Their bodies are returned to their families, along with generous compensation.



Creating Your Agent

Character creation follows the same process as in the *Savage Worlds* core book, except as noted.

Keep the Crystal for Last: We suggest you choose your starter Crystal only after you've finished *everything else*. This might seem counterintuitive for many players—this is *Crystal Heart*, why shouldn't I immediately go and choose a cool Crystal?—but it's important to remember that this is a *starter* Crystal, and your Agent will be replacing it in the not-too-far future.

Your character should be someone independent from the Crystal they bear, someone who interacts with, but is not *defined by*, the disposition of their Crystal. Otherwise you're not playing a person, but a container for exchangeable Hindrances.

There is also a practical concern that you (and your character!) should consider: an Agent should be able to handle themselves independently of a specific Crystal. This doesn't mean your Agent needs to be able to handle *every* Crystal at peak efficiency, but

it does mean they should be able to handle at least *some* Crystals beyond their starter one. Build a person who can grow and adapt to new Crystals (or not; see the Crystal Specialization Edge on page 19).

Step 0: Reasons to Join and Motivations to Stay

Becoming an Agent requires you to literally take your heart out and place yourself in the care of a mysterious organization. Why would anyone ever do such a thing?

It's the right thing to do: You believe strongly in something greater than yourself: duty to your people, the greater good, or maybe peace among the Islands. You want to contribute, but you lack the specialized training or the logistical backbone. Syn has all of this and more. When you become a Free Agent (see sidebar next page), you'll use your powers and Syn's resources to advance the cause.



Power unlike any other: You want to be strong. Or maybe you want to fly, or discover what lies at the bottom of the ocean. Crystals allow you to do amazing things, and Syn is the only place where one can have safe and nearly unlimited access to Crystals. Maybe Syn hasn't yet found the Crystal that does what you want—no worries, you'll find it yourself.

No other choice: Perhaps you were exiled from your tribe, angered the wrong people, or happen to be the last survivor of a volcano eruption on your island. You had no home and no hope, but Syn gave you a place to sleep and a purpose. Or perhaps your father was one of the founders of Syn and he demanded that you follow in his wake; or maybe you had a terminal heart disease and had no choice but to join in order to replace your heart. Regardless, you're with Syn now, so you better start appreciating it.

Step 1: Home Land

In *Crystal Heart* everyone is human (gaining a free Novice Edge as usual), and everyone comes from a specific Land.

The Five Lands represent the entirety of the known world. Each Land's population is made up of various cultures, but for the most part, each Land has its own ethnicity. For more details on the world and each Land, see *The Five Lands*, page 80.

Your Future Promotions

At the end of one to two years as a Crystal Hunter—and assuming you survive—you will graduate into one of the following roles.

Free Agents are given free reign when it comes to advancing Syn's interests (as well as their own) and are among the most powerful and influential people in the Five Lands.

Specialists use specific Crystals in the service of some organization in accordance with Syn's ever-shifting alliances.

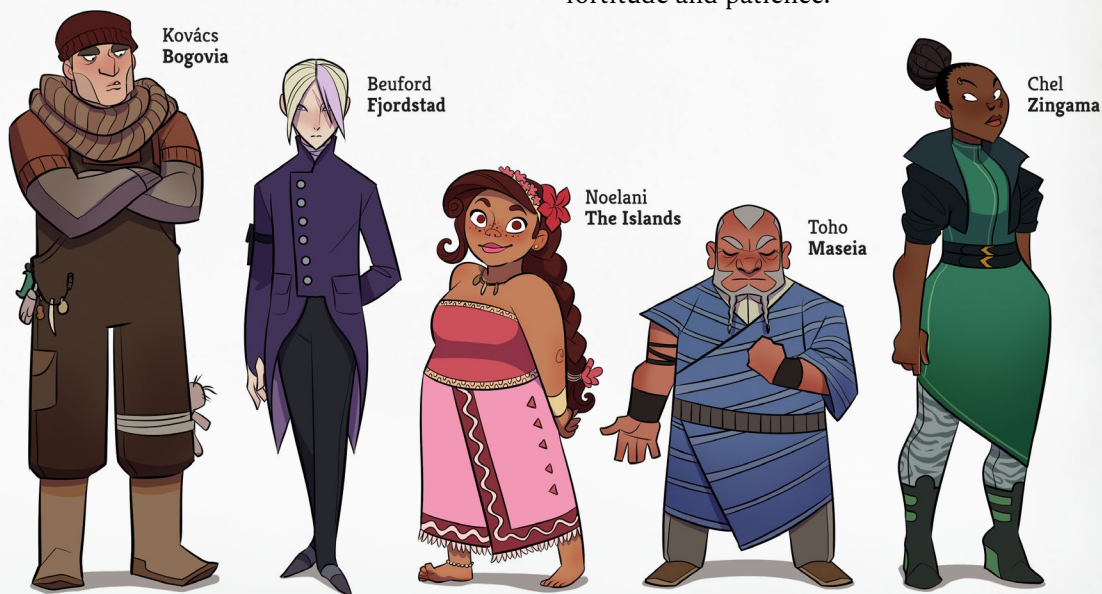
Subduers are given the responsibility of [further information is not available to Novice Agents].

Your choice of home Land increases one of your attributes by one step, as a result of both biological and cultural causes. Your maximum attribute limit is also increased by one step, to d12+1. Your choice of home Land also determines the type of things you might know with a Common Knowledge check.

Bogovia: Strength starting at d6. Bogovians are known for their fighting spirit, approaching most situations head on.

Fjordstad: Smarts starting at d6. Fjordstadians are known as being cunning and clever, approaching most situations as puzzles to be solved.

The Islands: Vigor starting at d6. The cultures of the Islands are more varied than in other places, but they tend to have great fortitude and patience.





Maseia: Agility starting at d6. Maseians are quick to act and react, and are usually regarded as more physically active than the rest.

Zingama: Spirit starting at d6. Zingamaians tend to see every problem as a small part of a bigger picture—one that revolves around people.

Name Conventions

Because all people speak the same language (see Languages, next page), there's no real reason for things to have weird names. However, since it's fun and atmospheric, we recommend finding some excuse for this: remnants of linguistic constructs from before the Bygone Age, old customs, local dialects, etc.

- Bogovian names tend to sound sharp and strong, with hard B, V, and K sounds.
- Fjordstadian names use mainly SCH, Z, and F sounds, with sudden dips into D and N.
- Islanders have complicated names with lots of R, W, K, and A sounds, with interesting vowel combinations.
- Maesians use many T and O sounds, with both hard and soft Ks.
- Zingamaians like R and I sounds, and names are usually kept short.

Step 2: Traits

Agents gain the usual 5 points for attributes and the usual 12 points for skills. Skills not mentioned on the following pages do not exist in *Crystal Heart*.

Core Skills: Agents of Syn go through several months of training, during which they gain the following skills at d4: Athletics, Common Knowledge, Crystal Channeling, Fighting, Notice, Persuasion, and Stealth. These skills are marked with a star (★) on the list. They can be further increased with points as usual.

Academics (Smarts)

This skill is combined with Science to reflect specialized knowledge of all kinds. A check is required to know anything of importance regarding the Bygone Age or Crystals, including speculating on Crystal manifestations and abilities (see page 62). Note that this skill does not signify hav-

ing access to Syn's full database; Syn has discovered many secrets it does not share with its Agents.

Athletics (Agility) ★

All Agents receive basic physical training.

Battle (Smarts)

This skill also covers team operations and squad-level techniques. Battle can be used to Requisition equipment and services from Syn (see page 36).

Boating (Agility)

Very common among Islanders, but also used by many river-travelers in Zingama and Fjordstad, as well as fishermen and traders in lake-heavy Maseia and swamp-heavy Bogovia. Includes building and controlling canoes as well as giant ships.

Common Knowledge (Smarts) ★

With communications technology still in its infancy, people aren't very knowledgeable about most of their Land, to say nothing of other Lands. You might be required to roll to see if you remember or are aware of specific details, such as customs (what people tend to celebrate, when, why, and how), dangers (hazardous weather conditions, fauna and flora, and where and when they might be encountered) and history (major political upheavals and wars, people in power, recent natural disasters).

Rolling Common Knowledge on Lands other than your own is usually done with a -1 penalty on the check. History tends to be foggy earlier than 300 years ago, so checks regarding those days are made with a -1 penalty. The Bygone Age is beyond Common Knowledge.

You might know some specialized information, thanks to your upbringing. Based on your Land, the following topics can be considered Common Knowledge to you, instead of Academics:

- Bogovia: Farming techniques and diseases.
- Fjordstad: Scientific principles, mechanics.
- The Islands: Trade and sailing.
- Maseia: Animal husbandry and weather.
- Zingama: Sociology and narcotics.

Crystal Channeling (Spirit) ★

The arcane skill used for Arcane Background (Crystal Channeling), with which one activates their socketed Crystal's powers. Channeling is



a mental exercise practiced with biofeedback techniques. See page 56 for the full details.

Driving (Agility)

This skill is virtually non-existent outside of a few Fjordstadian cities and Syn; most people won't even know how to turn on the wipers. Driving isn't needed for ordinary travel in the Tank (the Most-Terrain-Vehicle issued to each team of Agents), and all Agents receive some lessons behind the wheel, allowing them to use the skill untrained.

Engineering (Smarts)

This skill combines Electronics and Repair into one. It's about practical application of technical knowledge, mainly to construct and repair devices.

Fighting (Agility) ★

Syn Agents get to train with several melee weapons and also bare-handed, but most decide to focus on one or two weapons or styles (usually inspired by their home Land). This is encouraged, as Syn places a huge emphasis on personal development and uniqueness brought together under unified beliefs and goals.

Healing (Smarts)

Healing is used for all physical operations involving a Crystal, such as socketing under pressure (see page 58) and understanding Crystal influence on the human body.

Intimidation (Spirit)

Syn's reputation tends to precede the Agents, as naturally many people find the organization intimidating. Depending on the situation this can be a blessing or a hindrance; on occasion, even kind Agents find themselves resorting to the "Do you know who I am?" approach. See page 82 for the Setting Rule Everyone Has an Opinion About Syn.

Language (Smarts)

By default, this skill doesn't exist as there's only one language in the Five Lands, called the Tongue. The occasional expert also knows some Old Tongue, the language of the Bygone Age. A character learns some basic Old Tongue when they take the Bygone Age Expert Edge (page 18).

If your group enjoys playing with many languages, use the following guidelines:

- Bogovia has two distinct dialects (North Bog and South Bog) with a separate language for bog-dwellers (Mud Tongue).
- Fjordstadians speak North with local accents in every city.
- There are about two dozen Old Tongue-descended languages in the Islands, and the more isolated a society is, the less similar to the Tongue their language is.
- Maseians speak four different dialects (Grass, Hills, Low, and Shadows).
- Zingamaians speak Zingamaian, borrowing a lot of words from the tribal Zingamaian-descended languages that predated the modern nation, as well as from the major Island and Maseian dialects.

Notice (Smarts) ★

When seeing a Crystal in action, feral or otherwise, a raise on a Notice check to study its manifestation can give a clue to its theme.

Performance (Spirit)

Syn Agents don't usually try to pretend to be someone else or entertain a crowd, but stranger things have happened. You can't use this skill to raise funds; getting things from Syn requires a Requisition roll (see page 36).

Persuasion (Spirit) ★

Nobody in the Five Lands is indifferent toward you—see page 82 for the Setting Rule Everyone Has an Opinion About Syn. Persuasion can be used to Requisition equipment and services from Syn (see page 36).

Networking: Instead of paying with money an Agent can pay with Requisition, gaining +2 per point spent.

Piloting (Agility)

A rare skill, which can never be used untrained. Syn has several pilots who can control the autoplanes when needed. In Fjordstad, some engineers are inventing various types of mechanical flight, and Maseian sky-skiffers use gliders to reach the floating mountains.

Repair

See Engineering.

Research (Smarts)

This skill is very much influenced by the immediately available books and reports, which (unless you're in the Syn citadel) tend to focus on the Land you're currently in. Agents in a



Syn facility can spend Requisition to add +4 to the roll (see page 38) Research can also be used to Requisition equipment and services from Syn, see page 36.

Riding (Agility)

Very common in Bogovia and Maseia, and practiced in Fjordstad with the white horse (page 174). Some Islanders use Riding to ride dolphins and hull leviathans (page 175), and some Zingamaians ride delivery snakes (page 181).

Science

See Academics.

Shooting (Agility)

As with Fighting, Syn provides Agents with several types of weaponry but encourages specialization in a chosen form. It's expected that all Syn Agents who don't specialize at throwing things take Shooting to have some ranged combat ability.

Stealth (Agility) ★

The world is surprisingly filled with places people don't want you to go to. On occasion, Agents even try to pretend they never went there.

Survival (Smarts)

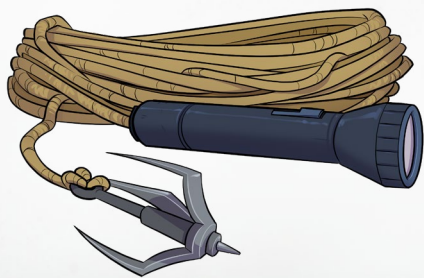
A key skill in all Lands, Survival is essential for a group of Crystal Hunters who run around in the wilds on a regular basis. The Tank is equipped with some basic survival tools (see page 45), but a team shouldn't rely solely on them.

Taunt (Smarts)

Taunt is also used for boasting. As with Intimidation, Agents occasionally find that the locals expect a certain behavior from them; see page 82 for the Setting Rule Everyone Has an Opinion About Syn.

Thievery (Agility)

When disabling traps, being quick and careful is what's important.



Familiarization

Most people in the Lands don't venture beyond their home Lands, and even Agents are only considered well-traveled when they become Seasoned.

Until the Agent gets around a bit, consider making the following skill checks with a small penalty whenever they are made outside of the Agent's home Land:

Knowledge skills: Terrain, weather phenomena, and flora and fauna all change quite dramatically between Lands.

Social skills: Local dialects, different pronunciations, and unusual euphemisms make it harder to get your point across. The vibe of a Bogovian town is very different from that of a Zingamaian city.

Step 3: Edges and Hindrances

You gain one free Edge for being human. You can spend Hindrance points to gain additional Edges, as usual.

For being a Syn Agent, you gain the Edge Arcane Background (Crystal Channeling) (page 16) and the Hindrance Vow (Major): The Agent's Code (page 30). These are above and beyond the usual allotment of Hindrances and Edges. Because this is a given for all Agents, it's not repeated in the stat blocks in this book.

HINDRANCES

Agents don't have to be entirely healthy or clear of mind. In fact, having Bad Eyes or being Yellow or Elderly can all be excellent reasons to become an Agent in the first place to look for a Crystal to overcome whatever's troubling you.

That being said, Syn cannot afford to let a Bloodthirsty Agent ruin its reputation of being fair (scary, but fair), and they'll never accept someone who is Driven or under a Vow which leads them to create international incidents or political catastrophes. There's a place for everyone at Syn—except those who are destructive to it.

The following hindrances are modified for *Crystal Heart*.



Enemy: Can be an Agent from a rival team or someone else in the organization, in which case they don't wish you death but certainly want to hinder your efforts.

Obligation: Normally can't be chosen—you're obligated to Syn—but some rare cases might qualify. A famous Agent named Matias is a single parent and had his eleven-year-old daughter accompanying him on adventures before he became a Subduer. A Major Obligation indeed! Also see the new Hindrance, Dependant.

One Arm: This is a Minor Hindrance, since Syn supplies a light and mostly effective prosthetic. Tasks that require two hands are made at a -2 modifier.

Outsider: In the world of the Five Lands, all non-natives tend to draw a respectful amount of suspicion, but some cultures are considered so out-there that they deserve the Minor version of this Hindrance: Bogovian bog-dwellers, Fjordstadian barbarians, eccentric Islanders, Maseians from the Desert Peninsula, and Zingamaian jungle villagers. See *The Five Lands* (page 80) for more details. By belonging to Syn you automatically get some respect and some legal rights, so the Major version of this Hindrance can't be chosen.

Slow: Syn provides a prosthetic for Agents with the Minor version, and an ultralight wheelchair for Agents with the Major version.

Wanted: Running away from the law to join Syn is not unheard of. Syn Agents are able to shrug off many accusations, but they don't *actually* have diplomatic immunity. The Major version of this Hindrance can only be chosen if the authorities are actively hunting for the Agent throughout their Land and beyond.

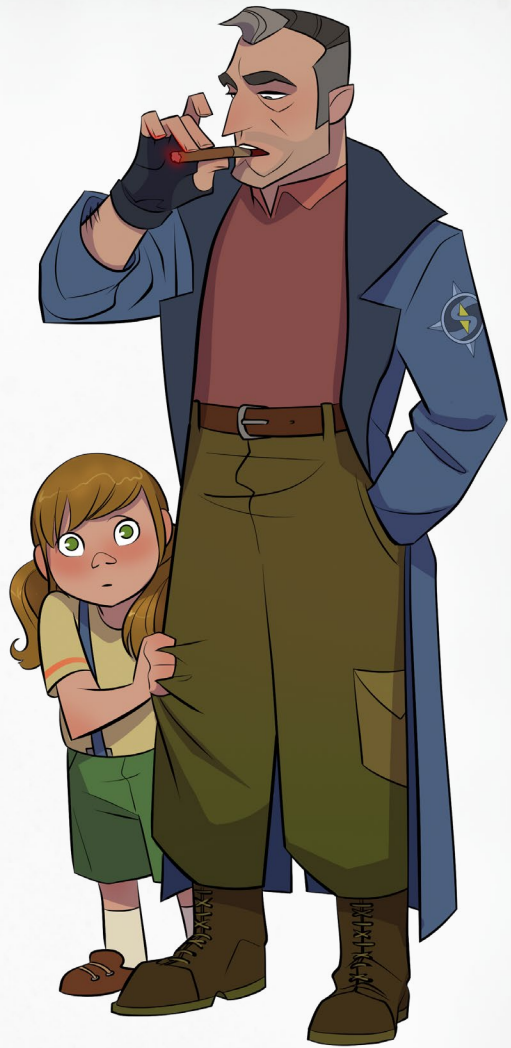
Unused Hindrances

The following Hindrances aren't used in *Crystal Heart*, because they make no sense in the setting: Doubting Thomas, Greedy, Illiterate, Poverty.

NEW HINDRANCES

Compulsive Behavior (Major)

Your Crystal's disposition has a powerful influence over you. When you are dealt a Heart as your Action Card, your Crystal's intrusive thought patterns take hold and you must de-



vote one action this turn to satisfying your disposition. If you are unsure what to do, you can just waste an action in repetitive thoughts.

Dependant (Minor)

Someone or something is depending on your support. You asked Syn to provide that support, but the organization isn't a charity—someone needs to pay for the service, and that someone is you. You start the game with one less Requisition (so you have zero if you're a Novice Agent) and must pay a point of Requisition every few months.

Harness Rejection (Major)

Your body and your harness don't get along, and pushing their connection too far isn't recommended. When you maintain a power you must make a new Crystal Channeling check every ten minutes to keep the power going. In addition, whenever you



choose to take a level of Fatigue instead of failing a Crystal Channeling roll, you instead take two.

Lingering Disposition (Minor)

It's hard for you to shake off the effects of a Crystal you've socketed, even after replacing it. When you switch a Crystal, choose one Minor Hindrance (or a Minor version of a Major Hindrance) of the former Crystal. You keep this Hindrance until you switch Crystals again. You can make a Smarts roll to try and overcome this Hindrance when it comes into play.

Even a starting Agent has a lingering disposition, from the Crystal they used during training; it can be any reasonable Minor Hindrance of your choice.

EDGES

The following Edges are used differently in *Crystal Heart*.

Arcane Background: No Arcane Backgrounds are allowed except for Crystal Channeling (see page 56) which all Agents get for free. The only exception is Weird Science, which is available exclusively to NPCs, mostly Fjordstadian mad scientists; see the No Magic Setting Rule, page 83. While the common person might have various superstitions, and the world is indeed filled with wonder, Syn Agents are taught that there's no "magic" in the Five Lands—only poorly understood Crystal technology.

Aristocrat: Each of the Five Lands, with the exception of the Islands, has an aristocracy of sorts. The differences in style and etiquette between Lands might reduce the bonus given by this Edge to +1 at the Game Master's discretion. Generally speaking you left your position behind, but you are still expected by the people of your Land to behave according to your status and fulfill some relevant duties; you still belong to the cultural elite.

Command: Syn training focuses on small unit tactics. All Leadership Edges that apply only to Extras instead apply to Wild Cards as well (effectively negating the need for Natural Leader).

Connections: You can't have Connections with Syn as your relationship with the organization is covered by the Requisition rules

(page 35). To have a connection with a powerful individual inside the organization, see the new Edge Mentor.

Trademark Weapon: All Syn-issued weapons are custom-made, but that doesn't mean they're custom-*awesome*. An Agent with Trademark Weapon has either brought their own weapon from home, or undergone specific training with a special weapon which is always fancier-looking than others of its kind. This does not require a Requisition roll.

Unused Edges

The following Edges aren't used in *Crystal Heart*, as they make no sense in the setting: All Power Edges, Arcane Resistance (and Improved), Champion, Chi, Linguist, Rich (and Filthy Rich).

NEW EDGES

The following edges are especially appropriate for use in *Crystal Heart*.

BACKGROUND EDGES

Arcane Background:
Crystal Channeling
Requirements: Novice

You are equipped with a harness. You are able to take ranks in the Crystal Channeling skill, which is based on Spirit. See page 56 for the full details. All Syn Agents get this Edge for free.

Fierce Forward

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+

People in the Lands tend to be fierce; you're an excellent example of that.

Once per day, when something you believe in is on the line, you can upgrade your Wild Die by one step (d6 to d8), or get a d4 Wild Die if you don't have one. This upgrade lasts for a scene. A mercenary won't be able to use this Edge simply for fighting, but she *does* get it when she fights a foe who opposes her belief that people should be free to make a living however they choose.

On the other hand, when retreating or avoiding a conflict in which your personal beliefs are challenged, you downgrade your Wild Die to a d4 (or get a -1 penalty on all Trait rolls, if you don't have one) for the next 1d6 hours, or until you come back and fight.



Mentor

Requirements: Novice

All Agent teams have a supervisor, but you also have a personal mentor. They can be the same person or someone else in Syn. The two of you have a special relationship—not necessarily a *nice* one, but one based on mutual respect.

You gain a skill point (but not above the connected attribute) in one skill that is relevant to your mentor, their teaching style, or their relationship with you. You also increase your Requisition by 2 points, reflecting your mentor's connections and willingness to shift some things around for you.

See Appendix B (page 214) for a list of recommended mentors.

CULTURAL EDGES

Each of the following Edges represents an ability that the character gained by going through some sort of ceremony or by wholeheartedly adopting a custom or way of life. While it's possible for a person of one Land to get initiated into the customs of another, it's a rare occurrence which requires justification in the story.

The trappings for each cultural Edge change according to local variants. For example, one Maseian clan's Rite of Passage has the youngsters go through a series of caves and confront mask-wearing elders, while another requires a person to sit alone in a hut for three days.

These trappings also set the requirements for each Edge. In the example above, the first clan takes all the youngsters of a calendar year through the Rite at an appointed date. In the second, every clansperson chooses when they're ready to go through the trial, with some people doing so late in life.

Bogovian Fire Drill

Requirements: Novice, Bogovian

In the Land of endless mud and musty swamps, fire can be surprisingly dangerous because nobody expects it. But you? You're ready for anything. You've been through too many jump scares and had more than enough people shouting at you to get going. You now show a fierce, almost narrow-minded

devotion to the task at hand. When you recover from being Shaken, you gain +2 on your next Trait roll this turn.

Fjordstadian Scrutiny

Requirements: Novice, Fjordstadian

Fjordstadians are taught from childhood to assume the unknown and suspect the obvious. At best, they are cautious; at worst, paranoid.

This Edge counts as Danger Sense, except that the character rolls her Smarts instead of Notice. It can also be used to recognize non-physical sources of surprise. For example, if the baron at the party is giving a speech about Syn's magnificent achievements but is in fact about to mock the Agents, this Edge can be used to recognize that something bad is about to happen.

Because this Edge casts a wide net, it occasionally triggers for no reason. The GM is encouraged to call for a Fjordstadian Scrutiny roll at least once per session, and especially during times of calm.

If you already have Danger Sense, replace it with a different Edge.

Island Diet

Requirements: Novice, Islander

You know how to eat well, and more importantly, what and when. Even if your Land's fruits, grains, and meats aren't around, you'll find suitable replacements. You've gained





healthy stores of energy, and your diet has guided your metabolism to access that energy quickly and efficiently.

You are able to survive without food for two days (instead of one) before needing to roll Vigor for hunger. If given proper ingredients and appropriate tools, you can create a tasty and nourishing meal. Anyone who eats it while enjoying a relaxing atmosphere is able to ignore one point of penalties from Fatigue for the next 8 hours.

You can usually restock quality ingredients at Syn facilities (no Requisition roll required).

Maseian Rite of Passage

Requirements: Novice, Maseian

You went through a tough trial during which you learned to broaden your horizons and connect with the earth. You have the uncanny ability to notice small details that others seem to miss. This might be thanks to the spirits intervening on your behalf, or a result of being highly perceptive because of your *belief* that spirits are helping you.

Once per session you can Influence the Story without spending a Benny. This new detail must be a new feature or item that couldn't have been immediately obvious at the start of the current scene.

Zingamaian Nationalism

Requirements: Novice, Zingamaian

Zingama is the best! Be proud, Zingamaians! All the other peoples only believe in their families, tribes, cities. They don't *really* understand what's it like to be part of something larger, grander than themselves.

This Edge counts as Strong Willed and Brave. If you already have either of these Edges, replace it with a different Edge.

Note: The Game Master can allow Fjordstadians to take this Edge regarding their city-states, as they have something resembling national pride toward them.

POWER EDGES

Focus

Requirements: Novice, Crystal Channeling d6+

When you keep still, everything is much clearer. If you don't move at all during your turn, you can ignore up to 2 points of penalties on a Crystal Channeling roll you make this turn.

Great Focus

Requirements: Veteran, Crystal Channeling d8+, Focus

Activating powers is second nature to you. You get a free reroll on Crystal Channeling checks.

Imbue With Power

Requirements: Seasoned, Crystal Channeling d6+

You are trained in the tricky but useful technique of imbuing an object with some of your Crystal's power, so it can be used by someone else.

The object must be a fist-sized item that is relevant to your Crystal's theme. You touch it for several seconds (an action, no roll needed) and place one of your Crystal's powers in it. That power becomes unavailable to you until it's used, but you are considered to be maintaining it. You can place several different powers into several different items.

Anyone holding the item can release its power with a Crystal Channeling check. Non-Agents can roll the skill untrained, but they become Stunned in the case of a Critical Failure (Agents suffer desync as usual; their Crystal's resonance comes into conflict with the power they're releasing!). If the power isn't used within a week, the effect dissipates and you get the power back.

Retain Power

Requirements: Novice, Crystal Channeling d4+

You can ignore one point of penalties from maintaining powers—in other words, you can maintain one power for “free”.

PROFESSIONAL EDGES

Bygone Age Expert

Requirements: Novice, Academics d6+, Engineering d6+

You gain +2 on Academics and Engineering checks made to understand and activate Bygone Age technology. You also know some basic Old Tongue, the language of the prehistoric people.

Crystal Expert

Requirements: Novice, Academics d6+, Healing d6+

You gain +2 on Academics and Healing checks made to analyze and understand



Crystals, their manifestations, and Crystal-corrupted creatures. A raise can reveal the unique powers and weaknesses of such creatures. You also know by heart the themes, benefits, dispositions, and powers of all the Crystals in the Syn database (refreshed whenever you have a day to study in a Syn facility).

Crystal Specialization

Requirements: Seasoned, must have kept the Crystal slotted for most of a Rank, or learned a new power with the Crystal through a Power Stunt

For whatever reason, you really like a specific Crystal. Maybe you want to gain mastery over this aspect of reality, maybe you have a specific task in mind, or maybe the Crystal's theme is just your sort of *thing*.

Choose a Crystal. You immediately learn a new power for it or add a new Edge to its benefit. Decide with the GM which power or Edge to add. As usual, it must work well with the Crystal's theme.

In addition, your greater understanding of the Crystal's theme allows you to ignore up to 2 points of penalties from Power Modifiers when activating the powers of this Crystal.

This Edge can be chosen multiple times, with different Crystals.

Improved Specialization

Requirements: Veteran, Crystal Specialization

You gain a new power with the Crystal you've specialized with. When you attain Heroic Rank, you gain an additional new power.

The Right Crystal For the Job

Requirements: Seasoned, Crystal Channeling d8+

You have no special sentimentality for Crystals. They are tools to be used and changed as needed.

Syn allows you to carry one other Crystal at all times (usually you're supposed to only have one). You've learned to change Crystals on your own, quickly and effectively, probably by taking a well-timed long breath or simply enduring through the sudden system shock. You can make a self-socketing check using Spirit or Vigor



instead of Healing, and you don't get the usual -2 penalty for doing so. Succeeding with a raise gives you the additional benefit of ignoring up to 2 points of penalties on your next Crystal Channeling check before the end of your next turn.

However, because of your emotional disconnection from the Crystals you are using, it's harder for you to learn to understand each of them individually. You require 3 raises in order for a Power Stunt to "click" (see page 58), and whenever you use at least one power Modifier on a roll, you have an additional -1 penalty.

Tomb Robber

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Notice d6+, Thievery d6+

Getting into ancient ruins is pretty easy; getting out alive is a different matter. You add +1 to Notice rolls when traveling in and around ancient structures, always on the lookout for common hazards and hidden traps. You also add +1 to Thievery rolls when disabling traps and unlocking barriers. Finally, your fascination with ancient tombs led you to study many tales and mythologies, so they're considered Common Knowledge for you.



WEIRD EDGES

Second Breath

Requirements: Seasoned, Vigor d6+

You gain an extra level of Fatigue, with a -1 penalty. You only become Exhausted after you take a third level.

Signature Move

Requirements: Seasoned

You are practiced with a unique and awesome technique, usually a combat move but not necessarily. It must include a motto—the name of the attack, a whispered idiom, or something similar—and a signature choreography. When you select this Edge, choose the set-up (an attribute) and the execution (a skill).

When you make your signature move, you first roll the set-up. For every success and raise, you gain +1 for the skill roll—the execution—which you then roll normally. Failing the set-up inflicts a -2 penalty on the execution, and a Critical Failure forfeits the execution completely. The whole move is considered a single action, and you can perform Multi-Actions this turn as normal.

All moves have a requirement that must be met, the trigger that allows them to activate. Here are some suggestions:

- When you act first in the round
- As a response
- When you're above/behind/under the target
- After saying an excellent quip or pun

Example: Muna's Leaping Strike (Agility + Fighting) requires her to climb on something large, like a table or a pile of rocks, and then jump onto an enemy while shouting "Battle strike!"

Example: Heuberger's Sneering Gaze (Smarts + Taunt) can only be used as a retort. He turns toward the target with a sneer, pushes his glasses back up with one finger as he examines the lesser person, and mutters something demeaning.

Example: Toho's Disappearing Act (Agility + Stealth) requires the target to be Distracted by something. He can try to distract them on his own ("Hey, look over there!") with a Taunt Test, but he's not great with these skills, so he usually asks one of his teammates to do it for him.

Step 4: Gear

Agents of Syn get everything they need from the organization. If they need to trade with someone from outside the organization, they do so by promising future help or using favors. In both of these cases, they use Requisition. See page 35 for the rules.

The following is standard-issued gear for Novice Agents on Crystal Hunter teams. See the equipment tables on page 42 for details.

- One or two weapons of your choice, from any of the weapon lists.
- Three Syn suits, custom-made.
- A backpack with some basic, yet modern, adventuring gear. Think flashlights and thermal blankets.
- Basic Crystal capture gear: an empty Crystal container and gloves.
- Any assistive technology required by the Agent, such as a prosthesis or a wheelchair. These are light and effective, but not powered.

The team is also issued a Most-Terrain-Vehicle, fondly named the "Tank." The Tank can seat three in the front and four in the cabin, with enough supplies and ammunition for about a month. The Tank also has storage for six Crystals and comes equipped with a first aid kit. See page 45 for more details on the Tank.

Starting Requisition

Novice Agents begin the game with one point of Requisition. Before starting your first adventure, you can make a single request for gear.

Step 5: Team Building

Now that you have a few Agents, you need to bring them together and form a team.

Your Supervisor

Syn training places a focus on mentorship, having a more experienced Agent help the new ones. Create your own supervisor, or pick or roll from the list in Appendix B, page 214.





As a group, think about the following:

- What's unique, annoying, or inspiring about your supervisor?
- What's their position in the organization?
- Are they seasoned Crystal Hunters, Specialists, or Free Agents?

Your supervisor has no mechanical effect on the game, but they are usually the first person you'll go to for advice or information, and your main connection to the rest of Syn.

Team Training

Your team has spent several months training together. Go around the table and have each player tell the others about their Agent's relationship with another player's Agent, perhaps by describing an event from their training.

You can draw a card and use it as inspiration:

- **Spades:** You share some aspirations. You both want to see the fabled Invisible Isle, want to be the best at the same thing, or maybe you really want your parents to be proud of you.
- **Hearts:** You share some habits or skills. Perhaps you've found a surprising common ground ("*You love baking? I love baking!*"), or maybe you have an honest appreciation of each other's skill or outlook.
- **Diamonds:** You envy something about them—their skill, their attitude, their upbringing. Are you using this to push yourself to become better, or do you instead become bitter?
- **Clubs:** You share a common enemy. Perhaps it's a rival Agent or team of Agents, maybe it's a common dislike of lazy people, or maybe you just both really hate it when it rains.
- **Joker:** You both experienced the same strange event. Maybe you were stranded alone for a week during survival training, were part of the same accident, or maybe you both saw the same strange shadow in the mirror.

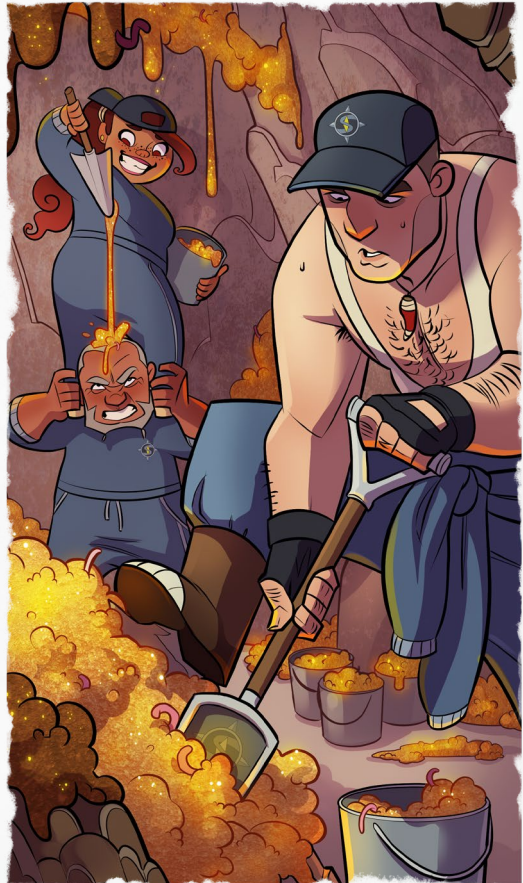
The Training Session

Now that you have your team ready, we recommend you play an hour-long game that represents one of your team's training sessions from the first few months of training,

before being implanted with a harness and becoming full Agents. This session has several benefits:

- You get to get to know your character's natural self, sans-Crystal. Remember, from now on they'll always be influenced by the Crystal they're socketing, so this is your only chance to play them as-is.
- You get to test out your character's skills and abilities. If anything isn't to your liking, you still have time to switch some points around.
- You get to create some group dynamics and understand each other's abilities and styles, meaning that on your first adventure you'll already feel like a team of Agents working together.
- The Game Master has a chance to lay out the basic themes for the upcoming campaign, introduce some important NPCs, and maybe provide some foreshadowing.

The Game Master has more information and suggestions on page 112.





Step 6: Starter Crystal

Choose a Crystal from the Starter Crystal List on page 63 and get your Game Master's approval. This can be a Crystal you've been training with for some time, or a newly issued Crystal you haven't had much chance to try out.

You can also spend 1 Requisition to upgrade your starter Crystal from Novice to Seasoned.

Replacing Crystals: When and How

As you adventure, you'll discover new Crystals. You'll also accumulate Requisition points, allowing you to "purchase" Crystals from Syn.

You might want to switch to a new Crystal because it has curious powers or because you grew bored with your old one. Sometimes you will even be ordered by Syn to switch to a Crystal that needs testing (see page 62 for ways to test out new Crystals) or to return your currently socketed Crystal because it's needed elsewhere.

The switch itself is dangerous if done in combat conditions, but pretty straightforward otherwise. The full rules are given on page 58.

In any case, most Agents are not allowed to carry an extra Crystal beyond the one they're bearing—they risk losing *both* Crystals should they go down in the field. Whenever you arrive at a Syn facility, you'll be asked to deliver all the extra Crystals you keep stored in the Tank.

If you enjoy switching Crystals on a regular basis, or grow to feel especially connected to a specific Crystal and don't want to switch it, check out The Right Crystal for the Job Edge or the Crystal Specialization Edge, on page 19.



Character Archetypes

Here are some common archetypes of people from the Five Lands, and common roles in a team of Crystal Hunters. They have all become Agents, so these are above-average people taken up to Step 3 of the Character Creation process.

Statistics for common NPC archetypes appear in the *Adversaries and Challenges* chapter, starting on page 159.

BOGOVIA

BOG-DWELLER

You were once one of the strangest and most reclusive people found in Bogovia—and that's saying something. Living off dangerous Bygone Era tech, deep in the stinky swamps, you barely had any connection with the outside world. And yet, now you're an Agent. How did that happen?

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Engineering d8, Fighting d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Research d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Habit (Major; must breathe special fumes), Outsider (Minor), Quirk (Uses archaic idioms)

Edges: Bygone Age Expert, McGyver

CHURCH ACOLYTE

The Faith's dogma commands the acolyte to protect the Bogovians from the wrath of the heavens. And also wolves. What would make a devout acolyte, with a bright future in the Church, turn to Syn?

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d8, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Delusional (Minor; the moon is magic), Vow (Minor; protect pious Bogovians)

Edges: Aristocrat, Common Bond



PEASANT

It's hard to raise crops and rear farm animals when your land is a swamp and the wolves are closing in. But it's even harder to leave your homestead and family behind to become an Agent. So why did you do it?

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Mean, Phobia (Minor; some superstition), Thin Skinned (Major)

Edges: Brute, Nerves of Steel

WOODSMAN

As a person who's made their living tracking beasts into the deepest forests and killing them, you're always ready to take the initiative and stare danger in the face. Was the forest not dangerous enough for you, so you decided to replace your heart with a Crystal?

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Ruthless (Minor), Stubborn, Phobia (Major; some superstition)

Edges: Quick, Woodsman

FJORDSTAD

ENGINEER

Whether you were an electrician, engine designer, botanist, sewage systems specialist, or something similar, you have the tools and the knowhow to create and repair. The world is a mess, but you can make it work for you. Is this why you want to channel Crystals?

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d4, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d6, Driving d6, Engineering d8, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d4



Church Acolyte

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Quirk (Speaks in jargon), Tongue-Tied

Edges: Calculating, Mr. Fix It

MOUNTAIN BARBARIAN

Who are the mountain people? Survivors from the cities of olden days? Those who remained behind when Fjordstadians moved to the cities? Banished criminals? Regardless, they have no place in proper Fjordstadian society. But in Syn...

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Enemy (Major; one of the cities), Mean, Outsider (Minor)

Edges: Thief, Two-Gun Kid

**NOBLE**

To be someone in Fjordstad, you need to belong to one of the noble houses. But the meaning of the word “noble” is changing as more and more people are accepted into the houses by merit. Are you one of them? If so, why would you leave after working so hard to become a member? Or are you of noble birth, expected to be loyal, to behave, to participate in the games of espionage and sabotage? If so, did you leave because it was too much...or not enough?

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Taunt d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5



Mountain Barbarian

Hindrances: Arrogant, Shamed (Minor; something you “had to do” to climb the ranks), Vow (Minor; your noble house)

Edges: Aristocrat, Command

SCIENTIST

You’ve learned just enough to understand how much more there is to know. Is that why you joined Syn—to discover more than the people of your city allowed you to explore? Or were you kicked out because you’ve *already* gone beyond the limits of acceptable research? (Each city-state specializes in a specific field; see page 92).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d10, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d8, Engineering d4, Fighting d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Research d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Overconfident, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Investigator, Scholar (Academics)

THE ISLANDS**ECCENTRIC**

There are many Islands and they are all different—but some are even more different than others. Way out, beyond the trade routes, where explorers rarely dare go, there are those who are called “eccentric” by the common Islander. Yes, they’re still one of *us*—but they’re weird. Not *bad*, but...

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Boating d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Clueless, Outsider (Minor), Quirk (a strange custom)

Edges: Brute, First Strike

GASTRONOME

To the Islanders, food is a big deal; so by knowing food, one becomes a big deal. This is true only in the Islands, so why did you leave? After learning the culinary arts—a rare and difficult feat—you turned your back



on the archipelago and joined Syn. Did you have a fight with your mentor? Or are you trying to bring a gastronomic revolution to the other Lands?

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Clumsy, Jealous (Minor; I'm the best chef), Stubborn

Edges: Fame (in high society), Island Diet

PIRATE

YARRRRRrrrrr!!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Boating d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Taunt d6, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident, Ugly (Major)

Edges: Acrobat, Feint

TRADER

You've spent your life on the move as one of the trading cooperatives or as an independent. Why leave this life and join Syn? Maybe you've seen many strange things around the Islands, but you're looking for things stranger still. Maybe your trading partners betrayed you, and you lost it all. Or maybe everything you own was eaten by a shark.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Boating d4, Common Knowledge d8, Crystal

Channeling d6, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Performance d6, Stealth d4, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Driven (Major; must leave an amazing inheritance for my family/clan); Hesitant

Edges: Bolster, Connections

MASEIA

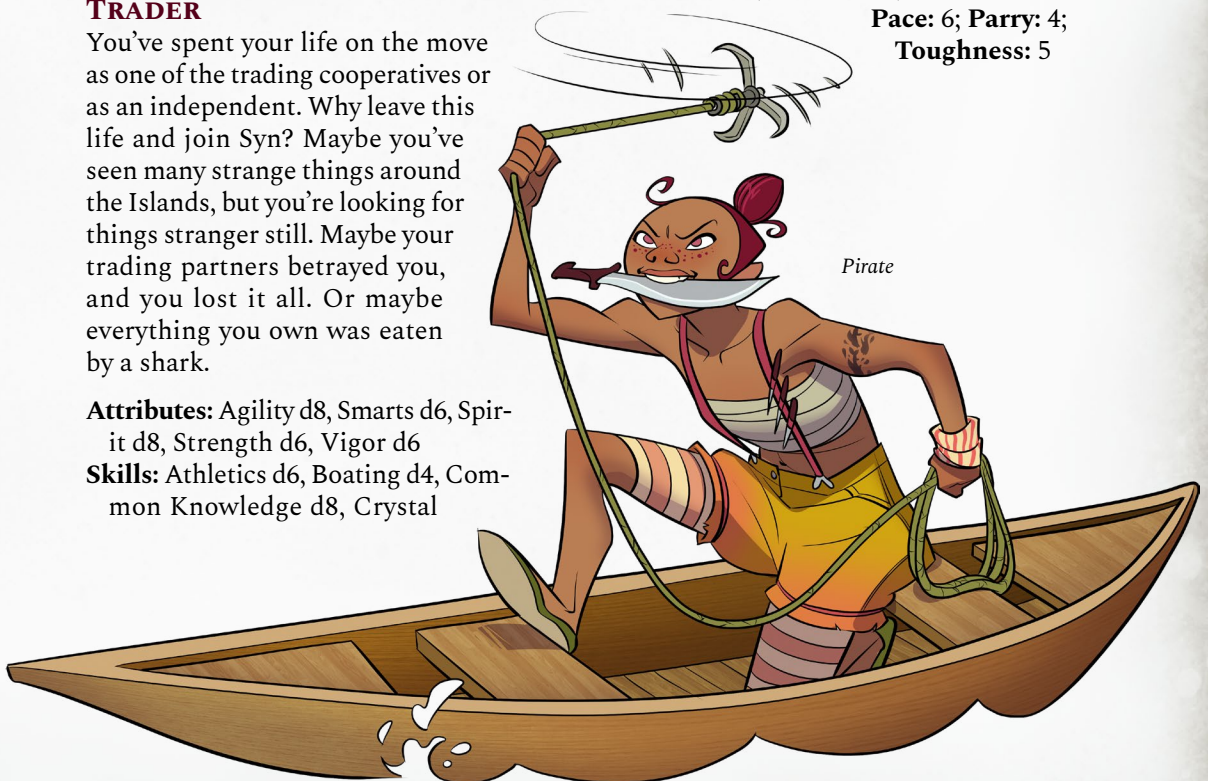
SKY-SKIFF RIDER

Admired, daring, cocky—the skiffers roam around Maseia on special wind-powered boards, belonging to no clan but accepted by all. They deliver mail and bring news from afar, returning every few months to their secret hideouts on the flying mountains above. Since the sky skiff is useless outside of windy Maseia, and Agents (unlike skiffers) are usually suspected rather than admired, why did you join Syn? Is windsurfing simply not extreme enough for you?

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4;
Toughness: 5





Hindrances: Delusional (Minor; everything revolves around me), Jealous (Minor; I'm the best acrobat around), Overconfident
Edges: Ace, Provoke

CRAFTSPERSON (HERBALIST)

Many clans are not self-sufficient, specializing in several crafts and trading their unique goods with their neighbors for whatever they need. In the Maseian stratified society, many are born into their craft and are expected to master it in order to prove their adulthood; others choose a role and are required to change their whole lifestyle to fit it. Most Maseians are content with their station—but apparently, you think otherwise. Or were you pushed out of the clan for doing something they simply won't accept?

This is an example of an herbalist, a craftsman who specializes in treating ailments.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d4, Healing d8, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Clueless, Loyal, Mild Mannered

Edges: Bolster, Healer

HUNTER

Being surrounded by boundless wilds means two things. First, there's lots of good stuff out there, let's hunt it; and second, there's a lot of dangerous stuff that can come from any direction, let's scout. Equipped with an invaluable set of skills for both your clan and Syn, what made you leave your family behind with one fewer hunter to help them?

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d4, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Heroic, Quirk (uncouth)

Edges: Free Runner, Woodsman

TRAILBLAZER

While the scout is forging new paths, the trailblazer is forging new alliances. It's not uncommon for a clan to be in contact with about a dozen neighbors who keep coming and going with the seasons. This means treaties constantly need to be revised, alliances reconsidered, and social status proved. Trailblazers are almost exclusively chieftain princes and princesses—so how come you turned to Syn?

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d4, Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d10, Riding d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Driven (Major; everything can be solved if we just sit and talk this out), Enemy (Minor; a clan who feels slighted by you), Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Aristocrat, Charismatic

ZINGAMA

ASSASSIN

In Zingama, killing people is a respected job. It's also very dangerous because people apparently don't want to be killed, so they employ traps, guards, and even other assassins to prevent this from happening. Maybe this ever-escalating arms race became too much for you. All of these new techniques are taking the *art* out of the job, you know?

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, Ruthless (Minor), Wanted (Major; your last mark)

Edges: Assassin, Thief

ENTERTAINER

In Zingama, culture is all around you—usually deafeningly loud and blindingly colorful. If you've got the talent, you'll have the audience! Did you leave for Syn to reach new crowds? Or was it because you failed to achieve the recognition you were craving?





Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Performance d8, Stealth d4, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Habit (Minor; smokes), Impulsive, Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Elan, Fame (In Zingama)

OFFICER

All Zingamaians join the army; some even stay. As an officer, you went through command training and served for longer than average. In a way, this “proved” your national pride. Strange that you chose to join Syn, then. Were you dishonorably discharged, or was the Zingamaian army too corrupt or unprofessional for your taste?

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Battle d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d4, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Mean, Quirk (Speaks in military terms), Vow (Major; protect Zingamaians)

Edges: Command, Soldier

VEXED

If you want to know what’s wrong with Zingama, ask a Zingamaian from outside of the nation. Despite what most people believe, there are a *lot* of people who are ethnically but not culturally Zingamaian, collectively called “vexed” or “displeased” by the “proper” Zingamaians. In the streets of Zingama City, the displeased only ever come up in a conversation when “primal” aesthetics are back in fashion.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Outsider (Minor), Suspicious (Minor), one other Major

Edges: Danger Sense, Fierce Forward



Officer

CRYSTAL HUNTER TEAM

Here are some classic roles one can find in a well-rounded group of Agents.

Note: Bump up one of the attribute dice according to your chosen Land.

CRYSTAL EXPERT

You know Crystals, their manifestations, and how to use them well.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d8, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Research d6, Stealth d4; two more points

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Crystal Expert, one other



ENGINEER

You can fix it, drive it, and build it.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d4, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Driving d4, Engineering d8, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d4; two more points

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Mr. Fix It, one other

FACE

You can calm down the angry commoner and manipulate the arrogant elite.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d4; four more points

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Attractive, one other

FIGHTER

You'll subdue, destroy, or kill it while protecting your teammates.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Taunt d6; two more points

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Provoke, one other

INFILTRATOR

You'll steal—erm, *stealthily acquire* much needed information, disable traps, and stalk from afar.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d8, Thievery d8; two more points

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Thief, one other

LEADER

You guide your teammates and help them work like a well-oiled machine.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d4, Athletics d4, Battle d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d6, Fighting d8, Healing d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4; two more points

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Command, Reliable





Syn

Welcome, would-be Agents, to your orientation course. Please stay close to your guide and be careful not to cross into areas designated “Restricted Access.” Be advised that all information provided in this course and during the rest of your training is classified “Agent Only”. It must not be discussed with people from outside of the organization or non-essential Syn personnel, under penalty of six months’ incarceration.

Welcome to Syn.

Responsibilities and Perks of an Agent

Syn is the world’s only global organization. It’s well known throughout the Lands for being powerful and aloof, using amazing technology and expert Agents to free the world from the danger of Crystals. It has way stations throughout the Lands, public connections, and secret agendas. It is the most respected and influential organization

in recorded history, and you are its Agents in the field.

LEGAL JURISDICTION

The Five Lands are ruled by various governments or similar powers, such as lords, village councils, or ancient customs accepted by the locals. Syn is powerful and far-reaching, more so than any other political power in the world, so everyone likes to know where they stand with the organization.

Most local governing bodies have signed agreements with Syn allowing for cooperation, though the exact wording varies from settlement to settlement. Generally they allow the following perks to traveling Syn Agents once they have identified themselves by showing their harnesses:

Perks

- A show of respect, such as being invited to important events as guests of honor.
- Free lodging for a week, including meals, once per month.

- The right to use force against those who break local laws. Syn Agents are occasionally called in to help with local policing efforts.
- The right to use force against those who interfere in Syn operations (subject to many restrictions, depending on local agreement).

While not technically a perk, Syn Agents also enjoy an unspoken, near diplomatic-like immunity. While Syn Agents are required to abide by local laws just like anyone else, most power groups would like to avoid getting into trouble with Syn, so they'll allow Agents to get away with some surprisingly uncouth behavior.

It is important to remember that while Agents can indeed escape justice in many Lands, they can't escape *Syn*, who takes very unkindly to Agents who soil its reputation unnecessarily.

Safe Crystals: It is generally agreed that Crystals belong to Syn even before being recovered, meaning Agents can claim ownership over any discovered Crystal and use reasonable force to retrieve it, if necessary. However, several towns have come to be dependent on one or more elements of their environment which were created or influenced by a Crystal. Although rare, Syn occasionally acknowledges that removing such Crystals would have disastrous or even fatal consequences. In these cases they allow the Crystals to remain where they are, designating them "safe" (though some Agents jokingly claim this is an acronym for Suspended, Awaiting Future re-Evaluation).

Varying Degrees of Access: Usually Agents have the same basic rights as every visitor to an area, but there are exceptions. In many places Syn Agents are handled with silk gloves and escorted at all times (but also followed and spied on). Elsewhere they are unwelcome interlopers, allowed only a minimal stay in town. And there are some isolated settlements where Agents are seen as enemies to be shot on sight.

THE AGENT'S CODE

The Agent's Code is a 216-page manual describing the procedures and guidelines all Agents are expected to follow. It's taken as

a Vow Hindrance (Major) by all Syn Agents during their training (see page 14).

The manual's main concerns can be summarized by the following points. Not fulfilling these responsibilities might result in temporary negative modifiers on Requisition rolls at the GM's discretion.

Go where directed, but show initiative.

The route is only as good as the information used to plan it, and most of it is based on rumors. Be aware of the signs of a Crystal's presence (see page 9) and follow the leads.

Help when asked by local authorities.

Local agreements almost always allow authorities to ask the Agents—who are usually more capable, better trained, and more prepared than local law enforcers—to act as a policing force.

Avoid unnecessary violence. You, the harness, the Crystal you carry, and all of your equipment represent hundreds of hours of investment. Don't endanger them without a good cause.

Syn supplies most everything you need.

You are not allowed to invest in commercial ventures. If you require something, Syn will provide it.

Represent Syn. Protect Syn's agenda and present it fairly and diplomatically. Remember: Crystals discovered in territories with which we have an agreement are considered Syn assets even before recovered.

CRYSTAL HUNTER DUTY: THE ROUTE

Crystal Hunters operate under a single mandate: find and retrieve Crystals. These Agents are tasked with a route planned by Syn's intelligence officers and based on clues and rumors. A route is usually a five or six month journey with eight to ten stops, assuming about a week spent at every major stop. This can fluctuate depending on weather patterns, being asked to deal with local issues, having to report to Syn way stations, and other such interruptions.

Syn recruits two new teams every year or so. Each team is assigned hunting duty for a route or two, so at any given time there are about four Hunter groups in the world. Different teams are usually given mutual-



ly exclusive routes, although occasionally routes might converge in certain places—especially if Syn suspects more firepower might be needed for a certain mission.

Debriefing: Agents are required to contact an operator in one of the many Syn way stations or facilities once every six weeks or so. During these check-up meetings, the Agents:

- File reports on their missions.
- Provide all Crystals and shards gathered during the previous period. These new Crystals need to be brought back to Syn's citadel to be evaluated. An Agent can socket a Crystal that they found, but since Agents are only allowed to keep one Crystal at a time—the one in their harness—they'll need to return their previous one. Occasionally, teams “forget” to report a Crystal, even up until the very end of their route.
- Requisition new gear, Crystals, dossiers or maps. (See Requisition, page 35).
- Receive new orders. If this way station is on your designated route, you might find new orders waiting for your group.
- Review bulletin board requests. Each Syn facility has a bulletin board with open requests by local authorities asking for help. Taking one of these missions is an accepted detour from your designated route. Finishing a mission successfully might reward you with Requisition.

Many routes end with only a single Crystal being found, along with a shard or two. Not

all rumors are true, not all information is accurate, and not every team survives retrieval (but *your* team, of course, is not just *any* team!). See the Chasing Leads Setting Rule (page 80).

Advanced Duties

Veteran and Heroic Agents are assigned to one of three roles.

Free Agent: Despite what many Novice Agents believe, Free Agents aren't given complete free rein to do what they want. They must submit a plan and occasionally report on their achievements. Their efforts should help Syn in some way, either by providing resources, establishing connections, getting Crystals (always good!), etc. The details of the plan are left very much up to the Agent, as they are people who have proved that they are capable and can be trusted. That being said, being Free is still a designation, which can be changed depending on the Agent's desire and Syn's needs.

Specialist Duty: A team of Specialists is given a goal and sent on a mission, usually in service of a major political power, but occasionally to accomplish some goal of Syn's. Many such missions are time-sensitive or require specific Crystals; others are less defined, or have vague success conditions.

Subduer Duty: As far as Novice Agents have managed to figure out, Subduers are just like Specialists, except the missions they're on are top secret and only serve Syn. When they return, they tend to require long-term medical treatment. All further information is classified.

Syn Facilities

Syn maintains two to three main facilities in each Land, mostly in the big cities, along with several small way stations in remote areas. The main headquarters of Syn is its famed flying citadel, which is always on the move. These facilities support all Syn personnel, whether Crystal Hunters on a route, Specialists on loan to local powers, or Free Agents going through the area.

Services

Main facilities offer two of the following services; way stations offer only one. Choose or roll randomly:

- 1. Formal meeting rooms:** Agents meeting with non-Syn guests in these rooms receive +2 on social interaction rolls.
- 2. Local library:** Several well-stocked shelves of books and documents provide +2 to Research rolls.
- 3. Crystal examination chamber:** Grants +2 to Academics rolls to discover the abilities of Crystals.



4. Workshop and garage: Grants +2 on Engineering rolls to create or repair devices as well as vehicles.

5. Clinic: This medical center adds +2 to all Healing rolls and Vigor rolls for Natural Healing.

6. Training room: Agents using this room gain a Benny that can be used during the current or the following session. This requires at least several days of training.

Each Syn facility has a bulletin board with open requests by local authorities, see page 36 for more details.

Quirks

All Syn facilities also have their own unique quirks. The first time the Agents visit a main facility or way station, roll on the following table:

- 1. State of the Art:** One of the services offered in this facility is among the best Syn can provide, increasing the bonus to +4. Roll randomly or choose. In case of a training room, it gives two Bennies.
- 2. Lacking:** This facility is understaffed, suffers from a corporate culture of bad work ethic, or is very new or very old. The staff is barely helpful. The Tank can only resupply two levels here (see page 39).
- 3. Reputation:** The facility is known for some reason (roll or choose): 1. an important, positively-received event happened here; 2. an important, negatively-received event happened here; 3. a major disaster was averted, thanks to the facility or visiting Agents; 4. a huge scandal happened here, and the facility or visiting Agents were to blame.
- 4. Secretive:** This facility is hidden and is considered a “black ops site,” either as part of a close relationship with the local political power or completely unknown to them.
- 5. Multi-purpose:** This facility also serves as a different kind of thing altogether, such as a mercenary outfit, a fort, a theater, a dam, an observatory, etc.
- 6. Weird:** The facility is built or staffed in an unusual way: underwater, filled with robots, using a shard, etc.

Other Syn Facilities

On paper, Syn also maintains five research labs in remote locations around the conti-



nent. Specific coordinates, as well as the projects they are working on, are classified.

Persistent rumors also mention “the End-game,” but Agents who have shared these rumors have either disappeared or progressed to become one of the twelve Heroic Agents—who now hunt such Agents themselves.

THE SYN CITADEL

Everyone in the Five Lands knows that Syn is a technological power to be reckoned with, even without their Crystals. The sight of the gigantic Syn citadel floating quietly behind a cloud will alarm just about anyone.

The Syn citadel (occasionally referred to by Agents as the Syntadel) is a large structure combining a Bygone Age building with modern architecture, built on a floating rock. Many suspect the citadel was built on a Maseian floating mountain, but any specific details about it are kept secret, even from Agents.

The citadel has a comfortable barracks capable of hosting thirty Agents, as well as mess halls, study rooms, armories, and the like. The main garage holds four Tanks that are not currently on duty, as well as Syn’s three famous autoplanes: airplane-like vehicles that are used to get on and off the citadel.

About a third of the citadel is restricted, requiring a special clearance which Novice Agents can only get on a limited basis. The

restricted areas include the following:

- **Crystal Database:** A computer server disconnected from the main servers, containing all available information on retrieved Crystals and shards. Also includes all sensitive research data regarding Crystal theory.
- **Crystal Repository:** Dozens of rows of shelves housing all Crystals not currently in use, kept under highly-regulated conditions. It is rumored there’s a sub-basement in which Syn keeps all of the hearts it has removed from its Agents, even though there’s no known method to keep a heart from evaporating (or is there?).
- **Situation Room:** The main operation hub for high-Ranked Agents and administrative personnel, where analysts turn data into intelligence.
- **Main Servers:** Syn uses a sophisticated computer network to automate as much as possible, but this network only operates within the citadel—radio-based data communication is still in its infancy. The server rooms are also the offices of administration personnel, where mountains of orders, receipts, and instructions are printed and sent out into the world.
- **Council Chamber:** The strangest thing about the five leaders of Syn is that they seem to never *leave* their chamber. It could be that this is not only where they meet, but also where they are kept—erm, live.





- **The Cells:** When an Agent has done something seriously wrong, Syn sockets them with a very weak Crystal and keeps them locked up in a deep sub-basement, usually for several months. At least three Agents, however, are incarcerated for life.

Facilities: The citadel offers all types of services one can find at a Syn facility, and they're all State of the Art. It has no quirks; although, in a way, it has all of them.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

All main facilities, as well as the citadel, have a radio tower, but this technology can be unreliable: weather has a big impact on broadcast quality and the range is limited. With the citadel being in high altitude and constantly on the move, these are big issues. Therefore, most communication with the citadel and between the facilities is made via the autoplanes.

Syn's autoplanes are always on the move, visiting every main facility two to three times a week, bringing supplies, moving Agents and Crystals around, and delivering reports. Even some remote way stations get visited, usually once a week—but seeing as Syn only has three autoplanes, a place needs to be *really* out of the way to justify this privilege.

With landing strips being rare and only usable by Syn, the preferred mode of travel is by Tank. Special aerial pickups are sometimes authorized, especially when a mission demands it (Specialists tend to travel around a

lot), but in general the autoplanes have a standard flight plan and they stick to it.

Hierarchy Within the Organization

Not every Syn member is an Agent, and not all Agents are the same.

Administrative staff: These are the people who keep the gears moving and the organization organized. There are about two hundred of them spread throughout the citadel and land facilities. They include managers, office administrators, talent hunters, diplomats, trainers, teachers, doctors, researchers, mechanics, legal advisors, guards, and the like.

Agents: Any person who is equipped with a harness is an Agent. The five Ranks of *Savage Worlds* characters correspond to Agent ranks within Syn (and to Crystal power levels; see page 54).

Agents in training: Very few people apply to become Agents every year, and of them, even fewer can be equipped with a harness—not everyone passes the required tests. Only about eight Agents join Syn each year, becoming two teams of three or four. They train for six months, two teams at a time, receiving their harness around half-way through this period.

Novice Agents: These new and inexperienced Agents are all Crystal Hunters, given a route and tasked with finding Crystals. It's a dangerous job: about a third of the Hunters don't make it past their second year, dying in various horrible ways in some ancient tomb or by some unknown beast.

Seasoned Agents: Having survived a year or so (which equals one or two routes, generally speaking), an Agent graduates to Seasoned. Some of them become Special-





ists, but many continue Hunting. There are around thirty Novice and Seasoned Agents in about eight groups.

Veteran Agents: Syn employs about twenty-five Veteran Agents, most of whom are Specialists or Free Agents, with some Subduers.

Heroic Agents: There are only twelve Heroic Agents, and they are well-known among the Novice Agents as paragons of Agentness. Most Heroic Agents use Veteran Crystals, as Heroic Crystals are highly regulated and usually kept in the vaults.

The Council of Syn: Legendary founders and leaders of Syn, the five councilmembers are aloof and remote. Only two of them are known (and feared) among the Novice Agents; the other three keep to themselves. They are the only people allowed to carry the only five Legendary Crystals ever discovered.



Death of an Agent

Agents almost always work in teams. Even Free Agents like working together (perhaps because their fellow Agents are the only people who can relate to them). When an Agent is incarcerated or killed, a replacement must be found.

Fortunately, a replacement is almost always available. Teams of equal-Ranked Agents can be disbanded by Syn because of infighting, because they suffered some casualties themselves, or some arcane reason. They say that Syn psychologists occasionally bring certain people together for experiments in team dynamics.

The newly-arrived Agent is usually at least somewhat known to the others, since all Syn Agents have a vague familiarity with each other. Still, Syn might decide to bring the team back to the citadel for a week of training to have them get to know each other better.

The dead, meanwhile, are not forgotten. If the dead Agent's body can be retrieved, and if enough of it is left, and if Syn scientists haven't confiscated it, then the family of the deceased is presented with their remains—usually by their teammates.

Requisition

When an Agent needs something from the organization, they Requisition it. Requisition is an abstract measure of how much Syn believes you can be trusted with costly equipment and valuable information. It's also used instead of money when paying for goods and services outside of Syn: it's seen as your promise on behalf of Syn to provide money, goods, or services in return. Syn always honors promises made by its Agents, and agents know that if they promise too much they might not get to see another point of Requisition for a long, long time.

Your Requisition score can be used in two ways: as currency when buying things outside of Syn, and as a modifier to a skill roll when asking for things from within Syn (Crystals are a special case; see below). The highest it can go is 10. It can be reduced to zero and even become negative (In which case, Syn doesn't allow you to even ask for new equipment until you prove yourself and get back to at least 1).

Requisition can't be transferred between Agents.

GAINING REQUISITION

Novice Agents begin the game with one point of Requisition, and gain a point whenever they advance a Rank. Requisition also increases as you prove yourself in the following ways.

Doing your duty: Whenever a group of Agents arrives at a way station or a Syn facility (see page 31), they file a report of their journey and get debriefed. The Agents need to show that they participated in active duty and went through meaningful events (had an adventure!). Crystal Hunters usually gain one Requisition point every two months on duty. Specialists gain 2 points when returning from a mission. Free Agents need to report on their progress, and gain 2 points whenever they achieve a goal they set for themselves.

Completing a bulletin board request: Syn facilities keep track of requests by local authorities. Successfully completing a bulletin board request rewards each participating Agent with one or two Requisition. Successful missions can usually be reported to any Syn facility, not necessarily the one that issued the bulletin board request. Syn goes to great efforts to keep all Syn facilities up-to-date with the latest information. (See Communication and Transportation, page 34).

Retrieving a Crystal: When a new (or previously lost) Crystal is delivered to a Syn facility, all Agents in the team gain a point of Requisition per Rank of the Crystal.

ROLLING FOR GEAR

Syn supplies most of the basic things an Agent needs: lodging, clothes, food, ammo, and more.

When you want to get something from the Gear and Equipment section (see page 38), roll one of the following skill checks and add your Requisition as a modifier. Some items may be temporarily unavailable, GM's call.

- **Battle:** Justifying the need for an item or service by showing how it's going to be used in the field.
- **Persuasion:** Talking through the bureaucracy, finding the right people and saying the right things to them.
- **Research:** Finding, filling, and filing the right forms in the right order.



This is a regular skill check. It can Ace, you get your Wild Die, and you can spend Bennies on it. You can even Support one another (see Responsibility, below). Consult the following for the result:

- **Success:** The Agent gets issued the piece of gear they requested or the service they asked for. Reduce their Requisition by 2.
- **Raise:** The Agent gets everything they wanted, and reduces their Requisition by 1.
- **Failure:** The Agent gets what they wanted, but there are complications; draw a card and consult the table on the opposite page. They also reduce their Requisition by 1.
- **Critical Failure:** The Agent doesn't get anything, but doesn't lose any Requisition. They might have gained an *enemy*, though, and they're told to never again ask for whatever they requested.

Each attempt represents several hours, or occasionally several days, during which the Agent is busy with the request.

Penalties: Syn expects Agents to ask for something once every few weeks (once per adventure, more or less), usually a single



YOU GOT IT, BUT...

Card suit	Complication
Spades	The item is fine but the maintenance is a killer. As long as you have the item, someone on the team must make an Engineering roll every morning or it inflicts a -1 penalty on every Trait roll made with it. This stops when you get a raise on the Engineering roll, but might return depending on the GM's decision.
Hearts	For whatever reason, your current Crystal doesn't resonate well with the new piece of gear. As long as you have the item, you must make a Spirit roll every morning. If you fail, then after every Crystal Channeling roll made that day you become Distracted. This stops when you get a raise on the roll, but might return when the GM decides so.
Diamonds	Your request forced Syn to pull the item from someone else who was asking for it or already using it. They're not happy. Take them as a Minor Enemy. The GM can decide their displeasure is satisfied by having them reduce your Requisition by 1d4.
Clubs	The piece of equipment is flawed. Until you manage to repair the item (Hard Engineering roll with specific materials) you become Vulnerable whenever you draw Clubs in combat.
Joker	A serious misfiling accident leads to you having received the latest prototype! It's better by one point, or twice as quick or effective.

item or a kit. Making more frequent requests or asking for more things is considered unusual, and the GM should apply a -1 to -2 modifier on the roll. Note that rare or expensive items incur additional modifiers, as noted under Gear and Equipment.

Responsibility: The equipment you roll for becomes your responsibility. While it's possible for an Agent to Requisition things for other Agents, Syn discourages this (in the form of a -1 penalty per other Agent) as they prefer each Agent to take responsibility for their own gear.

An Agent can Support another Agent's Requisition roll, but this means they both share the responsibility for the item. A Supporting Agent adds their own Requisition modifier to their roll.

If a piece of gear that you're responsible for is ruined or lost, you might be penalized several Requisition points.

Example: The team gets ready to head into the Fjordstadian Wilds, and they all Requisition winter survival gear; the GM references the Savage Worlds gear chapter, and decides the modifier is -1. Beuford's Requisition skills are all either low or non-existent, so they're worried they'll get a faulty coat. Noelani comes to their rescue with her d8 Persuasion and Supports their roll, helping them get a success. Should this coat be ruined, both Beuford and Noelani will be penalized for it.

Noelani considered Requisitioning the winter gear for the whole team by herself, but the GM informed her she'll have a -4 penalty on the roll (-1 per other Agent), meaning should she fail they might all get faulty gear... None of the others is likely to be able to Support her successfully, so she decided against it.

BUYING THINGS WITH REQUISITION POINTS

Some special services need to be bought with Requisition by spending an appropriate number of Requisition points. Several Agents can spend points together on the same purchase. You can't pay with what you don't have, so your score can't be brought down to a negative number—unless some interesting skill rolls are involved!

Access, favors, and purchases: When dealing with people from outside of Syn, Requisition can be spent as a combination of money and influence in order to gain access to restricted places (the VIP section of a club), pay for services (go and guard the caravan until morning), or purchase items (I need three hundred chicken eggs right now, don't ask why).

As a guideline, a point of Requisition can be spent to buy something uncommon or costly. It's the equivalent of around \$250 from the *Savage Worlds* core book. A point of Requisition can also be paid to add +2 to Networking rolls.

Syn's Involvement in Your Game

Some groups will want to have Syn less "in their face," keeping the organization as a background story and nothing more. Others may want to have complicated relationships with the organization, perhaps even focusing their campaign on exploring Syn and its many secrets.

Dropping some elements is easy ("We don't need Requisition, let's just get what seems plausible") but increasing Syn's influence requires extra effort. The *Living in Syn* expansion has lots of options that'll enrich your Syn experience: training rules, random events, more mentors, services, Edges, storylines, and more. It's available through uptofourplayers.com/CrystalHeart.

It can be safely assumed that Agents have enough local money to buy simple and common things. Beyond that, the rarer the object, the less likely its owner is to agree to sell or trade it.

Dossiers and maps: Requisitioning special information can only be done at Syn facilities and way stations. As a guideline, a point of Requisition can be spent once per Research check to add +4 to the roll (not including Research rolls made as Requisition requests). The more obscure the information, the less likely it'll be available in the facility, and therefore will need to be brought from the citadel or some other location. This usually takes a few days, a week at most. Way stations only have information about the Land they're in.

Known Crystals: Requisitioning for Crystals can only be done at Syn facilities and way stations. You can ask for a specific Crystal from the list of known Crystals, provided it's currently available (not used by another Agent or allocated to research). The cost in Requisition is 1 + the Crystal's Rank.

Since each Agent is only allowed to carry one Crystal, you must return your previous Crystal after receiving the new one (no, you don't get a "refund"). If you want to carry two, you'll need to persuade some higher ups you have good reasons to carry both, and will probably be asked to return the extra one after a while. Or, you can take The Right Crystal For the Job Edge (page 19).

Availability is up to the GM, but as a general rule, most Novice and Seasoned Crystals should be available while most Veteran Crystals should not. If another Agent is carrying the desired Crystal, they can perhaps be persuaded with a promise of favors, Support rolls on future Requisition requests, etc. It takes about a week for the request to be sent to the citadel and for the Crystal to be brought back from the Repository; twice as long if correspondence with another Agent is required (provided that Agent is available at all!).

Asking for Heroic Crystals always requires justification. An Agent must come to the citadel for an interview in which they explain their need for the Crystal. These Crystals are given on a limited-time basis, and cost 6 Requisition. Legendary Crystals cannot be requisitioned.

Gear and Equipment

Syn supplies everything you need, most of the time.

GETTING GEAR

All Agents begin with some basic gear as described in the *Agents of Syn* chapter.

Availability: Most mundane pieces of gear are available for Requisition in the main facilities, but way stations are not as well-equipped. The Requisitioning Agent might need to wait a few days for their request to be received at the citadel and brought by an autplane. All Syn gear technically belongs to Syn, and is only *loaned* for the duration of the Agent's mission. Agents are expected to return any piece of gear ASAP if asked to.

Requisition Modifier: Each item has a Requisition modifier which is subtracted from the roll (or occasionally added, if it's easy to make or readily available). The rarer or more specialized the gear an Agent asks for, the higher the penalty. Asking for many units of an item may incur additional penalties at the GM's discretion.

Replacement Gear: Once you are issued an item, it means Syn thinks you deserve to always have it (until returned). If it's lost or damaged you'll get a replacement, no Requisition roll needed. If you lose too much gear or something unique, you might be penalized a Requisition point or two, though.



Most personal gear in Syn is custom-made especially for the Agent. Should a replacement be needed, it can be quickly fabricated in the citadel and delivered to the facility where the request was made within two to three days. If Syn has given you a great axe, you will always be delivered a replacement if you need it—but if someone else wants one, they'll need to make a Requisition roll (there are no great axes just lying around in Syn facilities).

Note that nothing prevents you from carrying around five rocket launchers should you be able to find and wield them. However, Syn will not provide ammo, maintenance, or replacements to items it did not issue.

Returning Gear: Once you're done with a piece of equipment and have no more use for it, you can simply return it at the next Syn facility you visit. You don't get any "refund", but at least you're no longer responsible for the item. On occasion, you might be asked to return an item you're not finished with if it's needed somewhere else or has scheduled maintenance.

Ammo and Supplies

To track consumables, such as ammo and grenades, we suggest a variation on the Allies ammo rule from *Savage Worlds*.

Any Agent who uses guns, grenades, throwing knives or any other weapon that can "run out" has a supply level of High. After each fight the supply level goes down by one, first to Low and then to Out. If an Agent is dealt a Two during an action scene, their supply level drops down by one after that round.

The Tank carries enough stuff to resupply any consumable issued to the Agents, but its space is limited to eight levels of supplies. Whenever an Agent resupplies from the Tank, reduce the Tank's supply by one and increase the Agent's supply to High.

The Tank is fully restocked whenever it arrives at a Syn facility, no Requisition roll required (if the facility is lacking, it resupplies only two levels; see page 32). It is assumed that the facility received beforehand a list of ammo types required by the Agents, knowing they'll be coming this



way. If the visit was unexpected, the GM can rule that some types of supplies are unavailable (usually those that originate in other Lands). The GM might deem it possible to refill some types of consumables in the field by purchasing goods or salvaging.

PROTECTION

Combat Armor: The epitome of Syn defensive technology has ballistic protection (-4 damage from bullets) and an adjustable helmet. There are only a handful of these in existence.

Environmental suit: This full-body suit provides immunity to several specific Hazards and grants +2 to Vigor checks against others, depending on the specific suit. It is cumbersome, making you Clumsy.

Reinforced suit: Same as the Syn suit, but reinforced with ceramics and extra protection for sensitive areas. While the regular Syn suit is custom-made and therefore cool-looking, the reinforced suit is like a custom-made *battle upgrade*, and therefore super-cool-looking.

PROTECTION

Type	Armor/ Cover	Min Str.	Weight	Requisition Modifier
Syn suit (torso, arms, legs)	+1	d4	8	+0
Reinforced suit (torso, arms, legs)	+2	d6	20	-2
Combat armor (head, torso, arms, legs)	+4	d8	25	-4
Helmet (head)	+3	d4	3	+0
Shield	+2 / -2	d4	2	-1
Environmental suit (entire body)	+2	d6	30	-3

Syn suit: Each Agent is issued 3 custom-made suits tailored to their measurements. The suit is made with reinforced fabric which provides one point of Armor, and has various pockets or sashes so the wearer can carry their favorite weapon with ease. The suit is also insulated, providing basic protection in harsh weather.

MELEE WEAPONS

The Five Lands are varied and strange, but Syn's fabricators are flexible. Many types of weapons are available to the Agents.

You can use any Medieval or Modern weapon from the *Savage Worlds* Melee Weapons list. When Requisitioning a weapon from these lists, the GM should apply any Requisition modifier that seems reasonable (at least -1 if it's Modern).

The following is a list of weapons generally available from Syn or unique to the *Crystal Heart* setting.

Syn Knife: Stainless steel, good grip, elongated shape. You can get up to five.

Syn Sword: These statistics represent a generic sword, but it's possible to Requisition some modifications. Any of the following can be added, up to twice each: AP 1; Parry +1; Reach 1; increase damage die by one step. Each modification costs 1 point of Requisition (2 if taken a second time) which is spent after the roll. Having more than one modification increases the sword's minimum Strength requirement to d8.

Bogovian Charm Mace: Bogovians are superstitious and poor. The charm mace is the natural result of these two aspects: it's a repurposed heavy item, usually an old hammer, metal pan, or even a mail post. It is adorned with half a dozen charms, each with some

significance to the owner, such as a reminder of her village or a symbol of his religious sect. Simply wielding this weapon in combat provides the Bogovian owner with the Strong Willed Edge (or an additional +1 on the rolls if they already have it). Anyone else will roll Fighting with -2 because of the strange balance of the weapon.

Bogovian Fourstaff: Also nicknamed "false staff", the fourstaff is made of four pieces of hollow, hard wood. Each piece is about a foot in length and internally connected with a thin chain or rope. When extended, it looks like a regular staff. Originally used by shepherds to knock over an escaping sheep and carry it back on their shoulders, the fourstaff became a common farmer weapon.

It can be used to knock someone off their feet, usually by hitting the knees. The attacker makes a Called Shot against the target's leg (-2). On a success, the target must make a Strength check against the damage of the attack or fall prone. When used in grappling, an Entangled or Bound victim must make their breaking free roll with -2.

Island Walrus: The walrus is a yard-long staff with a curved walrus tusk at both ends. In the Islands, the walrus is an important part of a Capoeira-style martial art form.

When used to attack with the Frenzy Edge, it allows you to roll an extra Wild Die. As with your regular Wild Die, the extra one doesn't add an additional attack, but instead can replace a Fighting result. Extras get a single Wild Die. When used to hang on high branches, it can grant +1 on Athletics checks.

Maseian Slash: An elegant scimitar-like sword, carved from animal bones. It's surprisingly sharp when held correctly. When



getting a raise on an attack, it deals +1d8 damage instead of +1d6.

Zingamaian Snakebite: The snakebite is a very thin, very elegant knife favored by members of high society. The hilt is hollow, typically containing a single dose of a potent paralyzing agent (Vigor -2 or paralyzed for 1d6 minutes). If the target is unaware of the knife, the attack can be made with a Thievery check instead of Fighting (and also, The Drop!).

Zingamaian Whip: The whip is a staple Zingamaian weapon; it's easy to get vines in a jungle. It can also be used to disarm and then tie someone up, which is useful if you want to trade the victim for ransom later (killing your enemies directly is considered very bad taste in Zingamaian society). A whip provides +1 on the Fighting roll during disarm attempts, while also forcing the target to roll their Strength roll with -1. Provided there's something to wrap it around, a whip can also triple the length of a jump. A whip cannot be used against adjacent foes.

RANGED WEAPONS

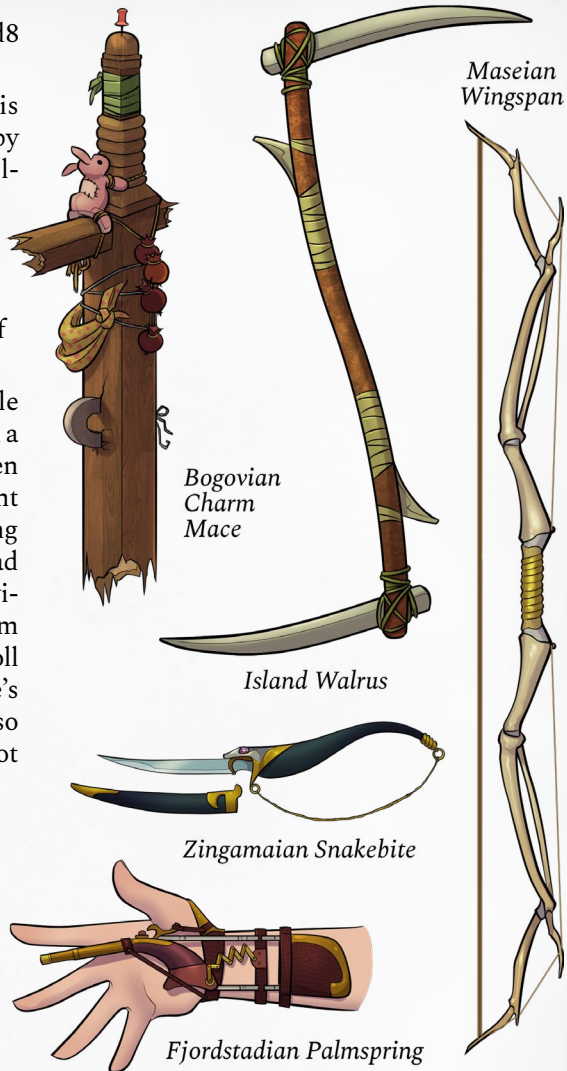
The introduction of firearms during the previous generation hasn't (yet) revolutionized combat, mostly because all firearms still need to be manufactured personally by craftsmen and ammo is rare.

You can use any Ranged, Black Powder (only pistols and muskets) or Pistol (only revolvers) weapon from *Savage Worlds*. When Requisitioning a weapon from these lists, the GM should apply any negative Requisition modifier that seems reasonable, at least -1.

The following is a list of weapons generally available from Syn or unique to the *Crystal Heart* setting.

Syn Pistol: A simple revolver, reliable and light. Can be upgraded to an advanced, semi-automatic version for -2 Requisition, increasing the range to 12/24/48 and the number of shots to 10. A second upgrade, which must be taken after the first, increases the damage to 2d8 for -4 Requisition.

Fjordstadian Buzzer: The buzzer is a bulky, anti-riot ranged weapon, which shoots dozens of small electrically charged balls. It uses the shotgun rules, but deals nonlethal damage.



Fjordstadian Palmspring: The palmspring is a small, surprisingly flat pistol. It rests under the base of the palm, tied to the wrist with a reinforced leather strap. It's hard to Notice (-2 on the check) unless one is searching specifically for it. The palmspring can be shot without being held in your hand, with a twist of the wrist, but it still takes an action to do so.

Island Whistle: A whistle is a boomerang-shaped stick, carved to create a chilling whistle as it flies through the air. It is usually thrown in a "chorus": three whistles launched in rapid succession in different arcs. When doing so using Multi-Action, the whistling seems to come from all directions at once, forcing the target to freeze. This is resolved as a Test using the highest attack result against the target's Smarts, *before* any

whistle hits. A whistle that missed its target returns to its owner's hand at the end of their turn; if all three miss, the thrower should probably duck.

Maseian Wingspan: A collapsible, highly flexible compound bow made from the bones of a bird. It is usually carried by Maseian princes, in a scabbard next to a slash.

Zingamaian Dart: This is a short, thick, and light aerodynamic sting, made from the branch of a naturally toxic tree. On piercing the skin it releases a powerful depressant (Vigor -2 or take a level of Fatigue; fall unconscious on a Critical Failure). Despite being somewhat "primitive" for the fine tastes of Zingamaian society—it's basically a sharp stick—it remains popular thanks to the fact that its natural toxin remains effective for several years. Most other poisons turn inert mere minutes or hours after being exposed to air.

GRENADES

Grenades are quite popular in some of the Lands, and many have unusual payloads.

A character choosing a type of grenade as a weapon is considered to be carrying three of them in various accessible pockets of their suit, with several more in a backpack (three of which can be retrieved as an action). There's no need to keep track of every grenade—it's recommended you use the Ammo and Supplies rules (page 39).

The following is a list of the grenades available from Syn or in the wider *Crystal Heart* setting.

Bogovian Papricrash: The papricrash is a small bundle of crushed seeds tightly wrapped in leather. It has several uses.

If thrown as-is, the highly spicy powder is released mid-air and gets into the nose, eyes and mouth of anyone failing a Vigor roll (at -2 with a raise) in a Small Blast Template, making them Stunned.

If mixed with the right dosage of water and some other common ingredients (an Engineering roll if in a hurry), the small satchel can be used as an explosive. It deals a number of d6s equal to the number of satchels (up to three) in a Small Blast Template. This can be thrown like a regular grenade, but it's heavy and clumsy, and the range is 3/6/12.

Finally, the papricrash seeds can be used to season a meal, usually potatoes in a stew.

Fjordstadian Flashflash: Crafted in Frahnauffen, the Fjordstadian city of lenses, this variant of a stun grenade is what happened when its inventors stubbornly refused to cooperate with people from Zeltser, the city which specializes in sounds. While the real-world flashbang releases a flash and a bang, the flashflash releases—you guessed it—two flashes.

The first flash is a sudden light in Medium Blast Template, forcing all targets to make a Vigor roll (at -2 with a raise) or suffer a -2 penalty to all actions requiring sight until the end of their next turn.

At the start of the next round, the tiny reflecting particles released by the first burst react with the air, creating a very bright flash in a Large Blast Template. Targets must make a Vigor roll or become Stunned; if they were blinded by the first flash, they make this roll with -2. Targets who know this second flash is coming can prepare by closing their eyes for the entire round, thus being immune but also effectively blind with -6 to all physical tasks that require vision.

Island Dreck: The fist-sized fruit of the dreck tree is pointy and smelly, but its insides are savory and delicious—until it rots, at which point the fruit becomes so amazingly putrid it can be weaponized. A thrown dreck is soft enough to explode on contact, releasing a stench that forces everyone in a Medium Blast Template to make a Vigor roll or become Distracted (or even Stunned on a Critical Failure).

Carrying dreck fruits for more than a month is risky business. On the one hand, they achieve such incredible levels of putridness that the Vigor roll is made with a -2. On the other hand, they're getting ready to burst, and will eventually open on their own to release their gunk all over the insides of your Tank—or in your hand, if you were dealt a Club on your turn.

The Fjordstadian city Lebeny has a similar weapon, the canned fooya fish. The can must be opened before being thrown, not unlike pulling the safety pin from a grenade.



MELEE WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Min Str.	Weight	Requisition Modifier	Notes
Syn Knife	Str+d4	d4	1	+1	-2 to be Noticed if hidden
Syn Sword	Str+d6	d6	2	+1	Varies
Bogovian Charm Mace	Str+d6	d6	10	+0	
Bogovian Fourstaff	Str+d4	d4	8	-1	Parry +1, Reach 1, two hands
Island Walrus	Str+d6	d6	8	-2	Parry +1, two hands
Maseian Slash	Str+d6	d6	2	+0	
Zingamaian Snake-bite	Str+d4	d4	1	-2	Poison
Zingamaian Whip	Str+d4	d4	3	+0	Disarming, Reach 3

RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Weight	Requisition Modifier	Shots	Min Str	Notes
Syn Knife	3/6/12	Str+d4	1	1	+1	-	d4	-2 to be Noticed if hidden
Syn Pistol	10/20/40	2d6+1	1	4	-1	6	d4	AP 1
Fjordstadian Buzzer	10/20/40	1-3d6	1	8	-2	2	d6	Nonlethal, Shotgun
Fjordstadian Palmspring	3/6/12	2d4	1	1	-2	3	d4	Revolver, -4 to be Noticed if hidden
Island Whistle	4/8/16	Str+d4	1	2	+0	-	d6	
Maseian Wingspan	12/24/48	Str+d6	1	3	-1	-	d6	AP 1
Zingamaian Dart	3/6/12	1d4	1	1	+0		d4	Poison

GRENADES

Type	Range	Damage	Blast	Weight	Requisition Modifier
Bogovian Papricrash	4/8/16	Special	SBT	2	+0
Fjordstadian Flashflash	5/10/20	Special	MBT/LBT	1	-1
Island Dreck	4/8/16	Special	MBT	1	-1
Maseian Glass Spiker	5/10/20	2d6	MBT	2	-1
Maseian Glass Statue	4/8/16	3d6	SBT	3	-1
Zingamaian Acid Bomb	5/10/20	2d6	MBT	1	-1
Zingamaian Smoke Bomb	5/10/20	Special	MBT	1	-3



Maseian Glass Spiker: This simple clay pot hides a deadly secret. When thrown against a hard object the pot shatters, mixing the two compartments within that contain special sand and a catalyzer. A chemical reaction heats the sand by several hundred degrees in milliseconds, turning it into dozens of sharp glass shards that erupt outward. The shards remain on the ground after the damage is dealt, making it Difficult Ground. A creature can ignore this penalty by making an Athletics roll, but they take 1d6 damage if they fail.

Maseian Glass Statue: Twice as big and heavy as the spiker, the statue utilizes the same chemical reaction in a very different way. Upon shattering, the sand crystallizes into glass in a sudden growth upward from the point of impact, creating a thick column. Creatures in the area must make a Strength check to avoid being pushed away 1d6 inches.

Zingamaian Acid Bomb: This is a small, thick globe of specially-crafted glass, holding less than an ounce of powerful acid. The acid is released on impact. At the start of the next round it deals damage again to everyone who was hurt by the blast, but of one die type less (2d4). A high-concentrate version of this weapon exists, starting with 2d8 damage, but these are costly to produce and come with a Requisition modifier of -3.

Zingamaian Smoke Bomb: Similar to the acid bomb, this even smaller glass globe contains a gas-based acid which erupts into a thick cloud that obscures vision (-4) in a Medium Blast Template. Anyone who breathes in the smoke starts coughing, becoming Vulnerable on a failed Vigor roll (at -2 with a raise). The bomb is commonly used by assassins who drop it at *their own feet* to escape unseen; they take a breath a moment before to avoid having to roll against choking.

UNCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

There exist in the world semi-automatic pistols, shotguns, some rifles, and even lasers, and all can be used as starting weapons with a good rationalization. They are all (probably) prototypes, and therefore harder to Requisition than normal with a modifier of -3 to -5, GM's call.

Assault rifles, submachine guns and machine guns should not be available for Agents, but might be found in the hands of killer robots or Bygone Age security systems.

Example: Guy, Macintosh's player, wants to start the game with a shotgun. Mac comes from a noble Fjordstaditan family and he's a trained engineer, so the GM agrees that he probably crafted this shotgun himself. Guy and the GM decide it's a Double-Barrel shotgun, because it seems the most fitting for Mac.

SPECIALIZED GEAR

Common gear: Most items of gear from *Savage Worlds* can be Requisitioned with +1 to -2 modifier. See Technology (page 84) for guidelines on what's available.

Skill kit: Each skill kit is a pack of tools and equipment which either enable new actions—such as spelunking, skiing, or golf—or provide a +1 bonus when used to achieve a specific task.

Some skill kits include:

- **Academics kit:** A collection of books, diagrams, and essays about a specific topic, granting +1 on relevant Academics and Research checks.
- **Chemistry kit:** Grants +1 on Academics checks to identify materials and compositions.
- **Climbing kit:** Includes a rappelling rope, ice axe, carabiners, and more. Grants +1 on Athletics checks to climb.
- **Disguise kit:** Includes many types of make-up, with a variety of styles of clothing. Allows an Agent to disguise themselves with Performance (opposed with Notice).
- **Diving kit:** A scuba diving suit and an underwater light. Allows diving for long periods of time, with +1 on the Athletics checks.
- **First aid kit:** Most Healing checks require a first aid kit, otherwise they are made with a -1 modifier. This includes recovering from desync. Every Tank comes stocked with a first aid kit.
- **Locksmith kit:** Grants +1 on Thievery checks to disarm traps and mechanical devices. Can also be used to pick locks.
- **Mechanic's kit:** Includes a blowtorch, monkey wrench, and a variety of tools and



SPECIALIZED GEAR		
Item	Requisition Modifier	Weight
Common gear	Varies	Varies
Skill kit	-2	Varies
Skill kit, state of the art	-4	Varies

VEHICLES						
Vehicle	Size	Handling	Top Speed (MPH)	Toughness	Crew	Notes
Tank	5 (Large)	+1	120	14 (2)	1+5	Four-Wheel Drive, Air Bags & Safety Harnesses
Autoplane	8 (Huge)	+2	540	16 (2)	12	Night Vision
Snow Glider	0	+1	50	7	1+1	Tracked
Syn Boat	7(Large)	+1	32	15 (4)	1+5	-

replacement parts. Grants +1 on Engineering checks to repair large devices.

- **Performance kit:** Includes a few useful tools for a specific type of performance, such as musical instrument and notations, costumes, books about rhetoric techniques, etc.. Grants +1 on a relevant Performance check.
- **Riding kit:** Everything one needs to ride a specific type of creature, with +1 on the Riding rolls.
- **Sailing kit:** Maps, measuring tools, sextant, compass and spyglass, granting +1 on Boating when navigating.
- **Scouting kit:** Includes binoculars, silhouette guides, lamp lights and more, granting +1 on Notice checks in the wild.
- **Skiing kit:** A pair of lightweight collapsible skis and footwear clips, including skiing poles.
- **Tinkerer kit:** Includes soldering iron, tweezers, hammer, screwdrivers and many replacement parts. Grants +1 on Engineering checks to repair small devices.
- **Stealth kit:** A variety of camouflage makeup and clothes grant +1 on Stealth checks.
- **Survival kit:** Includes guides, water filters and basic camping gear, granting +1 on Survival checks in a specific Land.

Skill kit, state of the art: These kits include durable, high-quality pieces of equipment that aren't part of the regular kit. They provide a +2 bonus on relevant skill checks.

THE TANK

The Most-Terrain-Vehicle is aptly named. While it can drive on many surfaces, it can't go underwater, and Syn takes its definitions seriously. In any case, most Agents call it the Tank.

About a dozen of these vehicles exist, each assembled and maintained by Syn engineers. At any given time, about four Tanks are at the citadel for repairs and upkeep.

Inside the Tank

The front seat of the Tank has room for a driver and two passengers, with four more in the back seat. The cabin serves as a small mobile house, with four foldable beds (and bedrolls if there are more Agents in the team), insulated walls, and even a sink and shower.



The Tank's cabin holds enough supplies and ammunition for about a month. It also has six compartments to store Crystals to keep them from turning feral, as well as a repair kit, several small replacement parts, and a first aid kit.

The Tank has enough fuel for a week or so and is refueled at every way station. Generally speaking, running out of fuel should be a narrative decision of the GM.

The Tank's tires are fantastically durable. They're made from a self-sealing material called cyclipede, manufactured by Syn using a Crystal.

AUTOPLANES

Syn has three autoplanes to transfer people and cargo between the citadel and the ground, and to deliver information between all of its main facilities. See Communication and Transportation, page 34.

The autoplanes have a small cockpit, but it's rarely used—only a handful of Agents and engineers know how to pilot them. Most of the time, the planes navigate with an automated system that relies on radio transmissions from the citadel and the main facilities on the ground. Storms disrupt the signals, so Syn prefers to avoid sending out planes during adverse weather conditions. Syn's engineering department wait eagerly for these pauses in service, because they hardly ever get time to maintain the planes.

One of the three autoplanes is nicknamed "The Mammoth". It's Size 10 (Huge) with Handling -2, capable of carrying 20 people, lots of cargo, and a Tank.

OTHER VEHICLES

Syn has access to the following motorized vehicles and possibly others.

Snow Glider: These snow bikes are used almost exclusively in Fjordstad. They have room for a driver and one rider.

Syn Boat: The "sea Tank" is Syn's solution for Agents moving through the Islands, and has similar features to a Tank. They are technically usable in most rivers as well. There's one allocated to a facility on the Golden River in Zingama.

Is Syn a Force For Good?

That's a question many Seasoned Agents start to ask themselves at some point. While it's true that many Crystals are a danger to those around them, after a few months on a route an Agent gets to see that it's not all black and white, and some Crystals, maybe, should not be disturbed. In some cases, Syn's claim that "All your Crystals belong to us" can seem like downright bullying—if a village has been using a Crystal's byproducts for hundreds of years, who is Syn to come and claim they can just take it?

Syn wants all the Crystals. But why? And is it worth the cost in ruined lives? The doctrine demands all Crystals be brought back to the citadel, but the people who issued this demand are either unaware of the implications or turn a blind eye. Can it be that the end goal is **that** important, that the end justifies the means?

Eventually, it's up to the Agents to answer these questions on a case-by-case basis.

The Twelve Heroic Agents

The following collection of unusual people is a list of Syn's most powerful Agents: The Heroics. Most Novice Agents have heard tales of them and see them as paragons of Agent-iness.

Most Heroic Agents use Veteran Crystals, as Heroic Crystals are highly regulated and usually kept in the vaults.

Adventure Seeds

The Game Master can read about the secrets and motivations of each of these Agents, along with their full statistics, in the *Adversaries and Challenges* chapter.



BACH

A skeptical Fjordstadian researcher who seeks to explain events through science.

Early in Bach Schwarzschild's childhood, he was diagnosed with a cracked heart: a terminal disorder that quickly led to severe health issues. During his early years as an adult, a solution to his problems came from a most unfortunate source. His best friend Mori died in an accident, but his heart remained intact and fit for a transplant. It was one of the first ever performed.

Throughout Bach's twenties, Syn's influence steadily grew around Fjordstad and the world. Bach became fascinated by their Crystal technology, especially since it required one to remove their own heart—a concept which was, well, close to his heart.

Bach soon joined the organization, determined to solve the riddle of how a “prosthetic heart” such as a Crystal could be created, and by whom. He quickly climbed the ranks, being persistent—some say too persistent—in his efforts to research the Crystals and explain their powers by scientific means. This narrow focus often leads him to mistrust the use of Crystals, since he is not at all convinced they were created for the role they now fulfil.

He firmly believes in keeping a rational mindset, and occasionally obsesses over seemingly supernatural mysteries, unrelenting until he finds a rational explanation. He strongly believes that if he unlocks the inner workings of the Crystals he will help humanity move past superstition and what he calls “primitive thinking.”

Bach carries Geist (Veteran), with which he can interact with the wisps of memories left within hearts. He can also read and occasionally re-write memories, whether the heart is dead or alive.



GARRIDAN

A studious Bogovian engineer who simply cannot refuse a good mystery.

At first glance, Garridan Gouyar looks nothing like an Agent. He is overweight, scruffy, and carries around an old tool belt. But take a look in his eyes, and you'll see the spark: serious, thoughtful, and *hungry*.

Studious and determined, Garridan got into a lot of trouble with his parents for taking things apart to see how they work. His family indulged him and funded his studies at the best Bogovian institutions, but the ancient colleges weren't enough for him and the mysteries of Crystals proved too alluring to ignore.

Garridan is very book smart. Once his wandering mind settles on a new question, he will spend a lot of time and energy to find the answer. He keeps many personal notebooks with details on every topic that ever interested him, including one notebook for each Crystal he encountered. The first pages of the notebooks are meticulously kept, but should an answer be out of reach, the writing becomes sloppy as obsession turns to frustration and he has to turn away from his quest for knowledge.

As the least favored of five children, Garridan never thought of himself as a family man—but recently his mother fell ill, and something shifted within him. He now would very much like for his family to *feel* like a family again, which is why he chases down his siblings—who regularly squabble with one another—in an effort to bring them together.

Garridan carries Sketch (Heroic), with which he can manifest imagined things as constructs in the real world or become slightly imaginary himself.



IVAN

A serious, efficient Bogovian who carries the weight of the world on his shoulders.

At 56 years old, Ivan Novak is one of the oldest Syn Agents on record. A Subduer for many years, he knows more about the true nature of the world, the Crystals, and Syn than almost any other Agent. He is also aware of how important it is to keep this information completely secret.

Throughout his prestigious career, Ivan has only ever used five Crystals, claiming it's better to focus one's skills with a single Crystal as much as possible. He has achieved fantastic control over his most well-used Crystals, and is considered highly dangerous even with Novice ones.

Ivan was instrumental in the establishment of many of Syn's protocols. He took part in some of the earliest recovery missions, and lost a friend (and a leg, he walks with a prosthetic) trying to overcome a feral Crystal's manifestations. It became a dream of his to gain control over that Crystal, Revert, and he used his power within the organization to prevent any other Agent from socketing it until he felt confident enough to try himself. After finally taming Revert, and believing himself to have achieved the peak of discipline, he set his sights on a very different goal.

Revert (Heroic) allows Ivan to undo anything man-made, then redo it. Ivan doesn't have the Right Crystal for the Job Edge, yet he is allowed to carry a second Crystal, Light-headed (Novice), which makes him very light and gives him easier maneuverability. He switches between the two Crystals with no risk using a unique mechanism that's placed on the chest. Ivan spends most of the time with Revert, but likes to switch to Light-headed on occasion, claiming the Crystal's meditative-like disposition helps him think.



JORDAN

An overly serious Fjordstadian bureaucrat who has trouble relating to people.

Jordan Flak's background is unusual for a Syn Agent, because he is one of the very few who joined the ranks after already being a part of Syn. He entered the organization as an accountant and was head of the logistics department for many years, until one day something happened (he keeps the specifics to himself) that made him decide to be more than just a bureaucrat.

Jordan joined the training program late in life, but it didn't prevent him from achieving greatness. In fact, his deep understanding of Syn protocols helped him not only survive through several dangerous missions, but become a Heroic Agent in a few short years. He did it without much help from his friends within Syn, since he barely has any.

Jordan's interpersonal skills were always his greatest weakness. He is overly direct, never relaxed, and needlessly wordy. Jordan's sister Sara is a scientist working for Syn and his closest friend. They talk for long hours during which he advises her on many topics. Even though she rarely needs his long winded advice, she is happy to spend the time with him.

Jordan carries Absence (Veteran), a Crystal that can make things disappear forever, forgotten by all.



KELLY

A welcoming, supportive Islander who has no quarrels with anyone.

Kelly K'wanga is a people person: she'll talk to anyone about anything. Despite her natural social intuitions, she doesn't really *get* the difference between a beggar and a king. Even after many years of interacting with cultures across the world, she just can't seem to understand the structure of society and the concept of status. She realizes that others find worth in differentiating between people, and most of the time she's able to account for that in her plans, but occasionally she simply forgets. People find her somewhat weird, but also very charming.

Kelly spent seven years as a Crystal Hunter—longer than most—enjoying the chance to get to know hundreds of people from all over the continent. For the past two years she's been working as a Free Agent, an ambassador of goodwill for Syn, helping in public relations around the Lands.

Kelly slots Ego (Veteran), which enhances her ego to ridiculous levels: it allows her to have more Kelly, and even some Kelly in other people.



MARC

A friendly and courageous Bogovian troublemaker who frequently leaps before he looks.

Marc Zest is one of the friendliest Agents in Syn. People often ask him why he joined, simply because his answer is so endearing: "I wanted to help people, and this seemed like the best way to do so."

While this is true, it's also true that Marc hardly ever thinks two steps ahead. When he first heard of Syn and their willingness to risk themselves for others, he joined on the same day. Joining an organization that brings so much good to the world simply seemed like the best thing to do at that moment. It's a decision he hasn't regretted since, despite leaving behind important people and duties.

When Marc was young he rescued a wolfhound pup from a hunting trap, and the two immediately bonded. Morgana is his constant companion, and he finds her inspiring. She doesn't judge or lecture him about the complications brought on by his impulsive decisions; she just acts like a beast, immediately taking care of the current issue head-on.

Marc currently carries Beast (Veteran), a Crystal that forces one's primal beast to manifest.





NUI

A courageous Islander sea captain who hunts treasure.

Ever since she was rescued by an Agent when she was a teen, Nui o Mua has been taken in by the awesomeness and romanticism of Syn. The life of a Syn Agent is so full of adventure, she just had to become one! She devoted herself to joining the organization and quickly proved her worth.

Nui is excellent at everything she does, and it's important that everyone knows this. She has a tendency to show off to fellow Agents and civilians, especially children—"just look how amazing Syn is!". She also enjoys mentoring rookie Agents, making sure they work hard "to earn the right to be one of us."

Nui tends to stretch the rules until they snap, which frustrates many administrators in Syn. She has become an excellent ship's captain, and spends much of her time as a Free Agent learning how to drive all of Syn's vehicles—including the Mammoth, in a stunt she wasn't at all authorized to pull. She is always on the lookout for the next exciting experience, and tends to switch Crystals on a monthly basis. The fact she's kept Consistent for more than a year shows she really, *really* likes it.

Nui loves a crowd, but she doesn't have many friends. One of the people closest to her is Kingrove, a Zingamaian Agent who is intent on perfecting his seacraft abilities. She's been more than enthusiastic to help in his endeavor: the two disappear into the Islands for weeks on end (without bothering to report their location, of course).

Nui doesn't like to commit, which is why she took the The Right Crystal for the Job Edge. She carries two Crystals: Split (Veteran), which allows one to split their presence between several places, and Consistent (Veteran), which is all about perpetual motion.



NYAMA

A self-destructive Zingamaian champion who throws herself at any danger.

After winning the Sash of Splendor, nothing was the same for Nyama Wilcken. Achieving the highest honor of the Pentadome Arena and being acknowledged as one of the top athletes in all of Zingama had been her dream since she saw her first wrestling match. When it was all behind her, she felt empty.

The stage wasn't enough anymore, so Nyama joined Syn, looking for a real challenge, real dangers. She destroyed everything in her path, except for things that managed to send her into long months of recovery—then she would just jump straight into action again. Eventually even that wasn't enough. By socketing more and more powerful Crystals, she managed to beat harder and harder foes.

Nyama became Heroic because she wanted to get the most difficult missions Syn could throw at her. Her friends are worried for her, and occasionally for themselves, because she never tries to mitigate any collateral damage. Her results can't be ignored: Nyama is Syn's hammer, being thrown with great purpose at the organization's enemies, while being kept away from delicate situations.

Nyama's Crystal, Intense (Veteran), allows her to become stronger than strong, pushing beyond her limits at a great cost. She can run like a horse and kick like an elephant, but quickly becomes tired and sometimes injures herself.



TOKPELA

A kind-hearted Maseian fighter of short stature who found a home in Syn.

Tokpela's life was defined by an event that happened during his childhood. While walking down a hill he tripped and fell into a pit, onto a shard which lodged into his lungs. On the brink of death, he was taken by his family to Syn, where the experts managed to identify the shard. They taught Tokpela how to activate it, enabling him to save his own life.

Since that day, Tokpela has been a part of the organization. Despite still being connected to his family, he grew up considering Syn as his *real* family, which he loves with all his heart. He is fiercely loyal, and has dozens of friends throughout the organization. He will do anything for Syn.

Tokpela's shard constantly regenerates his injury and his body, keeping him alive but also hampering his aging. He still looks like a kid, which is a touchy subject for him. He often feels unappreciated or out of place, and occasionally overcompensates by trying to be "the most adult" in the room.

Tokpela's Bellow (Veteran) is all about being VERY LOUD, allowing him to blast people with his voice or turn everyone's attention to him.



TU'AMQOLO

A paranoid Maseian spy trying to prevent her prophesied death.

There's a small village hidden in the valleys of western Maseia where a clan of witches live in secret, away from society. In this village, the Oracle reveals a child's future in a prophecy on their sixth birthday. While many of these prophecies are simple or benign, Tu'amqolo's was grim and ominous. "In a night so sharp, your life thus ends; by bloodied hands, by red-clad friends".

Tu'amqolo has lived her whole life in the shadow of this prophecy. By the time she was old enough to care for herself, she left the village with a singular vision in mind: to prove that destiny can be overwritten. She has no doubt in the Oracle's prophetic power, but she intends to live through the sharp night.

Joining Syn was a natural course of action for Tu'amqolo. She needed answers, and more importantly, to become powerful enough to live through the prophecy. In her journey she has uncovered secrets and kept them to herself. She learned how to read people and carefully judge them. None can be trusted, especially those wearing red.

She still uses her starter Crystal Tattletale, the only Crystal she ever felt comfortable with, despite its problematic disposition: it makes her want to tell everyone all her secrets. She sees it as a personal challenge that constantly needs to be overcome. When the urge is too great, she'll cover her mouth to prevent her words from escaping.

Tattletale (Novice) allows Tu'amqolo to uncover hidden truths, secrets deliberately kept buried. Thanks to the Crystal Specialization Edge she has developed several new powers for it, becoming an incredible spy.



TUHINGA

An early generation Crystal Hunter Islander searching for her lost daughter.

Tuhinga Mata was chosen to be a Crystal Hunter before she was born. In the tradition of her family, each generation's first-born must take a role in an ongoing cycle: the offspring of the head of the clan is to be a priest; the priest's child is to be a hunter; and the hunter's child would be a leader once more.

Tuhinga, as a hunter, had the duty to reach out into the world, experience it, and return to raise a wise and open-minded leader. This was during the early days of Syn, when the organization was no more than a small group of like-minded individuals. One of them was Tuhinga, who was compelled to explore.

Tuhinga found it difficult to return. In all of her years, she only ever loved one man—but after she gave birth to their daughter, he passed away from illness. Tuhinga raised their daughter on her own and on the road, promising herself she will bring the girl back home to be a leader but never following through. At fifteen the girl had had enough of her mother's moods, and ran off to find her own way. Tuhinga has spent many years since then in search of her daughter, hoping to reconnect with her. The weight of her familial obligation is heavy on her shoulders.

These days Tuhinga is old and gray, but still one of the most formidable Agents around. Due to an accident during her Crystal implementation process—in those early days, the harness was still a distant dream—she lost the use of her eyes, but her other senses are sharp enough to help her get by.

Since Tuhinga can't change her Crystal, she took the Crystal Specialization Edge to make the most out of it. Sympa (Heroic) allows her to see and touch emotions as physical entities.



YURHANT

A feral Fjordstadian outdoorsman who would nevertheless guard the pack (team) with his life.

Yurhant Hagspiel lives in the moment. The past is in the past. How he got here doesn't matter. Only braving the storm matters.

A true man of the wilderness, Yurhant spends barely any time at Syn's citadel or facilities. He is unaccustomed to any of the comforts of civilization, and he isn't interested in them. He lives out in the Fjordstadian Wilds, and while he isn't concerned with Syn's goals, he cares greatly about his fellow Agents. He doesn't understand them, but that doesn't matter. They are his kin, so he will guide and protect them.

Yurhant once saw a vision in the northern lights, which can occasionally be seen in the tundras of northern Fjordstad. Some say that what he saw was something else altogether: lights created by a Crystal he found, and that Yurhant joined Syn just to learn more of this Crystal and coax it into revealing more of its secrets. Yurhant doesn't respond well to rumors, and he isn't big on answers.

Yurhant has recently (maybe?) befriended a strange beast, a shaggy bear-like creature, which Syn zoologists are unable to identify. They've asked Yurhant for details, but he just walked back into the raging snow storm with the beast at his side, probably toward one of the many hideouts where he keeps his many ancient secrets.

Aurora (Heroic), the Crystal Yurhant sockets almost exclusively, allows him to become a part of nature. He is capable of feats such as moving plants, sensing his environment, granting the wisdom of the earth, speaking with beasts, and even walking the secret paths through the wild.



Crystals and Hearts

This chapter covers Crystals and their uses, and provides a list of appropriate Crystals for starting characters. It also discusses the unique hearts of the people of the Five Lands.

Crystals

The Bygone Age left many wonders throughout the world, old pieces of ingenious engineering and unparalleled science. The most prominent legacy of the Bygone Age, though, is the Crystals.

A Crystal is a fist-sized object resembling a huge gemstone. Because of their likeness to human hearts (see page 79) and because they're commonly found in close vicinity to remnants of the Bygone Age, the common theory is that they're artificial hearts created by the Bygoners to grant superpowers.

Crystals come in a variety of colors and shapes. While some may look similar, every Crystal is essentially unique. Each Crystal has a *theme*: a specific way in which it affects reality in a manner currently not understood

by science. If left unattended for more than a few minutes, a Crystal starts manifesting its theme in uncontrolled ways, going “feral.”

Common knowledge is that touching a Crystal grants one the ability to control it, but always at a hefty price, since they are temperamental and dangerous. It is now known that to fully control a Crystal in a safe and reliable way, one must use a harness installed by Syn. Rumors are always circulating about people who manage to find new ways to control Crystals, or even create or destroy them. Syn is quick to investigate such stories, but they don't share their findings with junior Agents.

CRYSTALS IN SOCIETY

Most people view Crystals as dangerous, unpredictable, and uncontrollable sources of power. Early in recorded history, many people tried using Crystals in order to establish themselves as rulers or to help their societies. This almost always ended badly. The main lesson most people remember today is to stay away from Crystals.



Are Crystals Magic?

Syn is clear on the subject: Crystals are natural. All “supernatural” effects created by Crystals are, in fact, part of the regular physics of the world; therefore, they can be discovered by the scientific process. It might be difficult to do so, perhaps even beyond the capability of current technology, but it’s possible.

That being said, the world of *Crystal Heart* is obviously using natural laws that differ from our own. For example, the Crystal Bam-Bam allows its bearer to infuse inorganic matter with crackling energy. Where this energy comes from and what it actually is (it’s not electricity) isn’t clear to the characters or the players. The important thing is that it acts in a semi-predictable way by adhering to its powers and maintaining a consistent interpretation of its theme. There’s no need to actually *know* the physical laws in order to keep them consistent.

Syn appeared on the scene relatively recently. The organization has been around in one form or another for about thirty years, but it only came into the public sphere about twenty years ago by sending its Agents into the world and establishing ties with local authorities. Despite Syn’s proven successes and the immense power it has gathered, most people eye it with suspicion because of its use of Crystals. Every proper person knows they are not to be toyed with.

Some people in the more accepting or forward-thinking communities see Syn’s taming of Crystals as a sign of things to come: the beginning of a new, glorious age. They say it’s only a matter of time until Crystals can not only be controlled, but also created for the betterment of humans everywhere. The glory of the Bygone Age is within reach! Syn, meanwhile, keeps most of its discoveries and developments top secret—so secret that even most of its own Agents don’t know about them.

Most Crystal experts outside of Syn have only rudimentary knowledge of the working of Crystals, comparable to that of most junior Agents. However, because each Crystal is unique, it’s quite possible that a specific expert or the people of a specific society will have a good understanding of the workings of a Crystal in their area. It’s probable that this Crystal has been a

part of their environment for hundreds of years, so they might know some of its feral manifestations as well.

ANATOMY OF A CRYSTAL

A Crystal has a **theme**, which determines its powers, abilities and disposition. It also has a **Rank**, which corresponds to the amount and variety of **powers** it has and the ongoing **benefit** it grants to the person socketing it. Finally, it has a **disposition**: the way it influences the moods and demeanor of the person socketing it.

Rank

Each Crystal has a Rank denoting how powerful it is, based on its theme and the number and types of powers it gives access to. You’ll begin with Novice Crystals, but might later gain more powerful ones.

Syn recognizes five ranks of Crystal. This classification is rarely used, or even known, outside of the organization.

Novice Crystals give you useful powers, but are mostly of a passive or supportive nature. A feral Novice Crystal might make a room very warm, or make everyone think annoying, repetitive thoughts.

Seasoned Crystals provide you with one or two powerful abilities, usually a bit more focused compared to the Novice ones. A Novice Crystal might allow you to create light or darkness, but a Seasoned one will allow you to control the shape and strength of your shadow. A feral Seasoned Crystal might turn a building jungle-like and fill it with poisonous plants, or make the water in a river purple and hallucinogenic.

Veteran Crystals have a wider range of abilities, and can provide their bearer with several always-on powers to make them effective and strong at all times. A feral Veteran Crystal might make the walls of an entire cave complex like rubber or keep an army of walking dead around it.

Heroic Crystals are amazingly powerful, giving you a huge range of abilities; they basically turn the Agent into a one-person army. Even the most high-ranked Agents only use these on occasion, as they are highly regulated and usually kept in the vaults. Most use Veteran Crystals instead.





Only five **Legendary Crystals** were ever discovered, and only the five members of the Council of Syn are allowed to carry them. Rumors claim these Crystals are *too* powerful.

Theme

A Crystal's theme is its main concept—what it's *about*. The theme is manifested in the Crystals' powers and their trappings. The more an Agent understands a Crystal's theme, the more new powers they can create out of it (with Power Stunts, page 58). Syn has a good understanding of the themes of most of the Crystals in their Repository, but some are only half understood (and some are misunderstood).

A theme also helps the Game Master decide how the effects created with a Crystal interact with the world and other Crystals, especially regarding synergy (see Trappings, *Savage Worlds*). As a rule of thumb, if something matches a Crystal's theme, it should interact with its powers. In some cases this is obvious: if you have a Crystal that's all about controlling fire, and a fire breaks out, you can control it—but you can't control water. This becomes especially important when comparing the powers of different Crystals.

Casual Use: Most themes can manifest in simple ways without needing a Crystal Channeling roll. Such casual uses can add +1 to a relevant Trait check, but can never be activated against someone or something else, or while under stress (such as during a combat situation). If there's any hint of effort, this is no longer a casual use—it's a Power Stunt (page 58).

Players should feel free to suggest casual uses for their Crystals as long as they maintain the themes.

Each Crystal's theme is followed in *italics* with several suggestions for casual use.

Benefit

Each Crystal has one or more abilities which are always active. Simply having a Crystal inside you is enough to give you some sort of an advantage—usually an Edge, but occasionally



an ongoing die upgrade to one or more of your Traits. All powers that are not part of your benefit must be activated as an action, usually with a Crystal Channeling check.

An Edge granted by a Crystal's benefit is considered to be yours for all purposes *except* during Advancement. If your Crystal gives you Acrobat, you can gain the one-time use of Combat Acrobat with a Benny (using the Syn Training Setting Rule, page 83), but you can't gain it permanently by spending an Advance. You *can* gain Acrobat using an Advance, making you "double edged."

Double Edged: An Agent might find themselves socketing a Crystal that gives them an Edge that they already have. In that case, the character gains the upgraded version of that Edge (Sweep → Improved Sweep), ignoring its requirements. If she already has the improved version, or if the Edge doesn't have an improved version, instead increase all numerical values by one. Dice are increased by one step. If the Edge grants a reroll, you get an additional one.

For example, a Quick character who gains another Quick Edge will now re-draw whenever dealt 6 or lower (instead of 5). An Agent with Improved Counterattack who gains another Counterattack Edge gets a free Fighting roll against up to four foes per turn (instead of three).

Disposition

A Crystal influences its bearer's psyche. This is usually in the form of a personality trait but occasionally a physical disability, and it is always related in some way to its theme. The disposition is usually expressed in the form of Hindrances. The Agent socketing the Crystal is affected by its disposition at all times.

Some Agents find their personality completely overturned in a moment, while others are merely troubled by thought patterns they're not used to. The higher the Rank of the Crystal, the stronger its disposition.

Double Trouble: An Agent might find themselves socketing a Crystal that gives them a Hindrance they already have. In that case, the Agent suffers from the Major form of that Hindrance (if applicable) or has all its numerical values increased by one. Double Clumsy subtracts 3 from Athletics and Stealth rolls, for example. In some cases this doesn't make sense—a Blind Agent can't become more Blind—so either ignore the extra Hindrance or find an interesting substitution.

If the double Hindrance doesn't have a mechanical effect (such as with Cautious or Driven), the combination of the character's natural and artificial inclinations becomes almost all-consuming. Should an opportunity present itself to act according to this Hindrance (GM's call), the character must make a Spirit roll to behave in a different manner. Having a double Death Wish is dangerous indeed.

Powers

A Crystal gives its user access to several powers that share a common theme.

Most of the powers presented in this book are used differently than in *Savage Worlds*, as explained in each entry.

- The power's in-world name is given first. This is the name Agents usually use to describe this power.
- The name is followed by parentheses, with the power's *Savage Worlds* name, and an indication if it can be used as Ongoing (see next page) and what its activation modifier is; this does not include the difference in Ranks between Agent and Crystal (see below). When two or more powers are listed, they are all activated together with the same roll.

- The power's rules are then listed. Assume the power functions as it does in *Savage Worlds* unless noted otherwise here.
- If the power allows any optional Modifiers, they are listed last. The common Modifiers are noted only if they're always activated; otherwise, they can be used if it makes sense (see Power Modifiers, next page).

CRYSTAL CHANNELING

Crystal Channeling is the act of harmonizing the connection between yourself and your Crystal, pushing against it with your mind to try and goad it into creating a desired effect. It's a mental exercise practiced using both biofeedback and psychological techniques.

Arcane Background (Crystal Channeling) does not use Power Points. Agents simply choose the power they want to activate, and if it requires a check, they make a Crystal Channeling roll. This skill is based on Spirit and is a core skill for all Agents (they begin play with a d4 in it). Activating a power doesn't usually require speaking, but some might require gestures. When a power is activated the Crystal glows with its distinctive color, usually bright enough to be visible through clothes.

The Crystal Channeling check is made with a penalty equal to half the Power Point cost of the power (rounded up) as noted in *Savage Worlds*. This penalty is already listed for all of the powers in this book.

Activating a Power

Once a power is activated with a roll, check the results below:

- **Success:** The power activates as normal. Assume the power follows the rules as noted in *Savage Worlds*, unless otherwise noted in the Crystal's description.
- **Raise:** A raise on the roll grants any additional bonuses stated in the power's description.
- **Failure:** The power doesn't activate. You can choose instead to make it activate (as if your final result was a 4), by taking a level of Fatigue that can only be reduced by a few minutes of meditation with no active powers. If this makes you Incapacitated, the power activates before you're out.
- **Critical Failure:** Treated as a failure, and you also desync (see next page).



Difference in Ranks: The difference between the Crystal's and the character's Ranks is added to the difficulty: a penalty if the Crystal's Rank is higher, or a bonus if the character's Rank is higher.

Example: Noelani, a Novice Agent, socketed the Crystal Infuse (Seasoned Rank). When she activates the healing power, she rolls with -2 (half the Power Point cost of the power, rounded up) and an additional -1 (the difference between her Novice Rank and Infuse's Seasoned Rank).

Maintaining Powers: All non-instant powers can be maintained for as long as the character desires (dismissed as a free action) but each power maintained inflicts a -1 on Crystal Channeling rolls.

Power Modifiers: To use a Power Modifier, subtract from the roll half of its cost rounded up. This is usually -1, so it's safe to default to it. For those who want to be as technically correct as possible, add the Power Point costs of the power and the Modifier, then halve the sum.

Each power lists the Power Modifiers it allows. The common Modifiers (see Power Modifiers in *Savage Worlds*) are generally allowed, but only with a good rationale and the GM's permission. Exactly how it works is a matter of description, but it must always be relevant to the Crystal's theme.

Some powers are always activated with a specific Modifier, which is already reflected in their listed penalty. Activating such a power without this Modifier requires a Power Stunt, as it's essentially a new power.

Example: Chel wants to activate a blast power which has a -2 modifier, but she also wants to hit a Large Blast Template (with the Area Effect Modifier, which the power allows), make it Selective, and cause Fatigue. The total modifier is increased by -1 for each Modifier to a total of -5.

Power Preparation: An Agent may prepare powers by concentrating for an entire round (no movement or other actions, and they must not be Shaken or Stunned). If successful, they ignore 2 points of penalties on all Crystal Channeling rolls on their next turn.

Ongoing Powers: Outside of tense situations, such as combat, activating Ongoing powers does not require a roll. The Agent takes a few moments to focus themselves and release the potential from within the Crystal. They can even choose to activate the power as if they got a raise on the roll. During an action scene, activating an Ongoing power requires an action and a Crystal Channeling roll like any other power.

Ongoing powers always come with a drawback. An activated power reflects switching the Crystal to a higher setting—you become stronger, but so does the disposition.

Losing Sync (Desync)

A Critical Failure on a Crystal Channeling check (as well as some other game effects) creates a backlash between your psyche, your Crystal's resonance, and the harness that's connecting the two—in effect switching it off. Your Crystal stops functioning as your heart and you immediately begin choking. This is called desyncing, and it's the main danger one must face for replacing their heart with a strange device.

You're essentially suffocating. You can hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to 2 plus your Vigor die, or half that if you weren't prepared and didn't have time to take a good breath (which is usually the case with a Critical Failure). Another person can resync you with a Healing roll made as an action, with -1 if there's no first aid kit available. You can try to resync yourself, but with a -2 modifier.



When you run out of breath you become Incapacitated and lose consciousness. You'll die in a number of rounds equal to your Vigor die. If someone can get to you before then, you can be resuscitated with a Healing roll at -2.

You don't have access to your Crystal's powers while desynced, and all of your maintained powers are dropped. A desynced Crystal might or might not still imbue its bearer with its benefits and disposition, GM's call.

Power Stunts

The powers within a Crystal represent only some of the uses of its theme, which come reflexively to its bearer. Agents who put their mind to it can activate their Crystal's theme in new, unusual ways. This effectively grants an Agent a temporary use of any power, as long as it makes sense as an extension of the theme.

The cost is a Benny, which grants a one-use effect of any instant-Duration power from *Savage Worlds* or three rounds of any other power (a new Crystal Channeling roll made before the end of the duration adds another three rounds). The Benny is paid only after both the GM and the player agree on the power and the interpretation of the theme. Calculate the penalty as normal (half the Power Point cost, rounded up) and don't forget to include any Power Modifiers used.

Power Stunts always require an activation roll; they are never Ongoing.

Upgrading to a Permanent Power: If an Agent gets two raises on a roll when activating a Power Stunt, something "clicks" and they gain a new understanding into the theme of the Crystal they're using. They now know this Stunt as a new permanent power. This remains true even if they change Crystals later—they will always know this power with this Crystal.

What Power Stunts to Allow? A note to the GM: reward creativity, but remember that Stunts aren't meant as a way for Agents to gain access to every conceivable power. Some thought should go into justifying each Stunt by referring to the Crystal's theme. A Crystal with a theme of energetic radiation shouldn't be used to slow people down, unless both you and the player agree on a reasonable explanation. Trappings matter!



If needed, discuss the theme among yourselves and decide how to interpret it from now on, adding a few notes to the Crystal's description so that you'll remember what you've agreed on.

SOCKETING A CRYSTAL

Setting a Crystal (or "socketing") means removing one's current Crystal and inserting a new one.

In many cases the socketing is done under controlled conditions by another Agent or qualified Syn personnel. There's usually no need for a check. In an intense situation, such as a combat scene, make a Healing check and consult the results.

- **Success:** The character manages to insert a Crystal into the harness and sync it with the bearer. The Agent immediately gains the Crystal's benefits and disposition. If Shaken or unconscious, they also get an immediate Vigor check to become un-Shaken or return to consciousness.
- **Raise:** The Agent also has a burst of energy, allowing them to ignore all Fatigue



and Wound penalties until the end of their next turn.

- **Failure:** The character can't safely remove the Crystal, and must try again with another action.
- **Critical Failure:** The Agent is left mid-process, with no Crystal inside the harness. They begin suffocating, as with a desync.

Trying to self-socket is a bad idea, with a -2 on the check. You do realize you're trying to unhook your own heart from your body and replace it with another, right?

THE HARNESS

All Syn Agents have passed medical tests and physical requirements, allowing them to be surgically equipped with a harness: the only method so far discovered which controls a Crystal with relative safety and reliability.

A harness is a sophisticated bio-tech device engineered and manufactured exclusively by Syn. It is inserted into the upper chest, replacing the heart with a socket-like cavity lined with special materials and equipped with an armored cover. The implantation process takes several stages and requires a week of intensive care available only in the Syn citadel. Not everyone can undergo this procedure and survive, so Syn has developed a screening process to identify who is compatible.

Only about eighty people in the entire

world are equipped with a harness. Most are Syn Agents, but Syn has also gifted this device (along with specific Crystals) to a select few outside the organization as part of special deals.

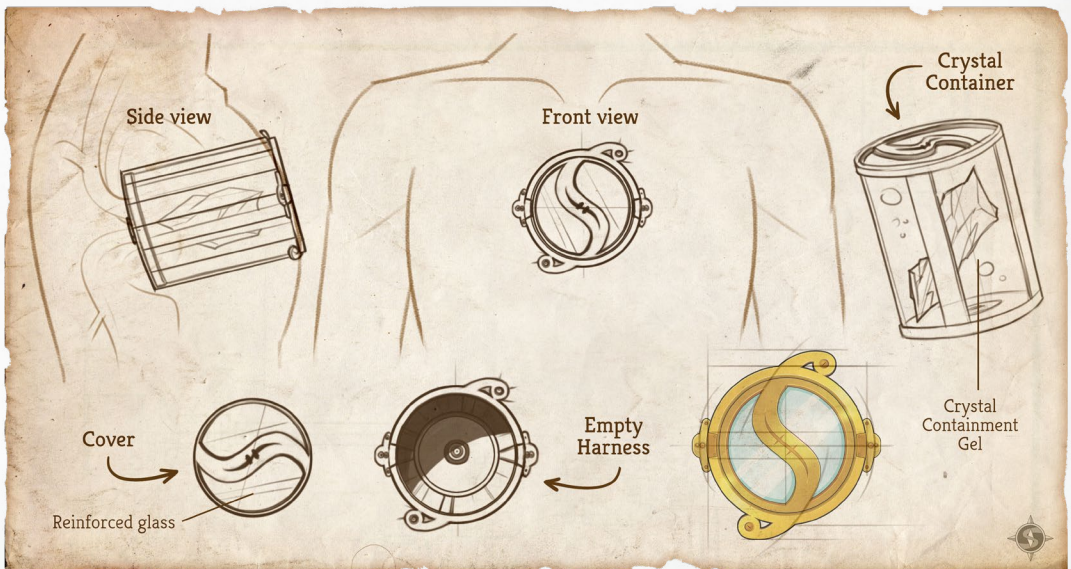
A person with a harness can have a Crystal container fitted into it in a quick (although not completely safe) procedure. The Crystal completely replaces normal heart functions, namely circulating blood (see page 79).

The harness is specially designed to allow a Crystal's power to flow into the body, and cannot normally be equipped with a regular heart. It is a sturdy and reliable piece of equipment that hardly ever breaks, and requires only a once-per-year maintenance check at the Syn citadel.

While it might be possible to remove the harness entirely so a person will regain their normal heart, it has never been done and Syn has no intentions of pursuing this possibility. Therefore, a person who decides to gain a harness also commits to leaving their heart behind forever. There is no known way to prevent hearts from sublimating (see page 79), but rumors claim that Syn secretly keeps all of its Agents' hearts in the flying citadel's Repository.

Harness Complications

The harness is not completely foolproof: Syn has recorded several conditions in which it might function in a less than optimal way.





Syn agents are advised to be on their guard in the following situations, but it should also be noted that other unknown factors might influence the harmonization process which keeps the Agent's psyche and their Crystal in sync.

Strong magnetic fields cause a drain on Crystal powers, inflicting a -1 on all Crystal Channeling rolls. They also increase the penalty for maintaining powers from -1 to -2.

Intense cold slows Crystal powers while also empowering them. A Crystal Channeling check can only be made after taking a turn for Power Preparation, but that preparation also grants a +2 bonus on the check.

Radiation causes severe interference with the harness. At the end of every turn in which the Agent performs any physical activity more intense than walking their Pace, they must make a Vigor roll. On a failure the harness "hiccups," their Crystal literally skipping a beat, and they are Shaken.

Life abundance is a strange environmental effect. It can be detected from a distance by noticing the higher-than-usual plant growth and animal presence. *All Syn Agents are forbidden from entering life abundance areas without proper authorization.*

Surgical Crystal Implantation

This is an alternative to implanting a harness. The procedure is reserved for people outside of Syn, occasionally given to the organization's allies as part of an agreement. Surgical Crystal implantation is a lengthy and dangerous operation performed by trained doctors and Crystal specialists.

The operation takes many hours and a success on Healing and Academics rolls, and the patient will require extended hospitalization. Failing any of the checks results in the person's death. A Critical Failure also turns the Crystal feral.

Activating Crystals Without a Harness

The harness allows Agents to access the full range of a Crystal's powers in a reliable, safe way. That's what makes it so unique and important. Any person can try to make use of a Crystal, but unless they're using it with a harness, any or all of the following will apply:

Limited: The person holding the Crystal manages to activate only a specific manifestation of the theme (which may or may not correspond to one of the Crystal's regular powers).

Unreliable: The holder can't make the Crystal do what they want it to, and the results are unexpected.

Unsafe: The holder harms themselves or others simply by touching or activating the Crystal; the Crystal's disposition overtakes the person's personality, driving them mad; the Crystal creates uncontrollable feral manifestations; or all of these together.

Anyone can touch a Crystal and activate it with a thought—it's just that they're likely to explode in some exciting way, probably after losing their mind.

FERAL CRYSTALS

When a Crystal is "in the wild," not tamed inside an Agent's harness or a Syn Crystal container, it's considered feral. Such Crystals manifest their theme in uncontrolled ways. Approach with extreme caution!

A feral Crystal's manifestation is only somewhat related to its Rank and theme. Although rare, Syn has recorded cases of a Heroic Crystal with a lightning theme manifesting as little pricks of static electricity, and of a Novice Crystal with a softness theme manifesting as quicksand that can swallow buildings. The environmental conditions surrounding the feral Crystal seem to have a large influence on the form and intensity of its manifestation.

Containment Procedures

Each Agent is provided with two Crystal containers: one that holds the Crystal in their own harness, and an extra one to contain feral Crystals. The container has a sliding lid and is filled with soft gel which needs to be replaced every few months.

When approaching a feral Crystal, Syn Agents are advised to first subdue any manifestations such as walking trees, choking water snakes, or zombified corpses. This allows for a short period of calm, usually around ten minutes, before the Crystal re-manifests its theme. During this time the Agents should place the Crystal inside a container using gloves.



If subduing the manifestations is not feasible (what can you do against an avalanche?), a feral Crystal can also be tamed by being held for several seconds in a container, a harness, or someone's hands. Crystals really don't like being held like this and tend to react in unexpected ways, akin to an angry cat.

Agents are advised to wear gloves while handling feral Crystals. For some unknown reason—perhaps something about the way the energies of two Crystals clash—when an Agent touches a feral Crystal barehanded, they must roll Vigor or take a level of Fatigue. On a Critical Failure, they desync! This roll repeats at the start of every turn until the Agent releases the Crystal or it becomes tamed, as noted below.

Grappling with a Crystal: Trying to grab a feral Crystal or trap it in a container is similar to grappling. Most times it requires an Athletics roll to grab the Crystal, at -2 if you're trying to push it into a container.

The Crystal must be held down for several seconds, forcing a Strength roll on your following turn to keep it secured (with +2 if you've got it in a container). If the Crystal fails to escape, it calms down and stops being feral, all of its manifestations disappearing. Unless the Agent is wearing gloves, they must make Vigor checks throughout this process, as noted above.

Each Crystal has its own idiosyncrasies. Some start hovering as you approach, nimbly escaping your grasp; others start shooting energy beams or create mental pulses that cause headaches. Still others might be surrounded by a layer of stone or embedded in a gooey slime creature, which must be dealt with before the Crystal can be contained.

Ongoing Containment: A Crystal inside a container remains tamed for about two weeks, but will eventually go feral again. There are only two known ways to prevent this from happening.

It can be kept inside a climate-controlled, magnetically-regulated safe—the Tank has six such slots for containers.

Otherwise, it can be placed inside a person, either with a harness or through implantation. The harness accepts a Crystal



container which is filled with stabilizing gel, but technically there's no need for it: once inside a human, Crystals never misbehave.

Basically, Crystals not directly inside your body should be considered akin to grenades. Handle with care, and always place inside safe containers.

Identifying a Crystal's Powers

Syn guidelines require every new Crystal to be brought to a Syn facility for a full diagnostic and an evaluation. However, Agents are known for their curiosity (it's one of the reasons they're in the job, after all), so it's an open secret that many Agents try out the Crystals they've gathered while still in the field. Some of them are never heard from again, so, you know. Be careful.

To identify a Crystal you need a few minutes to examine it closely in a Crystal examination chamber, available in many Syn facilities (see page 32). You automatically learn its Rank. You then make an Academics roll, with a +2 bonus if you've seen the Crystal's feral manifestation in action. Other Agents can Support you.



On a success, the Crystal is identified: you know the Crystal's benefits, disposition and powers. You get to name it! The GM gives you a vague description of its theme, which can later be clarified after seeing the Crystal in action a few times. On a raise, the GM tells you the theme straight away.

On a failure, the Crystal's capabilities remain unknown until tested in Syn's citadel, where it is automatically identified as with a success on the roll. Alternatively, you can try to slot it and see what happens.

The Hands-on Approach: An Agent can slot a Crystal into their harness to try it out. You will immediately identify its Rank, benefits and disposition, and get a vague feeling about its theme.

You can *try* any power you can think of; if you manage to discover one, it activates as normal. You can also use a Benny for a Power Stunt. Before you roll, the GM will tell you if the power you're trying to activate is natural for the Crystal or costs a Benny.

Until the Crystal is properly identified, every time you fail a Crystal Channeling check with the Crystal's powers you must make a Spirit roll or take a level of Fatigue lasting for several minutes (if you choose to succeed instead of failing, you take *two*).

An Agent can come to fully identify their socketed Crystal by simply keeping it socketed for several days, experiencing its presence and attempting to achieve a deeper understanding of it.

Roll Spirit every morning. After a number of successes and raises equal to the Crystal's Rank, the Crystal is fully identified.

A Critical Failure also makes the Crystal fully identified...but with a huge misunderstanding of its theme. The Agent suffers a -1 penalty on all Crystal Channeling checks with this Crystal and can't use Power Stunts until they have a good reason to reconsider their approach, such as by seeing someone else using it properly.

Why Do Crystals Have Dispositions?

A person's heart is created by their personality. The heart's characteristics, including its shape, density, and even color, are parts of the person's identity (mostly memories and general disposition), encoded in a physical form. As the heart hardens during childhood, it starts to affect conscious behavior. If your heart was developed to be kind, you'll find yourself generally guided toward kindness. It's akin to a river: the water carves a path, but the path then guides the water in a never-ending dynamic.

All of this is true in our real world as well, only for us it happens in the brain. For Agents in *Crystal Heart*, things get more complicated since changing your heart means replacing your personality core.

Crystals, being foreign objects which act as hearts, push against one's consciousness in ways that were not developed by one's life experiences. More importantly, Crystals only *dictate*. No matter how kind you are, if you're socketing a Crystal with a mean theme then you'll find yourself constantly pushing against its unkind influence, as Crystals never "change their opinions." In the river metaphor, they are a huge boulder in the middle of the stream, forcing the flow to reshape itself.

How Does it Feel to Control a Crystal?

Novice Crystals give you access to a broad aspect of the world. Activating a Novice Crystal usually feels like surfing a big wave: trying to ride a powerful force and guide yourself along it in a specific direction.

Seasoned Crystals take an aspect of the world and focus it. It sometimes feels like trying to control an angry, powerful dog using a sturdy leash: guiding a force that's already going in a specific direction in an effort to prevent any unintended consequences.

Veteran Crystals take a specific aspect of the world and exaggerate it. It can feel like being filled up from within like a hot air balloon, lifting you up but also stretching you out.

Heroic Crystals take a broad aspect of the world and give you full control over it. You're like a one-person-army. You have access to a huge arsenal, but you must also adhere to a strict regimen: the Crystal's powerful disposition.





Starter Crystal List

Each player chooses a Novice Crystal for their Agent as part of the character creation process. Several Crystals had previous owners, and others have a bit of a history. Syn is not big on information, so only tidbits of rumors might be known to the Agents.

NOVICE CRYSTALS

The following is a list of beginner Crystals currently authorized by Syn. Choose or roll for one (1d20). The GM can add or remove Crystals from this list as they see fit.

BUDDY

Description: Yellow bulb with purple streaks, giving the strange impression of a joyful fruit.

Theme: Being really, really helpful to your friends, a supportive part of the team. *Instinctively say the right word and laugh at the right time, making others feel as if you're all in on a private joke.*

Benefit: Reliable Edge. When you Support an ally, they gain +2 for a success and +3 with a raise (instead of +1 and +2). On failure, however, they subtract 3 instead of 2.

Disposition: Delusional (Major): Everyone is nice! Even the most horrible person secretly wishes me the best, I just need to help them dig down for that friendliness and bring it to the surface.

Let's Do This! (*boost Trait, Ongoing, -1*). You increase your helpfulness to absurd levels, becoming obsessed with a specif-

ic task and doing it with all your might (probably while screaming). Choose a Trait: both you and a teammate within a range of Smarts increase your die types by one. You can only maintain this level of enthusiasm for a short time. While active, after every ten minutes of activity or when you draw a Heart in combat, you must make a Spirit check or take a level of Fatigue. On a raise, you both increase your die types by two, but if you don't use the Trait on a round, the power ends.

On My Way! (*teleport, -1*). When someone needs you, you're there. When a friend is faced with a task they can't do by themselves and genuinely asks for your help, you sense it no matter the distance and can activate this power to appear next to them. On a raise, you also appear with the right tool for the job, if it was reasonably within your reach. Your friends can spend a Benny to force you to use this power as a free action, even when you're unconscious.



CONSCIOUS-SENSE

Description: Pink-white elongated, thin spheroid.

Theme: Perceive and create vibrations on the mental plane. Such vibrations are formed by conscious thoughts, like objects moving on a lake's surface. *Sense the presence of an ant colony inside the wall; make a cat drowsy.*

Benefit: Combat Reflexes Edge, as you're able to shake your own awareness back into action.

Disposition: Thin Skinned (Minor). The vibrations accompanying an attacker's insults cause you to feel them more intensely.

Awaken (*relief, -1*). You push against the target's mind, forcing it out of being Shaken and back into full consciousness. You cannot remove physical Fatigue, such as from poison or dehydration.

Detect Consciousness (*detect arcane, Ongoing, -1*). You sense all sources of awareness in range, even through walls or earth. You know how "big" the consciousness is, so you can differentiate between a dog and a person. With a raise you can recognize specific people if you previously had some interaction with them. Crystals can also be detected.

Lull (*slumber, -1*). You send a disruptive wave through the mental plane, trying to "mute" the target's awareness.



**DANCER**

Description: Pink, swirly, with splashes of red.

Theme: Sleek movements, graceful thrusts, elegant execution. *Catch the wine-filled glass before it falls to the ground.*

Benefit: You're a brilliant dancer on a stage and an efficient killer in a fight. You're Quick.

Disposition: It's hard to see someone being better than you. You're Jealous (Minor).

Graceful Dance (boost Trait [Fighting and Performance], Ongoing, -2). Self only. While active, you continuously dance, which might interfere with delicate actions.

In the Zone (warrior's gift, Ongoing, -2). Self only. You get Acrobat (and Combat Acrobat with a raise). You also get Berserk, which activates after becoming Shaken for any reason. While active, you hush everyone who's talking frivolously—they're making it hard for you to concentrate.

**DUMB LUCK**

Description: Flat blue with turquoise spikes. Senior Agents don't take this Crystal seriously, but it can't be denied that several Agents owe it their lives.

Theme: Luck is river rapids, and you're in a boat. *Get heads twelve times in a row; fall down the stairs, but into an important clue; correctly guess the password to the secret club, then enter it and realize it's the wrong club.*

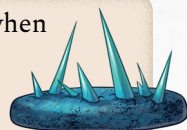
Benefit: The Dumb Luck setting rule applies to you, even if your group is not using it in the game. To get a raise on a roll, you only need 3 more than the target number instead of 4. However, you get a Critical Failure not only when the dice

show double-ones, but also when they show a 1 and a 2.

Disposition: You've got Bad Luck.

Contagious Bad Luck (lower Trait [Athletics, Fighting or Shooting], -1). It's not that they're any less skilled, it just that they seem to run into an unprecedented amount of disturbances. Allowed Modifiers: All.

Missed Me (deflection, Ongoing, -2). Self only. You seem to slip and fall at just the right moment and the bullet passes right where your head was until a moment ago. While active, you are more prone to accidents. If you move at more than half your Pace, make an Agility roll or fall prone.

**HEADLIGHT**

Description: Black and shiny, with reflective surfaces. Looks a bit like a modern art statue. Was found by the famed Agent Contessa.

Theme: Playing with the intensity of light, increasing or decreasing brightness. *Shine a light with the palm of your hand; cover your face in darkness.*

Benefit: You ignore up to 2 points of Illumination penalties from darkness.

Disposition: Habit (Minor). Feeling "enlightened," you're prone to saying semi-insightful but essentially meaningless phrases.

Control Brightness (light/darkness, -1). You can see through the darkness you create with this power.

Darksight (darksight, Ongoing, -1). Self only. Your eyes become accustomed to seeing only in darkness. You ignore illumination penalties from darkness as noted in the power's description, but bright light now inflicts a -2 illumination penalty on you, -4 with a raise.

Lights Out (blind, -1). You create a persistent darkness around someone's head or flash a bright light in their eyes.





HIGH SPIRITS

Description: A small gem, half yellow and half gray. It was widely used in the early days of Syn, which means there's more data (and war stories) about it than most other Crystals.

Theme: Clever ideas, sudden inspirations; foolish behavior and odd whimsy. *Get a brilliant idea; tell a stupid joke.*

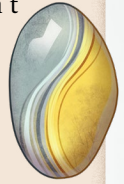
Benefit: This unusual Crystal is always in one of two extremes. While you're "clever," increase your Smarts by a die step, and reduce your Spirit by one. You also gain Jack-of-all-Trades. You can switch off being clever as a free action, at which point you become "emboldened." This increases your Spirit by one step and reduces your Smarts by one. You also gain Strong

Willed. Once you switch, you can't switch back for several hours.

Disposition: While you're "clever," you spend much of your time writing down your ideas, thoughts, poems, drawings, anything (they're not necessarily any good, though). This is an Obligation (Minor). While "emboldened," you're Stubborn (Minor) and it's hard to make you choose any course of action besides what you are used to.

Clever Solution (*warrior's gift*, -2). Self only. Only when clever. You devise a brand new approach to the situation.

Emboldened Action (*speed*, -3). Self only. Only when emboldened. Always activated with the Quickness Modifier. You're so sure of yourself that you move fast and act faster.



JINGLE

Description: Thin and twirly, multi-colored.

Theme: ♪ It's unusual but, technically it's art; there's a jingle in your heart! (in your heart) ♪ *Drown your thoughts in repetitive songs; remember some details by encoding them in a simple rhyme.*

Benefit: ♪ Your Performance skill is raised one die, and you can Test it vs Smarts if you'll just try! ♪

Disposition: ♪ Annoying, annoying, you bet that it's annoying! ♪ It's a Habit (Minor) inflicting a -1 on your social interactions. You are also occasionally overwhelmed by repetitive jingles: whenever you draw a Heart, make a Spirit roll or become Distracted.

Earworm (*confusion*, -1). You sing a jingle at a target, and they just can't stop thinking about it. All mammal minds might get affected, except for swarms. Because the target keeps mumbling the song, it's contagious: at the beginning of its turn, every enemy within a distance of 5" must make

a Smarts roll (-2 if you got a raise on the original activation) or suffer the same effect. The original victim might get re-infected if it starts its turn too close to someone they infected. When first activating the power, you must roll Smarts against it yourself, or catch the earworm and become infectious to your allies.

A Little Dance Number (*deflection and relief*, -2). You allow the jingle to flow through your entire body and do a little dance routine. All allies who see you are either inspired or amused, but either way they can remove their Shaken status (Stunned with a raise) and ignore the penalty from being Fatigued (Exhausted with a raise) while you keep dancing. You can continue to dance each turn as an action, no roll required, and gain *deflection* while you do, thanks to your footwork. This power is fueled by a jingle; if you fail the activation roll, it means that jingle didn't inspire you to dance and you must think of a new one (so you can't choose to succeed by taking a level of Fatigue).



PATCHWORK

Description: Lumpy and misshapen, this brown and gray Crystal is theorized by some to be a combination of shards from two different sources, though this is considered to be impossible.

Theme: You intuitively understand complex mechanisms, both biological and artificial, and recognize any fault in their internal processes. *Fix a squeaky hinge with a touch; fix the jukebox to make it work again.*

Benefit: You gain the Mr. Fix It Edge.

Disposition: Quirk: You occasionally confuse people for machines and vice versa; they're all mechanisms, after all.

Find Weakness (*boost Trait [Notice], Ongoing, -1*). Self only. You intuitively notice faults in items, dealing +2 damage to them. If you make a Notice Test against a creature and make them Vulnerable, you recog-

nize their weak points and can ignore 1 point of penalty with Called Shots made against them. While active, your focus makes all sounds seem to disappear: you're Hard of Hearing (Minor).

Fix it Up (*healing, -2*). Can be used on machines as well as living creatures. You must have some basic tools—a first aid kit or work tools—and the process takes five minutes of work per point of Size. If fixing a machine bigger than Size 0, add its Size as a negative modifier to the roll.

Work Mode (*boost Trait [Engineering and Healing], Ongoing, -1*) Self only. You allow the Crystal's power to fill you, becoming highly attuned to any mechanism you're examining. While active, you lose the ability to distinguish between people and machines, treating them equally.



RALLY

Description: A bright orange lump of three squat spheres held together by a black crusting.

Theme: Rising to the occasion, rallying your brethren, leading by example. *Say an encouraging word; think of an inspiring quote; slap the pain away.*

Benefit: Command Edge, as your mere presence helps others feel more secure in themselves.

Disposition: Loyal Hindrance, of course.

Behind Me! (*deflection, -2*). You can only activate this power if Command Mode is already active. Your sheer *heroism* can shield you and others from attack. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipients.

Command Mode (*boost Trait [Battle], Ongoing, -1*). Self only. You leap forward to lead your friends when they need you most. You also gain the Inspire Edge. While active you must always try to be the spearhead, to reach for the goal, to lead your allies; if you stop leading by example for any reason, the power ends. Maintaining this power does not inflict the normal -1 penalty on Crystal Channeling checks.

Encouraging Word (*relief, -1*). You can only activate this power if Command Mode is already active. You say an encouraging word to an ally who's feeling unwell, helping them get back into action. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipients.





RASCAL

Description: A swirling, tantalising wisp of turquoise. After a big scandal involving two Heroics and several people from admin, this Crystal is no longer allowed to be used at Syn parties.

Theme: Provides complete fluency in body language. *Wink to make someone lose their train of thought; understand who's in charge by the way they stand.*

Benefit: Charismatic Edge. Subtle body language adds much to your words.

Disposition: Quirk: you're flirtatious to the point that your teammates sometimes need to pull you away from a conversation to continue on the mission.

Body Language Literacy (*empathy*, -1). You attune yourself to the body language of a specific individual, making a Crystal Channeling roll vs the target's Smarts. This does not work on animals.

Conflicting Signals (*confusion*, -1). Can only be used on the target of *Body Language Literacy*. You express two conflicting meanings, making the target confused for a moment.

Deep Meaning (*mind link*, *On-going*, -1). You connect with another individual on such a basic level that the slightest movements convey huge amounts of information, allowing you to talk through simple gestures that others might not even notice. In order to communicate you must see each other. Suffering a Wound is not dangerous to the linked ally. While active, it's harder for you to speak using your mouth, so you are Tongue-Tied. Allowed Modification: Additional Recipients.

Disparaging Expression (*lower Trait [Spirit]*, -1). You convey deep disrespect with a subtle gesture, making the target doubt themselves without even realizing why. Allowed Modification: Strong.



RICOCHET

Description: Bronze, sleek, but cracked. This Crystal was found inside a fish, of all places. It was pretty hard to catch that fish, though!

Theme: Trick shots, perfect aim. *Flick a coin into a glass; spit into someone's eye.*

Benefit: You have Steady Hands.

Disposition: You keep throwing things into other things; it's an annoying Quirk. You always hit, though.

Ricochet Mode (*boost Trait [Shooting and Athletics (throwing)]*, *Ongoing*, -2). Self only. You can ricochet your bullets, arrows, and even knives off walls and ceil-

ings. Your attacks ignore Cover. While active you are focusing on ranged combat, so your Fighting die is decreased by one (if already at 1d4, to 1d4-1; this reduces your Parry by 1).

True Aim (*boost Trait [Notice]*, -1). Self only, and affects your current turn only. If all you do on your turn is activate this power, Aim, and a single ranged attack, the Aim affects this attack and you don't suffer a Multi-Action penalty on any of the actions. If you fail the activation of the power, you still Aim and attack, but with the full -4 Multi-Action penalty—effectively negating the Aim.



SILENT THOUGHT

Description: Yellow, thin, shaped like an hourglass. Originally named Castle Cravin, after the place it was dug out of, it earned the nickname Good Fellow in testing and usage. After being lost and found again, it was renamed Silent Thought.

Theme: Receive mental signals and surface thoughts from conscious beings, almost like a mental antenna. *Detect basic urges and simple mental states, such as reading the mood of a chicken.*

Benefit: Thanks to your increased empathy, you gain the Charismatic Edge.

Disposition: You're easily distracted because of the many mental glimpses you receive, resulting in -2 to Notice checks.

Deep Connection (*empathy, -1*). You focus on receiving a specific person's surface thoughts. This power is resisted with

Notice instead of Spirit to notice your somewhat strange behavior (staring at them intently, mouthing their words slightly as they speak). If they begin to suspect you are using a power on them, the sudden self-reflecting realization forces you to lose focus on them, ending it.

Mental Antenna (*mind reading, -1*) You try to attune yourself to another person's brainwaves to receive their thoughts. The target is not aware of this. A raise on the check allows you to gain a second truthful answer or more details.

Mental Vortex (*divination, -3*) Opening yourself to the world at large, you receive thoughts and memories—maybe even echoes from the deceased—in an almost overpowering surge. Sitting as quietly as you can for five minutes, you sift through the cacophony in search of useful information.



SLANTED

Description: Sharp orange, triangular in shape. When placed on a surface, it stays standing in whatever position it was placed.

Theme: Up and down are subjective to you, meaning that they don't necessarily align with the world. *Place something on your skin at a weird angle, making it behave as if your center of mass is the source of gravity.*

Benefit: You can walk and run on walls at up to a 90 degree angle as if you're on the ground. You can even make short jumps while staying aligned to the wall's surface, but losing contact for more than a few seconds (a turn) aligns you with the ground again. This doesn't require conscious effort, so you can even sleep on a wall.

Disposition: You lose orientation easily, and occasionally the world seems to swirl all around you. When you draw a Heart during combat you must make an Agility

roll or lose balance and fall prone.

Deflection (*deflection, Ongoing, -2*). Self only. You "convince" incoming weapons or projectiles that gravity is pushing away from you. Maintaining this power requires ongoing conscious effort, inflicting a -1 penalty on *all* actions, not just Crystal Channeling rolls.

Walk Over Everything (*wall walker, Ongoing, -1*). Self only. You increase the Crystal's benefit ability to the max. With a success, you can walk on all solid surfaces, whatever their alignment is to the ground: ceilings, ropes, your teammates, etc. With a raise, you can also run. You do not become lighter or more agile, meaning you might still need to balance (in the case of ropes) and be conscious of your weight distribution (in the case of teammates). While this power is active, you have a -1 penalty on all Agility and Agility-based skill rolls.





SPOTLIGHT

Description: Wide, purple and pink, eruptive. The Crystal was in use by a popular Maseian singer; only after being removed did anyone realize the singer was a nest of bees. Great buzzing, though.

Theme: Become the center of attention for a few moments. Burn twice as bright, half as long. *Draw someone's attention with a "hey!"; have everyone look at you as you enter the room.*

Benefit: Whenever you make a social skill roll, draw a card. If you got a Heart, you deliver your intent in a surprisingly bombastic way, catching your opposition off-guard and making them Distracted for a few moments.

Disposition: You're Mean. You don't intend to be, but you just miss cues or ignore manners. It's because your Crystal focuses all of your social capability into single bursts,

meaning that the rest of the time, you're lacking.

All Eyes on Me! (*boost Trait [Taunt], -1*). You draw as much attention as humanly possible to yourself. You gain the Humiliate, Provoke, and Rabble-Rouser Edges. This power lasts until the end of your next turn.

Hear Me! (*boost Trait [Intimidation], -1*). Self only. You ready yourself to give a ponderous threat or lecture. You gain the Menacing and Strong Willed Edges. This power lasts until the end of your next turn.

Lend Me Your Ear! (*boost Trait [Persuasion and Performance], -1*). Self only. You ready yourself to give a convincing argument or a brilliant performance. You gain the Charismatic and Work the Room Edges. This power lasts until the end of your next turn.



STRONGARM

Description: Golden in hue, this Crystal looks like a jumbled knot of thick strands.

Theme: Arms, arms, and more arms. You are able to even physically manifest the mere concept of extra arms. *Show off your powerful arm musculature; win at arm-wrestling; give amazing hugs.*

Benefit: Increase your Strength die by one step.

Disposition: Overconfident. You can handle anything by yourself. After all, you have the arms for it!

Arm Yourself (*warrior's gift, Ongoing, -2 per arm*). Multiple golden arms sprout from around your shoulders, phasing through clothing and armor. You can create a number of extra arms up to half your Spirit. Each additional arm gets its own action, separate from your regular actions, and you have the Two-Fisted Edge

(which affects *all* of your extra hands). They are all Off-Hands, but on a raise, you are also Ambidextrous. While active, it seems to you that the solution to *any* problem is *obviously* to handle it with your bare hands; any other action is done at -1 per extra arm.

Armed and Dangerous (*smite, Ongoing, -1*). You infuse your arms and any melee weapon you are holding with great armness. While the power is active you also gain the Martial Artist Edge, and your arms leave a golden aftertrail. While active, whenever you have a moment or two alone, you focus your attention on flexing your arms.

Grab Tight (*wall walker, Ongoing, -1*). Two golden arms sprout from your torso to grasp and hold onto sheer surfaces. The power deactivates automatically when the arms no longer have a surface to hold on to.



**SURVIVOR**

Description: Boxy, deep blue. A common choice for Agents who've heard about Novice Agent mortality rates.

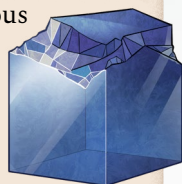
Theme: Enduring in any condition, surviving through any hardship. *Ignore minor pains; hold your breath for five minutes; run on burning coals.*

Benefit: Increase your Vigor die by one step.

Disposition: Stubborn. Your body isn't the only thing that remains unchanging—your opinions do as well.

Enhanced Constitution (*boost Trait [Vigor], Ongoing, -1*). Self only. Blue protective energy infuses your form. While

active, you have the Suspicious Hindrance as Minor, or Major with a raise. To truly survive through anything, one can never be too careful!



Fortified (*protection, Ongoing, -1*). Self only. A deep-blue force field surrounds you, tight against your form. It stacks with any armor. While active you are Overconfident; there's nothing you can't do. Allowed Modifier: More Armor.

Survive Anything (*environmental protection, -1*). Self only. A thick deep-blue force field engulfs you, pushing back against environmental harm while sustaining your body temperature and breath.

VERBALLISTIC

Description: Dark green with a twisted top, and a bulbous middle that seems to glow a little when fully charged.

Theme: Words are like bullets, and you're set to auto-fire. Only problem is, you also need ammo. *Talk a lot; make someone shut up for a moment.*

Benefit: Releasing words in a barrage comes naturally to you. Increase your Taunt die type by one and gain the Humiliate Edge. Most powers used through this Crystal (probably also Power Stunts) require and consume "charges," essentially speech itself, which must first be accumulated within the Crystal by use of the Siphon Words power. Up to three charges can be stored. It can usually be assumed that you begin each adventure with three charges.

Disposition: Big Mouth. There's just so much to say! Unless you're reigning in your instincts, you express yourself wildly and with body language.

Command (*puppet, -2*). You give such a sharp, forceful command that the target must obey it if they fail their opposed Spirit roll (a command to harm one's self or friends is automatically ignored). The power has a duration of Instant. The command

must be a single, short sentence, and the target will try to complete it on their next turn. You can keep giving commands to the same target on your following turns, once per round, as an action. This doesn't require further Crystal Channeling rolls, and the target doesn't get further chances to resist. If a round passes during which you don't give a command, this effect ends. Each command, including the first, requires and consumes a charge. If you got a raise, the first command is free.



Insult Mode (*boost trait [Taunt], -1*). You lower the dam fully, and a flood of words washes over your foes. You gain the Rabble-Rouser Edge, but it affects everyone, not just enemies. To activate this power you must have at least one charge, and it consumes a charge every three turns.

Siphon Words (*silence, Ongoing, -1*). You greatly reduce all speech (with a raise, all types of sounds) to a whisper within a Large Blast Template centered on you. While active, you can barely express yourself; you have the Tongue-Tied Hindrance instead of Big Mouth. For every twenty minutes spent in silence you gain one charge, up to a maximum of three. For every conversation that you silence during this time, reduce this duration by half.





WIDE SIGHT

Description: Small and flat, like a lumpy coin, with a bronze tint. Users of Wide Sight tend to scoff at users of Ricochet, and vice versa.

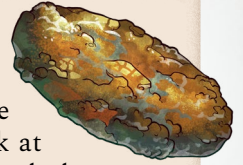
Theme: Extreme visual acuity. *Read fine print from across the room; differentiate between similar shades of color.*

Benefit: Nothing escapes you. You have the Alertness Edge.

Disposition: Quirk. You're very self-conscious about your appearance, willing to spend more than the usual amount of time and effort on grooming yourself.

Focus Mode (*boost Trait [Shooting and Notice], Ongoing, -2*). Self only. While active, you only ever look at things while aiming, through the scope of your ranged weapon, or with one eye closed. Your face is locked in a display of highly focused attention.

Telescope (*farsight, -1*): Self only. You increase your eyesight to absurd levels, but this focus can only be maintained for a few moments. The effect lasts until the end of your turn.



WOLFSBOON

Description: Red and angry. This Crystal was found in the possession of a reclusive family in Bogovia.

Theme: Makes you werewolf-like. *Sniff the presence of rodents; etch a mark into a wooden surface with your fingernail.*

Benefit: Increase your Strength die by one step.

Disposition: Bloodthirsty. The only good enemy is a dead enemy.

Go Feral (*boost Trait [Fighting], Ongoing, -1*). Self only. You gain the Berserk Edge

and it immediately activates. You also gain the Martial Artist Edge and your fingers seem almost claw-like; you gain +2 on climbing rolls, just like real claws. This power ends when your Berserking ends; ending it voluntarily requires a Smarts -2 roll. While active, you keep growling and groaning.

Sniff (*boost Trait, Ongoing, -1*). Self only. While active you gain +2 to Notice checks involving smells: you're as sensitive to smells as a dog. At the same time, you suffer a -2 penalty on Notice checks involving sight.



ZAP

Description: Sharp, spikey, yellow and blue. One Agent, now deceased, used to slot Zap in order to "get bright ideas," claiming its theme is misunderstood.

Theme: Creating sharp spikes in the voltage of existing electromagnetic fields. *Touch someone to make them go "ouch!"; safely discharge static electricity from an object.*

Benefit: You're jittery: you've got the Quick Edge.

Disposition: You're *always* jittery. Talking really fast, relentlessly, is a pretty annoying Habit (Minor).

Jolt (*confusion, -1*). You create a sudden jolt in someone's nervous system. If you Critically Fail with this power you are not only desynced but also Stunned, as your own nervous system suffers from the feedback.

Sense Electricity (*detect arcana, Ongoing, -1*). You can sense electrical currents in the environment, allowing you to notice living creatures, metal objects, and even weather patterns. While this power is active you must close your eyes, so you're Blind.



**Optional Rule: Syn Crystal Recall**

Unless an Agent is a Specialist who got issued a specific Crystal for their job, there is always the chance that some other Agent will requisition their Crystal or that Syn will decide it's better used elsewhere. This rule suggests a fair and random way to do so. Use this rule if your group isn't too attached to their Crystals and enjoys having to try new approaches now and again (and to increase the control Syn has over its Agents' lives).

Between adventures, or whenever the Agents arrive at a Syn facility, have each Agent draw a card:

- **2-10:** Nothing happens.
- **Face:** Syn has requested the Agent's Crystal.

In order to keep it, the Agent can roll Battle, Persuasion, or Research, adding their Requisition as a modifier. On a failure, they can still keep it, but only if they spend a number of Requisition points equal to the Crystal's Rank. If the group has no extra Crystals available, the Agent is provided with a Novice Crystal from the Repository.

- **Ace:** The Crystal is vital to a mission somewhere else. The Agent is provided with an alternative Crystal of the same Rank from the Repository.
- **Joker:** The person requesting the Crystal is high-ranking. The Agent is given a one-time Requisition bonus equal to the Agent's Rank as compensation for the inconvenience.

SEASONED CRYSTALS

Starting characters can spend one Requisition point to get one of the following Crystals instead of a Novice one.

The GM can add or remove Crystals from this list as they see fit.

BUBBLE

Description: Round, pink, but almost translucent. The Crystal was found washed ashore in the Islands.

Theme: Create translucent pink bubbles on or around your body. *Create a bubble around an apple; envelop your head in a bubble.*

Benefit: You can create a small, hard bubble in your hand as a free action and without a roll. You're instinctively good at throwing it, gaining +2 on the Athletics roll. The bubble deals Str damage, with a Range of 3/6/12. Bubbles exist for several seconds (a round) but you can concentrate to keep some bubbles existing (up to your Spirit); this is considered maintaining a power. Bubbles have a Hardness of 5. Left unattended, bubbles have a strange tendency to become slightly buoyant, hovering an inch or so above a surface.

Disposition: Curious, as you become bub-

bly, impulsive, and whimsical.

Bubble (*protection*, -2). Always activates with the More Armor Modifier. You touch a target and cover them with a bubble, which dissipates when you stop maintaining the power or when an attack manages to break through the bubble (surpassing the target's Toughness or Hardness). While active, the target can't touch anything outside of the bubble. The bubble is air-tight, so the target gains a basic version of *environmental protection* against the outside atmosphere, but after five minutes the target begins suffocating. If the target is unwilling they can resist with Spirit, and can also attack the bubble itself (Hardness 5) if they want to break out. Allowed Modifiers: Additional Recipients. Also, for a -2 penalty you can make everything inside the bubble weigh a tenth of its normal weight.





FASTER

Description: Green, cube-shaped, with smooth surfaces.

Theme: Everything's quicker; you're buzzing with movement. *Pull off sleight of hand tricks.*

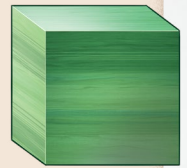
Benefit: You gain the Quick and Fleet Footed Edges. Better get moving!

Disposition: You're Hard of Hearing (Minor), because of constant background buzzing. You're constantly moving, which

can make people frustrated; it's a Habit (Minor).

Quick Instincts (*deflection, Ongoing, -2*). Self only. You respond immediately to any threat. While active, you constantly dodge and crouch and roll.

Quicker (*speed, -1*). Self only. You become even faster than usual. Allowed modifier: Quickness.



FIREBALL

Description: Orange ball. This isn't the most sophisticated of Crystals, but it does the job.

Theme: Creating a sudden burst of fire, launching it outward. *Throw an eruption of flame from a finger.*

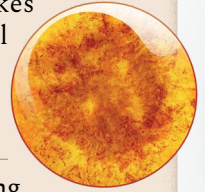
Benefit: You're more destructive than usual and have the No Mercy Edge.

Disposition: You are prone to sudden emotional eruptions. When you fail a Spirit roll, or when you draw a Heart in combat,

an unexpected emotion takes over you for a moment. Roll a die: odd, it's not appropriate to the current situation; even, it is.

Fireball (*blast, -2*). You bring your hands together and launch a fireball. Allowed modifiers: All.

Fire Bolt (*bolt, -1*). You launch a bolt of fire from the palm of your hand, with a range of 12/24/48. Allowed modifier: Damage.



HARD SHADOW

Description: Blue, thin, and drop-shaped.

Theme: Your shadow becomes corporeal. The whole shadow is one big "muscle," moving all at once. *Push open a door on which you cast your shadow.*

Benefit: You can use your skills at a distance, wherever your shadow falls. Any such action requiring delicate manipulation is done with a -1 penalty and takes twice as long. You need to be able to see what you're doing, as usual. If something bigger than you covers all of your shadow, it means you're not casting a shadow at all.

Disposition: Mean. Shades of meaning are for other people; you no longer have any

tact. You're also, ironically, afraid of the dark, since there are no shadows in complete darkness. It's a Phobia (Minor).

Shadow Strike (*bolt, -1*). You stretch a piece of your hardened shadow and put all of your Crystal's weight behind it. Range and Cover do not apply, but Illumination penalties apply as normal, and even affect your damage roll. Allowed Modifiers: Damage.

Shadow Wall (*barrier, Ongoing, -1*). You harden your shadow, pulling it off the surface it's on and stretching it into a thick, three-dimensional barrier. Allowed Modifiers: Hardened, Shaped, Size.



**INFUSE**

Description: Dark green, root-like, and soft to the touch. This Crystal was found protected by a thicket of animated trees in Zingama.

Theme: Infuses the bearer with pure, uninhibited life energy. The bearer can unleash this energy in barely-controlled blasts, directing it into living things. *Excite bushes to make them rattle; keep yourself energized as if you've had a good cup of coffee.*

Benefit: Fast Healer Edge, Healer Edge. The life energy fills you, and helps you heal others.

Disposition: Quirk: You're energetic all right, being boisterous and loud all the time. You quickly lose interest if a task takes too much time, resulting in -1 on such tasks, including most Research rolls.

Entangle (*entangle*, -1). You infuse the plants around a person or an area with

life energy, making vines, branches, leaves, and roots grow uncontrollably. Allowed Modifiers: All.

Infuse Health (*healing*, -2). Every raise heals a Wound, not just the first one. Allowed Modifier: all except for Neutralize Poison or Disease, since the power doesn't differentiate between the life of the patient and that of the disease!

Unleash (*havoc*, -1). Medium Blast Template centered on you or a Cone Template emanating from you. Fully unleashing the Crystal's energy into every living thing in the area, including yourself, forces them to jump, run, or spasm in a random direction (roll d12 and read it like a clock face). You are affected too, but have +2 to resist. This power might also turn the area into Difficult Ground if there's enough vegetation. Allowed Modifiers: All.

**TRANSLUCENT**

Description: A crystal-clear lump.

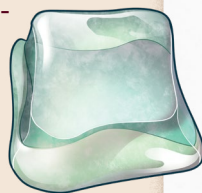
Theme: Things go straight through you, like you're not even there. It doesn't work the other way around, though—you can't pass through things yourself. They must be aimed at you. *Not catching something being thrown at you; avoiding a conversation with an annoying relative*

Benefit: Even if they manage to hit you, it's usually softer than planned. Your Vigor die increases by one step, and you have Combat Reflexes.

Disposition: It's hard to get your attention and keep you in the conversation, as words that are said to you occasionally just pass by your ear. You have -2 to Notice someone addressing you and -2 Athletics to catch things aimed at you.

Disappear (*invisibility*, *Ongoing*, -3). By focusing hard you can avoid someone's attention even when it's directed at you; their gaze will just skip over you. While active you can't draw attention even if you want to, and are Mute.

Transparency Mode. (*intangibility*, *Ongoing*, -3). You are completely immune to all physical attacks aimed at you: they just pass through you. This includes area attacks and even hazards, as long as it wasn't you who put yourself in danger in the first place. Suddenly collapsing ceilings won't damage you, but if you walk into a poisonous swamp, you've brought it on yourself. If you attack someone, any immediate retaliation by them is fair game—watch out for enemies on Hold. While active, your personality is transparent; you have Big Mouth and Habit (Minor; too honest about your thoughts).





Creating New Crystals

Game Masters may want to create new Crystals for their Agents to find, and experienced players may want to create new Novice Crystals for their starting characters. This process can begin anywhere: sometimes you'll get a cool idea for a theme and go looking for powers, other times you'll have a cool new power in mind and will need to figure out an appropriate theme. Follow these guidelines and don't hesitate to tweak the rules later during the game—playtest is key.

Legendary Crystals are not like other Crystals. Canonically, there are only five such Crystals, and they are in the possession of the five members of the Syn Council. If you want to create one, it should be used as a narrative device for your campaign—give it any power or ability that befits the story.

Note that as far as Syn knows, there is only *one* of each Crystal. That being said, feel free to create Crystals with themes that are very similar to those of existing Crystals, so that they're doing sort of—but not exactly—the same things.

Decide on a concise theme: Think of a mood, concept, or item, and try to describe a specific aspect of it in a single sentence. "A lot of flames" is too broad, but "igniting things with a sudden spark" is better. If your description starts with "it allows you to..." you're describing the benefit or one of the powers, not the theme. Try to finish that power, and then go back and extrapolate the theme from it.

Note that themes have some interaction with the Crystal's Rank (see page 54, and the sidebar on page 62). During the design process you might need to rephrase a theme or re-Rank your Crystal. Since Ranks tend to be more important game-wise (you'll usually design a Crystal with a specific Rank in mind), you should be open to changing your theme. Almost every theme can be separated into several different aspects or combined with other concepts if you're willing to tweak it.

Example: Amy creates a Veteran Crystal. Crystals of this Rank tend to "take a specific aspect of the world and exaggerate it." The idea that



first excited her was "calmness," but she's not sure how to take it to the extreme. She doesn't want to change the Rank, so she sits down to think of new ways to interpret "calmness." She finally decides to focus on "airy, light-headed, light as a feather." That's a start!

Translating theme into effects: Consider how to evoke a Crystal's theme with Edges and powers. Go through the lists from *Savage Worlds* and make a shortlist that includes anything that seems plausibly related. When deciding on a power, you should *almost always* change it in some way, customizing it to the theme—trappings come first! Consider which Modifiers should be allowed or which are always affecting the power.

Most of the time, this customization will lead to a power being very focused on doing one thing, meaning it's less useful or versatile than the original version. That's a good thing: by keeping the effect focused you keep the feel of the theme, and by having restrictions you force the Agents to come up with innovative solutions.

If a power has a duration and doesn't have a target that can try to resist it, it's probably Ongoing. See sidebar on the next page.



Remember that a Crystal's powers don't represent all of its theme's expressions, just the ones which are "easiest" for the Agent to create; those that come "naturally." This is a simple excuse to allow us, as designers, to give access only to specific powers, the ones that are most fun to play. At the same time, this limits access to overpowered effects (by requiring the player to spend a Benny on a Power Stunt) even if they seem like they should work well within the theme.

A power is "overpowered" when it gives the player too much control over what's happening in the game compared to the Crystal's Rank: it's too versatile. A Novice Crystal's power should not allow the Agent to teleport however and wherever they want—so while Buddy allows some teleportation, it's only done under strict limitations.

While *Crystal Heart* ignores a power's Rank, you should use it as a guideline. Higher-Ranked powers tend to be more versatile, and therefore require more customization when given to a low-Ranked Crystal to limit their use to the desired level.

Example: Amy creates a Crystal with a theme of "flighty, light and airy." She imagines a simple offensive power for it: making people so light that they float around aimlessly for a moment, as if in zero-g. She figures this can be a stun power, but because of the trappings, the targets must make an Agility check instead of a Vigor check to avoid being Shaken.

Creating benefits: In many ways, the benefit is the most important part of the Crystal. Because it's a constant effect, it's usually the go-to expression of the theme in the player's mind. Since benefits are always on, they are usually an Edge or an increase of a Trait die type by one. In some cases, however, they provide the basis upon which other powers operate. These special benefits require a lot of careful design (and playtest).

Assume each Crystal gets a number of Hindrance points equal to its Rank plus one or two. These are usually spent on Edges, but you can use them to buy positive racial abilities as well. If you "spend" more or less points than the recommended amount, balance it either with an equal amount of Hindrances in its disposition, or with the number of powers.

Keeping Ongoing Powers in Check

Many Crystals allow their bearer to gain an Ongoing empowerment, usually one which further enhances an ability granted by the Crystal's benefit.

Technically, nothing prevents an Agent from waking up in the morning, activating the power, and leaving it on for the rest of the day. However, in many cases this is not exactly an exciting choice, meaning we might as well just have the Crystal grant that ability as a benefit. Keeping the power active should be an interesting decision, not just a default state.

To keep that mindset, ask yourself "How am I paying for this?" All Ongoing activations should come with some form of drawback that's fun to roleplay. It can be a simple give-and-take—when you increase your Smarts, you decrease your Strength—but it can also be an unusual implication or exaggeration of the Crystal's theme (for example, constant excessive drooling). It's not the sort of thing you would probably want to keep "on" for the whole day—but if you do, you'll get interesting interactions out of it.

Note that the benefit should only reflect the most basic thing a person can do with the Crystal, which usually means it affects the bearer at close range or in a specific way. In order to do something fancier with the Crystal, the bearer should need to use its powers (or even a Power Stunt).

How many powers: Novice and Seasoned Crystals should have three powers at most, with a combined cost in Power Points of around six. Veteran Crystals might have four powers, with a combined cost of about eight Power Points. Heroic Crystals can go beyond these limits.

These limits keep Crystals manageable, both from a pacing perspective (to keep the game fast and furious) and from a balance perspective (to keep the game challenging).

The number of powers also depends on the Crystal's benefit, especially with Veteran and Heroic Crystals. If the benefit has only niche uses, so it doesn't allow for versatile problem solving, make sure to give the Crystal more powers to compensate.





Example: Amy decides to make the “flighty” Crystal Seasoned, so she gives it three powers. Beyond stunned, she goes with fly (of course) and confusion (makes people extremely light-headed). That’s six Power Points all-in-all.

Creating dispositions: Start by trying to find the most obvious repercussions of the Crystal’s theme. Does the Crystal allow you to become transparent and move through walls? Maybe you get sudden urges to peek into places and become Curious. Or maybe you yourself become transparent—personality wise—and lose a die of Spirit. If it’s a high-Ranked Crystal, maybe it’s both!

As a general guideline, Novice Crystals have a single Minor Hindrance and Seasoned have a single Major Hindrance. Veteran and Heroic have three or even four points worth of Hindrances, which should be Major when possible; it’s best to keep the total number of Hindrances low to make it easier for the player. Hindrances can also be replaced with negative racial abilities of equal cost.

These Hindrances can certainly be physical, when it fits the theme. The Crystal Faster creates a constant, annoying ringing in your ears because of the constant vibrations. Warp (page 202) makes space around you contort in uncomfortable ways, effectively making you Slow.

Here are some suggestions for dispositions:

- Makes your arms, legs, or eyes twitch on a regular basis
- Exaggerates a cognitive bias, such as Confirmation Bias, Stereotyping, or Negativity Bias
- Changes a speech mannerism, making you mumble, talk too loudly, or try to rhyme everything
- Shifts your priorities, making you think a lot about birds, or to try to take a nap whenever possible
- Gives you a new worldview, such as filling you with wonder about everything or making you see the worst in everyone

Be flexible: The first few times your Crystal sees action it might not be as cool, useful, or streamlined as you imagined. You may find that when used in the game, the pow-

ers don’t seem to connect into a coherent whole with an actual theme, and/or that the Crystal lacks personality. Maybe you’ll find that you created too many powers, some of which don’t really come into use—a common mistake among new Crystal designers, who try to model *all* the ways a theme can be expressed.

Consider the first few sessions as tryouts or playtests, and take feedback from the other players. If changes are needed, consider first increasing the specificity of the Crystal’s powers (fewer powers, limited targets, narrower range, giving an Ongoing power a harsher drawback) and second, increasing its Rank. Syn can always demand that the Crystal be taken back to the citadel (see the optional rule on page 72).

Example: Later on, Amy realizes the flight power is very useful, yet it doesn’t answer the question “How am I paying for this?”—which means there’s no reason not to keep it always on (see the sidebar Keeping Ongoing Powers in Check). That’s not how she imagined the Crystal: she wants the flight to be an occasional thing, not a constant benefit. She decides to add a limitation to it: while flying, the Agent is swept easily by winds. Worse, they’re pushed away from the ground, making it hard to get down again. She starts thinking of the mechanical implications of this.

There are exceptions to these rules: Any Crystal is allowed to break any of these guidelines. Even the best scientists at Syn aren’t really sure how Crystals work.

Novice or Seasoned?

Seasoned and Novice Crystals can seem quite similar. When creating a new low-powered Crystal, ask yourself the following question: can this Crystal be the character’s “main thing?”

Novice Crystals are generally supportive in nature, enhancing an Agent’s already-existing abilities. Seasoned Crystals can have powers which attack or influence others, giving the Agent something new to do: an ability which could become their most go-to solution.





Crystals in the Game

Here are a few things to keep in mind to stay true to the spirit of the setting.

Crystals are old. They've been here longer than anyone alive today. The people of the Bygone Age seem to have had many uses for them, so you can find them deep in the wilds or within ancient ruins. They've been there for so long that they've affected their environment.

Using Crystals is new. You might be the first to master yours, the first one to properly use its powers. You can name the new ones you discover—no one has seen them before! (Well, most of the time). Syn personnel are the most advanced Crystal users, and even they have only been doing it for about thirty years. While it's true that people have been using Crystals for hundreds of years, if you don't have Syn training or equipment, it might be more accurate to say that the Crystal uses *you*: its theme and disposition take over and its powers get out of control.

Everything supernatural can be traced back to a crystal, except (perhaps!) the flying mountains of Maseia. A rain of frogs? There's probably a Crystal in the lake. Someone's spirit returns from beyond the grave? They probably died next to a Crystal with death powers. Crystals can influence the environment as if infusing it with a sort of "radiation," usually referred to as corruption or taint. If you see something that isn't natural, there *surely* is a Crystal behind it. Even if not here and now, you can trace a link to a Crystal somewhere.

Crystals move around. You may use a Crystal for an entire adventure only to switch to a different one at the end. It might be taken from you by Syn to be used in a different mission, or to help train new agents. The powers of a foe you encounter might be known to you if they're from a Crystal you yourself have used before... and the other way around. Known Crystals and most information regarding them are not public knowledge, but important people and those in the know might be prepared for you.

Crystals are mysterious. We don't know *why* they have a theme. We don't understand how they're able to create their powers. If there's a pattern to their colors and shapes, no one in Syn knows about it (probably). But you still use them. And Syn always knows more than you do.

Shards

Some Crystals have shattered into pieces. Since Crystals are diamond-hard it's unclear how this can happen, and yet it evidently does.

These shards are simultaneously less and more powerful than a whole Crystal. On the one hand, each is only capable of creating a single, quite specific effect. On the other hand, they are easily usable by humans: anyone who touches a shard can use its power safely and reliably. Well, anyone except Agents, as their Crystal's resonance doesn't mesh well with the external power.

Most common people won't be able to distinguish between a Crystal and a shard. A Syn Agent will roll their eyes and point out the obvious differences in size and power scale, but to the person on the street it's all the same thing.

Syn Agents are required to gather shards whenever possible, and not only for the protection of the Lands. When all the shards of a single Crystal are brought together (usually three or four) they reforge themselves into the original Crystal. Surprisingly, the powers of this new Crystal do not necessarily resemble the powers held by its shards.

Shards don't have themes, but the Crystal from which they broke does. Shards of the same Crystal are like puzzle pieces, each revealing a part of the picture.

Designing Shards: Each shard holds a single, non-modifiable power. Occasionally a shard might contain two powers that are always activated at the same time, usually in an inconvenient way, such as *boost Agility* with *lower Smarts*, or *healing* that also creates *havoc*.

Using Shards: Non-Agents just roll Spirit to recognize what the shard does and then use it. Agents need to roll Crystal Channeling and *any* failure results in a desync.

You can't use any Modifiers or activate Power Stunts with a shard.



Human Hearts

In the world of *Crystal Heart*, all humans have small stones instead of flesh-and-blood hearts.

Human hearts are hard, gemlike objects, around an inch or two (3-5cm) long and an inch (3cm) in diameter, changing slightly in shape and greatly in color from individual to individual. At birth, the heart is only a small, colorless pebble. As the person grows, develops a personality and a world view, the heart solidifies into a unique shape and hue.

These hearts do not function like real-world hearts. They're not connected to any blood vessels or any other organ. They don't receive any nourishment from the body. However, the presence of a heart is essential to a person's health.

The heart beats slowly by shaking lightly, enabling blood circulation in a way theorized by modern medical science to be similar to a magnet creating a magnetic field. It is also theorized that the power that fuels this beating is the person's soul. This idea is strengthened by the fact that a person's mind shapes his or her heart in a very physical way. If the soul leaves the body, such as at the moment of death, the heart stops functioning immediately. If a heart is taken out, the person starts suffocating, unable to breathe.

A heart outside of a body does not function, although occasionally it might beat when held by a person (this is considered gory and horrific, just like holding a real heart in the real world). Over a period of several months it slowly sublimates, turning into vapors.

It's important to note that animals have flesh-and-blood hearts. Biologists in Fjordstad and Zingama have reached the stage where they are starting to be puzzled by this discrepancy between people and animals, but to most this is a simple fact of the world.

Heart Transfer

Hearts do not transfer well from one person to another, although it

is possible to transplant a heart in a surgical operation. This procedure requires extended hospitalization, like a real-world heart transplant. A person is only compatible with close family members and people who share their general disposition and worldview.

In the case of a successful transplant, the person receiving the heart gains a general insight into the original owner's state of mind, as well as limited hazy access to some of their memories. It's possible to try and experience a specific memory more clearly with a Smarts roll.

Broken Heart

It is possible for a person to become so fatalistic that they stop willing their own heart to continue functioning—at least, this is the current medical view on the matter. The facts are that sometimes people become very desperate and melancholy, and at the same time their hearts crack and stop functioning. However, correlation doesn't mean causation, and it is unclear if the person *actually* stops willing themselves to live or if their condition is the result of the failing heart.

When a person is brought down so hard that their psyche can't handle it anymore, they're on the verge of a broken heart. The person is allowed three Spirit checks, one each morning, after waking up. If they fail all three, they become heartbroken. From that moment on, any negative emotional event might trigger one last Spirit check. Failure results in death, as the heart literally breaks. These checks can receive up to a +2 bonus if a friend helps by cheering the person up or discussing the matter that is weighing so heavy on their heart.

In the world of *Crystal Heart* depression can literally kill you, unless you get help.





The Five Lands

This chapter covers *Crystal Heart*'s world, starting with the Setting Rules which give it its unique feel.

Setting Rules

We recommend using the following Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds*, summarized here for your convenience. Crystal Channeling is a variation on the No Power Points rule—see page 56 for the full details.

Creative Combat: A successful Test works as usual, but if a Wild Card character succeeds with a raise while in combat, their foe is not automatically Shaken. They instead roll on the Creative Combat Table.

Dumb Luck: A player can spend a Benny (and only one) after a Critical Failure. The critical failure still happens, but if the reroll is successful, the task somehow results in success through sheer dumb luck.

Fanatics: When a Wild Card enemy character is hit by a successful attack and the GM

thinks it is appropriate, one of the henchmen, goons, or other allies jumps in front of their leader and takes the attack instead.

Fast Healing: Wild Cards make natural healing rolls once per day instead of every five days (twice per day with the Fast Healer Edge).

NEW SETTING RULES

The tone of *Crystal Heart* can vary wildly depending on the Land you're in and your group's play style, but generally it doesn't stray too far from light-hearted cartoonish action with bits of philosophical drama. The Setting Rules listed below support this tone.

CHASING LEADS

These fun side-stories are a variation on the Interlude and Travel Encounter rules. Syn Agents spend a lot of time on the road, moving between rumored Crystal locations. These routes are constructed based on Syn's intelligence, sending the Agents to chase



every lead—but most of the leads *don't* lead to Crystals.

Before the start of each adventure, do the following:

- One player draws a card and consults the list *It Starts With...* below, to tell what happened when the team first started chasing this lead.
- The storyteller chooses another player to draw a second card for the *And Then...* list and explain how this complicated the situation. Repeat until the player before last, who tells how the mission ends.
- The last player draws a card and consults the *Back on the Road* list to say what happened between that lead and the start of the next adventure. Everyone can then suggest how the team dealt with this encounter using their resources, wits, and personalities. No rolls are made: this story is to help convey the feeling of going through hardships on the way to the adventure itself.
- Finally, everyone gets a Benny and a Requisition point. After chasing down all of these leads, the Agents deserve it!

For inspiration, ask yourself: which Agents were able to use their abilities, skills, or ingenuity to overcome these problems or fail in an entertaining way? Success and failure have no consequences here, so choose what is more interesting to you.

Remember: these leads *never* end with finding a Crystal. In case a shard was retrieved, the GM may want to rule that its powers are very specific (“It makes birds itch”) or benign (“It makes fruit wet”). It should be effectively useless in any other situation except the one it was found in.

It Starts With...

- **Spades: Ruins.** It's an old, dangerous place that hasn't been explored by Syn yet.

It's a flooded underground basement; There's a giant moss-covered statue of a frog, but no actual buildings; This suit of armor turns to look at me suspiciously as I walk down the corridor.

- **Hearts: Denial.** Something unusual is going on, but whatever's behind it, the answer is not straightforward.

The keepers of the grove won't allow us in-

side; The giant turtle with the glowing blue obelisk on its back swims away as we come close; There once was a Crystal here, but it was moved away to another castle. Sorry.

- **Diamonds: Shard.** There's a shard in action here; something is definitely supernatural. *The bikers shoot fireballs at us; The sound of the wind moving through the tree canopy makes everyone sleepy; The tiny officer rides an angry-looking beetle.*

- **Clubs: Misinformation.** Someone, somewhere, made a mistake while gathering or analyzing intelligence. They may have misunderstood the data or accidentally noted non-existent details.

They said it was deserted, but I see about two dozen bears here; Apparently it originally said “strong gusts,” not “strong ghosts.”

- **Joker: Accident.** You stumbled your way into a situation that seems to have something to do with Crystals.

Hiding in a cave from the rain, a strange fungus starts to speak to you; The Tank falls into a ditch and onto the broken roof of a buried treasure chamber.

And Then...

- **Spades: Uninvited Guests.** Everything got complicated because of something or someone that had no place being there.

As we got to the caldera of the volcano, a group of Fjordstadian scientists got in the way; While escaping the burning temple, we met another group of Agents investigating this place; A tiger? In Maseia?!

- **Hearts: It Gets Personal.** Someone took the Agents' involvement very personally.

The chieftain announces a hunt after us!; A clingy fan on the street won't stop following you; The lovers had to be separated—there was no other choice.

- **Diamonds: Hints of Crystals.** A Crystal-based force influenced the course of the mission, but it wasn't an actual Crystal—it was the Agents themselves, a tainted creature, or something that wasn't local.

An Agent used a power and it fumbled gloriously; A giant mole with pulsing purple veins tried to eat the Tank; The sky above the mountains to the east turned red—better tell Syn to send a group there sometime.





- **Clubs: Nature Happens.** Weather, natural disaster, an animal or even the time of day have had a huge impact on the mission.

After the snowstorm hit we almost lost track of the yeti-like monster; As the sun set, the shard which was energizing the statues stopped working; A razor snake ambush!

- **Joker: Syn.** The organization itself prevented you from investigating further.

There was a team of Subduers there, telling you to turn away; There's a secret facility doing secret research; The Agent's code specifically states you aren't allowed to do the thing you're trying to do.

Back on the Road

- **Spades: Accidents.** A flat tire, a beast running into the vehicle, falling off the road, something happening inside the Tank...life got complicated, messy, and probably dirty.
- **Hearts: People.** Someone caused some problems for the team: bandit ambush, revenge-seeking lackeys of a beaten foe, an old acquaintance from your life before Syn, a mob preventing you from going through their town.
- **Diamonds: Team Troubles.** An argument got out of hand; an Agent got separated from the rest because of one of their Hindrances; you ran out of supplies and had to push all the way to the next way station.
- **Clubs: Obstacles.** An obstacle is on the road, either because of a natural disaster (e.g. mudslide) or from lack of maintenance

(a fallen tree or ruined bridge).

- **Joker: Crystals.** Some Crystal-related mishap or misuse, either by one of the Agents or a manifestation of some feral Crystal. The latter could be used by the GM to foreshadow the next adventure.

It is recommended the GM use the Chasing Leads rules along with a Structured Campaign (see next page). The episodic format takes away a lot of the players' sense of control over the shared gaming experience by having the GM state the situation at the beginning of an adventure. Giving the players a chance to contribute to the story of the journey itself helps them gain back some control.

DRAWING A HEART

Some Edges, Crystals, and other rules are triggered when you draw a card of a specific suit, usually Hearts. The trigger only occurs for the first card you are dealt, and not on cards from Quick, Tactician, or other sources. The triggered effect only influences you on the round you were dealt the card; if you're on Hold until next round, the effect will fade.

EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION ABOUT SYN

Almost anyone, anywhere, has an opinion about Syn—and more specifically about its Agents. Whenever the Agents encounter a new person or group, the GM rolls on the table or decides what their opinion is of Syn. Use this instead of (or along with) the Reaction Table from *Savage Worlds*.





EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION ABOUT SYN

Roll	Attitude toward Syn
1	Ambivalent
2	Exploitative
3	Provoking
4	Wary
5	Admiring
6	Suspicious
7	Awed
8	Demanding
9	Dismissing
10	Roll twice and combine

NO MAGIC

There are no magic spells or divine miracles in the world of *Crystal Heart*. All powers and special effects are natural (really weird, but natural). All *Savage Worlds* powers can be found in this world in the form of Crystal manifestations, which are many and varied, and of shards, which are portable and powerful.

The only Arcane Background allowed for player characters is Crystal Channeling. Weird Science is a special case: NPCs who've learned the strange techniques of Fjordstad (mostly Fjordstadian natives, but not necessarily) are allowed to have this Arcane Background and the Weird Science skill, representing their unique take on science. They also have access to all of the relevant Power Edges from *Savage Worlds*.

STRUCTURED CAMPAIGN

A *Crystal Heart* campaign is intended to last ten to twenty sessions, from Novice to late Heroic (an Advance every session or two). We encourage playing using a serialized structure which gives an emphasis on fast, furious fun.

The following is the suggested structure for a typical *Crystal Heart* campaign, listed here so that the players know what to expect. Game Master, if you depart from this structure, let your players know in advance!

Think of the campaign as an animated series in three seasons:

Season one ("Crystal Hunters"): During the first few sessions the Agents travel

along their route, playing through mostly self-contained episodes in which they discover shards or Crystals. In-between, they're Chasing Leads (see page 80).

This stage of the campaign is episodic, meaning that each adventure is its own story. An adventure starts like an episode in a television series, with the Agents already at the scene, sometimes even in medias res. All less-exciting background activities should either be waived, played in ways that make them fun (see Chasing Leads), or abstracted (such as with Requisition or the Ammo and Supplies rules).

Season two ("Specialists"): While they were going through their route, the team discovered hints of some larger plot. Now they become Specialists or Free Agents, and are sent (or decide for themselves) to chase some leads and uncover the bigger conspiracy.

This stage of the campaign might be far more open-ended than the previous one, giving the characters more freedom in deciding how to approach each situation.

Season three ("Grand Finale"): As the big bad moves closer to achieving their sinister goals, the team uses powerful Crystals to chase them down, going through exotic locations and making far-reaching decisions, all culminating in one final fight. The campaign now ends—time to start a new one!

SYN TRAINING

Sometimes your Agent's training kicks in at an opportune moment. Like with the High Adventure Setting Rule, Agents can spend a Benny to gain a one-time use of a Combat Edge. Agents are encouraged to save one last Benny for use in an emergency to gain Hard to Kill or Nerves of Steel.

In addition, inspiration can sometimes strike as you use your Crystal. Agents can spend a Benny to gain the one-time use of any Edge as long as it can be explained using their Crystal's theme, just like with a Power Stunt. You must meet the Rank and Edge requirements of the new Edge, but you can ignore any Trait requirements.



Life in the Five Lands

Technically speaking, *Crystal Heart* is a post-apocalyptic setting, because several hundred years ago there was an apocalypse. That being said, this is not a game about scarce resources, surviving at all costs, or rebuilding civilization. All of that already happened many generations ago, and now everyone is sort of okay. It's a game about capable adventurers chasing after cool Crystals while confronting colorful, pulp-inspired challenges. For that, you need a world filled with various types of conflict.

Each of the Lands has its own style and theme as explained in their descriptions, but the world as a whole has a theme as well, a zeitgeist: the Lands are on the verge of an industrial revolution and the rise of globalization. Everyone is used to living in their own part of the world, building and establishing their societies. No one is prepared for the coming globalization, ushered in by new communication and travel technologies—and embodied in Syn. The Agents are literally the heralds of a revolution, and even if the people are not consciously aware of it, they still realize it in their heart of hearts.

TECHNOLOGY

Generally speaking, there are no convenient ways to do modern-day things such as cooking a meal, keeping food cold, or contacting someone on the other side of the continent. Most of the world is in a Renaissance stage of technological sophistication.

There are three notable exceptions to this. A piece of Bygone tech might help a community do something remarkable; a Crystal or its manifestation might be semi-harnessed by locals who know how to make use of some of its effects; and a Fjordstadian city might have engineered something using their specific field of study. Most fantasy or sci-fi effects one can imagine are probably available as a unique technological marvel or a Crystal somewhere. The important thing about all of these is that they're unique, local, and aren't reproducible—at least, not yet.

Crystals don't mix well with technology; or at least, no current-level tech is able to con-

trol a Crystal's power, except for a harness. As far as Syn researchers know, Crystals can at best be kept dormant using a carefully regulated environment such as the one found in the Repository, and can only be controlled when placed inside a human body. There are several speculations as to how and why this is the case, but no definite answers.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

Travel between Lands is a relatively new development. Many grandparents can still remember the days of their youth, when people from other Lands were considered demons or invaders with their strange looks and blasphemous customs. These days, after having enough exposure to outlanders to realize they aren't all that special, most people have begun to accept strangers—but many are still bigoted.

Traveling is dangerous business because of weather, wild animals, Crystal manifestations, and bandits, so most people need a good reason to do so. The governing powers of the Five Lands lack the resources to maintain roads, with the exception of Zingama, but Zingamaians have little need for roads as they travel mostly by river. Maseians travel in clans or small bands. Bogovians travel in carts, usually along the same short routes which they know well. Fjordstadians refrain from leaving their city, but within their cities they employ a variety of transport vehicles and devices. These range from automobiles and bikes to public trams and moving walkways, depending on the city.

Compared to the other Lands, the Islands are a grand central station. The major civilizations in the Islands have developed an intricate trade network since traveling by sea is pretty easy when there's always an island on the horizon, and the weather tends to be nice. Some Islanders are even braving the southern edge of Bogovia to get to the many fishing villages on its eastern coast.

The western coasts of the continent are deserted, mostly because of a phenomenon called the Great Steam Wall which stretches along the entire horizon. It is the source of many storms.



COMMUNICATIONS

Most commoners cannot afford to deliver a message in any way except by giving it to someone who's heading toward its destination. Those who have the means, though, can do much better.

Bogovians and Maseians use trained carrier birds to deliver urgent messages, but rely on horse-riding messengers for standard mail. Maseians also put their trust in sky-skiffers, daring windsurfers who travel across vast distances by riding the strong Maseian winds.

Zingama's official mail service, the Zingama Post (ZiP!) is capable of sending information and packages at record times by using carrier *snakes*. Some of them are frighteningly large, but all are well-trained and loyal.

Islanders occasionally use trained dolphins in similar ways, but they're notoriously unreliable and arrive at unpredictable times. The same is true for most other forms of communication in the Islands, but it's an accepted norm in the culture—no one seems to be in a hurry.

A Fjordstadian city or two have developed the telegraph, but the nobles refuse to use it to communicate with each other. This doesn't prevent them—and most other cities—from actually using it quite a lot, in secret.

A few years ago Syn started using radio to allow for quick communications between the citadel and its main facilities. Radio has also become integral to the operation of its autoplanes. Because it's a new technology, only a handful of engineers are able to build, maintain, and operate these radios.

While all Lands have some form of book-binding technique, the newspaper was only invented in Fjordstad a generation or so ago. It's becoming popular in Zingama as well, especially in the form of specialty magazines.

What Exists for Syn?

Syn Agents don't have: Radio earphones, mobile phones, mobile computers, laser sights. They could have, on a one-time basis: Jet skis, jetpacks, walkie-talkies, an actual tank.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Creatures and plants in the Five Lands can be put into one of three categories.

Regular: They're just like in the real world.

Unusual: They're definitely not like in the real world. They're too big, behave strangely, or even combine elements from several creatures. They're still considered normal in this world.

Corrupted: Crystal-touched, infused with some abnormal ability. This can be the result of direct contact with a feral Crystal's manifestation, or it could be an inherited characteristic passed down from an ancestor who was exposed. While these tainted creatures and plants can be considered monstrous (and indeed that's usually the case), some are perceived as divine, or even completely natural, depending on the locals and their preconceptions.

CALENDAR AND SPIRITUAL BELIEFS

The Five Lands have the same seasons as in the real world, and a moon that waxes and wanes twelve times a year. Most religions have something to say about this.

Each Land has its own calendar, with holy days that correspond to important events: the rising of tides in Zingama's river, the gathering of clans in Maseia, the beginning of the storm season in Fjordstad, or the one day of the year when you can actually see the sun in Bogovia. The Islanders tend to commemorate historical and social events more than other peoples, perhaps because the weather tends to be the same all year long.

Bogovians believe in many, *many* things, but above all, in the Faith: a vaguely-defined set of beliefs focusing on family, the afterlife, and the moon. Maseians revere spirits, either of the land or their ancestors, depending on the clan. These two belief systems disagree on many points, which has been a cause for many conflicts. Zingama recognizes an excessive amount of gods, only a few of which are considered "mainstream" at any one time, but their own nationhood seems to be central to their belief system. Fjordstadians are less likely to believe in the divine, but are much more likely to believe in an ideology.

HEALTHCARE

Up until recently, if you got sick, you died. End of story.

This has become much less common in the last few generations thanks to a proper understanding of hygiene, advances such as immunizations, and the rediscovery of Bygone and Crystal-based medicine—the last of which is mostly due to Syn’s explorations.

Many societies are struggling to adapt to this new reality. In Bogovia, having lots of kids is sensible, given that several are likely to die from disease (or be eaten by wolves), but city-dwelling Bogovians are much less afraid of disease (and wolves). Housing is sparse in Bogovian cities, leading the city dweller to create smaller households in conflict with social norms and Faith doctrine. In Maseia, many young people are finding it difficult to find a place in society as most roles are already filled—the clans are facing an uncomfortable rise in “unemployment”, leading to a rise in the number of young Maseians joining bands of bandits or revolutionaries. Zingamaians have more people with more free time than in any other Land, leading to a huge boom in their entertainment industry.

There are no “races” in the Five Lands beyond humans, but it might be the case that there are several types of humans. Strangely, the ethnic separation between Lands has a more deeply biological root than it first seemed.

When people from two Lands have kids, the children are of the same ethnicity as one of the parents—never mixed. Most people don’t ever get the chance to couple with people from other cultures, so this is a rare occurrence, but it is technically possible for a person to have siblings that look very different from themselves.

While most people who are aware of this fact simply accept it, Fjordstadian and Zingamaian scientists are

reaching a point in their understanding of biology that makes them wonder *why* this is the case, seeing as all humans are of the same species.

Bogovia

During the short moments when the sun manages to pierce the gray curtain of clouds, it shines a weak light over a gloomy, bleak land which seems to sneer and turn its back on the warmth. Vast pine forests spread down leering mountains, strangling the hills as they turn into muddy swamps. Small settlements cower against the woods, hiding in a mire’s fog or sitting bravely in open farmland, surrounded by thick walls. Bogovia is a land governed by fear of vicious beasts and the hidden past lurking between dark trees.

LAY OF THE LAND

Two mountain ranges, known as **the Sentinel** and **the Barricade**, divide Bogovia into three main territories. Many small valleys and hillsides are hidden between the folds of the mountains, some of which are inhabited. The mountains are passable in several places, but even these passages are unreachable during most of the winter and spring. Being separated, each of the territories developed distinct cultures and accents.

The Northern Plain is wide and mostly flat, an endless forest dotted with countless swamps. The slow Lover river makes its way





north-east toward the sea, collecting from the Sentinel; locals say the water is the Sentinel's tears, the huge mountain range weeping at its eternal separation from the Lover. Most settlements are to the south of the river and along the mountains, leaving the northern forest sparsely inhabited. Toward the west the land slowly ascends and turns into occasional dense woodlands, eventually rising into the desolate **Highlands**, where no one lives and no one goes.

The Rush Basin, between the two mountain ranges, is considered by most to be "true" Bogovia. Puftzburg, Bogovia's unofficial capital city, is situated on an uncomfortable, barely defensible group of hills to the east of the Basin and on both sides of the Rush. Like many other settlements in the Basin, it seems that its founders searched for the most problematic area to settle in, as if defying the Land: a sentiment shared by most of their descendants to this day. The Rush is aptly named, as it is only crossable in a few places.

To the south of the Barricade the land is divided into **the Murk** to the east and **the Marshes** to the south. The Murk forest is renowned for being dark, dense, and dangerous, and yet several villages persist along the seashore. They grow several species of worms which are highly useful in the silk and fishing businesses. The Marshes are musty in the summer and flooded in the winter, vast tracts of land where only the bog dwellers live. They've

been living there since the days of the Bygone Age—hardy, stubborn, and as suspicious toward Bogovians as Bogovians are toward everyone else.

A BIT OF BOGOVIAN HISTORY

THE FOG OF TIME: Bogovians gather in small communities deep in the valleys of the eastern Basin, where there are fewer wolves.

A LONG TIME AGO: Bogovians migrate into the Northern Plain and the Marshes. Around this time, the bog-dwellers began to dwell in their bogs.

THE TIME OF THE WARLORDS: Several powerful leaders rise throughout the Land, fighting each other for supremacy using Crystals and ancient tech. Refugees escape to the Murk. The Highland becomes cursed.

A FEW GENERATIONS AGO: The warlords' aspirations slowly decline and they settle, becoming barons and local nobles who take charge of their serfs. The Faith spreads, helping to unite the people and to keep the barons' power in check. Several towns throughout the Land become central hubs of trade and learning, with Puftzburg in the lead.

NOT LONG AGO: Many Bogovians move into cities, where the slow rise of the middle class brings more power to the guilds. Most Bogovians remain rural, though, and stick firmly to the old ways.

MAJOR LANDMARKS

Puftzburg, Bogovia's unofficial capital city, is a place of contradictions. The residents are known for being some of the toughest, roughest people in the world—but most of them are afraid of black cats and broken mirrors. The Tower of the Moon stands proudly in the middle of town, a center for scientific study of the heavens, but most of its findings are used by astrologists and in heated sermons. Puftzburg is where new urban technologies are suspiciously eyed by a traditional, stubborn society.

Cragtown sits on the cliff wall that is the generally accepted border between Bogovia and Fjordstad; indeed, the town belongs to both. The wealthy nobles of Uptown, the Fjordstadian settlement overlooking the cliff (an outreach of Shmep), control the cliff mines. These are worked by the miners of poor Lowtown at the foot of the cliff, most of whom are Bogovians. The Great Lift connects the two towns, with the entrance to the ancient mines in the middle. A recent miners' strike is slowly leading to the formation of the first union in the Lands.

The City of Crackling Gold is a famed legend in the Basin, describing a hidden valley with an ancient Bygone Age city full of treasure. There are dozens, if not hundreds, of hidden valleys in the Bogovian mountains, so this legend is unlikely to fade any time soon.

Howl Canyon in the Highlands is home to many crumbling stone buildings from around the first century after the Bygone Age. The moon motif is very prominent in these ruins, leading some to believe this is where the Faith originated. The canyon is inhabited by strangely cunning and malevolent wolves.

Bottomless Bog is a pool of stagnant water within the Marshes which appears to have no bottom. Every few days a strange artifact or piece of some unknown device floats to the surface, where it is quickly recovered by one of

several competing Bogovian families. They then sell the item for its precious metals.

Morning Crescent is a spot on top of one of the higher hills in the eastern Rush Basin. At certain times of the year, early in the morning, the sun and moon seem to collide in the sky above. An ancient group of Bogovians who are faithful to what they claim is “the Old Faith” reside in the area, tending a shrine to the moon. They are locked in fierce rivalry with another ancient group, identical in all respects except that they tend a shrine to the sun.

The Puffs are a series of heated pools and steam-spewing geysers to the south of the Murk. Puff Point is a fabled location within the Puffs, and it is said that if you jump at a specific time of the day, a giant cloud of steam will soften your fall and carry you all the way down. Several people have returned from the Puffs claiming they found the Point but got lost in the mist after reaching the ground, only to be escorted away by short, unusual women.

THE PEOPLE

The Bogovians are a *fearful* people. The Land is dotted with many small superstitious communities, wary of strangers. Most are ruled by various





barons, as they have been for hundreds of years; the nobles have a great deal of power, but only a few abuse it. Bogovians know their place—but they also know where the pitchforks are kept, should their baron misbehave.

The Bogovians' outlook on life can be summarized in the common saying "it'll rain again." Even if it's a little sunny now or there's a refreshing breeze, it'll pass. It'll rain again, soon enough. Bogovians are averse to change and quick to anger. They strike hard and fast at the first sign of trouble: destroy it quickly, before it destroys us.

Each settlement has a **Baba**, the town's "crazy woman." She is allowed to say what they're all thinking and behave in ways they are not allowed to. Baboi act deranged because it's expected and appreciated, but most have an excellent read of the room and can use their act to stand firm before barons and Syn Agents. The tradition of the *baba* stretches back centuries, but the modern day Faith is unhappy with their continuing presence and influence.

The Faith is the name of the Bogovian religion (formally The Holy Church of Safe Haven in Faith). Bogovians are avid believers, although most are unsure what the Faith is actually about—they know most of the tenets and listen to the Holy Fathers' words, and that seems to be enough. The Holy Fathers bless the people who gather in their villages' cathedrals, teaching the doctrine to acolytes. The main doctrines focus on the importance of the heavens, primarily the moon, which guides us during the dark nights. However, the exact dogma is so complex and archaic that probably only the High Priests in Puftzburg understand all of it.

Bogovia is the most lawless out of all the Lands. **Bandits** are a common danger in rural areas, where they raid villages and trade routes throughout the whole year, retreating to hidden lairs deep in the forest or up in the mountains. Even though many small villages are under the protection of a baron, this ruler doesn't necessarily intervene and judge

every crime. A common Bogovian punishment is exile from the community. These exiled are unlikely to find a home anywhere else, seeing as Bogovians are so suspicious of strangers, which often leads to them joining a group of bandits for safety in numbers.

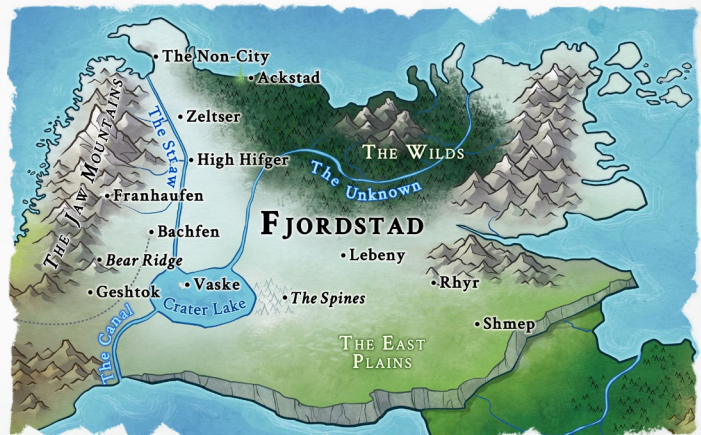
COMMON BOGOVIAN SAYINGS

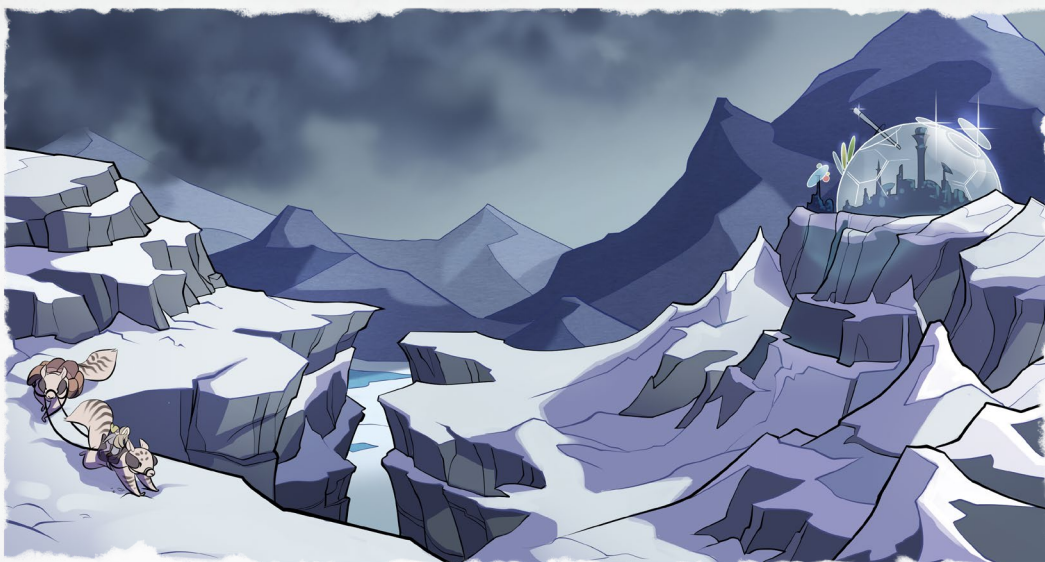
- Visitors bring news, and all news is bad news.
- Family! Can't live with them; got no other choice.
- The forest is a beast. (We milk it while it sleeps, and run away when it wakes up.)
- It'll rain again. (Even if things look sunny, it'll soon be bleak once more.)
- You can't trust those [people of neighboring town]!

Fjordstad

The Land of ice and storms is not a hospitable place. The people of the Eleven Cities huddle in their homes, where they are protected from the harsh weather and the uncivilized barbarians. Encouraged to turn to ingenuity by the mother and father of all inventions—necessity and a lack of resources—the Fjordstadians have developed a bitter inter-city rivalry over prestige and recognition. This has led to a scientific arms race, pushing each city deeper and deeper into its own niche. A cold war (in more ways than one) is raging beneath the surface. Anyone can be a spy, an informant, or a saboteur.

Most Agents who arrive at a Fjordstadian city do so under some cover, usually meeting only higher-ups in secret. The official





word among the noble houses is that Syn cannot be trusted and that Crystals are too dangerous to mess with: Ackstad's destruction (page 96) is still fresh in the collective memory. Unofficially, most noble houses maintain contact with Syn, using a "let's scratch each other's back" approach in order to have Agents sent on missions that benefit them and hurt their enemies. Syn tries to keep track of who's a friend and who's an enemy, but not always successfully—Fjordstadian alliances are as fickle as Fjordstadian storms.

LAY OF THE LAND

Most of Fjordstad is prone to strong winds and sudden storms, which occasionally increase into a full-blown thunderstorm that can last for days. Anyone planning on traveling or trading long distances must take the inclement weather into account, especially during winter. Winter is long and dark, the days grow short, and a heavy cloud cover obscures much of the sky.

The Jaw Mountains dominate west Fjordstad. This mountain range has the tallest mountains in the world. It forms an impassable barrier between the rest of the Land and the west coast, which consists of dozens of small fjords.

Crater Lake is the largest lake in the Five Lands, and also the highest. Fed by constant storms from the south, it freezes during winter and overflows in spring. Unlike most lakes, the Crater is the source for *three* rivers.

First is **the Straw**, which seems to have been dug during the Bygone Age as a canal; it stretches in long, straight narrows along the northern tundra. Second is **the Unknown** river, which leads into the Wilds and beyond. Finally, **the Canal** was recently constructed by the city of Vaske, connecting the Crater to the inner sea through a series of locks.

The Wilds is the name given to the vast forested area that dominates north-eastern Fjordstad. Despite taking up about a quarter of the Land's landmass, it has barely been explored. It's not inhabited—well, except for barbarians, but no *true* Fjordstadian considers them "people." Beyond the forest lie the ruins of Ackstad, lit by strange flames in the sky.

The East Plains is the mostly flat area that stretches along the series of cliffs which form the Bogovian border. There's nothing natural about the flatness of this area, and the ground is littered with signs of ancient land formations. The Plains serve as the main bread basket for some of the Fjordstadian cities.

MAJOR LANDMARKS

The Non-City sits across the sea from the mouth of the Straw. A generation ago, a group of Zeltserians tried to establish "the 12th city" here, but something went terribly wrong. The fault could be in the Bygone tech artifact the city was built around, its vicinity to the ruins of Ackstad, or maybe a strange fungus that came from the unexplored northern sea. Most of the inhabitants have lost



their minds; their bodies are deformed and animated even beyond death. The few survivors still huddle in havens across the ruins of the city, but no one dares to rescue them.

The Ancient Ice is a series of cave networks beneath the East Planes, stretching all the way to the nameless mountains of the Wilds. Some hint at a large Bygone Age settlement that would dwarf all Fjordstadian cities combined. Huge buildings apparently *transformed* into ice sit beneath the ground, barely more than a facade, with nothing but cave walls behind them.

Yamar's Battleground is a stretch of land between Bachfen and Zeltser, named after General Yamar Oiffploutz of the Bachfen Militia. These six bald hills have been used as a battleground by so many cities, and were blasted so many times, that they now resemble craters. Rusted tank carcasses dot the landscape alongside broken steam-mechs, melted death rays half-buried in the ground, and countless concrete barricades.

Bear Ridge is an outcrop of rock, jutting from the Jaws toward Crater lake. It's a snowy cap where—perhaps surprisingly—there are no bears at all. Still, the Ridge is avoided by travelers, because of recurring stories of strange growling noises and avalanches that look like rushing bears.

The Spines is a “forest” of giant frost pillars on the shores of Crater lake. From a certain angle, they almost look like trees. From a different angle, they resemble the spine of some giant creature protruding from the ground. They seem to never melt.

THE PEOPLE

Fjordstadians tend to think of tomorrow. Whatever their current situation is, they wonder if it could be different. Can I improve this? Can I see what's over there? Do they know that I know that they know?

City denizens mostly find comfort in their city's identity, knowing there's a clear “we” versus a clear “them.” The noble families deal with each other

the same way they deal with the other cities: keeping a front that's all patriotic while using covert operations, espionage, and backroom alliances to undermine each other. In many cases the denizens have to take care of themselves, only rarely trusting their governing bodies to do what's right.

The noble houses are becoming something akin to corporations. A generation ago, one of the lesser houses was on the brink of annihilation and opened its doors to “new recruits.” This gave the middle and lower classes a chance to join the elite, which was previously reserved only for those born into it. Within a few short years that house became a booming success, and so almost all of the other houses followed suit. These days, a heavy wall of bureaucracy in the form of application forms, tests, and administration fees has stemmed the tide of new recruits. Regulatory systems, usually accepted by all nobles of the city, manage promotion within the houses.





A BIT OF FJORDSTADIAN HISTORY

THE FOG OF TIME: Fjordstadians huddle in a handful of camps, remnants of cities of the Bygone Age.

A LONG TIME AGO: The camps become well-fortified towns. They contact one another, hoping to establish a society in which all can support each other against their Land's unforgiving temper.

THE RISE OF THE CITIES: Opportunistic betrayals and manipulative dealings lead all settlements to realize they must become more self-sufficient. The leading families take the old customs, which were created to keep order in society, and develop them into a set of strict regulations for trade, communication, and governance under their supervision. All the cities keep a close eye on each others' business, and no shenanigans are allowed in the open. These families become the noble houses.

A FEW GENERATIONS AGO: As the number of people increases, demand for scarce resources results in fierce competition between the cities. Each city keeps its innovations and discoveries to itself, as every secret can provide a crucial advantage. Mistrust between some of the cities escalates to open war, using strange and powerful weapons.

NOT LONG AGO: The cities settle into a fragile truce, the conflict shifting to behind-the-scenes subterfuge and skullduggery. With the increased need for sophistication, the middle class becomes prominent. The noble houses, which by now resemble corporations, open themselves to new recruits.

The cities are similar to each other in many respects. Each has three or four major noble houses, controlling most of the means of production and keeping the city secure against the weather and its enemies. Thousands of denizens live their lives within closed environments, as each city has found its own solutions to the same basic problems: intense cold, harsh weather, scarce farmland, sewage and trash disposal, and attacks by barbarians or other cities.

Alliances between the cities change every year, so a summer's enemy can be next winter's trading partner. Trade is vital to the lifeblood of each city, but they only trade in

resources and finished products—not ideas. Each city is fervently protective of its intellectual property. Most scientists would stare at you in horror at the mere suggestion of collaborating with any other city (Shmep is a grumpy exception to the rule).

In contrast, engineers, who face the challenge of scarce resources in their endeavors to realize their wild ideas in a working machine, might consider turning to other cities if they have better resources or techniques. Those other cities would love to have them, so it's common practice in Fjordstad to keep a careful eye on your engineers and steer them away from trouble—or even worse, *cooperation*. Occasionally, that requires kidnapping their family or placing them under “protection.”

The Fjordstadian **barbarians** are different from the city denizens in one major respect: they're poor. These are the descendants of old mountain people, escapees from ruined cities, exiles from still-standing cities, or simply those who are down on their luck. They live on the outskirts of every city in the trash heaps and sewer systems: the fringes of society. Some even live in the wilderness. There's no room for them in the cities, and not enough resources to care for them—not without everyone's lifestyle taking a huge hit. The common Fjordstadian prefers to believe they are “barbaric” and therefore deserving of pity, rather than accepting his or her own responsibility for their situation.

THE ELEVEN CITIES

Each of Fjordstad's cities specializes in specific branches of science and technology. More precisely, they *try* to, but in fact most of them cross into each others' specialities. Franhaufen and Zeltser, for example, both deal with lenses and optics in different ways.

The proud Fjordstadian cities each have an emblem and a motto. Each also has its own method of protecting itself against the Fjordstadian weather and potential attacks.

Bachfen, “Full Steam Ahead”

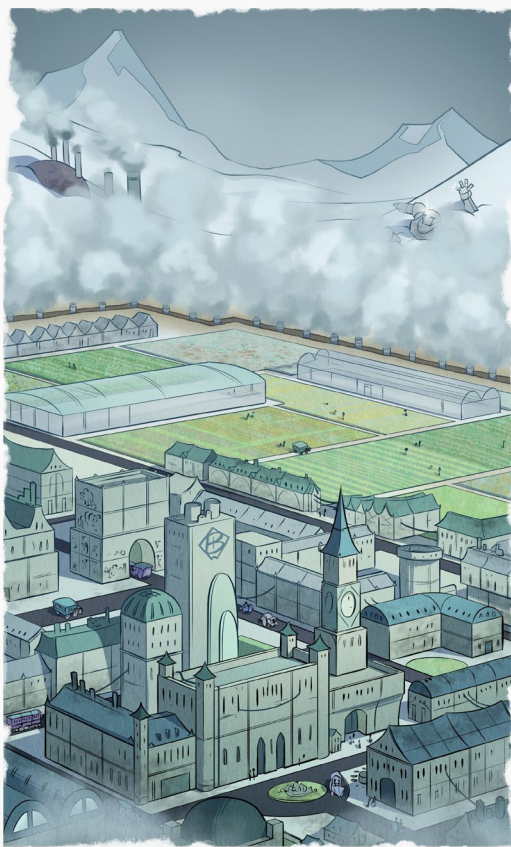
Bachfen is the most populous and prosperous of the Eleven Cities, and is probably the most well-known to non-Fjordstadians. Locals jokingly say its motto should be “Bigger Explosions.” Masters of combustion, steam,



and indeed explosives, the people of Bachfen created many forms of vehicles and engines, using them to drive, ride, and occasionally jet-propel over their well-paved streets. They even constructed the Fjordstad-Maseia Train Line, the world's only railroad, to facilitate quick and (relatively) safe travel through the Badlands and into Maseia.

Bachfen is currently at war with High Hifger. A disagreement over ownership of several metal mines in the Jaws sparked a years-old argument which soon escalated into open war. During the summer, the two cities fight on the plains; during the winter, when fighting is unfeasible, they both turn to industrial espionage and sabotage. For this purpose, the Bachfens have not only built the huge City Cannon that can shoot metal slugs all the way across the plains, but also the steam-mech power-suit division of piloted war machines.

Bachfen's **Steam Barricade** surrounds the city on four sides. These thin canals are filled with pipes spewing boiling hot water, forming a wall of steam which protects the city against harsh weather.



Bachfen's **steam-mech center** is a sophisticated factory: an underground facility filled with conveyor belts, steam pumps, and heavy cogs. The steam-mechs are also stored and maintained here when not deployed to the field.

Franhaufen, "Thinking Clearly"

The city of Franhaufen is a marvel to behold. The tall towers of steel and glass are surrounded by a web of glass sheets, appearing from afar like a single immense glass dome. Built up in the Jaw Mountains, it's the highest of all Fjordstadian cities—but its people seem dissatisfied with their situation and aim even higher. Although the city specializes in all manner of glass production, this is only to support its true passion: building telescopes to discover the mysteries of the heavens.

Franhaufenites have discovered methods for creating immensely wide sheets of glass. This is how they constructed the **Magnificent Array**, a glass dome above the city with openings for a dozen huge lenses held up with cranes and levers. Franhaufen can send beams of intense energy through the focus lenses to dissipate incoming clouds, or the other way around, to increase the warmth of the few rays of sunlight they get during the winter.

Skygazing tower is the tallest astronomy tower for studying the skies. Several years ago it was closed down, the nobles claiming it was unsafe due to faulty foundations. No explanation was given for the disbanding of the Moon and Heavens Society, the collection of scientists and philosophers who were in charge of the tower.

Geshtok, "Finding Solutions"

Resting precariously on the border of Fjordstad and the Maseian Badlands, Geshtok is the city of chemistry. While Bachfens are known for loving explosives, Geshtokians are the ones who supply them. In Geshtok itself, however, explosives are outlawed and the city employs the most skilled police force in all of Fjordstad to enforce its strict rules. Some of these rules include a ban on wide dresses and skirts (they can catch fire if something falls on them), a curfew every noon (taking a nap to restore mental acuity is encouraged, but not enforced), a long list of



demands regarding valve-maintenance (with over a dozen “what’s that smell” warnings), and a steep tax on hats (people in hats are just generally suspicious).

Geshtok doesn’t have a wall to protect against the weather. Instead, it has the **Weather Manipulation Injectors**: an array of catapults which launch chemically treated ice into the clouds, breaking up storms before they form.

Leshper’s Smog is a complex of refineries and warehouses on the outskirts of town, where some of the most dangerous chemical solutions are mixed. It’s guarded at all times by a sophisticated security system which utilizes several purple oozes, strange chemical life forms created with the use of a shard.

High Hifger, “Solid Ground”

The Masters of Metals, as the Hifgerians like to call themselves, live nestled in a deep basin between rolling hills. None of the city’s structures are allowed to extend upward beyond thirty feet in height, making it a stark contrast to the skyscrapers all other Fjordstadian cities seem to enjoy so much. Ironically, Hifgerians have the best construction skills and building materials around: the most spectacular buildings in Fjordstad were constructed by Hifgerian architects.

The reason for the city’s low skyline is practical. During winter or when under attack by Bachfen’s City Cannon, the city descends into the huge caverns below—toward *Low Hifger*. The thick **Ceiling of Concrete** then rises from beneath the surface to cover the city. Low Hifger, with its rich and endless mines, is stationary; as the other half of the city descends, the Low and High parts connect with each other.

Level Eighteen is Low Hifger’s lowest mining chamber. It’s been sealed for several years after the miners stumbled on an underground river. That’s the official story. The occasional roar, rumbling up the tunnels, is left unexplained.

Lebeny, “For Life”

The people of Lebeny are the world’s best taxonomers, a passion which has evolved into a specialization in biology and human medicine. They have brilliant surgeons and

doctors, and their understanding of the human heart is unmatched. However, only the bravest or most foolish of them dare study heart-Crystal interactions, both for fear of Syn (which keeps a very active involvement in the city’s politics) and because memories of the Disaster of Ackstad are still fresh.

The Lebeniyans rarely suffer from the severe storms that besiege all other Fjordstadian cities, as they are situated in a musty ravine thick with vegetation and close to a series of natural hot springs. The city is under a threat of a different kind, though. On occasion, creatures from the Wilds will attack its borders, which is why it too has a protective wall: the pheromone-powered **Scent Barrier**, which gives most predators the chemical signal equivalent of “we are not tasty, turn away”.

Clean, Professional Hospital is the world’s most advanced (and indeed, cleanest) hospital, and one of the only institutions that is dedicated to the complete study of human physiology and psychology. One of the conclusions of their studies resulted in changing the building’s name into its current, positive title. It was previously The Last Breath Asylum for the Insane and Dying.

Rhyr, “Precision in All Things”

The people of Rhyr specialize in clockwork. They mastered the art of devising and assembling small, delicate mechanisms, and now use such devices in all avenues of life. Much of the city is run like, well, clockwork. Rhyr policy makers were the ones who created the first police force as well as the 24 hour day, which is now observed all over Fjordstad and much of the rest of the world.

Spring-powered contraptions provide mobility around Rhyr’s streets and towers, but their most innovative use is seen in the entertainment industry. Turning platforms might reveal new scenes during a play, or large-scale constructs might be built solely to provide a thrilling quick ride up and down a track.

Rhyr’s **Mesh Shield** is a weather shield made of 1,088 hexagonal sheets of copper, which can interlock with great precision to form a complete semi-sphere. The city’s weather tower keeps constant watch, activating the parts of the shield that are



needed to protect against Rhyr's unusually harsh winds.

The Predictorium is Rhyr's most ambitious project. By stealing information from other cities and feeding it into a huge analytical engine, the Rhyrians hope to create a mechanism which will allow them to at least partially predict the future. Most importantly, they want to know what the other cities are planning. It's no surprise that the project is still undergoing construction, as it's being sabotaged on a monthly basis.

Shmep, "But Why?"

The easternmost city in Fjordstad is the laid-back Shmep, where philosophers gather to discuss logic and devise theories of law and politics, examining the human mind and reality itself. Shmep's tolerance, and even celebration, of the liberal arts has made it a haven for all "non-technical" scholars (mostly historians).

While not an especially rich city since they export very few manufactured goods, Shmep's thinkers have developed a wide range of organizational techniques, covering such topics as administration, meditation, professional practices, and more. These teachings draw other Fjordstadians, who are willing to pay to live for a few months with the best minds around. This influx of interest in "practical philosophy" has brought a rise in the study of problem-solving itself, leading to the formation of sociology and psychology.

Shmep's **Wall Against Weather** is a literal wall, a very tall and thick one. It stretches across the city's western limit, since all storms that hit the city are carried from the west.

Shmep's **Underground Bowel Movement** is the most sophisticated sewer system in the world: wide, clean, and efficient. Perhaps because of this, its cavernous spaces have become the home for an entire subculture of groundbreaking artists who experiment in new types of expression. Their recent innovation is something called a "beet poem," celebrating the miracle of produce.

Vaske, "Truth is Fluid"

When one stands on the northern shore of Crater Lake, between the Straw and the Unknown rivers, one can see Vaske some

distance to the south—seemingly floating on water. The city was actually built on an island, but it's grown so much that parts of it have slipped to the water level and below.

Vaske has the unique feature of being a semi-annual peninsula. Instead of being surrounded by water on three sides, it's surrounded for three *seasons*. During winter, the part of the lake that's between the city and the shore freezes over. A road is quickly constructed on it, allowing for quick travel and contact with the other cities. During summer the lake is liquid and usually somewhat misty, with only the rare ship allowing for contact between the city and the shore. Spring is the strangest of times, when the lake thaws and overflows the shores, and many of the lower streets of Vaske become canals for a month. As a city that's disconnected from the rest of the world for a good part of every year, the Vaskians have garnered a reputation for being weird and aloof. They seem to prefer it that way.

Vaskians know more about fluid and air dynamics than they're willing to share. Their protection against storms takes the form of a series of strangely curved fans, known as the **Wind Symphony**, which somehow deter the winds simply by revolving on their axes. This system also supposedly provides power to the city's electrical grid.

The Canal is Vaske's greatest engineering achievement, connecting the Crater to the inland sea through a series of locks, allowing their ships (and submarines? Who knows) to reach new lands.

COMMON FJORDSTADIAN SAYINGS

- Inspiration comes and goes; books are here to stay.
- As bad as [rival city's] plumbing.
- As quiet as a storm. (Said of events which rock the whole city.)
- Full steam ahead with the brakes on. (In Bachfen: they started something they couldn't commit to.)
- That's a Shmep idea. (With excitement, said of something that is brilliant; with sarcasm, said of something that is useless.)

Zeltser, “Perpetual Motion”

When one approaches Zeltser from land, the many varied lights can seem dazzling against the clouds above. When sailing down the Straw river, it looks even more amazing. Zeltser is all about vibrations, researching waves in all forms: light, sound, seismic, and others. They have plenty of energy to power their contraptions, and they sure do love lasers.

Despite being on the open plains, the city and its farms are kept perpetually warm thanks to the **Repulsion Field**, a constant orange-green energy field created by the city’s core.

It’s an open secret that the **City Generator** that provides power to Zeltser’s light shows isn’t a piece of Bygone tech (their official story) but a feral Crystal, somehow contained by early-generation Crystal technology. This Crystal must be one of the first to be assigned the “safe” designation by Syn, putting it on the list of feral Crystals which are allowed to remain in their untamed states.

The Lost City of Sensyble

The city of Sensyble (pronounced Sen-SAY-bel) is suspiciously absent from where all the maps claim it should be. No one has been to Sensyble for more than half a century. Despite this, Sensybles still occasionally appear at other cities to trade, discuss the weather, avoid answering any questions, and, many suspect, perform secret operations for unknown purposes.

Occasionally, someone will claim to catch a glimpse of Sensyble’s famous **Miniature Tower**, the huge building in the middle of the city. It supposedly allows its scientists to not only peek into the smallest of things, but also break them apart.

The Ruins of Ackstad

A hundred years ago, when the Fjordstadian renaissance began and each city started to specialize in a specific branch of science or engineering, the people of Ackstad chose Crystals.

There are many stories about the final days of Ackstad, recounted by some of the survivors who managed to escape and by those who watched the green lights erupting and covering the skies from afar.

Since the disaster, the skies above the ruins are still lit by a strange mirage, similar to the aurora borealis. People say that the ghosts of Ackstad’s denizens wander its cold, eerily-lit streets, hungry for hearts—but even more so for Crystals.

Islands

Welcome to the Islands! We have sun, sky, and sea. We have great harvests and nice neighbors. We have all the time in the world.

Islanders are diverse. They live on the many, many islands of the inner sea, with nothing much to unite them except a general calm demeanor. A few of the Islands have used the waterways to become the biggest trading hubs in the known world, and probably the most cosmopolitan places you can find. On other Islands, fanatic locals will *hunt you down* if you so much as set foot on their shores. Oh, and there are pirates, of course.

A common saying in the Lands goes like this: A Bogovian will charge at you, a Fjordstadian will lay a trap, a Maseian will shoot you from afar, and a Zingamaian will talk you to death—but an Islander will invite you to their home (some add: “and rob you blind”).





LAY OF THE LAND

The Islands are made of three distinct archipelagos.

The **South Chain** is a group of hundreds of small, lawless islands, where many hidden cultures reside (most of which are inhospitable to strangers). Several clues lead Syn to believe there was once a large community here which got separated after some disaster many years ago. The Chain is also where one can find the two main pirate coves, Shimmy's Teeth and Paradise.

Home of Calamity is the western island arc that stretches from Zingama's south-eastern coast. This region suffers from an intense monsoon season for half of the year, followed by a harsh drought for the other half. The people living here are among the toughest in the world.

The main center of the Islands is the **Large Lands**: four landmasses each surrounded by several smaller islands. **Basho** is a green, hilly island, home to one of the oldest cultures in the world, the Hito. They are said to have carved beautiful sculptures on the sides of equally spectacular natural stone formations, but as the Hito are isolationists, it's hard to tell if that's true. **Lay-Lay** is where the concept of "island resort" was invented and is the home of Reefs Market, which is built on stilts. **Motuhake** is dominated by a huge dormant volcano, and it's where many of the best fruits in the world are grown. **Whenua** ties with Basho for the

largest island award, and is so thick with mountains and jungles that the societies who live on its shores have no idea what's going on in its center.

MAJOR LANDMARKS

The Sky Tower is a surprisingly tall rock column in the Home of Calamity, which has been used as a navigation point by ships for centuries. Recently, a group of aspiring merchants created a small outpost on its shores, hoping to establish a stopping point for travelers.

Whataplace is well-known among Bygone Age scholars for the huge, ancient force field that protects its northern shores. A large community of Islanders live under the orange-tinted, semi-translucent force field, kept in a warm and temperate climate all year long.

The Island of Giants is a large Island off Whenua that is considered to be both cursed and curious. The phenomenon of island gigantism seems to have gone into overdrive on this island, with huge mammals, giant birds, and even some giant plants. People tend to avoid the place, but gigantic pelicans (see page 176) are a problem throughout the Islands.

The Oil Stream is a large patch of oil covering more than fifty square miles which seems to be moving around the islands of the Home of Calamity. Through some unknown process, it boils the water it moves

through, leaving columns of steam as well as many dead fish.

The Great Big Manatee is an astonishingly large statue, half-submerged, which dates at least to the Bygone Age and perhaps even to before. Twice a year, pirates from all over the South Chain gather here in a three-day-long celebration. Alliances are forged, slights are forgiven, and crews compete with each other.

A BIT OF ISLAND HISTORY

THE FOG OF TIME: Historians agree that most Islanders originated on one of the Large Lands, although it's unclear which one.

A LONG TIME AGO: The people spread across the island chains, using simple navigational techniques and small boats.

THE GREAT ESCAPE: Something happened in the Large Lands, an event which led the Islanders to seek refuge in other archipelagos. Thanks to many advances in sailing, most managed to escape and build new homes far away from home.

A FEW GENERATIONS AGO: The communities of the Large Lands grow big enough to once again reach far into the seas, and they discover dozens of peoples, most of which are willing to exchange goods and customs. Trade flourishes, as everyone has more to gain from talking to each other than from conquering each other.

NOT LONG AGO: For better or worse, some Islander communities become far more powerful and richer than the others. Increased connection with the other Lands push the Large Lands to begin a “soft” cultural war over who has more influence over the Islands and who’s a “true Islander.” This leads to many smaller communities resisting said influence, finding individuality by returning to old local customs.

Motuhake’s Salt Baths are one of the island’s most sought-after attractions. Secured in a series of steamy caves, the salt baths are considered a marvel of medicine, healing skin diseases and helping with lung deficiencies. The air in the caves is circulated thanks to a Crystal that Syn has designated “safe.”

THE PEOPLE

The Islanders’ diverse nature makes it hard to point at common motifs, but there are some customs that seem to permeate most of their cultures.

Food has an important place in Islander society. They like varied diets and go to great lengths to bring fruit, grain, meat, and seafood from other islands, archipelagos, and Lands. **Gastronomes** are people who specialize in understanding food and creating meals. They have an important part in many rituals, and can sometimes work for many intensive weeks before a grand holiday feast.

Many of the cultures of the Large Lands see themselves as **cooperatives**, communal gatherings that anyone is allowed to join. One’s place in society is determined by reputation, so newcomers need to work hard to become known and prove themselves; many are taken advantage of by well-established





COMMON ISLAND SAYINGS

- There's always tomorrow.
- How esoteric! (How strange, in a wonderful way!)
- Boat-worthy (Someone you can trust.)
- Can't tell from those clouds. (Unsure about how things are going to go.)
- Take it and it's yours; give it and it's ours. (Sharing is caring.)
- Don't worry, there are bigger fish.

lished trading families. Most other societies are closed tribes, consisting of several villages over an island or two, with coherent familial units and not much room for outsiders. These tribes also tend to be self-sufficient and less interested in trade.

Pirates are a growing problem in the Islands. As sailing techniques advance, allowing for larger boats and longer journeys, it's becoming easier to raid the seas of the Home of Calamity then go hide in a cove around the Southern Chain. Several families have completely transformed themselves into raiders. The commerce consortiums arm themselves more than ever before, while searching for new trading routes around Bogovia and Zingama.

While Islanders are generally accepting of all, there's a whole group of people who are considered outside of their society: **the esoterics**. Generally speaking, anyone who's not part of the "main" Island society, comprised of the Large Lands and their massive trade network, is seen to be less important and is occasionally regarded with paternalism. The big Islands started extending the esoteric label to some of the islands who are trying to resist the Large Lands' influence and keep their own cultural identity. After all, if they don't accept our ways, they must be a little strange in the head.

Maseia

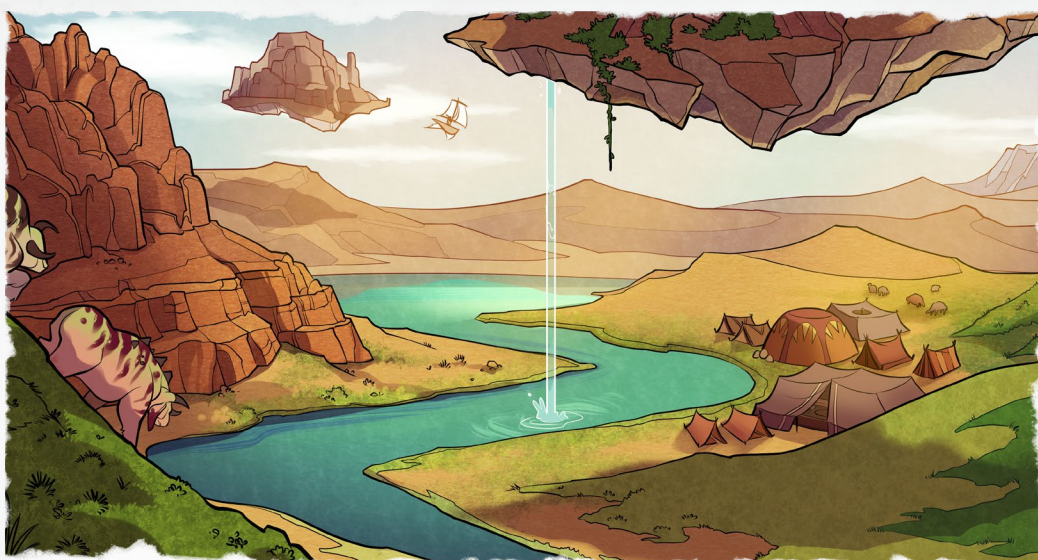
Endless plains roll toward the distant horizon while winds blow past river basins and over herds of leaping gazelles. It's a wide-open world, where everything seems possible and anything could be waiting beyond the next hill. On occasion, a shadow covers the land as clouds pass by...or flying mountains.

A Maseian can go anywhere (their clan goes) and do anything (their clan tells them to do). Fjordstadians envy their lifestyle, Zingamaians idolize their freedom, Islanders appreciate their business acumen (Bogovians have never heard of them), but the truth is, Maseians are rigid. Strict rules prevent them from expressing themselves, pressing them into well-defined roles, with layers upon layers of cultural expectations mixed with religious significance. Most of them think this is how things should be—which is why things remain as they are.

LAY OF THE LAND

Maseia is *big*, but it's essentially composed of three main parts. Starting with **the Perch**, a relatively low but very wide stretch of mountains on the Zingamaian border, the land descends slowly toward the north, turning





into hilly plains with hundreds of rivers and countless small lakes. The largest five lakes have well-known names—Calm Water, Blue Nests, Keeper, Dry, and Duck—but the names of the smaller lakes are usually only used by the clans who live around them.

To the north-west, beyond lake Dry—so named because during the summer season it's almost completely gone—the plains become the **Desert Peninsula**. The few clans who live here are unkind at best, actively hostile at worst. It's said that the largest creatures in the world can be found here, monstrous animals larger than elephants, which survive thanks to shards embedded in their bodies.

To the north-east, the **Badlands** are harsh and dry all year long, with extreme temperature changes between the cold winter and hot summer. During the spring, sudden thunderstorms can rage for hours then disappear just as quickly, resulting in quick and powerful floods. The Badlands are known for having unstable ground, geysers, underground caves, and ancient ruins. Experts also suspect this place played an important role in the events that ended the Bygone Age, as there's evidence that the current Badlands are a result of a huge shift in tectonic plates which pushed against the whole of Fjordstad.

Maseia's famed **floating mountains** are technically hovering, but since the sight of the mountains against the blue Maseian sky makes one think of islands in an ocean, the term "floating" stuck anyway. Most of them move in regular patterns, migrating on

routes that take between a few months and several years. Some, however, are stationary—these tend to be the tallest.

MAJOR LANDMARKS

The Nexus is a trading post serving several clans and built upon the shores of Keeper Lake. It boasts some of the most impressive permanent buildings in all of Maseia; for years, clans would send their people here to learn the craft of construction. Recently, two other "Nexus" trading posts have been established close to the Fjordstadian and Zingamaian borders; the three now fight over being called "the rightful" Nexus. The northern Nexus is known for being the last terminal in the Fjordstadian Train Line.

Heaven's Shadow, deep in central Maseia, is a cemetery exclusive to Maseian leaders. Almost all of the ancestor worshipping clans bring their honored dead to this dry, bleak piece of land directly under the stationary mountain Heaven, which casts an eternal shadow on the graveyard. Clanspeople occasionally make a pilgrimage to Heaven's Shadow to converse with the spirits of wise leaders.

The Timid Mountain is a lone floating mountain that follows an erratic migration pattern (if it follows one at all). It's one of a very small number of mountains which hover around the rocky south-eastern shores. This paradoxically makes it more well-known among Islanders sailing toward the northern trading hubs than among most Maseians.



The Ancestors' Palace is an ancient citadel carved into the side of a once-muddy rock face on the border of the Badlands. It seems to date back to the early days after the Bygone Age, but no one is sure. A group of self-appointed guardians prevents all access to it.

Raptor's Green is a vast, flat green plain covered with tall grass. When you look at it from a certain height at a distance—achievable only by sky-skiffers and autoplanes—you can see angular shapes “drawn” in the grass that are almost definitely stylized birds of some kind. Most people claim these are ducks. The Green's eastern border is, indeed, Duck Lake.

Soaring Woods is a large forest that slopes up and up, *way up*, as if it were a floating mountain trying to soar—which might well be the case! No one can tell for sure. The Woods are known for their large bear population. Local clans use it in their rites of passage, sending the young to the top to bring back one of the glowing rocks that can be found there.

The Granite Flat is a relatively low-floating mountain in the Desert Peninsula which is tethered to the ground with ropes and ladders. The Snives clan claim the Flat as their own. They have turned it into a gorgeous garden, surprisingly lush with both wild and cultivated plants. The Snives bury their dead here in open burial mounds.

THE PEOPLE

The people of Maseia are above all communal. They live in clans which are composed of several families, and care deeply about their clan's prosperity.

Maseian clans place huge emphasis on ritualistic behaviors. Their members spend much of their time making sure they are *correct* in the ways they are knitting, skinning, building, learning, treating injuries, and doing any other task. They keep the social order by filling *roles*—a position in society which must be handled exactly the same way, never mind who is filling it. This sometimes creates situations which visitors might consider absurd. For example, a Master of Boats must always be a tall woman who wears a wide hat (for various reasons, some of them relevant but others lost to memory). If the best candidate is too short, she needs to wear platform shoes; if it's a man, he must shift

A BIT OF MASEIAN HISTORY

THE FOG OF TIME: In the earliest of days, it appears that Maseians lived on the floating mountains.

A LONG TIME AGO: The Maseians came down from the mountains and spread out. They were all nomads, learning to survive in the huge wilderness around them.

THE WARS OF RULERSHIP: The clans go to war over dominance (not resources). Most agree that there must be a ruler for all of society, but they disagree about who this person should be. Those that avoid the war escape to the Desert Peninsula or disappear to the far reaches of the Land.

A FEW GENERATIONS AGO: The wars, having proved bloody but useless, don't result in a single ruler. Several forts and outposts turn into towns, with entire clans settling down to utilize the basic agricultural techniques that were developed during the wars to support the troops.

NOT LONG AGO: Not much has changed. The Maseian lifestyle is, after all, about rigid persistence.

his gender, adopting the socially accepted mannerisms and dress codes for women. In the strange meritocracy that is Maseian society, almost everything about you can change if needed to fit your required role.

The Maseians can be categorized by their positions on two axes: nomads vs. settled, and spirit believers vs. ancestor worshipers.

Nomad clans have migratory patterns, walking many miles across the Maseian landscape to follow herds or move between places where the harvest renews every year. Because most nomads move between the same campsites, they keep several semi-permanent buildings in each—usually nothing more than a few low stone walls and floors. When they arrive, they stretch leathers over the old foundations. Some of these campsites are shared between clans, each taking care of the place during their time there.

Settled clans remain where they are throughout the year. They've built solid buildings, usually well-constructed with thick timbers and several types of stone. The settled tend to have larger communities



compared to the nomads and fewer interactions with their neighbors (nomads must always consider the people they are sharing the land with).

Shifting between the nomadic lifestyle and a settled one, or vice versa, is a huge endeavor. It only happens during times of crisis, but when it does happen, the people readily accept the new set of beliefs. These beliefs include a disdain for the other way of living, since that's what's now *proper* for them to believe in.

Spirit believers are clans that revere the spirits of the earth and the animals. Their spiritual lives are guided by the spirit talkers, who help interpret the spirits' wills. Nomads make sure to appease the spirits of the lands they enter before daring to set foot there. Settled clans keep addressing the same spirits, forming complicated relationships with them.

Ancestor worshipers know for a fact that when their elders die, they join their ances-

tors in the stars (or the wind, or the rivers, depending on who you ask). They tell stories of these ancestors, remembering them and their ways, and always making sure to respect them. They turn to them for advice in times of trouble through each family's chosen ancestor channeler.

Spiritualists think that the worshippers are deluding themselves; worshippers think that the spiritualists are completely mistaken by giving thanks to animals and rocks. When political marriages between clans bring a family of one belief into the fold of another, they all adopt the new approach. As is appropriate.

A Maseian's life is complicated. They try to find whatever freedom they can within the pressures and demands of family, clan, and tradition, but these same structures give them order, purpose, and peace of mind.

Those who fail to find a place for themselves (or are banished by the others), tend to gather in **bands**, small groups of like-minded people. Many clanspeople dislike bands for being outside of normal society, and indeed, many bands have turned to banditry. Others, however, are gatherings of free-thinkers, artists, or craftspersons, who move between the tribes and offer their services. One of the most famous bands is the sky-skiffers, who glide around the Land on their wind-powered skiffs, and are known for being mischievous and daring.

COMMON MASEIAN SAYINGS

- Stand firm, and the world will revolve around you.
- [looking at a floating mountain] Still there. (Things remain as they are, said in objection to someone suggesting a destructive change.)
- No limits to one's breath. (The air you breathe gets to go everywhere; so can you.)
- Nomad flattery. (Said by settled; a fleeting thing, it has little meaning.)
- Settled belief. (Said by nomads; something unimportant, it can be ignored.)



Zingama

Out of the Five Lands, Zingama is the most populated, most complicated, and most moist. It's a huge Amazonian-like jungle, with one major river that serves as the lifeblood of local civilization. This unifying geographical feature led Zingama to becoming the most cohesive of the Five. It has one big government, cutting-edge science, and ever-evolving arts, as well as back room deals, bribery, and all the nepotism one can ask for. The many societies comprising this nation were formerly bitter rivals. They still are, only they have switched the battlegrounds from the jungle floor to the political scene. They use the latest fashions as camouflage and sweeping rhetoric as weapons; and when that doesn't work, there's always poison.

LAY OF THE LAND

The endless jungles of Zingama are crisscrossed by the dozen tributaries of the Golden River, which snakes around the land's hilly features from west to east. It eventually spills into the inner sea in a wide and fertile delta.

The Western Mountains are considered a nameless wasteland, a cursed place where no one goes (the local villagers might disagree, but they're not part of the nation; their opinion hardly matters). Many of the mountains are semi-active volcanoes, and it's not uncommon for the Zingamaian sunset to have strange colors because of the smoke.

The Golden River runs from the mountains to the sea, curving around the land. It is the main lifeline of Zingamaian society, and thousands use it daily to commute or reach recreation facilities. Officially, the nation considers all of the river and several miles inland of its shores to be part of its land, taken during the Great Conquest—but several remote tributaries still belong to the locals, thank you very much.

The Glorious Seat of the Snake Without End, known simply as "the Seat," is the im-



mensely tall mountain that dominates Zingama's skyline. No matter where you are in the nation, it can probably be seen above the trees. A geographical marvel, the Seat is considered the literal seat of Zingama's main god-like entity.

The Golden Delta is where the Golden River ends. It's remarkably wide and home to hundreds of unique species of animals and plants. It's also Zingama's bread basket—or at least was, until a generation or so ago. Modern farms inland recently began to replace those of the delta, which are quite remote and only semi-reliable during floods.

The Desolace is the stretch of land along the southwestern coast. Technically composed of two different landforms—a basaltic plateau to the west of the mountains, and a chalk cliff to the east—they're the same to the Zingamaians. No Syn route ever went through there. In a world filled with far-away, remote places, the Desolace manages to be the most remote of all.

MAJOR LANDMARKS

The Winding Path: The Path is a sacred pilgrimage that used to begin at the holy city of Tochiyamto, but by popular demand is now allowed to begin in any temple throughout the Land. Officially, it leads toward and then up the Seat, where it splits, winds, and twists seemingly pointlessly. There's no end to the road, so one must decide for oneself when it's time to stop. Walking the Winding Path is an important part of the Zingamaian spiritual tradition, despite it being relatively



deep in the jungle. It is heavily guarded at all times of year.

The Hapana River is filled with crocodiles, and its banks are covered with treacherous roots. It's one of the only parts of the trading network which is better to cross on land—but it's also home to some of the most prominently anti-nationalist villages.

Tumbili, the Sacred City: Located in the Western Mountains, Tumbili was at one time the capital of Zingama. Many years ago, the then-Emperor angered the Snake Without End by abusing his powers during an important ceremony, which led to a horde of apes taking over the city and banishing the residents. That's the story, anyway. The fact is that there's an ancient Zingamaian stone city in the mountains, and it certainly is full of apes.

Rubber Valley: Fifty years ago, the trees of this valley were almost completely cut down due to the rising demand for rubber. Lately, thanks to advancements in sustainability and the increasing complexity of Zingamaian society, the area has become the hub of new, innovative technologies. New development centers had to be built, and Rubber Valley proved just empty and close enough to Zingama City to fit the bill. Zingama still has a lot of catching up to do with Fjordstad, but Rubber Valley engineers are ahead in at least one area: they are very keen on drone technology, and many drones zip around the valley. Radio signals are still insufficiently understood to be safely intro-

duced to urban areas, and electricity isn't all that commonplace, but in Rubber Valley, the engineers sure are having fun.

Zingama City is where everything happens. With more than two hundred thousand people cramming its streets, this is the largest and liveliest city in the world. While some Island towns know how to party, Zingama City never stops partying, despite the inevitable hangover; just power through it! The impressive headquarters of the Zingamaian Post is here, right on the river's edge. The ZiP is known for being the most reliable messaging service in the world, with delivery times rivaling those of Syn's autoplanes despite using mostly water craft and delivery snakes. In a Land that relies on the quick and efficient distribution of information, they are amazingly powerful—which is why they could afford to build their own sports arena right next door, despite it taking precious waterfront real estate.

THE PEOPLE

The Zingamaian people are made up of several clans. The most numerous and important ones are located in and around Zingama City, where many of them work in bureaucracy. The heads of the main families, all part of high society, represent their clans within their Local Councils, or the Upper Council, or the Council of Clans, or the Council to the Emperor. There are many ways to be political in Zingama, and everyone fights over power.



A BIT OF ZINGAMAIAN HISTORY

THE FOG OF TIME: All across the vast jungles of Zingama, clans gather and fight for survival against a deadly environment.

A LONG TIME AGO: Most people gravitate toward the rivers, where it's easier to get water and meet others.

ZINGAMA UNITED: Finding they have more things in common than things that separate them—political marriages have led to many clans becoming kin—the time is right for several of the people to unite under a single leader. This Empress, who was graced by the Snake Without End, began a line of divine rulers stretching to the current day.

A FEW GENERATIONS AGO: More and more villages join Zingama, at first through diplomacy and then through conquest. The Great Conquest brings Zingamaian influence to the entirety of the Golden River, settling on what is considered its modern borders.

NOT LONG AGO: Secured within their glorious country, the Zingamaians develop a national identity, despite (or thanks to?) the many ruling parties trying to control the unofficial narrative of who is a “true” Zingamaian. The old and dirty custom of assassinating your political opponent becomes much less dirty and a lot more profitable when the assassin companies receive official recognition. The rise of consumer culture and a middle class leads to a whole generation, the “Eight-o’s” having more free time than ever before.

Zingamaians who are not a part of the nation are called “**vexed**” or “**displeased**” by the nationals, who believe the reason they reject the gifts of civilization must be their backwards-thinking, savage ways. They make up about a fifth of the Land’s population. Most of them resent the nation’s claim to supremacy, while at the same time benefiting much from its trading resources and ideas.

In the nation, **Zingamaians are all about reputation**, the latest hotness, and the juiciest rumors. They have recently invented tourism, extreme sports, and recreational drugs, and they’d love to try them all at the same time. Out of all the people of the Lands, Zingamaians are the ones most likely

to visit other places. This is not only because there are so many of them, but also thanks to their desire to know more of the world, to explore and tell their friends, or even establish official embassies in other Lands. Explorers come back with a variety of interesting artifacts and animals, showing them around the Land in roving exhibitions, or donating them to the Zingamaian Bygone Age Museum or the Wildlife Resort in exchange for their names on the wall.

Seeing themselves as much more honorable than the other Lands, Zingamaians no longer settle their differences with violence, instead turning to law and order—and when that fails, assassination. **The assassin companies**, previously criminal operations, are now a legal and discreet part of everyday life for high society. Many politicians and heads of houses hire assassins to kill *other assassins*, to prevent them from being a threat. This adds another secretive layer to the entire operation: assassin companies who sign agreements with each other to





lie to their employers about killing off each others' members.

Sports are very important to the Zingamaians. Competitions allow them to support their clan in a non-violent way (and show those bastards from the other clan!). Dangerous sports are especially appreciated, with the Pentadome Arena in Zingama City being reserved for the best of the best. It mostly features wrestling, but also cage fighting against animals and the rugby-like explodiball. Athletes are celebrities, and in general celebrities are expected to show some athleticism.

The Zingamaians are on the cusp of an **industrial revolution**, starting to build factories that produce large numbers of consumer products for the hungry crowds. Better agricultural techniques and biological developments allow Zingamaians to produce more food out of less land—and land is always a problem in such a thick jungle—as well as develop new and exciting poisons and drugs.

The Zingamaian religion places an emphasis on the Snake With No End, who blessed the line of Emperors to be unending. There's also room for several other divine beings who have intricate relationships with each other, shifting and changing according to—who would have guessed—the political climate. The temples of each god and the main temples of each region demand respect, especially as some are slowly being relegated to the status of mascots for sports teams. That being said, the Emperors of Zingama always have access to an impressive array of seemingly supernatural powers which they show off during ceremonies. Syn suspects the presence of a Crystal, but this is yet to be confirmed.

COMMON ZINGAMAIAN SAYINGS

- It's Bygone. (Said by the young of anything older than twenty years.)
- No-end, no-end. (Agreeing enthusiastically.)
- Rain on the leaves. (Something that can't be seen directly, but can be inferred.)
- Centipede win. (Something that will never happen; the Centipedes are a group of explodiball players that have never won the Nationals.)
- Swing this. (Here, try this thing; mostly regarding drugs or alcohol.)



Adventures

This chapter is for the GM only! It's filled with juicy secrets and dangerous knowledge. You have been warned.

Running Crystal Heart

The following are a few points to keep in mind when running a *Crystal Heart* game.

Give Lots of Bennies. It's best to hand the players Bennies on a frequent basis. When a player has a few Bennies in hand, they're much more likely to feel comfortable spending one on a Power Stunt or an Edge (using the Syn Training Setting Rule, page 83), which is usually fun for everyone.

Give Some Crystals. *Crystal Heart* is a game about Crystals, so the players should be able to get their hands on some. Because Agents usually retrieve only one Crystal per adventure, it might take some time for all of your players to have a chance to try out a new Crystal. There are two things you should

consider. First, it's best to make the beginning adventures short (a session or two each) so that the team will get Crystals quicker. Second, if players are about to become Seasoned without getting a new Crystal, remind them to consider Requisitioning one.

Give Only One Plot. There's a lot to do in the world of *Crystal Heart*, with many leads to follow—but your campaign should only focus on one. As mentioned under the Structured Campaign Setting Rule (page 83) we recommend running a full story, exploring one premise to the fullest from start to finish, then beginning a new one next time.

Structured Play. The Structured Campaign (page 83) takes away some player freedom: the players don't get a say on the location of their next adventure or what it's about. If you begin in medias res, they don't even get a chance to avoid getting into whatever mess they're currently in. Because of this, it's important that the players agree to come along for the ride and accept this premise as part of the game.



There are many ways to help players who are unsure about this playstyle.

- Start each adventure by Chasing Leads (page 80), handing the reins to the players.
- Emphasize *why* Syn directed the Agents to this specific mission and provide good information, maybe even a full briefing as a player aid.
- When a game begins in medias res, ask the players *how* they got into that mess, and let them make a roll or two to establish something retroactively (like saying they've researched this situation or planned an escape route).

These techniques work to serve a single purpose: increasing the players' trust in you. They should believe you have the game's best interests at heart and that whatever situation you put them in is an opportunity to be awesome—not a trap.

CREATING CRYSTAL HEART ADVENTURES

Syn Agents are somewhere between superheroes, wizards, and paladins, so creating adventures for them might require some special considerations.

Unusual Combat Goals

Crystals allow Agents to do crazy stuff, especially with Power Stunts, so make sure the action scenes are just as crazy! Most fights should have some objective other than “defeat all enemies.” Consider incorporating Dramatic Tasks when appropriate, like the Agents needing to escape hordes of zombies before being overrun, save a cowering civilian, protect a glowing orb, or ride a minecart while avoiding incoming dangers.

Crystal encounters can be stylized like a boss fight, with the Agents engaging with the manifestations in one or two stages: first fight your way past the flaming birds, then fight the Crystal as it forms around itself a menacing frame (page 183)!

Placing Crystals

There are many ways a Crystal can be used in an adventure—pick one that seems cool and run with it. Is it directly responsible for what's happening, or is it being used by an antagonist? Or maybe it's just the reason

for the fantastic location the adventure is set in? Are its powers being channeled in a specific way, or does it have various feral manifestations all over the place? Has this situation always been the case, or is it newly emergent—and if new, why? What happened?

To create an adventure, take a Crystal manifestation and add a human element. Consider what would happen if someone started using a Crystal or has always been using a Crystal. Are they trying to hide it? Are they using a Crystal to serve their own needs, or did the Crystal influence them and now they obey its bizarre motivations? Who or what did they upset? Do they profit in some way from a manifestation?

Using Shards

Shards are perfect for Savage Tales, because they can provide a mystery without also providing a power boost. Unlike Crystals, which can become a part of the players' arsenal and expand their range of abilities, shards have several significant limitations and are rarely used by players. Shards are inherently dangerous for Syn Agents, and their powers can be so specific that many of them simply aren't useful on a regular basis. It's Syn policy to have all shards collected at the end of missions and never to grant them to Agents as Requisition items.

To create a mystery based on a shard, start with an unusual happening, then trace it back to the shard. What is a cool supernatural power that could create that effect? Was it intentional or is the shard influencing something without anyone knowing?

GAME MASTERING SYN

This is a game about being an Agent of Syn. This means that the organization will always be featured in the game in some way. This chapter suggests several ways of doing so; use whatever works for you.

Portraying Syn

Syn cares about its Agents, but it cares more about its endgame. It has lots of equipment and knowledge, but will only hand out what it thinks is needed. It will also occasionally take things away for its own reasons.



Syn has power, but hoards it. Syn can fly you around the world, but only the organization decides when and where. Syn has contacts and alliances in every part of every Land, but they are only used when deemed necessary.

Syn is complex, which makes it both smart and dumb. A Requisition request for a helmet can get lost in the paperwork for many weeks, with the Agent eventually getting rubber boots. At the same time, the organization is able to establish and maintain a facility deep in uninhabitable terrain, keeping it a secret for many years.

Syn is your life. A character who gets banished from the organization won't be playable anymore, and the players are aware of this concept. This means that while one's relationship with Syn can become complicated, it is never over: the organization will always be a part of one's story.

Syn lacks heart. The organization demands loyalty, but treats its Agents like pawns: go there, do this, don't ask questions. Agents are a resource that can be discarded after use. Syn is willing to ally with criminals and to allow its Agents to disrupt people's lives and even invade their homes, because the end justifies the means—but it will not reveal what that end is. Once you join you can never leave, yet Syn only occasionally respects your human rights (perhaps that's one of the reasons many Agents feel they can abuse the organization in return; see below). Show repeatedly that Syn literally lacks heart.

Syn is not a singular entity. There are many people working within the organization, and some of them are at odds with one other—and perhaps even with the organization's goals. Most Agents are highly capable, deeply motivated, fiercely independent people, and many of them choose to use Syn's resources to promote their own agendas. Some, like Kino from the Seismic Shift campaign (page 131) are extremists; others, like Albrecht from the Weapon to Kill For adventure (from the freely downloadable Starter Set) are simply selfish and power hungry.

In any case, it's surprisingly common to have a Syn Agent as the main antagonist of

How to Bygone

The Bygone Age is a source of endless inexplicable artifacts. Game-wise, this serves the purpose of allowing you to create unusual locales, devices, and enemies that are not related to Crystals and therefore, not subject to the normal rules (or Syn's).

It is recommended that you keep all Bygone Age artifacts adhering to a certain style. Here are the guidelines used for the canonical version of the Bygone Age:

- There's only one of each artifact. If there's a giant forcefield around one Island, you won't find another giant forcefield anywhere else.
- An artifact always works or doesn't work. You can only rarely control Bygone Age artifacts; most have no control panels. The device is either always on or is always malfunctioning in the same way.
- The artifact is a part of the landscape. It's always big enough to be considered a *location*. Even if there's a small part of it that you can move around, perhaps a gun-like device, it's in fact part of the bigger artifact and won't work when taken away from it.
- The artifact has already interacted with its environment. It's been around for about 800 years, and during this time an ecosystem was established around or within it. Its mere existence has shaped the local people, creatures, weather patterns, etc.
- The artifact obviously had some function, because it does something unusual, but its effect might seem out of place or unclear.
- The artifact is disconnected from the current state of the world. Bygone Age artifacts have their own aesthetic which is different from the cultural styles of the people of the Five Lands. The artifacts also seem to be spread around the world with no relation to the current Lands.

Further details about the Bygone Age and its technology are available in the *Original Syn* book.

an adventure, or even a whole campaign. In essence, the organization is fighting a problem it itself has created. This phenomenon could be the result of incredibly faulty procedures, which allow Agents to gain too much power without enough oversight (much like Syn itself!), proving Syn is far from the monolithic and advanced organization it



claims to be; or it could be an intended consequence of said procedures—perhaps the council *wants* to have powerful individuals running around doing their thing, perhaps to distract from its own activities.

Syn as the Main Antagonist

Some groups may want to explore the intricacies of working for a globalist power, who has ambiguous ambitions and answers to no one. In such games, the big bad might be revealed to be Syn itself—not necessarily because of its goals, which might even be noble, but perhaps because of its methods.

In such a game, the Agents (and players) should slowly come to realize they are collaborating with an unjust power. Consider adding the following:

- Show that some of the Crystals they are sent to retrieve are not inherently dangerous, but in fact, vital and necessary to the continued existence of the local community. The adventure *Mixed Heritage* provides a good example of a case where a Crystal is an integral part of everyday life in a village; you can download it for free from uptofourplayers.com/crystalheart.
- When the Agents engage in a conflict between local factions, reveal that Syn officially stands on the side that's abusing its power. Players who wish to help the downtrodden must do so in secret or find themselves in a confrontation with Syn. The third *Crystal Heart* comic, *Heart of Stone*, is a good example of such a case.
- Have the Agents return to places they've visited before, and show them the consequences of their decisions. The route is planned so that Agents can just come, take and leave, without ever worrying about the repercussions of their actions—instead, confront them with these consequences.
- Provide allies and resources from within and without Syn, to help the players feel like they might be able to fight, or at least change, the organization. Introduce other teams of Agents who feel the same misgivings about the work they do for Syn. The Requisition system should become less effective as the game goes on, with Syn losing trust in the Agents' willingness to follow orders. It should be

replaced with a mirrored system of Support, acting exactly the same way, but representing the people from within and without Syn who work with the Agents to stop the organization.

- Confront the players with some Heroic or other important Syn personnel, who show them *why* it's important to gather Crystals. Show them people who sincerely believe they're doing the right thing, so the players face a choice; if Syn is obviously just "muahaha" evil, there's no moral dilemma, it's just a big bad that needs to be defeated.

The main thing to remember is that throughout all of this, Syn and the Agents still need each other. Without proper maintenance, an Agent's harness will eventually malfunction; more importantly, Syn provides the Agents with ample power and access, that they will need if they want to fight against it. Syn, on the other hand, really needs capable Agents, as it can't achieve its goals without them; even if they become a danger to Syn, the organization can't just kill the team and cover everything up. Remember that Syn is not a singular entity and that the Agents should have friends in high places who protect them. Play on this delicate balance.

Playing the Agent's Code

Players will occasionally try to push the boundaries of Syn's approval. This can be because the player did not comprehend the style of game they're in—in which case, a short conversation about *Crystal Heart*'s basic assumptions is advised. At other times, the player is usually just not sure what can or cannot be done.

If a player is about to do something that goes against your group's understanding of The Agent's Code, let them know they are about to cross a line before they are committed to the action. Some cases are in a gray area—that's actually part of the fun of playing *Crystal Heart*—but while others might seem obviously right or wrong to you, remember that it might not be as obvious to the player who's doing the action. Explain the situation as you see it, along with any repercussions you believe should arise from it and why, and discuss this until everyone in the group understands.





Sometimes players will push the boundaries in more subtle ways. This is especially true for players who are trying to exploit the game's currency system. For example, the Agents might try to gather tons of stuff that's not relevant to their mission, but *technically* doesn't require a Requisition roll. They might ask the staff of a way station to give them all the ammo they've got in stores, or start gathering gourds until they have several hundred pounds of root vegetables in the back of the Tank.

In such cases, consider starting to point out Syn's disapproval in the following ways. The whole team should be judged as one—they're supposed to be responsible for each other, after all.

First, ask for a roll: Persuasion to have the staff agree to provide some ammo, or Smarts to have the Agents figure out a way to keep all of the gourds without it affecting their daily routine and access to equipment. Give a negative modifier if you feel it's needed. This signals to the players that no, they can't just have this thing "for free."

Second, have Syn start asking questions, and act on the answers. "Why did you need all of that ammo? Couldn't you have used a different method? We're not made of money; our resources are not endless. Unless we're convinced this was necessary, you all lose 1 Requisition. Why do you keep all of those gourds? 'For fun' is not a relevant answer, and it makes us question your suitability and commitment. It also reflects badly on our reputation when people see the Tank rolling into a town smelling of slightly rotted gourds and looking like a delivery truck. Unless we're convinced there's an excellent reason for your choices, you will all be given weaker Crystals and assigned a stricter supervisor until you prove you are capable of handling yourself." And so on. This signals to the players that Syn does not ignore their behavior and that there are consequences to their decisions.

Forms of Punishment: Use the following as suggestions for Syn showing its disapproval: Requisition penalties; having some of your equipment replaced with lower quality versions (inflicting a -1 penalty); having your Crystal replaced with a lesser one; gaining

an Obligation to fill in paperwork, read manuals, or practice; being ordered to a hearing in the citadel, at which point every Agent becomes aware of your behavior (possibly Shamed, probably -1 on future interactions with Agents).

Thrown into the Cells: If none of the lesser forms of punishment manages to do the trick or if the Agent committed an unforgivable crime, such as murder, Syn has one last tool they can use, although they don't like doing it: they can throw an Agent into the Cells. Syn sockets the Agent with a very weak Crystal, one that is so meaningless it's not even given to Novice Agents, and keeps them locked up in a deep sub-basement, usually for several months. Unless this is part of an adventure (prison break from Syn!), it's probably time to switch Agents (see page 35).

Using Supervisors and Mentors

The team's supervisor is their direct connection to Syn, and as such can be used as a channel to introduce new adventure seeds, information, or complications. An Agent who takes the Mentor Edge forms a more personal relationship with Syn through their mentor.





Making Conversations Interesting

Talking your way into or out of situations is Syn's preferred method of interaction with locals, but in order to make the *players* consider it a legitimate course of action, it should be an interesting exercise. Some players default to combat simply because it's full of cool decisions and surprises—so it's best to make sure that conversations with the locals are just as unusual and layered, not a straightforward Persuasion roll.

For example, the Zingamaian priest will not allow the Agents into the temple. This is not because of any potential desecration on their part, but because he's a manipulative bastard who abuses his power, demanding a favor first and sending the Agents to humiliate his rival. A Maseian witch doctor who can provide some important details about local legends will only be willing to acknowledge and converse with the oldest Agent in the group. The Islander captain keeps changing the subject because she's too ashamed to speak about the treasure the Agents are interested in: it was her mother who lost it in the first place. The team must find an indirect way to make her say what she knows, perhaps even without her realizing it. They do love to drink, these Island captains.

The cultures of each Land have different world-views and a myriad of biases. Use the Land's theme (and a bit of reading on Wikipedia) as an inspiration. Color all plot-relevant conversations with the idiosyncrasies of the local culture, turning them into full, engaging scenes.

Both supervisor and mentor should contact the Agents on occasion, in order to keep them an active part of the narrative and letting the players feel that they're relevant. Here are a few suggestions for adventures and roleplaying opportunities for supervisors or mentors.

- After a tough mission, the supervisor sends the Agents a gift basket with candy and an encouraging letter.
- An Agent gets a surprising +2 modifier on a Requisition roll; apparently their mentor put in a good word about them.
- The team gets to meet their supervisor on their next stop—they're on different missions which just happen to coincide,

but it gives them an opportunity to interact with the supervisor and get a glimpse into their life.

- The mentor disappears! Were they on a mission? Were they kidnapped?
- The supervisor joins your next mission as an observer, holding a clipboard and shaking their head disapprovingly. Their assessment will determine if the Agents get an extra Advance, allowing them to graduate from Seasoned to Veteran.
- The mentor refuses to respond to your contact request. They're angry with you, but why? What did you do?

TRAINING SESSIONS

Training sessions (see page 21) are usually performed in the field, not in Syn's citadel. When designing your training session, stick to these principles:

- The characters are being *tested*. Syn doesn't necessarily expect them to succeed, so the stakes for Syn should be very low. That being said, success should reward 1 or 2 Requisition.
- Keep it simple and straightforward: the whole training session should take about 45 minutes in real time. Plan two scenes at most—arrival and complication—and improvise around them.
- Take the time to portray NPCs and encourage the players to roleplay their characters. This is the players' only chance to play their characters without the influence of any Crystal.
- Use this opportunity to introduce NPCs who will be relevant to the campaign. These can be people in the world, other Agents, or Syn personnel.
- Use the Heroes Never Die Setting Rule. Characters shouldn't die before the game even begins!

Sample Sessions

The following are simple concepts that can be used for a training session.

Clean the Warehouse: One of the main Syn facilities needs a good cleanup, and the trainees are asked to clear and dust the shard stockroom. Even the simplest of accidents can cause a shard to activate





unexpectedly, which might lead to *other* shards activating.

Cleanup Crew: The trainees are asked to clear an area of Crystal-touched creatures. The Crystal that created them has already been retrieved by a group of Agents. Use a creature such as wolves, and roll on the Crystal-Touched Encounter Generator (page 185). After the fight the trainees discover the local guide of the previous group, thought dead, at the bottom of a densely covered pit and hiding from the creatures. Barely alive, they can still be rescued if brought up and cared for.

Critter Eradication: The trainees are sent to a small settlement in the frontier, where the locals have awakened a monstrous spider after beginning to clear a nearby wood. The players can either defeat the creature and/or help find safe routes to new sources of lumber.

Express Delivery: The trainees are given the task of delivering a small but important box from a facility to a way station. Said station has no road leading to it: it's deep within wild territory and the weather is harsh. The hazards along the way are not deadly, but they're definitely tiring.

Guard Duty: A Heroic Agent is tasked with brokering a peace treaty between two rival groups. They bring the trainees with them to guard the room where the weapons of both parties are being kept.

Help the Liaison: A Syn diplomat is held captive in a village after being accused of stealing something of great value. The trainees can either help them escape or find the real culprit.

New Way Station: The trainees are asked to help at a recently finished way station, dealing with disorganized documents, annoying locals, and unhelpful management. Or maybe they're asked to convince the locals to build a new way station in the first place—see *Next Station: Low Inaki*, page 136.

Parade Around: An influential aristocrat asks for Syn's presence at an important event to show off his association with them. Syn sends the trainees, asking them to be civilized and make a good impression.

Resource Gathering: The trainees are tasked with recovering a rare and important resource that Syn is running low on. Some examples include: orange goo that can only be found on the ceiling of a large cave; leeches from a stinky swamp (but not just any leeches—only those with a red mark on their back!); or catching butterflies in the open hills, hopefully without falling into the thick nettles at the bottom. The team might notice scratch marks on walls and trees nearby: messages from previous groups of trainees who were tasked with this assignment.

CAMPAIGN SEEDS

The Plot Point campaign presented in this book (page 131) is just one of many that can be played in the *Crystal Heart* world. If you're looking for inspiration, here are a few ideas. These are all based on the Structured Campaign format (page 83).

Return of the Queen

Training session: The team represents Syn in a friendly competition in Maseia, where the players get to know some of the upcoming NPCs.

Part 1: The route begins in Fjordstad, where an investigation into the lower levels of a city reveals a Crystal and some ancient paperwork. Surprisingly, it's the paperwork that's more important. These early scripts describe a noble house in charge of the others, effectively proclaiming there's a legitimate ruler for all of Fjordstad. The noble houses hear of this and try to destroy the manuscript. The Agents are tasked with keeping it safe until they travel out of Fjordstad and into Bogovia, at which point they'll deliver it to a Syn facility in Puftzburg. Throughout the rest of the route, the Agents are besieged by Fjordstadian spies, ruses, and traps.

Part 2: The team is tasked with discovering what was The Disruption (the event that ended the royal Fjordstadian line) and who's in line for the throne. First they discover the rightful heir is a Maseian woman. This news reaches Fjordstad (it's hard to keep secrets from the noble houses) and the Land is in turmoil. The Agents are introduced to her by their Maseian friends, and are ordered to escort her to Zingama where she'll have



political asylum. After reaching Zingama City, fighting assassins along the way, the future-queen is so impressed by the team's capabilities that she decides she wants to be a Syn Agent herself. As news of her recruitment reaches Fjordstad, all hell breaks loose and several of the cities go to war with each other.

Part 3: After helping the future-queen in her first missions and following some clues in Fjordstad—right in the midst of a civil war where Syn is not welcome—the Agents discover and confront the ancient force behind the Disruption: a broken Bygone Age artificial intelligence in the Ruins of Ackstad. Along with the future-queen, they put a stop to it before it rebuilds an army of robots. Earning some legitimacy after proving herself as a defender of the Land, the future-queen is then crowned queen and the civil war ends.

Rise of the Warlord

Training session: In Zingama City, the team is tasked with maintaining the peace during the visit of an important celebrity. This gives them an opportunity to witness the Emperor using his pseudo-divine abilities and learn of rising tensions between Zingama and Maseia.

Part 1: The Agents are given a route which will take them through Zingama's jungles into Maseia, but they are also tasked with being trailblazers: they must find a path good enough to construct a road on. The team should be specially equipped for this—make sure they create characters knowing this is coming. You should probably use a cool mechanic to represent this ongoing effort as they advance; perhaps several Dramatic Tasks strung together. At the end of the journey, the Agents meet with Maseians and are held for questioning. The situation between the Lands is escalating and the Agents are seen as possible spies. They are eventually released back to the citadel.

Part 2: The Agents are sent to Maseia... as spies. A Maseian warchief is uniting the clans into a war council and sending teams of warriors to find Crystals and shards that will help her armies as they travel to Zingama to conquer it. The Agents chase these teams to recover the Crystals before they do, and

find themselves embroiled deeper in the war, disconnected from Syn, and on the march toward Zingama. They manage to get to Zingama and join Syn forces in defending their main facility from the Maseians—and then from Zingamaian assassins, who were trying to capitalize on the facility's weak defenses.

Part 3: A war erupts between Maseia and Zingama and the Agents are sent to try and calm things down. They eventually face both a Crystal-wielding warchief and the Zingamaian Emperor (who is also wielding a Crystal) in a fight fueled by overactive dispositions.

The Withering Curse

Training session: The team is sent to a settlement in the south of Bogovia, where they provide help for several days on a family farm. Only after returning does everyone realize there was some mistake and this was not at all the assignment they were supposed to be sent on—all of the hard work was for nothing. Welcome to Bogovia.

Part 1: The team is sent on a short tour of the Islands, then on to Bogovia. Throughout their travels they encounter a surprising number of Zingamaians, and eventually are introduced to the new Zingamaian settlement in Bogovia: New Zingama. The route ends there and the Agents help establish a way station, despite the angry Bogovians who claim this colony isn't legitimate in any way.

Part 2: The team is sent to help the Zingamaian colonization efforts, but they soon discover a curse is affecting everyone in the settlement. The source seems to be bog-dwellers using a Crystal, but after recovering it, the curse persists. Even worse, it begins manifesting back in Zingama. When the Agents visit to trace the source, the local politicians spin a story to put all of the blame on the Agents' shoulders: since all Crystals belong to Syn, this curse must be Syn's responsibility. The Agents discover that New Zingama was built using an old Bygone Age device. They explore the complex from which the device was taken and recover crucial information.

Part 3: The Agents arrive at New Zingama, only to discover that Bogovians have taken all settlers hostage—and with them, the plague-inflicting device. At an audience



with the Baron of the Marshes, they discover his personal counselor and chemist is a bog-dweller who is very interested in the device. Even if they manage to convince the Baron to let them treat the infected, everything eventually comes to a bombastic conclusion in the middle of the night. Zombified Zingamaians storm the streets, led by a now hugely plague-bloated bog-dweller.

WHAT ARE CRYSTALS, REALLY?

And what is Syn's master plan? The formative canon answers are given in the *Crystal Heart* webcomic as well as the *Original Syn* book, but in your world, any of the following might be true instead.

Note that some of the assumptions in this book about how Crystals and biology in general work might need to be changed according to your choice of explanation. These changes can usually be explained as faulty understandings or even deliberate misinformation by Syn or another power.

FROZEN MOMENTS

Crystals are essentially moments captured in stasis, and Syn is trying to unlock them.

At the height of the Bygone Age, temporal manipulation technology allowed the Bygoners to reach through time and capture the essence of a historical moment: The first ever lightning bolt to hit the ground; the loveliest spring day ever; the most fantastic moment of amazement experienced by a human being; etc. These moments were trapped in force fields, giving them the semblance of colorful crystals.

In their immense hubris and profound understanding of molecular engineering, the Bygoners then genetically engineered *themselves* to have stones instead of flesh-and-blood hearts. They imagined a future in which each and every Bygoner would have an essential moment within them, uplifting their entire society in a magnificent ascension. They then tried to trap a moment from *the future*, and the apocalypse happened.

Thirty years ago, the original five engineers of Crystal technology awoke in a Bygone Age underground complex after a thousand years in stasis. They were horrified

by what they saw: stone-hearted people running around in a world infested by unintended Crystal energies. Even worse, it seemed that by placing themselves in stasis, they had somehow influenced the entire continent. They had enforced strict and strange biological laws, so that each newborn resembled the ethnicity of one of the five engineers. They realized that their stasis technology had far reaching consequences: by trapping something in stasis it was stuck in time, but so were things *similar* to it.

The five created Syn in an effort to bring some order to the world, and more importantly, to get all of the Crystals and unlock them. They need to release the captured moments back into their proper places in the timeline. The engineers are especially on the lookout for the future moment they captured. They are terrified of what will happen when that moment is supposed to come, and it isn't *there*. Will that bring the end of time, with nothing happening, ever again?

Subduers are Agents tasked with mapping the timeline. Syn's leaders already know how to unlock a Crystal's force field and release the moment back into the past, but they're not sure what effect this has on the world. They open a Crystal only once every few months, then send Subduers to observe and report on all changes. The name "Subduer" comes from these Agents' need to occasionally battle time rifts, which occur naturally as the timeline stabilizes. If you thought that a feral Crystal is wild, wait until you try to fight the moment's manifestations *without* a force field around it. Time rifts are labeled with the code word "life abundance." Regular Agents must report their locations and aren't allowed to engage with them themselves.

Syn's endgame facility is the one in which the five engineers were in stasis: a huge complex inside a floating mountain in western Maseia. The citadel is, in fact, just a small part of it.

Syn as the Antagonist: The engineers see themselves as the only "true-hearted" humans remaining in the world (they went into stasis before other Bygoners started messing with human genetics). They simply can't believe that stone-hearted humans have the true spirit of humanity within them, true

morals, and therefore, they shouldn't have a say in humanity's future. The council is not only gathering and releasing frozen past moments, but have also begun capturing new future moments, to ensure only a *specific* future is allowed to come to fruition; they wish to control humanity's destiny. Some Subduers are aware of this and are helping the council, who have promised to grant them a true heart so that they can join the true humans.

HORRIFIC HEARTS

Crystals are created from people, and Syn is trying to destroy the Bygoners.

The people of the Bygone Age were looking to create a device which provides endless energy. After trying to fiddle with the Second Law of Thermodynamics and realizing endless energy is simply impossible, they looked for ways to circumvent the problem by transforming one type of energy into another at maximum efficiency. The solution was discovered to reside in their own bodies: the human heart.

A strange construct of human evolution, the heart is a physical manifestation of thought patterns and amazingly efficient at transforming electrical signals to matter. It's also capable of creating a resonance field which pushes the blood through the body—a highly useful conversion into physical motion.

Using these new understandings, the Bygoners constructed the first Crystals by growing humans in vats and indoctrinating their minds by trapping them in virtual realities. These experiments were cruel beyond measure, forcing a specific thought pattern through repetitive stimulation and consciousness-altering drugs. As the person grew up—if you could call the poor creature a person—they could only think of one thing and only believe in one truth. Eventually their heart was extracted and the body disposed of. The end result was Novice and Seasoned Crystals, capable of expressing energy in unique and specific ways. This was not enough.

The Bygoners turned to even crueler experiments, creating entire isolated societies and engineering their development. Eventu-



ally they harvested their hearts and distilled them into stronger Crystals: Veteran and Heroic. This was still not enough.

During the days before the “apocalypse,” the Bygoners established a presence on the large continent to the east and turned it into the largest and most horrific experiment ever conceived. They genetically engineered five distinct tribes and began to guide their evolution toward specific goals, planting devices and even Crystals in their environment. They were pushing toward their final goal: the utter destruction of all five nations, distilling from them a single, multi-aspected Crystal. When the day came, everything happened just as planned, with only a few survivors remaining behind. The Bygoners took the Ultimate Crystal, and returned to the west. The truth is, the Bygone Age never happened.

Syn formed a generation ago, when a group of archeologists found the base from which the Bygoners operated their experi-



ment—the flying citadel. In it, they’ve found not only a full description of the plan, but also the five Legendary Crystals. These, too, were formed as a result of the experiment, but the Bygoners left them behind because they weren’t *impressive enough*.

Subduers are Agents tasked with finding, clearing, and recovering the bases from which the Bygoners conducted their experiment. Several of these stations have been cleared, but some prove to be too well-guarded, and others are still undiscovered. Syn tries to piece together the Bygoners’ technologies, as well as their military structure and operating techniques.

Syn’s Endgame facility is the citadel itself. Most of the closed-off areas contain huge weapons and armories, as the citadel is slowly being transformed into the battle platform from which Syn will begin its assault on the Bygoners. There will soon come a day in which the citadel will traverse the western ocean, into the Bygoners’ land beyond the Great Steam Wall—and revenge shall be had.

Syn as the Antagonist: It wasn’t an archeologist who found the citadel, but the Bygoners. A group of them was left behind on the continent, after some political disagreements, and they are *angry*. They have very long lives and very long memories, and they seek revenge. They care little about the “cattle”—how they call the humans in the Five Lands—and are only using them as tools and cannon fodder. Syn Agents are effectively soldiers training for a war. The council occasionally even helps some Agents to “discover” more of the secret history of the world, to make them feel betrayed by the Bygoners; most Subduers believe they work to reclaim humanity’s honor, while actually being played as pawns in a game controlled by cruel and uncaring gods.

LEAKS FROM BEYOND

Crystals are trapped interdimensional beings, and Syn is trying to reopen the gates.

The Bygone Age’s most amazing achievement was interdimensional travel. Using huge and complex gates, they were able to reach into other realms of existence, where

they met bizarre beings and consulted with them. Perhaps one of these creatures was the reason for the apocalypse. In the Old Tongue, the word “Friend” is pronounced “Demon.”

At the moment of the apocalypse, all the gates shut down. All the creatures or items brought in from other realms were encased in a tight layer of the otherworldly consciousness that still radiated from them, becoming Crystals. This was a natural physical reaction, as in this world consciousness is physical and has qualities similar to a mineral. This is why people have hearts of stone: it’s where their consciousness resides. This means that when you replace your heart with a Crystal, your mind is expressing itself through an alien consciousness; this is how you get a disposition.

Syn is a young organization, created by ambitious historians and engineers. They have figured out what Crystals are and have the basics of dimensional technology already in place. In the near future, teleportation pads will replace the autoplanes. The council’s goal is to rebuild and reopen the gates into the netherrealms—because they are all possessed by their Legendary Crystals. They believe they will use the knowledge accumulated after the next apocalypse to create new Crystals, this time on demand (and less unruly!); in truth, it’s unclear if there’ll be any survivors this time.

Subduers are Agents tasked with handling naturally-occurring portals, which happen in areas which are designated as “life abundance.” Ever since the weakening of the interdimensional boundaries, beings and energies from other dimensions regularly invade the world, usually in remote places (but not necessarily). These dimensional manifestations put feral Crystals to shame, but that’s the usual excuse given for their existence. There’s a specific dimension—a really hot one—that Subduers are not supposed to fight, and their standing orders are to let these portals be.

Syn’s Endgame facility is under the Fjordstadian city of Mehlahayn. It’s the control center for the largest gate the Bygoners ever built: Crater Lake itself.



SEEDS OF THE HEAVENS

Crystals are an alien menace, and Syn is trying to create a world government.

Every eight hundred years or so, a comet passes above the world. This comet is an alien entity, a force beyond human understanding. It wants to infest the planet, and has nearly succeeded twice.

In the days before the Bygone Age—in what *they* would have called ancient history—the comet's passing was marked by five meteorites. The peoples of that time, primitive proto-humans, were influenced by the radiation from these meteorites. Their hearts turned to stone, and their bodies changed: stronger, smarter, taller. As each tribe was influenced by a different meteorite, they became the ethnicities we know today. While still human, each bloodline has an eldritch power surging through it—a power that does not mix well with others of its kind.

The meteorites eventually faded, but humanity made great strides, empowered by the gifts they hadn't realized they'd received. They developed society, culture, and science, but eventually the comet came back even closer than before. This time, the meteorites had fully matured into the alien entity's eggs. The Bygone Age ended when the skies rained Crystals that hatched monstrosities.

Several generations ago, a secret society of remnant Bygoners rediscovered their roots. They realized that it had taken their ancestors everything they had to stop the alien menace, and that their magnificent civilization had never managed to recover. What chance do we have, five separate Lands when the comet returns?

Using what little arcane understanding they had, they managed to develop ways to control the many unhatched Crystals which could still be found all over the world. They infiltrated power structures all over the world and for many years have been slowly guiding society toward a unified world government—the only thing they believe that has any hope of stopping the coming invasion.

Syn isn't working with the world's governments: it *is* the world's government. It's the global organization that's supposed to

become the basis for the future society: people of all Lands working together, mastering Crystals so they can better understand how to destroy them.

The truth is that in the chest of each Agent there's a dormant alien egg. These eggs are tamed by a jelly which is secreted from the dead bodies of well-preserved monstrosities, and the harness is etched with arcane runes that carry some meaning to the comet's eldritch mind. The citadel is only flying thanks to being infused with Crystal-powered arcane energies. Even the recruitment process is infused with arcane power. The reason for the questionnaire's strange questions is to guide the recruit's mind down a specific path, forcing their thoughts to follow a protective ritual which will allow them to accept a Crystal's presence in their body. Syn only rejects those who skipped a word or missed a thought. The physical aspect of the test is completely irrelevant.

Syn is relying on a *lot* of comet-based power, more and more each day, despite most of it being so beyond mortal understanding that it might as well be called magic. Who knows what might happen when the comet comes around again? However, the council sees no other choice, as there's no future if the comet is allowed to exist.

Subduers are tasked with finding rogue Agents and killing them. It is a sad fact that most Agents don't die in the field: they die to Subduers. In too many cases, the Crystal's power erupts and overtakes the person's mind, turning the Agent into a monster. They then run off into the wilds, creating a horrific realm where nature's laws are perverted: life abundance areas. Subduers try to find these runaways to reclaim their Crystals and hopefully the Agent as well, although the latter must spend the rest of their days in Syn's secret mental asylum.

Syn's Endgame facility is within the Seat mountain in Zingama, where they're constructing a launch facility for a manned mission to the comet to destroy it once and for all.

But Why Do the Maseian Mountains Float?

They just do.



Savage Tales

An Agent's life is filled with adventure! Any of the following can be used as stops on a Crystal Hunters' route, as fun distractions for Free Agents, or between plot points.

SYN SAVAGE TALES

The following Tales can be used in most Lands, and focus on situations having to do with Syn.

Failed Training

The Agents receive an emergency message: a group of trainees have not reported back from their training mission. The Agents are the closest Syn personnel, so they are sent to investigate.

Choose any of the training missions suggested on pages 112-113: it ended badly for everyone involved. It was more complicated or dangerous than first expected, probably because of a monstrous creature, deceitful locals, or a Crystal manifestation. The trainees' supervisor joined them on the mission and died while saving a few of them.

After finding and rescuing the survivors, the trainees report back to the citadel, where they ask one of the Agents—whoever they connected with most—to become their new supervisor. Would that Agent agree? They'll need to keep track of the trainees' performance, help them with challenges, and be somewhat accountable for their actions. The Agent will also need to spend some of their time outside of missions working with or for the trainees, at least until they finish training. Then again, being a supervisor is a great honor and status symbol within Syn, granting 4 Requisition and many other bonuses.

Focus, Please

This adventure adds a new aspect to the "run-of-the-mill" Crystal hunt.

The Agents rendezvous with a fellow team. One of the other agents is assigned to join the players in their next mission, thanks to special knowledge that the Agent has of the area or Crystal they are about to face.

The Agent is, unfortunately, highly susceptible to his Crystal's disposition. Perhaps this is a recent issue resulting from a faulty

harness, a Crystal that's too powerful, or the emotionally destabilizing effect of returning home; or maybe it's always been the case (if so, a Common Knowledge roll can reveal this).

During the mission the Agent becomes unhinged. He becomes obsessed with a specific line of inquiry, something that the players decide is not relevant to the mission. At first it's an annoyance, and he apologizes for his misbehavior, assuring the Agents he is aware of the problem. However, as the Agents get embroiled in the adventure he continues to push his obsession, forcing them to act on two fronts. He develops less and less rational explanations for what's going on while acting more and more extreme, eventually spying on people he suspects are "in on the conspiracy" and even kidnapping them.

The Agents are not just responsible for this Agent's well-being; they are also responsible for Syn's reputation. Both could be hurt if he is allowed to continue on his rampage.

Heart Needed

An Agent, preferably the team's supervisor or a friend, asks for their help. Lately he has realized that he no longer feels like a real person: the Crystals he sockets influence him too much. He now believes he was only "truly himself" when he had his heart. He regrets giving it up, and wants the Agents to infiltrate the Repository in the citadel to find out if the rumors are true and Syn does indeed keep the hearts of all recruits. If so, he asks them to retrieve his heart.

The Repository is a large hall filled with rows upon rows of ceiling-high shelves. The shelves hold special devices with containers inserted into them. There is a Crystal in each one, the gel inside is hardened almost to the point of solidifying: the hall is kept cold enough that one can see one's breath in the air. The Crystals shine with a weak light, mostly drowned in the bright white light of the ceiling lamps. The Repository is guarded at all times by four security personnel who will need to be distracted. Inside there are usually one or two scientists working on cataloging. Moving any Crystal container without first disabling the security system triggers an alarm.

Two main rooms branch out of the main hall, both behind electronically locked steel



doors. One is for the Heroic Crystals; the other is...for human hearts? If you decide this is the case, then the hearts' hall is kept behind an additional layer of security. The room behind the door is a small elevator activated by a single button on the wall. The button is in fact the end of a shard, and touching it releases a burst of psychic energy. This forces everyone in the area to make a Smarts -4 roll or feel an overpowering desire to retrace their whole day from the moment they woke up, starting with walking back to their bed and then mimicking every movement they did from that point on. Syn higher-ups keep a close eye on people behaving strangely in the citadel, knowing to look for the signs of a person who has discovered the elevator.

Down in the secret hall, the hearts are kept inside a knee-deep pool filled with blood or a blood-like substance. It pours gently into the room through wide openings halfway up the walls and all around the room (this liquid is perhaps harvested from a horrific beast kept in a different cellar). The room is almost completely dark and quiet, except for the quiet lapping of the blood. The hearts are laid inside the pool in rows. Finding the right one requires a Research roll on the terminal in the room, or a very hard Healing roll to figure out the likely shape and color of their friend's heart.

Re-Recruit

Run this adventure when the team has at least one extra Crystal on them.

While resting in a small settlement, the Agents are approached by a local who they recognize from their recruitment tests. She failed the very last test (counting down from 42, skipping all multiples of 3) and was quite angry at the time, but seems much more relaxed now. She happily guides the Agents around town, but manages to get one of them alone and injects them with a paralyzing poison (Vigor -4 to resist). She then takes their Crystal and runs away. The toxin greatly slows the Agent's metabolism, forcing them to roll against asphyxiation once every ten minutes. The other Agents, if they are not close by to investigate, receive a message from a local person telling them where their paralyzed friend is. The rogue

ex-recruit doesn't want the Agent to die; she just needed a Crystal.

As the Agents chase her down to an abandoned quarry, they must avoid several traps. Someone on the cliffside above them triggers a rock avalanche (Agility -2 or 3d6 damage), bear traps are hidden in the ground (Notice or take 2d6 damage), and barely-seen tripwires pull the trigger of a hidden shotgun (Notice -2 or take 2d6 damage). These are not just deterrents: these are attempts to kill anyone coming this way.

The abandoned huts at the edge of the quarry, previously used by workers, are now the headquarters of an organization called the Forward Thinkers. The members of this group feel that ever since Syn discovered the secret to using Crystals, it's been hoarding all the power to itself instead of sharing it. The Thinkers have been doing their own research, and came up with a strange conclusion: They suspect there's no need for a harness and that it's the mental techniques Syn developed for Crystal Channeling that are the key to controlling Crystals

The Thinkers began experimenting with surgical implementation. They are in constant need of Crystals, and the ex-recruit's theft was her ticket to joining their ranks. All of this can be gleaned from what records are left in the huts or from some Thinkers who remained behind to cover the others' escape. Most of the Thinkers and probably the ex-recruit escape well before the Agents arrive.

The Forward Thinkers can later be used as terrorists, a recurring danger that the Agents must face, or as freedom fighters, who approach the Agents to ask for their help with exposing the real danger: Syn.

Surgical Strike

The Agents are asked to stand guard during a delicate medical operation. The boss of an organization Syn is supporting is being implanted with a Crystal, but the organization's enemies are trying to stop it. The Agents must prevent any interference during the 8-hour long operation, which is performed by trained doctors and Crystal specialists.

Unfortunately, just as the leading doctor takes the boss's heart out, she is murdered by an enemy who managed to infiltrate



the surgical team. The Crystal falls to the ground and goes feral in the middle of the operation. The Agents must now save everyone involved, subdue the Crystal, hopefully keep the boss alive with some crazy Healing rolls, and probably fend off an attack by the enemies who rush the place from outside.

BOGOVIA TALES

Bogovia is a place of isolated people, loss, and despair. It is the land of dark forests and vaguely Eastern-European scenery. Stories set in Bogovia are about downer endings, bitter sacrifices, and Pyrrhic victories, but they can also be about rising from the depths of sorrow or finding one last hope.

Double or Nothing

It's an awful rainy day when the Agents arrive at a small cabin on the shores of a lake. The small farm has a shed, some livestock, and a well (keen-eyed players might be curious about the presence of the well, considering it's right at the shore of a lake). The local family consists of a mother, Dvonio, and her twin boys, Relen and Flashiv. Dvonio waves to the Agents and invites them to stay the night. She isn't happy to do so, but "when it rains, you never say no to visitors." Despite her bad mood, she insists they stay and refuses to be a bad host. The twins are very quiet and polite.

During the evening the Agents begin to feel uneasy. Those who make a Notice roll realize it's because there's two of almost everything: two birds at the window, two apples in the cupboard, two snails crawling along the wall toward two spiders, etc. A raise on the roll reveals that the two children have their own jugs of water, different from the one Dvonio uses for herself and the Agents (Dvonio drinks from the well, while her children drink water from the lake).

Examining a pair of similar creatures closely reveals they're identical, with the same marks in the same places. Dvonio seems to be the only thing that doesn't come in a pair. If asked about this, she becomes angry and worried. If asked again, she demands that the Agents leave, even if it's the middle of the night. She will only cooperate if calmed down and given a good reason to



believe the Agents aren't going to harm her and that her secret is safe, whatever it is.

The lake behind the house has been considered cursed for many years by Dvonio's family. Anything that enters it becomes two, but the replica disappears at sunrise. Dvonio avoided the lake as her mother taught her until several years ago, when her son Flashiv died in a bandit attack. The grief-ridden mother couldn't bear to tell his twin brother what happened, so she bathed him in the lake. The double that was created came to live as part of the family and is now called Flashiv, as Dvonio kept insisting. By having the children drink only water from the lake, she keeps the double existing day after day. She and the kids have not left the house since that day.

At the bottom of the lake, there's a shard that can duplicate living matter for short amounts of time. Finding it requires several dives into the lake to discover that it's buried deep under a doubly-thick forest of kelp.

Runaway Present

While visiting Puftzburg, the Agents are invited to a special ceremony on the second



floor of the council building in the early evening. There they are presented with a silver Crystal set on a purple pillow by the city's aldermen. It is glowing but mostly dormant, only shaking a bit. It was recently carefully recovered from a ruin close to town, and the aldermen would like the Agents to have it.

Unfortunately, the moment an Agent tries to touch the Crystal, it disappears in a flash and reappears in the window—*inside* a dour raven (page 172) that was standing on the windowsill. The startled raven caws, its beak releasing silver energy, then turns and disappears over the rooftops of nighttime Puftzburg.

A Common Knowledge or Academics check can reveal that a dour raven is a rare sight inside a city's walls, meaning it is probably owned as a pet by a family (a decision both they and the raven probably regret on a daily basis).

Start a Chase! The maneuvering skill is Athletics, and the Agents begin at the rear card. The raven is only two steps away—but the moment the chase begins it teleports a card forward. The Crystal is active now, teleporting the raven forward on each of its turns. The rooftops of Puftzburg are a mess of smoking chimneys, half-broken roofing, and deceptively placed ledges. Complications happen on Spades as well as Clubs!

Rather than being an actual chase, this is more of a chance for Agents to fall from rooftops, get jumbled in hanged laundry, and shout “stop, damn you!” in ways that are comically misunderstood by local Bogovians. The raven is Very Small and black against a black background, but it's croaking like crazy as it fumbles its way between dangerous, narrow passages and roofs. Whenever the Crystal activates, a flash of silver can be seen from its general direction.

Eventually, the Agents arrive at the home of the Buckets, who are not in the mood for guests but have no problem allowing them to take the raven—for good, hopefully. However, the dour raven figures it can make everyone's lives a living hell and has skittered away to hide in the walls. The mother turns to young Chelsie Bucket, demanding that she get “her pet” out. Chelsie, unfortunately, is about as annoying as the raven. She

is willing to call the raven out, but only after one of the Agents defeats her in a yo-yo competition (Thievery), best out of three. She is pretty good, with d8. She can even do a triple-once-over and a shading swan!

The Crystal can be Warp (page 202) or any other you create with a theme of teleportation.

Sleep, Deprived

The Agents arrive at a small village built around an old disused monastery. They are tasked with finding a Syn researcher (or an Agent that the players know) who was sent on a simple information gathering mission. This village is her last known location.

They find her alive and well within minutes of arriving. She, as well as everyone else in the village, is severely drowsy. They yawn, stretch, and spend their time talking about what needs to be done, but never act on it; they're too tired to do anything. The village's streets and buildings lack maintenance, and the fields are overgrown. At night, the people just go back to bed to sleep.

Despite all this, it seems that someone is chasing away wolves, harvesting some crops, and preparing food to keep the villagers alive (if only barely). That someone is Hibztah, a young and enthusiastic woman, who tries to keep herself hidden from the Agents as long as possible. She's responsible for what's happening to the village, but is confident in her ability to overcome this “little problem” and doesn't want the Agents' assistance.

Hibztah is mother to Rosz, a fiery teenage girl who's even more individualistic than her mom. A few weeks ago, Hibztah had had enough of her daughter's destructive tendencies. She dug out an old family heirloom: great-grandfather's seal, which he had received from a warlord he served. The seal has a shard embedded in it that can subdue and suppress whatever it is pressed against, so Hibztah started to press it to her daughter's forehead in her sleep to make her less energetic.

Unfortunately, the seal's metal body has eroded throughout the years. The influence of the shard began spreading, affecting all except Hibztah herself. To her frustration, the effects won't dissipate even though she no longer uses the seal.

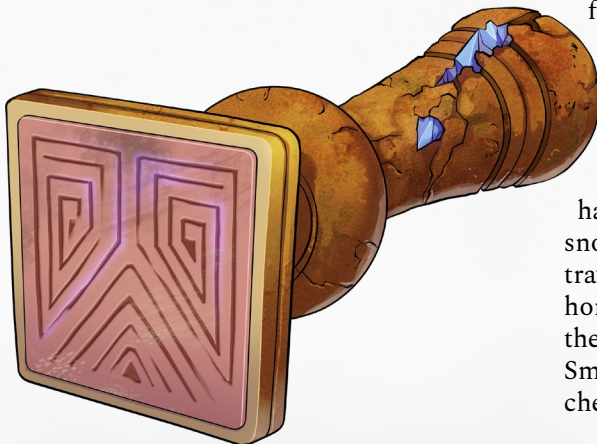


Hibztah might try to make the Agents fall asleep by approaching them discreetly one by one and pressing the seal to them in secret. This is a *slumber* effect using Hibztah's Spirit d10. When examining the seal, an Academics check can reveal that the shard's power seems to be affected by the seal's structure. Perhaps by understanding this phenomenon, its effects can be broken.

All details of the village's history, including the seal's origin, are archived under the wooden shrine in the old monastery building. Should Hibztah fail in deterring the Agents, she can eventually be goaded into revealing this. Most of the village elders know this as well.

Studying the ancient diagrams reveals that this region's warlord had some understanding of how to manipulate shards by use of geometric patterns. There's a pattern built into the seal's face but it has eroded throughout the years, changing the shard's effect. Should the Agents create a new pattern, they'll be able to break the shard's influence. They must dismantle the seal, examine the shard, compare it to the drawings, then draw a new pattern, place the shard in it, and give it a moment to activate.

Once the seal breaks, all villagers—including the Syn researcher—*snap*. They become awake and energetic, but with a deep desire to fall asleep. They assault the monastery in hordes, instinctively trying to get to the shard which can put them into a coma. Run this as a Dramatic Task, in which some of the Agents need to fend off (but not hurt!) the confused villagers, while others work on drawing the pattern to activate the shard.



FJORDSTAD TALES

Fjordstad is a place of cold weather and cold calculations. Innovation is praised (and usually taken too far), information is held close to the chest (and usually stolen), and everyone spies on everyone else. There's great potential in technology, but the only thing plentiful is shortages—items are out of stock, energy reserves are low, and room is sparse. Fjordstad's themes are hubris, calculated risks, secrecy, and trying out revolutionary innovations.

Diggy Diggy Hole

Play this when the Agents are close to Yamar's Battleground.

The Agents are approached by a large tracked vehicle, a mobile HQ for Bachfen or High Hifger, accompanied by several armed riders on white horses (page 174). The door hisses open, and a highly-decorated general walks out. She's calm and collected, but is accompanied by an officer who's clearly distressed. He introduces himself as Rhifile and explains that his general belongs to a house that is not technically allowed to talk with Syn, which is why he'll be doing the talking.

The general's secret battle plans were recently lost after a white horse buried them somewhere in Yamar's Battleground. The troops were frantically searching for the plans, but the Battleground is large and the plans must be retrieved by the end of the day. The general hopes that with the Agents' powers and assistance, they'll be able to cover more ground.

One of the white horse riders, Alaya, is sent along with the Agents. She's the general's daughter, but does her best to hide this fact. She is deeply ashamed because the plans were in her keeping and it was her white horse that lost them.

The white horse has a powerful gathering instinct that leads it to hold tight to treasured objects—mostly large, hard-shelled fruits—and bury them in the snow or ground. Many Fjordstadians have travel trunks made of a wood that the white horse finds pleasing so it will gladly hold the trunk in its mouth for the entire journey. Small pieces of luggage are kept inside its cheek, while larger ones have wooden han-

dles. But the white horses *really* like burying things, and occasionally this instinct proves too powerful.

When Alaya passed by these hills yesterday, she didn't notice when her white horse stopped to bury a chest it was keeping in its mouth; she thought it was just sniffing something, a common occurrence. She desperately wants to redeem herself because she and her mother were not born into their noble house. Losing the plans might be reason enough to banish Alaya and damage her mother's standing.

Run this as a Difficult Dramatic Task, with mines, live bombs, old war robots, lack of sunlight, bitter cold, and a quickly-agitated white horse as complications (Ayala has riding d6). At the start of the second round, the area starts being bombarded by the artillery of the enemy city, adding explosions to the mix. Have everyone make an Agility roll to avoid taking 3d6 damage!

For Science!

The team travels into the mountains of the Wilds to the supposed location of a Crystal. They're greeted by clever traps and wild animals, but the Crystal has already been excavated. All signs point to an expedition originating in one of the cities.

Arriving at the city, the Agents confront the small noble house which seems to have been responsible for the expedition. They deny everything and send the Agents after one of the largest houses in the city, claiming they were framed.

In truth, the leaders of the minor house did indeed commission the expedition. Their chief scientist has developed a flying technique that will "change the world!!", but needed the Crystal to activate it. When the Agents eventually discover this and infiltrate the lab, the entire building is sent flying. The Agents and nobles fight it out while the building soars into the air and the structural integrity of the lab deteriorates around them.

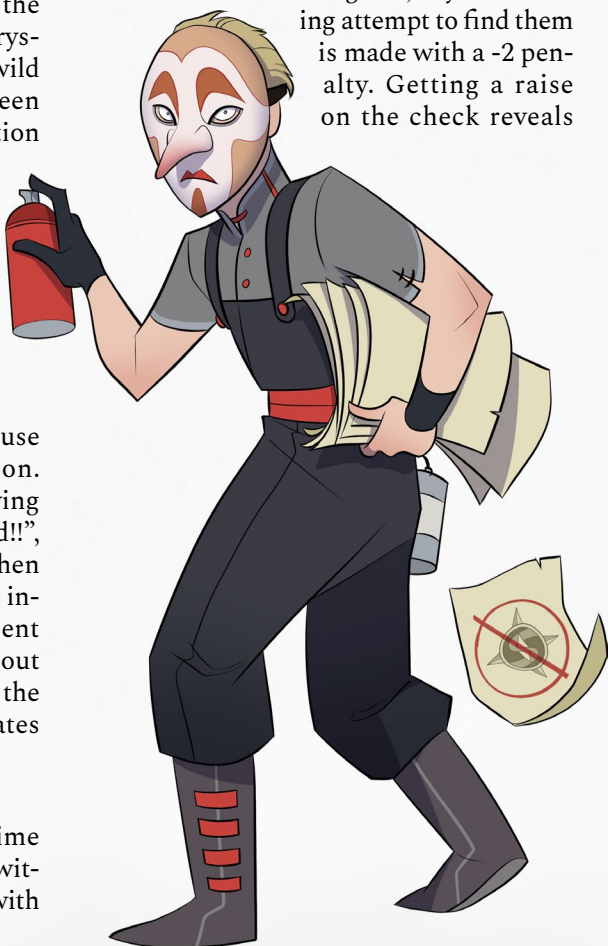
Rebels With a Cause

While visiting one of the cities, at a time that Syn is welcome there, the Agents witness an act of vandalism. Several youths with

masked faces spray a symbol on the side of a building, a number of stories up. A Common Knowledge roll reveals that the symbol has anti-Syn connotations in Fjordstad. The vandals then disappear among the rooftops and alleyways before the authorities can catch them.

These youths are members of a small society of rebels who protest Syn's involvement with the city's business. They recently became organized after a team of Agents (perhaps including someone the players know) destroyed an underground facility that the city used for peaceful purposes—either raising crops, assembling machines, or refining ore, depending on the city. The Agents claimed it was infested with a shard-created disease, but the protesters refuse to accept the story. This was the last straw and they now demand that the nobles cut all connections with Syn.

Details on the number of rebels and their capabilities are sketchy, and unless an Agent utilizes some sort of disguise, any Networking attempt to find them is made with a -2 penalty. Getting a raise on the check reveals





they're a group of young ideologists who care deeply for their city. They truly see Syn as a hostile foreign influence which shouldn't be allowed to operate without constraints.

Local nobles see the protesters as nothing more than an annoyance, since they seem to mostly spray paint and hang posters. If things escalate they are planning to call Syn to handle it, believing it's a matter that the organization should care about, not them.

Should the Agents ignore the situation, run *Chasing Leads* around town (page 80). Afterwards, as the Agents return to the way station, they arrive just as it is being attacked by face-covered rebels armed with buzzers and a single flamethrower. They are trying to ransack the place and then destroy it. They are not expecting any resistance, as they have frightened away the personnel and believe that the Agents had left town.

The rebels are not ready for a fight, nor are they looking for one; they will only attack in self defense while retreating into the back alleys. The whole group is in attendance: twelve **Fjordstadian Denizens** with two leaders (d8 at Intimidation and Shooting). If one of the rebels dies and the others get the impression that the Agents killed them on purpose, they will return later and try to kill the team with righteous fury.

ISLAND TALES

The Islands are varied and strange, both culturally and geographically. The main themes of the Islands are strictness vs. relaxation, authenticity vs. traditionalism, global vs. local, and finding refuge in the extremes.

Lettuce Help

While visiting an Island on their way somewhere else, one of the Agents is approached by a friend, family member, or mentor. A small but important competition is being held later that day and the contenders are in dire need of judges—their last one refused to come this time, saying it's "too dangerous and not worth it." The Agents can be consid-



ered impartial judges, and the friend insists it won't take long.

This is a lettuce judging competition. Six farmers from around the Islands have brought their best, juiciest, and biggest lettuces to be judged according to size, greenness, crispiness, flavor, and appearance. Despite publicly emphasizing the importance of fairness and impartiality, all six farmers are huge schmoozers. They sneak around to meet with the Agents privately, kissing their behinds (metaphorically) and promising any service or favor imaginable.

Run this as you'd like, but as the winner is announced they raise their magnificent lettuce, which then grows ten times larger, reveals evil eyes and a huge toothy mouth, and starts attacking everyone. Treat this monstrous lettuce as an earth elemental (from *Savage Worlds*) without the Burrow and Immunity special abilities.

After the fight, with everyone covered in shredded lettuce leaves, all of the contestants (not just the winner) admit that they're using special drugs to make their vegetables grow as big as possible. In fact, this fight is a yearly occurrence, which is why it's so hard to get judges.

Pirate Party

Syn is invited to the Gathering of Pirates, a biannual celebration of debauchery at the feet of the Great Big Manatee in the Southern Chain. The invitation is from Salt-Dog Much-Fear'd, a well-known pirate captain, and it even bears his official seal. The reason for the invitation remains obscure, but Syn is interested in knowing more about the secrets the pirates have discovered in the South Chain, so the Agents are carefully sent in.

The invitation was actually sent by Harpy Teeth, Salt-Dog's long time rival. Harpy and the Dog have a love-hate relationship: they try to outmaneuver each other at every Gathering, with generally joyful (but also quite deadly) murder attempts. Harpy's latest "hilarious" trick is sending the Agents to meet with Salt-Dog. The old pirate has been using a Crystal for quite some time, and she'd love to see them try to take it away from him.

When Salt-Dog is approached by the Agents, he'll amuse himself by saying he has a Crystal for them, but they must prove their worthiness in a series of contests. All of them are a regular part of the Gathering: Wrestling (Athletics vs. Athletics), insults (Taunt Tests), deep dives, and getting lashed (not a real contest—some bastard just wants to see if they'll agree to it).

You can run this as a Dramatic Task, but Salt-Dog has no intention of giving up his Crystal, which he keeps hidden. Instead, he sends them to Harpy—who is *also* in possession of a Crystal. She will deny having it, and reveal to the Agents that Salt-Dog has one. They'll both keep toying with the Agents until someone loses their patience.

If one of the pirate captains feels themselves being backed into a corner, they'll insist on one final competition: a one-on-one fight inside a pool. The pool is home to tiny, silvery jellyfish that can expel a chemical which hardens the water around their school, turning it into a jelly-like ichor for several minutes (Agility or become Entangled). The captain will enter carefully, then jump out and hope the scared fish create a thick enough jelly to trap the Agents while pirate lackeys rush to attack.

The Dead Who Judge

The island of Pama'ua is a tropical, sunlit place with thick forests, found just off a trading route in The Home of Calamity. Three local cultures live there: The Brutes Who Triumph are Pama'ua's face—the people that most visitors get to meet. The Eaters of E'oi live inland and consider the Brutes "newcomers," since they arrived on Pama'ua "only" seven generations ago. Finally, The Dead are isolationists who paint their faces white and wear rattling chains of bones.

The Eaters and Brutes trade in e'oi, an important root vegetable, but are constantly fighting with each other over territory and plantation sizes. However, both of them fear and revere The Dead. To prevent an all-out war between the Brutes and the Eaters, both clans regularly send delegations to The Dead, asking them to help maintain their borders.

Lately, the Brutes have been turning away from wearing emptied e'oi shells and red body paint, instead using face makeup in the style of the Zingamaians. The Eaters, who have little to no contact with outsiders, don't understand this change. They see it as an attempt to become more like The Dead (who color their faces as well), thinking the Brutes are trying to gain the same respect.

A few extreme Eaters turned to The Dead to ask for their help in assaulting the Brutes. The leaders of The Dead were appalled by the suggestion, and turned the Eaters away. The extremists saw this as a sign that justice wouldn't be served, so they took things into their own hands. They kidnapped and beheaded some of The Dead, killing them with their own ceremonial knife, and put their heads on display on their borders. They then framed the Brutes for the killing by planting the ceremonial knife in one of their villages, hoping that the Dead and Brutes will hurt each other.

Unbeknown to the Eaters, the knife is a shard which can awaken the dead. At nightfall, the heads begin to scream and screech. Everyone who hears them is filled with utter terror, but should someone listen closely, they'll be able to understand that the deceased Dead are reliving their last moments and describing their killers. This



new development brings the Agents in, who probably stir the pot even more.

MASEIA TALES

Maseia is a place of endless freedoms, but society inevitably needs to limit some of these freedoms. It is about personal wants versus cultural customs, expectations, and heritage.

Blurred Bandits

The Fjordstad-Maseia border is a lawless place called the Badlands. Should the Agents find themselves traveling this expanse, they might run into the famed Blurred Bandits.

The faces of these bandits look blurry and unrecognizable thanks to an unknown effect. They attack small convoys and trail-blazers, mostly of the same few clans. Some suspect that the reason the bandits obscure their faces is that they are themselves from those clans looting their own.

Syn thinks that the bandits use a Crystal which changes one's features, dubbed "Faceless." This is indeed the case, and the bandits are indeed originally from the clans they rob. The Crystal is unstable, and occa-

sionally the process that changes one's face back to normal malfunctions, dissolving the bandit into a pile of goo.

The gang keeps using the Crystal because they are firm believers in the future their leader promised them: a world where they are respected and powerful, not just workers for their clan. This man, Tay-na, is the one in charge of using the Crystal. He is also the only one of the bandits who resides in their hidden lair at the bottom of one of the cliffs in the area.

Tay-na is a Wild Card **Maseian Hunter** and is always accompanied by his pet cougar Ma, who because of some early experiments now has two heads.

Raiders of the Lost Age

The Perch mountains have some of the oldest Bygone Age structures in the world. Most of these are buried ruins which can be easily confused for the foundations of a nomad clan's semi-permanent camp.

A nomad clan that was driven from its previous land after settled Maseians took it for themselves arrives and makes camp at one of these sites. Something within them awakens. They spend the next few weeks uncovering a whole underground temple, adopting strange customs, and devoting themselves to the Great Bird.

At this point the Agents arrive. The Maseians will try to put on a show of reverting to their old ways so as not to raise suspicion, but they no longer care about their old values and are just going through the motions.

The underground temple is fully restocked with traps, guards, and unnerving insects and animals (all partly covered with feathers). There is a Crystal in the main chamber, resting on a pedestal and protected by a weight-and-boulder trap (of course!). But it's not feral: it seems to remain naturally tamed while inside the temple, which means it can't be the reason for the unnatural goings on.

The malign influence, unfortunately, derives from the temple itself, which dates back to the Bygone Age. If the Agents wish to neutralize its effect, they have no other recourse but to destroy the entire temple.



Runaways

The Agents arrive at an old stone tower: a watch station that serves several of the nomad clans in the area. It seems to be deserted, so the Agents make themselves comfortable for the night.

There are many open and empty supply crates in the tower's cellar. A Common Knowledge roll can show that it's customary for visitors to eat some of the food in reserves, then restock the supplies. Here, it's all gone. Some of the furniture has been broken down, and is in the process of being turned into basic hunting weapons and traps.

It turns out that the tower is also home to several runaway teens and preteens who escaped a settled clan that suffered from mounting tensions, scared that the adults would turn on each other. The runaways came to the tower to wait for a nomad band to stop for the night, in order to join its ranks. A few days passed and no one came. Now the food is running out and they're confused and desperate. They scattered when

they saw the Tank in the distance, hiding from the Agents. With the temperature falling during the night, some of them are about to get sick.

During the night, two of the kids try to sneak into the Tank to steal supplies while the rest hide. One of them probably accidentally honks the horn. What they don't know is that their parents have settled their differences: the clan is at peace and everyone is searching for them.

The fight had begun because several of the families suggested changing the clan's approach to Syn, but they settled on keeping to their traditional view that Syn is a force of evil. Seeing the Agents approach with kids will probably reignite the emotions of everyone involved.

ZINGAMAIAN TALES

Zingama is the land of jungles and poison, and is home to the largest society in the world. Tales in Zingama are about politics and manipulation, lies and ambition, superficial vs. meaningful.

It's All the Rage

A new style is in fashion these days: Syn suits! Everyone dresses like an Agent of Syn, some even flaunting the real Syn symbol. The most important part of the suit is the fake harness—without it, you're just flabbing. ("Flabbing" is "faking it." Sheesh, get with the lingo!)

Wysha just wanted to be one of the cool ones. Her brother managed to get a lot of attention by trapping a few fireflies in a globe and putting it under his shirt, making his "harness" glow. Hoping to up her game, Wysha went into the jungle...and found an actual Crystal.

She now walks around with the Crystal, which is sewn into the "harness" of her shirt. This Crystal's theme is all about dreams, which works very well for her—she looks amazing and everyone admires her. People in close proximity to Wysha are drawn into her dream world. However, the longer they stay close to her, the deeper they sink when they return to their homes, which then become their own dream worlds. Inside their houses, things feel and look as if their dream





is real. Their perceptions shift so much that reality doesn't matter anymore.

When the Agents arrive, finding Wysha's Crystal is very easy—she rushes to show off to them. While close to her, they find her irresistibly attractive and persuasive—they think she looks great and that her every word is funny and full of meaning. The Crystal's effects have become too powerful, as it has already manifested several times.

To approach Wysha effectively, the Agents must first disable all the other manifestations, which can be found in the homes of her friends and family. Here are some suggestions (remember, it's all a dream!):

Ndago (brother): Believing he is the mayor of the town, he can be convinced he's dreaming by having someone run against him in an election montage. At the end of the election, Ndago awakes.

Hwaya (mother): The former army officer is living her dream of commanding a training camp. She'll expect the Agents to go through a series of training exercises, while she barks commands at them. If at least one Agent makes it to the end of the drill, her dream will be fulfilled and she awakes.

Zwazy (best friend): Zwazy dreams she is Wysha, because of course she does. There's no one more popular and amazing than her best friend! Her dream looks like the regular town—it's just that she is Wysha. It might take some thinking to realize what is happening and confront Zwazy. Zwazy can be convinced that she is dreaming if one of the Agents takes the role of Zwazy while Zwazy is dreaming that she is Wysha.

Yasmir (officer): Yasmir was drawn to the commotion around Wysha after hearing rumors about people disappearing. He shadowed Wysha from afar, gradually being influenced by the Crystal without realizing it. When he returned home, he was trapped in a nightmare of being chased by immense tigers with the faces of his teachers from the army academy. Yasmir awakes once all the tigers are defeated.

Once all of the manifestations are dealt with, the Agents can approach Wysha and simply take the Crystal from her. Once her own dream world dissipates and she realizes

the damage she's done, the poor girl runs around to ask for everyone's forgiveness.

Makeover

A young Zingamaian man approaches the team while on route to a large city, begging for their help. He lost all of his money to a scam artist, and is too ashamed to go back to the small town he's from. He is even considering joining Syn, as a last resort.

This man, Shabatzi, accompanies the Agents if they allow him to, and tries to prove himself useful. His real problem, though, is a lack of cultural capital—Shabatzi simply doesn't have enough understanding of the ins and outs of modern Zingamaian culture in the big cities, and trying to use his "rural" sensibilities only makes things worse for him: He doesn't order poison wine because he's afraid of the name; he walks with his long hair held tight on the back of his head, like some peasant; and he uses the wrong shade of eyeliner, and even worse, doesn't understand why that's a problem!

After a while Shabatzi hears of an old temple in town, now abandoned, which supposedly houses a mural showing the location of a Crystal within the jungle (Whether that's true or not is up to you). Seeking to help the Agents, he investigates the place and stumbles onto an old relic housing a shard. The shard activates, and embeds itself into Shabatzi's torso. If he's not already accompanying the Agents, he immediately seeks them.

A careful examination (Healing) reveals it's a shard of crushing self-disappointment. No wonder it refuses to let go of Shabatzi's heart. Removing the shard requires a delicate operation, but the problem is—it's set to explode. Shabatzi's disappointment with himself is so severe it has "charged" the shard, which will shatter in a building-leveling explosion if removed. However, while it stays attached to Shabatzi it only *keeps* getting charged, by the man's crippling frustration with himself. Eventually it will erupt, reducing a whole block to ruins. The only safe solution is... to make Shabatzi a star, like in his dreams.

(Another option is to convince him that being socially-accepted by these people is not as important as he thinks it is, but good luck

convincing a star-struck 19 year old of *that*.)

In a month's time, the temple of the Sun who Delivers will have its yearly Delivery ceremony, and everyone who's anyone will be invited. If Shabatzi gets an invitation and participates in the event (something he's been dreaming of since childhood), he'll regain confidence in himself and the shard will simply fall off. For that to happen, the kid will need to be taught manners and be introduced to important people.

The authorities have no idea how to help Shabatzi and will not take him into custody. In fact, they'll demand Syn finds a solution to this walking timebomb. Killing him is out of the question—he's a Zingamaian citizen! Taking Shabatzi away from the city will only increase his despair. And worst of all, some of the higher-ups in town have decided to take matters into their own hands, and have sent some assassins to take care of the threat, to kill him where it's "safe". That is, away from themselves.

Slime Time

"Slime" is a strange but popular Zingamaian sport in which two teams of four each wade through a waist-high pool of very thick yellow slime, rolling a ball on its surface.

The Agents are invited to a match, or maybe go with some of the personnel of the local way station. The match is as disgusting as expected—front rows get regularly slimed—but barely a few minutes in, one of the players stops moving entirely. The other three soon join, all of them freezing in place, paralyzed.

An investigation can reveal that the ooze for this match came from a new source, T'zatska Ranch. The slime is usually harvested from the secretions of a special kind of giant spine slug, and T'zatska Ranch has proudly announced that their latest breed is even more special than usual.

T'zatska herself is happy to show the Agents her new slugs, which roam her ranch freely. She assures the Agents that her slugs are completely safe and takes them to the hatchery, where she

can use the eggs to create an antidote for the paralyzed athletes.

Unfortunately, the slugs are not safe, as T'zatska's new breed actually has more aggressive tendencies than usual—just not towards her. As she begins harvesting eggs, the slugs begin spewing slime on the team, then crawl ever so slowly toward their paralyzed victims.

SPINE SLUGS

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Shooting d8

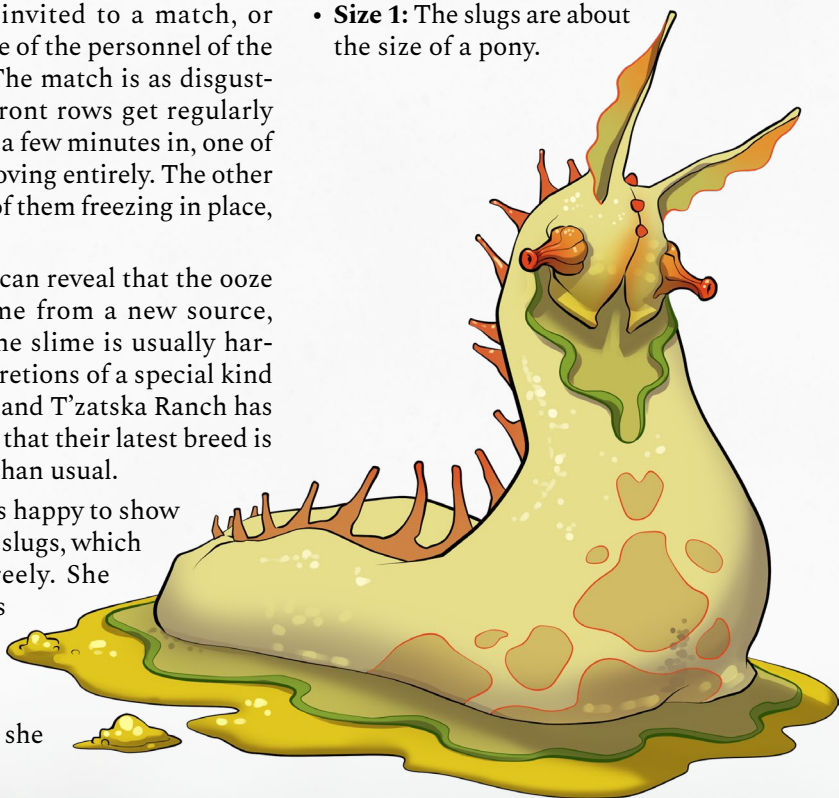
Pace: 3; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Hesitant

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Acidic Slap:** Str damage.
- **Low Light Vision:** The slugs ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Paralyzing:** If the target of a slug's attack is Shaken or takes damage, it must make a Vigor roll (at -2 on a raise) or become Stunned and also paralyzed for 2d4 rounds.
- **Shoot Slime:** The slug throws slime in a range of 12" using its Shooting skill, dealing 2d6 damage.
- **Size 1:** The slugs are about the size of a pony.





Plot Point Campaign: Seismic Shift

This campaign sets the Agents against a group of Islanders who are trying to unify the Islands into one landmass. They believe this will force the Islands to unify into a single society, which seems to them to be crucial for the Islands' survival in a world that will soon be dominated by nations.

These Islanders are secretly led by Kino: a Veteran Free Agent who has discovered the remains of a tectonic machine from the Bygone Age, but is unsure of how to operate it. She sends her lieutenants, who are armed with shards, to gather information from ancient Bygone Age ruins. This brings them into conflict with the team.

You should inform the players that their route begins in Maseia, heading north. They should also be aware that at later parts of the campaign they'll be visiting all sorts of places, but not Zingama (unless you plan on running a *Savage Tale* there).

CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

Training Session

- **Next Station: Low Inaki.** The team is sent to convince locals in the Islands to build a new way station. They're accompanied by Huna, who will later become their friend.

Part One

The Agents are assigned a route, starting in Maseia and ending in Fjordstad.

- **Unleashed Fury.** Arriving at a market town built on top of a small mesa, the team is invited by its eager mayor to open an old burial cave. Strangely, the cave had already been opened, and it seems to be guarded by living skeletons. While trying to investigate what's happening, the Agents help to fend off an attack on the market by Crystal manifestations. They then go back into the cave to discover a Crystal being manipulated by a traditionalist resorting to extreme measures.
- **Spirit Animal.** Following rumors of ghostly animals, the team meets up with a clan whose sacred bison has become hostile. Figuring things out with the chief and racing against his glory-seeking son, they

survive a bison stampede and discover a place where a Crystal has recently fallen from a floating mountain.

- **Through the Badlands.** Continuing north on The Train Line and meeting Huna once more, Yamy the necromancer disconnects the Agents' car and forces it off the tracks. The team must survive by themselves in the Badlands, finally arriving at Fjordstad.
- **Scavengers in the Snow.** In the Fjordstadian city Bachfen, the team allies with a rebellious member of a noble house and heads into the storm in search of an old mobile combat platform. They discover the house's rivals are harboring the skeleton-raising villain Yamy and his two companions.

Part Two

With the route now ended, the team is brought back to the citadel where they get debriefed. The villains are deemed dangerous enough to demand some investigation, so the team is sent to the Islands.

- **Solid Lead.** Following a lead in the villains' hometown, the team gets framed! The local authorities are led to believe the team murdered a whole family, and they are locked up.
- **Searching the Chain.** After being released or escaping, the team's long-time friend Huna reveals himself to be a lot more important than they thought, and says they have a mole. He authorizes a secret mission to search for the villains' headquarters. The team arrives at an underwater laboratory and face Yamy, Jamila, and Pasquan, defeating them. They also discover a deeper truth: the mole in Syn wasn't working for the Islanders—they were working for *her*!

Part Three

The team now knows of the rogue Agent Kino and of her nefarious plan. Aided by Huna, they chase her to a final showdown.

- **The Castle of Claws.** Kino's last recorded location is in Bogovia several months ago, so the team is sent there to track her down. They have to fight dangerous creatures that the Agent recently awoke, then follow her to a hidden valley in a

Bogovian mountain. In the valley, they find an old Crystal-powered castle from the days of the warlords. Fighting their way through its halls, they eventually confront Kino and discover that she came here for an ancient device, not the Crystal. She escapes, but at least the team has two new Crystals.

- **The Tectonic Machine:** The Agents arrive at the Islands, trying to locate the Bygone Age machine. They face opposition from a well-organized militia led by Kino. Huna is revealed to actually be one of the five Legendary Agents from the council of Syn. Kino uses the device from Bogovia to stun him and take his Legendary Crystal, which she needs for the machine. The team finally discovers the machine's location and heads there for a final fight against Kino amongst volcanoes and tsunamis!

MAIN NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

All of the following NPCs are from the Islands.

YAMYA THE NECROMANCER

Yamya gives off a strange vibe. He dresses in rattling bones and wears dark makeup, leering behind a huge headdress of animal skins. He walks in a bent posture, his many long sleeves and layers of cloaks obscuring just how thin his torso and arms are. Yamya suffers from a wasting disease that has made him weak and thin, a fact he tries to hide.

Yamya is quite the performer. The necromancer persona was initially a way of intimidating patsies, but as the disease got worse he started wearing it more and more to hide his wasting body. These days, this is how he meets the world. He's good at appearing unhinged, using his clear voice to switch seamlessly between a threatening deep baritone and sweet high-pitched laughter.

In combat, Yamya guides his lackeys and skeletons from behind while uttering unsettling curses in horrific tones, intimidating his enemies.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6



Skills: Athletics d4, Battle d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Performance d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Anemic, Clumsy

Edges: Command, Fervor, Menacing, Rabble-Rouser, Strong Willed

Gear: Thick robes (Armor +1), rattling skeletal cane (Str+d4, Parry +1, Two-handed)

Special Abilities:

- **Fanatics:** Yamya's goons are more afraid of him than they're afraid of you. He uses them and his undead servants as meat (or bone) shields. He is affected by the Fanatics Setting Rule, even if you're not using it otherwise.
- **Shard of Reanimating Skeletons:** This blue-gray shard looks like a long finger bone. It allows its holder to cast *zombie*, but works only on skeletons and always with the Modifier Permanent. The bearer can control a number of skeletons equal to their Smarts die.



JAMILA WHAPI

Jamila was a brilliant trader; now she is a brilliant mastermind. Having cornered the market more than once (first with turmeric, then with beads), she grew bored with commerce and went to look for a greater purpose. Kino gave her one, setting her on a course to change the destiny of all the Islands.

Jamila and Yamya go way back—the sarcastic Jamila appreciated Yamya's commitment to the necromancer persona—but she's uneasy around Pasquan, who was brought under her command by Kino. Jamila tries to be accepting and open, since she's working toward a future in which even eccentrics like him will be part of a unified Islander nation, but it's hard. He is very violent.

Jamila was the one who acquired the shards she and her lieutenants use, after spending a lot of time and effort in finding and studying them. She gave the shards to Yamya and Pasquan as gifts, but keeps reminding them it's only thanks to her that they have the shards and know how to



use them. It's likely she is in possession of one or two more shards, which she'll give to new lieutenants should the need arise.

In combat, Jamila throws one of the many bombs she carries in her pouches. Should an enemy engage in melee, she protects herself by playing mind games with them, waiting for her allies to come and help.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Boating d8, Engineering d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d8, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Block, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Feint, Killer Instinct

Gear: Thick leathers (Armor +2), cutlass (Str+d6), grenades (itching powder, gives +2 to a Fighting Test, one use)

Special Abilities:

- **Prepared in Advance:** If Jamila has at least 10 minutes to prepare before an encounter, she places several traps and uses her shard to make them invisible. Twice during the encounter, when Jamila moves to a new spot there's a hidden trap next to her. A character who approaches her must roll Notice at -4 or take 2d6 damage. Those Shaken or Wounded by the trap must make a Strength roll or fall prone. Jamila can spend a Benny to make the character Bound as well (it was a tricky trap!).
- **Shard of Inanimate Invisibility:** This shard looks like a long sugar crystal. It allows its holder to cast *invisibility* with indefinite duration, though it ends with the slightest movement. Even a heartbeat is enough to break the spell, which is why it's usually used on inanimate objects.

PASQUAN THE ASSASSIN

Not all Islanders are cool and laid-back. Pasquan, who hails from an unknown Island in the South Chain, is harsh, cold, and nasty. As deadly as a Zingamaian assassin, as hateful as a Bogovian who hit his toe on a table leg, Pasquan kills because he has a personal issue with *everyone*. They are all insulting and *deserve* to die.

It's unclear what Kino has on Pasquan or how she managed to make him join Jamila's forces. Despite occasionally challenging Jamila, he always eventually agrees to follow her orders to the letter. No one knows which Island he's from, but he sometimes mumbles about the Gods of the Depths, the Sacred Tribute, and the Eyes That Weep.

In combat, Pasquan attacks by surprise if able. He uses a knife in each hand and tosses his shard around, teleporting quickly and gracefully to confuse his enemies and get the upper hand. He tends to focus on a single enemy at a time—usually the weakest—until they're down.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d10, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Survival d6, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Phobia (Major, things with many eyes)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Assassin, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Frenzy, Quick

Gear: Heavy dark clothes (Armor +1), countless serrated knives (3/6/12, Str+d4+1)



Special Abilities:

- **Shard of Rebound:** This black and shining shard allows the holder to cast *teleport* and move to a distance of up to 60" away; the shard remains behind. The bearer can "rebound" and teleport back to the shard's location, no matter where it is, as a free action. If someone else is holding the shard, they can't activate it until the original holder rebounds—at which point they both make a contested Strength roll to avoid being knocked back and leaving the shard in the other's hand.
- **Rebound Attack:** Pasquan can use two actions to quickly teleport behind his target, stab them, then rebound and grab the shard before it even drops to the ground. The first action activates the shard (Spirit roll). He then makes an opposed Stealth vs Notice roll. If he makes it, the target is Vulnerable to his next attack on this turn; with a raise, he gets The Drop. After the attack he rebounds back to his previous location (a free action).
- **Rebound Ready:** Pasquan can teleport to *where he already stands*, enabling himself to later rebound to the shard—which he is still holding. This might allow him to confuse and surprise enemies who've figured out how his shard works (by throwing the shard past them, then rebounding to it). To fool onlookers he needs to make a Stealth vs Notice roll along with the Spirit roll to activate the shard.

KINO

Kino joined Syn as a young idealist, a firm believer in progress and the inherent positivity of connection: the better we know each other, the better we all are. She toured the world and witnessed many wondrous sights. When she eventually returned to the Islands as a Free Agent, she saw them with fresh eyes: filled with dozens of families and cooperatives, bickering over who had more stuff, more influence. They could be so much more, if only they'd work as one!

The world is becoming smaller, instant radio communications are around the corner, and the Islands need to modernize or they'll fall behind. Kino's efforts to convince her people of the need for change gathered a few



people to her cause, but her voice was barely heard. She realized more drastic measures might be required.

As a Free Agent she spent several years researching the history of the Islands, eventually uncovering a hidden truth: the event that triggered the Great Escape, the mass migration off the Large Lands, was the activation of a Bygone Age machine. This Tectonic Machine was able to shift the plates of the ocean's floor, raising and lowering islands. It separated what was a larger landmass into many separate Islands. We were once a united people, she realized. We could be again.

Kino firmly believes in her cause, and sees herself as simply doing what is necessary. She believes she is an honorable woman, and will keep to her word and avoid harming innocents. She is also aware that lying and killing might be necessary, which is why she approached Jamila to take care of the "necessary evil."

Kino knows she will be remembered as a villain, but it's a price she's willing to pay. She also secretly hopes people will learn to

appreciate her work, eventually coming to see her as the saint she truly is.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d8, Boating d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Driven (Major; "I am the only one who can unite the Islands")

Edges: Fierce Forward (see Driven), Focus, Frenzy, Retain Power, Second Breath, Sweep

Gear: Syn combat armor (Armor +4), titanium-reinforced Island walrus (Str+d8, Parry +1, two hands)

Special Abilities:

- **Crystal:** Kino can slot any Crystal you see fit, including Heroic ones. In Adventure 7 she uses Traveler (page 201). In Adventure 8, it's probably Dancer, Dumb Luck, Rally, or Survivor.

KAIWHAKAHAERE HUNA



This shy geologist and surveyor joins the Agents on their training session, but is in fact one of the five leaders of Syn, representing the Islands on the council. It's best if the players don't realize who he is until much later, which is why his role in the first few adventures should be downplayed.

He has the Legendary Island Crystal, which plays an integral part in the Tectonic Machine. It gives him complete control over earth: he can shift, change, create, and destroy soil or stones. He can also increase his Strength and Vigor dice.

Huna's clothing never reveals his harness—and in any case, he wears a special skin-like disguise over it. He never activates his Crystal in a way that exposes him unless his own life is in danger.

If any of your players speak Maori you might want to change his name, since it literally means "hidden person-in-charge."

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d10, Crystal Channeling



d12+2, Engineering d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Hindrances: Hesitant, Mild Mannered, Vow (Syn's secret agenda)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Focus, Great Focus, Hard to Kill.

Gear (as a scientist): Travel clothes (+1 Armor), several dreck grenades (4/8/16, MBT, make a Vigor roll or become Distracted).

Gear (as an Agent): Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities:

- **Crystal:** As an Agent, Huna claims to slot the Veteran Crystal Rockface, which is missing from the database for security reasons (so that rogue Agents won't know what to expect). In truth, the Legendary Crystal of the Islands grants him complete control over earth, and near complete resilience to anything.
- **Legendary:** Huna can't desync on a Crystal Channeling roll.

TRAINING SESSION: NEXT STATION: LOW INAKI

The Agents are sent to the island of Low Inaki to try and convince the locals to allow Syn to build a new way station there. It's not a crucial objective, which is why it's being used as a training exercise for the Agents, but it will be helpful if they make it happen (and will look great on their record sheets). It'll also help them in the later stages of the Plot Point campaign, but they should remain unaware of this fact.

Low Inaki is a large mountainous island, but most of it isn't inhabited. The village itself, populated mostly by fishers and pearl divers, is on the southern shore. The team arrives in an autoplane, landing in the water not far from the village.

They are escorted not by an Agent, but by a Syn scientist called Kaiwhakahaere Huna. Huna presents himself as a surveyor and geologist who has been working with Syn for more than a decade, advising on where to build new structures. It's not the most exciting job, but it does mean he can travel a lot, and he likes talking with new and exciting Agents. He's somewhat shy and insecure, but very knowledgeable in his field. Use Huna as a way to encourage the players and provide them with a reliable source of information about Syn.

Huna doesn't have any secret agenda at the moment—he really does just go around the continent and help design stations. It's his way of keeping an eye on what's going on in the organization.

There are two main ways to convince the locals: in conversation, or by helping to get rid of a pest.

Engaging in Conversation

The Agents can initiate a Social Conflict with the locals. Many of them gather to see the Agents (they've never seen one before), and several are quite vocal against their presence. The loudest of them is Kahamangai, a fifty-something-year-old woman in charge of the kids' education, who believes Syn are no-good strangers who try to meddle in the affairs of Inaki.

One Agent should be the main speaker, with the others Supporting. Kahamangai



SOCIAL CONFLICT RESULTS

Tokens	Results	The Agents get
1	The locals remain unconvinced. If the Agents get rid of the crabs they will change their minds (see below).	Nothing
2-3	The locals agree to consider the offer, but have several demands that restrict the location and utility of the station.	+1 Requisition
4+	The locals come to believe that having a Syn way station is a great idea.	+2 Requisition

stands up to passionately oppose them, mostly through emotional arguments. She has Persuasion d8, but the crowd appreciates her so she gets a +1. Consult the Social Conflict Results table to resolve the conversation.

Possible modifiers:

- Explaining the greater access to communications a way station provides, +1 (If the players aren't aware of this, someone can roll Common Knowledge to know what a way station is all about; see page 32).
- Noting that Syn's increased presence can help with protection and security, +1
- Saying "Low" Inaki: Syn's map of the surrounding archipelago has an unfortunate translation of the local dialect. It should be South Inaki, not "low." The locals are tired of strangers calling their home "low," and an Agent doing so will have a -1 penalty on all Persuasion attempts.

Getting Rid of Some Pests

Last summer, a group of redhead crabs settled on the western shores of the island. While not aggressive, they scare away or eat several types of fish that the villagers rely on. The village's warriors have engaged them several times, but could never deal a devastating enough blow to intimidate the entire group away. Doing so will help prove Syn's good intentions and result in the villagers agreeing to have a way station built (+2 Requisition).

The large crabs do indeed have a red head (eye stalks, to be precise) but more importantly, they're *really hairy*. There are two crabs per Agent, moving around the beach. They swarm the PCs as quickly as possible. Defeating all of them will be enough to drive away the dozens more that are watching from the water.

REDHEAD CRAB

These creatures look similar to real-world orangutan crabs, only they're much larger.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4 (1)

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Tough carapace.
- **Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Hairy Mess:** When a crab is hit by a melee attack, the attacker must make an Agility check or the weapon gets entangled in its thick hairs. Both the crab and the attacker are Entangled with each other until this mess is resolved with an Athletics roll. The attacker can let go of the weapon at any point (the crab remains Entangled).
- **Size -2 (Small):** About the size of a dog.

ADVENTURE 1: UNLEASHED FURY

Play this as the first or second stop on the route.

Background

Tasikpu is the main market town of the Tupqa, a respected clan of miners and smelters who settled in the river valley centuries ago. The land around the valley is dry, but its wide bottom is rich with greenery around the slow rolling river.

Tasikpu was built on top of a lone mesa in the middle of the valley. The mesa is as tall as the cliffs on both its sides. The town is structured like a big horseshoe: the middle market is a large open space, surrounded by an outcropping of rock in which houses and warehouses were dug or built. A long road, winding around the mesa and occasionally



into some of the caverns, rises from the valley's floor to the market.

The handler of Tasikpu—a title given to someone in charge of a Tupqa town—is **Hikwista**, a happy and polite man who was just appointed to the role. Despite dressing and talking like a man, he has obvious female physical characteristics: this is because until recently, he was a woman. Being a handler is one of the roles in Tupqa society which demand a specific gender identity.

For Hikwista, this was a blessing, as he had always considered himself a man in any case. Becoming a handler is one of the only approved ways of becoming a man, so *remaining* a handler is very important to him. He is terrified of losing his position, and will go to great lengths to solve—and if needed, cover up—any threat to his title.

As one of his first acts as a handler, Hikwista decided to open the sealed catacombs inside the mesa, reaching out to Syn and inviting them to explore it. His insecurities regarding his station resulted in seeking friends in Syn places.

This move has angered **Pihu**, the town's former spirit talker. This venerated role is given to people who can speak to spirits—or, as some say, are simply wise and empathic by nature. Pihu's role was taken from him when Hikwista became the handler, since he brought his own spirit talker with him. This made Pihu somewhat mad, but if you ask him, the real insult is Hikwista's willingness to desecrate the ancestors and sell their souls to the heartless Syn.

What no one in town knows is that this point is moot. About two weeks ago Yamyá (see page 132) arrived here in search of Bygone Era information. He raised some of the ancient skeletons inside the caverns to help him search the place. He found one or two pieces of valuable information and left, and completely missed the Crystal Alizarin (page 197), hidden in one of the tombs, where it was kept dormant for many years. It's about to wake up.

Surprise Entrance

The adventure begins at the bottom of Tasikpu's mesa. Hikwista, escorted by a small entourage of dignitaries, awaits the coming

of the Tank in a large visiting chamber. Pihu is waiting outside, making it known that he is very much against everything going on. He avoids direct engagement with the Agents, and quiets down once Hikwista approaches them and welcomes them to town.

Hikwista and his entourage escort the Agents up the trail (too narrow for the Tank), to a point a little below the town. Several meditation chambers have been dug into the mesa's wall, providing visitors with a place to pay their respects to the spirits. This custom has declined in recent years, so the place is a bit dirty and deserted.

A large, sealed door at the back of the room leads into the burial caves. To Hikwista's surprise, the door is slightly open! The ancient seal, made of leather and beads, is broken. Beyond the seal, the entrance has been partially clogged by rocks and large burial statues. Three skeletons wearing tattered clothing and necklaces of semi-precious stones are at the foot of the mound. The moment some light comes into the cavern, they stand up and begin to attack. Make a Fear check for all Agents; the NPCs automatically fail and fall back, watching in horror.

The **skeletons** (from *Savage Worlds*) have blue-gray light in their eye-sockets. Any Agent should be able to realize that this means the Crystal (or shard) animating them is blue-gray in color as well.

After the fight Hikwista demands that everyone go back outside to rethink and reconsider, rushing them all out of the room and forbidding anyone from touching anything. He places several trusted **Maseian Warriors** at the entrance.

One of the dignitaries tries to calm Hikwista by suggesting to look for answers in the town records—surely there's something there about the seal and any related curses? Hikwista claims he read through them before inviting Syn, but becomes worried he missed something and goes back to his office. He frets that his actions have disrespected the ancestors, and worse, that someone important will *hear of it*.

The Agents might be able to convince him to allow them to peek inside the cave.



It's a large, dark, and cold burial chamber, but there's no Crystal in sight and no other skeletons around. Examining the cave for more than a short moment is unacceptable for Hikwista at this stage, as he is panicked beyond reason.

Examining the debris reveals that much of it was probably brought from the burial chamber inside the cave.

Rising Anger

Pihu is quick to approach the Agents and ask what happened. Whatever they answer, he will feel vindicated in his beliefs. The players might think that he broke the seal himself. However, any such accusation will only reinforce Pihu's belief that he is being treated unfairly, and that he's right and everyone else is wrong.

One of Hikwista's people asks the Agents to consult him in his chambers, but as they go through the market, Pihu starts to make a scene and accuses the Agents of blasphemous acts. In righteous fury, he tells the gathering crowds that opening the caves has brought down a horrible curse on all—exactly what Hikwista doesn't want them to think. Pihu can be made to reveal his true intentions with a Taunt roll, making him bluster that “These sort of unholy people will never be allowed in town when *I* become the spirit talker again, *as is right!*”

If the Agents engage Pihu in conversation in front of an audience, remember that Everyone Has an Opinion About Syn (page 82). In Tasikpu, Hikwista's influence has made the crowd cautiously accepting (+0 modifier for interactions).

Eventually Pihu will retire in anger and secretly head to the caves. There he'll open the ancient stone coffins (already partly uncovered by Yamyá) desperate for signs from the ancestors. He'll be surprised to discover the Crystal there, but will quickly convince himself it's the ancestors' gift to him—especially as it immediately responds to his anger.

In his chambers, Hikwista is a mess. Use this scene as a fun interaction with a panicking leader. The players can try to calm him down, promising him there's no such thing as spirits, only Crystals—and who's better equipped to deal with Crystals than Agents!

The Agents can browse through the town records with a Research roll. Their trained eyes can notice things Hikwista missed: there's a record of an angry red god that resides within the cave. In fact, the ancestors were buried there to appease it. There's no mention of walking skeletons or gray-blue light.

Market Mayhem

After the meeting is done—or even during it—cries of anger and pain erupt from the market outside. A couple of merchants started arguing over a shipment and the anger escalated into rage. Just then, several deep-red energy manifestations erupted into existence, burning in fury and destroying everything in sight. This is because Pihu uncovered the dormant Crystal, allowing it to turn feral.

An Academics check can reveal these are **elementary manifestation frames** (page 183) of a Crystal with a theme of anger or vengeance. However, this is a “soft” manifestation—they will disappear naturally in a few moments (three rounds). With a raise, the Agents also realize the Crystal responsible can't be far away, and has only been awakened in the last few minutes.

Treat this as a Challenging Dramatic Task. Set aside four Task Tokens, representing four people who are in danger of being hurt by collapsing market stalls, panicked crowds, startled sisyphian bears (page 178), or a frame (the frames move randomly and don't target people, but might crash into them by accident). If an Agent draws a Club, someone is in immediate danger—failing to protect them this round means they'll die.

After the event, it's clear to Hikwista that something is going on in the cave and that the Agents are best suited to face it. He now *insists* they enter the cave and deal with whatever's inside.

Fury Cave

The warriors stationed at the entrance of the cave are gone: they were dismissed by Pihu, whom they revere.

The cave opens into a wide area with a tall ceiling. The walls have broad rock platforms with tightly bound mummies placed on them. It's cold, with Dark Illumination penalties (–4)





as the only light is coming from a torch Pihu brought with him and the deep red Crystal.

Pihu probably sees the Agents approach and turns to greet them. He is holding the Crystal, announcing that the Agents actually helped him by giving him access to this gift from the ancestors, with which he'll be able to prove his worth. The players might be confused by this—they may have concluded that Pihu was the one who opened the seal in the first place—which is good. The point is making it clear to the players that something fishy is going on, and that no one in this adventure was responsible for opening the cave or raising the skeletons.

Pihu then unleashes the Crystal's powers, and the whole place turns red and angry. Pihu's body is enveloped in a red field of vengeance. Four frames manifest around the chamber. Draw initiative!

Anger Barriers: At the start of combat, draw several straight lines on the map between stone totems, tall clay vases, the walls, or any other object. These lines are buzzing and crackling with red energy. Moving through them requires a Strength roll: Success, take 2d4 damage; raise, don't take any damage. On a failure the Agent can't push through, instead being pushed back 1d4" and falling prone. Pihu and the frames can move through the energy barriers.

Subduing the Crystal: The Crystal cannot be contained as long as Pihu holds it. Once freed, the Crystal begins to float with Pace

3 and shoots red energy beams (Shooting d8, 2d6 damage) at anyone approaching or holding it. See Containment Procedures, page 60, for more.

PIHU

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Jealous (Major; wants to be the spirit talker again), Thin Skinned (Minor)

Edges: Nerves of Steel

Gear: Hide armor (+1 Armor), Spear (3/6/12, damage Str+d6, Reach 1)

Special Abilities

- **Damaging Field:** Anyone attacking Pihu directly in melee takes 2d4 damage and must make a Strength roll to not be thrown back 1d4" and fall prone.
- **Vengeance Burst:** As an action, Pihu can create a Medium Blast Template anywhere in the cave. It can be Evaded (but not through red barriers!). Everyone in the area, except him, takes 2d6 damage.

ELEMENTARY MANIFESTATION FRAMES—ALIZARIN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5



Hindrances: Thin Skinned (Minor)

Edges: Counterattack

Special Abilities:

- **Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Elemental:** Frames have bodies of pure energy and thus ignore additional damage from Called Shots, ignore 1 point of Wound penalties, don't breathe or eat, and are immune to disease and poison. They can only be healed via magic or natural healing.
- **Flight:** EM-Frames usually hover above the ground, but can fly higher if need be.

Epilogue

Examining the caves reveals some Bygone Age remnants in the form of broken masonry and old trinkets. It seems that the early inhabitants of Tasikpu buried the dead along with some ancient artifacts. Even a simple examination reveals that someone has already sifted through these relics; an Academics roll reveals that they must have taken the best texts, leaving only rubbish behind. A raise reveals the text was some sort of a geological survey. It wasn't Pihu who took it—he would not even know the relics had value—which means it was the person who broke the seal.

After the dust settles, Hikwista asks the Agents to stay for the night to make sure everyone in the town sees them and has a chance to talk with them. This way, they'll see that these strangers are not monsters but heroes.

If the Agents take advantage of Hikwista's hospitality and stay for the night, have them make a Persuasion check (Networking). If someone makes it, then among the various discussions about the cave and its contents, they hear about a strange Islander who visited Tasikpu about two weeks ago and was asking questions about that cave. Give them a basic physical description of Yamy. If they got a raise, someone can even tell them they glimpsed a strange "stick-like" device that was semi-hidden in his robes—blue and gray in color.

ADVENTURE 2: SPIRIT ANIMAL

Play this as the second stop on the route.

Background

The Himutski clan are nomads who roam the lands around and under the Mighty Mountains, a mostly-stationary mountain range hanging above the north-eastern part of the Maseian plains. Last time the Himutski were around these parts, they were troubled by animal spirits. This was disturbing and dangerous, as weapons couldn't hurt the ghosts. Several months later, when the clan's migratory path was about to take them back to the area, Chief Monwi contacted the spirit talkers of several clans and asked for help. Syn got wind of this rumor and sent the Agents along.

Chief Monwi is considered by his clan to be a fair and wise leader, but in his own home he is a hard and ruthless father, bitter at being too old to serve as a warrior. He heaps expectations on his son's shoulders, honing him according to a glorified version of how Monwi imagines he himself once was.

Tsayalan, his 15-year-old son, is completely devoted to this dream—but he's just as hard as his father, and the two clash on a daily basis. Tsayalan wishes to prove himself by facing the Ghost Bison (see below) by himself. He has already driven away several spirit talkers from other clans who wanted to help pacify the ethereal beasts. He will try to push away the Agents as well, seeing them as the biggest threat to his ambitions.

Opening Argument

The adventure begins with the Tank rolling under the huge shadow of the Mighty Mountains, down a valley between two green hills. According to the maps, the Himutski camp is about half an hour away.

Suddenly, a spear is flung from above—an ambush! Have the players roll Notice at -2. Those who fail are surprised, and don't get an Action Card on the first round.

Tsayalan has brought a band of seven **Maseian Warriors** to try and damage the Tank and frighten the Agents away. They keep their distance and stay behind cover. After one or two rounds of combat (or at the first

sign that they're in over their heads), they retreat and head toward the camp.

On the first round, four warriors throw spears to attack the Tank. If the Tank takes damage, remember to ask for a Driving roll to avoid going Out of Control. The other three warriors and Tsayalan wait on Hold until an Agent or two step out of the Tank, at which point the warriors shoot arrows at the ground before the Agents. This gives +2 to Tsayalan's Intimidation check: he unleashes a horrific war scream at the Agents, trying to make them Distracted with a Test. The warriors avoid targeting the Agents themselves.

TSAYALAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Overconfident, Young (Minor)
[Note: This means he gets an extra Benny!]

Edges: Aristocrat

Gear: Curated hides (+2 Armor), a slash (Str+1d6) and a wingspan (12/24/48, Str+d6, AP 1).

The Himutski Camp

The Himutski only recently arrived at their camp site, and are still unpacking and establishing their presence. They don't really care much about the Agents as they are far too busy settling in, and direct them to the chief.

Chief Monwi regards the Agents with suspicion. He knows nothing about the ambush, and assumes the Agents provoked an attack from his scouts. After all, they are unwelcome and came unannounced.

Chief Monwi explains that normally, he would have banished the Agents away. However, a recent problem has complicated things. The clan's sacred red bison, Mosayru, was tempted by the spirits into the wilds. Now her ghost attacks the camp in the evenings. The clan's wise people can't pacify the spirit, and Monwi is getting desperate. He can't allow the clan's sacred animal to kill someone from the clan, but he also can't send anyone to find the spirit, because...

At this point Tsayalan enters the hut, announcing he is the only one allowed to go af-

ter the beast, as he has declared this his rite of passage. This means only he is allowed to try and appease Mosayru. Chief Monwi forbids him to go, believing the boy is putting himself in too much danger and that a clear mind is needed to face an angry spirit. However, the boy refuses to relinquish his rights, which means no one else is allowed to go. They're at an impasse.

Only the Agents, as outsiders, can resolve the impasse. Monwi asks the team to find and help the bison, whatever it takes. (Tsayalan insists that the honor be his; Monwi keeps trying to silence him.)

Regarding the ambush: Tsayalan is dirty from having traveled from the ambush site. If confronted about the ambush, Tsayalan proudly says he was in charge of the attack against those he considers a threat to the camp. Chief Monwi stands behind his son's actions, believing the ambush was called for. If you survived the attack, and were brave enough to continue, what are you complaining about? Good for you.

Gathering Information

The Agents might want to take some time to repair the Tank or learn more about the spirits and the sacred red bison. After they finish doing this, or around afternoon, they hear that Tsayalan left the village. He has decided that he can no longer wait for his father to agree to send him on his quest, so he went to the Claws (see below) by himself. The Chief asks the Agents to track him down and bring him back ("tied up, if needed") before the boy gets himself killed.

Mosayru, the sacred red bison: Mosayru is one of the bison who escort the clan on their journeys and is considered sacred because of her red color, which is rare among her breed. She is usually calm and gentle, but the night the clan arrived at the new campsite, the spirits of the animals who haunt this place scared her. She broke through her pen and ran into the wild. Ever since, her ghost has been attacking the clanspeople. Himu, the animal handler, is the person in charge of the red bison, and he can impart this information to the Agents. Himu doesn't believe she's dead; instead he thinks that something is agitating her, which is why her spirit roams at night.



Getting to know the area: If the Agents ask about the local features, they learn of The Claws: three large columns of rock in the shape of animal claws. Last year, a boulder fell from the Mighty Mountain onto one of the columns, breaking it; that's when the ghosts started coming. The clan's warriors had no time to investigate, as they had to pack and move away. The Agents gain +1 on Survival checks to navigate the area.

To the Claws

The path to the Claws goes through tight crevices and over broken land. The Tank can only be used for the first twenty minutes or so over the open plain until the terrain becomes too rough for further driving.

Rocky travel: Play the travel as a Quick Encounter, using Athletics, Notice, Survival, or any other skill that can be justified in an interesting manner. If the group gets at least as many total successes as there are Agents (one for each success and raise; Support rolls don't count), everything's great. Otherwise, each of them draws a card: on a Club, they lose a piece of equipment (their choice) in

some hidden crack, during a climb, or to an annoyed eagle. A Critical Failure results in Bumps & Bruises.

Stampede! As the Agents make their way down a rocky canyon, they start hearing the sound of bison—*lots of bison*—coming their way. This fast-paced action scene is best played as a Quick Encounter (a Dangerous one!). Players can use Athletics, Notice, Survival, or any other skill that can be justified in an interesting manner. They can also use Crystal Channeling if they have a suitable power. This could be an excellent opportunity to use a Power Stunt.

If the group gets at least as many total successes as there are Agents (one for each success and raise; Support rolls don't count), they make it past the canyon, though probably bruised. Otherwise, several of them are pushed along with the stampede and the team is scattered over the area. It takes a long time to find each other again, meaning they'll arrive at the Claws after nightfall.

Spirited Fight

Between the rock columns of the Claws rests the Crystal Deathless (page 198), which fell from the Mighty Mountains early last year. A thick, cold mist wall envelops the area between the Claws. Every animal that passes through the mist wall gets violently thrown out of its body, leaving its spirit running around in confusion until the body eventually dies of starvation.

The area is littered with the rotting bodies of animals. The first clue is the horrible smell, but once someone enters they must make a Fear check at the sight.

The thick mist covers the sun, forcing a -1 Illumination penalty. If it's night, the bright stars and moon can barely pierce through and it's Dark (-4). The ground is covered with dead animal corpses. If someone falls prone, or gets a Wound and touches the ground, they must make a Vigor roll to avoid contracting a Debilitating disease.

Mosayru's spirit stands in the middle of the area. She is angry because she's starving: despite returning to her clan every evening to be fed, she can never touch the food. This makes her even angrier, and distrustful of the clanspeople—she feels they have be-

trayed her. Mosayru's body is resting on top of the Crystal. The Crystal's eerie presence can still be felt, even though it's unseen.

If the Agents arrive early (having passed the stampede), they're just in time to see Tsayalan arguing with the spirit. Tsayalan already tried to appease her ("Oh spirit, look, I am worthy! I have arrived!") but she didn't respond as he imagined. He's getting frustrated and yelling at her.

If the Agents were delayed by the stampede, Tsayalan's body is on the floor. His spirit is hanging in the air, dazed: he got Soul Rammed by an angry Mosayru. Deal him an Action Card as usual—he'll use his turn to either Test the Agents with Intimidation ("You're not listening to me! No one is listening to me!") or the bison ("Stop attacking! I command you!") or just yell in frustration ("No one appreciates me!"). Tsayalan can be put back into his body if guided by an Agent.

In any case, the Agents' arrival startles Mosayru, who turns to attack them.

Throughout this combat, all intangible creatures use Spirit/2 + 2 ("Spirit Toughness") instead of regular Toughness. Strong Willed and similar Edges may provide a bonus to this TN. All ghosts can be forcefully brought back into their body by an Agent who sockets Deathless and uses a Power Stunt to activate *banish*.

Mosayru is a Wild Card **bull** (from *Savage Worlds*), with Fighting d8 and these Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** The bison is naturally immaterial and can only be harmed by Crystal powers. She briefly becomes physical when she attacks, so an Agent who Holds and interrupts during her turn might be able to hit her with a regular weapon.
- **Soul Ram:** If the bison hits with a Horns attack, the target must make a Spirit check or their soul is pushed outside of their body, 1d4". The body falls prone and is helpless until the soul—which looks like a ghostly version of the Agent—gets back inside as an action.

The scene also has three unseen **raptors** (from *Savage Worlds*) who are Ethereal like the bison, and invisible—they can only be seen by other ghosts and souls. They are on

Hold at the start of combat, descending to attack anyone whose soul got pushed out of their body by a Soul Ram attack.

When grabbed, Deathless tries to push the gripping Agent's soul out of their body as with a Soul Ram.

Epilogue

Hopefully, both Tsayalan and Mosayru survive this encounter, and everyone makes it back safely to the camp. The Agents gain +1 Requisition if one of the two survived, or +2 if both.

ADVENTURE 3: THROUGH THE BADLANDS

Play this as the third or fourth stop on the route. The Agents should be either close to becoming Seasoned Rank or recently Seasoned.

In this adventure Yamya tries to get rid of the Agents, thinking they are on his tail. The players should feel comfortable with the train ride, thinking it's nothing more than a prelude to the "real" action in Fjordstad, where they're supposed to meet the Helberdsen noble family.

Travel Plans

The Agents arrive at Northern Nexus, the southern terminus of The Train Line (the railway service connecting Maseia with the Fjordstadian city of Bachfen). It'll take some time for the train to be ready for the journey—it only travels once a week—so the Agents have several days in town. Roll for the local way station (page 32) as that's where the Agents will stay in the meantime. The Agents have some time to submit reports, restock, and Requisition items.

The town of Northern Nexus was founded only a few years ago, and built around the train station. The railway is supposed to extend southward, but for now it ends here. It's in the basin of a wide river that empties into the inner sea, meaning Island traders can reach it with relative ease. As a hub of trade between Fjordstad, Maseia, and the Islands, this town is cosmopolitan yet strangely empty. It consists mainly of warehouses, as the traders themselves rarely stay for more than a few days.

New arrivals: On the day of embarkation, two Syn workers arrive at the way station on



their way to board the train. These are Kai-whakahaere Huna—who is very happy to see the Agents again—and Eleshet, a young Bogovian engineer with a sour attitude. The two are on their way to Bachfen to participate in a conference about construction techniques.

All Aboard

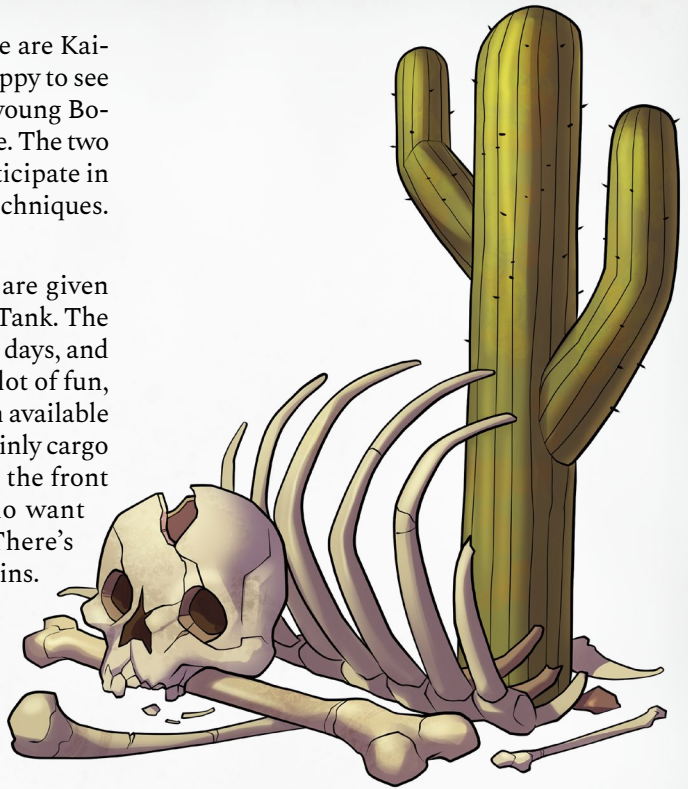
The Agents and the two workers are given the last car, which also holds their Tank. The journey is expected to take several days, and spending it in a cargo car is not a lot of fun, but that's the only accommodation available for Syn. The other carriages are mainly cargo cars, with a few passenger cars in the front which are filled with people who want nothing to do with the Agents. There's also a sleeping car with private cabins. Yamya is hiding in one of these.

The Agents' car was rigged with an explosive before the train left the station (maybe by Yamya, maybe by Kino's agents). It's set to go off after the car is disconnected from the train.

At some point mid-journey, the train climbs up a mountainside deep in the Badlands: the no man's land which separates Fjordstad from Maseia. This is when Yamya strikes. He sneaks to the Agents' car with a bag of bones, which he animates (he's too weak to do the work himself). The skeleton locks the door from the outside, then unhooks the car and pushes its emergency brake handle to force it away from the rest of the train.

Have the players make a Notice roll. Those who make it can see the skeleton just as it unhooks their car and pushes the brakes, with Yamya behind him. They might recognize Yamya from the description given to them in Tasikpu; if not, feel free to have him wave his shard and make several skeletal hands erupt through the window and attack. Even if the Agents are quick to react, Yamya disappears a moment later into the next car, protected by the skeleton. Each Agent has a single chance to act before their car is 10" behind the train, at which point something underneath the floor explodes and the car derails, sending everyone tumbling.

Derailed: After the initial explosion, have the Agents make a Vigor roll against Bumps



& Bruises. The car is rolling downhill, and they each have a single action before it falls off a cliff.

The Agents can try to steer the car or slow it down, perhaps by Supporting someone's Driving or Engineering roll. If they make it, the car *only* slides and falls off a cliff into a river; everyone makes a Vigor roll to avoid 2d6 damage, ignoring Armor. If they fail, the car starts rolling on its side and *then* falls off a cliff; it's Vigor -2 to avoid 3d6 damage.

Huna and Eleshet: Roll Vigor for them as well if you wish, but keep Huna's dice out of sight or skip his Wild Die so the players don't realize he is a Wild Card (he has Vigor d10, which is unusual but not unheard of for an Islander). It's highly unlikely that poor Eleshet, who's an Extra, survives this ordeal unharmed unless she is somehow protected. If she is Incapacitated, it is recommended that she doesn't die but instead breaks her leg or rolls on the Injury Table.

Welcome to the Badlands

The team is lost somewhere in the Badlands and must get their bearings and prepare for a journey. For the next few hours, or even



a day, they probably acclimate to their new situation: bandaging injuries, rescuing what supplies they can, climbing up to have a good look at their surroundings, and maybe even dealing with a Crystal they carried in the Tank that went feral after the fall (there's a Critical Failure idea for you!).

The Tank: The Tank survived the fall, but it's in bad shape. Even after an Engineering roll, it still has two Wounds until it can be fully repaired in a body shop. It can move at quarter speed (half if repaired). If the party wishes to retrace their steps back to the railway, they will need to leave the Tank behind—it's simply incapable of climbing back up a cliff's face.

If the group leaves the Tank behind, they can only carry one level of supplies each (two for Soldier or Brawny characters). A level of supplies provides ammo (see Ammo and Supplies, page 39) as well as food and water for three days.

Huna and Eleshet: The civilians can be used as part of the Dramatic Task—they might require assistance or guidance.

The Journey North

After finding a path, the Agents can now start moving toward Bachfen—but there's still a journey ahead of them. This should be run as an Interlude (Trek), with each player telling at least one story (aim for at least four stories in all). Each story represents about a day of travel. You can sprinkle a few of the following encounters between the stories according to your time constraints. Roll a d10 if you'd like.

1.Adding a Crystal: If there's a player in your group who still hasn't changed their Crystal and would like to find one, this is a good opportunity to place a Crystal that might seem interesting to them. Check out the feral manifestation suggestions starting with page 186.

2.Ancient ruins: These ruins are barely visible, buried under earth and vegetation. A simple Notice roll, however, is enough to recognize that there's something of value here: a sign of civilization. These are Bygone Age ruins, apparently only the surface of something bigger (a humming noise can be heard from beneath the

ground). It's too big to be excavated by the team, but studying this place thoroughly for several hours and making an Academics -2 roll can net the team 2 Requisition points each (they get 1 Req each in any case for reporting this place's location).

3.Desert: The Agents spend a whole day in severe heat, in a desert area where only prolonged Survival rolls can discover some water.

4.Musk hogs: These stinking creatures are drawn to the Agents' food during the night, gnawing on their supplies if they manage to sneak past any sentries. Even if they're driven away (Intimidation), they return a few hours later in greater numbers. This time, they attack if aggravated. They always use Wild Attacks.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Horns:** Str+d4.
- **Infection:** A character Shaken or Wounded by a musk hog must make a Vigor roll or become infected with a Debilitating disease.
- **Musk:** Simply being in the presence of these creatures is an assault on the nasal passages. The first time a character gets within melee range of a musk hog in combat, they must make a Vigor roll to avoid becoming Distracted, or even sick (Fatigued) with a Critical Failure.
- **Size -1:** The heads of these pig-like mammals come to an average human's waist, and they weigh about 70 pounds.

5.Feral eruption: If the Agents are carrying more Crystals than they currently have socketed, something might happen that makes one of them go feral. This is especially likely if the extra Crystals are not being kept in the Tank's container.

6.Geyser danger: The team finds themselves entering geyser country, where hot water boils in amazingly beautiful—but highly sulfuric—pools. Climbing this rocky area and continuing past it is tricky, requiring



rolls for climbing or driving, as well as resisting heat and avoiding toxic fumes (treat as smoke inhalation).

7. Out of fuel: The Tank's fuel tank has been leaking, and now it's empty. Unless the Agents abandon it in the field, they must find a suitable fuel replacement—possibly by refining some bio-fuel, constructing a sail, or using their Crystal powers in imaginative ways.

8. River crossing: The Agents must ford a river, either risking a place where the water's swift (Athletics to avoid Fatigue, or Driving to avoid damage to the Tank) or through a calm area, where a Survival or Notice roll can reveal the presence of **alligators** (from *Savage Worlds*), that will happily attack the Tank and the Agents.

9. Strange storm: The Agents must walk through a small valley where there seems to be a semi-perpetual dust storm, rising and subsiding in a pattern. A Survival roll can point them at a geyser on the valley's edge which erupts with dust instead of water. Exploring the crack in the rock can reveal a tight nook where a brown shard is lodged in the soggy ground.

Shard of dust storms: Fills a Large Blast Template with thick, sweeping dust that makes the area Dim. Everyone in the area must make a Vigor roll (-2 with a raise) or become Distracted (Fatigued on a Critical Failure). The dust storm continues for 2d4 rounds after being invoked, moving 6" randomly at the start of each round.

10. Worm sign: The ground around this area is littered with holes—really big ones. The size of a **giant worm** (from *Savage Worlds*). It's best to avoid the worms' attention, but that's not the real danger here: there are also several **lake moles** (page 177) with Crystal corruption (page 184) who'll shadow the team, trying to take an isolated Agent by surprise.

Epilogue

When they finally arrive at Bachfen, the Agents are quickly shown to the noble house of Helberdsen, where they are greeted by Shillah (see next adventure) and provided with medical aid. They have a day or two to rest before Shillah takes them

into the next adventure. Should they ask for details about Yamy, Shillah knows nothing, but promises she'll be in their debt and is happy to help once they finish the task she has for them.

Huna and Eleshet (if she survived) thank the Agents for saving their lives, and each Agent gains +1 Requisition for each of them who was saved. They then hurry to a hotel in town to get ready for the construction techniques conference, which is already underway.

There's no official Syn presence in Bachfen (this year, at least) so Requisition rolls are made at -1 for having to go through undercover channels. Submitting reports to receive Requisition is done quietly, but otherwise normally.

ADVENTURE 4: SCAVENGERS IN THE SNOW

Play this as one of the final stops on the route. The Agents should be Seasoned Rank.

Background

The Helberdsen family is a Bachfen noble house specializing in the production of steel parts and, surprisingly, theater. It has recently fallen on hard times. Its leaders, Harriet and Leigh Helberdsen, are considering refocusing their efforts exclusively on entertainment.

Shillah, a recent recruit to the house, thinks differently. This Zingamaian has fought her way against all odds to join Helberdsen. As a firm believer in progress through production of goods, she would like to see the house remain committed to the fabrication of steel parts. To prove she's right, she turned to unorthodox methods.

Against the wishes of her superiors, Shillah invited the Agents of Syn to stay as guests in one of Helberdsen's side mansions, going against the common Fjordstadian convention that Syn should be contacted discreetly. If that's not enough, she is also going to commission them to retrieve a shard which should help push her house in the "right direction." She asked her own staff to take care of the matter, but was refused, as the house leaders decided to go in a different direction.

All of this is *supremely* disrespectful toward her superiors, but Harriet and Leigh

only learn of the Agents' presence a few days after they arrive (from the *newspaper*). This leaves them no choice but to publicly accept them and try to maneuver around Shillah's troublemaking.

Shillah recently uncovered information about the Snow Roller, a building-sized troop carrier that Bachfen built and deployed a few decades ago. It didn't survive its first encounter with the enemy, and remains buried in the dirt and snow on a forgotten battlefield, a dozen miles out of the city.

The Snow Roller's main engineer was using a shard of filing, which is capable of giving a perfect finish to any metal object. Shillah really wants it. Unfortunately, agents of the house of Aibder (Helberdsen's most vicious rival) uncovered the same information. They are now rushing toward the Snow Roller—not because they need the shard, just to prevent Helberdsen getting it.

Into the Snow Roller

Shillah asks the Agents to find the Snow Roller and retrieve the shard before the Aibders do so. The word from Syn is to accept her request, as they'd like to build stronger ties in Bachfen.

If the Agents don't have winter gear, they can roll to Requisition some through Syn's contacts in Bachfen (there's no official Syn presence) with -1. Shillah does not have sufficient influence to provide this gear herself. The Agents can also buy this gear directly, costing a point of Requisition per suit.

The trek is expected to take half a day and the weather grows increasingly worse. The journey can be done in the Tank, but the players should be aware that at least one of them will need to roll Driving during the coming storm.

Resolve this as a Quick Encounter with Driving (if in the Tank), Engineering (to figure out where a vehicle such as the Snow Roller could roll to), Common Knowledge (to recognize the battlefield's features), Notice, and Survival. The journey takes about four hours, and all Agents must make a Vigor roll against the cold (+2 if wearing winter gear, -2 if walking instead of driving) or take a level of Fatigue. If the Agents don't get more successes than failures in this Quick

Encounter, they spend two more hours in what now becomes a storm, and must make a second Vigor roll.

To enter the Snow Roller's husk, which is slightly tilted, the Agents must either search for a hatch or tear through the rusting exterior. The main hangar doors are closed and bolted from within by the Aibder agents. Once inside, have the Agents make a Notice roll (at -1 because of the raging storm outside) to hear the echoing voices of the Aibder agents. Unless the team tries to move quietly, the Aibders will hear them coming and act quickly. They don't try to hide their presence: instead they split up, with half attacking the Agents while the rest keep searching.

Treat the Aibder agents as **Fjordstadian Police Constables** without buzzers. There are eight agents, escorted by the deadly Pasquan (see page 133), but he remains hidden in the hangar and only makes an appearance later. The hangar also houses the five snow gliders the Aibders arrived on, two-person speedy tracked vehicles that push through snow (page 46).

This is a combat encounter with a Difficult Dramatic Task in which *both* sides participate. Each group collects its own tokens,





trying to complete the Task before the other. The main skills are Engineering, Notice, and Thievery to understand the Roller's structure, find passageways into half-obstructed chambers, and unlock doors and lockers.

Complications: If a character's Action Card is a Club, the Snow Roller misbehaves in some way. Roll 1d4:

- 1. Sudden Wind:** A hatch flaps open and a blast of cold snow gushes into your face, forcing a Smarts roll to maintain your wits and avoid becoming Shaken.
- 2. Exposed Electrical Wiring:** Make a Vigor roll. Success means you're Distracted, failure means you're Stunned.
- 3. Dangerous Creaking:** Make an Agility roll to jump to the side before the floor/catwalk breaks and you fall into a dark chamber, taking 2d6 damage.
- 4. Threatening Creaking:** It's not actually dangerous, but you don't know that! Make a Smarts roll to realize you're not in danger; otherwise, you're being overly cautious and become Vulnerable.

Once the Task is complete—no matter who wins—any surviving Aibder agents escape by quickly unlocking the hangar doors and driving out on the snow gliders. Pasquan then appears to delay the Agents and stop them from chasing after the gliders. The moment he is injured he uses his shard's ability and rebounds, disappearing in a black wisp (his shard is on one of the escaping gliders).

Strange Islander Guests

Back in Helberdsen's mansion, Shillah is anxious to hear from the Agents. If they've got the shard, she is ecstatic; if Aibder got it, she begins planning a heist on their safe.

Harriet and Leigh enter, greeting the Agents through tightly clenched jaws. They are only as pleasant as civility demands, and quickly turn to sarcasm. They question Shillah and the Agents about everything (they had no idea what Shillah was planning), growing more annoyed and less patient with the Agents after every answer.

If the Agents mention the shadow assassin everyone is surprised, since as far as they know Aibder has no such capabilities. They then mention Aibder's "strange Islander guests."

Learning about the enemy: The players will probably want to start investigating the shadow assassin and Yamya, perhaps by rolling for Networking or spying around Aibder buildings. Shillah helps whenever she can (providing information or +1 on rolls), but must spend most of her time implementing the shard in Helberdsen's business (or planning the heist if the shard wasn't recovered).

Jamila, Yamya, and Pasquan: The three Islanders and their goons have been scouring Fjordstad and Maseia for geological data for Kino's Tectonic Machine. They're now guests of the Aibders after Jamila managed to secure them as allies (that's why Pasquan was helping them). Jamila is waiting for the end of the construction conference (see the epilogue of the previous adventure), at which point she'll take the survey data gathered during it and head back to the Islands, handing the information to Kino.

The three tend to stay together, mostly around Aibder's mansion but occasionally in the conference halls. Should the Agents confront them, Jamila introduces herself and her companions but avoids admitting any wrongdoing, like the most annoying lawyer. She admits they have an interest in geological data, but does not explain why, nor does she feel she owes any explanation to Syn Agents. "We are part of a scientific effort working for the betterment of the Islands," she'll say, as she knows that the best lie is one that's based in truth. In her mind, she already plans on asking Kino to get rid of these Agents.

Jamila and her people haven't done anything wrong in Bachfen itself. Should any violence start, they'll protect themselves until a dozen police constables arrive within a round or two to separate the groups.

Aftermath

Eventually, around the end of the conference, Jamila suggests a truce. She even approaches the Agents if they haven't found her by now. She tries to appease the Agents in any way possible. If she thinks their pride is hurt, she suggests a non-deadly duel between their best and her best (Pasquan) to square things off; if Aibder got the shard, she manages to take it from them and offer it to the Agents; if they want to bring Yamya to justice for what he did to their train car,



she agrees to punish him and takes away his shard (despite his protests), giving it to them. In the latter case, the shard will later be taken from the citadel by Kino's people and brought back to Yamya.

This behavior may make the players hate her *more* for taking away legitimate reasons to attack her. It's possible that the Agents have killed one or more of Jamila's people. It's best if at least Jamila remains alive for the following adventures, so note that she avoids conflicts as much as possible. The others are more expendable; you can always create more lieutenants if needed.

Epilogue

With the route now completed, the team is brought back to the citadel for a debriefing. Jamila is deemed dangerous enough for investigation, so the team is sent to the Islands. They are now Specialists, on a mission to uncover Jamila's operation and confront her.

They are given several possible leads (in the form of any Savage Tales you want to run), and also a boat (Syn uses boats instead of Tanks to travel between the Islands. One of Syn's main facilities in the Islands is floating around on a barge).

ADVENTURE 5: SOLID LEAD

Play this when you want the Agents to "find" Jamila's people.

The Agents get some intel directly from Syn leading them to Papura, a small village of winemakers on the island Velvet Tide, off the western shore of Whenua. It seems that Jamila Whapi grew up there, and might still have family living there.

Meeting Whapi

The Agents arrive at the local Syn way station. Syn has tight ties with the Papurans, and the way station has become a business hub for the winemakers. With the help of the villagers, they easily find the Whapi family.

At the Whapi house, which is down the hill from the main village square, the Agents are greeted by the family. They know of Jamila, and say that these days she can be found on an island called Takoto. The Whapis are lying: they've been paid off by Jamila (who only coincidentally shares a family name with them) to give this information

to the Agents. Agents who ask lots of different questions about Jamila might notice that there are inconsistent answers. The information is useless—not because there's an ambush waiting on Takoto (it doesn't even exist), but because the Agents are already in the middle of one!

As the Agents return to the way station, a cry comes from behind: "Arrest them!" and the town's peacekeepers (**Islander Warriors**) surround them. The town's leader, Hethkiti the Elder (he's 35), approaches them, stern and demanding. Moments after the team left the Whapi house, a neighbor found them all dead, brutally butchered (Pasquan was waiting patiently outside for the Agents to leave, then entered after them).

Hethkiti demands to have the Agents arrested. The personnel of the way station recommend they allow themselves to be jailed—the Papurans threaten to swarm the place and pull them out if they don't, to say nothing of the damage to Syn's reputation if they refuse arrest.

Some Persuasion or Intimidation can give the Agents a chance to see the crime scene for themselves. A Notice or Healing check on the bodies can reveal they were killed efficiently by someone holding a knife in each hand, who then sliced them open grotesquely as if trying to create a bloody scene.

Jailbreak?

The Agents are confined in an old wine basement converted into a jail. They have several opportunities to talk with the Syn personnel from the way station and the other Papurans. They can learn that none of them sent the original intel regarding the Whapi family, which led the Agents here. They can also learn that a suspicious looking black-clad Islander was seen snooping around the village two days before the Agents arrived, matching Pasquan's description.

Hethkiti plans on giving the Agents a fair trial, because he is aware of how delicate the situation is (he doesn't want to lose Syn's support, nor does he want to alienate his people). He summons a judge from Whenua, sends word to Syn, convenes the island's council, etc. The process takes time, and the Agents are expected to remain locked up for many weeks.





If they are not able to get themselves released sooner—or escape—Huna arrives as an ambassador from Syn. He reveals to the Agents that he isn't a simple surveyor, but a special Heroic Agent in charge of internal security. He either manages to convince Hethkiti that they're all fighting a common enemy, or uses his powers to shift the earth around the basement to allow the Agents to escape. If the Agents manage to release themselves, Huna waits for them and reveals the same information.

Epilogue

The Agents might have realized that someone from Syn set a well-planned ambush to delay them. If not, Huna explains this.

By the end of this adventure the Agents should realize communications with Syn can't be trusted, and that Huna is on their side.

ADVENTURE 6: SEARCHING THE CHAIN

After being released or escaping, Huna reveals to the Agents that he is secretly a Heroic Agent in charge of internal security (which is only half true).

Huna informs the Agents that he is now sure that there's a mole in Syn, someone working with Jamila. Whatever their plan is, it must be more far-reaching and dangerous than anyone realized, so Huna decides he must have more information before moving forward. He sends the Agents on a secret mission (without informing Syn, so the col-

laborator won't find out) after the only lead he managed to find: the source of a radio transmission.

On the day the Agents were arrested, an autoplane flying around the area received an errant radio signal. The engineers discarded this as a fluke, but Huna was suspicious. After some investigation, he managed to discover that someone on Velvet Tide was sending a coded message. He doesn't know exactly where the signal was sent to, but he is able to narrow the location to a general area in the South Chain.

Huna returns to the citadel to discover more about the collaborator, and gives the Agents a boat and a device to track radio signals so they can try to find what he suspects is Jamila's base.

To the Sea!

There are dozens of islands in this area of the South Chain. Tracking down the secret base takes time; resolve this as a Difficult Dramatic Task, using Boating, Common Knowledge (knowing the Islands), Engineering (tracking signals), and perhaps even Persuasion or Intimidation (chatting up traders, scaring pirates). Each round represents several days of searching. The stakes aren't about discovering the base—that's sure to happen eventually—but avoiding detection by Jamila. Any contact with Syn during this time, including for Requisition, counts as a round—it tells the collaborator where the Agents are!





If the Agents fail or take too much time, Jamila's people find them and attack with two hydrofoils, each with a medium machine gun and 6 **Islander Warriors**.

To the Base!

The base is revealed to be just off the shore of a beautiful but deserted paradise island. It's an underwater base, part of an old Bygone Age complex, and is just deep enough to allow a person to swim down with an Athletics check. On a failure, they run out of air and must make a Vigor roll to avoid taking a level of Fatigue (diving equipment can be Requisitioned from Syn, but is unavailable anywhere in the South Chain; there is some on the hydrofoils, though...).

Inside the complex, the walls are pearl-white and gray, sleek, and curved. Various liquids seem to ooze in tubes under the floorboards, maintaining the atmosphere and heating. Most rooms are abandoned, with strange kelp growing on the walls and small insects hiding under white plastic furniture. The place is structurally well preserved, but was obviously abandoned for hundreds of years before being recovered a few years ago.

Once the Agents enter the complex, Jamila greets them via a public announcement system. She is aware of their intrusion, and would like to explain herself before they all kill each other needlessly.

She explains that she and her people believe the Islands should be unified: they must become a single society otherwise they will be swallowed by one of the emerging world powers in the other Lands. "When I was a trader, I saw how divided we are; but when Kino came to me with a plan, I realized this is not an immutable fact. We can change our own destiny!"

If given enough time, Jamila continues: "We can all be united into a single Land, one huge island. There is a way. We have uncovered enough geological data to be able to do it. Safely!" For her, losing tens of thousands of people is a reasonable price to pay.

To the Death!

Jamila, Yamya, and Pasquan can be found in the control room of the base, along with ten of their goons. They'll all fight to the death,

as they don't want to be captured and forced to reveal Kino's secrets.

Several terminals around the room control the Bygone security system. One of the goons is in control of the terminals, and able to activate one of the following each turn. If he dies, the system chooses one option randomly until turned off with an Engineering roll. Turning the system against the goons is possible but very hard, with a -4 penalty.

- Two sleek turrets slide from a hiding place to shoot small pellets: Range 15/30/60, 2d6 damage, RoF 2, no recoil.
- A force field made of fine mesh, moving almost like a manta ray, zaps into being and tries to Entangle one of the Agents. They must make an Agility -2 roll to avoid becoming Entangled (Bound on a Critical Failure).
- A terminal shifts and another one rises like a sudden wave, just in time to inflict a -2 Cover modifier on an Agent who is about to shoot someone.
- A Medium Blast Template is filled with the deep, rumbling cry of a blue whale, forcing everyone in it to make a Smarts roll to avoid becoming Distracted and Vulnerable.

Should Jamila feel she is about to go down, she'll activate one last device she kept invisible with her shard—the button that opens all the hatches. Once she hits it, the Agents have only a few rounds to escape before the place becomes flooded with sea water. Any surviving goons will do their best to stop the Agents from escaping. There's a hangar in the complex, where Jamila's crew have their small submarine. It can seat six.

Examining the documents that survived in the complex (even if the place was flooded) reveals the truth: the "mole" in Syn wasn't working for Jamila and her people, *they* were working for the "mole"! Kino, a Veteran Islander Agent of good standing, is the brain behind this whole operation. A raise on the roll to Research the documents reveals mentions of a Tectonic Machine, but nothing more.

Epilogue

The villains are defeated, but the truth is revealed: Kino plans on uniting the Islands into a single landmass. How she's going to do this is perhaps still unclear, but the next stop is obvious: going after Kino.



ADVENTURE 7: THE CASTLE OF CLAWS

The Agents should be Veteran before starting this adventure.

With Kino ousted as a traitor to Syn, Huna chases down her lackeys in the organization to make sure Syn is once again safe for the Agents. They even get 2 Requisition each. He then sends them to the most obvious target: Kino herself.

The last recorded location of the rogue Agent is in the town of Lakash in Bogovia several months ago, so the team is sent there to track her down. It's unclear which Crystal she has on her, since the documents of her latest requisition got suspiciously lost.

Background

Lakash is a small, frightened town in the eastern Rush Basin, resting under the shadow of Severity Ridge and the boot of the local baron, Blech Karkachev. The Karkachevs have been ruling their land with an iron fist for many generations, using a special breed of attack dogs created through a Crystal called Harrier. Harrier is kept subdued in the Karkachev garden by way of a weekly ceremony (they pour water on it, then later give that water to the dogs).

By some unknown means (probably bribery, maybe extortion), Blech's parents managed to convince Syn that the Crystal should be designated "safe." In other words, the organization knows all about this situation and is okay with letting it stay as it is.

When Kino heard the Agents were after her, she finished up her research and headed toward the Castle of Claws (see below). Before leaving, she masked her trail by burning down her shack in the Karkachev gardens and unsettling Harrier, intentionally turning it feral.

Without daily infusions from the Crystal, Blech can't control the dogs. They've been terrorizing the town and its environment ever since.

Harrier dogs are everything a dog-hater hates about dogs: they're messy, smelly, and noisy. They bite aggressively

and walk around as if they own the place. They also have glowing eyes in sickening pink and yellow, and they can make one's blood literally freeze (which are less common features of dogs). Despite their name, harrier dogs are more akin to pitbulls than to harriers.

HARRIER DOG

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Alertness

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fearless:** Harrier dogs are what *other* things are afraid of.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a Wound.
- **Size -1:** The harrier dogs can reach a person's waist, and they weigh around 70 pounds.
- **Speed:** d10 running die.
- **Terrifying Bite:** The sheer ferocity of a harrier's bite combined with its corrupted power can freeze one's blood. A target that's bitten must make a Spirit roll or become Shaken, even if the damage didn't pass the Toughness or was soaked. On a Critical Failure they're paralyzed for 2d4 rounds.
- **Terrifying Howl:** A harrier dog can use its turn to stand and howl in a bone-chilling manner, forcing a Fear check at -2. If at least three dogs are howling together, it's at -4.



- **Weakness (Commands):** A character who knows the correct words in the specific dialect used in Lakash (a hard Common Knowledge or Language roll) can give the dog basic commands if they succeed on an Intimidation Test.

Lukewarm Lakash

The Agents arrive at Lakash after a difficult journey up a barely-serviceable rocky road. The Tank's 4x4 capabilities are pushed to the limits. The locals don't use mules for traveling to the basin below—they use goats.

The villagers are afraid of the Agents and angry at Syn. They tell of Lakash's grim situation and blame Syn for it. Some of the braver ones dare to blame Lord Blech, but most are too terrified of him, believing the dogs are still under his control. The villagers know Blech had a guest from Syn, a short outsider (they don't know what an Islander looks like). She left a few days ago, right after the fire in the Lord's garden when the attacks began.

At any point during the Agents' visit to the village, a dozen harrier dogs can appear from the woods and attack everyone mercilessly.

Blech's Bark

Lord Blech's mansion is situated on the edge of a ridge above the village. It's an old building, mostly stone and wood, with a large and well-kept garden behind a wooden wall.

The Crystal Harrier was previously placed in a small shrine at the edge of the garden, where the Karkachevs had it relatively tamed. Once Kino took it out of its proper place and tossed it on the roof (after easily defeating the guards), it went feral and the mansion was thrown into disarray.

The serving staff desperately try to keep up appearances, behaving as if all is well. They'll follow all the customs and insist on wearing the proper regalia—but their eyes dart from side to side with horror, drops of cold sweat running down their foreheads.

The Karkachev children are running around the gardens on all fours, chasing each other. They don't speak, just howl and bark, and are having the time of their lives. Their nanny tries to convince them to eat from the set table.

Bianca Karkachev, Blech's wife, sits quietly in her drawing room. As the butler shows the Agents in, they walk past her open door. She sits with her back to them, and the butler asks that they don't interrupt her, even though she seems to only be staring at the wall. If approached or talked to, Bianca turns her head—which is that of a dog. She is completely motionless otherwise.

Blech Karkachev sits in his office and is willing to have an audience with the Agents. He keeps his hands under the large oak desk in front of him—which is strangely clear of any paperwork, pens, or lamps.

Blech will insist everything is fine (he is the one demanding the staff stick to their daily activities as if nothing were amiss), and will demand an explanation for Kino's behavior. He knows she researched the fabled Castle of Claws, an old tale about one of the first warlords. Blech provided her with a shack in his garden, many research materials, and privacy; in return he expected her to teach him new tricks with Harrier. Instead, she burned half the garden and "made a mess", but it's all right since he fixed everything.

Blech has been trying to gain control of the Crystal, which he now carries in his lap (the sickly pink-yellow aura might be Noticed with a roll). His arms have become harrier dogs, which wake up and become agitated once exposed from under his heavy sleeves. They immediately attack an Agent, pulling an alarmed Blech with them. A moment later his feet erupt into dogs as well. The screaming Blech keeps saying he'll fix everything—at which point his body becomes four full harrier dogs (Fear -2, *at least*).

Going After Kino

The blackened ruins of the shack contain several remnants of Kino's research. A hard Research roll can piece together some clues, probably aided by Academics (Bogovian history) and asking around in the village. Successes and raises can allow the Agents to know some of the information about the castle (see below). There's nothing about the Cardiac Arrest (page 156) in the surviving notes; Kino made sure to take anything of value with her.



Kino is not a great woodsperson, and even a basic understanding of where she is headed can allow an Agent with Survival to follow her trail. She is going to a hidden valley in the Bogovian mountains.

Run a Trek interlude, and have everyone make a Vigor roll to avoid taking a level of Fatigue from Bumps & Bruises. The trail is clear enough if one keeps to the signs, but it goes up cliff faces and through thick bushes. If you decide to make this into a full Dramatic Task, don't forget to add cold rain and several wolves. That's Bogovia for you.

The Castle of Claws appears as the team walks around a rocky outcrop. It is an ancient and menacing stone structure that dominates the small, wooded valley.

The Castle of Claws

The castle is an old building, but it stands firm. The gray and black stones are barely covered by ivy, with only a few birds of prey daring to nest in its towers. A careful examination can reveal the castle doesn't seem to have any foundations: it appears as if it wasn't built here, but *placed*.

In the early days of Bogovia, several warlords used Crystals in their fight for supremacy. One of them, whose name is lost to time, became the feared Master of the Castle of Claws. His huge castle could *move*, pushed from the ground on gigantic claws, and glowing with yellow and blue light. Trampling, piercing, and crushing, the Master ruled over much of the Rush Basin until one day he retreated with his castle, never to be seen again. In his eyes, none deserved to have the castle after his death.

The castle is the home of two powerful Crystals, Claw and Shield. The presence of Shield kept rot and vermin to a minimum, so most rooms are still filled with furniture, art, weapons, and carpets. Everything is strangely well-kept—well-worn, but serviceable. Even the layers of dust are less thick than one would imagine.

Populating the Castle: Several servants still roam the halls of the castle. They are the last of those who served the warlord, dead for ages, now only corpses held together by Shield and motivated to stab things by Claw. Use **Bogovian Commoner** and **Town Watch**

with Undead and some of the traits below. The servants usually sit or stand in whatever room they're in, even behind locked doors, but the moment they sense the Agents they will erupt with black claws and rush silently toward them.

The castle can have whatever other creatures suit your taste (we recommend giant bats and spiders), with any or all of the following corruption effects.

- **Claw:** Even if it normally doesn't have claws, it has claws dealing d4+Str damage. If it hits with a raise, it sinks its claws in and is automatically Grappled with the Agent (and becomes Vulnerable itself).
- **Spiky:** All physical attacks deal +1 damage.
- **Spiky Armor:** +1 Armor, all melee attackers take 2d4 damage.
- **Spiky Soul:** The creature has Retort, which is effective against all attempts to influence it mentally.

Traps Galore: The whole place is one big trap. The Crystal Claw seems to take great joy in interrupting whatever the Agents are doing with a sudden claw-based trap. For example:

- **Claw Pit:** Notice -2 to avoid falling into a cleverly hidden pit, with lots of claws along the walls that tear through the victim's flesh. 1d4 claws, dealing 2d6 damage each.
- **Slamming Door:** The last person going through a doorway has the door—which has a huge spike in the middle—slammed into their back. If not Noticed in time, the spike pierces the Agent for 3d6 damage (AP 2) then curves up like a claw, making it harder to release the poor victim (another 3d6 damage upon release).
- **Spiky Furniture:** During a fight in a furnished room (or simply when sitting on a couch), the furniture is revealed to have large spikes that spring out, dealing 2d6 damage. If it's smaller than a person, roll Agility to avoid becoming Entangled with it as the spikes curl into claws. Can't be Evaded.
- **Wall Bash:** Notice -2 to avoid stepping on a rigged brick in a corridor. One of the walls grows black spikes and slams against the other wall, dealing 4d6 damage (AP 2) to 1d4 characters. Can be Evaded.

Confronting Kino

The audience chamber of the castle is a large hall with wide, drape-covered windows. Two metal cages on high daises take up a large part of both sides of the hall. Inside one of them, Claw is erupting with black energy; the other is empty.

Along the far wall, a third platform is raised from the floor. This is where the warlord once sat and received those who dared approach. Currently, a dead body rests on the black stone throne, the Crystal Shield on its lap. A shimmering blue-yellow force field surrounds the entire platform. As the Agents appear, Kino looks up from behind the throne, and says “Crap.”

Kino will try to delay the Agents by talking to them. She will fill them in on any details they’re missing about her grand plan. She has almost nothing more to hide, and will be truthful in every answer—except when asked about what she’s doing here and what she plans to do next. The only thing she is worried about is the Agents stopping her from retrieving the Cardiac Arrest from its hiding place inside the throne.

Fighting Kino: Kino is currently slotting Traveler (page 201). She is protected by Shield, which makes the platform she’s on almost impenetrable. Crystal effects can pierce through the shield with a -4 on the roll. It has Hardness 12 but reforms after a second or two, barely enough time for the attacking Agent to jump in. There’s only one thing that’ll pierce the shield so thoroughly that Shield becomes tamed: an attack from Claw.

Kino needs a few rounds to recover the pieces of the weapon (the throne is trapped and she needs to disarm it). This can be a Dramatic Task for her, or for the players.

Kino will try to buy time by kicking Shield, making it create several powerful frames that look a little like old Bogovian knights. They have lances and will run around the room, charging the Agents as if they were mounted. They have +2 Armor and perhaps Taunt d6 as well. (“Face me, knave!”)

Claw jumps in by creating a disastrous frame or two, horrific creatures of endless claws that try to slash at the Agents. They

don’t have head beams, but use the claw corruption traits from page 155. Whenever they tear someone to shreds (deal a Wound), the attack is so gruesome that it evokes a Fear check.

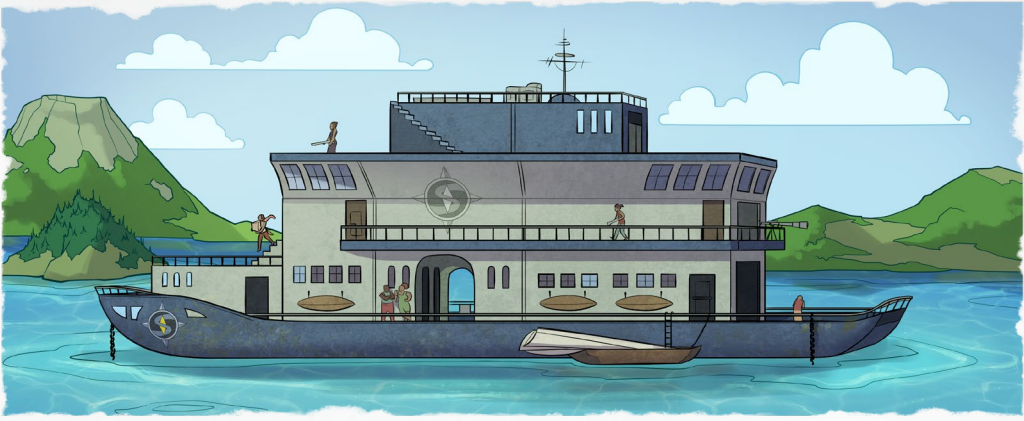
Should Kino be confronted in melee, she will avoid using the Cardiac Arrest at almost any cost to keep its capabilities a secret. She’ll grab whatever pieces of the Cardiac Arrest she already has and teleport away (using Traveler’s *No Place Like Home*). This means she’ll have to rebuild it, which might give the Agents some extra time before the kidnapping situation (see next adventure). If any pieces are left behind, the Agents can study them and understand that the device is able to resonate with Crystals, although it’s unclear how.

The Cardiac Arrest: One of the first Crystal-based devices ever created, the Cardiac Arrest was made with a single purpose: to stop Crystals from working. This weapon looks like a black sword with a split blade, akin to a particularly sharp tuning fork. The long metal blades are made of an alloy which creates a sonic shockwave that disables active Crystal powers and might even affect corrupted creatures. The blades must be struck by a person holding the handle, where there’s a lever that must be pressed. All Syn Agents in a 30” range must make a Vigor roll to avoid desync if the device is triggered, but if they make it they can keep breathing as normal. They lose access to their Crystal’s powers, benefit, and even disposition. This lasts for 1d4 minutes. Agents with Novice Crystals roll with +4; Agents with Legendary Crystals automatically fail.

When used as a sword, the Cardiac Arrest deals Str+d8 damage (AP 1) and grants Parry +1. An Agent who is Shaken or Wounded by the damage suffers the effect mentioned above.

Epilogue

Kino escaped, but at least the team has two new powerful Crystals. They might even know more about her plans. What they don’t know is that she’s missing one last piece for the machine: a Legendary Crystal.



ADVENTURE 8: THE TECTONIC MACHINE

Kino escaped, but only for the moment. By researching at the citadel's archives or asking Agents who knew Kino, the team can discover which Crystal Kino had on her, what Traveler's abilities are, and the location of Kino's home Island. It's High Inaki, of all places! On a raise, there are mentions of Bygone Age ruins all over the island.

If they make all the rolls, they'll already be on their way to the Islands when they hear the news of the hostage situation (see the next section) and are sent there immediately, arriving in time to meet with Huna. Otherwise, Huna will call them to help with the hostage situation as he boards the Barge; by the time the Agents arrive, he will be on the verge of death.

Unificationists, Unite

Kino unleashes what remains of her group of fanatics to take control of one of Syn's main facilities in the Islands: the Barge, a giant floating structure that is usually traveling between the Large Lands. The kidnappers use the Barge's radio to broadcast a demand for all Syn stations on the Islands to stand down and remove all autoplans from Island territory. "The Unification is upon us—it will not be stopped!"

There are seventy hostages on board, guarded by twenty of Kino's people. The Unificationists are **Islander Warriors** with Shooting d6, armed very well with revolvers, pump-action shotguns, and Zingamaian acid bombs (high concentrate). They rig doors with anti-personnel mines. A few of them are lieutenants, Wild Cards with Athletics

and Fighting d10. They have all taken a Vow (Major) to see this through.

Barging In

Huna makes contact with the Agents as they approach the Barge. He reveals himself to be one of the Council members of Syn, and explains that he decided to take charge of the situation because things are looking grim. He hates thinking of Islanders fighting Islanders, yet this is what is now happening on the Barge. He is quite sure the hostage situation is only a distraction (it's not; it's Kino's main plan), which is why he wants to "end this quickly" and head off to High Inaki to confront Kino before she activates her machine.

Huna's Crystal doesn't have much effect in the middle of the sea, but it can still make him a formidable foe. He gains Armor +10 and becomes Hardy, with complete *environmental protection*. He can lead the charge or serve as a distraction while the Agents sneak around and free the Syn personnel, whatever they decide.

At an appropriate moment, one of the Unificationists takes off her mask and reveals herself to be Kino. She is probably socketing Dancer, Dumb Luck, Rally, or Survivor. She pulls out the Cardiac Arrest, announces she is willing to suffer greatly for her cause, and activates it to stun all Agents in the vicinity. Huna automatically fails and Kino's people rush him, push him down, and take his Crystal out.

Kino will then make her way to a speedboat to escape as quickly as she can, preferring to fight face-to-face with Agents and stab them with the Cardiac Arrest rather than activating it again and risk desyncing herself.

High Stakes on High Inaki

As the Agents arrive at High Inaki, a storm gathers in the skies above the mountainous island and waves clash against its rocky shores. Kino has begun the activation (unless the Agents didn't stop to help Huna).

Huge parts of the mountains explode as giant metal arms reach out, pipes and lightning rods bursting through ages-old crust. The Tectonic Machine has awakened. The whole island might be reduced to rubble.

If the Agents helped the people of Low Inaki in the Training Mission, some of them are here now and will be happy to help, especially after the situation is explained to them. Even the people of High (technically, "north") Inaki will agree to help once the Agents explain that Kino is willing to sacrifice her own home to bring the rest of the Islands together, and that many of them will be sacrificed along with her. It's also likely Syn managed to send another group of Agents to help, but they might need to be parachuted in (beware those winds!) as the waves are too high for the autplane to land.

The final fight against Kino is held in a wide arena at the top of one of the mountains: it is the ancient command center for the machine, now mostly broken and ruined. It seems like giants created this place, with too-high stone tables and too-tall steps. A large metallic console holds the Legendary Crystal, lightning and crackling energy surrounding it. "It can't be stopped!" shouts Kino above the wind. "The Unification has begun!"

Several of her people will try to stop the Agents from intervening. Kino will also join the fight herself using her walrus. She is willing to die to stop Agents from reaching the Crystal. One of her Wild Card lieutenants is holding the Cardiac Arrest, standing along with two Extras a few yards away from the Legendary Crystal, ready to activate the weapon should an Agent approach.

To stop the machine, one must first reach the Crystal and take it. The machine will not stop, though! An Agent then needs to tame it, *socket it*, and use its power to force all parts of the machine to grind to a halt throughout the island and beyond. This is a Crystal Channeling roll with -6.

Release All the Brakes: At the beginning of each round, roll on the following table or use when appropriate.

- **1-2. Energy Release:** The Legendary Crystal is struck by lightning, and anyone within a Small Blast Template centered on it is Electrocuted (Vigor roll at -2 to avoid being Stunned; Distracted on a success).
- **3. Fissures:** High Inaki's dormant volcano stirs into action. The ground cracks and several random combatants stumble over the fissures, taking 2d6 damage from the intense release of heat and becoming Vulnerable (Agility to avoid damage, also avoid Vulnerable on a raise). Then acidic gas is released into the air; roll Vigor or take a level of Fatigue. The whole area is covered in smoke.
- **4. Hurricane:** A powerful wind sweeps through the area. Strength -2 (-6 if you're flying) to avoid being swept along (roll 1d8 for a compass direction); take 2d6 damage if hitting a solid object, and fall prone. The wind makes all ranged attacks suffer a -4 penalty for the round.
- **5. Tsunami:** A towering wall of water approaches the Island. It hits with a force that deals 3d6 nonlethal damage and also pushes everyone 1d8" (Strength to avoid). Anyone who smashes into a solid object takes 2d6 damage. Also, maybe a shark tries to eat someone.
- **6. Volcano:** Burning rocks land on two Medium Blast Templates, dealing 4d6 damage. Evading is possible, but everyone in the area (including Evaders) must make a Vigor -2 roll to avoid a level of Fatigue from the heat. For an extra challenge, the area then becomes strongly magnetic (-1 on Crystal Channeling rolls, and the penalty for maintaining powers increases to -2).

Epilogue

Huna, if he survived, will disappear back into the council chamber to reconsider his actions. There are, undoubtedly, several other Agents within Syn who are ready and willing to use the organization for...troubling ends. Who will uncover their plots? Not you, brave Agents—it's time for you to join the Subduers. There are even greater matters at hand.



Adversaries and Challenges

The world of *Crystal Heart* doesn't have "monsters" in the usual fantasy sense.

It has lots of unusual animals, most of which are based on real-world creatures.

It also has tainted creatures, people and animals who were transformed in some way by a feral Crystal or a Bygone Age relic (either directly corrupted or through their lineage).

Finally, there are Crystal manifestations which appear as a result of a feral Crystal.

Wild Cards throughout this book are noted with the Syn symbol .

People of the Lands

The following are examples for some classic archetypes from each of the Lands, ordered by commoner, less commoner, law enforcement grunt and captain, and finally, unusual. To enhance these archetypes further, consider giving them the appropriate Cultural Edge (page 17).

BOGOVIAN COMMONER

The simple folk who tend the farms, chop wood, and get eaten by the occasional wild beast are as suspicious of strangers as they are of that shadow over there, behind the trees—doesn't it look a bit like a wild beast?

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d4, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4 (5 with fourstaff); **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Brute

Gear: Pitchfork/torch (Str+d4), Bogovian charm mace (Str+d6, Strong Willed) or Bogovian fourstaff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

BOGOVIAN TOWNSPERSON

Old customs clashing with modern sensibilities and the recent emergence of the middle class do not make the urban Bogovian any

less suspicious than their rural brethren. They're just suspicious in *new* ways.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Retort

Gear: Tools of the trade (Str) or Bogovian charm mace (Str+d6, Strong Willed).

BOGOVIAN TOWN WATCH

These are generic town guards. Villages usually don't have a well-equipped watch; instead, they rely on mobs of Bogovian Commoners.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (3)

Hindrances: Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Chain mail (+3 Armor), long sword (Str+d8), crossbow (10/20/40, 2d6, AP 2).

BOGOVIAN TOWN

WATCH CAPTAIN

These statistics also work well for a baron who takes matters into their own hands.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Hindrances: Mean, Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Brave, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor

Gear: Chain mail (+3 Armor), long sword (Str+d8), crossbow (10/20/40, 2d6, AP 2).

BOGOVIAN BOG-DWELLER

Filthy, inbred, dangerous—the bog-dwellers are the Bogovians' Bogovians. Or so most people think. Their secretive society has been heading in a strange direction for several hundred years, living within Bygone Age structures deep within their swamps.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d4, Engineering d8, Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Mean, Outsider (Minor)

Edges: Brute, Woodsman, Scavenger

Gear: Crocodile and rubber armor (+1), fourstaff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach 2, 2 hands), unstable energy source (5/10/20, 3d4 in MBT, roll Vigor or become Vulnerable)

Special Abilities:

- **Fortified Immunity System:** Bog-dwellers have +4 against poison and disease.
- **Goggled Helmet:** Covers the head, and allows the bog-dweller to ignore up to 2 points of Illumination penalties.

FJORDSTADIAN DENIZEN

The people of the Eleven Cities wake up every day to a regular routine of working in their city's factories, construction sites, or fields. In the evenings they participate in leisure activities such as theaters, public lectures, and board games. Most of them





enjoy—or are at least accustomed to—this straightforward way of life. However, many are more ambitious, trying to prove themselves to the nobles in order to join one of the noble houses.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Driving d4, Engineering d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Alertness

Gear: Tools of the trade (Str), maybe a simple pistol (5/10/20, 2d6+1, AP 1, 2 shots, RoF 1).

FJORDSTADIAN NOBLE

The noble houses engage in a never-ending war for prestige and influence. This fight has been going on for many years, and the houses regularly compensate for their Land's lack of resources with the use of innovation, as well as many, many spies.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Vow (Minor; their noble house)

Edges: Aristocrat, Marksman

Gear: Palmspring (3/6/12, damage 2d4, RoF 1, Revolver).

FJORDSTADIAN

POLICE CONSTABLES

In most cities, law and order are handled by a council composed of all of the noble houses, or left to the hands of one or two houses. They usually hire regular denizens to work as enforcers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d4, Driving d4, Engineering d4, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Cautious

Edges: Double Tap

Gear: Body armor (+2 Armor, reduce damage from bullets by 4), baton (Str+d4),

pistol (10/20/40, 2d6, RoF 1, 6 shots, Revolver), buzzer (10/20/40; 1-3d6 non-lethal, Shotgun)

POLICE INSPECTOR

The investigators and commanders in Fjordstadian law-keeping forces are always nobles, so constables who wish to be promoted must first join a noble house.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Academics d4, Driving d4, Engineering d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d10, Taunt d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Vow (Minor; to their noble house)

Edges: Aristocrat, Command, Double Tap, Tactician

Gear: Body armor (+2 Armor, reduce damage from bullets by 4), powerful pistol (15/30/60, 2d8, AP 2, RoF 1, 6 shots, Revolver).

FJORDSTADIAN MAD SCIENTIST

While most Mad Scientists are in fact Mad Engineers, the one thing they have in common is indeed madness. Hoping to prove to the world just how amazing their very, very specific field of study is, and encouraged by a noble house to push the boundaries of human understanding (in the name of polit--erm, science), these inventors achieve amazing results which are usually insanely difficult to replicate.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d10, Driving d6, Engineering d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Taunt d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Big Mouth, Overconfident

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Level Headed, McGyver, Mr. Fix It

Gear: Lightning gun (15/30/60, 3d6, RoF 2, roll Vigor or become Vulnerable), magnetic coil armor (+1 Armor, ranged attacks against the Mad Scientist are made at -2)

Special Abilities:

- **Weird Science:** A Mad Scientist has about 20 points of inventions (the gear presented



above is just an example). The powers allowed depend on the specific field of study as inspired by the scientist's home city. The arcane skill is Engineering.

- **Minions:** Whether animated corpses, spring-powered robots, laser turrets, or just Slightly Deranged Lab Assistants, the Mad Scientist is always accompanied by a number of servants at least equal to the number of Agents.

ISLANDER

There is no such a thing as a typical Islander, since each island culture seems to have its own specialization, preferences, and even physical traits. Commonly, Islanders talk, socialize, and swim a lot. Most know how to handle a wooden weapon of some sort.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d4, Boating d4, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Survival d4, Taunt d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Every Islander should have a new skill or two at a d6 and an Edge to represent growing up in a specific environment and lifestyle. A few suggestions:

- **Coconut climbers:** Athletics d8, Survival d6, Brute
- **Hand-to-hand combatants:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Martial Artist
- **Jungle dwellers:** Athletics d8, Stealth d6, Free Runner
- **Pearl divers:** Athletics d6, Survival d6, Second Breath
- **Pirate:** Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Shooting d6, Feint (flintlock pistol, long sword)
- **Rearers of dolphins:** Healing d6, Riding d6, Beast Friend
- **Traveling traders:** Boating d6, Persuasion d6, Charismatic

ISLANDER WARRIOR

Use these statistics for a generic Islander who's practiced in violence.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Vow (Major; to their cooperative or family)

Edges: Frenzy, Sweep

Gear: Leather armor (+1), Island whistle (4/8/16, Str+d4, RoF 1), Island walrus (Str+d6, Parry +1, two hands)

Special Abilities:

- **Resilient:** Can take one extra wound before becoming Incapacitated.

ISLANDER LEECHER

The danger with sailing beyond the known trade routes isn't the lack of shores—there are more than enough islands out there. The danger is who's waiting for you. The leechers are notorious not only for growing giant leeches and using them in combat, but also for eating them.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Hindrances: Outsider (Major)

Edges: Berserk, Brawny



Gear: Leather armor (+1), battle axe (Str+d8)

Special Abilities:

- **Leeches:** The leecher carries a curled-up leech which can be thrown like a weapon (3/6/12). A leech that hits makes an opposed Athletics check. Should the leech succeed, it's attached and next turn it'll use Blood Drain (see in its description). On a failed grapple, the leech falls on the ground next to the target.
- **Resilient:** Can take one extra wound before becoming Incapacitated.

LEECH, GIANT

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4-1, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 1; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 3

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Blood Drain:** A giant leech that succeeds in a Fighting roll attaches itself to the target and begins to drain blood. The victim takes 1d4 damage each round (ignoring Armor). Removing a leech is an opposed Strength roll, on which the leech gets a special +2. The leech is Vulnerable while attached, but any failed attack against it strikes the target instead.
- **Size -3 (Very Small):** About 12 inches long.

MASEIAN CLANSPERSON

Many Maseians learn a trade during their youth based on their clans' demands. They are taught how to fill a specific role, which is more than a simple profession. It's a whole range of rituals and customs surrounding specific tasks, including socially expected behaviors and relationships. Each clansperson's role can be represented as Academics, Athletics, or Healing at d6.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d4, Notice

d4, Persuasion d4, Riding d4, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Maseian Rite of Passage

Gear: Tools appropriate to their role.

MASEIAN HUNTER

All clans, whether nomadic or settled, make use of scouts. Maseia is wide and open, and it's wise to know what's coming before it arrives. In nomad clans, groups of hunters go on expeditions lasting several days, counting on each other to survive.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs

Edges: Fleet-Footed, Woodsman

Gear: Leather armor (+1 Armor), knife (Str+d4), bow (12/24/48, 2d6)



MASEIAN WARRIOR

Most clans employ dedicated warriors who fill a different role from the hunter or the scout in protecting the clan from coming dangers. In bigger clans, warriors also keep the peace.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d4, Shooting d8, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Acrobat, Dodge

Gear: Curated hide armor (+2 Armor), spear (3/6/12, Str+d6, Reach 1, Parry +1 if used two-handed), knife (Str+d4), bow (12/24/48, 2d6)

MASEIAN PRINCE

Maseian princes are the sons and daughters of Maseian leaders. They are expected to lead by example, and are usually at the front of a group of warriors.



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Riding d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Arrogant

Edges: Acrobat, Aristocrat, Combat Reflexes, Command, Hold the Line

Gear: Curated hide armor (+2 Armor), slash (Str+1d6), wingspan (12/24/48, Str+d6, AP 1)

MASEIAN SKY-SKIFFER

Using a specially built wind-glider, the sky-skiffers fly across the plains on the powerful Maseian winds, belonging to no clan and all clans. Messengers, explorers, troublemakers, and heartbreakers, they live in a remote base on one of the floating mountains. Their elders reside there in an ancient lodge, overseeing the sacred tests whenever a new recruit asks to join.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Piloting d8, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Survival d6, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Ace, Dodge, Provoke

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), bow (12/24/48, 2d6), sky skiff. A sky skiff is Size 4, with Handling +1, Top Speed 40 and Toughness 10. The minimum wind speed required to lift a sky skiff is 20.

ZINGAMAIAAN CITIZEN

Have you heard about the new warrior they brought to the arena? They say he's from upriver, used to be a vex. Like, from the jungles! Crazy, right? So what are you wearing for tonight? Vala says it'll be the *best* party since the Festival.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Healing d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor; Zingama's the best)

Edges: —

Gear: —



ZINGAMAIAIAN HIGH CLASS

There are many types of high classes in the Zingamaiaian culture, including important government officials, high-ranking temple workers, successful merchants and more. They're all pushing against each other in an effort to remain in their social position, and maybe rise above the rest.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Healing d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Thievery d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor; Zingama's the best)

Edges: Aristocrat, Charismatic, Connections (someone in the government)

Gear: A vial of mind-numbing poison (Vigor roll or take -2 to Smarts, Spirit, and related skills for an hour), Snakebite (Str+d4, Vigor -2 or paralyzed for 1d6 minutes).

ZINGAMAIAIAN SECURITY GUARD

All Zingamaiaians are required to serve in the nation's military for a year. Most have a pretty laid-back experience, but some join the elite teams to hone combat skills that they later realize have little use in day-to-day life. Most of them become highly trained guards, working for a governor, company, or a clan in good standing. They work hard and get paid well to make sure you won't be able to get up to whatever you're trying to get up to.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor; Zingama's the best), Vow (Minor; their employer)

Edges: Block, First Strike

Gear: Chain armor (+2), spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands, can be thrown 3/6/12) and choke bombs (5/10/20, 2d6 non-lethal, MBT).

SECURITY OFFICER



The person in charge of the guards is usually a charismatic manipulator who manages to push their people forward while staying at the back. It's unclear if Zingamaiaians demand these skills from those who want to be in charge, or if people who get to be in charge become vicious snakes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d10, Healing d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor; Zingama's the best), Yellow

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Inspire

Gear: Chain armor (+2), Zingamaiaian whip (Str+d4, Reach 3, Disarming), and choke bombs (5/10/20, 2d6 non-lethal, MBT).

ZINGAMAIAIAN ASSASSIN

Killing your enemies is considered very bad taste in Zingamaiaian society. Therefore, it should be done in secret by somebody else. Assassins have become such a staple of Zingamaiaian society that many





have formed companies. The assassins started competing for contracts... and occasionally, yes, resort to hiring assassins to make sure they get what they want.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Shooting d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Cautious, Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Acrobat, Alertness, Assassin, Combat Reflexes, Streetwise, Thief

Gear: Lizard-skin armor (+1), poisoned throwing knives (3/6/12, Str+d4, Vigor roll at -2 to avoid taking a Wound), smoke bomb (-6 vision penalties in an MBT).

SYN AGENTS

All Syn Agents are Wild Cards, but beyond that common trait, they're all unique.

Novice and Seasoned Agents can be created by taking one of the archetypes (pages 22-28), adding a Crystal, and giving the equivalent of a few Advances. We also offer a few ready-to-play Novice Agents in the PDF supplement *Living in Syn*.

Veteran Agents are usually on some sort of a mission, even if they're Free Agents. They are trying to achieve something, they know how to use Syn's resources to their advantage, and they probably have a few secrets up their sleeves. Most supervisors and mentors are Veteran.

The Heroic Agents are all forces to be reckoned with. Beyond the openly known information about them (pages 47-52), they each have a secret agenda which can be inserted into existing adventures or become the basis for a new one.

BACH

Even before joining Syn, Bach had secretly developed a crude but effective method of keeping a heart from sublimating. He submerges it in a mixture of chemicals, with the most important ingredient being his own blood. He can only keep one heart this way (his blood supply is limited, after all) and it's the same one he's been carrying ever since becoming an Agent: the heart of his friend.

In a way, Bach feels that by switching his heart with a Crystal he betrayed his friend, discarding the gift he was given. Thanks to Geist, Bach is able to conjure his childhood friend's memories. He has been doing so almost obsessively, to the point that he is now accompanied by a "ghost" of his deceased friend. It is invisible to everyone else and isn't sentient—just a collection of behaviors and speech patterns, given "life" by Bach's channeling of Geist. Bach is seeing it less and less as a shadow, and more and more as his actual friend coming to life.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d10, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d10, Engineering d6, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Research d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Anemic, Driven (Minor; discover the secrets of the Bygone Age), Quirk (Doesn't trust Crystal users), Shamed (Minor; I betrayed my friend by joining Syn)

Edges: Calculating, Crystal Expert, Fjordstadian Scrutiny, Fierce Forward, Investigator, Level Headed, Marksman, Scholar (Academics)

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), lever-action rifle (20/40/80, 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Memento Mori:** Bach is accompanied by Mori, an invisible bodyguard (*summon ally*) with the Ethereal ability.

GARRIDAN

Garridan has managed to keep the true nature of his obsessiveness from the rest of Syn. He keeps *his own Repository*, hoarding more than a dozen Crystals in complete secrecy. He catalogs and re-catalogs them according to theme, color, recovery location, and any other category that comes to his mind.

But it's never enough—something is always missing. He must have more Crystals. He wants his collection to be complete and *correct* before allowing any "lesser" Agent to touch or archive it.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d6





Skills: Academics d10, Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d10, Engineering d10, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Research d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Hesitant, Stubborn, Ugly (Minor; scruffy and unkempt)

Edges: Block, Crystal Expert, Focus, Imbue With Power, Mr. Fix It, Investigator, Scholar

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), modified Syn sword (Str+d8, Parry +1), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Extra Crystal:** Garridan carries an extra Crystal on his person. This Crystal is from his personal collection, and Syn knows nothing about it or its powers.

IVAN

Throughout the centuries since the Bygone Age, many societies have come to live around, or even in symbiosis with, manifestations of local feral Crystals. Ivan, however, believes that any feral Crystal is a danger to humanity at large. He is ceaselessly working on plans to uproot and recover them all, even Crystals that Syn has designated “safe.” He knows they are not safe. They must be tamed.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Academics d6, Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d10, Driving d4, Fighting d12, Healing d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Survival d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Habit (Minor; complaining about today’s youth), Slow (Minor), Stubborn, Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Bogovian Fire Drill, Combat Reflexes, Crystal Expert, Focus, Hard to Kill, No Mercy, Quick, Sweep

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), Syn knife (Str+d4), 10 foot pole (Str+d6, Reach 1, Parry +1, two hands), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special abilities

- **10-foot Pole:** Ivan’s weapon of choice is a 10-foot pole made of a highly durable polymer. It’s a useful item for a man who

needs some help when jumping, but in Ivan’s hands it’s also extremely dangerous. If he manages to hit with the pole, he can make an immediate Crystal Channeling roll to liquify the end which has hit his target. He can then make it harden around them, effectively grappling. The victim’s resistance roll is made with a -2.

- **Hidden Leg Shotgun:** Ivan seems to have one prosthetic leg, but in fact, he has two. His other leg is a highly advanced prosthetic, which is hard to notice from a distance (Notice -2 to spot it by watching him walk). Inside the leg there’s a hidden shotgun (Range 5/10/20, 1-3d6+1, single shot). Ivan can unravel the prosthetic leg as a free action, just enough to shoot the shotgun and take the target by surprise. They must make a Notice -2 vs his Stealth; otherwise, Ivan gets The Drop.
- **Running:** If needed, Ivan can make his left prosthetic leg into a sturdy metallic block (as a free action, no roll needed), allowing him to run as if he wasn’t Slow.

JORDAN

Jordan has been embezzling from Syn since the day he joined. Never one to trust in authority, he made sure to construct an elaborate retirement plan in a location where no one will be able to reach him, protected by some powerful people. He extended an invitation to Sara, the only person in Syn he trusts with this information, but she gently refused.

Jordan has several contingency plans in place, and he’s ready to leave Syn at a moment’s notice should any of his shady dealings be discovered. Hopefully, they won’t be—he makes sure to amend any report discussing him, especially those that show the several cases in which he saved his own skin at the cost of a teammate’s life.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d8, Athletics d4, Battle d4, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d8, Fighting d8, Healing d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Research d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Elderly, Tongue-Tied



Edges: Calculating, Connections (Important Islanders), Double Tap, Fjordstadian Scrutiny, Focus, Investigator, Marksman, Strong Willed

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), sword cane (Str+d4, Parry +1, Notice -2 vs Stealth to notice), palmspring (3/6/12, 2d4, RoF 1, Revolver), Syn pistol (10/20/40, 2d6+1, AP 1, RoF 1, Shots 6), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Shady Dealings:** Jordan's understanding of the rules (he wrote many of them, leaving various loopholes) allows him to requisition any item or service he needs, no Requisition roll required.

KELLY

While on various missions, Kelly started suspecting that someone is undermining the organization's efforts from within. She's hunting for any clues about the rogue Agent, slowly gathering evidence that will allow her to identify the culprit and uncover their plan—although they're apparently very subtle in their work.

The person Kelly is chasing is herself. Several years ago, during her job as a Specialist, she socketed Mania: a Crystal known for its paranoia-inducing tendencies which linger even after it's removed. After returning it, she believed she had overcome its influence on her. She was wrong. Worse, the next Crystal she socketed (and hasn't removed since) was Ego, which exaggerates your self-esteem to ridiculous levels. She is surer than ever that nothing's wrong with her, but Ego is enhancing and maintaining the remaining shreds of paranoia. She is seeing patterns and traitors where there are none.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Academics d4, Acrobatics d6, Crystal Channeling d10, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Hindrances: Clueless, Delusional (Major; I'm chasing a traitor)

Edges: Brawny, Bolster, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Connections (several, across the world), Dodge, Streetwise, Work the Room

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), Syn knife (Str+d4), air-pulse shotgun (Range 5/10/20, Damage 1-3d6+1), Zingamaian Acid Bombs (Range 5/10/20 [double when shot through air-pulse shotgun] 2d6 MBT, 2d4 next turn), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Ability

- **Followers:** While she isn't qualified to take the Followers Edge, Kelly is almost always accompanied by friends, effectively giving her this Edge.

MARC

Marc is known for having no big plans for the future, but in fact, he's been working on a private project for some time now. For the past few months he's been pushing further and further into wild territories where humans rarely go. He claims that he is trying to speak with the local animals to uncover the locations of new Crystals, but the truth is much darker.

Marc is less and less tolerant of the damage his fellow humans cause to animals, who he now considers as his brethren. He is taking great pride in hunting those who he thinks are harming his non-judgemental friends.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Academics d4, Athletics d10, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d10, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Heroic, Impulsive

Edges: Beast Bond, Beast Master (x3), Charismatic, Extraction, Focus, Killer Instinct

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), whip (Str+d4, Disarming, Reach 3), several Syn knives (3/6/12, Str+d4), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Morgana:** This dire wolf was upgraded through two applications of the Beast Master Edge to be a Wild Card and have an Agility of d10.
- **Beast:** A special Syn protocol forbids Marc from allowing other Agents to socket this Crystal. For more information see the *Original Syn* supplement.





NUI

Nui has recovered almost a dozen Crystals throughout her career, and has used even more. She's begun to notice that there's a surprising amount of Crystals that are unavailable for requisition, but records never mention where they go or for what purpose. What began as a curious investigation quickly became an exciting mission once she realized she's placing herself in danger by asking tricky questions.

Recently, Nui was contacted by someone outside Syn, representing a powerful and secretive group. They were asking the same questions she was, and suggested working together. She is now spying on Syn for them—which is even *more* exciting! Recently she was asked to manipulate Kingrove and make him do some risky work to keep her own hands clean (she's of no use to anyone if she's compromised). She is unsure how she feels about this idea.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d10, Boating d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d10, Driving d6, Fighting d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Overconfident

Edges: Ace, Acrobat, Combat Acrobat, Counterattack, Fierce Forward, First Strike, The Right Crystal For the Job, Signature Move (Nui's Pistol Surprise, Agility + Shooting, can only be used after hitting with a melee attack this round, on the same target)

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), ornate sword (Str+d6, Parry +1), hand cannon (12/24/48, 2d8, RoF 2, AP 3, 10 shots), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Ability

- **Hand Cannon:** Nui's pistol is a one-of-a-kind weapon, created for her by a master artisan she knows personally. The cannon utilizes Bygone Era tech, turning shots into energy blasts (hence the high Armor Piercing value).

NYAMA

Nyama has been addicted to Purple Cheer since her early days in the Arena. This outlawed sweet nectar is a potent performance enhancing drug. Despite the long-term damage to the liver and joints, many wrestlers secretly take it.

Recently, Nyama finally discovered something that filled that hole in her soul, something that made her reject Purple Cheer. His name is Mara, and he likes her, even loves her, for who she is. She never thought such a thing was possible.

Nyama now tries to wean herself off the drugs, but someone from Syn is deliberately poisoning her, keeping her addicted without her knowledge. This person wants to keep Syn's "hammer" fighting, and under their control.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d12, Common Knowledge d6, Crystal Channeling d8, Fighting d12, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Performance d6, Stealth d6, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Hindrances: Death Wish, Habit (Major; Purple Cheer), Ruthless (Minor)

Edges: Brawler, Brawny, Bruiser, Brute, Fame, Improvisational Fighter, Martial Artist, Martial Warrior

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), fists (Str+d10), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

TOKPELA

Tokpela knows there are several rogue Agents running around Syn, either acting selfishly or actively wanting to harm his beloved organization. These bad actors must be purged.

Tokpela is not great at subterfuge, so he's hardly capable of finding these Agents—or so he wants everyone to believe. In truth, he is working in secret with one of the council members. They send him on missions to draw attention away from the council member's own clandestine operations.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Battle d6, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d10,



Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d4, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Hindrances: Small, Loyal, Driven (Major; Prove I'm an adult); Mean (from shard)

Edges: Berserk, Block, Brawler, Bruiser, Command, Frenzy, Inspire, Martial Artist, Nerves of Steel

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), fists (Str+d8), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Shard of Regeneration:** Tokpela has a shard piercing his lungs. The shard grants the special ability Regeneration (Slow), but it is also agitating, making him Mean.

TU'AMQOLO

Tu'amqolo has learned the entirety of Syn's true master plan. This wasn't her aim, but as more and more was revealed to her during her investigations, she found herself drawn deeper and deeper into the conspiracy. She knows terrible things are coming, but she does not act to prevent them. She is very aware that if any high-ranking Agent who is in the know discovers her involvement, she will be in trouble.

Believing as always that her fate is in her own hands, Tu'amqolo sees no reason to approach anyone within or without of the organization—not for help and not to tell them what she knows. The ultimate keeper of secrets, Tu'amqolo simply keeps this to herself, confident in her ability to maintain the status quo.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d10, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Taunt d6, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Cautious, Death Wish, Suspicious (Major)

Edges: Assassin, Crystal Specialization (Tattletale), Extraction, Improved Specialization, Marksman, Maseian Rite of Passage, Streetwise, Thief

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), sniper rifle (30/60/120, 2d10, AP 2, RoF 1, Shots

1, Snapfire), modified Syn pistol (12/24/48, 2d8, RoF 1, AP 1, 10 shots, equipped with silencer (Notice -4 to hear shot)), Syn knife (Str+d4), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Crystal Specialization:** Tu'amqolo has developed the following unique powers for Tattletale, thanks to the Crystal Specialization Edge. While it's slotted, she also gains Alertness.

» *Detect arcana* (-1). Tu'amqolo is so sensitive to secrets that she can sense things which are hidden or forgotten.

» *Invisibility* (-3). Tu'amqolo can temporarily turn her own presence into a secret, avoiding people's attention.

» *Object reading* (-1). Even the world itself can't hide secrets from Tu'amqolo. When she stands quietly for several moments, she can sense the events that transpired in that place. Allowed Modifiers: All.

TUHINGA

Tuhinga needs to find her lost daughter and reconcile with her, but she also searches for the whereabouts of her original hunting team: they all hold a piece of her in them.

Some of them were never even aware that some of their feelings weren't theirs, being instead pieces of Tuhinga's emotions which she planted in them. She only did it sporadically, and only because those feelings were too hard for her to deal with. They were about events she experienced during the early days in Syn, when things were... different. Only much later did she realize that the emotions contain some of her memories—memories that Tuhinga and Syn desperately need now.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d10, Common Knowledge d8, Crystal Channeling d12, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Blind, Compulsive Behavior

Edges: Block, Improved Block, Combat Reflexes, Crystal Specialization (Sympa), Frenzy, Sweep, Trademark Weapon (shard-tipped staff), Woodsman



Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), shard-tipped staff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach 1, two-hands), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Aura Sight:** Thanks to her Crystal, Tuhinga can sense the auras of people around her, so she knows where they are and has a general idea of the actions they are taking. She is still blind in all other ways.
- **Crystal Specialization:** Tuhinga has developed the following unique powers for Sympa, thanks to the Crystal Specialization Edge. While it's slotted, she also gains Strong Willed.
 - » *Mind wipe* (-2). Tuhinga has learned that especially powerful emotions can carry some memories within them. If she evokes a specific emotion within someone, the same feeling they felt during a specific memory, she can then pluck it out of them and make them forget the memory. She can also instill that emotion, including its memory, into someone else. She can use this on herself as well.
 - » *Protection* (Ongoing, -1). Tuhinga developed a technique allowing her to bring her emotions to the front, hardening them as a physical barrier that envelops her. Only she can see it. While active, she must keep grunting or exclaiming to keep her spirits high. Allowed Modifier: More Armor.
 - » *Telekinesis* (-3). By picking a single emotion and extending it like a tendril, Tuhinga can manipulate things from afar.
- **Shard-tipped staff:** Tuhinga has gained mastery over the shard at the tip of her staff, and she can activate it as a free action without the need for a roll. It allows her to create a thick force field around the staff's edge and along its length, effectively turning it into a new weapon. The staff's stats are replaced as follows: Maul (Str+d10, two hands, +2 damage to objects), halberd (Str+d8, Reach 1, two hands), spear (3/6/12, Str+d6, Reach 1, returns to her hand after being thrown).

YURHANT

Yurhant knows more about Fjordstad's history and relics than perhaps any other person alive, but these things matter little to him. His world is all he cares about, and that world is changing, dying. Something has been changing the climate of his northern abode. Yurhant doesn't know enough about industrialization, greenhouse gases, pollution and the like, so he assumes there's a person responsible for the change.

He might, in fact, be right—but there's no way to know for sure. At least not until he decides to tell someone of the environmental changes he's witnessed. Then some real experimentation can be done and conclusions can be reached.

For now, Yurhant has begun to attack his unknown enemy. A budding eco-terrorist, Yurhant is sabotaging any machine or sign of modernity he sees on his travels, trying to turn the land back into a peaceful wilderness.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Crystal Channeling d8, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Stealth d8, Survival d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean, Outsider (Minor), Stubborn

Edges: Beast Master (x2), Brawny, Fjordstadian Scrutiny, Frenzy, Second Breath, Trademark Weapon (bone-crafted ice pick), Woodsman

Gear: Reinforced Syn suit (+2 Armor), bone-crafted ice pick (Str+d6, AP 2), several kits that provide +2 to various skills.

Special Abilities

- **Companion:** Yurhant's companion has the statistics of a bear, at Size 1. It was upgraded to a Wild Card through a second application of the Beast Master Edge.
- **Healer:** Yurhant has mastered the use of the *healing* power through his Crystal. He can use all Modifiers.

Animals of Bogovia

The main predator in the woods of Bogovia is, of course, the wolves—and there are many kinds of them. The northern forests are also home to wild boars, bats, and many marsupials and beavers. The south, which is swampier, has cranes, pelicans, alligators, and turtles, but mostly frogs and insects.

DOUR RAVEN

A dour raven—not to be confused with the sullen raven, the glum raven, or the bleak raven, all of which are also native to Bogovia—is a short, flightless bird that eyes you suspiciously.

Many rural communities along the eastern reaches of the Land raise a few dour ravens in a coop-like structure (but away from the hens; they don't get along). The ravens have an uncanny ability to find and dig up several species of worms which are highly useful in the silk and fishing businesses. The ravens spend most mornings out in the dark forests, hopping between bushes and croaking in protest. This draws the attention of their owners, who are usually heavily armed in order to fend off all the *other* things attracted to the ravens' calls.

Just like the common raven, the dour raven is capable of basic tool use and can recognize human faces, but its intelligence is a double-edged sword. The raven's tastes grow more sophisticated (some would say petty) as it grows older. A dour raven might refuse to drink anything other than rose-scented sweetened water, and will croak in protest and peck its owners' kneecaps until it is appeased. When it gets its way, it will probably groan and roll its eyes at the quality or the presentation, the ungrateful jerk.

Dour ravens can't be bred in captivity. The little bastards hide their eggs deep in the forest and never show them to their

owner, which is why Bogovian children learn how to chase and capture young chicks. Dour ravens congregate in groups of about seven (a "grudge" of ravens), both in nature and in captivity. Well, "captivity."

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4-2, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 2

Edges: —

Special Abilities

- **Go For the Knees:** When attacking larger creatures such as Agents, the dour raven goes for the knees. If the bird scores a Wound, it has hit the character's knee. The character must make a Vigor roll or they are Slow (Minor) until the Wound heals.
- **Leap:** The raven can flap its wings just enough to fly with a pace of 8" once every two turns. It can't fly higher than twice its height.
- **Peck:** Str damage.
- **Size -3 (Very Small):** Ravens are typically as high as your knee.

WISP WASPS

An unsettling sight one can occasionally see in the Marshes and the Murk is a humanoid figure standing still in the mist. But is it humanoid? Its features are so obscured that it's hard to tell. And then the moan begins. Someone weeping in a pleading tone. Or is it the wind whistling through the creaking timber of dead trees?

The figure is probably a nest of wasps, and the moan is probably their strange buzzing. They're instinctively trying to lure you into a hidden quickmud pool, where you'll begin sinking. They'll then start attacking your ears and eyes to eat your gooey flesh.

Wisp wasps gather in three swarms, each a Small Blast Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d10





Skills: Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: — ; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Deceiving:** The nest's true nature is only revealed with a success on a Notice roll, which is usually affected by swamp mists (Dim Illumination), vegetation (Light Cover), and distance. Wasps attempt to build nests in places just far enough away from a path to be somewhat recognizable, yet still requiring the watcher to come closer and fall into a mud pit.
- **Fear:** The "person" you're approaching erupts with wasps that approach you as you're stuck in mud. It's a frightening experience.
- **Flight:** Flying Pace of 10".
- **Sting:** The swarm inflicts dozens of tiny stings every round, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Because the wasps tend to attack only after a target is half-sunk in mud, damage is usually applied to the head and torso.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of hundreds of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area effect weapons work normally, and a character can swat to inflict their damage in Strength each round. The swarm may be foiled by total immersion in water.

WOLF

There sure are a lot of wolves in Bogovia. Most use the wolf or dire wolf statistics from *Savage Worlds*, but some other types exist as well.

Bolf

A bolf is three badgers in a wolf suit. Really. In a land where the only thing that isn't regularly attacked by a wolf is other wolves, some ancestor of the common badger had the clever idea to skin a wolf and move as one of them to hide in plain sight. A Crystal must have been involved at some point, but its influence is minimal. The only thing making these badgers different from other badgers is their ability (and willingness) to clean, enter, and animate wolf skins.

The statistics are for a single bolf badger.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d4-1, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Edges: Frenzy

Special Abilities:

- **Badger in Wolf Clothing:** At first glance, the bolf looks like a regular wolf, more or less. A Notice -2 roll reveals the ruse; wolves roll at -4 because the creature "smells right."
- **Bite/Claws:** Str damage.
- **Burrow (3"):** The badger can quickly dig short tunnels.
- **Low Light Vision:** No penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Size -2 (Small):** The badgers are as big as a medium dog.
- **They're Onto Us!** When any of the badgers believe they've been spotted, all three burst out of their disguise and attack the closest exposed flesh (usually hands or faces). Anyone who Noticed the danger is Vulnerable to this attack; all others are subject to The Drop.

Rot Wolf

What's worse than a big wolf trying to eat you? One that's so big and tough it's still alive despite contracting a wasting disease! This makes it extra-mad and violent as it tries to eat you.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: Alertness, Berserk, Frenzy

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Fearless:** The rot wolf is pure instinct, pure violence.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a Wound.
- **Infection (-2):** A target Shaken or Wounded by a rot wolf's bite must make a Vigor -2 roll or contract a Chronic disease.
- **Speed:** d10 running die.

Animals of Fjordstad

Most of Fjordstad's lower lands are home to herds of deer, along with foxes, cougars, and owls. In the mountains one can find lions, wolves, goats, and eagles. The Wilds are a different matter, with larger and more unusual creatures (and some penguins!). The cities have their own mini-ecosystems, where pigeons, squirrels, racoons, rats, and roaches have become the norm.

RAT, GIANT

Lots of people equals lots of poop. Lots of poop equals big sewers. Big sewers + lots of poop = really big rats.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4-1, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Edges: Dodge

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+1.
- **Infection:** Their bite delivers a Debilitating disease.
- **Size -2 (Small):** These rats are about the size of a medium dog.

WILDS BEAST

Hunters on the edge of the Wilds talk of hulking humanoid figures that can occasionally be seen through thick snow storms, always disappearing before the storm ends. Are they gigantic snow apes? A Fjordstadian experiment gone wrong? A remnant of the Bygone Age?

Who knows.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Edges: Brute, Sweep

Special Abilities:

- **Camouflage:** Wild beasts have a thick white fur which grants them +2 on Stealth rolls in the snow.
- **Environmental Resistance:** Wilds beasts have +4 to resist cold Hazards and attacks, and reduce cold damage by 4.
- **Resilient:** The beast can take one Wound before it's Incapacitated.
- **Size 2:** The wilds beast stands much taller than a man, with thick arms and legs.

WHITE HORSE

A white horse is a horse-sized rodent, which is a lot longer than it is tall, with white fur and a huge, bushy tail. Fjordstadians have been using them for hundreds of years as pack and riding animals—although their use has declined with the rise of inner-city public transportation. Today they are mostly riding animals on rural farms, but at least one of the Eleven Cities holds a biannual white horse dressage competition, which is favored by old-fashioned nobles.

The white horse is known to be jumpy and excitable, but white horse wranglers know how to calm the steeds down. This is done by tiring them out and using white-outs (similar to horse blinders, these ensure the rodents mostly see a calm, non-changing white landscape).





Various concoctions are also added to their food to keep them feeling heavy, like after a big lunch.

White horses are especially sensitive to sudden movements, even more than sudden noises. If they enter their excited state, the best advice is to hold on tight and wait until they stop running around; only the best of riders can hope to calm a white horse down by themselves. Wild white horses tend to jump around in search of shelter, and some domesticated breeds do the same. This leads many of them to instinctively hide behind a pile of snow, no matter what color fur they were bred to have. Despite generations of breeders trying to eliminate this behavior, they have at most managed to make domesticated white horses just jump around in circles.

These statistics are for the common riding horse. This being Fjordstad, someone has probably tried creating a white *war-horse*, probably with disastrous results.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8

Edges: Fleet-Footed

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fast Reactions:** When the white horse is heading into a collision, it gets an Agility check to hop onto the obstacle or dodge to the side. This brings it to a stop without suffering collision damage.
- **Jumpy:** When the white horse would become Shaken, it goes into a jumping craze instead of being Shaken. A white horse that becomes Shaken while already in a craze becomes Shaken as usual. White horses trained for fighting get a Spirit check to prevent the craze, and become Shaken instead. Once a white horse goes into a jumping craze, it spends each turn moving around randomly or in circles. A rider must make a Riding check to stay mounted. At the start of its turn, the white horse gets a Smarts check to stop the craze; if it has a rider, they can make a Riding roll instead.
- **Size 2:** White horses weigh around 800 lbs.

Animals of the Islands

The Islands are full of lizards and birds of all types, and their shores are rich with sea turtles, crabs, dugongs, otters, seals, and elephant seals. The sea itself is home to dolphins, many types of whales, and every type of aquatic life one can imagine.

HULL LEVIATHANS

The hull leviathans are an uncommon but well-established mode of transportation around the Large Lands, where the winds are relatively calm and sails aren't as effective as a huge whale-like creature pulling your boat. The hull leviathans were domesticated hundreds of years ago, and have since been bred into three distinct size groups: the 10-foot-long boaters, the 25-foot-long arc-backs, and the 75-foot-long broad-tails.

Hull leviathans are highly intelligent and have complex social lives, both between themselves and with their handlers. The role of a whale handler is, in many respects, like that of a kindergarten teacher who has to keep the kids in line.

Boater

Boaters are great at pulling small rafts, but thanks to their high intelligence they also excel as mounts.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4, Taunt d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 10. Can stay submerged for about 30 minutes.
- **Size 3.**
- **Tail Slap:** Str+d6.

Arc-back

Arc-backs are the most common breed of hull leviathans, and are a regular sight around the Large Lands.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Notice d6,

Stealth d4, Taunt d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13

Edges: —

Special Abilities

- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 10. Can stay submerged for about 30 minutes.
- **Size 6 (Large).**
- **Tail Slap:** Str+d6.

Broad-tail

The immense broad-tails have never been used as weapons of war, despite consistent efforts. They're generally too calm to fight.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+10, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d4, Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 21

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 10. Can stay submerged for about 30 minutes.
- **Size 11 (Huge).**
- **Swat:** Ignore up to 4 points of Scale when attacking with their tail.
- **Tail Slap:** Str+d10.

SPIDER CRAB

This horrific-looking creature is similar to a spider in two ways. It has eight very long legs and it weaves webs, using tendrils of seaweed. Unlike a spider, it's also really big, and works well in teams. So it's worse than a spider in every way.

Spider crabs gather around rock formations, both underwater and above the surface, to stretch their seaweed webs. They're happy to eat whatever they catch: fish, squid, penguins, pearl divers, etc.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: Free Runner

Special Abilities:

- **Pincer:** Str+d4.
- **Seaweed Webbing:** The spider crab usually carries a web of seaweed it has woven beforehand. It can throw it with Athletics and a Range of 6", affecting a Small Blast Template. A hit means the victim is Entangled, or Bound with a raise.

- **Size -1:** The crab's body is no larger than a human torso, but it can stand so tall that it's higher than a person's head.

- **Small Body:** Hitting the main body is a Called Shot (Small -2).

TAKTAK

A vicious off-shoot of the otherwise timid gecko family, the taktak—named for its mating call—is a camouflage expert with endless patience. In the wild they like to prey on insects, waiting for them to land literally on their faces before snapping them up. However, they have become acclimated to human society and are now an annoying pest on many Islands.

The taktak hides itself in a corner or deep inside a sack, and waits until everyone is asleep. It then sneaks around the house, opening every container it can get its strange little claws on, spoiling fresh and preserved food. The annoying pest then sneaks out to avoid being caught.

Some taktaks get into backpacks, where they can sit still for several days, waiting for an opportunity to rip through every last package the team has.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d4-2, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Notice d6, Stealth d12





Pace: 4; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 2

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Camouflaged:** A taktak can move its weird limbs and change its skin color to look like an uninteresting part of the scenery. If it has a few moments to ready itself, this camouflage imposes a -4 on Notice checks to realize its presence.
- **Size -3 (Very Small):** Taktaks are the size of a large chameleon.
- **Wait, What's That:** When the taktak suspects it is about to be discovered, it suddenly changes its color and “appears out of nowhere.” For most creatures, it takes a moment to understand what they're looking at; the taktak uses this opportunity to run into a safe hole. When someone searches for a camouflaged taktak, it makes a Stealth Test vs. the target's Smarts, trying to Shake them and skitter away.

THIEVING PELICAN

When one first sees a thieving pelican swooping down toward them, one's first thought might be “Wait, why isn't it called a *giant* pelican? It's huge!” A moment later, when the pelican soars back up with your backpack in its beak, you will understand.

Thieving pelicans nest on the Island of the Giants, but they can spend many days in the air and are able to reach all of the Islands (and perhaps beyond). They appear to have gained a learned behavior, taught by parents to their young, to recognize and go after what people consider valuable. It's usually tasty food. If it's not, they deposit it in their nest on their Island, probably on top of a small mountain of stolen treasures.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Flight:** The pelicans fly at a Pace of 24”.
- **Size 4 (Large):** The pelican seems to weigh a ton, but it's actually much lighter. Its wingspan is 12’.
- **Slicing Beak:** Str+d4.
- **Swoop and Snatch:** If the thieving pelican flies at least 10” in a straight line before

reaching its target, it gets +2 on its Fighting roll. On a hit, it tries to grab something the target is carrying and store it in its throat pouch (its beak is sharp—it can cut through straps!). This is handled similarly to Disarm: the target must make a Strength roll against the damage total, with a -2 if the pelican got a raise. If the pelican aims for something that is being wielded, it must make a Called Shot as with regular Disarm.

Animals of Maseia

Maseia's open plains allow many large animals to roam free: there are herds of bison, elk and moose, as well as bears and cougars. The river valleys and forested areas are home to wild cats, coyotes, lots of fish, and dozens of types of birds. The Badlands and Desert Peninsula have some of the toughest survivors around, including giant lizards, rattlesnakes, marsupials, and armadillos.

LAKE MOLE

The lake mole is a carnivorous rodent the size of a large dog. Besides its unusual size, the mole is mostly known for the thin tendrill-like organ that emerges from its nose, which it can puff up to create a round, green circle. The mole hunts by submerging itself in the shallow water close to a lake's bank, where its nose organ looks almost indistinguishable from the average lily pad. Its diet consists of small birds, frogs, roots, and the occasional fish.

The lake mole is nearly blind, but it's highly sensitive to vibrations, both underground and underwater. The mole is especially active during spring time, when hundreds of them travel underground between neighboring lakes in search of mates. That's the best time of the year to hunt them down—their fur is highly praised for its water resistant properties.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

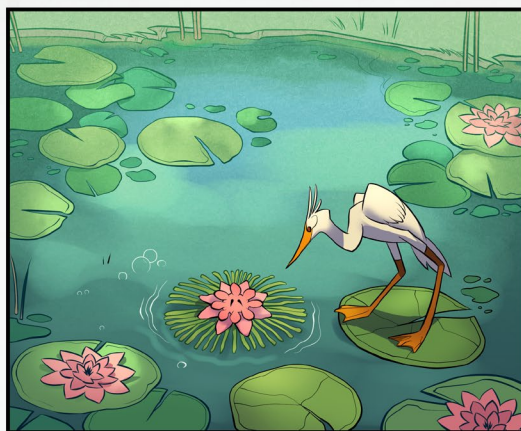
Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: —

Special Abilities

- **Armor +1:** The lake mole's hide and fur are quite thick.



- **Blind:** If the lake mole can't touch the ground or a body of water, it's effectively blind.
- **Burrow (8"):** The lake mole can easily move its Pace through soft ground, digging about 3 feet underneath the surface. It can just as easily submerge itself underwater.
- **Camouflage:** When lying still in its native ambush environment (among lily pads and between reeds), the mole gains +4 to Stealth rolls.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Size -1:** About as big as a big dog.

MOUNTAIN OWLS

There are many types of unusual birds that live on floating mountains. Giant eagles are the most well-known (they're like eagles, only really big) but mountain owls are probably the most dangerous. Unlike most other raptors, which hunt small mammals, mountain owls hunt *large* mammals.

Clever and vicious, the owls glide silently above, announcing themselves by dropping a rock on their prey's head. Several moments later, they swoop at the target. Mountain owls live and hunt in pairs, one harassing the target while the other tears at its neck until it stops moving.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: Feint

Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4.



- **Flight:** The owls fly at a Pace of 36".
- **Rock Drop:** A mountain owl can carry a rock the size of a watermelon and drop it at a target from a great height using its Athletics. It always targets the head, but ignores the Called Shot penalty. On a success, the owl deals 2d6 damage; it usually tries to catch the target unaware to get The Drop and therefore also deal a Knockout Blow.
- **Size 1:** Mountain owls are 4' tall, with a 10' wingspan.

RHINOCEROS REX

Possibly the result of mating between a regular rhino and the ancient beasts of the Desert Peninsula, the rhinoceros rex—colloquially known as rho-rho for the sound you make when you realize it has noticed your presence—is among the largest creatures of the Maseian plains. They're omnivores, but some have acquired a taste for bison and goats, happily chasing after nomad clans to repeatedly harass their herds.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d6, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 15 (2)

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Heavy hide.
- **Charge:** The rhinoceros rex charges into its targets, knocking them down. It must run at least a number of inches equal to its Pace in a straight line. Everyone it touches or runs into must make a Strength roll against the rhino or be Pushed, knocked back 2" (4" with a raise) and make an Athletics roll to avoid being knocked down. They also take Str+d6 damage.



- **Hardy:** Taking a second Shaken result doesn't cause a Wound.
- **Horn:** Str+d6.
- **Size 5 (Large):** This giant beast is the size of a Tank.

SISYPHEAN BEAR

Maseia is a Land of rolling hills and things rolling on hills. The sisyphian bear is a strange breed of brown bear that learned to use the hilly terrain and tall grass to hunt slowly but efficiently, using the following bizarre method.

First, the bear uproots a small tree or a couple of bushes and climbs to the top of a hill, disguising itself with this simple camouflage. It will then stand silently for hours until a herd animal comes to graze at the bottom of the hill. Springing into action, the bear tosses aside the camouflage and rolls down the hill until it knocks the creature down with amazing accuracy, not unlike a bowling ball hitting a pin (and with about the same difference in mass). After having lunch, the bear will restart the procedure, climbing up the hill only to roll down again in a few hours.

Several Maseian clans have learned to use the bear's instinctive behavior to help with construction and the transportation of goods. Their trained sisyphian bears carry sacks of fish, barrels of water, and building materials up plateaus—then roll back down using tunnels and slides constructed specifically for this reason. The bears' natural patience has proved immensely useful, as they are willing to wait for the meals they receive three times a day despite carrying large amounts of food up to the plateau. Occasionally their camouflage instinct triggers for no apparent reason, and they might stand in the middle of a road for hours, "hiding" behind a bucket of water.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Edges: Brute

Special Abilities

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.

- **Lift and Carry:** A sisyphian bear's natural instinct is to grab its foe and carry them until they ram into something, usually a tree or a rock face. A bear that hits with a raise has grabbed its foe (who is now Entangled). The bear will continue moving with the foe, usually running in a straight line to ram them into the nearest obstacle, thus dealing Str damage (this is part of the run, and does not cost an action).
- **Rolling:** A sisyphian bear standing at the top of a slope can curl up into a ball and roll down, crashing into things with relatively little harm to itself. The bear makes an Athletics roll to hit; if the target is aware of it, they can try to Evade. If the Evade is unsuccessful, both the bear and its target take 2d6 damage (+1d6 with a raise on the roll), and anyone who's Shaken or Wounded falls prone. The bear has a special +2 Toughness bonus against this damage.
- **Size 2:** These creatures can stand up to 8' tall and weigh over 1,000 pounds.



Animals of Zingama

Zingama's jungles are home to jaguars (use the lion stats from *Savage Worlds*), sloths, countless lizards, and swarms of insects such as centipedes and hornets. There are also several species of monkeys and apes, including gorillas. There are countless colorful birds living all over the jungle. In the rivers one might find water snakes (constrictors) and turtles, as well as alligators and poisonous frogs.

FOUL

The foul is a type of large flightless bird, known for being stinky, ugly, and completely ruthless. Despite standing taller than a human, they are surprisingly effective at traveling at speed in thick vegetation using their extremely long legs, which almost seem to break as they move in an unseemly manner.

A family of fouts attack from the bushes, one after the other, rushing at their victim and then past them into the safety of the undergrowth.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Edges: Extraction, Free Runner

Special Abilities:

- **Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Resilient:** Fouls can take one Wound before they're Incapacitated.
- **Size 2:** A foul is over 7' tall and weighs over 300 lbs.
- **Stench:** A foul smells very foul indeed, but when it's injured, it releases flatulence that's even worse. After the first time a foul takes a Wound in combat, everyone in a Small Blast Template around it (except fouls) becomes Distracted, and must make a Vigor roll to avoid becoming Vulnerable as well.

HOUND MOTH

A hound moth—not to be confused with the moth hound, which hunts them—is a very



big tree moth. They usually hunt in groups, going after smaller insects, but after the mating season they become highly protective of their eggs (which they keep inside trees) and attack almost anything.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Flight:** Hound moths fly at a Pace of 8".
- **Painful Wounds:** If a moth inflicts a Wound, the character is Distracted by the pain.
- **Size -1 (Small):** Hound moths are about the size of a dog.

SNAKE

Besides the usual types of snakes, Zingama is also home to several other species.

Anaconda

These giant water snakes are a common danger to fishing boats. Zingamaians keep finding new ways to repel them, only to have the snakes overcome these methods a few months later. During the flooding season, when the water rises, anacondas can reach far inland as well.



Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str.
- **Constrict:** +2 to Athletics and Strength rolls made to grapple.
- **Size 4 (Large):** Anacondas stretch 15' long and can swallow a human corpse whole.

Delivery Snake

A result of careful breeding over many years, the delivery snake is large enough to allow a person to ride it or to hold several packages, and can be taught a route. This makes them superior to the previous breed, the homing snake, which had a strong instinct to return to its home. The delivery snake is remarkably fast for a snake, but the creature's reflexes haven't caught up with its improved speed, leading to occasional crashes into trees.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d4, Notice d10, Stealth d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9

Edges: Fleet-Footed

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str.
- **Constrict:** +2 to Athletics and Strength rolls made to grapple.
- **Crash-prone:** When the snake moves more than 10" in a straight line, it moves the rest of its Pace (at least 1") in a straight line, taking 2d4 damage if it crashes into something.
- **Size 3:** A delivery snake is 12' long and is relatively thick for a snake (3' in diameter).

Inflated Snake

The rivers of Zingama are haunted by a deadly snake. In its resting form the deflated snake looks like a squashed, wrinkled, blue-green mess—but when startled or hunting, it inflates itself ten times larger to look intimidating. It is literally full of air, so it can't handle more than a hit or two should the assailant be unfazed by this display. This is why the inflation has a secondary use. An

inflated snake can release all of its air—now mixed with poison—to propel itself blindly backward and leave a poisonous fog in its place.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Quick

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str.
- **Camouflage:** In a river, the snake gets +2 on Stealth rolls.
- **Exhale:** After inhaling (see below), the snake can release a cloud of poisonous Lethal gas in a Medium Blast Template, resisted with a Vigor roll. The snake then deflates and launches backwards through the air 2d6", possibly smashing into something (taking 2d4 damage). It then takes a level of Fatigue. The snake loses its Resilient ability; if it took an extra Wound, it now becomes a level of Fatigue.
- **Inhale:** The snake can inflate itself and become as large as Size 2 without gaining the additional Toughness bonus. This can count as an Intimidation Test. While Inflated it is Resilient and can take an extra Wound before being Incapacitated. An attack that deals the snake a Wound releases a spray of Lethal gas in a Small Blast Template around it.
- **Poison:** Lethal. The snake does not inject this poison into its victims, and is *not* immune to it.
- **Size (-3 Very Small):** In its deflated size, this snake is as long as a human arm.

ZAPACHA

Zingamaian nobles enjoy the luxuries of life, big and small alike, and the zapacha is quite small indeed. The size of a mouse and as cuddly as a chinchilla, these blonde-furred rodents are a common house pet (although not among the *commoners*). It is adored for its ability to stay cute throughout its life (unlike dogs and cats, who have the audacity to stop being puppies and kittens).

A zapacha is generally docile, expressing itself through purrs and squeaks that most people find adorable. It's an omnivore, so



most owners enjoy sharing their meal of trendy food with their zapacha. The tiny rodents mate for life, and many Zingamaian noble houses maintain strict breeding protocols to keep their line of zapachas pure. Each has its own peculiarities, such as a specific shade of fur or roundness of eyes.

Zapachas are slightly venomous: a gland at the base of their armpits secretes a very mild numbing agent. The zapacha, which is immune to its own toxin, licks its armpit regularly; it delivers the toxin through its saliva when it bites. Most pet zapachas almost never bite, but it's common practice to feed them a monthly medicine that inhibits the production of the toxin.

Wild zapachas are *nothing like* their domesticated counterparts.

In the jungles and fields of Zingama, zapachas travel in packs of fifty to sixty, and can best be described as “surprisingly angry.” A zapacha swarm is almost always on the move during the day, disappearing into the underbrush after nightfall. When prey is in sight—anything up to the size of an adult human is fair game—they swarm it, bite until it's paralyzed, and keep biting until they're all fed before dispersing into the wild. The victim might still be alive at this point, but very badly bitten and probably bleeding to death.

Swarms of zapachas can occasionally be spotted on the outskirts of major urban areas. They're attracted to the refuse, farm animals, and small children that people leave in the open. The Zingamaian commoner sees the zapacha as a dangerous pest; the fact that the nobles keep them as pets only worsens the already-tense relations between the classes.

A pet zapacha that becomes lost or is abandoned can be absorbed into a swarm with remarkable ease.

Because of this, from afar many swarms look like a brownish or grayish blob with several blonde dots, hinting that some of the zapachas in the swarm used to have a very different lifestyle.

Some Islands are also infested by these swarms. Reckless traders, hopeful of introducing this new pet to their local markets, brought several crates of zapachas to their shores. The animals escaped, formed a swarm, and reproduced like crazy.

A zapacha swarm covers an area of a Medium Blast Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: —

Special Abilities

- **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of dozens of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict their damage in Strength each round. The swarm can be foiled by jumping in water.
- **Paralyzing Bite:** The swarm inflicts dozens of tiny bites every round, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (targets in completely sealed suits are immune). A victim that becomes Shaken as a result of this damage must make a Vigor roll or become Stunned. On a Critical Failure, they're completely paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.



ZOMBIE PANTHER

In the southern reaches of Zingama, there is a parasitic fungus that's twice as nasty as any other. Early in its life cycle, it feeds off other fungi in colonies that stretch down from infected branches, looking like a striped banana. On occasion, a strong wind will rip such a colony from the tree; it will float away in jerky movements not unlike an injured bird.

The black panther is a dark-furred jaguar that hunts alone, lives in the same habitat, and loves eating injured birds. It might be confused by the taste of the "bird," but that's nothing compared to its surprise when it dies from a fungal infection in its brain three weeks later. Despite being dead, it then starts walking around again.

For the next few days the creature reacts to any perceived threat with violence, but no longer hunts or eats meat. Instead, it gorges itself on fruit. Eventually, the fungus that is controlling the cadaver's brain makes it hop into a tree and stop moving. As the corpse and the fruits inside it rot, they provide rich ground for other fungi to grow. At this point, the parasite starts to feed off the new fungi, and the cycle begins again.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: Improved Frenzy

Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Dead:** Add +2 to Toughness and Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken, and ignore 1 point of Wound penalties.
- **Fearless:** Nothing scares a fungus.
- **Low Light Vision:** Jaguars ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Pounce:** The jaguars prefer to attack from a hiding place. If one can leap at least 1" and has The Drop, the target must make an Athletics roll (at -2 if the jaguar got a raise) or fall prone.
- **Size 1:** It's about as big as a lion.

Crystal Manifestations

Every feral Crystal manifests its theme in a way that influences its environment. Some manifest "frames" (see below), which are semi-elemental, semi-autonomous beings that haunt the Crystal's location. All of these disappear once the Crystal is tamed, as they are contingent on its powers.

Not all Crystal effects are temporary, however. Some Crystals have influenced the development of their local flora and fauna—or human habitation—in ways that are permanent and hereditary. These changes, though related to the specific Crystal which created them, no longer have any ongoing connection with its existence.

Creatures and locations whose powers are an ongoing expression of a feral Crystal (and therefore will return to their original form when it's tamed) are usually referred to as "manifestations." Those whose powers are hereditary or the result of a permanently mutated ecosystem are usually referred to as "corrupted" or "Crystal-tainted." Many people, Syn Agents included, refer to both types of Crystal effects as Crystal-touched.

ELEMENTARY MANIFESTATION FRAME (FRAMES)

Many Feral Crystals manifest entities that share the same basic build, usually described as half-humanoid—specifically the upper half. These manifestations consist of something akin to a torso, head, and arms, although their forms are malleable and change as they move.

Each group of these beings is made of a specific kind of energy and has its own abilities depending on the Crystal that manifested it. However, the similarity in shape and function (as well as their common occurrences) has led Syn to designate them all as "elementary manifestation frames." Most Agents call them EM-Frames, or just frames.

EM-Frames have the following statistics, but each Crystal's frames have their own unique abilities. Here are some suggestions:



- **Aquatic:** Aquatic, Breath Weapon (2d6 damage, water jet), Tentacles (water whip).
- **Awareness:** Alertness, Infravision, Notice d8, Weakness (Distracted by bright light, loud noise).
- **Confusing:** If the target of an attack becomes Shaken or Wounded, they must resist a *confusion* effect.
- **Rocky:** Armor +2, Size 0, Resilient, Strength d8.
- **Shadow:** Unlike other frames this one can't fly, but it has Fleet Footed and Wall Walker. Can see in total darkness and has Stealth d10. Weakness to light.
- **Shooting:** Shooting d8, dealing 2d6 damage and probably some effect as well.
- **Sturdy:** Armor +2, Hardy, Environmental Resistance (surrounding environment).
- **Toxic:** Breath Weapon (3d6 damage, toxic gas), Poison (Mild or Lethal), can become Ethereal (gaseous form).

REGULAR FRAMES

These manifestations tend to swarm in the vicinity of their Crystal, doing what one would expect of its theme. Fire frames light things on fire, dream frames try to enter people's minds and possess their thoughts, brooding frames sit around and groan at each other, etc.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Elemental:** Elementals have bodies of pure energy. They ignore additional damage from Called Shots, ignore 1 point of Wound penalties, don't breathe or eat, are immune to disease and poison, and can only be healed via magic or natural healing.
- **Flight:** Frames usually hover above the ground, but can fly higher if need be at their regular Pace.
- **Size -1:** Regular frames are mostly just torso and arms.



POWERFUL FRAMES

These manifestations are larger and stronger than the regular frames, and seem to have more intent behind their actions. While still reacting instinctively, they generally try to accomplish specific tasks: dehydration frames attempt to dam the river, air frames control the airspace above the Crystal, etc.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Elemental:** Elementals have bodies of pure energy and thus ignore additional damage from Called Shots, ignore 1 point of Wound penalties, don't breathe or eat, are immune to disease and poison, and can only be healed via magic or natural healing.
- **Flight:** Frames usually hover above the ground, but can fly higher if need be, at their regular Pace.





- **Size 2:** Powerful frames look vaguely like large, menacing humans.

DISASTROUS FRAMES

The largest and most dangerous EM-Frames have a distinctive humanoid appearance, occasionally including legs or other appendages. Their forms are far less malleable than those of their weaker cousins. A Crystal will have only one or two active disastrous frames, and they will usually try to fulfill a specific task, which can lead them far from their originator Crystal. A metal frame will assault a village made of wood in order to reconstruct it with steel, a grease frame will walk to the other side of the Land to retrieve a sample taken from its pool, etc. One Island makes use of a pleasing frame, which instinctively protects the people and makes sure they're all content. They call her Dissy.

There are reports of disastrous frames that formed around the bodies (or perhaps just the hearts) of deceased people. This apparently grants the frames a very limited ability to speak and reason. Because instances of this phenomenon are so rare, no thorough studies are available yet.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+6, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8

Pace: 14; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12

Edges: Sweep

Special Abilities:

- **Beams:** Can shoot beams of energy from its "head." Range of 6/12/24, 3d6 damage and an appropriate special effect. This attack counts as a Heavy Weapon.

- **Bash:** Str+d8.
- **Elemental:** Elementals have bodies of pure energy and thus ignore additional damage from Called Shots, ignore 1 point of Wound penalties, don't breathe or eat, are immune to disease and poison, and can only be healed via magic or natural healing.
- **Flight:** Frames usually hover above the ground, but can fly higher if need be at their regular Pace.
- **Hardy:** Second Shaken does not cause a wound.
- **Size 6 (Large):** Disastrous frames resemble powerful giants, standing 20 feet tall.
- **Swat:** Can ignore up to 4 points of Scale penalties when bashing.

CRYSTAL-TOUCHED ENCOUNTER GENERATOR

Use the following method to inject some fantastical elements into an adventure. Even when the Agents are after a specific Crystal, they might still meet Crystal-touched things that are unrelated to their chase. The world is full of many tainted creatures and locations.

To create a random Crystal-touched creature or event, first draw a card. If you get a Joker, draw two more cards and combine!

Now roll a d20 once or twice, on the table on the next page. Take the results and apply them to the person, creature (taken from this book or from *Savage Worlds*), or to the situation or environment (creating a Hazard). If you come up with a being or place that's especially unusual, consider applying Special Abilities such as Elemental or Resilient to reflect the thing's unnatural makeup.

CRYSTAL-TOUCHED ENCOUNTERS

Suit	It's a...	If it's a face card, then also...
Spades	Human-created artifact: chair, bucket, cart, house.	It's a unique and dangerous item: a Bygone device, a weapon, a Tank, etc.
Hearts	Person or group.	They are consumed by the Crystal's influence; its disposition has overtaken them.
Diamonds	Animal fitting the current Land.	The animal has a unique connection to something in its environment: it's literally part of it, lives in symbiosis, etc.
Clubs	Animal totally out of place.	Actually, it's a frame.
Joker	Draw two more cards and combine.	



CRYSTAL-TOUCHED ABILITIES

1	Acid. After it deals damage, it deals 2d4 damage next turn as well.	11	Spiky. It deals 2d4 when attacked, and extra +2 damage on its attacks.
2	Putrid. It's made of stinking mud or dead things. Make a Vigor roll when coming close, or become Distracted.	12	Soft. It takes -2 damage from weapon attacks and is gooey or malleable (it has Extraction).
3	Cold. It deals ice/wind damage and is immune to ice/wind effects.	13	Elastic. It can stretch, gaining Reach 2 or 3. It also takes -2 damage from weapons (they bounce off).
4	Hot. It deals fire/steam damage and is immune to fire/steam effects.	14	Mind-bending. Coming in contact with it or being close to it forces a <i>confusion</i> or even <i>stun</i> effect, using its Spirit.
5	Hovering. Maybe even flying. Ignores Difficult Ground and is Quick.	15	Barrier. It can erect a <i>barrier</i> either as a conscious effort (an action) or as a byproduct of an attack or movement.
6	Lasers. It shoots beams of energy with Shooting d8, dealing 2d8 damage.	16	Emotional. It can become very agitated (Berserk) or can make others emotional with <i>fear</i> or <i>puppet</i> (using Spirit).
7	Insects. It is either made of insects and can become a swarm, or is surrounded by a swarm of insects.	17	Deceptive. It is <i>disguised</i> , uses <i>illusion</i> , or uses <i>conceal arcane</i> (all using Smarts) to look like something else.
8	Speed. It's faster or slower than normal, (Fleet-Footed or Slow) and can also cast <i>speed</i> or <i>sloth</i> using Spirit.	18	Big. It's +2 Size (or more) or can use <i>grow</i> (with Spirit).
9	Explosive. It erupts for 2d6 damage in a SBT when destroyed. Roll a d4 on this table and add that ability as well.	19	Two-stages. Once it is defeated/overcome, it changes into something else—draw and roll again.
10	Ethereal. It's not completely real or only partly there. It can only be interacted with in specific circumstances.	20	Talkative. It will take the time to discuss things, and is either Menacing or can Humiliate.

FERAL MANIFESTATIONS FOR KNOWN CRYSTALS

The following is a list of suggestions for feral manifestations of all the Crystals appearing in this book (page number in parentheses). Use these as guidelines when creating manifestations for your own Crystals. Remember: all of these can change drastically according to the environment (examples are given for some of the Crystals).

Note that each Crystal can also have its own manifestation frames.

Absence (203): Once awoken, this Crystal is carried as the head of a disastrous frame, shooting beams that make things disappear. Alternatively: if implanted deliberately in the office of a political rival, some writings, charts, and even resolutions made in that office are forgotten by all. Someone holding Absence must make a Smarts check, otherwise they forget what they were doing and drop it.

Alizarin (197): A large part of a jungle is buzzing with crackling red energy that stretches between trees, turning the valley into a maze. This is the hunting ground of a giant beast which has the Crystal embedded in its hide. The beast can move through the energy barriers with ease, even creating dangerous energy bursts as it does so. Alizarin creates intense pain in the person holding it, forcing a Spirit roll to avoid a level of Fatigue.

Aurora (210): This Crystal lies deep in the Fjordstadian Wilds, guarded by bears and walking pine trees. The snow around it is constructed like a fortified hill and the winds push against all who come close. Anyone who dares to hold it will be attacked by all sorts of Hazards as nature itself turns against them—it takes twice as long to tame Aurora.

Bam-Bam (197): This Crystal animates rocks, loose earth, and even furniture or patches of snow into human-sized forms. These move around aimlessly but are high-



ly energized, releasing a small explosion whenever they hit something and a big explosion whenever they're "defeated." Use frames that explode for 2d6 damage in a Small Blast Template when Incapacitated. When Bam-Bam is held it energizes the holder's gloves, if they have any. The gloves explode for 2d6 damage after a turn, and if the Agent wishes to keep holding the Crystal through the explosion, they must make a Strength roll.

Beast (203): This Crystal is embedded in the forehead of a Gargantuan four-armed gorilla. Good luck, Agents! The Crystal furiously fights anyone grabbing it (literally—it has Fighting d8 and deals 2d6 damage). It also unleashes their inner beast; if they fail a Smarts -2 roll, they become Berserk.

Bellow (204): There's a place in the sea where tornadoes are born. First a whirlpool appears, then a roaring groan signals the eruption of swirling winds from under the waves. A column of raging storm is then unleashed upon the world. Bellow is buried down below, protected by a squid that can scream sonar blasts. To keep holding it, one must make a Strength roll to combat the increasingly powerful vibrations.

Bubble (72): A clearly visible shining globe sits on top of the highest tower or on the tallest rock spire, resting within a tiny bubble. Everything that comes close is enveloped in a similar bubble, becoming weightless and slowly rising into the air. When someone tries to reach for Bubble, it jumps away, floating. It can fly with a Pace of 6 and inflicts a -2 penalty on attempts to catch it.

Buddy (63): Buddy can be found by standing at a certain spot and waiting. Eventually someone will come along and just hand it to you! Alternatively: in a far-off society, the locals take excellent care of every guest, providing them with everything they need and making sure they have a very pleasant stay. Their own desires and urges are suppressed to such a level that they sleep walk, blindly trying to gain some release but also hurting themselves and others. Buddy has no problem with being held.

Claw (204): In a certain Zingamaian saloon, off an alley in one of the richer districts

of Zingama City, there's a special VIP area that is reserved only to those in the know. In that room, when sharp words are said, they literally cut. The high-class assassins who use this place know how to say small, sharp quips, which leave thin, barely noticeable cuts on the listener's skull. When their victims leave, they usually do so with hurt pride—and, unbeknownst to them, a bleed that will kill them in their sleep. Touching Claw directly causes a sharp piercing pain for 3d6 damage, and a Vigor roll to avoid taking -1 on all actions with the touched limb until fully healed.

Conscious-sense (63): This Crystal is being held by a person who "pushes" so hard against conscious thought that no one is able to perceive their existence. The person themselves no longer has any identity; their own thought patterns have been reduced to a single goal. This person is accompanied by frames that can enter a person's mind if they succeed in a melee attack, disappearing from the battlefield but pushing out the target's thoughts. This makes the victim Stunned if they fail a Spirit roll. Touching this Crystal releases a pulse that pushes against your mind, as in *slumber*.

Consistent (205): This Crystal is stuck in the antlers of a stag that never stops running. Whenever someone tries to capture it, it leaps and *shpangs* away from or directly into its pursuers. Several floating balls of kinetic energy float around the antlers, zipping through anyone coming close. When grabbed, Consistent starts *shpanging* with the person who is holding it, but the holder isn't protected from damage when crashing into things.

Dancer (64): Majestic swarms of bees move with precision and coordination to protect the small flower garden where this Crystal is lying. While trying to hold Dancer down, it jumps around a lot, inflicting -2 to grab attempts. If you fail to hold it, it gracefully flies toward your face with Fighting 1d8 for 1d6 damage (+4 for hitting the head).

Deathless (198): This Crystal can be found in a deserted village where only the spirits of the past still linger. Ghostly wagons, ghostly people, and the ghostly event that killed them all move in a bone-chill-



ing dance (Fear -2). One scientist is doing experiments on the ghosts, trying to capture the specific imprint of his dead lover. When touching Deathless, it forces your spirit out, making you Stunned unless you make a Spirit -2 roll.

Dry Tongue (205): Giant crab-like salt creatures (earth elementals who can't burrow but can spit salt as with *blind*, with Strength d10 and Size +1) protect a salt castle deep in the mountains. They go down to the lowlands at night to steal various implements and the occasional unlucky traveler. The children of the local village sneak into the hidden valley every week to pilfer blocks of high-quality salt, the village's main export. The Crystal is deep within a glowing salt column, and touching it forces salt to appear around your hands, then gradually around your whole body (Vigor -2 to prevent being covered). It takes one more round than usual to subdue Dry Tongue.

Dumb Luck (64): This strange Crystal can be found anywhere just lying on the ground. The moment someone picks it up, however, they're attacked by a tiger, hit by a cart, or fall off a cliff. Dumb Luck's frames have a d4 in Fighting, but whenever they miss, someone in their vicinity takes 2d6 damage from something bad happening to them. Grabbing Dumb Luck is simple, but the Agent must make a Spirit roll to avoid losing a Benny. If they don't have a Benny to lose, they automatically fail to hold it and it slips from their hands.

Ego (206): This Crystal is carried in the pouch of a very confident kangaroo. Through sheer force of personality, she managed to become the queen of a small island. All of the creatures there obey her; even the plants are willing to give her some slack. This Crystal's frames serve her, and are in the shape of kangaroos themselves. When grabbing the Crystal (if you manage to pry it loose from the entitled queen) its powerful presence is overwhelming. It's an Intimidation Test with a d10.

Faster (73): Faster is hiding on a rare floating rock—barely larger than a truck—in the Maseian Badlands. The rock rushes along its regular path so quickly that it's hard to reach it and even harder to grab it (espe-

cially since thunderstorms are common in the area). Faster zips around in the air, so grabbing it requires a roll with a -4.

Fireball (73): Wherever this Crystal is, things around it explode randomly. This includes its frames. BOOM! Alternatively: the Crystal is buried under a hill and the locals use natural rock chimneys to harness its heat. The person trying to hold this Crystal down better calm it with some ice or wind, otherwise it explodes after a single round, dealing 3d6 damage in a Medium Blast Template.

Geist (206): Deep in a graveyard, the visions and voices of the recently dead become real: entire scenes repeat themselves and various memories clash. The recently dead even walk around, though they are nothing but vicious id, their ego suppressed by Geist. Grabbing this Crystal makes people from your own past manifest before you, pleading, furious, or confused. It's very frightening (Fear -2).

Hard Shadow (73): A frighteningly powerful manifestation turns a whole ancient ruin into a nightmarish landscape. Even the walls and floors might be temporary, fading away suddenly, and your own shadows attack you from the sidelines. During a full moon, one can capture some shadow in a bottle to later mold into various forms. It's hard to find the Crystal since it's covered with shadow, and even harder to contain it. Unless kept in bright light, it creates shadow tendrils which try to choke the holder, grappling with Strength d12.

Harrier (198): This Crystal turned an entire family of bears into vicious, cold hunters. They travel the land in search of especially interesting prey, guided by the Crystal, which they carry in the pack of trophies they drag with them from place to place. They're efficient and patient, and can wait for weeks while they stake out a specific bird, a horse, or a traveler in a caravan. Grabbing Harrier is easy; letting go is the problem. The Agent must make a Spirit roll at -2 or they become obsessed with taking down the most capable, most dangerous opponent they can think of. Harrier then encourages them to slot it immediately—since it'll be very useful in hunting down this prey—but if they do



so, they gain this obsession as an additional Hindrance as long as its slotted, as if it was part of its disposition. If not slotted, this obsession fades after a minute.

Headlight (64): Buried in an old tomb, Headlight removes the light from all of the rooms in the underground mausoleum. The local creatures and residents have gained the ability to see perfectly in the dark. When a Heart suit is drawn, the darkness is banished, replaced by a sudden bright light that forces a Vigor roll to avoid becoming blind for the round. Headlight flashes rapidly in a nauseating fashion when grabbed; close your eyes or make a Vigor roll to avoid a level of Fatigue.

High Spirits (65): A tower on top of a cliff sheds strange lights over the valley below, switching between two shades. It makes everyone under its light clever during the night, and emboldened during the day. People in the valley live two lives, behaving completely differently between night and day. The tower is protected by an old guardian chosen from the valley's people. The guardian has full control over several frames, as well as a double-headed giant ape. Taming High Spirits takes twice as long as usual, and it creates several new frames each round.

Infuse (74): A powerful manifestation affects an entire temple. The whole place is highly energetic, turning small mammals ferocious and powerful and large animals into real monstrosities. The air itself is filled with crackling energy, making everyone hyper alert or even giddy. They are Vulnerable unless they pass a Smarts check every hour. Grabbing Infuse is tricky, as it's within a thick jumble of tendrils which regrow as they're being cut, wrapping themselves around the weapon being used against them. In direct contact, Infuse's energy is released as 2d6 damage.

Intense (207): The lions living around this Crystal's location are *huge* and powerful, but die young. Unfortunately, this has encouraged the most violent of them to take control. None are as big as the disastrous frame that walks that area, though. The Crystal's power seeps through the water of a local fountain, from which many people drink.

They are amazing athletes, but never leave their village unless forced to (generals like to draft them to war) because they're addicted to the water (a Major Habit). When grabbing the Crystal, the holder must make a Vigor roll to avoid becoming addicted to its presence, becoming Driven (Major) to slot it.

Jingle (65): You haven't lived until you've seen a flock of geese singing in unison. Carrying the Crystal with them as they migrate between Fjordstad and Zingama each year, they fill the hearts of everyone who hears them with a repetitive, annoying song. Jingle's frames don't attack—they run away while humming, infecting you with earworms. Holding Jingle down is easy; the problem is that it takes several *minutes* for it to calm down, since it keeps buzzing in a constant pleasant rhythm.

Maw (208): Legends tell of a canyon in which one can find a bottomless pit. Strange giant spiders crawl around the canyon, grabbing whatever passes through to feed the hole. To hold Maw, one must reach down into the pit it's floating in while avoiding falling inside. Alternatively: an old castle is infused with the Crystal's power, and each window or door might suddenly open into a black maw of doom. Strange people live in the castle, with very big mouths and many, many teeth.

Memento (199): Embedded in a fungus network, this Crystal transfers the memories of people who die nearby across tendrils and into fruit trees. The fruit of these trees grant some of the skills and memories of the deceased. This Crystal's frames, or the mushroom creatures it creates, can mimic humans and speak, but it's all just the remnants of someone else's memories. Grabbing Memento forces you to sink into a stream of your own memories, making it hard to do anything else. You will be Shaken if you fail a Spirit -2 roll.

Patchwork (66): An enormous Bygone Age complex drills under the earth, popping to the surface once or twice a year to consume a small building and add it to its own bizarre architecture. Inside, Patchwork is protected by several powerful frames which are Constructs, not Elementals. Alternatively, the Crystal is the centerpiece of a whale-boat: a whale that is also a boat. Touching



Patchwork makes your equipment start to meld with your body, forcing a Vigor roll to prevent a Wound (on a Critical Failure, the meld is permanent!).

Rally (66): Rally is unintentionally used by actors in a prominent theater. It's somewhere behind the stage, considered nothing but a talisman of good luck. Occasionally, when an actor touches it before a show, they'll have a marvelous performance, really moving the crowd. Rally affects one person at a time (only one can be *the leader!*), but it's not always actors, since some backstage workers and cleaners share the custom of touching it for good luck. These workers have formed a powerful working union, and it seems that whenever disaster looms, one of them will rise to lead the others. When someone approaches Rally with the intention of grabbing it—not just touching it for good luck—it forms several frames, one of which is created around it, as if holding it in its hand. That “leader” will then seem to command the others into glorious battle against the interlopers. Rally's frames work very well together, and get an extra +1 Gang Up bonus when swarming someone.

Rascal (67) This Crystal is embedded inside an old monument. At first, it seems like an obelisk, partly broken, somewhat crumbling. But something's off, and after staring at it for a few long moments, it becomes strangely clear that the obelisk is trying to *tell* you something. It's in the way that it stands, the little curves of the base, the sharp lines near the top, that almost seem to be aligned differently when observed from different angles. In fact, that obelisk is a treasure trove of old knowledge, preserved not in written language, but in body language. A professional who'll study it for a few weeks might be able to understand what secrets it holds. Rascal is very picky, and if someone wants to grab it, they'll have to convince the Crystal that they're worthy, with a Persuasion roll (using only body language; the Crystal can't hear you). Otherwise, it'll “turn its back” on the would-be grabber, which they perceive as a terrible insult; it has Taunt d10.

Revert (210): Revert is inside an ancient building in a hidden valley, and everything

around it is built from materials that were once part of different buildings. The Crystal forms and re-forms these buildings, changing the landscape as one tries to approach it. Old attack machines assemble out of nowhere to shoot bullets, only to dissolve back into the background a moment later. Revert's frames look like part of the environment; its disastrous frame is made from the floor itself, and as it dies it tries to envelop anyone who was standing near it. When touching Revert, it undoes your armor and weapons, then your clothes, then your prosthetics if you have any. It can't be tamed using a container, as it just reverts it back to its components.

Ricochet (67): The locals tell of a dangerous coconut tree which launches coconuts at anyone approaching. Not only do they hit with precision, they also shatter in a Medium Blast Template, each piece directly hitting anyone around the target (2d4 damage, can't Evade). Grabbing Ricochet is easy, but keeping hold is trickier: it starts flying and bumping you against surfaces (1d4 ricochets, 2d4 damage each).

Rope Fiend (199): What's worse than a mountain that floats above your head? One that has sticky tendrils descending to almost ground level, sweeping away loose debris and creating a mess. At least one clan expends considerable effort to cut off long lengths of the sticky ropes, which they use in a variety of ways. On the mountain itself, these ropes erupt from the ground, lashing out. Rope Fiend itself lashes like a whip at the faces of people who approach it, with Fighting d8.

Scrutinizer (200): Submerged in a filthy bog, this Crystal is surrounded by frames in the form of creatures it analyzed and then constructed from mud and branches. It can even construct barely-working weapons and vehicles from raw materials and debris. Scrutinizer tries to make the person holding it Shaken by letting them see everything that's wrong about themselves with a d10 Taunt Test. It then rolls away while they're busy rethinking their life decisions.

Shield (211): Shield attached itself to something or someone, and protects it at all costs. It might be inside an ancient seafaring vessel at the bottom of the sea, still main-



taining a force field bubble around the ship, with the crew's corpses animated through a similar force field, almost as if Shield tries to keep them moving as they once were. To touch this Crystal an Agent must first somehow pierce through the force field it creates around itself, by using an attack with Armor Piercing against its Hardness 10.

Silent Thought (68): It was originally found in Castle Carvin, buried in the crypt. Over the years, it transformed the mind of the castle's mistress so thoroughly that her personality was overtaken by that of her mother. There's good reason to think this has been happening in succession for hundreds of years. The staff is distrustful of strangers and paranoid: the Crystal makes them occasionally hear each other's surface thoughts as whispers. When someone approaches Silent Thought, it redirects captured stray thoughts from all over the world to everyone around it as random "blasts" (as in *confusion*).

Sketch (212): This Crystal can be found inside a very intimidating whale which sinks large ships by trailing a long *barrier* behind

it. Inside the whale's belly, primal fears from its imagination manifest as shark-like ink blobs that attack anyone approaching. Alternatively: the Crystal can be found in the hands of an artist who drew a spouse and refuses to let them go. When held, Sketch creates a long pole from within itself to aggressively Push the holder away with Strength d10.

Slanted (68): This Crystal is embedded in a glass column inside a cave, where ancient buildings line the ground and ceiling. Tainted giant frogs leap from surface to surface with ease, ridden by frames. When someone touches Slanted, their perception of up and down changes drastically, making them Stunned if they fail a Smarts roll.

Slippery Sleek (200): This Crystal is balanced elegantly at the tip of a very high and treacherous precipice, surrounded by perfectly smooth earth. Make an Athletics check at -4 to climb it or you will slip down a slope which curves back up—launching you some distance away and into lots of thorns. Grabbing this Crystal is worse than trying to eat soup with a fork; it *always* tries to slide away.

Solid Stone (208): This Crystal erects a whole hill around itself, filled with endless looping caverns in a complex three-dimensional structure with huge boulders rolling through it. Alternatively: when found in a deep underwater facility, it taints the sharks around the facility. They can melt through its metal walls just enough to take a bite; also, the sharks are made of stone (+2 Toughness). Touching Solid Stone turns your arm to stone, and then the rest of your body, unless you make a Vigor -2 roll.

Split (209): This Crystal has dozens of frames, all of which are invisible. It's used by a craftsman to manage his entire operation, and his shop is considered haunted by the neighbors. When holding the Crystal it starts creating presences of you, but they are not under your control. Roll randomly to choose a skill; there's now a presence running around trying to act according to that skill (and you no longer have that ability). These presences either need to be captured or you must slot the Crystal to bring them back.





Spotlight (69): Placed on a pedestal in the middle of a legal court, this is being used as an important witness in many cases. It doesn't talk, obviously, but can manifest a powerful frame that mostly nods (to standing ovations). When Spotlight is touched, the person holding it must make a Smarts roll to avoid becoming Shamed (Minor) for having assaulted such a star. The people watching this happen might react in anger and astonishment.

Strongarm (69): A stretch of land is full of arms that burst out of every surface. Alternatively: someone managed to utilize these arms, creating a semi-automatic mining operation where the arms in the walls of a tight fissure lift ore up and out. The Crystal's frames have four arms and Brawler. Strongarm forms an arm to arm wrestle anyone who tries to touch it with Strength d10; if you win, the Crystal acts with sportsmanship and becomes tame.

Survivor (70): Buried in an anthill and surrounded by thousands of extremely hardened ants which crawl all over you (Vigor roll to avoid becoming Shaken). The ants are dangerously resilient: stomping them doesn't help and drowning them doesn't work. Trying to unearth the Crystal causes a localized earthquake (everyone in a Medium Blast Template must make an Agility roll or take 2d6 damage), since over the years it has become a focal point for geological pressure.

Sympa (212): A whole Island has been made from the emotions of its inhabitants, a group of monks who worship a stoic disastrous frame. Five beings of pure emotion live on the island, each an unlikely pairing of two opposite feelings; they look like majestic dinosaurs. When touching Sympa, the holder must make a Spirits roll or all of their emotions slip out, lost unless quickly gathered. They're Ruthless (Major), Fearless, and empty inside, easily succumbing to the disposition of any Crystal they socket until they naturally develop their emotions again in a few days.

Tattletale (196): This Crystal is owned by a family known for leading a melodramatic life. The sneaky Crystal looks as unassuming as a gem, but makes everyone around it vague-

ly aware of everyone else's secrets. Invisible frames fly around, listening and whispering. This feeling of being exposed makes the family members seek independence by doing even *more* secretive things. When touching Tattletale, the holder must make a Smarts roll to avoid shouting their deepest secret.

Tides (213): A bit of land acts like the sea, or a bit of the sea acts like land. Or perhaps nothing at all seems out of the ordinary, because the manifestation only affects electromagnetic fields, maybe even the mental realm. Such soaring, slow waves might make everyone agitated for a while, before crushing down with a heavy "weight" on their mind. The Crystal's powerful frames manifest as invisible electromagnetic fields, invulnerable to normal attacks but with a weakness to electrically charged metal.

Verballistic (70): A group of street thugs have learned to use this Crystal as something akin to a weird machine gun. When harassing shop owners for protection money they use cuss-words and threats, which also serve to charge the Crystal. That way they're ready in case law authorities, or rival gangs, approach. One of them carries the Crystal inside a tight lantern-like contraption, with a handle on its side. When pointed toward someone (usually backward, as the gang runs from pursuers), turning the handle causes a series of small leather flaps to hit the Crystal in rapid succession, making it release the words through the lantern's single opening. Anyone in a Cone Template must make a Smarts roll or become angry, hurt, or otherwise emotional; On a raise they're Distracted, on a success they're Shaken, and on a failure they're Stunned. Verballistic avoids being grabbed by creating a deafening silence. It probably won't do much to deter the Agent, but it's a Crystal, what does it know anyway.

Vessel (201): Someone's house is said to be haunted. In fact, his spirit has dissipated into the building itself, which was built on top of the Crystal. Furniture moves, walls shift, wires twist, and eventually maybe the whole house lifts itself from the ground as it tries to achieve a goal the owner had. When grabbing Vessel, your own clothes start choking and fighting you, forcing a



Strength roll at -2 to avoid becoming Entangled (Bound on a Critical Failure) and then crushed with a Strength d8.

Warp (202): In a remarkably tame example of a feral Crystal, Warp created a stable gateway between two locations, and a small fort was built around it. The part of the fort that's behind the gate is in an otherwise unreachable place, like the top of a mesa or a walled-off valley. The Crystal only stays tamed because it's embedded into a person who's kept in a coma, fed hallucinogens that make them dream the same thing over and over. If it truly goes feral, the space around it will break in a nauseating manner. Touching Warp *teleports* you randomly away if you fail a Spirit -2 roll.

Wide Sight (71): Resting in the nest of a bird of prey, the bird and its extended family have become fantastic slingers. They drop small rocks that are perfectly aimed directly at people's heads. Inhaling the ground feathers of these birds grants +2 Notice for several hours. When touching Wide Sight, the holder's vision is shifted so they can see as if they are standing a few hundred yards away.

Wolfsboon (71): Found in ancient ruins where a weird Bogovian family lives, along with a dozen wolves who do their bidding. All family members can turn into wolf-like creatures, but whenever they do so, there's a chance they won't be able to turn back again. Swarms of red-eyed plague rats are attracted to the family and obey them. Touching Wolfsboon feels like a sudden bite from a fierce creature, forcing a Fear check and dealing 2d4 damage.

Worthless (202): This Crystal rests in a field of potatoes, making them addictive despite their bitter taste. The locals both hate and love this, as they suffer from alternating bouts of lows and highs: the potatoes cause depression, then lift it. The people now believe this behavior is integral to their lifestyle and will not allow Agents to take the Crystal away. Alternatively: it's not the potatoes, but tainted worms living in the ground which crawl into people's ears at night. Touching Worthless dumps a whole bunch of emotional baggage on the holder, giving them a level of Fatigue (emotional stress) unless they make a Spirit roll.

Zap (71): Electric hawks protect an electrically-charged river, where electrical frames spread electrical sparks. The voltage is low (2d4 damage), but constant exposure forces Vigor rolls to avoid becoming Shaken or even Fatigued. When held, Zap sends sudden pulses of shock, forcing the holder to make a Vigor roll to avoid becoming Shaken or even Stunned.

TOUCHED CREATURES

The following are examples of corrupted creatures that have carved out a niche for themselves in their environment. Most can be used in any Land.

CLOISTEROOS

These small bat-like creatures resemble a cross between a tiny loris and a fennec fox, with huge eyes and ears. Nesting in dark caves during the day, they emerge at night in flocks of two dozen or so to hunt and dance.

Cloisteroos move according to an inner rhythm that all of them seem to hear. They instill this rhythm into their prey by circling it, forcing it to dance until it exhausts itself.

A cloisteroo swarm covers the area of a Medium Blast Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: —

Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claw:** The cloisteroo swarm automatically hits Shaken characters in the template, causing 2d4 damage.
- **Flight:** Flapping around at a Pace of 10”.
- **Low Light Vision:** Cloisteroos ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Roll With the Beat:** The cloisteroos constantly dance! And so must everyone else. Everyone standing in the swarm's area at the start of the cloisteroos' turn become Shaken, unless they pass a Spirit roll. They're also Distracted, unless they get a raise.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2. This swarm is composed of two dozen bat-sized creatures—so unlike most swarms, regular weapons have a chance of affecting them. Killing a single cloisteroo has no effect on the swarm, but Fighting Tests can be made against Spirit

instead of Agility as the cloisteroos are easily frightened by direct violence.

LAKE SNAKE

Zingamaian legends tell of the lake snake, a huge jungle creature that has never been seen. However, there's no doubt that *something* is leaving long trails of destruction which seem to begin and end in a lake. Several people have even claimed to hear strange gurgling sounds from the depths of the jungle, but no one has ever seen a lake snake directly.

In fact, the lake snake is part of the lake itself. Once every few weeks, some of the water forms into a slithering snake-like being that slides into the jungle, instinctively following dampness in the air only to return to the lake after several hours.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 14

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots, ignores 1 point of Wound penalties, doesn't breathe, immune to disease and poison.
- **Immunity:** Immune to water-based attacks.
- **Poison:** Creatures drowning in the snake are subject to a Mild poison (Vigor -2 to avoid).
- **Size 7 (Large):** The lake snake stretches over 20' long and is 8' in diameter.
- **Slam and Swallow:** Str+d6, non-lethal damage. If the target is Shaken, it's swallowed by the lake snake and is now drowning. Swimming out of the snake requires an Athletics roll.

LIVESTOCK HORROR

Crystals and shards with themes of cooperation are often considered to be helpful all around. What could go wrong with a power that makes us work together? The answer is a livestock horror.

These beings are a huge mass of several farm animals fused together. It might have the legs of several oxen, the wings of a domesticated bird of prey, three horse heads (and one goat), and a body composed of dozens of rabbits. It's an unsettling sight, and is always confused and usually angry.

So far, these abominations have only been seen around Bogovian farms and Maseian ranches, but rumors from the Islands talk of a perpetual storm consisting of nothing but sharks.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d4, Notice d8

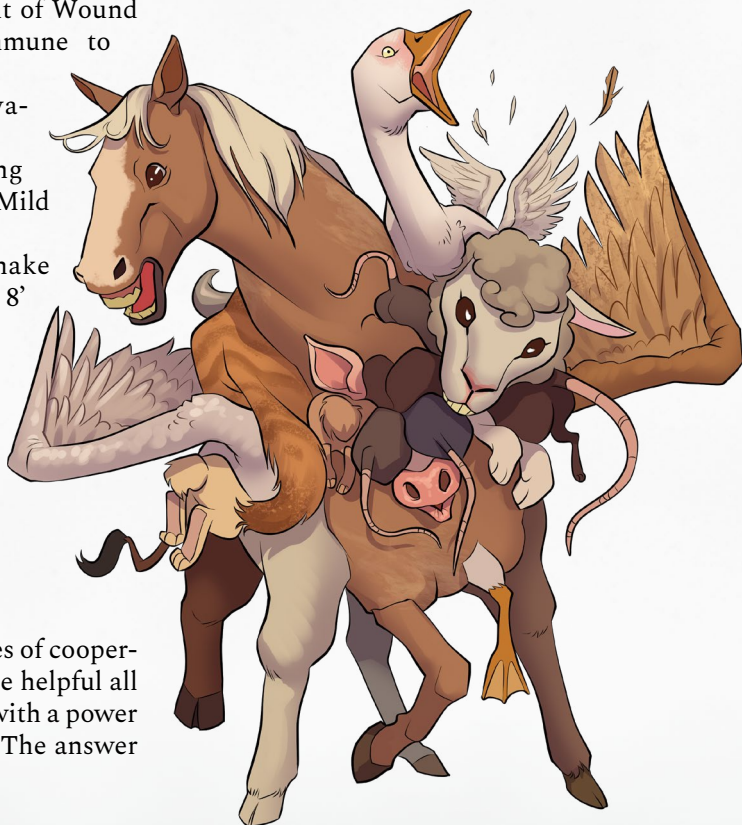
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 11

Edges: Strong-Willed (it has many disconnected minds)

Hindrances: Clumsy

Special Abilities:

- **Explode:** When Incapacitated, the livestock horror explodes into its component parts, dealing 3d6 damage in a Medium Blast Template. Some of the surviving animals might still be "contagious," later reforming a new horror around themselves.
- **Kick or Horns:** Str+d4, in any direction.





- **Many Bodies and Minds:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties. Ignores Multi-Action penalties.
- **Size 4 (Large):** Containing the body mass of several dozen animals, it's as big as a hippo.

MISSING ELEPHANT

Missing elephants were probably created by a Crystal with a theme of disassembly or dimension shifting. When looking at a missing elephant, each person sees something different. One may see its trunk or another might catch its hind-leg, while yet another looks straight at a really big bum.

A common misconception among hunters is that the missing elephant is not all there—that it takes up only a part of the space a normal elephant would take (specifically, the part one currently sees). In fact, it is all there; just not necessarily in the same spatial dimension. When a missing elephant runs through tall grass, the pattern seems crazy, but it's the same *amount* of displacement you would expect from a regular elephant.

A missing elephant exists over a Small Blast Template.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 16 (2)

Edges: Brute

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Immunity:** All of the missing elephant's surfaces are two-dimensional; it's immune to physical Area Effects.
- **Resilient:** Missing elephants can take one Wound before they're Incapacitated.
- **Self Stampede:** The missing elephant runs through several people at the same time. Everyone in a Medium Blast Template centered on the elephant must make an Agility roll to avoid taking 1d12+4 damage and being Pushed.
- **Size 6 (Large):** Missing elephants are as big as regular elephants, but you can only attack the part of it that you currently see. Roll 1d4; on 1-2 it's a Normal sized part (the back, part of the side), on 3-4 it's a

Small part (the trunk, a leg). Moving at least 1" changes your angle, allowing you to see a different part.

NONTHERE

A nonthere is a type of insect hive that was probably created by a Crystal with a theme of imagination or nostalgia. They swarm in the air, flying in psychedelic, mesmerizing shapes and shimmering in many colors. When you watch them move, they almost seem to represent a place you knew once, a long time ago. But there's no such place and you're not really there.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: —

Special Abilities

- **Drain Desire:** A nonthere swarm automatically hits and causes 2d6 damage to everyone in the template. This damage is against "Spirit Toughness," which is half Spirit +2. Armor doesn't protect against it, but Edges such as Strong Willed might.
- **Flight:** Buzzing around at a Pace of 8".
- **Low Light Vision:** Nontheres ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **No Place:** When someone looks at a nonthere swarm, they must make a Smarts roll or become convinced they are walking into a place that they know and love. It is not a specific place, but something constructed from their thoughts which evokes feelings of safety. They drop their defenses, becoming Vulnerable, and are unaware of the swarm's presence even when attacked by it. They snap out of the hallucination when they take a Wound.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area effect weapons work normally, and a character can swat to inflict their damage in Strength each round. The swarm may be foiled by total immersion in water.



Appendix A: More Crystals

Players, turn back! GMs, this is for you.

NOVICE CRYSTALS

LIGHTHEADED

Description: A swirling column of smoke.

Theme: Simple, uncomplicated thoughts and courses of action. *Seeing what's right in front of you without doubting yourself; falling asleep quickly, without a care in the world.*

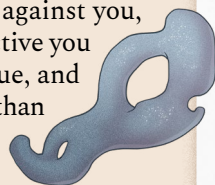
Benefit: When everything's straightforward, there's nothing to make you hesitate or reconsider. You are Quick.

Disposition: Intelligence is all about making connections, but this Crystal prevents that. Your Smarts die is reduced by one step (to 1d4-1 if already at minimum). You're not "dumb", you just find it hard to differentiate between shades of meaning or connect different concepts.

Naivety (*warrior's gift*, Ongoing, -2). Self only. You increase your straightforward thinking to the maximum, so that very little can distract you. You gain Brave and Combat Reflexes. With a raise, you gain the ability to spend a Benny in order to automatically succeed at a Smarts

or Spirit-based Test made against you, instead of rolling. While active you take everything at face value, and are even less sophisticated than usual; reduce your Smarts die by one additional step on top of the penalty from the disposition (to 1d4-2 if already beyond the minimum). With a raise, you roll all Smarts and Spirit skills at -1.

Unburdened (*fly*, -2). You touch someone and make them so detached from their burdens, they literally start to float. The floating person has no control over their movement; they don't really fly, they're just mostly weightless (a breeze might push them along). This makes them Distracted. An unwilling victim can resist the effect with a Smarts roll, with +2 if they consider you hostile (it's harder to loosen them up). If they fail, they can roll again at the start of each turn. A willing target doesn't roll to resist, and can even spend an action to clear their mind, giving you +2 on the Crystal Channeling roll to affect them.



TATTLETALE

Description: Sharp, black and purple, seemingly in shadow.

Theme: Uncovering hidden truths, secrets deliberately kept buried. *Finding the key hiding at the back of the drawer; noticing suspiciously empty places on a map.*

Benefit: It's hard to keep anything from you; you have the Investigator Edge, which also applies to interrogation attempts.

Disposition: You have an uncontrollable urge to tell your own secrets, so you have a Big Mouth.

Embarrassment Barrage (*boost Trait* [Taunt], Ongoing, -1). Self only. You draw small but embarrassing secrets from the minds of those around you, sneering them back at the targets to throw them off guard. You gain the Rabble-Rouser Edge. While active, you keep saying every secret you detect (including your allies')—you can't help it.

Pry Secrets (*mind reading*, -1). Your Crystal tries to pull a secret from the target's mind. If you don't ask a specific question, you get a random piece of information that the target keeps secret.





SEASONED CRYSTALS

ALIZARIN

Description: Dark crimson, bulbous shape.

Theme: Taking it all in, then releasing it with a vengeance. *Punch a wall to make your fist hurt, creating a pulse of anger that throws open a nearby door.*

Benefit: Whenever someone harms you, they're Vulnerable only to you until the end of your next turn. This includes verbal abuse, but the harm must be genuine—they must make you at least Shaken.

Disposition: Thin Skinned (Minor) and Vengeful (Minor). It's easy to get to you, and you take it seriously.

Come At Me (*damage field and protection, Ongoing, -3*). Self only. You erect a deep red translucent barrier around yourself to protect against incoming energy (including kinetic, such as sword strikes and bullets).

This field is immune to non-Crystal-based AP. When you are hit by an attack, even if it didn't overcome your Toughness, an angry red glow appears at the point of connection. Your next attack receives a +1 damage bonus. Multiple hits result in a cumulative bonus, but it's all gone if not used by the end of your next turn. While active, the disposition's Vengeful Hindrance is Major instead of Minor, and you're constantly angry. Allowed Modifiers: Damage (*damage field*), More Armor (*protection*).

Release (*burst, -2*). Can only be used while the previous power is active; activating Release automatically deactivates the other power (*after* the Crystal Channeling roll is made). You release your protective field in a cone of accumulated angry energy. If you have a damage bonus from that power, apply it to all the Burst targets.



BAM-BAM

Description: Yellow-orange and spiky, this Crystal almost seems to shake with excitement.

Theme: Bam-Bam energizes inorganic matter with frantic energy, but it requires direct contact between you and the target. *Make a small fire explode; make a window rattle.*

Benefit: You are very energetic, gaining the Frenzy and Combat Reflexes Edges.

Disposition: You are overly excited and jumpy; you can't sit still, and you keep talking and moving. You have a Big Mouth and are Driven (Minor; what's behind that next hill?).

Invoke Exploding Servant (*summon ally, special*). You energize an object to jump up and fight for you. The object is able to move and is somewhat elastic, but it's still limited by its form and bulk. The ally is always a Bodyguard, but its Size can vary; the maximum object Size you can animate is limited by your Rank:

Novice 0, Seasoned 2, Veteran 4, Heroic 6, Legendary 8. The ally is quick to attack your enemies, but if there are none it'll attack your friends; it really wants to attack *something*. When the duration ends or the ally is destroyed, it explodes in a Small Blast Template for 2d6 damage (3d6 for Size 4 and above).

Explode Earth (*havoc, -1*). Cone only. You touch the earth and release a rippling energy burst in front of you, causing the ground to shake and crack. Allowed Modifier: Strong.

Infuse Explosion (*smite, -1*). The object you touch radiates yellow-orange energy; it is now primed to explode on contact. The power lasts until released or for three rounds; in either case, the object releases the energy for 1d6 damage (2d6 with a raise) in a Small Blast Template (potentially harming the object itself). Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipients—you can touch up to four items in one action.





DEATHLESS

Description: Black, with a quartz-like texture.

Theme: Souls are usually inside the body, but you can touch them directly. You can somewhat push and pull against them, although they snap back very quickly. This Crystal has no effect on inanimate objects. *Ignore minor discomfort; make a shiver go down someone's spine by rattling their soul.*

Benefit: By pulling your own soul deeper into you, you are able to ignore a level of Wound and Fatigue penalties.

Disposition: Mean (Minor) and Habit (Minor; whisper a lot). You become aloof and pessimistic. Your first question when meeting a new person might be a shady whisper along the lines of "Were there any unusual deaths around here lately?"

Rattle (*fear*, -2). Always activates with Area of Effect (Medium Blast Template) Modifier, which is centered around you (you're immune). Your Crystal pushes

brutally at everyone's souls, which can be seen pushed slightly out of their bodies. This is an experience that makes people shudder. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect (Large Blast Template).



Soul Strike (*smite*, Ongoing, -1). Must be used on a melee weapon you're holding or on your own hands. When you attack your Crystal pushes against the target's life force, forcing a part of their soul out of their body—just enough for you to attack the soul itself. The attack is made as normal, but the damage ignores all armor and is rolled against Spirit/2 + 2 ("Spirit Toughness") instead of regular Toughness. Strong Willed and similar Edges may provide a bonus to this Target Number. If the target dies from this attack, you recover one Wound. While this power is active your eyes are misty gray, your words seem to echo, and you keep phrasing your sentences in a menacing way.

HARRIER

Description: Pink and bulbous, with yellow veins.

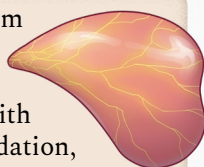
Theme: Chase down a target with a single-minded purpose. *Chase and capture a cat; win at hide-and-seek.*

Benefit: You are Fleet-Footed and have Alertness.

Disposition: You are Driven (Major) to chase and hunt down. If you currently have a prey (see the *Single Out* power, below), you have a constant urge to hunt it down. If you don't have a prey, you have a constant urge to chase *something* down.

Single Out (*empathy*, -1). If you make

the contested roll, you form a metaphysical bond with the target, which is now your prey. You gain +1 (+2 with a raise) to Fighting, Intimidation, or Shooting rolls against them. You are unable to read their surface thoughts, but you can gauge their direction no matter the distance. You can maintain this power indefinitely, but the prey can make a new Spirit roll each morning (contested by your Crystal Channeling) to try and dispel it.



Unrelenting Chase (*warrior's gift*, Ongoing, -2). Self only. You must have a prey, from the *Single Out* power. You gain Combat Reflexes, Free Running, No Mercy and Second Breath, but only while chasing your prey.



MEMENTO

Description: Light blue, translucent, thick but light-weight.

Theme: Remember everything! *Recall the name of something or someone; recognize a face.*

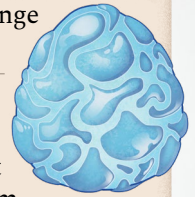
Benefit: Gain +2 to Common Knowledge rolls. You can make a Smarts roll to remember any detail you ever saw or heard.

Disposition: A Delusion (Major) brought on by insistent memories that belonged to someone else who used this Crystal, long ago. The details of the delusion might completely contradict things you already know, but the memories remain the same and no

new revelation or fact can change them.

Read Memories (*mind reading*, -1): You must look into the target's eyes for at least a minute. You are able to skim through their past experiences, but only those they remember clearly. They know exactly what memories you experience.

Perfect Recall (*divination*, -1): You sift through the memories collected by the Crystal. The GM rolls a die in secret: on 1-3 the answer you seek is attainable this way, but subtract the number from the activation roll; on a 4-6 no relevant memories exist in the Crystal.



ROPE FIEND

Description: Dark orange, coil-like.

Theme: The concept of one dimensional length. Or in other words, an endless rope. *Make the tip of your rope clap against a table; keep it suspended in mid-air.*

Benefit: You can create a rope stretching from your harness, phasing through its cover. It glows faintly with a soft orange light. You can make it as long as you like, but you can only create about 10 feet per action (no roll required). You can cancel the rope with a thought (free action) no matter how long it is, and it can be cut (Hardness 6). Any portion of rope not connected to the Crystal dissipates immediately. When you dismiss the rope, an opponent on Hold gets a chance to grab and pull it as an Interrupting Action before it disappears.

If something or someone pulls on the rope and you get a Critical Failure on the Trait roll to resist (usually Strength), the cover of your harness bends as the Crystal is pulled from inside, the rope disappearing a moment later. Your harness is now bent, and any time you use a Crystal there's a 1 in 6 chance that it falls out. A successful Engineering roll fixes the loose cover.

You'll normally want to hold the rope in both hands (to avoid tugging on it), but

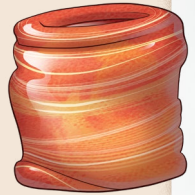
it's somewhat animated and responsive, granting you +2 to any Trait check you make with it up to a range of Strength x2. Here are some things you can try.

- Whip someone with a Fighting roll, dealing d4+Strength damage.
- Use it as a lasso to make an opponent fall prone—grapple from a distance.
- Slap a weapon out of an enemy's hand—Called Shot to the hand to disarm.

Disposition: Pacifist (Minor): your instinct becomes to restrain rather than to destroy. You take great pride in your skill with your rope, and are Jealous (Minor) of anyone who seems to rival your agility.

Crazy Tentacle Bonanza (*havoc*, -2). Cone only, always activates with the Strong Modifier. You unleash not one, not two, but a dozen ropes out of your harness, lashing everywhere and at everything in front of you. The mess of slapping ropes disappears a moment later. To use this power, you cannot already have a manifested rope.

Rope Wrangling (*telekinesis*, -3). By concentrating on the rope, you can make it move as if it were one of your limbs. It has a Strength equal to your Crystal Channeling.



SCRUTINIZER

Description: Pristine translucent semi-spheroid.

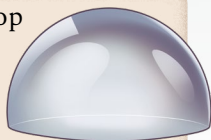
Theme: Understanding by thorough analysis, forming and retaining schematics of everything analyzed. *Understand the working of a trap; draw blueprints of a building.*

Benefit: You gain the Investigator Edge. Whenever you spend several minutes studying an object, artificial or natural, your Crystal forms a schematic or a diagram of it. You can call to your mind any such diagram, which is as detailed as your initial investigation. The diagram is automatically updated if you learn more information about the object, such as by dismantling or dissecting it. Basic understanding generally gives +1 on relevant rolls (usually Engineering, Healing, or Thievery) regarding the item or creature in question, while more thorough analysis gives +2. You know the object's vital areas and can ignore 1 point of penalty with Called Shots made against it.

You can only recall diagrams of objects you analyzed yourself. To recall diagrams created by previous users, you need to first gain access to them; see *Deduction*, below.

Disposition: You can't stop noticing the flaws in everything and everyone around you, and you are overly abrasive about it.

You point out cracks in the plaster, nitpick plot holes, and berate irrational choices—this makes you Mean. Your analytical ability also tends to point you at the easiest path, pushing against your morals and making you Ruthless (Minor).



Analyze Behavior (*empathy*, -1). You study a person for a few moments, giving you an understanding of their emotional state and probable surface thoughts. Your analysis allows you to choose the right words to influence them.

Deduction (*object reading*, -1). You study an object or an animal for at least 10 minutes to come to a better understanding of its construction and behavioral patterns. You don't literally see what happened around it, but you can understand where it's been, what happened to it, etc. This power has an additional effect: if a previous owner of this Crystal has already studied an object of the same type, you gain immediate access to its schematics the moment you activate this power.

SLIPPERY SLEEK

Description: Gray, smooth, and shiny, like a river stone.

Theme: The world is like water, and you are like oil. Nothing sticks as you slide away. *Slip down along a slanted slope; allow your clothes to slip off, woo!*

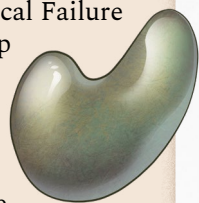
Benefit: Dodge Edge, Extraction Edge. It's hard to pin you down.

Disposition: You become evasive, avoiding topics that are even slightly uncomfortable to you, and even turn Yellow.

Sliding Mode (*speed*, Ongoing, -1). Self only. Who needs skates when your own feet can slide off anything? The problem

is stopping. If you get a Critical Failure on an Athletics check, you slip and fall prone, moving 1d6" in a random direction and taking 2d4 damage if you bump into something. If you are dealt a Club for initiative, or get the highest result on your running die, you must make an Agility roll or fall in the same way.

Slippery Mode (*deflection and warrior's gift*, Ongoing, -4). Self only. You dodge any attack coming your way. While active, you also gain the Improved versions of Dodge and Extraction. However, you can barely hold anything in your slippery hands: your own attacks have the same penalty as attacks made against you.





TRAVELER

Description: Green and brown, like a worn boot.

Theme: Wanderlust, reaching far, but always coming back home. *Stick to a trail; identify excellent walking sticks; create basic dinner from very little.*

Benefit: You are well-equipped for a journey. Your Survival die is increased by one step, and you gain +2 on any roll made during a Dramatic Task or Quick Encounter involving travel.

Disposition: Staying in one place is hard, when one hears the road's song so clearly. You are Driven (Major) to head out in search of new sights and far-off lands.

Companion for the Road (*summon ally, Ongoing, -1*). All around the world there are people who are wandering with no particular destination in mind. Might as well

walk together, no? This power summons to your side someone who is currently on a journey to nowhere. They are amiable to you, and will join you on your path, for as long as you maintain this power. You can only have one such companion at any time.



No Place Like Home (*teleport, -1*). Every journey begins with a single step, and it can end with one, too. You take a step and find yourself back at the place you consider "home." Others can join you, if they're following right in your steps. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipient.

Old Country Song (*slumber, -1*). You hum that old tune, you know the one. Ah yes, that old tune that warms the heart when it's cold, and helps you remember where you'll be coming back to, when it's all over. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.

VESSEL

Description: Cube-like and bumpy, a mish-mash of several dark browns.

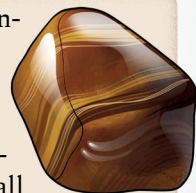
Theme: Your consciousness is like water, and the world around you is full of receptacles. You can infuse a bit of yourself into things around you. *Put some of yourself into a glass to taste the water.*

Benefit: You can touch an inanimate object (including plants) to place some of your consciousness into it. You have a dull sense of the sight, touch, and taste of that object, which allows you to make Notice checks as though you were standing in that object's location with double the distance penalties. Once active, there's no limit to the distance between you and the object. If the object is bigger than your fist, you must make a Crystal Channeling roll with a penalty equal to the object's Size, minimum -1 (like with the *beast friend* power).

The connection ends when you lose consciousness, or you can dismiss it as a free action. Nothing prevents you from placing yourself in several objects, but each is considered a different activation, incurring

the regular -1 penalty for maintaining powers.

Disposition: Clueless (Major). You're easily distracted as you tend to place little bits of yourself into small things around you—literally absent-minded.



Construct a Vessel (*summon ally, Ongoing, special*). Always activates with the Mind Rider Modifier. You piece together a humanoid construct from loose elements in your environment and grant it a large piece of your psyche. The ally's type is limited by your Rank, and you can't summon a Mirror Self. While active, your body and the ally tend to move and act in similar ways; occasionally, you're not sure which of them is you. Allowed Modifier: Bite/Claw.

Move the Thing (*telekinesis, Ongoing, -3*). You can only move an object you're already controlling. While active, you have -1 penalty (per controlled item) on all Smarts and Spirit rolls and related skills because a part of your mind is busy controlling the object.

**WARP**

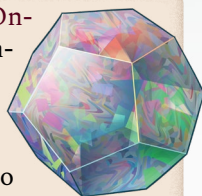
Description: Opalescent silver dodecahedron. Can cause queasiness if stared at for too long.

Theme: Distances and spaces, distorted. *You take one step but cross double the distance.*

Benefit: Gain the Acrobat Edge as you slightly shift the space around you when you move. You also have Reach +1 with all melee weapons.

Disposition: Slow (Major). The space around you distorts and stretches in unpredictable ways. Long distance walking for more than four hours requires a success on a Vigor roll to avoid becoming queasy and taking a level of Fatigue.

Cross Distance (*teleport, Ongoing, -1*). You take full control over the Crystal's distance-shifting distortions, overcoming its disposition and then some. You are no longer Slow, but the teleportation effect is very disorientating, making you Vulnerable and Distracted. A Smarts roll allows you to ignore one status, or both with a raise. Allowed Modifiers: All.



Stretch (*growth/shrink, Ongoing, -1 per point of Size change*). Self only. Technically, you're staying the same size—it's the space you're occupying that's distorted. While active, distant objects look very strange from your point of view, inflicting a -2 on Notice rolls and ranged attacks.

WORTHLESS

Description: A small, gray pebble.

Theme: Weakness, being less capable, having no ability. *Hinting at someone's incapability to handle something; feeling bad about yourself.*

Benefit: You carry the burden of feeling worthless—but that burden is artificial, and you know it. It takes some effort, but several times a day you can suppress this feeling and gain the Jack-of-all-Trades Edge, fueled by an injection of self-confidence.

Disposition: You have the Mild Mannered and Small Hindrances. You don't actually become smaller; you just handle yourself more compactly, seeming meek and small.

Don't Bother (*sloth, -1*). You spread the feeling of worthlessness into an area, making everyone in it wish they'd reconsidered getting out of bed that morning. Allowed Modifiers: All.



Just Bury Me (*burrow, Ongoing, -1*). Self only. You sink into the ground in melancholy. While active you are Distracted by self-berating thoughts.

Shoulder the Burden (*lower Trait, -1*). You push the feeling of worthlessness into someone else, making them suddenly believe they are less effective and less useful than they thought. Allowed Modifiers: All.





VETERAN CRYSTALS

ABSENCE

Description: A perfect, semi-clear sphere, its inside seemingly filled with a frozen gray mist.

Theme: Absence, negative spaces, hollowness. *Empty your mind of all thoughts; make an apple forgettable.*

Benefit: The ability to make things diminish helps you realize how *real* you are, and you gain Iron Will. When you are dealt a Heart card as initiative, enemies forget your presence and don't notice you during this round; they must make a Smarts roll to target you.

Disposition: You feel a deep connection to large, empty spaces. You are drawn to wide caves, hidden valleys, uninhabited islands, and similar places in the wild. You are Driven (Major) to explore these places, and even have a Phobia (Minor) of tight spaces.

Fade (*intangibility*, -3).

You make something... less. It's less real, less noticeable, less memorable. Subtract the target's Size from the roll. If activated on a creature, the target also suffers from a -2 penalty on all Trait rolls and their Pace is reduced by 2. The target is visible but faded, and any sound it makes seems to originate from far away.

Disappear (*banish*, -2). Only works on targets affected by *intangibility*. The banished thing ceases to exist, and even fades from memory—anyone trying to remember it must first make a Smarts roll. This state is dependent on the Crystal's powers: should Absence become feral, the disappeared thing might reappear in the place it was banished from.



BEAST

Description: Bright red with streaks of brown, like a piece of meat.

Theme: Forces your primal beast to manifest. *Your eyes glow yellow; your fingers seem like claws; you can sniff like a wolf.*

Benefit: Combat Reflexes, Quick. When you are dealt a Heart card as initiative, your unarmed attacks deal Str+d6 damage and your Pace is increased by 2 during this round.

Disposition: Who needs tools? You've got All Thumbs. Also, who needs prisoners? You're Bloodthirsty.

Beast Friend (*beast friend*, *special*). You can talk to and control any mammal, nat-

ural or Crystal-tainted. Allowed Modifier: Mind Rider.

Roar (*burst and havoc*, -2).

Only Cone Template. You roar with a force that tears through everyone in front of you, first dealing damage (*burst*) and then throwing them back (*havoc*). Allowed Modifiers: Damage (*burst*), Strong (*havoc*).

Inner Beast (*warrior's gift*, *Ongoing*, -2). Self only. You channel your inner beast and gain the Brawler and Frenzy Edges. With a raise, you get Bruiser and Improved Frenzy instead. While active, you communicate mostly through angry growls. This power remains active for 2 rounds after it's dropped for any reason.



**BELLOW**

Description: A wide, deep bowl.

Theme: BEING VERY LOUD! *Being easily heard across a yard; make a low noise louder.*

Benefit: When you act, you give it your all; you've got Elan. Also, when you talk, you talk to a *crowd*; you've got Rabble-Rouser. Finally, you reduce by 2 all damage from voice or sonic-based attacks.

Disposition: Being quiet and timid is for other people. You have -2 on Stealth rolls, and always aim to be in the center of the action (probably by shouting the loudest). This makes you Impulsive.

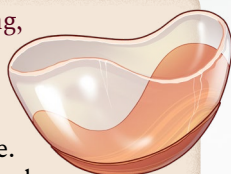
Now Listen Here! (*boost Trait* [Intimi-

dation and Taunt], Ongoing, -1). Self only. You become more *intense*, shouting and commanding. You also get the Provoke Edge. While active you can't speak any lower than a shout.

Shout. (*blast*, -1). Your voice is quite the hammer. Allowed Modifier: Damage.

Silence (*silence*, -1). You invert your Crystal's power, muting all sounds in a Medium Burst Template centered on you.

Thunderclap (*stun*, -1). By facing someone and yelling a powerful word (usually "KERBLAM!!"), you make them take the full force of your shout, stunning them. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.

**CLAW**

Description: Gray-black and claw-like.

Theme: Sharp, deep, tearing pain, curving to make it even more painful. *Touch someone and make them feel pain; slice open a letter with the tip of your finger.*

Benefit: When you deal damage, it always hurts (No Mercy and Mighty Blow). As an action, you can turn your fingers into thick, black claws, that deal d4 damage. These are Natural Weapons.

Disposition: Once you rend at something, you just can't let go. You only want to stick your claw deeper. You keep searching for a soft spot, pressing as hard as you can. It's not that you *want* to hurt someone's feelings, it's that you simply must leave your claw in them, so they'll always think of you. This is an amalgamation of Habit (Minor) and Mean, with a pretty disturbing Quirk.

Hook (*entangle*, -2). You make thick, black, hooked claws burst through every

surface around the target, possibility even their own equipment. If the target is Entangled, it also takes 1d4 damage. If it's Bound, it takes 1d6. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.

Pierce the Heart (*smite*, -1). Self only. Your fingers must already be claws. You infuse your claws with such vicious sharpness they'll tear through anything to reach the heart. If you hit with a raise, you add +1d8 damage instead of +1d6. Note that this is not an Ongoing power; it has the usual duration of 5.

Unhook (*fly*, -2). Self only. You release, unwind, retract your tight grasp on the world. You can fly with Pace 3", or double that with a raise. Unhooking isn't natural (it's doable, but feels wrong), so trying to unhook more than once per hour requires a Vigor roll to avoid taking a level of Fatigue. Note that this is not an Ongoing power; it has the usual duration of 5.





CONSISTENT

Description: Fluid and bright-blue, in the shape of a curling starfish.

Theme: Propelling ever forward, perpetual motion. *Walking with purpose; just keep swimming.*

Benefit: When using Multi-Action, if your second action is exactly the same as the first you don't suffer a Multi-Action penalty. You're also Fleet-Footed, since moving forward is a breeze.

Disposition: The best way to push forward is to stop discussing it and *do something already*: you're Impulsive. You also get stuck in a loop and tend to repeat yourself, and say the same thing again, and reiterate the point, and it's an annoying Habit (Minor).

Perpetual Motion (unique power, Ongoing, -1). As long as you keep doing the same task, you can continue for very long periods of time without rest or even sleeping. Make a Crystal Channeling roll at the end of every set period of time to keep going for another period. Decide with the GM on an appropriate length for a period, depending on the task. Some examples:

- Swimming: Every two hours.
- Running: Every four hours.
- Digging a hole: Every eight hours.
- Humming: Every twelve hours.

After the first roll you get a cumulative -1 penalty on the roll.

Repeat Motion (*telekinesis*, Ongoing, -3). You make a specific movement with an item, let go, and the item keeps making the exact same movement. While active, you occasionally repeat your own movements; if you maintain more than one instance of this power, it makes you Clumsy.



Shpang (unique power, -2). Named after the sound that seems to accompany every activation ("*shhhh-PANG!*"), this power allows you to rush directly forward in the direction you're facing (which includes up or down). This power can only be activated after you've already started moving in the desired direction (jumping counts). When activated, you immediately move what remains of your Pace, regardless of elevation. You are covered by an unstoppable streak of force that protects you from oncoming damage. Everything in your path is dealt 2d6 damage (3d6 with a raise) and is Pushed; you use your Crystal Channeling result instead of Strength and add +2 for running. Most types of earth crack and break in a hole about a half-Pace deep. Modifier: for -1 you deal 3d6 damage (4d6 with a raise).

DRY TONGUE

Description: Looks exactly like a large salt crystal.

Theme: You resemble a large salt crystal. You make things dry and salty. *Put your finger in a glass to turn the water salty.*

Benefit: No Mercy Edge, as your saltiness enters the blood, worsening the wounds. Also the Humiliate Edge, since you really know how to make people salty.

Disposition: You're Anemic, as all of this salt is taking a toll on your body; Delusional (Minor), thinking everything's better with salt; and with a Phobia (Minor) of large bodies of water.

Blind (*blind*, -2). Only used in Cone Template. You throw salt into the targets' eyes. Allowed Modifier: Strong.

Salt Punch (*bolt*, -1). A fist-sized lump of salt erupts into your target. Allowed Modifier: Damage.

Salt Wall (*barrier*, -1). A wall of thick, lumpy salt crystals rises from a surface. When the duration ends, it crumbles into several small piles of salt. Allowed Modifiers: Hardened, Size.

Salted Blood (*stun*, -1). A sudden increase in salt in the victim's bloodstream makes them dehydrated. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.



EGO

Description: White, bulbous, and shiny. Agents claim “it has a mind of its own” since it’s notoriously hard to control.

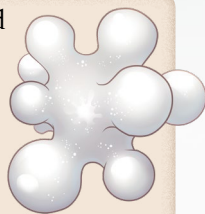
Theme: Enhancing your ego to ridiculous levels, expanding it so much that you can have more of you—and put some of yourself in other people as well. *Exude an aura of confidence even when covered with mud and wearing only socks; feeling proud of yourself for no reason at all.*

Benefit: Budge? Me? Never. You are Charismatic, Level Headed, and Strong Willed.

Disposition: You are also, of course, Overconfident and Stubborn.

Me in You (*puppet, -2*). You implant your thought patterns into someone else’s mind. This needs to be a specific thought or plan of action. The victim of the attack will have exactly the same idea, but will think it’s their own. You can only affect

thoughts about the here and now; with a raise, you can implant thoughts about the future. You must be able to see or touch the target. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipients.



More Me (*summon ally, -3*). Always activates with the Mind Rider Modifier. You create a tiny duplicate of yourself (five inches tall) adjacent to you and touching your skin. The duplicate is not an ally; it’s actually you! You now have two bodies. You can create more duplicates with additional activations, but each is a separate maintained power. You can’t split your attention between the bodies, which means you still have the normal amount of turns and actions. When you’re not directing your duplicates, they tend to follow you around according to your intentions, automatically Supporting you with your own skills (roll once for all of them, as group roll). All duplicates are Mirror Selves with Size -3.

GEIST

Description: Small and pale, semi-translucent green.

Theme: Accessing and interacting with the memories left within hearts. *Help a friend remember some detail by touching their chest.*

Benefit: It’s hard to affect your own heart (well, metaphorically), and your emotions are your own. You have the Arcane Resistance and Strong Willed Edges.

Disposition: You have a Phobia (Minor) of cemeteries, battlefields, and anywhere else where many people have died. Your deep connection to everyone’s hearts also makes you averse to harming other people, turning you into a Pacifist (Minor).

Clear Memories (*mind wipe, -2*). You must touch the target’s chest to activate this power. Allowed Modifier: Fast.

Conjure Memories (*object reading, -1*). You touch a heart and force the memories within to take form as wispy apparitions. Only you can see these, but you can make them visible to everyone with a -1 Modifier. Allowed Modifier: Audible History.



Detect Hearts (*detect arcana, Ongoing, -1*). You can detect hearts, whether they’re within a living person or anywhere else. The same is true for Crystals. While active, both your Pacifist and Phobia are Major.

Read Memories (*mind reading, -1*). You must touch the target’s chest to activate this power.

Rush of Memories (*confusion, -1*). You force a person’s heart to evoke an overwhelming stream of random memories in their mind. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.



INTENSE

Description: A large, red brick.

Theme: Being stronger than strong, at the cost of everything else. *Appear larger than you are; stand still in strong wind; ignore your hunger.*

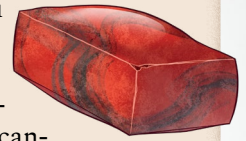
Benefit: You're a Berserk Brute with No Mercy, a force to be reckoned with.

Disposition: Your muscles twitch and your veins bulge; it's unsettling. You are Ugly (Minor). With your raging hormones, you are also Ruthless (Major).

Erupt (*growth, Ongoing; special*). You don't grow so much as you *expand*, your muscle mass increasing. You can grow up

to Size 3 at most, and you gain another Wound for every point of Size. Your maximum Wound penalty is still -3. Should you cancel this power while having more than three Wounds, you must immediately make a Vigor roll as if becoming Incapacitated. While active, you are Slow (Minor).

Heightened Physique (*boost Trait [Athletics, Strength, and Vigor], Ongoing, -2*). Self only. You can do anything—as long as you ignore the screams of pain coming from your muscles. While active, after every ten minutes of activity or when you draw a Heart in combat, you must make a Spirit check or take a level of Fatigue.



JET

Description: A stretched out cone, bright blue and white.

Theme: Powerful bursts of highly pressurized energy. *Create an inch-long jet at the tip of your finger; release small jets from your feet to jump a little higher.*

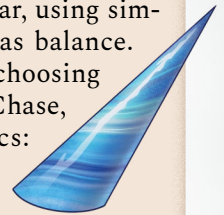
Benefit: You can push yourself out of harm's way with a quick burst from your hands or feet. As long as you can freely move at least one limb, you have Dodge and Extraction. You also increase your Piloting die by one (or gain it at d6 if you don't have it). When using the Syn Training Setting Rule (page 83), you're able to gain a one-time use of any Edge fitting this Crystal's theme without paying a Benny by pushing yourself: Make a Vigor roll or take a level of Fatigue.

Disposition: Releasing such intense bursts of energy takes a toll on your body, making you a glass cannon: capable of great firepower, but easily breakable. Your Vigor die is reduced by one (to d4-1 if already at minimum) and your spirit isn't all that stable either, making you Yellow.

Jet (*fly, Ongoing, -2*). You release jets from right under your feet (don't worry,

your shoes are fine) and soar, using similar jets from your hands as balance. For doing stunts or when choosing a maneuvering skill for a Chase, use Piloting, not Athletics: the trick is controlling multi-directional jets of varying strengths. If both of your hands are occupied, roll with -2. You must maintain the propulsion nonstop in order to remain airborne. This takes away some of your attention and inflicts a -1 on Smarts rolls and related skills.

Jet Stream (*burst and havoc, -2*). You cast your hand at an enemy and release an intense jet of energy. The *burst* deals 2d6 damage (3d6 with a raise) to everyone in a Cone Template as you move your arm in a sweeping motion. You can instead direct the energy in an 8" long line, dealing damage (3d8 with a raise) to everyone in its path. In both cases *havoc* comes into effect after the *burst* is resolved. You must make a Strength roll to avoid losing control of the powerful burst, or get tossed back 1d4" and fall prone. You get +2 on the roll if you use your other hand to hold your arm steady. Available Modifiers: Damage (*burst*), Strong (*havoc*).



MAW

Description: Dark purple, almost black, with a round depression. Looking closely, it appears as if the depression is full of thousands of fangs.

Theme: Annihilate and consume with no benefit or reason inside the Crystal's singularity. *Clear the leftovers from a plate into the maw.*

Benefit: The Crystal's theme manifests as a swirling, dark-purple portal which is a foot in diameter. It is centered on the harness and phases through your armor. The portal appears as long as you concentrate on it (but the feeling of hunger is always there). You can reach into the portal, *very carefully*, to pull out something previously thought consumed. Treat this as the Scavenger Edge.

You can use the maw in melee by trying to engulf a creature up to Size -1. To do so, you must succeed at a grappling check; note that your hands don't need to be free! If the creature is Entangled, it's half-way in; if Bound, it's shoved fully into the portal and has a -2 penalty when trying to escape. The target suffers 2d6 damage per round from the maw's corrosive energy. Armor offers no protection.

Disposition: The Crystal seems to feed off

the bearer. You have the Anemic Hindrance and reduce your Vigor die by one step. If already at d4, the next step down is d4-1.



Aura of Decay (*blast*, -3). By turning the portal's power inside-out you create a Medium Blast Template centered on you: a field of corrosive hunger which disintegrates anything that passes through it. Creatures in the field (excluding you) must make a Vigor roll (at -2 with a raise) or take 2d6 damage, with the Lingering Damage common Modifier. You can maintain this power, forcing creatures in the area at the start of your turn to make another Vigor roll, but then *you* start taking damage as well.

The area is filled with a crackling purple mist and is Dim. If there was a creature Entangled or Bound within the portal, it's now released. Allowed Modifiers: Area Effect and Damage.

Disrupt (*dispel*, -1). You unleash a wave of disruptive energy from the portal, trying to dispel all Crystal effects in a Medium Blast Template centered on you. Allowed Modifier: Power, which allows you to disrupt Crystal manifestations and even the special abilities of corrupt creatures.

SOLID STONE

Description: Purple and blocky. It somehow *looks* heavy.

Theme: Solid Stone makes you one with the rock, and the rock one with you. *Turn your skin gray; make a small mound of earth rise; resist an electrical current.*

Benefit: Increase your Vigor die by one step. You gain the Brawny and Iron Jaw Edges; you don't physically grow a Size, yet somehow give the impression that you're bigger.

Disposition: Tongue-Tied, and you have a -2 penalty on Agility rolls. Your thoughts may be deep, but your responses are slow.

Burrow (*burrow*, -2). Self only, always activates with the Power Modifier. You and your belongings turn gray and merge with the ground.

Stone Skin (*protection*, *On-going*, -2). Self only, always activates with the Toughness Modifier. You harden your skin to become rock-like. Allowed Modifier: More Armor. While active, your Pace is reduced by 2.

Stone Wall (*barrier*, -1). You raise a wall of earth or rock from the ground. Allowed Modifiers: Hardened, Shaped, Size.





SPLIT

Description: Oval orange gem, shiny and bright.

Theme: Your presence can be split between several places or in several ways. *Preparing a meal while talking with your friends while also hunting dinner.*

Benefit: You can be in several places at once, but there's still only one of you. This means that when you split yourself, only *some parts* of you can be at each of your locations; which part is up to you. You can split one or more of your skills into distinct parts, but you can still only perform up to three actions per turn. This means that if you separate yourself into more than three parts, some of them will have to remain inactive each turn.

When you separate yourself, your form remains as it is. You create a mostly-invisible (Notice -4 to see) vaguely humanoid *presence*. This presence has a Parry of 2 and your Toughness (without Armor). If it takes a Wound, it disappears. If it becomes Shaken, you can't use it until it recovers—but the rest of you is not Shaken. Each presence counts as a maintained power (-1 on Crystal Channeling checks to activate powers) but does not itself require activation. You can move a presence at your Pace, but only up to a range of Smarts x2 from your body.

You can only “be” in one of your presences (or your body) at a time, but you can move between them with a thought and it isn't disorienting to you. You are aware of each presence's location.

Note that skills that you separate from your body are no longer available to you, nor are they usable by any presence other than the one which has them. For example, if you send your Fighting away as a presence holding your sword, it can fight—but your body is considered untrained at Fighting. Your fighting ability is simply not within you.

All of your presences can see and hear, but not well; each presence is considered unskilled at all the skills it doesn't have. Some exceptions:

- All of your presences have Athletics at one die type lower than your normal score. One of them can have your full Athletics die (but then your body will have it at one die type lower).
- Notice can be separated as each different sense.
- All presences use your attributes, if needed. It is you, after all.

You can send several skills together in the same presence. For example, you might want to have your Boating and Notice busy steering the ship, while your Research is going over the maps and your body is fighting the pirates. Once a presence exists, it can't “switch” skills; you have to drop it (free action) and create a new one.

Disposition: You are *all over the place*. This makes you Clueless.

Leap (*teleport, -1*). Hey, a part of you is already there—might as well be *all* there. You move your body into one of your presences, which then dissipates.

Shape Presence (*growth/shrink, special*). You can't change your own size, but you can make a presence larger or smaller. Only that presence has its Traits changed.

Spread the Skill (*boost Trait, Ongoing, -1*). Self only. You concentrate hard and share a skill between two or more of your presences and/or your body. On a success, both parts get the skill at the regular level. On a raise, you can add another skill to share between the parts. In other words, you can't increase a skill beyond your regular level—you just share it more evenly. While active, the maximum range of your presences is Smarts x4, but your body is Vulnerable. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipients (your other parts).





HEROIC CRYSTALS

AURORA

Description: Shifting colors of the northern lights, in a shape vaguely resembling a snowflake.

Theme: Connecting with and becoming part of nature (possibly only the cold Fjordstadian environment; it's unclear). *Know the weather; sense what's in your environment; instinctively know the qualities of plants and animals.*

Benefit: Woodsman Edge, and your Vigor die is increased by one step. Animals never attack you unless desperate or provoked by you, and you are immune to poisonous Fjordstadian fauna.

Disposition: You're stoic, sometimes as cold as a block of ice. Occasionally you'll stand to the side, not intervening or even responding to the action, simply watching events unfold—just like nature does. This can be seen as a Major form of Cautious or Driven (Major; observe wisely). You also have no understanding of machines (All Thumbs) and have trouble acclimating to foreign weather patterns (Anemic when not in Fjordstad).

Lingering Disposition: When an Agent unsockets Aurora, they still have trouble acclimating to foreign weather patterns. In a new climate, they get a Vigor roll to overcome this Hindrance every week.

Bellow of the North Wind (*burst*, -2). You unleash the freezing winds on your enemies. Anyone who becomes Shaken

or Wounded by this power is also pushed away from you 1d6". Allowed Modifier: Damage.

Commune (*divination*, -3).

You extend your awareness throughout the world, up to a range of your Spirit in miles. You can ask any question about what's happening within this sphere, but your awareness doesn't penetrate human-made objects.



Entangle (*entangle*, -1). Ice forms around the target's legs, or maybe vines and branches grab them. Allowed Modifiers: All.

Invest with Nature's Bounty (*boost Trait* [Spirit or Vigor], -1). You grant someone a glimpse into the true majesty of nature. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipients.

Nature Mastery (*elemental manipulation*, -1). You can shift snow and crack ice.

One with Nature (*boost Trait* [Notice and Survival], Ongoing, -2). Self only. You increase your inner connection to the wild. While active, you only speak in wise riddles and (like nature) are never in a hurry—so you're Slow (Minor).

Speak with Beasts (*beast friend*, special). Works on all animals native to Fjordstad. Allowed Modifier: Mind Rider.

Travel (*teleport*, -1). You know the secret paths through the wild. You take a step back and disappear into the vegetation, behind a rock, or even a deep shadow—only to reappear a short distance away.

REVERT

Description: Dark brown, with bark-like texture. Well-known for the story of how it was retrieved in a dangerous and fantastic battle.

Theme: Revert undoes anything man-made, turning the artificial back into the raw and natural. The *intent* of the original construction remains within its parts, however, so it can later revert (or re-revert?) to its original

form. *Undo a door so it breaks down into its component parts, then re-make it after passing through.*

Benefit: You have the Woodsman Edge. Any attack against you made by a crafted or manufactured weapon deals -2 damage. The attacker must then roll Agility to avoid the weapon breaking down. You are also immune to synthetic poisons.





Disposition: Fabricated items seem a bit off to you. You've got All Thumbs, Habit (Major, must be "free of human artifacts" for a few hours per day), and Quirk (avoids modern comforts).

Lingering Disposition: When an Agent unsockets Revert, they keep All Thumbs. Every week they get a Spirit roll to overcome this Hindrance.

Break Apart (*entangle*, -2). The target's clothes or the items they're holding unravel and reform around their limbs in their raw forms—thick wool, gooey plastic, hard metal, etc. Weapons are destroyed, but armor might still have some effectiveness. If the material is too dense for a person to break out from (most metals, for example), a blowtorch might be needed to free the

victim. Everything remains dismantled as long as you maintain this power. As a free action, you can revert any or all unravelled items back to their original forms. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.

Break Everything (*burst*, -2). Walls break and paved floors crack open. Anyone who tries to Evade rolls with -2, and on a failure falls prone. This power doesn't affect creatures standing on natural ground, unless there's a basement beneath them. Everything remains dismantled as long as you maintain this power, and you can revert all unraveled scenery back to its original form as a free action. This acts as *entangle* within the same Cone Template, as the floor reforms itself around the targets' legs. Allowed Modifier: Damage.

SHIELD

Description: Light-yellow globe, apparently hollow.

Theme: Cover inanimate things with a yellow-hued force field which can then be stretched. *Cover something small with a shimmering yellow field, as thin and as weak as paper.*

Benefit: You are Brave and increase your Strength and Vigor dice by one step.

Disposition: You are protective of your friends (Loyal), and of your word (Code of Honor).

Enhance Weapon (*smite*, Ongoing, -1). You cover an item with a shimmering yellow force field, which is then stretched around the object to make it into an effective weapon. Use the Improvised Weapon categories, but the person holding it is considered armed with an actual weapon. In addition the weapon's damage is increased according the roll's result, its throwing range is doubled, and its Minimum Strength is reduced by two steps. If the item is close enough in shape to a specific weapon, you can make it behave exactly like that weapon (and gain the damage bonus from the power). You can also create

small, medium, or large shields with no Minimum Strength requirements. While active, the shimmering force field casts enough shifting lights to make any Stealth roll impossible. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipient.



Throw Weapon (*bolt*, -1). You throw the Enhanced Weapon you are holding, which returns to your hand at the end of your turn. Allowed Modifier: Damage.

Shield (*protection*, Ongoing, -1). Self only. You cover yourself with the force field. While active, you are not only Loyal but fully Heroic. Allowed Modifier: More Armor.

Shield Away! (*fly*, Ongoing, -2). Self only, Shield must be active. You lift the force field, and therefore yourself, in the air. Maintaining this power inflicts a -2 penalty on Crystal Channeling rolls, instead of -1.

Shield Up! (*growth*, Ongoing, -1 per point of Size change). Self only, Shield must be active. You increase the size of the force field surrounding you, becoming a small person in a big "suit." The force field is robust but barely has any digits, so you have -2 on any action which requires precision.

**SKETCH**

Description: An almost perfect cylinder, dull gray, like graphite.

Theme: Manifest imagined things as constructs in the real world. *Draw a very simple shape that exists for several seconds.*

Benefit: You can draw in the air with your finger, creating a physical object that remains in existence as long as you concentrate on it (this is considered a power you're maintaining). The quality of your drawing impacts how useful the item is—the GM may ask you to make a Thievery or Engineering roll if you're trying to create something that's especially delicate (lots of small details), accurate (specific features), or complicated (anything mechanical). Everything you create is made of a dull gray material, somewhat elastic and quite light. Drawing something simple, like a sharp knife, is a free action; anything more complicated takes at least an Action, and possibly several minutes or more.

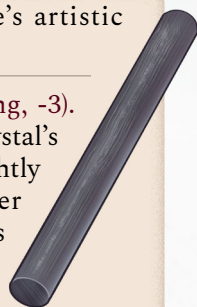
Disposition: Whatever it is you draw, it's never *quite* as perfect as it was when you imagined it. You are Driven (Major) to make sure every detail is correct, and so using this power to create something "on the fly" or "just for a moment" makes you uncomfortable. You are also Jealous

(Minor) about other people's artistic creations.

Fade (*intangibility*, Ongoing, -3). Self only. You reverse the Crystal's effects, turning yourself slightly imaginary. While this power is active, your physical self is susceptible to *opinions*, yours and others'. You have -2 when resisting Smarts and Spirit based Tests. If you fail and would become Shaken, you become Stunned instead.

Replicate (*illusion*, Ongoing, -2). By concentrating on a specific item you recall seeing in the past, you are able to create a replica of it which looks and even smells like the original. As long as this power is active, you can't stop thinking about this item and its every detail. Allowed Modifier: Strong.

Trail Barrier (*barrier*, Ongoing, -1). You extend the ability to manifest drawings to your whole body: by walking or running, you create a solid barrier behind you. It's as long as the distance you cover this turn, and as tall and wide as you are. As long as this power is active, you can't draw anything smaller and can only activate it again to "draw" more walls. Allowed Modifiers: Hardened, Shaped, Size.

**SYMPA**

Description: Multi-colored, multi-faceted.

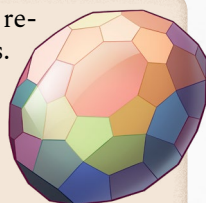
Theme: Emotions are physical things; they can be seen, touched, and manipulated. *Telling someone's emotional state by looking at them; nudging your own emotional state by pushing or pulling at your aura.*

Benefit: You can see people's emotions as colorful auras radiating around their heads and torsos. These auras are perceived through your Crystal, so you can sense them even through walls or darkness to a range of Smarts x2. Their shapes are too vague to give a clear indication of the person's actions, but through their coloring you can tell the person's exact emotional

state. This gives you a free re-roll on *all* social interactions.

When you attack using Fighting you can choose to attack a person's aura, which is physical to you. The damage is made against the target's "Spiritual Toughness" (half of Spirit + 2), ignoring armor but possibly affected by Edges such as Strong Willed—GM's call.

Disposition: Your own emotions tend to materialize and slip out of you, leaving you empty without you even noticing. If you do notice, you can develop the emotion naturally again, or run back and try to find it (it's on the floor somewhere, evaporating after several minutes). At the start of every scene, roll 1d4.





1. You keep your discipline; everything is cool.
2. You lose your courage and are Yellow.
3. You lose your confidence and are Hesitant and Cautious.
4. You lose your patience, becoming Overconfident.

As long as you remain unaware of this leakage, you give people the sense that you're "faking" it. They feel that you're only saying things to please them, imitating and reflecting; there's no honest, genuine emotion behind your words. You have -1 on all social interactions.

Emotional Pull (*bolt*, -1). You stretch out your hand and pull at a person's emotional aura from a distance. This attack is unaffected by Cover, and the damage is resisted using Spiritual Toughness. Allowed Modifier: Damage.

Emotional Storm (*stun*, -1). You push against the target's emotions, sending them into a jumble of unaddressed feelings. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.

Evoke Fear (*fear*, -1). You tug at one of the target's easiest emotions to manipulate: primal fear. Allowed Modifier: Area of Effect.

Fortify Emotion (*arcane protection and boost Trait [Spirit]*, -2). Self only. By fortifying your emotional aura and pushing it into your body, you protect yourself from all effects that influence your feelings, your thoughts, or your perception of reality. While active you gain Strong Willed but you are emotionally stunted, losing your free reroll on social interaction. You must also keep at least one arm outstretched for at least one action per turn. Allowed Modifier: Additional Recipients (who must stay adjacent to you to gain the benefit).

TIDES

Description: Clam-like in shape, deep purple shifting to deep green twice per day.

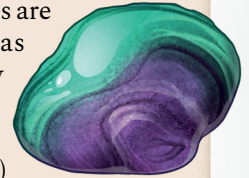
Theme: As things rise, so must they fall. You're at the center of the tides, whether liquid, gas, or even solids. *Increase the air pressure in the room to cause glass windows to explode; rise slowly by several inches on a pillow of high pressure; loosen the road's stones as the ground lowers.*

Benefit: The tides are massive. One can't move them—one is moved by them. You have Steady Hands and Strong Willed. If you don't move during your turn, nothing can move you until the start of your next turn. If you Defend, you also gain +4 to your Toughness.

Disposition: The tides shift slowly. You are Slow (Minor) and even your thoughts take a while to catch up, so you're Clueless. Finally, you have a Quirk: you speak of high and mighty things, using words such as "unleash" and "monumental."

Falling Wave (*entangle and havoc*, -2). You lift your arms and a wave erupts from you through the ground in a Cone Template (*havoc*). This power works through any medium; flying or swimming creatures make their Strength roll at -2. If standing

on solid ground, the targets are also subject to *entangle* as their feet are swallowed by the shifting floor. Available Modifier: Area of Effect (Large Blast Template) for both effects at -2.



Go With the Flow (*burrow, environmental protection and fly*, Ongoing, -4). You hug yourself with your arms and shift through the world. Earth and water reshape themselves to allow you to move through them, riding invisible magnetic tides. While active you can only do a single physical action every round. Available Modifier: Additional Recipients (-2 each) who can make a single physical action per turn.

Rising Tide (*elemental manipulation*, -2). You concentrate, lifting your arms, and the world moves. Liquids shift easily, but to shift gases you roll at -1, and for solids at -2. It's easiest to move unified matter; shifting large objects such as buildings or compound objects such as machines incur additional penalties. You can't target specific creatures, only a part of the environment up to 100 cubic feet (1,000 with a raise). This power acts slowly, over a minute or more, but with d12+10 Strength or d12+15 with a raise.



Appendix B:

Supervisors and Mentors

Choose or roll from the following. The GM should consider adding any of the Heroic Agents (pages 47-52) to this list.

Most of the following can be used as either supervisors or mentors (or both at the same time). For brevity's sake, we refer to them as "trainers" and to the Agents under their supervision or mentorship as "trainees".

If you have the *Crystal Heart Action Deck* you can also pull a random card from it. Treat Aces as 1, so draws of Aces to 10 correspond to the following ten Agents. The Heroics on the face cards are arranged in the following way: Jacks would prefer to be mentors; Queens prefer to be supervisors; and Kings are too busy and important to be either, so pull again.

Arx, the Detached Coach

Quiet, stern, and completely devoid of humor, this Maseian emphasizes maintaining a healthy spirit in a healthy body. His trainees go through a rigorous routine, throughout which he prohibits the use of Crystals that enhance one's physical abilities. He demands that his trainees be immaculately dressed at all times, sleep and eat well, and act with honor. Arx keeps an emotional distance from his trainees, but once one manages to cross that gap, they gain a friend for life. Arx was banned from field duty for reasons he would absolutely never discuss with you.

Beetle, the Keeper of Balance

This short Islander comes from a semi-pacifist society, and like many Syn Agents, his belief in his cultural values has only grown stronger after experiencing so much of the world. He teaches holistic balance, claiming that whenever something is taken, something of equal value must be given. He expects his trainees to leave something behind after they take a Crystal—a useful item, or maybe a lesson—and report it to him. He'll then judge if the payment was fair. If not, he will ask the Agent to restore the balance to the world in some other way.

Calaway Brayton, the Slacker

Calaway is the sort of supervisor you think you want, but after several days under him, you might find yourself reconsidering. This Islander is all smiles and no results, with a very hands-off approach. He seems to know everyone everywhere, hanging around with big-shots from around the Lands as well as joining the maintenance team's karaoke nights in the Syn citadel's engineering bay. You'll mostly get to meet him when you randomly bump into him in a corridor. He'll then ask you to fill in your own evaluation form with some plausible numbers (be a good Agent, why don't you).

Mrs Frodeliani, the Stern

This elderly Bogovian woman has been training Syn Agents since the organization's inception, though she never became an Agent herself. She's warm and motherly toward her trainees, establishing personal connections that one doesn't usually find in Syn. She genuinely cares. Thanks to mentoring lots of Agents and being part of the organization for so long, she has a lot of pull in many branches of Syn. However, she's also a firm believer in Syn's agenda, and requires nothing less than *top* performance from her trainees. When a trainee fails—especially if they do so in an embarrassing way, which she feels reflects on her own reputation—she will not hesitate to punish them harshly.

Iyani, the Spiritual

The stereotypical Zingamaian sees themselves as part of a bigger society. Iyani was the same, before joining Syn, back when he was Kabar. The first time Iyani had a Crystal socketed, they went through a spiritual awakening: their eyes were opened to a world they had never considered before. They left behind their family, their gender, and even their name. While they don't expect their trainees to do the same, they will try to help them harmonize with their Crystals through pilgrimages to wild parts of the





Lands or drug-induced spiritual journeys. They have never removed that first Crystal they socketed, and believe that everyone should find the one true Crystal that resonates with them and then dedicate their lives to achieving perfect harmony with it.

Jamil, the People's Person

Always well-kept and dressed in a myriad of opulent, head-turning styles, this stocky Zingamaian is a master of manipulation. He is a hands-off trainer, but always willing to devote his full attention should a trainee turn to him for assistance. During any conversation with Jamil, he twists and turns the discussion with such elegance that the trainee learns more from the way things were said than from what was actually spoken. Twice a year, Jamil invites his trainees to accompany him to a social event to learn etiquette and meet important people.

Hilda, The Dean

Nothing is more important than a good education, the Dean will tell you. The best armament is a well-thought-out method, she will say. Go to bed early and you will greet the new day with a clear mind, she advises. The Dean places emphasis not only on book learning, but also on the academic lifestyle: being thorough, checking your sources, challenging your own biases (with help), and taking the time to sharpen your skills and teach others. It's all good, but most of her trainees agree this Fjordstadian could do with fewer clever idioms.

Liha, the Artful

You wouldn't know that Liha has no arms just by looking at her. It's not just because of the wide shawls she wears, which obscure her torso, but also because of how *carefree* she is. You can spend an entire lunch with her, during which she eats with a telekinetically-levitated fork, without giving it much thought because of how casual and energetic the conversation is. Liha did not join Syn in search of an "ultra prosthetic" in the form of a Crystal; she joined because she had no choice after being banished from her clan. That's as far as she's willing to tell, though, and if asked will quickly change the topic to what she enjoys most: artful expression of one's inner self. She encourages her train-

ees to express themselves through their actions—what's the point of acting without *living*?—but keeps her own art to herself, locked in her room and unseen.

Mira, the Subtle

This Fjordstadian, who comes from a noble house, originally thought she was better than everyone. Now that she has a Crystal, she knows this for a fact. Relatively young for a trainer and surprisingly efficient (some would say ruthless), Mira makes sure her trainees are well-equipped to face a dangerous world. The cause always justifies the means, and the only time backstabs aren't useful are when you're facing the front.

Schultz, the Hard Worker

If it can be done, then go ahead and do it yourself: that's what Schultz believes in. Those trained under him learn to work hard and to appreciate their own handiwork. Anything from plumbing or replacing a tire to cooking or bandaging a severed leg—Schultz believes everyone should know how to handle, well, anything. Here, have some gruel—yes, it tastes horrible, what's your point?—and get the most out of your five hours of sleep, because first thing in the morning we're digging a trench. Schultz is the kind of Bogovian who sees the other Bogovians as soft.

