

BREAK ACTION



by Roland Rush
ver. 3

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Introduction

Break Action is a role-playing game that emphasizes driving, forward progression of story and over-the-top action. Bad situations, graphic violence and a strong sense of mortality build tension while the supernatural aspects of the world both help and hinder in fantastic ways.

The characters possess powerful and unnatural gifts that place them above humanity but forever in danger. With the strange abilities that they manifest the characters can overcome challenges in surprising and creative ways, but the supernatural isn't just limited to them. The world holds strange Artifacts, potent Aethers, cryptid menaces and enemies with gifts to rival their own. The science and technology of the modern age are also just as dangerous as ever when applied correctly, and the combination of all of these factors can give rise to even greater threats.

In order to achieve their goals the characters will be forced to confront dangers head on, often with little preparation and less time. Unforeseen problems will need to be dealt with in the moment, using limited resources and quick thinking. Stolen cars, improvised weapons, untested drugs and dangerous magics are all a part of their toolkit. Pushing the limit should become disturbingly commonplace.

As they beat their way through challenges they will find that great rewards require greater risks and that power, wealth and prestige aren't always the destination. Frequently the trials that they face will chip away at their bodies and minds. Those that live to grow old are often haunted by their past and pursued by their enemies. Eventually they may expire leaving nobody to remember their sacrifice, and the only solace left to their dying mind the knowledge that they forced destiny one step closer toward their goal.

Break Action is a simple, flexible, and fast-paced system. It focuses on keeping the tempo of the game brisk and force quick

decisions for better or for worse. The flow of the game should feel like an action movie with tense downtime scattered between layered action scenes. The Director is in charge of the game and describes the scenes while the players use their characters to strive toward the goal of the campaign. The natural abilities of the characters are defined by their profession, skills and background. Supernatural talents are expressed as "gifts" which can share some commonalities from person to person but are made unique through creative application. Most aspects of a character are left interpretive on purpose to encourage creativity and to enable faster gameplay. Arguing about gray areas and pouring over the details of rules is discouraged as it slows down the game.



The World

There have always been gods like us as far as I can tell. Not that I've lived as long as some, but those with the longest lives often have the shortest memory. In the past we were known as monsters, angels, witches, shamans, and all manner of other superstition. The years haven't really done anything to help.

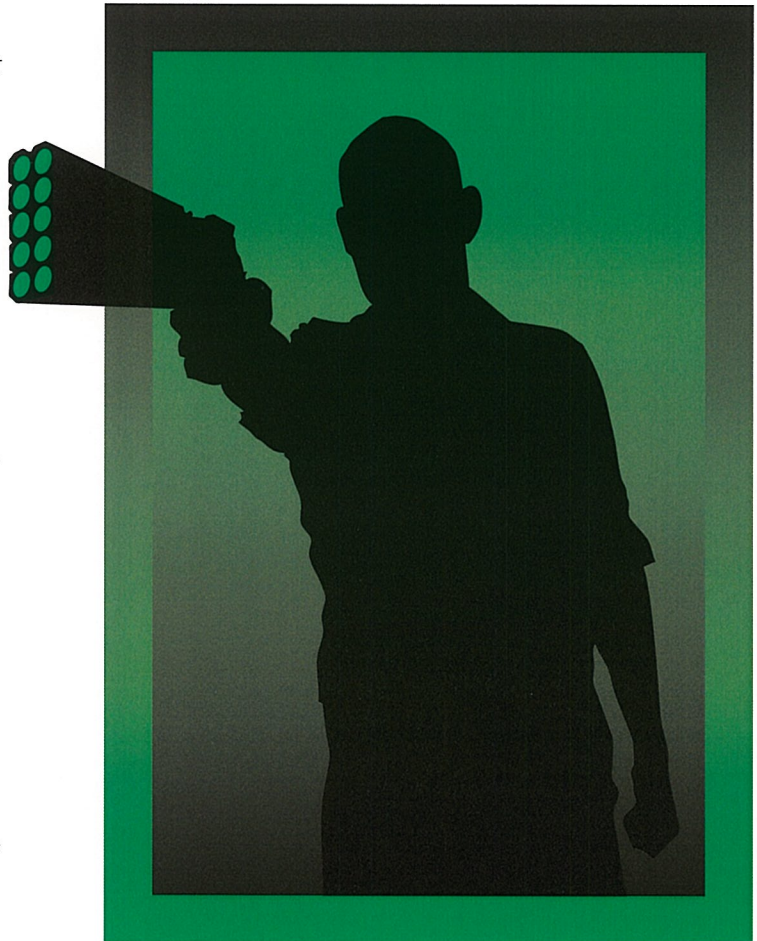
Old titles still follow us around, joined by new ones that make the old seem flattering. The bulk of us seem to have settled on calling each other "gods", but I still find the title overly grandiose. Don't get too excited about being a "god" either. The aspirations of a deity are the purview of the Riders of Jenj, and their divinity has yet to manifest to anyone but themselves. The truth of the matter is that you are what you choose to be, and you are limited only by the whims of our cruel world.

The gifts that you possess make you something other than simply human. They are the reason you've been marked for death by the Brotherhood of Stone.

Who are they? The Brotherhood is a secret society made up of humans that exists to counter the threat of the supernatural in whatever form they believe it has taken. The modern age has benefited them greatly. In times past they had to hunt in small groups following a trail of peasant stories and shoddy clues. Now they take advantage of global information technology, legal systems, law enforcement, and the unblinking eye of the digital age. The Brotherhood today enjoys the most power that they have ever had and they will gladly use a small part of it to destroy you if they can.

I've noticed that you have a phone. You would be wise to destroy it as soon as possible. Don't call your loved ones if you care about them. If the Brotherhood finds out that you have a connection to your family they'll use them to get you. It's not impossible that one of your family or friends could be a member of the Brotherhood as it stands.

There are various groups of gods out in the world. One that I mentioned, the Riders of Jenj, are the largest I can think of. Just about every one of them are horrible in some unique way. They believe that gods are elevated above mankind by their gifts, and as such deserve a superior station. They keep human slaves and perform unspeakable acts because they think it's their right. I would steer clear of them if I were you because they're not fond of people that don't share their viewpoint.



There are others out there but for now we're out of time to discuss them. Maybe you'll fall in with one or maybe you won't. Either way I'm going to leave and you have to make it on your own. I've pulled you out of a bad spot and told you the short story of your new life, and that makes two favors that you owe me. That's a lot more than I had starting out. If you live long enough and if we ever meet again you might have a chance to pay me back.

Break Action is set more-or-less in our world in the more-or-less modern day. The players take the role of “gods” who have incredible “gifts”; strange supernatural abilities that set them apart from humanity. The supernatural is not just limited to people either. Strange creatures of myth and legend roam forgotten places, magical Artifacts both old and new command incredible power and abstract planes of existence leak into our reality.

Broadly speaking, people know very little about the supernatural things around them. Chance encounters are usually met with disbelief or denial and shadowy forces work to cover up unnatural events. In the past such brushes with the supernatural were usually dismissed as fictitious or grew into myths. In time, the accounts became more muddled or were forgotten. In the modern day it has become even easier to ignore or dismiss the rare supernatural incursion, with a jaded populace being highly skeptical of any seemingly magical sight.

For the gods, the modern world is one

that rejects their gifts and the supernatural world holds no safe haven for them. It is in the boundary between the two that your characters have to scrape out their story, often with violence, cunning, and luck. Their gifts are powerful tools to achieve their goals and are also likely to be used by their enemies.

While no gods or Factions know for certain where the power for gifts comes from or why a certain few have them, the theories are abundant. Some have speculated that everyone has the potential to be a god but only few ever learn how to activate their gifts. Another explanation is that humans began to manifest these powers as an adaptation to the forces around them, or unnatural exposure has imparted some strange power on otherwise ordinary people. One disliked but entirely possible theory is that the gifts are caused by manipulation of a realm beyond ours, one not governed by rules like our own. This realm exists as everything outside the tiny reality we know. It is referred to as the realm beyond bound space, as any attempt to label it implies more definition and stability than it probably has.

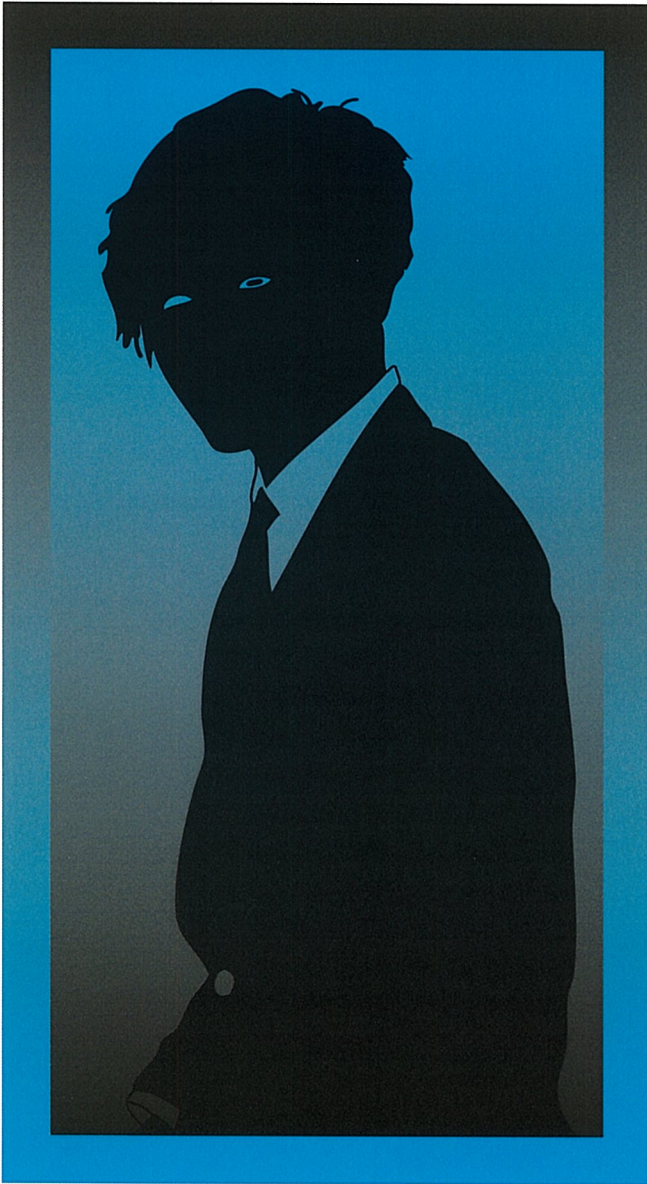
Few gods have the time to become philosophers regarding their origin. Factions tirelessly work against each other and to further their own goals. The life of a god (and those that pursue them) is dangerous and violent. Exploring treacherous and forbidden places in search of dangerous magical Artifacts can instantly give way to disaster. Trials they endure are insanely dangerous and at times gods frequently die for their cause. It's important to remember that real reward requires real risk, and that gods fight for causes that they believe are worth risking everything for.

Gods and Their Gifts

The humans with gifts are referred to as “gods” (among other less glamorous titles). Their gifts are supernatural powers with a wide variety of effects such as superhuman physical abilities, incredible cognitive power,



or the ability to distort the fundamental energies of reality. The number of gifts and the power of each one varies from god to god. There are even abstract and unique gifts not manifested by any other god.



There is no known pattern among those who manifest gifts. Limited studies have been performed to try and establish a genetic link, but they were inconclusive. It is broadly speculated that there are many gods unaware of their gifts and who live their entire lives without manifesting any signs. Of the few who do, there is no real pattern to when they manifest or what triggers them. Some gods learn of their gifts from a very early age, while others only realize that they have them late in life. In the case of the gift Longevity they might not know until they have outlived a

normal lifespan. It is known that practicing with gifts can sometimes strengthen them. Other times a gift increases in power without direct effort.

Characters will use these gifts in pursuit of their goals. It can give them an edge over ordinary humans and other opponents but using gifts consumes a lot of mental, physical and spiritual energy. Clever and creative use of gifts separates powerful gods from the others. They can make all the difference when used in the right way at the right time, but even then nothing is certain. A lucky bullet fired from a low caliber handgun can finish a god as fast as a human.

Creatures and Cryptids

Strange creatures can pose a threat to the gods as well. In the forgotten corners of the Earth gods may encounter monstrosities, many of which control powers even greater than gifts. They present a danger to exploring gods or any human unlucky enough to find them. In most cases it would be advisable to avoid cryptids except that fate and circumstance make encounters inevitable.

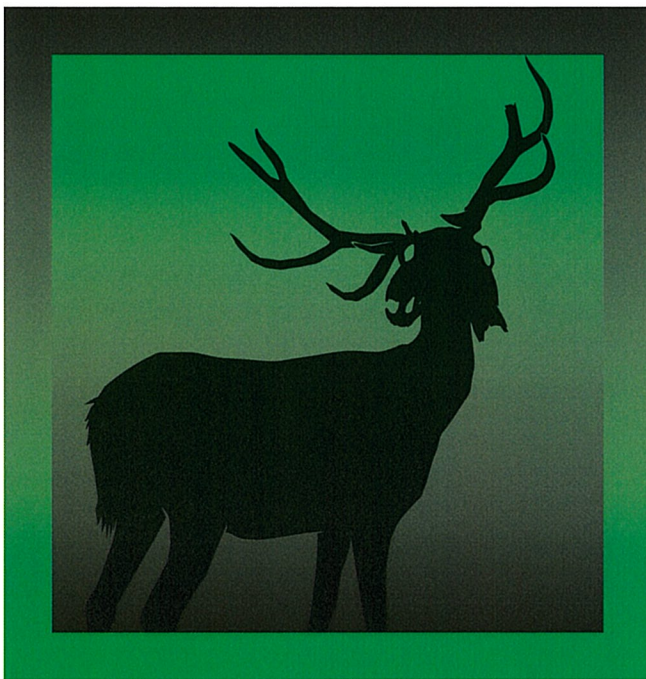
Some are non-magical but extremely rare, like the Ya-te-veo of Central and South America. A large carnivorous plant it is capable of killing and eating a person even though it has no magical powers or gifts. Others innately control magic, such as the Wendigo of North America. Mythic creatures such as the Phoenix may be entirely unique and very powerful, either through magic or gifts. Ordinary animals may also manifest gifts, but this is very rare compared to gods.

The Ordinary People

The majority of the human race either has no gifts or has not manifested any and are unaware of the supernatural. They are insulated from it by ignorance and the dedicated efforts of the Factions. People are also inclined toward disbelief even when confronted directly with gods, cryptids or magic. In most cases such an occurrence

is easy to dismiss as special effects or an elaborate stunt. When such defenses fail simple denial often takes its place. The methods and mechanisms to conceal the supernatural are many, and collectively work quite well.

Some few ordinary humans are aware and have aligned themselves with a Faction or against them. These can be dangerous opponents or stalwart allies for gods, as conventional means of getting things done are often more practical than gifts. A bullet from a gun can kill just as surely as an energy blast from a hand, and the gun is often easier to use. A computer can send information across the globe without any need for prophetic visions, and a door can be ripped open with a crowbar instead of an implausibly strong hand.



A Realm Beyond Bound Space

To label it is to define it in terms that fail to describe it. The realm beyond bound space exists loosely and absolutely outside of the reality governed by the rules that we inhabit. We float, anchored in place in the endless expanse of the undefined, our tiny sphere of rationality and laws protected only by a thin membrane of reason. The outside leaks into our realm from time to time and

we experience it in ways that conform to our limited understanding of the universe.

Regardless of the effect, these intrusions can present unique dangers. Outside of even the wildest magics, the effects of the realm beyond bound space are entirely unpredictable. They have been blamed and credited for the gifts, and some cryptids supposedly hail from there. There are a few people that have found ways to experience a small part of this realm and fewer still who have harnessed effects successfully from it. The by-product of this exposure on the body and mind is often detrimental.

The Dangers of Magic

Magic is another area outside the understanding of common people, and is excessively dangerous. Beyond the effort that it takes to use them, gifts are relatively safe. Magic on the other hand demands that a price be paid, and that price can be very high.

Humans have created spells and Artifacts throughout time that can harness magical powers, and these are the only known way that they can control the supernatural. Both humans and gods can use magic and are affected by it equally. They require at least some understanding of the spell, Artifact or effect desired. When used these effects are wide ranging, from the awesome and powerful to small and unimpressive. The outcome might not be totally predictable but the toll is certain. When magic is called upon for an effect it has a negative side-effect on the user, their environment or their fate.

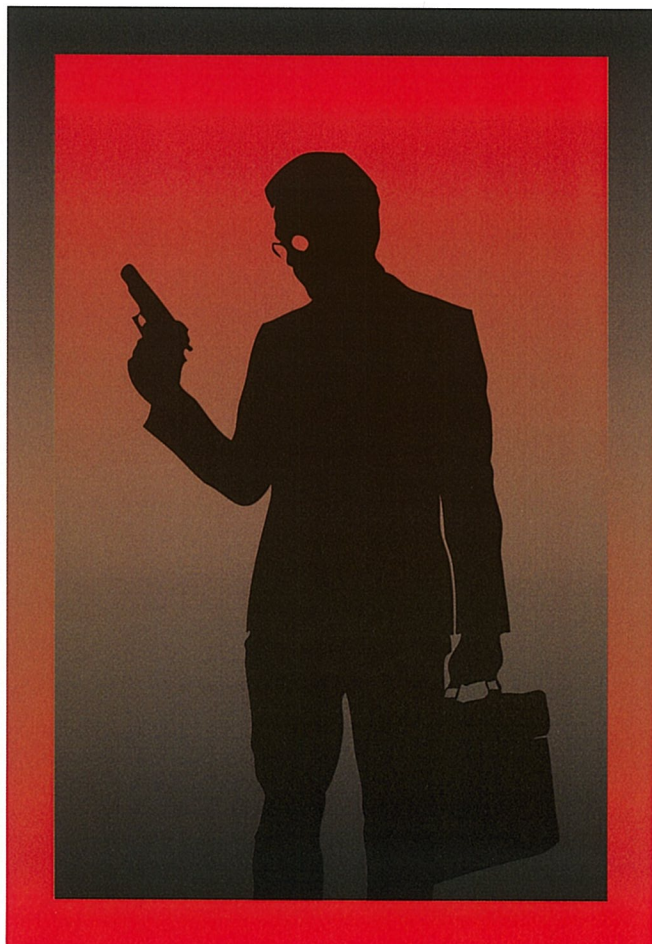
Those who have detailed information on actual magic are rare and usually loathe to share their knowledge, as magic in the wrong hands can have horrible consequences. Characters in the game will not start with actual magical knowledge and have to work for any kind of magic. Learning how to use it and its effects are often another hurdle. Practical magicians are rare to the point of being non-existent. However, the characters may have magic used against them, and gifts have no extraordinary effect on magic.

The Factions

Scattered across the globe are groups of gods and humans that operate with knowledge of the supernatural. Factions vary greatly in size, from small handfuls of individuals up to multi-national organizations. These groups are referred to as Factions and they each may be exclusive to gods or humans, or allow both to participate.

While the goals of Factions are often different, they each have some understanding of the supernatural aspects of the world. They use this knowledge to further their goals and to work for or against other Factions and their competing ideals.

What follows are the descriptions of some of the most influential and powerful Factions but this list is not exhaustive as many groups lesser known or purposely secretive. Factions also rise and fall; they are created anew and dissolve over time. Long-lived, potent Factions have to weather countless attacks and upsets if they want to survive and grow.



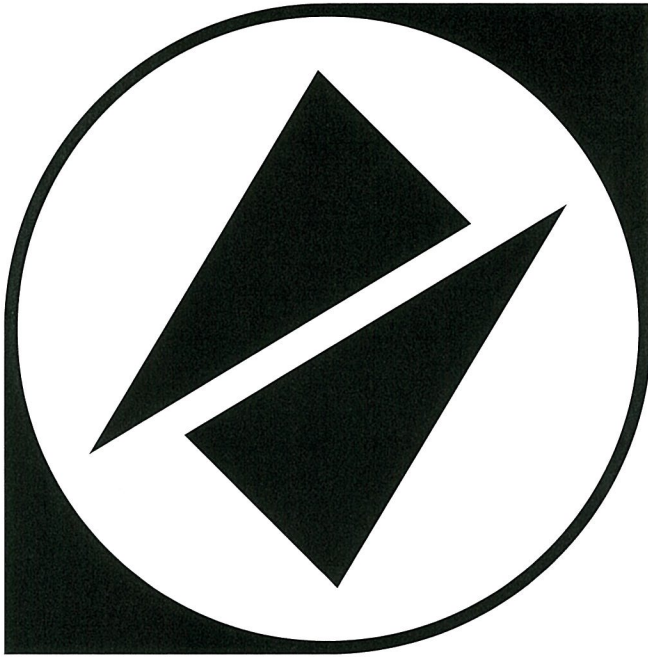
Didn't really think that I'd see you again, let alone twenty stories over the skyline. Hell, I didn't even think you'd last more than a month but here we are. Seems like you might make it after all.

While I'd love to chat about how you came to be here, that box in your hands tells me that you fell in with one of three Factions. Now, this is a chance meeting so I can tell that you're not here for me, and I'm definitely not here for you or whatever that box is holding. But I'm not going to lower my gun and I don't really blame you for not lowering yours either.

I guess that brings us to the elephant in the room. We're both tied in with a cause, but it might not be the same one. We could play our hands face up, declare what we are and who we stand with and see if that ends in a handshake or a bullet, but I have a better idea. Why risk becoming instant enemies? I suggest we both just walk by and pretend that we didn't see each other today. Sound good?

If you're heading back that way you should know that I took care of two guards. The one on the right might be waking up but I took his radio and his phone. His leg is broken and I don't think he's a Lapis Knight so there shouldn't be any trouble.

One last thing. If it turns out that we're alright with each other, take care of yourself. You still owe me two, and if I can I'd like to collect someday.



Brotherhood of Stone

The Brotherhood of Stone, or Brotherhood for short, is the most widespread Faction on the planet and possibly the most influential. They are comprised entirely of humans as their goal is to eliminate all supernatural aspects from the world and establish the dominance of humankind. They have existed since man first took up arms against the unknown, but their Faction only identified itself as the Brotherhood of Stone about 4000 years ago. They exist on every continent but have the most presence in North and Central America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

The modern world has been very good to the Brotherhood of Stone. The improvements in communication and information technology have united the otherwise isolated cells into a global network. Collaboration of effort and information have made the Brotherhood very successful in recent decades and their numbers have increased as a result. In some locations they could theoretically replace government agencies and in North America they have enough influence to step out of the shadows should the need arise. Nothing so far has been important enough to warrant such action.

The members of the Brotherhood follow two primary principles represented by their

symbol. The twin nails on their crest stand for Silence and Service.

Silence involves both their own code of silence and the suppression of humanity's greater knowledge of the supernatural. All members are expected to remain quiet about their dealings to anyone outside of the Brotherhood and breaking this code of silence often results in expulsion. Suppression of knowledge is accomplished in many ways: Tampering with information technology, obfuscating evidence, downplaying events to make them seem impossible or overblown and gaslighting otherwise credible sources. There is no hard limit to these efforts either; they will consider any available creative means of control.

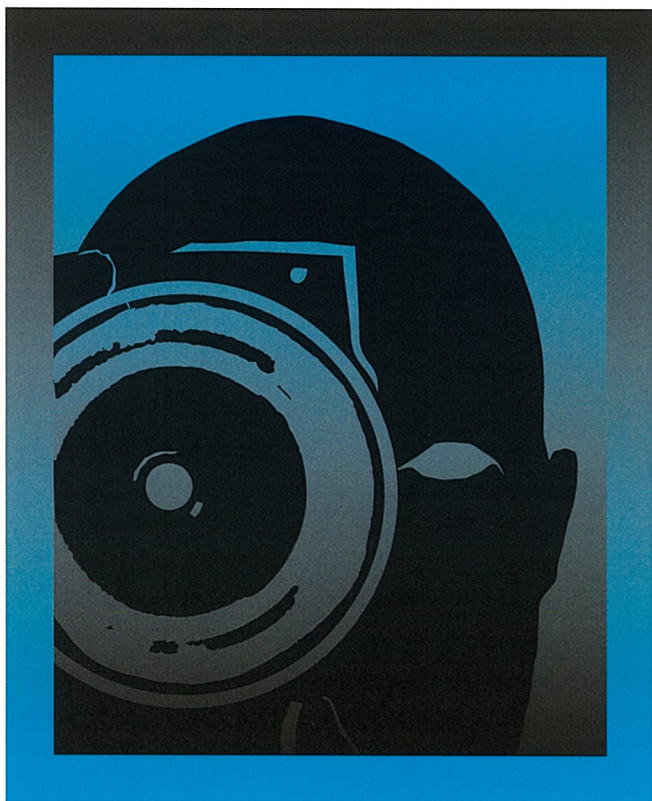
The principle of Service represents an ongoing dedication to their cause. They may be called on to do very unsavory things in the name of humanity and this is understood when they take their oath. Membership to the Brotherhood of Stone is a lifelong commitment. Individuals may grow old and take fewer responsibilities, but ultimately the loyalty remains. If all they can do is report a strange event by phone call, they are expected to do so.

The Brotherhood of Stone is arranged in a cell system. Each cell is comprised of all the participating members in a town or locale, with larger cities having several cells. Generally, smaller groups of Brotherhood follow the instruction of larger more powerful groups in their area. Information flows both ways in this arrangement and the larger group may call on the smaller one to take action or investigate an event, or the smaller one may request help from the larger. The whole is governed by an isolated group of elites whose location is constantly changed and kept highly classified. This governing council directly communicates with only a few powerful members on each continent.

If a cell becomes isolated or loses contact with others they act autonomously until contact is re-established. There have been instances of rouge cells which have stopped following the guidelines of the larger Faction

but they are rare. When a rouge cell is found by the larger Brotherhood they are coerced into re-joining the group, encouraged to disband, or forcefully eliminated.

It is because of the Brotherhood that gods cannot exist in normal society. When a god is discovered their holdings will be seized electronically and attempts will be made to isolate and then quietly eliminate them. If necessary, the Brotherhood is not above taking hostages from family or friends in order to force a god into the open.



Agents of the Brotherhood come from all walks of life but are united by their dedication to the cause. The most highly prized members come from areas in law, information technology, media and finance because they directly facilitate the control and suppression of gods. While they are very dedicated, most of the common members are not zealots and are unwilling to die for their cause.

Gods are the primary opponent of the Brotherhood, and they keep the most records and do the most surveillance in this area. Low members report on suspicious activity and a database of possible gods in an area is kept by each cell. After monitoring and confirming

the gifts of a god (to the extent that they can) a strike is planned. Able-bodied members are collected and sent against the god with weapons deemed suitable to destroy them. Guns are most often the tool of choice as they are often effective and easily available, but more creative tools are used when necessary.

There is an understanding that the members of the Brotherhood of Stone vastly outnumber gods around the globe. So much so that even if they were to lose one-hundred members for each god they kill, they would still be winning. They are not suicidal and value the lives of their initiates but losing the occasional member will not discourage them. It is accepted that losses will occur when fighting gods and those who die fighting against the supernatural are often elevated to martyrdom. Among the more zealous of cells these martyrs are held up as examples of pure and righteous dedication to the cause.

The majority of Brotherhood do not pursue their dedication to such a radical extent. They are content to contribute passively, living their lives and keeping on the lookout for strange activity. If they see something that they believe might be supernatural, such as the obvious use of a gift, they will usually call a private number, report their findings and call it a day. This information is moved up the line to be placed in a database that identifies likely gods or supernatural activity. If the instances are numerous or compelling enough, then action is taken by the Brotherhood or, in extreme cases, the Lapis Knights.

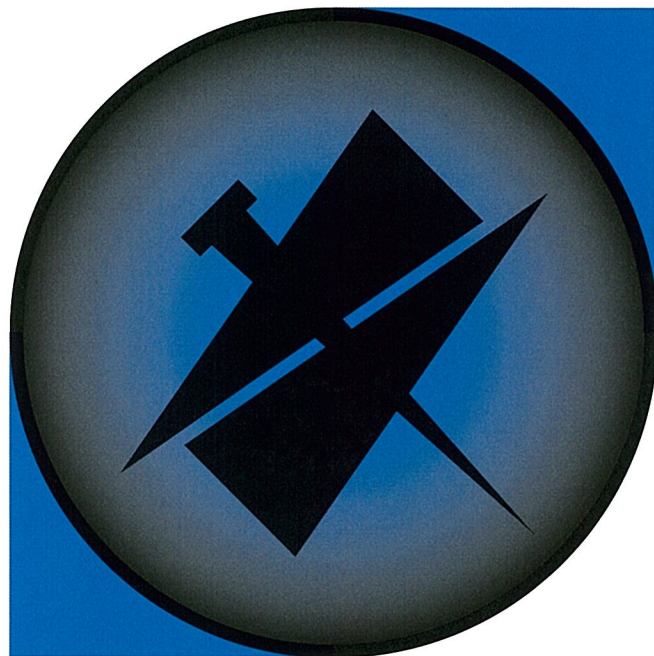
In addition, cryptids are actively hunted by the Brotherhood. Investigations are normally launched well in advance of any hunt in an effort to learn more about these unique or mythological creatures. Setting up these strikes is almost always a slower, lengthier process when compared to against a god or Faction, due to geographic isolation and the inherently diverse nature of cryptid targets.

Capturing and controlling Artifacts is the last area of focus and rates among the highest of Brotherhood priorities. They take pains to locate and contain or, if able, to eliminate

them. The only time they will actually make use of Artifacts is when they facilitate finding more or in the event that a supernatural being cannot be thwarted by more mundane means. Any Artifacts that the Brotherhood cannot destroy are hidden in secured locations or moved to geographic locations that are difficult to access.

The Brotherhood of Stone counts the Riders of Jenj as their primary enemy Faction, and considers the Knights Platinum and Edenites to be more of the same. In fact, any group that includes gods or the supernatural or does not actively reject both rates as an enemy. They sometimes hire Ziggurat for special missions. More often they will use their own special forces, the Lapis Knights, to oppose and destroy powerful foes.

The Brotherhood of Stone are meant to be villains in Break Action. Their omnipresence and decisively evil goals make them a threat to any god. While they could be used as characters or as the basis for a campaign it should be with the understanding that they are an evil Faction with sinister goals.



Lapis Knights

The Lapis Knights are the militant division of the Brotherhood of Stone. They are trained and conditioned to combat gods and other supernatural threats directly. Despite being normal humans they are feared by all but the most powerful gods for their ruthlessness, tenacity and zealotry. Each one of the Lapis Knights has had a part in the death of at least one god.

All Lapis Knights are recruited from the ranks of the Brotherhood of Stone. Individuals are selected based on their devotion to the cause and their aptitude for mental and physical training. As a prerequisite, possible recruits must have taken part on an operation that resulted in the death of a god. Their role in the operation does not have to have been a violent one, but often is. Those deemed eligible are approached and asked if they would like to join the Lapis Knights. It is their choice whether or not to join but once they have accepted they cannot leave. They will not be asked to join a second time.

Groups of Lapis Knights are taken to remote secret bases where they begin their training. Once they have completed this training they are moved to a hidden Lapis Knight cell, similar in structure to

the Brotherhood of Stone cells, where they receive missions and develop their skills further.

They are funded and supplied by trusted Brotherhood of Stone cells and do not produce any of their own wealth, equipment or weapons. The Brotherhood of Stone calls upon the Lapis Knights to engage targets that are beyond normal means of elimination. They receive all data collected by the Brotherhood agents and then take complete control of the operation. Only the highest ranking members of the Brotherhood can force them to stand down once they pursue a case.

Lapis Knights prize diversity in their candidates as they will often need to place agents in disguise near their targets. More diversity means more options, and other than physical and mental aptitude recruits are not screened to be homogeneous. They are all trained in disguise and stalking tactics as well as their unique form of martial fighting known as Lapis CQC (Close Quarters Combat). This fighting style heavily borrows from others designed for tight confines and heavily debilitating strikes. It is aggressive and incorporates minimal defensive technique. Improvised weapons are also a focus and Lapis Knights have been known to favor weaponry such as pens, box cutters, ceramic shards, kitchen implements and others. The usual strategy involves approaching a target without arousing suspicion, typically impersonating an ordinary human. Once they have closed the distance they strike aggressively with either an improvised weapon or a concealed firearm. The attack continues viciously until death is certain. Groups of Lapis Knights coordinate to strike simultaneously in horrifying pack-style takedowns.

Part of what drives the Lapis Knight behavior is an extreme version of the Brotherhood of Stone creed. Their symbol is that of the Brotherhood of Stone with an additional spike, symbolizing "Sacrosanct". They believe that their tenants are united by the sacredness of the immutable human form,

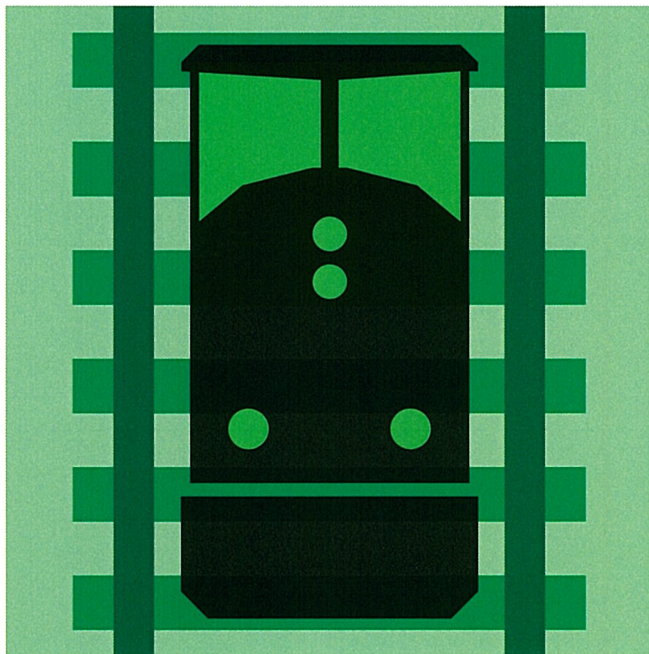
and the rising dominion of humans over the earth. The utter destruction of supernatural aggressors in all forms is supposed to herald an age of human supremacy and enlightenment.

The mental training of the Lapis Knights involves turning them into zealots for the cause and the ability to mentally shut off their senses of self preservation and pain. When using this mental training they appear utterly focused. They remain silent and directed even when in great pain, they will not speak and cannot be reasoned with. If a Lapis Knight is dealt a fatal injury while in this state they often continue to attack until their body cannot act anymore. They can end this mental state and return to normal when an objective is completed or is made unachievable. The training for this is so ingrained that even very old or debilitated Lapis Knights have demonstrated the ability to use it.



The Lapis Knights are as thorough as possible when researching targets and will gladly adapt tactics to fit a situation. If they are met with failure they will try again with adjusted strategies until they are successful. It is understood that losses will occur when fighting the supernatural, and like the Brotherhood of Stone they know that if they lose dozens of agents for every god killed, they are still winning in the long run.

The Lapis Knights function as a division of the Brotherhood of Stone and take instruction from their most elevated members. They do not make outside alliances, and consider any Faction that includes gods as their enemies. They can have some limited contact with Ziggurat, but only when commanded to.



Edenites

The Edenites are a small but motivated Faction that includes both humans and gods. Their members adhere to the idea that humans and gods are not inherently opposed and can accomplish the greatest feats while working together. This philosophy's merit is evidenced by their achievements, both technological and ideological. They are known to have amazing examples of hybrid technology and weaponry.

While they come from a plethora of different backgrounds, Edenites have also earned many enemies among Factions with narrower world views. Because of this, and their predisposition for taking large risks for the right cause, their Faction is in decline. Many regions where they used to have influence are now practically devoid of Edenites.

The Edenites maintain high mobility in the areas that they operate, commonly by making moving headquarters out of trains. They commonly refer to these trains by the code word "Eden." Trains offer a unique advantage by accommodating their need for a base of operations as well as providing the mobility to keep ahead of their enemies. They quietly enter areas by hacking schedules at the train dispatcher's office. This strategy allows them

to arrive and depart from an area with few delays and little scrutiny from the public. Hacking also serves as a primary method of hiding their activities and gathering information. More direct physical action is carried out by field agents, who deploy from the trains, or individual allies living in safe houses or among humanity.

Hacking is a skill that figures prominently in Edenite strategies. They prize accomplished hackers on their trains and in the event that they have none they call upon allies abroad. Hacking helps to doctor records, conceal movements and gain access to restricted locations. By hacking a train dispatcher's office they can monitor gaps in train schedules and insert their own itineraries, or add their own train into the schedules.



They have sometimes been called the "Orphanage Militia," due to their penchant for taking charity cases. While they don't share a singular code of ethics the Edenites reject injustice and seek out righteous causes even when the risk is high and there is little to gain. They will also shield others from the machinations of the other Factions when they can, making most of the Eden trains an abstract collection of unfortunate humans and gods. Some Edens have been known to have heavily modified train cars to

accommodate individuals with special needs, including supernatural ones.

Not all Edens are built into trains. Alternative Edens can be in semi trucks, commercial jets or even yachts. To be an Eden a vehicle need only be able to support its passengers as a base of operations and have room for their unique technology and support equipment.

In times of trouble they have stolen armored trains and converted them for their own use. In some cases monorails have been used, but these are rare. Mobility is crucial to Edenite operation but sometimes a fixed location will be used as a temporary base or to build up a new train.

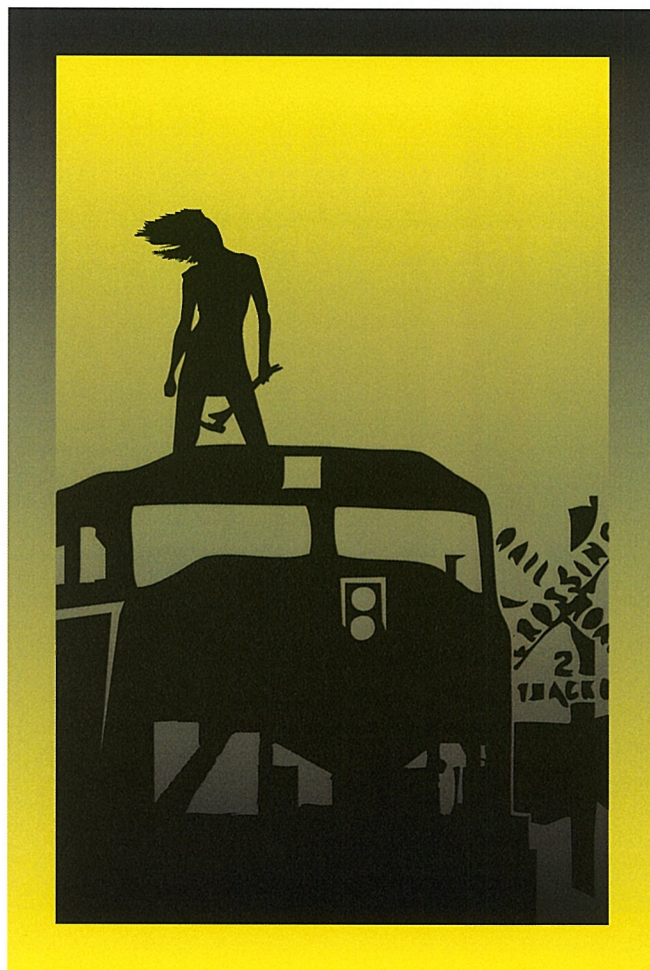
In appearance, Edenites tend to dress in a manner similar to the region. Because their finances are usually tied up in their missions they frequent second-hand stores and discount grocery outlets to save money. The food they store usually requires minimal preparation and keeps for long periods of time. This doesn't make life aboard the trains comfortable or luxurious. Edenites sometimes take brief vacations to get away from the claustrophobic confines of the train, and to visit out-of-the-way restaurants when it's safe.

The Edenites try to avoid conflict but typically end up finding it anyhow. They first emerged as a faction in response to oppression and violence between the Riders of Jenj and the Brotherhood of Stone several centuries ago. Their pursuit of the greater good puts them at odds with both those and several other Factions and these conflicts have taken their toll. Their numbers are in decline globally, and if the trends continue the Edenites will probably cease to exist within a century.

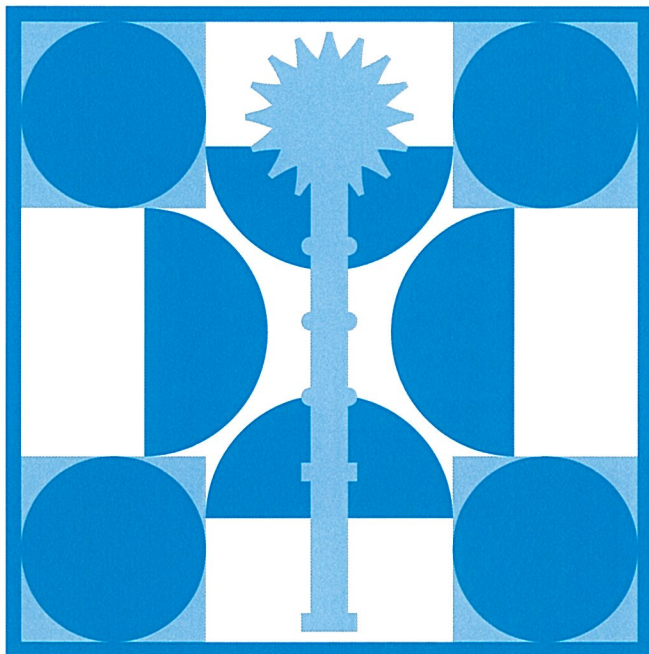
Edenites can be found in any area with an established rail system, although they are rare outside of their last major stronghold in South America. There, they have several very large trains in operation and some limited political influence. The Brotherhood of Stone and Riders of Jenj count themselves as enemies of the Edenites and their

inclusive philosophy. Lapis Knights will try to eliminate them at their source by finding Edens and destroying them.

The Edenites are not alone in the world though, and they count a few individuals and several Factions as their friends. The Aces have been their strong allies in the past century and the Knights Platinum have cooperated with them on many occasions. Ziggurat remains indifferent, but probably wouldn't turn down a contract that paid well.



There is an undefined but prevalent idea among the Edenites that they are meant for something very important. They believe that their efforts aren't just limited to the small victories of the now, but are escalating to some great event. This event will determine the future of gods and men, and at that time they must have the conviction to choose the right course. The oracles present on some Edens have tried to paint a clearer picture of this destiny but so far have failed to reach a consensus.



Knights Platinum

The Knights Platinum are a Faction made up of gods who have embraced their gifts wholly, who believe that they have an elevated status because of them, and feel they have a calling to help and protect those without. Their primary goal is to counter supernatural threats to the mundane world, and this ideology leads them to be unsung heroes and champions of justice. They frequently act like comic book characters, with larger than life ideals and boundless conviction.

Knights Platinum are present on almost every continent, though never in large numbers due to the small number of gods in the world and their tendency to be loners. They share a common belief in being responsible with their gifts and championing good causes, though that is where their similarities end. They have no codified rules or Faction structure and morals, standards and methods vary greatly between individuals.

They tend to be less concerned with secrecy than other Factions, maintaining only enough for immediate safety. Some Knights Platinum are even recognizable figures to the people in surrounding areas. This is a double-edged sword, as they can be praised and

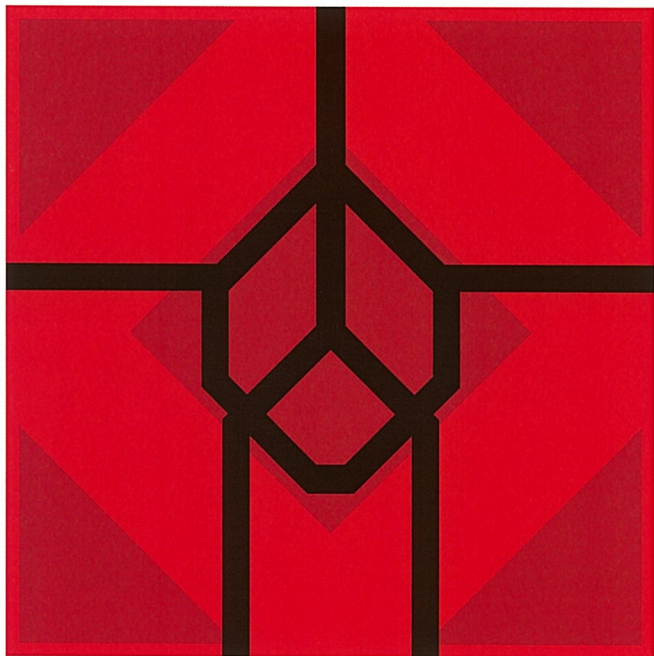
protected by those they have helped but may also attract the attention of the Brotherhood of Stone or others that want to destroy them.

The gods who decide to call themselves Knights Platinum tend to be brash and impulsive. The timid rarely try, as fighting for the causes that they believe in is a dangerous trade. This results in thinning of the newest members as they retreat from the heavy responsibilities they have taken upon themselves, or in some cases, die.

The Knights Platinum are self policing. While anyone can call themselves Knights Platinum, their actions will tell the true story. If a member is found to have strayed too far from the right cause another member may take it upon themselves to set the errant comrade straight, though in practice this is rare. If someone attempts to slander the good name of the Knights Platinum while claiming to be one, several members may band together to stop them.

When a Knights Platinum attracts the attention of the media it tends to be viewed as a remarkable but singular incident which is reported but soon forgotten. Strange and unique events are not so rare that they warrant lasting attention and the Knights Platinum count on this to erase their visible mistakes. Repetitive problems with visibility are still very bad and a member who is not careful can find themselves besieged by enemies. This, and over zealousness of neophyte Knights Platinum is their leading cause of death. The most experienced, successful and long lived of them have learned to temper zeal with wisdom.

Knights Platinum count anyone of similar mindset as an ally and have been found cooperating with the Edenites and The Aces. Such alliances are usually temporary, but can sometimes last for years. The Riders of Jenj are common enemies due to conflicting ideals. Knights Platinum tend to ignore the Brotherhood of Stone, Lapis Knights and Ziggurat except in instances where they are in direct conflict, as those Factions are made up of normal people and supported by the ordinary world.



The Riders of Jenj

The Riders of Jenj are a large Faction composed of a variety of gods who believe that their gifts set them above the rest of humanity. Led by Jenj Harappan, their often challenged but never dethroned leader, they strive to elevate themselves in the world by whatever means they deem necessary. They come from many places and many walks of life but are united under the idea that they are a superior form of humanity. Violence, death and slavery are their hallmarks.

Gods are isolated and rejected by modern society, largely due to the Brotherhood of Stone's growing influence. This oppression compels some gods to fight back and leads them into the arms of the Riders of Jenj. While the Riders have existed long before the Brotherhood of Stone, the activities of the latter have helped swell their ranks. Both Factions are very influential but it is unclear which is more powerful on a global scale.

At the bottom levels of Rider hierarchy are the new initiates. They initially demonstrate very little restraint, and infighting and death are common among new Riders as they try to prove themselves strong enough to advance. They work individually or in small groups, roaming from place to place, taking whatever they please while trying to avoid forces large

enough to destroy them. Riders of higher status will recruit the lower initiates for simple missions, cannon fodder, or brutish violence. The lowest ranks gladly accept these tasks, hoping to gain enough favor and resources to gain higher station.

As the dregs die off, some few individuals will earn distinction. These Riders come to make up the middle ranks, smaller in number but greater in cunning. Strength is valued by the Riders in any form and these intermediates have formed enough alliances and holdings that they can't be easily unseated. The infighting of the lower ranks persists but changes to include blatant ass-kissing or subtle plays for power. The highest ranks of the Riders of Jenj call on this middle management to complete more complicated missions and secure important Faction objectives. They are not as disposable as the lowest ranks and are generally much more reliable.

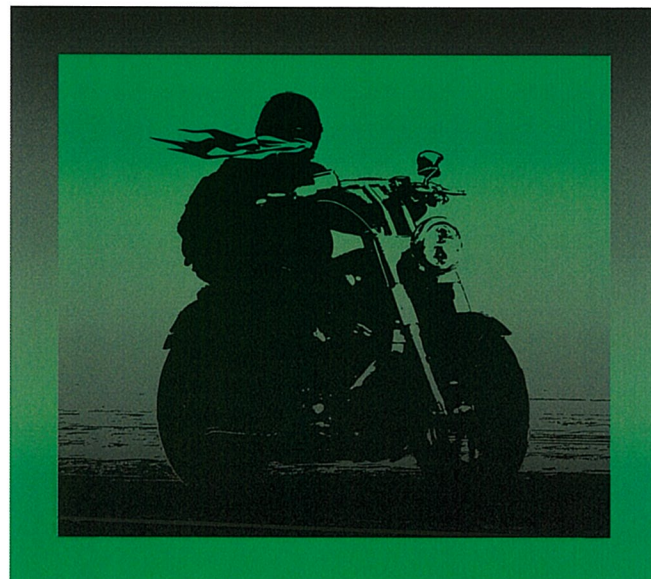
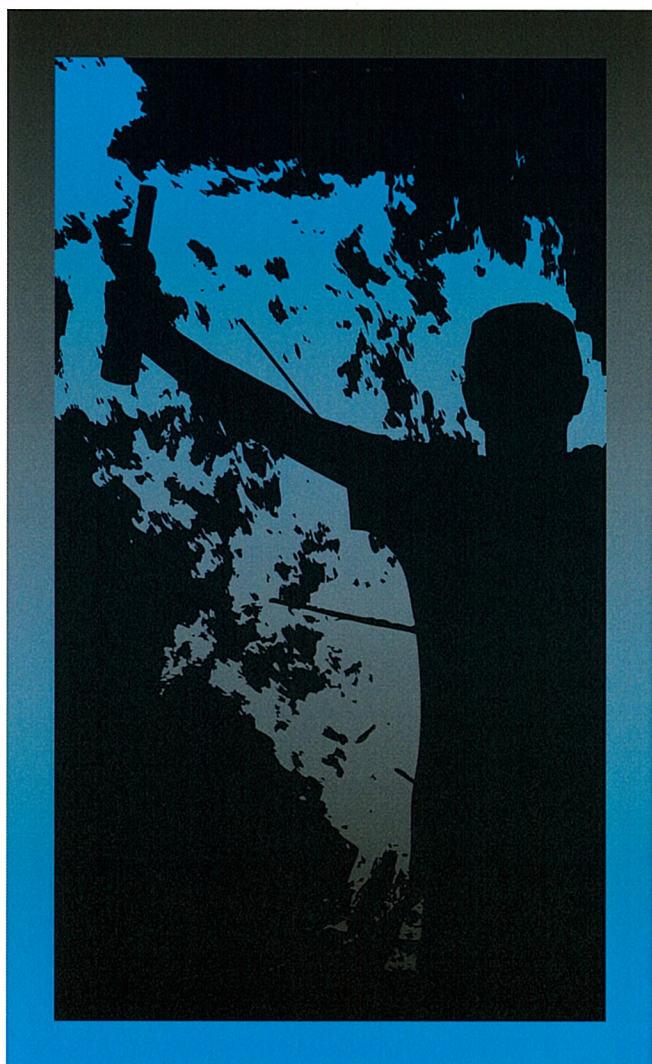
The Riders of Jenj are controlled and motivated by their highest ranks which are achieved by dedication to Jenj and his generals and by demonstrating ruthless power, cunning, upward ambition and surgical violence. They are much smaller in number than the middle ranks and mobility is quite limited. Anyone who has this level of distinction in the Riders is hard to subvert and usually holds their position until they die. Networks of allies and holdings ensure retribution against clumsy assassins with dreams of advancement.

At the top of the Riders is Jenj Harappan himself, possibly the most powerful known god. He has ruled the Riders for as long as anyone can remember and has thwarted all challenges to his reign, most often by deploying his trusted generals to the task. On rare occasion Jenj has had to address a challenge personally and it is during these times that his power and right to rule are proven to be unquestionable.

The Riders of Jenj view themselves as being elevated by their gifts into something different than common humanity. As such there are no normal humans among their

ranks except for slaves. Rider slaves are used as labor, resources or bartering chips. Most are taken by the lower and middle ranks and can't expect long lives or decent treatment. Slaves are viewed as personal property of their Rider and can sometimes obtain some station as a proxy. If their owner is powerful they may be used to instruct or inform other Riders on their behalf and damaging or disregarding these slaves may be viewed as a personal affront to their owner.

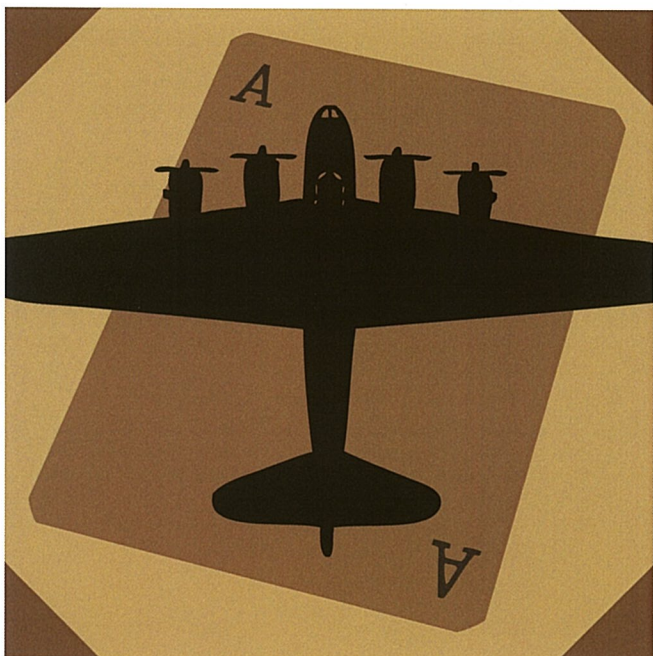
Historically, the Riders have used horses and other mounts to increase their mobility and range of operation. This tradition persists in the modern Riders who use motorcycles and other vehicles in place of the old mounts. Even the highest members observe this tradition and acquire favored vehicles, even if they rarely use them. The arrival of low gangs of Riders is often heralded by the roar of engines.



The philosophy of the Riders of Jenj attracts plenty of gods who have experienced rejection by society at large. Many have personally lost loved ones to the Brotherhood and are desperate to achieve revenge. Others have substance abuse problems and join the Riders to help facilitate this. Some have simply seen how they are likely to be treated and joined to find comfort among fellows. Regardless of the reason they will either prove themselves within the Riders or languish and die in the dregs.

While the Riders do believe that they are better than humans they are not ignorant of technology. They are not immortal and will not act out against humanity when there is little or nothing to be gained. Those who do rarely live for long as humanity possesses the tools to kill almost any god. Riders are not blind to the benefits of technology either; they will gladly use the tools of mankind and are often heavily armed.

The Riders of Jenj accept only gods among their ranks and as such do not ally with humans. They count the Brotherhood of Stone, Lapis Knights, and Edenites as their enemies. They have disagreements with Factions such as Knights Platinum and The Aces but tend to treat them with mocking respect. Unaffiliated gods or gods from other Factions who mirror their ideology are treated as potential recruits unless proven otherwise.



The Aces

There is a legend among gods and men of a warrior named Piotr. He grew up among the fires of World War II within a Nazi-occupied Poland. The Poles had fought hard and suffered greatly, and as the Nazis were pushed back Piotr looked up from the rubble of his city and saw American bombers overhead. The first sign of salvation left a mark upon him that would shape the future of his incredible campaign against the forces of tyranny. He committed himself to becoming like those airborne heroes that he admired. He became a pilot and spent every extra hour he had restoring a downed B-17 that he named Curvy Blanche. Despite being a human Piotr longed to take the fight to the Brotherhood of Stone; to defend the vulnerable and become a champion against evil. All he needed was a brave and loyal team to fly with him. People who did not fear death, and knew that the right cause was worth dying for.

The Aces are a Faction comprised of mostly normal humans who continue the righteous fight begun by Piotr the Polish pilot. His exploits have been embellished to mythic status but to the people who follow in his path every story might as well be true. He

and his crew fought an extended campaign against the Brotherhood of Stone, flying all across Europe, Asia and Africa, engaging in pitched gunfights, daring rescues and narrow escapes. Along the way they added more of the willing to their ranks and became known as The Aces, Piotr's own Wojsko, his army.

The Aces fought their way across the globe through castles and ossuaries, fighter planes and flying alien forts, led by their endlessly encouraging leader. Piotr could always be found leaping into the fray armed with his trusty VIS pistol and a confident smile. His crew came from many nations and backgrounds but all shared the same faith in their leader. In truth, Piotr knew his faith in them was greater.

The legend holds that Piotr and his Aces took the fight to the Brotherhood of Stone at a time when they were about to make a coordinated global advance. Their power had spiked and the Brotherhood had planned a massive attack against a large number of gods and their Factions. Having learned of their plans, the Aces made a bold strike against their headquarters in Europe, destroying their record of known gods and scattering their leadership for decades.

Following this victory, the Aces flew into obscurity. There were continued sightings of the Curvy Blanche over the decades and more people were recruited to the cause, but fewer as time went on. Nobody has seen or heard from Piotr in recent years and most assume he is dead.

The years and the fighting both took their toll. Each member chose a playing card as a token, and as they fell Piotr let their card drop from the Curvy Blanche. The deck thinned but their spirits were resolute. They smiled and celebrated their victories while traveling, a bottle of vodka and a box of cigars never far from Piotr's reach. In the end they flew against the enemy one last time. The plane crippled by gunfire and explosions, Piotr let the last cards go before

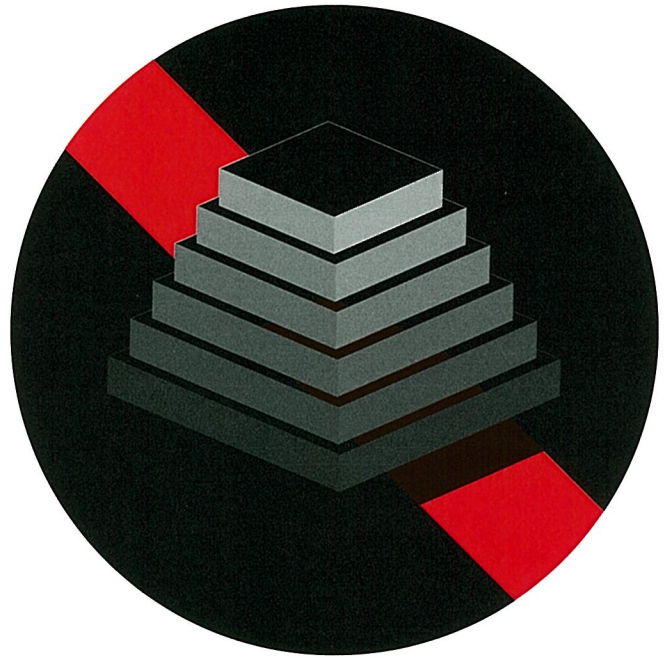
soaring over the Atlantic toward a country he idolized but had never seen. They should have idolized him, and in time many would.

Modern Aces are those that follow the example that Piotr and his crew set. Whether or not the legend is true doesn't matter to them, as it's the idea that counts. To be one of the Aces requires a dedication to the ideals they stood for. Selflessness and bravery are their defining features and they approach danger head on with daring and courage. They uplift their fellows with high spirits and teamwork and know that protecting the needful and defeating evil is a cause worth dying for.

The Aces are long time allies of the Edenites and will fall in with them quite willingly. They also find common philosophical ground with Knights Platinum and will tend to form groups with other Aces that they come across. They do not get along with Riders of Jenj but fight them less than other Factions. The Brotherhood of Stone and the Lapis Knights consider the Aces to be an old foe despite their relative newness. The feeling is mutual.



"With friends like those by my side I am a god, without them I am just a man. I could strike the moon from the sky if they would help me to reach it. Nothing was beyond us."



Ziggurat

Ziggurat is a private military company (PMC) that operates with knowledge of the supernatural. They are hired as a mercenary force to address, guard against or exploit supernatural threats, among other tasks. Traditional armed forces are difficult to use in these circumstances and Ziggurat has become quite wealthy for their willingness to plan for and counter the unknown. They always operate with discretion, for clients who may find a degree of separation or plausible deniability beneficial.

Ziggurat recruits members from experienced backgrounds, typically special forces from the militaries of various countries. They have headquarters set up around the world but no more than one in any given nation. These sites are placed only with the permission of that country's government and they have no secret or unsanctioned bases. Their effectiveness is high due exacting standards that they rigidly enforce.

Despite coming from trained backgrounds, members are subjected to physical and skill training for the duration of their service with Ziggurat. Ongoing psychological screening is enforced at each base and routine checkups are mandatory. Absolute secrecy is required

of members regardless of rank or function. They are forbidden to discuss their missions or contracts with anyone who was not personally present for them and even then only as it pertains to Ziggurat and their continued success.

Because of the diverse conditions they operate in and the myriad of strange things they may encounter, Ziggurat is frequently petitioned to field test weapons and gear from other companies. In practice their equipment is traditional or mundane but they have been part of the development process for next generation firearms, specialized armors and combat assistance technology including artificial intelligence.

Hiring such a specialized force is costly and even basic contracts can run up to several million dollars. While Ziggurat is willing to discuss almost any job, not all are accepted. The usual reason for refusal is either that the payment is too low or the mission has too many variables and is considered too risky. The agents selected for a task are not part of the negotiating process and are not informed of their payment until completion of the mission. This prevents conflicts of interest while a mission is underway.

Ziggurat pays a great deal of money to suppress knowledge of their activities and for legal defense. Legal interference is a standard part of any client contract and anyone trying to discover the identity of a client will have to fight through a gauntlet of specialized lawyers. This behavior has earned Ziggurat the ire of civil rights organizations and political transparency advocates but is highly valued by prospective buyers.

Money and the desire for “unique” experiences draw applicants to Ziggurat but attrition is high. Most members are only in active service for a handful of years. The demands of the missions and the requirement of secrecy takes a harsh toll on the agents, both mentally and physically. Medical coverage is provided for life, and psychological screening is a common cause of dismissal. Members who have endured mentally damaging contracts may be

voluntarily or involuntarily discharged. Given the nature of their tasks, most agents will eventually succumb to this fate and live out their comfortable, but unquestionably damaged lives.

Ziggurat will entertain working with any other Faction but typically only ally with governments or wealthy private entities. The Veynar Group is one such powerful corporation which has expensive standing contracts with Ziggurat. Of the Factions, the Brotherhood of Stone most often employs them for situations where the Lapis Knights are either inappropriate, unavailable, or will require support.



Other Factions

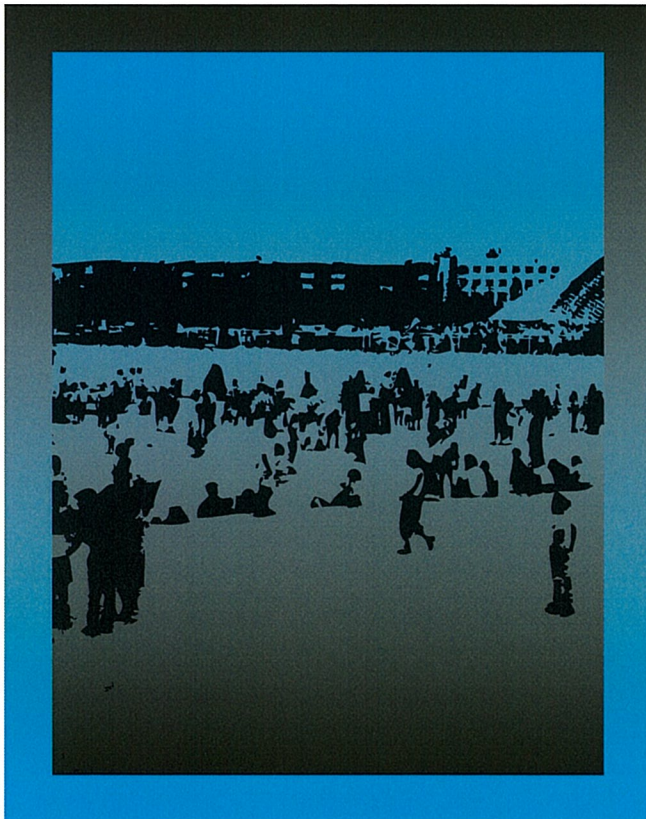
The Factions discussed here are some of the most notable ones but this is far from an exhaustive list. New Factions are formed regularly and while most of them don't last for more than a short time, some can be persistent. They can be made wherever there is a need or willingness and may last as long as centuries or only a single mission. They are defined by their ideologies and judged by their actions. Directors are encouraged to alter existing Factions to fit a story and they should feel free to add new ones as the need arises.

Notable Faction Members

I hope you've been taking notes on who's who, because we're going to meet three of these people for lunch. This is not some friendly business lunch either. If we don't negotiate a temporary cease fire we'll have no chance traveling next week.

The restaurant we're going to is on the sixtieth floor of the building so there's not going to be an easy escape if things go wrong. These people and their Factions are not all friends, and even under a flag of truce they'll be a volatile group. They make big decisions for their Factions and they don't mess around. Make sure to be direct and to the point; stick to business so that we can wrap this up and get the hell out. If any one of these clowns wanted to settle a score this would be a great opportunity, and they all know it too.

I'm not going to lie; even if we pull this off there's a good chance for a double cross. These people are only loyal to their Faction. Our helicopter is down from the last fight so we don't have an easy out. I've got a feeling this is going to go really badly.



For those familiar with Factions there are certain figures whose names come up over and over. These are some of the primary motivators behind Faction activity and they demonstrate great influence through a combination of connections, power and leadership. Whether or not they want to be they are excellent reflections of the ideology behind their Faction as well.

Zero

A young girl with a potent contagion within her, Zero is kept in a secured tank aboard an Eden train. The powerful disease she carries grows in strength with each passing day but can't harm her. Suspended inside a special transparent chamber that isolates her from everyone else, she spends her time studying and assisting the Edenites as a strategist and analyst.

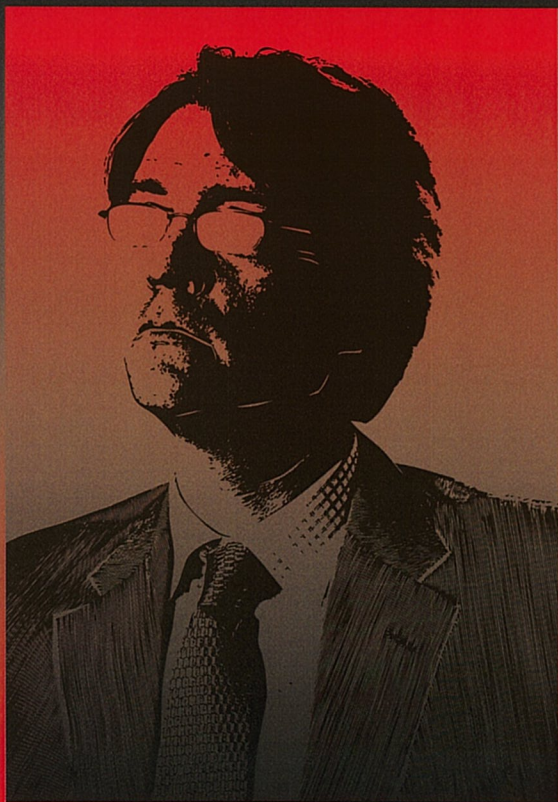
Zero is the code name she assumed upon joining the Faction, derived from "patient zero," the term used to identify the original carrier of a disease. True to that name, the afflictions she emanates are both unique and terrible. When she was only an infant the disease was weak but easily transmitted. Anyone handling her was almost certain to catch it and would be ill with flu-like symptoms for days. As she grew so did the disease, and by the time she was several years old it was lethal in a quarter of all cases. Taken in by Edenites, Henry was able to design a fluid filled tank that would contain her affliction. Specialized liquids are pumped through the tank and filtered by machines. Her air is similarly filtered and supplied by a mask she must always wear. The filters become contaminated over time and must be carefully removed, destroyed and replaced. Special locking chambers are used to provide food and clothing, and the entire machine must be attended regularly throughout the day. The tank has received several upgrades over the years as her contagion became too powerful to be contained by previous versions.

Henry has admitted that if Zero's disease

continues to grow, then in several years there will be no way of safely changing filters or upgrading the system further. At that point their only course of action will be to let her die in the tank as the fluid and air toxify. Now twelve years old, she is well aware of this fate. She spends her remaining time learning and using intelligence beyond her years to help the cause of the Edenites. Several of their most successful operations are owed to her unique strategies, as well as some of their more inventive technologies. When the time comes for her to die Edenites will lose one of their best minds.

Doctor Henry

A surgeon and pioneer of experimental medical science, Henry is the mastermind behind many of the Edenite mobile treatment facilities and their fantastic drugs. Tall and gaunt, he wore a medium length brown beard and a lab coat as an affectation. In later years his hair mostly retreated from the top of his head but his positive, upbeat nature never



left. Born in England before the second World War, he had a difficult childhood during the bombings and the rebuilding in the years to follow. Despite this, he became a dedicated and adventurous young man with a passion for medicine. He wanted to travel, find people with unique problems and help them where they were. This led him to discover gods and, fortunately, fall in with Piotr.

Piotr and Henry became good friends while he finished medical school abroad, and the two made a deal to team up after he returned from safari. Things didn't really work out but Henry and Piotr remained friends. Henry became an Edenite because he shared their philosophy and Eden's trains also provided the necessary space and mobility for his work. Piotr's constant flying and proactive (sometimes violent) strategies could not facilitate the same environment. Regardless, their friendship and contact over the years likely helped cement the alliance between The Aces and the Edenites.

Henry pioneered treatments for gods with unusual medical conditions, often by building dedicated devices or entire train cars to support their needs. Aside from serving as an emergency surgeon for Edenites he also created some of their most potent drugs. Ascension remains his magnum opus, the most powerful drug he ever created, and only perfected in the later years of his life. He regretted finishing and distributing it until the end of his days.

Piotr the Pilot

The leader of the Aces and pilot of the Curvy Blanche, Piotr is an inspiring figure. Born and raised in Poland he spent his late teens and early adulthood trying to survive in the second World War. Piotr was a shorter gentleman with thinning hair, a pudgy figure and wry smile. His unquenchable spirit is what moved people to follow him though he would never take personal credit for the accomplishments of his Faction.

Piotr was inspired by the American bombers that flew overhead during the

liberation of Europe, and dedicated his life to becoming a champion of those oppressed by the Brotherhood of Stone. He rebuilt a downed B-17 that he named The Curvy Blanche and with Henry's help he collected the first group of Aces. They flew all over Europe, Northern Africa, Russia and the Mediterranean, thwarting Brotherhood plans and defending those in need in a campaign that spanned the rest of his life. In that time, he and his crew attained mythic status and their legend eclipsed their actual exploits. Now, it's those stories that energize aspiring heroes to take up the cause of the Aces even in Piotr's absence.

Though many of his companions would fall over the decades of fighting, Piotr would still find more willing to fly with him. No matter how much time passed he would meet the next fight with fearlessness and enthusiasm. The Aces were unconditionally good and judged their battles with a simple sense of right and wrong. They didn't fear death and would not, or could not, see gray areas in morality. This ultimately led to the death of Piotr in the modern age, though if his legacy is any indication he was never really defeated.

Clementine the Physicist

A brilliant scientist and the most powerful living wielder of Gravity, Clementine is also one of the strongest and least known Knights Platinum. A medium-tall woman from Harlem, her appearance is permanently altered by her battle with Baphomet. She wears loose bandages to protect the wounds that refuse to fully heal, inflicted by the unearthly fires that burned her during the confrontation.

Clementine demonstrated high intellect from a young age and easily excelled in school. After college she began a career in nuclear research while at the same time honing her gift of Gravity. With her dedicated effort and analytical approach she refined her control of gravity to a razor's edge, and then even further. She began to practice folding space with gravity and was eventually able

to form and maintain temporary wormholes. These portals, known as Clementine Gates by the other Knights Platinum, could be used to instantly transport people and objects from one location to another. They require a great deal of energy from Clementine but serve as a form of accelerated crisis response for her Faction. In times of need she can also weaponize them into terrifyingly destructive, cestus-like tools.



Clementine was helping gate Edenites across the world when she learned that they had made a desperate deal with Baphomet, the Occult Goat, who had come to collect on their bargain. Not one to compromise in the face of supernatural evil, she immediately launched into combat. The fight was brief, each dealing one blow to the other. Clementine struck Baphomet with a gate, a unique and amazing feat that wounded the creature and forced it away from the Edenites forever. The magical counterattack used by Baphomet would have killed Clementine if

not for her ability to escape using her gifts. Instead, her entire body is marked with burns that will never heal.

Clementine has retreated from the her dealings with Factions for now. She is living in remote places where she can be introspective without distractions. While she is still willing to help those in need she is taking a less active role in world events and is difficult to contact.

Brute

The larger than life hero of comic book fame, Brute is admired by people around the globe who don't think he's actually real. A figurehead of the Knights Platinum, Brute's exploits have been turned into graphic novels which simultaneously protects him from exposure and inspires his fans.

Brute has powerful gifts in the area of Body and also maintains an impressive physique by bodybuilding in his hideout. He dresses in a costume inspired by Ostrogoths and wields an over-sized battle-axe. While he's not known for being the cleverest of combatants he has a knack for picking smart fights. He makes temporary alliances with other Knights Platinum members easily and will use them to shore up his own weaknesses when facing superior opponents. Zeal and overwhelming power are his trademarks in combat.



Because of the comic book line, most people consider Brute to be a fictional character. When seen by the public it's usually assumed that he is promoting comics or filming for a movie. He does nothing to discourage this idea as it protects him and events surrounding him from scrutiny. In addition, it plays into his boisterous and gregarious personality. He believes that he is a champion for good and has a simplistic view of right and wrong. He encourages others with stalwart dedication and optimism and many Knights Platinum wish they could operate as openly as he does.

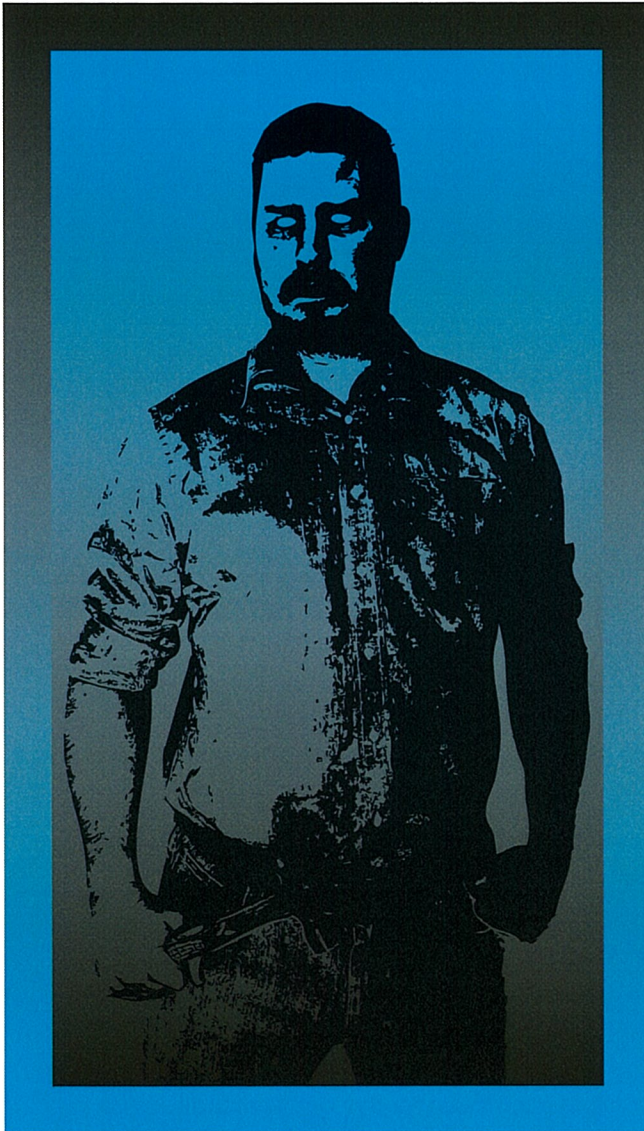
Commander Camille

The stern and stalwart leader of the East Coast Ziggurat company, Commander Camille is one of very few unshaken Ziggurat veterans. Born in Canada, his prestigious military history is the product of nearly a decade of time serving in Canadian special forces. After his time there he enlisted with Ziggurat and moved to the United States, and has remained with them ever since.

Camille runs one of the most productive and effective Ziggurat branches. He is short and balding with a pudgy exterior and while he stays in reasonable shape for his age, he has let proper combat physique lapse. Regardless, his demeanor is inspiring to newer troops mainly because he has both participated in a plethora of missions and also does not seem overly affected by them. A common problem with Ziggurat enlistees is the stressful nature of their jobs and the mental toll it takes on them. With a leader like Camille they can believe that it is possible to have a full career with the private military company and make it out mentally intact. While this would seem like a strange source of inspiration it is all too precious for Ziguart mercenaries.

There is rumor that Camille is not as mentally sound as he appears to be. Every so often stories of cracks in his facade emerge, especially among members who have gone on several missions under his command.

Camille seems unbelievably intact, and he does not engage in rumor control to dispel these ideas. It is broadly accepted that the longer someone serves under him the scarier they think he is. Several former enlistees have noted in their exit evaluations that they “don’t want to end up like Camille”.



Steven the Hammer

One of the most notorious Lapis Knights of the modern age, Steven the Hammer refuses promotion in order to continue fighting the supernatural directly. He pursues targets with enthusiasm, barely veiled by the stoic demeanor of trained Lapis Knights. Highly trained in strategy and weapon-craft he personally leads and equips groups of younger Lapis Knights.

Steven was recruited from the Brotherhood of Stone after a moderate term of service. While with the Brotherhood, his potential was recognized from his high success rate and ruthless, inhuman tactics. His upbringing wasn’t remarkable and he doesn’t seem to have the catalyst in his past that pushes most recruits to excel in their Faction, but his drive was appreciated nonetheless. Once assigned to a cell he trained vigorously, absorbing teachings and earning station quickly. He became the only thing restricting his precipitous rise, as he could have easily been assigned as a cell leader. Instead, he refused promotion in order to keep himself in close personal conflict with targets.

While a claw hammer is among his favorite improvised weapons his moniker is actually taken from his relentless, pounding tactics. He knows that gods succumb when they cannot rest, and he stages steady and persistent attacks against targets that have been flushed into the open to wear them down. Each wave is modified to adjust to the failings of the previous attack and to keep his opponents tired and off balance. He will often use mock attacks to trick gods into using gifts before having his forces fade away without a real fight. Among his favorite tricks is the use of bombs in public places, detonated to kill his enemies and then blamed on them by planting witnesses.

Steven the Hammer has been active as a Lapis Knight for two decades. Age has dulled his fighting skills some but he is still more than a match for most supernatural threats. He is always well prepared, and will never bring just a knife to a gunfight. If any of his victims think that they have the upper hand on Steven they likely haven’t thought hard enough.

Tallbooth

A leader and martyr for the Brotherhood of Stone, Tallbooth died in combat against The Aces. Trapped and outgunned by Piotr’s men, Tallbooth expired trying to defend critically important texts from their archive in Asia. He

is still admired by the modern Brotherhood and his tactics are standard reading among Lapis Knight cell leaders.

Tallbooth participated in the second World War as a spy for the Axis Powers. His Spanish heritage and language proficiency helped him to effectively blend in while traveling through Allied territories and he recovered information from Spain, Portugal, and France. At the end of the war he was still well behind Allied lines and simply faded away, using his skills to remain hidden for years before joining the Brotherhood. Because of his familiarity with political tactics he was an invaluable asset to his Faction. Rising quickly through the ranks, he nurtured intense loyalty to the Brotherhood of Stone and its goals. He masterminded their communication network and an efficient hierarchy of leadership that are still in use today.

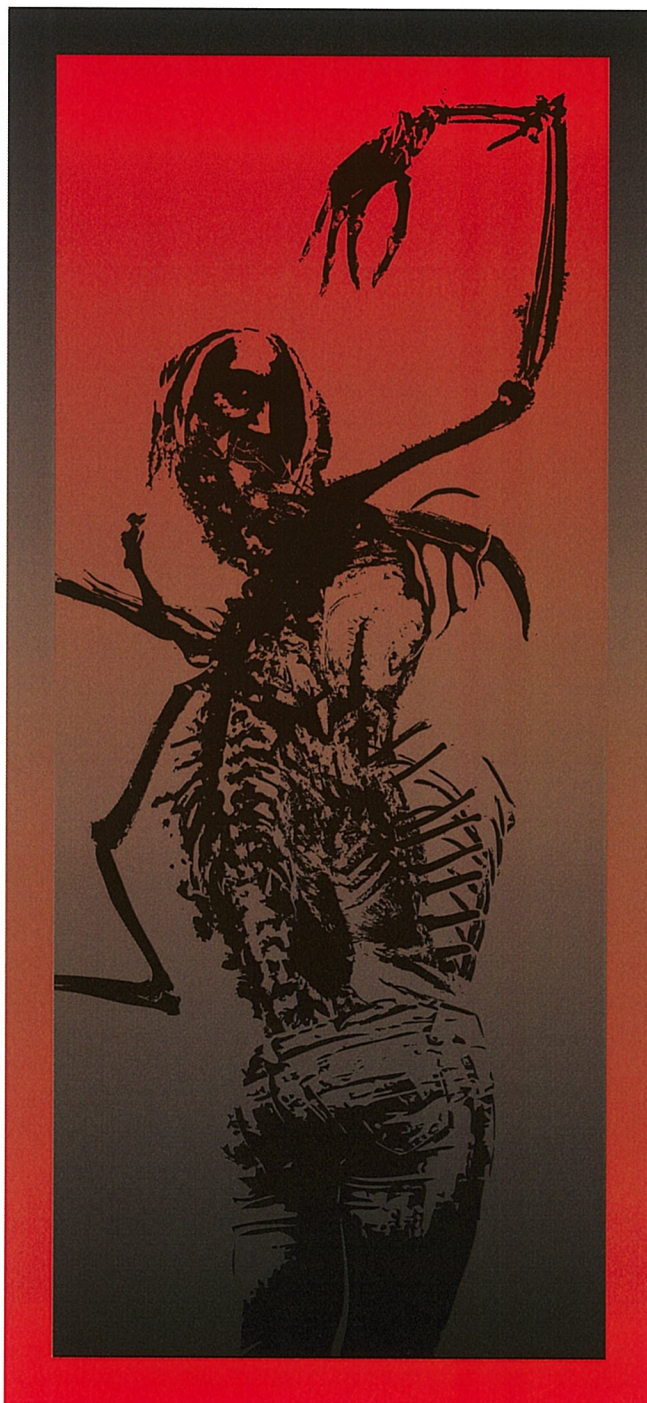
His greatest achievement was the creation of a detailed list of likely gods across the globe. The list was going to be part of a larger collective strike that would have solidified a dominant Brotherhood power structure for the future. He was trapped and killed with the list when his plan was discovered, but his glorious final fight cemented his revered place in the Faction's history.

Gadget

An emotionless terror and Jenj Harappan's second in command, Gadget is an unrepentant enforcer for the Riders of Jenj. While her gifts are unique, horrific and powerful, her position was earned through a willingness to accomplish any amoral mission she was assigned. She violently and remorselessly pursues her tasks and is accountable only to Jenj.

Gadget grew up homeless and despised in eastern Europe. Abandoned by her parents at a young age, her gifts ensured her survival when death would have been a welcome release. She lived from day to day evading the Brotherhood of Stone and stealing food to survive, navigating the back alleys and sewers

of various cities. As she grew up, rumors of her found their way to a small group of Riders who then unsuccessfully tried to recruit her. After their failure (and death), Jenj personally set out to find the young woman. She attempted to fight him as well and while unsuccessful, she wounded him several times and proved her potential as an enforcer.



Recruited into lower ranks with the promise of higher station if she performed well, Gadget took to her task zealously. She

had found a family that understood her and she thrived on their respect and fear. Rising through the ranks she earned a place at Jenj's right hand in only a few years.

Gadget's horrifying gifts enable her to enlarge and multiply her bones rapidly, extending her limbs and body while the flesh surrounding them is stretched and torn to shreds. She does not seem to suffer from the grave injuries related to using her gifts. Gadget freely creates long, claw-like hands or shields made from large ribs, among many other grotesque weapons and tools. Bullets and explosions may rip her guts to shreds, but won't stop her. She does not display any outward signs of pain (or any strong emotion) and will replace or multiply lost limbs with unnatural bone appendages draped in muscle and loose tissue. When she is finished with a fight, the surplus bones are simply discarded and her destroyed body knits itself back together over several hours.

While defeating or escaping Gadget is possible she will almost certainly return, usually on a high trim Italian sportsbike. She also owns several high profile human slaves who serve as messengers and organizers for the Riders. Jenj cares deeply about Gadget, and while he doesn't need to worry about her safety he does protect her reputation and position within the Faction.

Jenj Harappan

The undisputed leader of the Riders, Jenj has been in control for as long as anyone can remember. A slim man of undefined ethnicity, most guess that he is some combination of Asian and Indian heritage. He keeps his straight black hair in a simple ponytail and prefers to wear burgundy suits with a basic but refined cut. He always appears to be in his mid-thirties despite being over three hundred years old. His mannerisms are refined and gregarious, but carry an overly-complimentary demeanor that most feel is insincere. He does this deliberately to keep his opponents and underlings uncomfortable.

Jenj is the most powerful god known.

While there are individuals that have surpassed his power in specific areas, none have the same combination of potent gifts and formidable cunning that have allowed him to control a Faction like the Riders for so long. To unseat him a god would first have to defeat him, and fighting through his network of allies and generals would be the first step to getting his attention. Rare as it is there have been challengers from time to time, but obviously none have succeeded.

The Riders of Jenj have been shaped by his personal philosophies and clearly reflect his will. Despite his extreme power, he also knows his limits and exercises enough authority over his Faction to ensure stability. Open war with the Brotherhood of Stone or the human governments of the world would be disastrous, and he is content with the vast control he already exercises.



Game Mechanics

Break Action uses a simplified rules system compared to other tabletop role-playing games. The intent is to create an environment that favors forward momentum in a story without the rules slowing game play. Complex rules systems benefit slower play styles but do not work for the faster pace of Break Action's setting. In addition, the materials required are kept to a minimum to help prevent disorganization or confusion. Nobody likes waiting too long for another player to finish their turn in combat.

Required Materials

Each player should have a 100 sided die (or more commonly two, 10 sided dice), for rolling skills both in and out of combat, and a 6 sided die for rolling initiative in combat. A character sheet and a decent pencil with an eraser are recommended. Other than those and possibly a game book or two, nothing else is required. The Director may need more than one set of dice and whatever game material they have made for the session. For the sake of keeping things fast and neat, little else is advisable.

Skills

Skills are rolled to resolve the majority of situations during gameplay and are rolled on the 100 sided, or percentile die. These skills are recorded as percentages to indicate the chance of success. While most actions are so basic or simple that they do not require a roll, any time the outcome of a particular action is difficult or in question, a roll for a skill is needed. Rolls for skills are successful if the result of a 100 sided die is rolled under the value of the skill. The lowest roll is always the most beneficial. For example, a skill with a 70% chance of success will succeed on a result of 70 or lower.

Rolls should not be required where the outcome of the action is obvious. Rolling for situations where the outcome is certain does

very little to help the plot and creates small unnecessary pauses. As an example, driving a car normally is pretty easy for anybody with a basic amount of skill and should never require a roll. Driving aggressively through traffic while getting shot at and missing a brake pedal is very difficult and has an uncertain outcome. In that event a skill should be rolled.

Skills are measured by degrees. The base roll on the percentile die is 50% and reflects the chances of success that the average person has when attempting a skill which they have no personal familiarity with. This is something that they might know about but have never practiced or shown any real interest in.

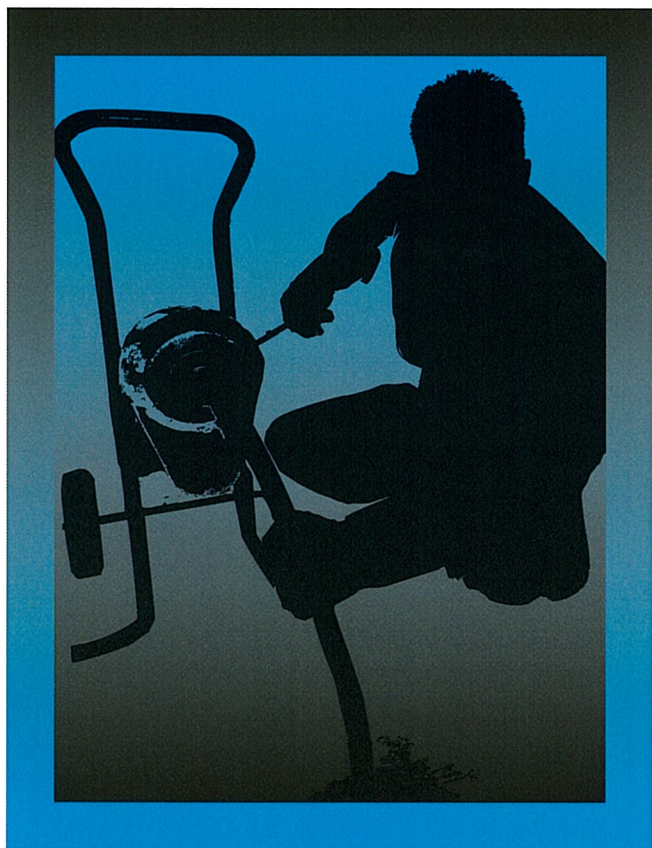
Improving from the base roll marks a character as a Dabbler, which represents the skill of someone who has a passing interest in a skill and some practice, at least enough to be familiar with it. It does not represent high expertise but the skill can be used more effectively at this level. Dabblers in a skill roll at 60%.

With greater learning and practice comes the Hobbyist degree. This represents the skill of someone who routinely practices a skill. They may not be perfect, but they have a hobby-level interest in the subject and can preform quite well in a number of circumstances. They roll at 70%, and with favorable conditions they can usually succeed.



The Expert degree is one which represents the skill of a specialist. As the name implies, they are an expert in the skill and are very adept with its use. They can succeed even in the face of unfavorable conditions and they practice often. They might be able to apply the skill in a professional sense and have detailed knowledge of the nuances involved in its use.

DEGREES OF SKILL	
INEPT	25% (BASE -25%)
UNTRAINED	BASE 50%
DABBLER	60% (BASE +10%)
HOBBYIST	70% (BASE +20%)
EXPERT	80% (BASE +30%)
MASTER	90% (BASE +40%)



The Inept degree reflects total ignorance of the skill or very poor aptitude. If chances of success get much lower the Director might opt to have them automatically fail without a die roll, or an attempt might be totally impossible.

The Master degree of skill is not commonly used in game. It is reserved to reflect the skill

of someone with total dedication to its area of expertise, one of a few people in the world with such aptitude. They practice constantly, and a large part of their life is devoted to the skill and the study of its intricacies. They can succeed even with harsh penalties and are not afraid to test themselves with extreme challenges. Characters in Break Action do not normally have this degree of skill and are not allowed to attain it without the permission of the Director.

Profession

A character's profession is a broad field which describes their primary focus along with a large body of surrounding knowledge. Anything that relates directly or tangentially to their profession can be rolled at the Hobbyist (70%) degree of skill. How broadly the profession can be interpreted with this roll is up to the Director, but it is usually favorable to the character as long as the action could be related. Players desiring a better roll than their profession provides should invest in that specific skill to the expert degree.

Background

Background is a summary of a character's past and can be tapped for skill rolls like profession. The skill rolls coming from background can be interpreted quite broadly but usually describe skills or experiences that the character used to be good at but hasn't used in a long time. The knowledge has atrophied and practice has been ignored. As such a skill rolled from background only uses the Dabbler (60%) degree. It's better than nothing but can't often be relied upon.

While profession and background can cover a wide spectrum of knowledge and ability, skills themselves should be fairly specific. It makes little sense for characters to be experts in "Driving", as it is too broad and unrealistic. A better skill would be "Truck Driving" or a specific type of vehicle.

Olivia has come up against a problem. She and her crew stole a semi truck and it's starting to have issues running. Fortunately, she is a Diesel Mechanic by profession. Repairing this truck wouldn't normally be difficult or even require a roll for someone with her skill, but the truck is currently in motion and they're being chased by several cars loaded with gunmen, all shooting at them. The hail of bullets isn't helping her chances but the bonnet of the truck came off when they rammed through a couple wooden fences so access to the engine is easy if she can get out there. The director allows her to use her Expert degree rock climbing skill to try and climb out of the truck to fix the engine. The situation is tough so the Director assigns a quick 20% penalty to her climbing skill which makes her check at 60% (Expert is 80% minus 20% situation equals 60%). She rolls and gets under 60 on the dice so she doesn't screw up climbing out to the engine, which could have been lethal. Once there she needs to roll for her profession (70%) to affect emergency repairs. The distractions of hanging on to a moving vehicle while being shot at aren't going to help her check but she knows she has to try. She will need to impress the Director with her next roll . . .



Combat

Like any good action movie Break Action thrives on combat. Fast-paced and lethal, combat will find the characters many times throughout the course of a campaign. These exchanges are short, violent bursts that can escalate in a flash and be resolved just as quickly. To compliment the simplified Break Action system players are encouraged to make decisions and rolls with haste. The Director is likewise encouraged to have combat encounters organized and ready to avoid disappointing, mid-combat hold ups.

Combat in Break Action is divided into a number of rounds which represent roughly three to five seconds of actual time. Each round has a number of turns within it, and characters act on a turn as decided by their initiative. Rounds progress and conditions change while characters take action, attack and use skills. Eventually combat ends when combatants disengage, are disabled, or killed.

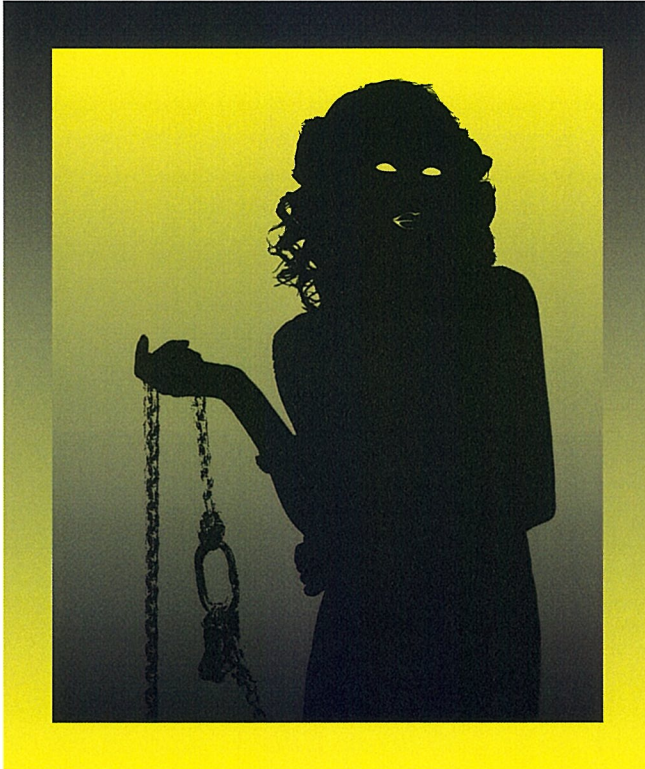
Initiative

Initiative is rolled on a single 6 sided die for each character and combatant. The Director rolls initiative for any combatants that are not controlled by a player. The combatant with the lowest initiative takes their turn first, followed by the rest in sequence from lowest to highest result until there are none left for that round. After the last turn initiative is re-rolled and a new round begins.

Gifts, abilities, injuries, and exhaustion can all modify an initiative roll. If the modified roll is 0 or less the combatant adds 3 to it and gets a turn on both numbers to reflect how fast they are acting. If the modified roll is 7 or more the combatant subtracts 3 from it and that becomes their turn on the next round. They do not get a turn on this round because they are just too damaged, exhausted or slow to collect themselves.

Break Action uses a 6 sided die for initiative to force overlap in actions. When two combatants have the same initiative

they act simultaneously in combat. There is no additional roll to determine who goes first. This overlap reflects the chaotic nature of combat and the very real possibility of mishap. In combat two people can definitely shoot each other at the same time, or run into each other as they both dash for the same cover. The effect of this overlap should be interpreted by the Director creatively and reflects the unpredictable nature of violence.



Combat Skills

Combat skills are no different from other skills aside from how they are rolled in a fight to calculate initial and potential damage. Any skill selected as a combat skill should be fairly specific and be titled as the weapon or technique intended to be used. A good example of a combat skill would be “Combat Knives” or “Hunting Rifles” or something similarly specific. Very broad skills that cover many weapons or techniques should not be used except with special permission from the Director. An example of these too-broad combat skills would be “Explosives” or “Martial Arts”.

The Profession and Background of a

character can be used to make combat skill rolls at their usual degrees. Keep in mind that this is not free reign to default any weapon into a combat-oriented Profession. Even highly trained soldiers are specifically trained in a limited amount of weapons and techniques and should not be allowed to roll their profession for just any weapon that falls into their hands without reason. Background used for combat rolls should follow similar discretion when deciding what can and cannot be used.

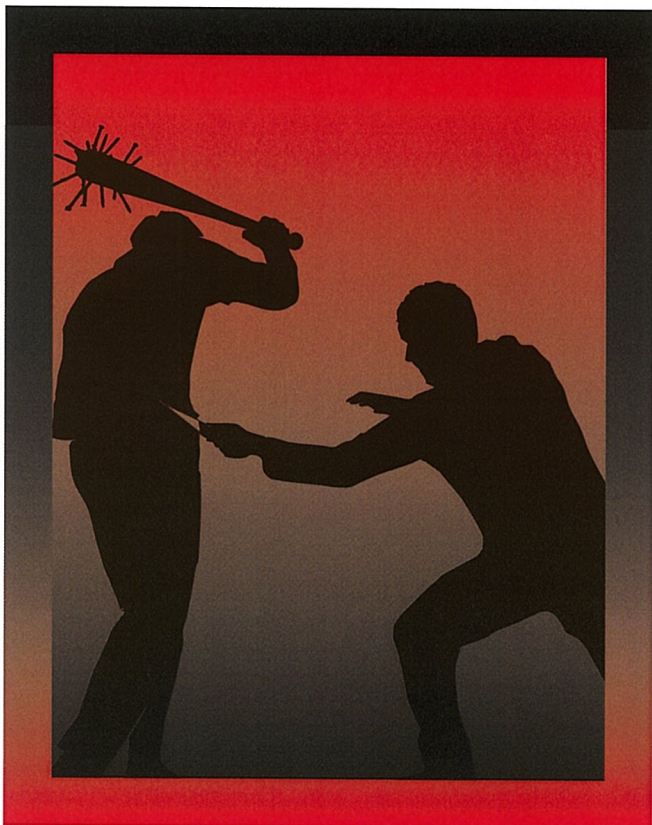
Initial and Potential Damage

Weapons have two numbers next to them to describe the damage they can do. The first is the initial damage of the weapon and the second is the potential damage. These indicate the range of damage that might be inflicted on a successful hit. Just like regular skills, combat skills are rolled using a 100 sided die (or two 10 sided dice).

When a weapon or technique is used to attack in combat, the first roll decides if the attack hits. This roll can be modified based on situation such as cover, range or visibility among other factors. Initial damage is dealt to the target if the skill check is rolled successfully. A miss does not deal initial damage and does not allow further rolling for potential damage.

On a hit, the combatant may immediately reroll against the same percentage to add a point of damage to the total done. If that roll is successful they may roll again and so on until they either fail a roll or reach the maximum potential damage of the attack, at which point they cannot add further damage to the attack. All rolls for potential damage are rolled against the same number that the initial attack had to succeed against.

A combatant may voluntarily fail any potential damage roll but not the initial attack. In this way they can use a weapon to subdue someone or purposely diminish the damage they do. Obviously, weapons that do high amounts of initial damage are poorly suited for such a technique.



Daryl has just run out of places to go, having arrived on the rooftop of a thirty story building after sprinting up the stairs. His pursuer crashes through the roof access door just a moment later, slowing when he sees his quarry trapped. Daryl doesn't have a weapon but he grabs a loose board (counts as a club, 1/4) near his feet and prepares to fight. His opponent smirks and draws a Combat Knife (2/4) from his belt while still advancing. The Director asks for initiative because it's pretty clear that combat has begun.

Daryl rolls a 2 for his initiative and the Director rolls a 4 for Daryl's opponent. Daryl goes first for this round because he has the lowest initiative. He doesn't have any particular skill with this loose board so it defaults to 50% skill, and he rolls under that with a 34 on the die, indicating a hit. With a hit he has already dealt 1 point of damage for sure, but he still has a chance to do more because the potential damage of the board is 4, so he quickly rolls again. 15 on the die this time, so he has done 2 points and gets to keep going. 62 for his next roll is not under 50% for his skill, so he does not get to do a third

point of damage and cannot roll more. 2 points of damage is pretty good for a board used as a club, and the Director describes the effect as a solid hit to the ribs, cracking one. If he had kept succeeding he would have had to stop at 4 damage, which is the maximum potential damage of his weapon and would indicate a really great hit.

Upon taking 2 damage from Daryl it is now his opponent's turn. He will roll his skill with the Combat Knife and if he hits, he'll deal 2 damage and have the chance to roll for potential damage too. After everyone gets their turns for that round they'll roll initiative again and proceed with the next round until the combat resolves.

Hit Points

Hit Points are a measure of how much damage a person or object can endure before they die or are destroyed. A player's character will usually have between five and seven hit points. Each person or object has a base amount of Hit Points which is subtracted from every time they take damage. Upon arriving at zero Hit Points a person is either unconscious or only partly conscious and unable to take coherent action. If a person ever has a negative number of Hit Points they are either dying or totally dead.

As a character loses Hit Points they will find it increasingly difficult to focus and act against their injuries. If at any point in time they have less than half of their maximum total Hit Points they incur a +1 penalty to any further initiative rolls. This penalty persists until they recover to at least half of their normal maximum.

Fatigue

A character's Fatigue is a measure for their overall endurance physically, mentally, and supernaturally. It can be spent to activate Gifts or to push past normal endurance barriers. Like Hit Points it has a base score which is subtracted from each time a character spends Fatigue or they become

brutally exerted or stressed. Even people or creatures without Gifts may temporarily lose Fatigue if they perform exhausting tasks, or they can spend Fatigue to summon extra reserves of energy and push past them.

Fatigue is instantly deducted from the base amount when a gift is activated. If this reduction causes the god or creature to fall to zero points of Fatigue they are critically exhausted and usually cannot undertake any other strenuous exertion. If they fall below zero points of Fatigue they become comatose and must rest until they regain Fatigue to a positive number again. Loss of Fatigue cannot be lethal by itself but may lead to other dangerous conditions.

Just like Hit Points, having low Fatigue will cause a character to incur an initiative penalty. If at the start of a round they have less than half of their total Fatigue they receive a +1 penalty to any further initiative rolls. If they recover to at least half of their Fatigue total the penalty immediately is relieved. This also stacks with the Hit Point initiative penalty, resulting in a +2 total penalty if the character has less than half of both Hit Points and Fatigue.

Healing and Recovery

Characters will lose Hit Points and spend Fatigue, and as they pursue their goals will eventually need to recover both. The normal way of doing this is by resting. For every 8 hours a character rests they regain 1 lost Hit Point or 1 spent Fatigue, their choice which. They cannot choose to recover more than 2 points of either consecutively without then regaining 1 point from the other.

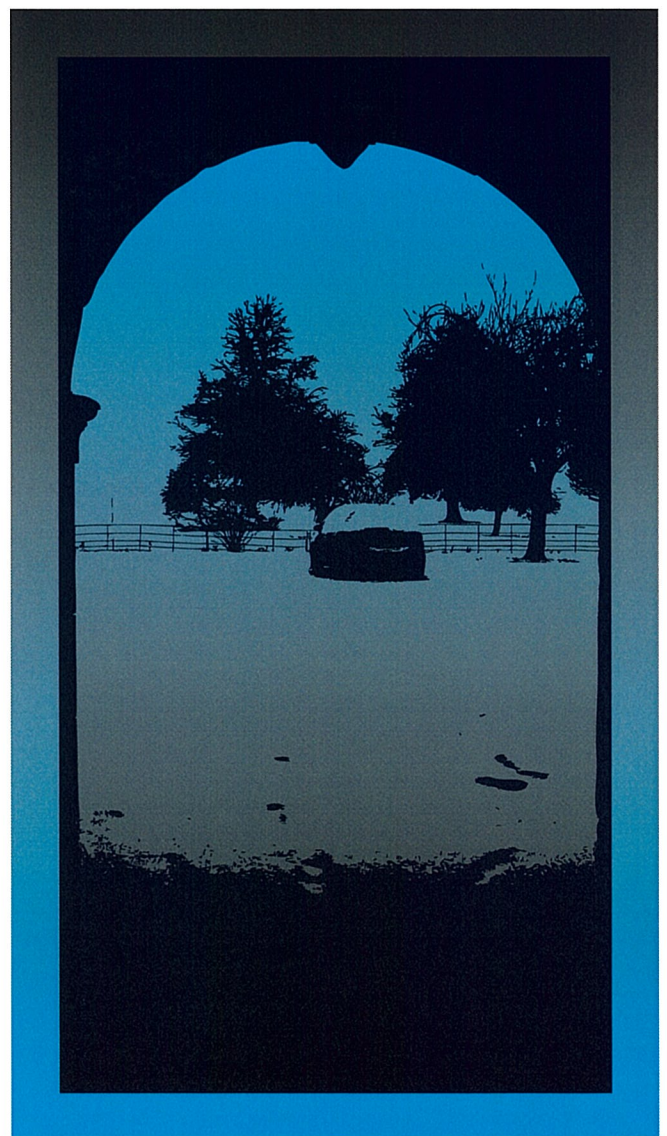
For instance, if a character rests for 24 hours they can choose to regain 1 Hit Point and 2 Fatigue, or 2 Hit Points and 1 Fatigue. This method of recovery cannot be used to regain more than a character's maximum Hit Point or Fatigue totals, and extra recovered is immediately lost.

There are other less typical ways to recover Hit Points and Fatigue including Artifacts, Gifts, Drugs, Magic, and more. If these

methods allow a character to exceed their normal maximum it will be stated in the description of the effect.

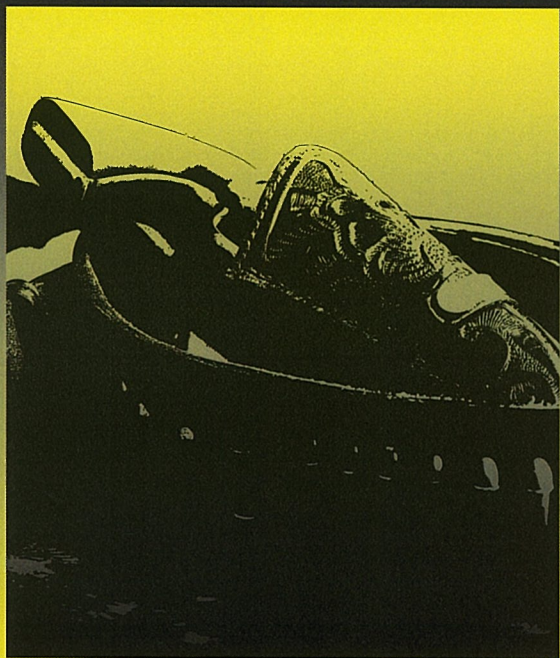
Using Gifts

Gifts are supernatural powers that can be used by gods and some other beings. They are activated by spending Fatigue, take effect instantly, and do not interfere with other actions in combat unless the description of the gift states otherwise. It is common for gods to use one or more gifts in a single round and still take full action for their turn. Activating more than one gift to combine effects creatively is encouraged as the situation and as their Fatigue allows. For more information on how gifts work see the Core Gifts section of the book.



Actions and Combat

A character can do a great variety of things in the 3 to 5 seconds that comprise a combat turn. Combat is expected to be chaotic and fluid in Break Action, with the Director interpreting the effects and outcomes of actions quickly. What follows are common actions and the rules that apply to them. All of these are malleable, depending on the situation and environment.



Movement

If a character focuses only on movement during their turn they can traverse roughly the length of a living room or a garage (roughly 30 feet) if there are not too many obstacles in the way. If they have a clear path, such as an open field, they may be able to cover 60 feet or more in a single turn. Athletic ability and motivation help greatly, but the environment has the greatest effect on how far they can go. If other actions are taken simultaneous with movement it is reasonable to expect a penalty both to distance traveled and the other action. Unless there are special conditions, movement does not require a roll to be successful.

Cover

Cover is the most common way of avoiding or mitigating damage. There are two major types of cover: physical cover and visual cover. In order for either to be effective they need to conceal or protect at least 25% of the character. The penalty listed is assigned to the skill of the combatant attacking the concealed character. It is applied before they roll the attack which has the effect of reducing their chance of a successful hit and their chance of doing high potential damage. Cover penalties can be reduced or removed by using weapons that defeat the cover type. Impenetrable or total cover may not allow an attack to be successful at all. The exact penalty and the effectiveness of cover is dependent on the situation and should be assessed by the Director.

AMOUNT OF COVER	PENALTY TO ATTACKER
AT LEAST 25%	-5% TO SKILL
AT LEAST 50%	-15% TO SKILL
75% OR MORE	-30% TO SKILL

Bethany flips over a table to protect herself during a gunfight in a coffee shop. She is crouched behind the table, which easily provides her visual and physical cover. Her enemies are using pistols which can defeat the cover by penetrating it, but not without the bullets losing a lot of energy on the way through. They also can't see her, but they can guess where she might be behind the table. The Director quickly decides that a -30% penalty to their rolls is appropriate and begins rolling attacks to see if they can hit her. She's not totally safe, but the cover makes her a lot better off. The -30% penalty to her attackers represents increased difficulty of landing a hit or doing high damage.

Unarmed

Whether by choice or by fate, characters may enter combat with no weapon at all. There is a plethora of diverse martial styles which someone might utilize in a fight, and they are too great in number to receive

detailed breakdown here. They are flattened to the following damage table for the sake of ease and efficiency.

UNARMED SKILL AND DAMAGE		
UNTRAINED	50%	(0/1)
DABBLER	60%	(1/2)
HOBBYIST	70%	(1/3)
EXPERT	80%	(1/4)
MASTER	90%	(1/5)

People who are unfamiliar with unarmed fighting are unlikely to do lasting damage, hence their damage starts at (0/1). On a successful strike they do zero damage and have to roll potential damage to even get 1 point to stick. This is not to say that they aren't hitting or fighting their best. Rather, they are largely doing bruising or scratching that would not count as a point of damage.

A small amount of training goes a long way. A character can deal 1 point of initial damage on a hit at Dabbler and above. As their skill increases so does the maximum potential damage and their chances of rolling it. An attack might entail a single powerful blow or a rapid combination of strikes. Because damage for unarmed attacks starts very low and players can voluntarily fail potential damage rolls, unarmed attacks are excellent when used to subdue rather than kill.

While damage for unarmed attacks is flattened into a single table, individual styles should still be noted and detailed to the Director so that their descriptive flair comes through in game. In each case they should be recorded as a skill to make it easy to roll and to improve with experience.

Rolls for an unarmed strike can be used for actions other than attacks with the Director's permission. Examples of alternative uses include disarming, defense improvement, dodging, grappling, and targeted, debilitating strikes. The players and the Director should take the strengths and weaknesses of a martial style into account when allowing rolls for alternative actions.

Firearms

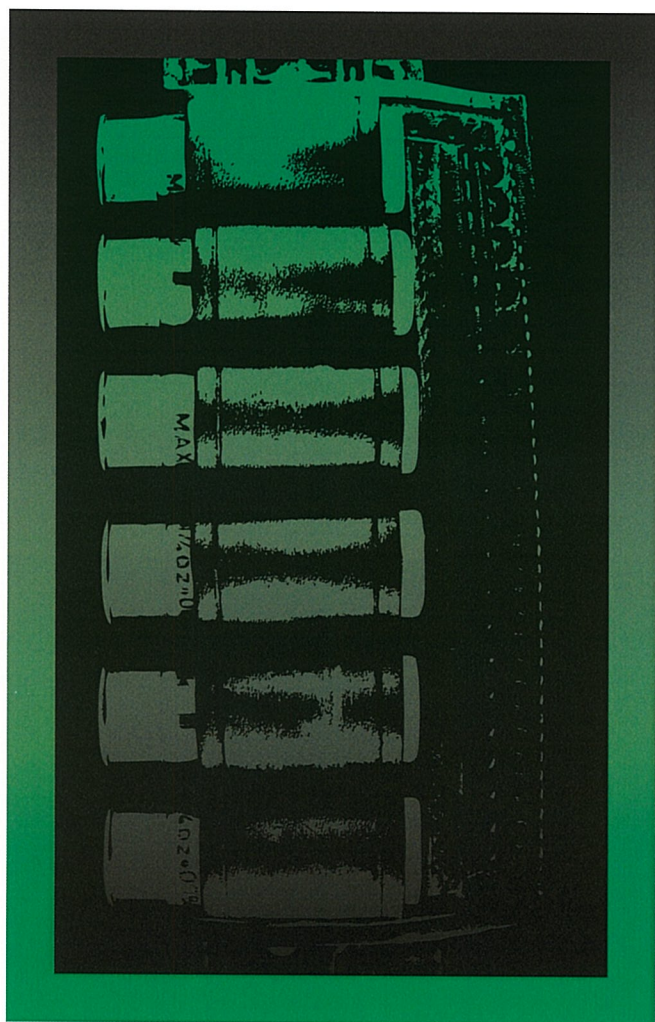
As some of the most commonly used weapons in the world, firearms come in a huge variety. Their potential damage is usually double that of their initial damage. There are a number of firing modes and actions that can be used depending on the type of firearm and ammunition. What follows are the most common types of action taken with firearms.



Single Fire: For bolt-action rifles, break open shotguns and other, slow rate-of-fire or heavy recoiling guns, a single shot in an action is all that is possible. Other guns may have selectable modes of fire or the user may only wish to fire once. This simple action is rolled with the skill of the person using the gun with no penalties or bonuses applied. In most cases it uses a single round of ammunition and is quite economical, if unremarkable.

Semi-Auto: Many pistols, rifles and shotguns are magazine fed and have manageable recoil, allowing them to fire more than once in a round. The first attack is made and resolved with no modifiers. Before the next initiative turn they may state the desire to make a second, semi-auto attack. They declare the initiative turn they want to make

the attack on and the target they wish to attack. On that initiative turn they make the second attack with a -10% penalty. Usually, no other actions can be taken on that second turn in the same round and the Director can refuse to allow a second semi-auto attack based on situation.



Burst Fire: Some firearms have a selectable burst firing mode, while fully automatic weapons can often be fired in controlled bursts. Burst fire combines the economy and control of single fire with the deadly barrage of full auto. It typically uses between 3 and 5 rounds from the magazine, depending on the gun, and is calculated as a single attack against a single target. The attack is rolled with a +5% bonus and an additional point of potential damage. As an example, a fully automatic rifle has damage (4/8), but when used to burst fire it makes a single attack with a +5% bonus and has damage (4/9). This

increase in potential damage only affects the maximum possible and must still be rolled. This makes burst fire most effective when used by individuals with high skill but also beneficial to those without.

Full Auto: Fully automatic fire persists until the trigger is released or recoil becomes unmanageable. It is not economical and rarely results in a high hit ratio, instead depending on quantity over quality. Firing like this can take between a third and half of a magazine, depending on capacity and rate of fire. When firing in full auto a combatant is able to make three attacks on successive turns in a round, starting on their rolled initiative. Each of these suffers a -25% penalty, making successful hits and high potential damage unlikely. Weapon mounting and other factors may reduce this penalty but in general, the people with the highest skill and ammunition to burn will have the most success with full auto. Full auto fire is intimidating and damaging to the environment, giving it unique advantages in some situations.

Dual Wielding: Sometimes people just need to get a little crazy. Simultaneously using two firearms at the same time is detrimental to accuracy but can make a statement. Each attack rolled in a turn where both weapons are used has a -20% penalty. Only highly skilled users will get decent results from dual wielding but it is intensely cinematic and can be wildly intimidating.

Reloading: Reloading a weapon normally takes 1 turn and assumes that there is a fresh magazine or ammunition ready at hand. Some weapons may have chains or drums of ammunition, trading extra capacity for long, cumbersome, multi-turn reloads.

These bonuses and penalties are supposed to be used as a general guide, and there are many others that can be applied to firearms. The Director should be familiar with the weapons used so they can make judgments regarding their use quickly and efficiently.

Rob has been pinned down behind a boulder. Gunfire from the Riders of Jenj has been unrelenting, and he's had enough. Emerging from cover with a sub-machine gun in each hand, he blazes away with both on full auto.

Rob goes on the initiative he rolled, which is 3. On that turn he gets the first two of six total attacks he's going to make. Dual wielding (-20%) and full auto (-25%) combine to give him a -45% to each, and he predictably misses both as brass rains down around his feet. Because he is using full auto, his next two attacks take place on the next successive turn, 4. He rolls again and hits with one, but doesn't do any additional potential damage as his roll is still heavily penalized. On turn 5 he rolls his two remaining attacks and hits with one of them. Once again he doesn't roll successfully for potential damage, but he got some of what he wanted. He used a lot of ammunition, got a couple hits, and his opponents are now thoroughly suppressed after the bout of wild gunfire.

Waiting

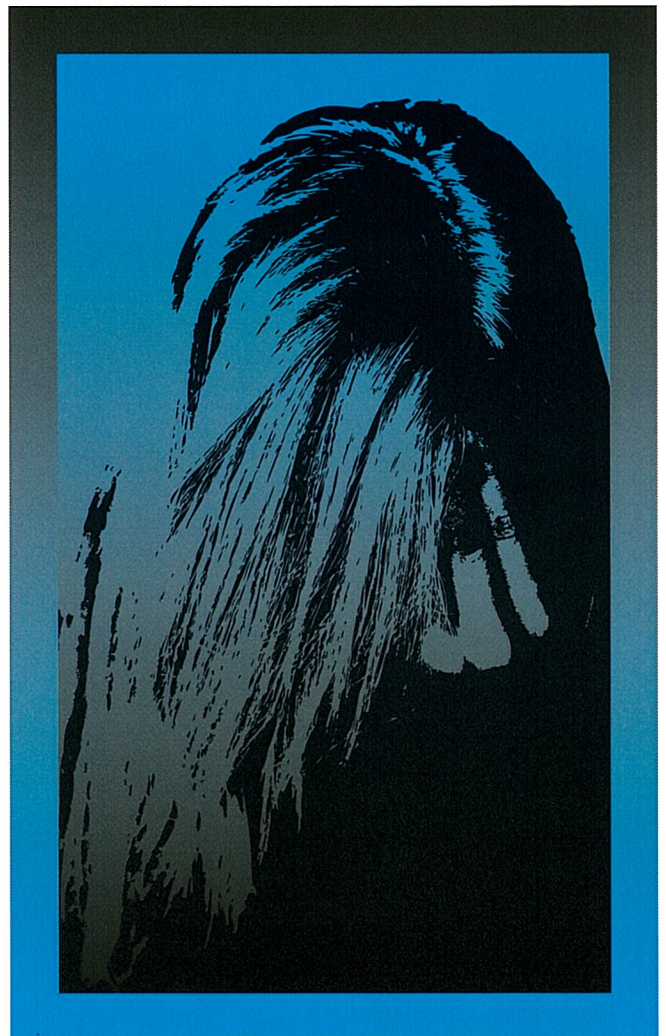
Sometimes it's beneficial for a combatant to wait until a later initiative turn to take their action. Trying to time movement or synchronize efforts with an ally are some common reasons to wait. When a combatant's turn comes up in initiative order they may elect to take their action on any later turn in the round, or even in a later round if they want, within reason. They simply declare that they are waiting, what turn they are waiting for, and what they plan to do when it comes along. In this way they can be precise about timing but sacrifice an earlier turn in that round.

A combatant may also want to wait in a reactionary fashion. This is usually done to try and counter the predicted action of someone else but could be for any number of reasons. In this case they declare their intent to wait like before, but state the action they are waiting for and what their reaction

will be. This still might prompt a skill roll at the Director's decision. If the predicted action does not occur (they guessed wrong) then they may potentially lose their turn that round.

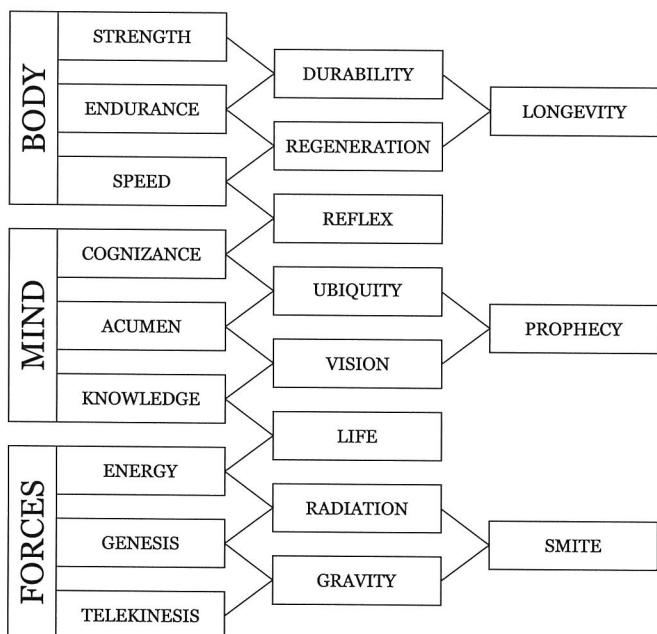
High Skill and More

As mentioned previously, possessing high skill is very beneficial in combat. Its uses go beyond those detailed in this section however, and at the discretion of the Director you may attempt unusual or cinematic actions if you are willing to deal with a penalty. These actions may include reloading and firing in the same round, drawing a weapon and firing in the same action, disarming or destroying melee weapons, etc. If you have an idea for a creative action you would like to take it doesn't hurt to ask. Just be prepared for a penalty or a compromise and go for it.



Core Gifts

The Core Gifts are broken down into three general branches: Body, Mind, and Forces. The gifts of Body can make a god unnaturally strong, heal faster and more thoroughly than any creature in nature or move at speeds far beyond the norm, among other effects. Gifts of Mind can give a god supernatural senses, startling premonitions or an aptitude for learning which surpasses the greatest scholars. Gifts in Forces allow a god to manipulate the quintessential energies and components of the universe, conjuring matter out of thin air or causing existing items to dissolve in a wave of power.



The Core Gifts are also divided into three tiers. The first tier includes all of the most basic gifts that form the foundation of the higher tiers. They appear on the character sheet in the left-most column of the gifts section. First tier gifts tend to be simple and easy to purchase. Second tier gifts are gained from the union of two first tier gifts, and are often prerequisites for higher tiers. They usually embody some characteristics of the gifts below but also expand on them to make a separate and more powerful gift. For example, the gifts of Strength and Endurance in the first tier form the basis for Durability in the second.

When a god wants to use a gift they must activate it by spending Fatigue. Fatigue is a measure of physical, mental and supernatural exhaustion. It is always spent immediately before the gift becomes activated and must be paid in full before a gift can manifest. If a god does not have enough Fatigue to activate a gift they may not use it. Some gifts are always active and do not require Fatigue to activate. If a god loses consciousness all of their active gifts immediately end. There are exceptions, and when this is the case it will be detailed in the description of the gift. Unless expressly stated in the description, all gifts must be activated to have effect.

There are other gifts which do not fall within the three branches of the Core Gifts. These gifts belong to a category called Sub-Gifts, which are discussed in the next section. What follows is a description of the 20 Core Gifts, organized by branch and tier.

Strength

The gift of Strength gives a god uncanny physical prowess which allows them to lift, push or pull heavy objects and apply their body to tasks with incredible force. Every point in Strength allows a god to lift approximately 300 lbs. of weight over their head or apply 300 lbs. of force to an object. If a god's increased strength exceeds the weight of an object they may be able to move it more quickly, endure the burden for a longer time, or possibly throw or shove the object at the discretion of the Director.



Strength prevents the god from being harmed by the force they are applying but in no way prevents them from being harmed otherwise. For example, a god with three points of Strength is pushing a concrete block weighing 600 lbs. along the ground. While a normal human's hands might be damaged by applying such great force the god is protected from harm by this gift. If they are struck by a club while pushing that block with Strength active they will be hurt normally.

Strength can be used against another person in combat to enhance damage done by punches, kicks, grappling or melee weapons. This gift adds 1 initial damage for every 5 points and also 1 potential damage for every 2 points of Strength active. The total force that they can apply is reduced due to the timing and control that they must exercise in order to fight effectively. This gift costs two points of Fatigue to activate and lasts up to one minute per point.

300 lbs. / point of Strength
 +1 Initial Damage / 5 points
 +1 Potential Damage / 2 points
 Does not prevent damage
 Up to 1 minute / point
 2 Fatigue to activate

Endurance

The gift of Endurance allows a god to act without the effects of exhaustion, starvation and pain. For every point that a god has in Endurance they can continue to operate normally for 12 hours. This gift only negates effects caused by natural sources. In addition it removes the penalties to initiative for having low Hit Points or Fatigue.

As an example, if a god with five points of Endurance is hiking through the desert without food or water they would begin to feel the effects of dehydration after only a few hours. If they were to activate Endurance at that time it would allow them to continue hiking normally for up to 60 hours without the need for food, water, sleep or shelter. If they were subject to some sort of ongoing

trauma such as a bleeding, amputated leg it would be unaffected by this gift. They would be free from pain, the need for food, water and comfort but blood loss would kill them in the normal amount of time.

In addition, a god can temporarily survive with negative Hit Points while this gift is active. They remain conscious and can endure -1 Hit Point for every 2 points of Endurance they have active. While in negative Hit Points, they cannot heal or regain Fatigue naturally. If Endurance deactivates before they return to a positive Hit Point total, they immediately die.

When a god chooses to stop using Endurance or its effects end, all of the conditions from their activities return. If a god spent 60 hours hiking in a desert before their Endurance gift ran out they would instantly return to the state that they would be in had they not activated it (dead or dying) unless prior measures were taken to recover. When this gift is activated the god must spend two points of Fatigue. They cannot regain Fatigue by resting while this gift is active and it cannot be activated as a reaction to lethal damage. It must be activated before they go into negative Hit Points to be useful.

12 hours / point of Endurance
 No penalties for low HP or Fatigue
 Can survive -1 HP / 2 points (see conditions)
 Cannot regain Fatigue while active
 Cannot be used as a reaction
 2 Fatigue to activate

Speed

The gift of Speed allows a god to move faster than normal, even to the point of breaking some natural physical restrictions. For each point of Speed that a god has active they can move up to 25% faster than normal.

While in use, the increase in speed applies to anything physical the god attempts including talking, working, typing, etc. This gift does not speed up mental processes or reaction speed which can lead to problems, depending on what the god happens to be

doing. For example, if a god with six points of speed wanted to chase a car using this gift simply take the average human running speed (12-15 mph) and add an additional 150% ($25\% \times 6 = 150\%$) to find out the approximate speed that they could run. In this case the god would end up running about 34 mph (rounded). They could probably catch a car in an urban environment given they will maneuver faster as well.

As stated before, this gift does not speed up mental processes or reactions so a god running 34 mph could accidentally run into something and hurt themselves. Similar to the gift of Strength they would be protected from their own gift and the forces it allows them to apply to their body but not other problems, such as damage from collisions. This gift will also increase the force of melee attacks and can be very effective when combined with the gift of Strength in combat. This gift adds 1 initial damage for every 5 points and also 1 possible potential damage for every 2 points of Speed active. This gift costs two points of Fatigue to activate and each use of this gift lasts up to one minute per point.

25% increase / point of Speed

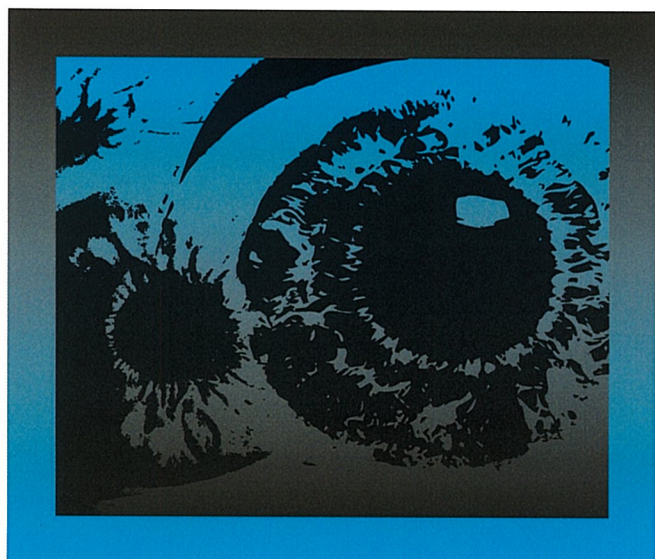
+1 Initial Damage / 5 points

+1 Potential Damage / 2 points

Does not speed up reactions or thoughts

Up to 1 minute / point

2 Fatigue to activate



Cognizance

The gift of Cognizance increases a god's awareness of their surroundings. While using this gift a god notices more details in their environment and has heightened senses. All of their physical senses are affected.

Cognizance has a very direct use in investigation and situational awareness. It can also be applied to a variety of tasks where attention to detail is critical or where clarity of the senses is vital. A bonus of 5% per point in this gift is appropriate to checks where heightened senses would be a benefit. The exact benefit will be determined by the Director.

Obviously this gift has no effect on things that cannot be perceived by the senses and will not grant supernatural senses of any kind. Additionally, it may be a disadvantage in places with exceptionally loud noises, bright lights or other factors that overwhelm the senses. If a god lacks a certain sense in its entirety (such as complete blindness) this gift does not affect that sense.

Upon activation the effect continues for up to three minutes per point. This gift costs one Fatigue each time it is activated.

Up to 3 minutes / point of Cognizance

Natural senses become heightened

Supernatural senses are not granted

1 Fatigue to activate

Acumen

The gift of Acumen increases insight, intuition and judgment. When a god uses this gift the player may pose a question and the Director will advise them on the most likely favorable course of action given any details of which the god is currently aware. The information comes to them instantly and this gift has no duration.

A god may only use this gift one time per point in a single day (24 hours) of in-game time. This gift does not force the Director to reveal the best course of action and it does not guarantee the success of the action

taken, nor is the god required to preform the revealed action.

Because this gift allows a player to ask the Director for advice its outcome will frequently be favorable. With clever use, this gift can give the god using it an immediate advantage, or even impact the greater storyline. If the information granted would give a bonus to a roll, then an increase of 5% per point in this gift is appropriate, but this is ultimately up to the Director's discretion.



Acumen can only be activated once each round while in combat and the duration is instantaneous in game, regardless of the time spent discussing it with the Director. The question must be reasonably specific and overly broad questions may receive vague answers. Each time this gift is activated the god must spend one point of Fatigue.

1 use in 24 hours / point of Acumen
Increases insight, intuition, judgment
Inquiries need to be specific
Instantaneous
1 Fatigue to activate

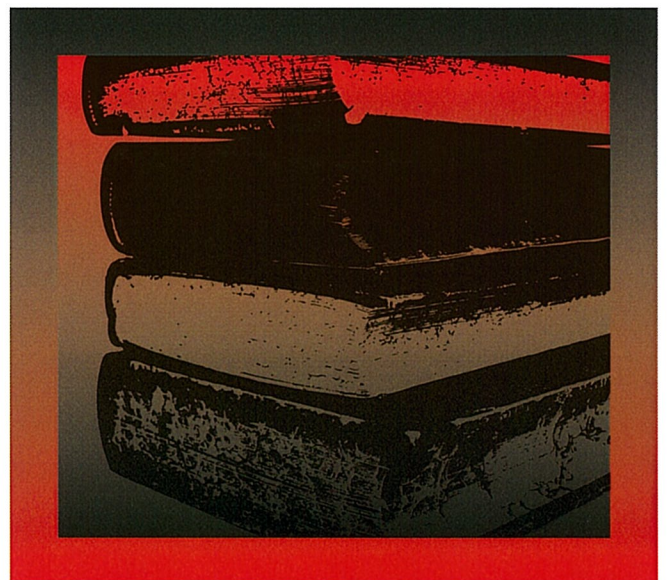
Knowledge

The gift of Knowledge temporarily increases a god's capacity to learn and recall details from their past. By using this gift a god can retain knowledge more quickly and completely than would otherwise be possible.

For every point in Knowledge a god can divide the time it would normally take to learn something by half. For example, if learning to repair a screen door would normally take 30 minutes, a god with three points of Knowledge could learn to repair it in 1/8 the time, or roughly four minutes. The god using this gift can only learn as fast as the information is presented. For instance, if the information is presented in a written format the god still needs to read it entirely at normal speed (they're just better at learning the information).

Additionally the god may recall details from their past with perfect clarity. This photographic memory can be used for events where the gift of Knowledge was not active.

While they may learn amazingly fast, just knowing about something does not equate to practicing it or having any real skill in it. It cannot grant additional skills without experience unless the skill in question it truly and absolutely academic. The Director is the final arbiter on what qualifies. Knowledge must be active while perfect recall is being used.



The combination of Speed, Reflex, and Knowledge allows for speed reading with memorization. Each time a god activates Knowledge they spend one point of Fatigue, and the effects last for ten minutes per point.

Halves learning time / point of Knowledge
Allows for perfect memory recall
Up to 10 minutes / point
1 Fatigue to activate

Energy

The gift of Energy allows a god to store large amounts of energy within their own body and expel it later. Many kinds of energy can be stored: kinetic, electrical, heat, etc, and the duration for which it can be held depends on the strength of the gift.

A god must be in contact with the energy in order to store it with this gift. Energy stored must also be expelled in the intensity it was received. Stored energy must be from a single source and can only be stored for ten seconds per point in this gift.

As an example, a god with one point in Energy could walk up to a normal campfire and absorb it into their hand. The campfire would go out because all of its energy has been stored within the god. Then within ten seconds time the god would have to expel the flame from their body. The amount of flame expelled would be equal to the campfire and would come out as if it were a campfire.

If a god using Energy does not expel it within the time allowed they immediately absorb it. Absorbing energy like this affects the god as if they had experienced the energy from an outside source, which will likely harm them. If they absorbed a campfire they would immediately experience all of the heat energy from that fire, which would burn them badly (and internally).

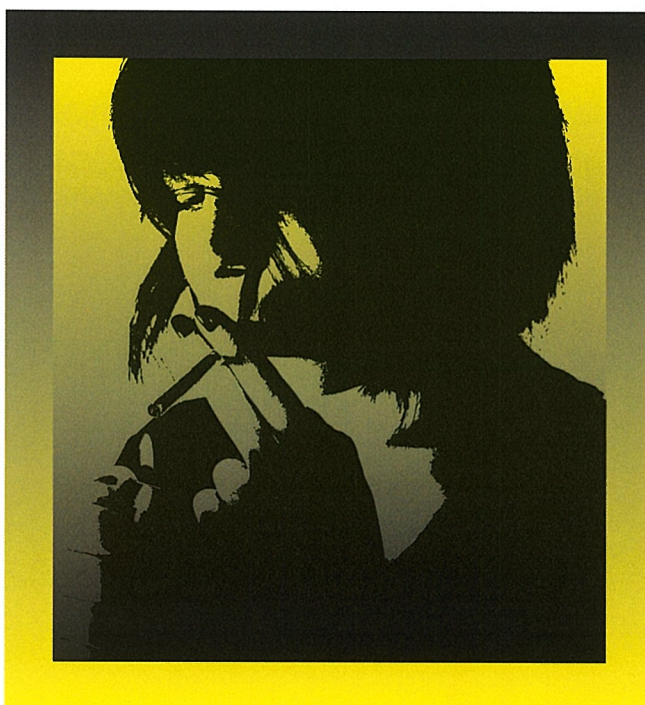
As a god's power with the gift of Energy increases they gain a clearer and clearer sense of the energies in close proximity to them. They can use this sense to help make decisions about energies to absorb or to be more precise about which energy they want.

This part of the gift does not require Fatigue to activate and can be used or suppressed at any time while the god is conscious.

The amount of energy that can be absorbed in a single activation of this gift is not unlimited but is extremely high. Lightning bolts are not out of the question with very high power in this gift. The energy does not harm the god while it is being absorbed, stored or expelled as long as they do it all within the time limit. To hold energy longer than they are normally allowed costs an additional Fatigue for each five seconds added.

This gift costs two points of Fatigue to activate. The exact details and effects of this gift are decided upon by the Director. Potential energy and gravitational, supernatural or theoretical energies cannot be stored. Using Energy to absorb the force of fast-moving objects or incoming blows is possible, but is greatly aided by the gift of Reflex.

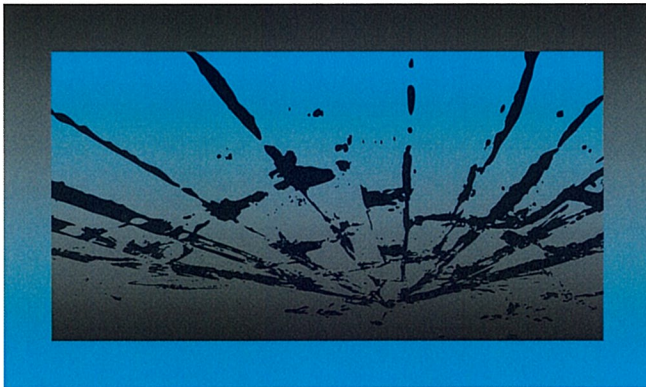
Up to 10 seconds / point of Energy
Allows absorption of energy
Must be in to contact with the energy
Expulsion in same manner as absorption
See gift description for information
2 Fatigue to activate



Genesis

The gift of Genesis allows a god to create matter from nothing. A god may create roughly 10 pounds of matter for each point they have in Genesis. The matter can be created in any shape and be made of any material, though the costs will vary.

Each use of this gift initially requires two points of Fatigue. If the object is organized in a complex fashion an additional point of Fatigue or more may need to be spent. If the object has an unusual amount of energy it may cost further Fatigue. For example, if a god with three points of Genesis tries to make plain dirt they could make 30 pounds of it for two points of Fatigue. If they want the dirt to be in a rough human shape it would cost an additional point. If they want the dirt to be in a human shape and freezing cold it would probably take four points of Fatigue or more. The created mass always takes one round to materialize regardless of amount.



The matter created must be in contact with the god's body. In order to create the desired matter accurately the god must be familiar with the substance. If they are unfamiliar with the type of matter they are creating it will likely be an approximation of that substance based on their best guess. For example, if a god desires to create a block of lead they need to be knowledgeable in regards to the composition of lead. Otherwise the product of their effort will look and feel like lead, but will probably be something else entirely (who knows?).

The material created with this gift is only temporary and dissolves into nothingness

after one hour per point of Genesis. It can be made permanent but at a high cost. The cost of any permanent matter is determined as normal and then multiplied by three. This is extremely taxing for the god and should only be done when absolutely necessary.

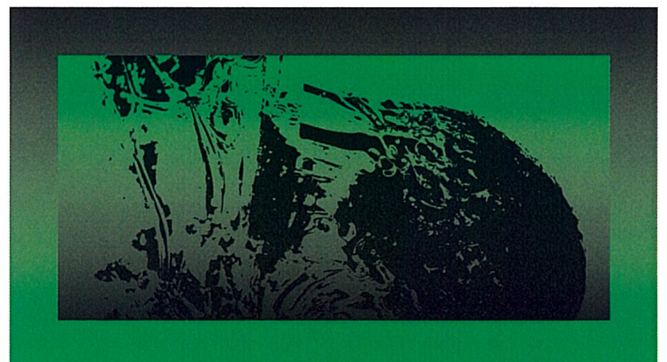
The final amount of Fatigue needed to create any matter is always the decision of the Director. Even when creating small amount of matter the absolute minimum cost of activating this gift is two points of Fatigue.

10 pounds of matter / point of Genesis
Matter is created in contact with the user
Matter is created over one round
Familiarity dictates matter authenticity
Matter dissolves after 1 hour / point
2 Fatigue to activate, plus conditional

Telekinesis

The gift of Telekinesis enables a god to move objects at a distance. Using this gift a god can move a single object weighing up to 50 pounds per point. The object moves at a walking pace in any direction the god desires.

This gift can be activated multiple times to multiply its effect. As an example, a god with three points of Telekinesis may activate this gift to move a single object weighing 150 pounds or they may pay more Fatigue to activate it twice and move an object weighing 300 pounds. They could also activate this gift twice to move two objects weighing 150 pounds simultaneously. The god must use two Fatigue each time they activate this gift or multiply it, and each activation lasts for one minute per point. Multiple activations of this gift will not increase speed traveled.



Telekinesis works on both living and non-living material and cannot be used to do damage, but it can be used to move an object to a place where it takes damage. The range of Telekinesis is ten yards per point and the effect ends immediately if the object exceeds that distance from the god, or if the god cannot perceive the object. The god may switch objects affected only once per turn.

50 pounds / point of Telekinesis
 Moves objects at walking pace
 10 yards / point range
 Up to 1 minute / point
 2 Fatigue to activate, plus conditional

Durability

The gift of Durability protects a god from harm by temporarily strengthening their body. This protection negates damage up to a certain threshold determined by the strength of the gift.

One point of damage is subtracted per point of Durability from every attack against that god while this gift is active. This gift is normally activated prior to being damaged but Durability can also be activated, at an increased cost, as an instant reaction to taking damage. Durability lasts for one round for every two points in this gift, with a minimum duration of one round.



As an example, a god with six points of Durability will reduce each attack that damages them by six points. If they are shot three times with three different attacks the

reduction occurs for each of those attacks. If they are shot by the burst fire of a weapon the damage reduction occurs only once because the entire burst was a single attack.

Durability does not protect a god from being shocked, suffocated, or any other effect that does not physically damage them. Three points of Fatigue must be spent every time this gift is activated. If it is used as a reaction it costs four points of Fatigue instead.

1 damage reduction / point of Durability
 Affects each attack that does damage
 Up to 1 round / 2 points
 Minimum duration of 1 round
 3 Fatigue to activate
 4 Fatigue to activate as reaction

Regeneration

The gift of Regeneration allows a god to heal wounds almost instantly, without the need for rest or medical treatment. A god heals an amount of damage equal to the number of points they have in Regeneration at the cost of two points of Fatigue.

It takes only one round to heal the damage and can only be used once per round. Vital organs, bones and any part of the body can be healed and replaced with this gift. Foreign bodies are expelled and bones are aligned properly for healing to take place in the same round that the healing occurs.

As an example, if a god with five points of Regeneration is cut by a sword for seven points of damage and activates this gift the following round they will only have two remaining points of damage. The wound simply knits together and closes.

If a god with the gift of Regeneration is killed they may activate this gift as a reaction at the cost of four points of Fatigue. Using Regeneration like this will bring them back to life with one hit point but it must be used within one round of death. They do not need to be conscious to use Regeneration in this manner but they do need to have at least half of their body mass intact. If they choose not to activate this gift or do not have

the necessary Fatigue then they will die as normal.

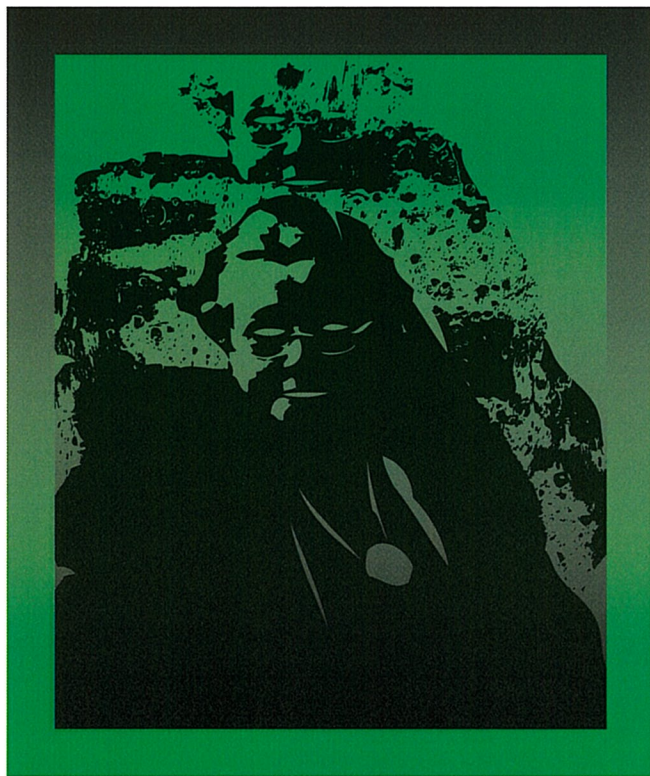
Heals 1 HP / point of Regeneration
 Healing occurs over 1 round
 See gift description for information
 2 Fatigue to activate
 4 Fatigue to activate as reaction to death

Reflex

The gift of Reflex supernaturally increases a god's reflexes and lowers reaction times. By using this gift it is possible for a god to perform incredible feats of timing. When using Reflex they will often feel as though time has slowed around them.

For each point in Reflex the god's reaction time is decreased by 10%. While active, a god's initiative rolls are decreased by one point for every two points in Reflex.

As an example, if a god with four points of Reflex activates their gift prior to combat



they subtract two points from their initiative rolls. In addition heightened reflexes may have other benefits determined by the Director. Reflex can be used as a tool granting situational bonuses to things such as catching

arrows or blocking punches.

This gift lasts one minute for each point and costs one Fatigue to activate. It combines well with other gifts and effects in a variety of ways. Speed and Reflex gifts are often used together as this gift can only decrease reaction time and does not increase physical speed in any way.

Minus 1 initiative / 2 points of Reflex
 Reaction time decreases 10% / point
 Up to 1 minute / point
 1 Fatigue to activate

Ubiquity

The gift of Ubiquity increases a god's awareness of their surroundings to an unearthly extent, allowing them to perceive things via other creatures and objects. When this gift is active the god experiences their environment from the perspective of everything surrounding them instead of from their own senses.

The area that their senses extend is 10 yards for each point in Ubiquity. A god with Ubiquity could feel wind blowing through trees as if they were the tree or feel the vibrations of people talking in the next room as if they were the wall. If there are sentient creatures nearby the god may share experiences with them and detect vague surface thoughts, but this does not enable precise mind reading. If the god is in physical contact with a creature or object they can focus on it to enhance the acuity of this gift.

While active this gift grants heightened awareness of the supernatural and it becomes easier to detect such presence. However, It does not grant any inherent understanding or explanation of the supernatural. Ubiquity lasts for two minutes per point and costs one Fatigue to activate.

10 yards range / 1 point of Ubiquity
 Grants unearthly senses
 Heightens supernatural awareness
 Up to 2 minutes / point
 1 Fatigue to activate

Vision

The gift of Vision grants a god brief glimpse of the immediate future. This vision is only a quick, precognitive flash in the mind but it may affect great change in the present.

Using Vision can change the outcome of an event that is about to happen. When something occurs that a character with Vision does not want to happen, they can activate their gift to potentially change the outcome due to a brief precognitive flash directing the character's actions. This occurs in game as a "rewind" of one turn.

As an example, a god is about to walk through a door into a room. They don't know it yet, but inside the room is an enemy with a gun who plans to shoot them. The events play out: they open the door and are immediately shot. The god activates the gift of Vision for a brief rewind. They begin to open the door, but now know what waits for them on the other side. Armed with this knowledge they dive to the side in an attempt to avoid the shot.

an event is 40% plus 5% for each point they have in Vision. In addition, they cannot use Vision more than once in any round. When a player fails their Vision roll the god still uses the gift and receives their vision but they are unable to act in time to change events. No rewind of gameplay is required.

When this gift is activated the god must spend two points of Fatigue. The effect can only predict the future by one turn. In other words, they can only ever "rewind" one turn in time (a second or two).

+5% chance / point of Vision

40% base chance

Brief rewind of the present

Only works one turn into the future

Can be used only once a round

2 Fatigue to activate

Life

The gift of Life allows a god to instill the essence of life into matter. Depending on its use this gift can accomplish several different things.

First, it can be used to heal them self in the same manner as the gift of Regeneration. One point of damage is healed for each point in Life. The god may use this effect on themselves if they are conscious but may not use it at all if they are unconscious, and they cannot use it to bring themselves back from death.

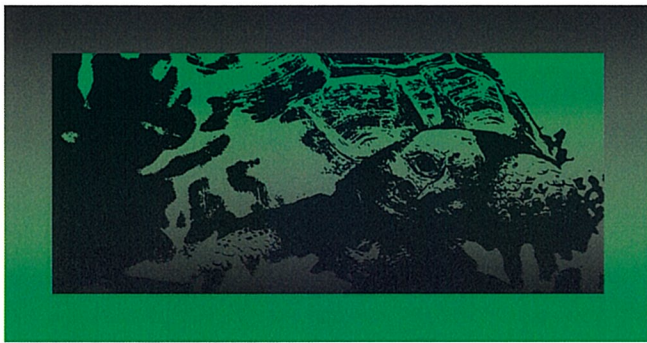
It can also be used to heal other people. The god with Life must be in physical contact with the recipient. When used in this manner it heals the target for one Hit Point for each point the god has in Life, and additionally the god heals themselves for half of that value, rounded down.

Next, a god can use this gift on something that has recently died in order to bring it back to life. The subject is healed enough to have one hit point and comes back to life as long as it has not been dead for more than one minute. If the subject is very heavily damaged or missing more than 50% of their body they cannot be brought back to life in this manner.



Just having this gift is no guarantee of a god's ability to alter the immediate future. It is possible to simply be too late. The base chance for being able to affect the outcome of

Lastly, non-living things can be made to have the semblance of life for a short time with this gift. The matter affected will begin to have a basic consciousness and maybe some locomotion. Any other traits the subject displays will be dependent on the general qualities that it has, usually the most obvious ones. For example, a chair will begin to move its legs and walk around, a corpse will become a zombie, a car will drive itself. The matter animated in this fashion is generally subservient to the god who animated it. This semblance of life will last one minute for each point of Life the god has.



Non-living objects and living ones that have been dead for more than one minute cannot be given permanent life with this gift. Regardless of how it is used this gift costs three Fatigue to activate and may require additional Fatigue depending on the size and complexity of the subject. The Director has authority over the final cost of this gift and when it can be used.

Heals 1 HP / point of Life
See gift description for information
Can animate non-living matter
Up to 1 minute / point
3 Fatigue to activate, plus conditional

Radiation

The gift of Radiation allows a god to project various forms of energy from their body; light, heat, microwave, etc. The radiation can be produced from anywhere on the body but most often from the fingertips.

The radiation from this gift extends ten yards per point and it costs one Fatigue to

activate. In addition, the radiation never lasts for more than one turn though its effects may be more permanent. It cannot be used more than once a turn.

Radiation does one potential damage for every point, while initial damage is always half of that damage rounded down. For example, a god with three points of Radiation could project a beam of heat to burn enemies up to 30 yards away at (1/3). A harmful type of radiation must be produced in order for this gift to be used as a weapon.

The skill for attacking with Radiation is 80%. Any god that has this gift automatically has this skill, and it is difficult to improve further. Penalties and bonuses may situationally be improved by the Director.

This gift is not capable of harming its user directly, but lingering effects may. Based on circumstance, armor may reduce the damage taken. When used as an attack, this gift may target only one object per turn and is instantaneous. For non-damaging effects this gift lasts for one minute per point.

1 potential damage / point of Radiation
Initial damage is half potential, round down
10 yards range / point of Radiation
80% skill used to roll attacks
Up to 1 minute / point, non-damaging
1 Fatigue to activate

Gravity

The gift of Gravity allows a god to control the force of gravity by redirecting it, weakening it, strengthening it or employing some combination of these effects. The range of Gravity is ten yards for each point the god has and the effect ends immediately if the area is farther than that distance from the god or if the god cannot perceive the affected area. The maximum area affected is one cubic yard per point and it lasts for 30 seconds per point. Once the gift is active, its area of effect only moves relative to the god. If they want to move the area to the left five feet, they must move themselves to the left five feet.

Gravity in the affected area can be negated

totally, multiplied by up to four times or redirected. Obviously all objects in the affected area are subject to the effects of gravity unless they are insubstantial.

As an example, if a god has four points in Gravity they can change the relative gravity of a four cubic yard area for two minutes up to 40 yards away. They can choose to negate it, redirect it, or increase it by four times in any direction. This can be changed at their discretion once a turn.

If a god is sufficiently powerful they can use this gift on themselves to “fly”. Using the gift of Reflex to manage the effects of Gravity would be very helpful in attempting flight. If there is little or no gravity in an area to manipulate this gift does not work. This gift costs two Fatigue to activate.

Gravity altered at 10 yards / point of Gravity
Area effected is 1 cubic yard / point
See gift description for information
Effect can be changed once / turn
Position moves relative to the god
Up to 30 seconds / point
2 Fatigue to activate

Longevity

The gift of Longevity greatly increases the healthy lifespan of a god. The god's lifespan, in years, is multiplied by the number of points in this gift. For example, if a god has three points in Longevity and they were going to live to be 70 normally they will actually live to be 210. During this time they regenerate very slowly, replacing lost limbs and permanently damaged parts of their body over a few months.

While this gift works passively for lifespan and regeneration qualities, it can be activated for a more direct healing effect. When a god actively uses Longevity it begins to heal them slowly, healing one hit point at the end of each day for a sequential number of days equal to their points in this gift. This use of the gift requires only one Fatigue to activate. Taking even one point of damage cancels this effect for any remaining days and it must be

re-activated to begin healing again.

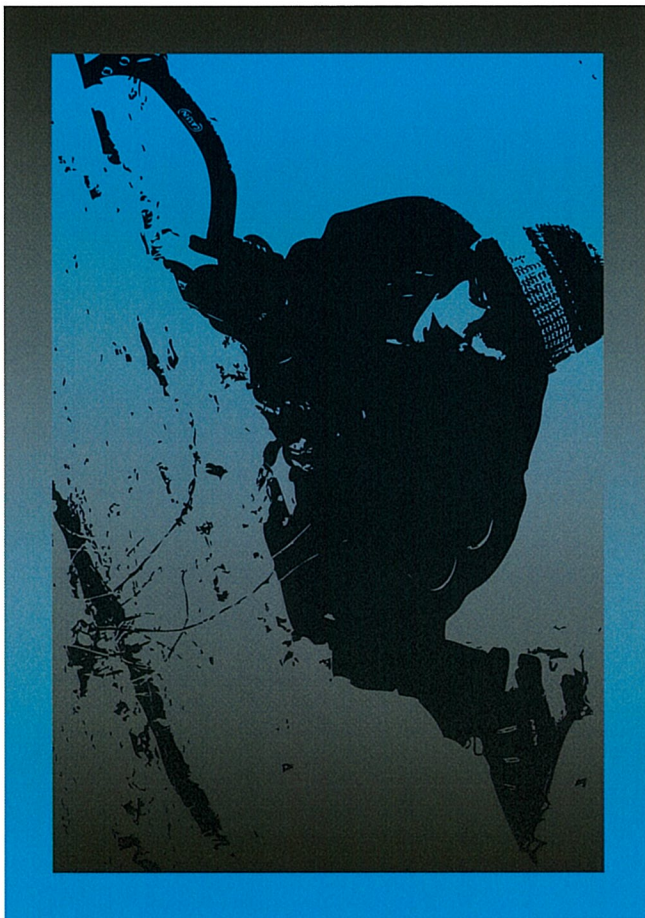
For most of their additional lifespan the god will physically appear to be between the ages of 25 and 40. Slow acting injuries and diseases will never be fatal but sudden trauma and damage can kill them as normal. This gift does not insure mental health or memories. As a result the gods with this gift may not clearly remember the events of the previous century and in some cases may be hopelessly insane. In other cases, those who have maintained their faculties but outlived their time can often be dispassionate or apathetic. An unnaturally long lifespan can take its toll in a number of ways.

Lifespan multiplied / point of Longevity
Cannot die of slow disease or illness
Slowly regenerate limbs and injuries
Primary effect does not require Fatigue
Can be activated for daily healing
1 Fatigue to activate



Prophecy

The gift of Prophecy allows a god to perceive visions of things to come. The god cannot always control when these visions occur or the subject they address. The visions are fairly accurate in foretelling the future and their frequency and duration increase with the number of points in this gift. Prophecy can activate spontaneously at the purview of the Director, and each time it does the god must spend one point of Fatigue. If they do not have any Fatigue to spend they slip into a prophetic coma. Some of the gods with extremely powerful Prophecy gifts do not wake up after slipping into one of these comas and they may become permanently comatose until their death. Most are afraid of an endless prophetic nightmare and live in fear of this possible fate.



A god with Prophecy can activate it willingly at the cost of five points of Fatigue. The subject of the prophecy can be chosen in this event by being in physical contact with it.

Whatever is revealed by this gift is probable and any change requires drastic measures to be taken (and maybe not even then). The time it takes to receive a prophecy ranges from a few seconds to several minutes, during which the god is not aware of their surroundings.

For every two points of Prophecy the god may ask one question about the vision they just experienced. These inquiries function similarly to the gift of Acumen and only work in regards to the latest vision received.

It is also possible to use rituals to aid in focusing this gift and reducing its voluntary cost. The type of ritual is frequently in theme with the culture of the character or subject and the Director will determine if it merits a decrease in Fatigue cost or other benefits.

1 question / 2 points of Prophecy
Grants powerful visions of the future
1 Fatigue when activated spontaneously
5 Fatigue to activate willingly

Smite

The gift of Smite allows a god to instantly channel powerful, destructive, supernatural energy into a localized area. The way in which this gift manifests is dependent on the personality of the god but the results are often an explosion or a blast effect.

For every point of Smite a god deals 2 damage in an area of effect. The area has a radius of 1 yard for each point and the center of the area may be up to a half yard away from the god for each point. Obviously this results in the god being within the area damaged by this gift, and they take half of the damage (rounded down) from Smite. This self-damage cannot be avoided or mitigated, but may be healed normally afterward.

The damaging effect of Smite does not discriminate between allies and enemies, nor between mundane objects or valuables. The only way to guarantee not taking damage is to be outside of the area affected.

This gift costs four fatigue to activate and damage occurs in the same turn it is activated. For people caught in this effect

the damage can be reduced with hard cover, armor, or other protection as determined by the Director. Durable objects will take less damage from Smite than others. The god must be able to perceive the target or targeted area in order to use this gift.

This gift might be triggered involuntarily if the god becomes overly angry, upset or stressed. As such, it is common for gods with Smite to train in controlling their emotions. When activated it is always at maximum power and cannot be willingly reduced. Smite is a violent and destructive gift and a god with it is often feared or shunned, even by their allies.

2 Damage / point of Smite

1 yard radius / point

.5 yard / point range to epicenter

User takes half damage rounded down

Self damage is unavoidable

Can activate from anger or stress

4 Fatigue to activate



Sub-Gifts

Sub-Gifts are rare, unusual or specialized gifts that gods may infrequently manifest. They are far less common and tend to be weaker than Core Gifts.

Sub-Gifts are purchased with experience points directly, with each point in a Sub-Gift costing a flat amount of experience. The Director may not want some or all of these to be available in a game, so make sure to discuss the character concept and desired Sub-Gifts with them.

Sub-Gifts are also a way to insert any number of custom gifts into the game. Ideas for these need to be discussed with the Director and described with respect to their power and limitations. Sub-Gifts need to be created with game balance and fairness in mind. They also need to be useful in more than one situation but not so broad that they become a solution to any problem.

Their costs, both in Fatigue and experience to buy, need to be considered against how powerful they are. If a player invests the time and experience to acquire a ten point Sub-Gift it should be rewarding and potent. Likewise a single point in a Sub-Gift should never be meaningless. As such, upward scaling should be created for each point and maximum power at ten points should be critically judged as much as a one point purchase.

Bizarre

The gift of Bizarre grants the god an unnatural trait which is most often physical in nature. This gift is different from god to god but the unnatural trait provided by Bizarre is rarely useful, or if it is then only to a small degree.

Good examples of Bizarre are a multitude of superfluous eyes or rows of teeth like a shark. The more powerful this gift the more pronounced the change or trait. In general a minor physical change only requires a point or two. Upwards of five points indicate a very significant difference like stony skin or a

removable, re-attachable leg. Ten points often defines some sort of total change. The exact details of any Bizarre gift need to be worked out ahead of time between the player and the Director. Bizarre does not normally cost Fatigue, but it may circumstantially.

One point in Bizarre costs one experience point to purchase.

Trait prominence increases / point of Bizarre
Does not normally require Fatigue

Mimic

The gift of Mimic allows a god to imitate people in both appearance and voice. When using this gift a god alters their features, height, physique and voice to try and mimic an individual they have seen before. The accuracy of the imitation depends on the strength of the gift and how familiar they are with the person they want to mimic.

In order to be accurate, the god must have encountered or observed the person they desire to mimic at least once. They can alter their features, voice and skin color dramatically. In addition they can change their height, weight and build up to 50%. True accuracy depends more on their familiarity with the target and their strength with the gift than anything else.

If they are familiar with the target the base chance to create a convincing imitation is 40%, and increases by 5% for each point in Mimic. It costs one point of Fatigue to activate and lasts for up to one minute for each point. It takes only one round to complete the transformation.

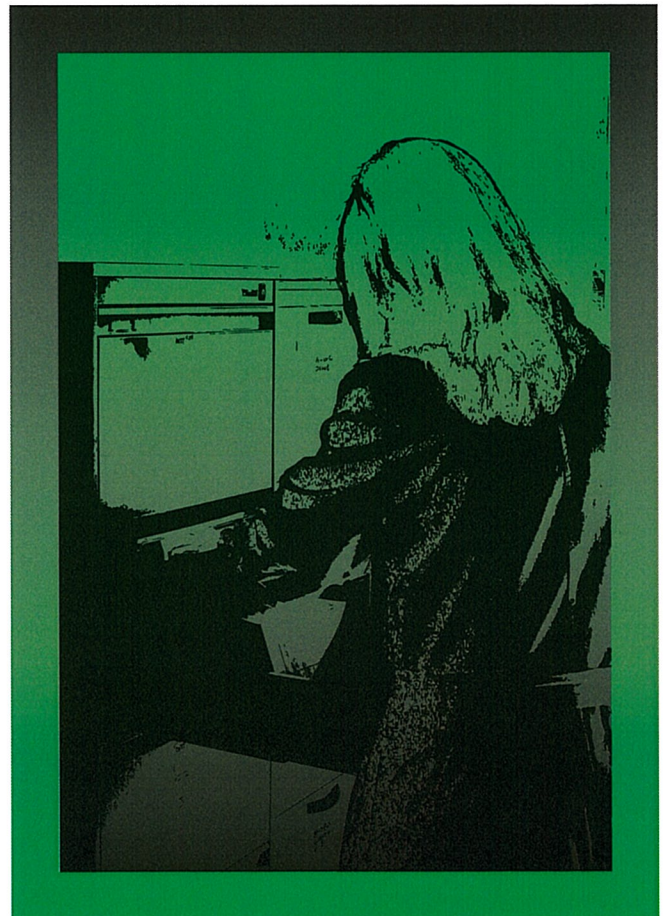
This gift does not give the god using it any help in imitating the mannerisms or personality of the person they are imitating, nor does it give them any memories or intimate knowledge. They will still have to act to create a convincing persona.

Alternatively, the god may spend four Fatigue to use this gift for one hour per point of Mimic. When used in this fashion they may not voluntarily cancel the gift until the duration is up. In either use, this gift may be

re-activated before it expires to create a more seamless imitation over a longer time.

One point in Mimic costs two experience points to purchase.

+5% chance / point of Mimic
40% base chance
Alters body for imitation
Up to 1 minute / point
1 Fatigue to activate
4 Fatigue to activate for longer



Null

The gift of Null is only allowed in a special class of god called an Obliviate, who can negate gifts used by other gods. In order to accomplish this the Obliviate must be able to perceive the target. Null will not work on the area affected by gifts, only on the god using them. The Obliviate must have a general idea which gifts they are negating but it is not necessary to know the name or relative power of that gift.

For each point in Null an Oblivate can negate the effects of one point of gift. This negation lasts until they can no longer perceive the target. It can be activated multiple times but each time counts toward an individual gift, and cannot be doubled up against a single gift. If the gift an Oblivate attempts to nullify is more powerful than their strength in Null, it remains active but is decreased in power by that number of points for the duration. Oblivates may activate Null preemptively but their Fatigue is still spent even if their target does not activate their gift.

Additionally, an Oblivate must have Null as their most powerful gift by at least one point. Each activation of this gift costs one point of Fatigue. The victim of such an attack is keenly aware that they are being stopped but might not be able to pinpoint the source.

Due to their nature, most gods view Oblivates in a negative fashion. Any god values their gifts and will usually react poorly when they are negated. Reactions may range from distrust to outright violence. Oblivates are often weaponized against their will by various Factions and they may harbor animosity toward organized groups. Forming a positive bond with an Oblivate is rare.

One point in Null costs three experience points to purchase.

Nullify 1 point of gift / point of Null
 Cannot be used against effects
 Must be able to perceive target
 Must know what gift is being negated
 Must be most powerful gift by 1 point
 See gift description for information
 1 Fatigue to activate



Presence

This gift gives the god a permanent aura that follows them and can be sensed, to some degree, by everyone around them. The exact nature of this gift is different from god to god.

The god with Presence is aware of the aura that they exude but may choose to be personally unaffected by it. The potency of the aura is dependent on the number of points they have in Presence. Any particular effect or essence can be represented by this gift but once it is established it does not change. Typical examples of this gift include exuding evil, discomfort or righteousness. The aura cannot be used to deal physical or mental damage but may adversely affect people within it. It may express temperature differences but the actual temperature does not change, only the feelings of the people affected.

This gift extends from the god for one yard per point. The gift of Presence is always active unless the god spends one Fatigue, which will suppress their aura for one hour.

One point in Presence costs one experience point to purchase.

1 yard range / point of Presence
 Cannot deal damage
 Does not normally require Fatigue
 1 Fatigue to suppress for 1 hour

Telepathy

This gift allows a god to communicate mentally with another individual across great distances. No line of sight is necessary and the exact location of the recipient does not need to be known. The range of this gift is ten yards times the number of points they have in Telepathy, squared. For example, a god with four points of telepathy could send mental messages to someone 160 yards away.

Telepathy lasts for up to one minute per point and costs one Fatigue to activate. Communication is not two-way and does not allow any kind of mind-reading. The god using it and the recipient do not need

to speak the same language for the message to be understood. While this gift is active the user may switch between recipients within their range once each turn and may communicate to one person for each point they have in Telepathy.

One point in Telepathy costs two experience points to purchase.

10 yards / point of Telepathy squared

Up to 1 minute / point

1 Fatigue to activate

Teleport

This gift allows a god to instantly teleport across distances without traversing the space between. The god, their clothing and a few small items may be teleported. Also, the god may not teleport anything that they are not in contact with.

The distance that can be traveled with this gift is up to ten yards times the number of points they have in Teleport squared. They must be familiar with the location that they are teleporting to. If that location has been altered or filled in the gift fails to work and the god remains where they are. Regardless of their success or failure, four Fatigue is used to activate this gift.

One point in Teleport costs two experience points to purchase.

10 yards / point of Teleport squared

See gift description for information

Must be familiar with destination

4 Fatigue to activate



Character Creation

So, let's make a character. Break Action's character generation should be relatively fast as long as you already have a concept in mind. It doesn't need to be intensely detailed as you may need to bend some of your ideas to fit around rules and the Director's vision. It's best to have a general idea of the character that you want to create as you fill out the sheet and to run these ideas past the Director as you go. This helps in two ways: It allows the Director to get to know your character before the game and prepare accordingly, and it allows you to get suggestions and ideas while building the character. This will help them fit into the campaign appropriately.

What follows is a piece-by-piece breakdown of each area in the character sheet and how you should fill them. The rules for your character's beginning Hit Points, Fatigue, Skills and Gifts are right after this section starting on page 58.

Name

This is the name, title or handle that the character assumes. A first or last name is not necessary and a single name or phrase is often best. Good examples are: Pete, Smith, Bruiser, Flyby, Stealth, or The Anvil. These are all easy to remember and will be used more often in game as a result. Bad examples are: Willard B. Wodengurk the Fourth, The Scientist Especial, or Mr. Applecrust Joseph MD. These names are all overly long and almost assuredly will be unused by other players except as a joke. The single name or handle is memorable and will be easier to manage.

Profession

This describes what your character does for a living or perhaps the area in which they are best trained. It represents their largest group of skills and is interpreted by the Director to assign difficulty for rolls. Your

character can apply it directly (such as a Car Mechanic working on a car) or take other actions based on its related fields and areas of knowledge (such as a Sprinter performing a long jump).

A character will rarely change their profession over the course of their life and it is never changed by experience points. To change their profession a character should spend a lot of time (typically years) and effort. The previous profession is then recorded in the Background section of the character sheet.

When a character performs an action based on their profession the difficulty is usually 70%. In cases where the action is particularly easy or well within the character's skill, no roll is required (at the discretion of the Director).



Hit Points

Like many RPG systems, these determine how tough your character is and how resistant to damage they are. Essentially, it's a measure of how much physical trauma they can endure before they die. A character will usually have between five and seven Hit Points as a base, and any amount lower than four might describe a character that is frail, fragile, or just doesn't take hits well. An amount over eight indicates a robust and healthy person capable of taking reasonable amounts of harm in stride. If a character has over ten Hit Points there should be a reason, as that usually means they are incredibly resilient and resistant to damage. For more information about Hit Points and their use in game see the Combat section of the book.

Fatigue

Fatigue is an abstract measure for several things. It's spent to activate gifts and is a measure of the physical, mental and supernatural exhaustion associated with that action. As a character becomes more accustomed to using gifts they might increase their base Fatigue score (by spending experience). Characters with and without gifts may temporarily lose Fatigue if they perform exhausting tasks, or they can spend Fatigue to summon extra reserves of energy to push past them.

Armor

This is the section where armor is recorded. Usually a character can only wear one set of armor at a time, and if armor is layered the Director will decide whether it stacks or uses only the better armor value of the two. Armor is rarely absolute protection against damage or being hit, serving to reduce the amount of damage taken instead. The maximum damage reduction is the value of the armor. Each point of armor must be rolled individually and the difficulty is determined by how well-suited the type of

armor is against the type of damage taken. For more information about armor and its use in game see the Armor section of the book.

Age, Height, Weight, Skin, Hair and Eyes

Each of these are used to describe some attribute of the character, usually in only one or two words. This part of the sheet is intended to be a quick reference for descriptive qualities, while more detailed information about personality or physical descriptions should be recorded elsewhere, if at all. (Not to imply that it's not important, but either you'll remember it when asked or it won't be referenced in game. Nobody cares where all of your character's scars and beauty marks are.)



Experience

As your character progresses through the game they will learn and advance in skill, toughness and general aptitude. This is expressed by how much experience they have. Experience is awarded by the Director for completing segments of a campaign or other noteworthy accomplishments. The overall amount of experience a character has is recorded in the "Total" box. Experience is tallied in the "Stored" box, until you decide to spend it. The amount spent is then recorded in the "Spent" box. The total of the Stored and Spent boxes should always add up to be equal to the "Total" box. See the Experience and Advancement chapter for more information on how you can spend experience.

Gifts

This large area is where the character's supernatural gifts are recorded. It divides the types of gifts into three main categories: Body, Mind, and Forces. The fourth section labeled "Sub" is for recording Sub-Gifts, should a character have any. For more information on how to purchase gifts and how they work see the Core Gifts section of this book.

Skills

In this section you record the skills that may stand alone or are unrelated to other areas such as Profession or Background. Alternately, a skill here may be a narrowed specialty within a character's profession or background. They reflect areas of fairly directed and specific knowledge or talent that a character possesses. Frequently these are hobbies, personal pursuits or interests.

Unlike a character's profession, skills are not interpreted far beyond their immediate field. For example, if a character has skill with pistols it won't mean that they have any particular aptitude with gunsmithing. A higher degree of skill provides better odds when rolling a skill check.

DEGREES OF SKILL

INEPT	25% (BASE -25%)
UNTRAINED	BASE 50%
DABBLER	60% (BASE +10%)
HOBBYIST	70% (BASE +20%)
EXPERT	80% (BASE +30%)
MASTER	90% (BASE +40%)

Note that the “Inept” degree is only used when a character has literally no exposure or knowledge regarding the skill in question. Also, the “Master” degree is only allowed to characters who have based their lives around a particular skill. It requires a very high amount of dedication and is only allowed in rare cases at the discretion of the Director.

If your character has a weapon skill (or some type of unarmed fighting) that they plan to use in combat it should not be covered by profession or background. This limits confusion regarding their experience with that weapon or fighting style and makes it easier to improve with experience points.

For more information on how skills (and other rolls and game mechanics) are used in game see the Game Mechanics section of this book.

Weapons

This is where your character’s weapons are recorded. It should be limited to what they have on their immediate person. Additional weapons that might not be with them should be on a separate, group equipment sheet if necessary.

The initial damage that a weapon inflicts is recorded on the same line as the weapon itself, followed by its maximum potential damage in parentheses. As an example, a pistol that does three initial damage with a potential damage of six is written (3/6) on the line with that weapon. For more information about weapons and their use in game see the Combat section of the book.

Ammunition

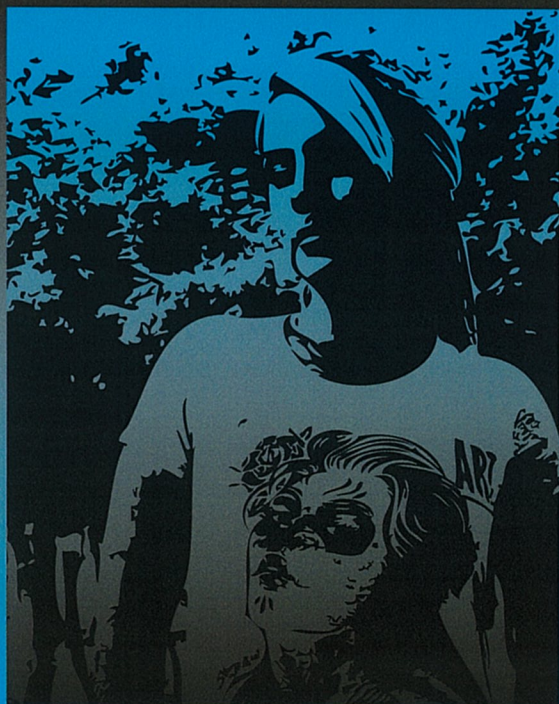
Just as your character’s weapons are recorded in the Weapons section, this is the part where ammunition is recorded. Certain weapons may share ammo or not have any at all. If your character has expendable weapons such as grenades, they are recorded here as well.

Background and Description

Your character came from somewhere and this is where that part of their life is recorded. Using general phrases (and whatever kind of descriptive words you want), record notes about where they were raised, things they like and events that transpired in their lives. You could note skills they used to have but haven’t practiced in years, scars and how they got them or exotic places they used to live.

A character’s background is used in game by the player to remind them of role-playing points and occasionally by the Director to assign a difficulty to a roll. When background is drawn upon for a check it usually has a low roll, slightly better than base. Most often it will be 60% depending on the situation and how well the background applies.

Background differs from Profession in that it is old knowledge. Background cannot be

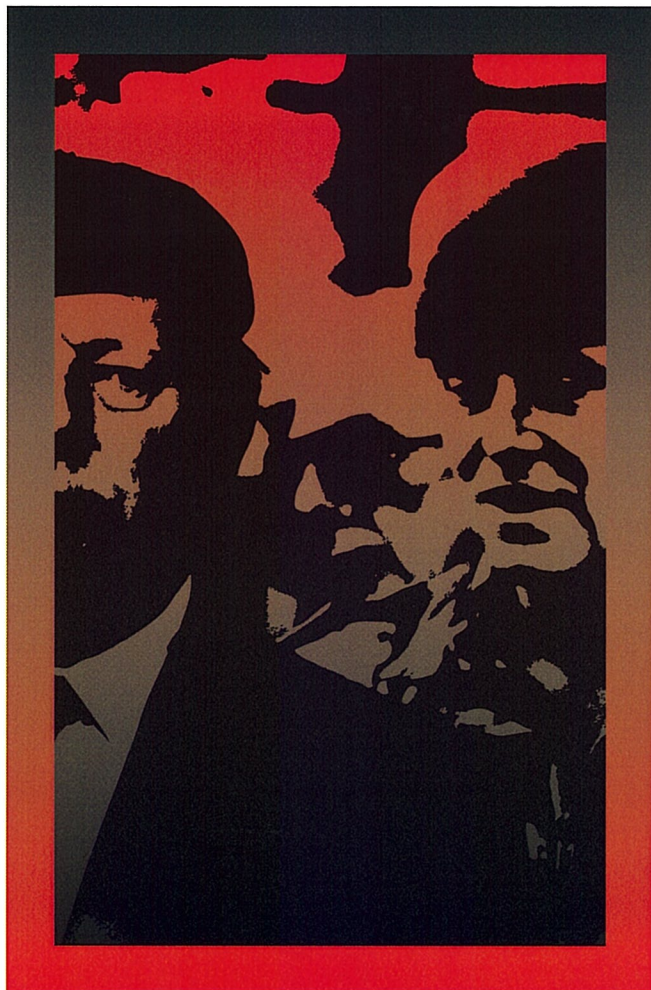


changed (just as history cannot be altered) but it might be added to as the character progresses and changes.

Equipment

This is where your character's stuff gets recorded. Like weapons, it should express only what they actually carry with them personally, while other equipment should be recorded on a separate paper, the back of the character sheet or maybe a group equipment sheet if needed.

How much your character can carry is a matter of how big and strong they are and what kind of things they have to help them. If it seems like your character has an unreasonable amount of gear, either in mass or in weight, they probably do. Keep in mind that most people don't want to carry heavy loads unless they have to and everyone moves faster with less stuff on them. In other words, bring only the necessities.



Experience and Advancement

As a character progresses through the game they will encounter hardships, overcome obstacles and survive deadly situations. Provided that they don't die, these experiences will temper and fortify the character. Practice will refine their skills and their mistakes will be learned from. While past challenges may mark their body and mind their aptitude will increase and this change is measured in experience points. Whatever does not kill them will, in its way, make them stronger.

Experience measures the advancement of a character as they progress. It may be spent to increase Hit Points, Fatigue, Skills, and Gifts. It is common for a character to earn a few experience points after each arc of a game, usually during downtime after one or more events. These points are recorded in the upper right corner of the character sheet. Whenever a character is awarded experience it is added to the total that they have. The two boxes below it are used to record how much stored (unspent) experience they have and how much they have spent on various advancements. These two should add up to the total amount recorded in the topmost box.

Hit Points cost three experience to purchase and can be purchased any number of times, with some conditions. It is unusual for a person to have only one or two total Hit Points, as this usually describes someone who is remarkably frail or of poor constitution. Likewise, a person with more than ten Hit Points is unnaturally robust. Without some strange factor to explain their physique the Director should limit characters to ten Hit Points at maximum. The average healthy person has between five and seven Hit Points.

Fatigue also costs three experience per point and can be purchased any number of times. Despite not having gifts, ordinary humans have a few Fatigue to represent the natural endurance and exertion that

they can express. Neophyte gods typically have between three and five Fatigue. A sign of an extremely powerful and experienced god is high amounts of Fatigue, which they advance to enable their powerful gifts and the combinations they more frequently use. Most gifts are useless without the Fatigue to activate them and a potent god will have advanced both over time.

Skills cost a variable amount depending on what degree the character is about to buy. To buy the Dabbler degree in a brand new skill costs only one experience. To advance from Dabbler to Hobbyist costs an additional one experience. Finally, to advance from Hobbyist to Expert degree costs an additional two experience.

Advancement of a skill is usually accompanied by some in-game training or practice toward the goal. The character's trials in the world are the basis for advancement and sometimes this, and spending experience, is all it takes to justify increasing a skill. Some skills may require the character to pursue them more actively or study in an academic fashion to improve. The Director should be made aware of any purchased increases in skills. They are also the final authority on whether a more technical skill can be advanced or if it will require more practice on the part of the character.

The Master degree of skill cannot normally be purchased with just experience and is restricted in all but a few special cases. If the Director allows a character to have the Master degree (they shouldn't), then the cost and requirements will be decided upon at that time.

Gifts have two methods of purchasing which can be used interchangeably. The first is Tree Buy, which gives an experience discount based on some previously purchased gifts. The second is Direct Buy which allows the purchase of any gift in the tree without consideration of previously purchased gifts, but at a higher price. When using experience to advance gifts the player may switch between these two buying methods freely.



Planning which gifts are going to be purchased ahead of time usually reveals the most cost effective buying option. Sub-Gifts do not have a tree and only use the Direct Buy method. The amount of experience they cost for each point is listed in their description.

Tree Buy: Using this method, a point in any gift may be purchased for one experience point. However, in order to purchase this point in a second tier gift a god must have at least as many points in each of the first tier gifts directly below it. As an example, a god with two points in Strength and one point in Endurance would be able to purchase only one point in Durability using the Tree Buy system. They would not be able to purchase two points in Durability because they would need two points in Strength and Endurance respectively. The third tier of gifts follows the same principles as the second tier, with a point in a third tier gift costing only one experience provided that the character has at least that many points in each of the gifts directly below it.

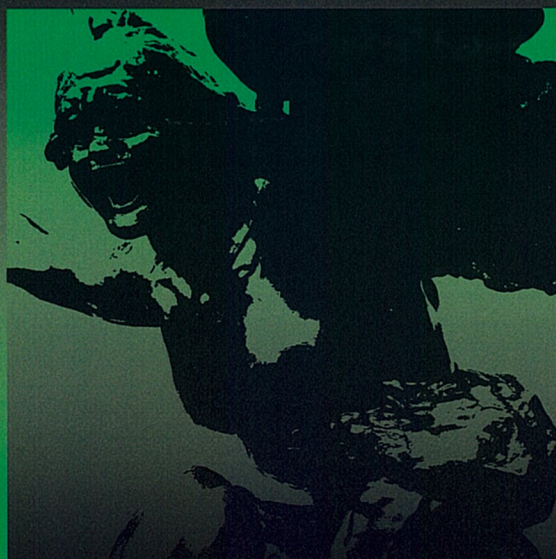
Direct Buy: Using this method a point in a gift in any tier may be purchased by itself for an amount of experience equal to its tier. If a god wanted to purchase Smite without first building up the prerequisites for Tree Buy they may do so at a cost of three experience points for each point in Smite. Obviously, it's cheaper to purchase higher tier gifts when you already have the two below it, but if you don't care to acquire those you may buy higher tier gifts quickly using this method. In some situations Direct Buy can be more economical and with either method a single point in a tier one gift costs only one experience point.

The characters are obviously not aware of their experience points in-game. They see advancements as being the results of practice or necessity. They hone their skills and gifts by using them and their Hit Points and Fatigue increase as they struggle to survive and overcome challenges. A god does not actively get to choose which of their gifts improve or by how much. That decision is made by the player and as such they may advance gifts in directions the character did not want. This is a great way to create a compelling character who, against their will, begins to manifest gifts in contradiction to their wants and needs. It is recommended to try this from time to time because the most memorable characters are often the ones with flaws.

EXPERIENCE SPENDING

INCREASE	COST
1 HIT POINT	3 EXPERIENCE
1 FATIGUE	3 EXPERIENCE
UNTRAINED TO DABBLER	1 EXPERIENCE
DABBLER TO HOBBYIST	1 EXPERIENCE
HOBBYIST TO EXPERT	2 EXPERIENCE

SEE TREE BUY AND DIRECT BUY ON PAGE 57
FOR RULES AND EXPERIENCE COSTS
SURROUNDING BUYING AND IMPROVING GIFTS



Starting Experience

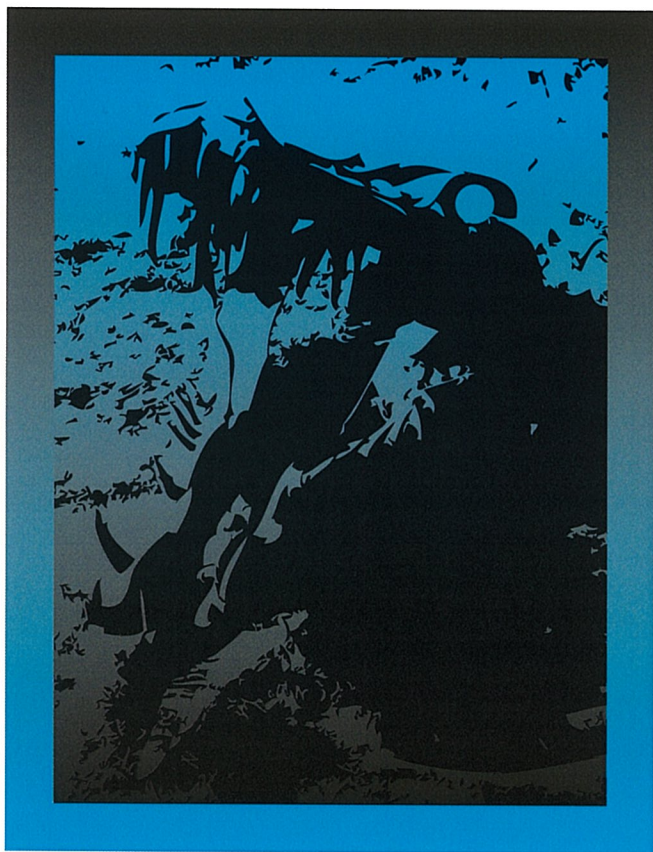
During character creation a player has a set amount of experience that they can spend to round out their character concept. These are spent in the same fashion as experience that gets awarded in-game, with a few extra conditions. Also, this beginning experience does not get recorded on the character sheet; a brand new character should have zero experience recorded. After character creation any unspent experience is lost. It may not be stored for later advancement.

First, a player gets 30 experience points to spend between both Hit Points and Fatigue. As described in Experience and Advancement section, Hit Points and Fatigue both cost 3 experience per point to purchase which means a starting character's Hit Points and Fatigue should add up to ten. The average Hit Points for a beginning character are between five and seven and their average Fatigue should be between three and five. Feel free to build in a less balanced fashion but be aware of the consequences.

Next, a player gets 7 experience to spend on skills. Just like in the Experience and Advancement section a Dabbler degree skill costs one, a Hobbyist degree costs a total of two, and an Expert degree costs a total of four. As an example, a beginning character could use their experience for skills to buy one Expert, one Hobbyist, and one Dabbler. While buying skills remember that there is no need to overlap them with the character's Profession or Background unless they need a high degree of specialty within them. Weapon skills should be purchased if the character has them and most people only have one or two weapon skills, if any.

Finally, a player gets 5 experience to spend on gifts. The two buying methods (Tree Buy and Direct Buy) for gifts are detailed in the Experience and Advancement section and can both be used during character creation. Neophyte gods typically do not have much power in the way of gifts, but these can be advanced and diversified with time and experience (if they survive).

The rest of the character sheet can be filled out based on the concept developed by the player and the guidelines for doing that are described in the Character Creation section. Try to make a compelling character that can grow and change as they progress through the game. Characters that work well with others help to engage other players, and avoiding gimmicks or one-trick ponies will give you more opportunities to engage with the story. Even if your concept is an abrasive or uncooperative type of person, try to give them the skills and gifts that will lead them to work with a group.



If the Director allows it, starting experience can be given in a lump total that may be spent freely on Hit Points, Fatigue, Skills and Gifts in any combination. The total for all of the categories mentioned above is 42 experience. If this alternative is allowed make sure to balance your purchases to avoid extremes of Hit Points and Fatigue. Any character created without gifts is not a god and should use the Regular Human Rules described in a later section to create their character.

Death and Dying

Look, I know when I've had it. Walking away from this operation was never going to happen, not for me. I just wish the shot was somewhere other than my guts. How much did it miss my vest by?

Pain? No, I'm fine. You know me. I mean, I can feel it, but like it's really far away. Like a dentist digging around in your numbed out mouth. The head game though, that's what's scaring me now. I want to focus.

Maybe I shouldn't.

Remember when we met? I gave you the hard line on what you were and where you were going and I'm glad you did it so well. It might not seem like it now but this is all worth it. It's good that we didn't shoot each other that one time.

There's some special stuff I saved under my bunk, you can have it. You know you need to get going though. You can hear that siren because if I can hear it right now then you definitely can.

What do you mean there isn't one?

Your character will probably die. Characters in Break Action are expected to get into a lot of dangerous situations with little time to recover inbetween. The driving pace can wear down tough-as-nails front-liners and will occasionally take those who hang back by surprise. Given the extreme obstacles they must overcome, it's reasonable for the player's characters to die from time to time.

This doesn't have to be a bad thing. Part of any diverse role-playing experience is dealing with how to finish a character. It might come suddenly or it might take a long time, but it comes for everyone and to have a complete story a character must have a beginning and an end. View this as an opportunity to role-play and have a great story moment. You may even consider tentatively looking forward to it.

The characters in Break Action do not often get to retire. After a lifetime of campaigning they won't be clad in golden

armor standing on top of a mountain of their vanquished foes. Much more likely that they will be broken and haunted, plagued by old injuries and the thought of hidden enemies. Their only comfort is the memory of a triumph in the past, a cause worth dying for, and their allies who fell along the way.



Real reward requires real risk. For the rewards of a task to mean something there has to be a risk of failure. The most valuable gems obtained easily won't mean much to a player, but a scrap of paper that they had to fight and die for? That is priceless, and probably has a more compelling story behind it.

Embrace the challenges in the game and strive to make a great story for your character, even if you know it could all end badly. Make their life count by putting it on the line, and make their death one which furthers the story and drives other characters. They will be more memorable for the effort.

It doesn't matter what they did if they had endless time to do it. What matters is what they did with the time that they were given.

Weapons

Conflict is commonplace in Break Action and weapons will be used both by the characters and against them. The variety of weapons available is nearly unlimited and anything in common use today or in history might appear in game. Groups of gods and their opponents tend to use a wide variety of weaponry because the hazards they encounter often demand unconventional solutions.

There are far too many weapons in the modern world to describe them all in this book. What follows are generic examples of common weapons, as well as suggestions on how to include more specific weapons in your game. These are generalizations, and while they can be used outright you should be prepared to change them or incorporate real world weapons. Specific weapons help to define scenes, tension, danger and ambiance.

Firearms are by far the most common weapon the characters will use and have used against them. They range from small pocket pistols to massive anti-vehicular weaponry. While a lot of firearms would not be considered "practical" for combat use, the unique nature of the supernatural world and the threats it presents create a good use clause for many unconventional guns.

Melee weapons are simple, reliable and effective. In the hands of a god or other supernatural creatures they can be far more potent than normal, and have become an excellent choice for certain situations. While they normally lack in range, once someone with a melee weapon closes the distance with a shooter they have a decisive advantage. In game terms, someone with a melee weapon has the advantage when in striking distance against someone with a gun. The exact bonuses are up to the Director and dependent on the situation, but common ones include skill or initiative bonuses for the user of the melee weapon and stiff penalties to skill or denial of use for the firearm.

Explosives have their place too, and come in a great variety of styles. They range from small distraction devices to massive

bombs capable of leveling a city block or more. Professional devices are controlled tightly, but characters may rarely acquire a handful or have some used against them. Loud, destructive and indiscriminate, they make a strong statement wherever they are employed.

Other, even less conventional weapons have a place in Break Action. Some artifacts are also weapons with strange aberrant powers. Vehicles can be weaponized easily, as can an environment. Quick thinking and creativity can turn anything into a weapon that can save the day when all other options have failed.



Firearms

There are a great variety of guns in the world, and for both the gods and regular humans they are a convenient and effective weapon. A god might be able to bend steel with their bare hands and fire incendiary beams from their fingertips, but a regular human with a gun can often match them for lethality and do it without spending Fatigue.



What follows are generic versions of firearms. These can be used in game on their own, but the Director is encouraged to include specific examples from real manufacturers if they can. The use of real-world gun types makes them more memorable and more unique in game. The players also have the perfect excuse to use niche weaponry that might otherwise be considered unconventional, as supernatural threats can justify excessive firepower.

The range at which firearms are effective varies greatly between models and is dependent on a number of factors including cartridge, design, and aptitude of the user. In general, pistols and other small guns have a lower effective range than longer guns that have been designed with distance and accuracy in mind. For most smaller, concealable firearms a range of about seven yards or less is considered typical for self-defense. Highly accurate sniper rifles in the hands of trained shooters have confirmed kills over a mile away. During game it is important for the Director to keep ranges in

mind and be aware of what distances might render a weapon ineffective.

In the examples below if there is a range of damage it indicates that there are varieties of that weapon that commonly do either category of damage. One or the other should be chosen with consideration to the type of gun and its expected use.

Compact Pistol

Damage: 2/4 – 3/6

Magazine: 8 rounds per magazine

Fire Modes: Semi-automatic

Single stack compact pistols are most commonly used as a concealed carry. The round that they fire is often considered the minimum for effective self-defense. Snappy recoil and a light frame make them comfortable to wear and easy to hide but they often lack the firepower of their full-size cousins.

Pistol

Damage: 3/6 – 4/8

Magazine: 13 rounds per magazine

Fire Modes: Semi-automatic

Full-size double stack pistols have a generous magazine, manageable recoil and more firepower without sacrificing too much portability. Found as the sidearm of many armed forces they are dependable and versatile. Many types are still considered concealable, although this requires more effort.

Handcannon

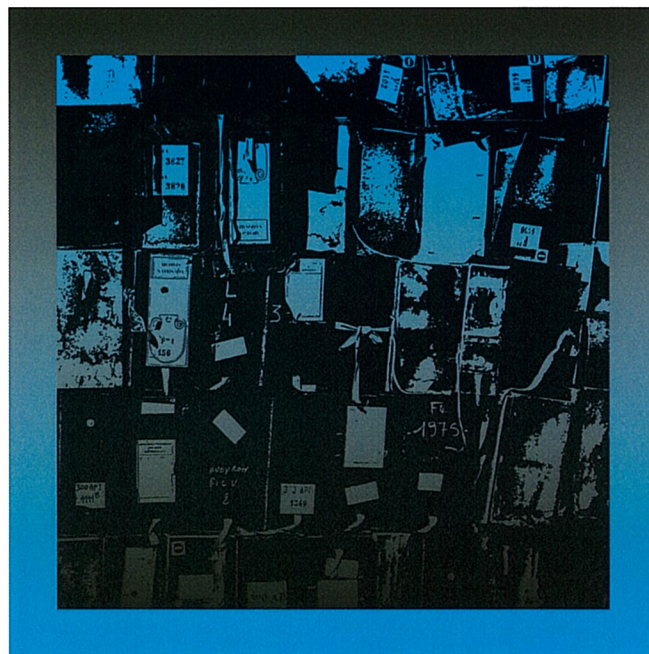
Damage: 4/8 – 5/10

Magazine: 6 rounds in a cylinder

Fire Modes: Single, Semi-automatic

Representing the larger varieties of revolvers, these pistols fire powerful cartridges and typically have heavier recoil than their lighter counterparts. Using an older, time-tested and very reliable design, reloading can be a chore compared to semi-automatic pistols.

The heavy recoil of larger Handcannons may limit them to single fire mode in less experienced hands. Concealment options are also limited due to the large frame “printing” through clothing, but it is not impossible. Regardless, Handcannons do high damage, make a statement when drawn, and some Riders of Jenj prefer this aesthetic.



Shotgun

Damage: 5/10 – 6/12

Magazine: 5 rounds in tube magazine

Fire Modes: Single or Semi-automatic

Well-known and widely-used, the pump shotgun is basic, versatile and powerful. They use a variety of shells without complaint and it's hard to get them to malfunction without deliberate abuse. Delivering awe-inspiring damage at close range, they tend to suffer at longer distances. With proper modifications they can be concealable but this usually demands specific jackets or bulky clothes.

There are versions which are semi-automatic and manage recoil very well but these tend to be more expensive and require more specific loads to work properly. There are many different loads that shotguns can use, a few of which are detailed later. In general, if it can be packed into a shell, it can be fired out of a shotgun.

Bolt-Action Rifle

Damage: 5/10 – 6/12

Magazine: 5 rounds in internal magazine

Fire Modes: Single

Used widely in hunting applications, these weapons are also found in the hands of soldiers in conflicts past or in the modern armed forces for specialized applications. Powerful and long-ranged, they trade quantity for quality. Getting good effectiveness out of a bolt-action demands a practiced and precise shooter, but they are rewarded with the ability to do high damage at long distances. Scopes are a common accessory for many of these rifles. Their size and weight tends to exclude them from being concealed. While some models feature detachable magazines for faster reloading, many have internal magazines that can only be reloaded slowly.

Assault Rifle

Damage: 5/10

Magazine: 30 rounds per magazine

Fire Modes: Semi-automatic, Burst, Full Auto

Assault rifle is a generalized term for many of the select-fire rifles used in modern conflicts. Normally using smaller rifle cartridges, they represent a good combination of power, range, accuracy and suppressive fire. They compromise little and have demonstrated their ability as a weapon across varied models and in many wars. Assault rifles are not usually designed to be concealed, though some models have collapsing stocks and short barrels that help. Reloading is typically faster than a bolt-action rifle due to their long, detachable magazines.

Battle Rifle

Damage: 6/12

Magazine: 20 rounds per magazine

Fire Modes: Semi-automatic, Burst, Full Auto

Similar to the assault rifle, battle rifle is a generalized term to describe select-fire rifles that use a larger rifle cartridge. They tend

to be bigger and more cumbersome than assault rifles, but make up for the difference with power downrange. Found most often in war zones, they offer the same advantages as assault rifles but the larger cartridge can lend itself to longer range and better effectiveness against personal armor. Concealment is not usually considered when they are being designed, and their average length is longer than that of assault rifles.



Sniper Rifle

Damage: 6/12

Magazine: 10 rounds per magazine

Fire Modes: Single, Semi-automatic

Large, powerful, long-ranged rifles used to eliminate personnel at range. Precise scopes and engineering combine to make these deadly accurate at extreme distances. A trained shooter is required to maximize the effect of a sniper rifle. While they are still man-portable, concealment is nearly impossible without heavy modification or a specialized, collapseable design. Gun cases are the normal way of transporting a sniper rifle.

Sawed-Off Shotgun

Damage: 5/10

Magazine: 2 rounds

Fire Modes: Single*, Semi-automatic*

A older design of side-by-side double barrel that has the barrels and sometimes the stock shortened to make the gun more concealable. This modification does nothing to help accuracy or recoil, and the shortened barrels can impede power as well. Still, few weapons make a statement quite like a sawed-off. They can fire twice before requiring a reload and the break-action reload requires a cool, calm operator to be effective in combat. At close range they can still deliver high damage to the target, and are both loud and intimidating. Because they are shortened they can be concealed, but they are wide in the body and will print through clothing unless care is taken with attire.

*This type of shotgun can have both barrels fire in rapid succession making a semi-automatic attack possible.

SMG

Damage: 3/6

Magazine: 30 rounds per magazine

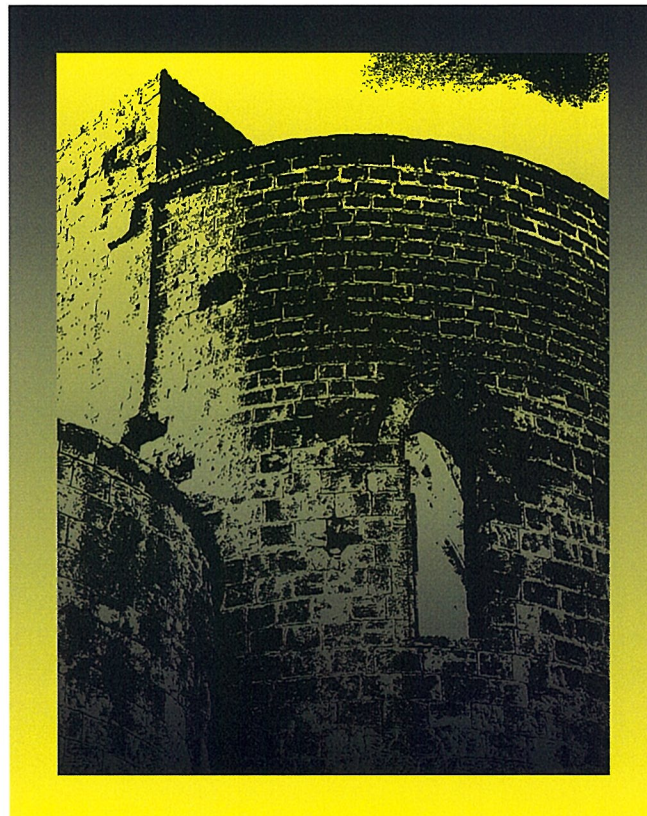
Fire Modes: Semi-automatic, Burst, Full Auto

Sub-machine guns are normally used by special forces in a variety of close range applications. They are compact compared to assault rifles and battle rifles, and normally fire a pistol cartridge. Rate of fire is usually high and recoil is low due to the small cartridge and design. While not considered highly concealable, many models have small enough bodies with collapsing stocks to be hidden in appropriate clothing. They may also have situational advantages at close range related to their short profile and pointability.

Specialty Ammunition

A wide variety of specialized ammunition exists, though the effects are often interchangeable with the basic, jacketed rounds that most firearms use. Some variants are different enough to be detailed below. The Director is encouraged to include others that are less common or to invent types that do not exist in the real world. Older firearms

may require custom rounds that imitate the historic cartridge they used, or they may be simply unable to use modern rounds. The following types of ammunition can usually be purchased over the counter at common firearm retailers.



Armor Piercing (AP)

AP rounds are designed to penetrate armor. These deal normal damage but any personal armor they encounter should be considered poorly-suited against them. They will readily pierce through soft barriers and tend to ricochet against hard ones.

Made with hard jackets or penetrating cores, armor piercing ammunition is designed to punch through ballistic vests and other kinds of personal armor. While it does this very efficiently, it has the disconcerting tendency to pierce other things as well. They can pass through dry wall and other common construction material easily, endangering targets beyond them. Materials that are hard enough to withstand the round (such as concrete and thick metal) tend to cause AP ammunition to ricochet, which may endanger the shooter or others.

Buckshot

Buckshot increases the damage of a shotgun by 1 initial and 2 potential at close range. At long range it reduces damage by 1 initial and 2 potential. Being close is important when using buckshot. Most armor types are considered well-suited versus buckshot.

A variant of shotgun ammunition packed with larger lead shot for taking bigger game, buckshot delivers high damage at close range. Because each individual projectile is small, they do not carry energy well over distance, and the effectiveness rapidly declines at range. Armor is also effective against the reduced mass of each separate ball. In addition, the gift of Durability counts double against buckshot.

Hollowpoint

Hollowpoints increase the damage of a gun against unarmored targets. Initial damage is increased by 1 and potential damage is increased by 2. If the target is armored, the damage is reduced by 1 initial and 2 potential.

As an example, if a pistol normally does 3/6 damage it now does 4/8 against unarmored targets when loaded with hollowpoints. When used against an armored target the same pistol would do 2/4 instead. The armor reduction is then still rolled as normal, making hollowpoints a very poor choice against it.

Hollowpoints are designed to expand on impact with the intention of transferring more energy to the target and doing more damage. Usually lighter than jacketed rounds, the projectile features a hollowed-out tip and serrations which peel open when they encounter resistance. Because of this design, hollowpoints do not penetrate armor well. Walls and other barriers can also greatly reduce the power of this round. In addition, the gift of Durability counts as armor when calculating the damage of hollowpoints.

Match Grade

Match Grade ammunition is designed to benefit accuracy at long range. It reduces

penalties for medium range shots by 5%, and long range shots by 10%. In order to provide this benefit, match grade ammunition must be loaded into precision weapons and firing at distant targets. Otherwise, the effect of this ammunition is not much different from normal.

This type of ammunition is precisely made with premium powder, primers, casings, and bullets. It is normally used in shooting competitions to maximize the high skill of the shooters, but is otherwise not much different than cheaper varieties. In applications where high accuracy is required at range (such as sniping) it is often required. At close ranges or in combat it typically does not make a large difference when compared to normal rounds.



Overpressure

Overpressure ammunition adds 1 initial damage to the firearm using it. It is powerful, but increases recoil. Delicate precision weapons and vintage firearms tend to suffer when using overpressure rounds and can be damaged by them. Penalties for semi-automatic and fully automatic firing may be increased by 5% while using these rounds.

Given a larger than standard propellant charge, overpressure ammunition is made to be powerful. The result is a faster projectile that may transfer more energy to the target. They are louder and cause more recoil than normal rounds and may damage weapons that are not made for them or are too old to use them. With over-use they can cause greater than normal wear even in guns that are designed to be able to use them.

Melee Weapons

Straight-forward and proven over the course of human history, melee weapons have evolved with new knowledge of leverage, ergonomics and force but still rely on an age-old tactic. Getting close to a target for melee might be difficult, but once the distance is closed melee weapons demand attention and get results.

In Break Action a character using a ranged weapon should receive stiff penalties when trying to use their weapon while in melee. When being attacked by someone using a melee weapon it should be difficult (if not impossible) to aim and fire most ranged weapons. While the penalty varies depend on the type of weapons being used, -20% or more is a decent starting point. In addition, the person using the melee weapon may receive bonuses to attacking someone with no defense against melee at the discretion of the Director.

In the case of many of the weaker melee weapons listed here, initial damage begins at zero. This means that the user must not only successfully roll for the attack but must also successfully roll potential to actually do damage. A successful hit that does zero damage could still be considered bruising or painful, but did not do enough physical damage to be recorded.

Just like firearms, Directors are encouraged to add more specific examples of melee weapons to their game. To create them in Break Action just choose a similar weapon from this list to represent damage, or use the examples here to approximate what the new kind of melee weapon would do. Be careful not to let special melee weapons have too much damage, as they can quickly break the game balance when compared to firearms.

Brass Knuckles

Damage: +1 Potential

A sturdy fist pack or a metal surround for a balled fist. This only adds an additional potential damage to an unarmed attack, but shines in the hand of a skilled fighter. Also

useful as a tool as it allows one to punch hard objects with less chance of self damage.

Pen

Damage: 0/1

The common plastic barrel ballpoint pen, or some similar variant. Small and unassuming, they can become a menacing piercing weapon in trained hands. A favorite of the Lapis Knights while stalking a target or undercover, as they can quickly initiate a fight with the pen and then leave the pen embedded in the target while continuing to fight.

Chair

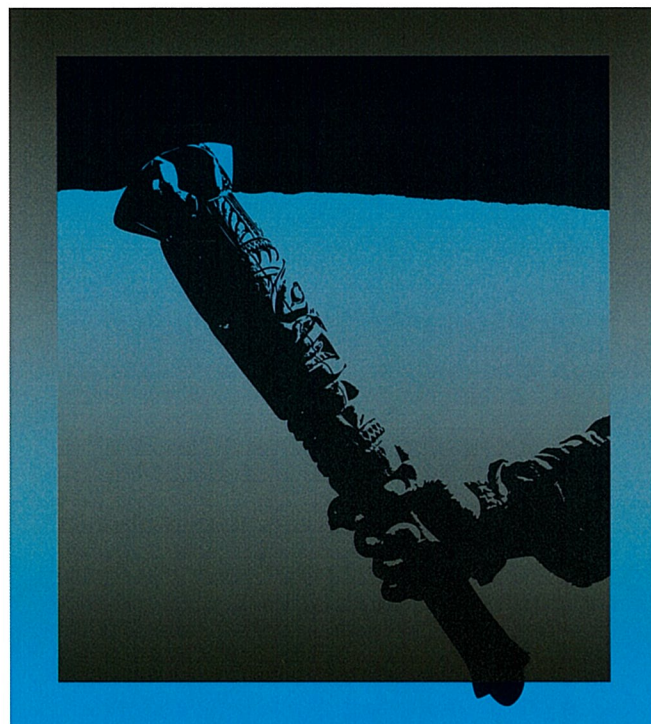
Damage: 0/1

Available just about anywhere, this damage represents a basic chair thrown or swung as a bludgeon. Not terribly effective but necessity is the mother of invention, or something.

Table

Damage: 0/1

Just like the chair, a table swung or thrown doesn't represent a real lethal threat. Still, it might make the difference in a desperate situation.



Whip

Damage: 0/1

A whip is designed to inflict pain more than physical damage, and while it might be intimidating to enemies it can be defeated by closing the distance needed to swing it effectively.

Brick

Damage: 0/2

A common red brick or a suitable rock weighing several pounds. When used as a weapon this is thrown at the target or used to bash them. Not terribly effective, but wars have been fought with less.

Thrown Knife

Damage: 1/2

A knife used in combat relies on the ability and strength of the wielder to do damage, adding an edge to their arm. Once thrown, part of the power of the attack is sacrificed for range.

Pocket Knife

Damage: 1/2

A standard folding knife carried by many as a tool. Tough but small with blades typically blunted by use and neglect but still sharp enough to present a threat. They are not designed for combat and do not preform as well as the combat knife, detailed later.

Club

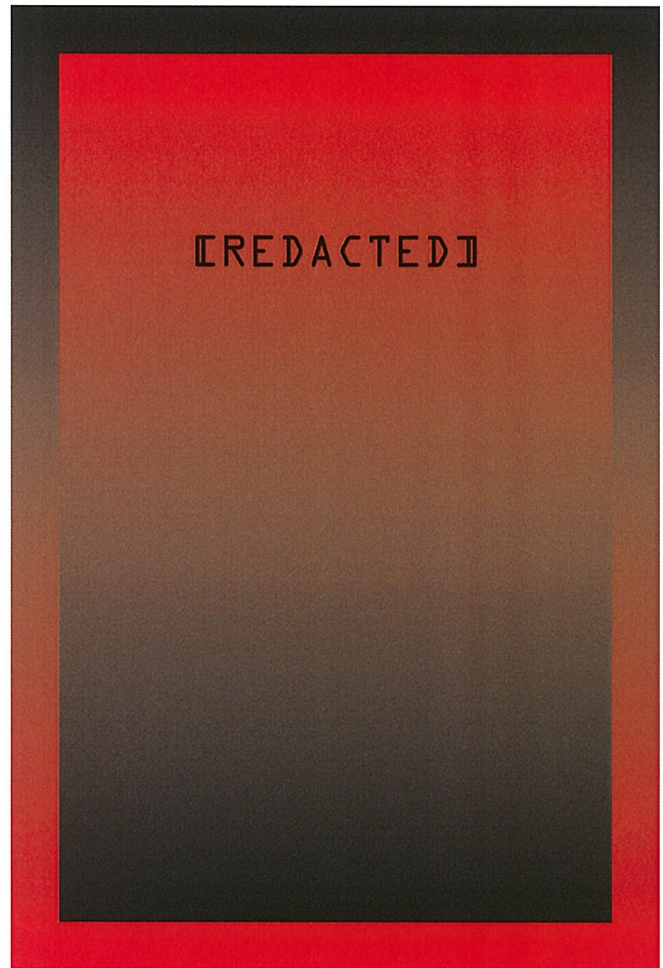
Damage: 1/4

Describes a variety of bludgeons including things like boards, branches and pipes. Crude but effective, especially on a good swing into the head. Force multiplication at it's most simple and violent.

Machete

Damage: 1/4

The South American machete is a long single edged knife, typically made of inexpensive metal with a basic edge. A common tool throughout the world, machetes come varieties that are suitable for many tasks, including infrequent use as a weapon.



Baseball Bat

Damage: 1/5

Much like the club but improved in design. A bat is well-balanced and has good grip. It's light enough to be swung easily but heavy and hard enough to do plentiful damage with a good attack.

Sledgehammer

Damage: 1/8

Unwieldy as a weapon due to poor balance, its heavy metal head can deal plenty of damage regardless. It's unlikely that someone will roll enough sequential successes to see it's highest potential damage, but when it happens the results are devastating.

Claw Hammer

Damage: 2/4

Another common tool re-purposed as a weapon. A claw hammer is well-balanced and multiplies force by design. Another favorite of Lapis Knights looking to send a message.

Baton

Damage: 2/4

Used by the police and martial artists, these come in a variety of styles. In most cases they are similar to a small bat or club, but are better designed to benefit a skilled user.

Combat Knife

Damage: 2/4

A well-made, purpose-built knife for use against people in melee. Large and tough, they are kept sharp in readiness for combat. They are a weapon first and a tool second, unlike pocket knives.

Hatchet

Damage: 2/4

Another common tool that may be used as a weapon, the hatchet is designed to focus power into a chop. Most varieties are sturdy and hold a basic edge very well.

Spear

Damage: 2/5

One of the oldest weapons used by humankind. When used in melee or thrown with skill they pierce deeply due to focusing force on a single point. The damage listed here assumes a well-made spear with a metal head. Other varieties may have reduced damage.

Sword

Damage: 2/7

Many cultures have developed their own variety of the sword. Classic designs will often reward high skill with high effectiveness. Because they are designed to be weapons, most kinds of sword do not serve well as tools.

Axe

Damage: 3/6

Similar to the hatchet but much larger, the axe can focus incredible power into the edge from a good swing. Highly effective, it needs only the space and time to swing in order to inflict devastating wounds.

Explosives

Explosions factor heavily into many action films; as such their use can be expected in Break Action. Regardless of how they occur, larger explosions tend to represent instant death for characters and their enemies alike. The way to survive an explosion is often to be somewhere else or to stop it from ever happening.

Most military grade explosives are tightly controlled and hard to get. In Break Action, some sort of improvised explosives or application is more likely, and those generally lack the power of the professional device that they seek to emulate. Additionally, there is plenty of room for error with explosives and poorly trained users play a dangerous game.



Attacking with a small explosive (such as a hand grenade) is still decided by a skill roll. A skill such as throwing or something related is usually required, but explosives placed as traps or set to do specific demolition work may use a different skill.

Explosives have an area of effect that dictates how much area is damaged by the blast. Due to the unpredictable nature of most explosives, the damage done to anyone or anything in the blast area is rolled using the six sided die that is normally used for initiative and then adding a set amount determined by the explosive type.

In addition, many explosives have a strong multiplicative effect if the amount is increased. In this case the effect, both area and damage is decided by the Director. In general, if the power of the explosion is much greater than what is detailed below it will usually result in instant death.

What follows are generalized descriptions of a few explosives that may show up in game. These are far from the only types, and they can be changed or added to when needed.

Hand Grenade

Damage: six sided die +2

Area of Effect: 5 yard radius

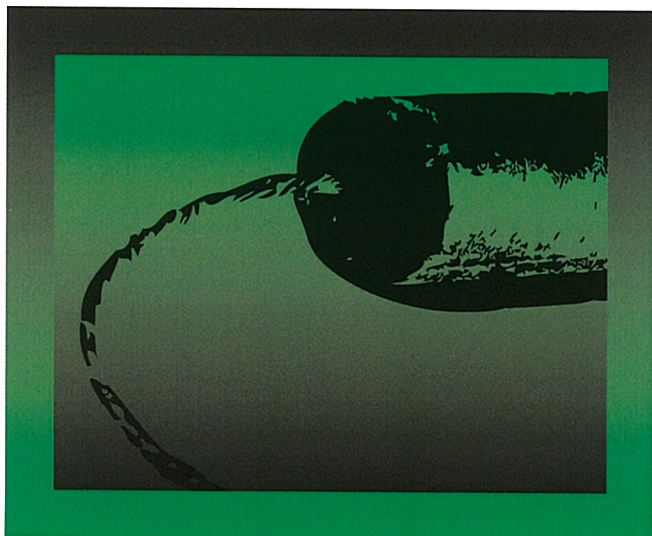
A common variety of high energy grenade used by militaries around the world. Simple and effective, their design includes good heft and grip for throwing and basic safety features for the user. Grenades are military weapons not usually legal for civilians to purchase or possess.

Stick of Dynamite

Damage: six sided die +1

Area of Effect: 4 yard radius

For more than a century Dynamite has been a go-to explosive for a variety of demolition applications. Prized for being more stable than straight nitroglycerin or gunpowder, it typically comes in cardboard tubes around 8 inches in length. Dynamite is normally found as a tool but can be re-purposed into a weapon in a pinch.



Pipe Bomb

Damage: six sided die +3

Area of Effect: 6 yard radius

Usually a sealed metal pipe filled with explosives, the pipe bomb comes in a variety of improvised forms. The containment that the pipe provides helps to amplify the explosion, and other objects can be added to increase shrapnel. A pipe bomb is almost always an improvised explosive device and possession of one is a crime in most countries.

2 lbs. ANFO

Damage: six sided die +4

Area of Effect: 10 yard radius

Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil (ANFO) is a common and relatively inexpensive explosive taking the form of tiny spheres. It is quite stable and commonly used as a tool for controlled demolition. ANFO requires the use of a secondary explosive to set it off, known as a primer. The primer may be specially designed for use with ANFO but can also be a sufficient amount of another explosive, such as dynamite.

Adding Guns

Adding real-world guns to your Break Action game is a great way to make firearms more unique and memorable. The following chart lists some common varieties of cartridge, sorted by the joules of energy they have upon exiting the barrel and the damage that round commonly deals in Break Action. A likely damage value can be found by comparing the cartridge of the gun you would like to add to the chart. The only thing required beyond that is to find out the magazine capacity and other particulars that can be easily researched online.

If the cartridge type is not listed here all you need to do is find out the average energy (in joules) that the round has upon firing and compare it to the chart to find similar rounds. For example, if the firearm you want to add uses .357 SIG cartridge then just research that round. We find out that its energy at

exit is approximately 750 joules (averaged from the values found). That fits into the chart right between .45 Long Colt and .357 Magnum, which both have a damage of 4/8. From this we can assume that this cartridge does 4/8 damage as well, and now all we need to know are the general features of the gun and we have all we need to add it to game. If a cartridge falls between two damage categories it is usually best to assume that it belongs in the lower one, although the Director should make the final decision.

CARTRIDGE	BULLET ENERGY (J)	DAMAGE
.22 Short	100	1/2
.32 ACP	170	
.22 Long Rifle	190	
.380 ACP	270	
.38 Special	270	2/4
9x18mm Makarov	300	
.17 HMR	335	
.22 Magnum	430	
5.7x28mm	500	3/6
9x19mm Luger	575	
.40 S&W	630	
.45 ACP	650	
.45 Long Colt	660	4/8
.357 Magnum	900	
10mm Auto	960	
.44 Magnum	1,575	
.223 Remington	1,700	5/10
5.56x54mm NATO	1,750	
.50 Action Express	1,900	
7.62x39mm	2,200	
6.8mm Remington SPC	2,300	6/12
.22-250 Remington	2,300	
.454 Casull	2,500	
12 Gauge 00 Buck	2,700	
.45-70 Government	3,300	7/14
7.62x51mm NATO	3,500	
.300 Savage	3,500	
.308 Winchester	3,600	
.500 S&W Magnum	3,650	8/16
12 Gauge Slug	3,650	
7.62x54mmR	3,675	
.30-06 Springfield	3,900	
.300 Winchester Magnum	5,400	9/18
.300 Weatherby Magnum	5,600	
.338 Lapua Magnum	6,650	
.50 BMG	~18,600	
20x138mmB	~47,500	10/20
20mm Vulcan	~51,500	

This chart only lists some of the more common cartridges and there are many others not presented here. The values for the joules of energy are averaged and should not be considered absolute. If the Director feels that a particular cartridge needs to deal more or less damage than is suggested here then they are encouraged to make that change for their game. Adding guns to Break Action is encouraged but completely optional, and the generic guns listed earlier are perfectly adequate for game.

Bows

Bows and arrows are ancient weapons that have been used throughout human history. Many cultures have created unique types of bow and modern variants take advantage of new technology to push the boundaries of performance. A proficient archer should be able to draw and fire a single arrow each round as long as they are accessible, and some highly skilled archers are capable of more.

In Break Action bows are broadly categorized into two types; the Light Bow and the Heavy Bow. These are generalized to include variants such as crossbows and compound bows. Specialized arrows or bow types may change damage, and the Director should decide if a particular one has different damage or effects.

Light Bow

Damage: 2/6

The light bow represents smaller bows or those with less draw strength. They are normally more compact and easier to use than the heavy bows, but lack power. Hand crossbows and compressed air guns that fire arrows also fall into this category.

Heavy Bow

Damage: 3/8

The heavy bow is larger and has a heavier draw strength which adds to the power of the shot. They are more difficult to draw and may be slower if the user is less skilled. Heavy bows can be accurate at long distances if the archer can judge the angle correctly. This category of bow also includes competitive long-ranged bows and large crossbows.



Other Weapons

Break Action includes a variety of weapons, and due to the chaotic nature of combat there are even more weapons that may be improvised in any particular scene. The easiest and most fluid way of adding these is for the Director to find out what damage and features they should have in advance. They can also be added quickly as they arise by comparing them to an already defined weapon in the book and using that with minor tweaks. For the sake of game pacing it is better to be fast than to be perfect when making these decisions. It's fine if the improvised weapon isn't totally accurate as long as it's mostly there to keep the action going. Adjustments can be made later if need be and the game shouldn't be halted to figure out minutia.

Armor

At this point it should be clear that guns and other weapons are pretty dangerous in Break Action. Characters usually have less than ten Hit Points and a lot of guns can inflict equal to half that damage or more with a single well-placed shot. It stands to reason that characters will strive to protect themselves. Gifts can be excellent in this endeavor but most resort to more conventional means of defense.

Armor protects the wearer by reducing the damage they take from a successful attack. Just wearing it does not make the character any harder to hit and will not usually penalize an attacker's roll. There are certain variables that affect a piece of armor's ability to reduce damage, such as how its design fares against the kind of attack it receives.

Each piece of armor has a value which describes the maximum damage it can prevent from a single attack. This does not guarantee a reduction when its wearer is hit, just the possibility. Each point is rolled individually, with a success indicating that a point of damage was prevented.

Each point of armor value has a chance

to prevent one damage. This chance is based on how well-suited the armor is against the type of incoming damage. If the armor is specifically made to prevent a type of damage, it is considered well-suited against that type. If it is not very capable at preventing the type of damage, it is considered poorly-suited. If it might be good at preventing the damage or if it is unclear, a base roll of 50% is appropriate.

For example, a Motorcycle Jacket is designed to prevent damage from impacts and abrasions. Against a type of damage that impacts, such as a baseball bat, it should be well-suited. It would roll each of its 2 points to try and get under 75%. How well-suited armor is against any individual attack is the choice of the Director.

If the armor is perfectly suited to prevent the type of damage then the value of the armor may be doubled. This only happens in cases where the armor is not only well-suited against the attack but is also undoubtedly effective at stopping it. An example might be an advanced bomb suit being hit by the rubber shrapnel of a riot deterrent mine.

In cases where a character wears more than one type of armor at a time they are all rolled separately against the damage type. The one which prevents more damage is the only one applied and the other rolls are discarded. Wearing more than one type of armor at a time may allow a character to hedge their bets against damage, but quickly has diminishing returns. It also may become bulky, restrictive or just silly to do so.

ARMOR SUITABILITY

WELL-SUITED	75%
MARGINAL	BASE 50%
POORLY-SUITED	25%

EACH POINT OF ARMOR VALUE IS ROLLED SEPARATELY
AND EACH MAY PREVENT ONLY ONE POINT OF DAMAGE

Lacie has stolen a ballistic vest from the body of a soldier killed in the mall. The gunfight that she needs to get through is still ongoing, encompassing most of the ground floor inside. She's pretty quick, but she knows that there will be bullets headed her way as

she sprints to the opposite end of the mall to join her entrenched allies. This vest may just help her to survive that long.

Not one to hesitate, Lacie begins her mad dash down the alley of gunfire the storefronts have become. Hitting a target at a full run can be difficult, but about half-way there she takes a bullet. After her enemy has completed their rolls the attack has dealt 4 damage to her. Because the vest she's wearing has a value of 3, it can't prevent all of that. The good news is that it's designed to stop bullets and so it's well-suited against this attack, so the Director has decided she'll roll each point of armor value at a 75% chance. Her rolls are 29, 85, and 38. Two of those are under the 75% chance she has, so two damage is prevented by the vest. Lacie takes the remaining 2 damage and subtracts it from her Hit Points.

The flash of agony piercing through the vest is briefly crippling. She tumbles from a full run into a phone kiosk as another bullet ricochets off the linoleum next to her ear. Scrambling back to her feet she continues her mad dash, the pain from the wound overwhelmed by the threat of worse if she doesn't keep running. It's looking grim for her, but with the vest and some luck she just might make it.

Ski Jacket

Value: 1

A warm jacket for outdoor activity in snow. It has some padding, which might help against impacts, but is probably poorly-suited against most damage types.

Motorcycle Jacket

Value: 2

A leather or synthetic-fabric jacket designed as armor for motorcycle riders. While not specifically designed for combat, it is well-suited against impacts and abrasions.

Motorcycle Helmet

Value: 2

Protecting only the head, these helmets are designed to withstand impacts from a

motorcycle crash. They are very good at just that, but are restrictive to hearing and vision.

Hockey Armor

Value: 2

Like most sport armor Hockey Armor is made of thick padding and plastic plates. It is excellent against impact and cutting attacks but is bulky and hot. A helmet is included.



Bulletproof Vest (Ballistic Vest)

Value: 3

Describes a variety of basic ballistic protection commonly worn by military and law enforcement. Designed specifically to stop bullets, it is also good protection against impacts and other damage types. It favors protecting the most vital areas in the torso and there is a lack of coverage in other areas.

Knife Vest (Stab Proof Vest)

Value: 3

Similar to the Bullet Proof Vest but slimmer and designed to protect against

bladed weapons. Highly effective against cutting and piercing attacks but poor against bullets and bludgeons.

Chain Mail

Value: 3

A medieval choice for the modern combatant. In its time it provided adequate protection from cutting attacks (and still does) but offers little protection against modern bullets.

MTV (Modular Tactical Vest)

Value: 4

Most often found in military applications the MTV works like the ballistic vest but includes shoulder, neck and groin protection, as well as a better trauma plate over the center of the torso and middle of the back. They are known to be heavy and hot, but are worn regardless because of their protective value. Effectively concealing a MTV under clothing is nearly impossible.

Ballistic Face Mask

Value: 4

A hard fiber and metal mask to protect the face from bullets. These are normally worn to accompany body armor and helmets, though they can be worn on their own. The visage of someone wearing these black masks is immediately alarming outside of a war zone.

Bulletproof Helmet

Value: 4

Commonly worn by armed forces around the world, they are effective at stopping small arms fire and other more basic hazards. One of the first kinds of armor issued to soldiers in the modern era they have been proven invaluable in armed conflict.

Full Plate Armor

Value: 5

Well-met sir knight, I see you have come prepared for battle on this day. Heavy and restrictive of vision and hearing if the helmet is also worn. Covering yourself in metal plates is effective against many kinds of melee

weapons and weaker firearms. More powerful guns can quickly render this armor obsolete.

Space Suit

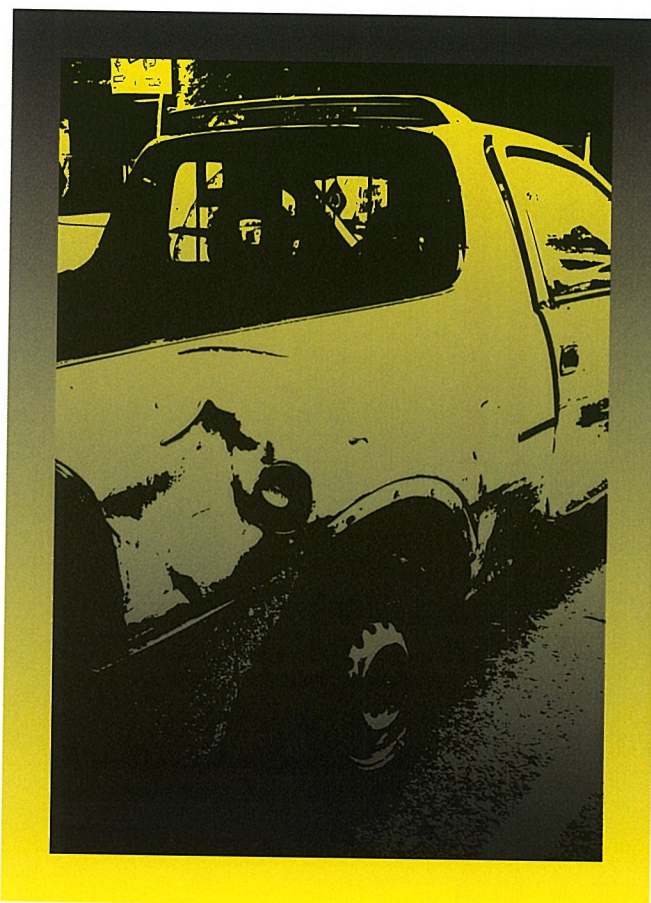
Value: 6

A space suit isn't too likely to show up in any kind of fight, but gods get inventive when their opponents can sometimes fire radiation from their fingertips. Space suits don't have much value against bullets, but are quite good against extremes of hot and cold as well as bombardment from the radiation in space.

Advanced Bomb Suit

Value: 6

Representing some of the heaviest personal armor that a person could be expected to wear, these suits are worn by technicians when around hostile explosives. They include full body covering, thick pads, plates and a helmet designed to withstand explosions, concussive force and shrapnel. They are uncomfortable to wear and restrictive to movement, but are sometimes necessary.



Drugs

Aside from the plethora of drugs available in the normal world, there are some specialized drugs created by various Factions to bolster their efforts. These may include supernatural enhancements or components that alter the gifts and abilities of gods. In almost every case these drugs have harmful side effects which discourage casual use, but when a situation becomes dire enough characters will reach for anything that might make a difference.

Even the largest Factions operate in secret and are typically forced to manufacture these drugs in small amounts and distribute them carefully. Finding a large supply is rare and obtaining drugs outside of a group's Faction, while possible, is uncommon.

Unless otherwise stated, Fatigue and Hit Points gained from the use of drugs may exceed the normal maximums for the character. Fatigue and Hit Points gained from drugs are not removed when their effects expire unless a character has been boosted beyond their normal maximum.

As an example, if a character has five maximum Fatigue and the use of a drug pushes them up to seven Fatigue total they retain that amount until they spend it or the drug expires. If they still have more than five Fatigue when the drug expires, they lose the additional points and go back down to five. If they spent enough to have five or less they do not lose any additional when the effects of the drug end.

P-106

Effect: +1 Fatigue, Moderate Painkiller

Onset: 1 Minute

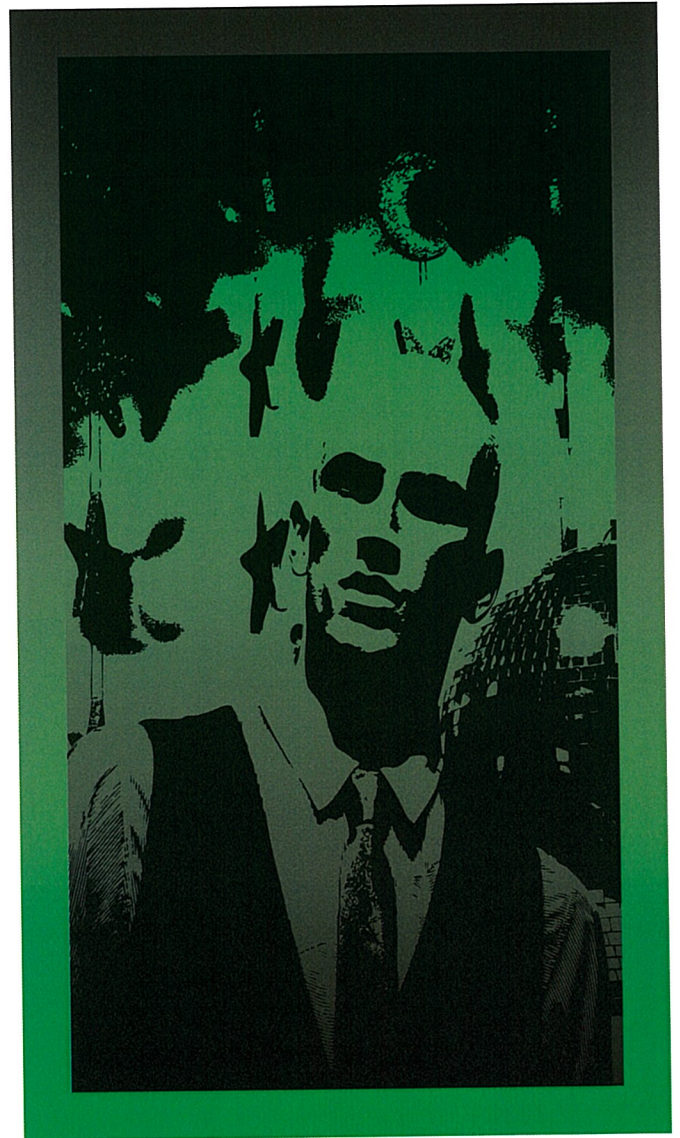
Duration: 8 Hours

Form: Labeled tablets in individual blister packs

P-106 was developed by Edenites to bolster their field agents between engagements. While pursuing objectives they get little rest, and this drug was initially created to reinforce short periods of downtime and traditional medical treatment. The formula was further

refined by their famous human doctor Henry, and does not include supernatural components.

While the use of P-106 is relatively safe, it does cause mild hallucinations and is known to be addictive with repeated use. If a character becomes addicted to P-106 they no longer receive Fatigue or other positive benefits from it. This drug works on both humans and gods.



Spinal Fluid

Effect: +1 Fatigue, +1 Hit Point

Onset: 1 Round

Duration: 4 Hours

Form: Small medicine container filled with clear viscous liquid

Designed and produced by the Riders of Jenj, the drug they call Spinal Fluid is

created by the union of strange science and a corrupted Native American contact magic ritual. The product is harvested from slaves and people captured by the Riders in a profane process that kills the donor. The refined liquid is then imbibed to enhance Riders before and sometimes during combat.

The Riders of Jenj produce enough Spinal Fluid to give to favored or well-performing groups in quantities of a half-dozen or fewer doses. The liquid in each container must be fully consumed to be effective and partial dosing does nothing. This drug is known to cause a variety of slight mutations in its users which may include loss of color in the iris, additional fingernails and toenails, patchy discoloration of skin and partial loss of hair. These mutations are typically mild at first but become more pronounced with repeated uses. These negative effects can also be prevented by another Rider drug known as Q8.

Spinal Fluid is created using corrupt rituals, torture and death. Most other Factions consider its use evil and will often destroy any Spinal Fluid they find. Even some Riders of Jenj will reject it based on its source.

Q8

Effect: Permanent -1 Fatigue, Permanent +1 Hit Point

Onset: 24 Hours

Duration: Permanent

Form: Prefilled syringe in sealed packaging

Q8 permanently modifies the body of the user to resist the negative effects of Spinal Fluid. It is distributed to groups of Riders who are expected to use Spinal Fluid regularly. This injection takes about one day to work, during which the subject experiences nausea and painful muscle spasms.

Afterwards they may appear slightly more muscular and have a small increase in fibrous muscle tissue.

The recipient of this modification may consume the drug Spinal Fluid without experiencing mutations or other negative effects. Q8 only works on gods and is lethal to humans.

Ascension

Effect: +10 Fatigue, +2 Hit Points, -1

Initiative Bonus, Powerful Painkiller

Onset: Instant

Duration: 24 Hours

Form: Prefilled autoinjecting syringe

The pharmaceutical magnum opus of the Edenite Henry, this drug wildly boosts the recipient. Used in moments of desperation, Ascension makes the user heavily resistant to pain and exhaustion and gives them a massive amount of Fatigue. It was only created in limited amounts prior to Henry's death and is quite rare.

Edenites often find themselves outnumbered and outgunned by other Factions, and will use Ascension as a way to clutch at victory in the face of defeat. Users often demonstrate erratic behavior while the drug is in effect, just barely held in check by their conscious mind. When the effects end they spend the next day in an agonizing withdrawal, barely functional and wracked with pain. During this time they permanently lose one Hit Point and have been known to lose some teeth, fingernails and patches of hair. Anyone who has taken more than two doses of Ascension in their lifetime is likely to die at the expiration of the third dose. Despite all these horrifying consequences, Edenites may still use this drug if the situation is dire enough.

Death's Design

Effect: +3 Fatigue, +3 Hit Points, Moderate Painkiller, Special

Onset: Instant

Duration: 6 Hours

Form: Prefilled syringe in sealed packaging

Ziggurat uses Death's Design on missions to prop up critically wounded members. Commissioned from an anonymous lab, this potent drug allows the user to live and act for a time after suffering otherwise lethal wounds. While the stated purpose is to give the mercenaries time to receive emergency medical treatment, in practice it is used to defy death and get one more shot at their enemies.

Upon being injected there is a substantial reduction in pain and loosening of muscle. Bleeding becomes sluggish and the user seems to be in a zombie-like trance, though their actual reaction speed does not change. They can also survive having negative Hit Points, at least until the effects of the drug end. They may descend into negative Hit Points equal to their maximum amount of Fatigue without dying. While having negative Hit Points they may not heal normally, but may receive medical or supernatural treatment to save their lives. If the effects of Death's Design end while they have negative Hit Points they will immediately die. Repeated use of Death's Design will rapidly degrade the user, who will begin to suffer from necrosis of tissues regardless of time spent between doses.

Ya-Te-Veo Tonic

Effect: +1 Hit Point, Consume Anything, Special

Onset: 1 Hour

Duration: 24 Hours

Form: Bottled plant slurry

Created by the Knights Platinum to aid in recovery, the Ya-Te-Veo Tonic is harvested from a carnivorous plant cryptid in Central America. The plant components are reinforced with magic rituals known only to a select few Knights Platinum in the area. The secret of its creation is closely guarded and anyone who knows the process will kill or be killed to protect it. Any amount created is distributed quickly to avoid stockpiles and it is uncommon to find it even among Knights Platinum.

The tonic allows the user to safely eat and digest anything they can get their teeth around. The material consumed seemingly disappears, though their strange appetite won't. Each time they consume their own body weight in "food" they regain 6 Hit Points. They may regain Hit Points up to their normal maximum using this drug, but not beyond. Repeated use of this drug stiffens the joints of the user and will prevent them from moving easily after only a few doses.

This effect is permanent, and the theory is that they are slowly becoming the plant from which this drug is derived, although nobody has tested it that far.

Mastiff

Effect: -2 Fatigue, Special

Onset: 1 Hour

Duration: 24 Hours

Form: Nasal spray

Mastiff is used by the Brotherhood of Stone to literally sniff out gods. A rare example of the Brotherhood using supernatural rituals to benefit their cause, each bottle is disguised as common nasal spray. A generous amount must be used each time, and most bottles only hold a few doses. While in effect, the user can smell a distinct odor coming from any god who has activated a gift in the past 24 hours. The smell changes depending on the gift used, but it is unlikely that the user can tell which one it is without a lot of practice. Regardless, even novice users can tell if they smell a god and may follow a scent to its source fairly well.

Brotherhood members using this drug are quite concerning to gods, as it quickly defeats anonymity and disguises they use to hide. The users may be seen sniffing at the air but are otherwise indistinguishable from a non-user. Repeated use of this drug causes severe nausea, but is otherwise relatively safe.

Shepherd's Smoke

Effect: Short Term Memory Loss

Onset: 2 Rounds

Duration: 2 Rounds

Form: Gas canister, Gas grenade

Shepherd's Smoke is used by The Brotherhood of Stone and Lapis Knights to facilitate their strikes and confuse their victims. Once released from its container it spreads into a blueish tinged cloud. It is odorless and has a slightly greasy feel but is otherwise similar to smoke. People inhaling this smoke rapidly lose short term memory and this effect persists until a short time after leaving the cloud.

In practice, Shepherd's Smoke is deployed

from hiding and used to disorient an enemy while leaving bystanders unharmed. An attack can then be carried out while potential witnesses are left confused with little or no clear memory of the event. Agents from the Brotherhood or Lapis Knights will wear gas masks or breathing filters during these attacks which easily defeat the effects of the cloud. Such attacks need to be carried out quickly, as Shepherd's smoke does nothing to prevent people from panicking or leaving the area.

While simple breathing equipment can defeat Shepherd's Smoke, improvised solutions such as wet cloth or short breathing will not. Even partial exposure can cause small gaps in memory, and being in the full effect of the cloud rapidly disorients victims as they fail to recall what they were just doing. Some gods who are experienced with Brotherhood or Lapis Knight attacks become suspicious of any smoke with an unknown source.

Redline

Effect: +5 Points to a Gift, +3 Fatigue, Mild Painkiller, Special

Onset: 1 Minute

Duration: 8 Hours

Form: Large pill in individual packaging

The Knights Platinum commissioned this drug from druids to increase their gifts in times of great need. Upon consuming the pill, the player chooses an existing gift to temporarily boost by five points, though the gifts still cap at ten. The character is not conscious of this decision but inherently knows which gift was boosted.

Similar to the Edenite drug Ascension, Redline is used in desperate situations to give the Knights Platinum the edge they need to succeed in the face of overwhelming odds. It is rare to find more than one of these pills at a time, due to both the rarity of the Druids who can produce it and the difficulty in making a single dose.

While in effect Redline greatly enhances the power of a god's gift. They may use the boosted gift for the duration (provided they

have the Fatigue), at which point it returns to its previous power. For the eight hour duration the god intermittently experiences flashbacks and shared memories, and is visibly very stressed. Blood vessels in their soft tissues may burst and users with poor health may be endangered.

After the effects wear off, the gift chosen permanently costs 1 additional Fatigue to activate. Unlike Ascension, repeated use of Redline will not kill a god but may render them unable to effectively use gifts. It also has no benefit for regular humans, and a gift that does not normally cost Fatigue may not be chosen.

M2 Cigarette

Effect: Special

Onset: Instant

Duration: 5 Minutes

Form: Pack of cigarettes

M2 Cigarettes are usually found in the hands of The Aces, though they would be hard pressed to remember where they got them. The package is plain white with black lettering, and the paper is somewhat aged. There is no health warning on the outside. The cigarettes themselves have a yellow colored area where the filter would be, but none is present. They smoke fine and taste alright.

While being smoked, M2 Cigarettes remove the penalties to initiative for having low Fatigue and/or Hit Points. The effect ends if they stop smoking the cigarette and it takes about 5 minutes to finish one. There are no penalties for repeated use, other than the long-term effects associated with smoking.



H-932 Chewing Gum

Effect: +5% Bonus to Combat Skills, -5%

Penalty to Other Skills

Onset: Instant

Duration: 15 Minutes

Form: Pack of chewing gum

This gum uses mild chemical and magical agents to focus Ziggurat Mercenaries for combat. It comes in two varieties; Mint and Cherry. Both taste slightly artificial, but are otherwise decent.

Members of Ziggurat may be found with a pack of this gum on occasion, but most prefer to avoid overuse. It has been known to whiten teeth and causes the user to grin more often, sometimes inappropriately.

Artifacts

Throughout the world there are objects imbued with strange powers known as Artifacts. Some are deliberately created while others are the consequence of the events around them, but each has supernatural effects. A few Artifacts have been known to come in sets, usually the deliberate creations of powerful forces, but many of them are unique with no standard size, shape or ability.

Artifacts are valuable for the powers they wield and feared for the tolls they take. They should only be wielded by the most adept or reckless individuals because sooner or later there will be a price. A worldly god knows that for an Artifact to give something, it must receive something in return.

Because of their power and rarity, known Artifacts are found in either dangerous locations or in the possession of individuals clever or crazy enough to keep them. The Brotherhood of Stone has small collections of Artifacts that they cannot destroy. They keep these locations secret and highly secure to prevent the Artifacts from being used, and rarely utilize them without a driving need. Jenj Harappan has a particularly large collection of Artifacts he has amassed during his rule over the Riders which he calls the Eclectic Museum. He prizes new additions to the museum and encourages Riders to

buy his favor by bringing new pieces for his eclectic collection. In practice, few people are allowed to actually view the collected items and it is mostly kept as a display of wealth and power.

Unlike drugs, use of Artifacts does not normally allow a character to have more Fatigue or Hit Points than their maximum. In cases where an Artifact grants them either Fatigue or Hit Points they will stop at their normal maximum. In some cases they may increase capacity (acting as a battery) while they are in use and these exceptions will be detailed in the description of the Artifact.

Aethers

Aethers are small spheres of dense, portable essence that are naturally created in areas where an energy, power or even concept is particularly pure. It usually takes centuries for one to form and any regular disruption of their environment will prevent them from forming. Once complete they can be handled and moved. They are about the size and weight of a golf ball and feel like an impossibly thin glass orb. Inside, the swirling essence of Aether is visible and they emit a light “feeling” of their namesake. They aren’t harmful unless broken, which is easy to do. In addition, contact with another Aether will cause both to break regardless of how carefully they are handled.

Breaking an Aether causes the violent release of all of its power. They are only about as strong as an eggshell and will readily break if dropped or thrown. The amount of power stored by an Aether is immense, but varies depending on the type. In general, a fire Aether will contain enough fire to destroy a house outright. As such, they are dangerous to handle but sometimes a situation may warrant their use.

While they are not Artifacts per se, Aethers are used as a type of ammunition or power source for some Artifacts. Some archaic firearm Artifacts use Aethers as ammunition and the resulting shot weaponizes their power in a devastating fashion. Others, such as The Horn Splendid, require a specific

type of Aether to power them. There are even Artifacts that slowly drain the power from these orbs for fuel. Aethers are highly valuable to the right buyer due to their rarity, specificity and potential power.

Witch's Nails

These nails originate from Europe and appear to be hand-forged, black, square nails. They are about two inches in length and always rust free. They act as a magical battery for Fatigue, extending a character's maximum but hurting their Hit Points.

A Witch's Nail is used by pounding it into the body of the user. It does not matter where as long as the tip of the nail is anchored in their living bone. Upon doing this, the character's maximum Fatigue is increased by 2 points while their maximum Hit Points are decreased by 1 point. This effect persists as long as the nail is in them, but does not grant any immediate Fatigue or do any immediate damage (other than the pain of having a nail pounded into bone).

There is no cumulative effect from using multiple Witch's Nails, and only the one used the longest will work. The wound created by the nail always appears fresh and bleeds lightly from time to time. After being in use for roughly two weeks the wound around the nail will fester and become infected, and the nail will have to be removed and re-applied elsewhere to resume the effect. If it is removed at any point its effects immediately end and the character's normal maximum value for Fatigue and Hit Points immediately returns; the wound does not magically heal.

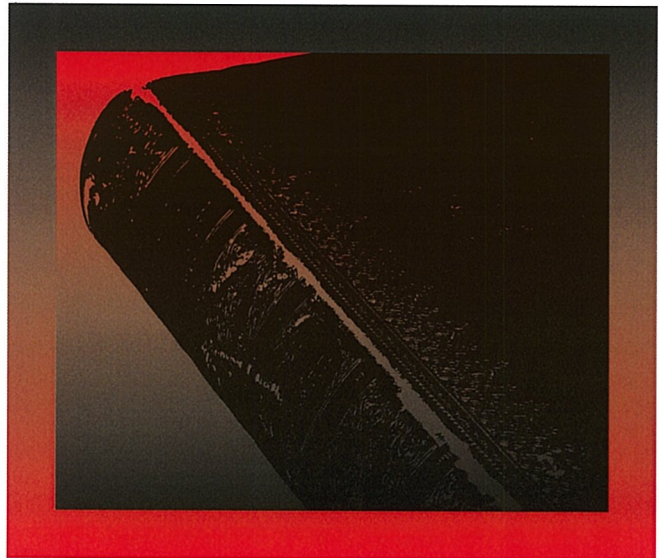
The Horn Splendid

A massive curved horn seemingly made of gold and brass, The Horn Splendid is about seven feet tall with a bell five feet across. The outside is embossed with images of strange spidery creatures and humans that are working to operate the horn. The mouthpiece is four inches across and is clearly made to twist lock with its firing device. The firing device is an archaic hand mortar that loads with wind or air Aethers, or something

similar to those.

When the firing device is loaded with an appropriate Aether and locked to The Horn Splendid it may be fired by pulling the trigger on the firing mechanism. The blast of sound that is emitted from the bell is catastrophically powerful. It has been known to flatten trees for miles and will easily displace clouds when fired from the ground. Buildings will be rocked and toppled when hit by the blast and the echoes from the sound can be heard hundreds of miles away. The only safe place to stand when firing is behind it, and anyone standing near or in the front arc will be disintegrated. Firing at a mountain or canyon may create echoes that can harm the shooter.

The purpose of The Horn Splendid is unclear but it has been used in the past to cause devastation. Whenever the horn is used it will attract the attention of aliens from another dimension known as the Ekluar. While they did not create The Horn Splendid it does belong to them, and they will reclaim it using lethal force.



Spirit Brand

The Spirit Brand is a branding iron that leaves a square, four inch by four inch scar. The inside of the square has a simple twist of metal that looks like a rune, but has yet to be identified. When the brand is heated and applied to bare skin it sears the sign onto the cauterized flesh. The subject

immediately gains four Fatigue, which may also temporarily exceed their maximum for 24 hours. They also have their maximum Hit Points permanently reduced by one and are forever marked by the brand.

In addition, the Spirit Brand marks the subject in the supernatural realm. A branded individual will attract the attention of nearby cryptids and otherworldly entities. This could be viewed as an advantage in some situations, but is most often negative. Multiple brands on the same body do not have a cumulative effect. No regenerative power or magical healing can remove the scar, and cutting it off does not remove its power.

The Deck

Piotr and his Aces gained mythic status for their heroic deeds and each of The Aces was eventually represented by a playing card. Each time one of them died, Piotr let their card fall from the Curvy Blanche. The cards have since become Artifacts in their own right and have the power to summon the Ace that they represent for a short time. Each card is well worn and has a habit of being misplaced. They cannot be destroyed, but will disappear to parts unknown if abused.

The cards in the deck are used by throwing them into the air and willing a member of the Aces to appear. Each card will summon the member it represents and they will arrive suddenly from somewhere close, but out of view. They are always armed and ready for action, and have immediate basic knowledge of what is going on and why they were summoned. While this is happening the card will blow away on a strange wind and will probably never be seen by the user again.

The summoned Ace is not under the control of or subservient to the summoner. They have their own moral code and can freely judge right from wrong. They will support noble causes and try to be unconditionally good. If the summoner is trying to use the card for selfish reasons or to pursue an ignoble goal, the Ace will know and either refuse to help or fight against them. They can be killed normally but do not fear

death and will use this to their advantage in combat. After the battle is over or the danger has passed, the Ace will leave the same way they arrived. Any attempt to prevent them from leaving or keep them longer will fail. Effects will remain but all of the gear they brought will disappear with them.

There is rumor that by using the entire collected Deck one can summon not only all of the Aces but also Piotr and the Curvy Blanche. Due to the difficulty of obtaining and using even one card, this has never been tested.

Tollund Man Fuel

The Tollund Man was naturally mummified in a peat bog thousands of years ago and his corpse, or other "bog bodies", can be utilized as a magical fuel. Even a small piece will give off a tremendous amount of energy while it is consumed and may drive machines to exceed their normal performance. The increase can be anywhere from 10% to 50% depending on the purity of the bog body and the design of the machine.

The Riders of Jenj (with their normal disregard for decency) were the first to discover the effects of burning Tollund Man Fuel. They grind it into the gasoline used for their motorcycles and other vehicles when they need exceptional performance. Most preserved bog bodies will be suitable provided they are old enough.

When Tollund Man Fuel is burning the ghostly spirit of the corpse will arrive to stop the user. They appear as a translucent specter of their living form, screaming in unstoppable agony and driven to attack the person burning the fuel. They can move slightly faster than the machine that is using the fuel, and their touch is destructive to all matter. They attack in melee by swinging wildly at their target with a skill of 35%. If they hit their damage is (1/8) and is rolled like any normal melee weapon. Their goal is to stop the combustion of their mummified flesh and to that end they will relentlessly pursue and attack the user and the machine. They cannot be damaged or killed by normal means, but if

the fuel stops burning or is burnt out they will vanish.

Artifact Weapons

Some weapons have become Artifacts over time and demonstrate supernatural properties. Most often the effect of an Artifact Weapon is related to its actual use in the past, not its intended use, though there are exceptions. Strange effects on range, damage and magazine size are most common but some of them have powers related to things other than combat.

Any person acquiring one of these rare weapons would be wise to research it as thoroughly as possible to try and learn its potential effects. The more powerful an Artifact weapon is, the more likely it is to require a price for its use.

Aether Weapons

Among the Artifact Weapons there are a special few that use Aethers as ammunition. The design of these is often archaic muzzle loading pistols and rifles, though there are others. In all cases they are capable of safely being loaded and transported with an Aether inside. When loaded the body of the weapon is enveloped in a tangible aura that belies the nature of the Aether inside. Firing one releases the total power of the Aether in a single blast focused out the front in a tight cone. The damage and the effect is variable depending on the load but is always extremely potent, with a range of several dozen yards.



Magic

In Break Action the knowledge of magic rituals or spells is rare. The vast majority of people who claim to be able to perform magical feats are either convincing charlatans or are using an Artifact of some kind. Actual magic users are altered by the things that they should not know, and a heavy price must be paid each time their magic is used. Both regular humans and gods may learn it, provided they find something to teach them.

Magic spells and rituals may be recorded in manuals or passed down from accomplished users. These enable the user to summon effects similar to those of Artifacts but directly from themselves, without the need for extra supernatural equipment. The power for these comes directly from adjoining dimensions, most often from the realm beyond bound space. Predictably, the use of one's body to channel such energies leaves a lasting mark.

While using magic is hazardous, using it badly is far worse. The inexperienced magician is a grave danger to themselves and others. Half-remembered rituals and poorly incanted spells can destroy or alter the surrounding area irrecoverably. The hidden corners of the earth have terrifying pockets where magic was let loose for a time, and these stand as a warning to those who would pursue the real thing.

Cryptids

The supernatural creatures of myth and legend are often real, and reside in hidden areas around the globe. Most do not get along with humans or gods and will either seek to avoid them, treat them as hostile or hunt them like prey. These reactions are not unfounded as people usually only encounter cryptids while exploring dangerous areas or intentionally hunting them.

In the past, cryptids were encountered more often and were accepted as facts of life by early cultures. As humanity spread, the cryptids were either killed or forced into

unoccupied territory. Some have become extinct and others very nearly so but the strange goals of gods can still bring them into contact. The unnatural and sometimes magical properties they possess make them valuable, and people can be driven to find them despite the danger.

What follows is the partial description of a handful of cryptids. There are many more and although they are rare, a well-traveled god should expect to encounter some eventually.

Skins

A terrifying ambush predator, skins appear to be the detached cutis (epidermis and dermis) of a human. Split at the spine and left in a pile, their appearance almost suggests that someone stepped out of their own skin walking backward. They occupy hidden subterranean settlements and wait through decades and centuries for explorers to prey upon. When they detect a human (or suitable primate) they become animated and rise from the loose pile they normally rest in. In this form they still appear to be the baggy, empty flesh of a human. They make no noise on their own and move swiftly on either two legs or all fours, transitioning when needed for their convenience. They are remarkably strong and can leap a dozen yards in a single attempt.

While they are not rational creatures, Skins demonstrate a high degree of animal cunning. They will hunt isolated individuals and are adept at stalking. When attacking they will leap to their target and attempt to envelop them, wrapping themselves around the victim like a second skin. They are impressive grapplers as well as elastic and lacking structure, making them difficult to fight against. Once they have sufficiently enveloped their prey they constrict and begin to suffocate it. The resemblance of the mouth on the face of the skin is an illusion; there is no opening there and other than the back, the only opening a skin has is the eye holes through which the victim stares out while being killed.

Once a Skin has killed its prey it retreats

to somewhere remote by manipulating the corpse like a puppet. It slowly digests the rotting body over the course of years, depositing indigestible elements in a pile wherever it is. If discovered while they still have food in them they will seek to escape, and they will never voluntarily relinquish a meal.

Snipes

Not to be confused with a bird of the same name, Snipes are cryptids that inhabit the vast, undeveloped areas of North America. They are about the size and shape of a domestic cat and are hairless with pitch black skin. Their head has a long tapering muzzle almost a foot long and sharply pointed. They live in large packs and hide during the day, coming out at night to hunt small animals which they kill by stabbing with their "beak". They avoid people unless they smell blood. They will attack anything that appears wounded en masse, killing them with a multitude of small, vicious puncturing attacks.

While Snipes are quite fierce when attacking, they can be deterred by killing or injuring a significant amount of their pack. They will not allow a pack to be wiped out in a single confrontation and will scatter if too many of them have died. Occasionally gods have managed to "tame" a Snipe and keep it, though in every case the owner has noted that they make terrible pets.

Yetis

Yetis are large humanoid creatures that inhabit the Himalayas. They have thick white fur that helps as camouflage in the snow and powerful limbs to aid in climbing and foraging. They strictly avoid people and will only fight if cornered. While they are not a threat to travelers in that region, Yeti parts are components for some powerful nature-centric rituals and they are commonly hunted.

If they cannot escape, Yetis will fight, and are powerful opponents. They stand several feet taller than a full grown human and are

much stronger. Though they are not gods, their strength and resilience can be treated as gifts, translating to roughly five points of Strength, Endurance, and Durability.

Yetis are not as intelligent as humans but do have a complex social structure. A Yeti related to one that has been slain may try to reclaim the body or, in some cases, seek revenge. They have also been known to use their environment as a weapon and may create avalanches, throw boulders, and dead-fall trees if they are able.



Sea Serpents

Sea Serpents are massive aquatic creatures that prey on smaller animals, like sharks and whales. They occupy deep areas of the ocean and are only rarely found in shallower waters when lack of prey requires it. They select their targets based on size and perceived ability to fight. Small creatures that won't provide much food are ignored, and creatures large enough to fight well are avoided. Once a Sea Serpent is fully grown there are very few animals it considers too big.

Their bodies resemble that of an eel with dark blue scales and wicked teeth. Infants can be over 50 feet long, with adults measuring in hundreds of feet. Sea Serpents avoid populated areas and warmer water but are attracted to shipwrecks that may serve as a home. In addition, they gravitate toward

Artifacts and supernatural presences which can make deep sea locations around them especially hazardous.

The Phoenix

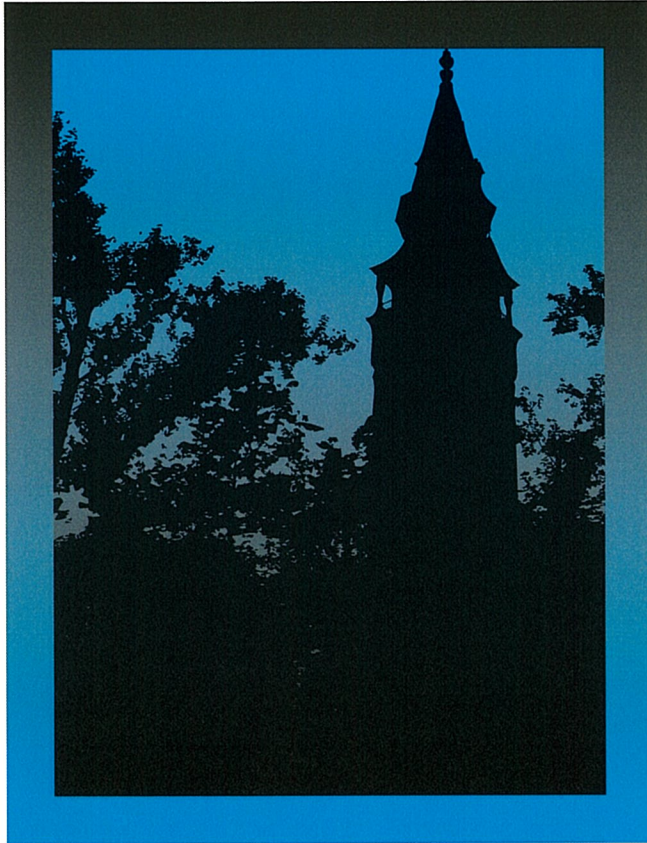
Known as a legendary bird that rises from the ashes of its predecessor, very few people have witnessed the terrible true nature of the cryptid known as the Phoenix. It possesses bird-like qualities in only the loosest terms, as its massive body is composed entirely of molten lava. When its location is discovered it grows from the earth like a jet of liquid fire. The pools it forms quickly expand and move as the creature takes shape, only stopping when it has reached its full height of approximately 30 yards. While the magma takes the general shape of a hawk, it moves by dragging itself forward with molten wings and is incapable of flight. Despite its awkward means of locomotion it can still travel about as fast as a car, dragging an amorphous fiery hindquarters along the ground.

The Phoenix would probably screech if it were capable, but a constant stream of magma is vomited from its mouth instead. Each time one of its wings hits the ground spatter from lava is thrown dozens of feet igniting any burnable substance not already set ablaze by proximity. The Phoenix is hostile toward the closest sentient target and is compelled to kill it by smothering. There is no reliable way to do lasting damage to it.

The Phoenix has only been encountered on the islands in the Mediterranean Sea. When it arises on an island it will inevitably make its way to the water where it will be extinguished and die, either by chasing a sentient being or by willful suicide. The gout of ash and steam that results will disperse in the air and settle on other islands and the Phoenix will be dormant again until the cycle repeats. Due to the number of places where the ash might have settled it often takes centuries before the Phoenix is discovered and will rise again. The site where it has risen is an ideal place to look for Aethers having the properties of either fire or regeneration, though the danger of such a pursuit is extreme.

Aliens

In Break Action there are a number of supernatural Aliens that might be encountered. Most often they do not come from elsewhere in space, but rather, alternate dimensions that overlap with our own in some way. They are never humanoid in shape and do not share cultural or behavioral values. Some may be found only partially engaged with our reality and others may manifest as a concept or thought.



As an example: The aliens known as the Ekluar travel into our dimension infrequently, and then only for a short time. They drift through the clouds on an Elax, which is a huge golden turtle-like creature hollowed out to be a fortress. Inside is a series of rectangular corridors and rooms covered in a bronze colored metal. They bend slightly with the slow rhythmic flapping of the Elax, and a band of light passes down them at regular intervals. The Ekluar themselves have a spherical, chitinous central body from which four thin appendages extend; two going up and two down. The sphere body can swivel and each appendage has a single joint

to facilitate a kind of skittering locomotion. Each thin "arm" ends in a very tapered spike, which are used as a weapon and to insert into holes in the walls where controls are located.

Aliens other than the Ekluar might be discovered over the course of an adventure but few will bear any more resemblance to people. One such case consists of alien, psychic travelers who take up residence in an unused human body as a sort of vacation home or a time-share. While controlling their host body these beings are typically curious about humans and may be helpful, but are just as often clueless.

Regardless of what kind of alien is found, all such encounters are rare. There are no known entities from or in the realm beyond bound space, and if there were they would doubtless be mind-destroying abstracts.

Apocalypse Maggots

An Apocalypse Maggot is a titanic, city destroying worm that sleeps underground in the cold expanses of Siberia and other desolate places around the world. They may not move for millennia, only coming above ground when they are woken by the simultaneous deaths of hundreds of thousands of creatures. They are 200 yards tall and several miles long while crawling, and closely resemble a maggot greatly increased in size.

Once they have been woken Apocalypse Maggots crawl to the closest area of dense population and destroy it, feasting on the wreckage of civilization. They use their mandibles to cut buildings down and their sheer bulk crushes houses and cars easily. They can also emit a beam from their mouth that can leave orbit. This beam is similar to a chemical laser, vaporizing almost anything in its path and is about two dozen yards wide.

It is possible to kill an Apocalypse Maggot, but such an effort usually requires military weaponry larger than tanks. They will not stop their destruction until all suitable cities and constructed monuments have been destroyed, at which point what happens is unknown.

Regular Human Rules

While most of the characters played in Break Action will be gods, it's possible to make a regular human and play them alongside or in the place of gods. When making a regular human for a character there are two things to keep in mind. First, discuss the character concept with the Director to make sure that it will fit into the campaign. Depending on what they expect to happen over the course of an adventure, a regular human character may be a bad fit or might have to deal with unique challenges that do not mesh well with the Director's ideas. Second, it is important to understand that regular human characters are not as powerful as a god with a similar amount of experience. This is done deliberately, as a god's gifts set them above and apart from ordinary humankind. A regular human character will have to face the same challenges with less personal power and a more difficult advancement path.

Regular humans do have some unique abilities that they may spend Fatigue to activate, similar to gifts. They are not supernatural in nature and are only usable by characters controlled by a player or those favored by the Director. These abilities are for regular human characters only and cannot be purchased or used by characters who are gods. In addition, they are not as powerful as gifts and cannot be advanced using experience.

Human Starting Experience

Like gods, human characters have an amount of experience that they receive at creation. This is spent the same way as experience that gets awarded in-game but uses a purchasing table separate from the one for gods. Beginning experience does not get recorded on the character sheet and after character creation any unspent experience is lost. It may not be stored for later advancement. Humans use the table in this section for both creation and to spend experience as they earn it in game.

First, humans get 32 experience points to spend between both Hit Points and Fatigue. Hit Points cost 4 experience per point and Fatigue costs 3 experience per point. The average Hit Points for a beginning human character are between five and seven and their average Fatigue should be between one and three. Feel free to build in a less balanced fashion but be aware of the consequences.

Next, they get 10 experience to spend on skills. Human characters pay more for skills than gods: Dabbler degree skill costs one, a Hobbyist degree costs a total of three and an Expert degree costs a total of six. While buying skills remember that there is no need to overlap them with the character's Profession or Background unless they need a high degree of specialty within them. Weapon skills should be purchased if the character has them and most people only have one or two weapon skills, if any.

A human character has no gifts and is not allocated starting experience to purchase them. Instead, they automatically have three abilities that they can use by spending Fatigue. Like gifts, these abilities require Fatigue to be spent at the moment they are used. If the character does not have enough Fatigue they may not activate abilities. Descriptions of these abilities are listed later in this section.

REGULAR HUMAN EXPERIENCE SPENDING	
INCREASE	COST
1 HIT POINT	4 EXPERIENCE
1 FATIGUE	3 EXPERIENCE
UNTRAINED TO DABBLER	1 EXPERIENCE
DABBLER TO HOBBYIST	2 EXPERIENCE
HOBBYIST TO EXPERT	3 EXPERIENCE

The rest of the character sheet can be filled out based on the concept developed by the player and the guidelines described in the Character Creation section. Try to make a compelling character that can grow and change as they progress through the

game. Characters that work well with others help to engage other players, and avoiding gimmicks or one-trick ponies will give you more opportunities to engage with the story. Even if your concept is an abrasive or uncooperative type of person, try to give them the skills and traits that will lead them to work with a group.

If the Director allows it, starting experience can be given in a lump total that may be spent freely on Hit Points, Fatigue, and Skills in any combination. The total for all of the categories mentioned above is 42 experience. If this alternative is allowed make sure to balance your purchases to avoid extremes. Any character created with gifts is not a regular human and should use the character creation rules described earlier in the book to create their character.



Human Character Abilities

A regular human played as a character automatically has these three abilities. A human has to be tough to keep company with gods and these abilities exist to reflect their tenacity. When the player chooses to active any of these abilities the character is not aware of it. They are simply exerting

themselves to reach for their goal. Human abilities are not supernatural and cannot be countered by things that would suppress or defend against gifts. They cannot be increased by spending experience.

Long Odds

The human that chooses to compete with gods is going to need luck on their side. This ability allows a human to reduce penalties to their skill roll by up to 15%. It may be used only once per roll, per round and must be activated before the roll is made. Long Odds will never give a bonus and is only used to reduce penalties. This ability costs 1 Fatigue to activate.

True Grit

People who aren't gods will need to be tough under fire because no gift will come to save them. True Grit allows a human to reduce the damage taken from a single attack by one point, once per round. This ability may be activated after the damage rolls are complete, but must be before further rolls are made. This ability costs 1 Fatigue to activate.

Die Trying

In a supernatural world, sometimes the only thing a regular human has to give is their life. If they are reduced to zero Hit Points or less, a human can use Die Trying to stay alive and conscious for another round. This ability may be activated upon taking lethal damage and at the beginning of subsequent rounds that they are using it. This can only be used for three sequential rounds and assumes no critical injuries that would prevent consciousness, such as decapitation. Each round that it is used this ability costs 1 Fatigue to activate.

Human characters used by the Director may have these at their discretion. If at some time a human manifests gifts, they immediately lose these abilities and must use the experience spending table for gods thereafter. They do not get refunded or get to re-spend already spent experience.

Random Generation

In a Break Action campaign there are a multitude of situations that may require (or be enhanced by) randomly generating vehicles, guns, characters and other game assets. Despite thorough planning on the part of the Director, players will tend to lead events in unexpected directions. It is during these times that being able to quickly and easily insert randomly generated things is most useful. Creating generation tables for every possibility would be exhausting, as well as boring to reference and to use. Instead, what follows is a mechanic the Director can use for a large number of random generation scenarios with little or no adjustment.

Like most other rolls in Break Action, random generation uses a 100 sided die. As before, a low roll is the most desirable with a result of 01 being perfect. A high roll indicates an unfavorable outcome, with a roll of 100 being absolutely terrible. Any roll close to 50 is a mediocre, or “workable” result. Keeping this in mind, the easiest way to accomplish random generation is for the Director to roll once and interpret the result with attention paid to the situation. Anything that is generated but requires additional attributes simply needs additional rolls to determine how favorable or unfavorable those attributes may be.

An example of random generation is described below, using the framework of something that comes up a lot in game.

Carjacking

It's really only a matter of time before characters are going to need transportation in a hurry, and they aren't going to ask nicely. Because of improved security in newer vehicles, hot-wiring is largely a thing of the past, and acquiring cars and other motor vehicles in the moment is often a matter of opportunity and luck. The players likely have a desired type of vehicle in mind but will settle on whatever is convenient.

In most cases it's very easy to just ask them what they are looking for and then roll to see

how close they get. If they say that they want a minivan and they're in the business district of a large city, it's pretty plausible that they'll get what they want. Any roll of 50 or less would be sufficient, with a lower roll meaning that what they found was closer to what they wanted. A roll greater than 50 would mean that they didn't find what they wanted, but it has a similar feature or two. A bad roll (80 or higher) would mean that they found something much different than they wanted, or possibly nothing at all.

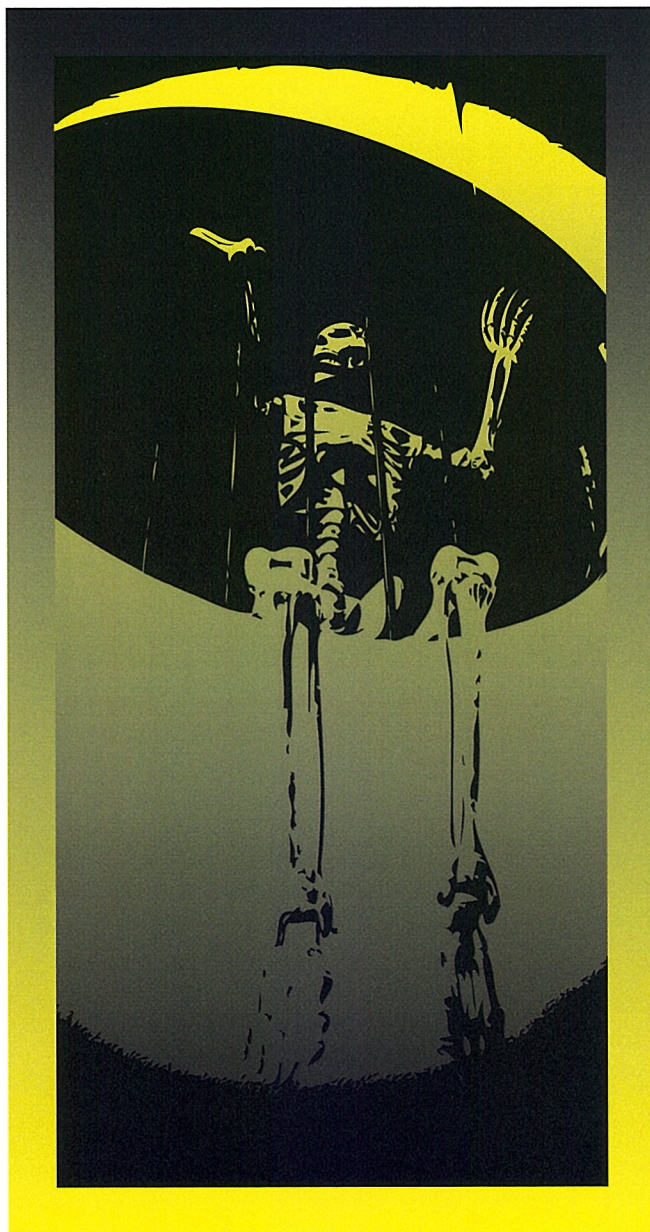
Because carjacking is often opportunity based, once the roll has been interpreted by the Director the characters frequently still have to take the vehicle. The roll indicates what they found, and that there is the possibility (not certainty) of taking it. It does not guarantee success.

Olivia just shot her way out of an ambush at the airport and sprints through the cars in the parking structure. Blood runs down her pants from the wound on her back, leaving a trail that her attackers are bound to follow. She needs a car to escape, fast.

To this end she starts looking for a vehicle to steal. Right now she'll settle for anything but the player states that she is looking for something small, maneuverable and fast. The Director rolls to see what comes up and considers the situation. She's in an area with lots of cars and people going in and out of the airport. Panic from the gunfire has spread quickly, and people are likely to be moving back toward their cars to leave. The Director rolls a 100 sided die and it comes up with 23. That's pretty good, and the request was fairly broad too. Looks like she'll get her wish.

Olivia spots a panicking man fumbling with his keys next to his expensive red sports car. The color doesn't impress her but she isn't likely get a better chance than this. She runs over to the man and points her gun at him, yelling for him to drop the keys and run. Given the gunfire that came from the terminal and the woman staring him down with a pistol, he doesn't ask questions. Olivia

grabs the keys from the ground and unlocks the sports car with an audible double beep. She just might make it out if she can focus on driving through the blood loss.



So in summation, randomly generating a car to steal goes as follows: The player declares what they're looking for. The Director considers the situation and how likely their request is. The Director assigns difficulty and rolls, interpreting the die roll to fit what the character found. A situation is described where taking the vehicle quickly is possible. The player chooses whether or not to attempt to take it, keep looking, or give up. Obviously, continuing the search takes additional time that they may not have.

Attribute Randomizing

Sometimes there isn't a clear idea of what the characters are looking for, or they just don't have a preference. In this case, the above method can be used with the Director interpreting a single roll, or an attribute-based random generation can be used. Attribute-based generation has the Director make a short list of notable qualities for the object and then rolls for each of them. This should be a quick and simple process, and is probably being over-thought if it takes more than a minute. Once again, a low roll generally indicates a favorable result while a high roll indicates a poor attribute.

Car Randomizing

In the case of a car, a sample list of attributes might include: Size, Power, Style, and Age. A series of four low rolls will probably indicate a large, powerful, stylish and new vehicle. A series of four high rolls would most likely be a small, gutless, beat-up old car. Other attributes can be added or removed based on whatever the Director may need.

Olivia pulls into the alley where, according to the plan, she's supposed to switch cars. The red sports car she used to escape is half-wrecked and billowing smoke from under the hood but her pursuers crashed on the highway, so she has at least a little time. She steps out and looks for the switch vehicle, briefly praying that her allies left her something good.

The Director needs to generate the switch vehicle and quickly starts rolling. 48 for size; it's something average sized. 96 for power; not good at all. 21 for style, so it's pretty classy. 2 for age means that its brand new. The Director thinks briefly and then continues.

Olivia walks up to the lavish black luxury sedan. Sliding into the drivers seat, she retrieves the keys from under the floor mat. It starts easily, but handles and accelerates poorly. Good thing she can take her time now that the switch is complete.

Pacing

Break Action relies on a fast pace to be successful. Proper pacing drives the plot of the game and also helps create the dangerous scenarios that characters must overcome.

By quickly and fluidly moving from one action packed scene to another, more can be accomplished in a single session and players will stay more engaged throughout the game.

What follows is advice on how to build, maintain and manage a faster tempo, which will keep the game running smoothly. There are advantages to doing this in any game, but Break Action specifically thrives on an intense pace. Not every starting Director will be able to achieve a good pace but they should strive to keep it in the front of their mind. Practice will eventually lead to success.

Abridge Downtime

A very common failing of role-playing games is the tendency to slow down too much when the characters have downtime. In between their forays and combats will be some recovery time and characters will often use it to pursue their independent goals. While there isn't anything wrong with this, a problem arises when their personal side quests start taking more than a brief amount of time. The player and the Director will be engaged in conversation about the side-story, leaving the rest of the players waiting. This can be boring for the majority of the table and is often unimportant to the overall plot.

A solution for this is to reduce the amount of time spent discussing each character's downtime activities. Find out what they're doing with their downtime and then roll or assign outcomes in brief. Get through each of the characters quickly and then move on.

While it is important for players to have one on one time with the Director, it does not need to take long. Be deliberate, and focus on the end results rather than overly detailing each step. The time of the group is more important than the time of an individual and anything requiring more attention should be reviewed during breaks or a separate, private

session.

In Break Action a good character is defined by their choices under fire. The most important developments should occur in the thick of the action. While good role-playing moments can be had during downtime, it's generally not the focus of the system and should remain concise.

Preparation

Being prepared for game is a large responsibility of the Director; it's unlikely that they can prepare too much and having a clear plan for a gaming session will help things flow smoothly. Having people, places and events detailed ahead of time reduces the amount of work (and the slowdown) that the Director must address during game. Any time they need to stop to look something up or to assemble the scene is time lost, and too much of this makes for a halting pace and the loss of momentum.

Compiling all of the information they think they might need in advance only takes time for the Director. Even if the game goes in an unexpected direction (which is common) they won't be any worse off for having prepared. Also, with proper research and a clear goal for the session, the material they prepared is more likely to be used. Preparation is easy to do and shows dedication to the game and the group.

Concise Descriptions

Any role-playing game will require detailed descriptions. It is helpful to have the key events of your story written in advance and subsequently reviewed with the goal of making the session concise. A good description will paint a vivid picture without dwelling on irrelevant or unnecessary minutia. Players will ask for more specifics in the areas they care about, and don't need to be burdened with details that they were never going to investigate anyway. A good, clear description doesn't take long to make and takes only moments to read to your players, keeping the focus on the characters and their actions rather than the environment.

Limit Arguments

Most arguments that arise during game are regarding minutia or are entirely irrelevant. While they may seem important at the time, this rarely holds true when viewed in hindsight. Because of this, the Director should try to identify frivolous arguments and quickly resolve them either with a decisive ruling or a simple die roll. There is no reason to stall an otherwise quickly moving game with a debate on some gray area that most players will not find relevant or interesting.

Fast Combat

Many role-playing systems will slow down dramatically during combat when they should be at their fastest, theatrically speaking. The combat system in Break Action is already trim and can be quite fluid when the Director and the players are familiar with it but efforts should be made to keep the pace up when rolls are involved.

The Director has a primary responsibility in keeping combat fast and should be prepared to make judgments quickly. Keeping track of and moving down the initiative order efficiently keeps the rounds flowing well and minimizes any one player's time between actions and decisions. They must adapt to changes that were not planned and reduce or eliminate "rewinds." Combat is chaotic, and nobody should have an overly long time to think out their action.

The players should stay alert and tuned-in to what is going on in combat. They should be at least partially ready for an action before their initiative comes up and also prepared to make rolls in rapid succession. If all of the players plan their actions before their turn arrives the combat will run much faster. Questions should also be limited to ones that apply to that character's action and not to others.

Improvisation

The Director should strive to cultivate skill in improvisation; the faster they can make up a scene, character or scenario the faster their game will run. It can take time to become

good at improvising but it is well worth it. Deliberate effort toward this goal is often rewarded.

Advice for Players

There is a pervasive idea in the role-playing community that the person running the game is the lone factor of whether or not the game is good. The Director certainly has a big hand in making their game fun and engaging, but they are not and cannot be solely responsible. Players are easily an equal factor in the success or failure of a game and having good players is just as important as having a good Director.

In many cases "experienced" players will still demonstrate bad habits and disruptive behaviors. There is often little impetus for players to become better, but a good player will actively try to improve. In order to improve they critically examine their flaws and make an effort to correct them. It takes time and practice, but it is always worth the effort.

- While most players are able to act solo, a good player will bring the others with them. They involve the others in their plans and try to engage each other rather than act alone.

- They know when to step into the background for a while and let other characters have the spotlight.

- A good player will find ways to hand the focus of the game to someone else to involve everyone in the game.

- They will pay attention and take action within a scene. They also minimize distractions and avoid having material unrelated to the game.

- Instead of drifting from event to event, they try to predict and embrace the plot of the campaign.

- They ignore broken rules and wait to

bring it up after game or some time that isn't disruptive.

- A good player will come to game with a positive outlook which goes a long way toward people's enjoyment of the game, as a good attitude is often infectious.
- Finally, they try to manage a schedule and commit to the time frame of the game.

Advice for Directors

Directors should strive for improvement just like players. While they have creative responsibilities, they also need to be the primary organizer and creator. Having a concept for a game is a great start but there is much more needed to be successful and many Directors don't see the process through. A common result is an incomplete game where the pace slows and story disappears half way through.



Beyond creating the game and organizing sessions, Directors need to be enthusiastic motivators. Strong pace is dependent on their style and preparedness. From the exciting beginning to the climactic end, they need to

be focused, engaged and flexible, all while tailoring situations to both challenge and accommodate their players.

- Have a good attitude and be enthusiastic. Players will pick up on this and will respond positively.
- Be prepared to run the game by doing research and planning in advance. Even if you don't use part of your prepared material it's always better to be over-prepared than under.
- Communicate clearly and address problems quickly. Honesty is the best policy, and fair warning is fair play.
- Be decisive and know when to pick your battles. Ignore small hang-ups with rules or continuity to keep things running smoothly.
- Simplify as much as you can. Avoid adding an elaborate rule when a simpler one will be sufficient. Rolling can be kept to a minimum if you allow easy actions to succeed without arbitrary rolls.
- A good Director will tailor parts of their game to each of the characters. The players spent time making their characters and investing in their strengths, it's only fair to have that pay off from time to time.
- Try to give characters a good death. Break Action is a challenging setting and characters will die, but it doesn't hurt to let their death mean something.
- Make sure each player is engaged and demand the attention of everyone present.

A final point on being a good Director: The players are not your opponents and you do not have to compete with them. The purpose of the game you created is to entertain them, rewarding their triumphs and punishing their missteps. The setting of the game should be challenging, not their interactions with you as the Director.

Core Gift Summaries

Strength

300 lbs. / point of Strength
 +1 Initial Damage / 5 points
 +1 Potential Damage / 2 points
 Does not prevent damage
 Up to 1 minute / point
 2 Fatigue to activate

Endurance

12 hours / point of Endurance
 No penalties for low HP or Fatigue
 Can survive -1 HP / 2 points (see conditions)
 Cannot regain Fatigue while active
 Cannot be used as a reaction
 2 Fatigue to activate

Speed

25% increase / point of Speed
 +1 Initial Damage / 5 points
 +1 Potential Damage / 2 points
 Does not speed up reactions or thoughts
 Up to 1 minute / point
 2 Fatigue to activate

Cognizance

Up to 3 minutes / point of Cognizance
 Natural senses become heightened
 Supernatural senses are not granted
 1 Fatigue to activate

Acumen

1 use in 24 hours / point of Acumen
 Increases insight, intuition, judgment
 Inquiries need to be specific
 Instantaneous
 1 Fatigue to activate

Knowledge

Halves learning time / point of Knowledge
 Allows for perfect memory recall
 Up to 10 minutes / point
 1 Fatigue to activate

Energy

Up to 10 seconds / point of Energy
 Allows absorption of energy
 Must be in contact with the energy
 Expulsion in same manner as absorption
 See gift description for information
 2 Fatigue to activate

Genesis

10 pounds of matter / point of Genesis
 Matter is created in contact with the user
 Matter is created over one round
 Familiarity dictates matter authenticity

Matter dissolves after 1 hour / point
 2 Fatigue to activate, plus conditional

Telekinesis

50 pounds / point of Telekinesis
 Moves objects at walking pace
 10 yards / point range
 Up to 1 minute / point
 2 Fatigue to activate, plus conditional

Durability

1 damage reduction / point of Durability
 Affects each attack that does damage
 Up to 1 round / 2 points
 Minimum duration of 1 round
 3 Fatigue to activate
 4 Fatigue to activate as reaction

Regeneration

Heals 1 HP / point of Regeneration
 Healing occurs over 1 round
 See gift description for information
 2 Fatigue to activate
 4 Fatigue to activate as reaction to death

Reflex

Minus 1 initiative / 2 points of Reflex
 Reaction time decreases 10% / point
 Up to 1 minute / point
 1 Fatigue to activate

Ubiquity

10 yards range / 1 point of Ubiquity
 Grants unearthly senses
 Heightens supernatural awareness
 Up to 2 minutes / point
 1 Fatigue to activate

Vision

+5% chance / point of Vision
 40% base chance
 Brief rewind of the present
 Only works one turn into the future
 Can be used only once a round
 2 Fatigue to activate

Life

Heals 1 HP / point of Life
 See gift description for information
 Can animate non-living matter
 Up to 1 minute / point
 3 Fatigue to activate, plus conditional

Radiation

1 potential damage / point of Radiation
 Initial damage is half potential, round down
 10 yards range / point of Radiation
 80% skill used to roll attacks

Up to 1 minute / point, non-damaging
1 Fatigue to activate

Gravity

Gravity altered at 10 yards / point of Gravity
Area effected is 1 cubic yard / point
See gift description for information
Effect can be changed once / turn
Position moves relative to the god
Up to 30 seconds / point
2 Fatigue to activate

Longevity

Lifespan multiplied / point of Longevity
Cannot die of slow disease or illness
Slowly regenerate limbs and injuries
Primary effect does not require Fatigue
Can be activated for daily healing
1 Fatigue to activate

Prophecy

1 question / 2 points of Prophecy
Grants powerful visions of the future
1 Fatigue when activated spontaneously
5 Fatigue to activate willingly

Smite

2 Damage / point of Smite
1 yard radius / point
.5 yard / point range to epicenter
User takes half damage rounded down
Self damage is unavoidable
Can activate from anger or stress
4 Fatigue to activate

Sub-Gift Summaries

Bizarre

Trait prominence increases / point of Bizarre
Does not normally require Fatigue

Mimic

+5% chance / point of Mimic
40% base chance
Alters body for imitation
Up to 1 minute / point
1 Fatigue to activate
4 fatigue to activate for longer

Null

Nullify 1 point of gift / point of Null
Cannot be used against effects
Must be able to perceive target
Must know what gift is being negated
Must be most powerful gift by 1 point
See gift description for information
1 Fatigue to activate

Presence

1 yard range / point of Presence
Cannot deal damage
Does not normally require Fatigue
1 Fatigue to suppress for 1 hour

Telepathy

10 yards / point of Telepathy squared
Up to 1 minute / point
1 Fatigue to activate

Teleport

10 yards / point of Teleport squared
See gift description for information
Must be familiar with destination
4 Fatigue to activate

Tables

DEGREES OF SKILL	
INEPT	25% (BASE -25%)
UNTRAINED	BASE 50%
DABBLER	60% (BASE +10%)
HOBBYIST	70% (BASE +20%)
EXPERT	80% (BASE +30%)
MASTER	90% (BASE +40%)

EXPERIENCE SPENDING	
INCREASE	COST
1 HIT POINT	3 EXPERIENCE
1 FATIGUE	3 EXPERIENCE
UNTRAINED TO DABBLER	1 EXPERIENCE
DABBLER TO HOBBYIST	1 EXPERIENCE
HOBBYIST TO EXPERT	2 EXPERIENCE
SEE TREE BUY AND DIRECT BUY ON PAGE 57 FOR RULES AND EXPERIENCE COSTS SURROUNDING BUYING AND IMPROVING GIFTS	

REGULAR HUMAN EXPERIENCE SPENDING	
INCREASE	COST
1 HIT POINT	4 EXPERIENCE
1 FATIGUE	3 EXPERIENCE
UNTRAINED TO DABBLER	1 EXPERIENCE
DABBLER TO HOBBYIST	2 EXPERIENCE
HOBBYIST TO EXPERT	3 EXPERIENCE

AMOUNT OF COVER	PENALTY TO ATTACKER
AT LEAST 25%	-5% TO SKILL
AT LEAST 50%	-15% TO SKILL
75% OR MORE	-30% TO SKILL

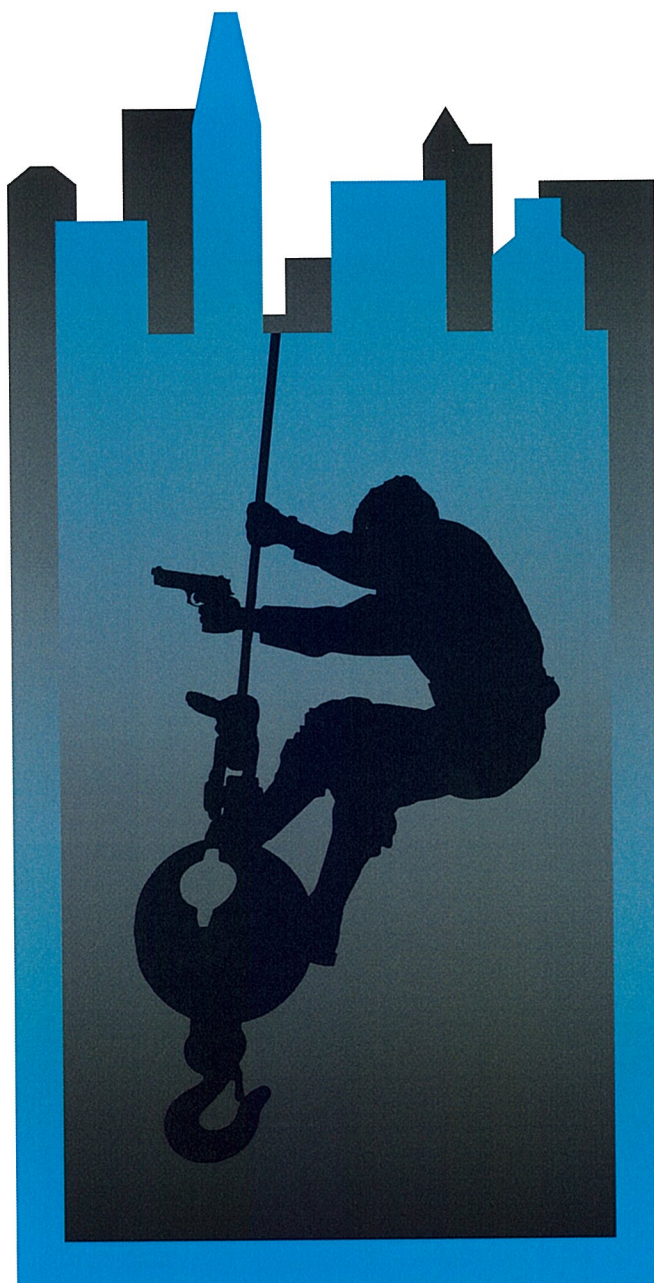
UNARMED SKILL AND DAMAGE

UNTRAINED	50%	(0/1)
DABBLER	60%	(1/2)
HOBBYIST	70%	(1/3)
EXPERT	80%	(1/4)
MASTER	90%	(1/5)

ARMOR SUITABILITY

WELL-SUITED	75%
MARGINAL	BASE 50%
POORLY-SUITED	25%

EACH POINT OF ARMOR VALUE IS ROLLED SEPARATELY
AND EACH MAY PREVENT ONLY ONE POINT OF DAMAGE



Editor's Note

Over the course of the last 8 years Break Action has been a rare joy in my life, both to play and to watch develop. No other campaign has captured the feel and pace of the action genre so cleanly, and no other system has matched the potential for enabling memorable scenes. Years after the conclusion of a campaign our play testers will still bring up old victories and bitter injustices, and I can think of no better proof of quality.

In this book, the often predictable or plodding combat of other games has been transformed into a streamlined, sometimes brutal and always exhilarating experience. Limited resources and low HP pools combine with the fast pace of the system to give player decisions something they often lack in other settings: risk and meaning. Likewise, the razor's edge characters will walk lends even the simplest of story moments a unique gravitas that is difficult to cultivate in other campaigns.

The world of Break Action can, and often should be unforgiving but if you can learn to value the opportunities you are given, to seize the moment in front of you and embrace a true do-or-die mentality, you will be rewarded. Here, anyone can become a big-time hero just as soon as they realize that a truly satisfying ending is the one that is never guaranteed.

David Bumstead

Material contained within this book is presented for entertainment purposes and is not intended to be taken literally. If you have trouble distinguishing between fiction and reality, stop reading this book and seek professional help.

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