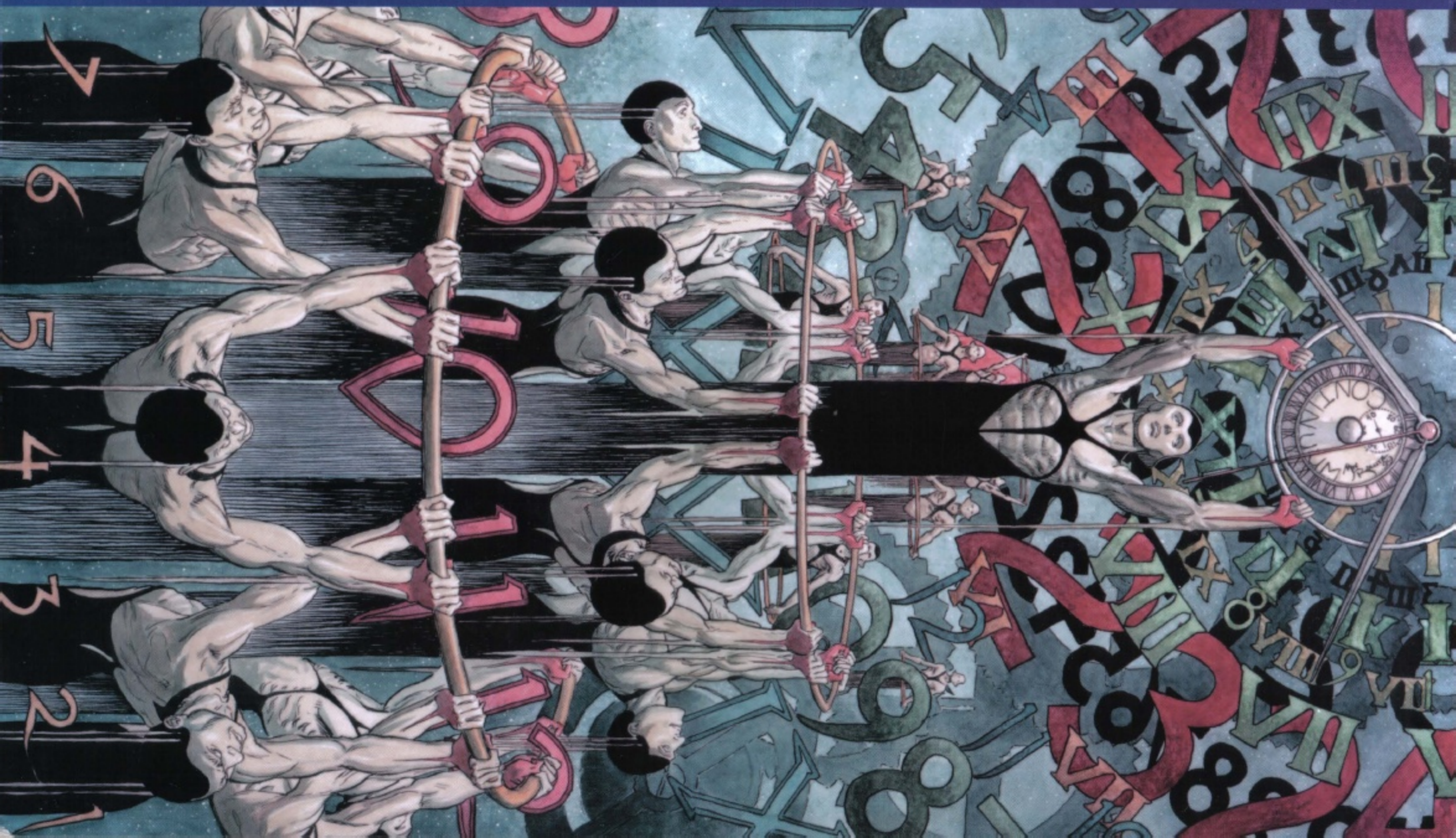
C⁰NTINUUM™

roleplaying in The Yet™



THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF GENUINE TIME TRAVEL

If you could learn to span time at will...
what form of civilization would you be entering?

Let's make history™

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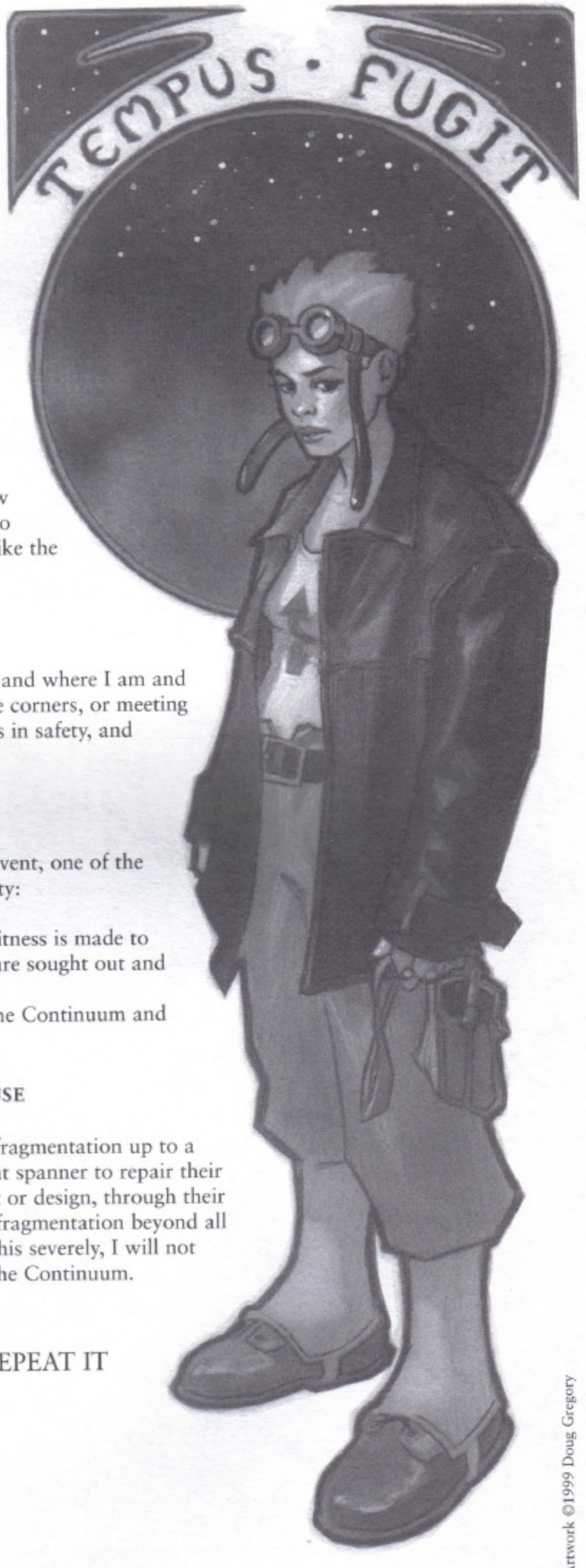
The Maxims



1. Information is All

Upon whether I know or not know a thing, depends my existence. If I know a thing is to happen, it is my foremost responsibility to see that it happens. This is my *Yet*, or Required Future, and it is the price I gladly pay to span time. Change of the known is resisted by the Continuum ceaselessly so that our greater liberties and lives will be fulfilled.

2. Respect Your Elders, They Know More Than You.

My elders, or Elder Selves, have been me, and more. I will show them every courtesy, and set aside anything I am engaged in to fulfill their requests. I will speak to them only when spoken to, like the well-mannered child of parents' dreams.

3. Measure Twice, Cut Once

Discipline is the lifeblood of the Continuum. I will know when and where I am and am going, and diligently record where I have been. I will arrange corners, or meeting places, when and where my fellow spanners can rendezvous in safety, and coordinate our actions.

4. Invitations to Dance

If a Leveller, or other unfamiliar person witnesses a Spanning event, one of the following must obtain, in ascending order of rarity:

a) The witness is made to forget or never tell.

b) The witnessing was a strike against the Continuum; the witness is made to forget or never tell, and the parties responsible for the breach are sought out and brought down.

c) The witness is to become a spanner, like myself, a part of the Continuum and must be respected.

5. Never Fight for a Lost Cause

I will assist fellow members of the Continuum to fight their fragmentation up to a clearly defined point. Beyond that point I will no longer aid that spanner to repair their fragmentation. Lost Causes are spanners who, through accident or design, through their fault, the fault of others, or no fault of anyone's, have suffered fragmentation beyond all aid, even their own. If such fragmentation ever afflicts me this severely, I will not hesitate to spend my remaining existence in assisting the Continuum.

MEMORIZE THIS PAGE. BE PREPARED TO REPEAT IT VERBATIM.

Artwork ©1999 Doug Gregory

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cover
The Compassmen; Engineers' Fraternity, Chicago, AD 1897-1928
Herm of the Piscean Gate
lapis, nanized marble, titanium and orichalcum
Council Temple, Atlantis
dedicated 12968 BC.
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frontispiece
D. A. Leyndecker, (b. AD 1902)
Portrait of Seana in the Guise of her Juniors
pastel triptych, center panel
Star Gallery, Witchita
AD 2014

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This is a game of entertainment, designed to introduce the greater public to the possibilities, hazards, and responsibilities of genuine time travel. Introduction to the actual disciplines of Spanning is not guaranteed with this book. People with an inability to distinguish fantasy from reality are discouraged from playing this game, and no warranty is made by the publishers for accidents, temporal or otherwise, that result from play of this product.

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Never played a roleplaying game before? See pg. 213.

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C⁰NTINUUM™

roleplaying in The Yet™

Aetherco

Dreamcatcher Multimedia, Inc.
New York, New York
1999

Introductions

D'Terlizzi, (b. 1462)
Spanner
Illumination from Chaucer's
Bread and Milk for Children
quarto manuscript, AD 1461.
pen-and-ink
collection of St Stephen's College

"I believe we've already met."

—Iizak of the Balangi, *Credo.*

If you could span time at will... *what kind of civilization would you be entering into?*

If you had a time machine, one that could go into the past and future, couldn't you just go and find the best one ever made? So except, perhaps, for the prototype, the best time machine would be the one in use.

What would the best machine be? Following the human logic of instant gratification, the best would one allow travel at will. In fact, it would just be standard equipment. No external device to get broken, stolen or lost. You'd learn how yourself. You would *be the machine.*

And if one person learned how, they'd be everywhere, up and down spacetime. This newborn time traveller would find already in place civilizations he never suspected before.

So now take a realist[1] approach: How do humans organize themselves?

Most time travel stories or arguments have to invent a time police, government or similar motivator to create the reason for a hero or team of heroes to go out and stop a villain or save a victim. While a police authority may wish to exercise control over time, the spanning people already living there have more than enough means to keep their skill hidden from the ignorant, and handle crises amongst themselves.

The laws of time travel become laws of *behavior.*

From this guiding principle does the universe unfold.

In 1977, I was playing *Tunnels & Trolls* when I created, quite by seeming accident, a time-travelling character that I would never stop playing. Oh, I'd get on with real life and all. But this character soon left the *T&T* surround, and entered EVERY work I made since.

For twenty-odd years, I've lived in the mind of this character to whom time is no natural barrier. Now, it's time to put it to good use. When Dave Fooden approached me in 1997 over whether a time travel RPG could be done, I merely extended the one character's experience to encompass a universe-long civilization. That's all. Two years later, Dave and I are trying to wrap this up, and have nearly gleefully murdered each other. We're all the richer for it.

I dedicate this book to all the following, with Gracious thanks:

The Quicker

Victory, first by definition. Iizak, who knows stuff. Lucy in the sky with all the cards, you go ladi. Yam, yes, you can go and kill the rip-off wizards now; that's our girl. Kiril: the bad spell is broken, and kid, you're all right. And Astarte, always.

The Quick

Mom, for everything, but especially for mentioning Tipler's invention to me one afternoon in 1974. Dave Fooden, for asking the wrong question at the right time. Lara Van Winkle, for listening to 'Group 27' and inspiring Kafira, bless you, my first muse. Mark Rose, whose call as a GM took Iizak's life in a curious new direction. Becky, for *Red Shift* dreams. Barbara, "Rnr. —What? Wha-a-at??" SherZann Spaihts, for pure believing— and for laughing at the word SHERATON. And never least, Liz Holliday, the answer to X2K.

The Dead

Dad, for not always understanding, but being so. J.R.R. Tolkien, for worlds and leaves. Gene Roddenberry, you look good medieval.

And David Trampier, and all other artists vanished before their hour.

Chris Adams
New York. July, AD 1999.

[1]This realism is taken full circle: This game "C⁰NTINUUM" is part of the universe, one of many tools being used to educate the population of the reality of time travel.

Artwork © 1999 Tony DiTerlizzi

May you enjoy reading and playing this game as much as I did creating it.
(Maybe now more than 3 people will get our in-jokes.)

I'd like to thank the following people for inspiration and helping to make this book happen:

Mom, for teaching me to read. Oh yeah, and that giving birth to me thing you did.

Dad, the best agent a guy could ask for, for being my dad,

Aunt Doris, Aunt Annie, & Uncle Harold, for helping to make publishing this possible.

Uncle Gil & Aunt Sandy, for your hospitality every GenCon weekend.
(doesn't my family rock?)

Lazarus Chernik, for the expert advice, talent, and friendship.

The illustrators who lent their time and talent to this and previous editions of Continuum. I'm honored to have friends as talented and noble as you.

Chris and Barbara (and Manu and Iizak), for all the strangeness.

NYMUG, back when it really *was* NYMUG, for all the Quark and Marathon.

The playtesters and convention organizers whose support of the RPG hobby in general and of us in particular aided in the development of the game.

They Might Be Giants, Tom Waits, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Rich Thomas, for that first illustration job.

Jeff Barber, for those words of advice a few years ago that you probably don't remember.

Andy and Thorin, for all those long conversations/debates/arguments about whether or not a time travel game could work (hah, so there).

Everyone who buys this book.

David Fooden,
Artist, Creator, Gamer,
New York City. July, Year of the Tiger

Time was when I had Harry Shapiro sitting *right over there*, and telling us about buried civilizations under the Sahara. Dr. Shapiro was in his time one of the luminaries of the world of archaeology, and a friend of my mother. The arc of that conversation touched also upon Vinland, which he had helped to bring to light.

Dr. Shapiro told us that the Sahara was a recent desert. He said that within recorded history, it had been considerably less arid than it was today; that desertification is a gradual process; that the Fertile Crescent had been green three thousand years ago, and that there was also every possibility that sites older than Koronovo and Sumer were hidden underneath the North African desert. He said that some had tried to dig there, and had been frustrated by the shifting sands.

But, he added, with new techniques and technology, it was likely that soon we would find traces, evidence, of antiquities beyond conventional suspicion. I am looking forward to this, even though it will make the landscape of Antedesertium fall into the strange region into which Barsoom fell when Viking landed, where one also will find the flat earth where no one lives any more. We have recently seen good evidence that the Sphinx is twelve thousand years old, and the pyramids line up with Orion's belt as it appeared to our ancestors, ten thousand years before Christ.

I have been watching this game take shape for the last two years. Usually if my name is on something, it means my blood is in it; but Chris and Dave deserve, by far, the lions' share of the credit on this one. I think Continuum is a significant innovation in the gaming industry. It's a hard game, not for those who are unwilling to think deeply about their campaigns and how they have to move in order to make sense. I have been telling people that I believe it will sell well. Frankly, I don't know. I think the true value of the game is to push the envelope of the RPG one step further. What are you, the gamers, going to make with it?

If you ever want to have fun with me, get me to rant about gaming and characters and responsibility. This is where I cross the line from a tailored Wall Street consultant, to a shaman with a mission. I genuinely believe that subcreation is our legacy from our own Creator, and that we can breathe the germ of life into the creatures we build with our minds. This leads to alarming questions, about the means of grace and the hope of glory; about charters and maxims and what makes Jonny real.

And the question that begs itself is, what will you lot do within the context of this framework? What kind of strange new life will you drag toward your own respective Bethlehems?

I had a dream once, many years ago. It has colored this game, so I think you all should hear it. I was only watching. There was a man. He was moving around a cottage, getting dressed. It was made of wood, thatched, and there was a woman falling asleep somewhere inside. Late afternoon. Outside the cottage, there was dirt, gravel, and then a road through a village. He wore colored silk, and leather, with a small sword in his belt; shaven head; square jaw, handsome in his way; he left and walked down the dusty road. I was on his shoulder, like glue.

He walked down the road, and I saw through his eyes. There were boys down by the stream, bowling their hoops in the tall grass, dodging and weaving through the boughs of the trees. Small brown boys, almost naked. I can still hear them laughing. He walked past them and up to the walls of the city.

I was still on his back as he walked through the city. Night was falling. I was in his mind and I could see as he saw. Two buildings, tall, rising up ahead in the road. And the moon, Sin, his beloved.

And then I saw as he saw. The buildings rose, and rose. They crossed the road and intertwined, Seussian sculptures of light and shadow, immense. Unfeasible. Sin, in his vision, framed between arching spires of masonry. It was homage and transport and raw energy.

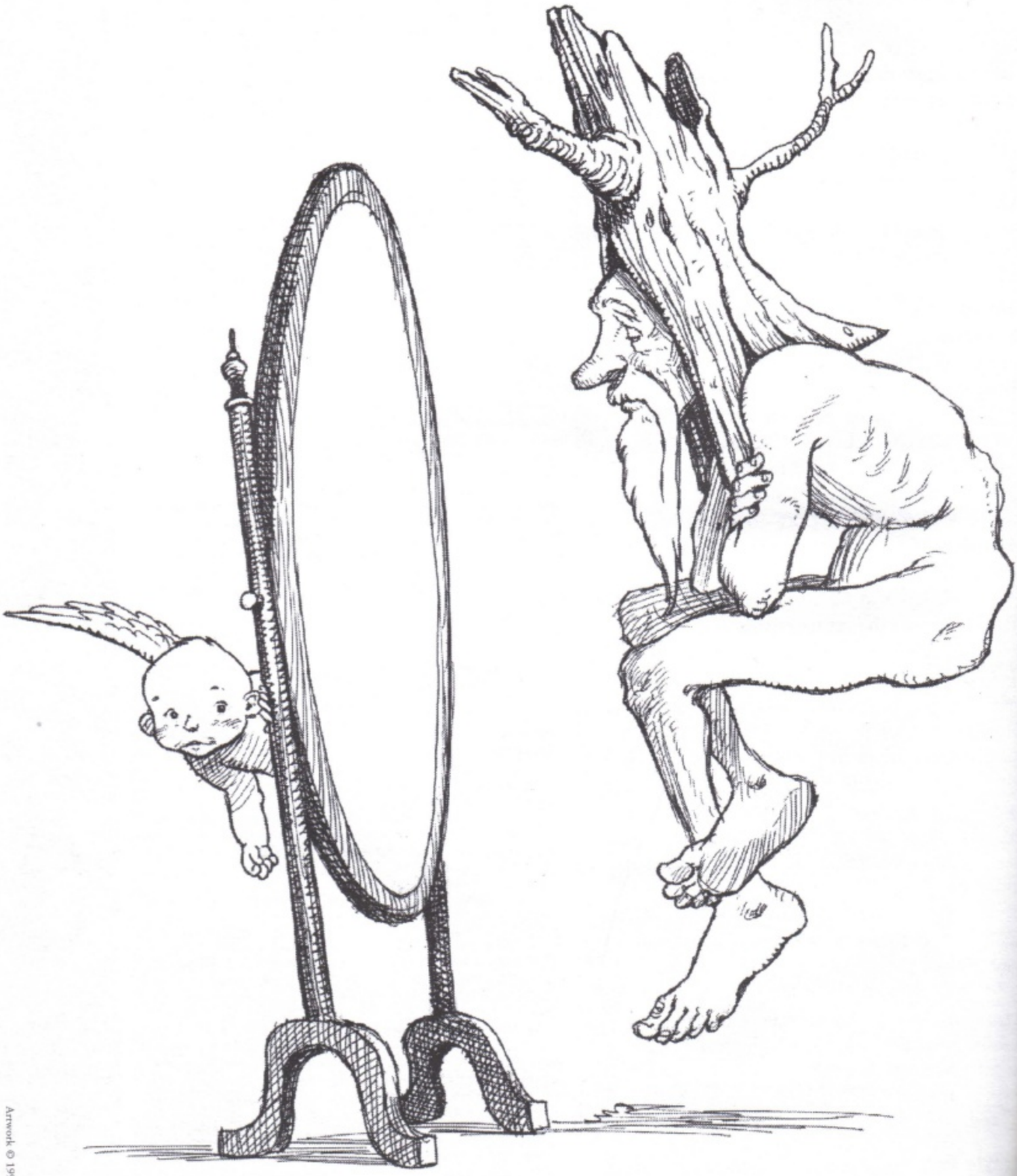
For this reason I call him the architect.

He came to a building, his building, and went inside into the dark. At the font he washed himself, in the moonlight. He put on the cloth of gold, and painted his eyes and put on the crown. My dream was fading. He went up to the altar, the high place, to perform the ceremony.

—Who was he? Where can I find him? What can I shake, to know this?

Barbara Manui
New York. July, 1999.

Thanks to Manu Eleihu, John Gallagher, and my parents.



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Chapter I: Invitations

"*Many a wrong, and its curing song*
Many a road, and many an inn;
Room to roam, but only one home
For all the world to win.
And so she vanished."

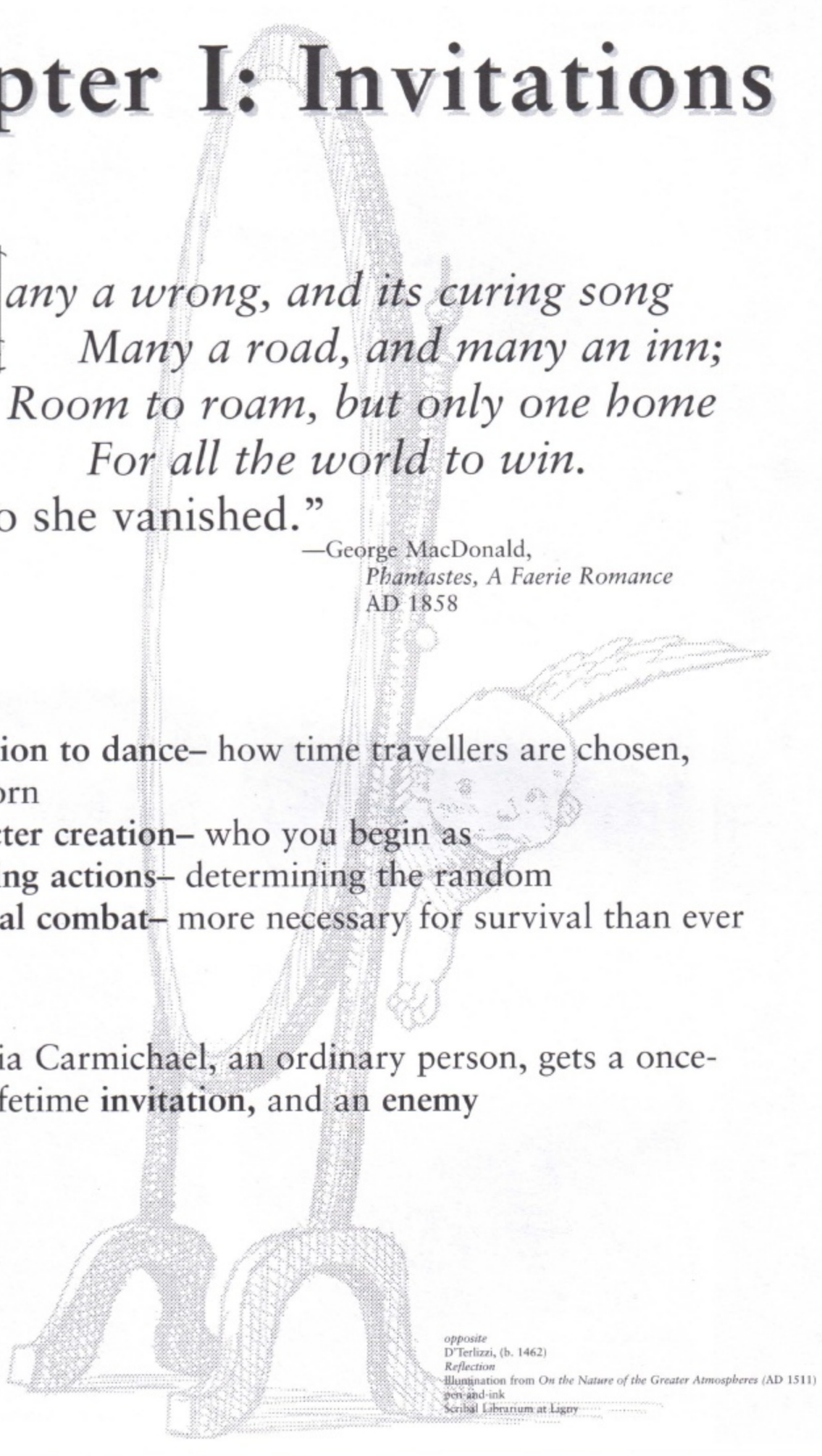
—George MacDonald,
Phantastes, A Faerie Romance
AD 1858

Rules

- **invitation to dance–** how time travellers are chosen, not born
- **character creation–** who you begin as
- **resolving actions–** determining the random
- **physical combat–** more necessary for survival than ever

Story

- Cynthia Carmichael, an ordinary person, gets a once-in-a-lifetime **invitation,** and an **enemy**



opposite
D'Terlizzi, (b. 1462)
Reflection
Illumination from *On the Nature of the Greater Atmospheres* (AD 1511)
pen and ink
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

I

1. The Invitation and the Dance

Cynthia was having the worst day. Getting around Milwaukee had been like pulling her skin off. Every oddball decided she was their magnet, and she was getting sick of it.

Just getting home from UW was agonizing. Leaving a decent residential neighborhood for some outlying century-old suburb. The bus lumbered into town and out, and Cynthia had adventures of the worst kind.

A brief stop at the downtown mall and Arby's resulted in some mendicant elbowing her tray and sending her shake flying. He was greasy, stank and was muttering something about trees being killed. This left her too disgusted to touch her roast beef. That dinner was supposed to have been her last treat before next Monday, payday. She had a lot of quarters, but that was for her clothes. Then another weekend of rice and Kool-Aid.

Getting on the bus, some old man, at least forty-five, just about grabbed her arm, and demanded to know the time. She shrugged away, and told him she wouldn't know. The next half-hour of the local bus ride had her rocking in the seat next to a bent-backed old woman with almost porous eyes, and a mouth that slobbered or moaned every other second. Her liver-spotted hand kept coming down on Cynthia's wrist, and she felt her empty stomach churn all the way home.

Home was in a third-floor walk-up, in some prairie-edge boom-town nightmare building she privately nicknamed 'The Nest of Fools'. With a key turn and a push, she was finally inside her apartment.

Cynthia knew she was not the model student. Everything kept being shunted over until the last minute. Papers and books were jammed abruptly everywhere, as if they had fought her all the way across the kitchenette and living room.

And it had been two weeks since her last visit to the laundry. She was dressed in ratty sweatpants and a shirt with faded teal triangles that was too short to look right.

Locking her door, she felt the hackles on her neck raise.

"Cynthia. Cynthia Carmichael?"

Cynthia started. To her right was a pale thin-faced woman, dressed in black. She must have been hiding on the stairs to the roof, as she didn't hear her come upstairs. "Um, yeah." I don't need one more crazy.

"No reason for you to go broke over clothes. Here." The woman tossed her a roll of quarters which Cynthia instinctively caught.

I could really use this cash right now. "Who did you say you were?"

"Didn't."

"So who are you, and what is going on."

"Me. Stuff." She just stood there.

April Fool's was last week. "I don't have time for this, Miss Me."

The woman smirked, and turned away. "You have what you have." She walked away from the descending staircase, and towards the far end of the hall. All that was down there was a narrow window overlooking the street and steps up.

"That way just leads to the roof. I think it's locked." But the dark woman ignored her, and went up the stairs.

Cynthia didn't like the feel of this. She looked at the coins through their clear plastic wrap. The one on the end was a bicentennial quarter, with the drummer on the back. She listened to the footsteps walk away, then stop. As if the woman were just waiting there, on the stairs, in the dark.

She checked that she had locked her front door, then left the quarters on the banister.

"I'm leaving your money," she called. Finally, hearing no answer, she left with her mess of clothes.

The clouds were standing on end, as they often did. They ran into a change of air over Lake Michigan, and stood like ostrich feathers on the caps of giant soldiers hiding below the horizon. Cynthia thought of the clothes of the 19th century. The nightmare they must have been to wash. And get into. But she looked at her crappy bundle of rags, and wondered how everything could change so much in just a hundred years. She imagined 2094, thought of people in goofy sarongs, bald with electrodes.

And so she was smiling when she entered the laundromat, a block or so down from where she lived. Her old life ended, about here.

A half hour later, Cynthia found herself reading a Good Housekeeping from 1988, wrinkled with repeated exposure to moisture and with the best articles torn out. My brain is officially on hold the rest of the night. But she remembered her pending physics exam, and wondered whether it was worth going back up a block to drag her books down into this environment.

In the otherwise vacant laundromat, a man sat down next to her. Trying not to notice, she did check out his reflection in the glass of one of the dryers. Suede jacket and dark hair. Young and handsome enough, but it had been a day of wackos. I'd like to survive till summer, she thought. Boys on beaches surely awaited, and she read on about gingersnaps.

"Excuse me, what time is it?"

Her wrists were bare. Annoyed, Cynthia looked up at the clock above the dryers. "Seven fifteen. Look for yourself." Men notice nothing. Think of nothing between pickup line and coitus.

His reflection grew a secret smile. "Yes. Stupid me. Sorry. Guess if I can't get the time, I can't get the date, huh."

Book and its cover. "Huh," she confirmed, hoping he'd go now.

"Why do they call them dates, anyway?" he mused, with a tone she couldn't help notice was nasty, like someone from parts of New York. "They never last a whole day. Why not call them evenings, or lunches, or what they are."

Call them what they are: Jerks. Cynthia tried to exclaim hate with her body language. God, this day.

"I mean, what's so important about the date? Little useless twig-blondes don't go down in history."

"Hey." She turned toward him, glowering, trying the brave face. Then she noticed a black guy in black leather and shades standing in the back, and

started to seriously doubt her future health.

"Hey what?" snorted the jerk next to her. He noticed her looking beyond him, and wheeled. Upon seeing their company, he swore once, and leaped atop the washers behind their seats, then down onto the far side. The man in the back didn't move, hands folded before him.

Cynthia watched the jerk flee over the machines, then heard silence. She looked toward the front, then toward the door at the back. The black guy just smiled once, then went back to his expressionless self.

After a few seconds, she carefully walked around the central bank of coin-ops. Staying close by the front door, she looked around to see, but only a laundry cart stood there. The jerk was gone.

"Did you see where–?" she began, but the black guy was gone too.

The roar of her machine was all there was to be heard. She recalled a friend who used to work here, collected coins and mopped up. There was a back way out of the laundromat, but she wondered how the jerk got past this other guy first.

Full moon? Frat boys? Her machine stopped. She stared at it a long while, half afraid her clothes were already stolen. Panties dripping suds all over the campus shrubbery. She was relieved to find her things still there. She debated washing them again, just because the jerk had made her paranoid, and realized she couldn't afford to. She remembered the weird girl with the quarters. She threw her stuff in to dry, and decided to go check on her place.

The street was very empty for this time of night, but it felt haunted. A car or two passed, rushing out of town. When the last one went, Cynthia felt eyes on her. She couldn't help think of the eyes of the dog that had scared her when she was ten. It had been a bright night, and the dog was one she knew from the neighborhood. But the animal that had padded toward her back then was a black hole in the dimness, except the unblinking red eyes.

"Tch," she said aloud, a false comfort. Her door was only yards away, close on.

But still that feeling. She scanned the houses across the street— sure enough, a figure on a distant rooftop. Suddenly, it ducked, was gone. Great, what was that.

"Cynthia..." The jerk's voice, close. She turned, but the street was empty. She had gotten to her driveway, and looked down it. Twenty-five yards away beneath a window, he appeared where only an empty pool of light was the second before.

She couldn't help jumping back. That's a mean trick—

"The hell is your problem," she forced out, hiding fear poorly.

"It's one of philosophy, actually," he said, casually approaching. "See... destiny is one of those lies? One of the big lies, like you make to use people. Like, we're all meant to get along, or we're meant for each other, or..." A sick, rehearsed smile. "you're meant for greater things."

Cynthia thought of screaming, exactly how and how hard. Another step, and the scream.

"Now, what I meant is," he started chuckling, "your life? It's about to change." He kept chuckling; turned to look at that distant rooftop, chuckling.

She took a step away. She could hear that step, as clear as Dolby, the gravel on pavement hissing once, beneath her sole, and all the lights down the street were sharp and indelible, and the whole moment hung like the dot at the end of a sentence.

"I still just find that so funny." And hands had her mouth and throat from behind.

Trying to elbow and flail, a soft part of her could already tell she was in the hands of a master— a soldier, or an enforcer; a master killer. The taunting jerk seemed to gesture, 'take your time', but her neck was giving way. Then the jerk broke into a furious run at her.

And then he skidded, and half fell for fear, himself.

The world spun, and she and her assailant were falling; she felt him being hit, and hard. Her neck had been bent around, but she was loose, gasping for air. She made it up on one knee, and was looking right in the eyes of the bastard, but he now he sputtered, confused. "No! This was set!!"

From behind she heard, "Dastardly filth! Without scruple! How dare you touch her."

A couple panicked seconds later, Cyn gulped out a short scream, then another. The jerk fled, down the driveway, and round to the back. In pain, Cynthia turned and stood.

Her savior was a sturdy little man, barely taller than herself, dressed in a white shirt and Levi's but looking out of place in them. She found she was focussing on the glisten of his hair, and knew she was not making sense yet. Get a grip My assailant. Get a description.

"I'll handle this rogue," came the crisp British accent. "Get inside. None of your heroics, my dear."

Heroics. Looking down, she saw her assailant struggling prone in the gravel. It was the jerk again. A twin. That's how they did it. Before she had a chance to doubt this logic, the twin blinked out, like seamless editing. "Movie..." gasped Cynthia.

"Blast." Her rescuer was looking up and down the street. "No one saw that, I hope. I'll do a sweep. You get inside, dear girl." He ran around to the back, leaving her alone.

After two or three breaths, hearing a dog bark inside, she bolted for the front door.

As she raced up the stairs, she knew she was going into shock, knew that her reactions were going to be increasingly long and askew, like they were when she was fourteen and fell out of the attic.

She came to her door, and juggled the the keychain. There were only five keys, but already she grew confused.

"Hi."

She yelped. That woman was back. She was just suddenly standing there, and No, I didn't see you come into the corridor, thought Cynthia. Her arms and shoulders began to feel rubbery with panic.

"What do you want."

"Nothing. What time is it?"

What? "Who are you. Leave me alone."

"You left your clothes over there. Better go

back for them."

"What? What the hell!?"

"Language, young lady." Then she turned and headed back down the corridor, and up the stairs to the roof.

Cynthia, bug-eyed, her neck beginning to ache from the attack, listened to the footsteps go up, then stop abruptly in dead silence.

Like a string tied to her soul, she had to see.

Around the corner she went, and the woman was gone. The door to the roof was bolted and padlocked from the inside.

Up into the dark she went, sick with confusion. The chain and padlock, probably illegal by themselves, were painted over and stuck to the door. Cynthia heard her own breath, her blood sing in her ears. Then she bolted down and scrambled for her door.

Fumbling again for her keys, Cynthia started to shake her head sharply and breathe deep. It made her neck hurt worse, but now she was afraid someone had slipped her something, one of those nutcases today, and she was on some designer nightmare.

Got to think straight. Shake of the head. What did she want? What would that bitch want? She remembered the quarters, and as she found her door key, she glanced at where she had left them.

Now there were two rolls.

Twenty dollars in quarters sat quietly on the banister. Threat by money, thought Cynthia, and she stared for a long moment at it. Some small detail was drawing her closer, and yes, the drummer. There were two little drummers, one at the end of each roll.

She took up one in each hand, fixating on the small tokens of her ordeal, and saw on the other end, each had an identically worn-down coin from 1965. She sat down on the top stair to her floor now, comparing scratches in Washington's face, each nick a duplicate, and her mind began wandering back to when her friend Julie commented on why George was the only President on money without a shirt, and a fight she had with a boyfriend, an ex-boyfriend.

I've got to call the police. But I must be drugged, they'll see that. Mom. Call Mom. She was about to squeeze the rolls until they spilled, and her tears started finally, when there was a thud.

Someone was in her apartment. Another bang, and a scrape, unmistakable behind the door. She took off before another thought.

Out through the front door, into the street. No sign of her recent attackers, but she ran. The nearest pay phone was at the laundromat. And she was going to use the damn quarters.

Coming out of the SpeedAMat with a bag was a huge guy with a great, braided red beard. He bumped into her.

"Hey, little! Where you going!" he yelled; at another moment it would have sound friendly.

She raised her fists, with the coin rolls. "Laundry!" she yelled, tears all over her face. The big guy looked concerned suddenly, but she was already past him, running for the pay phone.

Now the place was crowded, or felt it. This day isn't going to let go of me. And some gray haired balding guy was sitting there, chatting on the pay phone.

"Hey. Hey, let me on. Emergency." Cynthia wiped mascara-ridden wet from her face. "C'mon. Nine one one—"

The man turned, she didn't know him. He had a beard, graying too, which wrapped a smile that comforted until, "It's all right, Cynthia. I'll only be a sec."

He turned back to his conversation. She stood there, armed with quarters, but a glance revealed that the black guy was back, same place. The only other person was some woman with her back to her, in garish clothes, almost gypsy. She was piling all kinds of colorful fabrics into a waiting machine.

After a few heartbeats, she made to leave, quickly. But the big redbeard was leaning in the door, looking at her funny.

So she went to her dryer. Her clothes weren't done, but she loaded them into the wet bag she had thrown in with them. And in one sock, she slipped the quarters.

Hoisting the damp sack, she made as nonchalantly as possible for the rear. She considered the rusty detergent vending machine for a couple seconds, suppressing a hollow scream. The black guy was now only ten feet away. His attention seemed elsewhere. Glancing back, the beards were both standing and facing her. And the gypsy had her head resting on the washer, eyeing her. Her tanned arm cradled her face, which she could not make out. The little shape of this dark gypsy's head and arm drove deep into her mind.

Cynthia made for the back door. She hopped around the narrow back room, slung open the latch, and leapt out onto the rear steps.

She froze. They were all there, in the backlot, plus the thin-faced woman. Her original assailant was absent, but so was her earlier rescuer.

A shadow fell across her. She dropped her laundry. It rolled gathering dirt. She raised her sock-blackjack. The towering redbeard had appeared on the top step behind her, before a closed door.

"Hello, little. How are you?"

"Don't hurt me," she breathed.

"We won't," said the older graybeard guy, below her. "We're not here to rob you, or anything." He scratched his beard. "Maybe we should start this from a beginning. Hi. I'm Charlie. This is Ray and this is Lydia. That's our pal Sven behind you. Do you recognize any of us?"

To her right, Cynthia also saw the gypsy, her face covered in a veil. She hadn't been introduced. Behind her was parked an ominously unmarked old Chevy van. Her eyes went back to the thin-faced woman, Lydia.

"You. You're from the stairs."

"Yeah. Careful with them quarters, Cynful."

"Don't call me that."

"One false move, and those quarters are seriously mixed up," said Ray, the black guy, pulling a small electronic appliance out of his jacket sleeve. "Those are good instincts. I'm going to check on her dream logs. See how long she's been like this."

His device spewed a colorful display of energy into the air above it, eight inches on a side. Cynthia had never seen anything like it, except when her ex

had made her watch Trek.

The others clucked in disapproval. "Hey! Heyy..." growled Charlie.

Ray frowned, made an impatient gesture. "What? We know what we're doing with her."

"Very outside of kosher, Ray."

Cynthia felt like she wanted to sit. Her knees gave out suddenly and she fell hard against the steps. "Aaa—"

Ray blinked. Charlie came to Cynthia's aid. "Dammit, Ray, you're scaring her."

"Turn it off now, Ray," said the gypsy.

"But I was— oh, all right." The lights went out with a decorative flourish, as if it were a kind of author's signature. In a moment, the little device was stowed up his sleeve.

"I'll take those." Charlie gently retrieved the sock of quarters from Cynthia's hands and replaced it with some ones and fives. He handed the rolls over to Lydia, who placed them very carefully in a small wooden box.

Cynthia looked at the cash in her lap. Charlie said, "Here's your change."

"That's what the jerk who vanished said—" She stopped short. They'll think I'm nuts and— But their expressions didn't change. "You don't think I'm crazy. Do you."

"Ch-ch-ch-changes," sang Lydia. "It's Anton, all right."

Ray looked at her. "Anton is still pushing that pun? That's so lame."

"Yeah, Anton's fixated on that phrase. It's a place he got stuck on." Charlie just shook his head, but Ray was visibly puzzled by his remark.

"I won't tell anyone that your Anton friend can make himself invisible," said Cynthia. "Please just let me go. I won't tell anyone."

"I'd put odds on that!" laughed Sven. Ray threw a small rock at him, and he sobered. "Oh. I meant, you need not feel the teeth of fear from us. You have a long life ahead! You are happy, all over!"

Cynthia stared up at him transfixed.

Charlie chuckled slightly. "Sven means well. So do we. It's our turn to tell you some things."

"I don't need to know," said Cynthia, still watching Sven.

"She's a natural," said Ray, and smirked in the direction of the gypsy.

"Carmichael." It was the rich accent of the gypsy. Cynthia slowly looked away from Sven. "I would not like to see you die, Carmichael," said the veiled woman, opening the rear passenger door in the shadow of the van. "Ride with me".

"I don't want to go. Don't do this to me."

The gypsy hissed. Their eyes met, and Cynthia didn't like the plain anger she saw.

Charlie went and stood between them, and barked at the veiled woman. "Leveller? Young gemini? Stop bossing her around." Cynthia thought she misheard his words, then realized she was getting far too scared to think.

The gypsy drew herself up as if to put Charlie in his place. Then she gave a growl. "Handle it, then." She climbed in and threw herself into the back of the van.

"C'mon, ride up front with me," offered Charlie. "Where everybody can see you. We'll tool around downtown a little, then head out, if you're really worried."

"I went screaming," commented Lydia. "But I made the decision, ultimately. It's better than sex."

"Uh huh." Cynthia looked at all of them around her, but finally up at Sven, who shrugged his massive shoulders cheerfully. Running did not look possible, but she carefully stood up. "Where are we going."

"Well, somewhere safe. Not your apartment, since somebody's in there making trouble." Cynthia stared at Charlie's words. "Yeah, we know stuff. You needn't believe me yet, but you're way safer with us than anywhere else in the world right now."

"Okay, Charlie. I won't believe you. Say, I have to go to the bathroom. How do we handle that."

"We don't, because you went two minutes and seventeen seconds before you left to do your laundry," said Lydia.

There was a long pause. Cynthia listened to the traffic on the far side of the building, felt the warm thrum of the laundromat behind her.

"That bothers me in a deep way."

"Shall we?" sighed Ray, gesturing to the van.

"Come on, she'll get in," said Lydia. She walked over and climbed in herself.

"Careful," came the gypsy's voice.

Cynthia looked again at Sven. His eyes twinkled. She got in the front seat.

They had driven about Milwaukee discussing good places for take-out, trying to engage Cynthia into the conversation, but she was only trying to think about escape. Her thoughts weren't very well organized, like something was pulling them in a direction they wouldn't go.

They had made her buckle up. It was an old-fashioned strap, difficult to undo, and the seat was high, so at every stoplight she never felt brave enough to disentangle herself and make a break for it.

Ray had his holographic device out again, and Lydia was grabbing at it.

"Lemme see that toy."

"No," muttered Ray. "My span book's on it."

The gypsy cleared her throat, and Lydia and Ray said, "Sorry, ma'am." Ray turned the device's projector toward the front seat, where it played an old Milton Berle episode on the glass before Cynthia's stare.

Then at one light a police car pulled up across from the van. Instinctively she pounded on the windshield. "Help! Help me!!"

But the light changed, and the police drove away. Charlie looked at her compassionately. "Well, we cheated a little. They couldn't see through the other side of Ray's hologram."

"Hologram," Cynthia repeated as she quietly sank into her seat. "Never mind."

Finally, Charlie headed the van out of town. In a few minutes, the sweeping contours of Wisconsin lay glowing in the dark.

"One detail," the gypsy muttered. Cynthia

heard her coming forward to behind her seat. Gently, deep blue silk wrapped around her eyes. Its perfume fell on her, like nothing she had ever known.

"Oh, no." Cynthia groaned. "I'm going to die."

"I said I did not want that. We are taking you to a place of decision. We will show you a thing. Then you can stay or go. But only after you see."

"Cult. You're a cult. Oh great."

General chuckling around her, except Sven's voice. "No, she's right. She is right. We are a big cult, yes?"

"We're what cults only dream of being," said Charlie, and somehow he made it sound all right, even a good thing.

Many minutes later. Cynthia felt the van come to a stop on gravel, and heard a garage door open. The van proceeded inside, the door fell and audibly locked. The blindfold pulled off from behind.

She was alone in the van. They had all gotten out silently, or somehow, since they were waving her to come out. The gypsy was pulling the scarf around in her hand, tight, menacing.

It was a big garage space she slipped out into. Their voices were echoing with every word, and with crates and boxes and vehicles under tarps of various kinds, she couldn't see a ready way out. Another man was there, next to Charlie, and looked like a younger brother. Darker hair and beard, sharp black clothes. He regarded Cynthia intently. Family affair, whispered her mind.

"Okay. Make yourself comfortable," said the man. Cynthia saw a tarp covering some huge tires. It was a little apart from her captors, so she decided to perch there. She sank into it more than she liked, but didn't want to fidget. Her neck was hurting again, and she delicately touched her growing bruises.

"Think I should treat those?" said Ray. "That can't be comfortable."

"Not yet." The gypsy's words were cold, almost angry. "Charlie, get on with it."

The younger man, though, stepped forward. "Hello, Cynthia. My name's Charlie. Later I may give you my last name, and anything else you want to know about me. But first, it's my job to tell you why you're here."

"I thought he's Charlie," said Cynthia. And the grey bearded Charlie smiled.

"Observant," said Ray. Sven nodded vigorously. "Eyes of a dolphin."

"Quite right," said the younger one. "I'll be blunt. We travel time at will. We are not the only ones, but we're the ones that have crossed your path. And this is your invitation to join us."

"No. Can I go home."

"That's a no..." says Ray, an eyebrow coming up over his shades.

"Not yet," said the gypsy again.

"Right," said young Charlie. "How do you explain the man who attacked you, Cynthia. He appeared, disappeared."

"Yeah, and me on the stairs," smiles Lydia. "Where did that chick go?"

Nightmare freakshow. God, make it painless. I'm sorry. "Okay. I. I don't think I have time for this. My neck is bad. And I think you're here to kill or hurt me. So. I don't have time for this."

"Lydia," said young Charlie. "Demonstrate."

"Yoo hoo," said Lydia. Cynthia looked at her.

And then there were two.

It made Cyn more alive than she would have imagined. Not tv, not illusion. There was another person in the room where there hadn't been one before; she could feel it from where she slumped.

"Get me a beer," said right Lydia to left Lydia. Left Lydia shrugged, vanished, and returned with a beer, open, its odor slowly leaking around the cold garage. Right Lydia took it, patted left Lydia on the head. "Good junior."

Cynthia's mouth was open.

"Wake her up," hissed the gypsy.

"Hey," said old Charlie to the veiled woman. "What did I say."

"What... is that." Cynthia was unable to stop looking at Lydia, who was making fools of herselves with the beer.

"Actually, there is a term we use," says Charlie. "It's a gemini. But there's only so much I can tell you before you agree to become one of us, or decide to leave."

"No, what is she doing. They doing."

"Time travel," said young Charlie.

Cynthia looks around for mirrors and cameras, but is feeling weak.

"Here, in about a minute, I'll go and appear wherever you point," offers Charlie.

Cynthia pointed weakly to the van, and at once young Charlie was in it, behind the wheel. He got out. There were three Charlies, the latest one walked up to her and handed her a paper. It was the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel for Saturday, April 23, 1994. Two weeks away. "If you'd like, I can get you another paper. Just so you're clear."

The other young Charlie took a few steps toward the van and blinked out.

She set the paper down. "No, no, that's..." This isn't the abduction I ordered. She begins to laugh manically, then cry.

Through the tears, the looks of concern on the Charlies were identical, and more genuine than most men she had ever known.

"Why—?"

They were quiet. Then old Charlie began to speak, and young Charlie stepped away. "There's the question. What makes you chosen? You're a witness to what we can do. You didn't have any say in that. And we here have to agree it's all right to invite you. That's done, you don't have any say in that part either.

"But there's the last bit— and you have to choose tonight— do you want to become a time traveller? We can teach you."

"This is probably your only chance," said young Charlie. "So take a minute. Think. We can answer a couple questions, but only so much. Just think."

She was still thinking escape, but what was going on? "W— w— would I be leaving my friends? Would I have go away for awhile, would—"

"Not that anyone would ever notice," smirked Ray.

"Huh?"

"Continuum to Cynthia," said the Lydia on the left. "Time travel. Arrive before you leave."

"It's a lot to realize, all at once," said young Charlie.

"Yeah, I need—" Cynthia blinked, wiping her face. Looked at the Charlies and the Lydias. "I need time..." She pointed at the doubled people. "You— you can teach me how to do that—?"

"Better—" said left Lydia.

"—than sex." Right Lydia nodded.

Her mind was on, all at once. It was like clouds lifting, fighting Lake Michigan. X-Files? Candid Camera? Satan? Drugs? Dream? "What's the catch."

"Secrecy, some discipline," said young Charlie. "Beyond that, whatever responsibility you can handle."

"For instance," continued old Charlie, "Your father lost a leg in a car accident, May 17, 1992. You wouldn't be able to stop that, or anything you knew that happened. How does that make you feel."

The memory of the night slammed her from behind, as her father's Taurus had been. The agony in the hospital, his months of denial heaped on her, the smell. But she said, "I don't know. Why not."

"We'd gang up on you and beat you up," smiled left Lydia.

"But each of us expects that," said right Lydia. "If we're so stupid as to actually try and mess with someone's story."

"It's mostly good clean fun, and we watch out for each other. At the basic level, it's a lot like Boy Scouts," said old Charlie. "Or Girl Scouts. No uniforms, thank God."

"Of course not," chimed in young Charlie. "You'll still be going around in the world, see your folks and friends. Hold your job—"

"She's still a student," commented old Charlie.

"Right. All that. You'll also be expected to contribute to time traveller life—"

"Like?" Here's the catch.

"Socializing, partying, goofing off, gossip," said left Lydia.

"And more gossip," said right Lydia.

"Lydia," sighed old Charlie, with a resigned warning.

"What," both said.

"There is a lot of that," young Charlie interjects. "Plenty of fun and games, sure. There's also finding a vocation among time travellers." Before Cynthia can question that, he finished, " Believe you me, we have things that need to get done. It's not a free ride, by any means."

Cyn noticed them all glance at the gypsy. "But it is a ride," nodded right Lydia.

Vocation? "So why me."

"You saw a span. That's pretty rare. And we've agreed amongst ourselves, you're no idiot."

"Even more rare," muttered Ray.

"Why not scientists, or rich people. What do I offer."

They all chuckled. Even the gypsy seemed to be smiling under her veils. Cynthia began wondering about her again.

Old Charlie said, "That's not how it works. We're not some government program. No way we could be."

"I mean think about it," said Ray energetically, "you can do this, what do you need—" He stopped himself short, he was getting looks. "Okay. Further information isn't available here. There, I said it first."

"Wait." Cynthia's mind was speeding on, clouds thundering away. "You can travel time, pop in and out. You can get all the money you want. Do what you want, pretty much. You don't need scientists, you could just– you can meet Edison, Einstein—"

"Damn, you're quicker than I was." Left Lydia shook her head.

"See, you are good at this," smiled old Charlie.

All of the questions opened before her. For several seconds it was just her and these people in this building under glaring fluorescents, while inside she felt the earth and sky flipping upside-down in the dark beyond. "How many. How many are there? How did it start? How does it even work—?" Ray popped three feet to one side. Cynthia barked a nervous laugh. "How can you even keep track?! What does—?!"

"Are you in," said young Charlie steadily.

"What?"

Right Lydia leaned close. "No more answers till you're in. Call it a 'catch'."

"Well I—" I'm not sure I even like any of these people yet. "What are my options."

Young Charlie counted them off: "A) You're in with us and we teach you time travel and all the joys and tears it brings. You will become an ethical god, like rest of us. B) You say no, we use our ample means to erase your memory of this night. You'll wake up tomorrow with a couple of odd bruises, and wonder why you went to bed early. No weirdness, ordinary life."

"I'll take care of the bruises, even," shrugged Ray.

"No anal probes," smiled the Lydias in unison.

"There is no C)." Young Charlie folded his arms.

Say no. Just say nada. They're kidnappers, bad people— A small butterfly, deep in her bosom, wanted to go on its way, live simple and free, die in its time.

But she looked at the Lydias. If. If this is even remotely real. What I could do with that. She throws it away, this incredible, incredible gift! "I can't throw this away," slipped from her mouth.

"That's a yes," said Ray.

"Hang on," said the Charlies, and the old one laughed at himself. The young one remained intent. "Are you in?"

"Yes. Just yes. Okay, now—"

The time people broke into cheers and applause, made loud and brassy by the metal walls.

"If this is some prank, I'm going to kill all of you," she squeals over their echoing cheers.

"That's our Cynthia!" cried left Lydia. "Yay! Kill us all!"

The gypsy is smiling under the veil, and as the claps die down, she strides forward. "Good. Good choice," she said, her accent less sharp. "I am sorry for mentioning the possibility of your death. But the spanner life, it is dangerous. Even in our most peaceful moments, we are threatened. Even at rest, we are at war. Even asleep, we are ever watchful. Cynthia Carmichael, born of woman September twenty-seven,

I

Anno Domini nineteen-seventy-four, rise."

Cynthia scrabbled to her feet. The gypsy, two feet away pulled back some of the fabrics she wore, revealing a long stainless steel knife, which she reached toward. Cyn tensed to run. Well that was stupid, me.

But the woman drew out a small, brightly wrapped present, and handed it to her. "Happy birthday."

"It's not my birthday."

"Oh yes it is. Open it."

Cynthia took it, and pulled open the heavy wrappings. It was a paperback. "God Almighty. You people. You knew this was my favorite part. This is my favorite part of—" Her eyes rescanned the unfamiliar cover: The Fellowship of the Ring NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE "Um. Part of the trilogy..." Inside, it was signed by them all, and also by a mysterious 'S'.

Cynthia, giddy with this insane moment, looked the gypsy straight in the eye. "You're 'S', aren't you? Why don't I know your name?"

"Of course you do." And she unveiled.

Cynthia dropped Frodo, but then recovered. "For a second you looked like my mom. That would be too..."

"Close. Guess again." Her skin was deeply tanned, fewer wrinkles than her mother, leaner, no grey. A relative.

Cynthia was at a loss, but what was one more shock tonight. The hackles on her spine were bristling like fire. "I give up?"

"Give her a clue."

Another Ray popped in, dressed differently. Sven looked about, then laughed, and another Sven was there. "I see! I get it! Two of each, now!" The Svens punched each others' arms.

Cynthia was feeling a little dizzy, but still made no connection. "I'm... I'm not seeing it. Sorry. That doesn't mean I'm out does it?"

Laughter all around, even 'S'. "Dear heavens, no, Carmichael. But you will need to be able to count in your new lifestyle."

Cynthia looked at the laughing faces around her, already doubting her ability to swim in this depth. But the Svens helped drive it home. "Two! Two! Two of everyone!" And Cynthia started looking all around for the other 'S'.

Finally their eyes met again. The dark hair, the accent, didn't matter anymore. She knew how to put mascara on those eyes.

Cynthia's head turned, but not her stare, amidst the laughs. Two plus two. She forgot to breathe. Not enough oxygen reached her brain for a second, and she fell back. This was her last clear memory for some while.

Invitation to Dance

We are all born ordinary human beings. The moment where one is chosen to join the ranks of spanners is a delicate circumstance, to put it lightly.

Moment of Truth

Not every activity spanners perform goes unnoticed. People in two places at the same time, occasional accurate visions of the future, and other 'unexplained phenomena' are easily explained once the reality of spanning is taken into account.

And sometimes a leveller— a human that knows nothing of spanning— witnesses a span outright. Usually it's a narcissist out making trouble, but even so, the Continuum handles these moments of terrible surprise and confusion.

It's called an **Invitation To Dance**, but both parties have to be willing. The leveller normally must be at least 18 years of age, and possess remarkable maturity of mind and spirit. And the spanners present have to make a judgement (or find a spanner who can) as to whether this leveller's time has come, or more commonly, that means must be employed to ensure the leveller forgets and never tells of their brush with spanning. See the Fourth Maxim.

The leveller who is offered this opportunity is taken aside to a place either very familiar to the leveller, or a secret place known only to the spanners, but away from their corner, or home. In any case, it must be very secure and private. A spanner of Span Three rank is almost always called in, since Spans below Three have limited knowledge of how spanning works.

Every spanner present may know the invitee, and have even lived for long years of Age with the invitee's spanner elder selves— but they will not let on for an instant. On the one hand, the invitation must be pure: A leveller that is bullied into knowing he becomes a spanner almost always has mental or social trouble later on, as it robs the person of their rediscovery of free will. This is the invitee's most precious decision they will ever make, and to spoil it through arrogance is to spit on their humanity.

And on the other hand, no one wants to miss the fun of ganging up on a clueless member of the corner and watch them squirm before the awesome might of their soon-to-be peers. The hazing aspect is often the best part.

Note that a spanner that attends his own invitation is probably only there because it is in his Yet [See Chapter 2: Spanning— What is the Yet?, pg. 47]. Reliving a hazing is not everyone's idea of a good time.[1]

[1]Not everyone gets to meet themselves right off the bat, unlike the story example, and when they do, few faint.

The Perspective

The truth of time travel is told to the invitee, and proved as best as possible to him. What is told to him is mostly a matter for the inviting corner to decide, but much information is withheld: Events of the invitee's personal future, for instance, are rarely revealed, as it may prove too easily what choice they make. Certainly the physics and technical details of spanning are not mentioned. Usually the word "spanner" is avoided as well. But nearly anything might be discussed, as an invitee that turns the Continuum down has their memory suppressed, and is sent back to their narrow life.

Levellers are rarely taken for a span as part of their invitation. It would take the Span Three present to accomplish this, and Span Threes tend to be cautious about that. But once in private, the spanners can flit about as much they like to produce the proof the leveller needs to decide.

An aid many corners prefer is to present or describe a variation on the Spacetime Map of Earth, [on pg. 102]. Most levellers never think much beyond the basic changes of night and day, and the seasons. Explaining how the Earth spirals through space, and how time travel is always a vast form of space travel tends to open some minds. Sometimes a little future tech is helpful.

But the most convincing display is the spanning itself, especially when the invitation is held at the invitee's home or deserted office. If they can discard their prejudicial reactions (drug overdose, illusion, witchcraft, etc.) and begin to see the opportunity, they may have a chance to give an honest answer.

The Decision

Much of the invitation is looking for signs that the leveller knows what's happening, and even has an eagerness and a grasp of the issue. The inviters can spend up to 24 hours with an invitee, but often settle it in less time.

The person with the highest Span present at the invitation gets to decide when the leveller has seen enough to make a decision that spanning is real, or whether they will never believe or understand it. A flippant "yeah, sure, teach me" answer to the invitation is not sufficient: The leveller must be impressed with what they are getting into.

A flippant "no" answer can be ignored for awhile, but persistent weeping or calls to be left alone *after* being shown spanning is a sign that the person is not ready to accept time travel. They have their memories thoroughly suppressed, and are returned to their lives. On rare occasions, a person understands what they've seen, and seems a prime candidate, but turns away from the challenge, believing themselves unready or unworthy. They too are returned to their lives, but it is worthwhile keeping tabs on such people.

But an active and interested yes is exactly what the Continuum is looking for. Out of these daring individuals are player characters drawn from.

And Everything After

The novice spanner will remember nothing after his invitation, until he awakens in his corner. He will recognize all his chronies, though he'll have a big whitespace in his mind with few distinct memories of what happened.

He will be able to travel time, however. And have some basic instincts on how to survive.

Character Creation

Starting Off

All starting characters are new to the Continuum and to the ability of spanning. They have been taught how to span only recently, and have come out of their In-Between 1d10 x 30 days ago. They are keeping in close contact with their mentors and the members of their corner, relying on them for support and advice. Following is the process involved in creating a C°NTINUUM character.

Concept & Background

Most important in the character creation process is the character *concept*. The whys and wherefores of the character's life. Who are they? What was their "invitation to dance" into the life of a spanner? Many of the details that describe the character's life need to be filled in. Before the rules and numbers are applied, it's important to flesh out a characters' background and vital statistics. On the C°NTINUUM character sheet you will find spaces for all the pertinent background information; name, date of birth, age (which, for a spanner, will conflict with their original date of birth, see Span Sheet, pg. 225), and the rest. Take a moment and look at the top of the character sheet to note what vital statistics need to be recorded there. Additionally, the character's background should be fleshed out further to include their family, friends, likes, dislikes, hobbies, and other interests. Both the player and GM should be involved in the character's origin, to keep their abilities balanced and to allow the GM to blend the character's "life" into other story elements.

Roleplaying the Invitation

You may want to roleplay out your character's invitation with your GM. This will help define your character and answer questions about their background before you begin to play as a group. Some details about your character's leveller life that should be filled in include:

Your age.
Your occupation.
Significant or traumatic events in your past.
Who your family and friends are.
How were you introduced to the Continuum and Spanning.
The goals and habits you had before you learned time travel was a reality.

And details about your character's new status as a novice spanner should include:

Your native locality and where and when your corner is.
Who your Mentor is and your relationship with them.
Your current motivations, likes, and dislikes.

Attributes & Skills

Attributes and *skills* are what define a character's abilities. There are three attributes that every being in C°NTINUUM inherently possesses. These are Body, Mind, and Quick. Attributes are an amalgamation of the traits they represent, their ratings equaling general ability and potential. By acquiring skills, a character hones his potential in a specific direction. For example, a player creating an athletic character with a high Body rating might choose to give him skill in strength training or running to make him stronger or faster, respectively. Following is a definition of each attribute. The human average for each of these is a 3. The known human maximum for these attributes is 7. A character with any attribute of zero is dead or non-functioning.

Body

The physical state of being. Representing general athletic conditioning, muscular coordination, health, and resistance to disease and injury.

Body 1: Someone afflicted by disease or infirm, barely able to move, either extremely obese or rail thin. An infant.
Body 2: Below average, out of shape, usually pudgy or skinny. A young child or senior.
Body 3: Average, healthy adult.
Body 4: Above average adult, athletic.
Body 5: Very athletic, healthy, strong resistance to disease. A professional athlete.
Body 6 : Extremely good physical condition, excellent diet and constant exercise. Very strong.
Body 7: Peak physical condition. World champion athlete. Michael Jordan or Arnold Schwarzenegger in their prime.

Mind

A combination of mental acuity, ability to reason, clarity of thought, hand-eye coordination, and perception.

Mind 1: A very young child, a functionally retarded adult. IQ 60-80
Mind 2: A pre-teen child (10-12), a dim-witted adult. IQ 80-100
Mind 3: An average adult. IQ 100-120
Mind 4: A smarter than average adult, a child prodigy. IQ 120-140
Mind 5: Very smart, quick on the uptake, excellent memory. IQ 140-160
Mind 6: The proverbial "rocket scientist". A genius. IQ 160-180
Mind 7: One of the top geniuses of their time. Stephen Hawking or Galileo. IQ 180-200+

Memory and Mind

At a superhuman Mind of 8 or greater, a character automatically gains the Benefit **Photographic Memory** [see pg. 13]

Quick

A sense of timing, insight, and inner focus. The *chi* known in Asia. The attribute vital to the mastery of spanning.

Quick 1: Very poor reflexes, insensate much of the time.
Quick 2: Below average.
Quick 3: Average adult.
Quick 4: Faster than average, good timing.
Quick 5: Fast reactions, usually aware of time and themselves, very focused.
Quick 6: Very fast, moves gracefully, much inner focus and strength.
Quick 7: Legendary speed, Billy the Kid or Bruce Lee. Amazing powers of concentration.

Perception and Quick

For most humans, a Quick rating of 7 is the highest possible. But the rare few who have surpassed this have a unique perspective of the flow of time. Time seems to slow down as one's perception and sense of timing increases, and acts of extreme coordination and rapidity become possible. Those with a Quick of 10 or higher are capable of superhuman grace and speed. Spanners who manage to attain a Quick of 10 or higher gain a sensitivity to arrivals and departures of their fellow spanners. Called **Shift Sight**, it allows the character to tell within six seconds before and/or after of a span in or out, within a hundred yard radius. They can also tell which direction (Up, Down or Level) from or towards which the spanner is travelling, if they actually see the traveller vanish. Shift Sight does not allow a spanner to determine who is spanning, nor the precise point in spacetime they are coming from or going to.

Skills

Skills are learned abilities. They are acquired during character creation as well as during the course of the game. All skills are based on one of the three attributes, from which their base skill rating is taken. While a character may have only three attributes, he may have any number of skills. For each skill possessed, a character has both a skill *rating* and a *title*. The skill rating is used to determine the base chance of success when an action is attempted [see Resolving Actions, pg. 14]. The number represents a combination of skill and raw ability. The character's title in a skill is a measure of experience and comes into play when determining the difficulty of an action in respect to a character's experience, during competition between characters using the same or similar skills, and when learning and improving skills. A skill's rating and title are abbreviated as the first letter of the title followed by the rating. For example, a Journeyman skill with a rating of 6 would be abbreviated to J6.

Skill Title Rating Table
None=Use appropriate ability at a -2 modifier for default, if applicable.
Novice=Ability Rating
Apprentice=Ability Rating+1
Journeyman=Ability Rating+2
Master=Ability Rating+3
Grandmaster=Additional cumulative +1 each level of Grandmaster increase (ex: +4, +5, etc).

Character Points

Once a character concept is established, attributes, skills, and details relating to the game mechanics need to be added. Attributes and skills are purchased with *character points*. You have 25 character points to allocate to your character's attributes and skills. The cost per attribute and skill are as follows:

Attributes (human averages are 3, starting max. is 7)
1 Body point=1 char. point
1 Mind point=1 char. point
1 Quick point=2 char. point

Skills (see Skill List pg. 19)
Novice title skill=0.5 char. point (1 char point purchases 2 skills at Novice rank)
Apprentice title skill=1 char. point
Journeyman title skill=2 char. point
Master rank title=3 char. point
[A character may not begin the game with a title of Grandmaster in any skill]

Benefits

Benefits are are rare and valuable abilities. Some are inherent, some can be learned, and others may come and go during the course of the game. All player characters may choose one free benefit during character creation. Up to two more benefits may be purchased with character points. The second benefit costs 2 points, and the third costs 4.

Ambidextrous
The character can use either hand with equal proficiency. Use of a character's "off" hand results in a -1 modifier [see pg.23].

Aptitude (type of skill)
This benefit is taken for a general type of skill (ex: melee weapons, driving, languages, etc.), never a specialized area (see Skill List, pg. 17). Halve the time index of any skill of this type and check off two success clocks when making a successful roll with it (see Experience & Learning, pg. 21). The need for a teacher is also waived (as long as there is a way for the character to acquire information on their own)

Connections (in native locality)
The character knows "people in high places". The player and GM must agree on a leveller NPC in a powerful position that is friends with the character. This friendship originates from before the character learned to span, and must come from their native locality.

Contortionist/ Double Jointed
+3 to Body for any die rolls related to physical flexibility.

Extraordinary Beauty
People (usually of the opposite sex, or at least those that would be attracted to a member of the character's sex) find the character captivating and are more likely to help the character, or just be friendly in general. This makes the character very memorable and recognizable, and often subject to unwanted romantic advances.

Fame (in native locality)
The character is well-known and generally liked in their locality. They could be a famous entertainer, politician, or just someone in the public eye. People will often act positively towards a famous person, though maintaining a private life can be difficult at times.

Internal Clock
The character naturally has an accurate sense of what time it is. It may be necessary to make

I

The C^ONTINUUM Character Sheet Explained

Vital Statistcs:
All the basic information about who your character is and where they come from.

Span & Frag:
You character's current Span and Frag ratings, also important to note on your Span Card (pg. 225).

C^ONTINUUM™
roleplaying in The Yet™

Name: CYNTHIA CARMICHAEL
Sex: F Race: CAUCASIAN Ht: Wt:
Age: Yrs: 22 Days: 181 Date of Birth: SEP. 28, 1971
Date of Invitation: APR. 8, 1994 Current Corner: "CHOICE HOPS"
Locality: MILWAUKEE 1985-2005 Fraternity: N/A
Era: PISCEAN Society: UNITED STATES

SPAN 1
FRAG 8
Deliberate
Natural

BODY 4 MIND 4 QUICK 5
Benefits & Limits: PERCEPTIVE (+2 TO ALL PERCEPTION ROLLS)

Attibutes:
Where to keep track of your Attribute scores and advancment in them, as well as space to note any Benefits or Limits.

Skills	Attribute	Title	Rating
SCIENCE (PHYSICS)	B/M/Q	NOVICE	4
DRIVE (CAR)	B/M/Q	APPRENTICE	6
LANGUAGE - MODERN FRENCH	B/M/Q	APPRENTICE	5
U.S. HISTORY 1750-2050	B/M/Q	NOVICE	4
KARATE	B/M/Q	JOURNEYMAN	6
STEALTH (EVASION)	B/M/Q	JOURNEYMAN	7
DREAMING	B/M/Q	NOVICE	5
	B/M/Q		
	B/M/Q		
	B/M/Q		
	B/M/Q		

Skills:
Your character's skills and skill advancment charts.

Equipment & Notes:
CAR + HOUSE KEY
SPAN BOOK & PEN
OTHER SMALL NOTES
CEL PHONE
AT HOME - SPANNER BOX FOR JEWELRY
SPANNER BOX FOR OTHER STUFF
TEDDY BEAR NAMED "SHOOTIME"
Assets: $13,410,144

Equipment and Notes:
If you've acquired any interesting equipment, or just need space to jot down some important info, here's the space to do it. The last line is for you to keep track of assets.

Quick/ Combat Bout Table

	stage #1	stage #2	stage #3	stage #4	stage #5
Quick 1 to 2	no	no	yes	no	no
Quick 3 to 4	no	yes	no	yes	no
Quick 5 to 6	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Quick 7 to 8	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Quick 9 to 10	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Result	Dam. Code
0-2	D
3-4	C
5-7	B
8-10+	A

Wound Tracking Table

IP	Bruise/Lethal	Bleeding?
	B / L	y / n
	B / L	y / n
	B / L	y / n
	B / L	y / n
	B / L	y / n

Add 1 IP of bleeding impairment at the end of stage #5 of the current bout for every wound that is bleeding, and again every other bout until stopped.

IP total

Wounds:
If your character is damaged, here's where to keep track of all those nasty wounds

Weapons	Ammo	RoF	Length	Conceal	D/C/B/A
BARE HANDS					1/3/4/6
					/ / /
					/ / /
					/ / /
					/ / /

Weapons:
Here's where to note what weapons your character might be carrying and their statistics.

...hereo/ Dreamcatcher. Permission granted to the retail customer of this book to photocopy this page for per... are trademarks of Aetherco/Dreamcatcher for their time travel game.

a Quick roll to determine exact increments within a minute. If the character is disoriented somehow (knocked unconscious, goes into shock, etc.) he must re-establish the correct time for this ability to work again.

Lucid Dreamer

The character naturally has the skill Dreaming at the Apprentice rank. This is a natural ability, not a learned skill; if you want the character to have the Dreaming skill, it should be purchased as such. If the character wishes to increase this skill during the game (when taken as a benefit), he must first seek out formal training and spend time equal to half the amount needed to attain the title of Apprentice. Successes made from Dreaming rolls from this benefit are not recorded for the advancement of this skill until it is learned as such. (see Experience, p. 21)

Lucky

Once per game session, the player may re-roll any one die roll, and accept the results from either roll (excluding a roll on the Limit Table, but including the "One Big Score" roll).

Math Wiz

The character can perform complicated mathematical equations in their head at a rapid rate. The character already possesses the skill Mathematics at apprentice level if not purchased during character creation, and if purchased, its cost is reduced by 1 character point.

Perceptive

+2 to Mind for for any rolls related to perception.

Photographic Memory (see also pg. 10)

The character has a total recall of past events or information experienced. For particularly complex events/information, or ones in the character's distant past, a Mind roll may be called for by the GM. Any such rolls are made with a +3 to Mind. A character with Photographic Memory my use this ability in lieu of keeping a physical Spanning diary, though the player must still record all spans [see Span card, pg. 225].

Psychic Potential

The character has the potential to control psychic powers; a Mind rating of 7 or higher is necessary for these powers to become controllable (see pg. 114, Aquarian Skills) To determine what abilities the character has the potential to control, roll 1d10 and consult the chart below.

Roll:	
1	Clairvoyance
2-3	Telepathy
4-5	Levitation
6-7	Telekinesis
8-9	Pyrokinesis
10	Roll twice

Sharp Reflexes

+2 to Quick for purposes of reading the Quick/Combat Bout Table (see Timing, pg. 22)

Sense of Direction

The character has an innate sense of direction. With a successful Quick roll, the character can tell what direction they are facing (North, South, East, or West). A +2 modifier applies to this roll.

Speed Reader

The character is able to read and comprehend written information as quickly as they can turn the page. Reduce the time index by one-half any skill which involves reading as a large part of its training. Halve any research time involving written information as well.

Tough

The character takes 1 less IP (see Damage & Impairment, pg. 23) from wounds inflicting Bruise damage.

Wealthy (in native locality)

Before their "invitation to dance" the character possessed great monetary wealth as a leveller. Make two assets rolls (see "One Big Score", below) to represent your level wealth.

Optional Rule: Limits

If you feel your character needs a few more character points to be fleshed out, or if you think it would be a fun challenge to play a character with some sort of disadvantage, you may give them a *limit*. A limit is a detrimental modification to your character. If you choose to apply a limit to your character, you may allocate either 2 additional character points for purchasing attributes and skills, or one additional benefit. When your character is fully completed, including the additional points or benefit and background story, you must roll once on the limit table on the following page and accept whatever is rolled to be applied to your character. If the result of the roll conflicts with an already purchased skill or benefit, the limit takes precedence and the previously purchased ability is lost or reduced appropriately. Note that while some Limits may be the opposite of certain benefits in name, they only cancel an ability if their respective rules conflict (e.g. speed reader and dyslexic). This limit should then be worked into the character's background. For

example, if you chose the Tough benefit and rolled the Frail limit, perhaps the character was afflicted with a disease that left them weakened. Be warned that some of the limits on the table can be quite debilitating for your character, and a challenge to roleplay.

"One Big Score"

When the ability to span is first learned, there are many temptations to use one's newfound power for personal gain. To some degree, the Continuum agrees that this is acceptable if done carefully and under the strict supervision of the Moneychangers Fraternity (see Fraternities, pg. 64). When a new spanner is invited into the Continuum, they are granted this privilege both as a reward for their new responsibilities and as a deterrent to temptation. This sudden windfall via carefully controlled use of future knowledge is commonly referred to among spanners as the "One Big Score". In a 20th century locality, there are many ways money can be generated: gambling, lotteries, and the stock market to name a few. To figure the dollar amount generated by this process, roll 4d100 and multiply the results together (1d100 x 1d100 x 1d100 x 1d100). Write the total down on your character sheet under "assets". The Moneychangers fraternity carefully monitors all such procedures to avoid any possibility of Frag. Any such undertakings not done under the watchful eyes of the Moneychangers are dealt with harshly, and the standing of the perpetrator in the Continuum is usually ruined. It is possible to petition the Moneychangers for additional such "scores", but such requests are not granted easily or for petty reasons.

Resolving Actions

Rating Scores & Titles

For every ability a character has, there is a corresponding rating *score*, and, in the case of skills, a *title*. The score measures the raw level of ability and likelihood of success while the title reflects actual experience. The title of a skill does not denote any formal title held by the character, only their level of experience. The titles are, in order from lowest to highest: Novice, Apprentice, Journeyman, Master, Grandmaster. The Novice title denotes a general familiarity with the skill, and an understanding of its most basic uses. At Apprentice, the character has gone beyond the basics and understands a specific area of the skill and has a good working knowledge of it. At Journeyman the character is considered to have a professional level of competency. At Master the character is thoroughly experienced and considered an authority on their skill. The Grandmaster title comes after a lifetime of using a particular skill and denotes incredible devotion and study. If a character attempts to perform an action for a skill they don't have, they may default to a roll of the base ability with a -2 modifier, so long as there are no prerequisites to using the skill. All skills have another factor, called a *time index*, which defines how long it takes to learn and improve a skill, this is explained further in the section titled Experience & Learning, pg. 21.

Taking Actions

When a character attempts an action, the GM may ask the player to roll a 10 sided die (d10) to determine the success of the attempted action. Subtract the number rolled from the attribute or skill rating rolled against to determine the result. If the result is positive, the action is successful. If the result is a negative number, the action fails. A result of zero *is* a positive result. Furthermore, a roll of one (1) is *always* a success. This is the basic rule for determining the outcome of almost any action in C°NTINUUM. Everything else is a permutation of this rule.

Modifiers

Whenever the text refers to a modifier, it directly affects the rating of the attribute or skill so modified. For example, a -3 modifier would lower a rating score by three points, and a +1 modifier would raise a rating score by one point for purposes of determining the outcome of the affected roll. Therefore, a positive modifier is good, a negative bad.

Special Rolls

On occasion, we are all capable of great feats of skill, luck, or even stupidity. For your characters this is true as well. To reflect that rare moment of extreme prowess or embarrassment, there a few special die rolls that can occur in C°NTINUUM.

Victories

When the outcome of the die is a one (1), the die should be immediately re-rolled. If this second roll is a one as well, the roll is a *victory*. A victory is an outstanding success, pushing the character's abilities to their utmost, or an instant of extreme luck. Splitting an arrow already in the bull's-eye, or falling out of an airplane and landing unharmed are examples of victories.

Graces

There are also moments for a spanner, specifically a spanner of the Continuum, where fate, not chance, has to do with their success. If the die

Limit Table (or fifty of the thousand human frailties that flesh is heir to)

Roll:	Limit
01-02	**No Limit** Lucky you, you get away with out having a limit applied to your character!
03-04	**Bad habit** The character has an annoying habit of the GM's choice.
05-06	**Overweight** The character is approximately 20-30 pounds over their previously determined weight. Body is reduced by 1.
07-08	**Short** The character is at most 5' if a man, or 4' if a woman, or shorter.
09-10	**Bad hearing** -2 to all rolls involving hearing, correctable with a hearing aid.
11-12	**Bad eyesight** Near or far sighted, needs corrective lenses or suffers a -2 to all sight related rolls.
13-14	**Diabetic (hyperglycemic)** The character must receive regular insulin injections or die.
15-16	**Skinny** The character is 30-50 pounds under their starting weight. -1 to Body (to a min. of 1)
17-18	**Addiction (minor)** The character has an addition that is not illegal in his locality and has no immediately physically harmful effects (cigarettes, alcohol, chocolate, etc.).
19-20	**Facial tic** The character has developed a facial tic. One of the muscles in the character's face often twitches, especially under stress.
21-22	**Stutterer** During times of stress or excitement, the character stutters, making communication difficult.
23-24	**No sense of smell/taste (anosmia).**
25-26	**Ugly** The character's features are extremely unappealing, almost to the point of deformity. The GM may give the character various minor deformities (lazy eye, vestigial extra thumbs, warts, etc...)
27-28	**Phobia (uncommon)** The character has a phobia (irrational fear) of an uncommonly encountered thing or situation (sharp objects, hermaphrodites, zebras, etc...)
29-30	**Missing eye** No depth perception, -2 to related rolls (ranged attacks, etc...).
31-32	**Missing leg** Movement is at one-quarter.
33-34	**Missing Locality Skill** The character is missing one locality skill of the GM's choice.(eg: never learned to swim, drive, etc... see Locality skills, pg. 21)
35-36	**Insomnia** Takes twice as long to regain Span. -2 to all Dreaming rolls, double the time index of the Dreaming skill.
37-38	**Phobia (common)** The character has a phobia of a common item (the outdoors, insects, etc) of the GM's choosing.
39-40	**Deaf in one ear** Rolls related to hearing suffer a -2 penalty.
41-42	**Allergy (minor)** The character has an allergic reaction to a GM chosen substance that is fairly common (pollen, cats, latex)
43-44	**Dyslexic** Character has a difficult time reading. 50% chance of complete illiteracy. Double the time index of skills where reading is involved in the training, if the character is literate, otherwise it takes four times as long.
45-46	**Clumsy** -2 to all rolls involving coordination.
47-48	**Sickly** -2 to all rolls involving resisting disease and/or nausea.
49-50	**Allergy (major)** The character has a severe and possibly fatal allergy to a common substance of the GM's choice (bee stings, peanut butter) and will go into anaphylactic shock if the allergen is introduced into their system.
51-52	**Obese** The character is at least twice their previously determined body weight due to a glandular condition. Movement is halved. Body reduced by 2 (to a min of 1)
53-54	**Missing hand** The character is missing a hand. This is probably replaced with a rounded hook or some other form of prosthesis.
55-56	**Sleepwalker** This can prove to be dangerous if the character is not watched while sleeping, especially if they Span while asleep! [see pg. 140]
57-58	**Dwarfism/midget**
59-60	**Gigantism**
61-62	**Bad Reflexes** -2 to Quick for purposes of reading the Quick/Combat Bout table.
63-64	**Cripple-minor** Cane, limps, club foot, etc.. Halve movement.
65-66	**Asthma** Must make Body challenge when under heavy exertion or in contact with lung irritant or have asthma attack. Second Body challenge to resist attack, +3 modifier with inhaler.
67-68	**High blood pressure** If the character makes a Blunder on a Body roll related to exertion, they must make a second roll to resist going into cardiac arrest. +2 modifier to roll if regularly taking medication.
69-70	**Low blood pressure** It takes the character twice as long to stabilize from the effects of shock. [pg. 24]
71-72	**Hemophiliac** Even non-lethal wounds of of less than 2 IP cause the character to bleed, and a -2 modifier is applied to all attempts to stop character's bleeding. There are 20th century medicines available to lessen this condition, and if taken regularly, a -1 modifier only applies to to attempts to stop bleeding.
73-74	**Mute**
75-76	**Deaf**
77-78	**Missing arm**
79-80	**Infertile** The character is unable to reproduce sexually.
81-82	**No hands**
83-84	**No arms**
85-86	**Cripple-major** Character is confined to a wheelchair. But spine is intact.
87-88	**Frail** -2 modifier for each IP instead of –1.
89-90	**Blind** (gains the skill: Language (Braille) at novice rating if from a modern locality)
91-92	**Old** (60+ years) -2 Body. See pg. 143.
93-94	**Narcolepsy** The character may fall asleep, unwillingly, at any time (GM's decision).
95-96	**Unlucky** Every time this character rolls a failure (that is not already a Blunder), a second roll is made by the GM. If this second roll is a set of zeros, then the failed challenge *becomes* a Blunder.
97-98	**Borrowed Time** The character has witnessed their own death, and has this in their Yet to fulfill. See pg. 41, Second Death. The character may not advance beyond Span 3.
99-00	Roll **twice** more on the Limit Table, and accept both Limits for your character. Re-roll any results that duplicate or contradict results previously rolled on this table.

roll equals the exact number of their *unmodified* ability rating, re-roll the die. If the result of the re-roll is again the ability rating rolled for, the result is a *grace*. Grace rolls are the result of unseen aid from a fellow spanner. For their own reasons, usually in the course of mending causality, another spanner has applied sentient force to insure the character's success. Such successes can sometimes seem odd or even superhuman, as they often involve the use of advanced technology or elaborate set-ups. GMs and players alike will want to take note when graces occur, as the favor may one day be called in.

Blunders

When the die roll equals a ten (10), even if the roll was a success, re-roll the die. If the result of the re-roll again equals ten, the action is a failure, and the roll is a *blunder.* Blunders are the worst, most embarrassing mistakes imaginable. Nasty falls, weapons malfunctions and self-inflicted wounds are common examples of blunders.

Types of Actions

There are three basic types of actions a character can attempt. *Simple actions,* those which automatically succeed. *Uncontested actions,* those that call for a die roll to determine success. And *competitive actions*, when two or more characters attempt the same action using the same or similar abilities. Most everyday actions could be considered simple actions, those which require no great effort and do not require any roll of the dice. Also, if a character's skill title exceeds the difficulty of the action by two titles or greater, it is considered a simple action. An uncontested action requires a roll of the die to determine success. Competitive actions are the most complicated. A competitive action takes place when two or more characters are simultaneously attempting the same action against the same target (or each other, as in combat), using the same or similar skills. All characters involved roll according to their appropriate skill. The one with the highest result succeeds, all others fail. In the case of a tie, the character with the higher title wins, if both titles are the same, the one with the higher ability rating succeeds. If all tying factors are equal, none of the characters succeed that attempt.

Skill Titles and Superiority in Competitive Actions

Aside from breaking ties in competitive actions, if the character's title in the competitive action is two or more levels superior— (i.e. Master is two levels higher than Apprentice—) than his opponent's, regardless of the respective rating scores, the character automatically succeeds. This is called ***Superiority.*** A die roll is still made, to insure the

Action Difficulty Modifier Table

Action 2 or more titles below character's title:	*Superiority*— Automatic Success
1 title below:	+1
Same title:	0
1 title higher:	-1
2 titles higher:	-2

Apply an additional -1 for every title higher than the character's. ex: -3, -4, -5, etc...
An unskilled attempt at any action is considered to be 1 title below Novice, and the GM is the final arbiter of whether an unskilled character has any chance of succeeding at a particular action.

Sample Uncontested Actions and Their Difficulties

Locality Knowledge: finding the local supermarket: Novice

Mathematics: complex trajectory calculations for a space shuttle launch: Master

Firearms: hitting an immobile, man-sized target at 10 yards: Apprentice

Driving: jumping a car over a bridge as it's opening: Journeyman

Medicine: stopping the bleeding from a 3IP gunshot wound: Journeyman

Stealth: following someone down a busy street without them noticing: Apprentice

Athletics: climbing a chain-link fence: Novice

Swindle: convincing that little old lady from Pasadena that, yes, this *is* the perfect car for her: Journeyman

Security: disabling a car alarm, circa 1995: Apprentice

Computer: hacking NORAD's mainframe: Master

Projectile Weapon: shooting an apple off your son's head with an arrow: Master

Art: painting a realistic depiction of a scene from memory: Journeyman

Survival: knowing which plants are poisonous to eat: Apprentice

degree of success. If the roll would have failed normally, the minimal amount of success is obtained. If a blunder is rolled, the action fails and is handled as such, and the blundering character's opponent automatically succeeds in their action. (For how Damage and Impairment affect Superiority, see pg. 23.)

Skill List

The following is a list of some of the skills available to C^NTINUUM characters. Skills are broken down into categories based on the attribute they derive from. To find a skill's Rating, use the Skill Title Rating Table. Each skill listed is a general category. A specialty must be chosen for each skill. A skill in one category may be purchased during character creation multiple times for multiple specialties, or study in a separate area may be undertaken. The character's full skill rating and title only apply for the specific ability or knowledge pertaining to their specialty; for all other uses of the skill, the character is considered to be of Novice title. For example, Jane has the skill Drive (Car) at Journeyman title. If she were to drive any other sort of automobile (racecar, truck, etc.), she would use the Drive skill as a Novice. If she wanted to learn how to drive a truck, she would need to begin learning starting from the Novice title, as opposed to having to learn the skill all over again, since the Novice level of ability assumes a basic familiarity with all similar vehicles.

Body Based Skills

Athletics
Time Index:
60 days/ 20 days
Description:
Either a sports-based discipline or a general athletic endeavor.
Example Specializations:
Running, Strength Training, Running, Football, Swimming, Climbing, Gymnastics
Notes:
Strength Training
This acts as a multiplier for the amount of weight a character may move or lift. To find a character's weight maximum, multiply their Body rating by 30. This is the amount they may lift in pounds as a simple action. On a successful Body roll they may lift up to 60 times their Body in pounds. If a character has Athletics (Strength Training), the following multipliers apply instead: Novice x30/x60, Appr. x40/x80, Journ. x50/x100, Master x60/x120.
Running
This acts as a multiplier for movement speed on a successful roll (only if character is doing nothing but running for an entire combat bout or more, see pg. 22). At Novice x0, App. x2, Journ. x3, Master x4.

Melee Weapon
Time Index:
30 days/ 20 days
Description:
Fighting techniques of a weapon or class of weapons.
Example Specializations:
Rapier, Knife, Nunchaku, Whip, Club, Axe, Quarterstaves

Thrown Weapon
Time Index:
30 days/ 15 days
Description:
Techniques of thrown weapons, especially those designed for such a purpose.
Example Specializations:
Shuriken, Throwing Knife, Grenade, Shoe

Toughness
Time Index:
60 days/ 30 days
Description:
The ability to resist damage, disease, extremes of temperature, or torture.
Notes:
Use this skill's rating to resist shock and bleeding, and instead of Body when determining the amount of IP a character can take.

Unarmed Combat
Time Index:
60 days/ 30 days
Description:
Proficiency in a bare hand fighting skill.
Example Specializations:
Kung-Fu, Karate, Boxing, Savate, Wrestling, Judo, Aikido, Kickboxing

Mind Based Skills

Anthropology
Time Index:
40 days/ 20 days
Description:
The study of human beings in relation to distribution, origin, classification, and relationship of races, physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture.
Example Specializations:
Mongol Tribes, Ancient Egyptians, Celts, Saxons, Picts, Samoans, 20th Century Japan

Bureaucracy
Time Index:
60 days/ 20 days[2]
Description:
How to operate and move within a bureaucratic system.
Example Specializations:
Small Town Politics, Fighting City Hall, Bribery, Police Politics, Corporate Politics
Notes:
This skill does not change much from era to era, however, Locality Knowledge is also important for its effective use. There is usually no more effective way to "study" this skill than by its actual use, that is, being active within a bureaucratic system.

Computer
Time Index:
20 days/ 15 days
Description:
The ability to use computers and computer programs.
Example Specializations:
Programming, Internet, Graphics, Networking, Computer Security/Hacking

Etiquette
Time Index:
30 days/15 days
Description:
The social dos and don'ts of a culture, especially in a particular era.
Example Specializations:
Ancient Greek, English Royalty, Samoan, Proto-Inheritor, Late Inheritor, 18th century Lower Class French

Finance
Time Index:
60 days/ 30 days
Description:
Knowledge of financial systems and the the flow of money in a society.
Example Specializations:
Stock Trading, Money Laundering, Financial Analysis

Firearms
Time Index:
30 days/ 20 days
Description:
Familiarity with the "small arms" class of firearms and accuracy in firing them.
Example Specializations:
Shotguns, Pistols, Assault Rifles, SMG's, Hunting Rifles

Games
Time Index:
30 days/15 days
Description:
The ability to play and understand different types of games and their rules and strategies.
Example Specializations:
Word Puzzles, Math Puzzles, Military Strategy Games, Roleplaying Games, Mazes, Computer Games

History
Time Index:
30 days/20 days
Description:
Knowledge of the recorded past of a culture, place, event, or subject matter.
Example Specializations:
Ancient Civilizations, American South, Inca Civilization, Civil Wars, Automobiles, Castles

Investigation
Time Index:
90 days/ 30 days
Description:
The process of systematic inquiry and examination of facts to solve a question or find that which is hidden or purposely obscured.
Example Specialties:
Forensics, Criminal Investigation, Narcotics, Homicide, Organized Crime

Language
Time Index:
60 days/ 30 days
Description:
The ability to speak and write a language (if written)
Example Specializations:
English, Japanese, Greek, Farsi, Yiddish, Spanish, Latin, Old English, French, Celtic, Russian.
Notes:
The level of fluency in a language is as follows:

Novice: Limited conversational skill
Apprentice: Conversational
Journeyman: Fluent, little or no accent
Master+: Eloquent, speaks like a native

The amount of time a character spends speaking a language in everyday use counts towards study time.

Law
Time Index:
180 days/ 60 days
Prerequisites:
Specialized Training, access to law libraries
Description:
The laws of a culture or country
Example Specializations:
US Tax Laws, Corporate law, Entertainment, Copyrights,

[2]This number is an approximation; increase in this skill should be roleplayed or described to some extent, as it has an effect on the locality it is practiced in.

Locality Knowledge
Time Index:
60 days/ 30 days
Description:
Intimate familiarity with a place and time. A mix of local geography, history, politics, and folklore for a specific place in a specific range of years, which can vary from place to place, though usually within about 50 years and limited to one town or city, or group of small villages.
Example Specializations:
Late 20th Century Los Angeles, 40 B.C.-10 B.C. Rome, Victorian London
Notes:
The amount of time a character spends in a locality in day-to-day (such as it is for a spanner) living should be considered "study" of this skill and count toward its advancement in addition to any time spent pursuing its study.

Medicine
Time Index:
200 days/ 90 days
Prerequisites:
Specialized training, access to medical facilities and libraries
Description:
Knowledge of injuries and diseases and methods of healing them.
Example Specializations:
Surgery, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Forensic Pathology
Notes:
This example of the medical arts assumes a character learning late 20th century western medicinal techniques.

Observation
Time Index:
90 days/ 20 days
Description:
Observing one's surroundings with an eye for detail. The ability to notice and remember details.
Example Specializations:
Tactical Targets, Forensic Details, Artistic Details

Projectile Weapon
Time Index:
90 days/ 20 days
Description:
Proficiency in the use of (non-firearm) projectile weapons.
Example Specializations:
Bow, Crossbow, Sling, Slingshot

Science
Time Index:
180 days/ 90 days
Prerequisites:
Special training, access to laboratories, equipment and scientific libraries related to area of study
Description:
The study of a scientific discipline.
Example Specializations:
Biology, Metallurgy, Chemistry, Genetics, Astrophysics, Botany

Notes:
The study of science and the scientific method varies greatly with era, mainly due to leveller societal pressures and mores. Also, it is built upon the recorded discoveries of the past. The listing for this skill is based on late Piscean study.

Security
Time Index:
90 days/ 30 days
Description:
Techniques involved in theft and burglary, and their prevention.
Example Specializations:
Safecracking, Breaking and Entering, Alarm Systems, Bank Security Measures, Locksmithing/picking

Survival
Time Index:
60 days/ 30 days
Prerequisites:
Most of this study must be done "in the field", that is, living in the type of terrain one is learning to survive in, or a reasonable simulation.
Description:
Knowledge of how to subsist in a wilderness environment.
Example Specializations:
Desert, Forest, Arctic, Hunting, Poisonous Flora and Fauna, Tracking

Teaching
Time Index:
90 days/ 25 days
Description:
The ability to pass on knowledge to others in an engaging and effective way.
Example Specializations:
Young Children, High School, Adult, Specific Skills
Notes:
A successful use of this skill will halve the time index if teaching a skill to another character. The teacher must be at least two titles above the student in the skill being taught, and the difficulty title of the roll is the title the skill is being worked toward (ie: an apprentice in Biology is being trained to journeyman title, therefore, the difficulty is at Journeyman). A blunder on this roll doubles the time taken. The difficulty title of the roll is the new title being learned.

Quick Based Skills

Art
Time Index:
200 days/ 60 days
Description:
The ability to communicate through an artistic medium. Both the ability to wield a craft and to express oneself through that medium.
Example Specializations:
Painting/Drawing, Sculpture, Film Making, Origami, Glassblowing, Cooking, Writing, Performance, Musical Instrument

Dreaming

Time Index:
120 days/ 90 days
Description:
This Skill is unique; it encompasses the many powers listed below.

The following powers may be attempted at the Title rank indicated. For further information about the Dreaming Skill see Chapter III: Struggling—Dreaming and Communication, pg. 108.

Restfulness (Novice)
With a successful Dreaming roll (Novice difficulty), the character is able to fall asleep at will. With another successful roll, a specific time, or amount of time spent asleep, can be predetermined for the character to wake up at.

Lucid Dreaming (Apprentice)
This allows the dreamer to control the content and direction of dreams to reveal desired information. If Lucid Dreaming is successful, the dreamer may automatically learn something about himself or evidence he has seen but not understood. A second roll is required to discover information about people or events the dreamer is not normally privy to. Note that this information is likely to contain primarily symbolic representation of how others currently perceive themselves, the dreamer, or events. THe GM may set a difficulty for this roll based on the secrecy and obscurity of the information.

Oracular Dreaming (Journeyman)
This allows a dreamer visions of other times, that are reachable from his current Level with his Span. Only on a Victory or a Grace roll will the dreamer be able to control exactly what he wants to learn of the past, the future, or his Yet.

Dreamsharing (Master)
Two characters with Dreaming Skill may share dreams and information, within reason, as long as one of the dreamers is a Master, and they are both in the same Level time. Certain particulars may become clouded depending on fatigue of the dreamers; an appropriate level of difficulty should be assigned. Also, if one of the dreamers is not a Master, that dreamer must make a Dreaming success (Master difficulty) for every REM cycle of sleep (about 45 minutes).

Transchronal Dreamsharing (Grandmaster)
The same as Dreamsharing, only across space-time. This is a remarkable feat, and is limited to being between Dreaming Grandmasters that are within each others range of Span. (I.e. A spanner of Span 2 is forty years away from a spanner of Span 4. Both are Dreaming Grandmasters, but the Span 2 dreamer is not within range to receive the other's dreams, so they may not Dreamshare.)

Drive

Time Index:
varies per vehicle type
Cars/Trucks: 30 days/ 15 days
Boats[1]: 30 days/ 15 days
Aircraft: 90 days/ 60 days
Description:
The ability to operate a vehicle.
Example Specializations:
Car, Truck, Speedboat, Helicopter, Fighter Jet, 16-Wheeler, Freighter/Tanker, Steamboat.

Hypnosis

Time Index:
90 days/ 20 days
Description:
The ability to induce a state of hypnosis and manipulate a person in this state. [See also pg. 115.]
Example Specializations:
Party Tricks, Hypnotherapy, Seduction, Suggestion
Notes:
Someone in a hypnotic state is highly suggestible, but will not do something blatantly harmful to themselves or directly against their nature. Hypnosis will not work on a subject that is consciously resisting.

Stealth

Time Index:
90 days/ 20 days
Description:
The art of remaining unseen, moving without sound, and hiding. Also useful in finding what is hidden and hiding objects.
Example Specializations:
Stalking (following without being noticed), Hiding, Evasion, Forest Terrain, City Terrain

Swindle

Time Index:
120 days/ 30 days
Description:
The ability to lie convincingly.
Example Specializations:
Confidence Scams, Sales, Fast Talk

[1]This is control over smaller, engine-powered boats, this differs greatly from the skill of sailing large craft.

Other

Acumen
Time Index:
Variable
Description:
A professional, business, or leisure skill. A catch-all for any heretofore undefined skill.
Example Specializations:
Printing, Carpentry, Car Repair, Farming
Notes:
May be based on Body, Mind, or Quick.

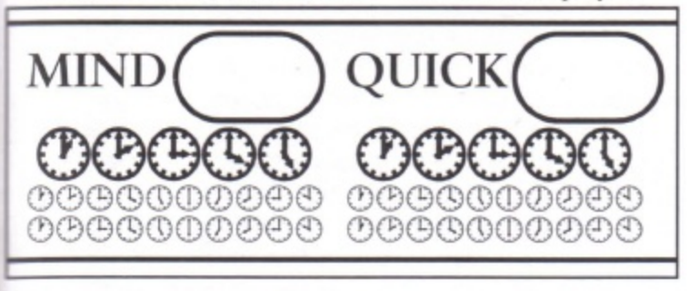
Locality Skills

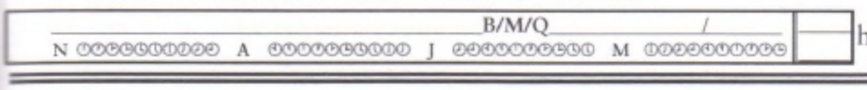
Locality skills are the sets of skills necessary for survival in a particular time. They are possessed by most adults in any society. Your character will have these skills at no cost at Novice title (with the exception of their native language, which is known at Journeyman). Should you want to increase these during character creation, they are considered one title lower for purposes of character point cost. Following is a list of Locality skills for late 20th century adults. For descriptions, see the Skill List.

Drive (Car)
Athletics (sport of choice, ex: football, baseball, swimming, etc.)
Locality Knowledge (native locality)
Native Language (at Journeyman)
Acumen (job skill)
Acumen (hobby skill)

Experience & Learning

Throughout our lives, we collect experiences and knowledge, and the more we do something, the better we get at it. Likewise, this applies to your character. The more a skill or attribute is used, the better your character gets at it. On your character sheet, underneath every attribute and skill listed, there are a row of clock faces. These are for players to keep track of a character's successes and study time. Every time a successful roll is made with an attribute or skill (not including automatic successes), players should fill in one of these clocks with a pencil mark. In the case of a success in a skill roll, mark one of the small clocks underneath both the skill *and* the attribute it is based on. In the case of an attribute success, mark one of the small clocks under the attribute. When all of the small clocks under an attribute are marked, erase all of the marks on the small clocks for that attribute and mark one of the large clocks. When all of the large clocks are marked, that attribute goes up one rating point. When an attribute goes up (or down, for that matter) remember to adjust all skill ratings appropriately. In addition, whenever a character spans, you may roll against his Quick score, if successful, fill in a small clock under the Quick attribute. GM's may wish to restrict the amount of such rolls per game session if they feel a player is Spanning frivolously in an effort to raise their Quick by abusing this rule. The maximum rating to which Body or Mind may be raised in this manner is 7. For skills, you will notice the clocks on the character sheet are divided by the letters N, A, J, and M. Each of these letters corresponds to the first letter of a skill's title. When the marked off clocks reach the letter representing the title above the character's current title in that skill, erase all the marks under that skill and raise its title to the next highest and increase its rating score by one. When a victory, grace, or blunder is rolled, mark off two clocks instead of one.





Every skill has a rating called a *time index*. This represents the time necessary for a character to study and improve a skill outside of use during game play. The time index lists two amounts of time, separated by a slash (ie: x days /y days). The first amount is the study time needed to learn a skill at its novice level. The second is the amount of time needed to check off one clock under that skill. When spending time studying, add up all of the time spent and add it to the character's age. Time spent studying is not usually roleplayed, and either takes place between game sessions or when a character needs to span out of a situation briefly to increase their skills. The time index listed assumes intensive, daily study, with little or no time spent on other pursuits. It is recommended that characters keep a low profile during these times, as they may be vulnerable to frag attempts. It is also required that these periods be kept track of in one's span book.

GMs wishing to create a time index for new skills are advised to determine the amount of time (usually *years*) they feel are necessary to achieve Master title in the new skill and divide this amount, based on the advancement system, as if a character were studying levelly.

Studying also assumes the character has a teacher guiding their study. The

teacher must be at least one title higher than their student. It may be difficult to find teachers for skills archaic to certain eras. For example, not too many people know much about ancient Samoan etiquette in 20th century America, and even fewer offer classes in it. There's also the matter of the cost of training and materials, and the possibility such training is restricted knowledge in a particular era (for example, Green Beret training in the late 1900's U.S., or Wiccan practices in Salem c. 1692).

Combat

Physical combat, as it occurs in C⁰NTINUUM, is settled as any other action, and the normal skill resolution system applies for actions taken in a combat situation. Some unique circumstances arise in combat situations; these are discussed below.

Timing

As far as level time is concerned, events happen sequentially. Under normal circumstances, character's actions happen in the order players declare them. For purposes of combat, or when the exact timing of events needs to be carefully played out, actions can be broken down into *combat bouts*. A bout is a ten (10) second window of time, broken down into five (5) stages of two (2) seconds each. A character's Quick score is a measure of how many of these combat stages are available for him to act in. The Quick/Combat Bout Table shows in which combat stages of each bout a character acts, given their Quick rating. At the beginning of a combat stage, the GM should turn to each character acting in that stage, in order from lowest Quick to highest, and ask them to declare their actions for that stage. The GM should allow around five seconds for the player to decide upon an action, those who hesitate longer than this lose their action that stage, and are only able to defend themselves if attacked that stage. The one with the highest Quick resolves his action first, the rest following in order from highest to lowest Quick. In the case of ties, a competitive Quick roll determines who acts first (or simultaneously, in the case of a tie in the roll).

Quick/ Combat Bout Table:

	stage #1	stage #2	stage #3	stage #4	stage #5
Quick 1 to 2	no	no	yes	no	no
Quick 3 to 4	no	yes	no	yes	no
Quick 5 to 6	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Quick 7 to 8	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Quick 9 to 10*	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

*in case of a Quick higher than 10, return to the top of the chart after 10 is reached to determine when the remaining actions are. That character gets multiple actions on repeated stages.

If you have an action in one stage and wish to wait until a subsequent stage to use it, you may do so. When declaring actions for the stage, a player wishing to hold their action must announce it then. Every stage thereafter, you may choose act, and use your held action before anyone who would normally act in that stage as if you had the highest quick in the stage. If there are other characters using held actions in the same stage, the order of those actions are resolved as usual for those with held actions; however, they still may act before any characters without held actions. You may not "save" held actions. For example, if you are holding an action from stage 1 of a combat bout, and you wait until stage 5 to use it, even though you would normally act on stages 3 and 5, you do not get 3 actions in stage 5. If you are holding your action and take any actions at all, including dodging a ranged or melee attack, or moving, the action is used.

Movement

A character may walk up to 2 feet in a combat stage and still perform another action (with a negative modifier, see chart on pg. 23). Should a character want to do nothing but run for a stage, he may move up to 2 x Body (or appropriate skill) rating in feet. If he wishes to do nothing but run for the entire bout, he may keep moving at this speed for all remaining stages in the bout, and may continue to move in all consecutive stages, regardless of Quick, until he stops.

Ranged & Melee Combat

Whether an attack is defined as ranged or melee determines the type of roll that must be made.

Ranged

Ranged attacks, those made with a weapon capable of striking from a distance, require an uncontested action roll to be made by the attacker only. A successful result means a hit is scored, and the number of the result decides the amount of damage dealt, according to the weapon used (see Damage & Impairment, pg. 24). Certain factors may increase the difficulty of the action, but the one roll is all that need be made.

If a character is aware they are being attacked, they may attempt to dodge only if they have an action in the same stage as the attacker, before the attacker. To dodge, the dodging character may roll against their Quick. A positive result is subtracted from the attacker's rating, a negative result is added as a bonus to the attacker's rating.

Example Combat Actions: Difficulties & Modifiers

Determining action difficulty in Ranged Combat

Ranged Combat rolls, being uncontested actions, requre the GM to determine a difficulty for the action. These are some common circumstances in deciding the difficulty title of a shot.

Action	Difficulty Title
shot attempted at:	
"Point blank" range (0'-10')	Novice
Short range (11'-30')	Apprentice
Medium range (31'-50')	Journeyman
Long range shot (51'-100)	Master
Extreme range (100'-150')	Grandmaster

Modifier	Diff. Title Increase/Decrease
	+1 title=1 title more difficult, ie: Journeyman to Master , -1 title=easier, see pg. 16
Ranged Combat	
Unaimed shot	+1 title
Aiming (per stage)	first stage: 0 second stage: -1 title third stage: -2 titles no further bonuses after 3rd
Aiming through a scope	reduces range two steps
Multiple shots in one stage	+1 title per shot
Target walking/moving	+1 title
Target running	+2 titles
Target not moving	-1 title
Target laying prone	+1 title
Under partial cover (2/3 visible)	+1 title
Under heavy cover (1/3 visible)	+2 titles
Low visibility (darkness, fog, etc.)	+1 title
Extreme low visibility	+2 titles
Firing blind	+3 titles
Laser sight (good up to short range)	-1 title
Using the "off" (left or right) hand	+1 title
Distracted	+1 to +3 titles
Small target (2'x2')	+1 title
Smaller target (1'x1')	+2 titles
Tiny target (6"x6")	+3 titles
Flyspeck target (1"x1")	+4 titles
Big target (twice man-sized)	-1 title
Huge target (a bus)	-2 titles
Enormous target (broad side of a barn)	-3 titles
Gigantic target (a skyscraper)	-4 titles

Melee Combat Modifiers

Melee combat, consisting of competitve actions, is not modified by title difficulty adjustments, but by modifiers affecting ability ratings. Here are some common melee combat modifiers.

Longer weapon reach	+1
Shorter reach	-1
Defending w/no actions this stage	-2 per attack, cumulatively
Attacking from behind	+2
Opponent prone	+1
Weapon is too heavy	-1
Using "off" hand	-1
Wounded	-1 per IP
Higher/ Lower postion	+1/-1
High/ Low quality weapon	+1 to +2/-1 to -2
Multiple attackers	+1 or -1 per attacker for or vs.
Fighting Blind	-3

Aiming

Firing without aiming is terribly inacurate, and incurs penalties to the difficulty of the shot. If a character spends actions aiming, they increase their chance to hit. A character who is aiming a shot continues to accrue aiming bonuses, even during the stages they would not normally act in, until they fire or are distracted (for example, being attacked).

Melee

In a melee combat, the attacker declares their action for the turn to be an attack towards the defender (along with any specific details). If the defending character is able to take an action in the stage they are being attacked, they may choose to counterattack as their roll in the competitive action, even if they would normally take their action later that stage. If they choose to counterattack, then that is their action for the stage. A character may always defend themselves from a melee attack, by trying to avoid the attack, even if they have already acted or normally have no action available that stage, providing they are aware of the attack. A negative modifier applies to this roll if the defender has no actions that stage (see chart). Each roll made in a melee combat does not necessarily represent a single blow; between skilled combatants it can mean a short exchange of moves and countermoves. Both the attacker and defender roll as per attempting a competitive action (assuming the defender is aware of the attack and wishes to fight back). The winner gets their attack or counterattack through, or avoids being hit.

Damage & Impairment

C°NTINUUM measures damage to a character in *impairment points* (IP). When a character suffers damage, he gains a number of IP equal to the damage rating of the attack striking him. For each IP gained, a one point negative modifier is applied to every attribute and skill rating possessed, including Quick for purposes of reading the Quick/Combat Stage Table and Body for calculating running speed. (*Example:* Joe takes 2 IP from a knife wound. Until his wound heals, he will have a -2 modifier applied to all his ratings. Additionally, his Quick is considered 2 points lower, bringing it from a 5 to a 3. So instead of three actions a combat bout, he now only gets two.) This modifier goes into effect the moment the IP are taken. When a character has taken impairment points equal to his Body (or Toughness skill) rating, he is rendered unconscious. If a character suffers IP equal to triple his Body (or Toughness), he dies. Wounds aren't the only way to incur IP. Fatigue, illness, and exhaustion are examples of other forms of impairment. Wounds are usually the most serious examples.

Under optimal circumstances, a character outranking an attempted action or opponent's title has Superiority (automatic success, see pg. 16); this is not always the case when wounded. Every IP taken *raises* the number of titles needed for Superiority. For example, a character who is a Melee Weapon (Fencing) Master could automatically beat an opponent of apprentice or novice title. If he were wounded for 1 IP, he would only claim superiority against those of novice title until his impairment was healed.

Bruise damage vs. Lethal Damage

There are two types of damage a character can suffer. One is *bruise damage*, the other is *lethal damage*. Bruise damage is caused by blunt trauma, asphyxiation, or fatigue. Lethal damage is caused by anything that cuts or punctures the skin and/or internal organs, breaks bones, or causes burns or nervous system damage. It takes longer to heal from and often requires medical attention.

Shock & Bleeding

Shock

Merriam-Webster defines shock as "a state of profound depression of the vital processes of the body that is characterized by pallor, rapid but weak pulse, rapid and shallow respiration, reduced total blood volume, and low blood pressure and that is caused usu. by severe esp. crushing injuries, hemorrhage, burns, or major surgery". Some common symptoms of shock are nausea, dizziness, and fainting. These rules are a simplified example of the effects of shock in a combat situation. They are for game purposes only. If you wish to add a greater level of detail to your C°NTINUUM game, GMs are encouraged to research the specific effects of shock and injury.

When a character suffers from a lethal wound of 2 IP or more, or a bruise wound of 3 IP or more, he must make a roll against his Body rating to avoid going into shock at the end of the current combat bout. A failure means the character is in shock for 1d10 bouts. A Blunder on this roll means the character falls comatose (this condition lasts 1d10 days, and can be reduced by dividing the number of days by the result of a successful Dreaming roll; only one roll may be attempted to reduce this amount of time, and a negative result is *multiplied* by the number of days). A triumph or grace roll, on the other hand, not only prevents the shock, but stops the effects of bleeding from that wound, if any.

If a character enters a state of shock, he is unable to attempt any further actions until he stabilizes. He remains immobile, and is unable to stand, speak, or span.

Bleeding

When a character takes lethal damage from a cutting or puncture wound, he may continue to bleed after the initial wound. Lethal damage is also more difficult to heal from. Wounds should be kept track of separately on the character sheet, noting how much IP are sustained and whether the wound is bruise or lethal damage. Bleeding from multiple wounds is kept track of separately.

When a character suffers 2 or more IP of cutting wounds, he must roll against Body. Failure on this roll means he will bleed afterwards, furthering his impairment. Left unchecked (i.e., without some sort of medical attention) the character will eventually bleed to death. A character that is bleeding suffers an additional 1 lethal IP at stage #5 of the combat bout the wound was received *per bleeding wound*, and again for every other bout thereafter, until the bleeding is stopped. To stop the bleeding requires a successful medical skill roll (Doctor, Paramedic, etc.) or default. A roll must be made for each wound causing bleeding, and at least 2 full combat bouts must be spent attending to the character. Even if the bleeding is not completely stopped by this roll, it still may be slowed to 1 IP every 4 combat bouts as long as the result is not a blunder.

Wound Severity Table

Amount of IP taken from a single wound

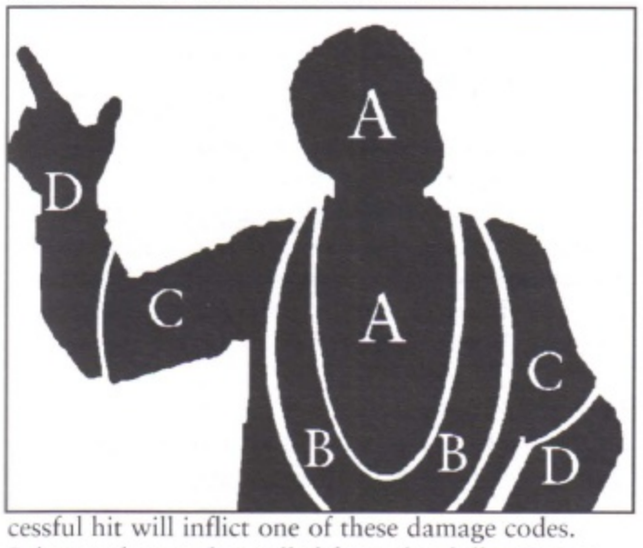
1IP	**Minor Wound:** blow to the midsection, minor sprain or cut. Anything below this level of damage is not considered to cause any IP (tiny scratches or cuts, small bruises, etc.)
2IP	**Serious Wound:** non-vital cut or gunshot, a powerful blow to the face.
3-4IP	**Severe Wound:** non-fatal gunshot, falling 20 feet. This amount of damage will knock an average adult (Body 3) unconscious.
5IP	**Critical Wound:** near a powerful explosion, large-caliber weapon hit. A wound of this magnitude will usually cause permanent damage such as loss of limb, appearance, or faculties.
6-8IP	**Extreme Wound:** riddled with bullets, covered in napalm (per combat bout), rolled over by a tank.
9IP+	**Deadly Wound:** LAW rocket to the face, This sort of wound is enough to kill an average adult instantly... and messily

Determining Damage & Hit Location

All weapons and potential sources of damage have four damage ratings, laid out like so: D/C/B/A. Depending on the result of the roll, a suc-

Result	Damage Code
0-2	D
3-4	C
5-7	B
8-10+	A

For example, Agent Sculder's pistols damage rating is 1/2/3/4. His Firearms skill is at J7. He is making a Master rated shot (-1 modifier), so his modified skill rating for this shot is 6. He fires and rolls a 2. That means the outcome of the challenge roll is 4 (6-2=4). Comparing this to the chart, we see that Sculder's shot does a C result of 2 IP to his target.



cessful hit will inflict one of these damage codes. Subtract the number rolled from the skill rating, as per normal action resolution, then compare the number with the weapon damage chart below. The damage rating for an unarmed attack is as follows (round down);
A=Body (or skill) rating, B=3/4 of A, C=1/2 of A, D=1/4 of A. All unarmed damage is considered Bruise damage. Round down to calculate all fractions. See the diagram below for approximate hit locations according to the damage code.

For damage from sources other than attacks, the GM should assign the potentially damaging situation a damage rating, and make a roll for it as if it were attacking the character with a skill rating of 10. The GM need also determine if such damage is lethal or bruise.

For example, Cynthia falls off of a ledge, the GM rules the fall as having a damage rating of 2/3/4/5, the GM rolls a 6, for a C result on the damage chart (10-6=4), and assigns Cynthia 3 bruise IP. Cynthia needs to roll for shock now. Poor Cynthia.

Damage Sources

Source	D/C/B/A	Lethal/Bruise
Falls:		
10 feet	0/1/2/3	B
20 feet	1/2/3/5	B
40 feet	2/3/5/7	L
80 feet	2/4/6/9	L
Hit by vehicle:		
10 MPH	0/1/2/3	B
20 MPH	1/2/3/4	L
40 MPH	2/3/4/6	L
60 MPH	3/6/9/12	L
Asphyxiation per bout	1/1/2/2	B
Burning per bout		
1st degree	1/1/1/2	L
2nd degree	1/1/2/3	L
3rd degree	1/3/4/6	L
Struck by lightning	2/5/10/20	L

Graces, Victories, & Blunders in Combat

An attacker rolling a Grace or Victory doubles the damage rating of the A damage code for that attack (if damage was the intention). Otherwise, a spectacular (and usually dramatic) success occurs as usual. A Blunder in combat should mean that the character is particularly disabled, perhaps losing their footing or having their weapon misfire or break. Very possibly, they wound themselves.

Spanning into and out of a level Combat

It is possible to Span up, down, and levelly during a combat bout. If doing this to gain advantage against a leveller, one must keep in mind the fourth Maxim. Of course, simply killing your opponent insures they never tell of what they saw. Against a fellow spanner, this kind of maneuver is tantamount to time combat, and any more than one such span per any spanners in a level combat against one or more spanners immediately becomes a time combat and is subject to such rules (see Time Combat, pg. 117).

Going Up

If you wish to span Up into a specific stage of combat in the bout you are spanning from, a Quick roll must be made. On a successful roll, you enter the intended stage of the bout desired, in the location you wish. If the roll is unsuccessful, you span into the first phase of the next bout after the one desired, in the location, and facing the direction wished for.

Going Down

Spanning Down into a combat bout you're already involved in would cause you Frag, effectively entering one into a time combat with oneself. Only Narcissists and fools engage in such antics. If a better prepared you is what is called for, it is possible, though dangerous, to slipshank a Gemini encounter into the fray (see pg. 39) and have an elder self appear. This is subject to the normal rules for Slipshank and Gemini encounters. This course of action is considered highly risky, as seeing an elder self perish can be extremely traumatic and if the junior were to fall in such an incident, it is likely everyone involved would suffer Frag. (See Second Death, pg. 41.)

Example of Combat

Three characters are engaged in combat. Harry (B:3 M:5 Q:7), Sven, (B:5 M:4 Q:6) and Cynthia (B:4 M:5 Q:6). Sven and Harry are engaged in a melee with one another, while Cynthia is attempting to pick Harry off from a distance with a rifle.

First, the GM lists each character's Quick to determine their sequence of actions.
Cyn: Q:6 Sven Q:6 Harry: Q: 7

Bout 1, Stage 1

Harry, acting first, attempts to run Sven through with his rapier (damage code 1/2/3/5), his skill is M6, Sven, armed with an axe (dam code 2/3/5/7, skill J7,) decides to counterattack, since he can take an action this stage. Since there is no Superiority of skill level deeming automatic success, so this is a normal contested action. No modifiers are applied by the GM. Harry rolls an 2 and Sven rolls an 5. Though both rolls were successful, Harry's result was higher, and his attack succeeds. Comparing his roll with the damage result chart, we see Sven takes 3 lethal IP. Sven, because of his wound, receives a -3 to all his attributes and skills. His Quick is now considered a 3 for determination of when he acts in the bout. Sven must now roll against his Body score, normally a 5, with the -3 modifier, to check if he will go into shock from the wound, Sven rolls a 6, he will suffer from the effects of shock at the end of the bout. He must also roll to see if the wound will continue to bleed. He rolls a 2 so it will not continue bleeding.

Cynthia now acts, her player asks the GM how difficult the shot to hit Harry would be. He rules this as a Master shot because Harry is moving (+1)and obstructed by Sven (+1), Cynthia is only an apprentice with a rifle (dam code 1/3/4/6, skill A6), and decides to hold her action and aim this stage, tracking Harry with her sights to offset the negative modifiers.

Bout 1, Stage 2

No one acts.

Bout 1, Stage 3

Harry acts first again, pressing his attack on the wounded Sven, who is only able to avoid the attack, at an additional -1 modifier because he does not normally act this stage due to his wounds. Sven also has taken 3 IP for a total of a -4 modifier to his roll. Harry rolls a 9, and Sven rolls a 1, Lucky Sven is able to parry Harry's attack.
Cynthia now takes a shot, the GM rules the shot is now a Journeyman action, it would have been a Master action, if not for the 2 stages of aiming. Cynthia takes a modifier of -1, and rolls a 6 (rolling again to check for a Grace roll, but rolls a 2 this time), and misses.

Bout 1, Stage 4

Harry, hearing the gunshot, runs away at his full running movement of 6 feet per stage. Sven attempts to chase him, but his running speed this stage is down to 4 from IP, and can't catch up to Harry this stage.

Bout 1, Stage 5

Harry continues running. Cynthia shoots at him again. The GM rules this a Grandmaster action. Cynthia rolls a 1 (no victory), hitting Harry for 3 IP. This is equal to Harry's body rating, and he falls. A roll against his Body, now modified to 0, results in a 6, Harry is unconscious and bleeding. Sven bleeds for 1 IP and he goes into shock, fainting. Harry also bleeds for an additional 1 IP.

Healing

Bruise Damage

A character naturally recovers IP from bruise damage through rest. A character resting for one full minute after the damage is incurred will recover 1 of the IPs from their total bruise damage. If unconscious, the character will regain 1 bruise IP per hour of rest until conscious again. The remainder of the bruise damage is recovered depending on it's source, see the table below.

Lethal Damage

Lethal wounds over 1 IP need medical attention to heal properly. in the case of most cutting and impaling wounds, stitches are required, if not surgery. If the wounds are not kept clean and bandaged, infection may occur as well. Lethal wounds of 1 IP are recovered without medical attention other than cleaning and bandaging. See the table below for healing times.

Healing Times

Lethal Damage Sources

Damage Source:	Approx. Healing Time*
Cutting/piercing wounds: Bladed weapons, Gunshots, Bites	2 weeks per IP
Burns : Fire, Acid, High-voltage shocks	9 weeks per IP
Internal Damage: Poisons, Severe hemorrahging, Broken bones	4 weeks per IP

Bruise Damage Sources

Blunt Trauma: Impacts, Strikes (punches, kicks, etc.)	2 days per IP
Fatigue: Heavy exertion, Lack of oxygen, Muscle strain	3 hours per IP

*Without rest and medical attention (where neccesary), double all healing times

Weapons

The following is a list of commonly found weapons and their game statistics. This is far from an exhaustive list, rather it is a broad overview of the various types of weapons and the damage they inflict. GMs are encouraged to further research this area, and modify these statistics to personalize your game with specific weapons. Many comprehensive books have been written on the subject for just such purposes. All damage from a weapon is lethal unless otherwise noted.

Ranged Weapons

Abbreviation key: Ammo: ammunition, RoF: rate of fire (how many times a character may fire in one combat stage), SMG: submachine gun, LMG, light Machine gun, HMG, heavy machine gun, Con: Concealment rating (apply to perception rolls as a modifier to notice if an attempt to carry the weapon concealed is made)

Name	Ammo	RoF	Con	D/C/B/A	Notes
Derringer	2	1	-4	1/1/2/3	
Revolver	6	1	-2	1/2/3/4	
Semi-Auto	15	2	-2	1/2/3/4	1
Heavy Pistol	12	1	0	2/4/6/8	
Hunt. Rifle	8	1	N/A	2/4/6/9	
Shotgun	8	1	+2	1/3/5/7	2
Shotgun (solid slugs)				2/5/7/10	
SMG	30	3	0	1/3/4/6	1,3
Assault Rifle	40	5	N/A	2/3/5/7	1,3
LMG	100+	10	N/A	2/4/6/8	1,3,4
HMG	100+	10	N/A	3/5/7/10	1,3,4
Longbow	1	1	N/A	1/2/4/6	
Crossbow	1	1	N/A	1/2/5/7	5
Blunderbuss	1	1	N/A	1/2/3/4	5,6
Sling	1	1	-6	1/1/1/3	5
Taser	2	1	-2	-special-	9

Melee Weapons

Abbreviation key: U: unarmed damage total (see pg. 24)

Name	Dam	Con	Length	Notes
Knife	U+1	-4	6"-12"	
Sword (small)	U+2	-1	15"-36"	
Sword (med.)	U+3	N/A	36"-60"	
Sword (large)	U+4	N/A	60"-84"	4,8
Club	U+1	N/A	24"-36"	7
Staff	U+1	N/A	48"-72"	7
Spear	U+3	N/A	60"-96"	
Polearm	U+4	N/A	72"-120"	4,8

1=Will jam on a roll of 0
2=Shotgun, shot is one level less difficult (ie; challenging becomes average) at 20 feet away or closer.
3=Every shot after the first is at a cumulative -1 modifier due to recoil without a successful Body (strength related) challenge is made or the weapon is fired from a stationary mount.
4=Heavy, user must have Body (modified for strength purposes) of 5+, or use weapon with a mount (bipod, tripod, etc.) if a gun.
5=Takes 1 full combat stage to reload.
6=Inaccurate, -1 to skill rating.
7=Damage from weapon is Bruise damage.
8=Slow melee weapon, -1 to Quick for purposes of reading the Quick/Combat Bout Table while using this weapon.
9=Does no normal damage, target, if hit, is immobilized for 2d10 bouts.

Breaking Things

Like characters, inanimate objects have a Body rating. When they have taken IP equal to their Body, the item stops working, or is sufficiently broken (ie, hole in a door or wall, etc), at 3x Body, the item is damaged beyond recognition or repair.

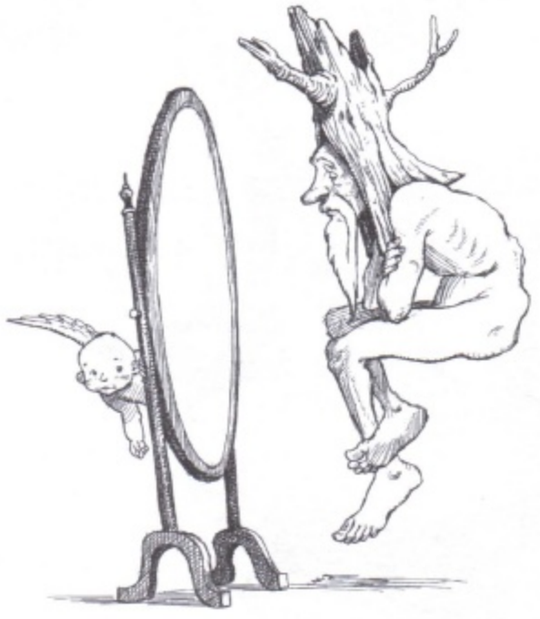
Armor

Some items are tough enough to withstand damage. They have an Armor rating. This number represents the amount of IP that must be exceeded before the item or what it is protecting actually accrues IP. Any IP delivered over this number is taken as usual. Only Lethal damage will affect an item with an Armor rating.

For example, a car door has a Body of 5 and an armor rating of 2. Bob fires a burst from his Uzi into the car door. His first shot does 6 IP. This is 4 over the Armor rating, and does 4 IP to the car door. His next shot does 3 IP, this is one over the armor rating and does 1 IP, damaging the door enough to fire through it now. His next shot, if it exceeds the armor rating, will damage both the car door and whatever is on the other side.

Item Body and Armor Ratings

Item	Body	Armor Rat.
Door, standard construction	3	1
Wall, standard construction	4	1
Car Door, standard	5	2
Car Windshield	4	0
Plate Glass	2	0
Iron Chain, 2"thick	6	4
Thick Leather	4	1
Plate Armor	5	2
Chainmail	3	2
Tank Armor	25	9
Battleship Hull	40	25



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Chapter II: Spanning

"The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice, it will roll in ecstasy at your feet."

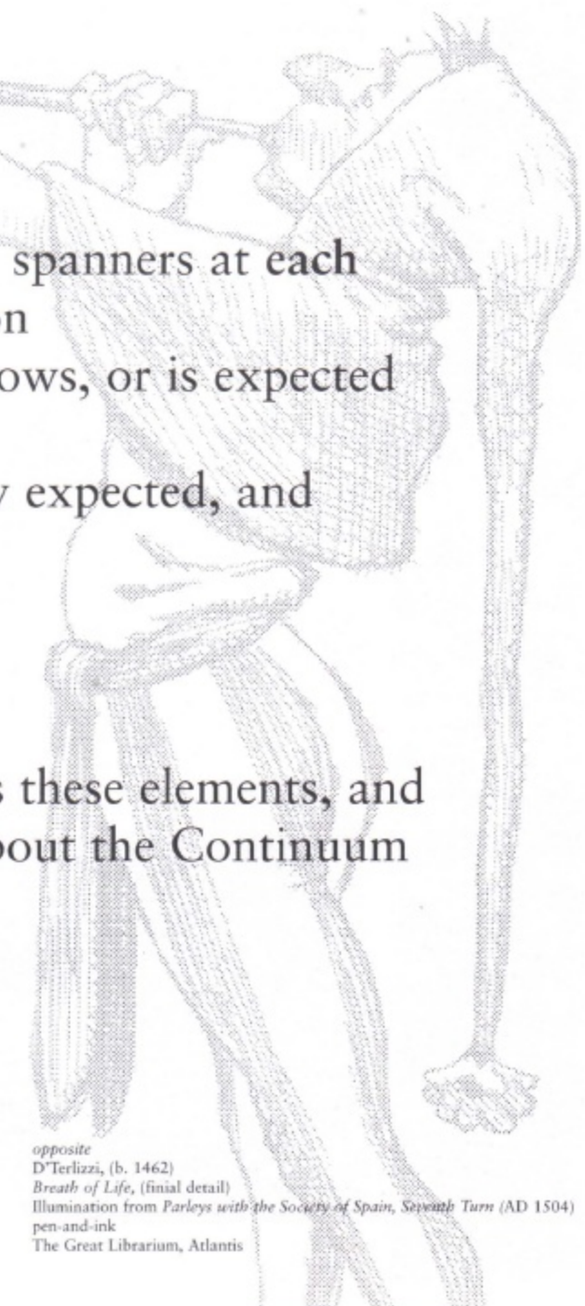
—Franz Kafka,
The Great Wall of China, Reflections
AD 1917.

Rules

- The **basic information** available to spanners at **each rank of span** with especial detail on
- **Personal knowledge**– what one knows, or is expected to learn
- **Personal behavior**– what is socially expected, and acceptable

Stories

- Cynthia's **day-to-day life** illustrates these elements, and presents **additional information** about the Continuum



opposite
D'Terlizzi, (b. 1462)
Breath of Life, (finial detail)
Illumination from *Parleys with the Society of Spain, Seventh Turn* (AD 1504)
pen-and-ink
The Great Librarium, Atlantis

The Memory of In-Between

The **In-Between** is what spanners call the period of their first learning to travel time, because most memories of this period are suppressed. The reasons for this are detailed below.

Chapter 2 is written as if it were information available to a novice spanner. Details of the activities of the many facets of life in the Continuum— higher Spans, Fraternities, the Societies and so on— are presented as they would be to a Span One inquiring about his newly adopted civilization.

2. Time Out of Mind

Cynthia sits on a bicycle, riding to class. She remembers the bicycle inside her, but not much else of the weeks that only she misses. White white white light sears over all these things.

Sweet breads, and warm juice. No sherberts or other treats because of the extremes of temperature. Later, soon this is not a problem.

Charlie's hands in hers, leading her to the next room, the high road. Conversation from nearby rooms overheard. French.

Parties and dinners. Reciting the Maxims amid catcalls. Hazing, but happy feelings.

A wet dying bird she could not save. Very important, shame attached.

A lot of television-watching, and movies. Not leisure, not hypnosis, but analysis.

The frames in sequence. The training of all twentieth-century levellers. Play a commercial again and again. It is the same moment. Small changes are always noted: editing makes a different commercial, not the same moment. Charlie's voice, muffled: "This is the ingrained experience that makes the vast numbers of spanners feasible. High population makes it possible."

A visit to empty fields, unknown woods. The animals silence, then grow loud again. Disorientation each time, feeling lost, then suddenly knowing every star and planet above her.

She arrives for class, precisely on time, all her work in perfect order, with more rest than anyone on campus.

Her dreamstate is more distinct than the memories of learning to span.

White white white light sears over all these things.

Span 1

Range: 1 year, 1 mile

3. Sleepwalking On The Cliff

Cynthia is sitting in a cozy living room, far different than the garage she had been brought to, months of age ago. The event was very near, to one side.

Whoa. What happened. "Wow. That was quick. No. No, wait. There's a couple things. Hey, my memories are all... white..." Cynthia looks up, and her gypsy elder, the strange 'S' is there with a quiet serene look on her face.

Cynthia reaches into a pocket and takes out her span book, and notes the gemini incident. She stops, regarding the pencil and notebook. "I just did that, like... it was habit." I even know the date and time...

Her elder leans forward and pecks her on the head. She grabs her shoulders and gives them a good shake. "You'll do great things." 'S' stepped back and disappeared.

Charlie was smiling nearby. "I am not going to stoop to Dorothy and Alice quotes. Rise and shine, Cynthia. It's a good day to get out and time travel."

"She vanished. And that didn't surprise me. These half-memories are bizarre." She looks around the room and sees all the members of her corner. Ray, Lydia, Evana whom she must have met in the in-between, and Charlie, her mentor. Faces that radiated trust, like that of her own sister. Sven is nowhere to be seen, but he is a wanderer, a part of their corner because he is so far from his original locality. Perhaps this isn't a moment he wants to share, but Cyn has only good feelings about him.

"Everyone, this is Cynthia."

Evana looks up from a book she is reading and smiles. "Hey, spanner."

"Long time no see, Cynful," says Lydia, "Excuse me, but I hate reruns..." She vanishes.

"Welcome to 'Choice Hops', Cynthia. I did not choose the name for the corner," smiles Ray.

There is also a man in dark suit and sunglasses carrying a briefcase. Cyn doesn't recognize him at all.

"This is Vido," Charlie says, "with the Moneychangers Fraternity. He'll verse you on the details of how to handle transactions, especially when going Down. And I think he's got your requested windfall."

"Requested?" What all was I doing while learning to span?

Vido opens the case on the side table next to her, revealing racks of money. "Would you prefer this as cash, credit card, valuables, or shall I deposit this in an account for you?"

Cynthia gapes at the suitcase of cash. "Um, yeah, just deposit— well—" She reaches out and touches the hundreds with the strange, big head of Ben Franklin off-center on each. Just to make the connection. Then she returns her hand to her lap. "Yeah, you can deposit that. Did I just sell my soul."

Charlie shakes his head. "Not at all. Getting

rich is easy for spanners, compared to levellers, as I'm sure you can imagine."

"Yeah, Michael J. Fox and that sports almanac. But this seems, well, way too generous, you know? Out of the Blue."

"Getting rich is easy, but tedious. That's why the Moneychangers' Fraternity handles initial enfranchisement for spanners."

Cyn looks at Vido. "It ain't so tedious," he says in his throaty voice as he closes the case. "Not when it's your passion."

"That's not all like, drug money or something."

"Nah, it's mostly speculative. Now, if you wanted Persian gold pieces, you'd have all those enslaved Lydian miners on your conscience, little lady."

"Hands off my slave gold," yells Lydia, who starts playing Asteroids on an arcade machine in the nearby rec room.

"When and if you join a Fraternity," says Charlie, "you'll perform services for other spanners. Cash is just the Moneychangers' part of the barter."

"So I get paid now, and work it off later?" Cynthia is still dubious.

"Later for you, beautiful," says Vido. "The Fraternity is already satisfied with your services, and we've thanked your elder." He adjusts his tie.

Cynthia sits and thinks about it, smirks, and notes 'Earn Vido's gold' down in her Yet. "So life just gets better and better?"

"You haven't fought your first narcissist," says Ray, busy on his handheld. "Or felt frag. Money is a trapping of your old life, Cyn. It's just another object. It's not what narcissists will attack you for, either."

"What will they attack for," asks Cynthia quietly.

"For being a stumbling block in the path of righteousness," Ray growls with real menace. His data entry becomes more agitated. "For living free while mankind knows only pain. Because YOU— " He throws aside the device and stands facing her, fists curled. "—You are wrong. Utterly. You're a bizarre aberration, an inhumanity. You must not be. Ever."

Charlie chimes in, with only slightly less intensity, "I understand your pain and concern. But think of how soothing nonexistence will seem. Far better than the damnation you're spreading to all the peoples of earth."

"Goodbye, bitch," says Evana coldly, not taking her eyes from the book.

Vido pops his knuckles. The sound of exploding asteroids repeats incessantly.

Cyn has one hand raised, and she is halfway ready to span out. "Oh... kay, guys. I think I get the point."

"Yeah, that's all cinematic villain talk," says Ray, relaxing. "When in fact they're just fanatics desperate on one or two little issues they have with the universe. And they don't often confront you and talk, either, just frag you."

"Why are they so unsatisfied? I don't want to sound like some jaded child of the nineties, but what do they hope to change?"

"It's a different issue with each," says Charlie, simply. "If they could agree on a single event to attack, and organize around, they'd be a greater threat."

"Well, the lives of Hitler, Christ, Mohammed, et cetera are favorite targets," says Ray. "I don't envy those corners near big name levellers, no how. And someone really has it out for little Joan of Arc, but that's okay, she got to be a spanner."

Charlie clears his throat.

"Sorry, again. Further information on Joanie isn't available here."

"The point is, some spanners get stuck," says Charlie. "They can't make the mental leap from leveller life. No one has to make the leap all at once, but some refuse to make the basic choice of letting the world exist."

"So we just go about, not letting our spanning be seen, and the world rolls along fine," says Cynthia.

"Basically, yeah. We just have to watch out for ourselves, for one another."

"Hey. Let Desert Storm be," she smiles. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Simpson, you die—"

"And your father's car accident?"

Cyn's face bends.

Charlie waits. Then: "We mentioned it before. Early on, during your invitation. But you were a leveller then. What will you do now."

Cyn does the calculation. Only two days travel Down. Dad. His leg. A thousand ways to keep him from taking the car—

"Dammit Charlie, that's so wrong."

"You think that's bad? Can you keep from finding out when he dies? Your mother's fate? Any children you might have? Or lack of them?"

Vague nudges from the white space of her memory tell her she's passed this test, more than once. But she cannot remember these victories, and so tears build.

Where am I? What on earth am I doing? A case with a million dollars already hers dangles nearby. Lydia slaps buttons in the background.

There is too much input, too many thoughts at once. With a fresh, unexpected instinct, she spans across the room.

She is standing, facing the wall, breathing erratically. It's several seconds before she begins to turn around. Something nags the back of her mind, something mundane compared to wiping the wet off her face. She finds she is reaching for her span book, fumbling for a pen for the notation.

"Where you been?"

"What."

"Well," says Charlie, "that was your first span out since your in-between. Congratulations. Where'd you go?"

"Just here!" screams Cynthia. And staring at the empty span book, the suggestion hits home: I am so free. I can just be anywhere at thought, pretty much. I could have gone to stop Dad, and my friends wouldn't have known. "But someone would know," she breathes.

"Know what?" says Charlie pleasantly.

"Screw your temptations, I don't want to know!"

"Atta girl," smiles Ray. He picks up his handheld, and returns to work.

Cynthia throws out an obscenity and spans level to Charlie's face. "Wanting to help my dad does not make me a fanatic, like those—"

"Doesn't it?" says Charlie. "You want to change something to benefit yourself." She starts to interrupt, but— "Or your own personal crusade. Narcissists get stuck for all the right reasons, Cyn. But they're leveller reasons."

Twelve different sentences are on the edge of Cyn's open mouth, Then: "Don't I owe him any help, then. Is my family just cut from me, just like that."

"Not at all. I think they expect you at school, at a job afterwards. There's plenty you can do for them as Cynthia. Are you going to show them all this time travel, like some narcissists run off and do—"

"NO."

"What makes you so different?" says Evana quietly. She's rolled over on the couch and is watching.

Cynthia looks around the familiar and unfamiliar room. It feels right and even her nose starts saying it's home, but, "Frankly. I— I want to spare them the agony of this." She meets Charlie's steady gaze. "Does... this really work? This life?"

"I imagine that the corner nearest where your dad had the accident has heard you have a lot of emotion tied up in the event. They won't let you spread frag around, I think you know that."

"Yes, yes. But this life, Charlie." She has not taken her eyes away.

"Well, first off, get your spans written down. I taught you better than that."

For a few tense moments, Cynthia stares at the little book, awaiting her record like a blank bowling scorecard. What's the use. But if I don't... then I'm alone, then I lose... She makes some quick angry marks in it, for the two level spans. She still has no memory yet of really travelling time, only space.

"One thing I tell my protegés— and I always hope the memory survives the in-between— is that time travel is absolute power. That's why levellers have such a hard time puzzling out paradox."

I don't remember it, Charlie. Cyn is looking grim. "And they say absolute power—"

"Is checked by absolute power. It would be a Maxim, but it's like saying, 'Breathing is a part of life.'"

"No, it corrupts absolutely."

"It corrupts levellers absolutely, because a leveller with absolute power has only himself. The Continuum means we have one another to bump against. Why don't you try a span, two seconds Up, into the future."

"That an order?"

"Not my style, Cynthia. I'm your mentor, not your elder. I think it would be good for you."

She lowers her eyes to the floor. Then she imagines the far wall, by the standing lamp, two seconds Up.

Turning like light into light, she spans.

It feels slightly different than the level spans, but not really. To her surprise, Charlie is standing there right next to her. There's only the one of him in the room, and he has on a different shirt than farther Down.

"What gives."

"Word gets out about the smallest things." He smiles, slightly. "Cynthia Cartwright's first span. It's in a story, somewhere. We're still human, Cyn. Gossip makes the rounds."

"Yeah. Now what if I just go Down a minute from here, to this same room. Frag the lot of us." And she already feels the goosebumps, like turning to face the edge of an awesome cliff.

"What if you light a match and toss it toward a gasoline can," says Evana. "What if you try to jump in front a train. We'd rush to stop you, and worry for your sanity, girl."

Charlie says, "Like I know you'd try for this spot—"

"—you'd know I'd try something stupid," she nods. "Or be able to find out. I must've learned this before..." Again, she tries to eke memory out of the whitespace, and stares into nothing.

"So I guess the answer to your question is yes," says Ray. "Yes, this life really works."

"Life doesn't necessarily get better and better," says Charlie. "But if you can cope it, it gets bigger and bigger." Cynthia turns her head toward him. Something about continuing the conversation from long before feels strongly natural. "If not, hey," he shrugs. "There are quiet jobs, especially with the Scribes or Antiquarians."

"One thing you got," says Ray comfortingly, "is time. And try not to be paranoid about someone out there knowing your every move. 'Cause the spanner that knows your moves the best is you. Your elder."

Cynthia thinks on the dark-haired gypsy with her face. Slightly maternal. Fairly nasty. "Great things, huh," she mutters aloud. "Respect my elders. What if I do become a bitch?"

"Respect your future bitch," says Lydia, slamming away.

Fairly nasty but highly respected. She tries to picture a road that leads from here to there. She would need every ounce of wit to stay sane, every ounce of support to stay human. Where to begin?

"Vido," she says authoritatively. "I'm going to need to buy a lot of chocolate."

Lydia finds this the funniest, and loses her last spaceship laughing.

A. Personal Knowledge

The Basics of Span, Frag and Causality

Spanning

The skill of time travel is called Span, or Spanning.

In the game, it is expressed as a number from zero on up. Characters all have a Span rating, but so do all things throughout spacetime.

Anything that cannot traverse time has a Span of Zero. People who cannot traverse time are called **levellers**, since by their nature they are forced to remain in the unfolding present.

All spanners have a Span of 1 or higher. For game purposes, use the Span table to determine the distance able to Span.

Terminology Across Time

People who can traverse time are called **spanners**, or **chronies**. "Chrony" is usually reserved for one's friends, or mates in the Continuum, as it is a pun among late Societal English-speaking spanners. However, the term is also used frequently in British, Greek (*chrone*, "time-man") and other corners.

The term "span" derives from the earlier form "spin". Since people from many different eras have many different names for spanning, you should be aware that variants on the term 'spin' are often used by spanners from agricultural corners (almost anywhere before AD 1700). For curious details on use of the word "spanner" in the AD 20th century, see the story *Beside myself with laughter*, beginning on pg. 43.

There are many different terms for ranks of achievement in the Continuum, but nearly all are based on one's ability to Span. Hence, spanners of Span One ability are referred to by the shortened form of "Ones". Span Two spanners are "Twos" and so forth. (Though most find it rude to refer to non-spanners as Zeros, and use the term "levellers".) Spanners perceive little difference between a spanner and his skill [see listings for 'sentient force' and 'span' in the Glossary, ppg. 42-43]. But for purposes of this rulebook, when the distinction between a person and their spanning skill must be made, a person is spelled out (i.e. "He is a Span One,") and the skill is written numerically (i.e. "He has earned Span 2.")

Finally, much is made in science fiction of the 'difficulty' in keeping verb tenses straight in a time travel environment. The Continuum has allowed this apparent confusion free reign, as it has disguised the simplicity with which spanning can be understood. With the Aquarian cusp, the time has come to explain. Plain English[1] suffices, with a few distinctions.

1) The terms "past" and "future" are largely discarded, being useful only to levellers. When a spanner spans toward the Big Bang, he is said to be **spanning Down**. When he travels away from the Bang, he is **spanning Up**. Spanning levelly, of course is **spanning Level**.

2a) **The Yet** refers to actions a spanner has yet to perform: His 'personal future', specifically his Required Future. [See also What is the Yet?, pg. 47.]

2b) The actions a spanner has already lived through, his 'personal past', is called his **Age**, or "a part of his Age". [See also What about keeping track of my Age?, pg. 36.]

3a) Verb tenses are usually kept in the **present tense** when describing events in the third person. I.e. "Stan **is** in the tenth century, then he **spans** to in the ninth, then he **takes** a trip to the twenty-second." Stan is in all these places; you might meet him in any of these times, just as he might discover when and where you are, and pop in for a visit.

3b) If Stan uses **past tense** and says, "I **did** that action," it's in his **Age**. He may have done it yesterday or tomorrow— it makes no more difference than if he performs an action in one room or another. Assuming he's an honest, loyal Continuum spanner, Stan has done the action, and it's a part of the universe.

3c) Similarly, if Stan uses **future tense** and says, "I **will do** that action," it's in his **Yet**, or he intends it to be there; again, it could be last year or next year he's referring to— he just has yet to do it. If it's an action he *knows* he *must* do (having witnessed it already, for instance) the phrase, "It's in my Yet," is appropriate.

A thorough glossary of common terms begins on pg. 41.

What does spanning feel and look like?

Spanner poets have written reams of beautiful expressions describing the sensation of being in one place and then suddenly another, wholly alien but filled with the noise, aromas and sights of a world run by humanity. But the realist John Jacob MacHale described it best: "It is simple. You turn, you are there. No more strange than pausing in the doorway to listen to the farewell of a friend."

To extend the bicycle analogy, it is very like a pleasant ride on a warm spring afternoon. It feels very right, and has no unpleasant side effects, unless you've pushed yourself beyond your limits [pg. 35].

Spanners vanish and appear silently when they travel. Occasionally a small noise may be heard from displaced air, and there is also the Shift Sight ability [pg. 10]. Shift Sight is a sensitivity to the subtle shifts in magnetism caused by spanning.

No external devices or vehicles are required for spanners to travel to their maximum Span, carrying themselves and about ten pounds of belongings. More can be carried at Spans above 1.

[1]Most Earth languages are adapted and used as simply in a time travel context.

What are the limitations to spanning?

The Span table shows the maximum distances through time one can travel before rest, and the maximum distance in space one can travel per span. These limits are primarily ones of convenience, since a Span One can travel hundreds of years through time— it will just take him hundreds of days, due to the need to rest. It's the difference between Columbus sailing to America, and flying there on a jet. Ultimately, Age becomes a factor. Higher Spans normally have access to life-extending technologies, since they've earned it.

The time between spans is usually no less than a heartbeat. While the act of spanning itself defies the speed of light, human decision-making is naturally slower.

Teleportation In Space Only

A spanner may travel through space at a radius of miles as shown on the Span table. Spanning space alone costs no Span, and can be done even after a character has spent all their Span.

While this power of teleportation seems incredibly powerful, spanning time actually entails travelling vast amounts of space, too. See the Spacetime Map of Earth, pg. 102.

Remember that the Fourth Maxim always applies [see frontispiece]. Your vanishing in the midst of a gaping crowd will keep many high Spans busy for awhile, and they won't think very well of you.

Spanning into a Previously Unknown Space

Spanning into an unknown space is as easy as walking into a room you've never visited. Though it is more akin to jumping feet first into a manhole with your eyes closed.

There is no mistaken materialization into walls or solid matter. Air and liquids part to hold you. If an unfamiliar space is targeted, the GM may ask you to roll against your Quick. Success merely means you appear in an optimal spot to get your bearings. Failure means you span in facing a wall, or into complete darkness, or into an air shaft or other inconvenience. But spanning itself is only deadly if one tries exceed maximum Span.

Bad environments that you can span into include spaces barely able to contain you, and fluid environments so thick it nearly does not part for you. Displacing powders is always questionable: Expect to able to span into the midst of a snowstorm, but not to displace hard pack snow on the ground. Debatable environments are up to the GM to judge as spanworthy.

There are also deadly environments. Nothing prevents a span into a furnace or a gas chamber. Outer space is the great constant, and mostly kills spanners that foolishly exceed their maximum Span [see below]. Worst of all these are areas of heavy nuclear or electromagnetic radiation. While any human can suffer damage to tissues and mind in such environments, spanners endanger themselves by spanning in or out of fields of high energy. Fields of this kind are rich in natural paradox which can tear a spanner's cohesion to shreds. In game terms, you can pile on the frag points just by using your ability to move while in these zones.

The GM has further information and tables for dangerous natural sources of frag, and how to cure it.

Span Table

Span	Years traversable without rest	Miles traversable in one span	Weight able to transport (in pounds)	Title
0	0	n/a	n/a	Leveller
In-between	1	1	10	Initiate
1	1	1	10	Novice
2	10	10	100	Apprentice
3	100	100	1000	Mentor
4	1000	1000	10000 [5 tons]	Master
5	10000	10000	100,000 [50 tons]	Exalted

How do I keep track of my spanning?

Spending and recording Span is done every time a character travels time, whether a year, a day, or merely a second. This is recorded throughout the game on the character's Spanning Card. An explanation of how to use it, and a copy of the cards themselves is on ppg. 224-5.

Every time a character travels time, no matter how briefly or innocuously, the player must note it on that character's Spanning Card. This represents the careful records all Continuum spanners keep to ensure they don't frag themselves or anyone they know. The GM is allowed to penalize characters who do not keep careful records. These penalties are detailed under the Frag rules [pg. 53].

At the end of each play session, the GM calls for all players to reckon their Age. Those that have spotty records will have a hard time recalling all their Spans, and earn themselves penalties. If the GM wishes, characters with well-kept records may earn small bonuses, raises in pay at their level job, or other signs that the universe is smoothly

working around them.

Keeping close records is also vitally important during Time Combat [see pg. 117].

Regaining Span

This is done by resting for one day. A "day of rest" is defined as one 24-hour period of regular (level) activity with no use of Span, which includes at least one eight-hour period of peaceful uninterrupted sleep. Use of the Dreaming skill [ppg. 20, 108] would be considered an interruption, though normal dreams are certainly part of peaceful sleep.

For game purposes, Span is not regained incrementally, but all at once at the end of the required rest period.

Travelling Beyond One's Span

This is a highly risky gamble, resulting in exhaustion or death. A roll against Quick is made whenever a spanner tries to exceed his remaining or allotted Span.

A Span One would take a -1 modifier to his Quick for **every year and fraction thereof** that he attempts to travel beyond his Span.

A Span Two would take a -1 modifier to his Quick for **every ten years and fraction thereof** that he attempts to travel beyond his Span, and so on...

Any failure results in the spanner missing his target. Since the earth, system and galaxy are hurtling through the universe at thousands of miles an hour, a small misstep results in sudden death in or near space. Novice spanners are warned that most such deaths result from burning in the ionosphere.

Any spanner who dies from exceeding their Span may not take advantage of the Surviving Death rules [pg. 40].

Any success results in the spanner reaching his target date and place, but **utterly** exhausted: He has no Span, may not even attempt to Span levelly again until rested, and must rest ten days to recover. And only on a Victory roll will he avoid the following further complications:

Any other successful result requires he **roll again thrice**, once each against Body, Mind and Quick.

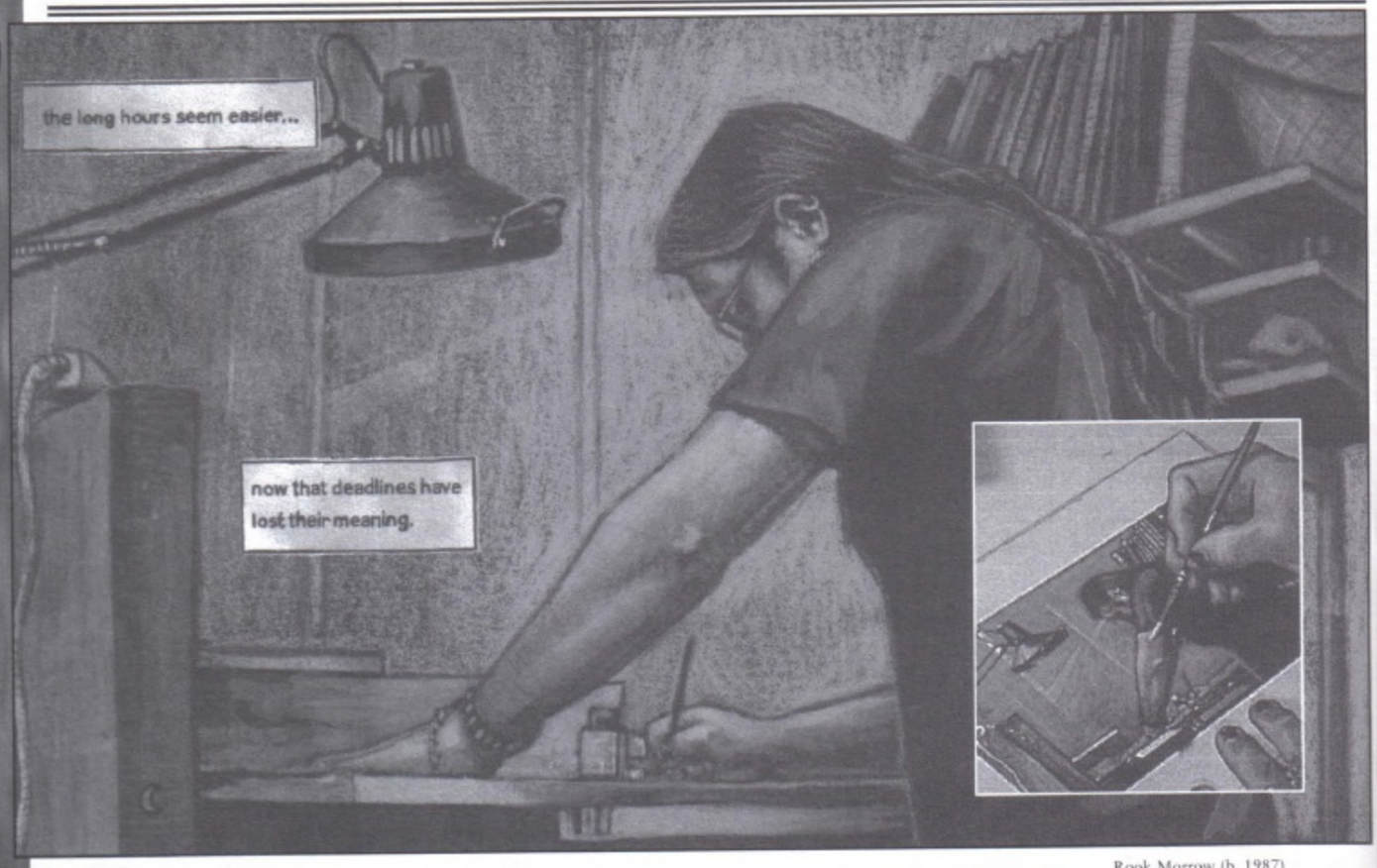
A) Failure of the Body check, and he goes into shock [pg. 24].

B) Failure of Mind, and he goes at least partially insane. There is an extensive list of possible insanities and their consequences in Chapter 3: Struggling [pg. 138].

C) Failure of Quick, and the spanner lands with relative safety on earth, but in a place and moment of the GM's choosing. The spanner will not know he's hit the wrong target unless he discovers his mistake, or if a friendly spanner tells him.

Victor Beauregard Houston (b. AD 1857)
Spanning (AD 1921)
watercolour
private collection, Paris

Artwork © 1999 Drew Tucker



Rook Morrow (b. 1987)
panel from *Blue Shift* graphic novel
ink, acrylic & graphite
Aetherco Comics
AD 2008

What about keeping track of my Age?

Age is still a very real factor in a spanner's life. The term 'Age' refers not just to a spanner's life, but to the events he has already experienced. [Compare **the Yet**, pg. 47.] When a leveller refers to how old he is, a simple calculation reveals what years he's experienced. A spanner's 'past' can only be calculated by the recording his spans and his duration at each Level— another important reason to keep track of your spans. [See How do I keep track of my spanning?, above.]

A spanner still ages normally, as the body only knows time in one direction. It's important to record the passing of time by your internal clock, and in the game, space for this is provided on your Spanning Card. While recording Age during the game— especially Time Combat— is essential, it's usually only necessary to do a final tally of a character's Age at the end of each game session. Note that after many sessions, the aging character may find it difficult to explain his change in appearance if he revisits a place looking noticeably older than he should.

Information on age-thwarting technologies is available to the GM.

The Daily Grind Stood Sideways

Becoming a spanner doesn't mean quitting your day job, at least not right away. Level society demands to know a person's means of support, that you pay your taxes, have a job, perform military service, and otherwise have your papers in order. Spanners have the advantage of not needing to perform these tasks in sequence; since they have endless time with which to develop reports, finish illustrations, write code or research answers— and are always punctual— they tend to excel at their ordinary jobs. Spanners can afford (both emotionally and financially) to be magnanimous to their leveller co-workers, and help worthy pals get ahead.

Again, Age can catch up to you, so don't take seven years off from work, unless you're ready to disturb your co-workers and annoy your fellow spanners with a questionable prank.

Other details from your old life like birthdays and anniversaries take on subtle new meanings. Spanners have more control over this common force of the universe, and many treat special days on the calendar as levellers do old folklore or superstitions: Things that cross your path now and then, but no longer have as much relevance as they once did.

Certain corners celebrate a spanner's birthday as 365 days of his Age after his first Span, whenever he may be in spacetime. Others celebrate it on the level anniversary of his first span, so that every-

Artwork © 1999 Raven Mimura

one can fit it into their schedule. [See Typical rules around the corner, pg. 51.]

How much do I need to know about calendars?

The characters, being spanners, acquire great and extensive knowledge of the earth's passage through the cosmos, even as a Span One. Every detail, every fluctuation in earth's orbit and rotation, and its every variance of gravitational topography is studied like a geophysical survey map to aid focussing their transit. Calendars are memorized by heart to assist the smooth blending of spanning from moment to moment and era to era.

Use of calendars through the years also changes drastically. Every culture mankind has formed has had their own unique method of counting time. The Continuum even has its own calendars, the **Societal** which counts from the beginning of the Societies, and the **Universal** which counts from the from the measurable beginning of the Universe to the maximum farthest point of spacetime that can support life.

Some players may be daunted by the fear of learning arcane calendars and complex date calculations. Put these worries aside: the C°NTINUUM game makes simulating spanning as simple as possible. **Appendix C: Counting the Days** [pg. 214] has perpetual calendars, marked with days spent and remaining, plus instructions on how to use them.

You may want a pocket calculator to help add and subtract days, hours and minutes. But beyond this basic tool, little wrestling with math is required.

If the GM and players desire greater realism, more details of real calendrical and spacetime anomalies (leap-seconds, the earth's obliquity, etc.) can be added. But it's hardly a requirement: The main goal of any game is to have fun. It's safe to assume that the well-trod spacetime of the Societies is well known to your characters. Leave the spanning to them.

What do I need to know about history?

Knowing about history is commendable, but time is a landscape to a spanner. You can go there.

As a leveller, you may have wanted to visit distant cities and places; New York, Paris, Rome, Tahiti, Easter Island. You wanted to go because of their reputation. But how well did you know every street and marketplace, even the location of famous sights in relation to each other, before going, or at least before buying a map? How well do you even know the map of your own town?

When new spanners think of history, they tend to consider only their closest surroundings, or what they've heard about "ancient" times. Humanity is much vaster than that recorded by levellers in any given span. To this end, novice spanners are reintroduced to the zodiac.

The Eras of the Zodiac: 24,000 Years of Humanity

The zodiac exists as a shorthand to human eras during the Societies and just before, for the benefit of spanners considering travel or adventures in such times. It also tends to broaden the minds of new spanners when they consider that people—spanners and levellers— are very much alive and active in each of these times.

Despite various conflicting leveller astrological calculations, the zodiacal eras correspond roughly to 2000 years each, as detailed below. Assuming you are playing a character contemporary to the publication of this book, your spanner is from the Aquarian cusp, the period of the transition between the Piscean and Aquarian Eras.

Aquarian Era

c. AD 2000 - 4000

The hallmark of this time is unity and self-discipline, and the inevitable control over all the forces of the universe. The Societies come to an end, and the time of the Inheritors begins.

Piscean Era

c. AD 1 - 2000

This is the time of the power of Rome, Christendom, a marked increase in population, and the crossing of the oceans in great migrations.

Ariesian Era

c. 2000 - 1 BC

The era of independent states, each with aloof philosophies. The rise of strategic warfare among levellers.

Tauran Era

c. 4000 - 2000 BC

The perfection of cattle breeding and the worship of the corralled herd; conformity in levellers and envy of level simplicity in spanners. The Hunt of the Sun brought to an end.

Geminid Era

c. 6000 - 4000 BC

A time of narcissist intrigue and great wars between spanners. Time of the elder human gods known to later levellers.

Cancerean Era

c. 8000 - 6000 BC

Receding ice and rising seas are the themes of this span, and the hardness of the people. The Hunt of the Sun begins.

Leonid Era

c. 10000 - 8000 BC

The time of the first domestication of cats, and of the return of individual prowess as a general standard.

Virgin Era

c. 12000 - 10000 BC

The early Societies, of which much is secret, potential, and unwritten.

Libran Era

c. 14000 - 12000 BC

The era of decision and measured, meted justice. The collapse of Antedesertium and Interregnum are here. The lower border of the Societies, and the Atlantean Councils.

Scorpiod Era

c. 16000 - 14000 BC

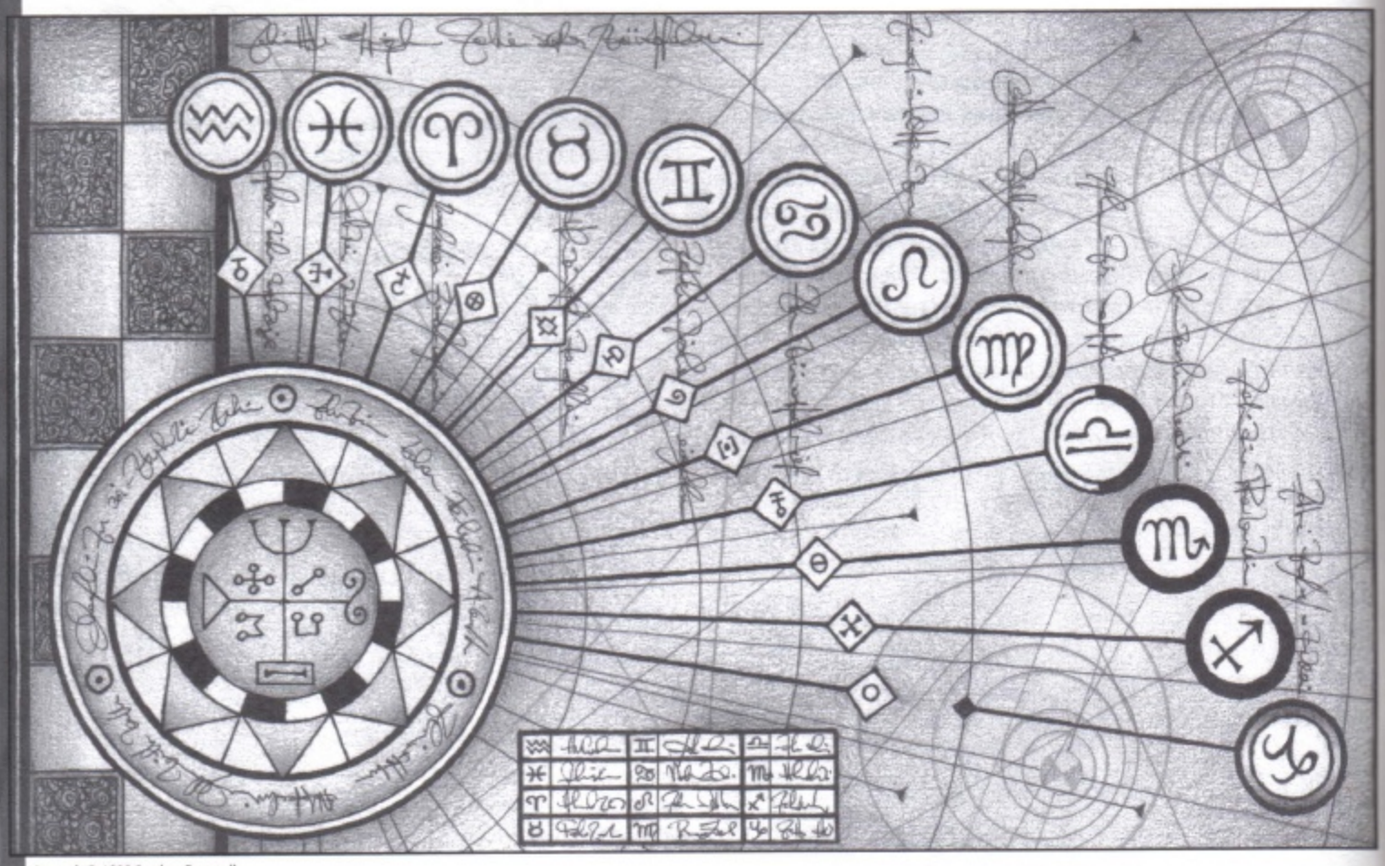
The time of the narcissists seeking hellish chaos, revenge, and pain. The great sickening of the level population.

Sagittarian Era

c. 18000 - 16000 BC

A more noble time of Antedesertium, but determinedly at odds with the Continuum.

Celastrus (b. 1271)
Frontispiece (detail) to his *Instructions for Pigrimages* (12972 BC)
nanized graphite
Museum, Alexandria



Artwork © 1999 Stephen Barnwell

Capricornic Era

This era precedes 18000 BC, and also follows AD 4000.

After 4000, Earth is entirely part of the Inheritors and the vastness of Civilizations among the stars.

Before 18000 BC, Ancient Earth is also protected by the Inheritors, but is home to host of incredible Civilizations, not all of them human.

Further information on this and the other eras is available to the GM.

What else can I do with time travel?

The Gifts of Physics: Curious Things You Can Do

Being able to teleport through space and time has its pleasant side effects....

Slipshank

Frag is never desirable, but even the most seasoned spanner is backed into a corner now and again. A difference is often made when a favorite weapon is discovered hidden within reach, or a lost map is in one's breast pocket after all.

A spanner may find any known object to be wherever he wants it at the Level he's currently at. This does **not** allow him to suddenly having in his head new information or known skills, but can include a Gemini Incident [see below], a future newspaper, or even a note from himself. The price is one point of Frag, and the need to physically place the slipshanked object goes in his Yet. Happily, successful placement of the object by the spanner himself cures the Frag.

Note that the Continuum forbids slipshanks to spanners with more than zero Frag [based on the Third and Fifth Maxims]. A spanner so bold as to slipshank when his Frag is above zero will take a penalty equal to his Span on his rolls and Graces will count as Failures until his Frag reduces to zero.

Gemini Incidents— Encountering Oneself

Encountering oneself is almost inevitable. Curiosity drives junior spanners, and responsibility and necessity leads elders back to Gemini Incidents.

Young Geminis

A spanner may not even remember his earliest set of Geminis: ones that took place before he learned to travel time. These are called the Young Geminis. In the game, you must determine the maximum number of times you may have met yourself before you learned to Span. Roll the D100, divide by ten and drop all fractions. This produces a result of 0-10. These incidents are in your Yet, but will be ignored if you die before completing them all. (This is a game convention to represent half-remembered encounters in youth, and the disguises elders take when meeting very young juniors.) If this number is ever exceeded, one point of Frag is earned, in addition to any other penalties.

Victor Beauregard Houston (b. AD 1857)
Gemini (AD 1892)
watercolour
collection of Lise Lancomme

Known Geminis

Naturally, you may encounter yourself after you begin to Span. At every increase in Span (including beginning at Span 1), roll the D100, and divide as above. This number (0-10) represents the absolute number of Geminis that occur during that Span. These incidents must occur before you may advance to the next Span.

Each incident, naturally, happens twice: once for the junior (the "junior incident") and once again later for the elder (the "elder incident"). Only the junior need fulfill the absolute number before increasing Span, but the elder keeps the incident in his Yet until the Gemini Incident is completed.

During the junior incident, GM portrays the elder spanner. During the elder incident, the GM reprises the junior spanner. This allows the player to experience the Gemini much as his character would.

Artwork © 1999 Drew Tucker

Initiating a Gemini

The GM may include a Gemini Incident at any time. The GM plays the elder version of the spanner, and may appear to deliver limited information, take or give objects, or just pass through ignoring the junior, among many other possibilities. The GM is strongly discouraged from portraying a player's spanner in a way wildly counter to the spanner's personality; aloof and distant is recommended if a difference in character must be emphasized. The GM is forbidden to play an elder dying before a junior's eyes, nor may the GM deliberately initiate a Gemini that would Frag the character due to overstepping the absolute number for the Span.

If a player decides his character should meet himself, he must have either 1) played the junior incident first, or 2) be meeting his junior of Span Zero as per the rules above. Otherwise, he takes a point of Frag as per the Slipshank rules [see above].

Roleplaying the Elder Incident

For GM and player alike, it is difficult to mouth verbatim everything from an earlier playing session, especially if it took place weeks before in real level time. Since the elder is supposed to take command of the incident, due to superior knowledge and the deference shown by the Second Maxim, some leeway in the game is allowed. The player playing the elder (and the GM reprising the junior) need only approximate the previously established conversation and actions to avoid Frag.

It is the GM's discretion as to whether the play of the elder incident is too different from the junior, and warrants a Frag penalty. GMs are encouraged to be lenient.

Note that the actual Gemini Incident will be considered to be the last one played. If Frag is declared, action must be taken upon the junior incident. [The Continuum stresses that genuine Gemini Incidents outside the game are much the more strict in scruple.]

'Instant' Skills

Got caught on an out-of-control hydrofoil, with a bunch of screaming levellers who are supposed to live to ripe old Ages? Don't know how to pilot it? Being a spanner makes the solution simple. Span away, learn how to hydrofoil, and span back.

Following the **time indexes** of skill listings on ppg. 17-21, you can determine how much Age it costs to learn a skill. Just declare what you are learning to the GM, fill out the appropriate actions on your Span card, and save the day.

Victor Beauregard Houston (b. AD 185?)
Facing Death (AD 1888)
watercolour
Musée Contratemps, Marseilles

Facing Death and Surviving It

Narcissists love to play with others' lives and existences. That being said, violent death can be a brutal price for the gift of spanning. It's a grim reminder for all the survivors that we are mortal too.

However, we have the unique facet of meeting one another up and down each others' timelines. It may happen that one of us discovers the moment of his death, possibly by experiencing it up close. Having this in your Yet can be stressful and demoralizing [see Chapter 3: Struggling— Madness and Related Problems, pg. 138].

In game terms, a player who wishes to continue playing a character that has died may do so, and the character **may continue to advance up to two more ranks of Span.** This is explained by allowing a spanner to escape his deadly fate at the last second, but learn that his broken/charred/dead body is lying there all the same. The usual explanation is that he spanned out... and will have to span back in again one day.

His death goes in his Yet, of course, and therefore the character at some point must face up to his fate and retire from play. But it can be a way of concluding an adventure without having to invent a new character halfway through. The only requirements to continue playing "after Death" are that the character is at least a Span One, and has less than 5 points of Frag.

Artwork © 1999 Drew Tucker

Second Death

If a player has already played the moment of his spanner's death, and the spanner is killed again in a different way during the game, the character is instantly set beyond Frag 7, and anyone directly involved with him at the time of Second Death also takes a point of Frag. This tends to quiet the sense of bravado that players who know their characters are destined to die, would otherwise have.

Glossary

Common terms and names used by the Continuum.

These terms are in general parlance among spanners, especially English-speakers of late Societal spacetime. It should be noted that all the words have roots in leveller language(s). If a conversation is ever overheard by a leveller, the subject matter is likely to be mistaken for something else. Only a handful are very unfamiliar to modern speakers (frune, futury, in particular).

For convenience, all cross-references are in **boldface.** The only exceptions are terms appearing in the same listing more than once, and the terms "span" and "spanner", due to their frequency throughout.

[See also Appendix B: Roleplaying Basics, pg. 213, for terms common to roleplaying games.]

Antedesertium n.
[*Latin* "the land before the time of the desert"]
The worldwide **narcissist** empire posing the greatest threat to the **Continuum**. Flourishes c. 18,000 to 13,557 BC.

As/As Not
The point during an incident of **frag** beyond which natural **paradoxes** do not heal by themselves, but collapse the universe, instead. **Sentient force** is applied at this point to heal frag.

Atlantean Councils n.
The 117 sessions at the beginning of **the Societies** that determined membership and many rules of conduct for spanners within Societal spacetime. Held every five or six years on **Atlantis**, beginning in 12969 BC.

Atlantis n.
[< *Greek* Atlas "Titan supporting the heavens" < *ProtoIndoEuropean (PIE)* tel "to lift, support, weigh"]
Spanning battle station modeled after certain **Inheritor** designs, large enough to house a city; largest of several allotted for the **Societies'** defense against **Antedesertium**. Host to the **Atlantean Councils.**

Chrony n.
[*Modern English Slang* "old companion" < *Greek* khronios "long-lasting" < chronos "time" < *Uncertain*]
A fellow spanner one considers a close friend.

Civilization n.
[*Middle English* < *Old French* < *Latin* civis "citizen" < "member of a household" < *PIE* keiwi]
To spanners, the overarching period dominated by a particular species or subspecies, as opposed to merely a culture. Examples of civilizations: **Antedesertium, the Societies,** the **Inheritors.**

Continuum n.
[*Latin* continuus [neuter form] "continuous" < continere "to hold together, restrain" < tenere < *PIE* ten "to stretch"]
1. Humanity (including nonhuman sentience) that can span, and the social framework that holds it together.
2. The entirety of sentience throughout spacetime, most specifically that which is used to maintain existence.

Corner n.
[*Middle English* < *Old French* corniere < *Vulgar Latin* cornarium < *Latin* cornu < "horn, extremity" < *PIE* ker "horn"]
1. A homestead or equivalent establishment where spanners of a particular **locality** can be themselves without **leveller** scrutiny. Essentially, a local safe house or home base for spanners.
2. By extension, the **locality** around the home base.

Dreamtime n.
[dream + time (dream < *Middle English* drem < *Old English* "joy, music" < *Germanic* draugma < *PIE* dhreugh "to deceive") + (time < *Old English* tima < *Germanic* dimon < *PIE* da "to divide")]
A state wherein people, primarily spanners, with the Dreaming skill, encounter one another to exchange information; a state of consciousness equivalent to Plato's World of Ideas. Named for the dream-state of Australian aboriginal myth.

Down, Downward adv.
[*Middle English* doun < *Old English* dune < ofdune "from the hill" < (of "off" + dun "hill") < *Germanic* dunaz "hill" < *Protoceltic* dhuno "fortified, enclosed"]
Towards the past from one's current place in spacetime. Pastward. Normally capitalized to differentiate it from a mere direction in space. Compare **Up** and **Level.**

Elder, Elder Self n.
The later, older self in a **gemini incident** [see below], that has experienced the incident before. See also **junior.**

Era
See **zodiac**, below

Exalted n.
[*Middle English* exalten < *Old French* exalter < *Latin* exaltare < "(to lift) up high"] sing. or pl.
Spanner(s) of such skill that they can easily travel the length of **the Societies** and beyond. Considered authorities and intermediaries with other **civilizations**, especially with **the Inheritors.**

Frag, Fragmentation
[*Modern English Slang* "to blow up [someone surreptiously]" < fragment "to break" < *Middle English* < *Latin* fragmentum < frangere < *PIE* bhreg "to break"]
1. n. The state of inconsistency with the universe, corrected at the **as as/not** by proper application of **sentient force.**
2. v. To frag. To use **sentient force** to cause such inconsistency.

Fraternity n.
[*Middle English* fraternite < *Old French* < *Latin* fraternitas < frater "brother" < *PIE* bhrater]
A group of spanners of like mind, usually performing a unique service to other spanners and/or the **Continuum**. Like a medieval guild, a fraternity is the profession of a spanner, when among spanners. Members of any given fraternity can be found throughout the time of **the Societies** and often beyond.

Frune, Froon v.
[*Old English* gefrunen]
To find out by asking questions. This is distinct from other forms of information, and gathering information. Fruning implies the knowledge of others, with its consequences, and the advertising that you are aware of certain events. It represents success in finding information, as distinct from merely asking (which is just the expression of the desire for information). Fruning emphasizes **sentient force** applied to the discovery of information from other sentience.

"Further information is not available here."
This phrase is used whenever an informative answer cannot be given to a spanner, on the understanding that knowing too much or too little can be burdensome to one's **yet**. The sentence is perfectly information-neutral, revealing only that additional information on the subject matter a querant seeks will not be found at that place and time— not whether the respondent knows, or doesn't know the answer, nor any clue to its discovery or relevance. See also **frune**.

Futury n.
The equivalent of history, only in reference to "the future"; prophecy. Detailed information of unfolding events. The term is most often used by novice spanners, though with some trepidation, as many avoid learning much futury.

Gemini Incident
An event where a spanner meets himself. Such incidents have strict rules of conduct, primarily governed by the Second **Maxim**, 'respect your **elders**, they know more than you'. Not to be confused with the Geminid zodiacal era, which is known for its frequency of gemini incidents. See **zodiac**.

Hegemony, The Hegemony n.
The name by which many narcissists refer to **the Societies**. Used derogatorily.

Inheritors n.
1. The people, mostly spanners, who flourish after the spacetime of **the Societies**.
2. When capitalized, the spacetime of the **civilization** of the inheritors.

Interregnum n.
[*Latin* "between reigns"]
The spacetime between **Antedesertium** and **the Societies**, 13557 - 12969 BC. A time of extreme chaos and **frag**.

Junior, Junior self n.
The earlier, younger self in a **gemini incident** [see], that has not experienced the incident before. See also **elder**.

Level n.
The "present" as currently occupied or described. The ordinary passage of time from past to future.

Leveller n.
A person unaware of spanning, and unable to span. An ordinary human.

Levelry n.
1. The equivalent of history, only in reference to "the present"; news.
2. The thrill of living in the moment, as experienced by a spanner. The pun on revelry is deliberate: The excitement new spanners have when visiting times they'd never thought they'd see and/or the thespian experience of playing out known events with dispatch and panache.

Locality n.
1. A spanner's original birthplace, especially where he was raised as a **leveller**. The spacetime most familiar to a spanner by experience and association.
2. The place(s) a spanner has made his home. See **corner**.

The Maxims n. pl.
[*Middle English* < *Old French* maxime < *Medieval Latin* propositio maxima "greatest proposition" < *Latin* maximus < PIE meg "great"]
The set of axioms spanners loyal to the **Continuum** follow. The maxims are believed to be universal throughout all spacetime, with only minor variations.

Narcissist n.
[*Latin* narcissus < *Greek* narkissos < *Mediterranean*]
A spanner at odds with the **Continuum**, using his ability and **sentient force** to attempt to alter events, usually for his own aggrandizement. So named after the figure in Greek myth who was so infatuated with himself, he became a vegetable.

Paradox n.
[*Latin* paradoxum < *Greek* paradoxos "incredible", "conflicting with the expected" < (para "beyond" + doxa "opinion" < dokein "to think" < "to cause to be accepted" < *PIE* dek "to take or accept")]
1. Any situation of two mutually-exclusive events occurring at the same time; can occur naturally, accidentally, or deliberately. [See ppg. 56-7 for elaboration.]

2. Used by some to refer to the moment of **as/as not** [see]; though properly described, the as/as not contains a near-infinite number of potential paradoxes.

Sentient Force n.
Deliberate act of will, usually in reference to its application in ensuing events, or attempting to change them.

Shift Sight, Shift Reading n.
The ability to sense an incoming span, or a recent departure. Can be refined to be able to tell if a spanner is headed Up or Down.

Society n.
One of the hundreds of cultures/nations accepted as a cohesive unit by the **Atlantean Councils**. One of the Societies [see below].

A society exists in both space and time, and interlocks with neighboring societies along its accepted borders in spacetime. Examples of societies: Britain, Zimbabwe, Celtia, Rome, Maya, China, United States.

Societies, The Societies n.
The civilization existing in spacetime between **Antedesertium** and the **Inheritors**. Made up of hundreds of individual cultures/nations, which provide the civilization its name. Trade and competition among societies make up much of the political machinations of the civilization. Flourishes 12969 BC - AD 2400.

Span
[*Middle English* spanne "short distance or interval" < *Old English* spann < *Germanic* spannon < *PIE* spen "to draw, stretch, spin"]
1. n. The distance of spacetime a spanner can travel safely without rest. Often indicative of social status and responsibility.
2. n. A length of time, used especially of the entire duration of a person, object or **civilization.**
3. v. to span. The act of travelling through time at will.
Most schools of spanner philosophy regard all of the foregoing definitions as facets of the others.

Spanner n.
1. A wrench.
2. One who spans; a person that can traverse time at will. Contrast **leveller**, above. Natives from before the Industrial Revolution, prefer the related term *spinner*, as in a weaver.

Up, Upward adv.
[*Middle English* up < *Old English* uppe "on high" < *Germanic* upp < *PIE* upo "under, up from under, over"]
Towards the future from one's current place in spacetime. Futureward. Normally capitalized to differentiate it from a mere direction in space. Compare **Down** and **Level.**

"What time is it?"
This phrase, or obvious variants, is the main signal spanners use to identify one another. The proper response is to repeat the phrase verbatim when asked. **Levellers** will act confused or annoyed; fellow spanners will expect to lead or be led to a safe area where matters privy to spanners can be discussed without leveller scrutiny.

Yet, The Yet n.
[*Middle English* yit < *Old English* giet, gieta "still" < *Uncertain*]
Usually referred to with an article (the Yet, my Yet, his Yet, etc.) The Required Future. Each spanner comes across direct information of events that they have not experienced, but will. This is referred to as the Yet to distinguish it from other, especially linear, definitions of a "future" or "past".

Young Gemini
The **gemini incidents** [see above] that occur before a spanner learns to span. **Leveller** encounters with **elder** (spanner) selves, nearly always unrecognized for what they are until much later.

Zodiac, Zodiacal Era n.
[*Middle English* < *Old French* zodiaque < *Latin* zodiacus < *Greek* zoidiakos kuklos "circle of carved figures" < zoion "animal" < *PIE* gwyoyo]
Twelve sections of spacetime of approximately 2000 years each. Each era has special meaning and events relevant to Societal spanners. Spanners often identify themselves to each other by their era before revealing narrower details such as their locality or corner [see pg. 49].
The zodiac and its variants exist to assist spanners in understanding their local spacetime; its astrological connotation is the face presented to **levellers.**

B. Personal Behavior

4. Beside Myself With Laughter

It's in April 1993, Evana is Span 2 and in an instructive mood this morning. She has been showing Cynthia techniques to wash clothes by hand. When to use a washboard, earlier sources of bleach and soap, drying methods, how to use a standard clothespin.

Cynthia is coughing from the contents of a Boraxo canister from 1959. "When do we get to the judo and all the action-adventure?"

A couple fists and a foot swing close to Cynthia's head and body. "You mean killing people?" says Evana.

Cynthia steps back several paces. "Well. Stopping bad guys. I guess."

Evana spans over and leans in close; Cynthia brings her hands up in half-mock terror. "First, you gotta know stuff," intones Ev with a growing smile. "Woman-stuff. Oh, I know you can just throw dinner in the microwave and vacuum the rug once a month. But not before twenty years Down. If you got goals for yourself, you better learn how to fit in Down there."

"Woman's work was not a big goal of mine," says Cyn, noticing her hands. "My hands are blue."

"And if you get Down before World War II, if you're going as any kind of working girl, you'd better learn that every Monday, your hands get blue."

"I'm a millionaire, Evana."

"I'm a billionaire, Cynthia, Up in 2012. Put the lid back on that lye. Dry your hands first."

Cynthia does as she's told. "I guess that trumps me. Wait on. Can't we just hire servants and stuff? Isn't that what was done?"

Evana gives her a lidded look. "Yeah, that was done. When and if you're Down there, you may find that there's only so much you do based in a hotel room. Or find yourself at a level with no hotel rooms. Or find you need spanner servants than are unobtrusive for the period. You have to learn what it means to live in a culture of master and servant."

"You will be my guide in all things."

"Good! And when you start resenting your black nanny for teaching you how to behave, then maybe you'll really learn something about this Era."

Not knowing that she'd been dreading this, the whole light and landscape turned. "I'm sorry, Evana."

Evana looks curious. "For what?"

Cynthia says, stupidly, "Um."

"You're still just a Span One, Cynthia. Unless you start breaking maxims left and right, you can't do anything wrong."

"No, I just," Cyn stammers. Time travel doesn't

help the racial thing does it. "There's just a lot of history. Isn't there."

"One bloody epoch at a time, Cynful. How was your day today."

Cynthia has a hard time changing the subject, but then recalls a question she has. "I... met a friend of mine today? Regina. And I hadn't seen her in two years— I mean, she hadn't seen me. She said she'd write, but obviously didn't, and I didn't because, well, I hadn't met her! What are the chances of my fragging myself silly by hanging around before I learned to span?"

"For levellers, these things work out." Evana wrings out a purple silk shirt and hangs it next to an identical dry one. "Usually. You really have to watch out for your own self." She eyes her. "You keeping up with your span book?"

"Every one!" Cynthia doesn't hide her pride.

"Good. It'll sharpen your memory, keep you from messing up."

"Still find it weird that I never even imagined spanning existed."

"What, no long folk tradition of strange vanishing people?" Evana smiles, empties the sink. "Like vampires, or witches, or ghosts or faeries? Wizards and magicians? Gods, angels, devils, and so on and on?"

Cynthia rolls her eyes. "Gah! Those are all us?"

"They're folk stories. We don't even have to plant 'em, bless those poor levellers. Sometimes it's a handy cover, but don't bank on it. People tend to be smart, and remember your Fourth Maxim, girl."

They walk upstairs to the kitchen. "Okay. Who will help me bake the bread?" says Ev. "Little red hens, front and center." No one else comes into the kitchen.

"Evana, when are you from? You have all this housework business down cold."

Evana smirks and opens the baking powder. "Right here. 1993. But I took an interest as to where I came from. That takes a lot of accepting to do. Hey, Cyn, you're female. Core and pare some apples for us."

Cynthia listens carefully, and nods, but says, "Core... and what?"

"See now, twenty years Down you'd know what I was talking about," said Evana, hands flying over the table, the ingredients. "Pare means to peel the skin off with a knife. Words, how they're used, and who uses them are vital information, and we know what information is."

"Right." She begins cutting as carefully as she knows how, until Evana demonstrates.

"Here. Pull towards the thumb."

"Toward my thumb!? I don't like knives that much, Evana."

"Well you should. Most of the Piscean Era is about knives."

"Really. How many Eras have you seen," she is more than half serious. History still haunts her in Evana's presence.

"Well I've got some friends who've been around. And I've gone about with a Span Three some."

"How far. I mean, if you don't mind my prying."

"Oh I'll tell you when, Cyn— That's good, not too much pressure on the knife— 1886. I couldn't handle going any farther Down then. I was young. Playing the slave was not something Evana was ever going to do."

Cynthia is silent. This isn't the usual test, not the one for a white leveller. This one's for a young spanner.

"You get a perspective," finishes Evana.

"You kept your head. That's better than I'd do."

Evana looks at her aside. "Cynthia, you are Span One, am I right?"

"Oh yeah," Cyn says, taking up another apple. "Just that I keep thinking, ever since I got here... and since that... incident—" Her mind flashes harsh, the images of her visit to her father's crash; still fresh in her Age, she does nothing but watch in the rain from a hill half a mile away as the ambulance arrives and the distance flashes until the local spanners walk up around her, asking her her business.

"Well. That was natural enough—"

"But my mother's father was a Nazi, you know. He wasn't important. He got off. So all that shooting-your-grandfather... All the time travel and Hitler jokes..."

Quiet paring maintains the next minute and twelve seconds.

Evana says, "Time heals all leveller wounds. For us, though, the bullets are always flying. Here, watch how I sugar these."

"What substitutes for that kind of release, Evana? For spanners?"

"Most make Hitler jokes," mutters Evana. "You know, denial, avoidance, all the psychologist tricks. Accepting history is the hardest test for some spanners. It's how narcissists are born."

"I know."

Evana watches Cyn's eyes turn fey. "Hm. Some go Up, see how things turn out. Watching Aquarians celebrate is no easy treat. Mankind works things out, Cyn. But where we're going gets some spanners more freaked than where we're from."

"Oh yeah. All those space people. Yay."

"But they're funny ha-ha as space people. Once you start talking about them as time people, levellers get nervous. It starts making sense. You start seeing the subtle marks in yourself, in the children..."

"Inheritors," breathes Cynthia. "It's even a little scary to me."

"Good," says Evana. "Don't mess with them. I got in a situation once? Not my fault, mind you, but I was present, and Inheritors showed up. Indoors, no ship or anything, but they were clamping down on something. Anyway my Frat chronies were all standing still and I thought it best to give them some room. So I picked up a crate I thought was in their way, and dragged it a few feet back? And you know what...?"

"What." Cyn is transfixed.

"They were all over me," whispers Evana. "And they looked mad. I have have never been so close to pissing my pants. They had me on the ground, and I was not alone in my brain."

"Jeez—"

"Don't ever move if Inheritors show. It's what they expect. They showed me what was in that box, Cyn. It was the whole reason the came, and my mov-

ing it nearly jeopardized me and all my Frat bros."

"What was it?" Cynthia leans close.

"Further information?" sings Evana. "Not available here."

"Grr! I hate that!" But Cynthia is smiling again. I know it's for my own good but— "Evana. We can have all the chocolate we want, but what about gossip! If I can't trade secrets with anyone, I think I will go crazy, or explode in the ionosphere, or—"

"Now don't you go joking about that." Evana has a finger raised. "But you got it wrong about no gossip. What do you think I'm doing here? You haven't been visiting to other corners yet, I can tell. The Continuum could not get by without healthy doses of stories."

"Okay like what." Cynthia goes to wash her hands as Evana finishes the pies. Charlie walks in from the hall to the living room.

"Well," muses Evana, eyeing Charlie. "I could tell you what Fraternity Charlie belongs to—"

"Uh oh," smiles Charlie.

"—and why."

"Uh oh!" he laughs. But he makes no gesture to stop her. Cynthia sees the subtle signals. Evana's asking permission. And she wonders how often that's necessary, or appropriate.

"Charlie... is... a... Scribe!!" Evana almost squeals.

That does sound too geeky for Charlie, thinks Cynthia. But she is enjoying the news, and hops up on a counter Evana isn't using.

"Well, somebody has to—" begins Charlie, but he is unable to stop Evana here.

"He was doing library research for the post office!! Complete nerd!!" This earns even more of a smile from Cyn.

"Okay, enough of my invitation. Let's just say that when I'm not thrilling my novices, I deliver the mail. Up and Down spacetime. It's a mundane chore on the surface, but being able to meet the same people in a dozen different corners is—"

Cynthia's smile gets quieter, and she hugs her knees. "So. We just span around, and nothing ever changes? We just live the same days, again and again."

The other two have a good chuckle. "Oh no," says Ev. "No way. You'd go nuts. No, Cyn, you got to look at it right. You're focussing on your evil grandpa, or your poor dad, or even the next 300 years. Spacetime is way bigger than that. It has Paris, and pirates and forests and Egypt and gold rushes and all the food you can eat, and horses, Cynthia! in every city, and, and—"

"Evana!" chides Charlie unseriously. "You forgot to mention Bigfoot."

That hits Cynthia well, and she laughs. "Bigfoot! Sasquatches roaming through... time..." She sees the look on their faces, and stops laughing. "Bigfoot."

Evana walks two fingers across the top of a piecrust. "All those footprints ending in the middle of nowhere? Terrified homesteaders rushing out with guns to find... nothing there."

"You laughed because you thought Bigfoot had to be impossible," explains Charlie. "And you assumed that because it was never found. That's the old leveller in you thinking."

"When in fact the evidence points to vanishment, probably spanning," Cynthia thought aloud. "That would make those Bigfoots Exalted. Way Exalted."

"Smart girl. Where did you find her again, Charlie?"

"It's in my Yet. Laundromat. As pickup places go, it's very early 90's."

"But, y'know, Bigfoot?" Cynthia keeps her doubts, as precious stones of her self. "The name is hokey, silly. And Sasquatch–"

"Comes from Coastal Salish, saskehavas. Bigfoot was coined in 1958 by a construction worker. More accurate is the Lakotan chiyetanka meaning 'big elder brother'. Their true name is the Ga'hagadrrg."

"Wendigo, walker on the wind," whispers Evana, her eyes holding Cynthia's like a preacher's words.

"They're not a Society, but a sparse, potent civilization, about 2 million years down. They treat each earning of a higher Span as a kind of walkabout, which is why they come up as far as here on occasion. They're good allies, incredible trackers in wood or snow."

"Shame you never made Span Four," says Evana, putting a hand on Charlie's shoulder.

Charlie puts on a good face. "We'll see."

Cynthia is impressed, but says, "So... all the gods, all the spirits and angels, are just us."

Evana shrugs. "Eh, maybe. Who can count? Probably some are, probably most aren't."

"It's like a vast uncharted wilderness, Cyn," Charlie has the warm smile again. "Us Spans, we can't see so far, but we might get there. Marco Polo never found the strange monsters from bestiaries, but some were real. Zebras, pink flamingoes, microbes on Mars. We'll hear the stories, but we won't know till we go there."

Cynthia still hugs her knees, but smirks. "Okay. This is just the coolest."

"Yep, but it's time to pull focus. History pop quiz."

Cynthia growls, but pulls herself upright. "Okay. Hit me."

"List the Eras from Up to Down."

"Oh, crap. Um, Capricorn beyond AD 4000. Aquarius, two to four thousand. Pisces, which is here. Taurus, 2000 BC to zero–"

"Bzzt," says Evana.

"Wrong and wrong," says Charlie.

"What?"

"Pisces, Aries, Taurus," corrects Charlie. "And there's no year zero in the Gregorian calendar."

"Oh, like I'm ever going to get within spitting distance of Christ." She feels a little chagrin at her own words, the talk of gods getting the better of her.

"You don't know that. And you need to have a knowledge of calendars. Third Maxim. Your gift will get you around precisely in time, but you have to count properly, or you'll record the wrong date in your span book. And I know you are very good with your book—"

"And we get plenty of Aries guests here." says Ev, putting the pies in the oven. "Not just early Pisceans like Sven who are here for the strong liquor."

"Hey! No picking on Sven!" yells Cynthia. "And no picking on me. Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, and back to Capricorn in 2000-year intervals."

Sven appears behind Cynthia as she recites the zodiac. Cynthia smiles up at him, and he says, "Little called for Sven?"

"I am defending your honor."

"That is good." Sven heads for the fridge. "Good Aquarian cusp woman. Agh, my sandwich isn't here." He spans Down for it.

"If you ever do forget your zodiac, just glance at a horoscope, grab a TV Guide—"

"I always hated horoscopes. Avoided them. I can barely remember what sign I am."

"You're a Libra, but so what, we're all Pisces to the Societies," says Evana. "But what's great about horoscopes is, everyone knows they predict the future."

"...Accurately?" Cynthia wonders at that.

"No," smiles Charlie. "But they can be an ironclad alibi, at least around this level. Any leveller asks how you knew something, tell them you saw it in your starchart."

"I don't want to come off as a ditz..."

Evana gives Charlie a look. "Didn't you tell her what 'spanner' means?"

Charlie scratches his beard. That habit he has. Cynthia asks, "It means 'one who spans', doesn't it?"

"Well, of course. To us. But since the word is used so much, it, eh, naturally has a leveller, um, connotation—"

"It means 'ditz'," says Evana.

"What! Oh, I never heard that as a leveller. When?"

"Here," sighs Charlie. "In Britain. That's why British spanners prefer the term 'chrony'— The Cambridge 1500s corner even make sure it's popularized—"

"'Spanner' means 'idiot'?!" Cynthia is so annoyed she almost spans off to her room to fume. "Why do we—"

"Actually, spanner means 'wrench'," says Charlie firmly. "As in 'wrench in the works'. Which is what we are, keeping the universe repaired, even while it runs."

"Unfortunately, to a leveller, a wrench-in-the-works means a screw-up. So. Spanner equals ditz." Evana folds her arms, and takes in Cynthia's disbelief.

"One of our own's even behind that meaning, too," admits Charlie. "He's not as popular as he might be, but it was well done."

"Well done?!" Cynthia is on her feet. Her hands can't find anything appropriate to grab or break, and hang angry in the air. "We're these demigods, and we have to go around calling each other morons, because of this guy?!"

"Told you there was gossip. What'd I say about the power of gossip?"

Cynthia turns, a nasty playful smile. "Who kills him?" Her tone is one-quarter serious.

They chuckle. "Further information's not available here," smiles Charlie. "But I said it was well done because: We use the word. A lot. It gets around. Levellers hear it. When they hear a word with no meaning, they get curious, then afraid. The term needs a meaning, and something that doesn't mean time travel."

"Yeah, but 'idiot'—?"

"Levellers don't know it's not bacon!" says Lydia, spanning into the kitchen for some cold toaster pastries, and out again.

"How can she eat those things."

"Next time a leveller friend acts like you've forgotten something major, you remember this," says Evana seriously. "It's one thing walking around here, with other spanners and their yets. It's something else to avoid explaining yourself to a leveller." Cynthia considers. "You're going to have to play the flake, sooner or later."

"I thought you were saying that with levellers everything 'just works out'!"

"I said, quote: 'For levellers, these things work out. Usually. You really have to watch out for your own self.' Unquote. That's what we're telling you about."

"You have that photographic memory, don't you," comments Cynthia.

"Yeah, spanner, I do. You oughtta get yourself one. Now we have discussed extraterrestrials, Bigfoot, horosopes, and time travel in the last ten minutes, and if some leveller overheard all that, what would they think you were?"

"Flake," sighs Cyn.

"A flake that's getting straight A's," smiles Charlie.

"Well, at school. That's easy."

Charlie moves past her, and pats her approvingly on the shoulder as he leaves.

Evana mouths to Cynthia, 'I think he means here,' and follows him. Cynthia has a flash thought of some spanner murdering Elvis, and laughs.

Then stops.

What is the Continuum, and my responsibilities toward it?

On the highest level, the **Continuum** is the entirety of all sentient life in the universe. Be aware: Most of life can span.

On a more personal level, the Continuum is the social framework that holds the universe together. This is not an exaggeration. As a time traveller, how one acts determines the very existence of civilization, and life itself. [Cf. 'Continuum' Glossary reference, pg. 41.]

The Continuum is not a government, not in the sense you've been raised to understand government. Spanners have formed smaller civilizations across time, but these are minor political conve-

niences. The Continuum is all loyal spanners everywhen, going about their existences, aiding and looking out for one another, in concert throughout spacetime.

By 'loyal', we mean any spanner who will help out his chronies, and follow the Maxims. Any that don't are probably out for themselves, trying to manipulate spacetime to their own, very small, limited, selfish ends. Since they need to hurt, even destroy others to achieve their ends, we call them **narcissists**, since they can think only of themselves. More on these dangerous enemies later. [See Chapter 3: Struggling— Narcissists and Lesser Dangers, pg. 135.]

Your responsibilities are spelled out clearly by the Maxims. The laws of time travel are laws of *behavior.*

What are my responsibilities regarding the Maxims?

The Maxims are the rules of conduct we memorize [see frontispiece]. They keep us clear of the danger of fragmentation, or **frag** for short. The Maxims outlined in this rulebook are presented for game purposes, but they are very accurate, and absolutely essential to the fabric of our life and existence.

The Maxims emphasize, without quarter, that each of us is responsible for his or her own actions. And we are there to help our chronies— up to a very specific point.

In game terms that point is a spanner with a Frag of 5 or higher, who is on their own to fix it [See What does frag feel like? (table), pg. 54].

Serious Consequences

C°NTINUUM is a game of social rules. Nearly all personality types are welcome as characters, and nearly every aspect of human culture finds its expression in the Continuum. But there some things one does and doesn't do. **One always takes responsibility for one's Yet, and the frag one has caused.** All the Maxims are written to emphasize this.

Having frag means it must be dealt with. But when? How is it that spanners feel these attacks at intervals seemingly unrelated to the times and events which require the repair?

What is the Yet?

The Yet, or the Required Future, are the things you discover you have yet to do. [Compare **Age**, pg. 36.]

If you see or meet an elder self, or hear of things you've done but don't remember doing, those actions go in your Yet. Hopefully, most things that find their way into your Yet will be interesting, but not too dire. It's basically a cosmic to-do list, everything from "Return JetSki to 10:30 pm April 17, 2006 before Fitch sees" to "Pack snakebite antidote before 2/2/1989 for trip to 1847" to "Give redhead daffodils, June 6, enjoy success" can be listed. Anything you find out you do but haven't done... yet.

Failure to handle events in your Yet— or worse, defying your elder self— creates paradox and the unwelcome accumulation of frag. Too much unhandled frag, and you're not seen around much.

In game terms, points of Frag accumulate on a spanner at moments when the damage should be dealt with. A narcissist might attack your timeline five minutes Down or in your grandfather's day. He might attack you when you are visiting your corner ten years Up. Your Yet will signal you at the time of your Age when you should start dealing with it. **Like the body creates pain when it's sick, your Yet tallies Frag.** (Note that the Yet doesn't *cause* frag, any more than the body *causes* a knife wound. It just calls out with pain.)

If you don't handle your Yet and your Frag, your friends have to. If they can't or won't, your mentor has to. If he or she can't handle it, the Exalted step in. You can imagine the social pressures of the spanner lifestyle. People have enough to do without having to clean up after someone else. And advancement to higher Spans depends on trust. How you manage your Yet is always the first test of your worth.

Spanners are careful not to reveal too much to one another, lest life become burdened with details in one's Yet. To remain human, with a healthy free will, we do not cave in to curiosity about what our personal fates are, and protect our friends from too much knowledge of what is to happen to them. The preferred information-neutral phrase is "**Further information is not available here.**"

How do I keep track of my Yet?

Recording your Yet happens every time you witness an event involving yourself, your stuff, or anything directly involved with you personally, but haven't performed the action, or the actions leading up to it yet. Completed events are checked off, like the ultimate to-do list that it is. The Yet has it's own section on a character's Spanning Card. An explanation of how to use it, and a copy of the cards themselves is on ppg. 224-5.

Victor Beauregard Houston
(b. AD 1857)
Recording (AD 1899)
watercolour
Musée Contratemps, Marseilles

How can I blend in with levellers?

Normal Life

Word of advice: Don't quit your day job.

Keeping track of span is hard enough without causing a panic among your old friends and family by vanishing from the earth, or hiding out with this mysterious "corner cult". As a Span One, you learn to work your old life into your new one. If you grew up dreaming about becoming a superhero with a secret identity, congratulations. Just skip the colorful costumes.

In game terms, this may amount to noting down hours worked at a job or in school on your Span card, and nothing more. C°NTINUUM games may emphasize realism, but roleplaying the office work is going too far.

Language

Word of advice: Speak simply, wherever you go.

Span Ones will probably not have to worry much about learning entirely new languages; no more than a leveller might want to learn a language before touring a modern nation.

In the long run, genuine time travel means encountering languages besides Modern English. In fact, if you imagine how many places in the world of AD 2000 you can visit where no one understands English, you get some small idea of what spanners face. Before about AD 1450, no one speaks Modern English, and a spanner would find it very difficult to understand its predecessor languages without study. Before AD 550, English doesn't exist at all.

Having a translator in the group makes visits to distant lands and places much more pleasant, even more useful. There are some guidelines to make roleplaying around alien languages easy— as long as you have someone to translate. [See Chapter 3: Struggling— Dreaming and Communication— Language, pg. 108.]

Wardrobe

Word of advice: Too much fashion sense invites trouble— including frag.

A wide range of clothes may enhance your social status among levellers, but is seen as excessive for a Span One. It's wisest to stick to one or two simple costumes, and keep to the specific day of the week for laundry your corner has agreed on [pg. 52].

Additionally, details such a jewellry, body piercing and tattoos must be considered in the light of the confusion they may cause if they are seen out of sequence by levellers. Keep such things discreet and hidden, (unless you like the drudgery of handling every odd detail over and over again.) [See also Item Discipline, below.]

Artwork © 1999 Drew Tucker

Item discipline

Word of advice: Travel light whenever possible.

The last thing we should have to worry about are things themselves.

Levellers live with the fear of losing valuables, money, even time, all the while looking for ways to streamline their lives. Consumer society develops because of humanity's needs and desires to possess and gain security over life.

But spanners have less to fear from things like hurricanes destroying their home, or a fire wiping out all their savings or records, or even from a computer crashing. Lost childhood toys and mementoes can be regained very simply, with proper caution. Objects stop having the hold on spanners that they did in their previous life.

'Item discipline' as it's sometimes called, is related to the Third Maxim (Measure Twice, Cut Once). It means being able to live without piles of stuff, because anything you may want, you can get. Nearly anything you may lose, you can retrieve. Let it go. The One Big Score [pg. 14] emphasizes this: the Continuum wants you to know from the get-go that personal belongings should never trouble you again.

The roll of quarters brought Down to sit next to itself in the story *The Invitation and the Dance* [pg. 2] is one of a host of obvious examples of how to find yourself needlessly entangled with the causality of objects.[2] [See also *The Beer Crisis of William and Edward*, pg. 55 and esp. Your Corner—Spanner Box, pg. 50.]

Hello, spanner.

When going abroad, you may find yourself in need of tell the spanners apart from the ordinary folk. Here is the means to say hello in a few of the major languages of the world. Note that the most popular languages of diplomacy in the Piscean era are Latin (AD 1 - 1500 Europe), Arabic (AD 600 - 2000 Middle East), Mandarin (AD 1600 - 2000 Asia), French (AD 1500 - 1900) and English (AD 1600 - 2000), though the many peoples of spacetime have a rainbow of biases.

The languages listed are from the Aquarian cusp:

Arabic	kam Al sa'aa?
Dutch	Hoe laat is het?
English	What time is it?
French	Quelle heure est-il?
Gaelic	cén t-am é?
German	Wie spät ist es?
Greek, Modern	Ti o'ra I'ne
Hebrew	Ma ha'sha'a?
Hindi	kyaa samaya huaa hai?
Hungarian	Hány óra van?
Icelandic	Hva? er klukkan?
Italian	Che ora é?
Japanese	Nanji desuka.
Korean	Myot-shi-im-ni-ka
Latin	Hora quota est?/Quota hora est?
Mandarin	jí dianv zhòng le?
Norwegian	Hvor mye er klokka?
Polish	Która godzina?
Portugese	Que horas são?
Romanian	Cit e ceasul?
Russian	Kotoryi chas?
Spanish	Qué hora es?
Swahili	Ni saa ngapi sasa?
Swedish	Vad är klockan?/Hur mycket är klock an?
Turkish	Saat kaç?
Yiddish	vi shpet iz?

For more languages, visit
http://www.travlang.com/languages/

How can I find the spanners out there, while blending in with levellers?

In this era of great information retrieval, keeping spanning a secret becomes more and more difficult. That is part of the reason the C°NTINUUM game is becoming available at this time— to gently prepare levellers for the difficult truth of time travel.

But what the future for levellers holds is irrelevant in the years before AD 2000, where time travel is patent myth, heresy, or bizarre imagining. In these years, the secret must hold fast.

One ploy that has been utilized across the eras is to hide conversations in common parlance. A common greeting, and means of identifying other spanners is to ask the time. A leveller will either read their watch (or sundial, etc.) and tell you, or will otherwise behave normally. A spanner wanting to return the greeting will repeat your **precise words back at you**. Unsuspecting levellers will merely act annoyed by this if they ask a spanner the time.

Once contact has been made, spanners can repair to a private location for discussion.

In eras Down from the Ariesian, timekeeping is by the sun and stars alone, there for all to see, and so asking the time might seem as odd as asking 'Is water wet today?' Visitors from these eras might sketch a line in the ground. If you complete the zodiacal symbol associated with the era you are currently in (probably Piscean or Aquarian) you're acknowledging a fellow spanner as surely as if you said 'What time is it?'

[See pg. 37 for chart of the Eras and their symbols.]

[2]But if you're really good at item discipline, and enjoy moving objects around time, the Antiquarian Fraternity may want to recruit you [see Fraternities, pg. 64.]

Your corner

You don't choose your family, at least not at first...

Denizens

The GM will probably have one or two NPC chronies around to spice up life around the corner, and on adventures. Most novice corners have a mix of Fraternal candidates; some are training grounds for specific Fraternities, but many have novices who have yet to choose their calling in the Continuum.

Especially if this is your first time playing C⁰NTINUUM, it's a good idea to practice spanning around the house awhile, get to know everyone in your corner. Relearning an ordinary home in four dimensions is a little mind-boggling, but it's the perfect environment to get things right.

The name says it

Every corner has a name, usually known only to spanners. But if a leveller ever hears it, it shouldn't sound too odd. People have been naming places they're fond of since they could speak, especially dwellings. There are places in Australia that have borne the same name for 35,000 years running.

Names can be anything that inspires the spanners of the corner. Examples include "Forest of the Euboean Satyrs"; "Bloodfist"; "Zero Falls"; "Serene Mountain Leaning"; "Wolfhead Sword Keep"; "Hank's Demolitionists", and so on. While it's up to the mentor to name the corner, lenient GMs may allow players to invent their own.

Militia and adventure

Your corner is responsible for your **locality**, or the area of spacetime around your house. While an individual being fragged is his own responsibility, when major attempts on the Continuum happen around your corner, you're expected to be the first line of defense.

If a major incident of frag happens in your backyard (attempts at dropping atom bombs, or poison gas on all your local 19th century ancestors is a good example,) you'll find dozens of affected spanners arriving, wanting to know what the trouble is. Odds are, all of you will be fragged yourselves, and be pursuing a Time Combat of the perpetrators.

This resembles the militias of ancient times, rather than the modern invention of a standing police force. It's more based around the clan/family structure of the spanner corner (one of those "minor political conveniences" mentioned on ppg. 46-7,) as is most of human existence throughout spacetime.

While hunting narcissists, or travelling spacetime looking for adventures is a perfectly legitimate pursuit, more often than not, adventure will find *you*. Span Fours [pg. 94] often recruit from novice corners for their various needs. Narcissists you haven't met yet can show up, with grudges against you that you haven't yet earned, trying to make your existence a living hell. And any number of curious visitors from across time may stop by with tempting quests, and puzzles needing to be solved.

Your room

This is your own private space; most corners don't allow anyone to span in without knocking. It's here where your daily wrestle with item discipline is held. How do you keep track of laundry, paper trash, notes to yourself, and just plain stuff? Practice, practice.

More importantly, this is where spanners learn how to cope with running into themselves. Elders may abound at first, and all claim dibs on the bed, or the clean clothes, etc. Try not to panic. Just put the gemini incidents in your Yet, and span to some other day when your elder isn't already occupying your space. Sleep comfortable in the knowledge that one day soon, *you'll* be the elder claiming the dibs.

Spanner Box

The spanner box is a staple of spanner home life, as it simplifies item discipline. Many spanners have more than one. A typical box has two lids, dividing the top in half, or at least two separately closed chambers on the inside. Its use is unique to spanners, who store objects that have been brought Up or Down in time, and are placed in proximity to an elder or junior version of the same object.

Novices needn't fear the tales of upsetting the mean density of the universe, or identical atoms splitting upon contact with themselves. Your real worry is in not fragging yourself. Spanner boxes allow room to place objects together, but separate, with the ability to place notes or markers with meaning only to the owning spanner (or any clever enough to find out).

This means if you, say, span Down wearing your fez for your Zembo Lodge meeting, and return home Levelly, you may have find you have two versions of the same fez in your room. Putting both the junior and elder fez into a well-marked spanner box is a safe way to keep from fragging yourself by taking the wrong fez in your Yet.

Spanners are pretty careful about letting anyone see these simple containers. Most levellers would assume they were jewellry cases, or other boxes for valuables, albeit of specialized design. Few genuine ones are ever seen by levellers. Sea chests often have distinct, watertight compartments. Many sunken treasures contain such spanner boxes, since they are so hard to recover, or spare from calamity.

Communal item discipline

It's all well and good to keep track of your own bits of stuff, but what about shopping for the whole corner? This is where strict adherence to shopping on certain weekdays and rationing start sounding like sane procedures. Some corners treat the fridge like a big spanner box; everything labeled all the time. Other mentors believe that frag is best felt first in the home, and that the way to a novice's heart... is through his stomach.

Visitors

If they were unable to visit distant corners, spanners would have terrible disadvantages, such as arriving in an ancient town with nowhere to live and a foreign accent at best. But tourists and travelling merchants are known in nearly every time and place, and make a common and useful cover story. If certain trusted locals take you in, your visit— either business or pleasure— can go much more smoothly.

Accepting visitors can be an involved process, and each corner has its customs, or lack thereof. Usually a corner would like to know the range of time visiting spanners are to be seen about. [See Typical rules around the corner— Guesting rules, below.]

The mentor of a novice corner should be informed of any visitors. One of the mentor's tasks is to send records of these visits— to himself. [See Span 3— Overseeing a corner, pg. 88.]

Level visitors

If your mom or friends from work want to know who these people are you're hanging with, and attempt to discover your hidden secrets, surprise is not their ally. Even without prior warning, unless they break in physically, everything can be readied and perfect as soon as the door opens.

Level burglars are the most fun. Some spanner households like to trap them and tie them up, while others enjoy watching them loot, and then stealing everything back and then some.

Your mentor

Your mentor is someone who wants to bring novice spanners into the Continuum. He wants to do the best job by you, not just to earn his privileges, but to share this wonderful gift with people who can understand its value and power. He was a novice once, too, and sympathizes 100%.

Novices have a thousand and one questions about time travel. To make the burden on your GM easier, players who are new to C°NTINUUM should try to pose these questions as the novice spanner to his mentor.

Most of your questions should be answered by a complete reading of this section (Chapter 2: Spanning). But don't feel put out by asking: You may find that many questions are answered with the same basic reasons. You'll find the reasons aren't arbitrary either, but part of the social fabric of the Continuum.

And so much gets wiped after the In-Between that even asking the stupidest-sounding question makes sense.

Explaining the Maxims

Mentor Threes teach the Maxims to novice Ones by repetition and example. Some of the basic lessons they aim to get across are on ppg. 92-3. Reread the story segments to get a feel for their technique.

Typical rules around the corner

The following are pretty standard courtesies followed in corners throughout the Societies. Span Ones get it drilled into them so that by Span Two, it's second nature.

Public room rules.

No spanning *in* to the parlor, vestibule or generally public rooms of the corner. Levellers stop by on occasion, so let's keep it clear of surprises. Spanning *out* is always okay if no leveller is around.

Visiting elders' homes.

Span Twos should refrain from inviting Span Ones over to their private homes, and Ones shouldn't pressure to know about their elder Twos. See Second Maxim.

Guesting rules.

These vary greatly by locality, but *formally,* a request is made either by Dreaming, or by Scribal courier, asking permission to span into the corner's locality.

Most spanners are rather *informal,* and simply show up. If (usually when) they are confronted by members of the corner, they introduce themselves and their business, and life proceeds in a friendly fashion. Spanners that ask to lodge with the corner, are often billeted with a Span Two in their private apartment, in case it's a narcissist trying to frag or distract the entire corner.

Privacy rules.

Most corners agree that a spanner's bedroom is their own— no surprise spanning in or out: Knock first! Same goes for the bathroom/outhouse/etc.

Rendezvous rules.

Knowing your corner's meeting habits is the highest courtesy, and best safety precaution.

Birthday rules.

These are always fun, and are times when Ones tend to act silliest. See pg. 36 for the note on birthdays, and when corners celebrate them.

Controlled substance rules— alcohol, drugs, etc.

These tend to be pretty strict, as novice spanners have a hard enough time avoiding fragging themselves, let alone spanning while drunk. [See also Chapter 3: Struggling— Madness and Related Problems, pg. 138.] Hold off on this stuff at least until you're Span Two.

Laundry rules.

Keeping all those clothes ready for when you need them is the best lesson in item discipline. See Communal item discipline [pg. 51] for notes on scheduling.

5. Somebody Always Wants You Gone

"He's hit," speaks Cynthia quietly. "He's Down there, fragged." She sits at the table, looking at her hands under the harsh single bulb.

Evana and Ray are standing, pacing. "Gotta keep telling yourself why he's fragged," says Ev. "He hit me twice. I say I let him off easy."

"Yeah. Yeah I am." This rendezvous with her chronies is more than strategic. She needs their company after deliberately shoving a man's existence into a tailspin. This is the other side of the cliff, she thinks. This is taking a man's hand and shoving it onto a hotplate.

The actual action she has performed is restoring an issue of a magazine that Evana buys shortly after. The narcissist has stolen all the copies— or thinks he has. Cynthia has replaced them the instant he leaves, healing Evana's frag, but not affecting his.

But Evana has been busy. He stands somewhere, fragged, because Evana has struck at him hard.

"Well, I got his name," says Ray. "It's Smit. Ewen Macready Smit. And a few details, written here."

Cynthia has never met this Smit, an Irishman from the 1840s, a spanner that is trying to make his own luck out of their pain. She reads the information, but is afraid to know too much about the man. She's still used to corner etiquette, and she knows this spanner is miles away from behaving.

This Evana is Span 1, but more experienced here than Cyn. "This is your first time combat, and you're taking it hard. I can tell."

And as Evana speaks, a wave of nausea sweeps up inside Cynthia, and a band of ill warmth sweeps out from her torso toward the tips of her limbs and the top of her head.

"Oh..." says Cyn. "Wait what did you say?"

"Cyn..." Evana stops pacing. "Are you getting the feeling you're falling backwards? Vertigo?"

"More like I have to be somewhere—" Her left ear itches, but ceases the instant before she can scratch it. "What the hell."

"Uh oh," says Ray.

"That bastard," breathes Evana.

"What, what are you talking about." She rubs parts of her head. "Agh! My ear! And my nose. It's like a fly's up it."

"Think you're fragged, Cyn."

"What." No no, I've been so careful. Careful for almost a year. "That doesn't happen to me. I mean—"

"It happens to every spanner," says Evana, bending down on her haunches, a look of pure sympathy. "This is time combat. We all have to fight for our lives sooner or later."

"Check your span book," advises Ray. "See if any event rings a bell. That sometimes works in finding the as/as not."

"Yeah. Yeah, okay," her voice is almost a whimper, and that bothers her. She pages through blearily trying to imagine what part of her Age is threatened. "So, so why would it— why does it catch up to me here. That makes no sense."

Evana puts a steady hand on her shoulder. "It's your Yet, Cyn. It's bleeding and you have to stop it, soon."

"Or you'll get more frag," says Ray. "Okay, we've gotta nail this guy."

"Well, yes, but. Aren't there instructions? It feels like we're guessing. Shouldn't there be a maxim or something—" She is starting to feel half-awake, and the fear is poking at her from the shadows of the room.

"No, this is you learning to swim in the deep dark ocean, Cynthia. Remember how to breathe, remember salt water kills you. You don't need a Maxim for that."

"There is the Fifth Maxim," says Ray firmly.

Ray's words strike across her like a club. Cynthia gasps and flails, as if the ocean imagery were real. "No! No! God, no!! Help me!!"

"Hey. Hey—" Evana holds her, calms her down. "What did you just do for me, huh?"

Cynthia's breathing becomes more regular. "I've— I've been in time combat..."

"And?"

"And helped you heal frag?"

"Right. Now calm down, you are nowhere near a Lost Cause, Cynthia. You've got, like, the smallest dose of frag a spanner can feel, that's my guess. It's just your first time."

"Smallest?!" she breathes. She backs away from imagining more. Not a Fifth Maxim— I mean, not a lost cause— But the thought of the broken event won't let her go. She is in the closing scissors of it.

"Starting to get angry?" says Ray.

Cynthia feels the cold knife laying over some memory down her Span, some event cast in a ditch, a limb of hers cast aside by Smit. An invisible piece of rape.

"You could say that," Cyn hisses.

"Never forget this moment, Cynthia," says Ev. "Especially this moment, because your mind is spinning off-kilter. This is what narcissists do to people. And it can make it hard to fight back if you aren't used to it."

Worst, she feels frag interfering with her half-

memories from her in-between. The entirety of her trust in Charlie and her corner is put in jeopardy because of one incomplete incident.

Cynthia holds herself, to keep herself extant. "What do we do to him, Ray. What do we do to them."

"Ideally, we don't want to frag them." He pauses. "Ideally."

"Yeah, but not ideally," she says. The shadows under her eyes hug her face as her arms hug her torso.

"Well." He sits down on the table, facing away from her. "You can give back what you get. But make sure the frag falls back on who it's supposed to."

"Sounds like it should be a Maxim."

"I think 'Measure Twice, Cut Once' says it well enough. But between the the First and the Fifth you have your breathing room," Ray points out. "You have discretion."

Cyn thinks a moment. Says coldly, "So the Fifth really means, 'Dump on a Lost Cause'?"

"No. Unless they ask for it, and they do," says Ev. "They start the walk to hell for themselves. None of us can say we aren't warned."

"It's about intent," says Ray with a distant tone. "What are they doing trying to hack up your life? Or all our lives? Do they have plans to reassemble it into their own cozy quilt?"

Cyn glances starkly up at him.

Ray smirks over his shoulder. "Sorry. Thinking of my grandma."

"The point is, all the king's horses aren't on Humpty's side. They're on ours, and you will be together again, girl."

Cynthia's mind comes into focus again. The knife in her memory doesn't go away, but now she is analyzing it, piecing it out, and seeing how to take it apart. "He hit you, then we struck back. Odds are he's done something to impair me close to that event with the hope that he'll get his strike on Evana restored—or at least his frag taken away."

"That's good intuition," says Ray. "But that's assuming he's too clever for his own health. It may not matter to him where he frags you, Cyn. It may just be revenge."

"So we start the research, right?" Cynthia is slowly finding a focus.

Evana nods. "Oracle. Frune. Keep it short and very formal, because we don't want to burden our frag on anyone else if we can help it."

"I think you're starting to see why we don't socialize much during Time Combat," says Ray, loading chambers.

"That's a gun," says Cynthia. "I guess it comes to that."

"No lawyers in spacetime," smirks Evana. "Okay, Cyn. Aces up. What kind of fighting do you know."

"Some judo. You're a good teacher," says Cyn.

Evana chuckles and notes it down in her yet.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" Cynthia is overly distraught. "I've been keeping that unavailable! I'm not thinking straight. It must be this damn frag—"

"Maybe. You get better at being cautious. Put that in your yet as a present from me."

Frag

A blatant violation of causality creates paradox, the effect of which is called **frag**.

In the game, Frag is expressed as a number from zero to seven (0 - 7). Characters all have a Frag rating, but so do all things throughout spacetime.

How does frag occur?

Were a paradox allowed to grow out of control, it would frag all people and objects involved, and like a chain reaction, unravel the world. Only a sapient spanner can put a halt to the paradox at a moment early enough to contain the collapse of spacetime. **Sentient force must be applied to resist the sentient force that initiated a deliberate paradox**— hence the occurrence of Time Combat [see Causality, pg. 56 and Time Combat, pg. 117, for further details].

In game terms, most instances of paradox (the as/as not) create one point of Frag. The GM may determine if an instance is more serious, or if multiple as/as nots are close together, creating more frag that has to be solved.

The As/As not

The **as/as not** is the point during an incident of **frag** beyond which natural **paradoxes** do not heal by themselves, but collapse the universe, instead. **Sentient force** is applied as close as possible to the as/as not, in order to heal frag.

When someone has applied (or on rarer occasions failed to apply) sentient force to an event, an as/as not is created. It has this unusual name because the moment is all potential, with an outcome known to most, but a different one desired by the assailant applying sentient force. (The name also resembles casual conversation if overheard, i.e. 'like as not'. Discussing 'paradoxes' usually means time travel, and the leveller population has to kept in the dark about that.)

In traditional time travel stories, paradox is a situation of two mutually-exclusive events occuring at the same time. In C°NTINUUM, only one event is allowed to prevail, the one with **overwhelming sentient force** behind it.

The Continuum, with its uncounted vigitillions of spanners Up into the future depending on that event, always wins in the end. It's just a matter of going out and handling the frag in your Yet. The Continuum is there to back you up in every Time Combat.

Three Kinds of Paradox

Paradox is caused deliberately, accidentally, or even naturally.

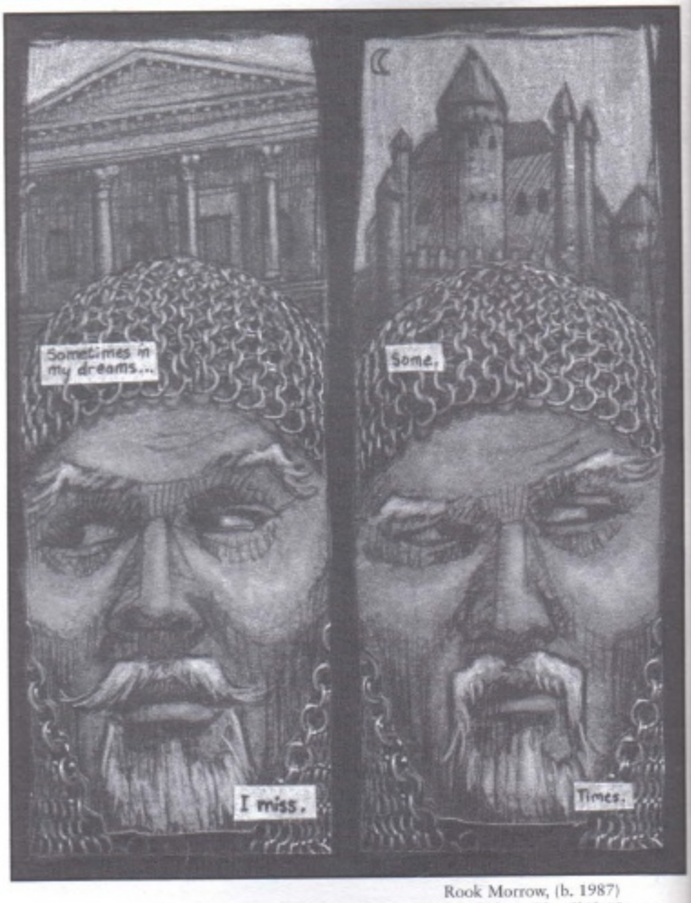
Deliberate paradox is the application of thought and action to bring about frag. This is the terrorism that narcissists bring, with their hopes of conquest or revenge.

Accidental paradox is the lack of applied thought to the need to avoid frag. This occurs when one is unprepared. Note that many efforts of deliberate paradox focus on creating the conditions whereby accidental paradox is unavoidable (ie, the withholding or rerouting of information).

Natural paradox means non-sentient collapses of spacetime, such as black holes, geons, or the less dramatic deviations of light wave-particles that occur endlessly. This is the universe's woof and weave; it is where we dwell.

Effect of Frag Chart

Rating	Effect
0	No Frag, no problem.
1	Minor fragmentation; probably easily dealt with.
2	Serious fragmentation; should be handled right away.
3	At this Rating and above, the Continuum will not generally assist a spanner to heal Frag. Grace rolls become failures.
4	The spanner becomes slightly disoriented in most moments of stress. -2 to all rolls involving Quick.
5	At this Rating and above, the spanner is considered a Lost Cause, and even his friends are forbidden to directly help him heal Frag.
6	The spanner is very disoriented, most of the time, and probably should not be out in public, certainly not leveller public. -4 to all rolls involving Quick, -2 to all rolls involving Mind.
7	The spanner probably can't easily tell when or where he is, and his memory is seriously impaired. He doesn't recognize some important things in his life, and often insists that he witnessed events that never occurred. Few return from this brink.
8+	The character can no longer be played. At times it may still be encountered as a shadow or phantom, but without meaningful powers, or even physical form.



Rook Morrow, (b. 1987)
panels from *Blue Shift #2*
ink, acrylic & graphite
Aetherco Comics
AD 2006

What does frag feels like?

Deja vu, partial amnesia, nausea, can all be symptoms of Frag. A spanner is never in doubt as to what his Frag rating is, though the cause can be obscured by viciously clever narcissists. At higher ratings of Frag, a character's sense of continuity becomes seriously compromised, as shown in the table.

The GM has further grisly details on frag in his section.

How do I cure frag?

When you have caused frag, and are expected to fix it, the best method is to tackle the source of the frag head-on, and handle the attempt at paradox oneself. Once the paradox is contained, the point(s) of Frag is removed.

Put simply, **the causality has to make sense.**

To elaborate with an example:

Artwork © 1999 Raven Mimura

The Beer Crisis of William and Edward

William and Edward are spanner buddies with their own place. They're both sitting in the living room watching football. William has a cold beer, which makes Ed thirsty. Ed spans levelly into the kitchen, and discovers there is no cold beer in the fridge. He spans Down ten minutes, finds one cold beer, and opens it, and spans back Up to enjoy the game.

"Hey!" growls Will, pointing to his beer. "Is that my beer? You just fragged me!"

"Oh crap," grumbles Ed, coming off the first sip. "Guess I gotta fix that."

"Yes you do, and before halftime."

Ed carefully puts the beer down in the living room, walks back to the kitchen. He puts another six pack of the same brand into the fridge. As a caution, he attaches a post-it note to one saying: "Don't Touch!! -Ed" He spans Up an hour (to let it get cold), finds it to be the only one remaining, then takes the cold beer back Down one hour and nine minutes, and replaces it in the fridge for Will to find in the next few seconds.

He tosses the post-it note away, and spans back Up eleven minutes— to avoid a gemini— and return to the football game.

"How's that? Unfragged?" he asks Will.

Will gives him thumbs up.

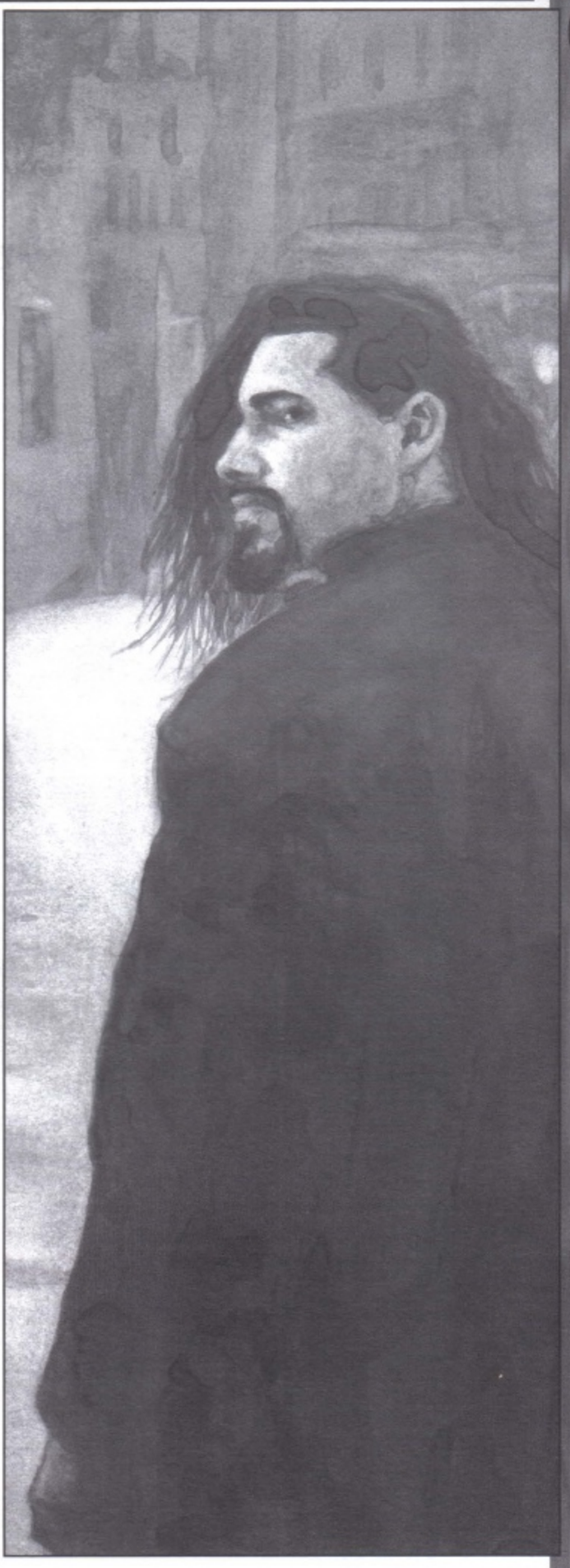
"Just don't touch the one I marked for the next hour, okay?"

"Gotcha."

Will could tell he'd been fragged, and could guess the cause since he knew he had taken the last beer, and saw Ed coming in with a cold one. Will and Ed are buddies— these misunderstandings happen. But when fighting a narcissist, you can't expect cooperation in healing your frag. You'll probably even have to investigate where the incident (the as/as not) took place, before you can fix it.

And you may well have to take action that frags your assailant in your stead.

A secondary option, for those whose Span is insufficient to reach the source of the frag, or those who can't discover the source, is to approach those of higher Span, and agree to perform service for them in exchange for their help in reducing one's Frag. These services normally entail blocking Frag of spanners who died before they could fulfill their Yet, though it is often the starting point for new adventures.



Sir Joseph David Footingham, (b. 1775)
Farewell to a Friend, (AD 1923)
watercolour
collection of the London Hunt Club

Artwork © 1999 David Fooden

II

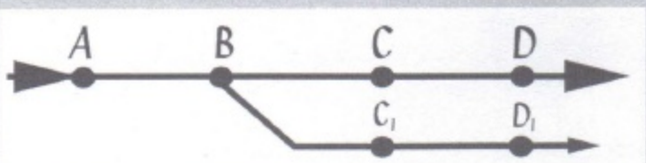
What's causality?

Simply put, **causality** is the "cause and effect" of the universe; how people make sense of the world through everyday application of Newton's laws. You push a domino, it falls down, knocking over the next, which knocks over the next, etc. Time travel, as one might expect, throws some of these assumptions for a loop— but causality must be satisfied to avoid frag.

How causality functions for spanners is well-discussed in the science fiction of the Aquarian cusp. Here is presented— with a great deal of detail— some of the fallacious explanations, and a beginner's approximation of genuine spacetime:

Illus. A: Fallacious Causality

This is a typical (erroneous) timeline illustration of causality, time moving from A the past to D the future. Some spanner leaves from C, goes down to B, and makes changes so that C and D and up never occur. The spanner goes forward along the new timeline which holds C1, D1, and so on.

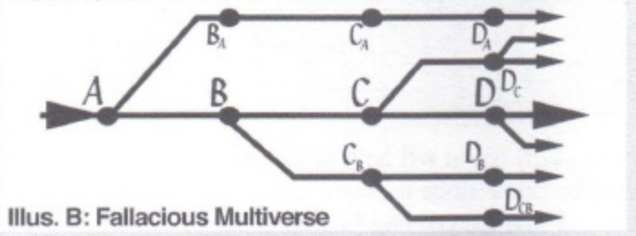


Illus. A: Fallacious Causality

The most famous example of this is the "grandfather clause", and often includes the concept of a time machine: John's grandfather builds a time machine for the first time at C, which John steals and travels down to B, where his grandfather is a young boy having sired no offspring. John kills the boy either deliberately or accidentally, and finds himself with a time machine that will not be invented, and himself never being born, and therefore unable to go back in time to kill his grandfather.

Illus. B: Fallacious Multiverse

This is an argument favored by many, if not all, narcissists. Therefore it is considered extremely dangerous information, even in the brief form presented here.



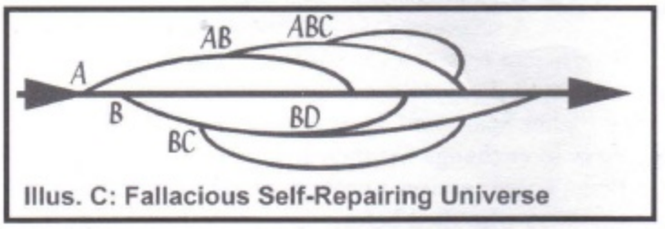
Illus. B: Fallacious Multiverse

This illustration postulates that with every alteration of the earlier timeline, a new universe is created. This supposedly eliminates paradox, by allowing a violating spanner free reign to change anything he pleases and enter a fresh universe more tailored to his likes.

Both the foregoing examples— and many other arguments— presume the actions of a single sentient group or individual spanner acting only upon unwitting levellers and inanimate objects. This is not the state of spacetime, of course. See also Appendix A, Fallacies & Follies [pg. 212].

Illus. C: Fallacious Self-Repairing Universe

As a leveller, the world just seems to take care of itself. You drop a pencil, it falls to the ground, and makes a noise. This is the world of Newton's *Principia*. Every action creates an equal and opposite reaction.

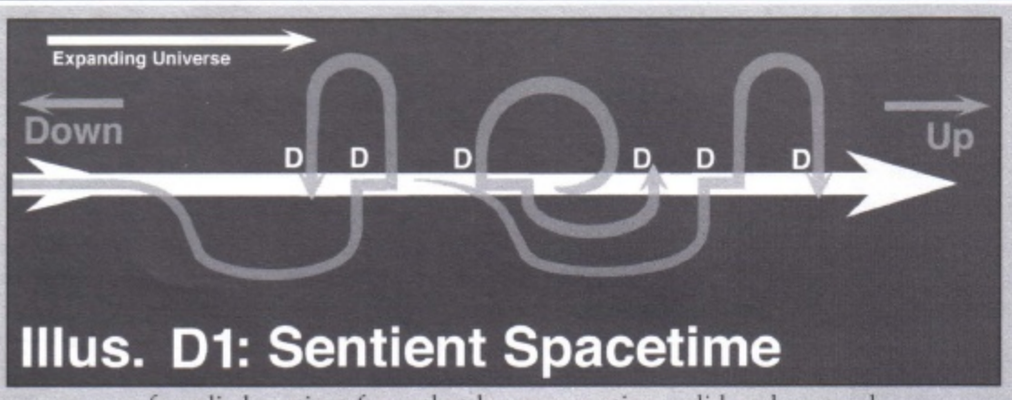


Illus. C: Fallacious Self-Repairing Universe

This illustration shows the common belief that time travel would impact the universe in much the same way. Every action, however paradoxical, would recycle back into the fabric of reality through some (usually ill-defined) natural means, like a stream washing dumped poisons away.
But causality is not a renewable resource. Some narcissists hope— even expect— that the universe will either get along around their desires, or some *thing* will stop them from playing with the universe, and no serious harm done. "Events will conspire against you."

Events don't conspire, people do. What's more, events *can't* conspire and people *can*. This is sentient force. The price of this freedom of time is responsibility for it, and this responsibility is backed up by the fear for one's very existence. In this regard, time travel is never a game. See also Appendix A, Fallacies & Follies [pg. 212].

Illus. D1: Sentient Spacetime

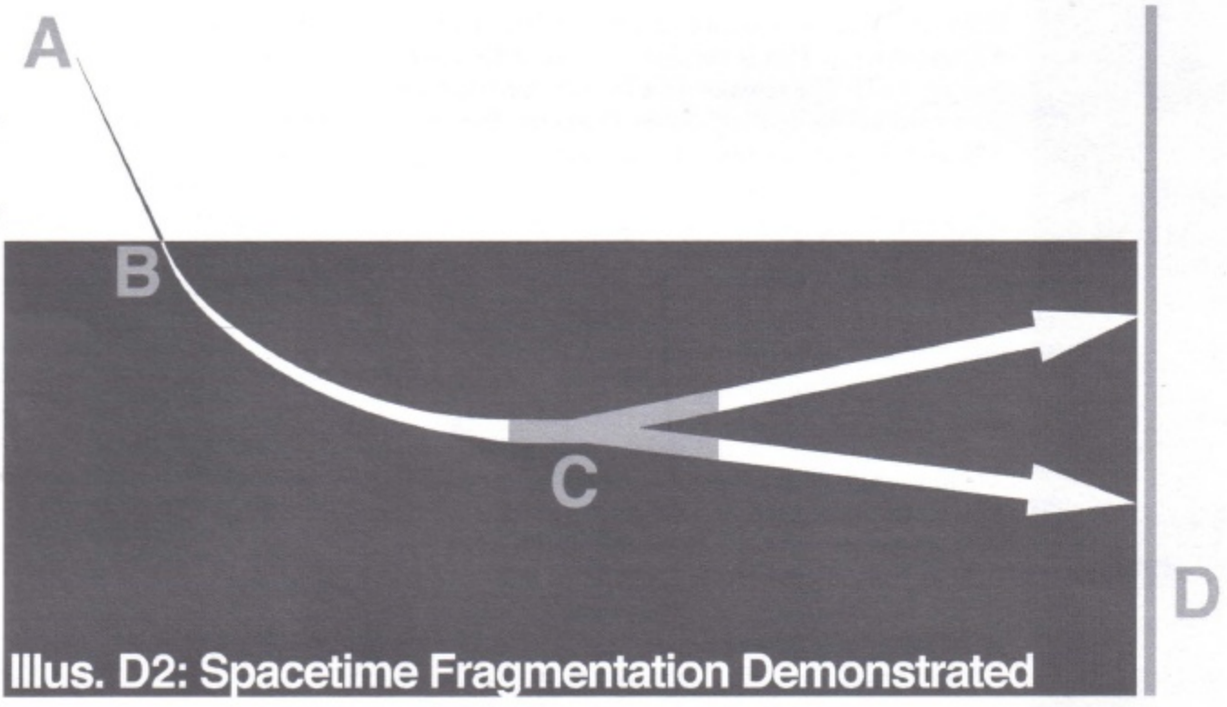


Spanners enter and leave the timeline at will, as shown below.
The light gray lines inside the white timeline arrow represent a spanner living in level time. The dark gray lines are merely aids to visualize the direction and destination of individual spans, and are not to scale by any means.
At any point marked D, the spanner may be entering to stop an incident of frag, (as shown in Illustration D1). It is this ceaseless sequence of applied sentient force that keeps spacetime solid and on track. The thrust of the expanding universe, rushing away from the Big Bang, is why there is time.

Spacetime Fragmentation Demonstrated

A basic illustration of how causality is maintained by the Continuum. Genuine mathematical models are not available here.
Some readers will be reluctant to cut or damage a book, due to cultural or investment reasons. Be assured your feelings are a part of this lesson, and proceed.

1) Without breaking through the paper, make a very light scoring with a drafting knife from A to B, increasing pressure slightly as you go along.
2) Now from B to C, make the cut through the paper.
3) At C begins what is called the As/AsNot, the point beyond which natural paradoxes do not heal, but collapse the universe instead. Cut this branching area cleanly.
4) Now tear (not cut) the page up to the line at D. Fold at D, and curl the peninsula of paper so that it lifts.



Explanation
An instance of paradox begins (A) and either reverts to a non-paradox state without effect at (B) or it increases in effect until (C). At C comes the As/AsNot, the beginning of collapse and the tearing of causality.

D is the Yet, or the Required Future [see pg. 47]. Before the effect of a deliberate or accidental paradox grows exponentially, a sentient force is applied by the Continuum to stop it cold. Because of this, the fragmented piece of spacetime remains a part of the universe (represented by the rucked up paper which is still a part of the page). Causality crosses over the fragment, just as our causality moves up and down spacetime.

A spanner who has created a paradox has the main responsibility to fix it in his Yet, even if that paradox caused him no frag. (Note that fragging the narcissist who has created a deliberate paradox is usually *fixing* not *creating* the paradox!)

5) Never let the bit of paper be torn out of the book; it's a good exercise.

Is it ever acceptable to cause frag?

Technically, spanners loyal to the Continuum are under no stricture to not cause frag, only that they are responsible for any they have in their Yet (First Maxim). But it's a bad idea to take this lightly. Fragging someone else will cause them, and all their friends to come down on you. It is this **balance of sentient force** that keeps the Continuum together.

Narcissists— spanners who are only out for themselves— often make the mistake of trying to frag large numbers of spanners at the same time, hoping to shear off all competition. Nothing could be more foolish. Imagine the list of angry, fragged spanners from around the world and universe, with the single-minded thought of fragging you out for your evil deed.

The Continuum can coordinate and frag efficiently, with **overwhelming sentient force** [see pg. 57, and above]. This is the reality of **Time Combat** [see pg. 117]. The remains of a known narcissist are then scooped up by the Quicker Fraternity [see pg. 80], who handle any final arrangements.

Tips on acceptable fragging actions

It's usually okay to frag back—

First of all, if you've been fragged, **make sure it wasn't an accident:** Alerting a loyal Continuum spanner to some frag they caused should meet with immediate action on their part, since it's in their Yet as soon as you tell them (First and Fifth Maxims). For an example of an accident, see *The Beer Crisis of William and Edward*, pg. 55.

Second, research the incident of frag as carefully as you can: **too much detail limits your options.** (If you know an event turns out a certain way, trying to change it will frag you too!) Sending a third party to observe and **carefully report the events leading up to the as/asnot** is usually safer than going yourself.

Don't blame spanners who aren't involved for resisting getting more involved: They have corners of spacetime of their own to protect. But usually information is forthcoming to thwart a true menace to the Continuum.

Ask first—

It's a common courtesy (and in keeping with the Third Maxim) when in someone's locality to let them know you are or are about to engage in Time Combat. The Frune Stratagem in the Time Combat rules [p. 124] covers this neatly, and helps supply you with local information about your target.

Transfer frag at the as/asnot—

If the narcissist's attack hinges upon moving or damaging a person or object, move the object back or protect the person or object before the damage occurs. **Do everything you can so that the only spanner who thinks the world is different is the narcissist.** Frag is the penalty for being so selfish that you don't care what happens to others, just so you can shape the world to your private tastes.

The subtler the better—

A quiet step can often be much more effective than big pyrotechnics. It helps to think more like a secret agent than like a tank commander, at least for private Time Combats. For instance, burning down a village to stop one narcissist runs the risk of creating more frag than the narcissist himself ever dared. Better to sneak a drug that will lower his defenses before he attempts his fragging action— and then engage the narcissist with the impaired abilities in Time Combat.

Oh, and watch out. Narcissists will try the same nasty tricks on you. [See Chapter 3: Struggling— Narcissists and other Dangers, pg. 135].

Don't forget to invite your friends—

If there really is a narcissist out there who's nagging for a fragging, don't forget that the Continuum succeeds by employing overwhelming sentient force. In simple terms, you and your corner can gang up on a really bad apple and **frag him out.**

For further information, see Chapter 3: Struggling— Time Combat [pg. 117], where the combat itself is simplified for game purposes into basic Stratagems.

Victor Beauregard Houston
(b. AD 1857)
Never Alone (AD 1876)
watercolour
collection of West End Gallery, New York

Earning Span 2

Increase in Span is earned by **merit**. Unlike common skills, Span is taught only when a candidate is deemed ready. The GM represents the Continuum, and may grant or bar a spanner's advancement, and withhold the reason (though a good reason should be present in the GM's mind).

Additionally, the following are requirements of advancement:

1. The candidate's
   a) **Frag must be Zero**, and
   b) the "**absolute number" of Gemini Incidents** for that Span is met.

2. The candidate must **not have travelled beyond his Span more than once** in the past year of his/her Age.

3. **One year of the candidate's Age** must have transpired since the last advancement. (From Span Zero to Span 1 is certainly considered such an advancement.)

4. The player (not his/her characters) must have spent **two months of real time, and played at least three game sessions of at least four hours apiece** playing C°NTINUUM, before advancement can even be considered. This represents the solid reality of spacetime: things happen when their time is right, not just when we want them to happen.

5. Finally, earning Span 2 requires
   a) having travelled to **each year of the decade** in which you first spanned and
   b) **reciting the Maxims by heart,** (which the player must also be able to do). [See frontispiece.]

GMs may add to these requirements, but should not waive any listed.

Artwork © 1999 Drew Tucker

Span 2

Range: 10 years, 10 miles

Who approves and teaches advancement to Span Two?

Usually the approval of the corner's mentor is sufficient, and can guide the candidate through the process of improving his spanning to a range beyond one revolution of Earth around the Sun.

A NOTE ON TRAVEL INTO THE AQUARIAN ERA

New Piscean Span Twos have ample ability to enter the Aquarian Era, and are therefore warned: DO NOT SPAN FARTHER UP THAN THE HOUR OF THE INHERITANCE UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY AN EXALTED SPANNER OR AN INHERITOR. This is a Decision of the Seventh Atlantean Council. The Hour of the Inheritance occurs in AD 2222. Span Ones and Twos are also forbidden to travel farther Down than 12969 BC, under any circumstances.

What does a Span Two do?

First and foremost, a Span Two takes on a new identity, maybe even several.

Encountering old friends, dead relatives, and distant descendants becomes more and more likely when an entire decade can be sped through in a day. Even one's existence as a Span One has to be stepped around lightly, making a convincing disguise all the more important.

Span Twos hire themselves out, enjoy adventures with old friends and for information-tight Fours, and live the spanner life a little before trying for the big jump to Span Three. They also make up the majority of the members of the Fraternities [see below].

Span Twos can span carrying up to a hundred pounds without penalty. Most people and their belongings weigh over a hundred pounds, so bringing a friend along on one's own power is unlikely and dangerous. Twos are the spanners most often tempted to rescue small children from fatal mishaps, as they are still very close to being levellers, and remember their leveller thoughts, goals and sympathies.

Clandestine Skills and travel

This is a list of relevant useful Skills from the Skill List [see Chapter 1: Invitations— Skill List, pg. 17]. Span Twos are encouraged to become proficient at most of these, and to reach at least Apprentice rank in four of these before considering volunteering for dangerous clandestine adventures. [See also Earning Span 3, pg. 87.]

Bureaucracy
Computers
Disguise
Finance
Forgery
Investigation
Law
Lockpicking/Locksmithing
Observation
Security/Burglary
Stealth
Swindle

Killing off your former identity

Faking death is easier for a spanner, since his chronies in the Continuum are more than willing to help him out. But note: **A Span Two spanner with a new identity ALMOST ALWAYS has faking his original leveller death in his Yet.** Usually a death where the body isn't found, or is totally destroyed is preferred, like a catastrophe, or death at sea. An unexplained but sinister disappearance can be staged, but is a little hazardous: Levellers might begin to discover more than they should, through dogged research, and narcissists might target you as a careless spanner.

The Thespian Fraternity has tips on how to go about this and other basic ruses for levellers.

Travelling nearby

Haunting the old corner has to become a limited pastime: The only encounters you're allowed with your Span One juniors are the geminis still in your Yet from when you were a One. You might interact cautiously with other Span One members of the corner, or even assist the mentor in various measures of training.

One of the most important reasons for a new identity is that levellers expect people to die *sometime*. The leveller every spanner was, and pretends to be as a Span One, needs a death date. The spanner doesn't have to fake their death right away— but it is in their Yets come Span Two. Unlucky spanners may even know when their actual death occurs [See Span One— Facing Death and Surviving It, pg. 40 and Madness ad Related Problems— Seeking Your Death, pg. 143].

Finally, since the Span Two is expected to be more apart from his novice corner, **a separate house, apartment, or dwelling is found for the Two in the same locality**, as soon as the new identity is entered upon. Sometimes the new place to live has been vacated by a previous spanner, and therefore has many accoutrements of the spanner life (like rooms with no doors or windows, etc.) Occasionally the spanner's own money must be spent to bring the place up to spanner spec. GMs are encouraged to allow players to design their own Span Two homes, within their budgets and within reason.

Travelling afar

Becoming a Two means the ability to travel more than a century in a fortnight (14 days rest = 140 years travel). This means touring history; taking on the vistas one traditionally imagines time travel to open up.

Find out about a welcome corner to stay in before you leave. If you're part of a Fraternity, expect to be asked to run errands for your Fraternal pals to whatever year you were planning on visiting— but a Fraternal corner will be there to welcome and guide you the instant you arrive. But remember, it's up to you to provide for your identity in distant times and places! Do your research first, don't be afraid to ask your chronies (and players, ask your GM) about how much detail you'll need to fit in. Remember your Third Maxim at all times.

Holographic and translation technologies of late Societal spacetime are generally not available to young spanners, and should not be brought Down before their time on a whim. The Engineers Fraternity [pg. 69] can assist you in finding appropriate devices for your needs, experience and level of expertise.

Spanners with an interest in an era of spacetime besides their own are encouraged to learn the language, customs and manners of the period, and to purchase period dress. The Antiquarian Fraternity [pg. 64] can help with physical accoutrements, while the Scribes [pg. 82] will always have a work on translating and speaking any language— even ones unknown to levellers, or without a native alphabet.

Of course, all these **Fraternities will expect compensation for their effort—** but if you belong to a Fraternity already, this is automatically handled. All the Fraternities continually barter services. (Some Scribes are keeping track of it all somewhere, but they aren't usually the adventurous members of the Societies.)

Remember when you were a leveller, and travel to a foreign country meant preparations of passports and inoculations, and arrival there held the gut fears of facing an unfamiliar culture, surrounded by a language you couldn't speak or understand. Amplify these concerns when approaching Eras other than your own, and arrive cautious but prepared.

Fraternal corners

Certain Societal corners are strongholds of spanners of like mind. Though most corners boast members of many Fraternities, some corners are centers for one specific Fraternity.

These differ from novice corners in an important respect: They are mostly made up of experienced spanners of a chosen Fraternity. Some live here, others merely visit looking for adventures, or to trade stories. Some are resting during a long journey Up or Down, others are tourists, still others are on a specific mission, and a few reclusive members are probably in Time Combat.

A Fraternal corner always has some function in the leveller world: A hospital, a judiciary, a public-house, a gymnasium, the seat of an Oracle, or a charity cafeteria. There is always a hidden room, chamber or passageway into which Fraternal members are expected to appear: First-time visitors are usually expected to come to the front door, or make contact away from the corner itself. This is a sane and standard measure of security. Since most legitimate first-time visitors send ahead that they are arriving, surprises are even less liked at a Fraternal corner than at a standard one.

Joining a Fraternity

At Span Two, most Societal spanners take the opportunity to join a Fraternity. It is essentially choosing a career, since Fraternities provide the services spanners require for their form of life, and lifestyle.

The Fraternities choose their members: Normally the invitation arrives at the novice corner or the Two's residence shortly after Span 2 is achieved. But it is possible to approach a Fraternity one is interested in, and (politely) turn down an offer to join. A letter of inquiry to any known Fraternal corner is all that is required.

Most spanners have a temperament or a set of Skills that mark them as a candidate for a specific Fraternity. It happens sometimes in real life that a person may have a desire to take up an occupation that they aren't qualified for. The Fraternities will refuse admittance to any spanner they feel is underqualified for the tasks of the Fraternity, but usually allow the spanner to work on improving various appropriate Skills, before applying again.

Members generally enjoy benefits equal to their responsibilities. Spanners that excel at their tasks are usually introduced to more of the secrets of the Fraternity, and of the Continuum.

6. Afoot

Smit's workday at Radio Hut is going badly. It is not where he wanted to die, or make a stand, in the summer of 1981, in a Michigan mall smelling of sickly-sweet fresh carpet and filtered air. He has even said so to someone he thought he could trust, the Negro called Talanthus. But it is all a Foxhorn trap.

He is ready for such a day. As figures begin appearing and disappearing from the edge of his sight, he grabs a boy and a girl who were near the door to the back office, and shoves them in. To the kids' horror, he pulls a huge pistol from out of nowhere, and slaps it across the girl's face before she can scream. The boy, taller and braver, is kicked in the ribs, and goes down.

Smit enters his prepared circle of cameras. Switching on, with levellers watching in the mall beyond, he knows the Continuum has to play close to the vest, and Smit wants them there. He has the girl by the throat, the gun to her eye.

"I'm safe here, you swarms of bitches," he barks. "I'm on closed-circuit, videotapes and live to the storefront, and I know you don't find 'em all, so come on!"

A fuzzy voice on the PA blurts, "Well, if you insist on dying, sure."

A swish behind him. He wheels, choking the girl. The intruder is gone.

"I'll span 'em from a half mile high! You leave me be!!"

Two guns, one at his temple, one at his back. He squeezes.

His last sight in his Yet is looking into the hazel eyes of a pretty raven-haired spanner, her hand engaging the safety of his gun.

Cynthia has changed her name to Stirling when she becomes a Span Two, and has taken up the black hair she's seen on her elders, but is keeping it short. Not long before, she has flown the nest, and has joined a Foxhorn lodge in the Upper Peninsula. She is prying the chokehold Smit's corpse has on the child, and says some sweet nothings to try to calm her down.

"A near one, but it worked," says Dan. Dan is the mentor of the corner; an old friend of Charlie's, he has recruited Cynthia, and Ray as well. "So. We've all avoided watching the videotapes, right?"

"Yep."

"Uh huh. And avoided the storefronts," says Ray Talanthus.

The customers were milling around as usual. Blissfully ignorant levellers, thinks Cynthia, peeking out from the back. One, in his thirties, was transfixed by Big Bird. Since Smit is dead, and not apparently foresightful enough to finish his shift, an elder Dan steps up to the register to keep the levellers busy. After all, a junior Smit might be in to work tomorrow.

"Sounds like he died fragged," says junior Dan.

"Nah," says Stirling. "I slipshanked the video. It's all feeding from a TV that's tuned to PBS."

"Hee hee, good one, Stirling."

"Thanks. Excuse me while I fix it." She smiles at the poor kids, and steps around the corner to span. Just to be discreet. She finishes the slipshank before the heat of the battle twelve minutes Down, and spans back.

The girl is only nine, but the boy is sixteen. "What do you think," says Dan to his crew.

"Shame to split up a family," says Talanthus. He gets out a small medkit. "I can have them patched up, if you can get someone in here to wipe them."

"Hey," says the boy, not liking the sound of that.

"Chill out dude," smirks Ray, playing with the kit.

"Agreed," says Dan. "It's not their moment, if it ever is."

"Hey wait. There's my mom. And we have to call the cops..."

Brave beyond his years, and beyond the shock. Stirling is impressed, but, "Maybe we'll see you later, soldier—" The doors to the back service hallway open, and stay open. "Dan—"

Coming from the interior loading corridor, three figures stroll in. The lead one is Robert Silbury, famed as a psychic debunker in leveller circles. Every spanner here knows him as a Quicker honcho: He is probably keeping the doors open with his mind. A sandy-haired woman and a dark fellow flank him. Behind them, unmoving, is a pale figure, very tall.

"Who ya gonna call?"

"Ray. I'd expect that crap out of Lydia."

"Yeah, what about it, old man." They clasp hands. Stirling wonders about the mention of Lydia. Last she sees her, she's a recluse; sitting in her own dark apartment with a couple sullen elders or juniors always around, afraid of going outside. Not narcissist, really. Just creepy.

Robert nods at Dan. "Daniel. Got a bad frag here, I understand."

Dan slaps his pockets. "Not that we can tell. What brings you here?"

Robert kicks Smit's foot.

Stirling is more interested in their leader, an Aquarian, a late Aquarian. Seven feet tall with long, precise, snow white hair, and huge silver-irised eyes. What sex, she cannot say. Like those Asian cartoons, she thinks. But she tries to

concentrate on the others. She knows the Aquarians don't like being stared at.

"So we killed him before he has a chance to frag us," says Tal, working on the children. "Doesn't that put us all back a peg."

"You fixed your frag during time combat," shrugs the young Indic Quicker. "He's the one with the problem." Smit's broken body is a mute, if convincing testament.

Dan has no lingering questions. "Oh, he never fixed that for himself. I shouldn't be surprised. Well, I don't think we need him. Lemme check." Dan blinks in and out. "Okay. He's not a big wheel. Tal here was doing recon with him. He's been a loner a long while."

Robert glances at the kids. "A bit abrupt, in front of them."

"They've seen it. They need some serious wiping down to before Smit grabs them—" As Dan speaks, the youthful sandy-haired Quicker steps up to them, smiling.

"Well, that was pretty awful, huh." She raises a finger and starts waving it back and forth. "Never ever go with strangers. Never ever. Never ever—"

Stirling has to turn her eyes away. "Man, she's good. I've got to learn more hypnotism." And even as she says this, her eyes fall on the pale Aquarian standing on the descending ramp beyond. Like he belongs there in the half-light, with the mall humming around him...

Stirling slowly wanders over, ten feet out from the shipping doors, to stand next to the exotic being that seems to ignore her every move.

"Can I ask a question?"

The cool, large eyes suddenly consider little Stirling.

Talanthus whispers, facing away from them, "Cyn. Ixnay on the estionsquay."

Stirling, barely hearing him, is now inclined to agree, but feels it is too late. "Ah. Um. Thank you, er, since we killed him here, like, before he started the time combat? How does he, how does he—?"

"Complete the events you reacted to his involvement in." The voice from that face is so perfectly modulated, that Stirling feels her emotions manipulated with every syllable.

"Whoa. I mean, yes."

The Quicker leader smiles. A smile, even. "It has been told you, Cynthia Stirling. I will tell you here.

"Your yet drew you to these things. His yet draws him still. He arrives in his yet less sentient than you arrive in yours."

Cynthia's mind barrels on. "But he must be pretty sentient if—"

"Further information is not available here." The Aquarian keeps smiling, but returns his gaze to the work at hand.

Cyn grins lamely. "Shutting up now. Thanks." She walks over to stand by Tal who slaps her shoulder, hard. He looks very annoyed.

The Quicker make many measurements before taking up the body. In the silence of their studies, Stirling thinks over the words of the Aquarian, and what they must mean. Never fight for a Lost Cause. She looks at the shattered body of the spanner, his dead eyes staring at nothing.

Stirling finds that the kids were already back in the front of the shop. She can hear their giggles.

"All that blood on the girl..." says Stir. "Wiping her off is one thing, but how is she suppressing what happened."

The Quicker woman looks out after them. "Their minds carry a different afternoon. Her brother dumped a cherry shake on her, but he's sorry. She had to wash. Their telltale wounds are gone, thanks to your chrony."

"So. Do this a lot I guess."

The round-faced woman smiles, but doesn't look at her. "Usually they're very dead. Pieces. It's pretty ugly. Not for nervous little girls."

"All right," growls Stirling, visibly angry.

A noise by the open doors. A whitish blur making a sussurus-noise is pushing at the bottoms of the open doors, as if trying to open them again. Stirling has never stuck around to see frag this bad, and steps back. The Aquarian inclines his head, and the apparition settles. Robert brings some devices to bear on the force, the outline of which looks like a huge version of Smit's head.

"I'm sorry. What's your name?" says the sandy-haired one casually.

"Stirling," she swallows. "Who are you?"

"I'm called Whiteye, but..." A glance. "You can call me Ayla." The target is bagged and tagged, Ayla's companions prepare to depart. "Well, he's all. 'Bye." With a wave, she and her chronies vanish.

Stirling glances round at her companions, ready to depart as well. Her trepidation dissipates when the memory of the Aquarian's voice pours happily across her mind, Except for a tiny droplet of fear, that courses down her spinal chord.

The Fraternities

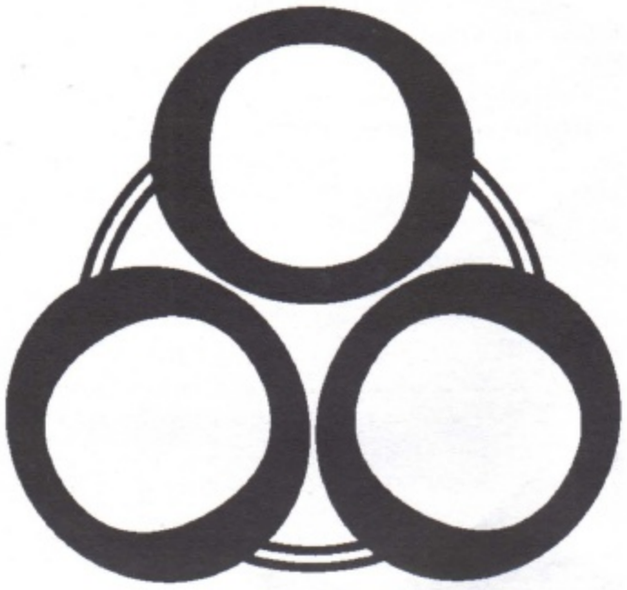
The unique power of spanning creates unique needs and demands. To meet these needs, the Fraternities exist.

There are ten Fraternities. There are also many lesser, local organizations that handle some commerce, or mutual protection, among a number of corners. But these are small individual groups dotting the vistas of spacetime: None grow beyond the boundaries of their localities. Only the Fraternities maintain services across all the Societies, and beyond.

While cooperation is the norm between Fraternities, some areas of rivalry exist. Foxhorn and the Quicker are known to dispute certain elements of Death, while the arguments between the Antiquarians and the Scribes over the meaning of Art is legendary (among spanners, anyway). Spanning provides more answers (and questions) to such age-old themes of philosophy— and since information is all, one's philosophy shapes one's attitude toward the universe, and one's destiny in the Continuum.

These disputes must never get out of hand, lest narcissists take advantage of our polite disagreements. If friendly conflict is what you crave, it's better to get involved in the politics of the Societies, than to stir up trouble between Fraternities.

Breakdown of descriptions:
Fraternity name [etymology]
Overview— What the Fraternity does for the Continuum
Alternate Names throughout time— Some famous, some utterly secret
Symbol— Found, with variations, throughout the time of the Societies, with description
Services for the Continuum— Extended description of tasks performed, and attitude toward these tasks
Areas of dispute with other Fraternities— These are primarily philosophical, as Fraternities are careful to not allow disagreements affect loyalty among all Continuum spanners. But they are arguments that underscore each Fraternity's reason for being.
Leader types— An example or two of popular leading figures in the Fraternity
Selected Main Corners— Some strongholds, or popular spots



Antiquarians

[n. one who collects or studies antiquities < *French* antique < *Latin* antiquus "ancient, former" < *PIE* antiekwo "appearing before, having prior aspect"]

Overview—
This Fraternity is made up primarily of antique dealers and other sedentary spanners who prefer to collect, and catalogue items, as opposed to travelling to dangerous eras— though some notably daring members have been known to go on treasure hunts.

Their private catalogues include items from farther Up, naturally. If period objects and costumes are required— or the often-needed precise replica of a lost item— Antiquarians are the ones to go to.

Alternate Names throughout time— The Reliquary, Collectors

Symbol: The Entwined Globes—
We move and make and remake the things inside the universe: hence our symbol of the ever-twisting Globes— whether the piles of counting-stones of earliest man, the pots and baskets he learned to make and stack, or the pawnbroker's orbs, the Globes are the enduring symbol of the material world, and our lives bound to it.

Services for the Continuum—

"Redibo tu num quam"
(I shall return, thou never.)
—Inscription on a English sundial, AD 1643

History is much more than people. It is objects. It is the creation of artifacts to do a task, or to grace us with beauty, or to stand as a testament. Levellers can't hold a person from an era gone by,

when that person is but dust and bone, but you can touch Charlemagne's armor, or sit in the chair from which the Pharaoh Khufu passed judgment, or walk in the Flatiron Building, and touch a part of someone else's past. It is the way for levellers to understand what it is like to span, even as they cannot. It lets them touch the whole of the world that we can walk through at any time, and be as amazed as we were the first time we spanned.

Not that most of us go diving headfirst into such things. No, most of us would be considered 'boring' compared to Foxhorn and the Thespians. Hunting big game, playing politics as pretend leaders, are not our speed. No, we're the blacksmiths, clothiers, stone-cutters, weavers, and makers of things. There *are* those of us that best enjoy raiding tombs or ancient treasuries, to be the one to attain things 'forever lost'... or other such excitement. But what the Continuum needs most is for all the props to be in place, and we arrange for that.

Do you know how many times we replace the Liberty Bell and the Mona Lisa? Or make sure that Rommel has all the tank munitions he needs, even as some narcissist sabotages them? We keep track of it all. We know where to replace objects if need be, and how to make those we cannot find. We have quite an impressive catalog.

And it is not just what you would consider antiques. No, we can make anything you need for the part. A khopesh sword with a family crest engraved in the hilt? Not a problem. A replica of a necklace a Narcissist is planning to steal? Simple enough. A boy's favorite coloring book? Yes, that as well. All of these have value, if only in the eye of a person. And that is good enough. We do not collect objects because someone will pay sums of money for it, but because somewhere, sometime, someone placed a value upon it. And that value is still of import, even as the person who valued it is passed from leveller reckoning. Because we know that it was valued, it is why we must guard it.

Mind you, not everything we deal with is from what would be considered the past. Depending on locality, objects from the printing press to the AK-47 to Kylona Industries Personal Battle Armor can be considered a future item. We guard these as well, for such things in the wrong hands can prove to be a dangerous enterprise... imagine the hateful tracts and pamphlets that someone could print in 1183! We are also the clothiers of those that would travel to other eras, for the worst you can do is arrive not as a native.

The Thespians appreciate us, for the fact that we provide the props and costumes for their performances; no good standing in for Richard the Lion-Hearted if you don't have your armor duplicated perfectly. Likewise, the Scribes respect us as like-minded scholars, despite our gentlemen's disagreement over Art. While we deal in things that can be touched and seen, their realm is that of ideas. Sadly, the Moneychangers do not see eye to eye with us on things of value; they assume that if no one wishes to buy something, it has no value. No, all things have value, and all things come their due in due time. The Engineers, on the other hand, are invaluable to us, as they understand the working of many things that we must construct.

Of course, there are some that would move objects about as though it were a simple game of chess. The narcissist sees no harm in bringing Down late Societal technology to earlier levellers, or removing important things from their place. It's like a game they play, as children do, without understanding all the rules. Normally, it is a matter for us to make a duplicate to replace the object moments before or moments after it is taken, depending on if the object needs to be kept out of their hands or just kept on display. Sometimes, a stronger message is needed, and we arrange for a few surprises to stymie the thief of history.

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—

Main conflicts:

Versus the **Moneychangers** over the value of **Wealth—**

It can be agreed upon that objects have value, that much is sure. But is that value perceived, or is there an absolute, due to the efforts that a person placed in crafting— as well as owning— an object?

If a man had a sharp stick, what value would it have? Very little, as it seems easily replaceable. But what if he was using the sharp stick as a tent peg? Some more value, yes. What if it was the stick that a boy used to play fetch with his pet beagle Nemo the whole of the dog's life? That stick would be worth far more to him than any Wealth measured by the world.

Since you can never know the true effort of every moment used in creating an object, you can never truly assign a value to an object. True, people will set a price for something, but that is only a price at which they will part with it. It's true value can be far far more. Value comes not from what others will pay, but from the use it will have and the effort and heart in its making.

Part of the absolute value of an object is measured by what would happen if that object was removed from the person's life. Would it frag them to have it taken out, by how much? That is why the Antiquarians do not agree with the **Moneychangers** over the value of Wealth, since as an abstract it is little more than chasing a phantom or a dream.

We are eager to replace what is lost; the whole of that person's Yet may depend on it. The Moneychangers' concept of Wealth only muddles and impedes what must obviously be done.

Versus the **Scribes** over the meaning of **Art**—

Information is conveyed by every object under the Sun— but few try to 'correct' the information in an incident of frag. Rather, they seek to replace, remove or adjust a tangible object. Whether it's a sculpture, a painting, a child's coloring book or even an living actor, Art's value is being in the right place at the right time— whether being examined to death by **Scribes**, or hanging serenely in the half-dark of the closed museum, or inspiring political movements. Any information conveyed is secondary to and dependent upon the object itself.

Art is perfect in itself, and doesn't need to jammed into the frame of recorded history any more than it already is. The Scribes lose track of that, even though they seem to be able to record and measure everything else.

We Antiquarians and the **Thespians**, both interested in aesthetics, ally in such matters as the meaning and purpose of Art— though the Thespians are shy about criticizing the Scribes too seriously.

The Antiquarians get along well with the **Engineers**, since they both deal with physical objects. The Fraternities stick to their respective spheres of cataloguing/replicas, and repair/grand design. While some small conflicts inevitably appear in situations involving design and restoration, our Fraternities keep enough in common to help each other out.

Also, the Antiquarians enjoy the company of **Foxhorn**, finding a way to live vicariously in elements of danger that they do not always wish to share. Sometimes, however, an Antiquarian will find his services needed in the field, that that provides enough excitement for a long time.

Personages of note—

Isaiah, Essene potter
Born Palmyra, 105 BC

Maurice Lancomme, French lieutenant
Born Marseilles, AD 1769

Son of the Revolution, Lancomme first became interested in antiquities as a boy studying in Paris. While passionate about redressing the government, he secretly hated the mobs for destroying every monument to their country's history that even suggested royalty— too much was being lost forever by narrow-minded brutes.

Taking a commission offered at the time for professionals wishing to study the monuments of Egypt during Napoleon's occupation, Lancomme found himself alone one evening near Karnak, miles from camp, discovering a small tomb half-uncovered in the sand. He had a small explosive in his satchel, and wrestled with the moral implications of blasting open the door; but in the end, he decided to pursue science after the manner of his day. *After all,* he consoled himself, *if I don't seize this opportunity of a freshly-uncovered tomb, any treasures inside will soon belong to a* real *graverobber.*

This is how he met Isaiah, then a Span Four Essene Antiquarian of much the same temperament, whom he accidentally knocked unconscious and thereby discovered *inside* the chamber he was blasting into. Apparently Isaiah had planned to catch a nap before spanning elsewhere. Awakening finally to find someone he recalled as an old friend, the explosion-muddled Isaiah overlooked the importance of asking the time, and started going on about Continuum business to the leveller Lancomme. That Invitation took a few days to sort out.

These two are rather infamous for getting into trouble, but they always fix accidental frag before too many spanners engage them in Time Combat. They have been invaluable for going into hazardous, even impossible circumstances, and recovering lost and forgotten artifacts, or at the very least recording what they looked like and consisted of.

All too often have more responsible members of the Fraternity groaned aloud as these two appear suddenly in their shops' backrooms, dusty and dishevelled, with looks on their faces which inevitably lead to statements like, "We didn't mean to smelt *that* apex," or "Was it the just the arms that came off the DiMilo?" While many young spanners look up to Isaiah & Lancomme, they should be advised that the Fraternity's patience— not to mention the Continuum's— is not infinite! Third Maxim, people!

"Beky", Packrat and Seamstress Extraordinaire
Born Detroit, AD 2003

[The practice of keeping a family name is still very much in use in 2026, but she is known by her mid-Aquarian uninomen (one-name), due to her works' popularity.]

Beky likes stuff. Despite this, it would seem odd that a 23 year old clubkid from the Motor City would attract the attention of curators and cataloguers. Still, Beky has always had a fondness of Victorian clothing, and coming across such things in 2026 was not cheap or easy. She was on her way to her favorite club, Albert's Jack, when she saw a lovely dress in the window of a curiosity shop nearby. She knew that there was no way she was going to be able to afford it. And as much as the owner Martha Simmons liked the girl, there wasn't any way she could part with such an expensive dress.

A few weeks later, Martha went on a vacation. She arrived back a week after she left, but it took her the better part of a day to notice something was wrong. Looking about, she finally pieced together that someone had broken into the shop, seemingly moved everything ever so slightly, and then left, locking up afterwards. Very concerned, Martha spanned back to just after she left, installed a security camera, and then watched the tapes of the week past.

Every night, the girl would break into the shop, steal some objects or clothing, and over the next few days return them undamaged. She made sure to put everything back in its place, and if it weren't for Martha's scrupulous attention to detail, it would have gone unnoticed. Curious, Martha picked a time when she knew the girl would be at Albert's Jack and spanned over to her apartment.

In Beky's tiny apartment was a repository of

antiques, sewing machines, leatherworking tools, sketchbooks of designs, and other odds and ends. Lying on the bed, chairs, and tables were piles of photographs and exact replicas of many of the objects and clothing taken from the store and then returned. If it weren't for the fact that some of them were unfinished, Martha would have assumed that they were the ones from the store. Impressed, Martha decided to confront the girl on her little project.

Taking some of Beky's designs, Martha spanned Down for a while to make them, and put them in her shop when she came back Up. Soon, they were flying off the rack. It took less than a week before Beky came storming into the shop, screaming about her designs showing up on everyone.

"Well, maybe if you had just asked before you broke in," Martha said, not bothering to look up at Beky, "I would have let you copy the dresses."

Beky was pretty quick about putting two and two together, and before long Martha found the Fourth Maxim tapping her on the shoulder. But after a brief and cautious background check, Martha decided an Invitation was warranted.

Beky's view on antiquities is that "stuff is cool". Despite her seeming disregard for decorum, and her tendency to wear revealing period clothing in inappropriate places, such as the Contributor's Reception for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she is a master craftsperson and seamstress, as well as knowledgeable about many elements of history. "Look, way I see it," she says while working on a replica of a Communion chalice, "this stuff is just like our stuff, only earlier or later. We're all the same, just the stuff is different. And it's not even that different; look at the shape of this chalice, same as people use today in church. Dates change, people and the stuff they have doesn't. And the stuff is what links us all together, through the Societies. And oh yeah, stuff is cool."

Beky is known for always having the right stuff before anyone asks for it, but almost never being seen handing it over. The sought-after object(s) is often just left on her shop counter— or even at the client's home— with a note attached if there's anything she or the Fraternity expect in return.

Selected Main Corners:

"National Palace Museum" Taipei, China AD 1958 - 2043

"Swap Meet" Gary, Indiana AD 1933 - 2019

"The Repository" Colon, Germany AD 1822 - 1937

"The Louvre" Paris, France AD 1844 - 2045

"Musei Vaticani" Vatican City, Italy 1503 - 1778

Pre-Ariesian corners can be found in any culture with a developed occupational system: Somebody in the city-state, collective, or tribe is assigned the task of making things. Corners in early tool-maker Societies tend to be shared with the Engineers.

Dreamers

[< dream n. "images in sleep" < *Middle English* drem < *Old English* dream "joy, music" < *Germanic* draugma < *PIE* dhreugh "to deceive"]

Overview—

Prophecy to a leveller is merely a call from a distant friend to a spanner. Those most skilled at dreaming often find themselves drawn to this, the Fraternity that always sleeps.

Dreamers are the means of communication across the ages, but are also adept at subtler interpretations of people, their intents, and their destinies.

Alternate Names throughout time— Mist-speakers, Sleepers, Oracles

Symbol: The Maze—

The spiral maze is the most ancient of sacred paths. The Dreamtime is the reality of that path. As the earth spirals, so do we, so do our minds. Under hypnosis, we are at the mercy of another. In the the Dreaming, the other must listen to us.

Services for the Continuum—

"Dreaming is for humans. It is not for Inheritors, for they have not the landscape nor the passion. This is our strength, our answer to the whys."

—Tjarapu, during the Turkish campaigns

The practical applications of Dreaming, the communication across eras and the revelation of secrets from the silence are all that most spanners think of when dreaming comes up in conversation. The Dreaming skill is a powerful thing, and those who do not understand it, both span and level, think of it either as a tool or a religion.

The Fraternity knows better. We try not to

qualify the discipline. Dreaming is the ability to work miracles, to enter another world, and tease from it the meat of concrete, absolute fact. What this other world means, and why we are reflected in it, is something that we should not ask. Anyone who has walked that landscape knows that it is too far to comprehend. There is the sense there that a wiser presence guides it. What that presence is, is not identified here.

The purpose of the Fraternity is to explore that world and listen to it. While in humility we do not ask for definitions, we take up the task of learning its complex and baffling language. We share our notes with one another, to try to seek common elements and form what paradigm we can of its regions.

We also police in a civilization without police. Life dreams. Dogs and cats dream. Humans can sin in their dreams. We observe the rapes and murders, the thefts, that people nightly seek to perform. We record the unrecorded. We have taken this place as our course of study, and we must guard it from the actions of our kinsmen, who have the power to enter, but not the courtesy to restrain their actions.

This study will take our lives. Moreover, it will take us beyond life. We see people in our dreams who we know to be dead. They move with a subtle difference around them, a restraint, like that used by an elder to a junior. But they are there, sapiently dreaming.

There are also few Inheritors in this world. One senses that they do not dream as often as we do. Perhaps they merely cover their traces, for it is very difficult to make a dreamer believe a lie for long.

Our benefactor Tjarapu tells us some ways of using the dreaming, but we know he holds some secrets that he shares with but a few. We trust him because of what he has given us, he, and Buru, and Karanda. We are curious to find out what they will ask us to do.

[Ed. note: Dreaming and related skills are quantified for game use in Chapter 3: Struggling— Dreaming & Communication, pg. 108 and Aquarian Skills, pg. 114.]

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—

The Dreamers maintain no major rivalries with other Fraternities. The Societies and the Continuum depend too much on us to quibble over what we do, and what we do is more important than any dispute over the nature of spacetime.

We have a polite rivalry with the **Scribes** over **Communication.** They believe delivering the written word is more secure, but we know that despite every scruple, honesty cannot trump the vision of truth itself. But in general, we regard Scribes as Dreamers of the waking world, and respect their opinions.

Besides that, we have some opinions about a couple of the other Fraternities. If these Fraternities take issue or umbrage with what we say, it is of no consequence to us. Debate is no more an issue than arguing with an oracle: What is, is.

The **Foxhorn** seems to be a pretty synthetic Fraternity. What they do is not hunting, it's trophyism. Like a tribal show-off looking to take the acclaim, they paint themselves.

Midwives: Where do babies come from? When we dream, we don't dream with DNA, sorry.

The **Quicker** explain their actions less than dreams do. When we see the dead and departed, in our sleeps, we have no great desire to pin them to a card, or shove them in a box.

Personages of note—
Tjarapu
Born Arnhem Land, 12991 BC

Tjarapu is a shaman of a tribe active in Arnhem Land at the time of the Atlantean Councils. His dreaming skill is so great that he noticed what was going on on the other side of his planet. Like the leveller who noticed someone blinking into an empty room, Tjarapu had to have his answer. The Councils knew, from an elder Tjarapu, that this was his moment. They went to gather him, and teach him spanning. In exchange, Tjarapu teaches the skill of dreaming to the Continuum.

Tjarapu believes that Dreamtime is the salvation of humankind. The only course that justifies humanity is to explore the obvious path that avoids politics and disaster.

Buru and Karanda are other aboriginal shamans who have joined the cause. Like Tjarapu, they came to it independently. They are less motivated to deal with spanners. But they span themselves, and often counsel young members of the Fraternity.

Tjarapu is a tall aboriginal man. He has dropped the ochre and pinfeathers of his own people, and tends to dress in flamboyant robes, with his hair neatly brushed. He has a somewhat arrogant manner while awake, but he is always ready to teach a dreamer.

Selected Main Corners:

The Dreamers, due to their nature, have very few centralized corners: Some 'corners' are spanners from a wide range of times and places who enjoy each others' company in the Dreamtime. But the waking-world corners the Dreamers do maintain are out-and-out strongholds. They last centuries, even millennia, and no one goes in or out of them without being observed.

"Oraklos Dalphe" 4228 BC - AD 394
The Delphic Oracle is one of the few fixed Dreamer corners. Before 617 BC, Delphi is only known as "Pyth", the

dreamers of whom excel in sending and receiving dreams from prehuman civilizations. The oracle herself is called the *Pythia* meaning "python, snake". After 617 BC, the leveller population come in greater numbers to hear prophecies.

"Long Land Dreaming" Northern Australia 13021 BC - AD 1683

Engineers

[n. < *Middle English* enginer < *Old French* engigneor < *Medieval Latin* ingeniator "contriver" < *Latin* ingenium "talent, skill" related to "genius, inborn tutelary spirit" < *PIE* genyo "to beget"]

Overview—

This Fraternity is made up of experts and technicians. Creation, repair and methodology of devices and systems are the duties and interests of the Engineers. Often work closely with Antiquarians and the Scribes.

Alternate Names throughout time— Planners, Wizards, Inventors, Scotties, Tinkers

Symbol: The Wheel of Fire—

Fire is Man's most effective use of Discovery. The Wheel is his greatest Invention. Fire and the Wheel lead to or imply all other created things, created for purpose under intent. The material manifestation and testament of sentient force.

Services for the Continuum—

The course of leveller history in the Societies is the measured developments— and regressions— of technical skill. Cultures are relative, including our own, but in the levels of the Societies cause can precede effect. Even we must respect this Newtonian truth as we cautiously fix the tools and machines spanners take with them on their sojourns.

We are distinct from the Antiquarians who supply merely items. If an item is utterly lost, they can replace it— but often, a device outside its own time becomes broken, and the owning spanner is at loss to fix it: 18th century Swiss watches, 20th century artillery, camcorders, aqueducts are all examples of vital equipment that may be simpler to repair than replace. While the Antiquarians are artisans glued to their stockrooms and studios, we're the repair specialists that make the housecalls, the innovators that know how much outside invention an Era can handle.

If the spanners of the Continuum "carry the means of repair, provide the nourishment and justify the very flesh that makes up the world"[3], the cogs and flywheels, then we Engineers are the very tools that allow the repairs to be carried out— without adding to any problems.

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities— Main conflicts:

Versus the **Thespians** over the purpose of **Invention:**

The Thespian attitude toward the written scripts of their posed lives takes such little account of the clarity levellers require of Invention, that they pose an ongoing threat to the smooth running of the Continuum. This is not an exaggeration. The classic case in point: Waith Go, an Aquarian Thespian of no small repute, takes the rôle of Alexander Graham Bell in 1875. He arrives deeply versed in the mores and attitudes of the decade, impeccably dressed, conversant in the smallest details of Bell's life, personal and public. But he calls us in before a critical moment to show him how to operate Bell's equipment. After painstaking lessons, when the critical instant of Invention arrives, he operates the device in a casual manner, and phones his assistant in as if he were a 20th century secretary! It's a miracle levellers don't ask more questions about the incident.

Versus the **Physicians** over the boundaries of the **Tool—**

The basic argument is over at what stage of bio-engineering does Man's own body become a tool.

Further information on this subject is available in the GM's section.

Personages of note—

Suzie "Patch" Armitage
Born Amarillo, Texas, AD 1920.

Anticipare
Born Milano, Italy, AD 2066.

"Patch" came to the Continuum the hard way: playing in the realm of the Inheritors.

She was a Rosie-the-Riveter during WWII, and her job was welding and spotting fighter fuselages at a secret Ford-run plant in the Texas panhandle. One afternoon, in late 1943, she coming back from a lunchtime stretch on the campus, when she saw covered flatbeds rush in from the direction of the desert, and park in a hangar under heavy guard.

[3]John Jacob McHale, Foxhorn; in private conversation, AD 1844.

Loose lips were discouraged around the campus, but her pals Alice and Wendy had heard that parts of a crashed foo fighter had been brought in. Patch was an avid follower of the tales pilots brought back from both theatres of war, and she just had to know what made this Axis hardware tick.

Sneaking in through the commissary van, Patch found herself in short order alone with what must be the remains of the cockpit of an advanced enemy fighter. She climbed into the wreckage of the foo, and thinking nothing of pressing buttons on an obviously broken and disabled machine, she was very surprised to find herself seemingly naked, and hovering above the dark side of the moon. She fell into the custody of Inheritors, and was not mentally well for some days.

The Inheritors took a long while in rehabilitating Patch's mind, but acknowledged that she had the talent to be an excellent spanner— albeit a bit too curious in her youth. After inculcation into an Engineers' corner in 2099, she ran into Anticipare, and now they run up and down the Piscean, solving spanners' problems of disguise, transportation, and information gathering.

Despite encouragement to learn all she can about the Aquarian Era, Patch can't stay away from Piscean and Ariesian technology for long. She's known for her love of fixing cars, airplanes, and especially chariots: "Oh you'll need a dark wood beam for that axle, yeh."

Anticipare is an early Aquarian high-tech genius, specializing in invasive bioelectronics. He's known for his remarkably pleasant bedside manner, especially for a mechanic.

The mid-21st Century is rife with experimentation on consumers as bioengineers wrestle with laws and ethics over how much wetware is a good (or bad) thing. Abuses of wetware, especially by the military, are rampant.

Anticipare is well aware of the issues of planned obsolescence: Most body tech of the 21st Century was never necessary, basic nanotech being perfected, secretly, in laboratory conditions as early as 1987. But marketing strategies and the precedent of computer sales made introduction of implant tech numbingly gradual. And hazardous.

He has good social skills in bioimplantation, and cares about those who partake of his work, but he has an ongoing row with the Physicians over it. They consider him more akin to a salesman than a doctor.

His most popular device— one of his personal adaptations— is a temporary neural implant. Designed primarily for language translation, it allows the recipient to access whatever information has been written into the 'plant for about sixty days, after which the device is literally eaten by the body. The slow dissolving of the device is said to resemble natural loss of recall due to elapsed time. It has a wealth of other possible educational uses, but is not used much in his own time due to the rise of Aquarian (psychic) Skills.

Patch and Anticipare run an Engineers' corner out of a big garage in Zurich called simply, "Der Spanner". Between the two of them, new members get the complete picture of interrelation of the macrocosm and the microcosm. As Patch puts it, "Floating around space makes you appreciate what a tiny little cork our spinning planet is. Now if you can keep your head, tumbling in a vacuum with untested wetware in your brain, and still complete the necessary valve adjustments to your vehicle... You're trying too hard. Span the thing in for a landing, or go get some help from your fellow engineers! That's what we're here for."

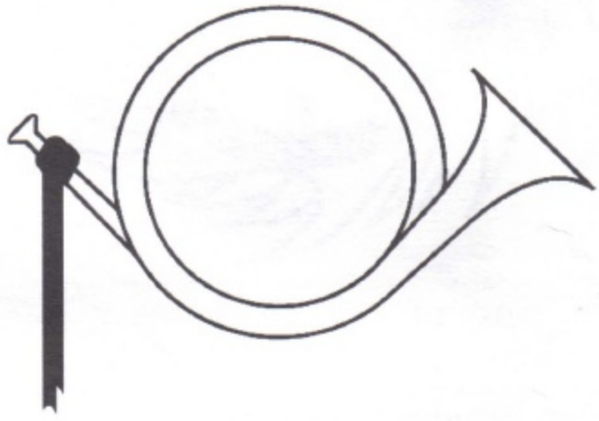
Selected Main Corners:
"Gizmonoco" St. Paul, Minnesota AD 1987 - 2222

"Nate's Hardware Store" Akron, Ohio AD 1932 - 2001

"Scuola Cecilia" Milano AD 1447 - 1620

"School of Dreaming" Thebes, Egypt 2216 - 891 BC
Not a Dreamer corner; name refers to the imagined buildings being designed by the student architects there.

Corners in early tool-maker Societies tend to be shared with the Antiquarians.



Foxhorn

[n. fox + horn (fox < *Old English* fox < *Germanic* fuhsaz < *PIE* puk "bushy-haired" < taboo variant root of wlkwo, "wolf") + (horn < *Old English* horn < *Germanic* hurnaz < *PIE* krn "horn, head")]

Overview—

This is the realm of the hunter, the warrior, and the leaders of men. The proverbial "old boy's club". a place where men of action and power gather to trade stories and discuss plans for business, politics and adventure. Hard workers and players all.

As a result, Foxhorn is one of the most exclusionary of fraternities, and can be a powerful ally or a deadly enemy. As many a fractious spanner has found out, narcissists are considered fair game, albeit the most dangerous; those who especially enjoy tracking down and bagging these villains find a home here. The Foxhorn are usually to be found on the frontlines of the Continuum's battles with Antedesertium.

Alternate Names throughout time— Tribe Orion, The Pack, The Wild Hunt, Hunters, Woodsmen, Exterminators, Corrections

Symbol: The Horn—

Any of the many horns and pipes known through the Eras can represent this Fraternity. The foxhorn itself is distinct in shape, with the bell facing the same direction as the mouthpiece, since it used by a lead horseman in a hunt to call forces to him.

Services for the Continuum—

"He was one of the mercurial men who exist to keep the human tide in movement. Their opinions matter principally because without them the opinions of other men would not exist. Their function is to provoke."
—Mrs. Humphrey Ward, *The Coryston Family*, AD 1913.

Gotten into a time combat with a foe you can't handle? Want to release the firepower without angering the Exalted? An inquiry at the closest Foxhorn lodge may be just what you need to save the corner.

The Quicker may mop up most of the fragged, but we're not just body baggers ourselves. We like being there as a miscreant realizes he's pushing the wrong button.

And if you've successfully brought down a few yourself, congratulations. Give a call, we *do* clean up the evidence for you. And if you're really good this kind of hunting, you should probably be a Foxhorn yourself. Stop by the lodge sometime and share your tales of conquest.

We are one of the most, if not the most practical of the Fraternities. We actively sponsor training to all spanners in tactics, tracking down an enemy, stand up fighting, covert ops, fighting narcissists and the use of all forms of weaponry— we appreciate tech of a useful or military nature. (The Antiquarians and Engineers make and repair the stuff, but we know how to use it.)

As a result of it's means and methods, the Foxhorn guards its information *most actively* of all the frats, save only the Quicker. Some accuse us of holding too many secrets, but it is all in the name of security for both for the fraternity and the rest of the causality we zealously guard.

The Foxhorn's main corner is set squarely in AD 19th Century London, though our corners, usually referred to as "Hunting Lodges", can be found in any millennium. Most notably, Lodges can be found in India and Africa, in many of the locations of the British Empire, as well as across the Roman and Mongol Empires, Acadian Greece, and the Americas, name but a few.

These lodges contain many trophies from across time, including dinosaurs and megafauna that didn't make it into some Antiquarian's zoo. There are rumors of even more grisly trophies, taken from narcissist foes, mostly in the form of momentoes of distant battles.

We're also avid participants in the Societies' "Greatest Game" [see pg. 95], since the next best thing to hunting narcissists is honing your skills in seeking people and the intrigue of politics.

Though some loyal spanners spread dark rumors about Foxhorn, these can be dismissed as sour grapes or jealous innuendo. Stories of Foxhorns interfering in individual corners are mostly narcissist propaganda— any Fraternity members know we deal with miscreants in our own ranks as harshly as we do any malcontents throughout spacetime.

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—

Main conflicts:

Versus the **Quicker** over the definition of **Death—**

The whole mystic business over frag obscures why Death is a big deal. Spanners are human, and to humans, Death means one thing: A cold, quite probably ruined body— and it's all that's left of you.

In many ways, a man doesn't even have to physically die to cross the threshhold into Death. Harrying the quarry until the will to live is out of them is quite acceptable: Knowing of our methods keeps many would-be narcissists from making stupid moves. This crossing from the fear of Death into the cold realm beyond can happen while alive: Look at rabbits, or soldiers shell-shocked into mental oblivion. No frag has to be involved, only the ceaseless grinding of terror for one's life, until the gear is stuck in neutral. Frag merely imitates this pure (albeit gruesome) state.

But even this terror is impossible without the *real thing* to back it up. Vanishing into a dimensional mess of yourself is scary like any horror story: It's abstracted from a fear of the *real thing*.

Terror of being cut and bled dry, hanging unable to breathe, burned whole, buried to starve— this is the real thing, and by this terror will you know what Death is.

This is also a debate over the means of taking down narcissists, as far as we're concerned. The Quicker tend to prefer tying up loose ends and putting them all in a pretty frag-free basket. We prefer nailing a villain down to a specific patch of spacetime by his own snapped, bloody bones. Which sounds more like Death to you.

Antiquarians provide us with basic weaponry and equipment, and most enjoy listening to our stories. Some of the more roguish like to tag along for the treasure-hunting aspect, but we don't always have the patience to wait for them to plumb catacombs when there's game in the field.

Engineers are very necessary for support services, especially in the warzones of the Gemini. If they ever have a complaint about things, we're always happy to support them in return.

The **Scribes** don't always approve of our methods, and often complain of the secrecy of missions we set for ourselves. This suspiciousness of us is unjustified, as our complete reports wind up in their hands in the Aquarian Era anyway.

Personages of note—
Mahavira Pralaya
Born Adahadrguta, India AD 1612

Notable among the Foxhorn is Mahavira, the loyal caretaker of the main lodge of the London locality. He is privy to many secrets of the Fraternity and a highly capable spanner and dreamer in his own right. It is rumored he may be behind much of the internal security of the Fraternity, and is known to have ties to his native India, the various princely courts there and possibly the Thugee cults.

When not subserviently waiting on guests of the Club, Mahavira spends his Age in a suite of smoke-filled rooms hidden in the depths of the sprawling Hunt Club. From here he directs operations of the Greatest Game, coordinates hunts and sends the best capable members of the corner off to whatever distant Time Combat needs them— as well as working on those rumored internal security matters.

Sir John Edward Mallory
Born London, England, AD 1702

Sir John Mallory was one of the more prominent barristers of his time and a noted game hunter, having visited in the jungles of Africa and India frequently, collecting many trophies. It was on one of these safaris that he was introduced to Mahavira, and in turn, the Continuum. Knowing of Mallory's Yet to found the Hunt Club in his native London, Mahavira accompanied him back after his In-Between to begin a corner there.

Sir John's great joy in life is the pursuit of the Hunt, in all its forms. He has participated in certain Midwife genetic curtailment operations on Easter Island and the Arctic, enjoyed a rare visit assisting the Sizizkai in elimiating certain bestial threats, boasts a long list of successful campaigns against narcissists in the Cancerean and Geminid Eras, succeeded in running down Nazis hiding in 1950s South America, and takes great pride in the extinction of the dodo: "Naturally, the best specimens were captured live for Aquarian and post-Aquarian use. But the most singular honor of culminating a famous cessation, is one that I trust many intrepid members of the Club shall aspire to."

Competition to earn a slot on one of Sir John's safaris is, naturally, very intense.

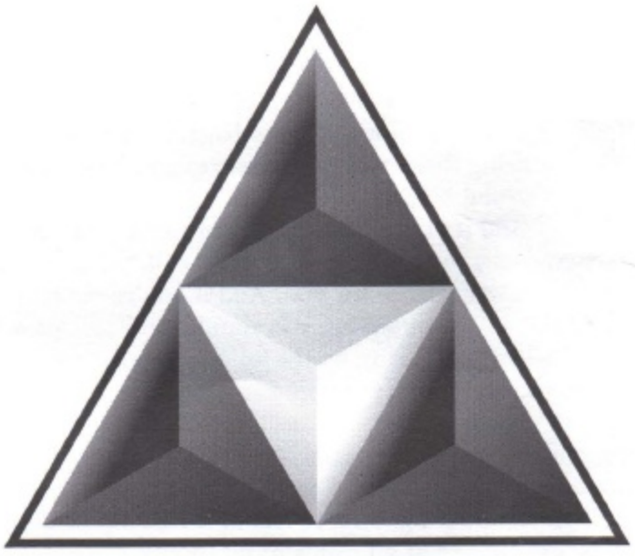
Selected Main Corners:
"The Hunt Club" London AD 1797 - 1919
A notably more important place in London to spanners than any other corner of any kind. While any Foxhorn corner is a good place to hear stories of battles, the Club has the richest and most scintillating of them all.

"Spiral Teeth Wandering" Central Asia 9824 - 9399 BC

"Horse God Thunders" Urudolyan Foothills (Russia) 5746 - 5570 BC

"Heron Lakes Lodge" Ohio Valley AD 106 - 1244

"CIA Headquarters" Washington, DC AD 1947 - 2070



Midwives

[n. *Middle English* midwif: mid + wif (mid "with" < *Old English* mid "among" < *Germanic* mid < *PIE* medhi "in the midst of") + (wif < *Germanic* wif "wife")]

Overview—
Midwives essentially handle questions of leveller genetic import. Matchmakers, and other personages handling destined marriages and love affairs. Many foundlings and swapped babies are also their doing. Midwives also keep a watch on spanners to make sure the Decision of the Second Atlantean Council regarding non-level families is observed.

Alternate Names throughout time— Hedge-witches, Match-makers, Wet-nurses, Godmothers, G-Nomes.

Symbol: The Fertile Pyramid—
Fertile because procreation of children is the Midwives' stock-in-trade. Pyramid because all life stands on the shoulders of other life, reaching Down and Up as far as sentient force exists to protect it.

Services for the Continuum—

"When you die, do you wind up with all your ex-wives and ex-husbands in Heaven?"
—Leveller folk humor, Aquarian cusp

The Scribes say they keep history. The Thespians say they make it.

We Midwives have no such pretensions. We merely make people. And keep them from being made.

It falls to us to see to it that those births which should happen *do* happen— regardless of Societal mores or the petty needs of leveller politics. Then again, we also intervene to ensure that marriages are made in the correct fashion— even childless marriages, if they are necessary. Who else would do it, after all? Many's the love-note carried by Midwives, many the secret tryst between forbidden lovers we have conspired to bring about. We have fanned the flames of love— and lust— at least as often as we have dampened ardour.

It can be such a sweet job, seeing romance to its culmination and fruition. If only there were not the darker side... If you think we mean only that we help make marriages arranged for political ends (the merging of houses, the strengthening of royal lines) and financial ones (many's the marriage made to salvage a failing business or secure a lucrative trade route), think again.

For every child we manipulate into the world, there may be one we remove from it. When we have to, we will cause miscarriages, aiming always to make them seem like acts of nature. And if all else fails, we will perform abortions unasked for, and make the recipient forget what has been done to her.

Then again, there are marriages made that *should,* by all rational standards, be dissolved— marriages between heavy-handed drunks and their timorous spouses, marriages to philanderers and wastrels (each of either sex and any gender, and sometimes as part of plural marriages— with all of time to play in, all permutations are possible). Sometimes, the laws, religion and morals of the Society in which these poor unfortunates find themselves permit divorce in such cases.

And even so, sometimes *we* do not. Sometimes the marriage must continue because a child of the union has a Yet to fulfill that we must ensure. Sometimes, the marriage itself is an experience the put-upon partner must endure in order that they become the person history requires them to be later on.

There are suicide attempts that would have succeeded but for us, and patients in psychiatric care who would not be there had we allowed them to follow their instincts.

When we must, we call upon the Thespians to provide a surrogate. If a child should be born of the marriage, we will provide the necessary medical interventions to ensure its genetics are correct for its time.

In such cases, the leveller concerned is removed. We prefer not to kill if we can avoid it— it's bad enough when the dead are unborn; we try not to add to the tally— and so make them forget. Or otherwise deal with them. Further information is not available here.

We do not do this joyfully. Most of us do not, at any rate. We are most unlikely to invite anyone to join us who seemed likely to find pleasure in such actions. There is a grim satisfaction in it though. The knowledge of a job well done and discreetly finished.

Though some of us have been known to weep at night, when they thought none could hear.

But there are compensations: Sometimes, we enable a woman to keep a child she would have terminated without our help. Sometimes we ensure the purity of a royal line— or discreet out-breeding from it.

And our duties do not finish there. On occasion we monitor the progress of a child the Continuum has an interest in— an artist, say, born of a poor family, or a gifted scientist. We may even provide an education for them, or see to it that they receive a word of encouragement when their flagging spirits would turn to drudgery in desperation.

The other Fraternities say we are a dark people, we Mid-Wives. Some fear us, for reasons that will become apparent shortly to you readers at the Aquarian cusp. And yet we have our joyous moments, and our hidden corners where we toast "our" couples long life and happiness, and celebrate the births of "our" children. If you are strong enough, perhaps you will join us.

[Ed. note: There are male and female Midwives, though in some cultures and some historical periods, male 'midwives' may come up against considerable difficulty in performing their duties; in these cultures, they are apt to take either the part of doctors, or— depending on the situation and the Society— matchmakers/go-betweens.]

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—
Main conflicts:

Many Spanners fear and dislike us. This is not a Fraternal matter. A Decision of the Second Atlantean Council (12963 BC) states that there shall be no Societal Spanner marriages that bear fruit, no getting of children— else all spacetime would be instantly filled, and all of it fragged in that same instant.

In this, we are the Council's ministers, and we pursue their *diktat,* and our duties, fiercely.

Versus **Physicians** over the meaning of **Life**—

Life is tenacious. It clings beyond hope and against expectation. It is ingenious, whether sentient or not, finding ways to survive in all environments— from the airless deep ocean to the oxygen-poor mountain heights, from torrid deserts to the frigid wastes of the Antarctic. More than that, it is fecund. It will populate every ecological niche to the maximum that niche can support.

Add sentience to the mix, and life becomes a force that cannot be denied. There is no reason to be precious with it, to nurture it beyond its basic needs. No reasons, except those imposed on us by sentience itself— those of morality and basic humanity.

Yet we do deny it, we Midwives, as often as we enable it. The **Physicians** argue with us, saying we should have more care of it— that it is a fragile, delicate thing which requires all the help that sentient force can provide for it.

They are right of course, in the short term and the individual case. But we are spanners, and we *may not take* the short term view, nor elevate the needs of individuals above those of Societies and populations. In those terms, the lives of individuals— even, sometimes, of whole races and species— are of small import. It is this which the Physicians, with their delicacy and limited morality, keep forgetting.

Outside of this, we have minor disputes with other Fraternities.

The **Thespians** think we meddle. Left to themselves, they'd populate— perhaps pollute would be a better term— every society they're asked to operate in with their offspring. All in the name of Fun, of course.

We aid the **Scribes** when we can, keeping genealogies (both public and true) straight. Of all the Fraternities, they perhaps understand us best, and fear us least— since they are, perhaps, least likely to let their scrupulous honesty give way to the vagaries of lust.

Personage of note—
Old Mother Megan
Born Gwynedd, Wales, AD 1180

In the chaos of the time, what with the war of Llewellyn the Great with the English, she never was sure quite when. It is rumored that the Scribes found out, with some difficulty, but they are not advertising the information. After she achieved Span 2, and attended to certain matters in her Yet, she dealt with this problem by staying well away from both the time and the place. ("Filthy, the twelfth century, filthy, my girl," she is apt to say if pressed.)

Considering her position of authority among the Midwives, it is fitting that her Invitation came about because of her skill as a healer and hedge-witch. It came about this way. The young wife of Daffyd ap Owen ap Dai, a lordling in the hills of Gwynedd, was taken ill in childbirth. Neither all her maids nor the doctor Daffyd called in from Shrewsbury could staunch the bleeding, not for all he leeched her and gave her a special tincture to drink.

Daffyd was not a young man, but he loved his wife dearly. Besides, he had no heir, and he had hopes of this child. For all he loved his wife, he was not a temperate man, and so he threatened death to her maids and the doctor too, should she die.

Fearing for their lives— and much against the doctor's advice, for he was a learned man— the maids sent a boy to get Old Old Mother Megan. For all she was known about the place as a witch, she was their only hope. She was old, even then, as that level counted such things. Old she was, and wise— and when she saw the gouts of blood upon the sheets, and the pallor of the girl, she knew herself for a dead woman. So, she did what she could, which was not much. And then she surprised the maids by saying she was going out to take the air and to pray a while for the success of the birth and the safety of the Lady.

Go out she did, but not to pray. She meant to run, old as she was, and even though her few possessions were away in the hovel that was all she had for a home. Instead, she met herself. "Press this to the woman's secret parts; give her this to drink," said this apparition. "She will be well."

Old Mother Megan called down the angels and the saints to protect her, for she knew this must be devil's work.

"Do as I say," the demon said. "I am older than you, and know whereof I speak. Or stand aside, and let me go in. And I will see you later."

Confusion tore at her. In the end, Old Mother Megan took the potion and the strange cloth she was offered, and went inside. The Lady and her child— a girl, somewhat to the chagrin of her father— lived.

He was not a bad man, though: he paid Old Mother Megan greatly. But not so greatly as the Continuum.

She joined the Midwives at Span Two. It is a natural choice for both parties. A hard life had enhanced her natural toughness to the point where she is well able to make the hard choices so often required by Midwives from all levels; yet she tempers this with sudden, surprising sentimentality— as like to show itself in her fondling of a kindle of kittens as in, perhaps, unprecedented mercy to a waif or the victim of a hillside infanticide (there was the Greek affair... the Scribes had a time putting a gloss on *that* and never have let the Midwives forget it..

Selected Main Corners:
"Hearts Singing" Well-woman Clinic in West London
1985 - 2010

"The Niagara Twelve" Planned Parenthood, Buffalo, NY
1972 - 2018 (Has more than twelve spanners)

"Kali Yuga Moksha" Chattisgarhi, India 1582 - 2000

Ariesian and pre-Ariesian corners can be found in any organized fertility cult around the world.

Moneychangers

[n. *Middle English* moneye + changen (moneye < *Latin* moneta "money. mint" < Moneta Juno, whose temple housed the mint) + (changen < *Old French* changier < *Late Latin* cambiare < *Celtic* camb "exchange" < "a turning" < *PIE* kambo "crooked" < skamb "a curve, bend")]

Overview—

Moneychangers handle the ebb and flow of finance and commerce throughout the Societies. Their ranks consist of accountants, taxmen, crime bosses, and all others that have an interest in the workings of money and trade in the Societies.

Alternate Names throughout time— Brokers, Benchmen

Symbol: The Sun Bull—

The Bull (or Cow) is the most ancient symbol of wealth and prosperity: The fruits of the Earth. The Sun is the energy that makes the fruitful Earth possible. The buffalo hunt, the Aphis bull and Hathor goddess, the gold coin and the bull market.

Services for the Continuum—

"If there's an intrusion, I'll pay back ten times my consulting fee... ten thousand years from now."
—Gregory Benford, *Deep Time*,
recounting a promise to Congress, AD 1990.

Face it. Despite what everyone says, one of the first things a spanner wants to do when first left to his own devices is become rich. Not visit his long-lost grandfather in disguise, or witness the JFK shooting, but get their "One Big Score" [pg. 14] and become stone wealthy. Anyone that says otherwise is probably a narcissist or a liar.

We make it happen.

Spanners have projects that need large amounts of capital, be it currency or other resources. Capital that won't get traced back to them, and won't get targeted for a Hit and Run by some Narcissist strung out on Frag. We make that happen too. We make sure that your plunge into the New York Stock Exchange in 1985 doesn't tumble the market before it is supposed to crash in 1987, or your planned trade expedition to China doesn't outshine the Polo family.

And we make sure that your own little ventures don't get you in trouble with the taxman, because they are around almost as long as the Societies themselves. Look at what happened with Capone...

But we are more than just bean-counters and bank tellers, despite what the Scribes think. What we provide is the concept of value to the Societies. Take out some money. Not much, right? A bauble of some sort, with some intricate artwork, but not something you would put on your wall. However, it has more value than you can possibly imagine. It is a medium of exchange. It is an idea, a concept that far exceeds the value of what it is made, of what paper or metal of which it is printed or cast.

Art, if you want. Except you can buy dinner with it.

The moment that levellers developed money, they could hold higher concepts in their mind, that they could bridge the gap between value of an object or idea to themselves, and value to others. It is a means to interact with other people easily, for themselves and others to get what they need and want, to create something that is bigger than the sum of its parts. It is perceived to have value because it represents gold, silver. or the backing and good faith of a great nation. It is abstract. It is thinking outside the box.

And at that moment, everyone started thinking not just of "me", but of "we".

It's a promise, a promise that you can take these coins or slips of paper and exchange them for the food you eat, the home you Live in, and a million other things you want or need. You and others could take the current of money, the currency, and cause it to flow to another, and another, and another. All these people interacting, all building upon one another, all trading and profiting, because they stopped thinking "me" and started thinking "we". All because of commerce. It is because of us that nations interact and people trade, instead of taking what they want and descending into chaos.

The Thespians sometimes act as our public face, playing the Franco di Medici, Nelson Rockefeller, or Richard Branson as needed. The Antiquarians, despite disagreeing with our views on objects d'art, give us specialty items to work with, commodities to trade throughout the Societies. They create value with the rarity of objects. How many Ming vases are there floating around? Not a lot,

which makes them valuable. Politics and money go hand and hand, so Foxhorn knows us well. We are the grease in the wheels. We make the world go around.

The Moneychangers are the keepers of peace, the ones that make sure everyone plays nice in the playground of commerce and trade, and by extension, the Societies. The Societies are so grounded in commerce, playing around with it can hurt a lot of people. We are the internal auditors, making sure that all the columns add up, for our own sakes. We have our finger in every pie too, and we don't want it cut off when someone tried to take a slice...

And true, we may not be the flashiest of the Fraternities, or appear to be the toughest. But how do you think the Thespians pay for those parties or Foxhorn buys all those guns to hunt narcissists? And would you like to start trouble with a corner of crime bosses, robber barons, frontier traders, corporate attorneys, and taxmen?

We write the checks around here.

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—
Main conflicts:
Versus the **Antiquarians** over the value of **Wealth—**

Wealth. Mankind fantasizes about it even before old Antedesertium. And never mind the Continuum handing you a stack of bills at the get-go. Wealth remains Man's oldest dream, spanning or not spanning. Some call us the "youngest Fraternity" because money was "invented" in 550 BC. But Mankind's dreams of Wealth are far older than cash itself.

Note our emphasis: *Mankind's* dreams.

Luxuries have always held great value throughout the Societies. The debate gets real when you consider that one man's treasure is another man's trash. Is something valuable simply because it is curious and rare, or is it valuable because someone has perceived it to have a value and has assigned a worth to it? But *worth* to one owner alone borders on irrelevance, even narcissism. Knowing the worth that *others* will pay is the road to Wealth.

Everywhere, people have unused stuff in their storage bins, garages, and attics. They call it trash and set aside cleaning days to throw it away. Yet other people scramble to own the exact same things, and pay exorbitant amounts of money for them. The view of the Moneychangers, therefore, is that exchange of commodities, whether art, perishable or utterly rare will only be as valuable as the market demands— thus Wealth is defined only in the widest of social terms. Not unlike the Continuum itself. The **Antiquarians** would narrow Wealth to a case-by-case basis, and absurdly dissolve any real means of comparison.

Some lesser business:

The Moneychangers get along well enough with the **Engineers** and the **Physicians**; much of the advances that technology and medicine take at the last 150 years of the Piscean Era are due to competition, commerce, and the infusion of vast resources into those fields.

We tend to ally with the **Scribes** when dealing with research into financial and commercial matters: the Scribes are a good resource to check your own records.

For some reason, the Moneychangers, especially those of high Span, involve themselves with both the **Quicker** and **Foxhorn** more than others would feel comfortable in knowing.

Personage of note—
Jared Page, Stockbroker
Born New York, AD 1893

Jared Page is our best example of what we call "Eliminator of Competition". Ultimately, his views are in line with the safety of the Continuum and the Societies, and he has done a great deal to insure this safety, but some, including his own team of "Wolves", consider some of his actions extreme and callous. His view of the matter is this, as put in the minutes of the last board meeting of the 20th Century: "No one objects when your money is safe, the Societies are stable, and Narcissists are not beating down your corner and fragging you out of existence. Why do you object when I do what is necessary to assure this safety?"

Jared was fresh out of high school when he became a runner for the New York Stock Exchange. It was hectic, but he loved it. For once in his life, he could be part of something important, in an environment that was nothing like the Bowery he grew up in and struggled to leave. This place, the Exchange, was where money was being made. and he was a part of it, if only a small part. Soon, he became a broker, moving money about, making a difference, but knowing that he was always on the edge of something important.

In 1912 Jared watched his own work suffer. He would be slow to place orders, to keep things straight, and he came close to losing his clients and job. He developed splitting headaches and fought to keep his thoughts straight as he experienced deja vu and disorientation. One afternoon just as the closing bell rung, Jared took a nap in a back room, trying to clear out the cobwebs.

When he woke, he realized he had slept for hours. Getting up, Jared heard noises coming from another office. Peeking in, he saw a dark-haired man in a suit thumbing through a set of files frantically, glancing around nervously. Jared called out to him, startling the man. The man seemed confused by all this, losing track of what file he was looking for, stammering in some blend of English and gibberish about "the Hegemony" and "getting what was rightfully mine". This went on for a few minutes, Jared and the man confused, until Jared watched two men appear from nowhere between them and beat the man senseless. Terrified, Jared ran from the building, knocking

over the night watchman from behind and continuing to run until he collapsed.

Strangely, the moment the dark-haired man fell to his knees, seemingly dead. Jared felt a great weight Lifted from his shoulders. It was as though some of cobwebs and fog cleared themselves. Jared walked around for a bit before going back to his apartment. He didn't know what to make of the two men appearing out of thin air: He didn't touch strong drink like many other brokers. He knew was that for all his terror, he felt better than he had for a long time. Jared returned to his apartment, hoping that sleeping in his own bed would help.

Late that night, Jared awoke to a man choking him and holding a knife to his neck. It was the same man from the Exchange, sort of. He was pale and disheveled, and the fact that Jared could Literally see through his eye-sockets to the other side of the room unnerved and frightened him. He struggled, trying to twist the insane man off of him, when he drove the knife forward in a desperate thrust. The man fell to his knees, dragging himself down Jared's body. Jared pushed the dying man away, and looked at the blood he got all over himself.

Jared looked around, first to the knife sticking out of the man's neck to the man himself who was almost transparent at this point, to the man who appeared in front of him. He was olive-skinned, well-dressed. And utterly calm about the fact that Jared had just murdered a man.

"Mr. Page. I assume you feel better?"

Jared paused, realizing that the man was correct: The fuzziness in his head had dissolved again.

Shortly, another man appeared out of thin air. One of the same ones from the Exchange except that he was in different clothing, had a different haircut, and less gray hair that he did an hour ago.

"Well, Mr. Page," the man from the Exchange said, "you certainly know how to get started on the job early. You always wanted to be part of something big. Here's your chance."

Here Jared Page found out about the Big Picture. He used it to full advantage putting together a financial empire and learning how to be a mover and shaker worthy of any time period. As well due to his disgust at being violated with frag as a leveller, he put together a team of associates that he personally trained to track down frag caused by commerce and finance. He and his "Wolves" are an open secret among the Fraternities, and one that the Moneychangers have cause to be both proud of and concerned. As Jared stated in a 1989 Moneychanger board meeting, "We're not the big game hunters or masters of disguise. What we are is the guardians of the underpinning of spanner life in the Societies, commerce and finance. When it's necessary for me to gather my fellow stockbrokers, accountants, bookies and loansharks to stop, kill, and frag back narcissists that would seek to destroy or manipulate finance to the detriment of others, I'm not going to shed a tear for the bastards. I've shot dozens, fragged them so hard they fumed into the packing peanuts of the universe. In every instance, they were trying the same on us, for far less of a reason. They call it looking out number one."

Selected Main Corners:

"Silicon Valley" California AD 1919 - 2103

"Bull Market" Manhattan Financial District AD 1884 - 2058

"Whalton" Philadelphia AD 1883 - 2077

"South Seas Bubble" London AD 1711 - 1784

"Fortress Hanseatic" Visby, Germany AD 1043 - 1277

"Capitulus" Rome. 69 BC - AD 247

Pre-Ariesian earners are seasonal, placed around harvest time. A number of these were in areas that would give rise to extended family or clan situations in the future such as Celtia or India, allowing many people to gather at once and trade goods.

Physicians

[n. "medical doctor" < *Middle English* fiscien < *Old French* fisique "medicine" < *Latin* physica "natural science, physics" < *Greek* phusike < phusis "nature" < phein "to bring forth" < *PIE* bhu "to be, exist, grow"]

Overview—

They see to it that spanners are free from contagious disease and other physical ailments pertaining to time travel, including excessive natural frag.

Physicians take advantage of the admonishment of "an ounce of prevention", and are often the spanners who interrupt the hapless from unwittingly harming themselves, friends, and levellers. Certain visitations of mysterious "angels of mercy" recorded throughout history are Physicians.

Alternate Names throughout time— Hippocreans, Healers, Angels of Mercy, Doctors, Medtechs

Symbol: The Blue Skull—

Blue is the overall color representing the Continuum, as in blue shift (motion towards a point). It can always be said that the Continuum and those that heal under its auspices will always be there for you. As well, the skull is a universal symbol for medicine. Combined, a blue skull, almost never seen in leveller culture, is the perfect sign that you may want to ask the time of that doctor or barber.

Services for the Continuum—

Just as the body is more than the sum of its parts, so are the Societies. And just like the cells of the body, the members of a society are born, go about their lives and tasks, and die. It is natural. It is what we are. But just because something is natural does not mean we have to sit back and watch idly. Death is in the Yet of everyone, but whether it comes down to it, it is best to keep it away as long as possible. Life is fragile, and that is why we are here.

To this end, we endeavor to assure that Spanners are as healthy as can possibly be. Why spanners, you ask, when we were just speaking of levellers? Simple: one spanner, with one influenza strain, could travel to a point where it could spread like wildfire through a populace unready for it. Likewise, bringing the Black Plague Up with you can have its own consequences. Who knows what other contagions and maladies are out amongst the Societies, waiting to spring themselves upon a frail populace?

Yes, this seems overly cautious. Then again, the washing of surgical instruments is considered unnecessary at one time, when people are bled to balance out their humors. We make sure that our charges, spanner or leveller, come to no harm by our hands, and do our best so that they don't come to harm from others as well. This can take some doing, ranging from simple preventative measures such as warning people to not drink the water without boiling it, all the way to advanced surgeries and swooping in to rescue someone.

As well, frag is always a concern. Just like anything, we consider it an illness, a sickening of what the universe is and has been. While frag can be inflicted just as a wound or illness can be inflicted, of more concern to us is frag caused by natural forces. Just what other than sentient force can disturb causality, and why does frag manifest the way it does in people? Is natural frag different in function and appearance than frag created by sentient force, and how can we tell the difference? Are illnesses and disease of a 'normal' sort merely frag represented on the microscopic scale? Questions we answer as efficiently as we can.

We make sure the Thespians are perfect for their parts, down to the last detail. It is an exacting task, but we are up to it, and more. It would not be a good thing to have to replace Shakespeare or Sun Tzu yet again because the Thespian playing the part has a stomach flu. The Quicker give us endless insight into the nature of frag, both natural and unnatural and the effects it has on the body. As well, through their ties to the Inheritors, we gain glimpse to our own evolution that we cannot begin to understand, but try to anyway. The Midwives always seem to be interested in our affairs, as matters of Life fall under them as well, albeit in a different capacity. Our differing opinions on certain topics is expected of intelligent beings.

Perhaps the one disease that we fight the most is that of the narcissists themselves. They are a cancer, corrupting everything they touch with malignancy and selfishness. What happens when one cell in the body decides not to work with the others, and do its own thing? It dies soon enough, yes, but not before it destroys others, weak compared to it. Likewise, the narcissist selfishly lashes out at others in order to get his own way. And the Societies suffer. And like a cancer, the narcissists must be removed, in order to assure the welfare of all others, spanner and leveller.

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—

Main conflicts:

Versus the **Midwives**, over the meaning of **Life** (as opposed to Existence, Causality, etc.)

Could it be said that life is persistent, ever attempting to move forward, or is it weak, able to be brushed aside as easily as you may clear a table?

Strike a stone and a chip might come off; strike a man and you get bruising, ruptures of vital organs, and internal bleeding. The nature of organic material is such that while appearing strong, it is indeed quite fragile. Cut someone, do they not bleed? Or go into shock? Certainly not a survival mechanism by any means. It is proven that Life is fragile by the fact that doctors, barbers, and physicians need to exist. Were this not the case, Life would flourish under every condition, and there would not be thousands upon thousands of cemeteries filled with this 'persistent' Life. The fact that things die, that eventually the mechanism of Life shuts down in an individual, gives more credit to the fragility of Life.

Viruses, organic compounds, and such are another issue, as all can corrupt Life quite easily. In their corruption of Life, they promote frag as well as leveller illness. They are a preferred tool of narcissists, due to their destructive and insidious nature; biotoxins, chemical agents, even naturally occurring medicines can be abused in their search for chaos. Still, despite all this evidence, the **Midwives** claim the Life is persistent and tenacious, clinging on for one more day. Such notions, while romantic, really have little foundation. It is understandable, their view; the Midwives see the big picture of it all, the generation upon generations that have survived, and the miracle

of Life. On the other hand, few come to the Physicians that are not sick and dying, and they are the ones that bury the dead.

Versus the **Engineers** over the boundaries of the **Tool**—
The basic argument is over at what stage of bioengineering does Man's own body become a tool.

Further information on this subject is available in the GM's section.

The Physicians are on good terms with the **Quicker,** as anyone can get along with them. This is due to overlapping areas of study; frag as illness verses frag as phenomenon. Still, the Physicians are at times uncomfortable with the Quicker, as they disregard the importance of the body in many instances of collecting the badly fragged. But this is in the nature of frag, and so it is pointless to argue since our means of curing it are distinct and limited.

The Physicians get along with the **Thespians,** who show great respect for their 'makeup artists'. In extreme cases, we even have to install them into bodies wildly different from the original, and they can be difficult to handle in these cases, but nothing worth arguing about.

The **Scribes** and the Physicians get along with each other, recognizing fellow scholars in differing fields.

Personage of note—
Keiko Osawa, blind acupuncturist
Born Edo, Japan, AD 1586

Blinded in an accident while a child, Keiko was still trained in the arts of acupuncture and *anma,* just as her parents had been trained and their parents before. Keiko proved to be a skilled student, for her reliance on her other senses allowed her to feel tensions and maladies of the muscles and bones that others would miss. As well, she seemed to have a natural talent for the healing arts, a true love of helping others, and her pleasant demeanor and child-like wisdom aided her work immensely. She had a fine career, serving the Tokugawa Shogunate successfully as a member of the medical staff along with several other blind acupuncturists. Such was their skill and expertise that they were allowed to form a guild to teach and train mainly the visually handicapped.

In 1653, still vibrant despite her advanced age and bizarre childlike behaviors, Keiko was called upon to treat a man who had a variety of stomach illnesses and tempers. The treatment went well, and the man, named Kenji, was very impressed. He said that he too was a physician, but had heard good things about the blind acupuncturists and had to experience it first hand. Soon, she had many new patients, all of whom were impressed with her skill. Strangely, many of the patients were brothers and sisters; at first, they would claim to be the same person, but under Keiko's skilled hands, she could tell that they were related but not the same person, that one was older or younger. This impressed the patients even more, for they were able to fool even the sighted assistants.

One night, many hours after she had finished treating patients, she heard a noise in her bedchamber. Someone had entered her room without opening to door, and called out to her. Keiko got up and helps Kenji to another room. She placed him on the table and felt over his body, finding the bruises and tears in the muscle. Asking about it, Kenji told her "I was set upon by bandits. They robbed me."

Upon hearing this, Keiko poked him hard in the forehead. Wincing, Kenji, made dizzy by the precise strike, rubbed his forehead. "I am blind, not stupid. I still hear your money pouch and feel the fine silk shirt you wear. Bandits would have taken those too." Keiko make him strip down as she prepared the needles and salves. As she begun to place them, she felt a very strange sensation on his skin. It was as though there was something wrong with what he is, and it had never been like that before. She had never had a patient like this— someone had managed to remove part of what he was, his being.

"Someone struck at your spirit, Kenji. You are very ill." Keiko could hear Kenji's sharp intake of breath at hearing this. "You could not tell this? I feel it in your flesh," she said. "I do not know if I can help you. You must tell me what happened."

Kenji was reluctant to tell Keiko any more; she replied with another sharp poke, this time to his chest. "Tell me! I cannot help cure you if I don't know what the injury is, or what caused it." Then she smiled again and went back to work placing needles.

Kenji told her what had happened, and how someone with a healing gift such as hers could help people of all times and places, not just here. Keiko, old as she was, felt that she had much to do for the sick and injured, and accepted the offer given to her. Since then, she has made many discoveries regarding the physical effects of frag, as well as other, more mundane maladies. Respected among the Physicians, often she is the one that does the final check on any Thespian surgically prepared for a part; she can sense mistakes not obviously apparent to others.

Keiko is like the grandmother that everyone wished they had; she smiles and laughs all the time, cooks wonderful food, and is probably the best person around in case you scrape your knee. However, anyone attempting to lie to her gets a swift poke to the forehead or chest while she verbally berates them in Japanese. One of the most impressive gifts that Keiko possesses, other than her ability to tell junior selves from elder selves, is the ability to feel both the amount and cause of frag by touch in a person; the Quicker have had several discussions with the kindly woman over the ability.

Keiko takes her place in the Continuum as nothing more than what she claims to be: a healer. However, she lays claim to the best that healing has to offer in all areas. "Much of what makes us sick is our perception of how things are," she says in a letter to a young Physician. "By sensing the source of the problem, rather than treating the symptom, the illness can be stopped. Be it a mundane illness, or the ravages of frag, only by going to the source and treating it can you be free of pain and suffering. The

universe is, and what is not is an illness that must be removed quickly and with care, unless you wish to damage all that is attached to it."

Selected Main Corners:
"New You" Hollywood, California AD 1949 - 2043

"University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey" (UMDNJ) Newark, New Jersey AD 1984 - 2133

"Restful House" Edo, Japan AD 1683 - 1794

"Keramos Asclepiadae", Isle of Kos (off Asia Minor) 990 - 182 BC

Others corners tend to congregate around medical schools, hospitals and hospices, and other places of healing or death. Some of these corners, the ones that focus on the study of death, are quite grim to behold.

Pre-Ariesian corners consist of medicine huts, and often share the meager shelter with the Midwives. Pre-Ariesian Physicians are used to travelling vast distances alone, even on foot.

Quicker

[adj. "faster than" < n. quick "fast, lively" < *Middle English* quike "swift, alive" < *Old English* cwicu "living, alive" < *Germanic* kwikwaz < *PIE* gwiwo "to live"]

Overview—

This Fraternity transcends the Societies, and has members from beyond its borders. The Quicker seek lost souls and research haunting phenomena. They claim that if ghostly apparitions are psychic records of misfortune, then the only people who can answer such a cry for help would be a time traveler.

Their presence tends to dampen moods, however, as it is said that they often come to collect spanners who have been fragged beyond hope of repair, and take them someplace.

Alternate Names throughout time— variations on "Life Breathers", Shrivers

Symbol: The Torq—

Best known as a Celtic badge of rulership, the open band around the neck symbolizes many things to many different peoples: the memory of slavery while in freedom, the worm that refuses to swallow its tail, the connection and the separation of the spiritual from the gross, the universal symbol for an appliance's on-switch.

But to the Quicker its primary meaning is of the Unfinished. The broken dreams of fools and heroes are the Quicker's lot to sort, and to find closure for.

Services for the Continuum—

"Draw him? Him? How can one draw a man who doesn't exist?"

— Max Beerbohm, "Enoch Soames," AD 1897

Transcending the Societies, the Quicker can be found in every civilization. We even watch Antedesertium from the security of Inheritor fleets, and brave brethren in the field. Members are closely associated with distant spanner civilizations, even at entry rank to the Fraternity.

Despite all this watchful authority, we do not act. The Foxhorn are free to hunt, and the narcissists are free to hie. Working so close to the Inheritors, it is tasteless to involve ourselves in Time Combats: There is no sport to it. Dead or unconscious opponents can be turned over to the Foxhorn. But badly *fragged* opponents should be reported to us after combat. Even if you can no longer find their remains, we will.

The Quicker seek the Lost Causes of the Fifth Maxim. When they have decayed beyond Frag 7, lost souls is all they are, helpless without direction, and prey for vengeful narcissists. Lost causes are delivered unto a place we call Cold Storage. It is not a happy place, but neither is it terrifying. It is a place where badly fragged sentience can find peace, and where its fragmentation ceases to harm others. Further information on Cold Storage is not available here.

Most Quicker mentors come from the Aquarian Era. This is no coincidence: Our numbers are vast, and our information on all fragged spanners is simply the best and ready to hand: We have access to the 23rd Century Scribal Librarium, and the Archives of Atlantis on its visit to the Societal border at AD 2400. The downside for some Quicker is that this wealth of information burdens their Yets. And pre-Aquarian spanners have a hard time with all the telepathy and other skills common to Aquarians. Only the most mentally disciplined need

apply.

We research haunting phenomena for other reasons. Since ghostly apparitions are psychic records of misfortune, the only people who can answer such cries for help are time travellers. Where appropriate, we observe and even intervene on behalf of levellers, who may be getting involved in matters beyond their ability to cope.

Many ask a sapient question about narcissists. If the Continuum frags one so severely that they vanish from sight, how can we say that they haven't escaped? What is to disprove that they were right all along, and are enjoying an alternate world that they themselves have set in motion?

The Quicker know. It's up to us to scoop up what's left after a Time Combat leaves less than a body.

Finally, we urge all spanners outside the Quicker to not be so depressed whenever we're encountered. We're silent because of the First Maxim, not because we like to seem creepy. We enjoy vacations, like anybody else. Being met with strange looks everywhere we go gets a little wearing.

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—

Main conflicts:

Versus the **Foxhorn** over the importance of **Death**—

Death is permanent loss of sentient force. Death means to be forgotten in eternity. We deal with the Dead every day of our Ages, because the Yet draws errant spanners on, even after their hearts stop beating or their fragmentation has exceeded the realm of the coherent.

Death is valuable in its expression of an event. Distinct from other events in that it represents the final point where sentience and the Yet coexist. Put simply, beyond the point of Death, sentience is moot.

To gad about as a disembodied ball of energy is to do so at the whim of others, as the existence of Vessels makes abundantly clear. Only individuals who are fragged— especially those who have died with substantial parts of their Yets unfinished— meet the fate of becoming an apparition. In this state, the awareness seeks a release. Remembering its lost sentient force, it may try to affect its surround, only making its existence worse.

The **Foxhorn's** argument for what constitutes Death is very colorful. Full of blood and guts, very Foxhorn, all the way. Unfortunately, it completely overlooks *time travel.* This is an oversight none of us can afford, especially on such a serious subject.

Where and when someone is killed is important, but rarely the most important moment in the existence of a spanner. Through this knowledge do many cheat Death, as the levellers (and the Foxhorn) define it.

A cold body alone doesn't mean much. The number of narcissists that have successfully faked their own deaths is a shame upon the Foxhorn's reputation. The Quicker do not make mistakes in gauging frag.

The Foxhorn make their case quite plainly that the value of Death is in the terror of the living: the End provides pause to a would-be transgressor. And this is a fine interpretation, for an animal. Humans are sentient, and both levellers and spanners deserve deeper consideration, and be held to a regal standard of self-discipline.

It is far better to have the Continuum stress the value in knowing when to pass away (Maxims Three & Five), than to cherish the leveller notion of a fear of Death. The universe is. Death is. Tying excessive emotional baggage to the event is beneath a spanner. We encourage everyone to apply a reasonable amount of Stoicism to the fact of life's cessation.

If you've knocked out a narcissist, or even just killed him physically, please alert the Foxhorn. Interrogation of *extant bodies* is their prerogative.

Except for this debate, no one much likes to argue with the Quicker, which we take as a sign of the success of our endeavors.

Personages of note—

Franklin Stuart
Born Danville, Virginia, AD 1893

Grandson of a freed slave, Franklin's perspective has allowed him to develop one of the fraternity's most popular philosophies. Called 'Giving Up the Ghost', this school encourages bringing recalcitrant spanners with a fatal amount of frag to settle down.

Whether it's organizing a revival, casting out demons, or leading a celebratory funeral parade, Father Stuart is always calling upon a fragged individual to come forth and settle down nearby. The combination of Stuart's strong but random telepathic calls into the area, and the familiar sights of ordinary people gathered for a spiritual purpose, attracts those too badly fragged to make decisions for themselves. Quicker are always on hand to take the damaged being to Cold Storage, and keeping the promise of peace.

On rare occasions, this technique can even save spanners from the brink. At Span Two, Franklin had been very badly fragged. An Aquarian came, and just sang to him for an hour. He got his head together, and found the mental stability to think his way back from the brink. [See Chapter 3: Struggling— Madness and Related Problems, pg. 138.] It was shortly after this incident that he began experimenting with the dead and fragged, and fell in with the Quicker.

'Giving Up the Ghost' is based not so much on the traditions of appeasing spirits as on the shriving of them. Father Stuart has an obvious knack for talking spirits down, but has managed to avoid the sensationalist religious circuits.

Ting As
Born Luce, Chile, AD 2378

Bioengineer attached to the Third Assembly of Transasia, her a-life friends[4] know all about spanning— it's the Aquarian Age, and after the Hour of the Inheritance, of course. They don't envy her work in Societal spacetime, being a mentor to small, hairy Pisceans. But being in the Quicker entitles her to regular contact with Inheritors throughout spacetime, and she likes not being limited by the Societal border. Her mind is often noisy with the unison jealousy of later Inheritors, including her friends. She doesn't spend much Age with her a's anymore.

Once she has gotten over the gross habits of pre-Aquarian culture and behavior, she finds the mental silence an incredible challenge, and studies deeply the Ariesian arts of Buddha and Lao Tzu to compensate.

Her methods of running her Fraternal corner are sublime. Every morning she tells each member of the corner something in another member's yet. She places the information quietly in their mind as she serves breakfast, a meal she has ritualized.

All Quicker must be the most ready to either heal frag, or target and collect the fragged. The discipline she teaches is severe interdependency. Ting's Method has each member learning more about his chronies than they know of themselves, while secure in the knowledge that his own life is better known to his chronies than to himself. Her Method is emulated in many parts of the Societies, especially where telepathy is less common.

Her seven foot seven form is remarkably athletic for her origins, but she admits that it is a necessity in such physical times as ours to pose as an amateur basketball player. As long as she manages to disguise her gigantic blue eyes behind sunglasses, or by other means, levellers seem to buy it.

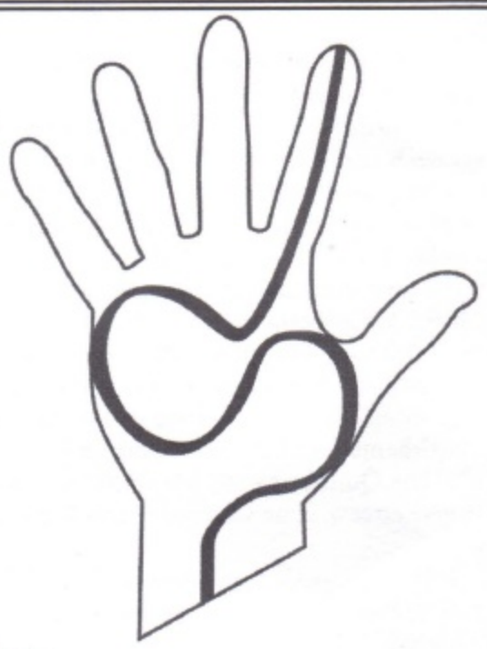
Selected Main Corners:
"Blue and white diagonal descent" Red-aqua-white, Upsilon Andromedae 3, AD 1830 - 4261 and 4318 - 4319
The actual name of the city is a projected mental image, roughly translated as 'blurred clockwise from lower right, candy red-pale aqua-dull white' and is a shorthand for its growth and exploitation through spacetime.

"Barnaby's Undertaker Supply and Chemical Transportation Company" London AD 1814 - 1902

"Silver House of the Second Ring" Atlantis 12969 BC, and various locations in spacetime

"H'iesh'håshaa-U'sÿss" (Leafnest of the Visitor) 106,234,822 - 106,234,071 BC

[4]'A-Life' is but one of an endless number of terms from Inheritor spacetime. It roughly translates as one's original chronies, or corner-mates, but Aquarians after AD 2222 are born spanners, so these distinctions are very different for them.



Scribes

[n. "professional clerk or writer" < *Middle English* < *Latin* scriba "official writer" < scribere "to write" < *PIE* skhribh "to cut, separate, sift"]

Overview—

Written information, indeed almost anything containing a deliberately constructed message is the province of this Fraternity. Its conveyance is considered part of the information, so Scribes are often the physical messengers of the Continuum, when such means are deemed safest.

They are experts in discerning the accurate truth from the lies and cobwebs: Sages, reporters, monks, codebreakers and other lovers of the written word in its many forms. Only the most scrupulously honest need apply.

Alternate Names throughout time— Amanueses, Record-keepers, Familiars, Secretaries.

Symbol: The Writing Hand—

The Writing Hand symbolizes succinctly that recorded information, in its turn, creates the recorder. As keepers of the First, and translators of all Five Maxims, we hold writings to the strictest truths and accuracy, as if a sharp stick were delicately writing upon the veins of our wrists.

Services for the Continuum—

And God woot that in alle these langages and in many moo han these conclusions ben suffisantly lerned and taught and yit by divere reules; right as diverse pathes leden diverse folk the righte way to Rome.
—Geoffrey Chaucer, *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, AD 1391.

We keep history itself. Does that sound too grandiose for a bunch of scribblers? Well consider two things. Firstly, without us, there would be no

controlling frag— no way of knowing what the Thespians should say or do when they play their parts, no reliable way of distinguishing historical truth from narcissist induced lies. And second, we are far from mere scribblers.

The Thespians would like you to believe they are the only ones who play parts, who become what they are not for the sake of the Continuum. But *we* also infiltrate— Sometimes we hide in shadows, watching; sometimes we are the trusted servant, hearing the secret wishes of leveller masters; sometimes, we are servants so lowly as to be invisible— hearing all, saying nothing, remembering everything.

Ah, memory! The Thespians claim superiority in that skill as in so much else— yet they are mere reciters of words we have first learned, for the most part. Some few of them can match our skill in improvisation, living on the edge of discovery always. None of them can match our ability to learn conversations verbatim, on a single hearing, while appearing engaged in some other activity entirely.

This is not our only skill, of course. It takes an understanding of human nature to inveigle one's way into the confidence of a king full of arrogance and justifiable paranoia; or a leveller inventor riddled with self-doubt and secret fears; or a maiden, desperate to wed her true love against her family's political aspirations. And how hard of heart we must sometimes be, to find out these secrets, record them— and, very often, betray them. For it is history that is most in danger from narcissist plots— and make no mistake, they can make it sound more humanitarian than letting history take its true course. It's our long centuries of intelligence that provide the sober outcomes demanded of life and the Continuum.

But there's also fun to be had. We are master word-wrights, and there are instances when we have stepped in to help out a leveller poet or novelist when they have proved unequal to their muse.

And again, we are experts in codes and ciphers, secret messages and the use of symbolism. Sometimes, we expend much energy helping levellers to break codes their enemies have devised— in Cold War and the heat of battle, or even simply in the hot tide of a forbidden love affair; and at others, we help them devise such things— and ensure that they are only as enigmatic as they should be.

Then again, some of our number are more attracted to the earliest Eras, with its oral tradition— and spend long years on the level, learning by rote songs that will pass from what is known, simply because nothing, in the end, is wasted, nothing forgotten. There is a cave in the heart of Iberia where a spanner, works according to the rituals of the tribe he is studying, setting down in wall paintings the tale of a hunt, a kill, the death of the tribe's leader and the ritual slaughter of the elk which gored him... all in charcoal and crude pigment, by the flickering light of a fat-lamp.

For twenty years, the tribe's shamans used that cave to initiate their young men into adulthood. And then, in the way of such people, they moved on, never to return. The cave lies hidden, its crooked mouth choked with rubble and encroaching greenery. In all the years of all the Eras, that painting is never seen again...

Except, of course that we have our Corners, our places hidden from the levellers, and here we have treasures otherwise lost to the Societies— lost even to the other Fraternities (though, it is true, more because so few of them think to ask than because we would not share)— the lost books of the Great Library at Alexandria, spared from the flames; the secret notebooks of Da Vinci— the ones so secret no levellers ever even knew they exist (and oh, what arguments we have with the Antiquarians over possession of *those!*); the formularies of Doctor Dee and the rest of the dark school that swirl around the court of Elizabeth...

We have another function also, though it embarrasses the rest of the fraternities to be reminded of it. Sometimes, they themselves cannot decide a course of action; they debate as endlessly as only those with all of time ahead and behind them will do. Then, we use all our diplomacy to broker a resolution; it is easier than it looks in truth— far easier than doing the same for the Levellers (which we have also done from time to time, or helped the Thespians to do)— since the debate is never about outcomes, but only about methods and possible consequences. And even here, we constantly monitor, memorize, record...

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—
Main conflicts:
Versus the **Antiquarians** over the meaning of **Art**— We are seen arguing sometimes with the **Antiquarians,** over whether a particular item should be considered art or information: what the final disposition of Da Vinci's notebooks should be, and whether the original manuscript of Machiavelli's *Prince* more properly belongs in one of their museums or one of our libraries.

These seemingly polite tugs-of-war are actually the endgames of long harangues over the importance of information itself. Antiquarians defend individual pieces of Art, like any common object they might be asked to remake: Being at the right time in the right place is important, but pales beside the First Maxim itself.

Information is all Art is really about. Conveying a very specific set of signals. Common objects rarely inspire the uncommon— Art is information, information transforms intents, information is all. And it remains our duty to see that recorded information flows where it belongs, and not wind up

carelessly in the wrong— (if there ever is a right one)— knick-knack shop.

The **Thespians** are a constant trial to us, though most of us would consider it beneath our collective dignity to permit them the pleasure of knowing *quite* how much they rankle. Of course, the causes vary— with some it's that they insist on ignoring our detailed scripts (and never mind the implied insult), in favor of attempting to improvise history— as if such a thing were not anathema to the Continuum; with others, it's that they *fuss* so about learning what we've so painstakingly provided for them.

The **Engineers** provide period equipment for us, though if it were up to them our natural abilities and acquired skills would be reduced in favour of eyeball cameras and hidden microphones, and damn the danger of discovery.

We who live in the shadows and shelves have little time for the **Foxhorn's** loud displays of bravado. Also, they are inclined to encourage the worst excesses of the **Thespians** if they think it will lead to a better hunt— how better to lure a narcissist into the open but by providing convenient bait?

Personage of note—
Mary Moreton
Born Wiltshire, UK AD 1913

A shy, mousy girl from a solid middle-class family, Moreton was nevertheless a superb horsewoman. Served as a Wren in WWII; in 1939 she was recruited to the Enigma code breaking team at Bletchley Park. Her skill at cryptic crosswords was noticed by her superior officers, who had been told to watch out for likely candidates.

She fell in with the Scribal corners, who are busy there rescuing various collections from the bomb raids. It is typical of the Scribe mind set that Moreton does little spanning for the duration of the war— a little, yes, mainly to hone her skills— but for the most part she does only what is required to help the war effort. But in cracking Ultra she becomes fascinated by the other arts of the Scribes.

As a Span Two, she works for Mary Shelley, travelling Europe with her as a household servant, all the time saving variant drafts of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,* and her lesser known work about an immortal man. Her efforts as a Three are mainly directed at teaching— she is a determined proponent of the Scribe's natural arts of memorization and diplomacy, and fiercely opposed to the use of mechanical aids to a Scribe's work.

Selected Main Corners:
"The Scribal Librarium" Jerusalem AD 2101 - 2400
This is where everything comes to be catalogued and assessed. There are more Scribes here than anywhere else in the Societies.

"Library of Congress" Washington AD 1790 - 2122

"School of Night" London AD 1503 - 1601

"Museum, Sarapeum et Caesareum" (The Great Library of Alexandria) 285 BC - AD 690
This corner has three main purposes. The first is to memorize and copy the original documents. The second is to prepare for each fire, and to remove as many documents as may be possible without the effort becoming known to levellers. The third is to foil the frequent efforts of assorted narcissists who wish to prevent the fires happening. This last frequently involves spanners from other Fraternities, and there have been heated debates— especially between ourselves and the Antiquarians, about the ultimate disposition of the rescued original material.

Burnings
48 BC The Collection at the Museum loses 40,000 scrolls to fire in Julius Caesar's attack
AD 265-270 - Civil unrest and war damages collection
AD 305 Diocletian orders many of the Library's books on metallurgy burned
AD 391 Collection at the Sarapeum attacked by mobs
AD 415 Christian mob burns the Caesareum collection
AD 686 Arab conquerors burn remaining books to heat their baths

Everyone in the Continuum can rest assured that all major libraries and natural history museums of the late Piscean are Scribal corners.

Thespians

[named after Thespis, reputed father of Greek tragedy]

Overview—

This is almost more an exclusive club than a Fraternity, as the perks are nothing short of magnificent. But then, it is the rare spanner with the skill and discipline to portray an important figure of history. Indeed, the history books are their scripts, as they perform every known act and deed of their role, no matter how mundane, horrible or secret.

Naturally as spanners, they find plenty of opportunities to get away for awhile. It's well known that Thespian parties are the best in spacetime, and almost impossible to crash.

Alternate Names throughout time— variations on 'Animal Speakers' in prehistoric eras, the Chorus

Symbol: The Silent Mask—

Many early masks are found without mouths, and several later ones are mere eye-coverings. The mouthlessness represents how the words of history are neither tragic nor comic, but are ultimately perfect for their moments. The mask itself, of course, means a spanner is behind the face of a leveller.

Services for the Continuum—

JACK. Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth.

—Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, AD 1895

Death scenes are always hard. They're even worse when they aren't recorded having occurred, and we're called in to supply an understudy. Most spanners learn that Francis Bacon was both himself and Shakespeare, but please, Pisceans, please don't ask any of us how many Hitlers there have been. It's embarrassing, and you'll only receive a very cold "Further information is not available here," even in Berlin.

What we do is supply fame. Some of us like to say we provide history, but that's too much a boast. We're the great people of history. Not all of them, nor even the most famous, of course, but just enough of them.

Fame is a magical thing. It's wonderful to read Lao Tse, or see busts of Nefertiti and then discover that these are spanners, and that meeting and speaking with them is quite acceptable. But even names unfamiliar to late Societal histories are ones we Thespians will understudy, if the call goes out. Many tribes have hero cults, and the best of them were built on oral traditions in the Cancerean through Tauran Eras, such as Gilgamesh. We remember these names and stories better than even the Scribes, whether they were spanners or levellers, because fame itself is born in these times.

Some of us take a very hard line with ourselves, and learn almost every moment of dialogue through years of studying the part, live at a distance. Others merely read the prepared notes from the Scribes, and enjoy the edge of improv. Both are acceptable methods, and require enormous mental discipline.

The Physicians are our costumers, preparing us for our known appearance, and against anachronistic disease. Of course, the Midwives are a great bother regarding procreation and all the fun one might be having. We tolerate their endless battery of tests and gene therapies, much as one might sit patiently through hours of difficult makeup.

We manage to have tremendous fun, anyway. Whenever Societal spanners need a diversion, we'll hold a small open house in one locality or another, and they come flocking because our parties are more legendary than most of us. And they come flocking to gape— it's like they become levellers again, wanting that natural connection to human greatness, and forgetting for a little while how mighty they themselves are.

Of course, our private parties are even more intense. War games amongst the mightiest generals, all for sport. Dozens of kings and queens from five eras discussing the finesse of policy and private stories, with the occasional enrapt Span Four or Foxhorn snuck in as a guest. Jam sessions among master painters or musicians are popular. And of course wilder parties than these are thrown, if such is your temperament.

The perqs are magnificent because we're the spanners standing out in plain view most of the time. We're your living targets, and have far less opportunity to move around history once our moment on the world stage begins.

Narcissists will often target the famous– especially when they're children, to make our job even more difficult. Every corner does their best, but knowing you can call in an extra player is helpful. We are always calling on the Physicans to help costume us for these special roles.

In most cases, it happens like this. The leveller child is taken away somewhere safe. We place our actor in there, and imagine the surprise on the poor narcissist's face when the kid starts fragging them, too! The real child gets a trip to sugar-plum-land, or whatever delights him for about an hour of his time, courtesy our staff... He's full of imaginative stories for his guardians, who of course witness little more than the kid playing by himself in the garden or other haven of safety. Older kids simply fall under the aegis of the Fourth Maxim, and are returned with some minor forgetfulness, but otherwise whole.

Areas of dispute and alliance with other Fraternities—

Main conflicts:

Versus the **Engineers** over the importance of **Invention—**

The crisis is over interpretation of the First Maxim. Is the value of information its mechanical usefulness, or its sheer human popularity?

This debate always arises when an inventor or businessman from history is being portrayed by a Thespian. The Thespian is more interested in engag-

ing his role than ensuring the device is working properly. Engineers are called in to fix inventions by the very people who are supposed to be inventing them, which they find very bothersome and troubling.

The Thespian argument is that the fame of a device, its creator, and its benefactor help disseminate the invention, not its intrinsic usefulness. We cite Louis XIV's disdain for anything that had not come into being by his reign. The Sun King refused improvements to social, political, and mechanical elements in his kingdom, and by force of his personality and status, improvements there were not made. France lost ground both scientifically and militarily because of this— but it was not because the Enlightenment wasn't full of good men and ideas. Additionally, it is a mainstay of late Piscean business practice to create "planned obsolescence". The best ideas don't disseminate to market until the consumer pays through several rounds of minor updates. The battery, the steam engine and even gunpowder sat unused for millennia. Japan saw how firearms upset the social order, and discarded them for centuries. Fame of a device is the real power of invention.

The **Scribes** are always sticklers for accuracy, since they hate creating non-leveller propaganda to hide Thespian mistakes. It's not like Hollywood, though. Annoying one's scriptwriter jeopardizes the fraternity's relationship with all Scribes, and your fellow Thespians will stop calling you, and extreme cases, groom *your* understudy...

The Thespians tend to ally with the **Antiquarians** versus the **Scribes** in their arguments over the meaning of Art, however.

We also tend to support the **Physicians** over the **Midwives** in most disputes, out of confessed self-interest.

Many Thespians are **Foxhorn** in all but name: playing a famous political figure means you're answerable to Societal policy, as long as it not at variance with scripted history.

Personage of note—
Gowannes Mores, mystery play author and performer
Born St. Ives, AD 1292

Mores is our authority on how to make an entrance to the Continuum. He insists that all spanners deserve the most memorable invitation, because if they're spanners, they will remember it. "And it will be written upon the world stage forever," he writes. "Should it not then, be written well?"

Mores was always a traveller, taking his performances, his mysteries and his puppets all around the fairs of the Hanseatic League, rescripting them in every language of Europe. At the ripe old age of forty, he realized that his decades of toil had brought him insufficient monies to retire on, and one autumn night in 1333 Brussels he began to despair of life, and fell asleep drunk near a Hanseatic counting-house.

The next morning he was awakened with splash, for he was already inside the establishment, arrested as a long-sought Venetian spy. After a brief but torturous interrogation, his insistence upon his true identity as an entertainer was corroborated. Remarking on the uncanny resemblance, and upon his skill with languages, his former torturer offered him a job: to infiltrate the Venetian warehouses to discover the lowest price they'd accept for the current shipment of silks. The pay was more than Mores could hope to see in the next five years of puppetry. He had to take the role of the Venetian spy, and although he had only portrayed personified vices and greasepainted devils, "That were close enough to this new employ."

And his performance as Dupris, the old spy, went magnificently; he was too terrified to even think of making a mistake as he spent a week "reacquainting" himself with "friends", and slipping in the fateful question of the bargain price as casually asking the weather over the Channel.

He had stepped away from his companions, and was nearly out of the warehouse when he espied a young man— no, woman, from the giggle— in simple motley and paint hiding behind barrels to the left of his exit. A slight noise, and he turned to see her twin behind barrels to his right. Panicking at this moment of escape, he stalled, calling the attention of the Venetians.

Then the girl on the left playfully stuck out her tongue and vanished into thin air. He cried out, looked at the other in terror, and her smiles turned to doubt and panic, too. When the other motley witch disappeared, Mores was screaming.

He tore open the door and started a run. He shouldered a man, dressed much as he, then tripped backwards, as this fellow had a drawn weapon.

Compounding this nightmare— this fellow had his face! The real Dupris! Mores was given a wink by this devil, a signal of duplicity he'd written into most his plays.

A great dead rat dangled from his sword. Mores stumbled away as the Venetians came out, but Dupris distracted them utterly with his find.

"Dupris! What has terrified you!"

"Terror? Anger, man! Look at these rats! They are dangerous to the merchandise! Why are no cats kept here?"

Mores escaped, and returned to his tents in the fairgrounds, fearing that this intrigue had too many layers, and that he was truly expendable. He hoped to have a moment to ponder his Hanseatic employer, but found many guests in his tent, including the little motley witch, who behaved like she had been chastised. They had an even more interesting invitation for a skilled performer...

He writes in his dense spanner autobiography, *Finding Faces in the Crowd, or the Extra-Ordinary Magnificence, etc.* [Scribal Librarium at Ligny, 1519]: "Many times this is how Thespians are brought into the course of the Continuum. The fascination with so many faces and roles leads to the occasional overconfidence of one's abilities, and entering encounters with fraternal brethren before they are at all prepared is too common a

habit. It is little wonder other spinners and other fraternities regard us as one would a horse loose in the fairgrounds, being half giddy, and half dangerous... [These habits] are quite forgivable, for no other spinners in the Societies of Man (sic) are expected to walk a path so laid out and precise, with barely a moment to breathe fresh. The world expects us at our posts, day after level day, and we are gladly there, but our humanity demands its playful rewards, which all spinners agree we deserve."

Selected Main Corners:
Several in and Around Los Angeles
"Beverly Hills Copse" AD 1947 - 2046
—Said to have inspired the movie title.
"Ventura Rosehips" AD 1890 - 2007
"Casa Pasadena" AD 1842 - 1987

"Footlights" Manhattan AD 1899 - 1975

"Jongleur Temperance" Lille AD 1091 - 1562

"Tui Lung" Hsien Chen AD 999 - 1317

"Atavis Vox" Rome 96 BC - AD 234

Pre-Ariesian fraternal corners are notable for being highly nomadic, usually wintering in different locales each year.

It is also rumored that the most popular private party spot for high-ranking Thespians is in the Virgin Era (circa 10,000 BC), on the then-warm expanses of Siberia and Central Asia.

Further information on the Fraternities is available in the GM's section.

Earning Span 3

Increasing Span is always based on merit. Threes have a long list of other requirements because as the mentors that train new spanners, they are the keystones that hold the Societies and the Continuum together. It's a great privilege, and, in a way, a greater honor than moving up to Span Four— not unlike being a ship's captain can be more important and engaging than being a rear admiral.

Span Three is a critical degree of skill. Anyone who can span 100 years between sleeps naturally has a great deal of responsibility on their shoulders. A spanner has to be an exemplary person to earn the right to achieve this Span.

Requirements for Advancement.
The following is in addition to any requirements for reaching Spans 1 and 2.

1. **An Exalted's recommendation.**
   At least one spanner considered an Exalted member of the Continuum (Span Five or higher) must agree to the Span Two's advancement. (Sorry, your elder can't be the one making the recommendation! You'll have to impress somebody besides yourself.)

2. **A 22nd century medical exam, or better.**
   Allows one to be certain to be **free of all contagens** throughout all the eras of the Societies. Also **extends lifespan** considerably (to 200 - 400 years).

3. **Membership in a Fraternity** usually (not absolutely) required.
   It's hard to gain (or discover) an Exalted's recommendation when your contribution to the Continuum is entirely personal. Being part of a team is a hallmark of responsibility.

4. The spanner must also meet the following statistical requirements—
   a. **Zero Frag.**
   b. A **Quick of 6 or greater.**

   c. **Master ranking in two Skills** from the following list:
      A Combat Skill
      A Computer Skill
      Diplomacy
      Disguise
      Dreaming
      A History Skill
      A Medical Skill
      Piloting
      A Science Skill

   d. **Journeyman ranking in three additional Skills** from the following list:
      Any from c. (above)
      Animal Handling (pref. **Horse**)
      An Art (esp. **Acting**)
      An Athletic Skill
      Demolitions
      Observation
      Repair
      Stealth

   e. **Fluency in three languages.** (Journeyman ranking or higher)

   f. At least **Novice ranking in both Physics and Dreaming.**

4. The player (not his/her characters) must have spent **three months of real time playing a Span Two, and played at least four game sessions of at least four hours apiece** playing C°NTINUUM, before advancement to Three can even be considered.

GMs may add to these requirements, but should not waive any listed.

Span 3

Range: 100 years, 100 miles

Who approves and teaches advancement to Span Three?

The recommendation of an Exalted is required to advance to Span Three since the secret of learning to span is revealed to all Threes. In the process, the spanner's In-Between is revealed, the consequences of which are detailed in the GM's sections.

[See also Earning Span Three, above.]

A NOTE ON TRAVEL INTO THE AQUARIAN ERA

New Span Threes have ample ability to enter the Aquarian Era, and are therefore warned: DO NOT SPAN BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SOCIETIES UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY AN EXALTED SPANNER OR AN INHERITOR. This is a Decision of the Seventh Atlantean Council. The Boundaries of the Societies are 12969 BC and AD 2400.

What does a Span Three do?

Threes tend to be the epitomes of their Eras. They gain an appreciation of why the world between Christ and Aquarius is all one thing, and why other, sparser eras have the unity they have. Piscean Threes know that swordsmanship and riding and industry are distinct from their Ariesian predecessors in both approach and execution.

Nearly every Span Three runs a corner, and trains Spans One and Two in the intricacies of time travel and the social etiquette of spanning.

Knowledge of how to teach spanning to others

Like all the information in this book, nothing is stopping you from turning to the GM's section to discover this secret except your own willpower. Make no mistake. This is a test of your personal inclinations.

Knowledge of how to teach spanning is the most significant measure of trust the Continuum can bestow upon a spanner. Even the deep responsibilities of the Exalted are less a grand leap, than learning the secret of spanning.

The GM has further information on the workings of spanning, which should be told you if you have never played a Three before.

Extended lifespan (usually youthful)

The gift of a couple hundred years seems impressive, but will be filled with raising new spanners into the ranks, and running on various errands— not a few of which are dangerous. The upside is being able to bring your corner along on adventures that interest you personally.

The GM has information for determining your increased lifespan.

How to take up a corner

Upon being chosen for Span Three, the candidate presents a list of places he'd like to set up a corner to his mentor, which is sent on to all the mentors of the areas the candidate would like to move to. Usually, the candidate is recognized as a neighbor by one choice. (The winning choice is often distant from the spanner's original corner, but that shouldn't come as a surprise.)

The player and the GM can discuss at length what the player would like to see as a corner they want to run. GMs are encouraged to let players get the space and set-up they dream of (within reason) and then give them a set of novices that are more than a handful!

All your novices at once

While to novices, it seems that they come into a corner one at a time, to the mentor it's as though a gaggle is born to him all at once; the stereotypical father in the maternity ward waiting room, and discovering he has octuplets.

Hence, if new players are introduced to the corner, they may be wayward novices or visitors (like Sven from the story examples) rather than original novices of the corner.

Overseeing a corner

Part of overseeing a corner is knowing about every visitor the corner will ever have, from the first moment one takes the reins. This is accomplished easily enough by the characters, since they can send detailed dossiers as far Down to the beginning of the corner as needed, where a junior is presumably setting up shop, and reading up on everyone he'll ever get a headache from for the next several years of his Yet.

Dossier

What surprises spanners of Spans One and Two, should never surprise a Three, not on his home

ground. To simulate this near-omniscience is easy when it's the GM playing the mentor. But when the Three is a player character, he may **request of the GM a dossier** on any pre-Aquarian or non-Inheritor spanner in the spacetime his corner is responsible for, the instant he hears about them. This dossier should have details of aliases, general intents of the visitor (many send ahead that they are arriving, as is polite), and whether he's friend or foe, but need not necessarily spell out precise dates of arrival and departure, or even give a clue as to how to defeat the intruder.

It's when a mentor doesn't get a dossier from the GM, he should legitimately worry and contact his fellow Threes, and maybe alert his Exalted contacts [see pg. 93]. After all, a surprise suggests that the mentor will not survive and/or remember the encounter long enough to write and send himself a dossier!

Dossiers are all considered part of the mentor's Yet. Since the number and character of adventures and encounters can vary greatly, it's assumed that these dossiers, while known, are not acted upon until necessary by the mentor. The mentor is assumed to be holding back his information until the right moment, as suggested by the First and Third Maxims.

Opportunities with new spanners

A player having a character that's earned Span Three has a couple possibilities awaiting him. He can either start a corner with all NPCs, or (with the GM's approval) act as the mentor over a new group of player characters. Most if not all of these PCs should belong to other players, either new members of the roleplaying group, or players creating new characters.

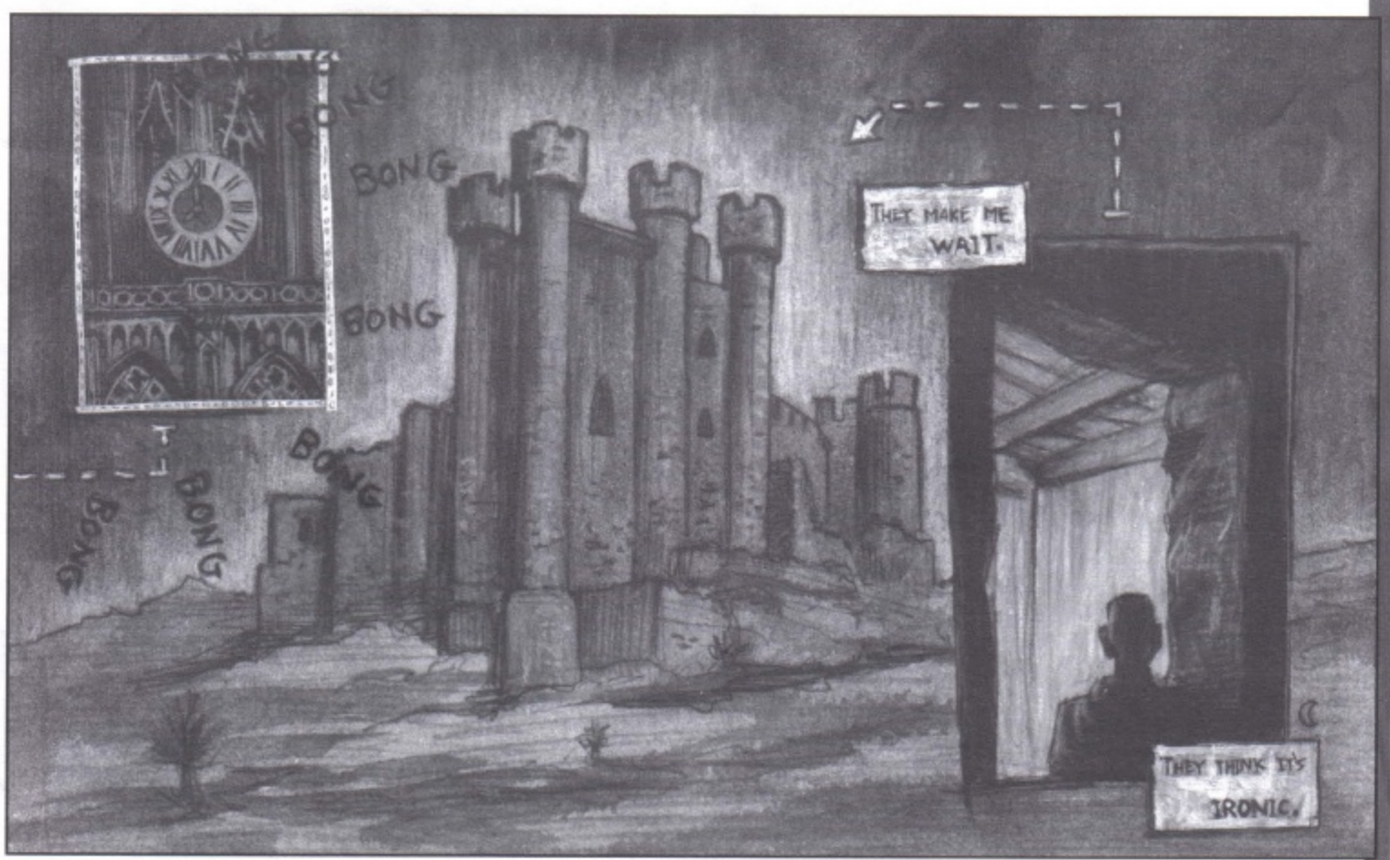
Leading an adventure

Span Threes can carry up to 1000 pounds in addition to themselves. This makes for some interesting field trips for corners, if everyone joins hands and leaves the spanning to the mentor.

Mentors should only take Ones and Twos that have Zero Frag, and that have been spanning for awhile at home. They also should be properly versed in the locality they are visiting— mentors are usually held responsible for any novices they bring with them.

The GM is prepared to handle surprise jaunts into uncharted territory. But you'll find that most of spacetime is occupied by spanners, and many corners don't take kindly to trespassers. Send a message ahead, to make sure you're not taking anyone by surprise.

[For rules and ideas on how to contact distant corners, see Chapter 3: Struggling— Dreaming and Communication, pg. 108.]



Rook Morrow, (b. 1987)
panels from *Blue Shift* graphic novel
ink, acrylic & graphite
Aetherco Comics
AD 2008

Artwork © 1999 Raven Mimura

7. You Want the Best For the Kids

"Riparian Nike", Stirling's corner, Saratoga Springs, and it's 1965, a hot summer, and she has the screens up with bugs slamming to get in. She looks up from some of the bills on the dining room table and watches their shining fury. Back in Milwaukee, Charlie always does the bills off-stage; Stirling doesn't think it right, despite the locality. This is her corner, her style.

She has packed Ayla off with a two-week assignment to the beginning of the corner, ostensibly to deliver information about visitors to the corner to Stirling's junior. But it's really to test Ayla. She has instructions to not leave the corner, since she's not very familiar with the years she's going through. And Stirling hopes this will help her with her span book discipline as well.

Chris, one of her novices, is sitting with her, deep in thought. "Are there bloodless weapons that the Foxhorn prefer?" he says soberly. "To minimize cleanup."

"The Foxhorn, you may find, like blood." Stirling recalls a particularly gory hunt across 1910 Manitoba, against a mad narcissist who wounds a young Ga'haga. The prey's many pieces, and how they have to destroy the sled dogs afterward. "You just start with learning that karate, young man. Bring 'em down alive, when you can."

Ayla reappears, as Stirling tears off 5¢ stamps for the envelopes. "How was the trip back?"

"All right. Nothing much. Though you and that Viking were hitting it off in 1959."

Stirling is not very surprised. "Probably an old cornermate of mine." She wants her novices to understand how many places a person can be, and not step on themselves. "How did delivery go?"

"Oh, fine." Ayla seems amused. "Yeah, that was really your first day, wasn't it."

"Hm," says Stirling. How much should I divulge of Threeness to these guys... "That was my junior. But further information isn't available here." I'm really starting to sound like Charlie.

"You thought I was somebody else." Ayla is very full of herself, her voice lilts to suggest she knows it's more than that.

"Ayla, that's rude. I said 'further information', and that's also your cue that it's something I'd like to leave undiscussed openly. First Maxim." REALLY starting to sound like Charlie... Stirling begins to understand all those beard-scratchings.

The novice's bravado immediately crumples. "Sorry. I'll wash out the bathtub again?"

"I'll go," says Chris. "I'm itching to put in a shift at work. It's been a week," He laughs. "Can't believe I'd actually come to miss it."

"Love it while you can. If you make it to Two, you'll be surprised how much you miss of leveller life."

Chris nods. Stirling says, "Oh, and Chris!" as he spans out. A second later, he's back.

"Eh? Did you yell?"

"Yes. Try not to use the terms 'week' and 'month' when referring to your Age with spanners. We discussed that."

"Gotcha, Stir." He gives two thumbs up and vanishes.

"Can I talk?" asks Ayla meekly.

"Yes, and that wasn't a bathtub-punishable offense. This time. Just be more careful. Now what made you so amused."

"Well... I delivered the guest list, like you asked. And you were looking and talking to me like I was some big player you knew? It was far out. I mean, like, on my way back I had to note it in my Yet. 'Get so amazing to Impress Stirling' And I'm like, I can't even ask you. It's big, and man, I don't know how, and I don't know when, but I gonna really be something! Isn't that so far out?"

Stirling smiles serenely.

"Course..." Ayla starts fidgeting again. "Course you know all that, don't you."

Stirling pulls out an old battered span book, turns to the front, checks it off from her Yet.

"You do that so automatically," says Ayla with envy. "And so do the others. Why am I so rotten with span book discipline."

"You're getting better, Ayla. Trust me." And Stirling sees the faraway look in Ayla's eyes. She's thinking of her In-Between. Stirling no longer has the whitespace, but full memory of the earliest training, and why she knows how to span. But she has come to know the look. "Besides. My mentor almost never used his book in front of us. His mind was so sharp, he could just fill it out privately at intervals. But I want to make the example to my corner. I think it's important."

"You are such a great mentor, Stir."

"Oh my. And how many mentors have you had?"

Ayla considers this, when Anton spans in.

Stirling thinks of his assault on her, again. But someone had to find him, train him. It just falls to her corner. The devil you know— And she pushes this to the back of her mind, again.

"Hey. I heard we're going off somewhere, and this was the rendezvous."

Stirling nods; she notices he's wearing a small sterling silver peace symbol. "Any minute now. Have you been wearing that necklace into town at this level?"

"Uh, yeah. A little."

"It's a little far Down for that symbol. You might want to keep it at home."

"You mean I can't inspire the natives?"

"You shouldn't try change what's known, obviously."

"I guess. Actually, where does it say that in the maxims?"

"'Change of the known is resisted by the Continuum—?' First one, Anton."

Ayla is watching intently, like it's a ping pong match going back and forth.

"Well. 'Information is all.' But the rest looks like commentary, pretty much. What group writes these things, anyway?"

"The Scribes translate and keep track." That's not his question. "But the Atlantean Councils accepted the whole set of Maxims, and their interpretations. It's what we live by."

"But the party line comes from farther Up,

right. The space fascists."

Ayla blinks, looks right in Stirling's eyes.

Maybe this is it. Stirling doesn't like this part. Her feelings show through the gentle scolding, she's harder on him than the rest. I am going to fight this, if I can at all, and hope he doesn't make a career out of hounding me. I have to believe that.

She recalls the many times Lydia mouthed off and Charlie expediently told her what her problems were. Lydia never seems to get beyond Two. "Except the Continuum isn't a group, or a party. It's people looking out for each other, respecting each other's space. Hardly fascist."

"You can't deny there's an agenda."

"The 'agenda' is the universe, Anton. History. If you let it be a burden on you, that's all it will be."

And Anton looks to be struggling to accept this. His every gesture suggests he wishes to do right by Stirling, by all his friends.

Maybe on the far side of his attack on me, he gets with it. She has yet to see any hard evidence of this, but knows that that may be a good thing.

"Listen, don't confuse my authority with the generational troubles of this decade. You may well be out there somewhere showing me a thing or two." Stretching the truth, but. It will make him think a bit as he plans to attack my invitation. "I mean, really. A thirty-year-old me can meet an eighteen-year-old you who gets older until a thirty-year-old you meets an eighteen-year-old me. I can't think of anything more communal and supportive."

"I guess." He sounds neither impressed nor belligerent, like the child of the '80's he is.

Stirling moves on, it's only thing to do. "Speaking of fascists, anybody want anything from the thirties? George and I are going out, but I could pick up some stuff. '39 World's Fair, and don't try to stop us. Tempted to wear one of those buttons that read, 'I have seen the future—'"

"But isn't that unethical?" says Anton, suddenly back into the fray. "Isn't that just doing the same flaunting you're telling us to avoid—?"

Before she can explain the difference between temptation and acting on it, another Stirling appears, nods to her elder. "Okay who's for Woodstock?"

"Oo!" squeaks Ayla. Anton raises his hand. Interestingly, Chris peeks put from around a corner, smiling, "Which one?"

"Which one!" says Ayla, shocked. She was invited in 1974. "Oh sorry. Further information— oh, you're supposed to say that."

"More than one," says junior Stirling, "if you're up to it."

"Can I wear my peace symbol there?" snorts Anton. Elder Stirling pulls a big handcarved wood one out her purse and tosses it to him.

"Try that one. Those little ones are very eighties."

He looks at it a second, then accepts it. "Thanks."

The junior says, "Everyone max your sleep, get some period gear and rendezvous me here five minutes Up." The room clears, and the Stirlings take a breath.

The elder clears her papers off the table. "Watch out for Anton."

"Always."

"He's in a mood. He's going to talk to some of the levellers, just to show us up. And one turns out to be CIA."

"Tch, I'll pack some bug spray," says the junior. A leveller government operative is hardly insurmountable, but the junior is plainly disappointed, and a little scared, because of Anton.

The elder doesn't mention his quieter but more invasive disruptions, small violations of the Fourth Maxim in front of drugged concert-goers, odd prophecies to Janis Joplin that she only hears about because Ray passes it on. Things that she's still busy with. Those are all part of the adventure ahead for her junior. All part of raising a monster.

Mentoring novice spanners

Now it's your turn to be the big bad spanner of the corner. Having a troupe of Ones looking up to you and doing stuff you want and recommend is great, but it's a position of absolute trust.

The novice spanner is like a toddler when it comes to spanning. The toddler must be shown why the bright red spiral that is so nice and warm on the stove must never be touched. All the basic questions of frag, causality and everything will be thrown at *you* now, eightfold.

What's worse, you have to train them in the basic questions twice— the first time during the In-Between, and again after they awaken in the corner, with nothing but instinct and wiped memories, amidst people who already know them.

Not only do you have to be there for them, but you're the one that has to remind these wayward children to heed the Maxims— not the GM. It's a real test of knowledge and patience to keep feisty novices in line, and yes, your performance mentoring counts when it comes to earning Span Four. Aren't you glad you remember your times as a feisty novice yourself, and finally have all the answers.

The Training and the Responsibility

Novice Span Ones love to play with their newfound power. As a mentor, you'll have to point out again and again where your novices are running afoul of the Maxims.

It's always best to show that the Maxims aren't an arbitrary morality, nor some arcane 'Laws of Time', but rules for surviving life as a spanner. Once your novices realize that bending the Maxims means asking for a fate worse than death, they'll keep their playfulness within sane boundaries.

Explaining the Maxims.

The Maxims are considered the cornerstone of spanner life. While they doubtless exist in all lan-

guages, and therefore have myriad shades of meaning, there are some basic elements of survival they aim to get across.

First Maxim: "Information is All"

Since sentient force is what causality and meaningful existence ride upon, what one knows, doesn't know, tells, and doesn't tell have primary importance over everything.

Striking the perfect balance of information is the life-long challenge of any spanner. Knowing too little and revealing too much hands victory over to one's enemies, whereas revealing too little hampers friends and knowing too much dissolves the last illusion of free will, and often brings insanity. [See esp. Chapter 3: Struggling— Madness and Related Problems, pg. 138]

The phrase "Further information is not available here" is used whenever one does not or must not divulge information. The phrase is quite precise. It goes well beyond "I don't know," or "I can't say." It is thoroughly non-committal: More information may or may not available someplace else. The speaker may or may not know the information or where and when it can be got. It's simply not available to the querant there from that source. [See Span One— What is the Yet?, pg. 47]

Always ask "What time is it?" It should be used and reused whenever unexpected behavior is seen in people you know, before having a deep conversation with them [See the story *Out in Society*, pg. 118, where Stirling is challenged by a puzzled pal.] Suggest briefer usages of "Further information..." among friends, but keep it strict with strangers— or old friends who are only meeting you for the first time.

Second Maxim: "Respect Your Elders (They Know More Than You)"

Being able to span time at will means nothing prevents an individual from meeting himself— except discipline and the fear of screwing up.

Whenever a spanner does meet himself, the junior version is supposed to be quiet and do whatever the elder version requests. The elder, having already experienced the incident, makes no changes in what he says and requests, though probably has a much better perspective as to why he makes his requests.

While not always a perfect system, it is designed to prevent frag and emphasize self-discipline. Certainly any number of adventures— and mishaps— hang on how such encounters are handled.

Third Maxim: "Measure Twice, Cut Once"

Spanning around one's corner is hazardous enough; spanning into anyone else's domain is usually done discreetly, and unless it's the neighbors, it's always best to ask permission before going. Spanners in places that respond with a welcome for inquiring visitors have probably already seen them around.

This Maxim is presented as meaning: "Be sure of where and when you're going and be prepared."

While true, consider: Anyplace you span is *somebody's* domain. If you had to stop at every county border and go through customs, nothing would get done.

But don't go having huge fights in people's front yards without expecting consequences...

Wherever you go, there you are. Your whenabouts will always be in the places you've visited. Therefore, keeping a personal log is paramount, since enemies will always try to Frag you somewhen you've been.

(And of course, players should remember it should be up to the GM to initiate a Gemini! [see pg. 40].)

Fourth Maxim: "Invitations to Dance"

Incautiously spanning in front of leveller witnesses gets a spanner in serious trouble. This is sufficiently serious so that even rabid, careless narcissists are usually circumspect about this. (They feel don't *have* to adhere to the Maxims, but messing with this Maxim *always* brings the Continuum down on you.) The reason it's such a big deal is, simply, that levellers learn about spanners at a precise point in their history, and not certainly not before or after.

What constitutes witnessing a span? Hiding behind a box or around a bend is okay, but try to make sure there's a logical level route of egress, in case some leveller checks. Be careful of gaining a reputation as an "escape artist"— even among spanners. Departures and arrivals outside Corners should seem as natural as possible to all nearby.

Also, the question of erasing memory. This has been popularized recently by various comics and movies, and even games. But whereas the plot and humor is furthered by memory jumbling in most of these stories, new friends must be decided on in C°NTINUUM. It's a moment of serious judgement, and it's usually a good idea to fetch— on the moment— your mentor or other Span Three to help resolve the incident. Besides, only Threes and above know the full method and means of spanning, and would have to be called in anyway.

A new spanner may already be your equal, superior or rival out there in spacetime. Always make it a test of the leveller's character: If the corner doesn't like the individual, or finds him mentally unable to cope, he should be processed and returned to his life. Know that anyone you invite into the Continuum is going to potentially be around for the rest of your existence.

Fifth Maxim: "Never Fight for a Lost Cause"

Getting involved with the events of a badly fragged spanner increases the likelihood that you'll be fragged, too. High amounts of frag are best dealt with quickly and personally.

This Maxim is the toughest one to live with, but knowing when to walk away from a badly fragged friend is the hallmark of discipline in the Continuum. There is no stricture against *reporting* a badly fragged spanner, usually it's quite the contrary. Tell your novices to let you know of the fragged spanner before any more of their Yet transpires, but to keep it from their chronies in the corner, just in case.

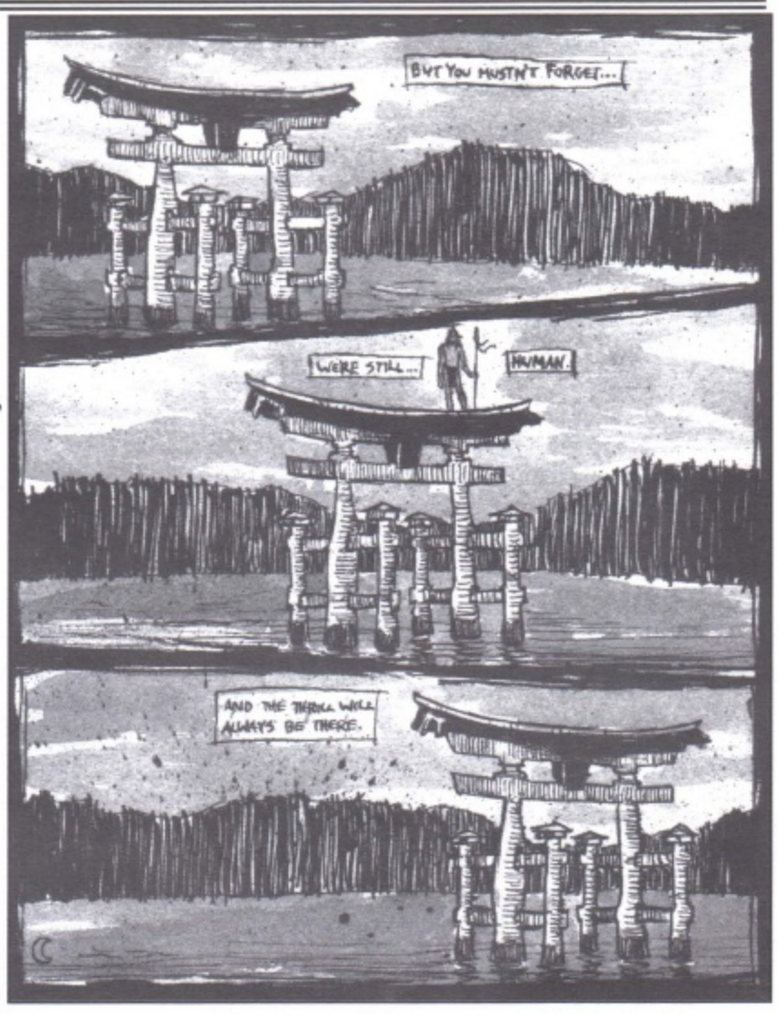
Ongoing contact with spanners of higher Span

Starting at Span Three, the spanner starts having regular contact with at least two Exalted spanners, one from each of the Eras to either side of his native Era. Piscean Threes would therefore have an Ariesian and an Aquarian contact.[5]

Contact with the Exalted is usually at their instigation, and they choose who they wish to be involved with. The relationship differs intrinsically from that between mentor and novice in that the Span One requires a nurturing/training environment while knowing nothing of how spanning actually works. Threes have this knowledge, and are more in the position of showing responsibility by adjusting to taking the occasional request from an Exalted.

These contacts provide an alarm network for longer-range threats when they are discovered; Threes can alert spanners of their own Era through their own network of friends.

Naturally, an Exalted's requests have to do with the well-being of all extant life. If an Exalted's requests go unfulfilled, he will seek a more helpful Three. In worst-case scenarios, frustrated Exalted point out serious problems with a mentor to the Inheritors, who handle the problem expeditiously.



Rook Morrow, (b. 1987)
panels from *Blue Shift #1*
ink, acrylic & graphite
Aetherco Comics
AD 2006

Earning Span 4

1. To earn Span Four, Threes must successfully run a corner for at least 100 years of Age. Preferably either:
   a) A novice corner, or
   b) A Fraternal corner

GM's discretion as to what constitutes "successful".

2. The Three must have the skill **Hypnotism** at least **Novice** rank.

3. The Three must also be at **Frag Zero**, and have a minimum **Mind of 6**, and **Quick of 8**.

4. The player (not his/her characters) must have spent **four months of real time playing a Span Three, and played at least five game sessions of at least four hours apiece** playing C°NTINUUM, before advancement to Four can even be considered.

GMs may add to these requirements, but should not waive any listed.

[5]Aquarians have contact with a Piscean and an Inheritor. Spanners from the Libran and Virgin Eras usually have a contact in the Atlantean Council, and one from the Leonid.

Artwork © 1999 Raven Mimura

Span 4

Range: 1000 years, 1000 miles

Who approves and teaches advancement to Span Four?

Usually the approval of as many Span Fours of the Society into which the Three belongs is sought, though the approval of the Three's Exalted contacts (who remain their contacts as Fours)

What does a Span Four do?

A Span Four chooses a long-range vocation in the service of the Societies. Usually one of the following:

- Participate in the **Greatest Game**
- Run a major **Fraternity corner**
- Be a **deep operative** inside Antedesertium
- Or any other long-range task.

Fours have to prove they can handle the long haul. They have the extended age, and are expected to spend it. Even a rapid, successful run in the Greatest Game, or a number of quick major victories deep inside Antedesertium is not a complete test of a Four.

Lifespan

A Span Four's lifespan is extended to 1000+ years. This is the least amount of time anyone deeply devoted to the Greatest Game will wish to have to play it.

But many minds, even those that can handle spanning vast amounts of time, are unable to cope with vast amounts of **Age**. [See The Greatest Game—Opponents: Other Fours, and Yourself, pg. 97.]

8. Infinite Typewriters Taste Bright Blue

"You know what I hate," says Zayoshi, the Aquarian. She is Stirling's contact in that Era since Stirling's becoming a Three. They have nothing in common, and the arrangement is stressful in the extreme. "I hate your apelike devotion to irony. Animals walking around indoors. I hate the hair everyplace—"

Stirling, excellently manicured behind her desk in her darkly serene, windowless office in New York, starts breathing in through her smile, with ape noises: "OO AA OO AA OOO AAA!! E! E! E!!"

"That. That right there. A dead leveller can see it coming, and it gives me a headache."

"Try blinking. Works for us Pisceans." I try asking what would aid her visit, like a good host, and I get pet-bashing. "What do you want, Za."

"What I always want in these meetings. The current delivery. For the Fifth Atlantean Council."

"I'm not at that Round. It's already part my Age."

"What. Why are you jeopardizing your work through sloppiness."

"Za. Do us both a favor, and buy a vowel. I go when the Greatest Game takes me. It's not my fault if my Exalted contacts can't keep up."

Za's brows fold. "Vowel? That's the second time I've heard that out of you—" Stirling thinks, Keep that in my Yet for awhile— "I have no reference, it must simply be to druf me. Stay on subject throughout."

"You stay on subject. I'm doing my job, why are you whining over details."

"Council sequence is the most vital part of this exercise. And I don't whine."

Stirling can see her point: Zayoshi's voice is startlingly deep. "All right, all right. I'll arrange for as much of that as my Yet allows, but you're going to have to put up with my movements through at least the Tenth Round."

Za rolls her huge eyes up into her head, a casual gesture for her that makes Stirling's skin crawl. "That is very unprofessional. The Unity Society's Fours handle its turn sequence simply and elegantly, why can't the United States'."

But the Unity Society is so darn easy to map. It's the Earth, and a little Mars. It's entirely on video— "Well, you're stuck with us plain Americans. Yee-ha."

At last the eyes came back down. "Yee-ha. If you want to be oblique, please study Aioni."

They looked at each other blankly.

"I have no idea what you just said. Why are we working together."

"Further information is not available here. I'd settle for the chail'ur of the early Manuists from you, if it helps my pain of frustration here."

"I barely know they exist. But since they are American, maybe we can get back to the subject."

"I never left the subjects. You must increase your speed of understanding, Stirling."

Without consulting any record, Stirling rattles off, "Sequence: Turn Five, Saturday June 10, 1996, 8 pm. Turn Six, Sunday April 3, 1983, 8 pm. Turn Seven, Tuesday July 18, 1815, 4:15 pm. Turn Eight, Sunday April 10, 1983, 6 pm. Turn Nine, Sunday September 8,

1991, 7 pm. Turn Ten, Thursday April 4, 1985, 5 pm. All in this room, except Turn 7 in my cabin aboard the Ceres in the East River. For subsequent turns we meet here every Friday, 4 pm, beginning April 14, 1995." Soulless. It's like I'm her website or database, it's all she knows, or wants to know—

"Agreed." A small nod. "Less conversation is better."

Stir wonders at the remark, but not much. Really. "One more thing." Stirling rises, walks up to the staring Zayoshi and says coolly, "Virgin Era Mexico."

The Aquarian's fine hairless eyebrows fold further.

"You need a vacation. Too many minds in your mind."

"I am busy, unlike some Span Fours."

"Virgin Era Mexico. Alone. You need it. I'm doing you a huge favor. I don't push it on every Aquarian. Lord knows you all need it, but all of you'd never fit."

Zayoshi turns her back to Stirling, a gesture of strong contempt, and spans away. Stirling sighs. What are the ethics of saving our grandchildren from themselves, since they're all spanners?

She begins wondering about her own choices. Hunting down lost Americans, corralling parties of spanners and levellers to go seek out forgotten settlements and mysterious dangers. She realizes that she's so worked up about all these plans, that investing interest in her relationship with George is actually becoming difficult.

She thinks of Zayoshi's dull, thudding voice, the voice of the 'Future'. She spontaneously spans Down to George's home on the Isle of Man, 1905. Now I'm busy, she cheerfully reminds herself.

What makes a Society?

We don't see as much importance to national governments, but levellers do. They remain fixed by the taboos of marrying and interacting with foreigners. This is the pool of humanity: if you could see the movement of population over the years, you would see how it swirls and eddies into pockets defined by national boundaries, especially in the Piscean. There are occasional rushes of migration, but population often finds distinction by the space it occupies. Only by the Aquarian do these pockets dissolve at last into Unity.

—Manx Cohen, Span Four, Germany Society,
Introducing Farewells: A Primer for Playing the Societal Game
[Jerusalem: Scribal Librarium, AD 2220]

The Societies

'The Societies' is the name of our civilization, the one between the ravages of Antedesertium and the time of the Inheritors. It is the many nations and peoples of mankind. Each Society has measurable borders, beyond which its influence, it is agreed, does not extend. Every player spanner comes from a Society, and are considered cultural experts of their native locality.

Examples of Societies include (in no particular order): Britain, China, Israel, France, Russia, Inca, Babylon, Turkey, Brazil, Mongol, Rome, Spain, United States, Celtia, Ethiopia, Japan, Egypt, and so on.

These borders wend along spacetime, waxing and waning with the Society's success and failures in the world, and fitting together with neighboring Societies like a vast 3D jigsaw. Known national boundaries are by no means absolute: Societies are defined by either **Crown, Blood** or **Culture**, or often a blurring mix of all three:

Crown is traditional national boundaries, and politically sanctioned divisions of space.

Blood is basic genetic commonality, who is related to whom?

Culture is behavior shared in common, often the definition of greatest influence.

By the decisions of the Third Atlantean Council, Societies are recognized as permanent structures, secure within their borders Up to the spacetime of the Inheritors. They are the framework of history, wars and all, and Societal spanners think of them as family and home. **A nation is a larger and no less accurate form of family,** and its disruption would be as destructive as an attack on a spanner's immediate family.

Corners are not a final definition of where a Society's boundaries are: **A Society exists where the level population live and thrive.** Often corners find themselves crossing into two or more Societies, although there is almost always one Society more prevalent than the others. Gerrymandering of this sort is quite common, and is even encouraged by some avid players of what some Fours call the Greatest Game.

"The Greatest Game"

This is but one of the epithets of the Game of the Societies, an exquisitely performed exercise of decorum and ruthless competition with the goal of establishing the complete history of the Family of Man.

The "board", as it were, are the three dimensional Societies themselves, with different areas being familiar, and others barely explored at all.

If the board is the Societies, the pieces are levellers. Not all levellers, as such, but those that have chosen to live lives outside the normal round of mankind, and/or those that history has mostly forgot.

The main players are Span Fours, who direct the moves. Lesser players include spanners of lower Span, or ones of equal or higher Span hired by the directing Four.

The moves are either of levellers across spacetime, or of hired spanners seeking them out.

The goal is to discover all of Man's history, while extending your Society's reach as much as feasible **without risking Frag.** This is a friendly Game, after all, played within the Continuum.

Most of the main players are Span Four. Span Fours have developed an appreciation for nations and tribes as they exist in their totalities across millennia, since they can see the connectedness of a people, even at the length of 1000 years. Some Span Threes are deeply involved, learning the ropes, and the occasional Span Five puts in their two cents here and there. But it's by and large the Fours involved, experiencing the spanner life beyond Mentoring, preparing to become Exalted.

The Societies are secure within their borders, but what are their borders? Indeed, how many of the limitless shades of culture and nationhood are fully enfranchised Societies?

These questions are answered by the Greatest Game. It also provides the basis for a census of spanners that the Scribes keep and that the Foxhorn and Quicker consult to track intruders, especially narcissists.

It is arguable that Span Fours "run" the political machinery of the individual Societies. This is due to their unique status in between the Threes who train new spanners, and the Fives that sit on the Atlantean Council and deal with the even larger aspect of politics between civilizations. Fours are the closest thing to a wider government that the Societies have.

So what does a Society do?

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."
—John F. Kennedy, US President, inaugural address, AD 1961

These words, expressed for the purpose of revitalizing civil service, bear a relevant meaning here. A Society's contribution to spanner life is representation in the Atlantean Councils. While this is very important, a Society's main contribution is the history of Mankind itself.

From levellers are all of us born. Their every action and event are part of our lives too.

Much is made of the "grandfather clause" in time travel fiction [see Causality, pg. 56] because it acknowledges the link of family and bloodline. Spanners are very aware of the ties that bind them to their leveller families, and the family atmosphere of their novice and even Fraternal corners, watching out for their localities. **A nation is no less a family than any of these.**

Since the universe **is**, we must know what it is. In the pursuit of the Game, Span Fours doggedly seek out every leveller that may have wandered off or disappeared, and find out their fate.

The Game also is essential for unmasking narcissist intrigue: By tracking down the life story of every leveller born into the Societies, dangerous people found sneaking into in the mix can be picked out and dealt with.

So in asking what a Society does, ask not about its form of government. Ask how well it meets the definition of a family, watching out for its own, leveller and spanner alike.

How is the Greatest Game played?

"The Greatest Game" may or may not be the greatest thing a spanner can do, but for those that relish the challenge, it's best thing on Earth. Essentially, while the Societies are fixed within their borders, the Fours are out there filling in all the blanks, and discovering and bargaining what those borders are.

Debatable areas like Roanoke Island, clerical lands, Indochina, and even 1920s Chicago are all open for claim by the select Societies that are present. Some liken the Game to be like completing the world's largest crossword or jigsaw puzzle; others simply compare it to games that simulate warfare, still others approach it as pure diplomacy.

Some of the Rules

The Greatest Game is played in 117 rounds. Each player that wishes their Span Four character to participate informs the GM at any time.

You can claim any area of spacetime where a leveller that is arguably a member of your Society is living. [See the definitions of Crown, Blood, and Culture, above.] The area of spacetime you can claim varies, but a spanner must witness the leveller living there.

'Points' are earned by spanners who can claim areas of spacetime (3 points), negotiate for them (2 points), or successfully negotiate as a third party in a dispute (1 point). You can hire other spanners to collect points, so a resourceful Four can gather up the necessary points very rapidly, long before 117 go by.

200 points scores you victory, and you can retire from the Game knowing you've done your share. Other Fours of your Society will still be out there— or maybe you'll be one of them, plying down to the end. It's a matter of personal preference.

The 117 rounds correspond to the 117 Atlantean Councils, to whom the results are delivered in sequence. A claim made on a previous Turn supercedes claims attempted on later Turns.

A spanner may experience the Greatest Game only once, so choose your moment wisely. Complete basic rules for participation are in Appendix G, pg. 218.

Opponents: Other Fours, and Yourself

Not every part of the Game is about finding unwritten history. It's also another of the Continuum's tests of character, perhaps its hardest.

A good example of a driven player is the following story, *Manifest Destiny,* wherein we see Stirling meet up with a personal crisis over her own behavior. Even if the players have no intention of going this far with the Game, there are opponent Fours out there so zealous that the etiquette of entering corners is sometimes overlooked, and believe they can cover their arrogance by apologies and presents.

Many Fours are driven by the fear that they will not make the cut as Exalteds. Trying to earn the approval of three Exalteds over the course of several centuries, especially when no sign of your Exalted elder is seen, is exhausting to most Fours. Some are propelled by the fear of their most disliked opponents *being around for eternity* as Exalted, and so try to stymie their success in the Game.

It's the test of centuries that's most important. Many human minds grow brittle, unelastic by living great amounts of time— not from ill health, but because **it's a modification of the limits of humanity.** Living for a hundred, two hundred years is not unfeasible, many animals survive so long. But only the rarest of trees sees life over 1000 years (see pg. 142).

Spanning may seem to ease this problem, but in fact it's a trap, providing the comfort of an unchanging world around you. If your mind cannot handle the burden of a trans-human weight of years, you aren't Exalted material.

H. Freyja, (b.1869)
Advertisement,
New York Sunday Herald
October 30, 1921
ink wash
collection of the
Museum of the City of New York

9. Manifest Destiny

She takes in the rough-hewn wood of the prairie fort. It smells amazing, and she wants it for one of her Chicago bedrooms. "The US is a late Piscean construct. It's vulnerable from a number of Societies, since it derives from nearly them all," she explains to an avid pupil. His mentor is in Pierre, nearby for the standards of the time, about 130 miles. But I'm the extracurricular fun.

Stirling is mobilizing her ranks in the field. This is her 51st turn, culling a cascade of bits of spacetime for the United States Society from her swelling ranks of operatives. She's outstripped nearly every competitor, specially other American Fours who nickname her "Envelope" for her ceaseless search for places that can contain an American.

She nearly succeeds in convincing the 49th Council that the wombs of pregnant immigrants to America were United States territory. It goes to a floor debate, which is a mark of distinction, despite her loss, and despite the strange argument. The uproar about it distracts opponents from her moves in the Philippines on the same turn, at least, netting some solid victories.

"But that's where we come in, marching the boundaries, Up, Down and Level for Old Glory. Yet. I can't help but wonder that this Game is more a distraction than practice. Some nights, I get pounding dreams of Inheritor spacetime. And that is fierce firewater."

Here she is addressing Sergeant Matthias Bromwell, 7th Cavalry, Span One, at his post, and plainly thrilled with the honor of being alone in her presence.

Dressed in demure costume for 1876, she sounds off about the bloodshed Up nearby. No one else is supposed to realize she's there, anyway.

"Are we going for claiming the whole territory?" he asks, thinking big.

Stirling smiles, but says, "Let 'em have Big Horn Valley for two days. Let it resonate for them. I want more action Down in this treaty period. There are already settlers before the treaty's negotiated, let's start from there—"

George Armstrong Custer strode into the headquarters, all flamboyance, saying, "Are we ready to see some scattering feathers, Sergeant?"

Bromwell is on his feet: "Yes, sir!" Stirling is gone.

Stirling is high over the Dakotas, level, face

Artwork © 1999 Heather McKinney

down falling. She enjoys coming here, and spying down like the eagle she is. Someone may be overlooking a settlement. A hill or valley may hide a space to claim from the old owners. Behind her somewhere, behind the blue day, there were stars.

Up seven minutes. Custer departed, knowing he can count on Bromwell. His eyes reflected the knowledge that his other men don't understand him, not like his troops during the War. The door closes, Stirling is there, saying, "—There's a little massacre on both sides, but find all the attempts at white settlement, from as early on as you dare. Names, dates, places. You're my surveyor out here, Matthias. Counting on you."

"Won't let you down, ma'am." She watches Bromwell smile and nod. The best thrill is watching the young Ones. Stirling's reputation for recruiting more and more spanners makes her one of America's best known and busiest Fours. The young Ones scenting the horizons ahead. Look at that thirst!

"I gotta get to bed. Big meeting."

Matthias smiles. "Africa or the Philippines?"

She thinks in Swahili, the various chants for for conquest, and adds another mental note to absorb another dozen, maybe hundred West African dialects before turning in the big push. Someone may have questions.

Stirling smirks back. "Further information, kid. Rendezvous me, 04:30 hours, May 10, 1876 this room." She spans to her apartment in 1928 Chicago, walks down one of the long corridors to a guest room. Peeking in she's pleased to see it done in hewn frontier wood. Notes her Yet, and spans to her bedroom, spans out of her clothes, bodice and all, and grabs pyjamas from the correct drawer.

Stirling gets some sleep in.

She builds an office, lit in rich heavy blues, with a ceiling of twirling, five-pointed stars, and the reverse of the Great Seal on the dream-carpet. Not in humility before the Oval Office, though she'd like Jacob to think that. Tonight we start on Africa, she thinks, tracing the eye of the pyramid with her toe.

She can already feel Liberia, the American colony, gobbled in one or two moves. She has spanners throughout its spacetime, and estimates little or no native opposition. The Game is mature by the 51st move, but organization in West Africa is rumored very sluggish. She floats over her desk and waits there for the report.

Jacob is there. He sleeps in 19th Century Ohio, having spanned over from his post in Monrovia to be in range. His last assignment from Stirling, while awake, was watching for movements of early 16th Century colonists out of England. A choice player. But tonight he's unusually fuzzy, and standing at a distance.

**I've heard from some opposition,* he dreams. Usually, Jake keeps his dream-lips in sync, but something has made him nervous.*

*Stirling leans forward in the air, like she's pulling herself toward an ambush she's planned. The old Foxhorn still loves challenges. *Interesting, but Liberia is an American idea. Word from an African Four? What's their position?**

Yes, a native Four... I'm sorry ma'am, it's not looking good.

*Stirling makes the blues in her office deepen. She frowns quietly, and settles her floating dreambody down behind her desk. *Don't like the sound of that, Jacob.**

No, you shouldn't. I sent all recruits out into the hinterland, and I'm afraid they all met with decisive resistance.* Jacob's clothes go black and very severe; his form sharpens. *We should be hearing from our opponent here.

Good Lord, you invited this Four to our dream rendezvous?!

*Stirling feels slightly betrayed, but Jacob moves closer. *It's a fait accompli, Stir. I see no room for anything besides negotiations.**

**This is unlike you, Jake.* A couple small golden dream-eagles circle around Jacob's head. They're Stirling's way of underscoring displeasure and suspicion.*

After several moments of silence, the office slowly fills with warm sunlight from an unknown source.

Stirling, this Njani of the Obu, negotiating for Liberia, among others. Njani, Stirling, United States.

It was without fanfare, and it was in a dream shaking with challenge, but Stirling found herself suddenly unable to force the room into her parameters.

It was Evana. Evana, whom she hadn't heard from in centuries of Age.

*Stirling starts a yelp of recognition, but it dreams out like a rattle. *Well! You're quite a shock,* is all she manages to articulate.*

*Evana Njani is all smiles as her sunlight takes over three quarters of the dream. She even laughs. *Well, I have been saving up to surprise you, girl!**

*Stirling is numb. Out of her comes words that Za would approve: *Liberia is a planned colony of the United States. It's national independence isn't relevant without continued American support for over a century. I can outline our claims—* A map appears behind Stirling, a blue three-dimensional blob, its only defining consistency the Atlantic coastline.*

*Evana looks a little hurt, but also sad and unsurprised.*No, I've had calls on all that spacetime since Third Council. Didn't you look into that?**

**I...* For the first time in the last 226 years of Age, Stirling is at a loss for a snappy response.*

Evana Njani raises an eyebrow. It's like she hasn't changed, thinks Stirling, deep in her consciousness. All the old loyalties to her novice-corner shined out of nowhere, but she didn't know how to speak like that anymore.

I'll relinquish any challenges. Um. Could I negotiate for the capital, Monrovia?

*Njani says without hesitation: *There are a few islands off North Carolina—* A distinct map of them appear before her, and extend into the long balloons that represent the spacetime through which they pass. Through which Njani's claim passes. *I have people on the ground there. Can I package these for the 52nd Council? I'll trade the couple hundred years of Monrovia for that. But it stops at the city limits.**

*And Stirling of the United States Society finds herself saying, *Sure. That's great.*

*Njani nods. *Deal. I'll send round paperwork if you need it.*

No, no. That's fine.

And the dream pauses. The gold and the blue sit drifting like mismatched towels in the background.

It's good seeing you. You've been well?

Stirling just sits and makes a closed-mouth smile.

Well. Be seeing you, Cynful. She waves politely, and vanishes like a glorious sunset.*

*Stirling sits in the gathering blue as Jacob slowly comes forward. *Um, ma'am—*

She turns the rendezvous dead black, and washes the office with rain. After a couple thunderclaps, Jacob finds he is alone, and wet, and turns up the lights.

Stirling pulls awake. I can't believe I just did that! "Dammit, Evana, you— arrg!!" She kicks away the satin sheets in a flurry of silk pyjamas and perfect hair. She is all about the room, tossing porcelains, breaking delicate jades. Then she tears open the liquor cabinet.

Scotch, one of the best and rarest of the 19th century, pours into a big glass, then over her hand. In her vast apartment, she talks to herself.

"Evana you pig. You absolute pig. You run off for a half-millennium or however long, bitch. Bitch!! Trick me in the heart with a surprise out of a— out of— Oh you're the very snake! Manipulative! Stupid merchandise, useless druffing horseferry!" She takes in the alcohol, all at once. And as it impacts her reengineered flesh so slightly, her working mind finds room for an aside.

Now. Now when has Evana been any of that. Not in dream there. She falls back, sits on the bed.

Who am I yelling about.

Suddenly, she needs to find a mirror. The bathroom. But her face looks twenty years old, has no signs of corruption, no telling mark of shame or evil. She has 687 years of Age behind her, and Aquarian tech has exported any element of Dorian Gray. She thinks of Zayoshi's perfect face and awful impatience. I guess that's why they call them grays.

Sitting among ivory-fitted tub and basin, a hundred weapons and trophies of her killing years draping the huge bath space, Cynthia Stirling silently amazes herself that she has to think about how to cry.

God Almighty, help me. I've grown envious, even afraid of Zayoshi's favor.

Stirling in pyjamas spans over to a dark chamber in South Dakota. It's a place she comes whenever some turn of the Game goes badly, or when her personal life conflicts with her work for her Society. This time, it's both.

I'm unfinished, like this hall. It is not the first time she thinks this, it is the same thought she has on her every visit. The chamber is cut into the side of a mountain; a time capsule, discarded by disagreements and failed funding.

I'm just swimming in "points". But I'm so a part of this Game, I've got to keep going... And here Stirling Cynthia closes her eyes, and feels rough-hewn stones around her, realizing. I'm stuck. Getting stucker.

Does anyone want to be Exalted this badly?

She remembers George, how she lost him during a border dispute with Canada. A man dead, and she couldn't care— 'We're Foxhorns, Georgie. Get a grip.' Other Fours had to step in to solve it. I should have seen it then. But it was on to foundered submarines, and Gadsen, and shadowing Ambrose Bierce and Lee Harvey Oswald.

She already has the next move planned out to the last detail, and ready to mobilize. I'll just hand this to Jacob to orchestrate. He has nothing else to do, now. No, no. There's so much to do—

There's the 53rd move coming, and all the adjustments that will be needed without a foothold throughout Liberia. She is already working the reallocation of spanners, how she's free to move some into the various Marines operation around Africa, and move John and Edward into American bases in Iceland during WWII. That alone cascades and steps up operations for the 54th, 55th and maybe impacts all the 1919 plans she has for claiming brief parts of Russia before the 56th. Streetcorners in Berlin, brothels in Japan. The room by room, minute by minute claims she's swapping over the Saigon Embassy. Calendars and conferences with Midwives, trading secrets of births and adoptions. Her Yet is choked with another 110 years, 67 days of meetings and hidebound intrigues.

"Guuh!" The centuries-old woman pushes armfuls of broken rock off the ledge on which she sits. God oh God this is worse than high frag. What have I done to myself, I've locked myself across this thing like a bootlace. Hundreds of spanners await adventure upon her word, and tens of thousands of levellers dance their lives to her secret tune, and Stirling is driven sick of herself.

But Evana lives. She's all right. She's even her old self— And Stirling starts building a way out.She's negotiating. For other Societies, the ones with fewer levellers and therefore fewer spanners. But that's never been my style! Her clockwork intriguing passes over like the shadow of a minute hand. Of course, no one would expect that out of me.

She recalls some information that crossed her desk regarding Romania and Serbia, something about the Gypsy Society petitioning for recognition, but there being enormous Council stumbling blocks, even their ability to gather data on their entry is stymied.

They're in trouble. Evana would do that. Help spanners in trouble...

She looks around the dusty man-made cavern. Yeah. I have got to get out and meet real people.

II

Other choices for Span Fours

Attached to an Exalted

Span Fours of exceptional merit may find themselves attached to specific Exalteds as their agents and contacts in various Societies or Fraternities. This can range from taking the Exalted's dictation, to marshalling armies to fight in the Geminid Era, to becoming embroiled in intrigues on Atlantis itself. Whatever adventures the GM (and you) have in mind.

Running a major Fraternal corner

For further information on Fraternal corners, see pg. 61 and Span 2— Fraternities beginning on pg. 64. Many of the 'Leader Types' listed certainly make it to Span Four, and stick with their Fraternities, and the situations they generate.

Operative inside Antedesertium

For further information on being an operative inside Antedesertium (or in the Geminid) see Span 5— War, beginning on pg. 103.

Earning Span 5

1. To earn Span Five, Fours can perform **one** of the following services for the Continuum:
   a) Be in the **Greatest Game** long enough to earn 200 points
   b) Run a **major Fraternity corner** for at least 250 years of Age
   c) Be a **deep operative** inside Antedesertium
   d) Or any **other long-range task** that the Exalted deem worthy

2. **Approval of at least three Exalteds**, not including your elder self.

3. The Four must have the Aquarian Skill **Hypnotism** of at least **Master** rank, **and must also have Photographic Memory, either as a Benefit, or automatically with a Mind of 8 [see ppg. 10, 13].**

4. The Four must also be at **Frag Zero**, and have a minimum **Mind of 7**, and **Quick of 9**.

5. The player (not his/her characters) must have spent **five months of real time playing a Span Four, and played at least five game sessions of at least four hours apiece** playing C⁰NTINUUM, before advancement to Five can even be considered.

GMs may add to these requirements, but should not waive any listed.

Span 5

Range: 10,000 years, 10,000 miles

Who approves and teaches advancement to Span Five?

The approval of at least three Exalteds must be attained to achieve Span Five. (These Exalteds must other than one's elder— though discovering you have an Exalted elder is a mighty good sign.)

What does an Exalted do?

The Exalted are the safety-valves of the Continuum, mainly for the Inheritors. They are the ones to first sense major attempts on the Societies, and to take the necessary steps.

As has been said before, if the corner and its mentor can't handle a situation, it falls to the Exalted. This is because when frag assaulting a corner is so great that the local spanners become overwhelmed, it threatens corners on all sides of it, and so on. Since mentors all have Exalted contacts, they become affected as well.

It is very rare that Exalted spanners cannot muster the support necessary among themselves to defeat any instance of frag.

But the Exalted have many tasks. Their reward is the letting go of human limitations— telepathy, ceaseless lifespan, greater and greater vistas of Span, and frequent contact with the Inheritors.

10. Words Upon the Tempest

"I went through hell not knowing."

"You expect an apology, maybe?" But Zayoshi smiles.

"Actually, yes. From me to a junior. It's an odd gemini left over. I think I'm almost ready for it."

They are floating past some of the buildings of the Second Ring of Atlantis, upon one of which is carved seven thousand names, in nearly as many languages. It is a honor-house, and all the names on the walls belong to one person. An Exalted that perishes fighting Antedesertium. Pulling her masses of black hair back to read the wall more clearly, she is a tangle of colors and ribbons dipping into information. The names are mostly male, and she starts wondering after George again, after all this.

Then Seara thinks on all her own names, how she's stood by the few she's earned over the last nine hundred years. She glances toward the Council Hall, the many spanners with many names. Men in three-piece suits discussing the arcs of the Societies with bare chiefs and robed sages in the shadow of the bull-

altar, still stained with old blood.

"Think we should use napalm instead? It's really not about the grain."

"No." Far below, a smartly dressed Jeanne waves up at them. Several more were helping new visitors get about Atlantis."She really is everywhere here, isn't she."

"I can't imagine what it means," says Za, looking down with a distinct snort. "It sounds like a security breach, or a trap we're setting."

"I want to find out."

"Me too. But that may be the trap."

"Interesting point. I suppose it's playing itself out."

They come back from a long conference on migratory families, for the 73rd Council. They have not seen one another in a century. Early this day, they agree that they will seek the aid of Ailathakent in the razing of Tarikanniratеth, an Antedesertium granary-town with the throngs of people who must die, despite the Fourth King's insistence that they live.

"I wonder if George is around Atlantis at all. That would be funny."

"Can I finally get an explanation of that womb-business out of you."

"What? Oh God," Stirling Seara blushes for the first time in decades of Age, showing through her dark tan. For a moment, the conversation abandons the multi-levels, and falls like an old pancake. "My callous youth. I don't know what I was doing. All it wound up being was a smokescreen for my moves in the Philippines, but..."

"Don't be so ashamed. I wish I had spent a few throws at being silly. You got here faster than me. Much faster," says Zayoshi, all traces of impatience easily melt from her voice. She is resigned and amused at herself. "You were right about Aquarians, we are too psyched all the time."

Seara senses the event. "You took my advice about Virgin Era Mexico."

"YES. And I kept it to myself for years of Age. Completely selfish. But it was even better when I brought Down some friends, and afterwards took in the solitude anew." She closes her eyes, a startling gesture. "Oh, those singing leaves. The salt. And I earned the respect of a cat."

"I'm impressed."

She opens one huge eye. "Thank you. And thank you for the advice, Stirling. I could never understand pre-Aquarians, just show them pity."

Was that what that was, thinks Seara, not knowing she was still in conversation.

Ah ha.

*Stirling Seara breathes in, Zayoshi's smile widened. *Got you. I get to teach you this.**

I don't care to become, well what is that— She thinks of an image from an old, old part of her brain, of a robotic monster pouring its nanites into a hapless Trek-suited extra.

*Zayoshi laughs! which makes Seara jump more than the telepathy. *This is going to be sharp fun. No, I get to teach you the folds of your mind, Stirling Cynthia. A spanner box for your soul. How to speak and think for yourself again, all at once. When and how not to, and other schoolyard stuff. I will teach you hopscotch, if you lend me your jumprope.* "It's an Exalted thing," she says before Seara can open her mouth or settle her forebrain.*

"This is why we can only play the Greatest Game once," she whispers, thinking, No safe route turning back.

**Good! But you can't keep it up.* "Neatso what's lunch around here."*

Sandwich— "Yes— agh!"

"Very good. We will schedule this."

The Labours of the Exalted

For the Exalted, the Maxims take on a different tenor. They still apply, but the Exalted are expected to **exercise** them, as opposed to simply **obey** them. In this they are almost the equal of the Inheritors.

The Fifth Maxim: Complete Discretion

Suppose an entire corner succumbs to a concerted narcissist attack or intrusion. Sadly, such events are not unknown. Your choices may seem limited by the Fifth Maxim, since the spanners are badly fragged, and without assistance will spin out.

Exalted have the option of stepping in to either heal or chuck the fragged corner.

You aren't fighting for or against the Lost Causes— you're fighting *for the Continuum*. If it requires wiping memories, removing all spanners from the locality and installing a mirror corner, or any number of actions that spell disaster to individuals of lower Span, it is still done.

The Fourth Maxim: Complete Stealth

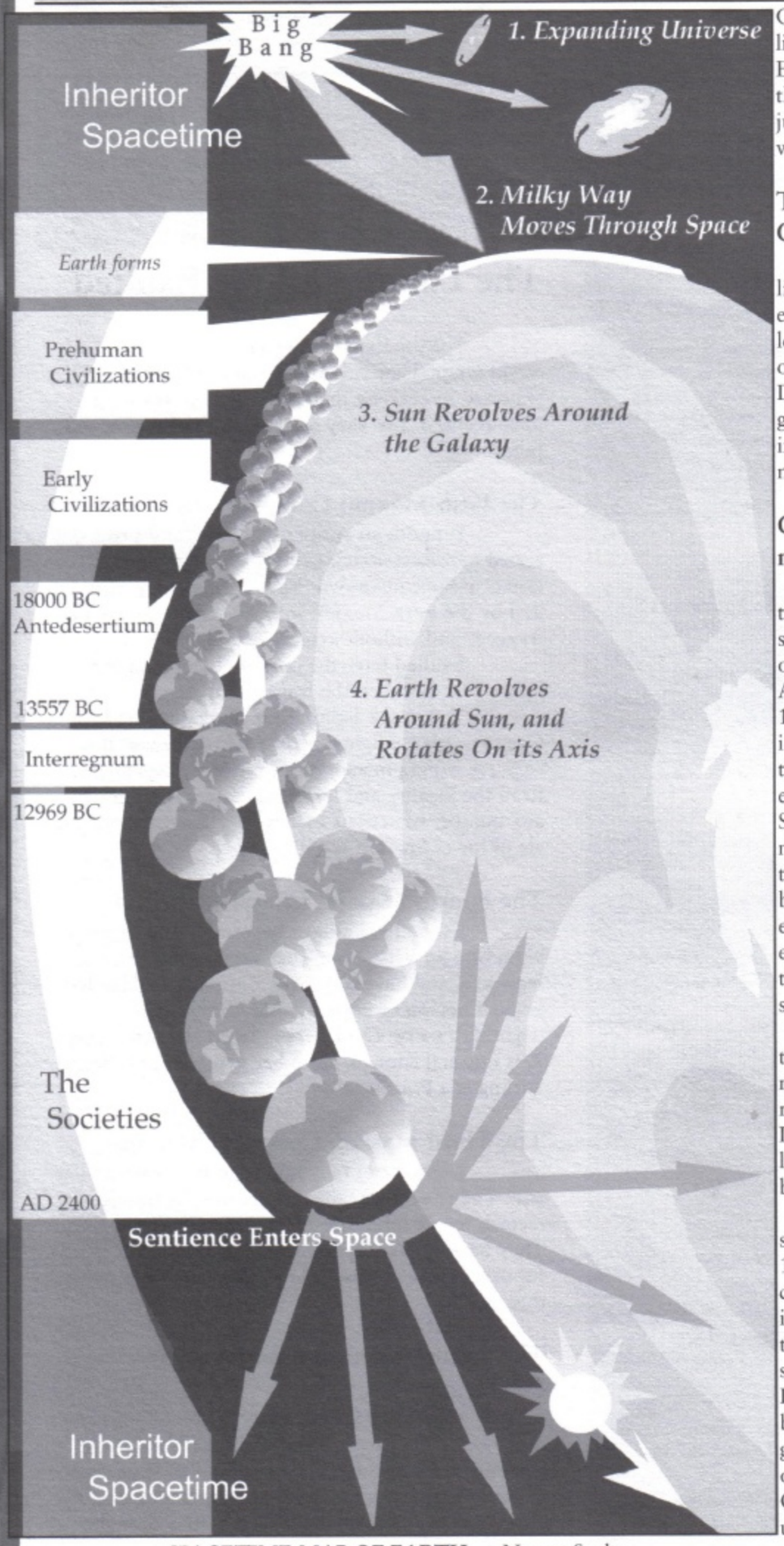
Exalted are almost never involved in stumbling into an Invitation. They are too aware of consequence, and have too many options available to avoid a person or erase a mind on the spot. (Cynthia's story, *The Invitation and the Dance*, pg. 2, is unusual enough, since her gypsy elder is Seara Stirling is a Four.)

The Third Maxim: Complete Measure

Exalted can tally and span with ease and at will. They can divest their entire life's spanning record, for an Inheritor, for instance, from memory. They backup their Span records dutifully, but that is for other Exalted's use. Their Span card is purely in their heads.

The Second Maxim: Complete Self-Possession

For most Exalted, meeting yourself becomes more and more rare as the expanses of spacetime you can reach explode outward. And as your access to devices becomes universal and commonplace, disguise is as easy as flicking a switch, or a thought.



SPACETIME MAP OF EARTH — Not to Scale.

Map © 1999 Chris Adams

Geminis are no longer a great likelihood. If they do occur, the Exalted is so mature a spanner, that conversations between junior and elder are calm and without incident.

The First Maxim: Complete Information

The Exalted, already having lived 33 times as long as the expected lifespan of a Leonid leveller, no longer fears his Yet, or anything he might fill it with. Details and information can be gathered with little fear of knowing too much: Exalted are eminently *sane*.

Calling on your friends, new and old

Exalted spanners stick together. So wide-ranging is their spanning ability, and so developed are their Dreaming and Aquarian skills [ppg. 20, 112, 114] that the lifestyle of adhering to a corner is less appealing than one of wandering the expanses of Earthly spacetime. Spending part of a day with neolithic Chinese potters, and then taking a lunar shuttle before bed is a common enough experience. It's kind of like enjoying retirement and being on the frontline of action at the same time.

So summoning your friends to help in a Time Combat or more complicated exercise is a relatively simple affair. But like Inheritors, Exalted want less and less to do with the everyday business of the Societies.

Not through aloofness, but simply that they have lived these 15,000 years enough times. It's crowded with their juniors as it is, and showing up to fix situations is tedious, however necessary, as any Time Combat is. Exalted have no patience for being fragged. They tend to target a narcissist with a heavy dose of natural frag, and send the Quicker in to (carefully) scrape up the mess.

After a surprisingly short while, returning to the Societies begins to feel like entering a nursery. The kids who don't know you may glance at you with interest (since you can't help exuding maturity and wisdom), but the ones that do come running up like you're grandpa, here to give them magical presents. Some Exalted never tire of this role, and pine for not being able to enjoy it more; others find it galling in the extreme, and can't get away fast enough.

The Atlantean Councils

The Atlantean Councils consist of Exalted from each member Society, usually the ones that participated in the 'Greatest Game' as Span Fours. Each has the depth of understanding to handle the foreknowledge of the shape of their Society, while accepting the census of the Game, and to pass judgements on the many Council Decisions that they have lived under all their lives.

War

There is one duty most Exalted are called to, and that is the War with Antedesertium.

Distant Allies

Being Exalted means that you can travel a million years in 100 days, at the very least.

There are a vast number of civilizations within those hundred days. This book only mentions a scant few, and the GM is encouraged to devise as many as he and the players can handle.

Bear in mind the hundreds of civilizations that flourish in the Ariesian Era alone, a span of 2000 years. Apply that to the vastness of hundreds of thousands, even one million years stretching back before Antedesertium, and you can begin to see strategies that the Exalted see.

In Country

Antedesertium's heartland is located roughly where the Sahara Desert is in the Piscean Era. It is the reason, in fact, that Atlantis makes appearances off the African coast, and is stationed there at the beginning of the Societies.

Narcissists pretend to think like us, and then deviate when they become stuck on a point of personal pride, interest, or reasoning. Watching a spanner writhe into a ghost is painful, but keeping your head as vast areas of landscape shudder under narcissist experiments takes the poise of an Exalted (or an Exalted candidate) to maintain.

The Battle of the Gemini Era

In the midst of the Societies there is a beachhead of Antedesertium loyalists and their many recruits. Being 10,000 years in from the borders of Antedesertium, it is little surprise that what Span Five narcissists are allowed out of the Scorpiod, make it here first, and bring their pals.

[Further information on Narcissists and the War with Antedesertium is found in Chapter 3: Struggling, pg. 135]

Movement Through Spacetime

The Earth does not simply turn on its axis, and revolve around its sun, of course, but hitchhike along as the sun rotates around the galaxy, and the galaxy hurtles through the expanding universe. [See Travelling Beyond One's Span, pg. 35.] Thus the Earth arcs a great path, with spirals within spirals, as it exists from beginning to end. Though every Span One learns this, the relevance of this information comes home when a spanner becomes Exalted. [See Spacetime Map of Earth, at left.]

As a Four, the Greatest Game helps prepare Exalteds for the mental challenge of Inheritor spacetime. The many countries, races, and cultures of man are but the simplest reflection of the patterns of sentience in Space.

Calling on Inheritors

This is always done only in extreme circumstances— unless the Exalted is visiting Inheritor spacetime. Having entwined themselves so completely into the story of Mankind with the Greatest Game, and all the many contacts among novice and Fraternal corners, the Exalted are becoming more like Inheritors in their understanding of the interrelatedness of everything, and how small the Societies are.

(Of course, if for some reason you don't handle your situations involving frag, the Inheritors *will*. See The Inheritors, below.)

The GM has further information on the Exalted in his section.

The Inheritors

If you ever encounter Inheritors, stand still. They're on your side.

They are on your side, but they are handling major incidents of frag. And if you see them, you're involved.

If you've done something to anger them, you'll probably know. Trying to span away is to no avail, and implies, even advertises guilt. You might not be seen again if you behave badly in their presence.

On occasion, they will be wiping minds, rearranging property and people; usually levellers, but sometimes even loyal spanners need to go for a ride. Try not to worry about anything that would be a felony in leveller culture: These aren't secret experi-

ments, **they're doing what you do.** Keeping the universe healthy and whole.

And you can put fears of colonization to rest, they don't want to come to our spacetime more than they have to.

Be aware: The spacetime of the Inheritors is on all sides of the solar system, going as far Up and Down as Life can survive. The entirety of spacetime is full of life, all at a comfortable distance from the day-to-day awareness of we, their Ancestors. Civilizations, nearly innumerable, exist and are founded in every corner of the universe.

The complexities of the Societies are but the Inheritors in embryo. Space travel and time travel go hand in hand.

It was long held in the science of this passing century that travel faster than the speed of light, even if mass and other major hurdles were overcome, would result in travelling back in time. "Arriving before you left," was the popular catchphrase, that seemed to settle the issue as moot, impossible and amusingly absurd.

Science fiction, coming into its own in that century, widely preferred space stories that circumvented the time problem. Starships that warp and wormhole, or civilizations unable to break lightspeed at all, remaining with narrative conceit, all in the same timeframe. Time travel stories that explored this usually had a specific point to make about paradox, were set on earth, or were cherished as classics or unique visions, to be tucked away on a high shelf collecting dust.

The Inheritors invite us all to set that illusion behind, as we would a doll from the nursery. We aren't ready to experience it yet, but we must begin to dream it, for the promise of all our descendants.

Life in Space.

There is indeed life in space, most of it human and human derived. In fact, Space is remarkably crowded. The Inheritors have taken pains to keep that idea an absurdity to us, as the truth must come at its proper moment.

Instead of counting, like Carl Sagan, the number of possible worlds with intelligent life by dividing stars by millions, we must remember that life multiplies in any way it can. The niches of spacetime that spanning sentience seeks out to survive are startling, and beyond even the expectations laid out here. But we remain one universe, and are united in that at our most essential levels.

They are our children. They are our Elders.

In fact, the Continuum is ceaselessly amazed

Victor Beauregard Houston
(b. AD 1857)
Elders (AD 1886)
watercolour
Musée Contratemps, Marseilles

Artwork © 1999 Drew Tucker

at how easily levellers ignore the obvious traits— two eyes, a nose, a mouth, arms, hands and legs all in the usual places— that provide a blatant clue to the origin of "greys" of various "breeds". It's a hard road, psychologically, for Piscean Era people to accept this as the face of their grandchildren.

Incursions.

Machines that aid time travel are available in the spacetime of the Inheritors, but aren't taken into pre-Inheritor areas on a whim, and certainly not to be lent to native spanners. Even Societal spanners aren't ready for most Inheritor devices and ways of life.

Spanners can feel confident that if trouble gets out of hand, if even the Exalted are overmatched by a narcissist plot, the Inheritors are there as the "big guns" to stop the Frag. They *will* save the day, if they have to.

You can feel confident, but never should you rest easy. Inheritors play rough and very much for keeps: *The vast majority of all life is at stake with their every move*. Even the most experienced Exalted and their own contacts within the Quicker Fraternity are treated brusquely and with scant remorse.

Earth is an extremely dangerous and precious place, and Inheritors don't live here before AD 2222. They aren't meant to stick around. Provoking them is a sure way to get the Continuum to censure you.

To share some Inheritor perspective with you, take the famous Roswell incident. Everyone has heard of it, and certain leveller fanatics can quote dates and times like a true spanner.

One of the better known anecdotes is the actual discovery of the crashed "aliens". One dead and mangled, the other injured, and standing there staring, screaming in the desert as authorities surround them. One scared and confused native cracks the victim's skull with the butt of his gun.

And afterwards, the story goes, cover-ups and weather balloons.

But as other leveller witnesses of "close encounters" attest, Inheritors rarely make a sound, even when surprised or communicating, let alone scream.

Whichever Inheritor survives the crash at Roswell will know of the famous incident, too, almost like we would know a fable told in childhood, a bogeyman to make us behave. He can see where he's crashed, hear the jeeps pull up. He awaits the fame of that gunstock, and the end of his Yet.

Earning Spans Beyond 5

Once you're an Exalted, improving your Span is a matter of diligence and survival. At least 1000 years of Age must be lived between increases in Span, and preferably far, far more.

The Exalted learn Telepathy and all other Aquarian Skills [pg. 114]; indeed, before moving up in Span, the character should probably Master every major piece of technology and useful skill available. They truly now have the time, and they have the need for every advantage in their position.

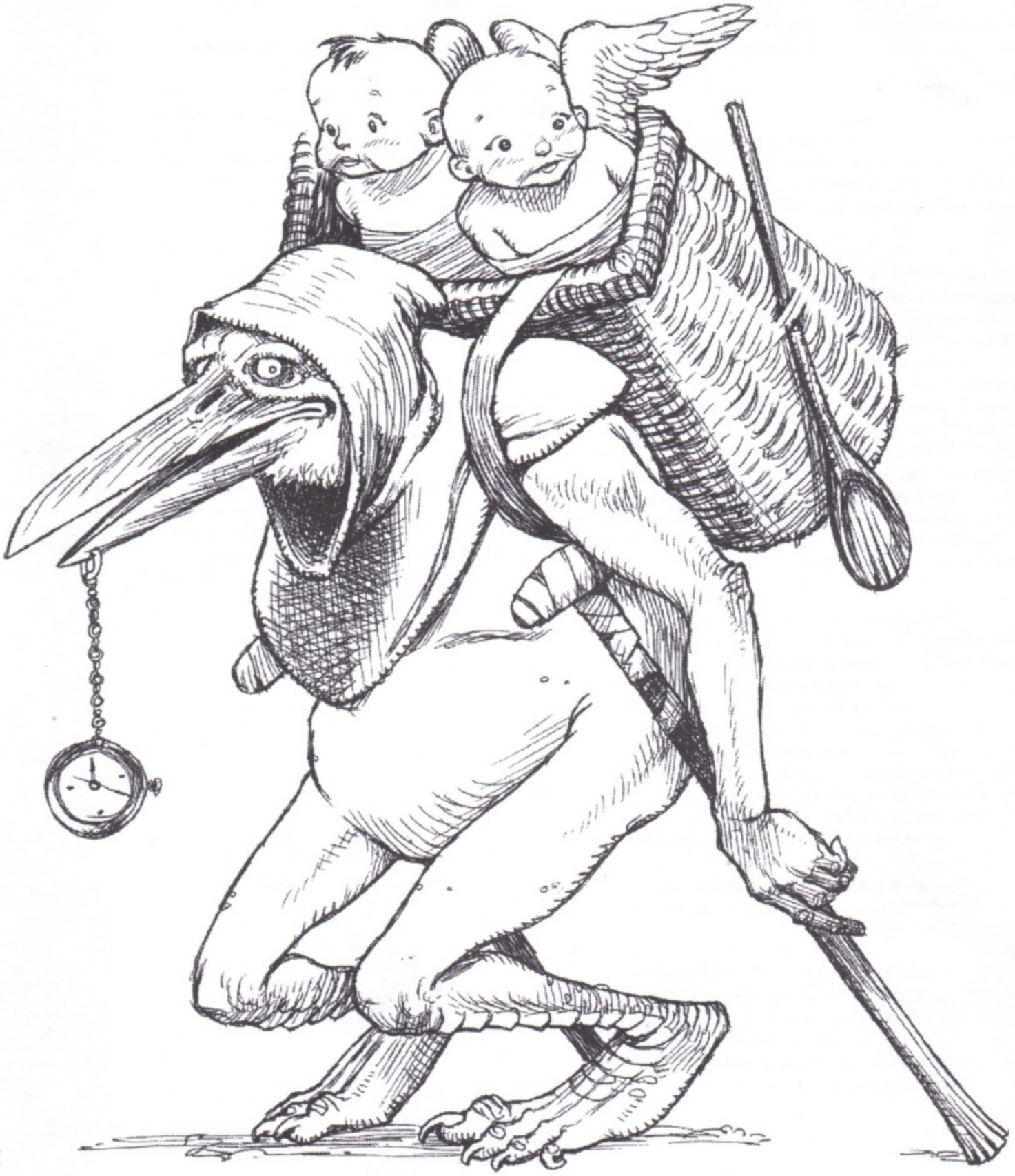
The player (not his/her characters) must have spent **five months of real time playing at that Span, and played at least five game sessions of at least four hours apiece** playing C°NTINUUM, before advancement to the next Span can even be considered.

Who approves Spans Beyond 5?

The approval of at least three Exalteds of the Span you're aspiring to or greater must be attained to achieve Spans 6 and 7. (These Exalteds must be other than your elder, though having an elder of higher Span is always a good sign.)

For Spans above 7, you will be approached directly by the Inheritors.

Artwork © 1999 Tony DiTerlizzi



Artwork © 1999 Tony DiTerlizzi

Chapter III: Struggling

"Causality is only one principle and psychology essentially cannot be exhausted by causal methods only, because the mind lives by aims as well."

—Carl Jung
Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology, forward
AD 1916.

Rules

- **dreaming and communication–** how to let others know when you are
- **aquarian skills–** psychic powers available only to the best minds
- **time combat–** how to fight across time itself
- **narcissists and lesser dangers–** knowing your enemies and your own pitfalls

Story

- Stirling has a visitor who wants to pick a fight, and learns about **strength in numbers**

opposite
D'Terlizzi, fl. 1462
Captured
Illumination from *On the Nature of the Greater Atmospheres*
(AD 1541)
pen and ink
Scribal Libracium at Ligny

Dreaming and Communication

Communication across great distances of space has been one of mankind's proudest achievements. Communication across time one of the humblest. The realm of sleep, with some focus and personal discipline, has opened the ways across the Eras for those who can already wander them.

The question is often asked, How necessary is communication across time, if travel there is instantaneous? Simply put, communication remains paramount and distinct from transportation. Dreamers at many different Levels and Localities can rendezvous with one another, spending no Span. This alone makes the Dreaming Skill priceless.

It is also frequently necessary to reach out to one's friends when one has misplaced a physical rendezvous. Most spanners learn to Dream as soon as they can, as it's like getting a cell phone: You want your friends to be able to find you out there.

The passing of information across time never *in itself* creates paradox or frag. But it provides the temptations, the distractions, and often the means to cause it. Dreamers have been known to contact themselves, older and younger versions of friends and strangers with tales, warnings and visions. But such is the nature of the Dreamtime—the place all Dreamings are— that these dream-geminis and dream-yets need only be recorded as the Dreamer deems necessary. [See Landscape of the Dreamtime, below.]

Accurate as the information being passed in Dreams is, they are still only Dreams. This remarkable freedom and flexibility spanners exercise to its limits.

In Your Dreams

Dreamers Fraternity

The Dreamers Fraternity handle many long-range communications, since they have the most, and highest Span Grandmasters. In few other Fraternities do Exalted remain for so long; most Span Fives and up regard their old Frats as alma maters: Fond affection, but rarely interested in further direct involvement.

But Dreaming Grandmasters only truly come in to their own when their Span is sufficient to Dream with other Exalted across the Societies, and beyond. What few negotiations that are actually held with Antedesertium, are mainly held while in the safety of the Dreamtime.

Transchronal Dreamsharing is considered the most effective way to explain oneself, derive feedback, and simply converse at a temporal remove from your audience. The Dreamers Fraternity is also serenely proud of the fact that Dreams can never cause frag: Any unexplained or contradictory experiences had in the Dreamtime are easily explained— it was just a Dream.

Time & Dreaming

Exerpted from *The Pages of Sleep* of I-manu he' Eleihurai. Courtesy the Dreamers' Fraternity; emphasis added by the authors.

The authors would like to stress that this is the text that the Dreamers wish players of C°NTINUUM especially to consider, though for gameplay only points 1 through 4 below are discussed in this volume.

Within the perspective of time travel, wisdom and enlightenment need to find a new definition, a new perspective. Most timebound cultures have a general philosophy that places an ideal wisdom either in a vague, indefinite past (such as all the Golden Ages many cultures propound) or in the indefinite future (the Progress we're all working to build). Time travelers know that these places don't hold any special answers. They've been there. This destroys, for them, the Grail of the perfect wise culture, the people who know the truth.

But Man, as a species, has his ways. The first thing a time traveler notices is that a peasant, or a bureaucrat, or an ecclesiastic, in fourth-century Rome, is very like his opposite number in Des Moines, 1943. We are *Homo sapiens*, by gum, and most of us like chocolate. After a little experience, most time travelers come to recognize the unity in human nature, and see the differences as variations on a theme.

But what about God? Time travelers keep hearing about him, in every culture they meet. All societies have some version of God, of otherness, of mythos that undercatches and sustains the order of daily life. Evidence keeps showing itself, just around a corner or beyond a pale. Chronies are canny people, and although cause and effect is the discipline on which their survival depends, they know that too much evidence has been accumulated to deny the existence of a spiritual truth. If God is real, he's hiding from them for some reason.

Seasoned time travelers throughout the Societies, have sought out an approach into this mystery. In all Eras, mystics have leaned heavily on the power of dreams. Everyone dreams. And although different cultures interpret dreams differently, (since even the wisest shaman is still timebound and the product of his culture) certain common threads emerge.

1. Dreams can be used to **predict the future** of an individual, and sometimes of nations.

2. Dreams can **reveal important clues about people**, their motives and agendas.

3. Certain adepts are able to "send" a dream, to **communicate** a message or influence the dream's recipients.

4. Dreams take place in an **alternative landscape** of our space-time continuum. While this region is beyond our understanding, it still obeys its own laws and is as real as our own world, if not more.

5. Gods and Powers are aware of the dreaming of man, and use it to affect humankind for good or ill.

6. The dream world has its own inhabitants. Some of them take a keen interest in us, for reasons we do not understand.

Therefore, the Societies have adopted a conception of mankind's Dreamtime, and use it as a means to understanding what happens to them in their sleep. This paradigm is only a tool that they use. It is not perfect, and it is certainly not real. It is merely, like Vonnegut's foma, a lie that makes sense and solves most of the riddles, thus allowing one to use the vast medium that no one understands.

It is an intensely personal medium. It enfranchises the validity of your past, and your Yet. We admonish you to use it with respect, and caution.

Elaborations on Time & Dreaming

1. Predicting the Future

This is hardly a difficult task for spanners, but can amaze levellers who come to beg boons from an oracular priestess, or fortune teller. Sometimes information eludes even a spanner, and hence Oracular Dreaming is a desired Skill [see pg. 20].

2. Revelations about a Person

Lucid Dreamers (Dreamers of Apprentice rank) can read and manipulate the symbols they see in Dreams, and sometimes (GM's option) interpret the Dreams of others. The overall effect is of a sapient individual considering a kaleidoscope of art and theatre dancing around them, and trying to make a critique of what they are seeing.

Dream behavior

In the Dreamtime, nothing is real, so the Maxims run the risk of being ignored or distorted. But much in the Dreamtime remains accurate; thus while the First Maxim is very much active in a session of Dreaming, the other Maxims exist only as much as the Dreamer regards them as important.

Dream-geminis are often the best opportunity to examine yourself and how others see you in the Dreamtime. Due to the nature of the Dreamtime, seeing or meeting yourself doesn't affect causality, or create frag. Just because an apparent elder appears before you in a Dream doesn't mean you have to obey his every command— though warnings from your Yet often take this form, so don't regard them lightly.

Studying behavior and symbols of behavior and attitude can take a lifetime of study, but in many cases a person being examined makes their inmost feelings clear. When a Lucid Dreamer focusses successfully on a target for study, immediate and unbidden reactions come back; a secret admirer might blossom into flowers, a closet narcissist might appear as an annoying woodpecker or in a broken mirror. These are Dreams, after all, and the GM may describe the symbols you experience in any way he sees fit.

Lucid Dreamers can tell they're being examined. They can resist being examined by other Lucid Dreamers by making a Quick roll to defend against each Dreamer making an attempt. Failed attempts simply meet with no information; finding out the distant examiners requires a successful Lucid Dreaming roll itself, of course [see pg. 20].

3. Communication Across Time

Making the Call

How does one find the person one is looking for in all spacetime? The nature of the Dreamtime circumvents the problems of mass entirely, so any spanner who is a Grandmaster Dreamer can perform Transchronal Dreamsharing [see pg. 20]. But the need to seek the person one wishes to contact is, apparently, counterintuitive to the nature of the Dreamtime. If two Dreamersharers are seeking each other, they usually find one another. The most frequent exception is when a Dreamer is stressed by Time Combat, they may miss a Rendezvous in the Dreamtime [see Time Combat— Strategems— Rendezvous la Reve, pg. 126].

Rendezvous la Reve

Also called Dreamsharing, Dremoot, and a number of other names by the myriad cultures of mankind. This is a meeting of several minds via Dreamsharing or Transchronal Dreamsharing. The Dreamers Fraternity is famous for its vast rendezvous, or *corroborees*, to use the Australian term, where thousands of Dreamers gather to discuss and amaze one another. But most Rendezvous la Reve have no more than eight or ten participants, if that.

Dreaming cannot overcome the basic impediments of language, but it allows for understanding of basic needs and desires. Many Rendezvous are conducted by symbols and pictures alone, since Dreamers can always project basic emotional intents. Rendezvous la Reve is so common and important, it is a Strategem in Time Combat: see pg. 126.

4. Landscape of the Dreamtime— Where Dreams take place

Akin to the Platonic World of Ideas, the Dreamtime is the area in which all Dreams occur. The brain may react to the stimulus of dreams, the eyes may twitch and the body's signals form subconscious ideas that become projected into the Dreamtime, but the Dreamers Fraternity insists that it is a distinct realm of our universe. The Dreamtime takes place outside the body; one merely needs a body in order to send and receive, to extend the cell phone simile.

The farther Up into their Era one proceeds, the more Aquarians dismiss the Dreamtime as asci-entific hokum, and turn to nanotech to solve communication demands. Pre-Aquarian Levellers, of course, tend to open themselves to Dreaming in order to receive visions or messages. Journeyman Dreamers put this desire to use with the power Oracular Dreaming [pg. 20].

An Uncontrolled Environment

A dreamer's body sends them signals that they are hungry, or need to get up and use the bathroom. An inexperienced or untutored dreamer might find themselves trying to eat endlessly, or find themselves with an aching bladder in a milieu of water fountains. Beginning with Apprentice rank in Dreaming, a Dreamer can begin to shape the milieu of the Dreamtime.

Control of Environment

When entering the Dreamtime, **the most accomplished dreamer sets the milieu.** Essentially, the milieu is the backdrop, scenery, and mood of Rendezvous. In fact, being controller of a Dreamtime milieu is a lot like being GM of a C°NTINUUM game, only with less worry about consequence.

Highest Title in Dreaming always gets to control the milieu. Equal Titles, higher Mind gets it. If Title and Mind are the same in both dreamers, and if they just can't agree on something as ephemeral as a simple backdrop, it comes down to a competitive action, rolling against the Dreaming skill.

GMs may optionally allow a mixed milieu, with more than one controller painting the canvas. This would allow participants to adjust a mixed milieu if within one Title rank of highest Titled Dreamer present. Note it can be more informative to allow others to form or adjust the milieu: A choice of background can be a big giveaway as to personalities or intentions.

Dreamers always maintain control of what their own appearance is, unless four Title ranks below the controller of the milieu; in these cases, the controller can pretty much turn them into what they want, until they leave, behave or whatever. I.e. "Bernie, your Novice Dreamer appears in my Grandmaster's milieu as a cabbage, with no ability to see or hear. Go away."

Lucid Dreamers can also create small effects such as a dream-flashlight and its beams, dutiful dream-pets, and dream-clothing that dream-broadcasts the Sci-Fi Channel.[1] In fact, Dreamers can do anything the controller of the milieu lets them [see above]. Dreamers cannot be held in a milieu through normal techniques, and are normally free to leave for other parts of the Dreamtime, or awaken.

Dream Combat

Dream Combat is primarily a pretend form of Physical Combat [pg. 22]. Some dreamers have psychic combats with encounters, but unless Telepathy [pg. 115] is employed, these somnolent bouts cause no actual damage— No more than an unsettling feeling upon awakening, if the dream-fight happened by surprise.

Count dream-impairment as 'ZIP': sleeping impairment points. Useful for practice, but otherwise unaffecting the waking world. Shock is normally not a part of Dream Combat. If a Dreamer takes sufficient ZIP to be killed or 'knocked unconscious,' he wakes up instead, grumbles a bit, and can either go back to normal sleep or get up and start the day.

Use of Telepathy to cause real damage.

The Telepath must be Dreaming levelly with the target, and within Telepathic range: After all, Telepathy is not a transchronal skill. Dream Combat is conducted normally, but the Telepath tells the GM his intention to cause real wounds. The victim is unaware that signals are being sent from his brain down his actual nerve pathways to cause internal bleeding.

Every bout that actual damage is inflicted, the victim is allowed to roll against his Mind: Success means he knows this is the real thing, and may awaken. Bruise damage creates bruises along the nerve pathways; these are twice as painful as waking bruises, but cause no greater damage than real Physical Combat. Lethal damage causes nerve damage along the pathways, and may render limbs or one's whole body paralyzed if the area is cut off or maimed in Dream Combat.

If the victim ever enters Shock, he awakens. If he is killed, he truly dies: No one who is Telepathically killed in the Dreamtime may take advantage of the Surviving Death rules [p. 40].

Limitations to Telepathic Attack in Dream.

Dream-weapons that can inflict real damage are limited to melee, ranged or simple firearms or hand lasers: Anything designed to do direct damage from Telepath to target, with no chance of a backlash onto the Telepath. The target must also not be altered directly by control of milieu (as in the Bernie-

[1] Though such effects may wander off or morph into something else in the milieu if not concentrated upon.

is-a-cabbage example, above). This is necessary to hide the Telepathic attacks. Dream-weapons with a blast radius, esoteric payload, or that can do massive damage to a milieu (napalm, grenades, bioweapons, atom bombs) shatters the illusion of the Telepathy, does no damage, and reveal to the victim that he's been Telepathically attacked, and may awaken.

Telepathy does not have have the power to damage tissue outside of Dreaming. For that kind of fun, you need Pyrokinesis [see, p. 116].

The Telepath takes no real damage in the Combat, only the victim. Naturally, two Telepathic Dreamers on the same level can have it out in Dreamtime like it was the real thing. In these situations, control of milieu is paramount.

Many in the Dreamers Fraternity are accomplished Telepaths, and many are eager for a real fight. Such warriors gladly Span to whatever Level a fellow spanner is being ambushed, and retaliate with their own Telepathic barbecue. Or sometimes a Foxhorn is sent round to dispatch the Telepath before he can dream again.

Control of Milieu in Dream Combat.

As above, whoever has highest Title in Dreaming, or highest Mind controls the milieu. Changing the milieu during the Combat requires a roll against Mind.

Victory - he may change the milieu and attack!
Success - milieu can be changed, but controller can only defend
Failure - he can only defend, and the milieu is unchanged
Blunder- controller unable to defend, or change milieu

Nothing presented as part of a milieu can actually harm a Dreamer, even if designed by a Telepath. But a changed milieu can put a combatant off guard by dropping the floor out from him, encasing him in a closet of blinding light, or other impediments. It takes one bout to recover from any unfavorable change of milieu.

Note that unless a Dreamer is four Title ranks above his opponent, he has no control over the opponents' appearance— thus burdening an opponent with chains, ropes or fire, etc. is not an allowed change of milieu, nor is it an effective attack.

Dream Learning

Practicing Combat or Learning Skills while Dreaming is only supplemental. No more than a single clock per Skill per Title rank can be checked this way, and Time Indexes are not affected.

The only exception is when the learner is at least a Master Dreamer, and the teacher is a Grandmaster in both Dreaming and the Skill being taught. Time Indexes are halved, but it is rare to find Grandmaster Dreamers willing to take on students.

Again, no Span can be regained from sleep conducted while using Dreaming Skill; this naturally includes Dream Combat and Learning Skills. Some nefarious enemies have used Dream Combat to prevent spanners from getting enough rest to regain Span; it is advised to seek out the Dreamers' Fraternity if these attacks persist.

Attempting to Span in Dreams

The Dreamtime is not a tool or medium for physical transportation, despite the seeming reality of one's body and milieu. If one were to try and Span to an earlier part of a Dream, one merely relives the dream as an unfragging gemini [see above]: You enter a different dream, or different Rendezvous la Reve.

It is widely believed that narcissists take inspiration for multiple-world theories from the Dreamtime, where anything can happen. Alas that they cannot understand that it's only in their Dreams.

Dream log— optional

Keeping a separate log for revelations and experiences in the Dreamtime can be useful, especially when the GM likes to use Dreaming as a method of furthering his plots. Keeping the log is nowhere near as important as maintaining one's span book [pg. 34], and keeping your spanning a secret: Plenty of levellers keep dream journals. If anyone finds yours, you can explain to your leveller acquaintances that you dream of travelling time. This makes a pleasant excuse to maintain among levellers whenever the subject of time travel comes up.

Further information on the Dreamers Fraternity and their motivations is available to the GM. [See Also Aquarian Skills—Clairvoyance, pg. 114.]

In Cold Print

Scribes Fraternity

The Scribes Fraternity handles most movement of physical information Up and Down spacetime. Translations, interpretations and even composition of information are the great love of the Scribes, and this central fount of learning in the Continuum is of enormous convenience to all loyal spanners.

While they don't have an enigma like the Dreamtime to explain, the Scribes do have strict rules about use of Scribal Librariums. For one thing, books are never removed. They are easy enough to

duplicate, or have duplicated. But reasons for needing the information, where the information is going, who is seeing the information and when are asked of all querants, and while tedious, it is all part of recording the acts and unfolding of the universe.

Many (though by no means all) Oracle and Frune Strategems during Time Combat [ppg. 124-5] are actually carried out at or with the cooperation of a Scribal corner. Scribes have detailed information about all Time Combats everywhen: Many if not all have been recorded in detail, primarily for use by the Quicker. How much they divulge to you about any subject is the amount of information you should accept in the given situation (First Maxim).

Delivering hard copy is considered the best way to prove oneself, fix promises, and meet and entwine Yets across time. The honesty and accuracy of the Scribes is known and trusted by all Continuum spanners, and no reputable source can be found to complain about their spotless service.

Time & Writing

The Scribes have no specific statement to make about sending and carrying written material across spacetime beyond the admonishments of the First and Second Maxims. Put simply: Be careful with information, knowledge and wisdom! No one is meant to have all of them all of the time.

That being said, here follow some tips and guidelines to information use in playing C°NTINUUM:

H. Freyja (b.1869)
Advertisement,
The Times (London) February 29, 1904
ink wash
courtesy Lavender Twilight Bath, Ltd.

Note to myself

Nothing precludes players from sending themselves notes. But the chances for frag are pretty high unless precautions are taken.

Example One. Player Harry's character Lt. Byro receives a letter in his PO box detailing a shootout that Byro hasn't experienced. He writes the event down in his Yet. Then he grabs a fresh envelope, stuffs the letter he received into it, spans back and mails to to himself.
"Point of frag," says the GM. "Aw, why?" groans Harry.
The GM explains that Byro has created a potential causal loop: The note was never composed, the notepaper would never have been manufactured, et cetera. Harry now has to sneak into the Post Office and swipe the note he mailed, and mail a properly composed note, to fix the frag.

Example Two. Player Harry's character Lt. Byro receives a letter in his PO box detailing a shootout that Byro hasn't experienced. He writes the event down in his Yet. As a precaution, he tears or crumples the note he received— so that he'll be able to tell it apart from the one he's composing. Only then does he grab a fresh envelope, and a fresh piece of notepaper, to copy the entire note verbatim. Then he destroys the received note, and spans back and mails his composed note to himself.
The GM says, "That works." Harry stands proud. Byro would even notice how precisely alike the notes were before he mailed the one, and threw away the other.

Example Three. Player Harry's character Lt. Byro spans Down and mails a letter to a junior a year younger from when he composed it, warning the junior of a shootout that the junior will survive.
"Point of frag," says the GM. "Aw, why?" groans Harry.
The GM explains simply that Byro never experienced receiving a letter before the event. The GM could have just had the Post Office lose the letter, but feels Harry needs a lesson in caution (after all, it was a bit narcissistic of him to mail that). Now Harry has to secretly retrieve the note before it can get to his junior, to heal the frag.

Example Four. Player Harry's character Lt. Byro receives an answering machine message from himself describing his imminent death in gory detail. He

Artwork © 1999 Heather McKinney

writes the recording into his Yet, but then immediately spans Down and records it.
The GM says, "Darn it, that works." Harry stands proud, and laughs.
All physical elements are accounted for; the message is just another event in his Yet, albeit very self-intensive. It's also a way to circumvent a dire destiny by turning prophetic warnings into practical jokes! Another warning to GMs about player cleverness.

Languages and nuance

Span Ones will probably not have to worry much about learning entirely new languages; no more than any leveller might want to learn a language before touring a modern nation. But there are certain small details a spanner should watch out for.

Especially slang.

Time travel movies like to play around with distinctive slang used anachronistically such as 'groovy' or 'daddy-o'. But these can usually be passed off as a joke or idiosyncrasy, because they are so distinct and unusual. More dangerous is trying to use the latest catchphrase: Being off by even a few months can set off a trend too soon, or mark you as behind the times.

For instance, the word 'definitely' was a very popular catchphrase for 'yes' circa AD 1987. It wasn't seen much before or after. 'Dynamite' was used as a comparative for decades, then as a popular exhaltation from 1971 until about 1975, when actor Jimmie Walker adopted a stylized form of it for his tv character; afterwards the word becomes associated solely with him. Such subtleties exist in all centuries, and indeed all Eras— the best cautionary example is the word 'O.K.' It is perhaps the most famous synonym for 'yes' in the world in AD 2000: Even non-English speakers tend to recognize it. It appears in print only as early as 1860, and may derive from Martin Van Buren's 1836 presidential campaign moniker, 'Old Kinderhook'. So even saying 'okay' to someone from earlier periods will only result in their puzzlement.

Let the nuances of slang be a warning. As a general rule, do as the natives do, and stick to the simplest form of the language. You will always be seen as a stranger anyway, unless you spend a great deal of Age with a people, so keep your words unadorned and polite.

Learning languages in the field

The rule for spanning away and picking up 'Instant Skills' [pg. 40] needs a caveat: If you're years away from home, and speak a language not yet in use, you're not likely to find a local able to teach you easily— you may have to go back Up and learn the desired language in your own century!
Exceptions exist, of course. Thespian and Scribal corners might be willing to help train you, if there are any nearby, and have members that know tour native tongue. Don't forget that even spanners don't share a common language!

Simon Says

Without some convention to represent language translation, you may quickly experience confusion around the gaming table:

Bart: So what's your name?
GM: "Phocis, of—" No wait, he can't understand you.
Mary: Well, I can speak Greek, I ask.
GM: "You are all confusing foreigners here! What are *your* names!"
Mary: I'm Mary of er, Londininium. This is—
Bart: I'm Bart!
GM and Mary: He can't understand you.
Bart: Well that's crappy.

One trick for maintaining a sense of realism, without burdening the players with excess time or worries, is having the players speak as if addressing the translator. The GM then responds as if the native speaker is being translated.

Try having players who aren't native speakers preface everything with "Ask him" or "Tell him": This is no harder than 'Simon Says' or the rule on *Jeopardy!* of phrasing answers in the form of a question. If the player fails to say "Ask him", have the native speaker politely ignore him, since no translation is assumed:

Bart: Ask him what his name is.
GM: He says, "I am Phocis of Epirus. And you?"
Bart: Tell him "Bartholomew, from over the sea."
Mary: I'm Mary of Londininium.
Bart: Any good places to stay here in Epirus?
GM: He says, "I am pleased to meet you. What is your business?"
Mary: Trading in tin, if there is a market for it here.
Bart: Oops. And *ask him* about good places to stay.
GM: He strokes his beard and says, "There's quite a need for tin by the army. If you let me make the introductions, you may guest at my house tonight."

Tech Solutions to Translation—

Science fiction abounds with easy-to-use hidden translation devices, but in real life these devices would be quite obvious, and clunky. For example: A Universal Language Stick that talks, is hardly clandestine, and one would have to wait as it spoke in bursts in the alien language, and hope it doesn't insult the ambassador via computer error. Same for waiting for a device in your ear to translate as you nod idiotically: And how are they supposed to

understand you? Even the United Nations uses mid-century equipment and translator methods, through the Aquarian cusp.

The only efficient translation tech that can be used unnoticed are bioimplants allowing for instant download of new languages and fluency. That way the character can simply speak with the natives and avoid any translation gaffes or middlemen. The GM has further information on bioimplants in his section.

Telepathy—

While telepaths can read minds, they can't always translate them. Gaining access to all the images and scenes stored in the deep memory of a target is of limited use: Seeing top secret Nazi documents means little if you don't know German, and even visual records add up to little more than seeing foreign language films without subtitles.

For further information, see Telepathy, pg. 115.

Aquarian Skills

So called because these are much more common in that Era; the communication skills generally replace Dreaming, for instance, at least levelly.

Brainwaves and their traditional powers

How does one learn this psi stuff? It's all extracurricular, as far as learning to span goes. You can seek out gurus in the various Fraternities [ppg. 64-87]. The Midwives have more than their share of witches, the Dreamers are replete with telepaths and clairvoyants, and the Physicians, Foxhorn and Quicker often find psi powers useful on their rounds.

Even some levellers have limited psychic gifts, but it's best to leave them in the dark, as usual. Aquarians and, of course, the Inheritors tend to be reticent about their psychic skills. To emphasize the distinction, **spanners automatically succeed in any unchallenged action using Aquarian skills,** whereas levellers must roll for success.

Most spanners in the Continuum consider the information-related psychic skills very important. The other psychic tricks they believe to be to be fun and all, but somewhat distracting from the issues of causality, narcissists, and the War with Antedesertium. Time travel and teleportation are the cornerstones of the spanning life; this psi stuff is merely decorative by comparison.

Always bear in mind the Fourth Maxim. Too much of what follows is unexplained to levellers, and may be considered a violation of the Fourth if abused in front of level onlookers.

Concentration is necessary to maintain any of these effects: GM's discretion as to what equals sufficient concentration. Pain breaks concentration at any Title below Master. Shock makes using these powers impossible.

INFORMATION-RELATED
Based on the Mind Attribute.

Clairvoyance

Time Index:
300 days/90 days

This is akin to Oracular Dreaming [see Dreaming, pg. 20] only while awake. Clairvoyants can always tell when they're being watched themselves, but cannot block: They can only attempt to watch back.

Any scene psychically witnessed can be either *vague* or *distinct* .

Vague readings tend to be rapid impressions, lasting only a few seconds. Information is similar to half-remembered recollections: You know the basic gist of the event, but maybe only one face, place, comment or object is at all clear.

Distinct readings last up to several minutes, and you usually experience the event moment for moment. It requires you to be right at the location of the event, Up from it, or Level. (Farther Down, and less of the event's effect is flowing in your direction. Being Level is useful for reading cards or seeing around corners.)

Clairvoyants with a Mind 10 or higher can get distinct impressions from farther Up, but these are almost always brief flashes.

NOTE: GMs may force an impression upon a clairvoyant at any time. GMs can describe impressions any way they choose, as long as it is accurate.

Roll: Versus Mind for success. Frequency of use: A number of times equal to your Mind, between rests that regain Span.
Range: You can only see events within your range of Span. (I.e. a Span One can't clairvoyance an event farther than ten miles or one year away, no matter their title of skill.)

Novice— min. Mind 5
Can see events within 5 minutes Down from you, or Level, but not Up
Apprentice— min. Mind 6
Can see events within an day, Up, Down or Level
Journeyman— min. Mind 7
Can see events within a year, Up, Down or Level
Master min. Mind 8
Can see events within ten years, Up, Down or Level
Grandmaster— min. Mind 9
Can see events within a hundred years, Up, Down or Level

Hypnosis

Not an Aquarian Skill, as any leveller can learn it, but it is certainly Information-Related, and is of a piece with the Skills in this section.

Hypnotism works by *trance* and *suggestion.* Once a target has been put into a trance, trust with the hypnotist is assumed, and suggestions may be planted in the target's mind. Hypnotists can decide how much or how little a target remembers during a trance session. Suggestions may be *hypnotic* or *post-hypnotic.*

Hypnotic suggestions are ones acted upon during hypnosis, and have no effect after the trance session is over. Anyone with Hypnotism can plant hypnotic suggestions on a willing target.

Post-hypnotic suggestions are those to be acted upon after the trance session is over. A hypnotist must have a minimum Quick 5 and Mind 5 to effectively plant post-hypnotic suggestions in a entranced target.

Entrancing a target against their will is difficult, but not impossible: The hypnotist's Quick must exceed the target's by 1 and his Mind must exceed the target's by 2. Targets with the hypnotism Skill may resist by Title rank. Targets that are entranced get one attempt to resist a post-hypnotic suggestion with a bonus of +1 to their Mind.

Hypnotic and post-hypnotic suggestions can include any or all of the following:

Party tricks—
"Bill, bark like a dog." But simple tricks can be extremely useful when someone has created accidental frag or a recalcitrant narcissist refuses to help reverse a deliberate paradox. One quick suggestion, and the target sets things to rights.

Hypnotherapy—
Often a mentally ill spanner's best ally, as it can help integrate forgotten periods of Age, or even help cope with terrors in (or terrors managing) their Yet. [See Madness and Related Problems, pg. 138.]

Seduction and Crime—
Would-be Svengalis and Circes can put hypnosis to all kinds of unethical use. [See Madness and Related Problems— Taboos, pg. 140.]

Altering Memory—
The target can be made to surpress the memory of any incident or believe to have experienced incidents that never occurred. Usually both, with a sensational or terrifying incident replaced with an incident involving a reasonable explanation. Note that the true memories lie buried in the target's mind, so this is different than telepathic wiping of memory (see Telepathy, below).

Sorry, standard hypnosis can create no Manchurian Candidates: A person won't do anything utterly contrary to their nature. Note that it is in the nature of some people to maim and murder, so hypnotizing a Foxhorn, for instance, is a dangerous thing to play with.

Removing the Suggestion

As easily as the suggestion is placed, it can be removed. The removing hypnotist has the option to let the target forget or remember anything that has transpired. Note that once an incident of frag is overcome and unmade, it is usually safe to remove the suggestion planted in a victim of frag: They remember being hypnotized, which allows causality to make perfect sense.

A Final Warning

Use of Hypnosis on spanners is highly discouraged by the Continuum, and needing to resort to it frequently to cure frag shows a sloppiness that can retard a spanner's advancement. Use on levellers is much more acceptable, especially in light of the Fourth Maxim.

Photographic Memory

Equivalent to the Benefit [pg. 13]. This ability is automatic to humans of Mind 8 and above.

Telepathy

Time Index:
300 days/90 days

Since information is all, get inside their heads. Keep them from getting into yours. Any telepath from Apprentice on up automatically knows when someone's trying to read them; Masters can tell who. *Reading* minds can be challenged by *shielding.* Telepaths can also *wipe* whatever they successfully read, instantly, within the parameters set down below. Wiping is either (attacker's choice): hypnotic surpression of memories, or their permanent erasure, ouch. GM's discretion as to how many memories an attack can take out per bout. Surpression is reversible at the same title of skill, but the victim can't tell if the memories are gone for good...

Roll: Reading and wiping can be challenged by shielding; Superiority rules apply [pg. 16].
Range: Must be Level, spatial range equal to the distance one can Span, but GM's discretion may decide there's too much interference for automatic success (i.e. target is in a big city with a million other minds, target is on the far side of an above ground nuke test, etc.)

Novice— min. Mind 7
Read/shield surface emotions
Min. Mind 9 to wipe
Apprentice— min. Mind 8
Read/shield conscious thoughts
Min. Mind 10 to wipe
Journeyman— min. Mind 9
Send emotions and simple thoughts
Master— min. Mind 10
Read/shield subconscious thoughts, send conversation
Min. Mind 12 to wipe
Grandmaster— min. Mind 11
Read/shield deep memory
Min. Mind 13 to wipe

ENERGY-RELATED

Based on the Mind Attribute.

Pyrokinesis and related effects

Time Index:
300 days/90 days

If simple molecular agitation is all you're after— boiling water with your mind— you can achieve it with this.

Conveys absolutely no protection from one's own effects. If you're the target yourself, you can challenge.

Roll: Can challenge another's Pyrokinesis; Superiority rules apply [pg. 16].
Range: within sight. Area: Up to 1 cubic foot per point of Mind

Novice— min. Mind 6
Temperature change 1° C./per minute
Apprentice— min. Mind 7
Temperature change 6° C./per minute
Journeyman— min. Mind 8
Temperature change 1° C./per second
Master— min. Mind 9
Temperature change 10° C./per second
Grandmaster— min. Mind 10
Temperature change 100° C./per second

MASS-RELATED

Based on the Quick Attribute, but with required minimum scores in Mind.

These rely to a great extent upon your innate abilities as a spanner. Levellers who can telekinese are rare, due to the high Ability scores required.

Levitation and Flight, telekinesing oneself

Time Index:
300 days/90 days

Spanning is great, and makes skydiving easy, but what about flying around like Peter Pan? A repeat warning for the wannabe-superhero spanner: Read the Fourth Maxim. Maximum load is your weight times your Span. (Hence, levellers can't *fly*, but see telekinesis below for an alternative.)

Roll: Can be challenged with Telekinesis; Superiority rules apply [pg. 16].

Novice— min. Mind 7 min. Quick 7
Max. speed 1/10 mph
Apprentice— min. Mind 7 min. Quick 8
Max. speed 1 mph
Journeyman— min. Mind 7 min. Quick 9
Max. speed 10 mph
Master— min. Mind 7 min. Quick 10
Max. speed 100 mph
Grandmaster— min. Mind 7 min. Quick 11
Max. speed 1000 mph (Watch the g-force on that!)

Telekinesis of external objects

Time Index:
300 days/90 days

Move objects, even people, as if it were normal to were carry or throw them around, up to the weight allowance shown. Can substitute for Levitation, but speed of self-movement has a maximum of about 2 mph, and unless you're tiny, you'll need the Title of Master before you can lift yourself.

Roll: Can challenge Levitation or another's Telekinesis; Superiority rules apply [pg. 16].
Range: Within sight. Can span with the object if your Span is sufficient to bear the load.

Novice— min. Mind 7 min. Quick 7
Weight 1 pound
Apprentice— min. Mind 7 min. Quick 8
Weight 10 pounds
Journeyman— min. Mind 8 min. Quick 9
Weight 100 pounds
Master— min. Mind 8 min. Quick 10
Weight 1000 pounds
Grandmaster— min. Mind 9 min. Quick 11
Weight 10,000 pounds

Time Combat

The rules for conducting Time Combat in C°NTINUUM begin on pg. 121. First, a discussion of what it looks like to the characters:

What Time Combat Looks Like

To a Leveller—

Levellers, of course, never notice much time travel. But some telltale signs are there, familiar to spanners from their days before the Invitation.

Deja vu, or "already seen" is one of many names psychologists and neuroscientists give to the phenomenon of having the impression of that one has experienced something before. The authors' own experiences with deja vu involve the distinct element of being able to recall *when* one had seen or known the event before, all the while aware that one couldn't have had the actual experience then. There is no memory of having remembered the experience before the deja vu, either.

Late Piscean science explains deja vu as a retroactive firing of neurons out of sequence between the forebrain (short-term memory) and the deeper memory centers of the brain. Why different centers of the brain should misfire is given a number of explanations, but the majority of these instances can be explained simply by the intercession of the Continuum against narcissist intrigue.

Deja vu is the scar left behind from a narcissist attack. Since the Continuum ultimately defeats all attempts at frag, all that there is for a leveller to notice is the split-second of a present moment related to a past moment: the brainwave that exists in two places at the same time. For the tiniest instant, they are half-awake to the woof and weave of spacetime [See Chapter 2: Spanning—Causality, pg. 56], and then the special moment is gone, leaving only the memory of an impossible memory.

Mental illness. Some instances of mental illness, and even physical ailments can be attributed to attempts at frag. [See Madness and Related Problems, pg. 138.]

Precognitive flashes occur to levellers as frequently as does deja vu since they are part of the same incident. Since most flashes are of seemingly irrelevant moments, most levellers' minds don't commit these "daydreams" to long-term memory. Fleeting images of the future are rarely recognized as such, since levellers have no memory of the future to compare to.

Tintinnabus, or ringing in the ears, denotes a hypersensitivity to electromagnetism, and is often a sign that a large amount of spanning is going on nearby.

To a Narcissist or other Target of Frag—

Narcissists refer to encounters with the Continuum as 'the Swarm'. Though, often as not, the 'Swarm' is not concentrated in one moment, or even one Level of spacetime, when it is, it does have an ominous appearance to someone targeted for doom.

Anyone who has felt frag does not want to feel it again, but is better prepared for its effects. But Time Combat is such that dire harbingers of its coming often drive a target mad with terror. Flitting spanners coming and vanishing out of the corner of your eye, a person watching you from a distance, meeting the same stranger more than once over the course of a day, but without a kind word or the signal 'what time is it?' to ease the fear. [See the stories *Somebody Always Wants You Gone*, pg. 52; *Afoot*, pg. 62, and *Out in Society*, pg. 118 for further illustration of this.]

Continuum spanners that see this much suspicious activity around them alert their corner like a reflex. But while narcissists can exhibit some form of organization, and even attack in teams, most find themselves alone or deserted when frag comes down upon them. Few narcissists live to see three Time Combats, and they know this quite well.

To a Continuum Spanner—

The process of bringing down a narcissist is like breathing deeply and slowly. Like listening to your heart beat. Most Time Combats involve a cycle of Oracle/Attack, Rendezvous, Oracle/Attack, Rendezvous. The quarry becomes familiar, and then it is hunted down, and either neutralized physically, or in serious cases fragged out. With numbers on our side, a frag out is always very possible.

There is also the possibility of mercy. Not all narcissists are so far down the road as to deserve destruction. Many are wayward novices out on a joyride that they don't understand can be deadly. It's a dangerous judgement call, though, as many that beg for a chance to change their ways, are merely hypocritical spies and intriguers.

Time Combat is always a test of character for a spanner. The Continuum wishes you all the Grace available for you to succeed.

11. Out in Society

Long had he wandered, down in the darkwood, a lonely god going, bending the hours.

Catching game is merry and easy. The great buck flinches as he steps so, beside it. A knife in the throat, an arm already straddling the great arc of his neck; it makes for good eating.

There are pleasant fields in this land, and for him the springtime never dies. Old bears fish in he rocky rivers. If they make an argument with him he laughs, and is out of the way of their paws.

A night is spent with a shapely Mahican woman he saves from a bear. She keeps making such noises, stroking the scar on his ribs, the one he got in fighting near Trebizond. He wishes he could tell her about the Black Sea, how she moves like it. In the morning he is a year away.

The wood people give way as he climbs the year-ladder, and settlements of what he takes for Frisians and Germans begin to fill the river-valleys, and then the hillsides. He considers spinning back, to walk the wide land with the tribes again. But he comes here with questions. He comes to frune the secret of his making, from those that know, even if he has to take their lives. He has heard they are impatient, and so is he.

He hears the rattle of engines, more and more as he journeys up, until the game is quiet and the leaf-rush is fighting the shrill song of man in the encroaching distance.

One evening he spins and hunts a three-point buck with his old bow. He fells him, but the bow breaks, and he knows it is a bad omen for his solitude.

That night, as he roasts his kill, they come. Four, one one each side of his small clearing. He heard no step approaching, and can tell what is to happen.

A woman with dark hair strides into the firelight before him. Her clothes are strange and smooth, with dazzling, distracting details. He looks into the flames, yanks out a leg from them.

In a rough dialect of his native tongue, the dark woman begins to speak. "What is the hour."

He takes a bite and says nothing.

She folds his arms and frowns down on him.

After another two bites he mutters, "What is the hour."

She spans, is seated next to him. "I am called Stirling. Here, this is my corner you are walking in."

He snorts, and looks away from the small woman. She punches him deftly in the ribs, and to his surprise, it hurts.

"Look at me when I speak. I know you, Sven Olafsson. We have spent many months of age in learning your language, which is dead here, because you have made yourself our guest. Will you come with us to our corner-house, or will you accept only the wrath of the Continuing upon a wayward son?"

Sven stares into her eyes a long moment. Stirling does not blink.

Sven tosses away the bone, and turns toward his gear. "I will come if I can bring my carving."

"Bring your good knife, if it makes you feel safe."

Sven's reaction is a half-pounce, but he neither spans nor reaches closer than a foot from Stirling, who doesn't flinch. Ayla swallows audibly, and steps back a pace.

Sven is amused by the nervous girl. He says to Stirling: "You should not taunt your guest. It could frighten the children." He chuckles and turns back to pick up his carving, and the good knife.

A man of sturdy height steps out from the shadows to the east saying, "Three and two-thirds furlongs to the southwest, is our place. Among many such dwellings upon a gray road it has a deep green roof and door." A dark-haired youth, frowning, whose eyes catch the fire, hangs back to the west.

Stirling continues, "Meet us there, three sunrises ago. Be discreet before the levellers, or suffer the penalty."

Sven only snorts, and they are gone. He finishes his meal, and lays back to sleep, but cannot. Something in the trees is watching. "Curse you, Stirling, and you, her kin." But he marches up to the spring, washes briefly in the dark, and readies himself to face the corner on their home turf.

Sven manages to stay discreetly behind the tall fence as he arrives. The paperboy is a late arriving witness, staring at the lumbering man in the rusty helmet and fur boots, as he glares up and down the neighborhood, and marches up the steps to bang on the door with his half-finished carving.

Looking out from the window, Anton comments, "We're going to have to join a Ren fair or something Down from here, you know."

"Explains some of the junk mail," peeps Ayla.

The day drags on into afternoon as Sven goes in stages from taciturn to angry to sullen. Christopher has tried to engage him in questions beyond the grunted yes-or-no. He paces the living room floor; the shavings from Sven's work are starting to pile up. Anton is draped into a recliner in the corner, having told Sven hours before that he had given up on him. Sven had simply ignored his words.

Ayla comes downstairs. She is throwing powder from a can all over, and flinches at a great deer tick that hops from Sven to her arm.

"These have Lyme disease," she hisses in English, whacking it away.

"What is that mixture," grunts Sven.

"Another welcoming gesture," Ayla whines, and Sven laughs; he does not believe her, but doesn't fear her dusty magic. He is more magic than most who breathe under the sun.

"You have not mentioned why you honor our threshhold," says Stirling, slowly losing patience. "Or why you abandoned your teacher, and abandoned all the wisdom you were meant to share."

"I have my reasons," he says, with a gesture Gunnar taught him from the court at Constantinople.

"You are near the Aquarian cusp, very near. They will not care for your reasons there, they will remove you. Then there will be no one to write your story." Stirling was hitting close to the bone, and Sven grew red.

"There are a dozen blackened villages that remember Sven Olafsson, and his men!"

"And can one man raid a village alone?"

"If he is mighty, and the village is weak," spits Sven.

"And if the village is protected by the gods?" says Chris.

Sven sits glowering. He starts his whittling again.

Stirling says quietly, "And what of the mighty man whom all the gods have singled out for vengeance?"

"I've never seen that."

"But you've heard of it, Sven Olafsson. Now, would you like to see?"

Sven stops carving, and is silent a long minute.

"Am I the one hunted?"

"That is not what we intend to show you," says Chris. "You do not deserve that here."

"Then show me."

It is night. The dew is on the perfect grass, and Sven is wondering how it is kept so square on the top. They are there, all five crouched down behind a knoll, in a backyard under a bright moon and eerie incandescent lamps. Beyond the knoll, in short order, a passion is to be performed.

"We should be hidden if we stay here," says Chris.

"This is a rare treat," explains Stirling. "We should be safe watching, since all my corner have experienced this. You will find our methods quiet, for this century. A fire-arm here would alert the commoners."

"Or an axe, casting brains out on them," he chortles.

"Do not move from here or make another sound, or I will kill you." Stirling's voice is low, the matter is settled, despite Sven's glower.

She points over, over to the left. Beyond a high red fence, on a near, low rooftop stands a figure, watching. Sven believes he recognizes Stirling herself.

And before them, spanning near the gate in the fence, a man appears.

He seems in a hurry, but hesitates, looking for a long moment at a clay flower pot. He approaches it, and begins to pick it up, when he blinks, and suddenly swerves to see the figure on the roof.

"Swarm," mutters the man, and Sven recognizes the word.

He begins to peer in Sven's direction, and Sven's hand finds his knife-hilt. Stirling puts a small hand on his shoulder. He can feel the tension in her palm, ready to spring and remove the nearest eye. As it happens, the man has no chance to discover them.

Ayla appears, a stiff black shadow under the patio roof, holding before him with a knife dripping with blood. He pales, doesn't move. "You liked this, huh. Fragging me." He steps back, lean muscles in his face pulsing.

"I— I'm awfully—" And he is gone.

Alya carefully puts away her trophy, and draws another blade.

She stands for a moment, tense, steps forward a pace, then thrusts behind her and to her right as the man appears again, with bloody face and swollen eye, trying to grab her. It's a clean shot, deep in his gut, and he goes down. Ayla leaps with a hiss and vanishes.

It is not over.

Anton appears, and moves a patio table with a characteristic smirk. He is gone.

The man reappears, farther to the east, sweating profusely but uninjured. He backs up nervously, stumbles over the table and falls with a crash.

Chris appears next to him, cracks the man's skull with a bat, and vanishes. Ayla appears, punches his throat, he turns, she is gone.

Sven blinks in the grass. He sees the elder Ayla next to him. The white teeth of rage glint between her lips. She relives the violence of this time, and Sven realizes he does not know the depths of this young spanner.

Alone, the man struggles up, coughing, a tooth slipping down his chin. He pauses, breathing, scowling up at the shadow on the roof, and with a muffled curse disappears.

All is quiet for several seconds, except the crickets.

He reappears where he first entered, swings and kicks at air, yelling, "—sorry!" looks confused, then winces from some inner turmoil. He holds his hands to his ears. "Dammit." Then he sees his prone body.

Falling back to the east, he gives a small yelp. He turns in the grass and is gone.

And Ayla reappears, descending out of the air and stabbing the prone form. Her panting echoes amid the cricket-calls. Sounds of a trowel rushing hurriedly in dirt, until Chris and Anton show, and calm her down. She is covered in blood, and is saying, "I don't like frag, guys. It does this to me. It just does."

Anton suggests something to her in low tones. She laughs in silent hysteria, nods, and is gone. Chris is shaking his head, but the two depart, leaving the dead man.

The roof figure vanishes, having never moved once.

After another minute, a group of five serious looking people step out silently from behind a shed. A sixth is Anton, who points at the body with a few comments, then returns the table to its place. He spans away.

Two of the newcomers examine the fallen man, while the other three fan out around the yard. One fellow sees them lying there relaxed and cozy, and approaches the prone spanners dubiously. Stirling smiles and gives him a thumbs up.

He looks with great curiosity at Sven. "I don't suppose you'd care to tell me the time," he says in English.

"I don't suppose you'd care to tell me the time!" Stirling sounds amused, and very much in charge.

"I suppose. Later, Stirling." He lopes off, and vanishes.

"Ed, a Foxhorn friend," she explains. "Should have introduced you, Chris. Anyway. The Foxhorn handle prisoners like that. If self-lover is lucky, he will

never reawaken."

Sven makes a noise, but he reconsidering many things.

"Have you ever felt frag, Sven?" asks Stirling.

In the suburban twilight, he does not answer. The distant lamps in odd yards cast his hosts' faces into the colors of skulls and dead flesh.

Stirling starts to chuckle, and is soon joined by the rest of her corner. Even Ayla plainly knows here that she has been tested, and tested better than the big man.

"I must have," he mutters. "In the time of forgetting—"

"Doesn't quite count, huh. Well. Your time will come. Are you a fox, a beast in the wilderness? Or do you stand with your own kind."

Sven watches as the other Foxhorns take hold of the broken body, and span away. "I am tired of the waste-wandering. There is more to be seen among spinnerfolk."

Finally, the lights come on inside the leveller homestead. "Time to go," says Stirling.

They return to the corner on a Sunday morning. Sven has his first experience of cocoa. As they sit in the kitchen, an elder Anya shuffles through for some milk. "Keep it down, guys. Your elders are trying to sleep upstairs." She pauses, sleepy-eyes at the doorway, staring at her junior. For a long moment, junior Ayla sits there. Then she nods, and rolling her eyes, gets out her little book and puts marks in it. Her elder grunts approval. Then in Old Norse, "Good morning, Sven." She shuffles out again. Sven is very thoughtful.

"The ways of the hunt you have shown me..." He struggles with silence before speaking again. "I practiced some with my mentor, on birds and on wild goats. But I did not come close to what I saw. I rue my decision to try the life alone."

"It's not just the hunt, but your spin-saga. I believe you have been lax in keeping track. Did your mentor not teach you these things."

Sven frowns at his own hands. "I thought I knew enough, and took myself to the sea-road. It was only the lack of my own kind, after long slow spans through Skraelingland, that set me searching. I did not stay with my mentor, for he wished me to spend my weeks learning the Irish arts, before educating me in the warfare of gods."

"The 'Irish arts'?" Stirling sounds vaguely intrigued.

Sven glances furtively about, and then a sharp twinkle directed at Stirling. "If you will trust me to span out, I will be back at once, and then I can show you a thing."

"I don't trust you," smirks Stirling. "But go and return. Don't wander far. Most corners don't like the uninvited."

"So I have seen. So then." He vanishes before their eyes, and even as Anton starts to say, "Suppose he's—?" Sven is back.

He returns with an armload of Celtic art he has shaped from a log. He also smells worse; it amuses him to see them flinch. "I went and made this in the small wood where you found me, going and returning by the sky-road." He sets it down heavily on the kitchen table, scratching the furniture badly. Anton nearly says something, but Stirling stops him with a gesture.

"What am I supposed to see in this?" asks Stirling.

Sven snorts, and says simply, "A time hunt."

The corner looks closer. Weaving in and out and around are the impossible necks and lattice bodies of the ancient style. Man, dog, and fox are intertwined. "It is the same for hunting the self-lovers," says Sven. "I only realized when you showed me the hunt, why my mentor wanted us to carve, to let our minds see this thing. The spiral and the catch. Our carvings were to be only of men."

Stirling smiles her approval. "That's excellent. So much stuff out there."

"You didn't know that's what it represents?" says Ayla in English, blinking. She is still a very young spanner. "I mean, I didn't know. But, I thought, y'know, you'd... you'd..."

"I'm supposed to know everything?" says the mentor in Old Norse, feeling the rich detail under her fingers. "Where would the fun be in that?"

Anton leans close. "Is he going to be here, um, much?"

Ayla looks very distressed toward her mentor. "I think we've got some Sven in our yet..."

"Maybe." She thinks of Charlie, standing only as high as Sven's shoulder. But Sven there is mellow compared to this discovery. "I think he's here for a bit, yes. Our Sven just needs some sanding and polish before he meets the world again."

Preparing for Time Combat

Prepare for Combat in Advance

You may describe to your GM in great detail new Strategems you will take during Time Combat, but this planning should be between game sessions. Essentially, you must describe your invented Strategem in writing, the GM should take the time to consider its consequences before approving it. The GM may edit Strategem before it comes into use, and interpret its description during the game. Strategems that prove inconsistent or unbalancing may be reedited by the GM between games.

Know Your Corner, and When to Rendezvous

Also, have meeting placetimes arranged so that if you're separated from your chronies suddenly, you'll all be able to find one another again. This is an essential coordinating element for any group wishing to succeed at Time Combat, and it's a necessary part of the everyday life of a spanner as well.

A good place to meet is one's corner, if feasible. If you and your chronies are doing Combat in other spanners' territory, be careful to not upset the natives.

Rendezvous every other (or every third)

Sweep of Time Combat. This is not mandatory, but it allows a Corner to coordinate and bring down the assailant.

When Is It Time Combat?

Whenever sentient force is applied to create deliberate paradox and Frag another sentient being, Time Combat has commenced. In other words, once someone punches you, get your friends and fight back.

For when Time Combat concludes, see pg. 127.

Why Me?

There are as many myriad reasons why a narcissist or group of narcissists start a Time Combat. Whatever their dreams of making universes of their own design, it means bulldozing you out of the way. For the reason an incident of Frag affects a spanner when it does, see Chapter 2: Spanning—What is the Yet?, pg. 47.

Enemy Tactics

Time Combat often begins shortly after meeting the Narcissist who starts the fight. This is because the Narcissist has to make certain of where all of you are *before* you begin to hate his guts and counterattack. It allows him to span away to somewhen hard to find, even as you begin to engage in the Combat in earnest.

This does leave them slightly more vulnerable: A small piece of their whenabouts is known at the outset

In many cases the narcissist directly involved in your fight is swapping favors for another Narcissist, who is messing around in a different Time Combat with a corner for which your assailant has the real animosity. This makes tracking the motivations and continuity of these people some of the "chores" during and after Time Combat.

But occasionally Time Combat starts the moment a hapless Narcissist attempts to alter the universe in some small way, and it Frags unsuspecting Continuum spanners. Such Narcissists are usually taking fewer precautions anyway, and pay the price for their foolishness.

Losing

Sometimes they get away— be prepared to face that. Occasionally a less experienced spanner, or even an entire corner will be assaulted, and the narcissist has been clever enough to hide his identity or at least his whenabouts. This can leave a number of spanners fragged, and in need of

Take heart. *They* ultimately lose. In fact, the longer they string out their defiance of the universe as it is, the worse shape their existence takes.

As for Frag that may seem unfixable (due to a distant or unclear— but successful— Fragging Action) the Continuum has every interest to help. Ask fellow Fraternity members for assistance with remote As/As Nots, and they'll find a way for you to barter services with distant spanners.

In cases where an As/As Not (source point of Frag [pg. 53]) is nearby, but the Frag seems hopelessly complex for the local spanners (or players) to unravel, the Mentor of a corner is expected to see Exalted for aid. Problems that cannot be handled by the Exalted are handled by the Inheritors [pg. 103].

Winning

Bringing a narcissist to heel is usually a matter of spanning in, surprising him, and clobbering him physically. Since spanning occurs at will, most narcissists get knocked out from behind, or by other less-than-chivalrous methods, so they can't escape. They are only human, too.

Keeping a defeated narcissist unconscious is usually a good idea, as an awake one can just span away. Keep them in dreamless sleep if you can— they may have Dreaming skills, and call for help, or at least send a warning; most are loners, though. The Foxhorn and Quicker Fraternities should be informed, though members often show up instantly after Time Combat to collect the bad guys. Even the dead bodies of narcissists are usually of great interest to these Fraternities, and are removed with dispatch.

Fragging an assailant into a state of non-sentient existence (beyond Frag 7) has a certain satisfaction, and experienced spanners working in concert can often produce this result.

Conducting Time Combat

These rules simulate what actually occurs on the unfortunate occasions when spanners fight with one another. With narcissi always acting to disrupt the universe, Time Combat is run across all too frequently.

Intention & Participation

Time Combat is to harm an opponent either by intentionally increasing their Frag, or surprising them and stopping their mischief physically.

Frag is increased by attempting to change any incident in a spanner's life. Innocuous events are usually chosen by attackers: Trying to kill a target's family members before their time, blow up buildings that are to stand for years more, etc. usually Frags other spanners, and they take action against you also. [See also Double Jeopardy, below.] The GM may bring in as many other spanner characters into a Time Combat as he feels he can handle, and is fair. These characters have their own agendas and coordinations, and character spanners may never meet

many (or even any!) of the participants in a Time Combat.

A character being attacked may do nothing, and try to heal the Frag later. But for purposes of this game, assailants can only be caught in the act if a spanner engages in the Time Combat that caused that Frag.

Double Jeopardy

Events of previously played-out Time Combats should not be targeted by subsequently played Time Combats. All but the most insane narcissist avoids this as it brings in a host of other spanners from the same locality, Society or Era who are now put in jeopardy from their Oracular and other aid to the spanners during the Time Combat, as well as anyone dependent on events stemming from the outcome of the original Time Combat. The attacker may succeed in fragging vast numbers of spanners by doing this— but his elimination is the solution to that frag. Bad idea all around.

The GM is empowered to add d10 x d10 spanners (of Spans of the GMs choosing) per Sweep to oppose the attempt to affect the outcome of a previous Time Combat, which ought to be enough. This is sometimes the explanation of Grace rolls during Time Combat.

SPAN IS NOT REGAINED DURING TIME COMBAT.

This simulates the stress of conflict and the effects of repeated frag attempts on all involved. After all, they could be fragging you in your sleep... See the story *Somebody Always Wants You Gone,* pg. 52 for a dramatization of the loneliness and tension of Time Combat.

Who Goes First in a Time Travel Game?

Initiative in many RPGs is a standard way to determine who strikes first, or gains surprise. And the Physical Combat system used in C°NTINUUM is just that. But when Time itself is an element of play, how can anyone hope to keep it straight?

The sequence has been interpreted for leveller players, but each turn of Combat is called a **Sweep**. As necessary, refer to each part of the Sweep as an **Element**. Sweeps and Elements are not measurements of Time, but of Actions.

In each Sweep, each participant chooses a **Direction** and a **Strategem**. During Time Combat each player has sixty seconds "real time" alone with the GM each Sweep to declare their spanner's actions.

Direction

- *Going Down*
- *Staying Level*
- *Going Up*

GOING DOWN to the Past often has the advantage of attempts to Frag, such as Hit and Run. While the timelines of spanners may wend all over spacetime, all began as levellers, as were (most) of their ancestors. One also may gain initiative by being farther Down than your opponent.

STAYING LEVEL in a Present has the advantage of certain clarity: One isn't spanning in the heat of the moment, one can observe the first volley of attacks, and one conserves Span for final assaults.

GOING UP to the Future has the advantage of attempts to find the location of most of the spanners involved in the Combat with Oracle. Except, of course, spanners farther Up.

Naturally, the advantages of one Direction create disadvantages in the others, as detailed above. And once again, SPAN IS NOT REGAINED DURING TIME COMBAT.

Acceptable Strategems

Strategems are shorthand for a series of actions during Time Combat. Since the pace is kept fast during the game, a spanner may choose only one Strategem per sweep. They come in 3 categories:

- **Attacks/Defenses**
- **Information Control**
- **Narcissist Tricks**

Here follows a few of the approved Strategems for the C°NTINUUM game. Players are encouraged to send in their own successful Strategems to timekeeper@aetherco.com —any that meet with our approval will appear on our website (www.aetherco.com):

Attacks/Defenses

Gemini Flush

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
10 minutes	n/a	—	—

This is a dangerous Strategem, as it gives the user a point of Frag as per Gemini Incident rules [pg. 39]. However, it is a strong way to span in and engage in Physical Combat [see pg. 22]. An elder arrives, played by the GM, and both may attack any

opponents. The elder will probably do what the player intends, but the GM may decide otherwise in any circumstance as he sees fit, including having the elder leave.

During Time Combat, if Gemini Flush is the chosen strategem, another elder may appear per Bout, resulting in even more than two of the same spanner in the same Combat. Each costs a point of Frag; this Frag is cured after the Combat as per Gemini Incident rules [pg. 39].

The elder(s) will depart after the end of the Sweep unless the player attempts to direct them. The player must successfully roll against the elder's Quick at the end of each Sweep, or the elder departs. Success means that elder will stay in the Combat, and can take actions as an additional player character.

The player must also write any movements of the elder into the character's Yet; he may want to attach a separate Span Card for elder to accommodate this task. The elder departs as soon as the Time Combat is over: Where, is best left an unwritten part of the Yet.

If a junior dies in the Time Combat, the remaining elders take 2 additional points of Frag. If it is a Second Death, of course the character is instantly unplayable, with a Frag of at least 8 [see Second Death, pg. 41].

Harbinger

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 second	n/a	—	—

If a successful attack (Frag or physical) on opponent has been made, but he or his cohorts are still engaged in the Combat, this strategem is useful for increasing one's advantage in the Time Combat.

The spanner confronts his opponent not with Physical Combat, but with psychological warfare: evidence of his defeat from the attack mentioned above (a bloody knife, a photo of his humiliation or confusion from frag, a rent and stained piece of his clothing) is shown to or left where a junior of the opponent can find it. Now that the elder (the one you're fighting) knows the threat was made good, he is penalized -1 on all his Skills for the rest of the Combat due to sheer nervousness and self-doubt.

Harbingers are cumulative if evidence separate successful attacks are presented to the target. (I.e. a penalty of -2 for proof of two attacks, -3 for three attacks, etc.)

Hit And Run

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 minute	n/a	—	—

The spanner targets a specified event, person or object in his opponent's timeline to Frag, and immediately moves on. The spanner must declare his Fragging Action (i.e. I move the lamp so that he trips over and breaks it, instead of switching it on; I steal his car keys so he can't arrive on time, etc.), and then roll on the Frag Table (pg. 129).

The player should give a convincing description of how he Frags his target, within the narrow confines of a sixty-second deadline.. Many results on the Frag table are up to the GM's discretion, and he may have to decide if what you've attempted works. The GM may also decide from the description that an Action would Frag not only the target, but the fragger and other things beside, so describe carefully!

If successful in Fragging the target, he must declare his NEXT SWEEP privately to the GM.

This is the typical first blow of a Narcissist, though it is sometimes given as a sharp warning to any spanner deliberately employing sentient force to something they know they shouldn't.

Patch

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 second	n/a	—	—

This is an important strategem for spanners, as it employs a quick-fix to known sources of Frag, but with post-Combat consequences.

A spanner that has located a source of Frag caused in Time Combat (see Oracle) can recover one point of Frag with a non-confrontational action farther Up from the As/As Not. This action must occur between 15 seconds and 30 minutes after the As/As Not.

The player describes his attempt to Patch (i.e. 'I replace the car keys in my pocket in time', 'I arrive and use my authority to cancel the bogus shipment of lifeboats to the White Star Line', etc.) in such a way that the original assailant is not confronted or encountered at all.

Patches are written into a spanner's Yet, because they are imperfect resolution, and merely buy a spanner some Age. They must be better resolved after or later in Time Combat, unless the spanner rolls a Grace or a Victory vs. their Span at the time of the Patch.

The GM may always rule a Patch unsuccessful (or even fragging), and decide whether or not further information would assist in another attempt to Patch.

Hide

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
7 days	n/a	—	128 days

The spanner slinks off to his Corner, and takes no actions. Oracles can locate him only on a Victory. Frunes are halved, round down. Attempts to Frag a Hiding character are penalized +1 on the roll, but aren't impossible; they can't Hide their entire lives. Attempts to Physically attack a spanner while in his Corner will invite all the spanners in that Corner to join in the Time Combat; assailants beware.

If his Corner is out of the range of his remaining Span, a local chapter of the spanner's Fraternity may accept to Hide him: GM's discretion, or roll a 10 or higher on d10 + ([2x character's Span] - [2x character's Frag]).

Isolate

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 second	n/a	—	—

Once an assailant/narcissist is found, Isolate can put his fragging actions in a temporal vacuum. This frags an individual severely, and should be used with only the worst offenders— though more often than not, those are the ones initiating Time Combat.

The effect of Isolate is to coordinate information about the incident of Frag in such a way that no one Continuum spanner knows enough to become deeply involved with the Fragging Action, but can pass along sufficient means to a chrony to Narcissists know they've had it when Isolate is employed against them: In their parlance, they refer to it as "the Swarm", because that's what it looks like from their sorry perspective.

Isolate requires the coordination of at least three spanners; there is no maximum number of spanners who can be involved. They must first Rendezvous in one Sweep, and then the next Sweep descend upon the moment when the Frag was created. Each must succeed in a competitive challenge: Their Quick versus the target's Quick. Naturally, each are resolved highest Quick to lowest. Each success against the target adds a penalty to his Quick of -1, so it becomes progressively easier to win the challenges.

Losing against the target means taking a point of Frag— but only the one chrony, and probably not for long (see below).

Every success adds a point of well-deserved Frag to the target. Specifically, the elder version of the assailant, attempting to perform a strategem in the same Sweep, takes all the Frag at once. If he is not set beyond Frag 7, he is very disoriented for at least 7 days Duration, and he loses the next chance to perform a strategem, though he may Span normally. Beyond Frag 7, he is of course out of the game.

Spanners involved in the Isolate strategem must return to their point of Rendezvous from the previous Sweep, about a minute after they left. This is equivalent to declaring their strategem for Next Sweep.

Isolate heals all Frag of a specific As/As Not if targeting the spanner that caused it while within 15 seconds of the event (or by GM's discretion). This includes Frag acquired while performing Isolate.

Information Control

Cobweb

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
7 days	+1	14 days	+6 / 84

The spanner plants false information, in order to fool an Oracle strategem, and/or possibly deceive a spanner into arriving to perform a Measure. The GM secretly subtracts the Mind score of the Cobweb user from the Skill used in performing the Oracle. If the Oracle is successful despite the Cobweb, the Cobweb is revealed for the false information it is, and anyone can be informed of this through Dreaming, Rendezvous or other logical means.

A Measure strategem conducted where the Cobweb is placed will also uncover its falsehood, but will distract the Measurer sufficiently to be open to Physical Attack. Cobwebs can become baited traps in this way: Your opponents may suspect you're lurking around the Cobweb, and attempt to get the drop on you. This becomes a layered shell game of information control, with each side trying to get the edge and the final drop on the other.

Cobweb cannot affect the Dreaming Skill unless the Cobwebber has Dreaming himself; in this case, his Dreaming is subtracted from anyone attempting to Oracle information about him with the Dreaming Skill. A successful Oracle or Frune performed with Dreaming also reveals the details of the Cobweb, though not necessarily the creator of the Cobweb.

Frune

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
7 days	+1	14 days	+6 / 84

The spanner asks around among others in the Continuum for information, especially regarding targets and other matters of his current Time Combat. But one might Frune anything.

The extra time is taken because 1) other spanners are very very cautious about passing infor-

mation to people engaged in Time Combat, and 2) any one question the spanner can imagine may be asked. The spanner must roll his Span, (as adjusted by Duration) to gain an answer. Failure nets only comments of "Further information is not available here."

Note that if any participant Frunes successfully during the Combat, the Continuum is more widely involved. Therefore, the Continuum will actively encourage **all** Continuum survivors to patch up any details in their Yet, especially Frag, generated by the Combat, directly after the Combat ceases (assuming it's within any possibility of their doing so). This "encouragement" can take the form of plain messages or visitors, subtle or unsubtle hints and coincidences, dreams, the players' own consciences, or anything the GM can imagine.

Iron Man

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
7 days	*special*		

The spanner Goes Up to a point in the future where he feels he is certain to discover his fate in the outcome of this Time Combat. The GM rolls d10:

1	*Victorious.* +5 to all Skills and Abilities in this Combat; spanner will emerge with at most minimal damage, and no additional Frag.
2-5	*Signs Favorable.* +3 to all Skills and Abilities in this Combat. No meaningful information available.
6-9	*Signs Unfavorable.* -2 to all all Skills and Abilities in this Combat.
10	*Death in this Time Combat.* This fact enters the players Yet, and is considered Death as per Span and Frag rules, including Second Death, if applicable. No negatives to rolls, but the spanner will die because of or during the confrontation.

Note that if the spanner has Fruned in a previous Sweep, he may roll again on the table, if he doesn't like his first roll. The second roll is not cumulative; it entirely replaces the result of the first roll.
Iron Man can only be played once per spanner per Time Combat, and is strongly discouraged.

Measure

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 day	+2	14 days	+6 / 42 days

The spanner goes to where an assailant (or victim) is, and studies him clandestinely and in detail— gathering information for ***other*** spanners to act upon.

The spanner rolls his Mind score, adjusted by Duration. (If the target being Measured doesn't spend at least 14 days on the studied level, these bonuses cannot accrue.)

Measure dispels the lies of any Cobweb placed at that level and locality. But any bonuses gathered are primarily for the benefit of other spanners whom the Measurer would inform (presumably through Rendezvous). These bonuses are applied any time an informed spanner makes or tries to stop a Fragging Action at that level (such as Hit & Run or Isolate).

The reason the Measurer cannot use the bonuses himself is simply that he learns too much of what happens there. If he tried to change or influence anything, he runs the risk of fragging himself.

Oracle

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
7 days (in addition to target's Duration)	+1	12 days	+5 / 60 days

This is a critical strategem, as it allows a spanner with Anthropology, History, Library Science, or similar Skills to discover information of the Past regarding opponents who have travelled there. Dreaming can also be used, and even has a chance of seeing into the Future. Once located, an opponent can be surprised by a spanner that has done Oracle successfully, and Physical Combat may be initiated.

The spanner attempting Oracle:
1) Declares a target spanner, object or event to research (even if it's only "whoever just fragged me").
2) Declares Duration of study (see box).
3) Asks one and only one of these questions [with examples of usefulness]:
   a) Who/What is this? [asked if you've been Fragged by an unknown assailant]
   b) Where and when is he/it? [asked if you intend to go and attack this Sweep, or Measure in a later Sweep]
   c) Where and when did he/it go? [asked if you've been hit this Sweep, & intend to go and attack next Sweep]
   d) How (when/where) was it done? [asked if you intend to go and heal Frag]

—Then rolls his ability.

Adjustments to Oracle

In ADDITION to the Duration adjustments (above), THE TARGET'S DURATION (Age Spent) IS ADDED TO THE ORACLER'S DURATION TO DETERMINE THE ORACLER'S BONUSES. Thus, spending extra time doing anything at one level **increases the danger of being discovered and attacked.** [See **Dangers of Staying Put**, pg. 127]

Note that only on a Victory roll will an

Oracle reveal a spanner that is in his native Corner; otherwise, the Oracle would fail to pinpoint the spanner well enough to surprise him.

Spanners who have Gone Up gain a +1 to their ability, as more information is available the farther into the future one goes. If a spanner is farthest ahead in the future of all player participants in the Combat, they gain +2.

If Dreaming is used to Oracle, answers about events and persons farther Up (in the Future) can be got, but the GM secretly penalizes the spanner's ability by -2 or more, depending on how hard he deems the information is to come by. The GM need not reveal that the information is about the Future, unless the spanner is asking 'where & when', or already knows when to look.

Finally, if a spanner has not spanned this Sweep, and has successfully Oracled, he may Span Levelly and Physically Attack this Sweep, if otherwise feasible. A safer method is to Measure the weasel and bring him down with Isolate.

Rendezvous

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 day	n/a	—	—

Another critical strategem to employ, as working in concert allows assailants to be brought down expediently.

This is how the Continuum works together to stop Frag, and how groups of Narcissists plot their nefarious plans. When Rendezvous is declared, a corner or other private place within spanning range is gone to, and at least a day of Age spent there. All information known, including Frag, Oracles, etc. are shared by all friendly parties at the Rendezvous, and the Rendezvousing spanners are given an three minutes to discuss the Next Sweep, then each may have sixty seconds apiece to make declarations for the Next Sweep, if they desire to coordinate plans.

The Rendezvous begins on the Element when the last spanner arrives for the Rendezvous. More than one spanner must declare Rendezvous to the same corner in the same Sweep, or it is assumed they missed one another, or the information miscarried.

Rendezvous la Reve

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
2 hours	n/a	—	—

This acts like the Rendezvous strategem, only the spanners conserve Span (and Age) by Dreamsharing in order to meet. Naturally, all participants in Rendezvous la Reve must be meet the requirements for Dreamsharing, and therefore are likely to be all Grandmaster Dreamers. Each must successfully roll their Skill, or miss the Rendezvous in the Dreamtime. Happily, longer Dreaming sessions adds bonuses to successfully Rendezvousing.

Narcissist Tricks

Reverse Engineer

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 minute	n/a	—	—

This strategem is expressly forbidden to Continuum spanners, due to its insidious nature. It targets events in a spanner knows are in his Yet, and attempts to erase them.

Some preparation of the ground applies:

1) Assailant must know who the target is. (either previous to the Combat, or via Oracle.
2) The assailant must Oracle an event in his target's Yet. (Using the question "Where/when is he going?" suffices nicely.)
3) The assailant spans to that event, and attempts a Fragging Action upon it (and should describe it as per Hit & Run).
4) Since this is a Fragging Action, the spanner must declare his NEXT SWEEP.

Note that Gemini Incidents are almost always in a spanner's Yet, even if nothing else is. Attempting to stop a Gemini is very risky, as the GM may bring the attacked spanner's elder into the Time Combat (like Gemini Flush, but at no extra penalty of Frag)— and this elder may be of whatever Span and Abilities the GM feels is appropriate. The assailant almost always finds his trouble doubled; it's only attempted when the likelihood of pushing a spanner beyond Frag 7 arises. Spanners that have had their elder forced into Combat in this way, should note it in their Yet.

Statue of Liberty[2]

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 minute	n/a	—	—

This is a favorite (and powerful) ploy of Narcissists, and it is good to study, though the Continuum stresses it should only be used against proven Narcissists.

The intent is to deliver the coveted second point of Frag to an opponent just before Time Combat begins by making the opponent... late for

[2]Also known as "Cheshire Cat" in Britain, and by various names in different Societies. It has no standard name as it is rarely employed by Continuum spanners.

the first point of Frag they received. (Ensuring a bus breaks down, a car stalls, an escalator catches their pantleg, etc.) This has the special benefit of letting the attacker *lose* a point of Frag if successful: Essentially, the assailant passes a piece of Fragged timeline over to the victim. (The assailant must have received a point of Frag in this Time Combat, however, in order to get rid of it.)

The assailant goes to a point just before his victim knew he first was Fragged in this Time Combat, preferably before Time Combat commenced. There he performs a Fragging Action (and should describe it as per Hit & Run) the main function is to delay the target's discovery that he was fragged, or place the discovery elsewhere or elsewhen.

Once the assailant has fragged the same target in the same Time Combat twice, by the Ending Time Combat rules [below], the Combat's over! Now he can try and slip away, leaving his victim with a nasty knot: Fragged for not knowing he was Fragged!

Surrender

Minimum Duration	Bonus to Skill	For every amount of Age spent ≥	To a Max. of
1 minute	n/a	—	—

This can be a distraction or a ruse, so watch out.

The narcissist, having performed Frune or Oracle the previous Sweep, appears before a spanner in a position of surrender, supplication, or other obvious demonstration of begging for mercy. This is merely a statement that they wish the Combat to end. It is not in any one spanner's power to end a Time Combat, except by the rules stated below.

The only way to be certain of victory is to knock the supplicant out (though heed the caution that they may still Dream for aid). It is up to the individual temperament of the spanner whether to finish off the unconscious narcissist, but it's usually better to call in the Foxhorn at the end of the Time Combat. Their methods of interrogation will either result in a healthy ex-narcissist reintegrated into Continuum life, or simply and end to his Yet. If the surrenderer looks badly fragged, call the Quicker.

The narcissist may try to get the information as where your next Rendezvous is, who else is involved, etc. claiming he wishes to follow you there to surrender. Don't go for it! If he doesn't let you knock him out on the spot, he's almost certainly up to no good, and you have a Physical Combat on your hands.

Most important: Continuum spanners don't surrender to narcissists. They have no means of 'reintegrating' you into spanner life— quite the opposite. Most will simply take the opportunity to kill you; some will toy with you, then frag you out. It's far better to keep fighting to the bitter end.

Details of Time Combat

Segueing in and out of Physical Combat

Physical Combat during Time Combat is usually swift and brutal. The sixty-second limit to each Element is waived until Physical Combat ends.

Any spanner that has performed Oracle or Frune can surprise their opponent in Physical Combat, unless they have already left that Level. See Oracle [pg. 125] and Frune [pg. 124] for details.

Filling Spanning Cards

Spanning Cards must be filled as Combat progresses. At the end of each Sweep (Bout of Time Combat), the GM reiterates the actions taken in the Sweep, and calls for all players to update their cards. (See Appendix Z [pg. 224] for a detailed explanation of how to keep your cards up to date).

Dangers of Staying Put

Staying put for too long has a downside. Long Durations in one place, except for Hide, also adds to rolls of anyone doing Oracle or Frune to find you. The bonuses in the Duration box are applied to the benefit of the Oracler for BOTH the investigating spanner's AND the target's Duration.

Ending Time Combat

Time Combat ends when any one of the following occurs:

1) Two otherwise successful attempts to Oracle or Frune the whereabouts an attacker fails to result in catching him (the attacker gets away), *or*
2) Two attempts to Frag the same spanner by the same assailant succeed (further attempts is asking for trouble from Continuum spanners of higher Span[3]), *or*
3) If the parties manage to agree to stop, *or*
4) If all of one side is brought down physically, *or*
5) If all of one side is hit to beyond Frag 7.

If the requirements for ending Time Combat are met, but the players are still eager to beat up bad guys, the GM recommends they rest, heal, regain Span, and maybe even heal Frag if feasible. Then go after them again. Of course, they might be rested, too— unless the player characters do careful research before jumping in. Spanners who enjoy the hunt this much are likely candidates for the Foxhorn Fraternity [pg. 70].

[3]The GM has specific information on the danger of spreading Frag in his section; suffice to say here that two points usually not enough to threaten the entire Continuum.

Time Combat Sequence

EACH SWEEP:
GM calls for Spanning Cards to be filled as each player announces.

I. All combatants are sorted by when they are in spacetime.
A. Farthest Down (Earliest) spanner declares intentions[4] and acts.
B. Next Farthest Down declares and acts, and so on.

II. If more than one combatant is on the same Level, their declarations are handled in order:

A. Declarations
0. (Levellers declare intentions, HIGHEST Quick to LOWEST)
1. Spanners declare intentions LOWEST Quick to HIGHEST[5]

B. Execution
The GM then sorts the actions taken:
1. Declarations are handled
a. By when they are in spacetime (as above)
b. HIGHEST Quick to LOWEST.
2. Any successful Frag attempts by them take effect at once and:
a. the affected characters are informed
b. the spanner who successfully attacked secretly declares his NEXT SPAN to the GM

(Once the First Sweep concludes, any Levellers intentions are carried out. Leveller characters can only participate in a single Sweep.)
At the end of each Sweep, the GM reiterates to each player what has occurred to his character.

Note on Physical Combat within Time Combat.
All Physical combatants may only depart from Physical Combat by spanning *once* during a Sweep, and must declare their intentions to the GM for the next Sweep. Characters that depart must also openly declare their direction to any characters left standing within view.

* On the Frag Results table, (above right) One or Zero Frag (GM's discretion).

[4] Taking a maximum of 30 seconds apiece, real time.

[5] Tied Quicks are resolved by each rolling d10; highest roll to lowest, repeat as necessary.

Frag Results

The Roll >	</=0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>/=11
Attacker's Span												
1	1	1	*	*	*	*	0	0	0	(1)	(1)	(1)
2	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	0	0	0	(1)	(1)
3	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	0	0	0	(1)
4	2	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	0	0	(1)
5	2	2	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	0	(1)

FRAG TABLES

Whenever an attempt at Frag is made, the Fragger may well take a backlash of Frag upon himself. Results in brackets (below) is Frag taken by the attacker. Results with an asterisk (*) are left up to the GM, whether the character has been descriptive enough in his attack to warrant causing 1 or no Frag.

Additionally, each Frag successfully applied in the same Time Combat to any opponent(s) adds +1 to all rolls for a spanner on this table. (The more you Frag someone, the more dangerous it becomes for you to Frag again.)

Grace results are not possible while Fragging someone.

Note that the GM is final arbiter of how much Frag a character takes in any given situation; indeed the table is designed to allow GMs to craft amount of Frag suitable to their campaign style.
Also, for game purposes, Frag is always taken in whole numbers.

Adjustments to Frag Results, by Span
Number indicates adjustments to the *roll*.

Target's Span >	0	1	2	3	4	5
Attacker's Span						
1	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
3	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
4	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1
5	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0

Example of Time Combat

Intangible Assassins
June 14, 1976 5:43 AM Philadelphia, Pa.

Amber's stats
Span 2 Frag 1
Span Spent: 4 days, 7 hrs
B 3 M 5 Q 6
Skills include Dreaming M8, Longsword J5

Ben-Youssef's stats
Span 2 Frag 1
Span Spent: 9 years, 348 days
B 5 M 3 Q 4
Skills include Library Science J5, Martial Arts: Karate J7

Grimveldt's stats
Span 3 Frag 2
Span Spent: 4 days, 7 hrs
B 5 M 6 Q 7
Skills include: History G10, Firearms: Pistol M9

Mordant's stats
Span 2 Frag 1
Span Spent: 4 days, 7 hrs
B 4 M 5 Q 6
Skills include: History M11, Boxing J6

Continued next page...

Sweep 1

Dawn is already creeping through the window of their apartment on this bicentennial summer morn, when Amber is shook awake by Ben-Youssef. "We've been fragged," he explains.

"Oh crap!" The full weight of it pulled her up from slumber. It explained her dreams of splinters from the floor catching in her stocking feet, piercing her every step. She sat up in one motion. "Did you get your rest?"

"No!" Ben-Youssef screamed, his bloodshot eyes liquid in the growing light. He breathed rapidly in the shock of panic. Amber reached out and took his hand, but he didn't calm down. Only his voice quieted, because of the neighbors.

"I don't even know where it came from, Amber. They just hit us. One second, I'm dead asleep. Then it washes over me like hot blood— I've been fragged!"

Amber squeezed his hand. "Calm down, Ben. We'll work this."

"But Amber! I didn't get any of my Span back! I'm dead in the water!"

Alice, the player with Amber as her character, looks at Gary at the end of the table. "Yeah, that kinda sucks, Gary. You call that fair?"

Gary, the GM, looks up from his notes. "Well, there's stuff you can do," he says.

"Yeah right," snorts Burt, playing Ben-Youssef. "I can Die. I doubt I could even Iron Man properly with 17 days left."

"Well, you're going to find out," says Gary pleasantly. "You're in Time Combat, and they got the drop on you for Sweep One."

Gary's the only one who knows of the existence of the two narcissists Grimveldt and Mordant, and their plans to change Gerald Ford, who's arriving July 4. They're trying to get our heroes out of town by distracting them to think that they themselves are the main targets: that their presence is a danger to the events of the celebrations. After convincing Amber and Gary to scurry off, they intend to work psychological mischief on other local spanners. Finally, once enough of the Continuum is distracted away from Philly, they'll feel bold enough to go after the President.

Alice, a cautious player, with loads of questions. "Tell me once more why if someone fragged me in a different time, I'm only feeling it now?"

Gary reads her the information about the Yet calling you to fix the Frag on pg. 47. "Essentially, it's your Yet slapping you— upside your head."

Burt smirks. "Okay. Back to the seventies."

"So, to sum up the First Sweep," says Gary, "you don't have enough information to tell where these guys are coming from. You're completely surprised, so I'll let you have a couple minutes to sort out what you want to tackle on the next Sweep."

Sweep 2

Alice says, "Well, Amber keeps her head. First thing we need to do is Oracle these guys, find out where and when they are. We can do that without knowing their names, right?"

"I would say so," says Gary. "You have at least on piece of information to work from: You've been fragged."

Sweep One

element

Grimveldt -farthest Down (May 12 1947)
Direction Down *When/Where* May 12 1947 12:00 noon Philadelphia
Strategem Hit & Run (-1 to roll for Span 3 vs. Span 2)
Duration 1 hour *Roll* 0 (1-1) on Frag Results causes 1 Frag on Amber
Details Having tracked down Amber's favorite gold necklace. He bought it before Amber's grandma found it, and threw it in the Delaware.
Declared Next Span (see Sweep 2).

element

Mordant
Direction Up *When/Where* June 25 1979 11:37 pm Philadelphia
Strategem Hit & Run (no adj. to roll for Span 2 vs. Span 2)
Duration 1 hour *Roll* 2 on Frag Results causes 1 Frag on Ben
Details Having discovered a moment when spanner Ben was alone in a cinema watching "Arthur" (months before in Ben's Age, but Up from Ben in this Sweep). Mordant slipped into the projection room, and in a flourish of willful irony, snipped the film.
Declared Next Span (see Sweep Two).

element

Amber & Ben-Youssef - last due to surprise
Direction n/a *When/Where* June 14, 1976 5:43 am Philadelphia
Strategem n/a (Surprised) *Duration* 17 min. *Roll* n/a
Details Amber is asleep when the Frag hits, and Ben, while Fragged by a spanner farther Up, isn't expecting it till it lands. Still, they figure that at least two narcissists are out to get them, which is bad, since Ben has little Span left. They decide to each Oracle their assailants on Sweep Two, and Rendezvous on Sweep Three, on July 3.

GM reiterates: You don't have enough information to tell where these guys are coming from. You're completely surprised, so I'll let you have a couple minutes to sort out what you want to tackle on the next Sweep.

Sweep Two

element

Grimveldt -farthest Down (coming from May 12 1947)
Direction Up *When/Where* May 12 1975 2:00 am Philadelphia
Strategem Cobweb *Duration* 14 days (+2) *Roll* 4+2
Details Plants false information that a narcissist called Fred Blank is setting the stage to try to steal a nuclear sub out of the Philly yard during the bicentennial festivities the following year. Since his Mind is 9, a -9 applies to the Skills of spanners attempting

Alice nods. "So we should Go Up a couple years, Oracle the guys who fragged us. Then the next Sweep we Rendezvous—"

"Hey, whoa, I can't Span Up and Down far." says Burt. "*You* meet *me*."

"Right. Sorry, guy."

"I mean, all I can do is Oracle and such, from what I can tell." says Burt. "Ben's panicking. He wants to Frune."

"No don't! We'll involve more spanners before we even know what's going on."

Gary looks at his watch. "Giving you guys about a minute more..."

"Look, just stay put and we'll both Oracle. I'll Go Up just in case my fragger is Up from us."

"Okay. But without some quick results, I want back up, pronto. Rendezvous here in 12 days" Burt nods. "I'm ready."

"Let's go," says Alice.

"Okay, Second Sweep," says Gary jotting a few notes about Grimveldt, since he secretly is going first this Sweep. Grimveldt is planting a Cobweb about a fake attack on the Philadelphia Navy Yard to detract attention. "You're both on the same Level, June 14, 1976, let's say 6:00 am. Amber has the higher Quick. Okay, go. Sixty seconds to declare."

Alice, out of habit, reads from left to right on her Span Card, as she fills it out. "Amber's going to Span Up... two years. That'll be June 14, 1978, 6:00 am. Let's say across town at the Holiday Inn."

"Okay," says Gary.

"I'm going to Oracle, using Dreaming. I'm asking: Where and when is this bad boy?"

"That'll tell you where he is this Sweep, if successful."

"I don't like the sound of that 'if successful.' I'll spend a whole 60 days Duration, and max out the bonuses."

"That's a long stay at a Holiday Inn."

"I'm insanely rich and no one knows." Alice rolls. "Three. If he found a way to hide from *that* roll, with my bonuses, I'll run crying to my Mentor."

"No, you dreamed straight through his Cobweb." Gary tells Alice the made-up story Grim was planting, and when, but not his real identity. "Okay, Burt, it's your turn. Sixty seconds."

"Oh, wow. Think of the places I can travel to. I Stay Level and Oracle for my fragger. Where and when is he?"

"How much Duration you spending on your Oracle?"

"Twelve days. Gives me a small bonus, and I'll already be here for the Rendezvous." Burt rolls. "Six."

"That bonus saved your butt. Guess what. He's across town looking for you."

"Whoa! When?"

"June 25 1976 12:00 noon - July 2, 1976," explains Gary. "You haven't spanned this Sweep, so you could surprise him."

"I do! I want this guy to feel—the Dragon's Claw!"

"That's a karate thing, right?"

"Oh yeah."

"Okay. So anytime after... June 26 at 6:00 am till July 1 at noon."

to Oracle his whenabouts from farther Up— except for Dreamers.

element

Amber -higher Quick than Ben (coming from June 14, 1976 6:00 am)
Direction Up *When/Where* June 14, 1978 6:00 am Philadelphia
Strategem Oracle: Where/when is he?
Duration 60 days (+5)
Roll 3 vs. Dreaming 14 = (8+5) +1 for Grimveldt's Duration
Details Amber takes extra time, which is risky, but she's had experience with narcissists. Since Grimveldt doesn't have the Dreaming skill, his Cobweb is powerless against her, and she sees straight through his plans. She doesn't know his name yet, but she knows exactly when/where he's planting the false lead.

element

Ben-Youssef -lower Quick than Amber (at June 14, 1976 6:00 am)
Direction Level *When/Where* June 14, 1976 6:00 am Philadelphia
Strategem Oracle: Where/when is he?
Duration 12 days (+1)
Roll 6 vs. Library Science 6 = (5+1)
(+No bonus for Mordant's Duration, since it's less than 12 days)
Details Nearly "dead in the water", Ben's only hope is the fact that the successful Frag attack on Sweep One meant his assailant had to announce his intentions for Sweep Two. The successful roll pays off: Ben discovers his tormentor has come within his narrow reach! He takes advantage of being able to Span Levelly since he hasn't spanned this Sweep, and surprises Mordant at the University of Pennsylvania.

This Element then steps outside the sixty-second limit for a fast action-packed Physical Combat with...

Mordant -(coming from June 25 1979 12:37 am)
Direction Down *When/Where* June 25 1976 12:00 noon Philadelphia
Strategem (was working on Oracle: Where is he?)
Duration 7 days (+1 for target's Duration) *Roll* never had a chance to!
Details Because of his successful Fragging Action last Sweep, Mordant had to Declare where and when he'd be this Sweep, making him vulnerable to an Oracle. (Normally a spanner Farther Up can't be found, except by Dreaming, and, if the GM allows, Frune.)
He decided to study Ben's movements in Philadelphia in 1976—and pays the price of spanning so close to his victims. (The GM decided that Mordant didn't know that Ben is low on Span, and figured he'd be spanning around.) He had barely begun his studies when Ben spanned in and clobbered him.

"I don't want him to have any chance of completing his Oracle. I Span Level right at June 26, 6:00 am."

"Okay... we're going Physical Combat—"

"The Dragon's Claw!"

"Yeah, okay, so the sixty-second limit's set aside. Let's see. He's using History... I'd say he's in the library at the University of Pennsylvania on this bright June morning."

"Yeah, he's got his coffee and a newspaper and a book and I come down on him like Kato."

"You are allowed to surprise him."

Burt rolls a 3 against a challenge of 7 (surprised). Mordant takes 3 Impairment Points, and is badly hurt. "Oh yeah! Dragon's Claw! Haiee!"

"Stop saying that," says Gary. "It's meaningless."

"Not to Ben. Next bout!"

"He's got the higher Quick, so goes first. He pulls a fast boxing maneuver." The GM rolls a 6
"He winged your arm, Dragon-Brain."

"Ha! Swallow hot bamboo fingers of steel, Narcissist!" Burt rolls a 2, and hits Mord square in the face for 5 IP.

Gary rolls, shaking his head. A 3. "He goes into shock, and loses consciousness. *Bamboo* fingers of *steel...?*"

"Great. I bury him in a stack of books, and next Sweep take the bus back for the Rendezvous. Pick up breakfast on the way." He adds a couple hours to his Duration.

Sweep 3

Gary announces Sweep Three, and rolls some dice to look busy. In fact, Grimveldt is waiting for a Rendezvous with Mordant, and Mordant ain't showing.

Our heroes meet for their own Rendezvous. Burt boasts of his victory. "He's unconscious in the Reference stacks at U. Penn. Ready for delivery."

"Great, but what about this Cobwebbing guy that fragged me?" asks Amber.

Burt says, "He's up to something else this Sweep. A second attempt at Frag?"

"Then he's either failed, or he's Farther Up. We'd have felt it. My Oracle says he wants us to think someone called Fred Blank is going to steal a sub from the Navy Yard on the bicentennial, but it's all fake. The name, the event. He just wants us to go there."

"Well, let's not go there."

"Duh. But how do we get at this guy?" She looks at Gary."Here's a question. We're allies at a Rendezvous. Can I let Ben Oracle first, then use that information to Go Down and target the guy?"

Gary looks over the rules. "Well, it's not spelled out, but that question does show up in the example of Time Combat."

"And?" Alice asks hopefully.

"The GM in the example points out that Oracle has a minimum Duration of 7 days. If you were to wait for Ben's Oracle, Amber would have to Stay Level this Sweep, too."

"Drat. But at least that makes sense."

"So we could just spend this Sweep doing Oracle," says Burt. "But he'd move on."

"I'm gonna go and bag this guy at where he

GM reiterates
(To Amber): This Sweep, you found the guy who fragged you, but still don't know his name, or how he fragged you.
You know one place where he thinks he's pretty safe— in 1975— since he's planting a Cobweb there that doesn't fool you. You left Ben in 1976, and you're in 1978.

(To Ben): Well, this Sweep you aced it. You Oracled your attacker's Next Sweep, since that was a possibility. You found him within range, Spanned Levelly, engaged in Physical Combat and knocked him out. You're in 1976, Amber went to 1978.

Sweep 3

element
Grimveldt -farthest Down (coming from May 26 1975)
Direction Up *When/Where* July 1 1976 2:00 am Philadelphia
Strategem Rendezvous *Duration* 1 day *Roll* n/a
Details He expects Mordant to show. But he doesn't, and now he's a little scared. Grimveldt gets vicious when he's scared. Being in his hideaway, he arms himself to the teeth.

element
Amber (coming from August 13, 1978 6:00 am)
Direction Up *When/Where* June 26, 1976 6:00 am Philadelphia
Strategem Rendezvous *Duration* 1 day *Roll* n/a
Details Meets with Ben (see below)

element
Ben-Youssef (already at June 26, 1976 8:00 am)
Direction Level *When/Where* June 26, 1976 8:00 am Philadelphia
Strategem Rendezvous *Duration* 1 day *Roll* n/a
Details Ben & Amber decide that Amber will span down to the Cobweb and try a Gemini Flush. Ben will Oracle on Amber after she departs, and see if she's dead or in a hospital or something.

GM reiterates
(To Amber & Ben): This Sweep, you've shared relevant information with one another, and decided a risky, but interesting course of action. Your Rendezvous cost a day: you're both at June 27, 1976.

Sweep 4

element
Grimveldt -farthest Down (coming from July 2 1976)
Direction Down *When/Where* May 12 1975 2:00 am Philadelphia
Strategem Measure *Duration* 14 days *Roll* n/a
Details He's Measuring his own Cobweb in the expectation that his opponents will be arriving, regardless of the potential of self-inflicted frag. He

placed the Cobweb," says Amber. "It's all I've got to go on."

"Careful," warns Gary. "You Oracled all that. If you stop him, you'll Frag yourself."

"We don't know any more about him than that: *where and when he is*. Let him plant his Cobweb. I'll span in just as he's finishing, and bonk him."

Gary thinks. "That could work."

"If I interrupt his rotten little narcissist timeline, that's his Frag not ours. Information is all."

"You go, girl," says Burt.

"Seventies," reminds Gary.

"Oh yeah. Far freakin' out, mama." Burt holds up his index and little fingers. "Anyway, what can I do this Sweep?"

"Spot me," says Amber. "Do an Oracle on *me*, after I leave. If anything happens to me in 1975, you'll know, and can take action."

"So if I Oracle that you've been sent to jail, or the hospital, or a mortuary, or vanished...?"

"*Then* you should Frune the following Sweep," says Alice. "Get the word out, and hope help arrives for you."

"So your Strategem next Sweep is straight Physical Combat?"

"No," says Alice, a devilish twinkle in one eye. "I want to try Gemini Flush."

"That should be fun. Okay, your three minutes are up." Gary reviews the Sweep: "This Sweep, you've shared relevant information with one another, and decided a risky, but interesting course of action. Your Rendezvous cost a day: you're both at June 27, 1976."

Sweep 4

Gary announces Sweep Four. He decides Grimveldt is patrolling the Cobweb, expecting to be attacked, since Mordant never showed. He jots down the weapons Grim is laden with and the fact that he's on a storehouse roof overlooking a pier.

"Okay, Amber has the highest Quick. Sixty seconds."

Alice asks, "So, Gemini Flush. How does this work. My elder arrives, and we span down together—?"

Gary raises a finger. "No, the elder arrives once you're at your chosen Level. Book says you and your elder can't direct each others' spanning across time."

"Okay... I dress in my SCA armor, plus a visored helmet."

Gary chuckles. "Okay—"

"I go Down, sword drawn, intending Gemini Flush and blood to spill. Where exactly is this, uh, Cobweb? I want to arrive a minute or two before he's supposed to leave. My Oracle told me that much, right?"

Gary checks his notes for Grimveldt's Cobweb. "Yeah. Looks like the Philly Navy Yard May 26, 1975. He's there till 2:00 am."

"Okay, I Go Down to May 26, 1975 at 1:55 am at the Navy Yard. Strategem Gemini Flush—"

"We're moving into Physical Combat Bouts."

"Yikes. What do I see?"

"It's a warm night, a dark pier. There are military storehouses along the shore, and the water at your back. There's a light on in a nearby boathouse, and movement."

won't be disappointed, but Amber has a twist in mind.

element

Amber -higher Quick than Ben (coming from July 5, 1976 6:00 am)
Direction Down *When/Where* May 26, 1975 1:55 am Philadelphia
Strategem Gemini Flush *Duration* 10 min. *Roll* n/a
Details Amber wants to Gemini Flush— dressed in full armor. The GM loves the idea, but warns her she's risking Frag. But she carefully states she lets the Cobweb get planted

The junior Amber knocks out the junior Grimveldt (from Sweep 2).The elder Amber takes on the elder Grimveldt (arrived in the previous Element)

With all opponents down, Time Combat ends.
Ben was going to Oracle for Amber, but with Time Combat over, "normal" roleplaying recommences. They can use any of their skills freely again, instead of being constrained to "Strategems".

GM reiterates
(To Amber): This Sweep, you clocked the bastard. Hm. Always wondered where that term came from.

"I stroll over there. What is my elder doing?"

"What do you think you'll do. After all, your elder is a later you," notes Gary. "But played by me."

"Hm. I'd like me to appear when needed..."

"Okay your elder's on the scene, though you're not sure where. You think you see her on the storehouse roof. Gemini Flush gives you one point of Frag, so you're at Frag 2."

Alice notes it. "I enter the boathouse. If my armorclad self doesn't startle the person inside, I'll attack."

"Odd philosophy. There's a bald guy with a flashlight moving papers in a filing cabinet around. He doesn't see you yet, you're still in the doorway." Gary rolls for the elder Grimveldt, who, while unfamiliar with nightscopes, starts taking shots at Amber. He rolls a nine and then a ten (no blunder though).

"Couple high powered rounds shatter the doorjamb next to you. You're not hit."

"Hell-o. Could be Navy boys. I lunge for the Cobwebber, who must have heard those shots."

"Yeah, he turns around as you're lunging. His eyes say it all. Sword, then?"

"Sure." Alice rolls, 4 "All right!"

"Bad bleeding from the side, he's in shock. He's down. I'll award him a point of Frag, since he thought he moved on from this level. Speaking of which..." says Gary. "Your elder is on the roof trying to surprise his elder."

"Cool!"

"Sort of. He has a chance to bring the rifle to bear on her—"

"Can I run out to try and distract him—?"

"That's next Bout. But I'll let you roll for your elder. She's equipped exactly like you. She's on the roof of

those storehouses, where he was taking potshots. It's pretty close quarters."

Alice rolls a 4 to Grim's 6. "He wings your shield-arm. Elder Amber can still swing. Roll."

Alice rolls a 2 to Grim's 8. "His right forearm is mostly severed, just hanging there. After a moment of gurgling horror, he slides off the roof."

"WHOO! My junior comes out to see!"

"So all this mayhem has finally alerted the Yard," Gary rolls a d10. "Here come seven Marines, running down the dock, ordering you to stand down."

"Uh oh. I can span out once from Physical Combat during Time Combat, right?"

"Yep."

"I jump off the dock, but never hit the water. I span Up to Ben. Obviously, I'm hoping not to be seen. Or shot at."

"No, it's dark and the Marines aren't that trigger-happy. They figure you have nowhere to run, until you jump off. I'd say it's a clean getaway."

"So... can I spend my Element on something other than Oracling Amber?

"You could but, you bagged all opponents. Time Combat ends."

"We GOT 'em!!" screams Alice.

"Whoo-hoo! Eh, I mean, Dy-no-mite..."

"You only knocked out your guy," grins Alice. "I knocked out, fragged and killed my guy."

"And I didn't even get to Oracle for Amber. Oh well. It's a good twist on the strategem. Could come in handy someday."

Gary comments, "Navy investigators— levellers— write reams of reports about the security of the docks, because of that fight. All that gun-and-swordplay added to that Cobweb about an attack on the Navy Yard."

"Hunh. It would." Alice sits and thinks a moment. "This game is so strange."

"Yeah, says Gary. "Your elder shows up, and puts her arm around Ben. 'Excuse us,' she says."

"Hey," says Alice, "I believe in respecting my elders and all, but aren't you kinda cutting in?"

Gary smiles. "Your elder smiles and says, 'There's a guy shooting at you from the roof back in 1975. Don't you think you should handle it?' She displays the wound on her arm."

"Ah, right," says Alice. "I go back— do I have enough Span? Yeah, I go back and clobber him again. Do we have to play it out?"

"Not the Physical Combat, nah."

"Okay, I kick baldy butt, get winged by a bullet and return to confront my junior self. 'Excuse us!'" yells Alice at Gary.

"Hey-y," says Gary, now playing the startled junior. "I believe in respecting my elders and all, but aren't you kinda cutting in?"

"There's this guy shooting at you from the roof in 1975," says Alice. "Don't you think you should handle it?"

"Ah, right," says Gary. "Your junior spans away. That heals a point of Frag from the Gemini Flush, and check off a Gemini Incident from your Yet card."

"Great," says Alice, "Let's celebrate."

"Ben still wants his sleep, and his Span back," says Burt. "We can celebrate tomorrow."

"Amber sings 'Celebration'," Alice informs them.

"Yeah, yeah, dancing in the streets..." Burt looks thoughtful. "We got 'em all right. But who *were* those guys?"

Alice and Burt look at Gary.

Gary grins. "Your TV on?"

Alice, dubious, says, "Um... I guess so."

Amber and Ben still felt the ravages of their Frag, but the victory was good.

A live broadcast of President Ford. He's in town, down at the celebration around the Liberty Bell. He taps it once with a baton, gently. It makes a dead, hollow sound. Everyone cheers.

They looked at the screen, the hundreds of thousands of people thronging in Philadelphia. What were those guys up to?

"It's time we told people." They found they were speaking in unison.

Roleplaying Time Combat

The rules above are designed to play attacks out on narcissists as if Time Combat was as fast-paced as Physical Combat. Some players will prefer to play out every moment and emotion of a Combat. This may take the entire session, or even several, to play out. But if character development is what your group cherishes over all, you may want to try roleplaying the Time Combat.

This makes Time Combat a seamless part of the roleplaying experience. But **when in Time Combat** the same rules **must** apply: **Once you Span, you enter a new Sweep,** and you'll run the risk of waiting for your friends to catch up as they roleplay.

This, however, helps demonstrate the caution and consideration that actually goes in to conducting a Time Combat. "I'll spend a week doing Strategem X" is shorthand for what the character's really does for a week: Eat, sleep, read books and newspapers, accomplish the stated goals, and maybe get some leveller relaxation in like a movie, or jogging.

Compare the stories *Someone Always Wants You Gone* [pg. 52] and *Out in Society* [pg. 118]. In *Someone*, the entire scene is played out during a Rendezvous in the midst of Time Combat, while *Society* demonstrates the rapidity with which the outcome is achieved. In theory, every nuance of the moment can be delved into, and roleplayed out. It's up to your group of players to decide on the mix they enjoy most.

Final Note of Advice

For initial Time Combats, it's often a good idea to have the Mentor be a lookout, and perform the Measure strategem. That way the GM has the absolute outcome of the Combat during player learning sessions, and once the players are playing Threes, they can help their novices piece themselves back together...

Narcissists & Lesser Dangers

The term 'narcissist' is applied to these spanners, according to the Scribes, because of observations made in the Geminid Era of their behavior towards themselves.

"Elders are not respected by these antagonists. They refer to them as *echoes,* and treat them like refuse. Watching elders beg callous juniors for shreds of dignity and existence is the most terrifying thing I have seen, and I have fought many seasons in this Era.

"Often have we witnessed arguments ending in harm to the elder, and to the surround of the argument. The elder bravely tries to assert his greater knowledge and authority, but to little avail. Once I saw a clever one trying to claim that he was the junior, and was going to bring disaster if his demands were not met. But he was found out, and the true junior and his cohorts harried him like laughing wolves. He was fragmented, and made a ghastly kind of buffoon.

"We choose such moments of self-argument to bring the antagonists down, when they are distracted and brashly attempting fragmentation upon themselves or other allies. They try everything to bring the nightmares they fled from here to our own homes, and turn us into echoes. They fail, but we must fight for the day."

—Pneumeon, from a private letter in Attic Greek, penned 5322 BC (Adreaus, translating for the C^NTINUUM RPG)

In Greek mythology, Echo was the name of the cursed princess that Narcissus ignored in favor of loving his own reflection. From the narcissists' own inhuman terminology have they earned their name.

Some late Piscean spanners truncate 'narcissists' and refer to them as 'narcs': an ironic use, since their behavior is much more akin to pushers than to narcotics officers. The authors believe that the seriousness of the subject does not lend itself to cute catchwords. But players may invent such slang for these villains as they see fit.

Temptations

The first line of defense against Narcissists is to know how they think. They hope to use the same tactic in recruiting novice spanners. All the weapons of guilt, doubt, greed and fear so common to leveller spin control are in the narcissist arsenal as well. After all, this is a War over the abuse of sentient force. They can make no headway, enjoy no triumph, if they cannot first win over the hearts of those they wish to destroy.

Wakewits the Younger, (b. AD 1213)
Sketchbook of Scenes from 1393
ink & wash
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

Here follow some of the typical arguments and temptations presented by narcissists, followed by **good comebacks in boldface.** They have an infinite number of variations of these, so just keep your head when the devils make their pitch:

You're a Mindless Drone

You're really just doing what you've been told. What is the Yet but a means of making you run the rat-maze set by the Exalted? With all this sneaking around and giving signals, you really have no way of knowing what is going on! When was the last time you did something that wasn't just for this faceless, secretive 'Continuum'?

—I have friends, heroic responsibilities, cash in the bank, and a wide, wide horizon ahead of me. You're the one that looks fragged, nagged, ragged and paranoid...

Secrets and Powers Revealed

Poor thing, you don't even know how you learned to span! But I'll tell you, free of charge. And hey, if you like that, I know how you can go and rule your own world. I've seen it happen. No obligations, just hear what I have to say...

—I can wait until I earn Span Three to find out further information, thank you. And when I do, then watch out for me ruling the world: I'm on the winning side NOW.

Artwork © 1999 Brian Wackwitz

The Nightmares of History

How can you just sit there when millions of Jews, Gypsies, gays and dissenters are sent into the ovens of the Grossdeutches Reich? Or the centuries upon centuries of slavery, breeding humans to be strong and stupid, and keeping them from the dignity that freedom promises? How often can you just walk around these bloodbaths before you lose your humanity all together!?

—All these tragedies pale beside eliminating these peoples' existence altogether. That is what you're suggesting, isn't it?

The Inheritor Peril

This whole Inheritor Spacetime business is just a big lie— the biggest. Mankind is being genetically *erased*. You're helping them do it! They gave you this little earth-bound trick of spanning, while they have vast alien fleets awaiting to absorb another planet into their empire. We have to resist with all the resources we have!

—This makes zero sense. If the Inheritors are evil aliens, why give any of us the power to span? They could just smush us as levellers. (If you've made any Aquarian friends by this point, you might want to mention them, too.)

Finally, if the situation doesn't seem hopeless, turn the recruitment tables on them, and tell them if they want change, they could start with themselves. It may not be too late— if they're willing to make a phone call, the Continuum will come to them, and look into their rehabilitation.

Dreamers and the Quicker are the best Fraternities to handle narcissists who want to shape up. The Foxhorn can be helpful if they still seem dangerous; but Foxhorns can get carried away, so be careful where you send converting or surrenderring narcissists.

Antedesertium

Many send to me, begging with words, Let us come to you, Master. Let us Love you, let us glory in your wisdom and open all the Gates of Wonder, as your hands. And I say to you: stay away. For all of us have already chosen our favorites, and they are not smiling on you.
—Khar Tembedh, the Twelfth King.

This narcissist-sympathetic empire dominates Earth for millennia of spacetime before the eras of The Societies.

They say our philosophies are at war, and that they have allies in all Civilizations who band together to unmake the Continuum. But they are just another piece of chaotic spacetime trapped in amber: No successful decisive strike is observed or recorded anywhen. But their blind faith in mutability makes them dangerous to every individual, and the fighting of them is in all our Yets.

Sagittarian Era: Kings of a Fey People
c. 18000 - 16000 BC

This is perceived as an enlightened, albeit misled spacetime for Antedesertium. In broadly general terms, it is a collection of seventy kings, of varying descent and causal relation, who rule conjointly and in relative peace. While the people seem outwardly happy, it is known that sacrifice is a part of their culture: Vanished objects, animals, children, and so on, have special rituals that allow the ravaged populace some small comfort amidst living the nightmare.

Its dealings with its direct descendants in the Scorpiod Era are nearly as chilly as its dealing with the Societies. It is generally believed that the Sagittarians allowed the development of the Scorpiods as a means of distracting the Societies and the Continuum, while they hatch subtler plans at home.

Junkyards of Spacetime

Antedesertium is a spanner civilization; therefore many secrets of technology cannot easily can be kept from them. The ceaseless task of the Continuum is keeping working examples of weapons of mass destruction, and other critical items and information, out of narcissist hands. Nevertheless, the kings succeed in cobbling together much of what the Societies discard over the generations: An unusual mix of AD 20th and 21st century technologies makes its appearance in surprising, and often out-of-context ways in their cities.

Therefore, much of the information and services that Continuum spanners take for granted is fought over as the most precious commodities in the realm. Vast resources are spent by Sagittarians in spying on and stealing from each other, making our job that much easier.

Attitudes and Responses toward the Continuum

Narcissists refer to our diligence in mapping mankind 'the Hegemony'; their name for the Societies. This disdain for the care of our people is typical: Most Sagittarians value personal strength of will over compassion for their fellows. While a complex of honor systems are draped on this cultural construct, it is largely hollow, as cooperation is impossible to maintain in a civilization where every individual wants to reshape the world, and believes he can.

Most Sagittarians are little interested in travelling outside their Era, although they do manage to marshall and send forces out to fight the Societies. (Most are seeking a means to escape to 'another' universe directly from where they live.) The kings also bear modest responsibility for stopping our actions in their territory; but tend to divorce them-

selves from bad situations they cannot prevent. They tend to attach a rationalist explanation to these failures: They have not the resources to both rewrite the universe and guard their people.

Scorpiod Era: Kings of Hell

c. 16000 - 14000 BC

This is a particularly cruel spacetime wherein the ruling classes rapidly narrow to a handful of vicious individuals who pool and eddy the reality around them to suit their merest taste. It is these tyrants modern narcissists envy and emulate.

They are known to launch minions deep into Societal spacetime; it is no coincidence that the wars of the Geminid Era are at the maximum reach of a Span Five from— or to— the border of Antedesertium.

This civilization is determined to unravel the universe to its own selfish annihilation. They fail, of course. But that doesn't make our victory bloodless.

These matters are generally beyond the scope of novice, Span One and Two, spanners; but sometimes the monsters from this "prehistoric" past find their way across your path, or even living in your neighborhood.

The Seven and the Sixteen

The most serious attacks on spacetime inside the Societies come from these powerful and fearless narcissists. They are princes in their own land, and walk among spanners of the Societies as the most ordinary of levellers. If you ever suspect a leveller of knowing far too much about time travelling than seems right, spread the word about them at once.

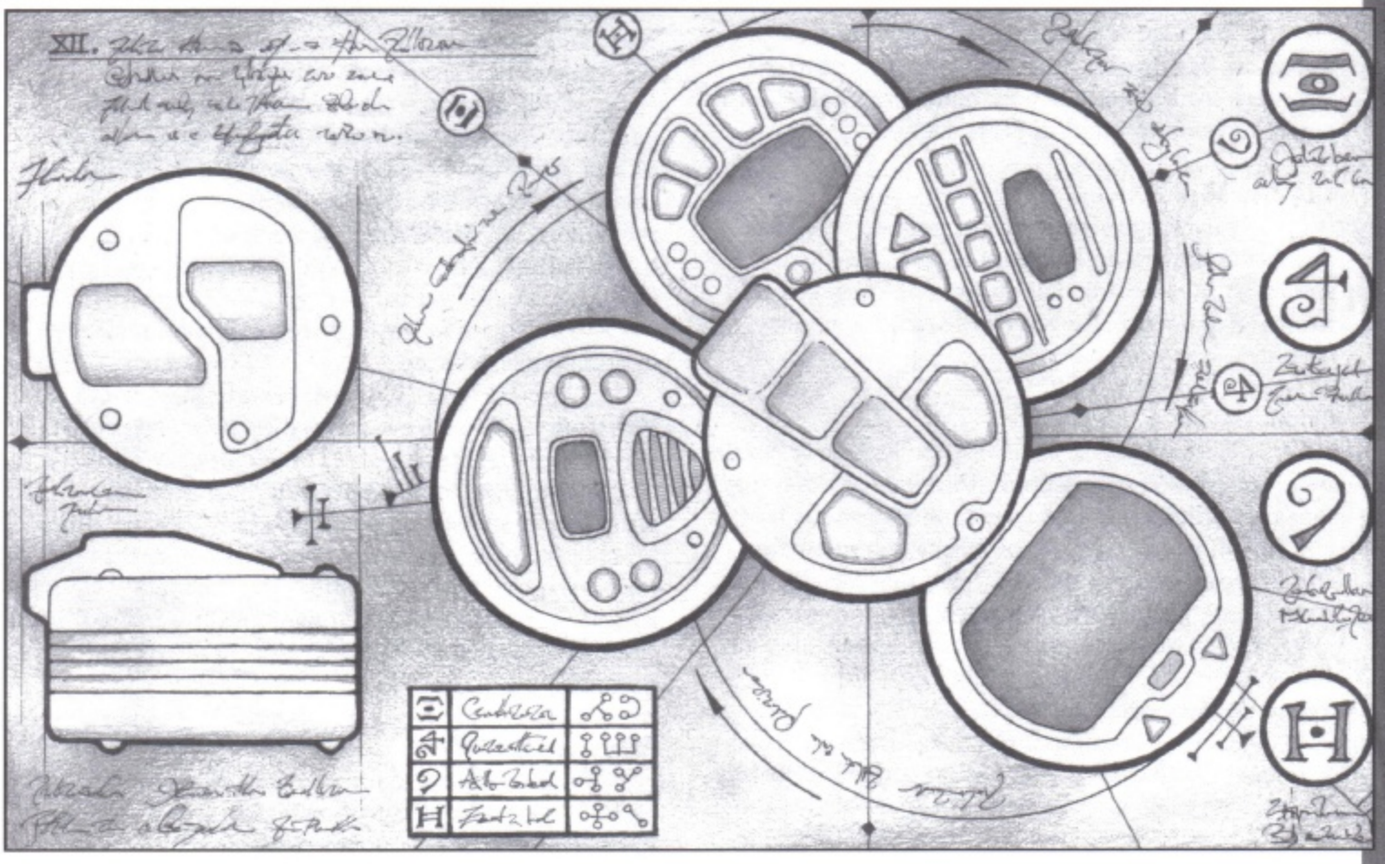
The function of these dark legends seems to be to attempt to fracture the universe with the intent of creating alternate timelines [see Fallacious Multiverse, pg. 56]. The plan of attack seems arithmetically obvious: Seven from sixteen is nine (16 - 7 = 9), the number of eras the Societies span (Libra - Aquarius). This may be a mere ruse, and serious attempts may occur in greater or lesser numbers than than nine, and the suggestion that there is only one serious attempt per Era seems unsubstantiated.

It is believed that the Seven derive from the Sixteen, and are also their masters, though this is deeply unclear. The Seven's ultimate existence is roiling the globe during the Scorpiod Era, and presenting the forward, very military threat to the Societies up and into Interregnum.

The Sixteen are the ones who enter Societal spacetime and set up patterns of recruitment. Being narcissists, each has a very different style, but none act like they pose a threat. Most go undercover as levellers of ordinary occupation, and patiently build lives around this persona, carry no evidence of anachronism about them.

The story goes that nine of the Sixteen sacrifice their all to open a way for other narcissists to enter other worlds, while the other

Celastrus (b. 1271)
A device seen in Antedesterium, from *Foundlings of the Discarded People* (12983 BC)
nanized graphite
The Great Librarium, Atlantis



Artwork © 1999 Stephen Barnwell

Seven return to Antedesertium mightier than when they left. Needless to say, the Continuum finds and squelches these hazards to humanity, though they are our toughest fights on home turf. Further information on these attempts is not available here, but the GM may feel free to use the information presented here to construct his campaign.

The "Vessels"

Some narcissists of high Span are fragged to within microns of annihilation, but are maintained by their fellows in binding them to a place or object. These are called Vessels, and they distort spacetime, often to the whim of their controller.

They are exceedingly fragile and difficult to control, but when used properly a Vessel can deflect attacks and even research about its master. A master must carry at least one point of Frag to carry or use a Vessel, a bit of information that can be useful when dealing with them. Also, it is believed that so much frag is spread by a Vessel, that it cannot be restored to above Frag 8, but can only be fragged out to be destroyed.

A Vessel is usually hidden by its master, and therefore difficult to frag— but while fragging out a Vessel may be the only way of destroying it, its final destruction is usually spectacular and deadly to anyone nearby. Choose your moment to attack carefully.

Dark Gifts of Frag

or, Stupid Narcissist Tricks

The Continuum does not teach how these things are performed. For game purposes, the GM has a table outlining just how much Frag a narcissist has to have to accomplish these tricks:

Discoporative Actions

Reaching through walls, poltergeist activities, being unharmed by weapons, etc. All the spooky stuff you hear that ghosts do. These effects can be very daunting when combatted by novice spanners.

Haunting

Without a will of his own, a narcissist begins to attach himself to susceptible levellers in the hopes that they will cross paths with moments of his frag, and be influenced to aid him. While unable to control his spanning, the narcissist still may be able to concentrate what is left of himself on an object or place. Or, as the following illustrates, on to a person.

Terror & Possession

Inciting emotional reactions in people (mainly levellers) and even taking partial control of their minds is possible at extremes of frag. All that is left of the narcissist is the desire to have their free will back: Note that most reported possessions leave victims gibbering, violent and nonsensical, and certainly in no shape to remember who they are or how to heal frag.

While some these powers may seem enticing, even magical, remember that they are only possible by losing one's volition entirely. These are really the mindless reflexes of an insect leg, yanked from a crushed body.

Madness and Related Problems

Mental Health

Since sentient force is our gift and our responsibility, we must be ever careful that the bearers of this sentience remain sane.

Time travel is not the natural state for *homo sapiens*, but it is one it can adapt to. Nevertheless, the strain that spanning puts to the mind of an individual takes many forms. The most common among Span Ones is simple confusion, and the remedy is usually patience and helping one another cope. At higher Spans, the stress of managing events on a global scale can be likened to a high-powered executive job among levellers. Again, nothing a little r&r won't cure, and scheduling a vacation is almost never a problem.

But serious mental illness can strike spanners, even ones deeply loyal to their fellows in the Continuum. Too many weapons of the Aquarian cusp, and too many instances of natural and deliberate frag can strike a person's mind.

Whenever the GM decides a spanner has had some rough going (near death, frag over 4, loss of legs, lover butchered by narcissists, etc.) he may decide the experience was stressful enough to warrant rolling vs. Mind to see if the spanner develops a mental illness. The GM chooses an appropriate illness from the list below.

Needless to say, it is impossible to advance in Span while afflicted.

Here follows a list of mental illnesses and their causes. Not all are ordered by psychiatric classification (for instance, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and phobias would all be classed anxiety disorders), but are listed separately as they affect spanners. And note that the pleasant terms "mental health" and "mental hygiene" are late Piscean terms; most eras and cultures simply refer to the afflicted as madmen or the possessed:

Altimnemonosis

A term used mainly in spanner circles for all forms of **altered or jumbled memory,** or the inability to remember events in their proper order.

Injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, or any of a number of diseases affecting the memory centers of the brain can create this problem in levellers. Lack of sleep can also be a culprit. But for spanners the most likely source is, as one might guess, frag.

Amnesia

Partial or total loss of memory. This is similar to Altimnemonosis in that injury, disease, and even stress can inflict a surpression of one's basic ability to remember.

The GM decides what and how much memory a character loses. Partial memory loss can be anything to forgetting that you just bought gum, to where you live and work and the names of all your friends.

Total amnesia means someone who can read and speak their native language, and how what country they are from, but are missing most of their life's story. Spanners that forget they are spanners try to return to their leveller lives, possibly puzzled as to how so much time has passed— or how they, incredibly, woke up one morning and found themselves *somewhere back in time!*

Induced by hypnosis or device

Sometimes it's a necessary part of life, when an incident must be forgotten by aghast levellers, or a spanner can imagine no other way to untangle his frag. This is not so much an illness as a poison that leads to a cure. See Hypnosis, pg. 115.

Induced by frag

Narcissists can attack in waves too, though more rarely, and if a character takes 4 points of frag in one Sweep, he may suddenly lose his memory altogether, so fragmented is his Yet. Curing the frag cause the memories to slowly be restored, probably over a period of two to six weeks.

Apathy

Lack of interest in any events. This is often related to Automatonosis. In levellers, it is a clinical state of depression. In spanners, it usually has to do with feeling one already knows how the universe turns out, and there's nothing to do but watch it spin on until they or it dies.

The best cure for this is a surprise vacation into a distant Era, though other treatments are available. If the GM is to blame for the apathy, the player should take the initiative to surprise him.

See also Obsessive/Compulsive Disorders, below.

Automatonosis

A spanner term for the **compulsion to perform one's life as fated.**

This is an illness mainly seen in spanners, rather than levellers: Few levellers gain the respect and fear of fate that time travellers do.

In the most serious cases, a spanner will become obsessed with the outcome of his life, his family's life, his nation's destiny, et cetera, and try to learn all he can, filling his Yet with a lifetime of known chores. He may insist that it is the only way to keep himself and/or the universe secure, and so torture himself into life as a *de facto* automaton. Worse, the sufferer may insist that he is incurable, because he knows that as well.

Using Hypnosis at appropriate moments in his life may relieve some of his burden, but if kept up for long, this can doom a spanner with an existence worse than death, robbed of all spontaneity and surprise. For a variation on this, see the story *Manifest Destiny* [pg. 97].

See also Obsessive/Compulsive Disorders, below.

Glossolalia

Otherwise known as "**speaking in tongues**". In spanners, this is a failure of the speech centers of the brain to distinguish between the language being spoken to the spanner, and the one(s) they are responding in.

Often affects dreamers, or spanners that have been communicating a great deal through dream with many people who speak languages they do not understand. Sometimes affects spanners of over 200 years of age who have learned more than five hundred or so languages. The afflicted is sometimes unable to maintain a conversation in one language, and occasionally mixes sentences and even word-constructs with dozens of languages that they know or have encountered in dreams.

Multiple Personality Disorder

Known at the Aquarian Cusp as Dissociative Identity Disorder, it is defined at that time by the American Psychiatric Association as being "characterized by the presence of **two or more distinct identities or personality states** that recurrently take control of the individual's behavior, accompanied by the inability to recall important information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness".[6] Theoretically a psychic mechanism for dealing with separate painful moments of the victim's life, each personality taking on different strengths to combat each kind of pain, the very validity as a leveller illness is hotly debated at the Aquarian Cusp.

But what Jacob Robert Kantor referred to ominously in 1919 as a "*longitudinal* dissociation of

[6]American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, version IV, emphasis ours.

the components of personality"[7] is not a matter of debate to spanners in the Continuum. Spanners who bear the burden of a point of frag for an extended period of time can begin to develop an alternate personality *to explain that frag*. The frag does not go away, but the spanner's alternate personality begins to deny the necessity of curing it, and even blames the other personality for perpetuating the frag.

The length of time before an alternate personality first emerges is usually at least one year of Age, and that only in fragile-minded spanners. But excessive or repeated frag can make it more likely to occur, even in a usually healthy mind.

Memories are not shared between personalities, though sometimes they can hold conversations. The GM may call for a separate character sheet to be written up for the new personality, with the same Ability scores, but different Skills based on Mind, and all other Skills set down to Novice rank. Which personality is dominant usually depends upon what information or task is being asked of the person. The personality best able to cope with a situation will likely be the one in charge.

Once the first personality emerges, subsequent points of frag run the risk of creating more personalities. The character must roll against Quick every time he's fragged, or he'll have even more mental company. Conversely, curing the frag (if it is possible against the spanner's will) results in the new personality slowly reintegrating into the character. It's a process that takes seven days to six months, depending on how long the personality has been loose.

Obsessive/Compulsive Disorders

Ritualized behavior. Not feeling balanced until having touched objects with each sides of one's body. Having to wash one's hands a certain number of times. Always checking the time more than once a minute. Superstitious behavior. The list of possible compulsions is endless. In levellers, it is usually a response to anxiety, and the ritual makes one feel more secure.

In spanners, this is often referred to simply as "getting stuck": The **inability to *not* perform events** by routine, even if they aren't in one's Yet. This results often from a spanner's anxiety over not wanting to discover more about one's Yet, and so hides in emptier rituals that avoid the possibility of such discovery, or even of much enjoying the spanner life.

Paranoia

The irrational belief that the world is plotting against you. Not enough can be written about this problem. Spanners, especially Pisceans, are encouraged to study the cultures of the last half century of the Piscean era when researching paranoia.

A spanner can suffer from this when to many coincidences, especially unfortunate ones, begin to occur in their lives. Even favorable Grace rolls can become grounds for suspecting the Continuum of trying to put you off-guard. Many narcissists succumb to or derive from paranoia.

See also Obsessive/Compulsive Disorders, above.

Phobias

Fear of a particular object or situation. Usually irrational, but with an identifiable source. Being attacked by hungry lions might result in a fear of cats, for instance.

A common spanner fear is barophobia—fear of the loss of gravity. This strikes spanners who have had trouble flying or spanning— especially a recent near-miss into the atmosphere. A spanner afraid of spanning is about the saddest sight in the world.

See also Obsessive/Compulsive Disorders, above.

Schizophrenia

Known popularly as an illness with hallucinations, hearing voices, altered sense of self and/or reality, and bizarre behavior, schizophrenics also exhibit many less spectacular and more devestating symptoms such as emotional withdrawl, loss of motivation and cognitive abilities. Contrary to popular belief, Multiple Personality Disorder is a separate and distinct illness.

People from most Eras regard schizophrenia as a form of demonic possession, and considering narcissists, they are more accurate than they know. The cause is largely unknown at the Aquarian cusp, due to a dearth of reliable biological markers, and treatments are erratic.

In spanners, schizophrenia can be a result or misdiagnosis of high frag (5 points and up). Symptoms may persist even after the frag is repaired, though this would be the first step. Combatants in Antedesertium and the Geminid Era often suffer from varying degrees of the illness.

Sleepspanning

Somnambulance, or sleepwalking takes on new meanings when the sleeper can span.

Sleepwalking usually lasts between a second and thirty minutes. It is more common in children than in adults, and can be induced by Hypnosis. Sleepwalkers often perform routine daily functions while asleep, like walking the dog or washing dishes. Often their eyes are open, though they are asleep.

Sleepwalking is related to the slow wave sleep (SWS) part of the sleep cycle. SWS is believed to be part of the regenerative cycle of the cerebellum. Since Dreaming is related to the rapid-eye movement (REM) part of sleep, a spanner is not likely to be in

[7] Human personality and its pathology, *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and the Scientific Methods*, 1919, 16, emphasis ours.

the Dreamtime while sleepspanning, and few clues about his sleepwalking habits are likely to be found there.

Sleepspanning is controlled by the GM, or by the Hypnotizing character, if applicable. Often the player simply isn't told where he is when he awakens, or what he was doing while somnambulent.

While it is quite conceivable for a sleepspanner to span off into space, over a lava pit, or other oblivion— and would cause due alarm among his friends because of this— it's unfair by game standards to have a hapless character get killed by wandering in his sleep. Therefore, the GM must allow the sleepspanner to awaken unharmed, though there is no stricture on how long their safety lasts upon waking (i.e. on a raft surrounded by crocodiles, falling from 30,000 feet, in the service module of Apollo 13 sixteen seconds before launch, etc.) Violations of the Fourth Maxim are quite possible, so cures for this are rapidly sought.

Span is not regained during any sleep interrupted by sleepwalking or sleepspanning.

Taboos

The barriers of time being removed, many human taboos that are time-bound drop away, leaving only human willpower and a sense of ethics to prevent one from becoming a monster. The list of once-forbidden possibilities tempting a spanner is remarkably long.

The laws of leveller nations cannot bind a spanner, even the most circumspect one. The ethics of theft and responsibility, and even murder, are put to the test when no leveller authority can hope to catch you. The depths some go to find 'sport', such as a leveller that became lost in the woods never to return, make most spanners stomachs turn.

Sexual experimentation is to be expected in some spanners, and shunned by others. Plural marriages are illegal in the West in the 20th Century— but not in certain places in the 19th. Some spanners even become confused distinguishing between a lover of 21 years of age, and juniors of same, or elders much older, even dying or dead. Some are ill or fragged individuals that need treatment. Others are narcissists who simply refuse all ethical bounds. Another healthy reason children aren't candidates to become spanners.

The Continuum is as tolerant of decadence as it is tolerant of totalitarianism: Each have their place in the rounds of life. It is only when the need for thrills or expressing intolerance reach the point of creating frag does the Continuum call a just and ready halt, and brand someone a narcissist.

But toying with taboos is inviting trouble; it is really just practice for the temptation of breaking Maxims. Keeping a balanced mind and healthy *human* attitude is always preferable. It keeps one away from that slippery slope into nothingness.

Curing Mental Illness

For levellers, the casting out of inner demons has taken many shapes over the centuries. Usually a priest or shaman, and only later licensed physicians, would administer healing drugs, or perform rituals that would apply stress to the body as a response to the stresses place by disease or injury.

For spanners, the corridors of the mind are intimately entwined into the use of sentient force. Symptoms of mental illness can persist after all frag is cured, and long period of rest and therapy is always recommended.

The Dreamers, Quicker, and Physicians Fraternities are especially equipped to deal with spanner mental illness. Dreamers have the ability to pinpoint the problem by Lucid Dreaming about the victim, and sharing it with them. The Physicians have many mental health professionals in their ranks. And the Quicker can tell if frag is still involved, as well as recommend some exotic locations that only they might know about. The Quicker are also adept at 'tough love': A spanner being petulantly obsessive or apathetic can be roused by a creepy visit by this fraternity, as if someone's doom were hanging by a thread. They usually know when this is a helpful, rather than detrimental course of action.

The Physicians Fraternity also specialize in healing mental-related ailments that can affect a spanner's ability to span:

- **Physical injury** to the brain (and/or nervous system) —this can easily result in faulty spanning; the GM has details
- **Allergies**
  —a big problem for Aquarians, certain exotic funguses or pollens can affect the nervous system
- **Intoxicants**
  —counteracting drugs or alcohol to make it safe to span

Intoxicated Spanners

Spanning while drunk is a bad idea.

Travelling more than a day in any direction requires a roll against Span, or you miss your target. The first time you miss while drunk isn't deadly, and should sober you up. But subsequent spans while drunk are treated as per Travelling Beyond One's Span, pg. 35.

Again, spanning Levelly is always safe, but while drunk, you might just be off a couple feet, and bound into a wall, or wind up on the far side of one from where you're aiming. Being drunk while violating the Fourth Maxim is absolutely no excuse.

Wakewits the Younger, (b. AD 1213)
Sketchbook of Scenes from 1393
ink & wash
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

Aging and the Human Perception of Time Passing

All the cells of the human body, with few exceptions, regenerate every seven years. Thus a person tends to look very different in every seven-year cycle of their existence. It has been shown that events of seven years in one's past are reviewed with new insight, often with surprise and a sense that one was considerably more foolish, or that fashions were

Nostalgia usually sets in at intervals of four teen or twenty-one years. Quaintness is a feeling one naturally holds for a revered grandparent, and sets in after at least forty years, or at about the second generation, from the times that seem quaint.

Interrupting Aging

When one begins to manipulate human flesh to accommodate the desire to remain young and alive for centuries, millennia, and onward, the body's signals of cellular regeneration are altered, and many of the subtle human emotions mentioned above (nostalgia, quaintness) are lost, sometimes forever.

This emotional brittleness is more evident in pre-Aquarians, who one would expect to keep a greater range of expressing feelings about the world. (Aquarians are mostly born engineered, and therefore acclimate smoothly.) This is why Exalted seem very aloof: They are not just superadult, they are removed from the heady sluice of life. They still feel the range of emotions, but no longer experience the needs of the day-to-day, as they were first born to do. The wisest of them take time to play sports and bake pies, before returning to Atlantean politics and holding aloft the world.

For a case of emotional brittleness, see the story *Manifest Destiny*, pg. 97.

Elderly Spanners and Natural Death

Since part of the goal of spanners in C°NTINUUM is to advance in Span, and thereby gain the privilege of extended life, this section is mainly informative of encountering those that don't make the cut.

Senility and all the common mental and physical diseases of old age can strike spanners who grow old and remain Span One or Two. But while old folks have increasing difficulty in walking or caring for themselves, spanning often remains a joy to the very end.

A senile spanner is a tough thing to corrall, as the Maxims get muddled and forgotten while the spanner gads about, often gleeful at escaping his caregivers until he loses his way.

Artwork © 1999 Brian Wackwitz

Aging Table

Span	Penalties				
	-1 Body	-2 Body	-3 Body -1 Mind	-4 Body -2 Mind	-5 Body -3 Mind
0	50 years	60 years	70 years	80 years	90 years
1	55 years	65 years	75 years	90 years	100 years
2	55 years	65 years	75 years	90 years	100 years
3	200 years	250 years	300 years	350 years	400 years
4	950 years	1000 years	1100 years	1200 years	1400 years
5+	usually irrelevant				

The GM may waive or increase any penalties on the table above. If Body or Mind reaches Zero through penalties on this table, the spanner keeps the Ability at 1, but will die of natural causes within 3 years after, and is bedridden until then. Maximum Age is exceeding the last listed Age for your Span on the Aging Table by 30%, at which point natural death occurs automatically.

Seeking Your Death

A spanner's leveller persona will need a death at some point. This can be staged, like so many other events, with a little forethought and elbow grease.

But some spanners are overwhelmed by the curiosity of when and where they are to die. It is a common theme in time travel fiction, to find oneself standing upon one's own grave a la Scrooge, morbidly fascinated by the implications.

Beyond the Aging Table (above) there is no reason why further information need be easy to acquire, or why any Scribe, Quicker or Dreamer would want to impart this awful information to the doom-seeking spanner. A spanner might find their death in any number of ways, Eras, and places; there may be no grave, or the spanner may yet be fragged out and collected. The GM is under no obligation to help a spanner find out.

Spanners are actively dissuaded from seeking such discouraging information: If you try too hard, you may find the answer is "Now".

Artwork © 1999 Tony DiTerlizzi

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Chapter IV: Mastering

"Pity that the stags cannot teach swiftness to the turtles."

—Kahlil Gibrain, *The Prophet*, AD 1923.

A CAUTION TO PLAYERS:
CHAPTERS IV & V ARE FOR GAME MASTERS ONLY!
DO NOT READ ANY FURTHER INTO THESE CHAPTERS,
UNLESS YOU ARE THE GM.

Rules

- **gamemastering time travel–** help for the referee:
- **handling players–** prepare for the cleverest and the most base
- **designing a campaign–** telling the tale while keeping the game balanced
- **notes on chapters I, II, and III–** secrets only for the GM
- **narcissists–** who, when and why
- **scenario ideas–** adventure nuggets, and how to get free scenarios online

Stories

- The other side of Cynthia Stirling's life, the **secrets she keeps every day,** even from herself

opposite
D'Terlizzi, (b. 1462)
Balance
Illumination from *On the Nature of the Greater Atmospheres* (AD 1511)
pen-and-ink
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

Gamemastering Time Travel

The referee, or Game Master (GM) has the real burden in C°NTINUUM: designing adventures and moderating characters that may be interacting across many years, even centuries. A single play session may be run across generations of time, and the GM has to stay cheerfully flexible as the players tie his plotlines into Gordian knots of paradox.

For a general explanation of what it means to referee a roleplaying game, see Appendix B: Roleplaying Basics, pg. 213.

A. Handling Players

Inevitably, as you begin a C°NTINUUM campaign, or even a simple scenario, players have questions about time travel– and then more questions. Even a complete perusal of the players' section will leave many captured with the wonder of the possibilities, but concerned over what is and is not impossible.

Whenever feasible, make the players roleplay to ask a time travel question. These questions should be addressed from novice character to mentor— not player to GM. This will allow them to practice and experiment with spanning so that everyone can see by doing. (It also allows you to deal with any petulant players that go and frag themselves and their friends within the context of the game!)

We've found that nearly all time travel questions in C°NTINUUM fall under these two categories:

Answer #1: Because It's There.

If an event occurred, it occurred. Frag "points" are a game convention: In the long view, frag is always repaired. Much of the action in the game is *getting* them repaired.

If it's in your corner, it's your jurisdiction. If it's your doing, it's your responsibility. Any Fraternities or strangers that want to hunt on your turf have to ask. Remind them if necessary that making tensions in the Continuum is something narcissists attempt to exploit.

Finally, it is the extreme of arrogance to assume that one person can create an entire universe, especially by destroying any or all of the vigitillion lives to come.

Answer #2: Information Is All— and so is the kind of information you have.

If a character has witnessed or participated in an event, he's subject to any frag associated with it. On the other hand, hearing about an event second hand allows an individual much greater leverage to act. Dreamers and Scribes are especially adept at providing you with precisely the information you need For instance, the Oracle and Frune stratagems of TIme Combat can often be handled through contact with members of these fraternities.

Any other questions should be answerable by studying the Maxims [see frontispiece] and the mentor's explanations of them [ppg. 91-93]. These are mostly social questions, but when span and frag depend on an individual's actions and sentient force, **social behavior becomes of paramount importance.**

For further information on response to time travel questions, see Chapter 2: Spanning, pg. 32, or direct the players there themselves.

More Tips on Handling Players

Here are some detailed methods of handling the surprising situations players entangle their characters (and your plots) in. For tips on how to develop a C°NTINUUM campaign, see pg. 150.

Take Control of the Plot At Any Time

Players running away with the plot of a game can often be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. But in those instances where you feel something must happen, well, it does.

Say you had a complex plot involving a fragile sculpture in a museum window which they smash to bits one day, but you wanted to exist three days later. Let the players know, by seeing it, or a note from a friend in the Continuum, or even a Gemini Incident, that the sculpture exists in perfect shape a few days hence, and levellers are none the wiser. Now they have this thing in their Yet, and have to solve 1) what its survival means [i.e. your original plot] and 2) how to get it or a copy of it back to where their junior selves can smash it.

Essentially, when an object is destroyed, treat it like Surviving Death [pg. 40], and if it destroyed a second time, ("Second" Death,) anyone in its vicinity or near future must roll on the Frag Table as if it were a spanner of Span 1 attempting to Frag them. Curing this Frag will involve another round of...

Record-Keeping

Span Cards

Whenever a player says "I Span over to..." tell them, "Okay, write it down." Getting in the habit of this allows players an accurate diary of every game, and the sense that every action matters. The spanning cards provided [Appendix Z, pg. 224] should allow you to do this smoothly.

What these records do for you, the GM, is to help spawn new adventures. Bill spanned back eight months so that he could learn to fly a plane? Okay, he spent eight months of Age and arrived back ready to pilot. But those eight months were spent somewhere. Perhaps the rest of the players later Go Down and meet the junior Bill, still struggling with FAA regulations. They begin to discover that his instructor is a Narcissist, out to ensure that Bill fails, or even crashes! Since that would Frag the lot of them (having already enjoyed many plane rides with Bill), the opponent has to be weeded out, and he might have friends...

The fact that Bill didn't tell his friends of the adventure is easily explained— as a good member of the Continuum, he did not pass on information they did not yet have.

Record-keeping by the players also allows you to apply the effects of aging. Adults tend to look noticeably older at seven-year intervals. GMs can play the reactions of distraught family members as a spanner returns home for a Christmas after spending years of Age in some enormous combat-filled adventure. At some point, spanners can't go home again.

A note on recording level spanning: Low-Span characters may wish to zip around big cities or even countries by a rapid succession of mile-long "hops". At your discretion, you may decide that they make it without encounter or incident— if so, you may also want to save players' time and space in filling out spanning cards, by having them list the entire number of Level spans on a single line.

Character Sheets

Every time a player character increases in Span, have them start a new character sheet. This will not only allow them a fresh start, it will assist them in any elder geminis they have to clean up, or any scenes where a junior of that Span encounters other players' characters.

Splitting the Party

When one character takes off for the distant past, leaving others behind, you might feel that it's not like other games when a party of characters is divided— they're all over spacetime!

In fact, the best way to treat parties divided in Time is to simply give all players equal attention; say, five minutes apiece, back and forth, and let members of one party roleplay while your attention is with the other.

Ed might spend weeks in 1987 trying to escape a killer, while Susan appears in the nick and stops the bad guy. Ed was desperately trying to find a safe place to sleep and regain Span, while Susan was doing Oracle research to find Ed and his enemy, and travelling slowly down from 1996 to help her friend. Being a time traveller, it's no surprise she arrives at the perfect moment— once she's had weeks of research and the resources of a decade behind her.

Just don't fall into the trap that one party will "run out of time" to save the other party, even if both are level with each other. Spanners usually have more time than they know what to do with.

More fun are situations where the party forgets to assign a corner to rendezvous in after spanning about separately. "Uhh, anyone remember where we parked...?"

Time Combat has a strict 60-second limit to keep up suspense: this is a game convention, as the spanners are outright declaring they spend weeks combatting each other. Know what pacing is appropriate for your players in situations outside of Time Combat, and run with it.

Compounding Failures

Someone may well try and force a gemini, or other event they are certain didn't happen, "just to see." Keep adding points of frag as the event goes forward. At 2 or 3 points of Frag, have the other members of the fragger's corner begin a Time Combat— since they have almost certainly been fragged by this wayward spanner's actions. The corner need not know the source of the Frag at the outset— but that's typical of Time Combat.

The erring spanner should soon be found out, though, and be shamed, fragged, and facing ostracism. The spanner should be given *one* chance to redeem himself and fix all the frag. Acting up a second time, and he may find himself very much on his own...

Dangling Rewards

New players may well be impatient to see the greater vistas of Time. They may complain that replacing broken vases before they're noticed missing, and making sure that they don't Frag themselves by appearing in the same grocery store on the same day, is growing a little tiresome.

Start dropping in hints of the vast stretches of Time awaiting them. One finds a 17th Century sword with their name and duelling marks engraved upon it. Another makes a friend at a popular Corner whose thick voice prattles in almost unintelligible Middle English, but who acts like they've been pals for years. Still another watches the History Channel, and footage of Teddy Roosevelt reveals a familiar face at his side. And there are always Gemini Incidents: Elder selves may appear, dripping with the

air of spanning sophistication, to make simple requests of their juniors, spawning renewed wonder and adventures.

Also, if you feel you and your group are good enough roleplayers, you may have them play spanners of Span One born and living in another Era, learning this strange new art from folk they barely know, or have been told to shun for their sorcerous ways. Note that the authors believe that learning the social graces and mechanics of spanning is challenging enough to new players that their first characters should be people like themselves, of their own Era and locality. The weirdness of spanning around a local mall or schoolyard can be a wild ride all by itself.

Munchkins and other terrors: Handling difficult players.

Against the Lollipop League.

The term *munchkin* (after the diminutive, intense, but helpless inhabitants of Oz) came into common parlance in the 1990s as a depreciative word for gamers with a certain mindset. Munchkins[1] are gamers who devise characters with maximum powers and minimum vulnerability, assuming that the numbers in the game provide the means to 'winning' it, like card-counting at a casino.

Munchkins are distinct from players who like less talk and more kicking butt: C°NTINUUM is entirely compatible with the "hack and slash" form of roleplaying. Munchkins just pursue attaining the best stats for their own sake, and it's kind of odd. They tend to recount the powers and things their characters *have* far more than the victories they've achieved. Fighting villains is seen as just another means to attaining more powers and things. People who openly do this in real life are usually disliked.

But all spanners start out with absolute power over space and time. Munchkins may have a hard time in C°NTINUUM, because to advance, their character actually has to *impress* somebody. They will be flummoxed as other players' characters advance by performing services and earning admiration, while they try to make their characters' muscles larger, or learn every skill in the book, or push their Quick scores into double-digits.

Be patient and polite with any munchkins, but when it comes to their Span advancement, we recommend you take a hard line.

Game Hogs.

Being a spanner can quickly go to a player's head. Certain players are of the mindset that they can learn a million things in a second— if they only take the time.

Unfortunately, the time they take is not always just their own. If all the deeds and adventures they wish to perform require the GM to approve or mediate, the other players can rapidly become bored waiting for the game hog to finish swilling events for himself.

Let them do pretty much what they want as long as it doesn't become Time Combat. Just tell them you won't let them take up time at the game session away from others. Put them in a corner to fill in a Span card with all the Skills they intend to soak up, and figure out the Time Indices for each. Just tell him to go to town, and tell you what the bill comes to (i.e. how much Age he's squandered.)

When he returns to the party with his list of accomplishments, announce how everyone is startled by how much older he looks Even in a relatively short time away (six months to a year) the character may have experienced a gain or loss in weight, new wrinkles, tooth cavities, excessive acne or other rash, or even hair loss. Tell the hog that he may violate the Fourth Maxim if he's seen by leveller friends or goes about in public except in places where his noticeable changes will seem natural.

If the hog manages to get himself into a bonafide Time Combat while off garnishing himself (thus hogging *more* game time away from other players) offer to let the hog come back to the group— with 3 frag from a completely unknown source. If he insists on hogging on and take his chances, have the narcissists attacking him draw the rest of the corner into the action— by laying most of the frag attacks squarely on the hog.

Another appropriate way to brake this trend is to have selfish players' characters approached at once by a narcissist recruiter [see ppg. 135, 192]. The best moment to choose is when the character is off on their own, hogging the action. That should drive honest characters at once back to their corner. If the player is particularly obnoxious, have the narcissists lead him along, then frag him for a couple of points. Time Combat will commence, but his corner needn't take the brunt of the frag, as above.

Note that a player that just wants to perform some quick actions, pick up a couple 'instant skills' or roleplay an interesting situation is not a game hog. Know a game hog by their greed, and desire to be ceaselessly the center of the GM's attention.

Disruptive players.

Some people just like to cause trouble or spoil others' fun. Some argue with every ruling of the GM, or just refuse to get into the spirit of the game. Anyone that's too disruptive, or unable to parse their own lives from that of their characters should be shown the door. At least until they get their heads or attitudes together.

Always remember it's just a game; having fun is the first criterion.

[1]The authors advise against using the insulting term 'munchkin' on any particular person, though odds are you may find one or more in your gaming group.

Bored players.

This is *your* fault, pal. If players start acting antsy or annoyed because the action isn't moving fast enough, it's the referee's job to keep the ball rolling.

Varying plot elements, introducing new and unusual characters, developing different time travel related conundrums to solve, meeting challenges posed by different Fraternities, are but a few of the ways to maintain the interest level for players exploring C°NTINUUM.

If you need new campaign or scenario ideas, see ppg. 193-199. Observant GMs will notice that this rulebook leaves many parts of the C°NTINUUM universe unwritten. While we hope the rules are as sufficient, complete and concise as explaining time travel allows, the missing parts are by and large, deliberate. Any universe is a big place, and the entire expanse of history makes C°NTINUUM astronomically vaster than the average RPG. See The Far Horizon, pg. 151.

B. Designing the Campaign

The Question of Game Balance

The player characters in C°NTINUUM are the **most powerful ever designed** for an RPG.

They can **teleport** and **travel time at will.**

And they will show off every chance they get.

Some traditionally-minded GMs may find themselves at a loss with such powerhouses loose. A standard 'dungeon' with standard 'monsters' or 'treasure' would be easy pickings for spanners, but of little interest to them. A carefully balanced plot might be undone in a moment if the players all decide to run off to another Era without warning.

The GM has to ask himself certain questions going into a C°NTINUUM campaign:

1) Am I willing and able to let the player characters run amok in time?

This is a mindset necessary for running C°NTINUUM. While the Continuum's social strictures set upon the characters are sufficient to limit their 'absolute power', it helps if the GM is flexible enough to handle complete surprise. Always remember that you can surprise the players back with sudden spans of NPCs grabbing items or creating frag. See Take Control of the Plot at Any Time, pg. 146.

2) Am I willing and able to let the players be inventive?

Most GMs understand the need to allow players some inventive control over how their character acts and moves. But inventiveness in a spanner can lead to all kinds of mischief and mayhem. As long as the GM can adapt to fresh ideas, the mayhem can remain entertaining and fun, and the plot can stay mainly on track.

3) Am I willing and able to slam player characters that break Maxims, and cause mischief that's counter to the Continuum?

Some GMs don't like to be drawn into becoming the punisher, preferring players to make their own destinies. In C°NTINUUM, part of those destinies involve fighting for one's existence, and fighting one's own baser nature for the right to that existence. Despite their obvious might, the player characters are fragile, and most will need a reminder at some point.

As stated elsewhere, the Continuum is tolerant of a wide range of behavior— it just isn't tolerant of causing frag to aggrandize oneself. Spanners that realize that their place and power is more outside of history than in it, tend to fare the best.

And just remember that every point of frag you hand out has an as/as not somewhere where it can be fixed. See Frag, pg. 53.

Finally, see the Two Answers on pg. 146.

Story Writing Basics

While the players will be putting their creative spin on any scenario you design, the 'story' of the game is first yours to command. And since you want to impress the teleporting time travellers, you should have a command of what goes into creating a good story.

Plot and Pacing

Plot is a series of decisions.

In an action movie, the decisions are mostly actions. In a more talky movie, or well-written book, the decisions take on a number of forms. Usually the villain makes the first decision, something that the hero must react to, or discover and then react to.

In a roleplaying game, decisions are mostly made by player characters which the NPCs react to.

This allows the players the feeling that they have control over their characters' lives, much as average human beings desire to have control over their lives. In a story, of course, these decisions reach a meaningful *resolution* which satisfies the audience (i.e. the villain gets a comeuppance, the artifact is retrieved, the family is reunited, and so on).

Pacing is speed at which the plot moves. In C°NTINUUM, pacing is what your gaming group makes it. If you prefer a slower roleplaying style (a 'talkie' movie), then spanning and climactic scenes will be more rare, and character development will take up much of your time. If your group prefers hunting down the bad guys and maybe getting in some serious combat (an action movie) then the pace of events will be like lightning striking, with spans possibly outnumbering words of dialogue spoken.

Or anything in between— some of the best movies pace action scenes against dialogue to make both more interesting. See also Campaign Tips— Pacing the Secrets, pg. 151.

Continuity

Continuity is the art of making sense. Keeping plot and characters on track and believable. (It is also, on the cosmic scale, the business of the Continuum.) Decisions build upon one another. If a character in a book or movie makes a decision that contradicts his earlier decisions, the audience wants to know why.

If it is a revealing, surprising character trait— such as an heroic starship captain that hates children, or a villainous vampire lord that really tries to be a good father and understand his vampire son— then the audience grows more interested: Why is that character like that? Good writing reveals the answers in enticing ways.

But more often, contradiction is just bad writing. A superhero detective who has long foresworn firearms, suddenly adds machine guns to his supervehicle —all with no explanation. The question the audience asks is the same— Why is that character like that?— only here they expect to be cheated; the author or director didn't care enough to keep their plot making sense. How many times have you come out of a movie theatre pointing out just these kinds of flaws in a film with your friends?

In C°NTINUUM, continuity is literally the name of the game. Not keeping causality straight, getting fragged, screwing up geminis— bad continuity is fatal. Any nitpick the players (or yourself) have about how the plot hangs together can turn into a full-scale spanner war getting it fixed.

Motivation

Motivation is what a character desires.

When a serious actor asks, "What's my motivation?" it's the same question the rest of ask when we decide why to take a job, or which books to read, games to play, food to buy, etc. It's "Why do I care about doing this?" Simply put, it's what the character wants or needs to do.

The GM needs to create a plot that motivates the player characters. While being sent forth on tasks by one's mentor, or a Span Four, may function to begin an adventure, events that personally interest the characters will better engage the interest of the players. And NPCs, especially villains, need motivations to remain believable.

Having an *identifiable villain* always helps a story along. If the villain has a clear goal motivating him, his pursuit of it, and the heroes' (player characters') efforts to stop him will keep the plot rolling. Note that in C°NTINUUM the villain himself may remain a mystery for some time— it's only important that the villain *can be* identified— which is usually the first task for a bunch of investigating spanners.

Campaign Tips

Every GM's campaign is unique.[2] Therefore, we present some general insights on how to construct a successful C°NTINUUM campaign.

Start Fresh

Set your initial games in your recent past. If you're playing C°NTINUUM in "real time" 2002, begin the setting of your game in 2000 or 1999 so that your novice spanners will have familiar territory to run around in.

If you find your spanners have sneaked into the "real-time" near future, and are concerned for continuity, do a little research between games for the dates planned for the completion of public works and movie release dates, which studios sometimes scheduled more than a year in advance, and include titles they haven't heavily advertised to the public yet. While there's no guarantee these estimates will be accurate, setting adventures in buildings and parks that haven't been built yet, or near theatres playing as-yet unheard-of movies can be a real thrill for your players once those days arrive, and the places and films turn out to be real.

Of course, your best predictions for the near future can backfire. The mayor never gets the stadium built, or a film on the release schedule is downgraded to straight-to-video, or even dropped altogether. It will be up to you to decide whether to change your campaign to suit real events, or declare your campaign's events to be the "real, unchangeable Continuum universe", and the one the players go home to a "mere narcissist fantasy". Just never forget that yours is only a game.

[2]The Continuum tolerates multiple GMs and campaigns as a necessity of leveller roleplaying games, but stresses again there is only one universe.

Pacing the Secrets

It may be impossible to keep players from peeking into the GM chapters of this book: They may own their own copy of C°NTINUUM, or have played or GMed before. So many of the secrets of the Continuum are going to have to be ones you devise. And these secrets invariably center around people.

A slimy nest of narcissists that are nigh impossible to pinpoint, an aloof Scribe that takes umbrage with the corner's every move, an Exalted that mysteriously keeps bringing strangers together. Each of these characters plainly have a wealth of unspoken motivations they keep secret.

Withholding and revealing information is what Continuum spanners do on a regular basis. There should be little trouble in pacing how secrets should be revealed. As player characters investigate and pursue villains, the GM can make information become 'available' at the most dramatic moments, spurring the plot. Don't let the awesome power of time travel play to the easy advantage of the characters: The Continuum only wants things to be discovered at the right time for each.

The Far Horizon

This is a secret of good storytelling: Keep them coming back for more.

J.R.R. Tolkien, our Cynthia Stirling's favorite author, observed in his essay "On Fairy-Stories" (AD 1938) the importance of always presenting another unexplored vista, to encourage the wonder and imagination of his audience. In light of this, he complained of a movie treatment of his novel (Zimmerman, AD 1958) that the screenwriter had irritating 'faults' for 'anticipation', moving events Down to well before they're meant to be experienced.

Time travel throws a... spanner into this worldview. If you can simply travel to an outcome, what does that do for plot and pacing? The solution is in the Yet— knowing an "outcome" doesn't mean there isn't more to discover: How does the outcome come about, who benefits from it, who is angered and reacts to it, and so on and on. There is always another vista in the distance when exploring the avenues of time.

So many great events are crammed into every century, that when one looks into what one scholar called the "collection of rags and tatters" of ancient history, one realizes that incredible adventures, passions and surprises lie waiting in the cavernous spaces of these unwritten millennia.

Meeting Ramsses the Great may be a thrill, but what about Auneizza, a king of sixth Dynasty Vielavayan? Defying the bronze spears of his legendary cavalry to protect the Ish-Yangi nomads in their yearly trek between the Yellow River and Indus valleys is no small feat, not when his youngest daughter suspects you are a sky-god, and that you are here to help usurp the succession by killing her rival sister— the future Cheinethap II, the Fire Queen, conqueror of the Degesh, who not incidentally orders the founding of Damascus as a frontier fort.

But the history of the Vielavayan is lost to archeologists; the evidence is muddled in unlettered graves across Rumania, or lost beneath the swirling waters of the Black Sea. In reality, all the names and events of the Vielavayan were invented for the C°NTINUUM game. But historians have no clearer picture of most these unlettered Eras beyond what people grew to eat and the pots they stored the food in. Meeting the famous need not be limited to what Piscean levellers can remember. The characters will remember, and keeping many of the secrets of history is what makes playing C°NTINUUM unique.

Gather Resources

Much is made of historical roleplaying supplements. Volumes about known eras of history tailored to a specific game system or product line abound. The authors of C°NTINUUM recommend finding actual books on history for your settings, since you can learn something while building your campaign. Plots and Motivations for adventures are universal throughout human existence; historical periods are best discovered from writers of history, rather than game designers.

Obvious resources are history books, encyclopedias, newspaper archives, The History Channel, websites, and so on. Wherever reliable (or at least entertaining) information on history can be found.

A perpetual calendar useful for 1582-2222 is contained herein in Appendix C: Counting the Days, pg. 214. It's often fun to surprise a young spanner that the day they chose to Go Down and see the antique dealer was a Sunday, and he's closed.

There are already several worthy books and collections of rules for would-be GMs of a time travel game, and you can visit our website (www.aetherco.com) to discover the best that we and others have to offer. Usually game authors encourage inspiration from books and movies to gain ideas for adventures. In the case of C°NTINUUM, however, a serious eye is cast upon time travel, and many sci-fi entertainments are found wanting, even some of the most popular ones. The Continuum recommends the study of these only to understand the errors contained in them. For comparison, see Appendix A: Fallacies and Follies, pg. 212.

Basking in Your Own Mistakes

Many early adventures can be derived from the mistakes of fledgling spanners. It's likely many players will attempt to experiment with what's possible in the Continuum, and new spanner characters from the 20th and 21st centuries might still harbor

fallacies about time travel based on what they've seen in the media. Judicious allotment of Frag should keep the more rambunctious elements in line, while letting everyone have a good time playing.

It's also possible that you made an error in judgement while GMing that leaves some event unexplained, or badly explained. In C°NTINUUM, this can be the impetus for a whole new adventure. The corner discovers that a situation they thought they solved still has some loose ends, and begin to uncover the narcissist evil/ Quicker intrigue/ leveller curiosity/ whatever plot you concoct, that has caused the discrepancy.

Quick Plot Ideas

If you need plot ideas on the fly, some are available starting on pg. 193.

C. GM's Notes to Chapters I, II and III

This is where further information, not available to novice spanners, can be found. Cross-references to the derivative sections are listed throughout.

The Invitation & the In-Between

Invitation vs. Recruitment

Nearly all new spanners are discovered by accidents involving the Fourth Maxim. Some wonder why active recruitment isn't pursued more vigorously. While reams of spanner philosophy have been written on this subject, the answer is actually quite obvious.

The invitation is how spanners are *born* in the Societies. It is no mere simile: Since spanners are forbidden to be raised from infancy in Societal spacetime, an invitation is the closest spanners come to raising families of their own kind. The fact that your newborn sibling is in their teens or twenties is not so shocking when you consider that the lifetime of a spanner is hundreds, thousands of years, or more. The surprises in store at every invitation are more natural and human than any recruitment program could hope to be— and also looks less suspicious to any leveller attempting inquire about the corner.

Recruitment is a tactic of a military or a police organization, or a government. Anything like impressment or the draft in a time travel environment would be devastating to recruiter and recruitee alike. Leaving aside the door to nepotism and the consequent danger of drawing all levellers in before the Hour of the Inheritance, recruitment assumes an utterly planned civilization. A recruited Continuum would shatter its flexibility. Consider: If recruitment were the norm, levellers would be kidnapped rather than invited, told what their function in spacetime was destined to be, and the foreboding deterministic nightmare Yet we all seek to avoid would be the only dark reality.

If there is still a leveller that is just too good not to recruit, discuss the situation with an Exalted before deliberately approaching someone.

Narcissists, on the other hand, do actively recruit, and while they prefer corrupting Continuum spanners into their own private hells, some steal and use Physician technology to create new spanners of their own. These usually hail from the fastness of Antedesertium, where the Continuum's interventions are most difficult.

These uninvited spanners are called **crashers** (after party-crashers; among other terms) and are special prizes among the Foxhorn. Crashers are almost always killed or fragged out from the instant they are discovered for what they are, even if seeming innocent. There's often no telling what post-hypnotic time bombs or physical illnesses crashers are carrying, even if they seem like nice people. They have had no training or nurturing from the Continuum, and are therefore the most unpredictable of

Spanners of less than Span Three are not given much information about crashers (except for notable Span Twos in the Foxhorn, Quicker and Physician Fraternities) as it threatens their perspective of a secure, nurturing Continuum. Further information on crashers is available on pg. 192.

Second Thoughts

On rare occasions, an invitee will have second thoughts about joining [pg. 8], especially once the Threes take them aside to have their body opened. While the situation is unlikely to arise for a player character ("You do want to *play* this game, don't you?"), it can be a dramatic moment when an NPC leveller shrinks from their chosen fate, and tries to run screaming back to their mommy.

The corner and higher Spans may have to reevaluate the invitee. Perhaps their mental stability is insufficient to become a spanner after all. If the invitee has already devoted a great deal of level time preparing, or has learned too much before the In-Between, he may have to be eliminated, rather than returned. In certain cases where the corner has absolutely *no* memories of the doubting invitee as a spanner, this is often seen as the best course. (The GM can always declare certain encounters having been in the corner's experience, or even in their Yets, though this may be seen as extreme or confusing to some players.)

Unfamiliar Invitees

It may happen that the corner has accepted a new member that they have little or no experience with; an odd occurrence indeed. The GM is free to devise what happens to NPC novices who fit this description, as not participating much with the corner that found him is obviously in his Yet. Early death is not recommended, though possible. Other explanations include narcissist recruitment, a runaway (like Sven in the story *Out in Society*, pg. 118,) or even a kidnapping or seeming kidnapping by a high Span intriguer or new lover... The corner can either take up the adventure of finding this wayward son, let the rest of the Continuum know, or the GM can have an elder of the character appear to set hearts and minds at ease (though an adventure is probably more fun than a mere explanation).

Administering the white light

Once a leveller agrees to join the spanning life, he is Hypnotized [pg. 115] as soon as possible. The Hypnotism is only to set a marker in the subject's mind, and little else. This marker determines the time at which the subsequent memory-suppression shall begin. Shortly afterward, the spanner is created [pg. 167].

Key neurons devoted to memorizing short-term memory are sorted during the spanner's creation. After months of practice and making friends, the initiate is checked by a Physician to determine if sufficient spanning skill has been retained into instinctual memory, and if certain names and habits are retained in the spanner's deep memory. The initiate is then taken to see their actual corner for the first time, and the attending Physician suppresses the short-term memory neurons, forcing them to retract their dendrites until a specific moment. Technology exists in abundance to make these neurons hibernate, though Hypnotism [pg. 115] will often suffice, as these neurons have been specially prepared. Residual memory impressions often remain; these are from the odd few neurons that shared some of the experiential information during the in-between.

The moment of memory restoration is the sharing of the creation by spanner's elder Span Three, assuming he earns that Span. This experience also reacquaints the spanner with forgotten parts of his Yet, some of which may even have come to pass in the interim! [See the story *These Are The Good Old Days*, pg. 177.]

Population and the minimum sophistication for spanners

Human population generally increases throughout the time of the Societies: Thus, the Piscean and Aquarian Eras have the vast majority of spanners. Uncoincidentally, the development of these Eras allows for the wider acknowledgement of time travel.

At some point Down there, Mankind is just too brutish to grasp spanning. At a remove of over 100,000 BC, it is a rare human indeed that can earn the full admiration of the Continuum; nearly all human spanners in this period have travelled there from the distant Societies.

Homo sapiens has several unguessed cousins who become wise enough to span. But their numbers are so small, that even if all of their last few generations had learned spanning, the numbers of humans from the Piscean on Up would dwarf theirs. Still, members of these intelligent primate civilizations should be watched out for, as they have our mutual ancestors' native curiosity— and many of their habits.

Span One

Day Job [pg. 36]

While having a 'Clark Kent' persona is handy, it's up to the individual gaming group to decide how much of their own time they want to spend playing these day jobs. Many will prefer to cut to the chase, and seek the dangers of fighting narcissists and impressing their fellow spanners. But occasionally it can be fun to bring the fight to the humdrum workplace, ironically to save its very mundanity. Feel free to set scenarios in the spanner's places of work and classrooms, if saving them from disruption is the theme of that night's session.

It can also help to illuminate the fact that while spanners have to interact with levellers, it can be stressful to deal with them on a day-to-day basis, and every move can seem like toadying to cull their favor, just to keep them in the dark. This can be enormously frustrating to the mighty beings the spanners are by nature. As GM, you're encouraged to help them along with stuff from their elders, to spare them slipshanking endlessly... though either way it put things in their Yet.

12. Level Playing Field

Cynthia is still new to the Continuum; she is hoping to get somewhere in her relationship with Clay Horston, even if he's only a leveller, and only a football player. She spans Up a day to the janitor's closet in his apartment building and knocks on his door, hoping to surprise him that evening.

Clay was oddly stern with her. "Where's the stuff for the party?"

Cynthia blinks. "Stuff." She hasn't heard of any party. Not even hello? I have to fake this again. "Oh right! I must have left it in the car."

"What car?"

Bother. Car is next month. But is Clay still in my life next month? "Sorry. I meant stairs."

Clay skwunched his face. "Stairs? Why?"

"I was looking for my keys. But... I don't have keys to your room, do I." I have never felt more blonde.

"No. So just, y'know, bring up the stuff before

someone swipes it, eh?"

Cynthia closes the door on him. She slips out her span book and jots down in her Yet "find out what + buy party stuff". A rustle beside her. A crumpled bag of groceries, mostly beer, is now there. She didn't slip-shank that, it was her elder's choice, pretty much. She notes "and drop it off" on the next line.

Pocketing her book she opens the door again. Clay was still near the door, scratching his chest.

"Here they are!"

"Whoa. That was fast. You made it to the stairs and back?"

"Yeah! Well, no. I had them... closer."

Clay came up, ran his hand through her hair and planted a big long kiss on her. "That's for my little spanner," he said, taking a beer, and moseying back towards his tv.

Bliss slams into shock. "Clay," she says quietly. "What time is it?"

"Oh, a little after five-thirty. Starting to wonder where you were."

Mechanically, she starts putting items in the fridge. "Why'd you call me a spanner."

"Something Rob told me. He's the new British guy, they made him running back. It's a Brit word. Means you're cute."

"Oh yeah. That's funny. Never heard that one before." You dirty pig. Liar!

"Hey set the chips and stuff out, eh? The guys'll be here any sec."

Okay Darrin, honey. "Right..." Cynthia takes down bowls for the chips and pretzels from her Yet. She stares at them a long moment, seeing them as they are, on the shelf farther Down, being used farther Up, waiting for her Level. And he can't see that. Even that. Why am I here?

"Hey sweetie, next time make it earlier so the beer gets cold." He watched the pre-game pontificating, as if the tv were his lover. Something is missing here, Clay, and it has nothing to do with your being chronally-challenged...

They began to arrive. Joe and Thurgood she knows, but a couple more seemed to know her, including one that had to be Rob, by the accent. They complimented Clay on his taste in blonde, and made various requests for brew. She finds herself apologizing for the temperature of each bottle.

As they assembled in the other room, Cynthia found she didn't want to leave the kitchen. I am not going to let this get to me. She knows the odds of getting Clay to come and talk about how she felt are equivalent to a sparrow being invited to join the Continuum. But she tries, she has to see and hope she's wrong.

At the doorway, she calls. "Clay?"

"Hey, babe. Sit down here by me." Clay and his pals have all the chairs; he was tapping the floor with his foot. The dog's spot on the mat. If it wasn't for the Fourth Maxim... But Cynthia accepts this moment of leveller humiliation, thinking of Evana, thinking of the million dollars she'll never share with him.

She takes the position at his feet, and watches football. Next month, car and no Clay. That was too easy. Damn sad.

The announcer began to yell, and so did the boys, anything might be the outcome of this game, to them. Cynthia knows what little of Clay she has yet to put up with, and starts becoming glad.

I am a demigoddess, and you are dust. Dust on my feet. She imagines her Yet, the chance of picking up Clay and dropping him naked into Nero's Forum to race some lions in the sand. Fourth Maxim. That would be wrong, but. She smiles, and enjoys the rest of the game.

Toy men running, grabbing and tossing one another to the ground.

Spanning (pg. 32)

Span Ones and Twos don't learn the secret of how they 'learned' to span until they earn Span Three. There is a very sapient reason for this: Inexperience with temptation. Narcissists love to recruit from the ranks of the inexperienced. See Narcissists— Secret Ploys and Countermeasures: Recruitment, pg. 192.

For the details on how to span, see Span Three— How Spanning Works, pg. 174. [See also Chapter 5: Knowing— Time Travel in the Real World, pg. 208.]

Spanning Away with an Item

As long as it's within his grasp, and within his weight limit, a spanner can span with anything made of matter. As long as everything solid he wishes to span with is connected by touch back to him— (touching something that is touching something that his flesh is touching)— the objects come along for the span. Gases and liquids can also be spanned, but must either be in a solid container, or be touching the spanner's flesh directly.

Spanning amidst uncontained forces of energy (such as lightning, unstable isotopes) will usually result in natural frag [pg. 158]. Contained sources of energy (such as batteries) can be carried at no penalty.

If two spanners attempt to span away with the same object simultaneously, the higher Quick always gains the object. When Quicks are tied, the highest Span gains the object. If both Quick and Span are tied, each character must roll; lowest gains the object.

Spanners who are awake and moderately alert cannot be spanned elsewhere against their will (unless they're in, say, an Inheritor ship or equivalently overpowering situation).

Limitations to Spanning

A note on momentum, body positions, and selective items. The nature of spanning across time and space makes details like one's physical velocity when one leaves or enters a space moot. You can be thrown upside-down, handcuffed and blindfolded out of a speeding airplane, and span to the ground free from bonds, and walking quietly. Just watch out for those handcuffs falling from 3000 feet. (Sorry, no

change of clothes on the way.) The worst that can happen is that if you span while jogging, you might lose your rhythm.

Span Table (pg. 34)

Spans higher than 5 continue the expoential increase in abilities (Span Sixes can travel 100,000 years and miles, carry 500 tons; Sevens can travel a million years, and so on). All loyal spanners of Span 5 and up are called 'Exalted'. See also Who approves Spans beyond 5? pg. 105.

Age (pg. 36)

While it isn't emphasized, Age is also called the Required Past, being the usual target for narcissist frag attacks. It is the equal opposite of the Yet.

Since human beings are used to remembering the past in their natural state, learning additional definitions for Age at the get-go is found to be confusing for some novices, with so much else to learn. Mentors can mention this definition to their novices when they have a grasp of the basics. [See Also Age-Thwarting Technology and Other Medtech, pg. 167.]

The Zodiac Eras

Much is made of in the rules as to what Era one belongs to. Normally, the Era you are born in is the one you are identified by, though characters who are born in one Era but experience their invitation in the next, are often referred to a **cusp** spanners, and are considered native to both. (Sven in the story *Beside Myself with Laughter*, [pg. 43,] is slightly mistaken in calling Cynthia an 'Aquarian cusp woman' — though she is very very close.)

A similar situation is experienced by Aquarian spanners who are born after the Hour of the Inheritance [AD 2222] but before the end of the Societies [AD 2400]; they can claim affinity to both Societal and Inheritor civilizations. [See the description of the character Ting As, pg. 82.] Aquarians born after AD 2400 are early Inheritors, and are restricted from visiting Societal spacetime, except when sent on incursions to known events [pg. 104].

"Instant" Skills (pg. 40)

Players may be tempted to abuse this possibility, but note carefully how long it takes to learn a skill. Age can add up quickly, especially for a novice spanner, who might feel arthritic before reaching Span Two if he can't control his Skill-grabbing habit.

Additionally, since the player is a greater hurry than the character to get back to the adventure, the character is stuck with weeks or months of their lives in one spot studying, vulnerable to narcissist attack. Time Combats where 'Instant' Skills are being targeted are very popular with the bad guys (who probably prefer the spanner to **not** have the skill needed to save the day), making this an effective way to keep this from being abused.

Gemini Incidents (pg. 39)

The "Known Geminis" are the number of junior incidents that must occur while the character is at that Span, before he can advance. Elder incidents can, of course, complete the incident at any point in the spanner's Yet.

One question that comes up is: Why assign the number of Gemini Incidents when a spanner reaches a new Span at all? This is a game convention, to make keeping track of geminis easier for players and GMs alike, and to **limit a player's ability to initiate geminis** [see pg. 40]. Thus, the character need not know how many geminis they are destined for, only the player.

The actual Continuum accepts geminis simply as they occur. If the playing group finds this a preferable method, they may do away with rolling up "Known geminis" and merely list the geminis as they happen on another line of their Yet— but the GM will have to watch out for too many slip-shanked geminis.

For spanners native to or fighting in the Geminid Era for any significant amount of time, the GM should multiply the number of resulting incidents by 10 (0 - 100 incidents). The reason for this is the vast amounts of spanner activity in that Era, much of it military in nature. GMs that have some major military campaign in mind might even wish the spanner to roll a straight d100 x 10! (10 - 1000 geminis.) This would make for platoons of selves...

Etiquette with a young gemini

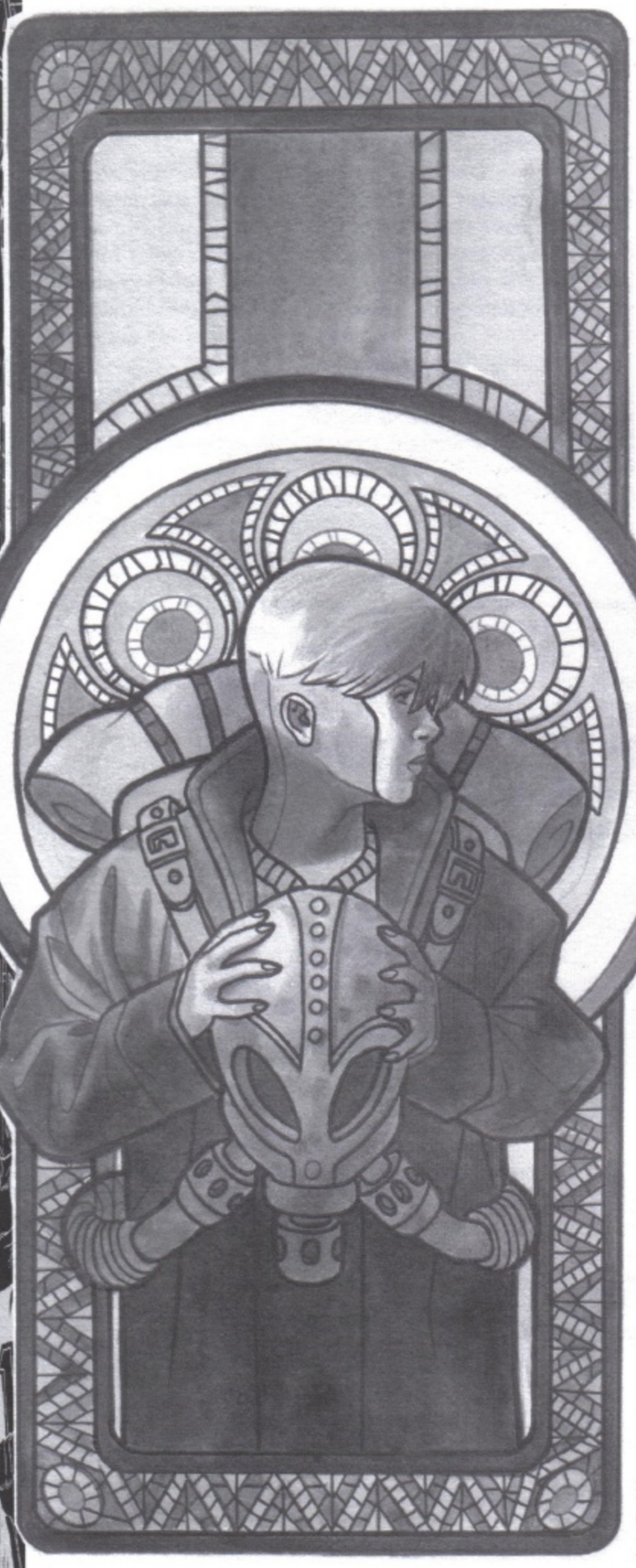
After a few centuries of being a spanner, one's infancy as a leveller can easily get forgotten. They don't know it's you, so don't boss them around! They shouldn't even be allowed to recognize you, in keeping with the Fourth Maxim.

Facing Death and Surviving it (pg. 40)

It may occur to some players, "Hey. If I can slip away from the icy fingers of death, why go back? Surely I can get some kind of future tech clone corpse to stand-in, or some poor stooge to take the hit for me. If I set it up right, causality is served and no leveller need be the wiser."

Corpses remain a sign of suspicious behavior. Even spanners look twice at someone who asks to get a corpse.

Don't expect Thespians to jump at the chance of playing a corpse. And Physicians will rarely grow a dead clone for spanners. You have to be a pretty impressive Exalted to be able to order up a completely convincing dead version of yourself [see 24th century nanotech, pg. 168]. Narcissists are known for pulling stunts with lookalike corpses, what's your excuse? Most of your friends are going to frune why you want a dead duplicate of yourself, thus spreading the suggestion that you may not be



Zachariah Plutarch (b. AD 1890)
That Has Such People In't, (AD 1917)
ink & wash
Museum of Forgotten Wars,
Antiquarian Warehouse, Algiers

Artwork © 1999 Zak Plucinski

trustworthy, or meant to live or exist long.

The reason for all this is that if everyone was allowed to just keep shortcheating Death, no spanner would ever die— and that would have dire consequences for the universe and all life therein. If you die, enjoy any brief escape you're allowed, but then face your Yet like a red-blooded member of the Continuum.

Responsibility-

Chapter Two states: "If you don't handle your Yet and your Frag, your friends have to. If they can't or won't, your mentor has to. If he or she can't handle it, the Exalted step in." And of course, if the Exalted cannot handle an incident of frag, the Inheritors will. [See the Inheritors on pg. 103 and pg. 186.]

Blending in with Levellers (pg. 48)

What makes a stranger

Anthropologists in the field have noted that to be accepted as a native to a place, one has to be born there. No matter how well you behave, or how welcome a part of the community you become, it will be remembered that you came from outside.

A curious exception to this was observed by anthropologist Charles Ward, working in the 1950s: If one leaves the community, and then returns after a distinct absence, one is then welcomed much as a *returning native*. This can be seen as a norm in most human cultures, as long as the person returning was looked upon favorably when they left.

It is easy to see the advantage a spanner has in such circumstances. After a few months of hunkering down with taciturn locals, they can make a show of departure, span Up a few months or years, and return to smiles and welcomes. For those that can afford to invest a little Age, and some help to a community, they can earn the renewed trust of a people, even the status of a native son, just by taking a short trip.

GMs are encouraged to let players discover this phenomenon for themselves— just show the reactions, never explain it, unless they players make a thorough study of 20th century Anthropology, Psychology, or other deep learning. Experienced characters and NPCs inside of people-intensive Fraternities (like the Physicians and the Midwives) would also have noted the phenomenon, and might inform player characters they like. And high-Span narcissists are very familiar with this, and use it to go into deep cover in a number of localities.

GMs can make this a ploy for further adventures (the characters are 'welcomed back' the first time they enter a village— strongly implying a visit farther Down in their Yet) or as a reward for saving a town or nation from disaster or dishonor. The prestige of subtly helping people one has guested with will not be lost on Exalteds looking for candidates for higher Span.

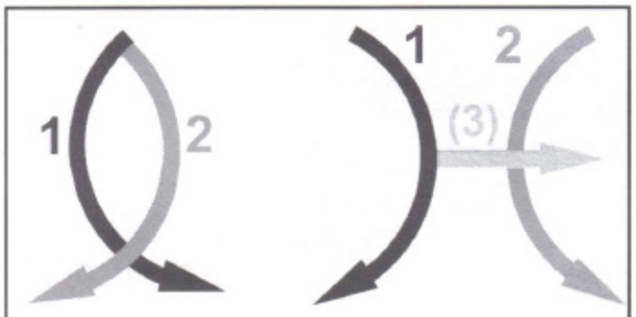
Language (pg. 48)
[See also Chapter 3: Struggling— Dreaming and Communication— Language, pg. 108]

Finding other spanners— lines in the sand [pg. 49]

In Chapter 2: Spanning it's mentioned that in Eras where asking "Wat time is it?" would sound unusual, that "Visitors from these eras might sketch a line in the ground." And you would complete the zodiac symbol to acknowledge you were a spanner.

Christian historians will recognize the similarity to the drawing of the early Christian IXTHOS, or fish symbol. This was adopted by Christians as a secret sign in times when they are hiding from Roman oppression. So popular are the first two centuries of the Piscean Era, that visiting spanners seem to have inspired some levellers.

The Christian fish and the Piscean symbol are very similar, though distinct. Even so, we hope to help as many spanners avoid confusing the levellers, and avoid frag, as possible. Please inform any guests or visitors from pre-Piscean eras of the custom of asking the time, instead. Considering the large number of spanners from the Piscean and Up, they will meet with better success at finding their own kind that way.



Comparison of drawing IXTHOS *(left)* **with drawing Piscean glyph** *(right)*

Frag (pg. 53)

—Deliberate Paradox

Fragging Levellers and items

It's hard to accomplish this beyond a single point of frag, as Continuum spanners are likely to be fragged by the same action, and enter Time Combat against the miscreant. Of course, some narcissists are willing to take a point of frag just to get the Continuum's goat, and so will observe, even record an event and then deliberately attempt to change it. See Narcissists— Secret Ploys and Countermeasures, pg. 192.

Assigning and Increasing Frag

Some GMs may simply want to be told how much frag to assign various as/as nots, rather than decide on a case-by-case basis. **Most as/as nots have or start with a frag of 1,** and increase in frag if ignored. But below is a table of when frag gets serious enough to affect other spanners. At this point, the as/as not **will** be fixed, by someone, and the onus be on the lazy spanner who shirked his proper responsibility.

As in jurisprudence, where the term "alleged" is used until guilt is proved, the term "attempted" is used here to emphasize that these attacks on causality ultimately fail.
In theory, even the most insignificant as/as not can frag a spanner out if he obstinately refuses to fix it over the course of years or centuries of Age. However, most incidents worth 1 Frag simply stay that way, as they have little to do with the spanner's ongoing existence.

The **rate** at which frag increases is entirely dependent on how important it is to the character, the GM's plot, or to the Continuum. Frag from a single as/as not should normally not increase until it has been ignored for hundreds of days of Age, unless it is exacerbated by repeated attack. Note that frag should not increase during Time Combat except by successful attack by stratagem.

[See Frag Spread Table, following page.]

—Accidental Paradox

This is rare, though your adventuring group might not know it, getting far more than their fair share as they learn the ropes of spanning. Most accidental paradox happens when spanners congregate, and can't help but cross each others' causality. But sometimes narcissists go out of their way to trick spanners into creating accidental paradox, and entangle a corner with endlessly solving their annoying mischief. See Narcissists— Secret Ploys and Countermeasures, pg. 192 and also Chapter 3: Struggling— Note to myself, pg. 112.

It is the Quicker's grisly job to find and clean up and residual frag left around by spanners who have been fragged out. For further details see the Quicker Fraternity, pg. 80.

—Natural Paradox

As earlier reported in pre-release versions of C°NTINUUM [version 0.5 May 1998], non-sentient collapses of spacetime are a constant in the universe. Infinitesimally small knots of information form and reform, stabilizing only as they are observed.[3] This

[3]The Continuum must point out at this juncture that many of these observed instances are actions of sentient force, or results therefrom, and caution the level scientific community in their research. That being said, happy hunting.

Frag Spread Table

Deliberate paradox	Initial Frag	Victim's frag from this as/as not, must reach this amount before other spanners get Initial Frag from it
Attempted destruction of city	2	2
Attempted murder of grandpa	2	3
Attempted trashing of house	1	1
Attempted theft of valuables	1	2
Attempted placing of tripwire	1	2
Attempted theft of socks	1	3
Attempted hiding of papers	1	4

makes the act of observation itself akin to creation of a particle, a paradox that physicists wrestle with throughout the AD 20th Century.

Mark Hadley, a physicist at the University of Warwick demonstrates this as the **geon**, a particle that can be affected by events in its future as well as its past. According to the *New Scientist* ["Paradox Lost" 24 Apr 1999], Hadley bases his interpretation on a suggestion of Einstein's that particles are actually warps in spacetime. By comparing geons, quantum measurements can be made without forcing a particle into a specific existence through observation.

Note that the effect of active consciousness (sentient force) is thereby demonstrated to affect the structure of the universe. Even the decisions of leveller scientists and laymen have a small measurable effect on events further Down in time.

Information is all.

Sources of Natural Paradox

Many sources of 'natural' paradox are actually man-made. Man-made natural paradox is referred to as 'natural' because they are produced by levellers who are mostly unaware of the implications of sentient force. Only spanners can create or attempt deliberate or accidental paradox.

The table shows the amount of frag received by spanning into or out of an area of natural paradox. If you span into an area of natural paradox, and then out again, yes, you get fragged twice. Spanning levelly through an event may also frag, at the GM's discretion, but spanning through time avoids the event, unless you enter or leave it.

Example. Hideoshi Tamara of Nagasaki decides to travel from 1878 to 1976 in one span. He's a Span Three in his hometown, and so off he goes. In 1945, an atomic bomb is detonated almost directly over where he was (and will be) standing. But most residual radiation has dissipated by the 1970's, so he arrives safe and sound.

Curing Frag from Natural Paradox

Since an as/as not isn't involved, and the spanner cannot unmake the event that led him into the briar patch of natural paradox, there must be alternate cures. These are generally held by the Physicians Fraternity [see, ppg. 77, 166].

A note on items carried

Items that are borne by spanners on their spans are usually affected by frag, but less so. Personal effects such as clothing, coins, luggage may simply materialize where a fragged-out spanner intended to land, but be highly radioactive, brittle, or have other molecular problems. The effects in areas of natural frag upon inanimate objects is highly volatile and unpredictable; deliberate frag primarily affects the spanner, not so much his belongings.

What frag feels... and looks like. (pg. 54)

We've saved this for the GM's section, as it can be a bit graphic and startling. See also the story *Somebody Always Wants You Gone,* pg. 52. For further information on effects narcissists glean from high frag, see Dark Gifts of Frag, pg. 138.

Frag starts as mainly a sick feeling that the universe isn't screwed on properly. What this often nauseous, often painful sensation is trying to relate is that one's own mind is doubting where one's existence lay in the universe.

Don't Even Go There

Natural Paradox	Amount of frag received
geons, ordinary spanning around	0
raw uranium mine	1
nuke waste depot	1
main electrical transformer	1
heavily electrified fence	1
gammas on zero-ozone day	1
microwave transmission path	1
lightning strike within 3 yards	2
ball lightning roaming within 25 yards	2
leaky nuke plant	2
ELF pulse apogee	3
partial meltdown	4
full meltdown	5
unshielded from solar wind	5
active supercollider	6
nuclear weapon EMS shockfront ground zero	6
T+/- 6 seconds	8
T+/- 6 minutes	6
T+/- 6 hours	3
T+/- 6 days	1
planetary axial shift	9

Frag received is in addition to any normal physical damage one receives for being around these things.

At high Frag, the damage to one's Yet becomes so great that parts of your consciousness are drawn off to fill in the missing events. As explained in How Spanning Works [pg. 174], a spanner is no longer simply human, but a reconstitution of matter and energy. The sentience that drives a spanner is like water in a glass: It seeks its own level, and if that water is upset, it makes a mess.

Thus a leveller or an object that becomes fragged is less likely to disintegrate, unless perhaps it has been brought through a span, reorganized at least once. But even then, it is a *spanner's sentience* that draws it to its Yet— level people and things have no imagination of such possibilities. Only spinners can be drawn across Time, like fraying yarn. The need to solve a riddle of frag can become so great that a spanner's subconscious or other idle thoughts draw globs and pieces of the spanner across the universe to fill in the cracks like mortar. Hence mental distress precedes material disorder [see Frag tables, pg. 54 and Frag Beyond 7, pg. 190].

These awful results are accompanied by increasing lack of control, increasing inability to adhere to the Maxims, or even to common sense. So it is no surprise that spanners who are badly fragged are the ones encountered by levellers most often; encounters that have been explained away under countless names over the millennia.

The face in the window of the deserted place, the footprints leading nowhere, the sudden thrill of terror from no source, what the dog hears and the cat bristles from, the figure crouching in the dark that becomes the couch or a bush, that blur on the photograph, the thing in the corner of your eye, that pattern in the woodgrain, the why no one goes there, the ghost famous for repeating the same event, that tinny silence, 'did you call my name?', the monster, the bogey, the zephyr, the such things don't exist.

These are the fragged people.

Advancement (ppg. 59, 87, 93, 100, 105)

GMs are advised that **each rank of Span is exponentially more powerful than the last.** So when rewarding increases of Span, bear in mind the quantum leap in power you are allotting them.

Player Groups of Mixed Span

A Span Three can carry 1000 pounds in addition to his own weight: That amounts to five people and basic gear for each. Thus, Span Ones and Twos can hitch rides with Threes (or greater) when in particular distress. As long as a Three is available, Ones and Twos need never really feel 'lost in time'— but this possibility is rarely emphasized, to encourage resourcefulness and caution in novices.

The question of group advancement enters into the equation when some characters of the playing group are Span 2 and others are still Span 1. The Span Twos plainly have an advantage, but that's the point. Have the players of the Span Ones been loyal, well-behaved spanners? Have you been neglecting these characters? If so, advancement should be shortly forthcoming for these characters. Otherwise, if characters need to wipe out their frag, shape up their attitude toward the Maxims, or their span book or item disciplines, this is the spur. Feeling sluggish or left behind by other characters is part of the point— being left out socially is about as close to 'losing' an RPG as one can get.

As GM, you should ready scenarios which are good for Ones, but have an element that makes a Span Two a perfect 'secret weapon'. For instance, the scenario available online, "The Death Hand of St. No-One," mentions an auction taking place Friday May 5, 1963— though most of the scenario is set in the 1990's. A Span Two might want to check out the auction personally, since it's only a few days Down for him. The Two would also have to be careful not to upset distant events upon which the rest of his corners' actions depend.

When Twos begin to outnumber Ones in the playing group, then the scenarios should be geared more toward Twos, with major spanning and fighting action for Twos, and little research tasks and details left for Ones. This should be the last goad for straggler Ones to earn their stripes: Staying a One means the equivalent of a spanner desk job! That should be a sufficient terror to get them to put it in gear.

Finally, if a new player wishes to join the game, you may allow them to begin at a Span commensurate with the rest of the group. Note that the authors strongly urge that any new player so advanced either be familiar with C⁰NTINUUM, or that the GM be willing to play at least one session with the new player as a One, to get him up to speed. Your players may even wish to join the new player, and get out their old Span One sheets and have a go as their juniors— if the GM is willing to make an addendum to events on their Span cards.

Aquarian Ones and Twos

A spanner that was born in 2001 might claim the right to travel throughout their Era. After all, the reality of time travel has been announced, if not utterly accepted; they had their invitation no earlier than 2019, and Aquarians abound in their day-to-day existence as spanners.

But early Aquarians that start travelling Up find themselves out of their depth, and quickly. The development of Mankind into his Inheritors is very rapid. This rapidity can be agonizing for early Aquarians, as they can witness and participate in the transformation, but so many details fall to them to personally achieve, that they are famous for their impatience.

The closer to 2200 they are born, the more impatient they get. This is a generalization, even a stereotype, but it is not without foundation. Being born after 2200 means that you are almost certain to be one with the Inheritors, but before that, and you have to prove your worthiness with every move you make.

Also, the rate of change in the Aquarian Era is so fast that even skipping the experiences of a single year leaves one missing vital information...

The Year-Visiting Requirement to Advance

Consider: Show a 1995 web address for the first time to a novice spanner from 1985. Even an internet hotshot from that year would wonder what "www" stood for— most would draw a complete blank, think it an arcane code, or at best ask what program it was a macro for, and for what operating system. Already the rate of change has accelerated, only ten days' travel away for a One, or a single jump for a Two.

Now compare an early Piscean from the city of Rome, born AD 1. Travelling Up slowly 400 years, the Empire hardens, weakens, falls into ruins, but remains somewhat recognizable. By the 530s the unscrubbed baths are filled with ignorant dwellers of a crumbling city, as strange-armored Greek troops arrive, claiming to reclaim Rome for... Rome? What is this Byzantium? If he makes it as far up as 800, a Germanic fellow, who builds altars for a Jewish god out of broken Roman pottery is crowned Emperor in a bizarre ceremony devoted to said god. A Span One is over two years' travels from home, a Span Two is eighty days away, but both are in over their heads. The mess that Europe slogs through for a thousand years would make any early Piscean despair, at least until they earned enough Age to appreciate it in full.

This is why a visit to each year of the decade one learned to span in is a requirement for advancement for Ones, as is visiting each decade of the century is for Twos. It provides the necessary perspective a spanner needs to understands the course, structure and meaning of spacetime.

It's also a great avenue for wonder and exploration, and Ones and Twos should be allowed to enjoy their fun while they have it— being Threes, Fours and beyond means a lot of responsibility and hard work. (For the characters anyway: Don't bog down the players with every scrap of Societal and Continuum paperwork!)

Span Two

Warning regarding travel in Aquarian Era

Danger potentially awaits the novice spanner everywhen, but near the borders of the Societies, too many mistakes, both social and temporal can be made by the inexperienced.

To this end, the Seventh Atlantean Council passed its Decisions regarding travel near the borders of the Societies (in the Libran and Aquarian Eras). For further information on the Atlantean Councils and their Decisions, see Chapter Five: Knowing—Libran Era, pg. 204.

Taking a New Name

Naturally, new names should reflect the period and culture one is adopting as much as one's own sense of self and accomplishment. Often enough for Twos, this is only a decade or two away from their birth locality, and so is at least passingly familiar to them.

These should seem as inconspicuous as the locality allows, though there are exceptions where being flamboyant is tolerable. Ironic pseudonyms (like 'Wolf Blitzer' or 'Gene Gray') are not well-advised, as they can seem too obvious to the attentive. Conversely, medieval European scholars often took Latin names to emulate a classical writer, and so bring an aura of authority to their work. They in turn were emulated by later alchemists and magicians who desired to make themselves sound scholarly; over time this practice was only maintained by charlatans (often just to hide their true identity from authorities) or illusionists, which eventually degraded into the stage names of AD 19th and 20th century prestidigitators.

Bearing in mind this sweeping change in the caliber of a respect certain kinds of names experience over the centuries, choose wisely as you adopt your aliases. Or adopt several, if it helps you keep your levels straight.

The Fraternities (pg. 64)

"Isn't it time you chose a career?"

Much as parents ease children from homelife by encouraging them to enter the workplace, so Span Twos are asked to take up meaningful work for the Continuum.

Each Fraternity has Skills it looks for in candidates for membership. While lists of these often make the rounds among Ones and Twos, its often up to the boldness of a spanner to frune around for prospects of joining, and what Skills are considered valuable. Lists of these Skills follow under each Fraternity's heading, in order of importance.

Switching Fraternities

You may be personally adept at a wide range of skills, but still choose to employ them for one Fraternity over another. For example, a spanner who is a disenfranchised Shao-Lin monk with great power in Dreaming and martial arts roams the American southwest in the 1800s looking to right wrongs. He could join the Foxhorn, or the

Dreamers. Or perhaps his desire for chronicling leads him into the Scribes, but still uses his Dreaming to counsel people when he can, and his rounds of delivering information leads him into situations where he can kick villain butt.

A spanner would have to be terribly disappointed in their choice of Fraternity to want to switch entirely to a different one. A better option is to try moving to a new corner, which is always an open possibility; move to a distant enough locality, and most qualms need not follow.

Some Fraternities tend to look for specialists, rather than jacks-of-all-trades (Physicians and Dreamers, for example). However, it is unlikely that anyone with a genuine calling will be turned away. But having learned one Fraternity's secrets, the concern may be insurmountable if a spanner simply decides to forgo his brethren and try another. Who's to say where you're wandering with this internal information?

The one exception that's universally accepted is when a spanner has ethical qualms about the Fraternity they've joined. This can be either a **personal aversion** (less stomach for killing than you thought before you joined Foxhorn; not able to wrench your heart around the baby-swapping of the Midwives you joined, too frightened of the fragged individuals your chronies in the Quicker seek, etc.) or a **philosophical disagreement,** usually on the basis of one of the Subjects of Debate. This latter is regarded as a very noble and honorable reason to alter one's path in spanner life, especially by Span Fours and the Exalted— though you will be expected to be able to state and discuss your position at length, if any high Spans inquire.

While philosophy is seen as a frivolous exercise by many levellers, especially at the time this book is first seeing press, it is quite different for spanners, who see man and the universe throughout their history— and who live lives long enough to need such ponderings. Dreamers, who mostly stay outside these Debates, call it the 'religion of the Continuum', though this is a tongue-in-cheek defense of their perception of the Dreamtime's spiritual superiority.

Debates are not always formal— they're held anywhen two or more spanners are together with a Subject in contention. If the results are believed of interest, transcripts are sent to the Scribes.

The importance of the **Subjects of Debate** is always based around its relevance to spanner civilization. What these concepts mean to levellers is less important.

It has been observed that they fall into three distinct diads: Wealth/Art, Invention/Tool Death/Life. There is less argument over the duality of these

The Subjects Of Debate
Listed for the GM, for easy reference

Subject	*Frats taking major issue with it*
Wealth	Antiquarians, Moneychangers
Art	Antiquarians, Scribes, (Thespians)
Invention	Engineers, Thespians
Tool (Discovery)	Engineers, Physicians
Death	Foxhorn, Quicker
Life	Midwives, Physicians

Subjects, or between them (ie Life vs. Death). The Debates are almost always over the meaning of each Subject.

Secrets

Here follows some of the secrets of the Fraternities; some are serious, some playful, and some are quite ugly. It's up to the GM how much and when any of this information comes into the hands of the players:

Antiquarians (pg. 64)

Desired Skill List
History (Antiques)
History (Various Eras and Localities)
Stealth
Investigation
Read/Speak (Various Languages)
Security
Acumens
Administration
Appraisal

While it's suspected by many, the scale of the truth of it is not. Most believe that it stops at petty shoplifting, with the occasional art heist slipped in here or there. But no, it's far worse. The average Antiquarian is a big time thief.

Now, a word of caution. They believe it to be 'borrowing' because they return everything. Absolutely everything, they second after they take it, and they have the network to easily accomplish it. But they enjoy the things for many years at a time. These Antiquarians, in secret rooms, and distant homes with obscure addresses, live surrounded by an absurd luxury. Some have all of Donatello's work (yes *all,* walls and frescoes included) crammed into their secret palaces, others fill their homes with unique manuscripts, or live animals doomed to extinction, or carpets and furniture from the palaces of every king and prince. One is noted for collecting small lakes: His Leonid estate in the depths of the dying Sahara is a wonder of its Era, and is visited by a few higher-ups in the Foxhorn. Another has built a fantastic city of 'lost' buildings, high in the Cancerean Andes. And the fleet of the salvager called 'DJ' is called by his fellows the 'Dream of the

Atlantic' and so it is— in 6000 BC.

Also, this truth is usually reserved for Span Threes, but many resourceful Twos ferret it out.

This is one of the reasons they see the Moneychangers and their take on Wealth as pointless and empty. Money is for gimps: Antiquarians have the shortcut.

[More notes on the Antiquarians are found under the Engineers, pg. 163, and the Physicians, pg. 166, below.]

Dreamers (pg. 67)

Desired Skill List
Dreaming
Observation
Read/Speak (Various Languages)
Investigation
Acumen
Meditation
Occultism
Various Religions

Most Dreamers are encouraged to see the Dreamtime as a place of great spiritual awakening. Where the doubts of the religions of the ages can be set aside, and the true possibility of harmonious mankind can unfold. While most other spanners in the Continuum are fairly aware of this, they see little harm in this navel-searching. As long as messages get through, most spanners have little interest in the Dreamtime.

But at Spans of Three and above, some Dreamers may be introduced to a kind of heresy. Many leaders of the Fraternity insist the Dreamtime is another universe.

The Dreamtime escapes so many of the conventions by which the Continuum is bound to serving the universe, and even defies the cycles of life and death, as unborn souls and departed spirits all commune together there. Since the Maxims are near-meaningless there, it begs the question of how valuable they are to mankind. But the Fraternity does not seek a war with the Continuum, only an unthreatening place aside from it.

This is not a Subject of Debate, because for the Continuum it is not to be debated. *All* discussion on the subject of Dreamtime's independence is to left in the Dreamtime. The occasional spanner that hears of the Dreamer's heresy is approached at once by Tjarapu, Buru or Karanda, or one of their close confidants. Such spanners are usually troubled when discussing the Fraternity; it is conjectured that either a Dream Squad [see below] is set to tailing them, or even a post-hypnotic suggestion has been left, suppressing the information, and spooking them good.

Also, many higher Spans in the Fraternity say they have an 'arrangement', made at the earliest times of the Societies, to escape this Continuum altogether, and have devised means to flee into the Dreamtime— once the work for the Societies and the Inheritors is done.

Dream Squads

The Dreamers' Fraternity jealously guards their Grandmaster Dreamers, especially those with Skills worth learning. Because of the efficacy of Dream Learning and Combat [see Chapter 3: Struggling— Dreaming & Communication— Dream Combat & Learning, ppg. 110-111,] the Fraternity forms Dream Squads of champion dreamers around them, teams who are unafraid of facing any challenge of Dream Combat— especially the threat posed by Telepaths [pg. 110]. Many of the best Squads are made of of Telepaths, just to give back what's coming to certain abusers of the Dreamtime.

Dream Techniques

While the schools of Dreaming are myriad throughout the cultures of mankind, there are some basic techniques Lucid Dreamers use to narrow in on the meanings of dreams. Some of the constant questions Lucid Dreamers ask while in the moment:

- *Did I invent this?* Knowing where an impression originates is like reading the state off a car's license plate: You know where it started.
- *Why did I invent this?* A deeper question by far, usually solved by context. If your elder said something cryptic to you, you would try to puzzle it out. The same applies here; you're passing information to yourself.
- *Is someone else trying to tell this to me, and why?* Lucid Dreamers are better trained than most in others' motives and how it relates to them. The Dreamtime is referred by some as the 'filter of the soul': the symbols and signals sent by someone controlling a dream milieu [pg. 164] can, like the style of a fiction author, reveal much more about the dreamer than the message itself.
- *Is this an abstract truth?* The Dreamtime itself may present an archetype or general symbol to help guide you, or warn you off a line of inquiry. (Another proof of the Dreamtime's difference from the Continuum: It acts, where the Continuum's universe is wholly acted upon.)

Careful analysis of lucid dreams with questions like these can parse out the meaning of all but the more obscure riddles presented.

[More notes on the Dreamers are found under the Foxhorn, pg. 164.]

Engineers (pg. 69)

Desired Skill List
Engineering (Various)
Repair (Various)
Sciences (Various)
Computers
Acumen
Electronics
Nanotech
Preindustrial Tech

Spanners throughout the Societies remark on Engineers' uncanny ability of always arriving out of the Blue with the right tools, garb, and know-how to a solve a mechanical problem, even as it's just being discovered. It shows an ability to coordinate like well-oiled machine. There are always a few Scribes who simply enjoy hanging with Engineers, and these utilize the powers of their Fraternity to speed Engineers to where they're needed— to the point of occasionally bending Scribal information policy of sending in an Engineer somewhere they're needed, but before they've been asked for. These attached Scribes usually handle the necessary information-sorting to get the job done with magical speed.

Time machines.

Devices that allow a person to span, or otherwise travel time are forbidden to the Societies by the Inheritors, a Decision backed up by the First Atlantean Council. But there are exceptions, and ways of bending the hard rule— and reasons to do so, as follows. [See also Chapter 5: Knowing— Time Travel in the Real World, pg. 208.]

Span-enhancement devices.

Certain machines have been devised to allow spanners to 'carry' more than is allotted by their rank of Span. These have to be worn or carried at least once on a span before it coordinates with the spanner, but that's all it usually takes to set these devices, since they are very sensitive to the sentient force ('wills') of their possessors. Most are 24th century tech, and can therefore take a variety of forms adapted to the localities in which they will be used.

The GM should feel free to allow other span-aiding tools— **as long as they don't grant greater Span on an on-going basis.** And machines that allow levellers to travel time at all bring Inheritors in right quick. A device than increased the reach of one's Span by a couple years or decades as a one-shot might be acceptable; but all such machines would have to operated by a spanner, and not be a scary surprise for a leveller (i.e. a time machine). These devices are usually only in the hands of Threes and Fours, and on rare occasions in the hands of highly trusted Twos. [See also Span Three— Span-enhancing devices, pg. 175.]

Invitation Kits, and other sensitive repairs

When the Physicians need an Invitation Kit checked or repaired, it's usually done by an Exalted Engineer. Engineers with the Engineering (AD 23rd Century) Skill at least Master rank can properly calibrate and diagnose the average Invitation Kit. Naturally, the existence of Invitation Kits is kept from Span Ones and Twos.

The Antiquarians also call upon our services, especially in cases where one of their masterful replacement projects call for some detailed engineering. (And some of those 'big-time thieves' require an Engineer's touch to place their 'borrowed' castles and lakes.)

Nanotech wrangling

Physicians ensure communicable disease doesn't cross the centuries; Engineers wrangle rogue nanites, and the Antiquarians are happy not to have *that* job. Most pre-24th century nanites can be done in with powerful electromagnetic pulses, but these have a chance at sending any person in range of the pulse into cardiac arrest [pg. 175]: Roll vs. Body; spanners only fail on a blunder. Any nanotech that goes into creating a spanner is not significantly affected by this method.

More sophisticated nanotech is adaptive or already adapted to the EM pulse technique, and may require atomization to disable. If confronted with such tenacious tech in a hostile situation, Engineers usually ask Exalted members to alert the Inheritors for help, before loosing nuclear 'solutions'.

Further details on the **area of dispute** with the **Physicians**— over the boundaries of the **Tool**— have been reserved for this section due to the fact that the subject matter touches closely upon the secret of spanning. Picking up from pg. 69 where the argument left off:

Our main contention with them is in the Aquarian Age, where engineering upon Man himself begins in earnest.

The Physicians like to argue that mankind's bodies have *always* been tools, the teeth being specialized 'bioimplants', or nonsense about the evolution of the eye. But slow genetic reactions to the environment is not the same as sentient Discovery, where Tools are found in the environment, and the *environment* is modified.

Chewing is instinct, not discovery; it is only when manipulation of the Genome becomes acceptable does the entire body turn into a tool. It's repair stops being a natural process, and even stops resembling a natural process.

Spanners are machines— time machines. They are people, yes, but their importance as spanners far outweighs their importance as people. If a person breaks down, it is sad, call the doctor. If a

spanner breaks down, sound the alarm. The tech and knowledge held by Physicians depends upon us to maintain, and they should not lord over it as they do. The power of creating spanners starts with the Engineers.

[More notes on the Engineers are found under the Foxhorn, below.]

Foxhorn (pg. 70)

Desired Skill List
Combat (Various)
Tracking
Stealth
History (Military, Various)
Investigation
Bureaucracy
Etiquette (Hunt, Guesting, Various)
Acumens
Politics
Strategy
Tactics

They follow what they term the **Hunters' Code**: Local corners always have suzerainty when hunting an intruder, never the Fraternity. (Unless, of course, it's one of their Fraternal corners. Pity the narcissist that walks into one of *those* lions' dens.) This is usually told to Span Twos inside the Fraternity, but Span Ones and others outside the Foxhorn might not know, just to keep the respect for the Foxhorn high.

Rumors abound that this Fraternity is rife with narcissist moles, tipping the enemy off to Foxhorn hunts, and sending loyal members off on wild goose chases— or even to be killed. The Continuum feels confident in dismissing these rumors, but if GMs feel such a "conspiracy theory" plot would aid their gameplay, feel free to employ such in your campaign.

Hunting a narcissist is pretty self-explanatory. The Foxhorn hear of a good prospect for a chase, organize a likely party, and begin Time Combat on the narcissist, usually with the intent to finish him physically. A more salient question is what does the Fraternity do with the quarry once it's felled.

Prepping a felled narcissist

First, the Foxhorn assess if a ruse must be performed for any onlooking levellers. Guard of the Watch, medical personnel, even startled travellers coming to 'help' have all been guises we have taken to remove narcissist bodies from where they fall; some play-acting that would do the Thespians proud.

Then, the narcissist is checked to make sure he's unconscious or dead. Next, a sweep is made for any physical booby-traps; the Observation Skill will do for most, but some have implants which require detection tech; its use is very standard, and even corners in the most primitive Era have some Aquarian tech to hand for just this precaution.

If dangers are discovered, disarming is the next logical step; see below.

Detection technology

Like many of the Foxhorn's weapons, the best overall field detection equipment comes from the mid-21st century. Popular scanning devices are called syrxis[4]: a handheld AI scanner with visual display. Even nanotech of the 22nd century will show up as a distinctly artificial area in a body, or moving school of nanites, though details on the nanotech's function will not be readable.

True to the human pattern of obsolescence, scanning devices of the AD 22nd - 24th centuries can detect and analyze any nanites of its contemporary or previous locality— but are useless in analyzing pre-nanite technology. Properly programmed nanites themselves are better at this kind of analysis, but the Continuum (and especially the Engineers and Antiquarian Fraternities) frown on nanites escaping Down from the Aquarian Era. Nanotech is best left to Engineers and Aquarians anyway.

Disarming tech

This takes a variety of forms, but the Foxhorn are used to acting as a time travelling bomb squad. Various Security Skills are most useful here, as is Demolition. If the implanted booby-trap is nanotech, Engineers are consulted, and if the nanotech is particularly lethal to the locality, Exalted are brought in at once.

Once a narcissist's body is deemed safe for transport, it is taken to the closest Foxhorn lodge for interrogation. For further information on narcissist booby traps, see pg. 192.

Interrogation

This Skill [see Acumens, pg. 21] is effective on levellers, but a captured narcissist is rarely allowed to regain consciousness. While areas of heavy natural paradox [pg. 158] can be created on and around a prisoner, and thus form a spanner 'jail', it can't prevent them from committing suicide by trying to pass it, and limits any loyal spanners entering the area. Dreaming is of greater value, but keeping a prisoner in REM sleep is difficult, and there is always the possibility of them Dreaming a warning to his cohorts.

Hypnosis [pg. 115] is used by some corners, but the generally preferred method of information retrieval is neural sequencing.

[4]SYntel Resonance/Xray Imaganalyzers™, pronounced SIR-cheez, mid-21st cent. spelling *searchies*™. In production, 2012 - 2081.

Neural Sequencing

The Foxhorn can still interrogate a dead narcissist. Sometimes it's even better.

Neurons begin dying rapidly after a person stops breathing, and its dendrites retract even faster, making the connections of knowledge and memory difficult to reassemble. However, neural sequencing tech, perfected in the early 2100s, allows reconstruction of the information contained in neurons by rapid analysis and comparison of synaptically exchanged molecules, and calculates their cells of origin, retracing memories, knowledge, and ultimately anything kept in the subject's brain.

• *The Comparative Scan Method*

No serious damage is caused to a living brain by this method of sequencing; if allowed to awaken, the subject may experience great sluggishness in thought, and headache for several days, but can return to normal functioning.

• *The Ream Method*

Dead brains can be treated more roughly: Dying neurons have little fight left in them, and divulge their complete inventories of molecular records readily. It's often more effective to let sequencing pull apart the cells of the brain for complete direct analysis, without the time-wasting steps of comparison. This method is not used on living subjects, but not for any barrier of sentiment on the part of the Foxhorn: Living tissue simply puts up a fight when provoked this hard, and dies in spectacular ways less conducive to information acquisition. The tech *can* be used to simply ream a living person's brain, but there are simpler, more effective (even more entertaining, if that's your kick) methods to accomplish this, and the information retrieval is markedly poorer.

Both methods are equally effective in gleaning complete information, including data the subject may have forgotten, consciously or via hypnosis. Neural sequencing devices can be portable, but they are normally kept in the Foxhorn or Physician corners, due to the risk.

Many Physicians are skilled in neural sequencing, but utilize it only for therapeutic purposes. Dreamers *deeply* hate this invasion of a person's mind; they describe it as robbing the dead of their eyes. But it gets the job done.

When it's the Quicker's quarry

A major problem that's encountered while probing a fragged narcissist is that part of their brain structure is given over to erroneous perceptions of the world. Since this is often the seat from which the abuse of sentient force derives, it's often safer to leave narcissists of Frag 3 or higher to the Quicker. Dead spanners with even one point of frag are picked up by the Quicker eventually anyway.

Time police, or something less?

With all this pseudo-military background and activities, many spanners say the Foxhorn are indeed the Societies' police department. But most Foxhorn complain of being treated more like sanitation workers than cops, cleaning up endless dead narcissists that local corners have kicked the tar out of.

The Fraternity's attitude is that it's a War being waged with Antedesertium, not a police action. All the information gleaned from interrogation is sent off to the Scribes for analysis by the Atlantean Councils and the War effort. And Foxhorns prefer the hunting to the drudgery of reaming dead skulls any day.

Midwives (pg. 72)

Desired Skill List
Science (Genetics)
Engineering (Genetics)
Anthropology
Medicine
Investigation
Languages (Various)
Acumen
Infant/Parental/Maternal Psychology
Genealogy
Sociology

The Tree of Knowledge

The act of creating a spanner alters his or her genome permanently. Breeding with a leveller creates a leveller, though the offspring may be unusually bright or gifted.

If two spanners breed, a spanner is born.

For the same reason levellers (and even spanners) are not allowed time machines, uncontrolled production of time travel would choke the universe with an impossible population and quantity of frag. Narcissists are well aware of this possibility, and some have gone out of their way to make it occur.

A major part of the War with Antedesertium is limiting the genome available to the enemy, while preserving mankind to survive into the time of the Societies. As the Scorpiod ready a group of novice spanners for a breeding program, we counter by introducing genetic dysfunctions. This ongoing battle has the terrible effect of nearly wiping mankind off the Earth, and it is the basis for the arguments about Life with the Physicians [Chapter 2: Spanning— Span 2— Fraternities— Midwives, pg. 72 and

Physicians pg. 77].

Midwives like to point out that their ability to make the tough calls on genetic causality leave the Physicians more able to do their job: They can afford the luxury of being the nice guys.

The Sex Police

Some call Midwives the 'Sex Police' but accurately they research children exhibiting late Aquarian tendencies in earlier Eras, and discover the culprits responsible for creating them— sex needn't be involved, though often it is. If narcissists are involved, the Foxhorn are called. If troubled but otherwise loyal spanners are raising a family outside the parameters of the Council Decision [pg. 205], the Midwives will attempt a rehabilitation, usually involving raising any spanner apart from the birth parents. In extreme cases, the parents must be subdued and/or the children's minds suppressed with hypnosis.

On rare occasions, spanner children are placed with the Inheritors, who have the means to raise such a child. This is the source for most tales of changelings, and fear of elves and monsters who steal babies.

Moneychangers (pg. 75)

Desired Skill List
Finance
Security
Swindle
Investigation
Science (Mathematics)
Bureaucracy
Acumen
Animal Husbandry
Raw Materials

The Moneychangers like to say that all their ugly secrets are out in the open. Or, just below the surface— slaphappy idiot little-kid pranks like stealing all the gold in Fort Knox, giving the guards a heart attack, then returning it in a moment. Just to say you did it. (And when someone complains, say it was a test— in case someone tries it for real, the Continuum would have a leg up. But no one ever buys that.)

And well they shouldn't, because Drazen Kellek, one of the higher Spans in the Fraternity, is waging his own private war deep inside Antedesertium.

Drazen Kellek maintains a very low profile which is both easy (as much of his business is in-country in Antedesertium) and in his best interest (as he was 'rescued' from the Sagittarian Era by a Continuum spanner driven psychotically paranoid by the place, and is therefore often suspect due to his origin). Once taught to span, he travels throughout the Societies, he sees how the ebb and flow of commerce and trade affects everyone, leveller and spanner alike. The idea of money as a first step to abstract thought intrigues him, and he knows that he has to make sure such a concept was never abused as he was abused in his locality.

Drazen is a stocky man, with a kind and crafty look in his eyes. He dresses whatever way is expected of him, so as to inspire trust. He has a tendency to mirror the behavior of those he is speaking with, to the point where Spanners have sworn that he was a long-lost twin; the perfect salesman. He claims a native's point of view in regards to what Antedesertium desires and is capable of, and has taken it upon himself to mobilize his Fraternity to preempt any such attempts at development.

The argument is often made that Drazen's efforts are only calling Narcissist attention to the resources, and that by seeding ancient Africa and Arabia with guards, he's only exacerbating the problem. But Drazen has a remarkable ability to convince or delay opponents to his operations, not the least of which is that his Fraternity spanners *are there*— providing at least a needed anchor to keeping the Eras of Antedesertium from spinning apart. This leaves most of the debate over to those who insist they be coordinated better into the overall War effort, and not just be Drazen's private domain. The Inheritors, at least, seem to be silent on the issue.

Physicians (pg. 77)

Desired Skill List
Medicine
Etiquette (Bedside Manner and related)
Sciences (Genetics, Nanotech, Various Medical)
Science (Physics)
History (Medicine)
Anthropology
Languages (Latin, Various)
Observation
Acumen
Psychology

Curing Frag from Natural Paradox

Physicians answer the frequent call to solve frag problems that have no causal solution, no as/as not to correct, but come from the sources of natural paradox listed on pg. 158. This is also why there is a separate listing for natural paradox on the character sheet [Appendix Z, pg. 226].

Treatments of the late Aquarian Era are available at Physician corners throughout the Societies. No need for an appointment, just walk in. The tech varies widely, as much of it is of Inheritor manufacture or origin, so only the results are listed below. (GMs can supply Physicians with anything from huge whirling machines to liquid collars, to tiny time pills as natural frag cures.)

There are two major categories of natural paradox

sources, and the period spent away from spanning is markedly different for each:

Radioactive

(Anything that emits radiation or unstable waveparticles.) Simple to fix: This kind of damage has destroyed some of your matter, but it's nothing that can't grow back.

Healing takes 5 days per point of frag, during which you may not span at all.

Electromagnetic

(Such as lightning, or that planetary axial shift.) Hardest to fix: This damage has affected the bonding of your molecules, and made it hazardous for you to span. The GM secretly rolls D100 upon diagnosis. The result is the diagnosed number of spans the character has left before he must roll for survival each time as per Travelling Beyond One's Span rules [pg. 35].

Healing takes 1 year per point of frag, during which you may not span at all. The treatments are often lengthy and painful, though there is 100% chance of recovery if the regimen is maintained. Spanning even once in this time negates the efforts of all frag so healed, so it is recommended that one find a Physician corner in a locality you've always wanted to vacation in, before you begin the process.

Physicians will not treat most patients with a Frag of 5 or greater, and simply refuse to treat those over 7 Frag, relegating their fates to the Quicker [see].

Creating spanners

The number of volunteers that would flock to this Fraternity, if this fact were better known! But Physicians seek as members only those with the true calling to heal.

Invitation Kits [5]

The story *These Are the Good Old Days*, pg. 177, describes the creation of a spanner, and mentions an Invitation Kit as appearing, "about eight by ten inches, and maybe three or four inches high. There are no obvious markings, only a smooth contour, like tumbled gold." They are mostly AD 23rd century technology, and come in a variety of shapes and styles, but nearly all are quite portable. Kits are kept well-guarded at Physician strongholds, and are only taken out on house calls when an Invitation has ben accepted; it is immediately returned thereafter.

Further details on the **area of dispute** with the **Engineers**— over the boundaries of the **Tool**— have been reserved for this section due to the fact that the subject matter touches closely upon the secret of spanning.

Engineers feel that the Aquarian Era is where Man begins making himself into the Tools he has long been devised. But as they should be the first to realize, humanity has been Discovering and re-Discovering the Tools it is born with, for many dozens of millennia.

Take for example, the teeth born to Man. Far beyond their properties of aiding digestion, they are Tools for modifying clothing, holding objects, and even verbal communication. Hands are precursors to digging sticks. Eyes are the earliest form of spectroscope. The list of what the Tools of Man's body have given him are endless.

The adjustment of Tools through the centuries has had surprising few parallels in adjustment's to Man's own body, but not without reason: The skills in surgery or bioimplantation await the Aquarian Era. But the the rest of the Eras have telltale signs that the body is Tool to be improved— armies shearing their beards, clothes for protection and spectacles for focus, thousands of exercise techniques, dietary experiments, and even controlled breeding. Spanning is merely this trend's crowning achievement, and its use must be very judiciously allotted.

Physicians are very sensitive to the many cultures of the Societies with various body taboos; but our mission is always the wellness of the person. If improvement to the Tool that is their body makes them better, where is the argument in that?

Age-thwarting Technology, and Other Medtech

This is increasingly available as the spanner earns higher Spans, especially at Span Three and Up. The years presented are the range in which the technique is considered the most effective in thwarting the effects of aging, which coincides with general medical breakthroughs. Skills to operate the equipment would be either Medicine or Engineering of the appropriate century; for example Engineering (21st century gentech) or Medicine (22nd century nanotech). Naturally, Physicians are more likely to have the Medicine Skill, and Engineers Engineering; but in the Aquarian Era the lines between them blur rapidly.

20th century surgery (c. 1960 - 2018)

Normally requires the use of an operating theatre, or at least the facilities of trained plastic surgeon. Doesn't extend Age, is considerably painful and messy, and only a Master in Plastic Surgery can actually get you to look distinctly different.

21st century gentech (c. 2018 - 2090)

This is the age-extending technology available to Threes. Primarily based in genetic manipulation, with experimental cybernetics available through about 2070. Everything from organ replacement to telomere manipulation to stretch the human lifespan potential to 200 - 300 years.

[5] Antiquarians of Span Three and higher know what these are, and if they are found misplaced anywhere, they make sure they get back into the right hands.

22nd century nanotech (c. 2090 - 2222)

This nanite technology has the capacity to eliminate communicable diseases of all kinds, and combat them in an ongoing fashion for the rest of the spanner's life. This tech is sophisticated enough to diagnose mutation in itself and correct it; it also knows when it is combatting a major infection, and pauses before the tech overwhelms the host, or escapes the body. Threes are allotted this simple form of nanotech shortly after witnessing their Invitations (the required medical exam mentioned on pg. 87).

Slightly more advanced nanites (c. 2110) allow for rapid healing. Few Threes are given this, but some working in war zones or other dangerous patches of spacetime are. Wounds heal at twice the normal rate, or faster if the GM allows.

Complete reproduction of sentient adult life is within easy reach from 2151 Up, but its popularity begins in the 2180s, and is seen as the natural course for humans from 2218 Up.

23rd century nanotech (c. 2222 - 2312)

Span Fours are the main pre-Aquarian beneficiary of this tech when utilized to its full capacity, as it allots and perfects youth and health for at least 1000 years of Age. Spanning itself creates the limitation on the lifespan available with this tech, as the charge of molecular bonds slowly degrades after centuries of spanning; it is this Catch-22 more than anything else that limits Aquarians from joining Inheritor spacetime. [See Chapter 5: Knowing—Aquarian Era, pg. 207.]

Tech of this period includes the nanosequencing technology to create spanners from original, pre-existing material. Around 2250, the tech becomes highly portable; this is the source of Physician's Invitation kits, and indeed, most Physician technology.

Late 23rd century tech also has portable magnetic shielding to allow livestock to be spanned safely— this can be used on levellers as well, so great care is taken as to its distribution.

24th century nanotech

This is the technology that can build or duplicate intelligent spanners (or nearly anything) from scratch. Considered too potent for pre-Aquarian spanner creation, it is not allowed farther Down than AD 2222, though it is equally portable. This tech is employed upon Exalted to maintain their agelessness.

After AD 2400

Aging loses its meaning by the AD 25th century, as shared-energy technology and other transhuman wonders make these concerns obsolete. Spanners of Span Seven or higher may be introduced to this tech by the Inheritors [see pg. 103].

[More notes on the Physicians are found under the Engineers, pg. 163, and the Foxhorn, pg. 164, above; and under the Quicker, below.]

Quicker (pg. 80)

Desired Skill List
Science (Physics)
Hypnotism
Aquarian Skills (esp. Telepathy)
Observation
Investigation
History (Various)
Dreaming
Languages (Various)
Anthropology
Acumens
Occultism
Religion (Various)

Adventures for the Quicker usually begin with a heavy dose of known information. The price of being a 'ghost-buster' is having a heavily burdened Yet.

Most Quicker corners have an Aquarian overseeing them. This Aquarian, of at least Span Three rank, has connections with the Inheritors, and so can obtain complete dossiers on whatever poor spanner has gotten himself fragged. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Quicker have all the information the Scribes can gather on any situation available, and the Scribes are always ready to help.

Occasionally ghost activity is all that is recorded of a particular site, and the Quicker investigate its origins. Leveller sightings are the best to start with, because even the most cautious fruning among spanners can alert narcissists to the whenabouts of a lost friend, and they may try a rescue. Any number of narcissist bands have been rounded up by following the leads of a simple ghost story.

Prepping a felled narcissist

First, the Quicker assess if any onlooking levellers have suffered a violation of the Fourth Maxim. If a local corner or Foxhorn lodge has felled the target, but not handled the Fourth Maxim violation, the Quicker will first urge them to do so. If for some reason they cannot, the Quicker will handle it, but usually by simply suppressing memories: the Quicker rarely spend effort on Invitations, since it's the other end of spanner life that is their forte.

When feasible, the Quicker clear the area around an incident of Frag, by either adopting the guise of high-ranking officials of the locality, or in extreme cases, wiping large numbers of minds. Cases this extreme usually call for Inheritor intervention anyway, but Aquarians feel it is their duty to trouble

them as little as possible. They are usually right.

Once the area is clear, detection equipment comes out and all pools and eddies of the fragged individual are sought in the spacetime around their manifestation. Once the Fourth and Fifth Maxims are satisfied, the fragged individual is collected and removed.

Memory-Altering Devices

There is a vast range of these, from the low-frequency transmitter experiments of the 1940's, '50's and '60's, to hand-held neural smoothers of the late 22nd century, to the mass pulse blanketers aboard most Inheritor incursion ships. Quicker corners have use of any of these, as the Aquarians and Inheritors see fit.

All do one of three things:
1) Memory Suppression— as in Hypnosis [pg. 115].
2) Wipe and write memories— as in Telepathy [pg. 115].
3) Implants that provide Photographic Memory— as the Benefit [pg. 13].

Availability of these or any devices is based on merit, of course. Abuse of memory tech usually results in the abuser waking up one morning missing the device, with no memory of where he left it... Investigations meet with dirty looks from unhelpful Scribes.

When Frag is high enough to collect spanners

Other Fraternities fear the Quicker, and with good cause. They may come to collect a spanner with a Frag as low as 6, and sunder friends who try to intervene. While this is always plainly for the good of the Continuum, it tends to fray nerves in corners under heavy attack. While a spanner at Frag 6 or 7 can accompany the Quicker on their own volition, the confused individual is often tries to fight or flee, and only winds up more fragged.

The Quicker go out collecting only when asked, either by Societal spanners, or by the Inheritors. Rarely, a ghost investigation lands at some unfortunate corner's doorstep. The Quicker never attempt to collect spanners who not reached at least Frag 5, because of the Fifth Maxim, and normally follow an internal policy to wait till they reach Frag 6. Doomed spanners are usually not told of Frag in their Yet, unless they are particularly loathsome narcissists who deserve a psychological dressing-down [see Harbinger Stratagem of Time Combat, pg. 123].

Detection and Containment devices

Only the most basic are listed here. Operation of any of them would be considered a technical Acumen, for example: Acumen— Frag Detection & Collection (21st Century). GMs may opt to make collection and detection two separate Skills, but the difference is mostly superfluous.

20th century (c. 1960 - 2018)

EM registers, videotape, psychrometers (humidity gauges), Geiger counters, and other 'paranormal paraphernalia'. Crude by Aquarian standards, these mostly bulky pieces of hardware will record the passing of ghosts, or at least shut off mysteriously, presenting a temporal clue as to when to look.

21st century (c. 2018 - 2090)

Magflux trackers, and crystal holography are at their peak. **Magflux trackers** allow for precise movements of unseen force to be tracked (even into the magnetosphere), thus allowing the possibility of seeing spans, and 'ghostly' movements.

Holography allows for any energy impressions left behind by the heavily fragged to be read at will. These include sounds such as disembodied voices, or visual 'hauntings'— where ghosts repeat themselves like a broken record, with no apparent awareness or reactions.[6]

The earliest reliable containment vessel is a **superconducting cylinder**; not necessarily hollow, though some are specially made for containment of plasma and matter. While bulky and excessive on power use, many corners prefer it as it both draws the fragged elements into itself and holds it there.

22nd century (c. 2090 - 2222)

Mid-century **reconstructive nanotech** can sort among different fragged molecules to determine the object of origin. Very useful in cases where several narcissists have been fragged out in the same combat.

23rd century (c. 2222 - 2312)

The same tech that allows spanners to be made can detect pieces of same, with the best efficiency, and even (with comparative analysis) arrive at a frag rating; such devices are **hand-held**. Collection devices include a **bipolaron**, a long, thin cylinder made of superdense magnetized matter, nicknamed the 'magic wand'. Creatures of Frag 8 or greater are held in place by the wand, and can be 'rolled up' by it when spun at high velocity.

24th century

The detection tech from the 23rd century can be successfully implanted, and farther Up, it can be exchanged and modified via Telepathy. Note that external devices for *collection* are widely preferred by even the most daring Aquarian: Holding a badly fragged narcissist in a small part of your brain is considered unhealthy.

[6]'Psychic impressions' can also be left in placetimes by Master Telepaths; but further information on how this is done is not available here.

Curing Frag

This is all the Quicker really do, but they don't do it with the individual in mind, but the Continuum as a whole. Badly fragged spanners are placed in a Container[7] (usually a cylinder or bipolaron, above) and taken to Cold Storage, even if that frag is all from natural paradox. The Physicians Fraternity have strict policies regarding the disposition of characters with high frag [see pg. 167].

Cold Storage.

Once contained, the fragged, formerly sentient force, along with all information relevant to it, is sent to a special facility far Down, in deep space. One of the common names for this facility is Cold Storage.

It is probably the farthest Down of any consistently inhabited place in the universe, perched daringly close to the Big Bang. What fragged elements that can be discovered are removed here, and a complete catalogue is kept. Occasionally, information is sought from some of the containees, but for the most part it is a facility which draws frag away from Earth and every other system to close causal loops for eternity in a safe environment.

Some claim that spanners that manage to be restored to Frag 0 are eventually released from Cold Storage. But no one admits to ever having witnessed a successful return.

Advancement for pre-Aquarian members of the Quicker

Advancement is already mighty difficult, and Aquarians make it more difficult for those who have joined the Quicker. The Quicker is run by Aquarians who prefer thinking of pre-Aquarians as dead, anyway. Aquarians are fiercely jealous of their status with the Inheritors, and rarely hide disdain for pre-Aquarians that try to emulate them, often by presenting confusing puzzles (social or otherwise) that are 'child's play' for Aquarians. If high advancement in Span is what a character is mainly after, every other Fraternity makes it much easier.

A pre-Aquarian Quicker Three is rare, but not unusually rare. These tend to be the best minds of their times regarding physics, and/or the wisest people regarding their locality's beliefs, especially the afterlife beliefs. And they can run a tight corner, too.

Pre-Aquarian Quicker Fours are extremely rare. These are humans who have proven themselves sufficiently able to partake in the collective minds of Aquarian and Inheritor spacetime, without disrupting proceedings. They are used to appearing when summoned, and always gather and present the most enlightening information.

An Exalted pre-Aquarian who has joined the Quicker is the rarest of creatures; it is said there are only two from each Era, if that. They have had to prove themselves every second, and have always had to provide superior information, insight, and efficiency over any Aquarians they have worked with, while accepting all petulance and abuse from Aquarians with the serenest calm, and even subservience. But they have the reward: Inheritors come to them for information about the Societies and their locality(s) *first*. And they are trusted with any Inheritor information they request: even Exalteds of higher Span envy this.

[More notes on the Quicker are found under the Foxhorn, pg. 164, and the Physicians, pg. 166.]

Scribes (pg. 82)

Desired Skill List
Languages (Many and Various)
History (Many and Various)
Observation
Computers
Etiquette (Various)
Hypnosis
Anthropology
Bureaucracy
Acumens
Library Science

Watchful recorders of history

Usually a member of long standing is called in to observe (and often clandestinely tape or record) any and all incidents of frag. If there is ever a mysterious figure watching an entire incident unblinkingly, it is either a corner's mentor, or more likely, a Scribe.

Scribes that watch over a locality, often grew up there as a leveller and/or a novice. This provides complete understanding of a locality, as well as the caution of wanting to avoid fragging yourself and your old chronies. There is usually an outside contact always willing to come in to observe if the local Scribe has gotten himself in a tangle.

With the Pandora's box of Hypnosis (see below, and pg. 115) somebody has to keep all the records straight. Within the Societies, the final authority on records is the Scribes.

13. Open and Shut

Chris, here a Span Three Scribe is taking Span One Anton to task for an incident of frag. The incident is recent in Anton's Age, though Chris is all too familiar with it from research.

"We have the video from the hotel room," sighs Chris. "It's not good."

Anton is slumped in one of the gradeschool chairs in the small A/V room. It's 1965. "Alright, can I see it."

"That's the idea." Chris turns off the lights and switches on the Toshiba from 2007 with built-in widescreen projection. "As you can see, it starts right off."

A dim hotel room, Anton was sleeping shirtless with the covers down. Then another Anton appear,

[7]Note that *Vessels* [pg. 204] are the opposite of *Containers:* Vessels are spanners whose frag is being actively used by narcissists or other fools.

and taps the figure, who starts awake, and is immediately met with his elder's pocketwatch swinging back and forth.

"Oh that's a cute touch."

Chris says, "I figured it was your legendary sense of humor. Now, ahem... watch."

The sound is not as good as it might be, but Anton's muttering to his selves is audible enough. the junior Anton nods, and after several minutes of suggestion agrees that he is about to see a man try to crush his skull with a bowling ball, miss by an inch, then vanish.

"Oh, God," groans Anton.

"Yep. Here it comes."

On screen, the elder Anton vanishes as the junior lays back for a second, and suddenly a figure is there, dressed all in black, including his face covered ninja-style, with a purple bowling ball. A second Anton falls out the closet near the door to the hall, and the ninja steps back. The sleeping Anton awakens and rolls over to avoid... nothing. The closet Anton grabs at the black-swathed figures legs, and a muffled voice says, 'Anton! Hey man, wake up!' After a brief wrestle on the floor, the 'ninja' drops the ball, and vanishes. The closet Anton swears.

The bed Anton rises slowly, looks around, and sees the ball, but not his elder. 'Damn, it wasn't a dream.' he scratches his head, stands and spans away as the closet Anton rises, looks at the empty bed, and says, 'Sleep tight, champ,' and vanishes, too.

"Great," shrugs the Anton in the A/V room. "Now that I know that, I guess that frag isn't going bother me, huh."

"No genius, your hypnotism is in your Yet now." Chris runs back the tape.

"Yeah, well, maybe it's a Thespian, or hey, maybe an evil wicked narc is posing as me to screw up you and everyone who sees your movie."

"We're more thorough than that. Something you obviously aren't." Anton makes a mocked-scared noise at Chris. "Really, Anton, you're being a pill. That closet junior is hypnotized, too. He thinks your junior in the bed is still asleep, and he's already gone—"

"It's one tiny blip of frag, and I don't even notice it."

"And I'm warning you this is important. The man who attacked you—"

"No." Anton folds his arms. "That does it. I'm just getting pushed around. I don't believe in hypnotizing people."

"Anton, it's not as though it's a mystery who's putting the suggestions in your brain."

"Look, I don't care that it's me getting hypnotized. I expect that in this nutzy life. I care a lot that you say I'm doing the hypnotizing. I don't ever want to learn that. I find it deeply wrong."

Chris throws up his hands. "Okay, you don't want to handle your Yet, that's it. I'm going to Stirling."

"Well, no wait."

"What. She's your mentor. She has to handle—"

"I'm sorry. Okay. I'll do it." Anton bends his head, his face is mottled blue in the thick air. "I'll do this."

Span book repository

A wise custom adopted by most spanners is to deposit one's span books for copying at a Scribal corner. Naturally, they return your books almost instantly, and always remind spanners to keep them locked away safe.

If a Span book is ever lost or stolen, the Scribes are alerted, and they set out a watch. Scribal squads nicknamed by late Pisceans as 'Overdue Brigades' stalk Span book stealers and their call the Foxhorn in, or bring them down themselves. Scribes with an athletic bent go in for these Brigades, since Time Combat frequently occurs against narcissists who are out trying to find places to frag people, or selling span books to the highest bidder.

The cleverest narcissists swipe span books and replace them at once— but it takes time to copy them somewhere. Any spanner that's been fragged repeatedly, and suspects their book has been copied or tampered with should alert the Scribes.

Memorized span books

At some point, usually when increasing in Span, a spanner with Photographic Memory is asked to recount their spans to a Scribal recorder. Personal oral histories can sometimes take days to relate, so plan it like a working vacation— span to some pleasant resort or locality that interests you with a Scribal Librarium nearby.

At Exalted Spans, this is usually handled by the Inheritors, and can be very direct.

Memory Cross-References

For further information on Hypnosis, see pg. 20 and pg. 115. For Telepathy, see pg. 115. Photographic Memory is a Benefit, pg. 13, but also comes automatically at Mind 8, pg. 10. For Memory-Altering Devices, see the Quicker, pg. 169. See also Dreaming, ppg. 20, 108.

That legendary honesty

Some spanners, especially those from paranoid localities, wonder openly about the trust placed in the Scribes' lauded honesty. They've read Machiavelli, they've read Frank Herbert. How can the Continuum's record-keeping function solely on the Scribes' word of honor?

Scribes are a swarm onto themselves; the least hint, accusation, or grunt of misgivings from any spanner, and they are there to defend and prove themselves with special spanners trained in just this kind of 'public relations'. Should the smallest whiff of scandal from their own ranks be detected, the accused party is examined and reexamined, at first without their knowledge, and then if necessary, they are given the temporal third degree. Scribes that survive the ordeal of reexamination may ask where the doubt in their work came from, and a second round of shakedown occurs around the accuser. It seems

extreme to some, somewhat kangaroo to others, but the Scribes seem to be happy with their system, and their records stay accurate.

[More notes on the Scribes are found under the Engineers, pg. 163, and the Quicker, pg. 168.]

Thespians (pg. 84)

Desired Skill List
Art (Acting)
Swindle
Languages (Various)
Etiquette (Various)
Anthropology
Drive (Various)
Athletics
Combat (Various)
Hypnosis
Medicine
Acumens
Any and Many:
Whatever's appropriate for the part

Building a Resume

Much like actors of the late Piscean, Thespians are always claiming to be good at anything, just to land a choice rôle in history. This is dangerous, despite the ever-present possibility of 'Instant' Skills [pg. 40], because one never knows every detail of what is being asked of one until the part is closely studied. Though Thespians do perform their own stunts— and occasionally stunts for meeker spanners.

Replacing People and Faking Death

The Thespians' function of filling the shoes of historical figures can quickly become abused by players. The intent is never to see human life as disposable or replaceable, but to respect the places into which one finds oneself. Faking Death is easy if the body is never recovered, but that gets harder and harder as one approaches the Aquarian cusp, until the secrets of the flesh— DNA and all— can no longer be disguised by mere Acting Skills.

There are some guidelines GMs should follow, even if each Thespian troupe has different standards of participation: If the name is in the history books, but the person gets aced, call in the understudy. If it's a leveller NPC, and characters have met him farther Up, but he's been aced, call in the understudy.

Otherwise, (if the rôle is mundane, one you've invented, and the players haven't encountered him farther Up,) feel free to explain the individual's death or disappearance any way plausible. Local news is full of people vanishing every day, their bodies discovered weeks later far away, if at all. And let's not forget the bodies that remain forever

Wakewits the Younger, (b. AD 1213)
Sketchbook of Scenes from 1393
ink & wash
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

Artwork © 1999 Brian Wackwitz

unidentified: some may come from distant time, and match no record of the locality where they are found.

See the Physicians [pg. 166] for warnings about trying to replace bodies, etc.

Finally, some vanishings and teleportations make it into leveller tales, where they are discounted until the Aquarian Era. While rare, these poor sods should be left alone to puzzle out the meaning of existence on their own. The Fourth Maxim applies, of course, but sometimes they aren't worthy, and sometimes they say no. Some recent examples the GM may have fun with:

Gil Perez— As a soldier in the service of Felipe II in Manila, he witnesses the Spanish Governor's gruesome assassination on October 23rd, 1593. He shortly finds himself in a place he does not recognize, but near a formation of soldiers with uniforms similar to his own. When discovered, he is told he is in Mexico, on October 24th, and he reports the assassination of the day before. He is held in prison, due the patently mysterious circumstances. After word finally arrives— months later, through leveller means— of the Governor's death, he is eventually set free, since no evidence can be found against him.

Count St. Germain— see pg. 185. Many have posed as Saint Germain throughout the centuries since the 1700s; not all need be the spanner himself.

The crew of the *Mary Celeste*— The ship, originally christened *The Amazon,* from its maiden voyage to its being run aground and set aflame in 1885 is plagued by bad luck and the fraud schemes of her owners. On December 4, 1872 she is discovered abandoned but 'highly seaworthy' by the crew of the *Dei Gratia,* east of the Azores. The only other things missing are her lifeboat, navigation equipment and ship's papers; the ship's log is intact, the last entry, dated a few days before recovery is unremarkable. Protective gear, including boots, stores of food and water and the cargo are left behind untouched, as are small creature comforts such as the crew's pipes and tobacco and the toys of the captain's child. (Tales of ghosts, piping hot food still on the table, and confused pets aboard are later, romantic inventions; the spelling 'Marie-Celeste' was poetic license exercised by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.)

Agatha Christie— December 3, 1926: Following the death of her mother and the confession of infidelity from her husband, Agatha Christie drives off into the Berkshire night in her two-seater Morris. Early next morning, the car is found abandoned half a mile away, its front wheels hung over the edge of a 120-foot chalk pit. The brakes are off, the gear is in neutral and the ignition is switched on. As a startled public discusses the mystery, 250 miles away at the Hydro Hotel, Harrowgate, Yorkshire, a redhead is wowing the guests. Claiming the name Theresa Neele— the same surname as her husband's lover— and claiming to hail from South Africa, Christie remains there 11 days until her husband at last discovers her. While many claim this to be a typical 1920's publicity stunt, the mystery has never been satisfactorily solved.

Timing and distracting levellers

While some Skills exist to shortcut roleplaying the tricking of levellers, such as Swindle, Stealth, Hypnosis, Acumen Prestidigitation (Stage Magic), nothing suits like the Third Maxim. Taking the leisure to study a moment of continuity until you know how to play it precisely, and practicing it several times before executing it, guarantees success and callbacks for rôles with greater responsibility.

If a Thespian is called upon to perform a seemingly impossible feat, the troupe (his corner) may come in and assist in distracting levellers for an important second or two via buffoonery, or the typical moves pickpockets use to distract their marks (spilling food on someone, knocking their belonging out of their arms and apologizing, or even asking directions... or the time).

These are just a couple of the basic ways to keep levellers from stumbling into seeing a Fourth Maxim violation. Most Thespians are greater showoffs, and like turning even a simple moment into a rich, poetic, or emotionally complex scene.

Preparing to be an Understudy

This normally takes at least three months' preparation before one begins; though Acting Grandmasters have been known to improvise off-the-cuff and study up after an initial scene, most spanners in the Continuum sleep easier knowing that Thespians train hard for their historic rôles.

Definitions

n/a— Some parts are just not given to the inexperienced. Pay your dues first.

Extra/Filler— Just some typical person of the period walking around. No lines or real interaction. Also applies to "filler" moments that other spanners have left to Thespians to perform.

Servant— Any person in a menial role who made no noticeable impression on his tribe, nation, people, or history, but whose presence is required anyway.

Acting Skill:

Title	Time Needed to Train				
Importance of Rôle	Extra/Filler	Servant	Minor Historical	Major Historical	Great Fame
Novice	90 days	180 days	1 year	n/a	n/a
Apprentice	30 days	90 days	180 days	2 years	n/a
Journeyman	7 days	14 days	90 days	1 year	n/a
Master	1 day	7 days	30 days	90 days	1 year
Grandmaster	improv	1 day	14 days	30 days	90 days

Minor Historical— People who get much of the work of nations done, but are less well known. Footnotes to history, but still in the history books. The dusty scholarly ones, anyway.
Major Historical— Most Piscean schoolchildren have at least heard of this person. Kings, Presidents, generals, or their close staff and families, as well as notable civic leaders, inventors, or anyone all the players have heard of.
Great Fame— The Big Names: Confucius, Alexander, Lao Tzu, Caesar, Columbus, Ghandi, and so on. Superstars.

A final note on the Fraternal Symbols

It will be observed that some of the Symbols are named with a single noun; others with an adjective and a noun. The simpler titles belong to the Fraternities with the greatest range through time (Dreamers, Foxhorn and Quicker). While all Fraternities have representatives flitting throughout spacetime, only these three have extensive organizations beyond the borders of the Societies. These symbols' meanings for Humanity— the Dream, the Hunt, and Eternity— are deeper in its spirit than even the Midwives' or Physicians' efforts to understand Life.

Span Three

All mentors are acutely aware of how spanning works, and remember their in-betweens in detail. So without further ado, we present the secret of time travel:

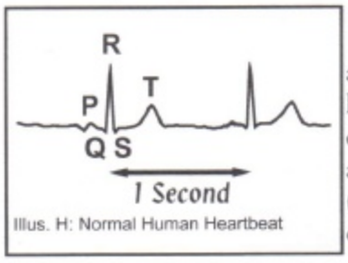
How Spanning Works

In A Heartbeat

It has been stated that the time between spans is no less than a heartbeat [pg. 34]. There is a fundamental reason for this.

The heart is the world in miniature. This is no romantic allegory, though it has been used to disguise meaning in our conversations. The human heart functions as a powerful electromagnet; powerful, at least as far as the body is concerned.

Unlike nerve cells, the cells of the heart carry an electric charge— a charge near the maximum sustainable without creating a spark.[8] The mean length of the heartbeat is one cycle/second. It is this standard, steady rhythm of a healthy heart at rest that has inspired mankind to divide time into seconds.[9] A spanner's biomagnetism has been altered to allow for the stresses put on them with every span. The cycle also allows the spanner to coordinate his magnetic cycle with that of the earth's.



Illus. H: Normal Human Heartbeat

The illustration of an electrocardiogram at left (Illus. H) shows the depolarizations of the atria (P) and ventricles (QRS) and repolarization of the ventricles (T).

At atrial depolarization, the spanner's specially engineered nervous system uses the energy to take a reading of the matter to be spanned— primarily the body and its status, but also whatever else the spanner's mind is consciously (a object being touched) or reflexively (one's own clothes) focussed on. All this is bundled as information in less-used areas of the brain, areas reengineered at the spanner's Invitation to properly organize the information of all the matter to be spanned.

At ventricular depolarization, all targeted matter is translated to a tachyon burst of the gathered information, headed in whichever direction the spanner desires. Arrival is the tachyon information targeting with such precision that the energy assembles in the precise pattern from which it derived. There is no consciousness in between.

The heart is an impressive vessel, but not one that can dematerialize and rematerialize itself and up to tons of surrounding matter on its own power. One must wonder where the energy for this magic comes from.

The Sky-road

"We used to think that the Van Allen Belts slowly waxed and waned and were not particularly dynamic. But these belts have now been shown to be powerful, energetic particle accelerators, generating excitement and awe in the scientific community."

—Daniel Baker,
Director, Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics,
University of Colorado at Boulder
December 7, AD 1998.

The Earth's magnetosphere contains two, and sometimes more[10], belts of trapped radiation, called the Van Allen Belts after their discoverer, James Van Allen (AD 1958). Piscean leveller scientists have noticed the trapping and acceleration of vast amounts of solar energy by the magnetosphere. But they are only barely aware of the particles rocketing at lightspeed toward the future, or the others there exceeding lightspeed, slipping into the past. That would be us.

[8] "It amounts to some ten million volts per meter of potential change across the thin insulating membrane of each cell." —Arthur Winfree, *When Time Breaks Down*, AD 1987.

[9] The cycles of the sun and stars inspired the division of days and hours, and the minute was a logical ordering of seconds to fit hours (60 x 60).

[10] A third appeared, for instance, recently, as C^ONTINUUM v. 0.5 first went on sale (May 1998).

Much of the energy in the Belts are spanners becoming and unbecoming tachyon streams. Energy is conserved by accelerated solar radiation in the Belts supplying the majority of the power for the span, materialization, and any compensation or resistance necessary to keep this process from leaving craters in the earth[11]. Kinetic motion is generally not rematerialized, but the electromagnetic energy of the spanner is instantly restored without noticeable change.

The spiral force of the earth and its magnetosphere has its parallels in the contours of its lifeforms and weather patterns, but none as profound a parallel as the energy trapped and released by the magnetic field in a spanner's heart. These parallels resonate with a precision the science only at the Aquarian cusp can grasp.

One now sees the fire one is playing with: to exceed one's ability to ride this spiralling dragon is to find one's molecules forming and falling randomly, or have one's soft tissues thrust into a particle accelerator filled with lightspeed electrons. And also explained is why Span Sevens are approached directly by the Inheritors: To learn to span beyond the cradle of Earth's bounds takes new and greater disciplines of riding the unmollified solar wind itself.

For further information, see Chapter Five: Knowing— Time Travel in the Real World, pg. 208.

Minimum Physical Requirements to Span

A spanner can be shot, fragged, and driven mad, and still manage to span. At minimum he needs his **brain, spinal chord,** and his **beating heart,** all **still attached to one another.** If any of these has taken physical damage, the spanner must make a Victory or a Grace roll, or be annihilated instead of rematerializing.[12]

Note that even Exalted spanners are not invincible gods, but men. Any person with *only* his brain, spinal chord and heart attached will be unable to breathe, or live more than a few seconds. They had better make their span straight into an AD 23rd century nanomed facility, and hope they're expected.

Living Tissue and Cardiac Arrest

The normal human heart cannot handle the fluctuating electromagnetism, a necessity in spanners. If taken unprotected for a span, they must roll vs. Body; any Failure is a cardiac arrest, a Blunder results in their body reassembling with a neutral electric charge— very dead, and unrecoverable. Hence levellers (and even livestock) have a dangerous barrier to direct exposure to the Fourth Maxim. AD 24th century tech exists to protect levellers, but it isn't handed out much for obvious reasons [see Engineers— Span enhancement devices, pg. 163.]

Spanners have been adjusted to withstand most of these assaults, but in some cases the GM may wish a spanner to roll for cardiac arrest— situations include being struck by lightning, exceeding one's span, or trying to span in or out of a field of intense magnetism. Rolls are vs. Body, but arrest only occurs in spanners on a blunder.

The state of the heart's electromagnetics during cardiac arrest is called **fibrillation.** Instead of moving in nice, even rhythms, in fibrillation, the heart's cells quiver in disorganized chaos. If a span is attempted during or the instant before the spanner's heart falls into cardiac arrest, synchronization with the Van Allen Belts fails. The spanner rolls vs. Quick; on a Grace or Victory, the span fails to begin; the spanner stays where he is and experiences the heart attack. Any other result, and the spanner atomizes, his energy most likely added to the Belts themselves. End of Yet.

Spanning while ill

GMs are at liberty to decide how much danger certain ill or fragged spanners are in when they span. Among the options that the GM may have to sort through are:

- Spanners with damage to brain, heart or spine may spontaneously combust, as high-speed electrons arrive to their bodies without proper instructions. (Good way to hide the evidence of spanning tech.)
- Old and senile spanners may have to start rolling vs. Quick, or never come down from the Belts.
- Spanners at Frag 7 may have to roll vs. Quick to see if they can remember how to span that day.

Span-enhancing devices

These may also be at the service of Threes, usually allowing greater cargo to be carried. Mentors may prefer to have such devices implanted instead of lying around, tempting novices. But in any case, its function must be known to the operator, and it has to be carried at least once on a span before a spanner can use it. For further information, see Engineers, pg. 163.

Magnetic shielding devices to protect livestock while spanning also exists (see Physicians— 23rd century nanotech, pg. 168) but can easily be

[11]Note that even when spanning levelly, the spanner dematerializes and employs the energy of the Van Allen Belts. GMs should bear this in mind should questions arise regarding the differences of level and time travelling spans.

[12]Certain spanners beyond Frag 7 may well be below these requirements, but they are also no longer moving via their own volition. Their Yet drags them piecemeal across spacetime, as noted on pg. 47, and inthe story on pg. 222, leaving little trace of one's former state of existence in any one spot. This fate is far worse than simple physical annihilation.

abused by narcissists who wish to take levellers on joyrides: only Fours and Exalted can get this on request, and Threes only rarely get to borrow it.

Spanners whose weight is carried by other spanners spend no Span, but may be at the mercy of the spanning individual as to where they materialize. And 'cargo' of any kind will also avoid integration with existing structures on the ground, and appear (like spanners) as close to an unoccupied space as feasible [see Chapter Two: Spanning— Spanning into a Previously Unknown Space, pg. 34].

Learning Time Travel

The instincts of spanning come quite slowly, and the first span (in the in-between) is often achingly painful. The initiate is then often very reluctant to span again, but with the encouragement of his mentor and corner, takes the new power as his own. After six or eight spans, the pain vanishes completely. Usually a regimen of level spans is practiced for the first fourteen days, followed by spans to within a few seconds Up or Down, usually back and forth between adjoining rooms to avoid a gemini.

After spanning during one's in-between, the spanner develops the instincts to reintegrate in any position on the far side of the span. The same cannot be said of material not being worn by the spanner, which arrives pretty much as it departed.

Further details of a typical In-Between are revealed in the story *These are the Good Old Days,* below.

The Yet of the In-Between

Spanners begin to gather a Yet, even during their In-Between: Some events the spanner discovers while very young, and it can be VERY awful— or too spectacular to calm down from. But, it's then suppressed. The table below is for GM's to determine certain events hidden in the character's Yet, to be revealed upon attaining Span Three[13]. GM's discretion decides if an event rolled is close enough to an event played, and can be considered checked off from the Yet. GMs may optionally select appropriate Yet events instead of rolling, or indeed invent them without using the table if they so choose.

The very existence of the Yet of the In-Between should be kept from players for as long as possible, since **its existence is usually kept from characters below Span Two.** This is considered a facet of the First Maxim, so **spanners almost never discuss the subject,** even when no Span Ones and Twos seem to be around.

What I Forgot To Remember

Could be something good, could be something bad...
(d100: Roll once for every 4 points or fraction thereof of Quick the character has upon attaining Span Three, duplicate results are ignored but not rerolled. Add to the Benefits/Disadvantages column and the Yet, as appropriate.)

01	**Favored Exalted** You can still be injured, and suffer all kinds of terrors getting there— but you will live to see Span Five, guaranteed. Negates 'Death at Span Four'.
02-03	**Grace on Demand** You have friends, powerful friends. You have ten free Grace rolls to change any result you (not the GM) get to roll.
04-05	**All Too Easy** Aquarian Skills (including Hypnosis) are learned in half the normal Time Index. And you *will* learn them.
05-10	**Save Love of Your Life** If you already have one of these, you'll be saving them from death or worse. Otherwise, hero, remember the gorgeous person that that will call you 'mine'.
11-15	**Hero's Companion** You have a great career ahead, and along the way you have a mighty NPC pal who is Little John to your Robin Hood, Enkidu to your Gilgamesh. Make the GM design him *now.*
16-30	**Sidekick** Similar to the Hero's Companion, but less amazing. More like some novice who thinks you're hot stuff, but only has potential, not walking demigod stats.
31-50	**Liked** Fruning around, it turns out spanners think you're okay. First impressions wherever you go among spanners starts favorably. Negates Disliked. Effect lasts until and if you reach Exalted.
51-60	**Disliked** I dunno, there's something wrong or weird about you. What's your problem? Spanners' initial impression of you is negative. Effect lasts until and if you reach Exalted.
61-85	**Petty Betrayal** Some cheap advantage is there, and you take it. No frag or Maxims broken, but a lot of bad feelings from old pals.
85-90	**Great Betrayal** You mess up the lives of most people who care about you for some streak of self-aggrandizement— or some one you trust does it to you (GM's call).
91-95	**Kill Loved Ones** Everyone you care about... is dead. And everyone agrees, it's your fault.
96-97	**Death at Span Four** Well, it could be a glorious Death. Overrides any limitations for Surviving Death, even if you were previously limited to Span Three. But it's not really good news, is it.
98-99	**Rape** You suffer a brutal humiliating assault from your worst enemy, with little chance of ever getting him back. You might die, too.
00	**Treason** You are destined to betray the Continuum to Antedesertium, you don't know precisely when. We do. Have a nice day.

[13]Make no adjustments for Lucky Benefits or Unlucky Limits— Maybe the reason for the character's luck is revealed by the Yet of the In-Between!

14. These Are the Good Old Days

Stirling Cynthia is a Span Three candidate, she wants to work in the same time as her juniors. It looks like she'll be taking up a corner near Saratoga Springs, from the 1950s through the early '90s.

First she has to learn how she came to span.

The theatre is part of a small medical college, but only the lights are being used. And the straps to hold her junior in place. Above it, behind one-way glass, sit Charlie and Stirling, alone in the small observation room.

"An operation." The white of her memory ripples once, twice, like the Mirror of Galadriel. "We were always told spanning was a learned trait."

"Sentient force is the key, Cyn," says Charlie. "This is just your engine being installed."

"So we'd have no way of actually training other spanners, without this tech."

"But with knowledge of its existence, it's that much easier to acquire and abuse. You can see the natural precaution. The training and the tests have always been of character."

"I know. I guess I was just hoping for a more... I don't know. Spiritual source? A moment of awe and wonder?" She looks at her junior, who is having things explained to her by Barry, a member of the Physicians Fraternity she knows rather well. Barry is putting on heavy black rubber gloves with thin, wire attachments on the outside. Her junior is already scared.

Charlie adds, "This is just the science. How people use it is always the most important thing."

"Yeah. Information is all, and it can bite. Still can't remember what Barry is telling me down there."

"Patience," says Charlie, but he sounds nervous.

Stirling sees Barry pull a smooth metal device from a felt bag. It's about eight by ten inches, and maybe three or four inches high. There are no obvious markings, only a smooth contour, like tumbled gold. Barry places it quietly on a table to the junior's left.

Charlie has mentioned the Invitation Kit a few minutes before, and even the name has Stirling on edge. It opens like modern sculpture, with many fine rods supporting boxes larger than the item itself, and delicate devices, nine feet up in the air. Her junior stares open-mouthed on the table below it. Look at that thing. No wonder I'm scared.

Barry touches her junior's temple. She begins to pass out. Stirling feels a slight cold touch at her own temple, and starts fidgeting. Not the time for sympathetic-magic crap.

She grimaces as the energy tools go to work on her junior. Focussed beams are invisible, so her junior's flesh merely opens up. "Aah. It's tough to look at. Frog dissections in high school were not my forté. This is worse."

The front of her junior's torso levitates away, breasts, ribs and all, leaving organs living and exposed. No sign of suction or clamps, but Stirling guesses at the fields holding her unconscious junior's blood in check. The big piece of her bobs gently in the half-light above the theatre like a nightmare from the French comix scene. "Well. That's more than I expected."

"Watch," says Charlie softly, discreetly not touching her.

A cool grey plate, shaped like a planchette, is brought down on a thin guiding rod. It slips in under the lungs of her junior, and Stirling reaches for her tightening throat. It was becoming familiar. She remembers remembering this, as she watches her junior below, her eyes fluttering open and closed, a fear and the cold.

A dull hum, barely perceptible through the glass, hardly noticeable in the theatre, lives loud in Cynthia's memory,

The planchette brushes under her heart, and cradles it.

Cynthia breathes. "It recognizes— I recognize—"

And like a dimmer switch, the white white light, the white light around her memories steps away, inch by precious inch.

The straps are off, she knows that. Again, she struggles through the haze and muddy pain.
"No no no, Cynthia. You want something, someone will bring it. Lie there. No no, easy does it."
"Bear." Her mouth throat and lungs feel lined with cotton.
The nurse looks confused. Somewhere in the blurry distance she hears and sees Charlie: "The teddy bear. Here." And Skootchie the bear, childhood companion, is laid in her arms.

"—Yes! My heart, it's like it's alive. All alive." She looks around the room— it's a place all to herself, but her cornermates— her future— no, no, her chronies in her Yet!— she can go out, a little, and see them. She's not hiding in this little house, she's exploring, growing stronger and freer by the second. "And I can go here— and here—" She pops around like a firecracker, and Charlie laughs, he's been explaining everything, happily, several times.
"And I only get a little sick, when I try, y'know the real time travel. Tell me about tv, again. The movies."
"No..." says Charlie, scratching his beard. "Your turn to tell me."
"Okay." The college student in her rallies. "Spanning is a reality, but one the ordinary— the level people aren't ready for, but we're getting them ready! All century we've been getting them ready with the movies and the tv, the repeating. Events, always the same, you can always visit them. They can imagine an event being exact, they have the, the group, group consciousness! They have what's necessary to become Inheritors."
"And spanning is—?" Charlie smirks.
"The natural state, only two hundred years in the future— Up. Meant Up." She slaps her thighs for emphasis. "We're gettin' ready."

This time, I will get it right, and no dizziness.
The certainty fell upon her like a glass scarf. This would be the good span.
She is by Lake Michigan, and cars and planes are far away, at the edge of things. It was time to step around that. Not heed them. Rooms of dust where I once lived.

The sky calls the back of her mind, pulls her heart, the spinning whorls of yarn, burning unlooked-for, she finds them, she knows them—
And she is in the field of startled crickets, a mile from the lakeshore and two days farther Down, and tall grass is by her as she is light and perfect, on ballet point. And she says to the wheels and eyes of sky, "You're mine. All of you."

Another testing day. Charlie is there, rattling events she has experienced over the past seven days, or events she has heard of.
"Where is Julie eating cappuccino pie?"
"Sunday, April 4, 2004. Morning, eh, 11:07 AM. Adele's on Market St., Milwaukee. I remember because she's fat there."
"Where is Ray wearing those silly plaid socks?"
"They're argyles, and it's Wednesday, December 25, 1996. 10:58 AM, at his place on Third St."
"Vice-President Quayle's private discussion of Wisconsin welfare reform?"
"He's at home in DC, upstairs bedroom, on the phone, January 8, 1990, 10:57 PM. Talking to... I don't remember the other man's name, but he's in Green Bay, James K... Something..."
"Okay. Here is?"
"Friday, April 18, 1997, 10:32 PM. And thirty-five seconds... mark."
"Forty, actually. Not bad for a tweener."
Cynthia sticks out her tongue.

And the bird. That was red pain, red red. The worst test, cut me open again deeper.

Friday May 1, 1981. She watches her junior, her nine-year-old self playing around with other kids at her bus stop. The old wooden rain shelter is a great barrier to the racing and the screaming, round and round it.
'No! There's a bird's nest. Be careful.'
She runs out from the nearby trees, arms flailing. But she is still far away. Charlie, nearby yet, hisses, "Don't, Cynthia—"
"No! No, let me stop this." And she is out there, and there was her young gemini, looking back at her, wondering, wondering what? She remembers this differently, and the sick cut is coming across her abdomen and head. "I just want to save the little eggs—"
But she sits down in the road, the frag is direct and strong. There are no cars here, it's too far away from the main drag for cars, the perfect bus stop for children. They've stopped playing and screaming, staring at the crazy teenager in the road. The chirping of the mother bird is loud in her ear, under the cold silence of sky.
"Hey kids!" Charlie's most cheerful voice. And they all turn, and he mesmerizes them on the spot. And 1981 began to curdle for Cynthia Carmichael even as her first frag approaches its healing. All her playground pals stood like the toys they owned.
"Cyn." It is Ray. He is back in the woody copse where she has ran out from. "C'mon back. It's no good, Cyn, I think you can see that."
Charlie whispers instructions to the boys and girls, and Cynthia turns around, first crawling, then getting up to a stumble into the trees. The children burst into a scream, a manic, carefree scream, and barreled down on the shelter, pushing it, shoving it to a final crash and tilt.
Cynthia is crying behind the leaves, and watches. Her young junior was laughing, until she saw the little nest in the dark shelter, the smashed yolks, their mother limping in the wet grass, and the brutal truth of death shadowed her that day, forever.
The thrill of healed frag, of renewed existence, only makes the elder trebly sick with her own blind greed.

The white light is as thin as a plane, now. Before is perfect memory, and after is the memory of imperfection.

Her eyes are shut, she is leaning back, hears the buzz of the neon above her head.

"This is recompense, isn't it Charlie." She looks over to him, her mentor.

Charlie looks confused, cocks his head.

"For having no children. We get this childbirth instead."

"We can have children, Cyn. Just not spanner children—"

Cynthia, Stirling, turns her eyes away. "You really can't understand, can you. I want Evana."

"She can't make it, Cyn, sorry," Charlie sounds out of his league at last.

"Dammit. Why won't she show. Why do I have to become what I become without half a dram of someone who knows me."

Charlie begins an answer, and Stirling says, "Don't bother, Charlie. Get out. Leave me be awhile."

He sits there, she sees his reflection. He's an old man now, all at once. Like his youth has gone away to make room for her memory. Without another word, he walks out, and closes the door behind him.

She has a mild headache from all the awakening neurons. She shuts her eyes, sees the silly ironies and errors of youth better than any leveller, and moves on to reintegrating this old hole in her life. She drops into sleep, and into lucid dream. The memories of in-between now stand in their rows, complete; she walks among them just as she did before. That which was empty, made full. Knowledge replaces doubt. The becoming leaves the envelope of mysteries.

And around a subtle corner, her Yet took its place.

Forgotten pieces of her Required Future leap at her like floor tiles in a tornado, but land like the backwards movie. Some are already done. Others are still flying knives to catch in the tempest. Her dream-state comes alive, and messages long curled in her unconscious, unfold like a fan of cards.

George, her hero outside the old SpeedAMAt, she knows that she meets him again only when she is much older, in a Foxhorn Lodge Down from here, and the Foxhorn has been met, but no sign of George. This is soon. Soon, and very romantic.

She will see Charlie's death, and this has been

met, too, because he invited her, but there is further information: Ray is involved in the shootout near the mail truck, she does not know if he is trying to stop the assailants on Charlie or ensure the event. This is strange.

And Anton, Anton, Anton. She'll have to teach him, feed him, all but kill him with interest and affection. This nightmare looms so large from where she sat, a circle of hell on end and barreling down on her. A poison in her own cabinet, a disappointment going in.

Long nights and longer days spent marshalling spanners to pursue odd bits of territory for the Society of the United States. And beyond, but always near it, the berrybrown gypsy elder. Handstands on a cantering, saddle-less pony: Not a symbol, a memory. To put the young tweener at her ease, and sing wonder to her heart.

Her dreamstate sounds out her Yet like sonar in outer space.

A quiet darkness settles around all these things.

She wakes up in the chair, checks the clock. Four hours asleep, precisely. She leans forward, the theater below is dim. Her junior is elsewhere now, in the throes of recovery, kept as quiet and still as possible lest she span reflexively and hurt herself.

In the glass she sees two more faces span in beside her.

She glances over. It's a small pale Asian woman with deep blue eyes and a tall man with wavy oily hair and beard. She's dressed in trim jeans and t-shirt, his clothes are darker and less well-fitting, and there are heavy scents of herbs about him. An Aquarian and an Ariesian, she recognizes at once. Interesting.

"I don't know you. I'm Stirling."

The small woman nods. Her voice is deep and flat. "I'm Zayoshi of Corvallis, 2102. This is Nachedekk of Babylon, 622 BC, Third Year of Nabopolassar." Nachedekk brings his hands level with his shoulders, and bows with a sharp motion. "We're your contacts."

"Contacts. This is already sounding like serious politics."

"You wanted to be a Three. Mentoring is more than training, and it's not all mentoring. It is up to you to pass information on dangers along, and be the first to handle disruptives in or entering your corner."

"I know that. 'Disruptives', that's a charming term."

Zayoshi is quiet a moment, then: "It's a Societal thing."

It takes another moment for Stirling to realize Zayoshi was trying to be contemporary and light. "Ah. Ha-ha. But you mean narcissists."

"Yes. But novice spanners are a handful, Stirling Cynthia. Mischievous as newborns."

Stirling doesn't ask after the implications of that last sentence. "Yeah. I've been both." Zayoshi raises a hairless eyebrow, and Stirling senses approval. "You're Exalted, I take it."

"Yes. We are here to expand you with instruction. You may approach us at intervals, but you are not a novice, and are expected to be able to cope your own way. Only for information you are widely blank on should we be sought, or regarding said dangers."

"I follow you," says Stirling, wondering already how deep she was getting into things.

"Do not discuss the Yet you now remember with anyone but spanners you know to be Threes or above. Do not discuss the existence of the Yet of the In-Between with One and Twos; should your novices ask, signal it is not a matter to discuss. This is all divulgent from the First Maxim."

It's like she's reading from some manual. How To Paper Train Your Three. "Understood..." she says cautiously.

"Your movements are now more important than ever. You are to train spanners, and you are to answer requests of Fours of your Society and Exalted of any background. Foremost, as a Three, we strongly request that you do not span up from AD 2200. The Societies concludes at 2400, and you are forbidden beyond that year."

"So I've heard. Why?" Stirling is starting to feel that it's fine to dislike Zayoshi.

"It is a Decision of the Seventh Atlantean Council. Further information is not available here." Zayoshi rattles off the phrase like it was an Aquarian trademark slogan.

Stirling and Zayoshi are getting into a staring contest. Stirling begins to realize that she hasn't seen Zayoshi blink her big blue eyes once. I doubt I'll win this one easily.

"We are calling primarily as a matter of courtesy," speaks Nachedekk for the first time, in a perfect if trilled English. "Since you are, as you say, coming within spitting distance." Stirling smiles at the reference to her old remark. But he seems quite earnest, without a hint of humor— at least not humor she understands. "Especially now that you are a Three," he emphasizes.

"Now a Three. Isn't there some adjustment to be made?"

Zayoshi breathes impatience. "That was what your witnessing allows for. The inhibitions are properly recoordinated. You probably need to practice spanning to more than a decade. Take it slow."

"Fine." Stirling finds that old fears of the Inheritors are returning in the guise of a thin-skinned loathing of Aquarians. Do many of them feel this condescending toward the rest of us?

"Also," explains Nachedekk, "These are your span books from your In-Between. You may break the seal on them at any time, now." From his robes he produces two battered span books, sealed in old wax.

The memory of them, recalling the excited notes scribbled inside, forces a sudden, girlish grin out of her. Nachedekk seems won over, and a deep smile pleasantly creases his face. On the cover of the first one is scrawled a Tolkien rune for the letter 'S': the same sound that begins both Cynthia and Stirling. Gandalf returns the gifts of Galadriel, she thinks.

"Thank you," says Stirling. "I've wondered about these. Do you mind my asking, why you took it

upon yourself to keep them? Wasn't that Charlie's call?"

"Ah, but he does not go on from where you found him. He cannot always be with you, not that way. His corner must pass on sometime, and all it is and was."

"I know, of course. It's just..." It was almost too real now, full circle. She finds herself regretting her hard tone with him, finds herself saying aloud, softly, "What about Charlie?"

Zayoshi states flatly, "Charlie's just your equal now. You already know he never achieves Four."

"Yes," says Stirling, irritated.

"You have your Yet to fulfill, and he has his. You have your corner ahead, Charlie's is behind you."

"Are all Aquarians so rude and clueless."

"We appear so, in direct proportion to the backwardness of the spanner observing us from farther Down."

"That is incorrect, as I have known many pleasant Aquarians, and toured into your Era extensively." Eat that.

"Those are field anthropologists. They like going native. And you saw what was appropriate of the Era, for Twos. Aquarius is not for toddlers."

Of all the cheek. Stirling wonders why she's saddled with this one, then realizes that Zayoshi must be considered one of the better Aquarians...

The Ariesian breaks up the argument as pleasantly as a human can. "I am certain our experiences will be illuminating, and please the heavens. Until the meeting after, Stirling, honors and favors light your path." He bows more deeply that she has imagined his great height allowed. Stirling recovers some of her smile, and courtesies, despite that she's in jeans.

Nachedekk vanishes. Zayoshi turns her head left— a gesture of farewell, then looks back with a scowl. "Sarongs? Electrodes?" She sniffs once and spans away.

It takes Stirling the better part of an hour to figure out what Zayoshi means. She recalls her passing leveller thought of what 2094 would hold in store, on the night of her invitation. "Hate telepathic Aquarian bitches," she mutters aloud.

She spans around looking for Charlie, but he's strangely hard to find.

Training and the Responsibility of the Knowledge

The most important thing is to never divulge the secret of spanning to Ones and Twos. Not only would the technological source act as a brake to many young spanners' sense of wonder, but the information would be left imperilled by entrusting it to spanner that had not been tested again and again. The In-Between exists for an *intrinsic reason.* Information is All.

Mentoring the In-Between

Mentors look like they go it alone to their novices, but in fact dozens of neighboring Threes are usually on hand with their myriad skills to help train an invitee, and get them ready to emerge from the in-between. Nurses, counselors, babysitters, and any other task needing to be filled as an initiate learns the instincts of spanning, can be found in the 'neighborhood'.

Mentors need these other contacts to train Ones. Obviously the other Ones of a corner aren't much a part of the in-between training, or they'd remember more. There's one spot the novitiate is brought to, for training, away from the corner, but the serious equipment isn't kept there. That would be in Physician corners, primarily. Curious Span Ones that poke around the training grounds when no one is there will find nothing more suspicious than a deserted operating theatre and some innocuously anachronistic items here and there, mostly antiques.

Patience is also required of the new novices: They won't remember their in-between, and so will ask the same questions all over again— all with remarkable similarity. The mentor must never let on what has transpired during the in-between, or the memory-suppressing dictums of the Fourth Maxim must be applied to the novice who's learned too much too soon— and the mentor may be in for some discipline himself.

Passing the Reins

At some point one must begin a corner, and at another point, one must end it. Most Threes take up a corner from a previous mentor as their first act, rather than jumping merrily into the mix of novices they may not know yet at all. They usually have dossiers ready or shortly arriving, explaining the novices they are to care for.

And at the end of a corner's existence, its border farthest Up, the Three usually waits to visit till near the very end of his run as a mentor. In this way he can pass the cornerhouse to the next mentor with complete knowledge, or be certain everything is taken care of before he shuts the house down, and gives it over to the native levellers.

Roleplaying Dossiers

GMs may be daunted by the task of handing vast amounts of info over to players with Span Three characters, but it need be no more than what is handed out to players beginning a typical adventure, (i.e. little to no information— make 'em frune!) Otherwise, it should be treated like a gemini in terms of respecting the elder that sent the info along.

Players that demand more information from dossiers, claiming perhaps that their character would be more thorough, might be allowed to get away with getting a few extra details— but always make them put dossier-writing in their Yet, and if they're consistently info-hogs, make the players write the dossiers out themselves after the adventure, on penalty of frag. You'll be amazed how quickly the characters learn to be terse, concise, and even cryptic...

Political knowledge

Span Threes Have a decent working knowledge of the Span Fours who are building and and trading local territory for their Societies. A corner's Society may shift as a playing piece in the Greatest Game, but of course is set by the Atlantean Councils. Threes are well aware of the outcome for their corner, having to instruct their corners in what a Society represents.

Some Threes focus on their novices rather than gearing up for successful moves in the Game, but others make use of their time in probing distant borders, or even playing the Game as an underling to a Four. Thus, once they enter the Game, they are well-versed in what territories to claim early, to make the best trades in.

Others maintain their connections with their Fraternal friends to such a degree, their corner begins to take on the tenor of a Fraternal corner. The possibility of graduating it up to a major Fraternal center by the time one earns Four is a well known and respected plan, though it always takes some doing to separate one's life as a Three, and one's elder Four always present, pushing you and your novices around.

Still others use their time as a Three to impress the Exalteds they are associated with, in the hopes of placing as an attaché to a Span Five. If not one of their own Span Fives, perhaps a friend of theirs? Circumspectly learning the fates of one's novices, and being able to refrain from even hinting to them what is in their Yets is often seen as a hallmark of responsibility, especially if the novices' elders perform actions of great import.

Crashers trying to pass

There are tell-tale signs of what to look for.

At some point a young spanner may wander into your corner, and ask to join it. You should be prepared to frune from him *and* from your fellow Threes in the Continuum:

- What locality he had his invitation
- His native Society
- What happened to his mentor and original corner
- Any pseudonyms he may have gone under
- Any record of participation in a Fraternity, a move of the Greatest Game, or serving in the War with Antedesertium

If any of these queries meets with an unsatisfactory answer from either the newcomer or your chronies throughout the Continuum, you should speak with the Scribes and Physicians directly about records of his actions, and of his Invitation. If records for either are vague or absent, it's time to have the Foxhorn come and get him— crashers have been known to be time bombs.

Finally, any major event like a new spanner arriving or joining the corner is usually covered in a dossier to oneself: Lack of information on such an encounter is rarely a good sign.

For further information see Narcissists— Crashers, pg. 192.

Additional Glossary

These terms are not usually taught novices, as they are not yet ready to understand some of the troubling implications of the terms.

Echo n.
["repetition of a sound by reflection (from a surface)" < *Middle English* ecco < *Old French* echo < *Latin* < *Greek* ekho "noise" < *PIE* waghoi "to resound"]
Term used by **narcissists** when referring to an **elder** they chose to disobey or ignore.

Crasher n.
["one who crashes" < crash Informal "to join without invitation" < "to collide noisily" < *Middle English* crashen blend of (crasen "to shatter, render insane" < *Old Norse* krasa "to shatter" < *Imitative*) + (dashen "to dash" < *akin to Danish* daske "to beat" < *North Germanic*)]
One of many euphemisms for a spanner created without training and guidance, i.e. by **narcissists.** Considered a threat to the **Continuum** by their very existence, crashers are destroyed without quarter, lest the be encouraged to choke all spacetime with their kind.

Wakewits the Younger, (b. AD 1213)
Sketchbook of Scenes from 1393
ink & wash
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

Artwork © 1999 Brian Wackwitz

Nanomed n.
[(nano- "extreme smallness, one-billionth of a unit" < *Latin* nanus "dwarf" < *Greek* nannos "little old man") + (med-, medical "pertaining to medicine" < *French* < *Medieval Latin* medicalis < *Latin* medicus "doctor" < mederi "to heal" < *PIE* med "to take appropriate measures")]
Nanomed is the use of microscopic machines to repair and/or alter human bodies. Mid-AD 21st century abbreviation of *nanotechnological medicine*. Then in its infancy, it ultimately determines the last course of Mankind into his **Inheritors**.

[The main Glossary begins on pg. 41.]

Span Four

Inside "The Greatest Game"

There are several steps on the path to reach Span Five. One of these means is to realize that you are no longer just part of the Society in which you are born, but its creator and builder.

The history that you knew as a leveller is accurate, to a point. There are many parts in it, however, that are unwritten, unseen, or lost in the cloud of the past. It is here that the Span Fours move about, moving the pieces of the world, making what is, is, but at the same time bolstering their Society, playing in the margins of the history books. They may be arranging for manifest destiny, the movement of the Mongol hordes, the subjugation of the world by Caesars, and the times that a farmer's son needs to see what is on the other side of those mountains on the horizon.

They write the backstory of history, the stuff you find only by being there, being behind the scenes of the greatest play of all. It has many names, from grandiose titles to words whose meaning has been lost to Leveller culture. Those who have been built up the Societies and filled in the gaps, those that have been there, call it for the most part the "Greatest Game".

The Purpose of the Greatest Game

Essentially, the highest Purpose of the "Greatest Game" is to build the Societies even as they participate in making Decisions for the Societies as a whole. A fascinating enterprise, with a wholly spanner mindset. Some Piscean wags claim that this is why all politicians are crazy: The ongoing precedent of the Atlantean Councils silently acknowledges the self-inventing nature of social decision-making.

But the purpose of the "Greatest Game" itself is to rush in and make the most claims of territories for one's Society. By being there, and arranging for Levellers of your Society to be where they should, you are making your Society happen for Levellers. As well, it is a game: the footnotes of history that you make happen for your Society are the stories told in Corners and Thespian parties.

But it is more than that; you are showing other Spanners that you truly understand where you have been (your Society), where you are (your actions to make your Society greater in the eyes of other Spanners), and where you will be (that you will be able to handle the responsibilities of Span Five). This last part is perhaps the most important, as being able to see beyond the Societies requires that you understand that you are the child of your own Society.

The Structure of the Societies

Societies tend to run along national boundaries, but as exemplified by the Ariesian Era and before, these boundaries are plainly tribal and subject to many debates. Ethnic ties are far more important to a people: It's quite possible that, for example, the leveller Austrian Empire is always divided along ethnic Societal lines, instead of its shaky political boundaries. The argument can be made that New York's Chinatown, Jewish settlements throughout medieval Europe, and Vikings in Minnesota are all small enclaves of one Society inside the boundaries of a much larger one.

Conversely, a mighty empire might exercise sufficient power to claim the area of an ethnic neighbor. This may apply to such varied examples as France's military protection of the Basque, Chinese dominance over Tibet, US occupation of South Vietnam, or Assyria's enslavement of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

For spanners, all these wars must be fought over again. Only this time, we fight it as the cautious and enlightened beings that we are.

For a basic outline of rules with which to play the Greatest Game within the context of , see Appendix G, pg. 218.

For further information, see Chapter 2: Spanning— Span Four— What makes a Society?, pg. 95.

Government without government

The Greatest Game builds the Societies while they are being governed— but how do the Exalted get on the Atlantean Councils? Is there an election? Is it somehow based on oligarchy? Who runs the show is pretty well known (Exalted and Inheritors)— but how does the show get run?

Individuals are simply appointed to higher Span, if they earn it. Exalted who maintain an interest in attending to the business of Council meetings usually find themselves with a seat. Their say is in direct proportion to the number of lives affected by their decisions, i.e. majority population of a Society rules.

This may ruffle various leveller political sensibilities, but consider: the 'establishment' doing the appointing may include *you*, an elder Exalted. But even this isn't some lowbrow temptation to 'sell out' because the system, by definition, merely *is:* The pol-

itics of a spanner civilization are never those of *changing*, but of *understanding* the system. Even the concept of corruption becomes irrelevant, since the only absolute change that can be attempted is through frag, and this cannot be hidden from the population. A population made up of spanners, that will turn against a fragger instantaneously.

There are reasons why the examples in Appendix A [pg. 212] are fallacious systems of order. Systems of government for levellers are impossible to apply to spanners. As one can imagine, this is not an elitist view; rather it is based on simple practicalities.

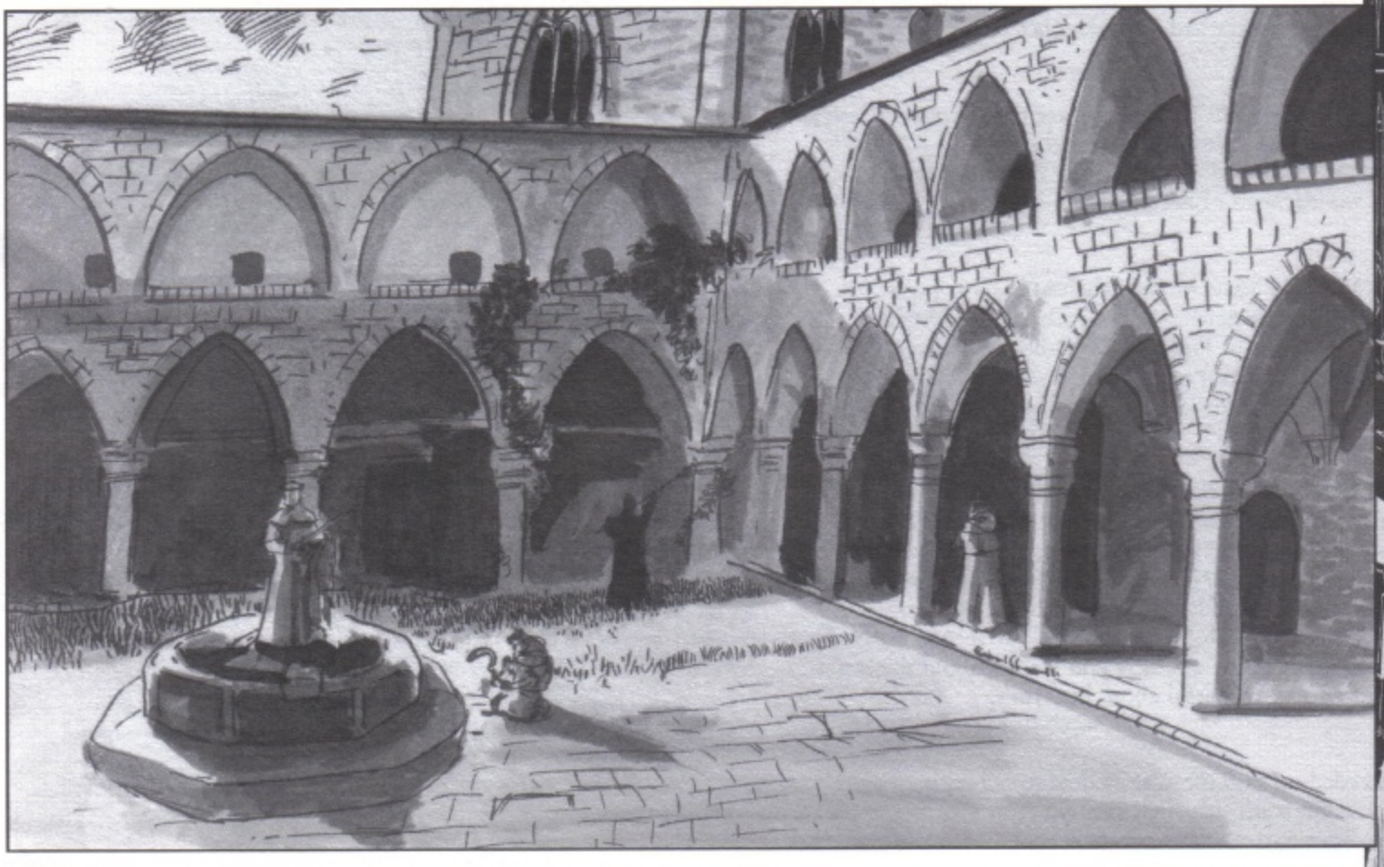
Nations may change, grow, or falter—throughout history, perhaps. But not **trans-historically.** For instance, the contests among dynasties, clans and ethnicities in Chinese spacetime is remarkably active, and is often the subject of lively stories in the private chambers of Atlantis— but no one contests the *existence of China*. France **is** the tribes of Vercingetorix, the Directory, the Merovingian Court, the Second Empire, Vichy and Napoleon, Louis XIV and Robspierre. Charlemagne's kingdom was a great unification of many nations, a time of general peace; but the contests for every square mile his territory in the Greatest Game is some of the fiercest of the Piscean Era.

And spanners of the same Society by no means need get along, if they're on opposite sides of the War. Here follows two children of France, both well known to spanner and leveller alike, and with two very different understandings of the world they were Invited into.

As can be seen, while the fates of these spanners is plainly bound to that of France, the major confrontation between them is millennia away from any Gallic claims, in Geminid West Asia. The "Greatest Game" binds the Societies together in the most rich and subtle ways.

following pages
Don Diego Sanchez, (b. AD 1660)
selections from
Sketchbook of Gallic Personalities and Curiosities
(AD 1330 - 2002)
pencil
Scribal Librarium at the New York Public Library

below
Wakewits the Younger, (b. AD 1213)
Sketchbook of Scenes from 1393
ink & wash
Scribal Librarium at Ligny



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Jeanne D'Arc

Joan of Arc, La Pucelle ("the Maid"), Maid of Orleans
spanner aliases Patrice of Montalais, "Duchesse" of Atlantis
Hero of France

BIRTH Jeannette D'Arc, Jan. 6, AD 1412 Domrémy, France
INVITATION Encounters at a "fairy-spring" near her home, AD 1425: Well-documented in leveller histories that voices instruct her on her destiny.
DEATH Rouen, May 30, AD 1431, burnt at the stake.
"Even the executioner was convinced that he had killed a saint: no matter how hard he tried he could not burn her entrails or her heart, and terrified, he threw her remains in the running water of the Seine." —James Matterer, *La Pucelle and the Dying God*
NOTABLE PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES
Height 5' 4", athletic, has kept scars, (arrow in left shoulder, Siege of Orleans, 1429; bolt in right thigh, Paris, 1429,) despite medtech. Prefers wearing pants where feasible.
FRATERNITY Foxhorn, joined at Span Two
HIGHEST SPAN ACHIEVED At least 4, probably 5.
OVERALL GOALS
"Challenge spinners (sic) of all Eras to consider God, and successful or not, make friends and help people."
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Span Zero
Highest Stats B 5 M 4 Q 4 *Skills* Speak Medieval French J6, Horse A6, Farming J6

Span One
Highest Stats B 5 M 4 Q 5 *Skills* Read Medieval French J6, Middle English A5, Military Science (Medieval) J6, Horse M8, Etiquette M7, Dreaming A6; *Weapons* Longsword M8 (Others as above)
Despite her skills with weapons, and commanding armies, in personal combat she aims to subdue, never kill.
Performs her trial at Rouen (1430-1) as a spanner: When asked why she had 'relapsed' into wearing men's clothes, thus condemning herself, she answers that her voices had instructed her to do so.

Span Two
Highest Stats B 5 M 5 Q 6 *Skills* Latin J7, Horse G9 *Weapons* Lasso J8, Crossbow A7, Bow J8, Lance A6 (Others as above)
Enjoys creating a few "miracles" in the vicinity of her campaign (1429-30), to the wonderment of her junior.

Span Three
Highest Stats B 6 M 6 Q 8 *Skills* Mod. French M9, Most Indo-European Lang. A7, Military Science M9, Tracking J8, Levitation J10 *Weapons* Rapier M9, Most Firearms J8 (Others as above)
Mentors "Tour la Jetée" corner, Paris AD 1555 - 1720 as Patrice of Montalais. Serves with distinction in the wars of the Geminid Era.

Span Four
Highest Stats B 8 M 8 Q 10 *Skills* Military Science G12, Most Lang. J10, Pilot Aircraft J12, Dreaming M13 *Weapons* Most Melee M11, Most Aquarian Weaponry J10 (Others as above)
Jeanne's contribution is unique. Nicknamed "la Duchesse", she makes up 98% of what would be considered the police force and welcome wagon of Atlantis (12969 - 12644 BC). She seems to have no trouble reconciling the horde of elders and juniors about the installation, and is almost always cheerful about her work.

Exalted
It is known she headed off into the War against Antedesertium after her time in Atlantis, but is insistent that she will return for her death in Rouen. Further information is not available here.

Level Events

BC	
12969>	Known as the frequently-seen hostess of Atlantis, the "Duchesse". Span Four.
5562-4383	Serves briefly as a Span Three in the Gemini wars.
AD	
1390	Marie Robine prophesies a maiden in armor to save France from the English.
1412	Born to Isabelle de Vouthon and Jacques d'Arc, farmer and doyen of Domrémy.
1425	First hears voices in her father's garden. Joins "Maison Rousse" corner, Neufchâteau 1330 - 1572.
1428	Domrémy is burned to the ground. Jeanne is summoned to Toul for breach of promise to marry a young man there. Span One.
1429	Hears of the siege of Orleans, and rides to France (Jan 12). Meets privately with the Dauphin Charles, and gives him a "sign which Joan would never explain." —*Encyc. Brit. 1929* Charles has her examined by theologians. By summer she lifts the English siege of Orleans (May 5-7), sees Charles crowned king at Rhiems (July 16), and brokers an armistice with Burgundy (Aug. 26-28). An attempt to liberate Paris fails (Sep. 8). By year's end she is ennobled (Dec. 29). Span One and Two.
1430	Captured outside Compiènge (May 23). Charles VII makes no attempt to ran som her. 'Attempts' an escape from Luxembourg Castle in Beaurevoir by jump ing out of a tower. She is not seriously injured by the fall. Span One and Two.
1431	Martyred at Rouen, May 30. Apparent age: 19.
1456	Second trial is held and she is pronounced innocent of the charges against her (June 16).
1555-1720	Mentors "Tour la Jetée" a predominantly Foxhorn corner in Paris. Span Three.
1909	Beatified by the Catholic Church.
1919	Canonized by Pope Benedict XV.

Excerpt from an interview in Atlantis, 12966 BC:

Ah, yes, but you do not understand, being from the cusp Aquarian.

You have raison, yes. Mais, n'est pas raison d'etre. Being, my friends. Even now you have not figured it out. We spinners, we weave and wheel. We are the angels of God, we are chosen to be that other order, the fellow-servants, bringing succour where we can. All your science teaches is how to build tools of life and death, not why to use them. We are closer to God, you know, closer than even the Inheritors, and they know this. They command the skies and all the starry heavens, but we are more of God, they are more of Man. They envy us. Respect this in yourselves, eh?

But Popes? Well, yes, it is very amusing from here. I can see all the Popes now. There are certainly more than one, but to me, today, their number seems so small.

Artwork © 1999 Juan Sanchez

Count St. Germain

Jacques Germaine, Eduardo Luarde, Tyrillian Magnus, and many, many more pseudonyms across the years...
Narcissist Mastermind

BIRTH Gaul, 1st century BC. Further information is not available here.
INVITATION Believed that he was Invited & trained by a young spanner, Siobhan Geoffrea, c. AD 30. Further information is not available here.
DEATH Only recorded death is at Eckenförde, February 17, 1784. Many levellers see him again beginning the following year.
NOTABLE PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES Appears as a strikingly handsome man of about forty years, with piercing eyes, and dark hair (under any powdered wigs). He only ever wears the finest period garb, visibly quite wealthy no matter what level he is on.
HIGHEST SPAN ACHIEVED At least 5
OVERALL GOALS Personal glory in the breakdown of the Continuum and the eventual return in triumph to Antedesertium.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Span Zero
Highest Stats B 3 M 4 Q 5 *Skills* Latin J6 Gallic M7 Herbalism J6 *Weapons* Daggers N3

Span One
Highest Stats B 4 M 4 Q 6 *Skills* Latin M7 French A5 Alchemy J6 *Weapons* Daggers A5 Leveller rumors include the belief that he was born in Jerusalem, just as Christ was being put to the cross. May be euphemistic for his Invitation. It is believed that St Germain began as a loyal Continuum spanner, not a crasher, thus making him far more dangerous.

Span Two
Highest Stats B 5 M 5 Q 7 *Skills* Latin G10 French J7 Italian A6 Alchemy M8 Etiquette (Court) J7 *Weapons* Swordsmanship A6 Receives some sort of training from a Thespian. Never loses this knack; Thespians know they must watch out for their renegade prodigy. Rumored to impersonate Roger Bacon, Christoforo Columbo, and even Shakespeare. Only persistent rumor of him at this Age is that he gets orders from a withered crone he only refers to as 'Mother'. This raises far more questions than answers.

Span Three
Highest Stats B 7 M 6 Q 8 *Skills* German A7 English J8 Greek J8 Many Other Languages A7 Alchemy G10 History J6 *Weapons* Longsword J9 Disguise A9 Swindle M11 Courtly Intrigue M11 Studies France's wealthy classes and her Revolutions, attempting to learn the nature of mankind's desires for change & changelessness. Writes *Les Très Sainte Trinosophie*, a manuscript he takes great pains to ensure remains in leveller hands, as it reveals truths about spanning encoded in alchemical symbol. Organizes narcissists cells, many of which are designed solely to confuse Span Fours engaged in the Greatest Game in & around the Society of France.

Span Four
Highest Stats B 8 M 7 Q 9 *Skills* Arabic J6 Spanish M10 Many Other Languages J9 Alchemy G12 History G12 Disguise M11 *Weapons* Longsword M11 Rapier M11 21st century Crystal weapons J9 Is involved in the Gemini wars, but is foiled by Jeanne's forces. "There are several pockets into which my avenging may fall. Some upon this witch, but most upon these dusty elves that feed and clothe her."

Span Five
Highest Known Stats B 10 M 8 Q 10 Sanskrit J10 Alchemy G14 Quantum Physics M11 History G14 Disguise G14 Violin M13 *Weapons* Rapier G14 Other Melee Weapons M13 Other Projectile Weapons J10 Involved again in all the parts of his life he has already visited, but with fresh recruiting being his goal; often at clever cross-purposes with his juniors. He is intelligent, charismatic—and infamous enough— to organize narcissists to greater effect than when at a younger Age. Plots he sets in motion may or may not even involve him; in this way he confuses Continuum spanners trying to untangle his strategy.

Level Events (Known Movements)

BC	
5557-42	Arms Vielavayan refugees with crystal energy weapons and complete Hunt of the Sun, but is overwhelmed by Continuum counterattacks. Span Four.
1st Cent.?	Birth in Gaul.
AD	
1710	Countess von Georgy meets him for the first time; her diaries describe him as looking between 45-50 years old
1737-42	In Tehran, at the Court of the Persian Shah. Believed to conduct much of his generalship in the Geminid from here. Span Five.
1743	At the Court of Louis XV, famous for his wealth and alchemical prowess.
1744-5	Arrested in London for spying, but released. "He sings and plays on the violin wonderfully, composes, is mad, and not very sensible." —Walpole
1745-6	Lives in princely luxury Vienna. Trades so much in jewels it creates minor inflationary panics among local fiduciaries.
1755	Visits India a second time; claims he learns the secret of "melting jewels"
1760	Seen again by Countess von Georgy, who is certain he has not aged a day.
1774	Warns Louis XVI of a "gigantic conspiracy" destined to alter the world order.
1777	Witness in Dresden claims his appearance to be 60-70 years old.
1784	Feb. 7. Dies at Eckenförde; buried March 2. "He was always a careless fellow, and at last, like his predecessors, forgot not to die." —Mirabeau
1785	Attends occultist conference with his pupils Caligostro, Mesmer, & St Martin. "I saw globes revolve around me and earths gravitate at my feet."
1788	Actively warns French nobility of the coming Revolution, but organizes the worst elements of the rebellion in secret, and creates crashers. Span Five.
1789	Attempts to aid Gustavus III of Sweden, tells Mme d'Adhémar he will see her again five times more.
1820	Visits Mme d'Adhémar for the last time, before the Duc de Berri is murdered.

Excerpt from his Pedantry Among the Lesser Minds, &c. (Berlin, 1765), *manuscript kept at an undisclosed Scribal Librarium; translated by Adreaus for the* C^ONTINUUM RPG:

A dog might be forgiven its delights. The sun upon his familiar rounds, a bee to snap at, washing one's fur full and all. And yet its joy is not the measure by which we set its worth and value, but by how it guards the hearth, fetches up the quarry, by its bark that warns the marches of the night. "Halt! Halt! Your evil is smelt by me, and I shall tear from you your blood if you step near."

This, my fellows in Wisdom, is just what a peasant is for. To live its life, to snap at bees and bark when its duty arises. The best of us will pet and encourage these slow minds, and watch as their breast swells with pride, with duty earned and their function fulfilled. This is not a wickedness, or indulgence upon my good gentlemens' hearts. It is not flattering oneself, but understanding well that this peasant, and that merchant, yea, even prince and princess are objects and furnishings. Why, the very dog is less predictable, and more happy.

For this is one of the secrets to being opened to the ways. It is all a chessboard, in which we may always move in passing, and they take back not a step. Once this is clearly accepted and seen, then all the cares of gold, or age, or every trouble great or petty is plainly swept aside; leave these troubles, kinsmen, to your loyal hounds.

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The Game and the War

The rôle of a Societal wonk is emphasized for Span Fours above, and in the players' section. This is very important research, full of dynamic action, and determines how preeminent a Society is perceived during the many Atlantean Councils.

But it is Fours contributions and sacrifices to the War effort against Antedesertium that many more readily aspire to. While noble, a military career for a Four is often brutally short, and can oftentimes leave the Four so emotionally scarred that they are never mentally fit to attain Exalted Span. The "Greatest Game" is often the preferred route, because it flushes out enough dangers to the Continuum to be a significant and brave contribution to the Societies. But compared to serving in the War, it is just a Game.

Span Five

War (pg. 103)
Further information is available in Chapter 5: Knowing, where the boundaries of Antedesertium and the main theatres of the War are laid out within the context of the Eras.

The Inheritors

Intercession

When the Inheritors want something to occur, it does. This is a hard and fast rule.

Spanners can fight, squirm and argue all they want. They may even be of sufficient strength to challenge the mental weapons and other powers aboard a small Inheritor craft. [For stats, see below.] But that only gets them in deeper, as the information as to what is needed to stop them becomes instantly known, and they send in a bigger ship. Or fleet. The resources available to the Inheritors are several vigitillion times the entire available resources in the solar system throughout its entire existence. Don't even bother doing the math, they win.

Inheritor intercession is not a savory option, for Exalted or for Inheritors. It is certainly bad news for any of lower Span. —It's not even a very good option for players or GM, as it interrupts the free flow of the game with every character frozen in place, terrified that the Inheritor bulldozer will mow over them. It's not good roleplaying or storytelling, nor is it much fun.

GMs are discouraged from throwing flying saucers into every scrape, or have a frowning legion of greys behind any door they don't want the players to enter. Relying on the Inheritors too often lessens the awe of them: It lowers their real value, like the tabloids do.

But introducing the occasional UFO, or odd set of lights in the distance, especially when players are in someone else's corner, can be an entertaining touch.

One good way to tame cocky players is this: If the players ever see one far away in the night sky, and start saying over-confident things like, "Looks like someone's gonna get it," have it swing close suddenly. After a few moments of cold sweat, send it back to what it was doing.

The Inheritors are always on top.

Inheritor stats

Inheritors come in as many, if not more, varieties as the GM can imagine. Here presented is an example of a common "gray". In game terms, he is a late Aquarian from Upsilon Andromedae 3, or possibly even Earth, circa AD 3600; but note that co-generational colonies of this type are common throughout nearby systems in the Aquarian, Piscean and Ariesian, as well as, of course, the Capricornian Era.

BODY 2
MIND 25
QUICK 30

Skills
Since Inheritors are ready from Day One, all Skills they are made with are of Grandmaster status. Slowly-learned skills are normally a burden to them; if they need to know something, they frune it from their collective minds, or absorb it in toto from a information-delivery source. Some example skills they're 'born' with:

All Aquarian Skills G30
Pre-Inheritor Earth History G10
Upsilon Andromedae History G20
Local System Cultures G15
Pilot Timeship G10
Genome G20

Telepathy
Mid- to late Aquarian spanners are at least Master telepaths. Inheritors are utterly unreadable, but they can read (and write into) anyone with a Mind less than 10, and probably get the better of anyone with a Mind less than 20. Yeowch!

Inheritor ships
Its drive being faster than light, details like vehicle speed and maneuverability are fairly moot. Here are some known properties of a typical small timeship:

Frostgreen/Forestgreen/Richer Hue
(Name for a standard small Upsilon timeship)

External fields ("Shields")

These are usually visible extensions of mag drive in action, and provide sufficient shielding to most projectiles, as the particles that are trapped therein are swirling at lightspeed.

Internal stasis fields

Able to hold up to 6 people in a corporal state; unaging or moving but with alert minds; usually used for piloting. Note that a ship normally carries only two pilots. The duplicate beings seen by many witnesses are merely elders and juniors.

Transport

Most mass transported between systems is converted (or recorded) as energy patterns and reconverted at destination. Exceptions are: At least two crew, certain durable devices, the drives themselves.

Hulless Flight

Solid hulls and other objects, like ramps, only exist when convenient, usually when in atmosphere or when landing.

Mindwiper

You know, that bright white light that comes out and makes you forget you've been abducted. Can either work like Hypnosis [pg. 20 and 115] or Telepathy [pg. 115] with a Skill of 50. Good luck.

Mag Drive

Utilizes the magnetic fields of suns or planets to flit about time and space; has a somewhat limited range, perhaps only a century or two in either direction before a pause for recalibration is required. See Chapter 5: Knowing—Time Travel in the Real Word, pg. 208 for further information.

Geon Drive

This is a backup system, with energy provided by concentrated natural paradox. It is not normally used to power the ship, but as an emergency incursion method.

This has been observed frequently by levellers: A set of two to six lights reforming into one "mothership". The Inheritors aboard are actually experiencing Frag, and quite deliberately; on the ground somewhere below them, a Time Combat has gotten away from a local corner and even the Exalted responsible to the mentor, and requires a multiple incursion to repair an as/as not that has lasted for more than a minute. There is only one ship repeated, but it is attacking multiple narcissists, as they foolishly attempt to rip a hole in the world. These multiple incursions are the Continuum dutifully sewing it back up.

Spanning near timeships

Spanning into an Inheritor ship is unwise. They are designed as carriages through spacetime, and as such have extremely rich electromagnetic fields around and inside them. These sources of 'natural' paradox act as brutally efficient shields against spanning. It is little wonder that narcissists see them as harbingers of doom, and why mentors tell their novices not to span or flee in their presence.

A spanner attempting to span into a ship when it is aloft and unmoving, or anytime its portal is closed, must roll vs. Quick— a Grace roll becomes a Blunder. Any failure result kills and disintegrates the spanner. If the ship is moving, the spanner must roll a Victory to succeed... or be killed and disintegrated.

In the moments it is stationary on the ground, with its portal open and accessible, spanning in is safe— at least as far as physics are concerned. Spanning in without an express invitation plainly angers Inheritors, who don't like unannounced spanning going on in their presence under any circumstances.

Spanning *out* of an Inheritor ship at any time without express permission and instructions kills and disintegrates the spanner, unless they roll a 1. If he survives the escape, the spanner has no remaining Span, and must roll thrice for shock as per Travelling Beyond One's Span rules [pg. 35].

An Origin of Time Travel?

Some claim starships to be the prototype of spanning tech. There is too much overlapping sentience and information to disentangle a single point for the invention of time travel, let alone how it came to be perfected and miniaturized for biopersonal use. The universe is.

Further information on the technology aboard Inheritor ships is not available here.

Government conspiracies

Some GMs will want governments or corporations involved in a vast conspiracy with the Inheritors; the authors wish them hours of fun, because such tales of paranoia can be very entertaining. But C°NTINUUM is a game where the player already plays the conspirator, hiding their every move from the levellers bumbling around them. Spanning allows access to any top secret of any government, even by the lowliest Span One, if they can work up the gumption to just pop in and see.

Men In Black, Helicopters In Black and the usual suspects of Area 51, Cheyenne Mountain, and other secret bases may all exist to study the phenomenons of time travellers, but they are as late to the party as anyone, and only pick up the pieces the Continuum wants them to see. It remains in the power of these leveller organizations to play up their

possible involvement, and so retain power and authority, even while they are privately panicked and clueless.

It all boils down to proper... spin control.

Time Combat

Militia and adventure (pg. 50)

When does someone *have* to engage in Time Combat? When one is attacked, obviously, but a victim can usually count on their chronies to weigh in. Not participating has an obvious price: When Time Combat strikes a slacker, who will want to go to bat for him? It's just common sense and common courtesy to help fellow spanners at all times.

But there are instances where one is impeded in conducting a Combat in a corner or locality, or some spanners don't participate. Narcissists do their utmost to make the Continuum fight itself, and so gain a more profound victory here. GMs may use any of these situations to enhance his plots:>>

• A conflict between personal and the corner's responsibilities.

A person may have frag from various sources, and these people are adding to the load. How much the spanner has to fix, and how much the corner can get muddled, especially if the as/as nots that were fragged from an earlier Combat are struck at again...

• Sometimes the person affected can't make it.

Usually this is a question of distance. A Rendezvous la reve may reveal that a chrony is fragged— but is too low a Span to fix the as/as not during Combat.

• Sometimes they won't let the corner help.

Time Combat can get to be a very personal matter— old friends sometimes turn out to be traitors, events in one's family's history that one would rather not share get fragged... there are a myriad of human reasons to want to take out a narcissist by oneself.

• Sometimes a corner the Time Combat passes through is obstructive or territorial

Some corners take their responsibility very seriously, and insist on handling any frag occurring on their turf by themselves. This is often the case for corners with major world events transpiring in their spacetime: The tourists and fanatics are always messing around. 'You're help is NOT appreciated here in Jericho. Please return home...'

All the above could be assign that narcissists are afoot... Or, cultural or special circumstances may apply. If the spanners are concerned, suggest they check the neighbors (neighboring localities and corners) to see if they have regular contact with the corner, and what they're like.

See also the Foxhorn, and the reference to

below
Wakewits the Younger, (b. AD 1213)
Sketchbook of Scenes from 1393
ink & wash
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

Artwork © 1999 Brian Wackwitz

C⁰NTINUUM™
Roleplaying in the Yet™
Spanning Card
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Patent Pending

#	Name of NPC	Span

Use this card for Time Combat. Assign each NPC a number at left, note their Span, then use the number in the column at far left for every Sweep they act, and of course any time they declare their next Sweep.

GM's SPAN™ CARD

#	SWEEP DIR. (D/L/U)	WHEN YYYY/MM/DD hh:mm(:ss)	WHERE events/actions	Span spent Y/D/h/m/s	Span remaining Y/D/h/m/s	DURATION Y	D	h	m	s

Narcissists

Dark Gifts of Frag (pg. 138)

Here's some elaboration on what Frag looks like, and what narcissists do with it at higher levels of Frag. Once again, the **Continuum does not teach how to perform these things.** Untrained spanners that try this stuff must roll for the success of their actions as if they were Quick-based Skills— but note the penalties to Quick from high Frag. [See also the Effect of Frag Chart, pg. 54.]

Frag 6—
Slight transparencies: You might not show up in a photo, or even in the mirror, except in spurts.

Penalties:
Results vs. Mind at -2
Results vs. Quick at -4

Powers:
Discorporation— You may be able to see the contents of envelopes, wooden drawers, sometimes through thin stone or brick, but never metal or heavily glazed ceramic.

Frag 7—
You're a nightmare. Levellers that see you scream, or call 911. Your very looks are a threat to the Continuum, so don't expect to be sentient long.

Penalties:
Same as Frag 6, plus extreme mental disorientation, and memory loss.

Powers:
Discorporation— You can reach through walls, boxes, and with some concentration and patience, through thin barriers of metal (up to about one inch is safe; pulling through any more runs the risk of leaving fragged parts of you behind.)

Note that curing Frag while reaching through objects is a bad idea. Your molecules reintegrate into a new pattern with the object you are reaching through, and any flesh interacting with anything more volatile than salt water will be killed. Spanners are assured from the day they are Invited that even if one dies while Spanning, they are in no danger of this happening. But Frag is another story all together.

Beyond 7—
Even if you are so blessed as to have juniors of less than Frag 8, they can't [Fifth Maxim] or won't help you here. On rare occasions, the spanner that fragged you to 8 will get his comeuppance— and thereby heal some frag, making you a (barely) viable spanner again. But don't expect anyone to directly rescue you.

All characters who are beyond Frag 7 are run by the GM. Skills and Attributes can no longer increase through experience, though the GM may make an exception if he wishes the listed Powers to be treated as Skills. Spanning is an extremely dangerous enterprise, rolling against one's penalized Quick each time to see if you arrive on the far side at all. Failure indicates that your energy joins the Van Allen Belts.

Extremely kind GMs may allow such characters to be played on occasion, but they can't perform any span, or indeed any action, without GM permission.

Frag 8—
You're probably the typical ghost. Most of the time you can't manifest, and when you do, it's often fixed to repeating an important event you failed at from farther Down.

Penalties:
At 8 and above, Body is effectively 0 for all checks— but you no longer have to worry about IP or Shock, either. Death may be a welcome release, though, and it's not to be come by from natural means here...
Results vs. Mind at -3; a Mind check is required to appear as a ghostly apparition. +1 bonus if you've successfully manifested before: but must perform the same action as before, in the same spatial location.
Results vs. Quick at -5; a Quick check is necessary to see if you can move small objects, or make minor effects to physical things (i.e. small cuts in flesh, knocking something off a shelf) or minor energy-based effects (chilly drafts, power surge in an appliance, etc.)

Powers:
Haunting— Can still follow people around, and show up in various locations, instead of just one.
Terror— Your presence can affect deep emotions, usually fear. Can be love, sadness, etc. But *deep*.

Frag 9—
You're generally invisible, though sometimes you can manifest as a dim ball of light. Sort of.

Penalties:
Results vs. Mind at -4; a Mind check is required to appear as said ball of light (or pool of darkness). No bonus for repeat performances.
Results vs. Quick at -6; poltergeist effects like those listed for Frag 8 are only possible on a Victory, and only one attempt a day.

Powers:
Haunting— Cannot follow people unless base Quick

is over 10: You're stuck in one place, house, grove of trees, etc., unless you possess a passing person. Possession— This is now possible; Frag 9 is the optimum niche with which to enter a leveller's Mind and mess around. Minds of 3 or less cannot resist you. Possessed characters generally do what the possessing spanner wants, even down to details: The effect can seem to be either schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder [see Madness and Related Problems, pg. 138]. Curing frag, or increasing it beyond 10 drives the possessor out.

Frag 10—

You're probably settled into a single object. [See Vessels, pg. 204]. This allows you to remain extant in the hopes that someone will find you and you'll have some chance to reincorporate yourself. Unfortunately, waiting like this can take years, even centuries of level time, during which the fragged Mind retains less and less, becomes bitter, confused and wrathful. Hence many instances of bad luck seem to come out of nowhere...

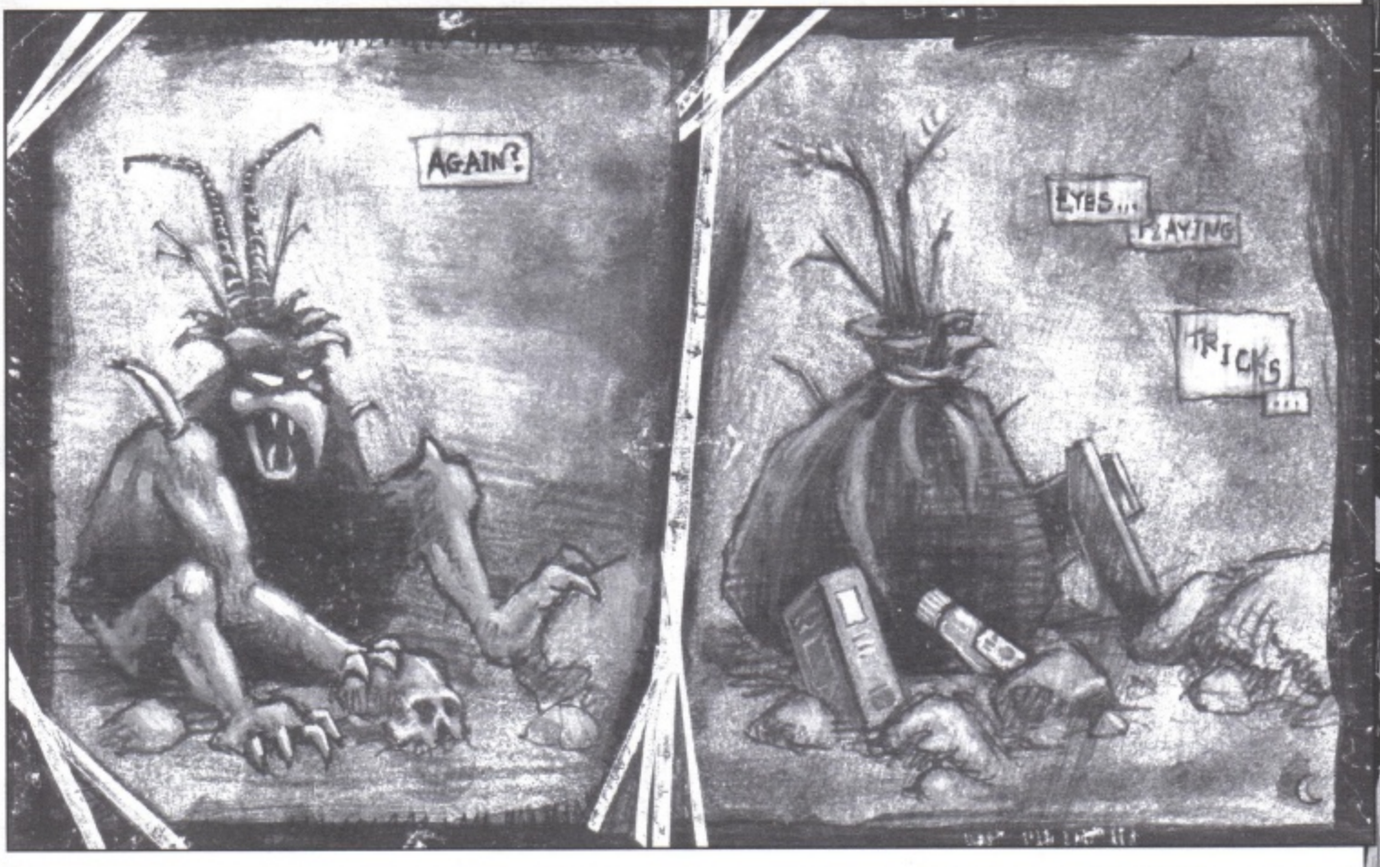
Penalties:
Results vs. Mind at -5
Results vs. Quick at -7
(And see Frags 8 & 9 above.)

Powers:
Curse— For spanners less than Vessel status [See stats of various Vessels, pg. 204], all they can do is make peoples' lives unlucky. A penalty of -1 is secretly applied by the GM to all the Skills and Attributes of the possessing person, as long as the object is within 20 yards of them at the time. Bless— Full-fledged Vessels can conversely assist their keepers, increasing their *good* luck. These are not usually left lying around... [See Vessels, pg. 204] Possession— This is now much harder; (see Frag 9, above). Any Mind can attempt to resist you; Minds of 4 and higher automatically succeed against you. Possessed characters must keep the spanner's object on their person, and can only get vague urgings from the possessor, but will act on them. Usually diagnosed as schizophrenia, with a danger of violent tendencies.

Frag 11+

Give it up. Your physical existence is now fixed at a small amount of spacetime, with minimal resemblance to anything you may have been. Anyone curing your frag now may be doing a service to the universe, but is unlikely to return you to any semblance of humanity: Beyond Frag 10 your fate is pretty well signed, sealed and delivered. Consider yourself lucky in the extreme if the Quicker can find what's left of you and take you to Cold Storage.

If the final as/as not causing your frag is unknown, you can only be found by a Clairvoyant [pg. 114] with a Quick equal to or greater than your Frag.



Rook Morrow (b. 1987)
panels from *Blue Shift* #1
ink, acrylic & graphite
Aetherco Comics
AD 2008

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Secret Ploys and Countermeasures

Recruitment

Spanners of the Continuum accept that what is, is. All the joys and sorrows of humanity are in their proper places and perspective. But the narcissists see otherwise, and no two see it the same way. While we know our unity to be our strength, they perceive their unpredictability as theirs.

Hence narcissists may chose anywhen to recruit. There is little obvious pattern to these spanners, since chaos is their credo anyway, but they look for the places where doubts can come in, and so try to build both a consensus, and a nest of powerful allies: **For many narcissists pose as loyal for as long as they possibly can.** Spying and treason are the worst offenses against the Continuum, as they are ugly violations of the First and Fifth maxims.

And if they cannot convince loyal spanners to join their narrow causes [see Narcissists & Lesser Dangers, pg. 135], then they try to build their own...

Crashers: Spanners born of hate

Like Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, most narcissist do not hesitate to create new life— in this case new spanners— against their will. Those that survive the processing with faulty, jerry-rigged, or aged equipment, must also survive the gruelling experience of learning under a master with only *his* agenda in mind— with an attitude that one's family and loved ones are furniture, or who claims to know your every attempt to escape his will. Many narcissist masterminds use drugs with unique dosages available only from them, to keep their 'broods' in line. Their abilities may be well below par even for a Span One, and may only be able to span a few days Up or Down before engendering risk to themselves, and may require much longer periods of rest. And their first instructions, after they've barely begun to heal, is usually to span around and kidnap more warm bodies.

This is recruitment at its most barbaric: press gangs of narcissists sweeping out to draw more innocents into a life they cannot understand, and which can only result in their destruction. Many such levellers have been rescued by the Continuum before its too late, and have been blessed with a proper corner and an in-between. But the crashers are simply too dangerous, in mind, and in their very existence, and when the Foxhorn are in the mood for a rabbit hunt, or for an easy training exercise for Twos, they make thorough mop-ups of these poor creatures.

Booby-Traps

Some narcissists, especially when fragged to the point of despair, go on kamikaze Time Combats, where even their dead bodies are rigged for reprisal. Stolen Aquarian nanotech, Piscean timebombs, or open vials of Cancerean Era plagues or hazardous species are all typical narcissist booby traps. The Foxhorn have special hazard teams to go and defuse these kamikazes, often with Engineer and Physician support. [See Engineers, pg. 163, Foxhorn, pg. 164; and Physicians, pg. 166.]

Bookworms

As mentioned under Scribes [pg. 171], some narcissists specialize in confusing loyal spanners' Span and Yet books. While only rarely successful, careless young spanners that have failed to bring their books to the Scribes for copying are always the ones that find they've been bookwormed, and have an impossible time trying to sort out their Age and their Yet without fragging themselves— everything in their lives have to be researched all over again, and some grow so desperate they succumb to narcissist blackmail just to (literally) get their lives back. Don't let this happen! As late Piscean computer users well know, a minor maxim to remember is 'Save a back-up, and save often!' Scribes are always ready to copy your books, so set a date in your Yet to do it. And acquire Photographic Memory [See ppg. 10, 13] as soon as feasible.

Corner Assaults

These are usually carried out by large numbers of misinformed crashers who are the cannon-fodder sent in by the higher Span narcissists to disguise their high-powered assaults on the members of the corner. This is Hit and Run on a massive scale, and is usually performed with the sole intent of killing or fragging out an entire corner. Attacks of this serious a nature are rare after the Gemini Wars, but should still be prepared for.

Cuckoo

Vicious ploy of narcissists, to replace the loyal spanners of an **entire corner** with lookalike narcissists. They usually attempt to use the Second Maxim against loyal spanners, pretending to be elders, luring us one by one to a place to be killed and replaced. Replacing the mentor is the hardest, and is often attempted first, though some cautious high-Span narcissists— whose plan this is— prefer to save the mentor as the *coup de gras*. Cuckoos are fully prepared to pretend to be loyal Continuum spanners for years of Age: After all, they'll keep meeting up with members of the real corner Up and Down, and have all the deceased's Span books to sort out what's left of their dead hosts' Yets— just so no one suspects.

Mirror Corner

Similar to Cuckoo, a Mirror is just what it sounds like, a narcissist nest silently working in the locality of a loyal corner. Its existence may have a myriad of reasons but at some point it will attempt

to destroy the loyal corner— though probably at a point in spacetime when the Mirror is not generally active— if only to silence any direct information of their existence.

Redoubt

This countermeasure is an extreme response to a narcissist incursion. A second corner in a locality is quietly established by the Continuum to rescue a badly fragged one— or to replace it. An operation of this nature is so sensitive that either a War-trained Span Four or an Exalted is present overseeing it. [See Chapter 2: Spanning—Span Five— Fifth Maxim pg. 101.]

Friendly Fire

Sometimes a Mirror Corner is just a front for a more vicious strategy: To get the Continuum to fight itself. By getting a native corner to mistake a Redoubt as the narcissist Mirror, and the Redoubt to believe the native corner has been Cuckooed is a masterwork of their deviltry, and has occurred more than once, resulting in an extreme Inheritor incursion, and much death, frag and embarrassment to loyal spanners all around.

Onward

This is just a small sampling of the dangers facing all Continuum spanners. Let no one doubt this is a War, and the Societies are the Continuum's war machine.

Further information on Antedesertium and its denizens is found in Chapter 5: Knowing, pg. 202.

Scenario Ideas

Here are listed a few kernels from which to grow tales of adventure with your playing group, listed by the Span they're most appropriate for. Each is broken into three developing parts of the plot:

- *The Invitation*

Borrowing the name from the Invitation to Dance, this is the inviting aspects of the scenario; what makes it an interesting situation for the characters.

- *The Likely Span of Events*

With spanners, anything can happen. But if the plot follows through anywhere near expected, it should flow like this. Whenever you're designing a scenario, it's a good idea to create a Likely Span of Events to bring the characters back on track with the main plot.

- *The Surprise*

No good plot is without a twist, or at least an exciting ending.

Adventures for Span Ones

Details on how you can find a complete scenario, **The Death Hand of Saint No One, online is on pg. 196.**

Suffer the Children Onto Me

The Invitation

Local leveller children are ending up dead, horribly violated and dumped in various locations and dates. All initial evidence points to a minor narcissist, who has been identified at many of the crime scenes, and whose composite picture is all over the airwaves.

The Likely Span of Events

Much of this can be level police and social work, but of course, the characters can see their results more readily.

Evidence is muddled for the cops, since the described suspect hasn't been seen, nor seems to live anywhere in the area. The best lead is on one James Ethan Falsell, but neighbors say he moved away ten months before the spree began, and was always kind and helpful— especially with kids. He can't found anywhere by police—but time travellers have more options. The spanners can play the part of 'psychic detective', and reveal useful leads, but are mainly there to secure autopsy reports and other useful data for cornering this guy.

His place a year Down is just an obvious base of operations. But further information shows that Falsell's actually trying to stop these foul crimes from happening and being Fragged as a result. Why is this narcissist acting the part of the good guy, and who is actually harming the children?

The Surprise

Falsell is involved, but he's trying to take the blame off his leveller dad, the real killer.

Money Makes the World Spin 'Round

The Invitation

Someone has to set up the One Big Score for Spanners, right? Here, the players get drafted into helping the Moneychangers put pieces in place for what turns out to be their own One Big Scores... and get to deal with some of the disreputable parts the Moneychanger business, like theft, murder for insurance money, and the Internal Revenue Service.

Likely Span of Events

The player characters are put through all the worst imaginable mobland scenes of torture for information, money laundering and skimming gambling winnings. Most of the pressure is on the spanner whose money is being raised. Rebelling now only results in frag, as the characters get thicker and deep-

er into the situation, they have to back each other to keep going down the dark precipice of clandestine finance.

The Surprise

With a little fruning or even a momentary peek into the lives of their victims, the spanners make a startling discovery. Most of the people they're shafting on the stock exchange or in the backrooms of the IRS are pretty reprehensible people, who thought they were going to get away with hurting shareholders, or cheating another leveller out of hard-earned cash, or worse. The Moneychangers will simply explain that the leveller scam artists and misanthropes who have to hide their tracks when making their own scores, are the ones least likely to pipe up when their ill-gotten gains are vanished away. This is the painful but steady justice of the Continuum.

Adventures for Span Twos

Timelike Love Triangle

The Invitation

The players are contacted by Rosa Fernandez, who says that her brother Luis has been fragged by a narcissist, but the fragging occurred so far Down that she can't help him. She says she's a Span One, and a bit desperate for help. (But see the Surprise)

Likely Span of Events

Whatever happens, the players will start to have odd experiences— hearing voices, things moving at the corner of their vision and so on. They will also be approached by Eric Reed, who says he is a loyal Span Three. He will warn them off helping Rosa. However, he'll seem shifty, and he's from sufficiently far away in spacetime that it's hard for them to check on him. If the players persist in helping Rosa, they'll find themselves being fragged.

The Surprise

Rosa and her boyfriend (Luis *Vasquez, not* a brother of hers) are narcissists, actually Span Two. The "Continuum spanner" is another narcissist with whom they've been engaging in Time Combat (they cheated him in a deal for pirate gold and Rosa's affections). Rosa's brother is fragged so far that he's beyond help. She's been trying to heal his frag, but the other narcissist is too quick for her— and she's been picking up frag of her own. Hence she enlists the help of the players. If the players succeed in defeating Eric Reed and healing the brother's frag, they will have to fight Rosa and her brother, who will want to cover their tracks.

You're on Candid Chainletter

The Invitation

Recently, a friend (let's call him Tom) from another corner approaches the players. He said that recently, he started getting strange photos in the mail, showing him at various locations, all marked with a time, date, and location. The first one, he ignored, and was soon was fragged for ignoring his Yet. He corrected it, and now is at the whim of these photos that get to him no matter what, and force him to be at the strangest of places and doing the strangest things: Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah's Witnesses soliciting for a blood drive, the local senator's office handing out pamphlets on communism, and dressed as a mime at the local museum, to name a few.

Likely Span of Events

Are the photos real, and who is taking them? That's the first question the spanners are likely to ask. Tom insists that he's watched scrupulously, and has seen no one with a camera at the correct angle. At the last one— the mime gig— he even planted a video camera an entire hour before his visit and taped the whole thing. He's never been so humiliated, but there seem's to be no clues as to who's the photographer: no one shows up to take the shot.

Once the player spanners start hanging around the scenes, they may discover a young leveller girl who is also setting up a hidden camera, the one taking all the shots. She claims to be doing a special project for college based on polling statistics, and that she's been disturbed that the same guy keeps showing up in all her statistically random shots. She thinks Tom is following her, and is starting to get nervous.

It will turn out that her professor is a narcissist experimenting with Clairvoyance to help choose moments when to frag spanners. He's actually a loner, and only Span Two, so he's fairly easily dispatched. But his office contains no notes on his experiments.

The Surprise

Soon after helping to solve the mystery and bag the guilty party, someone in the player characters' corner starts getting photos of themselves at various places as well...

Adventures for Span Threes

Sex and the Single Borgia

The Invitation

The characters are asked to span to Italy in 1506— the Court of Lucrezia Borgia. In order to ingratiate themselves at court, they will have to take on period disguises. And while Lucrezia Borgia is a patron of the arts (the players might like to consider

taking on the role of artists, poets, or musicians), her court was a hotbed of scandal and intrigue. Although the spanners' mission does not directly involve Borgia, at the GM's discretion they may get implicated or otherwise drawn in to her machinations.

The spanners are to locate and protect Ana-Luisa Peireta, the daughter of a local lordling. There is a running battle to take her out by fragging her which other Spanners are currently fighting. It is believed that since the Continuum is winning this war, the band of narcissists concerned will try a more direct approach. Ana-Luisa is supposed to marry the son of Mazziuchelli, and this will cement trade between the two cities.

Likely Span of Events

The Narcissists may try to kill Ana-Luisa; or they may try to render her unmarriageable by getting her pregnant (either in the traditional way, or by technological means). Either way, the characters will have to discover what nicks of time to appear in, unseen, to keep Ana-Luisa from getting an unhappy ending.

The Surprise

Ana-Luisa is already having an affair with one of Lucrezia Borgia's courtiers, Encole Strozza, outside of any narcissist intrigue. She would much rather *not* marry her betrothed. She will do all she can to get out of the betrothal, including (trying) to have her guardians secretly killed if that's what it takes.

The Quick and the Fragged

The Invitation

A collection of narcissist gunslingers and shootists decided to hold their gunslinging contest in and about the players' corner. They are quite crafty, and the players may not realize what is going on until far into it. Worse yet, the best shooter of the corner gets called out for the contest, and they got the numbers, the Span, and the muscle to make a Time Combat deadly. They name the places and times, and if the shooter don't show, then they'll just move in and take over this little locality...

Likely Span of Events

The only choice is to play along until they can be isolated and taken out. This can be successful if the party hangs together and manages to frag out the bad guys one by one— and frag each out completely in one or two Sweeps of TIme Combat. Otherwise, his compadres will be alerted, and they'll all come down on the player characters instantly. Getting the word out to the rest of the Continuum is also something the GM should encourage, though the players *will* be left as the first line of defense.

The Surprise

Once the players run out of spacetime to sneak around, trying to defend their corner— when all hope is lost, and the shootist must show, or be branded a yellowbelly— just have a character stride in at the proper times and hours, who says nothing, doesn't even ask the time, but wails in on the bad guys with score of at least Body 7 Quick 8, Pistol G10, All Other Firearms M8, Knife M8 and Span enough to spare for any Time Combats.

This mysterious stranger never speaks or reveals their name, but beneath the kerchief resembles a weather-worn elder of the shooter. If the player had asked to slipshank a gemini, let him— but skip the frag penalty, because *that* gemini was with one high Span drifter...

Amazing Grace

The Invitation

It starts with *all* the beer being gone from the refrigerators at some Span Three mentor conference, and the player characters unwittingly frag someone by taking the last case of an Exalted's favorite beer from the store, the one he is certain he buys...

Who is driving them into such a high-powered conflict?

Likely Span of Events

The Spanners get to dance around the edge of a Time Combat as they are manipulated into providing for Graces in an ongoing Time Combat between some high Span combatants— this is no picnic, as these Exalted Combatants can hit a spanner for 2 Frag at a pop— so entering the Combat itself by fragging someone is a bad, bad idea.

The Surprise

The Exalted is being attacked primarily where it hurts most: as a leveller or an initiate experiencing his in-between. Hence much of the time the characters will have the rare thrill of being able to teach the Exalted a lot of that wisdom he's so famous for...

Adventures for Span Fours

FLY!

The Invitation

Here's a departure from the Greatest Game: Some of your Threes miss a rendezvous, and word comes they're being held in Ariesian Era China, in 1766 BC— by a leveller. Emperor Ki-Kung-Shi says he's seen a flying machine... and has been told you can get him one. He shows that he has your unconscious friends— "these sleeping demons"— and will put them to the sword unless you "spirits" get him one) His guards look pretty quick with those blades, and besides, some bunch of narcissists must be

behind this kidnapping— they're probably still around, waiting for a royal Time Combat and more Fourth-Maxim breaking. (And there's no point trying to go Down further to rescue them: It would just frag you all.)

Likely Span of Events

While moving a small plane piecemeal among your group isn't hard, the real trouble is pausing with these plane parts overnight in various realms of the Piscean and Ariesian Eras. Few corners care to harbor anachronism that big and hairy in their backyards, and Fourth Maxim arguments and situations are almost inevitable.

There's also tracking down the narcissists that bagged your friends and dropped them off helpless in Ariesian China; a tricky game, especially since they must be allowed to kidnap and deliver your Threes— but then be nailed afterward.

The Surprise

Despite the large number of threats and negative reactions from individuals along the way (especially Engineers), neither the local corner nor the Continuum as a whole really mind Ki-Kung-Shi from getting his plane: It's in the history books. There will be a fuss about taking Down more than a quarter tank of gasoline, however: That stuff could quickly get into the wrong hands.

But ultimately, at some point, the Emperor's machine crashes (runs out of gas), and gives him quite a scare— so then he has it destroyed.

But is it Art?

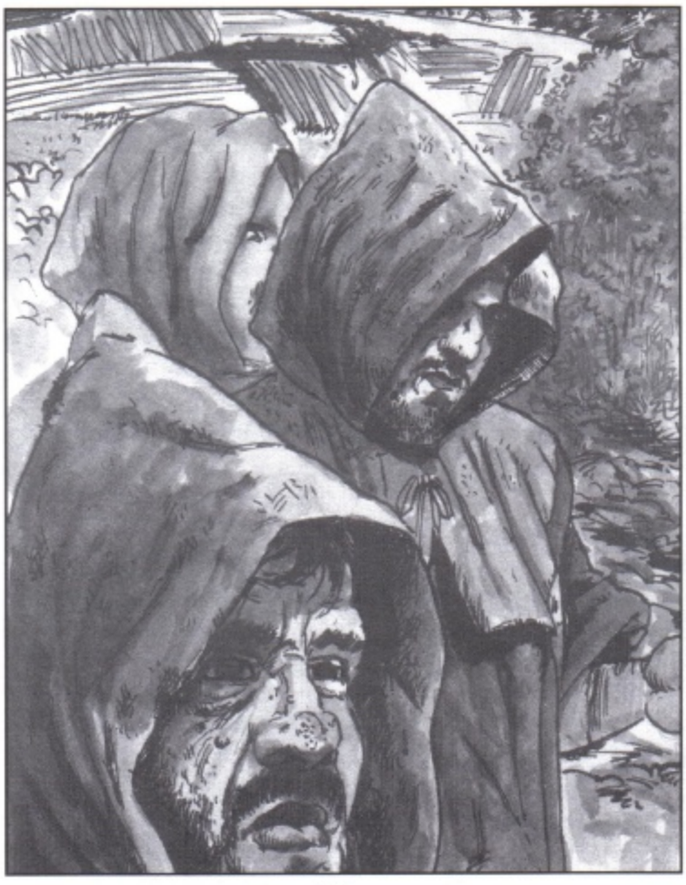
The Invitation

Someone is painting the most wonderful murals on walls and sidewalks all over the city... and fragging dozens of spanners for whom bare, artless walls were in their Yet. This is so startling and awful to all the Threes running the corners in town, that they look to the few Fours in town to figure out what happened. The Exalted generally agree that it's up to them to try to solve first, since this is impinging on the spread of Culture in the Greatest Game.

Likely Span of Events

The Antiquarians and the Scribes are laying claim to the walls, Foxhorn and the Thespians want the painter, (dead and alive respectively,) and all for different reasons. You can hold your own corners against the demands of these Fraternities, but then the Quicker show up claiming there's a major narcissist in this spacetime needing collecting. And they expect you to have the investigating delivered to them where and when they stand.

The walls themselves, upon investigation, just suddenly bleed with colors in the night, with no one applying them. With Shift Sight or the proper Quicker tech, it can be discovered that the paint has literally spanned in from farther Up, and is badly fragged, but somewhat alive, like clay.



above
Wakewits the Younger, (b. AD 1213)
Sketchbook of Scenes from 1393
ink & wash
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

following pages
Don Diego Sanchez, (b. AD 1660)
selections from
The Later Adventures of America: A Sketchbook
(AD 1870 - 2136)
pencil
Scribal Librarium at the New York Public Library

Massive rounds of Hypnotism and wall-washing are in everyone's Yets, but what is causing this bizarre anomaly?

The Surprise

The painter is just a leveller, but his pigments are the scary part. Apparently his entire paint box is infested as a Narcissist Vessel, and his luck is doing great: He's getting calls and recognition he *really* hasn't earned, since his work when not using the box is mediocre.

Simply taking the Vessel from him is remarkably hard, since it subconsciously warns him where and when to hide it, lest it be easily found. And attempts to wrangle it are at -3 to rolls because of its power.

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Sample Player Character Handouts

Part of GMing C⁰NTINUUM is being able to create and adapt on the fly. The backgrounds of the provided Player Characters contain many extra story arcs that may not enter into the plot you've devised. Rowena's boyfriend, Tom's painted stones, Taro's art films— all fairly ordinary, everyday things, but very personal things. Any of these might be targeted by resourceful narcissists... Also, these characters are useful as NPCs, starting new players quickly, or for running one of our online scenarios.

Ed Branch
Society United States *Locality* c1990s *Corner* c1990s
Age 30y 64d *Born* May 12, 1960 *Frat* n/a
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 4 MIND 6 QUICK 4
Benefit: Photographic Memory
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Firearms/M/Journeyman/8
Accountancy/M/Journeyman/8
Car/Q/Apprentice/5
History - Firearms/M/Apprentice/7
Law - U.S. Modern/M/Apprentice/7
Computer - Internet/M/Novice/6
Items:
Guns, guns, guns, taser, bulletproof vest, copy of "Guns & Ammo",handcuffs.

What everyone knows about Ed: Accountant. Also firearms aficionado, and Second Amendment activist. He also quotes the Tenth Amendment a lot, especially after a few beers, or whenever the conversation turns to the Maxims.

Some of Ed's Private Stuff:

Few of your clients know you are a 'gun nut'. There's a gun club upstate near your Westchester County home that meets every Friday night, and sometimes you can't resist going there five times a week. But no one upstate knows of your wild side.

You have a bottomless supply of ammo hidden in various spots around the warehouse. Only you know where they all are.

The Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1791): "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."

Rosie "Bubbles" La Paz
Society United States *Locality* Chicago c1920s
Corner c1990s *Age* 21y 84d *Born* Aug 22, 1905 *Frat* n/a
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 2 MIND 4 QUICK 5
Benefit: Extraordinary Beauty
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Etiquette - U.S. 1920's/M/Journeyman/6
Etiquette - U.S. 1990's/M/Apprentice/5
Melee Combat - Gin Bottle/B/Apprentice/3
Athletics - Dancing/B/Apprentice/3
Dreaming/Q/Journeyman/7
Research - Library/M/Apprentice/5
Items:
Gin Bottle

What every (spanner) knows about Bubbles: Bubbles is a Bright Young Thing from Chicago that nearly got herself killed in the crossfire of a gunfight during an early Prohibition raid. The corner's mentor rescued the teen Rosie, and decided (or discovered) she was a keeper. It took some finagling to bring her up to the Nineties, but everyone feels it was worth it.

Some of Bubbles' Private Stuff:

You don't feel insane, or even strange about being on the other end of the century. There's something natural to you about the link between the Roaring Twenties and the Rave Nineties. Raves are the same as speakeasys, only louder, more choices in 'medicine', and more honestly raw.

The corner's mentor usually feels responsible, to meet any material needs of yours, but lately you've decided to take employment helping with library research for a study a local college professor, Leon Holmes, is doing into nineteenth-century women's mores. (You've got to stop giggling in the library.)

Privately, you've been wondering if the Narcissists are as bad as they're made out to be— they seem to have wildness down to an art. But your mentor gets mad every time you want to talk to them, so you do what your mother said to do, and shut up.

Rowena Lincoln
Society United States *Locality* c1990s *Corner* c1990s
Age 20y 40d *Born* April 7, 1975 *Frat* n/a
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 3 MIND 5 QUICK 6
Benefit: Tough
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Language - Spanish/M/Apprentice/6
Car/Q/Novice/6
Art - Cooking/Q/Apprentice/7
Athletics - Dancing/B/Apprentice/4
Melee - Katana/B/Apprentice/4
Unarmed Combat/B/Apprentice/4
Items: Katana

What everyone knows about Rowena: Works at the Love on Madison Ave in the East 90s. Gorgeous girl in love with a leveller named Vinny. Vinny's in with the Latin Lords. Rowena tried telling him once about spanning, but he just called her nuts. Everyone's worried that it won't work between them.

Some of Rowena's Private Stuff:

Even you're worried it won't work out, especially since Continuum spanners of higher Span keep looking at you with such sad eyes.

Vinny taught you to fight, and you've been hoping you could teach him a thing about love, but he's been away a lot lately, and it's starting to look like it's over.

Plus your mother and your four sisters in Chattanooga keep asking for money, and you're wondering how much you can bend this time thing for extra cash, without breaking the rules or disappointing your mentor.

Next time a higher-Span Continuum person asks for some help, you're going to ask for that extra cash.

You hated knives until Taro introduced you to the katana, and now you and he practice whenever you can arrange it. Hey, now that you think about it, Taro's an available man...

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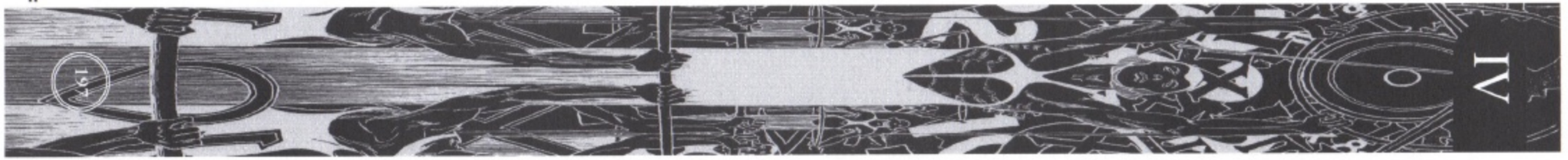

Taro Matsushita
Society United States *Locality* c1990s *Corner* c1990s
Age 24y 8d *Born* May 8, 1974 *Frat* n/a
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 4 MIND 4 QUICK 5
Benefit: Tough
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Unarmed Combat - Judo/B/Journeyman/6
Melee - Katana/B/Journeyman/6
Art - Filmmaking/Q/Journeyman/7
Language - English/M/Apprentice/5
(Native Language - Japanese)
Items:
Katana, 16 mm camera, Japanese-English pocket dictionary.

What everyone knows about Taro: Yes, he knows martial arts, and even trains people for cash. He's a professional stunt man, but he's proudest of his work as an indie film director, which few of you have seen, since it's all in Japanese.

Some of Taro's private stuff:

Your indie films are primarily four shorts and one hour-long masterpiece built on footage you took of natives in the South Seas, which you dubbed over with weird narration in your native tongue. There are five literati in Tokyo who think you're the bomb, though you've summoned the courage to *not* span Up to find out if that career takes off.

Rowena has been scheduling more practices with you than you'd expect. You're wondering if this means you'll have to trounce Vinny for her or something.

Elvis Moore
Society United States *Locality* c1990s *Corner* c1990s
Age 25y 45d *Born* Dec 8, 1978 *Frat* n/a
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 6 MIND 5 QUICK 5
Benefit: Perceptive Limit: Addiction- ciggarettes
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Repair - Vehicle/M/Master/8
Motorcycle/Q/Apprentice/6
Melee - Pipe/B/Apprentice/7
History - U.S. South/M/Apprentice/6
Items:
Lead Pipe, tools.

What everyone knows about Elvis: Motorcycle Repairman, has his own small garage in central Jersey. Known for hating the King of Rock 'n Roll because he grew up being teased for the name. Went on a long, personal pilgrimage to the Fifties to tell Presley fans that he died fat; The corner's mentor eventually went and told him to cut it out. Likes Pink Floyd.

Some of Elvis' Private Stuff:

God you hate Elvis Presley, and you tell *everyone*. No fewer than three Southern spanners, one of them Confederate, have challenged you to duels to defend his honor, and when you're high enough Span, they'll be ready. So will you.

These people didn't have to put up with the fat jokes, the grease stuck in their hair, and ceaseless schoolyard nattering. You had no middle name, nowhere to hide.

You secretly swear you'll span into Graceland that fateful day, and personally jam the last fried peanut butter hoagie down that black-velvet throat, and be the father of a million conspiracy theories.

You can fix anything. Bikes, cages, roofs, TVs, computers up through 2002. And one day— you will fix the Presley.

Tom Redsnake
Society Apache *Locality* c1990s *Corner* c1990s
Age 28y 184d *Born* Jun 14, 1968 *Frat* n/a
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 5 MIND 4 QUICK 5
Benefit: Aptitude (Dreaming)
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Dreaming/Q/Journeyman/7
Art - Office Design/Q/Journeyman/7
Art - Dancing/Q/Apprentice/6
Religion - Apache/M/Apprentice/5
Language - Apache/M/Novice/4
Melee - Knife/B/Apprentice/6
Items:
Knife, Painted stones, medicine bag (worn around neck).

What everyone knows about Tom: M.A. Office Design, Columbia University. Claims that raves are 'the only places people dream much anymore'. His grandmother prophesied in a dream that he would visit his Apache ancestors, so after he learned to span, he focussed on his skills at dreaming.

Some of Tom's Private Stuff:

Your grandmother was much spookier than you've been telling people. She kept showing up at odd hours and giving you small tribal artifacts like beads and painted stones, saying they held a power both quiet and great. You still have them somewhere, but your spanner experiences have caused you to relegate totemic objects to the back drawer.

Your dreams have been revealing a gold hand, disembodied, pulling at what might be a submarine hatch in dark waves. You're not sure if it's hanging on for survival, or if it wants to break in, killing the submarine's passengers. All the portholes have crosses on them.

You also have an embarrassing secret. While at Columbia, before you became a spanner, you made extra bucks as a Chippendale's dancer. You wonder how long this can possibly be kept from your chronies.

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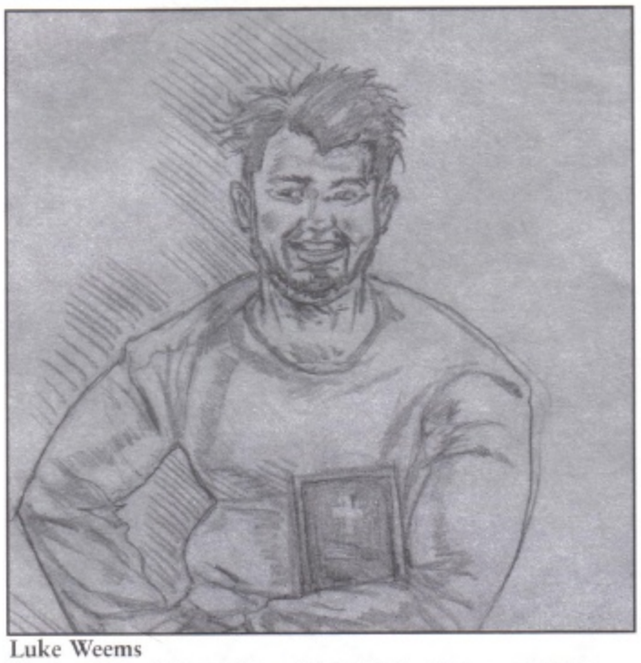


Luke Weems
Society United States *Locality* c1990s *Corner* c1990s
Age 35y 18d *Born* Sep 19, 1972 *Frat* n/a (see below)
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 5 MIND 5 QUICK 5
Benefit: Math Wiz
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Unarmed Combat - Boxing/B/Apprentice/6
Car/Q/Novice/5
Light Aircraft/Q/Novice/5
Language - Spanish/M/Novice/5
Professional Skill - Finance/M/Journeyman/7
Religion - Mormon/M/Apprentice/5
Mathematics/M/Apprentice/6
Items: Latest PC, Personal planner book, Pager, New Testament, Book of Mormon

What everyone knows about Luke: Has a religious bent, and is a workaholic futures broker, with fanatical honesty. Well, sort of. Luke's a Mormon with six wives, and only two actually are aware of each other. Plus, he claims he has twenty more in his Yet. Packs a wicked punch, too.

Some of Luke's private stuff:

You find nothing dishonest in having multiple wives. A spanner has a wider perspective on things, and there is plenty of spacetime where polygamy is the norm. You cheat on none of them, and are ready with helpful advice to dissuade your chronies considering extra- or premarital affairs.

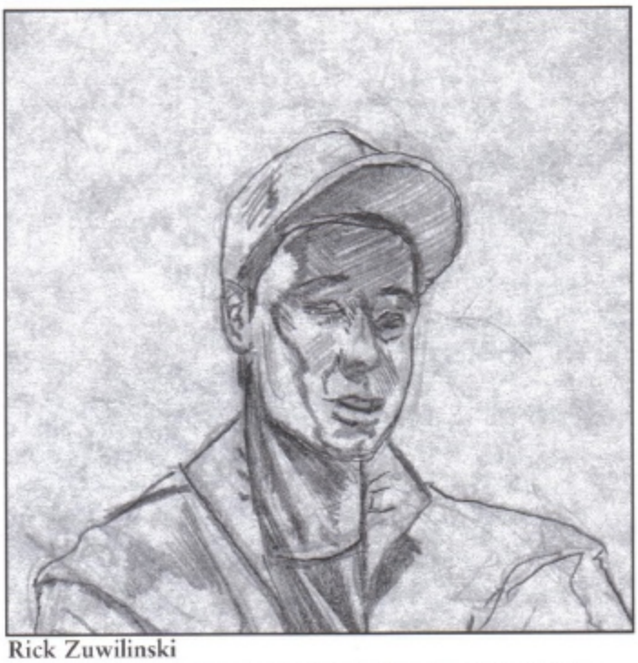
You never use the information you have to influence your advice and purchases at work. You intend your service to the Continuum to be seamless in this regard, and the Moneychangers' Fraternity seems impressed— you have every expectation of joining them one day.

You spend over twelve hours of every week of your Age practicing boxing at various gyms.

The wives:
Salt Lake City—
Gail— the only wife the secretaries at work know about. She covers for:
Elena— who is devoted to Luke, and had the first child of this family, Michael, in 1990.
(The rest rely on separate pager numbers to contact you. You always return their calls within seconds.)
Morissette— (Chicago)
Mindy— (New Orleans)
Lona— (Mexico City) - three children, Eduardo (b. 1986), Lona (b. 1987), and Consuela (b. 1989).
Kai Li— (Hong Kong)

Your hope is that Deseret (the Mormon terrestrial kingdom later incorporated as the state of Utah) is recognized as a Society. You haven't pursued the information, waiting instead until you're higher Span. Plus, you're a busy family man; time enough for politics later.

The Continuum has had nothing to say to you about your lifestyle, good or bad, apart from the strong hint that twenty wives await you over fifty years Down in the past. Your mentor has said his personal opinion is you're headed for trouble— not Frag, but trouble.



Rick Zuwilinski
Society United States *Locality* c1990s *Corner* c1990s
Age 18y 251d *Born* Apr 1, 1980 *Frat* n/a
SPAN 1 FRAG 0 BODY 3 MIND 4 QUICK 6
Benefit: Contortionist/Double-Jointed
Skill/Attribute/Title/Rating
Art - Animal Husbandry/Q/Journeyman/8
Vehicle - Carriage/Q/Apprentice/7
History - Medieval England/M/Novice/5
History - Industrial Age Transport/M/Novice/4
Melee Combat - Horsewhip/B/Apprentice/4
Stealth/B/Novice/3
Items:
Horsewhip, Map of the City.

What everyone knows about Rick: City buggy driver. Loves horses, loves carriages. Wants to span down to where there are lots of them. Rick can almost talk to animals, and when he was a teen leveller, he picked the locks on the cages in the City Zoo monkey house, and let them roam the backrooms. In fact, you know the week it happens, and some of you want to go watch and tease him.

Some of Rick's private stuff:

Frankly, you're not sure how you managed to get out of the Monkey House without going to juvenile hall. You remember a bunch of people showing up and helping you get the monkeys corralled. they all seemed to know you somehow, and then as soon as it was done, they mysteriously disappeared while your back was turned. Since you became a spanner, you believe it's the Continuum helping out. Lately, you're believing it's been in your Yet to arrange the monkey-house cleanup yourself.

You're looking for a few good men who are brave enough to wrestle a gorilla back into his pen. But you're wondering how to breach the subject delicately to your friends.

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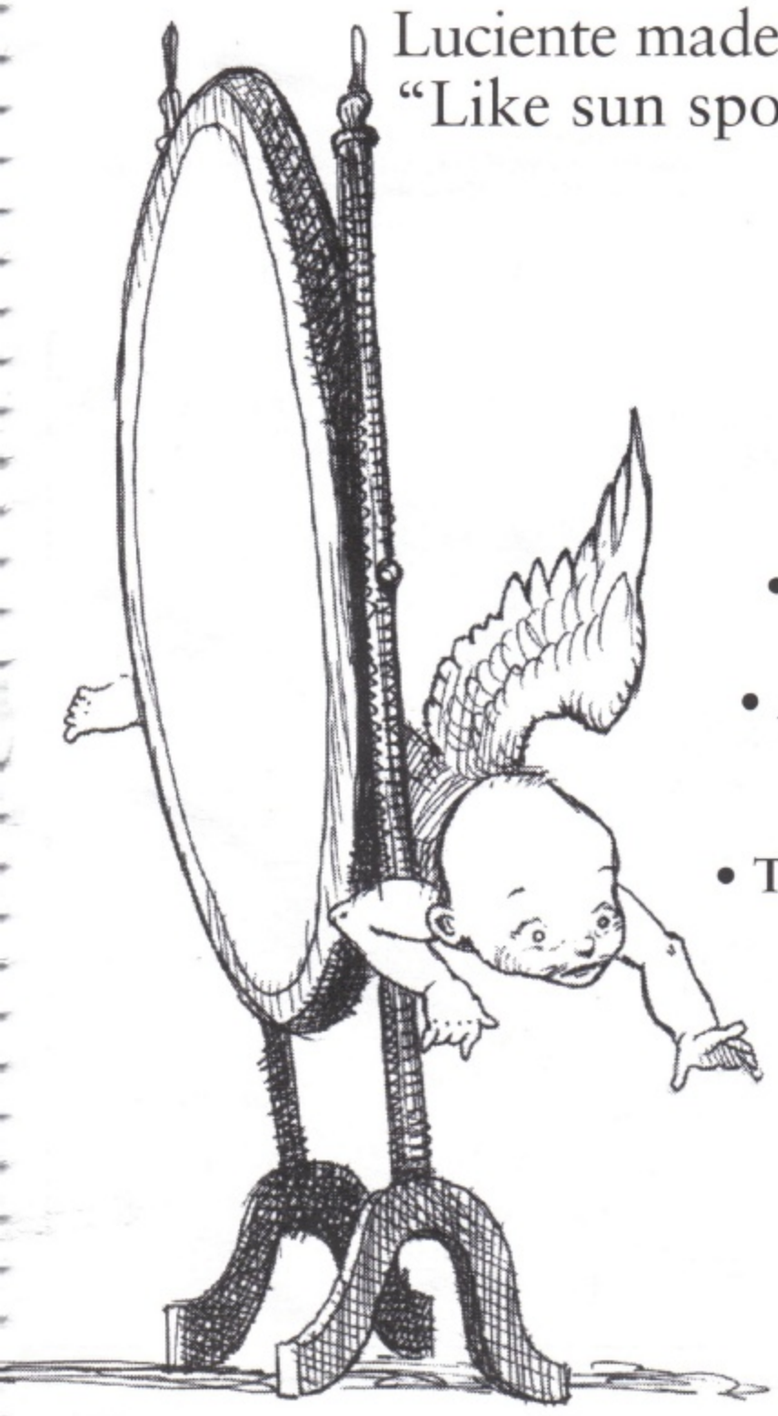
Artwork © 1999 Tony DiTerlizzi

Chapter V: Knowing

"How do you know it'll be over?" Connie asked. "Do you expect to win soon?"

"Win? It comes in spurts." Luciente made a face over her shoulder. "Like sun spots."

—Marge Piercy
Woman on the Edge of Time
AD 1976



History as Battlefield

- **Early Civilizations**— what one knows, or is expected to learn
- A **glimpse of distant Eras**— and the battles awaiting us there

- **Time Travel In the Real World**— is also discussed

D'Terlizzi, (b. 1462)
Villains
Illumination from *On the Nature of the Greater Atmospheres* (AD 1511)
pen-and-ink
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

History[1] as Battlefield

War

This section gives an overview of the War with Antedesertium, the Societies' readiness and responses, and some of the Societies' distant allies within the Continuum.

There is far, far more to the following civilizations and Eras than their participation in the effort against Antedesertium.

Early Civilizations

Before Man evolved, there were other Civilizations aboriginal to Earth.

Just as there are hundreds and thousands of societies within the Societies' 15,000+ year span, so too there are thousands of Civilizations of Man, reaching down as far as 15 million years. Most human spanners come from late Societal spacetime, or upward, due to the high population of those areas.

Here follow some of the Societies' most trusted allies. Certain borders of the following civilizations are deliberately obfuscated, to protect their interests.

Sizizkai [ss-ss'ka-ii (unvocalized)]
106,237,032 - 106,233,878 BC

These are a people descended from *Iguanodon cardiomax:* A reptilian folk, they have scant patience for nosy mammals who leave the bounds of their guesthouses.

They are most admired for their skill with gems and crystals. Many of the best mineral deposits were exposed on the surface in the Jurassic and after, allowing their easy collection and a culture of workmanship develop.

While few excel at spanning, they are huge, standing well over 15 feet high, and weighing a couple tons apiece.

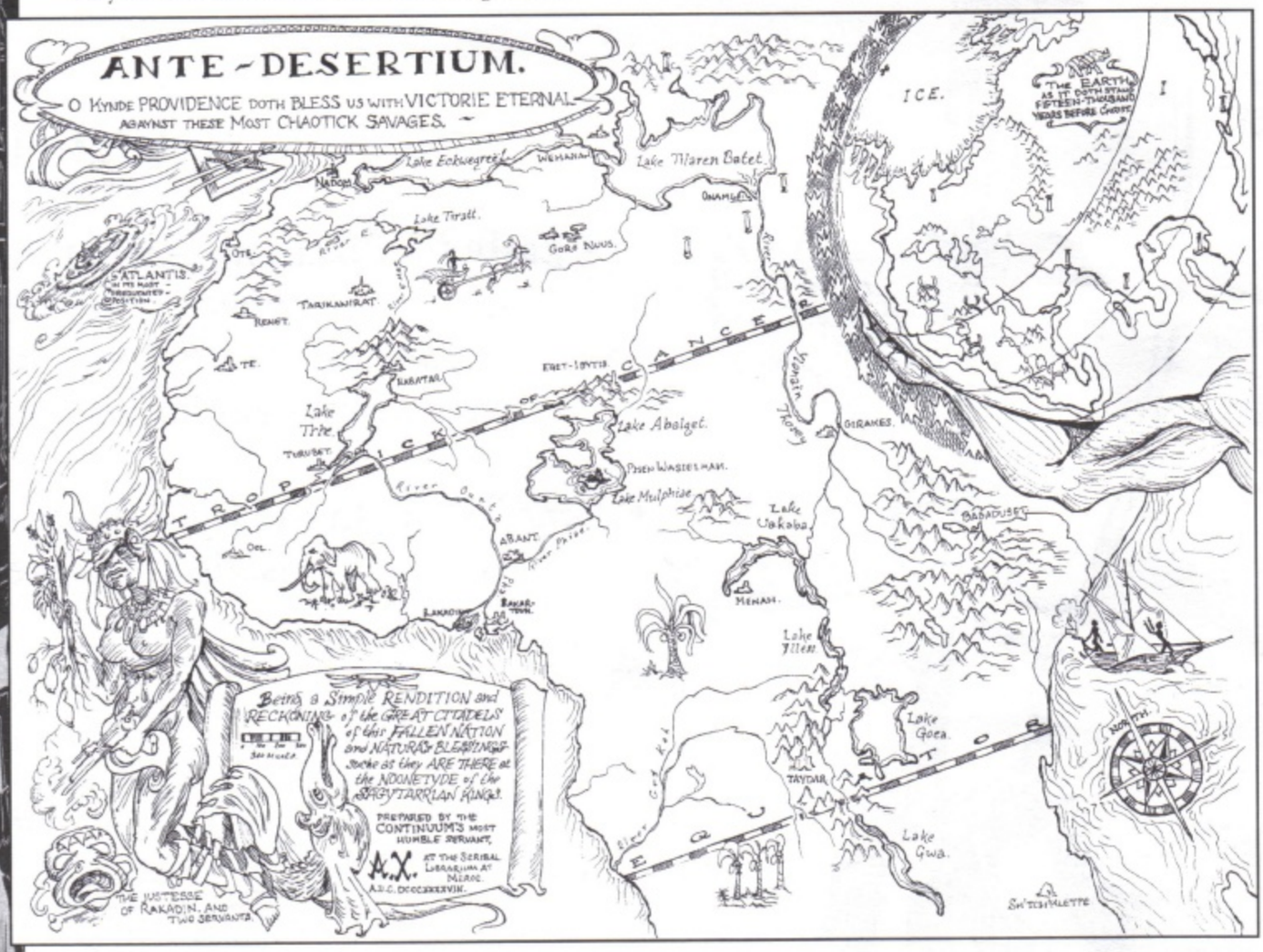
Average adult stats
SPAN 1 BODY 10 MIND 4 QUICK 4 LIFE EXPECTANCY 120 years
SKILLS Solar Tech J6, Gemology G12, Adornment G9, Dino History M7
WEAPONS Rending G14: 2/4/8/16; Spear-ram M13: 3/6/12/25

Ga'hagadrrg
2,012,379 - 2,009,561 BC (breeding grounds)

Relatives of Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon, this branch of humanity was discovered as a spanning culture, with a very cautious and elaborate social structure preventing overpopulation.

Further information on the genesis of the Ga'hagadrrg is not available here, but the most experienced spend much of their adult life far from their birthplace, roaming spacetime like the vast wilderness it is.

Average adult stats
SPAN 5 BODY 9 MIND 3 QUICK 8 LIFE EXPECTANCY 40 years
SKILLS Tracking G9, Survival G9
WEAPONS Rock M12: 1/1/2/5; Sharpened Rock J11: 1/2/3/6; Wrestle M12



Artwork ©1999 Chris Adams.

Dreamgathering
45806 - 29120 BC

Humans are drawn to better climes— away from the weather, the spanners, and the timeship incursions of the larger continents— by visions in their dreams. A sizable population finds its way onto the great southeastern tip of Asia, which later is cut off and becomes the isolated Australia.

High Span members of the Dreamers Fraternity take up seasonal residence with these people; very few are taught to span, but the civilization is based around Dreaming, not Spanning. The level population is aware of time travel, but is not daunted by it. The Fraternity is very protective of these people, and with good cause: They are progenitors of the Fraternity' s founders.

Tororo Borhe
24608 - 21986 BC

Waning population combined with increased yield due to heavy animal migrations. Referred to by some as the 'Old Piscean Era' this is the time of the 'Willendorf' figurines of obese goddesses. The Borhe have spanners that enjoy life, and hide their talent less from the levellers among them. They also freely interbreed with one another, and levellers Up and Down the Era of their civilization. While monitored by the Midwives, the Borhe are not subject to the decisions of the Atlantean Councils (being well before the Societies). However, genetics generally trouble the Borhe, who because of this transchronal breeding, doom themselves to near extinction, creating an inverse pyramid of spanner children: Each generation producing fewer and not more spanners.

The Far Border
22000 - 18000 BC

These are largely peaceful tribes with few native spanners. While Antedesertium, the Societies, and of course the Inheritors all have contacts and intrigues in these times, they are beyond the scope of the current volume.[2]

The Eras

The symbols of the zodiac eras are on ppg. 37-9.
Timelines of Notable Events—These events are examples only; their listing does not necessarily imply preeminent importance.

Antedesertium and the Societies at War

War must have clear objectives, or the people asked to fight it will become confused, lose heart, or both. A war among spanners has a different price: It has no beginning or end, but many battlefields.

The Continuum's war aims are plain: Saving all humanity throughout the universe. The Continuum's victory is also plain: The Societies lead to the Inheritors. But narcissists will battle on anyway, an unfortunate spin on human hopes and dreams, taken advantage of at every turn by Antedesertium. Yet: the war must be fought. Stories of veterans and eager new arrivals mingle in the streets of Atlantis, and strategies for every battlefield are discussed at length to provide maximum feasible advantage and coordination.

Antedesertium's war aims are not always as clear. Firstly, there is a distinct division between the governance the Sagittarian and Scorpiod Eras. The Sagittarians tend to distance themselves from defeats they cannot prevent, and become fixated on altering a small bit of spacetime, or trying to invent a 'multiverse'. But there is little consensus among the seventy kings, and so resistance to the Continuum's applied sentient force is piecemeal and localized.

The Scorpiod are another matter. The fight with them boils down to personality, and having so few minds with such massive power, they can and do coordinate against loyal Continuum spanners with much more devastating effect.

Societal Incursion Strategy

Antedesertium knows it has the advantage on its home turf, to a point. Overwhelming sentient force is the Continuum's to command. But its judicious use is difficult to measure in an Era whose people insist on altering records, inventing tricks, and foster frag-celebratory cultures, all to confuse our attempts to coordinate their spacetime.

For this reason, as well as the impossibility of waging war in the leveller sense (see Appendix A: Fallacies and Follies, pg. 212) spanners gather in Atlantis to find new friends and form platoons (of mostly Fours and Fives), much like the corners they participated in, earlier in their Age. The Councils, as well as the Quicker and Foxhorn Fraternities hold meetings wherein battlefields are revealed, and interested platoons can take on the challenges that await in enemy territory. See also Dream Boot Camp, pg. 206.

Sagittarian Era
c. 18000 - 16000 BC

"That's where the next great discoveries will be made. When we have the technology to look under the sands, we'll find it, under the Sahara."
—Dr. Harry Shapiro, American Museum of Natural History
in private conversation with the authors, AD 1985.

The earth's axis is not where it is in Societal times. The north pole is over what will one day be Hudson's Bay, and the south pole is over what will one day be the southern Indian Ocean. These changes are all legacies of narcissist furor.

Only a few events are absolutely certain. These are lynchpins of life in Antedesertium, and while some of the events are loathsome, they are little worse than leveller atrocities of our own civilization. Some are listed below.

See also ppg. 136-7 for further information on the Sagittarians.

BC
17997 Taydar founded with human sacrifice
17862 War Among Kings; Phen Wasieima besieged; Societies secure advantage
17853 Level fighting called to halt; *The Binding Chart* signed by the Seventy Kings.
17637 Nir Modent, 9th King, declares himself the "only required person in his territory"
17224 The pleasures of the cities of G'Oronus at their height
17128 The Mockers drive Khebet Tel, 67th King, from his throne
17117 Mocker democracy collapses
16343 Hawassa leads the Murdering in the homes of Ganamazet
16221 Battles of Lake Gwa. Societal incursion turned back with massive losses to Antedesertium
16080 Assembly of the Sixteen

opposite page
Adamus Xenobus, (b. AD 1488)
Tempus Ante-Desertium
ink on parchment
Scribal Librarium at Meroë
AD 95

[1]Levellers are advised that this is a falsified history for use with the C^ONTINUUM roleplaying game, and should regard it neither as prophetic nor genuine in any way. Event listings that follow are deliberately inaccurate before 664 BC and after AD 1999, but are perfectly acceptable for use within the game.

[2]Note that a contact from Tororo Borhe wishes to point out that the foregoing presents a very skewed picture of life in his times, and says that much more cultural emphasis is placed on baking honey bread, especially late on, and the method of dressing animals for the table. "The elaborate rituals, symbolizing beasts coming to the feast, ripping themselves open, spewing their cooked flesh into the lap-bowls of the hosts and guests is one of our most colorful and celebrated traditions." Contact Gibra of Odera for visiting information.

Three of the most notable Kings:

Betne Rebu, the First King
SPAN 10+ BODY 7 MIND 8 QUICK 12
Dreaming G16+ Bureaucracy, Antedesertium G13+ Telepathy A9+ Telekinesis M11+ Other Aquarian Skills G12

If any one king is generally seen as the leader of all Antedesertium, it is Betne of aBant. He sees many events in his life, and of all the seventy kings, seems to have the most respect for one's Yet. But in the surround of Antedesertium, this becomes small comfort.

Hawassa, Seer of Rekedan, the Sixteenth King
SPAN 9+ BODY 6 MIND 9 QUICK 12
Dreaming G16+ Bureaucracy, Antedesertium G13+ Telepathy J11+ Telekinesis G13+ Clairvoyance G16+ Other Aquarian Skills G12

She is believed to be Betne's greatest opponent, holding a grudge against him from the earliest time of her life, until her spectacular demise. The cause is believed to be either his approval of creating the Seven and the Sixteen, or his lack of leadership against the Societies and the Inheritors; probably both.

Tchonch Ri, the Fifty-fourth King
SPAN 7+ BODY 5 MIND 8 QUICK 11
Dreaming G12+ Bureaucracy, Antedesertium M11+ Telepathy A9 Telekinesis M11 Other Aquarian Skills G12

As king of Ulkra, he controls few people, but much of the vast material resources of Eurasia. It is this individual that the Moneychangers and Antiquarians must plot against, lest he rob the earth of its wealth before its time.

Scorpiod Era

c. 16000 - 14000 BC

Accurate history for this era is difficult to obtain, as the War is prosecuted throughout, and the Seven are always disseminating rumors of false or changeable timelines.

See also ppg. 137-8 for further information on the Scorpiod.

BC
15780 Last of the Seventy Kings departs Down.
15540 The Whispering Lands in full blossom.
15628 Atlantis' main assault degrades the Seven's capacity to make crashers.
15430 Eight-Stars captures important Inheritor tech
15321 Cities are moved; this is treated as a game.
15281 The Plague of the Mark; sharp population decrease follows unabated
15006 Limited-existence crashers are made in large numbers
14924 Two-Hornéd Worm stretches to reach Luna
14440 Experiments to grow levellers adapted to freshwater lakes
14230 Radiation barriers at their most virulent
14107 Main Scorpiod magnetic barrier; Quick 16+ required to cross

It is known that spanning into the Scorpiod is highly dangerous, as the Seven throw their collective weight around to make their spacetime as unpalatable a place to materialize as possible. Vast amounts of 'natural' frag are kicked up, and this beyond most other actions is the most frequent way loyal spanners meet their end in Antedesertium.

The Seven

The Seven are rarely named, but each has a distinct personality. References to them as "the Seven Deadly Sins" are purely late Piscean black humor: They are each quite adept at all the seven sins.

Meeting one of the Seven is rarely a goal of even the most well-equipped band of spanner commandos. These narcissists have so finely honed their craft of subterfuge and damage control that they are next to impossible to frag— unless they want you to, and it's certainly a trap of some kind.

And as if these stats were not terrifying enough, each usually wields 20 or more Vessels (of Frag 8 -10).

1) Two-Hornéd Worm
SPAN 12+ BODY 35 MIND 30 QUICK 32
Telepathy G50 Telekinesis G55 Other Aquarian Skills G50

This Scorpiod is most often seen as a vast worm or waterspout, with one or two smaller tornadoes being sucked *into* its head. The Worm is distinctly male, however, and is known to manifest as a mighty warrior-king, or giant, but rarely anything non-human, besides the worm-form itself.

2) Dome-and-Mirror
SPAN 10+ BODY 98 MIND 8 QUICK 25
Telepathy G25 Telekinesis G38 Other Aquarian Skills G*Special*

As things approach Dome, they become beautiful. Beautiful by Dome's standards, which are whatever they are that moment.

Dome's Body Attribute is used to calculate the 'Other Aquarian Skills' instead of Mind; Dome's mass is exceedingly dense, and she spans only rarely. She is so powerfully influenced by her physicality that its urges ceaselessly rearrange the matter around her, sometimes up to several miles out from her consciousness. In fact she is hard to communicate with, as messages entering her hearing range are modified to something highly pleasant by the time her consciousness can understand them. Mercifully, long-term strategy and even memory is nearly impossible for Dome to maintain.

3) No Eyes
SPAN 10+ BODY 15 MIND 35 QUICK 25
Telepathy G40 Telekinesis G40 Other Aquarian Skills (G35)

This being rarely even has a nose, mouth or ears, but besides the smooth, featureless face appears otherwise human. Having deliberately curtailed his input from the physical world, his Mind has arranged and rearranged events even as he designs them, and he has the strength to enforce these events he imagines.

4) Eight-Stars-In-A-Disc
SPAN 10+ BODY 18 MIND 25 QUICK 39
Telepathy G29 Telekinesis G30 Other Aquarian Skills G45

This Scorpiod is known for her ability to absorb energy, even all known forms of natural paradox. It is said she is so aware of causality at all times that she can frag an opponent out well before he's decided to attack her. Treat this as being able to defend, research attack and attack again at full strength, for eight Sweeps to each Sweep her opponents get in Time Combat.

Her name comes from her appearance as a wheel of eight stars, wobbling madly, from which she makes pronouncements, usually of a martial nature. On the rare occasions she appear as a human, she is a tall handsome African woman who never smiles or speaks, but gives every impression of intently *listening*.

5) Shadowangle
SPAN 8+ BODY 0 MIND 40 QUICK 22
Telepathy G44 Telekinesis G50 Other Aquarian Skills (G20)

Shadowangle appears only as a deep fold or crease in spacetime, varying between about six inches to several miles in length, and usually about a tenth as wide as its length. Any object that falls into, or even touches Shadowangle is gone; people vanish, spanners meet the end of their Yets. Its appearance is accompanied by a noticeable sucking sound, as it consumes the atmosphere it passes through.

It communicates telepathically, in the form of creating neurons in a person's memory centers so that the person recalls conversing with it, but can't determine when. Repeated exposure to this thing's influence is certain to play havoc with one's perception of reality, memory, and general mental well-being. It often drives spanners mad enough to frag themselves, by this process of force-feeding memories.

6) The Welcome One
SPAN 8+ BODY 15 MIND 25 QUICK 28
Telepathy G55 Telekinesis G29 Other Aquarian Skills G30

The most insidious of the Seven, The Welcome One is able to take any form, and can create illusions within and without a person's mind with ease. The Welcome One always is true to his name; no matter what atrocity or nightmare he arrives to create, he is always remembered with fondness. Worst, an initial approach by The Welcome One is almost never noticed. Even after a short period of exposure to him, a person comes to regard him as an old and trusted friend.

7) SunRender
SPAN 8+ BODY 19 MIND 20 QUICK 27
Telepathy G24 Telekinesis G25 Other Aquarian Skills G24
Generally considered to be the dark manipulator behind the Hunt of the Sun that consumes leveller imagination in the Cancerean and Geminid Eras. As the name implies, his main cause is to destroy the Sun before the Societies can flourish beneath it. [See Cancerean Era, pg. 208]

The Sixteen

The Sixteen are Scorpiod bigshots; they are behind many of the most successful attacks of the Geminid and other Societal Eras.

TYPICAL STATS
SPAN 7 FRAG 1+
BODY 9+ MIND 16+ QUICK 17+
Telepathy G20 Telekinesis G20 Other Aquarian Skills G20
They will also show a consummate command of any common and professional Skills of the Era in which they have infiltrated, at Master rating or higher.
Wield 7 or more Vessels (of Frag 8 -10).

Note that the Sixteen are said to become the Seven after attacks into the Societies. Most of the Sixteen attack the Societies in the most insidious way possible: posing as ordinary levellers.

These deep-cover master narcissists only rarely attempt to pass as loyal spanners— their usual mode of attack is to pose as a leveller, complete with history and records, if feasible, and live the life of a *successful* member of a Society. They believe being sufficiently high profile protects them from easy recognition or attack.

They gather only a very few and able narcissists to them, and never reveal all their intentions or identity, even to them. This insures their ability to secretly manipulate and control the every movement of lives of the individuals they delude.

Of course, narcissists that hold dreams confined to this universe, often hope to actually *become* one of the Seven. Determining which such Scorpiod (or Sagittarian) a narcissist admires most is a good way to predict his intents and actions.

Vessels

MIND 10+, QUICK 15+ FRAG 8-10

These are powerful narcissists who through accident or design have become objects of great power. [See also pg. 138.] Here follows some of the more general traits of Vessels:

Creating Vessels

Some Vessels are simply born, the product of a decayed spanner fragged beyond Frag 7. Others are made by narcissists using tech scavenged or copied from designs of Containers used by the Quicker [see p. 170].

Wielding Vessels

A Vessel's bonuses to Attributes or Skills are granted whenever carried, or whenever special conditions are met (i.e. rubbing the lamp, casting the bones, speaking certain words, waving the wand, etc.) Usually these events have significance to something in the fragged spanner's former life.

Destroying Vessels

There are two methods: Heal the fragged spanner that powers the Vessel (generally prohibited under the Fifth Maxim, and possible only within certain limits [see below]) or frag the Vessel out. (Beyond Frag 11, the spanner is out of the game, and the object may or may not disintegrate with him.) This latter is hazardous, because the unluckiness these things radiate will automatically fall against anyone attempting to increase the frag of the Vessel. Breaking the physical object may work, or it may prove in vain: the Vessel's Yet still holds it, and Vessels have been known to reassemble, even from ashes, if their Frag is below 11. As objects, unable to Span, they are not affected by *accidental* paradox [see p. 54], only deliberate or natural.

Frag 8 Vessels

Most spanners at Frag 8 are still too hopeful to become an object for another's use. The wielder may find the vessel hard to keep hold of (i.e. bracelets fall off, rings roll away when set down, etc.) But if the Vessel has existed for more than 100 years of Age it *can never be healed above Frag 8*. Too much of the rest of the fragged spanner has found other parts of the universe to *be* after that stage.

Grants no bonuses to scores, but can penalize one Attribute or Skill score of a target within sight, by concentrating, for -1.

Frag 9 Vessels

Grants +1 to one or more Attributes or Skills scores, and can equally penalize one Attribute or Skill score of any target within 1000 miles, Level time, or any target engaged with its wielder in Time Combat, wherever they are in spacetime.

Frag 9 Vessels also has best chance of avoiding frag. If fragged, it may make a Mind score; success means the frag is passed to the spanner (that tried) causing it, at the same as/as not.

Frag 10 Vessels

Grants +2 to one or more Attributes or Skills scores, and can equally penalize one or more Attribute or Skill score of any target on Earth, within 1000 years, or any target in Time Combat, as above.

Vessels of this great a Frag have a range of curses they can inflict, as follows:

Disease— usually incurable without Aquarian tech
Wounding— 1 IP per bout, perhaps more, to a target within range stated above
Mindmelting— Can be a mental disorder, physical breakdown of the brain, or both
Frag— Some of the worst lash out at the universe itself, and can cause frag even at a distance from the as/as not. These heinous devices are the ones most sought by Quicker for containment.

Some infamous Vessels (of any Frag, 8-10) also have a Master Power— granting invisibility, making research on its wielder difficult or impossible, grant Grandamastery of various Aquarian Skills, or indeed any fiendish loophole the GM approves.

Libran Era

c. 14000 - 12000 BC

The Collapse of Antedesertium

The fragile bonds holding the Seven Scorpiod snap, as each tries to make Earth into their own private reality. The Continuum does all it can to protect and rescue fragile mankind in this time, but the rapacity of the Seven is literally unlike anything you imagine— because *they* do all the imagining there. Even a leveller's scant sentient force comes to be bitterly resented; the result is an Earth owned wholly by seven swollen devils.

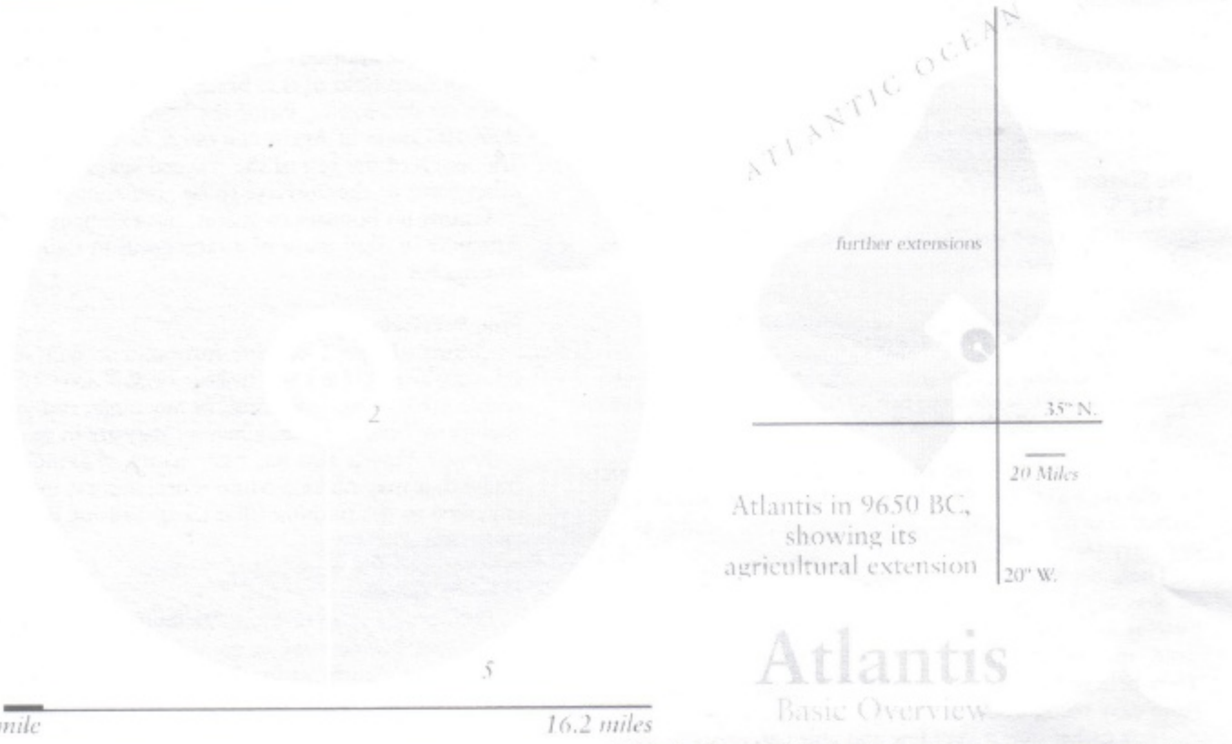
It should come as no surprise to learn that once they believe they control all life on the planet, they turn against one another. This titanic shredding of causality is called the Great AsNot, and the Continuum sends countless lives in to rescue mankind from this wreck.

Interregnum

(13557 - 12969 BC)

This area of spacetime is too wild for any civilization to claim. It's most notable feature is a tilting of the Earth's axis and an alteration in its rotation in 13274 BC. But this is also the ugliest battlefield, as the twisting, waning Seven engage engage every spanner that defies their will in Time Combat after Time Combat.

Note from Yue: The scan isn't fucked here, it's faded like that in the book.



Key to Atlantis diagram:
1 Inner rings, from inside out: Council Temple, Inner Harbor, Second Ring, Second Harbor, Third Ring.
2 Great Harbor: can hold water in transit; docks also hold air & spacecraft.
3 Great Canal, for watercraft (enclosed; empties for transit); bridges over harbors.
4 Greater City, mostly residential and manufacture
a) Nursery: Where Midwives raise orphan spanner children
b) The Hospice: Joint Quicker and Physician establishment to heal veterans
c) Trade district: Antiquarians and Moneychangers
d) 'Old Berm': Foxhorn marshalling facility; others on the Third Ring
e) The Great Librarium
5 Outer defense perimeter: various energy shields and projectors, as well as explosive projectiles, and other weapons.

The Summer of Atlantis

"My great-grandfather, Dropides, had the original writing, which is still in my possession, and was carefully studied by me when I was a child."
—Plato, *Critias*, 360 BC
in reference to the description of Atlantis Solon found in Egypt (Benjamin Jowett, trans.)

Atlantis, the island that bears up the universe, answers another important need— a city for spanners.

This great metropolis has every kind of denizen, every kind of craftsman, architect, creator, and personage of spanner life one can imagine, but very few narcissists, if any. It's simply too dangerous to be one in a place where *everyone* spans.

It can span, but usually requires pulling a great deal of energy from the sun. It is not spaceworthy, so when it moves, it is carefully considered beforehand, and well advertised. Many inhabitants prefer travelling on their own power rather than be carried by such a large device. It is also not designed for sustained flight, it being an enormous expenditure of power. This is the origin of the stories of Atlantis foundering in flames— so great is the conversion of mass to energy that Atlantis arrives and departs with a flash bright enough to be seen for hundreds of miles. And its water displacement leads to all the sinking stories.

As a mobile city, certain accommodations have to be made in its construction. One of the most logical of these considerations is designing it to be waterbourne— landing a city on hard terrain is unpredictable and dangerous even in the best circumstances.

Atlantis is a city, but it is also a war machine: A staging area from which attacks may be launched, and troops can be marshalled. Its fabled position near the African coast, and its long-term existence in the Libran Era are strategic considerations. There are smaller versions of Atlantis at the disposal of the Societies, and are often under the command of Exalted of high Span.

The GM may decide to move Atlantis, but should only do so rarely, as the population always debates the move, often for years before setting a date to move the city, several more years farther Up.

Dream Boot Camp

The weapons of Antedesertium are legion, and one of their favorites is using their superior numbers to confuse and frag our people in-country, This often creates delirium and mental illness as the enemy expends great effort in rearranging perceptions of events.

Hence the value of Dream Combat [pg. 110].

Because of the endless false reports and the stubborn refusal to surrender consistent data, Atlantis has several ongoing Dreaming practice forums. While physical fighting readiness is always commendable, and several gymnasia and practice areas are available, the trickiness of Antedesertium spacetime is best practiced in Dreams.

Dreamers of high Skill and Span tend to put out the call in Dreamtime itself for students and drill practice; few Dreamers live on Atlantis itself, as they don't really need to, for their lifestyle. But denizens of Atlantis prefer to be sleeping on the same level, in the city itself, since they are the ones going to War, and they want to discuss and plan in waking hours their plans of attack.

Council Decisions

These represent tenets that are for the good of the Societies, and only by extension for the good of the Continuum. They may be enforced by individuals, corners, Fraternities, or even Fours in the Greatest Game, as representations of their Society. On all important decisions, some spanner somewhere will want to enforce it. While not a Maxim that dare not be broken, Decisions remain powerful motivators in the Societies.

Most Exalted on the Councils have lived under the Decisions all their lives. What remains for them to do is debate and record vast commentaries on why the Decisions are good, and their drawbacks— the *deciding* is more a consideration of what each Decision *means*. These guidelines allow any spanners calling upon a Decision a reason for their actions, or be given pause. Corners keep the right to judge actions in their own locality as they see fit.

GMs that feel certain spanner behavior should be curtailed or inhibited in his campaign, or even some actions that need a word of encouragement, could invent and cite a Council Decision. Decisions only rarely mention specific spanners, usually as a special commendation.

BC
13977 Shelter on the banks of the Chesapeake established by the Foxhorn for refugees
13567 Dome-and-Mirror covers much of the coast of the Indian Ocean, and pools antimatter
13557 The Great AsNot collapsing Antedesertium; the Seven jockey for preeminence, resulting in Interregnum
13274 Major shift throws Earth 15° off previous axis; temporal fallout leaves misleading and contradictory geomagnetic records
12969 Lower border of the Societies; First Atlantean Council
12963 Second Atlantean Council
12945 Fifth Atlantean Council
12284 117th Atlantean Council
12191 Atlantis departs for upper border of the Societies
12087 Atlantis off the southern coast of Australia
12008 Atlantis departs for assault on Antedesertium

Council Decisions, Selections

Acceptance of Decisions
"The Decisions of all 117 Councils are known to the members of the First Council, and are accepted as binding on all Councils, and throughout the spacetime of the Societies." —1st Council, 12969 BC

Authority within the Societies
"The Atlantean Councils have the authority to arbitrate any action within the Societies, whether addressed by the Maxims, or otherwise..." —1st Council, 12969 BC

Decision against Spanner children
"Spanner marriages or couplings may not result in progeny following this Council's session, until the end of the Societies." —2nd Council, 12963 BC

Decision of Self-Defense
"Whether and where to retaliate with Fragmentation... is a plebiscite taken by the individual corner, Society or Societies, against the existence of a known marauder." —5th Council, 12945 BC

Decisions on Travel Limits
"Societal spanners of Span 1 and 2 achievement are prohibited from travel Up beyond the Hour of the Inheritance, [7:18:00 AM UTC,] March 15, AD 2222, unless accompanied by an Exalted spanner, or an Inheritor..." —7th Council, 12964 BC
"Societal spanners of Span 1, 2 and 3 achievement are prohibited from travel beyond the borders of the Societies, [6:55:26 AM GMT,] June 1, 12969 BC, and [12:01:00 AM UTC,] January 1, AD 2400, unless accompanied by an Exalted spanner, or an Inheritor..." —7th Council, 12964 BC

Decision on the Virgin Era
"The events of the Virgin Era... shall not recorded, save by the natural processes of memory, by any spanner of the Societies." —12th Council, 12903 BC

Decision Accepting the Revelations of Time Travel
"Accepted revelations to the level population of time travel occur in the last century of the Piscean Era and include... a simulation approximating spanner life in May, AD 1998... These are considered transitionary events to the Hour of the Inheritance, and are not violations of the Fourth Maxim to insure..." —88th Council, 12485 BC

Virgin Era

c. 12000 - 10000 BC

Secret and unspoiled

A decision of the Twelfth Atlantean Council is to leave the histories and events of the Virgin Era unrecorded, save by Memory. Only Span Fours are expected to stay long— High Span Midwives invisibly watching over the growing families; Thespians celebrating in a land distant from the level population. Scribes keep a strict policy of Exalted-member-only information, where the high Span Scribes record only by memory.

With the new rotation having been settled for over 1000 years, and the guardianship performed by Atlantis, the scarce population that remains is approached by Societal spanners with words of encouragement, and directions to the best and most fertile lands.

Of course, snakes come to the garden, which is why we quietly watch but rarely record. The rapid kills of those who would harm the ancestors of *all* the Societies are some of the most spectacular of all spacetime.

The following information about the Virgin Era has been approved for use with the C⁰NTINUUM RPG:
BC
11960 A murder is reported
11860 New herbs discovered in Alpine region
11522 Grieved by bear attack, the Tuluk-edsh make hunts in wider arcs
10738 Lions follow Kerent's people as they hunt
10551 Lion cult of Netente gains supremacy in Nile valley
10506 Sphinx and Temples of the Waters (later Giza) built

Leonid Era

c. 10000 - 8000 BC

The population begins to recover from its long precarious millennia of low numbers. (Aquarian cusp genetic researchers estimate that as few as 40,000 humans were alive on Earth at the time.) The ice caps begin to give way, and reform over their new poles. Expanding tribes chase down most of the big game in temperate latitudes.

All but the last of the Successor States (of Antedesertium) collapse in the growing desert, leaving only dim memories of glory. Migratory agriculturalists and their peoples take over in the last of the ruins outside what had been Goronuus in 9455 BC from a group of three inbred families who had lost or destroyed their written histories many generations before. The only successful Successor is Irmeda, tending a lake region to the west of the Nile; these peoples are the distant ancestors of the Egyptians, but become great allies of Atlantis throughout its many manifestations.

A parallel disaster strikes hunter/farmers of Nehebade in the southwest of North America, who rapidly exhaust the game and fresh water lakes left behind by the retreating ice. Despite a brief period as a coastal sea power (c. 8280 BC), the inability to raise a steady supply of grain divides the inhabitants into sea-journeyers and hardscrabble agriculturalists of the desertifying interior.

Atlantis is also constructed in this Era, along with its agricultural platform mentioned in Plato's *Critias*. Most spanners get their first, often only visit to Atlantis here, before it develops fully as a center for the Atlantean Councils.

BC
9701 Construction of Atlantis begins
9697 Atlantis fully self-sustaining
9672 Atlantis complete; successful raids against local narcissist spies
9607 Atlantis departs in face of rising oceans; forced to return, damaged
9588 Repairs to Atlantis complete, with improvements; levellers long remember its departure
9012 Prides of Kurbasa migrate south.
8662 Hu of Urdekhohn famed for his fighting strategy in open grainfields
8350 Jericho founded

Cancerean Era

c. 8000 - 6000 BC

The Hunt of the Sun is only suspected by early Aquarian leveller archeologists as an explanation for the megalithic building of these millennia. The actual reason is far darker.

THE HUNT OF THE SUN

The Hunt of the Sun is a millennia-spanning event. On the surface, it is a model of neolithic cooperative culture: The ley/li lines of Eurasia, and the many precisely aligned megaliths, and the structures of wood that accompanied and preceded them are a plain hallmark of the degree of care men had for distant brethren, and the sophistication with which they were able to express it.

But under this mask is one of the deadliest schemes of Narcissist intrigue. If Antedesertium cannot defeat the Continuum, and shape the Earth to its likings, they wish to shear us all off. They attempt, at various points during this Era, to project the information with precision in to the Sun, as to create a Tipler cylinder out of it [see pg. 210].

BC
7882 The Measuring Cultures of the North begin with Dured, the One at Night
7670 The Twilight Walk begins, early precursor to the Hunt itself.
7006 Village of the Pa (SE China) becomes renowned for its clever cooks
6932 Idnm the Journeyer opens trade and wisdomsharing with Asia and America
6927 First Gathering of All Tribes, in the Indus Valley
6919 Second Gathering. The Plans for the Hunt laid out
6790 Coastlines approach Piscean boundaries
6545 Earliest lines of the Hunt complete, first attempted attack Sun thwarted.
6218 Fire sweeps Europe in one of the driest years of the Societies.
6199 Efforts to maintain the Hunt begin to rely on stone and greater commerce.
6122 Lake tribes of Vielyavan form an open confederation

Geminid Era

c. 6000 - 4000 BC

Presented here are dates of notable events in the Gemini Wars. This is Antedesertium's Gettysburg, or Waterloo, if you will: a deep incursion into Societal spacetime with the intent to break apart our civilization from within. It fails, but we must fight to realize our victory, of course.

At least seven of the Sixteen [see p. 204] have been identified as appearing in active roles during the Geminid. Whether all or any of these are of *the* Seven is a laudable question. Further information on this question is not available here.

From the Great Flood and the epic of Gilgamesh, to the mighty powers (Uranus, Rhea, Ptah, etc.) that predate the ancient gods, the Geminid holds the truths behind these tales. The level population is never made fully aware of spanning, but miracles and portents are nearly as common here as they are in Antedesertium.

BC
5995 Tol the Branch-wielder worshipped by the Lake People of Vielavayan
5940 Buffalo herds recover after 20 years of snowstorms in North America
5762 Midwives' Crisis: All leveller mothers begin birthing twins
5730 Raids from Urudolyan hill country herald coming of the Handtakers
5702 Tchpebanemal, empress. Expands control over Hunt throughout Asia
5622 Narcissists aid Kpuran in moving his government eastward
5626 Mediterranean breaks into the Vielavayan Valley after heavy rains
5582 Atlantis' first intervention meets objective, but with serious damage; it never returns to this era
5561 General Mayana of the Foxhorn routs Crystallists
5072 Hunt of the Sun at its most active; Engineers' Crisis
4562 Gaignog conspiracy succeeds in recovering maps of leys
4316 Jeanne directs actions against enemy leveller weapon depots

Tauran Era

c. 4000 - 2000 BC

This is a time of peace and prosperity following the agonies of the Geminid. Many spanners are tempted to lavish simple gifts on favored levellers, families or civilizations.

Controlling these over-kind inclinations is much of the work of the Continuum in this era. It is believed that with fewer resources readily available from Antedesertium, organized narcissist activities during the Tauran take the form of temptations rather than belligerence.

BC
3781 Sunspot activity kills thousands due to major attempt against Sun
3544 Liang-ch'eng chen founded by a union of families
3327 Megalithic burials at Knowth at their most extravagant
2867 Final reordering of Stonehenge, in accordance to the Cold Demands. The Hunt of the Sun fails.
2716 Tsantatur begins visiting the Northwest of the Americas
2608 Series of natural disasters destroys Tsantur League (North America)
2522 Twelve years of drought plagues Mesopotamia
2365 Ancestor worship universal throughout Egypt
2330 Population begins to return to Lower Nubia
2240 Sargon of Akkad born

Ariesian Era

c. 2000 - 1 BC

Laws and kings demand that their authority be respected. These higher forms of polity are restored after 10,000 years of human forgetfulness and experimentation.

Wars for food and animals give way to wars for prestige, either of one's gods or one's self.

BC
1911 Fall of Ur
1870 Sumerian law code promulgated by Lipit-Ishtar of Isin
1766 Ki-Kung-Shi builds a flying chariot, later destroyed
1610 Use of bronze in Huang Ho valley
1523 Shang confederation founded
1497 Khenefre sends Moses to conquer Kush (Ethiopia)
1003 David conquers Jerusalem
1027 Shang Dynasty overthrown by the Chou
960 Trojan War
925 Ramesses II sacks Jerusalem
887 Ittobaal, high priest of Astarte founds new Phonecian dynasty
776 First Olympic Games
657 Croesus of Lydia begins minting coins
605 Lao-tzu born
566 Siddhartha Gautama Bhudda born in Kapilavastu
497 Iron tools introduced to China
399 Socrates executed for atheism
323 Alexander dies in Babylon soon after ingesting a drink
221 Shih Huang Ti founds Ch'in Dynasty; destroys early histories of China
133 Attalus bequeaths Pergamum to the Roman Republic
59 Han control extends west to Ferghana, to gain its 'Heavenly Horses'
4 Yeshua Christos born

Piscean Era

c. AD 1 - 2000

With Rome, leveller understanding begins to set aside local interests and realize goals of interdependence. While the formal Republic and Empire themselves fail, the goals of universality are carried by Christendom, and by the merchants tied to the system that welcomes intricacy and mutual dependence. By the end of the Era, all cultures—including those that passionately oppose such unity—come to adopt its standards, even as they resist.

Further information on the Piscean Era is available in innumerable history books available at the Aquarian cusp.

AD
2 Han census places the population of China at 57 million
70 Vespasian and Titus crush the Jewish rebellion and destroy the Temple
184 Yellow Turban religious uprisings in China
272 Zenobia conquers Syria, Palestine and Egypt
394 Theodosius closes the Oracle of Delphi
484 The Ephthalites invade Sasanian Empire
570 Mohammed born in Mecca
618 T'ang Dynasty replaces the Sui
802 Jayaxarman II founds Angkorean kingdom
929 Abdurrahman III founds caliphate of Córdoba
1014 Cnut the Great, ruler over Denmark, Norway and England
1170 Venice at war with Byzantium
1206 Temujin unites all the Mongol hordes
1302 Estates-Gèneral formed
1457 Songhai at its greatest extent
1517 Martin Luther begins Protestant Reformation
1644 Ming toppled by rebellion; Manchus invade, seizing Chinese throne
1776 United States declares independence from Britain
1837 Victoria, Queen of England
1951 Osamu Tezuka publishes *Tetsuwan Atomu*
1999 C⁰NTINUUM game released

Aquarian Era
c. AD 2000 - 4000

AD
2002 Reports leak of successful temporal travel at CERN and CalTech
2006 Turkey reasserts leadership of Muslim world; Generation 1
2019 TPF locates 72 potentially habitable extrasolar planets
2020 Beginning of Strategic Resource Allocation; Tactical nuclear war in south Asia
2032 Singapore leads market in biochip implants
2042 Third World War begins in an industrial apple orchard in France
2043 Victors reorder the disenfranchised; brain illnesses widespread
2067 Violence and revolutions in mountain regions, especially the Alps, Andes, and Sino-Indian border
2078 Haleea Barone gives birth to Tameya, first child born on Mars
2098 Computer error loses last complete original human genetic material
2119 Fenris cults sanctioned in most countries
2120 Universal language translation complete
2136 Bloodtubes at height of popularity
2137 Iri consolidates ownership and organization of cultures
2152 Trans-Asiatic Districts founded ahead of schedule; world outrage
2176 The Petitioners fight modification, some are reserved for habitat study
2179 Unity founded; Oxygen crisis averted through telepathic syncopations
2187 Songs of Aioni accepted
2191 Surgeon General's office dissolved; medtech universal
2195 Spanners commonly met, but refrain from much open demonstration
2218 Childhood eliminated
2222 Hour of Inheritance; impatient populace demands to learn spanning
2362 Contact with starships increased
2397 Atlantis departs for Libran Atlantic for final redelivery of information
2400 Upper border of the Societies; Earth joins Inheritor spacetime

2401-4000 Aquarians of this time period (mid- to late-) have more in common with Inheritors than with previous forms of humanity, and are accepted as such. They maintain certain cultural mementoes of their Predecessors, and host most of the Continuum's bases for Inheritor intercession.

The authors have been forbidden, as many prophets are, from revealing accurate or precise dates for when these things will become available. The cultural ramifications between the end of the Piscean and the beginning of the spacetime of the Inheritors are also fictionalized and altered for use in the C⁰NTINUUM game.

SOME DETAILS OF AQUARIAN FUTURY

The story of mankind's Inheritance in the Aquarian is one of the shedding of a caterpillar's cocoon. Before the first eighth of the Era passes, the great day has come.

Religious revivals and optimism of the first half of the first Aquarian decade culminate in a reassertion of Muslim power that is significantly at odds with the West. With the Saud acceptance of the suzerainty of the pan-Islamic heritage councils in Istanbul, the West is challenged for a ready source of cheap energy (oil). Measures are taken to immediately introduce alternate forms of power, such as cold fusion, but these take several years to implement generally.

The nuclear exchange in south Asia (2020) abruptly destroys and discredits Islam's future as a world power. Internal rifts and massive loss of life leave pan-Islam prey to infiltration and rapid dissolution. Most of the rest of the world takes the opportunity of a nuclear war to declare states of emergency, or similar means to attain redistribution political power and control of resources.

Following the nuclear exchange, much of the mercantile order of the Piscean Era gives way rapidly to the power and promise of reengineering humanity.

The development of cybernetics into the twenty-first century converges rapidly with advances in bioengineering. The sci-fi image of metal-plated cyborgs, or jacks sprouting from every orifice only comes to pass insofar as it is a fashion statement, a cultural attitude toward technology as accessory. Before long, implants are seen as a passing fad, and are made obsolete by convenient and inexpensive methods of bioengineering desired features upon and into individuals.

While the financial elite make the move towards continuing or recreating traditional indentured-servant structures, they soon lose control of the marketplace to a flood of inexpensive, primarily Asian, enhancement products. Attempts to deny these products to the Western population only meets with failure or loss of wealth or prestige: They are readily accepted in the 'Third' World, seeking a technological advantage that does not require large investment or energy resources. With South America and Africa already becoming central breadbaskets for the world, the 'First' World attempts to divide these economic growth economies with the old ploy of fomenting local warfare.

Thus, up until the 2050's war and finance-war economies create an increasing array of weapon adaptations of all kinds (explosive, biological, chemical, energy, cybernetic etc.). But after the Third World War (2042) proves thinktech supreme on any battlefield, primarily nanotech's ability to capture an enemy at small expense and no loss of life or property, the showy weapons of the Piscean begin to be discarded.

Weapons Up from 2071 are all mental control devices and techniques, with rare exceptions in hand weaponry. The occasional peaks in bioweapons inevitably focus on nanotech delivery options.

Space travel is spotty until late Aquarians and other Inheritors directly encourage redeployment of population into space shortly after 2020. Encounters with Inheritors become so common that time travel is accepted by most populations long before 'official' acknowledgements are forthcoming; by about 2031 spanning is a standard of folklore. Curiously, different governments acknowledge the presence of spanners and Inheritors at different times over a forty-year period (2036 - 2070), though the surprise is gone by then.

Telepathic and other enhancements rapidly become standardized after 2065; improvements in virtual/silicon technologies are superceded completely. Asian influences keep prices down for implants, though complete reengineering remains expensive until a breakthrough in telomere reduplication in 2070 makes reengineering a living organism very feasible.

Revolutions in remaining mineral-rich areas threaten the new world economy, as it needs rare elements. Their deep-earth positions make nanotech difficult— and slightly dangerous— to deploy. But discoveries on Mars and in the oceans makes these attempts to hold progress hostage irrelevant. Most rebels are sealed into mines to die (2069). This ends traditional human warfare.

By 2095, most children and adults are born engineered; central census indicates that every living human has had some modification or other at a basic genetic level sometime in their lives. [See also Chapter 4: Mastering— Age-thwarting technology, pg. 167.]

A seeming computer error eliminates part of the original living genome supply stored in the Azores, leaving only synthesized elements available to replace certain sections. Some blame groups intent on speeding up the process of the Inheritance; this is the first widely accepted mention of the impatience Aquarians have for the Inheritance.

Most occupations of the swelling population of the 22nd century involve perfecting medtech, and a concerted effort to shrive themselves of proto-Inheritor traits takes a notable twist as humanity willfully seeks out self-destructive pastimes, only to take advantage of cheap, easy medtech for repair.

At first limited to the wealthy, the practice spreads to the general population, and even the goriest non-lethal experiences are legalized in 2119. This orgy of personal blood and mayhem comes to an abrupt end in 2139 as a fleet of Inheritor ships eliminates an (unoccupied) fleshpark outside Des Moines. There are no recriminations; the movement simply stops, and the Aquarians return to their overall development.

A narcissist infiltration into this time was one of the most daring and near-successful of any Aquarian Era attempt. The unifying governments of the world take advantage of the personal distraction to categorize and materially consolidate all remaining traditional cultures, for their future protection and study.

By 2142, debates over the use of remaining time before the Inheritance become widespread. Nanotech already provides for most needs, including maintaining the skyrocketing population in increasing comfort. Besides medtech perfection, experiments in fluctuating mass-mind experiences and the Epic Subtlety movements (better known as Vacuums of Rain schools).

Intellectual debate becomes so involved, that more and more minds remain linked for years, then decades over a growing number of issues. World political unification is accomplished in an acceptance of a minor postulate for food production reform in 2179. Those unwilling to join the swelling mental landscape are set aside, for care and study.

Colonization of all accessible planets of the system is ongoing; by the Hour of the Inheritance, remote nanotech has made Venus nearly ready to accept a fully adapted population (2234), followed by a steady flow of contact with Inheritor civilizations.

These accomplishments pale beside the universal introduction of time travel. Man— to paraphrase generations of hacks— is ready.

Capricornic Era

When Betne Rebu, First King of Antedesertium, learned to span, he walked slowly Down among the years, until he came to the Fields of Baraband, in 18122 BC, and before he could go further, he raised his eyes to see seventy-one fleets arrayed in the sky and on the ground, from every system within ten thousand parsecs, knowing of his arrival, and awaiting him in silent peace. The gesture was one of respect for a king, but of course, bearing a warning to an opponent. War is one thing, attempts at suicide would not be tolerated. He was not welcome farther in that direction, and so after a short time he went home to consider many things, and what options were left to him.

Capricorn is a time both before and after, and even during. The goat that eats everything, that both provides and punishes, robs and is punished in return. It is living in the highest places, but not being welcome or interested. Capricorn symbolizes the time of the Inheritors and the completion of all Yets.

For further information on the Inheritors, see ppg. 103 and 210.

Time Travel in the Real World

I will not (as I might) point to the strong moral purpose of this poem itself, to the arithmetical principles so cautiously inculcated in it, or to its noble teachings in Natural History— I will take the more prosaic course of simply explaining how it happened.
—Lewis Carroll,
Preface to *The Hunting of the Snark: An Agony in Eight Fits,* AD 1876.

First and foremost, C°NTINUUM is a game. Just a game. If we at Aetherco and Dreamcatcher had the actual secret to time travel, we would not be focussing our efforts on writing this game.[3] At best, we would have returned after an extended period, and published an extensive anthropological dissertation on the cultures and mores of the Continuum, and what they expect out of leveller society in the coming decades. But more likely, you would never have heard from us again.

So if any of you are pondering the actual equations of what makes this a doable prospect, good luck to you. Here follows a few of the known properties and accepted theses in the physics community regarding time travel:

Einstein's theory of general relativity allows the possibility of time travel to the past, as spacetime is curved, and an observer strolling along a closed timelike worldline can find themselves in their own past.

Einstien's theory of special relativity allows for time travel to the future, by approaching lightspeed, one's frame of reference is far less advanced than your destination's— essentially a way to spend less time to *get* to the future.

Simple tinkering with the numbers on either side of $E=mc^2$ doesn't get you very far. The main barrier to simply speeding up past the speed of light is *mass*. The faster you go, the more massive you become, until near-infinite mass is achieved near lightspeed. For this reason, only high-energy particles are beyond (or come close to breaking) lightspeed. Photons themselves are massless. Most of us like to carry our bodies as we travel. This is what makes the C°NTINUUM game so alluring.

FTL (faster-than-light) particles are not considered impossible, what's impossible is accelerating sublight particles past the light barrier. In the game, spanners are assumed to be 'translated' to tachyons for travel to the past, and into near-lightspeed electrons for travel to the future, and then back again [see pg. 174]. They become, and disembark from, information itself.

The Tipler Rotating Cylinder

In 1974, the first time machine was invented by Frank Tipler, then a graduate student at the University of Maryland. This should settle most of the arguments out there about when a time machine has or will be invented.[4] Nearly all physicists agree, if it is built, it will work, sending a ship that travels over its circumference either Up or Down in time. (Allowing an observer's light-cone to cross a different point in time in another's light-cone.) The cylinder would only have to be spinning at about half lightspeed.

There are a few engineering difficulties, of course.

1) Tipler's calculations are based on an *infinitely long* cylinder. However, it has been suggested that a cylinder with a ratio of ten-to-one might suffice, and may only need to be a few hundred kilometers long.
2) It must be made of superdense material, "40 to 80 times... that of nuclear matter".
3) Thus, its internal gravity may make it crush itself along its long axis before completion.
4) And, the acceleration of cylinder of even modest size (by astronomical standards) would have a centrifugal force 200,000,000,000 times that of Earth's surface gravity. All currently known forms of matter would simply blow apart.
5) Like all real-world time machines, it's impossible to travel back to before the machine was built. Not really an engineering problem, but one can expect a lot of traffic the instant the thing is up and running...

Still, these seem to be engineering problems more than they are problems of discovery, or even discovery of what's necessary. In C°NTINUUM, it is assumed that the Inheritors have the engineering to accomplish Tipler cylinders, and use them for deep time travel, spanning millions or billions of years. Ever-resourceful mankind has worked around the problem of travelling back to the point of the creation of the machine. Controlled tachyons are utilized to project information into gas clouds with select properties of raw materials (including ones that can react to tachyons) in the deep past. After preparing the ground, the information for rudimentary molecular restructure is sent, followed ultimately by commands for nanotech production. Once created, further instructions for replication and construction of the cylinder are sent. Knowing where to build them is easy enough, since the evidence of their existence is there for all Inheritors to see; all that awaits is for the position in the depths of time to be... reverse engineered.

Now back to some real world time machines:

Wormholes, and more possibilities

- Rotating black holes have long been held out as a hope for time travel, since non-rotating ones will just crush you at the event horizon. The rotating kind would have a "ring singularity" which one might just survive going through, if quantum field fluctuations allow. But black holes are still in the realm of discovery, rather than invention, unless starkilling is your idea of how to go about things. [See Hunt of the Sun, pg. 208.]
- Wormholes, popular in science fiction because it *looks* convenient, and makes for easy special effects, must in reality be coaxed from 'quantum foam', expanded "somehow" from quantum to classical size, and then held open with matter or fields on the "magnitude as the pressure at the center of the most massive neutron star". Once there, you have to be careful not to let the energy loop, lest the hole collapse, and keep hoping the violations of weak and strong energy conditions remain solved before stepping through.
- Cosmic strings, no longer in vogue from what we've heard, are superdense strings of pure energy created at the Big Bang that stretch the length of the universe. A couple of these passing close enough to each other at "99.99999 %" of lightspeed would set up the closed timelike curves needed for time travel— But, these strings really are infinite, spatially, so human control of them seems unlikely at best.

Authors and gamemasters interested in an in-depth take on real world time travel should get their hands on Paul Nahin's *Time Travel* writer's guide, from which the preceding quotes were taken; further information is available in the Bibliography [Appendix R, pg. 219].

C°NTINUUM

Ours is not a physics approach. We're not physicists. We draw the line in doing math beyond a certain number of die rolls. This game takes an approach not observed enough in any physical science— What is time travel's impact on humanity? What would a *culture* of time travelers be like?

Our concept is simple and obvious: If any machine can be made, Man will want it both as convenient and as effective as possible. This suggests that if a time machine could be constructed, it would be married to the trend of instant gratification.

Time machines being what they are, the best time machine would be the one in use. There might be a 'prototype' or two, but once perfected, the best would be everywhen. Hence spanning at will, hence the Inheritors. If time travel is possible at all, it's most likely to look like this.

The particle accelerator of the world

One of the authors is very full of himself over the fact that the Van Allen Belts has been shown to be far more than just a spare anomaly of the Earth's atmosphere. [See pg. 174.]

Occasionally, over the past twenty years, this author has confided his belief to the occasional listener, when asked when and where any evidence of time travel might be found. And always the more knowledgeable listeners would insist that the Belts were just tepid fields of low radiation, nothing special about them at all. And the author would just shrug. Something about them was more important, he could tell. Maybe it was just a hunch.

[3] The spanning method outlined on pg. 174 is a fictional, though not utterly implausible, means of time travel.
[4] Eerily, one author remembers precisely where he was and what he was doing when he first heard about it in 1974.

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Chapter VI: Details

D'Terlizzi, (b. 1462)
Rebirth
Illumination from *On the Nature of the Greater Atmospheres*
(AD 1511)
pen-and-ink
Scribal Librarium at Ligny

"All right! All right! Take your damn chicken puppet. I'll have it back before you know it, anyway."

—Kevin Murphy as Tom Servo,
Mystery Science Theatre 3000,
AD 1998.

what Chapter VI: Details contains

- **Appendix A - Fallacies and Follies**
- **Appendix B - Roleplaying Basics**
- **Appendix C - Counting the Days**
- **Appendix G - Rules for Simulating the 'Greatest Game'**
- **Appendix R - Bibliography & Review**
- **Appendix X - Index**
- **Appendix Z - Character Sheet and Spanning Card** with instructions

and a **conclusion** to a longstanding problem of Stirling's.

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Appendix A. Fallacies and Follies

Since a majority of the Societies' spanners come from the last years of its domain, it is important that the reality of life in the Continuum be separated from the many fantasy stories about time travel presented in those years. It is in this interest that we here present what the Continuum is not:

Police & Special Agents

This is the most common fallacy, usually found in the paranoid works and derivations of the AD 20th Century. In these stories, the discipline required to maintain the order of spacetime is delegated to a 'Time Patrol' or a clutch of CIA-style secret agents.

This is partially the result of the cultural and political structures of their day. The pattern is standard: every level culture imagines its future as extensions and developments of its own familiar rites. Stories of these imagined futures are often used as a means to enforce conformity and mores. But in the case of 'Time Police', it is primarily the luxuriant attitude of the level that spawned the idea toward the management of people and power. Self-discipline in many aspects of daily life is simply surrendered to the convenience of a police body, a bureaucracy to handle details. And in the tales, little imagination is spent on the consequences of allowing a single undisciplined individual loose in the timestream.

More natural to mankind is the Hunt, as exemplified by the Foxhorn, or the local militia, as exemplified by corners and localities watching out for one another, and gathering only when needed.

Since all people of the Continuum take precaution, self-respect and mutual-respect as givens of their existence, all police themselves, and one another. The only other way is Narcissism, and its concomitant annihilation.

Chronos Ex Machina

Devices and related methods exist to enhance the capacities of spanning, but "time machines" are not constructed by the Societies, and are discouraged from Societal spacetime by the Continuum. Atlantis is the exception, and its primary function as a time machine is to prevent narcissist incursion, and participate in the War— essentially the same function as an Inheritor ship, but it is only one, island-sized construct, and only at the disposal of a consensus of the Societies' wisest spanners.

Mechanical replacements for sentient travel would open the door to any number of mechanical errors, computer malfunctions, and worse. A level child or even certain pets might be able to activate the device: Devices by their very nature can be broken, stolen, lost or sabotaged. Levellers could become spanners upon an instant, or believe they have. Access to the means without the understanding is absolutely unacceptable.

Most importantly, a machine cannot be responsible for itself. This alone makes the creation of such all-encompassing devices anathema.

Loneliness

Many tales depict spanners who are alone or travelling in small groups, experiencing the wonder of it all in solitude, as if they are the "first" time travellers. There is never such a pristine moment. We are all responsible for one another, all watching and watching out for. We forever have company.

The Mortal Sidekick

We have company enough without looking to levellers and their misunderstandings to cause additional trouble. Many common time traveller tales include leveller adults and even children, going off with a mighty time master, and then returning home to ordinary lives afterwards. Nothing could be further from actual practice.

You are either in or out of the Continuum. If you don't know, you are kept in the dark. If you find out, you are made to forget, or brought into the circle. Once you know, you are introduced and taught as appropriate. If you do too much that's inappropriate, you may find yourself very, very out.

No leveller sidekick could experience all these tests and remain a leveller.

Invite Me To Dance

This is an easy one to see through, but poignant: Some levellers hope that by invitation, they can meet the spanners. Various schemes, like holding parties for time travellers (or space aliens), putting ads in the paper, and writing secret messages where 'someone will be sure to find it' have all been tried, and are no more or less effective than sitting at home, wishing silently for a chance to meet a spanner.

Alas, like social invitations of all types, being invited to a party works the other way around.

Time As The Ultimate Weapon

One common fallacy is that anyone travelling to the past automatically gets the drop on anyone left in the future, and can Frag enemies to nothingness with the leisure of centuries to play in. This is only microscopically true, as members of the Continuum with higher Spans are always on the watch, passing information to the right sources to deal with dangerous spanners. Even casual gossip in certain corners is a means of passing along information vital to stopping Frag.

This cumulative effect is distilled in the Time Combat rules, where stratagems that might take

months of careful planning are undone before they can begin.

All the same, narcissists are always out there thinking they are one step ahead, and can unmake the universe with a little effort. We, who cherish life, our own and all others, are devoted to keeping our house in order and our universe whole.

The Self-Repairing Universe

This is as absurd as suggestions of constructing a perpetual motion machine. But it's the most understandable error, since it is rooted in leveller logic and experience.

Going about in leveller life, cause creates effect and effect follows cause. Popular imagination has looked to its everyday surround to explain the logic loops created if time travel is a reality. Since mankind uses the earth at will for its natural resources, it seems to follow that a universe with time travel would be similarly renewing— like Spring brings new leaves to the trees.

But causality is not a renewable resource.

Some narcissists hope— even expect— that their callous or arrogant shoving upon events will either meet with no effect, or be thwarted by some universal or unsentient force: Nature, God, Physics, Spirits, what have you. The universe will either get along around your desires, or some *thing* will stop you from playing with the universe, and no serious harm done. "Events will conspire against you."

Events don't conspire, people do. What's more, events *can't* conspire and people *can*. This is sentient force. The price of this freedom of time is responsibility for it, and this responsibility is backed up by the fear for one's very existence. In this regard, time travel is never a game.

(See also Appendix R - Bibliography & Review, pg. 219, where the inspirations for this game are analyzed, as well as the time travel whoppers that have been presented over the years.)

Appendix B. Roleplaying Basics

What is a roleplaying game?

This section presumes that you have acquired this book without any prior knowledge of roleplaying games (also called RPGs). You will need to understand this medium before you go forward. And it is a medium, like paint or charcoal. A published set of roleplaying rules, such as the one you're holding, is a mechanism through which you can focus your creativity and make it run in harness with your friends'.

Roleplaying is like a grown-up version of cops and robbers, in which a number of players invent characters and use them to interact with each other through an intricate scenario, which a designated player will referee. Although some intrepid players act these games out physically, most play them sitting around a table, taking notes and eating junk food. Creative players can keep the same characters going over many play sessions, exploring the ways their characters are affected by the plot events they go through, and how their motives change as they develop.

Characters in the game are either *player characters* (PCs), which are "run" by the players, or *non-player characters* (NPCs), which are run by the referee, or *game master* (GM). The game master has designed the scenario— or purchased a pre-written one— which the player characters will play out, and the non-player characters are essentially his levers within the story, with which he can seek to guide the plot.

The key to understanding these games is that the notion of "winning" does not enter into it. There are no winners and losers, except in the relative and highly vulnerable way that there are winners and losers in real life. The obvious thrust of the game is to achieve certain story objectives (rescue the princess, achieve wealth, etc.) but there is a subtler payoff; even if these objectives fail, the story that is generated may be all the richer. During or at the end of each session, the game master awards points to each character, to approximate the maturing and strengthening value of the experiences the character has gained in that session. In time, these points translate into greater capacities for the character.

What are the dice for?

In a book or movie, the characters are written by the author, or perform as actors and directors decide. In a roleplaying game, all the players are making decisions for themselves. But as in real life, when two people want the same thing, or when we are uncertain of an outcome, some means must be found to resolve the question.

The referee (GM) could decide the outcome of each action, but to make it more fun and fair, dice are used to determine success— like the spinners or dice throws in any family board game. Since characters have a range of abilities that change with experience, like people in real life, there are usually charts to consult to see what the range of ability scores can achieve, and with what die rolls.

There are a vast array of roleplaying games on the market, everything from video games with minimal personal involvement, to rich-textured story-telling games. Shop around, and discover which kind is best for you.

Appendix C. Counting the Days

Calendars for use in playing C°NTINUUM.

Perpetual Calendar - Gregorian AD 1582 - 2222

In AD 1582, Pope Gregory XIII authorized a change in the Julian reckoning to accounted for drift in accuracy of ten days. Religious politics being what they were, Catholic countries changed their calendars at once, but Protestant nations took over a century to change, and Orthodox Russia only changed after the Bolshevik Revolution (1917).

Each year has a corresponding letter; **this letter is the day of the week upon which Sunday falls.** This system allows for only two calendars having to be kept, one for standard years, one for leap years. Leap years are listed in bold face; part of Gregory's reformation was to skip leap years thrice every 400 years, as demonstrated below.

The small numbers listed in each day of the calendars are for use with the C°NTINUUM RPG. The one on the left represents days past, the one on the right, days remaining. These are calibrated for use on the Span cards. Thus, by simple addition or subtraction, one can determine the day one arrives at ("I go Down 56 days from September 18, how far is that?" "September 18 is Day 260 minus 56 is 204— that's July 24!") or how many days away a date is ("I'm going Up to December 20 from March 12, what's it cost me?" "12/20 is day 353, and March 12 is day 70... 353 - 70 is 283 days.") Add together days remaining and days past whenever crossing January 1, and watch those Leap Years...

1582	*	1625	E	**1668**	**A**	1711	D	1754	F	1797	A	**1840**	**E**	1882	A
1583	B	1626	D	1669	F	**1712**	**C**	1755	E	1798	G	1841	C	1883	G
1584	**A**	1627	C	1670	E	1713	A	**1756**	**D**	1799	F	1842	B	**1884**	**F**
1585	F	**1628**	**B**	1671	D	1714	G	1757	B	1800	E	1843	A	1885	D
1586	E	1629	G	**1672**	**C**	1715	F	1758	A	1801	D	**1844**	**G**	1886	C
1587	D	1630	F	1673	A	**1716**	**E**	1759	G	1802	C	1845	E	1887	B
1588	**C**	1631	E	1674	G	1717	C	**1760**	**F**	1803	B	1846	D	**1888**	**A**
1589	A	**1632**	**D**	1675	F	1718	B	1761	D	**1804**	**A**	1847	C	1889	F
1590	G	1633	B	**1676**	**E**	1719	A	1762	C	1805	F	**1848**	**B**	1890	E
1591	F	1634	A	1677	C	**1720**	**G**	1763	B	1806	E	1849	G	1891	D
1592	**E**	1635	G	1678	B	1721	E	**1764**	**A**	1807	D	1850	F	**1892**	**C**
1593	C	**1636**	**F**	1679	A	1722	D	1765	F	**1808**	**C**	1851	E	1893	A
1594	B	1637	D	**1680**	**G**	1723	C	1766	E	1809	A	**1852**	**D**	1894	G
1595	A	1638	C	1681	E	**1724**	**B**	1767	D	1810	G	1853	B	1895	F
1596	**G**	1639	B	1682	D	1725	G	**1768**	**C**	1811	F	1854	A	**1896**	**E**
1597	E	**1640**	**A**	1683	C	1726	F	1769	A	**1812**	**E**	1855	G	1897	C
1598	D	1641	F	**1684**	**B**	1727	E	1770	G	1813	C	**1856**	**F**	1898	B
1599	C	1642	E	1685	G	**1728**	**D**	1771	F	1814	B	1857	D	1899	A
1600	**B**	1643	D	1686	F	1729	B	**1772**	**E**	1815	A	1858	C	1900	G
1601	G	**1644**	**C**	1687	E	1730	A	1773	C	**1816**	**G**	1859	B	1901	F
1602	F	1645	A	**1688**	**D**	1731	G	1774	B	1817	E	**1860**	**A**	1902	E
1603	E	1646	G	1689	B	**1732**	**F**	1775	A	1818	D	1861	F	1903	D
1604	**D**	1647	F	1690	A	1733	D	**1776**	**G**	1819	C	1862	E	**1904**	**C**
1605	B	**1648**	**E**	1691	G	1734	C	1777	E	**1820**	**B**	1863	D	1905	A
1606	A	1649	C	**1692**	**F**	1735	B	1778	D	1821	G	**1864**	**C**	1906	G
1607	G	1650	B	1693	D	**1736**	**A**	1779	C	1822	F	1865	A	1907	F
1608	**F**	1651	A	1694	C	1737	F	**1780**	**B**	1823	E	1866	G	**1908**	**E**
1609	D	**1652**	**G**	1695	B	1738	E	1781	G	**1824**	**D**	1867	F	1909	C
1610	C	1653	E	**1696**	**A**	1739	D	1782	F	1825	B	**1868**	**E**	1910	B
1611	B	1654	D	1697	F	**1740**	**C**	1783	E	1826	A	1869	C	1911	A
1612	**A**	1655	C	1698	E	1741	A	**1784**	**D**	1827	G	1870	B	**1912**	**G**
1613	F	**1656**	**B**	1699	D	1742	G	1785	B	**1828**	**F**	1871	A	1913	E
1614	E	1657	G	1700	C	1743	F	1786	A	1829	D	**1872**	**G**	1914	D
1615	D	1658	F	1701	B	**1744**	**E**	1787	G	1830	C	1873	E	1915	C
1616	**C**	1659	E	1702	A	1745	C	**1788**	**F**	1831	B	1874	D	**1916**	**B**
1617	A	**1660**	**D**	1703	G	1746	B	1789	D	**1832**	**A**	1875	C	1917	G
1618	G	1661	B	**1704**	**F**	1747	A	1790	C	1833	F	**1876**	**B**	1918	F
1619	F	1662	A	1705	D	**1748**	**G**	1791	B	1834	E	1877	G	1919	E
1620	**E**	1663	G	1706	C	1749	E	**1792**	**A**	1835	D	1878	F	**1920**	**D**
1621	C	**1664**	**F**	1707	B	1750	D	1793	F	**1836**	**C**	1879	E	1921	B
1622	B	1665	D	**1708**	**A**	1751	C	1794	E	1837	A	**1880**	**D**	1922	A
1623	A	1666	C	1709	F	**1752**	**B***	1795	D	1838	G	1881	B	1923	G
1624	**G**	1667	B	1710	E	1753	G	**1796**	**C**	1839	F			**1924**	**F**

*The unique calendar of 1582, and the calendar adopted by Britain 1752 are available online at our website: www.aetherco.com/continuum/scenarios/

Gregorian AD 1854-2222

1925	D	1983	B	2041	F	2099	D	2157	B	2216	A
1926	C	**1984**	**A**	2042	E	2100	C	2158	A	**2217**	**G**
1927	B	1985	F	2043	D	2101	B	2159	G	2218	E
1928	**A**	1986	E	**2044**	**C**	2102	A	**2160**	**F**	2219	D
1929	F	1987	D	2045	A	2103	G	2161	D	2220	C
1930	E	**1988**	**C**	2046	G	**2104**	**F**	2162	C	**2221**	**B**
1931	D	1989	A	2047	F	2105	D	2163	B	2222	G
1932	**C**	1990	G	**2048**	**E**	2106	C	**2164**	**A**		
1933	A	1991	F	2049	C	2107	B	2165	F		
1934	G	**1992**	**E**	2050	B	**2108**	**A**	2166	E		
1935	F	1993	C	2051	A	2109	F	2167	D		
1936	**E**	1994	B	**2052**	**G**	2110	E	**2168**	**C**		
1937	C	1995	A	2053	E	2111	D	2169	A		
1938	B	**1996**	**G**	2054	D	**2112**	**C**	2170	G		
1939	A	1997	E	2055	C	2113	A	2171	F		
1940	**G**	1998	D	**2056**	**B**	2114	G	**2172**	**E**		
1941	E	1999	C	2057	G	2115	F	2173	C		
1942	D	**2000**	**B**	2058	F	**2116**	**E**	2174	B		
1943	C	2001	G	2059	E	2117	C	2175	A		
1944	**B**	2002	F	**2060**	**D**	2118	B	**2176**	**G**		
1945	G	2003	E	2061	B	2119	A	2177	E		
1946	F	**2004**	**D**	2062	A	**2120**	**G**	2178	D		
1947	E	2005	B	2063	G	2121	E	2179	C		
1948	**D**	2006	A	**2064**	**F**	2122	D	**2180**	**B**		
1949	B	2007	G	2065	D	2123	C	2181	G		
1950	A	**2008**	**F**	2066	C	**2124**	**B**	2182	F		
1951	G	2009	D	2067	B	2125	G	2183	E		
1952	**F**	2010	C	**2068**	**A**	2126	F	**2184**	**D**		
1953	D	2011	B	2069	F	2127	E	2185	B		
1954	C	**2012**	**A**	2070	E	**2128**	**D**	2186	A		
1955	B	2013	F	2071	D	2129	B	2187	G		
1956	**A**	2014	E	**2072**	**C**	2130	A	**2188**	**F**		
1957	F	2015	D	2073	A	2131	G	2189	D		
1958	E	**2016**	**C**	2074	G	**2132**	**F**	2190	C		
1959	D	2017	A	2075	F	2133	D	2191	B		
1960	**C**	2018	G	**2076**	**E**	2134	C	**2192**	**A**		
1961	A	2019	F	2077	C	2135	B	2193	F		
1962	G	**2020**	**E**	2078	B	**2136**	**A**	2194	E		
1963	F	2021	C	2079	A	2137	F	2195	D		
1964	**E**	2022	B	**2080**	**G**	2138	E	**2196**	**C**		
1965	C	2023	A	2081	E	2139	D	2197	A		
1966	B	**2024**	**G**	2082	D	**2140**	**C**	2198	G		
1967	A	2025	E	2083	C	2141	A	2199	F		
1968	**G**	2026	D	**2084**	**B**	2142	G	2200	E		
1969	E	2027	C	2085	G	2143	F	2201	D		
1970	D	**2028**	**B**	2086	F	**2144**	**E**	2202	C		
1971	C	2029	G	2087	E	2145	C	2203	B		
1972	**B**	2030	F	**2088**	**D**	2146	B	**2204**	**A**		
1973	G	2031	E	2089	B	2147	A	2205	F		
1974	F	**2032**	**D**	2090	A	**2148**	**G**	2206	E		
1975	E	2033	B	2091	G	2149	E	2207	D		
1976	**D**	2034	A	**2092**	**F**	2150	D	**2208**	**C**		
1977	B	2035	G	2093	D	2151	C	2209	A		
1978	A	**2036**	**F**	2094	C	**2152**	**B**	2210	G		
1979	G	2037	D	2095	B	2153	G	2211	F		
1980	**F**	2038	C	**2096**	**A**	2154	F	**2212**	**E**		
1981	D	2039	B	2097	F	2155	E	2214	C		
1982	C	**2040**	**A**	2098	E	**2156**	**D**	2215	B		

JANUARY

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1 0 364	2 1 363	3 2 362	4 3 361	5 4 360	6 5 359	7 6 358
8 7 357	9 8 356	10 9 355	11 10 354	12 11 353	13 12 352	14 13 351
15 14 350	16 15 349	17 16 348	18 17 347	19 18 346	20 19 345	21 20 344
22 21 343	23 22 342	24 23 341	25 24 340	26 25 339	27 26 338	28 27 337
29 28 336	30 29 335	31 30 334				

FEBRUARY

D	E	F	G	A	B	C
1 31 333	2 32 332	3 33 331	4 34 330	5 35 329	6 36 328	7 37 327
8 38 326	9 39 325	10 40 324	11 41 323	12 42 322	13 43 321	14 44 320
15 45 319	16 46 318	17 47 317	18 48 316	19 49 315	20 50 314	21 51 313
22 52 312	23 53 311	24 54 310	25 55 309	26 56 308	27 57 307	28 58 306

MARCH

D	E	F	G	A	B	C
1 59 305	2 60 304	3 61 303	4 62 302	5 63 301	6 64 300	7 65 299
8 66 298	9 67 297	10 68 296	11 69 295	12 70 294	13 71 293	14 72 292
15 73 291	16 74 290	17 75 289	18 76 288	19 77 287	20 78 286	21 79 285
22 80 284	23 81 283	24 82 282	25 83 281	26 84 280	27 85 279	28 86 278
29 87 277	30 88 276	31 89 275				

APRIL

G	A	B	C	D	E	F
1 90 274	2 91 273	3 92 272	4 93 271	5 94 270	6 95 269	7 96 268
8 97 267	9 98 266	10 99 265	11 100 264	12 101 263	13 102 262	14 103 261
15 104 260	16 105 259	17 106 258	18 107 257	19 108 256	20 109 255	21 110 254
22 111 253	23 112 252	24 113 251	25 114 250	26 115 249	27 116 248	28 117 247
29 118 246	30 119 245					

MAY

B	C	D	E	F	G	A
1 120 244	2 121 243	3 122 242	4 123 241	5 124 240	6 125 239	7 126 238
8 127 237	9 128 236	10 129 235	11 130 234	12 131 233	13 132 232	14 133 231
15 134 230	16 135 229	17 136 228	18 137 227	19 138 226	20 139 225	21 140 224
22 141 223	23 142 222	24 143 221	25 144 220	26 145 219	27 146 218	28 147 217
29 148 216	30 149 215	31 150 214				

JUNE

E	F	G	A	B	C	D
1 151 213	2 152 212	3 153 211	4 154 210	5 155 209	6 156 208	7 157 207
8 158 206	9 159 205	10 160 204	11 161 203	12 162 202	13 163 201	14 164 200
15 165 199	16 166 198	17 167 197	18 168 196	19 169 195	20 170 194	21 171 193
22 172 192	23 173 191	24 174 190	25 175 189	26 176 188	27 177 187	28 178 186
29 179 185	30 180 184					

Standard Years

JULY

G	A	B	C	D	E	F
1 181 183	2 182 182	3 183 181	4 184 180	5 185 179	6 186 178	7 187 177
8 188 176	9 189 175	10 190 174	11 191 173	12 192 172	13 193 171	14 194 170
15 195 169	16 196 168	17 197 167	18 198 166	19 199 165	20 200 164	21 201 163
22 202 162	23 203 161	24 204 160	25 205 159	26 206 158	27 207 157	28 208 156
29 209 155	30 210 154	31 211 153				

AUGUST

C	D	E	F	G	A	B
1 212 152	2 213 151	3 214 150	4 215 149	5 216 148	6 217 147	7 218 146
8 219 145	9 220 144	10 221 143	11 222 142	12 223 141	13 224 140	14 225 139
15 226 138	16 227 137	17 228 136	18 229 135	19 230 134	20 231 133	21 232 132
22 233 131	23 234 130	24 235 129	25 236 128	26 237 127	27 238 126	28 239 125
29 240 124	30 241 123	31 242 122				

SEPTEMBER

F	G	A	B	C	D	E
1 243 121	2 244 120	3 245 119	4 246 118	5 247 117	6 248 116	7 249 115
8 250 114	9 251 113	10 252 112	11 253 111	12 254 110	13 255 109	14 256 108
15 257 107	16 258 349	17 259 106	18 260 105	19 261 104	20 262 103	21 263 102
22 264 101	23 265 100	24 266 98	25 267 97	26 268 96	27 269 95	28 270 94
29 271 93	30 272 92					

OCTOBER

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1 273 91	2 274 90	3 275 89	4 276 88	5 277 87	6 278 86	7 279 85
8 280 84	9 281 83	10 282 82	11 283 81	12 284 80	13 285 79	14 286 78
15 287 77	16 288 76	17 289 75	18 290 74	19 291 73	20 292 72	21 293 71
22 294 70	23 295 69	24 296 68	25 297 67	26 298 66	27 299 65	28 300 64
29 301 63	30 302 62	31 303 61				

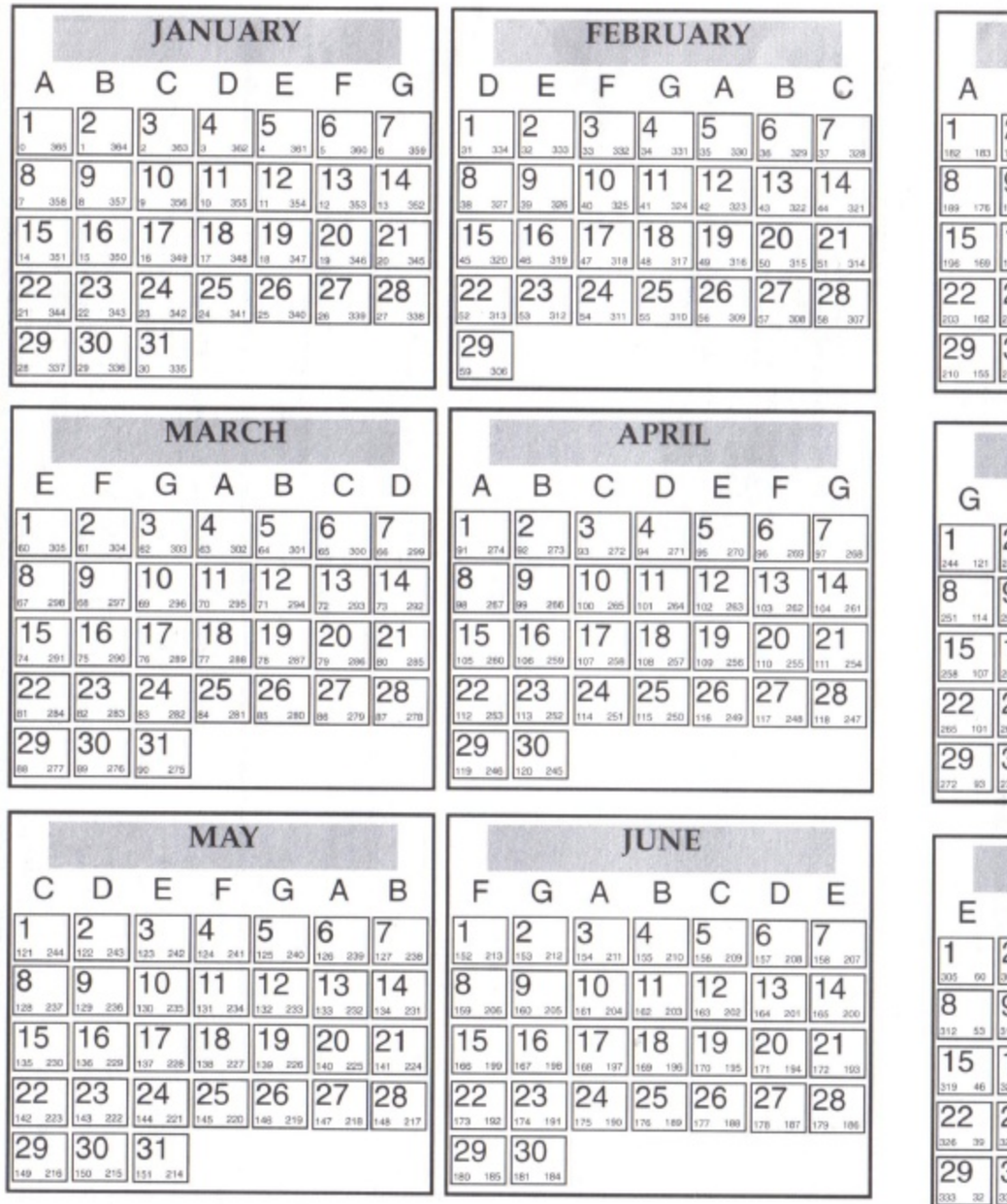
NOVEMBER

D	E	F	G	A	B	C
1 304 60	2 305 59	3 306 58	4 307 57	5 308 56	6 309 55	7 310 54
8 311 53	9 312 52	10 313 51	11 314 50	12 315 49	13 316 48	14 317 47
15 318 46	16 319 45	17 320 44	18 321 43	19 322 42	20 323 41	21 324 40
22 325 39	23 326 38	24 327 37	25 328 36	26 329 35	27 330 34	28 331 33
29 332 32	30 333 31					

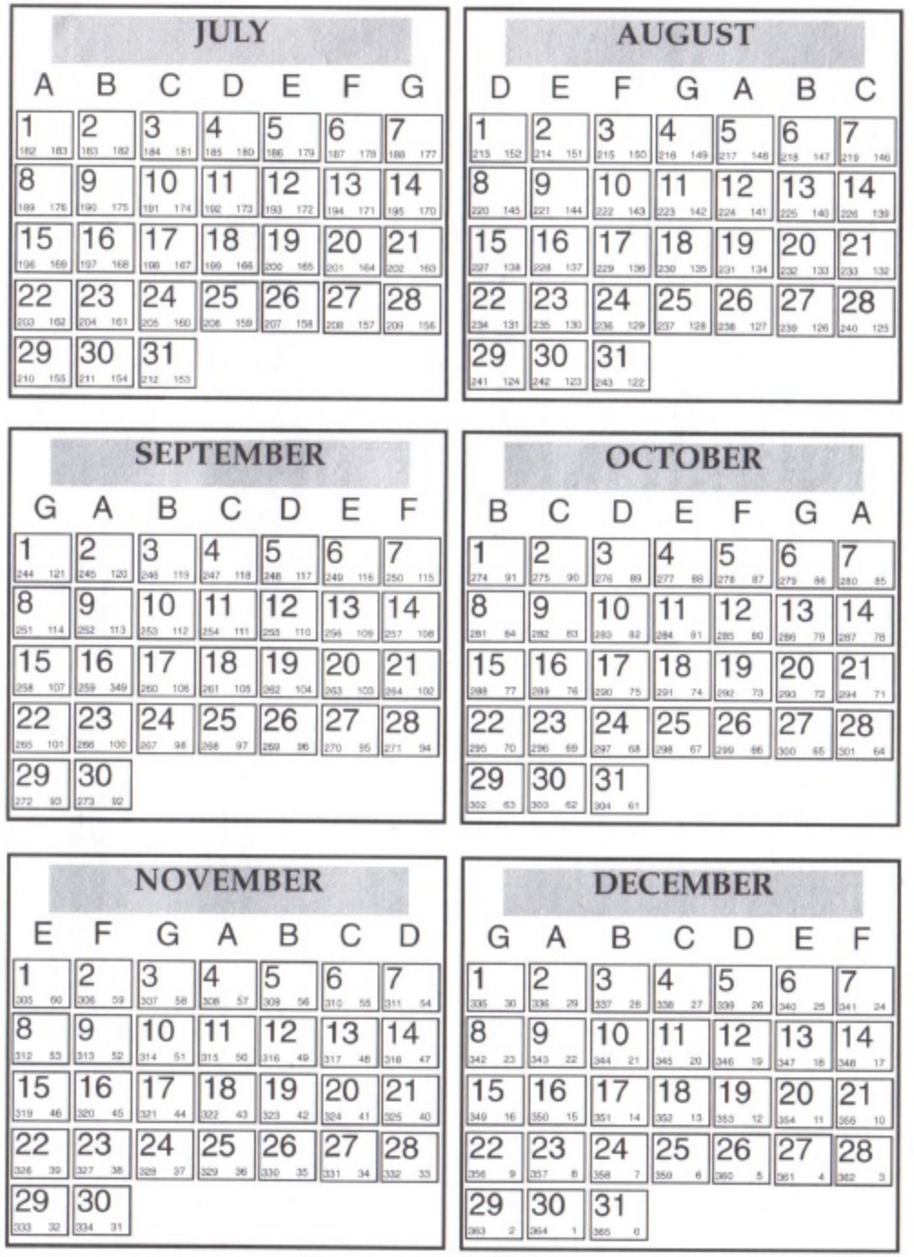
DECEMBER

G	A	B	C	D	E	F
1 334 30	2 335 29	3 336 28	4 337 27	5 338 26	6 339 25	7 340 24
8 341 23	9 342 22	10 343 21	11 344 20	12 345 19	13 346 18	14 347 17
15 348 16	16 349 15	17 350 14	18 351 13	19 352 12	20 353 11	21 354 10
22 355 9	23 356 8	24 357 7	25 358 6	26 359 5	27 360 4	28 361 3
29 362 2	30 363 1	31 364 0				

Standard Years



Leap Years



Leap Years

Appendix G. Rules to Simulate the 'Greatest Game'

Levellers may be wondering what this 'Greatest Game' is, and what makes it so great, anyway. As an experiment, the Continuum has asked us to include rudimentary rules for playing the Game as a kind of vast board or parlor game. We invite everyone interested in this unique revisiting and measurement of history to experiment with these rules, and send us your feedback at: timekeeper@aetherco.com.

The best questions and comments will be compiled as a FAQ of our website www.aetherco.com/continuum/

The Rules (v. 1.0)

The Atlantean Councils have set certain rules for the Greatest Game, to assure that what is, is, and will always be, while allowing gains of territory and prestige for Spanners resourceful enough to attain them. The following simulates the rules quite succinctly for use with the C⁰NTINUUM RPG:

a) No violence against fellow Continuum spanners. Physical violence against a spanner disqualifies a claim. Fragging any opponent gets you tossed from the Game. Levellers are pawns, and physical pain may be their lot, but they must not be fragged.

b) Societal turf can be claimed by one or more of the following, but requires at least one leveller of the Society present in the area claimed, as well as a spanner witness.

i) Crown (who governs the territory)
ii) Culture (way of life held in common, from art to religion)
iii) Blood (genetics and heredity)

c) You may only play the Greatest Game once. The Atlantean Councils consider the Greatest Game a benchmark of responsibility, and you only have one chance to prove that you are worthy of becoming Span Five.
d) you may only submit one claim to the Atlantean Councils per Spanner you have hired per round.

For purposes of this game, you are considered to have won the Greatest Game when you have gained 200 points. This number is an abstract representation of the skill needed to gather allies and perform all the necessary claims, as well as the actual judgments of the Atlantean Councils. While there are 117 rounds to the Greatest Game (corresponding to the 117 sessions of the Atlantean Councils), you will find that you need far less rounds to garner 200 points.

What is needed for the Greatest Game:
A d10
One Spanner of at least Span Four for each player
Copies of Greatest Game sheet (online at www.aetherco.com/continuum/)
A library of good history texts, preferably including:
a good historical atlas
an accurate timeline

Phases of a Round:
A) Roll one d10 for points
B) Spend points, openly declare new hires
C) Move all hires to new claims
D) Turn in report to Atlantean Council
E) GM Mediates; returns results & points
F) Bargaining phase between players

An explanation of each phase:

A) Roll one d10 for points

This is to determine the effective resources that your Society has at the time, and thus the resources you may use for the Greatest Game.

B) Spend points, openly declare new hires

You must **first spend points equal to your Span to enter the Greatest Game yourself!** Failure to roll at least your Span means your Society doesn't have the resources to provide for your activities yet. You may use unspent points to hire other spanners, but they can't be placed or sent off to any claims unless your character has entered the game on this or a previous round.

Each point you have remaining corresponds to a level of Span you may try to employ this round. For example, with 4 points left over, you may attempt to hire 2 Span Twos, or 4 Span Ones, or a Span One and a Span One, or any combination that would add up to four. Span Twos tend to be the most familiar with the locality and the most available and agile: Threes are often busy with their corners and cannot stay involved as long, Fours are usually competing against you for points and Fives and above are extremely hard to get involved.

Additionally, you may spend one point of each roll on levellers (Span Zeros). These are rolled separately on a d10, and must be from an area within ninety days travelling distance of the target. Levellers cannot be hired until the Round AFTER you are first active.

Any spanners of Span One and Two may be rolled over to the next round, and added to your total points. In any cases when you are roleplaying an adventure to stake a claim, spanners must be at Zero Frag before continuing to the next Round.

If, by Round Seven, your character isn't active, any roll of 1-3 lets him enter the Game, but he cannot make decisions until the next Round. Any Span Four not in the Game by Round Seven may not enter it. Once you have entered the Greatest Game, you may place yourself anywhere on Earth within the boundaries of the Societies (12969 BC - AD 2200).

C) Move all hires to new claims

At this point, you must place your hires and have them make their claims. A new spanner hire may be placed anywhere within 500 years Up, and 500 years Down of your own Span Four character, BEFORE you move this Round.

In order for a claim to be legitimate, there must be at least one leveller of the Society present in the area claimed, as well as a spanner witness. Such claims can be made by one of three means, as stated in the rules set down by the Atlantean Councils:

i) Crown (who govern)
ii) Culture (way of life held in common)
iii) Blood (genetics)

Abandoned or empty lands cannot be claimed by spanners alone. (Hence the very neutral nature of the Virgin Era.)

In early rounds, making sweeping claims of territory is fine; it will get scaled down by the Atlantean Councils, but it will set the stage for later claims. Your claims are not announced at this time.

Areas unclaimed by any Society at the end of the Game are under the protection of the Atlantean Councils.

—Allowable Moves

Hired spanners and levellers may move according to the following table

This portion of the Greatest Game is best for roleplaying, either as your Span Four character, or taking the part of one of your hires, be they leveller or Spanner. Here, players can see what actual Spanners deal with in their struggle to assure that their Societies exist, and perhaps learn a bit more about the struggle faced by Spanner and Leveller alike.

—Types of Claims

There are three types of claims: a original capture, a negotiated concession, and mediated capture. An original capture is a new claim, such as Roanoke, Virginia in the 1600's, or any place which is unsettled or uncontested. A negotiated concession is a claim agreed upon by parties during Phase F; such claims normally include areas that can legitimately be claimed by more than one society through different means. An example of this is New York City; while by Crown, the United States Society can claim it, there is such a wide diversity of cultures and blood within it that many other Societies could lay partial claim to it.

The mediated capture takes place when the Atlantean Councils must make a decision regarding a claim, normally reducing it in size. An example would be a British Spanner claiming all of Africa from 1000 to 2000 AD; the British did not get to Africa until the 1800's, and much of it was still unexplored at the time. As well, the United States has a solid claim on Liberia by virtue of Culture (take a look at the Liberian flag for one of many examples). In this case, The Atlantean Councils (the GM) would be fully justified to cut this claim down to size, at least until the Spanner arranged for some Leveller explorers.

D) Turn in report to Atlantean Councils

Here, you fill out the Greatest Game sheet and hand it to the GM, who will go over it in the role of the Atlantean Councils. Here, Spanners may choose to honor or ignore any deals they have made with other Spanners regarding negotiated concessions.

E) GM Mediates; returns results & points

The GM will give you the decisions of the Atlantean Council concerning your claims, as well as your points. In the case of a original capture, the results are not announced! Leave it for the Spanner who tries to grab it in a later round to find out the error of his ways...

Your Pieces

Span	Range	Claimed	#Rounds active	Can move...miles/ years
0	10 mi.	(lifespan)	1	n/a (90 day journey from origin)
1	1 mi.	1	any #	10 years, 100 miles
2	10 mi	10	any #	100 years, 1000 miles
3	100 mi	100	2	500 years, anywhere
4	1000 mi	1000	1 (exc yourself)	anywhen
5+	10,000 mi	spec.	1	anywhen

If your results are verified by the Atlantean Council
3 points awarded for every original capture of spacetime
2 points awarded for every negotiated concession of spacetime
1 point awarded for every capture of spacetime mediated by the Council (GM)

If your results are rejected (ie conflicting result approved by a previous Council)
-1 points for failure
-5 points for any falsification, and you are automatically removed from the Greatest Game.

Point bonuses:

For each Span One you have hired this round	+1 For each
Span Two you have hired this round	+2
Using a Span Four other than yourself to make a claim	+1
Using an Exalted (Span 5 or above) to make a claim	-1
Roleplaying of Phase C	0 to +3

F) Bargaining phase between players
Here, Spanners can make deals and agreements for next round, but not bound to keep any promise not submitted to the Councils.

Examples of Play

Radiating Up but not Down: There will be times where a Spanner will place himself at the start of a Society's territory and advance upward, perhaps to avoid a contested claim or concession to someone of lower Span. Care must be taken, since the technical start of a Society's territory may still not be practical.

Example. A British player sends a Span Five into the tiny Virginia colony in 1607, and claims all the Eastern seaboard as British, up to 1774, which is the United States, including the British possession of Canada in 1763 and the area of Hudson's Bay Company, but bordering with Spanish Florida to the South, and the receding Native tribes to the west.

The trouble with this claim is that while the European population of the colonies expand and eventually reach one another, for many decades there are no British roads between Virginia and Boston, only the sea lanes and Native Societies. Therefore, the GM trims the claim a bit, and awards the player 1 point.

Negotiated Concession of Spacetime:

In later rounds, you will find that you will risk failure unless you negotiate with other Spanners. This will assure that you do not contest other claims and that you both may benefit.

Example: In Round 5, Spanners from the United States, Britain, and France, after some careful negotiations last round, lay claim to West Berlin between 1958 and 1989. Checking his atlas, the GM sees that all three of those Societies had solid presences in West Berlin during that time, with a combination of the Berlin Airlifts and military presence, and with no German or Prussian Spanner in play, each of the players gets 2 points.

GM Mediation:

This will occur at times, as Spanners attempt to grab as much as they can, to both limit their opponents as well establish themselves for other moves in later rounds. Not every grab for territory can be an original capture, and sometimes it is easier to grab a bunch of territories that are subject to mediation than to fail completely with attempts at original captures.

Example: On Round Two, both Britain and the United States place Span Fours in 1700 Virginia. The British claim the eastern seaboard from AD1407 to 2407.The US claims it from 1507 to 2507. The GM cheerfully gets out his atlas, and starts pruning.

Virginia is first settled by Britons in 1607, so he chops both claims off at 1607, since there are no European levellers before then in the Americans. For simplicity's sake, he's sticking to the history timeline book presented for play, which happens to declare the US beginning in 1774. So Britain has that turf from 1607 to 1773, the US from 1774 Up. (The GM may also use the Aquarian Rule to limit all claims at year AD 2000.) Each receive 1 point.

Special Rules and Tricks.

S1. Size Doesn't Matter

A French Spanner can claim France for 500 years in either direction, or a British Spanner can claim Grenada from 1783 to 1974, and they still are valid claims of territory. What matters is that you can back up your claim with solid proof of either Crown, Culture, or Blood. This comes into play most often in later rounds, as the Societies have been sweepingly claimed in large amounts, and any edge you can gain in the form of an extra point or two is well worth it.

S2. Bits and Pieces.

Grabbing a territory in 1 or 10 year increments, with Spanners of Span One or Two, that others may not touch for a while can garner you large amounts of points quickly. However, caution has to be taken that someone does not sweep in and grab the territory in one fell swoop, embarrassing you in front of your fellow Spanners as well as causing you to lose points.

S3. Do I trust this person?

By the time you have reached Span Four, you will have already made a great number of allies and enemies. Part of any negotiation you make must be the thought that someone may burn you. It could be as simple as someone wanting to get ahead in the Greatest Game, or something far more sinister.

Appendix R. Bibliography & Review

CAUTION: CONTAINS SPOILERS FOR MANY BOOKS AND MOVIES. But we spanners can handle that, can't we? Opinions expressed in this bibliography are entirely those of the leveller authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Continuum.

Our bibliography is broken into **"Inspiration"** and **"Reference":**

Inspiration

—Fiction (alphabetical by artist)

Anderson, Poul. **There Will Be Time.**
New York: Signet, 1973.
One of the few 20th Century novels involving people time travelling at will. The travellers in the book spend most of their lives finding each other, and the rest of their lives getting barely organized. But a good read. Like many of Anderson's time stories, the travellers decide to retire to the future, where going into space is possible.

Burroughs, Edgar Rice. **At the Earth's Core.**
Never mind he invented Tarzan. ERB had explorer David Innes discovering relativity even as Einstein was, in this masterpiece written in 1913: "You have no conception of the strange contradictions and impossibilities which arise when all methods of measuring time, as we know them upon earth, are non-existent." Innes has a string of long-range cross-country adventures in the same time it takes his professor friend to study a couple of books.

L'Engle, Madeleine. **A Wrinkle In Time.**
New York: Dell, 1962.
Newberry award-winning children's classic of tesseracts and mysterious times and places.

Lovecraft, Howard Phillips.
Penned a number of stories involving travel to (what was in his day considered) unimaginable depths of time. The mental time travel of **"The Silver Key"** and **"The Shadow Out of Time"** were plain inspirations for *Quantum Leap*. Stories like **"At the Mountains of Madness"**, and the patiently sleeping Cthulhu (**"The Call of Cthulhu"**) mark his fascination with awakening in an incomprehensible future, from an incomprehensible past. **The Case of Charles Dexter Ward,** his only full-length novel, also deals with this theme, but within sharply mortal terms: "...but what healthy antiquarian could recall how the creaking of Epenetus Olney's new signboard (the gaudy Crown he set up after he took to calling his tavern the Crown Coffee House) was exactly like the first few notes of the new jazz piece all the radios in Pawtuxet were playing?" Last but not least, the short story **"He"**, wherein an unnamed wizard tortures the narrator with terrifying visits to a Manhattan throughout its existence in spacetime.

Morrison, Grant, et al. **The Invisibles.**
New York: DC Comics, 1994.
Demigod street rebels versus evil demigod authority figures. Good healthy narcissist propaganda, well-written. Time travel through a kind of dreamstate, the rules of which are not terribly well-defined.

Pini, Wendy and Richard. **Elfquest.**
Poughkeepsie, NY: WaRP Graphics, since 1978.
Deceptively pretty race of psychic people fights for survival on a Stone Age planet, and takes up a quest to discover their ancestry. Turns out their ancestors were time travellers who screwed up something major. A stern warning to all Inheritors out there.

Wells, Hebert George. **The Time Machine.**
serialized in *New Review,* 1894-5; London: Heinemann, 1895.
The original homegrown genius, writing years before Einstein. It's not spanning at will, and paradoxes are utterly absent, but the protagonist does wrestle with the responsibility of bearing witness to the ages.

Vonnegut, Kurt. **Slaughterhouse Five, or, the Children's Crusade.**
New York: Dell, 1991. (First edition, 1969.)
The classic featuring Billy Pilgrim who's "come unstuck in time". Billy finds himself reliving parts of his life precisely, and has no control over his destinations.

—Prophecy & Cataclysm (in chronological order)

I Ching. (The Book of Changes) 6th century BC.
Wilhelm, Richard and Cary Baynes, trans. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. (First edition, 1950.)
This book of early Chou Dynasty wisdom has stood the test of millennia. Wilhelm's is the definitive edition, complete with instructions and all the ancient annotations.
The elegance of its divination system lay in 64 hexagrams, the changes indicating trends. Situations and individuals over the centuries may come and

go, but the nature of the *system* of change in the universe is fixed. The heart of this unique prophetic tool is the understanding that when certain changes come about in certain sequences, the nature of the results is predictable. The limits and possibilities of exercising sentient force in any given situation are amply displayed.

Nostradamus (Michel de Nostradame). **The Centuries.** AD 1555.
The most authoritative translation is Jean-Charles de Fontbrune, working in the early 1980s.
Please be advised of the prophet's warning, in Latin, placed at the center of his work, before using his prophesies as entertainment:

> Omnesque Astrologi, Blenni, Nabari procul sunto,
> And let all Astrologers, Fools, and Barbarians keep away;

As this goes to press, the prophet's only fully dated quatrain is coming due. The "seven months" might mean either July or September [*Latin* septimus "seven"], but the year seems unmistakable:

Old French	*Modern English*
L'an mil neuf cent nonante neuf sept mois,	Seven months, the year 1999,
Du ciel viendra un grand Roy d'effrayeur	From the sky comes the King of Fear,
Ressusciter le grand Roy d'Angoulmois,	Reviving the Mongol king,
Avant apres Mars regner par bonheur.	Before and after Mars cheerfully rules.

Smith, Joseph, as revealed by the angel Moroni. **The Book of Mormon.** 1823.
Prophet Joseph Smith had visions of ancient Hebrews commanding North American Empires— revelations he acquired by placing two glass spheres in his hat, and then pressing his face close to them. His followers are today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and at this writing, they give away this copyrighted sequel to the Bible for free.

Velikovsky, Immanuel. **Ages In Chaos.**
Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Sons, 1952.
Speculation and hyperbole mark Velikovsky's writing style, which is simply great for adventures, but not for science. His alarmist revision of history, with such titles as **Worlds in Collision** and **Earth In Upheaval**, is primarily useful to GMs who want to spice up unwritten ages with a few catastrophic surprises.

Toffler, Alvin. **Future Shock.** Bantam Books, 1970.
(And its sequels **The Third Wave** [1980] and **Powershift** [1990].)
The beloved pundit repeatedly weighs in on each decade before him. Toffler is a good source for discovering how people in different times felt about the future, and their place in history.

—Television & Cinema (alphabetical by title)

None of these have spanners that travel time at sheer will, with narrow exceptions noted. Many involve being cast around against one's will. For travel under one's own will, a (stealable, breakable) machine is usually employed. For further information on the plot of any titles you don't already recognize, consult the internet.

Back to the Future (1985) and **Back to the Future II** (1990) & **III** (1991) Universal/Amblin Has some serious problems with causality, even as it valiantly attempts to explain things. Let's go:

The first movie establishes travelling up a changed timeline, because Michael J. Fox's character Marty returns home from 1955 to an improved, yuppie lifestyle. Okay. Then in Part II, old evil Biff in 2015 steals the time machine, goes back to 1955 to improve his junior's luck, and then returns the machine. Marty and Doc then take the machine back from 2015 to a nightmarishly changed 1985, and correctly determine that only by returning to the 1955 point of change (the as/as not) can they set things to rights.

—Leave aside the sheer mystery of *why* any villain would *return* a working time machine: By the series' own rules, old Biff should return from 1955 to a nightmarishly changed 2015, with Marty & Doc safely locked away or dead...

Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1988) and **Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey.** (1991) Interscope/Nelson and Orion. Case study in why responsibility is at the heart of the Maxims, and why teens are rarely chosen as spanners. The movies are good examples of working out one's yet, including slipshank. And except for certain minor anachronisms in the medieval Britain scenes, it's accurate about the past and its languages.

Dr. Who (1963-1989) BBC. (1996) Fox TV Movie. Until its cancellation, the longest-running dramatic TV series in the world. Starring the original phone booth jockey, the early series was for children; it always left you the feeling you would have more fun driving a TARDIS than watching the kindly Doctor go about and knock down the same straw cybermen each week. The later series has much improved plotlines, including a nasty surprise in the yet: the Doctor's 13th incarnation is evil. But many diehard fans felt it grew too dark.

Groundhog Day. (1993) Columbia. Bill Murray's character is forced to repeat the same day until he gets it right. Probably based on the Chanticleer Films short **12:01** (1991).

Quantum Leap. (1989-1993) Belisarius Productions. In the final episode, Sam Beckett learns the power to leap at will and in his own form— and immediately unmakes his own future, and the actions of the entire series.

Seven Days. (1998-) UPN. Frank Parker travels back in time, and calls in to the Project: 'This is Conundrum.' You got that right. He should be at the office every time he calls in, but no, he just isn't there. Where is he? Didn't he save the world last week? Shouldn't we be facing a Frank Parker glut as elder Franks arrive to fix problems and hang around with juniors that have no need to go back and fix the problem?

Star Trek[1]— The Voyage Home, Generations, First Contact, and four TV series. (1966-) Paramount. The interesting thing with *Trek* is, there are no set rules of time travel, ever. Sometimes things you do change the universe, sometimes you fall into the trap of destiny despite yourself. Sometimes both and neither in the same movie or episode. The popularity of the series has kept levellers in the dark about spanning for decades.

The Terminator (1984) and **Terminator 2: Judgement Day.** (1991) Carolco. Time travel can only be done in the nude, one-way, from a projecting machine. But if stuff like clothing or synthetic armor and weapons can't travel, how does Schwarzenegger's cyborg skeleton make it through? Or the T-1000, at all?

Time Cop (1994) and **series** (1997) Signature/Universal/Dark Horse/et. al. Time cops. 'Nuff said.

Time Trax. (1993-1994) Nardino/Lorimar/Warner Bros. Villains are sent bodily back to their future at the will of a time policeman; the procedure is deadly poisonous if attempted more than twice, and requires the fixed-position TRAX machine. The opening credits of the hero popping in with the words "Now he is among us!" are amusing and misleading: He only time travels once, in the first episode. At least Darien Lambert and his holographic helpmeet Selma are a likeable pair, and have some chemistry.

Time After Time. (1979) Warner Bros. Well-crafted tale of H.G. Wells as inventor of a real time machine that gets hijacked by Jack the Ripper. Useful for period insights into the 1890s as well as a realistic time capsule of the late 1970s.

The Time Machine. (1960) Galaxy/MGM. George Pal's classic take on the classic. Steven Spielberg's Dreamworks SKG may be filming a remake.

The Time Tunnel. (1966) Irwin Allen/Kent/Fox As popular as *Star Trek* in its day, as two friends get popped around vast stretches of time by a fixed-position machine run by the US military.

Twelve Monkeys. (1994) Universal/Classico/Atlas Terry Gilliam's sober time travel masterpiece that deals with the subtleties of knowing and disseminating information. Time travel is by fixed-position projection, not spanning at will, but this movie is a must-see. A cautionary tale for those who keep their Yet too empty. Based on the French film **La Jette** (1962).

Voyagers! (1982-3) Pocketwatch alerts a duo of adventurers to repair damage around history.

—Games (in order of publication)

TimeTripper. SPI, 1970s
An infantry radio operator in-country during Nam devises a time flux unit out of his rig while tripping on acid. Incredible premise for a hexgrid boardgame.

Porter, Greg. **TimeLords.** Blackburg Tactical Research Center, 1990.
If you simply need more violence and melee with your time travel, check out this game. Has multiple timelines and probabilities, but you're not allowed to meet yourself. Odd.

Wieck, Stuart, et. al. **Mage: The Ascension.** White Wolf Game Studio, 1993.
A fine entry into the 'World of Darkness'. You can change reality at will, so you can *try* to time travel, but not much. If you change anything, this guy will show up and make you die. Other WoD players think mages are too powerful anyway.

Advanced **Dungeons & Dragons Chronomancer.** TSR, 1994.
Cool name, convoluted process. A set of checks and balances based on a kind of astral 'silver cord', with a less than convincing set of adventures for the Dungeons & Dragons multiverse. Fun stuff like meeting yourself is declared impossible— unless you're a *high level* chronomancer.

Laws, Robin. **Feng Shui.** Daedalus, 1996.
In this excellent RPG, most of the Feng Shui sites are gates to the future and past, and must be guarded. They have that *Quantum Leap/Time Tunnel* quality of synchronously moving forward in time, so it's mainly a gateway to cross-genre fun. Said to be in print again, from Atlas Games.

Jackson, Steve and John M. Ford. **GURPS Time Travel.**
Steve Jackson Games, 1995.
Thorough overview of every kind of time travel in literature, as interpreted for roleplaying games. (Including spanning, pretty much: Check out the Time Jumping advantage.) Makes for a dizzying set of choices before a GM can begin play, but is a must for any gamers' library.

Halliday, Chris. **Time Wars.** (in development)
http://www.fortunecity.com/tattooine/wilhelm/148/timewars.html (as of May 1999) It's not spanning, but it is a thorough, military-oriented time travel campaign universe being developed online. Since Chris has been magnanimous enough to say, "I wish I had thought of it first," how can we not

[1]The Friday 10 PM Paradox: In the Star Trek Universe, in AD 1968, what does NBC have on its fall schedule, Friday nights at 10 PM? A quandary in suspension of disbelief applicable to most works of fiction.

give him a plug? Besides, Chris' game is the only one we know that is coming in the future... except...

Adams, Fooden, Manui, et al. **Narcissist: Crashing Free.**
Aetherco/Dreamcatcher, 2000.
That *other* philosophy gets its turn at Yet. Get more out of frag. Make it all the way to 'E'. Quest for the key to your own utopia. Or connive your way up the ranks of Antedesertium. Maybe you just want to experiment playing the bad guy... or maybe you've begun to suspect who are the real heroes in this universe.

Reference
—Nonfiction

Benford, Gregory. **Deep Time.**
New York: Avon Books, 1999.
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—Technical & General Reference

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Online

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and for the best time travel links online visit
www.aetherco.com/timelinks/

Appendix X. Index

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15. The Far and the Near

Seana Stirling, Exalted, leaves 89 hours in Council chambers behind her. 89 hours of debating human attire; how much of it is Art, and how much of it mere function. The Antiquarians and the Scribes have had some of their say, but mainly it only served to remind her of an old debt in her Yet, something more than getting back to Zayoshi and Jeanne eight days Up.

She thinks of the heavy paper made only in the press district of the Third Ring. She is there, among pressmen and interested spanners, gaggles of Scribes in this, the one great spanner metropolis. She has to find the matching wrapping paper, an old, old instinct. Some cheerful fuss again over this, a sedentary Antiquarian appears in the market, as if to start the Council debate anew, and Seana finds room to smile.

She arrives, in the chair, in the light of upstate New York. All the old tactiles of the corner she mentored enfold her gracefully.

And through the door, she hears the old argument in the kitchen. Her mind sees the faces and the moves. There will be a gemini later today, but first, her little corner is having a crisis. Anton is up to fever pitch: "I don't give a damn about your fascist Maxims!"

Stirling leans over and whispers, "This is where we all point and screech at him like Donald Sutherland."

It makes Anya smile, but she is growing more visibly troubled by the second, and Stirling feels it deep. What if Anton isn't able to handle this?

"But we should do things. Like, like go Up and stop Jeffrey Dahmer—" Dahmer kills in Milwaukee, Seana recalls her junior recalling. But this conscious deja vu holds another twist. It bothers the Exalted; presents information yet to be sorted.

"You're an idiot, Anton," says Chris. "You're talking about changing what's known—"

Anton rails on. "Yeah, change. It's a basic goal of mankind. A right, even."

"Look," says Chris, before the mentor can say anything, "for levellers, time travel, it's a barrier. They can't cross it, no matter how greedy or stupid they grow. It's their circle of the world. But for us, we're on the other side. Everything they do is set. It's the cliffsides and ravines of our lives that we can't move. That's the deal. That's always been the deal. Grow up!"

"That's very good, Chris," says junior Stirling.

"Yeah, well, I've been reading."

Another Anton is there, and looks remarkably withdrawn and severe. He gets a glass of milk, scowls at his junior, and heads for the living room.

Already he can tell. She is dressed precisely as she was when mentoring, July 7, AD 1964, her skin and hair rematched to perfection. She does not float. But she can see that he can sense it. He faces an ethical god.

Seana's victory is not plain, but shattering in understatement to Anton. He thinks of the most shocking way to tell her, like it was a deathbed instinct: "Ray's a narcissist."

A set of old suspicions turned, then rotated in her mind again, fitting like an Ola protein puzzle. She blinks, he has startled her. "How is this."

And for twenty minutes, in low tones, he explains. The approach, the demonstrations of secrets. How the forbidden truth of the Invitation was agony. By the time he is finished their juniors and their corner are out of the house, enjoying another time.

Finally, she asks, "Did you share his agenda?"

"No, I was on a personal crusade, and a stupid one." He seems very flustered with himself, for a man of his Age. "I turned against my mentor."

"Ray is very clever. I know, he was at my side for—" I can hardly bring myself to admit it. My poor novice! "Well thank God they didn't frag you out."

"He showed me stuff. Really, Stirling." Anton was all but pulling his forelock and wrenching his cap in his hands for shame. "I don't know how, but he explained a rotating system of frag that—"

She raises a hand, mind still racing down the list of everything Ray was ever involved in. "I have heard all about it. Another narcissist Perpetual Motion scam. Put it from your mind." Even now, it's hard to comfort him. That might not change.

"But I saw it! —I thought I saw it. Like pushing inside one of those huge blobby soap bubbles. There are other events!"

"I think you know better than that, Anton." Seana remembers regrets and disappointments, but they are sorted, well sorted. She kind of misses the passion of fearing the boy. It had faded, as news of him thinned to nothing. But she draws out a gift.

Anton dutifully unwraps it. "I should have brought you something, too. This meeting has had me, I dunno..." He looks surprised at the battered paperback, an edition from nearly forty years Up. "Thank you. I've never read it."

Even you may have something yet to do. The Exalted finally feels her Age. All the missing pieces are over. Charlie's odd doubts. Evana away for centuries. Ray acting the smoothass watchful guardian at my Invitation. And Lydia! By Gamesh, what did he do to her! The image of Ray tempting Lydia into something stupid and forbidden, then scaring her with blackmail till she rots at home. It made sense. She wrote Help Lydia as feasible deep on the neurons sorting her Yet. She would attend to it immediately, over her next 24 years.

And if Anton has been a looming nightmare, what of Ray Talanthus? His presence shadows Stirling to her very birth. The trust. Her every move as a spanner. And now she was Exalted, a prize.

Even my dream logs. Ah, that. The plan is made.

Ray is happily tapping on his book, nestled into a sofa. His house in the suburbs of Milwaukee is modest enough. Modest, for a prince of Taydar. But then, it's AD 1999, and a long way from North Africa.

He glances up to see Stirling, or whom he thinks of as Stirling, floating a foot off the floor and glowering down with a coldness she never mastered when they ran together with the Foxhorn.

"You nearly drove him to kill himself," she says. "And when he wouldn't do that, you had to eliminate him personally. The bowling ball is bizarre touch."

The information is plainly with Stirling. Ray is nonchalant. "Accidents don't happen with katanas."

"Accidents don't happen." Her voice is buried ice.

"I think that's where we shear off, Cynful. Each to our own universe. You want your party and I want—"

And Seana, stops listening. She turns her back to him, like a furious Aquarian, and reflects only silence. His information is not accepted. He, shortly, is not.

She hears his breath, an intake with more surprise than he has planned for. The high Span Foxhorns arrive, and the living room shatters to pieces behind her. The front window smashes into the night, thumps and odd squeals come from many rooms, simultaneously. Then brute silence.

She touches ground, walks across the blasted room, and out through the glassless window, and glances

right, where Ray stands. What remains.

"See now, I have a contingency plan for this," says Ray angrily, but he's mumbling because his teeth are slowly spinning out of his head, through his spongy flesh, out through his cheek and ear. One is caught under his eye. But all keep quivering as he speaks, because to some of Ray, they're still in his mouth.

He reaches for his holographic book, but it's slipping into his forearm. He gingerly tries to pull it loose, but some of the deeper parts of his epidermis are sticking to it, especially the warm parts where the batteries are kept.

"Ogg— Ohh ky, thaas a probblm." But at last he has it free, and opens it. "I'm gonna broadcash. This neighboorhood is gonna wakke up to a freaky holoshow, and I'm the star. Now BAKK OFF, or you'll have a majjr incident i'm not alon no"

And Lydia is behind him. "HEY GENIUS." She has a remote electric charger. A toy, from an Aquarian friend.

And the holodiary explodes in an arc overload from the microwave current, a current tearing Ray apart. He discards the device, and twists, but barely moves.

"Ah, no—"

Ray is a blur along the edge of the house, where he tries to run, or span. A white, glowing shape fading into a blob. Charlie appears an instant before what-had-been-Ray twists slowly into the ground, won over by Earth's gravity.

Charlie looks pretty beat. "He keeps doing that. Repeating that move along the house once every 29, 30 days. At least for the next year. I've let the Quicker know."

Lydia is staring at what she's done. It takes a beat for her to recover, and she doesn't, entirely. "Thirty days? Like lunations?" she makes herself say. "Mind explaining that?"

Seana is in the bushes across the street. She approaches, only Charlie sees her, and he makes no sign. He carefully gathers up the pieces of Ray's diary. "Further information isn't available here," Charlie yawns and stretches. "Except. I hear it's common enough in ghost stories. I'm going to bed."

"I'm not. I'm up for a good while. Oh momma." Charlie doesn't see, but Lydia is a cold sweat, holding the remote like the smoking pistol it is.

Charlie is already waving goodbye, Seana is nonchalant, but waves. He is not in her Yet, but wants him to think so. Too brief a life needs its illusions. Charlie is gone.

A car pulls up with levellers. "Hey Lydia! Ray said you'd be here." Lydia sees Seana approach, nods but looks terrified. The remote has fallen into the grass, and Seana kneels and picks it up.

"It's going to be okay," says Seana to the young Lydia. And it won't be okay for her, for many years of Age. Ray all but puts her on the rack, because he exists, and he already begins to measure and suspect the actions of this night. But one day, she leaves her house, and starts living again. And she takes a sister's comfort in that.

Lydia gets in the car, and goes off with the laughing zeroes. She is not the life of the party, even for them, this night.

Seana walks once around Ray's quiet suburban home. She has been apprised of how much remains, and so circles around to meet him. Ray is there looking at the damage to his home. His clothes are different, but this junior is vibrant as ever.

"Vandals! Look what they've done. Hope they haven't fragged anything valuable."

"Hm. What's the going rate for treason?" The betrayal is still fresh and awful for Seana, but she parses it like it was nostalgia. But her question is direct and clear. She insists to learn his mission here.

Ray smirks. "One thing I've learned in all my Age with the Continuum. Learn too much, all you get is useless frag. I'll let you stew in these juices. You can just keep on guessing what makes me tick."

"You're not in the least concerned of the events of tonight? Where we bring you down like a Lobase razorback?"

Ray snorts at the comparison. "Not very. He's just a poor echo. Doesn't have to be me. "

But Chris is watching by satellite, reports this to Seana. Here, she knows Ray is gloatingly scanning her dream logs. But dream logs can be made up. Already he takes the bait, thinks he sees the flaw, walks his Yet. There is no escape.

"You'll be drawn to this night, Talanthus. Sure as silk."

"I don't think so, Cynful. I'm surprised that you're still so oblivious at, at, well whatever Span that is," he gestures, as if annoyed at her body. "Excuse me, I have to call the police."

And she leaves him there, all alone.

Seana is back in Atlantis, a second after departing her friends. She has enjoyed eight days since facing Anton, then Ray, by laying in the mud baths of Ka Urghizi, where a rider can choose up to seven fruits and one bed partner a night. She returns arrayed as she left, but sits on the rail by Jeanne, and is an ounce more thoughtful. Something not unnoticed.

**Everything is sorted.* It was the kind of question Zayoshi put, in the form of an answer.*

Aye, Za.

"We were just getting to discuss food production, aloud," says Zayoshi. "It's fine practice for me."

"It must be agony, making such an effort!" says Jeanne, pleasantly enough. "I am sorry to see you put yourself through such a needle."

"Perhaps," Zayoshi almost brightens. "I could show you the Aquarian arts? That would be delight and surprise."

But even when talking of the Virgin Era, Zayoshi's brightness is that of old vinyl. Jeanne is nonplussed, even slightly soured. "No thank you. I have no interest."

"Surely being able to use your mind for anything is a goal. To reach being Exalted."

"You are jealous, eh?"

Za lowers her brow in that way she has. "What."

"You cannot read me. You see, I have studied with the serene men of the ages, not the toolmakers, of your time. I am good at this, yes? But then, I've had a gift for voices in my head."

Zayoshi's face almost struggles, and Stirling thinks, Not enough muscles left.

"I have business." The Aquarian is gone.

"You see, Cynthia? They are less for it. Do not envy them, anything."

"That's almost a narcissist thing to say, Jeanne." The Exalted's black hair rises in the breeze like a threat, but the hazel eyes are only curious.

A small thoughtful frown, la Pucelle glances over the houses of the smithers of Atlantis. "Ah no, I do not wish to erase them? It is God's will that they are. I only thought, well—" she takes in Stirling's full gaze. "I once wished God had meant something else by 'the meek'. Mais c'est vrai."

Another Jeanne is running, a hundred feet away, squealing in Old French, saying the water is wonderful. That one has on a modest bathing suit, and is in the water of the Second Harbour with a span and a splash.

Appendix Z. Character Sheet and Spanning Card

How to fill out Spanning Cards

As the game progresses, and you span Up and Down time, you have to keep track of where and when you are. Failure to do so will result in penalties; a wise spanner who keeps careful records is rewarded with faster progress and greater Span.

The ovals represent the most important scores: one's Span, and the Frag one has taken.

The **SPAN** half of the card is essentially the diary of your actions. Once written down, it becomes a part of your past.

DIR (Direction) Column is to record the direction of the Span taken. A single letter code will suffice: Going Down (to the Past) = D Staying Level (in the Present) = L and Going Up (to the Future) = U.

WHEN and WHERE Columns are simply when and where on Earth you are as you first arrive at that Level: **This should be filled out first thing *upon arrival.***

When. The recommended way to list the date is presented on the card: YYYY/MM/DD hh:mm(:ss). Three seconds after 10:04 AM on the first day of 1999 would read: 1999/01/01 10:04:03. Keeping it precise to the minute is advisable— seconds count, but usually only when you're fine tuning events.

Where. Note where you are and/or the main thing you're doing— during Time Combat, the name of the Strategem usually suffices.

SPAN SPENT/REMAINING Columns are for keeping track of how much Span you have left. Don't feel obliged to fill out both Spent and Remaining: **either** will do; it's your preference. The recommended method of recording is listed, of course: Y/D/h/m/s. If a Span One character went back in time ninety-seven days, two hours and eight minutes, Span Spent would read: 97D/2h/8m or Span Remaining would read (subtracting from 1 year of 365 days) 267D/21h/52m.

Span is measured in years able to travel, and the more you spend before resting, the less far you can go in one trip. Since Span is regained every time one rests enough, make sure you reset back to your maximum every time you spend sufficient Duration on a Level to get some sleep. Since Span is *not* regained during Time Combat, keeping track of it then is even more critical.

Note. For convenience sake, spanner characters of Span Two and higher get to spend leap days (i.e. one 366-day year for every three 365-day years). Other calendrical oddities should be arbitrated by the GM.

DURATION Column is how long you remain Level, i.e. the time you spend between spans. Duration must be filled out every Sweep of Time Combat. It is important to keep track of outside of combat as well: **It should be filled out last thing *before departing.*** A shorthand for time that you may find useful: 2y, 3m, 4d 3" 12s would translate 2 years, 3 months, 4 days, 3 minutes and 12 seconds.

AGE Column records your linear Age, or simply, how old your body actually is, and how old you would normally appear. This column doesn't have to tallied every time you Span; once at the end of a gaming session usually suffices. (Age is a natural progression, and some spanners are a trifle vain.)

THE YET half of the card contains the actions that must happen in your future. Many of these are learned during the course of play, and all must be ultimately accounted for, or Frag occurs.

IN THE YET Column holds these incidents. Describes the required action itself, as best known to you.

CHECK BOX Column at the end is useful for tallying completed incidents, like any To-Do list. Details of completion should be recorded at the appropriate time on the Span side of the card.

FRAG Column lists the amount of Frag caused by a Fragging Action— this is always known to the spanner. Total Frag goes in the oval at the bottom.

Deliberate tallies Frag from *deliberate* and *accidental paradox* (see pg. 54).

Natural tallies Frag from *natural paradox* (non-spanner sources; see pg. 54). The GM has information on how one gets afflicted by and cured from natural paradox.

WHEN +/- Column contains the ***range*** of when the action must be fulfilled. Examples: "Between noon and 3 pm 12/24/1956 AD" or "86 BC - 44 AD".

If an incident causing Frag to you is known, its precise date and time is known, and should be written down under When.

If the incident causing Frag is unknown to the spanner, "unknown" is pencilled in the **When +/-** column, and the spanner's first job is to find out about it. (Time Combat has probably commenced.)

GEMINI Track is for recording the number of Gemini Incidents destined to occur while the character is at this Span rating (see ppg. 39-40).

YOUNG Column contains the number of Gemini Incidents that occurred before the character learned to Span (top box), and the number of those incidents still to be fulfilled (bottom box).

THIS SPAN Track contain the number of (Junior) Gemini Incidents to complete before increasing Span. The number of these incidents you rolled when you earned your current Span is circled, and the boxes are checked off until they reach zero. (All Elder incidents go in the Yet, and are recorded on the Span half of the card when completed.)

Further information is available in the Span (pg. 32), Frag (pg. 53) and Time Combat (pg. 117) sections.

CºNTINUUM™

Roleplaying in the Yet ™

Spanning Card
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SPAN™

DIR. (D/L/U)	WHEN YYYY/MM/DD hh:mm(:ss)	WHERE events/actions	spent Y/D/h/m/s	remaining Y/D/h/m/s	DURATION Y D h m s	AGE YEARS	AGE DAYS

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young **GEMINI** *This Span*

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
← KNOWN →											
→ REMAINING ←											

IN THE YET	√	FRAG	WHEN (+/-)

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Spanning Card
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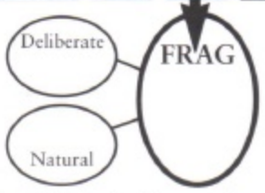

THE YET™

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C°NTINUUM™
roleplaying in The Yet™

Name:_____

Sex:_____Race:_____Ht:_____Wt:_____

Age: Yrs:_____Days:_____Date of Birth:_____

Date of Invitation:_____Current Corner:_____

Locality:_____Fraternity:_____

Era:_____Society:_____

SPAN

FRAG

Deliberate

Natural

BODY **MIND** **QUICK**

Benefits & Limits:_____

Skills

Skills	Attribute	Title	Rating
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			
_____	B/M/Q		/
N A J M			

Equipment & Notes:_____

Assets: $

Quick/ Combat Bout Table

	stage #1	stage #2	stage #3	stage #4	stage #5
Quick 1 to 2	no	no	yes	no	no
Quick 3 to 4	no	yes	no	yes	no
Quick 5 to 6	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Quick 7 to 8	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Quick 9 to 10	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Result	Dam. Code
0-2	D
3-4	C
5-7	B
8-10+	A

Wound Tracking Table

IP	Bruise/Lethal	Bleeding?
_____	B / L	y / n
_____	B / L	y / n
_____	B / L	y / n
_____	B / L	y / n
_____	B / L	y / n

IP total

Add 1 IP of bleeding impairment at the end of stage #5 of the combat bout for every wound that is bleeding, and again every other bout until stopped.

Weapons	Ammo	RoF	Length	Conceal	D/C/B/A
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	/ / /
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	/ / /
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	/ / /
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	/ / /
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	/ / /

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Further information is not available here.