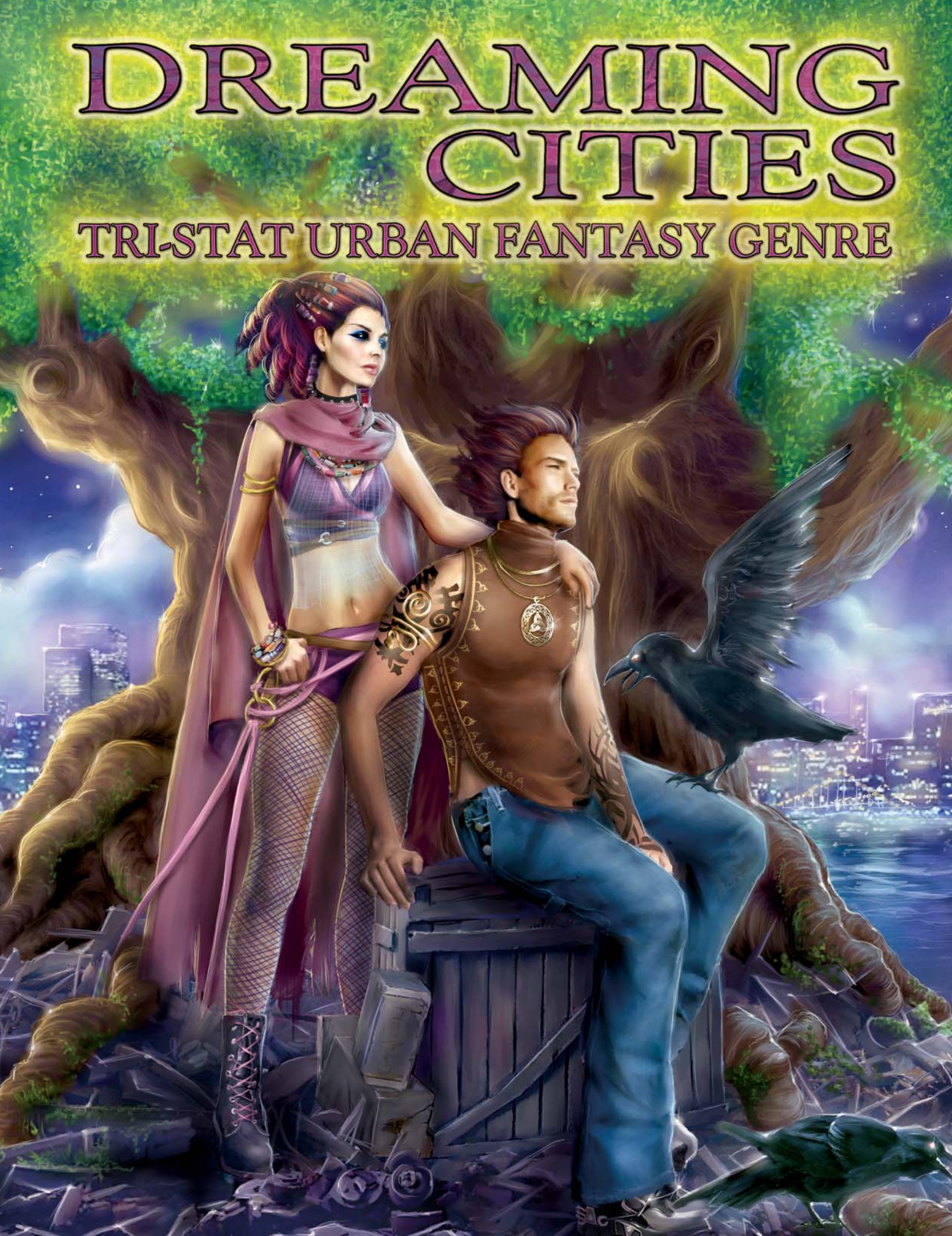
DREAMING CITIES

TRI-STAT URBAN FANTASY GENRE



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Role-Playing Game Manifesto

These rules are written on paper, not etched in stone tablets.

Rules are suggested guidelines, not required edicts.

If the rules don't say you can't do something, you can.

There are no official answers, only official opinions.

When dice conflict with the story, the story always wins.

Min/Maxing and munchkinism aren't problems with the game; they're problems with the player.

The Game Master has full discretionary power over the game.

The Game Master always works with, not against, the players.

A game that is not fun is no longer a game — it's a chore.

This book contains the answers to all things.

When the above does not apply, make it up.

Developer Introduction

Ancient gods and modern myths rub shoulders in night clubs, ghosts and goblins ride the subway, and the fairies are ready to rock and roll! This is the world of urban fantasy.

I was first exposed to the urban fantasy genre when a good friend loaned me his copy of Charles de Lint's novels *Mulengro* and *Moonheart*. Here were fantasy stories that hit me where I lived — literally, for the stories of people being caught in a world of Celtic druids, sorcery, and native American shamans were set in the very real city of Ottawa, Ontario, only a few hours drive from where I lived. Later I would read the words of authors like Emma Bull, Terri Windling, Tim Powers, Neil Gaiman, Michael de Larrabeiti, Bill Willingham, and many others.

Urban (or "mythic") fantasy shares roots with the popular "horror" genre — but it is as much about learning to see the wonder as well as the horror of the unknown ... to awaken a hidden power in an unexpected place, to discover the reality of magic, if only our eyes and ears can open up to notice it. In *Dreaming Cities: Tri-Stat Urban Fantasy* Genre we have tried to capture the feel of this exciting genre, through the work of five talented role-playing authors.

Jo Ramsay wrote a comprehensive overview of the urban fantasy genre's history and themes, and went on to create practical guidelines for designing archetypal characters, magical rituals, and continuing campaigns. In conjunction with the *Tri-Stat dX* rules that we've included, these guidelines provide the resources for Game Masters and players who wish to develop their own urban fantasy campaign.

This book isn't just rules and campaign advice. It is always better to show rather than tell, so we've also provided three stand-alone campaign settings that illuminate different aspects of the genre.

Phil Master's "The Small Folk" is simultaneously a satirical take on both the traditional legends of the little people and a play on the conventions of contemporary "gothic horror" role-playing. It is also an excellent setting for adventure, as the hard-boiled but pint-sized protagonists live like rats in our walls, balancing ancient traditions and rivalries with the perils of modern-day urban survival.

Jamais Cascio's "Nightmare Chronicles" explores the darker end of urban fantasy with an epic struggle in which people act locally and think globally in their battle against demonic forces. As with much urban fantasy, magic empowers both the good and the bad, and Cascio's work makes this both literal and explicit, showing how the monsters exist in a symbiotic relationship with their foes.

Jason Blair and Liz Rich's "World at Twilight" explores how the denizens of a typical mid-size American city cope with the return of myth and magic to the world. Legendary archetypes and creatures of Faerie cause havoc when they are reborn into the modern city streets, but human ambition may prove even more dangerous in the end ... .

Welcome to the worlds of *Dreaming Cities*. The magic has returned!

— David Pulver, December, 2004

Author Biographies

Jason L Blair

Jason L Blair is a firm believer in expanding both the content and presentation of role-playing games. His first design, *Little Fears ~ The Roleplaying Game of Childhood Terror,* was nominated for a 2001 Best RPG Origins Award. His second design, the street-level game of inner-city magic *Wyrd is Bond,* was released in 2004. He is also a fan of board and card games, and has designed several that he hopes will see the light of day. Jason L Blair lives with his wife, his daughter, chinchilla, dachshund, Maltese, y dos tortugas. He spends his time drafting new games, being with his family, and telling folk there's no period after the L in his name. He was honored to be contacted for this project.

Jamais Cascio

Jamais Cascio is a freelance wo rld-builder, a writer specializing in the creation of speculative futures for entertainment and foresight projects. He produces scenarios for science fiction TV shows and movies, multinational corporations, and non-profit organizations, and his essays on the future appear regularly at WorldChanging.com. He is also a part-time game designer, and wrote two books for the *Transhuman Space* series. This is his first non-science-fiction effort. He lives just outside San Francisco with his wife, two cats, and four Macs.

Phil Masters

Phil Masters is a British author who's been playing RPGs for more than a quarter of a century now, and writing them for a lot of that time, on and off. He has previously worked for, among others, Hero, Steve Jackson, White Wolf, and more magazines than he can remember. This is his first project for Guardians of Order.

Jo Ramsay

Jo Ramsay is a DSP Engineer and nethead who has been an avid player of various board, card, computer, and roleplaying games for at least 15 years. She has a Ph.D., which besides allowing plenty of spare time to design and run MUDs, also gave her research expertise which came in surprisingly useful in her work on *GURPS Screampunk, GURPS Dragons,* and contributions to Steve Jackson Game's *In Nomine* line. She and her husband share a house with six computers in Reading, England; a town which is well known for its swans, but not its swan princesses

Liz Rich

Liz Rich has been an avid gamer since that first time in elementary school, when she realised that group of boys in the corner of the classroom who were always talking about dragons and elves were playing a game. She muscled her way into their group, and has been gaming ever since. When writing, she shamelessly steals material from her travels and studies; many adventures have been based upon tombs and temples she explored when living in Greece or wandering through Turkey, or learned about while studying history. She loves chocolate, cheesecake, and ancient deities, all of which have made it into her writing.

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Introduction

Tom sat on his battered rucksack and tried to ease the kinks out of his shoulders. He was conscious of itching stubble and aching joints and tried not to think about the offer of the shower and comfortable bed that the rusalka had made so appealing.

"Got a light?" asked the dark-skinned old man to his right.

"Sorry, mate. I don't smoke."

"Heh, heh. Everyone smokes where we're going."

A little girl clutching a sagging toy bear giggled inanely at the man's last comment, and giggled, and giggled. Her shoulders shook with amusement, and aching tears of laughter ran down her face. Everyone else in the ragged queue glanced at her, five pairs of eyes with expressions ranging from annoyance to impassiveness.

"Never got the habit," Tom commented, in an undertone. The girl continued to giggle soundlessly, helplessly, as if verging on hysteria. "Is she okay?" he asked the other man.

"Her kind never are," was the dry answer. "She knows."

Tom walked across uncomfortably and crouched down by the little girl. Her sobs had subsided into dry wracking shudders.

"She gotta go home, lad," offered the dark-skinned man. "Can't help that"

"Is this bus going to take you home, honey?" Tom asked.

The girl looked up at him and nodded, and the anguish in her eyes was not that of the ten-year-old she appeared to be. The moonlight caught her rumpled hair and highlighted the little points of horns that stood out on her temples.

"Err, where is your home, precisely?"

Before anyone could answer him, the bus careened around the corner and came to a shuddering halt at the kerb by the bus stop. It was an ageing double-decker, of a style that had long since been withdrawn from service, and it was heaving with all manner of people … and creatures. The conductor, a tattooed Chinese man with a cigarette hanging out of one corner of his mouth, leaned out of the back door and yelled, "All aboard for the Number 9, all aboard. State your destination and get your tickets on board."

"Heaven," said the dark-skinned man laconically as he swung himself up from the curb.

"Hell," mumbled the little girl with her broken teddy bear.

"Do you go to New York?" asked Tom cautiously.

The conductor nodded, and held out a strong, wiry hand to help him onto the night bus.

The World of Urban Fantasy

Welcome to a world where ancient myths and magical creatures stalk the streets, and where legends peek out from behind facades of the everyday and the commonplace. Many people and places are not as they first appear, and even the familiar has unexpected revelations to offer. Supernatural creatures hide their true faces from humanity, and mysterious cults hoard forbidden knowledge. Magical factions conspire and fight secret wars away from the eyes of the mundane world, while ordinary people are plunged into epic quests. Bustling modern cities harbour tales of heartbreak and heart's desire, depression and elation, secret joys and forgotten mysteries ... and reveal the true prices that people set on their souls.

These stories do not take place "a long time ago and far, far away" as with traditional fairytales, but right now, or perhaps tomorrow. Is the woman with the faraway look in her eyes in the next train a swan princess who aches to return to the skies? Is the busker with his tinny harmonica the incarnation of a fabled god of music? Perhaps, in the dreamscapes of a city's restless slumber, they really are.

Urban Fantasy in Literature

"Urban fantasy" is the modern term for fantasy stories that use myths, magic, and fantastic creatures in a setting contemporary with the author. This doesn't just apply to novelists writing within the last generation. Writers have used similar devices for over two centuries, stretching back to the origins of modern fantasy among the Romantic Movement of the late 18th century. This was a backlash against the Enlightenment, celebrating the empathic over the logical, guts over brain, and dreams over reality. Romantics were fascinated with the beliefs of the past, with all of its folklore and mythology and ritual.

In the 19th Century, several classics were published that dipped heavily into the fantastic: Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland,* published in 1865, followed by *Through the Looking Glass* in 1871, created striking images that still resound today, especially the Cheshire Cat and the Mad Hatter's tea party. Alice is ostensibly an ordinary girl, but the magic of Wonderland lies very close to her, simply down the rabbit hole. This period also sees Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*; with this early time travel story, Twain contrasts his modern world of electric lights and telephones against an anti-romantic Medieval England.

In the 1950s, C.S. Lewis placed another keystone for urban fantasy by writing the "Chronicles of Narnia." The first book, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe,* published in 1950, shows a fantastical, medieval world paralleling then-modern-day Britain. The story focuses on four children — Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy — who are sent to stay in the country due to the air-raids over wartime London. They discover a wonderful land in the grip of the White Witch, and must fight her evil domination. Lessons abound for the children, including the notion that magic is not something that can be easily controlled, or turned off and on at will.

Over the next decades, many fantasy, science fiction, horror, and speculative fiction writers (as well as several non-genre writers!) have dabbled in urban fantasy. Some pieces — like Roger Zelazny's "Chronicles of Amber," are more entrenched in a medieval world of godlike beings. The focus on the mundane is sometimes lost. Others, like the gothic horror of H.P. Lovecraft or Robert E. Howard, run to the darker and more terrible — in these, the nightmares inevitably win out, presenting a vision more grim and moribund than many urban fantasy pieces. Of course, some writers defy labels, like Harlan Ellison and his collection of a new pantheon of modern gods, *Deathbird Stories,* published in 1975.

Key influences in modern urban fantasy are Charles de Lint's *Moonheart,* and Emma Bull's *War for the Oaks.* Both books are set in a modern city and tell the story of humans who are drawn into the magic that exists side-by-side with the world they have always known. Both authors were also involved in Terri Windling and Mark Alan Arnold's *Borderland,* an influential anthology that later became a series. Borderland stories are set in Bordertown, a place where elves and humans live together and where runaway youths try to live their dreams.

Contemporary Settings

Urban fantasies are often placed in familiar settings, drawing on popular culture and local landmarks to anchor the story tightly in reality. Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* is set in modern London, and his *American Gods* tells a tale in the contemporary United States. Both books explore the stories of "normal" human heroes who meet a variety of mythical or fairytale characters on their pilgrimages. Many of Charles de Lint's novels share a modern day Canadian setting (the made up city of Newford), peopled with a rich cast of characters, both human and supernatural. Orson Scott Card's *Enchantment* tells the story of a Russian-born American student who steps into the ninth century where he awakens Sleeping Beauty. The pair flee Baba Yaga by escaping into the New York of 1992.

Other novelists pick more generic or even invented cities. John Crowley's *Little, Big* is set in places known only as "the City" and "Edgewood," a house that sits at the "edge" of the world, inhabited by a family whose lives are deeply entwined with the world of Faerie. Walter Jon Williams's *Metropolitan* and *City on Fire* are set on a never-identified world, a planet covered in cityscapes, with technology powered by geomancy. China Mieville's *Perdido Street Station* brings to life the Dickensian, steampunk city of New Crobuzon, where strange scientists rub shoulders with demons and alien races.

Urban fantasy can explore darker themes, especially when the eldrich creatures involved are no friends of man, and harbour malignant intentions. Clive Barker's *Weaveworld* describes a magical world known as the Fugue which has been woven into a carpet for protection against those who wish to destroy it. The struggles between the particularly horrific evil forces that wish to control the Fugue and the normal humans who accidentally end up as its guardians are grim and magical. Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat* celebrates a high-rolling immortal bloodsucker who reinvents himself as a modern-day rock star.

Other books take a humorous slant on the material, revelling in the juxtapositions of ancient and modern to set up comedic situations. Tom Holt's novels, such as *Who's Afraid of Beowulf,* take an amused look at mythical heroes reawakening or being reborn into the modern world, who are forced to deal with the foreign world in which they find themselves (and vice versa).

Many works in this genre are nominally aimed at a teenage audience, although adults enjoy them as well. J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books feature sections of modern day London in which wizards and mundane people, or "muggles," mix side-by-side. Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series is an epic in which children discover mysterious artefacts and prophecies relating to Arthurian myths. Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy is a spectacular story of worlds and creatures existing alongside our own, including an alternate Oxford where everyone has a pet animal-daemon always nearby, and a mysterious Mediterranean city in which wraiths kill all the adults. The conflict of Good and Evil is brought sharply to the forefront of all three series, a theme from which the more morally complex adult-targeted books often shy away.

Tim Powers is perhaps one of the most capable urban fantasy writers. His 1992 World Fantasy Award-winning novel, *Last Call* entwines Las Vegas, Bugsy Siegel, Tarot, Poker, and the Fisher King in a tale about the battle for control of Las Vegas, and the quest to regain one man's soul. His more recent novel, *Declare*, is a supernatural, espionage thriller. A British intelligence agent is called back during the Cold War to finish a World War II era mission — travel to Mount Ararat, rumoured site of Noah's ark, and bring down a Communist government before Moscow can gain control of dark, otherworldly forces.

Elfpunk

Elfpunk stories are fast-paced, portraying a flawed, gritty side of the city and the poor and deprived who scratch out a living there. This type of story is named from a similarity in themes with cyberpunk — drawing inspiration from a fusion of urban fantasy and "noir" in which magical talents and devices are put to use on the streets. Magic and technology co-exist, although the majority of humans may be unaware of this. The *Borderland* series of anthologies is one of the prototypes for this take on urban fantasy. Magical worlds may experience industrial revolutions like ours, powered by magic and populated by the Fae but otherwise reminiscent of the 19th century's Industrial Revolution. One example would be Swanwick's *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*, whose protagonist lives in a world as bleak and hopeless as any of Thomas Hardy's. In extreme cases, magic might even have replaced high-technology entirely, allowing fantastic creatures such as the wizarding families in Harry Potter to live in the manner to which we are accustomed without having to respect the laws of physics.

Honouring the Past

Stories in which ancient myths and legends contain unexpected truths for the modern world fall into this category. Often written by folklorists, they bring out the spiritual side of old fairy stories, which represent gods and ideas in which people once truly believed. Magical creatures are representatives of traditional beliefs who should be treated with respect. Human characters that delve into magical and mystical secrets may be pagans themselves, or part of some human culture or subculture that honours its own heritage and beliefs. One example would be John C. Wright's *Last Guardian of Everness*, where one lone human family guards the dreamgate that connects the worlds of myth to the mundane world that has largely forgotten the truths behind its folklore.

Unicorn in the Garden

Coined from a short story by James Thurber, these tales involve magical creatures that turn up unexpectedly in the real world. Often they are lost and lonely, needing help and support from whoever finds them.

Far and Away

People from the modern world are transported to a magical world. Perhaps, if they are lucky, they will one day be able to find the way home. This isn't strictly urban fantasy, although travellers take their modern sensibilities with them into the strange other world. Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* tells the story of an enterprising American who is able to apply his 19th century Yankee know-how in Camelot when he is accidentally transported there. Stephen Donaldson's *Thomas Covenant* series focuses on a sick writer who travels to and from a world known only as "The Land", where the people expect him to save them from an ancient evil. Covenant's doctors explain away his travels, which appear to occur only while he is unconscious or asleep, as dreams and deliriums. Covenant almost goes insane trying to reconcile what is happening to him with what he believes reality must be. Joel Rosenberg's "Guardians of the Flame" series, starting with *The Sleeping Dragon,* has seven college students who play a fantasy role-playing game transported to the world of their characters. Guy Gavriel Kay's *The Fionavar Tapestry* trilogy is an epic about a group of Canadian students who are transported into a magical realm where they have crucial roles to play in determining the outcome of a conflict between Good and Evil.

Magical Realism

This term was coined in the 1920s to describe another genre that has much in common with urban fantasy. Magical realism stories contain elements of the fantastic within a deadpan modern setting. Surreal, impossible things may happen, but people accept them as commonplace. Influential authors include Gabriel García Márquez and Jorge Luis Borges. Less well known writers include Thomas Pynchon (*The Crying of Lot 49*, a strange satire of worldwide conspiracy), and Christopher Moore (*Coyote Blue*, wherein Samuel Hunter's successful insurance salesman life is turned upside down first by finding dangerous love in Calliope Kincaid, and again when the Native American trickster, Coyote, rolls into town to reawaken the mystical storyteller within Sam).

Historical Settings

Instead of picking a contemporary setting, urban fantasies can just as easily be set in the past. Orson Scott Card's *Alvin Maker* series is set amongst the early white settlers in North America. The fantasy element involved

fits seamlessly with the beliefs and customs of the time, with a folksy style of magic-working for the settlers and a more spiritual connection with the land for the native Americans. Michael Moorcock's *The Warhound and the World's Pain* tells the story of a mercenary captain in 17th century Europe who is recruited by Lucifer to retrieve the Holy Grail. Mary Gentle's *Rats and Gargoyles* is set in a gothic, alternative 17th century city which is the centre of the world. Magic in her world is based on the Hermetic Philosophy that was popular in the real 17th century. Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula* takes place in a Victorian London where vampires run amok, alongside many other fictional characters of the time.

Other urban fantasies were contemporary when they were written, and thus capture the spirit of their ages more faithfully than any modern-day author could hope to mimic. Hope Mirlees's *Lud-in-the-Mist,* written in the 1920s, tells the story of a rural community, which was once connected to fairyland before the rule of law came to liberate mankind from the dangerous, amoral Duke Auberon and his people. Unmistakable portents of fairy activity have been seen again, and the good people of Lud-in-the-Mist find that once more their children are disappearing over the hills and far away. E. Nesbitt's *The Phoenix and the Carpet* describes four children in the early 1900s who discover a glowing egg that hatches into an egotistical, mythical bird.

Graphic Novels

Modern comics are a bastion of urban fantasy. Starting perhaps when Alan Moore and artist Steve Bissette reinvented writer Len Wein and artist Berni Wrightson's *Swamp Thing* to much critical and popular success, comic urban fantasy has grown up. Comics (or graphic novels, if one wants to be arty and possibly pretentious) have given us John Constantine (another creation of Alan Moore's) in *Hellblazer* (by various writers and artists, but the regular series began in 1987 by writer Jamie Delano and artists John Ridgway and Alfredo Alcala), a grungy, chain-smoking, trench coat wearing, British occultist who is barely one step ahead of the demons — his own, and otherwise. Neil Gaiman's epic, award-winning, paradigm-shifting *Sandman* — a story about the Endless, who are more and less than gods, involved in very human affairs — ran for 75 issues to tremendous popular and critical acclaim. Garth Ennis and artist Steve Dillon's ultra-violent, extremely obscene, fantastic American adventure, *Preacher*, is about Jesse Custer, a hard knocks, heavy drinking, good ol'boy from Texas, armed with the word of God, his gun-totting girlfriend, Tulip, and an Irish vampire named Cassidy, and their quest to find God and demand answers or retribution. Grant Morrison's hip and dangerous *Invisibles* stars a cast of freedom fighters ranging from slick British spies to Brazilian transvestite shamans to hip-hop Voodoo priests, and their war against the forces of old age and terror, and sleazy insectoid soldiers of control and oppression. Additionally, Bill Willingham has made a significant mark in the urban fantasy genre with the limited series, *Proposition Player* — about a poker player who accidentally begins to wager souls, and inadvertently becomes the new god on the block — and his ongoing series, *Fables.* Beautifully illustrated by a rotating team of artists, *Fables* tells of Fabletown, a magical ghetto surrounded by the normal world of the "mundys," and home to such well-known characters as Snow White, the Big Bad Wolf, Pinocchio, Prince Charming, and so forth, all reimagined in modern guise and as refugees from their respective magic lands.

Television and Movies

Urban fantasy has found a welcoming home on television in the past few years. From Disney's animated *Gargoyles*, to the highly successful Joss Whedon franchises, *Buffy* and *Angel,* mainstream audiences currently welcome a dash of magic along with their drama. Also of note are the late 90's television adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast* and the BBC mini-series *Neverwhere.*

Futuristic Settings

Fantasy and technology could also meet in the future. Characters in William Gibson's *Count Zero* are "ridden" by spirits, and voodoo cultists believe they can contact their pantheon via cyberspace. In Jeff Noon's *Vurt,* characters experience a dreamlike shared world called "the Vurt" by using a drug known as "vurt feathers." Sometimes creatures escape out of the Vurt and come to life. Whenever that happens, someone from the real world is dragged into the Vurt because balance must be maintained. Mike Barr's graphic novel *Camelot 3000* envisages a reincarnated King Arthur and his knights fighting Morgan le Fay's alien allies a thousand years from now when the Earth is under attack. *Svaha,* by Charles de Lint, tells a cyberpunk story fused with native spirituality and Dreamtime.

A Timeline of Urban Fantasy Role-Playing Games

The following list is by no means complete, but strives to illustrate some of the groundbreaking, innovative, and creative achievements in role-playing games that touch upon some of the many aspects of urban fantasy.

- 1981 *Call of Cthulhu*, Chaosium
- 1988 *Beyond the Supernatural*, Palladium
- 1989 *Shadowrun*, FASA Corporation
- 1991 *Vampire: The Masquerade*, White Wolf
- 1991, *Amber Diceless Roleplaying*, Phage Press
- 1992 *Over the Edge*, Atlas Games
- 1992 *Shadowrun, 2nd Edition*, FASA Corporation
- 1992 *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, White Wolf
- 1993 *Kult*, Metropolis Ltd.
- 1993 *Mage: The Ascension*, White Wolf
- 1994 *Wraith: The Oblivion*, White Wolf
- 1995 *Changeling: The Dreaming*, White Wolf
- 1995 *GURPS Voodoo: The Shadow War*, Steve Jackson Games
- 1997 *In Nomine*, Steve Jackson Games
- 1998 *GURPS Technomancer*, Steve Jackson Games
- 1998 *Shadowrun, 3rd Edition*, FASA Corporation
- 1998 *Unknown Armies*, Atlas Games
- 1999 *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, Eden Studios
- 1999 *Hunter: The Reckoning*, White Wolf
- 2001 *El-Hazard RPG and Resource Book*, Guardians of Order
- 2001 *GURPS Cabal*, Steve Jackson Games
- 2001 *Little Fears*, Key 20 Publishing
- 2002 *Buffy the Vampire Slayer RPG*, Eden Studios
- 2002 *Hellboy Sourcebook and RPG*, Steve Jackson Games
- 2002 *Nobilis, 2nd Edition*, Hogshead Publishing
- 2003 *Angel RPG*, Eden Studious
- 2003 *Deliria: Faerie Tales for a New Millenium*, Laughing Pan
- 2003 *Orpheus*, White Wolf
- 2004 *Call of Cthulhu, 6th Edition*, Chaosium
- 2004 *Fireborn*, Fantasy Flight Games
- 2004 *Vampire: The Requiem*, White Wolf
- 2004 *Wyrd is Bond*, Key 20 Publishing
- 2005 *Army of Darkness*, Eden Studios

Dreaming Cities: Urban Fantasy Role-Playing

Urban fantasy is the fusion of the familiar with the fantastic. Myths and legends are hauntingly familiar to us — they are told and retold in books, songs, and works of art throughout our culture. A role-playing game that brings them to life with a modern twist can ring true to players in a way that few other settings can. The players and Game Master already share background knowledge. A deceptively comfortable setting offers not only a wealth of inspiration from real history and a familiar set of assumptions, but also a very vivid form of escapism. It is a small step from saying "imagine our world but with magic" to "imagine our world, where you have the power to make a difference."

A modern setting also allows players to face edgy, real world issues if they so wish. For example, urban fantasies often deal with alienation and poverty, and characters that feel neither part of one subculture or the other. These are legitimates issues in modern cities as well. Stories from the news can be used as inspirations by the Game Master, lending a sense of realism and urgency to the game world and the characters' predicaments.

The dX Game Line

In 2003, *Tri-Stat dX* was released as a generic game system. It stripped away the superhero trappings of *Silver Age Sentinels* and the anime features of *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*, demonstrating that Tri-Stat could be used as a universal, rules-light cinematic game.

This book, *Dreaming Cities,* is a stand-alone genre book that provides the background and rules for urban fantasy role-playing. The genre essays and urban fantasy-specific game systems were written and designed by Jo Ramsay. They are supported by the inclusion of three distinct campaign worlds created by Jason L Blair and Liz Rich, Jamais Cascio, and Phil Masters.

Dreaming Cities consists of three main sections, the first of which is an overview of the urban fantasy genre.

- Chapter 1: an essay introducing the notion of urban fantasy and its primary themes and genre history.

Part two gives rules for any urban fantasy game:

- Chapter 2-6: detailed character creation rules incorporating a version of the dX rules system specially customised for urban fantasy.
- Chapter 7-8: guidelines for urban fantasy-themed characters and magic.
- Chapter 9-10: rules and game mechanics.
- Chapter 11: general advice on game mastering and urban fantasy.

Part three contains three unique campaign worlds waiting for a group of players to explore. Although the worlds stand alone, feel free to mix and match ideas, or use them as inspiration for creating your own settings.

- Chapter 12: "The Nightmare Chronicles", designed by Jamais Cascio.
- Chapter 13: "The World at Twilight", designed by Jason L Blair and Liz Rich.
- Chapter 14: "The Small Folk", designed by Phil Masters.

The Nightmare Chronicles

The monster appears out of nowhere, crashing through the window, tearing through bodies like paper. Those around you scream and run, but you stand your ground: your body pulses with strange energy, and lightning crackles at your fingertips as you pull the blade from your bag. The hell beast looks at you in surprise as you leap to the attack. As your sword strikes home, you know you'll remember this moment forever ... but those around you who have never been touched by the Nightmare Realm will remember it only in their dreams.

"The Nightmare Chronicles" tells the secret history of the ongoing war between the demonic forces of the Nightmare Realm and the handful of Dreamtouched humans who stand against them. Normal humans are shrouded by the Veil, which compels them to remember demons and magic only as nightmares. The Dreamtouched see reality all too clearly, and have powers that awaken when the Nightmare creatures are near. Circles of mages, bands of immortal soldiers, and hidden government agencies fight in this shadow war, but success or failure will come down to you. Can you save your friends, your town, perhaps even the world?

The World at Twilight

Welcome to an archetypal city where magic lurks beneath every doormat and flowerpot, where living myths and legends walk the streets beside ordinary unmagical folk, where faeries frolic merrily as they work their mischief upon an unsuspecting populace. Fables struggle to complete the tales of their existence in a place unknown to them, while a sinister corporation plots to invade the world from whence they came.

The magic has returned, and the city — and the world — will never be the same again.

The Small Folk

"The Small Folk" is a traditional fantasy concept reset in the context of the modern world. Tiny, magical beings are traditionally found in hedgerows and woodlands, but they can surely adapt to realms of concrete and rusting steel. These creatures are just as magical, strange, and evasive as their rustic ancestors, but they've been infected with the cynicism and energy of the urban environment.

They also retain their resemblance to the humans among whom they live unseen, a resemblance that is closer than anyone would like to admit.

What is Role-Playing?

Role-playing games are tools for your imagination. They are designed to let you play out exciting stories of interest to you and your friends. They provide structure and rules to resolve conflicts and a framework within which to place the action of those stories.

As the name suggests, participants in a role-playing game (RPG) play roles. They take the personae of the principal characters in an adventure story, pretending to be those characters just as an actor pretends to be the person he or she plays in a movie. Unlike a movie, however, the actions of the characters are not acted out. Rather, the activity is imagined by the players and narrated to the other participants. You don't actually mimic shooting a gun at an onrushing monster, for example. You describe that feat, saying something to the effect of "my character opens fire on the demon."

Role-playing games have rules that dictate what the character can and cannot do. Every character in the game is defined by a set of statistics and numbers that ordain how talented he or she is at any given action. The rules then help determine whether an action was successful. The *Dreaming Cities* role-playing game uses a pair of dice as a randomiser to resolve actions and conflicts. Players roll the dice to see if their characters' deeds are successful or not. If their actions succeed, the characters successfully accomplish their task. If the roll fails, something goes wrong. In either case, the results of the attempted manoeuvre are described by a special player called the Game Master (GM). The GM's job is to act as rules arbiter and to describe the results of the action to the players. He or she also handles playing other characters in the game — usually the antagonists, but sometimes friends of the players' characters — and sets the environment in which the characters exist.

The object of a role-playing game is not to defeat the other players as you would in a game of cards or a board game. Instead, you are working to collectively tell a story about the principal characters of the game, the Player Characters, or the PCs. The PCs are the protagonists of this story, and each player is like an improvisational actor, much like the ones on *Whose Line Is It, Anyway?*, with each actor contributing to the plot by determining the actions of his or her particular character. The rules of the game exist to give you a means of resolving actions and settling conflicts, and your imagination drives the story forward. In that way, role-playing games are a kind of formalised make-believe.

In addition to the GM, your game may include from one to four (or even more) players. Role-playing games typically last for about two to six hours — about the time it takes to sit down with friends to play for an evening. This amount of time is called a "session," and the game can either end at the end of the session, or it can continue by stopping play for the evening and then meeting for another session at another time. Many people who play role-playing games meet with their friends to do so at a regular time on a weekly basis. A session can contain an entire story or only part of one. Adventures that span several sessions are referred to as "campaigns." If a campaign is similar to a television series, then each session is like a weekly episode of that show. The players get together, play for a few hours advancing the story, and then they stop. At the next session, the action picks up where it left off from the previous session. Campaigns can last anywhere from weeks to years depending on the interest and dedication of the players.

The Tri-Stat dX Family

Dreaming Cities is part of the growing *Tri-Stat dX* family of games. This book includes all the rules you need for an urban fantasy RPG, but if you wish to go beyond the genre, take a look at the other dX games that are available. *Ex Machina* is the *Tri-Stat dX* game of cyberpunk role-playing. It is fully compatible with *Dreaming Cities*, if you wish to combine the two books into a futuristic cyberpunk-with-magic urban fantasy setting. The *Tri-Stat dX: Core Role-Playing Game System* is also available. It is a toolkit for creating and playing role-laying games in any genre, theme, mood, time period, or power level. The latter is available as either an inexpensive 96-page book or a free download. To learn more about the *Tri-Stat dX* system or download the *Tri-Stat dX: Core Role-Playing Game System* rules visit our website at http://www.guardiansorder.com

Dice and Notations

Dreaming Cities is a *Tri-Stat dX* series game that uses polyhedral (multi-sided) dice during game play, though usually only a single type of die in each adventure or campaign. This typically includes dice with the following number of sides: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, or (rarely) 20. When you need to generate a random number with a dice roll, always roll two dice with the appropriate number of sides, known as rolling 2dX, where:

- d represents the word "dice"
- X is the type of dice rolled (number of sides)

For example, 2dX in a street-level detective game would likely indicate 2d6 (roll two 6-sided dice), while 2dX in a superhero game could instead mean 2d10. The values showing on each die after the roll are added together to generate a random number between 2 and 2X. If your roll of 2dX generates a 4 on one die and a 6 on another, for instance, the final result is 10.

Sometimes X, called the "game dice," is used by itself in the text to suggest an upper limit for a specific game mechanic. For example, the game Attributes (page 14) available to characters typically range from Level 1 through Level X. Consequently, up to Level 8 is available in a posthuman game (8-sided dice); up to Level 12 is available in an inhuman game (12-sided dice).

The character power levels and associated game dice are explained further on page 12.

Why Change the Dice?

The dice size needs to change to alter the probabilities of achieving success for the range of character aptitudes. For example, a Stat of 4 represents the adult human average. In *Dreaming Cities*, to succeed in a Stat-related task, the player must roll his or her character's Stat or lower on two dice (task resolution is explained in Chapter 9: Game Mechanics; page 94). In a superhero game that uses d10, the probability of rolling 4 or less is only 6% — not very likely. This is a desired result, since average humans shouldn't often succeed at tasks that are considered normal for superhumans.

In a human-level game that uses d6, though, the probability increases to 17%. Again, this percentage matches the desired result since an average human should have a reasonable, not minuscule, chance of succeeding in a game where above-average humans are the normal player characters.

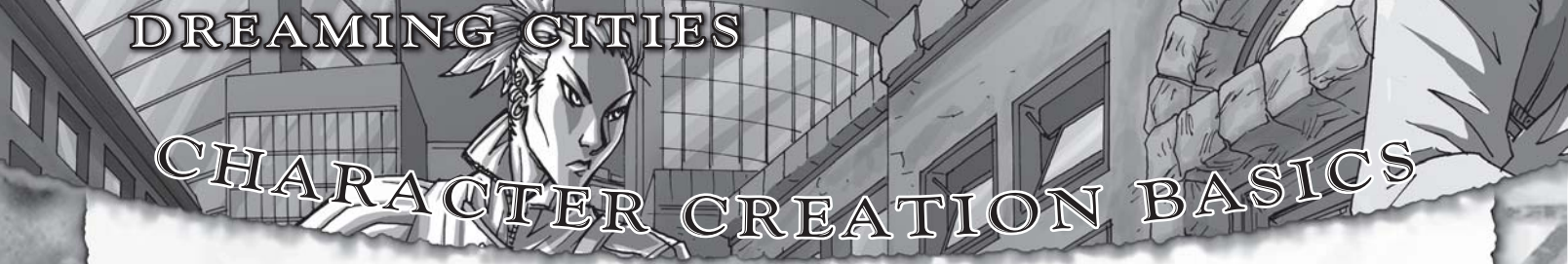
Changing the size of the dice is an easy way to scale the game to the correct power level (and thus success frequency) for the player characters.

Urban Fantasy Game Dice

The standard Game Dice for urban fantasy settings in *Dreaming Cities* is d6. Stories often focus on characters at a human level. Regular people can adventure alongside magical creatures and even triumph over them. For a campaign in which all player characters and many of the non-player characters they encounter are supernatural creatures, it might be appropriate to pick d8 or even d10 as the Game Dice, as some of the settings in this book recommend. By doing this, the importance and the threat posed by human NPCs in the campaign to the supernatural entities is diminished. They are less likely to succeed in tasks that non-humans find normal.







CHARACTER CREATION BASICS

The design of a new character for the *Dreaming Cities Role-Playing Game* should involve a thoughtful collaboration between the player and the GM. Your objective is to create a character that is fun to play, who has plenty of reason to undertake adventures, and who fits into the GM's campaign. You can choose to spend as little as ten minutes or upwards of an hour designing a character. The difference lies in the amount of detail and individuality given to your character. At no time during an RPG campaign do you have more control over the destiny of your character than during the creation process. If you have any questions about game mechanics or specific character abilities, discuss them with the GM before you begin character creation.

Step 1: GM Discussion

Talk to the GM about the nature of the upcoming game. Issues that should be addressed include the duration of the game, scheduled playtime, the setting and related timeline, and the thematic intensity level. The GM should set the power level of the campaign accordingly, which will determine the number of Character Points that you may use to design your character and which game dice will be used.

Step 2: Character Outline

Use the game boundaries established through your talk with the GM to sketch a rough character outline.

Step 3: Assign Stats

Use Character Points to give your character Body, Mind, and Soul Stats, making sure each Stat is not lower than 1 nor higher than twice the size of the game dice. See page 13.

Step 4: Consider Templates and Assign Attributes

Any remaining Character Points may be used to acquire Attributes, which are rated in Levels from 1 to X. See page 14. You may also wish to consider using one the templates provided to help conceptualise your character. See Chapter 7: Urban Fantasy Character Types for more information.

Step 5: Select Skills

Your character receives a number starting Skill Points determined by the game's power level, plus additional Points if you assigned the Highly Skilled Attribute or fewer if you assigned the Unskilled Defect (Step 6). Use the Skill Points to acquire Skills and Specialisations relevant to your character outline. Skill Levels range from 1 to one-half X. See page 54.

Step 6: Select Defects

You are encouraged to take Defects appropriate to your character outline. These Defects will provide you with more role-playing opportunities and give you Bonus Points you can use to raise Stats or acquire additional Character Attributes. See page 62.

Step 7: Calculate Derived Values

After you have modified your character's Stats through Attributes and Defects, you can calculate his or her Derived Values — Combat Value (both Attack and Defence) and Health Points. Additionally, if the GM is using rules for Energy Points, this Derived Value is also calculated now. See page 71.

Step 8: Earn Background Points

You can earn up to one-half X extra Character Points by giving the GM a background history of your character, an important character story, or a character drawing. See page 71.

Step 1: GM Discussion

You and the other players should discuss the nature of the upcoming game with the GM. Before any characters are created, the GM should outline such details as genre, setting, campaign duration, story boundaries, and expected time commitment. As a player, you should listen closely to the GM's descriptions since they will directly influence the character you wish to create.

Ask for clarification of any rule modifications the GM plans to use as well as any background restrictions on your character. If you have any game preferences involving issues such as combat intensity, maturity level, or drama versus comedy ratio, let the GM know about them. Help the GM create the game that you all want to play.

One of the most important things that the Game Master should discuss with his or her players is the power level of the game, which determines the Character Point total and game dice. Character Points are a measure of the relative capability of characters. The power level of the game will determined how many Character Points are available to each player, though NPCs may be given widely varying Character Point totals depending on their roles in the game.

If the scope of the game will involve players and NPCs covering a wide range of Character Point values, the game dice should be set at the low or middle scale of these Points, rather than the upper end. For example, in a campaign featuring major NPCs and characters ranging from 75 to 150 Character Points, using d8s would be a better choice than d10s.

Table 2-1: Character Power Levels

Power Level	Character Point Value	Game Dice (dX)
Subhuman	25- 50 Points	Four-sided (d4)
Human	50-75 Points	Six-sided (d6)
Posthuman	75-125 Points	Eight-sided (d8)
Superhuman	125-200 Points	Ten-sided (d10)
Inhuman	200-300 Points	Twelve-sided (d12)
Godlike	300+ Points	Twenty-sided (d20)

Dreaming Cities includes three world settings, each with their own suggested Power Levels.

Step 2: Character Outline

A character outline is a broad concept that provides you with a frame on which to build your character. It is not fully detailed. At this stage, there is no need for you to concern yourself with the character's specific skills, powers, or background details at this stage. Use the game boundaries established in your discussion with the GM as the starting point for your character and build your outline on that foundation. Discuss your character ideas with the GM to ensure your character will work with those of the other players and with the overall themes and focus of the campaign. Here are some issues to consider:

Is the character human?

In many urban fantasy game settings, non-human or part-human characters may exist. Examples include elves, ghosts and spirits, gods and goddesses, and monsters such as demons, shapechangers, or vampires.

What are the character's strengths?

In some campaigns, the players may want to create complimentary characters with distinct sets of abilities. A degree of specialisation helps players enjoy their

characters by giving them a unique identity. At the same time, it is equally important that the characters are not too specialised, or the group will lack cohesion. Players will sit around bored while each specialist has his or her own little adventure within the game.

What are the character's weaknesses?

Game characters may be larger than life — figures of myth and legend — but usually still have weaknesses. Is the character vulnerable to magic? Does it take a while for the character's powers to activate or can some special substance negate them? Does the character have an Achilles Heel? Does the character struggle with an addiction? Providing weaknesses to a character adds greater depth and potential for role-playing.

What helps define the character?

You should decide on the character's age and sex, determine a broad archetype for his or her personality, and sketch an idea of ethnic and social background. On the other hand, it is equally important that a character have room to grow beyond your initial concept. A character that you have spent hours perfecting and detailing may quickly become stagnant and uninteresting once play begins. A good character outline usually focuses on one or two main personality traits and leaves plenty of room for you to explore and develop the character into a fully rounded personality over time. Although the starting archetype should be an integral part of the character, it should not rule all of his or her actions. At some point during the game, your pacifistic artist may be driven to an act of vengeance, or your angst-ridden goth teenager may finally discover a cause in which to believe. As long as these developments proceed naturally from events in the game, they should be a welcome part of the role-playing experience.

Step 3: Assign Stats

Stats (or Statistics) are numerical assignments that reflect your character's basic capabilities. Higher Stat values indicate an advanced level of accomplishment or achievement. *Dreaming Cities* uses three Stats to represent your character's abilities: Body, Mind, and Soul.

Body Stat

This Stat measures the physical aspects of your character. This includes overall health, strength, endurance, quickness, rate of healing, manual dexterity, and ability to withstand trauma. A character with a high Body is in good physical shape.

Mind Stat

The Mind Stat represents a character's mental abilities. High values indicate intelligent, witty, and quick-learning characters.

Soul Stat

The Soul Stat represents luck, willpower, determination, and spirit and can sometimes represent psychic ability, empathy, and unity with nature. A high rating in the Soul Stat helps a character focus his or her personal energies or life force to go beyond his or her normal limits and to fuel special abilities.

Stat Cost

Raising a Stat by one value costs 2 Character Points.

Stat Values

For most games, Stats range from 1 to 20, although the maximum Stat values available to your character are determined by the game dice (see Table 2-3: Maximum Stat Values). A value of 4 in a Stat is the adult human average with ratings under 4 indicating decreasing competency and ratings over 4 designate increasing superiority. Although 4 may represent the human average, characters in a role-playing game are often significantly better than average. For more details, see Table 2-2: Stat Value Descriptions. Thus, a person of average build, high intelligence, and above average determination might have Body 4, Mind 7, and Soul 5.

Your starting Character Points (page 12) are used to purchase Stats. You must decide how many of them you will spend on Stats and then divide these Points among the character's Body, Mind, and Soul. At least 2 Character Points must be assigned to each Stat.

GMs are encouraged to require a solid character concept before allowing Stats values to exceed the "Talent Threshold," since these represent values beyond typical capacity for characters of a specific power level (see Table 2-3: Maximum Stat Values). Otherwise, it is up to you to decide how many Character Points you will use for Stats and what each Stat's value will be. Any Character Points not spent on Stats will be used to acquire various useful talents and abilities called Character Attributes (page 14). The GM may set an absolute ceiling or floor on the number of Character Points that can be allocated to Stats to ensure characters have a balance between Stats and Attributes.

Table 2-2: Stat Value Descriptions

Stat Value	Description
1	Inept; infant
2	Significantly below adult human average; child
3	Below adult human average; teenager
4	Adult human average
5	Above adult human average
6	Significantly above human average
7	Highly capable
8	Extremely capable
9	Best in the region
10	Best in the country
11	World-class ability
12	Maximum human potential
13	Above human achievement
14	Significantly above human achievement
15	Moderately powerful superhuman ability
16	Powerful superhuman ability
17-18	Extremely powerful superhuman ability
19-20	Legendary ability
21-24	Maximum achievement in the galaxy
25-30	Maximum achievement in the universe
31-40	Godlike achievement

Table 2-3: Maximum Stat Values

Game Dice	Talent Threshold	Maximum Value
Four-sided (d4)	6	8
Six-sided (d6)	8	12
Eight-sided (d8)	10	16
Ten-sided (d10)	12	18
Twelve-sided (d12)	14	20
Twenty-sided (d20)	18	40

Less Capable [Stat] Defect

With only three Stats, the *Dreaming Cities* game system is obviously slanted towards well-rounded, balanced characters. But what if your character is weak in a particular area of a Stat? For example, your character might be strong, healthy, and durable, but not dextrous. Similarly, he or she could be intelligent and witty, but forgetful, or strong-willed and composed, but unlucky. On page 66, you will find the Less Capable [Stat] Defect, which was designed specifically to further divide the Stats. Although you do not normally assign Defects until Step 6, become familiar with Less Capable [Stat] at this point if you need to define your character with more precision.



ATTRIBUTES

STEP 4: CONSIDER TEMPLATES AND ASSIGN ATTRIBUTES

The three Stats represent your character's basic abilities, but his or her more specific acquired or innate talents and abilities are known as Attributes. Any Character Points remaining after you have purchased Stats (and any templates) are available to acquire Attributes.

There are many different Character Attributes, each representing a particular talent or special ability. Some of these Attributes are suitable for ordinary humans. Others are used to represent the supernatural abilities of non-human races, or a character's ability to use magical spells or psychic powers. Most Attributes are rated with a Level from 1 to X, though Attributes can be extended beyond Level X with the GM's permission. A few Attributes are restricted to a more limited number of Levels. Acquiring an Attribute or increasing it in Level requires the expenditure of one or more Character Points, depending on the Attribute's Character Point cost per Level.

The selection of Attributes is one of the most important steps during character creation. Through Attributes, you define your character's unique capabilities compared to other individuals. Think carefully about the balance between a few high-Level Attributes and a large number of low-Level Attributes.

If you find yourself needing more Character Points than you have been assigned, consider burdening your character with one or more Defects (Step 6: Defects, page 62). Each Defect can provide you with additional Character Points, which can be used to acquire more Attributes or higher Stats.

USING TEMPLATES

The selection of Attributes (and Skills — see page 54) can be a time consuming process. To speed things up or help conceptualise your character, you may wish to use one or more of the templates provided in this book.

Templates are archetypal occupations or races with a set of suggested Attributes, Skills, and Defects assigned to them. Templates suitable for the urban fantasy genre are found in Chapter 7. Additional world-specific templates are described in chapters 12-14.

MODIFYING ATTRIBUTES AND ADJUSTING POINT COSTS

Players may occasionally find that an Attribute does not exactly match their concept of how a particular power or capability should function. The GM (and, with GM permission, the players) may redefine the effects of existing Attributes to better suit particular character concepts. If the GM feels a changed effect makes the Attribute significantly more or less powerful, he or she may alter its Point cost to reflect this.

Additionally, the value of Attributes assumes the setting of the game gives them a good chance of actually being useful in play. If a character is given an Attribute that the GM decides is unlikely to have much, if any, utility in the campaign, the GM can reduce its Character Point Cost or even give the Attribute away for free. If circumstances change and the Attribute becomes useful on a regular basis, the character should pay for the Attribute with Character Points granted through advancement (page 117).

MAGICAL SPELLS, POWERS, AND RITUALS

Some urban fantasy characters are ordinary humans but many also have magical powers or gifts, whether the result of innate abilities (such as an elf living forever, or a fairy being able to cast an illusion), psychic abilities (like the Sixth Sense of precognition), or magical lore.

Like more mundane abilities, supernatural talents and spells are represented by choosing appropriate Attributes, often modified by PMVs (see below) and limited by assigning Restrictions or other Linked Defects (page 62) to them.

The GM can choose to let players freely create whatever magical powers they can afford with their Character Points, or may choose to closely monitor what abilities are or are not appropriate. To aid players and the GM in character creation, Chapter 7 has examples of supernatural entities (such as ghosts), and Chapter 8 has extensive guidelines for using the Attribute rules to represent magical rituals. Additional ready-to-use templates for supernatural entities and magical abilities are presented in the three world settings in Chapters 12-14.

POWER MODIFIER VALUES (PMVS)

Several Attributes — primarily superhuman powers such as Healing or Telepathy — can be modified by a variety of factors known as PMVs, referring to Table 3-1: Power Modifier Values. These modifiers allow players to customise their characters' Attributes, making each Attribute unique to the character. The description for each Attribute lists which PMVs are required, and which are optional. Required PMVs must be assigned at a minimum of Rank 1.

PMV COST

Each Rank in a PMV costs 1 Character Point.

AREA

Area modifies the radius of influence of the Attribute, centred on either the character (for Attributes with a Range of zero) or on a specific location (for Range Rank 1 or higher).

DURATION

Duration determines the maximum period of time that the Attribute's effect will influence a target (requires no concentration to maintain after it is activated). In most cases (with the exception of Mimic; page 33), this only applies when the character is using an Attribute to affect someone or something else. Duration does not apply when using the Attribute to affect him or herself, since the character can simply reactivate the Attribute at will. At the end of an Attribute's Duration, its effects will cease.

RANGE

Range determines the distance at which the Attribute may be used. Range is a measure of how far away the centre of an Attribute can be manifested; it does not determine the area or number of targets affected (see Area and Targets). Attributes with the Range PMV at Rank 0 can only be used through contact with the target. Alternatively, if the Attribute has the Area PMV above Rank 0, characters may centre the effect upon themselves (or any other location within the Range).

Targets

Targets determines the maximum mass of objects and/or number of people, as is appropriate, that the Attribute can affect. A Rank of zero indicates that only the character can be affected; a Rank of 1 means that any single individual (including the character) or appropriate mass can be targeted. It should be noted that the target objects or people must still be within the Attribute's Area and Range to have an affect. For rules on using an Attribute against unwilling targets, see Using Attributes Against Opponents, page 110.

Zero Rank PMVs

What does it mean when an Attribute has an optional PMV at Rank zero? Can the Attribute still work? How does it function?

For Area, it means the Attribute affects a pinpoint area even smaller than a grain of sand. Unless the character is using the Attribute on him or herself or on an incredibly small target, its effect is virtually insignificant, unnoticed to almost everyone. It is appropriate to take the Area PMV at Rank zero if the character will only use the power to affect him or herself.

Duration of zero means the Attribute has an instantaneous effect. Since the effect of the Attribute vanishes instantly, nobody but the most perceptive people will be aware that anything happened. Consequently, most Attributes that list Duration as a PMV require it to be assigned, or the Attribute is virtually useless.

A Range of zero means that the Attribute can only be used on him or herself, or when touching a target. This restriction is appropriate for many Attributes that require contact to activate.

Targets at Rank zero means that the character can only affect him or herself with the Attribute — it cannot be used on other targets. Many Attributes have Rank zero Targets that only affect the character directly.

Consequently, if the character wishes to use his or her Attribute to affect other people than just him or herself, assigning PMVs at Ranks 1 or higher is necessary. If, however, the character simply wishes to affect him or herself, PMVs may not be required for the Attribute at all.

Table 3-1: Power Modifier Values

Rank	Area	Duration	Range	Targets
0	pinpoint	instantaneous	touch	self
1	10 cm	1 round	10 m	1 Person/50 kg
2	1 m	5 rounds	100 m	5 People/100 kg
3	10 m	1 min	1 km	10 People/500 kg
4	100 m	10 min	10 km	50 People/1 tonne
5	1 km	1 hr	100 km	100 People/5 tonne
6	10 km	12 hr	1,000 km	1,000 People/10 tonne
7	100 km	1 day	10 k km	10 k People/100 tonne
8	1,000 km	1 week	100 k km	100 k People/1,000 tonne
9	10 k km	1 month	1 M km	1 M People/10 k tonne
10	100 k km	6 month	10 M km	10 M People/100 k tonne

Attribute Progression

The effects of each Attribute improve as its Level increases. Most Attribute description indicates which column of Table 3-2: Progression Charts you should reference when determining the game effect of the Attribute. For example, Animal Summon/Control (page 18) has a Progression of "Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 animal." When determining the game effect of Animal Summon/Control, the player looks at the Medium column of Table 3-2: Progression Charts and cross-references it with the Rank equal to his or her character's Level in the Attribute. Thus, if his or her character had Animal Summon/Control at Level 6, the character would be able to affect up to 500 animals with the Attribute.

Table 3-2: Progression Charts

Rank	Fast	Medium	Slow	Time
1	1	1	1	10 Initiative
2	10	5	2	1 round
3	100	10	4	5 rounds
4	1 k	50	8	1 min
5	10 k	100	15	10 min
6	100 k	500	30	1 hr
7	1 M	1 k	60	12 hr
8	10 M	5 k	125	1 day
9	100 M	10 k	250	1 week
10	1 B	50 k	500	1 month
11	10 B	100 k	1,000	6 month
12	100 B	500 k	2,000	1 year
13	1 T	1 M	4,000	10 year
14	10 T	5 M	8,000	100 years
15	100 T	10 M	15,000	1 k years
16	1 Q	50 M	30,000	10 k years
17	10 Q	100 M	60,000	100 k years
18	100 Q	500 M	125,000	1 M years
19	1 Quint	1 B	250,000	10 M years
20	10 Quint	5 B	500,000	100 M years

k = Thousand M = Million B = Billion
T = Trillion Q = Quadrillion Quint = Quintillion

Some Attributes begin the progression at a higher Rank on the Chart. For example, Flight (page 26) has a Progression of "Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 kph." Thus, the Level 1 effect of Flight (10 kph) is equal to Rank 3, or two ranks higher than the Level of the Attribute. Therefore, if a character had Flight at Level 6, the player would reference Rank 8 on the Medium Progression Chart and see that his or her character could fly at speeds up to 5,000 kph.

Sliding Up and Down the Metric Scale

Since the *Dreaming Cities* system uses the metric scale, converting between units of measure is easy. For example, Computer Scanning has a Progression of "Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm." Following Table 3-2, the Attribute at Level 2 would function at 100 cm, Level 3 at 1,000 cm, and Level 4 at 10,000 cm. Of course, 100 centimetre equals 1 metre, so the progression is effortlessly converted to metres: Level 2 is 1 m, Level 3 is 10 m, and Level 4 is 100 m.

Descriptive or Special Progression

If the Attribute indicates a descriptive progression, read the Attribute entry for more information.

Linear Progression

If an Attribute follows a linear progression, the advancement per Level is indicated clearly. For example, the entry for Tough reads, "Linear; +20 Health Points each Level."

Reversed Progression

A few rare Attributes require a reversed progression as the Level of the Attribute increases. Contamination, for instance, has a Progression of "Time Progression Chart Reversed, starting at 6 months." Thus, the Level 1 effect for Contamination is equal to Rank 11 on the Time Progression Chart. For each additional Level of the Attribute, the Rank decreases by one.

How do PMVs Work?

The Power Modifier Value Chart allows players to create distinct applications of the same Attribute. By assigning a certain Rank in a PMV to an Attribute, you will create different variations of the base use. Suppose you are creating a sorcerer, demon, or psychic who can transport him or herself instantly from place to place. This is the Teleport Attribute. Each Level of Teleport dictates how far your character can teleport, starting at 10 metres at Level 1. Without PMVs, every character with Teleport will use it in the same way, on him or herself only. By using the PMVs for Area, Range, and Targets, however, you can create a specific version of the Attribute that works very differently than another character's. If one character possessed Teleport at Level 4, he could Teleport himself up to 10 km away. Another character takes Teleport (also at Level 4) but assigns Area Rank 3, Range Rank 2, and Targets Rank 4. She is able to teleport herself up to 10 km away, but she is also capable of teleporting up to 50 people or 1 tonne in mass (Targets Rank 4) within a 10-metre radius (Area Rank 3) that is 100 metres away from herself (Range Rank 2), up to 10 km away. Thus, she could teleport a car (under 1 tonne in mass and under 10-metres in radius) located at the other end of a football field (under 100 metres away) to the other side of the city (within 10 km teleport). The first character can only use his Attribute to teleport himself while the second character can use her Attribute to teleport people and objects around her as well.

In short, the PMVs allow you to push Attributes beyond their base, standard mechanics and use them in new and innovative ways.

Table 3-3: Attributes

Attribute Name	Cost per Level	Progress	Required PMVs	Optional PMVs	Relevant Stat	Page
Mundane Attributes						
Agents	5	Slow	None	None	Soul	17
Attack Combat Mastery	3	Linear	None	None	None	19
Combat Technique	1	Linear	None	None	None	19
Defence Combat Mastery	2	Linear	None	None	None	22
Divine Relationship	1	Linear	None	None	None	22
Energy Bonus	2	Linear	None	None	None	23
Exorcism	2	Linear	T	A,R	Soul	23
Extra Attacks	8	Linear	None	None	None	26
Extra Defences	3	Linear	None	None	None	26
Features *	1	Linear	None	None	None	26
Gadgeteer	2	Slow	None	None	Mind	28
Gadgets	2	Linear	None	None	None	28
Heightened Awareness	1	Linear	None	None	Body/Mind	29
Henchmen	1 or 2	Slow	None	None	Soul	30
Highly Skilled	1	Linear	None	None	None	30
Item of Power	3 or 4	Linear	None	None	Soul	32
Massive Damage	2 or 5	Linear	None	None	None	33
Organisational Ties	1, 2, 3	Descriptive	None	None	Soul	35
Servant	2 or 6	Linear	None	None	None	40
Wealth	3	Medium	None	None	None	51
Special Attributes						
Adaptation	1	Linear	None	None	Body	17
Alternate Form	2, 3, or 9	Linear	None	None	Body	17
Animal Summon/Control	1, 3, 5	Medium	D	A	Soul	18
Armour	1 or 3	Linear	None	None	Body	18
Block Power	1 or 6	Linear	None	A,D,T	Soul	19
Computer Scanning	2	Fast	None	None	Mind	20
Contamination	2 or 4	Time Rev	T	A,R	Body	21
Creation	2 or 3	Medium	D	R	Mind/Soul	21
Damage Absorption	8 or 10	Linear	None	None	Body	21
Duplicate	6 or 8	Linear	D	None	Body	22
Dynamic Powers	10, 15, 20	Linear	Special	A,D,R,T	Variable	22
Elasticity	2	Descriptive	None	None	Body	23
Enhanced [Stat]	2	Linear	None	None	None	23
Environmental Influence	1	Linear	A,D	R	Soul	23
Extra Arms	1	Slow	None	None	None	26
Features *	1	Linear	None	None	None	26
Flight	2, 3, 4	Medium	None	None	Body	26
Force Field	4	Linear	A	D,R	Mind	27
Grow	10	Variable	None	None	Body	29
Healing	4	Linear	T	A,R	Body/Soul	29
Heightened Senses	1	Linear	None	None	Body/Mind	29
Illusion	1, 2, 3, 4	Fast	A,D,T	R	Mind	30
Immovable	1	Linear	None	None	Body	31
Immunity	5	Descriptive	None	None	Body	31
Insubstantial	4	Descriptive	None	None	Body	31
Invisibility	2 or 3	Linear	None	A,T	Body	31
Jumping	1	Medium	None	None	Body	32
Mass Increase	8	Variable	None	None	Body	32
Metamorphosis	5	Linear	D,T	A,R	Mind/Soul	33
Mimic Powers	7 or 10	Linear	None	D,R	Mind	33
Mind Control	2, 3, 4, 5	Variable	D,T	A,R	Mind	34
Mind Shield	1	Linear	None	A,R,T	Mind/Soul	34
Natural Weapons	1	Linear	None	None	None	34
Nullify	7 or 12	Linear	T	A,D,R	Soul	35
Plant Control	2	Fast	D	None	Mind/Soul	38
Pocket Dimension	2, 3, 4	Fast	Special	A,D,R,T	Mind/Soul	38
Power Flux	5, 10, 15, 20	Linear	Special	None	Variable	39
Projection	3	Medium	A	D,R	Mind	39
Regeneration	6	Linear	None	None	Body	40
Reincarnation	2 or 4	Time Rev	None	None	Soul	40
Sensory Block	1	Linear	A,D	R	Mind	40
Servant	2 or 6	Linear	None	None	None	40
Shrink	1	Variable	None	A,D,R,T	Body	41
Sixth Sense	1	Linear	A	None	Soul	41
Special Attack	1 or 4	Linear	None	None	None	42
Special Defence	1	Linear	None	None	Variable	47
Special Movement	1	Linear	None	None	Body	47
Speed	6	Medium	None	None	Body	48
Superstrength	4	Medium	None	None	Body	48
Swarm	2	Linear	None	None	Body	48
Telekinesis	2 or 4	Fast	None	A,R	Mind	48
Telepathy	1, 2, 3	Descriptive	T	A,R	Mind	49
Teleport	5	Fast	None	A,R,T	Mind	50
Tough	2	Linear	None	None	None	50
Transfer	5 or 10	Linear	D	R	Soul	50
Transmutation	3, 4, 5	Medium	D	R	Mind/Soul	50
Tunnelling	2	Medium	None	None	Body	51
Unique Attribute	1-10	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable	51
Unknown Superhuman Pwr.	Variable	Special	Variable	Variable	Variable	51
Water Speed	2	Medium	None	None	Body	51

* Features can be a mundane or special Attribute depending on the Feature.

Attribute Restrictions

Players may wish to assign the Restriction Defect (page 69) to one or more of their characters' Attributes, thereby reducing the Attribute's total cost by 1 to 3 Points (or sometimes more). The description of each Attribute lists some example Restrictions that are appropriate for the Attribute. GMs are always the final arbiter of whether or not a Restriction is acceptable for an Attribute.

Attribute Reductions

In addition, players can assign the Reduction Defect (page 68). Reductions decrease the Attribute's cost per Level by a number of Character Points, determined by the severity of the Reduction.

Attribute Entries

The Attribute entries in the following section indicate: the Character Point cost; the Stat most often relevant to the Attribute's use should a check be needed (page 95); the associated required and optional Power Modifier Values; the Attribute's Level progression; several suggested limitations to the Attribute (for the Restriction and Reduction Defects); and finally the Attribute's game effects.

Mundane and Special Attributes

Attributes are each classed as either Mundane or Special.

A Mundane Attribute is a talent that an unmodified human being can possess. The Attribute may be extraordinary, but the character is still an unmodified human despite possessing it. An example of a Mundane Attribute is Combat Technique.

A Special Attribute is a power that marks the character as non-human (such as a demon, animal, or fairy) or possessed of unusual powers (such as the ability to cast magical spells). It may also be possessed by a device such as an Item of Power. An example of a Special Attribute is Illusion.

A character may only take Special Attributes with GM permission, or as part of a template (see page 74) the GM permits player characters to have.

Adaptation

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 environment each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Time limit; no Armour; naked form only

The character can adapt to survive in a number of environments hostile to ordinary humans equal to his or her Adaptation Level. Examples of hostile environments include: acidic/basic liquids, extra dimensional, extreme pressure, intense cold, intense heat, noxious gases, radiation, underwater (the ability to "breathe" water), and vacuum (low pressure, not the absence of air). Adaptation does not apply to non-human characters whose natural environment is not the Earth's atmosphere (such as a mermaid living in the ocean). In these cases, the character must assign Adaptation (Earth Atmosphere) to survive in normal human environments. Surviving in low- or no-oxygen environments is a Special Defence Attribute (page 47), not Adaptation.

The Attribute also provides 5 points of Armour against environmental conditions and attacks similar to the adapted environment. For example, Adaptation (Heat) provides Armour while in the desert heat and against fiery blasts, while Adaptation (Pressure) provides Armour while deep-sea diving and against a crushing gravity attack. In most natural Earth environments, this Armour provides complete protection against the elements. Adaptation can thus be viewed as a very limited form of the Armour Attribute in many situations. A character with even Level 1 Armour gains the benefits of Adaptation against damage due to environmental conditions. Armour does not protect against specific hostile environments that have less tangible damaging effects, such as extra dimensional, noxious gases, and underwater.

Agents

Type: Mundane
Cost: 5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 1 Agent
Reduction: Built on fewer Character Points
Restrictions: Agents have further limited Stats/Attributes/Defects/Skills

The Agent Attribute represents mercenary employees, hired guns, researchers, or fanatical followers. Unlike Henchmen, Agents are often well trained, and can become reasonably dangerous. Agents fill the gap between Henchmen and Servants, allowing for a squad of effective, capable followers.

Individual Agents are NPCs. All of the character's Agents normally have identical Stats and Attributes, although Skills may vary. A character may have followers with varied Stats or Attributes, but each one counts as two Agents. Agents are built on 30 Character Points, and have 10 Skill Points. For every additional +2 Points spent, however, they all gain X Character Points (X is the game dice). It is recommended that the Character Point total for the Agents not exceed one-quarter to one-half the character's Point total.

Agents will fight for the character, although they need not be soldiers. Many advisors, scientists, or even lawyers fall under this Attribute. Agents, due to their secondary nature to the story, should usually not have the following Attributes: Agents, Henchmen, Servant, Special Attack, or Transfer.

Alternate Form

Type: Special
Costs: 2, 3, or 9 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +10 Character Points for the Alternate Form each Level
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Under certain conditions, time limit, requires special equipment

A character with Alternate Form can instantaneously transform into one other specific form that is determined during character creation and approved by the Game Master. Once selected, the form cannot be altered. Alternate Form allows the character to possess a radically different body shape than his or her normal human form, and exhibit exotic physical features as well.

If a character only has a single, permanent, non-human form, this Attribute should not be applied. Instead, the character must acquire the relevant Attributes and Defects that best represent the form's capabilities. A character with several different Alternate Forms should assign this Attribute multiple times. The Attributes gained in the character's Alternate Form obviously cannot be Dependent (page 64) upon the Alternate Form Attribute. Different Alternate Forms can be built with different Attribute Levels as well. To create a character with unlimited additional forms, see the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 22) with a Shapeshifting speciality.

Partial-Powered Form (3 Points/Level)

The form is built from 10 Character Points for each Alternate Form Level, which can be used to acquire Stats, Attributes, and Defects. The character's Stats all drop to zero and thus must be raised with the Alternate Form's new Character Points; Derived Values also must be recalculated. Additionally, the character's regular Attributes, Skills, and Defects no longer function in the Alternate Form, though the GM may decide that some Attributes (such as Gadgets, Henchmen, Organisational Ties, Wealth, and others) and some Defects (such as Achilles Heel, Bane, and others) still retain their effects.

Defects can also be assigned to the new Form to provide additional Character Points. Unless the GM indicates otherwise, normal clothing becomes part of the Alternate Form as well.

Full-Powered Form (9 Points/Level)

The form is built from 10 Character Points for each Alternate Form Level, which can be used to acquire Attributes and Defects. The character retains all the Stat Values, Attribute Levels, Skill Levels, and Defect Bonus Points associated with his or her regular form. The newly acquired Attributes and Defects add to the character's normal form. If the character's Stats are modified by the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute or Less Capable [Stat] Defect, the Derived Values should be recalculated as necessary. Unless the GM indicates otherwise, normal clothing becomes part of the Alternate Form as well.

Cosmetic Changes (2 Points)

A "Level 0" option of the Alternate Form Attribute is also available at the cost of 2 Character Points. This Level allows a character to undergo cosmetic changes that confer no additional abilities on the target. This includes: a 10% size increase or decrease, change of gender, 50% age increase or decrease, colour changes (eye, skin, or hair), and minor physical changes (shape of ears, facial features, or bodily proportions). This can also add the Features (Appearance) Attribute or Unappealing Defect.

Sample Alternate Forms

The examples given below suggest some Attributes that may be appropriate for the Alternate Forms, but the GM can modify them if desired. Other types of alternate forms can include electricity, radiation, light, emotion, data, dream, sound, and many others.

Animal Forms

Many nature-based shapeshifters have one or more Partial-Powered animal forms. Suggested Attributes: any that are relevant to the specific animal form, such as Armour, Attack Combat Mastery, Features, Flight, Heightened Senses, Jumping, Natural Weapons, Special Movement, Tough, Tunnelling, etc.

Elemental/Chemical Forms

This option covers a wide range of possible forms, including: acid, base, gold, granite, ice, mercury, water, sulphur, synthetic drugs, etc. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Armour, Duplicate, Elasticity, Enhanced [Stat], Extra Arms, Insubstantial, Mass Increase, Massive Damage, Regeneration, Special Attack, Special Defence, Special Movement, Superstrength, Swarm, Tough, Water Speed.

Flame Form

The character is composed of fire, and can ignite flammable objects on contact. Any person near the character may suffer burn damage as well. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation (Heat), Armour (Optimised to heat), Environmental Influence (Heat), Flight, Force Field, Special Attack (Aura).

Gaseous Form

This form is less substantial than a liquid form. The character cannot pick up solid objects and can only exert the pushing force of a gentle wind. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Creation, Extra Attacks, Flight, Heightened Awareness, Insubstantial (Level 2), Invisibility, Projection, Regeneration, Shrink, Sixth Sense, Special Attack, Special Defence, Speed.

Incorporeal Form

An Incorporeal form is without physical substance (for example, a ghost or living shadow). The character can pass through walls, walk on air or water, and perform similar ghost-like feats. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Flight, Insubstantial, Invisibility, Special Defence.

Melding Form

The character can meld into any inanimate object, and still perceive nearby events as though he or she is still human. Once merged, the character cannot be harmed unless the object is damaged. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Insubstantial, Teleport (Within melded object), Tunnelling.

Two-Dimensional Form

A 2-D character has height and width, but not depth. He or she can squeeze through the spaces between atoms, and is completely invisible when viewed from the side. An entire new two-dimensional universe may be waiting to be explored by such a character. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Insubstantial, Pocket Dimension, Special Defence, Special Movement, Speed.

Animal Summon/Control

Type: Special
Cost: 1, 3, or 5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: Duration
Optional PMVs: Area
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 animal
Reduction: Can only give limited commands
Restrictions: Check needed to maintain control; animals aggressive towards Summoner once released; demons require gift/offering

Characters with this Attribute (at 1 Point/Level) can summon animals from the surrounding area (as determined by the Area PMV Rank), and command them to perform a variety of simple activities: attack, confuse, hunt, defend, track, etc. Human control is covered by the Mind Control Attribute (page 34). The Attribute Level determines the maximum number of animals that can be summoned. If fewer animals are in the area of effect, only those will obey the summons. Additionally, the animals do not appear magically; they must find a way to travel to the character. After the Duration PMV has expired, the animals will return to their normal activities and habitats. Any animals still travelling to the summoning character will cease their journeys at that time.

If the character limits the Summon/Control to a single broad group of animals, the Attribute functions at one Level higher. Broad animal groups include: mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians, fish, avians, etc. If limited to a single specific group, the Attribute functions at two Levels higher. Specific animal groups include: dogs, cats, rodents, ants, bees, large reptiles, frogs, sharks, birds of prey, etc. If limited to a specific type of animal, the Attribute functions at three Levels higher. Examples of animal types include: poodles, tigers, rats, fire ants, crocodiles, tree frogs, hammerhead sharks, eagles, etc.

For 3 Points/Level, the animals are summoned through supernatural means. The character can always summon the maximum number of allowable animals (as determined by Level), and the animals arrive within a single round. When the Duration expires, the animals instantly return to their original location.

An alternate 5 Points/Level version of this Attribute — Demonic Summon/Control — allows the character to summon creatures from other dimensions or planes of existence. The creatures arrive within a single round. The creatures are built using 5 Character Points for each Level of Area PMV assigned. When the Duration expires, the creatures instantly return to their original location.

Armour

Type: Special
Cost: 1 or 3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +10 damage reduction each Level
Reduction: Reduced Armour values
Restrictions: Needs repairs; cumbersome and restricts movement; under certain conditions

The Armour Attribute represents actual armoured plates, or simply skin or clothing (if part of an Item of Power) that is highly resistant to damage. It is most often found on giant monsters and powerful supernatural beings, but can also represent magical defences created by a spell .Armour reduces the damage

that is inflicted on the character or structure (see Chapter 7: Game Mechanics for how damage works). Armour reduces the damage of each attack by 10/Level (20/Level for Shield). The base cost for Armour is 3 Points/Level.

A number of options are available for the Armour Attribute, which alter the Attribute's Point cost or modify the Armour's effectiveness. The minimum Point cost of Armour, regardless of options, is 1 Character Point.

Partial

The Armour has a small thin area (half Armour value, -1 to Point cost) or an unarmoured area (no Armour value, -2 to Point cost) that can be targeted using a Called Shot (page 102). Point cost reductions apply to the total cost of Armour, not the cost per Level.

Optimised Armour

The Armour is focused against a particular uncommon attack form. Eligible attack forms include electricity, cold, laser beams, fire/heat, energy blasts, etc. Armour cannot be optimised against broad categories such as blunt impacts or piercing weapons, however. Optimised Armour provides doubled protection against the chosen attack form only, and no protection against other forms. A character can acquire both Optimised Armour and ordinary Armour by assigning the Armour Attribute twice.

Shield Only

The Armour does not cover the character's entire body. Instead, it is a shield that the user must deliberately interpose in front of a melee or unarmed attack using a Block Defence (page 105). The character must also possess the Combat Technique (Block Ranged Attacks) Attribute to use the shield in a Block Defence against ranged attacks. If the character successfully defends, the shield's Armour can protect against 20 damage each Level (rather than 10). This option reduces the cost of Armour to 1 Point/Level (rather than 3 Points/Level).

Attack Combat Mastery

Type: Mundane
Cost: 3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Combat Value)
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 Attack Combat Value each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

Attack Combat Mastery denotes either an innate "killer instinct" or the character's intimate knowledge of a wide range of offensive combat techniques covering all aspects of armed and unarmed encounters (including Special Attacks and ranged weapons). Individual Combat Skills (page 50) let a character specialise with particular weapons or specific styles, but Attack Combat Mastery allows a character to pick up any weapon (or use none at all) and be dangerously proficient. See page 71 for more information on the Attack Combat Value.

Block Power

Type: Special
Cost: 1 or 6 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: Area, Duration, Targets
Progression: Linear; -1 Check Value penalty to effect character using +1 specific Attribute each Level
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against broad or specific group of people; weak against an Attribute

Opponents have difficulty affecting the character with specific Attributes because the Attributes' effects are blocked. For 1 Point/Level the character can block one Attribute at each Level, which must be determined during character creation (or when Block Power is assigned as advancement). In the case of the Special Attack Attribute, only another character's single, specific attack is blocked (which reduces an enemies chance to hit the character). For 6 Points/Level, the character can block all Attributes that can be used against a character, including all Special Attacks (they suffer a penalty to hit the character but if they do hit, they have full effect). The Duration PMV only applies when the character is using Block Power to stop specific Attributes from affecting a willing or unwilling target, rather than him or herself. Targets cannot be blocked from the effects of their own Attributes, however.

When an opponent targets the character, he or she must make a successful Stat check at a -1 penalty for every Level of the target character's Block Power Attribute. If the check fails, the Attribute does not affect the character (although a multi-target Attribute may still affect the other targets). The base Check Value is determined by the "Relevant Stat" of the Attribute used. If no Stat is indicated, the Soul Stat is used as a default. If the check succeeds, the target character is affected by the Attribute as normal.

Combat Technique

Type: Mundane
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Combat Value)
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 technique each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against broad or specific group of opponents; with specific weapons or weapon groups

The Combat Technique Attribute allows a character to perform astounding feats with a wide variety of melee or ranged weapons, or special attacks. For a listing of penalties associated with some special combat manoeuvres, see page 105. Each Level gives the character one combat technique; the Game Master will determine if a specific manoeuvre can be assigned multiple times. The GM and players are encouraged to develop their own combat techniques as well.

Accuracy

The character suffers reduced dice penalties when attempting an accurate attack, such as striking at partial Armour, weak points, or vital spots, shooting at longer-than-usual ranges. Accuracy is also used when attempting a special trick shot, such as carving an initial on someone's body or ricocheting an arrow off a wall to shoot a target around a corner, and when using the Deflection or Reflection techniques (see below). Each difficulty penalty is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0). For example, attacking a vital spot (-8 penalty) would become a -6 penalty, while firing at double range (-4 penalty) would receive -2 penalty.

ACV Knockback

This technique is only available in campaigns that use Knockback rules (page 109). The character is proficient at maximising the distance that he or she knocks opponents back after a successful hit. The character adds his Attack Combat Value, in metres, to the knockback distance inflicted upon the target of a successful hit.

Blind Fighting

The character does not suffer penalties associated with attacking or defending with melee weapons or while unarmed in poor light, absolute darkness, or against an invisible opponent.

Blind Shooting

The character suffers half penalties associated with attacking with ranged weapons in poor light, absolute darkness, or against an invisible opponent. This technique can be assigned twice to reduce the penalty to zero. The character must be capable of detecting the general presence of the target, however, through one of his or her senses (smell, hearing, sixth sense, etc.).

Block Ranged Attacks

Under normal circumstances, a character cannot use a Block Defence (page 105) against a ranged attack. With this technique, a character gains this defensive option.

Concealment

The character has an unearthly ability to conceal weapons about his or her person. As long as the character has something to hide the weapons (even if it only long hair or a light robe) the character's weapons will not be noticed by anything short of an actual physical search, and such a search is conducted at a -8 Check Value penalty. A Special Attack weapon with the Concealable Ability is even harder to find: searches suffer a -12 Check Value penalty.

Deflection

If the character makes a successful Block Defence, he or she can deflect a standard melee or ranged attack away harmlessly without damaging the blocking object. The GM may decide that some types of attacks cannot be deflected. When trying to deflect a Special Attack (page 42), the Block Defence roll is penalised: -2 for each Level of the Special Attack.

Judge Opponent

The character can judge his or her opponent's approximate Combat Value and weapon Skill Levels from the foe's attitude and posture even without actually seeing him or her fight. Additionally, the character can accurately estimate the opponent's remaining Health Points. For both of these advantages, the GM may decide to provide descriptive indications such as "your foe is much better than you with a sword, but if you can get past his guard, a single solid cut should finish him off, rather than saying "the enemy's ACV is 12, with a Melee Attack (Sword) Skill of 2, and he has 15 Health Points remaining."

Leap Attack

The character can make leaping attacks with his or her melee weapon, delivering additional damage due to momentum. Any time the character has a higher Initiative than his or her opponent, he or she may attempt a leaping attack. If the strike is successful (it hits and the target fails a defence) the character gets an extra +5 bonus to damage and may additionally add his or her Acrobatics Skill Level (if any) to the damage. If the character fails to hit, however, or the opponent succeeds with his or her defence, the character is off balance and receives a -2 penalty to any further defence checks until his or her turn to act in the following round.

Lightning Reflexes

The character reacts quickly in combat and frequently outmanoeuvres opponents. Each time this technique is selected, the character gains +5 to all his or her Initiative rolls.

One Shot Left

The character will always have at least one projectile remaining for his or her ranged weapon, even after an extended combat. This might be a final bullet in a gun, arrow in a quiver, or stone in a sling. This option does not remove the need to reload weapons in a game that uses realistic ammunition rules, but rather assures that the character will not be forced to reload at a critical moment. One Shot Left does not affect weapons or attacks built using the Limited Shots Disability (page 46).

Portable Armoury

The character will always have easy access to any weapon required for a particular task, including illegal weapons and accessories not available to the general public. The actual weapons and accessories must still be acquired via the Gadgets Attribute (page 28), but remarkably, the character can access them whenever he or she needs them instead of being forced to return to where they are normally stored. Characters with Portable Armoury may also make field modifications on their weapons, switching options such as laser sights or scopes in a single round.

Reflection

If the character has the Deflection Combat Technique (see above) and makes both a successful Deflection defence and a successful attack roll (which uses an attack action), he or she can reflect a standard melee or ranged attack towards any target within range (including the attacker) without damaging the blocking object. This Reflection is treated as a normal attack against the target using standard attack rules (page 98). The GM may decide that some types of attacks cannot be reflected.

Steady Hand

This is the ability to use Attack Combat Skills with ease while the character is moving quickly (running at full speed, flying at high speeds, riding a horse or in a vehicle, etc.) or otherwise engaged in complex stunts. This greatly reduces the penalties a character normally suffers for attacking while in motion. Each penalty is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0). A character with this ability may also use weapons in conjunction with the Acrobatics Skill, and may aim while they are moving.

Two Weapons

The character can effectively fight with two melee or ranged weapons at once against the same or different targets, provided both weapons are designed for one-handed use. When using two weapons, the character can attack twice using the normal Two Weapons rules (page 102), but the penalty for doing so is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0). Alternatively, the character can attack with one weapon and defend with another receiving a -2 penalty to attack checks he or she makes but adding a +2 bonus to his or her defence checks vs. melee or unarmed attacks. This bonus lasts until the character's turn in the following round.

Weapons Encyclopaedia

A character has the ability to recall the vital statistics and important quirks of practically all known commercially available weapons. This includes, but is not limited to, its general level of reliability as well as all vital statistics — material composition, manufacturer, ammunition capacity, calibre, model year, possible outfitted accessories, etc. Characters without this ability will only have such information on weapons they actually own or use regularly and will need to successfully roll a Mind-based Military Science (Hardware Recognition) Skill check to recall important details. In addition, Weapons Encyclopaedia also includes knowledge on acquiring weapons, so characters will have a +4 bonus on any Street Sense or Business Management Skill checks needed to locate or buy legal or illegal weapons.

Computer Scanning

Type:	Special
Cost:	2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat:	Mind
Required PMVs:	None
Optional PMVs:	None
Progression:	Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area
Reduction:	Access but cannot understand
Restrictions:	Under certain conditions; in particular regions; specific types of computers or data

With a successful Mind Stat check, characters with this Attribute can access, read, and understand data from all computers or "Silicon Age" technology in the surrounding area. In *Dreaming Cities* this Attribute will often represent some form of techno-magic or psychic ability, or possibly the powers of technically-adept entities like gremlins. When attempting to access a computer built as an Item of Power, the character suffers a penalty to the Mind Stat check of -2 for each Level of the Item of Power. The Attribute Level determines the maximum area in which the computers can be scanned. To read multiple computers over a network, the area Level must be high enough to encompass the target computers. Since this Attribute can be a very powerful tool in a campaign, the GM and players should ensure it is used appropriately.

Characters who can control and manipulate computer data should acquire the Dynamic Powers Attribute with a computer data specialisation. Alternatively, characters who can control machine technology such as automobiles and construction equipment might instead possess the Telekinesis Attribute (page 48), with a specific restriction.

Contamination

Type: Special
Cost: 2 or 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: Targets
Optional PMVs: Area, Range
Progression: Time Progression Chart Reversed, starting at 6 months
Reduction: Partial effectiveness
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; specific targets; temporary change

This Attribute represents the character's ability to transform other people (or animals, or objects) into entities like him or herself. Frequently, this victim can then contaminate even more people. The method should be specified when the character is created. It might be similar to myths behind the vampire legend — the character's blood carries a "plague" that, when ingested, mutates the person over a matter of hours or days. Alternatively, the character might lay an egg or seed (real or metaphorical) in the body of his or her prey, which will later hatch within the victim, killing him or her as a new monster is born. The character might even need to perform some special ritual that alters the victim. Whatever the case, the conditions under which the victim can become "contaminated" must be specified.

For 2 Points/Level, contamination is "difficult" — the victim must be willing, unconscious, or restrained for deliberate contagion to occur, or the target must perform an unusual activity (such as eating a morsel of the character's flesh).

For 4 Points/Level contamination is "easy" — the contagion might be similar to a traditional werewolf attack, where a scratch or bite results in a victim becoming a werewolf. The GM can add special conditions, limitations, or effects to ensure that becoming a monster is a curse and not a blessing.

The higher the Level of Contamination, the faster the transformation occurs. There should always be some means of curing or delaying the eventual mutation, however. Possible cures include the death of the creature that inflicted the contaminant, radical surgery, blood transfusion, or a successful mystical healing.

The GM will decide whether a player character who is turned into a monster remains in the player's control or is reclassified as an NPC. Any retention (dreams, memories, etc.) of the victim's former existence depends on the nature of the contamination and whether the victim has been "transformed," "devoured," or "reborn" in the process. A person who has been successfully contaminated will usually gain a certain number of Attributes "paid for" with the Bonus Points acquired by assigning new character Defects (often including Cursed, Ism, Marked, Permanent, and Owned, the last one representing servitude to his or her new master). Usually the mutation will result in a monstrous form similar to that of the character responsible. Thus, a spider alien that laid an egg in its victim may produce another spider alien, the victim of a vampire will grow fangs, etc. The GM should be wary of potentially undesirable possibilities such as a werewolf character infecting the entire group of characters, thereby creating an entire group of werewolves.

The Contamination Attribute usually allows the creator or mother some measure of control over the newly transformed character. In these instances, the Level of Contamination is added as a favourable modifier to any Mind Control attempts performed against the subject.

A variation to Contamination inflicts the target with some sort of curse or disease, rather than transforming him or her into a different type of creature. Examples of these afflictions include rapid ageing, debilitating diseases, sensitivity to specific elements, etc.

Creation

Type: Special
Cost: 2 or 3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Required PMVs: Duration
Optional PMVs: Range
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 kg
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; creation is visually flawed; limited control over actual object created

This Attribute allows a character to create a non-living object (or set of connected objects, like clothing or a gun and its ammunition). Creation costs 3 Points/Level if the character can create anything (within the limits of his or her Level). It costs 2 Points/Level if the creation is limited to a general class of objects such as "metal," "weapons," "clothing," or "food."

The character cannot create new objects outside his or her experience. The character could create a book, painting or videotape, but the content must be something with which he or she was already familiar. Likewise, a character who had no familiarity with guns could not create one using Creation. The GM may choose to require a Mind Stat check (or relevant Skill check) if the character attempts a particularly complex creation. Failure may indicate the created object does not function properly, or is otherwise flawed; this is especially applicable when creating complex technological devices. Unless the GM decides otherwise, Creation is only able to make objects that could be classified as Gadgets; it cannot create Items of Power.

The created object will remain in existence for a period of time indicated by the Duration PMV. The ability to change one object into another is covered by the Transmutation Attribute (page 50).

Damage Absorption

Type: Special
Cost: 8 or 10 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +10 damage converted into Health Points each Level
Reduction: Partial effectiveness
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific attack types; when battling specific opponents

A character with this Attribute can absorb up to 10 damage received from physical attacks (such as guns, swords, punches, or energy blasts) each Level, and change them into a corresponding number of Health Points before damage is inflicted. The new Health Points are added to the character's current total immediately, which may temporarily raise the total above its normal maximum. Damage that is blocked by the character's Armour or Force Field Attributes cannot be absorbed. For 8 Points/Level, the character's Health Point total can never rise above his or her normal maximum (extra points are lost). For 10 Points/Level, the character's Health Points total can be raised as high as twice their normal maximum value (for a duration of one hour).

Damage Absorption does not convert damage from non-physical or complex attacks, including Special Attacks with the following Abilities: Burning, Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, Mind or Soul Attack, Stun, Tangle.

This Attribute is most often possessed by powerful demons or monsters who are all-but-immune to ordinary physical attacks.

Defence Combat Mastery

Type: Mundane
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Combat Value)
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 Defence Combat Value each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

Defence Combat Mastery denotes either an innate "danger instinct," or the character's intimate knowledge of a wide range of defensive combat techniques covering all aspects of armed and unarmed encounters (including Special Attacks and ranged weapons). Individual Defence Combat Skills (page 59) let a character specialise with particular weapons or specific styles, but Defence Combat Mastery allows a character to pick up any weapon (or use none at all) and still proficiently defend. See page 71 for more information on the Defence Combat Value.

Divine Relationship

Type: Mundane
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 dice re-roll per game session each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Time limitation; combat checks; Stat/Skill checks

A character possessing a Divine Relationship may have powerful forces acting as his or her guardian, which can beneficially influence the outcome of important events. Alternatively, the character may be really lucky, have great karma, or can subtly influence his or her surroundings with thought alone. This relationship is represented through the re-rolling of undesirable dice rolls (this includes undesirable re-rolls as well). The player may choose to use the original roll, or any of the re-rolls, when determining the success of the action. The Level dictates the number of times dice can be re-rolled in a single role-playing session, though the GM can alter this time frame as desired.

Duplicate

Type: Special
Cost: 6 or 8 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: Duration
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +10 Character Points to build duplicates each Level
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; only certain Attributes are duplicated; shorter duration

A character with this ability can create one or more independent, self-aware duplicates of him or herself, each of which have a maximum number of Character Points dictated by the Attribute Level. The duplicate is not under the character's control, but will act in a manner consistent with the original character. Multiple duplicates can be in existence at any time, but creating a duplicate requires one non-combat action.

Duplicates only remain in existence for a limited time, usually for a single scene or long enough to complete a single task (Duration PMV is typically 1-5). Since this Attribute can have tremendous impact on a campaign if used too frequently, the GM should impose restrictions on its use as necessary. The player should consider what consequences, if any, will arise should an enemy kill the duplicate.

There are two different types of Duplicate: Customised (8 Points/Level) and Proportionate (6 Points/Level).

Customised Duplicate

The character can assign the duplicate's Character Points as desired when this Attribute is first acquired, provided the duplicate does not gain any Attributes or Defects the original character does not possess. Additionally, Attributes and Defects cannot be raised to Levels that would exceed the original character's Levels. The GM may waive this restriction if it seems appropriate. Once the Character Points are allocated to the duplicate in a specific pattern during character creation, the distribution cannot be changed; all duplicates ever made will be identical.

Proportionate Duplicate

If the Duplicate Level is not sufficiently high to create a duplicate with the exact same number of Character Points as the original, a less-powerful duplicate is created. In these cases, the reduced Character Points are distributed over the duplicate's Stats, and Attributes, Skills, and Defects proportionately with the original character. The one exception to this rule involves the Duplicate Attribute; the character may decide that his or her twin does not have the Duplicate Attribute.

Dynamic Powers

Type: Special
Cost: 10, 15, or 20 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Variable
Required PMVs: Special
Optional PMVs: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: One aspect of category
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; use weakens character, specific targets

Dynamic Powers represents extensive control over an element, ideology, natural phenomenon, or sphere of influence. At low Levels, the character is an initiate, and can only effect minor changes in the Attribute. At high Levels, the character holds mastery over a Realm, and has an intimate understanding of all things relating to the Attribute. This is a very open-ended Attribute and should be discussed with the GM at length to determine the effects and limitations in his or her game. Proper use of Dynamic Powers will not unbalance the game, but rather can provide many opportunities for character innovation. As an alternative option to Dynamic Powers, see the Power Flux Attribute (page 39).

Minor or small categories cost 10 Points/Level. Examples include: a classical element (water, fire, wind, earth), a limited concept or idea (lust, protection, charm, pride), a minor aspect of nature (temperature, friction, insects, sunlight, clouds, orbits, sea creatures), or a limited sphere of influence (keys, silence, cats, writing, guns, a small locality, nutrition).

Major or large categories cost 15 Points/Level. Examples include: a broad concept or idea (love, communication, travel, strength), a major aspect of nature (weather, magnetism, gravity, electricity, animals), or a broad sphere of influence (cities, computer data, health, truth, manufacturing, fertility, weapons, drugs, shapeshifting).

Primal or universal categories cost 20 Points/Level. Examples include core concepts and primary spheres of influence: Time, War, Death, Life, Earth, Stars, Thought, Magic, Force, Math, Self, Law, Chaos, Creation, Heaven, Hell, Dimensions, Dreams, and others.

If the character makes a successful Stat check (the relevant Stat is determined by the GM), he or she can manipulate aspects of the chosen area of influence (see Chapter 7: Game Mechanics). The extent of control is determined by the Dynamic Powers Attribute Level and any relevant PMVs. Since this is a story-driven Attribute, there are few definitive rules regarding what a character can and cannot do with a particular Attribute Level.

For those players and Game Masters who desire a more rigid outline, the recommended guideline is as follows: characters can influence their area with maximum control approximating the abilities listed for other Attributes, with

total Levels corresponding to twice the Dynamic Powers Level. No single effect can exceed a Level equal to the Dynamic Powers Level, however. The PMVs available to the character while creating effects is limited by the Dynamic Power PMV Ranks. Under normal circumstances, Dynamic Powers cannot imitate the Transfer Attribute; additionally, the GM may wish to restrict some Characteristic Attributes such as Organisational Ties, Servant, and Wealth.

For example, a character with Level 4 Dynamic Powers (Weather) can initiate effects similar in scope to a total of 8 Levels of other Attributes at once; the maximum single effect is limited to Level 4 abilities, though. This means that the character could activate weather-associated abilities approximating: 8 Level 1 Attributes; or 2 Level 4 Attributes; or 1 Level 4, and 2 Level 2 Attributes; or 1 Level 3, 2 Level 2, and 1 Level 1 Attributes; or any other combination of Levels that adds to 8 Levels total, provided no effect exceeds a Level 4 ability. Likewise, a character with Level 10 Dynamic Powers can initiate effects similar in scope to a total of 20 Levels of other Attributes at once, provided no effect exceeds a Level 10 ability. Each ability must operate within the PMV Ranks assigned to Dynamic Powers.

In addition, any effect that is an attack on another entity (one that is best represented by the Special Attacks Attribute, page 42) also requires a successful attack check to hit; the target will normally be allowed a defence check to avoid it. If the controlled area produces something that has a more indirect effect, the target should be allowed to attempt an appropriate Stat Check to resist its influence.

Elasticity

Type: Special
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: Attribute always used in same way
Restrictions: Time limit; naked form only; stretching inflicts pain

The character can stretch or contort his or her limbs and/or body to a superhuman degree. Increased Levels not only provide greater flexibility, but also the control over fine manipulation (such as using a stretched finger to move specific tumbling mechanisms on a key lock). At high Levels, characters can squeeze under doors and through small holes, as well as mimic crude shapes. While stretched, the character receives +1 Unarmed Attack/Defence (Grappling) Skill bonuses for each Level of Elasticity. Extremely malleable characters — who can contort their bodies into a virtually unlimited number of shapes to gain the benefits of other Attributes — should acquire the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 22), rather than Elasticity.

Level 1-3 The character can stretch 1 (L1), 2 (L2), or 3 (L3) body parts up to 5x their regular dimensions.

Level 4+ The character can stretch his or her entire body. The length the body can be stretched follows the Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 metres (Level 4).

This Attribute is most often possessed by fantastic creatures, such as a snake demon.

Energy Bonus

Type: Mundane
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +20 Energy Points each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

This Attribute is only available in campaigns where Energy Points are used. Possessing this Attribute increases the Energy Points of the character, allowing him or her to draw on a greater pool of energy reserves in times of need. See page 71 for information on Energy Points and their uses.

Enhanced [Stat]

Type: Special
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 Stat Value each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Only under certain conditions, time limit, does not apply to all dice rolls

This Attribute is useful when a character should have one or more high Stat Values, but the player wants to indicate that the elevated Stats were gained after a supernatural event occurred. For most instances, assigning Character Points to the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute or to the Stat directly results in the same benefit: a character with a Body of 15 or a Body of 7 with Enhanced [Body] at Level 8 both have a Body of 15.

Environmental Influence

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: Area, Duration
Optional PMVs: Range
Progression: Linear; influence over +1 environment each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Very specific influence effect, only under certain conditions, easy to counteract

The character can initiate minor influence over environmental conditions such as light, darkness, heat, cold, sound, specific weather conditions, etc., as determined by the GM. The control is not sufficient to inflict significant damage on individuals or objects within the Area PMV of influence unless the target is particularly susceptible to damage from that environment (such as delicate plants dying from cold air, or a vampire with a Bane Defect to bright light). For damaging environmental effects, the character should acquire the Special Attack Attribute (page 42) with the Dependent Defect (page 64). For enhanced influence over the environment (such as weather control), see the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 22).

This ability is commonly possessed by ghosts, spirits, and mages.

Exorcism

Type: Mundane
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: Targets
Optional PMVs: Area, Range
Progression: Linear; -1 Soul Stat each Level
Reduction: Fewer Stat Values drained
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; usage inflicts pain; against specific opponents

A character with this Attribute knows how to perform or create rituals, charms or spells capable of driving out, binding, or banishing supernatural entities. Exactly what entities qualify will depend on the nature of the game world; in some settings, undead, such as zombies or ghosts, may be vulnerable to Exorcism. Using this Attribute on other "normal" targets has no effect.

Each attempt at Exorcism counts as an attack and requires a Soul Stat check with a -1 bonus per Level of the Attribute. A ritual action is





also necessary in most cases, such as a chant or mystical gestures, or use of particular objects, such as holy water or spirit wards. During the Exorcism attempt, the character is completely focused on the Exorcism and cannot defend against other attacks. In addition, the targets entities must fail a Soul Stat check, with a -1 penalty for each Level of the Exorcism Attribute.

If the attack succeeds (the Exorcist makes his or her Soul Stat check and the entities fails their own Soul Stat checks) the entities will be affected. They cannot attack the exorcist (and any companions sheltered behind him or her) for one round. In addition, the entities each loses one Soul Stat value for every Exorcism Attribute Level. Although prevented from attacking the exorcist for one round, the entities may choose to take other actions, such as taunting or threatening the exorcist, fleeing, or even vanishing.

Exorcism may be repeated each round with successes draining additional Soul Stat values from the targets, and failures having no effect (and leaving the entities free to attack the character). If the entities are ever reduced to a Soul Stat of 0 or lower as a result of the spiritual attack, they are either banished to their own dimension (if normally extra-dimensional), turned to dust, or permanently "sealed" in an object or in a mystic location (an Item or Place of Power may be ideal) until a specific action is taken that breaks the seal (GM's option).

If the campaign uses Energy Points (page 71), Exorcism may instead reduce the entities' Energy Point by 5 for each Attribute Level, rather than reduce their Soul Stats (GM's discretion). If the entities are ever reduced to a 0 Energy Points (or lower), they are banished as noted earlier.

Extra Arms

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 1 extra arm
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Extra arms are cumbersome; arms only function sometimes; arms are awkwardly placed

Unless indicated otherwise, all characters possess two arms and hands. By assigning this Characteristic Attribute, the character can acquire more. An "arm" is defined loosely as an appendage that can reach out and manipulate objects. A trunk, tentacle, or prehensile tail is an arm; an appendage that simply ends in a gun-barrel, melee weapon, stump, or tool mount is not. Legs with paws or feet are not usually considered to be "arms" unless the character has good manipulation ability when using them (such as the way chimpanzees can use their feet to grasp objects). Extra arms are useful for holding onto several things at once, but do not give extra attacks (for that ability, see Extra Attacks Attribute, below).

Possessing only one arm or no arms is reflected by the Physical Impairment Defect (page 68).

Extra Attacks

Type: Mundane
Cost: 8 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 attack per round each Level
Reduction: Less often than each round
Restrictions: Extra attacks must all be similar in nature; only extra melee attacks; only extra ranged attacks

This Attribute reflects the character's ability to use every offensive combat situation to his or her benefit. Each round, the character may make one or more additional offensive or non-combat actions. In addition, unless two or more opponents are very close together, armed or unarmed hand-to-hand attacks must target the same person.

The GM must decide when the character can use his or her extra attacks. The suggested method spreads the actions roughly evenly over the character's Initiative range. For example, if a character had three attacks and rolled an Initiative of 18, he or she would attack on Initiative numbers 18, 12, and 6. If the enemy rolls an Initiative of 35 and has 5 attacks, he or she can attack on Initiative numbers 35, 28, 21, 14, and 7. This option has the advantage that it spreads actions over the entire combat round, but it involves the player paying closer attention to the Initiative numbers. Alternatively, the attacks may be carried out at the same time during the character's single Initiative.

Extra Defences

Type: Mundane
Cost: 3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 defence per round each Level
Reduction: Less often than each round
Restrictions: Extra defences must all be similar in nature; only extra melee defences; only extra ranged defences

This Attribute reflects the character's ability to use every defensive combat situation to his or her benefit. Each round, the character may make one or more additional defensive or non-combat actions. Additionally, penalties for performing more than one defensive action each round (page 106) only apply after the extra defences are used. For example, a -4 penalty is applied to the fifth defence for a character with Level 3 Extra Defences.

Features

Type: Mundane
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 feature each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

The character possesses various secondary abilities that grant useful, but minor, advantages. Features are typically possessed by non-humans and reflect various, minor biological or technological advantages. Examples of racial features include homing instinct, secondary eyelids, longevity, a pouch, feathers, soft fur, moulting ability, scent glands, diagnostic equipment, gyrocompass, etc. A wide range of other Attributes covers other more useful features such as gills, wings, fangs, and enhanced senses.

One additional Feature is appearance, representing beauty, cuteness, or good looks. Assigning appearance multiple times indicates heightened levels of extreme beauty.

Flight

Type: Special
Cost: 2, 3, or 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 kph
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; Stat/Skill check required to fly safely

A character with Flight can fly through an atmosphere or in space. The method used to achieve flight can vary greatly: wings, paranormal power, rotors, rockets, anti-gravity, psionic levitation, magic, or some other technique.

Depending on the speed at which the character is moving, opponents may suffer a penalty to hit the character (see Attacking Moving Targets, page 104). A fast-moving character may have an attack penalty as well.

Flight costs 4 Points/Level if the character can hover and fly at variable speeds, take off and land vertically, or stop in mid-air. This is the most common type of flight possessed by characters.

Flight costs 3 Points/Level if the flyer cannot hover, but instead flies like a normal airplane. Thus, the character needs a smooth surface or running start for landing and take off, and must maintain a minimum speed (at least 1/10 of his or her maximum speed) once airborne to avoid crashing.

Flight costs 2 Points/Level if the flyer is either a Skimmer/Hovercraft or a Glider:

Skimmer / Hovercraft

The character is limited to skimming no more than a metre or two off the ground or water. He or she may be riding on a cushion of air, low-flying carpet or broom, or even travelling along a magical weave or track such as a ley line.

Glider

The flyer can only become airborne if he or she launches from a high place (like a tree or rooftop) or from a fast-moving vehicle. Additionally, he or she can only gain speed by diving, or gain altitude by riding thermals.

Force Field

Type: Special
Cost: 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: Area
Optional PMVs: Duration, Range
Progression: Linear; -20 damage reduction each Level
Reduction: Lower damage reduction
Restrictions: None (see Limited Disability, below)

A Force Field is an energy field around the character that protects against incoming attacks. Force Fields can represent magical barriers, telekinetic shields, or technological "screens." The Area PMV is essential for the Force Field; Area Level 2 is required to make it a form-fitting Force Field for a character. Additionally, Duration is only required if the character wishes to create a Force Field that remains unattended. In this case, the Duration indicates how long the Force Field will remain in place before vanishing. Force Fields created in this way cannot move — they are static structures.

A typical Force Field is different from Armour, since it can be battered down by a sufficiently powerful attack. A Force Field can be "up" or "down." When down, it does not stop any damage. Unless the Detectable Defect (page 65) is assigned, an up Force Field is invisible. Force Field status must be determined at the start of the character's actions for the round and cannot be changed until his or her turn to act in the next round.

Attack damage is first applied to the Force Field, with any additional penetrating damage applied against Armour (if any). Thus, if a weapon hit successfully penetrates a Force Field, the Armour Attribute can still protect against it. A Force Field can be reduced or even knocked down by a sufficiently powerful attack. If an attack does more damage than the Force Field prevents (even if the rest of the damage is absorbed by Armour), the Force Field temporarily loses one Level of effectiveness. The character can only regain Levels if the field is down and regenerating, unless the Regenerating Ability is assigned. A Force Field recovers one Level every round it is turned off and not in operation ("down"). A Force Field that is knocked down to zero Levels automatically shuts off to regenerate.

A Force Field can be given additional customised Abilities or Disabilities. Each Ability taken reduces the protection provided by the Field by 20 points, but gives it some special capability. Each Disability taken increases the protection of the Field by 20 points but adds some sort of weakness.

Force Field Abilities

Air-Tight

The field prevents the passage of gas molecules. While this is a beneficial defence against toxic gas attacks, a character in the field will eventually deplete all breathable oxygen.

Blocks Incorporeal

The field prevents the passage of astral, ethereal, or otherwise incorporeal characters through it. Even someone with Insubstantial Level 12 cannot penetrate the Force Field.

Blocks Teleport

A character cannot teleport into or out of the field. This Ability cannot be used with the Shield Only Disability.

Field-Penetrating

The Force Field can be used to interpenetrate other Force Fields while making attacks (or moving through them). If the character's Force Field is in direct contact with an enemy Force Field, and can stop more damage than the foe's, the enemy's field offers no protection against the character's attack, but it is still up. In this case, the character may actually move through the neutralised field.

Offensive

The field delivers a powerful electric or energy shock to anyone who touches it. The damage equal 10 for every 20 damage that the Force Field currently stops. Consequently, the damage delivered by an Offensive Force Field decreases as the Field becomes damaged and is knocked down in levels of effectiveness.

Regenerating

If the character uses one non-combat action to regenerate the Force Field, it regains one lost Level of effectiveness. A character with the Extra Attacks Attribute (page 26) can regenerate multiples Levels each round.

Force Field Disabilities

Both Directions

The Force Field blocks attacks moving in any direction, both inwards and outwards, thereby virtually preventing the user from attacking when the Force Field is up. This means that when the Force Field is active and the user makes an attack, the Force Field will affect their attack as it would an outside attacker's (reducing the damage inflicted and going down in Level if its protection value is exceeded). This Disability cannot be used with the Shield Only Disability.

Full Impact

This Disability is only available in campaigns that use Knockback rules (page 109). Whenever the character is hit with an impacting physical attack, he or she can feel the force of the attack though he or she may not receive any damage. Consequently, the character is affected by the attack's full Knockback value, before the damage is reduced by the Force Field.

Internal

The field is only usable inside a specific building or other structure. This can be used to represent a Force Field that protects a vital part of a building's interior such as a wizard's magical sanctum or a sacred temple, or a character who draws personal Force Field energy from some sort of power source inside his or her headquarters or lair.

Limited

The field has a major or minor limitation. An example of a minor limitation would be a Force Field that is effective against ranged attacks but not melee or one that offers full-strength frontal and rear protection but only half-strength protection from above. An example of a major limitation would be a Force Field that prevents the character from making any attacks during

operation, one that is unstable in certain types of environments (such as sub-zero temperatures or near water), or one that only works against a very specific type of weapon (such as lasers). A minor limitation counts as one Disability, a major limitation as two Disabilities.

Shield Only

This option is only available for Force Fields with Area PMV of Level 1 or 2. The Field does not entirely surround the character's body. Instead, it is a shield that the user must deliberately interpose in front of an attack using a Block Defence (page 105). The character must also possess the Combat Technique (Block Ranged Attacks) Attribute to use the force shield in a Block Defence against ranged attacks. If the character successfully defends, the Force Shield can protect against damage associated with the Attribute Level. This Disability cannot be used with the Block Teleport Ability or Both Directions Disability. It counts as three Disabilities.

Static

The character cannot move when generating the field. He or she may still attack or otherwise act, but must stay in one place (or continue to drift if floating through space, continue to fall if falling, etc.).

Gadgeteer

Type: Mundane
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 2x normal building rate
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; specific types of machines; requires expensive/consumable equipment

The character has an innate knack for creating, modifying, and working with complex machines. Unlike someone who is merely well trained in a particular technical skill, a Gadgeteer is a natural and is able to flip through a tech manual for an advanced technology in 30 seconds and figure out a way to repair the machine in an hour or so. Most Gadgeteers have high Levels in Electronics and Mechanical Skills as well.

A character with this Attribute can also build new and modify existing Gadgets at an astonishing rate, provided he or she has appropriate parts and facilities. In game terms, this means he or she can modify existing Gadgets or technology-based Items of Power by exchanging Attributes and Defects, as long as the overall Point total is unchanged. A Gadgeteer can also build Gadgets and Items of Power, but their creation requires the character to allocate the appropriate number of Character Points.

Alternatively, the GM may describe this Attribute as "Magical Gadgeteer" ("enchanter") that allows a character to modify magical Items of Power by exchanging Attributes and Defects.

Gadgets

Type: Mundane
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 major and +4 minor Gadgets each Level
Reduction: Only major or minor Gadgets
Restrictions: Limited functioning; poor workmanship; consumable

The Gadgets Attribute represents a character's access to useful equipment. Characters do not need to spend Character Points for items that are legal, inexpensive, and mundane in the campaign setting (such as clothing, a backpack, a knife, or consumer goods), unless taken in quantity (GM's option). For example, "a complete tool box" would be a single minor Gadget; a single wrench is mundane. GMs may ask players to allot Points to this Attribute, however, if their characters will begin the game with numerous pieces of equipment to which the average person might not have easy access such as weapons, body armour, or specialised professional equipment.

Gadgets cannot include magic items, secret prototypes, or equipment that is significantly more technologically advanced than what is standard in the setting (instead, see Item of Power Attribute, page 32). It can include common civilian vehicles appropriate to the setting (for example, a car, truck, light airplane, or motorbike in the present day). The GM may allow it to include minor magical items, if they are not significantly more powerful than existing technological devices. Less common or more expensive vehicles should count as several items of gear. The GM always has the final say on whether or not an item is available to the characters. Some examples of Gadgets can be found in Chapter X; the GM can create the statistics of other items.

Although characters may have items that are owned by the organisations to which they belong, they still must acquire these items as Gadgets if they will make regular use of them (though the Conditional Ownership Defect may apply; page 64). Thus, a police officer would use Gadgets for a pistol, police car, or handcuffs, although these items are property of the police department. This rule is intended mainly for play balance and, naturally, the GM has final say on this issue.

Each Level in this Attribute permits the character to take one major and four minor Gadgets. Alternatively, the character can exchange one major Gadget with an extra four minor Gadgets (or vice-versa). Use the guidelines below to differentiate between major and minor Gadgets:

Minor

The item is somewhat hard to get, or rather expensive. It is something available in a shop or store or from a skilled artisan, but it costs as much as an average person's weekly or monthly wage. Alternatively, the item can be less expensive but needs a license or black market contact to acquire. Non-standard items that modify or improve other items of gear, but are not functional by themselves (for example, a scope for a rifle, silencer for a pistol, or a supercharged engine for an automobile) are also minor Gadgets; for more information, see page 262 and 266.

Examples of minor Gadgets include: weapon and vehicle modifications, handguns, melee weapons such as swords, premium medical kits, night vision goggles, full camping gear, burglary tools, expensive tool kits, and personal computers.

Major

The gear is usually illegal for civilians, but it may be issued to an elite law enforcement agency, an average soldier, or a government spy. Modern-day examples of major Gadgets include machine guns, tactical armour, and grenade launchers. Major gear can also include quite expensive but commercially available equipment such as a workshop, car, or motorbike. Very expensive items (such as an airplane, big rig truck, science lab, or medical facility) counts as two or more items (GM's discretion).

Table 3-4: Grow

Current Grow Level	Height Speed Range Multiplier	Armour Immovable Mass Multiplier	Superstrength Level	Damage Bonus	Enemy's Attack Bonus
1	2	10	1	+5	+1
2	3	30	2	+10	+2
3	4	60	3	+15	+3
4	5	100	4	+20	+4
5	6	200	5	+25	+5
6	7	400	6	+30	+6
7	10	1,000	7	+35	+7
8	20	10,000	8	+40	+8
9	40	50,000	9	+45	+9
10	80	500,000	10	+50	+10
+1	x2	x10	+1	+5	+1

Grow

Type: Special
Cost: 10 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Variable; see chart
Reduction: Associated Attributes not gained, or gained more slowly
Restrictions: Time limit on growth; naked form only, growth inflicts pain

This Attribute reflects the ability to increase the stature and mass of the character, giving him or her access to several other Attributes and effects (see chart). It is a common power for magical animals in fairy tales. In addition to increased height and mass, the character gains a corresponding Level of the Armour, Immovable, and Superstrength Attributes. Also, the character's running speed, weapon range, and damage inflicted by physical attacks and Special Attacks (physical, not energy-based) increase as the character grows. The damage bonus of +5 per Grow Level is in addition to those bonuses gained by Superstrength for muscle-powered weapons (see Superstrength, page 48). Finally, opponents attacking the character gain a bonus to their attack checks equal to the character's current Grow Level size.

In campaigns that do not use Knockback (page 44), the cost of Grow should be reduced to 9 Points/Level instead of 10.

Healing

Type: Special
Cost: 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Soul
Required PMVs: Targets
Optional PMVs: Area, Range
Progression: Linear; +20 restored Health Points each Level
Reduction: Fewer Health Points restored
Restrictions: Specific targets; specific wound types; character suffers damage when Healing others

This Attribute allows a character to heal a target's injuries (including him or herself; for continuous healing, see the Regeneration Attribute, page 40). At higher Healing Levels, the character can also revive someone who is "clinically" dead but not actually brain-dead (Level 3+), repair massive trauma such as lost limbs or organs (Level 5+), or restore a character who was cut in two (Level 7+). No healer can repair someone who was blown to bits, disintegrated, or dead for more than a few minutes, however.

The Attribute Level dictates the maximum number of Health Points that healers can restore to a particular target in a single day. This cannot be exceeded, even if multiple healers work on a subject; the combined Health Points restored cannot exceed the maximum Health Points that the character with the highest Level of Healing could restore. The subject must have at least a full day's rest before he or she can benefit from any additional healing.

Heightened Awareness

Type: Mundane
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +2 Check Value bonus each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; situations detected by only one sense; specific situations

The character possesses a high degree of situational awareness. He or she is usually very alert and receives a Check Value bonus to notice nearby hidden things, such as concealed objects, ambushes, or anything else related to sensory awareness. The bonuses of Heightened Awareness are cumulative with those of Heightened Senses.

Heightened Senses

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 sense or technique each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; weakened technique; adverse effects upon detection

A character with Heightened Senses has one or more senses that have been sharpened to a superhuman level of acuity. It can represent either the preternatural sharpening of a specific sense honed by special training (such as a blind person's trained sense of touch) or the enhanced senses of a paranormal or technologically augmented character. Additionally, several Levels of Heightened Senses can reflect the capabilities of sensors built into spaceships and other commercial or military vehicles. For each Level of the Heightened Senses Attribute, the character will either gain one enhanced sense (Type I) or one sense technique (Type II). The character must make a successful Body Stat check to detect and pinpoint a specific target within a large area (for example, to listen to a specific conversation thought the background noise of the city).

The Heightened Awareness Attribute (page 29) allows for a lower Level of enhancement for all of a character's senses.

Type I

One of the character's five senses — hearing, smell, vision, taste, or touch — is enhanced, and can operate over an area of several city blocks. The character may take the same sense twice, which doubles the effect and extends the area of detection. A character using a Heightened Sense has a +4 bonus (+8 if the sense was heightened twice) on Stat checks that relate to using that sense to perceive things that someone with human-level senses might conceivably notice.

Type II

The character has one Heightened Sense technique, which extends beyond human capabilities. Examples of techniques include: electric current detection; infravision; magnetic field detection; microscopic vision; radar sense; radio reception; sonar detection; ultrasonic hearing; ultravision; vibration detection; X-ray vision. Most techniques only work at short range, often requiring line of sight.

Henchmen

Type: Mundane
Cost: 1 or 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 1 henchman
Reduction: Fewer Henchmen available
Restrictions: Limited to specific type of henchmen; henchmen consume the character's resources; henchmen have further limited Stats/Attributes/Defects/Skills

The Henchmen Attribute represents the extent of a character's loyal and dedicated human resources. Henchmen — sometimes known as groupies, stooges, toadies, or flunkies — are always eager to carry out the character's commands, and ask for very little in return. They always aim to please, even at their own expense.

For 1 Point/Level, the Henchmen are not warriors; they may get in the way of an enemy, or fight in self-defence, but will not attack. For 2 Points/Level, the Henchmen will take up arms at the request of their master. For specific talented and loyal battle-ready followers, see the Agents or Servant Attribute (page 18 and 40). Mercenaries who the character hires for specific tasks are not Henchmen, since they have an agenda and expect compensation.

Individual Henchmen are NPCs. All of the character's Henchmen normally have identical Stats and Attributes, although Skills may vary. A character may have followers with varied Stats or Attributes, but each one counts as two Henchmen. Each Henchman should be built on 20 Character Points (plus any Defects) and 10 Skill Points. Clearly, most Henchmen have focused abilities and numerous Defects (often including Inept Attack, Inept Defence, Less Capable, Marked, Not So Tough, Owned, and Wanted) to raise their Stats and Attributes to competent levels. The 1 Point/Level Henchmen should not possess the Attack Combat Mastery, Massive Damage, or Special Attack Attributes, nor should they have Combat Skills.

Highly Skilled

Type: Mundane
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +10 Skill Points each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

A character with this Attribute is more experienced or better trained than an ordinary person, and as a result has more Skill Points (page 54) than an average adult. Acquiring several Levels of the Highly Skilled Attribute is the ideal method for creating a versatile character.

Illusion

Type: Special
Cost: 1-4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: Area, Duration, Targets
Optional PMVs: Range
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area
Reduction: Illusion always the same
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; illusions are flawed in some way; usage inflicts pain

The character can create mental Illusions that fool one or more senses ... such "glamours" are a common magical ability, often possessed by both fairy folk and human wizards. An Illusion appears to be real to the targeted observers but is not really there; it has no physical substance, and characters who are not the target of the Illusion are unaffected. Characters that can create Illusions are often sorcerers, demons, or people with psionic abilities. See the Projection Attribute (page 39) for the ability to create real images that anyone can detect, rather than mental illusions that target specific people.

An Illusion may be of a particular object or entity, or of a complete scene (such as a furnished room or crowd). It may also be created over an existing person, scene, or object to make it appear different than it really is. An Illusion that is untended is normally static, either remaining in one place or (if created over something) moving as the underlying object or entity moves. To give an Illusion the semblance of independent activity (such as an illusionary person or crowd that moves and speaks) the character must actively concentrate on manipulating the Illusion, and perform no other actions. The maximum amount of time an Illusion will remain in existence is dictated by the Duration PMV.

For 1 Point/Level the character can create Illusions that deceive one sense, usually sight (sense must be determined during character creation). For 2 Points/Level the Illusions can deceive two senses, usually sight and hearing. For 3 Points/Level they can deceive three senses, usually sight, hearing, and smell. For 4 Points/Level they can deceive all senses. No matter how realistic the Illusions, however, they can never cause physical sensations intense enough to inflict damage. An illusionary fire may feel hot, and a character may believe that he or she is burning, but the fire cannot actually deliver damage. To create Illusions capable of injuring targets, the character should possess a Special Attacks Attribute (page 42) which is tied to the Illusion Attribute through the Dependent Defect (page 64).

A character can normally maintain only a single Illusion at a time. The ability to maintain multiple Illusions at once costs the character an extra 1 Point for every distinct Illusion the character can sustain simultaneously after the first. Thus, "Illusion Level 3 (Sight only, four Illusions)" would cost six Points: three Points for Level 3 (one sense) and three more Points for being able to sustain four Illusions at a time. A group of objects or entities within the Area PMV, such as a furnished room, a swarm of insects, or a horde of charging warriors, counts as a single Illusion rather than several. If a character is already sustaining his or her maximum number of Illusions and wishes to create another one, an existing Illusion must first be dispelled.

An Illusion may have two types of areas: the Area PMV, and the area determined by the Attribute Level. The Area PMV reflects the maximum area in which the Illusion may be created, while the Level-related area dictates the actual size of the Illusionary image. Thus, an Area PMV of Rank 6 (10 km) with Attribute Level 3 (10 metres) means that any image up to 10 metres in radius (such as a school bus) can be created, and moved around within a location that has a 10 km radius (such as a medium-sized city).

In order for the character to create a convincing Illusion of something complex, the GM may require a Mind Stat check. The GM can add modifiers depending on how familiar or unfamiliar the character is with the scene that is being simulated. The GM may also give the character a +1 bonus for every Level he or she has in excess of the minimum Level needed to create an Illusion. For example, if a character with Illusion Level 5 decides to create an image with an area radius of one metre (a Level 2 effect), a +3 Check Value bonus applies (Level 5 - Level 2 = +3). If the check fails, the character's Illusion has some subtle flaw in it; the character creating it may not be aware of this until someone else points it out, however.

Whether or not an observer recognises an Illusion for what it actually is depends on the circumstances and should be adjudicated by the GM. For example, if a character creates a visual-only Illusion of a tiger, it may easily fool everyone if it is a few hundred metres away, but if it comes close to the characters, the fact that it is not making any sounds will be obvious. Its lack of a tiger's scent will probably only be a clue to someone who has Heightened Senses (Smell). The audio-only Illusion of a tiger roaring from behind a closed door, however, should fool just about anyone ... at least until they open the door and see that there is nothing actually there. If appropriate, the GM can require Body or Mind checks to "see through" an Illusion; if successful, the Illusion disappears.

Immovable

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +20 metre Knockback reduction each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific opponents; against one type of attack; in a particular spot

This Attribute is only available in campaigns that use Knockback rules (page 109). Characters with this Attribute absorb physical impacts better than the average person, reducing the distance by which they are knocked back from impact attacks and forceful blows. If a Special Attack's or melee attack's Knockback distance is reduced to zero or below, the target has successfully absorbed the impact of the entire attack (but the attack still inflicts damage). For more information on Knockback, see page 109 (or page 44 for the Special Attack Knockback Ability). An Immovable entity might be very dense, or may have a magical connection to a particular place, or to the Earth itself.

Immunity

Type: Special
Cost: 5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; limitations on use

With this Attribute, the character is completely immune to damage and adverse effects that stem from a particular weapon, element, application, or event. For example, a character with Level 2 Immunity to silver cannot be hurt by silver weapons and will not feel pain if clubbed with a sack of silver dollars. Similarly, a character with Level 8 Immunity to fire/heat could walk into the most intensive firestorm possible and emerge unscathed.

Though only six Attribute Levels are described below, GMs can easily extrapolate intermediate or higher Levels as required.

Level 2 The Immunity plays a small role in the game. Typical examples include: weapons made from a rare substance (such as gold, silver, or adamantine); attacks from a specific opponent (such as a brother, single animal type, or oneself); under specific conditions (such as in water, one hour during the day, or at home).

Level 4 The Immunity plays a moderate role in the game. Typical examples include: weapons made from an uncommon substance (such as wood, bronze, or iron); attacks from a broad opponent group (such as blood relatives, demons, or animals); under broad conditions (such as during the night, on weekends, or in holy places).

Level 6 The Immunity plays a large role in the game. Typical examples include: electricity; cold; a specific weapon type (such as daggers, arrows, or rapiers).

Level 8 The Immunity plays a major role in the game. Typical examples include: fire/heat; a broad weapon type (such as swords or clubs); mental attacks.

Level 10 The Immunity plays an extreme role in the game. Typical examples include: gunfire (including forms of artillery); bladed weapons; unarmed attacks.

Level 12 The Immunity plays a primal role in the game. Typical examples include: weapons; energy; blunt trauma.

Table 3-5: Insubstantial

Attribute Level	Can Pass Through
2	Paper/Cloth
4	Wood
6	Concrete/Earth
8	Iron/Steel
10	Lead/Gold
12	Energy/Force Fields

Insubstantial

Type: Special
Cost: 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: "Can Pass Through" entry at lower Level
Restrictions: Under certain conditions, time limit, naked form only

Each Level reduces a character's density so much that he or she can pass through certain types of objects (including weapons) as though insubstantial. If a specific substance is not listed in the chart below, the GM should use the entry that it most closely resembles. The density of water, and thus the human body, for example, falls between Level 4 (Wood) and Level 6 (Concrete/Earth); consequently, a punch from an enemy would harmlessly pass through a character with Level 6 Insubstantial. Characters with Level 12 Insubstantial are effectively incorporeal and can pass through virtually anything, including most forms of energy. Use either Level 10 or Level 12 for ghosts, astral bodies, or other completely incorporeal entities. Though only six Attribute Levels are described, GMs can easily extrapolate intermediate or higher Levels as required.

Invisibility

Type: Special
Cost: 3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: Area, Targets
Progression: Linear; invisibility to +1 sense or technique each Level
Reduction: Partial effectiveness
Restrictions: Time limit; invisible to certain types of characters; naked form only

This Attribute will completely hide the character from one or more senses or detection methods. The character may possess a supernatural concealment ability or a technological cloaking device, or have a psychic or magical talent that causes observers to overlook him or her. To represent partial invisibility, see the Sensory Block Attribute (page 40).

For each Invisibility Level, the player selects one sense or technique to which the character is "invisible." Senses include the human range for sight, hearing, taste, touch, or smell. Detection techniques include: astral; ethereal; infrared; mental; radar; radiation; sonar; spiritual; ultraviolet; vibration. The GM may decided that the most common forms of Invisibility — usually sight and hearing — cost 2 Attribute slots rather than only 1.

While the character may not be detected using specific methods, indirect evidence can still reveal the character's presence. For example, a character who is invisible to sight will still leave footprints in muddy ground. Similarly, a vase that is knocked from a table by a character who is invisible to sound will still make noise as it smashes on the floor.

In normal combat situations involving human or nearly human opponents, a character who is invisible to sight has a great advantage. Once the invisible character gives away his or her general position (for example, by firing a gun, attacking with a sword, or shouting) he or she can be attacked, but there is a -4 penalty for anyone within melee range and -8 for anyone at a greater distance. Heightened Awareness and Heightened Senses can reduce this penalty, as can the two Combat Techniques, Blind Fighting and Blind Shooting (page 19). This penalty is halved if using an Area or Spreading attack on the invisible character.

Item of Power

Type: Mundane
Cost: 3 or 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +5 Character Points for item building each Level
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; limited functioning; item's Attributes are only partially conferred

This Attribute describes any exotic, usually portable item that directly enhances a character in some way (perhaps by conferring Attributes), or one that serves as a useful tool or weapon. An Item of Power represents a relic with paranormal or magical powers, such as an enchanted sword, or advanced technology. More ordinary but useful items (such as a car or gun) are covered by the Gadgets Attribute (page 28). Special weapons that others can use are often designed with Item of Power, with Points allocated to the Special Attack Attribute (page 42).

Each item is built using up to 5 Character Points per Level of the Item of Power Attribute, which can be used to assign Attributes. Assigning Defects to the item earns Bonus Points, which are used to acquire additional Attributes for the item. Defects that cannot usually be assigned include: Conditional Ownership, Famous, Ism, Marked, Nemesis, Owned, Red Tape, Significant Other, Skeleton in the Closet, and Wanted. Players selecting this Attribute must have a discussion with the GM to determine what abilities the Item of Power possesses and how it works. The player, with GM approval, may also create specific abilities for Items of Power using the Unique Attribute (page 51). An Item of Power may be combined with a mundane, minor, or major Gadget (such as a car that can fly, or a sword that can teleport people).

The item costs 4 Points/Level if it is difficult for the character to misplace or for an enemy to steal/knock away, or it is almost always with the character. Examples include jewellery, frequently worn clothing, or equipment the character carries with them always. The item costs 3 Points/Level if it is easier for the character to misplace or for an enemy to steal/knock away, or it is often distant from the character. Examples include thrown weapons, armour that is stored when not in use, and vehicles or equipment that stay at the character's home until needed.

Additionally, the total Point cost (not cost per Level) for the Item is increased by 1 if it can only be used by a small subset of individuals (Restricted Use). For example: only characters with a superhuman Body Stat, only magicians, only members of a specific native tribe, or only gods. The total Point cost is increased by 2 if the Item can only be used by the character (Personal Use); this restriction cannot be reconfigured by someone with the Gadgeteer Attribute.

Items that cannot be lost or stolen, such as objects that are implanted in or fused to the character's body, are not Items of Power. In these cases, the items are considered part of the character and thus the player should use Character Points to acquire the relevant Attributes directly. If a character requires a specific object, or group of objects, to act as a focus when using one or more of his or her innate Attributes, Item of Power does not apply; see the Special Requirement Defect (page 70).

Jumping

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 5 times normal distance
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; need running start; damage inflicted upon landing

With this Attribute, the character can jump great distances (and land without injury) but cannot actually fly. Jumping does not enable a character to exceed the character's normal maximum running speed (or swimming speed for aquatic characters capable of leaping). Consequently, unless the character also has the appropriate Level of the Speed Attribute (page 48), long-distance jumps may require several round, minutes, or hours to complete. For example, a character with a Body Stat of 10 can sprint approximately 60 metres/round. If the character jumps a distance of 120 metres, he or she will be airborne for two rounds rather than finishing the jump in just one ($120 \div 60 = 2$). The advantage to jumping, rather than running, however, is the character can ignore terrain and is not fatigued as the character would be if he or she had to run the same distance. See Jumping (page 104) in Chapter 7: Game Mechanics for additional jumping rules.

Mass Increase

Type: Special
Cost: 8 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Variable; see chart
Reduction: Associated Attributes not gained, or gained more slowly
Restrictions: Under certain conditions, time limit, naked form only

This Attribute reflects the ability to increase the mass — and thus density — of the character. In addition to increased mass, the character gains a corresponding Level of the Armour, Immovable, and Superstrength Attributes. The chart entry indicates two columns (realistic and perceived) of substances that have a similar density to a character with increased mass. The realistic column matches the character's density (also know as specific gravity) with a close counterpart in the natural world. The perceived column matches

Table 3-6: Mass Increase

Attribute Level	Mass Multiplier	Similar Density (Realistic)	Similar Density (Perceived)	Armour Immovable Superstrength Level
1	2	Brick/Concrete/Rock	Hardwood	1
2	4	Gemstones	Aluminium	2
3	6	Iron	Concrete	3
4	8	Steel	Granite	4
5	10	Copper	Lead	5
6	12	Lead	Iron	6
7	14	Mercury	Steel	7
8	16	Uranium	Titanium	8
9	18	Gold	Diamond	9
10	20	Platinum	Adamantine	10

the character's density with a substance that is commonly believed in fiction to have a corresponding strength. For example, the gemstone, diamond, has an actual density close to four times that of the human body (3.3 to 3.7, to be specific). Because it is one of the strongest substances on Earth, however, it is also perceived as one of the densest. GMs and players may use either column when determining density/strength values in their games.

In campaigns that do not use Knockback (page 109), the cost of Mass Increase should be reduced to 7 Points/Level instead of 8.

Massive Damage

Type: Mundane
Cost: 2 or 5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +10 damage each Level
Reduction: Less damage delivered
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific opponents; one attack type is excluded

A character with the Massive Damage Attribute knows precisely how and where to hit any opponent in order to inflict incredible amounts of damage.

For 2 Points/Level, additional damage is only inflicted when the character uses one specific weapon type, Special Attack (page 42), or method of attack; this attack is defined during character creation. For example, it might represent a special talent with a weapon (such as guns, blades, blunt weapons), knowledge of a particular martial arts technique, or ability with a specific Special Attack.

For 5 Points/Level, this knowledge can be applied to all forms of physical combat including armed, unarmed, martial arts, and ranged weapons, as well as Special Attacks such as energy blasts, magical spells that inflict damage, or vehicle weapons.

Naturally, the character's attack must be successful to inflict any damage. Physical strength is not the key to delivering massive damage in an attack; the ability to sense a weakness is far more important. The capacity of Massive Damage to augment any kind of attack makes it a very useful Attribute for a combat-oriented character. For more information on physical combat and damage, see page 106.

Metamorphosis

Type: Special
Cost: 5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Required PMVs: Duration, Targets
Optional PMVs: Area, Range
Progression: Linear; adding +1 Character Point or adding/removing +3 Bonus Points each Level
Reduction: Change fewer Character Points and/or Bonus Points
Restrictions: Specific targets; limitations on Attributes/Defects that can be changed; limited to several distinct changes

The Metamorphosis Attribute allows a character to transform others into alternate forms by adding Attributes to, or adding/removing Defects from, the target character. The maximum duration of this change is dictated by the Duration PMV. Additionally, this Attribute requires a Targets PMV at Rank 1 minimum. If the target character successfully makes a Body or Soul Stat check (whichever is higher), the Metamorphosis attempt does not work. The GM may rule that Metamorphosis automatically fails if the subject's new form could not survive in the present environment. Consequently, a character could turn an enemy into a goldfish, but the attempt would only work if the target was currently in water. This prevents this ability from being used as a quick way to instantly kill an opponent. Again, GMs may waive this restriction where appropriate (such as for a villain in a supernatural horror campaign). In order to transform him or herself, the character needs the Alternate Form Attribute (page 18).

For each Level of Metamorphosis, the character can assign 1 Character Point to a target's Attributes (or PMV Rank). This can either raise the target's current Attribute Level, or result in the target gaining a new Attribute. Alternatively, for each Level the character can add 3 Defect Bonus Points to, or remove 3 Defect Bonus Points from, a target. To negate Attributes, see the Nullify Attribute (page 35). Cosmetic changes that confer no additional abilities on the target, but do not fall under the Marked Defect, are considered a 1 Bonus Point change total (for all changes). This includes: change of sex, 50% apparent age increase or decrease, colour changes (eye, skin, or hair), and minor physical changes (shape of ears, facial features, or bodily proportions).

Unless the GM indicates otherwise, Character Points gained through Metamorphosis can only be used to add Levels to the following Attributes: Adaptation, Armour, Elasticity, Extra Arms, Features, Flight, Heightened Senses, Insubstantial, Jumping, Mass Increase, Natural Weapons, Regeneration, Special Defence, Special Movement, Speed, Superstrength, Tunnelling, and Water Speed. Additionally, only the following Defects can be changed: Awkward Size, Diminutive, Ism, Less Capable, Marked, Not So Tough, Physical Impairment, Sensory Impairment, and Unappealing. Metamorphosis is not intended for transforming people into stone or other forms where they would be effectively immobilised. In order to do that, use the Special Attack Attribute (page 42) with the Incapacitating Ability (page 44).

Mimic Powers

Type: Special
Cost: 7 or 10 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: Duration, Range
Progression: Linear; +1 Attribute each Level
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Trade Attribute with target; specific targets; limitation on Attributes/Defects that can be mimicked

Upon a successful Stat check, the character can temporarily mimic any Attribute, Stat, or Skill Level of any single target character within the Range PMV distance. The Mimic Powers Attribute Level determines the maximum Attribute or Skill Level that can be mimicked. Stats Values (at any rank) can be imitated when Mimic Powers reaches Level 5 or higher. The Level of a mimicked Attribute/Stat/Skill only replaces the character's corresponding Level (if applicable) if it is higher; the character's Attribute/Stat/Skill Level cannot decrease through Mimic unless a specific Restriction is assigned. The character gains the benefits of a mimicked Attribute as long as indicated by the Duration PMV; it is recommended that GMs not allow Duration past Level 6 for Mimic Powers.

For 7 Points/Level the character can only mimic one Attribute/Stat/Skill at any single time. For 10 Points/Level, the character can mimic all Attributes/Stats/Skills simultaneously at the appropriate Levels (as indicated above), from one character or many. To create a character that steals a target's Attributes for his or her own use, assign both the Mimic and Nullify (page 33 and 35) Attributes, linked through the Dependent Defect (page 64).

Mind Control

Type: Special
Cost: 2-5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: Duration, Targets
Optional PMVs: Area, Range
Progression: Variable; see below
Reduction: One aspect of thought only
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; usage inflicts pain; target remembers the control

This Attribute allows the character to mentally dominate other individuals. Sorcerers, some psionic adepts, and creatures with hypnotic powers (such as many demons or vampires) are among those likely to have Mind Control. The Duration PMV Rank cannot exceed the Attribute Level without GM permission.

Mind Control costs 5 Points/Level if it can be used on any human or alien with a Mind Stat of 2 or higher (animals are excluded). It costs 4 Points/Level if it works on broad categories of humans ("any American" or "any male," for example). It costs 3 Points/Level if the category is more specific and less useful ("priests" or "people obsessed with beauty"). Finally, it costs 2 Points/Level if the category is very specific (members of the character's family, or mutants with a specific gene). The effects of Mind Control should be role-played. If necessary, the GM can take over the character, although it is more fun if the player (with GM guidance) continues to play the character.

Initiating Mind Control requires a non-combat action (page 104). Rather than making an attack check, however, the character must successfully make a Mind Stat check (if attacking multiple targets, roll only once). If the Mind Stat check is successful, the target gets a defence check, but, instead of using Defence Combat Value (page 71), the base Check Value is his or her Mind or Soul Stat (whichever is greater). When controlling a large number of people, an estimated Mind and Soul Stat average for the entire group could be used. At every odd Level (1, 3, 5, etc.), the character receives a +1 bonus to his or her Check Value when attempting to Mind Control a target. At every even Level (2, 4, 6, etc.), the target also receives a -1 penalty to his or her Check Value when attempting to defend against Mind Control (or when trying to break established contact; see below). At Level 7, for instance, the character gains a +4 bonus while the target suffers a -3 penalty. A character needs to defeat an opponent in Mind Combat (page 109) to toy with his or her emotions (for example, giving the opponent new fears or a prejudice).

Once Mind Control is established, it remains in effect until either the Duration PMV expires, or until the target breaks free from the control. A target may attempt to break control under two circumstances: whenever he or she is given a command that conflicts with the nature of the character, and whenever the GM deems it appropriate for dramatic effect. To break control, the target must make a successful Mind or Soul Stat check (whichever is higher), modified appropriately by the Mind Control Level of the initiating character.

Against Target's Nature

If a Mind Controlled target is commanded to perform an action that he or she would not willingly do under normal circumstances, the target can attempt to break control. Additionally, the target may receive a bonus if the action goes against his or her nature. The more distasteful the target finds the command, the greater the Check Value bonus. For mildly distasteful actions (such as licking an enemy's boots), no bonus is given. For highly distasteful or undesirable actions (such as stealing from an ally), a +4 bonus is given. Finally, for exceptionally distasteful or undesirable actions (such as attacking an ally), a +8 bonus is given. Note that these bonuses are cumulative with penalties associated with the controlling character's Mind Control Level.

When the GM Deems Appropriate

If the character commands his or her target to perform a number of mundane activities (clean the house, fetching a drink of water, etc.), the GM may decide the target does not receive an opportunity to break established control. Even a seemingly inoffensive command such as "sit in the closet" or "go to sleep," however, may have a drastic impact on the lives of others if a bomb is about to explode in the train station or the target is piloting an airplane at the time. In these instances, the GM may give the target a chance to break free of the Mind Control even if the target does not regard a command as dangerous or distasteful (which would present an opportunity to end the control). This option puts the GM in direct control of the situation, which will benefit the campaign. Naturally, the GM can also apply modifiers to the Stat check that are cumulative with penalties associated with the controlling character's Mind Control Level.

A character need not control every thought and action of his or her victims but can allow them to live normal lives until they are needed; these targets are known as "sleepers." Additionally, people who have been Mind Controlled will not remember events that occurred during the time period they are controlled and will have a gap in their memories (unless a Restriction is assigned).

The GM may allow a character to temporarily boost his or her Mind Control Attribute by one or two Levels against a single individual who is his or her captive by "working" on the subject for a day or more. This bonus can represent concentrated brainwashing techniques or dedicated study of a subject.

Player Characters should only be placed under Mind Control for extended periods of time in exceptional circumstances.

Mind Shield

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Linear; effective increase of +1 to the Mind and Soul Stats each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Time limit; against specific characters; against one type of intrusion

A character with Mind Shield is protected against psychic intrusion. This may be a reflection of his or her own psychic abilities, a protective spell, special training, or some innate ability. A character with Mind Shield can detect and gain Check Value bonuses to block attempts to read or control his or her mind by a character with the Telepathy or Mind Control Attributes (pages 49 and 34). The bonuses also apply during telepathic mind combat (page 109), and against a Special Attack with the Mind or Soul Attack Ability (page 44). Additionally, each Mind Shield Level provides 10 points of "Mind Armour" that are used for defence during mind combat or against attacks with the Mind or Soul Attack Special Attack Ability.

Natural Weapons

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 Natural Weapon each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Against specific targets; less damage; slow to use (Initiative penalty)

The character has one or more relatively mundane natural weapons, such as sharp teeth, claws, tentacles, etc. Natural weapons are normally possessed by animals, monsters, and similar characters. More powerful Natural Weapons can be designed using the Special Attacks Attribute (page 42), with the Melee Disability.

The character possesses one Natural Weapon per Level. Possessing more than one such natural weapon gives the character a wider variety of attack forms. Normal damage inflicted by a successful attack is outlined in Chapter 9: Game Mechanics (page 94).

Hands, feet, a heavy tail, ordinary teeth, or hooves are not normally counted as Natural Weapons since they are (relatively) blunt, and thus only inflict normal unarmed damage (equal to the character's Attack Combat Value).

Claws or Spikes

The character possesses sharp talons or spikes on his or her fingers, paws, or feet. In addition to regular damage, the claws inflict 10 additional damage when used in melee combat. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Strikes) Skill.

Fangs, Beak, or Mandibles

The character has very sharp teeth, or alternatively, a beak or insect-like mandibles. This natural weapon inflicts only 5 damage above normal damage in melee combat, but a successful strike that penetrates Armour gives the character the option to maintain a biting grip and continue to inflict equivalent damage in subsequent rounds. These additional attacks are automatically successful, but the opponent can break the hold with a successful defence check. While the attacker is maintaining a biting grip, his or her own ability to defend is impeded: the attacker cannot use weapons to defend, and suffers a -4 defence check penalty against all attacks. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Bites) Skill.

Horns

These are large horns on the head, used for butting or stabbing. Horns add 5 extra damage to normal damage in melee combat but are exceptionally effective if the character charges into battle. If the character wins Initiative against an opponent and has room for a running start, he or she can lower his or her head and charge. A successful attack will deliver normal attack damage, plus 20 (rather than 5) damage. If a charge fails to connect (the character fails the attack check or the opponent makes a successful defence check), the charging character will be off balance and suffers a -2 penalty on defence checks for the remainder of the round and a -4 Initiative roll penalty on the following combat round. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Strikes) Skill.

Spines

The character is covered in nasty spikes, quills, or sharp scales. Anyone who wrestles with the character automatically takes damage equal to the character's Attack Combat Value each round. This damage is in addition to any attack damage delivered. During these struggles, the opponent's clothes will also be ripped and shredded unless they are armoured.

Tail Striker

If the character has a combat-ready tail it can be equipped with spikes, a stinger, or other similarly nasty weapon. It is difficult to strike with a swinging tail (-2 attack check penalty), but, since it is flexible, it is usually harder to dodge (opponent suffers a -4 defence check penalty). The attack inflicts normal unarmed damage. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Strikes) Skill.

Tentacles

One or more of the character's limbs — or possibly his or her hair — are actually tentacles. A character with tentacles gains a +2 bonus to his or her Unarmed Attack and Unarmed Defence Skill Level when engaged in a grappling attack or defending against one. Tentacles are also difficult to avoid in combat (opponent suffers a -2 defence check penalty).

Nullify

Type: Special
Cost: 7 or 12 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: Targets
Optional PMVs: Area, Duration, Range
Progression: Linear; +1 Attribute each Level
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific targets; against specific Attributes

With a successful Soul Stat check, the character can temporarily render the Attributes of other characters unusable within the Area PMV. The Nullify Attribute Level determines the maximum Attribute Level that can be nullified. The character can nullify an Attribute as long as indicated by the Duration PMV; it is recommended that Duration not extend past Level 6 for Nullify.

For 7 Points/Level the character can only nullify one Attribute each combat action. Thus, a character with Extra Attacks Level 3 can Nullify four Attributes each round. For 12 Points/Level, the character can nullify all Attributes simultaneously at the appropriate Levels (as indicated above).

This Attribute is most often used to represent counter-spells, charms, or blessings that cancel magical ability. In general it only functions against Special Attributes.

Nullify (Drain)

For an additional 3 Points/Level, this Attribute can be specified as a Nullify (Drain). At each Attribute Level, the target's single Attribute (at 10 Points/Level) or multiple Attributes (at 15 Points/Level) are reduced by one Level, to a minimum of Level 0. For example, if a character with Level 5 Nullify (Drain) at 15 Points/Level targets a character who has Level 3 Armour, Level 8 Flight, and Level 10 Teleport, the target is reduced to Level 0 Armour (3-5=0), Level 3 Flight (8-5=3), and Level 5 Teleport (10-5=5). If, instead, the character only had regular Nullify, the Flight and Teleport Attributes would be unaffected since they are above Level 5 Attributes.

If the character uses Nullify (Drain) on the Special Attack Attribute, only damage is reduced (-20 damage for each Nullify Level). None of the Attack Abilities are affected directly, though the effectiveness of Abilities that depend on the amount of damage delivered will be reduced.

To create a character that steals a target's Attributes for his or her own use, assign both the Nullify and Mimic (page 33 and 35) Attributes, linked through the Dependent Defect (page 64).

Organisational Ties

Type: Mundane
Cost: 1-3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Favourably connected with only part of the organisation; character's connection results in conflict; high price to pay

Organisational Ties represents a character's close relationship with a hierarchy of some sort that grants him or her access to respect and privileges. Monetary advantages are usually covered by the Wealth Attribute (page 51), while access to special equipment may be represented by the Gadgets Attribute (page 28). Examples of organisations include hero leagues, powerful corporations, organised crime rings, secret guilds and societies, governmental positions, and some religions. For campaigns in which all players belong to the same organised group, the GM may decide that Organisational Ties are not required. Consequently, this Attribute is optional; the GM may prefer to treat organisation membership as a background detail instead.





The value of Organisational Ties depends on its importance in the setting. An organisation that exerts moderate power within the setting is worth 1 Point/Level, one that has significant power costs 2 Points/Level, and one that has great power in the setting costs 3 Points/Level. Players should not assign this Attribute to represent organisations that have very little power. The GM determines the extent of the organisation's influence. In a high school comedy campaign, the school's autocratic Student Council might wield "significant power," while in most other settings it would be completely trivial and not worth any points. Similarly, a criminal organisation like the Mafia or Yakuza might count as "great power" (3 Points/Level) in a traditional cop game set in modern times, but merely as "moderate power" (1 Point/Level) in a high-powered conspiracy game.

Normal organisations should be limited to a geopolitical area, such as a single country. Global organisations, or those that span multiple geopolitical areas, function at 2 Levels lower. For example, the president of a global megacorporation needs to assign Level 12 to gain access to the Controlling Rank category (2 Levels lower). Some organisations may be ostensibly limited to a single country, but the higher ranks still have global influence. For example, the President of the United States is a Controlling Rank (Level 10). Since the US has great influence across the world, however, the position would be Level 12 (as if it was a global organisation).

Though only five Attribute Levels are described below, GMs can easily extrapolate intermediate or higher Levels as required.

Level 2 Connected. Examples include a powerful political supporter, an ally to a group, or a valued corporate employee, or an army soldier.

Level 4 Respected Status. Examples include a Mafia "Wise Guy," a junior executive in a corporation, a city council member, a member on a medical Board of Directors, a senior enlisted army soldier, or a new-made knight.

Level 6 Middle Rank. Examples include a Mafia "Captain," a departmental vice-president in a corporation, a junior congressional representative, or a low- to middle-ranking army officer, or an important member of a feudal aristocracy, such as such as a landed knight or a demon lord.

Level 8 Senior Rank. Examples include a senior vice-president in a corporation, a US senator, or a high-ranking army officer, or a member of a royal family, such as a fairy princess or demon prince.

Level 10 Controlling Rank. Examples include the boss of a crime syndicate, the president of a corporation, US state governor, a president of a small nation, or the ruler of a magical kingdom.

Plant Control

Type: Special
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; in particular regions; no or lower additional growth (1x through 4x)

Characters with this Attribute can control the growth and movement of all plants in the surrounding area. The Attribute Level determines the maximum area in which the plants can be controlled. After the Duration PMV Rank has expired, the plants will return to their normal state and size before the control.

If the character limits the Control to a single broad group of plants, the Attribute functions at one Level higher. Broad plant groups include trees, grasses, weeds, bushes, flowers, mosses, vegetables, ferns, vines, seaweeds, etc. If limited to a specific type of plant, the Attribute functions at two Levels higher. Examples of plant types include oak trees, wheat, dandelions, raspberry bushes, sunflowers, club moss, carrots, etc.

Controlled plants can grow to a maximum size of 5 times their normal mature state. For 10x growth, the Attribute functions at one Level lower when determining area. For 50x growth, two Levels lower; for 100x growth, three Levels lower; for 500x growth, four Levels lower; and for 1,000x growth, five Levels lower.

To cause significant damage with controlled plants, the character should acquire the Special Attack Attribute (page 42) with the Dependent Defect (page 64).

Pocket Dimension

Type: Special
Cost: 2, 3 or 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Required PMVs: Duration, Targets (Offensive use only)
Optional PMVs: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at a dimension with a 10 cm radius area
Reduction: Attribute always used in same way
Restrictions: Limited to specific types of dimensions; damage inflicted when passing through portal; opening portal weakens character

This Attribute allows the opening of a hole or doorway — a portal — into another dimension. A Pocket Dimension could also represent an object that is simply bigger on the inside than on the outside.

The Level of Pocket Dimension determines the maximum size of the dimension. The environment and furnishings of the dimension are up to the player within the GM's limitations; extensive furnishings should be acquired as Gadgets (page 28). A dimension could even be partially unexplored or dangerous territory, providing adventuring opportunities to the characters.

The cost of Pocket Dimension is 2 Points/Level if it is limited to a single fixed portal (such as a house closet), 3 Points/Level if the portal is in a mobile location (such as inside a vehicle, or attached to an item), or 4 Points/Level if the character can use a particular class of objects as a portal (such as "any mirror" or "any pool of water"). The Range PMV cannot apply to the 2 Points/Level option; additionally, the Area PMV only applies to the 4 Points/Level version, or characters who can use the Attribute offensively (see below).

A character with this ability at 2 or 3 Points/Level cannot create new portals leading out of the dimension; he or she may only leave by the one that was entered. A character can usually only have a single portal opened to his or her dimension at a time, but additional apertures to the same dimension may be possessed for 1 extra Character Point each. At the 4 Points/Level version, the character can leave the Pocket Dimension through any other appropriate exit within the Area PMV of the entrance portal; the character is not required to leave through the same one he or she entered. For example, a character with Area 6 can leave his or her Pocket Dimension by any appropriate portal within 10 km of the entry point.

Once opened, a portal can stay open for as long as the creator is in the dimension. The creator may also be able to "leave the door open" if he or she wishes to allow individuals to enter or leave while the creator is not present within the dimensional pocket.

Pocket Dimensions may optionally be designated as only one-way, restricting access in or out until the character or machine maintaining them is destroyed, or some other condition is fulfilled. This Attribute may be taken multiple times to give access to multiple different dimensions. If so, it may be taken at different Levels for each individual dimension.

Using Pocket Dimension Offensively

Some characters may have the exotic ability of being able to suck or warp unwilling targets into their alternate dimension (at the 3 or 4 Points/Level version only). To indicate this, assign the Area, Duration, Range, and Targets PMV. Duration only applies when the character uses Pocket Dimension to trap an opponent in this way — a character can be held in a pocket dimension

for a maximum amount of time indicated by the Duration PMV Rank. The character is released from the dimension once the Attribute's Duration ceases. See Using Attributes Against Opponents, page 110, for rules on affecting an unwilling opponent with a Pocket Dimension.

Characters who have an ability to travel between dimensions should possess either the Dimension Hop Special Movement ability (few dimensions; page 47) or the Dynamic Powers Attribute (many dimensions; page 22) with the Dimensions category, depending on his or her ability to travel through dimensions.

Power Flux

Type: Special
Cost: 5, 10, 15, or 20 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Variable
Required PMVs: Special (Duration reversed; see below)
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +5 Flux Points each Level
Reduction: One aspect of category
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; only raise or lower existing Attributes, limitations on Levels exchanged

Power Flux represents extensive control over an element, ideology, natural phenomenon, or sphere of influence. This is a very open-ended Attribute and should be discussed with the GM at length to determine the effects and limitations in his or her game. Proper use of Power Flux will not unbalance the game, but rather can provide many opportunities for character innovation. As an alternative option to Power Flux, see the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 22).

A character with this Attribute has a pool of reserve Character Points (called Flux Points) that can be allocated to different Attributes as needed, within the thematic category chosen by the player. This often represents a magical or psionic ability, but it can also reflect a character who has several different powered forms, or a character who has little control over his or her range of Attributes (in conjunction with the Unreliable Power Defect, page 70).

Power Flux uses a special PMV that follows the reverse of Duration, starting at 6 months (Rank 1) and decreasing to 1 round (Rank 10). The GM may limit the Duration PMV to Rank 8 (1 minute) to ensure that the flow of combat is not impeded by characters fluxing Attributes too frequently. This PMV represents how frequently a character can change the allocation of Flux Points from one group of Attributes to a different group, and not how long a character can use Power Flux. At low Ranks, the character will be forced to use the same group of Attributes for extended periods of time before he or she can use the Flux Points for alternates. At high Ranks, the character can gain a complete new set of Attributes almost at will. Stats and Defects cannot be raised or lowered with Power Flux (though the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute may be altered). Fluxing some Attributes may require GM permission.

Minor or small thematic categories cost 10 Points/Level. Examples include a classical element (water, fire, wind, earth), a limited concept or idea (lust, protection, charm, pride), a minor aspect of nature (temperature, insects, sunlight, clouds, orbits, sea creatures), or a limited sphere of influence (silence, cats, writing, guns, a small locality, nutrition).

Major or large thematic categories cost 15 Points/Level. Examples include a broad concept or idea (love, travel, strength), a major aspect of nature (weather, magnetism, gravity, electricity, animals), or a broad sphere of influence (cities, computer data, health, truth, manufacturing, fertility, weapons, drugs).

Primal or universal thematic categories cost 20 Points/Level. Examples include core concepts and primary spheres of influence: Time, War, Death, Life, Earth, Thought, Magic, Force, Math, Self, Law, Chaos, Creation, Heaven, Hell, Dimensions, Dreams, and others.

If the character makes a successful Stat check (the relevant Stat is determined by the GM), he or she can assign Flux Points to one or more Attributes that grant powers that fit within the thematic category. A Flux Point is equal to one Character Point, which can be assigned to the cost of the Attribute directly, or to the cost of raising an Attribute's PMV Rank. Under normal circumstances, Power Flux cannot imitate the Transfer Attribute or the Dynamic Powers Attribute.

For example, suppose a character is the incarnation of the cat goddess Bast has Level 6 Power Flux with a "cat theme" and Reversed Duration PMV of Rank 5 (12 hours). She has assigned a total of 65 Character Points to the Attribute (6 Levels x 10 Points/Level + 5 Points for the Duration PMV). In return, she gains 30 Power Flux Points. At a minimum interval of 12 hours, the character can allocate the 30 Power Flux Points to any combination of Attributes that fit the cat theme. Perhaps in the morning, she needs to prowl around the city hunting for demons and were-rats, and assigns the following Attributes: Armour Level 3 (9 Flux Points); Heightened Awareness Level 9 (9 Flux Points); Heightened Senses (Hearing, Smell, Vision) Level 3 (3 Flux Points); Jumping Level 5 (5 Flux Points); and Superstrength Level 1 (4 Flux Points). Later in the evening (13 hours later), the character might need to track down and capture the evil Rat King with the help of an army of alley cats, and thus reassigns all 30 Flux Points to different Attributes as follows: Animal Summon/Control (Cats) Level 4 with Area PMV Rank 4 and Duration PMV Rank 6 (14 Flux Points); Extra Attacks Level 1 (8 Flux Points); and Invisibility (Sound; Partial) Level 4 (8 Flux Points).

Limited Point Exchange

An alternate method of Power Flux only costs 5 Points/Level, but limits the character to a small assortment of Attributes among which Character Points can be exchanged. At Level 1, Character Points can be exchanged in any way between the Level cost and PMV cost of any two Attributes, which are determined during character creation. From Level 2 on, each Level adds one additional Attribute to the list of Attributes that can be fluxed. For instance, if a character with this Level 3 Power Flux and Rank 4 Duration (1 day) has allocated 47 Character Points to four fluxable Attributes (Armour, Flight, Special Attack, and Teleport), he or she can redistribute the 47 Points in any way over the four Attributes and their PMVs once every 24 hours. For a variation of Limited Point Exchange that better represents some types of urban fantasy magic, see Innate Wizardry on page 89.

Projection

Type: Special
Cost: 3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: Area
Optional PMVs: Duration, Range
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area
Reduction: Projection always the same
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; projection is flawed in some way; usage inflicts pain

The character can create projected images that may have audible or visual components, or both. This Attribute may reflect holographic technology, magical ability, control over environmental conditions, or a completely different method of creation. The Projection cannot be touched because it is not substantial, nor does it have a taste or smell. Depending on the situation, and the nature of other individuals or animals viewing the Projection, the image may appear to be a real object. Closer inspection will usually reveal the Projection for what it is, but this will not cause the Projection to disappear as it would for an Illusion. If appropriate, the GM can require Body or Mind checks to "see through" a Projection. See the Illusion Attribute (page 30) for the ability to create mental illusions that target specific people, rather than real images that anyone (including technological devices, such as cameras) can detect.

A Projection may be of a particular object or entity, or of a complete scene (such as a furnished room or crowd). It may also be created over an existing person, scene, or object to make it appear different than it really is. A Projection that is untended is normally static, either remaining in one place or (if created over something) moving as the underlying object or entity moves. To give a Projection the semblance of independent activity (such as a projected image of a person who moves and speaks) the character must actively concentrate on manipulating the Projection, and perform no other actions.

A character can normally maintain only a single Projection at a time. The ability to maintain multiple Projections at once costs the character an extra 1 Point for every distinct Projection the character can sustain simultaneously after the first. Thus, "Projection Level 5 (six Projections)" would cost 20 Character Points: 15 Points for Level 5 and 5 more Points for being able to sustain six Projections at a time. A group of objects or entities within the Area PMV, such as a swarm of rats or a furnished office, counts as a single Projection rather than several. If a character is already sustaining his or her maximum number of Projections and wishes to create another one, an existing Projection must first be dispelled.

A Projection may have two types of areas: the Area PMV, and the area determined by the Attribute Level. The Area PMV reflects the maximum area in which the Projection may be created, while the Level-related area dictates the actual size of the projected image. Thus, an Area PMV of Rank 7 (100 km) with Attribute Level 7 (100 metres) means that any image up to 100 metres in radius (such as a huge advertising billboard) can be created, and moved around within a location that has a 100 km radius (such as a large county district).

In order for the character to create a convincing Projection of something complex, the GM may require a Mind Stat check. The GM can add modifiers depending on how familiar or unfamiliar the character is with the scene that is being simulated. The GM may also give the character a +1 bonus for every Level he or she has in excess of the minimum Level needed to create a Projection. For example, if a character with Projection Level 8 decides to create an image with an area radius of 50 metres (a Level 6 effect), a +2 Check Value bonus applies (Level 8 - Level 6 = +2). If the check fails, the character's Projection has some obvious flaw in it.

Regeneration

Type: Special
Cost: 6 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; restoration of +5 Health Points per round each Level
Reduction: Fewer Health Points restored
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; specific wound types; regeneration is not automatic

Characters with this Attribute automatically heal their own injuries, whether the characters are awake, asleep, or unconscious. The character's Health Points cannot exceed their original total. At higher Healing Levels, the character's body will revive itself if "clinically" dead but not actually brain-dead (Level 3+), repair massive trauma such as lost limbs or organs (Level 5+), or restore the character if cut into several pieces (Level 7+). The body cannot repair itself if it is blown to bits or disintegrated, however.

Reincarnation

Type: Special
Cost: 2 or 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Time Progression Chart Reversed, starting at 6 months
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Reincarnate after injury from specific weapons; alive for a limited time; limited to a specific target group

If the character is destroyed, some of his or her essence may still survive. This may be in spiritual form, or it may be something that must be retrieved from the corpse. A necromancer or demon that seals his or her soul in a magic talisman, a creature that leaves an egg in its body upon death, or an undead monster that will reform a few minutes, hours, or days after its apparent death are all examples of this. If this remnant can be salvaged or otherwise recovered, in a matter of days or weeks and with proper care, it will develop a new body similar to the original. A reincarnated character usually starts with 1 Health Point.

Reincarnation can be prevented in some way. This may be as simple as burning, blowing up, or dismembering a body, or as obscure as requiring a special ritual. For 2 Points/Level, the Reincarnation is easy to stop; for 4 Points/Level, the Reincarnation is difficult to stop. The GM and player must work together to determine the parameters involved in preventing the rebirth.

Sensory Block

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: Area, Duration
Optional PMVs: Range
Progression: Linear; +1 blocked sense or technique each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific targets; time limit

A character with Sensory Block can cover the Area PMV with a field that blocks specific senses or detection techniques. This can represent a magical ability, technological enhancement, or paranormal effect. For each Level of the Sensory Block Attribute, the character can either block one sense or enhanced sense (Type I) or one detection technique (Type II), which is determined during character creation. The GM may allow multiple assignments to the same sense or technique, which results in cumulative penalties. To fully block a detection technique, see the Invisibility Attribute (page 31).

Type I

One of the five senses — hearing, smell, vision, taste, or touch — is partially blocked. This may mean that individuals within the Area PMV cannot see well (vision), cannot hear well (hearing), etc. Checks made by these individuals when pertaining to the specific senses suffer a -4 penalty, which is cumulative with any Heightened Senses bonus (page 29).

Type II

A detection technique is partially blocked. Examples of techniques include: electric current detection; homing weapons; infravision; magnetic field detection; microscopic vision; radar detection; radio reception; sonar detection; a specific Sixth Sense technique; ultrasonic hearing; ultravision; vibration detection; X-ray vision. Stat checks relating to these detection techniques suffer a -4 penalty.

Servant

Type: Mundane
Cost: 2 or 6 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; Servant built using +X Character Points each Level
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Servant leads active life and is not always available; Servant has conflicting agenda; communication barriers

The character has a sidekick or companion entity. It serves as a familiar, pet, companion, or bodyguard. Examples of Servants could include: a talking animal companion, a sorcerer's apprentice, a fierce wolf, a bound demon or ghost, a dedicated and talented henchman, a mage's familiar cat, or a vampire's enslaved thrall. Servants are NPCs controlled by the GM, but they will normally work toward the character's best interests. Nevertheless, they should have their own personalities and may occasionally get into trouble of their own. Low Levels of this Attribute best represent animal or mechanical Servants; high Levels are required to create competent human (and superhuman) Servants.

This Attribute costs 2 Points/Level if the character is limited to one particular Servant. If the character can dismiss the Servant and replace him or her with a different one between adventures or during an adventure with suitable effort (GM's option, such as casting a summoning spell, training a new recruit, or taming a new animal), then the Attribute costs 6 Points/Level. A character can take the Attribute several times to have multiple Servant.

Each Level of the Servant Attribute gives the player up to X Character Points and 10 Skill Points with which to design the Servant (X is the game dice). The Servant is created exactly as a character with two exceptions. First, it may not possess the Servant Attribute. Second, some relationship-based Defects should not be assigned due to the Servant's innate role as a character's assistant. Thus, it is usually inappropriate for a Servant to have the following Defects: Famous, Involuntary Change, Owned, or Red Tape.

Shrink

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Variable; see chart
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Suffer pain/damage while shrinking; naked form only, double damage penalties

This Attribute reflects the ability to decrease the stature and mass of the character; while this can certainly be an advantage, it also creates many potential problems (see chart). In addition to decreased height and mass, the character who shrinks has reduced running speed and weapon range, and inflicts less damage through physical attacks and Special Attacks (physical, not energy-based; minimum of 1 damage). Although the character also suffers additional damage from normal-sized opponents, the enemies have a harder time hitting him or her with ranged weapons. The Duration PMV is only relevant when affecting others; a character can Shrink him or herself for an indefinite period.

At Level 10, the character has shrunk to the cellular range; at this size, normal combat rules cannot apply since the character is simply too small. At Levels exceeding 10, the character can shrink to the molecular, atomic, or sub-atomic scale — a size that requires GM guidance and permission. If the GM and players wish to make characters that can shrink to a "micro-verse" where they interact within an entirely new world, the Pocket Dimension Attribute (page 38) may be more suitable.

A character who is permanently shrunk should assign the Diminutive Defect (page 65), rather than Shrinking and the Permanent Defect.

Though only five Attribute Levels are described below, GMs can easily extrapolate intermediate or higher Levels as required.

Table 3-7: Shrink

Current Shrink Level	Rough Size	Height Range Speed Multiplier	Mass Lifting Multiplier	Damage Penalty	Enemy Damage Bonus	Enemy's Range Attack Penalty
2	Child/Dog	1/2	1/10	-5	+5	-2
4	Cat	1/5	1/100	-10	+10	-4
6	Rodent	1/20	1/10,000	-15	+15	-6
8	Bug	1/200	ten millionth	-20	+20	-8
10	Cellular	1/20,000	ten trillionth	???	???	???

Sixth Sense

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: Area
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 Sixth Sense each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; must actively use Sixth Sense; vague or partial detection

Some characters have the ability to detect things that may be hidden to normal senses or technological sensors, while others have affinities for specific objects or people. Sixth Sense typically represents psychic or magical ability, but can also reflect trained and acute senses or divine intervention.

The character may sense one particular category of phenomenon per Level. The player should define the category with the GM's approval (Sixth Sense is very much a GM-defined ability). As a guideline, the character is automatically alerted when something his or her Sixth Sense detects is in close proximity (minimum of Area PMV 1 —10 cm radius area). The GM may require a Soul Stat check to do this, with difficulty modifiers depending on the strength of the source of whatever emanations the character can sense. The GM should give a bonus (+2 modifier or more) if the character is touching the source.

A character who specifically concentrates on using his or her Sixth Sense may gain more precise information on a successful Soul Stat check. The exact content of this information is up to the GM. If the check succeeds, the GM may provide the character with a few extra clues about the source such as "the magic is coming from those buildings over there" or "you sense the evil presence feels otherworldly ... and hungry." If the check fails, the character will not gain any additional information unless something happens, such as the phenomena becoming stronger, or coming much closer. The GM should always try to use Sixth Sense to plant clues that make a story more exciting, but not allow it to circumvent the process of discovery in a mystery plot.

Examples of phenomena to which the character may be sensitive include astral/ethereal beings, danger, Pocket Dimensions, electricity, elements, emotions, evil, illusions, interpersonal dynamics, magic, magnetics, paranormal nexus points, particular objects, places of power, psionics, spirits, telepathy, truth, virtue, or the use of specific Attributes or Defects.

Precognition and Postcognition

Alternatively, Sixth Sense can be assigned to represent precognition and postcognition — the ability to access visions of past and future events. This option is a GM-defined Attribute, however, which allows him or her limit its application and scope within the campaign. For precognition, the Attribute's Level reflects the difference in time between the present situation and the future event follow the Time Progression Chart, starting at 1 round. For postcognition, the character can see back an amount of time equal to double the Attribute's Level in Rank on the Time Progression Chart, starting at 1 round (Level 1). For example, a character with Level 5 Precognition can see 1 hour into the future, or 1 month into the past with Level 5 Postcognition.

Special Attack

Type: Special
Cost: 1 or 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +20 attack damage each Level
Reduction: Less damage delivered
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; usage inflicts pain; against specific opponents

Some urban fantasy characters can wield powerful offensive energies, such as the soul-harrowing shriek of a banshee, the chilling touch of a ghost, a sorcerer's magical fireball, demonic hellfire, a psychic's mental blast, or even a *ki*-powered martial arts strike. Special Attack can also be used to define technological attacks built into Items of Power, such as a missile launcher or ghost-busting particle beam.

Special Attacks deliver a maximum of 20 damage per Level; actual damage inflicted is determined by a roll on Table 10-6: Damage Percentage (page 107). Assigning one or more attack Abilities from the list on pages 42-45 further customises a character's Special Attack. Each attack Ability taken reduces the damage by 20 but adds an additional capability. Attacks may also be assigned one or more attack Disabilities from the list on pages 45-47. Each attack Disability increases the damage by 20 but reduces the attack's utility by imposing some form of limitation.

The player must assign the Abilities and Disabilities when the Special Attack is designed. He or she may assign a combination of Abilities and Disabilities that reduces the attack's damage to a minimum of 20. For example, suppose a character has a special Attack at Level 2. He or she would only be able to purchase one Ability, which would reduce the attack's damage from 40 to 20. If the character wanted to purchase a second Ability, he or she must first assign a Disability, which would raise the attack's damage back to 40. The character could then purchase a second Ability, reducing the damage back to 20.

When designing a Special Attack, the player (with GM input) should determine what Skill and Specialisation is appropriate for its use. For most magical or supernatural ranged attacks, it will be Special Ranged Attacks. Any weapon with the Melee Disability uses the Melee Attack or Unarmed Attack Skills, depending on its description. For example, Melee Attack (Sword) is appropriate for an energy sword, while Unarmed Attack (Striking) would be suitable for a character that drained energy by touch or used a *ki*-energised martial arts strike.

Table 3-8: Special Attack Abilities

Ability	# of Slots	Ability	# of Slots
Accurate	1	Irritant	1
Affects Incorporeal	1	Knockback	1
Area Effect	1	Linked (Attack)	2 or 4
Aura	2	Long Range	1
Auto-Fire	3	Mind or Soul Attack	5
Burning	1	Muscle-Powered	1
Concealable	1	No Healing	1
Contagious	2 or 4	Penetrating (Armour)	1
Drain Body	1	Penetrating (Force Field)	1
Drain Energy	1	Quake	1
Drain Mind	1	Spreading	1
Drain Soul	1	Stun	1
Enduring	1	Tangle	2
Flare	1	Targeted	1 or 2
Flexible	1	Trap	1
Homing	1 or 2	Undetectable	4
Incapacitating	3	Unique Ability	Variable
Incurable	4	Vampiric	2 - 4
Indirect	1		

Alternate Attacks

Although a character often uses his or her highest-Level "primary" weapon, alternate or backup ones may also be possessed. The Point cost of these additional "secondary" attacks are one quarter the cost of the primary attack at 1 Point/Level. The primary attack — the attack with the highest Level — is the only one that costs the standard 4 Points/Level. Secondary attacks may each possess different damages, Abilities and Disabilities.

Special Effects

The special effects of Area Effect, Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, Spreading, and Tangle are determined by the Level of the Special Attack only. Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers are not included in the calculation. Additionally, Armour and Force Fields do not normally protect against Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, or Tangle. Before making an attack, a character can choose to inflict less damage than the normal 20/Level, or reduce the power of their special effects.

Effects Based on Damage Inflicted

The scope of the special effects for attacks with the Area Effect, Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, Linked, Spreading, or Tangle Abilities depend on the Level of the Special Attack. For example, Drain (Mind) reduced the target's Mind Stat by 1 for every Special Attack Level; similarly, Tangle creates restraints that have 10 Health Points for every Special Attack Level. To introduce randomness into these special effects, their scopes could instead be based on every 10 damage that the attack inflicts (or would have inflicted in the case of attacks with the No Damage Disability). For the above examples, Drain (Mind) would reduce a target's Mind Stat by 1 for every 10 damage, and Tangle would create restraints that have 10 Health Points for every 10 damage. If this alternate rule is used, damage must be rolled for all attacks — including ones with the No Damage Disability — to determine the special effect scope.

Special Attack Abilities

The following Abilities may be assigned to a Special Attack. The GM may disallow any inappropriate Ability combinations.

Accurate

The attack is unusually accurate, giving a +2 bonus to attack checks (or Stat checks if the attack has the Mind or Soul Attack Ability). This ability can be assigned two or three times for a +4 or +6 bonus, but may not be combined with the Linked (Attack) Ability. This Ability is usually assigned to hand-held weapons created as Items of Power (page 32) only, since Attack Skills (page 59) better represent a character who is adept at using his or her Special Attack.

Affects Incorporeal

This attack will affect characters who have very low densities — or are currently astral, ethereal, or incorporeal (see the Insubstantial Attribute) — as if they were solid.

Area Effect

This is an attack, like an explosive blast, that affects not only the direct target, but also anyone in the immediate area. The area of effect is a sphere with a radius of 1 metre for every Special Attack Level. All affected characters are allowed a defence check (diving for cover, swerving out of the way), but a successful defence check may not be enough to escape completely (GM's discretion; depends on how target avoids attack). The target of the attack (or anyone at the centre of the effect) can reduce the damage percentage by one rank when successfully defending (page 105). All other individuals caught in the area of effect can reduce the damage percentage by two ranks

when successfully defending. Area Effect can be assigned multiple times; each Ability doubles the area radius.

Aura

Rather than having to make an actual attack, the character instead automatically damages anyone who touches his or her body. An example might be a character who was sheathed in flame or electrified. If this Ability is combined with the Area Effect Ability, it automatically damages anyone in the designated area around the character. Aura counts as two Abilities.

Auto-Fire

The attack consists of a burst of multiple shots like a machine gun or rapid sequence of energy bolts. Instead of scoring one hit when an attack is successful, the attacker scores hits (minimum of one, maximum of 10) equal to the difference between the attack check and his or her Check Value (Attack Combat Value plus relevant Combat Skill). For example, if a character's attack Combat Value is 6 and relevant Combat Skill at Level 1, and the player rolled 5 (after all modifications), he or she would score 2 hits. The defender's chance to avoid the attack is derived in a similar way, however: a successful defence check will defend against a number of hits equal to the difference between the defence check and Check Value (Defence Combat Value plus relevant Combat Skill), with a minimum one hit avoided on a successful defence. Each hit delivers separate damage (important when considering Armour and Force Fields). Bonuses from Combat Value, Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers are only applied to the first hit in an Auto-Fire burst — all others only inflict the percentage of base damage of the Special Attack. Auto-Fire counts as three Abilities.

Burning

This represents acid, flaming liquid, or similar attacks that deliver continuing damage over several rounds. If the initial attack damage penetrates the opponent's Armour, the target will suffer an additional 1/10 of the base damage for five rounds or until the effect is somehow neutralised (GM's discretion; it should depend on the type of attack, and may require several rounds for full neutralisation). Armour does not protect against the extra Burning damage in subsequent rounds. Alternatively, Burning can be defined as an "hourly burn," which inflicts 1/10 of the base damage each hour after the attack, or "slow burn," which inflicts 1/5 of the base damage each day (rather than round-by-round). This ability may best represent a disease or slow poison attack. Unlike a regular Burning attack, the hourly and slow burn damage will continue until the victim is dead or makes a successful check with at -4 penalty against the average of his or her Soul and Body (made on an hourly or daily basis).

Concealable

This option is only available for hand-held weapons. The weapon is small enough to be used with one hand and concealed under clothing. Most pistol-sized or knife-sized weapons are Concealable. For more cinematic games, larger weapons such as swords and machine guns can be designed as Concealable as well.

Contagious

Some or all of the attack's damage or other effects will be passed on to others who touch (or otherwise contact) a victim. If mildly contagious, not everyone will be infected; a prospective victim must fail a Stat check at a +4 bonus to be affected. If taken twice, it is highly contagious; someone must fail a Stat check (without modifiers) in order to be affected, or possibly contagion may be automated under some circumstances. The base Check Value is normally the Body Stat, but magical psychic contagion may use Mind or Soul. The GM should adjudicate effects and countermeasures. The Ability is usually combined with the Toxic Disability. Contagious counts as two abilities if mildly contagious or four abilities if highly contagious.

Drain Body

The attack causes the victim to suffer weakness and/or loss of co-ordination. The victim's Body Stat is reduced by 1 for every Special Attack Level. The Body Stat drain is in addition to any Health Point losses from the attack. To design an attack that only drains the Body Stat, but inflicts no other punishment, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. A character who is reduced to a 0 Body Stat is unable to move. Lost Body Stat Points are recovered at one Point per hour of rest. Losing Stat Levels will also lower the Combat Value, but Health Points will not be affected.

Drain Energy

This Ability is only available in campaigns that use Energy Points (page 71). The attack drains away the victim's personal energy supply, causing him or her to become fatigued and/or despondent. In addition to the damage delivered to the victim's Hit Points, the attack causes the same loss of Energy Points. To design an attack that only drains Energy Points, the No Damage Disability must also be assigned. Lost Energy Points recover at their normal rate.

Drain Mind

The attack causes the victim to lose his or her sanity. The attack may be a psionic attack, a tranquilliser or similar drug, or another form of attack. The victim's Mind Stat is reduced by 1 for every Special Attack Level. This Mind Stat drain is in addition to any Health Point losses from the attack. To design an attack that only drains the Mind Stat, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. A character reduced to 0 Mind is "mindless" and will act in an illogical and animalistic fashion. The drained Points return at the rate of one every hour. Losing Stat Levels will also lower the Combat Value.

Drain Soul

The attack affects the victim's spirit. This attack may be a wave of fear, despair, or some other willpower-destroying emotion. The victim's Soul Stat is reduced by 1 for every Special Attack Level. This drainage is in addition to any Health Point losses from the attack. To design an attack that only drains the Soul Stat, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. A character reduced to 0 Soul is "broken," and lacks all drive or volition. The drained Points return at the rate of one every hour. Losing Stat Levels will also lower the Combat Value, but Health Points will not be affected.

Enduring

Enduring can only be assigned in conjunction with Area Effect. The attack remains active within the affected area over multiple rounds. Examples of this type of attack include chemical clouds, sheets of fire, electrical charges, or supercooled vapours. Anyone entering or remaining in the area is immediately subject to the attack; defence checks are outlined under Area Effect. Each time Enduring is assigned, the Area Effect attack remains active for 1 additional round.

Flare

If the target is hit (or in the radius of an Area Effect weapon attack) the defending character may be blinded. Every target looking in the vicinity of the attack must roll a Body Stat check at a -1 penalty for every Special Attack Level, ignoring Armour. To design an attack that only blinds opponents, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. If a target character rolls greater than his or her Body Stat, he or she is blinded for a number of combat rounds equal to the difference between the Check Value and the dice roll. Flare may be taken multiple times; each time it is taken, add an extra -2 penalty to the Stat check. Flare can also be generalised to cover other sense-overloading attacks. For example, an acoustic attack might cause deafness.

Flexible

This ability represents long, flexible, or extendible attacks such as a prehensile whip, magical energy-lash, razor-ribbon, or similar attack mode. The target defends at a -2 penalty. If the attacker is strong enough to physically lift the target, a successful attack can trip or disarm an opponent (snagging a hand-held weapon) in lieu of delivering damage. Such non-damaging attack stunts are made at a -2 penalty to the attack check since they require great skill to execute accurately.

Homing

The attack or weapon fires a projectile, spell, or energy bolt that can track and follow its target. The character receives a +4 bonus to his or her attack check, and if the attack misses or the target successfully defends, the weapon will return to try again (only one more time) in the next combat round. A Homing attack may be vulnerable to Sensory Block, however (page 40).

Incapacitating

This represents any form of attack that can instantly incapacitate a foe even if it does not inflict actual damage. This includes putting an opponent to sleep or turning him or her to stone. Regardless of whether the attack does physical damage, the victim must make a Stat check (Body, Mind, or Soul — decide when the attack is designed) to avoid being completely incapacitated. The check is made at a +4 bonus with a -1 penalty for every Special Attack Level. For example, a Level 4 Attack would require a Stat check at 0 penalty; a Level 1 Attack would be made at a +3 bonus. When designing the attack, specify the form the incapacitation takes: asleep, awake but paralysed, turned to stone, transformed into an inert doll, etc. The effects will wear off in several minutes, unless the Incurable Ability is also taken. To design an attack that only incapacitates the target, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. Incapacitating counts as three Abilities.

Incurable

The attack produces wounds or other effects that do not heal naturally, and are incurable by normal methods. Rather than recovering at a normal rate or being amenable to medical treatment, recovery cannot take place until some exotic event or treatment has occurred. This requirement must be specified when the attack is designed, subject to GM approval. Incurable counts as four Abilities.

Indirect

The weapon can fire shots in a high ballistic arc, or call down energy from the sky, such as a lightning strike, ice storm, or meteor. This allows the attacker to shoot at targets hidden behind buildings, hills, or other obstacles (or even shoot over the horizon, if the Long Range Ability is also taken). Indirect fire is tricky, however. To effectively fire at an indirect location, the attacker must be able to "see" the target (sensors can be used), or someone else must spot the target and relay its position to the attacker. Indirect fire results in a -2 penalty to the attack check; firing at a target the attacker cannot "see" results in an additional -6 penalty (-8 total). A weapon with the Indirect Ability can be used under normal mid-range conditions without any penalty.

Irritant

This represents pepper spray, a skunk's musk, an itching spell, or similar effect. Whether or not damage penetrated Armour or Force Fields, the subject must make a Body Stat check at -1 penalty for every Special Attack Level. If the target fails, the character is partially blinded and distracted (-2 penalty on all checks to do anything) for a number of rounds equal to the amount by which he or she failed the check. Irritant is usually taken in conjunction with the Toxic Disability to simulate an attack against which a gas mask offers protection.

Knockback

This Ability is only available in campaigns that use Knockback rules (page 109). The attack impacts the target forcefully, knocking him or her back one metre for every point of damage delivered. Armour is ignored when determining Knockback distance; Force Fields without the Full Impact Disability do reduce Knockback, however. This Ability is for attacks that impact the character, and may not be appropriate for slashing or piercing attacks. The Knockback distance is doubled each time this Ability is assigned. Combat Value (for characters with the ACV Knockback Combat Technique), Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers may be added to the attack damage when determining final Knockback distance; apply these after any doubling for multiple Knockback assignments.

Linked (Attack)

An attack with this Ability is "attached" to another (or "master") attack. The master attack may be an ordinary weapon (such as a Gadget, like a sword or a gun), a Natural Weapon or unarmed attack, or a different Special Attack. If that attack is successful, this "linked" attack automatically hits as well (no defence allowed), but if it misses or fails to penetrate Armour, the linked attack automatically fails too. If the master attack hits and delivers enough damage to successfully penetrate Armour, then the Armour does not protect at all against the damage of the second linked attack. Damage bonuses from Combat Value, Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers only apply to the master attack, not to each attack. An attack with the Linked Ability may not be given the Accurate or Long Range Abilities or the Inaccurate, Melee, or Short Range Disabilities; its range and accuracy are dependent on the attack to which it is linked. Linked (Attack) counts as two Abilities. If damage bonuses from Combat Value, Massive Damage, Superstrength, etc. are applied to both attacks, this counts as four Abilities.

Long Range

An ordinary attack has an effective range of about 500 metres. This Ability extends the range to 5 km. It can be assigned multiple times: each time it is taken after the first doubles the actual range. Since the Earth's horizon limits line-of-sight for characters standing on the ground, multiple Long Range Abilities are often combined with the Indirect Ability (page 44). The Long Range Ability is incompatible with the Melee or Short Range Disabilities.

Mind or Soul Attack

The attack is not a physical attack but rather is a mental assault (Mind Attack) or contest of spirit or will (Soul Attack). During character creation, the player must specify either Mind or Soul as the focus of the Ability. Instead of the attack requiring Attack or Defence Combat Value checks, the players must roll successful Mind or Soul Stat checks for their characters to attack or defend (though appropriate Skills can modify this). Mind or Soul Attack ignores Armour, Shields, and Force Fields, and affects Insubstantial or Astral characters normally. Both versions count as five Abilities.

Muscle-Powered

This ability normally is only appropriate for melee or thrown weapons. The character may add any damage bonus from the Superstrength Attribute (page 48) to the attack's basic damage.

No Healing

This is a lesser form of Incurable. The damage from the attack cannot be restored using the Healing or Regeneration Attributes but can otherwise recover or be repaired normally.

Penetrating (Armour)

The Armour Attribute does not stop damage from these attacks as efficiently as usual. Each time Penetrating (Armour) is assigned, the Armour stops 20 less damage than normal from the attack (up to the Armour's maximum rating). For example, assigning Penetrating (Armour) to a Special Attack 3 times reduces the amount of damage the target's Armour stops by 60.

Penetrating (Force Field)

The Force Field Attribute does not stop damage from these attacks as efficiently as usual. Each time Penetrating (Force Field) is assigned, the Force Field stops 20 less damage than normal from the attack (up to the Force Field's maximum rating). For example, assigning Penetrating (Force Field) to a Special Attack 5 times reduces the amount of damage the target's Force Field stops by 100.

Quake

This attack creates a linear shock wave in the ground, causing rumbling and fractures. The quake "fault" will only be large enough for one person to fall into its depths unless it is combined with the Area Effect Ability. A victim may fall into the crevasse if he or she fails a Body Stat check (the Acrobatics

Skill will provide a bonus). The fissure will be approximately one metre deep for the first 20 points of damage inflicted and is doubled for every additional 20 damage points. Thus, a 40 damage point quake would create a fissure two metres deep, while an 80 damage point quake would create a crevice eight metres deep. Although the Massive Damage Attribute is not usually considered for determining fissure depth, this limitation may be ignored if the Quake is also Muscle-Powered (page 44). Quake can only be used on a solid surface (which may be earth, sand, cement, or asphalt), and may not be combined with the Aura Ability.

Spreading

This type of attack spreads to cover an expanding area like a cone of energy or a spray of projectiles or energy bolts. The defender receives a -1 penalty to his or her defence check. Multiple adjacent targets in the attack path may also receive damage if they are lined up or in a dense formation, up to a maximum of one extra target for every Special Attack Level. The Spreading Ability can be acquired multiple times; each one further penalises the target's defence check by -1 and doubles the number of possible adjacent targets. Spreading is often assigned in conjunction with the Short Range Disability.

Stun

An attack with this Ability inflicts temporary damage such as an electric shock that shorts out electronics and renders people unconscious. Lost Health Points are recovered at one Point every minute. Stun damage cannot kill. Although the attack does less damage than a regular attack of a comparable Level, it has the advantage that it may be used to incapacitate a foe without the risk of killing him or her.

Tangle

Attacks that can entangle the victim may include an assault that freezes the target in ice, or traps him or her in the branches of an animated plant, or simple webbing. The entanglement has 10 Health Points for every Special Attack Level. If a target does not successfully defend against a Tangle attack, he or she is trapped until sufficient damage is delivered to the entanglement to reduce its Health Points to zero or lower (at this point, it is destroyed). A trapped character has restricted movement and: attacks physically at a -4 penalty, cannot defend, and cannot perform actions that require complex gestures. The character is usually able to speak, however. A victim who has partially destroyed an entanglement may regain additional body movement, however (GM's discretion). A Tangle attack also inflicts damage as normal unless the No Damage disability is also assigned to the attack. An "Incurable" entanglement can only be damaged by some special means (such as fire or water), defined when the Tangle attack is created. Tangle counts as two Abilities.

Targeted

The attack inflicts double damage to a specific group of targets and normal or no damage to everyone else. Thus, an attack could be good energy (double damage to evil creatures), chaos energy (double damage to lawful creatures), life energy (double damage to undead creatures), or detrimental to a specific race. Targeted counts as one Ability if no damage is delivered to non-Targeted opponents, or two Abilities if normal damage is delivered. Taken as part of an Item of Power (page 32), this is a good way to create customised magical weapons designed to destroy a particular foe.

Trap

The attack lays a cursed glyph, mine, booby trap, or some other similar device, which "sits and waits" until someone triggers it. A successful Mind Stat check will reveal the trap's presence. The Trap Ability can be paired with the Melee Disability (page 46) to simulate a booby trap that must be carefully planted. Without the Melee Disability, the trap can be deployed at a range; a successful attack check indicates that the Trap was fired or tossed into the correct area.

Undetectable

Most Special Attacks have a visible component that makes it easy for targets to determine who is attacking them. An attack with the Undetectable Ability does not provide any indication that it is about to strike and cannot be traced back to the attacker using normal methods. This may result in the attacker gaining surprise, which prevents the victim from making a defence check (page 105). If the target knows he or she is under attack, however, a defence check can still be made at a -8 penalty (as though the attack were invisible; page 106). This Ability is most often associated with non-physical attacks such as ones with the Drain (Any), or Mind or Soul Attack Abilities. Undetectable counts as four Abilities.

Unique Ability

The attack has some other unspecified Ability that is not listed, and is subject to GM approval. Examples can include an attack that alters the target's memories, one that affects the appearance of the target, and many more. The number of Ability slots is determined by the GM based on the benefit the Unique Ability provides.

Vampiric

This Ability can be added to any attack that causes normal damage or one that drains Stat Points. Upon a successful attack, the lost Health Points or Stat Levels are transferred to the attacker. Vampiric counts as two Abilities if the attack can only restore lost Points or Levels (thus, the character could heal him or herself). It counts as three Abilities if the attack can increase the character's Health Points above their normal maximum value (no more than twice normal, however). Finally, it counts as four Abilities if it can increase the character's Stats above their normal maximum value (though not beyond a value of 20). Any values or Points in excess of the user's normal Level fade at a rate of 20 Health Points or one Stat Level per hour. This Ability may not be combined with the Area Effect or Spreading Abilities. Vampiric costs 2, 3, or 4 Ability slots.

Attack Disabilities

Some, none, or many of these Disabilities may be assigned to a Special Attack. The GM may disallow any combination that seems inappropriate.

Backblast

The attack produces some sort of backblast or other side effect that affects anyone or anything standing directly behind the attacker (within 1-2 metres). An example is a rocket launcher that produces a hazardous backblast to anyone standing behind the gunner, but some spells or supernatural abilities might have similar risks. The damage of the backblast is normally one-fifth the damage of the actual attack. If this Disability is taken twice, it affects everyone in a 1-2 metre radius around it, including the attacking character (unless he or she also has Immunity to one's own attacks). Backblast cannot be combined with the Area Effect and Aura Abilities at the same time.

Drop Shields

This Disability can only be taken if the character also has the Force Field Attribute. It requires the character to turn off all Force Fields before using the attack, and they must remain down until the character's turn to act on the following round.

Hand-Held

Attacks usually emanate from the character, but they may be designated as hand-held. A hand-held weapon can be lost or grabbed by an enemy, or loaned to an ally. The character using the weapon must have at least one hand free to hold it. Optionally, the GM may decide this Disability takes up zero slots (it's for description only).

Inaccurate

The attack is not accurate, suffering a -2 penalty to all attack checks (or Stat checks, if it is a Mind or Soul Attack). This ability can be taken two or three times for a -4 or -6 penalty.

Table 3-9: Special Attack Disabilities

Disability	# of Slots	Disability	# of Slots
Backblast	1 or 2	Self-Destruct	4
Drop Shields	1	Short Range	1
Hand-Held	1 or 0	Slow	1-5
Inaccurate	1	Static	2
Internal	1	Stoppable	1-5
Limited Shots	1-3	Toxic	1
Low Penetration	1	Unique Disability	1
Melee	2	Unreliable	1
No Damage	1	Uses Energy	1 or 2
Only In (Environment)	1 or 2		

Internal

The attack is only usable inside a specific structure. This may represent a headquarter's built-in internal security systems or an attack for which the character draws power from inside the building and channels it through his or her body.

Limited Shots

The attack is only usable for a few combat rounds, after which it either runs out of ammunition or power, or simply burns out. Assigning this Disability once means it can make up to six attacks; if taken twice, up to three attacks; if taken three times, only one attack. If the attack also has the Auto-Fire Ability (page 43), one "attack" means a single Auto-Fire burst.

The base number of Disability slots are for attacks that take several minutes or more to "reload." If the attack can be "reloaded" with one action, the number of Disability slots is reduced by 1 (minimum of 1 slot). If the attack can be "reloaded" instantly (an ammunition source is still required), the Disability is worth two fewer slots (minimum of 1 slot).

Low Penetration

The attack has an inferior ability to penetrate Armour and Force Fields relative to its damage. Examples include shotgun blasts, hollow-point bullets, or phased plasma guns. Any Armour or Force Field Attribute stops an additional 20 damage. The Game Master must approve multiple assignments of this Disability. This Disability is incompatible with either of the two Penetrating Abilities. GMs must approve Special Attacks with multiple assignments of Low Penetration.

Melee

The attack is only usable against adjacent opponents and may require physical contact. An example of a Melee attack is a physical or energy sword, or a touch that inflicts debilitating effects. Of course, many Melee weapons can be thrown as well in desperate situations, but the attack suffers a -4 attack penalty and the base damage is divided in half. The Melee Disability cannot be combined with the Long Range Ability or Short Range Disability. It is sufficiently limiting that it is equivalent to two Disabilities.

No Damage

The attack does not deliver ordinary physical damage; the attacker's Attack Combat Value and Massive Damage Attribute bonus do not add to damage either. This Disability is usually only taken if combined with Abilities such as Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, or Tangle that produce effects that do not rely on physical damage. The damage value of the attack is used only to rate the effectiveness of these special abilities — the greater the damage value, the more effective the attack. Characters that use Special Attacks with the No Damage Disability may still need to roll the damage percentage (page 107), however.

Only In (Environment)

The attack or weapon can only target objects that are on or in a particular limited environment, for example, "only in water" (representing an octopus ink jet) or "only in dreams" (representing a psychic attack that works only in a shared dreamscape). The environment should not be one that is ubiquitous in the campaign (for example, "only in air" is not valid unless a lot of the game action will take place in airless environments). If the environment is very rare in the campaign, the GM may allow this to count as two Disabilities.

Self-Destruct

Use of this attack destroys the weapon (characters obviously take this Disability very rarely). This Disability is often combined with Melee and Area-Effect to represent an explosive self-destruct system. It may not be combined with Limited Uses. It counts as four Disabilities.

Short Range

This attack is only usable at close range (effective range of about 50 meters). The Short Range Disability cannot be combined with the Long Range Ability or the Melee Disability.

Slow

The attacker must use one combat action to aim, charge, chant an incantation, load the weapon, or perform some other necessary activity before each attack. Someone with the Extra Attacks Attribute (page 26) can use one of his or her extra actions to prepare the attack rather than wasting the entire round. The Slow Disability can be taken more than once to represent an attack that takes even longer to initiate. Assigning it twice increases the time to three rounds; three assignments increase the time to 10 rounds (about a minute); four increases the time to two-six hours; five increases the preparation to days. This Disability may not be used with the Linked (Attack) Ability.

Static

The attack cannot be used while the character is moving. This could be due to a need for precise aim or total concentration. The weapon might also require all power to be diverted to its energy supply, or might be static because of recoil, or another reason. The character may not even make defence checks on the round a Static attack is used; if he or she has already made a defence check, the character cannot attack with a Static weapon until the following round. Static is worth two Disabilities.

Stoppable

The attack fires a projectile or energy bolt that is massive or slow enough to be shot down and does not reach the target until Initiative zero. Consequently, the attack can be stopped in mid-flight. A cannon shell would probably not qualify, but a winged dagger, guided missile, or magical ball of lightning might. Anyone with an unused combat attack action during the same round may make a ranged or melee attack against the projectile. To stop the attack, a successful hit (or hits) must deliver 5 damage for every Special Attack Level. Stoppable may not be combined with the Melee Disability. Stoppable may be purchased more than once to reflect an attack that takes even longer to reach the target. Each additional Stoppable rating grants one additional round where characters may attempt to intercept or otherwise stop the attack. Weapons using the Indirect or Long Range Abilities can take minutes or hours to reach their targets; in these cases, the Stoppable Disability is assigned a maximum of five times.

Toxic

The attack is a gas, toxin, biological weapon, sound, radiation, or other harmful effect that only damages living things. Non-living material or characters who have the appropriate Adaptation or Special Defence Attributes are immune to its effects.

Unique Disability

The attack has some other unspecified limitation, which is subject to GM approval. Examples could include a weapon that fires in a random direction, one that is extremely costly to operate, an attack that drains Heath Points from the user, etc.

Unreliable

Any time this attack is used and the attack check is an unmodified (or "natural") 19 or 20, the attack fails to take place and the weapon or ability burns out, jams, overheats, or otherwise malfunctions. The Special Attack will not work again until some condition is fulfilled. For example, repairing a technological weapon requires a skilled individual to make a successful Mind Stat check (one attempt each round), and while the character is making repairs, he or she cannot carry out other activities. The same could apply to a magical attack with a Mind Stat check needed to remember the correct words. Other remedies might be appropriate for recovering different attacks (for example, a supernatural monster whose breath weapon has "burned out" might have to eat a hearty meal first).

Uses Energy

This Ability is only available in campaigns that use Energy Points (page 71). The attack draws upon the user's personal energy, each attack draining 10 Energy Points. This Disability can be taken twice, and, if so, it uses 10 Energy Points per Level of the Special Attack.

Special Defence

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Variable
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 Special Defence slot each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; partial defence (for 2 Slots only)

A character with this Attribute is resistant or completely immune to a specific type of uncommon ailment or injury, normally one whose effects are otherwise insidious in nature. Special Defence can be acquired multiple times to represent a character who is resistant or immune to different kinds of attacks/events.

If a category is assigned one slot, the character is partially resistant; for two slots, the character has complete or enhanced resistance. For ability to survive under harsh physical conditions, see the Adaptation Attribute (page 18). For characters who have defences against particular Attributes, see the Block Power (page 19) Attribute.

Several examples of Special Defences and their effects are shown on the next page. The GM and players are encouraged to develop their own as well.

Table 3-10: Special Defence

Effect	1 Slot	2 Slots
Ageing	Ages slowly	Does not age
Breathing	Survive in low-oxygen environment	Does not breathe
Hunger	Need to eat once every 2-4 days	Never need to eat
Disease	Half damage or effect	Immune
One Type of Magic	+3 Stat/Stat checks	+6 Stat/Stat checks
Own Attributes	Stat check to avoid effect	Immune
Pain	Unwanted sensation is reduced	No pain is felt
Poison	Half damage or effect	Immune
Sleep	Sleep once every 3-7 days	Never need to sleep
Specific Attack Ability	+3 Stat/Stat checks	+6 Stat/Stat checks

Special Movement

Type: Special
Cost: 1 Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 type of movement each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; movement is exhausting to the character; involving particular surfaces

The movement abilities may be the result of genetics, mystical forces, supernatural talents, or intense training. The character may select one Special Movement Ability for every Level of this Attribute. Several examples are given below; the GM and players are encouraged to develop additional abilities as well. See Flight (page 26), Jumping (page 32), Speed (page 48), Teleport (page 50), Tunnelling (page 51), or Water Speed (page 51) for other methods of movement.

Balance

The character never loses his or her balance, even when running on a narrow rope or beam.

Cat-Like

The character will take half damage (round down) from most falls and always lands on his or her feet.

Dimension Hop

Upon a successful Stat check, the character can instantly travel between his or her home dimension to one other dimension, such as Asgard, Heaven, Hell, alternate Earth, the astral plane (the body is left behind), etc. Each time this method is assigned, the character can travel to another single dimension. Characters who can travel among many dimensions should probably have the Dynamic Powers (Dimensions) Attribute instead. The GM will determine if Dimension Hop is appropriate for his or her campaign.

Light-Footed

The character can skim over sand, snow, or ice at full speed.

Slithering

The character can slither along the ground at normal walking/running speeds. This allows a character to move quickly while maintaining a very low profile.

Swinging/Brachiating

The character can swing through forests and cities (areas with natural or artificial structures above swinging height) using vines/ropes/webbing or simply his or her arms.

Untrackable

The character never leaves footprints, tracks, or a scent when he or she walks or runs.

Wall-Bouncing

The character can move at regular walking speed without touching the ground by bounding back and forth between nearby vertical surfaces (walls). For example, he or she can proceed down hallways or climb an alleyway between two buildings (bouncing from wall to wall).

Wall-Crawling

The character can cling to walls or ceilings as though they were on the ground or floor. This counts as two Special Movement abilities.

Water-Walking

The character can walk or run over water as if he or she was on land. This counts as two Special Movement abilities.

Zen Direction

When the character opens his or her mind to the natural world, he or she will always move in the "right" direction. The "right" direction is not always the desired direction, however.

Speed

Type: Special
Cost: 6 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 100 kph
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; Stat/Skill checks required to run safely

On average, a character can sprint up to 6 metres per round (4.3 kph) times his or her Body Stat. A character with Speed can move much faster than this, as well as perceive the world at an increased pace. At Speed Level 5+, the character moves quickly enough to run over any liquid surface as well.

In most genres, a fast-moving character can still interact with the world. This means that the character will not run into buildings along city streets because he or she can perceive them early enough and make sharp turns to avoid them. Speedsters can also read books quickly, write at incredible speeds, and perform normal chores and activities at enhanced rates. In addition to gaining +2 Initiative at each Level, the character is harder to hit due to the incredible speed at which the character is moving. For more information about Speed and its influence on combat, see page 104.

Speed is a modular Attribute that does not provide the character with many other benefits typically associated with speedsters, however. Many characters with Speed will also possess one or more Levels in the following Attributes: Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes), Extra Attacks, Extra Defences, Heightened Awareness, Incorporeal, Massive Damage (Speed attacks), Regeneration, Special Movement, and Special Attack (Tied to Speed through the Dependent Defect).

Superstrength

Type: Special
Cost: 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 tonne
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; no extra combat damage; Superstrength in single limb only

On average, a character can lift 30 kg times his or her Body Stat, but some characters are far stronger than their Body Stats indicate. This Attribute can represent the muscular strength of a large or powerful non-human, or a supernatural ability. Each Level of Superstrength determines the maximum mass the character can lift. Each Level also adds +10 close combat damage when using punches, kicks, body slams, melee weapons, Special Attacks with the Muscle-Powered Ability, or the Natural Weapon Attribute (page 34). Each Level also grants a +4 bonus for Body Stat checks where pure strength is involved.

A character's Superstrength is independent of his or her Body Stat. When someone or something has Superstrength, strength moves beyond the Stat scale; the Body Stat now represents fitness, durability, and agility rather than actual muscle. Thus, a player could create someone with a Body Stat of 2, but Levels of Superstrength (clumsy but powerful!).

Swarm

Type: Special
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +1 critter for every current Health Point each Level
Reduction: Attribute always used in same way
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; fewer critters; suffer damage when transforming

A character with this Attribute can transform into a swarm of small creatures: rats, bats, wasps, crows or other tiny creatures or things. Vampires and demons most often possess this dramatic ability.

The type of swarm must be determined during character creation. The character can create one critter from his or her body for every current Health Point, multiplied by the Level in this Attribute. Thus, a character with 130 current Health Points who has Swarm at Level 4 could transform into a mass of 520 creatures (130 x 4 = 520).

When transformed into a swarm, the character cannot use any of his or her existing Attributes or Skills. The actions of the swarm are basically limited to three options: move, observe, and attack. Additionally, all the critters of the swarm must remain within close proximity of each other (within a radius of five metres per Level).

A swarm's Attack Combat Value is equal to the Swarm Attribute Level + 4. Its attack damage is not based on Combat Value, though. Instead, it inflicts 1 damage for every 10 critters (round up; minimum one damage point) in the swarm. In many instances, the Armour and Force Field Attributes will protect the target character from all damage, since the Attributes stop sufficient damage from each critter attack. Against some critters, even regular clothing may be enough to stop some or all damage. Each situation will be different; the GM must determine how much damage, if any, will penetrate the target's defences.

A swarm can be attacked normally, and each creature in it dies if it is hit (no defence check is allowed). Unless an opponent is using an attack with the Area-Effect or Spreading Abilities (pages 42 and 45), however, only a single member of the swarm can be killed per attack (GM's discretion). Consequently, a swarm of 200 creatures requires 200 attacks to completely destroy. Attacks with the Spreading Ability can affect multiple critters at a time, while attacks with the Area Effect Ability can be devastating to the swarm.

A character who dissolved into a swarm may choose to revert into normal form during his or her Initiative in a combat round. To accomplish this, all available critters in the swarm (those not killed or trapped) must join together. Transforming back to normal form replaces a character's action for that round. The character will return to normal form with Health Points equal to the number of critters that recombined, divided by the Swarm Attribute Level (round down). For example, if a character with 130 current Health Points and Swarm at Level 4 divided into 520 creatures, and after a battle, recombined with only 100 available critters, the character would then have a current total of 25 Health Points (100÷4=25).

Telekinesis

Type: Special
Cost: 2 or 4 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: Area, Range
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 1 kg
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; more specific matter limitation

The character can concentrate on an object and move it without physically touching it. Telekinesis may represent psionic ability, magic, or some form of tractor beam. Characters with the ability to magically control the movement of a particular element (Earth, Water, etc.) may also use Telekinesis to represent their particular ability.

A character using Telekinesis can lift him or herself, a character, an object, or a group of adjacent objects and move it at a fast walking speed (10 metres/round) or manipulate it with the dexterity of a human hand. The higher the Attribute Level, the greater fine motor control the character has when manipulating objects as well. The character can also levitate an object and have it strike another person as if it were a short-ranged thrown weapon. The mass Telekinesis can lift is reduced by a factor of 10 when throwing an object hard enough to inflict damage. For example, a character with Level 4 could lift up to 1,000 kg but could only throw objects massing up to 100 kg. This is treated as a normal attack and thus can be negated by a successful defence. Damage depends on the mass of the object hurled: 5-15 points for an object massing up to 1 kg, 15-30 points for up to 10 kg, 45 points for one up to 100 kg, 60 points for one up to 1,000 kg (one tonne), etc. The same damage applies to the object being hurled. If Telekinesis is used to directly crush or constrict a target, damage delivered equals 5 points for each Attribute Level.

A character who uses Telekinesis to grab another person and throw him or her uses the same procedure, but this requires a successful Attack Combat check to "grab" the target. Accurately tossing an opponent so that he or she hits another target requires a second successful attack check. If attempting to disarm a character with Telekinesis, the subject should be allowed a Body Stat check to retain the weapon at a -1 Check Value penalty per Level of the disarming character's Telekinesis Attribute. If a character wishes to fly at speeds exceeding 10 metres/round, he or she needs the Flight Attribute (page 26) rather than Telekinesis.

Ordinary Telekinesis (capable of moving anything physical, but not forms of energy) costs 4 Points/Level. At a cost of only 2 Point/Level, the character may have a more focused Telekinesis. This restricts the character to telekinetically moving (or sculpting) a particular type of matter. Some examples are given below.

Air

The character can only move air (or other gases). A cubic metre of air masses about 1.3 kg. Enough air to fill a 3 metre by 3 metre by 3 metre (roughly 1,000 cubic feet) room masses 35 kg.

Earth

The character can only move dirt, rock, stone, sand, etc. He or she cannot affect treated metals. A cubic metre of packed dirt masses about 2 tonnes; the same mass of concrete masses about 2.5 tonnes, while a cubic metre of solid granite masses about 2.7 tonnes.

Fire

The character can only affect flames of an existing fire, or can possibly start them with his or her mind as well (GM's discretion). Since fire does not have mass, the Level indicates the size of the flames that can be controlled and manipulated: small fires at Level 1 (like a candle or match flame), up to raging infernos that cover several city blocks at Level 10.

Metal

The character's Telekinesis only works on metal. This may be a mystical limitation, or it may be the character's Attribute is actually based in magnetics. A cubic metre of steel masses about 8 tonnes.

Water

The character can lift and move water. A cubic metre of water (1,000 litres) masses about a tonne. A gallon of water (about 4 litres) masses about 4 kilograms.

Wood

The character's Attribute only works on wood (living or dead). This ability is usually mystical in origin and common to nature priests and spirits. A cubic metre of wood masses just under a tonne.

Telepathy

Type: Special
Cost: 1-3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: Targets
Optional PMVs: Area, Range
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: Attribute always used in same way
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; usage weakens character

Telepathy is the classic psychic ability. Versions of telepathy may also represent other magical capabilities; demons that can tempt their victims often possess Telepathy, for example.

Telepathy costs 1 Point/Level if its utility is quite restricted (for example, "only works with canines" or "only with close friends"). It costs 2 Points/Level if its utility is somewhat restricted (for example, "only with humans" or "only with beasts"). It costs 3 Points/Level if it has universal utility.

This Attribute allows the character to read and transmit thoughts, and at higher Levels, to actually "invade" a person's mind and probe their memories or alter their thoughts. Telepathy works only if a subject is in very close proximity, unless the Range or Area PMV Rank is 2 or higher. Pinpointing a single target in a crowd can be difficult; the GM may require a Mind Stat check, modified by any Levels the character has in the Heightened Awareness (page 29) or Heightened Senses Attribute (page 29).

A subject cannot detect a telepath reading thoughts or sensory impressions unless he or she has the Telepathy or Mind Shield Attributes at an equal or higher Level. If so, he or she can choose to block the telepath, in which case the only way to get through is via mental invasion. A subject will always be aware of a mental invasion (although a non-telepath may not understand exactly what is going on). See the Mind Combat rules (page 109) in Chapter 9: Game Mechanics for details of mental invasions.

Once contact is made, a telepath at Level 6 or higher can temporarily gain a target's specific knowledge that is associated with a Skill. The actual Skill is not learned in full, however. For example, a telepath can scan the mind of a nearby surgeon to learn how to perform a specific operation on an ally, but he or she does not gain the Medical Skill. The telepath will soon forget this newly learned Skill-based knowledge.

Unlike most Attributes, Telepathy only has listed entries for Levels 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. If necessary, the GM can interpolate the intermediate and higher Levels. When performing a Mind Stat check to determine if the Telepathy attempt was successful, the character receives a Check Value bonus equal to half the Attribute's Level (for example, a Level 8 Telepath makes his or her Mind Stat checks with a +4 Check Value bonus).

Level 2 The character can, by concentrating, use mind reading to pick up the "loud" surface thoughts of a subject. A "loud" thought is something about which the subject is thinking intensely or that has a very strong emotional content. The character can also transmit a single feeling, such as "fear" or "love" to another person.

Level 4 The character can, by concentrating, use mind reading to pick up the ordinary surface thoughts of a subject. The character can only read what a person is actually thinking at the time. Two telepaths can communicate with one another at conversational speeds by reading each other's thoughts. The character can also transmit a word, simple image, or simple concept (like "flower," or a person's face) to a non-telepath on which he or she concentrates. It requires an entire round of concentration to convey one concept, which makes telepath to non-telepath communication slow.

Level 6 The character can easily read a subject's surface thoughts and sensory impressions (for example, seeing through a subject's eyes, feeling what the subject feels, etc.). The character can choose to ignore some senses if desired. The character can send and receive mental speech to a non-telepath at normal conversational speeds. If the Targets PMV is raised to Level 2 or higher, the character can broadcast the mental speech of one subject to others in the range/area as well.

Level 8 The character has the same capabilities as at Level 6 Telepathy. In addition, he or she can invade another person's mind. This counts as an attack, and if the subject is unwilling or unaware, the character will enter Mind Combat with him or her (page 109). If the subject is willing or loses the mental combat, the telepath can probe his or her memory for information he or she needs. The character will also automatically read surface thoughts of anyone within the telepathy area.

Level 10 The character has the same capabilities as Level 8 Telepathy. He or she automatically shares the sensory experiences of anyone within the telepathy area without need for concentration, unless he or she deliberately tries to block this ability. Additionally, a successful mental invasion can probe memories that the subject can no longer consciously remember, delete existing memories, and plant false ones.

Teleport

Type: Special
Cost: 5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 m (Level 1)
Reduction: Attribute always used in the same way
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; teleport not accurate; naked form only

Teleport enables the character to transport him or herself instantly from place to place without crossing the intervening space. It is a common ability for psionic characters, sorcerers, and superhumans.

Teleporting is only possible if the character has visited the intended destination or can see or otherwise sense the destination (possibly through the Heightened Senses or Sixth Sense Attributes). The Game Master may allow characters to teleport to unknown destinations (such as "100 metres up," or "to the other side of the door"), perhaps for an additional 1 or 2 Character Points total. Accidentally teleporting into a solid object may be fatal or simply cause a failed teleport at the GM's option. A character can carry anything while teleporting that he or she could normally carry.

When Teleport is first assigned, the GM may ask the player to decide if velocity (speed and direction) is conserved during travel. Alternatively, the character might adapt velocity to each Teleport individually. In many campaigns, the effects of velocity will simply be ignored.

Tough

Type: Special
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Linear; +20 Health Points each Level
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

Possessing this Attribute increases the Health Points of the character, allowing him or her to withstand more damage in combat. The Tough Attribute, along with the Body Stat, also reflects a character's resistance to sickness, disease, and other physical ailments. See page 71 for more information on Health Points. Note that characters with high Body or Soul Attributes may be very healthy even without this Attribute.

Transfer

Type: Special
Cost: 5 or 10 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Required PMVs: Duration
Optional PMVs: Range
Progression: Linear; transfer of +1 Attribute Level each Level
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Character loses Attribute while it is transferred; transfer to specific type of targets; transfer of specific Attributes

Upon a successful Stat Soul check, the character can temporarily grant the use of any one of his or her Attributes to any single willing target character within the Range PMV distance. Dynamic Powers and Power Flux cannot be transferred under normal circumstances. The Transfer Attribute Level determines the maximum Attribute Level that can be granted. The Level of a transferred Attribute replaces the target's corresponding Level (if applicable), which can be an increase or decrease. The target gains the benefits of a transferred Attribute as long as indicated by the Duration PMV. The GM may also decide that Stats, Skills, and/or Characteristic Attributes can be given to a target when Transfer reaches Level 5 or higher. To grant Attributes to multiple targets, the Transfer Attribute can be assigned multiple times.

For 5 Points/Level the character can only transfer one Attribute at any single time. When the character grants a new ability, the target ceases benefiting from any currently transferred Attribute. For 10 Points/Level, the character can transfer all desired Attributes simultaneously to a single target. When an Attribute is Transferred, the receiving character is in complete control of its abilities.

Transmutation

Type: Special
Cost: 3-5 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Required PMVs: Duration
Optional PMVs: Range
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 kg (Level 1)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; creation is visually flawed; limited control over actual object created

This Attribute allows a character to transmute one non-living object (or set of connected objects) into another. Transmutation costs 5 Points/Level if the character can transmute any object into another (within the limits of his or her Level). It costs 4 Points/Level if the character can only transmute (to or from) a general class of objects such as "metal," "weapons," "clothing," or "food." It also costs 4 Points/Level if the character can only transmute one object to another of similar mass; the types of objects are unrestricted. Finally, the cost is 3 Points/Level if the character is limited to a transmutation within a specific category and of similar mass, such as "regular clothes to battle costume," "lead to gold," or "spoiled food to edible food." The GM may restrict any categories that seem overly broad or too powerful.

Few characters with the Transmutation Attribute will also possess the Creation Attribute (page 21). Since Transmutation allows a character to transform air, earth, and buildings into anything else, this Attribute effectively "trumps" Creation. Only in rare circumstances will a character find him or herself in a situation in which nothing in the immediate area can be transmuted.

The character cannot transmute material into new objects outside the character's experience. The character could transmute a weapon into a book, painting or videotape, but the content must be something with which he or she was already familiar. Likewise, a character who had no familiarity with computers could not transmute a television into one using Transmutation. The GM may choose to require a Mind Stat check (or relevant Skill check) if the character attempts a particularly complex transmutation. Failure may indicate the new object does not function properly; this is especially applicable when creating complex technological devices. Unless the GM decides otherwise, Transmutation is only able to make objects that could be classified as Gadgets; it cannot create Items of Power. When attempting to transmute an Item of Power, the character suffers a penalty to the Mind or Soul Stat check of -2 for each Level of the Item of Power.

The object will remain transmuted for a period of time indicated by the Duration PMV.

Tunnelling

Type: Special
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 m/hour (Level 1)
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; in specific terrain; depth limitation

The Tunnelling Attribute allows a character to move earth and/or burrow underground. Tunnelling assumes that the character is going through sand or packed earth; boring through solid rock is one Level slower. The tunnel the character leaves behind will either be permanent or will collapse immediately (must be specified during creation of each tunnel).

Unique Attribute

Type: Special
Cost: 1-10 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Variable
Required PMVs: Variable
Optional PMVs: Variable
Progression: Variable
Reduction: Any
Restrictions: Any

This Attribute covers any and all powers and special abilities not detailed in the rules. Often one single Point in a Unique Attribute is sufficient to give the character "flavour," but more Points can be allocated to enhance the effects on game play and must be added if the Attribute would be of considerable benefit. Discuss the Attribute with the GM to determine what specific game effects the Unique Attribute possesses.

The GM should assign a Point cost per Level based on how the Attribute compares to other Attributes and how useful it is. An Attribute that is somewhat useful in the game should cost 1 Point/Level; one that is very useful should cost 2-3 Points/Level; one that is extremely useful should cost 4-6 Points/Level; and one that is exceptionally powerful and useful should cost 7-10 (or more) Points/Level.

Unknown Superhuman Power

Type: Special
Cost: Variable
Relevant Stat: Variable
Required PMVs: Variable
Optional PMVs: Variable
Progression: Special (see below)
Reduction: Any
Restrictions: Any

In some campaigns, the characters may be unaware of their supernatural Attributes until they manifest at a crucial moment. A fairy changeling, mage, half-demon, or other person with a supernatural heritage may have grown up believing he or she was a normal human, until something triggers a more-than-human power. To represent this, the player can allocate some Points to Unknown Superhuman Power when creating the character. The player does not purchase a Level in this Attribute — he or she simply spends a selected amount of Character Points. The GM takes those Points and adds a bonus of 50% (rounding up) and uses them to assign other Attributes to the character. The GM does not tell the player which Attributes have been assigned; they are revealed to the player (and character) as the game unfolds and the Attributes manifest. GMs are encouraged to reveal the character's Attributes slowly and when it is appropriate for the campaign's story. The GM should never feel pressured to tell the player what his or her character's unknown Attributes are before the time is right.

Water Speed

Type: Special
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 5 kph
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; only surface travel; time limitation

A character with Water Speed can float and travel on or under water. Aquatic creatures or amphibious non-humans such as mermaids usually possess this Attribute. The character can swim on the surface at high speeds and dive underwater for brief periods by holding his or her breath, or indefinitely if he or she has the Adaptation (Underwater) Attribute. To survive the pressure associated with deep diving, the Adaptation (Pressure) Attribute must also be assigned. Also, depending on the speed at which the character is moving, opponents may suffer a penalty to hit the character (see Attacking Moving Targets, page 104).

Wealth

Type: Mundane
Cost: 3 Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None
Required PMVs: None
Optional PMVs: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at $500,000
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Difficult to access funds; less non-liquid assets; spending limits on single items

The character is more financially stable ("liquid") than an average person. This will allow him or her to easily acquire commercially available goods, and bribe or hire people. Note that hirelings that are intensely loyal to the character should still be acquired through the Henchmen or the Servant Attributes. The character usually has non-liquid assets (like houses or real estate) commensurate with his or her wealth as well. In order to have access to things that are illegal or difficult to acquire without special licenses, the character should still acquire the Organisational Ties or Gadgets Attributes (pages 28 and 35).







SKILLS

Step 5: Select Skills

Your character's Skills represent his or her extensive training and experience in a particular field. Skill Points, not Character Points, are used to acquire them.

A character's starting Skill Points is determined by the power level (see Table 4-1: Starting Skill Points). This value can be increased by an additional 10 Skill Points for each Level of the Highly Skilled Attribute (page 30). A character with the Unskilled Defect (page 70) has 10-60 fewer Skill Points. Non-player characters created by the GM may have any number of Skill Points. Minor characters will usually have only 5-15 Skill Points, for example, while a major, recurring opponent may have 100 or more. The character's power level also indicates the maximum Skill Level he or she can achieve under normal circumstances (GM's discretion).

Table 4-1: Starting Skill Points

Power Level	Starting Skill Points	Normal Maximum Skill Level
Subhuman	10	2
Human	20	3
Posthuman	30	4
Superhuman	40	5
Inhuman	50	6
Godlike	60	10

Table 4-2: Skill Level Descriptions

Skill Level 1	Well-Trained. The character has some training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 2	Scholar. The character has moderate training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 3	Expert. The character has significant training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 4	Veteran. The character has comprehensive training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 5	World Leader. The character has rigorous training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 6	Master Apprentice. The character has extensive training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 7	Master. The character has complete training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 8	Grand Master. The character has exhaustive training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 9	Undisputed Master. The character has nearly unparalleled training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 10	Heavenly Master. The character has godlike training and practice with the Skill.

The different Skills are divided into Levels 1 through 10. Increasing the value of a Skill by one Level requires 1-12 Skill Points, depending on the Skill. The higher the Skill Level, the better your character is and the broader his or her knowledge within the field. Characters with high Stats (or Combat Values) can be exceptionally proficient within a field even without high Skill Levels; they are considered "naturals."

Skills and Specialities

General and Combat Skills have a number of associated Specialisations, which describe the different ways that the Skill may be used. For example, Gun Combat is divided into Auto-fire, Pistol, and Rifle. When you assign a Skill to your character, choose one of the listed Specialisation or create a new Specialisation with GM approval. Your character will be significantly better in the chosen Specialisation than he or she will be in the other aspects of the Skill. A Specialisation is usually recorded in parentheses after the Skill, for example, "Gun Combat (Pistol) Level 3."

Instead of improving a Skill by one Level, it is possible to take an extra Specialisation. Each extra Specialisation costs only one Skill Point regardless of the Point cost of the Skill. If your character has Skill Points to spare, however, you may find it more advantageous to add an extra Skill Level rather than take many extra Specialisations.

Using Skills

Each Skill has its own description, which indicates game effects and the Stat which is usually most relevant to the Skill's use, should a Skill check be needed. Game mechanics for using Skills in play are described under Skill checks (page 96), but there is no need to worry about them while designing a character. Simply choose those Skills that most closely fit your concept.

A player should not assign a particular Skill to his or her character to justify some familiarity within the field. Even a Level 1 Skill assignment reflects a substantial amount of training, and will demonstrate that your character is quite knowledgeable or capable in the chosen area. If a character has only limited capabilities within a specific area, he or she should not possess the relevant Skill. For example, anyone can throw a punch or fire a gun without necessarily having any real talent. A character that knows how to drive a car safely on city streets does not automatically need the Driving (Car) Skill nor does someone with a first year university course in physics necessarily have Physical Sciences (Physics). Conversely, a character may have high Skill Levels without any formal training, because he or she has used the Skill in daily life for many years (such as a brawny farm worker having the Powerlifting Skill). Characters should rarely possess Skill Levels at their maximum allowed Level, since this achievement reflects an incredibly high degree of proficiency. A character with a Skill Level of one-half X is widely regarded as the best in his or her field.

Skill Point Costs

In *Dreaming Cities* the Point cost of a Skill is based on its utility in the game and not on the difficulty of learning the Skill. Table 4-3: Skill Point Costs provides a list of Skill Point costs for the Urban Fantasy genre.

The skills emphasised in urban fantasy are those connected with survival in an urban setting. Investigations in the city require characters to interact with NPCs of many different cultures and backgrounds. Having a good network

Table 4-3: Skill Point Costs

Skill	Cost
Acrobatics	3
Animal Training	3
Architecture	2
Area Knowledge	5
Artisan	4
Biological Sciences	3
Boating	2
Burglary	3
Climbing	2
Computers	3
Controlled Breathing	2
Cultural Arts	3
Demolitions	3
Disguise	3
Domestic Arts	1
Driving	2
Electronics	3
Etiquette	2
Foreign Culture	3
Forgery	2
Gaming	2
Interrogation	4
Intimidation	4
Languages	3
Law	3
Management/Administration	1
Mechanics	2
Medical	4
Military Sciences	2
Navigation	3
Occult	6
Performing Arts	3
Physical Sciences	4
Piloting	1
Poisons	5
Police Sciences	3
Power Usage	6
Powerlifting	2
Riding	2
Seduction	4
Sleight of Hand	4
Social Sciences	3
Sports	1
Stealth	5
Street Sense	4
Swimming	2
Urban Tracking	4
Visual Arts	3
Wilderness Survival	2
Wilderness Tracking	2
Writing	2
Combat Skills	
Archery	2
Gun Combat	5
Heavy Weapons	1
Melee Attack	6
Melee Defence	6
Ranged Defence	6
Special Ranged Attack	6
Thrown Weapons	5
Unarmed Attack	6
Unarmed Defence	6

of contacts or knowing how to efficiently find out information on the streets might be crucial. Street Sense, Urban Tracking, and Area Knowledge of the city could give characters the advantage that they need to fight supernatural opponents, or to outmanoeuvre them.

"People skills" are more important in this type of campaign than they might be in other settings. Characters will often have to bargain with, intimidate, or finesse NPCs to get what they want. Physically fighting enemies is generally reserved as a last resort, if for no other reason than that it tends to attract unwanted attention from the mortal authorities. For those times when violence is the only option, characters who can handle themselves in a fight come into their own. Occult expertise is also particularly useful when fighting magical battles or dealing with supernatural forces. All wizards and many magical creatures will have the Occult Skill, reflecting their knowledge of magic and folklore.

Use Table 4-4: Skill Costs Descriptions as a guideline for determining how much a particular Skill should be worth in your particular campaign, if it differs from this assumption. See the "Small Folk" chapter (page 222) for an example of an alternate Skill Point Cost Table.

Table 4-4 : Skill Costs Descriptions

6-12 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that define a particular campaign setting and will be vital in nearly all aspects of a story.
5 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that will be used multiple times in a particular game session, or give characters extreme advantages.
4 Points/Level	This is appropriate for general adventuring Skills that characters will find useful in most story lines, or give characters significant advantages.
3 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that are specialised enough that a character might use them only once in a typical session, but which are either of general utility or are likely to be important to the campaign.
2 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that may be beneficial, but for which opportunities for use will probably not come up frequently.
1 Point/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that are mainly used to flesh out character backgrounds, but which will not usually be important to play.

Reallocating Skill Points

In some campaigns, characters may end up travelling to another time or dimension. If this travel results in a high-cost Skill becoming useless, the Game Master may allow the player to reallocate Skill Points between adventures to reflect what the character has learned in the new land.

For example, if a 21st century investigator magically travels back in time to ancient China, his Driving and Area Knowledge Skills are useless. After several adventures and some rough experiences the GM could allow the character to trade those Skills for Levels in Chinese Foreign Culture and Languages. If the character ever makes it back to his own time, he will be allowed to swap the Skills back after a period of readjustment.

General Skills

Acrobatics
Relevant Stat: Body
Specialisations: Balance, Flexibility, Jumps, Tumbling

The ability to perform feats of agility with minimal chance for injury. Includes jumping, flipping, contorting, and reacting quickly.

Animal Training
Relevant Stat: Soul
Specialisations: Any single animal such as dogs, dolphins, horses, etc.

The ability to teach and train animals with an intellect above that of instinctive insects. An animal usually has a Mind Stat of 1-2.

Architecture
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Aquatic, Bridges, Fortifications, Small Buildings, Skyscrapers

Knowledge of construction methods, architectural drafting, etc. A successful use of this Skill can also find weak points in constructions or help in locating old structural plans.

Area Knowledge
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: One specific locale (city, forest, sea, desert, mountain) within the area

Knowledge of the geography and people of a single area (choose one area) and a specific locale within it. The smaller the area, the more detailed and extensive the character's knowledge. This Skill may be assigned multiple times to indicate knowledge of several areas.

Artisan
Relevant Stat: Average of Body and Soul
Specialisations: Carpentry, Leatherworking, Metalworking, Plumbing, Tailoring, Woodworking

This Skill represents a character's ability to work with a variety of materials to repair or produce useful or aesthetically pleasing objects not electronic or mechanical in nature.

Biological Sciences
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Bacteria/Viruses, Botany, Ecology, Genetics, Physiology, Zoology

This field covers scientific knowledge of how living things function.

Boating
Relevant Stat: Average of Body and Mind
Specialisations: Hovercraft, Large Ships, Small Boats, Submarines

The ability to safely operate a watercraft.

Burglary
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Specialisations: Breaking-and-Entering, Hot-Wiring, Safe Cracking.

The ability to open locks, quietly cut glass, hot-wire car ignitions, etc. The ability does not cover disarming electronic security systems, which is handled by Electronics (Security) Skill.

Climbing
Relevant Stat: Body
Specialisations: Natural Surfaces, Poles, Walls, Vegetation

The ability to scale vertical surfaces with or without the use of specialised climbing equipment.

Computers
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Artificial Intelligence, Databases, Intrusion/Security, Networks, Programming

Practical knowledge of computer use. Computer engineering (hardware) is covered by Electronics.

Controlled Breathing
Relevant Stat: Body or Soul
Specialisations: Cyclic Breathing, Holding Breath, Slow Heart Rate

The ability to control respiratory functions in order to maximise breathing efficiency or to perform tricks such as "playing dead."

Cultural Arts
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Archaeology, Art Appraisal, History, Literature, Urban Legends

Knowledge of aspects of human culture (or another species' culture).

Demolitions
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Specialisations: Artificial Structures, Bomb Disposal, Natural Structures, Safe Cracking, Underwater

The ability to set explosive charges without getting hurt in the process or inflicting undesired collateral damage. It is also used for deactivating explosives set by someone else.

Disguise
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul
Specialisations: Costume, Make-up, Prosthetics

The ability to change one's personal appearance in an attempt to deceive others.

Domestic Arts
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Specialisations: Cleaning, Cooking, Decorating, Home Budgeting

The ability to efficiently organise and run a domestic household.

Driving
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Specialisations: Big Rig (large tractor/trailer trucks), Car, Motorcycle, Small Truck (vans, pick-ups, hi-cubes), Tank

The ability to operate a powered ground vehicle. Skill checks are only necessary in difficult situations such as performing vehicular stunts, avoiding hazards, etc.

Electronics
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Communications, Computers, Consumer Electronics, Robotics, Security, Sensors

The ability to maintain, repair, build, modify (and at high Levels, design) electronic equipment.

Etiquette
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Lower Class, Middle Class, Upper Class

The knowledge of polite, proper, and inoffensive behaviour in social settings.

Foreign Culture
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: One Specific Culture

Reflects knowledge of the history, religion, ethics, and lifestyle of one or more foreign countries or cultures: one foreign culture at Level 1, two at Level 2, three or four at Level 3, five to eight at Level 4, and more than nine at Level 5. Naturally, less than the maximum number of cultures can be assigned. Thus, multiple Specialisations may be listed for Foreign Culture.

Forgery
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Electronic Documents, Handwriting, Paper Documents

The ability to counterfeit documents and papers. This Skill can be used in conjunction with the Computers Skill.

Gaming
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul (Body for some video games)
Specialisations: Board Games, Computer Games, Gambling/Card Games, Military Simulations, Role-Playing Games

The ability to play various games and simulations well.

Interrogation
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Specialisations: Drugs, Psychological, Physical

The ability to convince someone to provide information against their will. Can also be used to help withhold information when being Interrogated by an enemy.

Intimidation
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul
Specialisations: Business, Political, Street

The ability to convincingly project a "tough guy" image. A successful check means someone witnessing your performance is convinced you mean any threats you make. How they react after that will depend on how tough they are themselves in relation to the kind of threat you present — they may respond with respect, fear, hatred, or amusement.

Languages
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Any one language, Braille, Code Language, Lip Reading, Sign Language

Reflects an aptitude for languages and their historical usage. Additionally, a character will be able to speak and write one foreign language at Level 1, two at Level 2, three or four at Level 3, five to eight at Level 4, and more than nine at Level 5. Thus, multiple Specialisations will be listed for Languages — the first is the character's native language (a free Specialisation), while the others are foreign languages.

Law
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Civil, Criminal, Customs, Family, International, Political

Knowledge of legal procedure and practice. GMs may assume that anyone with Level 3 or more has a license to practice law. In addition to lawyers, many police officers, politicians, and, in some stories, demons have the Law Skill at Level 1 or 2. All Specialisations, except International, are specific to one country or region only (for example, "American Criminal Law").

Management and Administration
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Accounting, Banking, Executive, Fraud, Government, Marketing, Small Business

The ability to organise, run, and understand part or all of an organisation (such as a business, government, or association). This Skill is also useful for locating new employees.

Mechanics
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Body)
Specialisations: Aeronautical, Armourer, Automotive, Gunsmith, Locksmith, Micro, Traps

The ability to maintain, repair, or build mechanical and electro-mechanical devices. This also includes knowledge of tool use, welding, etc. Armourer applies to heavy vehicle-mounted weapons while Gunsmith covers personal weaponry. Use Artisan for archaic weapons.

Medical
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Body)
Specialisations: Acupuncture, Dentistry, Diagnosis, Emergency Response, Homeopathy, Pathology, Pharmacy, Surgery, Veterinary

Knowledge of how to heal the body. GMs may assume that anyone with Level 3 or more has a license to practice medicine. A typical general practitioner would Specialise in Diagnosis, while most police officers or paramedics Specialise in Emergency Response.

Military Sciences
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Hardware Recognition, Intelligence Analysis, Logistics, Strategy, Tactics, Teamwork

The character has military-style tactical, staff, or leadership training. In addition, SWAT (or other tactical police units) often include individuals who pick up similar Skills (and often recruit ex-military personnel).

Navigation
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Air, Highway, Sea, Space, Urban, Wilderness

The ability to read maps or use specialised navigation equipment. The Navigation Skill will help a character find the fastest/safest route to a destination.

Occult
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Alchemy, Astrology, Channelling, Demonology, History of Magic, Numerology, Rituals, Spirits, Tarot, Voodoo, Witchcraft

Knowledge of the arcane and mystical arts, and their applications in both historical and modern society Most magic-related skills will be Specialisations of Occult — feel free to come up with other examples that fit a particular setting, such as vampire lore or necromancy. An occultist in a game of urban fantasy is someone who knows about "real" magic. While a level of Occult can cover general knowledge of popular superstitions and occult beliefs from around the world, higher ranks than this relate to more than mere superstition. A character who has an in-depth knowledge of the magical beliefs and etiquette of one particular culture may also reflect this

as ranks of Foreign Culture. This includes knowledge of magical or non-human societies.

Performing Arts
Relevant Stat: Average of Body, Mind, and Soul
Specialisations: Comedy, Dance, Drama, Music, Public Speaking, Singing, Fast Talking

The ability to perform well before an audience, and to evoke an emotional response through the art form.

Physical Sciences
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Astronomy, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Engineering, Geology, Mathematics, Physics

Scientific training in the way the universe works, including the necessary background knowledge.

Piloting
Relevant Stat: Average of Body and Mind
Specialisations: Heavy Airplane (usually multi-engine), Helicopter, Jet Fighter, Light Airplane (usually single-engine), Lighter than Air Craft, Spacecraft

The ability to operate air or space vehicles. Skill checks are normally only necessary when performing an unusual manoeuvre, avoiding a hazard, piloting an unfamiliar aircraft, etc.

Poisons
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Alien, Natural, Synthetic

The ability to recognise, concoct, apply, and neutralise a variety of poisons and toxins.

Police Sciences
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Ballistics, Criminology, Forensics

This is the science behind detective work. Ballistics is the study of the wounds inflicted by projectiles; criminology focuses on studies of criminal behaviour and strategies; forensics covers evidence gathering (including hair-and-fibre, fingerprint and DNA-based identification techniques).

Power Usage
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul
Specialisations: One specific Attribute only

Unlike other Skills, Power Usage only offers a Check Value bonus to the Stat check (not Combat check) for one specific Attribute, which is also the Specialisation. To receive a bonus on multiple Attributes, this Skill must be assigned multiple times at 8 Points/Level. The Skill is useful to a character who may not have a high Stat (such as Mind) that is associated with one of his or her Attributes (such as Mind Control or Telepathy). When the character must make a Stat check for the specific Attribute, the Power Usage Skill adds a bonus to the Check Value as though the Stat check is actually a Skill check.

Powerlifting
Relevant Stat: Body
Specialisations: Bulky Objects, Free Weights, Humans, Moving Objects, Small Objects (Hand-Held)

The ability to perform feats of strength with minimal chance for injury. Includes lifting or pushing heavy objects, stopping objects in motion, and supporting large masses.

Riding
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind or Soul
Specialisations: By species (Camel, Horse, Tiger, etc.).

This is the knowledge of how to care for a riding beast, how to saddle, mount, and dismount the animal, how to get it to perform difficult or dangerous manoeuvres safely and without balking, and how to best pace it for long distance rides.

Seduction
Relevant Stat: Body or Soul
Specialisations: Alien, Female, Male

A character with this Skill is adept at exploiting their sex appeal. A successful Skill check will convince another person that the character is genuinely interested in them. Whether or not the subject actually responds will depend on his or her own romantic inclinations and sexual preferences.

Sleight of Hand
Relevant Stat: Body
Specialisations: Card Sharking, Lock Picking, Pick Pocketing, Stage Magic

A character with this Skill (also known as prestidigitation) has superior manual dexterity, greater than that suggested by his or her Body Stat. This includes the ability to perform "magic" tricks, palm small objects, cheat at cards, plant an item on someone, etc.

Social Sciences
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Anthropology, Geography, Politics, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, Theology

Understanding of the way people function in society as well as societal behavioural patterns.

Sports
Relevant Stat: Body (sometimes Mind or Soul)
Specialisations: Baseball, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Volleyball, etc.

The ability to play well with others in a team or individual sporting event with specialised rules.

Stealth
Relevant Stat: Body (sometimes Mind)
Specialisations: Camouflage, Concealment, Silent Movement

The ability to disguise objects or people so that they blend into their surroundings. This also includes the ability to conceal small objects on one's person and the ability to move silently.

Street Sense
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Specialisations: Gang Activity, Influential Individuals, Territorial Divisions (all by region)

The knowledge of street activity within a particular region or city. This is a vital survival Skill for a person on the streets.

Swimming
Relevant Stat: Body
Specialisations: Competition, Deep-Sea Diving, Free Diving, Scuba, Snorkelling

The character is skilled at swimming or diving. The GM may assume that any character in a modern setting can swim even without this Skill.

A swimmer can usually move at a speed equal to his or her Body in kilometres per hour for short distances.

Urban Tracking
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specialisations: Academic, Corporate, Residential, Underworld

Urban Tracking is the ability to "shadow" someone (or follow a vehicle in another vehicle) through an industrialised, populated area or to find certain people in a particular sub-culture or environment by asking the right questions.

Visual Arts
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul (often an average)
Specialisations: Animation, Drawing, Flower Arranging, Painting, Photography, Sculpting, Video

The ability to produce a work of fine or commercial art in a particular visual field.

Wilderness Survival
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Body)
Specialisations: Aquatic, Arctic, Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Plains

The ability to find food and shelter in the outdoors, to avoid natural hazards, and to identify wild plants and animals.

Wilderness Tracking
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Soul)
Specialisations: Aquatic, Arctic, Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Plains

The ability to successfully trail or track someone or something while outdoors in a rural or wilderness setting.

Writing
Relevant Stat: Average of Mind and Soul
Specialisations: Academic, Fiction, Journalistic, Poetic, Technical

The ability to communicate ideas or emotions in a written work.

Combat Skills

Archery
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specialisations: Bow, Crossbow

The ability to accurately shoot with a bow or crossbow. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Gun Combat
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specialisations: Auto-fire, Pistol, Rifle

The ability to accurately shoot with a hand-held firearm and to keep it properly maintained. Auto-fire applies to firing bursts of fully automatic fire from any gun, whether it is a small submachine gun, a big assault rifle, or a heavy machine gun. Pistol applies to firing single shots from a handgun. Rifle covers firing single shots from guns with a shoulder stock including rifles and shotguns. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Heavy Weapons
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specialisations: Artillery (indirect fire weapons such as Howitzers), Gunnery (heavy machine guns, tank guns and other vehicle-mounted direct-fire weapons), Launchers (rocket and missile launchers)

The ability to accurately fire vehicle-, shoulder-, or tripod-mounted weapons such as a tank cannon or heavy machine gun, and to perform routine maintenance. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Melee Attack
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specialisations: Axe, Baton/Club, Knife, Improvised Weapons (chairs, lamps, ladders, etc.), Polearms (spears, naginata, etc.), Shield, Sword, Whips/Chains

The ability to attack effectively with a hand-to-hand melee weapon. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Melee Defence
Relevant Stat: None (uses Defence Combat Value)
Specialisations: Axe, Baton/Club, Knife, Improvised Weapons, Polearms (spears, naginata, etc.), Shield, Sword, Whips/Chains

The ability to defend well with a hand-to-hand melee weapon. This is a Defence Combat Skill.

Ranged Defence
Relevant Stat: None (uses Defence Combat Value)
Specialisations: Personal, Air Vehicle, Ground Vehicle, Water Vehicle, Space Vehicle

The ability to avoid ranged attacks, but this does not enable a character to actually dodge bullets. Rather, it is a combination of situational awareness and tactical movement as well as knowing when to keep moving (to present a more difficult target) and when to drop for cover. This is a Defence Combat Skill.

Special Ranged Attack
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specialisations: One specific Special Attack

This Skill is used for weapons created using the Special Attack Attribute (page 42) that emanate from the character's body, rather than a device or weapon. For example, eye beams, fireballs fired from the hand, or sonic blast shot from the mouth would qualify, but a laser gun or a deadly boomerang would not. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Thrown Weapons
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specialisations: Blades, Cards, Grenades, Rocks, Shields

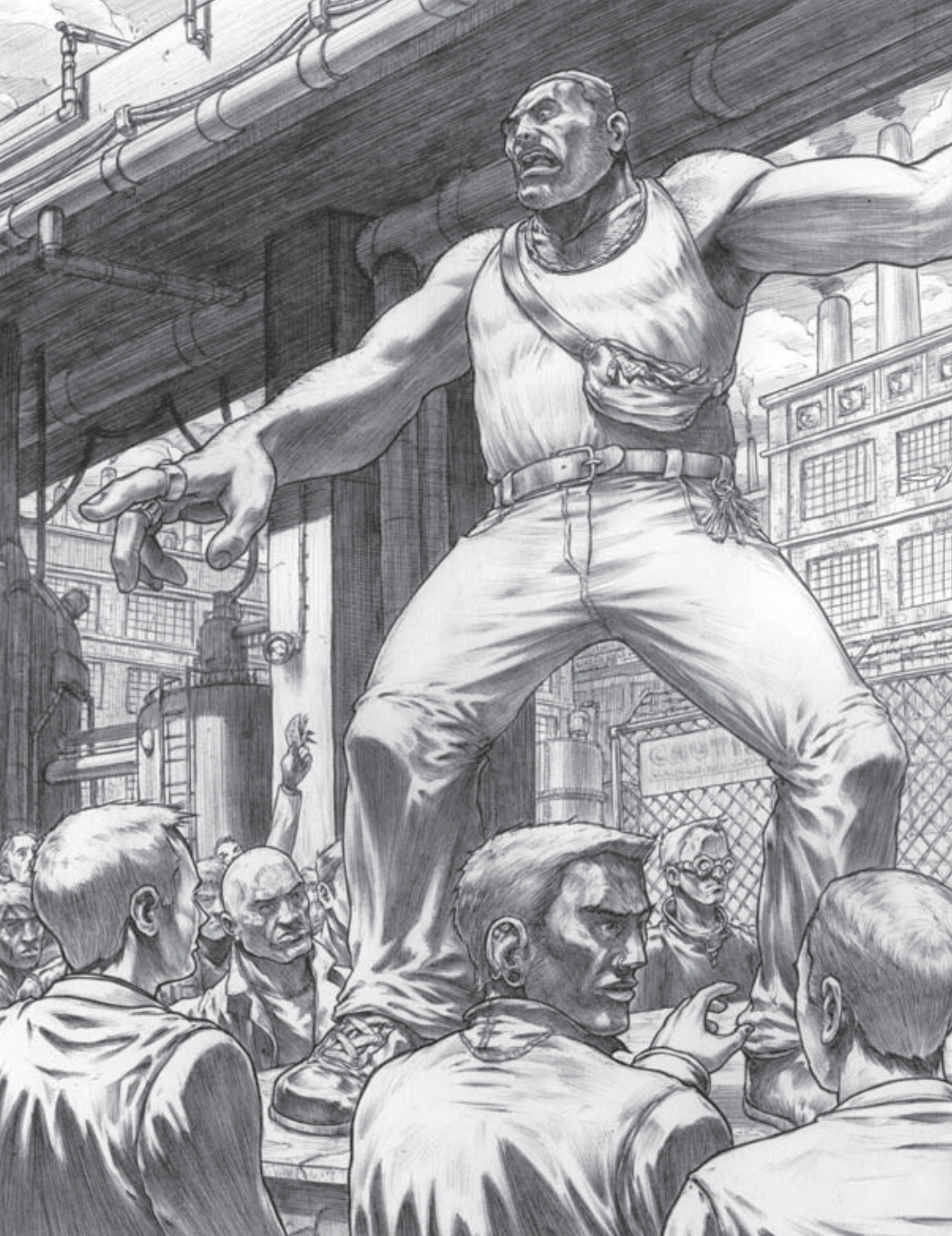
The ability to accurately throw weapons or objects at a target. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Unarmed Attack
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specialisations: Strikes, Holds, Throws, Grappling

The ability to attack without weapons. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Unarmed Defence
Relevant Stat: None (uses Defence Combat Value)
Specialisations: Strikes, Holds, Throws, Grappling

The ability to block armed or unarmed melee attacks without using a weapon. This is a Defence Combat Skill.







Defects

Step 6: Select Defects

Defects are disadvantages through which your character must suffer in order to overcome the hardships of day-to-day life. Defects serve as an excellent and often comical role-playing opportunity. They only impede your character to a limited extent and are not intended to totally negate his or her many abilities.

Defects can represent those aspects of characters which mark them as non-human, making their lives difficult, miserable, or doomed. Supernatural defects could reflect the price that a character has paid for power, or inherited traits due to his or her race. Defects can also represent more mundane issues and weaknesses affecting a character. It is common in urban fantasy for characters to struggle with both issues from the real world, and from any magical subcultures in which they move.

Some Defects will be racial in origin. For example, a magical creature with an Achilles Heel or who is Marked might share the Defect with others of his or her kind. Others are magical in source, perhaps the result of misfired spells or arcane curses.

My Overconfident, Lazy, Stubborn, Honourable Character

No, you don't get any Bonus Points for creating overconfident characters in *Dreaming Cities*. Or truthful ones, or sadistic ones, or shy ones. Less desirable personality traits should appear in the game through role-playing, not Points on a character sheet. If your character is a coward, then portray him or her as cowardly. It's just that simple.

Defects represent disadvantages over which your character has little or no control (i.e. no free will). One example is Phobia — a person with an irrational fear has no choice but to be afraid of the specific trigger. A Phobia is not a personality trait.

By taking a Character Defect you can gain up to three (or occasionally more) Bonus Points (BP) to use when acquiring Stats or Attributes. The number of Points you receive is directly proportional to how much the Defect hinders your character; Defects that do not inflict a significant disadvantage (such as a weakness to bullets made from the earth of planet Neptune) are not worth any Bonus Points. After you have selected your character's Defects, return to the previous steps to use your Bonus Points.

It is recommended that you assign no more than eight Defects to your character (this limit does not apply to Defects linked to an Attribute). In most cases 2-5 Defects are appropriate.

Types of Defects

Defects are classed as Mundane, Special, or Linked to Attribute. The distinction between Mundane and Special Defects is the same as that of Attributes: Mundane Defects are available to anyone (although some applications of them may only be appropriate for nonhuman characters); Special Defects reflect weaknesses usually associated with supernatural or nonhuman entities, and so require GM permission. The Defects that have "Linked to Attribute" in their description are direct limitations on your character's Attributes, rather than more general disadvantages. BP returned by linked Defect cannot exceed Attribute cost). Magic-using characters will often take such linked Defects (in particular, Activation Time, Burns Energy, and Restriction) to represent the need to perform rituals or have various components handy in order to cast spells.

Defects and Dual Identities

If a character maintains a dual identity through the Skeleton in the Closet (Secret Identity) Defect, some other Defects may not affect him or her in one of the identities. For example, a masked vigilante may be wanted by the police on murder charges (the Wanted Defect), but his or her alternate identity may be a respected politician. In these instances, the character will receive Bonus Points at a reduced amount.

If either the character's normal or secret identity (but not both) suffers from a Defect, the Bonus Points granted are reduced by 1 BP. If both identities suffer from the identical Defect, at the same or different BP Levels, the character is granted Bonus Points equal to the higher BP Level. If a character only has one identity, the Defects return Bonus Points as normal.

Defects associated with an Alternate Form (page 18) usually provide Bonus Points directly to the Form's Point total. The GM may decide that some of these Defects function the same as they do for the Skeleton in the Closet Defect, though (at low BP ranks), rather than apply to the Alternate Form directly.

Achilles Heel

Type: Special

The character loses twice as many Health Points as normal from a particular attack form, which must fit with the character concept. It might be something with appropriate mystic resonance, such as wooden stakes for vampires, cold iron for a fairy, or silver for werewolves. It could also reflect the character's nature such as a fire elemental taking extra damage from water. The GM must approve any Achilles Heel Defects. A character may have an Achilles Heel to either a common, uncommon, or rare attack form (in the context of the campaign).

1 BP The attack form is rare.
2 BP The attack form is uncommon.
3 BP The attack form is common.

Activation Time

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. A character with this Defect cannot use one of his or her Attributes whenever desired because the Attribute requires a short time to activate. Once activation has started, only the character can stop it from becoming active when the appropriate time is up. This could represent a physical change that is not instantaneous, the collection of spiritual energies to perform a task, an incantation, a device that takes time to "power up," or an Attribute that only works when the character is mentally prepared (or angry, or overcome with another emotion).

Activation Time extends to 10 BP following the Time Progression Chart, starting at 10 Initiative (1 BP) and increasing to 1 month (10 BP). Additionally, the Defect may return an additional 1 or 2 Bonus Points to the character. 1 additional BP is granted if the activation can be interrupted temporarily, but restarted where it left off. One example of this is an Item of Power body suit that the character must put on. If the character stops activating the Attribute (i.e. stops dressing) to make a phone call, he or she can continue afterwards. 2 additional BP are granted if the activation must start again from the beginning if it is interrupted before the Activation Time has elapsed. An example of this is a spell that must be chanted completely before the Attribute activates; if it is interrupted, the spell must be started again from the beginning. The Concentration Defect (page 64) is often linked to these two applications of Activation Time.

Table 5-1: Defects

Defect Name	Progression	Type	Page
Achilles Heel	1-3 BP	Special	62
Activation Time	1-10 BP	Linked	62
Awkward Size	1-10 BP	Special	63
Backlash	1-3 BP	Linked	63
Bane	1-3 BP	Special	63
Blind Fury	1-3 BP	Mundane	64
Burns Energy	1-10 BP	Linked	64
Concentration	1-3 BP	Linked	64
Conditional Ownership	1-3 BP	Mundane	64
Confined Movement	1-3 BP	Mundane	64
Cursed	1-3 BP	Special	64
Dependent	2,4,6 BP	Linked	64
Detectable	1-3 BP	Linked	65
Diminutive	2,4,6 BP	Special	65
Easily Distracted	1-3 BP	Mundane	65
Famous	1-3 BP	Mundane	65
Inept Attack	3,6,9 BP	Mundane	66
Inept Defence	2,4,6 BP	Mundane	66
Involuntary Change	1-3 BP	Special	66
Ism	1-3 BP	Mundane	66
Less Capable	1-10 BP	Mundane	66
Limited Use, Instantaneous	1-3 BP	Linked	66
Limited Use, Ongoing	1-3 BP	Linked	67
Marked	1-3 BP	Mundane	67
Maximum Force	1-3 BP	Linked	67
Nemesis	1-3 BP	Mundane	67
Not So Tough	1-3 BP	Mundane	67
One-Way Transformation	1-3 BP	Special	67
Owned	1-3 BP	Mundane	67
Part of Body	1-3 BP	Linked	68
Permanent	1-3 BP	Linked	68
Phobia	1-3 BP	Mundane	68
Physical Impairment	1-3 BP	Mundane	68
Recurring Nightmares	1-3 BP	Mundane	68
Red Tape	1-3 BP	Mundane	68
Reduction		Linked	68
Restriction	1-3 BP	Linked	69
Sensory Impairment	1-3 BP	Mundane	69
Significant Other	1-3 BP	Mundane	69
Skeleton in the Closet	1-3 BP	Mundane	69
Special Requirement	1-3 BP	Mundane	70
Unappealing	1-3 BP	Mundane	70
Unique Defect	1-3 BP	Special	70
Unreliable Power	1-3 BP	Linked	70
Unskilled	1-3 BP	Mundane	70
Vulnerability	1-3 BP	Special	70
Wanted	1-3 BP	Mundane	70
Weak Point	1-3 BP	Special	70

Awkward Size

Type: Special

This Defect means the character is notably larger than an ordinary human. A character with Awkward Size may have trouble fitting through doors and moving through narrow hallways, and does not fit into many vehicles. A character with Awkward Size is also much easier to notice. The larger the character, the more BP this Defect will be worth. In most cases, Awkward Size above 1 BP is not appropriate for human characters, only for giant monsters, machines, or similar entities.

Awkward Size extends to Level 10 following the Slow Magnitude Chart, starting at 2.5 to 4 metres tall (x2 height; Level 1) increasing to 2000 metres tall (1000x height; Level 10). Mass increases proportionately as a cubed function of the height multiplier, starting at 0.8 tonnes (Level 1) increasing to 27,000 tonnes (Level 5), and finally to 1 billion tonnes (Level 10). An elephant, for example, would be Awkward Size Level 2.

Backlash

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. The character suffers from an unfortunate side effect whenever an associated Attribute fails to work. If the character fails his or her Stat check when using the Attribute, the character is hit with the energy or essence that would have powered the Attribute's use. The Backlash could be physical damage, memory loss, Stat drain, disorientation, or many other effects that make the character's life more difficult. The player and GM should determine the game effect of the Backlash.

1 BP The backlash occurs if the character fails the check by 6 or more.
2 BP The backlash occurs if the character fails the check by 3 or more.
3 BP The backlash occurs if the character fails the check by 1 or more.

Bane

Type: Special

A character with the Bane Defect is vulnerable to an otherwise non-damaging substance such as water, sunlight, or a specific element, material, or object. The Bane should relate to the character's background or Attributes in some way. Urban fantasy often features supernatural beings who are vulnerable to some facet of the modern world to which the normal inhabitants are immune or even unaware. A vampire's traditional weakness to sunlight or the fae folk's weakness to cold iron would fall into this category. In the worst case, a character's Bane could involve a vulnerability to something as tenuous as "negative vibes" or a need to be believed in. In a light hearted campaign, characters' attempts to avoid their Bane leads to all sorts of humorous misunderstandings and social faux pas. In a darker game, knowledge of a character's weakness can be discovered and exploited by enemies.

The character suffers damage if his or her skin is physically touched by the Bane. If the Bane does not require direct physical contact (such as sunlight, seeing one's reflection, hearing the noise of a church or temple bell, or having the Bane in close proximity), the damage is halved. Alternatively, if the Bane only affects the character when ingested, the damage is doubled. Finally, the damage rating assumes that the Bane is common, such as water, sunlight, steel, or wood. If it is less common, such as a holy symbol, Buddhist scripture, or rare element, the damage is also doubled. If it is even more rare such as one particular artefact, the damage may be tripled or quadrupled.

1 BP The Bane causes minor damage (20 points/round of exposure).
2 BP The Bane causes moderate damage (40 points/round of exposure).
3 BP The Bane causes severe damage (60 points/round of exposure).

Blind Fury

Type: Mundane

Under specific conditions selected by the player (and approved by the GM), the character will enter a state of unbridled anger. While enraged, the character will furiously attack the closest person, whether that individual is a friend or foe. Once that person is defeated or flees, the berserk character will attack the next closest "threat." Examples of conditions that might initiate Blind Fury include: receiving a certain amount of damage, sight of blood, a specific sound or smell, being outnumbered in combat, seeing a friend in mortal danger, confrontation with a specific opponent, etc.

The character can only return to a normal emotional state under another specific condition. This return could involve a Soul Stat check, or could be an automatic reversion. Examples of return conditions include: no opponents in the vicinity, a specific calming technique performed by an ally, solitude, injection of a particular drug, being knocked unconscious, etc.

1 BP Initiating the Blind Fury is difficult; reverting to normal emotional state is easy.

2 BP Initiating the Blind Fury and reverting to a normal emotional state are both moderately difficult.

3 BP Initiating the Blind Fury is easy; reverting to normal emotional state is difficult.

Burns Energy

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. This Defect is only available in campaigns where Energy Points are used. The character's Energy Points are used to power a particular Attribute. The Energy Points will either be reduced after the Attributes use (for Attributes for immediate effects, such as Teleportation or Special Attack), or while the Attribute is used (for Attributes that are used over a period of time, such as Flight or Invisibility). This is a good way to represent psychic powers or magical abilities that drain or fatigue the user.

Burns Energy extends to 10 BP. For immediate effects, reduce the Energy Points by: 1 (1 BP), 2 (2 BP), 5 (3 BP), 10 (4 BP), 15 (5 BP), 20 (6 BP), 30 (7 BP), 50 (8 BP), 80 (9 BP), or 100 (10 BP). For Attributes used over a period of time, reduce the Energy Points as follows: 10/day (1 BP), 1/hour (2 BP), 5/hour (3 BP), 10/hour (4 BP), 1/minute (5 BP), 5/minute (6 BP), 10/minute (7 BP), 5/round (8 BP), 10/round (9 BP), or 5/second (10 BP).

Burns Energy should not be used with a Special Attack. Take the Uses Energy Disability instead.

Concentration

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute (or the Activation Time Defect, page 62). The character must concentrate while using a specific Attribute that functions over a period of time; it does not apply to Attributes with an instantaneous effect. If the character's concentration is interrupted voluntarily or by an outside event, the Attribute ceases to function.

1 BP The Attribute requires slight concentration. The character can still perform other non-combat actions, but cannot engage in combat or use other Attributes that also require Concentration.

2 BP The Attribute requires intense concentration. The character can move at a slow speed and talk with others while using the Attribute, but cannot perform any complex actions or use any other Attribute.

3 BP The Attribute requires full concentration. The character cannot do anything else while using the Attribute; he or she must remain still and devote full attention to the Attribute.

Conditional Ownership

Type: Mundane

Linked to Characteristic Attribute. This Defect can only be acquired by a character who possesses either the Item of Power or Gadgets Attributes (pages 28 and 32). The character's possessions granted by those Attributes actually belong to another person or organisation. They are issued to the character, but the agency imposes "mild," "strict," or "severe" conditions on their use.

"Mild conditions" indicate that the character can use the objects for some personal business (such as travelling), but if he or she is released from the organisation or disobeys direct orders, the objects can be taken away. The character can also be assigned different objects at any time. For example, a police detective might have conditional use of an unmarked police car.

"Strict conditions" indicate that the character is only permitted to use the objects for activities as ordered by the organisation. This is the way most military and police equipment is issued. If the character is caught using the objects for personal activities, he or she will receive a severe reprimand.

"Severe conditions" indicate that the character can only use the objects under specific orders. A government owned time travel device would probably fall under these conditions. Using the objects at any other time results in incarceration, physical punishment, or even death.

1 BP Mild conditions are imposed on the objects' ownership and usage.

2 BP Strict conditions are imposed on the objects' ownership and usage.

3 BP Severe conditions are imposed on the objects' ownership and usage.

Confined Movement

Type: Mundane

This Defect prevents the character from leaving a narrowly defined area. This may represent a ghost cursed to haunt a particular place or a prisoner sentenced to house arrest or internal exile who is only registered for travel in a specific region.

1 BP Restricted to a large area (100 km radius), such as a single county or large city.

2 BP Restricted to a small area (1 km radius), such as a small town or large, multi-structure complex.

3 BP Restricted to a tiny area (100 m radius), such as a small village or single building.

Cursed

Type: Special

A Cursed character has likely offended a great being of power in his or her past, or is the direct descendent of someone who did (Curses often pass through bloodlines). This is common in gothic or other dark campaigns. Cursed characters are suffering from the results of a supernatural curse directed either at them directly, or at an ancestor. Some varieties of curse might be meaningless to the mundane world but carry great taboos among magical creatures. Others have minor but inconvenient consequences that remind characters constantly of the supernatural power whose enmity they have earned.

The Curse can take a near limitless number of forms, but should not provide a character with an obvious advantage (remember, it's a curse!). The exact nature, background, and limitations of the Curse should be discussed with the GM. Note that not all curses will involve the Curse Defect — a curse with an effect which is closer to another Defect could be represented by that instead, such as Achilles Heel, Bane, Involuntary Change, or Marked.

1 BP The character suffers from a slight disadvantage.

2 BP The character suffers from a moderate disadvantage.

3 BP The character suffers from a severe disadvantage.

Dependent

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. The character cannot use the chosen Attribute without first using a second (or more) Attribute. If the character fails a Stat check to activate the second Attribute, he or she cannot use the other one either. Examples of the Dependent Defect include: a character who can fly after activating his Force Field (Flight Dependent upon Force Field), a character who gains additional Armour when invisible (Armour Dependent

upon Invisibility), a character that can run much more quickly after stretching his or her legs and growing (Speed Dependent upon Elasticity and Grow), etc. The player must justify the Dependent Defect to the GM to avoid silly combinations, or combinations that do not actually limit the character.

2 BP The Dependent Attribute cannot work until 1 other Attribute is activated.

4 BP The Dependent Attribute cannot work until 2 other Attributes are activated.

6 BP The Dependent Attribute cannot work until 3 other Attributes are activated.

Detectable

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. While using a specific Attribute, the character can be pinpointed and possibly identified by others who have specific detection techniques. For example, the Attribute's use may make a loud noise or a bright flash, send vibrations through the ground, or emanate mental shock waves. Detection techniques include: astral; ethereal; human sight, hearing, or sense of smell; infrared; mental; radar; radiation; sonar; spiritual; ultraviolet; vibration; and others. The Special Attack Attribute (page 42) is an exception to this Defect — characters must acquire an Attack Ability to make the attack undetectable.

1 BP The Attribute's use can be detected using 1-2 methods.

2 BP The Attribute's use can be detected using 3-5 methods.

3 BP The Attribute's use can be detected using 6-9 methods.

Diminutive

Type: Special

The character is permanently much smaller than a human. Although a Diminutive character is physically weaker than an average human, he or she is able to get into spaces that a human cannot, and may even be small enough to hide in someone's pocket.

The Level progression is similar to the Shrink Attribute, but Diminutive is a disadvantage because the character does not have the option of shrinking to different Levels whenever desired, since the Defect is permanent.

Diminutive provides 2, 4, or 6 Bonus Points.

2 BP The character is the size of a cat or small dog. His or her running speed and the range of any cat-sized attacks (see below) is reduced to 20% of normal human levels, and he or she can only lift up to one-hundredth (1%) normal capacity (for an average human, this is approximately 1 kilogram). Any damage the character inflicts on a normal-sized foe using cat-sized attacks (see below) is reduced as if the opponent had an additional 10 Armour. Any damage inflicted against the character from any source except a fall or attack from a cat-sized or smaller foe is increased by 10 points. Enemies making ranged attacks, suffer a -4 Attack penalty unless within 20% of normal range. Finally, he or she suffers a -6 penalty on any Body Stat checks that require lifting, carrying, or grappling with objects larger than cat-sized.

4 BP The character is the size of a rodent. His or her running speed and the range of any rodent-sized attacks (see below) is reduced to 5% of normal human levels, and he or she can only lift up to one ten thousandth (0.01%) normal human-scale capacity (for characters in the average human Body range, this is approximately 10 grams). Any rodent-sized attacks he or she makes against a normal foe inflict damage if the opponent had an additional 15 Armour, or 10 Armour if the foe is cat-sized. Any damage inflicted against the character from any source except a fall or rodent-sized or smaller attack is increased by 15 points (damage from cat-sized attacks is increased by 10 points). Enemies making ranged attacks suffer a -6 Attack penalty unless within 5% of normal range. Finally, he or she suffers a -12 penalty on any Body Stat checks that require lifting, carrying, or grappling with objects larger than cat-sized, or a -6 penalty for larger than rodent-sized.

6 BP The character is the size of a bug. His or her running speed and the range of any bug-sized attacks (see below) is reduced to one two hundredth (0.5%) of normal levels, and he or she can only lift up to one ten millionth normal capacity (for someone with average human Body, this is approximately 10 milligrams). Any bug-sized attacks he or she makes on a normal-sized foe inflict damage as if the opponent had an additional 20 Armour (15 Armour if the foe is cat-sized, 10 if rodent-sized). Enemies making ranged attacks suffer a -8 Attack penalty unless within 0.5% of normal range. Finally, he or she suffers a -18 penalty on any Body Stat checks that require lifting, carrying, or grappling with objects larger than cat-sized, -12 for larger than rodent-sized, or -6 for larger than bug-sized.

"Cat," "rat," or "bug"-sized attacks are defined as those delivered by the character using unarmed attacks or the Natural Weapons Attribute, or any ordinary weapon (such as a sword) scaled to the character's size.

Attributes are normally unaffected the Diminutive Attribute, with the exception of those directly based on diminished running speed (such as Jumping). Thus, a rodent-sized character's Special Attack or Telekinesis has its full effect as if it were launched by a human-sized person. To create an Attribute that is affected by Diminutive, take an additional Restriction (Diminutive) worth 1 BP if cat-sized, 2 BP if rodent-sized or 3 BP if bug-sized. This is normally only appropriate for Attributes that inflict damage, have a range or movement speed, or affect a specified weight or area, or which were assigned PMVs that produce these effects.

Example: A rodent-sized character buys one Level of Speed with the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect for 2 BP. Instead of a base speed of 100 kph he will have a base speed of 100 x 5% or 5 kph -- small by human scales, but allowing him or her to quickly scuttle across the floor. (This is actually common among many small animals. It may also be combined with Defects such as Limited Use to represent animals which can sprint quite fast for short bursts but not cover very large distances.)

Easily Distracted

Type: Mundane

Some characters are Easily Distracted by events, objects, people, or ideas, which are collectively known as triggers. Notable examples of triggers include attractive members of the opposite (or same) sex, wealth, food, movie stars, hobbies, gossip, hot cars, music, one's own looks, books or scrolls of ancient lore, and magical items. A character with this Defect will become enthralled with the trigger until it can no longer influence him or her. Many characters have interests in a variety of triggers but do not possess this Defect because their interest is moderated by their sense of judgement.

1 BP The character is distracted by a trigger that is encountered infrequently.

2 BP The character is distracted by a few infrequent triggers, or by one trigger that is encountered frequently.

3 BP The character is distracted by several infrequent triggers, or by one trigger that is encountered constantly.

Famous

Type: Mundane

The character is recognisable by many people, and thus it is difficult for him or her to keep secrets or maintain a private life. Journalists and photographers may hound the character regularly, and report his or her actions on television, in newspapers, and on websites. While being Famous may have some privileges (preferred seating at restaurants, daily special treatment, etc.), it can be a significant disadvantage for someone who maintains a secret identity.

1 BP The character has regional fame.

2 BP The character has national fame.

3 BP The character has international fame.

Inept Attack

Type: Mundane

This Defect reflects a character's poor judgement in offensive combat situations, which makes it much more difficult to strike an opponent successfully. A character with the Inept Attack Defect suffers a penalty to the Attack Combat Value. The penalty cannot lower the Value below 1. See page 71 more information on the Attack Combat Value. Inept Attack provides 3, 6, or 9 Bonus Points.

3 BP The character's Attack Combat Value is decreased by 1 Point.
6 BP The character's Attack Combat Value is decreased by 2 Points.
9 BP The character's Attack Combat Value is decreased by 3 Points.

Inept Defence

Type: Mundane

This Defect reflects a character's poor judgement in defensive combat situations, which can often place him or her in precarious positions. A character with the Inept Defence Defect suffers a Defence Combat Value penalty. The penalty cannot lower the Value below 1. See page 71 for more information on the Defence Combat Value. Inept Defence provides 2, 4, or 6 Bonus Points.

2 BP The character's Defence Combat Value is decreased by 1 Point.
4 BP The character's Defence Combat Value is decreased by 2 Points.
6 BP The character's Defence Combat Value is decreased by 3 Points.

Involuntary Change

Type: Special

This Defect is only available to characters who have the Alternate Form Attribute. The character may accidentally change from human form to the Alternate Form (or vice versa), or an external trigger (opponent, ally, natural force, etc.) may induce the change. This Defect may represent a character who: transforms between identities upon hearing or uttering a specific sound or word, reverts to normal form when a particular chemical in the body is in low quantities (such as sugar or salt), transforms when a button on a gadget or Item of Power is pushed, transforms in times of stress, etc.

This Defect is assigned once to indicate the character can accidentally change from human to the alternate identity, or vice versa. The Defect is assigned twice if the character can transform both ways unintentionally.

1 BP It is difficult to trigger the Involuntary Change.
2 BP It is moderately easy to trigger the Involuntary Change.
3 BP It is very easy to trigger the Involuntary Change.

Ism

Type: Mundane

Ism is discrimination based solely on one particular aspect of a character. Urban society is one where many different cultures meet and intermingle, and the addition of fantastic races and magical beings only complicates the situation. In an ideal world, people would respect and honour each other's differences and seek to learn about other cultures and their ways of thinking. Sadly, in the real world, people are a mess of incoherent prejudices, both learned and acquired. People often fear and hate that which is different to themselves, even if the difference is no more than a political opinion or a different accent. Those who belong to a deprecated minority live very different lives from those who enjoy backgrounds that are conventionally acceptable.

Examples of Ism include: ageism, elitism, racism, sexism, or discrimination based on education, species, genetics, sexual preference, occupation, religion, physical features, etc. Racism, Sexism, prejudice, bigotry and other forms of "Ism" are endemic in cities in our real life society. The cities in an urban fantasy are not immune to these all too human flaws. Magical creatures have prejudices and biases of their own. These could be even more pronounced than those of the humans alongside whom they live. Any character who belongs to a minority grouping, especially a secretive magical grouping which keeps its true nature hidden from the world, may be subject to "Isms." It would take a noble soul not to feel bitter at the world and people who have judged him or her as second rate, due purely to some racial or behavioural quirk. The players and GM are strongly encouraged to discuss these contentious discrimination issues, and their role in the game, before play begins.

1 BP The character experiences a small degree of discrimination.
2 BP The character experiences a large degree of discrimination.
3 BP The character experiences a severe degree of discrimination.

Less Capable

Type: Mundane

Currently, the three game Stats indicate the same level of ability in all aspects of each Stat: the Body Stat represents all physical aspects, the Mind Stat represents all mental aspects, and the Soul Stat represents all spiritual and willpower aspects. Some characters may have one or more aspects of a Stat at a less proficient level than the rest of the Stat aspects and this is where the Less Capable Defect comes in.

For example, a bulky brawler might have a high strength, excellence endurance, fast running speed, good manual dexterity, and healthy immune system ... but be rather clumsy. This would fit a character with a Body Stat of 8 or 10, with the Less Capable (Agility) Defect at 2 BP. Similarly, a witty, perceptive, and insightful academic genius that happens to have a surprisingly bad memory might have a Mind Stat of 9, with the Less Capable (Memory) Defect at 1 BP.

Every Stat has a multitude of aspects associated with it, that are considered either Major Aspects (aspects that arise frequently in a game) or Minor Aspects (aspects that arise infrequently). For each BP Level of the Less Capable Defect, Stat or Skill checks for which the specific Major Aspects is important suffer a -3 penalty, while Stat or Skill checks for which the specific Minor Aspects is important suffer a -6 penalty. Less Capable can typically extend to 6 BP for Major Aspects or 3 BP for Minor Aspects. Derived Values are not recalculated.

Each Stat has three Major and three Minor Aspects listed below. Players may create additional Aspects with the Game Master's input.

Body

Strength, Agility, Endurance (Major); Manual Dexterity, Running Speed, Immune System (Minor)

Mind

Intelligence, Wits, Perception (Major); Memory, Intuition, Savvy (Minor)

Soul

Luck, Willpower, Charisma (Major); Presence, Empathy, Composure (Minor)

All Stat Aspects

There are rare occasions in which a character may need the Less Capable Defect to apply to all aspects of a specific Stat. This usually applies to characters that undergo a radical change from one form to another, such as that induced by the Alternate Form Attribute (page 18). For example, a scientist character with a Mind Stat of 11 who transforms into a hulking beast may need to reduce his or her Mind Stat to 3 with a Less Capable Mind Defect. For this application, a -1 is applied to the character's specific Stat checks for every 2 BP Levels of the Less Capable Defect assigned. All Derived Values must be recalculated for this application of Less Capable.

Limited Use, Instantaneous

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute with an instantaneous effect. The character can only use a specific Attribute occasionally. This may result from a need to recharge the Attribute (or a device), an incredible drain on the character's internal reserves, or a different form of limitation. Only under exceptional circumstances (and at a great sacrifice) can the character use the Attribute more often than indicated by this Defect. This Defect is usually incompatible with the Burns Energy Defect.

1 BP The character can only use the Attribute three times a day.
2 BP The character can only use the Attribute twice a day.
3 BP The character can only use the Attribute once a day.

Limited Use, Ongoing

Type: Linked

Linked to an Attribute that can be used on an ongoing basis. After the character uses a specific Attribute, he or she cannot use it again for a specific period of time; the longer the Attribute is used, the longer the rest period must be. For example, the muscles of a character with Superstrength may need time to recuperate after use, or an Item of Power that grants Flight may need to be recharged between uses. Only under exceptional circumstances (and at a great sacrifice) can the character use the Attribute again before the waiting period has elapsed. This Defect is usually incompatible with the Burns Energy Defect.

1 BP For every minute the character uses the Attribute, he or she must wait 1 minute before the Attribute functions once again.

2 BP For every minute the character uses the Attribute, he or she must wait 5 minutes before the Attribute functions once again.

3 BP For every minute the character uses the Attribute, he or she must wait 10 minutes before the Attribute functions once again.

Marked

Type: Mundane

A character is considered Marked if his or her body hosts a permanent and distinguishing design that may be difficult to conceal. The design may be a family symbol, an identifying birthmark, a permanent scar, or a unique tattoo. If the mark is not considered out of the ordinary (such as freckles or a common tattoo), this Defect does not apply. Characters who are obviously non-human (mythological beings, demons, talking animals, etc.) in a setting where most people are human (or vice versa) would also have the Marked Defect.

Magicians, cultists, and supernatural entities that can pass for human often have some minor mark that reveals their true nature. As long as the mark cannot be hidden from someone who knows what to look for, it can be a valid mark. This includes marks such as casting no shadow or no reflection, or being possessed of a scent or aura that seems unremarkable to anyone except another character who realises its implications.

1 BP The mark is easily concealable because it is small or in an inconspicuous location.

2 BP The mark can be concealed, but this is difficult because it is large or in an obvious location.

3 BP Under most circumstances, the mark cannot be concealed because it affects the character's entire body.

Maximum Force

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. The character cannot use a specific Attribute at the lowest end of its power range. This could represent a character who is too talented for his or her own good, an item that only functions within certain parameters, a powerful character who pushes the Attribute's limits so often that he or she has forgotten how to use it at a low Level, or something different.

This Defect is only appropriate for the following Attributes: Animal Summon/Control, Creation, Dynamic Powers, Elasticity, Flight, Grow, Illusion, Insubstantial, Jumping, Mass Increase, Plant Control, Projection, Shrink, Special Attack (applies to damage only), Speed, Teleport, Transmutation, and Water Speed.

Maximum Force extends to Level 10, providing 1 BP each Level. The restriction on an Attribute's use is given below, where Z is the number of Bonus Points granted and (Z+1) is one Level higher than the BP Level.

z BP The character cannot use up to Level Z of the Attribute. The Attribute must be at Level (Z+1) or higher.

Nemesis

Type: Mundane

The character has someone in his or her life that actively interferes with goal achievement on a regular basis. This Nemesis can take several forms. He or she could be a professional rival such as someone competing for the favour of the character's boss. The Nemesis could also be personal; for example, a vampire may be pursued by an obsessed hunter who is utterly devoted to ending his or her existence. The Nemesis may even be a romantic rival such as someone chasing the same person the character is pursuing.

The Nemesis should be someone who makes the character's life difficult frequently (and cannot easily be removed), but the Nemesis does not need to be a mortal enemy. It might be someone the character loves very much, but one whom they cannot avoid. An overbearing parent who lives at home is an example of this. If for any reason the Nemesis is defeated or goes away, the GM should create another Nemesis, unless the player also wishes to use Advancement Points (page 117) to eliminate the Defect permanently.

1 BP The Nemesis is merely annoying and/or interferes infrequently.

2 BP The Nemesis may actively try to harm the character and/or interferes frequently.

3 BP The Nemesis will always harm the character given the opportunity, and/or interferes constantly.

Not So Tough

Type: Mundane

The character is less durable than his or her Body and Soul Stats would otherwise suggest. This Defect is appropriate for characters with a "glass jaw," or those who succumb to physical trauma easily.

1 BP The character's Health Points are decreased by 10 Points.

2 BP The character's Health Points are decreased by 20 Points.

3 BP The character's Health Points are decreased by 30 Points.

One-Way Transformation

Type: Special

Linked to Attribute. This Defect can only be taken in conjunction with the Alternate Form, Elasticity, Grow, Insubstantial, Invisibility, Mass Increase, or Shrink Attributes. Once the character has transformed from a normal state, he or she cannot transform back to a prior form without meeting certain conditions. This might include a magical ritual, work by mechanics or lab technicians, consuming a specific substance, or simply the passage of time.

1 BP It takes several hours of work or special circumstances to enable the character to transform back to an earlier form.

2 BP As **1 BP**, but the process requires expensive (or hard to find) replacement components, ingredients, or other prerequisites.

3 BP As **2 BP**, but the process takes several days.

Owned

Type: Mundane

Free will has little meaning for a character who is Owned by a corporation, government, crime ring, or other organisation or individual. Control over the character can be exerted through a variety of methods including blackmail, brainwashing, magical geas, legal contract, technology, or just highly effective propaganda. Where magic is involved, characters can mystically sell their hearts or their souls in return for power, they can be kidnapped and forced into service by powerful entities, or even be created purely in order to serve a master's will. A character who is Owned is beholden to the person or organisation who has power over them. Characters who work (whether secretly or overtly) for a magical creature are not necessarily Owned by their employer.

A campaign involving mystical creatures seeking to influence humanity offers many opportunities for manipulative power games. Many factions may wish to control human servants, and even magical creatures are pawns of more powerful masters. Both player characters and NPCs may have little free will of their own. They could be Owned by secret societies or supernatural beings, each of whom has its own private agenda. A game in which this is rife has a dark and oppressive mood, with characters seeking to defy or even escape their supernatural masters.

Dire consequences await a character whose actions conflict with the mandate of the owning body.

1 BP The organisation has partial ownership of the character; the character is subject to slight punishment for opposing the owners.

2 BP The organisation has significant ownership of the character; the character is subject to moderate punishment for opposing the owners.

3 BP The organisation has total ownership of the character; the character is subject to severe punishment for opposing the owners.

Part of Body

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. Only part of the character's body is affected by a specific Attribute, most commonly used for: Adaptation, Alternate Form, Armour, Damage Absorption, Insubstantial, Invisibility, and Superstrength. For example, a character might only receive Armour benefits against abdominal attacks, possess the ability to turn his or her left arm invisible, or have bionic legs with Superstrength.

1 BP The Attribute affects a large part of the body (torso, both legs, both arms, etc.).

2 BP The Attribute affects a small part of the body (one leg, one arm, abdomen, chest, head, etc.)

3 BP The Attribute affects a tiny part of the body (one hand, face, one foot, groin, knee, etc.).

Permanent

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. A specific Attribute is always functioning, and the character cannot turn it off. This Defect only applies to Attributes that would inconvenience the character if the Attribute was always active, such as: Force Field, Insubstantial, Invisibility, or Nullify. The player and GM should discuss the problems and limitations associated with an eternally active Attribute.

1 BP The Attribute is a slight inconvenience to the character.

2 BP The Attribute is a moderate inconvenience to the character.

3 BP The Attribute is a severe inconvenience to the character.

Phobia

Type: Mundane

A Phobia is a fear (often irrational) of an event, object, or person that can limit a character's choice of actions. Avoiding situations that could trigger the phobia may take a high priority in the character's life. Note that a Phobia that effectively cripples the character with fear does not add constructively to the role-playing experience.

1 BP A slight phobia or one that is encountered infrequently.

2 BP A moderate phobia or one that is encountered frequently.

3 BP A severe phobia or one that is encountered constantly.

Physical Impairment

Type: Mundane

The character has a physical impairment that makes aspects of daily life more challenging. Possible impairments include: one or more missing (or unusable) limbs, loss of speech, constant sickness, nagging injury, severe headaches, an android that requires frequent repairs, etc. The player and GM should discuss the problems and limitations associated with the impairment.

1 BP The impairment is a slight inconvenience to the character.

2 BP The impairment is a moderate inconvenience to the character.

3 BP The impairment is a severe inconvenience to the character.

Recurring Nightmares

Type: Mundane

When the Recurring Nightmare Defect haunts a character, he or she has trouble sleeping at nights and functions at less-than-optimum performance during the day. The nightmare can be a memory of a tragic event or traumatic experience, or it might be something else such as a prophetic vision or warning. The nightmare may not occur every night but it will haunt the character on a regular basis. Additionally, the nightmares do not need to portray the exact same events repeatedly, but the visions should be related in some way. The details concerning the subject matter of the nightmares and why they occur is the responsibility of the GM and the player to create.

1 BP The nightmares occur infrequently and have a slight effect on the character's lifestyle.

2 BP The nightmares occur frequently and have a moderate effect on the character's lifestyle.

3 BP The nightmares occur constantly and have a severe effect on the character's lifestyle.

Red Tape

Type: Mundane

The character must negotiate his or her way through a complicated bureaucracy in order to accomplish tasks. This Defect is often associated with characters who are members of law-enforcement organisations or similar government agencies that require paperwork. A large criminal organisation may also require a character to receive permission from several levels of bosses before undertaking certain high-profile jobs. Some modern depictions of heaven and hell even portray angels, spirits, and demons who are forced to deal with bureaucratic Red Tape. Red Tape also includes whatever measures the character must take "after the fact" to appease the organisation to which he or she belongs. For example, a cop may need to fill out a report every time his or her weapon is fired or may have to follow a complicated series of steps to obtain a search warrant. A thug may be required to pay a percentage of his or her take to the regional crime organisation or face some very strict penalties.

The Red Tape Defect is inappropriate for characters created via the Henchmen or Servant Attributes.

1 BP The Red Tape only impedes the character before or after a major action (but not both) and/or the Red Tape is easy to manage most of the time.

2 BP The Red Tape impedes a character both before and after a major action, and/or is difficult to manage most of the time.

3 BP The Red Tape impedes a character before, after, and during a major action, and/or is extremely difficult to manage most of the time.

Reduction

Type: Linked

Linked to Characteristic or Attribute. One of the character's Attributes is limited greatly, resulting in a Reduction of its Point cost per Level. This Defect offers a near-endless number of limitations, and consequently the player and GM should discuss the game ramifications and the Attribute's new Level costs.

Each Attribute description provides one sample Reduction. This entry is only a suggestion, and does not represent the only Reductions available. A list of suggested Reductions are shown in Table 5-2: Sample Reductions.

Unlike other Defects, Reduction does not return Bonus Points to the character; the Attribute cost changes instead. The Point cost change is directly related to the original cost of the Attribute. For example, a Reduction that limits a 4 Points/Level Attribute to half of its power might be a 2 Points/Level Reduction; the same limitation on a 10 Points/Level Attribute could be a 5 Points/Level Reduction. This Defect is not usually appropriate for 1 Point/Level Attributes.

Table 5-2: Sample Reductions

Fewer sub-Points awarded	One aspect
Less frequent usage	Partial effectiveness
Limited control	Attribute always used in same way
More than one but less than all	Very specific utility

Restriction

Type: Linked

Linked to Characteristic or Attribute. One of the character's Attributes is associated with one or more disadvantages that limits its use. This Defect offers a near-endless number of limitations, and consequently the player and GM should discuss the ramifications of the selected Restriction. A list of suggested Restrictions are shown in Table 5-3: Sample Restrictions.

Each Attribute description provides a short list of three of the more commonly associated Restrictions. These entries are only suggestions, and do not represent the only Restrictions available. The GM may increase the Bonus Points returned to the character to an alternate progression (such as 2 BP, 4 BP, 6 BP; or 3 BP, 6 BP, 9 BP) if the Attribute this Defect is restricting has a high Character Point cost at each Level (see Dynamic Powers, Extra Attacks, or Power Flux for examples). Severe limitations on an Attribute, which will affect the Point cost per Level, is covered by the Reduction Defect (see above).

1 BP The Attribute has a minor Restriction.
2 BP The Attribute has a moderate Restriction.
3 BP The Attribute has a major Restriction.

Table 5-3: Sample Restrictions

Cannot use on oneself	Requires consumable focus
Check needed to maintain control	Requires maintenance
During specific times of the day	Requires special equipment
Easy to counteract	Requires Stat checks
Flawed results	Restricts movement
In particular locations	Specific targets
Initiative penalty to use	Time limit
Limited functioning	Under certain conditions
Loss of specific effect	Usage inflicts pain
Naked form only	Use weakens character

Sensory Impairment

Type: Mundane

One or more of the character's senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell) are either diminished or lost. An example of a diminished sense is being near-sighted or hard of hearing; the GM should take the impairment into consideration when deciding what the character is able to perceive, and may apply a -4 penalty on checks to notice things with that sense. An example of a lost sense is blindness or deafness. Any diminishment or loss is based on the character's status after benefiting from any technological aids such as eyeglasses or hearing aids in the setting. For example, if a character has a hearing aid but is still hard of hearing, he or she has Sensory Impairment (diminished hearing, 1 BP). In a setting where a hearing aid was unavailable or could not correct his or her particular impairment, he or she would have Sensory Impairment (deaf, 2 BP) instead.

1 BP The character has a diminished primary sense (such as short-sightedness or being hard of hearing), or has lost a secondary sense (such as taste or smell).
2 BP The character has completely lost a primary sense (sight or hearing), or has two diminished primary senses, or has completely lost multiple secondary senses.
3 BP The character has completely lost a primary sense (sight or hearing) and multiple secondary senses.

Significant Other (S.O.)

Type: Mundane

A character with this Defect has someone for whom he or she will go to any lengths to keep safe from harm, even at the risk of his or her own life. The S.O. should be a regular fixture in the campaign. A one-night stand, or a cousin visiting for two weeks is a plot complication and not an appropriate S.O. The character's sense of obligation towards the S.O. is enough that the character will take great pains to ensure his or her safety and well-being. Examples include spouses and steady boy or girl friends, team-mates, immediate relatives (parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, perhaps very close cousins), and close co-workers (such as a cop's partner). It is acceptable for a character to take another character as an S.O., provided the players role-play this relationship appropriately. In this case, the S.O. relationship is always worth just 1 BP but is treated as a 3 BP Defect by the GM in terms of the frequency with which it affects the game.

The S.O. Defect is inappropriate for most Henchmen and Servant characters.

1 BP The S.O. is rarely placed in grave danger and appears infrequently.
2 BP The S.O. is often placed in grave danger and appears frequently.
3 BP The S.O. is always placed in grave danger and appears constantly.

Skeleton in the Closet

Type: Mundane

The character has a dark secret. Exposure of this secret could cause harm to the character in the form of public humiliation, loss of a job, arrest, injury, or even death. Many beings in an urban fantasy have something to hide about themselves. Magical creatures may be forced to conceal their true natures from friends and acquaintances. People maintain secret identities, hoping beyond hope that no one will ever discover who or what they really are. Characters commonly have a Skeleton in the Closet Defect to reflect these dark secrets which the mundane world must never know. In some campaigns, if knowledge of the supernatural leaked to humanity, characters' lives would be destroyed. They can never let their guard down, especially if they hold positions of power in the mortal world. Unscrupulous types will lie, cheat, steal, and even kill to protect these secrets. Their lives and those of many others may depend upon it.

Others have something important to hide about their past history. Perhaps they have a dark secret related to something they once did, or knew. It may be a criminal background involving the supernatural, or knowledge of an ancient evil which they unleashed upon an unsuspecting foe. Unfortunately for these characters, in urban fantasies, wrongs done in the past have a way of coming back to haunt characters. Where ghosts are involved, this might even be literally true.

Sharing a common Skeleton in the Closet can be the glue that keeps player characters together. However much they may dislike each other, they are all in the same boat....

The number of BP gained from this Defect is based on the severity the consequences if the secret is revealed. The secret must be important enough that the character will actively take steps to keep others from learning of it. If the Skeleton is ever revealed, the character will suffer the associated consequences, and the GM should replace it with an appropriate Defect or Defects worth at least as many BP as Skeleton in the Closet.

For example, most criminals have a 1 BP Skeleton in the Closet: they have committed crimes that could send them to jail or worse, but usually there is no easily available evidence. If their secret is discovered, they will usually have Skeleton in the Closet replaced by an equal or higher value Wanted Defect. A 3 BP Skeleton is usually reserved for characters who face destruction or death if their secret is discovered such as a flesh-eating alien living among humans or an undercover agent that has infiltrated a terrorist organisation. If a character has a secret identity, the Skeleton in the Closet Defect applies. The number of Bonus Points associated with the identity depends on the consequences if the secret is revealed, and thus is heavily Dependent on the nature and actions of the character. For instance, if a undercover agent's identity is revealed, enemies can target the character and his or her family more easily. Whether this is a 1, 2, or 3 BP Defect depends on the position of the character, popularity of the character, how many enemies he or she has, how easily the character can maintain a normal lifestyle, etc. When in doubt, assume that most characters who have secret identities gain the 2 BP Defect.

The Skeleton in the Closet Defect is inappropriate for most Servant characters.

1 BP The Skeleton is difficult to discover, and/or the consequences of discovery are slight, and/or the character's reputation will be impacted slightly.

2 BP The Skeleton is relatively easy to discover, and/or the consequences of discovery are moderate, and/or the character's reputation will be seriously impacted.

3 BP The Skeleton is very easy to discover, and/or the consequences of discovery are severe, and/or the character's reputation will be devastated.

Special Requirement

Type: Mundane

This Defect forces the character to meet a Special Requirement in order to function normally on a day-to-day basis. The Special Requirement may involve a physical object, an event, an action, an environmental condition, or even a state of mind. Examples of Special Requirements include a vampire's need for blood, an addict's craving for a drug, or a chronically ill person's need for medicine. Everyday activities, such as eating and sleeping, are not considered to be Special Requirements unless they must be carried out under unusual conditions or more frequently for some reason. This Defect covers a wide range of possibilities, and thus the details should be discussed with the GM.

1 BP The Special Requirement is easy to obtain and/or needed infrequently.

2 BP The Special Requirement is difficult to obtain and/or needed frequently.

3 BP The Special Requirement is extremely difficult to obtain and/or needed constantly.

Unappealing

Type: Mundane

An Unappealing character may find it difficult to blend into a crowd because their appearance is distinctive. The term "unappealing" does not necessarily mean ugly but can also refer to a bad smell, manner of speech, or even an unpleasant habit that provokes a consistently negative reaction.

This Defect is often taken in conjunction with the Marked Defect (page 67). A monstrous, ugly creature is usually both Unappealing and Marked. On the other hand, a beautiful, winged angel would be Marked (the presence of wings) but not Unappealing.

1 BP The character is slightly unappealing. He or she receives a -2 penalty on any Seduction Skill use.

2 BP The character is moderately unappealing. He or she receives a -4 penalty on any Seduction Skill use.

3 BP The character is severely unappealing. He or she receives a -6 penalty on any Seduction Skill use.

Unique Defect

Type: Special

This section covers any and all possible Defects that a character might possess but are not detailed in the rules. The boundaries and limitations of the Defect should be discussed with the GM.

1 BP The Defect occurs infrequently and/or has a slight effect on the character.

2 BP The Defect occurs frequently and/or has a moderate effect on the character.

3 BP The Defect occurs constantly and/or has a severe effect on the character.

Unreliable Power

Type: Linked

Linked to Attribute. One of the character's Attributes frequently does not function when desired. Before the character can use the Attribute, he or she must make a successful Stat check with a penalty. If the Attribute does not have a "Relevant Stat" entry, the character's Soul Stat should be used as a default. If the Stat check fails, the character can try to use the Attribute again during the next round (when the character is in combat), or in a short period of time (when the character is not in combat).

At the GM's and player's discretion, Unreliable Power can also represent an Attribute that does not always function in the manner desired. For example, a character with Grow might not always grow to the desired size, or a Force Field might not always appear in the correct place. For this alternative, the Stat check determines if the Attribute operates properly; a failed check indicates that it activates in an unexpected manner.

1 BP The character suffers a -2 Stat check penalty. In non-combat situations, the character cannot attempt to use the Attribute again for 1-10 minutes.

2 BP The character suffers a -4 Stat check penalty. In non-combat situations, the character cannot attempt to use the Attribute again for 10-30 minutes.

3 BP The character suffers a -6 Stat check penalty. In non-combat situations, the character cannot attempt to use the Attribute again for 30 minutes - 2 hours.

Unskilled

Type: Mundane

An Unskilled character starts with less than the usual number of Skill Points: -10 Skill Points (up to the character's starting Skill Point total) for each BP returned. This Defect cannot be combined with the Highly Skilled Attribute.

Vulnerability

The character has a critical weakness to a specific object, environment, thought, activity, or condition. When in close proximity to the Vulnerability, it can temporarily strip the character of his or her Attributes. The Vulnerability should only affect the character rarely, however, since it impacts him or her so severely.

1 BP The character's accessible Attribute Levels all drop by one-quarter (round up) when affected by the Vulnerability.

2 BP The character's accessible Attribute Levels all drop by one-half (round up) when affected by the Vulnerability.

3 BP The character cannot use any Attributes when affected by the Vulnerability.

Wanted

The character is wanted by the law or a powerful criminal or private organisation that has placed a price on his or her head. This organisation could certainly include supernatural hierarchies like heaven, hell, or a fairy court. Being Wanted is different from having a Nemesis; there is no single person devoting his or her life to annoying or hunting down the character. The character will need to conceal his or her identity or move around regularly to avoid having complete strangers calling the police or pursuing the character (depending on the circumstances).

1 BP The incentive to hunt the character is minor. For example, he or she may be wanted on outstanding warrants, but there may be no actual reward posted, or the reward is fairly small.

2 BP The reward, contract, or other incentive offered to hunt the character is significant.

3 BP The reward, contract, or other incentive offered to hunt the character is extreme.

Weak Point

The character's body possesses an abnormal weak point (in addition to the normal human weak points, like the heart and head). If the weak point is ever hit during combat with a Called Shot (page 102), the result is an automatic critical hit (page 107). If the attacker rolls a natural critical hit (a natural 2), the target is immediately reduced to 0 Health Points and falls unconscious. The opponent, or even the character, may not be aware the weak point exists, however, until its presence is discovered by accident or through careful study.

1 BP The weak point is tiny (-6 Called Shot attack check penalty).

2 BP The weak point is small (-4 Called Shot attack check penalty).

3 BP The weak point is large (-2 Called Shot attack check penalty).



Finishing Touches

Step 7: Calculate Derived Values

Calculate the character's Derived Values. These numbers are based directly on the Body, Mind, and Soul Stats and thus do not afford any choices of Point distribution.

Combat Value

This value governs all facets of physical conflict including your character's abilities in attacking, defending, and delivering damage. A higher Combat Value reflects fighting spirit and an increased knowledge of all physical combat forms: armed, unarmed, martial arts and ranged weapons. There are two separate components of the Combat Value — Attack and Defence. Character Attributes and Defects may modify either component separately, but unless otherwise noted, the term Combat Value refers to both Attack and Defence.

Increased skill in combat can only be achieved through harmony of the Complete Self. Lack of self-unity through weakness of any facet of the character will restrict his or her ability in combat. Consequently, the Body, Mind, and Soul are all of equal importance to the combat master: Body Stat for a forceful attack and defence, Mind Stat for quick wit, knowledge of combat techniques and anticipation of an opponent's actions, and Soul Stat for the winning spirit and good fortune. For example, a petite female standing five feet tall with martial arts training can take down an opponent nearly twice her size; knowledge and determination is just as important as brute force.

To calculate the base Attack Combat Value, add together all the Stat Values and divide by three, rounding down ([Body + Mind + Soul] ÷ 3).

The base Defence Combat Value is two less than the Attack Combat Value ([Body + Mind + Soul] ÷ 3 - 2).

Health Points

This Derived Value dictates the amount of physical damage your character's body can sustain before it ceases to function (for example, your character is knocked unconscious or even dies). Damage delivered in combat is subtracted from your character's current Health Point total. If the total ever falls below zero, the character is rendered unconscious and may die if he or she does not receive medical attention. Attributes or Defects may further modify Health Points.

The base number of Health Points is equal to the sum of the Body Stat and Soul Stat multiplied by 5 ([Body + Soul) x 5]).

Henchmen Rule

To reflect the ease with which unimportant NPCs are dispatched in combat, the GM is encouraged to assign such "extras" as the Not So Tough Defect at 2 or 3 BP, therefore reducing their Health Points by 20 or 30. The GM will decide which characters constitute minor NPCs.

Energy Points (Optional)

This Derived Value can be used for games where the GM feels that characters possess a personal reserve of energy that is depleted when carrying out difficult tasks. Energy Points are needed to fuel Attributes that are associated with the Burns Energy Defect and Special Attacks that have the Uses Energy Disability. If your character's Energy Point total is ever reduced to 0, he or she will fall unconscious from exhaustion.

Energy Points are a handy means of "powering" psychic or magical abilities, so the use of Energy Points is highly recommended for a *Dreaming Cities* game.

Caution! Although they are a useful game mechanic, Energy Points can slow the pace of a game and increase the amount of bookkeeping. Additionally, your character may tire quickly if you assign the Burns Energy Defect to several Attributes, preventing him or her from using them over sustained periods. Whether this is appropriate for your character or not depends on how you envision your hero. Energy Points may be further modified by the Energy Bonus Attribute (page 23).

To calculate your character's initial Energy Point total, add together the Mind Stat and Soul Stat and multiply by 5 ([Mind + Soul] x 5).

Shock Value (Optional)

For games in which damage should have more realistic effects, characters should also calculate their Shock Value. This value is not recommended for heroic games. If a character suffers an amount of damage equal to his or her Shock Value, there is a danger that the character will be stunned. If the attack penetrates the skin (such as from a bullet or knife), the Shock Value also represents the damage necessary to inflict a major wound, which, if untreated, can result in the character bleeding to death. For more information on Shock Value and its applications, see page 108.

The Shock Value is equal to the character's maximum Health Points divided by 5. ([Health Points] ÷ 5).

Step 8: Earn Background Points

Now that the numerical component of your character is complete (Stats, Attributes, Defects, Skills, and Derived Values), you should concentrate on fine-tuning his or her personality, while still leaving room for the character to grow in the future. One of the most effective ways to better visualise your creation is to provide detail through a background history, a character story, or a character drawing. Spending time to develop your character without a rule structure will enhance your role-playing greatly, and can give the GM a window into your character's motivations. Additionally, your Game Master might hand out a character quiz for you to answer. As an incentive, the GM will award you from 1 to one-half X Background Points for each contribution that you complete, which are then distributed among the Attributes. If any of your character's Stats are changed after using the Background Points, you must recalculate the three Derived Values.

This final step in character creation also serves as your last chance to answer important character questions before game-play begins. What formed his or her outlook on life? Where does he or she live? Work? Earn money? What are your character's likes? Dislikes? What about family? Friends? Romantic interests? Enemies? Details add depth to your character, but you should not become obsessed with them. Leaving room for growth can provide numerous character development opportunities during the course of the adventures.





URBAN FANTASY CHARACTER TYPES

Urban fantasy stories take a very human approach to their protagonists. Characters might personify archetypal myths or wield phenomenal powers unfathomable to science, but they still share many of the frailties and weaknesses of regular humans. They are neither infallible nor godly. If they are pricked, they will (usually) bleed. If they are poisoned they will (usually) fall ill. They have to pay their taxes, deal with unfaithful lovers, and wait for the busses alongside everyone else in the city. The price of living in the real world is that a character has to live in the real world.

Partly because of this, the majority of urban fantasy is set among humans, with characters being created on a similar points basis as normal humans. The Game Dice for these settings is usually d6, and characters are created on 50-150 Character Points, depending on how powerful they are intended to be, although GMs are free to set higher or lower values for starting Points. At the lower end of this scale, characters are skilled humans who may have a few insights and abilities that set them apart from the mundane person in the street. At the top end of the scale, characters could be powerful supernatural beings, wizards, or reincarnated deities walking the Earth.

TEMPLATES

This chapter contains several templates. These are sets of ready-to-use archetypes and abilities that can be added to a character, or used to speed up the process of character creation. Two types of templates are presented in this chapter: occupational and species templates. Both have a listed Character Point cost.

- Occupational Templates are archetypal roles. They grant a set of Stat modifiers, Attributes, Skills, and Defects. Most of them cost 10 or 15 Character Points. You may choose to give your character a single occupational template.
- Species Templates are nonhuman races or supernatural entities. They provide a set of Stat Modifiers, Attributes, and Defects suitable for a supernatural entity.

Templates are completely optional. You can create a character without using them.

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Campaigns vary hugely in scope and setting. Stories are usually set in contemporary cities and feature human characters alongside those with supernatural connections, but this is not set in stone. Some campaigns may focus on a small group of supernatural creatures, others on humans who hunt down the monsters who live among them, and still others might be more like modern day magical soap operas.

Characters in urban fantasy often represent some long-established archetype that has been translated to the current world, or a magical creature that has adapted and learned to live in a present-day urban environment. Modern-day wizards and people who have contacts with urban or street culture also often feature in these settings.

TYPES OF CHARACTERS IN URBAN FANTASY

The power level of a campaign is largely determined by the types of characters who feature as protagonists, and the enemies they are likely to face. When telling stories about the supernatural life of a 21st century city, and how it intersects with the modern world, there are three main ways to focus on the setting.

The first concentrates on characters that are normal humans. Their adventures will involve being slowly but surely drawn towards the magical side of the city. They may discover hitherto unknown powers and abilities, make powerful supernatural friends and enemies, and become involved in secret battles for the heart of the world.

Another type of story tells the tales of human characters who are already involved with magic. They may be wizards in the present world, or have jobs that bring them into contact with the supernatural. Their adventure is not so much one of pure discovery and more of learning how to come to an accommodation with both of the worlds they live in, mundane and supernatural.

A third style of urban fantasy relates to supernatural characters. These characters are not human, but they live among them. They may be mythical creatures, reincarnated gods, or monsters lurking about the city's underside and preying on those hapless humans who fall into their clutches. They can never truly belong in the mortal world, and are always fated to be outsiders, searching for places where they can be themselves.

Characters could interact with NPCs of all three types in a campaign.

OCCUPATIONAL TEMPLATES

Template Cost is the sum of all Stat, Attribute, and Defect Character Point costs. It is paid with Character Points.

LEVEL shows the Level of the Stat, Attribute, or Skill granted or modified. It is noted as a bonus (or penalty), since these stack with any other Levels the character may possess.

POINTS shows the Character Point cost of Stats or Attributes, the Bonus Points from Defects (expressed here as a negative, since they give back Points) or the Skill Point cost of Skills.

STATS lists the Stat modifiers of the template. For example, if the Template has Body with +2 in the LVL column, increase your character's Body Stat by 2.

ATTRIBUTES list the Attributes provided and their Level (LVL). Some Attributes incorporate Restrictions or Reductions. These are special, linked Defects that limit or handicap a particular Attribute in some way, but which also reduce its Character Point cost.

SKILLS are the Skills the template provides. Occupational templates have been built with Skills worth a total of 20 Skill Points, +10 Skill Points per Level of Highly Skilled Attribute or -10 per Level of the Unskilled Defect in the template, the standard for a Human-Level campaign. Characters in campaigns of higher power levels will have additional Skill Points (see Table 4-1, page 54).

Skills have one or more Specialisations noted in parenthesis. For example, Gun Combat (Pistol) means the character's Gun Combat Skill Specialisation is shooting a pistol. "Any" means that any Specialisation appropriate to that Skill must be selected when the template is chosen — for a list of Skills and the Specialisations that may be chosen for each of them, see page 54

DEFECTS are the Defects with which the template is burdened. Feel free to substitute other Defects of equivalent class and value.

Mundanes — The Silent Masses

The vast majority of a city's human population is made up of people with no supernatural powers or connections. They built the city and keep it running, they drive the busses and pay the bills, they tell its tales, and they bury its dead. Human characters featuring either as player characters or NPCs are likely to be those with many interesting contacts from different walks of life.

Different sorts of characters are described below, based on their jobs and lifestyles. Each type could be seen as an avant-garde version of a fantasy archetype, filling a similar function in a modern fantasy as his or her more old-fashioned counterpart would have done in a medieval fantasy. Although these roles describe ordinary humans entangled by destiny with the supernatural, they could also serve as the adopted personas of magical creatures. Characters may never be quite sure if the apparently mundane people with whom they are interacting are regular humans, as they appear to be, or something more….

Street Musician (Busker)

"Without warning, the piping sound of a penny whistle started up, somewhere further down the subway platform. Tom's pace quickened instinctively, footsteps falling in time with the trills in the melody until finally he saw the musician. The man winked up at him, ancient eyes twinkling in his leathery face as the music swirled and rippled around them both."

Fantasy equivalent: A travelling minstrel or bard, who entertains travellers with songs or stories for a few coins.

The busker spends much of his or her time haunting the highways and byways along which people travel on their way from one place to another. Minstrels of the old school, their job is to entertain people in return for donations, and perhaps even information or friendship. Buskers consider themselves part of the professional musical community and many of them play live paid gigs in the evenings if they have the opportunity. They often mix with other musicians to listen to music or chew the fat over a few drinks. They are not beggars.

In an urban fantasy, a busker has many opportunities to observe people (and creatures) without being noticed. He or she is also likely to know those who regularly travel past any favoured busking spots, and be on speaking terms with a wide range of people from all walks of society. A personable busker who enjoys listening to gossip and passing it on is likely to find many opportunities to do so. Magical creatures who enjoy music might protect a favoured busker, should anything untoward happen to him or her. Characters might seek out the busker to be entertained, to hear the latest gossip, or to request help in finding a way around one of his or her usual haunts.

Other roles which a modernised bard might take include: bartender, street poet, children's librarian, DJ, or any type of job which involves entertaining the public without being too limited to one location. All the while they are able to keep one ear close to the ground for gossip or other tidbits of information that may prove useful in a game.

Busker
(5 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Body
+1	2	Mind
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	5	Area Knowledge (Local city)
+1	3	Cultural Arts (Music)
+1	3	Performing Arts (Music)
+1	4	Street Sense (Pick any)
	5	Unused Skill Points
Level	**Points**	**Defects**
	-1	Ism (Minority group, or non-mainstream)

Beat Cop

"Rain fell in angry sheets, hurrying to dash itself on the darkened sidewalk. Through the deluge loomed the familiar figures of the two policemen, the sound of their footsteps a strangely comforting tempo as they grumbled to each other about the weather."

Fantasy Equivalent: A town guard, who makes it their business to protect the people of their city.

Beat cops are policemen who are not stuck behind a desk, instead working closely with the local people within their precinct. They walk the walk and talk the talk. They have a comprehension, both intuitive and trained, into the way the city works that no higher-ranking officer who had been promoted straight from college could ever understand. It isn't a glorious job, and it offers few opportunities to shine in the eyes of "The Powers That Be," but a beat cop who can earn the trust of local people is a powerful influence in an area of the city.

Characters taking this role needn't be grizzled old veterans, but they are unlikely to be strongly promotion oriented either. They could hold non-uniformed positions in a department dealing with vice, drugs, homicide, even magic (in a campaign where magic is known to the authorities), or a uniformed role on the streets. Whatever the nature of their job, the character has a feel for the pulse of the city in which they work, they have a network of information, and good instincts for when things feel right … or very wrong. A cop often will have useful contacts with the city's underworld, either informants or minor nemeses, who have been dragged in and out of the station many times.

The beat cop need not have a strong moral compass; some people are driven to fulfil what they see as their civic duty, others are "bent," and still others try not to get too personally involved with their day jobs. Any idealism is likely to be tempered with a comfortable dose of pragmatism. His or her duty is to the city itself, rather than to particular individuals.

Other jobs that a present-day town guard might find include: bouncer, private detective, lawyer, social worker, or doctor.

Beat Cop
(10 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attribute**
+1	2	Gadgets
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+1	1	Highly Skilled
+2	2	Organisational Ties (Police)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	5	Area Knowledge (City: Local beat)
+1	5	Gun Combat (Pistol)
+1	4	Interrogation (Pick any)
+1	3	Law (Pick any)
+1	3	Police Sciences (Pick any)
+1	6	Unarmed Attack or Defence (Pick any)
+1	4	Street Sense (Pick any)
	Points	**Defects**
	-1	Nemesis
	-1	Red Tape (Police)

Note:: In settings where police do not routinely carry firearms, replace the Gun Attack Skill with an appropriate Melee Attack or Defence Skill.

Folklorist

The shop was shrouded in shadows, daylight barely filtering in through windows nearly opaque with grime. Tom peered at a shelf of mismatched books on traditional Chinese legends, homeopathic treatments for arthritis, and Victorian erotica. A couple of ageing packs of tarot cards were stuffed into the same shelf.

"Don't touch those!" barked the tousle-haired shopkeeper, looking up from his bottle of beer. He grumbled to himself about customers, then returned to studying a set of runes on his desk.

Fantasy Equivalent: The learned scholar, bent over piles of scrolls, studying by the flickering light of a candle flame.

The folklorist is a scholar who has carefully studied the myths, legends, and customs of a human culture. These people are not necessarily paid researchers. Investigating the occult may be a private hobby nurtured carefully over the years. They might be university academics, rich dilettantes with exotic private libraries, folk singers or novelists, or even workers in a fast food restaurant.

As well as being knowledgeable in their chosen field, folklorists are usually accomplished researchers. They know how to effectively use libraries, online sources, friends, and colleagues with an interest in the same area, and how to sift through information until they find the specifics for which they had been looking.

Folklorists are often very emotionally attached to their field. Some might even worship, in their own way, the gods and spirits that they have studied. Those who immerse themselves in the folklore most passionately may find it difficult to remember where the superstitions and beliefs stop, and reality starts. Academics or hobbyists who work in other fields can also fill the role of folklorist. Since urban fantasy often involves fantastic or mythical creatures in the modern world, a folklorist is especially likely to be drawn to these supernatural phenomena like a moth to the flame.

Other jobs for a modern-day scholar might include: anyone who devotes themselves to a website or blog about their favoured subject, specialist librarian, a psychic, naturopathic doctor, herbalist, or an owner of a shop selling esoterica.

Folklorist
(10 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+3	6	Mind
+1	2	Soul

Level	Points	Attribute
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+1	2	Organisational Ties

Level	Points	Skills
+1	3	Cultural Arts (Pick any)
+1	3	Foreign Culture (Pick any)
+2	12	Occult (Pick any)
+1	2	Writing (Academic)
	5	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-1	Nemesis (Academic rival)

Biker

Tom swallowed hard as the other two men moved closer, shoulder to shoulder. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed that the tall German woman had risen to her feet behind him and was slowly pulling on her worn, red leather gloves.

"I think you should leave him alone," she suggested to them bluntly. She cracked her knuckles.

Fantasy Equivalent: The knight errant, drifting from place to place in search of profit or adventure.

The biker has chosen a lifestyle that doesn't tie him or herself too closely to any one person or place. Often an imposing figure, who can intimidate others simply by looking at them, these types of characters are self-reliant. They can handle themselves in a fight and repair their own gear and bikes. Many of them resent any interference in their private affairs, even from friends and allies.

Characters taking on this role are typically steadfastly loyal to their friends and to those who win their trust. Even bikers who prefer non-violence may find their patience sorely tested when allies are in trouble. In urban fantasy stories, friendly bikers have the hearts of warriors. Unfriendly ones may be bullies or strong-arm men for more sinister masters. Bikers often have contacts among their fellow bikers. Depending on the character's history, they may also have contacts in the city's underworld or law establishment. They are often adept at acquiring weapons, as well as drugs and chemicals, both legal and illegal.

These are people who value freedom and comradeship, and they are prepared to put their money where their mouths are. Their defining attributes are that they prefer not to be tied down and they aren't afraid of speaking their mind. Additionally, they are often physically intimidating or willing to fight if they believe it is necessary.

Other jobs for a modern knight-errant might be: private investigator, bounty hunter, retired policeman or army officer, or a criminal with a heart of gold.

Biker
(10 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
+1	2	Soul

Level	Points	Attribute
+1	2	Gadgets (Motorcycle plus three minor gadgets)
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+1	1	Highly Skilled
+2	2	Organisational Ties (Gang connections)

Level	Points	Skills
+2	3	Driving (Motorbike)
+1	4	Intimidation (Pick any)
+1	2	Mechanics (Bike repairs)
+1	6	Melee Attack or Defence (Pick any)
+1	4	Street Sense (Pick any)
+1	6	Unarmed Attack or Defence (Pick any)

Points	Defects
-1	Marked (Tattoos)
-1	Ism (Criminal record) OR Nemesis (Rival gang)

Crusading Journalist

Fantasy Equivalent: The paladin, an idealist fighting for truth in a world filled with lies and shadows.

The woman smiled at him, patiently.

"I'm sorry," Tom explained quietly. "I don't know what you are talking about."

"Ah, but I think you do. Tell you what, I haven't eaten since noon. How about I take you out to dinner and you can tell me all about it?"

He sighed. "Look, I wish I could help, but I just don't think —"

"Then stop thinking," she laughed. "Come on, Tom. My expense account gets lonely if I don't take it out for a spin twice a week. We can always talk about something else. Did you hear about that bookshop in town that burned down yesterday?"

Tom froze. The woman winked at him over the rim of her latte mug.

The journalist has a professional interest in people, whether this is an idealist who follows a lead to the bitter end or a nine-to-five clock-watcher who is worn out by filing reports on events in which virtually no one is interested. Some have a sense of duty to both the truth and to their readership, others are focussed on advancing their careers and reputations, while other journalists enjoy investigating leads for the joy of the work itself. Their jobs involve spotting potential stories, following them up, and then if necessary, making public what they have found.

Most people who pursue this role as a career are intensely interested in uncovering the truth, even if at the same time they are trying to spin it into a story that their editor will approve and readers will enjoy. Although lazy journalists are prone to making up corroborating evidence, faking quotes, and plagiarism, they are always in danger of exposure by more conscientious colleagues or victims of their frauds.

Characters in this role are motivated to investigate interesting leads, and are also experienced at doing so. They often draw on a pool of useful contacts among both the general public and other journalists, and are proficient at expressing themselves in writing. Journalists are often sociable to the point of being manipulative, quickly spotting potential contacts and moving to win their trust. If their dedication to the truth comes into conflict with other friendships or family ties, some characters will find their loyalties sorely torn. Even the most noble of paladins may discover the path of honour is not as straightforward as they had once thought.

Other jobs which could fulfil this role are: civil rights lawyer, political or charity campaigner, or a preacher.

Journalist (5 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attribute**
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+1	2	Organisational Ties
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	5	Area Knowledge (Local city)
+1	2	Etiquette (Pick any)
+1	3	Law (Pick any)
+1	4	Urban Tracking (Pick any)
+1	2	Writing (Journalism)
	4	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-2	Easily Distracted (Stories, curiosity)

Religious Leader

Fantasy Equivalent: A priest whose life is dedicated to serving a deity or deities, and healing the sick of body or of soul.

The church was still open, even at such a late hour. A wavering beam of light leaked through the doorframe to spill in bright puddles around the night-black steps and sidewalk outside. From within the building could be heard the faint murmur of tired but devout voices.

A religious leader is the spiritual centre of a community. As well as a duty to whichever deity they serve, they take responsibility for the pastoral care of local people in their protectorate. In the modern world, many people wonder if religion still has a role. Others adhere to the traditional cultures of their parents, friends and families, wearing them proudly as part of their identity. Whether priest, rabbi, imam, druid, priestess, or guru, the clergy who staff the local place of worship is charged with maintaining the traditions of his or her faith, and keeping the it's culture alive.

Characters in a game are more likely to be junior clergy, who have enough free time for their own interests to allow them to become involved in magical adventures. Most will have trained in an appropriate institution, and will have some knowledge of theology and philosophy, as well as the tenets, traditions, and history of their own religion. Clergy (mostly) believe in God (or gods) and in the supernatural and as a result, their reaction to these types of events is likely to be very different from that of more secular characters. There is a sense in which they are fighting to keep spiritual beliefs alive in the face of the modern secular world. Clergy of different faiths often find that despite their contrasting credos, they have much more in common with each other than they do differences.

A conscientious leader is sympathetic to the needs of his or her people. A lazy or corrupt religious leader may be judgmental and prejudiced, and blind to everything except his or her own needs, wishes, and career. In the worst case, someone in this role could abuse their trust and misuse their responsibility to harm and use members of their community.

Other jobs that could fill this role are: local doctor, head teacher or anyone who takes on the pastoral care of a community, especially if they are religious.

Religious Leader (5 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attribute**
+2	2	Organisational Ties (Church, or equivalent)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	5	Area Knowledge (Local city)
+1	3	Cultural Arts (Appropriate religion)
+1	3	Foreign Culture (Pick any other religion)
+1	2	Management/Admin (Local religious organisation)
+1	3	Social Sciences (Theology)
+1	4	Interrogation (Psychological)
	Points	**Defects**
	-1	Owned (Church, or equivalent)

Influential Businessman

Tom straightened his tie reflexively and stepped through the double doors into the large office beyond. Light streamed in through three large panes of glass, forcing him to blink as his eyes adjusted. The room was dominated by a huge oaken desk, behind which lounged a young man in an impeccably tailored Zegna suit.

"Tom, isn't it?" he commented cheerfully, pale blue eyes flicking from Tom's face to his hands and then back to his face again. "Take a seat, I'm glad you could come at such short notice."

"It's good of you to see me —"

"Not at all. I was intrigued by your email," the businessman leaned forward on his immaculately tailored elbows for a long moment and subjected Tom to a more thoughtful stare. Then he laughed and reached over to touch at an intercom button on his phone, "Two coffees, please. And cancel my appointments for the next hour, Janey."

Fantasy Equivalent: The Lord of the Manor, resplendent in silks and velvets, whose influence can gather armies, or starve thousands.

In the modern world, wealth is a path to power. A successful businessman or woman is an influential figure, whose favour can make or break careers, cities or even entire nations. Influence can be used in many different ways, swaying society's oligarchs, the loose-knit groups of people who are responsible for making most of the decisions as to how regions are run, selecting which new developments will be favoured, and deciding upon other changes that have huge effects on the lives of the local people. People often petition such well-connected characters for help. Charities lobby them for support and donations. Other businessmen and women seek to engage them in joint ventures.

Many money related issues simply don't exist for the wealthy and powerful, but in their place come a slew of other concerns and responsibilities. Some characters must maintain a network of complicated responsibilities, directorships, and management roles. Others are lucky enough to be both wealthy and at liberty to take off at short notice to do whatever they please. Their needs are provided by prudent investments, trust funds, or profits made from having previously sold off a business. Even so, the influence that they could wield if they chose attracts hangers-on, flunkies, and people who wish to manipulate them.

Influential Businessman (10 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	4	Mind
+1	2	Soul

Level	Points	Attribute
+2	2	Organisational Ties (Pick any)
+1	3	Wealth

Level	Points	Skills
+1	4	Area Knowledge (Local city)
+1	4	Intimidation (Pick any)
+1	3	Law (Business law)
+2	4	Management/Admin (Business)
+1	4	Urban Tracking (Business community)
	1	Unused Skill Point

	Points	Defect
	-1	Nemesis (Business rival)

Note: As employers, businessmen and women often have Henchmen available, but are liable to be taken to an industrial tribunal should they regularly use employees for non-work related tasks. Those who are less scrupulous or have more loyal employees will reflect this with an appropriate Henchmen Attribute.

As antagonists, a self-centred businessman or woman has a great deal of power with which to affect characters and their allies. A character like this might be the modern day equivalent of a malevolent aristocrat, commanding minions and wage-slaves to perform his or her dark will.

Other jobs which can fill this role: politicians, senior civil servants, or anyone who wields both wealth and influence, and moves in the same circles as the great and the good.

Those who Know

Some people stand firmly with one foot in the real world, and one foot in the world of magic. These characters are human, or at least mostly human, but they know about the supernatural. They are aware of the marvellous, unbelievable things and creatures that exist in their city. Some of these people acquire a superiority complex, feeling themselves to be part of an elite group that is privy to magical secrets. Others will try to deny what they have seen or heard, or maintain as regular a lifestyle as they can despite what they know. Often, their knowledge must be kept quiet. After all, the majority of people would find these things unfathomable, and impossible to believe.

Many characters that fit into this category will not have been born into a magical lifestyle. Instead, they were drawn against their will into a world filled with strangeness, or happened upon a mentor who was able to teach them magic. They might have discovered the monsters living in their midst, followed a dark and mysterious cult, or adopted a reincarnated god as a friend.

Magicians

Magicians not only know that magic exists, but understand how to summon and manipulate magical energies, altering reality itself!

The nature of magic in an urban fantasy game depends heavily on the campaign. In some games, the potential to do magic might be an inborn talent and those with the "gift" could become an elitist clique, or a persecuted minority. In other settings, anyone might learn magic if they could only find a mentor, be it ancient tomes of knowledge, fellow travellers on the path, a demonic tutor, or even a website.

Different ways to portray magic in an urban fantasy game are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 8: Magic, together with some of the more common Defects associated with magicians.

A competent magician will have several Skill levels of Occult, as well as Attributes reflecting how he or she performs magic.

Ritual Mage (45 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Mind
+2	4	Soul

Level	Points	Attribute
+1	6	Sixth Sense (Magic, Area 5)
+1	2	Organisational Ties (Appropriate magical organisation)
+1	1	Highly Skilled
	30	Unused Attribute Points (to be spent on ritual spells or Items of Power)

Level	Points	Skills
+1	3	Cultural Arts (Magical traditions)
+1	3	Languages (Pick any ancient or magical language)
+3	18	Occult (Pick any)
+1	6	Special Ranged Attack (Pick any)

	Points	Defect
	-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Magician)
	-1	Wanted or Nemesis (Magical rival)

Note: For examples of ritual spells see Chapter 7.

Cultists or Members of Occult Societies

There are people who find out about the magical side of the world accidentally. Perhaps they have once seen incredible things, dreamed something, or read about some concepts that rang true to them, then sought out others who shared a similar experience. Members of a cult or an occult society were able to make contact with at least one other person who was sympathetic to their beliefs and who introduced them to a larger group of similar-minded people. The organisation could be huge, part of a secret world-wide conspiracy, or as small as a local special interest group, who meet once a month for a drink. The group may also have a hidden agenda or even links to supernatural entities about which new recruits know nothing.

A campaign featuring characters that are all members of the same occult society might involve investigations into the organisation's true hierarchy, as well as allowing characters to meet all sorts of other society members. For example, a group whose members seek to locate and debunk occult "sightings" could attract a wide variety of people, including mundane enthusiasts, career-minded academics, and magical creatures who want to learn how not to be spotted. Another example might be a cult in service to a sleeping Egyptian god that has reinvented itself as a lunch club for people with a shared interest in the ancient world. Members may not initially realise just how deep the shared interest can get….

A magical cult is likely to have religious overtones. Members might worship a mythical god or spirit, or embark on a joint spiritual journey. Cults may be strongly hierarchical, with a strict regime of priests who oversee the activities of lay members. The rank and file members are expected to obey commands from the object of worship, or the priests who serve it. In urban fantasy, an egotistical mythical creature might enjoy being the subject of a cult's devotion. An evil deity could have plans for cultists of which even the cult's priesthood have no inkling.

Cultist
(0 Character Points)

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	2	Organisational Ties (Relevant cult)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	6	Occult (Pick any)
+1	4	Urban Tracking (Occult sub-culture)
	10	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defect**
	-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Membership of secret cult)
	-1	Owned (Cult)

Friends or Servants of Magical Creatures

People may be catapulted into the world of magic after having encountered an otherworldly creature. For some reason, the relationship grew and now, the character is in contact with the supernatural being on a frequent basis. This might be because the two of them became friends or lovers, because they are close neighbours, or even perhaps one is a servant of the other. Characters might have been able to capture a magical creature and compelled it to do their bidding. Alternatively, characters may find that they have become enslaved to a demon or faerie queen.

Monster Hunters

There are those who have decided to devote themselves to ridding the world of supernatural creatures that prey on humanity. Somewhere in the past, the character has had an encounter with such a creature, or with one of their victims. Investigating the event, they believe that they have proof that other such creatures exist, and are a threat to the city and the people in it.

Consequently, these characters are determined to seek out more proof of the activities of such creatures, and do whatever they need to do to stamp these dealings out. Some hunters work alone, whilst others band together with assorted groups of other weirdoes, occultists, and criminals, any of whom might be trying to use the hunter for their own ends. In a very dark campaign, innocent people will be slain when the hunter picks the wrong target. In such a game, the hunter might even discover their assumptions about the occult world were never correct in the first place. In a more heroic game, the monsters being targeted may be vicious, evil, cunning, and very, very patient. Each success is a victory for humanity over the supernatural elements that would threaten and prey upon it.

Monster Hunter
(20 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Body
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attribute**
+2	6	Attack Combat Value
+1	1	Combat Technique (Pick Any)
+2	4	Defence Combat Value
+1	2	Gadgets
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+1	1	Highly Skilled
+1	2	Massive Damage (A favourite weapon)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	5	Area Knowledge (Pick any)
+1	6	Melee Attack or Defence (Pick any)
+1	6	Occult (Pick any monster type)
+1	5	Stealth (Pick any)
+1	4	Street Sense (Pick any)
+1	4	Urban Tracking (Pick any)
	Points	**Defect**
	-1	Nemesis (Enemy monsters) OR Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)

Note: Monster hunters sometimes possess supernatural gifts themselves, such as an Item of Power, a Sixth Sense, or even Superstrength. Others have suffered dire injuries in their battles, and have Defects, such as Marked or Physical Impairment. Some are members of a group or agency and will have Organisational Ties.

Those who are Part of the Otherworld

Characters who fall into this category are not human, and were likely never human. To all effects and purposes, they are an alien species. Many of them live alongside mankind, and some may even have been brought up without ever having been told that they were not human themselves. They may be mythical or magical creatures, monsters preying on humanity, or even sad ghosts doomed to walk the earth until their wrongs have been righted.

In an urban fantasy, they could be as much a part of the modern city as any of the mundane humans who make up most of its population. They might hold down nine-to-five jobs, pay mortgages, and argue with the taxman. Despite this, they are supernatural creatures and their natures are fundamentally inhuman.

Faeries

The fae, also known as faeries, are creatures from European folklore. From medieval times, superstitious people have lived in fear and awe of these magical spirits. Fae come in all shapes and sizes, and although some are associated with natural features (such as rivers or trees), others are under no such restrictions and roam as they please. Many are interested in people, and can be persuaded to help those who treat them well.

Origins

Many stories relate that the fae come from a magical world, known as Faerie. While the fae can travel to and from their homeland with ease, the journey is perilous for humans and many that go there never return. Time passes at a different rate in Faerie than in our world — a man who spends a year there might find that 200 years have passed in the real world when he returns. In some stories, Faerie was the land of the dead, and the fae themselves were the souls of those who died unbaptised.

In other interpretations, many of the faerie folk have always lived alongside humanity, taking interest in the mortal peoples around them. They could have adapted happily to the modern world and city life. As characters, the fae could take a range of forms, from the noble and sinister knights of the Seelie or Unseelie courts to the grotesque redcaps or more humdrum work-a-day brownies.

Faerie etiquette is often puzzling at best to humans, and utterly cryptic, illogical, and fatal at worst. They are complex creatures, with their own intricate social structures and conventions. Their unusual role as protectors as well as tormentors of humanity has made them popular characters in urban fantasy, as both villains and heroes.

Fae Types

Urban fantasy stories differ widely in their interpretation of the fae. They may be portrayed as elegant and deadly renaissance courtiers, strange and whimsical entities whose natures are driven by wild magic and elemental passions, or a dwindling race poisoned by technological society. "The World at Twilight" (page 184) and "The Small Folk" (page 222) settings depict two different versions of such beings and the worlds they might inhabit. For a more traditional "fairy prince" see the Daoine Sidhe template below.

Fae Attributes and Defects

Attributes especially suitable for the fae include Alternate Form, Creation, Dynamic Powers, Flight, Growth, Illusion, Invisibility, Pocket Dimension, Projection, Shrink, Sixth Sense, and Special Movement. Some Faerie folk may also have Tunnelling or Water Speed.

Defects especially suitable include Achilles Heel, Easily Distracted, Marked, and, for fae living among humans, Skeleton in the Closet.

Behaviour

Although some are more responsible than others are, fae have a wickedly childlike notion of right and wrong. Many delight in cruelty, being unable to sympathise or even empathise with the victims of their pranks. Puzzles, riddles, and games with obscure rules fascinate them. Love is as much a game to them as everything else and they notoriously fall in and out of love at the blink of an eye. Faerie manners can be alien to humans. They may tease and play but will never break their given word, and all of them consider it a matter of honour to repay their debts in full. They hate to be thanked, believing that mortals offer thanks instead of paying for favours in kind. They also dislike being stared at or bothered, and all of them expect to be addressed with courtesy, whether or not their actions warrant it.

Powers and Weaknesses

Traditionally, the fae detest cold iron, which is anathema to them. They also cannot cross running water, or enter a private dwelling unless they are invited over the threshold. Many shun churches and holy ground, and sprigs of rowan or fennel can repel others. Fae powers often include the ability to cloud men's minds or create illusions, known as glamour. Shape shifting and size changing is also common, as is invisibility. Magic connected with traditional Faerie folk is likely to be tinged with Celtic and other northern European mysticism.

Nobility

Faerie nobles (Daoine Sidhe, in Irish folklore) are tall and inhumanly beautiful. Their wrath is fearsome, their passions are legendary, and their fighting skills are as mighty as their eldrich magics. They love to ride out hunting on their milk-white chargers, which can run over land, sea, and air. The fae hounds by their side, recognisable by their creamy pelt and russet ears, can track a quarry to the edge of the known world and beyond. The Sidhe are divided into two opposing courts, members of which try to confound each others' schemes even when they are not at open war.

The Seelie Court ("Holy Court") represents summer, chivalry, and beauty. Ruled by Duke Auberon, whose womanising and wicked sense of humour are offset by an unnatural charm, it is a place of fey beauty and wild dancing, of noblesse oblige and of ancient aristocracy. The Fae of the Seelie Court can be as cruel and thoughtless as any of their kin outside the Court, but they honour chivalry where they find it, and protect those mortals who bring great beauty into the world.

The Unseelie Court ("Unholy Court") represents winter, darkness, ice, and destruction. Its ruler is the Queen of Air and Darkness, a terrifying, cruel beauty. Despite the Queen's allure, the Unseelie celebrate the grotesque, monstrous ugliness, violence, and passion. Although their court is seemingly lawless and anarchic, members of the Unseelie Court maintain their own codes of honour, and will keep their given words. They take as keen an interest in talented mortals as the Seelie, although this often ends in tears for the mortals involved.

Metamorphosis

In some campaigns, it is possible for a character to undergo physical transformation into a magical creature in the course of the game. For example, in a game where vampires can condemn victims to undeath by forcing them to drink vampiric ichor, a character might be created as a human and then later become a vampire.

If it is intended at the beginning of the game that characters will later be able to gain more powers, then a GM could advise players to reserve some of their Character Points as Unknown Superhuman Power, so that the points are available later to pay for the supernatural abilities of their new form.

Daoine Sidhe
(50 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
+2	4	Mind
+2	4	Soul

Level	Points	Attribute
+1	1	Combat Technique (Pick any)
+3	3	Features (Unearthly beauty)
+1	2	Highly Skilled
+3	20	Illusion (All senses; Area 4; Duration 4)
+2	7	Invisibility (Sight, Hearing; Targets 1)
+1	2	Organisational Ties (Seelie or Unseelie Court)
+1	5	Sixth Sense (Fae, Area 4)
	6	Unused Attribute Points (Additional faerie powers or Items of Power)

Level	Points	Skills
+1	3	Cultural Arts (Pick any)
+1	2	Etiquette (Faerie court etiquette)
+1	2	Gaming (Pick any: Board games are traditional)
+1	4	Intimidation (Pick any)
+1	6	Melee Attack or Defence (Pick any)
+1	3	Navigation (Faerie)
+1	6	Occult (Faerie magic)
+1	2	Riding (Horse) or Driving (Pick any)
+1	4	Seduction (Pick any)
+1	3	Visual or Performing Arts (Pick any)
	5	Unused Skill Points

	Points	Defect
	-1	Achilles Heel (Cold Iron)
	-2	Easily Distracted (Attractive or Artistic People, Games and Riddles)
	-1	Owned (Seelie/Unseelie rulers) or Wanted (Relatives or assassins chasing an errant fae who is fleeing an arranged marriage or court intrigues)
	-1	Unique Defect (Geas — Must keep their given word)
	-1	Unique Defect (Geas — Cannot enter a building without permission)
	-1	Vulnerability (Holy Ground)
	-1	Vulnerability (Rowan Berries)

Note: Sidhe often also have access to at least one Alternate Form if they wish to hide more easily on Earth (this would be a cosmetic change) or they may simply find occupations where their appearance is an asset, such as modelling or performing. Half-breed Sidhe are a common feature of many urban fantasy stories — these would lack some of the Attributes and Defects of a full-blooded Sidhe.

Ghosts and Spirits

Reflections of the world's magic or the shades of the dead respectively, these creatures are able to pass through the real world. Ghosts are widely held to be the spirits of people who have died, who for some reason are tied so tightly to the material world that they cannot yet leave it completely and move on to the afterlife. They have access to a variety of exotic powers. Common to many of these creatures is the ability to move unseen at will and to become intangible, passing through walls or other solid objects. Some ghosts can also possess victims, or use eerie powers of mind control. Many are compelled to continually patrol an area or repeat an action over and over, or even haunt a specific person.

A spirit is another form of disembodied entity, often associated strongly with a location that it protects. Other magical creatures might have the ability to assume spirit form, or even have been trapped in intangibility and forced to guard a place or an item.

In order to interact with the mortal world, spirits must be able to make themselves seen and heard by people. Not all ghosts are forced to remain intangible all of the time and some spirits also have the ability to take on solid flesh when they feel the need.

Ghost
(60 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
+1	2	Soul

Level	Points	Attribute
+10	40	Insubstantial
	-3	• Permanent
+2	6	Invisibility (Sight, Hearing)
+1	6	Mind Control (Duration 1, Targets 1)
+1	6	Telepathy (Targets 1, Range 3)
+1	6	Telekinesis (Area 1, Range 1)

Level	Points	Skills
	20	Unused Skill Points

	Points	Defect
	-2	Confined Movement
	-3	Marked (Translucent)

Note: Due to being Insubstantial, even an Invisible ghost will not leave footprints or other tangible evidence of their presence. If the ghost can become solid at will, then obviously the Permanent Defect linked to Insubstantial will not apply.

Urban Legends

These characters personify modern myths and superstitions. Urban legends spring up like mushrooms, appearing unexpectedly from so many different sources that it is sometimes completely impossible to tell from where the original story came. Some of these stories concern people, or involve extraordinary shaggy dog tales which allegedly happened to "a friend of a friend" of the storyteller. With the ubiquity of the Internet, the potential for new superstitions to spread like wildfire has increased immensely.

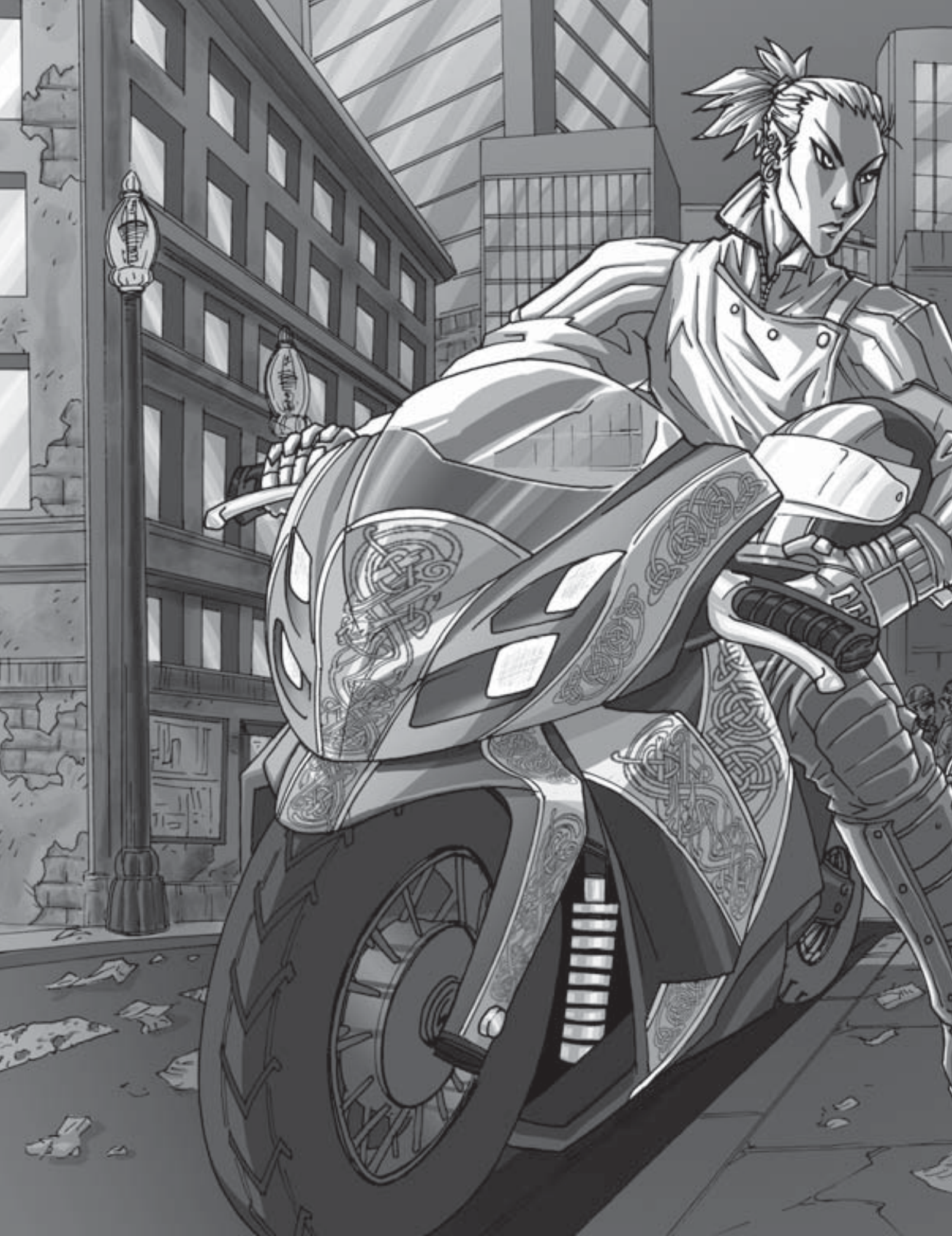
A character personifying an urban legend might be responsible for one or more of these stories. The character's true nature might be similar to a modern faerie, monster, spirit, or demigod, depending on the type of campaign. Their reasons for initiating the legend could be a hint at secret mystical agendas or obligations to be resolved.

Examples of these characters would be those responsible for the Nigerian 404 scams, or the kidney thieves. Many people know the stories, and have concocted wide-ranging theories to explain them, but as to the real truth of the matter, who knows?

For examples of urban legends come to life, see the "World at Twilight" setting, page 195.

Magical Constructs

The sorcerous equivalent of a robot, this character has been created by magical means. This type of character could include a golem created cautiously by a group of austere cabalists, a woman made of flowers invoked by a lonely wizard to be his ideal companion, or a demon summoned to the mortal world and trapped in a human form.




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The character need not be in service to their creator, but the relationship between creature and master is likely to have defined his or her life. Perhaps they are on the run from their creator, or have become separated involuntarily. Whichever the case, finding out the motivations that provoked their creation may be a guiding force behind the character's actions.

Feature (Appearance) is common for constructs designed as "ideal" forms. Magical constructs are often immortal — or at least lack various human weaknesses — and will have various Special Defences (such as Age or Hunger). Depending on what they are made of, they may have unusual Achilles Heels, Special Requirements, or Vulnerabilities.

Talking Animal

"A black cat melted out of the shadows as he passed, and the intelligence gleaming in its jade coloured eyes was more than merely animal…."

These are creatures that can easily pass unnoticed by most people; beings that are more than they first appear. Some campaigns may even be based around a secret culture of intelligent animals, living in and around humans. Such mortals might have their own forms of magic, their own religions, and their own secret wars and agendas. Others might be solitary members of their kind, magical beings transformed into the shape of an animal, wizards' familiars, or even experiments that have escaped from a secret laboratory.

For examples of animal templates, see the "Small Folk" setting (page 222).

Slumming or Reincarnated God, Angel, or Mythic Hero

Although such characters look human, they may be the mortal avatars or reincarnations of ancient gods, angels, or immortal heroes such as Thor, Isis, Gabriel, the Muses, or King Arthur, or perhaps of abstract concepts (such as Love or Death). Alternatively, they may even be the original gods themselves, weakened by centuries of neglect, as worshippers turned away to follow other gods or causes. Perhaps theyhave forgotten who they were, and without their memories, may be uncertain why they are cursed or blessed with immortality. Maybe some powerful force has recently awoken these mythical gods and heroes, or caused their essences to be reincarnated into a select group of mortals, to continue their legendary struggles in a new age.

A character of this type is likely to be more powerful in many ways than normal folk. They may have access to superhuman Attributes — most often Dynamic Powers or Power Flux relating to their particular legendary sphere of influence and Special Defence (Age). They may possess a particular Item of Power associated with their legendary status (such as Thor's Hammer, Death's pale horse or scythe, or Arthur's sword Excalibur), although these Items may take modernised forms (For example, the four horsemen of the apocalypse might now ride motorcycles instead of horses). The characters may also have a set of Skills at high Levels, Skills that are associated with their "true" selves, as well as Defects representing any classical weaknesses or traditional enemies. Despite their connection to godhood, the characters are often as vulnerable to the vagaries of human life as any regular person is. Deities who are down on their luck, who have forgotten their true selves, or who are suffering under curses needn't be built on high levels of Character Points. For examples of reincarnated gods and heroes, see the "World At Twilight" setting (page 184).

Monsters and Mythical Creatures

Legendary monsters and mythical beings walk the city streets, no longer mere stories told by superstitious peoples to explain their fear of the unknown. Intelligent foxes, wolves, dragons, trolls, gargoyles, and other strange entities might all live among mortals. Since many such beasts would be immediately recognisable in their true forms, those who live in modern cities must either feign being human (or animal), have some mystical way to avoid being spotted, or else spend most of their time in hidden lairs. As player characters, the first option allows for more contact with regular humans, but in an all-monster campaign characters may indeed have to lurk in the shadows for much of the time.

Magical creatures often have access to Attributes that help them to hide their true nature from the modern world. They may have Alternate Forms that allow them to pass as human, or have powerful capabilities to create Illusions or perform Mind Control to help hide their tracks. If they possess Natural Weapons, these are likely to be concealable under a layer of clothes so that they can go about their business without being apprehended. More to the point, they have strong motivations to keep their powers concealed.

Even if a mythical creature does not traditionally change shape or disguise itself with illusions, in an urban fantasy some may have discovered how to do so, whether through magic, evolution, or using an Item of Power. Others have forms that are similar enough to humans that mundane disguises suffice to hide themselves. Mythical creatures often have the Marked Defect whilst camouflaged as humans.

Demons

Demonic creatures are a common facet of urban fantasy. Depending on the setting background, demons may be true servants of hell (in the Christian sense), dedicated to tempting mortals into sin or bringing on the apocalypse. Even such beings may not be all bad: in a tradition that dates back to Milton's *Paradise Lost* (if not earlier), urban fantasy authors often portray the servants of hell in a sympathetic or at least not entirely ignoble light, suggesting that the Fallen may be trying to make the best of a raw deal. Alternatively, they may be entirely malign magical entities: evil spirits, monstrous faerie folk of the Unseelie court or Celtic twilight, angry nature spirits poisoned and corrupted by pollution, or the denizens of bizarre alien dimensions.

For several ready-to-use examples of demons, see "The Nightmare Chronicles" (page 140).

Table 7-1: Occupational Template Costs

Template	Point Cost	Page
Busker	5	75
Beat Cop	10	75
Folklorist	5	76
Biker	10	76
Journalist	5	77
Religious Leader	5	77
Businessman	10	78
Ritual Mage	45	78
Cultist	0	79
Monster Hunter	20	79
Daoine Sidhe	50	81
Ghost	60	81



MAGIC

URBAN FANASY MAGIC

Magic is the bending of reality, but the nature of that reality may vary from world to world. In one setting, magic may be a gift that runs in the blood of certain families, while in others it might require pacts with demons or with spirits. In some cases it may be a form of psychic ability, or it may simply be a scholarly discipline that anyone can learn with the right effort.

The campaign settings in *Dreaming Cities* — "The Nightmare Chronicles" (page 140), "The World at Twilight" (page 181), and "The Small Folk" (page 122) — each specify how magic works in that particular world. This chapter is intended for the Game Master who wishes to create a different setting, or add new types of magic. It presents guidelines for using the Attributes and Defects in the Character Creation system to create mages whose powers have an urban fantasy flavour. The GM can allow players to design whatever magic-using characters they want or to use the guidelines presented here to establish specific "laws of magic" to which all player characters must conform.

Magicians

The powers of magicians in urban fantasy tend to be subtler than the wizardry practised in swords-and-sorcery worlds. In most urban fantasies, the existence of working magic remains a secret. This may be the result of strenuous effort on the part of the mages, but often it is also a reflection of how urban fantasy magic works — it tends to subtly flow along with the nature of the universe, rather than overtly breaking the laws of nature. Such a mage is more likely to conjure lightning down from the sky during a storm than he or she is to throw a lightning bolt from the tip of a pointed finger. Other spells may affect the mind, alter perceptions, ward off or call supernatural entities, or modify probability. Anyone not directly affected may not even realise that anything out of the ordinary is occurring. When subtle magic is dominant, mundane people who accidentally get involved can easily convince themselves that what they saw was a bad dream, or a trick of the imagination. Magical effects often have a dreamlike quality, something that lends itself to these explanations.

There may be magicians whose powers do not follow these guidelines. Flashier magic may be practised in neighbouring otherworlds, such as Faerie realms. In some worlds, magic may contain its own innate mechanisms that keep it secret — see the "Nightmare Chronicles" setting (page 140) for an example. In others, it may not be a secret at all. In most urban fantasies, the mage is someone whose secret powers set him or her apart from ordinary mortals. Being different is not always a good thing, and even the most powerful magician in the world would prefer not to be hounded by the authorities. Partly due to their shared secret, magical creatures and wizards often congregate in hidden cults and societies. Characters showing signs of magical talents may find themselves drawn inexorably into this secretive subculture, joining the many strange creatures who hide their true natures from the world around them. If a magical cult or society is particularly institutional, individual characters may even have an "Organisational Ties" Attribute to represent their status within the organisation. This implies that they may call upon the society's resources at need.

The Peculiar Habits of Magical Creatures

Wizards and magical creatures can seem mercurial and superstitious to mundane humans. Mystical folk see signs and portents in such humdrum things as innocent trees or sprigs of flowers, and they have been known to suddenly decide that a building "feels wrong" and refuse to go inside. As an aspect of their arcane nature, some characters have less free will than normal human beings, and cannot contemplate breaking their given word or betraying an oath. They may be bound by taboos and restrictions that they dare not break if they wish to maintain their metaphysical abilities. Characters may even have a Marked Defect, bearing some sign of their magical heritage which is visible, perhaps only to other wizards, or perhaps visible to all.

These are some other common Defects and Attributes which any mage or magical character might possess.

Oaths and Geasa

Geasa (singular: geas) are magically imposed compulsions. They may take the form of a quest that the character must undertake or a goal he or she is compelled to attain. Geasa could even be the cause of a character's Vulnerability, or in rare cases a Special Defence. An example of this might be: "you may never be harmed by fire." A geas can be as simple as "never hit a woman" or as complicated as "you will never sleep a quiet night until you collect for me the eight fragments of harmony that were sung by the angels on the day of Creation." It is very difficult to escape a geas and breaking one, even accidentally, is deeply traumatic. Characters suffering under a geas have a Unique Defect (Geas) (page 70). If the geas has any side effects these may be additional Defects. For example, a character that cannot sleep soundly until a geased quest is completed will also have Recurring Nightmares.

Some magical creatures are mystically unable to break their given word, even if keeping it leads them to certain ruin. Their oaths are sacrosanct and they never make promises or threats lightly. This is a form of geas, and is represented by a Unique Defect (Geas) for each oath which the character has taken, regardless of whether they made the vow of their own free will or were tricked into it.

A Sense for Magic

Characters with a bent for the occult often have supernatural senses. This includes people who can "smell" magic in the air, see spirits, or have inexplicable hunches when bad things are about to happen. Many magical characters possess a Sixth Sense — they can sense things that mundane people cannot.

Magical Taboos

Magical creatures may follow seemingly unfathomable customs, such as shunning certain types of plants, people, animals, or buildings. Although these habits could be purely cultural, observing traditional taboos might also be key to a character's survival. They could reflect Vulnerabilities, Banes, or Achilles Heels. For example, rowan berries are traditionally used as a ward against the fae folk. In a campaign where using these berries is a viable defence against the machinations of Faerie, fae-blooded characters are likely to have a Vulnerability (Rowan Berries). This Defect would make it impossible for these characters to use any magical Attributes while the berries are present.

A magical character that has a taboo constricting his or her behaviour possesses a Unique Defect (Magical Taboo) which is similar to the Geasa described above. For example, a character that is unable to cross the threshold of a house without permission from the owner would fall into this category.

Ritual Magic

This magic takes the form of individual rituals or spells, each of which has one well-defined effect that must be learned separately by the mage. With time, research, and an effort of willpower, an individual wizard can learn to adapt the spells he knows to new situations or to add new effects.

Individual players are encouraged to design the rituals their character will use. The nature of these magical Attributes and their associated Defects will colour the flavour of magic in a campaign. At the extreme ends of the spectrum, some types of magic might be more like psychic abilities in that all

the caster needs to will them into existence is a brief period of concentration. More complicated rituals might require hours of preparation. Magi who follow a traditional magical path, such as a tribal shaman or a hermetic mage, might devise different rituals to perform similar feats of magic. One character's ritual might not work for another who was trained in a different path, although knowledge of a rival school of magic's rituals might help a character to research a ceremony appropriate to their school's traditions, a sacrament that while different in many details from its inspiration would produce the same effect the original ritual did.

Common Defects Associated with Ritual Magic

Spells are assigned to the character as individual Attributes, each of which models one magical effect. Defects attached to the Attribute represent the ritual that must be performed before the spell can be cast. For example, an Attribute with an Activation Time may require the caster to spend time praying or meditating to achieve the correct mental state for performing the magical ritual. Limited Use applies to any spell that is so demanding to cast that the wizard is not mentally, spiritually or physically capable of performing it frequently. Concentration implies that the caster must focus a large portion of his or her attention on controlling a particular magical effect once the spell has been cast. If the mage is distracted, the magic fades.

Some types of Restriction are particularly associated with traditional ritual magic. These are drawn from the principles of sympathetic magic.

Degrees of Sympathy

An optional rule for sympathetic magic is that more powerful magical effects can be conjured when a particularly strong thematic resonance exists between the desired effect and some element of the preparation. For example, an attempt to summon a ghost made in a graveyard at midnight on Halloween might be more potent or more likely to succeed than if the spell was cast over two dozen inexpensive condolences cards picked up from a local stationers. In both cases, a sympathetic element is present connecting the caster with "death," a theme in the desired magical effect, but the first spell has much stronger thematic links, which in turn means a stronger connection for sympathetic magic.

At a GM's discretion, characters who go out of their way to induce significantly stronger sympathetic links than what their Attributes Linked Restrictions strictly require may be able to squeeze an extra Rank from a PMV of their choice for that one instance of the spell. In the above example, summoning a ghost in a graveyard at an auspicious time might mean that the caster can maintain contact with the spirit for much longer than usual (an extra Rank on that Attribute's Duration PMV). Alternatively, if the spell requires a Stat check, the GM might allow a player to re-roll a failure if the sympathetic link is especially strong. These rules can also apply to NPC magicians, and in a campaign where they are heavily used, wizards may be able to guess what types of mischief their allies and enemies are up to, based on where they have been seen and what they have been doing.

Laws of Magic: Similarity

The Rule of Similarity states "If two things seem alike, then they are alike." This principle has formed the basis for much traditional magical belief and superstition in the past. For example, in some Stone Age tribes, hunting scenes were acted out as a way to invoke good luck for a forthcoming hunt. By mimicking the desired result, the magicians believed that they could influence the actual outcome. If a character follows a traditional path, he or she may need to use this type of magic to empower rituals.

A Restriction (Similar Magic) means that the magician must act out or imitate the desired effect of the ritual. For example, if a character knows a spell of destruction and wishes to destroy an empty building with a magically induced flood, he or she may need to actually pour water over an appropriate object as part of the ritual, even if the object is just an old box. This Restriction is usually worth 1 BP, meaning that the ritual requirement is merely for a loose similarity with the desired effect. A wizard may also choose to enact the spell's effect by chanting, dancing, acting, or indulging in other form of artistic expression.

Laws of Magic: Contagion

The Rule of Contagion states "Once together, always together." This means that if an item or person was once part of someone or something else, then performing magic on the item can also affect the thing of which it was once part. A classic example of this principle is the use of voodoo dolls, where attaching a hair from the victim to the doll allows the rule of contagion to come into play. The doll may then "become" the original person for magical purposes — stabbing the doll will induce a similar wound in the victim.

Restriction (Contagious Magic) means that in order to affect someone or something with a magical ritual, the caster needs to acquire an item that can provide a mystical link with the target. This could be one of the victim's blood relations or one of the victim's belongings, or an item taken from the location the spell will target. If the target is sitting in the same room and the caster touches him or her, the element of Contagion is satisfied. This Defect is worth 1 BP or 2 BP if the item is used up in the ritual.

Laws of Magic: Names are Power

It is believed in many cultures that knowing a person's true name or possessing their image can grant a magician power over that person. In societies where true names are considered important, a character will have many names. One is the public name, or use name, by which most people know them. Other names may be nicknames, or used only for particular purposes (similar to titles or job descriptions). His or her true name is private and only shared with people who the character trusts with his or her life. Traditional magicians may also choose to keep their true names secret and use a pseudonym in its place, to protect themselves against other wizards. Demons and other magical creatures have true names that are difficult to discover (and to pronounce correctly). Knowledge of true names represents information for which these creatures, or unscrupulous wizards, would lie, cheat, and kill.

Restriction (True Name) is worth 1 BP. It means that the caster may only affect a victim with that ritual if their true name is known. If the target is a mundane human, their real name means their birth name (more specifically, the name which their birth mother gave to them). In the case of adopted children or refugees, finding out someone's true name can be a difficult task. A ritual cast using an incorrect true name will always fail.

Computer Aided Magic

Ritual magic is akin to magical theory in the same way that engineering correlates with applied science. In Computer Aided Magic, modern technology has automated, complicated rituals that previously required hours of detailed calculation from a hard-working team of wizardly geniuses. This is not necessarily a good thing. If summoning infernal spirits is a long, arduous, and fiendishly complex ritual for an unaided magician, then availability of an open source computer program to calculate optimal summoning pentagrams or generate hacks for a demon's True Name will only increase the number of invoked demons in the world. It only takes one "public spirited" amateur to write the demonologist's version of the *Anarchist's Cookbook* and suddenly every mystically inclined terrorist, bored student, or geek with an axe to grind will be able to try summoning demons for themselves.

Restriction (Requires Computer) describes a complex magical ritual which can only be worked if the caster has access to a computer able to run a magical analysis program, . This Restriction is worth 1 BP. A more detailed Restriction could contain minimum technical specifications.

Incantations and Rites

In some campaigns, specific magical rites must be fulfilled before activating even the most minor spells. Magical Attributes that require a rite to be performed have a Linked Defect of Restriction (Magical Rite). A rite might specify arcane chants, hand gestures, and dances. Complicated magical rites could also involve lighting candles, spilling blood or wine in a pattern, or any actions the GM deems appropriate. If a character has any Attributes with this Defect, the GM and the player should agree on the nature of the rite when the Attribute is assigned.

Usually if an Attribute has Linked Restrictions or Defects, then it simply cannot be used if any of the restrictions are not met. As an optional rule, ritual magic may work differently. Under extreme and desperate circumstances, and at the character's own risk, a spell can be cast without the correct ritual. In game terms, at the GMs discretion, a character may choose to forego the proper ritual, but by doing so will temporarily replace the Magical Rite Defect with an Unreliable Power and a Backlash Defect for that particular use of the Attribute. The Unreliable Power is worth the same number of BP as the original Restriction Defect. The Backlash is an unfortunate result of omitting the ritual. In other words, ritual magic is inherently dangerous and unreliable, but performing the correct ritual channels the magical powers in a reliable manner. Successful wizards try to perform their rituals wherever possible. Unsuccessful ones may not survive long enough to learn better habits.

The difference between Restriction (Magical Rite) and a requirement involving the laws of similarity or contagion is that the latter allow a character some freedom for creativity to make up a ritual on the fly. In contrast, a rite is only viable when performed in the one correct way, and any variation on the prescribed method could lead to disaster.

This Defect is worth 1 BP if the requirement is minor and easily accomplished, such as a quick mumbled incantation or a few hand gestures. If the rite is more onerous or requires props that are difficult to acquire then it is worth 2 BP. A magical rite that is especially time-consuming or difficult to perform could be worth 3 BP.

Specific Rituals

These are examples of specific magical rituals. The parameters given in these examples can vary from one caster to another, depending on the character's style of magic, and the power level of the spell. For example, characters whose magic is very ritualistic may have a Restriction (Magical Rite) on all of the spells they know. In campaigns where Energy Points are used, spells are likely to have an additional Linked Defect (Burns Energy) to reflect the cost of casting. Attributes for ritual mages often require a Stat check when cast, since there are very few spells which have no chance of failure….

The rituals are described in a format similar to the templates (page 74): as a set of ready-to-use Attributes and associated Defects that can be incorporated into a character. Each ritual lists the Attribute (with any Abilities, Disabilities, or PMVs in parentheses). LVL is the Attribute's Level; PTS is the Point Cost. The Final Cost is the total Character Point cost required to acquire the ritual. Players and the Game Master should feel free to modify the rituals (and their point cost) by altering their Level, or adding or deleting PMVs or Defects.

Summon Demonic Familiar

This ritual allows a brave magician to summon an entity from the Abyss into the real world and bind it into service. If a summoning ritual fails, the demon is free to attack the summoner with every power at its disposal. If correctly summoned and bound, the familiar will be an obedient servant and may even be a cheerful one, depending on how well it is treated and how pleasant the material world seems in comparison to Hell. That said, the nature of such spirits is inherently malicious and often hostile to mankind. A demonic companion will take every opportunity to subtly (or unsubtly, depending on the demon) guide its master towards evil. Allowing the demon time off to go and amuse itself is likely to end badly for some innocent person, place, or small furry animal. A demonic familiar can be dismissed at will, and will then return instantly to the plane from which it came.

Summon Demonic Familiar

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
4	24	Servant
	-1	Backlash
	-1	Restriction (True Name)
	-1	Restriction (Soul Stat check required when replacing Servant)

Final Cost: 21 Character Points

This is the ritual used to summon a typical demonic servant, but mages may have more or less than 4 Levels, if they are summoning a stronger or weaker demon.

Magefire

This spell causes eldrich flames to blossom around the magician's hands. These can be directed to strike at an enemy, or enemies. The caster may choose to maintain a flame-thrower effect by concentrating on the magefire. He or she can also forego the area effect, focussing his magical energies onto a single enemy, intensifying the heat of the flames on the unfortunate foe.

Summoning magefire is an explosive act of will that can be detected by other people or creatures that are sensitive to magic in the surrounding area. The fire itself may display its arcane origins with unnatural colouring, scent, or sounds. For example, a demonic magician could strike at his foes with black magefire, accompanied by smoke, explosions, and the stench of brimstone.

Magefire

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
2	8	Special Attack "Magefire" (20 Damage, Area Effect)
	-1	Concentration
	-1	Detectable

Final Cost: 6 Character Points

This reflects a spell that is cast very quickly, by an effort of will. If the casting time is more significant, then the Special Attack may have a Disability (Slow) to reflect that it is not instantaneous, as shown below.

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
1	4	Special Attack "Magefire" (20 Damage, Area Effect, Slow)
	-1	Restriction (Magical Rite)
	-1	Detectable

Final Cost: 2 Character Points

This is a much cheaper version of the Magefire spell, but the character must spend a combat turn performing his or her magical rite correctly before the magefire can be invoked. If they are interrupted before they finish their rite, the spell will fail, a serious drawback if they are trying to cast it during a firefight.

Enchanted Sleep

A spell to send a victim into an enchanted sleep, from which he or she can only be woken by true love's first kiss. To work the spell, the caster needs to either touch the victim, or have some part of them on which to focus — perhaps a hair, or a drop of blood.

Enchanged Sleep

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
7	28	Special Attack "Enchanted Sleep" (20 Damage, Incapacitating: Sleep, Incurable: True Love's First Kiss, No Damage)
	-1	Restriction (Contagious Magic)

Final Cost: 27 Character Points

Scry for Magical Workings

Scrying spells allow the caster to find out information about a place or person of their choosing. To cast the spell, a character must act out that he is looking for something, maybe by examining a room, sniffing the air, or even searching the Internet. If successful, the magician senses whether magic has been used recently in the vicinity, and also gains an impression of the type of magical spells that have been cast. If the spell is cast on a magical item, the caster understands what powers the object has, and how to activate it. Magicians who are unfamiliar with modern technology may also use this spell to work out how to use a new gadget, if the gadget would be considered magical in their terms of reference. A critical success on a scrying spell gives the user information about the magician who was responsible for any magics or Items of Power that are detected.

The magician may also possess a natural Attribute of Sixth Sense (Magic) which is always active, and allows them to sense magic in the vicinity. Casting the scrying spell is likely to gather much more detailed information about the type of magic. More powerful versions of the spell might gather more information, or have a longer range.

Scry for Magical Workings

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
1	5	Sixth Sense (Magic, Must be actively used; Area 4)
	-1	Restriction (Similar Magic)

Final Cost: 4 Character Points

With an Area PMV of 4, a mage may scry for magic within 100 meters of where this spell is cast.

Counter Magic

A spell used to counter the effects of other spells. For example, if a magician detects that a ward of protection has been placed on a doorway and wants to remove it, a successful counter magic spell could unravel the original magic. Used in this way, the target is the person or object subject to a magical effect. The effect is nullified permanently if the counter magic is successful. Counter Magic can also be worked to nullify an opposing wizard, in which case the Attribute being countered is nullified for as long as indicated by the Duration PMV.

Counter Magic

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
1	15	Nullify (Against Magical Attributes Only; Area 3; Duration 4; Targets 1)
	-1	Concentration
	-1	Restriction (Soul Stat check required)

Final Cost: 13 Character Points

This spell allows a mage to counter any one single Level 1 magical Attribute in his or her vicinity. If facing an enemy wizard, the mage can counter a single spell for up to 10 minutes.

Invisibility to Electronic Scrying

A ritual used to help a wizard to hide his passage through the modern mortal world. When this spell is active, no information about the caster can be extracted from electronic equipment. For each level of the Attribute, the caster may become undetectable to an additional form of scrying. For example, a powerful wizard may cast this spell to ensure that no information about him or her can ever be found on any computer, and that no form of electronic detection will record his details.

This spell can also be cast on another person, either to help a friend conceal him or herself, or to curse an enemy. Being invisible to computer searches in today's world is likely to be a mixed blessing at best, especially to a mage who is being audited by the government.

This example of the invisibility spell is designed to protect the target from computer searches. Other versions might be designed such that electronic cameras and sensors will not record the target's details. These would have smaller Area and Duration PMVs, but might affect more senses.

Invisibility to Electronic Scrying

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
1	17	Invisibility (Computer-based information search; Area 8; Targets 1; Duration 6)
	-1	Restriction (True Name)
	-1	Restriction (Soul Stat check required)

Final Cost: 15 Character Points

This version of the spell renders the target immune to any computer-based searches within the specified area. The Area PMV is very large because this is a modern-day spell, designed to deal with suspicious investigators contacting sources half-way across a continent to ask for help with the search.

Viral Marketing

Modern day advertising techniques use sophisticated methods to catch a potential customer's attention with brand conscious messages. Subliminals, mass media coverage, subtle imagery, and catchy music all serve to get an idea ricocheting around in the minds of viewers, where, if the idea is well crafted, it will change the viewers' buying habits. Forms of magic concerned with controlling hearts and minds have a similar effect.

In urban fantasy, an advertising executive might cut a deal with a powerful sorcerer to magically enhance a campaign at particular key sites. This spell, if not resisted, forces the brand's message into the viewer's mind, and encourages them to talk about it to all of their friends. Although the compulsion wears off when the viewer is no longer watching or listening to the trigger, the idea remains lodged in the target's memory. A spell caster with a secret agenda — perhaps a nature spirit who wants to save trees, or a wizard with political affiliations — might also recruit an unsuspecting advertising company to provide the mass media coverage to trigger his or her spell.

The Targets PMV associated with any use of this spell represents the number of people who may be affected by the spell simultaneously at any time. If the number of potential targets is greater than this, then the spell affects victims picked at random. For example, if this spell is cast to enhance a television campaign which is seen by millions of people and the Targets to be affected are 1000 (Rank 6), then 1000 random viewers within the caster's Range for Viral Marketing will suffer the effects of the spell when the ad is shown. The Duration PMV affects how long the magical effect is attached to the advertisement.

Viral Marketing

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
2	16	Mind Control (Product placement, Male Americans 17-29 with annual earnings above $70k; Targets 6; Area 5; Duration 3)
		Reduction (-1 Target emotionally inclined toward advert only)
	-1	Restriction (Triggered by watching a specific TV advert)

Final Cost: 15 Character Points

This example is for a highly-targeted marketing spell, designed only to affect a specific portion of the viewing population. If the spell were to be more "persuasive" higher levels of Mind Control would be required.

Innate Wizardry

There are wizards whose magical talent is a natural affinity, not the result of years of academic training. Magic is in their blood, and in the air that they breathe. Often they can control raw magical forces with a mere thought or a simple gesture. They rarely bother with complicated, ornate rituals to channel their power, or think in terms of individual spells. Characters with this type of arcane talent have a strong affinity for a particular element or thematic area of power. They can work wondrous magic, but only as long as the effects are related to their affinity. Innate wizards often show signs of talent at a young age. Stories of children who mysteriously set fire to houses, speak with animals, or summon friendly ghosts might all point to untrained innate wizards.

Mages with an innate talent for wizardry have a Power Flux Attribute to represent the flexible nature of their magic. The Attribute specifies the caster's special magical affinity. Within these bounds, he or she can assign Flux Points to any Attribute that fits within that category. This could include magic that can detect, summon, manipulate, or banish anything related to the mage's special affinity.

Magical creatures may also possess innate magic, if they are magicians whose powers naturally focus on a specific category of magic. For example, a faerie wizard works glamours — a category including illusion, invisibility, and mind control. Although these could be represented as individual Attributes, a character with especial innate talent would be able to produce any desired effect on this theme and so Power Flux is more appropriate.

Defects Associated with Innate Wizardry

Any Defects that apply to all uses of a Power Flux Attribute are worth 3 BP/Level, as described on page 39 as an alternate progression.

A character that has not yet mastered the control of magical energies might have a Defect of Unreliable Power associated with his or her Power Flux Attribute. Although the magic usually works as designed, there are times when the heady rush of channelling the power is just too much for the caster to control. Unintended and possibly dangerous side effects may result.

There are some wizards who cannot focus arcane energies without some kind of personal totem or charm to aid meditation. Traditionally, this might have been a ritually prepared magic wand or crystal ball but a modern magician needn't be restricted to old-fashioned trappings. Instead, he or she could channel magical power by concentrating on a less conventional object. Usually this is something portable, such as a mobile phone, cup of coffee, or tattooed mandala. A character that relies on such a focus to work magic has a Defect of Restriction (Magical Focus). The first level of this requirement applies if the item is easily obtainable. If the focus item is difficult to replace or to transport, higher levels of the Defect are appropriate. For magicians whose invocations destroy or use up their focus, this Defect is better represented as Restriction (Consumes Focus).

Although innate wizards have little use for formal rites, the more flexible rituals of sympathetic magic might help a character to focus his or her abilities. A Restriction Defect associated with the Power Flux specifying similar or contagious magic describes a caster whose influence is limited to a specific area, but who can improvise appropriate rituals at need.

It is not uncommon for an innate wizard to be vulnerable to the elements that naturally oppose his or her own. For example, a magician whose powers involve the control and manipulation of fire might be susceptible to water. A necromancer might need to avoid maternity wards or the celebration of life found in brothels.. These weaknesses are represented by appropriate Defects such as having that element as a Bane, Vulnerability, or even Phobia. In this case, the Defects are associated with the character, not with the Power Flux Attribute.

Examples of Innate Wizardry

Wizards whose powers centre on a particular area of influence are sometimes given titles that reflect their expertise. For example, a magician whose spells all relate to fire might be known as a Pyromancer, and one whose speciality is divination might be referred to as a Seer. Magical cultures in different campaigns might develop their own names for particular areas of magical talent.

Necromancy

Necromancers are wizards whose magic bestrides the boundaries between life and death. They are able to speak with dead spirits, control ghosts and other undead phenomena, raise the dead to do their bidding, inflict premature ageing, and even travel to the lands of the dead at will. Necromancy is traditionally shunned as an evil practice, since dabbling with death is often thought of as more unnatural than setting fire to tall buildings or transforming people into frogs. Other Defects often associated with Necromancy are Marked (Hated by Animals), or Marked (Hated by Nature), for characters whose unnatural aura is so strong that dogs bark as they pass, or plants die at their touch. Characters may take more than one Level of Necromancy.

Necromancy

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
1	24	Power Flux (Death; Duration 4)
	-3	Detectable
	-3	Restriction (Contagious Magic)

Final Cost: 18 Character Points

A Duration PMV of 4 allows the Flux Points to be reassigned once per day. A more powerful necromancer will have multiple Levels of Power Flux and may have a higher Rank of Duration PMV also.

Mastery of Glamour

Many faeries can perform small glamours, magical sleights of hand that allow the caster to become invisible or to make a turnip appear to be a lump of gold. True wizards of the faerie courts who have mastered the art of glamour can perform all of these feats, and more. Not only can they create all manner of beguiling illusion, but they are also able to assign their flux to any Attribute that will help them to deceive others. These could include shape shifting, transmutation, becoming unnaturally charming, rendering enemies blind or dumb, and projection.

Traditional faerie weaknesses, such as cold iron or rowan berries, will be represented as a character Defect of Vulnerability. They apply to the character, rather than being Linked specifically to this Attribute. Characters may take more than one level of Mastery of Glamour.

Mastery of Glamour

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
1	19	Power Flux (Deception; Duration 4)
	-3	Detectable
	-3	Restriction (Burns Energy)

Final Cost: 13 Character Points

Magic Bestowed by Higher (or Lower) Powers

Characters could be granted magical abilities by inhuman entities — powerful spirits, demons, or even gods. Such power always comes at a price since inhuman spirits follow alien motivations and harbour hidden agendas. The character so blessed (or cursed) becomes an agent of the patron entity, whether he or she realises it or not.

In many cases, this is a benign partnership of mutual self-interest. Perhaps the character has goals in common with the empowering spirit, and the pair may even have arranged a contract or agreement to define their relationship. Devout worshippers beseeching an ancestral god to grant them strength with which to fight their people's traditional enemies falls into this category, as do power-hungry characters selling their souls to the devil in return for supernatural abilities. If a character's relationship to the patron spirit is a particularly strong one, he or she might benefit from a Divine Relationship Attribute, reflecting that the patron will occasionally subtly lend a hand to assist the agent.

Other spirits have no interest in making bargains. They may grant powers to mortal agents in order to manipulate the material world, or simply because they have taken a liking to the character. These magical abilities are thrust upon an unwitting or unwilling character. The patron spirit often takes an active interest in its new agent, but the victim is under no formal obligation to a supernatural benefactor.

The precise form of any granted magical Attributes would depend on the preferences of the patron spirit. Some prefer to teach rituals to their agents, while others will lend a portion of their powers, granting an innate magical ability centred on the patron's sphere of influence. Other spirits might simply grant supernatural Skills or Attributes to a character, devoid of overt magical trappings.

Black Magic

Black magic is the control of occult powers for evil or self-serving ends. While any character could use his or her magical abilities to perform wicked deeds, a true black mage invokes infernal entities for aid. Tediously mundane morals or ethics rarely encumber characters that call upon magic of this type. Black magic rites typically involve sacrificing human or animal victims and petitioning ancient, malevolent spirits. They may even deliberately mock or parody mainstream religious rituals, to distance the practitioner still further from moral forces within normal society.

While characters might agree to a deal with infernal spirits for good reasons — perhaps they need the powers to help others — practitioners of black magic usually lose their inhibitions about hurting people and learn to justify their acts to themselves as a necessary evil. In some campaigns, black mages are traditionally opposed by white mages, characters who draw their magical powers from entities associated with good or divine goals.

As with necromancers, black mages are often subject to Defects including Marked (Hated by Animals), Skeleton in the Closet, and Vulnerability (Holy Ground).

Supernatural Curses

A powerful spirit may punish those who incur its anger by cursing them with magical abilities in the form of supernatural Attributes. Such powers are typically uncomfortable or unsettling for the character to use since they were doled out as a punishment, or to teach the character an important lesson. Removal of the curse is purely at the discretion of the entity that imposed it.

Typical Defects associated with cursed Attributes include Unreliable Power, Permanent, and Involuntary Change. Other associated character Defects could include Marked, and Recurring Nightmares. Unlike characters with a Cursed Defect, those suffering supernatural curses of this type may find their new powers to be useful.

For example, a character that has offended a minor goddess of the hunt may be cursed with an Involuntary Change into a pigeon on every night with a full moon. However awkward this may be for the victim's social life, it will undeniably offer interesting new perspectives, especially if he or she can learn to control the change at other times of the month.

Defects Associated with Granted Magic

A character that has willingly given up a portion of his or her free will in return for power is Owned by the patron entity. The patron makes requests known to the agent from time to time with a frequency dependant on the severity of the Defect. If the spirit's wishes are not respected, retribution will fall upon the character's undeserving shoulders. Entities that enjoy controlling people may exercise control subtly, allowing characters to feel that they are the masters of their own destiny every step of the way until it is too late.

Some patrons are capable of monitoring their agents from afar. This need not imply that the patron will step in to assist an agent in trouble, but merely that characters' actions cannot easily be hidden from the source of their power. If a character is Owned but wishes to disobey an order, the likelihood of getting away with it will depend on how cleverly the character covers his or her traces (or how good an excuse can be offered) and how likely it is that the patron was watching. Characters owing allegiance to jealous entities that watch them frequently are subject to a higher level of Ownership than those with more lax patrons.

Powerful entities may mark their chosen agents, to ensure that the characters do not forget their new allegiance. If the patron intends the character to be able to move unmolested in the mortal world, the mark will be concealable, such as a small tattoo or birthmark (see Defects in Urban Fantasy, page 62). Other entities might inflict more prominent marks such as sharpened teeth, a small pair of horns, unnatural eye colour, or extra fingers.

Activation Time represents a brief period of prayer or meditation by which the character focuses on their spiritual patron and the energies they are trying to channel. Restrictions on the magical Attributes could include invoking the name of the patron spirit, offering a sacrifice of something which would please it, or carrying out an action by which the caster ritually assumes some aspect of the empowering entity via a form of sympathetic magic. For example, a thief calling on the powers granted by a trickster spirit might need to pick someone's pocket or run a red light to mimic the patron spirit's disregard for the law.

Calling Upon the Patron Spirit

A character that has been granted magical powers by a powerful entity can try to call upon this patron in times of need. The player makes a Soul Stat check with a critical success meaning that the entity hears the call and will try to act upon it. This may not necessarily be a good thing for the character, but desperate times call for desperate measures. If the character has a Divine Relationship with the patron, a failed attempt to call upon that entity may be re-rolled as usual.

Spirits who wish to be contacted more reliably will typically bestow on the character a means to contact them, whether it is a summoning ritual or an email address. Alternatively, a ritual mage might be able to devise a spell to contact the spirit, given the patron's True Name or an associated item that could act as a focus for contagious magic.

In some cases, the patron may be unwilling or even unable to hear the call, regardless of the dice roll. Perhaps the spirit has been trapped or even destroyed since assigning magical powers to the character.

Beings with Magical Powers

There are characters that may not think of themselves as magicians, who possess supernatural Attributes. Magical creatures fall into this category, as do people with non-human ancestry, or whose families suffer from an archaic curse (or blessing) in the form of magical Attributes. For example, a family with draconic blood in its lineage might have a tendency to be abnormally long-lived and able to communicate with reptiles. This needn't apply to the whole family. As the bloodline becomes thinned out, the power might skip generations and become less pronounced.

There are also rare individuals who are born with a special supernatural talent that sets them forever apart from the rest of humanity. Perhaps they are mutants, or were exposed to powerful magical fields before birth. Other characters might possess an Item of Power which is the source of their magic, which might be anything from a valued family heirloom or a trinket picked up cheaply from an online auction. In an urban fantasy, any abnormal or supernatural Attributes possessed by characters are more likely to have a magical explanation than a purely scientific one.

Psychics and Spiritualists

Psychics have unusually acute mental powers. Gifted individuals are able to communicate with each other or to interact with their environment in ways that science cannot explain. Traditional psychic powers include Sixth Sense and Telepathy, but other powers of mind over matter could also fall into this category. Folklore associates these powers with particular families or bloodlines, and "professional" fortune tellers often claim to be scions of long lines of psychics, to enhance their image. Unlike other types of magical ability, a portion of the scientific community accepts psychic phenomena. Characters from a psychic family are likely to have siblings, cousins, or grandparents who can act as mentors or tutors, showing them how to harness and understand their own gift. On the down side, it can be difficult to escape from family, especially a psychic family.

Psychic Attributes often have an associated Backlash. Psychics whose concentration slips or who are unexpectedly assaulted by traumatic emotions when their minds are unshielded risk headaches, nightmares, or even permanent brain damage. Other associated Defects could include Concentration for those Attributes that are not instantaneous, and Permanent if the Attribute cannot ever entirely be turned off. Fortune tellers often use props to help concentrate their powers of divination. A Restriction (Focus Item) Defect would apply if a character needed to peer into a reflective surface or a flickering flame, or lay out a spread of Tarot cards to access a psychic Attribute.

Spiritualists and mediums are characters with the psychic ability to contact the spirit world, and to summon or control spiritual entities. Traditionally, these are the ghosts of dead people. While a spiritualist can speak with the spirits, a medium is able to channel them, allowing them to speak with others through his or her own mouth. A medium may need to set up a ritual séance, a meeting at which a group of people attempt to contact a spirit. Usually, at least one of the participants is a friend or relative of the deceased. Some of the dead person's possessions might also be brought to the ritual to help the medium focus on the right spirit. If the séance is successful, the ghost will manifest and communicate via the medium. A psychic power that can only be performed during a séance is represented by a Restriction (Séance) which is a form of Restriction (Magical Rite). Practised spiritualists may also be able to banish spirits using a psychic form of Exorcism.

Psychometry

Psychometry is the psychic ability to see visions of the past history of a person, place, or object. In order to do this, the psychic must either be standing in the location to be scryed, touching the object whose past will be revealed, or holding something belonging to the person. If the history of the object is particularly violent or traumatic, the psychic risks a Backlash effect which will give them a splitting headache for several hours, leaving them disturbed and uncomfortable.

Psychometrists are rarely able to view the distant past — too many other disturbances and more recent events cloud their vision. Despite this, a psychic who scores a critical success on a Soul Stat check when focussing their second sight may find themselves in possession of startling, unexpected flickers of insight dating from much further back in time than their Attribute would usually allow.

Psychometry

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
5	7	Sixth Sense (Postcognition; Area 2)
	-1	Concentration
	-1	Restriction (Contagious Magic)
	-1	Backlash (Migraine)

Final Cost: 4 Character Points

Speaking with the Dead

A character with this Attribute is aware of any dead spirits who are in his or her vicinity and understands what they are trying to say. Being able to see ghosts is a different type of Sixth Sense from being able to understand what they are saying. A psychic who is only capable of one or the other will have a cheaper version of this Attribute (to reflect that their Sixth Sense is less well developed) and must improvise other methods to discover where the ghosts are, or what it is that they wish to communicate.

Speaking with the Dead

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
2	5	Sixth Sense (See ghosts, Hear ghosts; Area 3)

Final Cost: 5 Character Points

Summoning the Spirits

This Attribute allows a character to lead a séance and summon the spirit of a dead person or animal. Characters who are also able to speak with spirits can then communicate normally with the ghost. If not, they may ask the ghost to make its wishes known in some other way, and hope that it is able to hear the request. A summoned ghost will usually be willing to answer questions, especially if the questions are posed by a friend or someone who is trying to investigate its untimely death, but the ghost is not compelled to do so.

In some campaigns, the summoned spirit may be able to choose of its own free will to stay past the duration of the summoning spell. In other campaigns where ghosts do not freely wander the material world but instead live in an afterlife, when the summoning time is up, the ghost must return from whence it came.

A Backlash when using this Attribute could mean that the wrong spirit has answered the call or that a ghost refuses to leave the séance room when asked, preferring to haunt one or more of the people present.

Summoning the Spirits

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
1	10	Unique Attribute (Summon Ghost; Duration 4)
	-2	Restriction (Séance — a Magical Rite including Activation Time and Contagious Magic)
	-1	Backlash
	-1	Restriction (Soul Stat check required)

Final Cost: 6 Character Points

Pyrokinesis

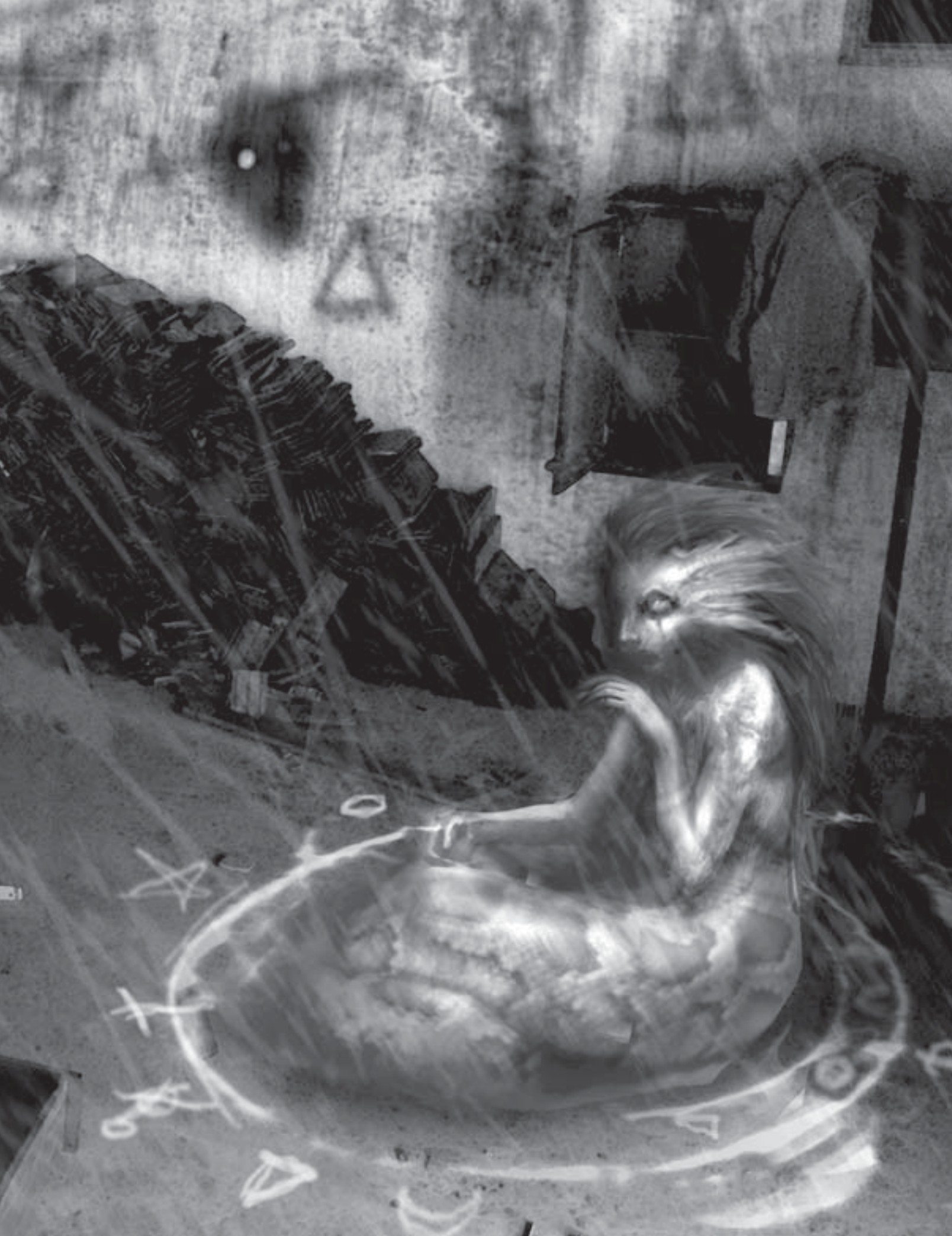
The character has a psychic affinity for the element of fire. Pyrokinetics summon wreaths of flame with which to attack enemies or ignite flammable objects. They can start or extinguish fires, and make any flames near them dance, assume artful shapes, burn hotter or cooler, or change colours. As described here, Pyrokinesis involves two fire-related Attributes because it can be used as a Special Attack.

Pyrokinesis

Level	Points	Attributes/Defects
2	8	Special Attack "Pyrokinesis" (20 Damage, Area Effect)
	-1	Concentration
3	9	Telekinesis (Fire; Area 2; Range 1)
	-1	Concentration

Final Cost: 15 Character Points







Game Mechanics

Introduction

In a role-playing game, most character or NPC actions do not require any particular rules. A player simply says his or her character walks across a room, picks up an object, drives a vehicle, or talks to someone, etc., and if the GM agrees that it is possible, this simply happens. Personal interaction between characters or NPCs normally consists of the players and GM talking "in character" and describing what their characters are doing. In the GM's case, he or she describes what the characters are seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting.

In the course of a game, circumstances may arise where specific rules can help determine what happens. This is usually the case when the outcome of an action or event is uncertain and the result is important to the story. If a character needs to fix a broken reactor pump to prevent a nuclear meltdown, can he or she do it in time? If a character's car drives off a cliff, can he or she jump clear in time, and if not, how badly will the crash injure the character? If two people fight, who wins?

A character's Stats, Attributes, Skills, and Derived Values help resolve these dramatic questions. In many cases, dice rolls can add additional hazard and drama to the action. The dice rolls represent elements beyond the direct control of the character or the uncertainty that results when opposing characters interact. In some situations, the GM may elect to determine the results by simple fiat, without rolling dice (see Should I Make My Players Roll Dice?, page x). The GM may do so if he or she thinks a particular outcome is certain or is dramatically necessary to the game.

One situation the rules cover in greater detail is combat. The rules for combat are extensive, giving players a greater sense that they are in control of their characters' every step. If they lose, they will know the GM has not arbitrarily killed or injured their characters. The GM can also follow a similar procedure with any other actions that affect a character's fate: treat routine activities in passing and delve into more detail whenever an action influences the player character physically or emotionally.

IMPORTANT! Do not hesitate to go beyond the rules if you are the Game Master. If you dislike a rule presented in *Dreaming Cities*, you are encouraged to modify it to suit your needs and those of the players. Do not let your own vision of a role-playing game be superseded by anything you read in this book. These pages are filled with guidelines and suggestions, but certainly do not reflect the "One True Way" to role-playing success. Use what you like, discard what you do not, and fill in the blanks with your own ideas.

The Passage of Time

"In game" passage of time in a role-playing game is fluid, just as in a comic book. In some situations, like a conversation between two characters, the movement of game time normally matches real world time. More often, the amount of time that passes depends on the characters' activities as set by the players' actions — things happen as soon as dramatically appropriate. Climbing a high mountain takes a few short minutes. It does not take the several hours that climbing a mountain would really take. The GM should telescope time until something interesting happens: "Two weeks pass while you investigate the crime. Then the terrorist broadcasts a message to the world, announcing his plans to destroy the UN if his demands are not met...." Finally, in very dramatic situations such as combat, the GM may keep very precise track of time, using individual "combat rounds" (see Combat, page 98). GMs may go back in time as well to employ flashback scenes. A flashback is a useful tool to establish the background for a story without simply recounting the information in dry lecture fashion, allowing the player to work through the event.

Scene, Round, and Initiative

Three common measures of game time in *Dreaming Cities* are a scene, round, and Initiative. A scene is any situation where the events remain linked, moment-to-moment. Think of it in movie terms — a scene lasts until the camera cuts to an entirely new setting, potentially with new characters. If, for example, a character is speaking with an informant in a diner, the conversation constitutes a scene. Once the GM switches scenes to the character entering a back alley, following up on the informant's lead, the diner scene ends and a new scene begins in the back alley. If the conversation was interrupted by a villain attacking the informant, intent on shutting him up before he could reveal any important information, the scene would not yet end when the character chased after the villain down a back alleyway. Since the events are still linked moment-to-moment, it is still a part of a scene although the setting has changed.

A round is a measure of time of approximately 1-10 seconds in length (usually averaged to 5 seconds), while an Initiative is one specific moment in time. When combat occurs, characters roll Initiative (page 98) and each is allowed to act on his or her Initiative. The round is broken into a number of Initiatives equal to the highest Initiative rolled for the round. For example, in a combat between three characters that roll an 11, 19, and 24, the combat round has 24 Initiatives. The round remains 5 seconds in length, but for the purposes of action within the conflict, there are 24 potential individual moments — 24 instances where a character could decide to act. On the following combat round, when the characters roll 16, 23, and 39, there are now 39 Initiatives within the round.

Taking Action

Every character is capable of performing or attempting a nearly endless list of actions. These can be mundane activities (talking, breathing, thinking), skilled activities (building a suit of power armour, hacking into a computer, moving silently, climbing the side of a building), or combat activities (fighting, dodging, shooting). The Combat section covers combat action in detail and thus is not discussed here. Additionally, players can assume that characters carry out routine skilled activities successfully on a regular basis unless specified otherwise by the GM. For example, the GM can assume that characters with the Gun Combat Skill routinely keep their weapons clean, safely stored, and properly maintained.

Every GM has a preferred method for having players describe their characters' actions. Usually this involves the GM moving from player to player asking, "What is your character doing?" Experienced GMs try to give each person equal role-playing time so that everyone is an important facet of the story (switching between characters as necessary). Conversely, players are responsible for relating their characters' intended actions to the GM. In return, the GM will describe the results of those actions or will request a Stat or Skill check to determine the outcome.

Consider the three action descriptions below:

Action 1: "My character, Maxwell, is going to search for the artefact."

Action 2: "My character, Maxwell, is going to search for the artefact in the basement of the building."

Action 3: "My character, Maxwell, is going to quickly search for the artefact in the basement of the building. He will knock down doors if he has to, in order to find it as fast as possible."

All three accounts involve Maxwell looking for the artefact, but the level of detail is quite different. You should not be overly concerned with detail if it is irrelevant to your character's actions (such as exactly how Maxwell is forcing open the doors in Action 3), but sometimes a little detail can greatly alter the GM's interpretation of the event.

Attributes and Actions

In some situations, it is important to know how many Attributes a character can activate at one time and how quickly he or she can activate the Attribute. Innate Attributes, such as Armour or Superstrength, are considered always active, unless the character selects a Restriction Defect (page 69) whereby the Attribute is not always active. Attributes which must be activated but do not usually require a dice roll, such as Force Field, can be activated at a rate of one per Initiative starting on the character's Initiative roll; these activations do not require the character to use an action. Attributes that must be activated and do require a dice roll demand focus, and thus the character must spend one or more actions to activate the Attribute. A character can have any number of Attributes active at any moment, though GMs may wish to impose penalties if the character is focusing on too many things. It is usually obvious which Attributes fall into which category, but the final classification is at the Game Master's discretion.

Using Attributes at Reduced Levels

Unless a character assigns the Maximum Force Defect (page 67) to an Attribute, he or she can voluntarily use the Attribute at reduced Levels and PMV Ranks. For example, a character with Level 6 Teleport (maximum distance of 1,000 km) could choose to teleport any distance up to 1,000 km. Similarly, if the character also assigned a Targets PMV of Rank 4 (50 people/1 tonne) to Teleport, he or she could use the Attribute on any number of people or objects up to 50 people/1 tonne.

Fractional Attribute Use

The GM might also allow the character to use a fraction of an Attribute's effect. A character with Level 10 Insubstantial, for instance, may only want to turn a single body part, such as a hand or head, incorporeal. The GM could decide that fractional Attribute use is more or less difficult than using an Attribute's full effect, assigning appropriate Check Value modifiers (see Table 9-1: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers).

Dice and Dice Rolls

Dreaming Cities uses polyhedral (multi-sided) dice during game play, though usually only a single die type in each adventure or campaign. This game dice, represented by X, usually has one of the following number of sides: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, or (rarely) 20. When a random number needs to be generated, two dice are rolled. By adding the two numbers shown on each die, values between 2 and 2X can be generated. The distribution of values almost follows a bell curve, with the middle value of X + 1 generated most frequently. For example, when X = 6, the value of 7 is generated most often; when X = 12, 13 shows up most frequently. There are three major types of dice rolls, or checks, a GM or player may use during game play: a Stat check dice roll, a Skill check dice roll and an Attack/Defence Combat check. When a player announces the intended actions of his or her character, the GM must decide if a dice roll is necessary. Should a roll be required, the GM chooses which type of check is most appropriate.

In most cases, a player rolls dice to determine the success of an action his or her character performs, while the GM rolls the dice to determine the results of NPC actions when they impact the characters. In situations where NPCs are only involved with other NPCs, the GM should simply decide what happens rather than rolling dice.

Should I Make My Players Roll Dice?

It is important for the GM to realise that not all actions require a dice roll. Obviously mundane character activities, such as hammering a nail, riding a horse down a road, or eating lunch, should never need dice rolls unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding the character's actions. In other situations, the necessity to roll dice is less obvious. If a character is virtually guaranteed to succeed at a task, then the GM should consider whether the check is really necessary. While it is true that the character might fail, having the player roll the dice will slow the game down. Thus, GMs should recognise when a character is almost certainly going to succeed at a task and, in those situations, not request the check and allow game play to continue, uninterrupted.

Conversely, one might think that if a character only succeeds if the player rolls a really high number, then the GM should similarly not request a check and, instead, state that the action fails. This, however, is not the case — player characters should always be given that one slim chance of success, even at difficult tasks that seem doomed to failure (with the exception of tasks that the GM deems impossible). While the dice roll may slow game-play down a bit, that slim chance of success allows characters to accomplish heroic feats that will be remembered for years. GMs may wish to allow only player characters to make this roll, even in the face of near-certain failure — since NPCs are not the stars of the game, they should not be allowed the same chance of pulling off superhuman feats.

The following is a list of suggestions when the dice should and should not be rolled. If a check is unnecessary, the character should gain an automatic success for the action.

Roll dice when...

- the action is foreign to the character
- the action has been a weakness for the character in the past
- the character is distracted or cannot concentrate
- another character or NPC is working directly against the character
- the action is not of trivial difficulty
- outside forces influence the actions
- the player wants to roll the dice

Do not roll dice when...

- a roll would reduce the enjoyment of the game
- the action is routine for the character
- the action requires a trivial amount of talent compared to the character's Skill rank

In some circumstances, the GM may roll the dice to determine the results of a character's action instead of having a player roll, keeping the actual dice roll — and the reason for rolling — secret. This is normally done when the player rolling would give away an event that should remain unknown to the character. If, for example, there is something hidden that the character may or may not notice, the GM can secretly roll dice to see if the character spots it. If the GM allowed the player to roll the dice, the player would know that a clue existed even if the character did not succeed in noticing it.

Stat Checks

A Stat check is used when the GM believes that innate ability is more important than any learned expertise or combat capability. During a Stat check, the GM decides which Stat (Body, Mind, or Soul) would be most relevant to the action in question. If two or three Stats are closely related to the action, an average Stat Value should be calculated instead, rounding up to the closest whole number. For actions that fall under the domain of an Attribute, the relevant Stat is usually given in the Attribute description.

A successful Stat check involves the player rolling less than or equal to the Check Value on two dice. The base Check Value is equal to the appropriate Stat or Stat average, as determined by the GM. The Stat check is unsuccessful if the dice roll generates a value greater than the Check Value. The greater the difference between the Check Value and the dice roll, the greater the degree of success or failure.

Check Value Difficulty Modifiers

The GM has the option of modifying the Check Value should the action the character is undertaking be particularly easy or difficult (see Table 9-1: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers). Difficult actions gain a negative modifier to the attempt, while easier actions receive a positive modifier.

Table 9-1: Check Value Difficult Modifiers

Check Value Modifier						Difficulty of the Action
d4	d6	d8	d10	d12	d20	
+4	+6	+8	+10	+12	+20	Practically Guaranteed (why roll dice?)
+3	+4	+6	+7	+9	+15	Extremely Easy
+2	+2	+4	+4	+6	+10	Easy
+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+5	Below Average Difficulty
0	0	0	0	0	0	Average Difficulty
-1	-1	-2	-2	-3	-5	Above Average Difficulty
-2	-2	-4	-4	-6	-10	Difficult
-3	-4	-6	-7	-9	-15	Extremely Difficult
-4	-6	-8	-10	-12	-20	Practically Impossible

Critical Success or Failure

Regardless of the actual Check Value, an unmodified or "natural" roll of 2 always succeeds (it is considered at least a "marginal success"), and an unmodified roll of 2X always fails (it is considered at least a "marginal failure"). This rule is important in an RPG, because it reflects the extreme possibilities that even the most talented characters sometimes fail in their tasks, while even the most awkward characters can succeed. Due to the limited dice range available, the GM may modify this suggestion for games that use d4 (subhuman).

What is an Average Difficulty?

The difficulty term "average difficulty action" more correctly means "action that is considered of average importance in the campaign, for which the GM would actually want the player to make a dice roll." Parallel parking a car is not an average action — even though many drivers cannot do it — since it is unimportant in almost any campaign using d6 through d20. It might be of some relevance in a d4 subhuman game, though.

When you are thinking about a specific task, if you cannot say "that's a fairly average action for a player character to accomplish in my campaign," then it's not an average action.

Contested Actions

If two or more characters are working directly or indirectly against each other (such as two people pulling on a contested object), each character must make a Stat check. The character with the greatest degree of success (or least degree of failure if both characters fail) is considered to have the advantage over the contested action.

Skill Checks

A Skill check is similar to a Stat check, except it is used when the task is one that the GM decides would be governed by both a particular Stat and a particular Skill. For example, if a task required general intellectual ability (such as remembering the name of a person the character had met), a Mind Stat check would be made. Determining the origin of a rare alien species would also require a Mind Stat check, but this task is governed by the Biological Sciences Skill (more specifically, the Zoology Specialisation). In game terminology, this task would require a "Mind-Based Biological Sciences (Zoology) Skill check."

The base Check Value of a Skill check is equal to the appropriate Stat. Thus, for a Mind-based Skill check, the base Check Value is the character's Mind. If the character possesses the appropriate Skill (even without the exact Specialisation), he or she receives a bonus to the Check Value. This bonus is equivalent to the character's Skill Level (if the task does not fall under his or her Specialisation) or one more than the character's Skill Level (if his or her Specialisation does apply). A successful Skill check involves the player rolling less than or equal to the modified Check Value on two dice. The degree of the action's success or failure is determined by the difference between the Check Value and the dice roll.

The GM is responsible for deciding which Stat, Skill, and Specialisation are relevant to a particular task, using the Stat and Skill descriptions given in Chapters 2 and 4. Since these questions can often be tricky, the GM should listen to the player's reasoning why a particular Skill or Specialisation might apply. The final decision belongs to the GM, however.

Combining Skill Checks

When more than one character tries the same Skill at the same time towards the same goal, their efforts may overlap — they can work together and help each other out. In this case, one character is considered the leader of the effort and that character makes the master Skill check. Each helper also makes a Skill check, and for every success, the leader gets a +2 circumstance bonus to his or her master Skill check. The GM limits co-operation as she sees fit for the given conditions.

Skill Synergy

It is possible for a character to have two Skills that work well together, such as Street Sense and Urban Tracking, or Computers and Electronics for a computerised lock. The GM should apply reasonable Skill check bonuses (up to a maximum of one-half X) when an appropriate situation arises.

Unskilled Attempts

Often, a character will attempt an action for which he or she does not possess the relative Skill. The Check Value in these situations is dependent on the nature of the action.

Familiar Action

If the character is undertaking a familiar action, the Check Value is simply equal to the relevant Stat. The familiarity should have been established previously, such as in the character's background story, or be consistent with the character's role within the setting. The player should explain to the GM why his or her character is familiar with the current task. The GM, of course, has final say whether the character is sufficiently familiar to avoid an unfamiliar action Check Value penalty (see below).

For example, a student who attends university to study astronomy undoubtedly has at least a cursory familiarity with many academic fields. Similarly, almost all characters living in a big city will be familiar with the process of driving a car, even if they do not possess the Driving Skill; in North America, attempting car-related actions is familiar to nearly everyone. An elf prince newly arrived from the realm of Faerie is likely not familiar with motor vehicles and therefore driving would be an unfamiliar action for the prince.

Unfamiliar Action

If the character is undertaking an action with which he or she is unfamiliar, the task should be treated as a normal Stat check with an unskilled penalty applied to the Check Value. This reflects how difficult it is for an unskilled character to accomplish the task. The unskilled penalty should range from -1 to -X, depending on how much the GM feels training is required and how background aspects of the character could affect the attempt. This unskilled penalty is in addition to any penalty (or bonus) that is applied as a reflection of how easy or difficult the task itself is to accomplish.

For example, keeping a plane in the air in a human-level campaign (X = 6) after the cabin crew suddenly falls unconscious is a daunting task for anyone who is not trained as a pilot. An average character might therefore suffer a -6 penalty to the Check Value. A character that is an aficionado of combat jets and aircraft documentaries might only suffer a -2 Check Value penalty ... even if he or she has never actually piloted a plane before.

Required Skill

The GM may decide certain tasks automatically fail when performed by characters lacking the required Skill. Examples of required Skill activities include: performing brain surgery, deciphering ancient hieroglyphics, concocting an antidote for a poison, estimating the value of a rare piece of art, etc.

Power Usage Skills

Some characters may select the Power Usage Skill for one or more of their Attributes. This Skill provides a bonus when the character makes any check involving the specific Attributes. Unlike other Skills, Power Usage does not provide an additional +1 bonus for Specialisations. For example, a teleporter with a Mind Stat of 9 and the Power Usage (Teleportation) Skill at Level 3 makes Teleportation checks against a Check Value of 12 (a Mind Stat of 9 plus 3 for his Level in the Power Usage Skill).

Additional Modifiers

GMs should remember to also apply normal Check Value difficulty modifiers based on how easy or difficult the task is (see Table 9-1: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers). For instance, landing a crippled airliner on an icy runway at midnight during a blizzard might be a quite difficult task. Landing the same crippled jet during daylight in fair weather might not incur a difficulty penalty. Any difficulty modifiers that are assigned to a character's task are cumulative with his or her Skill Level bonus.

Combat Dice Rolls

The combat check resolves any type of physical combat including armed, unarmed, martial arts, and ranged weapons attacks. The combat check is very similar to a Skill check except the Check Value is now the character's Attack Combat Value (for Attack Combat checks) or Defence Combat Value (for Defence Combat checks) rather than a Stat. A successful combat action involves the player or GM rolling less than or equal to the Check Value on two dice. The attack or defence is unsuccessful if the dice roll (after any modifiers) is greater than the Check Value.

A character can attack or defend with a weapon (or unarmed) even if he or she does not possess the relevant attack combat Skill (combat is a Familiar Action). Consequently, attacking or defending characters lacking the appropriate Skill do not suffer a Check Value penalty; a character without the appropriate combat Skill simply does not receive a Check Value bonus.

Skills adjust the Check Value, but other Attributes may also provide modifiers as well. The GM also has the option of modifying the Check Value should the attack or defence be particularly easy or difficult (see Table 9-1: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers, page 96). A natural dice roll of 2 ("snake eyes") is a critical success and cannot be negated by an opponent's defence (the defender does not even have the opportunity to make a defence check). The critical success rule may not apply in games that use d4 (GM's discretion).

Using Attributes

If an Attribute does not specifically require a Stat or Skill check or a Combat check, GMs can assume they function automatically in most situations, though the Game Master may decide that a Stat or Skill check is necessary in unusual circumstances. For example, a character with the Features (Appearance) Attribute always looks good, but the GM might require a Soul Stat check were he or she attempting to attract someone's attention.

Certain Attributes occasionally require Stat checks (or sometimes Skill checks) to properly use the Attribute. Other Attributes provide favourable modifiers to Stat checks or Skill checks. If an Attribute interacts with Stat or Skill checks, this is noted in the Attribute's description in Character Creation.



COMBAT

Combat Introduction

Conflict is an essential component of any role-playing game. Physical conflict, or combat, is an important element of *Dreaming Cities* but important is not the same as frequent. Combat should be a vital element of a scene, and not just a distraction that the GM uses to pass the time.

The combat rules for *Dreaming Cities* were designed to mimic dynamic, fast-paced combat. Whenever a character enters physical conflict with another character or NPC, the physical Combat Phase begins. Each round of combat covers from 1 to 10 seconds of time from the characters' perspectives, depending on the characters' actions and the circumstances (the exact time scale is not relevant but a five-second round is usually appropriate). Characters are permitted to take one offensive and one defensive action each round. They may also choose to take more than one defensive action, but will suffer a Check Value penalty to each subsequent attempt (see the Defence section). Alternatively, a character may forfeit his or her attack in favour of one non-combat action. Should the conflict not be resolved at the end of the first combat round, subsequent rounds of combat will follow.

The Physical Combat Phase is subdivided into four parts: Initiative, Character Action, Defence, and Damage.

Initiative

Initiative determines the order in which characters act and is checked at the beginning of each round. Each player involved in the fracas rolls two dice and adds the result to his or her character's Attack Combat Value. A bonus is applied if the character possesses the Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes; page 20) or Speed (page 48) Attributes. The GM does the same for any NPCs engaged in the conflict. The GM may also grant bonuses or penalties if he or she believes the situations calls for it. Alternatively, the players and Game Master can roll once at the beginning of combat to determine their characters' Initiatives for the entire battle (i.e. their Initiatives will remain the same every round).

The character with the highest total has "gained Initiative" and acts first, followed by others in descending order. Should two or more characters or NPCs have the same Initiative, their actions are simultaneous. This means both characters attack and deliver damage at the same time; if one character drops below zero Health Points as a result, he or she still acts before falling unconscious.

A character may delay his or her action until any time later in the round to see what the other characters intend to do. If all his or her opponents also delay their actions waiting for something to happen, the round ends in a dramatic standoff and a new one begins.

If a character holds one or more actions until the end of a round and does not act, he or she acts on the first Initiative in the next round. The character does not gain an additional action — he or she simply acts first regardless of Initiative rolls. All held actions occur during the first Initiative. If two (or more) characters hold their actions until the following round, then both characters act simultaneously (assuming neither continues to hold their action) and then everyone else involved in the combat acts based on Initiative rolls.

Character Action

Characters act in the sequence determined by the Initiative roll. When it is time for a character to act, he or she may make one offensive action (i.e. attack) or one non-combat action, unless the character has the Extra Attacks Attribute (page 26). Attacks are normally against a single target, though some weapons or attack Abilities may allow the character to engage multiple targets simultaneously.

Before rolling the dice, the player should clearly describe the method of attack, the weapon his or her character uses (if any), and the target. If the character is trying something unusual (such as a Called Shot or attacking with two weapons), he or she should specify this beforehand.

To successfully attack an opponent, the player (or GM for an NPC) must roll less than or equal to his or her character's Attack Combat Value on two dice as described under Combat Dice Rolls on page 97. Remember to include all relevant Attribute, Skill, Defect, Weapon Ability/Disability, and difficulty modifiers (refer to Table 10-3: Attack Situation Modifiers, page 105).

If the attack check succeeds, the character is on target and will hit unless the opponent can defend against the attack. Refer to defence checks, page 105, for more information. If the target fails the defence check or does not defend at all, he or she suffers the effects of the attack. This is normally damage and/or any other special effects associated with the attack. To reflect some of the brutally successful attacks demonstrated in game adventures, a natural dice roll of 2 is a critical success and cannot be negated by an opponent's defence (an optional rule for d4 games).

If an attack check fails, the character has missed. The attacker's action is over, and the attack has no effect, though a miss with a ranged weapon may cause collateral damage if the shot strikes somewhere else instead (this is up to the GM). A natural roll of 2X (for example, 12 for a d6 game or 20 for a d10 game) will always miss and may result in an exceptional failure, such as hitting an innocent bystander or a weapon malfunctioning (an optional rule for d4 games).

Melee vs. Ranged Attacks

Some attacks are useful at a distance, while others are limited to close, hand-to-hand fighting. For simplicity, ranges are grouped into the four categories listed below. It is up to the GM to decide whether he or she wishes to track ranges and distances, or abstract them.

The distance given for each attack range is the effective reach of that attack. Many may be fired out to twice that range at -4 penalty or five times the distance at -8, though the GM may decide that some attacks or weapons cannot exceed their listed ranges.

Melee

The attack is only usable against adjacent opponents within touching distance (usually one to five metres). This is the range for swords, melee combat, etc.

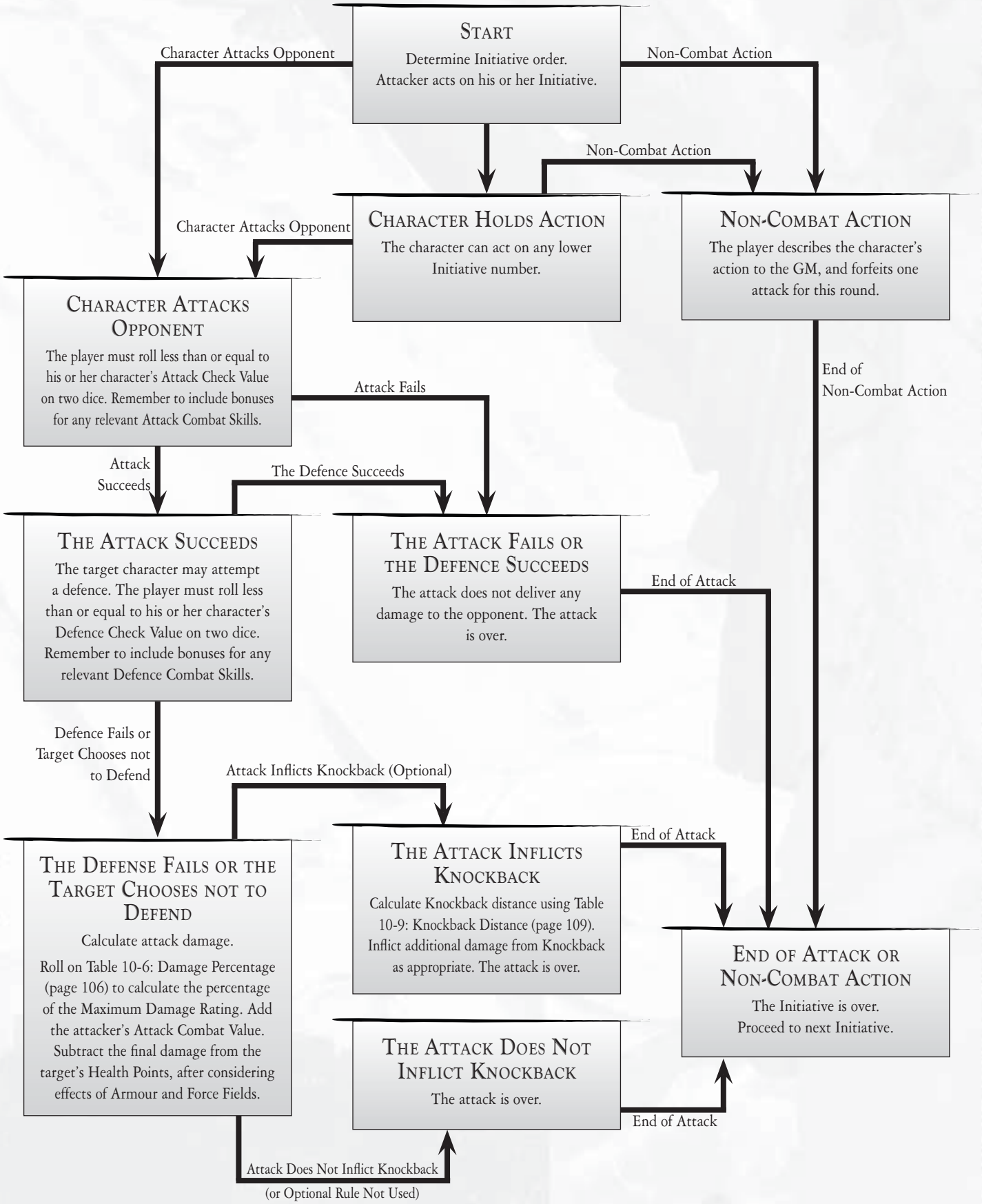
Short

The attack has an effective range out to about 50 metres. Most pistols, shotguns, grenades, submachine guns, and hurled weapons such as a thrown rock or throwing knife, are short-ranged.

Medium

The attack has an effective range out to about 500 metres. Most energy blasts as well as bows, crossbows, rifles, and machine guns are medium-ranged. This is the default range for weapons if none other is listed.

Combat Flowchart







Long

The attack is effective out to considerable ranges: about 5 km (or more if specifically noted). A surface-to-air missile, an anti-tank rocket, or a tank's main gun are examples of this.

Special Combat Situations

The following are special situations that can occur during combat.

Attacks With Two Weapons

A character with a one-handed weapon in each hand may use both at once against the same target or attack two different targets (even if he or she does not have Extra Attacks) but at a severe penalty to both checks. A two-weapon attack incurs a -8 Check Value penalty if the attacks are aimed at the same target or a -12 penalty if aimed at different targets. If a character has Extra Attacks, he or she can only use this option with one attack and not every attack.

Called Shots

An attacking character may opt to suffer an unfavourable difficulty modifier to hit in exchange for a Called Shot that provides some special advantage. For example, a Called Shot may ignore Armour (by attacking a small, unarmoured spot) or strike a vital point, inflicting greater-than-normal damage results. Players must specify a Called Shot before rolling the dice.

Called Shot – Disarming

A character may attempt to shoot or knock a weapon out of another person's hand. If using a ranged attack, this requires an attack at a -8 penalty. If the attack hits and the opponent fails his or her defence check, the character knocks away the weapon (probably damaging it). If using a melee weapon or unarmed attack to disarm, the character only suffers a -4, but the target may make a Body Stat check to retain control of the weapon. If the Body Stat check succeeds, the weapon's user still suffers a -4 Check Value penalty on his or her next action with that weapon (since it is off balance), but he or she retains control of it.

Called Shot to Partial Armour

Some armour may provide partial protection, like a flak vest only protecting a person's torso. An attack aimed at a thin or unarmoured area suffers a -4 attack check penalty and ignores the effects of the Armour if successful.

Called Shot to Vital Spot

A character attacking a living being can specify he or she is aiming for a vital spot (heart, brain, spine, etc.) rather than simply shooting at the centre of mass as usual. He or she suffers a -8 attack check penalty, but, if successful, the attack inflicts full, 100% damage. If the character rolls a natural 2 on this attack check, subtract 6 from his or her dice roll for determining the effects of the critical hit (page 107; optional for games using d4).

Called Shot to Weak Point

If the character knows his or her enemy has a Weak Point Defect (page 70), a Called Shot can be made to hit it in combat. The attack check penalty depends on the size of the Weak Point: a tiny spot gives a -6 penalty; a small spot gives a -4 penalty; and a large spot gives a -2 penalty.

Extra Aim

A character making a ranged attack may deliberately take extra time to aim. If a character aims a ranged weapon for an entire round and does not move or defend during that period, he or she receives a +2 attack check bonus, or +3 if he or she is using a scope. If an aiming character chooses to make a defence check or suffers any damage before he or she can fire, the character loses the benefit of Extra Aim.

Striking to Incapacitate

A character attacking in hand-to-hand combat or with a blunt melee weapon may attempt to knock a surprised opponent unconscious. The target of the attack must be unaware of the attack to be vulnerable. The attacker makes his or her Attack Combat check with a -6 penalty. If the target suffers any damage (after all defensive Attributes are applied), he or she must make a Body Stat check. If the target succeeds on this Body check, he or she maintains consciousness. If the target fails this check, however, he or she falls unconscious. Damage inflicted by an Incapacitating Strike is then divided by ten, rounding down.

For example, a troll wants to capture his victim alive so he strikes to Incapacitate. His punch normally inflicts a maximum of 40 damage. He rolls to hit with a -6 penalty and successfully hits his opponent, forcing the target to make a Body Stat check. Regardless of whether or not the target remains conscious, he takes 4 (40÷10 = 4) damage from the blow.

Striking to Wound

A character in combat can elect to reduce his or her delivered damage below the normal damage value to a minimum of 1 point (known as striking to wound). He or she may not attempt this with attacks possessing the Area Effect, Auto-Fire, or Spreading Ability, however.

Throwing Heavy Things

A character with the Superstrength Attribute (or a high Body Stat) can lift heavy things — up to 10% of his or her maximum capacity — and throw them to deliver damage. It takes one action to grab and lift a large, awkward object, and another to throw it. Consequently, throwing objects is slower than firing most weapons. The advantage of throwing an object is that big things are harder to dodge than smaller ones. The GM should assign objects a number of BP of Awkward Size based on their size and mass; see Awkward Size on page 63. defence checks suffer a penalty of -1 for each BP of Awkward Size of the object thrown (or equivalent). Damage delivered to both the target and the thrown object is equal to the attacker's Combat Value, plus bonuses for Superstrength and Massive Damage, plus 10 for each BP of Awkward Size Defect of the thrown object.

Total Attack

A character can take this option in conjunction with an attack. It means he or she focuses completely on an offensive action with no thought given to defence. The character may opt to forfeit one defence action to perform a Total Attack, gaining a +2 bonus to his or her attack check. Only one defence may be forfeited per attack, though a character with both the Extra Attacks and Extra Defences Attributes can initiate more than one Total Attack each round.

Touching a Target

Some Attributes require a character simply touch his or her target. It is much easier to just touch a person than it is to physically strike him or her with enough force to cause damage. Thus, any character that is simply attempting to touch an opponent gains a +6 bonus to his or her attack check. Touching a specific part of a target's body may require a Called Shot. This assumes the character is simply attempting to make physical contact with the target. If prolonged contact is required, the target must either be willing or the character must grapple the target (page 103).

Trick Shots

Some characters are known to make trick shots (such as ricocheting weapons or energy blasts off several walls before striking the target). Trick shots make the attack much harder to defend against, but likewise it is harder for the attacker to successfully hit. If the attacker takes a voluntary penalty to his or her Attack Combat Check Value, reflecting the difficult nature of

the trick shot, the defender will suffer the same penalty to his or her Defence Combat Check Value.

Table 10-1: Trick Shot Modifiers

Trick Shot Degree of Difficulty	Attack's Penalty To Hit	Defender's Penalty To Evade
Fancy Trick Shot	-2	-2
Challenging Trick Shot	-4	-4
Complex Trick Shot	-6	-6
Difficult Trick Shot	-8	-8
Fantastic Trick Shot	-10	-10

Grappling

Instead of striking to inflict damage in melee combat, a character can attempt to grab someone and pin him or her. This is a grappling attack, and a character must have at least one empty hand free. Grabbing a small, inanimate object not in an individual's Sphere of Control (page 110) does not require a full action.

Game Masters resolve a grappling attempt like a normal attack with the applicable Unarmed Attack (Grappling) Skill. If the attack hits and the target's defence (if any) fails, then the attacker successfully grabbed his or her opponent. The target of a grappling attack defends by making a defence check. The Unarmed Defence (Grappling) Skill is applicable. The attacker gains a grappling advantage if he or she has more free hands than the defender. "Free" means not holding weapons or other objects, or not otherwise incapacitated. In this case, the defender suffers a cumulative -2 attack or defence check penalty for each free hand the attacker uses to grapple in excess of the number of free hands the defender is using. The maximum penalty assigned for this disadvantage is -8.

For example, if a knight (two hands) tries to escape from the grasp of a lizard man (four hands), he suffers a -4 defence check penalty (4-2 = 2; 2 x -2 = -4). If the lizard man is holding an object in one of its four hands, however, the knight only suffers a -2 defence check penalty (3-2 = 1; 1 x -2 = -2). Characters with the Elasticity Attribute (page 23) gain a bonus to attempts to grapple.

The attacker can hold a grabbed character relatively stationary. The target suffers a -4 penalty on all attack and defence checks when performing other melee attacks or defences (including grabbing, biting, kneeing, etc.) or -8 when attempting to perform other tasks requiring freedom of movement like using hand-held equipment. Exception: if the grabbed character is much stronger (or more agile, at the GM's discretion) than the opponent, his or her penalty is halved, and the character can still move freely. The GM may consider a character much stronger if his or her Body Stat is at least four Levels higher or if the character has Superstrength at a higher Level. For this purpose, each Level of Less Capable (Strength) counts as a -3 to Body. Thus, a small child (Body 2) could not stop a strong man (Body 6) from pinning him or her while the strong man would be able to move freely if grabbed by the small child. It is, of course, possible for one character to grab an opponent who then grabs the character in return (this is what often happens when grappling).

Grappling Manoeuvres

Once a character grabs an opponent, he or she can attempt a grappling special manoeuvre (Lock, Throw, or Pin) as his or her next attack (see below).

Lock

Instead of attacking normally, a character that (on a previous attack) successfully grabbed his or her opponent can choke, crush, or strangle that foe. This attack automatically hits and inflicts damage equal to the character's Combat Value plus bonuses from Superstrength and Massive Damage.

Throw

Instead of attacking normally, a character that has already grabbed an opponent and is standing can hurl the foe to the ground. A character must make an attack check at a +4 bonus, modified by the Unarmed Attack (Throws) Skill. If successful, the opponent receives a defence check using the Unarmed Defence (Throws) Skill. A throw delivers damage equal to the Attack Combat Value plus 5 additional points of damage (as well as bonuses from Superstrength). Additionally, if the defender fails his or her defence check, the attacker may throw the character out a window or off a ledge, and the GM can assign extra damage based on the situation. If the attacker throws the opponent at another enemy, the target must make a defence check or suffer equal damage as well. A throw normally breaks the grip on the target unless the attacker attempts to maintain a hold and succeeds in an Unarmed Attack (Grappling) check with a -4 penalty (which must be made whether the throw is successful or not).

Pin

A character that has grabbed someone may attempt to improve his or her hold during the next attack by completely immobilising the opponent in a pin. Game Masters may treat this manoeuvre the same as the first grab attack. If the attack succeeds and the opponent fails to defend, then the foe is pinned, usually under the weight of the attacker's body. Attackers may not attempt a pin if the opponent is much stronger (see earlier for definition of much stronger). Once a character pins an opponent, the target suffers a -6 penalty on checks when attempting to escape. A pinned character cannot attack or defend.

Biting

Since biting does not require the use of hands, it is an effective tactic when a character has either grabbed or been grabbed by an opponent. Game Masters should treat this as a normal attack that inflicts only one half of the Attack Combat Value in damage (round down), unless the aggressor is using a Natural Weapons Attribute (Fangs, Beak, or Mandibles).

Escaping

A grabbed character may attempt to struggle free. On the character's Initiative to act, he or she can attempt to escape instead of attack. Both characters roll a Body Stat check with modifiers for the Unarmed Attack (Grappling) Skill. The character with the highest degree of success (or least degree of failure) wins. If the grabbed character wins, he or she escapes, and may also attack or take another action. If the characters tie, the grabbed character escapes, but forfeits his or her current action. If the grabbed character loses, he or she is immobilised and forfeits one attack action and one defence action that round. If a grabbed character chooses to attack the person who grabbed him or her (with appropriate penalties) and inflicts damage equal to or greater than his or her foe's Body Stat, he or she escapes the grab.

Fighting from the Ground

Fighters thrown to the ground or who are otherwise forced to fight from a prone position defend and make all attacks at a -4 penalty.

Disarming via Grappling

A character can try grabbing an opponent's weapon instead of the opponent's body. He or she makes the attack at a -2 attack check penalty. The opponent earns a +2 bonus to the defence check if holding onto the weapon with two or more hands. A successful attack might dislodge the weapon, but the defender is allowed a Body Stat check to maintain his or her grip. If the defender fails, he or she drops the item; if successful, the defender is at a -4 penalty to use the weapon until the end of his or her next action (after which time, the defender can use the weapon without penalty, unless the attacker attempts another disarm manoeuvre).

Movement in Combat

The GM decides whether he or she wishes to keep detailed track of movement, ranges, and distances. In most close-in combat situations, GMs should not worry about exact speeds and distances — a general idea of the overall situation is sufficient. Alternatively, GMs can measure ranges in a more abstract fashion: "you're behind him and in melee range" or "you can reach her in three rounds, if you hurry." The GM should judge how quickly range shifts from relative speeds to dramatic necessity. For example, in a race between two opponents with equal speeds, the GM can allow the character that keeps winning Initiative to increase the gap gradually between him or her and the other runner. A good way to resolve long distance chases is for the GM to establish a certain number of combat rounds between the starting point and the goal. It then becomes a simple matter of reaching the target first.

If the GM wishes to keep precise track of movement and distances, assume an average human adult can sprint approximately 6 metres per round times his or her Body Stat over short distances (one metre times Body Stat if swimming or crawling). The speed is reduced when a character is running a long distance. This guideline assumes five-seconds per round, but the GM can modify exact speeds when necessary.

Jumping

GMs can allow characters to jump as far as seems dramatically appropriate for the game. If distance is important, a person can jump about two metres forward, or one up or back, with range doubled on a short running start. A successful Body Stat check allows a fast moving character (or vehicle) with a running start to jump, in metres, one-quarter of his or her current speed in kilometres per hour — an average character can reach 5 kph times his or her Body. A failed Stat check means the character falls short. A wheeled or tracked vehicle or a boat can only jump if it has a ramp.

Movement Attack Penalties

When a character is moving in combat, he or she may incur penalties to attack and Block Defence checks (see Table 10-2). The penalty incurred depends on how quickly the character is moving relative to his or her maximum movement ability. The following chart indicates the movement rates and penalties incurred. For a normal character who does not have or is not using an Attribute to move (Speed, Flight, Water Speed, etc.), the character's movement rate is dictated by his or her Body Stat, as outlined in the Normal Character column. Characters who are using a movement Attribute refer to the Movement Attribute column to determine their rate of movement.

If a character is sprinting, he or she incurs a -4 penalty to attack and Block Defence checks. If the character is running, he or she incurs a -2 penalty on attack and Block Defence checks. Characters who are jogging do not incur penalties. Additionally, characters do not incur penalties when attempting Parry/Dodge Defence checks regardless of their speed. GMs do not need to keep exact track of movement rates unless they wish; they may simply keep movement abstract.

Table 10-2: Movement Attack Penalties

	Normal Character	Movement Attribute	Penalty
Jogging	up to Body x 4 metres per round	Up to Maximum Attribute Level -2	no penalty
Running	Body x 5 metres per round	Maximum Attribute Level -1	-2
Sprinting	Body x 6 metres per round	Maximum Attribute Level	-4

Firing Weapons from Moving Vehicles

Characters who are inside a fast-moving vehicle fire their weapons at a penalty. Firing weapons when moving at moderate speeds incurs a -2 penalty, while moving very quickly earns a -4 attack check penalty. Game Masters should impose an additional -4 penalty for characters also piloting the vehicle while firing.

Attacking Moving Targets

Attempting to hit a target that is moving at exceptional speeds is very challenging. When attempting to hit a target that is moving quickly, the character suffers an Attack Combat check penalty. See Table 10-3: Attack Check Modifiers for the appropriate penalty based on the target's speed.

Attack Check Modifiers

The GM may impose appropriate modifiers when the players make an attack check. An attack action normally assumes characters are engaged in active combat — dodging enemy attacks, making quick strikes when the opportunity arises, moving about, etc. The GM should not apply any penalties for this sort of normal combat-related activity. If circumstances are such that a character's aim or concentration seems likely impeded (such as shooting someone whom the character cannot clearly see or attacking a foe while hanging upside down), the GM may assign penalties to the attack check. Likewise, in stress-free situations (such as whacking an immobile victim, or target range shooting with nothing riding on the outcome), the GM can apply favourable bonuses or assume automatic success.

A number of possible penalties or bonuses are described on Table 10-3: Attack Check Modifiers. The GM may adjust or ignore these modifiers if he or she prefers.

Non-Combat Actions

Rather than taking an offensive action during any combat round, a character may use a non-combat action on his or her Initiative. Such actions include untying a rescued captive, running, changing weapons, climbing into or out of a vehicle, writing a note, changing clothes, etc. Players may also use non-combat actions to safely withdraw from armed or melee combat, provided the opposition does not attack at a later Initiative number in the same round. Note that speaking a few words during combat, running about while attacking, or making a short dramatic speech does not constitute an action.

A non-combat action may succeed automatically, or the GM can require a Stat check, or Skill check to determine whether it succeeds. Some non-combat actions may require several rounds to perform at the GM's option.

Table 10-3: Attack Situation Modifiers

Attack Situation	Modifier
Attacker is:	
Taking an action to aim	+2, or +3 with scope
Attacking Multiple Targets with one action	0, -2, or -4 per additional target
Attacking with two weapons (same target)	-8
Attacking with two weapons (different targets)	-12
Attempting a Combined Attack	-2 per attacker after the first
Attempting to Touch the Target	+6
Making a Total Attack	+2
Firing personal weapons from a moving vehicle	-2 or -4
Firing personal weapons while piloting a vehicle	-8
Firing personal weapons while swimming	-4
Firing personal weapons while performing acrobatics	-4
In an awkward position (on the ground, etc.)	-4
Attacker is Attempting a Trick Shot:	
Fancy Trick Shot	-2
Challenging Trick Shot	-4
Complex Trick Shot	-6
Difficult Trick Shot	-8
Fantastic Trick Shot	-10
Attacker is:	
Jogging (Body Stat x 4 metres per round or lower)	0
Running (Body Stat x 4 to Body Stat x 5 metres per round)	-2
Sprinting (Body Stat x 5 to Body Stat x 6 metres per round)	-4
Jogging (two Levels below maximum Attribute movement rate)	0
Running: (one Level below maximum Attribute movement rate)	-2
Sprinting: (maximum Attribute movement rate)	-4
Attacker is Attempting a Called Shot:	
Disarming (with melee attack)	-4
Disarming (with a ranged attack)	-8
Targeting a partially armoured point	-4
Targeting a vital spot	-8
Targeting a Weak Point	-2, -4, or -6
Target is Moving at:	
up to 99 kph (Flight 1 or 2)	0
100 to 499 kph (Flight 3; Speed 1)	-2
500 to 999 kph (Flight 4; Speed 2)	-4
1,000 to 4,999 kph (Flight 5; Speed 3)	-6
5,000 to 9,999 kph (Flight 6; Speed 4)	-8
10,000 to 49,999 kph (Flight 7; Speed 5)	-10
50,000 kph or more (Flight 8+; Speed 6+)	-12
Target within melee range, and:	
Concealed by trees or brush	-2 to -6
Concealed by darkness, fog, or smoke	-2 to -4
Taking cover	-2 to -8
Target beyond melee range, and:	
Concealed by trees or brush	-4 to -8
Concealed by darkness, fog, or smoke	-4 to -6
Taking cover	-4 to -10
Range Modifiers:	
Attacking at up to twice range	-4
Attacking at up to five times range	-8

Other Actions

Some activities do not count as attack or non-combat actions. A character can perform all of the following activities in addition to an attack or non-combat action:

- Move a short distance or manoeuvre his or her vehicle.
- Say anything that fits within the span of 1-10 seconds.
- Perform defensive actions in response to any attacks against him or her.

Note that if the character performs more than one defensive action in a round, subsequent defensive actions after the first (or later, if he or she has the Extra Defences Attribute, page 26) in the same round suffer penalties.

Defence

If a character is the target of a successful attack, he or she may attempt to defend against it with a Dodge/Parry Defence (avoiding the attack by moving out of the way, or using a weapon to push the attack to the side or "off-line"), an Attribute Defence, or a Block Defence (interposing an object between the attack and the target). Defensive actions are not dependent on Initiative order but resolved immediately after the attack before the attack damage is calculated or revealed.

To successfully defend, the player must roll less than or equal to the character's Defence Combat Value. Each character can attempt a defence only once against a particular attack (including grapples). A character may defend against more than one attack in a round, but with an appropriate penalty to each defence after the first (unless the character has the Extra Defences Attribute; the penalty then applies to each defence after the final bonus defence). Should the opponent not defend (perhaps in anticipation of a more powerful attack still to come), he or she cannot change that decision later in the round.

If a vehicle is the target of an attack, its driver or pilot makes the defence checks. If a vehicle is unable to manoeuvre (trapped in a confined space, for example) the GM may rule that it cannot defend at all. Likewise, a vehicle cannot normally defend against attacks made by a character that is riding in or on it.

Defending Against Multiple Attacks

When defending against multiple attacks in a single round, each defence after the first incurs a cumulative Check Value penalty of -4: -4 for the second defence, -8 for the third, -12 for the fourth, etc. This means that even the greatest fighter may be overwhelmed if badly outnumbered. Remember to include all relevant Attribute, Skill, Defect, and difficulty modifiers. If successful, the defender blocks, dodges, or otherwise negates the attack, and suffers no damage.

Relevant Defence Skills

When a character defends against a ranged attack, the relevant Skill is Ranged Defence. For a hand-to-hand or other melee-ranged attack, the relevant Skill is either Unarmed Defence (if the character is dodging, or blocking the attack with his or her body), or Melee Defence (if the character is using a weapon to parry or block).

Block Defence

Rather than attempting to avoid an attack with a Dodge/Parry Defence, the character may instead choose to block the attack with a shield or other suitably large and resistant object (a Block Defence). When a character attempts to block, he or she gains a +2 bonus to his or her Defence Combat check. If successful, the character has interposed the object in front of the attack. The object's Armour Rating provides protection to the character. Thus, a plank of wood can be used to block a powerful energy blast but, if the attack does more damage than the wood's Armour Rating, it will still strike

the character, inflicting reduced damage. See Breaking Objects (page 268) for suggested Armour Ratings of common items or Table A-3: Armour and protective devices (page 267) for shields. If the attack delivers five times the object's Armour Rating, the object is destroyed. Characters may only attempt to block melee or unarmed attacks unless they have the Block Ranged Attack Combat Technique (page 19).

Why is Block Defence Easier?

Of the two defence options — Block Defence or Dodge/Parry Defence — we have decided to make the Block Defence easier for two reasons. First, we believe that interposing an object, like a sword or shield, between your own body and an attack is indeed easier than completely avoiding any contact (a dodge). We also think it's easier than using your own weapon to parry, which requires some skill.

Secondly, we assigned the +2 bonus for Block Defences for game balance reasons. With a successful Parry/Dodge Defence, the defender avoids all damage completely. Powerful attacks can potentially break the object the defender uses in a Block Defence, however, still inflicting partial damage. In exchange for a higher-risk defence manoeuvre, we are awarding your character a +2 bonus.

Indefensible Attacks

A character may not attempt a defence check if he or she is unaware of the attack, unable to move, or is struck with a Critical Hit (page 107).

Total Defence

A character can make fewer offensive or non-combat actions in a round to improve his or her chances of avoiding an attack. Instead of attacking or engaging in another activity, he or she concentrates completely on defence. A character performing a Total Defence may still move normally, but may not attack or take non-combat actions; the character is dodging and weaving, parrying frantically, ducking, and hiding. The character receives a +2 bonus to all defence checks for each attack sacrificed. This lasts until the character acts again next round. Additionally, a character who is employing Total Defence reduces any Knockback suffered (page 109) by half, representing the character bracing for the attack. Total Defence is a good tactic for anyone retreating, or someone buying time until his or her allies arrive.

Defending Others

A character can defend the target of an attack in three ways: by pushing/pulling him or her out of the way, by interposing an object (such as a shield, or the character's body) between the target and the attacker, or using an Attribute. The first two methods are described below, while the final method is detailed under Defending With an Attack (page 111).

Table 10-4: Defence Situation Modifiers

Defence Situation	Modifier
Dodge/Parry Defence	0
Block Defence	+2
Total Defence	+2 per attack sacrificed
Defending Against Additional Attacks	-4 per additional attack (cumulative)
Defending Against Undetectable Assailant	-8
Defending When Surprised	Defence Check Not Possible
Defending Against Critical Hit	Defence Check Not Possible

The first option, pushing or pulling (or grabbing a target as the character swing by), is similar to a Dodge/Parry Defence. The character uses a defence action, and rolls a defence check. It is difficult to defend someone else, however, and the attempt usually suffers a significant penalty (see Table 10-5). Obviously the action has to make sense — if the character has no way to reach a target, he or she cannot defend the individual.

To shield another person is akin to a Block Defence. Like any other Block Defence, the character gains a +2 to his or her Amour Class, and must have the Block Ranged Attacks Feat in order to defend against missile weapons. A character can Block for another person with a Shield, weapon, extendable Force Field, or simply by standing in the way and absorbing the brunt of the attack.

If the character is out of defence actions, however, he or she normally cannot attempt to defend another (although in dire situations a GM might allow the character to make a roll with the normal cumulative penalty for additional defences, plus any other modifiers).

Table 10-5: Defending Others

Defence Situation	Modifier
Target is within reach	-2
Target is at medium range	-4
Target is at long range	-6
Target is in an awkward position	-2
Defender is in an awkward position	-2
Target concealed by trees or bush	-2
Target concealed by darkness, smoke	-4
Defending against additional attacks	-4 (cumulative)
Defender is surprised	Defence Not Possible
Defending against undetectable assailant	Defence Not Possible

Damage

Characters suffer damage through combat, accidents, or other hazards. Damage ratings indicate the maximum amount of damage that an attack can inflict. The target character subtracts any damage inflicted from his or her Health Point total if the attack successfully penetrates Armour.

Amount of Damage Inflicted

Each attack has a Maximum Damage Rating, which is equal to the base damage of the attack (which includes a weapon's damage value) plus any bonuses from Massive Damage, and Superstrength, as is appropriate for the attack. When the character successfully strikes an opponent, he or she rolls on Table 10-6: Damage Percentage to determine the amount of damage the attack inflicts (always round fractions up). The character's Attack Combat Value, a reflection of the balance between Body Stat (force of the blow and manual dexterity), Mind Stat (knowledge of a body's vulnerable areas), and Soul Stat (determination and luck), is added to that value to determine how much damage is inflicted upon the target. The Maximum Damage Rating for normal, unarmed attacks by characters lacking Superstrength and Massive Damage is zero — the only damage delivered is equal to the character's Attack Combat value (do not roll on Table 10-6). In some circumstances it may be still important to determine the damage percentage for a Special Attack with the No Damage Disability (page 46), since the result determines the effectiveness of the attack's other Attack Abilities.

Characters may choose to inflict less damage than the dice roll indicates, if they desire. Thus, a heroic character who scores a crushing blow against an opponent on his last legs can reduce the damage inflicted to ensure that he does not kill the villain by mistake, rendering him unconscious instead.

Some effects reduce the percentage of damage delivered by one or more ranks. Each rank of reduction reduces the damage delivered by 25% to a minimum of 0% damage, though the attacker's Attack Combat Value is still added to this result.

If an attack delivers a percentage of damage, such as a Special Attack with the Burning Ability (page 43), the percentage of damage is based on the Base Damage of the attack, not on the amount of damage that the successful attack inflicts upon the target. If an attack inflicts multiple hits, such as Special Attacks with the Auto-Fire Ability (page 43), each additional hit inflicts the same percentage of damage as the first hit.

Players should record, on their character sheets, the Maximum Damage as well as the 25%, 50%, and 75% damage values of each of their attacks to avoid slowing down game play.

Table 10-6: Damage Percentage

Dice Roll						Damage Percentage
d4	d6	d8	d10	d12	d20	
2	2-3	2-4	2-5	2-6	2-10	100% Maximum Damage
3-4	4-6	5-8	6-10	7-12	11-20	75% Maximum Damage
5-7	7-10	9-13	11-16	13-19	21-32	50% Maximum Damage
8	11-12	14-16	17-20	20-24	33-40	25% Maximum Damage

Unarmed Combat

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the character's bonuses for Superstrength, and Massive Damage. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Melee Weapons

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the weapon's damage value, plus bonuses for Superstrength and Massive Damage. If the weapon has Abilities or Disabilities, refer to the relevant section (pages 42-47) for their effects. See Table A-1: Weapons (page 263) for damages delivered by various melee weapons. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Ranged Weapons

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the weapon's damage value, plus bonuses for Massive Damage. A Superstrength bonus may also be added when appropriate (such as for thrown weapons). If the weapon has Abilities or Disabilities, refer to the relevant section (pages 42-47) for their effects. See Table A-1: Weapons (page 263) for damages delivered by various ranged weapons. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Special Attacks

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the Special Attack's damage value, plus bonuses for Superstrength (as appropriate), and Massive Damage. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Impact Damage

Damage may also result from a non-combat action such as crashing a speedboat into land or falling from a tree. Characters always suffer the maximum damage indicated from falls and crashes — do not roll on Table 10-6: Damage Percentage. Naturally, some non-combat actions may result in an NPC's death, but these events should only kill a player character in exceptional circumstances.

Crashing

During the course of an adventure, a character's vehicle may accidentally (or deliberately) crash into objects along the road, in the sky, in or on water, or in space. GMs should assess whatever damage they deem appropriate upon both the vehicle and occupants in a crash. The Armour and Force Field Attributes may protect against this damage. Similar damage can be applied to a character that jumps or is pushed from a speeding vehicle, or is struck by one.

Table 10-7: Crashing and Falling Damage assists the GM in determining the damage for hitting the ground, water, a building, or some other immovable object based on how fast the vehicle was moving during that round. If a speed falls between two damage values, use the greater of the two.

Falling

A character that falls a great distance will suffer damage depending on the height he or she plummeted. He or she may also make an Acrobatics Skill check with success halving the sustained damage to indicate a proper break fall. The Armour and Force Field Attributes may protect against this damage (GM's discretion).

Table 10-7: Crashing and Falling Damage

Speed	Falling Distance	Damage Delivered
20 kph	3 to 4 meters	10
30 kph	5 metres to 9 metres	20
50 kph	10 metres to 29 metres	30
100 kph	30 metres to 59 metres	50
150 kph	60 metres to 149 metres	70
200 kph	150 metres to 499 metres	90
500 kph	500 metres (or greater)	120
1,000 kph		150
2,500 kph		180
each additional 2,500 kph		an additional 30

Armour or Force Fields and Damage

If a character has Armour (page 18) or a Force Field (page 27) or is wearing body armour (see Table A-3, page 267), this reduces the delivered damage from each successful attack by an amount equal to its rating. The character suffers any damage not negated by the Armour or Force Field, subtracting it from his or her current Health Point total. See Effects of Damage (below) for the result.

Critical Hits

In the event of a natural attack dice roll of 2, the attacker automatically hits, preventing the target from making a defence check at all (this rule is optional for games that use d4). The target also receives double Maximum Damage from the attack, plus the character's Attack Combat value — do not roll on Table 10-6 when an attacker rolls a critical hit.

Effects of Damage to a Character

Total loss of Health Points can cause a character to pass out or die. Should a character or NPC's Health Points ever drop below zero, he or she suffered a severe wound and is rendered unconscious. If a character is reduced to the negative value of his or her Health Points, he or she has suffered a mortal wound and will die (or fall into a coma, depending on the tone of the game) unless medical attention arrives immediately. The GM may allow the character to linger long enough to say a few last words or perform some other final, heroic action.

Wound Difficulty Penalties

The Game Master may wish to assign difficulty penalties to characters that have been injured in combat. When the character's Health Points are reduced to 75% of their original value or less, all tasks suffer a -2 penalty. This penalty applies to all Stat, Skill, and combat checks. At 50% Health Points, tasks suffer a -4 penalty; at 25%, tasks suffer a -6 penalty.

Second Wind

If an event occurs during the course of combat that induces a powerful emotional response within a damaged character, the character is given an opportunity to refocus on the combat and eliminate all damage difficulty penalties — getting a "second wind." The GM decides which events are significant enough to evoke such a reaction. In these situations, the penalties are removed if the character makes a successful Stat check, without any modifiers, against his or her highest Stat Value.

If a character drops below one of the remaining damage tiers (50% or 25% of original Health Points) after getting a second wind, he or she will immediately suffer from the corresponding damage difficulty penalties once again: -4 at 50% or -6 at 25%. A character can only get a second wind once during any combat scene.

Table 10-8: Damage Difficulty Penalties

Percentage of Original Health Points	Modifier
100-76%	0
75%-51%	-2
50%-26%	-4
25%-0%	-6

Character Death

Death in a game can occur rarely, often, or never, depending on the tone and theme of the story in question. The default rule in *Dreaming Cities* is that death is a real consequence of extreme actions; it happens rarely, but is the end result of deadly force or careless negligence. Characters are responsible for keeping their powers in check, and not laying waste to their targets haphazardly.

Not all stories should have the possibility for death, or the chance of accidental death, however. In these games, characters may hit an enemy full force and be comfortable that the GM won't announce they've unwittingly decapitated their opponent. Wounds may require medical attention, and knockouts, concussions, and comas are all possible, but death only occurs when a player announces that his or her character has had enough, and finally steps over that line. Playing with this rule gives players the freedom to let loose a little, but still maintains the option for intense role-playing, if a character is ever driven so far as to make that choice.

It is also possible that death is not the end of the story. A very powerful Healing Attribute can restore someone dead no more than a few minutes and the Reincarnation Attribute can bring anyone who possesses it back under certain circumstances. The GM can even allow other dead characters to return as a ghost or other undead entity (as a player character or an NPC) if they died in a situation where such an event would be dramatically appropriate.

Shock and Critical Injury (Optional Rule)

The rules for Shock and Critical Injuries are appropriate for gritty or realistic games but are not recommended for heroic games.

Shock

If a character suffers more damage from a single attack than his or her Shock Value (page 71), he or she must make a Soul Stat check. If the check fails, the character is stunned and will collapse. The character will also let go of anything he or she is holding. The character's incapacitation will last for a number of rounds equal to the amount by which the Soul Stat check was failed. An incapacitated character is effectively out of action, either knocked out or awake but immobilised by pain or shock. He or she may not take any offensive, defensive, or non-combat actions. The duration of incapacitation from multiple failed Soul Stat checks from several injuries occurring in a short period of time is cumulative.

Critical Injury

A character that suffers more damage than his or her Shock Value from an attack that breaks the skin (such as from a bullet, knife, arrow, grenade fragment, etc.) has taken a critical injury. A character who suffers a critical injury loses one additional Health Point every round (every minute, if out of combat) until given successful first aid. Just stopping the bleeding through first aid is not enough, however — it only slows the loss of Health Points. A critically injured character that has undergone successful first aid will lose one Health Point every 10 minutes until he or she undergoes successful surgery (best performed in a hospital). Thus, a character that is badly hurt might die because of shock and internal injuries before he or she can be stabilised. A character can suffer multiple critical injuries. If so, each must be treated separately, and Health Point losses are cumulative.

Medical Treatment for Critical Injuries

If a character suffered a critical injury, he or she will lose one Health Point every round (or every minute if out of combat) until treated via first aid. This requires a successful Mind/Body-average based Medical (Emergency Response) Skill check. Each attempt takes 10 rounds (or one minute); several tries can be made until successful. If the character is trying to perform first aid on him or herself, apply a -2 penalty. If the character does not have an actual first aid kit handy but is forced to improvise dressings, etc., apply an additional -2 penalty.

As mentioned before, a critical injury that is treated will still result in the loss of one additional Health Point every 10 minutes until the character undergoes surgery. This requires a Mind/Body-average based Medical (Surgery) Skill check. There is no penalty if performed with a full staff in a modern hospital, but a -4 penalty applies if it is performed with less adequate medical facilities (for example, in a doctor's office or a poor third-world hospital) or -8 if performed with completely improvised equipment. Each attempt will take at least 10 minutes. Success stabilises the patient while failure causes him or her to lose additional Health Points equal to twice the margin of failure. Another try is possible, however.

Optionally, a character that has been badly injured (negative Health Points) because of cumulative Health Point loss may also require treatment, even if he or she did not suffer a critical injury. This may be dependent on the nature of the injuries — someone who was badly burned may be in worse condition than someone who was beaten up. The GM can rule that keeping the character alive until adequate medical attention is available requires a successful Medical (Emergency Response) Skill check and that full recovery (at doubled healing rate) will require a Medical (Surgery) Skill check. In both cases, use the average of the caregiver's Body and Mind Stats.

Knockback (Optional Rule)

Blunt attacks (such as punches, kicks, or blunt melee weapons) and Special Attacks with the Knockback Ability (page 44) can inflict Knockback upon a successful hit with this optional rule. Attacks such as a slash from a sword or a piercing spear do not normally inflict Knockback. The target is knocked back one metre for each point of damage delivered after rolling on Table 10-6: Damage Percentage (before adding the attacker's Attack Combat Value, unless the character has the ACV Knockback Combat Technique; page 19). This distance is reduced by the target's Body Stat, in metres. Additionally, the Immovable Attribute (page 31) and Force Fields without the Full Impact Disability (page 27) reduce Knockback.

Knockback Impact Damage

Characters who are knocked back usually tumble along the ground or sail through the air, but do not suffer any additional damage. When a character is knocked back into an object, however, he or she suffers 1 point of impact damage for each metre of Knockback, up to a maximum of five times the Armour rating of the object into which he or she is knocked (see Breaking Objects, page 268).

Other Knockback Effects

If a character is knocked high into the air, off a building, or some other similar situation, additional damage may be suffered when the character falls to the ground. The Special Movement (Cat-Like) Attribute and Acrobatics Skill can mitigate damage (GM's discretion). If a character is knocked up into the air, reduce his or her Knockback distance by half; the character falls back to the ground and suffers full damage from the fall. A character that falls to the ground as a result of Knockback only suffers damage from the fall (see Table 10-7: Crashing and Falling Damage, page 107), not the Knockback impact damage outlined above.

Additionally, if the character can fly and is knocked back a great distance, the GM can determine if he or she is able to recover his or her senses soon enough to begin flying before colliding with an obstacle. The GM may require a successful Body or Mind Stat check for a character to accomplish this (possibly with penalties on the check).

GMs may, however, alter any of this to reflect specific situations or game styles, as is appropriate. For example, a GM may decide that a character who is knocked back 80 metres and comes to a skidding stop on the pavement will still suffer some damage (perhaps equal to one tenth the Knockback distance), even if he or she does not collide with a building or object.

Table 10-9: Knockback Distance (in Metres)

Add:

+ Percentage of Maximum Damage delivered (see Table 10-6: Damage Percentage)
+ Attacker's Attack Combat Value (only if the character possesses the ACV Knockback Combat Technique)

Multiply by:

x Critical Hit damage multiplier, if the attack delivered a critical hit (page 107) or Called Shot to Vital (page 102)

Subtract:

– Target's Body Stat
– Target's Immovable Attribute Level x 20
– Target's Force Field Attribute Level x 20 (only for Force Fields without the Full Impact Disability)

Mind Combat

Mind combat is a special type of conflict, which uses the Telepathy Attribute (page 49) to forcibly invade another's mind. Most telepaths make mental attacks using the Special Attack Attribute with the Mind Attack Ability. This mental conflict, however, is a clashing of two psyches, each struggling to subdue the other — it is akin to two people getting into a mental fistfight. Mental combat can become lethal if either person begins tearing down neural pathways, erasing memories, or destroying brain cells. Physical strength does not play a role in this battle, only the power of the Mind. Each round of mind combat covers from 1 to 10 seconds of time from the characters' perspectives. The exact time scale is not relevant, since one round of physical combat should cover the same amount of time as one round of mind combat.

Mind combat can only be carried out once mental contact has been established, usually using the Telepathy Attribute. Once two minds have touched, the initiator of the contact may withdraw at any time. Alternatively, physical damage to the initiator or perhaps use of an appropriate Item of Power can break the contact. For the target to break unwanted mind contact, the player cannot initiate any other actions for one round and must make a successful Mind Stat check with a -4 penalty. If the check is successful, the aggressor is forced from the character's mind and the mind combat ends immediately.

If any character in mental contact forfeits all physical actions for the round (including attack, defence, and non-combat action), he or she can attack through mind combat. A successful attack requires the player to make a successful Stat check using the average of his or her Mind and Soul Stats. The GM has the option of modifying the Check Value should the attack be particularly easy or difficult. The target can attempt to defend with a Stat check using the average of his or her Mind and Soul Stats with a -2 penalty.

The psychic damage of a successful attack is equal to the average of the attacker's Mind and Soul Stats. If using the optional rules for Energy Points, this damage is subtracted from the target's current Energy Points. Otherwise, it is removed from the character's Health Points. If a character is ever reduced to or below zero Health (or Energy) Points while in mind combat, his or her mind has been broken and is now at the mercy of the opponent. The

victor can end the character's life, search through memories, plant powerful suggestions, erase thoughts, or simply render the character unconscious. Any changes to a character's mind (other than death) will remain until reversed by another character skilled in the Telepathy Attribute. The GM should decide exactly how this must be accomplished. Role-playing a character whose mind has been altered is challenging but can also be very rewarding when played with consistency.

A telepath who wishes to alter a target's mind after winning a mind combat battle must spend a great deal of time to alter it. Minor changes such as removing unimportant memories or implanting unessential false memories can take a couple of hours. Massive changes, such as instilling (or removing) a prejudice or phobia, rebuilding a large portion of the target's memories, or similar large scale remodelling should take days to complete. Characters may rush the procedure, if pressed, but there is a risk of the alteration failing over time. The target may notice a gap in his or her memory and question what happened, or a personality adjustment (new phobia, for example) may weaken over time. If the character wishes to perform a change quickly, the character may perform minor changes in a matter of rounds while the character can accomplish massive changes in about an hour.

When a character attempts to alter a target's mind, he or she must make a Mind-based Social Sciences (Psychology) Skill check. The GM may impose a penalty if the alteration is particularly severe or drastic. The character's Margin of Success determines how long the modification lasts, measured in years if the character took his or her time with the procedure or measured in days if the character rushed things. GMs should make this Skill check secretly and not inform the player of the result unless it is a failure — he or she will not know how long the change will hold, only that it has occurred or not.

The Mind Shield Attribute (page 34) provides a bonus to the character's attempt to resist mind combat and mental alterations, as well as Armour against mind combat damage.

Recovery

A character that suffers lost Health Points due to damage may heal naturally (or be repaired, for mechanical characters).

Recovering Health Points

Health Points regenerate at a rate equal to the character's Body Stat for each day (or hour for less "realistic" campaigns) of rest. For example, a character with a Body Stat of 5 rejuvenates 5 Health Points every day while resting. The healing rate doubles if the character is in the care of someone with Medical Skill but halved if he or she does not spend time resting.

Recovering Energy Points

This rule is only used in campaigns where Energy Points are used. The average of the Mind and Soul Stat (rounded up) equals the number of Energy Points the character recovers every hour whether the character rests or not. A character with a 7 Mind Stat and a 3 Soul Stat, for example, regains 5 Energy Points ever hour (7+3=10; 10÷2=5).

Repairing Equipment

Equipment, such as weapons, vehicles, or other gadgets can become damaged in the course of fighting crime. Characters can repair damage to equipment by making a Mind-based Mechanics Skill check. If the object has Health Points, each Skill check repairs 10 Health Points. Each Skill check should take approximately one day of work (approximately six to ten hours), depending on the extent of the repairs required. Most mechanical, or non-organic, characters do not recover Health Points, and must also be repaired.

Using Attributes in Combat

In some situations, players will want to use various special Attributes in inventive ways in the middle of a fight. The following rules outline the use of Attributes in combat. It primarily applies to non-combat power type special Attributes that can be used on others, such as Environmental Control, Telekinesis, or Teleportation. In many instances, the appropriate Power Usage Skill (page 97) can influence the chances of success.

Using Attributes Against Opponents

Creative characters can use a number of seemingly inoffensive Attributes in very effective ways in the middle of combat. Special Attacks are obviously designed for offensive use against an opponent, but what about Teleportation? Could a character not teleport an opponent in front of a moving truck or simply out of a fight entirely? When a character wishes to use a normally inoffensive Attribute against an unwilling opponent, the character must give up a non-combat action and make a Stat check using the relevant Stat for the Attribute. If the check is successful, the target is allowed a Soul Stat check to resist the effect (Body or Mind can be substituted if the GM deems it appropriate). If the target fails the Soul Stat check, he or she is affected by the Attribute. Otherwise, the target resists the effect entirely.

Characters must have PMVs at a Level sufficient to be able to accomplish their desired effect. If a teleporter does not have the Targets PMV, for example, he or she cannot use the Attribute against an opponent.

Sphere of Control

If a character attempts to use an Attribute on an object within the sphere of control of a character, the character is allowed to make a Soul Stat check to resist the effect as though he or she was the target of the attack. For example, a teleporter who wished to teleport the bullets out of an opponent's gun would still be required to make a Mind Stat check and the person holding the gun would be allowed a Soul Stat check to resist the effect. Other common objects usually in a target's sphere of control include: the ground beneath the target, air around the target, objects the target holds or carries, etc. The GM determines what objects are under the defender's sphere of control.

All-or-Nothing or Partial Effects

When an Attribute is used against a group of targets, GMs may use one of two options for resolving the resistance check. When a large group of people attempt to resist the effect of an Attribute, the GM makes one check, using the average Soul Stat value of the targets. Important characters (player characters or key NPCs) should be allowed to make individual rolls for themselves to prevent villains from teleporting a group of 50 people, including the players characters, thereby using the more vulnerable citizens to avoid the player characters' higher Stats. In this way, either all of the targets are affected by the Attribute (on a failed Soul Stat check) or none are affected (on a successful check).

Alternatively, the GM may wish to use one dice roll which is used as the same roll for each character's check — characters with high Soul Stats within the group may successfully resist the effects of the Attribute while characters with low Soul Stats are affected.

Attribute vs. Attribute

When two characters pit their Attribute against each other, who wins? In most situations, the character with the highest Level wins. For example, a witch is attempting to make her get-away by Flight, escaping on an enchanted broomstick. A demon grabs the witch and tries to hold the character back, preventing her from flying away. The demon has Superstrength at Level 5 while the witch's broomstick is an Item of Power that incorporates Flight at Level 3. The demon, therefore, is strong enough to prevent the witch from escaping.

If the two Attribute are close in Level (usually the same or differing by one Level), the GM may request an opposed Stat check to see who wins the contested action. Using the above example, if the witches' Flight Level was 4, instead of 3, the GM could request an opposed Stat check. The witch makes a Body Stat check (since Body is the relevant Stat for Flight) and scores a Margin of Success of 4. The demon must now make a Body Stat check (again, since Body is the relevant Stat for Superstrength) and score a Margin of Success greater than 4 to prevent the witch from escaping.

What if a character has two or more Attribute that can be used in the opposed check? What if the witch, in the first example, also has Superstrength at Level 4, perhaps due to a magical spell she had cast? In a situation like this, the GM should simply add the two Attribute Levels together to determine who wins the opposed action. Thus, the witch has Flight at Level 3 and Superstrength at Level 4 for a total of 7 which is much higher than the demon's Superstrength Level of 5. The witch is therefore able to make her escape (possibly lifting the demon into the air or simply breaking free of his hold, depending on the GM's discretion).

Note: Superstrength provides a +4 bonus to Body Stat Checks. Do not apply this bonus in Attribute vs. Attribute contests — it is only applied when the character is attempting something like breaking open a door or bending steel bars.

Using Attributes as Attacks

In many adventure stories, character regularly use seemingly passive, non-hostile superhuman Attributes to attack opponents, causing harm. A character who can teleport may disorient foes by teleporting them repeatedly within one combat round or selectively teleporting portions of mechanical sentries away, causing massive trauma, for example. The list of possible attack applications of an Attribute is endless. Most Attributes do not account for these offensive tricks and stunts — they are accomplished using Special Attacks. A Special Attack is not limited simply to powerful energy blasts — it can be any "attack" that causes harm or detriment to an opponent. The teleporter who repeatedly teleports a target in a combat round may have a Special Attack with the Drain Body Ability and the No Damage Disability, reflecting the disorientation the target feels after the attack and the fact that no real physical harm is inflicted on the opponent. Alternatively, if the teleporter is capable of teleporting just a select portion of a target away causing harm to the target, the Special Attack may be designed to do an incredible amount of damage. By using the Attack Abilities and Disabilities, players can create any sort of attack, which will account for the numerous and creative ways that people can utilise their abilities. Some Special Attacks designed this way will have the Dependent Defect (page 64) — the character must first activate his or her Teleportation before being able to use his or her Special Attack: Teleportation Disorientation, for example.

Using Attributes Defensively

Just as characters can find imaginative ways to use superhuman Attributes against opponents, they are just as likely to think of ways to use their Attributes to defend themselves from harm. Automatic Attributes are those that work without a necessary Stat check. A teleporter, for example, is capable of teleporting him or herself without the necessity of a Stat check. Thus, in combat, if an attack is directed against him or her, the character can teleport out of harm's way. The character must attempt a defence check and, if successful, activates his or her teleportation and vanishes before the attack hits home. The defence check is used to determine whether or not the character activates the Attribute in time to avoid the attack, not whether or not the Attribute activates at all. If the character fails the defence, the Attribute may still activate after damage is delivered. The character defends him or herself from attacks exactly the same way all characters do — with a defence check.

Defending with an Attack

By holding an action until attacked by an opponent, a character can defend him or herself with the offensive use of an Attribute. This simultaneous attack and defence option combines the advice under Using Attributes Against Opponents and Using Attributes Defensively into a single action. To succeed, the character must activate the Attribute with an appropriate Stat check (the target can make a Soul Stat check to resist as normal) and also make a successful defence check to time the effect properly. For instance, when a hero attacks a villain who has a held action remaining, the villain might attempt to use Teleportation to place a bystander between him and the hero's power blast. The villain must first make a successful Mind Stat check to see if the Teleportation works. If the attempt is successful, and the bystander fails to resist with a Soul Stat check, a defence check determines if the villain activates the Teleportation in time.

Pushing Your Attributes (Optional)

To encourage players to develop their characters through role-playing, characters may push themselves beyond their normal abilities, sometimes exerting their Attributes beyond their normal limits and other times pushing them in ways they have never done before.

Any time the character wishes to push him or herself, the player spends one unused Advancement Point and attempts a check using the relevant Stat for the action. If the check is successful, the character has pushed his or her Attribute beyond his or her normal limits (increased an Attribute's Level by 1; accomplished a new, yet related action with an Attribute; or whatever else the GM deems acceptable). At the GM's discretion, the character may spend more than one Advancement Point to push an Attribute even further, such as by 2 Levels or even more. The spent Advancement Point counts toward the cost of purchasing the new Attribute. For example, if a character wishes to use the Special Movement (Dimension Hop) Attribute to enter someone's dreams and discover their secret desires, the GM may wish to treat it as a use of Telepathy and assign the Advancement Point to the future acquisition of the Telepathy Attribute. If the check fails, the character fails in the attempt and may suffer some sort of mishap, such as taking some damage or becoming lost in an nightmare — pushing yourself can be risky. Even if the character fails to push an Attribute, the Advancement Point is still allocated to increasing the Attribute Level or gaining a new Attribute; even a failure can teach a character something, if only what not to do the next time. Though characters can normally only push their Attributes, under special circumstances, GMs may allow characters to push their Stats.

Using Attributes Unexpectedly

Sometimes, players will want to use their Attributes in ways that are not covered by the rules. Consider the following three solutions to this problem:

Use the Pushing Your Attributes Rules

Players spend Advancements Points to push their characters' Attributes in specific ways. This method creates a mechanic to circumvent the rules for each Attribute, and is a great technique to keep a balanced game.

Low Levels of Dynamic Powers

Suggesting that all players assign low Levels of the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 22) to their character during creation offers you a safety net when players want to do the unexpected. Since Dynamic Powers is such an open-ended Attribute, players can explore their characters themes — speed, combat, magic, strength, etc. — within the rules.

Just Fake It

When in doubt, make it up. If a character uses an Attribute in an unexpected way, adjudicate on its use and move on with the game. This technique avoids the rules completely, and does not impede the flow of your game session.


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Game Mastering

The greatest responsibility in a role-playing game is that of the Game Master (or GM). As Game Master, you create the opponents, plots, and situations that challenge the player characters. You take on the roles of all of the non-player characters in the story, as well as presenting the universe in which the game is set, resolve actions using the game rules and adjudicate any questions that arise during play. This chapter provides some brief Game Mastering advice, as well as guidelines to help you run dynamic and exciting games of your own.

Game Mastering Basics

As Game Master, you fill many roles, handling all the parts of the game that the players do not. These roles can be divided into four main areas: creator, actor, narrator, and referee.

Creator

You are responsible for creating and maintaining the world in which the heroes have adventures, including supporting characters,history, geography, and current events. This requires great effort, although many game worlds are similar to our own. For worlds similar to ours, a lot of the setting information already exists but worlds unlike ours will require more effort from the GM.

Actor

You play the roles of the various non-player characters (or NPCs) in the game, including the player characters' major opponents and allies. Keep the NPCs' goals and motivations in mind, but also focus on keeping the game fun for everyone.

Narrator

You also narrate events in the game, describing to the players everything that their characters see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. A good GM provides players with enough descriptive information for them to understand their characters' surroundings, but not so much that it slows down the game and turns it into a droning monologue of "flavour text." For example, you might say to one player, whose character is an aspiring folk-rock musician:

"You've just finished an evening of playing at The Three Sisters, a new club. The audience was younger than you usually get, but they seemed to be getting into it — maybe the club will invite you back again. It's a good feeling. Now you're walking home, a route that takes you through the city park. It is a warm summer night, about 11 PM, and the oak trees are shimmering in the light of the full moon. As you cross the old bridge, you notice the trees seem older and thicker than you remember them being, and you can no longer see the city lights. Then you hear it: a wild melody drifting on the night breeze, and the faint clip-clop of hooves, coming down the path toward you ... . "

You have explained to the player where he or she is, what is happening, and placed the player character in an active situation. The player may ask for clarification about your description, such as what type of music, or whether the trees have changed? Answer the questions to the best of your ability, or have the player use his or her character's Attributes or Skills (for example, have their character make a Cultural Arts Skill Check to recognise the type of music) while encouraging action.

While providing narration for the players, try to avoid assuming actions or feelings on the part of their characters. For example, in the above description, do not end with "... the sound fills you with anticipation, so you run toward the music!" Each player must decide their own character's actions. The player might instead stand to greet whatever approaches, or hide in the trees to stealthily observe it, or even pull out his or her instrument and join the music.

Similarly, do not tell players how their characters feel about a particular NPC unless there is some outside force imposing those feelings on them. Rather than saying, "you take an instant dislike to him," when a character is dealing with an unpleasant NPC, you might try "he just does not seem very likeable." Better yet, simply play the NPC as unpleasant and rude, and the characters will start to dislike him naturally, without any prompting from you.

Referee

Finally, you apply and interpret the game rules and resolve any rules questions that arise during play. You make the necessary rolls for NPCs, apply the effects of characters' Attributes and actions, and use the game rules given to resolve conflicts during the game.

Keeping the Players Interested

One of your key GM roles involves keeping the players interested and involved. If you and the players are not having fun, your game needs to adapt quickly.

Know Your Players

Do you know what your players want to accomplish in the game? Discover their interests, likes, and dislikes, and cater to them. In some cases, players may be interested in story elements or plot ideas that do not inspire you, or you may want to run a type of game in which the players are not particularly interested. Negotiate something that is agreeable to, and enjoyable for, everyone.

Players have different styles. Some players like to immerse themselves in detailed characters, role-playing interactions with NPCs and the other heroes. Others like lots of action and the opportunity to blow off steam at the gaming table. There are those who want to play ultra-competent characters who are the best in the world at what they do and those who enjoy flawed or tragic heroes who make mistakes and suffer misfortune. Some are thinkers, enjoying puzzles and mysteries, while others are builders, always coming up with new characters and ideas. It is possible to satisfy all of these different types of players if you understand what gives each of them the most enjoyment in the game.

There may also be certain elements your players do not want to see in the game. Try to respect this as much as possible. It is difficult to fulfil the player preference of "I never want my character to lose," but it is easier to accommodate "I want my character to be unique. I never want to see a main NPC with the same Attribute focus as him," or "I really hate having my character framed or set-up," or "Violence and sex should not mix in any of our adventures."

Listen to the Players

Once your campaign is underway, pay attention to what your players are telling you. Most of the time, players make it clear when they are enjoying themselves and when they are not. They may often speculate openly or think out loud, saying, "I think that the people behind the plot are..." or "wouldn't it be cool if...." Use these discussions as insights into the minds of your players.

If the players speculate about a particular mystery or possibility, perhaps they might like to see the plot proceed in that direction. You can always change a mystery to fit the players' ideas behind the scenes — a tool called "retroactive Game Mastering" — so long as it does not interrupt the flow of the game.

Be sure you get feedback from your players. At the end of each session or adventure, ask them if they enjoyed themselves and what they liked. If they have criticism, accept it gracefully and use it to make your next story even

better. If it seems that a player is not having fun, ask why and see what you can do to correct the situation. It might be that the player is just having a bad day, or that some element of the particular adventure does not appeal to them but it may also be that some expectation important to the player is not being met by the campaign, and that may need to be addressed.

Spotlight the Characters

The focus of attention in your campaign should be on the player characters and their actions. This advice might seem like common sense, but a campaign can easily get caught up in events over which the characters have little control, taking the focus away from them and putting it on the plans and actions of NPCs. If you have created a detailed and interesting setting, you are going to want to show it off, but do not do so at the expense of the player characters. The story is supposed to be about them.

Likewise, be careful not to allow one particular player or character to dominate the plot. Some players may be more aggressive about grabbing centre stage than others are, but try to make sure everyone gets equal time. In particular, include the specialities of the various characters in the adventure. There should be objects for the strong characters to lift and break, shadows in which the skulkers can hide, mysteries for the detectives to solve, etc.

If you are finding a particular character dull or uninteresting, mention this to the player and work together to develop his or her story further. Find hooks that make for interesting adventures or build a subplot around that hero to inject some more life and colour.

Take a Break

If you find yourself "burning out" because of stress, the demands of everyday life, or simply because you have run the game for too long, you only have one clear solution: take a break. Put the campaign on hiatus for a while and run something else or, better yet, let a player Game Master a new game and take the chance to be a player yourself! When you feel like your creative batteries have been recharged, come back to the game with renewed energy. This solution is much better than allowing the campaign to drag and become a chore.

Handling the Rules

Part of the Game Master's job is handling and interpreting the various game rules. Players have a way of putting their characters in situations the game's designers never contemplated. No rules system can take every possible situation into account; *Dreaming Cities* purposely leaves many aspects of the rules open for interpretation. As GM, you must ultimately make the calls.

Cheating: Just Do It!

If you want your players to think you are the best Game Master in the world, you only have one option: cheat, and cheat often. Never make a single dice roll without thinking to yourself, "Hmmm ... if I cheat and change the result of this roll, will I make it a better game?" In the games of Game Mastering and role-playing, there are no rules about "being fair," "sticking to the dice roll," or "being honest with the players." There is only one rule: make your game the best it can be. As Einstein once said, "Gott würfelt nicht (God does not play dice)," and neither should you. Dice are only a tool to suggest how you should make up your mind. You make the decisions, not the dice.

Whether you ask your players to also follow this advice is up to you....

Rules Questions

Questions about the rules will arise during games and you must resolve them. They may be questions about how a rule works, what rule applies in a particular situation, or how to handle an unusual situation or application of a rule.

Become as familiar with the rules of the game as you can. You need not commit them to memory, although they may find their own way there the more frequently you play and run the game. Read through the rules thoroughly at least once before running the game, however. If you can, run a couple of solo test combats using the characters in this book or ones of your own creation to better understand how the game plays.

When a rules question arises, take a moment to handle it and make your answer as clear as possible to the players. When you first play the game, you are likely going to need to consult the rules fairly often, until you and the players understand the Tri-Stat System dX and its nuances. You may prefer to ask one of the players to look up rules for you during the game so you can focus on the story.

Most situations can be adjudicated without dice, or with a simple Stat or Skill check with an appropriate modifier. When in doubt, ask a player to make a Stat check for the character and apply a modifier (bonus or penalty) that suits the situation. See Check Value Difficulty Modifiers and Should I Make My Players Roll Dice? on pages 96 and 95 for additional guidelines.

Sometimes during the game you will make a "GM's call," where you say, "this is how I want to handle it for now." Ask the players to respect your ruling and move on with the game. If necessary, you can talk after the game about the ruling and how to best handle similar situations when they arise in the future.

House Rules

Every gaming group tends to develop its own set of "house rules" over time. These are modifications (or clarifications) of the game's rules or specific rules about conduct at the gaming table. House rules should make the game a more pleasant and enjoyable experience for everyone, and the players and the Game Master should agree upon the particular House Rules that are in effect before the session in which they are to be used.

Let the players know if you have changed any of the game's rules or if you are using any optional rules in your campaign. If the players have any concerns about these rules changes, discuss them and if necessary, come to a compromise. Record any rules changes and make a handout for the players, so everyone knows the rules; this will minimise disputes.

Rules of conduct, or "table rules" as they are sometimes known, vary from group to group. Some groups prefer to limit side conversations, inappropriate movie and television quotes, or jokes while the game is in progress. Others have no such rules. Use whatever works best for your group.

Changing the Rules

On occasion, gaming groups may want to change the rules provided in this book to better suit their own games and style of play. If you find that a particular rule does not work for you then change it! Of course, you may want to consider carefully how any changes will affect point balance and other rules in the game. Test a rules change for a session or two and see how it works. You can always change it back or modify it further as necessary.

A particular gap in the rules does not necessarily require a rules change, but rather discussion and agreement among the players. In many genres, characters can have tremendous powers, and inexperienced players (see Power Abuse, page 116) can abuse those powers. Rather than changing the rules to restrict the characters, consider asking the players to voluntarily modify their characters' behaviours to eliminate the abuse.

Never change the rules arbitrarily or without informing the players in advance of the change, and your reasons for it. This ensures there will be fewer rules disputes and confusion during the game.

Troubleshooting

Even the best gaming groups (and Game Masters) encounter difficult situations. When problems arise, you must resolve them. The following are some of the more common troubleshooting techniques you can use to help keep your campaign running smoothly.

Making Mistakes

Sometimes you may make a mistake, whether it is misinterpreting a rule or not recalling an important fact about an NPC. If the mistake occurs during the game, own up to it, do what you can to correct it, and move on. It is much better to tell your players, "oops, I made a mistake," than to try and cover it up or, even worse, refuse to admit it and allow the game to suffer because of it.

Most mistakes are not likely to make much difference in the game. If a mistake does result in serious consequences (such as the death of a player character), you can either choose to reverse the problem — changing history and saying it never happened — or you can redress it in a future adventure. Perhaps the heroes get an opportunity to fix the mistake, or even to travel back in time and change history themselves, in order to "right the cosmic balance" by preventing an event that should not have happened.

Conflict Between Players

Although most campaigns are about teamwork and co-operation, conflict may arise between players in your group. Note this is not conflict between characters, which can be interesting and fun, but a conflict between the players that threatens to spoil everyone's enjoyment of the game.

If a conflict develops between two or more of your players, discover what the basis of the conflict is and settle it through some mutually agreeable compromise. Make it clear to the players that they should keep their personal disputes out of the game. If they are incapable of doing so, or settling matters, then ask one or more of the difficult players to leave the game. Most problems can be solved long before that becomes necessary however.

In the case of conflicts over events happening in the game, remind the players that it is just a game and the goal is for everyone to have fun. If an in-game conflict is not enjoyable for a player, try modifying or eliminating it. If there is conflict in the group about the game, find out what it is and settle it by changing the campaign's plot or adding some house rules that address the issue.

Power Abuse

The player characters may have tremendous powers. Perhaps they can literally move mountains, or change the course of history. Sooner or later, someone will decide to see just how far he or she can go with their character's powers.

While you should encourage player creativity, there are some uses of powers that are either inappropriate to the campaign genre or, if permitted, are likely to ruin everyone's enjoyment of the game. In those cases, you need to step in and politely, but firmly, refuse to allow them. For example, it is certainly possible to create a character able to control the minds of everyone on Earth with sufficient Levels of the Mind Control Attribute and the Area, Range, and Targets PMVs. Does that mean you as GM have to allow such a character in your game? No. In fact, you probably should not. Tell the player "I do not think that idea works for our game" or "I do not think that your character would really do something like that, do you?" A gentle reminder is usually enough to dissuade most players, especially if it is for the good of the campaign as a whole.

In cases where players create abusive powers or characters, you can simply ask the players in question to drop the characters or redesign them to fit the campaign. There is nothing wrong with saying, "your interpretation of that Attribute is simply too powerful for this game" and setting limits on what the characters are capable of accomplishing. Alternatively, when an abuse of power happens in the game, you can surprise the players with the consequences of their actions in a later session.

Getting Back on Track

No adventure plan survives unchanged after contact with the players, who do the most unexpected things ... some of which can derail a planned adventure. Sometimes all you can do is follow where the players lead you. If you have a good grasp of the setting and characters for your game, you should be able to improvise and deal with most digressions from your plot. The players may even provide you with some ideas and opportunities you had not originally considered.

Other times, when an adventure is diverging wildly from the story you had planned, you may need to nudge things towards the best direction. The trick is to do this without the players realising, since the ideal adventure leads the players as little as possible. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to guide wayward players back in the right direction.

Give Them a Clue

Villains are notorious for taunting heroes with clues about their fiendish master plans. If the heroes wander away from the plot, have the villain drop them a hint like a riddle, a sudden attack, or a threatening message. A decent clue can put the heroes hot on the villain's trail again.

Sudden Insight

Provide a more direct clue using the heroes' abilities. A psychic or mystic hero might have a vision or flash of insight, or a skilled detective might piece together certain clues. Heroes with enhanced senses may pick up on clues others failed to notice, while a telepathic hero might sense a stray thought or "psychic impression."

NPCs

If all else fails, you can have an NPC guide the characters in the right direction. The best way to enact this is to have the characters come to the NPC's rescue, rather than the supporting character solving the problem.

Creating a Campaign

A campaign is an ongoing series of adventures featuring the same cast of player characters, in a world that evolves and changes from session to session. Creating a campaign may be as simple as running one adventure after another. There is an almost limitless number of different stories you can tell with *Dreaming Cities*, and some campaigns are better suited to some gaming groups than others. This section looks at the major choices that go into building a successful adventure series.

Campaign Scope

A role-playing game can range from a brief one-shot adventure that takes a few hours to play to a lengthy campaign that can run over many sessions for a period of months or years. The story pacing and plot depth of a campaign is different from that of a mini-campaign, which in turn differs from that of a one-shot adventure.

A campaign usually has a vast or epic scope with a number of shorter plot arcs that weave together to reveal the greater story. The characters have time to develop unique personalities as they are faced with challenges to their bodies, minds, and souls. The characters have the opportunity to learn new Skills and Attributes and establish lasting relationships with NPCs. In a campaign, the players have ample time to explore the various aspects of the world that the GM has created. Additionally, antagonists will come and go over the course of a campaign as they are defeated, destroyed, or reformed by the characters. The GM should establish the outline of a plot for the beginning of the campaign before play begins, but the interests and actions of the characters will largely determine the middle and the end of the story.

Mini-Campaigns

A mini-campaign is a single story arc that usually takes place over 4-8 gaming sessions. The characters may not develop much over the course of a mini-campaign since the plot only spans a few days to a few weeks. The antagonists are often present in every session with the major villain, if any, usually surviving at least until the final climactic conclusion to the story arc. Mini-campaigns require a greater plot structure than open-ended campaigns, and thus the players are required to focus more on the story and less on their own characters. The GM should know where the characters will start (the beginning) and where they should go (the middle), but the closure at the end of the story is heavily dependent on the choices made by the player characters during the game.

One-Shot Adventures

A one-shot adventure covers one single story idea in a 3-8 hour gaming session. These adventures are frequently run at conventions and as demonstrations at game stores. The characters are unlikely to develop much during an adventure because the story only spans a few hours to a few days. To maintain a high level of intensity during the game, the role-playing of character personalities is often sacrificed for dramatic action and conflict. In order to finish the adventure in one session, one-shots are often highly structured and only offer the characters a limited number of choices for each dilemma that they face. Most GMs usually script the plot to establish the beginning and middle of the story, and have a rough idea of the ending as determined by the players' actions. For example, whether the villain wins, loses, or escapes will depend on what the players did.

Player Input

The first thing to do when planning your campaign is to ask your players what sort of game they would like to play. If you want to run an urban fantasy campaign featuring a private detective agency that employs elves and wizards to fight occult horrors in contemporary San Francisco and your players want to play in a far future space opera game, you are both going to end up disappointed. Negotiate with the players as necessary until you have a concept that everyone will enjoy.

Once you have established the kind of campaign you are going to run, ask the players what kinds of characters they would like to play, since that can affect decisions about the campaign as well. Some character concepts may not be appropriate for your campaign, and it is better to deal with that up front than have a player get set on a particular character idea that does not suit the game.

Character Advancement

Character advancement is unnecessary in a short adventure, but during a lengthy campaign, players may wish to improve the Stats, Skills, and Attributes of their characters. Advancement is not a requirement, but it can reflect the characters' learned knowledge through conflicts with the environment, with other characters or NPCs, or even with themselves.

The GM is encouraged to award all characters one Advancement Character Point every three to five role-playing sessions and one Advancement Skill Point every couple of sessions. Each player can assign these Character Points to Stats or Attributes immediately (GM's discretion) or accumulate them for future use.

GMs can award Points more frequently if this better fits the intended flavour of the campaign. This can be appropriate if the campaign is intended to be a short "mini-series" with a finite number of sessions, or if the game is intended to depict the rapid transformation of ordinary people into talented or magical individuals. The sudden flowering of new abilities or powers is quite common in the urban fantasy genre. An award of one or two Character Points and one Skill Point every session might be appropriate for a game of this nature.

The GM also has the option of rewarding exceptionally talented or active players with an extra Advancement Point. Finally, players that complete contributions for the game should receive additional Bonus Points as well (page 71).

The Point cost for increasing a Stat, Attribute, or Skill is identical to the cost during character creation. Players are encouraged to assign Advancement Points to Stats, Attributes, or Skills their characters use often. Alternatively, players can decide to have their characters acquire a new Attribute or Skill, provided they can come up with an explanation for the GM that justifies this choice. The GM may require a character to perform certain tasks to rationalise the acquisition of a new Attribute. He or she should not allow characters to acquire any Attributes that would disrupt the balance of the game. At the GM's discretion, players can also use Advancement Points to remove Defects that are no longer appropriate to their characters' concepts.

The GM may allow characters with the Item of Power or Gadgets Attributes to "swap" existing items for other items of similar Point value during or between sessions if a good story rationale exists. For example, a technological inventor who uses a suit of power armour to fight crime may make some modifications to his suit between adventures, swapping Points in Flight to increase the armour's Special Attack Level — the Point cost for the suit of armour remains the same but the character has simply designed the Mark II version. Swapping Points requires the expenditure of in-game resources (favours, money, time, captured enemy gear, etc.) and in this example at least one and perhaps several Mechanics Skill checks before this can be completed. Additionally, this exchange of points represents a time consuming process that can take several days or weeks of work, depending on the extent of the change attempted (the Gadgeteer Attribute can reduce this time considerably).

The Urban Fantasy Campaign

The urban fantasy genre offers a GM virtually unlimited possibilities. Take a dash of the modern world, throw in a few random quirks and personal biases, don't forget to have walk-on appearances by famous celebrities, and sprinkle it all with a dose of magic and interesting mythical creatures. One of the strengths of the genre is that there are no firm rules. Anything might happen. The boundaries between reality and fantasy become blurred and a character from a novel, a singing pigeon, or a mythical monster is as likely to turn up in scenarios as a personality from the real world.

Differing Moods for Fantasy

It is very easy to switch moods in an urban fantasy. One scenario could be based on a traditional ghost story, the next a pastiche of a popular TV series, and a third an epic tale of high fantasy — and all of these stories could be facets of the same campaign. The world of urban fantasy is a multifarious place, a bustling city full of interesting characters, stories, and events just waiting to be investigated or unleashed. Within the city itself, many different stories, cultures, and possibilities coexist and cross-fertilise. Giving players a flavour of a lively bustling setting could involve allowing them to dip into all sorts of different plot arcs that are happening within their urban setting.

Stories with fantastic elements can be told in many different ways. A gothic horror campaign set in a vampire-infested Victorian London and a 21st century game about a family in New York with a talking cat are both urban fantasies, but have very different tones. The mood and atmosphere of a campaign is based on the setting, on the types of plots and story lines featuring in the game, and on underlying assumptions shared by the GM and players. The themes that are emphasised in scenarios help to define a game's mood. Urban fantasy can fit into many different sub-genres of fantasy. If the campaign revolves around a particular genre, the GM should discuss this with players to help them generate characters who will fit comfortably into the setting.

The mood and style of the campaign will affect its every aspect. This includes the portrayal of NPCs and how they interact with characters, which pieces of the setting are given most focus, and what types of stories will be told within the setting. For example, a player wishes to create a character that is a dour elfish prince. There are very different consequences for such a character in an epic tale of high fantasy, than there would be in a comic campaign, one played for laughs.

It isn't necessary for a campaign to fit snugly into just one of these types of mood. A high fantasy game can also be dark, and a comic game of light urban fantasy could have high overtones. Being set within a city allows for a very wide range of NPCs and situations, with potential to focus on very different themes from one scenario to the next. Switching styles or sub-genres between scenarios can give a campaign the feel of an anthology of short stories in a shared setting, which is a fun excuse to surprise players with something new every session.

Selecting a single theme or mood for the entire campaign will give a game a more cohesive, focussed feel. Players may find it easier to immerse themselves in their characters and the game setting once they are familiar with the campaign's axioms. It is also easier to present a long-term plot arc if the focus of the game is fixed on a particular style of story and characters.

High Fantasy

These stories encompass wide-ranging epic quests, world-shaking confrontations, and individuals overcoming their personal flaws to achieve their true inborn potential. They are modern myths, and relate the time-honoured themes of true heroes finding the inner strength to combat evil. Even romantic sub plots can have the feel of epic fantasy. Characters may fall tragically in love with unattainable people, or become involved in long and intricate courtships. True Love itself may have a magical power to defeat evil. High fantasy is often quite serious. The moral and physical battles being fought (and hopefully won) are important ones, and although there is room for comic relief, that room is not during any of the dramatic plot-driving climaxes.

Characters are likely to stand out from the world about them. They may be highly talented, chosen by the gods, heirs to legendary titles, or apparently mundane humans who are destined to achieve greatness during the campaign. They will be able to interact with powerful NPCs, often as equals, and may have an active part to play in fulfilling hallowed prophecies from the distant past. Characters in a high fantasy campaign are likely to be built using higher point totals than in other styles of fantasy, to reflect their heroic nature.

High urban fantasy relates elements of the modern world to the heroic epics of classic fantasy and mythology. Characters face evil overlords in modern guises and undertake world-shattering quests through the highways and byways of urban landscapes.

Low Fantasy

In contrast to high fantasy, these stories do not centre on the great and the good. Rather than focussing on conventional heroes whose goals are to save the world, low fantasy describes grittier, more down-to-earth characters. This does not mean that characters cannot be involved with the epic plot arcs of high fantasy, but they will see these stories from a different perspective. Instead of being the nobility and sorcerers, they are the foot soldiers, hapless apprentices, and merchants of the fantasy world. Their style of heroism is less likely to involve wielding ancient swords and duelling with dark lords so much as facing their own fears and overcoming their own moral shortcomings to do the right thing.

Low fantasy is often associated with a certain earthy humour. Characters are free from the social binds that tie true high fantasy heroes. They can still go on important quests and accomplish wondrous tasks, but they needn't be so disapproving about it. They are also less likely to interact directly with gods, kings, and A-list celebrities of both the fantasy and real world.

A low urban fantasy style of game focuses on the street culture and lowlife of both the city and the various magical subcultures within it. Characters in this type of campaign will see the city's underside, both in a real world sense and in a magical sense. An immersive game of low fantasy focuses on the day to day practical issues that might arise for magical but non-heroic characters. It need never involve major quests and world shattering events at all, but simply the business of survival, as magical creatures and those who live among them try to live, love, and find happiness in the big city.

Dark Fantasy

This sub-genre is very close to horror. The world of dark fantasy is often unpleasant, grim, and doomed. Characters may be struggling against impossible odds, living under a terrifying tyranny, or facing fearsome monsters with no real hope of success. In a dark world, survival itself is a form of victory.

Characters are often driven by angst, and they may harbour dreadful secrets from their past. The moral boundaries between good and evil often become very blurred in a dark fantasy, and characters allegiances' may be severely tested. Unsettling plot twists can leave characters unsure of what is right or wrong, isolated from the comfortable certainty of home. There are no guarantees that characters' deeds will be heroic, or that the forces of good will prevail. Characters are often unhappy, frightened, and powerless in the face of adversity. What victories they can win will be hard won and fleeting.

In a dark urban fantasy, a focus is on the themes of being an outsider. Magic is something that sets characters apart in the world, something that launches them into terrifying conflicts about which the mundane world knows nothing. Arcane power and knowledge makes their possessors unhappy, warps them into monsters, or drives them to monomania and insanity. Even the most evil of archenemies might once have had the potential to be something quite different.

Light Fantasy

A light fantasy is played for laughs. Ludicrous things may happen to characters, and they are allowed and even expected to respond in amusing ways. This does not mean that serious stories cannot be told, but they will be packed with inexplicable coincidences, NPCs with silly names, and anything else that gives the GM and players a quiet chuckle. It is common to satirise other fantasy novels, TV shows, and real life institutions in this type of campaign. Walk-on roles by unexpected but famous NPCs add to the general mayhem of the setting.

A light urban fantasy campaign highlights the juxtapositions of the fantasy creatures in the real world. These are used to point out some of the inconsistencies and strangeness of the world around us, and to encourage players to poke fun at both themselves and at the modern world.

Themes in Urban Fantasy

There is more to modern fantasy than simply magical creatures in the real world. These tales have a distinctive mood, a way of portraying the wondrous alongside the humdrum, and the primeval alongside the hauntingly modern. Stories focus on the interplay between urban life and the hidden magic in the world. Supernatural elements appear unexpectedly, sometimes incongruously. Characters learn to see the world around them through different eyes. Many people and places are not as they first appear. An old headmaster could be a secret guardian of the gateway into dream's country. A long deserted garage might be the centre of a Faerie market place every 10 years under a full moon.

In Urban Fantasy, Classic fantasy archetypes are reinvented and reinterpreted in modern terms. Instead of the knight in shining armour, perhaps it is the local drunk fighting his own inner demons who must embark on a sacred quest. Instead of a regal bargeman sailing the silent waters of the Styx, a taxi driver might ferry the souls of the dead from the city to the afterlife. Themes from ancient epics are retold in radio plays or adapted into graphic novels and online comic strips; modern nursery rhymes encapsulate

the fears and horrors of people who lived and died centuries ago. The past touches the present, and old stories can carry new meanings.

In our cities, people from many different backgrounds live in close proximity. Their lives touch daily and otherwise unrelated cultures that are free to clash and interact. Magical subcultures also thrive in these places. Never quite part of the mainstream, they still maintain old customs and taboos, and strive to preserve their own identity whilst moving with the times and adapting to the *zeitgeist*. Just as exotic rituals and language may confuse a guest in an unfamiliar culture, so may a stranger in the magical world be overwhelmed. Learning to interact with these societies and the supernatural creatures that have formed them is part of a character's initiation into the world of magic. Modern urban tribes — homeless people, skateboarders, clubbers, junkies, and bikers, for example -- also form subcultures outside of the mainstream. Magic and urban cultures are closely connected. Perhaps the graffiti on the wall by the skateboarding park is a protective ward against demons, and the grizzled drunkard who wakes up at home without remembering how he got there was really rescued by his guardian angel.

As well as human protagonists, the city itself often takes a leading role. Places may remember human joy and trauma which they have witnessed, and could even "awaken" if enough human energy is invested into them (see The Memory of Places, page 126).

Picking out a few of these themes to highlight when plotting a campaign can heighten the mood and feel of urban fantasy. A game focussing on alienation, the clash of different cultures, and how cities affect the people living in them will feel different from a game which concentrates on the incongruous situations that can happen when fantasy turns up in the real world, and characters taking on mythic archetypes.

Juxtaposition and Pacing

Careful pacing of a game highlights the contrast between "normal" life and the magical world. Slowly paced mundane scenes give characters time to relax and feel comfortable in a familiar environment. In a horror film, scenes of normality trick victims into a sense of false security. In urban fantasy, the same is true. To draw a scene out, the GM can encourage the player characters to interact with minor NPCs and locations at length. In a comic or TV series, sub-plots relating to shopping trips or domestic dealings would be considered filler material, a way for the author to take the characters out of a stressful adventuring environment and focus on how they react when the pressure is off. In a game, these types of scenes allow players to explore their characters without having to worry about any immediate threats.

By contrast, fast-paced scenes packed with action focus everyone on the events at hand. With no time to waste, the mood turns urgent and exciting. From being able to control the flow of the scene, players suddenly have to react quickly to external events, without much time to consider the consequences of their actions. Supernatural events explode into life (maybe even literally), and before characters have time to say "Wait, that's impossible!" they are catapulted from the familiar world they knew into a magical plot. This can amplify a sense of surprise, excitement, and wonder.

How the GM relates a scene also affects pacing. Deliberately describing locations and NPCs in great detail is the role-playing equivalent of giving characters plenty of time to look around. Adding unnatural elements to a scene slowly (for example: first the curtains twitch as if in a breeze, then a cold chill sweeps the room, then the sound of children chanting can be heard, and so on) also builds up the tension, encouraging characters to pause and pay attention to every spine-tingling detail. Keeping descriptions very brief and concentrating on the action conjures an image of changes happening rapidly, or characters being in too much of a hurry to notice minor particulars.

Theme: Secrets and Lies

"You understand that no one must ever know what you are?"

There are many things and creatures in the world that live a hidden, secret life. Being a magical creature in the real world may lead characters into a shadowy world of lies and subterfuge, never able to reveal their true selves. The majority of humans do not suspect that magical phenomena really exist, nor can they be allowed to know. Magical creatures have a variety of reasons for keeping their existence secret. They may be afraid of extinction, or need to hide in order to avoid other more powerful enemies than mere humans. Some might have acquired human friends or even family who they don't wish to drag into a nasty magical war. Others are subject to strict rules, rules constrained by powerful magic or supernatural law enforcers, rules that require them to keep their true natures hidden from the non-magical people around them. Any who dare flout those laws must live knowing that the day will come when the inevitable knock at the door or text message on the cell phone means that the game is up, that they must now face the judgement of their own kind.

For all these reasons and more, those who are involved with magic live in the shadows. They form secret societies to share their common experiences, and fight hidden wars with other factions … under the unseeing eye of the authorities. The need for secrecy is an over-riding concern that controls every aspect of their lives. They lack the freedom to relax and be themselves to which ordinary people are entitled. Many lurk and watch the business of human society from the sidelines, envious of those who have no need to hide. Others revel in their self-declared superiority, preying on mortal victims or covertly manipulating human pawns.

Theme: Magic is Surreal

"It was as if I were dreaming, or as if my whole life up to this point had been no more than a dream from which I had awoken…."

Magic in urban fantasy has a dreamlike, surreal quality. In dreams, anything can happen and the dreamer will find a way to accept it. The moon is made of cheese, true love breaks curses, soul mates can read each other's minds, and the children of midnight cast no shadow. The concept of trying to explain magic in real world terms is alien to magical creatures. Words and logic are not the tools they would use for explanation. Intuition, music, and art offer better ways to delve into the meanings of the unreal. Explaining the supernatural as dreams or as visions is also a way for people to try to come to terms with what they have seen that doesn't contradict what they know about their world. After all, anything can happen in dreams.…

Drugs and Visions

Practitioners of magic and mortals travelling to otherworldly places often invoke a trance or induce visions to help them on their way. This visionary state can be reached using drugs, meditation, dance, or dreams. It could also be reached by less traditional routes such as sleep deprivation, playing computer games for hours without a break, hypnosis, or some more personal way of getting into "the zone." In this mental state, magic is easier to explain and control. Urban magicians make use of mind-altering substances and casual street-smart rituals to help them work magic or communicate with the supernatural.

Dreams are often meaningful to the dreamer, even if he or she doesn't realise it at the time, and so are magical experiences. If a demon summoned to divulge information is carrying a toy doll when he arrives, characters may later find the doll itself … and ponder what the connection might be between the child who owns it and the demon from the magical vision.

GM Tips: The Unreality of Magic

Magical experiences are replete with impossible imagery, contradictions and incongruous juxtapositions. Often they have a surreal, dream-like mood, as if lifted straight out of the subconscious. (If a situation could fit nicely into *Alice in Wonderland,* the chances are that it is surreal.) The following tricks can help a scene become more surreal to players. They are best used sparingly. When a scene becomes too weird, players have trouble relating to it.

- Being unable to concentrate on specific details and drawn instead towards others is a dreamlike quality. This implies that the dreamer is not entirely in control of his or her own senses. Perhaps a character wants to examine the talking statue but instead becomes fascinated by the rippling shadows of the drapery, or some otherwise minor but all-consuming detail.
- In fiction, unexpected adjectives and out-of-place descriptions such as "swan-white skies", "spidery, incarnadine nails", and "ashen breath," add to this air of unreality. In a game, describing how incongruous elements affect the senses has the same effect — perhaps water flows in amethyst and spice rivulets, a honey-cake tastes of broken dreams, or the scent of homesickness fills the air. The descriptions themselves contain internal contradictions, so throwing them at players draws them into the dream logic.
- A common surreal motif involves inanimate objects coming to life or dumb animals being able to speak. This is heightened if they then behave in unexpected ways (even for an inanimate objects), such as the carpet whose woven patterns shift to form strange sigils and then fly off into the evening sky, or the speaking cat who wears a velvet frock-coat and walks on his hind paws.
- Having difficulty in remembering details of the scene after it has finished is also very typical of dreams. This can be simulated by requiring players to make a successful Soul Stat Check if they wish to record their magical experience or relate it to someone else after the event.

Theme: Echoes from the Past

"Even in the heart of the city, no one can escape the past."

To an outsider, a city has no memory, and no reverence for tradition. People are absorbed, then spat back out. Those who know better realise that the city does remember. Everyone who has lived within the city and helped to build it into what it is today has left their mark, or their influence. Some might call this the city's atmosphere, or even its soul. Echoes from the past are a reminder that although places or people may seem modern and vibrant, no one can escape the inexorable consequences of past actions. They will return to haunt characters when least expected.

The past also holds important secrets. Understanding the present requires investigation of the past, perhaps even disturbing long-forgotten histories that suddenly become very relevant. Curses that have lain dormant through the generations are reawakened. Promises that were made between immortal creatures when the world was young still hold lasting power. Tragedies enacted between sad couples centuries ago leave their supernatural stains on the modern city. Ancient traditions hold mystical truths within them, to be ignored by adventurers at their peril. When investigating occult phenomena, every minor local detail could be significant, from the nursery rhyme that local children are chanting to the graffiti on the walls, or the coats of arms embroidered into an old suit.

Clues lie everywhere in plain sight to those who can recognise them. Many facets of the modern city offer insights into the past which might prove key to understanding a supernatural phenomenon. Mysteries embedded in the real world, whether in buildings, in songs, or in stories suddenly make sense when the creatures they describe come to life. Those who honour the traditions and memories of their own culture may find themselves drawn into arcane wars, or appointed by their knowledge as the sole keepers of keys to antique riddles. If there is power in the stories of the past, then remembering them is an important task.

Theme: Creativity and Magic

"There is power in the human imagination."

Magic is more than just a source of supernatural power. It is an expression of the music of the spheres, and the life force of the universe. Spirits, gods, and magical creatures are connected to this power, and can manipulate it to produce magical effects. Humans are also attuned to the same force, however forcefully some folk try to quash its primitive, strident song in their souls. In particular, artists and other creative or imaginative individuals wield or can summon magical power. Acts of wanton creativity — performances where the artist channels pure forces of creation — can easily become acts of magic. Many magical creatures recognise this affinity and are drawn to it themselves. Some come to admire; others find more sinister uses for such talents.

Objects that were once the focus of a creator's passion also possess magical potency. They might develop personalities and agendas of their own. Those places where great works of imagination or creativity were created are also more likely to "come alive," attract magical beings, or become gateways to other worlds (see Important Magical Locations, page 126). Children playing in the streets might touch on magical forces as their games of imagination awaken something that had long been sleeping. Imaginary friends might not be so imaginary after all.

Theme: Layers of Identity

"I learned that I was more than I had previously thought."

People are often more than they first appear. Many have aspects and depths about which even those close to them know nothing. Some hide criminal activities or secret relationships, others devote years of their lives to hobbies whose nature might surprise their friends. In a city, it is easy to mingle daily with different subcultures, many of which are oblivious to each other's existence. Work-mates, family, contacts with a shared hobby, friends in an online game or chat room, each group sees a different side to an individual and could even know them by a different nickname. In a big city, a person can maintain many "masks", selecting the identity they choose to present according to their circumstances.

Supernatural creatures maintain mundane personas. The mysterious oracle doffs her concealing veil and drives to her job at the bank, while a lord of the Unseelie court counts parking tickets and calculates fines. Those who are involved with the world of magic are forced to cultivate false guises, and normal people may discover magical sides to themselves that they never knew they had. Characters find themselves thrust into unfamiliar cultures. They see a different side to the city they thought they knew.

Parts of a person's identity could also be misplaced or forgotten. If gods forget their true nature and drift into the real world, what happens to them? Does the moon lose her path through the sky, and the wandering soul forgets his way home? Magical creatures may be roaming the streets, unaware of who they truly are (or were), marooned in the big city, just drifting along with the rest of society's flotsam and jetsam.

Theme: Elements of Fantasy

"The magic, the mystery, the swords and sorcerers, they are right here!"

Portraying fantastic creatures and situations in the real world is the core of urban fantasy. These tales ask, "what if magic really existed in our world? What if ancient myths had truth in them?" As a campaign unfolds, questions will be answered about how magical creatures could live, love, fight, and quest in a modern city. The trappings of these stories will be contemporary ones, far different from those of medieval folklore, but the threats and monsters that must be overcome are still perilous. They just appear in a form more appropriate to the setting.

Magic

Magic can create wonders and perform miracles; it describes any supernatural way to finesse reality into obeying a magician's will. Anything is possible, from miracle cures to fireballs, from invoking a beautiful sunset to slaying an enemy with a whisper. Magic isn't an unnatural force that defies the laws of nature, it's just that the world has supernatural aspects that science can't yet exploit but magicians can. Some methods of magic, based on ancient beliefs and appeals to immortal spirits, even retain an air of haunting spirituality. Those who practice magic view themselves as channelling a form of mystical energy. Meditation, ritual prayers or invocations, and traditional magic spells help to focus this power, but despite any arcane trappings, magic to a magician is as natural as laughter. Modern mages adapt old-fashioned traditions to a more contemporary idiom (see Rules of Magic: Similarity, page 86 and Rules of Magic: Contagion, page 86).

Although magic isn't bound to obey conventional physics, it does have its own rules and strictures. Ignoring these rules is at one's own risk. A magician is more likely to rely on intuition and "dream logic" to understand how modern magic works than on books of academic notes (see Theme: Magic is Surreal, page 119).

Fantastic Races

Not everyone in the city is human. This in itself is an unsettling discovery for anyone who was raised in mundane society. Other intelligent, magical races that have little in common with humanity share our world. Even beings that seem human might be mere shells, harbouring something alien within. Some supernatural races have lived among humanity since the dawn of time. Others could have originated from another plane of existence; perhaps they are ghosts from the lands of the dead, creatures from dreams, or avatars that have escaped a virtual online world.

Often, these races will be drawn from human folklore and mythology. Creatures such as elves, dragons, faeries, dwarves, and spirits are familiar from countless legends. In a modern setting, they could appear in vastly altered forms from those described by the original myths. Non-human entities stroll along the city streets, loll in luxury apartments, broker business deals, and appear on quiz shows. To mix with humanity, members of these races must either be able to assume human form or have a way to hide from the world of men. Shape shifting is commonplace, as are illusory or glamorous powers.

Magical Items

What would fantasy be without the archetypal magical potions, weapons, and artefacts? The seven league boots and the talking mirrors, the cloaks of invisibility and the blades that fight of their own accord feature in urban fantasy just as they do in older stories. These most often appear as Items of Power whose special abilities have been imbued by magical means. Some magic items are similar to the traditional objects of legend. Others will be far more contemporary in form and function, having been brought into being to serve a more modern purpose.

Some magical items might perform a function that seems quite mundane in the modern world. A sleeping potion may be similar in effect to an anaesthetic, and a book that contains all the knowledge in the universe (subject to extreme writer bias, and with an atrociously bad index) could be replaced by a laptop computer with an Internet connection. If a magical item serves a very similar purpose to a real world gadget, the main difference being that it is powered by magic rather than conventional science and engineering, it might appear on a character sheet as a Gadget.

Another type of item is a mundane item that has been used as a focus for a spell or other magical Attribute. For example, if a spell is cast through a painting, the painting might appear to have the power to hypnotise a victim, or even to kidnap them. In fact, the wizard or magical creature that first owned the painting provides the power. A character could possess one of these objects without ever understanding its true nature and purpose. Such items are worth no Character Points in themselves. Instead they are represented as Restrictions on the Attributes of the character who needs them to perform magic (who need not be the current person in possession of the item).

Other magical items may even have extra Attributes that the current possessor knows nothing about. These Items of Power are created with Restrictions that reflect the hidden agenda of the item's creator.

Magical items are not always dumb objects. They may possess a rudimentary sentience and intelligence, or the ability to operate themselves without assistance. Imagine a magical car that can drive itself, or a chess set that can play against an opponent by moving its own pieces. If the magical item is intelligent enough to be loyal, it could belong to a character as a Servant, rather than as an Item of Power.

Creating Items of Power in the game is as difficult and time consuming for characters as the GM desires. As a basic requirement, the character must have enough spare Character Points to create the new Item of Power. He or she must also be familiar with the magical powers to be imbued into the new item, and must know of some magical way to perform this creation ritual. If he or she is a ritual mage, for example, this could mean researching a magical technique that will allow powers to be imbued into an item. Any other requirements on creating Items of Power are purely up to the GM to determine, based on the style of the campaign. A wizard who can breathe life into an inanimate object would cast a spell representing a Unique Attribute, granting an item the ability to move around and acquire some basic level of intelligence for the duration of the spell.

An alternative way to approach creating items is to begin design work before the Character Points are available to the player character. The GM determines what special ingredients, what arduous quests, long hours of sanity-draining research in the laboratory and assistance from experts will be needed. The character must fulfil all of these requirements, and instead of earning Advancement Points as usual for these game sessions, success with the tasks automatically provides some (or all) of the necessary Character Points for the item.

Legendary Items

Many legends feature fabulous magical artefacts. Some have associations with epic heroes or wizards, while stories tell of others that were directly imbued with their powers by a divine hand … or a diabolical one. If mythical creatures and locations can appear in the modern world, then perhaps these items also have survived the centuries. They are likely to be highly sought after by many factions of magical creatures, both for the powers they control and the prestige which ownership would confer.

Modern myths also make legends out of inanimate items. Anything strongly associated with a modern day icon may have acquired a magical aura or powers of its own, if characters could only work out how to unlock its abilities. Musical instruments played by legendary performers, notebooks or computers owned by great speechmakers or novelists, and the favoured casserole dish of notable chefs might all have acquired a mythical status in the modern world. Magicians with an interest in sympathetic magic, as well as magical archaeologists and researchers, may seek to locate such items for their own sake. Power hungry magical factions might also collect legendary artefacts, both ancient and modern.





Legendary items are notably self willed. They rarely spend long periods of time in the hands of those who do not use them appropriately. If such an item should fall into the possession of a player character, there is doubtless some reason for it.

Arcane Societies

Magical groups and factions band together to pursue common goals, but also engage in secret wars and conflicts with adversaries. These factions are esoteric and secretive. Members carry out strange rituals and observances, or honour ancient traditions for which the original purposes are long forgotten. Plots and conspiracies are rife, and no one can be trusted. Being involved with such groups makes life uncertain and uncomfortable for characters. Friends are easily confused with foes, many people have hidden agendas, and loyalties can be enforced by supernatural means. Each arcane society has a purpose and an ethos. These might be as simple as sharing knowledge between wizards, guarding a city against supernatural incursions, or taking over the world. Many have elitist restrictions on who may join, or are limited to magical creatures of a particular race.

In the modern world, an arcane society might hide behind a façade of normality, presenting itself as a social club or networking group for businessmen. Only a privileged inner circle is aware of the society's true nature and purpose. In a campaign focussed on conspiracies, such groups might even have infiltrated multinational organisations, political parties, and other influential bodies in order to further their agendas.

Other Worlds

There are magical Otherworlds that can be reached from our own by those with the wit or wisdom to understand the paths between worlds. Some are more like alternate dimensions or other planes of existence, which lie alongside the real world. These encompass mythical lands and cities of legend, such as the Isle of Avalon, Faerie, the Valhalla of Norse myths, or even Heaven and Hell. Others include the world of dreams, where all dream creatures live when not visiting the human subconscious, or the land of the dead to which all souls must one day travel. These Otherworlds are magical in nature, and the laws of physics cannot be expected to reliably apply there. Visiting such places is always perilous for mortals, even if they are invited or guided by native creatures.

Travelling between worlds could involve passing through a portal, or activating a magical ritual to open the path (see Gateways Between Worlds, page 126). Instead of travelling physically, perhaps an adventurer falls into a trance and enters the Otherworld via a vision. Characters might magically log in on to a virtual cyberworld. One thing is certain, if adventurers or wizards from the real world can travel to these places, then the magical creatures that are native to these worlds can also travel to ours….

Many stories claim that magical creatures originally came from Otherworlds. Faerie is the traditional home of the fae folk. Ghosts reside in a spirit half-world, unable to travel on to the land of the dead. Magical characters could be exiles or outcasts, dreaming of the time when they will be able to return home to a place where they will no longer need to hide. In a more sinister campaign, denizens of a magical world may plot to invade the physical plane. An invasion of a modern city by magical creatures could be a subtle step-by-step affair as magic bleeds into reality and slowly warps it. Alternatively, it could take the form of a full frontal assault and open warfare.

Heroic Archetypes

Epic fantasy revolves around mythic heroes. Such people are larger than life, and follow a long tradition of legendary figures that are greater than those around them. They are willing to shoulder burdens which others would shun, and to take on impossible quests. Modern heroes also combat dreadful monsters and quest for legendary relics, in their own idiom. As characters become immersed in the magical life of a city, heroic roles may come naturally to them. Those touched by magic often discover something new in themselves that they previously had not known.

Contemporary heroes and heroic archetypes are mythical beings, with a predefined, ritual role to fill in modern fantasy epics. Old legends could be retold in the modern world, with the main characters doomed to be reincarnated, forced by powers beyond their control to re-enact the old story. For example, a campaign could involve the tragic Arthurian love triangle between Lancelot, Guinevere, and Arthur being retold in a modern setting. Characters who find themselves heir to one of these three great heroic archetypes know that they may be fated to replay the sad story of the original trio. Even though they know where this once led, there are no foregone conclusions. Perhaps they can find a happier ending than the original legend offered and put right some wrongs that were done in the past.

Theme: Elements of Myth

"Old legends walk the Earth in a modern guise."

Mythic creatures excite mixed reactions from people who discover them. Some will worship the creatures or run in fear from them, others will seek their destruction, but no one remains unmoved. Dreamers and students of folklore may find in these creatures a vindication of old magical beliefs that humanity once knew so well.

A humorous campaign highlights the paradoxes faced by mythical creatures that have awakened to a modern world, trying to deal with a humanity that has changed so much from what they once knew. Having actual gods and spirits come to life also poses a challenge for even the most urbane city dweller. Although modern man is quick to claim that humanity has progressed past tribal myths and superstitions, it is difficult to uphold this cynicism when the creature in question is strutting around the office, demanding respect. Perhaps these reborn myths are weaker than stories imply, or have drifted from their original purpose. Magicians who seek out such entities could be in for a dreadful disappointment.

Not all legends are benign. The original myths, transcribed by peoples who had a political purpose behind their religious sagas, could have obscured the nastier, more bloodthirsty reality behind the stories with careful allegories. In a darker setting, demons, monsters, and malevolent spirits inhabit the city alongside humanity, and they don't share well.

Urban Legends

"Everything people have ever believed can come true."

If old legends can come to life, then so can recent ones. Urban legends spring up as swiftly and randomly as the government changes the tax laws. These stories have little in common except that their origins are often mysterious, and they somehow spread so fast that suddenly "everyone" knows them. Many are comical, involving ludicrous coincidences happening to unfortunate (or fortunate) people, others are modern morality tales, featuring people being punished in horrible ways for flouting the conventions of society. They are not always based on falsehoods, but all are embellished to make good stories. Lists of urban legends are easily found online at www.snopes.com or www.urbanlegends.com and many of these can be lifted whole cloth and used as plot seeds in a game.

Other sources for modern beliefs are books, plays, and TV shows. Anything that has ever captured the human imagination, from great works of art to the latest soap operas, has generated characters, ideas, and images that could come to life. The cult of celebrity builds up modern myths and deities — urban legends thrive on sightings of Elvis, Napoleon, and President Kennedy. Children today still daydream about Father Christmas and have nightmares about the Tooth Fairy. Students fret about the location of the mystical homeland of missing socks, and commuters privately make sacrifices to the god of public transport who must be appeased before the bus will arrive….

Theme: Elements of Urbania

"The city is a unique and magical place, in and of itself."

Cities are marvellously exciting places to live. Urban society is constantly adapting to new stimuli, and birthing new and revolutionary ideas, fashions, and trends. Waves of people bring their hopes and fears and dreams with them to the city, many of them will never leave. Just as Faerie is traditionally perilous to human travellers, modern cities are both beguiling and sinister to the non-human creatures, drawn there like moths to the flame. Being native to this strange urban patchwork may prove to be a powerful advantage when struggling with magical influences on home turf. Even such humdrum knowledge as how to use public transport, what the local slang means, how to find a 24-hour supermarket, or how to call the emergency services could confound the plots of a magical creature who is a stranger to the world of men.

Urban culture is a quilt produced by the many different peoples who make the city their home. Investigations drive characters between gleaming shopping malls and nightclubs, depressed inner city slums where the establishment no longer holds sway, and even sleepy corporate offices, grey with suppressed boredom and conformist dreams. This is the city's unique and magical aspect. All things bright and dingy, the banes, blessings, and attitudes of modern life, can be found there. The contrast between poverty and wealth and between desperation and privilege within the city limits is as marked, and as powerful, as any juxtaposition of reality with magic.

The Hidden Life of Cities

"Delving into parts of the city's soul that only an insider should ever be allowed to see."

A living city has a pulse that beats to a rhythm generated from within. This is not the city of laws and regulations, of carefully planned commercial zones, and neatly planted parkland. The city's soul is the people within it, and their quiet interactions, passing unnoticed and unrecorded. Old people sip at coffee and weave their memories into the great urban tapestry, young people tap into street life, bringing new ideas and fashions into the city's dreamscape. All of these currents run deep, with roots in every urban tribe and culture. Exploring the nuances of a previously unknown community is an important theme in many urban fantasies, which often focus on cultures outside the mainstream. Magic itself is just another subculture within the city's whole.

There is another side to the hidden life of cities. Places can awaken if enough human energy is vested into them (see The Memory of Places, page 126). Perhaps the city itself is more than just a collection of buildings infested with humanity; perhaps it has a soul. The city's spirit could be malignant or even vampiric, preying on the people who live within it. If a city can be alive, then perhaps it could also become sick or insane, or even, like ancient Petra, die….

Building the Setting

A strong sense of location sets the scene for urban fantasy. Stories take place in the real world. Magical scenes are played out in familiar modern locations. No matter how fantastic the creatures or how primeval the old myths which have come alive, the place and the time for the action is right here, right now. Just as people are often more than they seem in these stories, places also can have a hidden magical side….

Archetypal fantasy locations appear, adapted to fit into the contemporary world alongside the creatures who use them. The broad-shouldered castles, elvish woodland cities, dragons' lairs, and Faerie markets could all exist in an urban setting, in new and different forms. Magical creatures may even have learned from the mortals, and built modern human innovations into their strongholds. Many of these places are so well disguised that people live and work in them every day, never suspecting the true nature of the familiar buildings.

These magical places are a focus for supernatural activity in the city. Many of these places will have far more meaning to magical creatures than to the humans who know only their mundane forms. Other locations might be equally significant to both worlds, but for different reasons. Some locations may seem oddly, strangely appropriate to people who discover their hidden sides.

Discovering the secret, magical sides of well-known locations help lend a sense of wonder to the city. Suddenly a place that was familiar to characters becomes new again, and strange. If the game is set in a city familiar to the GM and players, there are likely to be incongruous buildings and places that leap out as having the potential to be magical in an urban fantasy. Does a club have an odd name, or a shop thrive in the middle of nowhere? Are there strange gargoyles lurking on the roof of one particular house, or a park that has an interesting history? All of these places are rife for reinvention as magical locations.

Designing hidden purposes for well-known locations is also a way to set the tone of a game. In a light hearted campaign, perhaps exceptionally mundane locations will have magical aspects to them — a local supermarket might be hallowed ground fought over by groups of wizards, an insurance company headquarters might contain a gateway to Faerie, and a Chinese restaurant might be the lair of an ancient dragon. In a campaign of high fantasy, magical locations are more intuitively appropriate. Perhaps the hallowed ground is a graveyard built on top of an old Roman temple, or the magical portal is in a hidden parkland glade, or a house where a famous poet once lived.

Rites of Passage

The woman shrugged once at Tom and strode ahead into the gloom. Setting his jaw, he followed her silhouette, his boots splattering against the wet paving stones.

"Allie! Hang on! Won't you at least tell me where we are going?" he begged.

Ignoring his pleas, she took the steps up to the entrance of the old boarded-up telephone exchange two at a time, and waited for him briefly at the top. Sucking in his cheeks, the teacher followed her and was rewarded with a brief, ice-sharp smile.

"This is it," she announced, "let me do the talking."

With that, she rapped once on the doors with her knuckles, and pushed the other hand absently through hair that glowed almost white in the moonlight. Under the mingled light of the moon and the sodium streetlights, it looked to Tom as though all of Allie's colour had been leeched away, leaving only a black and white cartoon. Then the door opened a crack.

"Who is this?"

"Who do you think?"

The man who had opened the door (Tom could only see his shadow from where he was standing) growled, "You know the rules."

Allie sniffed audibly, "Oh, very well. By oak and ash, the lady of the waters and the lord of midnight, the Court of Night and the city of Ys, I demand safe passage for my charge and myself. Obstruct me and face the wrath of my masters."

The door opened wide.

"Enter Lady, and your charge with you, but be quick about it."

"Come on," Allie ordered Tom. He swallowed hard. He had already seen the shadow of the man melt into that of a great black dog … but it was too late to turn back now.

The Memory of Places

In the magical city, places themselves may be roused to life. Bricks and mortar are more substantial and longer-lived than the human hands that made them. Silently and dumbly they look on as our tiny lives come and go. If the spirit of a place could somehow speak to us, it might be able to remember many things long lost to mankind. Locations with a spirit of their own might have been awoken by complex magical rituals, or by something as simple as a child's beliefs. In extreme cases, perhaps the spirit once was a living creature. Maybe it was somehow transformed into its current state, or died and its body was buried in the foundations. Or perhaps the spirit of the place, the "genius locus", is older and more self-aware than any creation of a mere wizard.

If a place is sentient and has memories, it might also have a darker purpose. A building that wishes to entrap or to kill people could become a terrible adversary, attracting other nightmarish monsters to its vicinity to share in the bloodshed. A place with a more helpful or provident personality could become a focal point for people and creatures that share those traits, even if none of them realise why the location is so attractive to them. If a building has a strong atmosphere that sensitive people can feel, it could be a sign that it has a spirit of its own. Perhaps a malevolent old house inflicts pain and suffering to its human inhabitants, a playground lures children from their parents with the promise that they can play there forever, or a library tries to help people find the books, for which it thinks they should be looking.

Other buildings might no longer exist in the real world, but only in the memories of the city. In an urban fantasy, these places are not forever gone. A magical traveller could still take a dream journey to walk the halls of the library at Alexandria, lounge on the deck of the Titanic, or buy sweets from a shop that was demolished during the Blitz.

Important Magical Locations

Just as any real city will have places where important people tend to gather, the magical city of urban fantasy has favoured gathering points for its supernatural population. Characters have reasons to visit these places repeatedly. They are locales that have such strong connections with the magical life of the city that the campaign revolves around them. If one of these locations is damaged or threatened, it creates ripples of concern throughout the local magical world. The locations may house powerful NPCs or nodes of power that are fiercely contested in secret power struggles. They might be gateways to other worlds, popular meeting places, or places where humans and non-humans alike are initiated into the magical subculture of the city.

A common theme in these stories is that something which was once known becomes forgotten, and the only clues to its existence are hidden in the past, in old architecture, and works of art (see Theme: Echoes from the Past, page 121). Even a magical place can fall into disuse, if the people who once used it had a reason to abandon the place. Hapless people could easily stumble into such a location, or accidentally reawaken something that had long been sleeping.

In a surreal setting, some places could be replaced by people or objects. A magical gateway could be a person trapped in an enchanted sleep, rather than a place. An ageing gnome might be a magical prophetic oracle, and the magical power in a nightclub might only awaken when a particular DJ plays a set. In these cases, the location is transient; it is wherever the source of its power happens to be.

Deciding which (if any) of the locations discussed here belong in a particular campaign and where to place them helps to determine the character of the whole setting.

Gateways between Worlds

Gateways between worlds are locations where the boundaries between worlds are weak, or where magical portals have been opened. In these places, a traveller can cross from one world to another. Creatures from the other side of the boundary may also be able to enter the "real" world. Beyond the portal could lie a magical world of alien landscapes and cities, a spirit world built of dreams and memories, or even a mythical land. These places often have a resonance with the world to which the gateway leads. For example, a graveyard might be a portal to the land of the dead. A graveyard houses old bones and rotted corpses, and is a place where the living come to remember those who are gone so by its nature it is a place where life contacts death. Hospital wards and old plague pits are also places that are connected with death, which could mark them out as other potential gateways in a game where the two worlds sometimes touch.

Gateways may be self-willed and intelligent. A playful city delights in luring unsuspecting travellers into deserted suburb-worlds that exist frozen in time between one second and the next, far away from the familiar streets they know. A gateway might even be an item, perhaps a picture or photograph that resembles the place to which it leads, or a mirror that sometimes shows a scene that has nothing to do with the real world reflection of the person looking into the glass.

Like any ordinary doorway, the portal might need to be unlocked and opened before it can be used. Maybe this requires ritual sacrifices, or a special artefact key. Perhaps a gatekeeper must be persuaded to open the doorway, or cajoled into revealing the portal's secrets. Other gateways might only open on prescribed times and dates. For example, perhaps the graveyard gateway is easiest to open on All Souls' Day, a day whose association with remembering the dead goes back to pre-Christian times. A forgotten portal to a spirit world might open briefly only when Haley's Comet is visible in the night sky.

A gateway could be unidirectional, allowing visitors to travel in only one direction. It may be too small for a human to pass through, instead allowing smaller creatures or even just messages to be magically relayed between worlds. Perhaps a deserted telephone box can be used to put calls through to Asgard, or a radio frequency that can only be picked up on specially prepared tuners is broadcast through a tiny gateway from Faerie.

Common plot threads involving magical gateways:

- A regular mundane location or item becomes a magical gateway. The person or people who own it either fall through the gateway, or encounter a creature that has come to the real world.
- Magical factions fight over who owns the access rights to a gateway.
- A magical gateway has been closed for centuries. Now powerful forces seek to reopen it. Other forces may seek to ensure it remains closed.
- Characters stumble across a gateway or open it accidentally.

Places of Power

A magical location is similar to a magical item that is rooted to one spot. If a character controls such a location, it is represented by an Item of Power with the Restriction Defect that it cannot be moved. Control of a place is a nebulous concept, because characters are unlikely to spend all of their time there. If the character can restrict who may enter the place and use its magical facilities, then it is considered to be under his or her control. This need not mean that the character owns the title deeds to the plot or is responsible for its mundane upkeep.

A Place of Power costing 4 Points/Level is difficult to access by anyone other than the owner. It might be a hidden sanctum veiled from the mundane world by illusions, or a lock-up to which few people have the keys. One costing 3 Points/Level is easier for others to find or use. Other than this, guidelines as given for the Item of Power Attribute (page 32). Although a place cannot usually become lost, control of a Place of Power can certainly switch hands….

Crossroads

A crossroads is a place where people of many cultures and backgrounds gather. They are junctions where characters can meet and mingle with others travelling different routes. A magical crossroads is also a place to which supernatural creatures drift when they wish to seek their peers out, even if they are traditional enemies. For lonely mythical beings wandering the big city, the meanest and least welcoming of these watering holes still offers the hope of being with those who understand their situation. For that reason alone, magical characters flock to these meeting places. Of course, they might have other reasons to mix. These are also good places to catch up on gossip, exchange information, pick up partners of the appropriate species and gender, or engage in intricate social games. A crossroads is a well-known hangout for the magical community that offers these facilities, probably with its own set of regular patrons and staff. Anyone who is involved with the supernatural side of the city can learn about these places easily, since they are only kept secret from mundane humans.

Since magical creatures often need to disguise their true selves from the world around them, so must their meeting places be well hidden. In the modern city, the supernatural beings often meet in locales superficially similar to the places where humans gather. A night club, bar, bath house, or coffee house that is owned by magical creatures or those who are aware of their unusual clientele could become a crossroads where supernaturals choose to meet each other on safe, or at least neutral, ground. It may be a place where truces between warring races are in force, or other agreements are in place to keep the peace. A meeting place belonging to renegades of an arcane faction is under constant threat of discovery by common enemies, even though it is a haven for those who use it.

Not all crossroads and meeting places are frequently used. Gatherings and events might take place only on prescribed days of the year, like a club with meetings once a month. A wanderer could check the same bar every time he passes through a city for over a century without ever finding another of his kin, but still continue to do it because he knows that one day, someone will be there.

Just because a place is used by supernaturals doesn't mean that humans cannot enter. They might mingle heedlessly with the magical patrons, never realising with whom, or with what, they are rubbing shoulders, never quite grasping the true nature of their favourite bar. Enchantments and illusions make the deception easier to uphold. More nervous or elitist supernaturals might protect their crossroads carefully, like private clubs to which only a personal invitation will grant an outsider admittance.

To create a magical crossroads like this, several questions need to be answered:

- Who is likely to meet here?
- Why do they come to this place?
- When are meetings held?
- What do creatures do at their meetings? Do they sit around and chat? Play music or games? Have formal dinners, or business lunches?
- Are meetings very formal (for example: a council of mages that meets twice a year), or is the place a social hangout?
- Is it open to mundane humans, and if not, how is it hidden?

Goblin Markets

A goblin market is the traditional name for a vast Faerie marketplace that assembles only once every few years. Eager visitors can buy all manner of curious charms, trinkets, and services. Since the market is only open for a limited period of time, it also becomes an important gathering point for magical creatures for the duration. Not only can they buy and sell wares, but also it is a place to gossip, to meet once more with old acquaintances, and to make new ones. These are busy places where items are traded that would never be found in any mundane location.

Buying from the market can be perilous for the unwary. Not all of the goods on offer are what they seem. Selling can be even worse. Pity the poor soul who has inadvertently sold his heart's desire to the fair folk, or ten years of his life to the piper. Epic stories result when people try to track down who bought a particular item, or try to retrieve an irreplaceable possession which was accidentally traded away for a song. Although magical creatures are often short of hard cash, they usually prefer to sell their treasures for favours in kind, maybe arcane services or hooks into a person's soul. Bargaining with such traders is an art in itself, and many are clever enough to trick characters into doing "small favours" for them that turn out to be very large favours indeed.

Like any other supernatural meeting place, the market has ways to disguise itself from the mortal world. Perhaps it is a shop that never appears on the same street twice. It could be a web site, or online auction that is open by invitation only and in permanent beta testing. Advertising is key to the success of any business venture. Everyone knew the dates and location of the traditional goblin market, because that was when and where it was always held (this kind of circular reasoning is common in fairytales). More modern methods of spreading the news could involve sending personal invitations to VIPs, holding launch parties for new product lines or franchises, and sending travelling salesmen to the most widely used magical crossroads to make sure that both buyers and sellers are aware of the market. Magical advertisements could float across the city streets, invisible to all but those with the second sight.

Common plot threads:

- Characters must try to find out where the goblin market will be held, and to enter it.
- A friend of a character has a child who has been kidnapped by the faeries. If he or she can reach the goblin market, he or she may be able to ransom it back.
- Someone needs a magical item to break a curse. This involves bartering for it in the market.
- Someone accidentally sells something very important to him or her in a magical market. Characters are enlisted to find the buyer and persuade them to undo the deal.

Nodes of Power

A common fantasy conceit is that some places are more appropriate for magical workings than others. These are the hidden groves, woven with eldrich enchantments and veils of illusion. They are the private sections of the library with their rows of sulky desks glowing ice blue from the light of lamps that need no power. They are the standing stones that glow pale in the moonlight on every tenth new moon. They are the groaning lathes in the old workshop that answer only to a dwarfish hand. If a place has a particular affinity with magic, it may become a node of power. This means that some types of magic are more powerful if they are performed there, or that magical creatures might draw strength and power from association with location. Characters with Attributes that are more effective when used in particular nodes of power will have related Defects limiting the terms of their use.

In urban fantasy, these powerful locations are translated into their modern analogues. Maybe buildings have been raised on the site of the ancient shrines, the hidden grove is concealed in the secret atrium of a tall skyscraper, the library is in the basement of a dusty second hand bookshop, and the dwarfish lathe is in a museum storeroom. A locale may have been so exposed to magic, or to human energy and imagination, that it has finally become magical itself. Perhaps this special power must be invoked by means of a ritual, even a traditional blood sacrifice. If a node of power is strongly inclined towards good or evil, opposing factions might seek to destroy or defile it. Acts of war will target the node. It becomes an important tactical location, a source of power for a whole faction, race, or community.

Because of this mystical and practical importance, such places become the focus of power struggles. The people who recognise them for what they are have an interest in keeping them safe and out of the hands of others. The

faction that controls them becomes more powerful, and any that lose them feel the pain of the loss very deeply. In a modern city many things which were once known become forgotten. An old place of power could fall into disuse, remembered only in old stories. Perhaps the magical activities that once took place there have not been used or needed for centuries.

Common Plot Threads:

- Characters stumble onto a node of power and activate it accidentally. Various magical factions then take an interest.
- An important item is found which may only be used in a certain place at a certain time.
- A node of power must be activated via a special ritual.

Sacred Ground

This place is hallowed to a group of magical creatures. This may be for historic reasons — perhaps a great truce or treaty was once signed there, or it once belonged to a legendary magical hero. It may be a graveyard where magic or magical creatures are buried, or a traditional place of worship. Whatever the reason, it is likely to be a place surrounded by taboos, where any creatures or people who still remember and honour the memories come to pray, where a terrible vengeance will be meted out on anyone who disturbs the peace or dishonours the spirits within.

Otherworldly religions and beliefs might be centred on such a place, with ritual fights or dances, storytelling, or solitary individuals keeping lonely vigils as part of the rites they must perform. High days, holidays, and traditional festivals could include meetings on such sacred ground. Even simple creatures have places where they choose to go to honour their dead or to celebrate the new spring. Such religions are close to nature, relating to what primitive supernaturals understand. Other magical creatures have more contemporary achievements to celebrate. The switching on of a new computer, the garnering of the first million dollars or the theft of an identity might all be ritually marked on sacred ground within the city limits. Anywhere could become hallowed ground to a modern urban tribe of supernaturals.

Common Plot Threads:

- Characters stumble upon some sacred place and are forced to deal with the reaction of the magical creatures that worship there, or the spirits who they disturbed.
- Characters are invited to take part in a traditional ceremony by magical friends.
- Characters become part of a ceremony, whether they want to or not.
- A location that is hallowed to some magical subculture is under threat.
- Characters must search for a legendary sacred location in order to find an item or some assistance that they need.
- Characters find that they own or live near a place that has ritual significance to magical creatures.

The Oracle

An oracle is a person or place where magical creatures and mundane folk seek information that must be obtained mystically, for lack of any other reliable source. The oracle's advice and answers are always correct, even if they are unclear, phrased as riddles or seem unlikely. People consult the oracle with care, to avoid angering the person or spirit of the place with irrelevant questions, and (more importantly) to avoid being given information they really didn't want to know. An expedition to the oracle involves finding the location, and then persuading the seer to answer some questions. Perhaps sacrifices must be made, promises kept, or simple charm and good manners must be put into play. The ritual of asking for and receiving advice might be magical in nature, or could be as simple as dropping an email to a mystical agony aunt who writes for a widely circulated magical magazine.

In legend, visiting an oracle was a religious as well as a practical pilgrimage. She who Speaks with the Voice of the God was not to be disturbed lightly or for trivial matters. Stories give many examples of using mystical means to gain information about events that lay in the future or off in far away places. Mythical oracles made use of scrying pools, where the queries of a supplicant were answered by visions rippling in the watery reflection, or sacred trees whose leaves whispered the answers to questions. Even in the modern city, such places could still exist. Traditional fortunetellers use cards, dice, or runes or any of a number of other methods to answer a querent's questions. Psychics glimpse images of the future, and more contemporary seers may cajole prophetic information out of computers or scientific instruments.

Common Plot Threads:

- Characters must consult with an oracle.
- A character is kidnapped and forced to take part in a magical divination ceremony.
- Any kind of investigative work might lure characters into seeking out an oracle when no other trails are left.
- An oracle seeks characters out because they appear in a prophecy or magical divination.
- A character discovers they are potentially an oracle themselves, although untrained.

Labyrinths

A labyrinth is a maze of twisting pathways, designed to lead victims into a convoluted enigma of knotted tunnels. Only a single correct route leads to the centre of the maze. Straying from this path could damn a visitor to an eternity of wandering alone through forgotten, empty passageways. Magical labyrinths are created for many reasons, most often to hide secrets and treasures that were never mean to see the light of day. Like the original labyrinth of Greek myth, they might be traps or prisons for dangerous monsters, may protect mysterious treasure vaults at their core, or may even be places of ritual meditation. Walking the pathways of a labyrinth can be a spiritual as well as a physical journey, with the hidden treasure representing knowledge or an increased self-awareness. The maze is also used as an allegory by magicians, implying that secret pathways that only initiates may learn hide powerful secrets. For hapless wanderers who follow a false path, the maze becomes a universe of dead ends and false trails, where all rational thought is lost in waves of rising, devastating panic.

The city harbours many potential mazes. Roads, rivers, tunnels, and cables twist and intertwine to form its infrastructure. Humanity has learned to live within these urban labyrinths, but there are many paths within the city's depths that seldom feel the tread of feet. A self-aware city could have streets that deliberately warp themselves into a labyrinth to trap the unwary. A street mage or Faerie might befuddle victims' minds, leaving them incapable of finding the exit to buildings or areas they once knew.

Labyrinths are also associated with sacred geometry. This is a mystic notion that architecture can sometimes reflect the archetypal nature of the universe. In other words, the physical layout of a building or a city can imbue the place with power. Geometric shapes, as wrought in bricks and mortar, might be symbolic of mystic truths. If a city building, be it a gothic cathedral or a modern tower block, was designed by a magically aware architect, there may be strange and unexpected secrets to be found inside.

Common Plot Threads:

- Characters accidentally stumble into a labyrinth.
- A character must navigate a maze in order to find a secret treasure.
- A character's friend disappears. Have they been lost within a magical prison that is somehow hidden within the city?

Legendary Places

If mythical creatures can walk the Earth, then perhaps even legendary places can be awakened to life. Unlike magical worlds, some places known from legend once existed in the real world. This includes semi-mythical locations like Camelot, Troy, the Garden of Eden, and the Tower of Babel. Perhaps their stories grew and became embellished over the years. In time, they were transformed into places where the world of myths had touched the world of men, where epic heroes had lived and died and gods and monsters manifested themselves to mankind. For many of these places, knowledge of their precise locations is now lost beneath the sands of time, an academic question to be argued by professors.

Portions of a contemporary city might somehow correspond to these ancient places, even though they are geographically far removed from the original locations. If a god could be reincarnated in mortal form, then perhaps even Camelot could have a mystic resonance with a concert hall, or a tower block represent Mount Ararat, the last resting place of Noah's Ark. Modern legendary locations could have an arcane link with more recent folklore or stories. An old cinema might resonate to the OK Corral, and a refurbished jazz café to Rick's Bar from *Casablanca*. Anyone aware of the mystical connection might be able to guess from the mythical events what is fated to someday happen in the modern location.

Legendary places have other strange powers relating to the original location. Modern incarnations of the ancient heroes who once walked its halls might again be attracted there. Magic or Items of Power connected with the original myth might be more effective in a resonant locale. In campaigns where sympathetic magic (see page 86) is a factor, knowing the associations of a location allows powerful spells to be worked there. Magicians might find these places auspicious for summoning spirits associated with the original stories, or for opening portals into the old myth. If the legend is fated to be played out again in a modern setting, the building will once again preside over the same events.

Lairs and Fortresses

These places represent the strongholds of different magical creatures. Living in the city means that it isn't always possible to maintain a gorgeous fortified castle in the clouds whose glittering turrets sweep upwards to the sky in dramatic prismatic arcs. Even modern day supernaturals must make concessions to the laws of physics, and the laws of economics. Despite this, or even because of it, magical creatures often attempt to make lairs in which they feel comfortable, adapting to their circumstances as best they can. A dragon in an urban fantasy can hardly curl up in a mountain fastness atop a pile of gold but if he plays the markets well, he could instead lair in a towering luxury hotel, surrounded by the comforts which represent his hoard. Elves in a modern city may have abandoned their traditional woodlands, but they can still cultivate marvellous greenery and hold their courts in a private park or garden centre.

Common Plot Twists in Urban Fantasy

Urban fantasy is such a wide-ranging sub-genre that many types of story can be told within its bounds. The most common plot devices and story arcs in urban fantasy are either adapted from traditional fantasy stories and given a modern twist, or connected with the intersection between reality and fantasy. Using one or more of these plot elements in a game will give the scenario a more classic "urban fantasy" feel.

Fairy stories, fables, myths, and fantasy novels are rich sources of inspiration. Any of these tales has the potential to be updated and adapted for a modern urban setting. Another useful technique is to use current events, perhaps a news story from television or a newspaper, as inspiration. Pick an article that sounds completely mundane, then decide how it might be explained if some magical creature or event was really behind the story. The advantage of using real news as a plot seed is that a GM has the option of handing copies of the articles to the players as props, which can convey strong sense of stories being anchored in the real world. After all, the original story truly did occur. Be careful of accidentally crossing the bounds of good taste. A tragic, gruesome murder that really happened could be trivialised if explained away in a game as a casualty of a magical war; some players are very uncomfortable with these types of plots. Using real world events is a good way to encourage players to think about the people behind the news, and to bring out the humanity of the setting.

Plot Seeds

The seed of a story is the event that becomes a catalyst for plunging the characters into an investigation, or an adventure. It is the starting point of a scenario, the first thing that happens to draw characters into the plot. Many stories in this genre tell a tale of mundane people being slowly drawn into the world of the supernatural, maybe even discovering that they are magical themselves. In this style of campaign, a plot seed will often involve some strange but apparently mundane occurrence. Clues point characters towards magic being involved in some way, even though others may not see this.

Someone has an unusual dream or vision

A character suffers a nightmare that is ominously meaningful. Often they are aware that the dream is important, even if they don't understand its significance. These dreams and visions might well be portents for future events, or they could indicate that a magical creature wishes to communicate, that an innate magical talent is being exercised, or even that the character is under attack by hostile magic. Perhaps the dream turns out to be an accurate prediction, or elements from the dream might show up later in the real world.

Someone disappears, leaving no trace

A person mysteriously vanishing is a plot seed common to many varieties of stories. In an urban fantasy, any clues present will point towards the occult or the magical as the cause of the disappearance. The person who vanished may have magical connections, or have been a victim of a magical assault. Some varieties of creature kidnap humans for their own purposes, whether because the creatures are vampires or dragons seeking prey, or faeries taking human children to replace them with changelings. It may be that the "victim" was leading a dual life, and that their magical life has suddenly become urgently important. Perhaps the missing person accidentally stumbled through a gateway into another world.

A character acquires a magical item

Someone accidentally acquires a magical item, unaware of its true nature. Perhaps it was picked up in a jumble sale or antique shop, where even the seller has no idea what has actually been sold. Later events give characters cause to suspect that the item is more than it appears. If it is particularly powerful or significant, other magical creatures or wizards will also be hunting for it.

The arrival of an unusual stranger

A person or creature arrives and inserts him or herself into a character's life. It may be in the guise of a distant relative, a friend of a friend, or a new patron, employer, or colleague. One thing is sure, they are not entirely human. They may bring trouble with them, or have strange habits and motivations. Adventures, whether desirable or not, are likely to follow.

A peculiar message is received

A character receives an unusual message. Perhaps the message is delivered in a strange way, or appears to have been addressed to the wrong person. On investigation, the message proves to have come from some inexplicable, magical source. It may be a plea for help, a demand for payment, or an offer of assistance with a problem that the character doesn't believe they currently have. If characters have a mystic mentor or employer, this may be the usual means by which their orders are delivered. In any case, investigating the message will draw the characters into the plot.

Plot Events

Stories in urban fantasy often involve plot twists that are taken directly from old legends or from other fantasy epics, and adapted to suit the modern setting. As well, some types of event, discovery, or plot twist are very characteristic of modern fantasy. These include occurrences that highlight the strangeness of magical beings interacting with the real world, or vice versa.

Mythical creatures hunt down a magical item

Questing after magical items is a staple not only of fantasy epics but also of ancient myths, from Jason's search for the Golden Fleece, Arthurian grail epics, to the battles for the magical Sampo (a mystical spice mill and source of prosperity) in the Finnish Kalevala epic. Any of these fabled items could make an appearance in some form in an urban fantasy scenario. So could real world items with magical powers gained from association with modern myths or icons. There are other reasons why an item might be of special interest to magical sub-cultures. It might be powerful in its own right, or have the potential to be very significant in the right hands.

If an Item of Power is interesting to one creature, it may be interesting to others, causing a conflict between different groups over which of them will acquire and control it first.

A conference of magical creatures

A meeting is held between strange, magical creatures. Perhaps they need to hold a formal council to debate a common threat or discuss business, or it may be a simple social gathering. Player characters could be invited to the meeting, or they may stumble across it accidentally.

In urban fantasy, such meetings are likely to occur right under the noses of mortal observers, disguised as a mundane human interaction. This means that the meeting place is likely to be one which humans would also use. It may be a hotel, café, nightclub, or office, and the fact that the characters involved may be non-human doesn't necessarily affect their choice of location. The meeting may copy the conventions of a regular mundane group of people. For example, a council of wizards who are the governing body of a magical college will discuss similar topics to a group of human governors.

Important information is hidden in plain sight

Characters are investigating an event, an NPC, or an item when they discover that an important clue was present the whole time, had they only known how to recognise it. This clue gives a link between an old myth or legend and an event that has happened in the modern city setting. Once characters realise that one myth has come to life in their world, they may realise where to look for more information about it in other connected myths.

In stories, these clues could be foreshadowed by children chanting a nursery rhyme in a scene towards the start of the tale, or a brief mention of a local myth or legend in passing -- when the hero discovers that the rhyme has an important hidden meaning, it isn't a complete surprise to the reader. In a game of urban fantasy, this is most easily done by finding a way to make a story, rhyme, or legend which players are likely to know apply to the scenario.

Need to consult a mystical source of information

At some point in the story, characters are completely at a loss as to how to progress. Their only path forward is to seek out a mystical source of information and beg for help. This source could be a supernatural person such as a shaman, wizard, or werewolf elder. The source might be an Item of Power, such as mystical book in a forbidden library, or an enchanted scientific meter that can be used for divination. It might be a place, such as a labyrinth or magical scrying pool.

Whatever the true nature of the source is, seeking this information out is itself an adventure. The information source must be located and persuaded to assist. Perhaps this involves payment, trickery, or fast-talking. Even once the source is co-operative, there is always a chance that characters might find out information that they would have preferred not to know.

A gateway to another world is opened

A pathway is opened by which characters can either travel to another world, or creatures from that other place can travel to our own. This other world need not be a physical place — it might be a world of spirits or dreams that can only be visited whilst asleep, or it might be a virtual online world, or even the land of the dead or another afterlife. Once the portal is opened, it is possible for characters to affect that world, and to be affected by it. The portal might be a natural phenomenon, a magical one, or something which was never meant to be wrenched into the fabric of reality, forced into existence by some terrible triumph of magic or technology.

The portal could be a source of either great good or great evil, depending on nature of the place to which it leads. Controlling such a passageway would give a character tremendous leverage over any creatures who wish to pass through.

A person in a position of power in the real world turns out to be a mythical creature

Characters discover that someone who they had always assumed was a mundane human is really nothing of the sort. In a game of dark fantasy, this is a terrifying revelation. Monsters walk among humanity, disguised as regular people. In a game with a lighter tone, the discovery brings home to player characters that magical creatures do involve themselves with modern life and regular human affairs.

If the character whose true nature is revealed wields power in the real world — perhaps they are a politician, or someone who runs an institution such as a school or hospital, or a person with influence in the business arena — it might indicate that magical creatures conspire to control humanity. Which other significant figures are more than they seem?

A magical creature needs help to survive

A magical creature is stranded in the real world and it desperately needs help. It may have escaped through a portal from its true home, could be on the run from its own people, or might simply have become lost, or suffered the effects of a magical curse. Whatever the reason, the creature is unable to cope with the mundane world nor can it find its own way home without help. A group of player characters could be in this situation themselves if they are stranded far from their own homes and people, left to navigate an unfamiliar world with only their own resourcefulness and skills to aid them.

Characters might be given the responsibility of looking after such a lost creature, or teaching it how to survive among humans. Perhaps they desperately need to locate it before someone who would subject it to scientific experiments, or before other magical creatures who also have malevolent designs on it.

Modern magic is worked

A magical spell is cast, and either the ritual or the effect contains some modern, real world element. Perhaps contemporary technology or devices are used, or the spell mimics an effect that could just as easily have been accomplished by a mundane character with appropriate gadgets. For example, an alchemist might use a food blender instead of an old-fashioned mortar and pestle, or a summoned spirit might possess a target's mobile phone to deliver a message instead of manifesting in person. If magic in the game commonly works like this, it drives home the theme that magic is not an alien or separate entity in urban fantasy. It is an integral of the setting, as fitting as any real world plot devices or items.

It isn't necessary for all magical spells to be as subtle or as modern as these examples. Other wizards or spells might be more "old fashioned," evoking lightning bolts and sheets of fire. Magic in a game will have a more up-to-date style and feel if it mimics modern technology. By contrast, spells that are more spectacular or very obviously unnatural in nature highlight the juxtaposition between fantasy and reality in the game.

Longer Plot Arcs

A campaign is a set of scenarios linked by common protagonists, settings, and themes. Some campaigns are episodic, like a TV series which features the same characters every week and throws them into unrelated situations that are wrapped up neatly during the session. Others are more like a mini-series, with a connecting plot arc tying the campaign together that begins in the first episode and finishes in the last one. Both styles of campaign can work very well for a game, and they also share many of the same requirements. They aren't even mutually exclusive. An episodic campaign can also have an epic story arc connecting each game session, or recurring NPCs who change and develop during the course of the campaign.

In a mini-series campaign, the longer plot-arc gives characters a reason to stick together for its duration. They might be thrust into a long quest, transported to another world together, or witnesses to a terrible crime. Even though some characters may not get along, they each have a personal reason for needing to see the story through. They don't have the in-character option of walking away from the plot. Often there is an event before the campaign begins which will force characters together and gives them a reason to embark on their shared adventure. In an episodic campaign, the setting itself gives characters a reason to be together. Perhaps they all live in the same house, work as a team for the same employer, or study at the same magical academy. In every episode, characters will want and need to spend time together, tackling whichever adventure comes their way.

Example Campaign Arcs

A campaign setting requires several elements to define it. Players need to know what sorts of characters they could play, where and when the game will be set, what sort of mood and overall themes the game will have, and how long the campaign is planned to last. A GM needs to know these things also as well as what types of NPCs are likely to become recurring, what challenges and enemies the characters will face, and what powers and resources they may have at their disposal. Designing a new campaign touches on all of these points, often using examples from films, books, and TV to give both players and GM a firm mental picture of how the game is intended to work out in practice.

The following are examples of the types of campaign that are especially characteristic of urban fantasy. They can touch on many of the themes discussed on page 120, will give ample scope to set scenes in typical urban fantasy locations such as those listed on page 126, while offering the opportunity to showcase many of the magical creatures and characters described on pages 74 to 84.

Secret Wars

Premise: Unbeknownst to the mundane humans, several factions of magical creatures are fighting a bitter war right under their noses.

There are several factions of magical beings living amongst humanity, in human cities and human population centres. These factions might be different political groups within a magical society — such as power-hungry cabals of wizards, the Seelie and Unseelie court of the fae, or families of dragons. Alternatively, they could be races that are traditionally opposed to each other, or a grand alliance of good creatures versus evil. Whichever the case, these factions are embroiled in a bitter conflict within which player characters will be caught up. If characters are plunged blindly into the magical subculture, with its dangerous conflicts, they may find themselves undergoing a trial by fire as they struggle to learn what is going on and which side to support. If they are co-opted by one side or the other, they may not get much of a choice.

When magical forces conflict, they might choose to fight in different ways. A magical war of attrition is fought with subtle magics, or else far out of sight of humanity. A war of influence is fought by factions seeking to obtain power in the mortal world, using it to counter enemy schemes. Although the nature of the conflict depends on the different goals of the creatures involved, each group will have short-term tactical aims as well as dreams for the long-term.

Main plot sources and goals

- Countering enemy forces.
- Locate and recruit allies, or useful weapons/items of power.
- Gathering intelligence about the enemy's plots and goals.
- Subverting sympathetic or corruptible enemies to become double agents, or allies.
- Rescuing captured comrades.
- Keeping the war secret from human observers.

Policing the Monsters

Premise: Characters are jointly responsible for keeping an eye on magical issues within their city.

Player characters have a job or responsibility that involves other magical creatures in their city. There are many different ways of setting up a campaign in this mould, and some are provided below. Each scenario might simply relate a normal day in the characters' lives, which brings them into contact with magical people and situations. They are likely to mix with a wide range of NPCs, some of whom are aware of the magical side of their jobs, and others who are not. This type of story tends to be low fantasy, focussing on the characters' everyday lives. Any contact with the magical world could potentially pull characters into a high fantasy epic tale of good and evil, though.

Example: Player characters are members of a special police or government agency who are aware of magical activity within the city. Their duties include keeping an eye on magical creatures, investigating any misconduct involving the magical community, and protecting the mundane people of the city from magical attacks. They are called in to assist with cases where it is suspected that the occult is involved. If they become friendly with any supernatural contacts, they may also be asked to help the magical community with policing itself.

Example: Characters are magical creatures themselves, and have responsibilities within their own culture for keeping the peace. They may hold mundane jobs as well, occupations unrelated to their true natures. They could become embroiled in all manners of issues facing magical creatures in their city, as their positions of responsibility may make them the first recourse for other NPCs who are in trouble.

Example: Characters are entrusted with positions in an institution that might normally be of no great interest, except that this one has magical associations. Perhaps the characters are teachers or students at a university for wizards, librarians or curators for the private collections of a Chinese dragon, or staff in a hospital for magical creatures. This set up lends itself well to becoming a magical situation comedy, in a light fantasy game. Characters must deal with magical issues, but handle it using the same mindset as would be used by mundane people in the real world.

Main plot sources and goals

- Carrying out orders, missions, or jobs assigned by a superior.
- Enforcing laws, and taking part in the due process of justice.
- Investigating unusual occurrences that might have magical associations.
- Researching strange clues.
- Contacting useful allies and persuading them to be helpful.
- Diplomatic dealings with other magical creatures.
- Office politics in the characters' workplace.

Old Stories Reborn

Premise: Characters from old myths or legends walk the city streets, reliving their old quests and enmities.

In the beginning there was a golden age of heroes, magic, gods, and spirits and a day when legends walked the Earth. In time, these stories passed into history and then into myth. Now, in the modern day, history is fated to repeat itself. Those legendary gods and monsters may be immortal, or have been recently reborn to walk amongst an unwitting humanity. Using modern city streets and office blocks as their stage, they re-enact the old stories and quests, hoping that perhaps this time they will reach their journey's end. In a dark fantasy campaign, these powerful creatures may bode ill towards the mortal world. It may be that all of the legendary characters involved were once associated in the past, perhaps through being part of the same pantheon or set of stories. This lends the story a strong theme. For example, a game set in modern-day Baghdad may involve legends from the Arabian Nights coming to life, or an Arthurian game might involve the re-awakening of the knights of the round table in a modern guise.

Player characters in this type of campaign might be reincarnated gods or heroes themselves, striving to come to terms with the modern world and take up the reins of their old lives where they left off. Alternatively, they might be mortals who for some reason become entangled in the plots of timeless immortals or archetypes. One thing is certain, all manner of powerful and dangerous magical characters will take an interest as these stories unfold,.

Main plot sources and goals:

- Locating old allies and enemies.
- Keeping up appearances in the modern world.
- Investigating clues about quests or items that were connected with the character in the past.
- Politicking among fellow legendary creatures.
- Picking up old quests and stories where they had been left off.
- Finding a modern role to replace the traditional one.

The Dark is Rising

Premise: The city is under threat by a force that seeks to destroy it.

There is a threat to the characters' city from an external source. Perhaps the city is in danger of being drawn into an alien world — the world of dreams or the land of the dead, for example. Perhaps dark powers are infiltrating our world, seeking to destroy and subvert all in their path, and the city is an important objective for them. Whatever the threat, local magical, mundane, and other desperate factions will have to co-operate with each other to save their world, or die trying.

In these campaigns, the danger builds slowly, step by step. Characters may be magical themselves, or mundane mortals dragged into the quest to save the city. Slowly, the true extent of the danger is revealed and characters begin to understand why they must fight and what this will cost them. This type of story line has much in common with the secret wars, above, but the threat is likely to be more dark and alien. Each scenario shows characters a new aspect to the threat to the city, or displays another way in which things and people within the city are being transformed … and not for the better.

Main plot sources and goals

- Discover the true nature of the threat.
- Research and investigate any possible avenues that might help the fight.
- Contact possible allies.
- Embark on a quest to destroy the threat at its source.
- Resist the enemy's influence, step by step.

Adapting Urban Fantasy to Historical Settings

These stories are still about mythical creatures interacting with the real world, but instead of a modern setting, the past is mined to give a more alien backdrop. One of the advantages of picking a historical setting is the relative lack of technology. No Victorian "Peeler" will try to check whether the elves have criminal records by logging into a global database, or spot that the 17th Earl of Marchmont hasn't aged in the last 40 years by checking an old photograph. Against this is set the disadvantage that players may be less familiar with the setting, and less likely to be aware of the mundane day-to-day details on which urban fantasy thrives. It isn't necessary to do months of research before running a game like this; other ways to help anchor players into the time and place of the game are to introduce in-character cameos by famous people of the time, and to refer to historical events with which players are familiar.

Crossover Campaigns

A crossover is where a character or group of characters who were originally part of one game campaign turn up in a completely different one. For example, alien relic hunters might appear unexpectedly at a Faerie ball, or vampire hunters might capture a group of talking animals. These scenarios can be a lot of fun, encouraging the GM and players to see how characters respond to unusual challenges, and to situations that never were envisaged when their characters were created.

Crossover campaigns or scenarios can feature a clash of genres, moods, or power levels. Characters are likely to find the new setting exotic and strange, and may need to find ways to describe what they see and feel in familiar terms. A team of scientists will describe magic in scientific terms, a demon might see all relationships as power struggles between domineering masters and their submissive slaves, and a talking animal will try to explain the world of humans in terms of its own experience.

A crossover campaign is easier to balance when all characters involved are from settings based on the same game dice, and generated on similar point values. When characters are from campaigns based on different game dice or points values, the crossover can be less smooth. Characters travelling from a d6 to d8 setting, for example, will find themselves more clumsy than other NPCs they meet there, and they will more difficulty in achieving successful dice rolls because their Stats and Skills were designed for the lesser dice value. They may find that people they encounter tend to be stronger, brighter, and more widely skilled than themselves, especially if the standard point values on which characters are created differs between the campaigns. This needn't mean that the crossover cannot work. Coming to terms with this power difference could generate interesting stories.

A *Dreaming Cities* game will only use one type of dice. The setting in which characters find themselves includes the game dice that will be used to resolve conflicts while they are there. A GM might want to make more cautious use of dice rolls than normal, especially if he or she is unsure whether the new game dice accurately reflects how likely the crossover characters should be to succeed in tasks. Alternatively, players could recreate their characters for the crossover using game dice and points values appropriate for the setting into which they have travelled. This represents the characters as they would have been had they been native to that setting, which could make them either more or less accomplished than when they were originally designed. In a game, it might be that travelling magically from one setting to another has a transformative effect on a character, even if the character never realises this.

Characters might travel from one setting to another through a magical portal, or a mundane, scientific method of transportation. They might be

visiting in a dream, or have been summoned by a magical power. It is entirely at the GM's discretion as to whether any Items of Power, allies, or other accoutrements make the transfer from one setting to the other intact. If an item is likely to be overpowering in the new setting, it might temporarily stop working, or have different powers and effects than it originally did.

Sources of Inspiration

Sources of ideas for adventures are everywhere in the real world. Game Masters looking to feed their creative fires should consider the following:

Books

You can get many story ideas from reading both fiction and non-fiction books — mystery, fantasy, SF, biographies, real science, true crime, history, comic books, etc. When you come across a particularly interesting character or idea, ask yourself, "how would this work in my campaign?" See the bibliography on the next page and the Introduction chapter for examples.

Real Life

You can also draw inspiration from everyday life. Take inspiration from current events and news items, or turn your last vacation or visit to a museum into an adventure idea.

The Internet

The Internet is a source for nearly every type of information. You can find websites dedicated to the urban fantasy genre or to particular authors as well as sites devoted to role-playing in general, or *Tri-Stat dX* role-playing specifically.

Technology and Gaming: A Changing Landscape

The face of role-playing today has changed dramatically since the '70s and '80s. Technology has had a significant impact on gaming, broadening the definitions of "campaign" and "game" to include a plethora of options available to households with computers and Internet connections. Even if you are a traditionalist and prefer keeping role-playing as weekly face-to-face interactions with your local group of friends, so-called "table-top" role-playing, computers can still augment your gaming experience in unobtrusive ways. You can greatly enrich your Tri-Stat dX campaign by taking advantage of even a small fraction of what computers offer you and your players.

WWW.YOUR-CAMPAIGN.COM

Establishing a website for your campaign showcases your creativity to the gaming public and is an ideal way to keep players up to date between sessions. Additionally, by posting important documents on the site, you can ensure the players always have access to vital gaming records — session logs, character backgrounds, world history and timeline, cast of NPCs, maps, and perhaps even their own character sheets and advancements. Documents posted on your webpage have several advantages over printed paper ones as well: they save on photocopy/printing costs, they can be updated frequently without reprinting, and the players can access your website from any computer, even while on vacation.

If you do not have your own website already, one of your players or friends may be willing to host it for you. Perhaps a player will even design and programme your site in exchange for Background Points. If you don't have these options, many companies will host your webpages for a small fee, or even for free. Search the Internet for "web hosting" for more information; www.google.com is always a good starting place for any such search.

A worthy option for managing a campaign website is to use "weblog" or "personal publishing software." Weblog software is growing in leaps and bounds in recent years, and can create a very flexible solution that can allow the GM or any player in the group to update their campaign website from within their own web browser. Most weblog software also allows for comments, so players (and other interested parties) can make annotations to your campaign page as time passes.

If you want the most malleable website for your campaigns, consider using Wiki software. There are many variants of this software, all of them designed to allow collaborative document creation and editing — allwithin your favourite web browser. Wiki software is designed to creating open-ended documents, where anyone can create a new sub-document and anyone can edit or add to it over time, creating a site that evolves — just like your campaign!

Private Emails

Email provides you with a fast and easy method to communicate with your players between sessions concerning campaign meta-issues: where and when the next game will be held, who is responsible for bringing munchies, social events you plan to do before or after the session, and so on. It is also a great medium for one-on-one role-playing between sessions, for both player-GM and player-player interactions. A player's character might wish to pursue a thread from your campaign by themselves, and since no other character is involved, there might not be enough time to role-play it during the normal session. Solo email role-playing, while not as dynamic or exciting as face-to-face interactions, can supplement your campaign by giving that player a chance to pursue his or her special goals. This method of role-playing is also useful to further develop the backgrounds of the players' characters, rather than simply treating them as historical footnotes.

With your approval, email can also keep your players' characters connected between sessions. Players can discuss strategy and tactics, develop bonds that cannot be role-played during the sessions due to time constraints, or simply get to know one another's characters better. If the players copy you on the emails, you can comment on the players' messages when required or desired.

Email Lists

Email lists (also known as listserves) are similar to private emails, but all people on the list receive each and every message. This communication method is useful for game announcements and document distribution, especially if you don't have a website. Your Internet service provider (ISP) might offer listserve creation as a feature (often handled by a programme called "majordomo"), or you can use one of the many free mailing list services offered by companies on the web. One of the best free services is Yahoo Groups (http://www.yahoogroups.com), which has an intuitive interface and many customisable options. You can set up your email list to allow only approved members (i.e. your players) to join, or open your list to allow anyone to sign up. This latter option is not usually a good idea for a closed campaign, since only a small group of people is involved in the game.

Guardians Of Order hosts many email lists for our fans, including one for the Tri-Stat System. To subscribe, send a message to tristat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Play-by-Email

While a traditional gaming group of one Game Master and handful of players that meets weekly or biweekly to play is perhaps the best way to enjoy a role-playing campaign, forming and maintaining such a group is not always possible (or desired). An alternative to this is a game played over email with players across the city, country or even around the world. Play-by-email games trace their roots to the '70s and '80s when play-by-mail games — people playing scenarios by sending messages and role-playing through the postal system — were popular. Although the face-to-face interaction is lost in an email game, it allows friends (or perhaps strangers) from vastly different locations to game together over cyberspace. As the GM, you send messages to all players, describing the events taking place in your world. In turn, the players send you and the other players emails describing their actions and reactions. You adjudicate their responses, and continue the process by letting the players know how their actions transpired.

One main difference between traditional role-playing and an email RPG involves the game system. Frequently, the Game Master does not roll dice to

resolve conflicts, but rather decides what sequence of events would be best for the players and campaign, then describes the results through email. Email games usually grant the Game Master more control over the story and plot than a standard campaign.

Play-by-Post

Play-by-Post games (sometimes called "PB3" for "Play By Bulletin Board') are similar to Play-by-Email games, but take place on public or private message boards instead of ove traditional email. This gives the players and GM additional flexability (such as inline images, hyperlinks to necessary resources, text formatting tools), and also makes it easier for non-participating players to read the story as it unfolds. In many cases, Play-by-Post games encompasse multiple message board "threads", some exclusively for In Character and some for Out of Character posts. Like Play-by-Email games, a Play-by-Post game is usually part gaming and part collaborative storytelling.

Online Chatting

Online chatting is a great way to supplement both traditional campaigns and all manner of online games games. Many types of public and private chat services are available now, and most of them allow for group chatting, so you can meet there at scheduled times between sessions to discuss issues in real-time. A chat is similar to email communication, except the messages and responses can often be sent much more quickly and efficiently to everyone participating in the chat. A good analogy to an Internet chat is a telephone conference call, except the chat is naturally slower and there are no long distance charges. Some chat rooms have an archive feature, which allows you

Works of Urban Fantasy

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to capture a text document of the chat transcript and post it on your campaign website; players who were unable to attend the chat can then catch up on what was said.

One popular form of online chatting is organised on-line campaigns known by many names: MUD, MUSH, MUX, MU, MOO, and others (derivations of "MU," which stands for "Multi-User"). These games are usually free to play to anyone on the Internet, thousands of them are available, and they might be a great way to meet like-minded players to form a play-by-email game.

In addition, some game companies and many fan communities sponsor online chat facilities for various games and for in-character chatting. Most of these services offer an extensive Frequently Asked Questions list, so do some reading before you jump on in!

Shared Worlds

Although an entire book could be written on the concept of shared worlds, this treatment will be brief. A shared role-playing world is akin to a game setting controlled and directed by multiple Game Masters (and perhaps players). Each GM contributes his or her ideas to the direction and destiny of the world, while considering the input of the other participants. Each GM then uses the co-operatively created setting in his or her respective campaign. Feedback from the results of each role-playing session is then contributed to further develop the world. The process yields a living campaign world that is vast, intricate, and dynamic, created by all those who participated. The creation of a shared world is perhaps best facilitated though an email list with an archive function, a website message board, a weblog, or a wiki.

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Horror Urban Fantasies

Many horror writers delve into the realm of the fantastic. What makes one story "supernatural horror" and one "fantasy" is often a question of theme, trappings, and resolution. It's also clearly a subjective opinion, based on where one is standing. Some of the most fantastic horror writers include the following.

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Films and Television Urban Fantasies

There have been so many films and TV series created in the urban fantasy idiom that trying to list them all would be difficult at best and confusing at worst. These are some examples which capture the sense of urban fantasy (or suburban fantasy, in the case of Bewitched) best.

- *Angel.* Created by Joss Whedon and David Greenwalt, 1999-2004.
- *Beauty and the Beast.* Created by Ron Koslow, 1987-1990.
- *Bewitched.* Created by Sol Saks, 1964-1972.
- *Big Trouble in Little China.* Dir. John Carpenter, 1986.
- *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer.*. Created by Joss Whedon, 1997-2003
- *Gargoyles.* Dir. Saburo Hashimoto, Yeun Young Sang, Kazuo Terada, 1994-1997.
- *The Fisher King.* Dir. Terry Gilliam, 1991.
- *The Kingdom (aka "Riget")* Dir. Lars von Trier, 1994. (Note: Stephen King adapted this for US television, but the original is well worth seeing.)
- *Neverwhere.* Created by Neil Gaiman and Lenny Henry, 1996.
- *The Tenth Kingdom.* Dir. David Carson, and Herbert Wise. 2000.
- *Twin Peaks*.. Dir. David Lynch, 1990-91.

Networking During Play

If your entire gaming group is tech savvy and equipped, perhaps all players could bring their portable computers, laptops, and handhelds to each session and network them together. This decadent set-up can be used to send instant messages between players and the GM, distribute maps and illustrations of places and people, and even generate random numbers for everyone to see (a sort of public distributed dice rolling). Computer networks may have a very important place in the future of face-to-face role-playing.

Tech and the Ongoing Game

If you can use a computer to supplement your campaign, why not other forms of technology? Cellular phones offer a wide range of services, such as paging and instant messaging, all of which may assist you to expand your game into an engrossing 24/7 campaign. In-character phone calls are a fast and easy way to inject adventure into your normal sessions, especially if they are made to one of your players by a mysterious third party! Consider how some of the following can be used to turn your weekly game into a daily event for your players: faxes, custom burned CDs or DVD, camcorders, postcards from exotic locations mailed to your players, cryptic notes in school lockers or on the radio, classified ads to the player characters in the school or local newspaper, etc. The options are limitless.

Remember to tell your players about some of your ideas in advance, so you don't freak them out when they receive phone calls from some guy named Orpheus telling them that they are the ones that will save the world from destruction!

Convention Gaming

Each year, hundreds of thousands of gamers worldwide spend one or more weekends playing games with complete strangers at game conventions. The largest in the world is probably Spiel (held in Essen, Germany), which hosts over 150,000 gamers each year (although much of the focus is on board games). In the Americas, both GenCon Indianapolis (25,000+ gamers) and Origins (15,000+ gamers) are well attended, attracting people from all over the world. Large regional cons may have attendance in the high 100s to low 1,000s, while the small ones may only have a few dozen participants. Regardless of size, the format is the same: show up at the con, pay your registration fee, sign up for games as a player or GM, and have a great time!

Constructing Adventures

Role-playing games run at conventions are given a variety of names: one-shots, adventures, modules, demos, scenarios, tournaments, and many others. Usually, GMs design a short scenario (2-6 hours) for a small group of players (5-8 perhaps), focusing on a single idea. While the stories behind adventures vary greatly, you may wish to follow a traditional formula for ease of play.

Level of Difficulty

The first question you need to ask yourself is: "How much knowledge of *Dreaming Cities* or *Tri-Stat dX* do the players need?" If you run a novice or beginner game, you will probably have some people sign up who have never played the system before. If you indicate that the game is for advanced or experienced players only, players are more likely to know the rulebook inside and out. Let the convention organisers know the experience level you desire from the players so everyone can be suitably prepared.

Pre-generated or Created?

When running a convention one-shot, you might ask each player to create a new character with restrictions specific to the game. This can be your best option, but it can also pose some problems as well. If some players have never played a Tri-Stat System game before, you will need to provide them with a copy of the rules and coach them as they create characters. Additionally, character creation may steal precious minutes from your game time, since most games have a fixed duration.

Instead of having players create characters, you can construct a handful of custom-built characters, with attached background history, before the convention begins, for use in your game. These pre-generated characters are given to the players, allowing you to begin the game right away. One major drawback, however, might arise from one player's desire to have a different character. For example, if you give a Roman senator character to a player who wants to play a gladiator instead, you have a problem.

Between the previous two option lies a third: a partly pre-generated, partly created character. You may give the players characters with half of their points allocated, for instance, and ask them to add more Points to develop and customise the designs. This method can save valuable time compared to players creating characters from scratch, but still provides flexibility in character creation.

Be Prepared

You should assume that the players will show up to your game completely unprepared, and consequently make preparations for them. Be sure to have enough dice, paper, character sheets, and pens for each player, in case they forget to bring their own. Wear a watch so you can keep track of time; a watch with an alarm may be a good idea. If you can manage it, bring one or more extra copies of the Tri-Stat dX core rulebook for players to reference before/during the game. Purchase all the drinks and snacks you will need during the game early, to avoid disturbing the flow of the story later on. Encourage players to do the same. If it's important, ensure your gaming friends know where you are during the adventure should they need to reach you.

Props

Props can greatly add to the atmosphere of your game adventure if you use them effectively and sparingly. Since you only have a limited time to play, and you might not have met any of the players before the game, using props can convey your ideas more succinctly than words alone.

Consider how you can use the following props in your convention scenario: deluxe character sheets in specially designed folders, short history documents for the setting, city maps, headquarter floor plans, illustrations of NPC heroes and villains, trinkets that players will find during the game, pre-recorded sounds or discussions and a portable stereo so you can play them, costumes, and miniatures and a battle map if your adventure is more tactical in nature.

K.I.S.

Keep It Simple. Your one-shot adventures should have a single, clear focus, with a linear plot and a clearly defined endgame — the exact opposite of a well-rounded campaign. You must ensure that your players do not have too much to accomplish; it will take them time to adjust to the game and consequently they will not be as swift to resolve the plot conflicts as your normal gaming group. After all, the players are interacting with a group of people they probably have never met before and may be a little uneasy. You must ensure the players do not get distracted chasing unimportant plot tangents if you want them to finish the adventure.

Four Short Hours

Players arrive 10 minutes late (3:50). Introduce yourself and hand out character sheets and other information (3:40). Answer questions (3:25). Wait until Joe Gamer returns from the men's room (3:20). Answer more questions (3:10). Set the scene (3:00). Now you only have three hours left to play the game and it hasn't even started yet! Knock off another 30 minutes minimum if you want players to create new characters. 2:30 and time's wasting....

Oh yeah — don't forget that half the players will be leaving 15 minutes early so they can grab a bite to eat before their next game begins.

Something for Everyone

Perhaps one of the most difficult parts of running a con game is balancing time and action amongst the players. In your home campaign, you can fix the mistake of giving one player less time during one session by giving him or her additional role-playing opportunities the next time the group meets. At a convention, you do not have that option and consequently you must get it right the first time.

Players want you to present them with opposition where their strengths can shine: players with strong or combat-oriented characters want to fight enemies; players with smart characters want to solve mysteries; and players with spiritual characters want to explore funky, non-traditional occurrences. Take a close look at the composition of your player characters to ensure the plot has something for each character to accomplish, both as a group and as individuals.

Wrapping Up

By keeping an eye on your watch, you can predict whether your scenario will finish during the "correct" scene or not. If it looks like the adventure will be unfinished at the end of the scheduled time, you must adjust the action slightly to draw the plot to a conclusion before times runs out. Perhaps that means skipping a planned encounter, or having the enemy leave additional clues that direct the group to the climax of the story. The players will be very unsatisfied if you run out of time in the middle of battle, with the conclusion no where in sight.

If you can manage it, finish the game a few minutes early so you can gather your belongings and answer questions that the players might have. They will likely want to know what really happened, who was really behind the plot, and what will happen to their characters after the adventure.

Did I Win?

Role-playing games are not competitive by nature, but you can establish a scenario where some players are considered to have done better than others (i.e. "won"). This is prevalent in tournament-type scenarios, where the top players from one event advance to the sequel event where they play with others who advance under similar circumstances. It is also important to determine the winners if prizes are provided by the convention.

You know better than anyone else does who did the best. "Best" might mean "defeated the most enemies," but it could also mean "solved the most riddles," "saved the most people," or simply "role-played the character most accurately and intelligently." You can decide who won by yourself, but polling all the players in secret (get them to write a name or two on a piece of paper and give it to you) can give you additional insight.

Shared Game Mastering

If you are attending the convention with some of your local gaming friends, you might consider asking one of them to share the Game Mastering with you. Although this technique is perhaps best suited for games with large numbers of players (12 and up), sharing the responsibility can also benefit the pacing and intensity of an adventure for 4-8 people. If you want to really demonstrate your creative talents, try running a con scenario for 24 players, with 4 Game Masters: you serve as the head GM, while your friends help as assistant GMs. Aside from possible logistical nightmares, the main problem with shared Game Mastering involves the GMs' various styles of play and task resolution. If you decide to run an adventure co-operatively, talk to the other GMs at least an hour before play begins to set some ground rules — how specific events should be adjudicated, how the Mastering duties will be divided, how the strengths of each individual GM can best be used, etc.

Crossover Games

The crossover game is one of the best character creation alternatives for a convention scenario. For these games, players bring their characters from their home campaigns to the convention and play them in your crossover adventure. Obviously, the players will need to know this in advance so they remember to bring their characters, so it is vital that you give the convention organisers a suitable description of the game for their pre-registration booklet. Crossover games ensure that each player assumes a role with which he or she is comfortable and familiar, and allows you to jump into the action of the scenario right away.

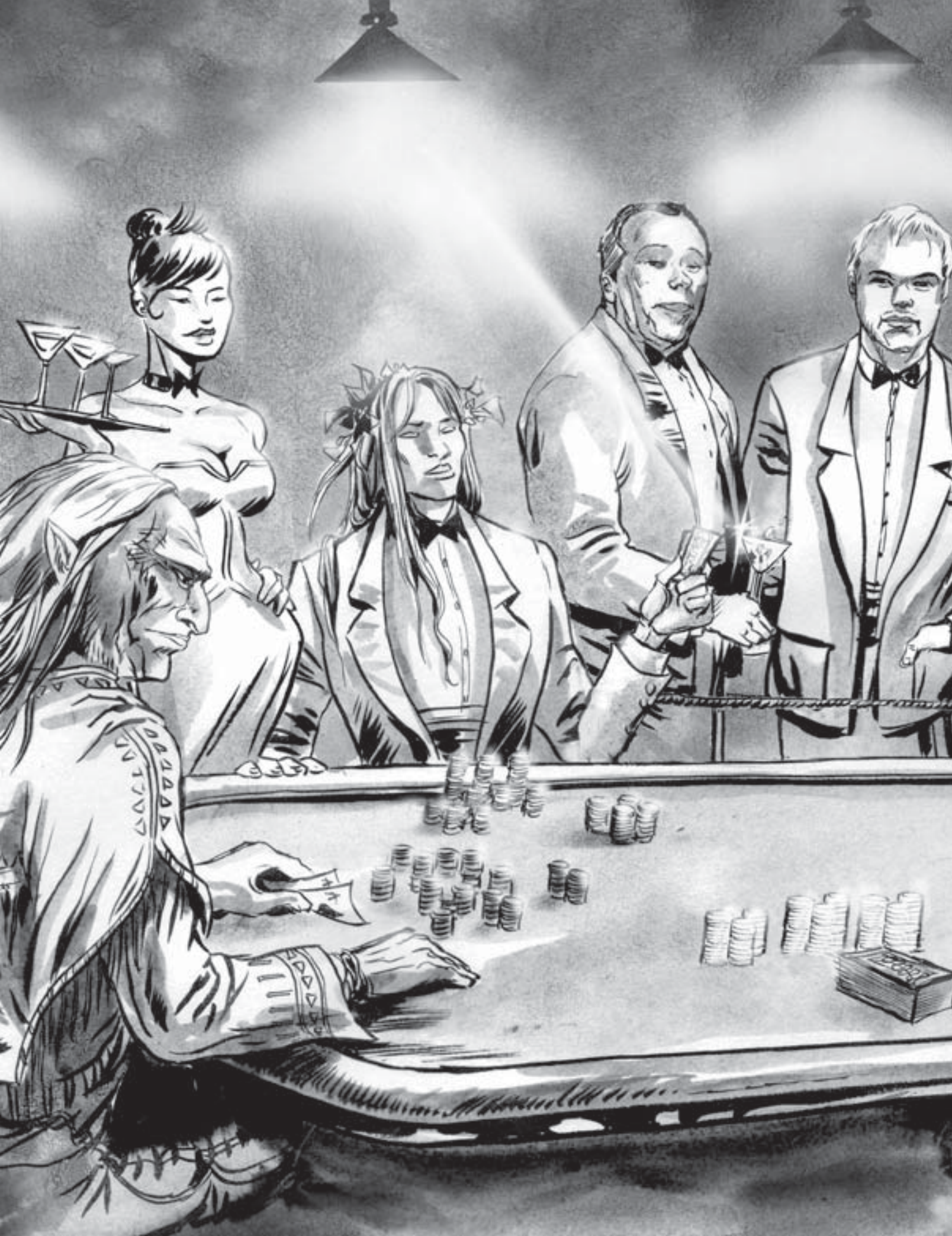
You need to decide whether the characters can be played in the adventure as they are — with any number of Character Points and no restriction on Attributes and Defects — or whether each character needs to be slightly retooled to fit certain specifications (for example, all 100 Point characters, with no Mind Control Attribute allowed). Either choice will work, although the first method is perhaps best suited for more advanced or experienced players who will not be distracted by a Character Point spread amongst the group.

Freeform Gaming

Freeform gaming emphasises the role-playing aspect of an RPG more than the game aspect. The game environment is quite different; rather than sitting at a table and mixing player talk with character talk, freeform games encourage players to walk around, making use of the entire room (or perhaps even building), and remain in-character for nearly the entire game. The players — and for much of the time, the Game Masters — take the roles of actors, playing their parts in an improvisational theatre. You, as head Game Master, also undertake the director's position, using NPCs to loosely guide the characters through the events of the scenario.

A freeform scenario obviously requires more forethought than a regular adventure and often features a more restrictive plot and setting. For example, the adventure could focus on the events of a supernatural murder or grand theft, set in a posh hotel or on a small island. Some Game Masters take freeform gaming in a slightly different direction known as a LARP, or Live-Action Role-Playing. LARP participants frequently wear costumes appropriate for their characters. The most ambitious LARPs at the Origins and GenCon conventions are played over the entire weekend and support hundreds of participants. The urban fantasy genre, with its "real world" setting, is quite suited to LARP games. Freeform games work best with a large group of players and multiple Game Masters. They also benefit from an environment away from the gaming tables that are standard at many game conventions. Consider hosting your game in more comfortable surroundings, such as the convention's hotel lobby or university lounge. You must also set specific ground rules before the game starts, stating very clearly to the participants that:

- No real or replica weapon props are allowed in the game;
- Combat will be resolved using the game rules, and not acted out;
- No one should grab, hold, hug, or make physical contact with another participant; and
- Everyone should stop what they are doing when a GM says, "freeze."




SMOKING IS
NOT PERMITTED
INSIDE THE
HARDWAY CLUB

"The sleep of reason produces monsters."

— Goya

The Nightmare Chronicles describe a world where, unbeknownst to most people, humankind fights a deadly war against otherworldly beings. Not all of the warriors are aware of the larger war in which they fight their battles. Indeed, many believe themselves to be fighting alone against the madness. Each has a role to play in the conflict, and each has the potential to save the Earth.

In The Nightmare Chronicles, humankind struggles against the Ashigath, the chaotic and magical denizens of the Realm of Nightmares. These demonic beings vary in shape, abilities, and power, as well as in motivation — some even choose to fight alongside humankind, for their own obscure reasons. While the Ashigath are mighty, humankind is not entirely defenceless. Standing up for humanity are the Dreamtouched, apparently normal people who possess amazing powers. Those powers come with a catch: the Dreamtouched may have superhuman strength and agility, access to magical energies, or even transcendent awareness and knowledge ... but only they only have access to these abilities when they are near the Nightmare demons.

Urban Fantasy

The Nightmare Chronicles is an urban fantasy setting, where the fantastic and mythic exist right under the noses of the "normal" world. More specifically, it is a setting where otherworldly, demonic forces seek the subjugation (or even destruction) of humankind, while humanity's protectors, imbued with phenomenal powers of their own, fight a secret war for our survival. Such a setting is traditionally a bit "grittier" than many other kinds of urban fantasy, with more combat and mayhem than is common in urban fantasy. Nonetheless, adventures in the Nightmare Chronicles need not be about saving the world every week; there's plenty of room for intrigue, romance, and even humour. Ultimately, the Nightmare Chronicles is about characters that possess extraordinary talents for which they will never receive recognition, asked to save a world that will never understand them.

The World of The Nightmare Chronicles

"Philosophers tell us that the waking world is an emergent effect of our thoughts, so does it surprise us that a world has also been created by our nightmares? I can only hope that our fantasies, hopes, and daydreams are just as powerful."

— Janice Elana, Eskaton

Although most people are not aware of the fact, the universe contains at least two separate realms of existence: the Realm of Thought, our home; and the Realm of Nightmares, the home of the Ashigath. At one time, a great barrier known as the Incubata held these two dimensions distinct. War among the Ashigath weakened the Incubata, and now the two Realms are slowly contaminating each other. The Ashigath roam the Earth, leaving trails of death and terror in their wake. Their powers are manifold, and many excel in magic.

The magical abilities of the Ashigath make it almost trivial for them to travel from their home Realm to our world. The path back is not so simple. The rituals and components used by the Ashigath to come here do not work in our realm to send them home. While a few paths back to the Realm of Nightmare have been found, many Ashigath over the years have opted to remain on Earth. Some hide from humans, seeking a quiet existence. More of them seek to prey on humankind, feeding on our flesh or our spirits.

The Realm of Nightmares

Little is certain about the Realm of Nightmares, the home of the Ashigath. Its geography changes without notice, the political machinations of its various armies are in constant flux, and time passes at a different rate there than on Earth, sometimes passing slower, sometimes passing faster — and occasionally, we are told, even passing in reverse. Reports of the Realm that have come back to Earthly scholars tell of superheated air, ice on the ground which does not melt, molten rivers, and persistent screams and drumbeats just on the fringes of a traveller's perception. Demons who fight alongside humans insist that the Realm truly is the home to humanity's nightmares, the disturbances that trouble our sleep. They also claim that the Earthly realm is the home of nightmares for the Ashigath.

The Ashigath

Humans who fight against the Ashigath commonly refer to them as demons, and for good reason. Ashigath have few of the characteristics we associate with the best of humanity — love, loyalty, innovation, inspiration — and all of the elements we attribute to the worst of us — hatred, avarice, manipulation. Their forms vary, and scholars among those fighting this nightmare war believe that there are multiple species (if that concept can apply to such creatures). Some Ashigath — largely (but not exclusively) from the group known as the Dissectors — will occasionally ally with humans against the other demons, but few humans trust any demon to remain an ally for long.

The Sleepers

At the centre of the Realm of Nightmares lie the Sleeping Lords. Immense, ageless, and incalculably evil, the Sleeping Lords (sometimes simply called the Sleepers) rule the Realm through the pronouncements of their lieutenants, the Oracles. Their power is also maintained via the insane dreams they induce in others, and the fear held by all Ashigath of what will happen when the Sleeping Lords awaken. No human now on Earth has ever seen the massive crypts holding the bodies of the Sleepers, but the Dissectors stories tell of stone buildings the size of small mountains.

The Demon War

The various factions of the Ashigath have plotted and schemed against each other for countless years. These machinations would occasionally flare up into open warfare, but such fights rarely lasted long, for the power of the Sleepers' Oracles was too strong. The leader of the Dissectors, a Blood-Wizard known as Meranus, saw a way to victory, and urged the Dissectors to rise up against the Oracles and their deadly assassins, the Devourers. Meranus had concocted a daring plan: he would pierce the Incubata and pull over an army of humans, the beings that haunted the nightmares of the Ashigath. In doing so, he weakened the barrier and when the Oracles cast the human forces back to whence they came, they broke the barrier entirely.

The Realm of Thought

The Ashigath call our world the Realm of Thought, as logic and reason are at the core of its nature. Unlike the Realm of Nightmares, the physical laws of our world behave rationally, if subtly. Magic, psionics, the supernatural — none of these are native to our plane of existence.

The Nightmare Chronicles takes place on an Earth, and at a time, that seems very much like our own. For the majority of people on Earth, life continues as it always has, and the world works as it should. Few people are even aware that a great struggle is underway, and has been underway for centuries, even millennia.

The fraction of humankind that is aware of the true nature of reality belong to one of three groups: the Deathless (humans who were once compelled to fight for Meranus), the Infused (who have taken Ashigath blood into themselves), and the Dreamtouched (humans who have in their heritage a small measure of Ashigath blood). The demonic hordes of the Sleepers' Realm are rapacious and hungry when manifest on Earth. Over the centuries, many human women have been left pregnant with the seed of the Nightmares. These part-demon offspring usually appear quite normal, and may be father or mother to children of their own, thus spreading the touch of Nightmares to subsequent generations.

Those carrying the blood of the demons may display frightening powers — but only when a full-blooded Ashigath is nearby. Without the presence of a Nightmare demon, most Dreamtouched are as weak (and as normal) as any other human. The exceptions are first generation Dreamtouched born to a human-Ashigath coupling — beings called Half-Blood by the Dissectors. The Half-Bloods are unique: they do not need the presence of an Ashigath for their powers to manifest. They are also under constant threat, since their mixed blood is highly prized by spell-casters as a component in their dark rituals.

The Veil

"If I sleep, I'll forget. If I forget, I'll die. I must not sleep. I must not sleep. I must not sleep."

— Scrawled diary entry found at the scene of an unsolved murder.

Although the Ashigath and humans have been fighting for centuries, few references to such conflict appear in our histories. This is because of the Veil, a phenomenon little understood by either human or Ashigath. The Veil causes the minds of those without any demonic blood to forget about Nightmare demons, to misremember encounters with them only as dreams, or to subconsciously construct mundane explanations for otherworldly events. The Veil also interferes with recollection of visible magic use, as magic is only possible in our world because of the influence of the Realm of Nightmares. For most people, memories of encounters with the Ashigath or witnessing magic use will fade into dreams or rationalisations once the human falls asleep, usually far sooner. In most cases, only the Dreamtouched remember having met (or fallen victim to) the Ashigath.

The Veil affects more than day-to-day human behaviour; it also shapes how humans interpret the physical sciences. The laws of the universe that we know are "consensual wisdom," memories of the way our Realm is supposed to work. These natural laws are no longer the true face of reality. Few Dreamtouched are physicists or astronomers by trade or training. Those who are can look at experimental or observed data and get entirely different results from what all of their colleagues see; this does not lead to a productive scientific career. Nevertheless, those few Dreamtouched who understand the big picture and who have returned to scientific endeavours are slowly beginning to assemble a model of how the universe really works — and it's not at all the same as conventional science would have us believe.

The Incubata

The barrier between the Realm of Nightmares and the Realm of Thought is known as the Incubata. In the past, the Incubata prevented any physical transfer between the two Realms, allowing only nightmares to pass between the minds of those asleep on either side. The Incubata shrouded the Realm of Nightmares from the eyes of humans, and proved an impassable barrier for the Ashigath. During the Demon War, powerful magic weakened the Incubata, allowing physical movement between the separate dimensions. It also scattered many thousands of demons from the Realm of Nightmares into the Realm of Thought.

Those demons that will speak of it to humans claim that the damage done to the Incubata is a recent thing, but that the weakening stretches back to the dawn of civilisation. This is because of the flexible nature of time in the world of the Ashigath. Once the Incubata was damaged at the Battle of the Broken Maze, the flaws reached far back into Realm of Thought's past, as well as forward to its near future (see The History of the Universe (Abridged), page 178). Nightmare hordes appeared on Earth throughout history. Human scholars dread to discover how the presence of demons on Earth has changed the past.

The Ongoing War

Most of the Ashigath on Earth arrived here directly from a civil war between different demonic factions. Few saw any reason to stop fighting just because the battlefield had changed, and as the years have gone on, new factions have arisen both on Earth and in the Realm of Nightmares. As a result, any two groups of demons are as likely to savage each other as to attack any nearby humans.

The demons that have migrated to Earth are not fond of humanity. Humankind has long haunted demons' nightmares, and legions of human warriors fought alongside the Dissectors against the armies of the Sleeping Lords — but unlike the Deathless who fought in the civil war, the majority of people on Earth are weak, fearful and oddly forgetful. To most Ashigath in our world, human beings are corrupt, contemptible, impure creatures, far too willing to embrace change and discard tradition. These Ashigath see extermination as their only real option.

Humankind has its own weapons in this war. Some of the Ashigath work alongside humankind, seeking to eliminate the hordes of rival demons on Earth and to close the breach in the Incubata. The human warriors brought to the Nightmare Realm by the Dissector Blood-Wizard Meranus still live, after a fashion, fighting on as the Deathless. Most importantly, the Dreamtouched, with powers allowing them to stand up to the demons, grow more numerous with each generation.

Dreamtouched Soldiers

Very few humans carry the taint of Ashigath, and only a small fraction of those people will become aware of their potential for power. The signs that a person is marked by Ashigath blood only manifest when a true demon is nearby, within about 50 metres. Even then, unless Dreamtouched humans have been properly trained, know what to look for, or are simply lucky, the only result may be confusion about what has happened to them. The Dreamtouched may even be completely oblivious to the power coursing through their bodies.

Once Dreamtouched humans become aware of their capabilities, they are more than a match for many demons. The powers of the Dreamtouched vary, greatly from person to person, but can manifest as superhuman strength, speed and agility (the so-called "Tanks"), a far-greater-than-human intelligence and awareness of the psychic world ("Adepts"), or as an embodiment of magical power which can be controlled via ritual or unleashed as pure destructive force ("Mages"). The Dreamtouched can be very challenging opponents for predatory Ashigath.

As mighty as they may be, the Dreamtouched are neither immortal nor omnipotent. A well-placed blade or bullet can kill a Dreamtouched human as readily as a normal person, and the extraordinary powers the Dreamtouched possess only manifest when a demon is nearby. The more intelligent and manipulative Ashigath know to surround themselves with non-demonic allies able to strike against meddlesome Dreamtouched humans as needed.

In this sort of struggle, the Dreamtouched would be unwise to willingly fight alone. Nevertheless, they are few in number, and the Veil keeps their struggle from becoming public, so they are often forced by circumstance to confront demonic eruptions with only the strength of a few allies. A few Dreamtouched are unaware that others like themselves even exist. Despite these handicaps, the slowly growing numbers of Dreamtouched are banding together across the world, uniting to beat back the Ashigath and figure out a way to heal the Incubata. Some of these groups are organised by government agencies, and have access to significant resources. More of them are independent movements, a few with a military bent, and others are more scholarly in orientation. All is focused on a single goal: ridding our world of the Ashigath.





Human Endeavours

"When you learn that the demons have been here for centuries, you get scared. When you learn that they really haven't, but a colossal screw-up in the demon world made them show up now and in our past, changing our history, you get mad. When you learn that a lot of the demons decided that they like this place, and want to take it over ... well, then you get ready to fight."

— Sgt. Emily Johnson, USMC, "Force Tango"

The Ashigath seeking power over humankind do not stand unopposed. Humans all over the world are fighting back. Some have become quite good at it. A minority of Ashigath stands beside these humans, at least for the moment.

The Human Resistance

The demon packs invading small towns, the Ashigath Mages on corporate Boards of Directors, the horrific Nightmare beings drunk on human terror — all rely on one common element: humans who can't understand what's going on. As long as the Veil causes people to construct elaborate consensual fantasies to explain away the depredations of the Ashigath, the Nightmare demons can act without fear of consequence. Only when humans are able to pierce the Veil can they fight back. Fortunately for our world, some people are able to do so.

The Dreamtouched, those who have some measure of Ashigath blood flowing in their veins, do not always suffer from the effects of the Veil. For their entire lives, they occasionally bear witness to the reality hidden behind the Veil. More often than not, they think themselves mad because of these glimpses. Once their powers awaken, the Dreamtouched are forever afterwards immune to the Veil. Otherwise normal humans can gain long-term resistance to the power of the Veil only by becoming one of the "Infused," those who take pure demonic blood into their own bodies. The Deathless, human warriors stolen from their original homes and times by the demons to fight in the Realm of Nightmares, may also ignore the Veil, but are no longer normal humans.

Creating Characters in the Nightmare Chronicles

The Nightmare Chronicles is a d8 setting, with a twist. Player characters should receive 100 starting Character Points. Initial Stats should be limited to 8, the Talent Threshold of a d6 game to reflect the human origins of the characters, and their intermittent access to super-human powers.

All characters may have access to the following mundane Attributes (maximum Level allowed is indicated in the parentheses): Agents (Level 8); Attack Combat Mastery (Level 8); Combat Technique (Level 8); Defence Combat Mastery (Level 8); Divine Relationship (Level 8); Extra Attacks (Level 2); Extra Defences (Level 2); Features (of a mundane sort, no limit); Gadgets (Level 4); Heightened Awareness (Level 8); Henchmen (Level 8); Highly Skilled (Level 8); Massive Damage (Level 2); Organisational Ties (no limit); Servant (Level 8); Tough (Level 1); and Wealth (Level 8).

All characters may choose from the following mundane Defects: Blind Fury; Conditional Ownership; Easily Distracted; Famous; Inept Attack; Inept Defence; Ism; Less Capable; Marked; Nemesis; Not So Tough; Phobia; Physical Impairment; Recurring Nightmares; Red Tape; Sensory Impairment; Significant Other; Special Requirement; Skeleton in the Closet; Unappealing; Unskilled.

Other Attributes and Defects are available depending upon which path chosen for the character.

Because the Dreamtouched, Infused, and the Deathless do not forget encounters with the Ashigath, they are able to see what needs to be done to fight the demons. The Infused may call upon technological resources, and the Deathless are superb warriors, but it is the Dreamtouched, with super-human powers arising from the Nightmare blood flowing in their veins, that give humanity a true fighting chance.

The Dreamtouched

About 1% of the human population is Dreamtouched — they have some measure of Ashigath blood in them, even if only an infinitesimal amount. The taint is present in roughly equal numbers in males and females, and is consistent across all ethnicities and most nationalities (there is a slightly higher-than-average number of Dreamtouched in the United Kingdom and a slightly lower-than-average number in China). There are no outward signs of being Dreamtouched, and no mundane medical tests can detect it — although this is a common line of research for demon-hunting institutions.

The only way to know whether a person is Dreamtouched is for that person to be in the presence of a 100% pure Ashigath, within 50 metres or so. The first time a Dreamtouched human's powers manifest, he or she will feel an immediate fever and headache (bordering on a migraine). Many people experiencing their first flush of power are unable to stand, dropping to their knees, sometimes even passing out for a moment. The incipient Dreamtouched must be near a demon for a full three minutes before the transition — which many of the Dreamtouched call "the awakening" — takes hold. Anything less than three minutes and the fires fade. Many unfortunates experience the awakening process numerous times before they manage the full duration. Scouts for the various resistance groups keep their eyes and ears open for reports of people experiencing sudden, transient episodes of migraines and fevers.

Dreamtouched powers only appear once a person has gone through puberty; the earliest known awakening was of a young woman of 13, but most don't experience the transition until they reach 16 or 17. For adults, the awakening can happen at any age. Myron Franken, the founder of the demon-hunting group Eskaton, is said to have gone through his awakening at age 72. Scouts and recruiters for the agencies fighting the Ashigath prefer to find younger Dreamtouched, not because the powers are stronger in young adults, but because they have more time to build up their potential.

Once they manifest their powers, Dreamtouched people seem to have a natural knack for using them, at least at a basic level. Training isn't necessary for the use of most abilities, with the notable exception of magic. This is fortunate, as the powers only appear when an Ashigath is nearby. Once the demon is gone (moved on, dead, or otherwise removed from the presence of the Dreamtouched), the powers are no longer accessible. This can be a problem if the awakened person can fly!

Testing and training awakened abilities is less of an issue if allied Dissectors are handy (although they find the need to hang around training areas fairly tedious). Groups not friendly to Ashigath of any sort will sometimes capture one of the weaker demons and hold it prisoner to allow for extended full-power training. Dreamtouched demon-hunters working without the support of a large group just have to settle for on-the-job training.

Dreamtouched Characters

The Dreamtouched manifest powers in three broad areas: physical, mental, and magical. The majority of the Dreamtouched develop powers that focus on one of these three; mixes are rare. The new abilities usually mirror "natural" talents the person may have already had. People who were already physically gifted tend to manifest super-human speed and/or strength, while those who were already considered bright or artistic would tend to develop strong mental or magical abilities, respectively. This is more a pattern than a rule; there are occasional examples of physically unremarkable young people suddenly gaining superhuman strength, individuals with no discernible artistic Skills becoming masters of magic, and so on.

Creating Dreamtouched Characters

The ability of a Dreamtouched person to transform into a magical warrior is represented by the Alternate Form — Full Powered Attribute. This Attribute must be given the Reduction (Only Near Ashigath), which is worth 1 Point/Level Reduction.

A Dreamtouched person does not otherwise physically change when his or her Alternate Form is activated.

Reduction (Only Near Ashigath)

This Reduction means that the Dreamtouched can only assume his or her Alternate Form while there is a living Ashigath within 50 metres of him or her. Once activated, the Alternate Form will function for as long as a living Ashigath remains within that range, plus an additional five rounds. Thus, if an Ashigath sprints 100 metres away, the Dreamtouched is not instantly depowered — he or she can try to close the range and pursue the Ashigath. More handily, a Dreamtouched who is flying when his or her power source disappears has time to try to land safely (although one way or another, he or she will reach the ground).

Creating the Alternate Form

All Dreamtouched should take the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute in Body, Mind, and/or Soul. Taking Enhanced in all three is acceptable. This reflects the magical boost the Dreamtouched receive when — and only when — they are in the presence of a Nightmare demon.

Physical Prowess – the Tank

"Tanks" — the Dreamtouched characters with an emphasis on physical abilities — are the most common variety. Nearly all of the physical Dreamtouched have Alternate Forms that include Attributes that are of a "human but more so" nature, such as Superstrength, Speed, and added Levels of Tough. On the other hand, Body-based Attributes that don't correspond to a natural human ability, such as Duplicate and Elasticity, are entirely unknown among newly-awakened Dreamtouched, and may only manifest in humans who have spent a great deal of time in the presence of Ashigath.

Unsurprisingly, most Tanks excel at battle, particularly hand-to-hand fighting. Combat-related Attributes (such as Attack and Defence Combat Value, Combat Technique, Extra Attack, Extra Defence, and Tough) are key aspects of a Dreamtouched Tank character.

A Tank's Alternate Form can include any mundane Attributes plus any of these Special Attributes: Armour (up to Level 1); Damage Absorption (up to Level 8); Heightened Senses (type I) (up to Level 8); Immovable (up to Level 8); Jumping (up to Level 2); Regeneration (up to Level 4); Special Movement (up to Level 4) limited to Balance, Cat-Like, Light-Footed, and Zen Direction; Speed (up to Level 2); Superstrength (up to Level 2). All must be taken in conjunction with Restriction: Dreamtouched, worth 1 BP.

Mental Prowess – the Adept

Adepts, the Dreamtouched characters with an emphasis on mental abilities, vary greatly. Some will manifest psychic Attributes, such as Sixth Sense or Telepathy; others seem to develop an extraordinary knack for machines, showing up as Computer Scanning or Gadgeteer Attributes. A few simply experience a superhuman increase in intelligence when in the presence of Ashigath, with a corresponding increase in their success with Mind-related Skills. Most Dreamtouched Adepts have Heightened Awareness, Heightened Senses, or a Sixth Sense that alerts them to magic or demons.

Non-mundane Attributes commonly found in Adept's Alternate Forms include: Computer Scanning; Gadgeteer; Heightened Awareness; Heightened Senses; Invisibility; Mind Control; Mind Shield; Projection; Sensory Block; Sixth Sense; Telekinesis; and Telepathy. All may be taken at any Level up to Level 8.

Magical Prowess – the Mage

Mages, the Dreamtouched characters with an emphasis on magical abilities, seem to be the most powerful, but they have definite limitations. Without training, the Mage is limited to little more than crude channelling of otherworldly magical energy — such raw magic (often derided by ritual spell-casters as "blaster magic") quickly drains the reserves of a human Mage, leaving him or her weakened and defenceless. This use of magic is certainly dangerous to its targets, but it is only a fraction of what a Mage trained in ritual magic can accomplish.

A Mage's Alternate Form must always include Special Attack, as described below. It can also include Energy Bonus and Enhanced [Stat] (Soul). Further Attributes can be incorporated into the Alternate Form if they meet the criteria for ritual magic, as described below.

"Raw magic" is represented by the Special Attack Attribute with the Short Range and Uses Energy Disabilities. Raw magic mages may sometimes have Area Effect or Spreading Abilities. The relevant Skill to direct Raw Magic is the Special Ranged Attack Skill.

With training, the Mage's raw channelling of power can be crafted into a wide array of capabilities. A mage's training is represented by the Occult Skill. He or she must also have a mentor (human or Ashigath) to get this training (this usually amounts to Organisational Ties at Level 2 or better) but the GM and player may agree to have the Mage be self-taught instead. A self-taught Mage will be able to use some variety of Force Field and Special Attack Abilities, but would not have access to ritual magic (see below) without actual instruction.

A Mage who has received a degree of formal training can also learn how to shape his or her raw power through magical rituals, producing effects that vary from subtle creations and transformations to awesome displays of power.

A ritual Mage can grant temporary abilities to allies, heal wounds, even teleport. Rituals take more time and concentration than raw magic, and they often require physical components, but in compensation, rituals grant access to far greater power. Ritual magic is represented by the Power Flux (Limited Point Exchange) Attribute, using the specific campaign variation outlined on page 39. Since this represents ritual magic, the reversed Duration should not be less than one minute (Rank 8). For inexperienced Mages, it may be longer, often an hour or more.

Almost any Attributes might be incorporated into the Power Flux, each Attribute representing a particular ritual. The most common are Adaptation, Alternate Form (each form counts as a separate Attribute for Power Flux purposes), Animal Summon/Control, Armour, Block Power, Creation, Exorcism, Flight, Force Field, Healing, Illusion, Insubstantial, Invisibility, Massive Damage (used to enchant a particular weapon), Mind Shield, Nullify, Plant Control, Projection, Regeneration, Sensory Block, Servant, Special Attack, Swarm, Telekinesis (for a specific specified substance only), Telepathy, Teleport, and Transmutation. Also, Item of Power may be taken as part of the Power Flux — this uses special rules (see page 176). GM permission is required for other Attributes. In particular, Mind Control, Telepathy, Sixth Sense, and general Telekinesis tend to be the province of Adepts rather than Mage, and Superstrength and other physical Attributes is the domain of Tanks.

When making Stat rolls to exchange points in the Power Flux, make a Soul-based Skill Check using Occult (Ritual Magic) at a penalty of -2 rather than a Stat check. A failure means that the time spent is wasted; spend the Reversed Duration and try again.

The Power Flux will often have Restriction (Consumable Focus) and Concentration Attribute (the latter only applies when using the Power Flux to flux Attributes). The focus should always be something different for each Attribute in the Power Flux, and should be mystically appropriate, (such as a feather or a broomstick for Flight, a sponge or protective amulet for Armour, a wand or rod for Special Attack, etc).

Not all Dreamtouched magicians are as flexible as an experienced Mages. The lesser mages are often self-taught Dreamtouched dabblers in the occult. They may know various individual rituals learned as single Attributes, rather than Power Flux (Limited Point Exchange). Use the guidelines for ritual magic in Chapter 8.

Sample Character — Alex Volkonsky

A few years ago, Alex Volkonsky was living in Northern Pennsylvania, studying to be a Russian Orthodox priest like his grandfather. Everything changed a few months later. During a summer holiday caving in the Adirondacks, he and twin sister Anya encountered their first Ashigath, and Alex found a higher calling than the priesthood. Shortly afterward, the Eskaton recruited him. Now 26 years old and the veteran of several adventures, he has honed his powers to become a powerful Mage.

Alex Volkonsky — Dreamtouched Mage (100 Character Points)

Body 5 **Mind** 6 **Soul** 8 (10)
Attack Combat Value 6 (7) **Defence Combat Value** 4 (5)
Health Points 65 (75) **Energy Points** 70 (80)

Level	Points	Attribute
5	40	Alternate Form (Full-Powered) Reduction (-1, Only Near Ashigath)
1	2	Gadgets (Sports car, shotgun)
2	2	Highly Skilled
2	2	Organisational Ties (Russian Orthodox Church)
2	4	Organisational Ties (Eskaton)
8	16	Servant (Raxankashi Pup "Ivan the Terrible")

Level	Points	Alternate Form Attributes
2	4	Enhanced Soul
7	43	Power Flux (Ritual magic; 35 Flux Points; Limited Point Exchange: Force Field, Healing, Item of Power, Projection, Regeneration, Sensory Block, Special Attack, Transmutation; Duration Reversed 8)
	-1	• Concentration (While fluxing the Attribute)
	-1	• Restriction (Consumable Focus for each Attribute)
1	4	Special Attack "Raw Magic" (Damage 80, Short Range, Burns Energy x2)

Level	Points	Skills
1	3	Animal Training (Dogs)
1	2	Climbing (Natural surfaces)
1	2	Driving (Car)
2	6	Languages (Russian; English; Greek)
2	12	Occult (Ritual magic)
1	3	Social Sciences (Theology)
1	2	Wilderness Survival (Mountains)
1	6	Ranged Defence (Personal)
1	6	Special Ranged Attack (Magical)
1	6	Unarmed Defence (Strikes)
1	2	Writing (Academic)

Points	Defects
-1	Easily Distracted (Ancient books and manuscripts)
-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Dreamtouched Mage)
-2	Significant Other (Sister)

The Half-Bloods

The Half Bloods are one exception to the rule that Dreamtouched powers only manifest in the presence of Ashigath. The Half-Bloods are first generation Dreamtouched, those rare individuals who have a human for one parent and an Ashigath for the other (thereby having one spiritual foot on Earth and the other in the Realm of Nightmares). Half-Bloods develop superhuman powers similar to other Dreamtouched, but unlike the other Dreamtouched, the Half-Bloods can use their abilities whenever they wish. This makes them highly sought-after as allies, and furiously hunted down as opponents.

While being able to use super-human strength or toss a bolt of energy at any time is a distinct advantage, Half-Bloods have several notable weaknesses. The first is that their connection to the Realm of Nightmares gives Half-Bloods a significant tendency towards sleep disorders. The second weakness is somewhat more serious: any Half-Blood use of their non-mundane powers sets the fabric of reality vibrating, broadcasting the Half-Blood presence to any being with a connection to the Realm of Nightmares (including Dreamtouched and even the Infused) within approximately 1 kilometre. The effect becomes stronger closer to the Half-Blood, although it stops when the Half-Blood stops using his or her superhuman abilities.

The third weakness is the most troublesome over the long run, particularly in combination with the second weakness. The blood of Half-Blood humans is charged with sorcerous energy, and is a necessary component in a number of high-powered magical rituals — most notably, the ritual to open a gateway to return to the Realm of Nightmares. The Ritual of Return requires an amount of blood equivalent to that contained in a normal adult human body. While friendly spell-casters may be willing to wait until a compliant Half-Blood donates sufficient quantities over time to feed the spell, less patient mages — especially Ashigath — tend to simply take the blood they need all at once, with fatal results for the human supplying the blood.

Adult Half-Bloods are extremely rare in the modern age, as enough people and demons are aware of their value (and of the threat they present) that Half-Bloods are widely hunted. Cunning Ashigath will keep track of every human woman they have impregnated over the years, so that they can seek out their Half-Blood offspring before they come of age. Depending upon the demon, this may be so they can train their offspring, to eliminate the potential threat, or to capture the Half-Blood for later use as a gateway back home. The most insidious Ashigath will continually impregnate human women to ensure a regular supply of Half-Bloods, if only to sell their offspring to other demons who wish to head home.

Half-Blood Characters

Half-Blood characters are created in the same way as other Dreamtouched: they may be Adepts, Mages, or Tanks. Half-Bloods do not have Alternate Forms: their Attributes function all the time. In all other ways, including in choice of paths, Half-Bloods are created like Dreamtouched.

All Half-Bloods must take the Recurring Nightmares Defect. All Half-Blood characters must also take the Detectable Defect for 1 BP. Although Half-Blood powers are always available without the presence of an Ashigath, they are not always active. The Half-Blood character must consciously choose to activate and deactivate Attributes, even in the presence of demons. This means that Half-Bloods with superstrength need not worry about accidentally crushing objects or injuring someone with a handshake, but it also means that Half-Bloods taken by surprise may not have their defences up.

The Infused

If normal humans, without any demonic heritage, introduce a small amount of demon blood into their own veins, they too can see through the Veil for a period of time. The Infused, as the Dissectors refer to them, do not manifest any special powers aside from being no longer shielded from reality by the Veil. This awakened period lasts for about a year; annual injections of demon blood are required to remain aware of real reality. This is not without a cost: each injection has a 1% chance of killing the recipient outright, and all successful infusions result in a painful awakening process akin to the first time a Dreamtouched human encounters an Ashigath.

While both demon-hunter and demon-controlled groups make use of Infused agents, Ashigath wishing to extend their control over humanity particularly value them. Since they are not subject to the Veil, the Infused understand what is going on and do not forget the power and desires of the Nightmare demon. As they are not Ashigath, they can attack Dreamtouched humans without triggering their targets' Dreamtouched powers; as they are not themselves Dreamtouched, they rarely pose a serious threat to the Ashigath who commands them.

Infused Characters

The Infused are normal humans, except that they are no longer subject to the effects of the Veil. Since few normal humans would think of injecting themselves with the blood of demons whose existence they do not even suspect, Infused characters are only found as part of an established team or organisation. The GM should decide whether the group awakening the Infused character warrants requiring the Organisational Ties Attribute, but at least 2 Levels are typical. All Infused characters must take Unique Attribute (Infused) at Level 1, costing 5 Character Points. They may not bring their Stats above the Talent Threshold of 8 and can only choose from the mundane Attributes (page 16) with the following exception: they may choose the Item of Power Attribute, representing their access to a specialised weapon usable against the Ashigath. The power and capabilities of this item should be determined with the GM (see Crafting Magical Items, page 176, for guidelines).

The Deathless

Rarest of the human opponents of the Ashigath are the Deathless. They are the most ancient of the demon-hunters, for they are the remnants of the roughly 10,000 human warriors brought to the Realm of Nightmares by the Dissector Blood-Wizard Meranus. These warriors came from throughout human history, from as far back as the earliest days of civilisation and from over a century into the future. Babylonian swordsmen, samurai, infantrymen, Navy SEALS, barbarians, even power-armour drivers from the Posthuman Wars of 2112 — all were called by Meranus to serve in his army against the Devourers. They arrived in the Realm of Nightmares naked and confused.

The spells used by Meranus to bring these soldiers to his Realm wiped away most of their memories, granting them in compensation the ability to speak any language, thereby allowing them to fight side-by-side with their fellow humans despite their widely varied origins. Dissector Mages carefully peeled away the confusion and fear the warriors felt, replacing it with certainty, focus, and an increased sensitivity to the presence of Nightmare magics. The Dissectors armed their human pawns with magical weapons and armour, and set them on their task. The human warriors fell upon the armies of the Oracles, and pushed them back towards the Broken Maze. The human soldier's battle lust wasn't his or her own and although these warriors fought for the Dissectors, they did so only under the magical compulsion of Meranus' will. When the Oracles' spells tore open the Incubata and flung the humans back to the Realm of Thought, they also brought down the Blood-Wizard. Once Meranus was eliminated, the human soldiers no longer remained compelled to do the bidding of the Dissectors. They had lost their families, their memories, and their humanity, leaving only a burning desire for vengeance.

The Oracles did not intend to shatter the Incubata, and neither did they intend the magic's other startling result. As a unique side effect of the human warriors' violent transit back and forth through time and the Incubata, the warriors became immortal. The soldiers summoned to fight for the Dissectors and, flung through time by the Oracles, will never die. The Deathless do not heal abnormally quickly, although given enough time, they can regenerate any injury. They are not immune to pain, although most have learned how to ignore it. They are Deathless because they do not age, and their minds remain magically intact regardless of what happens to their bodies. This means that they are immune to a variety of Ashigath attacks, but it also means that they can suffer horrific fates by being torn apart, burned to a cinder, and so forth without being released by death. The closest state to non-existence that they can hope for is an extended sleep, only possible when deep-frozen.

When returned to Earth, most of the Deathless were scattered far from the times and places they knew. The few who were randomly returned to their home times and locations no longer remembered their family or friends and were in turn completely forgotten by those once dear to them. Strangely, a very few were returned to their homelands in the short years prior to being kidnapped by the Dissectors; a handful of these found themselves watching helplessly from

Deathless Characters

Most of the several thousand Deathless who survived the Battle of the Broken Maze remain whole, although nearly a tenth of those scattered by the Oracles (see page 178) have yet to appear in the Realm of Thought. Some of the Deathless are hundreds or even thousands of years old. Most are supremely talented as warriors, but retain only a dim recollection of their lost humanity. While the majority of the Deathless who have returned to Earth seek only a return to a human existence, within the limits imposed on them by their nature, a handful have collected companies of skilled fighters to serve as elite shock troops against the Ashigath. Most of the Deathless are male, reflecting military traditions throughout history. Of the Deathless now on Earth, only a few dozen are female.

Deathless characters will typically be recent arrivals from the scattering, with well-above-average combat skills, deadly weapons, and a warrior's bearing. Recently arrived Deathless are highly-skilled soldiers from some time in human history. Those from the past have a difficult time adjusting to the ways of the present, as do those from the not-so-distant future.

The Deathless do not have superhuman Stats, and may only choose from the mundane Attributes, except for the following. The Deathless can detect the presence of magical or Nightmare-linked items and creatures within their line of sight, or within 50 metres if not visible (Heightened Senses Attribute, Type II, Level 1). This applies to Dreamtouched and Infused humans as well as demons, and to shape-shifted or possessed individuals. Deathless status itself combines Special Defence (Ageing x2) for 2 Points and Unique Attribute (Deathless Mind) at 1 Level, for 1 Point, totalling 3 Character Points. All Deathless have Regeneration at Level 7, but with a linked Reduction Defect — the actual speed of healing is no faster than for a normal human, but all damage, including loss of limbs or other massive trauma, will eventually be healed completely. Reduced Regeneration costs 2 Character Points/Level.

Finally, all Deathless have the Item of Power Attribute, reflecting the weapon — Demonslayer — assigned to them by the Dissectors for use in fighting the Devourers. See page 173 for its Stats and Attributes. Few of the Deathless bother with traditional firearms, since these typically will not affect demons, although Deathless from more modern times may still have Gun Combat Skills. A player may choose not to outfit a Deathless character with the Item of Power, but such warriors would be rare.

All Deathless characters should take the Less Capable Defect with regards to their Soul Stat. This reflects the human Empathy Meranus burned out of them to make them his warriors. Many Deathless also suffer from Recurring Nightmares, a side effect of their time spent in that fearful Realm.

a distance as their original selves disappeared, snatched away to the Realm of Nightmares by Meranus's spell. Deathless who do manage to encounter their younger selves or ancestors meet a particularly strong Veil effect, one that affects even the Deathless. Despite these obstacles, some Deathless struggle to regain the fragments of their past while others do their best to avoid all contact with their lost histories. Stolen from homes and families they could only remember in dreams, many of the Deathless grew despondent, and some undertook increasingly inventive — but futile — attempts to commit suicide. Only extreme cold could bring on a state approximating death and only for as long as the cold lasted. A group of Deathless known as First Legion (see page 153) eventually built a vault in the mountains of Antarctica to house the bodies of those Deathless who wished to remain permanently unconscious.

Normal Humans

I write this knowing that, in a matter of hours, it will all seem to be just a dream. I will be convinced that I have imagined it all. My mind will work against my soul.

I know this because it has happened before. I have lived through astounding, frightening events (and my hand shakes from the effort of writing this) that my mind is certain, certain beyond any doubt, were nothing but nightmares. Despite the video. Despite my recorded messages to myself. Despite my losses. Even now, I have to fight with myself to remain focused.

— From the diaries of Barbara Jorgensen

For those without the blood of the Ashigath, the Veil is the prism through which they view reality. Normal people quite literally cannot comprehend otherworldly horrors, and will do whatever they can to convince themselves that they do not really see what is in front of them. If a normal human is in the presence of demons not engaged in Nightmarish activities — a litter of Raxankashi pup, for example, or a pack of Craven seeking only to hide from more powerful Ashigath — the Veil effect is immediate and complete. The human will either ignore the demons or treat them as something entirely mundane.

The use of magic can cause "flashes" of true reality to pierce the Veil briefly, although these are quickly again shrouded. For small, isolated events, such flashes are later remembered only as dreams, and physical evidence is rationalised away. For visions of events impossible to explain as dreams, particularly traumatic, newsworthy events, normal human witnesses will quickly (and unconsciously) settle upon an acceptable story. This can include even widely seen, infamous episodes, such as terrorist acts. Instead of suicide bombers and the like, those who see true reality witness (for example) fearsome acid-belching fire demons. The majority of witnesses who briefly see such horrors will immediately but unconsciously build a consensus rationalisation. They will then only see the "correct" version of events, even when watching video recordings; only a small percentage of the populace, the Dreamtouched, will remember seeing what really happened. Those who know what is going on know to keep quiet. Those who had before never witnessed such horrors will convince themselves to accept the "correct" story, or come to believe that they themselves are insane.

The more normal human witnesses there are to a demonic attack or magic use, the faster the consensus rationalisation will assert itself. A normal human alone or in a small group will resist the Veil for a brief amount of time. For about an hour after encountering the demons (or their effects), a lone normal human can understand the true nature of the world. After an hour, the memories will begin to fade into confusion, and after six hours, the Veil's influence will be complete. This process is accelerated by sleep, even a brief nap. Each additional normal human witness reduces the duration of this glimpse of true reality by 10%; a group of 10 or more normal humans who witness a magical or demonic event will immediately rationalise it away.

Once the Veil reasserts itself, all of the knowledge a normal human may have gathered the true nature of the world fades into dreams and rationalisations. He or she will be unable to accept that they really did witness what they now believe to be just a dream. For this reason, Dreamtouched or demons that desire that a normal human remain with them for an extended period usually request — or demand — that those humans become Infused.

Normal Human Characters

Taking a normal human as a character is extremely challenging, at least within an ongoing campaign. Aside from the lack of special powers or knowledge, the inevitable loss of all knowledge and experience built up about the Ashigath and the world would make it difficult to play an ongoing role in the fight against the demons. If the GM is willing to allow a normal human character, vulnerability to the Veil is a Unique Defect worth 6 BP. Normal human characters only have access to mundane Attributes. The GM may choose to allow the character to own an Item of Power, but the Veil-shrouded normal human will not recognise the magical item for what it is.

Demonic Allies

Few of the Ashigath could ever be described as "good," but a minority of individuals are less brutal towards humans and, occasionally, even helpful. Some of the Nightmare demons seek to reverse the scattering and heal the damage to the Incubata. Others are willing to assist in fights against more aggressive Ashigath in exchange for being left in peace themselves. Many of the less-aggressive demons are Dissectors, as they tend to prefer knowledge to mere dominance. Dissectors have been known to willingly trade strategic or ritual information for human technology, which they see as a possible key to victory in the Demon War.

On occasion, other types of demons may become allies. Diekashi (the Craven) are common as informants and assistants, although individually they are essentially useless in fights. Raxankashi (Sentinels) can be loyal companions if raised from birth by a human. The cephalopod-like Moshagashi (Makers) seem to see themselves as above both the demonic civil war and the fight between humans and the Ashigath. They will sometimes provide knowledge or assistance, but always for a price. Devourers will never work with humans, except to use humans as thralls or cattle.

Demon-Hunting Groups

Humans have fought the Ashigath on Earth for centuries, sometimes as individuals, but increasingly in groups. Over the years, numerous secretive organisations have sprung up across the globe, seeking to fight, capture, or occasionally ally with the invading creatures. Some, like the Britain's Section 21 or America's Force Tango, are government-run, with access to substantial technological and financial resources. Others, like Eskaton, are private operations, mistrustful of the intentions of both "official" demon-hunters and alliances-of-necessity between humankind and rebellious Ashigath. Not all of the human organisations fighting the Ashigath are of recent vintage; a group known as the Golden Circle, staffed by Mages trained in ritual magic, has existed for nearly a thousand years.

Because Dreamtouched only make up about 1% of the human population, and the overwhelming majority of those carrying Ashigath heritage never encounter a demon long enough for them to pierce the Veil or for their Dreamtouched powers to surface, those able to fight against the Ashigath on their own terms are few and far between. Most end up alone against the demons, or as part of tiny isolated groups, never realising that a greater war is underway. They often act as unsung champions for their own community, fighting ongoing battles against creatures only they are aware of, protecting normal humans who couldn't begin to understand what is going on.

Nearly all of the groups of humans challenging the Ashigath aggressively pursue new recruits, in part simply to replace the fallen — the war against the Nightmare demons tends to have a high casualty rate. They also recognise that the solo warriors and small groups out there are not as well equipped as they should be, nor as knowledgeable about what's really going on. Most will bring into their fold any Dreamtouched willing to fight; a few groups focus on Dreamtouched with particular powers, such as Adepts or Mages. Humans who work with the Ashigath in their lust for power and dominance may seek out these isolated Dreamtouched, in hopes of making them allies — or eliminating them as threats.

The Chosen Few

A slim majority of Dreamtouched around the world fights alone or in small groups, only knowing that something very strange has happened to them. Unless someone more experienced finds them — or a non-aggressive Ashigath willing to talk — they will only be aware of the barest fragments of the story of the real world. Nonetheless, those who discover they have superhuman powers when demons are on the attack tend to recognise the necessary elements: the Ashigath are not of this Earth and only the Dreamtouched have the power to drive them off.

Small Town Hunters

This is particularly true in smaller towns and communities, where the overall number of Dreamtouched is likely to be low, and where there are few chances to encounter more experienced (and knowledgeable) demon-hunters. As a result, small towns and villages around the world are dotted with solo or tiny groups of demon killers, each wondering if only they know that the world has gone crazy. Since Dreamtouched status is passed along bloodlines, many of these small demon-hunter groups comprise siblings or close blood relatives. If they're lucky, the newly awakened Dreamtouched may discover that a much-older relative had been awakened years ago, but (due to age, fear, or responsibilities) now keeps away from the fighting. These older relatives sometimes play a role as mentors, helping the younger Dreamtouched learn about their powers and the war in which they now find themselves.

Even when they learn of the bigger picture, many newly awakened individuals feel a greater responsibility towards their home communities, and decline opportunities to join up with larger groups based elsewhere. Demons rarely appear as isolated incidents; when scattered Ashigath get pulled to Earth, they arrive in clusters, sometimes dozens at a time, over a period of days or weeks. If one Nightmare monster is encountered, others are likely to be skulking nearby. If newly arrived Ashigath are not hunted down, they tend to form nests (usually, but not always, by type).These can prey on a community for years. Once the demons become established, it's only a matter of time before their presence awakens latent Dreamtouched in the area. Fortunately for the humans, isolated groups of Ashigath are as ignorant about the nature of our world as the humans are, and do not know to shut down not-yet-awakened Dreamtouched before the Dreamtouched turn into threats.

Big City Hunters

Just because a newly awakened Dreamtouched human lives in a big city, doesn't mean that he or she will quickly find an army to fight alongside. Awakening in the bigger cities can be much more dangerous than encountering demons in smaller communities. Those who awaken in cities must often contend with the normal human criminals common to urban centres, as well as the likelihood that the demons in the city are greater in numbers, better organised, and more aware of the threat of the Dreamtouched than are their suburban and rural counterparts. The main benefit to awakening in a city is that there are also greater numbers of Dreamtouched in the area; even if these Dreamtouched don't have the whole story, they at least will be able to show newly awakened hunters the basics.

The more powerful and manipulative Ashigath tend to gravitate towards the larger cities, seeing more potential for building up their dominance in places of economic and political power. This means that the demonic opponents one finds in many cities are often more than hungry predators. Demon-hunters working in a large city may find themselves facing mercenary security forces in the employ of a Nightmare-controlled corporation, demon-manipulated media outlets calling for the demon-hunters' heads, or even political leaders acting as puppets for shadowy otherworldly figures. Similar situations may also arise in smaller towns but the more manipulative demons tend to think big.

Typical Demon-Hunter Teams

Whether in big cities or small towns, Dreamtouched heroes fighting on their own against demonic forces share some consistent traits. The core of the team focuses on hand-to-hand combat. Guns rarely work against Ashigath; a blade driven by the enhanced power of a Dreamtouched Tank almost always does. Teams consisting only of combat Dreamtouched are not unheard of, but teams without anyone able to stand toe-to-toe with a demon rarely survive long. Nearly as important to a team's success is the presence of a spell-casting awakened human. Even if the Dreamtouched Mage is only able to use raw magic — destructive energy blasts — the ability to do damage from a distance can make a difference in a fight. If the Mage has been trained in control over his or her magical abilities (particularly if he or she can perform ritual magic), the team becomes far more effective, as the caster may be able to heal wounds, trap the enemy, or build shields against the demon's own magical attacks.

Demon-hunter teams without members with awakened mental powers are fairly common, but powerful teams without them are not. Dreamtouched Adepts with enhanced Mind abilities are crucial in fights against sophisticated opponents, particularly those who have enmeshed themselves in the systems of the modern world. If the Adepts' abilities allow for the creation of novel tools and devices, the demon-hunter team may be outfitted with weapons unavailable anywhere else in the world. Those Dreamtouched Adepts with psychic powers are especially valuable in fights where normal humans are used by the enemy as soldiers, as the effects they can produce are usually invisible, and often do not cause physical damage. Normal humans may not recall seeing a fight against a three-metre-tall demon, but will certainly remember seeing another human hacked in the chest with an axe!

Loners and Circles

Not all awakened humans involve themselves in the fight against the demons. A few are more interested in how their newfound powers can enrich them and make them more powerful among other humans. As with other Dreamtouched, some join up with others with similar powers, and others decide to go it alone.

The loners are often Half-Bloods, as their ability to use their powers without the presence of a full-blooded Ashigath is unique among the Dreamtouched. As a result, they are sometimes less inclined to seek out the demons, feeling no need to be in the presence of a (usually hostile) monster in order to feel fully alive. They can use their powers as they see fit — to help others or to help themselves. The various factions in the war find Half-Bloods extremely valuable, which further isolates these special humans. The few Half-Bloods who manage to avoid the terminal fate common to their kind often end up on the road, alone, wishing to avoid both the demons who hunt them and the other humans who wish to exploit them in battle.

Groups of Dreamtouched humans who band together to seek out Earthly power and wealth are known as "Circles." These can be mixed gangs of Dreamtouched, but more often than not they are groups of awakened people with similar powers — a coven of Mages, for example, or a squadron of Dreamtouched Tanks. Without the presence of an Ashigath, of course, they're as weak as any other human is. For this reason, these Circles often seek out Nightmare beings that want to avoid violence while still desiring power, to become a part of their groups. Such demons always have their own agendas in mind when joining up with a Circle, and both the humans and the Ashigath will try to manipulate the other to serve their goals. It's not uncommon for Circles to come to an abrupt end when one side or the other decides that enough is enough and attempts to kill their erstwhile partners. Circles invariably contain no more than a dozen members, usually fewer.

Far more rare — and much more deadly in the long run — are Circles of Half-Bloods. They do not need the presence of a demon to power their abilities, and often feel (with some justification) that others see them only as tools to be used for a larger purpose. Circles of Half-Bloods can be exceedingly powerful, and members often train each other in various Skills, tactics, and rituals they may have picked up along the way. One of the very few recorded alliances between demon-hunters and their powerful Ashigath antagonists happened in the early 20th century, when a Half-Blood Circle known as the Final Call used immeasurably powerful magic rituals in a bid to secure global domination, causing World War One as a side-effect. Final Call successfully killed numerous Ashigath commanders and wiped out several of the major demon-hunting organisations of the day before they were finally stopped.





The Assembly

The Assembly is the largest association of those who fight against the Ashigath, numbering about 2,000, with agents and advocates on every continent and nearly every country. As a resource for newly awakened Dreamtouched, it's quite useful — the Assembly knows exactly what has happened on Earth, whom the major players are, and what can be done about it. As an organisation, the Assembly is hopeless. It's split into numerous squabbling factions, from humans closely linked to rebel Dissectors, wishing to use the amassing human forces to "put a blade to the throat of the Oracles," to a splinter of Infused humans who push vigorously for the elimination of all demons on Earth as a method of removing the real threat to human freedom — the Dreamtouched.

Such conflicts mean that, under most circumstances, the Assembly can only bring to bear groups of no more than a dozen demon fighters, often even fewer. Many Dreamtouched have stories of being told that a global organisation was going to help them in a big fight, only to have three people show up, late. Despite the many differences among its members, the Assembly has so far managed to pull together when necessary to fight the big fights. Demon-hunters of all kinds — from newly-awakened Mages to centuries-old Deathless soldiers — willingly stand side-by-side against the demonic threats which really do threaten the planet, even if the next day they will refuse to have anything do with each other. The Assembly may be chaotic and noisy, but when necessary, it works.

At least four different cities claim the mantle of headquarters of the Assembly: San Francisco, United States; Sydney, Australia; Mumbai, India; and Rotterdam, the Netherlands. All four can assert some legitimacy for their claims based on the early history of the Assembly, which dates back to the early 19th century, but few of the Assembly members "in the field" pay much attention to the political struggles. Even if these cities aren't universally recognised as the headquarters, each does possess an Assembly base of operations complete with library, medical facility, and spell-casting sanctum for practice and weapon making. As the most visible demon-hunting association, the Assembly is the target of hostility from the Ashigath. As a result, the various facilities around the world are a bit hard to find, and are very well-protected.

One of the areas where the Assembly doesn't work as well as it could is scouting and recruitment. With so many members, the Assembly tends to assume that newly awakened Dreamtouched will stumble across someone from the Assembly in short order. This laissez-faire attitude is increasingly controversial among some members, especially those who have found the remains of recently awakened humans who encountered the Ashigath first.

Independent Organisations

Not all of the organisations fighting the demons are as sprawling or as chaotic as the Assembly. Smaller groups, with more assertive leadership, often play a more decisive role in the overall struggle than the anarchic global association. Some are older than the Assembly (in the case of the First Legion, much older), some are more narrowly focused, but they all share the same general goal of ridding the Earth of the Ashigath. They go about their efforts to accomplish this goal, in radically different ways.

Eskaton

Perhaps the most respected of the smaller independent groups is Eskaton, started in the southern French city of Nîmes in 1910 by the ageing historian Myron Franken. Franken awakened during the early days of the struggle between the Half-Blood Mage Circle called Final Call and a temporary (and very shaky) alliance between the powerful demon-hunters of the day and several of the strongest Ashigath. Franken believed that the presence of these otherworldly beings on Earth, and the magic power they brought with them to humankind, presaged the end of the world and the beginning of a new one — what the Greeks called the "eskaton." He started his organisation initially as a scholarly group. Many of his early recruits were academics too old to fight in World War One, who were awakened to their Dreamtouched powers by the bigger, largely unseen, conflict between the Half-Blood Mages and everyone else.

Over the 20th century, Eskaton built up a substantial body of knowledge about the nature of the ongoing war against the demons, the Realm of Thought and the Realm of Nightmares, and the true history of the Ashigath on Earth. Much of what Eskaton discovered (through archaeological research, examination of source texts no longer obscured by the Veil, and extensive interviews with Ashigath and Deathless subjects) contradicted the stories told both by the demons long-established on Earth and the demon-hunting groups then in power. Franken made few friends during the remainder of his life, but gained a great deal of respect. Although Franken died in 1928, his spirit of unflinching respect for facts over propaganda continues in the organisation he founded.

In the 1980s, Eskaton changed its long-standing policy of emphasising research over conflict when agents of Lamiast, a massively powerful and ancient Devourer, destroyed the central Eskaton library in Athens, killing Eskaton's Chief Provost. The acting Chief Provost, Alana Drita, called on Eskaton's academy to apply the knowledge it had accumulated over the years, and to seek out new students able to both uncover the truth and actively fight. Drita knew that, along with the greatest accumulation of un-Veiled history in the world, Eskaton had built up the largest storehouse of ritual knowledge around, including some spells the Ashigath themselves had never known of. By 1992, Lamiast had been destroyed, and her minions scattered or killed.

Eskaton today remains a small (no more than a few hundred members globally) association of mental and magical Dreamtouched, with a growing number of well-armed, well-trained warriors ("Templars") able to stand up to the Ashigath threat. Eskaton actively recruits both talented newly awakened humans and Dreamtouched individuals who have proven their value and Skill in other groups. Although they play an active role in fights against the more powerful Nightmare demons, their ultimate goal is to discover or invent a way to repair and seal the Incubata, permanently.

Golden Circle

Golden Circle stands at the balance between being defenders of Earth and the planet's potential conquerors. Said to be nearly two thousand years old, Golden Circle is an alliance of powerful Half-Bloods. Most are Mages, but not all — the leader is Jeanne Ngome, a 50-year-old Dreamtouched Adept. Golden Circle will not reveal how many members it has, but Eskaton estimates its numbers at around 50. While not particularly large, it is decidedly influential; the threat of Golden Circle opposition has in several cases caused even some of the mightiest Ashigath to suddenly abandon elaborate campaigns.

Little is known about the operations of Golden Circle. Where it is centred remains a mystery, although in recent years Eskaton has come to believe its home is in North Africa, perhaps deep in the Sahara. Golden Circle members rarely engage in commonplace battles between humans and Ashigath, although they will respond with overwhelming force if attacked. The Half-Bloods of the Circle prefer to have as little contact with the outside world as possible; as a result, young Dreamtouched are occasionally hired to perform various tasks requiring prolonged exposure to normal human society. These tasks range from the mundane (purchasing boots and rope suitable for a beginner hiking trip) to the somewhat odd (finding and sending to a mail drop in London three copies of each issue of Time and Cosmopolitan magazines from the past thirty years) to the out-and-out baffling (going to a particular geographic location in Mexico, remaining still and silent for one hour, then immediately eating a cheeseburger). Some observers of Golden Circle behaviour believe these to be evidence of the group's studies into the nature of reality; others think it demonstrates that even half-demon recluses have a sense of humour.

Two recurring rumours about the Circle reflect its power and ambiguity. One suggests that the reason the Golden Circle is simultaneously so potent and so detached is that it focuses all of its attention on opening pathways to other Realms. The Dissectors claim that no Ashigath has ever found evidence that Realms beyond that of Thought and that of Nightmares exist. A more troubling rumour holds that, every decade, the Golden Circle holds a vote as to whether they should step in and assert control over the Realm of Thought. There is little question among those who have studied the Golden Circle that,

should they choose to do so, they would have a decent chance of success in carrying off such a feat. So far, the vote has always come back as "no." Some suspect that the Final Call, which required a tenuous alliance between the most powerful of humans and the most dominant Ashigath on Earth to defeat, was a rebellious subset of Golden Circle members unwilling to submit to the outcome of such a vote.

The First Legion

The Deathless were soldiers from throughout human history, brought over to the Realm of Nightmares to fight in a war they neither understood nor cared about, stripped of their humanity, as well as most of their memories, then scattered randomly back across Earth's history. Some tried to kill themselves, or at achieve a condition approaching death; others sought out ways to live seemingly normal lives, rarely staying for more than a single generation in one area, crafting new identities several times a century. A surprisingly large number sought ways to return to the fight in the Realm of Nightmares, hoping that they might at least be able to die there.

Around two thousand years ago, during the early Roman Empire, a small group of Deathless — five recent arrivals and three who had been on Earth for centuries even at that point — decided to form a band of soldiers who would fight against the Ashigath here on Earth. Calling themselves "Legio Primus" — the First Legion — they vowed to avenge their fallen and transformed comrades and themselves against the demons. Armed with the weapons brought back from the Realm of Nightmares, they stalked the Ashigath of Southern Europe and Southwest Asia.

Over the subsequent centuries, First Legion has grown from its original eight soldiers to a small army of around 300. Most who join the Legion are Deathless recently arrived back on Earth, filled with a sense of frustration at the events in the Realm of Nightmare and a sense of loss over what happened to their lives. They have none of the magical or super-human abilities of the Dreamtouched, but they do have a relentless desire for vengeance, bodies that simply cannot die, and a conviction that they have nothing to lose.

Although the First Legion remains a group for Deathless soldiers, they are conscious enough of the tactical situation that they willingly admit older Dreamtouched humans as "added firepower" with a distinct preference for Dreamtouched Mages who rely on raw energy blasts. Carrying on the tradition of the founders of the Legion (six of who remain active; two have "retired" to the vault at the South Pole), First Legion members work in teams of eight. They will occasionally assemble larger cohorts for bigger battles, and they have a once-a-century mass gathering to commemorate the founding of the Legion. The next one will celebrate two thousand years of the First Legion, and will be held in 2009, in Ankara.

First Legion units often associate themselves with other organisations, acting as special forces in fights with the Ashigath. What they lack in magical and superhuman abilities, they make up in combat skills. The finest swordsmen and marksmen in the world are all Deathless warriors of the First Legion.

Nighthunters

One of the newer groups to rise in the battle against the Ashigath, the Nighthunters are unusual. They accept anyone as a member — even normal humans and Nightmare beings. They also advocate the invasion of the Nightmare Realm itself and the overthrow of both the Oracles and the Dissectors. The more aggressive Nighthunters generate a mixture of awe and fear in ally and enemy alike. Many demon-hunters consider Nighthunters to be psychotic, but very good at what they do.

The Nighthunters tend to disdain the use of ritual magic. Most strike teams go out without any spell-casting support at all. They use Dreamtouched with mental powers to co-ordinate groups and analyse tactics, but rely on their strength, speed, and combat mastery to deliver the deathblow to their targets. Few of the Nighthunter warriors have the confident finesse of ancient Deathless soldiers, but Nighthunters do have Dreamtouched power to back up their blades, letting them hit much harder than a Deathless soldier, albeit less accurately. The best Nighthunter teams fall upon their opponents like buzz saws, and can destroy even a mighty Tolonkashi in a matter of moments. Few Nighthunter strike teams ever get quite that good and the casualty rate for this group is unsurprisingly very high.

As a result, Nighthunters aggressively recruit new fighters, and operate the most sophisticated scouting program of all of the various demon-hunting groups. Mental adepts constantly scan news feeds from around the world, looking for reports of unusual phenomena or clusters of unexplained (and brief) migraine headaches. Computer specialists map known locations of Dreamtouched awakenings, reasoning that others with related bloodlines will be in nearby areas. Nighthunters recruiting teams make extensive use of domesticated Raxankashi "demon dogs," using them both as sources of Dreamtouched power and as triggers to awaken latent Dreamtouched individuals they find. Nighthunters strongly believe that waiting for encounters with free-roaming Ashigath to trigger Dreamtouched awakenings are far too risky. Newly-awakened Dreamtouched are all too often unable to simultaneously handle the emergence of their new powers, the realisation that much of what they knew about the world was wrong, and the demon breathing down their necks.

Government Agencies

Given the scale and history of the threat to the world posed by the Ashigath, it's not surprising that many governments have agencies and departments empowered to confront the demons. Such agencies often function under covert operation guidelines, reflecting the public (and, usually, official) ignorance of the problem. Authorisation for funding has been easy to acquire: the (Dreamtouched or Infused) heads of the sections can show the legislative and executive leaders hard, compelling evidence of the Ashigath threat, confident that funding will be immediately authorised. Even after the politicians rationalise the demonic threat into something more prosaic, if also quite threatening, the funding remains. Top political leaders in important positions (such as senior officials in intelligence agencies) may be given full-time awareness of the Ashigath menace via Infusions for the duration of their stay in office. No awakened Dreamtouched individuals are currently known to be in charge of a country.

Although they are both fighting the same threat, anti-Ashigath government agencies and independent organisations rarely bother to contact each other, let alone co-operate. Most official demon-hunting agencies view the independents as dangerous amateurs at best and threats on the same scale as the demons themselves at worst. Conversely, most independents believe the primary purpose of government-run groups is not to destroy the demons, but to figure out how to turn them into controllable weapons. Attempts by some operatives to dismiss this belief as comic-book-paranoia are undercut by repeated discoveries of efforts by some government agencies to do just that — although, so far, without success.

Most government demon-hunting agencies recruit new talent nearly as aggressively as the Nighthunters, which sometimes results in several teams descending upon the newly awakened simultaneously. Such a situation can be as likely to result in a skirmish as it is in shoptalk and coffee. In particular, Nighthunters and the United States' Force Tango recruiters have little love for each other, and have fought several times in the last year — not to the death, but perilously close.

While most official demon-fighting organisations have functional knowledge of the nature of the conflict and the enemy they face, few of them seek a deeper understanding of the real structure of the Realms. Many of the better-funded, combat oriented departments deride groups like Eskaton as "ivory tower researchers," or worse. The government groups tend to be particularly mistrustful of any independent demon-hunters working with "friendly" Ashigath.

What demon-hunting agencies lack in knowledge of their foe, they make up for in sheer firepower. Government groups learned early on what works and what does not work when fighting demons. Most official strike teams

can bring in far heavier weaponry than is available to even the best-funded independent. Anti-Ashigath agencies learned the hard way to have all bullets empowered by Mages, and most have developed specially-designed stand-off weapons for use against the nastier demons. While the majority of medium-sized or larger countries have some kind of government oversight for demon-hunting activities, a few nations are much better funded than others are. Some of the more notable agencies are outlined below.

Canada: RCMP, Special Interests Division

While many other nations treat the Ashigath threat as a military or intelligence concern, Canada approaches it as a law-enforcement issue. This is largely because Canada has not experienced a recent influx of aggressive Ashigath, and because Canada has become an unofficial refuge for Nightmare beings that wish to avoid both the civil war at home and the various Dreamtouched demon-hunters. Canada has the largest number of non-hostile Ashigath (what the Special Interests Division — SID — terms "non-combatant nonhumans") of any nation. Rather than forming large centralised communities, most of these Ashigath end up settling in small clusters in cities and towns around the country, avoiding direct human contact when possible. A few even find work and friendship among normal humans, who (through Veil-shrouded eyes) come to see them as just another set of immigrants, albeit ones with very odd skin conditions.

As a result, most problems with Ashigath in Canada are closer to bizarre cop-show episodes than military concerns. Drunken demonic domestic disputes, petty theft, bar-room brawls where one combatant just has to pull out the spiked tail — these are far more common than threats to the world. Larger-scale events do sometimes happen, and the SID is equipped with appropriate hardware (usually purchased from Force Tango — see page 155) for those occasional emergencies.

The SID is the only government demon-control operation that regularly employs normal humans alongside Infused and Dreamtouched employees. This is due to the low-key nature of the Ashigath situation in Canada; a normal human SID officer, working alongside a Dreamtouched or Infused officer, will tend to treat the concerns of Ashigath residents with the same detached efficiency used for those of human citizens. The normal human officers are of little help when truly bad things happen, but SID employs sufficient numbers of Dreamtouched and Infused to handle such situations. The current head of the SID is a Deathless soldier named Jacques Marcel (not his original name, but a decent approximation of the original Gaulish).

One unanticipated side effect of the growing number of non-combatant nonhumans living in Canada is that a higher percentage of Dreamtouched people are awakening due to contact with Ashigath. While the proportion of awakened Dreamtouched runs about 1% in most nations, in Canada the fraction of Awakened is now pushing 10%. This is starting to become a headache for SID personnel trying to handle the growing number of people who are now aware that reality isn't what they once thought it was, and who have discovered that they occasionally exhibit extraordinary powers.

Japan: Kagekaminari

Officially known as the Extraordinary Situation Self-Defence Force, the Ashigath-hunting agency in Japan is more often referred to as "Kagekaminari," or "shadow thunder." This name refers to the original Japanese demon-slayer clan from over 700 years ago. Ashigath have long been a troublesome part of life in Japan, and essentially ran the country from about 1930 to 1945. As a result, the post-World War Two government has focused heavily on the total elimination of the Ashigath threat.

Kagekaminari is unique in a number of ways. It is led by a group of five Deathless warriors from Japan's past, including one who is rumoured to be Miyamoto Musashi, although he himself denies this. Unlike other Deathless in positions of authority elsewhere, the Kagekaminari leaders do not pretend to be anything other than centuries-old, immortal demon-hunters.

Kagekaminari is also unusual in that it avoids the use of any sort of firearm or heavy weapon for combat with Ashigath. This comes in part from the influence of the leaders, who are never without their empowered blades and in part from bad experiences in the 1950s with improperly enchanted ammunition. Kagekaminari operatives use only modern variants of classical Japanese hand-weapons, and are trained to use a wide variety of everyday items for self-defence in emergencies. Field operatives are exclusively Dreamtouched, largely Tanks; Kagekaminari does have some Infused agents, but they are only used as analysts.

This does not mean that Kagekaminari is opposed to the use of modern technology. Quite the contrary: all operatives are well-equipped with the most advanced communication and information gear, sensors designed for low- and no-light actions, as well as cutting-edge gear created by the agency's Dreamtouched Adepts. A small number of agents have been outfitted with a highly experimental blade that is as much made of magical energy as it is beaten steel.

The Ashigath that appear in Japan tend to be extremely clever and cruel, and Kagekaminari has its hands full. While Kagekaminari refuses any offers of outside assistance, both Eskaton and the American ACD believe that, if a major world-threatening demonic event is to take place, Japan is its most likely epicentre. Fortunately, Kagekaminari has proven able to handle Ashigath activities in Japan over the last 50 years.

South Africa: Black Lion Battalion

The original counter-demon arm of the South African Army, the Death's Head Regiment, earned a nasty reputation in the 1970s and 1980s as it probed into neighbouring nations hunting for Ashigath, casually killing any humans it deemed to be "consorting" with the Nightmare beings. Consisting entirely of Dreamtouched soldiers, Death's Head was responsible for numerous atrocities during various Apartheid-era South African military actions. Quite understandably, when Apartheid was dismantled and the African National Congress government took power, the Death's Head Regiment was shut down. Those members of the Regiment who were not immediately caught and arrested fled the country.

Shutting down the Regiment meant that South Africa, the only real powerhouse in sub-Saharan Africa, no longer had an official organisation dedicated to fighting the demons. Independent groups and local teams tried to pick up the slack, but these did not have the resources necessary to completely take over the fight. The independent demon-hunters in the region had an added problem: former Death's Head soldiers, now working as Dreamtouched powered mercenaries, began fighting alongside the demons they once fought. A Dreamtouched Mage with connections to the ANC managed to get an audience with the office of the President; she brought a Raxankashi pup with her, allowing her to demonstrate the reality of her claims. The government immediately authorised a new Ashigath-fighting group, eventually known as the Black Lion Squadron.

Black Lion spends as much time hunting the mercenary Dreamtouched as they do fighting Ashigath. The leadership of the Squadron openly embraces co-operation with local independent demon-hunters, recognising that the successes enjoyed by the independents against the Ashigath allow Black Lion to concentrate on the Death's Head mercenaries. Black Lion also uses Eskaton as a resource for information and analysis.

At the present, Black Lion is smaller and less well funded than it would like, and is in the process of actively recruiting Dreamtouched individuals. The co-operation between the Death's Head mercenaries and hostile Ashigath puts Black Lion at a disadvantage, as the renegade Dreamtouched are often able to use magic attacks on Black Lion operatives who are not yet close enough to the demons to be able to use their own powers. Black Lion has put a high priority on the recruitment of Half-Blood operatives, and is even willing to consider hiring foreign mercenaries of their own to assist in the fight against demon and renegade alike.

United Kingdom: Section 21

A sophisticated operation, Section 21 comprises awakened members of both the MI-5 and MI-6 intelligence operations, as well as military personnel who have demonstrated both real talent and Dreamtouched powers. One quirk of Section 21 is that members are scrupulously rational; they will refer to the Ashigath as "transnatural creatures," never as "demons," and use the term "transnatural energy effects" — or "TFX" — rather than "magic." Originally founded in the 1950s to defend the UK from the Ashigath, Section 21 operations have in recent years taken on a more global character. While most operatives focus on the UK, increasing numbers are active around the world. They tend to work in small teams, most often half-Dreamtouched/half-Infused. A large number of Section 21 agents do not work in the field, but in the lab — Section 21 treats the Ashigath as a scientific mystery as well as a national threat.

Section 21 primarily targets Ashigath, but will aggressively go after rogue Half-Bloods and Dreamtouched as well. Section 21's definition of "rogue" is fairly broad, and more than one independent demon-hunting team operating in the UK has found itself in the crosshairs of the government for being a bit too careless with public property and the public during a fight. As a general rule, Section 21 doesn't care for freelancers, but will take advantage of them if they feel the situation warrants such action.

The agency is presently in the midst of an internal power struggle between the traditional elements of Section 21 (including the current operations director, an Infused named Jeremy Woodward), who wish to eliminate all transnatural creatures while completely closing off the Realm of Nightmares, and elements who wish to eliminate the threat the Ashigath pose but learn how to employ TFX (and, if possible, tamed Ashigath) as a political tool.

United States: Force Tango

Force Tango is one of two American agencies fighting against the Ashigath threat, along with the Anomaly Correction Department (see below). This is not because the United States has more Dreamtouched warriors available than other nations, or because the United States is particularly vulnerable to the Ashigath. Rather, the existence of two agencies is a result of their more or less simultaneous origins, one military, and the other a purely civilian operation. Neither group was willing to be absorbed into the other. Each has its own patrons in Congress and the Executive branch, although few of these patrons are Infused and able understand the real situation. Each group has a separate and fiercely protected budget. Unsurprisingly, there's little love between the two organisations.

Force Tango is the military side of the American anti-demon efforts, and it takes a shoot-to-kill, Special Forces approach. No Ashigath incursion is too small or too large for them to handle, and Force Tango will use whatever means necessary to bring down its target. Operating out of a small office in the Pentagon, Force Tango pulls from all of the active-duty services, and is constantly on the lookout for potential new recruits. For bureaucratic reasons, anyone joining Force Tango must also join one of the military branches. Which branch is suggested as the best one to join typically depends on which branch the Force Tango recruiting officer calls home.

Force Tango has authorisation from Washington to operate globally, and to call in support from non-Force Tango resources. They even have authorisation to "take out" civilians who may have been contaminated by Ashigath magic, such as Devourer-Thralls. In the past, this authority was occasionally abused, but the current leadership (under Admiral Leslie Graham, USMC) keeps a tight lid on misbehaviour. Against the demons Force Tango can be as violent as needed.

While Force Tango is probably the most aggressive of the large-scale government operations, it actually has a couple of Ashigath Dissectors as in-house advisors. These Ashigath allies provide intelligence analysis, strategic advice, and act as triggers for the Dreamtouched Mages employed by the Pentagon to empower ammunition for use against the demons. This is the primary duty of Dreamtouched Mages in Force Tango; the leadership strongly prefers not to employ magic during operations, believing it to be too unreliable and uncontrollable. Force Tango assault squads are nearly always a mix of Infused soldiers and Dreamtouched Tanks.

United States: Anomaly Correction Department

The second of the two American agencies working against the Ashigath is the Anomaly Correction Department, or ACD. One of the spin-off groups from the World War Two-era OSS, the ACD is a civilian intelligence and operations agency with an exclusive focus on the activities of the Ashigath. Its existence is a top-level secret; its funding is pulled from activities considered classified even for those with access to the so-called "black budget." Only the heads of the various intelligence agencies and the Force Tango leadership are aware of the ACD's existence, although some of the independent demon-hunting groups have heard unconfirmed rumours.

The ACD primarily depends on Infused agents, reasoning that anyone who wishes to leaves the organisation can do so after the effects of the Infusion have worn off, and the Veil again takes hold. The agency has very few Dreamtouched; those who are part of the organisation are exclusively Mages and Adepts. The ACD only recruits from within other intelligence agencies, never directly off the street.

The agency conducts extensive research into the nature of the Ashigath, the Realm of Nightmares, and the structure of magic. The ACD believes that its collection of rituals rivals that of Eskaton and given that it has had covert operatives in place within Eskaton for the last four decades, it would know. The ACD is the only government group to mount an expedition to the Realm of Nightmares. Anomaly Correction, despite its name, rarely sends agents to investigate or combat a "typical" Ashigath event. The appearance of a new type of Ashigath or evidence of the use of future technology by a Deathlesswill bring them in, as do events that threaten to change the overall nature of the conflict (for example, an attempt to reseal — or finally destroy — the Incubata).

The rivalry between Force Tango and the ACD has a couple of odd results. When in need of non-combat support or resources otherwise unavailable to them, Force Tango tends to turn to the UK's Section 21. Similarly, when they are in need of combat acumen but do not wish to endanger their own units, the Anomaly Corrections Department is more likely to call upon the Nighthunters — but never officially, only through elaborate cut-outs. The Nighthunters, when so employed, have no idea they are being used by the ACD.

Other Nations

Most countries have some kind of government-run or government-sponsored anti-Ashigath operations, but these organisations are often quite small. Nations with unstable or oppressive governments tend to use Dreamtouched or even Ashigath assets as tools for factional or political violence rather than to counter the threat posed by the Realm of Nightmares. Eskaton believes, for example, that the Chinese government has quietly agreed to scale back its fight against the Ashigath in exchange for magical and demonic support for the Beijing authorities in other matters. They also believe that Russian anti-demon efforts have devolved into a fight between the Russian Mafia and the remnants of the KGB, each trying to build up magical and Ashigath weapons to use against the other.

The Shrouded World

There are about 600,000 awakened Dreamtouched humans around the world, about the same number of Ashigath, and a much smaller number of Infused and Deathless. The total number of individuals who know about the invasion from the Realm of Nightmares is tiny compared to the total population. Although more Dreamtouched will be awakened over time, at present the Dreamtouched, both awakened and not, only amount to just 1% of the world's people.

The Veil ensures that the fight against the Ashigath will remain a hidden affair, but that doesn't mean that it goes unnoticed. The use of heavy weapons always attracts attention, and it's difficult to conceal a massive, ornate sword. Unlike the mythical past, when a hero could set his battleaxe on the table in a tavern and expect little more than a drink in response, the modern era is extremely sensitive to the sight of groups of people carrying weapons, even medieval weapons.

This forces the Nightmare war into the shadows, into the night, where it's harder to spot a short sword under an overcoat and easier to rationalise away flames leaping from a young woman's fingertips. While most Ashigath function perfectly well in daylight, encounters with demons are far more likely after the sun sets, as the dark makes it easier for them to get around. That tall figure in a long coat and hat pulled down tight on its head may be a normal human tired of the rain, a Dreamtouched Tank heading towards a fight, or a Nightmare demon hoping to make it back to the entrance to his underground lair.

Sometimes bigger and wilder events can be easier to get away with, as the Veiled humans will be focusing so hard on rationalising and ignoring what they see that a cluster of men and women with swords and machine pistols can go unnoticed. This is most likely to happen when the Ashigath are the least human-looking varieties, and the human warriors are overtly using whatever magic they have at their disposal. In effect, this overloads the Veil, and normal humans enter a fugue-like state, immersed in the internal battle between what they see and what the universe demands they believe to be true. Some Ashigath have learned to take advantage of such episodes, as most Dreamtouched heroes end up having to split their efforts between protecting the stunned humans and fighting against the demons.

Enforced Rationalisations

Dreamtouched Adepts with the Mind Control Attribute can help accelerate the Veil's consensus rationalisation process. If the control the Adept attempts simply reinforces the rationalisation without making the target(s) change the thrust of their reaction, the human targets receive an additional -2 penalty when resisting the control. Examples of this include an Adept helping those around him or her rationalise a big and ugly — but non-threatening — Ashigath as a big and ugly person, or the Adept convincing people running in panic from a rampaging demon that they're running in panic from a pack of rabid pit bulls. If the control the Adept attempts makes the target(s) ignore something truly unusual and hard to explain, but not immediately dangerous, such as a group of heroes running through a mall with swords, there is no modification. If the Adept attempts to control the target(s) into ignoring something that is both unusual and potentially threatening, such as an Ashigath dismembering a policeman, the target receives a +4 bonus to his or her resistance.

Nightmares on Earth

"Every now and then I wonder what it must be like for them. You know, to suddenly find yourself in a world filled with creatures you'd only had nightmares about before, to know that whatever you do will be forgotten by those around you, to have powerful beings trying to hunt you down and kill you. Their lives aren't all that different from mine, I suppose. Then I go back to killing them."

—Taylor Mackenzie, Edinburgh

As a result of the breaking of the Incubata and the scattering of numerous Ashigath in our Realm, thousands of chaotic beings of great magical power now walk the Earth. Some are recent arrivals, some have been here for decades or centuries, and new ones appear with alarming frequency. The Ashigath vary greatly in type and power, as well as in their hostility towards humans.

Although Ashigath can and do walk openly among humans, few people recognise their existence. In large part, this is due to the Veil, which compels most humans to forget about the demons, convince themselves that what they saw was simply a dream, or construct plausible explanations for the otherwise unnatural experiences. Earthly legends of vampires and ghosts and the like are manifestations of this process: Ashigath roughly matching the descriptions of mythical horrors do exist, but most humans recast them as figures of mere legend. Even without the effects of the Veil, some demons would be able to walk among humans with impunity, as these demons have the power of invisibility or the ability to change their shape.

The first Ashigath arrived in small numbers in the earliest days of human civilisation, and new Ashigath continued to appear over the course of history through the present day. According to the Dissectors, the arrival of the scattered Ashigath will continue over the next century, corresponding to the temporal origins of humans pulled by Meranus to assist in their civil war (see The World-Bender, page 179). Nightmare demons new to Earth are often confused and angry, and some go on immediate rampages. Others are more careful, choosing to hide while they learn about their new home.

Will to Power

The hundreds of thousands of Ashigath on Earth have a wide array of motivations. Some are simple predators, and find humans to be tasty snacks. Others are looking for a way back home, either to continue to fight the civil war between demons or to escape the madness of being in the Realm that gives them nightmares. A few seek only refuge. Many Ashigath seek control.

Ironically, the Veil proves to be an obstacle for demons wishing to assert control over a human population through force and threat. Such attempts rarely succeed; people are suitably terrified, but quickly construct rationales for their fears, forgetting Ashigath demands for tribute or obedience. For many demons this is incredibly frustrating, and often results in violence against the humans, thereby setting off more cycles of terror, rationalisation, and demonic frustration.

Some Ashigath quite literally feed on these transient eruptions of terror. These individuals travel throughout human communities causing fear, moving on when the flavour grows stale. As Nightmare beings, all Ashigath can sense fear, but for some it is powerfully attractive, even acting as an intoxicant. Such demons often run in packs, hitting small towns, keeping away from the big cities where they may find strong opposition or competition.

The greatest driver for many Ashigath is a desire for power. In comparison to the magically enhanced capabilities of the Ashigath, most humans are weak, fragile creatures, seemingly made to be subjects or slaves. While violence may not work over the long run, subtlety can. The Nightmare demons have a profound ability to influence humans, particularly those already given over to greed, ambition for power, and insanity.

Ancient Evil

While most Ashigath are not technically immortal, they are extremely long-lived. A few of the first group of demons to arrive on Earth still exist, and are easily the most powerful beings on our world. They have little love for each other and have often countered each other's more aggressive moves for dominance. While there are more than a dozen extremely powerful, ancient Ashigath, three are particularly notable:

Seth

Revealing himself to ancient humans as a God of War or God of Death, Seth is an extraordinarily powerful Gerashi, or Devourer (see Devourers, page 161). In centuries past, Seth would attempt to amass vast armies of conquest, only to be beaten back by other Ashigath working with — or through — human forces. He now prefers to act with more subtlety, using mercenary forces, terrorists, spies and arms manufacturers to keep humans fighting each other, thereby increasing instability in the world. Not coincidentally, this has the beneficial side effect of undercutting the attempts of other powerful Ashigath to impose their own forms of order. His allies include a large number of Devourers and other Ashigath, as well as a select cadre of Dreamtouched humans.

Melenkor

A Dissector Blood-Wizard, the right hand assistant of Meranus, Melenkor was the first Ashigath to figure out how to return to the Realm of Nightmares. Rather than immediately head back home, Melenkor decided to stay on Earth and make it his own base of power, intending to build an army able to storm the citadel of the Sleepers. This remains his goal, although it has taken centuries for elements of his plan to come to fruition. He has spent much of the last couple of millennia countering Seth, supporting human efforts at order, hierarchy, and control. He had a particular fondness for the Fascist movements of the 20th century, and intends to mould the 21st century versions into his conquering army.

Kalfu

Kalfu was initially one of the weaker Ashigath to appear on Earth. A Kubalashi, or Stalker (see page 163), it holds no consistent corporeal form. Kubalashi are able to possess the bodies of other beings, and Kalfu served Seth as an infiltrator and source of discord among humans. Over time, Kalfu grew impatient, tiring of Seth's focus on war and chaos. Abandoning Seth (and thereby earning his ongoing enmity), Kalfu began to explore the limits of its powers. By the rise of the Industrial Revolution, it had developed the ability to possess machines as readily as humans and Ashigath. Kalfu soon was able to shift itself along the wires for telegraphs, telephones and electricity, travelling the breadth of the Earth over humanity's growing networks. Today, Kalfu lives solely on the Internet, with access to enormous bodies of information and, increasingly, control over devices and machines around the world.

A Slow-Motion Invasion

The Ashigath have been appearing on Earth for over 3,000, always in small numbers, usually in locations in the midst of a war. Those who have fought against the demons for centuries believe that the number of Ashigath entering our Realm has seen a sharp rise in recent decades. While some of these invaders are infiltrators and agents of the Sleepers sent after the Incubata was damaged, most are Ashigath scattered during the Battle of the Broken Maze. The Ashigath already established on Earth and humans fighting the demons actively seek out the new arrivals.

While demon-hunters often estimate that the number of Ashigath on Earth at the present day at around fifty thousand, some have come to realise that these estimates are off by an order of magnitude: over half a million Ashigath now reside on Earth. The demons range in power from the minor Diekashi, the cringing servants of the Nightmare rulers, all the way to the fire-demons known as Tolonkashi, five metres tall and able to tear apart armoured vehicles with their bare claws. The demons arrive in waves, driven by unpredictable cycles of transition between the two Realms. Human researchers have noted a correlation between Ashigath appearances and periods of great human violence (war, terrorism, natural disasters and the like); the nightmares that humans have when fearful and under great stress act as magnets, bringing the scattered demons through the remains of the Incubata.

While a half-million Ashigath is a considerable force, it pales in comparison to the sizes of many human armies. What makes the Nightmare demons such a threat isn't their number, but their magical nature. Most varieties of Ashigath have some degree of mystic power; moreover, nearly all demon types can only be harmed by magic or by weapons infused with the power of the Nightmare Realm. Such weapons are either enchanted by spell-casters, or held in the hands of those with Ashigath blood in their veins: the Dreamtouched. Mundane bullets, thrown knives, even artillery shells bounce harmlessly off the skin of most demons (in the case of artillery shells, the impact does result in the Ashigath being thrown back great distances). A blade held in the hands of a Dreamtouched Tank can easily pierce Ashigath skin as can bullets or weapons used by normal humans after the weapons have been empowered by a Mage's ritual.

The Demon War Continues

Since many freshly-arrived Ashigath appear (from their perspective) immediately after the pivotal moment in the Nightmare Realm's civil war, most of the demons new to Earth have a strong desire to continue the battle. Upon their arrival, many Ashigath end up picking up the war they were fighting when they were scattered where they left off, attacking demons from the opposing faction and, more often than not, any humans unlucky enough to be nearby. Even Ashigath that have been here a while can get caught up in the fight. Dissectors and Devourers tend to attack each other on sight, and many of the demons used as soldiers by each side still feel sufficient loyalty to their causes to view their opponents as implacable enemies, even in this foreign Realm.

Ashigath who have been on Earth for decades or centuries may be less aggressive in their pursuit of their enemies, but most remain convinced of this goal's desirability. Few of the soldiers of the Devourers or Dissectors have given up their struggle, even if it has taken on a lower priority in comparison to survival or dominance on Earth. The rival demonic factions will work together only under the most extreme conditions. Even then, they will be seeking ways to gain advantage over their temporary allies.

Underground Communities

If there is no enemy at hand to fight, newly arrived Ashigath will make a rapid escape, trying to sort out what has happened to them and what they can do about it. Some Ashigath, fearing what might happen if they are discovered by humans, head underground — literally. Sanitation and transportation tunnels in many cities harbour small communities of Ashigath, living a precarious existence out of sight of humankind. Most are merely outposts, with fewer than two dozen residents. A few are larger communities, with upward of a hundred denizens, active bazaars, and communication links with other Ashigath towns. The three largest demon communities — Baifour (under Manhattan), Yun Carnas (in the London sewers and Underground), and Yun Dremval (beneath Moscow) — have more than a thousand permanent residents each, as well as numerous visiting Ashigath (and, very occasionally, trusted Dreamtouched humans).

Two of the three major demon cities loosely allied with a particular, although different, faction in the Demon War, while the third is aggressively neutral. Baifour is closely linked to the Dissectors, although the council that rules the city distances itself from those Dissectors who have enmeshed themselves in human affairs. Yun Dremval, conversely, is associated with the Oracles, and while the leader of the community is a Tolonkimi, it is widely rumoured that Devourers actually run the city. Yun Carnas is unique among Ashigath communities, in that it is considered neutral ground in the ongoing war among demons, both the rebellion in their home Realm and the struggles between the powerful Ashigath on Earth. A powerful Maker named Demarthik ar-Ventax, who is always accompanied by a platoon of Servitors, rules the community. These massive guardians will swiftly hunt down and capture any who try to fight within the walls of Yun Carnas; those who are taken away are never heard from again.

In cities without extensive underground tunnels, or where those tunnels are too heavily-patrolled to be of use, Nightmare demons tend to stick to the more dangerous, beaten-down parts of town. Their presence tends to exacerbate urban decay, for even if the Ashigath avoid attacking people, they leave unsettled dreams and subconscious discomfort in their wake.

Part of the System

The more intelligent — and more dangerous — Ashigath often gravitate towards sources of power in the human world. Economic giants, political movements, charismatic leaders and the like are enormously attractive to some demons. Taking advantage of the fact that normal humans quickly forget about Ashigath, some of the more manipulative demons provide advice and counsel to amorally ambitious humans, confident that, while the memory of meeting the demon will soon fade, the lessons learned will not.





The most successful example of such a relationship has to be the extended conversations between a Dissector named Pahlengas and a young Italian named Niccolo Machiavelli.

Human experts on the Ashigath disagree about how heavily embedded demons are in the modern political and economic system. The more cynical humans claim that it's clear that nearly all major political leaders and large corporations have a demon or two as advisors, and have for more than a century. The more hopeful suggest that the number of actual Ashigath-influenced humans in power is fairly low, but that government and economic leaders tend to emulate apparently successful behaviour, making it appear as if there's more demon influence out there than there really is.

An Ashigath Bestiary

The Ashigath comprise a number of different types, such as the massive, golem-like Servitors ("Malashi"), the vampiric Devourers ("Gerashi"), the rebellious Dissectors ("Muashi"), the spectral Stalkers ("Kubalashi"), and myriad other races. Earthly legends of creatures such as vampires, lycanthropes, ghosts, and the like emerged from half-remembered encounters with these creatures over the ages. Many have psychic or magical Skills, and some have inhuman strength. Most are invulnerable to normal weapons — at least, normal weapons not wielded by a Dreamtouched human.

The following list of Ashigath covers those demons that are most notable or most likely to be encountered by adventurers. Other otherworldly beings do exist and GMs are encouraged to construct demonic opponents as needed. They may wish to consult their own nightmares for inspiration.

The statistics are given as ready-to-use characters rather than templates, as befits their status as monsters. Feel free to customise then by modifying their Statistics, changing Skills, and so on — in particularly, adding a few Levels of Highly Skilled and some additional Skills will easily customise a particular Ashigath.

They can be converted to templates by subtracting 4 from each Stat (reducing their total cost by 24 points), For example, an Ashigath with Body 7 would have Body +3.

Arcantashi – The Watchers
(Character Point Cost: 100 Points)

Body 2 **Mind** 10 **Soul** 9
Attack Combat Value 7 **Defence Combat Value** 5
Health Points 55 **Energy Points** 95 **Shock Value** 11

Level	Points	Attribute
3	17	Illusion (Sight/Hearing — Area 3; Duration 4; Targets 4)
	-3	• Burns Energy (Illusion)
	-1	• Dependent (upon success of Telepathy)
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Except those wielded by Dreamtouched
1	1	Natural Weapons (Claws)
1	7	Sixth Sense (Detect fear — Area 6)
6	12	Telepathy (Only used to pull fearful images from victims — Area 3; Range 3)
	-3	• Burns Energy (Telepathy)

Level	Points	Skills
2	12	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
	18	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-1	Easily Distracted (Other Watchers)

Arcantashi ("The Watchers")

"You fear you fear you fear is good. We eat now. Yes, we eat."

The Arcantashi are small, weak creatures, standing less than a metre tall. Their goblinoid features and large, unblinking eyes make them stand out as inhuman, but normal people rarely notice them, usually rationalising them as children or, occasionally, stray animals. They have leathery skin whose hue ranges from milky white to a deep greenish-blue, and long, sharp nails on the ends of each of the four fingers on each hand.

While these claws can leave a nasty scratch, the real threat the Arcantashi pose comes from their psionic abilities. All Arcantashi can read minds and project telepathic images, allowing them to create illusions matching the fears or desires of their victims; some have even greater mental powers. The Watchers are mischievous carnivores, prone to abducting small creatures as meals (small dogs and baby humans being popular delicacies). They travel singly or in small groups; Arcantashi packs numbering more than seven or eight tend to collapse into chaos, as the Watchers play deadly pranks on one another. They are intoxicated by the "smell" of fear, and often appear in areas already terrorised by demons, warfare, or human predators.

Diekashi ("The Craven")

"But, my lord, that human has already killed dozens of my kind ... Um, yes, I suppose that being killed by that human would be faster than being tortured to death by you, my lord, now that you mention it."

Diekashi are the most common form of Ashigath in both the Realm of Nightmares and the Realm of Thought. They are about human-sized, with widely varying appearances: some (but not all) have horns, from a single one in the middle of their foreheads to rows of them on their skulls and down their backs; some have chitinous skin, others leathery skin, still others fur; fangs and claws are common, but not universal; a few even have wings. Diekashi can very occasionally appear completely human, but with a single profound oddity (a tail, six fingers, a forked tongue, etc.).

In the Realm of Nightmares, Diekashi are often used as slaves, grunt troops, and occasionally as dinner. Not surprisingly, most of the Diekashi scattered to the Realm of Thought have decided to stick around, either serving with the more powerful Ashigath factions seeking to extend control over Earth or simply hiding out. The majority of Nightmare demons living in the various underground and refugee communities are Diekashi.

The Craven are not enormously powerful as demons go, usually having little in the way of magical or psychic power, but are physically stronger than a normal human. They rarely attack alone, preferring the strength of numbers whenever possible. Their personalities vary as widely as their appearance, although few harbour any dreams of global domination. Unlike most other Ashigath, Diekashi can be hurt by non-magical weapons.

Diekashi – The Craven
(Character Point Cost: 25 Points)

Body 7 **Mind** 3 **Soul** 2
Attack Combat Value 6 **Defence Combat Value** 1
Health Points 35 **Energy Points** 25 **Shock Value** 7

Level	Points	Attribute
2	6	Attack Combat Mastery
1	1	Natural Weapons (One of Claws, fangs, or tail)

Level	Points	Skills
4	24	Melee Attack (Club)
1	6	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)

Others are possible, if demon has been living near/among humans.

Points	Defects
-2	Inept Defence
-1	Not So Tough
-3	Unappealing

Finashi ("The Changelings")

"Sam? Oh, there you are! We thought you were a goner when that wolf-thing grabbed you and ran off."

The Finashi are shapeshifters, able to change the appearance of their bodies. Few beings — human or Ashigath — have ever seen the true shape of any Finashi, since once they adopt their first alternative form, they never revert to the shape they are born with. The shapeshifting abilities of the Finashi are not unlimited; the transformation takes a minute or two to complete, and they can only change shape about twice a day. The shape-changing ability is sufficiently controlled to allow the Finashi to appear convincingly human, even to take on the form of a specific person.

Changelings are intelligent and thoroughly manipulative. They are very mildly psychic — not enough to read minds, but enough to pull the image of something another being fears out of their minds, in order to change into that form. They refer to this process as "fear-bonding," and once they've adopted a shape based on another person's nightmares, they make extensive use of it. Historically, fear shapes pulled from human minds have often included wolves and snakes; in some of these cases, in order to allow continued use of tools or weapons, the Finashi would adopt a half-human, half-animal form.

Finashi transformations do not grant the knowledge, memories, or powers of the assumed forms. Although the height and girth of the changed Finashi can vary between about half the size of a human to just over twice the size, the weight remains the same; apparently, the Changelings can control their overall density, allowing them to adopt such widely varying forms. Finashi are quite a bit stronger than normal humans, but have no magical powers beyond shapeshifting.

Finashi — The Changelings
(Character Point Cost: 90 Points)

Body 13 **Mind** 6 **Soul** 8
Attack Combat Value 9 **Defence Combat Value** 7
Health Points 105 **Energy Points** 70 **Shock Value** 21

Level	Points	Attribute
0	2	Alternate Form (Appearance only, no Character Points)
	0	• Activation (Alternate Form; functions at 4 BP)
	-1	• Limited Use, Instantaneous (functions at 2 BP)
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Restriction (Except those wielded by Dreamtouched)
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws and fangs, typically)
6	10	Telepathy (Only used to pull images from victims — Area 2; Range 2)
	-6	• Burns Energy (Telepathy)

Level	Points	Skills
3	18	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
	12	Unused Skill Points

Gerashi ("The Devourers")

"Welcome to our home, human. We hope you like it, as you will die here. Your blood smells warm and sweet, and we are very, very hungry."

Gerashi — the Devourers — are the elite soldiers of the Sleeping Lords. With pale, desiccated flesh, blood-rimmed eyes, and masses of needle-like teeth, the very appearance of a Devourer can instil terror in humans and many Ashigath. Those who know of the Gerashi and their powers are often the most terrified of all. Devourers stand over two metres tall, but are sufficiently humanlike in general shape that they can be taken for normal humans in dimly-lit areas.

Gerashi excel in physical, magical, and psychic abilities. They are universally far stronger than normal humans, and are immune to the effects of many magical and earthly forces. They regenerate extraordinarily quickly, even after apparent death. The only certain way to kill a Gerashi is decapitation or the complete destruction of its body in flame.

Legends of vampires came from half-remembered encounters with Gerashi, and for good reason. Devourers have something of an obsession with blood, drinking it from their victims, often using it as a kind of war paint. Devourers often attack humans at their vulnerable jugular veins, revelling in the resulting gouts of blood.

Perhaps the most frightening attack of the Devourers is the unnatural contamination they can cause in others. In the bodies of those killed by a Gerashi, the contamination will cause a new Gerashi — a so-called "Devourer-Spawn" — to form from the body's remains. The process takes about a week, and happens whether the body is buried or kept in a morgue, although if the body is cremated, the transformation cannot take place. The new proto-Gerashi will have an outward appearance reminiscent of the original being, but no other relationship — none of the original person's Skills or memories transfer into the new being. Over the course of a few months, the Devourer-Spawn will eventually become a full-fledged Gerashi; until that happens, the Devourer-Spawn cannot create more Gerashi.

If the Gerashi successfully contaminates a victim, but the human host is rescued before death, the contamination can still be the person's undoing. As long as the Gerashi who infected the human lives, the contaminant will continue to grow in the host's body. By the end of a week, the human will become a Devourer-Thrall, subject to the psychic control of the Devourer. A Gerashi may have up to five Thralls at one time.

Most of the myths surrounding vampires and their vulnerabilities — to sunlight, to religious icons, etc. — are false, except for one: Devourers are sickened by the scent and flavour of garlic. If they are somehow made to eat fresh garlic or pure garlic oil, it actually causes them 20 points of physical damage per round of exposure; this also tends to make them quite angry.

The most powerful of the Devourers are the Gerashi Lords, who are among the mightiest and most frightening of the Ashigath.

Gerashi — The Devourers (Normal)
(Character Point Cost: 190 Points)

Body 16 **Mind** 8 **Soul** 8
Attack Combat Value 10 **Defence Combat Value** 8
Health Points 120 **Energy Points** 80 **Shock Value** 24

Level	Points	Attribute
5	5	Combat Technique (Blind Fighting; Judge Opponent; Leap Attack; Lightning Reflexes; Two Weapons)
3	10	Contamination (On successful bite — Target 1)
	-8	• Burns Energy (Per use — Contamination)
		• Reduction (-1; Does not turn living victims into Devourers, only Devourer-Thralls)
1	8	Extra Attacks
5	5	Highly Skilled
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
4	20	Immunity (Mental and Stunning attacks)
	-1	• Restriction (Except those wielded by Dreamtouched)
4	20	Immunity (Stun)
1	5	Massive Damage
10	38	Mind Control (Duration 10; Range 6; Target 2)
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, fangs)
8	16	Regeneration
		• Reduction (-4; Gives 10 HP/round, not 40)

Level	Points	Skills
3	12	Interrogation (Physical)
3	18	Melee Attack (Varies, usually Sword)
5	25	Stealth (Concealment)
3	18	Unarmed Attack (Strikes(
	7	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-3	Achilles Heel (Fire)
-1	Bane (Garlic)

Devourer-Spawn are somewhat less powerful than normal Devourers:

Gerashi (Spawn)
(Character Point Cost: 125 Points)

Body 13 **Mind** 6 **Soul** 6
Attack Combat Value 8 **Defence Combat Value** 6
Health Points 95 **Energy Points** 60 **Shock Value** 19

Level	Points	Attribute
4	4	Combat Technique (Blind Fighting, Leap Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Two Weapon)
1	8	Extra Attacks
4	20	Immunity (Mental attacks)
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Restriction (Except those wielded by Dreamtouched)
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, fangs)
8	16	Regeneration
		• Reduction (-4; Gives 10 HP/round, not 40)

Level	Points	Skills
2	12	Melee Attack (Varies, usually Sword)
1	5	Stealth (Concealment)
2	12	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
	1	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-3	Achilles Heel (Fire)
-1	Bane (Garlic)

Gerashi Lords, conversely, are far more powerful than normal Devourers are:

Gerashi (Lord)
(Character Point Cost: 250-270)

Body 18 **Mind** 10 **Soul** 10
Attack Combat Value 12 **Defence Combat Value** 10
Health Points 140 **Energy Points** 100 **Shock Value** 28

Level	Points	Attribute
5	5	Combat Technique (Blind Fighting, Deflection, Leap Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Two Weapons)
3	10	Contamination (On successful bite; Targets 1)
	-8	• Burns Energy
		• Reduction (-1; Does not turn living victims into Devourers, only Devourer-Thralls)
3	24	Extra Attacks
8	8	Highly Skilled
4	20	Immunity (Mental and Stunning attacks)
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Restriction (Except those wielded by Dreamtouched)
2	10	Massive Damage
10	38	Mind Control (Duration 10; Range 6; Target 2)
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, fangs)
4-8	20-40	Power Flux (Limited Point Exchange — Depends on access to rituals, at least 4, maximum 8)
	-1	• Uses Energy
	-3	• Concentration
8	16	Regeneration
		• Reduction (-4; Gives 10 HP/round, not 40)
4	16	Special Attack "Raw Magic" (100 Damage, Uses Energy)

Level	Points	Skills
3	12	Interrogation (Physical)
3	18	Melee Attack (Varies, usually Sword)
2	12	Melee Defence (Varies, usually Sword)
3	18	Occult (Rituals)
2	12	Special Ranged Attack (Special Attack)
3	15	Stealth (Concealment)
3	18	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
	5	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-3	Achilles Heel (Fire)
-1	Bane (Garlic)

Devourer-Thralls

Devourer-Thralls are those individuals infected with the Devourer contamination. In the Realm of Thought, the victims of this Gerashi ability are usually human, although the power was primarily used on Diekashi back home in the Realm of Nightmares. If a Gerashi assaults a person and the Devourer manages to successfully make a Contamination attack, the victim may end up under the psychic control of that demon. If a Gerashi makes a successful Contamination attack, but is subsequently killed before the Thrall effects take hold, the contamination is thwarted.

The contamination takes a week to fully take control of the host. During that time, the victim is unable to sleep restfully, due to nightmares he or she cannot remember. The victim will run a slight fever at first, and then his or her body temperature will drop below normal. At the end of the week, the victim must make a Body Stat check (against the un-Enhanced Stat) at a -6 penalty. If the victim succeeds, he or she has managed to throw off the effects of the Contamination. If not, the victim becomes a Devourer-Thrall.

The new Thrall begins to develop magically enhanced strength, and a set of immunities similar to that of a real Gerashi. The victim's skin becomes increasingly sallow and he or she stops sleeping; all motivation or ambition is lost. The newly controlled Devourer-Thrall may behave normally at first, but will progressively become little more than the soulless puppet of a Gerashi. Unlike Devourer-Spawn, Devourer-Thralls do retain all of their memories and Skills, and Gerashi often use this contamination to gain control over a particularly influential or important enemy. The period between the onset of infection to full Thrall submission is one week.

As long as the controlling Devourer prompts the Thrall to eat, the victim will continue to live this half-existence. There are two ways to break the hold of the contamination. The first is a magic ritual requiring a small amount of the victim's blood and a small amount of the Devourer's blood; the second is to kill the Devourer dominating the Thrall. The second option is usually considered the more straightforward approach, although it is certainly not an easy solution. Unfortunately, if the Thrall has been under the control of the Gerashi for too long, the former Thrall is left quite insane.

To avoid insanity, the victim must make a Soul Check (At -2 if under thraldom for more than a month and at -4 if under for more than a year).

Gerashi-Thrall
(Character Point Cost: 30 Points)

Body +3 to base Stat **Mind** -2 to base Stat **Soul** -2 to base Stat
Attack Combat Value varies **Defence Combat Value** varies
Health Points varies **Energy Points** varies **Shock Value** varies

Level	Points	Attribute
4	16	Immunity (Mental attacks)
		• Reduction (-1; Does not apply to Mind Control by dominant Devourer)
4	20	Immunity (Stun)

Retains all physical and psychic Attributes, loses magical powers.

Level	Points	Skills
		Retains all previous Skills, does not gain new ones.

Points	Defects
-1	Owned
-3	Unique Defect (Under complete control of Devourer, no resistance)

Kubalashi – The Stalkers
(Character Point Cost: 220)

Body 8 **Mind** 8 **Soul** 6
Attack Combat Value 7 **Defence Combat Value** 5
Health Points 40 **Energy Points** 70 **Shock Value** 8

Level	Points	Attribute
12	48	Insubstantial
	-2	• Permanent
7	43	Mind Control (Duration 6; Range 1; Targets 1)
3	12	Flight
3	12	Telekinesis (Not all have this)
	-6	• Burns Energy

Level	Points	Skills
2	12	Melee Attack (Improvised weapon, telekinetic only)
	18	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-3	Not So Tough

Kubalashi ("The Stalkers")

"Team three, magic support group reports a bogey in your sector. Probable casper. Watch for possession attempts, and prep tranqs. Repeat, probable casper, prep tranqs."

Kubalashi are unlike any creature found on Earth. In their normal form, they are utterly insubstantial, appearing only as a disturbance in the air. Normal motion or heat sensors will not detect them, although systems designed to detect energy fields (magical or otherwise) can. Stalkers can move quickly, when needed, and can pass slowly through solid material, such as walls.

In their natural form, the Kubalashi can neither be damaged by physical means nor can they cause any physical harm. The Stalkers have a singular power, one that makes them quite challenging to deal with: possession. All Kubalashi can enter living creatures and take over their minds and bodies.

Such attacks are not always successful, and even when successful, possession will not last indefinitely. The victim may be able to resist or throw off the assault, if his or her willpower is sufficiently strong. Even if the victim is unable to hold off the Stalker, the Kubalashi's control fades after a few hours. If the victim is rendered unconscious, the Kubalashi is trapped in the person's mind until the victim wakes up.

A few Kubalashi have learned how to possess inanimate objects, usually devices or objects with some potential for mobility (a vehicle or a suit of armour, for example, rather than a gun or a painting). This form of possession is much more difficult to accomplish, and can usually only be sustained for a few rounds. During that time, the animated object may move or even attack, seemingly on its own.

Physical assaults do not harm Stalkers, and any damage done to the bodies they possess accrues only to the victim, not to the demon. The only way of hurting a Kubalashi is through magical or psychic attack. As a Stalker's only means of protecting itself is via possession, a Kubalashi under attack will either attempt to possess those trying to hurt it or run away. As it can fly at up to 100 kph and can pass through all solid objects, it usually can get away easily.

Malashi ("The Servitors")

"Did that Statue just move?" "What Statue?" "The one right — wait, where did it go?"

Malashi are among the most ominous and enigmatic of the Ashigath. Standing three to four metres in height and nearly two metres in width, Servitors resemble statues, and their marble-like skin only adds to the effect. The Malashi appear to be mindless, although this is not at all true. Servitor minds move slowly, but deeply. Servitors are infinitely patient, and utterly relentless.

Malashi do not move unless absolutely necessary; when they do move, it is either at a nearly imperceptible pace or with astonishing rapidity. Servitors do not seem to operate in the same world as the rest of us, and very few beings (human or Ashigath) have ever successfully engaged one in conversation. Fewer still can claim to understand what motivates these creatures.

Servitors grudgingly obey the dictates of a handful of beings. Some act as guardians for powerful Dissectors, while others can be found in the employ of the more elusive Makers. In combat, they are frightening and awesome warriors, stronger than nearly any other known being — only the Tolonkashi can stand toe-to-toe with them — and inhumanly fast. Magical steel breaks against their bodies, and Servitors can withstand the direct hit of a PAW-3 (see page 177).

They do have vulnerabilities. They have no particular defence against psychic attack, and magical assaults that do not attempt physical damage can usually work against them. A number of magical hand weapons have been crafted over the centuries specifically for use against the Servitors. Many of these weapons are hammers, and all consist of materials not from Earth — either meteoric metals or hard-to-gather minerals from remote stretches of the Realm of Nightmares.

Malashi — The Servitor
(Character Point Cost: 250 Points)

Body 21 **Mind** 10 **Soul** 13
Attack Combat Value 14 **Defence Combat Value** 12
Health Points 370 **Energy Points** 115 **Shock Value** 74

Level	Points	Attribute
6	18	Armour
4	4	Combat Techniques (ACV Knockback; Blind Fighting; Leap Attack, Lightning Reflexes)
5	40	Extra Attacks
8	8	Immovable
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
5	25	Massive Damage
1	6	Speed
	-5	• Burns Energy
5	20	Superstrength
10	20	Tough

Level	Points	Skills
3	18	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
	12	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-1	Awkward Size
-3	Bane (Certain magical weapons, +60 points damage, ignore Armour)

Moshagashi ("The Makers")

"Come, human. Let us parley. I have much to offer you ... and you have much to offer me...."

Very few humans have ever actually encountered a Maker, although most have been victim to their machinations at some point. Moshagashi are beings with octopus-like heads and thin, skeletal bodies. They nearly always dress in flowing robes and cowls, hiding all but the occasional flicking of their tentacles. They nearly always live in groups. Even when a Moshagashi appears to be alone, others are always nearby, out of sight.

Makers are evasive, hard to read, and manipulative. Neither the Dissectors nor the Oracles had Moshagashi in their armies, yet dozens — perhaps hundreds — of these strange beings were scattered to Earth during the Battle of the Broken Maze. Makers invariably refuse to participate in combat, fleeing threats or (more often) relying upon the defence of allies such as Servitors or Tolonkashi.

The Moshagashi are called Makers due to their extraordinary creative Skills. Alone among the Ashigath on Earth, they have mastered the ability to craft human technological artefacts. In some cases, the items they build exceed human understanding. Nor are Makers are limited to technological achievements. Many are talented Mages and psychics, using their wealth of power in concert with their technical skills to construct new weapons or tools.

Moshagashi openly remain above any petty struggles between Ashigath, claiming not to care about the outcome of the fight between humans and demons. Eskaton is aware of a small number of cases where Makers worked out arrangements with humans, offering their creative services or information as payment to humans willing to take on difficult tasks for the Makers. While the humans who successfully managed to complete the requested tasks always received exactly what they asked for, in retrospect few considered the prize worth the cost.

Moshagashi — The Makers
(Character Point Cost: 125 Points)

Body 4 **Mind** 16 **Soul** 14
Attack Combat Value 11 **Defence Combat Value** 9
Health Points 80 **Energy Points** 150 **Shock Value** 16

Level	Points	Attribute
10	20	Gadgeteer
1	1	Highly Skilled
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Except those wielded by Dreamtouched
3	9	Item of Power (Varies)
4	4	Mind Shield
1	5	Sixth Sense (Truth — Area 4)
	-4	• Burns Energy (Sixth Sense)

Level	Points	Skills
5	15	Electronics (Computer)
5	10	Mechanics (Micro)
2	12	Occult (Any)
	3	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-3	Marked
-1	Not So Tough
-3	Unappealing

Muashi ("The Dissectors")

"Of course you can trust me, fleshling. If you were in any danger from me your dead limbs would already be part of my latest pet."

It is ironic that many Muashi consider themselves to be friends to humankind, as the Dissectors, to an even greater degree than the than the vampire-like Devourers, have a physical form seemingly pulled from humanity's most dreadful nightmares. Muashi are tall humanoids, impossibly thin, with a greyish, translucent skin exposing their musculature and internal organs. Their mouths are disproportionately large for their faces, and appear frozen into a rictus-like grin. From birth they use metal thread to sew their own eyelids open, and they often have elaborate scar artwork on their limbs and back. They prefer to dress impeccably, with stylish clothing and accessories.

Muashi are physically quite weak, but enormously powerful in magic. They focus on ritual magic, although they are quite willing to use raw magic when the need presents itself. The rituals they employ are elaborate and strangely moving. Many involve dance, and the sight of a circle of Muashi performing slow, almost sensual movements coupled with the ritual chants is simultaneously fascinating and terrifying.

The one Muashi ritual that no human has been able to duplicate is also their most frightening. Muashi are able to raise the dead. The ritual used by the Dissectors to do this is time-consuming but powerful — a group of Dissector Mages can bring life back into a dead body anywhere in the world. The basic version of this results in a being referred to as a "Returned;" the more elaborate version is the resurrection ritual is called the "Concordance," which combines the bodies of multiple corpses into a single, massive being (see below).

Dissectors are notorious both for their obsession with order and for their overwhelming curiosity about how life functions. Nearly all Dissector lairs contain a laboratory, usually filled with disassembled bodies, brains in jars, animated limbs, and the like. Such efforts are not motivated by cruelty — although Dissectors are often quite sanguine about causing pain — but of simple curiosity. Dissectors treat all living things as potential toys, there to be taken apart and (possibly) reassembled as the Dissectors please.

The Muashi focus on order and hierarchy can be just as disturbing. Dissectors are extremely conscious of social ranking, etiquette, and face,

although they have numerous factions constantly struggling for dominance. Humiliation in front of their peers is far more likely to drive Dissectors into a rage than is defeat. Disagreements between Muashi are handled with extreme grace and politeness, even as they scheme madly against each other. Such etiquette is extended to humans who demonstrate both power and culture; humans who have great power but no sense of proper behaviour are shunned or, if necessary, killed.

Muashi – The Dissectors
(Character Point Cost: 200 Points)

Body 3 **Mind** 18 **Soul** 18
Attack Combat Value 13 **Defence Combat Value** 11
Health Points 105 **Energy Points** 180 **Shock Value** 21

Level	Points	Attribute
1	1	Highly Skilled
5	5	Heightened Awareness
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Except those wielded by Dreamtouched
7	28	Item of Power (GM's option)
5	5	Mind Shield
10	50	Power Flux (LPE; Dissectors typically know 10 rituals)
	-1	• Uses Energy
	-2	• Concentration
3	12	Special Attack "Raw Magic" (120 Damage, Short Range, Uses Energy x2)

Level	Points	Skills
5	30	Occult
3	9	Etiquette
	1	Unused Skill Point

Points	Defects
-2	Marked
-3	Unappealing

Muashi creation: The Returned

The Dissector ritual to raise the dead creates a being that appears to be alive, at least initially. The original personality returns, as do memories and (most) Skills. There is one problem with this ritual: it does not reverse or even stop, the decay of the body. The returned dead body "lives" in the sense of once again having its mind and "soul" back, but the life is one of magical animation. The body itself remains dead. If the newly-raised individual died only minutes or hours earlier, the onset of decay won't be immediately noticeable. If the re-awakened corpse has been dead for awhile, especially if it's been buried, the decay is unmistakable.

The animation does not allow a Returned the use of any supernatural or superhuman powers the original person may have possessed before death. A Returned will only be as strong as a normal human, and will have no magical or psychic abilities. Further, the ongoing decay of the body means that the Returned will grow weaker both physically and mentally, as the animating spell has less and less to hold onto. For every two weeks since the original person died, subtract 1 point from Body, Mind, and Soul Statistics. Once one of those Stats reaches 0, the Returned is permanently dead.

Damage taken by Returned will not heal normally, although magical healing will work. A Returned brought to 0 Health Points is not rendered unconscious, but is just immobilised. If the head itself has not been seriously damaged, it may still be able to speak. Serious trauma does accelerate the process of true death from decay. If brought to a number of Health Points lower than its Shock Value, the subtraction of 1 Point from each Stat happens every three days instead of two weeks. If brought to 0 or fewer Health Points, the loss of Stat Points occurs once per day.

Muashi creation: Concordances

Concordances are the living-dead constructs assembled by Dissectors using parts of multiple dead bodies. Concordances range in size from a bit more than three metres to nearly seven metres in size, and are only vaguely humanoid in shape — two legs, two arms, a central body and a head. Concordances are made from fragments of corpses, sewn together using ritual magic. It often takes a moment for those first encountering a Concordance to realise just what they're seeing: massive arms and legs made from multiple limbs connected to give the right shape; a body made from torsos stacked like bricks, sewn into a rough cylinder; a head-like shape comprising numerous real heads, broken and reshaped into necessary shapes, faces outwards, eyes and jaws — if they remain — still moving. The first sight of a Concordance can send even the strongest heroes screaming away in terror.

Unlike the Returned ritual, the Concordance ritual requires the corpses be present during the ritual, as a significant portion of the ritual involves sewing the pieces together with the empowered metal thread the Dissectors use on themselves. Concordance constructs may also include parts removed from living bodies, with or without the consent of the donor. As with other raised beings, Concordance constructs have memories and abilities from their previous lives, but since such constructs combine multiple corpses, Concordances can display a startlingly wide assortment of Skills. Concordance beings are invariably quite insane, and Dissectors need to use domination and mind-control rituals to keep the constructs in line.

A Concordance requires a minimum of three full bodies (or full body equivalents — each limb used could come from a different donor, as long as they added up to three full bodies), and can contain a maximum of 10 full bodies. The memories and Skills possessed by the Concordance will come only from the heads used, not other body parts (i.e., using heads of artists and bodies of soldiers may result in a strong Concordance, but not one with combat skills). As with more standard Returned beings, Concordances have no magical or psychic abilities, even if the original donors did.

While strong, Concordances are quite vulnerable to large amounts of damage applied in a short time. Lesser wounds — from a sword blow or a burst of gunfire — can be ignored, with the damaged bit dropped from the whole. More serious damage, from an explosive or a particularly effective spell — in an amount equivalent to twice the Concordance's Shock Value — can shatter the Concordance, causing it to collapse into a scattered pile of rapidly decaying body parts. If a Concordance takes more than twice its Shock Value, make a Soul Check. If the Concordance fails the Soul Check, it collapses into its component fragments.

As with other Returned, Concordances will decay at a rate of 1 Point from Body, Mind, and Soul every two weeks if otherwise uninjured. Once brought below its Shock Value in Health Points, it will lose 1 point in each every three days, and if brought below 0 Health Points, it will lose 1 in each every day. Concordances can only be healed magically.

Muashi Concordance
(Character Point Cost: 15)

Body 6x number of bodies **Mind** and **Soul** Sum of all head donors
Attack Combat Value varies **Defence Combat Value** varies
Health Points varies +80 **Energy Points** varies **Shock Value** varies

Level	Points	Attribute
3	15	Massive Damage
4	8	Tough
		Others vary, but only mundane Abilities from donors.

Level	Points	Skills
		Vary, based on Skills of heads.

Points	Defects
-2	Awkward Size (Sometimes only 1 BP)
-3	Marked
-3	Unappealing

Others vary, but only mundane Defects from donors.





Neslamashi ("The Oracles")

"I stood there, suddenly awake, remembering in a rush what had happened, not believing it. But the sky was on fire; the air smelled ... blue ... and in front of me was a shroud in the shape of a man, with shadows instead of a face. I knew it was going to kill me. So, I hit it with my sword."

The voices of the Sleepers, the Oracles normally do not leave the confines of the Broken Maze, the citadel housing the vaults of the Sleeping Lords. The Dissectors claim that the spell cast by the Oracles to scatter the human soldiers (see page 179), that swept up numerous Ashigath from both sides, also pulled a small number of Oracles to Earth. If this is true, the Oracles have proven able to hide themselves from demon hunters and renegade Ashigath alike; no Oracle has ever been caught on Earth.

Deathless soldiers who faced off against the Oracles and Devourers describe the Neslamashi as shrouded, spectral beings, with faces hidden in the darkness of their robes. They appear to fly, and demonstrate a talent with magic that matches or exceeds that of the Dissectors. Eskaton has records of one Deathless soldier who actually attacked an Oracle during that last battle. The Neslamashi is said to have crumpled with a single blow, but the contact made by the weapon caused a fast-moving rot to set in on the soldier's arm; the quick thinking Deathless warrior had a comrade cut off his arm before the rot could corrupt the rest of his body.

(The following template represents the Oracle as based on Eskaton analysis; actual Oracle powers may vary considerably.)

Neslamashi – The Oracles (Character Point Cost: 275)

Body 4 **Mind** 20 **Soul** 20
Attack Combat Value 14 **Defence Combat Value** 12
Health Points 70 **Energy Points** 200 **Shock Value** 14

Level	Points	Attribute
7	29	Contamination (Rotting disease, consumes body from point of contact, even if contact is through a weapon or armour, no known cure other than amputating Contaminated limb; Targets 1)
2	8	Flight
5	5	Highly Skilled
2	2	Heightened Awareness
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Restriction (Except those wielded by Dreamtouched)
8	49	Mind Control (Duration 4; Targets 5)
	-3	• Burns Energy (Mind Control)
6	6	Mind Shield
10	50	Power Flux (LPE; Oracles typically know 10 rituals)
	-1	• Burns Energy
	-2	• Concentration
5	20	Special Attack "Raw Magic" (120 Damage, Short Range, Uses Energy x2)

Level	Points	Skills
10	60	Occult (Rituals)
4	16	Area Knowledge (The Broken Maze)
	4	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-5	Not So Tough

Palangashi ("The Diseased")

"What's this goo on the ground? Hey—"

Unlike many other Ashigath, the Palangashi have no similarities to any Earth beings. Gelatinous, oozing blobs, the Palangashi extrude numerous tentacles and pseudopods to pull themselves along. They are utterly without intelligence, existing only to devour. Even other Ashigath stay well away from the Palangashi.

When they are "born," Palangashi are about the size of an adult human. They grow quickly, absorbing organic material they encounter, gravitating towards sources of warmth and movement. Their growth is related to the amount of material they consume, retaining about a tenth of the mass they eat as body weight; they would have to eat the equivilent of 100 humans to gain one level of grow, 300 for the second, 600 for the third and so on. This growth is irreversable, until such time as they reproduce, and then they do not return to their original size but only die. Palangashi attack by extruding tentacles/pseudopods to entangle their target. These pseudopods can reach a distance equivalent to the diameter of the Palangashi. A Palangashi can extrude as many as nine tentacles at once, although normally may only attack with three in one round. If successfully struck by three pods, the victim is drawn into the Palangashi. Armour (natural or otherwise) can stop the damage from the impact of the tentacle, but will not prevent the pseudopod from taking hold. Force Fields are a useful defence, as the tentacles slide off them. Palangashi are accurate judges of size, and will only attempt entangle and consume creatures smaller than they are.

Once enveloped by a Palangashi, a living animal is eaten alive, taking 20 damage per round, leaving only minerals as waste. Any creature being devoured will also suffer from lack of air. Fire, cold, and magical force easily damage Palangashi, but physical assaults do little but get stuck. One-quarter of the damage taken by a Palangashi is passed along to any creature being devoured inside. Once a Palangashi is brought below its Shock Value in Health Points, victims and stuck weapons may be pulled free.

After a Palangashi gets to be about one thousand times the mass of a human — that is, after eating the equivalent of about 10 thousand average adult humans — it may form ascocarps, or "fruiting bodies", which will begin dropping buds, immature Palangashi. Unchecked, a Palangashi at the ascocarp stage will drop upwards of a hundred sporesover a 20-day period. Each drop weakens it, reducing its Body by 1. When it releases its final spore it dies, crumbling into dust. In budding mode, it may continue to move after dropping below 0 Health Points, although it may not engage in combat at that point.

The Dissectors claim that they created the Palangashi aeons ago, for use by the Oracles and Devourers as a weapon. Since Palangashi exist only to eat and spore, they are never used in actual battles, only to weaken and terrify inhabitants of a region before Sleeper forces move in to conquer it. Since neither the Dissectors nor the Devourers were using Palangashi during the last battle, Eskaton believes that the blobs were sent to Earth from the Realm of Nightmares only recently, perhaps as a prologue to a greater invasion.

It is not clear what factors limit Palangashi populations in the Realm of Nightmares, but in the Realm of Thought they are hampered by the lack of native magic. A Palangashi that feeds exclusively on mundane victims, whether human, plant or animal, cannot bud. Instead it simply dies when it is about 100 tonnes. To retain its fertility, at least 1% of its mass must come from either Dreamtouched or demonic sources. Both Dreamtouched and the demons are extremely unlucky that the Palangashi have both the sensory ability to distinguish magical sources of food from mundane ones and a powerful taste for magic-rich food sources.

Palangashi – The Diseased
(Character Point Cost: 150 Points)

Body 7 **Mind** 1 **Soul** 3
Attack Combat Value 6 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 55 **Energy Points** 20 **Shock Value** 11

Level	Points	Attribute
2	16	Extra Attacks
7	70	Grow
	-10	• Activation Time (Variable)
	-2	• Restriction (One Way Transformation)
	-3	• Restriction (Only after eating mass)
12	60	Immunity (All melee/missile attacks)
1	1	Natural Weapons (Tentacles)
3	3	Sixth Sense (Magic; Area 2)

Level	Points	Skills
3	18	Unarmed Attack (Grappling)
	12	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-3	Bane (Acid)
-1	Bane (Electricity)
-1	Bane (Extreme cold)
-2	Bane (Fire)

Raxankashi – The Sentinels
(Character Point Cost: 45 Points)

Body 6 **Mind** 2 **Soul** 4
Attack Combat Value 9 **Defence Combat Value** 2
Health Points 50 **Energy Points** 30 **Shock Value** 10

Level	Points	Attribute
3	9	Attack Combat Mastery
1	2	Defence Combat Mastery
3	3	Combat Techniques (ACV Knockback, Leap Attack, Lightning Reflexes)
1	1	Feature (Four Legs, x2 running speed)
5	5	Heightened Awareness
2	2	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Smell)
1	1	Jumping
2	2	Natural Weapons (Fangs, Claws)
1	1	Special Movement (Untrackable)

Level	Points	Skills
3	18	Unarmed Attack (Bites)
	12	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-3	Marked
-2	Physical Impairment (No manipulators)

Raxankashi ("The Sentinels")

"October 12. Completed clearing out the Sentinel den. Apparently one of the Raxankashi was a breeder becausewe found a cluster of five pups. Reilly was going to kill them, but I told him how much Rax pups were worth on the underground market. We carefully bagged them and took them back home. We fed them some cooked meat but they're really taken to the dog's food."

Although the Realm of Nightmares is an entirely different universe from our own, there are a few similarities between the two worlds. One is that, just as humans do, many Ashigath enjoy the companionship of pets, both as guardians and as comfort. The most common type of such companion is the Raxankashi. Numerous Raxankashi were transported to Earth along with the various combatants, and many of those Ashigath who deliberately sought out pathways to the Realm of Thought brought their Raxankashi pets along.

Raxankashi are quadrupeds, vaguely dog-like in shape, and often rationalised by those shrouded by the Veil as aggressive dogs or wolves. They are generally smarter than Earthly dogs, although they are not as smart as humans are. They can understand complex commands and even simple questions. They are obligate carnivores, although they can survive quite happily on standard canned dog food.

Sentinels are vicious but completely loyal if raised from birth, even when raised by humans. Experienced demon-hunters often tell stories about discovering a pack of Raxankashi being raised by normal humans who think of the Sentinels as pit bulls, Rottweilers, or other such fighting dogs. Because they are full-blooded Ashigath, Raxankashi pups are highly sought-after by those Dreamtouched who wish to have a loyal demonic companion always within 50 metres, providing the Dreamtouched access to a power source on a full time basis.

Shontog ("The Outcasts")

The Shontog, the dark makers of the world, are not of this place. They haunt us and belittle us, and will eventually betray us. Only the Sleeping Lords can protect us from their heresy.

— From the Dissector's Book of The Sleepless Death

Shontog are only found in the Realm of Nightmares. The Dissectors claim that the Shontog have had no dealings with humans so far. From what the Dissectors have told humans, the Shontog are among the oldest of the Ashigath, and utterly heartless. They are known as the Outcasts, and were driven from the land of the Sleepers because they refused to obey the Sleeping Lords. They have now returned to the outskirts of the lands of the Ashigath, planning to awaken the Sleepers and resolve, once and for all, which should rule.

Shontog are said to be short (about 150 cm), stocky beings who are exceedingly strong physically. A few have magical abilities, but not all. They range in coloration from a dusky grey to deep ebony. If they have more than one gender, this is not obvious from their appearance.

Oddly, despite the Dissector's statement that the Shontog have not dealt with humans, a few researchers have noted that their description is surprisingly similar to legendary gnomes or dwarves, and to more recent tales of Grey aliens who abduct humans. It is possible that those Dissectors who have spoken about them either have not revealed the whole truth or that the Shontog have their own, secret, designs on humanity of which the Dissectors know nothing.

The most notable aspect of the Shontog is their songs: they can create massive magical effects through co-ordinated harmonies. Individual Shontog are said to be able produce three different tones at once. Dissectors who have heard the songs of the Shontog describe the songs as otherworldly, like something from their own nightmares. Since the nightmares of demons originate from the Realm of Thought, some Ashigath believe that the Shontog originally came from Earth's distant past.

Shontog – The Outcasts
(Character Point Cost: 200 Points)

(The following is based on reports of the Shontog; actual individuals will likely vary considerably.)

Body 10 **Mind** 10 **Soul** 10
Attack Combat Value 16 **Defence Combat Value** 14
Health Points 100 **Energy Points** 100 **Shock Value** 20

Level	Points	Attribute
1	3	Armour
6	18	Attack Combat Mastery
6	12	Defence Combat Mastery
2	16	Extra Attacks
1	1	Highly Skilled
3	3	Heightened Awareness
2	2	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Smell)
6	30	Immunity (Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Restriction (Except those wielded by Dreamtouched)
3	15	Massive Damage
6	6	Mind Shield
1	23	Power Flux (Ritual Magic, Duration Reversed 8)
	-1	• Detectable (Unearthly singing)
1	4	Superstrength
3	12	Special Attack "Raw Magic" (120 Damage, Short Range, Uses Energy x2)

Level	Points	Skills
2	12	Melee Attack (Varies, usually Axe or Club)
2	12	Occult (Any)
4	12	Performing Arts (Singing)
	4	Unused Skill Points

	Points	Defects
	-3	Marked

Tolonkashi ("The Burning Lords")

"Ah, little human, creature that haunts my dreams. Why have you come to annoy me? Do you really think you can harm me? I have walked this Earth for centuries, and flew through the skies above the Broken Maze for aeons before. I only wish to return to my home. Come, let us talk."

Nearly as old as the Shontog and the Sleeping Lords are the Tolonkashi, the Burning Lords. Winged beings with frightening, inhuman faces, the Tolonkashi look like mythical fire demons, or perhaps even dragons. They typically stand up to five metres in height. Even larger Tolonkashi are rumoured to exist, although no witnesses have survived to tell their tales. A sheath of fire covers their bodies; causing them no damage but injuring any who come near.

Very few Tolonkashi came to Earth in the scattering, and those that did were debilitated by the lack of acrid chemicals in the atmosphere. Those Tolonkashi unlucky enough to be marooned in our world tended to remain hidden away, underground, often near volcanoes. The spread of industrial pollution allowed some Tolonkashi to venture out, but most still prefer to remain in their subterranean lairs, using other Ashigath as their agents. Most seek a way home, although a small number have decided to investigate methods that could be used to transform the surface world into an environment more suitable for their kind. These Burning Lords tend to work out arrangements with the more manipulative sorts of Ashigath, trying to encourage humans to produce and use chemicals and fuels whose by-products are atmospheric toxins.

Tolonkashi are massive, powerful, and thoroughly evil. It is fortunate that there are so few on Earth, as they can easily defeat most opponents. Fire obviously causes them no harm, but neither do cold or acid. Many spells cannot hurt them directly, and neither can missile weapons such as bullets or rockets, even those empowered by spells. Tolonkashi laugh at explosions, and the impact of tons of rock or metal is at best a mere annoyance. Normal weapons, even those wielded by the Dreamtouched, do no damage. The only weapons that can hurt the Tolonkashi are magical hand weapons used by someone with Ashigath blood. These do full damage to the Burning Lords, and while their fiery sheath will usually injure or kill those who come close enough to strike, Tolonkashi will not risk hand to hand combat with anyone who can possibly hurt them. Instead they prefer to use their own magical abilities, including their ability to fly, to kill these threats at a distance.

Tolonkashi – The Burning Lords
(Character Point Cost: 375 Points)

Body 20 **Mind** 11 **Soul** 15
Attack Combat Value 15 **Defence Combat Value** 13
Health Points 375 **Energy Points** 230 **Shock Value** 75

Level	Points	Attribute
4	12	Armour
2	6	Armour (Optimised: Raw magic energy)
5	5	Combat Techniques (ACV Knockback, Blind Fighting, Deflection, Leap Attack, Lightning Reflexes)
5	10	Energy Bonus
5	40	Extra Attacks
4	16	Flight
5	5	Heightened Awareness
5	5	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell, Taste, Touch)
5	5	Immovable
10	50	Immunity (Acid, Cold, fire, Missile Weapons, Non-magic weapons)
7	35	Massive Damage
6	6	Mind Shield
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, spiked tail)
9	36	Special Attack "Fiery Breath" (180 Damage, Spreading x2, Short Range, Uses Energy)
9	9	Special Attack "Wall of Fire" (80 Damage, Area Effect, Enduring x5, Uses Energy)
6	6	Special Attack "Flame Shield" (80 Damage, Aura)
4	16	Superstrength
10	20	Tough

Level	Points	Skills
	30	Unused Skill Points

	Points	Defects
	-1	Awkward Size

Tolonkimi ("Children of the Fire")

"I think that I shall enjoy stripping the flesh from your bones. Yes, I am certain that I shall."

Few humans who have come face to face with the Tolonkashi live to tell about it, and fewer still know that the Tolonkashi can drop the sheath of fire that otherwise surrounds them, whenever they choose. Normally, the Burning Lords have little reason to let go of that protection. Tolonkashi do have one significant weakness: every century or two, they need to mate. This is no mere physical urge; it is a magical curse placed upon the demon species by the Sleeping Lords. In order to slake these urges, which can become painful and actively debilitating, a Tolonkashi must court a potential mate from another species, and the mating itself must be performed willingly by the non-Tolonkashi partner.

With another Ashigath, the result is always a new Tolonkashi. Some of the Burning Lords on Earth have, whether from perversity or curiosity, sought out human companionship for this occasional act. As with other human-Ashigath

pairings, the coupling will produce a child — a Half-Blood. Unlike other Half-Bloods, the results of a human-Tolonkashi mating — the so-called Tolonkimi — bear little resemblance to their human parent.

Tolonkimi are humanoid and wingless, but otherwise do not resemble their human parent. Tolonkimi grow to be three to four metres tall, with monstrous heads, huge claws, and scale-covered skin. They have superhuman strength, and occasionally magic abilities on par with a Dreamtouched Mage (as with other Half-Bloods, their magical powers are readily detected when in use). They are always immune to fire, and resist other energy attacks. Magic can damage them, as can enchanted bullets and the like. They are the only kind of Half-Blood immune to non-magical weapons.

Tolonkimi can usually be found leading gangs and mercenary forces, as they have a strong violent streak and an inherent love for mayhem. While their great strength gives them an obvious edge when using melee weapons, they are equally fond of rifles and machine guns — which they prefer to use two at a time, one in each hand. Because they are the result of a cross between a demon and a human, there are no Tolonkimi in the Realm of Nightmares, although Oracles and Devourer Generals are reportedly quite intrigued at the possibility of bringing them over, as vicious assassins.

Tolonkimi – Children of the Fire
(Character Point Cost: 175 Points)

Body 15 **Mind** 8 **Soul** 12
Attack Combat Value 16 **Defence Combat Value** 9
Health Points 255 **Energy Points** 100 **Shock Value** 51

Level	Points	Attribute
2	2	Adaptation (Acid, Cold)
2	6	Armour
5	15	Attack Combat Mastery
1	1	Combat Techniques (Blind Fighting)
2	16	Extra Attacks
8	40	Immunity (Fire, Non-magic weapons)
	-1	• Restriction (Except those wielded by Dreamtouched)
2	10	Massive Damage
2	2	Mind Shield
1	1	Natural Weapons
1	4	Superstrength
6	12	Tough

Level	Points	Skills
	30	Unused Skill Points

	Points	Defects
	-1	Awkward Size
	-2	Unappealing

Tolishi ("The Firelings")

"Well, well, well. What do we have here? A bunch of kids wanting to play dress-up? Oooh, those swords look scaaaaary!"

More commonplace than the Tolonkimi are the Tolishi, the descendants of Tolonkimi-human pairings. They are Dreamtouched, and manifest powers in the same way as other Dreamtouched. Like the Tolonkimi, they are quite menacing, but the Tolishi can (and do) pass for human. While stronger than average, they are only superhumanly powerful in the presence of an Ashigath.

The two ways in which Tolishi stand apart from other Dreamtouched are their incredible resistance to fire and their invariably nasty personalities. Tolishi are mean, cruel, and vindictive, socialising only with others of their kind or with particularly unpleasant humans. They have a definite tendency to join biker gangs, and their preferred weapons are spiked chains.

Tolishi – The Firelings
(Character Point Cost: 85 Points)

Body 8 (13) **Mind** 5 **Soul** 4 (7)
Attack Combat Value 10 (13) **Defence Combat Value** 3 (6)
Health Points 120 (160) **Energy Points** 45 (60) **Shock Value** 24 (32)

Level	Points	Attribute
1	1	Adaptation (Heat)
1	3	Armour
	-1	• Restriction (Only use near Ashigath)
5	15	Attack Combat Mastery
5	10	Enhanced [Body]
	-1	• Restriction (Only use near Ashigath)
3	6	Enhanced [Soul]
	-1	• Restriction (Only use near Ashigath)
2	16	Extra Attack
3	6	Tough

Level	Points	Skills
3	18	Melee Attack (Varies, usually Whips/Chains)
	12	Unused Skill Points

	Points	Defects
	-1	Blind Fury
	-2	Unappealing

Magic and Ritual

We crept slowly through the abandoned warehouse, looking for signs of our quarry. I used to play in here, back Before, and I was startled now at how different the place looked now. I could see bloody writing on the walls which Before I would have sworn was just splattered paint or torn signs.... But now I could remember that there have been Ashigath markings here for years. I even dreamt about them. I just couldn't see *them. Now I couldn't stop looking at them.*

We found the door leading to the basement stairs. I started getting a tingling in the back of my head. Melinda, at the front of the team, turned and whispered "it's close —"

She didn't get to finish her sentence. The demon burst through the door, knocking her down, heading for the warehouse exit. Jack took a swing at it with his blade, but missed. I stepped back, tightened up muscles I had never been completely aware ofand let out a strangled shout. The power leapt from me, pouring through my eyes, piercing my skin like tiny crackles of electricity, and leapt towards the demon. I put everything I could into that blast.

The demon fell, hard, and didn't move again.

Magic is not native to our universe; it is a manifestation of the Realm of Nightmares, reaching into our world through the shattered Incubata. There were no human spell-casters prior to the arrival of the Ashigath, and those humans who now have the ability work under notable restrictions. Our universe — the Realm of Thought — constantly works to limit or conceal the effects of magic. Nonetheless, magic, however foreign, is now present in our universe, and both demons and the Dreamtouched can make use of it.

Raw Magic

The most common manifestation of magic, at least among human spell-casters, is "raw" magical energy, pulled directly from the Realm of Nightmares. Such magical energy matches no Earthly form: it damages what it touches in ways similar to fire, yet it does not burn; what it hits can receive a notable kinetic jolt, but there is no corresponding recoil for the caster; it can overload electrical circuits and cause shorts, but is not at all electric or magnetic in its nature. Its nature, in short, is an enigma.

Untrained Dreamtouched Mages can call upon this raw magic as needed, with no particular gestures, components, or incantations required. The energy usually bursts forth from the Mage's eyes, targeting whatever the Mage is looking at, although some Mages find it more natural to point at their targets. In the latter case, the magic blasts from the mages' fingertips. Raw magic is an undifferentiated Special Attack blast, and an untrained Mage can do little to control it other than turning it on or off, and pointing it in the right direction. A raw magic blast affects a single target, and can travel as far as 50 metres before dissipating.

Raw magic is not limited to these simple blasts but achieving the level of control required for the more subtle applications depends on both training and practice. The techniques for controlling the magical blasts are largely exercises in mental discipline. Occasionally, talented young Mages can develop the necessary skills on their own but more often, the newly-awakened Mage must spend a period of several weeks or months being coached in the use of raw magic by a more experienced mentor. This training is represented by the Occult Skill at Level 1, and it allows Mages to make use of Special Attack Abilities for their blasts.

All raw magic, whether controlled or otherwise, burns Energy Points. The Mage's Special Attack Attribute requires the Uses Energy Disability x2, so that magic attacks cost 10 Energy Points per Level of the attack. Like any other Disability, the Uses Energy Disability x2 adds 40 points to the base damage done by the magical attack. The success of a raw magic strike is based upon the Mage's Special Ranged Attack skill.

The Power of Ritual

Raw magic is powerful, but its use is limited to blasting things. In order to create other magical effects, the Mage must use ritual magic. Ritual magic uses prescribed forms of gestures, incantations, and on occasion, physical components to bring about the desired outcome.

Ritual mages may use the magic rules found in the Magic chapter (Chapter 8). Some especially talented ritual mages are also capable of using Innate Wizardry (page 89).

Many ritual Attributes are available only in limited or restricted forms, or require particular components. All ritual magic implementations of Attributes should have the Activation Time or Concentration Defects and should Burn Energy.

A Few More Melee Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Abilities *	Disabilities	Skill
Battleaxe	15	MP	Melee	Melee (Axe)
Cutlass	10	MP	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Great Sword	16	MP	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Hammer	12	MP, KB	Melee	Melee (Club)
		Inaccurate		
Hammer (Tool)	3	MP	Melee	Melee (Improvised)
Lg. Warhammer	14	MP, KB	Melee	Melee (Club)
Sm. Warhammer	8	MP, KB	Melee	Melee (Club)
Katana	14	MP	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Morning Star	10	MP, KB	Melee	Melee (Chains)
	Flexible			
Scythe	16	MP	Melee	Melee (Polearms)
		Inaccurate		

* MP = Muscle-Powered KB = Knockback

Artefacts and Technology

"One more thing before you head out, kids," the old man grinned. "Those tire irons and campfire axes you've been using against the demons really aren't going to do much good."

"Yeah?!" Ernie was defensive. He'd been the one to pull together a good set of weapons for us, back when we were using kitchen knives or baseball bats. "We've taken down some pretty ugly monsters with these things."

The old man started to laugh, then stopped. He addressed us seriously. "I'm sure you have — and you've done a damn good job of it. But wouldn't you rather have had one of these...?" He opened a closet door, and pulled aside a curtain.

Ernie and I were stunned. It took me a second to find my voice. "Yes. Yes, we would."

Humans use a wide array of devices in their fight against the Ashigath. From swords and rifles to mobile phones and computers, the greatest advantage humankind has over its demonic adversaries is its ability to make and employ tools. Some are magical, some are high-tech, some employ elements of both and some are simply very sharp.

Non-Magic Weapons

The value of mundane weapons in the fight against the Ashigath depends on whether the arms are missiles (including bullets) or melee weapons. Otherwise unremarkable melee-type weapons, such as swords, spears, clubs, and the like, can prove quite effective against most Ashigath when used by the Dreamtouched, as their bloodline connection to the Nightmare Realm lets them pierce the immunity to harm that many demons have. Mundane bullets (and arrows and other such missiles), conversely, are often completely useless against Nightmare demons, bouncing harmlessly off their skins, even when fired from weapons wielded by the Dreamtouched. A mundane (non-magical) weapon has to be in the hands of a Dreamtouched to even have the potential to be effective against the Ashigath.

As a result, much of the combat against demonic opponents happens face-to-face, with the human heroes wielding swords, axes, and the like. Finding a decent-quality melee weapon in the early 21st century is not simple, as many of the decorative swords sold in pawn shops or utility axes sold in camp stores are simply too flimsy to stand up to real combat. (Such weapons should be considered to have the Low Penetration Disability). Real weapons should always count as minor Gadgets.

Weaponsmiths crafting and selling combat-grade weapons do exist. Demon-hunting groups will often know where to find those able to create reliable melee weapons, and sometimes have these people on staff. Historical weapons, made for battle, may also be used against the Ashigath.

Magic Items

Magic items are an important weapon in the Demon War. Ashigath-forged magical weapons — designed to kill rival Ashigath in the Demon War — are just as effective when wielded by human warriors. These weapons often incorporate the Targeted Ability, and do double-damage to full-blooded Nightmare beings. Clothing imbued with the Armour Attribute can withstand far greater damage than even the most sophisticated modern tactical armour. Rings and medallions can be empowered with other rituals, such as Flight and Invisibility.

The extrusion of magic into the Realm of Thought led to research into the development of rituals to create magical items that work on Earth. Thus far, they have not been very successful. This is because magic is completely alien to the Realm of Thought. Magical items crafted in our world require the blood of a Mage to even stabilise and they do not last long, often serving only as temporary talismans (see page 176) or as ammunition in techno-magic weapons. Like the abilities of the Dreamtouched, the powers of human-made talisman can only manifest if an Ashigath is within 50 metres.

In contrast, magical devices manufactured in the Realm of Nightmares will last indefinitely. Some of these powerful objects have found their way to Earth in the hands of the Ashigath and the Deathless. A few of these weapons were even built for humans, created for use by the Deathless. Because the Ashigath rituals differ from human magic, the items sometimes have magical effects that no human artefacts or spells can duplicate. This makes them all the more valuable. Most importantly, unlike human-crafted magical items, Nightmare magic items work all the time, whether or not an Ashigath is nearby.

Due to the timeless nature of the Demon War, there were Ashigath-crafted scattered throughout human history. Many legendary Items of Power — such as Arthur's sword Excalibur — may have actually been Ashigath-forged artefacts that a demon or Deathless abandoned or lost on Earth.

The following list includes notable or commonly found magical items.

Blade of Rumanjin

This jet black short sword is from the Realm of Nightmares.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	8	Item of Power
		• Reduction (Unstable, -1)
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
4	16	Special Attack "Blade of Rumanjin" (40 Damage, Burning, Drain Soul x3, Melee)

Final Cost: 8 Points

Wayfarer's Cloak

This cape/overcoat is enchanted to allow the user to survive in harsh environments. Often issued to Deathless soldiers as standard survival equipment, to help them survive in the Realm of Nightmares, the cloak is also useful on Earth as well.

Level	Points	Attribute
2	6	Item of Power
		• Reduction (Unstable, -1)
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
3	3	Adaptation (Cold, Heat, Noxious Gas)
1	3	Armour (Optimised vs. fire)

Final Cost: 6 Points

Liquid Armour

This enchanted suit of combat armour used by the Deathless may resemble a wide leather belt, thick armband, a glove, or a choker necklace, depending on the type, when not in use. Upon receiving a command word, the armour flows across the user's body, covering him or her in a dark shimmering suit of neck-to-toe armour. The armour also enhances the wearer's mobility.

Level	Points	Attribute
1	4	Item of Power
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
1	2	Armour (Optimised vs. raw magic, thin area)
1	2	Armour (Thin area)
1	1	Jumping

Final Cost: 4 Points

Demonslayer

The most common weapon issued to Deathless soldiers, this is a rune-carved sword or other melee weapon with enchantments similar to those described here.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	12	Item of Power
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
4	16	Special Attack "Demonslayer" (60 Damage, Muscle-Powered, Targeted: Ashigath with normal effect on non-Ashigath, Melee)

Final Cost: 12 points

Enris Hammer

This hammer (small warhammer) was supposedly crafted by the Shontog in the Realm of Nightmares.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	12	Item of Power
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
5	20	Special Attack "Enris Hammer" (100 Damage, Muscle-Powered, Quake once/day, Melee)

Final Cost: 12 points

Globe of Warning

This sphere becomes active when anyone from the other dimension is present. Thus, it will detect Ashigath in the Realm of Thought and humans visiting the Realm of Nightmares.

Level	Points	Attribute
1	2	Item of Power
		• Reduction (Unstable, -1)
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
1	6	Sixth Sense (Extradimensional beings, Area 5)
	-1	• Restriction (Limited information: glows brightly)

Final Cost: 2 Points

Meranaxa

This Katana, Short sword, or Greatsword is a special weapon of the Deathless, abut is lso used by many Ashigath.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	12	Item of Power
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
1	5	Sixth Sense (Area 4)
	-1	• Restriction (Limited information: glows brightly)
4	16	Special Attack "Meranaxa Strike" (60 Damage, Muscle-Powered, Targeted: Ashigath, with normal damage to non-Ashigath, Melee)

Final Cost: 12 Points





Nightmare's Bane

Only the Eskaton knows the rituals for the creation of this short sword from Realm of Thought.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	8	Item of Power
		• Reduction (Unstable, -1)

Level	Points	Item of Power Attributes
2	4	Massive Damage
	-1	• Restricted (Ashigath only)
4	16	Special Attack "Nightmare's Bane" (60 Damage, Muscle-Powered, Targeted: Ashigath with normal damage to non-Ashigath, Melee)

Final Cost: 8 Points

Paxim's Folly

This hammer (large warhammer) is from Realm of Nightmares.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	12	Item of Power

Level	Points	Item of Power Attributes
5	20	Special Attack "Paxim's Folly" (40 Damage, Accurate x2, Targeted: Malashi only)

Final Cost: 12 Points

Ring of Dreams

This Ring is made of Ashigath-enchanted silver from the Realm of Nightmares.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	16	Item of Power

Level	Points	Item of Power Attributes
5	5	Heightened Awareness
5	5	Mind Shield
1	6	Sixth Sense (Magic use; Area 5)

Final Cost: 16 Points

Ring of Invisibility

These uncommon silver rings are made of Ashigath alloys, and usually carved with various demonic runes. Variations include Sight-only, Telepathy-only, etc.

Level	Points	Attribute
3	9	Item of Power
		• Reduction (Unstable, -1)

Level	Points	Item of Power Attributes
5	15	Invisibility (Sight x2, Hearing x2, Infrared)

Final Cost: 9 Points

Sword of the Runners

These long sword are used by Ashigath warriors.

Level	Points	Attribute
6	18	Item of Power

Level	Points	Item of Power Attributes
4	16	Special Attack "Sword of the Runners" (20 Damage, Accurate, Muscle-Powered, Penetrating: Armour)
3	15	Speed
	-3	• Restriction (10 minutes/day)

Final Cost: 18 Points

Taligast's Amulet

This garish gem on thick gold chain looks very cheap and gaudy. One is found tossed in amongst unwanted goods by normal humans, but it originates from the Realm of Nightmares.

Level	Points	Attribute
4	16	Item of Power

Level	Points	Item of Power Attributes
4	12	Armour
1	6	Regeneration

Final Cost: 16 Points

Talismans: Crafting Temporary Magical Items

One way to get around the limitation on creating magic items in the Realm of Thought is to empower them with the life force of the Mage. In essence, the Mage transfers a portion of his or her power into an object, and then gives that object as a gift to another person, or keeps it for his or her own use. Such an Item is known as a "talisman."

To create a talisman, the Mage must have Item of Power as one of the Attributes in his or her Power Flux (Limited Point Exchange). By taking the usual Duration Reversed period to place some of his or her Flux Points into the Item of Power and making a successful Soul-based Occult (Ritual Magic) Skill Check, the Mage creates the Item. The Mage can only add Attributes to the Item of Power that he or she can already use as part of his or her Power Flux (Limited Point Exchange). This ritual transforms whatever focus the mage uses in casting his or her spell into an enchanted Item that can be used by the mage or given to someone else. The Item will last until the Mage changes his or her Flux Points to no longer support the Item, or until the Item is destroyed. There is one disadvantage: if someone else takes the Item, he or she can use it until the Mage takes the time to "depower" it — that is, spends the Reversed Duration to use his or her Power Flux Attribute. In fact, even if the talisman is destroyed, the Mage will not have access to the Flux Points supporting the item until he or she spends the Reversed Duration

In addition to the object — whose nature must have an appropriate mystical resonance (such as clothing for a protective ability, or a weapon for a Special Attack) — creating a talisman requires a small amount of the caster's blood as a component (1 Health Point per Level of the Item of Power).

As with other Dreamtouched magic, the Item will suffer from the same limitation as other Dreamtouched powers acquired through Alternate Form (Dreamtouched): it will only function within 50 metres of an Ashigath.

Example: *Alex the Mage (with loyal Ashigath Raxankashi Ivan nearby, to ensure his Dreamtouched power functions) wishes to create a powerful magical protection for his twin sister, Anya, who is an awakened Tank, about to go into battle. His repertoire of ritual magic — from Power Flux — includes Force Field and Regeneration. He settles on the notion of a "cap of protection." Finding a cap for her favourite baseball team (which has a mystic resonance to Anya), he uses his Power Flux to transfer 16 of his available 35 Flux Points to create an Item of Power Level 4. Alex takes a minute to perform the ritual and loses 4 Health Points in the process from the blood required. (This also required an Occult Skill Check; if he had failed, he would have had to try again after spending another minute and more blood.) This Item now can contain any of his Attributes worth up to 20 Points (5 per Level of the Item of Power). In this case he gives it Regeneration Level 1 (6 Points) and Force Field Level 3 (Area 2) (14 Points). As long as Anya wears the cap, she can use the Regeneration and Armour as if she had these Attributes. If she loses or removes the cap, she does not benefit from it, and she only benefits from it when she does have the cap when she is within 50 metres of an Ashigath, and so long as Alex does not de-power the Item by taking a minute to perform another ritual and redistribute the Flux points again (which will unbind the ritual).*

Technology

While magic is a cornerstone of the fight against the Ashigath, so is technology. Human technology may well be the key to the eventual expulsion of the demonic invasion. The Ashigath living in the Realm of Nightmares had never seen devices as complex as the commonplace technologies of early 21st century Earth; the technology level of the Nightmare realm is roughly equivalent to that of Dark Age Europe. Although a strong sword or well-placed spell is often the most reliable way to kill a demon, bullets — when "enriched" by ritual magic — can be surprisingly deadly. Modern technology allows the defenders of humankind to communicate, share intelligence, monitor the enemy, and more, all without worrying about needing an Ashigath nearby.

At the same time, some of the more clever Ashigath — particularly the type known as "Makers" — have recognised the potential power offered by technology, and have begun the process of adapting various effective tools and weapons for their own use. In some cases, they've gone so far as to engineer take-overs of corporate or governmental organisations with the goal of securing control of key technological developments. Ashigath-adapted technologies are gradually filtering into the Realm of Nightmares, transforming the ongoing war between the Devourers and the Dissectors.

Technology and Magic

The symbiosis between technology and magic is stunningly powerful. Enchanted bullets can tear through the flesh of lesser Ashigath, and the mighty PAW-3 can devastate all but the most powerful demons. As human Mages learn more about the nature of magic, they are better able to integrate various Attributes into standard sensory or communication devices. The research labs of Section 21 and the ACD are centres of development for cutting-edge mixtures of high tech and powerful magic.

The primary weakness is that techno-magic Items created on Earth are unstable and must be periodically replaced or they are made from Ashigath-enchanted alloys which can be difficult to come by. A technomage might be able to melt down an Ashigath sword to recast it into a warhead or bullet, but the Ashigath whose sword is being used is unlikely to co-operate.

M198 Anti-Demon Assault Rifle

The ADAR is a bullpup configuration short-barrelled .50-calibre battle rifle that can fire either normal armour piercing or special enchanted "Salem 3" bullets that are filled with a magical silver-phosphorous incendiary compound enhanced to torments the Ashigath. The weapon comes with a gyrostabilised harness to control its recoil and a plug-in computerised targeting visor and ear piece that not only provides night vision but also features a near-sentient tactical advisor that can analyse opponents' weaknesses, always using the voice of a deceased loved one or mentor. It uses Guns (Rifle) Skill.

M198

Level	Points	Attribute
4	12	Item of Power
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
1	1	Features (Night Vision)
3	3	Combat Technique (Accurate, Judge Opponent, Steady Hand)
3	12	Special Attack "Salem 3 Ammo" (Damage 40, Burning, Targeted: Ashigath, normal damage to others, Limited Shots x2: 3 shots)
1	1	Special Attack (Damage 20, Penetrating: Armour, Limited Shots: 6 shots)

Final Cost: 12 Points

PAW-3

The PAW-3 (Powered Anti-paranormal Weapon, Model 3) is typical of the latest generation of hybrid magical weaponry in use by government groups: a rocket launcher firing a rune-carved guided missile with a magic-boosted ectoplasmic explosive and cold-iron and silver cladding to provide shrapnel. Individual rockets feel oddly warm to the touch, and buzz softly, like a muted hive of hornets. When launched, they shriek toward their targets, circling and returning for another try if they miss. They detonate in a spherical ball of violet flame rather than a normal blast. Use Heavy Weapons (Launcher) Skill to fire it.

PAW-3

Level	Points	Attribute
3	9	Item of Power
Level	**Points**	**Item of Power Attributes**
1	1	Feature (Night Vision sight)
3	12	Special Attack "Enchanted rocket" (Damage 60, Area Effect, Homing, Targeted: Ashigath, affects others, Backblast, Limited Uses x2: 3 shots, Static)

Final Cost: 9 Points

Living the Nightmare

I kept expecting to get a visit from some old British guy in an overcoat and floppy hat, or maybe a tweed suit, or something equally awful. I kept hoping that someone would show up and tell me what the hell was going on, to explain that I was the Chosen One or the Last Best Hope for Earth or something like that. Instead, about six months that first weird lizard demon guy showed up and did whatever he did to me, a couple of American women show up on motorcycles, apologise for being late, give me a business card — a freaking business card! — and ask if I have any questions, but make it quick, they're running late.

Life in the world of the Nightmare Chronicles can be a strange experience. The majority of the world's population continues to live, work and play as if nothing unusual is going on. They may have fears about the world, but they are fears of human-scale events. None of them would believe that they were actually living in the midst of an ongoing, bloody war between magically empowered humans and demons from another dimension. Because of the effects of the Veil, none of them could believe it.

This means that, for the Dreamtouched, life is a precarious balance between fighting off the demonic monsters that threaten the world and going about one's everyday human existence. Outside of the government agencies, demon

hunting doesn't actually generate an income. Some of the Dreamtouched may be fortunate to come from wealthy backgrounds, but most will need to figure out how to pay the bills. A few of the Dreamtouched may be tempted to use their powers to take what they need from other humans, becoming in the process just another predator.

Seeing the Bigger Picture

Depending upon where they reside, and what organisations they may be in contact with, the adventurers may know very little or quite a bit about what's going on around them. Prior to being awakened, they, like most people, thought that what they were taught in school about the world was more or less factual. They may have had flash-visions of a world which looked much different — seeing video of a demonic creatures breathing fire on a city street half a world away instead of video of a car bomb — but they had convinced themselves that what everyone else said about the world was true. It had to be.

If the adventurers are newly awakened, they may be forced to determine what is real and what is a dream on their own, making numerous mistakes along the way. If the game begins with the characters belonging to an organisation, there will be less emphasis on discovering the basic facts of life and more on exposing — and clearing out — those parts of the world the Ashigath have infested. The organisation to which the adventuring team belongs can dole out knowledge as needed, secure that it understands what is really going on in the world.

The History of the Universe (Abridged)

"Everything we know about the universe: physics, astronomy, religion, biology, themind — it's all wrong. There's really no way of denying that, now. But the hell of it is, we've got nothing yet to take its place. I trust the books the Dissectors have given us about as much as I trust the government — that is, not at all."

—Larry Murdoch, Nighthunter, Tacoma, Washington

Such organisations can be wrong, of course. The Dissectors who work with the humans have not revealed everything about the Realm of Nightmares and its link with humankind, and not everything they have said is true. The Ashigath are insidious and powerful, and have infiltrated numerous demon-hunting groups, weakening them from within, spreading disinformation.

Most of the following details about the history of the connection between the Realm of Thought and the Realm of Nightmares are known, at least broadly, by the top human researchers at Eskaton, as well as by a handful of others. The picture — detailed in some places, sketchy in others — of the history of the Realm of Nightmares and its relationship to our own world is not flattering to the Dissectors, and it gives little cause for hope. Some of the sources are the texts of the Dissectors (although those are treated with extreme scepticism), while other sources are captured demons induced to tell of the world they come from. A small but critical portion of the story emerged from journeys made by humans from our own Realm to the Realm of Nightmares — journeys very few manage to survive.

The Realm of Nightmares is known as "Gathi" in the language of its residents, meaning "the place of the pure" (Ashigath means "pure ones"); in contrast, the Ashigath call the Realm of Thought "Thoki," or "the corrupted place" (humans are sometimes referred to as "Ashithok"). While humans justifiably see the Ashigath as beings of evil and chaos, Ashigath supposedly view humans and human culture as base and unclean. The Dissectors claim that our universe and theirs are magically linked by nightmares. Just as their Realm is the source of our nightmares, our world is the nightmare world for the demons, in particular for the Sleeping Lords. Or so the Ashigath say.

The Realm of Nightmares exists in a universe parallel to our own. Its laws of physics differ from ours in a number of ways, particularly regarding time; unlike our own world, the Realm of Nightmares does not manifest as planets and stars, but as an apparently endless flat plane. The tricky nature of Nightmare time and space allows an unending expanse that nonetheless has a true centre — the Broken Maze, the massive citadel of the Sleeping Lords. The Incubata, a magic barrier keeping the two Realms apart, allowed only the jumbled and ambiguous link of dreams to connect the inhabitants of the two Realms.

Do all dreams come from the Realm of Nightmares?

This was one of the first questions asked of the Dissectors. The answer is no, not all. A tiny number of dreams are nightmares from the other Realm forced (due to the dreamer's will or sheer luck) to "behave themselves." A somewhat larger number comes from waking-world interactions with the Dreamtouched; sometimes personal contact with a Dreamtouched individual triggers a deep psychic response, which leads to vivid dreams. A less pleasant variation on this is when an non-Dreamtouched person encounters an Ashigath: because of the effects of the Veil, the resulting dreams are the mind working overtime to construct an acceptable version of reality for the dreamer. Fortunately, the majority of dreams dreamt by humankind arise due to the entirely natural biological processes described by neuroscientists.

The Sleeping Lords and the Dissector Rebellion

The Sleeping Lords have ruled the Realm of Nightmare for all of recorded history (or, in the words of one of the Dissectors' texts, "since time before time"). Whether this amounts to tens, hundreds, or thousands of thousands of years is subject to debate — the passage of time in the Nightmare Realm is too disjointed for human accounting.

Eskaton has managed to assemble very little detailed information about the Sleepers themselves. They are known to be immense beings, slumbering in kilometres-long vaults. No human (nor, as far as Eskaton can determine, any Ashigath) has ever seen the true faces of the Sleeping Lords. When the Sleepers appear (usually only in the dreams of the dying, according to Ashigath legend) they manifest as tall and slender humanoid beings with the faces of the dreamer sewn onto their own as masks.

The Oracles and the Devourers

Two distinct forms of Ashigath carry out the rule of the Sleeping Lords: the Oracles and the Devourers. The Oracles are the voices of the Sleeping Lords. Few in numbers, they nonetheless wield great influence, as they are the only Ashigath privy to the desires and edicts of the Sleepers. The Oracles live within the Broken Maze, never venturing beyond its walls.

The Devourers, conversely, no longer set foot within the citadel, but roam throughout the Realm of Nightmares (and, now, the Realm of Thought), carrying out the orders of the Oracles. They are traditionally armed with a wickedly curved steel blade and a bag (to carry the heads of those they've killed), although some Devourers on Earth have adopted more modern weaponry. Deadly and frightening, the Devourers act as both shock troops and spies, enforcing the will of the Sleeping Lords and stamping out rebellion.

The Dissectors

Rebellion has long been a fact of life in the Realm of Nightmares, but no civil war has been as successful as that of the Dissectors, led by the Blood-Wizard Meranus.

Of the various types of Ashigath, the Dissectors are the most attuned to the ways of magic. Physically weak, they nonetheless held prominent positions in Ashigath society as scholars and Mages. The Dissectors accumulated knowledge like the most precious of treasures, and would frequently mount

expeditions to unexplored reaches of the Realm to gather more. Alone among the Ashigath, the Dissectors knew of the Incubata and the possible existence a Realm of Thought lay beyond it.

Meranus

The greatest of the Dissectors, Meranus was the Mage-general of the armies of the Sleepers, widely believed to be the most powerful wielder of magic aside from the Sleeping Lords, even, according to most fervent supporters, more powerful than even the Sleepers. For centuries, he obeyed the Oracles and lent his power to the Devourers; entire races of Ashigath who sought to escape the reach of the Sleeping Lords were wiped out by Meranus's magic. Over time, Meranus grew troubled.

Unlike most Dissectors, Meranus enjoyed combat, and would often ride with the Devourers and the armies of the Sleeping Lords to put down rebellious provinces. As a result, Meranus bore witness to the deaths of Ashigath with great frequency. Meranus came to realise that he had not in some time seen evidence of the Sleepers visiting the death-dreams of the soldiers. While never a common event, such visits had signs that a trained Mage could spot; Meranus hadn't seen any such signs in many battles.

Meranus began to quietly investigate whether any other battle-Mages had seen signs of the death-dreams, and began to listen closely to the pronouncements of the Oracles. Soon Meranus became convinced that the Sleepers were silent, and had been for ages upon ages. The assertions made by the Oracles of the desires of the Sleeping Lords were nothing more than the Oracles seeking to further their own power.

Meranus called together the canniest of the Dissectors, and told them of his conclusions. After many debates, they decided that it was time for the Oracles to be overthrown, and for the Dissectors to stand as rulers of the Ashigath until the Sleeping Lords decided to return. Cautiously and in great secrecy, the Dissectors sought out allies in order to launch their own rebellion.

The World-Bender

Meranus knew that the rebellion would eventually be put down like all the others before it, unless he found some way to change the balance of power. Aware of Dissector lore about the other Realm, Thoki, he calculated that an army of beings from outside the world of the Ashigath could tip things his way. While the other Dissectors sought to build a coalition against the Oracles, Meranus searched for a way to pierce the Incubata.

Eventually, he discovered it: an ancient machine called the Agsugon ("World-Bender"). One of the very few artefacts reputed to predate the Sleeping Lords, the resting-place of the Agsugon lay out beyond the deepest reaches of the Devourers; it took Meranus decades to find the archaic machine. Dissector lore holds that the Agsugon was guarded by four beings of a kind Meranus had never seen before, who told him that to use the machine would be to invite his own doom, and the doom of his entire world. Ignoring this warning, Meranus defeated the guardians after a difficult battle and claimed his prize.

Returning to the Dissector stronghold with the Agsugon, Meranus called forth the magics needed to power the machine. Carefully, cautiously, he used the machine to open a small breach in the Incubata. He then used ancient Dissector rituals to retrieve from the other Realm an army of its most powerful warriors.

Meranus was unprepared for what appeared. It was an army but not a unified force. What appeared was a diverse collection of thousands of soldiers from vastly different lands and, as the Dissectors later learned, from vastly different eras. All were terribly confused. Meranus was confused himself, for the beings from the other Realm, who called themselves humans, were identical in form to the four guardians of the Agsugon.

Meranus's imported human warriors, who would later become known as the Deathless, came from throughout human history: the earliest days of Babylon; the Classical ages of Greece, Rome, and Egypt; Ancient China and the Mongol steppes; Medieval Europe; the Napoleonic era; World War I; World War II; the modern age; World War III (in 2048); the Posthuman Wars (in 2112). As far as the Dissectors who worked with Meranus knew, the Blood Wizard placed no limits on the origin of his soldier, in space or time. Eskaton, ACD, Section 21, and other more research-oriented demon fighting groups consider the lack of humans retrieved subsequent to 2112 a worrisome, if distant, fact.

The Breaking of the Incubata

The humans pulled through by the Agsugon had powers in the Realm of Nightmares unlike anything they possessed in their home Realm and they proved a terrible and mighty force on the battlefield. The Dissectors and their handful of allies fought alongside the human army, driving the Devourers and their allies back into the Broken Maze. At the moment of Meranus's victory, the Oracles finally acted.

Over time, the Oracles had managed to bind the Sleeping Lords, and had crafted rituals to channel their power through the Oracles themselves. Although the Dissectors were considered the most talented in the ways of magic among the Ashigath, the Oracles were more than their equals when backed with the might of the Sleepers. The Dissectors watched in horror as the human army disappeared in a burst of darkness. The Oracles, backed with the power of the Sleepers, shoved the humans back to their own Realm, intending to then turn on the Dissectors.

While Meranus had carefully opened a temporary gateway through the Incubata, the Oracles, drunk on power, had simply blown a hole. They did not know — or care — what the repercussions might be. They only cared that the human army would be removed.

The Incubata was damaged and began to shatter. Ashigath from both sides of the civil war began to disappear, pulled through the barrier between Realms as though by a whirlwind. As the Dissectors later learned, just as the human warriors had been pulled from different times and places, so too were the Ashigath scattered across every human civilisation throughout history. When the storm passed, tens of thousands of Ashigath — perhaps even more — had been pulled through to Earth.

While Meranus was not snatched away by the dimensional storm, he was severely injured by its passing. Weakened, he was captured by a troop of Devourers investigating the disappearance of so many Ashigath, and dragged in front of the Oracles in chains. His skin now decorates the floor of the Oracular Hall. Some Ashigath claim that the Oracles have kept Meranus alive, despite his flaying, and that he is subject to unrelenting torture.

The Ongoing Rebellion

Their human soldiers gone and a significant portion of their own forces missing, the Dissectors quickly retreated from the citadel of the Sleeping Lords. This did not mark the end of the uprising. Other Ashigath, those who had ignored the Dissector entreaties and hidden from the Devourer press-gangs, saw an opportunity to overthrow the dominion of the Oracles and put themselves into power. Within a short time, five different factions were fighting each other for the right to rule the Realm of Nightmares.

Although the Oracles still claim the mantle of the Sleeping Lords, rumours fill the Realm that the Sleepers have now fallen silent even for the Oracles. It is also said that the expenditure of magic required to send the human army back to Earth broke the link the Oracles had to their masters. The Oracles deny that such a fracture occurred, but the relative lack of battlefield success for the Oracles' forces since the Battle of the Broken Plains suggests otherwise. At present, the Oracles and their remaining Devourer minions still control the citadel of the Sleepers, but are weak everywhere else in the Realm.

Neither are the Dissectors dominant. The loss of Meranus and the scattering of so many of their forces greatly weakened the position of the rebellious demons. The Dissectors retreated back to their hidden sanctuaries to plot their next moves, still dedicated to the goal of eliminating the Oracles.

The faction widely considered the most powerful is the force calling itself Ka'katla Tun, or Acid Blade. The core of the movement is an elite Devourer assault group. Its leader triad, after witnessing the disappearance of much of the Sleeping Lords' military power because of the actions of the Oracles, declared

that the Oracular Counsel had lost its legitimacy, and that true followers of the Sleepers should move against the Oracles. At least a third of the Devourers remaining in the Realm of Nightmares have defected to the army of the Acid Blade. Ka'katla Tun partisans most aggressively spread the persistent rumours that the Oracles have lost their links to the Sleeping Lords.

Nearly as powerful are the Shontog, an army of Ashigath long exiled to the farthest reaches of the Realm. Shontog legends claim that they came into being alongside the Sleeping Lords, but were driven to the edges of the Realm when they refused to bow down in obedience. Most Ashigath — Devourer and Dissector alike — consider the Shontog to be heretics. The Shontog claim that their goal is to destroy the Oracles and awaken the Sleepers in order to determine who truly should rule the Realm.

The last of the five warring factions is a small force calling itself Tholinar, or the "Unified Way." (Its opponents regularly refer to it as Thokinar, the "corrupted way.") Tholinar is something new to the Realm: a religious movement. The Unified Way claims that the existence of the Realm of Thought is proof that the Sleeping Lords did not create the world, and that the blending of the two Realms will result in the creation of the real world. Tholinar includes amongst its members a wide variety of Ashigath types, and even a small (but growing) number of humans brought over in the time since the breach of the barrier. Alone among the factions, Tholinar seeks to eliminate the Incubata entirely; the others, for now, consider the opening of the barrier a secondary concern.

Passing Between Worlds

The hole in the Incubata opened by Meranus was, in magical terms, quite small and controlled, pulling only a few thousand humans from their home Realm to the Realm of Nightmares. The breach opened by the magic of the Oracles is something else entirely: a shattered, gaping wound in the barrier, stretching thousands of years into the past and decades into the future. The flow of energy from the Realm of Nightmare to the Realm of Thought remains strong, although not nearly as violent as in the moments after the Oracles' ritual. As a result, travel from the Nightmare Realm to Earth is relatively easy, given the right magic, while travel from Earth back to the world of Nightmares is far more difficult.

From the perspective of the Ashigath remaining in the Nightmare Realm, the breach of the Incubata and the disappearance of more than a million soldiers and slaves happened the equivalent of a few years ago. Most Ashigath are not even fully aware of what happened; only the Dissectors regularly travel between the two worlds. Early stories that the Oracles had killed a million Ashigath helped to foment greater rebellion against the rulers, but have since been undercut by the appearance of humans working with the Tholinar movement.

Dissectors and the Oracles are known to have the necessary magical abilities to cross readily between Realms; Tholinar evidently has the capacity, as well. The Devourers of the Acid Blade do not, but are now seeking knowledge of the rituals. The Shontog may have sufficient magical power, but have expressed no interest at all in the Incubata, humans, or Earth, and there are no known Shontog in the Realm of Thought.

Gateways from the Realm of Nightmare to the Realm of Thought can be opened from either side, and can even appear spontaneously, if briefly. In every case, the passage is strictly one-way, although the gateway can be held open (through the concentration of the spell-caster) for an extended period, allowing significant numbers to pass through. Ritual gateways link roughly equivalent points in history — they don't appear to allow time travel — but the temporary natural portals can link points in the timelines of the two Realms that are widely separated on our calendar. Natural gateways last for about a week, then close. No two natural gates have ever been observed to appear in the same spot. At any given moment, three or four natural portals will be open somewhere on Earth.

Moving from Earth to the demonic world requires a much more elaborate ritual. A naturally occurring temporary gateway (from Nightmare to Earth) must be found and "locked," a time-consuming and easily disrupted ritual. Once it has been held open, the ritual of reversal — also time-consuming and easily disrupted — alters the flow of energy, allowing transit to the Realm of Nightmare. The ritual of reversal has a single key component: blood of a Half-blood Dreamtouched human, in quantities about equal to that contained in a single adult. It is possible for a Half-blood, over time, to siphon off enough blood to power the ritual; most Ashigath adopt the simpler approach, draining a Half-blood Dreamtouched all at once, killing the unfortunate Half-blood on the spot.

Unlike the gateways used to travel to Earth, portals from our Realm to the Realm of Nightmare collapse after a single use (allowing, at most, five or six human-sized entities to pass). As a result, both the blood of Half-blood Dreamtouched and access to natural gateways are highly sought-after by the Ashigath. Numerous battles have been fought over the control of a natural gateway; on more than one occasion, the fight lasted long enough that the gateway collapsed, and none of the warring parties were able to use the gateway for a ritual of reversal.

Running the Setting

GMs can take a variety of approaches to the Nightmare Chronicles setting. "Dark and gritty" is easy to do, with the relentless guerrilla war between the humans and demons, and the grim realisation that this may be humanity's final hour. The setting also lends itself readily to a "modern horror" theme, with the horrific experiments of the Dissectors, the bloodthirsty Devourers, and heroes who are as unnatural as the beings they fight.

Many games will take on a "crypts and monsters in the 21st century" feel, as the small team of mighty heroes — armed with spells and swords — hunt down the demonic creatures living underground or deep in the wilderness. While gold coins may no longer be common, magic items are definitely worth discovering, and the modern era offers its own varieties of treasure. This approach offers opportunities for recreating classic adventuring moments in modern dress, exchanging horses for off-road vehicles, piles of coins for bundles of unmarked bills, and magic wands for enchanted shotguns.

A less traditional — but no less adventurous — approach is the "perky young hero" concept, where the Dreamtouched characters are teens just coming into their own, in a city or town well removed from the larger struggles of the Nightmare war. Demons and magic and shadowy combat are still central to the story, but so are concerns about dating, college, and local football rivalries.

Adventuring in the Nightmare Chronicles: Adventure Seeds

The Dissectors have long refused to say why the Ashigath fear the Sleeping Lords awakening. ACD leadership proposes a survey team head into the Realm of Nightmares and try to capture an Oracle for interrogation.

An orphaned Half-blood girl living in the care of an Infused uncle goes missing just before her 14th birthday. Fearing the worst, the Dreamtouched investigators use every tool at their disposal to track her down quickly, only to have her turn up in Yun Carnas a week later, escorting a renegade Dissector known for his disregard towards humanity and his unusual ritual spells. He claims that she is his willing apprentice, but word reaches the group that he is actually planning a return back to the Realm of Nightmares, and intends to drain her blood once she Awakens.

The Deathless general Osa Khan is said to have brought with him from the Realm of Nightmares a wealth of Dissector books and magical items. Khan has been missing for centuries, captured by a Tolonkashi; his body relentlessly torn to bits and burned as it slowly regenerates. He must be recovered and magically healed, in order to find the whereabouts of his still-undiscovered treasure. He will be utterly insane, of course, and the Fire Demon will be quite a challenge.

The World at Twilight

Forrest cursed. It should have been a simple task to retrieve his client's stolen property. That's not how it had worked out.

She'd wandered into his office at an hour in the morning where he wasn't generally known for brilliance, and demanded he help her. He should have realised then that this was no mundane retrieval. The little old lady had seemed nice enough but the item stolen had been an apple. An apple crafted from gold, emeralds and rubies, no less. There'd even been a stepdaughter. At the time the affair had seemed simple: a matter of greed or revenge, perhaps both, tempered with a healthy amount of avarice. He'd fallen for her story; a prized heirloom kept in the family for generations and a disputed will. The apple had been stolen by Felicity, the jealous stepdaughter, after her father died. In any event, it didn't much matter to him; the old lady had clear title to the apple, so he'd taken the case.

He snorted in disgust at his own gullibility. Apples, old ladies, and stepdaughters. How could he have missed it? Now here he was, roaring across the city on a stolen bike, fleeing three minions of Camper Wallace, transporting what he suspected was a powerful magical artefact — or at least one of great significance. This was definitely not one of his better days. He gunned the bike, increasing his speed.

This was going to be trouble, and he knew it. In the past, he'd been careful to never run afoul of Wallace's goons, but he'd known it was only a matter of time. He'd heard the rumours: the collector was trying to round up all the city's fables and legends for his own dark purposes. Given the persistence of his pursuers, the detective could well believe it.

A glance over his shoulder revealed the three thugs were still on his trail. He needed a better idea, since he wasn't going to shake them. He increased his speed further, heading for an underpass, where a certain acquaintance of his lived.

It was good to be friends with the troll who lived under the bridge.

The Return of Legend

Everyone grows up hearing the legends. They learn about the man who could cut an entire forest down with a single swing of his axe, the princess who was poisoned by the apple, tended to as she lay in magical slumber by a collection of small folk, and the half-divine man who was tested by his wicked stepmother and cast into the underworld. In deep, dark places lurks the beast that grows two heads for every head severed, the bull-headed warrior who guards a maze littered with the bones of his victims, çand the joker-god who was chained spread-eagled to a stone slab as punishment for his trickery.

Everyone grows up hearing the legends, but no one expected they could be true. Only in fairie tales, in stories that are told to coax children to sleep, or written down to amaze and amuse, do such things as magic men, leprechauns, and big bad wolves exist. The stories were present in everyone's lives, in entertainment and advertising, on television and in books, but no one really believed they were based in reality.

Neither did the legends themselves. They only knew a world of plot, magic, and ether, existing in a timeless state, reliving their stories again and again, each time for the first time. Then came the destruction of Yggdrasil. Now dreams, legends and reality have begun to mingle, creating a world where Cinderella and Freya might attend the same high school dance; a world of skyscrapers and werewolves; a place where the imaginary lurks behind a façade of the mundane.

When Yggdrasil was destroyed, only a few noticed the slow return of magic. The first shockwave opened the door for the most well known of legends, then following on their heels came the inhabitants of lesser known stories, and finally those who were rarely spoken of.

It has been a mere five years since the tree's destruction, yet some occult observers have already noticed distinct patterns in the sequence of appearances of mythical archetypes and legendary beings into our world.

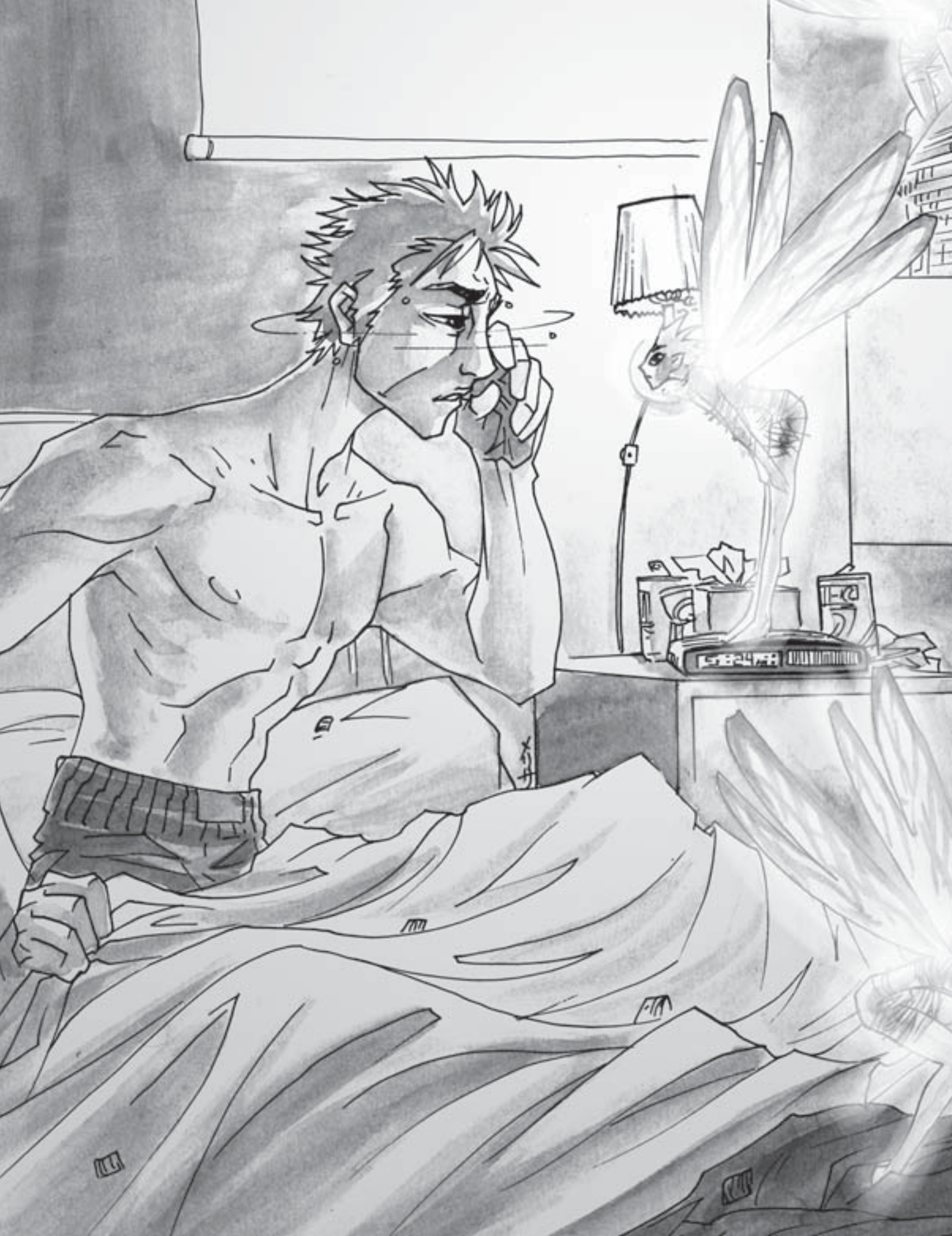
First came the Fables. Beauty, Prince Charming, Snow White, Rapunzel and Little Two Eyes all gazed in confusion upon a world they had never before seen. Their stories had been transformed, leaving them in varying states of bewilderment as they searched for their companions, the counterparts they required to finish their tales and return home to their more familiar environs. Fables are driven more strongly than many of the latter arrivals, and have considerable ability to overcome whatever setbacks may threaten to prevent the completion of their tales, but they all suffer from varying degrees of confusion.

Then came the legends. Thor manifested on a busy street intersection that had been closed to traffic while a burly construction worker dug deep into the pavement with his jackhammer. Penthesileia survived her awakening but a few moments, stealing her killer's heart away with her gaze, even as he struck her down. Legends often have unhappy endings, and they have trouble resisting the temptations of modern life, but the haze that hinders many of the Fables does not plague them. Their stories are both eternal and ever changing, and Legends are more than able to adapt to a new world.

The last to arrive were the miscellany, the legendary creatures, the nightmares, and the modern myths. Goblins crept into the world, in the company of pixies and imps. Elvis was spotted in trains and parks across the world, ghosts were seen, and elephantine children were born. Divers were found dead in treetops after conflagrations, sucked from the lakes where they swam by Grumman airtankers, dying as they and the water around them were dropped on conflagrations. Other fables slipped into modern life as easily as any mundane person might, finding corners to hide in, or a nine to five job to pay the bills.

Magic is returning, slowly and subtly. Some who know the truth often struggle to keep it a secret from the public. Who knows what damage could be done if everyone knew of its return? Practising witches tremble at the thought the Burning Times, when inquisitors stalked the lands. Others shiver at the thought of what horrors might be conjured, what dark creatures might come hunting if the sudden abundance of magic were to be handled without care. In the same spirit that leads to labels warning that candied peanuts "may contain nuts" they utter dire warnings that people should not be trusted with true power. The more malevolent creatures are pleased with such concealment; it is easier to work mischief when your victims don't believe in your existence.

The branch of the Second World, the world of magic is slowly consumed to repair our world, the world of creativity. The fire was five years ago, but the process is still ongoing today.





The World at Twilight

The World at Twilight is the story of a city at the centre of an expanding mystical convergence, an intermingling of reality where the boundaries between our world and the Second World — where stories live — have frayed. The creatures of myth and legend are being reincarnated into waking life, to play out their timeless tales among the city streets, and magic has begun to appear. Most of the citizens of the city are still unaware of what is happening, but a few have some inkling of what is happening and are trying to understand or exploit it. Self-appointed guardians struggle to keep the awakened powers from wreaking havoc among the citizens. Most do not realise how serious the problem is ... for magic does not belong, and is a symptom of the wound done to the world. If the ripples of power and fable spread from the city, both worlds, ours and the Second World, risk falling into new dark ages. For now, it is at twilight.

With some modifications, this city could be any place in the western world. For simplicity, it is assumed to be somewhere in the United States. The city's name is up to the Game Master — with a few changes to the details, it might be the GM's hometown, or the nearest mid-size city.

All Things Great and Small

The tree took root quickly, thriving in the soil of its new home, becoming the symbol it had been intended to be. After its planting, it was a common sight to see families picnicking beneath the shade of its spreading limbs, young lovers meeting to exchange vows of devotion, and children playing and laughing. Tourists began trickling into the city to gaze upon it, and although few noted this, after the planting of the Millennium Tree, the city itself began to revive. Conventions began to meet there, bringing new economic growth to the metropolis, and crime rates declined. It was as though the city had moved into spring, and was enjoying all the new growth that comes after winter ends.

Ashes, Ashes

The call came in early on a Thursday afternoon. There was a fire at Atkinson Park. It had already consumed the north yard and was moving west. Police Chief Valkan was quoted hours after the blaze died as saying, "This was a wicked act. Whoever is responsible will be caught and punished to the full extent of the law."

There were only a few witnesses who saw the initial stages of the fire. Everyone who was questioned said the same thing, "I just saw it shoot up, like a fireball. It happened really fast. No, I didn't see anyone near the tree."

It took the fire department over 45 minutes to contain and extinguish the fire. There was, of course, extensive property damage. Acres of grassland and wooded areas were gone. Two dogs died in the fire. One homeless woman, narcotised by liquor, was consumed alive by the blaze while she dozed on one of the park benches. A family picnic area and most of its fixed structures were gone.

The Millennium Tree was destroyed, leaving only a grey, sooty mound of ash to mark where it had stood.

Although no humans realised it at the time, while the physical body of the tree was gone, save for some unseen roots, it left behind it a subtle, intangible wound in our reality. Through this weak spot, something dark and wonderful, chaotic and pure, would grow, silent and unseen, into our mundane world, bringing with it change and possibility. This something was magic.

Newsreel: Our Roots – The Planting of the Millennium Tree

As it fades from black, the camera's focus is on Marc Curie, local reporter for GFT23, the local Newstrade affiliate. Marc runs his fingers through his hair as he scans the crowd behind him. He waves his freshly manicured hand at them and a few fans cheer. Hundreds of people, young and old, have gathered today to hear Mayor Procop's address and to witness the unveiling of the Millennium Tree. Receiving his cue from Stacy, his field producer, Marc turns to face the camera and, finger on his earpiece, he begins to speak:

"Hello and good morning, everyone. Marc Curie here, live at Atkinson Park where, as you can see, hundreds of people have gathered to witness the unveiling of a tree. Not just any tree, mind you, but a very special tree. A tree that will not only provide us with beauty and give birds a place to rest their wings, but one that will stand as a symbol of unity and pride for the rest of our time. It will be a symbol of our city, a community that has admittedly taken quite a few hits lately, politically and socially, but one that will continue to strive and survive because, like a tree, our roots are strong and our branches are ever-extended toward a sky of clear blue hope that is dotted with fluffy clouds of love and trust. That love, like the bark of a tree, will protect us and keep us warm, no matter what the seasons may bring."

Dark hardwood seats encircle the tree, concealed by a light blue tarpaulin bearing the city's crest. A podium stands in front of it. From behind Marc, council members and city elders take their seats around the tree. After a short wait, the crowd erupts into applause as the city anthem begins and the mayor's entourage begins its procession towards the main attraction.

Marc perks up. "Here's Mayor Dimitrios Procop, now, making his way to the podium. As you can see, he's shaking hands with noted city benefactor and Pulitzer-winning poet, Norris Woden. Further down we can see a man who has been making headlines in recent weeks, business magnate Camper Wallace. Mayor Procop has reached the podium."

The camera pans to focus on Mayor Procop, who is adjusting his tie and smiling a tight-lipped, pale-faced smile.

"Good people of the city, good morning and welcome to what is, to me, a big first step in a very long journey we have taken together." The mayor pauses to allow the crowd time to applaud. "When I took office three years ago, I promised to make our city the best city in the world. I feel we have taken great strides towards that goal and I ask that you allow me the privilege of continuing to lead you into the new millennium and beyond." Another swell of adulation waves through the crowd. The mayor looks on, beaming. "As a symbol of our past, present, and future, it is my honour to unveil to you, this morning, the city's new symbol of pride, endurance, and growth. I give you the Millennium Tree."

The tarpaulin falls away to reveal a twelve-foot tall ash. The crowd erupts into applause, people stand up to cheer, and the mayor beams a smile that cuts his face from ear to ear.

"This certainly is a beautiful specimen. The mayor's office has informed us that it is a very rare breed of ash that, while not native to our area, is native to a climate and soil very much like our own." Marc squints at the tree for a moment before Mayor Procop addresses the crowd again, this time with a gold plaque in his hand.

"The inscription on this plaque reads: 'Neither as strong nor as tall/ Neither as tough nor as bright/am I as the oldest tree/but be here I shall/ when the final clock thrums/A victor over all adversity.' An original Norris Woden there. Norris, we thank you for your words. May this city, like this tree, stand for all eternity."

Yggdrasil

Two kinds of world existed, one of logic, thought, and reality, and another, more numerous, of magic, myth and legend. The second kind of world was fed by the imaginations within first. Strong dreams from the mundane world found root in the Second Worlds, and events in the Second Worlds might be echoed in the dreams of the mundane, but otherwise the two varieties rarely interacted directly.

Yggdrasil, the World Tree, at once connected the worlds and kept them separated. As long as Yggdrasil was complete, the relationship of the two worlds to each other was fixed. With the fragment of Yggdrasil that was once known as the Millennium Tree destroyed, Yggdrasil was forced to draw on the magic of a Second World, using it to heal the damage to the world of logic. Distinctions between the unlucky Second World that found itself being drawn upon and our world could blur, trickles of mutual influence could increase to torrents and protections adapted to the old status quo could find themselves swept away by change.

In the Second World, the tree that represents Yggdrasil stretches far and wide, its branches seemingly supporting all creation. The tree is both omnipresent and hidden. Invisible to direct gazes, glimpses can sometimes be seen out of the corner of the eye. Lands with a healthy connection to the Tree world are brighter, greener, and more verdant.

Unlucky Second Worlds that have been drained of all magic feel desolate. Many places speak of these places as the realms of the dead. Helheim, Annwn, Hades are all kingdoms used to cure the world. Others, even more badly served by Yggdrasil, were snuffed out entirely, leaving no trace in human minds of the worlds of imagination that once existed.

In the mundane world, our branch was manifested in the body of a simple ash. Neither a sapling nor full grown tree, the mundane Yggdrasil was indistinguishable from any other ash, save for its overwhelming beauty and its ability to inspire. Poetry written beneath its branches was more moving, words spoken were truer, and oaths sworn were more compelling. When it was transplanted in the city park, Yggdrasil inspired the entire city toward greatness. As though the sun had suddenly risen, the city took on a brighter tone. Production increased, art was more inspiring, donations to charities soared, illnesses spontaneously healed themselves, and babies were born stronger and smarter than ever before.

Conversely, the Millennium Tree's apparent destruction brought a darkness and wildness to the city. Hope gave way to despair. Crime increased, as did sickness and unemployment. Standards of education plummeted, and corruption spread. The Tree still has a catalysing effect on the inherent creative abilities of humans, but the purposes to which people apply that creativity have become darker. As well, magic has begun to leak into our world from a neighbouring branch. Some people take hope from the appearance of magic, providing a false hope to some, even though thus far this magic is more commonly seen in the pranks of mischievous beings and the marauding of beasts than manifested as marvels and miracles. It has been but a handful of years since Yggdrasil was burned; those years have as heavy as a lifetime to those within the city.

Yggdrasil Past

An avatar of Yggdrasil has been destroyed (and reborn) before. Its destruction alters the natural order of the worlds, allowing things to cross between them, bringing magic and chaos to the mundane world and surfeit to the Second World. Although the history of Yggdrasil is not commonly known in the mundane world, each of its deaths paints itself across history. The mysterious collapse of Minoan Crete, the abrupt abandonment of Naachtun, the obliteration of Mahenjo-Dara and the mysterious decline of Great Zimbabwe all were preceded by the destruction of a tree much like the Millennium Tree.

With every death of the World Tree comes magic and strife. Mystical forces amplify natural disasters while unchecked access to the creative output of the dreamers, the inventors and the artists overwhelm some otherworldly entities who once survived on a mere trickle of creativity from the mundane world. In the past, the avatars have been completely destroyed, adjoining worlds have merged, and whole regions of the mundane world have collapsed in chaos while entire realms of myth have been completely annihilated, leaving no trace in the legends of humanity.

Yggdrasil Present

The injury suffered by Yggdrasil has once again brought two neighbouring worlds into close contact. This time the destruction wasn't complete, and Yggdrasil's roots managed to survive. What this means for the city is unknown, although it does seem to have affected the return of magic. Both worlds have remained distinct, although far more closely linked than before.

The Return of Magic

When the Millennium Tree was burned to ash, two worlds, one mundane and one the magical realm that lived off it, suddenly came into close contact as Yggdrasil used the concentrated magic of one to heal the damage done to the other. Every day, each use of magic, and every appearance of magical folk sees that connection becoming stronger and stronger, as a side effect of Yggdrasil's natural healing processes. The more magic is used, the faster Yggdrasil merges the two worlds, and the more they come to be the same, the more magic can be used. That the side effects will doom many of the inhabitants means nothing to Yggdrasil, whose needs are alien to us.

In addition to Yggdrasil's efforts to merge the worlds, a fast but ugly method that might be compared to scarring, there is a second and far less destructive regenerative process occurring. Unlike previous occasions when an avatar was destroyed, a fragment of the old Yggdrasil remained. The surviving roots of the Yggdrasil-that-was (see The Underground, page 208) fight to preserve the old order of things, working to mend the wound the destruction of the trunk of the Millennium caused without needing to merge the two realms. There are moments when that effort is simply too much, and a small collection of roots will burst, creating a quick flash of magical energy (see HotSpots, page 218).

There are those who rejoice in the return of magic, believing it will grant them power, or the fulfilment of their dreams. The appearance of Incarnations amazes them, and they marvel as the Fae run rampant and causing mischief, but they fail to see the inherent dangers. For every hero that appears, a hundred villains follow, for every item of power that heals, a hundred are crafted whose only purpose is to harm. The Second World housed many things that were fair and legendary and but more that were bestial and malicious. Close contact between the mundane and the Second World has created not one battle, but numerous ones. Jack may step forward to kill the giant, but the terror the giant has accomplished before its defeat is no longer measured in simple words, but in actual lives.

Magic itself does seem like a pretty prize. It can heal, grant knowledge, and aid those who wield it, and accomplish nearly unlimited goals. Its power is sought by many and held by few, but its cost is felt by all. When magic was last in the world, a country was submerged. Many grasped its power freely, using it to aid or to injure as they willed. Rulers conjured monsters, and used them to fight battles, peasants summoned spirits to work their fields, the eldrich terrorised and ran amuck, pleased with the offerings that were left to them. The price was paid in plagues, droughts, floods, and famines, along with natural disasters of unprecedented magnitude. Entire villages were reduced to mysterious ruins. Many would-be sorcerers were consumed by the powers they sought to harness, or killed by demons too powerful to control. In the end, the mundane world always won out, and the magic was diluted beyond use, taking with it those creatures whose natures depended on it.

A Kind of Magic

From complex rituals to kitchen sorcery, magic has always been practised in one form or another. Prior to the fall of the Millennium Tree, magic was virtually powerless. Some adepts still practised newly invented or half-remembered rituals from ancient days, but the power of these rituals was too minute to be measured, and in most cases the effects were entirely imaginary.

No longer. With the gradual merging together of the two worlds, magic is becoming powerful. At the moment, just five years after the fall, magic only manifests within the city where the Yggdrasil burned. As time passes, its influence is slowly but steadily spreading beyond the city limits. Although natural limits will halt its progress and snuff the magic out, before that happens magic might affect the whole of the state it is in, or perhaps the entire nation.

People sensitive to magic can feel a certain new energy, vibrant and fresh, that was not present before. Foods taste better, rain is a little cleaner, the wind is a crisper, and on a cold winter morning, a perfect frost covers every cool inch of earth as far as the eye can see. It's a tiny change, almost sweet, just like many portents are.

Sweet ... like a Halloween candy apple with a razor blade inside. For that myth, too, has become real.

Joe Hellersham stood at the entrance to his home, terrified. His big, thick front door was laying in so many bright red splinters and glittering, gilded chunks of metal and glass on his front lawn. And his driveway. And his hedgerow. The risers of the staircase leading to the kids' rooms had collapsed, crushed beneath the massive weight of some creature whose footprints were a full half-meter in diameter. His living room was in shambles. Joe could not tell one piece of furniture from another.

Joe was not happy with how his house looked. Or smelled. Or billowed with smoke from somewhere in the back, past the soot-caked kitchen area. He was not happy with how things were, but none of these upset him the most. That was the steaming scaled cadaver, all bone and blood and twitching, oozing muscle, an affront to his reason. And probably to that of his insurance company as well.

Joe stood and stared at what remained of his home. He fought back tears and curled his hands into fists until his knuckles turned white. Slowly, from the backyard, a tall blond-haired man in a clean white tank top and dark blue denim slack approached. His large leather work boots left muddy craters as he walked. The man extended his massive right hand toward Joe, his bright yellow hard hat in his left. The man flattened his lips against his teeth, apologetically.

"Hey there," He nodded as Joe stood there looking at his hand. "You, um ... you live here?"

Joe nodded, trying to maintain a non-lethal blood pressure.

"Um," the man ran his left hand through his wavy hair, pausing to scratch it. "What's your name?"

Joe nodded again. "Joe."

"Hello, Joe." The man shuffled his feet. "My name's Harry. Harry Cleese."

Joe stared at Harry, his face impassive with shock.

"Joe, have you ever heard ... of a hydra?"

However marvellous it may seem, the Second World does not suffer the mundane well. The true scope of the peril the mundane world suffers is difficult to gauge, although its immediate effects are cause for serious concern. People's bodies are being hijacked by errant mythological souls; the fair folk effect sanity, efficiency and the standard of living, mortal magic users unwittingly (sometimes eagerly) sow havoc, and Beasts and villains cause destruction. This peril is nothing compared to what may lay in store for the Second World, whose dreams cannot survive reality. Yggdrasil's roots must be given time to regenerate or the Second World is doomed. That is where the Heroes come into the scene.

Heroes are those who have stepped forward, through fate, choice or simple happenstance, in an attempt to stem the tide of magic. They battle with beasts and villains, setting right to the wrongs that are committed by magical beings. If they are lucky, the damage will repair itself and the two worlds will once again grow apart. If they fail, the Second World will explode into ours, destroying the city with a brief, fecund but ultimately doomed flowering of unchecked, chaotic magic.

The Heroes

With the appearance of magic and myth have come Heroes. Heroes are those who are quite aware that magic is creeping into the world, and they struggle to keep its effects at bay. They may not be traditional white knights, battling only for Good, but all Heroes fight fiercely against malevolent Beasts and Villains. They may come from legend as well as every day life; not all Heroes are armed with mythic weapons or magical abilities. It is action rather than origin that make a Hero.

Once Upon A Time: Characters

The world of myth and magic feeds off our own, at once a part of our experience, and separate. Within it, there are deep glens and glades where faeries dance and feast, in the dead of night when changelings are substituted for babies, in the city where the gods walk the streets, and in hidden corners where gremlins stash stolen items. In our world, these are all merely the stuff of folktales and legends. In the World of Twilight, Fables and myths lurk in the shadows of the familiar world, living out their stories in a chaotic jumble of old and new.

The World at Twilight uses a d8 game dice and posthuman power levels, for the characters are slightly more than human, either representing mythic figures come to life, or people with ties to the Second World. The World at Twilight characters regularly encounter magical beasts and villains, and usually triumph over them. Normal people in the World at Twilight setting are rarely capable of mustering the resources required to best a player character, and generally too weak to be the major Villains. Characters in a World at Twilight campaign are normally built on 75-125 Character Points, ranging from highly talented people to magical creatures.

The Fae

The Fae are among the inhabitants of the Second World who have been drawn to our world. They have an active presence in the City. Not only do the recently arrived Fae themselves run amuck, creating havoc, but there exist those people who are descended from the last infestation of Fae (see below). The Fae are more suitable for use as NPC antagonists than as player characters, but it is quite possible to play one if the Game Master permits. Playing a character that has some fae blood, which gives them magical talent, is more appropriate — see Those of Mingled Blood, page 188.

Fae characters will have appropriate racial attributes and magical powers. See Chapter 7 for examples of Fae templates suitable for this setting. Fae PCs should be built of 75-125 Points, but NPC Fae may be more or less powerful, as suited to the needs of the Game Master.

Modern Myths: The Incarnations

Just prior to the arrival of the Fae, close enough that few are aware they actually preceded those mischievous creatures, there appeared beings that have become known as Incarnations. They are the living embodiment of legend; they wear the faces of folk tales and fables. They continue to act out their stories in the mundane world, struggling to find their preordained friends and foes in an unfamiliar environment. Every story that runs its course in the mundane world contains a host of characters, and they must all assemble before the tale can continue. Let loose in the mundane world, the fable or myth embodied in single Incarnation can run for years without conclusion; the villain must rise in power and infamy before the hero can claim victory.

Incarnations (divided into "archetypes" and "legends") are the characters who embody a figure from fairie tales and legends. Be it Red Riding Hood, Atalanta, or Thor, the Incarnations have found their way from their own existence, appearing as avatars within the body of an average person in the mundane world. There is little warning of a coming possession. When the brief moment of transition occurs, there is a flare of magical energy akin to a Hot Spot (see HotSpots, page 281), and the body houses an Incarnation rather than its rightful owner.

This can present a variety of problems, although not as many as might be expected. The moment of transition between mundane and myth invariably occurs in an isolated location, even if that location is as mundane as a public bathroom stall. Once present in its new body, the Incarnation suffers a period of extreme disorientation, one that never quite fades.

An Incarnation is the original person plus the archetypal impulses and abilities, but the Incarnation is in control. It has a few of memories of the person, but superimposed over those is a set of new imperatives and abilities. It is, in essence, a spirit from another world that has possessed a host.

Archetypes

The majority of Incarnations are archetypal figures: the beautiful princess, the handsome prince, the young woodsman, and the stepdaughter. They are the most common of the incarnations. They need not be the well-known characters such as Snow White, or Prince Charming. Just as many Archetypes are more primal in nature: the unnamed huntsman, the locksmith, and the young maid, the youngest son or daughter. Even those characters that do possess specific names tend to draw those names from some archetypal characteristic. Cinderella or Cinderclod is so named because she lies within the cinders, Snow White is called Snow White because her skin is as white as the snow and Little Two Eyes has two eyes, rather than the one or three of her sisters.

Every Archetype has a Story — a fable or myth that their existence embodies, and which is connected to a task or goal they have been incarnated to accomplish, which should be outlined before the start of the game. Players are encouraged to invent their own fables, or alter already existing ones; it is also possible to play a character whose Story is known only to the GM. Many Fables can take quite dark turns, but in the end, the hero of the tale triumphs, and the wicked are either punished or they atone for their misdeeds. When creating a fable, there should be several challenges leading up to the final accomplishment. Common trials are finding hidden places, solving puzzles, and accomplishing seemingly impossible tasks. It should be noted that a common theme is the rewarding of virtue, whether that virtue is kindness, loyalty, or generosity.

Archetypes have a mythical connection with the other figures in their story, which will also appear as Incarnate entities. Although figures from any given story rarely appear in the same place, Archetypes have shown a remarkable ability to intuit the location of their mythic companions, even in those cases where reality mirrors fiction in only the faintest of ways. Rapunzel may be an overprotected heiress, locked away in her guardian's estate, but even if her prince is a condemned man on death row, they will find each other. The mundane world may confuse and bewilder both of them, but somehow events always lead toward the proper conclusion.

Archetypes are more human than Legends (see below). Despite often benefiting from magical assistance or items (fairie godmothers crafting pumpkin coaches, shirts that change their wearers into swans, or magical beans, among the myriad of possibilities), they still interact with normal people. They do not win their tasks through might, but with kindness. Even conquering youths tend not to win through brute force, but through friendship. Some, for example, have generously helped a magical creature in distress, which in turn gave the Archetypes assistance or an item that was crucial in their victory. No jealous gods or selfish desire for glory motivate these heroes. Most only desire to right some wrong, improve themselves, or persevere through the troubles other humans have heaped upon them.

Archetypes are usually built on 50-125 Points. Archetypes will rarely have unusual Attributes themselves, but many of them possess Enhanced Stats, high levels of Divine Relationship, and the attribute Item of Power, which grants them otherwise impossible abilities. These Items represent solutions to the tasks they must accomplish in order to fulfil their stories, and may often be quite useful in other ways. Common Items of Power among Incarnations are canteens that never run dry, pouches whose capacity for holding is never reached, or capes that grant their bearer the power to become invisible. All Incarnations possess the Unique Attribute Happily Ever After (see page 220)

Common Defects among Archetypes are Easily Distracted (by events related to their Story) and Nemesis (the villain or hero of their Story, depending on their role in it). Many also have Confined Movement at 1 BP (a compulsion to remain within the area of other characters in their tale) and occasionally Marked at 1 BP (certain characteristic features or modes of dress which allow those who know about fairie tales, and the other entities who are part of such Stories, to recognise characters from them). An Archetype who keeps his or her true natural secret from others may take Skeleton in the Closet. If the local authorities know him or her, he or she should take Wanted (pursued by Camper Wallace and his minions or by others).

Legends

Legends are Incarnations who are larger than life. Many are the children of gods or other powerful beings, some were born on some auspicious date, and others are simply extraordinarily gifted with some skill or ability. Most are powerful warriors who earn their fame through the completion of almost impossible quests, and the defeat of terrifying monsters. They may have divine aid, although just as many are driven along by misfortunes sent by a jealous or vengeful god. They differ from Archetypes in that they usually have a distinct personality and sometimes a history, albeit a mythical one that cannot be verified, and in the degree of personal power they possess. King Arthur is an example of a Legend. So are the many gods, demi-gods, and heroes of pagan or Native American myth, legendary Christian saints, Vodoun loa, and so on.

Legends' tales tend to be more about character development than moral lessons and they are more prone to campaign-styled stories than episodic ones. While the tales of Archetypes often have lengthy journeys, those journeys are merely the transition between discovering the task and completing it, in the case of Legends, their journeys tend to be their tales, with the destination often merely an after note.

Legends are usually built on 125 or more Points — they may (if the GM allows) even be created at Superhuman power levels. Most Legends have at least one unusual special Attribute, which they use to great effect. Many have the attribute Item of Power, which often tends to be a magical weapon, or armour, or a modern equivalent of a device that they possessed in myth, translated into the life the Legend has been incarnated into (for example, a legendary magic hammer might become a construction worker's jackhammer). Few possess Dynamic Power, or Power Flux, Legends tend to have a fairly limited focus to their abilities.

It is possible to play the Incarnation of a legendary pagan god, angel, or primal entity (such as Death). These are more extreme and powerful form

of Legends, and accordingly much rarer. When playing such a being, either Dynamic Powers or Power Flux should be taken, to represent the god's ability to influence their particular sphere of power.

Common defects among Legends are Nemesis, Marked, and Significant Other. Many are Cursed, or bound by Oaths and Geasa (see page 85).

Incidental Legends

Not all Legends are the world-renowned protagonists everyone knows about. These lesser-known figures are the incidental Legends. They have histories, origins, and destinies like other Incarnations but they are not the protagonists of their tales. The vendor who sells jam to the Tailor before he kills seven with one blow is an incidental Legend, as is the chef who cooks the feasts given at the Prince's balls. They exist to further the story along, and without them, the tales could not continue.

Incidental Legends are seen regularly, and sometimes possess vital information, but as supporting characters they are generally less powerful than even an Archetype or Legend. They are most likely to have many levels of Divine Relationship.

Those of Mingled Blood

Magic has been in the world before, and it brought with it the same host of creatures it has now. As it begins bloom once more, those with magical heritage may begin discovering new talents and abilities. There are quite a few Fairie descendants in the city, as well as people who have the blood of gods running through their veins. The faintest trace of mythic heritage brings with it a heightened sensitivity to magic, and those with it are likely to find themselves caught up in magical events. Fairies, odd creatures, and anyone from the Second World are considered to have mingled blood.

Witches, shamans, and other magic users fit seamlessly into both the mundane world and the Second World. They are born of the mundane world, although all have knowledge and skills of the Second. Many have encountered the Fae, and dealt with other magical creatures. They work, buy food and enjoy movies with their friends, just as regular people do. It's only in private, away from the people who would not understand, that they brew potions, cast spells and vanquish evil. Some have begun to train specifically to combat the growing Fae population, and, if not eradicate it, at least keep it under control.

Mingled Blood characters should be built on 75-125 Points. Use the normal guidelines for creating them. Most of the archetypes in Chapter 7 are appropriate. See Organisations, page 208-211, for examples of templates.

Normal Humans: The Calling

There are human beings that have become aware of the rise of magic and the existence of the fae and the Incarnations, who have decided to do something about. There are the people who woke up one day and found a pixie staring at them from atop their alarm clock, who were used as part of the story of a villain's rise to power, or who suddenly realised one day that their co-worker was not just like a modern-day King Arthur, he *was* King Arthur. Many are children, too young to have acquired the blinkers of maturity, who could see what their families refused to, that their eccentric old uncle really is a warlock, or that fairies play in the garden behind the children's homes. They are not of fair or mythical nature, their stories are not yet written, and they are free to act — or not act--as they will. Most Faerie wranglers, witches, and warlocks fall into this category.

Normal humans are usually built on 50-125 Character Points. See Organisations, page 208-211 for examples of suitable character templates. The templates in chapter 7 are also appropriate.

"Where is she?" Two kicks to the ribs in quick succession caused the doctor to wince in pain. His vision was foggy, his head jammed hard against the rain-slicked asphalt. Through the pain, he recognised the man standing over him, the man whose feet had just broken three of the doctor's ribs, as the enforcer for Mallory Efissant, better known in crime circles as the "Bad Witch."

"I don't know," the doctor lied, blood welling from a split in his bottom lip.

The heavy knelt down and sneered. "Dr. Miner, it would be in your best interest to tell us what we want to know. I'm only gonna ask one more time. Where is Miss White?"

The doctor's right index finger found the open gash in his leg. "What do you want with her?"

There was a low and feral laugh, like a predator emitting an excited growl. "Let me just say that if we don't find her before midnight, I'm gonna turn her into a pumpkin."

The Villains

A Villain is anyone who opposes a Hero. While this may include such people as the Big Bad Wolf, or the Wicked Stepmother, many Villains are regular people living out their lives who were unfortunate enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, who found themselves trapped in someone else's story, compelled to oppose a Hero. It is true that many Villains are people who wish to use magic for personal gain, who are quite willing to commit evil deeds in order to obtain power or fulfil their every wants. Others are simply those who oppose the Hero due to circumstance rather than ill intent. A clerk who does not wish to give out information to an unauthorised person may be considered a Villain, as they are opposing the Hero, even though they are motivated by their own sense of right, rather than any malevolent intentions.

Kindness Rewarded

Game Masters should keep in mind that generosity is an important quality among myths, and it is always rewarded. Conversely, those displaying haughtiness, greed, or disdain are invariably punished, usually with dire results. A common feature in fairie tales is the 'magical helper,' some powerful magical being that seems to know just what is needed to solve the current problem. Very often their assistance bought by helping these people out of some sort of jam. Standard motifs are dwarves, starving and asking for a meal, magical fish caught on a hook, or even a god, testing the hospitality of humans by posing as a starving beggar.

Whatever the task may be, it should be appropriate to the Hero's current situation. If it is food that the helper wishes, they will be asking when the Hero has only enough for themselves, or if they have a simple task that requires nothing more than time, they will appear when the Hero has little time to spare. Should the Hero pass the test, he or she will discover things are not as bad as they seem. Bottles will continue to provide drink, or almost instantaneous transportation will be provided.

A Common Goal

Whether it is their own or another's, motivation drives the characters' stories. This motivation could be the desire for knowledge or power, it might be altruism or lust for revenge, but when it comes down to it, motivation is cause, and actions are its effect. The motivations of most Incarnations are fairly simple. If you can identify their story, what they want becomes obvious. Other beings are not so clear-cut, especially in instances where the actions of one are determined by the motivations of another.

Manifest Destiny

Most Incarnations want to find their mythic companions, and complete their stories, so that they can leave the unfamiliar mundane, modern world. Everything they do stems from this simple desire. Left to themselves, they would complete their tales and move on. But they do not always remain unopposed. The bulk of the city's citizens remain ignorant of what has entered their city. There are those who feel the Incarnations serve a greater purpose in this world, and they put considerable effort into making the Incarnations remain. Some believe that each trip from our world to the Second World only makes it easier to travel between the worlds, and hoping that by marooning Incarnations here, they discourage the migration of even more. Others people have more sinister motivations, and capture or kill Incarnations for personal gain.

Each Incarnation has a destiny they are driven toward, an event that must happen in order for their tenure in the mundane world to end. It begins as a gentle tugging at his or her soul, but grows stronger and more pronounced as time goes on, leading them to the people, places, and things they require while fulfilling this destiny. An Incarnation's destiny is usually the most well- known event from his or her stories or the logical conclusion of those events; the unspoken ending that everyone wants to happen. Once he or she has achieved it, the Incarnation returns home to the Second World.

Newsreel: Predestination Theory – Thoughts on the Inevitable

The following is an article from the *Newstrade Media Magazine*, transcribed from a public television broadcast from that originally ran from November 14th to the 23rd, 1987:

Predestination, the thought that all actions and events are determined before their actual occurrence, is one of the oldest — and most fundamental — beliefs in the field of spiritual thinking. The supposition that predestination mandates a "master plan," as is commonly tacked to such theory is interesting but unfounded.

Imagine an event. This event does not need to be an extraordinary event, but it is a well-defined event that should take place to a specific individual within that person's lifetime. It could be meeting his or her future spouse or it could be finding a five-dollar bill on the side of the road. The person will live his or her life expressing autonomy, expressing free will, but eventually the person will come upon that event. His or her actions will precipitate the event, and they will determine when the event occurs.

There are those philosophers who support such a possibility as "free-willed predestination" but, they ask, "If when we say events should happen, who is putting that condition there?" The question is "Who says whether or not something should happen?"

Going Home Again

When an Incarnation fulfils his or her destiny, he or she returns to the world of legend. The mythic spirit departs and the mortal body that served as its mortal vessel is released to return (or at least attempt to return) to the life it was leading before being so rudely interrupted. For the Incarnation, the conclusion of their story is a welcome relief from the burden of mundane life. For the mortal shell left behind, there is a gap in memory from the moment the Incarnation spirit took over to the moment it left as well as the disconcerting feeling something vital has been taken from them.

This can be tricky for the Game Master who is attempting to run a lengthy campaign. Once Cinderella has attended her ball, and won her prince, her story is fulfilled and she will return from whence she came. There are two methods that might be used to combat this problem. In the first, her ball must be postponed, and postponed again, until the culmination of the grander campaign. In this instance, the Game Master must find a way to blend all of the characters' stories into one climactic ending. The largest problem with this solution is finding a way to avoid the feeling of a forced game. Not all stories run the same length of time, and trying to force them to can be harmful to the mood of the game.

In the second, the character takes the part of Cinderella, but rather than a specific character, for example Ashley, the unloved stepdaughter who must find her 'prince', the captain of her high school's football team, at a 'ball' represented by the Homecoming, the hero plays a generic archetype. First the cycle of Ashley is completed, then the hero moves on to work through the next incarnation of the Cinderella story. It becomes an exploration of archetypes; what might be a ball in one arc might be a night at the opera in another, or a board meeting in the next. The problem with this solution is game cohesion, and getting the characters together after each transition.

When crafting a campaign, the tales the Incarnations must undergo might be used as the framework, instead of the focus of the story. Rather than making the campaign about the stories they are trying to fulfil, the running story line might have little to do with those stories. The events that lead to the conclusion of the Incarnation's tale happen as a consequence of the overarching conflict. If the second option is chosen, the repetition of story lines, it is possible to allow the newly returned Incarnation to recall everything about their previous time in the mundane world. Rather than a complete reset of story line, the Incarnation finds themselves once more in the mundane world, once more attempting to live out their story. While they are compelled to complete their tales, this may bring them an additional motivation; discovering what it is that continues to drag them back to the mundane world, so that they can repair it.

Destroying Your Enemy

Some Incarnations wish to destroy another Incarnation. This desire may be part of his or her Story or it could be a new rivalry that was sparked while in the mortal realm. The interactions between previously unrelated Incarnations may provoke a myriad of new situations, and not all Incarnations will get along.

When the destiny is fulfilled, both spirits will return to the world of legend and the mundane world will be that much closer to its normal self. Some magical organisations (such as the Benevolent Constabulary, see page 210) not only assist Incarnations, but also work to aid those people who have been host to a Incarnation once that Incarnation has departed. The body that spirit is in was just a normal person before some rogue spirit commandeered it. If during the course of an Incarnation's tale, an Incarnation is slain, the body that was host to the Incarnation dies as well. This can often leave lasting problems for the 'victorious' Incarnation's host, who must then deal with a subsequent murder charge. The Benevolent Constabulary is often in the best situation to assist in these cases.

Fight Ever Onward

Most Incarnations remain in the mundane world for only a brief time, just long enough to complete their stories. Few wish to remain longer than necessary, although there have been cases where the Incarnation delays completion of their tale in order to complete some other task. Usually this is in relation to more personal goals that have appeared after their initial entrance into the mundane world. Malcolm Grimmerson (see Malcolm Grimmerson, page 195) has theorised that the modern era's tendency to take already





established fairie tales and fables and twist them into new tales might be contributing to these changes.

There are Incarnations who either find they cannot return to the Second World or have been fighting in this world so long they have begun to believe they cannot return. Misfortune, or the hostile acts of those who wish to prevent the departure of Incarnations, may prevent the completion of an Incarnation's tale. It is a difficult task to intervene in the tale of an Incarnation, but it has been known to happen. Camper Wallace has a tendency to involve himself in the lives of many Incarnations because he is seeking further information about the Second World (see Camper Wallace, page 213). When this happens, the Incarnation becomes trapped in the mundane world until the necessary event or companion reappears.

Merle Godwin

Occupation: Bouncer / Merlin
Height: 6' (183 cm) **Eyes:** Hazel
Weight: 200 lbs. (91 kg) **Hair:** Auburn

Merle is the head bouncer at a nightclub called The Round Table. He is also the spirit of the demon-kin wizard known most commonly as Merlin. Merlin's destiny is to lead Arthur Pendragon to his rightful place as the King of all Britain. Unfortunately, Merle has yet to find his Arthur and the more he learns about the modern age, the more he wonders exactly how he will complete his tale. He has begun to wonder if the kingdom in his tale is an actual kingdom, or whether it will represent a large corporation or political body.

To bid his time, and keep his mind and body sharp, Merle roams the city helping other Incarnations fulfil their destinies. He hopes that one day he'll "help some kid pass a stone and a sword," but until then he is just a loveable burly lunk that seems to know far more about the Incarnations of the world than anyone else.

Recently, Merle had an affair with Morganna Fayth, the wealthy heiress to a large construction corporation. After this brief fling ended badly, she slapped a paternity suit on him, and has been overheard expressing her intent to seek revenge. Merle denies fathering the child, and has been increasingly uncomfortable with the press the case is attracting.

Merle Godwin (100 Character Points)

Body 5 **Mind** 9 **Soul** 10
Attack Combat Value 8 **Defence Combat Value** 6
Health Points 75 **Energy Points** 95

Level	Points	Attributes
1	1	Highly Skilled
2	40	Power Flux (Minor; Deception)
3	3	Sixth Sense (Magic — Area 2)
2	10	Happily Ever After

Level	Points	Skills
2	6	Cultural Arts (Myths and Urban Legends)
1	2	Gaming (Gambling)
1	3	Languages (Gaelic, English)
2	12	Occult (Sorcery)
1	5	Poisons (Natural)
1	6	Unarmed Attack (Holds)
1	6	Unarmed Defence (Strikes)

Points	Defects
-2	Nemesis (Morganna Fayth)

Jack Bentry

Occupation: Kid / Giant-Killer
Height: 3'10" (117 cm) **Eyes:** Green
Weight: 70 lbs. (32 kg) **Hair:** Red

Ten-year old Jack Bentry doesn't look like much of an Incarnation. With his gap-toothed grin, freckled cheeks, and bright-red hair, Jack looks like the poster child for a humorous children's book, down the slingshot sticking out his back pocket. He's a scoundrel and rapscallion, and known throughout the city by toy and candy store clerks as a skilled thief. Knowing it, and catching him are separate issues, however, and while they watch him carefully every time he enters their shops, he still manages to walk out with full pockets.

Jack has been lying low lately, puzzling over his newest acquisition, a velvet pouch containing a tin filled with unusual beans. He lifted it from the pocket of a passing stranger, and although he recognises that his mark must have valued them, he can't see the worth of a bunch of dried up beans.

Jack Bentry (75 Character Points)

Body 5 **Mind** 4 **Soul** 4
Attack Combat Value 4 **Defence Combat Value** 2
Health Points 45 **Energy Points** 40

Level	Points	Attributes
3	3	Combat Technique (Concealment, Lightning Reflexes, Leap Attack)
3	15	Happily Ever After
1	1	Highly Skilled
1	3	Item of Power (Magical Beans)
2	6	Item of Power (Sling Shot)
3	21	Nullify (Area 3, Duration 2, Range 1) •Reduction (-2 Grow Attribute Only)

Level	Points	IOP ("Magical Beans") Attributes
1	1	Special Movement (Dimensional Hop: Second World)

Level	Points	IOP ("Sling Shot") Attributes
2	8	Special Attack "Jack's Giant Killer" (20 Damage, Knockback)

Level	Points	Skills
1	3	Acrobatics (Escape)
3	15	Area Knowledge (The City: Downtown)
1	6	Melee Attack (Improvised Weapons)
1	6	Melee Defence (Improvised Weapons)
2	4	Sleight of Hand (Shoplifting)
	6	Unused Skill Points

Red

Occupation: Street Fighter
Height: 5'6" (198 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 140 lbs. (64 kg) **Hair:** Black

Red is not just a scrapper; she's a street fighter of renown. Once just a homeless Haitian runaway, Red is now a woman driven to avenge her grandmother's death. The man who wronged her is Hans Woolver, head of Shepherd Inc, a multi-billion dollar corporation with interests in all facets of business. Hans's very public presence and notoriety in the world of business have made him a hard target, but Red is determined that one day, vengeance will be hers. The thought of killing Hans Woolver consumes her every waking thought. Everything she does is toward that end.

A year ago, she partnered with Lionel Wood, the woodsman from her tale, who was also investigating Hans Woolver. He went missing some weeks ago. While she has no definitive proof, Red is convinced Hans had him killed

as well. She possesses a lot of tools that will aid her in her goal. Her skill in Capoeira, her spot-on instincts, and her drive to destroy the man who murdered the only person she ever cared for will push her to her destiny no matter who or what stands in her way.

Red
(65 Character Points)

Body 8 Mind 4 **Soul** 4
Attack Combat Value 5 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 60 **Energy Points** 40

Level	Points	Attributes
1	2	Defence Combat Mastery
3	3	Combat Technique (Blind Fighting, Judge Opponent, Lighting Reflexes)
2	8	Extra Attacks
1	1	Highly Skilled
1	5	Happily Ever After
2	8	Item of Power (Red's Hood)
2	4	Massive Damage (Capoeira)
1	3	Sixth Sense (Magic — Area 2)

Level	Points	IOP ("Red's Hood") Attributes
3	8	Armour (Thin Area; — 1 Point)
2	2	Combat Technique (Deflection, Leap Attack)

Level	Points	Skills
1	3	Acrobatics (Dancing)
1	5	Area Knowledge (The City: Business District)
2	12	Unarmed Attack (Capoeira)
2	12	Unarmed Defence (Capoeira)
2	8	Urban Tracking (Corporate)

Points	Defects
-1	Easily Distracted (Story Elements)

Hank & Greta

Hank and Greta are looking for a witch. When they find her, as they tell anyone who listens, they are "gonna shove 'er in an oven. Click-click-click. Turn the gas up to seven and send her right to Heaven." Hank and Greta know the city better than anyone else does, including the city-planners. They know every crack in every sidewalk or brick wall, they know how many tiles are on the floor of the Silver Towers complex, and they will tell you anything you want to know for just a few pieces of candy.

Hank and Greta are ten-year old siblings best known for their fateful trip into the woods. "But bread crumbs ain't no use in the city," Hank says, on which Greta always adds, "The winds blows 'em away, it does." After the death of their parents, Hank and Greta took to the streets. They are incredibly streetwise and savvy in the most scurrilous of ways. When they speak, one will often finish the other's sentences or they will simply speak in unison if the mood strikes them. Their speech will be a rhyming singsong one moment then deadly serious and dire the next.

Hank

Occupation: Street-kid
Height: 4' (122 cm) **Eyes:** Blue
Weight: 80 lbs. (36 kg) **Hair:** Blond

Hank is the spunky one of the pair, determined to protect his sister. To that end, he has devoted considerable time into building his offensive skills, in the hopes that a good opening strike will take care of their opposition, whoever or whatever it may be.

Hank
(90 Character Points)

Body 7 Mind 5 **Soul** 5
Attack Combat Value 5 **Defence Combat Value** 3
Health Points 60 **Energy Points** 50

Level	Points	Attributes
1	6	Damage Conversion
2	10	Happily Ever After
1	1	Highly Skilled
6	30	Massive Damage
6	6	Telepathy (Only with Greta)
3	3	Sixth Sense (Magic — Area 2)

Level	Points	Skills
6	30	Area Knowledge (The City: Downtown)
1	6	Melee Attack (Knives)
1	4	Street Sense (Magical Divisions)

Greta

Occupation: Street Kid
Height: 3'6" (107 cm) **Eyes:** Blue
Weight: 65 lbs. (30 kg) **Hair:** Blond

Greta is quieter than her brother, and speaks to few people beside him. When they are negotiating with a mark, she often plays the 'reluctant younger sister' in an effort to raise their guide fees. She is usually successful at this since their routine is well thought out, and well practised. Greta was particularly traumatised by the death of their parents, and has devoted herself to taking care of Hank.

As Hank is protective of her, so Greta is protective of Hank. If the battle isn't going well for him, she'll throw herself into the enemy's attacks; somehow managing to convert the damage she takes so that she can heal her brother.

Greta
(80 Character Points)

Body 5 Mind 5 **Soul** 9
Attack Combat Value 6 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 70 **Energy Points** 70

Level	Points	Attributes
1	10	Damage Absorption
3	15	Happily Ever After
1	1	Highly Skilled
1	2	Sixth Sense (Magic — Area 1)
6	6	Telepathy (Only with Hank)
2	10	Transfer
	-2	•DependEnt (Damage Absorption)

Level	Points	Skills
6	30	Area Knowledge (The City: Downtown)
1	3	Disguise (Costumes)
1	2	Gaming (Con Games)
1	5	Stealth (Silent Movement)

Bright Lights, Big City

The city has everything one would expect: crime, drugs, libraries, parking lots, office complexes, park benches, and hot dog vendors. Its history is as long as any North American cities that were founded by European settlers. The city is a hometown, a vacation destination, and a place to layover on your way to somewhere else. It has an art district with a strip of live theatre houses, and a historical society that fights to protect old buildings from the Scylla of gentrification and the Charibdis of "redevelopment." Brick and concrete meet at the seams that divide the law offices from the ghetto, the parking lots from the tenements.

The city has a stadium for football and baseball, an arena for basketball and fields for its other sports. Billboards litter the freeway exits with advertisements for watches and wine coolers. If a person were to stroll from the city centre, which is congested with officer workers, lawyers, and the grinding of the municipal gears, to the history museum, thick with the air of age and condescension, he or she might swear to have passed the entire world.

Every colour and creed can be found in the city. The face of the person who sells coffee and muffins from a cart on Baker bears no resemblance to the person slinging hash at the café on Firth and Main. The city is diverse but it remembers when it was not.

The city has grown organically over the past couple decades, slowly building itself a cocoon of glistening suburbs in which to nestle. Its growth has left many buildings as hollowed victims and it bears the scars of the new world imposing on the old. It is a thriving, bustling city with blue-collar roots and white-collar dreams. It is stable enough, though it wishes it had more jobs to offer and more opportunity for those who chose it as a place to call home.

Yet the city is dying. With the Millennium Tree destroyed, the edges of reality have become frayed and the return of magic is slowly eroding its very foundation. Monsters bearing human faces serve hot dogs on the corner. Sorcerers, in the form of strays, sniff out the unbidden in its alleyways. Wizards speak to the undead and gaze into the beyond as they panhandle and prophesise on the corner. Street urchins, the last true prophets of free trade, have cornered the market on information and foul deeds. Aloof in their towers of steel and glass, executives rule their subjects and play their rivals and allies against each other for monetary, and magical, gain.

The city is where life takes place. It is where dreams come true, and nightmares too, but people sleep each night just the same. It is a city that needs healing … and heroes.

Mayor Procop

Occupation: Mayor
Height: 5'6" (165 cm) **Eyes:** Hazel
Weight: 150 lbs. (60 kg) **Hair:** Light Brown

Dimitrios Procop was seven years of age when he saw his fire-fighter father gunned down by a crazy old man outside a corner market. That day, Dimitrios swore he would become a cop to help clean up the city. In high school he studied hard and played hard. Unfortunately, Dimitrios tore his ankle the day before starting the big varsity game against his school's rival. Dimitrios's luck has changed much since then. His bum ankle kept him out of football, the service, and the police academy, but it didn't keep him out of politics.

Dimitrios's childhood dreams of cleaning up crime and corruption lost to his adult love of money and power. Dimitrios was 31 years old when he was first elected to the city council. After five years in the seat, he graduated to the mayor's office as Deputy Mayor to Orrin Delphi. After Orrin chose not to run for re-election four years ago, Dimitrios made his bid and won the mayoral seat.

Procop's political inheritance was not a happy one. Crime rates were up and the economy was sluggish. Procop employed a lot of finesse and a little dirty dealing but he feels he is pulling the city from the edge of an abyss. He has dealings with Camper Wallace (page 213). The Mayor thinks his ally is a little on the crazy side, and every now and again, after meeting the man, Procop's dreams are haunted by incomprehensible images of Wallace doing … something, but the Mayor appreciates the funding that is brought to his political campaigns. He is becoming more skilled at self-justification, assuring himself that the occasional misdeeds he turns a blind eye to aren't so important as the greater good Procop might offer to the city with the funding Wallace delivers.

Dimitrios Procop (60 Character Points)

Body 7 Mind 6 **Soul** 5
Attack Combat Value 6 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 60 **Energy Points** 55

Level	Points	Attributes
2	10	Agents
1	1	Combat Technique (Judge Opponent)
4	8	Henchmen
5	10	Organisational Ties (City Government)

Level	Points	Skills
2	10	Area Knowledge (The City:Business District)
2	4	Driving (Sports cars)
3	9	Law (Municipal)
2	4	Management/Admin (Political Campaigning)
3	3	Social Sciences (Politics)

Points	Defects
-2	Less Capable (Running Speed)
-2	Red Tape
-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Accepting Bribes)

"Let me guess," Detective Sandoval combed the apartment with a glance before returning his attention to his little red notebook. "These two are the would-have-been new tenants?" He stabbed his left index finger toward the young couple on the floor.

The landlord nodded. "Yeah, they just started moving in yesterday. Nice enough people. They wanted to spruce the place up a bit so they bought a new rug. That's it there."

Sandoval walked over to the dark blue Berber, still half-coiled into a cylinder.

The landlord shook his head and rubbed his ham hands on his jeans, nervously. "I just wish I knew what happened. I didn't hear nothing and I'm only, what, two doors down the hall."

"Well," Sandoval started, his knees creaking as he rose and walked over to the victims. "You see these little holes on their hands?" Each body had several pairs of them from the fingertip to the wrist.

The landlord nodded.

"If I remember my Trail Boys handbook, and I like to think I do, those are snake bites."

"Snake bites? But how — where would these snakes come from?"

Sandoval walked back over to the rug and kicked the roll gently. Slowly, the carpet unfurled. As the last round of it made the final rotation, five cobras scattered, angrily, and slithered toward the door. The landlord's mouth dropped. Sandoval tilted his hat and calmly stepped out of the snakes' way. "Oh, if I had to guess…."

Urban Legends

One of the strangest side effects of the return of magic is the way urban legends are being made real. All the classic friend-of-a-friend stories are now making headlines. Just last week, a man woke up in a tub full of ice with fresh stitches just over his right kidney. An alligator has been spotted in the sewer by city workers, who claim it is over seven meters long. It appears that fairie are not the only tales come to life, and life in the city has become a strange and bewildering thing, even for those who remain oblivious to the return of magic. Even people who used to scoff at such things are beginning to believe. Tales that once began with 'a friend of a friend' now begin with 'a friend of mine…' or even 'Last night, I saw...'.

As in the past, lurid magazines have proliferated, proclaiming Virgin Mary sightings, alien babies born, and other tales of strangeness in large headlines. The difference is that now they are being entirely factual.

Gargoyles

The stone gargoyles perched on rooftops and in gardens in older neighbourhoods are the traditional guardians of the city. As magic crept into the world, these strange protectors began to wake.

The city's gargoyles are diverse in form, twisted and ugly, beaming and cherubic, short and tall, but all serve to guard and protect. Despite their varied appearances, two distinct types of gargoyles exist. The first breed considers itself a guardian of the city as a whole, protecting all citizens and buildings equally, while the second are more specialised, protecting a specific private location.

Although this might seem to be a major difference, it is simply a matter of range. The one type of gargoyle, usually found perched on public buildings, draws its boundaries around the entire city, the other guards the area within the boundaries of a single property deed. Some correlation between the size of their stewardship and their power has been noted, although there is enough uncertainty to make the thought of facing any gargoyle a terrifying prospect. Malcolm Grimmerson, warlock and scholar (page 195), began studying the gargoyles as soon as they began to wake. His conclusion about what creates the gargoyle's power focuses on the care and craftsmanship that was taken in their original creation. He argues that the gargoyles who guard the city are generally older, individually crafted, whereas the gargoyles who protect but a single property tend to be mass-produced. It is, of course, a difficult theory to prove, so little remains certain beyond the observation that the size of a gargoyle in no way determines its power.

Grimmerson also points out that there is nothing in theory to prevent other statuary, such as garden gnomes, from experiencing the animating effect that woke the gargoyles. Thus far reports of would-be burglars being savagely beaten by hordes of very angry foot tall men are unknown, or at least quite rare.

Gargoyles sleep during the day, awakening only at night. They will only take action if they witness someone who intends to cause physical harm to the firmament of the city. They would not interfere with a re-zoning initiative, redecoration, or the levelling of a run-down hospital by city workers. Graffiti artists and hoodlums attempting a night-time smash-and-grab on a local mom and pop soda joint, on the other hand, would be well advised to heed the warnings circulating on the street. While those rumours contain no specific details, they are littered with references to "grey vigilante weirdoes" and "that bat-guy from the comics." Darker tales tell of bodies found torn limb from limb, or battered to bloody pulp, or dropped from a great height.

Gargoyles
Template Cost: 40 Points

Level	Points	Stats
+4	8	Body

Level	Points	Attributes
+2	6	Armour
+3	9	Attack Combat Mastery
+2	2	Combat Technique (Blind Fighting, Leap Attack)
+2	8	Flight
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+2	1	Highly Skilled
+2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs)
+1	6	Sixth Sense (Threat to something in its territory, Area 5)
+4	4	Special Defence (Age x2, Hunger x2)

Level	Points	Skills
+1	6	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
+1	6	Unarmed Defence (Parry)
	8	Unused Skill Points

Points	Attributes
-2	Confined Movement (Its Territory)
-1	Easily Distracted (Intruders in Its Territory)
-3	Marked (Inhuman Appearance)
-2	Special Requirement (Destroyed if property is destroyed)

Malcolm Grimmerson

Occupation: Warlock and Historian
Height: 5'10" (178 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 180 lbs. (82 kg) **Hair:** Blond

Malcolm Grimmerson is a scholar well known for not only his knowledge, but also his eccentricity. He attended a small, private college in New York that permitted him to focus his studies in areas that interested him, namely, the history of magic. He has written countless treatises on the strange and unusual, including witches, gargoyles and werewolves. Malcolm enjoys an odd sort of status among his peers; while they hold him in public disdain, no one can argue that he does not know his chosen subject. Despite there being few universities that would offer his works in their curriculum, Malcolm's papers and books are considered an irreplaceable source for any scholarly works that mention the occult.

Much to Malcolm's surprise, when Yggdrasil was destroyed he discovered a new talent: sorcery. He experimented on his own, poring over his references and his own works, discovering that many of his theses were at least partially correct. He found himself an errant nymph, and managed to work out a deal; in exchange for her tutelage, he provides her with a plentiful supply of hosts. He is careful to watch the process of possession carefully, working to prevent any of them from actually dying, but so far this has not been a problem.

Malcolm Grimmerson
(55 Character Points)

Body 4 **Mind** 6 **Soul** 8
Attack Combat Value 6 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 50 **Energy Points** 70

Level	Points	Attributes
1	18	Dynamic Powers (Ritual magic — Area 1, Targets 2)
1	1	Highly Skilled
1	2	Sixth Sense (Magic — Area 1)

Level	Points	Skills
2	6	Computers (Artificial Intelligence)
1	3	Cultural Arts (Incarnations)
1	3	Foreign Culture (Fae)
3	9	Languages (English, Latin, French, German, Athenian Greek and Homeric Greek)
2	12	Occult (History of Magic)
1	3	Social Sciences (Theology)
2	4	Writing (Academic Writing)

Points	Defects
-1	Famous (Among mages and occultists)
-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Practising sorcerer)

My Hometown

"Aw jeez," Ms. McGillicutty swore, kicking the upturned soil with her slipper-shod feet.

"Marge? Something wrong?" Miriam Mayhew poked her head over the slotted fence with a quizzical look on her face.

"Something tore up my garden. My tomatoes, beans — everything's shot." Marge knelt down, her left knee popping as she did so, and she withdrew a small yellow tooth from the ground. "I think it was a dog."

"Oh? What makes you think that?" Miriam turned her attention to the trash that she had been sorting into plastic, aluminium, or paper for recycling. The remainder went into her mulch quarry.

"I think it was the Winthrop's dog. What is it? A pit bull, is it? Darn nuisance is what it is."

"Yeah," Miriam smiled behind the safety of the fence. "I think they call it a bull mastiff. Real troublemakers, those." She slid her patio door open. The goblin behind her, face smeared with tomato juice, teeth infested with seeds and bean skins, scampered after her, chortling as it followed its master inside.

Inside the city, close to the ruined Yggdrasil, magic manifests in pockets of concentrated energy, leaving the city streets a haven for all manners of creatures to hide. Where Yggdrasil's roots remain, magic is a chancy affair; sometimes a magical effect may erupt with surprising potency, other times it may simply trickle out. Outside the city, it thrives in the kitchens and bedrooms of seemingly ordinary people. Away from the influence of what remains of Yggdrasil, magic is less powerful, but far more stable. The change caused by the return of magic was subtle, but those who were already seeking it discovered magic easily enough. The city's neo-pagan covens of witches, shamans, priestesses, and others, found their potions and blessings were becoming more potent and their charms were lasting much longer.

These witches were the first to recognise the existence of Incarnations in the city. At first they were puzzled. Already tuned into the power of archetypes, they simply thought the explanation might be that with the return of magic came a deeper tie to the unconscious for some, or that the Incarnations were possibly possessing spirits. Further experience revealed that these Archetypes were more not people who happened to have internalised modern representations of myth, but rather true avatars of storybook characters and ancient legendary figures. Many witches began keeping an eye out for these Incarnations, to assist them and their hosts, especially in the aftermath of the tale's completion. It did not take them long to realise that when the tale is done, and the Incarnation returned to whence it came, the person who had existed before regains control of their body, without the benefit of having any memory of what transpired while they were Incarnated.

The witch community is divided on the question of what to do about the Incarnations. There are covens devoted to assisting Fables in completing their tales, and there are covens devoted to aiding the hosts after the Fable has left. A few witches speak out against such aid, insisting that this simply increases the influence of magic, and undermines their greater goal, but these are few and far between.

There are also some factions that are devoted to particular types of entities, finding and protecting them when they appear while dealing with any darker aspects of these traditions (such as a wicked or trickster entity). For example, a Wiccan coven might be more inclined toward Dianic or Celtic powers, a coven that followed Egyptian mystical traditions would be particularly inclined to help out the incarnation of Isis or Sekhmet (or oppose those gods known to be evil), Vodoun priests and priestesses would keep an eye out for the appearance of loa, Native American shamans would be likely to be on the lookout for ancestral spirits and the manifestations of Coyote, Raven, and other traditional gods, and so on.

Faerie Wranglers

Witches were also the first to realise that the Fae, mischievous creatures who care about nothing but their own desires, had returned. Noticing the effects of their return was fairly simple, the faint iridescent glow that lingered in some areas changed almost overnight into a bright luminescent green (see the Fae, page 203). Fables are easily dealt with, if one keeps an eye out for the counterparts to their tales. If one is confronted with a giant, all that is needed is to find Jack and his magical beans, or a woodsman with an enchanted gun. The Fae are much more difficult to deal with. They are smart, ruthless, and stronger than they appear to be, making themselves into real problems. Some witches decided they would take it upon themselves to get rid of (or at least contain) the pests. To that end, the witches started training a select few in their ranks to take on the role of "Faerie wrangler."

Faerie wranglers do not have an enviable job but it is both necessary and important. Many wranglers are eccentric and outspoken, handling the Fae in ways that disturbs and discomfits more conservative witches. Without them, however, the Fae would soon be running rampant.

This new breed of witches, most of who are still inventing their profession, has also learned an entirely novel kind of magic, shapeshifting. So far, the majority of shapeshifters have only been able to master changing into domesticated cats and the smaller breeds of dogs. A few have managed serpents, or birds. Every day, wranglers strive to broaden this ability.

Many older witches do not approve of shapeshifting, and have expressed some concern over it. Most covens have instituted a policy against it, pointing out that all of its side-effects may not have been discovered. They bring up all the old tales about witches being trapped in bestial forms or losing their humanity. Faerie wranglers scoff at such worries, countering by pointing out all the stories about witches that had no basis whatsoever in reality. They claim that shape changing allows them to more effectively deal with the Fae, giving them another tool to draw upon when battling such tricky foes. Those covens that allow shape shifting do so discreetly.

Witches have proven to be an amazingly resourceful group time and time again. As they have in the past, they are trying to ensure the safety of themselves of their communities outside the city.

Totem Guards

When the city's witches saw what was happening in the city, some attempted to protect their own. Some made the effort — mainly through trial and error — to determine how magic worked under the new rules. By deciphering ancestral texts and using intuition and experiment, some managed to summon or create protectors to guard them against the coming time.

One example would be the creation of Hecate Weir and her sisters Selena and Artemis, the youngest members of their coven. Three sisters tried to call forth a creature to guard over the suburban community where they lived. They put much care into the creation of it, believing that the more effort was used to create it, the more power to protect it would have. They used items found around their community to bind it even more tightly to its duty. The creature was composed of clay from local streams, and straw from a farmer's field. Its body was wicker and branch; its head was a bag of hay. The bag has two Xs for eyes and a jagged stitched line for a mouth, drawn tight and accented with burnt cork. When it was summoned, it lay limp and unmoving. They tried everything they could think of to prod it into revealing itself, but to no avail; it remained a still figure crafted of hay and burlap.

Deciding that the attempt had been a failure, Hecate dragged the scarecrow to her backyard and tossed it into a burn barrel. She struck a match and touched it to the construct's shirt. In a flash, the fire consumed it and, as it did, the body rose. The stitch of the Xs unfurled, exposing gleaming black coal eyes. Its crooked mouth opened and a guttural rumbling came forth. Hecate named the construct "The Burning Man."

The Burning Man has since become a familiar figure to those with magical awareness; it slinks through yards and back streets, watching over and protecting its territory. Many children have seen it, and although there is a rippling unease beginning to form in the minds of the adult community when they hear their children speak of it, they do not fear it. Hunting for a glimpse of the Burning Man has become a game among the more adventurous youths of the suburban community. Thus far those who have actually managed to catch sight of it aren't speaking of what they witnessed, and he remains a mystery.

The Burning Man

Occupation: Guard
Height: 5' 11" (180 cm) **Eyes:** Black Stitches
Weight: 55 lbs. (25 kg) **Hair:** None

There is a lot of conjecture and thought on who or what the Burning Man actually is. That the three sisters summoned him is fact but exactly what those sisters summoned is not entirely clear. The Burning Man has no skin; he is just an animated scarecrow. He is generally silent and when he does utter sounds they are low and guttural moans.

He protects those who live in the suburbs. He stays in no fixed location, preferring to roam the area he is bound to. To the public, he is like a yeti: seen only in unverified glimpses and blurred photographs. Those who encounter him directly either do not live to tell the tale or are so grateful for his help they dare not speak his name for fear he may be captured — or worse.

The Burning Man (110 Character Points)

Body 10 **Mind** 4 **Soul** 6
Attack Combat Value 8 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 80 **Energy Points** 50

Level Points	Attributes
2	6 Attack Combat Mastery
2	12 Damage Conversion
6	24 Insubstantial
6	6 Sixth Sense (Danger to Community — Area 5)
6	24 Special Attack (100 Damage, Affects Incorporeal, Burning, Flare, Short Range, Unreliable)

Level Points	Skills
6	30 Special Ranged Attack

Points	Defects
-1	Bane (Water)
-1	Confined Movement (His Community)

Another witch, a loner named Portia Circe, laid a half-ton of powdered silver in a thin line along the city limits in an attempt to create a circle of protection around the city. She worked slowly, one bag full at a time, over the course of a year. She worked in secret, putting all of her energy into her goal, which was to protect the city against magical incursions. Unfortunately for Portia, her attempt at a circle of protection created a summoning circle instead. Portia woke something in her attempt to protect the city. Whether that something was benevolent or malevolent is unknown.

A week after finishing her rite, Portia went missing. Her small sunflower-coloured ranch home is completely closed up, and no one has been able to gain entry. Windows refuse to shatter, doors refuse to break, and the locks seem to have fused closed. Neither key nor lock pick will open them. After the initial alarm and concern for Portia began to fade, nearby witches began consider large issues. The thought of a lone practitioner having the power to single-handedly overcome a concerted effort on the part of several covens is unthinkable but what worries the witch community more is the possibility that Something claimed Portia and that it may well claim other witches too.

The Second World

A side effect of the ongoing healing process is that as our world draws magical energy from the Second World, travel between the two worlds is now much easier. Paths have opened, both temporary and permanent, which can be used by those who know how to move freely between the mundane world and the Second World. Some pathways only require the will to travel to walk along them. Others require rituals or specific incantations. Malcolm Grimmerson has begun compiling a list of pathways, but he has found it impossible to come up with a complete list. Between temporary pathways and those that shift location, his list is doomed to be forever out of date.

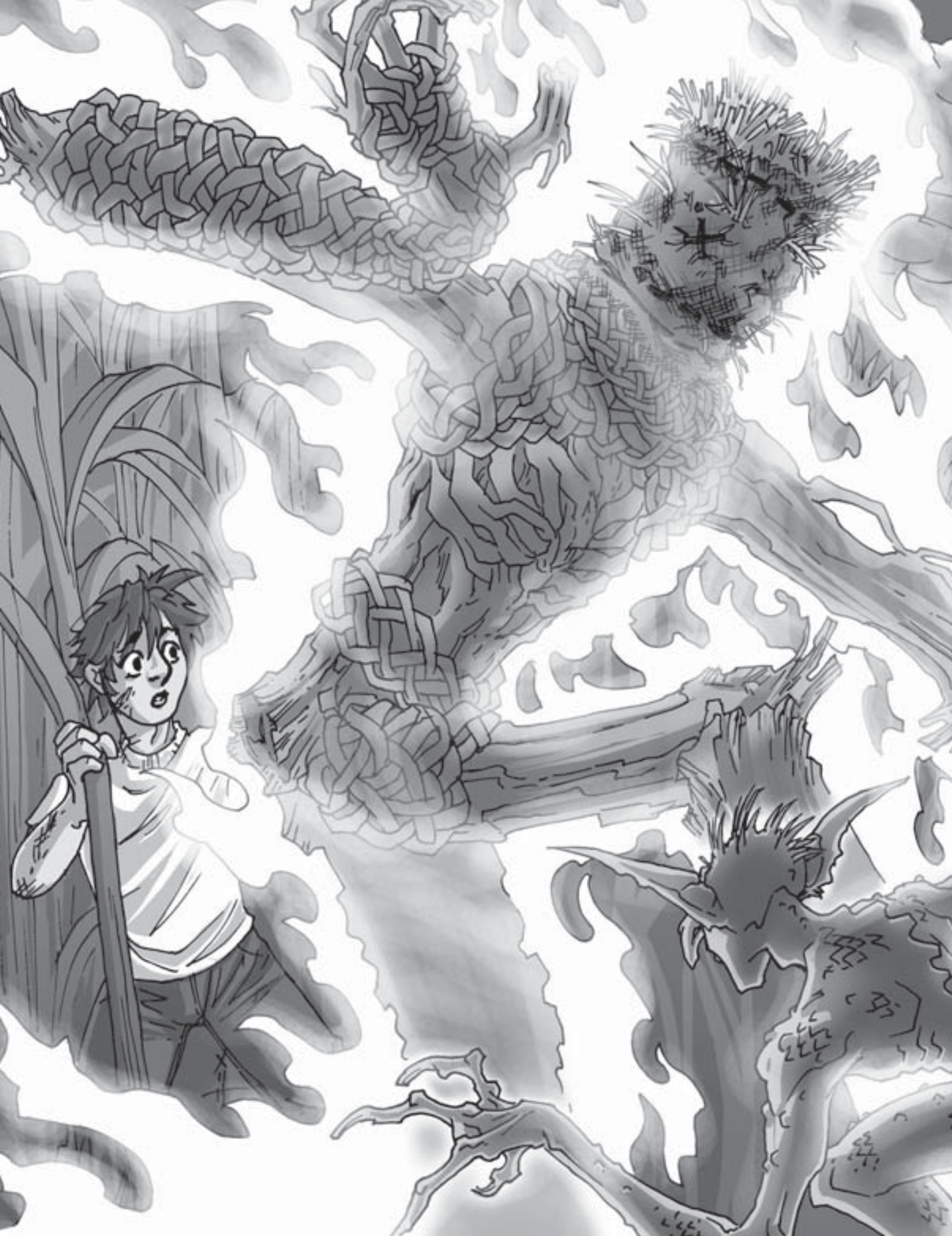
There are three main types of pathways; corresponding, keyed, and transient. A corresponding pathway leads the visitor to the Second World, depositing them directly to the place corresponding to their mundane world location (see Once There, page 200). Such pathways are the simplest to traverse; the traveller walks down them to arrive in a similar location in the Second World. Many of these pathways have been formed through happenstance; they tend to occur where the barriers separating the worlds are the weakest. A keyed pathway leads the visitor to a specific place that has nothing to do with the actual location of the pathway. It could bring those who enter it halfway across the worlds or more. Most of these pathways were deliberately created for specific purposes, and are likely to lead the unwary traveller into dangerous locales. Transient pathways are the most dangerous types to use; they will lead to random locations in the Second World, sometimes changing destinations within the space of a few seconds. These are the most likely pathways to trap visitors in the Second World, for if the destination of the pathway changes, unless an alternate exit presents itself, the visitor has no way to return.

Transience and the Second World

Malcolm Grimmerson has noted that transient pathways are rooted in the mundane world. To his knowledge, all transient pathways remain tied to the same location in the mundane world. It only where they lead to in the Second World that changes. He believes this is due to the more rigid nature of reality in the mundane world, although he admits he has not been able to spend much studying this variety of pathways.

It has been noted that transient pathways do tend to have some manner of shifting marks that may indicate where they lead to at any given moment. The most commonly known example of this is located in Ivorymere, a small theatre specialising in Shakespearean plays. In the women's powder room, there is an antique full-length mirror that can be stepped into if the proper incantation is spoken. The frame of the mirror is crafted of yew, and carved into various woodland scenes. So far, four possible destinations have been discovered, and with each one, the carvings on the frame change to present suitable images.

It is possible for a mundane to cross over to the Second World, but they cannot stay there safely for long. The visitor may freely remain within the Second world for as many minutes as five times their Soul value. Once that period has elapsed, they begin to lose one Health Point per minute. If slain, they are doomed to remain in the Second World as an intangible shade. Witches, warlocks, and other magical beings may freely enter the Second World, although they are bound to all the laws therein (see Once There, page 200.).





Promises and Vows

Mundanes are unable to remain long in the Second World without suffering effects that will, if unchecked, inevitably kill them. There is one known way to avoid this, which involves Geasa. Any mundane that binds him or herself to the service of a resident of the Second World can freely remain — indeed, is unable to leave — until they complete the terms of their service. There are Second World denizens who haunt entranceways of known pathways, seeking to trick unwary visitors into servitude (see Getting Back, page 201), while others simply offer aid. As always, it is advised that a visitor to the Second world act with all due caution.

Matilde Forsythe

Occupation: Artisan
Height: 5' (152 cm) **Eyes:** Blue
Weight: 120 lbs. (54 kg) **Hair:** Auburn

The Forsythe family has been around for centuries, having emigrated from Ireland to the New World when it was first being settled. The Forsythe's are Old Money and they have traditionally held a great deal of influence and fame within the city and its surrounding areas. The head of the Forsythe line is invariably a strong willed woman, and the current matriarch is 30-year-old Matilde. She is currently the sole member of the Forsythe family. Never a large family, all known members died a month prior to the unveiling of the Millennium Tree, when the Forsythe mansion burned to the ground. Matilde survived the blaze by climbing into her kiln when she realised the fire had cut off all other routes of escape.

Matilde is known for her devotion to her art. She has been carving stone and clay for as long as she has been able to remember, favouring images with mythological significance. Yggdrasil, or the Millennium Tree as it was then known, was a major source of inspiration for her and its destruction left her devastated. She turned this devastation into art, and thus the Wilde Fountains were created. She refused payment for this work, accepting only what donations people offered that covered the cost of the materials she had used to construct the Fountains.

Since creating this artefact, Matilde has been haunted by troubling dreams that she can barely remember upon waking. In each of them, she recalls one image: that of herself astride a winged lion. She remains unaware of the extent of her abilities, which stem from a distant Faerie ancestor, although she might at any moment discover or be informed of her true potential.

Matilde Forsythe (55 Character Points)

Body 3 **Mind** 4 **Soul** 4
Attack Combat Value 3 **Defence Combat Value** 1
Health Points 35 **Energy Points** 40

Level	Points	Attributes
1	13	Creation (Duration 10)
1	15	Power Flux: Deception
	-1	•Unreliable Power (Unaware of its Existence)
3	9	Wealth

Level	Points	Skills
3	12	Artisan (Sculpting)
3	6	Etiquette (High Society)
1	6	Melee Combat (Hammer)
2	6	Visual Arts (Sculpting)

Points	Defects
-1	Famous (Renowned Artist)
-2	Recurring Nightmares (Fighting losing battles)

The Wilde Fountains

The Wilde Fountains were built on the site where the Millennium Tree once grew. In an effort to boost the city's moral after the destruction of the Tree's, Matilde Forsythe, a notable sculptress, spent several months crafting this elaborate fountain. It is an enormous marble fountain that displays three figures: a crowned merman atop a sea horse; a warrior woman astride a winged lion, with sword held high, and a young fair-faced, pointy-eared man standing aside a smiling goat. Stone ivy leaves and serpents creep along the rim of the pool, and the water sprays from the warrior's sword. The red stone around it display the fountain's name: The Wilde Fountains. Onlookers may try to get wishes granted by tossing a coin into the fountain; dreams in the form of pennies litter the bottom of the crystalline pond.

The fountain is encircled with blue-grey marble. Scrawled in barely visible scratches along the bottom of the basin is a runic inscription. When read aloud, this inscription is part of a ritual that will turn the fountain into a pathway leading to the Second World. As the last syllable of the final word is spoken, all the water drains from the fountain to be replaced by a shimmering glow. To enter the Second World, the speaker simply climbs into the fountain. The pathway lasts long enough for only one person to cross at a time. Should more than one person wish to open the pathway, each one after the first must wait for the pool to refill itself.

Matilde can often be spotted lingering at the fountain, peering into its depths with a faint expression of bewilderment.

Once There

Once a pathway is activated and entered, the visitor finds himself or herself within the Second World. The Second World is vaguely analogous to the mundane world: cities correspond to cities, village to village, and wilderness for wilderness, although the nature of these analogous locations can differ greatly. A visitor entering a pathway in a small town might find him or herself exiting amidst a community of predators, or haunted burial grounds.

The Second World can be compared to a dream, and much like a dream, its appearance is mutable. Its appearance is affected by what the viewer is expecting to see, although it is important to note that the Second World is not a 'pleasure-box' that caters to every want or need. A frightened visitor might see sinister expressions upon the faces of everyone around, while someone expecting a paradise will see only welcoming gestures. A building might be perceived as a tree house, a colourful tent, a dark and dreary cave or something reminiscent of a standard urban dwelling, depending upon the expectations of the traveller. Like all dreams, appearance in the Second World can be (quite) deceiving. Group travel can be difficult, as it is by no means guaranteed that everyone will perceive the same things.

Provided the Second World would normally allow its entrance, any clothing and equipment the traveller is carrying will be brought along. Most complex technology will not function in the Second World unless it has been the subject of magical enhancement. Even simple tools may turn out to work differently in the Second World.

The Faerie Market

The Faerie Market is one of the main attractions in the Second World. Filled with all manner of vendors and creatures, this is the place where witches and warlocks can go to find any ingredients for magical spells, where students can seeks out teachers of obscure lore, and the unscrupulous may search for the unwary. It is slightly reminiscent of Renaissance Fairs, with a loose skeleton of buildings and alleys surrounded by colourful tents and stalls. The air is thick with smoke, the scent of wine and drink, and heavy with the sounds of street performers and merchants hawking their wares.

Titania's Trinkets

Named after the fabled Queen of Faeries, this shop is often ridiculed by those familiar with the Second World. It is the equivalent to the junk souvenir shops that bilk tourists in mundane cities. The shop is bright and gaudy, demanding attention, and many people and creatures that are unfamiliar with the Faerie Market make their first purchases there, always to their eventual regret. Titania's Trinkets has little to sell other than broken down charms (invisibility charms that make the user blind), faulty potions (Love potions whose effects wear off with the first kiss), and faulty equipment (six-sided pentagrams of demonic containment).

Deela's Delectables

Deela caters to those new to the Second World. She is located near a pathway, and she offers 'samples' to the unwary. Convenient word play insures she has a plentiful supply of heavily and inescapably indebted servants and slaves.

Getting Back

Provided the traveller normally resides within the mundane world, the traveller can return home simply by closing his or her eyes and wishing to return home. Upon a successful Soul check, the traveller appears in the mundane world. If the visitor uses this method, there is no telling where in the city they will appear. Alternately, the person can return to the pathway he or she used to reach the Second World, if the pathway still exists, and follow it back to the mundane world.

If a person consumes anything or steals anything from the Second World, he or she may become trapped there. If the person ate something, he or she must wait for it to pass through his or her system before returning to the mundane world. There is no Health Point penalty while the material is inside the body. Once it has passed, the person will start to lose Health Points as listed above. If a person has stolen something, he or she becomes indebted to the injured party. The transgression must then be atoned for, by first admitting the theft to the wronged party and then abiding by whatever sentence the wronged party insists upon. The rules governing punishment in the Second World dictate that wronged party cannot mandate anything cruel, unusual or any condition of atonement that cannot be fulfilled or which is paradoxical. If a person makes a promise to anyone while inside the Second World, he or she may still leave but cannot use magic in either world until the promise is fulfilled.

People are usually insatiably hungry for a few hours after returning from the Second World. The cause for this is unknown but almost everyone suffers this side effect.

Agents Most Foul

Heroes need villains to struggle against, and no true villain is complete with her or her hordes of henchmen (or henchwomen). Powerful adversaries have recruited incarnations and mundanes alike into service. What goals these recruits serve are entirely dependent on the nature of their particular master. Some villainous Incarnations enjoy life in this world too much to consider returning home to the Second World, despite the urges they feel as Incarnations. Many have successfully struggled to overcome the urge to play out their appointed role in their tales, to gain some measure of freedom for themselves. Some are trying to devise a way to destroy their enemies permanently, forever ending their story. These people hope that the rules of mundane world are different enough from those of the Second World to make this possible.

Hans Woolver

Occupation: CEO of Shepherd Enterprises
Height: 6'3" (191 cm) **Eyes:** Hazel
Weight: 200 lbs. (91 kg) **Hair:** Golden Brown

He'll huff and he'll puff and he'll buy you out. After that, he will shut down each division as he exports the jobs overseas to people willing to work in dangerous conditions for slave wages. He will force you out one way or another; liquidate your physical inventory and IP to the highest bidder; fold your dream; and even if no monetary return is possible, he will do it just to ruin your life. As far as he is concerned, the Big, Bad Wolf appeared in the best location imaginable for a predator like him. He has a corporate empire that spans the country, more wealth than he ever dreamed was possible, and all at the cost of a few moments of disorientation. He would not be displeased, were he to remain in the mundane world, and his alliance with Camper Wallace one step towards that end. If Woolver helps round up all the Incarnations, and backs the invasion of the Second World, his story won't ever come to a close. That is how he figures it, anyway.

Hans Woolver is a calculating man with very little patience. His business acumen is unrivalled. Hans got to his current position using his uncanny powers of persuasion, his lack of a moral code, and a team of attorneys and MBAs that he refers to as his Wolf Pack. He'll never admit it, but Hans's only regret is the death of Margaret Willston, Red's adoptive grandmother. Margaret was Hans's greatest supporter. She was killed in an extremely hostile take-over, when his rival took her hostage in an attempt to dissuade Hans from his course of action. Hans's rescue attempt failed and she was killed before he made it to her. Red blames him for her death, a belief that is only encouraged by his own self-recriminations. Since Margaret's death, Hans has become even more bloodthirsty than ever. Hans is a man of strength, cruelty, and secrets.

Hans Woolver
(125 Character Points)

Body 6 **Mind** 6 **Soul** 6
Attack Combat Value 6 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 60 **Energy Points** 60

Level	Points	Attributes
3	41	Dynamic Powers (Wind — Area 4, Duration 1, Range 4, Targets 2)
2	10	Happily Ever After
	-1	•Backlash
2	2	Heightened Senses (Smell, Taste)
1	1	Highly Skilled
10	30	Organisational Ties (CEO of Shepherd Enterprises)
3	9	Wealth

Level	Points	Skills
3	6	Architecture (Modern)
2	4	Controlled Breathing (Feign Death)
5	15	Demolition's (Plastic Explosives)
2	8	Intimidation (Business)
5	5	Management and Administration (Executive)
1	2	Power Lifting (Humans)

Points	Defects
-2	Nemesis (Red)
-1	Recurring Nightmares (Red's Grandmother)

The Wolf Pack

The seven members of Hans's "Wolf Pack" are MBAs, attorneys, and accountants of great acclaim. They are also all lycanthropes — werewolves to be precise. During the day, they tear apart their opponents in the boardroom, ravage weak prey in the courtroom, and bloody the soil with paperwork. Under the cover of night, all those metaphors become literal.

The Wolf Pack can transform at will, without need for a full moon or vial of mercury. Unlike the witch's animists, the Wolf Pack can do this at will, without any magical effort. They can do it at will. The price is that unlike the witch's animists, the Wolf Pack are limited to one alternate form, that of a grey wolf.

Wolf Pack
(Template Cost: 45)

Level	Points	Stats
+3	6	Body
+2	4	Mind

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	9	Alternate Form (Full-Powered; Grey Wolf)
+1	4	Animal Summon/Control (Canines; Duration 3)
+3	3	Highly Skilled
+6	18	Organisational Ties (Shepherd Enterprises)
+1	3	Wealth

Level	Points	AF ("Grey Wolf") Attributes
+1	3	Attack Combat Mastery
+1	1	Combat Technique (Leap Attack)
+1	2	Contamination (Must bite victim during the full moon)
+1	2	Enhanced Stat (Body)
+1	1	Heightened Senses (Smell)
+1	1	Natural Weapons (Fangs)

Level	Points	Skills
+3	12	Intimidation (Business)
+3	9	Law (Corporate)
+3	3	Management and Administration (Executive)
+1	6	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)

	Points	Defects
	-2	Achilles Heel (Silver)

One-Eye (210 Character Points)

Occupation: Unemployed
Height: 5'6"(168 cm) **Eyes:** Grey
Weight: 140lbs. (64 kg) **Hair:** Blond

Odin once had everything — literally. Now his life is in shambles. He is sliding down the slope of insanity. The spirit of Odin the All-Father, god of gods, was one of the few brought over the last time Yggdrasil was damaged and the Second World spilled into the mundane realm during the Gross Mandranke of 1362. Only the floodwaters covering the Friesian Utland had protected humans from direct contact with the Second World, at the cost of thousands of lives. Eventually, the wound healed but Odin's spirit remained here in the body of a man once known as Father Seamus O'Bannon. Father Seamus's body is over 600 years old now but Odin's spirit keeps it looking as young as it can.

The prolonged exposure to the mundane has driven Odin mad. He plucked out Seamus's right eye with a rusty dagger when he came to America in 1834. His grey hair is always matted with filth. Of his two blackbirds, only Munin, the one he called Memory is still alive. The other, the one called Hugin or Thought, is gone. Odin no longer remembers but he lost Hugin in a card game on a riverboat.

He no longer recalls where he gained his items, but he finds them quite useful. The golden ring he wears spawns enough wealth each night to keep him housed and fed. The large walking staff he uses protects him from would-be muggers and thieves. Most of the petty criminals in his neighbourhood know to leave him alone by now, although he occasionally encounters out of town thieves, most of who will never break into another house after meeting him.

Odin is known only as One-Eye now; it is a name given to him by the twin brothers from one of the families that live in his ramshackle walk-up. Odin spends all his time sitting in front of his television, loathing the world he is trapped in while arguing with himself, the television, the busted radiator, or whoever it is that keeps knocking on his door every Sunday morning.

Odin is quite possibly the greatest single stable source of magical energy in the city. He seems to attract the lion's share of vagrants, crazies, visionaries, and thieves, who flock to him on the rare occasions he leaves his apartment. There is one person, a girl named Freya Watkins, who stops by to take care of him. She tends to him as often as she can manage, although recently her father, Loknar, has become quite insistent that she avoid One-Eye's presence.

An outcast at school and at home, Freya says Odin is the only person who understands her. She speaks a language only One-Eye and she share. One-Eye is only barely aware of her presence, but at night, when drowsing in his chair, he sometimes dreams of the person Freya will grow up to be.

One-Eye
(210 Character Points)

Body 9 Mind 9 **Soul** 9
Attack Combat Value 9 **Defence Combat Value** 7
Health Points 90 **Energy Points** 90

Level	Points	Attributes
1	28	Dynamic Powers (Death; Area 3, Duration 3, Range 1, Targets 1)
1	29	Dynamic Powers (Dream; Area 3, Duration 1, Range 4, Targets 1)
3	69	Dynamic Powers (War; Area 3, Duration 1, Range 3, Targets 2)
	-1	• Detectable (War cries)
2	10	Happily Ever After
2	8	Item of Power (Golden Ring)
2	8	Item of Power (Walking Staff)
3	6	Servant (Munin)
1	3	Sixth Sense (Magic — Area 2)

Level	Points	IOP ("Golden Ring") Attributes
1	9	Creation (Wealth; Duration 7)

Level	Points	IOP ("Walking Staff") Attributes
1	1	Combat Technique (Accuracy)
2	4	Massive Damage
1	5	Teleport
	-1	•Restriction (To Wielder's Hand Only)

Level	Points	Skills
3	18	Occult (Runic Lore)
1	12	Melee Attack (Staves)

	Points	Defects
	-1	Recurring Nightmares
	-1	Sensory Impairment (Single Eye)
	-2	Nemesis (Loknar)

The Beasts

The Beasts are all the bad things that have crawled and clawed their way into our world. They are the trolls, demons, dragons, and undead that haunt our nightmares, who often exist simply to provide an Incarnation with the opposition they require to complete their tales. Not all Beasts can be spotted through appearance alone. In the mundane world, many Beasts have found ways to disguise their dark natures. To a fellow commuter, a demon may appear to be a red-haired man with piercing blue eyes, only exposing his true self just before tearing the still-beating heart out of his mundane seatmate. A dragon may walk the streets as a mild-mannered kabuki dancer, only unfurling her wings under the cover of absolute darkness.

There are many ways to hide. Some Beasts come out only at night, or employ humans to attend to their daily tasks in their place. A nest of harpies may enslave the unlucky homeless, dispatching their hapless servants to poke through dumpsters for the carrion the harpies require.

Meruadh

Often mistakenly thought of as Fae, the meruadh are mundane men and women who willing exchanged their mortality for power. During the process of becoming a meruadh, a small item — usually a semiprecious or precious stone-- is mystically bound to the person. With this item, the meruadh can steal the energy of those around them, using it to power their own skills and abilities. Without it, the meruadh is helpless and can be easily enslaved or defeated.

Meruadh are soulless beings. As such, they do not age, and are totally immune to non-magical illnesses.

The most commonly encountered meruadh are the Selkie, who can adopt the forms of seals or other sea creatures.

Meruadh
(Template Cost: 50 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+5	20	Item of Power (Meruadh Focus)
+2	35	Power Flux (Fae Magic, Duration Reversed 5)
	-7	• Burns Energy
Level	**Points**	**IOP ("Meruadh Focus") Attributes**
+1	1	Adaptation (Underwater)
+3	9	Alternate Form: Partial-Powered Form (Animal Form)
+2	2	Special Defence (Non-magical Disease)
+3	12	Special Weapon Attack (Damage 60, Drains Energy, No Damage)

The Fae

To those with magical sight, the city and its suburbs have been transformed since the destruction of Yggdrasil. The Fae have invaded, dusting the city and its outlying areas with the signs of their presence. Even when they are careful to leave no physical signs of their presence, the Fae are unable to hide their distinctive signature: a shimmering, muted green hue that is clearly visible to even the most unskilled of witches. All Fae leave this mark, which stems from their origin in the fair realms. If the viewer is perceptive and knowledgeable enough, they may distinguish between each type of Fae by the distinct calling sign each variety leaves. An area infested with nymphs shimmers with the green of new leaves, goblins leave a more unwholesome green, dark and festering, and the green of a pixie infestation resembles a chaotic mass of continually mutating shades. If the Fae leave an area altogether, the colour gradually fades, slowly becoming a faint, iridescent aquamarine. Where the Fae were particularly active or numerous, it can take centuries before this colour fades completely, marking certain areas as 'Fae-touched' for quite some time.

There are many rumoured ways to ward off the Fae. Not all of these methods are actually effective. Some types of Fae seem to have no particular weaknesses, while others are injured by cold iron, and other things that traditionally injure or drive away the Fae. It has been noted that most of these vulnerabilities are tied into the magical abilities of the Fae. Those with more magical abilities are often those who are the most sensitive.

When the Fae first move into an area, they begin to align themselves into what are commonly known as Courts. Mortals commonly refer to these courts as Seelie and Unseelie, and the Fae have begun referring to them in the same manner. For the Fae, these terms are actually something of a joke. It is commonly perceived in the mundane world that those Fae who are more good than evil will join the Seelie Courts, and vice versa. While this might technically be true, for the Fae, the Fae choice of Courts merely reflects his or her personal aesthetics. It is not that the Seelie Court is good, it is simply that this Court prefers to function within a code of living that appears this way to those who only catching an occasional glimpse of it.

This is what makes the Courts so dangerous to outsiders. It is easy to assume that one is in the midst of well-meaning companions when their sense of aesthetics mimics what humans commonly referred to as good. Neither Court feels much compunction against kidnapping, theft, or murder; it is how these tasks are accomplished where they differ. The Seelie Court strives for grace and elegance. To them, it is far more amusing to create vast games where they trick their victims into thinking they have brought their own fate upon them. They will not simply swoop in to grab their victim. Instead they prefer to trap them with cunning. A nigh-unwinnable test might be created: a Seelie Fae who desires something from a drunkard will craft a game wherein the drunkard is only taken should they drink. Although the Seelie take great care in manufacturing the circumstances of these games, they strive for simplicity, believing that the fewer variables in their game, the more probable it is that the game will play out as they wish. It is very rare for a Fae to lose at these games, for they are not above surreptitious cheating to get their way, if they believe they can do this unnoticed.

Conversely, the Unseelie Courts prefer open whimsy. If they want something, they simply take it. Any games they might play are so blatantly stacked against their victims that they lose even more rarely than do the Seelie, for they will not enter a contest except to derive amusement from the hopeless struggles of their victims. Despite the pains both factions take in setting up their games, the Seelie Fae are fascinated by a challenge, the Unseelie are not.

Goblins

Goblins are mean-spirited little buggers with beady red eyes and long, twisted limbs. They have brown skin covered with sickly grey specks, warts, and rough, scaly patches. What little hair they have spouts out of their noggin in spotty, dirty black clumps. No goblin stands more than two meters tall and most are less than one. They communicate via rough low growls and raucous shrieks. Goblins are generally happy little creatures provided they are given the opportunity to wreak havoc on their environment and maintain a full belly.

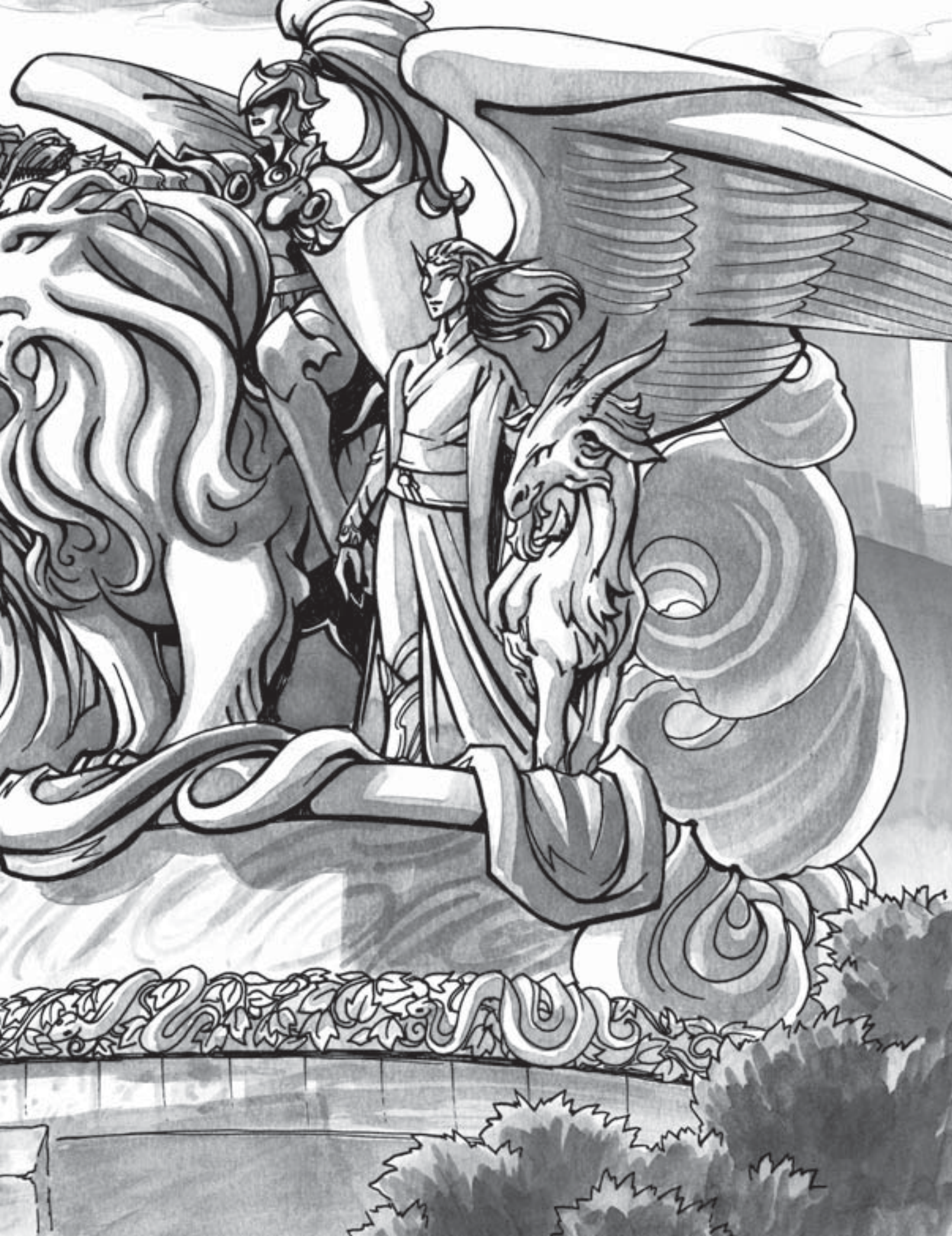
In the city, their diet is primarily unlucky dogs and cats, preferring animals with owners to mourn them to ferals and strays. Goblins find the meat on strays to be tougher and less juicy than those plucked from backyards and from under porches. Goblins are easily confused by patterns so most tabbies and calicos are safe, as long as they keep on the move. This serious cognitive deficit is often exploited as protection against goblin rampages, since elaborate designs painted across walls and walkways will deter any curious goblin. For no known reason, Dalmatians anger goblins to no end, and many goblins have been known to abandon a half-eaten meal to attack a Dalmatian if the chance arises.

While no goblin is well behaved, they can be tamed by a Fairie wrangler confident (or foolish) enough to accept the task. Like a rambunctious puppy, a goblin can be trained if handled properly. They can be made useful for small manual tasks if rewarded with a bit of meat or sugar. Often, dealing with goblins often involves luck: the trainer hopes the goblin will choose to eat the neighbour's car in lieu of his or her own.

Goblins are primarily solitary hunters though rare groups of two or three, invariably related by blood, are occasionally spotted. They seem fond enough of each other, although they are easily provoked, and will often turn on each other. Goblins do not have individual names, although a few wranglers have trained a few of the brighter goblins to answer to names. Left on their own, goblins slap, scratch, tug at, or bite each other to get attention. Pet goblins must be trained not to instinctively resort to these violent methods with their masters.

Beyond their problems with obedience, the biggest problem with goblins is their intense stench. Unwashed goblins reek like wet garbage that has been left forgotten under a pile of dung during a long, hot August week. A thorough





cleaning will help for a few hours, but the odour will inevitably return. Most Fairie wranglers concur that the stench is inherent, exuded through the goblin's skin and not, as was once believed, the result of their lifestyle.

Goblins dwell primarily in the suburbs, rarely venturing to the city core, although a very few brave goblins have discovered the delights that can be found in back alleys. Goblins love to rummage through rubbish cans and recycle bins. They are capable of making crude, non-functional constructs that some wranglers have compared to Impressionist sculpture. These structures are almost universally phallic in nature, and tend to incorporate a lot of tin cans. Redkin find these images immensely amusing, and have been known to capture more artistically inclined goblins for their own perverse entertainment. Many Redkin have collected entire gardens of goblinoid art, filling alleys, warehouses, and parking lots.

A dead goblin begins to degrade immediately. Mere moments after its death, the goblin is little more than a pile of rich earth. A faint odour remains, although many will overlook this given the vitalising effect the soil has upon plants. The remains of a goblin are often used as fertiliser for vegetable gardens.

Goblin
(Template Cost: 15)

Level	Points	Stats
-2	-4	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	3	Armour
+1	1	Combat Technique (Leap Attack)
+2	2	Natural Weapons (Fangs, claws)
+3	12	Special Attack "Stench" (40 Damage, Area of Effect, Enduring, Irritant, Penetrating: Armour, Inaccurate, Short Range, Toxic)
+2	4	Tough
	Points	**Defects**
	-1	Easily Distracted (Dalmatians)
	-2	Marked (Inhuman Appearance)

Redkin

Redkin are to the city core as goblins are to the suburbs, save for one difference: Redkin are meaner and smarter than their country cousins. Redkin stand just under a meter, with long spindly limbs. Their pale translucent skin looks gelatinous but stands up to damage like Kevlar. They dress in whatever clothing they can steal and they have a noted preference for shades of red. Their long noses and large bloodshot eyes, when combined with the layers of second-hand clothes and their shaggy grey hair, allows them to blend in among the city's homeless population.

In the Second World, Redkin are almost attractive creatures, with rosy-hued skin, and long auburn hair. At home, they have a marked tendency toward malice. Here in the mundane world, their bodies are transformed, withered and toughened, the beauty they possessed at home is faded and haggard and they hunger for cruelty. They claim alleyways, abandoned subway stations, and any small corners tucked out of the way as their homes, crafting nightmarish hideaways to torment those unfortunate enough to fall victim to them (see Mastery of Glamour, Urban Fantasy page 89). They will kidnap children, running them through their territories until they are mindless with terror. Redkin are fond of the taste of freshly inspired terror.

Redkin are malicious, psychotic creatures. Among the most dangerous of the Fae at home, they have become doubly so since they crossed over to the mundane world. Redkin are able to speak clearly enough that regular folk can understand them, but sometimes they will mistakenly speak an animal language such as doggerel, caterwaul, or rattish to a human being. Most folk dismiss these sounds as the gibbering of someone who is mentally ill or strung out on drugs.

Faerie wranglers have a particularly hard time with Redkin since Redkin are both intelligent enough to get around and work the city without being obnoxious but psychotic enough not to be able to control their base and sociopath tendencies. The wranglers are thankful there are very few Redkin around.

Redkin
(Template Cost: 70)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+2	6	Animal Summon (Rats; Duration 2)
+2	2	Heightened Awareness
+3	50	Power Flux: Deception (Duration Reversed 5)
+2	14	Mimic Powers (Duration 1; Range 1)
	Points	**Defects**
	-2	Achilles Heel (Cold Iron)
	-2	Marked (Slight Alien Appearance)

Pixies

Pixies are only a few inches tall, and move so quickly that they are only barely visible to humans' eyes. They have short spiky hair, large gem coloured eyes, skin that is faintly reminiscent of opals, and large gossamer dragonfly's wings. They tend to dress in tattered clothes woven from unravelled carpets and curtains, or threads stolen from their victim's clothing. They converse in high-pitched tones that resemble the squealing of fingernails on chalkboard, or the whine of faulty fluorescent lights.

Pixies are often referred to by mundanes as gremlins. Even those who remain ignorant of the reappearance of magic and Incarnations will sometimes recognise a pixie infestation. Such claims are meant mainly as jokes but many people who have claimed a resident gremlin are actually hosting one or more pixies. When encountered singly, pixies are rarely worrisome. It is when a hoard of them infests an area that they become problematic, and pixies are highly social. Pixies have often been compared to fungus: where one blemish appears, it is fairly certain more will quickly follow.

To state that a pixie is fond of mischief is akin to describing the sun as bright. Pixies live for trouble, and are quite skilled at finding ways to irritate everything around them. Pixies love fluorescent light. They love to steal the caps from permanent markers, loosening the bolts in padded leather chairs, removing the rubber balls from computer mice and they absolutely love to jam the printer with a moulted pair of gossamer wings. In terms of the potential to cause trouble, there is no better home for a pixie than an office. Many will compete with each other, trying to see who can cause the most mischief. A gang of pixies is never happier than when they have disrupted an entire office and turned its workers at each other's throats.

Pixies are the champions of the cruel and unusual practical joke. They have mastered the art of misdirection, often studying their targets for some time before beginning their campaigns of mischief. A favourite trick is stealing from one office worker, breaking the object, then concealing the fragments, badly, in a co-worker's cubicle. They will substitute salt for sugar in the lounge, but only when they can frame some human for this.

Pixies have infested the business district, and outside of a few foolhardy Redkin, that territorial claim is respected. There are few Fae who would not be concerned about being targeted by a vengeful pixie, or worse, many vengeful pixies and many Fae consider 'pixie zones' to be somewhat hazardous to the health.

Faerie wranglers have created a network of Human Resource and temp agency personnel to ensure enough of them are on staff to quell any potential pixie outbreaks. It is not known just how smart pixies are but any Fae that can unobtrusively slip horse tranquillisers into jelly doughnuts are a danger that cannot be ignored.

Pixies
(Template Cost: 20)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	4	Flight
+2	8	Insubstantial
+1	3	Invisibility (Sight)
+1	6	Speed
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive
	-1	Easily Distracted (Bright lights)

Nymphs

Most of the fey find themselves in the mundane world through chance or to seek out the possibilities for mischief that exist in a world that is largely unaware of their presence. Not so with the nymph: most of the beautiful creatures in the mundane world have been exiled from their home in the Second World. Although they are best known for their great physical beauty, most nymphs are scholars of arcane lore, and have been aware of the mundane world, and its effect upon them, for centuries.

Nymphs have always remained somewhat outside the Courts of the Fae. Standard Fae values means nothing to the Nymphs and so they see no purpose in aligning themselves with either of the Courts. They instead govern themselves through a series of councils, which they call Circles. Positions within these Circles are based largely upon sorcerous ability; they most value knowledge and its acquisition, and their leadership reflects this. There are still actions even the nymphs frown on and the worst crimes, such as making decisions based upon moral implications, are punishable by exile to the mundane world.

The mundane world is as hostile to nymphs as the Second world is to mundane humans. A nymph unlucky enough to be exiled to our world will die within 24 hours of arriving, so it is rare to see a nymph in her true form. After their body expires, nymphs are forced to survive on our side by stealing bodies. Their strong spirits drain mortal shells fairly quickly, so nymphs must switch bodies every few days to avoid doing permanent damage to their host. They prefer to occupy the bodies of animals and children, as these usually possess spirits that are easier to dominate and dismiss. If the nymph does not leave the body before a week or so passes, the body will die, forcing the nymph to relocate anyway. A nymph can only survive a handful of hours without a mortal host to sustain them. If they stay outside a body for too long, their spirits explode. Nymph spirits look like purple-grey dust and smoke in ghostly echo of their original bodies.

Nymphs have claimed the parks and the schools as their home.

Nymphs
(Template Cost: 80)

Level	Points	Stats
-1	-2	Body
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+4	16	Insubstantial
	-3	• Permanent
+5	29	Mind Control (Possession — Duration 8, Targets 1)
+2	35	Power Flux: Deception (Duration Reversed 5)
+2	8	Special Attack "Blinding Beauty" (40 Damage, Flare, No Damage)
	Points	**Defects**
	-3	Physical Impairment (Lack of Host)

The Others

Not everyone the Hero comes in contact with will have ties to magic. The bulk of people in the city remain blissfully unaware of what is lurking in the hidden corners of the city. Most folk remain caught up in modern ways of thought, seeing only the stars when they stare at the sky and just a crowd when they gaze out their window. These are the ordinary blue-collar workers, the office clerks, and the bureaucrats.

The Affected

Even those who cannot see magic might sometimes become affected by it. The Affected are people whose lives have been changed by magic — for good or ill — despite their ignorance. Office-workers who have been the butt of a pixie's practical joke, or whose child was kidnapped by Redkin are among the Affected.

Glitterdust

A new drug called Glitterdust, or simply 'Glit,' has recently hit the streets in great quantities. It is highly addictive and it grants its users a variety of different effects with no immediately noticeable side effects. Most addicts enjoy it for its surprise, for the high of Glitterdust is unpredictable. It always grants hallucinations, most notably colouring the world in sparkling hues of green, but it can also create euphoria, hyperactivity, and it can improve perception. Some users have reported other side effects, such as the ability to turn invisible or the ability to float on breezes, but these users are laughed off as having enjoyed especially intense hallucinations.

Glitterdust comes in pill or powdered form, and it is often mixed into drinks. It is created from the distilled blood of faeries, most often pixies as they rarely missed. There is a thriving Glitterdust trade, and thus far few have become aware of just how it is made.

The most dangerous aspect of Glitterdust has yet to be discovered. Should anyone who has taken the drug within the past 24 hours enter the Second World, they will be unable to leave until they atone for their part in the death of whatever Fae was used in its creation.

Magical Affect On The Mundane

The mundane cannot resist change, even slight change, when it comes in contact with magic. Most of the time, the change is barely noticeable: A person may start hearing a certain song in his or her head that they cannot shake; a tree may bear strange fruit, or someone who is always late for work may suddenly become infallibly punctual. The change may be routine or it may be absurd but the person will be permanently or temporarily altered.

Your Average Citizen

Player characters are either Incarnations, the embodiments of myths and fables, or they are ordinary or half-blooded people who have somehow stumbled upon magic. In either case, the characters have suddenly found themselves in a world that is unexpected and often bewildering.

Many Incarnations compare their lives in the Second World to sleepwalking. Finding themselves in the mundane world was akin to waking from a very involving dream. An unlucky few of them claim it is the reverse, insisting that they went from an enjoyable existence to one of nightmares. For many of them, that moment of awakening is immediately followed by panic. Camper Wallace's Millennium Initiative is on the lookout for Incarnations, who are most easily found as they try to adapt to their new situation in the mundane world. They must not only adjust to the abrupt change in their story line, and to a world that operates on a different set of principles than the one they are used to, but to the introduction of a previously unknown enemy.

Normal folk who are brought into the magical underground are in the same predicament, having to adjust to unnatural law. Magic violates all the rules that most people grow up with, and those who are unfamiliar with it become easy prey for the unscrupulous. Most normal folk who become involved in the magical world do so for some specific purpose, whether that is to seek revenge, to protect those they care for, or to explore the new world that has opened up before them.

Even those who are familiar with magic and its workings are at somewhat of a disadvantage. After lifetimes with a dearth of magical energy, there is suddenly a flood. While creating potions, spells and tinctures has become a great deal easier, this flood has also brought with it dangerous creatures and possibilities. Witches and warlocks are discovering new skills and abilities almost daily, and although magic has always been a risky practice, it is even more so now.

Organisations

In order for people to live, thrive, and survive in the magical underground, they need to serve a purpose. Those people who do nothing get nothing. Organisations, such as they are, have begun to crop up in the city and beyond, forming networks of magicians, Incarnations, and mundane oddities. These organisations are listed below as well as example characters one would find within the group.

East 42nd Street Regulars

It is a sad fact that many of the Incarnations and other magical creatures are poorly equipped to deal with the mundane world. Many of them find themselves living on the streets, unable or unwilling to adapt to the demands of modern life. Just as many of them are scoundrels by nature, and these take advantage of their magical abilities to bilk mundane folk for everything they can. The scoundrels have banded together to form a poorly organised band that calls itself the Regulars.

The Regulars see themselves as the rogues of modern society. They include in their ranks pickpockets, cutpurses, con men, junkies, homeless vets, musicians, and general street folk. They are a close-knit band whose headquarters, called The Shelter, is a now-defunct soup kitchen in a once-prosperous street. Many of the Regulars have nowhere else to go but most of them claim that even if they did, they would remain. What's a house, they ask, compared to having friends you can count on? Who'd want a job, when they'd have to give up freedom?

A large part of the Regulars are magical folk, but not all. Anyone who calls the street their home is welcome among them. Every evening, a portion of the day's take is pooled to buy food for the next evening's meal. While all may come to the Regulars for a bed for the night and a bowl of soup, only those who have proven themselves worthy of trust and have a trade applicable to the Regular's situation are let in on the big scores and deep secrets. More than a few of the Regulars would be surprised to learn they share quarters with Incarnations and magicians.

Dodgers

While Street Performers manage the trade in information, Dodgers deal in hard currency. Always street kids, Dodgers are infamous for their puppy-dog eyes and their fast hands. A Dodger will first try to appeal to empathy, grabbing sympathy --and cash-- by staging collisions with bike messengers or cars. If those don't work, they lift anything not nailed down, from apples and candy to watches and rings. Now and again they pull off a real score, though mainly they leave the big jobs to the Fagans. Dodgers specialise in taking advantage of the good nature of marks and unexpected moments of opportunity.

Their motto is 'Always Prepared,' and their overlarge coats conceal an abundance of tools. Skeleton keys and duct tape reside beside false IDs and hat pins. Even the coats themselves serve a purpose beyond warmth and storage. When grabbed, a Dodger will shed the coat, slipping away in the blink of an eye.

Dodgers
(Template Cost: 10)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Body

Level	Points	Attributes
+2	2	Combat Technique (Concealment, Steady Hand))
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+3	3	Highky Skilled
+1	1	Special Movement (Balance)
+1	2	Tough

Level	Points	Skills
+1	3	Acrobatics (Jumps)
+1	5	Area Knowledge (The City: Downtown)
+1	2	Climbing (Walls)
+1	3	Disguise (Costume)
+1	4	Sleight of Hand (Pick Pocketing)
+1	5	Stealth (Move Silently)
+1	4	Street Sense (Gang Activity)
+1	4	Urban Tracking (Commercial)

Points	Defects
-1	Ism (Youth)

Street Performers

If there is one thing that is required for Incarnations to survive, it is information, and information is one good the Regulars have in abundance. If something is happening, the odds are someone among the Regulars knows something about it. They are the first source many turn to when in need of information. Street Performers are the eyes and ears of the Regulars. They are ubiquitous throughout the city's streets, performing in subway stations, on street corners, and in public parks. Street performers have the uncanny ability to fade completely into the background when they need to, and to appear as soon as the opportunity for profit presents itself.

Mimes and musicians are the foot soldiers of the Street Performers, followed by acrobats, artists, and street preachers. They attract crowds, observe who comes and goes, and listen closely to passing conversations. Mimes speak little, but listen well. Musicians can change moods, and traffic lights, with a few choice chords. Most people do not appreciate that street performers are the soul of the city, defining its rhythm and step.

Street Performers
(Template Cost: 5)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Body

Level	Points	Attributesy
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+3	3	Highly Skilled

Level	Points	Skills
+1	3	Acrobatics (Flexibility)
+3	15	Area Knowledge (The City: Downtown)
+1	3	Performing Arts (Any)
+1	5	Stealth (Concealment)
+1	4	Street Sense (Territorial Divisions)

Points	Defects
-1	Ism (Occupational Discrimination)

There is little Street Performers value more than information, and they have built a thriving trade out of collecting it. They are generally not privy to the secrets that occur within the buildings of the city, but they are quite knowledgeable about those things that occur in the public thoroughfares. If a murder is committed inside a building in the city, they may not know who committed the deed, but if the body was brought outside, they will be aware of when it was brought out, and who carried it.

Mundane Street Performers will not possess unusual attributes, although those with a magical background often find themselves in this role due to abilities that compliment a life devoted to performance. Amongst the magic-touched Street Performers, Attributes such as Invisibility, Illusion, and Transmutation are fairly common. It is rare for Street Performers to remain ignorant of the magical nature of some of their companions, even if they themselves lack such a background.

Fagans

Fagans are adult Dodgers. Where Dodgers take advantage of sympathy and circumstance, Fagans are the long-term planners of the Regulars. They acquire tips, looking for larger scores, and they take the time to carefully plan their thefts. A Fagan can just as easily play the straight man in a Dodger's gig, or build up longer cons and larger grifts that the Dodgers lack the patience or experience to complete. The 'homeless vet', blind on one stretch of the sidewalk and legless on the next, is a classic pose often used by Fagan grifters.

Most Fagans are Dodgers who have grown to adulthood among the Regulars, who failed to find a life beyond that group, or who lacked the desire to try. The Dodgers tend to provide the Regulars with its steady income, although the Fagans may provide periodic windfalls. Willing to work as a mercenary band, they are often hired by outside parties for targeted thefts. More than a few Items of Power have found their ways into the hands of Fagans, even if these items remain unrecognised by their "liberators".

Fagans
(Template Cost: 15)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
+1	2	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+2	2	Combat Technique (Concealment, Steady Hand)
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+4	4	Highly Skilled
+1	1	Special Movement (Balance)
+1	2	Tough
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	3	Acrobatics (Jumps)
+2	10	Area Knowledge (Any)
+1	2	Climbing(Walls)
+1	3	Disguise (Costume)
+1	4	Sleight of Hand (Pick Pocketing)
+2	10	Stealth (Move Silently)
+1	4	Street Sense (Gang Activity)
+1	4	Urban Tracking (Commercial)
	Points	**Defects**
	-1	Wanted (Police)

The Wizards of Union Station

The Wizards of Union Station are a group of street people who are all skilled witches and warlocks. They are aware of the return of magic, and the appearance of mythical beasts, heroes, and villains. The Wizards tend to find it difficult to disconnect from the magical world, even when this would be conducive to living indoors. They live in the bowels of the city, surviving on its largess, and as a result they are more aware of its intimate nature. After the destruction of Yggdrasil, this nature has been mainly influenced by the return of magic.

Whether because of their intimate ties to magic, or their style of living, few Wizards have close friends outside of their loosely bound organisation, as people find their countenances and dispositions somewhat disturbing. The Wizards' hands tremble, and their skin is sallow and they are somewhat prone to raving in gibberish and dramatically gesturing at things nobody else can see. They are the fidgety old women in baggy clothes muttering to themselves on the city bus. They are the panhandlers in the subway, and the passed out drunks on street corners.

Speakers

Speakers are so named for their ability to speak for the dead. This ability is as often a curse as it is a blessing, for while they are able to learn a great deal from the city's departed, they rarely can control when a ghost will use them as a mouthpiece in the living world. Many Speakers wander through life in a sort of daze, guided and controlled by ghosts who use the Speakers for their own purposes. Speakers are intimate with the inside of jail cells, and the dedication of private guards, for many Speakers find themselves vehicles used by meddling ghosts. They will grab the arm of a random passer-by on the street, and speak gibberish, repeating dire (and often unintelligible) warnings from the passer-by's dead grandmother. They will walk into a crowded three-star restaurant to deliver a threat of vengeance from the mobster who was slain by the headwaiter's father.

Speakers
(Template Cost: 5)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	1	Highly Skilled
+1	3	Sixth Sense (Magic, Area 2)
+4	4	Telepathy (Only With Ghosts)
	-2	• Permanent
	-1	• Restriction (One-way Telepathy: Receiver)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	6	Occult (Channelling)
+1	4	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)
	Points	**Defect**
	-2	Unappealing (Odious Personal Habits)

Seers

Seers see the Second World superimposed atop the mundane one. This creates serious difficulties for the Seers as they interact with the mundane world, for many react to creatures and events that only they see. The alien scale of the Second World increases these difficulties. A metre in the mundane world means little in the Second, and the Seer might be seeing a huge areas or minute ones superimposed over every city block.

When they are able to make sense of what they are seeing, Seers can be quite formidable. They can tell a mortal from an Incarnation at a glance, and can determine a person's familiarity with magic. They can find nests of pixies, and other gatherings of Fae, by following the telltale trails of Fairie dust. They are able to see the patterns of the magical world, and are thus best able to determine its impact upon the city. When paying attention, many Seers are able to locate HotSpots with fair accuracy (see HotSpots, page 218).

Seers
(Template Cost: 10)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+2	2	Highly Skilled
+2	6	Sixth Sense (Magic, Second World — Area 4)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	3	Foreign Culture (Second World)
+1	6	Occult (Second World)
+1	4	Street Sense (Territorial Divisions)
	7	Unspent Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-2	Easily Distracted (Events in Second World)

The Benevolent Constabulary

The Benevolent Constabulary is a network of law enforcement professionals who have made it their duty to prevent the discovery of Incarnations and magic. They fear the havoc that might result were magic to become generally known to the general populace, and so they have allied to keep it hidden. The Constabulary is draws from the entire range of the police, including within its ranks pencil pushers, forensic specialists, detectives and street cops. They ensure that necessary pay-offs get made, that magic does not become common knowledge and that revealing evidence is kept hidden from the press, and those law enforcement personnel who are still ignorant of magic. One of their most important tasks is ensuring the wrong people are not assigned to sensitive jobs; making sure, for example, that forensic pathologists who are as yet still innocent of any inkling of the magic are not assigned an autopsy of a minotaur.

Most of the credit for the general public's continued lack of knowledge of magic in the city is due to the efforts of the Benevolent Constabulary.

Flatfeet

Flatfeet work out of the back offices of the Constabulary, dealing mainly with the piles of documentation that could reveal what is going on in the city. They trash and forge paperwork as needed, help magical folk handle modern bureaucracy, sometimes assisting the magical to find new identities or alter old ones, whiles they deal with staffing. Staffing is particularly critical. Flatfeet admit that their work is not glamorous, but it is vital to keeping hysteria at bay.

Flatfeet are as important to those who seek information as the Street Performers of the Regulars, for Flatfeet are aware of much that happens inside the private areas of the city. If a crime is committed, they will learn about it. The Flatfeet and the Street Performers have an uneasy alliance, with one side calling upon the other when there is need.

Flatfeet
(Template Cost: 10)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	2	Computer Scanning
+3	3	Highly Skilled
+2	2	Organisational Ties (Law Enforcement)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+3	9	Computers (Databases)
+1	5	Gun Combat (Pistols)
+2	6	Law (Criminal)
+2	4	Management/Admin (Government)
+2	6	Police Sciences (Any)
	Points	**Defects**
	-1	Red Tape

Gumshoes

Gumshoes are the detectives, the street police, and the forensic experts of law enforcement investigation. They investigate crime scenes, examine evidence in labs, and follow up on investigations. Gumshoes have two main functions: to work on those cases that have been identified as being magic-related, and to identify new cases that have magical ties as quickly as possible, so the Flatfeet can put the right person on the job. Most Gumshoes are honest, down-to-earth types, working to hide information only because they believe no good can come of the widespread knowledge of the existence of the Second World. There are few people as aware of the horrors mundane people can inflict upon each other than those who deal with homicides and other crimes on a daily basis. Many of them fear what might happen were it to be generally known that the city was suffering an infestation of Fae and other beasts.

Gumshoes have invested a considerable amount of time and effort into studying the abilities of magical beings. More than a few have been noted to have a dampening effect upon nearby magic. They refuse to comment upon this. Because of this lack of co-operation, the question of whether people with this ability are drawn to the Gumshoes, or if it is a skill taught to them by older Gumshoes remains unanswered.

Gumshoes
(Template Cost: 15)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	6	Block Power
+1	2	Defence Combat Mastery
+4	4	Highly Skilled
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+2	10	Area Knowledge (Any one area)
+2	6	Driving (Car)
+2	6	Law (Criminal)
+1	4	Medical (Emergency Response)
+2	6	Police Sciences (Criminology)
+2	8	Urban Tracking (Underworld)
	Points	**Defects**
	-1	Red Tape

Librarians

None appreciate the phrase 'Information is Power' more than the Librarians do. Libraries, whether physical buildings filled with shelves of books or virtual spaces crammed with electronic data, are empires of information, and those who walk their halls are the emperors. Thanks to the Internet, modern libraries are no longer solitary bastions of learning, but nodes within vast networks of data.

Librarians are the Druids of the modern age. They guard information, preventing dangerous knowledge — such as the formulas required to summon powerful demons — from falling into the wrong hands. Librarian teach those who come to them, if they are worthy and they research, searching out forgotten secrets and unknown lore. Classical literature and modern encyclopaedias are as valuable to them as ancient grimoires and eldrich tomes. They know where magic has been, where it is, and can make accurate guesses as to where magic will go. Librarians are invaluable to the growing magical community, for they are in possession of ancient lore that is once more becoming needed and the Librarians keep their stores of information well organised.

Regardless of their specialities or backgrounds, all Librarians become enraged when information is wilfully destroyed.

The Silver

The Silver Librarians are the masters of the written word. There are few languages they can not decipher, and their code-breaking skills are famous. Given a bit of text, a Silver Librarian requires little time to discover its true meaning. They know how to read — truly read — the printed word. What they learn, they remember, and given a research task, they will uncover every detail of the subject, regardless of the topic.

While they tend to avoid combat whenever possible, Silver Librarians have a marked ability to determine the weaknesses of those around them. This is a combination of being able to 'read' people's body language, as well as the extensive theoretical knowledge of combat that they have accumulated.

Silver Librarians (Template Cost: 5)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+2	2	Combat Technique (Judge Opponent, Weapons Encyclopaedia)
+1	1	Highly Skilled
+3	6	Information Scanning (see Information Scanning)
	-5	•Activation Time
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+3	9	Languages (Any Four)
+1	1	Management and Administration (Data Centres)
	Points	**Defects**
	-1	Blind Rage (Wilful destruction of knowledge)

The Gold

The Gold Librarians are acolytes of the Master Mage, Melvil Dewey. Dewey was a brilliant sorcerer who hid his vast and varied fountain of knowledge where he knew no one would think to look -- plain sight. Its true purpose was unknown to most of those would later come use it. Dewey knew what he was doing when he laid out his famous code. He was protecting what he knew and preparing future generations for the task he foresaw. The Gold Librarians are magicians who can conjure information from thin air. They can absorb an entire reference set inside twenty minutes. Merely by holding a book, they can tell you what it says, who wrote which parts of it, and how it came to be in their possession.

Gold Librarians have the Attribute "Liber Veritas."

Gold Librarians (Template Cost: 45)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	23	Dynamic Powers (Information — Area 2, Duration 3, Range 2, Targets 1)
+2	4	Information Scanning (see Information Scanning,)
+2	4	Liber Veritas
+1	12	Nullify (All Level 1 Attributes)
	Points	**Defects**
	-2	Blind Rage (Wilful destruction of knowledge)

Unordinary People

There are those who straddle the fence between Incarnation and mundane. They are regular folk who knew about magical theory or practice for years, sometimes decades or even generations, before its most recent resurgence. These are the witches, who have kept magical tradition alive and have been practising the craft on the meagre traces of magic that have lingered since the last destruction of Yggdrasil.

Witches pass their knowledge and technique down through their family lines. In accordance with their traditions, witches are almost always female. The other witches call the few male witches around "warlocks" (Uninformed outsiders may still call them all "witches," male or female).

Being a witch is not just about brewing potions or acquiring extraordinary numbers cats. Witchcraft is natural and holistic view of the world. This is not to say there have not been crackpots amongst the witches, but most witches are found in their kitchens or helping pregnant women rather than flying around on broomsticks or cackling at school children.

Since magic began increasing in effectiveness, witches have enjoyed the rewards of greater power. They have been cautious about all the other mystical events. Witches are very concerned about what is happening in the city, and have put a considerable amount of time into studying and observing it. Most witches call the suburbs their home but they are not so near-sighted as to think that whatever happens inside the city core will not have repercussions for the wider world.

Witches practice a variety of individual crafts but they tend to fall under one of three specific areas. Each specialisation requires enough study and practice to leave no room to study the others, and so which one a witch selects will define her.

Kitchen Witches

Kitchen Witches specialise in poultices, salves, herbs, potions, draughts, and other run-of-the-mill remedies and panaceas. Kitchen Witches have an extensive practical knowledge of botany, biology, and/or chemistry, and have at least a rudimentary understanding of Western medicine. They can be called on to set broken bones, cure headaches and impotency, or identify rare or frightening flora. They have extensive herb gardens, and their medicine cabinets often contain potions and poultices rather than pill bottles and prescriptions.

Kitchen Witches keep animal familiars, primarily cats, bats, or rats. These familiars are attuned to their mistresses and can act as remote eyes and ears.

Kitchen Witch
(Template Cost: 35)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+2	24	Dynamic Powers (Choose Minor Power Category — Area 1, Duration 1, Range 1, Targets 1)
+3	3	Highly Skilled
+2	4	Servant (Animal Familiar)

Level	Points	Skills
+2	6	Biological Sciences (Botany)
+2	2	Domestic Arts (Cooking)
+2	12	Occult (Witchcraft)
+2	10	Poisons (Natural)

Animists

Animists are witches who have learned how to shape-shift. Shape shifting, the practice of transforming one's physical nature, is a dedicated pursuit that requires rigorous training and practice. Many animists are scholars or naturalists, who have devoted their time in the study of one particular type of animal. Animist with more than one other form are rare, although not unheard of.

Advanced animists can turn into large cats, dogs, and birds. A few can even turn into horses. Most animists can only turn into the smaller breeds of domesticated cats and dogs. Transformation of any kind is an impressive feat, and despite the animists' limitations, prudent practitioner in the magical underground, friend or foe, respect the animists' abilities.

A Growing Debate

Animism is a relatively new art, having appeared only after the bridging of the Second World. Due to its recent discovery, elder Witches tend distrust it and many speak loudly about the need to suppress all use of animism. Many animists speak just as loudly about the value of learning new skills, and how useful animism is (just as many choose to remain silent about their studies). Most covens have strict policies governing the proper use of this ability, as it is such a heated topic of debate. There is an alarming schism building between covens regarding this controversial ability.

Animist
(Template Cost: 20)

Level	Points	Attributes
+2	4	Alternate Form (Partial-Powered Animal Form)
+1	14	Dynamic Powers (Choose Minor Power Category — Area 1, Duration 1, Range 1, Targets 1)
+2	2	Highly Skilled

Level	Points	Skills
+3	9	Biological Sciences (Zoology)
+1	6	Occult (Witchcraft)
+1	5	Poisons (Natural)

Faerie Wranglers

It's a dirty job but someone has to do it. Faerie wranglers are those souls — often witches or occultists — who have taken on the responsibility of making sure the Fae are contained, eliminated, or otherwise dealt with. They tend toward two extremes: grim and determined, or light-hearted and jesting. Most Wranglers look normal enough, no more overtly eccentric than other witches do. Other Wranglers appear to revel in unconventionality. Decked out with night-vision goggles, a hunter's vest, latex kitchen gloves, Hawaiian shirts, and cowboy boots, these brave, but peculiar, few are especially enthusiastic in their duty. No matter what attire they choose, all Wranglers are a little off their rocker.

It may be prolonged exposure to the fey that drives wranglers to the edge. But it is just as easy to imagine that pre-existing mania may be the perfect attribute of a Fairie Wrangler candidate.

Faerie Wrangler technique is a hotly debated subjected in the city's occult circles. Some Wranglers trap the fey through careful study and convoluted schemes; others use complicated traps; others use Pied Piper inspired songs and music to lure them; still others prefer trails of sugar and chocolate chips.

Faerie Wrangler
(Template Cost: 15)

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	3	Sixth Sense (Fae — Area 2)
+1	14	Dynamic Powers (Choose Minor Power Category — Area 1, Duration 1, Range 1, Targets 1)

Points	Defects
-1	Easily Distracted (Fae)
-1	Unappealing

Wallace and Houtermans, Inc.

Wallace and Houtermans, Inc. (referred to simply as W&H in casual conversation) is the oldest corporation still operating under its original name in the city. Most of the other corporations in the city now owned by it in some way, thanks to buy-outs and take-overs. The principle exception is Shepherd Enterprises, although the two corporations have recently formed a so-far highly successful partnership.

Esau Houterman was a scion of old railway money. Jacob Wallace came from a poor family but his own mathematical talents got him into an Ivy League college on a merit scholarship. The two met in class: Houterman liked to dabble in the occult whereas Wallace was notorious in certain circles for having certain "abilities" — love charms and fortune telling tricks he claimed he had learned from his grandmother, said to be a witch. They became fast friends, and Houterman told Wallace of his dream to make his mark on the city by renovating its transport infrastructure with a modern subway system. After they graduated, he hired Wallace as project engineer. Together, they marketed the plan to the city. Riches followed.

Esau Houtermans died shortly after his vision of a modern subway system became a reality. Jacob Wallace assumed full control of the corporation. He and his son, Connor, built W&H into a multi-billion dollar, extremely diversified Goliath. After Jacob and then Connor died, the company passed into the hands of Robert Atkinson, a financial executive who was appointed by the board. Atkinson proved to be an adequate captain but he lacked the skill and vision of the Wallace family. Six years ago, after a two-decade term, he was diplomatically allowed to "retire". The stockholders selected Camper Wallace, the youngest grandson of the Wallace family, to replace him.

In his youth, Camper, who bears a striking similarity to old Jacob, travelled in Europe, tracing the family's roots back to the old country. Upon returning to the city, Camper went to work for the family firm, accepting a position as a very junior executive. He worked his way up through the

company, carefully building a power base among the other younger managers. Camper Wallace not only had ambition and drive. He had the people skills and business savvy to back them up. When the stockholders tired of old man Atkinson, he was positioned to reclaim his family's company. He took the job with the enthusiasm of a hungry wolf leaping on prey, and since his promotion, Wallace and Houtermans has risen once more to prominence. Camper was not just a man of action but also a man of ideas. Camper had one very big idea, one he had not shared with others, and Wallace & Houtermans Inc. was going to make that big idea a reality.

Camper Wallace, CEO

Camper Wallace is not an Incarnation, nor has he experienced the calling, but he is fully aware of magic — and he wants it. Camper first learned of the Second World from his grandmother. She told him all the stories she remembered being told in her youth. She taught him tales of fair hearts and wizardry from all corners of the globe, and she convinced him that the Second World was a real place, if very different from our world. From the moment he heard the tales, Camper wanted to visit the Second World. He wanted it so badly that he dedicated most of his life to this goal. People laughed and scoffed when he spoke of it, but Camper was confident he would find a way. Taking control of the family corporation was only an initial, although necessary, first step.

As a wealthy young man, he had travelled the globe in search of true magic. His studies eventually led him to the legend of Yggdrasil, the World Tree. Convinced that the World Tree was real, Camper decided he needed to find it and possess it. Years passed, and millions of his family's fortune was spent, but finally Camper tracked down a tree he believed was Yggdrasil. Unfortunately, he was right.

Upon gaining control of W&H, Camper hired a team to uproot the tree and transplant it to the city. Camper wanted it displayed prominently, against the will of certain others that thought it best to keep the tree a secret. Camper presented it to Mayor Procop who saw it as a way to boost his sagging approval rates and public image. The fact that it was an election year didn't hurt, and he gave Camper all the support the man needed.

Camper and the Mayor dubbed it the Millennium Tree. Camper convinced the mayor that the best location for the tree was Atkinson Park, which was on land owned by Camper's company. A lavish ceremony followed, nearly the entire city turned out to witness the Tree's unveiling. Everyone loved the tree. "It's so unique," they all said. "So wonderful." Camper thought otherwise, having come to loathe the tree for tempting him and then hiding its secrets from him. Camper spent months trying to figure out the connection between our world, Yggdrasil and the Second World. Every avenue he pursued came to a dead end. Every possibility was cut short. Finally, in a fit of frustration and despair, Camper torched the tree.

It was not long until Camper realised that he had done it, inadvertent as it may have been. What once was a burning desire became and all consuming need. Camper started the "Millennium Initiative," his name for the invasion of the Second World and the rest, as they say, will soon be history. His ultimate plan is to invade the Second World, mine it for magical wonders, bring them over to the mundane world, and make a fortune. Camper is looking to control the entire flow of magical trade in the mundane world. To this end, Camper has started rounding up Incarnations. Thus far, all the Incarnations have refused or been unable to tell Camper anything about the Second World that the mad magnate does not already know. Camper is confident that he will eventually piece together a way to get to the Second World.

He has no magical skills or abilities, but Camper wants to create an army of magicians, a network of seers and speakers. He wants to control the magical community. He has allied with Hans Woolver for this end, although the allegiance on Camper's part is tentative. Camper's affiliation with Hans is contingent on Hans capturing Red, whom he believes may be one of the strongest sources of mystical energy in the city. He remains ignorant of One-Eye's presence, although if he were to learn of the man, he would recognise his significance immediately.

Camper is so concentrated on the Millennium Initiative that his grasp on the day-to-day affairs of Wallace & Houtermans has slipped. In his stead, his administrative assistants and vice-presidents have usurped his power, and are slowly taking his company away from him. Camper has barely noticed, having been driven to near-madness by his desire for magical domination.

Camper Wallace, CEO

Occupation: CEO of Wallace and Houtermans
Height: 6' (183 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 175 lbs. (79 kg) **Hair:** Brown

Camper Wallace
(85 Character Points)

Body 5 Mind 7 **Soul** 6
Attack Combat Value 6 **Defence Combat Value** 4
Health Points 55 **Energy Points** 65

Level	Points	Attributes
6	12	Henchmen
1	1	Highly Skilled
8	16	Organisational Ties (Wallace and Houtermans)
8	24	Wealth

Level	Points	Skills
2	6	Cultural Arts (Second World)
3	12	Interrogation (Psychological)
2	4	Management/Admin (Corporate)
3	18	Occult (Second World)

Points	Defects
-2	Famous
-2	Easily Distracted (Obsessed with Second World)

Executives of the Silver Towers

The Silver Towers Complex sits in the centre of the city. It houses the corporate offices of some of the biggest names in commerce and industry. The ground floors contain elaborately decorated reception areas, waiting rooms, and coffee machines, but the top floor, 44 floors above, is where the real action takes place. Here, the offices of the most powerful men and women of the city reside. Here, deals are made, and hopes and dreams are traded like rare coins. Camper Wallace was once a fixture here, but his recent obsession with the Second World has turned him into a stranger. He isn't missed.

The Executives of the Silver Towers employ thousands under a hundred different company banners. People use their products and services, and fill their wallets more and more everyday. They are the chess masters of the world and they keep an eye on every move their pieces make. These towers are furnished with the heights of modern technology, from satellite television and security cameras to top of the line computer systems. There is even a small filming studio, where the executives hold interviews and press conferences.

And they are aware of magic. The question they ask themselves now is how best to profit from it. Their answer is to invade and conquer the Second World. The Executives of the Silver Towers are the Board of Directors of the Millennium Initiative, Camper Wallace's plan to enter the Second World.

Officers

Officers are the foot soldiers of the executives. They do all the dirty work and take all the risks. On the upside, what they lack in glory they make up for in monetary reward. Officers are thrown at problems to make them go away. Failing that, officers will attempt to at least neutralise any potential threat. Their role in the Millennium Initiative is reconnaissance: to seek out and retrieve whatever the administrators tell them. Officers are hired for their ability to comprehend and follow instructions. Any officers that show initiative beyond that are either removed, replaced, or promoted to administrators.





Officers are kept ignorant of what they are really doing. They are told they are bringing back corporate traitors, rival corporate employees, or similar lies that are meant to justify their actions. In many cases, they are simply paid well enough to ask few questions.

Officers (Template Cost: 5)

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	3	Attack Combat Mastery
+1	2	Gadgets (Assault Rifle or Heavy Pistol with Laser Sighting)
+2	2	Highly Skilled

Level	Points	Skills
+2	12	Gun Combat (Rifle or Pistol)
+1	1	Military Science (Strategy)
+1	5	Urban Tracking (City Streets)
	1	Unused Skill Points

Points	Defects
-2	Owned (Wallace and Houtermans)

Administrators

There are few Administrators in the Millennium Initiative at any given time. Camper does not entrust his knowledge of the Second World to just anyone, and requires a great deal of time, and testing, before he trusts anyone to the extent that offering them a leading role in his plans for the Second World requires. All current Administrators have been a part of Wallace & Houtermans for well over a decade, with the exception of the most recent addition, who was brought on board after the defection that led to Camper's renewed attacks on Red. That he blames her for the man's disappearance is plain, although further details on exactly what happened are unknown.

Camper's administrators deploy and control the officers. Administrators mete out tasks only at Camper's request, although recently they have begun to tentatively advance their own agendas. His obsession with the Second World gives them more than enough room to plan their take-over and that is what they have begun to do. There is one administrator whose role is dedicated to finding Red; another's role is to safeguard Camper Wallace. The roles of the others vary depending on necessity.

Administrators (Template Cost: 25)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+2	10	Agents (Officers)
+1	1	Highly Skilled
+1	4	Item of Power (Create based on current task)
	-1	•Conditional Ownership (Corporate Owned Items)
+5	10	Organisational Ties (Wallace and Houtermans)

Level	Points	Skills
+2	4	Management/Admin (Corporate)
+1	6	Occult (Second World)

Over The River

As more and more magic leaks into the mortal world, more and more strangeness follows. There are times when the world of the fair and the world of legend crawl over the mundane world like a strangler fig, especially between the hours of midnight and one, the hour commonly known as the witching hour. As more and more magic leaks into the world, the range of the possible stretches farther and father, but never more than during the witching hour.

That old mirror collecting dust in the attic may reflect the inside of an unknown building, or it may show a face quite unfamiliar unlike that of the person looking into the mirror. The entrance to a local Jif-E-Mart may lead into a green pasture between the hours of 2 AM and 3 AM (the only hours that Jif-E-Mart is ever closed), regardless of whether the door is locked or not. The pictures in scrapbooks may begin to move, and dolls may come to life.

The Magical Areas

Newsreel: Living History

It fades from black to a shot of the newly remodelled Upton Hotel. A voice-over begins.

"Welcome to the city's beautiful downtown. Quite a sight, isn't it? With its shining metal towers of steel and glass, quaint brick museums and restaurants, and cobblestone walks, with the traditional and the modern supporting each other, downtown is truly the heart of the city. "

A montage follows that displays various locations, old and new, that are present in and around the city.

"The most wondrous of these locales are the city's many landmarks. Landmarks stand as icons that reflect a city's history and growth. Landmarks are symbols known around the world, bringing visitors from all walks of life to see what makes our city unique. Landmarks have importance and power, drawing millions of people every year to travel to them and bask in their magnificence."

There are places of great significance to those who are aware of magic. These are places that have either become magical since the bridging of the worlds or ones whose previously existing magic was intensified. Many of these locations have frequent Fairie visitors, and they may affect spells cast in their proximity.

If an area resonates with a particular category of power (see Dynamic Powers, page 22), then all abilities that are tied to that category receive a bonus of +1. An ability associated with an opposed category receives a penalty of -1. When determining if a bonus or penalty is received, the end result of the Attribute determines whether it is keyed to the area's power or opposed.

The Suburbs

Most suburbs are a recent phenomenon, satellite communities that appeared around the city during recent periods of growth. Many of them are newly created developments, collections of townhouses and free standing building constructed by up-and-coming developers, although there are suburbs consisting of smaller towns that have been engulfed by the sprawl of a rapidly expanding city. The flavour of magic in the suburbs tends to differ according to their past; new communities are often the victims of pixie and redcap infestations, while the older towns contain more varied magics that are based upon local history.

Suburban landmarks are often unnoticed by newcomers, since these locations have only local meaning and significance. There might be several gas stations, but only one can be the location of 'that awful accident a year ago, when five cars collided with that big rig.' A street may contain several empty houses, but only one of them was the site of a grisly murder or the childhood home of a famous actress before she became a star. Any unusual event can transform a place into a local landmark, although such landmarks are only of significance to those familiar with the area.

Burke & Waite's Gas 'N Go

Richard Burke inherited his father's gas station over 30 years ago. In that time, he has seen the entire landscape change. Even his station, which once had just two analogue pumps, now has five four-pump stations. Each one is digital, with screens that display weather reports, national headlines, and sport scores. The Gas 'N Go has changed immensely in the three decades that Richard has owned the station. It seems the only thing he cannot change is the fact the spirits of the dead frequent his gas station.

Every night around 11 PM, when Richard is locking up for the night, ghosts begin to appear. A few of them are victims of a large fire that 70 years go razed a property that stood on the lot occupied by the Gas 'N Go, but the majority are revenants from a Native American community that once used the spot as a burial ground. They have an hour of free wandering, which a few of them use to explore the local area. The majority of them collect in the empty parking lot to watch the occasional passing cars and share gossip. Now and again, one of them will appear during the daylight hours, usually to stare at a patron from the back of the cooler, or to startle someone in the car wash. Richard does not believe these actions are anything more than mistakes on the ghosts' part.

Richard has considered calling in a professional of some type, but the ghosts do not cause him physical harm nor do they damage the property, so he cannot justify the research or the expense. Besides, Richard likes spending some time with the shade of his father from time to time. The ghosts have a great number of stories to tell — not all of them ancient history. Those who bother to listen are usually amazed at how much attention ghosts pay to the living. Those ghosts seem to know just about everyone's dirty little secrets.

Burke and Waite's Gas 'N Go resonates to the power category of necromancy.

Anderson's Lot

This plot of property has been empty for several years. It was once part of the Anderson Estate, and it housed the private garden of Estella Anderson. She was well loved in the community, participating in local events, and donating heavily to many charities. When a drunk driver killed her, the entire community mourned her. Shortly after she died, her husband sold the lot to a family. The family had planned to build their own home on the property but midway through the construction, the wife of the couple was killed when a portion of the new foundation collapsed on top of her.

The locals continue to call the empty property 'Anderson's Lot,' despite the fact that it has changed hands several times in the past handful of years. Most of the sales occurred after the sudden death of a woman. Currently, the lot is a tangle of forgotten bits of construction, trash, and the remnants of Estella's garden. It is a common playground for adventurous children, despite the attempts that have been made to fence it off. Local goblins periodically raid the area for bits of things with which to build their sculptures.

Downtown

Some of the most potent magical areas are within a single five square kilometres region, right in the heart of the city. Each of these places serve a unique purpose, both to the city and to those with magical know how.

The Black Cab Company

The Black Cab Company's name is a bit misleading, as the company consists of a single cab and one driver. Amir Sharon and his converted black Towncar are on call at any hour of any day. Each ride costs only two shiny new pennies and Sharon will accept no other currency. A person may only call on the Black Cab Company so many times before Amir Sharon will refuse them. Sharon's services are reliable and cheap but not to be abused.

There are two way to hail Sharon's cab: be one of the very few to have his cell phone number or be in a desperate enough situation that Amir actually shows up. Amir can sense trouble and he always knows where people need or want to go. When those two things are not the same, Sharon will choose one as his destination — but be warned that the decision is entirely Amir's and not his passenger's.

Julian's Emporium

This is a small artist's shop, hidden in an obscure alley between a bar and a cutlery shop. Julian Barle is a struggling sculptor, whose preferred subject is woodland animals, although he does accept commissions upon occasion. What makes this shop of interest is not the shop itself, or the artist, but its location. The alley is not paved but cobbled. The cobblestones were brought from England in the 19th Century by a retiring archaeologist, Edward Spence. Spence claimed to have found them after stumbling into a faerie's mound. When his fortunes turned, he packed up what he could of his estates (which, aside from the cobbles, was little) and fled his British creditors by coming to America. He built the cobblestones into a walkway, leading to his front door. His home has not survived, but the walkway has.

Each night of the full moon, if someone walks along the remaining original cobblestones still present amidst modern replacements, then tries to enter Julian's Emporium, the doorway will lead not into the shop, but to the Second World.

Precinct 33

Precinct 33 is the unofficial hub of the Benevolent Constabulary. It is not actually a precinct station at all but a nondescript building next to the city's now all-but-abandoned park. The Precinct has rooms with beds for folk who are hiding out, back rooms for folk who need to do whatever it is that they need to do, and secret rooms best left undiscussed.

John Christian Bethesda Memorial Public Library

The John Christian Bethesda Memorial Public Library, or the John Chris, for short, is an imposing four-story edifice across the street from Atkinson Park. The John Chris has a basement that is primarily used for storage and a sub-basement that no one has entered for over a century. The John Chris Board of Directors has consistently refused to modernise the building. The library is one of the few remaining where the catalogue is still kept on cards. Each floor has a central filing cabinet that contains a complete card catalogue. One could walk the marble-floored halls of the John Chris for days, admiring the craftsmanship of the dark hardwood floors and the polished brass hardware. Fine art and sculpture take up much of the room not filled with books. Each floor also has a large open reading area, dotted with small circular tables and over-filled chairs.

It is unfortunate that a terrible fire gutted the John Chris five years ago. At least, that is what mundane folk believe. The library's blackened façade and boarded over windows claim no differently. Passers-by who dare to glance inside see nothing but a hollowed remnant of the city's glory days. Only those who know a Librarian are granted true access to the library's inner sanctum.

2120 Balk Street

An unassuming brick two story building with glass-block windows and a single metal door, 2120 Balk Street is sandwiched between a defunct print shop and an old pawnshop. Few people notice the building. Those that do notice it often shiver and then pass quickly by, barely remembering the place moments later.

What is at 2120 Balk Street? That is Noone's Business. Noone is an exceptionally industrious Redkin, who has taken over the length of Balk Street. Noone runs the street with an iron fist, occasionally kidnapping a hapless victim for hours of tormented fun.

Noone

Occupation: Serial Killer
Height: 2'10" (86 cm) **Eyes**: Bloodshot
Weight: 40 lbs. (18 kg) **Hair**: Grey

One of the most powerful Redkin to have crossed over to our world, Noone is feared by mortals as much as Incarnations. The homeless of the city have begun avoiding the area. Even the inhabitants of neighbouring streets have begun walking more quickly when passing Balk Street or going out of their way to avoid it entirely.

Noone
(110 Character Points)

Body 5 **Mind** 7 **Soul** 9
Attack Combat Value 7 **Defence Combat Value** 5
Health Points 70 **Energy Points** 80

Level	Points	Attributes
2	6	Animal Summoning (Rats; Duration 2)
2	2	Heightened Awareness
2	14	Mimic Powers (Duration 1, Range 1)
3	50	Power Flux (Deception; Duration Reversed 5)

Level	Points	Skills
1	3	Animal Training (Rats)
1	4	Intimidation (Street)
1	6	Melee Attack (Knives)
2	12	Occult (Necromancy)
1	5	Poisons (Natural)

Points	Defects
-2	Achilles Heel (Cold Iron)
-2	Marked (Alien Appearance)

The Upton Hotel

"What did he tell you about it?" Isaac took a long, slow drag off his cigarette. "Did he tell you how to find it?"

"He said he didn't know anything. Said he'd never heard of the place."

Isaac shook his head. "He's a liar. He knows. He knows because he helped build it."

"He — you never told me that."

"You really should have figured that one out on your own, Wesley. His name is Elridge Upton, isn't it?"

Something is alive in the Upton Hotel. Rumour has it that the something is the hotel itself. Others talk of a Beast cult that has taken over the penthouse and is sacrificing bellhops in exchange for power. Regardless of which theory is truth, the Upton Hotel does have a high staff turnover, and there is noted tendency for lone visitors to leave unexpectedly, or to never leave at all. The building is filled with hidden corridors, doorways that are only seen once, and mazes of stairwells and empty halls.

The Door at Church and Vine

The BW Klements Building is at the corner of Church and Vine. The first floor of the Klements houses a bistro and a franchised submarine sandwich shop. The other 13 floors house variety of standard office-dwelling businesses, from a telemarketing call centre to day spa. To all appearances, the building is nothing special at all. The grey-green service door exactly 24 feet from the curb on Vine is another matter altogether. The owners of the Klements building believe it belongs to the parking centre that occupies the lot to the North; the parking lot owners believe it is a back entrance to the apartment building west of both itself and the BW Klements. Both are wrong, of course. The door belongs to no one — but itself.

The door does not open inward, only out. Some people in the know believe the door is a quick way back home for whoever opens it. Other people think it can lead wherever the opener wills it to lead. Still others think it is simply a door, a legacy of some other time that leads nowhere at all and that people should really stop fussing over such a simple and mundane thing as a door.

One man claims he stepped through the door, and was trapped for 30 years in what he describes as a land of intangibles, while only a few minutes passed outside.

The Mundane Areas

The majority of the city and the suburbs remain either non-magical or only slightly touched by magic. These places fill in the gaps of the city. While they may be mundane, they still have a history and a purpose, a reason people come to them.

The Theatre District

Located a few kilometres from the city centre, the theatre district may well be the most interesting non-magical part of the city. The theatre district is a rectangle two blocks long and one block deep. It houses four theatres, a handful of restaurants and cafes, as well as a few other small shops that cater to patrons of the arts. Artists, actors and musicians are a common sight here, hawking their creations, or practising lines for the next big play.

The Business District

The centre of the city houses the business district. This is where the Silver Towers rest, as well as a large shopping mall and a large collection of corporate headquarters. The people that fill this area of town tend toward the well dressed and affluent. Those that appear out of place will be noticed fairly quickly and dealt with by polite but firm private security guards.

HotSpots

Patterns of magical energy in the city are not dissimilar to the more familiar patterns of weather. Each are minutely unpredictable, although with enough study one can learn to identify trends. Magic has its analogue to flash floods and sudden storms; events that are called HotSpots. These HotSpots are brief flashes of intense, concentrated magical power. Although dangerous, they can be harnessed if the person in question, usually a witch, is willing to incur some risk.

Magical HotSpots occur when magic becomes too concentrated in a certain area. Those who are sensitive to magic can sense them, if they are in close enough proximity. There are witches who will actively seek out such areas when casting, although the flare-ups are so unpredictable and short-lived that most witches do not bother attempting to trying to exploit such nexuses of power. There are specialised witches who claim to be able to determine when and where HotSpots will occur, although these folk are generally regarded as little more than charlatans.

When in the proximity of a HotSpot, a witch's hair will stand on end. The closer she gets to a HotSpot, the faster her heart will beat. Adrenaline will pump through the witch's body and if she remains within the HotSpot, after a moment her breathing will become rapid and shallow. If the power of the HotSpot is not quickly harnessed, the witch will collapse, and be unable to use magic for an hour after she awakens. No HotSpot lasts longer than ninety seconds and none have ever been observed that were larger than three meters in diameter.

A witch must make a Body check if she stays in a HotSpot for more than one round. If the witch is successful, she will receive a bonus to all magical rolls equal to the number of rounds the HotSpot is active. If the witch fails, she will suffer the reaction detailed above. Those possessing the Sixth Sense attribute with a specialisation in magic can find HotSpots. A successful Soul Stat Check will provide hints as to the location of immanent HotSpots, should they be nearby.

A-Train, 6:18am, 6th Street Station

"Oh my god," the woman in the black power suit gasped as she clapped her hand to her mouth. "Oh my god," the crowd behind her echoed, horrified. At their feet was the body of Marnie Procop, the daughter of Mayor Dimitrios Procop, lifeless and dangling by one hand from an overhead loop in the second car of the A-Train, next stop Cross and Grant.

The rest of the train was inexplicably empty and though there was no blood to be found, Marnie was missing both her teeth and her eyes. A woman reached into her purse for a cell phone. After three solemn tones, she spoke into it, "Hello? Police?"

Further investigation revealed that the engineer's compartment was empty as well. The train's driver, 41-year-old Manuel Sandoval, had a clean record aside from one arrest for disorderly conduct when he was 19. He was assumed to have abandoned his post. The police attempted to locate Manuel, and find a clue, any clue, that could shed some light on the murder of Marnie Procop and the disappearance of an entire train full of people.

The search was in vain. The autopsy revealed that Marnie had suffered a heart attack. Her eyes and teeth had been crudely removed after she died. Investigators were unable to collect any solid information to base an investigation on and, after four months, the case — despite the mayor's protests — went cold, pending new evidence.

Had the investigators opened their minds a bit more perhaps they could have noticed the seven-foot tall homeless man on the park bench but, as mere mundanes they were unable to see him. Perhaps, had any of them been a student of the fantastic, they would have known what manner of creature is known for eating the eyes of its victim and making necklaces from human teeth.

The Subways

The city's subways are strangely fascinating to those with any tie to magic. Newly arrived creatures often find themselves exploring the subways as soon as they appear in our world. At first the mysterious attraction is an almost painful compulsion, which slowly fades into a dull ache like an almost forgotten addiction. Fables feel this ache more strongly than any others do, although it is present for all. Most of the Fae avoid the subways, save for nymphs, whose desire for learning bring them to the subways again and again, exploring forgotten tunnels in search of enlightenment.

The source of the mysterious attracts is Yggdrasil, whose extension into our world was not wholly destroyed. The roots of the Millennium Tree dug deeply into the ground, finding their way into the heart of the city, reaching as deep as the subway tunnels and sewer systems, and intertwining with buried cables and power lines. Despite the destruction of the bulk of the tree, Yggdrasil still bleeds its influence into the world. Though they don't know it, all those who haunt the subways search for these remnants.

The roots of Yggdrasil can be used in a wide variety of ways. A piece of the tree can give mundanes the ability to sense magic, and the urge to protect Fables and other magical creatures. They can be crafted into weaponry. Ground into powder, Yggdrasil's roots are often used to potent effect in magical rituals or potions. It is rumoured that a large taproot remains, and if it were to be found and nurtured, restoring Yggdrasil to its former glory, the connection between the mundane world and the Second World would dwindle, closing the doors between the two realms.

Tripping The Light

The Campaign

There are two ways a World at Twilight campaign might be run, in episodic fashion or as an ongoing story.

The Ongoing Story

This is the traditional way to run a role-playing game. Each game sessions builds on the last, as the player-characters' gradually discover the truths behind mysteries, face ongoing threats, embark on a lengthy quest, or thwart the plots of a particular villain. If successful, the characters will grow in influence and power, and may ultimately reshape the world they live in. Perhaps they will become legendary figures in their own right.

The Episodic Campaign

An alternative is to run the World at Twilight as a series of episodes with the same characters, but with disconnected situations. Unlike a traditional campaign, the GM should strive for a timeless feel, and what happens in one session need not necessarily affect later events. In one adventure, the Heroes might accidentally discover a way to travel back in time, and that game would be about discovering a way home. In subsequent game sessions this ability is not a part of their repertoire, and while the Heroes may remember their adventures in the past, each adventure is self contained and thematic elements might reappear over and over. Cinderella might attend a thousand balls in an episodic campaign, but none of them send her home.

Adventure Seeds

Life is rarely dull for those conscious of magic. There always seems to be one Beast or another that needs to be trapped or vanquished, or new items and places that appear and need to be dealt with. Incarnations pop up, lost and confused, who will need guidance. Whether out in the suburbs or deep in the heart of the city, there is always plenty that needs attention.

Fever Dreams

A young boy, hospitalised at North General since his third birthday, has recently slipped into a coma. The doctors could not determine the nature of the lingering disorder that plagued him. For five years, they have been studying him. Last week, he suddenly slipped into a coma during routine questioning.

Six days ago, a young girl woke up claiming that someone was talking to her in her dreams. She says it is the boy who has been on the news lately — the one in the hospital. She says the boy is hiding from men in white coats. The girl has also started sleepwalking. She woke up in the backyard one morning. Another morning she found herself almost two kilometres from her home.

The boy is tired of the white coats. He told her that he wants a new life. The life he craves is hers….

The Revisionist

There is a rumour of a librarian who has the power to change old stories. This librarian supposedly has the power to rewrite the lives of the Incarnations themselves. Now, the rumours claim that she is being held captive by someone who wants to force her to destroy the Incarnations and close off the Second World.

Wanted: Schoolteacher

A dark figure has been spotted riding a massive black steed through Atkinson Park. He seems to patrol the lake and the section near the school. Witnesses swear they can hear him calling out a name in anger. They say it sounds like "Ichabod."

A few days ago, a tall, rail-thin man was found murdered. His head was cut clean off. Just last night, another man, equally tall and thin, was found headless on the steps of a school. Authorities fear the killings will continue.

Faerie Dancing

Raves are quite popular in the inner city. Once every full moon, a rave is held, each time in a different location. The co-ordinator, as far as people can tell, is a bony woman named Titania. After each rave, three more people disappear. Recently, a 21-year-old bike messenger missing for six months was found dead in Atkinson Park — right where the Millennium Tree once stood.

A Dreaming City

There are times when the city falls asleep. It is not often, but it happens. The city dreams while it is sleeping. Anyone who is awake can see what the city dreams; they forget these images when the city wakes. Sometimes, when the city is sleeping, it has a nightmare. Sometimes, when the city is sleeping, people get trapped inside its dreams.

New Attributes

Many magical beings display a variety of novel talents and abilities when they cross into the mundane world. Whether they are abilities acquired due to their special 'alien' stature in the mundane world, or they were an implied part of the being's repertoire, they are unique to those that use them.

Happily Ever After

Attribute: Divine Relationship and healing
Cost: 5 Points/Level

Incarnations are more than simple characters; they are embodiments of well-loved tales. Every Incarnation has a story they live out, a series of events that must be fulfilled in order for their time in the mundane world to come to an end. When the events around them do not correspond to the necessary elements of their tale, an Incarnation is able to exert a subtle control over their situation to return to their story. This Attribute represents the strength of that ability.

This Attribute can be used to fully heal an Incarnation's own injuries, providing those injuries are not a part of their story line and will interfere with the story's completion. At higher Levels, the character can revive him or herself even if they are clinically dead (Level 3+), repair massive trauma such as lost limbs and organs, restore themselves if cut in two (Level 7+), and even heal if he or she is disintegrated or blown to bits.

This Attribute can be used to re-roll undesirable dice rolls (this includes undesirable re-rolls), if the failed roll would directly contribute to a failed story line. The player may choose to keep the original result when determining the result of the reroll. It can also be used to grant a bonus to a roll, when that roll is key to the Incarnation's story. Each Level of Happily Ever After grants a bonus of +1 to a roll. The player may choose to use any number of Levels when determining the total bonus.

The Attribute Level equals the maximum number of times it can be used in a single game session, whether it is used for healing, for bonuses, or for re-rolling.

This Attribute is only available to Incarnations.

Osmosis

Attribute: Computer Scanning
Cost: 2 Points/Level
Associated Defects: Activation Time, Concentration

With a successful Mind Stat check, characters with this Attribute can access, read, and understand the contents of a written book. The book must be written in a language the character can understand, although other Attributes might be utilised for the comprehension of foreign languages. When trying to access the contents of a book built as an Item of Power, the character suffers a penalty to the Mind Stat check of -2 for every Level of the Item of Power. Only a single text can be read at a time with Osmosis, although given enough time, the character could scan an entire library.

Characters able to manipulate the text of a book should acquire the Dynamic Powers Attribute with a written word specialisation.

Liber Veritas

Attribute: Sixth Sense
Cost: 2 Points/Level

Liber Veritas represents the Librarians' ability to determine where all the books that have ever been a part of their libraries are located. With a successful Soul Stat Check, the character can also determine the location of a text that holds information on a particular subject.

A character who specifically concentrates using Liber Veritas can determine the general direction of the item they are seeking, whether it is a book he or she have once owned, or a book containing information the librarian is are looking for. If the Soul Stat check fails, no direction is gained.

A Link To The Past — Making the Most of Your Local Museum

Items of Power play a key role in many story lines of Archetypes and Legends. The Item of Power can be a part of the identity of the Hero — where would Thor be without Mjolnir? Or Red without her Hood?-- or it can be a one-shot item, used simply to progress in the story line.

Artefacts

Any magical object that is beneficial to the user is considered an artefact, whether it is a tool, weapon, alarm clock, or collapsible cane. Artefacts are highly priced items and those who possess them expend a great amount of effort to keep them, and to keep them secret. Artefacts may be beneficial to the user but that does not mean they will be beneficial for everyone else. The gun that will hit whatever target is whispered into its barrel is not the friendliest object around.

Guiding Feather

This is a simple grey feather, one that could have been plucked from a dove. It has no distinguishing features, and its abilities remain hidden unless it is grasped between thumb and forefinger, and asked a question that can be answered by indicating a direction. "Which way must I go to accomplish my task" is an appropriate question, as is "Which way did the man I am chasing go." Once the question is asked, the feather is thrown into the air. When the feather lands, it points in the direction that answers the question. The possessor of the feather is unable to be tracked while following the direction indicated.

Guiding Feather
(2 Points)

Level	Points	Attributes
1	3	Item of Power
	-1	•Restriction (Only Usable by Fables)

Level	Points	IOP "Guiding Feather" Attributes
2	2	Special Movement (Untrackable, Zen Direction)

Final Cost: 2 Points

The Porridge Stone

A good-hearted soldier once shared his last meal with a witch, who rewarded his generosity with this magic stone. It is three centimetres in diameter, with a smooth, polished surface, and a metallic hue. If placed in a pot of boiling water, this stone will transform the water into a rich porridge or stew. If consumed before the Duration expires, the porridge will not revert back to water.

The Porridge Stone

Level Points	Attributes
2	6 Item of Power
Level Points	**IOP "Porridge Stone" Attributes**
2	10 Transmutation (Duration 4)
	-1 •Activation Time (10 Initiative)

Final Cost: 8 Points

Three Snake Leaves

Originally made from the scales of a pair of snakes, this item looks like three heart-shaped leaves. They are white, with dark green veins, and are each about the size of a quarter. When placed upon an injury, the Snake Leaves glow faintly, and heal the wound. If placed upon a severed limb, the limb will reattach itself. They have even been known to bring the recently dead back to life.

Three Snake Leaves

Level Points	Attributes
5	15 Item of Power
	-3 •Restriction (Only usable by Fables)
Level Points	**IOP "Three Snake Leaves" Attributes**
7	25 Healing
	-2 •Activation Time (1 round)
	-1 • Limited Use (Three times a day)

Final Cost: 12 Points

Antiques

Antiques are the opposite of Artefacts. While artefacts help the bearer, antiques inflict harm, although the bearer usually does not realise this in time to save him or herself. There is a clock that causes the listener to age one year every time the alarm goes off. After a few days, it becomes apparent that something untoward is happening but it usually takes a while for the person to figure out the cause of his or her rapid physical decline. There is a lamp that grants wishes, just like out of an Arabian tale, but every time a wish is granted, someone with the same name as the wisher must die. This is not so much a problem for John Smith but Mohammed Rakir does not the luxury of a common name.

Some antiques obviously hurt their owner. The fountain pen that will draft the writer's most brilliant work that does so only when filled with the author's blood is one example. The deck of playing cards that will always favour its owner but cuts the owner's flesh with each hand is another.

The Red Shoes

These beautiful shoes appear to be crafted from the finest silk, and are a vivid scarlet. No dance is unknown to the wearer of these shoes, and the dancer's every move is graceful and filled with beauty. The dance has been observed to provide an odd benefit; while dancing, the dancer is more capable in combat than he or she might otherwise be. Along with dancing skills, the Shoes grant additional attacks, and a greater defence. The Red Shoes will always fit their wearer, changing shape to fit any shoe-size. Once the wearer begins to dance, however, the true nature of these shoes is revealed.

Once he or she dons the Red Shoes, the wearer must make a Soul Stat Check. If successful, the wearer gains the ability to dance with no penalties for the night. If unsuccessful, the wearer of these shoes is compelled to dance until certain conditions are fulfilled. For every ten minutes spent dancing, 1 Health Point is lost. Every 10 Health Points lost, the dancer may make another Soul Stat Check, and upon a successful check, the shoes may be removed.

The Red Shoes

Level Points	Attributes
3	12 Item of Power
	-2 Restriction (Loss of Health Points)
Level Points	**IOP "The Red Shoes" Attributes**
2	2 Defence Combat Mastery
1	8 Extra Attack
2	2 Features (Beautiful Movement)

Final Cost: 12 Points

He is sitting on a chair, watching the wavy lines roll and rush on the monochrome screen of a small grey television. Behind him, hot summer rain fogs his windows. His blackbird is sleeping in the remains of a once-shiny cage now caked with dirt, dust, blood, and spit. His solitary eye is bloodshot. He sees images and patterns in the static. There are times that he is more lucid than anyone else in the city is. There are times that he is crazier than the most deluded patient in the mental ward is. Most people cannot tell the difference between his two states.

A man lies at his feet, alive but barely. One-Eye makes a clicking sound with his teeth and prods the man with his foot until the man rolls over. The man's face is obscured. One-Eye shakes his head.

"Close it," he says. "Close the door."

The little boy from down the hall steps inside and does so.

"Do you have it?" One-Eye asks, not looking at the boy.

"Yes," the boy responds nervously.

"Good. Put it on the table."

The boy does so cautiously then quickly resumes his standing position.

"Good. Go, now."

The boy turns the knob and slowly opens the door. "Wait," One-Eye shouts, then calmly, "thank you."

"You-you're welcome," the boy responds. "An-anything else I can do for you, mister?"

One-Eye looks around the room and nods his head. "Yes. Take that with you."

"Take…what?"

"The other one. Take the other one with you."

The boy looks around the room for a moment before his eye falls on you. "Oh. Okay." Slowly the boy grabs your hand and leads you out, shutting the door behind you.



The Small Folk

The new office building on the road out of town was a tidy, well-managed project, but even so, there were the usual heaps of junk and rubbish in skips on the edge of the site. The night watchman thought that it was certain that the building would have its share of mice and rats, and so he didn't worry too much when he heard rustling from there while he was out on his rounds. The shrill, bat-like chirps were a bit odd, but when the watchman peered half-heartedly around the nearest skip, he didn't see anything unusual. No burglars or vandals, anyway, so it wasn't his job to worry, was it?

If he had looked inside the skip, he might have seen something more — although that is unlikely, in all truth. If he had listened to those chirps a little more carefully, preferably with the ears of a cat, he would have realised that he was actually missing quite a lot.

"Lissen, man. We got a problem. Iss a reeeeal hassle." The first voice was actually quite slow, being something of a drawl as bat-chirps go.

"Bro — I reckon yo got tha problem. Ain't nuttin' to do with me o' ma homies." The reply was delivered in a tone as aggressive as the words it spoke.

"No, like — reeeeally. Y'know? This place is gonna have zero in the way of usable wallspaces. Totally, like, hostility city. Totally uncool for all of us, man."

"Ah, actually — we do have a solution. If, umm, you people are interested." The new speaker was hunched at the back of the temporary space that had been hollowed out within the rubble in the skip. She gestured at the bundle that leaned against the wall next to her, which was taller than any of the three beings. The contents of the clumsy paper wrapping appeared to be a slim disc. "All you've got to do is, umm, get me and, umm, this into the architect's office. Umm, tonight, really."

"Yeah? An' what then, tech-head?"

"And then I can change the plans. Much more crawlspace, a lot fewer access panels."

"Hey — thas cool, babe. I'm, like, totally up for that." A pause. "By the way, where is, like, this architect's office?"

The computer expert smiled sheepishly, and sounded embarrassed when she spoke. "Umm, about a hundred and fifty miles away. 'Fraid we'll have to hurry, a bit."

This chapter describes what is, in a very literal sense, a "wainscot" urban fantasy game set-up. It focuses on the "Small Folk," a race (or, by some of their own claims, a set of races) of tiny humanoid supernatural beings who have lived in the shadows and under-floor spaces of the human world since the dawn of human civilisation. The player characters are members of this species, with a unique, low-angle view of the modern world.

The Small Folk are clearly associated with countless human myths and legends, but as creatures of urban fantasy, they have moved with the times. The names they give their various subgroups are deceptively traditional, but these are very modern, highly self-aware beings. This does not change the fact that they still have old-fashioned magical powers.

The tone of games in this setting should be essentially comic, although there is also plenty of opportunity for action and drama, even tragedy and death. The Small Folk embody the earthy, ironic aspects of fairytale and myth, in a contemporary setting.

Physiology

The Small Folk superficially resemble miniature humans, but closer inspection reveals a wider range of physical forms than is typical of humanity. Adult Small Folk can be anything from 5-10 cm tall, and their builds can vary from stick-thin to impressively stocky. Their bodies are a bit denser than those of humans (meaning that they have trouble staying afloat in water, although they can manage with effort). Hence, their weight can vary widely; anything from 10 to 50 grams is commonplace.

Their rugged physiques and a degree of downright supernatural resilience makes them more robust than might be expected for their size, but they are by no means indestructible. They are omnivorous by diet; they seem to enjoy much the same sort of foods as humans, but this may be a matter of custom inspired by the necessity of stealing many of their supplies from humanity. They are quite resistant to poison and disease. Little Folk have a range of skin colours, although most have pale, often downright sallow, skin and their hair and eyes cover the same ranges as humanity. Their ears are sometimes but not always noticeably pointed.

They are quick on their feet — far faster than a human scaled down to their size would be — and their senses are sharp, more because they have to be alert much of the time to survive because of any innate superiority over humans. They are thus well able to evade predators, although all their advantages are not always enough. Like most animals of their size, they can often survive long falls — small, light bodies benefit from higher effective wind resistance, slowing them as they drop — although they are slightly too large and too dense to be immune to falls of unlimited distances.

Metaphysics

Given that this is an essentially lightweight, frivolous sort of setting, games featuring the Small Folk should not be subjected to too many questions about the exact details of their history, the (doubtful) physics or biology of the set-up, or anything similar. Then again, RPG players being as they are, those questions probably will be asked — and players may not be satisfied to be told that their characters will never know the answer, the nature of the answer will never affect the game, and merely asking the question is likely to spoil the atmosphere of the thing.

The origin of the Small Folk is metaphysical. They are magical beings, not entirely limited by mundane reality. They can best be regarded as "psychic echoes" of the operation of human minds and souls in the structure of reality. They are reflections of the larger, more rational entities amongst whom they dwell, embodying some subconscious human conceptions about the nature of the universe.

Of more pragmatic interest is the fact that The Small Folk are entirely aware of their position as "rats in the walls"; they can not only eavesdrop on human beings whenever they choose, they can and do learn to read, and frequently steal human books and other texts. They have an ironic, often self-mocking attitude, and a capacity for flippancy and mordant humour that well suits something as vulnerable to accidents of fate as themselves.

("That's steal those books, by the way, not borrow — we're kleptomaniac little sods, remember.")

The Small Folk sometimes have an intuitive grasp of their status as psychic reflections of human ideas and images, albeit only in rather vague and unspecific terms. To the extent that they understand what they truly are, they are remarkably well adjusted about it. It is entirely in keeping for them to make jokes about being "myths" or "figments of humans' imaginations." In other words, there is a good excuse for confusions between player-level and character-level jokes in games in this setting.

Hiding in the Walls

Despite their origins, Small Folk are not specifically obliged to associate particularly closely with humanity; some tribes and communities live and thrive in remote wilderness areas. Furthermore, given their determination to avoid human attention, rustication might seem like a rational strategy but most Small Folk do choose to live in human buildings and near to humans.

This may be because, as echoes of human dreams, they find a certain comfort in the presence of humans. More practically, human communities are free of some of the natural predators that can threaten Small Folk. Their main reason is the opportunity to steal good stuff from humans — whether tools, information, or warmth and shelter. It is also because of tradition; they have always lived like this.

One important consequence of the Small Folk's psychic nature is that their physical bodies evaporate into a puff of oily vapour when they die. This has always been immensely frustrating for would-be predators, and coupled with the Small Folk's use of illusory and mind-warping magics, it means that humans rarely acquire anything resembling tangible evidence of the Small Folk.

History (Such As It Is)

The Small Folk lack much sense of history, and even those who are curious about the subject are short on definite knowledge. They have some garbled stories regarding their past, and can read human books relating to myths about Small Folk, but that is about all.

It is obvious that they are the inspiration for some old human myths — perhaps even the majority of them. A few Small Folk like to believe that the Small Folk may have progressively shrunk in stature over the generations; perhaps some of their ancestors were as large as human beings, or even larger, and proportionately powerful, the dread elves, Sidhe, djinn, and suchlike of human legend. (Only Small Folk with an unusually clear idea of their status as psychic echoes really accept this theory.) It certainly seems likely that they were once both more diverse in form and slightly less inclined to hide from attention, although whether they were more numerous is less certain; no one is sure how many Small Folk there are today, let alone in the past. It is entirely possible that the expansion of human populations has permitted similar growth in Small Folk communities, despite their need to hide.

The fact is everything about their history is vague. A few Small Folk do keep records, but when such historians grow old, they often neglect to find worthy successors, or fail to convince their heirs to preserve their records properly. The race's oral history is a garbled mixture of anecdotes, jokes, and comforting lies, and should usually be ignored. They also have slightly garbled ideas about geography, which is not helped by their extensive use of magical transdimensional tunnels.

Early Days

Judging by human accounts, the Small Folk probably first appeared in something like their modern form when humanity began to build substantial towns back in the Bronze Age. Before then, any psychic echoes or dream projections likely took the form of animistic spirits, and were rarely human in shape or terribly rational in behaviour. It was only with the development of some limited long-range trade and contact that there was scope for belief in strange communities of not-quite-people over the hill or beyond the horizon. With the creation of walls and thatched roofs there came space for small creatures of all sorts to hide out close to hand.

Medieval Glories

According to Small Folk traditionalists, the zenith of Small Folk culture, at least for ancestors of the currently dominant cliques, came during the period known to humans as the Middle Ages. Stories of helpful or malicious elves and fairies were widespread in Medieval Europe and every sensible peasant would leave out a saucer of milk for them at night. More cynical Small Folk disagree, claiming that things have been going downhill ever since ancient times. Even if there was never a golden age of "Larger Folk", a period when their ancestors were feared by the early Celts as the terrible Sidhe, it is possible that there was once a time when some of the Small Folk pulled a magnificent con game, resulting in the race being revered by the Romans as *lares* and *penates* — household gods. The spread of Christianity meant that non-human beings found themselves likely to be treated as demons or at least as soulless outcasts from Heaven.

Still, the race clearly got by in those days, as the human folklore attests. Almost every castle, cottage, and haystack had its miniature denizens who could do peculiar tricks or work blessings and curses, and few sensible priests spoke out openly against them. It is possible that sufficiently strong faith could hold off Small Folk magics, but the typical exorcism had no effect on them whatsoever.

Being believed in had had its disadvantages. When people became annoyed at Small Folk pranks, or when some charismatic and fanatical priest convinced enough of his congregation that they were beset by "imps" that had to be destroyed for anyone's soul to be safe, the traps and the poison and the cold iron weapons (which did not necessarily hurt any more for being cold iron, but which certainly hurt by virtue of being weapons) could be a real menace. This is why some Small Folk actually claim that their ancestors were responsible for what happened next, and insist that they should be praised, not blamed.

The Age of Not Being Discovered

The world turned, and the Small Folk had to adapt. Changing religious beliefs somehow always left the Small Folk labelled as being in the wrong — as belonging to the *Other Side* — while the occasional witch-hunt had them marked down as imps or familiars, and their magic as diabolical. A little later, growing human science and materialism were just as annoying, if less dangerous; the folk beliefs which had so often guaranteed them a saucer of milk at night were increasingly discarded as mere superstition, and any Small Folk who tried to demonstrate their reality were once again treated as pests.

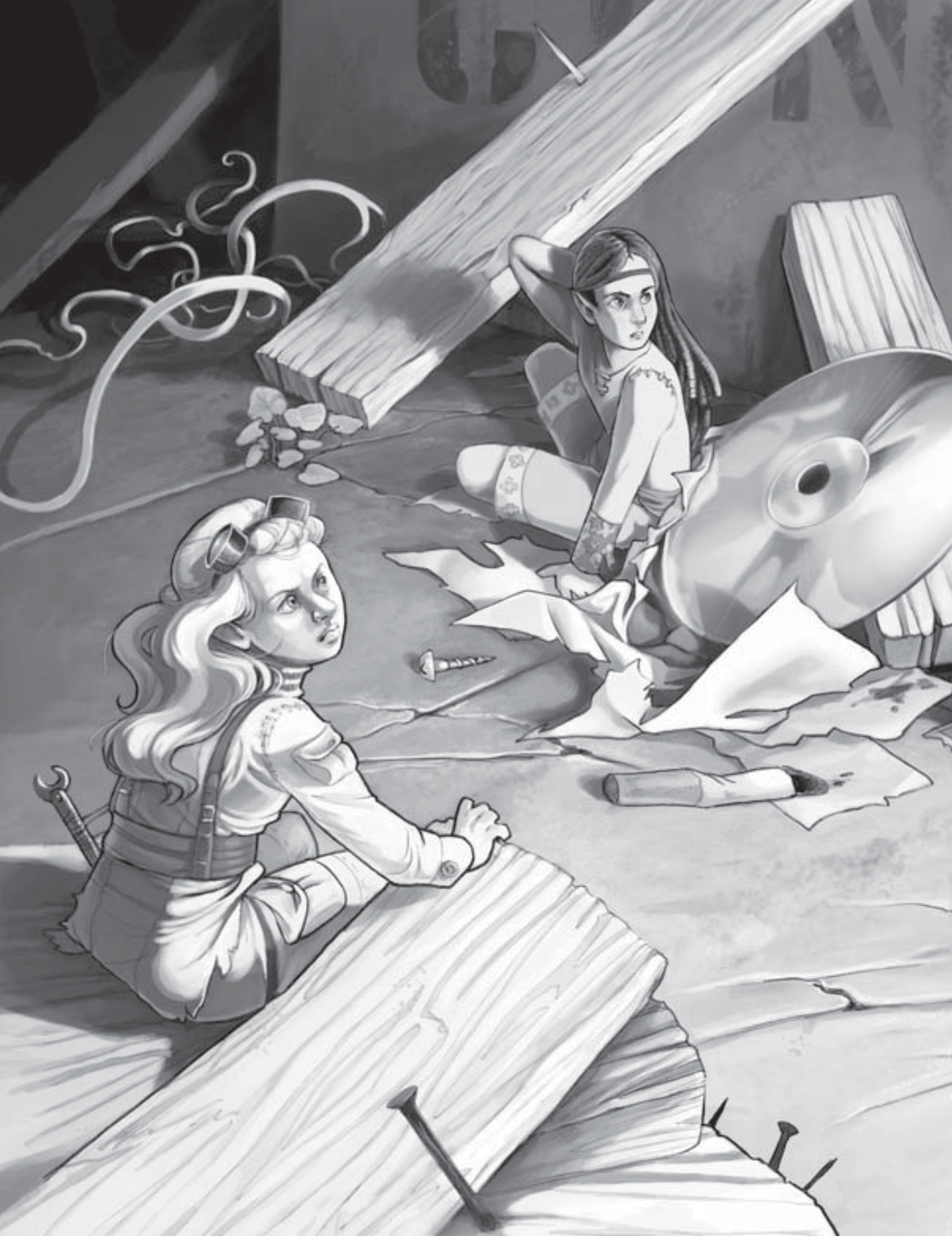
Furthermore, some wiser Small Folk began to suspect that the complicated but often negative human opinions of them were having a bad effect on the race as a whole. It seemed that, as psychic by-products of the human imagination, they became, to some extent, what they were believed to be. There really were some imps on the loose in those days, and they were trouble for everyone.

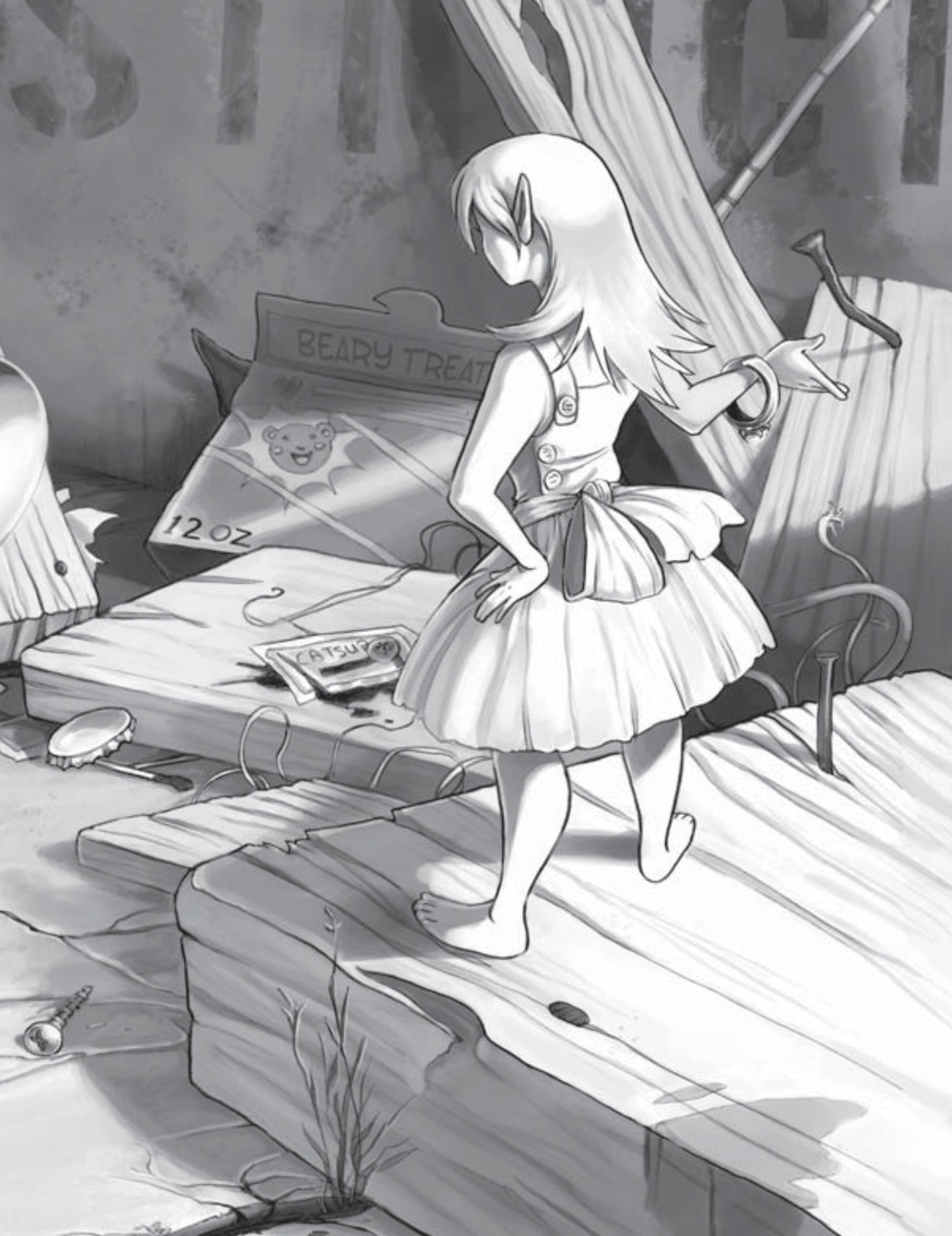
Somewhere along the line, a decision was made which turned into a consensus policy among the Small Folk, which was to go into hiding. Some Small Folk insist that this decision was the result of a great and tumultuous conclave, wherein killmoulis and callicantzaroi and polviki and hengeyokai from all across the world convened in some ruined tower in Brittany or the high Alps or Tuscany and hammered out a decision amongst duels and passionate affairs and subtle artful politics. Others suspect that this story is utter hogwash, and that the policy about concealment was just an obvious bit of common sense that spread like a rumour among creatures who had been forced to dodge too many mousetraps. Either way, the ethnic of secrecy did spread, and the Small Folk have remained sensibly hidden ever since.

Whether the decision to be discrete was conscious or not, it had consequences. Apart from anything else, it meant that the great councils which once probably existed — the "Seelie and Unseelie Courts" (page 227) — now became impossible to organise. Many Small Folk regretted this — meetings of the Courts were great excuses to get together and get drunk — but not enough to do anything constructive about it.

Remaining Hidden

To this day, one of the central principles of Small Folk life is that every member of the race should remain hidden from humanity, and should actively conceal all evidence of their existence from human eyes. This should be one of the perennial concerns of Small Folk characters in games — perhaps a major theme of the storylines, and certainly a consideration in every plan they make.




BEARY TREAT
12 OZ
CATSUP

There are several reasons for the policy, and the explanation is likely to vary depending on which Small Folk one asks. But, aside from memories of homicidal witch-hunters (who invariably accused any Small Folk they met of being imps, and generally murdered any they caught with great shows of self-righteousness) and impertinent Enlightenment natural philosophers (who occasionally captured Small Folk, asked them a lot of foolish questions, and then accused them of failing to pay allegiance to some "new spirit of logic and rationality"), the main concern is simply that humans, being so much larger, would be prone to treat Small Folk as inferior — as pets at best, toys or vermin at worst. Small Folk magic might help balance the scales, but shrewd Small Folk realise, or remember from the old stories, that their supernatural powers are simply not sufficient, even if more of them could be bothered to develop their skills to their potential, to compensate for the humans' natural advantages.

Lost and Found

For some reason, significant minorities of Small Folk display peculiar obsessive and kleptomaniac tendencies. In short, they spend much of their time stealing some specific category of item, almost always from human beings, for no apparent rational reason.

Most of these "collectors" have a very specific subject of interest, which may involve almost anything portable and common enough to support their habit. The three most common addictions among modern Small Folk are single socks, keys, and ballpoint pens, but there are many other sorts of obsessive thieves around.

The cause of this behaviour is unclear; it seems to be a flaw based in the species' deep psychology, possibly resulting from their origins as projections of the human collective unconscious. Despite the irrational, compulsive nature of the impulse, these "collector" Small Folk are usually cool, methodical, and very efficient in their collecting — which is fortunate, given the risk that these Small Folk "magpies" would otherwise pose to racial secrecy.

The main reason for the secrecy might be summarised as tradition. The Small Folk have been in hiding for centuries, and it is vary hard to break a culturally ingrained habit of that depth. Small Folk can be, and often are, rebels, but preserving racial concealment has become an injunction as deeply seated as any principle in human morality. Furthermore, it is a very practically enforced rule; Small Folk who reveal themselves and survive the experience tend to be beaten up or more ingeniously punished by any members of their own kind who feel like amusing themselves. This custom is a powerful deterrent for anyone who wants to suggest a change of policy or who fails to observe the present one.

Practicalities

Fortunately for the Small Folk, they have several advantages when avoiding notice. To begin with they are very small, which helps both in going unseen and in remaining effectively silent. In the modern western world, they also benefit considerably from the general belief that tiny humanoid creatures are merely the stuff of fairy stories; many a human has glimpsed one of the Small Folk, shaken his head, and muttered something about mice, lack of sleep, or laying off the beer.

Magic

The Small Folk's supernatural powers are also immensely useful for stealth. A number of these powers, ones associated with several different cliques, seem specifically designed to help the user hide from other beings. These must sometimes be used with care — flagrant supernatural activities can attract more attention than they avoid — but once again, the general disbelief in magic among "sensible human adults" is their ally.

Education and Reactions

Remaining hidden is both an art form and a survival skill for Small Folk, and is carefully taught. Learning how to hide forms a major element in the informal process of Small Folk education; every youngster learns his or her community's favoured tricks, tactics, and hiding places. In some communities, skill in hiding and evasion is a respected art and even a mark of status; in others, the necessity is regarded as tiresome but unavoidable. In still others, youngsters and even some older Small Folk make far more of a joke of the directive to remain out of sight, seeing how much they can get away with — although never pushing matters to the point where detection seems inevitable, thanks to their cultural taboos. Humans living near a Small Folk community of this last type can have rather confusing lives, what with bumps in the night, scuttling sounds, "mice or rats" glimpsed in places where they simply couldn't be, small items mysteriously vanishing, and a stream of strange stories from "over-imaginative" children.

Cruelty to Animals

There is another aspect to all this. While humans can be avoided or deceived, or persuaded to deceive themselves, nonhuman species, in particular the species that hunt, often present harder problems. Wild animals include numerous predators (who cannot gain any nutrition from dead — and hence vaporised — Small Folk, but who will not understand this and who are therefore likely to keep trying), as well as defensive or clumsy herbivores. Worse, human households often include domestic animals kept specifically for their ability to detect and eliminate small vermin.

The Small Folk have various practical strategies for dealing with all this. To begin with, they often cultivate animal-fighting techniques, and combat-trained Small Folk make some study of various species' habits, psychology, and anatomy. Few animals will continue attacking when their prey sticks tiny spears into the animal's soft parts. More important is the Small Folk program of deterring animals from even considering attacking them.

This can involve cunning, magic, bribery, and a broad streak of applied sadism, primarily targeted at young animals still learning their "hunting habits." The objective is to make the creature grow up with an intense conditioned aversion to the idea of attacking anything that looks remotely like one of the Small Folk. The society awards extra kudos to the "teacher" if the animal learns well enough to pass the same attitude along to its offspring. Killing an animal which is in the process of being "taught" is considered deeply gauche; after all, it usually means that another predator will just move into the now empty territory, and the entire process will have to start again from the beginning.

A few animals can be taught by positive reinforcement, such as rewards of food or other prizes until they come to regard Small Folk as "friends," but most animals are too unreliable for this to be entirely safe. Many Small Folk leaders consider the entire idea to be a waste of time. The opposite approach, physically attacking the creature, preferably while it is at a disadvantage or still very young, is far more popular, although this tactic carries risks of its own. Many Small Folk adopt a more subtle style of aversion training, sneaking in and out of the animal's nest or lair and waking it up with something sharp and pointed while it is trying to sleep, or simply behaving in a deeply confusing and frustrating way before slipping away. Magic can obviously help enormously with such schemes, but a skilled "trainer" can achieve plenty using only his or her ordinary skills and some ingenuity.

The complexity of the results that can be achieved varies a lot by species. Insects really cannot be usefully "trained," and reptiles and most birds can at best be conditioned to avoid specific places and things. Mammals are worth some effort, in the Small Folk analysis. The number of cats and dogs that have been rendered hopelessly neurotic by this sort of thing is beyond counting.

See pages 253-258 for game details for a variety of animals from the Small Folk point of view.

Births, Marriages, and Deaths

Although they may have been created initially by the power of human psychic influences, Small Folk today live, breed, and die just like any mundane biological creature. It is unknown whether new Small Folk can still be called into existence from nowhere by human minds in the vicinity, but if it doeshappen, it is extremely rare; some Small Folk may have heard tales, but there are no reliable reports of such spontaneous creations. It is possible that the space that Small Folk occupy in the psychic world is full enough that the creative forces are no longer functional.

Small Folk actually live much like the humans they reflect. The natural Small Folk life span is hard to estimate, given all the unpredictable influences of good and bad luck, strange lifestyles, and weird diet, and it seems highly variable; some Small Folk live for decades, ultimately transforming into wrinkled little figures of uncertain temper and unreliable wisdom who have outlasted anyone who once knew their exact age, while others rapidly burn out. The average for one of the Small Folk who avoids bad luck is probably around 50-60 years, but like most averages, this should not be taken as any kind of reliable rule for any one of the Small Folk.

Small Folk mature relatively quickly, as a matter of necessity given their uncertain scavenging tribal lifestyle. "Childhood" for the Small Folk rarely lasts longer then 10 years, if that. Some of the larger, more settled communities run schools of a sort, teaching reading, writing, basic mathematics, human behaviour, and whatever other subjects the teachers find interesting, but most Small Folk learn things as they go along, from their families and friends. Fortunately, members of the race are impressively quick studies with good memories, and learn almost as well as they might from formal schooling.

(One theory espoused by some of the very rare Small Folk intellectuals says that Small Folk can tap the human "collective unconscious ," and don't need to be taught so much as reminded of things. This would certainly explain a lot, although the theory has some problems.)

As with humanity, Small Folk mating, family, and basic social arrangements are largely determined by local custom, modified by the attitudes of the various cliques (see below). The normal pattern is a system of monogamous marriages, formalised by brief ceremonies conducted by the community's leader or some vaguely shamanic individual. Couples produce children who stay at home until the arguments with their parents get too loud, at which point they wander off in search of their own sleeping-space. "Illegitimacy" is regarded as an unfortunate accident which can usually be fixed by marriage; Small Folk tend to think (with much logic, given the complications of their lifestyle) that children are better raised by family groups. Despite all the rows, Small Folk families are usually close — or at least, Small Folk enjoy ganging up with their relatives against outsiders. Marriages often last a lifetime, but not always; "divorce" may or may not be recognised by the community, with varying degrees of inconvenience attached.

Their community usually looks after elderly Small Folk. Virtually all Small Folk bands have a tradition of great respect for the wisdom of the elderly, an attitude that the elderly themselves encourage and exploit mercilessly. Children are urged to care for aged parents, but given Small Folk irascibility, this does not always work.

Given that their bodies vaporise on death, the Small Folk have never any need to develop much in the way of funeral traditions. Most communities have some kind of informal ceremony of mourning, during which friends and relatives compete to tell (allegedly) true stories of the dead individual's life and deeds, usually followed by a drunken party and days of squabbling over the division of the deceased's personal property.

The Clique System

Human stories tell of a dizzying variety of sorts of fairy, with a bewildering diversity of powers, tastes, and weaknesses ranging from great lumbering trolls to baby-stealing elves and whimsical flower fairies. To the Small Folk, this is a great joke.

The fact is there is just one species of Small Folk, if scientific terms like "species" can be used in reference to inherently magical entities. The "cliques" into which they are divided are far more like subcultures, external appearances notwithstanding. The cliques like to talk about themselves as though they were all very distinct groups, and they like to refer to the other cliques as distant outsiders, but this is a matter of psychological identity, not biology. Although many Small Folk communities contain members exclusively from a single clique, many others include contingents from two, three, or more, with extensive intermarriage.

While most Small Folk are brought up in the same clique as one or both of their parents, this does not always take. Small Folk are prone to adolescent rebellion (as well as infantile rebellion, adult rebellion, and senile obstreperousness), and this rebellion often takes the form of a decision to switch cliques. Repeated changes at this stage are unusual although not unknown, but eventually the individual finds a clique where he or she is relatively happy, declares that this is home, and from then on, obstinately defends that decision in the face of all criticism.

One element involved in this decision may be the character's appearance and build. Most of the cliques tend toward a distinct physical ideal, and members who fit that image are often happier than those who do not. This is by no means the only factor, but a tall, thin, pale adolescent may well be best suited as a boggart, while a slightly plump, perspiration-prone character may be happier as a gremlin.

Having decided on a clique identity and made their choice sound convincing, the individual will begin hanging around with other members of the clique, learning its style of speech, private slang, and typical attitudes. (Someone who decides to join a clique with no active members in his or her community or neighbourhood may have to seek some out first, which can be an adventure in itself.) Eventually, the older members of the clique will accept that the new member is sincere, and begin teaching him or her the clique's secrets — magical powers, as described below. Some groups of knockers and a few goblins and pixies have formal initiation rites or ceremonies, but for most cliques, being accepted by a leader and looking and acting the part makes one a member.

It is possible for an older character to change cliques, but this is rare, and involves serious challenges. The new clique is likely to be suspicious and cynical, often imposing arbitrary qualifications or "initiation rites", which may be hard to tell from sadistic practical jokes, while the old clique may be annoyed or even violently offended. The problems are greatest when the cliques involved regard their magic as an important secret; while Small Folk society as a whole frowns on the idea of anyone being forced to stay in a clique, or being murdered for changing, it respects the idea of clique monopolies, and cliques may get away with inflicting punishments — possibly to the point of assassination — on former members who teach their new friends such inner secrets.

The Seelie and Unseelie Courts

Small Folk lore and discussion often make reference to the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. It takes many young Small Folk several years to realise that these are a myth, or at best archaic institutions with no modern existence. Many less intelligent or more superstitious Small Folk never quite shake off the sense that the Courts still exist, at least in some abstract, intangible sense.

This is important because the Courts were, and in a sense still are, the governments and legal authorities of the Small Folk. The best evidence suggests that they were two rival governing bodies, both of which claimed authority over all their kind. There may have been occasional organised physical battles between the two, but mostly the competition seems to have been a matter of what would now be called ideological propaganda, verbal persuasion and abuse, and the odd small-scale brawl — a struggle for the hearts and minds of potential followers.

So far as anyone can determine today, the Seelie Court was a kind of impartial authority — a police force and arbitration service with the ability to

make the law up as it went along. Although power on this scale would corrupt most modern Small Folk within minutes, the Seelie Court appears to have been bound by a code of honour and a tradition of impartiality; most Small Folk believe at heart that the Seelie Court was a good and virtuous thing.

The Unseelie Court was more of a hierarchy of power — a kind of Mafia, complete with its own dark but effective code of honour, and a certain willingness to keep things working right. Small Folk still become nostalgic about this myth because the Unseelie Court did bring order and safety to their fractious and anarchic world. Furthermore, the Unseelie Court worked by tolerably clear and comprehensible rules, whereas the Seelie Court was bound by virtue and justice, which made them less predictable and more dangerous to typical modern Small Folk. It is also said that the Seelie Court obliged Small Folk to avoid humanity or even to obey human laws, whereas the Unseelie took the side of their own kind, and were willing to assist in overt actions which harassed or drove away annoying humans.

Today, the Courts are most often mentioned when arguments (especially those between different cliques) have been reduced to screaming matches. Lines such as "if the Seelie Court knew what you were doing, they'd stop you" or "the Unseelie Court knew how to deal with people like you" are commonly heard. Old Small Folk like to give the impression that they can remember the days when the Courts were active, because they can then say what the Courts did or thought about certain subjects with little fear of contradiction. This impression is almost certainly always false.

Restoring the Courts

The Courts may or may not ever have existed, at least in the forms in which they are remembered; they are certainly a powerful image in contemporary Small Folk culture. Hence, from time to time, some of the race proposes schemes to revive one or both of them. There are even popular rumours that certain legendary Faerie lords might somehow manage to reappear, perhaps because these figures of myth are magically sleeping or in hiding somewhere, waiting for the day of their return.

All this may just be wild talk, but it is impossible to prove the point either way, and occasionally, ambiguous hints emerge that the Courts might indeed be resurrected. This could be a major plot element in Small Folk games; seeking to restore the Court organisations or to discover the truth of the "sleeper" legends could lead characters into epic quests, perhaps taking them into forgotten Small Folk hiding-places. Equally, freedom-loving Small Folk could battle to sabotage magically enhanced efforts to resurrect ancient tyrannies — or might have to deal with sentimental or sinister manipulators who are exploiting the legends.

Part of the problem is that no one is entirely certain what happened to make the Courts disappear — a fact that makes some of the more cynical Small Folk certain that the whole business of the Courts is just a myth. The chances are that the Courts simply decayed into irrelevance as Small Folk dispersed through a spreading and rapidly evolving human culture, until none of the Small Folk were paying any attention to the pronouncements of the Courts or bothering to attend Court meetings any more. Legends hint at internal conflicts instigated by manipulative villains, magical curses, or cataclysmic struggles between Seelie and Unseelie in which crucial regalia and symbols of power were misplaced (the last raising the possibility of hunting down these essential baubles, of course). The first step towards restoring the Courts might be discovering why they vanished — or faking up a convincing explanation.

Even if the Courts were somehow restored, they might not resemble the old stories very closely. Any ancient lords who awoke would surely be badly out of touch with the practicalities of the modern world; they might be fierce and uncompromising, a threat to the survival of all Small Folk with their dreams of honour and glory, or they might be enfeebled and incompetent. It would certainly be in keeping with the general nature of Small Folk if the ancient lords turned out to be quarrelsome, pretentious, and thoroughly corrupted by power. Likewise, trying to adapt a feudal, chivalrous court system to present-day circumstances could lead to all sorts of problems. Even Small Folk who thought that they liked the idea of restored Courts might quickly change their minds once they actually experienced them.

Law and Custom

In the absence of the Courts, Small Folk society is governed by tradition rather than by formal law, although thanks to years of repetition, some customs have a rigid, fixed form. Some long-established communities have tidy systems of what humans would call "common law," but many more, especially small clans, are governed by the dictates of some chief, moderated by what he fears others may do if he pushes too far.

Above all this is the simple practical fact that there are quite a few wandering Small Folk, and some outright nomadic groups. Thus, Small Folk often come into contact with other Small Folk with whom they are not familiar, and some general framework of rules and assumptions is required to govern these meetings. Unfortunately, what they actually have is much more like a set of vague guidelines, and no two Small Folk can ever quite agree on the specific details of these guidelines. There are nonetheless a few near-universal principles.

The first principle, above all else, is the tradition of secrecy. Any Small Folk who break this, at least with regard to adult humans, will become pariahs and legitimate targets for assault. It is true that the precise definition of what represents a dangerous risk to security, and what can be forgiven in relation to very young, solitary, or mad humans who will never be believed, is very fuzzy indeed. Making it hard for other Small Folk to preserve secrecy is considered as bad as violating secrecy oneself — but there are frequent arguments about what others can reasonably be expected to do for themselves.

Second, a Small Folk group that effectively controls a patch of territory is usually allowed to set the general rules for that territory. A visitor should tread carefully, say hello politely, and try to learn the local rules as soon as possible. On the other hand, what constitutes "control" or "politeness," what can be done before making contact, and what is legitimate in pursuit of a feud, war, or investigation of other broken rules, are all open to vigorous discussion.

Finally, there is a broad, vague assumption that Small Folk have a right to life, personal property, and freedom within the limits of their own group's rules. (Human property, on the other hand, is fair game — leaving aside any issues of secrecy.) Rule-breakers and the like can be punished, but the general Small Folk culture tries to avoid any "war of all against all." Of course, a non-lethal kick on the shins or punch on the nose may be merely a sign of natural boisterousness or irritation (Small Folk being quite robust), and the definition of "personal property" sometimes seems limited to what the owner can carry on his or her person. Something unattended and not nailed down is all too likely to wander away, and Small Folk are amazingly good at prying up nails.

Many Small Folk know about grand human ideas of law, and find them utterly hilarious.

Justice

If the customary rules or accepted moral standards are violated, and the perpetrator can be identified and restrained, judgement and punishment depend on some very *ad hoc* sorts of systems. Even in large Small Folk communities, the nearest thing to a formal trial may involve the suspect being dragged before the local leaders with a few of their advisors and friends allowed to argue with whoever is accusing them. In small groups, the niceties of due process are far too much to hope for.

On the other hand, many Small Folk have read or watched all sorts of human entertainments, and most have a keen sense of fairness, at least as it applies to them. From this, they tend to accumulate garbled ideas of how a system of justice ought to work, and some of the more settled communities may attempt to meet these expectations — even if the appointed judge often ends up throwing his gavel at squabbling lawyers. Small Folk malefactors are also especially prone to demanding that they should be "read their rights" when they are caught by anyone with any sort of official status, which can lead to a few moments of uncertainty as someone tries to remember what the appropriate rights are.

Despite these handicaps, Small Folk justice usually achieves a certain rough-and-ready fairness — especially if enough of the participants manage to make something of a good show of it. Small Folk appreciate being entertained, and a good trial is most fun if the ending makes a satisfying story.

Punishments

In the absence of a concrete set of social institutions, the punishment of offenders must perforce be prompt and straightforward, which in turn means it can also be rather brutal. It is fortunate that Small Folk are quite robust, because being caught offending against the social order can lead to being beaten up with some enthusiasm. "Fines" — deprivation of anything valuable they happen to be carrying, and its re-assignment to the community or its leader — are also popular.

Only the largest communities are in any position to impose a system of imprisonment, and few of them bother. Instead, what educated Small Folk sometimes call "community service" is common. If there is a dangerous or unpleasant job to be done on behalf of the community, and someone has recently been found guilty of reasonably serious misbehaviour, it seems only logical for that someone to be given the job. Miniature "Dirty Dozen" missions would be a perfectly good way to get a group of Small Folk characters together for a campaign.

The idea that a community might accuse a few outsiders or unpopular characters of some crime that they did not actually commit, simply to get some unpleasant job accomplished, is of course quite outrageous. It could help set that campaign up rather nicely, though.

Aspects of Magic

For all their earthy simplicity, the Small Folk are an authentically supernatural race. The mere fact of an intelligent race of this size proves it — a human biologist would find them highly implausible — but they also possess powers that are blatantly magical. All Small Folk have at least a little latent supernatural talent, which can be unlocked and channelled by techniques — rituals and "spells" — taught by experienced users. Each clique has its own catalogue of methods; others might be developed or discovered, but it would be a lengthy, complicated and chancy process, and Small Folk society cannot support laboratories or research institutes.

The known powers for each clique are described on pages 243-245, complete with game mechanics. These range from boggarts' ability to produce clouds of darkness and walk through walls, through sprites' powers of hallucinatory illusion and flight, to knockers' sensitivity to underground conditions and weird transdimensional tunnelling. Most or all of these powers require some special rituals or actions to function. This gives Small Folk magic an especially eccentric air.

It is important to note that not all Small Folk bother developing their magic at all, although those who live dangerous or adventurous lives will usually try to learn at least a few helpful tricks. It seems that those who can use magic at all — which is most of them — could actually learn most or all of the known powers, but acquiring training outside one's own clique can be very hard.

Although magic is a routine part of Small Folk life, taken for granted by most of them, they often tend to play down its significance, only using it when they really have to. Ostentatious displays of magical talent is regarded as a particularly flashy form of vanity, much as flaunting wealth might be seen among humans; this is one area where Small Folk understand the virtues of subtlety and taste. The fact is magic often requires time and concentration to bring into play, while mundane skills and ingenuity are simpler and generally faster. Also, while it can help them to avoid human attention if used sensibly, careless use of supernatural abilities can draw dangerous amounts of attention.

The Cliques

The cliques dominate Small Folk society. This section details each of them in turn. Remember that everything which follows is a generalisation; every clique has members who defy almost everything which can be said about the clique as a whole, although a character who wanders too far from the stereotype will be seen as an eccentric, eliciting anything from puzzlement through amusement to outright contempt from other Small Folk.

Each clique has a couple of associated magical powers, taught by its senior members to new recruits. (The way that each has exactly two is just one of those oddities of fate — or perhaps a product of the Small Folk's fundamentally magical natures, prone to numerological symmetry and arbitrary rules.) The details of each power, including the exact nature of its requirements and limitations, are discussed on pages 243-245. It is possible, though difficult, for members of one clique to learn how to use another clique's powers — Small Folk are all the same species, more alike than not — but this will require some explanation. One or two of the powers are regarded as clique monopolies, and as such are jealously defended.

Each clique is also given a set of brief notes defining its general attitudes to each other clique. These are highly generalised stereotypes; members of every clique can and often do have friends and acquaintances in every other clique, of whom their opinions may be completely different than indicated by the notes.

Finally, for each clique, there is a character template. This is designed to assist the quick creation of a typical, rather stereotyped member of the group, and should be treated as a general set of guidelines and a convenient tool, not as a straightjacket. Many respected members of any clique may not fit the template at all. These templates include examples of the clique's magical abilities; see pages 243-245 for more on these. They also assume that characters are built with 20 Skill Points and a Normal Maximum Skill Level of 3 (as suggested on page 242).

Boggarts

"Oh no, all this is just too, too unpleasant. It really hurts me even to think about it."

In traditional stories, boggarts were domestic fairies with a taste for playing tricks and practical jokes on humans. It was assumed that they acted in this way out of mischief or raw malice. Those who know modern boggarts suspect that, if the two groups are the same and the old tales are true, the old boggart tricks were a way of assuaging or forgetting some kind of deep-seated depression or pain.

Unfortunately for the modern day boggarts, they no longer find such behaviour effective as a way to relieve their unhappiness. Perhaps they are aware of the greater need to avoid human attention, or perhaps they have simply fallen out of the habit. As a result, boggarts are far and away the most depressive and miserable of the Small Folk, and they really do not care who knows it. They dress, act, and talk in a way that cries out "Misery!" In fact, many do cry out "Misery!" repeatedly, whenever they have nothing else to do.

All this might make boggarts seem like a rather feeble, useless faction, but they can achieve quite a lot when they try — provided that they are able to avoid the appearance of caring. The suicidal air is largely a pose, and they collectively take significant interest in many aspects of human culture. They also wield subtle but powerful magic; most mixed Small Folk cliques are willing to put up with a boggart member for the sake of access to boggart powers.

A boggart is usually slightly taller than most Small Folk, and much thinner, with very pale skin. (Boggarts do not eat properly, or at least, they avoid eating too much, and never go out in the sun if they can help it.) Their clothes tend to be black or near black, with the occasional touch of white or crimson for contrast. Indeed, their sense of style is more active than they will





ever admit; they raid human scraps and rubbish heaps, zeroing in on silk or lace, and assemble their acquisitions into simple shift dresses (for both sexes) or other forms. If they can acquire dolls' clothes, they will adopt anything that fits their style, even — or especially — if it is too small for them. They make many sneering references to less sombre dolls' clothes and often drop sarcastic hints about why other cliques might be interested in the dolls that wear them.

Boggarts have a simple and economical, but ritualistic style of magic that focuses on gloom and lack of substance. They can create clouds of impenetrable darkness, and walk through walls like small but despondent ghosts.

Boggart Template (30 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Mind
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	1	Highly Skilled
+6	24	Insubstantial
	-4	• Activation Time (1 Round, Must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted)
	-3	• Concentration (Linked to Activation Time)
	-1	• Detectable (Character must emit an audible wail and becomes ghostly and mist-like)
+1	6	Speed
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
+9	13	Sensory Block (Magical Darkness, -12 to normal vision, infravision, and UV vision — Area 2; Duration 2)
	-3	• Activation Time (10 Initiative, Must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	2	Cultural Arts (One human)
+1	2	Cultural Arts (Small Folk)
+1	6	Stealth (Concealment)
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive
	-1	Not So Tough

Brownies

"All we have to do is work smarter and actualise the options we've kept open through the last market cycle, and we'll have all the cheese we need to kick that upward-leaping monkey's butt. Yah?"

Brownies were known in medieval Europe as hard-working domestic fairies, and their modern successors preserve that work ethic. Their reputation for helpfulness is less justified today, if it ever was. They are the most highly motivated, methodical Small Folk. Of course, this isn't saying much, but Brownies regard themselves as businesslike and efficient, and like to mock others in their braying or drawling voices. They also monitor human society carefully, adopting half-understood jargon from overheard business conversations and stolen textbooks and training course notes.

They are also the most diligent and selective of Small Folk when it comes to acquiring dolls' clothes, plundering anything that can help them look smart. Some brownies even manage to acquire or create neckties. Not surprisingly, they form a tolerably well-organised clique, although their tendency to competitive individualism can be a problem. The most materially successful brownies receive a great deal of respect (although fluency with up-to-date human jargon counts for more). The most respected among them function as the clique's leaders.

Boggarts and Other Cliques

Boggarts regard most other Small Folk — and for that matter, most other boggarts — with an attitude of bleak despair, leavened by a certain amount of irony and a hint of plain disgust. They affect not to distinguish much between the other cliques, but in actual fact find some of them far more annoying than others do.

"Brownies are simply unbearable. They *try* so *hard*. Really — why do they bother?"

"It's easy to understand what makes goblins so angry — but wasting all that energy just shows that they're a bit clueless. Perhaps when they've burned some of it off, they may understand a bit more about life."

"Talking of clueless — look at those gremlins. Drips. Walking fashion crimes. And their fiddling with their toys is nothing like as clever as they want to think."

"Knockers are soulless thugs, really. They do have a little bit of rough charm, -- if industrial soundscapes are your thing."

"It's not like being clean *matters*, but pixies just seem to have mess down as cool. At least they know better than to try too hard, most of the time."

"Sprites ... Ouch ... They're so ... colourful. They can be really, really annoying that way."

Brownies and Other Cliques

This clique tries to look down on all the others, although they have to compromise on this a fair amount. Their materialistic lifestyles and complex schemes often require a large degree of inter-clique co-operation and help. Sometimes they forget themselves and in a smirking manner offer to sell the others Barbie dolls "in plain packaging for a very friendly retail discount."

"Boggarts are useless miserable twits. Unfortunately, they have a few process streams we should sometimes tap. Just agree with them from time to time about how sub-optimal everything is, and you can usually get what your business plan requires for functional actualisation."

"Goblins have real chips on their shoulders, don't they? But they don't have a clue how to get things done. Too loud, too crass — much, much too much last year."

"Keep gremlins in the back room, give them a real-time stream of material assets, try not to let them see you laugh at their dress sense, and they'll be a big e-enabled item on the left of the balance sheet."

"Knockers are smokestack remnants. Their asset value has depreciated to penny share status. If it wasn't for their residual logistical resources, they could be, like, totally downsized."

"But then again, look at pixies. That partnership isn't even smokestack, is it? No grasp of fiscal realities and not much sense of the book value of intangibles either. Stick to a strictly arms-length relationship, max."

"Sprites are like pixies, but more manageable. They simply place too high a valuation on intangibles. A fairly good source of design concepts, when adequately motivated, but incapable of value-additional micromanagement."

Brownies wield magic that increases the amount of work that they can accomplish. They also learn how to create small physical objects out of nowhere. (The latter power is rather limited and in any case, status among brownies comes from acquiring material goods from other beings, not from creating those goods.) All this is accomplished with a minimum of gestures or ritual, helping brownies to preserve their smug attitude. They dislike being seen to exert themselves in this way and thus, they rarely develop their powers very far.

Brownie Template (25 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+3	6	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+3	13	Creation (Duration 5)
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
+2	2	Highly Skilled
+1	6	Speed
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
+2	6	Speed
		• Reduction (-3 Only for non-combat tasks, not for long-range movement)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+2	4	Etiquette (Small Folk)
+1	1	Law (Small Folk Business)
+2	2	Management/Admin (Any)
+1	6	Stealth (Any)
	7	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive
	-1	Not So Tough OR Less Capable

Goblins

"Yo, bro — ain't nuttin' I can't smack down, so don't yo dis this."

Goblins are the most overtly forceful Small Folk, with the most aggressive attitudes. They claim to despise all the other groups for "putting them down." Quite what the instances of "putting down" for which they blame the others is often unclear, but any time that they find something really worth complaining about, they are secretly delighted. A committed goblin confronts all other Small Folk and most other goblins with an unwavering scowl, and speaks in staccato abbreviations accompanied by strange hand gestures.

Most male goblin clothing is simple and practical, although they have a fondness for baseball caps stolen from souvenir dolls. They may embellish themselves with some of the most garish (usually fake) jewellery any Small Folk have ever seen. Some female goblins adopt the same style, while others appropriate the most garish, impractical, "sexy" garb from humans' "fashion dolls." They are not usually persuaded into this by male goblins; rather, they find that it draws attention from other Small Folk, to which they can respond with verbal or physical violence. Both sexes like to imply that other Small Folk prefer to see such clothing on the original dolls, being too inadequate to handle "the real thing." It is perhaps important to note that most goblins are no worse off than other Small Folk; nor are they different in their actual physical form, as opposed to their choice of costume. They simply adopt the style of an oppressed and angry minority. Genuinely oppressed goblins — who do exist — are far more practical and focussed in their response to the problem.

Goblin magic demands the most bizarre and extravagant casting procedures. It includes lengthy staccato chants and jerky dance-like movements; the most powerful effects may demand that the goblin spin on its head for a few seconds. (Other Small Folk claim that this explains why goblins so often wear their baseball caps on backwards.) The specific effects they specialise in are "telekinetic," involving moving objects around or shattering inanimate matter with barely controlled forces. The latter may be described as "making things break by cursing at them." Goblins certainly do a lot of cursing.

Goblins and Other Cliques

The goblin air of near-paranoid aggression is only slightly mitigated by the differences between the other cliques, although they acknowledge those differences when pressed:

"That moan-moan-moan stuff yo gets from boggarts makes me spittin' angry. Shape up or shut down."

"But boggarts are better'n brownies. Brownies are the ones as puts us down — or wannabe."

"As for gremlins — Huh, maybe their sound systems are happenin.' Wimps are wimps, though."

"What knockers gotta learn is, if yo workin' for tha man, yo's parta tha problem. Don' make any dam' diff'rence how much you say you hate tha man."

"Pixies, now — grubby an' shabby an' not much good for nuttin'. Still, at least they sometime tell tha man ta shove it."

"Which is more'n yo can say for sprites. Oh, yeah, so cute an' stuff. No good at all for nuttin', an' they pos'tively let tha man push 'em around wid all tha peace crap."

Goblin Template (30 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Body
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+2	2	Highly Skilled
+1	6	Speed
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
+5	20	Special Attack "Curse of Breaking" (40 Damage, Penetrating: Armour x2, Targeted: Non-living matter, does not affect living things, Undetectable, Slow x2, Static)
+5	20	Telekinesis
	-4	• Activation Time (1 Round, Must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted)
	-3	• Concentration (Linked to Activation Time)
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	4	Acrobatics (Tumbling)
+1	4	Intimidation ("Street")
+1	6	Stealth (Concealment)
+1	2	Street Sense (Any)
	4	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive
	-1	Blind Fury

Gremlins

"This is a new age, and a new paradigm. Learn or lose out. And could you pass me that screwdriver?"

Gremlins are a relatively new clique. Indeed, their name itself only dates back to World War II, and the group itself may be even more recent than the tales attached to their name among humanity.

Certainly, gremlins' tastes and talents are inherently quite modern. These are the most technophile of Small Folk, with a real knack for using complicated tools and improvised or "borrowed" gadgets. Human stories notwithstanding, they are not limited to destroying or sabotaging devices, but can build and adapt brilliantly. Indeed, they can be quite inventive. The Small Folk lack the infrastructure of human technological civilisation, so gremlins have to scavenge and "borrow" the parts and tools they need, which does limit them. They are often expert scavengers with an uncanny talent for making devices work in ways that were never intended by the mechanisms' original creators.

Gremlins strenuously deny that they have any interest in their own appearance, while working at least as hard as any other clique to look "right." All self-respecting gremlins, of either sex, look very similar; they wear simple clothes with capacious pockets, where they store small tools and writing implements. Given the run of a doll wardrobe, they will select short-sleeved shirts and plain trousers. Along with sprites, they are the Small Folk most likely to acquire eyeglasses from human toys or dolls, regarding them as status symbols; unlike sprites, they do not care at all if the glasses look ugly or have overly thick lenses. They positively glory in artificial fibres.

Gremlins are rabid elitists, utterly convinced of the superiority of their skills and philosophy. Strangely, groups of gremlins can be quite egalitarian, if only because each member is secretly convinced that he or she is the most elite of all. While any sort of useful accomplishment (especially technological inventiveness) grants status in such groups, the most recent achievement counts most; hence, what passes for leadership tends to migrate rapidly round the group. Other Small Folk find gremlins annoying, mocking them mercilessly, but cannot escape the truth that their mastery of technology is extremely useful at times.

Gremlins have developed a body of magic that relates to those new human inventions that other Small Folk often find difficult and dangerous. They can control the flow of electricity, and sense the internal workings of both electrical and mechanical devices. (They cannot create significant energies — they merely can sense and control what already exists.) These powers mostly take a few moments to activate, but do not otherwise involve old-fashioned rituals or spoken spells. Some gremlins do speak short snippets of jargon when using their powers; a few go in for snatches of doggerel poetry. This is purely to show off or confuse other Small Folk, and is never actually required.

Gremlins and Other Cliques

When gremlins bother to pay attention to their surroundings, they try to maintain an air of superiority and disdain towards other cliques — but the effect is usually ruined by their lack of social and rhetorical skills. They also secretly harbour a nasty unspoken suspicion that all the other cliques are having more fun than they are, possibly in ways involving stolen Barbie dolls.

"Look at them all. Starting with boggarts ... Parasites. Still, I s'pose the style is cool. They're okay in small doses."

"And at least they've got some self-awareness. Contrast them with brownies — parasites who don't even know it. We do the work, they take the credit. They keep talking about "management," but that's just an excuse to deny us the kit we need to do really cool stuff."

"As for goblins ... spare me the psycho attitude. It doesn't matter how big the chip is on your shoulder; if you don't get with the program, it's your own fault."

"Then there's the knockers. All that old crude hardware is just a drag, and they're almost as aggressive as the goblins — with better organisation. Still, it helps to have somebody around to make the realspace connections."

"Pixies, conversely, just have absolutely no clue. A few of them are somewhat technically informed, but short on discipline."

"Whereas sprites just have no discipline whatsoever. Still, their aesthetic thing is okay. Employ them as design consultants, maybe?"

Gremlin Template (35 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Mind
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	3	Armour (Optimised vs. electrical damage)
	-1	• Restriction (Only while the character is conscious)
+2	4	Computer Scanning
	-3	• Activation Time
+1	8	Dynamic Powers (Electricity)
	-2	• Activation Time
		• Reduction (-7; Only for non-combat tasks, not for long-range movement)
+1	5	Environmental Influence (Minor electrical phenomena — Area 2; Duration 2)
	-2	• Activation Time
+2	2	Highly Skilled
+2	20	Nullify (Drain, Single Attributes)
	-3	• Restriction (Only against electrical powers and effects)
+1	4	Sixth Sense (Internal function of mechanical devices — Area 3)
	-3	• Activation Time
+1	6	Speed
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	4	Artisan (Any) OR Electronics (Any)
+2	6	Computers (Any) OR Mechanics (Any)
+1	1	Physical Sciences (Any)
+1	6	Stealth (Any)
	3	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive
	-1	Not So Tough OR Less Capable

Knockers

"Oi! You! 'Oo you lookin' at? You come down here actin' so la-di-dah, but my gang'll sort you soon enough if you don't respect the workers."

Once upon a time, human miners told stories of "kobolds" or "knockers" — the fairy folk who shared the miners' tunnels. Sometimes, the kobolds were said to be helpful, sometimes dangerous, but they always demanded respect. Those tales may be dismissed these days, but the knockers are still around, and still demanding respect — in Small Folk society, anyway.

They can be very surly about this, as they pride themselves (with partial justification) on being the toughest, most practical, hardest working of all Small Folk. They are very communally minded amongst themselves, while caring little for outsiders, and very diligent about maintaining their monopoly on their clique's main magical power.

Knockers tend to be short, but very solidly built and muscular. They keep their hair cropped very short, and wear simple rags, dismissing the fancy clothes favoured by other cliques with contempt. They do appreciate the virtues of good solid boots, which are either appropriated from human "soldier dolls" or made by knocker leather-workers.

Knockers favour a very functional sort of magic. The power which other cliques admit makes them invaluable is the ability to dig tunnels, not only through solid rock but also through the very fabric of space itself, enabling Small Folk to travel vast distances by taking a short walk. They also have a keen magical awareness of the nature and condition of inanimate matter in their vicinity, making them extremely useful in mining and other work.

Knocker Template (35 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+2	2	Highly Skilled
+1	6	Speed
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
+1	4	Sixth Sense ("Mine Lore," see page 244 — Area 3)
+4	18	Teleport (Can reach unknown destinations: 2 Points, Area 2; Targets 2)
		• Reduction (-2; Must tunnel at least 1 metre through unworked solid rock or stone for every 1,000 metres teleported)
+4	8	Tunnelling
	-1	• Restriction (Requires use of mundane digging tools)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	3	Powerlifting (Bulky Objects)
+1	6	Stealth (Any)
+2	2	Physical Sciences (Geology)
+1	6	Power Usage (Sixth Sense)
	3	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive
	-1	Less Capable (Agility)
	-1	Less Capable (Manual Dexterity)

Knockers and Other Cliques

Knockers are all focussed aggression and assertiveness. They think of themselves as oppressed, while convinced that their physical and magical power makes them superior to everyone else. Exactly what they think of other Small Folk depends on how they think they've been treated in the past, but most of them believe that every other clique consist of crowds of sybarites who spend all of their time engaging in decadent perversions with human-made dolls. (Secretly, quite a few of them are deeply jealous of this.)

"Oi, boggart — depressed? Get up off your black-clad backside and do something about it!"

"Brownies are exploitative ^&*%$! They're the oppressors — and they're ^&*%$ proud of it!"

"Goblins ain't as tough as they think they are. Get a job, punk."

"Gremlins should remember that all the borrowed gadgets and fancy jargon in the world don't substitute for honest labour, and don't make anything."

"An' pixies are rural idiots. That dirt don't come from honest toil. They don't know what work is, and ducking out from under the oppressor doesn't change anything, tempting though it might be."

"As for sprites — they're a bunch of pretty flower-suckers who're so useless that the oppressors let them talk big. After all, it's not like they'll ever do anything important."

Pixies

"Gotta keep moving, moving, moving, friend-friend-friend. Blue sky, brown earth — plug into all of it and feel the perfect vibe. Hey, fancy a drink?"

Pixies and sprites are the Small Folk who remain closest to ancient rural traditions, but while sprites intellectualise this and talk about it endlessly, pixies just get on with being rustic. Chiefly, this means that they are very muddy.

Pixies seem to positively glory in grubbiness, wading through boggy puddles at every opportunity and wearing their hair in anarchic spikes or long braids — either of which may be stiffened by a liberal use of mud. Their clothes are random rags and tatters, albeit often selected and worn with a certain sense of style and Pixies like splashes of bright (often fluorescent) colour and smiley-face symbols. They are frequently accompanied by pet mice on lengths of string.

While sprites seem to be perpetually spaced out on bizarre mushrooms, pixies appear to be permanently slightly deranged with no need for any botanical aid whatsoever (though they are happy to sample anything on offer). They are usually hyperactive, although they occasionally drop into a state of meditative stillness; they love music, mostly for the rhythm, and will drum on any available surface if there is no other source of sound. Many humans who think that they have problems with the domestic plumbing in their rural cottages actually have a pixie infestation.

Being, as they say, more in touch with the roots of Small Folk existence than the other cliques, pixies have access to a subtle, primal style of magic. The process of triggering an effect may involve rhythmic drumming or detached meditation. They can render themselves invisible to sight; they can also sense other magical powers in action, and prevent them from working properly if they choose. Other Small Folk should periodically remind themselves that it is always unwise to make an enemy of a pixie, whatever the provocation, and sometimes useful to have a pixie as a friend.

Pixies and Other Cliques

To a typical pixie, all the other Small Folk have lost their way; the other cliques each detached from the soil and alienated from the reality of Small Folk existence in one way or another. Their response to this is pity as much as anger. They talk a great deal about "authentic" flesh and blood and dirt, as compared to "fake" plastic and prettified design. They can become quite snide about other cliques; they use the term "Barbie doll" as a symbol of everything they despise about other Small Folk's tastes and attitudes, generally with an implication that the others' behaviour is unnatural in every possible way.

"No need to get depressed like those boggart poseurs. Get back in touch with the soil, and you'll get things back in proportion."

"Brownies are the ones who make us trouble. Out of touch with the soil — and proud of it. We might have to get real heavy with them sometime."

"If goblins understood why they were so angry-angry-angry, they'd be able to do something 'bout it. Victims, truth be told."

"Gremlins are lost in a jungle of wires and flashing lights ... So sad ... But some of their toys have their uses, in their place."

"At least knockers are right in touch with the earth and the soil and reality. But they exploit it with picks and shovels, and then get all aggressive with everyone else about everything. So near and yet so far, if y'see what I mean."

"Then there's sprites. Close — so very close. Just a bit too fastidious. Reality isn't all prettiness, which must be why so much that they do ain't really real."

Pixie Template (40 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+1	1	Heightened Senses (Detect magical energies)
+2	2	Highly Skilled
+4	12	Invisibility (To normal, infrared, and ultraviolet vision)
	-4	• Activation Time (1 Round, Must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted)
	-3	• Concentration (Linked to Activation Time)
+3	32	Nullify (Drain — Duration 1; Range 1)
	-3	• Activation Time (10 Initiative, Must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted)
	-1	• Detectable (Hearing)
+1	6	Speed
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	3	Animal Training (Mice)
+1	3	Occult (Small Folk Lore)
+1	6	Stealth (Any)
+1	4	Wilderness Survival (Any)
	4	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive

Sprites and Other Cliques

Sprites affect a peaceable, detached, calm attitude to everything, including other cliques. Beneath the surface, they are often quite irritated by everyone else's failure to agree with them. The sight of a sprite that has lost patience with other Small Folk has been compared to that of a sheep in a berserk rage. Sprites think that they are the only clique that appreciates the true beauties of nature, and often say so; they may, for example, suggest that the nearest that other Small Folk come to appreciating beauty involves unnatural passions for human-made dolls.

"Black ain't a bad colour, but there are so many others that are so much nicer. Boggarts should get out and smell the flowers, man!"

"Brownies are breadheads. They can be a real pain at times. Remember, man, flowers smell nicer than that boosted human perfume stuff."

"Be cool, man! Nothing's worth all the grief that goblins generate. Relax and smell the pretty flowers."

"Gremlins really do take themselves a long way from all the flowers and such. Wake up, man — there's a whole world out there beyond the toys and gadgets!"

"Digging under their roots the way knockers do makes the flowers die — and the boots and the attitude are just ugly. Look, man, we know that the system has pushed you down there, but all you've got to do is push back and you can get out into the daylight."

"Pixies are pretty cool folks, really. But not pretty enough. How can someone be that close to nature, and not appreciate its finer aspects? Remember the flowers, not just the soil, man!"

Sprites

"Hey, man — time to turn on, y'know? Like, get with the flowers and the beauty an' all. Is really cool if you just chill, man."

Those few humans who knowingly encounter Small Folk have often been exposed to old-fashioned fairy stories, and bring certain expectations along with them. If they are lucky, what they first encounter are sprites. Still, after a few days of dealing with this clique, a meeting with a businesslike brownie or proletarian knocker can come as a positive relief.

Sprites pride themselves on their proximity to nature — in an idealised form. They love blue skies, rainbows, and most of all, pretty, pretty flowers. Some sprites try to wear clothes made from flower petals, but petals invariably prove hopelessly fragile, and provide no protection from the elements, so most sprites resort to scraps of the brightest floral prints and other human fabrics that they can acquire. Their love of beauty always exceeds their taste. They never cut their hair, trying to look wild and free but more often looking untidy and unkempt. When they can acquire eyeglasses of the right size, they like to wear those too.

Sprites are almost all self-proclaimed pacifists, although they sometimes forget this, and may display a vicious streak when crossed. They are mostly quite laid back; other Small Folk call them downright lazy, but they can summon a fair amount of energy when they perceive some goal as really important or cool.

Sprites are also noted for their interest in unusual foodstuffs. They love exotic mushrooms, and indeed will insist on sampling any and every fungus they encounter.

Sprite magic largely derives from altered states of consciousness, which they attain by extended meditation, intricate chanting, and the consumption of exotic fungi. Thus, their magic requires substantial preparation, but is quite quick to invoke when actually required. They can influence other beings' consciousness, creating detailed and powerful (and usually very colourful) illusions. They can also magically detach themselves from the "oppressive hassle" of gravity, and fly, transforming their state of mind into physical reality.

(This last power makes some sprites rather more mobile than most Small Folk, and enables a few of them to live in some strange out-of-the-way places. This requires access to supplies of specific fungi, which deters sprites from using it too casually. Some of them haven't mastered this technique at all. Furthermore, they have to use it cautiously in the vicinity of humans. In any case, laid-back sprite attitudes mostly prevent members of the clique from using this power very methodically.)

Sprite Template (20 Character Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Soul
Level	**Points**	**Attributes**
+2	8	Flight
	-4	• Activation Time (1 round, Must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted)
	-1	• Concentration (Linked to Activation Time)
	-2	• Restriction (Requires consumable elixir)
+2	2	Highly Skilled
+4	20	Illusion (Sight, hearing, and smell — Area 4; Duration 2; Targets 3)
	-2	• Activation Time (10 Initiative, Can be restarted if interrupted)
	-2	• Concentration (Linked to Activation Time)
	-2	• Restriction (Requires consumable elixir)
+1	6	Speed
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)
Level	**Points**	**Skills**
+1	2	Cultural Arts (One human)
+1	2	Cultural Arts (Small Folk)
+1	2	Performing Arts (Dance OR Music) OR Visual Arts (Any)
+1	2	Poisons (Natural)
+1	6	Stealth (Any)
	6	Unused Skill Points
	Points	**Defects**
	-4	Diminutive

The Cliqueless

Inevitably, in every system of social groups, there are a few individuals who refuse or are unable to fit in anywhere. Among the Small Folk, the "cliqueless" often like to think of themselves as "cool rebel loners." Other Small Folk mostly think of them as obnoxious twerps — a relationship not helped by the fact that every clique likes to think of itself as rebellious, and fears more blatantly rebellious competition.

It is true that the cliqueless are unconstrained by group conventions, and that they tend to be quite diverse in comparison. The problem is, they have their own ruts into which they can fall. Taciturn brooding, much staring into space, clothes made of black leather (or vinyl, if no leather is available), a wandering lifestyle, and a tendency to walk away from situations just as the drama ends rather than stay around and help clear up the mess, are all common cliqueless motifs.

Cliqueless Small Folk tend to be quite tough and capable — loners this size have to be — but perhaps not quite as formidable as they want people to think. Their loner cool does sometimes make them especially alluring to gullible members of the opposite sex. Many lack any great magical talent, but others may turn out to have wheedled or extorted lessons in almost any power out of someone at some point in the past.

Small People, Big Problems

The Small Folk may be miniature metaphysical entities living in the spaces between the walls of human buildings, but they are still people, with lives and hopes and problems. Their marginal existence means that life for them is often full of adventures — although only a minority does not prefer comfort and a quieter existence, given the choice.

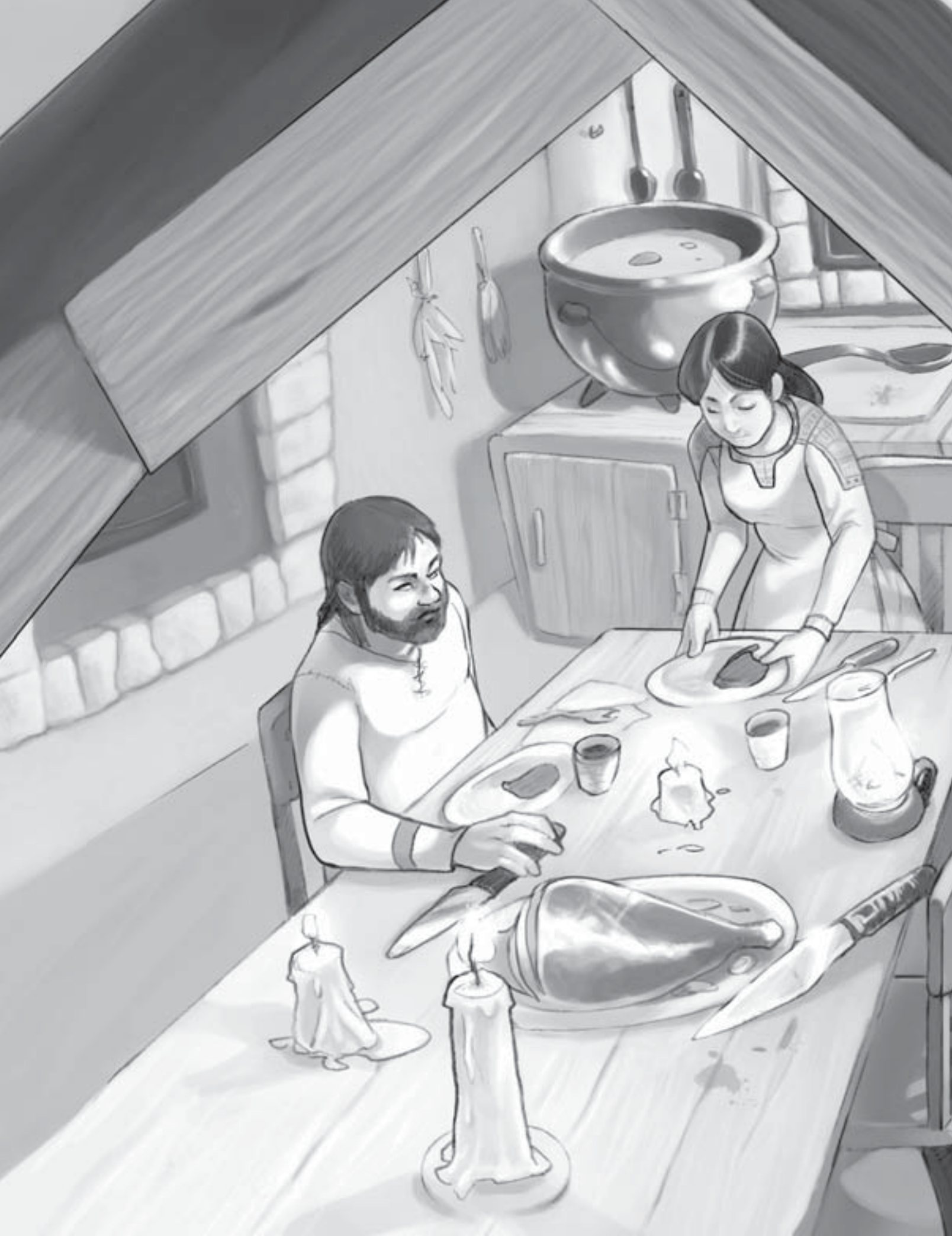
Internal and External Conflicts

If they can avoid human attention, the biggest challenges that any of the Small Folk are likely to face come from other Small Folk. Their communities are full of personal feuds and social climbing; many are led by charismatic chiefs, who can easily be deposed and replaced if a more charismatic and successful rival comes along. Meanwhile, there are numerous conflicts between communities, albeit that the vast majority remains at the level of name-calling and posturing. Although the world is quite rich in resources for Small Folk, there are still disputes about control of especially good territory, as well as innumerable old arguments, private grudges blown up to the group level, clique-based differences, and traditional hostilities with causes lost far in the past and no longer actually relevant.

Despite all this, these struggles mostly remain quite low-key. Small Folk exist too close to the edge of survival too much of the time for them to make a habit of wasting energy, and the tradition of secrecy remains stronger than almost any personal or group feud. Many a confrontation has been conducted in whispers, followed by a distinctly muffled battle. Furthermore, although few Small Folk like to back down, when one of them does admit defeat, the racial magical powers and skill in stealth and evasion often permit a safe escape. Casualties in conflicts are usually low.

Duels

In some groups, "fair fights" may resolve personal conflicts. It would be exaggeration to say that Small Folk have a duelling code, although some boggarts have read too many human historical novels, and have been known





to flick their lace handkerchiefs in others' faces and call them persons of no consequence. Rather, two brawlers may be dragged apart, and when they refuse to calm down, persuaded to face off somewhere on reasonably equal terms, preferably with some limits on damage to be done. This is enormously entertaining for other Small Folk, who often gamble on the outcome.

Arranged duels between champions of rival communities are much rarer, but not entirely unknown; they may occasionally be suggested by the leaders of the competing groups as a way to resolve some conflict which is otherwise threatening to spiral out of control.

Wars and Battles

If such limited combats cannot resolve a conflict and neither side backs down or flees, Small Folk may, very occasionally, engage in very small wars. These tend to be rather half-hearted — Small Folk have no stomach for total war — but once personal pride enters the mix, it is difficult for things to end without a few serious injuries.

Such struggles resemble guerrilla campaigns and skirmishes much more than classical pitched battles. It is hard for Small Folk to find an open battlefield without endangering secrecy, and in any case, very few communities have drilled troops capable of fighting in formation. Two "armies" of stealthy, sneaky, magic-wielding Small Folk are more likely to spend their energy infiltrating each other's territory, sniping at the other side's people, engaging in ambushes, while trying to sabotage or steal resources and score psychological points.

When enough participants eventually give up, the peace is likely to be marked either by the obvious losing side grudgingly agreeing to leave *en masse*, or by the two leaders meeting to shake hands over a compromise agreement. Small Folk with pretensions may settle their conflicts with flowery and intricate armistice statements; most do not bother.

Small Folk Magic

Small Folk refer to their magic in all kinds of vague and imprecise terms — as spells, glamour, enchantments, cantrips, blessings, and so on. Some of them, especially perhaps gremlins and pixies, are quite insistent that this is a matter of refined art, or at least that their own clique's magics are subtle and elegant, although they may then say that all the other cliques merely use cheap trickery and delusion. The less partial among them admit that all of these powers clearly come from the same roots; all Small Folk have a seed of power inside them, which can be channelled and expressed in various ways.

This magic can be regarded as something between formalised spells and innate "psionic" powers focussed through special training and activated by odd rituals. These "casting" or "focussing" techniques are often rather bizarre; complex gestures and magic words are commonplace. They are also, to some extent, very personal; no two Small Folk, not even teacher and pupil, use exactly identical methods to evoke the same power, and the specific rituals often reflect something about the character's personality and tastes. Some are even the product of human ideas about how magic is supposed to work.

For details of each power, including game mechanics, see pages 243-245.

Other Magic

The simplest assumption in this setting would be that, these days at least, Small Folk represent all of the world's active magical phenomena. They are magic and have magic, but otherwise this is an essentially mundane setting. That is not the only possibility.

It could be that there are a few secretive magicians among humanity. The powers that these individuals wield may be similar to those of Small Folk, or they may have an array of spells and rituals of their own. They would probably be aware that the Small Folk exist, and might regard them with attitudes ranging from the patronising through the fascinated to the fearful. (After all, the Small Folk may be small, but they casually wield powers that the human wizard probably had to sweat and study for years to acquire — and the Small Folk are everywhere!) There may also be other magical creatures, possibly lurking in the dark corners of the world but more likely dwelling in other dimensions or magical realms. Game Masters could see the other settings in this book for possibilities as to the broader nature of magical reality.

A more restricted possibility is that humans can use few or no actual magical powers, but that a traditional, secret class of human "wizards and witches" really exists, or at least existed in the past — working entirely through collaboration with Small Folk. In this case, the old stories of witches' familiars — something that Small Folk were sometimes accused of being back in witch-hunting times — would be partly true. Of course, Small Folk are not (so far as they know) imps sent by the Devil, shamanic totems, or emissaries of the gods, but by using their powers at a human's request, as well as spying on his or her behalf, they could give that human a solid reputation for magical power. There is the minor problem that familiars are usually described as taking animal form, but this could be explained as the strategic use of illusion or some lost Small Folk power of shapeshifting.

How human "wizards" might gain the service of Small Folk is another question. They might simply research reports of Small Folk activity and secret records of Small Folk behaviour, track down a Small Folk community, and then offer a deal — human resources, aid, and protection, for the potential familiar or for his or her community, in exchange for magical aid. Such bargains may be long established, perhaps passed down through families of witches and warlocks and their Small Folk allies; they may even have been initiated by the Small Folk themselves rather than by humans. This latter possibility would likely have been a product of the past, since the consensus about the need for secrecy precludes modern contact initiated by the Small Folk.

The "familiar" may be coerced in some way. Successfully threatening a Small Folk or its community with harm or exposure would be tricky — it would earn the human what is at best a grudging, potentially treacherous servant, and in any case many Small Folk would be confident of their ability to escape the danger by stealth and cunning. Perhaps one of the few sorts of magic that works for humans is some kind of locating and binding spell that obliges Small Folk to serve them. (After all, if these creatures are partly a product of unconscious human psychic activity, a disciplined human might well be able to control them.) The familiar's mind might be moulded in such a way that it thinks of itself as serving willingly, or it might be placed in the traditional "bound spirit" role of having to obey the letter of a command, if not necessarily the spirit. This option would make human wizards the villains of Small Folk games, as the heroes — and possibly friendly human allies — seek to free the enslaved victims of binding spells.

Magic Items

If magic does extend beyond minor Small Folk talents, at some point it may have created magic artefacts. If these were on a human scale, many of them would be of limited use to Small Folk; a 5 cm creature simply cannot wield a 50 cm sword. Other items — rings or amulets, say — might be another matter, at least given a little ingenuity, while potions and salves prepared for human use might or might not work if divided up into Small Folk-size doses, at the GM's option. The image of a crew of Small Folk struggling to carry and aim a magic wand while attempting to invoke its power, or of a Small Folk character battling to swallow enough potion to activate its magic, is certainly good for comedy.

If items are available in Small Folk sizes, matters will be a lot simpler. This might imply that the items were made by Small Folk, raising the question of whether modern Small folk might duplicate the feat. It might be best to assume that there was once a golden age of magic, when very small craftsmen wrought mighty spells, and that such works are now quite beyond the more scattered Small Folk of a less magical age. Alternatively, perhaps there is a lost clique, deep in some alpine cavern or in the wall-spaces of some secluded manor house somewhere, still creating the occasional very strange item of power.

Teaching and Learning Magic

Small Folk learn magical techniques from each other. This is usually a lengthy process, requiring a teacher with a detailed and unusually abstract comprehension of the power involved.

In game terms, players can spend earned Advancement Character Points to acquire new magical powers — but only if the character can find a suitable teacher, and then spend a lengthy period in study. A teacher should have both Mind and Soul of 5 or higher, Occult Skill at Level 2+, and the power the student wishes to learn with no linked Defects other than those which are mandatory — preferably at a level at least 50% above the minimum required, if possible. The teaching process should then take at least a week of game time for every Character Point to be spent.

Player characters who meet these requirements may teach each other their powers, if the pupils have the Advancement Character Points, even outside their normal clique. Remember that members of each clique may disapprove of this, though — perhaps strongly. If someone is suspected of giving away secrets, both teacher and pupil may be subject to anything from verbal harassment to assassination attempts. Finding a non-player character teacher prepared to bend the rules in this way could be a major role-playing exercise. Indeed, even finding a teacher within one's own clique can be difficult, if one's loyalty or taste in friends are considered at all dubious.

Improving powers already possessed is much easier; the GM can permit Advancement Character Points to be freely spent on this, provided that the player can make a reasonable case that the character has been practising with the power or using it effectively under stress.

Gatherings

While the Small Folk mostly dwell in small, scattered tribes and communities, they are still aware that they form part of a larger global community. They mostly have a vague, abstract sense of loyalty to the race as a whole, and at least some of them occasionally recognise a need to get together to discuss large-scale problems. For that matter, many of them thoroughly enjoy any excuse for a party.

Hence, every now and again, a large enough assortment of Small Folk will decide to hold some kind of general meeting. Such gatherings may be limited to members of a single clique, or they may be open to everyone. (Formal meetings between members of more than one clique that deliberately exclude other cliques are regarded with intense suspicion if anyone else hears about them.) Word will then be passed around by whatever means are available — there are usually unofficial "postmen" running errands between major communities, as well as brownie traders, gremlin technicians, knocker mining engineers, and sprite mobile freeloaders who will sometimes carry messages on request, and some Small Folk are officious enough to make it their mission to announce important news. A meeting of any size, with attendees from across a significant area, can take weeks or months to arrange.

Once assembled, a meeting is usually "chaired" by whoever was most active in arranging it, unless enough someone else can find an excuse to take over. Although some Small Folk have borrowed human ideas about the best way to arrange such things, others insist that the old-fashioned approach (everyone shouting themselves hoarse and taking the occasional break to get drunk) still works best. It does not help that the Small Folk with the most detailed understanding of concepts such as "rules of order" are mostly brownies, who wrap the whole business up in such impenetrable jargon that all the other cliques usually just mock them, nor that the second best organised are the knockers, who regard the brownies with intense suspicion and all the other cliques as undisciplined rabble.

Despite all of this, some useful results do quite often emerge from Small Folk meetings, if only because the most sensible attendees will usually go off into a corner and hammer out some kind of pragmatic decision between them while the rest bicker. This has established a network of *de facto* treaties and alliances between Small Folk groups and communities, as well as solving countless transient problems.

Current Agreements

Among the most important "arrangements" — carrying the weight of customary law — are a set of agreements as to which communities or groups oversee Small Folk activities in major human cities. Although these groups lack the numbers, organisation, or energy to function as true governments, they can arbitrate disagreements on their territory, provide semi-formal "criminal courts," and give a visiting outsider somewhere to go to argue about things that should perhaps be done.

For example, the *Petty Court of London and Westminster* claims authority over Small Folk activity in the capital of the United Kingdom. It is based in labyrinthine tunnels under and around the city's Houses of Parliament, and claims, on dubious evidence, to have been established in the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, London is a sprawling city, and the ageing, nigh-senile boggarts and brownies of the Petty Court have severe difficulty making their presence felt even as far as the nearby business district, which is much more under the control of the modern multi-clique *Council of the Barbican*, based in a complex of residential tower blocks, and the unusually politically cunning gremlins who run the *Communications Association of Bloomsbury* from wall-spaces of the Telecom Tower north of Oxford Street. As for London's sprawling suburbs — they have long since decayed into a patchwork of weak feudal holdings who barely even acknowledge that the Petty Court exists.

As a contrasting case, Washington, DC is governed with ruthless efficiency by the *First Subliminary Council of the District of Columbia*, which has offices embedded in the foundations of several government buildings including the Pentagon. It is administered by brownies with a terrifying command of opaque jargon, assisted by a number of Small Folk "interns" and "messengers" who have, like their leaders, supposedly disavowed all clique allegiances (but who mostly seem to be "former" goblins or, oddly, sprites).

For an interesting example from a smaller town, there is Avignon, in southern France, where ancestral Small Folk apparently infiltrated the great papal fortress-palace while it was being constructed in the Middle Ages. Generations of knockers have extended their tunnels into the rocky hill on which it stands; the rulers of the town, the *Conseil Municipal* ("Town Council"), have preserved incredibly complex quasi-religious ceremonies derived from the human papal court, while engaged in a perpetual, highly formalised conflict of words and postures with the *Maçonnerie* ("Masonry"), a group of knockers who maintain the structures in which everyone lives.

By contrast, some very up-to-date independent communities dwell under and within such major human establishments as NASA's Cape Canaveral launch facilities in Florida and virtually every major airport. There are also small groups permanently established on many ocean liners and even some large warships, with strange habits and traditions copied imperfectly from the human crews.

Treaties and Borders

Further agreements sometimes rule relationships between Small Folk communities and "governments." Such treaties tend to be long on impressive language and short on material consequences, but may, for example, determine borders as well as systems of trade (which can be complex and tricky for creatures that have never developed money as such).

In truth, there are often wide open, ungoverned anarchic zones between Small Folk "states," so that treaties only tend to be important where two communities have somehow grown up in close proximity or one large one has subdivided for some reason. Such borders sometimes follow human political boundaries through some accident of history or convenience, but they more often follow natural features such as rivers.

Where substantial frontiers do exist, they are hardly ever actually guarded or patrolled — the Small Folk simply do not have the resources — and establishing on which side of a frontier some event happened can be a major diplomatic exercise in itself. When the relationship between two neighbouring communities is less than cordial, the intermittent patrols which do go out will spend a lot of time on disputed territory, leading to numerous

skirmishes and brawls. When the relationship is better, the treaty may even specify that meetings should be held periodically on the border to resolve any problems that arise. Such meetings can take the form of moderately formal conferences, armed confrontations, or trade fairs, depending on local traditions and circumstances.

For example, the Small Folk of Berlin found themselves split into two groups when the Iron Curtain divided the city into Western and Communist sectors at the end of the Second World War, primarily because most human-made tunnels and links were cut and the divisions were quite carefully monitored by human guards. These two groups each developed their own governing councils, the *Städtverwaltung* and the *Arbeiterrat*, which remain divided even though the human city has been reunited. Treaties hammered out over five decades governed trade, scavenging rights, access to communications systems, and even "extradition" of Small Folk who fled from what law there was on either side of the border. When the humans' Iron Curtain fell, the two Small Folk "governments" saw no compelling reason to re-unite, and made no movement in that direction — leading to a surreal situation under the human city, as Small Folk found it increasingly easy to meet up and travel through human transport and communications channels, or to scurry from one building to another on quiet nights. A more complicated set of Small Folk frontiers underlies New York City, where the self-proclaimed sophisticates of Manhattan Island have little difficulty holding the natural borders defined by the surrounding rivers, but more trouble with incursions from the north, where a narrower channel and many bridges permit a fair amount of traffic. The region's numerous quarrelsome factions meet periodically — often in the foundations of the Statue of Liberty, which have been declared neutral ground. (Reaching those meetings out on Liberty Island can be an interesting trip.)

Migrations

The life of the Small Folk is uncertain. Their population numbers fluctuate, and any given site may become vastly more or less hospitable through the influence of human activities or natural disasters. Although most of them are not actually nomadic, entire Small Folk communities have had occasion to uproot themselves and transfer to new sites.

Small Folk upbringing discourages thinking of any home as permanent, and many of them have skills and experience in locating suitable new sites, clearing away any problems, and moving a whole tribe or clan. Anyone willing to act as a scout or explorer can often find employment, although such individuals may find themselves regarded as "feckless and footloose" rather than heroic, at least in some quarters. There are usually enough disaffected goblins or fresh-air-loving pixies to fill this role without too much effort to recruit them.

Managing the practical aspects of a move is hard work but the political aspects can be even more complicated. If enough knockers with enough power can be persuaded to help, the migrants may be able to use the knocker's strange tunnels to reach the intended destination, but otherwise they will have to cross the intervening space on foot — and that is likely to mean crossing territory that someone regards as theirs, even if the final destination is unclaimed. An individual or a small party of Small Folk might be able to make such a journey unnoticed, or without provoking much trouble, but an entire community is another matter.

Sensible leaders send "diplomatic" parties ahead of any such move to negotiate safe passage and identify any practical problems. If the community has any enemies who learn of the plan, they will certainly be plotting trouble or attempting to sabotage the arrangements, while merely neutral but greedy or desperate groups may be looking for an excuse to lay claim to the intended destination first.

See page 252 for more on long-distance travel by Small Folk — and remember that what is relatively simple for small parties is a lot more complicated for large groups.

Game Mechanics

A Small Folk game is run like most other Tri-Stat games; the power level and the difference in scale of the protagonists are handled by reference to some standard rules.

Setting-Specific Parameters

A standard Small Folk game should have a Character Point Value of 75 Points (permitting broadly human-equivalent characters, but with some scope for interesting magical powers), a base 20 Skill Points with a Normal Maximum Skill Level of 3, and d6s as the game dice — so that the game has a general sense of slightly gritty, low-powered "realism" in normal play. (Small Folk have a slightly raised Talent Threshold and Maximum Value for the Body Stat; see Small Folk Pysiques, below.)

Of course, GMs are free to adjust these values to suit different styles of game. A Character Point Value of 50 or even 25 Points can be used to produce more slapstick action, heavy on the comedy of failure — or a grimmer game in which "everyman hero" Small Folk with no more than minor supernatural powers struggle against a hostile world. On the other hand, 100 point Small Folk can represent the heroes of their race, going on vital quests or founding new communities in major new human buildings. Likewise, setting the game dice as d4s may suit a low-key game of survival struggles or light comedy, while d8s would be appropriate for a heroic epic of magical struggles and secret wars behind the plasterboard.

The Diminutive Defect

All Small Folk have the Diminutive Defect (page 65), as do many of the creatures with which they regularly interact. Small Folk have it at the 4 BP level ("rodent-sized"). Thus, a 12 gram individual (at the light end of the racial range) with Body 4 can lift his or her own weight. In addition, almost all Small Folk characters (except for a few who have suffered crippling injuries or similar) have one Level of Speed with the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect, enabling them to make rapid dashes as described in the example above. This also allows them to perform minor tasks about twice as fast as humans, if they hurry; see Quick Work on page 244 for more on this.

Small Folk characters taking Attributes to which it can apply should buy them with the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect (at the 2 BP level) unless this book says otherwise or the GM gives them explicit permission otherwise.

Small Folk Physiques

Small Folk are actually somewhat stronger, on average, than humans in proportion to their mass, but within the general range for creatures with the Diminutive Defect at their level. They are also notably deft and agile, although again, they fall within the normal human range of abilities. Accordingly, Small Folk characters should often be created with good rating in the Body Stat. Furthermore, the Talent Threshold and Maximum Value for that Stat should be set 2 higher than normal for games using any given dice type. In a normal Small Folk game with d6 as the Game Dice (as described above, this makes the Body Talent Threshold 10, and the Maximum Value for Body 14.

A few Small Folk display downright prodigious lifting strength. Such characters may take one Level of the Superstrength Attribute with the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect at the 2 BP level, enabling them to lift up to 100 grams.

Larger Opponents

Note that a normal human is a formidable opponent for one of the Small Folk in the absence of magic or special devices, inflicting +15 damage with any successful attack and more or less ignoring many non-magical attacks by Small Folk; the only problem for humans tends to be hitting such small targets. Even cats and small dogs can be very dangerous foes. Small Folk should regard the racial habit of stealth as more than just an irrational taboo.

Movement (in All Directions)

Given their size and physical nature, Small Folk inevitably have a different relationship to movement and distance than that of humans, affecting them in a variety of situations.

Running

Typically, one of the Small Folk can run at 5 kph (7 metres per round) thanks to their standard Speed Attribute. (Without this, they would be limited to 0.3 metres per round times their Body Stat — 0.86 kph for a Body 4 character.) They cannot buy more than one Level of Speed. This is generally sufficient to enable them to scurry between convenient hiding places when anyone they are trying to avoid looks away briefly, but it is not enough to permit them to cover what humans would consider long distances on foot in any comfort.

Small Folk are literally light on their feet, and some learn to use this to good effect. Hence, Small Folk characters may have Special Movement (Balance) or Special Movement (Light-Footed).

Swimming

Small Folk characters have to expend energy to stay afloat in water. They must make frequent Swimming Skill checks merely to stay afloat, with heavy penalties if they are tired or weakened.

The Diminutive Defect also affects swimming speed; swimming Small Folk will move at 0.05 times their Body Stat in kilometres per hour. As this leaves them generally unable to deal with even the feeblest current, even the most experienced swimmers among the Small Folk tend to be extremely wary of rivers, streams, or any open water that they do not know and trust.

Falling

Small Folk who fall any significant distance take damage much as would a human being in their place. (Note that the extra damage for Diminutive characters does not apply to falls.) Other creatures of this size are often more or less immune to falling damage, due to the greater effects of wind resistance on smaller bodies, but the density of Small Folk bodies means that they do have a problem.

On the other hand, some of the lighter Small Folk have a definite talent for literally landing on their feet and Small Folk characters may freely take the Special Movement (Cat-Like) Attribute.

Magical Powers

The various magics available to Small Folk are defined in game terms as Attributes with various PMVs and linked Defects; some of these modifiers may be mandatory, while others are optional, depending on the character's power and skill with the magic. In most cases, these particular packages of Attributes, PMVs, and Defects are the only way that a Small Folk character can acquire the Attributes involved; see pages 245 for discussion of other Attributes.

Each power is assigned to a specific clique. Remember that members of other cliques might learn any given power, but most cannot find teachers, or simply do not try; "cross-training" is considered eccentric or disloyal, indicating ambiguous allegiances. Small Folk magic is also intimately bound up with self-image and group style.

Note also that, in the default style of Small Folk game, the game dice are d6s (as discussed on page 242); hence, normally, characters may take up to six Levels in any Attribute — unless the notes below say otherwise, or the GM gives special permission. (The latter may occur in magic-heavy games where some otherwise unremarkable Small Folk wield startling powers.)

Create Stuff (Brownie)

This power is defined as Creation (3 Points/Level version), with the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect for 2 BP, reducing the mass created to 0.01% of its base value. Thus, a Small Folk character with one Level in this power can create objects weighing 0.1 grams, increasing to 0.5 grams at two Levels, 1 gram at three Levels, 50 grams at six Levels, and so on.

This power has no other mandatory linked Defects but very few Small Folk develop it very far; whatever the campaign power level, characters are unlikely to possess more than six Levels, Rank 6 Duration, or any Ranks in Range, and most will be less powerful than that.

Curse of Breaking (Goblin)

This is the ability to shatter or break non-living matter with a concentrated but imprecise pulse of telekinetic force. The magical energies involved cannot penetrate living flesh at all, but can smash directly into the internal structure of even very strong inanimate materials. The power is represented by a Special Attack with the Abilities Penetrating (Armour, must be assigned at least twice), Targeted (double damage to non-living matter, no damage to living matter), and Undetectable (this is a magical curse, not a missile or beam), and the Disabilities Slow and Static.

The required Disabilities reflect the fact that the technique required to cast the Curse involves a complex series of movements and gestures (see page 233). The spell does not have to take the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect; despite goblins' small size, their curses can carry over considerable distances and shatter large, robust objects. (This Defect may optionally be taken by a few characters to reflect a limited, small-scale ability with the magic.) This effect is often quite powerful, if used by an expert; goblin player characters may purchase up to three Levels beyond the campaign's normal Level limits.

Darkness (Boggart)

This is the ability to create a mass of swirling magical blackness that blocks visible light as well as infrared and ultraviolet frequencies (but not radio waves or other senses, such as hearing). It is purchased as a Sensory Block, and the character must take at least six Levels, giving -8 penalties to each of normal vision, infravision, and UV vision; characters may optionally purchase further Levels to increase the penalties, and can if they wish take up to six Levels beyond the normal Level limits for the campaign. Characters can and should also take PMVs for Area, Duration, and Range.

To generate this effect, the character simply spends a momentum frowning and wiggling his or her fingers in a vague and unhappy fashion. This is represented by the Activation Time Defect with the "must be restarted if interrupted" option, not usually taken at more than 2-3 Levels.

Flight (Sprite)

This relatively simple if spectacular power — the ability to hurtle through the air in the midst of a swarm of sparkly particles — is represented by the Flight Attribute in its most expensive (4 Points/Level) form. Small Folk cannot purchase more than two Levels with the Attribute, but are not required to take the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect in this case; this gives them a maximum flying speed of 50 kph.

In order to fly, a Small Folk character must be convinced that gravity really is merely a suggestion and not a law; achieving that insight involves consumption of a mushroom-based elixir, combined with a process of mental adjustment. The Attribute must have these linked Defects: Activation Time (with a minimum time of 1 round, and the activation must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted), Concentration, and Restriction (moderate — requires consumable elixir).

Illusions (Sprite)

This is (of course) represented by the Illusion Attribute and all the standard options and rules apply. To produce such an effect, a Small Folk character must induce a hallucination in his or her own mind, and then project it to others. This is accomplished by consuming a preparation derived from various unusual fungi, and then exerting a certain amount of mental effort. The Attribute should be taken with the linked Defects Concentration (at any level) and Restriction (moderate — requires consumable elixir). In some but not all cases, it also has Activation Time. Restriction (Diminutive) is not required.

Insubstantiality (Boggart)

This power is represented by the Insubstantial Attribute, which must be taken to at least Level 4. It can be taken up to Level 8 in any game, whatever the normal campaign parameters. To become insubstantial, the character must stand absolutely still for a moment, bowing his or her head, and then close his or her eyes and emit a low, despairing wail which echoes for some seconds after the power has come into effect, while the Insubstantial character becomes visibly "ghostly." All this is represented by the linked Defects Activation Time (at any level, but the activation must be restarted from the beginning if interrupted), Concentration (at the 3 BP level, linked to Activation Time), and Detectable.

Invisibility (Pixie)

Small Folk Invisibility is represented by four Levels in the Attribute of the same name, granting invisibility to normal sight (treated here as requiring two Levels), and also infrared and ultraviolet vision. (While this leaves a character susceptible to detection by sound, vibration, and more exotic senses, it is entirely sufficient to protect Small Folk from casual observation by humans — especially if combined with some Stealth Skill.)

Some Small Folk trigger this power by a moment of rapid drumming against the nearest hard surface, in which case the effect must be "reinforced" from time to time by a few more beats. This has obvious drawbacks, so most Small Folk who use this spell prefer to use a process of meditation, which takes a little longer but is silent. The former is represented by the Linked Defects Activation Time (10 Initiative, Must start again if interrupted) and Detectable (1 sense). The second version of the power is represented by Activation Time (at least 1 Round, Must start again if interrupted) and Concentration (the 3 BP version) linked to the Activation Time.

Mine Lore (Knocker)

This is magical awareness of the nature, composition, and general state of any raw, unworked stone or rock in the vicinity. In game terms, it is defined as a form of Sixth Sense. Note that for this power to be particularly useful, the character will probably have to make a lot of Soul Stat checks; Power Usage Skill can be very useful here. Also, while Mine Lore can, for example, identify granite or limestone, reveal how much of any given mineral is present, and determine if the rocks are especially strong or suffering from flaws and fractures, detailed knowledge of the general strengths, weaknesses, practical uses, etc., of such materials requires the study of Physical Sciences (Geology).

This power does not have to take the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect; Small Folk who master it can use it to survey mineral deposits over areas far out of proportion to their own size.

Quick Work (Brownie)

As in folklore, some Small Folk can perform certain tasks with startling speed and efficiency. This is treated as Speed with a large Reduction; it can only be used for non-combat tasks, and not for movement except within a few yards as required by the task. This reduces the Attribute Cost to 3 Points/Level. For practical purposes, assume that each Level of Speed enables a character to work twice as fast as usual. Since virtually all Small Folk start with one Level of Speed, they can in fact perform many tasks within their normal physical capabilities twice as fast as humans; this power increases that efficiency further.

As with the brownie "Create Stuff" power, very few Small Folk develop "Quick Work" far beyond its standard level. In particular, brownies, who are the experts in this power, hate to admit that they use magic to achieve their high Levels of efficiency; also, they prefer developing high skill to performing "trivial" tasks quickly, and few would bother developing this power very far. Small Folk characters should be limited to no more than three Levels in this power, unless they have special justification.

Shape the Spark (Gremlin)

This power represents the ability to control the flow of electrical energy. It does not grant the ability to generate more than a tiny amount of electricity, although an existing current may be boosted slightly; rather, it is a matter of direction and adjustment. In game terms, the power is represented by a combination of Attributes.

First, if the character is to have this power at all, he or she must take Environmental Influence (Minor electrical phenomena), with up to 3 Ranks of Area and Duration PMV (never any more). Second is Armour; the character may have one Level only, Optimised against electrical damage, reflecting the ability to reflexively deflect or "damp" such attacks, taking the Restriction (Only while the character is conscious) for 1 BP. Third, the character may have up to 2 Levels in Dynamic Powers (Electricity), with Reduction (Only to modify and direct existing effects), worth 7 BP per Level. Finally, the character may take up to three Levels of Nullify (Drain), with Restriction (Only against electrical powers and effects), worth 3 BP; GMs may permit this aspect of the power to be used to "damp" electrical phenomena which do not happen to have been bought as Attributes, assessing how strong the effect is by analogy with the most similar available Attribute. All except the Armour must also have the Activation Time Defect at some level — usually for at least 2 BP for all but the most experienced, skilful gremlins — but the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect is not required in any case.

Scan Machine (Gremlin)

This power, almost completely unique to gremlins, represents the psychic ability to stare at machinery of any kind and determine what is going on inside it and what it is doing. In game terms, it is represented by a combination of Computer Scanning and Sixth Sense (Internal function of mechanical devices). Characters must take both together, and the area of effect for each must be identical. Both must also have the Activation Time Defect at the same level — usually for at least 2 BP for all but the most experienced, skilful gremlins — but the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect is not required.

A character using this power can tell what is going on inside a machine, at least in broad terms. Understanding the subtleties and implications of a machine may require a Mechanics or Electronics Skill Check.

Secret Mining (Knocker)

This is actually a double power, although knockers claim that both elements are part of the same phenomenon, and both certainly tend to develop together. It enables a character, firstly to dig through solid rock or stone with uncanny speed, and secondly to create dimension-warping passages which appear to be simple tunnels but which actually permit travel anywhere in the world.

The simple tunnelling requires only the use of an ordinary (Small Folk-sized) pickaxe, and some time and effort. This is represented in game terms by the Tunnelling Attribute with a minor Restriction. Trans-dimensional tunnelling requires that the character construct a seemingly mundane tunnel into solid rock (not sand or earth), with a length of at least one metre for every kilometre that the character wishes to travel. Somewhere along the way, the tunnel twists through four-dimensional space (or something), and eventually opens up somewhere else. This aspect of the power is represented by the Teleport Attribute with a Reduction. Other characters can travel alongside the tunneller (represented in game terms by the Area and Targets PMVs; up to 2-3 Ranks can be taken), but the dimension warp is strictly temporary; it closes behind the travellers, sealing off the tunnel and leaving about half of its length at each end, going nowhere. Anyone who tries to pursue the tunneller without remaining in the power's Area PMV will literally run into a wall.

Characters who gain this power must buy both Attributes, and must have at least 2 Levels in each before either will work. Neither has to take the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect; Small Folk magic can create both mundane and magical tunnels with truly supernatural speed.

This spell represents the most jealously guarded secret in Small Folk society. The knockers are fully aware that it is the key to the grudging respect which they are able to extract from other cliques, and will do anything to make sure that the technique does not become general knowledge.

See and Negate Magic (Pixie)

This power over magical forces takes the form, in game terms, of two Attributes; Heightened Senses (Type II — detect magical energies) and Nullify (Drain) with the Restriction "Only against magical powers." These must be acquired together; a character that wants the ability to detect magic must also purchase at least one Level of Nullify in some form, and vice-versa.

Using the ability to detect magic merely requires a moment of attention and a line of sight view of the subject or area in question. (It is not entirely automatic — the character must specifically check for magic, and may not do so while fighting, operating machinery, etc., although a really large, nearby magical phenomenon may be impossible to miss.) As with Invisibility (above), some Small Folk trigger the Nullify effect by a moment of rapid drumming against the nearest hard surface, while others prefer a slightly lengthier, but silent, process of meditation. The drumming technique is represented by the Linked Defects Activation Time (10 Initiative, Must start again if interrupted) and Detectable (1 sense). The "meditative" technique is represented by Activation Time (at least 1 Round, Must start again if interrupted) and Concentration (the 3 BP version) linked to the Activation Time.

Shift Stuff (Goblin)

This is a manifestation of Telekinesis (specifically, the general 4 Points/Level version). A character cannot use it to lift him or herself (a Restriction), but otherwise the Attribute works as described on page 48. To generate this effect, Small Folk must perform complex and intricate "dance moves," represented by the Defects Activation Time (the "must restart from the beginning if interrupted" version) and Concentration (linked to the Activation Time, to at least the 2 BP level). The spell must also take the Restriction (Diminutive) Defect, although a fair number of goblins have the power at high enough Levels that they can nonetheless shift quite respectable masses.

Other Available Attributes

Some Attributes are used as described above to represent Small Folk magical powers. Of the remaining Attributes, some are available to any character whose player wants them, while others are unavailable or at least strongly discouraged.

Generally Available

Some Attributes are available to any Small Folk character, as "mundane" character features. For example, quite a few have sharp ears and eyes, which can be represented by Heightened Awareness, or are Highly Skilled. Likewise, some Small Folk are good in fights, and may have Attack Combat Mastery, Combat Technique, Defence Combat Mastery, Extra Attacks, Extra Defences, or Massive Damage. (Actually, most Small Folk are merely adequate warriors at best, and others simply train up one or two combat Skills, but a few "warrior heroes" can have these Attributes). Also, some Small Folk are just plain robust, represented best by Tough; more than three or four Levels in this Attribute would be implausible, at least without a supernatural explanation. In addition, a few Small Folk learn to use their small size and low mass to advantage when getting around and these individuals may take the Special Movement Abilities Balance, Cat-Like, or Light-Footed.

Gadgeteer should usually be limited to gremlins, and might be discouraged altogether in more down-to-earth games. Still, it can be a lot of fun in a world where most technological items are tremendously out of scale with the Small Folk who might work with them. Gadgets may be a little more widespread; when used to represent technological devices, it too is most appropriate to gremlins, but other Small Folk can acquire the odd interesting toy. Magical "gadgets" are more or less unknown in the setting, but given that magic certainly does exist, GMs might possibly permit the odd strange and archaic exception in wilder sorts of games.

Wealth is a special case. Small Folk operate in an economy of barter and sharing, not a cash economy. They have some idea of personal property, although this is mostly limited to what a character can carry around. They also have a concept of community property, accessible to anyone who can argue the need or persuade the community's leader. In Small Folk society, "Wealth" actually represents either very good personal equipment, or easier access to more and better community property. One Level represents either a good collection of personal tools and weapons, or reasonably free access to a small group's shared resources (as might be granted to the group's leader and perhaps some respected warriors, or builders); two Levels implies either both of these, or completely free access to a large group's shared resources, while three Levels is appropriate to the chief of a large, strong community with full access to its armoury, tools, larders, and wardrobes. Such "Wealth" still only grants access to ordinary items; for specialised or unique equipment, take Gadgets instead.

Discouraged

Some Attributes are not usually appropriate in Small Folk games, but are not excluded completely. Small Folk society is mostly made up of small communities of independent-minded individuals. While it is not entirely impossible that one of the Small Folk might recruit a group of loyal followers, it simply does not happen very often. Thus, Agents, Henchmen, or Servant are likely to be inappropriate, especially for player characters; they might reflect a tribal or clan leader with a group of hangers-on or bodyguards, but such a figure would rarely be very appropriate as an "adventurer." A Small Folk hero of some repute might have a loyal henchman or servant sidekick.

Similarly, there are few, if any bodies to which one of the Small Folk could have useful Organisational Ties. (If the Seelie and Unseelie Courts were ever restored, that would change.) Also, exotic toys on the Level of an Item of Power are simply not a feature of Small Folk existence, although it is just possible that one or two might appear in some wilder campaigns. (See the notes on Gadget above for a lower-key option.) While Small Folk are quite diverse, the systems and Attributes provided elsewhere encompass almost everything that any of them can do, so Unique Attribute should be rare or unknown. Lastly, whether or not there really are gods in this setting, Small Folk do not knowingly have regular relations with them; any that have the Divine Relationship Attribute merely think of themselves as lucky.

Prohibited

Certain Attributes are entirely prohibited in a Small Folk game. Shapeshifting is beyond the scope of magic in this setting (as far as any Small Folk know) and Small Folk are not werewolves or vampires (or at least, none are known to be), so Alternate Form and Contamination are prohibited. Small Folk are consistently humanoid, excluding Extra Arms or Natural Weapons.

Reincarnation doesn't seem to happen to Small Folk, so far as anyone can tell (whether or not they have souls). Also, Small Folk do not have latent powers which can emerge under stress (at least not in this sense); they have normal natural skills, and trained magical talents, so none should have an Unknown Superhuman Power. Other Attributes which are simply inappropriate and prohibited for Small Folk include Elasticity, Force Field, Grow, Healing, Immovable, Metamorphosis, Mimic Powers, Mind Control, Plant Control, Swarm, any Special Movement Abilities not explicitly discussed elsewhere, and Transmutation.





Skills

While Small Folk can learn Skills in the same way as humans, the topics that they can study are inevitably constrained and modified by their size and environment. Despite this limitation, they can know a surprising range of facts, thanks to their access to stolen human information; some even have a functioning awareness of exotic human sciences, though rarely beyond the "interested amateur" Level.

Skill Costs

See the table for Skill costs appropriate to a typical Small Folk campaign. These can of course be adjusted to suit specific campaigns; for example, in a game where the characters are expected to extend and exploit their magical powers, the cost for Occult Skill might be raised to 4 or 5, while a pure soap opera game of polite intrigue at a revived Seelie Court might have the cost of Unarmed Attack and Defence reduced.

Skills marked "n/a" on the table are simply unavailable to Small Folk for practical reasons. There are no aircraft or firearms built to Small Folk scale, so Piloting and Gun Combat are ruled out. If a Small Folk character somehow gained access to an electronically-controlled or miniaturised aircraft, he or she would have to operate it untrained (and probably crash rather soon), while a being on this scale seeking to fire a human gun, presumably with mechanical assistance, would use Heavy Weapons Skill.

Other Skill Notes

Small Folk tend to learn "Technological" Skills with a distinct slant of their own. For example, Architecture may be used to create shelters for communities in secluded spots, but is more often learnt by Small Folk who need to find their way around the hidden spaces in human buildings. (Some Small Folk know an amazing amount about human construction methods.) Likewise, Demolitions may indicate experience somehow acquired with actual human explosives, or ingenuity with improvised contraptions using stolen human household chemicals and incendiary materials, while Computers is a Skill for enthusiastic gremlins. Gaining access to hardware that can be operated by one of the Small Folk is hard, but the benefits can be huge — especially if the system is connected to the Internet.

Small Folk use various forms of transport, but have serious limitations; for example, Boating is known by a very few of them who have constructed functional watercraft or stolen suitable human toys, but water travel is tricky and very dangerous for the Small Folk. Driving is slightly more common. It may be used with modified human toy cars and other such devices, but its practical usefulness is quite marginal in most cases. Riding is used only by those very few Small Folk who have trained specific animals or birds to carry them.

Likewise, Skills relating to social activities are learned from a Small Folk perspective. Cultural Arts has one Specialisation for each major human society (Western, Chinese, etc.), and one for the melange of oral tradition, performance art, and hand-crafted oddities that forms Small Folk culture, while Etiquette covers the wide range of mostly quite informal rules of Small Folk society. No one can know everything that applies in every backwoods clan, but there are some general principles that always apply. Small Folk do not usually care very much about such things, but there are always a few sticklers for protocol. Foreign Culture almost always applies to human cultures; the Small Folk are mostly remarkably homogenous in such matters, although there may be a few "lost" or obscure communities in remote parts of the world. Any one of the Small Folk is automatically broadly familiar with the human culture of the area where he was brought up.

Law is limited among Small Folk — mostly a matter of simple "common sense" rules (see page 228) — but a character can study those rules and their history if desired. Finally, Special Ranged Attack can be used with the goblins' Curse of Breaking, although that spell is more commonly used on immobile targets in non-combat situations.

Skill Point Costs

Skill	Point Cost	Skill	Point Cost
Acrobatics	4	Mechanics	3
Animal Training	3	Medical	3
Architecture	3	Military Sciences	1
Area Knowledge	4	Navigation	2
Artisan	4	Occult	3
Biological Sciences	2	Performing Arts	2
Boating	1	Physical Sciences	1
Burglary	3	Piloting	n/a
Climbing	4	Poisons	2
Computers	3	Police Sciences	1
Controlled Breathing	1	Power Usage	6
Cultural Arts	2	Powerlifting	3
Demolitions	2	Riding	3
Disguise	3	Seduction	2
Domestic Arts	2	Sleight of Hand	2
Driving	1	Social Sciences	3
Electronics	4	Sports	1
Etiquette	2	Stealth	6
Foreign Culture	2	Street Sense	2
Forgery	1	Swimming	2
Gaming	1	Urban Tracking	2
Interrogation	2	Visual Arts	2
Intimidation	4	Wilderness Survival	4
Languages	4	Wilderness Tracking	2
Law	1	Writing	1
Management/Admin	1		

Combat Skills

Skill	Point Cost	Skill	Point Cost
Archery	4	Ranged Defence	4
Gun Combat	n/a	Special Ranged Attack	2
Heavy Weapons	2	Thrown Weapons	3
Melee Attack	4	Unarmed Attack	5
Melee Defence	4	Unarmed Defence	5

Defects

Small Folk characters can be given many standard Defects, but some are ruled out or highly unlikely. Any not discussed below are as useful for Small Folk characters as for humanity.

There is one special case; as explained on page 242, all Small Folk have the Diminutive Defect at the 4 BP Level. None of them are different enough in size to take it at any other Level. (At least, none known to the general Small Folk population today. Various myths and stories suggest that there may have been Small Folk of different sizes, larger or smaller, in the past, and such beings may still survive somewhere in the world. On the other hand, human legends are a notoriously unreliable guide to the realities of Small Folk existence.)

Small Folk characters can, if desired, also take one Level of Awkward Size. This would imply that the character is extraordinarily large for one of the Small Folk. While Small Folk society has few standard doorways or vehicles, not being able to fit through certain "mouse holes" or use certain equipment can be a severe problem, making this a valid Defect.

Generally Available

Defects such as Activation Time, Concentration, Reduction, or Restriction are sometimes included in Small Folk magical powers, representing complex casting rituals or similar. They are unlikely to apply to Small Folk otherwise.

Small Folk society is fragmented, with no mass media. Thus, Famous is a possibility in this setting, but is quite rare. If taken, it implies some spectacular past achievement, and is highly unlikely to involve anything more than regional fame.

Discouraged

Small Folk do not usually suffer from Defects such as Achilles Heel, Bane, Vulnerability, or Weak Point, but they could be used to represent problems such as physical frailty making a character especially vulnerable to heavy crushing blows, a severe allergy, or the consequences of a disastrously failed magical experiment in a magic-heavy game.

Backlash, Detectable, Maximum Force, One-Way Transformation, Permanent, or Unreliable Power could be linked to a magical Attribute, representing dangerously unstable or inept control of a power, although Small Folk magic is usually quite safe and stable. A character with such Defects would regularly be mocked or shunned. Similarly, Cursed or Special Requirement might arise as the consequence of, say, a magical incident, but are highly unlikely.

Dependent might appear as part of a complex new magical power, or be appropriate for some character whose magical skills are restricted and involve a great deal of rote ceremony, but it is not generally a feature of Small Folk character sheets.

Even if the character somehow has an Item of Power or Gadgets, there are very few, if any, Small Folk groups with the resources and influence to justify Conditional Ownership. Likewise, there are very few Small Folk groups with the power over others implied by Owned or Red Tape.

Finally, Small Folk society has a fair amount of prejudice, though little of it goes beyond verbal sparring — but it almost always involves groups of similar sizes haranguing each other on roughly equal terms, rather than larger groups ganging up on much smaller ones. Some Small Folk communities may have specific biases against the young, the old, particular cliques, etc., which may justify the Ism Defect for characters operating entirely within them, but this would require specific GM permission.

Prohibited

Small Folk games should not usually use Energy Points — they simply add more complication than the setting needs. Hence, Burns Energy is prohibited. Similarly, Involuntary Change can hardly be justified in the absence of Alternate Forms. Small Folk magic does not work in a way to justify Limited Use (Instantaneous or Ongoing) or Part of Body, and it is hard to see how they could be associated with other Attributes in this setting. Also, there is no plausible way that Confined Movement could be imposed on one of the Small Folk.

Equipment and Trade

Small Folk do not have a regularised system of currency. While they do understand the concept of private property (if only because they have stolen the idea from humanity), many of their communities are tribal groups or clans living on the edge of survival, with enough mutual trust to hold much equipment in common. Determining equipment for a starting Small Folk character is not simply a matter of assigning cash and working down a shopping list.

Most of the sort of equipment available to low-tech humans is also available, in miniature form, to Small Folk. Such items are often made from scavenged or stolen human items of the appropriate size, and some of the comedy in a Small Folk game may come from the use of human-made objects for completely new purposes. For example, a traveller might carry a collapsible cardboard carton to use as a tent, or a human's winter sock or a small padded shipping envelope as a sleeping bag, while a worker may employ a coffee-spoon as a spade. A grand ceremony might be held in a "hall" illuminated by multiple cigarette lighters with their switches strapped down (or, if it is managed by gremlins or brownies, by a couple of electrical pocket torches, carefully placed for maximum atmospheric effect).

Small Folk regard human dolls and similar toys as one of their most productive sources of gear, although they make many irritated remarks about doll-sized implements which fail to work for their supposed purpose. A favourite topic of Small Folk adult humour is ribald speculation on the ways rival cliques use pretty fashion dolls.

A new Small Folk player character can freely be designated as starting with any item of equipment mentioned as common in this text, or easily scavenged from human rubbish, so long as it can all easily be carried in (Small Folk) hands or backpacks. GMs should reward and encourage clever or funny ideas involving adapted human objects, although players may be asked to justify any given item as fitting in with the character's history, skills, and social position. If the campaign is set to begin in a large, established community, characters with a clear need for such things can have complex manufactured items such as Small Folk-sized crossbows. Only powerful leaders and exceptional warriors are likely to have heavy armour or anything that would be considered very valuable by a human being (such as gold jewellery). See the discussion of the Wealth Attribute on page 245 for more on this.

Common Weapons

When they have to fight, Small Folk use a range of weapons, often improvised from common human products such as needles, nails, razor blades, or string. Missile weapons do not work terribly well on their scale (although Small Folk, being creatures of magic more than scientific logic, theirs work better than a human physicist would say that they had any right to), but Small Folk do occasionally create such devices when they have reason to expect serious violence. They lack the craft skills and tools to manufacture effective firearms in their scale, and in any case they cannot manufacture or expect to routinely scavenge much in the way of explosives so their arsenals have a distinctly medieval air.

Most of the weapons the Small Folk have can be treated as "rodent-sized" versions of standard human weapons, using the rules on page 249. Small Folk especially favour thrusting spears, typically made from nails or large darning needles; many carry pins or carefully adapted shards of glass or metal as daggers, at least as tools or backup weapons. Lengths of rigid metal, hardwood, or heavy-duty plastic are easily scavenged from human workshops or scrap boxes to serve as clubs or staves, while cheap human jewellery can provide slender metal chains which, with the addition of a heavy nut or fishing weight, serve as effective chain weapons. Large, prosperous communities may include a few specialist craftsmen who can create functional miniature swords out of carefully selected strips of steel, filed down, sharpened, and fitted with scrap plastic hilts and mouse-hide grips. Given very skilled armourers, spring steel or certain plastics can make effective bows or even crossbows, firing arrows fitted with weights at the head end and paper fletching. Sensible Small Folk leaders are careful of such things, and insist that archers must only use them if they can be sure to recover all their ammunition after the fight; sharp-eyed humans might otherwise notice such artefacts and respond with curiosity.

Armour

Armour is fairly rare among Small Folk, even if they are inclined to get into serious fights, but occasionally a thoughtful craftsman or shrewd warrior will put something together from scavenged human materials, insect chitin, or cured rat-leather.

A light suit means flexible (leather or heavy fabric) torso protection and minimal or no headgear, and counts as a Minor Gadget. A medium suit includes some rigid torso protection (usually made from chitin or scraps of plastic or metal) and some kind of helmet (typically made from a thimble or metal bottle top, or from stiff leather), and counts as two Minor Gadgets. "Battle array" is very rare, counting as a Major Gadget, and consists of rigid protection over more or less the entire body.

Armour

Armour Type	Armour Value	Penalties
Light Suit	2	None
Medium Suit	5	-2 on Body-related checks
"Battle Array"	8	-4 on Body-related checks

Note that even the lightest armour will be visible unless the character can find an excuse to wear bulky clothing over it. Openly wearing armour will be seen by most polite Small Folk as an indication that the character is expecting and quite likely looking for a fight. The heaviest suits are largely limited to old-fashioned leader figures, ceremonial occasions, and open warfare.

Shields are occasionally constructed and used by thoughtful small folk who have studied ancient human warfare. They are typically made from plastic (cut from sheets of the stuff or adapted from large buttons or game tokens; a credit card can serve as a shield) or thin plywood. The equivalents of heavy or standard shields are relatively common; bucklers are also possible, usually manufactured from smaller buttons, although they are less often seen. A shield counts as a Minor Gadget.

The World From Ground Level

Small Folk live in a world that, for practical purposes, can be regarded as the world that we know — but they literally see it from a completely different perspective. The trick for both players and GMs is, first to consider what would be realistic in a given situation, and then to think how it would appear to someone seven cm tall.

Small Folk Around the World

It might surprise humans to know just how much some Small Folk know about human political geography. It is a subject that they have long found it sensible to study. They like to know where there is plenty of stuff to scavenge, and human wars can be as dangerous for them as for humans.

Thanks to their magical powers, and their extensive experience sneaking aboard human vehicles, they can move around the planet reasonably easily. Also, although they are not exactly rare, they are scattered thinly enough that they can usually find some unclaimed dwelling space in any substantial human settlement. As a result, they usually have a good choice as to where to live.

Given a free choice, they will usually opt for "First World" nations. Not only can scavengers find more and better stuff in such areas, but also the human inhabitants are markedly less inclined to believe in fairies and the supernatural, making it much easier for Small Folk to hide. Many of them would claim that their kind have abandoned less developed areas altogether, although this is actually an oversimplification.

The degree to which Small Folk actually depend on proximity to advanced, technological human culture tends to vary from clique to clique. While gremlins would feel totally lost without electricity and interesting junk, pixies pride themselves on their "closeness to nature," and are more often found in rural areas or at least on the edges of towns. (On the other hand, many pixies appreciate the conveniences of human urban culture, and also enjoy the opportunity to complain a lot about the "oppressive unnaturalness" of the towns where they voluntarily live.) Brownies like to be near powerful humans or human businesses from which they can adopt jargon, while boggarts prefer dark corners and reassuring shadows. Goblins can fit into most places, although they seem to actively seek out run-down parts of town, while knockers will live anywhere that has some rock for them to tunnel through, preferring basements and dry regions to skyscrapers or swampland. Sprites refuse to admit that they cannot find beauty in any given spot — although areas with parks or gardens obviously suit their love of flowers best.

Small Folk have a slight preference for temperate climates, although this may be mostly a matter of habit. They can and do enjoy the benefits of human-built heating and air conditioning systems, although in climates extreme enough that they have to stay within climate-controlled spaces, they find they suffer significant additional problems in remaining hidden and secure. Most "First World" cities and towns have resident Small Folk; less developed tropical cities have lighter populations, and polar bases and the like are usually entirely clear of Small Folk.

One exception to this last is Northern Europe. The Small Folk of Scandinavian and northern Russian cities are notoriously taciturn and surly, with a taste for good-quality fur garments, which they often acquire by hunting. Such hunts can be brutally dangerous, providing the hunters with moments of grim excitement in otherwise stark and difficult lives. Most northern Small Folk are hard drinkers.

Small Folk population densities are higher in Europe and America than in Asia. There is some evidence, so far as what passes for Small Folk historians can judge, that their kind originated in Europe, and that they have been slow to migrate to some regions due to an inability to comprehend the local humans well enough. Given a tempting prospect of living space and rich pickings, many have learned to adapt, and Tokyo, Hong Kong, and countless other Asian cities now have plenty of Small Folk inhabitants. Some of these colonists have group names drawn from local tales of the supernatural; these may have been borrowed from human media, although many of the Small Folk involved insist fiercely that they are in fact descended from native beings, and are in no sense "immigrants."

There are also scattered but healthy Western-style communities under and alongside the human cities of Australia and New Zealand, and a moderate

Lost Cliques?

Given that the cliques described here are contingent social groups rather than separate species, and not all Small Folk belong to one and only one clique throughout their lives, there are any number of lost, forgotten, failed, or rumoured secret groups and factions.

This is primarily an excuse for GMs to throw some variety and mystery into games by introducing hints of "lost cliques," along with secret conspiracies, hidden tribes, and anything else that might make the game interesting. These secret groups may actually exist (although they should be very hard to track down and identify), or the rumours and stories may be red herrings, camouflage or even outright fabrications. Any good book on folk myths and traditions can be raided for ideas — especially names, habits, and possible powers. As with the known cliques, these can be distorted and modernised for use in games.

The tendency of mainstream Small Folk society (such as it is) to gravitate to wealthier human regions leaves large areas of the map to be populated with lost Small Folk tribes and strange magics, in the best pulp/colonial fiction traditions. Tales of beings such as the African *abatwa* (ant-sized expert archers with prophetic powers) or the Mexican *zips* (rural warriors with the power to make the deer they guard immune to mortal weapons) could provide some strange encounters for wandering Small Folk. Alternately, such creatures could accompany human immigrant communities in Western cities, providing native Small Folk with interesting neighbours, rivals for resources, and complex diplomatic problems.

number of their kind in the more prosperous parts of South America and even the Caribbean. Africa and India have fewer such colonies, although some adventurous Small Folk groups have decided that the wealthier cities of India offer interesting long-term prospects.

Scavenging

A major feature of most Small Folk communities' lives is the process of "scavenging" — which usually means appropriating items that humans have mislaid or are unlikely to miss. While the scavenging itself is necessarily an *ad hoc*, improvised sort of business, the parties which are sent out to perform this task may be selected by a relatively formal, sometimes even ritualised process.

Scavengers are not treated as heroes, but they do receive a certain amount of respect, and often display inordinate pride in their (sometimes very limited) accomplishments. Other Small Folk — including the "farmers" and craftsmen who often do more useful work overall, as well as off-duty scavengers — may play along with this, or subject them to mockery ranging from the amiable to the embittered. It is interesting to note that Small Folk hunting parties who go out after dangerous prey or menacing predators, and who are therefore more the sort of heroes which scavengers claim to be, tend to make less of a fuss about their own accomplishments.

Scavenging is usually undertaken at night or at other times when humans are absent or asleep. Experienced scavengers who want the status of party leaders try to claim detailed knowledge of human habits and behaviour. This claim is sometimes justified, and sometimes total fiction, although almost all Small Folk have a pretty good grasp of human habits and behaviour.

Occasionally, when the community has some specific requirement that is hard to meet, a special scavenging party will be assembled; they will form a plan (invariably after much argument and sometimes a few brawls), and then mount a special expedition. Objects which are merely hard to find or to reach may be acquired by "heroes" using magic or special skills; unusually bulky acquisitions may need a large team of scavengers to bring them home, hopefully co-ordinated and managed by some experienced individual.

Small Folk and Human Technology

Given that many Small Folk spend much of their time studying human beings with some care, and others watch far too much television given the chance, the Small Folk do not find human technology — even in its most advanced forms — terribly strange or surprising. Their opinions on the subject, and their ideas as to how to use gadgetry, are inevitably somewhat skewed. They think of cars and aircraft in terms of how easy they are to sneak aboard and hide on, small items as objects to adapt for special tasks, and water, electricity, or gas supplies as either opportunities for ingenious adaptation or as special dangers.

Some Small Folk — mostly but not solely gremlins — specialise in technology, using skill and ingenuity or magical power. Many such individuals have some kind of favourite "style" or specialisation, whether broad (such as electricity or clockwork) or narrow (such as locks or digital watches). A few have some knowledge of human medicine, which can often be adapted to Small Folk requirements (carefully scaling down dosages of drugs and such). Using this sort of thing safely and reliably too often requires a depth of knowledge and training which Small Folk simply cannot acquire through eavesdropping or browsing "borrowed" books.

Traps

One thing that does not worry Small Folk too much is the human habit of putting traps down for vermin and other animals. Such traps can be dangerous, and smarter, adventurous Small Folk make something of a study of the sorts of devices that they may encounter — but the fact is that a fully intelligent being can usually spot even a new trap intended for animals as something odd and out of place, and can defeat or circumvent it. Some Small Folk amuse themselves by stealing bait from mousetraps.

Even when Small Folk do fall into non-lethal traps, they have the capacity for abstract thought that animals lack, functional hands, and usually friends nearby, which can enable them to escape quite easily. Humans may be left cursing lucky or clever "vermin" when they find the trap tripped and empty, but rarely get more suspicious. The danger of such devices does make sensible individuals cautious; being found alive in a trap would be disastrous. Small Folk venturing into unknown territory where traps might be encountered will very rarely travel alone.

Poison — including some sorts of poisoned traps — represents rather more of a danger. Effective poison aimed at animals rarely tastes obviously bad, because the animals would reject it, and many Small Folk have suffered unpleasant fates due to lack of caution. The common wisdom among Small Folk is that tempting food left in very obvious places should be carefully avoided, and many of them watch out for recognisable poison bottles or containers in human householders, and pay close attention if they overhear conversations on the subject.

Small Folk can also set traps. They may borrow human ideas and even devices, but usually find simple deadfalls or pits quite adequate for their needs when they go in for this sort of hunting.

Small Folk Lairs

A Small Folk community's home will usually be the product of intelligent planning, long experience, and the practicalities of its location. They appreciate security, secrecy, and good defences and escape routes, and will rarely settle where these cannot be guaranteed. On the other hand, needs must when the devil drives and Small Folk are not always as smart as they like to think; some lairs are distinctly flawed in a wide variety of ways. Many communities huddle around heating pipes where they run through a building's service spaces, scrabbling for the warmth that is being carefully directed to the human occupants, or have to take long detours to move between nearly-adjacent spaces because there is no safe direct route. Gremlin electrical engineers may redirect a little power to their own needs, and thereby render exposed metalwork throughout the lair "live," as an unintended side effect while other communities occupy the spaces around large building-mounted clocks, and thus have to live with the danger of moving machinery and deafening hourly bells.

As this suggests, most lairs are a mixture of the ingenious, the comfortable, and the slapdash, with a significant proportion of the community perpetually seeking to make improvements without running too much risk of drawing human attention. Older communities are often better established and more comfortable and secure — but some have simply learned to put up with blatant problems, with their leaders dismissing any suggestion of change as "wild talk" or "folly." New lairs, on the other hand, almost always have at least a few major difficulties still to be sorted out.

Urban vs. Rural Life

Small Folk dwelling in the country tend to adopt the lifestyle of well-adapted animals, lurking in natural spaces and living by hunting and gathering. Machines and even tools themselves tend to be rare in such communities, and clothes may be limited to scraps of unkempt animal skin and a few very old human-made rags. A small minority of rural Small Folk are genuinely ingenious, and they do have many generations of experience to fall back on, so some rural lairs can be surprisingly comfortable. Many "rustics" are fiercely proud of their traditional culture, which may or may not encompass literacy.

Urban Small Folk, by contrast, generally have access to extensive human-made resources, and exploit such things, creating dens which are carefully disguised and hidden, but which, on close examination, show signs of intelligent planning. These lairs have plentiful furniture and tools and may be carefully planned and laid out. Their occupants tend to be very proud of their accomplishments and "sophistication," usually convinced that their home lair is among the best in the entire Small Folk world (despite the fact that very few of them have any experience of other lairs).

Rural Small Folk traditionally consider their urban cousins to be decadent, incautious, and too dependent on discarded human rubbish. The city-dwellers consider the rustics to be little better than the animals amongst which they dwell, and to lack dignity or wit. All of which said, the real differences between the two types are often much less significant than the similarities.

Domesticated Animals

While Small Folk do not need agriculture of their own to survive, many of their communities do include creatures of other species, in a more or less domesticated state. As noted on pages 252-258, common species include mice, rabbits, and occasionally rats. "Herds" must often be carefully controlled to avoid drawing human attention, especially in urban environments, and cannot grow too large. Few Small Folk communities really need domesticated animals, but many Small Folk find a lot of pleasure in having living beings to exploit and control.

Small Folk on the Move

When Small Folk need to migrate, they have various options. What they choose depends on the distance to be covered, the available resources, and their individual skills and traditions.

While Small Folk are extremely quick on their feet for their size, able to sprint across a room before a human can turn around, they are severely limited in the distances over which they can keep up this sort of movement. If they try to cover long distances on foot, they are restricted to a much more sedate walking pace, at about a twentieth of human speeds — often limiting them to a few hundred yards a day, perhaps as much as a mile for a determined traveller. Given some distance to travel, they will be very likely to consider alternatives.

Knocker Tunnelling

The knocker "Secret Mining" power (see page 244) provides one answer, and is largely responsible for the broad Small Folk population distribution. It has obvious limitations, starting with the fact that the knockers themselves guard it as a highly profitable secret; it also requires substantial quantities of raw rock at both ends of the journey through which the knocker drives the seemingly mundane tunnel. These facts force many Small Folk — even including some knockers — to look for alternative methods of travel.

Hitching Lifts With Humans

Human beings often offer one such alternative, as their many and varied vehicles often have convenient nooks, crannies, and hiding places. Ever since the first substantial ships took to the open seas, Small Folk have been mastering the art of stowing away.

Ships remain a favoured option when they are available, as they can be large enough, with enough nooks and crannies, that travelling Small Folk can remain hidden with little trouble, while crew stores can be raided for supplies. Pest control measures on ships are rarely more than a minor problem. Of course, ships are slower than aircraft, and not every desired destination is on the coast, but no option is perfect. Some Small Folk even spend their entire lives on board ships, and may help other travellers for a modest price.

Small Folk have long been accustomed to the idea of hitching lifts on wheeled vehicles, although in the days of carts and stagecoaches, this was mostly limited to small parties and moderate distances. With the development of motor travel, distances grew greater; trains and then trucks permitted slightly larger scale travel. The chief remaining drawback is that land vehicles are still relatively small and all too easily searched; Small Folk travellers sometimes have to scramble to avoid attention. Unlucky travellers may find themselves driven off their chosen vehicle, stranded miles from anywhere.

Over the last hundred years, humanity has obligingly introduced a whole new, much grander possibility, by inventing and adopting the aeroplane. Small Folk can now move swiftly between continents without having to butter up some aggravating knocker miner, and can even do so in some comfort. Stowing away on planes is not entirely without risks; human aircraft operators often display an almost paranoid aversion to the idea of "pests" on board, and employ formidable anti-vermin measures. Also, would-be stowaways who lack a keen understanding of aircraft workings may put themselves in danger from machinery, or may find themselves trapped in unheated and non-pressurised sections to fatal effect. Air travel often tends to be managed by specialist gremlins, who have long had the greatest interest in the subject.

Domesticated Birds

Some Small Folk have managed to capture and tame various species of large wild birds, and have even transformed them into riding mounts. This is hideously dangerous; aside from the risk of a fall if the mount turns fractious or something goes wrong, the fact is that birds are generally too stupid to train properly, and many will suddenly turn aggressive for no clear reason after months of handling. This trick only really appeals to young, daredevil Small Folk — but it has been successfully accomplished from time to time, and the ensuing benefits, in the form of rapid travel and height advantages, mean that many communities are prepared to encourage their young lunatics.

Species that have been exploited from time to time include geese, swans, and storks. Occasionally, insanely brave and flamboyant Small Folk set out to master large birds of prey such as eagles; a few succeed, becoming heroes, while others have less luck, usually becoming lunch.

Rules

Characters who want to attempt to train a flying mount will have to begin by capturing a bird (or raising one from an egg), while finding some way to keep it captive and under control while training it. Training any creature requires several weeks (exactly how long depends how much reliable control the trainer wants), with daily Soul-Based Animal Handling Skill checks. A failure means loss of the day's efforts and gives the next attempt an additional -1 Difficulty Modifier; when working with birds, failure by 2 or more wipes out the last d6 days of work, and failure by 4 or more may also cause the creature to attack the trainer. (Make a second roll immediately to avoid actual combat.)

Training any bird for riding takes a Difficulty Modifier of at least -2 (for a mild-mannered herbivorous bird raised from the egg), up to -4 or -5 (for captured birds of prey). Putting a bridle on a trained bird requires another such roll on each occasion, but with the Difficulty Modifier modified by +2; failure makes the task impossible for an hour, and failure by 4 or more means that the bird may turn on its handler, as above. Riding a trained bird involves Body-Based Riding Skill checks at the beginning and whenever attempting complicated manoeuvres, with Soul-Based Riding Skill checks whenever the riders tries to make the bird act against its normal instincts. Bad failures and risky manoeuvres may lead to falls, at the GM's option; in most cases, the rider can stay on the bird with a Body check, although the bird may decide to do whatever its instincts indicate while the rider is regaining his or her seat. Predators are inclined to find the presence of a struggling rider on its back annoying, and may seek to get rid of the problem.

Other Creatures

Small Folk go out of their way to avoid the attention of other creatures that they cannot easily defeat, but they do not always succeed. Adventures for Small Folk player characters are likely to include their share of encounters with "monsters."

GMs should try to depict such things fairly realistically. Most other species will find Small Folk surprising and a little confusing. Predators will tend to attack unless they have been conditioned to behave otherwise, or unless they are currently sated, but most will retreat if they discover the potential meal seems to be more trouble than it is worth. Conversely, herbivores will mostly ignore anything that does not actually threaten them, but may be aggressively territorial or protective of their young.

Unfortunately, one of the most dangerous of all encounters is also the least predictable....

Humans

Humans are gigantic creatures, with overwhelming strength and mass compared to those of the Small Folk. In game terms, this is represented by the fact that humans do not have the Diminutive Defect.

A typical, ordinary human adult — the sort of problem which one of the Small Folk might encounter by chance — has a value of 4 in each Stat, and a Level of 1 to 3 or so in a few Skills appropriate to his or her profession or hobbies, possibly including some kind of weapons training. Experienced police or soldiers can be far more formidable foes, but sensible Small Folk are unlikely to encounter such. More danger is posed by skilled investigators or occultists, who might have Mind 5 or 6 and Soul 5, along with some Skills in the 2 to 4 range and possibly minor but useful Attributes such as Heightened Awareness, making them hard to fool or evade.

Human Young

Many games might be more likely to feature human children rather than adults, both because Small Folk are slightly more willing to reveal themselves to younger humans (whose stories are unlikely to be believed) and as a matter of narrative convention. Stories of "little people" living in the shadows of humanity are often aimed at children, and hence feature child characters. Children are also closer in size to Small Folk than adults (although still annoying large from the perspective of any of the Small Folk who encounter a human child) and are more likely to be looking at the world from an angle where spotting the Small Folk is possible. A child will have Stats of 1 to 3, depending on age (Soul may run a little higher for annoyingly wise or determined youngsters), along with at most a few Skills at Level 1 (perhaps 2 for the most scholarly of bright kids). Some children may have a Level or two of Heightened Awareness ("childish perceptiveness"). They may well also have Defects such as Easily Distracted, Inept Attack, Inept Defence, Ism (as their claims and stories are often disregarded), Not So Tough, or Phobia.

Humans in Combat

Humans are unlikely to go hunting Small Folk with specially chosen weapons, and the good news for Small Folk characters is that most human attacks they might plausibly face will seem clumsy and easy to dodge. Perhaps the greatest common threat comes from farmers or similar individuals out vermin hunting with shotguns, which gain the benefit of the Spreading Ability. GMs may rule that a shotgun blast aimed at a group of Small Folk who have made the mistake of bunching close together should be treated as aimed at all of them at once. For that matter, even an improvised melee weapon such as a baseball bat may be swept to hit numerous small targets in one blow, if they are positioned correctly. Small Folk who foolishly insist on letting themselves get into combat with humans should scatter, run, sacrifice most or all of their possible attacks (which would be unlikely to do much, if any, damage anyway), and use any cover or magic available.

Birds of Prey

A falcon, hawk, or owl is a real terror to one of the Small Folk. Fast and quiet, striking out of the sky, these creatures are sometimes known collectively as "goodbye — with wings." Small Folk weapons can in theory hurt them, but rarely get the chance. Attacks by birds of prey usually leave the survivors stunned, shaken, and thoroughly terrorised.

Another problem with this type of predator is that it is very hard for Small Folk to "train" them out of attacking; they rarely nest close enough to ground level to harass, and they are a little bit too stupid to learn much, for all their lethal instincts. The most reliable tactic against these birds is not getting caught in the open by them.

Raptor Species (5 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
-2	-4	Mind
-1	-2	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Combat Technique (Diving strike)
+2	8	Flight
+1	1	Heightened Senses (Vision)
+2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws and beak)

Points	Defects
-2	Diminutive
-1	Not So Tough (Hollow bones)
-2	Physical Impairment (Claws rather than hands)

The Combat Technique permits the bird to make attacks at the end of a full-speed dive onto the foe without penalty.

This represents a typical hawk or falcon; note that an adult specimen will have Body 6, Mind 2, and Soul 3. For an eagle or other larger species, increase Body by 1, and add 1 Level of Awkward Size (to reflect a large wingspan and general problems in confined spaces). For an owl, change the Heightened Senses Attribute to 2 in hearing and 1 in a Type II version granting night vision effective in anything short of total darkness, and treat the bird as having Stealth Skill at Level 3.

Incidentally, while two Levels in Flight is quite sufficient to represent a bird of prey in level motion; some species can manage very impressive speeds when diving on prey. This is left as a "special effect" here, but Small Folk characters in open country should be nervously aware of such facts.

Cats

While hawks and owls can generally be avoided by most sensible Small Folk, cats are probably the greatest practical day-to-day threat for members of the race. Fast, clever in a lazy sort of way, and positively encouraged in their vicious hunting by humans (who may well also notice if their pets turn up strangely dead or maimed), cats are a deadly nuisance. A cat can and will wreak terrible carnage among an unarmed, unprepared group of Small Folk, and may do some serious damage even to the toughest bands until the cat is driven off or defeated by weapons or magic.

Fortunately, cats are easily deterred if they decide that subduing a potential victim is too much like hard work. Furthermore, Small Folk can and do systematically harass individual cats into harmlessness. Many a kitten has grown up with a healthy terror of this one type of potential prey.

Cat Species (0 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+3	6	Body
-1	-2	Mind
-1	-2	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Feature (4 legs: superior movement for short bursts)
+3	3	Heightened Awareness
+2	2	Heightened Senses (Night vision, ultrasonic hearing)
+2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws and fangs)

Points	Defects
-2	Diminutive
-2	Easily Distracted (Easier-looking prey, sheer boredom, catnip, etc.)
-2	Less Capable (Endurance and Intelligence)
-2	Owned
-2	Physical Impairment (No hands)


CITY



Note that a typical adult housecat has Body 7, Mind 3, Soul 3; it is also likely to have Stealth Skill at around Level 2. Strays lack the Owned Defect, of course, but may have health problems and can be molested by Small Folk with more impunity.

Cats' build and four legs enable them to sprint or leap at speeds comparable to most humans (i.e. disregarding the effects of the Diminutive Defect) over short distances. After a couple of rounds of this sort of effort, any cat will give up and rest for a while.

Dogs

Dogs vary a great deal, and some Small Folk are inclined to dismiss them as threats, regarding them as too large to get into hiding places, fundamentally rather stupid, and hopelessly softened and weakened by human domestication. This attitude has cost many Small Folk their lives, usually when they encountered some terrier or similar breed that may have mistaken them for rats but more likely didn't care. Even the largest, dopiest dog can display snap reflexes to go with its big teeth and keen senses.

Sensible Small Folk communities are as systematic about deterring dogs as they are about cats. This is easier with the smaller breeds of dog, who are more on the Small Folk scale — but those are often the greater threat in practise, being able to get into smaller corners. Magic and cunning can affect any dog, and most are gratifyingly susceptible to "training."

Medium-Sized Dog Species (-5 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	2	Body
-1	-2	Mind
-1	-2	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Feature (4 legs: x2 running speed)
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+2	2	Heightened Senses (Tracking scent, ultrasonic hearing)
+1	1	Natural Weapons (Fangs)

Points	Defects
-2	Less Capable (Strength and Intelligence)
-1	Not So Tough
-3	Owned
-2	Physical Impairment (No hands)

Note that a typical adult dog of this type has Body 5, Mind 3, Soul 3. For a large, very powerful dog (such as might be used for guard duties) drop the less capable (Strength) and Not So Tough Defects. For a small breed, replace the Less Capable (Strength) and Not So Tough Defects with Diminutive at the 2 BP level. Dogs specifically trained for combat, or accustomed to fighting for dominance in packs of strays, may add a Level or two of Unarmed Attack Skill. The comments above on stray cats also apply to stray dogs in general.

Foxes

Foxes are a significant predator, found primarily in the country but also in some towns. There are worse threats to the Small Folk, but unlike many other threats, foxes are used to hunting prey on the Small Folk scale. Foxes have keen senses, and their reputation for cunning has some basis in fact. They are also notorious for inflicting excessive carnage if they find themselves in an environment full of easy prey, such as a hen house or a Small Folk lair. Fortunately, truly determined resistance can usually drive off foxes; as part-time scavengers, they see little reason to expend too much effort over their hunting. For game purposes, they have similar details to a medium-sized dog.

Mustelidae

For Small Folk in rural areas especially, members of the ferret and marten family are almost as great a nightmare as birds of prey. While a bird can swoop down with sudden, devastating effect on careless Small Folk in the open, predators of this type can get into a seemingly secure Small Folk lair, however well buried or hidden — and they possess a frightening combination of speed, sharp teeth, and vicious killer instinct. The smaller weasels are easier foes in a straight fight, but fit through even smaller gaps.

Ferret Species (0 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
-2	-4	Mind
-1	-2	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Feature (4 legs: x2 running speed)
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+2	2	Heightened Senses (Vision)
+2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws and fangs)

Points	Defects
-2	Diminutive
-2	Physical Impairment (Paws rather than hands)

A typical ferret has Body 6, Mind 2, and Soul 3. Other, related species are broadly similar; a weasel would have another Level of Diminutive. Many such creatures would effectively have a couple of Levels in Skills such as Stealth and Melee Attack; they are formidable hunters in their size range. Some are Owned by humans and used in small game hunting or vermin control.

Insects and Arachnids

While insects and the like are mostly smaller than Small Folk, many of them have highly unpleasant poison stings or bites, as well as a tendency to use swarm tactics, at least in the eusocial insects. Small Folk have very few uses for insects, and not many Small Folk would admit to eating any of them with any enthusiasm. Furthermore, insects cannot be taught to fear Small Folk; they are simply too stupid. Hence, they tend to be classified purely as vermin. A single spider or carnivorous beetle will be slain as quickly and efficiently as possible; a new nest of wasps or ants may be the target of a carefully planned assault, preferably involving specially designed weapons and magic, before nearby Small Folk are forced to relocate entirely.

General "Bug" Species (-10 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
-3	-6	Mind
-2	-4	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Feature (6 or 8 legs: x2 running speed)
+1	1	Heightened Senses (Ultraviolet vision)
+2	2	Natural Weapons (Fangs)

Points	Defects
-6	Diminutive
-2	Physical Impairment (No hands)

A typical bug thus has Body 6, Mind 1, and Soul 2. Most bugs are broadly similar for game purposes, but with obvious detail differences. Winged insects have one Level in Flight, while a creature with a poisonous stinger or bite might have a Special Attack with Abilities such as Burning, Drain Body, Incapacitating, or Irritant, along with the Toxic Disability. Tough chitin can function as a Level of Armour. Levels of Less Capable or Not So Tough can reflect variations in size and general robustness; some insects might even have a Level of Superstrength with

Restriction (Diminutive). Exotic senses, attacks, etc., may also be appropriate in some cases. It is fortunate for Small Folk in general that the vast majority of insects have one more Level of Diminutive than themselves.

Mice

Being timorous and weak enough to be safely beaten up by even an unarmed Small Folk, stupid enough not to learn much from the experience, but not always too stupid to run away, mice are one species to which Small Folk can feel comfortably superior. They have only a little, stringy meat on their bones and are not usually considered useful if domesticated.

A few eccentric Small Folk leaders keep specially bred specimens, possibly stolen from the litters of human-owned show mice, as status symbol pets. At the other end of the social scale, some Small Folk — usually pixies — also keep small, scrawny mice, possibly for company, possibly because it makes them look rebelliously uncivilised.

Mouse Species (-15 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
-1	-2	Body
-2	-4	Mind
-2	-4	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Feature (4 legs: x2 running speed)
+2	2	Heightened Awareness

Points	Defects
-4	Diminutive
-1	Inept Attack
-1	Less Capable (Intelligence)
-2	Physical Impairment (No hands)

A typical mouse thus has Body 3, Mind 2, and Soul 2. Pet/tame mice have the Owned Defect.

Rabbits

If there is one species that Small Folk regard with a balanced mixture of affection and contempt, it is the rabbit. Lumbering herbivores which nonetheless move quickly away from danger, creators of convenient burrows that can sometimes be "borrowed," good eating for entire clans of Small Folk, rabbits are extremely useful. Large, organised, rural Small Folk communities may even domesticate them.

All of which said, and despite their herbivorous natures, rabbits are bulky when compared to Small Folk, possess powerful leg muscles, and occasionally muster the courage to defend themselves or their young. Even accidents with completely tame rabbits can be dangerous.

Rabbit Species (-5 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+2	4	Body
-2	-4	Mind
-2	-4	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Feature (4 legs: superior movement for short bursts/leaps)
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+2	2	Natural Weapons (Hind Claws, Incisors)

Points	Defects
-2	Diminutive
-1	Less Capable (Intelligence)
-2	Physical Impairment (No hands)

A typical rabbit has Body 6, Mind 2, and Soul 2. Some specimens are Owned.

Rats

Small Folk have an oddly ambiguous attitude to rats. Tough, versatile, and likely to carry disease, a single rat can be a serious nuisance and rats are prone to working in groups, with a minor knack for pack tactics. They also make unappetising eating, although many desperate Small Folk have survived on rat meat in hard times. All of which might leave Small Folk with a view of the other species almost as negative as the usual human opinion of these vermin. Except....

Rats live in the walls. They're tough, adaptable, bloody-minded, and persistent. They seem to take positive delight in their parasitic relationship with humanity, while avoiding direct human attention as much as possible.

The fact is, Small Folk find it hard to avoid identifying with the blasted things.

Some Small Folk have managed to tame and even domesticate rats, mostly in a spirit of sheer perversity, but rat meat is still tough, and they cannot learn many tricks.

Rat Species (-10 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
-2	-4	Mind
-2	-4	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+1	1	Feature (4 legs: x2 running speed)
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+1	1	Natural Weapons (Fangs)
+1	1	Special Defense (Disease)

Points	Defects
-4	Diminutive
-2	Physical Impairment (No hands)

A typical rat has Body 4, Mind 2, and Soul 2. Pets obviously have the Owned Defect. They have a reputation for viciousness, among Small Folk as among humans, but most only act this way when desperate or cornered. A Level or two of Melee Attack might not be inappropriate.

Small Birds

Small Folk regard most non-predatory birds with amiable contempt, a handy source of food in many cases. (If humans notice a few losses, especially of pets from cages, blame can usually be pinned on some convenient cat.) Some such birds can manage a nasty peck and the relative difficulty of hunting them keeps them from being a major part of the Small Folk diet.

Small Bird Species (-10 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
-2	-4	Body
-2	-4	Mind
-2	-4	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+2	8	Flight
+1	1	Heightened Awareness
+1	1	Natural Weapons (Claws or equivalent)

Points	Defects
-4	Diminutive
-1	Less Capable (Intuition)
-1	Not So Tough (Hollow bones)
-2	Physical Impairment (No hands)

A typical small bird has Body 2, Mind 2, and Soul 2.

Snakes

The attitude of Small Folk to any given snake obviously depends on its size and dietary habits, and to some extent on whether or not it is venomous. Those who regularly have to deal with snakes such as rattlesnakes, take the subject far more seriously than those who merely have to fend off the odd small grass snake. All snakes are predators, and many have a natural talent for tunnel operations, so few are exactly popular with Small Folk.

Generic Poisonous Snake (-10 Points)

Level	Points	Stats
+1	+2	Body
-3	-6	Mind
-2	-4	Soul

Level	Points	Attributes
+2	2	Heightened Awareness
+1	1	Natural Weapons (Fangs)
+1	4	Special Attack "Paralysing Poison Bite" (20 Damage, Incapacitating, Melee, Toxic)
	-2	• Restriction (Diminutive)

Points	Defects
-4	Diminutive
-3	Physical Impairment (No limbs)

A typical snake of this type has Body 5, Mind 1, and Soul 2. Different species come in quite a wide range of sizes and accordingly have levels of power that vary considerably from species to species. For a non-poisonous constrictor, replace the Special Attack with one Level in Natural Weapons (Constriction), giving +2 to all checks when grappling and squeezing opponents).

Campaigns and Adventures

The world of the Small Folk is large — especially from their point of view — as well as varied and dangerous. It also provides an odd perspective (literally) on human experience. Adventures in this setting can take many forms, across a range of styles.

Defending Hearth and Home

To begin with, characters may simply be required to confront danger — for themselves and on behalf of their communities. Ingenuity, skill, and magic can help a great deal here, but the Small Folk operate with serious handicaps, starting with their size. Simple adventures may take the form of driving off predatory animals, and perhaps tracking them back to their lairs to deal with the problem permanently. Lengthier, more complex stories are likely to involve problematic humans, who the Small Folk may have to deter or sabotage without revealing themselves.

Example Plot: Unwelcome Developments

The player characters live in a large community that occupies hidden spaces in a number of buildings in one district of a human town. Normally, if one of these buildings is demolished, the Small Folk inhabitants simply move to another. As a result, the community has managed to grow large and very settled.

Unfortunately, the entire neighbourhood is now scheduled for redevelopment by human businesses. Some of the buildings will be demolished, while others will be radically reconstructed. The Small Folk will have severe problems; they could move, but their numbers are huge, and uprooting such a long-established society would be devastating.

Our heroes are asked, persuaded, or commanded to find a solution to this problem. This will involve close study of the humans and human organisations involved in the redevelopment, and perhaps identification of any humans who are opposed to it, followed by careful planning and execution of some kind of "intervention" — all without compromising the community's secrecy. While some characters might enjoy sabotaging bulldozers and setting fire to corporate offices, such actions will provide temporary respite at best; there is a lot of money tied up in this scheme, with a lot of profit riding on its success, and the developers are determined to carry things through. Furthermore, if sabotage becomes too flagrant, security will improve — and may be backed up by some dangerously determined investigators. This sort of thing could also discredit any human opponents of the scheme.

The best plan might involve a lengthy scheme of subtle sabotage and manipulation, designed to slow down the redevelopment and force the builders to take it by stages, enabling the community to slip from building to building, never quite running out of safe locations in which to retreat. It is possible that the developers include some ruthless individuals whose shady dealings could be exposed to the human police and press, causing the scheme to collapse or at least be replaced by something more restrained and subtle, but even this may achieve no more than slowing things down so that the Small Folk can execute a controlled evacuation.

Example Plot: Dark Waters

A Small Folk community dwelling beside a river begins to suffer an epidemic of sickness when a factory upstream starts polluting the water. The Small Folk are aware that humans have laws about such things, but apparently these laws are not being enforced.

Investigating, the players might expect their characters to discover a ruthless industrial corporation buying off local politicians and wrapping any honest inspectors up in lawsuits and red tape, or perhaps a military base which is immune to many laws. (Indeed, some entirely innocent sites and structures along the way may distract the investigators.) The problem proves to be rather stranger than that. The pollution all appears to emanate from a large private house by the river. Surely no single human dwelling could be responsible for such things? For that matter, don't humans pour their waste into sewers and such, not directly into adjacent rivers?

It may take some time to discover that the quantities of pollutant coming from the house are tiny, although quite potent, and that the effluent is flowing through a drain in the old place's basement. Any attempt to draw the attention of human authorities to the matter will achieve little; human scientists detect nothing to trouble them in the river water. For that matter, the local wildlife does not seem unduly bothered by the stuff.

The owners of the house are a middle-aged human couple who appear to work from home, but it is hard to find out much more about them. Even magic proves unable to penetrate the basement — which is very strange — while the pollutants make access through the drains or sewers impossible. The characters will have to get in through the ground floor. Along the way, they may discover that the humans own a large collection of dusty leather-bound books, many of them in scripts unreadable by even the best-educated Small Folk.

In fact, the couple is experimenting in alchemy and magic, in pursuit of power and wealth. They have actually mastered enough of such things to cause trouble. If they should discover the Small Folk — which is entirely possible, given what this pair has accomplished already — they will be startled, but also pleased and extremely curious; they are more inclined to believe in such things than most humans, which makes them dangerous. It may be possible to make some kind of deal with them, but these are greedy, tricky characters, and the threat to Small Folk secrecy will only grow with time.

Preserving Secrecy

A subtler sort of work when protecting the whole world of the Small Folk involves preserving the secret of its very existence. This can lead characters into missions that take them further afield and require slightly more dramatic displays of ingenuity. While there is no central Small Folk government (barring the restoration of the Courts), there are any number of powerful or respected

figures who might recruit bands of bright individuals to track down evidence of Small Folk carelessness or human curiosity, and deal with it.

Example Plot: Starring Role

Some gremlins who happen to have watched a new children's TV show are pretty certain that the "elves" in certain scenes are not just camera tricks, but are actually Small Folk. If anyone researches the subject through human media, they find that the producers are extremely secretive about their clever "special effects," and indeed, human experts are impressed that a company with limited resources and budget can achieve such good results. This is terrifying stuff; has a human captured some Small Folk, or worse, done a deal with some idiots with no sense of safety or secrecy? The player characters get the job of finding out and preventing any disasters for their race.

The investigators will have to infiltrate the studio, discover whether the gremlins are right or just misled by brilliant computer wizardry, discover how these renegade Small Folk (if any) could have got mixed up in such a crazy scheme and how many humans know the truth, then try to patch over the problem with minimal damage. (Of course, merely freeing any prisoners or kidnapping any hired traitors may not be enough; the humans involved might get angry and reveal too much to the human world if they lose their valuable stars.) If things go right, this should be a subtle matter of infiltration and persuasion — but things so often go wrong. In the extreme case, our heroes could find themselves mixed up in the filming of what (hopefully) turns out to be the last ever episode of the show — a wild and crazy chase scene around the studio.

Example Plot: Lab Rats

Small Folk living in a community beneath and adjacent to a human university are suffering a wave of headaches and mental problems. So far, the sufferers are only partially aware that they have some kind of large-scale problem, rather than minor personal troubles; apart from anything else, the stress and distraction of the effect is playing havoc with their ability to recognise its nature. It all becomes (literally) painfully obvious to anyone who visits the community (before the mental problems wear them down too), while anyone from that community who travels away from it for a while will realise that their minds are clearing as they put more distance between themselves and home. It will be up to some such travellers, or to public-spirited outsiders, to deal with the matter. Of course, once they take on this task, they will have to get into the area and fix things quickly, before the stress gets to them, too.

This might not sound like a secrecy-related issue, until the characters investigate the likely causes of the problem more closely. It seems that the epicentre of the effect is a complex of laboratories in the university's Department of Biophysics. The exotic research into "psionic powers" being conducted in this laboratory is having weird side effects that can be felt by innately psychic beings like the Small Folk. Closer investigation will suggest that the research is going all too well; if this goes on, the human scientists may soon gain some kind of insight into the paranormal powers a monopoly over which presently gives the Small Folk a crucial edge. The researchers might even gain the ability to detect psychic powers in use.

Thus, the problem grows ever more tricky and complex as the player characters learn more about it. They will probably have to undertake at least short-term sabotage strikes against the research labs, to restore the sanity of the local Small Folk; after that, they may seek to evacuate "civilians" from the area, and perhaps find some method to disrupt the research permanently. If they want to protect the Small Folk monopoly of psychic abilities, they will have to discredit the researchers and their work so totally that no other human scientists will pursue the same line of investigation for years to come. Even if this seems possible, some intellectual Small Folk may feel that this is a wasting an opportunity to learn more about their own magic.

And then, somewhere in the laboratory, there are the psionically-augmented rats....

Founding a Community

Small Folk communities come and go. While few of the Small Folk are truly nomadic, many groups have had to uproot themselves from time to time. Players who enjoy building something for the long term may appreciate a game with such a move as its key feature. While it may not seem terribly heroic at first glance, the quest for a new safe haven can have an epic quality, with many subsidiary adventures along the way.

Example Plot: Mall Addiction

A brand new shopping mall is going up on the edge of what was previously a small, sleepy town, and Small Folk from some of the more crowded local communities see no reason to miss out on the fun. The campaign can start with junior-ranking player characters being sent to examine the plans for the development somewhere and determine where a Small Folk colony could best be placed within it, then continue as they take an increasingly important part in the project, eventually becoming leader figures — or at least heroes of a sort — in the new community.

Different cliques will fight, secretly or overtly, to gain advantageous positions in the new community at every stage along the way. The player characters can choose to support their cliques' interests, possibly fighting each other in the process, or seek to compromise or to rise above these feuds. They can even attempt to give the new semi-independent community something as high-minded as a written constitution, although this will probably just earn them a lot of heckling from the metaphorical gallery. They will also have to observe the human developers, looking out for radical changes in the plans, and perhaps learn something about human culture and construction techniques. Gremlins may seek to place taps on the new buildings' communications lines, while brownies study new human jargon and pixies contemplate sabotaging the whole thing in the name of unspoiled nature.

Also, for some reason, young brownies, especially the females, will seem especially taken with the mall as it develops. They will take to hanging out there together in groups, discussing trivialities in high-pitched voices, using a form of slang that even the rest of their own clique finds incomprehensible, and beginning every sentence with "Like" or "Hello." This is eventually seen as a problem, to which somebody will have to try and find a solution.

Example Campaign Structure: College of Hard Knocks

It has been decided — somewhere, by someone — that if the Small Folk are to survive in the margins of a rapidly changing human world, they must know themselves better — their place in that world, their nature, and their magic. The necessary level and intensity of study cannot be accomplished in the traditional *ad hoc* fashion; something more formal is required. In short, the Small Folk need to build a university on the human model, to perform research and propagate what they know.

Creating such an institution is going to involve several stages, each of them a major project in its own right. Someone will have to identify and scout out suitable sites. Once a site has been selected, the new establishment will probably need some kind of construction work to provide living and teaching accommodation, plus camouflage and other defences against both human and animal incursions. The institution will need organisation — someone will have to decide what needs to be taught, who will teach it, and when. This may happen before or after suitable teachers have been located, recruited, and escorted to the site.

Then the students can be allowed in. Of course, there will doubtless be "teething problems," especially if these students come from a wide range of communities, cliques, and cultural backgrounds. If the initial decisions were right, the place needn't expect too many attacks or incursions — but one should always expect the unexpected.

As the institution develops, many of the new students will divide up into groups, mostly by clique, each with its own distinctive character and eventually its own residences and facilities. Thanks to brownie and gremlin influence, these may take to giving themselves bizarre names in ancient human languages, as well

as logos and badges. Some Small Folk will doubtless seek to prove themselves in sporting contests, either based on human organised sports or derived from Small Folk traditions, while others may engage in competitive scavenger hunting. A few may even seek to prove themselves academically superior.

Eventually, with luck and effort, both the "university" and its subdivisions will become well established, with traditions and fixed arrangements of their own. Characters who have been involved from the beginning may have found niches and risen through the ranks — and now, they may have to deal with competition, including academic rivals internally, and perhaps even other Small Folk colleges.

Magical Research

For those who want to emphasise the magical side of urban fantasy, there is the option to focus on the magical powers of the Small Folk. Learning to use these powers is nothing special — thousands of individuals have already done so — but understanding them, creating new or radically variant powers or regaining ancient lost spells, is another matter altogether, and not research that many Small Folk are currently pursuing.

Occult Skill is crucial here; it reflects what Small Folk know about the general nature and underlying principles of magic. High Levels in this Skill will often just serve to tell the character that no one knows about more different subjects. It can also be used to assess and integrate any new knowledge that is obtained — by whatever process of adventuring and research. Characters can dig through old (probably human) texts, conduct experiments (preferably a long way from anyone else), seek higher states of consciousness by some means or another, or study human-style science in pursuit of underlying principles.

Even if they master a considerable range of new and old powers, Small Folk should never become miniature superheroes; their magic always requires time, special procedures, and odd materials. Advanced Small Folk magicians should more closely resemble the wizards of folklore and some other games — obsessive scholars, often appearing downright mad to their neighbours, adepts who can move mountains or twist minds with a word and a gesture, but who still often need their backs guarded and their groceries fetched by more practical colleagues. Pointy hats should only appear as a joke, though.

Characters may pursue magic for its own sake, out of curiosity or the lust for personal power, but the study of magic can also serve practical purposes, such as helping to defend a community (or all Small Folk) from humanity or other problems. Whether this is the researchers' initial goal, or just something that comes up later, is up to the players and the GM.

Example Plot: Museum Pieces

Close reading of texts and experiments with variant rituals may determine some things about the nature of magic, but eventually, the best clues may lead somewhere else. In fact, they have just turned out to lead to a number of intricate carvings from ancient Babylon and Assyria, in a symbolic alphabet unknown to human scholars but still remembered by a few pixie witch doctors. These writings may hold the secrets of a general theory of Small Folk magic — or at least a bunch of really cool new spells.

The trouble is, these carvings — which are only identifiably related if one happens to understand that ancient alphabet — are currently divided among a number of human museums in several different cities (possibly, if this is going to be an epic game, on several different continents). None of the human records or reference books are quite detailed enough for the academic Small Folk who are pursuing this topic. The basic plot of this game is a series of exercises in very carefully planned and executed breaking and entering.

The researchers probably do not need the objects to actually be purloined — good drawings, photographs, or wax impressions should be enough. There is always the option of escorting some of the expert NPCs in to examine the things *in situ* — and the party will have the advantages of Small Folk size and magic. On the other hand, they will be up against state of the art modern human security systems.

The basic version of this plot can leave things there, but a great deal of extra complication can be added by playing up the magical aspect. The party may eventually be asked to conduct some experiments on or near some of the carvings which run the risk of activating something or the use of Small Folk magic in their immediate vicinity, or in the vicinity of other ancient artefacts in the same museums, may actually trigger some unexpected effects. Incursions by the strange and inhuman demons of ancient Mesopotamian myth would probably be too much, even if they were scaled down to Small Folk size, while simple magical firework displays (attracting the attention of nearby humans) would only represent a very minor new plot twist. The best option might be something intermediate; say, the creation of temporary portals to strange pocket dimensions (themselves holding more vital secrets of the art of magic), or the summoning of an ancient, decrepit spirit with an uncertain but basically malicious temper and just enough power to cause trouble (probably more in the form of animal summoning and bad luck curses than of lightning bolts from the blue).

Example Plot: The Summoner's Tale

Small Folk magic is a matter of physical effects produced by personal actions. It is not, unlike the magic of much human legend, a matter of summoning some dangerously powerful spirit and then having to negotiate with the damned thing for favours. This is something for which to be grateful.

But what if there are other forms of magic which do involve the invocation of extra-dimensional entities of dubious ethics? Or worse, what if human magic, currently forgotten among the larger folk but not necessarily lost forever, was and might be capable of summoning, binding, and controlling Small Folk?

This is currently a hypothetical question, but there may be some Small Folk who think that it would be best to find the answer before the question suddenly becomes urgent. This interest might be triggered by a series of ambiguous but suggestive events — individual Small Folk vanishing into thin air in bizarre circumstances, say, and perhaps turning up later with holes in their memories, or overheard conversations in strange voices from the private dwellings of solitary researchers into Small Folk magic. The latter would probably imply a fairly simple, if dangerous, spying mission, while the former could lead to complicated exercises in detective work, following up sightings of the missing or amnesiac victims, identifying any humans who might be involved, and discovering what they know.

(For that matter, a disparate player character group might first be brought together when they are all summoned and bound by some human's magic, forcing them to work together to neutralise the problem and escape, while preserving their race's secrecy as far as possible.)

Situation Comedy

Small Folk games should always have their share of comedy; for those groups who can sustain the stream of jokes, there is the option of emphasising this. Comedy roleplaying is sometimes thought to be difficult, but given the level of flippancy and humour common in most role-playing groups, this problem really does not seem too bad; the main thing is probably to relax and let the jokes emerge naturally rather than forcing them.

Given that comedy is hard to sustain in the face of extreme, continuous danger, the circumstances in which it is set should usually be something other than high-intensity adventuring. Comedy does thrive on low-level conflict — squabbles and rivalries rather than fights to the death. A comedy game is likely to need some sort of "hook" which will keep the central group together, rather than permitting those conflicts to make the group fly apart. Hence, comedy games will often be situation comedies — and the nature of the situation will be all-important.

Suitable situations can include exercises in community building, magical research, and so on, but they can also encompass less dramatic aspects of Small Folk society — daily life in stable communities. Twisted adaptations and parodies of conventional comedies and dramas are certainly a reasonable idea here.

(Despite the above comments, some very successful comedies have been set in fairly high-risk situations. These include war-based black comedies and sagas of wisecracking vampire-slayers. This sort of thing is something of a balancing act, but if a group of players is willing to try it, good luck to them. Any conventionally adventurous, danger-filled Small Folk game can have moments of comedy along with everything else.)

Example Campaign Structure: All in the Clique

Situation comedies often work best when they focus on small, dysfunctional groups within larger communities. The clique structure of Small Folk society provides options here. If there were only a half-dozen or so members of some specific clique within a certain community, for whatever reason, this small group would be forced together despite any personality clashes between its members. If this group is the player characters, then the campaign can be based on the inevitable conflicts between them and the larger community — and the equally inevitable conflicts within the small group.

The precise nature of the game would then depend on the personalities of the player characters, and also on what clique they belonged to. A group of boggarts would probably indulge in a lot of cynical, dismal commentary on the world around them, while brownies would be full of schemes and plots to get the better of everyone else, and gremlins would likely engage in a lot of technological creativity, salvaging human devices and rigging up new contraptions every session, collaboratively or competitively. The last might be relatively welcome; at least until their creations caused more trouble for the community than they saved; members of other cliques might be merely tolerated.

Other aspects of the game will be determined by the nature of the community at large. A large, dynamic Small Folk "town" will probably regard small groups of minority clique members with tolerance, at least so long as they made themselves at least marginally useful; the player characters may be able to lose themselves in the crowd. A smaller or more regimented community may be less tolerant, regarding "necessary" minority groups (such as gremlin technicians or knocker miners) as a necessary evil, and "parasites" with a degree of hostility. Of course, if they are actively persecuted, the game probably stops being much of a comedy — but a little low-key mockery and incomprehension can provide hooks for comedy, and also a reason for the player characters to hang together, despite their own differences and private arguments.

Example Campaign Structure: Along the Way

Although the Small Folk do not have highways or airports in the conventional sense, there are sometimes established routes between Small Folk communities that see regular traffic. In some cases, there may even be "way stations" established — more or less formalised hostelries where travellers can find shelter and reliable food. Small Folk communities elsewhere along the route may support these for their own purposes, or they may be run on a commercial basis, granting that their prices must be defined in terms of barter.

The staff in such a way station will thus be a small group who find themselves forced into each others' company for extended periods, while dealing with an assortment of travellers who happen to come by. This is perfect comedy material; the characters are stuck with each other, but not trapped in a claustrophobic nightmare, while the visitors provide a turnover of NPC interactions. The need to keep important and influential travellers happy, cater to a range of visitor needs, and generally keep the place working reasonably smoothly, provides a degree of tension, and there will very likely be clashes over the objectives of the whole operation.

The group responsible for running a way station could easily include members of several different cliques. For example, the "managers" could be not terribly successful brownies who either regard this place as exile or who plan to use it as a step up some kind of social ladder, and who have to keep control of an assortment of gremlin technicians and boggart or sprite temporary staff. Throw in some annoyingly obtuse and rustic local pixies who leave a trail of disasters everywhere they go, and some strangely intelligent local wild animals which show up at the most inconvenient moments, and the game should evolve into an effective blend of farce and soap opera.

Changing the World

Lastly, players who may dislike the static, defensive, slightly paranoid nature of Small Folk existence can be given the option of setting out to change it. They may even succeed.

This could mean an essentially political campaign in which the player characters promote the outrageous idea that the Small Folk should let themselves be known to at least a few, carefully selected humans, a pioneering "builders" game based around the idea of setting up self-sufficient Small Folk communities in remote areas instead of living as parasites on human society, a mystical quest for the higher secrets of Small Folk magic with a view to transforming the array of hedge-magic spells into a true science, or an attempt to resurrect one or both of the Courts (which would probably encompass elements of all the other ideas). While different versions could give the basic idea a very different flavour, all should develop a distinctly epic flavour — although, as with all epics, there would be plenty of opportunity for digressions along the way.

Example Plot: Before I Kill You...

A certain brownie leader of middling status is accumulating resources and followers, apparently with some kind of goal in mind. He is clever, ruthless, and has clearly been reading up on strategy and politics; anyone who opposes him tends to turn up dead, in ingenious ways that can never be traced back to him with any certainty. Other leading Small Folk are becoming concerned about this, and need some agents to find out what this fellow is up to and probably to make him stop. Guess who gets the job?

After a series of tricky and violent clashes with the villain's minions, our heroes trace a consignment of "borrowed" human technology back to his base — a well-hidden and previously completely secret lair full of subverted goblin guards and amoral, unspeaking gremlin technicians. It seems that the villain has acquired human technologies that most Small Folk would regard as far too dangerous to touch — weapons capable of causing massive devastation on human scales, let alone Small Folk — and he is hell-bent on using them in some insane scheme of conquest.

This plot may not actually lead to a changed world, at least if the player characters win through, but there's a very real threat involved. Bonus points are awarded if the secret base blows up at the end.

Example Campaign Structure: Once and Future Things

Humans are not the only ones with a recurrent structure to a lot of their myths. There is, among certain traditionalist Small Folk, a persistent legend that the Last Lord of the Seelie Court never died, but lies sleeping somewhere — perhaps under the traditional hill, or perhaps in the foundations of some grand, ancient, unspecified human building.

All of which may be of no real interest to the practical and pragmatic player characters — at the start of the campaign. Indeed, they may only learn of these tales after a few seemingly unrelated incidents, in which they have to deal with a number of eccentric and secretive Small Folk antagonists who are bent on recovering various old texts or maps, kidnapping some innocuous scholar of history, and sowing random chaos.

These crazies are hard to capture and they refuse to explain their actions even if they are caught; it will require some kind of infiltration, or very clever deductions, to determine that they see themselves as agents of the Unseelie Court. It appears that some kind of prophecy or portent suggests that the Last Lord may be about to reawaken, unless he can somehow be prevented. This is likely to be bad news for everyone, as sleeping heroes only tend to awaken when there is something big and nasty for them to fight; the fact that this has exposed the power and extent of the "long lost" Unseelie conspiracy just makes things more difficult for everyone. Even if they can prevent any oncoming apocalypses, the Player Characters are going to see their view of the world change radically.



APPENDICES

EQUIPMENT

This Appendix provides quick and simple rules that help players and Game Masters provide weapons, armour, and vehicles with which to outfit characters. The Game Master should nevertheless be careful before allowing full access to weapons and armour; asking "does this sort of thing fit the campaign?" Some urban fantasies do indeed have heavily-armed biker gangs, medievalists, Mafia assassins, or police SWAT teams encountering magical evils; others deal with ordinary people who will may not have had time to equip themselves with weapons or other gear before their adventure begins. The equipment lists here are intended to give the GM the option to equip characters or NPCs for chases or fights ... but only if that is appropriate to the intended tone of the campaign.

The equipment created with the following rules is intended for use with the Gadgets Attribute (page xxx). If a character requires a more powerful item, such as a magical ring, it should be created using the Item of Power Attribute (page xxx). Item of Power reflects magical or supertech items that are exceedingly difficult to create. Gadgets may be high-tech or incredibly expensive, but are within the ability of modern science. While a character's vehicle may be the best car on the road, anyone with enough funding and skill could build one. An enchanted black hearse driven by the incarnation of the Angel of Death requires far more than money and skill to create. Ensure that the desired item is, in fact, a Gadget before attempting to build it with the rules herein.

Technology and Other Worlds

In some urban fantasy stories, technological gadgets such as guns or cars will cease to function if brought into otherworlds such as the realm of faerie. In others, they may even be seen as potent magical items by the inhabitants of such worlds. The Game Master should feel free to have either effect occur, depending on the intended flavour of the campaign.

Weapons

Table A-1: Weapons lists the damage values and other characteristics of common weapons. If a weapon is not listed, the GM should assign a damage value based on one that is similar in form and function. A mix of archaic and modern weapons has been included, since urban fantasy combat can range from an elven knight with a long sword defending himself from muggers in Central Park to a heavily-armed police SWAT team responding to a call in a demon-haunted mansion.

Some weapons possess Abilities and Disabilities to reflect their unique capabilities. Full descriptions of these modifiers are on pages xxx-xxx. Note that special or magical weapons might cause additional damage or possess unique abilities beyond those listed here.

The Armour Ratings and Health Points of operation weapons, such as firearms, are indicated in the table as well (page xxx).

Customising Firearms

Sometimes, nothing gets the trick done like a reliable firearm. The following options can be added to different types of weapons to enhance performance or otherwise alter them. Each accessory or feature normally counts as a minor Gadget. Some options are considered "mundane" (their advantages and disadvantages cancel), and do not cost Points.

Options for weapons are classed as either accessories or features. A feature is a change to the basic weapon template that reflects a particular factory model, or extensive after-market customisation. This requires the Mechanics (Gunsmith) Skill to install, and may require several hours or more. An accessory is something that can be easily attached or removed from the weapon within a few seconds to several minutes. Weapon options are available for any class of weapon unless otherwise noted.

Accurised

Modification Type: Feature

The weapon has been specially modified (custom grips, improved sights, polygonal rifling, heavier barrel, etc.) to improve its accuracy. This is typical of target pistols and competition or sniper rifles. This modification grants a +1 bonus to any attack check when firing single shots, but no bonus if used with Auto-Fire. An accurised weapon must be kept in excellent condition with its sights precisely aligned — it will lose its bonus if knocked about, dropped, or otherwise mistreated.

Flashlight Attachment

Modification Type: Accessory

This attachment allows any weapon to be used with a flashlight, and permits illumination of targets at short range so that attackers can target them without any penalties for darkness. Of course, someone using a flashlight at night can also be detected at a greater distance.

Laser Sight

Modification Type: Accessory

A laser sight projects a small, bright dot of laser light exactly where the weapon is pointing, which helps the attacker determine whether or not he or she is on target. In game terms, the attacker receives a +1 bonus to their appropriate attack check in situations where they can see the laser dot on the target (usually up to Short Range unless combined with a scope). Laser sights with an infrared beam (visible only to people with night vision scopes or goggles) are also available.

Night Vision Scope

Modification Type: Accessory (counts as 2 minor Gadgets)

This scope uses thermal imaging or light intensification technology to "turn night into day." This functions exactly like a regular scope, except that it also eliminates any penalties for darkness.

Sawed-Off Barrel

Modification Type: Feature

This modification is for shotguns only. Sawing off the barrel of a shotgun means that it is easier to conceal, but is also shorter ranged. A sawed-off shotgun can be concealed under a long coat (see Concealable weapon Ability, page xxx) as if it were a submachine gun. At up to Melee Range (five metres or closer) it has a wider spread of pellets (+1 bonus on attack checks), but suffers -4 penalty to damage at ranges beyond Melee Range.

Scope

Modification Type: Accessory

A telescopic sight mounted atop the weapon gives the shooter an extra +1 bonus to his or her attack check when taking an entire turn to aim at a target (page xxx). This bonus only applies to targets further away than Melee Range (over five metres). Scopes are available for all guns.

Silencer

Modification Type: Accessory

A silencer, or more technically, a sound-suppresser, is a tube that attaches to the weapon's barrel and reduces the noise the weapon makes while firing. A silenced weapon cannot be heard at a range of greater than five metres unless a nearby character makes a successful Body Stat check. The GM should modify this distance/check for conditions such as ambient noise, range, and Heightened Senses. Auto-loading pistols, machine pistols, submachine guns, and rifles may be fitted with silencers. A silenced weapon cannot be concealed or holstered until the silencer is removed, which requires one round.

Table A-1: Weapons

Weapon	damage	Abilities	disabilities	skill
Melee Weapons				
Bladed Weapons				
Axe	10	Muscle-Powered	Inaccurate, Melee	Melee (Axe)
Broadsword	12	Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Knife or Dagger	6	Concealable, Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Knife)
Long Sword	12*	Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Short Sword	8	Concealable, Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Spear	10	Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Polearm)
Blunt Weapons				
Bo, Staff, or Pipe	6*	Knockback, Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Polearm)
Club, Baseball Bat	6	Knockback, Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Club)
Nunchuku or Chain	6	Flexible, Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Whips/Chains)
Whip, Rope, or Belt	4	Concealable, Flesible, Muscle-Powered	Low Penetration, Melee	Melee, (Whips)
Bows (2 Armour, 20 Health Points)				
Crossbow	12	None	slow, Limited Shots (1)	Archery (Crossbow)
Long Bow	10	None	Limited Shots (1)	Archery (Bow)
Guns				
Pistols (4 Armour, 30 Health Points)				
Light Pistol	8	Concealable	Low Penetration, Short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Heavy Pistol	12	Concealable	short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Machine Pistol	10	Auto-Fire, Concealable, Spreading	Inaccurate, Limited Shots (6), Short Range	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Medium Pistol	10	Concealable	short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Rifles (5 Armour, 35 Health Points)				
Assault Rifle	14	Auto-Fire, Spreading	Limited Shots (6)	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Hunting Rifle	14	None	None	Gun Combat (Rifle)
Light Rifle	8	None	None	Gun Combat (Rifle)
Sniper Rifle	20	Accurate	Limited Shots (6)	Gun Combat (Rifle)
Light Assault Weapons (5 Armour, 35 Health Points)				
Submachine Gun	10	Auto-Fire, Spreading	Limited Shots (6), Short Range	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Shotguns (5 Armour, 35 Health Points)				
Shotgun	18	spreading	Limited Shots (6), Low Penetration, Short Range	Gun Combat, (Rifle)
Heavy Weapons (4 Armour, 30 Health)				
66 mm LAW	40	Area Effect, Burning, Penetrating	Inaccurate, Limited Shots (1), Self-Destruct, Slow, Static	Heavy Weapons. (Launcher)
Thrown Weapons				
Concussion Grenade	30	Area Effect x3, Concealable	Limited Shots (1), Self-Destruct, Short Range	Thrown Weapons (Grenades)
Thrown Knife	4	Concealable	Limited Shots (1), Short Range	Thrown Weapons (Blades)
Non Lethal Ranged Weapons (3 Armour, 25 Health)				
Taser	12	stun	Low Penetration, Short Range, Slow	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Pepper Spray	12	Concealable, Irritant, Stun	Melee Range, Limited Shots (6), Toxic	None

Weapon Table Notes

"Damage" is how much punishment the weapon inflicts (the damage of the attack).

"Abilities" or "Disabilities" are any special capabilities or limitations the weapon possesses. See pages xxx-xxx. Unless noted otherwise, a weapon has Medium range.

"Skill" is the Skill and Specialisation that provides a bonus when firing the weapon.

* Requires two hands to wield properly; delivers +4 damage when wielded two-handed.

Types of Ammunition

It is assumed that characters have access to ammunition of whatever type they need for their standard weapons. Standard ammunition for auto-loading pistols, revolvers, rifles, and machine guns is a lead bullet; this type of bullet is called "ball" in military parlance. Standard ammunition for shotguns is shot. If characters have more than one type of ammunition, each extra type that is carried counts as a minor Gadget.

Armour Piercing (AP)

This is a bullet specifically designed to punch through Armour, using a steel or tungsten core rather than jacketed lead. Weapons using AP bullets are assigned the Penetrating (Armour) Ability (page xxx). AP bullets are somewhat less lethal against flesh, and thus the actual damage is always halved (round up) after the effects of Armour are considered. These bullets are available for auto-loading pistols, machine guns, shotguns, revolvers, and rifles. AP pistol or revolver ammunition ("cop killer bullets") is usually illegal.

Hollow Point (HP)

This is a bullet designed to expand after entering a target, therefore doing greater damage. HP ammo is standard issue in many police departments, since the rounds are better man-stoppers and are less likely to pierce walls and injure bystanders on the other side. Hollow Point bullets have less Armour-penetrating power: Armour protection is doubled against the bullets. These disadvantages are cumulative with any Low Penetration modifiers. If even 1 damage succeeds in penetrating Armour or if the target was unarmoured, 5 bonus damage is added to the damage that a living target suffers (the bullets "mushroom" inside living tissue), provided that the base damage before the bonus penetrates the target's Armour. No extra damage is inflicted on machines or structures by HP bullets. HP bullets are available for auto-loading pistols, machine guns, revolvers, and rifles.

Silver and Other Exotic Ammunition

Silver bullets, bullets filled with holy water, and similar exotic rounds may be constructed by a skilled gunsmith (use Mechanics: Armourer Skill) or Gadgeteer. Such rounds generally have less armour penetration (like Hollow Point ammunition, Armour is doubled against them) but will have additional effect on any creature with an appropriate Achilles Heel or Vulnerability Defect, as described for the particular Defect.

Shotgun Slugs

A shotgun can fire big bullets instead of shot. Police will often use slugs to stop cars or blow open barricades. When using slugs, a shotgun loses both the Spreading Ability (page xxx) and the Low Penetrating Disability (page xxx). Slugs are available for shotguns only.

Grenades and Explosives

The user throws these hand-held explosive weapons at a target. Their use uses the Thrown Weapons (Grenade) Skill. All of these explosives count as minor Gadgets except a satchel charge, which is treated as a major Gadget.

Concussion Grenade

This grenade is filled with high explosives. 30 damage is delivered to everyone in a six-metre radius who fails a defence check. Even if characters make the defence check, they still may suffer some blast damage (see Area Effect, page xxx) unless there is sufficient cover (GM's option).

Smoke Grenade

This grenade fills a room-sized area (three-metre radius) with non-toxic chemical smoke for 3 to 8 rounds (depending on wind). Anyone without night vision goggles or a night vision scope will suffer a -4 attack check penalty when attacking a target obscured by smoke.

Dynamite Stick

This explosive functions like a concussion grenade, except the blast covers only a three-metre radius, and it delivers 20 damage.

Satchel Charge

This is a knapsack full of plastic explosive or multiple dynamite sticks. The explosion is treated as a concussion grenade, but the blast covers an eight-metre radius and the maximum damage is 40. Unlike a grenade, a satchel charge is too heavy to throw far, so its range is limited to melee range for average humans — the attacker will be caught in the charge's blast unless it has a timer.

Timed or Remote Detonator

This device is used to explode a satchel charge (or other bomb) from a distance, either at a specific time or in response to an electrical or radio signal. Attaching the detonator to the explosive and properly setting it requires a Demolitions Skill check, with failure indicating a late or premature blast.

Vehicles

Along with their specialised weaponry, many modern era characters and organisations use vehicles to get around, sometimes specially rigged and modified for particular tasks.

This section describes the standard vehicles likely to appear in a modern-day game. Some vehicles are suitable for use as personal vehicles by characters, while a desperate individual may commandeer others (such as a city bus) when no better transportation is available. This section concentrates on general types that are in common use, rather than providing individual statistics for specific models. All costs are approximate US dollar (USD) values, which can vary greatly.

Each vehicle counts as a major Gadget, with the exception of the motor scooter and ultra-light (minor Gadget). These basic templates can be modified using the Customising Vehicles guidelines (pages xxx). Using the customisation options, the vehicle can be further modified to match the character's personal vision (adding options such as supercharged engines or armoured glass windows) with each option normally considered to be as a minor Gadget.

Speed is the top speed in kilometres per hour. Pickup trucks, sport/utility vehicles, and dirt bikes move at half speed off-road. Other non-military ground vehicles are road-bound and can move a maximum of one-quarter speed off road.

MB is the Manoeuvre Bonus. +1 means a +1 bonus to Initiative rolls (only), while a -1 or -2 means that penalty is applied to both Initiative rolls and to Driving Skill checks.

Size is a relative measure of the vehicle's mass and volume. "1" means the vehicle is about the size of a motorcycle — you could drive it through a house's door, or stow it in the back of a van (masses up to 500 kg). "2" means it is about the size of a car or pickup truck, and you can park it in a normal garage (masses 1-5 tonnes). "3" means it is the size of a large truck (uses multiple parking spaces, often masses 6-10+ tonnes when loaded). "4" means it is even larger, such as a big tractor-trailer combination that might haul 20+ tonnes. "5" is exceptionally large (50 metres plus).

People is how many people the vehicle is designed to seat, including the driver or pilot.

Cargo is how many tonnes or kilograms of cargo the vehicle can typically carry without suffering movement penalties. An ** indicates that the cargo area can be converted into passenger space at a ratio of 5 people per tonne.

Armour is the number of damage points that the Armour stops. An * indicates that the Armour only protects the vehicle, not the driver or passengers.

Health Points indicate how much damage the vehicle can sustain before it ceases to function. The vehicle is not necessarily destroyed when its Health Points are reduced to zero — it has merely sustained enough damage to shut the engine down, hinder the control systems, or in some other way prevent the vehicle from working. For rules on destroying a vehicle, see Breaking Objects, page xxx.

No range is listed, since all vehicles except the ultra-light can operate for 3-10 hours before requiring refuelling. The ultra-light's endurance is under one hour. Oversized vehicles (trucks, big rigs, busses) usually burn diesel fuel, while most other vehicles use gasoline.

Table A-2: Vehicles

Vehicle	speed	MB	size	People	Cargo	Armour	Health Points	skill
Automobiles								
Passenger Car	160	-	2	5	200 kg	5	60	Driving (Car)
Pickup Truck	160	-	2	3	1 tonne	6	70	Driving (Car)
Sports Car	200	-	2	2	200 kg	4	50	Driving (Car)
Sport/Utility	160	-	2	6	200 kg	6	70	Driving (Car)
Stretched Limousine	160	-1	2	6	500 kg	5	60	Driving (Car)
Van	150	-1	3	2	1 tonne **	7	80	Driving (Van)
Motorcycles								
Dirt Bike	140	+1	1	2	-	3*	40	Driving (Motorcycle)
Motorbike	180	+1	1	2	50 kg	3*	40	Driving (Motorcycle)
Oversized Vehicles								
Big Rig	150	-2	4	2	10 tonnes	10	110	Driving (Big Rig)
Bus	120	-2	4	30-50	1 tonne	9	100	Driving (Big Rig)
Aircraft								
Light Helicopter	200	+1	2	3	250 kg	4	50	Piloting (Helicopter)
Utility Helicopter	200	-	3	2	2 tonnes **	7	80	Piloting (Helicopter)
Light Airplane	350	+1	2	4	250 kg	4	50	Piloting (Light Airplane)
Speed Boats								
Recreational Boat	80	+1	2	3-4	100 kg	4	50	Boating (Small Boat)

Automobile

Most modern-day characters will have access to automobiles. Standard features include headlights, seat belts, air bags, and air conditioning.

Passenger Car

An ordinary compact or mid-sized automobile. Cars are available in coupe (two doors, often with a hatch back and extra cargo space), sedan (four door), or station wagon (extra room in back, but reduced rear visibility for driver) body styles. Cost: $12,000+ USD. For an expensive luxury car, add custom options such as Big Engine and Luxury Interior.

Pickup Truck or Sport/Utility Vehicle

A light truck with cab seating (2-3 people), off-road suspension, and four-wheel drive and either an open cargo bed (pickup truck) or extra passenger capacity (sport/utility vehicle). Cost: $20,000+ USD.

Sports Car

A car with good aerodynamics, a powerful engine, and superior transmission and suspension. Some sports cars carry two people, while others sacrifice already-meagre cargo space to carry an extra person or two in cramped back seats. Cost: $50,000+ USD.

Stretched Limousine

An oversized passenger car. It will usually have a number of posh features, such as a luxury interior. Cost: $50,000+ USD.

Van

A light panel truck or mini-van, with one or two big rear doors and sliding side doors. Use this template with appropriate customisation for ambulances. Cost: $15,000+ USD.

Motorcycle

A two-wheeled bike powered by a gasoline engine. Standard features include headlights and rear-view mirrors.

Motorbike

A big bike with a reasonably powerful engine. A second person can usually be carried without much difficulty. Cost: $3,000+ USD.

Scooter

A small bike with an anaemic engine. Scooters are suitable for a single rider only. A minor gadget. Cost: $2,000+ USD.

Dirt Bike

A motorbike designed for off-road operations. Dirt bikes include the Off-Road Suspension option (page xxx) at no extra cost. Cost: $4,000+ USD.

Oversized Vehicle

A big ground vehicle with six or more wheels, usually powered by a diesel engine rather than gasoline engine (diesel fuel is cheaper, and less flammable). Standard features include headlights, seat belts, airbags, and air conditioning.

Big Rig

An 18-wheel tractor-trailer combination, with a powerful tractor cab designed to tow a big trailer. With trailer, a big rig may be 20 metres long. Pick one of these options for the cargo area: flat bed (open cargo), van (enclosed cargo), refrigerated ("reefer"), tanker. If the trailer is unhooked from the "fifth wheel" (this takes at least two rounds outside the vehicle to do this), the rig's speed can increase by 10-20 kph. Cost: $60,000+ USD.

Bus

A city, school, or excursion bus. In action series, these usually make their appearance when someone hijacks or plants a bomb on them. A typical bus seats 35-45 people (with plenty of standing and cargo room) and is about 10-15 metres long. Cost: $50,000+ USD.

Helicopter

A rotary winged vehicle. Modern helicopters are usually powered by a gas turbine engine, and require a pilot's license to operate. They have a horizontal main rotor that provides lift and (by tilting the helicopter) propulsion, and a small vertical tail rotor to act as a stabiliser. A helicopter is capable of executing vertical takeoffs or landings, and hovering. Standard features include landing lights (treat as headlights), seat belts, and often air conditioning.

Light Helicopter

A small helicopter that can carry a couple of people. This is a typical news or police helicopter. Cost: $100,000+ USD.

Utility Helicopter

A larger helicopter. These choppers are designed to carry a dozen people or a decent cargo load, and are often used by the military for troop transport, gunships, or as air ambulances. Cost: $1,000,000+ USD.

Airplane

An airplane relies on wings for lift and a propeller or jet engine for propulsion. It requires a smooth, flat runway for takeoffs and landings. While airborne it must maintain a minimum speed (usually about 1/10 its maximum speed) to avoid stalling. Standard features include landing lights (treat as headlights), seatbelts, emergency parachutes, and often air conditioning.

Light Airplane

A single-engine propeller-driven passenger airplane, capable of operating out of grass strips or landing on a smooth stretch of highway if necessary. Light aircraft are a favourite of drug runners. Use Pilot (Light Plane) Skill. Cost: $100,000+ USD.

Heavy Airplane

A large plane, often with two or four engines, which is used primarily to transport large numbers of people or cargo. Heavy airplanes often require longer runways in order to take off or land. A heavy airplane counts as two major Gadgets. Cost: $10,000,000+ USD.

Ultra-Light

A small one-man powered hang-glider that is used mainly for recreation. Counts as a minor Gadget. Cost: $10,000+ USD.

Speed Boat

Boat designs come in a variety of shapes, depending on their desired function. Speed boats have sleek hull designs and powerful engines in order to travel at high speeds. Standard features include a VHF radio (treat as a CB radio), convertible tops, running lights, and lifejackets.

Recreational Speed Boat

A medium-sized powerboat, usually with an outboard engine. These boats are often used for water-skiing. Cost: $10,000+ USD.

Customising Vehicles

Options can be added to different types of vehicles to enhance performance or give them additional capabilities. Unless otherwise noted, each accessory counts as one minor Gadget and can only be taken once.

Armour

The vehicle is retro-fitted with armoured panels, Kevlar inserts, and bullet proof glass on the windows. Each time the armour is assigned, the extra weight reduces top speed by 10 kph but increases the vehicle's Armour Rating by 5. Armour is available for any vehicle except an ultra-light aircraft, and counts as two minor Gadgets.

Table A-3: Vehicle Customisations

Armour	Lights and Siren
Biohazard Unit	Luxury Interior
Burglar Alarm	Polarised Windows
Citizen's Band (CB) Radio	Police-Band Radio
Consumer Electronics	Stretchers/Medical Equipment
Door Mount	Tow Winch
Furnishings	Turbocharger
Global Positioning System (GPS)	

Biohazard Unit

A portable biohazard facility for transporting "infected or contaminated subjects" — a popular cover story for any supernatural beings captured by government or corporate agencies. The passenger compartment of the vehicle is sealed off, a filtration and overpressure system is added, and all windows/doors are replaced by a single airlock. Biohazard sensors are installed to warn of any leaks. The safety systems will only fail if the vehicle is actually reduced to 0 Health or less as a result of damage — ordinary penetrations (such as a bullet fired through the vehicle wall) are handled by the overpressure system. A Biohazard Unit reduces passenger capacity by two; it is often combined with a couple of stretcher pallets.

Burglar Alarm

If a door, trunk, or window is opened without the proper key, an alarm will sound to alert (and annoy) everyone in the vicinity. Defeating the alarm requires a Mind-Based Electronics (Security) Skill check. Marginal failure means the thief realises he or she cannot disarm it while a worse failure means will trigger the alarm.

Citizen's Band (CB) Radio

With a range of a few miles, truckers favour CBs for exchanging information on road conditions, speed traps, and general gossip. Unlike a personal cell phone, a CB broadcasts to everyone in the area — it is not useful for private communication, but is great for distress calls. A similar option can be taken for taxi dispatcher radios. A CB radio can be installed in any vehicle.

Consumer Electronics

These electronic gadgets include small TV sets, a vehicular computer, fax machines, etc. A CD or MP3 player in a car can be considered a fairly mundane item. Electronics can be added to any vehicle, provided the size seems reasonable.

Door Mount

This option is a post and bracket for mounting a light or heavy machine gun out a helicopter's or van's open side door.

Furnishings

Furnishings include a mini-bar, mini-fridge, kitchenette, chemical toilet, bunk bed, etc. For larger furnishings (kitchenette, bunks, etc.) each one added also requires replacing one or two seats, depending on the size. Furnishings can be added to any vehicle with Size 2 or more.

Global Positioning System (GPS)

This option uses satellite systems to provide precise navigational co-ordinators, which prevents the driver from becoming lost. Naturally, it is still possible to miss a turn through human error. A GPS can be added to any vehicle.

Lights and Siren

Any vehicle can be fitted with a noisy siren and flashing lights. This option can also provide a powerful spot search light.

Luxury Interior

Leather upholstery, lots of chrome, extra head room, or other items on a vehicle are a sure way to impress someone special. A plethora of luxury options are available for most vehicles.

Polarised Windows

Specially designed to keep out sunlight while allowing occupants inside to see out. Popular with vampires, trolls, and other entities that prefer the darkness, but like to travel in style.

Police-Band Radio

This radio allows the driver to listen to, and communicate on, police and emergency frequencies. If the cops find one of these in a vehicle, they may be a little suspicious. This radio is available for any vehicle.

Stretchers and Medical Equipment

This option differentiates ambulances from regular vehicles. Each stretcher replaces two seats for passenger capacity purposes. Medical equipment can be added to any van or utility helicopter.

Tow Winch

A winch allows the vehicle to tow other vehicles of equal or smaller size (similar to pulling a trailer — see Trailer below). A winch is available for any pickup truck or oversized ground vehicle.

Turbocharger

This device uses the engine's exhaust stream to drive an air compressor, which increases the engine's power output. This extra power adds 20 kph to top speed, but there is no extra initiative bonus, due to "turbo lag" — the delay it takes for the turbocharger to respond. Turbochargers are available for any vehicle except a helicopter or ultra-light.

Body Armour and Protective Devices

Most armour only covers some of the body, leaving the face and often other extremities unprotected. An attacker can aim for an unprotected spot in exchange for suffering a penalty on his or her attack check (see Called Shot to Partial Armour, page xxx). The Armour values listed in this section represent average-quality construction and materials. Shoddy workmanship, poor construction techniques, or weak materials can penalise the given Armour values by -1 to -4. Exceptional workmanship, advanced construction techniques, or resilient materials can increase the given Armour values by +1 to +4.

All but the lightest armour will impose a penalty on Body checks involving agility (including jumping, acrobatics, swimming, etc.), endurance, or running speed. This penalty is not applied to attack or defence combat checks.

Ancient Armour

Light Mail

A light shirt of fine metal links that can be hidden under a normal jacket and stops 6 damage. Due to the armour's weight, the character suffers a -2 penalty on Body-related checks involving agility, endurance, or running speed. Minor Gadget.

Table A-3: Armour and Protective Devices

Armour Type	Armour Value	Penalties
Ancient Armour		
Light Mail	6	-2 on Body-related check
Partial Metal Armour	10	-4 on Body-related checks
Full Metal Armour	12 to 16	-6 on Body-related checks
Modern Armour		
Leather Jacket	2	None
Soft Body Armour	8	-2 on Body-related checks
Tactical	16	-4 on Body-related checks
Shields		
Standard Shield	12	Requires one free hand to use -4 on Body-related checks
Tactical Shield	20	Requires one free hand to use, -2 on Body-related checks

Partial Metal Armour

A mail hauberk or cuirass, open helmet, and arm or leg protection. It stops 10 damage. Due to the armour's weight, the character suffers a -4 penalty on Body-related checks involving agility, endurance, or running speed. Minor Gadget.

Full Metal Armour

A complete head-to-foot suit of metal armour, similar to those worn by medieval knights in battle. It stops 12 to 16 damage. Due to the armour's bulk, the character makes Body-related checks involving agility, endurance, or running speed at a -6 penalty. Major Gadget.

Modern Armour

Leather Jacket or Riding Suit

This mundane item stops 2 damage from melee attacks or concussion damage.

Soft Body Armour

This armour is a light-weight ballistic-fibre (Kevlar, etc.) "flak jacket" or "bullet proof vest. A typical vest subtracts 8 from the damage inflicted on the character, and can be worn concealed under a jacket or coat. It is cumbersome and penalises the wearer with a -2 penalty on Body-related checks involving agility, endurance, or running speed. Spotting the armour requires a Mind Stat check; it will be obvious if anyone does a pat-down search. Minor Gadget.

Tactical Armour

This armour is a stronger version of soft body armour, consisting of an armoured jacket (often reinforced by ceramic plates), heavy gloves, pants, and boots, and a visored helmet. Tactical armour cannot be concealed — everyone seeing the character will know he or she is wearing body armour. Tactical armour is uncomfortable to wear all the time, and characters will not be able to rest and relax while wearing it. Someone who wears the armour for several hours on a hot day may have to make Body Stat checks to avoid passing out from heat stroke. Tactical armour subtracts 16 from the damage inflicted to the wearer. The armour requires at least three rounds to strap on or take off, and is sufficiently heavy that Body-related checks involving agility, endurance, or running speed suffer a -4 penalty. Major Gadget.

Shields

Shields stop a significant amount of damage if they are interposed between an attack and the target with a successful Block Defence (page xxx). If the damage exceeds the Armour rating, the remaining damage is delivered to the intended target. This damage can reflect several events: penetration of the weapon through the shield; damage delivered to the target's arm through a forceful impact; the shield slamming against the head or body of the target; a piece of the shield splintering away into the target; a target's physical exhaustion after successive shield impacts; etc. The reason why the target receives the excess damage is best determined by the combat situation.

Standard Shield

This shield is approximately 1 metre in diameter and provides excellent protection for the character. Due to the shield's size, the character must have one free hand with which to wield the shield. Stops 12 damage. Minor Gadget.

Tactical Shield

This modern riot shield is built from light-weight materials. Due to its advanced construction, it not only provides greater protection but also is easier to wield, imposing only a -2 penalty on Body-related checks involving agility, endurance, or running. Stops 20 damage. Major Gadget.

Breaking Objects

Battles between powerful foes often result in a great deal of collateral damage. How effective is a manhole cover as a shield? How much damage can a telephone pole deliver before it breaks?

Objects are divided into two main categories: static and operational. Static objects are those that exist without working parts, such as most melee weapons, furniture, buildings, etc. Operational objects are things that have moving parts that work together in some way to accomplish a task. Examples include firearms, vehicles, computers, and other similar objects.

Static Objects

Static objects possess an Armour Rating. This is an amount of damage that the object is capable of stopping. If the object is hit with more damage than this, it suffers damage up to its Armour Rating and any remaining damage passes through it (possibly injuring characters behind it). Though the object is damaged, it still maintains its structure but will require repairs later. If an object suffers repeated damage, roughly 5 to 10 times within a short period of time (GM discretion), it has suffered sufficient damage to break. If the object suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack, it is completely destroyed — it is beyond repair and must be completely rebuilt or replaced.

Operational Objects

Operational objects have both an Armour Rating and Health Points. If the object suffers more damage than its Armour Rating, the excess damage is deducted from its Health Points. If its Health Points are ever reduced to zero, it ceases to function in its given task; a car will no longer run, a gun will no longer fire, etc. The object is not destroyed — it is simply rendered non-functional. It can be repaired later and returned to normal. Additionally, as with Static objects, if the item suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack, regardless of how many Health Points it has remaining, it is completely destroyed — it is beyond repair and must be completely rebuilt or replaced.

Penetrating (Armour) vs. Objects

When a character uses a Special Attack with the Penetrating (Armour) Ability (page xxx), the attack is more likely to destroy an object. Each assignment of Penetrating (Armour) reduces the multiplier required to destroy an object by 1. For example, if a character attacks a steel girder, he or she must inflict over 75 damage (Armour Rating of 15 times 5) to destroy it. If the character had special claws with Penetrating (Armour) assigned three times, the character only needs to inflict over 30 damage (Armour Rating of 15 times [5 minus 3 due to three assignments of Penetrating: Armour = 2] = 30).

Armour Ratings of Objects

The Armour Rating of an object indicates how much damage the object can stop and it is dependent on the material from which the object is made, the size of the object, and how well it is constructed. A hollow, aluminium pole will be far weaker than a solid aluminium pole of the same size. Table A-5: Static Object Armour Ratings provides rough Armour Ratings for common Static objects. GMs are encouraged to use this chart as a basis when determining the Armour Rating of other objects encountered in their games, adjusting for the material from which the object is made, the thickness of the material, the quality of construction, and other similar factors. The Armour Ratings and Health Points for common operational objects are listed in Tables A-2: Weapons and A-3: Vehicle . In most cases, the Health Points of an operational object is equal to 10 plus five times the object's Armour Rating.

Table A-4: Static Object Armour Ratings

Object	Armour Rating	Object	Armour Rating
Bench/Table, Metal	8	steel Cables	8
Bench/Table, Wood	4	steel Girder	30
Cement Barrier	30	stop Sign	6
Door, Wooden	8	Telephone Pole, Metal	20
Door, Vault	50	Telephone Pole, Wood	16
Dumpster, Metal	18	Tree, Giant	40
Furniture, Wood	6	Tree, Large	30
Ladder, Metal	8	Tree, Medium	20
Manhole Cover	24	Tree, Small	10
Melee Weapons	Equal to the weapon's maximum damage, see Table A-1: Weapons		

Damage to Weapons

When a character uses a melee weapon against an armoured foe, there is a risk of the attack's force breaking the object. The damage from an attack must either be delivered to the target, or (if the target is armoured) delivered to the weapon itself. If the target's Armour prevents damage equal to five times the weapon's Armour Rating in one attack, the weapon breaks, snapping under the strain. When a character scores a critical hit (page xxx), his or her weapon will not break, regardless of any damage prevented.

Breaking Items of Power

Items of Power are treated as if they possess an additional 5 Armour per Level of the Item of Power when determining whether or not they break.

For example, a character with a long sword that is a Level 4 Item of Power attacks a dragon. The character strikes a fantastic blow, delivering 42 damage. The dragon has 45 Armour. Under normal circumstances, a typical long sword, which can inflict a maximum of 8 damage, would break if 40 damage was prevented (5 times it's Armour Rating of its maximum damage value of 8). Since the character's sword is an Item of Power, however, it will only break if 140 damage is stopped by an attack (8 Armour Rating + 5 damage per Level of Item of Power = 28; 28 x 5 = 140).

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DREAMING CITIES CHARACTER SHEET

Character Information

Player: _____ GM: _____

Character Name: _____

Affiliations: _____

Occupation: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

Description: _____

Statistical Information

Character Points: _____ Skill Points: _____

Advancement Points Earned: _____ Unused Advancement Points: _____

Body	Mind	Soul	Health Points	Shock	ACV	DCV

Damage Percentage

2d6 Dice Roll	Damage percentage
2-3	100% Maximum Damage
4-6	75% Maximum Damage
7-10	50% Maximum Damage
11-12	25% Maximum Damage

Attributes

Attribute	Type	Level	Cost/Level	PMVs	Total Cost	Notes

Skills

Skill	Level	Cost/Level	Total Cost	Skill	Level	Cost/Level	Total Cost

Defects

Defect	BP	Notes

Magic/Items of Power/Notes

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