CHARACTER BOOK

FADING SUNS

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Dedication:

To all the writers and artists who helped reveal the far-flung worlds of **Fading Suns** in all its previous editions and books. You are all saints and true servants of the Pancreator.

And to Greg Stafford (1948-2018), mythmaker. **Fading Suns** wouldn't exist without the immeasurable influence of Greg's worlds and games.

Pilgrims:

It is truly the end of history, it seems. Judgment is near. Yet, I cannot accept that we are to be rewarded for sitting still and waiting for death. If that were so, why did the Prophet say: "A sun must burn to birth light. When your passion burns, you give off light." Perhaps the suns die because we lack passion. Passion for life, for the struggle necessary to unlock the Mystery. We are bored with everything, having accomplished all. History has returned to the point at which it began.

Or perhaps the answer still waits for us. Perhaps the dying suns are our spur to greatness, a necessary quest on which we will finally understand ourselves and our place in the universe.

— Guiseppe Alustro, *My Time Among the Stars*

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Introduction

Welcome to the **Fading Suns Character Book**. It's one of three Core Books. The other two are the **Universe Book**, introducing the setting and background of **Fading Suns**, and the **Gamemaster Book**, providing the special rules for GMs, as well as a sample setting and drama.

You'll need all three books to play **Fading Suns**. This book provides the rules of play and the process of character creation, as well as details on the traits that describe characters in rules terms, the technology and equipment they can carry, and the occult powers some of them can wield.

If you haven't read the **Universe Book**, you might want to start there. This book, as well as the **Gamemaster Book**, assumes you know the setting and its people and places.

Before we get into a discussion of the rules in Chapter One, let's talk about…

Roleplaying

Kids spend hours making stuff up. Why shouldn't we keep doing that well into adulthood? Tabletop roleplaying games are group imaginative-play events. A small team of players work together to imagine together.

Fading Suns is a tabletop roleplaying game themed as a spontaneous play, written and performed by the players in concert over the course of a game session. Roleplaying is both collective storytelling *and* performance, all done on the fly. All the universe is a stage, and the player characters are its players.

Like all art forms, roleplaying games have a *form*, a structure. In the case of a story, the structure is a plot. In the case of a roleplaying game, it's a rules system that guides the many moments of improvisation. Each player's "performance," under the direction of the gamemaster (a special role one of the players takes), contributes to build a coherent story through the framework of game mechanics.

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of the **Fading Suns** rules system — the structure that helps the players to write and perform their imaginative stageplays — let's address some issues of *theme*, the unifying idea behind it all.

The Pilgrimage

Fading Suns presents a science-fiction setting that tells an age-old mythic story: the life and trials of a culture hero — or better yet, *heroes*.

This tale has evolved in modern times: the *hero* has become the *heroes*. The role of the singular individual is now taken up by an ensemble of protagonists – from Gilgamesh, Odysseus, and Beowulf to the crew of the starship exploring strange new worlds, the rebels fighting the Empire, or the fellowship of the quest.

For Known Worlders in the early 51st Century, this myth is exemplified in the story of the *passion* — the holy suffering — of the Prophet and his Disciples. Their trials, tribulations, and triumphs give meaning to the universe and raise it to a higher form.

That's pretty heady stuff for a sci-fi adventure story with blasters and spaceships. **Fading Suns** is what happens when "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff" crashes into the European Middle Ages with all its deep religiosity. While some strains of sci-fi like to portray histories where "superstitions" like religion will one day be outgrown by our super-evolved, highly rational human descendants, **Fading Suns** posits that religion will always be with us, for that is how we try to make sense of the unknown, the mysterious, and the incomprehensible: challenges that await us among the stars.

Known Worlders all know the stories of the Prophet and his Disciples, and they see their own lives in them. Each life is a metaphorical pilgrimage, even for those who never physically leave the hamlet in which they were born. Each life's trials mirror the dramatic and miraculous trials of the Prophet. This simple truth — this congruity between high and low — is a lesson taught to all Known Worlders. Even when the harsh realities of inequality and injustice pervade interstellar society, the example of the Prophet's passion holds the promise of reconciliation for all wrongs.

Simply put: **Fading Suns** player characters are pilgrims on the path to a higher destiny. They might each envision it differently — for some it's a quest for power, for others it's beauty or enlightenment or revenge — but their victories and failures mirror the lives of the Prophet and his Disciples, reliving in their own ways that passion. Known Worlders model their thorny paths through life on the experiences of these primal progenitors of 51st-century religion. They are the metaphors by which Known Worlders make meaning out of existential chaos.

The Play's the Thing

Some roleplaying games use different forms of media to model their play experiences. Their exemplars and analogues might be cinema, novels, or comic books. **Fading Suns** models itself (very loosely) on the stage play.

Like a play, **Fading Suns** sessions are built of scenes and acts that focus on drama between people, although — being science fiction — the scenery and props can also become characters in their own right.

More specifically, **Fading Suns** games are far-future forms of the medieval mystery plays (also called miracle plays) and the more ecclesiastical passion plays. The former presented Biblical stories while the latter told of the passion (suffering and triumph) of Christ, although the term has also been applied to Egyptian plays about Osiris. In **Fading Suns** terms, these are the stories of the Prophet, but they are also the stories of the player characters, who carry special destinies, suffer trials, and ultimately triumph (even in defeat, as did the Prophet).

The analogy of a roleplaying game session as a play is meant to be a helpful hook, a *thematic* frame more than a functional frame. It shouldn't be stretched too far — after all, there is no prewritten script, no passive audience, and the props and scenery can change in an instant. Any **Fading Suns** game also has cinematic elements and novelistic twists. After all, the scale is grander than any single stage set can convey. But the elements of a troupe tramping the boards under a spotlight, where their dialogues and monologues serve to edify a distant audience, ring true. Even Known Worlders sometimes stop to imagine that their lives' dramas, as internal soliloquies are delivered to an unseen audience of the Pancreator and Empyrean cohorts.

Exeunt pedantry, enter our cast....

The Troupe

The primal social groups of the early Church were miracle play troupes. They would travel from planet to planet putting on plays about the miraculous deeds of the Prophet, the Disciples, and even some of the early saints of the yet-to-be-formalized Church. Before scripture, before dogma, there were simply the stories, enacted through plays and oral recitations.

Although the miracle players are still around in the early 51st Century, they're much rarer, enduring as a historical curiosity. The leaders of the faith are now ordained priests with elaborate hierarchies and dogma. Still, there's enough life left in the old practice for it to have become a metaphor for certain tight-knit groups of pilgrims who envision themselves as players on the Pancreator's stage, their deeds providing living examples to the faithful throngs.

Accordingly, **Fading Suns** adopts the miracle-play troupe metaphor to describe player character groups. Just as *commedia dell-arte* had stock characters that symbolized social stereotypes, so do player characters: PCs have a class, faction, and calling. The somewhat tight classifications player characters use to build their characters are mirrored in the stock roles of the far-future miracle plays.

Player characters, as both a troupe and a group of pilgrims traveling together (as in *The Canterbury Tales*), will have certain advantages for acting in concert but also many temptations to scheme for personal advantage, even at the expense of their traveling companions. In the end, despite internal frictions, their bond as a troupe should unite them against adversity, just as the Disciples put aside their personal differences and prejudices to rally around the Prophet.

In our troupe metaphor, the Prophet isn't one of the players. He's the ideal the players follow. Just as Zebulon the Prophet did not travel alone, pilgrims should band together to reach their holy destination. When divisions threaten to break up the troupe, the prophetic ideal can restore their aim and provide a vision for how each member fits into the larger whole. The Pancreator has brought them together for a reason.

To bring these metaphors down to actual gameplay, the players have come together to have fun and maybe even create a work of art, as fleeting as it might be. While everyone has their favored play style — thespian, power gamer, tactical ops — you're all building something *together*. Where can one style complement another? When is it someone's else's turn to shine?

Keep in the mind that the rules are there to serve the play experience for everyone, including the gamemaster. Sometimes they might need to be put aside to serve a higher purpose.

Transcending the Rules

The rules are a framework, but just as the Prophet transcended the boundaries of time, the players can transcend the boundaries of game mechanics when their story calls for it.

This means that the gamemaster should feel free to suspend certain rules at times and alter others in the service of the story, of the drama, of the imagination at play.

Story before rules.

Rules ground the story and can even provide the friction that ignites the drama. If they become chains that makes the game just no fun, break them — just as St. Maya did with her bonds. (Now you know why she's the patron saint of the following rules chapter.)

With that caveat in mind, let's get into the rules of the game….

INTRODUCTION
RULES
CHARACTERS
TRAITS
TECHNOLOGY
OCCULT

Chapter 1: Rules

SAINT MAYA THE SCORNED WOMAN

Hail Maya, most just of us all. Pilgrim, it is to Maya that we pray when we seek justice and deliverance from tyranny. No lord — no emperor even — can deliver unjust commands in her presence without trembling.

Maya is the epitome of determination and unyielding purpose. Just as she broke her chains, so do those who petition her learn to plow through all opposition. She strode across the stars to confront the misuse of power and the traps set by the Dark. No weapon or instrument could harm her, for they broke and failed when brought to bear against her. She accepted her martyrdom on the torturer's rack only so that she could rejoin the Prophet in the Empyrean, but she left behind a curse that to this day wracks Malignatius with sectarian conflicts.

The bonds that she threw off in the end — the Chains of Wrath — reveal to those who hold them their deepest sins… but also the means by which they might make their wrongs right.

Following her martyrdom, she is said to have harrowed the icy depth of Gehenne, freeing the souls of the innocent. It is also said that in that netherworld, she installed the souls of all who had wronged her.

She is beloved of the shantor and is said to have whispered to them the preparations they must make for the eventual day of their deliverance. Woe to any who harm them, for like Baron Ferros Decados, her executioner, they will freeze for all eternity in the deep-space hell of Gehenne, beyond the farthest jumpgate.

— Charioteer Captain Zelina Hamid-Sandor, The Pilgrim's Path: H0w to Read the Omega Gospels

Gameplay

Syleen couldn't believe her luck. Her lousy *luck. This sort of thing didn't happen to her colleagues. Not Gregor or Mina; only her: the unluckiest Scraver of them all.*

She stood completely still behind the thick curtains that draped the walls of Genin Hamuchi's office. He hadn't noticed her — yet. If she'd made a sound or twitched, he'd certainly know it.

Damn it. *Genin was supposed to be at dinner, being entertained by Jenna. But here he was, sauntering back into his office after midnight, almost catching Syleen in the act of jimmying open the hidden drawer where he kept his ring of jumpkeys. Three of the four keys were common; Syleen already had those routes: Criticorum, Rampart, and Byz II. But the fourth — the rumored "night road" to Rinpoche — that was invaluable.* If *it existed. And* if *it was in that drawer.*

She heard a low groan, followed by a thudding sound. A body hitting the floor. Unmistakable, that. She'd heard it many times before. She risked a quick rustle of the curtain, enough to get a glance out at the room. Yep. There he was, sprawled on the floor in a spreading pool of his own blood. Rest in peace, Genin Alberto Hamuchi.

Footsteps entered the room. She recognized the rhythm, the distinctive shuffle of Boss Urbo's limp. Of course; he had that needler he was always bragging about. Silent shots.

So, she wasn't the only one who wanted that key. She slid her hand down her thigh and unlatched the holster of her laser pistol. She'd only get one shot at this….

Fading Suns, like all tabletop roleplaying games, uses a set of rules to determine the outcome of dramatic situations. Also known as "game mechanics," RPG rules provide a level playing field for everyone involved in the game. They're a method for resolving differences of opinion that arise during play, when one player tries to do one thing but another player challenges or disputes it. Instead of letting the players resort to schoolyard bouts and petty arguments ("Bang — you're dead!" "No I'm not!" "Are too!"), the rules present a means for resolving uncertain actions through that most archetypal arbiter of fate: the roll of the dice.

Backing up that roll are various systems with special terms, numbers, and guidelines that provide a common standard through which everyone can agree on what happens in the game. This chapter presents those rules. We call this unified collection of rules the Victory Point System or VPS.

The rules aren't laws — breaking them brings no criminal penalties or divine punishment. They are guidelines. The nigh infinite variations that arise in a roleplaying game session — in any act of the imagination, really — must by necessity render any RPG rules set incomplete.

We've done our best to build a structure that can hold any situation that arises in the game, but inevitably, some things will slip through the cracks and require the gamemaster and/or players to make up a rule on the spot. Thankfully, that shouldn't prove difficult, given the core simplicity of the **Fading Suns** system.

PLAYER AND CHARACTER

Just a quick note about how we address the difference between *player* and *character* in the rules text: When we say that "you" do something within the game and then refer to things such as "you" rolling the dice or taking damage, we don't go out of our way to distinguish between you as the *player* (the one who actually rolls the dice and keeps tallies on the character sheet) and you as the *character* (the fictional construct who acts within the imaginative game world according to your directions). We assume you'll be able tell the difference from the context. We feel that writing in the second person ("you") makes for punchier writing than third-person descriptions (he, she, they).

Here are some abbreviations to note that we adopt for common terms:

PC = player character
GM = gamemaster
VP = victory point(s)
WP = wyrd points(s)

The Basics

The absolute rock-bottom basics of the **Fading Suns** system can be described as a simple process or sequence of play:

1. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? *ACTION*

Anything a character does is considered to be an *action*. If it's an action directed against another character (PC or NPC), that person is the action's *target*.

Example: *Jasmina fires a laser pistol at Baron Morgenstern.*

2. HOW DOES THAT WORK IN THE RULES? *TRAITS*

Any given action can be described using a combination of two traits: a skill (a trained ability) and a characteristic (one of nine innate abilities). These are listed on the character sheet.

Example: *Firing a laser pistol at short range involves the Shoot skill and the Dexterity characteristic.*

3. DID YOU ACTUALLY DO IT? GOAL ROLL

The action's skill and characteristic ratings are added together to provide a *goal number*. You roll a single 20-sided die and hope to roll that number or less. You want the result to be as high as possible but not higher than your goal number.

If the die-roll result is equal to or less than the goal number, the roll is a success. If the result is higher, the roll is a miss.

Example: *Jasmina has a Shoot of 5 and a Dexterity of 7, giving her a goal number of 12. Jasmina's player rolls the die and gets a 7 – a success.*

If it's a success, proceed to Step 4. If it's a miss, you've failed the action, and you can't complete the sequence.

4. HOW WELL DID YOU DO IT? *VICTORY POINTS*

If the roll is successful, you gain a number of victory points (VP) equal to the roll result.

Example: *Jasmina succeeded with a 7, so she gains 7 victory points (VP).*

5. WHAT OPPOSES YOU? *RESISTANCE*

Targets have innate and trained abilities to avoid actions made against them; situations without PC or NPC targets might still pose a certain difficulty that could foil some actions, even when the goal roll is successful. This is represented by *Resistance*, described by a number. The expenditure of victory points (VP) must match that number before any impact can take effect.

The factors that determine the Resistance number vary and are described in detail later in this chapter.

Example: *Baron Morgenstern is wearing stiffsynth armor, which provides 4 Resistance against physical attacks. Jasmina must spend 4 VP to overcome this Resistance before her laser pistol's 5 damage can penetrate the armor.*

6. WHAT'S THE END RESULT? *IMPACT*

If you overcome the Resistance rating that opposes your action, you are victorious. Your action delivers its impact. If you do not overcome the Resistance, you've failed the action; you do not deliver any impact.

Most actions have a basic effect that takes place when they are victorious. If the action is a physical attack, the impact takes the form of damage points. If the action involved influence — mental and social manipulation — the impact takes the form of a psychological state imposed on the action's target. Victory points can be spent to increase impact.

> ***Example:*** *Jasmina's laser pistol does 5 damage. She can spend VP to increase this.*

Interpreting the Rules

Since these rules are meant to be broad and applicable to nearly any situation imaginable, sometimes the gamemaster and players will have to adjust them for use in specific instances. They'll need to interpret them in light of a particular context.

The trick here is not to get too hung up on the details or some vision of the proper way things should be done. The important thing is to keep the game going and the action moving. If you stop too long to argue over rules, you risk losing the narrative thread and draining emotional energy from the scene you're playing.

The default is to let the gamemaster make a ruling and then go with it. Of course, the players can dispute the ruling and make suggestions of their own, and the gamemaster can choose to change their ruling as a result. But to promote the course of play, we advise not spending too long in this pursuit. Once the dramatic conflict has been played out and everybody takes a breather, that's the time to review the rules decisions and decide if a better method can be used in the future, in case a similar situation arises.

There's a term that gamers have developed for the type of player who likes to quote the rules, gospel and verse: "rules lawyer." There's nothing wrong with being a rules lawyer! Different players have different preferred play styles. We do encourage, however, every player to be respectful of the other players' preferred styles, and if a too-strict adherence to the rules rains on everybody's parade, perhaps it's time for the rules lawyer to back off and recess the court for a while.

Ultimately, the only lawyer that matters is the gamemaster. Their ruling is final, even when it seems unfair.

Time

VPS measures time in seven abstract units.

TURN
This term is nearly universal in RPGs; it's used to measure each incremental burst of action that a character performs. In this game, it lasts from 1-3 seconds.

ROUND
Everyone (PCs and NPCs alike) involved in a turn-by-turn scene (see below) may act; each player gets a single turn. Once each person's turn has been resolved, the round ends and a new round begins, wherein each person gets another turn, and so on.

MOMENT
This short period of time is used to present a variably timed action, such as a character trying to influence an NPC (*entreat*, *deceive*, *command*, etc.) or the time it takes to sneak across a room. Like a turn-based combat, one roll can be made per moment, but the time it takes to build up to and then complete the action that the roll presents can vary; it's negotiated between the player and gamemaster.

SCENE
A scene is known in some other games as an encounter or battle. It's like a scene in a play, defined by activity in a specific place at a certain time. When the action shifts discontinuously to another place (from the palace to the bar across town) and/or time skips ahead (from morning to that evening), the scene ends and another begins.

ACT
Made up of a series of scenes, an act provides a dramatic rhythm to the game's story. An act might encompass every scene that takes place in a single game session, or it might be a way to bring down the curtain on one part of the story before raising it for the next.

DRAMA
Also known in other games as a story, adventure, scenario, or module, a drama is made up of multiple acts.

EPIC
Also known in other games as a campaign or chronicle, an epic is a series of dramas.

METRIC MEASUREMENTS

VPS uses the metric system to denote measurements of distance, length, volume, and mass.

Distances for combat are measured in meters (roughly 3 feet each). Stellar distances are measured in AU. (One astronomical unit = 149.6 million kilometers, the distance from the Earth to the sun.)

Play Scales

There are different time scales to consider in game terms when handling the sorts of things that characters do.

PRESENT TENSE

Events play out in "real time" or in a slightly abbreviated form. This is the default mode of play, where players state what their characters are doing and how they're doing it, often using actual character dialogue.

Most commonly, Present Tense time is measured in *moments*. The gamemaster determines just how long any given moment is in negotiation with the players as they describe their characters' actions. This is mostly informal; in most cases, there's no need to mention how long any given action takes.

Sometimes, however, time needs to get more specific, such as when a player is trying to haggle with a merchant over the cost of a slug gun while his adversaries close in on him through the market crowd. He might have only two minutes to talk down the price of the gun to something he can afford before his enemies find him.

INSTANTANEOUS

When things get *really* tense — when every twitch or word can alter the course of events — then the game enters turn-based time. Each instant is tracked turn-by-turn and every move made affects what comes next. Physical combat — the most typical instantaneous event — often feels like a slow-motion action sequence in a movie, where each movement is witnessed in excruciating detail as time slows down.

In instantaneous time, it's important to know who acts when. Each character has a turn in the initiative order, but the sequence can change from turn to turn. (See *Initiative* below.)

NARRATED

Events take place over a scene or more, but they're resolved in a condensed manner in a brief period of gameplay. This time scale is often referred to in other RPGs as "downtime," the time between adventures. Narrated time usually involves the players and gamemaster recounting what happens, rather than role-playing out the event in detail with dialogue. This could represent a two-hour concert recital, perhaps with a single die roll to determine how well a character's playing moved the audience, or it could track a daylong attempt to repair a broken starship drive.

Unlike a turn-by-turn combat, a Narrated endeavor doesn't necessarily involve multiple dice rolls. Often, one roll is made to determine the outcome. However, some situations require *sustained actions*, which involve completing more than one stage and a dice roll for each stage. (See *Long-term Tasks* below.)

Initiative

When gameplay becomes simultaneous (see above), it's time to determine just when each character can act in relation to the other characters (including NPCs).

The general rule is: *the character with any type of initiative edge goes first*.

This might be because of a particular maneuver they're performing, a perk, a successful observation roll, an advantageous position on the battlefield, a device that pumps adrenaline into the character's bloodstream — whatever effect quickens a character's reflexes. The GM can award a character an initiative edge based on circumstances.

If more than one character has an edge, then each player rolls a d20. If you're the player with the highest result, you get to choose who goes first: yourself, another player, or an NPC.

If nobody has such an edge, then the player whose character is the troupe's leader chooses who goes first. If that player (or the character) isn't present, then each player rolls a d20 and the player with the highest result makes the choice.

The character chosen to act next takes their turn, and then their player chooses which of the other characters gets to go next. That character takes their turn, and then their player chooses which character goes next, and so on, until everyone (including all the NPCs) has acted.

When the next round begins, the process is repeated: the character who has the initiative edge goes first, and so on.

Exception: Various actions or situations can place a character *hindmost* in the initiative queue. That character acts last, even if another player or the GM chooses them to act earlier. If more than one character is placed hindmost, resolve ties as above.

If a character with hindmost initiative gains an edge, the two statuses cancel each other out; the character now fits into the regular queue. The reverse is also true: hindmost cancels an edge.

GAMEMASTER INTERRUPT

Now, the gamemaster's NPCs also need a place in the initiative order. Some NPCs act in a single group for initiative purposes, while others act on their own. The players need to include these NPCs in their choices. If they don't, there is a possible cost.

The gamemaster can interrupt once per round and choose who takes an action (either a player or one of their own NPCs, so long as neither has yet acted) by taking 1 VP from the well and giving it to the character whose turn was interrupted — unless one of the GM's NPCs acted last in the previous turn, in which case the gamemaster can interrupt for no cost this round.

OPTIONAL RULE: INITIATIVE INTERFERENCE

There are, of course, exceptions to the general rule that the GM can choose to adopt.

- **Brother Battle advance:** Once per round, so long as they haven't acted yet, anyone playing a Brother Battle character can *advance* into the fray to take their turn to perform a combat action. They cannot interrupt the current turn, but they can declare that they're acting next. If more than one Brother Battle advances, the one with the highest level takes precedence. In the case of ties, each rolls a d20: highest result wins. They can only advance to engage in combat; they can't advance to attempt influence or perceptions actions or anything else, really.

  A Brother Battle advance takes precedence over GM interrupts and noble overrules.
- **Noble Overrule:** The player of a noble character can *overrule* another player's choice and choose themself (so long as they haven't acted yet that turn) or a different player or NPC who hasn't acted yet. There is no VP cost, but nobles can overrule only once per scene.

  If the player who is overruled is also playing a noble, the highest-level noble wins. If the levels are equal, then the highest rank wins. If ranks are equal, the original player's choice takes precedence.

  Nobles cannot overrule Brother Battle advances or GM interrupts.

ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVE METHODS

The VPS initiative system creates a chaotic, ever-changing rhythm where the exact order in which characters act cannot be predicted ahead of time. Some gamers describe this style of play as "popcorn initiative." It could just as easily be called "teamwork" or "interactive" initiative. Hopefully, it encourages players to work together to chase the ever-shifting ideal sequence for their characters' actions. It is intentionally vulnerable, however, to scheming nobles and unanticipated NPC actions. That's the spice of life.

If you feel this method is too unpredictable and just no fun for your particular troupe, feel free to try out alternative methods. We chose the "teamwork" method partly because we didn't want to resort to dice rolls; we'd prefer to reserve rolls for actions that really matter — rolls that produce victory points. Still, it's no sin to resort to other means.

Other possible methods include:

D20 Roll: At the beginning of each new round, each player rolls a 20-sided die. The one with highest result acts first, followed by the one with the next highest result, and so on. The gamemaster rolls for their NPCs.

If any character has an edge on initiative, their roll is favorable (see below). If two or more characters are tied, the one with the highest Dexterity wins. If there's another tie, the one with the highest Intuition wins. If there is still a tie, tied players should roll again.

Table Order: Characters act based on where their players are sitting around the table, beginning from the GM's left (or right, whichever) and working one-by-one around the table. This way, the initiative order is stable and predictable — unless players swap places. The GM should feel free to ignore games of musical chairs and stick to the original order. In this system, the GM acts last (but can still interrupt if they pay the VP cost).

Dice

The Victory Point System uses a single 20-sided die — a "d20" — to resolve situations with uncertain outcomes. The random roll of the die is the universal arbiter. It takes no sides and hears no appeals. Its result is the raw fact of the matter.

Tabletop roleplaying games have long used an array of strangely shaped dice called polyhedral ("many sided") dice. The most commonly used dice are the 20-sider and 6-sider.

Unlike many other RPGs, **Fading Suns** only uses the d20. Previous editions of the rules used handfuls of 6-sided dice, but this current edition has eliminated them in favor of the single, elegant d20 and the host of victory points it awards, which come in the form of tokens (see *Victory Points* below).

Actions

Characters can do lots of different things – like punching a fascist or sweet-talking the town guardsman – but they can't do all of them at once.

In a single turn, a character can take each of the following actions:

- one primary action (such as an attack, a dodge, or an attempt to intimidate someone),
- one movement action,
- and any number of secondary actions (singing while fencing, winking at an ally), so long as the gamemaster allows them.

Only primary actions are rolled (and can yield victory points); secondary actions rarely use rolls.

Primary Action

A primary action is the main action you perform in your turn. It often requires a goal roll, from which you can gain VP.

You can instead choose to use your primary action as an additional movement action, effectively doubling your movement rate for that turn.

Certain special maneuvers and powers might allow you to perform an additional primary action in the same turn, usually triggered by a victory on your initial primary action. This additional action takes place immediately after the first primary action (unless stated otherwise in the description).

Movement Action

You can move up to your full movement rate, which for human-sized species is 10 meters per turn. (See *Size* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for the movement rates of larger and smaller beings, such as certain alien species.)

Secondary Action

These don't require rolls and don't usually award victory points.

Reflexive Action

A reflexive action is an action you can perform *before* your proper turn in the initiative order. You do it in reaction to someone else's action, such as when someone attacks you and you reflexively dodge. You essentially take your action then and there, instead of waiting for your turn to come around.

Certain maneuvers described in this book are listed as reflexive actions. The gamemaster can decide whether to allow a character to perform a reflexive action that isn't listed as part of a maneuver. Reflexive actions are most often primary actions, but certain types of secondary action can be reflexive, such as when the GM asks you to make a roll to notice something hidden.

You can use your movement action in accord with a primary reflexive action, such as when you reflexively evade an attack. If you don't use it then, though, you can't take it later that round.

You can opt to delay your primary action, turning it into a reflexive action that is triggered by a particular condition or occurrence. You can declare this delay only on your proper turn in the initiative order, but the action can take place later in the round, whenever its condition is met. Your condition/occurrence might

be something like "I aim at the door and fire at anybody who comes through it" or "I offer my hand in truce but pull it back just as the ambassador is about to shake it — psych!" If the cited condition does not come to pass, your reflexive action is never triggered, and you lose your action for that turn.

Maneuvers

A "maneuver" is simply an action for which we provide detailed rules descriptions. Each maneuver lists the traits (skill + characteristic) the action uses, the action's impact, and any special effects it might have.

Really, any action can be considered a maneuver, but we don't try to describe them all. We provide some specific examples throughout this book and the rules for using them, but GMs and players should feel free to make up their own.

A sampling of maneuvers includes:

Befriend — a Charm-skill influence action where you try to change a target's attitude towards the better.

Deceive — a Knavery-skill influence action where you try to make a target believe outright lies.

Evade — a Vigor-skill physical combat action where you move around to make yourself a harder target.

Strike — a Fight-skill physical combat action where you punch or kick someone.

Since maneuvers are skill-driven, you can find the rules for them under the descriptions of their skills in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

Long-Term Tasks

Sometimes you need to do something that simply can't be achieved with a single roll. You might need to repair damage from multiple blaster shots to a starship's engines, recite the excruciatingly long Etyri national epic in its Urthish translation, write an exegesis about the Disciple Ven Lohji's esoteric yogas, or just cook a three-course meal to impress the Duchess.

Such large tasks are typically handled in Narrated time (see *Time* above). A task could be abstracted into a single die-roll action, once the character has spent sufficient time doing it (three hours disassembling the engine block, five hours in the kitchen, etc.). Or it could be broken down into a series of stages, each of which requires a roll. If any stage fails, the whole task is at risk. A second failure could end it prematurely. (The appetizers turned out to be divine, but the soufflé collapsed. What to do?)

In each case, the GM assigns a Resistance to either the task as a whole or each stage of the task based on its difficulty. (See *Resistance* later in this chapter.)

While the first method — a single roll — is expedient, the second — multiple stages — might be more fun, since the tension could build as each die roll puts the outcome of the entire endeavor on the line.

Trait Ratings

Characters are described not simply by words but also with traits and their number ratings. "Traits" is the term we use for specific character abilities that have particular gameplay rules associated with them. A character's traits are listed on the character sheet.

These traits are described in detail in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

For our purposes here, as we set forth the basic workings of the rules system, we're chiefly concerned with two traits in particular: skills and characteristics.

Skills

Each action a character performs that requires a die roll can be described by a particular skill. It might be the Fight skill, if the action is a punch or kick, or the Charm skill, if the action is an attempt to befriend someone. The skills list is given in full in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

Many skills come naturally and are relatively easy to perform, in that everybody has some degree of aptitude with them simply by virtue of growing into adulthood. Others require training and/or studying, usually under the guidance of someone who has already mastered the skill. While most skills can still be performed by those who lack training (anyone can try to lie to someone, even if they haven't studied the arts of Knavery), most people just aren't very good at them until they get some training under their belt. A few skills, such as Pilot, cannot be used at all without some degree of training.

All skills are ranked by *skill ratings*. Each has a number from 0 to 10 that describes how good a character is with that skill. Someone trained in woodcraft might have a Survival rating 7 or 8 or more, while someone who has rarely been out of the city might have only a 3 rating. They can still find their way around roughly, but if conditions worsen, they're going to regret not training that skill.

Characteristics

Everyone has certain innate abilities simply by dint of being sentient creatures with bodies and nervous systems. We call these *characteristics*, and there are nine of them. The details can wait until later (when you read **Chapter 3: Traits**), but for now, remember that each action involves a particular characteristic.

An action first requires a rating in its skill to be able to perform it at all, but this skill is *bolstered* by a characteristic and its rating.

Characteristics are ranked with ratings from 3 to 10. Different characters are better or worse with different characteristics — some people are strong, others weak; some are smart, others stupid; some are charismatic, others are wallflowers, and so on.

Trait Pairs

Each action is described by a skill used to perform it and a characteristic that bolsters its performance. This is the action's *trait pair*.

This rulebook provides many examples of actions and the traits they use. Some are obvious (throwing a punch uses Fight + Strength) while others might be more open to interpretation (such as whether a firing a gun uses Dexterity or Perception).

The trait pair for any given action is used to figure out whether the player succeeds or fails with the roll of a die; that roll is called the *goal roll*.

RULES HOMILY: THE FLIGHT OF ICARUS

The core die-rolling mechanic mirrors one of the Church's themes about the hubris of sentient creatures, illustrated in the ancient myth of Icarus. Daedelus, Icarus' father, made his son a pair of wax wings so that he could fly, but cautioned him not to fly too high, lest the wings get too close to the sun and melt. Of course, Icarus flew too high, his wings melted, and down he went.

With the goal roll, you want to roll high — shooting for the sun — but don't roll *too* high, lest you miss the mark.

The roll result depends entirely on fate, luck, providence — what your character might call the will of the Pancreator. The odds of rolling any particular result are the same for all numbers in the 1-20 range. If you were adding the results from multiple dice, the average roll would produce a result in the middle of that range, but a goal roll doesn't typically allow you tweak the odds from a single die. (There is one exception, however: see the sidebar below about *Favorable and Unfavorable Rolls*.)

The lesson, according to the Church's creed, is this: Strive for excellence, but be wary of hubris, and know that your success or defeat is entirely in the hands of the Pancreator. Your good works (or more precisely, your skills) can better ensure His favor, but it is His choice whether to bestow it.

Goal Roll

When a character performs an action, the player attempts a *goal roll* to determine if it is a success or a miss.

This roll is made with a 20-sided die. You'll need a *goal number* for the roll; you figure it by adding the action's skill and characteristic pair together. Since skills are rated from 0 to 10 and characteristics are rated from 3 to 10, this gives us a goal number somewhere between 3 and 20.

The base goal number is equal to the action's trait pair, but this may be modified by situational factors. Some modifiers make the roll more likely (as bonuses to the goal number); others make it more unlikely (as penalties to the goal number).

The die-roll result must be equal to or less than the goal number for the action to be successful. If the result is higher, the roll is a miss and you've failed the action. If the roll is a success, the die result tells you directly how many victory points you gain. That is, *the number rolled on the die is the number of victory points generated by a successful roll*.

Missed rolls don't generate VP and cannot deliver any impact.

Note that goal rolls should only be called for in meaningful circumstances, where the outcome is uncertain and talent and skill make a difference. The vast majority of activities — walking, eating, talking — don't require rolls. Repetitive and routine tasks — sweeping floors, reading sermons, hunting hull rats on starships — should not require rolls.

Modifiers

Occasionally, a goal roll is modified by a bonus (making it more likely to succeed by adding to the goal number) or a penalty (making it harder to succeed by subtracting from the goal number).

As a general rule, gamemasters should avoid modifying goal rolls. If an action is easy to achieve, that might be because there's little to no Resistance. If it's hard to achieve, consider raising its Resistance instead of penalizing the goal number. (See *Resistance* below.)

Think of it this way: A goal roll represents your ability to do something regardless of the external conditions in which you find yourself, while Resistance represents those external conditions, ranging from auspicious (little to no Resistance) to adverse (high Resistance).

One exception to this general guideline is perception, which sits in that zone between you and your environment, where your sensorium meets the outer world. External conditions can affect your senses, which can degrade your ability to effectively act (modifying your goal numbers), independent of your target's Resistance.

Factors that might modify a goal roll include: perception conditions (darkness, fog), physical or social states (from a concussion to a deathly fear of your opponent), the effects of a drug or poison, a maneuver (by throwing all your might into a punch, you might suffer a slight penalty to your accuracy), or other complications that pertain more to you than your opponent.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Environmental conditions might modify your rolls: A smoke-filled room is harder to survey for enemies than a brightly lit one; it isn't easy to shoot someone in complete darkness; gale-force winds can make climbing a real challenge; chasing someone down on a low-g moon is, well, different than on most planets.

Rather than list every possible condition and modifier, VPS represents these environments through *states*. Anyone in the environment is affected by its associated state. See the states' descriptions in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

GOAL ROLL 0

If penalties reduce your goal number to zero, a die-roll result of 1 still succeeds. The Pancreator looks out for the most deprived.

Such a desperate roll, however, cannot score a critical hit. It does yield 1 VP, though, if it's successful (i.e., the result is a 1).

Environment	State
Partial darkness, driving rain, fog, smoke	Seeing Impaired
Gale-force winds, loud concert, or magic lantern show	Hearing Impaired
Complete darkness	Blinded
Complete silence (such as in a vacuum)	Deafened
Underwater	See *Movement* in **Chapter 3: Traits**.
High-gravity environment	Hindered (immobilized in crushing gravity)
Low-gravity environment	See *Movement* in **Chapter 3: Traits**.
Zero-gravity environment	Suspended
Adverse atmosphere (methane, etc.)	Dying

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE ROLLS

Sometimes conditions are stacked so greatly in your favor that you just can't miss — or they're so set against you that failure is almost assured. Such conditions alter the odds in a way that simple goal roll bonuses and penalties just don't capture, so we offer an additional method: "roll twice, then pick the best (or worst) result."

Many d20-based RPG systems use a similar mechanic under different names. We call these conditions either *favorable* or *unfavorable*.

FAVORABLE ROLL

Attempt the goal roll twice and take the *best* result. If both dice produce victories, the best result is the one that awards the most VP.

> ***Example:*** *Jasmina's goal to intimidate a guard is 12. She is, however, wearing a strange alien artifact that gives her voice an uncanny allure. Its game effect is to make her influence rolls favorable, so long as they involve her speaking. Her player rolls two d20s and gets results of 18 and 9. The first result is a miss but the second is a success, and since she can take the best result, she is successful.*

UNFAVORABLE ROLL

Attempt the goal roll twice and take the *worst* result. A missed roll is the worst result, but if both dice produce victories, the worst result is the one that awards the least VP.

> ***Example:*** *Just as Canon Barlow begins his sermon and his influence attempt to rouse the crowd gathered in the field before him, a bird poops on his head. Unbeknownst to Barlow, his Scraver enemy hiding in the nearby trees directed his trained crow to do the despicable act. The GM rules that Barlow's influence roll is now unfavorable, due to the indignity suffered. Barlow's goal number is 14. His player rolls two d20s and gets results of 3 and 17. The first result is a success but the second is a miss, and since he must take the worst result, Barlow fails.*

EXAMPLE: CAPABILITIES

Characters have various *capabilities*, which are traits that designate what areas of knowledge and training they're familiar with. (See **Chapter 3: Traits**.) These include, among other things: weapons, equipment, languages, and topics of knowledge.

When a character tries to interact with a person, thing, or topic of thought (i.e. trying to remember a fact about the planet Malignatius), they'll hopefully have a capability with it; if not, their roll is unfavorable.

> ***Example:*** *Canon Barlow is confronted in the mansion library by the murderer he and his investigators have been seeking. The masked fiend lunges! Canon Barlow is holding a piece of evidence from the crime scene – a medium slug gun. He raises it and fires. Unfortunately, our peaceful canon has no capability with slug guns. His roll is unfavorable: He rolls twice and takes the worst result. His goal is 8, and he rolls 15 and 3. He must accept the 15, which is the worst result for him. His shot misses the assailant. Let's hope his cries (and his gunshot) summon aid before the murderer can add another body to his list.*

EXCEPTION: CONTESTING CONDITIONS

If you have a condition that provides favorability (a wyrd point, a perk), you can use it to counter an unfavorable roll, making it a regular roll. For instance, if you lack a needed capability, you can spend 1 WP to counter it and make it a regular roll.

Favorability cancels unfavorability — and vice versa. An unfavorable condition counters a favorable one, making for a regular roll.

Critical Hit

When you roll your goal number exactly, your action becomes the very epitome of success in that particular instant and context. The Pancreator has bestowed His blessing.

In game terms, the following two things happen:

- Your action ignores all Resistance. You don't need to spend VP to overcome Resistance, because your critical hit has pierced all defenses. (This means a defender cannot boost their Resistance against a critical hit.)
- You gain 1 wyrd point. See *Wyrd Points*, below, for an explanation of these potent points.

Critical Miss

The Pancreator giveth, and the Pancreator taketh away. Just as you can roll a critical hit, you can also roll a critical miss.

Also known as a fumble, a critical miss occurs whenever the natural result of a die roll is a 20. Even if your goal number is 20 or higher, a roll result of 20 is a critical miss.

A critical miss is mostly like a regular miss — except that the GM gets to take 1 wyrd point (WP) from the well and put it into their adversary coffer (see **Chapter 1: Drama** in the **Gamemaster Book**). Your failure gives an advantage to your NPC opponents. Just how or when this advantage will manifest is up to the GM: they decide when to spend this wyrd point and for what purpose. (See *Wyrd Points*, below.)

Victory Points

Victory points are the foundation and key concept of the rules. The system is called VPS — the Victory Point System — because it's all about players gaining victory points when their characters make successful rolls, so they can spend those points for interesting results.

Throughout the course of gameplay, you will routinely gain victory points — VP, for short — and then routinely spend them, although you can store some of them for later use.

You can think of victory points as measurements of effort or willpower — or, more colloquially, "spoons" (units of energy used to overcome daily challenges). You gain confidence, energy, and poise from a successful roll, and then marshal your effort (spend these resources) to achieve your action.

Rather than forcing everyone to keep a running tally with pencil and scratchpad, we prefer to represent VP with tokens: actual physical objects you can hold in your hand and count out whenever you collect or spend them.

VP Tokens

Victory point tokens can be anything small and easily moved around: chits, coins, glass beads, paperclips, jelly beans, etc. Ulisses produces special victory point tokens for use with **Fading Suns**, but players can elect to use any small item they agree upon.

THE WELL

Somewhere within easy reach of the players, there should be a bowl that holds a good number of VP tokens. This reservoir is the *well*.

Each time you gain VP, you take tokens from the well and place them in your *cache*.

THE CACHE

Each player has a VP cache. This location is either a spot somewhere on the table next to that player where they keep their pile of VP tokens, or preferably, it rests within a small bowl or bag, which ensures the tokens don't get scattered.

When you gain VP, you place them into your cache. As you spend them, you put the tokens back into the well.

At the *start* of your next turn, before anything else occurs, any VP in your cache that have not been transferred to your *bank* are then returned to the well.

When you're playing in present tense or narrated time, your cache is emptied after you've determined the impact of your roll.

THE BANK

Each player has a VP bank. Unlike the well and the cache, the bank is not represented by a physical item or space; it's purely imaginary, so it's represented by notations on a character sheet.

Your character's class level (see **Chapter 2: Characters** for a description of the classes and levels) determines your bank's capacity: how many VP it can hold. It increases as the character's level increases.

VP transferred from the cache to the bank are not lost at the start of the next turn. They stay in the bank until they're transferred into the cache.

You can freely *transfer* VP from your cache to your bank and vice-versa. There is no limit to the VP amount that can be moved (save for the bank's capacity), nor is there any particular stage of gameplay during which this transference is done.

When you transfer from the cache to the bank, return that number of VP tokens to the well and write that number on your character sheet under your bank's tally. When you transfer from the bank to the cache, subtract that amount from your character sheet's bank tally and take that number of tokens from the well, placing them in your cache.

Note that you never "spend" VP from your bank, only from your cache. You can *transfer* to and from the bank, but you can only *spend* from the cache.

COFFERS

In addition to your cache and your bank, you might have one or more *coffers*. These are sub-banks that work in specific ways for specific purposes. Coffers are most often gained through perks, such as Money Manager (which creates a *general funds coffer*) or Shepherd of the Flock (*flock coffer*). The specific rules are provided in the perk's description.

The troupe as a whole has a *troupe coffer* from which each troupe member can draw wyrd points. See *Wyrd Points*, below, for more information.

Gaining VP

You gain VP by making successful dice rolls during the course of gameplay.

The number you roll on the die (assuming it's equal to or less than your goal number) is the amount of victory points you gain. If your goal number is a 12 and you roll a 9, you've got 9 victory points.

RULES HOMILY: THE DESCENT OF GRACE

The idea and mechanics behind victory points are rather abstract. VP aren't things your character can hold in real life; they're a way to measure tides of luck and effort. They do, however, have a certain basis in Church doctrine, namely the Descent of Grace and the Luminous Return. The Pancreator's divine radiance is delivered down upon His creatures, and through their right and proper deeds, radiance is reflected back to the Empyrean, further opening the soul channels for successive Descents and Returns.

It's not hard to see the VP well as the Empyrean source and the victory points a character gains as their receipt of the Light, in the form of descended providence. As a player spends VP and return them to the well, their character participates in the Luminous Return.

Of course, they can save some of this Light — these VP — in their banks. This is not greed or stinginess, refusing to reflect back the Light, but a chance for lessons in proper stewardship. (See *Rules Homily: Wise Stewardship* below.)

Characters do not recognize "victory points" or think in those terms, but many of them do perceive their sudden ebbs and flows of fortune and mishap in terms of divine favor or censure. Even the less religiously inclined, who prefer to think in terms of probability and pure chance, can speculate on good or bad "weather" for the odds.

The more esoterically minded (such as those among the Eskatonic Order), especially those referring to the phenomena associated with wyrd points, might speak of the "receipt of lumens" or other quanta of divine light. Most people don't concretize spiritual phenomena that way. (Hence, we use the term victory point rather than lumen, although theurgists are perfectly comfortable with the latter.)

Spending VP

You can achieve various effects with VP, but each one has a cost. The typical costs and their gains are:

Cost	Effect
1 VP per +1 goal	Increase the goal number of your next goal roll (you must spend *before* making the roll); see *Precision Bonus*, below.
1 VP per -1 Resistance	Overcome (cancel) your target's Resistance to your action/attack/influence (only against a target you have hit with a successful goal roll)
1 VP per +1 Resistance	Boost your Resistance (this applies against a single attack)
2 VP per +1 damage	Increase the damage delivered by your action's impact

These effects are cumulative, so long as the player spends the required amount of VP. For example, it costs 2 VP to increase damage by 1. You can spend as many VP as you want to increase damage: 2, 4, 6, 8, or more, adding more damage to your attack. For instance, you could spend 3 VP to increase your next roll's goal number by 3, and so on.

In addition, most actions allow you to spend VP to enhance their effects. For instance, when disguising yourself using the Disguise skill, you can spend VP to make it harder for others to pierce your disguise. (See the skill maneuvers descriptions under *Skills* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for specific examples.) As a general guideline, each additional 2 VP spent beyond the amount required doubles the effectiveness of the action.

PRECISION BONUS

You can spend VP to improve the accuracy of your *next* roll: 1 VP per +1 goal, up to a limit of your highest finesse characteristic (Dexterity, Intuition, or Perception).

> ***Example:*** *Chief Hoffmann swings his frap stick at a wily serf. His player decides to spend VP from his bank to gain a precision bonus for the roll. Hoffmann's highest finesse characteristic is Dexterity 6, so he can spend up to 6 VP for +6 goal.*

When you spend the VP, make a note of the goal bonus and return the spent tokens to the well. This *precision bonus* applies only to the next roll that occurs, so long as it takes place before your next turn ends, after which the bonus goes away.

When you're playing in present tense or narrated time, the bonus applies to your next roll, but only if it follows soon after (one moment to the next) or is the next stage in a long-term task (see *Long-Term Tasks*, above).

Exception: If you are asked by the GM to make a roll you didn't intend to make, such as a reflexive *spot* roll, you are not required to apply your precision bonus to it, although you can choose to do so.

Surges

When you run out of all the VP in your cache and have no more VP in your bank to transfer to your cache, fear not: At any time (even with a full cache and/or bank), you can opt to use a *surge*. Think of it like an adrenaline surge, a second wind, or a self-instilled boost of confidence.

You then gain VP from the well equal to your Surge rating. As with most activity involving VP, this does not require your character to take an action. You simply declare it and then fill your cache with VP.

You have a limited number of surges you can call upon, after which you need to rest to restore them. See *Surge* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for more details.

Wyrd Points

Wyrd points (WP) are a special type of victory point that betoken the mysterious currents of fate, providence, and even the occult. Adventurers in the era of the Fading Suns live in a universe of mysterious and miraculous occurrences and incredible feats that defy all odds.

To represent this touch of destiny, certain effects in the game bestow *wyrd points* instead of regular VP. These are represented in gameplay by special tokens, which distinguish them from regular VP. If you're using glass beads for VP, then use different colored beads for wyrd, or some other item, such as M&Ms or paper clips. (Better yet, you can use the official wyrd tokens produced by Ulisses.)

Wyrd points share the same well as victory points. When you gain a wyrd point, such as from a critical hit, draw it from the well and place it into your cache.

Like victory points, unspent wyrd points in your cache go back to the well at the start of your next turn. You can instead move them into your bank (they count toward your bank's capacity) or the *troupe coffer* (see below).

GAINING WYRD

- Whenever you contribute a particularly notable moment to the roleplaying session, you earn applause from the GM in the form of 1 or more WP. These go into the troupe coffer (see below), not your personal cache or bank. See **Chapter 1: Drama** in the **Gamemaster Book** for more guidelines.
- Whenever you roll a critical hit you gain 1 WP. This goes into your cache (although you can transfer it to your bank).
- Certain perks allow you to convert VP to WP in special circumstances; consult the perk's description. Examples include: Enlightened, Petition, Saint's Blessing, and Saint Lextius' Blessing. (See **Chapter 3: Traits**.)
- You can store wyrd points in your bank. Each WP takes up the same amount of space as a single VP.

RULES HOMILY: WISE STEWARDSHIP

Victory points are fluctuating resources. Players must *steward* or manage these resources in their own ways, following their own play-style preferences. As they become more familiar with the ebb and flow of VP, they'll develop tactics for spending and saving them.

This is all in accord with one of the Church's virtues. Stewardship is wise management of one's domain: the bounty rewarded by the Pancreator. For a noble lord, this is the fief and its people. For a priest, it's the cathedral and its flock. For a merchant, it's goods and their monetary gain, as well as the high-technology entrusted to the League.

For you, it's the VP you gain from your rolls. Do you spend them profligately or do you save some of them in your bank? Do you hoard them miserly or do you use them proficiently? There are no laws here; your choices all depend on context.

When nobles, priests, and merchants fail in their stewardship, misery results. Tyranny rules fiefs, sin corrupts the flock, and crime spreads. The Pancreator's harmonious order is imbalanced. It is then time to get one's house in order.

Lucky for you, there's no way to "fail" to steward VP. There are more or less optimal methods, but they have to be discovered through trial and error; they differ for each character and vary from situation to situation. VP stewardship is a never-ending organic process.

SPENDING WYRD

- Once per round, you can spend 1 wyrd point to make a single roll favorable.
- You can convert 1 wyrd point into 3 VP. The wyrd point goes into the well, and you take 3 VP out of the well.
- Wyrd points have special potency when used with occult powers. See the *Wyrd Force* sidebar in **Chapter 5: The Occult**.
- Wyrd points twist fate and probability in your favor. They also let you perform actions that might otherwise be considered outrageous or wildly improbable — much like the amazing stunts seen in action movies or the stunning reversals that speeches and cross-examinations can elicit in thrillers and romance movies. In short, WP can be used to introduce melodrama into a drama — sensational and extraordinary events that would ordinarily stretch belief but, thanks to wyrd points, come true. Just what this means in gameplay is left up to the GM to work out with the players on a case-by-case basis. It usually involves a player asking if they can do something outrageous by spending a WP, and the GM either allowing it, disallowing it, or modifying the action to make it allowable.
- You can contribute your WP to the troupe coffer. Once they're in the coffer, any troupe member can access them. You might contribute them from a sense of charity or fellowship, or for the mercenary reason that your bank is already at capacity and you risk losing the WP to the well at the start of your next turn.

THE TROUPE COFFER

The troupe shares a single coffer that holds the wyrd points awarded by the GM. While a critical hit awards the player who rolled it with a single WP for their cache, most other WP awards go into the troupe coffer and can be accessed (spent) by any troupe member. See **Chapter 1: Drama** in the **Gamemaster Book** for full information about how the troupe coffer works.

Resistance

When a character is successful with a goal roll, that's not the end of the story. They still have to contend with Resistance. An action needs to be successful *and* overcome Resistance before it can be called a *victory* — that is, before it has any impact.

Impact only happens when Victory Points overcome Resistance.

This means you must spend an amount of VP equal to your target's Resistance rating. If the Resistance is 3, you must spend 3 VP to overcome it.

An action that does not overcome Resistance is a glancing blow, a near miss, or a close call. Simply connecting is not enough. You have to have enough force or perfect placement (however you want to describe VP) to overcome Resistance.

This includes weaponry, whether swords or blasters. These only deliver their base damage if the attack overcomes Resistance. Your blaster's devastating plasma doesn't burn your foe if you didn't connect well enough — that is, if you didn't spend enough VP to overcome Resistance.

A roll might be successful, but it's only a *victory* if Resistance is overcome; otherwise, it's a failure.

Resistance Ratings

People, objects, and even situations can have Resistance ratings. For characters, these are listed on the character sheet. (See **Chapter 3: Traits** for full details on determining a character's base Resistance ratings.) You can spend VP to raise it higher.

Characters have three types of Resistance: Body, Mind, and Spirit.

- Body Resistance is used against physical attacks; it's determined mainly by factors that include armor (plate mail is more resistant than cloth robes) and environment (such as hiding behind cover).
- Mind Resistance is used against mental and social influence — others' attempts to manipulate you. It's mostly based on social rank (a noble duke has more innate Mind Resistance than a knight).
- Spirit Resistance is used against the occult — psychic powers, theurgy, the Dark, and the weird science left behind by the Anunnaki jumpgate-makers. Its rating is based off your spiritual defense practices (in the form of perks).

In the case of inanimate physical objects (locks, doors, delicate technological devices, etc.), Resistance represents how tough they are to affect. This is usually based mainly on the type of material (stone is more resistant than wood), but the construction can play a role (a well-wrought device might be harder to break than a poorly made one), as can complexity (a high-tech security lock presents a higher Resistance than an old, rusty one).

When you vie against a situation, the particular conditions determine Resistance. For instance, when you survey a room for enemies, the GM takes into consideration its size, the number of people congregating there, the intensity of distractions present ("Is that a rare Zurilio painting on the wall?"), and so on, so they can devise a net Resistance value. We scale Resistance both by its number rating and by an adjective used to sum up its degree of difficulty, ranging from Easy to Hard and all the way up to Miraculous (nigh impossible to beat).

Note that environmental conditions — the room is smoky or shadowy — are best handled through states rather than Resistance, since they tend to directly affect the senses. (See *Environmental Conditions* in the *Modifiers* section earlier in this chapter.)

Resistance	Rating	Examples
Effortless	0	Playing hopscotch (you might still need to roll to land in the squares, but it's literally child's play)
Easy	2	Sneaking across thick carpet, concealing a firebird coin in your palm or up your sleeve
Hard	4	Sneaking on gravel, applying first aid to a wounded patient
Demanding	6	Sneaking around sound detection devices, hacking standard think machine security, applying first aid to an unconscious patient, concealing a switchblade up your sleeve
Tough	8	Sneaking around motion detection devices, calming a wild animal, applying first aid to a Dying patient, concealing a hunting knife on your person, holding your breath while in combat
Severe	10	Sneaking in broad daylight, remembering an extremely obscure fact that you once read about origami customs on Midian, hacking invincible think machine security, inventing a tech level 5 device
Herculean	12	Sneaking past a horde of watchdog drones, inventing a tech level 6 device
Miraculous	14+	Passing without trace on sand, searching for a needle in a haystack, inventing a tech level 7 device

Self-Defense: Boosting Resistance

It might be tempting for you to spend the majority of your VP on offense, so you can make your actions succeed with the most impact. However, that can leave you wide open to attacks. Resistance can be slim for those without armor or social standing. Those without such aids will need VP to spend on their defense.

In VPS, *boosting Resistance* is the main means for you to defend yourself against attacks and influence while still being able to perform your own actions on your turn. When you spend VP to boost your character's Resistance, that choice does not cost your character their action that turn. Spending VP is a player activity, not a character action. You can boost your character's Resistance at any time, even if it's not your character's turn in the initiative queue.

However, when you spend to boost Resistance, the effects apply against *one attack only*. You can keep spending to boost against other attacks, but each expenditure applies only to the attack at hand.

It's assumed that you will be banking VP in anticipation of future defense needs. Also, as you increase your level, you'll get better with certain actions and (on average) gain more VP from them. You'll surely want to save some of those VP to boost your Resistance against particular attacks. (See the *Rules Homily: Wise Stewardship* sidebar above.)

If you ever think you don't have enough VP to contest an attack, you can always resort to a *dodge* maneuver (see below), although that will use your primary action for that round.

THE ATTACK-DEFENSE CYCLE

When opponents clash, they vie against one another by spending VP to both cancel their opponent's Resistance and to boost their own Resistance. It works like this:

1. The attacker makes a successful attack roll (or an influence roll, in the case of "social combat") against the defender.
2. The defender can choose to spend VP to boost their Resistance.
3. The attacker spends VP to overcome the defender's modified Resistance. If they can't (or choose not to) spend enough, the attack fails. If they do spend enough VP to overcome the defender's Resistance, the attack succeeds and delivers its impact.

   The cycle can then be repeated with the tables turned: The defender becomes the attacker and the attacker now defends. This process applies to GMs, too, when their NPCs are attacking or defending. (Note that only characters can contest actions; GMs can't spend VP to boost the Resistance of a situation or object.)
4. *Optional:* There is an optional rule called "last-ditch defense," by which the defender can still attempt to slip from their attacker's clutches by calling for a blind-bid. See *Last-Ditch Defense*, in the *Optional Rules* section, below.

   Note that in most cases, the attacker knows the Resistance they're up against. Defenders must guess how much VP to spend to boost their Resistance; they don't know how much the attacker is willing or able to spend to overcome it. Sometimes, though, the Resistance isn't obvious; in these cases, the GM might call for a blind-bid. See the *Blind Bidding vs. Resistance* sidebar.

BLIND BIDDING VS. RESISTANCE

Sometimes you just don't know what you're going up against: You don't know the exact Resistance you need to overcome. In the case of attacking someone wearing visible armor, you have a pretty good idea, so the GM should tell you their Body Resistance. However, when you scan an area to spot hidden enemies, you can never be completely sure that you've succeeded. In this case, you must make a *blind bid* against the action's Resistance.

You take a guess at the amount of VP you need to overcome the Resistance, and then you spend it. The GM then provides information based on whether you're victorious or not. In the example above, if you spent enough to notice the hidden enemies, the GM will alert you to them. If there are no enemies, the GM will tell you that you don't notice anyone — which is the same thing they would say if you failed and there really were enemies.

The obvious drawback to a blind bid is that you might overspend. You guess that the Resistance is 4, so you spend 4 VP, but it's really only 2. You lose all the VP you spend; you don't get a refund for overestimating your opposition.

The GM can call for a blind bid for any action whose Resistance you can't know.

Assured Success

Sometimes, an action or task might be easy enough for you to accomplish that you really don't need to roll. Sure, making a roll might give you VP, but it also might lead to a failure. If you meet the proper conditions for *assured success*, you can choose to forego the roll and just take the success.

It works like this: If the action isn't dangerous or risky (where failure could bring serious harm or death, such as when climbing heights), and the action doesn't vie directly against a resisting person, *and* your skill ranks for the action *exceed* the Resistance, you can take an assured success.

An assured success does not give you victory points. It does, however, give you the effect of a successful roll. You must still pay the VP cost to overcome the Resistance to turn your success into a victory. Also, you have to spend twice as long performing the action. If it's normally a single-turn action, it now takes you two turns. If it usually takes 1o minutes, it takes 20 minutes to do it as an assured success.

Example: *You're trying to sneak through a house without alerting the sleeping residents. The GM declares the Resistance to be Demanding. If your Sneak is 6 or higher, you can take an assured success. You'll need to spend 6 VP to overcome the Resistance, but after that, you're in the clear and can move through the house without waking a mouse.*

A "resisting person" is anyone who doesn't want the action to affect them, whether it be a punch, a cutting remark meant to embarrass them, or even friendly banter meant to assuage their distrust. Even if the target doesn't boost their Resistance, their simple denial is enough to force you to roll to succeed against them.

The GM can disallow assured successes in any situation. Perhaps the stakes are higher than you're aware, but the GM is fully cognizant of them.

Area Attacks

Some types of attack — grenade blasts, burst-fire gun spreads, or even an opera singer's mesmerizing voice — can target everyone within the attack's stated area. In this case, keep track of how many VP are used to overcome Resistance; this amount is compared against the Resistances of everyone affected. Those whose Resistance is overcome are impacted by the attack. Those whose Resistance is *higher* than the attack's overcoming VP are spared from the attack's impact.

Brief Review: Victory & Success

Now that we've described a good portion of the rules in detail, let's pause for clarification and review our terminology.

SUCCESS

A die-roll result is either a *success* or a *miss*.

- A successful result is equal to or less than your *goal number*. It awards you VP equal to the exact result rolled and allows you to contend against the action's Resistance to try to score a *victory* (see below).
- A miss is a result that is higher than your goal number. You get no VP and the action fails.
- A critical hit results when you roll your goal number exactly. You ignore Resistance for that action and gain 1 WP.
- A critical miss results when you roll a 20, no matter what your goal number is.

VICTORY

If you scored a success on your goal roll, you can now contend against the Resistance that opposes your action. This is either based on the target's relevant Resistance rating (Body, Mind, or Spirit) or based on the situation at hand with a Resistance determined by the GM.

- Spend VP to overcome Resistance: 1 VP per 1 Resistance. Characters can contest your action by boosting their Resistance with VP. (See *Self-Defense: Boosting Resistance* for full rules.)
- If you overcome the Resistance rating that opposes your action, you are victorious: your action delivers its impact.
- If you do not overcome the Resistance, you fail: you do not deliver any impact.

SUMMARY

A *success* refers to the result of the goal roll. A *victory* refers to the result of the action once it has a) scored a success and b) overcome Resistance.

A *miss* refers to a goal roll that did not meet its mark. A *failure* refers to an action whose roll missed or a roll that was successful but you did not overcome Resistance.

Impact

When an action is both successful and overcomes Resistance, it succeeds. You now need to measure the effect it has — what we call its *impact*, which is most often measured in result (for non-attack actions), damage (for physical combat) or states (for influence).

An action's *base impact* is provided by the weapon or tool used or is listed in the action maneuver's description (in **Chapter 3: Traits**). Players can spend VP to increase impact.

In all cases, impact is only applied once VP have been spent to overcome Resistance.

Result

You can perform all manner of actions to achieve a desired result. In general, a victory (i.e., you've succeeded on your goal roll and overcome Resistance) provides a basic effect. Examples of these are provided in the maneuver descriptions under *Skills* in **Chapter 3: Traits**. For instance, when you're trying to remember something, you perform the Academia-skill *enter memory palace* maneuver. Victory means you remember it. In most cases, you can spend VP to improve your result. In the case of remembering, by spending additional VP, you recall more and more details.

Each maneuver's description lists what you gain with additional VP, but the general guideline is as follows:

Additional VP	Improved Result
2	Good: a noticeable improvement, more of what you wanted
4	Better: a marked improvement, much more of what you wanted
6	Best: a dramatic improvement, the most of what you could get

Damage

Combat attacks deliver damage points as impact. Damage is applied directly, one for one, against a target's Vitality rating. (See **Chapter 3: Traits**, for details about Vitality.)

The base damage of an attack is determined by the nature of the attack. If it's from a fighting maneuver, such as the Fight-skill *strike*, the base damage is listed in the maneuver's description. (For example, it's 2 for a *strike*.) If it's from a weapon attack, the weapon's description lists that weapon's base damage. (For instance, a Martech Gold laser pistol delivers 5 damage.)

Example: *Melisandra al-Malik is involved in a firefight with a gang of thieves who are trying to steal her rare art collection. She fires her Martech Gold laser pistol at the gang leader. Her player rolls her Dexterity + Shoot of 12. She rolls a 7. It's a success, and she gets 7 VP to place in her bank.*

The gang leader has a Body Resistance of 3. He's also behind the partial cover of a pillar, giving him a Resistance bonus of 3. That adds up to a total Body Resistance of 6. Melisandra has 6 VP in her bank and 7 VP from her successful roll; she spends 6 to overcome the gang leader's Resistance, leaving her with 7 VP.

The GM decides not to contest the shot.

Melisandra's base impact is her laser's 5 damage. Her player decides to spend 4 VP to add 2 damage to the hit (remember, it costs 2 VP for 1 damage point), adding up to a total of 7 damage. The result is applied against the gang leader's Vitality.

RESTRAINT: WITHHOLDING DAMAGE

Sometimes you just don't want to deliver the full damage that your fist or weapon inflicts upon impact. Maybe you're trying to teach your opponent a lesson rather than injuring them. Perhaps you simply want to wing them with your bullet so that

they'll surrender for questioning, or you might be attempting to slip your rapier into your enemy's thigh with just enough force that their energy shield doesn't activate to block it. In these cases, you can exercise *restraint*. This allows you to spend VP to *lower* your attack's base damage. The cost is 2 VP per -1 damage.

> ***Example:*** *You pierce your foe with your rapier and penetrate their defenses (i.e., you overcome Resistance). Your rapier inflicts a base damage of 5. Unfortunately, your opponent has a standard energy shield, which activates to block damage when it takes 5 or more damage. If you'd only done 4 damage, it would not have activated the shield and would have been applied against the target's Vitality... so you spend 2 VP to lower the damage from 5 to 4. Problem solved!*

States

Characters can be put into various physical or psychological *states*. These are conditions that hinder them or alter their behavior. Most states are temporary and can often be "shaken off" early by the victim. In some instances, certain states can become permanent until therapy can help resolve them.

The various states — physical, mental, and social — are described in **Chapter 3: Traits**. The rules for using them are given below.

EFFECTS

Each state has a particular effect(s) that is imposed on the person experiencing that state.

Physical states are fairly straightforward: their effects tend to be concrete, felt in the body, and easily described in rules terms.

Mental and social states are more open-ended and open to interpretation. Their descriptions offer roleplaying guidelines for how the state affects its victim's thoughts and behavior. They might have some concrete rules effects, but for the most part, they're meant to be negotiated between the players and the GM.

COMBINING MULTIPLE STATES

You can suffer from more than one state at a time, but there are limits.

- You can't suffer the same state more than once at the same time. If you're actively Stunned and something else causes you to become Stunned, only one instance applies: the one with the longest-lasting persistence.
- When there's a question of which state has precedence, first judge by persistence: The longest-lasting state takes precedence. If states are equal, the GM chooses.
- If two or more states impose the same or a similar effect, use the worst version, rather than combining the

effects. For instance, if an effect levies a -2 goal penalty on the character's goal rolls, and another effect levies a -2 goal penalty, simply use one -2 goal penalty rather than adding the two penalties together.

PERSISTENCE

States don't last forever. They come and go. There are four different scales:

- *Brief* — The state lasts for one or more turns at best, after which it simply goes away.
- *Temporary* — The state lasts for the remainder of the scene, after which it goes away.
- *Enduring* — The state lasts until the person affected takes a Respite; they "sleep it off". (See *Respite* in **Chapter 3: Traits**.)
- *Chronic* — The state lasts until therapy can resolve it or the person affected can *rally*. (See *Therapy* below.)

Guidelines for which scale to use are given under *Influence* below, and they're listed throughout the rulebook with the maneuvers and occult powers that impose them.

OVERCOMING STATES

A character affected by one or more states can take an action — the *shake it off* maneuver (see sidebar) — as they try to overcome one of those states (unless a state's description specifically disallows this).

REINFORCING A STATE

Whenever a target tries to shake off a state you have imposed, so long as you are present, you can spend VP to *contest* their action by increasing the Resistance against that attempt: +1 per 1 VP. The target must be able to see and/or hear you and vice versa. (A two-way live audio, video, or holo feed is sufficient.) Your searing gaze or shouted command can strengthen the Resistance for *that action only*. (See *The Attack-Defense Cycle* above.)

THERAPY

They say that time heals all wounds, but that can take too damn long. Therapy can help someone to overcome a chronic state that just won't go away.

The Empathy *minister* maneuver can be used to relieve another character's unwanted mental or social state. The Alchemy *refine* maneuver can be used to relieve one's *own* unwanted states. Certain occult means might also relieve or remove a state entirely, such as the Amalthean ritual Calming or the theurgy ritual Righteous Assignation of Penance.

Without therapy, you must rely on time to erode the state. After one week of suffering a chronic state, and after taking a Respite, you can perform a Focus-skill *rally* maneuver to try to resolve the state. See the Focus skill description in **Chapter 3: Traits** for details.

TRACKING STATES

You can use an index card to represent a state that has been imposed on a character by placing it next to that character's sheet (or place a sticky note on it). You

SHAKE IT OFF

Action

You can overcome a state through sheer toughness, willpower, or conviction. If you're currently suffering from more than one state, you must state which one you're trying to shake off before making the roll.

Usually, only *one* such attempt per state is allowed, unless conditions change that would plausibly allow you a fresh shot at overcoming the state. If you've been *entreated* (through the Charm maneuver) but couldn't shake it off, you might get a second chance if your influencer acts poorly toward you or proves themselves to be a cad.

Being attacked can break a state's hold on you. As soon as you're attacked, even if the attack fails, you can attempt a reflexive *shake it off* roll.

Sudden dangerous or traumatic surprises — the arrival of enemy reinforcements, lightning striking right next to you, catching your lover in another's arms — might also shake a state's hold on you, allowing you a reflexive *shake it off* roll at the GM's discretion. If the state was imposed by a tech compulsion or an occult power, however, you can't so easily break its hold; you have to spend a primary action to try to do so.

Note that the Impress *command* maneuver can be used to force someone to try to shake off a state, even if they're already failed an attempt to do so.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Focus + Endurance/Will/Faith

Endurance is used to ignore and power through physical states; Will is used to deny and outthink mental states; and Faith is used to overcome social states through sheer force of personality or inner conviction.

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Hard for a brief or temporary state; Demanding for an enduring state + any VP spent by the state's imposer

Impact: You overcome (cancel) the state.

may decide to summarize the effects of the state (and their game mechanics, if necessary) on the card. This can be especially useful when tracking multiple states on a character.

If the person who imposed the state has spent VP to raise the Resistance for a *shake it off* maneuver, you can represent that by either writing the Resistance on the card (or sticky note) or placing onto the card a number of VP tokens representing that Resistance boost.

If the state's persistence is chronic, paper-clip it to the character sheet until it is resolved.

Physical Combat

One of the most common activities in RPG sessions, as in almost all adventure stories, is combat. While the better part of valor might be to avoid a fight, it's often the case that you can't choose your battles: they choose you.

Whether you seek out perilous situations or simply want to survive them when they happen, you'll need to know how to handle combat using the game rules.

As with many traditional tabletop RPGs, we abstract the complexities of physical combat by boiling it down to damage points applied to a character's Vitality rating. When damage exceeds Vitality, the wounded person is rendered unconscious and might die.

This is a well-established game mechanic stretching back to the beginning of tabletop RPGs. It was later adopted by video games in the form of "health bars" and other such visual displays to represent a character's fluctuating health. This mechanic has widespread cultural cache, and we use it here because it is still useful and well understood, even by beginning players.

There are other effects, too, which we call *states*: temporary conditions imposed on the victim. These include: Disoriented, Stunned, Tormented, and more. Generally, states are imposed as *special effects* from particular weapons (e.g., stunners cause Stunned states) or through perks.

Nonetheless, most physical combat is aimed at reducing Vitality through damage.

Combat Maneuvers

As with most actions, combat involves maneuvers that use a skill and characteristic pair.

There are really just four skills to consider for combat: Fight, Melee, Shoot, and Vigor. Each skill allows for a number of combat maneuvers. These are discussed in detail in the skill descriptions in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

Certain perks (Fencing, Marksmanship, Martial Arts) can also provide access to special maneuvers.

Defense Actions

Defense actions, such as *dodge* (see below), are performed reflexively — whenever you're attacked, you can make a defense action *even if it's not yet your turn* in the round. (If you've already taken your turn that round, you still can perform a defense action reflexively, although you lose your primary action in the *next* round.)

A defense action is made in response to an attack. If there's no attack to defend against, you don't get to roll and you don't get VP.

During your turn, you can declare that your action is to defend yourself. This allows you to save your primary action until it is needed as a defense action in response to an attack. You can save your defense action until your next turn in the following round. If you haven't used it by then, you forfeit it.

DODGE

Defense

You react to an attack by ducking and weaving out of the way.

Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)

Roll: Vigor + Dexterity *or* Intuition

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Dodging is Effortless. Environmental conditions — unsteady ground, strobing lights — might increase the adversity.

Impact: You gain VP.

These can be spent or banked like any VP. Usually, the goal of a *dodge* action is gaining VP to spend on increasing your Body Resistance so you can completely avoid the attack you're reacting to. Technically, though, you don't *have* to make this choice; you *could* bank the VP gained on the roll and use it later for some other action. In this instance, your *dodge* doesn't have to be viewed strictly as bobbing and weaving out of the way of a punch. It could be a pause to recoup your strength, gather your will, or psych yourself up for the next flurry.

The *dodge* maneuver is the default defense action that applies against all physical attacks. There are a number of other defense actions that can be employed when their preconditions are met: you can perform a Fight-skill *block* against a fist strike, a Melee-skill *parry* against a sword strike, or a Vigor-skill *evade* against a gunshot. See *Skills* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for these maneuvers' descriptions.

TAKING COVER

Most people don't try to sidestep gunfire; they take cover instead. They hide behind a tree or a skimmer (a hover car), or they duck down beneath a retaining wall. From there, the character can pop up, fire back,

and drop back down again. (See the Shoot-skill *snapshot* maneuver in **Chapter 3: Traits**.)

Cover adds to a character's Resistance, depending on how well it covers the character.

Degree of Cover	Resistance
Partial	+3
Full*	+6

* If a character behind full cover doesn't move or pop-up to fire back, he cannot be hit at all (except by weapons capable of piercing the structure).

If the structure used for cover is flimsy (thin wood, weak ferrocrete, or damaged metal), then once it is breached by any amount of damage, the structure crumbles enough that it can no longer provide armor or cover.

If there's no cover to be had, a character can still attempt a *dodge* or *evade* maneuver.

Influence

We're all familiar with physical combat in RPGs. It's a staple of most game systems. Most things get done by resorting to a sword or a gun.

Social "combats" occur, too, but they are usually resolved in most RPGs through roleplaying, or sometimes they're summarized with an abstracted roll that tells you whether you got what you wanted. We provide here a more specific system for determining the particular effects of events like arguments, politicking, and stand-offs — any situation where one person tries to charm, fool, or impose their will upon another.

In the world of the Fading Suns, a sermon can often be as powerful as a sword strike. They're not deadly — words don't kill — but they do have psychological effects. Whether it's a noble playing mind games with a courtier, a priest exhorting a sinner to change his ways, or a merchant haggling for a better price, characters use their social skills to eke advantage from interpersonal encounters. We call this *influence*.

Mind Games

There is no Vitality equivalent for social conflict. Instead, characters contest with NPCs in a war of words, jibes, glances, gestures — any means of communication — all in order to elicit a specific response. This response is defined in game terms as a psychological *state* that is elicited from or imposed upon a contestant. Such a state is not merely a side effect of a successful social "attack," as it can be with physical attacks (such as Stunned, Disoriented, etc.); it's the main goal, the purpose for the combat.

Following a victory with a social skill action, you impose a specific state on a target, and you can choose to spend VP to make it harder for the target to *shake it off* (by raising its Resistance).

The influence system isn't magic or mind control. Its effects are fairly modest but can prove quite effective in social situations, where they really matter. The system is meant to enhance roleplaying, not to replace it. It offers cues to the players and GM, creating guiderails for navigating character interactions.

It also works both ways: NPCs can influence players, imposing states on them.

The Three Social Customs: Court, Cathedral, Commons

Known Worlds social conventions are defined by three categories or *social arenas*: Cathedral Customs, Commons Customs, and Court Customs.

Characters can attempt to contest in any arena, anywhere, and at any time. But unless they have a *capability* in the customs of that arena, their rolls will be unfavorable. (See **Chapter 3: Traits** for details on the capabilities available to characters.)

Nobles have capability in Court Customs, priests in Cathedral Customs, and guilders in Commons Customs. Anyone can learn a capability in a social custom other than their native one. For instance, it is not uncommon for Orthodox priests to gain capability with Court Customs, while the Li Halan often have Cathedral Customs and the al-Malik sometimes have Commons Customs.

These are not to be taken literally — Court Customs influence contests don't have to actually take place within a noble court. They represent manners and mores in Known Worlds life for people of different social standings. When dealing with noble affairs, one must have capability with the Court arena, lest one make a faux pas in etiquette. Likewise, dealing with the common folk and guilders requires capability with the Commons arena, lest one put on airs or fail to recognize coded sarcasm or mistake bonding jibes as insults.

Capability applies based on the class of the target, not the influencing character. If the target is a noble, the influencer had best have the Court Customs capability.

Note that characters can use most social maneuvers on anyone without needing a capability in the arena representing that person's class. It's only when they're trying to gain advantage within the arena's area of power that they have to prove their capability. For example, trying to *befriend* a noble at a bar doesn't require Court Customs, but doing so in any relation to the noble's domain, duties, and standing would probably re-

quire such capability. It's no longer an informal meeting over beers from which nothing is asked of anyone except good cheer; it's now a matter of favors, tit for tat, and the exercise of that noble's power.

Influencer and Target

Consider two factors in this contest: the influencer's action (his mode of attack; his *social maneuver*) and the effect it causes in the target (the psychosocial *state* achieved by the contest).

Social Maneuvers

Just as there are combat maneuvers — *strike*, *disarm*, *snapshot* — there are also social maneuvers: attempts to fast-talk someone, befriend them, or eke a confession out of them.

Most maneuvers result in a target becoming affected by a particular state. The social maneuver *castigate* can make a target spill the beans about something he's been hiding: he's been Castigated.

There are really just four skills to consider for influence: Charm, Impress, Knavery, and Perform.

Each skill has a number of maneuvers that any character with that skill can attempt. The descriptions are provided in the sections for the skills in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

If the maneuver delivers its impact, the target is put into a particular state. In general, the maneuver and the state share the same name. Using Charm skill to *befriend* someone makes him Befriended.

Maneuvers are classified as either *persuasion* or *coercion*. The former works to get the target's cooperation while the latter seeks to force the target to comply.

PERSISTENCE

As a general rule, the time you spend imposing a state through influence provides a rough guide to how long it will last.

If you bark out a *command* during a tense stand-off, or even a combat, it will only last for as long as a few turns (the state is brief) or for that immediate encounter (the state is temporary). If you spend a few minutes *entreating* someone, they'll only feel inclined to do what you've asked until they've gotten a good night's sleep; their sense of obligation might vanish by morning (the state is enduring). If you spend days working to *castigate* someone, their sense of guilt and shame haunts their days and nights (the state is chronic).

But rules are meant to be broken, so really, states can last shorter or longer, depending on the context they were created in. In all cases, the details are to be negotiated between the players and GM, and the GM has the final call.

To sum up the general rule:

- A one-turn influence action = a brief state: it lasts for 1 turn. The influencer can spend VP on impact to make it last longer:

2 VP = +1 turn
4 VP = +2 turns
6 VP = the state become temporary: it lasts for the remainder of the scene.

- A Present Tense influence action = an enduring state; it lasts until the person takes a Respite.
- A Narrated influence action = a chronic state; it lasts until the person gets successful therapy or rallies it away.

ROLEPLAYING INFLUENCE ACTIONS

The heart of a social maneuver isn't the rules that decree the game effects; it's the roleplaying behind the action. Players are encouraged to tell exactly what their characters are doing when they attempt to *command*, *deceive*, *entreat*, and *rouse* other characters. What do they say? How do they present themselves?

Not every player is going to be great at this. Some prefer to stay quiet and just roll dice. That's fine. But roleplaying is the spice of life in a roleplaying game, so exceptionally well-done or fun instances of it should be rewarded and encouraged. Rather than directly awarding the player or the character who performed the witty or clever moment, it's better to reward the troupe's *aims*. Good roleplaying moments advance the goals of the troupe, not just the individual who stood out.

Just how this plays out is entirely up to the gamemaster. In its simplest form, the GM puts 1 or more WP into the troupe coffer. (See *Applause: Rewarding the Troupe* in **Chapter 1: Drama** of the **Gamemaster Book**.) More contextual awards might be things like:

- a character's *befriend* maneuver against a town guardsman applies to his whole troupe — they're all his friends now;
- a *deceive* maneuver that tries to convince the bishop to admit a character into guarded Church archives works so well the bishop gives the character a membership pass (which can then be used by any troupe member);
- an ad hoc speech given to *rouse* a crowd into religious fervor is so well received that it becomes part of local folklore, so that any who were there (such as the rest of the troupe) are treated with awe.

Here's the bottom line: reward exceptional roleplaying.

Mind Resistance

The mechanics for Resistance work the same way for influence as for any action, but a character's Mind Resistance rating is different than their Body Resistance rating.

The most common building block for Mind Resistance is rank in one of the three major power blocks in Known Worlds society: Church Ordination, Guild Commission, and Noble Title. It is more difficult for a knight to influence a duke or cardinal than a fellow knight. In the Known Worlds, social standing has real significance, backed by metaphysical assumptions about one's place in the Pancreator's plan for the universe.

Characters can also perform the *stonewall* maneuver to resist psychosocial influence.

STONEWALL

Defense

The mental and social equivalent of the *dodge* maneuver (see above), *stonewall* is the default defense action that applies against all influence attacks. You steel yourself against invective or take a skeptical attitude to your interlocutor's argument.

Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)
Traits: Focus + Will
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Stonewalling is Effortless. Mental distractions or social pressures (all eyes are upon you; your superior is present) might increase the adversity.
Impact: You gain VP, which you can choose to spend to boost your Resistance if you wish.

There are a number of other defense actions that can be employed when their preconditions are met: the Charm skill *rebuff* maneuver against persuasion, Empathy's *debunk* against Knavery-skill influence, Impress's *encourage* against coercion, and Knavery's *distract*. See *Skills* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for these maneuvers' descriptions.

JUDGING CONTEXT

The rules provide a baseline for resolving influence attempts, but they can't always take into account the specific context involved: the *content* of the influence (its believability), the *situation* in which it takes place, and the influencer's *mindset*. If any of these conditions are detrimental, it can affect the outcome.

CONTENT (BELIEVABILITY)

The more absurd the influence attempt, the higher the Resistance against it. The gamemaster can assign a Resistance hurdle to a particular influence attempt, based on how unlikely or unbelievable its claim. Trying

to *convince* someone that you're really Emperor Alexius in disguise is a Herculean task, at the very least. On the other hand, trying to *daunt* someone on the turn after you suffered a pratfall isn't a game ender, but it might warrant a Demanding or Tough Resistance.

Gamemasters should not always impose such a Resistance hurdle, however. Do so only when an influence attempt stands out as especially unlikely.

The target's own Resistance is added to any content-based hurdle.

SITUATION (APPROPRIATENESS)
Environment can affect influence. Trying to *mesmerize* a stranger in the midst of a raging forest fire might not be the most efficacious option at that time. Telling a raunchy joke to *wow* the audience at a somber funeral is likely to fall flat. In such cases, the gamemaster might declare certain influence attempts to be unfavorable.

MINDSET (ATTITUDE)
If an influencer's heart isn't in it, they're less likely to succeed. Perhaps they really don't want to *castigate* the poor serf, but the rest of the troupe insists upon it, or they're hungover and just not in the mood to *deceive* the baroness about how she looks in that gown. In such cases, the gamemaster might levy a goal penalty to the roll.

MULTIPLE TARGETS

Usually, influence maneuvers target only one individual (except for Perform maneuvers, which affect anyone watching/listening). You can direct your influence at more than one person by spending 2 VP per additional target. The maximum number of additional targets is limited by your Presence characteristic.

The amount of VP you spend to overcome Resistance is applied against all targets. Each is compared individually, so it's possible to affect some (those with the lowest Resistance) without affecting others (those with the highest).

SUCCESSIVE INFLUENCE

With physical combat, assailants can wail on each other all day and still inflict damage every time. Influence is not so forgiving. *Fool me once, shame on me. Fool me twice....*

In general, a character cannot be affected by the same influence maneuver from the same influencer more than once per scene.

Now, there is some wiggle room here. The GM could decide that a new attempt at *confuse* is sufficiently fresh and novel that it might work. Exceptions based on context should be the rule, not the exception. However, even when a successive attempt is allowed, it should be unfavorable.

Also, other influencers who haven't yet influenced the same target that scene can still do so. While the same character can't *entreat* the city guardsman again, another character can try it.

Finally, occult powers suffer none of these limitations. The same theurgy ritual can be cast multiple times on the same target in the same scene. This is perhaps one reason (among many) that even Church-approved occult powers are viewed with such suspicion.

CONSENT

The influence rules are not an excuse to ignore the players' consent. Different players have different boundaries. The tabletop should be a safe place to enact dramas, and everybody involved should put forth a good faith effort to play their characters within the themes of the game.

Still, sometimes something might happen in the game that unexpectedly disturbs one or more players. Everyone should strive to be forthcoming about where their lines are and work together to avoid crossing them.

The bottom line is: If a player is made uncomfortable by an influence result upon their character, don't go there. Players have the absolute power to overrule unwanted influence. If this happens, rewind and play the action out a different way.

As part of good faith, this shouldn't be used as a loophole to get out of a result you find inconvenient for your character. You might not want your charismatic lord to be made a laughingstock by an NPC's *humiliate* maneuver, but sometimes it happens. On the other hand, if an NPC or player character makes unwanted advances upon your character, you have the right and the power to say no, let's not play it that way.

Optional Rules

Some other rules to consider don't always come into play, but they can enhance the game when they're used. These game mechanics are entirely optional: The GM can choose to allow or disallow them. They can add complexity, so we recommend you don't introduce them into play until your troupe has mastered the basic rules.

Slight Impact

Once you're familiar with the rules and feel comfortable adding complications, you might consider adding *slight impact*. Normally, when you get a successful roll but cannot overcome your target's Resistance, you deliver no impact. With this rule, your successful roll can still have a slim effect.

- In the case of an attack, you deliver 1 point of damage.
- In the case of influence, you don't deliver the intended state, but the target is slightly distracted: they suffer a -1 goal penalty on their next turn. (Once that turn is over, the penalty goes away.)

Example: *Lt. Chang punches a pickpocket who tried to steal his ring of jumpkeys. His roll is successful, but he doesn't have enough VP to overcome the pickpocket's Resistance. The GM has chosen to use the slight impact rule, though, so Chang's fist still delivers 1 point of damage to the would-be thief.*

Goal Numbers Above 20

Sometimes your goal number, due to bonuses and/or alien tech or whatnot, might meet or exceed 20. In this case, you still need to roll (a 20 is always a critical miss; a critical hit occurs on a result of 19). If your roll is successful, each goal number above 20 becomes an extra VP, regardless of the roll result.

Example: *Felicia, temporarily imbued with cosmic awareness from exposure to an Anunnaki Gargoyle, scans a room for the assassins she suspects are hiding there. Her Perception is 14 (thanks to the Ur-tech boost) and her Observe is 8. That gives her a goal number of 22.*

She rolls a 10. It's a success with 10 VP, but because her goal was 22, she gets to add the 2 in excess of 20 to her VP.

Last-Ditch Defense

This is an optional phase in the attack-defense cycle described above under *Self-Defense: Boosting Resistance*, earlier in this chapter.

Fading Suns is a universe of wily, slippery characters who often find a way to surprise, escape, and pull the rug out from under their rivals. Nothing is assured, not even a rapier strike. This rule aims to help provide an atmosphere of constant uncertainty.

Normally, once an attacker has overcome the defender's modified Resistance, their attack succeeds. However, with this rule, the defender can call for a *last-ditch defense*: a blind-bid contest between attacker and defender to see who spends the most VP. (See the *Blind-Bidding vs. Resistance* sidebar, earlier in the chapter, for general notes about the blind-bidding system.)

The process goes like this:

1. The defender must spend 1 WP (from either their own bank or the troupe coffer).
2. Both attacker and defender secretly choose how many VP they will bid, either writing down a number or collecting the number of VP tokens in their hand or a cup.
3. Each simultaneously reveals their bid.
4. The highest spender wins. (A tie goes to the defender.) If the attacker wins, their attack's impact is delivered. If the defender wins, the hit fails to penetrate or is turned aside (however the defender wants to describe it) and no impact is applied.

Both attacker and defender must spend the points they bid, regardless of which one of them won. Those VP are lost and are placed in the well.

Accenting the Die Roll

You can monkey with your goal roll's die result — the number that is rolled on the d20 –by *accenting* the roll down. Accenting a roll downward improves the odds of coming in under your goal number and ensuring a success.

The cost is that a reduced roll produces no VP, no matter what the die result was, and it cannot produce a critical hit (but the roll can still result in a critical miss).

You can reduce *after* you have rolled the die and seen the result. You must spend 2 VP per -1 applied to the roll result. If you needed a 10 and you rolled a 12, you must spend 4 VP to reduce the result to a 10. Expensive, yes, but it turns a miss into a success.

Example: *Elias wants to throw a pebble at his secret lover's window, so he can alert her that he's hiding in the bushes below. It's an Easy action (2 Resistance) and he doesn't need a lot of impact here; just a tap on the pane is all he's going for. His goal (Vigor + Dexterity to throw the pebble) is 9. He rolls a 12: a miss.*

He really doesn't want to spend all night throwing rocks, so he decides to reduce the roll result. He needs to spend 6 VP to subtract 3 from the result, and then 2 to overcome the Easy Resistance, giving him the result of 9 he needs for a success.

He doesn't get any VP from the roll, since he reduced the die-roll result, but the gentle tap of the pebble does bring his lover to the window.

Extra Actions

You can normally perform only one primary action in your turn. Certain special conditions (such as fencing, marksmanship, and martial arts maneuvers, gained as perks) might allow for an additional primary action in the same turn immediately following your first. Other than these specific conditions and exceptions, whose rules are described elsewhere throughout this book, the GM can choose to allow PCs to attempt extra actions, using the following guidelines.

- You can declare an extra action immediately following your first primary action. You don't have to plan ahead and call for it before your first action.
- The extra primary action must be performed during your turn, following the first primary action; You can't split the actions and perform one of them later in the initiative queue. When your turn is over, you can't change your mind afterward and try for another action; you'll need to wait till your next turn.
- Spend 1 WP *before* you attempt the extra action's goal roll. If you can't spend the WP, you can't take the action.
- You suffer a -2 goal penalty on actions that repeat the first primary action. If you shot your pistol as your first action, and you shoot again as your extra action, you suffer -2 goal.
- If your extra action is a different maneuver or action than the first, the roll is unfavorable. If you shot your pistol as your first action and then attempted a *daunt* influence maneuver as your extra action, the *daunt* roll is unfavorable.
- Whenever you perform an extra primary action, your *next* turn takes place hindmost (or "last") in the initiative queue.

Interpreting the Rules: Redux

As a final word for this chapter:

The one rule to rule them all is c*ontext is king*.

Each situation is unique. No game system can capture every nuance, especially when characters are involved — people are hard to pin down. The GM will routinely be making snap decisions. *Do not sweat it if they don't adhere to the rules presented here.* These rules are guidelines, not commandments writ in stone by a hand of fire.

Take, for example, the many skill maneuvers presented in **Chapter 3: Traits**. They present *one way* of handling those kinds of actions, but there can be other ways — every situation is different, every outcome is open-ended. The same thing can happen many different ways — whichever ways the GM and players decide on.

You shouldn't spend too much time parsing rules specifics: just play. Wing it on the fly. If you have the time and inclination, reference a specific rule and then use it or don't — it's your choice.

That said, avoid too much chaos. The rules provide a consistent background that allows players to judge the possible outcomes of their actions with some degree of accuracy. If you throw them to the wind too often, the drama loses its believability. As with any art form, roleplaying games are balancing acts between creativity and structure. You're doing all this spontaneously as the need arises, which means you'll inevitably make some calls you'll regret and wish you'd done differently. *Don't sweat it – keep moving.* The drama is key: You're here to tell a story together, performing a play. Don't let a poor line reading stop you. The show must go on!

Chapter 2: Characters

Saint Amalthea the Healer

Hail Amalthea, most merciful of us all. Pilgrim, it is to Amalthea that we pray for release from disease and torment, for healing of all wounds, and for the deep serenity that abides amidst all turmoil.

Amalthea rose above the factional conflicts of her time, transcending the boundaries that keep sentients from uniting against the Dark. Her example is that no soul is complete without the companionship of others. Where there is love, friendship, and self-sacrifice among sentients, there is Amalthea, turning with her blessings the worst of odds into the most-likely of victories.

As a child, she was vouchsafed a vision of the fractured universe by the angel Ahnkelbion the Radiant and knew from it the deep connections of All to All. She recognized that the Dark needed to be healed.

Her most holy act was the healing of the Prophet in his most dire need. If not for her mercy, the universe would have long ago succumbed to the Dark. She later softened Zebulon's heart whenever his trials hardened it, as she does our own.

She bears the Gleaming Grail that spills forth the Holy Flame. Those rare few who have truly and fully received her blessings cry the stigmata of luxia, the lambent tears of sorrow for the ills of the world.

— Charioteer Captain Zelina Hamid-Sandor, The Pilgrim's Path: H0w to Read the Omega Gospels

Character Creation

Your character is probably the most important aspect of **Fading Suns**. It is the role you portray over the course of the story, your window into the world created by the gamemaster. Before you begin play, you'll need to make your character; this chapter provides you with the tools to accomplish that. The numbers and descriptions (skills, characteristics, perks, etc.) are only one aspect of your character. It's up to you to decide who they are and how they fit into the story. Some questions are provided to help you begin the process, but it is up to you to fill in the blanks.

Now all you need to do is get a copy of the character sheet (see the back pages of this book) and proceed to the next section, where you'll proceed step by step through the character-creation process. Then you'll be ready to enter the universe of **Fading Suns**.

Step 1: Form the Troupe

Your character doesn't go alone: they're part of a troupe, an ensemble of characters. The other players will each have a character in this troupe.

This is the stage where all the gamemaster proposes to you and the other players a particular *troupe archetype* that you'll build the drama or epic around. Is the troupe a *noble entourage*, gathered to support a noble character, or are they on a *spiritual mission*, following a priest character? Perhaps they're a *merchant caravan*, led by a merchant, or their leader is an NPC *patron* who sends them on missions.

The most common type is the noble entourage, but just about anything is possible. In general, the GM proposes an archetype and everyone agrees on it. Each player then builds their characters in relation to the others, figuring out how and where they fit into the archetype model. For a noble entourage, a priest character might be the noble leader's confessor and spiritual guide, while a merchant might be the troupe's ship pilot or fast-talking diplomat and a combat-oriented character, such as a priest Templar or merchant Mercenary, serves as the noble's bodyguard.

More information on troupe archetypes is provided to the GM in **Chapter 1: Drama** in the **Gamemaster Book**. For now, work with the GM and the other players to choose an archetype and then proceed to the next step.

Step 2: Character Concept

Take a moment to think about the type of character you want to play: a pious monk, a daring pilot, a haughty noble? Common archetypes are a good place to start. A list of questions later in this section can help guide you in developing a concept that has more depth. Answer as many of them as you can; when you're done, you may find that you have a fairly solid concept.

Also keep in mind how your character fits into the troupe. What particular role do they play in relation to their comrades? Not all troupes are in synch — strife can and does occur — but each member begins their adventures with the intent to work together.

One of the characters will be the troupe leader. In the case of a noble entourage, this is the noble

around whom the entourage forms. For a spiritual mission, it might be a priest who has had a vision and is converting followers to help spread the word. This doesn't mean that the leader's *player* is in charge; it means their *character* provides a central focus for the dramas about the ensemble cast. They are the reason and excuse that the other cast members gather and face danger together. Despite the schisms that might arise among them, the leader unites them all.

Step 3: Choose Your Species

Humans are by far the most common species in **Fading Suns**, but sometimes, playing a species outside the norm can be exciting. Playing a member of an alien species impacts many aspects of your character. The role may be limiting and more challenging to play; however, in a universe full of humans it can also be a rich and rewarding experience.

Your chosen species provides a *birthright*, a package of special abilities and limitations.

Step 4: Choose Your Class (Upbringing)

A character's class is defined as one of four different stations in society: noble (those who rule), priest (those who pray), merchant (those who trade), and yeoman (those who find their own way).

Class is the core definition of your character. It represents your character's place in society and their sociopolitical standing. Make this choice carefully, because it will affect every other choice you make. Your choice of character class limits and defines pretty much every other aspect of your character; both factions and callings are limited by your chosen class. Each class also has perks that are accessible only to characters of that class.

Characters begin at 1st level and advance in level as they experience adventures and adversity in their explorations of the Known Worlds and beyond. As your character advances in level, they gain new abilities. (More details on levels and level advancement are available at the end of this chapter.)

It is possible that the gamemaster may have you start at a higher level. Perhaps you're joining an established story, or maybe the gamemaster just wants the players to begin with more experienced characters.

Your class provides your *upbringing*, the basic traits you gained during childhood and early adolescence.

Step 5: Choose Your Faction (Apprenticeship)

Each class has several factions. You get to choose one of them. Think of it as the adjective that modifies the noun of your character's class. What kind of noble, priest, merchant, or yeoman are you? Each faction has its own peculiarities, informing how your character sees and interacts with the world around them.

Take your time, and make sure the faction you choose most closely fits what you had in mind for your character. Nobles are the rulers of the Known Worlds; there are five Royal Houses and a multitude of minor houses that hold dominion over the stars. The Church is similarly divided into different sects, and each one serves in its own way. The Merchant League is divided into five major guilds as well, creating a nearly dizzying array of minor guilds. Even yeoman have societies they can belong to.

Your faction provides your *apprenticeship*, the traits you learned in late adolescence as you were taught what it means to be a member of your faction.

Step 6: Choose Your Calling (Early Career)

Your calling is best described as your job. Each class has a list of callings that are available to characters of that class, and you can pick from any calling on that list. Like your faction, callings impact your traits.

Think of it as your character's verb — calling is what they *do*. Most callings are restricted by class. Only a priest can be an Inquisitor, and only a merchant can be a Star Pilot. (The exception is yeomen, who can mimic many callings.) There are also "open" callings available to any character.

You most likely practice your calling for your faction. If you're a member of the Muster and your calling is Banker, you're most probably a paymaster for that guild. If you're a Hawkwood Courtier, you serve your house's interest at court. If you're an Avestite who follows the Healer calling, you're probably the one tasked with making sure sinners don't die during "questioning."

As you rise in your class's level, you gain benefits from your calling in the form of perks. While changing your class and faction can be a life-altering event, you can change your calling from level to level. A 1st-level priest whose calling is as a Confessor might change it to Inquisitor when they reach 5th level (or at whichever level they choose). In theory, you could have a different calling for each level, although this

kind of mercurial behavior should require a good explanation. Few members of any profession would be willing to train someone who has no clear ability to stick with it. So long as you remain in duty to you faction, however, finding new job opportunities within its ranks shouldn't be a problem.

Your calling describes your *early career:* what you did as soon as you left your apprenticeship and entered life as a full adult.

FAVORED CALLING

Most factions have a particular calling that is *favored*, representing activities for which that faction is renowned and that provide the foundation for its power. For example, Decados nobles are renowned as unrepentant Sybarites, the Eskatonics as Occultists, and the Reeves as Lawyers. Those who follow their faction's favored occupation have an easier time getting promoted, being awarded pay raises or assets, and generally being taken more seriously as a vital cog in that faction's inner workings.

In game terms, this means that someone who follows that calling can substitute a *class* Privilege-type perk for their calling perk (with the keyword "Privilege"), even at a level in which they don't get a class perk (2nd, 4th, etc.). This allows them to rise in rank faster than usual (by choosing one of the rank class perks as their calling perk for that level), gather wealth (the Riches perk), and other such perquisites of class that come more slowly to others. (This applies only to Privilege perks, not to Abilities or other types of class perks.)

Factions also honor the non-favored callings, even though they don't get a special fast-track loophole. For instance, the Hazat are renowned for producing legendary Commanders, even though the Hawkwoods currently favor that calling. The current vogue among the Hazat places puissant Duelists in the favored status, but as their need for Commanders increases in their pacification campaign on Hira, this favor could well shift.

PATRON SAINTS

To 51st-century Known Worlders, the universe is full of signs and wonders. One of the most popular manifestations of this mysticism is the cult of the saints. While the Church reveres many saints —the Prophet's Disciples foremost among them — it is also officially cautious about elevating the dead into the canon. The common folk, however, are far less discerning. Localities across the Known Worlds are rife with saints. Simple folk may become renowned for a single deed that mattered; miraculous heroes inspire legends where every step seems to sprout some new testament to the power of the Pancreator.

The hierarchies of the Church can seem daunting to most people, even nobles and merchants. Saints offer divine inspiration even peasants can use to connect with the mystical side of the universe, bypassing the priests and speaking directly to the Empyrean through the intercession of the honored dead. Penitents pray to saints for intercession, and workplaces often have small shrines to them, although professional clergy often look down on these superstitious folk practices. Some saints are martyrs, while others are simple folk or quirky hermits who became associated with a miracle. Some saints might even be aliens, although this does not prevent humans from praying to them for intercession.

The Church keeps a register of "official" saints, their feast days, and their prominent deeds. This is mainly a means to winnow down the endless requests from pilgrims for ordained and protected pilgrimage routes to innumerable sacred sites on every planet. For those saints on the register, the Church provides protected travel to and from many worlds through fleets of pilgrimage starships guarded by templars or even Brother Battle monks.

One of the most common methods of recognizing the saints is by following your calling. Each calling has many saints who stand as exemplars of its means and methods. The callings presented below provide examples of two saints each (out of an uncounted number of them), not only to display the diversity of devotion but also to show that many Known Worlders secretly want to become saints themselves. Your character doesn't necessarily claim or revere these persons as patrons; they're provided as examples of the sorts of legends they heard when training for that calling.

Step 7: Personalization & Equipment

During this final step of character creation, you'll make a few choices to personalize your character: you get to pick one perk and one capability without any class, calling, or other restrictions. Finally, you get to record any weaponry or equipment your character possesses.

Lifepath or Custom Method

The sections below for class, faction, and calling provide you with *lifepaths*: prefigured upbringings, apprenticeships, and early careers. Simply go through them step by step and write down what traits each stage gives you for your character.

These templates are broad and stereotypical for characters of their class, faction, and calling. They won't always give you exactly what you want. Feel

free to mix and match a bit, swapping skill ranks and/or capabilities around with others that aren't listed. Whatever gives you the character that best fits your concept is allowed (so long as you stick with no more than the assigned number of trait ranks).

If these don't give you the character you want, you are free to resort to the custom method of character creation: assign all the traits yourself. (See *Custom Characters*, toward the end of this chapter, if you choose to use that method.)

Character Concept

Perhaps the most important part of character creation, and the most fun, is determining your character concept. Who or what is this person? What events in their past made them into the person they are today?

This is your first time stepping into your character's shoes. It's your first chance to get to know them. You probably have some rough ideas of the type of character you want to play, but this section has questions that can help expand your character concept. Ask each of these questions to yourself, answering as your character would.

Are you human or alien? The easiest choice here is human; this option is recommended for beginning players. However, players seeking a greater challenge might want to try playing a member of an alien species. Remember that aliens might not always think the same way as humans. Their reactions are likely to be… well, alien. They may also have trouble interacting in human society and may be subject to distrust and prejudice by many humans.

Do you have any family? Are you still in touch with any of them? What is your relationship with them? Did you have a bullying older brother or a kind and patient father? Was your mother a powerful merchant who allowed you to do as you wish? Were you the eldest child or an only child? So many aspects of your family could impact who you are today.

Describe your character's physical appearance. What are your distinguishing characteristics: hair color, eye color, skin color? Do you have any scars or other distinguishing marks? If so, how did you get them? Did you get a scar fighting off pirates? Do you have a brand from your time as a slave? What kind of clothes do you wear? Makeup? Jewelry? Do you carry a trinket, bauble, or curio that is special to you?

Do you have any quirks or ticks? Do you have a nervous habit, pattern of speech, or other eccentricity? Maybe you stroke your beard or play with a medallion you wear when thinking. Do you have a habit of shouting something out when scared or startled or when you make a discovery? Unique mannerisms can be a great way to help you get into character. Be careful, though, and keep it limited to one or two. Too many can make your character cartoonish.

What is your social status? The social group you were raised in is likely to have a lot of impact on how you perceive the universe. Was everything given to you on a silver platter, or did you have to struggle for every crumb of food?

Do you have occult powers? If so, how did you discover them? Did you manifest special powers as a child? How did the people of your planet react? What impact did they have on you and your family? Were you hunted as a demon or revered as a god? Do you use your powers openly or keep them secret?

What is your profession? Does it make you happy? How do you earn a living? Did you choose your profession, or was it forced upon you? Is it your life's dream, or do you fantasize about doing something else?

Are you superstitious or a believer of reason? Are you terrified by the dark void of space, or are you fascinated by its secrets?

Do you have faith in a religion? The Church is an all-pervasive entity in the **Fading Suns** universe. It is known for committing wonderful acts of good and kindness, but it can also be stifling and repressive. Are you a true believer? Do you question your faith? Or are you a pagan?

What is your perspective on technology? Technology is not as safe and reliable in the universe of **Fading Suns** as it is in ours. Those who rely heavily on it are often seen as magicians — or worse, consorters with demons.

How do you feel about the status quo? Are you happy with the current power structure ("All hail the Emperor!"), or are you a revolutionary who wants to see change?

What is most important to you? What do you hold most near and dear to your heart? Is it a personal item? Wealth? Your friends? Family? Religion? What would you die for?

What is your greatest fear? Fear is a great motivator. Do you fear the Church? An enemy from your past? Death?

What are your ambitions? What motivates you? What do you want to be remembered for when you die?

What's your role in the troupe? Are the bodyguard or the diplomat? The techie or the skulker? The leader or the rival for control?

How did you meet your troupe mates? Were you brought together by social forces (an assignment by your superiors) or were you best friends growing up with one of the other troupe members? In some cases, the GM might want you to hold off on answering this question until play begins, as the initial drama might tell the tale of your meeting.

TRAIT OVERFLOW

Characters can only have a maximum of 8 ranks in skills and characteristics at level 1. They can raise these to 9 at level 2 and higher, and then to 10 at level 10 and higher.

If, during the lifepath method of character creation, your character gains 9 or more ranks in a skill, just put those excess ranks into a different skill of your choice (so long as you meet any preconditions). The same rule applies for characteristics.

If you gain more than one instance of the same capability, simply choose a different capability of your choice (so long as you meet the preconditions) for any extra versions of the same capability.

Quickstart Character Concept Chart

Use this handy flowchart to figure out what kind of character you want to play. See ***Chapter 2: Characters*** in the **Character Book** for full details.

1. WHAT SPECIES ARE YOU?

Human

Ur-obun (mystics)

Ur-ukar (rebellious psychics)

Vorox (6-limbed giants)

2. WHAT'S YOUR SOCIAL CLASS?

Noble

3. WHICH FACTION DID YOU JOIN?

- House al-Malik (exotic)
- House Decados (scheming)
- House Hawkwood (regal)
- The Hazat (militant)
- House Li Halan (pious)

4. WHAT'S YOUR CALLING?

- Commander
- Conspiracist
- Courtier
- Duelist
- Enthusiast
- Incognito (also choose a cover-identity calling)
- Knightly Order
- Lord
- Questing Knight
- Ronin
- Spy (also choose a cover-identity calling)
- Sybarite
- …or choose from the Open Callings (below)

2. WHAT'S YOUR SOCIAL CLASS?	3. WHICH FACTION DID YOU JOIN?	4. WHAT'S YOUR CALLING?
Priest	Brother Battle (warrior monks) Eskatonic Order (esoterics) Sanctuary Aeon (compassionates) Temple Avesti (zealots) Urth Orthodox (ecclesiastics)	Brother Battle (must also be Brother Battle faction) Chorister Clergy Confessor Dreamtender Friar Healer Imperial Cohort Inquisitor Mendicant Monk Occultist Scribe Spy (also choose a cover-identity calling) Templar …or choose from the Open Callings (below)
Merchant	Charioteers Guild (travelers) Engineers Guild (techies) The Muster (soldiers/skilled labor) Reeves Guild (the law) Scravers Guild (thieves)	Banker Bounty Hunter Chainer Detective Imperial Cohort Lawyer Mercenary Reclaimer Scout Spy (also choose a cover-identity calling) Star Pilot Tech Redeemer Thief Trader Tycoon …or choose from the Open Callings (below)
Yeoman	The Dispossessed (mercenaries) F.A.R. (pro-alien activists) Society of St. Paulus (explorers) Vagabonds (space hobos) Vuldrok (barbarians)	Choose from Merchant or Open Callings

Open Callings (available to any class):
Amateur
Artist
Dervish (see Ch. 5: The Occult)
Explorer
Mercurian
Pirate
Psychic
Scholar
Theurgist

Species

Choose your species. Humans are by far the most common species in the Known Worlds. Other species tend to be ostracized by humans, especially by the unlettered common folk. Commoners simply don't understand them, projecting many of their fears and hatreds onto these scapegoats. It's unfair. It's unjust. But it's also the way things are in the benighted era of the **Fading Suns**.

The Second Republic once offered far more equality and opportunity to all sentient species, but that age is long gone. Some people, both humans and aliens, hold out hope that Emperor Alexius will usher in a new era of inter-species harmony. So far, he's proven to be more open-minded and fair than the regents who came before him.

Characteristics

At this stage, as you choose your species, you get to choose one characteristic as *primary* and one as *secondary*; all the rest are *tertiary*. Your primary characteristic begins at 5 ranks, your secondary begins at 4 ranks, and your tertiaries begin at 3 ranks.

Here is the characteristics list:

BODY	MIND	SPIRIT
Strength	Wits	Presence
Dexterity	Perception	Intuition
Endurance	Will	Faith

If you're not sure yet which characteristics to choose, you can wait until later in the process, perhaps during Step 7: Personalization & Equipment.

Certain alien species require you to choose one or more specific characteristics as your primary or secondary. See the species descriptions below.

Size

Your species determines your Size rating. Adult humans are Size 5, as are ur-obun and ur-ukar. Vorox are Size 7.

You'll list your Size on your character sheet right below "Species". You'll also list your speed.

Species	Avg. Size	Movement speed (in meters)
Human	5	10
Ur-obun and ukar	5	10
Vorox	7	14/21/28*

* 14 m (two legs), 21 m (four legs), 28 m (six legs)

Human

The most widespread and populous species in the Known Worlds

HUMAN BIRTHRIGHT

Humans have no special birthright abilities. They are a very flexible and adaptable species; individuals are able to choose any class or calling but they have no special preferences for any of them.

Ur-Obun

Humanoid psychics from a communal, contemplative society

OBUN BIRTHRIGHT

Enlightened endowment: You begin play with either Psi 1 or Theurgy 1. You can increase your ranks later from the characteristics ranks you gain at each level. You can choose from the psychic powers or theurgy perks lists (depending on which characteristic you chose) for your calling perks, even if you don't follow the Psychic or Theurgist calling. (See **Chapter 5: The Occult** for more details.)

Sagacity: The obun have the capacity for highly developed mental functioning. Your Wits and Will ratings can rise as high as 11 ranks (but only after 10th level).

Serene: A life of obun meditation and philosophy exercises has led to disciplined self-control in the face of stress, granting you a +2 goal bonus on *shake it off* rolls.

Speak Lojmaa: You've learned your native tongue as a Speak capability. (There are many native obun languages, but Lojmaa is the most universal.)

CLASSES

Once found in the ancient past, noble families have no place in modern obun society. Obun who claim such a lineage take the surname prefix *vo*, although this convention has little pragmatic value. Obun may be knighted, but this is rare and largely inconsequential.

Obun religious life has created numerous opportunities for Bintaru (Velisamil native pagan) and Voahvenlohjun priests (although the latter have more social mobility), particularly as Mendicants, Monks, or Confessors, whether serving on Velisamil or sojourning beyond obun space.

Some obun find their destiny among the Merchant League, valued more for erudition and technical knowledge than for brute force.

CALLINGS

Certain obun callings can be articulated as both priestly and noble options. The Vhem-saahen (Champions of Vhem) are an ancient martial-religious order that can be interpreted as an obun Knightly Order or a cognate to the Templars, but they can also serve as Questing Knights or Imperial Cohorts. Likewise, Umo'rin councilors (some of whom are priests) can be treated as a Courtier or a Confessor.

UR-OBUN PERKS

Whenever you gain a calling perk, you can choose a perk from the list below or from your calling's list. See *Perks* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for the full descriptions.

Child of Dhiyana
Mental Conditioning
Oral Memory

Ur-Ukar

Humanoid psychics with a brutal past

UKAR BIRTHRIGHT

Alert: You are hyperaware of your surroundings and the presence of enemies or threats. Even ukari who are raised in safe cities still cultivate this atavistic awareness, lest they become weak and vulnerable to their rival-clan enemies. Your instinctual perception tests use smell, hearing, and touch (see below) to provide you cues about your environment most other species are blind to. (For example, a person hiding using the Sneak-skill *camouflage* maneuver doesn't hide their smell.)

Enlightened endowment: You begin play with Psi 1. You can increase your Psi ranks later from the characteristics ranks you gain at each level. You can choose from the psychic powers perks lists for your calling perks, even if you don't follow the Psychic calling. See **Chapter 5: The Occult**.

Sensitive touch: You were raised in darkness and taught to discern your environment through sense of touch. Your Observe-skill actions to read details about things you touch — and about people who let you touch them — provide you with more feedback than most people can glean from touch. You can detect subtle changes in wind or pressure, as well as reading braille versions of languages for which you have the Read capability. You can read the baa'mon body carvings of other ukari, which relate their personal achievements. Provided you can feel out your surroundings, you can circumvent some of the effects of the Visually Impaired and Blinded states.

Speak Uryari: You learn your native tongue as a Speak capability. (The written form, Bhakti, is ideogrammic.)

CLASSES

Ukari have no nobles. Even their royal leader, the Nadakira, is a priest (although that hereditary office holder and family can choose noble callings).

Ukari priests are usually followers of the native religion, Banjak.

The Merchant League, as with most alien species, offers the primary career path for off-world ukari. The guilds welcome their unique contributions, although they aren't necessarily liked by their fellow guilders.

Many off-world ukari are yeomen who join a society that will appreciate them, such as the Society of St. Paulus or the Frontier for Alien Rights (F.A.R.).

CALLINGS

Ukari can choose Psychic and Occultist calling perks even when they don't follow that calling.

UR-UKAR PERKS

Whenever you gain a calling perk, you can choose a perk from the list below or from your calling's list. See *Perks* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for the full descriptions.

Nothing to Lose
Simmering Rage

Vorox

Six-limbed giants known for their fierce loyalty

VOROX BIRTHRIGHT

Bite: You have sharp teeth, allowing you to make a Fight-skill *bite* maneuver (3 dmg).

Brutal: For your primary or secondary characteristic, you must choose either Strength or Endurance. Your Strength and Endurance can each be raised to a maximum rating of 12 (but only after level 10).

Extra limbs: You have six limbs. Your base running speed is 14 m on two legs, 21 m on four legs, and 28 m on all six legs. With training, you can learn to coordinate use of your extra limbs for combat advantage; see the Graa school under *Martial Arts* (**Chapter 3: Traits**).

Huge: You are Size 7. You require specially tailored clothing (+10% price in most agoras).

No occult: You cannot naturally awaken Psi or Theurgy, so you cannot follow the Psychic or Theurgist callings. (Exposure to Anunnaki relics has been known to erode this drawback.)

Noble claw (precondition: noble): You can use the Fight-skill *strike* maneuver to slash with your single claw: 3 base damage + slow-acting paralytic poison. A target who suffers even a single Vitality wound from a vorox-claw attack begins to suffer a cumulative -1 goal penalty per turn on all physical actions. Once this penalty equals the target's Endurance, they are in the Paralyzed state for the remainder of the scene (after which they are Dazed for the following scene). Before paralysis sets in, a medic can attempt a Remedy + Dexterity roll as a primary action vs. Demanding Resistance to suck or squeeze the poison from the wound; spend 1 VP per goal penalty accumulated by the poison to completely remove it. Once paralysis sets in, only high-tech or occult medical assistance can neutralize it.

Predatory: When you are hungry, your Survival rolls are favorable.

Sensitive smell: With your Observe-skill maneuvers, you can detect and differentiate subtle scents to which most other sentient species are nose-blind. You can even track a creature or transport by the scent trail it leaves behind.

Speak Voroxian: You learn your native tongue as a Speak capability.

Uncouth: Even the most civilized vorox has trouble fitting in with human cultural norms. At the GM's call, you might suffer unfavorable rolls when attempting persuasion influence on strangers, especially in tense situations.

CLASSES

Vorox have nobles who are recognized as such by other Known Worlders. Only they, among all other "civilized" vorox, are allowed to retain a single one of their poisonous claws as a symbol of their status.

While it is very rare, vorox can join the priesthood. Most vorox priests minister to their fellow vorox on Ungavorox, but it is not completely unknown for a vorox Mendicant to travel the Known Worlds, preaching the Prophet's message with a unique twist.

Vorox are welcomed into the guilds of the Merchant League with open arms, especially among the Muster.

CALLINGS

Vorox have access to the Scout calling's perks even when they do not follow that calling. It is perhaps not a surprise that many off-world vorox serve in various militaries as Mercenaries, usually in tight-knit units with fellow vorox and a human commander. Vorox who travel beyond the Li Halan worlds are often Explorers or Scouts; they may even be Questing Knights or Imperial Cohorts.

VOROX PERK

Whenever you gain a calling perk, you can choose the Smell Danger perk instead of a perk from your calling's list. See *Perks* in **Chapter 3: Traits** for the full description.

Noble

The role of the noble is to be master of all things: accomplished ruler, skilled warrior, able diplomat, gifted artist, and so on. The reality is often far different, but the goals are still worth striving for. All of the houses, whether royal or minor, share certain features, such as a sense of duty and honor, but each is very different.

Class: Upbringing

You were born to nobility, so you were raised learning its skills and responsibilities. At 1st level, you gain the following traits:

UPBRINGING TRAITS

Capabilities: Arts Lore *or* Beastback *or* Warfare Lore; Court Customs; Homeworld Lore; Military Weapons; Read/Speak Urthish
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Endurance +1 *or* Strength +1; Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Presence +2; Wits +1
Perks: the Imperious perk plus 1 class perk chosen from the Noble Class Perks list below or from the open perks list
Skills: Academia 1; Arts 1; Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Melee 1

RAISED IN SPACE

Some people spend their early years on spacestations, moons, or even starships. This isn't common, but if that's how your character was raised, you might consider swapping out some of the listed upbringing traits for one or more of those listed below. You can ignore the normal restrictions for gaining these traits; they're often necessary for survival in artificial environments.

Capabilities: Shipboard Operations, Think Machines
Skills: Interface, Tech Redemption

Noble Class Perks

Choose from the list below for your class perks. You can also choose from the open perks list. Full descriptions of the perks can be found in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

Fencing
Imperious (already awarded during the upbringing stage, as listed above)
Landed
Lay Down the Law
Martial Arts
Nimble
Noble Title (the faction apprenticeship stage listed below will award you this perk's 1st rank)
Noblesse Oblige
Proxy
Retainer
Riches
Saint Lextius' Blessing
Two-Gun Fighting

OPEN PERKS LIST

See **Chapter 3: Traits** for details about each perk.

Advisor
Alien Friend [choose species]
Alien Upbringing [choose species]
Ally
Ambidextrous
Cash
Comeliness
Contact
Danger Sense
Exemplar
Fame/Infamy
Family Ties
Forthright
Gossip Network
Incite Passion
Passage Contract
Reeve Advocate
Refuge
Retinue
Savoir Faire
Sensitivity
Steady Hand
Stoic Body
Stoic Mind
Stoic Spirit
Trendsetter
Underworld Contacts
Veteran
Well-Traveled

Filling in the Character Sheet

In this step of the character creation lifepath process, you get traits to write down on your character sheet.

First off, you get some capabilities. You'll write those in the "Capabilities" section of the character sheet.

You'll get a number of characteristics ranks added to specific characteristics: write those in the "Characteristics" section of the character sheet next to the named characteristic. All your characteristics begin at 3 ranks, except for the one characteristic you chose during Step 3: Choose Your Species as primary (5 ranks) and the one you chose as secondary (4 ranks). (You can wait till later to choose these two, if you want.)

You get two perks, one assigned by your class and another one that you get to choose. Find the section of the character sheet labeled "Perks" and write them down there.

As with characteristics, you'll also add ranks to your skills. Most skills begin at 3 ranks, so all the ranks you gain at this step *add* to those base 3. For example, a noble upbringing gives you Charm 2, which you'll add to the base 3 for a total of 5 ranks. (You might add even more to this skill depending on your choices in the next steps.) One exception are the skills labeled "restricted"; these begin at 0 ranks.

Faction: House Apprenticeship

There are five Royal Houses and innumerable minor ones. Each of the Royal Houses is described in detail in the following section. You spent your early apprenticeship years learning the ropes from your faction.

FILLING IN THE CHARACTER SHEET

As with the upbringing stage, your apprenticeship stage gives you certain traits.

First off, you get a capability in your faction's Lore, as well as two additional capabilities. You'll list this in the "Capabilities" section of the character sheet.

You get 5 characteristic ranks and 5 skill ranks, and a perk representing the 1st degree of rank. You'll list this in the "Characteristics", "Perks", and "Skills" sections of the character sheet.

Next, each faction has quirks or cultural practices that typify its members. You acquire a Blessing and a Curse unique to your faction that modify specific traits in specific situations. You'll list these in the "Faction" section of the character sheet.

Each faction lists its favored calling, but this is a suggestion. You won't write it on the character sheet, unless and until you choose your calling in the next step.

Your faction gives you a material award upon completing your apprenticeship. Sometimes this is a largely ceremonial item, but often it's also useable equipment. You'll record this in the "Equipment" section on the back of the character sheet.

You'll then choose the field in which you apprenticed. Each field gives you skills, characteristics, and capabilities, which you'll record just as you did during the upbringing stage.

al-Malik

Intellectual, artistic, and talented to a fault, the al-Malik are the standard by which other noble houses measure culture. While they do not have the biggest military, they are quite wealthy and friendly with the merchant guilds, patronizing artists and creators of all types. An al-Malik character might be searching for their next masterpiece, on a research trip for any of the universities they sponsor, or simply along for the adventure.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: al-Malik Lore; Commons Customs *or* Think Machines *or* choose a weapons capability (Military Weapons, Energy Guns, Slug Guns) *or* an Arts or Performing Arts Lore capability; Speak Graceful Tongue
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Wits +1; Intuition +1; Presence +2; Wits +1
Perk: Noble Title (Knight)
Skills: Academia 1; Arts 1 *or* Perform 1; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1 *or* Interface 1; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1

HOUSE QUIRKS
Blessing: Extrovert (+1 goal for persuasion influence with guests)
Curse: Impetuous (-2 Mind Resistance against persuasion influence when trading)
Favored calling: Enthusiast
Material award: *Aesthetic orb* (TL6 curio: floating baseball-sized orb; can follow its user and produce soft lighting and mood music from a library of themes)

Decados

Sly, outrageous, and generally decadent by choice, the Decados are often considered the most cunning of the great houses. Their spies — the Jakovian

Agency — rival the Hawkwood Rooks in terms of gathering information and spreading fear. The Decados are masters of the body and know just which buttons to push to cause someone to say what they want to hear. A Decados character might be a member of the Jakovian Agency, but they'd never tell — and those that do often have no association.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Decados Lore; choose any Lore (often Arts Lore *or* Poison Lore *or* Torture Lore); choose a weapons capability (Military Weapons, Energy Guns, Slug Guns)
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Strength +1 *or* Endurance +1; Perception +1 *or* Wits +1; Presence +1; Will +2
Perk: Noble Title (Knight)
Skills: Academia 1 *or* Arts 1; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1 *or* Knavery 1; Disguise 1 *or* Interface 1 *or* Intrusion 1; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Observe 1 *or* Sneak 1

HOUSE QUIRKS
Blessing: Suspicious (+2 Perception around political rivals)
Curse: Vain (-2 Perception when flattered)
Favored calling: Sybarite
Material award: *Little friend* (TL5 curio skin patch worn at the base of the neck; choose a specific skill when receiving this award: +1 goal to that skill once per scene, but your next physical action roll is -1 goal from nervous system overload)

Hawkwood

Proud, honorable, and a little myopic, the Hawkwoods have never quite gotten over Alexius' "betrayal." While they are patiently moving forward as the non-Imperial house, they still expect their son on the throne to follow their code. Hawkwoods follow an unspoken code of chivalry, treating everyone around them with cool civility until their actions or Hawkwood honor demand otherwise. A Hawkwood character might be on a mission for her branch of the house, weaving a web to ensnare the other characters for the greater good, or even a member of the feared Rooks spy agency.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Beastback *or* Shipboard Operations *or* Warfare Lore; Hawkwood Lore; Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns)
Characteristics: Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Endurance +2 *or* Strength +2 *or* Wits +2; Presence +2
Perk: Noble Title (Knight)
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Focus 1 *or* Vigor 1; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1

HOUSE QUIRKS
Blessing: Unyielding (+1 goal on End-, Will-, Faith-based rolls when being called out)
Curse: Prideful (-2 Wits when insulted)
Favored calling: Commander
Material award: Premium-quality weapon (+1 goal), usually a sword

Hazat

Disciplined yet passionate, the Hazat are a study in opposites. Their military is frighteningly well-trained and well-equipped, and their diplomats are canny and sly. All members of the house can handle at least one weapon at an expert level, and it is said that one Hazat is more dangerous than a whole platoon of Muster soldiers. A Hazat character might be the focus of a drama for one of any number of reasons — and more often than not, the reason is deeply personal.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Combat Armor *or* Lore (any) *or* Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Hazat Lore; Warfare Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +2 *or* Strength +2; Presence +2; Will +1 or Wits +1
Perk: Noble Title (Knight)
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Empathy 1 *or* Vigor 1; Fight 1 *or* Shoot 1; Melee 1

HOUSE QUIRKS
Blessing: Disciplined (+2 goal on Strength- *or* Dexterity-based combat rolls; choose only one characteristic when you acquire this Blessing)
Curse: Vengeful (-2 goal on Will-based rolls when questioned or insulted)
Favored calling: Duelist
Material award: Synthsilk cape (TL5 armor; +3 Body Resistance, e-shield compatible) and dueling weapon

Li Halan

Once the darkest and most deviant of houses, the Li Halan are now a model of courtesy and piety. This house is extremely devoted to the Universal Church; Li Halan nobles regularly tithe and provide manpower for it. Individually, Li Halan are straight-faced and straight-laced, unfailingly polite and always com-

posed. The house's military is a thing of beauty (or terror, depending on who you're talking to). A Li Halan character will always use her house's name before her own, no matter who she is or where she's going. The only exception are the hidden dark cultists within the house, who try not to use their house name at all when it's convenient.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Cathedral Customs; Li Halan Lore; Religion Lore *or* choose a weapons capability (Military Weapons, Energy Guns, Slug Guns) *or* an Arts Lore or Performing Arts Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Endurance +1 *or* Strength +1; Faith +2 *or* Presence +2; Intuition +2 *or* Wits +2
Perk: Noble Title (Knight)
Skills: Academia 1; Arts 1 *or* Perform 1; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Observe 1 *or* Remedy 1

HOUSE QUIRKS
Blessing: Pious (+2 Presence around sinners and other nobles)
Curse: Dynastic Stain (-2 Presence around Church officials)
Favored calling: Courtier
Material award: Saint's relic (associated with a Garden Worlds saint) and loose synthsilk robes (TL5 armor; +3 Body Resistance, e-shield compatible)

Noble Callings

At 1st-level, you choose a calling to represent your early career. At this stage of your life, you've taken up your duty.

FILLING IN THE CHARACTER SHEET

As with the upbringing and apprenticeship stages, your early career stage gives you certain traits: capabilities, characteristics, perks, skills, and equipment. You'll fill these out just as you did with the previous stages.

The patron saints listed with each calling are examples only; you won't list these on your sheet or even necessarily offer devotion to these persons. They're provided as exemplars of your calling, as models to aspire to.

Commander

Commanders are the war leaders of their houses. They know where everyone should be on a battlefield at any given time, and they are masters of strategy and tactics. However, they are also masters of style — Commanders lead parades, drill for their lords, and recruit peasants to their infantry forces with the promise of glory. While not all Commanders are martial geniuses, most cut a dashing figure on the field. Those who can grasp the art of combat, both on a micro and macro level, will never be without a home or a job. Though the Pax Alexius has soothed some tensions between the houses, there are plenty of opportunities in the coming campaigns to help pacify the barbarian and lost worlds.

PATRON SAINTS

Darius the Resolute – Darius Hawkwood of Gwynneth commanded Taliesin's Spear, his house's psychic troops. His own psychic abilities were meagre, but his loyalty to both his house and those in his command was nonpareil. His steady and just leadership shaped a motley gaggle of disgruntled psychics into a model of military precision. Their glorious self-sacrifice at the Siege of Jericho (4994) was testimony to the transcendent power of devotion to house and throne.

Edward Wyrmslayer – Hailing from Virgo Minor on Delphi, the second son of Countess Ealhswith Hawkwood, Edward Dunstan (43rd century) joined the army, becoming leader of the Doloria Defense Force. Saint Edward is best known for his battle with the Void Wyvern, a dark dragon-shaped entity that emerged from the jumpgate and terrorized Nacado; it was said to be a spawn of Levayath-Nidhogg, the great serpent of the Abyss. Saint Edward's victory over the wyvern is a common Church motif.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Beastback *or* Warcraft *or* Warfare Lore; Military Weapons
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Presence +2; Will +1 or Faith +1; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Commander Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 1; Drive 1 *or* Survival 1; Focus 1; Impress 3; Melee 1; Shoot 1; Vigor 2
Equipment: Fine military commander's uniform, dress sword, and destrier (trained war horse).

COMMANDER PERKS

Conscript
Invigorate
Loyalty unto Death
Marksmanship
Martial Arts
Military Rank
Strategic Mind

Conspiracist

Conspiracists are the spiders in the shadows, always weaving a web with which to ensnare others. This life of intrigue is always exciting but always dangerous. If too many spiders spin webs close to each other, they risk becoming food. The life of a conspiracist is a delicate dance of letters carried in the night, words whispered in the right ear, and always knowing where you stand with those around you. Conspiracists are constantly at the top of their game, because otherwise, they're the pawns others use to better themselves.

PATRON SAINTS

Ariston of Gwynneth — Bishop Ariston of Gwynneth (44th Century) was suspected of being a believer in the heretical doctrine of Duo-Prophetism, a sect that rose on Urth in the 30th century that proclaimed the existence of two Zebulons, one the Prophet and the other a non-physical Dark Energy form that proclaimed the "Hidden Eidolons" in the *Apocryphal Gospel of St. Hombor*. Protected by powerful political connections, he loudly proclaimed his innocence, while inferring that many contemporary noble leaders were *gemini* — dark doubles who had replaced their originals to do infernal work. He was sainted for his ministry to those suffering from the Green Plague. The Church states that he was martyred preaching to the Vuldrok, but he actually died of abdominal obstruction after eating a cache of Aylon pears, of which he was most fond.

The Hidden Regicide – The most provocative conspiracies can raise suspicions with minimal evidence. Theorists whisper of Natalya Decados's hidden hand behind the fiery demise of Emperor Vladimir's imperial ambition, but her role in his assassination can neither be proven nor disproven. In fact, there is no record of her birth, evidence of her life, or information about her death. Such absence of evidence about her very existence disproves nothing, of course, but serves as her greatest posthumous miracle.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any, but usually a rival faction); Poison Lore *or* choose a Customs Lore (Cathedral Customs, Commons Customs, or Streetwise)
Characteristics: Intuition +1; Perception +3; Presence +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Conspiracist Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Disguise 1; Knavery 2; Observe 2; Sleight of Hand 1; Sneak 1
Equipment: Three fine outfits (noble court, Church pageantry, agora shopping)

CONSPIRACIST PERKS

Calculating
Council Member
Master of Deception
Rabble Rouse
Sacrificial Lambs
Vicious Insult
Web of Lies

Hazat Conspiracist

Courtier

The Courtier is the public face of the nobility, the one the Church or the League thinks of when they imagine a member of a great family. Chic, clever, and always well-attired, the Courtier is the noble the family sends when they need to impress. One might think of a Courtier as lazy or a peacock, but the truth is, it takes them years to hone the art of polite diplomacy. They're raised to be the loveliest, the most charming, the wittiest, and the most observant. While they do not host parties like the Sybarite, they share many characteristics and they can be seen at many of the same parties. A Courtier who is seen is a Courtier who has power. They are their house's diplomats, marriage prospects, and occasional rulers, and they are not to be underestimated.

PATRON SAINTS

The Counsel of Kish – Aldine Li Halan of Kish was crippled by a rare childhood illness, and her neural pathways rejected advanced cyberdevices. Where other nobles would have treated her as a liability, her family supported her education in the arts, strategy, and rhetoric. Aldine's acuity and cunning positioned her amongst the most powerful members of her house, becoming the senior-most Li Halan advisor of her day. She died at the end of Emperor Wars, having anticipated — or some would say engineered — the outcome.

Lady Amorita — Princess Ayami Okada (?-4473) was raised in refinement and culture. Born on Kish to a middling knight family and educated on Byzantium Secundus, she returned to the Li Halan worlds, becoming a courtier to Prince Cardano. Ayami, now titled Lady Amorita, fell in love with the prince, despite her devout upbringing, and many think she was responsible for his conversion. Advising him on many matters of governance, he later reluctantly allowed her to join Sanctuary Aeon. The two wed after Cardano's first wife died. Her role as advisor on political and Church matters, especially her prayer for the Intercession of the Prophet on behalf of Prince Cardano and the people of the Li Halan worlds, drew attention to her first as a folk saint and later as a canonized saint. She sometimes confuses modern Known Worlders (for obvious reasons) with her status as the patron saint of courtesans.

Li Halan Courtier

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose a Customs Lore (Cathedral Customs or Commons Customs); Lore (any)
Characteristics: Presence +3; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Courtier Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 1; Arts 1; Charm 3; Impress 2; Knavery 1; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Perform 1
Equipment: Three fine outfits (official occasions, hunting, dining)

COURTIER PERKS

Council Member
Entourage
Paramour
Respectable
Schmooze
Vicious Insult

Duelist

Sleek, dangerous, and performative, the Duelist is a personally puissant combatant who fights for the honor of their house. Duelists train daily, and some have done so since they were old enough to pick up a weapon. They can be hot-headed or calm and collected, but all of them are finely-honed combat machines. Some look at them askance, considering them no better than thugs with a noble title. Others consider them a valuable part of any house's retinue. Duelists often have seconds, typically either apprentices they are training or friends they trust. They're not as self-sufficient as they'd like others to think, but they're forces of nature when given a weapon — preferably their specialty.

PATRON SAINTS

Carrillo of the Sword — Don Rodrigo del Narro y Carillo (40- 41st centuries) was the

greatest sword master of the late Second Republic. When a pro-Republican mob stormed Bishop Cerda's residence on Byzantium Secundus, the dashing Carrillo slew laser-armed rabble with his family's sword, *Invencibilidad,* dueled and defeated the feared Republican Captain Pierre Chaulnes, and saved the bishop by hoisting him to safety on a skid hook attached to a hover-copter.

The Transfixed Saint of Tsaritsyn – "Your blade is keen," Alexei Decados (c. 4600) gasped at the sword buried in his chest, "but you were never the sharpest blade in the armory." His initial remark — "When you're on your knees, try prayer instead" — was meant to invite a duel of wits, but his opponent answered with steel. Alexei's sanctity honors the potency of ridicule as a dueling weapon, and his iconography depicts him impaled by a sword while bearing a countenance of blessed contempt.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Combat Armor; Military Weapons
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Endurance +1; Perception +1 *or* Will +1; Strength +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Duelist Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Fight 2 *or* Shoot 2; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Knavery 1 *or* Perform 1; Melee 3; Vigor 2
Equipment: Premium dueling sword (+1 goal).

Pistol Duelist:

As above, but swap Shoot 3 for Melee, and Melee 2 for Shoot.

Equipment: Premium dueling pistol (+1 goal; 1 shot capacity).

DUELIST PERKS

Aim Assistance
Aim Where It Hurts
Armed to the Teeth
Dance of Destruction
Fencing
Marksmanship
Nimble
Two-Gun Fighting

Enthusiast

The idle rich are not often so idle. Enthusiasts are nobles who choose to use their status to better their own minds, as well as those of the people around them. These nobles are the most likely ones to go to university, study under guilds, or learn the deep theological disagreements of the Universal Church because it's fun. An Enthusiast may have a life-long obsession, or they might pick up a new special interest every week. They love sharing their knowledge, experimenting with it, and generally making use of it to the best of their ability, whether by creating new armor for the house's military or by painting a picture of their paramour.

PATRON SAINTS

Nimr the Collector — Winthrop Sterling Nimr (4602-4690), scion of a League banker who had been ennobled by the al-Malik of Ishtakhr, was a collector of rare Second Republic entertainment, including episodes of *Bosco and Shrike* (a human and ukari cop team) and *Constantius and Constultius*. Adding to the erudition of the Church, he discovered lost Synod holo-records from the 37-38th centuries, which were used to clarify certain matters on proscribed and allowed forms of prayer. He also miraculously found the original logbook of Saint Paulus, thought lost until then.

The Veiled Poet – Rabia al-Malik of Shaprut (c. 3800) became entranced with the *bakhshi* (singing poets) of her homeworld. Interest became obsession, which became a way of life. At first content with sponsoring private performances, she later commissioned original works, then founded a studio for elder poets to teach and mentor the young. At her deathbed, her family discovered a slim volume of poems which Rabia herself had secretly composed — poetry later honored as the finest verse of her day.

al-Malik Enthusiast

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose a primary Musical Instrument *and* either a secondary Musical Instrument *or* Lore (any).
Characteristics: Dexterity +2; Presence +1; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Enthusiast Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 2; Arts 2; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1 *or* Knavery 1; Crafts 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1; Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Observe 1; Perform 1
Equipment: Arts and crafts supplies.

ENTHUSIAST PERKS

Beginner's Luck
Botanist
Cat Burglar's Eye
Epiphany
Patron of the Arts
Tutor

COVER IDENTITY

Incognitos and Spies have a special consideration: They each declare a "cover" identity. They choose a different calling (which can be from any class) and perform as if they were a member of that calling — indeed, they *are* actually practicing their cover calling, even if they don't always earn the credentials to claim it properly.

They can choose perks from their cover calling or from their true Incognito or Spy calling — until their cover has been blown. After successfully going into hiding (during the downtime between dramas or when they level up), they can craft a new cover identity. They can choose to change covers at any time, but they must still go into hiding for a while before resurfacing in their new identity.

Note: Your cover identity calling can never be Brother Battle. You can't fake being one of the Church's legendary war monks.

Incognito

Few willingly choose this calling; most Incognitos are forced to take up this life due to political circumstances and family stains. The Incognito can be in hiding, a rogue prince on the run, or the last scion of a doomed branch of the family. They do not want to be recognized — doing so might mean death or imprisonment. Every Incognito is on the run from something, and while that may vary, the consequences are enough to keep them on the run. Sometimes Incognitos run with each other or hide on their homeworlds as members of the free folk or merchant classes. Some just escape into the guilds or the Universal Church, trusting their fellows to protect them if (or when) their secret comes to light.

Like the Spy calling, the Incognito assumes a "cover identity" calling under which they hide. (See the *Cover Identity* sidebar.)

PATRON SAINTS

Alberto the Unrecognized — Alberto Masseri (c. 4915) was thought killed on Nowhere's moon during the Symbiot Wars. Crawling from the wreckage of his sabotaged flyer, he suspected the work of his own kin, but lacked evidence. Alberto adopted the face and guise of a common mercenary. He found employ with his own family on Cadavus until he could gather the evidence he needed to exact his revenge. Alberto reclaimed his name but renounced his family, preferring freedom over allegiance to the dynastic politics that had caused so much misery.

Oscar, Shadow of the Patriarchs — Oscar Koval (?-4375) was a member of the Purger's Guild working in Urth's sewers. His resemblance to Patriarch Jacob I was uncanny, as well as his ability to mimic the Church leader. When presented to Jacob I, he was offered the job of "Patriarchal Double," substituting for Jacob on dangerous assignments. Shot twice, he died from wounds inflicted by a rogue Avestite, becoming a martyr for the Church and an example for nobles who must endure double identities.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 2 that support your cover identity.
Characteristics: Intuition +1; Perception +2; Presence +1; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Incognito Perks list below *or* your cover-identity calling's list *or* from the open perks list.
Skills: Knavery 2; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Observe 2; allocate 5 skill ranks among these skills or others that support your cover identity
Equipment: As your cover identity's calling.

INCOGNITO PERKS

Learning from Mistakes
Loyalists
Mentor
Second Skin
Triumphant Return

Knightly Order

Members of a knightly order are sworn to the betterment of their order above all things. Rules, codes, and uses might vary, but induction into a sacred or knightly order means a prominent organization acknowledges that you are a worthwhile member of your house and that your service is too valuable to lose. Some knightly orders are little more than social clubs, a place for the older members of the order to gripe about the younger generation, or more often, a useful central meeting place for members of other houses to bond over their shared duties. Others drill hard, live an almost ascetic lifestyle, give alms, and are chivalrous to a fault. Some sell their services; others do not. The details all depend on the order. One thing is the same though — knight recognizes knight. Being a member of a knightly order means someone always has your back.

Well-known orders include:

Order of the Shroud — This secretive order was reputed to serve a psychic coven; its members wear hoods or shrouds to hide their appearance and to assist in anonymously helping the needy.

Order of the Mantis — This ambitious order was originally formed by the Decados to compete with the Questing Knights.

Order of Vladimir — This discreet anti-Republican order works to keep the sovereignty of the noble houses.

Some nobles give themselves over to defending the Church through various orders dedicated to its protection (where they often fight alongside priest Templars.) These include:

The Adamantine Order — This small order is mostly made up of knights, but includes some priests, who serve the Eskatonics, usually by protecting specific priests.

Order of Saint Yara — This noble order is dedicated to protecting Amalthean priests on their frequent pilgrimages to dangerous locations.

Swords of Lextius – This humble order serves the Urth Orthodox, often as penance or at the behest of families who seek favor by sending a younger son into service.

PATRON SAINTS

The Adamantine Lion — The *Antiphons of Alessandra* recite how the young Hawkwood knight faced death on a symbiot battlefield on Stigmata (4900) but emerged victorious, proclaiming visions of other-worldly beings and an apocalyptic battle. She came to Pentateuch as one of the first Adamantine Knights, pledging her sword in defense of the newly-sanctioned Eskatonic Order. She fell in battle against antinomists, but the *Antiphons* assert she rose in celestial glory, locked in spiritual combat with the coming darkness.

The Seven Saints of the Sacred Sword — During the barbarian invasions of the 46th Century, seven knights joined to defend Valdalla on Leminkainen. Sir William Hawkwood, Lady Amani al-Malik, Sir Sergio Decados, Count Stefano Hazat, Sir Mukuna Washikala, Sir Iskandr Alecto, and Sir Zhe Xianren Li Halan saved a convoy of citizens and monks who were pursued by Vuldrok slavers. Discovering *Castus* (the legendary Holy Sword of Saint Albas) and a faithful follower of Mantius, they fought on. All but Mukuna (?-4503?) perished defending their charges. Many holo-plays celebrate the Seven, later canonized.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Armor (choose Combat Armor or War Armor) *or* Jumpweb Lore; Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns)
Characteristics: Faith +2; Strength +2; Will +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Knightly Order Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Fight 1; Melee 2; Remedy 1; Shoot 2; Vigor 2
Equipment: Premium military weapon (+1 goal) *or* premium combat armor (+1 Body Resistance)

KNIGHTLY ORDER PERKS

Badge of Merit
Badge of Valor
Fencing
Martial Arts
Order Badge
Paragon of Order

Lord

Someone has to do the actual work of ruling a fief, and Lords are the ones to do it. Either raised to know the gravity of their duty or appointed regent while the titled lord goes off adventuring for a bit, Lords study law, rulership, and other necessary fields. Everything a Lord does is scrutinized, though different houses may hold their Lords to different standards. A Lord's marriage is equally as important as their army, and they have the well-being of their people to consider. Some crack under the strain, going mad or becoming callous and cruel. Others are fair and just. Many have a balance of the two — the equilibrium of being a Lord resides somewhere between fear and love.

PATRON SAINTS

The Fisher King – Siddig Keddah of Byblos (c. 2837) was the beloved lord of a fishing community. He was devoted to his people, and when the Cathan Fever struck, he worked tirelessly to care for the sick and the dying until the plague took him. The *Life of Siddig* states that on his death, Siddig appeared in a vision to Amalthea and implored her to save his people — thus bringing her to Byblos, the world which would be renamed Grail.

Hidalgo the Utopian — Raised by his mother, Donna Sofia, on Vera Cruz, Don Alonso Hidalgo Serra y Hazat (4612-4699), studied utopian societies. Becoming Count of Ococuahuitl, an island off the Haven continent on Vera Cruz, he created schools, improved irrigation, established democratic pueblo councils, and was declared *loco* by his relatives. Upon investigation, Haven's bishop saw that grain grew wherever Hidalgo's feet touched the earth. He cured livestock by quoting Zebulon and created a paradise based on the Prophet's teachings. Upon his death, the Little Utopia faded.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 2 Lores related to the running of your fief.
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Faith +2 or Will +2; Presence +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Lord Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 2; Charm 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1; Impress 2; Empathy 1; Observe 1; Shoot 1; Survival 1 *or* Vigor 1
Equipment: Any item within your fief can be requisitioned for your use at any time.

LORD PERKS

Conscript
Executioner
Privy Council
Loyalty unto Death
Untouchable

Questing Knight

A Questing Knight is a member of the Company of the Phoenix, Alexius's personal conquistador brigade. They swear fealty to the Emperor over their own houses. They're also famous for exploring unknown space, bringing back information and treasures the Known Worlds have never seen. While members of the houses often resent nobles who decide to become Questing Knights, the choice can provide an easy path to glory for a second or third child who has no chance of being landed. Questing Knights are fiercely devoted to each other and their Cohorts — merchants and priests who aid them in their duties and travels. (See the priest calling Imperial Cohort.)

PATRON SAINTS

Éva Maria Bellona – Éva Maria (c. 5000) was among the first to pledge herself to the Company of the Phoenix. Her bravery, love of fine wine, and skill at arms were legendary, bestowing great honor to House Xanthippe. Disgusted by the inequity and prejudice she believed was rampant among Questing Knights, she embraced a solitary quest in barbarian space. She disappeared, leaving behind a legacy of valor and an exemplar of bold defiance.

Sir Brieuc the Loyal — Little is known of the mythical Sir Brieuc of Woveweld (31st century?). Legend states this knight explored the Known Worlds for his liege-lady, Countess Chantel Keddah, searching for Zebulon's Belt. He had fantastic adventures and later in life founded the Saint Hombor Monastery on Antioch. The Questing Knights look to Saint Brieuc as a legendary knight loyal to his lord, as well as an explorer of unknown worlds.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Barbarian Jumpweb Lore *or* Combat Armor
Characteristics: Faith +1; Endurance +1; Presence +1; Strength +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Questing Knight Perks list below or from the open perks list. (Imperial Charter is the most common choice.)
Skills: Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Empathy 1 *or* Observe 1; Fight 1; Melee 2 *or* Shoot 2; Survival 2; Vigor 2
Equipment: Sturdy weapon and suit of combat armor (+2 Resistance against breakage)

QUESTING KNIGHT PERKS

All-Access Pass
Badge of Merit
Badge of Valor
Deputize
Fencing
Imperial Charter
Marksmanship
Rise from the Ashes

Ronin

Noble houses are not eternal. Families die off or are wiped out, ruling scepters are lost, and children go off to serve in the guilds or the Church. Sometimes, members of powerful houses are exiled for no reason other than someone stepping on the wrong person's toes at a dance. Ronin seek opportunity or solace outside of their house while still keeping their house in mind. A Decados who gives their life to the Church and foreswears all other allegiances counts as a member of the Church, not a Ronin. However, a Masseri who seeks their fortune in the military of House Hawkwood to bring glory to their house might well be a Ronin. The Emperor Wars set off a massive wave of Ronin from many worlds, all with their own agendas and talents. They meld into the fabric of noble and clerical life, but their goals are their own, and they are not happily or easily thwarted. Not all Ronin stay Ronin — some are eventually accepted back into their house, while others join orders like the Questing Knights.

PATRON SAINTS

Mafalda the Convert — Mafalda Roão (?-2995), the last destitute survivor of a minor noble house, took to the life of a wandering warrior for hire. When the ukari attacked Aylon (2995), she defended the nascent Church of Zebulon at the foot of Prophet's Hill, inspired by the example of the sainted Defenders of Aylon. Besieged, she fought to the death defending the flock. Converted during the siege to the new faith, she posthumously became one of the early saints of the Church.

The Two-Blood Border Lord – Born of House Trusnikron, reared amongst barbarians, and rumored to have had a Vuldrok father, Luc (c. 4995) lived between cultures. He made his home on Leminkainen, frequently mediating between Vuldrok and Hawkwoods — but when he slew a Hawkwood soldier in defense of a barbarian farmer, Luc was executed for treason. Many despise him as a traitor, while others revere his commitment to an honor that transcends borders or dynastic allegiances.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any); Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns)
Characteristics: Dexterity +2 *or* Endurance +2 *or* Strength +2; Perception +1; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Ronin Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 1 *or* Knavery 1; Empathy 1; Fight 1; Melee 2 *or* Shoot 2; Impress 2; Observe 2; Survival 1
Equipment: A family relic that you rescued from destruction. It might be worth something again… someday.

RONIN PERKS

Hired Muscle
Living Legend
Military Rank
Nothing to Lose
Seen Too Much
Trouble Magnet

Decados Ronin

Spy

The most dangerous enemy is one you can't see, and Spies are all but invisible. They may play at being a Courtier or a Questing Knight, but what they're really looking for is a way to get you at your most vulnerable. Not all Spies kill, but many have some training in the art of employing poisons and antidotes. A Spy is unable to be held by doors or locks: After five seconds with a hairpin, guarded secrets are all theirs. You might have thought you said something innocuous, but the Spy will figure out how to use it later.

Like the Incognito calling, the Spy assumes a "cover identity" calling under which they hide. See the *Cover Identity* sidebar. Noble Spies have a true allegiance to their house's agency: al-Malik Mutasih, Decados Jakovians, Hawkwood Rooks, Hazat Archons, the Imperial Eye, or the Li Halan Hidden Martyrs.

PATRON SAINTS

The Father of Secrets, Protector of Malignatius – Willem Van Gelder of Aola (c. 4600) founded his family's espionage network after Vladimir's betrayal. With an unremarkable face and unpretentious manner, he easily developed new identities for different missions, and he taught his protégés to do likewise. Through guile and disguise, Willem secured his family's longevity, protecting it with enough secrets to topple an empire. Undoubtedly, Willem's most dramatic identity shift was transforming the reputation of his family from unremarkable landowners to notorious spies.

Yussef the Reclaimer of Souls — Yussef (4400s) was of the Ishtakr al-Malik. When Rahimat al-Malik came, researching family lore, he quickly realized Yussef's intelligence. Rahimat asked him to be his eyes. Yussef agreed, aiding Rahimat with intelligence on his enemies. Together they rediscovered through family lore Bay'ho len Itka Tu, the Way to the Three Mountains. After Rahimat's victories, Yussef offered his skills to the Patriarch, became an early spy in barbarian space, and eventually helped captured Church members escape.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 1 that supports your cover identity; Poison Lore *or* Streetwise Lore *or* Torture Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Perception +2; Presence +1; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Spy Perks list below *or* from your cover-identity calling's list *or* from the open perks list.
Skills: Empathy 1 *or* Sneak 1; Knavery 2; Observe 2; allocate 5 skill ranks among other skills that support your cover identity
Equipment: As your cover identity's calling.

SPY PERKS

Martial Arts
Mimic
Rabble Rouse
Ruthless
Second Skin
Secret Agent
Vicious Insult

Sybarite

Some parties are nice, well-catered affairs with good music, but nothing to write home about. The Sybarite's parties are an order of magnitude above these gatherings – grand spectacles of light, sound, and culinary delights. Even a small Sybarite party is sure to leave people talking for days afterwards. A little party never killed nobody — except the people the Sybarite wanted dead — and those who adhere to this calling know well the power of word of mouth. Sybarites have a bad reputation for being crass, tasteless, and even disgusting, but for most Sybarites, this is only part of their carefully-crafted image. Their favorite tactic is "shock and awe," and the ballroom is their chosen battlefield.

PATRON SAINTS

The Virgin Voluptuary – Abbess Iulia Decados relinquished house for Church and embraced extreme chastity, but never abandoned her family penchant for intemperance. Her remote convent on Nowhere, now abandoned, welcomed private conclaves for the powerful; under her eye, excess promoted vice, but discretion promised diplomacy. Her legendary Conclave of Figs (c. 4925) — with its figs, selchakah, and 100 courtesans — curried favors, bartered secrets, and forged impossible allegiances that shaped the end of the Regency. Her ashen relics are still sought for their miraculous opioid quality.

Yuri of the Distilleries — Rediscovering an ancient ingredient for Urth vodka, Yuri Juandaastas (4632-4720) ran several successful distilleries on Istakhr. A cheerful, boisterous man, he held huge bacchanals on his estate where guests included exemplars of all species. So popular were his parties that he became a peacemaker between local humans and various alien communities. Annually giving huge sums to the poor and the Church, he invited the destitute to his masked balls twice a year, dressing them like nobles.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 1 Lore (any) and another Lore or a Musical Instrument.
Characteristics: Endurance +1 *or* Will +1; Intuition +1; Presence +3
Perk: Choose 1 from the Sybarite Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Arts 2; Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Disguise 1 *or* Sleight of Hand 1; Knavery 2; Observe 1; Perform 1; Vigor 1
Equipment: Three disguise outfits for masked balls.

SYBARITE PERKS

Blackmail
Fencing
Debauchery
Entourage
Schmooze
Vicious Insult

Priest

The shadows of the saints and holy men and women shimmered on the walls, appearing almost to move in the flickering illumination of hundreds of votives. A thick cloud of heady incense hung in the air.

Brother Pavel knelt before the altar, deep in prayer. With his mind still and his heart at peace, he prepared himself for his fate. At the edge of awareness, he noticed another of the brotherhood come to kneel by him, but then the choir began to sing, and he let his consciousness focus on the hymn. He did not hear the words, but the hymn's meaning was clear; he felt his soul begin to soar.

The church shook, and the thunderous boom that followed a fraction of a second later pulled him from his trance. A second and a third concussion rocked the foundation of the church so much that dust fell from the ceiling. Inhaling deeply, he rose slowly to his feet. The shaking and thunderous boom came almost immediately. They were getting closer.

He reached over his shoulder and drew the blade he wore. Holding it with the tip toward the floor, he kissed the pommel. He was ready. His hard years of training with the Brother Battle would be put to the test this day. Today he would meet the enemy in war in defense of the church, its followers, and his very beliefs. Today he would meet his fate. He would emerge victorious… or he would die in battle.

Sheathing the sword, he turned and give a grim smile and nod to the brother next to him. He brushed some of the fallen debris from his shoulder and headed for the door.

No single institution has as much impact on day-to-day life in the Known Worlds as does the Universal Church of the Celestial Sun. Despite the Church's many factions and sects, the average peasant sees it as a giant monolith, dedicated to saving humanity from the evil inherent in the universe. As far as they can tell, all the priests work toward the same goal, hand-in-hand, fighting evil together. Never mind the fact that they call one another heretics; the Church itself is good. The peasants' view only changes when someone tries to replace the sect of their ancestors with a new one.

You can choose from a number of sects as a member of the Church. Each of these are described in more detail in the *Faction: Sect Apprenticeship* section.

Class: Upbringing

At this stage of your life, you're not yet a priest, and you have received no formal training, but you might have been groomed for the task by your family or taken under a priest's wing for tutelage.

At 1st level, you gain the following traits:

UPBRINGING TRAITS

Capabilities: Cathedral Customs; Homeworld Lore; Medical Lore (choose Surgery or Disease) *or* Musical Instrument (choose Brass, String, Woodwind, Percussion, or Keyboard) *or* Transport (choose Beastback, Beastcraft, or Landcraft); Read/Speak Urthish; Religion Lore

Characteristics: Faith +1; Endurance +1 *or* Strength +1; Intuition +1 *or* Wits +1; Presence +2

Perks: the Inspiring perk plus 1 class perk chosen from the Priest Class Perks list listed below or from the open perks list.

Skills: Academia 1 *or* Crafts 1; Charm 2; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Remedy 1

OPTION: BROTHER BATTLE MONASTERY UPBRINGING

Instead of using the traits listed above, you can use those listed below. You were given to the Brother Battle as an infant, raised in one of their exclusive monasteries. If you choose this upbringing, but not the Brother Battle faction, it means you failed to pass the rigorous tests to become an apprentice when you hit puberty; you were then turned loose into the world.

Capabilities: Armor (Combat or War); Religion Lore

Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Endurance +1; Strength +1; Faith +1; Will +1

Skills: Academia 1; Fight 1; Focus 1; Vigor 2

Priest Class Perks

Chartophylax
Church Ordination (the faction apprenticeship stage listed below will award you this perk's 1st rank)
Condemn
Enlightened
Harmonize

Hierophant
Holier Than Thou
Inquisitorial Seal
Inspiring (already awarded during the upbringing stage, as shown above)
Invigorate
Landed
Legate
Martial Arts
Nimble
Petition
Purge
Retainer
Righteous Sermon
Riches
Shepherd of the Flock
Wise One
Witch Hunt

Filling in the Character Sheet

See the noble upbringing stage, above, for directions on how to fill out the character sheet with the traits provided to you by your upbringing, as well as your faction's apprenticeship and your calling.

Faction: Sect Apprenticeship

There are five major sects and a handful of minor ones, as well as some pagans. Each of the major sects is described in detail in the following section. You spent your apprenticeship years learning the ropes from your faction.

Brother Battle

Known as defenders of the Prophet's faith and champions of the faithful, Brother Battle priests are among the greatest warriors in the Known Worlds. They train from childhood to hone the skills needed to preserve the Church and the Empire against military threats of all kinds. A Brother Battle character might be a symbiot fighter, a protector of pilgrims, or a bodyguard to a priest or noble.

All Brother Battle monks spend their apprenticeships in exclusive order monasteries. Most of them spent their upbringing there, too.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Special: You can choose to allocate 1 or more characteristic ranks to the Theurgy characteristic, and you can increase it by using the characteristic ranks awarded at each level.
Capability: Armor (Combat Armor or War Armor) or Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Brother Battle Lore; Military Weapons
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Endurance +1; Faith +1; Strength +2
Perk: Church Ordination (Apprentice)
Skills: Fight 1; Focus 1 *or* Impress 1 *or* Survival 1; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Remedy 1; Vigor 1

SECT QUIRKS
Blessing: Disciplined (+2 goal to shake off states)
Curse: Clueless (-2 goal on Intuition- and Perception-based rolls to notice social cues)
Favored calling: Brother Battle
Material award: You have a blessed sword or slug gun. The weapon of choice grants +1 goal to either Melee or Shoot, respectively, when wielded against a foe of the Church.

Eskatonic Order

Originally viewed as heretical occultists, the Eskatonics were welcomed into the Universal Church after their command of theurgy proved invaluable against the symbiot menace. Now members of this sect seek out esoteric knowledge for the glory of the Pancreator and the good of the wider Church. An Eskatonic character might be an artifact hunter, a potent theurgist, or a demon hunter.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Special: You can choose to allocate 1 or more characteristic ranks to the Theurgy characteristic, and you can increase it by using the characteristic ranks awarded at each level.
Capability: Eskatonic Order Lore; Occult Lore; Read Latin or choose any one Lore
Characteristics: Faith +2; Intuition +2; Wits +1
Perk: Church Ordination (Novitiate)
Skills: Academia 2; Alchemy 1 *or* Observe 1; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1 *or* Remedy 1; Focus 1

SECT QUIRKS
Blessing: Curious (+2 Perception when encountering something new)
Curse: Subtle (-1 goal for persuasion influence when explaining something)
Favored calling: Occultist
Material award: You have a complete set of the *Apocrypha of Horace* (in either book or data archive format) and four texts containing information about Saint Horace the Learned that were rejected by the Church (citing alleged false authorship and theological error).

Sanctuary Aeon

The most beloved sect within the Universal Church, Sanctuary Aeon brings the Pancreator's grace and healing to all sentient beings without prejudice. Amaltheans preach justice, respect, and tolerance as the keys to peace of mind and body. This stance has earned them the esteem even of their opponents within the Church. A Sanctuary Aeon character might be a pacifist healer, a talented diplomat, or a counselor to another priest or noble.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Lore (any); choose a Medical Lore (Cybernetics, Disease, Poison, or Surgery); Sanctuary Aeon Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +2; Faith +1 *or* Intuition +1; Presence +1; Wits +1
Perk: Church Ordination (Novitiate)
Skills: Academia 1 *or* Arts 1 *or* Perform 1; Charm 1; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Remedy 2

SECT QUIRKS
Blessing: Compassionate (+1 goal for persuasion influence when helping others)
Curse: Gullible (-2 Mind Resistance against fast-talk attempts)
Favored calling: Healer
Material award: You own a minor *merciful technal* (TL5 device; a medical scanner or surgery kit; grants +2 goal to Remedy rolls).

Temple Avesti

Even the Orthodoxy views these fanatics as too rigid in their interpretation of the Prophet's teachings. The Avestites seek to purge sin from the universe with cleansing fire. The Temple Avesti preach a rigorous life of discipline and penance as the best means to reflect the light of the Holy Flame. An Avestite character might be a zealous inquisitor, a traveling missionary, or a dogged bounty hunter.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Lore (any) *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Temple Avesti Lore; Torture Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Faith +1; Endurance +1; Presence +1; Perception +2
Perk: Church Ordination (Novitiate)
Skills: Empathy 1 *or* Knavery 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Focus 1 *or* Vigor 1; Impress 1; Observe 1

SECT QUIRKS
Blessing: Pious (+1 goal for coercion influence among the sinful)
Curse: Righteous (-1 goal on Will- and Faith-based rolls when judgment questioned)
Favored calling: Inquisitor
Material award: You wear a pendant bearing the symbol of the Holy Flame. With the flick of a switch, this symbol becomes a searing brand which an Avestite can use to brand sinners' foreheads.

Urth Orthodox

The Orthodoxy has a reputation for rigidity and worldliness. Despite this, many of its priests care deeply about their flocks, hoping to protect them from both outward and inward evil, whether it be aliens, barbarians, or heresy. An Urth Orthodox character might be a devoted shepherd of souls, a time-serving bureaucrat, or a power-hungry prelate — all are possible within the largest and most influential sect of the Universal Church.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Court Customs *or* Lore (any; usually Oratory); Read Latin *or* Speak Latin; Urth Orthodox Lore
Characteristics: Faith +2 *or* Will +2; Presence +2; Wits +1
Perk: Church Ordination (Novitiate)
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1 *or* Remedy 1; Perform 2

SECT QUIRKS
Blessing: Pious (+2 Presence among the sinful)
Curse: Austere (-2 Charm with members of the flock)
Favored calling: Clergy
Material award: You have an illuminated copy of the Omega Gospels and a silver jumpgate cross.

Priest Callings

At 1st-level, you choose a calling to represent your early career. At this stage of your life, you've entered the ministry.

Brother Battle

This calling is exclusive to those priests who chose Brother Battle for their faction at 1st level. You *must* choose this calling at 1st level to join Brother Battle. Their single-minded dedication means there is a limited number

of callings a priest can follow in addition to this one: Healer (combat medic), Occultist (usually posted to the Stigmata Garrison), and Theurgist. Even then, at every *other* level after you've chosen a different calling, you must come back to your Brother Battle calling.

> ***Example:*** *You must choose the Brother Battle calling at 1st level to join. At 2nd, you might decide to become a Healer. At the 3rd level, you must return to the Brother Battle calling, although at 4th level you can again explore one of the other approved callings, and so on.*

Otherwise, a Brother Battle character can only choose another calling if they are, for whatever reason, intending to leave the order and pursue another path for themselves. Such a choice would be highly unusual. With few exceptions, Brothers Battle do not choose to leave the order of their own accord. Aside from death, expulsion due to misconduct or heresy are the only means of doing so. Such an expulsion would be a noteworthy event in the history of the order. Consequently, any character choosing another calling than those listed above must have done something exceptionally grave. Even then, the order sometimes prefers to discipline its wayward members harshly rather than expelling them, as expulsion both undermines morale within the order and sullies the reputation of the Brothers.

PATRON SAINTS

Korhonon of the Holy Hand — Risto Korhonon (4589-4679) entered Brother Battle at age five. After achieving oblate level and becoming adept with the laser rifle and mist sword, he nonetheless lost his right arm defending Syneculla Otto Brandhorst from a heretical Incarnate's attack. While healing, he studied chirurgery and later returned to his old unit as their chaplain. His ability to bless weapons and armor became legendary within his lifetime. He cured injuries from a distance, a miracle he attributed to faith.

Master Isabella – Master Isabella Cardozo's discipline and skill at arms earned great renown. She commanded great respect as she rose through the ranks of Brother Battle. She died with her corps in battle on Absolution (4900). The epic poem *Isabella Immolata* claims that she was miraculously immolated before she could be claimed by the symbiots. Iconography depicts her wielding a broken sword atop a mound of fallen monstrous bodies, surrounded by holy flame.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Armor (Combat Armor, Handheld Shield, or War Armor); Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Gun or Slug Gun)

Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Endurance +1; Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Strength +2

Skills: Fight 2; Melee 2; Focus 1; Impress 1; Shoot 2; Survival 1; Vigor 1

Perk: Choose 1 from the Brother Battle Perks list below or from the open perks list.

Equipment: Premium weapon (+1 goal) *or* premium armor (+1 Body Resistance)

BROTHER BATTLE PERKS

Armed to the Teeth
Battlesense
Born on the Battlefield
Deliverance
Imbue Tabernacle
Mantok
Mental Conditioning
Resilient
Steadfast
Theurgic Rites (you can choose theurgy rites as calling perks; see **Chapter 5: The Occult**)
Two-Gun Fighting

Chorister

This calling covers a number of different vocations — leaders of church choirs, hymnists, even folksingers — and thus, it is open to priests of any sect who seek to serve the Pancreator through the art of song. Many sects have ancient traditions of song that they continue to cultivate even in the present day. For example, the Avestites have long used chanters to reinforce the faith of their members and inspire others through the simple, almost-hypnotic rhythms of their chants. Similar stories could be told of all the major sects of the Church, as well as many minor ones, meaning that this calling is far from rare. Of course, any priest who is especially dedicated to singing may well become one of the Chorali, who are the greatest practitioners of ecclesiastical music in the Universal Church. Choosing this calling does not mean that you are a member of the Chorali, unless you first seek them out for training in their methods, but many Chorali are choristers.

PATRON SAINTS

Saint Dario — Dario Sabatelli (3800s) was a popular Second Republic anarchist folksinger (*Chimes of Change*) who converted after hearing the choir at Saint Hombor's Church in Roma. Possessing an excellent baritone, he brought many jaded Second Republicans to the faith by the power of his voice alone. Creating new songs (*Zebulon Proskomedia*) and reviving older liturgical music, Dario eventually led the Patri-

arch's Choir. His singing healed many, including the crippled atheist-doubter, "Mr. Jones."

The Singer of Pentateuch – "Sing to me of the Pancreator," the strange blue flame commanded Ksenia (c. 3810), a young draga-herder born to the first generation of settlers on Pentateuch. "I know neither song nor scripture," the terrified girl trembled in reply. "Sing to me of the Pancreator," the flame repeated, and Ksenia sang a wondrous new hymn of creation, followed by other sacred melodies unveiling the beauty of the Empyrean. Thus she sang for seven times seven years, then chanted her own dirge and died.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Performing Arts (Music); Performing Arts (Song)
Characteristics: Faith +1; Intuition +2; Presence +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Chorister Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 2; Empathy 1 *or* Observe 1; Focus 2; Perform 5
Equipment: You own a musical instrument and fine performance attire.

CHORISTER PERKS

Breath Mark
Gospel
Harmonize
Key Signature
Perfect Pitch
Petition

Clergy

Clergy are administrative priests, which is to say, priests whose primary occupation is the daily bureaucratic work necessary to ensure that the Church continues to function. To some, this would no doubt seem to be drudgery of the highest order, as well as a distraction from the higher callings of the Church, such as preaching and tending to the spiritual needs of the faithful. Priests who take up this calling, however, would argue that what they are doing is every bit as important as the work of a parish priest or wandering mendicant. Without the copying of texts, the keeping of records, the distribution of alms, and so forth, the Church would be unable to support good works done elsewhere. Clergy correctly see themselves as the bedrock of the Church, the priests who maintain the hidden machinery of ecclesiastical governance on which everything else depends. This is not the glamorous work of a charismatic preacher or a beloved healer, but it is vital nonetheless. (It is also, however, a common cover for Spies because of the access to records it provides.)

PATRON SAINTS

Mother Ruby, Martyr of Criticorum – Mother Ruby sought nothing less than salvation for her small community. When the first ukari forces attacked Criticorum (2855), she sought to shelter and shield her people, but the ukari marauders slew her. Legends relate that Mother Ruby then strode defiantly to the door of her chapel, holding aloft her severed head, which intoned holy curses against the brutal ukari. A superstitious lot, they fled in terror, allowing Ruby's community to find safety.

Saltik the Broker — When Erdal Saltik's (31st century) family converted to the Universal Church, he enthusiastically followed. Rising in the clergy, he was instrumental in shaping the Council of Artemis (3170), which formulated Church doctrine concerning social dignity and aid, managing to hold the split between the proto-Mahayana and Hinayana factions for 60 years. Becoming Metropolitan of Istanbul, he was a strong advocate of the *megalynein* **movement, meant to magnify and follow the teachings of Zebulon.**

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Read Latin; Speak Latin
Characteristics: Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Presence +1; Wits +3
Perk: Choose 1 from the Clergy Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 2; Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Empathy 1 *or* Knavery 1; Focus 2; Interface 1; Observe 2
Equipment: You have three sets of vestments and ecclesiastical attire (everyday wear, low, and high ritual).

CLERGY PERKS

Chartophylax
Counterfeit
Hierophant
Holier Than Thou
Indulgence
Legate
Quaestor

Confessor

Although all priests are capable of hearing the confessions of the faithful and offering them absolution for their sins, this calling represents a very specific type of priest, namely one who has entered the service of a single noble, merchant, or higher-ranking member of the clergy to be their spiritual advisor. As its name

suggests, the priest who takes up this calling hears the confessions of the person to whom they are attached; this is the key to the calling, as the Church considers the ritual confession of sins to be a vital means by which the Pancreator's grace is conveyed to the faithful, thereby enabling them to better reflect His light. This calling is more than that, though, for a Confessor is there to form the conscience and guide the actions of their patron. In so doing, the Confessor has a profound influence over that person and ensures that the Church's influence can be felt on a personal level. Since most Confessors attach themselves to people of power and importance in the Known Worlds, the impact of their advice can be great indeed.

PATRON SAINTS

Felix the Steadfast – They were inseparable: the Hawkwood adventurer and his Orthodox confessor. They traveled together throughout space following no call but that of exploration, and Brother Felix (c. 4545) offered the voice of ethics and reason. Although he warned against entering barbarian space during the height of Vladimir's campaign, he faithfully followed his lord into the unknown. Captured by Vuldrok on Hargard, they were lashed together and run through with a single blade, bound together in death as they lived in life.

Klax'tor the Kind — A hironem of the Illu outcast caste, Klax'tor (? -4762?) caught the attention of a visiting Church representative on Turaz, who adopted and taught the lone hironem. Klax'tor later became the confessor to Countess Christina Decados, known for her exotic entourage. Due to Klax'tor's honesty and faith, she came to rely on him completely. The kind-hearted Klax'tor was declared a saint on Decados worlds, and later recognized on other worlds as well.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose a Customs Lore (Commons Customs or Court Customs, based on your patron's class); Lore (any)
Characteristics: Faith +1; Intuition +2; Presence +2
Skills: Charm 2; Empathy 3; Focus 1; Impress 1; Observe 2; Remedy 1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Confessor Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Equipment: You own a collection of penitential manuals and a *traveling confessional* (TL6 force-field emitter; creates a zone of silence: 1 square-meter area from which no sound emanates, but anyone within the zone can hear one another. *Tech Compulsion:* Solicitous).

CONFESSOR PERKS

Absolution
Call to Contrition
House Confessor
Keeping Secrets
Micro-Confessions
Royal Confidence

Dreamtender

Though psychology, psychiatry, and other sciences of the mind are generally studied most assiduously in the Merchant League, the Church also has a tradition of tending to the ailments of the mind. This tradition goes all the way back to the Prophet himself. The Omega Gospels recount in several places the Prophet's ministering to those troubled by dreams and nightmares; he viewed them as another means by which the Pancreator spoke to his creatures and encouraged his disciples to pay heed to the wanderings of their sleeping minds, for therein lay hidden wisdom. Following his example (and that of Saint Amalthea, who also paid close attention to the revelatory power of dreams), the Church trained and authorized certain priests to act as "healers of the mind," spiritual therapists known as "dreamtenders." Some outsiders, particularly among those wedded to Republican-era scientific theories, scoff at the calling of the Dreamtender, but their skills are well-documented. Many a noble and hierarch keeps a Dreamtender on staff, in order to interpret their subconscious thoughts and so better lead them down the path that the Pancreator is drawing them.

PATRON SAINTS

Evagria the Dream-healer – Evagria (c. 4940) was a follower of the Eskatonic way. Seeing dreams as the "royal road to the sacred consciousness," she studied obun dream science, Second Republic oneirology, and different esoteric psychologies. Evagria established a chapel in Viridian on New Istanbul, where she learned from both studying obscure texts and engaging in therapeutic dialogue with those who sought her wisdom. Eskatonic contemplative psychology owes much to her pioneering insights.

Saint Krause — Karl Friederich Alt (4612-94) was an Amalthean healer who became interested in the "dreaming cure." Discovering "kaverne chiffrée," a method where the unconscious spoke with spirits, he treated many battle-scarred veterans and brought a patient back from the dead (the Miracle of the Couch). Initially suspicious of his work, the Church could not ignore his successes, allowing for his eventual canonization after a confirmation of the miracles attributed to him.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any) *or* choose a Customs Lore (Commons Customs or Court Customs); Occult Lore
Characteristics: Intuition +2; Perception +1; Presence +2
Perk: Choose 1 from Dreamtender Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 2 *or* Knavery 2; Empathy 3; Focus 1; Observe 1; Remedy 2
Equipment: A copy of the *Formulary of St. Kalle*, an approved book dedicated to dream interpretation.

DREAMTENDER PERKS

Analyze Personality
Cleansing Word
Empathic Connection
Epiphany
Incubation
Micro-Confessions

Friar

This calling describes priests who serve a specific community, whether it includes peasants (the most common assignment for friars), the inhabitants of a space station, or even something more exotic, like a traveling circus. Throughout the Known Worlds, there are untold thousands of communities of believers, and each one needs a priest dedicated to its spiritual well-being. The Church takes this need very seriously, for without the presence of a friar in a community, the faithful could easily be led astray from the reflective path. Friars are often overworked and under-supported by their superiors, which can lead to frustration, anger, and exhaustion if not tended to. Other friars do not take their duties as seriously as the Church and, left to their own devices, find ways to lead decidedly unholy lives, especially in communities far from centers of ecclesiastical control. This calling is frequently not a prestigious one, and priests who hope to advance within the hierarchy sometimes shy away from it. On the other hand, friars who excel in their vocation can be noticed and rewarded for their selfless toiling on behalf of the souls of the faithful. Some of the Church's greatest saints were once humble friars, and their examples continue to inspire.

PATRON SAINTS

Sojourner Gilead — The wandering preacher was quiet, unassuming, and scarred by an unspoken past. He traveled with his flock, a motley band of guild explorers who sought to make a new life in the years shortly after the Fall. Gilead frequently offered counsel that was usually unsolicited but often necessary. His memoirs testify to his realization that life in a community was a pilgrimage as profound as any religious endeavor. Ultimately, he found redemption as he served others.

Sorr-Thunain the Mime — An obun of the Voavenlohjun sect, Sorr-Thunain (39-40th century) recreated the comedic/tragic philosophy (Tlask) of the Seven Cities of Zhri'aalloi, consisting of sophisticated pantomime performances that conveyed sacred lore. A friar to the small city of Tajinn in Velisamil, he entered under a vow of silence. All his teachings were mute performances done with such dignity, pathos, and comedy in imparting sacred teachings that Sorr-Thunain drew many to Zebulon, becoming canonized in due time.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Commons Customs; Lore (any)
Characteristics: Faith +1 *or* Endurance +1; Intuition +1; Presence +3
Perk: Choose 1 from the Friar Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Arts 1 *or* Crafts 1; Charm 3 *or* Impress 3; Drive 1 *or* Survival 1; Empathy 2; Knavery 1 *or* Observe 1; Perform 2
Equipment: Common vestments, a jumpgate cross, a *writ of assistance* (somebody owes you a favor, not training but an actual non-dangerous deed they will perform or hire out for when you call it in)

FRIAR PERKS

Armor of Sanctity
Lay Priest
Peasant Hero
Shepherd of the Flock
Tend the Flock

Healer

Many priests take up the arts of the doctor, the surgeon, and the potioner; this calling covers them all. The teachings of the Prophet are sometimes mistakenly dismissed as being purely spiritual and without any concern for the sufferings of the material world and the people who dwell within it. A close reading of the Omega Gospels and the pronouncements of the Church down through the centuries, however, would quickly disavow one from such a belief. Zebulon and his Disciples were often moved by the ailments of ordinary people and worked to alleviate them when possible. The Church maintains hospitals and houses of healing across the Known Worlds, staffed not only by Amaltheans but also by priests of

many sects, all of whom take seriously the Prophet's injunction not to neglect the health of the body while tending to the health of the soul. Priests who take up this calling thus play an important role in the Church, contributing to the high regard so many common folk hold for it.

PATRON SAINTS

Rohit the Spagyrist — One of the greatest potioners in history, Saint Rohit of Capo (now a lost world) was among Amalthea's earliest followers. Rohit left pharmaceutical sciences for meditation and study at the newly established Santa Amalthea on Mount Siddik, where he demonstrated expertise with restorative concoctions and healing elixirs. He traveled the Known Worlds, collecting, documenting, and modifying traditional and innovative remedies. Rohit's *New Pharmacopoeia Spagyrica* remains the most important compendium of this healing art.

Saint Jivanta —Chosen as her mother's successor, Amalthea's daughter, Jivanta (2722-2951), became Kecharch of Sanctuary Aeon. The Miracle of the Demon-Plague Cleansing of Artemis (2918?) is attributed to her; it tells of when she healed the world from the infection of fallen entities. So devoted was Jivanta to healing that she stepped down as Kecharch (2929, some Church histories give 2932), stating that the Amaltheans did not need a royal caste; instead, she said they should choose their leaders. Then she left for Holy Terra, where she tended the poor.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose a primary Medical Lore and either a secondary Medical Lore or any Lore.
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Faith +2; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Healer Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 2; Empathy 2; Focus 1; Observe 1; Remedy 3
Equipment: A physick's kit, consisting of low-tech first aid supplies (bandages, alcohol, etc.), plus 5 doses of standard-potency Elixir.

HEALER PERKS

Cleansing Word
Concoct Elixir
Fortitude in Faith
Invigorate
Loving Prayer
Military Rank
Peasant Hero

Imperial Cohort

Some priests hear the call to more worldly duties, inflamed by the values and vision set forth by Emperor Alexius over the course of his reign. These few pursue the role of Imperial Cohort to the Company of the Phoenix — the Questing Knights. A priest who takes up this calling provides spiritual succor and advice to a Questing Knight, acting in a fashion not dissimilar to the Confessor calling. An Imperial Cohort accompanies the knight to whom they are attached and travels wherever the knight goes, often into dark places far from the bosom of the Universal Church. A Cohort thus gains the unprecedented opportunity to preach to new converts, providing a sterling example of what the Prophet's faith has to offer. Of course, doing so may cost the priest the opportunity to advance within the hierarchy of the Church. Many hierarchs distrust Imperial Cohorts, seeing them more as agents of the Emperor than children of the Church. This suspicion — and, in some cases, outright animosity — is one of the reasons that this calling remains controversial within the Church. Priests who take it up should be prepared to encounter resistance among more traditional members of the faith.

PATRON SAINTS

Clara of Antioch — She cursed, she smoked, she drank, and the sidearm she carried was not for show. Sister Clara (c. 4998) was an Amalthean and one of the first priests to respond to Alexius's call. When news spread that an Amalthean had joined the cause, eyes rolled. Skeptics expected a bleeding heart but got a tough-as-nails search-and-rescue medic. Saving many lives on distant worlds, Clara became the reason many clergy joined the Company of the Phoenix.

Sergios the Resourceful – Father Sergios Apostolos (? -4593), served as a priest, weapon specialist, and cook for the Leib-Gvardia knights, who protected Emperor Vladimir's person. Sergio was twice decorated for bravery against barbarians. After the Emperor's sudden death in 4550, Sergio retreated to a monastery on Ravenna, where this jack-of-all-trades became known for his deep religious meditations and visions foretelling an Emperor's return.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Combat Armor *or* Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Jumpweb Lore (Known Worlds or Barbarian Space)
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Faith +1 or Will +1; Intuition +1 *or* Perception +1; Presence +2

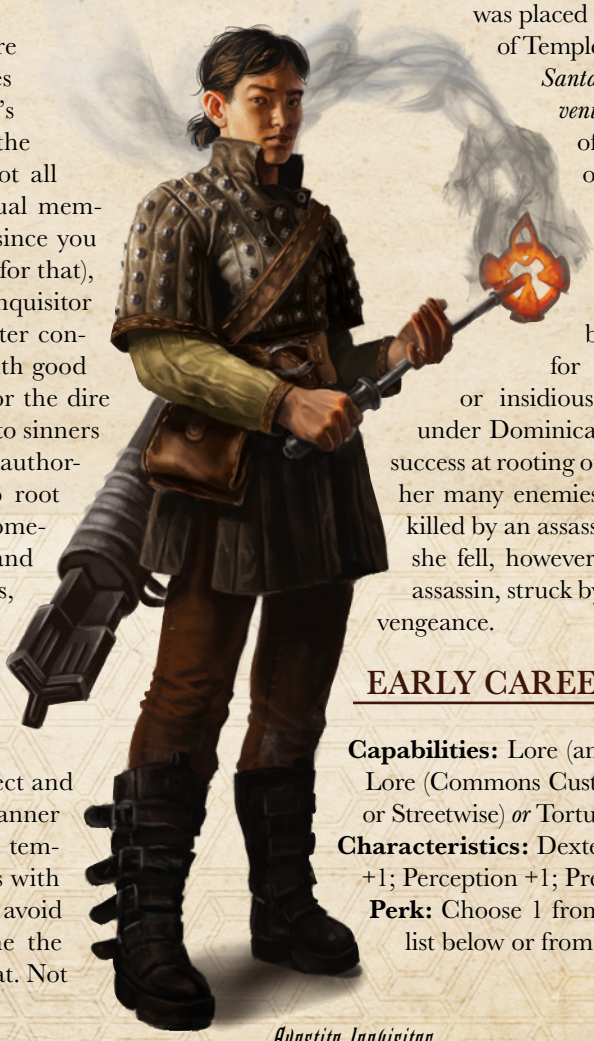
Perk: Choose 1 from the Imperial Cohort Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Observe 2; Remedy 2; Survival 1; Vigor 1
Equipment: *Cohort Badge* (TL7 curio; proof of status, keyed to your DNA and very hard to counterfeit)

IMPERIAL COHORT PERKS

All-Access Pass
Badge of Merit
Badge of Valor
Deputize
Imperial Cohort Charter
Learning from Mistakes
Marksmanship
Martial Arts
Rise from the Ashes

Inquisitor

A Church investigator is trained not just to root out signs of sin and heresy but also to find more tangible clues involving crimes that concern the Church. (It's like an ecclesiastical version of the merchant Detective calling.) Not all who follow this calling are actual members of the official Inquisition (since you need the Inquisitorial Seal perk for that), but most are. The calling of Inquisitor carries with it a decidedly sinister connotation in many circles and with good reason. Inquisitors are feared for the dire punishments they can mete out to sinners and heretics, as well as the wide authority they wield. In their zeal to root out the impious, Inquisitors sometimes scoop up the innocent and care little for the consequences, so long as they achieve their ultimate goals. That said, not all Inquisitors behave in such a fashion. In fact, a great many Inquisitors see their calling as a charitable one intended to protect and defend the faithful from all manner of dangers, both spiritual and temporal. They exercise their duties with restraint and compassion and avoid excessive zeal, lest they become the very monsters they hope to defeat. Not all Inquisitors are successful in this regard, but it's worth remembering that this calling attracts more than unthinking and intolerant fanatics. Indeed, not a small number of Inquisitors are humble parish priests who investigate local crimes more out of curiosity than zeal.



Avestite Inquisitor

PATRON SAINTS

Brother Noman — His birth name is unknown; he is called "The Saint with No Name" or the "Myrk-Blazer" for his skill at burning through spiritual darkness. Brother Noman (? -4500s?) was sent by the Inquisitional Synod to investigate growing demon-worship at a remote monastery on Vera Cruz. Armed with only his blessed flamegun, he burned monks who became undead Husks, immolated Abbot Bertók, who was possessed by a demon, and torched a sizeable library. His flamegun was blessed with the Flame Imperishable. Today, it's a holy weapon of the order. Recited in the uneven Latin of the Avestites, his motto, *Perge! Fac... me... oro!* (which roughly translates to "Go ahead! Make… me… pray!"), was placed over the headquarters of Temple Avesti on Vera Cruz.

Santa Dominica, the Fervent Martyr — A native of Pyre and a student of Grand Inquisitor Argus, Dominica (c. 4560) was immersed in Avestite tradition. Her heart burned with loyalty for her order. No false or insidious doctrine prospered under Dominica's watchful gaze. Her success at rooting out the wicked brought her many enemies. She was eventually killed by an assassin while in prayer. As she fell, however, so too did her own assassin, struck by the Pancreator's just vengeance.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any); choose a Customs Lore (Commons Customs, Court Customs, or Streetwise) *or* Torture Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Endurance +1; Perception +1; Presence +2; Will +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Inquisitor Perks list below or from the open perks list.

Skills: Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Empathy 2 *or* Knavery 2; Focus 1; Observe 2; Perform 2; Shoot 1 *or* Vigor 1
Equipment: Flameproof civilian or combat armor.

INQUISITOR PERKS

All-Access Pass
Armor of Purity
Blood Hound
Deduce
Deputize
Inquisitorial Seal
Inspire Fear
Ruthless
Scent of the Witch
Witch Hunt

Mendicant

A Mendicant is a traveling priest without a formal congregation of their own. This calling applies to all priests who lack a community to which they are assigned, not merely those who belong to a Hesychast sect. The Universal Church of the Celestial Sun is vast and well-organized. This mandate enables it not only to fulfill its mission throughout the Known Worlds but also to exert its power and influence. However, not every priest fits well within the Church's structure; they chafe under its rules and regulations, often causing disruptions by trying to fit themselves into it. The calling of a Mendicant is therefore a recognized outlet for these clerical misfits. Such men and women, provided they neither preach heresy nor act contrary to the good of the Church, are allowed to become itinerant preachers and teachers among the stars. In this, they follow in the footsteps of many saints who are revered for their travels on behalf of the Faith.

PATRON SAINTS

The Pale Rider — Kaddak na Dwelthmid, taudwon of Kordeth (c. 3060) was accustomed to human suspicion. The Ukar-Human Wars had ended, but people saw him as a terrorist, not a priest. Undaunted, he traveled the stars to teach Ronga's reformist doctrine. His quest was poorly received. Some peasants saw his visits as dark omens and the cause of many misfortunes. Set upon by a terrified crowd on Criticorum, Kaddak accepted his own death as a sacrifice, so that he could atone for ukari violence against humanity.

Saints Ruqayya al-Nafti and Shas-Sheyim — A distaff cousin of the Shaprut al-Malik, Ruqayya (4655-4742) was a solemn girl, taken to pondering the Prophet's words. She left home and took to the mendicant life with the Shantor Shas-Sheyim (?—4742). Together, they discussed religion, meditated, and pondered the great universal love of the Pancreator. Pilgrims sought them out, and when Ruqayya died, Shas-Sheyim passed from grief soon after. Buried side by side, their tombs are now a pilgrimage destination.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Commons Customs *or* Lore (any); Jumpweb Lore
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Perception +1; Presence +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Mendicant Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Drive 1 *or* Survival 1; Empathy 1 *or* Knavery 1; Fight 2 *or* Focus 2 *or* Shoot 2; Perform 2; Vigor 2
Equipment: Traveling vestments, portable altar, jumpgate cross, and a one-way, one-use *passage contract* (in the hold of any commercial ship; see the Passage Contract perk).

MENDICANT PERKS

Anthropologist
Epiphany
Fortitude in Faith
Incubation
Living Legend
Righteous Sermon
Vow of Poverty

Monk

This calling covers priests who practice one of a wide variety of ascetic techniques, whether they're contemplative, esoteric, or martial. This calling is not exclusive to a Hesychast sect, though naturally, many members of that sect have taken it up. Unlike the Mendicant calling, the Monk calling is usually not a solitary one. Monks congregate in groups, typically called monasteries, abbeys, or priories, where they live in community with others who have adopted the same calling. The monasteries of the Known Worlds are quite diverse and include many different types of Monks. Some of them have little or no contact with the outside world, while others are actively engaged with it. Some serve the Pancreator by means of academic or scholarly work, while others engage in extreme forms of penance and discipline. What unites them all, despite their variety, is the intensity of their devotion to the faith and the lengths to which they will go in

pursuit of its spiritual gifts. Priests who take up this calling should consider the nature of the monastery from which they came and how its members pursue their vocation.

PATRON SAINTS

Chayim the Banisher — Chayim Bensaïd (34th Century) researched the ancient Essenes and Pharisees of his ancestral peoples and faith, along with Mosaic and Noahchide laws and the Kabbalah. After traveling to the pre-reflective Monastery of Saint George of Choziba near his ancestral homeland on Urth, he practiced ancient Essene meditations. Tempted by demons, Chayim was finally confronted by Sshlu'uthecch, the Whisperer in the Void, who appeared in the form of the Adversary or Prosecutor. Chayim vanquished it with a *tzitzit*, one of the tassels on his ancient Hebrew prayer shawl. (Note: Some historians hold that Chayim was of the ancient Urth Hebrew faith; he was later appropriated by the Church as a saint.)

The Seven Sleepers of Iver – The legend of the seven sleepers is well known among Hesychasts. Seven ascetics on Iver lived in secluded contemplation of the Omega Gospels. When the Incarnates took Iver off the jumpweb (4005), the seven ascetics retreated into hidden caverns and mastered the Via Anima's Slumber of Perfection — a sleep that has lasted centuries. They await Iver's redemption from the Incarnates, when the sleepers will awaken and share the mysteries they have seen in their meditation.

Monk

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose any 2 Lores appropriate to your tradition
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Faith +2; Will +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Monk Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Ascetic Tradition (Focus 2; Remedy 2; Survival 3; Vigor 3) *or* Martial Tradition (Fight 3; Focus 2; Impress 1; Observe 1; Remedy 1; Vigor 2) *or* Scholarly Tradition (Academia 3; Alchemy 2; Arts 2 *or* Crafts 2; Focus 2; Observe 1)
Equipment: Ascetic Tradition (minor saintly relic; grants +1 Focus); Martial Tradition (monastic attire); Scholarly Tradition (collection of books related to a chosen Lore)

MONK PERKS

Armor of Purity
Enlightened
Epiphany
Martial Arts
Monastic Order
Subtle Body
Vow of Poverty

Occultist

Despite the ominous sounding name, an Occultist is simply a priest who studies the practice of theurgy, Ur technologies, fringe sciences, and in some cases, the dark between the stars. The Church has a rich tradition of plumbing the depths of reality, seeking out the hidden wisdom of the Pancreator wherever it may be found. Furthermore, the Prophet taught that the wisdom of those ancient faiths he called "pre-reflective" (that is, from before his vision of the Holy Flame) were real and worthy of study. At the same time, some of those faiths (allegedly) contained errors and falsehoods, along with dangerous teachings that could harm one's very soul. An Occultist is a priest trained by the Church to seek the knowledge hidden in ancient lore without falling prey to their inherent dangers. That is the theory, at least, and history has shown that many priests, no matter how well they're trained, are not adequately prepared to face the Dark head on. Nev-

ertheless, the quest goes on, and the Church honors the Occultist's calling, even as it warns against the calling's many pitfalls.

PATRON SAINTS

The Magus of Delphi – Studying as a mystic, occult philosopher, and alchemist, Magus Johanan of Delphi was known by many names. His arcane research invited the Church's scrutiny, but he was shielded by his political friendship with numerous influential nobles. At the Pentateuch Concordat (4955), he could speak freely and present his studies. His treatise *On the Eskaton* forcefully explicated the otherworldly dangers which threatened creation. His work is credited for its role in convincing the Universal Church to recognize the Eskatonics.

Tsintah, Who Sees in the Dark — Under Amalthean patronage, Tsintah Kláyonah-éh (? -?) researched the ancient *Kíth-nah-klizhíni*, the traditional Spirit of Darkness of her Navajo nation. She sought a way to heal its wounds. After discovering that Darkness was complete and not in need of healing, and that it bore beautiful gifts, Tsintah studied its ways, recognizing that *Kíth-nah-klizhíni* was also a child of the Pancreator. Meeting Eskatonic founder Deimos, she studied the Digamma Apocrypha and later composed a beneficial theurgical work, *Door to the Healings of Night, Nehochée-Dothinlah*.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Occult Lore; Read Latin *or* Weird Tech (choose one type, such as a soul shard or gargoyle)
Characteristics: Faith +2 *or* Will +2; Intuition+2; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Occultist Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 2; Focus 2; Interface 1 *or* Survival 1; Intrusion 1; Observe 2; Sneak 1; Tech Redemption 1
Equipment: Collection of esoteric texts that might provide needed clues when deciphering occult phenomena.

OCCULTIST PERKS

Counter the Dark
Dabble in the Dark
Deduce
Enlightened
Scent of the Witch
Wyrd Knowledge

Scribe

A scribe is a clerk or personal communication assistance to a noble, merchant, or higher-ranking priest. In an age when electronic forms of communication and data storage — not to mention literacy — are not widespread, this is a vital calling. The Church long ago established special curricula for training Scribes; it now lends them to those who can afford their services. There is, naturally, a dual purpose to this practice. First, it ensures that records are kept in a fashion that is relatively standardized and easily understood. Second, it also ensures that the Church has access to those records and, when necessary, it can *bend* them to produce results more favorable to its own perspectives. Priests who take up this calling see it as an opportunity to serve and an invitation to move about in the corridors of power in the Known Worlds. Many nobles and merchants employ scribes to record everything they do for their biographies, making them somewhat like Confessors (or Wordwright guilders) but with more worldly goals. The life of a scribe gives priests access to a kind and quality of life that might otherwise be unavailable to them. That's a very attractive proposition to many, which is why the Church's scribal schools never lack for students. (Like the Clergy calling, this is a common cover calling for Spies.)

PATRON SAINTS

The Apostle to the Shantor — The priest Ulfas of Shaprut (c. 2715) was a scholar and scribe tasked with documenting the beliefs of the equine shantor, a species whose language was translated via *dolomei* voice boxes (a marvel of computational philology). Ulfas didn't just document shantor sacred stories and histories. He also created an alphabetic notation for transcribing their language and developed a primer of their grammar. He's remembered by the shantor as a holy emissary who bridged two cultures.

Rashid the Reliever — Rashid Irshaid (4628-4719?) from New Nablus entered the White Priesthood after wedding Somaya Farij. He became in practice, if not in name, clerk and Chartophylax to the Mahayana reformer Patriarch Questor (4665-4676), influencing his ideas on debt relief. After the Patriarch's demise, he served Duke Saqer ben Sinhijah al-Malik in a similar capacity. The Miracle of the Letter of Horace is attributed to him. His descendants live on Istakhr to this day.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Read Latin; choose a Customs Lore (Commons Customs or Court Customs) *or* Speak Latin
Characteristics: Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Intuition +2; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Scribe Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 2; Art (Writing) 3; Charm 1; Focus 1; Interface 1; Knavery 2 *or* Observe 2
Equipment: Writing implements (pens, ink, etc.) and a *word-renderer* (TL5 curio keyboard; connects to most think machines to allow for typing documents)

SCRIBE PERKS

Backdoor Key
Counterfeit
Criminal Archives Access
Linguist
Perfect Recall
Superficial Knowledge

Spy

Like the noble houses and the Merchant League, the Universal Church of the Celestial Sun has its own intelligence-gathering agencies. In any organization as large as the Church, knowledge is power. To that end, over the centuries, the Church and its sects have created a number of spy networks to acquire that knowledge. Perhaps the best known is the Synecullum, overseen personally by the Patriarch's deputy, but others exist, such as the demon-hunting Kalinthi and the reformed psychics known as Penitents. Church Spies see their calling as every bit as holy as those of other priests, even if outsiders sometimes cannot understand why a religion needs covert operatives. Their activities are not always sinister. Rather, Spies work to protect the Church against the machinations of other powerful groups throughout the Known Worlds, including those who see its hold over the hearts and minds of the common folk as obstacles to their own quests for domination.

A Spy assumes a "cover identity" calling under which they hide. (See the *Cover Identity* sidebar next to the noble Incognito calling.) Church Spies have a true allegiance to their agency: Penitents, Kalinthi, or Syncellum.

PATRON SAINTS

Noor the Observer — The *Testament of Hombor* mentions his disciple Noor, a young woman who followed Hombor, just as Hombor followed Zebulon. One pericope relates that Hombor sought a private pilgrimage across Midian after Zebulon's death. He sent Noor ahead throughout the journey to determine safe passage and assess possible dangers. Clerics who conceal their identities or secretly gather intelligence for their order are often said to follow "the journey of Noor."

Xiao the Invisible — Lin Xiao (?-4457) was an Orthodox priest who became bodyguard to Cardano Li Halan, "Shield of the Prophet", a noble who converted the Li Halan from demon worship to the Church. Lin Xiao became Cardano's choice to lead his fanatical secret police, the Hidden Martyrs. Lin Xiao infiltrated enemy camps. The Miracle of the Sleeper Agent was attributed to him, and his pious acts of generosity to the poor were legendary.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 1 that supports your cover identity; Poison Lore *or* Streetwise Lore *or* Torture Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Perception +2; Presence +1; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Spy calling list, your cover identity's list, or your agency's list: Kalinthi (Occultist, Reclaimer, Scholar, Theurgist), Penitents (Psychic), Synecullum (Banker, Clergy, Courtier).
Skills: Empathy 1 *or* Sneak 1; Knavery 2; Observe 2; allocate 5 skill ranks among other skills that support your cover identity.
Equipment: As your cover identity's calling.

SPY PERKS

Martial Arts
Mimic
Rabble Rouse
Ruthless
Second Skin
Secret Agent
Vicious Insult

Templar

A Templar is a priest who fights to defend the Church and the faithful. This calling is distinct from that of Brother Battle (see above). Templars are priests belonging to one of the other sects who have undertaken the study of combat skills to better protect the interests of the Church. All of them channel their faith in the Pancreator toward martial pursuits, inspired by the examples of martial saints like Lextius and Mantius, who showed that there is no contradiction between the Prophet's teachings and the way of the Templar.

Depending on whether they operate alone or as part of a group, priests who take up this calling may or may not have specifically assigned duties. Those who do not usually attach themselves to the entourage of a noble, merchant, or higher-ranking priest, lending their aptitude with gun and blade to their cause.

Known Church orders include:

The Adamantine Order — Mostly made up of knights, as well as some priests, this order serves the Eskatonics, usually by protecting specific priests.

Order of Saint Yara — This order is dedicated to protecting Amalthean priests on their frequent pilgrimages to dangerous locations.

Swords of Lextius – These templars often serve the Urth Orthodox priesthood as penance, although some families seek favor by sending their younger sons into service.

(Members of these orders might fight alongside nobles of the Knightly Order calling.)

PATRON SAINTS

The Defenders of Aylon — Zebulon's death shattered the faithful. Grieving pilgrims traveled to Aylon to pray at Prophet's Hill, where he first preached. Others had gathered too: Terrorists whose dark hearts hated Zebulon's words came to devastate the disconsolate pilgrims. One small group of stalwart pilgrims fought the terrorists with fist and blade and stick; that day, victory belonged to the faithful, and the memory of the defenders of Prophet's Hill (c. 2849) inspired others to protect the newborn church.

Jamshed the Purifier — Jamshed Taghavi protected the pilgrimage routes through symbiot-contested space to holy shrines on Daishan (4902-5). An Orthodox initiate of deep piety, he recovered the boots and sheath of Saint Mantius from a symbiot-infested shrine. When attacked, he was miraculously saved from symbiot conversion. His prayers against conversion worked on others. Eskatonic and Orthodox specialists studied his miracles and concluded that his great works came from his deep faith.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Armor (Combat Armor, Handheld Shield, or War Armor) *or* Warfare Lore; Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns)

Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Endurance +1; Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Strength +2

Perk: Choose 1 from the Templar Perks list below or from the open perks list.

Skills: Fight 2; Focus 1; Impress 1; Melee 2; Remedy 1; Shoot 2; Vigor 1

Equipment: Premium weapon (+1 goal) or minor saint's relic (+1 Focus)

TEMPLAR PERKS

Badge of Merit
Badge of Valor
Bodyguard
Born on the Battlefield
Fencing
Marksmanship
Martial Arts
Mental Conditioning
Order Badge

Templar

Merchant

The guilds may be all that remain of the giant corporations of the Second Republic, but they've carved out an important place in the Empire. While nobles may snub them, and priests may call them sinners, the merchants know they provide a necessary service — one neither the houses nor the sects could get along without.

You can choose from a variety of guilds as a member of the Merchant League. Each of these are described in more detail in *Faction: Guild Apprenticeship*, later in this section.

Class: Upbringing

At this stage of your life, you're not yet a merchant, and you've received no formal guild training, but you might have been groomed for the task by your family or given an unpaid internship by a merchant.

At 1st level, you gain the following traits:

UPBRINGING TRAITS

Capabilities: Commons Customs; Homeworld Lore; Jumpweb Lore *or* Tech Lore *or* Think Machines *or* Transport (choose one from the list); Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns) *or* Shipboard Operations; Read/Speak Urthish

Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Strength +1; Intuition +1 *or* Will +1; Presence +1; Wits +2

Perks: the Ingenious perk plus 1 class perk chosen from the Merchant Class Perks list or from the open perks list.

Skills: Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Drive 2 *or* Pilot 2 *or* Tech Redemption 2; Fight 1 *or* Shoot 1; Observe 1 *or* Vigor 1

Merchant Class Perks

Embargo
Gambler
Gearhead
Guild Commission (the faction apprenticeship stage listed below will award you this perk's first rank)
Ingenious (already awarded during your upbringing stage)
Landed
Marksmanship
Martial Arts
Nimble
Retainer
Riches
Saint's Blessing
Tech Savvy

Filling in the Character Sheet

See the noble upbringing stage, above, for directions on how to fill out the character sheet with the traits provided to you by your upbringing, as well as your faction's apprenticeship and your calling.

Faction: Guild Apprenticeship

There are five major guilds and a dizzying array of minor ones. Each of the major guilds is described in detail in the following section. You spent your early apprenticeship years learning the ropes from your faction.

Charioteers

The Charioteers control access to the stars and to the destinations most good people want. Starship pilots, drivers, traveling merchants, and more make up this guild. There's often a fine line between a dashing explorer and a smuggler.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Charioteers Lore; Jumpweb Lore *or* a Tech Lore *or* Think Machines; Shipboard Operations

Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Intuition +1; Presence +1; Wits +2

Perk: Guild Commission (Ensign)

Skills: Charm 1; Drive 1 *or* Focus 1; Interface 1; Pilot 1; Shoot 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1

GUILD QUIRKS

Blessing: Curious (+2 Intuition when encountering something new)

Curse: Nosy (-2 Presence when encountering something new)

Favored calling: Star Pilot

Material award: *Jumpkey* (TL7 curio: penlight-sized cylinder; holds jumproute coordinates for a single route between two planets)

Engineers

A first meeting with an Engineer is guaranteed to be unnerving, if not downright petrifying. No one better understands technology than an Engineer, and they often show off their knowledge by incorporating tech into every aspect of their lives — and sometimes their own bodies.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Engineers Lore; choose a Craft or Tech Lore and either a successive Tech Lore *or* Think Machines
Characteristics: Dexterity +2; Intuition +1; Wits +2
Perk: Guild Commission (Apprentice)
Skills: Academia 1; Alchemy 1 *or* Crafts 1 *or* Focus 1; Interface 1; Tech Redemption 2

GUILD QUIRKS
Blessing: Innovative (+2 Intuition when trying to invent something new)
Curse: Unnerving (-2 Presence when dealing with serfs)
Favored calling: Tech Redeemer
Material award: *Multitool* (TL7 nanotech device: produces an array of tools and meters for most tech redemption needs, one tool at a time; screwdriver-sized. *Tech Compulsion:* Industrious.)

The Muster

Begun by and still run by mercenaries, the Muster has expanded its catalog dramatically. The Chainers make their living off living beings. Mercenaries, technicians, animals, foodstuffs, and (some say) slaves make up their inventory. The Muster is the freeperson's labor guild, providing trained (but union-regulated) labor for freepersons to various contractors.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Muster Lore; choose two equipment capabilities (armor, military ordnance, transport, or weapons)
Characteristics: Dexterity +2 *or* Endurance +2; Faith +1 *or* Will +1 *or* Presence +1; Strength +2
Perk: Guild Commission (Private)
Skills: Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1; Impress 1; Shoot 1; Tech Redemption 1 *or* Vigor 1

GUILD QUIRKS
Blessing: Bold (initiative edge on combat and coercion influence)
Curse: Callous (-2 Presence when asked for aid)
Favored calling: Mercenary
Material award: *MuSpA suit* (TL6 device: multi-spectrum synth armor; 4 Body Resistance; Shockproof, Slamproof + choose one more -proof: Blaster-, Flame-, or Laser-; does not require an armor capability. *Tech Compulsion:* Protective.)

The Reeves

The Reeves (Gray Faces) do all that they can to appear as the most respectable of guilds. Working as lawyers, advisors, and bankers, they never seem to rock the boat. However, the guild also houses loan collectors, information gatherers, and even reporters. Wherever the reins of power are held, Reeves are often wearing the spurs.

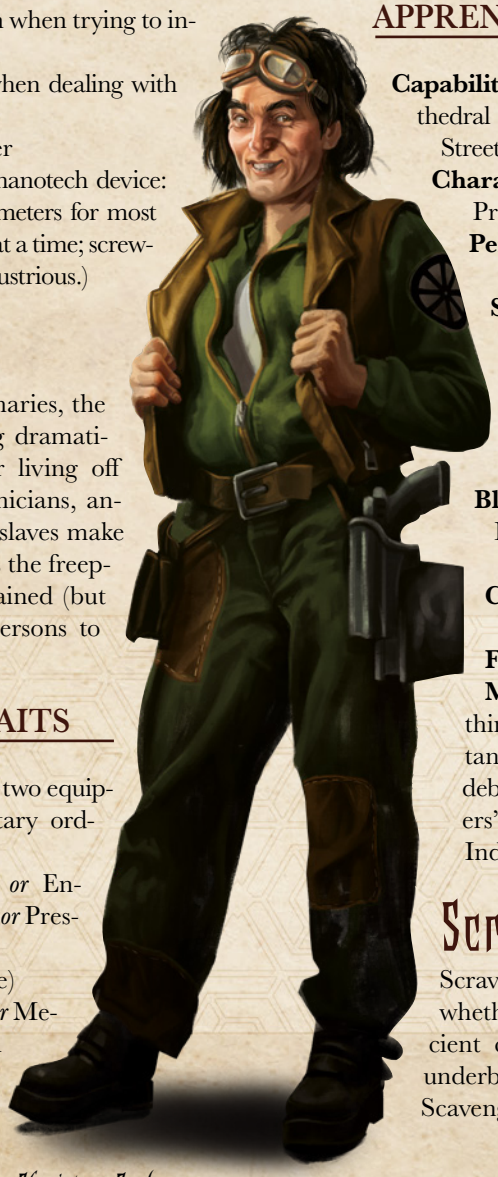
APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Choose a Customs Lore (Cathedral Customs, Court Customs, or Streetwise); Lore (any); Reeves Lore
Characteristics: Intuition +1; Presence +2; Wits +2
Perk: Guild Commission (Associate)
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 2; Empathy 1 *or* Impress 1; Focus 1 *or* Interface 1 *or* Shoot 1

GUILD QUIRKS
Blessing: Shrewd (+2 Mind Resistance against fast-talk attempts)
Curse: Mammon (-2 Perception when money involved)
Favored calling: Lawyer
Material award: *Crawler* (TL6 think machine; reads Reeve's datanet "crawl": lists of open jobs, debts owed to the guild, defaulters' names, etc. *Tech Compulsion:* Indiscreet.)

Scravers

Scravers can find wealth anywhere, whether they're in the ruins of ancient civilizations or in the seamy underbelly of today's Known Worlds. Scavengers and scroungers, they



Charioteer Explorer

also have found their way into organized crime of all types. Their archeological finds help fuel their less-legitimate operations.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capability: Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns) *or* a technology capability (Tech Lore 5+) *or* a Transport capability; Scravers Lore; Streetwise Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Strength +1; Perception +1; Presence +2; Wits +1
Perk: Guild Commission (Associate)
Skills: Charm 1 *or* Impress 1 *or* Knavery 1; Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Intrusion 1 *or* Observe 1; Sleight of Hand 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1

GUILD QUIRKS
Blessing: "The Man" (+2 Presence when leading underlings)
Curse: Possessive (-2 Presence when cut out of the action)
Favored calling: Thief
Material award: *Guest key* (TL7 nanotech device: universal key; when inserted into a simple mechanical lock, key conforms to shape needed to unlock it, bypassing need for certain Intrusion rolls. *Tech Compulsion:* Industrious.)

Merchant Callings

Elani finished reviewing the manifest and smiled. This run was going to go well. As long as nothing went wrong, this would be the job that finally paid off her ship. This looked to be a fairly routine smuggling job. As far as she could see, there weren't any complications beyond slipping past the Decados blockade. She tapped the screen of her miniature think machine and stowed it in her inner jacket pocket. She smiled at the merchant and offered her hand. "It's a deal. I'll get this shipment to the colony well before the deadline."

The merchant, Kalem, did not proffer his hand, but remained sitting, his hands steepled in front of him. "The blockade won't be a problem?"

Elani shook her head emphatically, "You got yourself the stealthiest ship out there. The Ravenwing *and her crew can get past any blockade."*

Kalen rose slowly from his chair and even more slowly he offered his hand, a wry smile spreading across his thin lips. "There's just one more thing…."

At 1st-level, you choose a calling to represent your early career. At this stage of your life, you've entered the work force.

Banker

In the Known Worlds, Bankers aren't just money-lenders and accountants — they're practically priests in a very exclusive sect with power over the magical forces of wealth and prosperity. Bankers milk this myth for all it's worth. They know that money comes and goes, but *leverage* remains. Leverage — *debt* — is power, the unseen chain that binds the mighty to the humble Banker. Bankers don't necessarily own the money they handle; they're managing the inflows and outflows for their factions, keeping the records of who owes whom. Everybody courts the Banker to turn on the loan spigot but fears the day when debts come due. While most Bankers remain in their home offices, some are tasked with the dangerous job of collecting on debts. These knee-breakers might let you off with a warning… once. Don't make them come back a second time.

(While the Reeves Guild is best known for its banking empire, most Reeves are Lawyers first; hence, that calling gets the guild's favored status.)

PATRON SAINTS

Humble Henderson — Robert "Bob" Henderson (4571?-4663), a devout wood-shop teacher on Leagueheim, developed laser saws that made him a fortune. Going into banking to monitor his assets, Henderson created more wealth through applying the Prophet's teachings and woodshop lessons to monetary transactions, often given in the form of homilies. He eventually became one of the richest men in the Known Worlds and head of the Bank of Leagueheim. Known for funding hospitals and schools, he is revered for his Conversion of the Materialists (4608).

Larus of Arion — Larus Grímmson of Arion (c. 244o), a world now lost, was the wealthy scion of a banking family with a scandalous legacy predating Urth's space age. Under his aegis, United Arion Nordbank invested heavily in aerospace development, becoming a major financier in interplanetary transport until UAN's acquisition by EarthCom — making Larus one of the wealthiest individuals of his era. His riches could not protect him from a Sathraist assassination, but his lavish funeral was a testament to excess.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose Lore (any) *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slugs Guns) *or* a Customs

Lore (Cathedral Customs or Commons Customs); Think Machines

Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Strength +1; Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Presence +2; Wits +1

Perk: Choose 1 from the Banker Perks list below or from the open perks list.

Skills: Academia 2; Alchemy 1 *or* Sleight of Hand 1; Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Empathy 1 *or* Observe 1; Fight 2 *or* Melee 2 *or* Shoot 2; Interface 2

Equipment: *Datacruncher* (TL5 think machine calculator and record-keeper; curio) or a small alchemical studio.

BANKER PERKS

Bankster
Money Manager
Riches
Savings
Taxes
Windfall

Bounty Hunter

Bounty Hunters are professional people hunters (i.e., thugs for hire) who chase down criminals, runaways, political rivals — anybody that somebody will hire them to catch. Law enforcement is stretched very thin within most fiefs and on many planets, and it's nigh non-existent between worlds. It's just too costly to maintain an intra-planetary — let alone an interstellar — police force. That's when you need Bounty Hunters. When a criminal escapes from the jurisdiction where they committed a crime, the ruling authority — the noble lord, the parish deacon, the guild master — places a bounty on their head. In most cases, the goal is to return the criminal for trial. For extreme crimes, they might be tried *in absentia*, and the bounty is "dead or alive."

PATRON SAINTS

The Daughter of Rillos — Belkka Torun of Istakhr (c. 3050) was mean and resilient, the traits needed to hunt ukari fugitives of the Human-Ukar war. She pursued her own kind, but that meant little to her; she had long since abandoned the ukari as a spiritually dead people. Each mission was a violent pilgrimage, a bloody hunt to honor Rillos. Humans hired her and ukari hated her, but both feared her, as she had become death incarnate.

Saint Erhard — Erhard Schmidt (4600s) was a highly reputed bounty hunter. Paid to bring the escaped Church theologian Pelagia Kostka back to the pre-conversion Li Halan leader, Ustirin the Unspeakable (Bao Xionshên), Erhard caught her but was converted by her faith and reasoning. Ustirin paid Erhard's fee and then personally slew Kostka. Filled with remorse, Erhard spent the rest of his life hunting down and converting dangerous criminals and outcasts.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slugs Guns); choose Streetwise Lore *or* a Transport capability (usually Aircraft or Landcraft)

Characteristics: Dexterity +2 *or* Strength +2; Intuition +1; Perception +1; Presence +1

Perk: Choose 1 from the Bounty Hunter Perks list below or from the open perks list.

Skills: Drive 1; Fight 2 *or* Melee 2; Impress 2 *or* Knavery 2; Interface 1; Observe 1; Pilot 1; Shoot 2

Equipment: A gun you're capable with and a *rogues gallery* (TL4 think machine curio: taps into local Town Criers Guild's datanet list of public bounties)

BOUNTY HUNTER PERKS

Aim Where It Hurts
Armed to the Teeth
Blood Hound
Criminal Database Access
Hunter's Cred
Manhunter
Ruthless

Chainer

A Chainer is a fancy term for a slaver. It's a sad reality in the Known Worlds. While most Chainers are members of the Muster guild, they don't carry that guild's favored status. (Mercs do.) Few people respect what Chainers do, although many of their clients — noble lords and merchants — couldn't maintain their wealth without slave labor to work in fields or shanghaied sailors to man their military space fleets. They're not all strictly slavers; some are prison wardens and guards on contract to houses or even guilds. Chainers aren't out to win popularity contests; they're in it for the money, although some of them do get their kicks inflicting misery on others. In the Known Worlds, the slave trade doesn't single out ethnicities; it takes what it can. The pickings are getting slimmer in the Pax Alexius, although the opening into barbarian space promises new "resources." Saint Maya, the Prophet's Disciple, famously broke her chains, and slaves pray to her. Ironically, Chainers often host lavish shrines to her, hoping she'll look the other way.

PATRON SAINTS

Augustyn Martyr of Malignatius — For decades, Augustyn raided ships and colonies, building an empire fueled by the slave trade. He died in 2723, the same year the Prophet began preaching the Omega Gospels. The (now-banned) *Apocrypha of Augustyn* claims he was killed while raiding a passenger vessel near Malignatius. The *Penance of Augustyn*, however, relates that the vessel conveyed converts to Zebulon's faith; their testimony worked wonders, and they converted Augustyn. When he released the new slaves, he was butchered by an outraged crew. Augustyn is revered by Chainers and penitents alike, each abjuring the other's narrative.

Saint Searc — Although later condemning the practice, the Church practiced a form of slavery against the pagans of Malignatius in the early New Dark Ages. The greatest among the Chainers at that time was the ex-soldier Searc MacRuadh (4200s?). Developing a conscience, Searc read from the Omega Gospels to the captured pagans, and later, he paid for Church schools to instruct the children of slaves. He wrote a book on the humane treatment of pagans in the human-acquisition trade. He is known for converting the pagan Anu Dechtire, later canonized as Saint Clinda.

PLAYING VILE CHARACTERS

Fading Suns allows you to play villainous characters. Some callings can be… problematic. Come on, now: Bankers and Lawyers? Devils incarnate. Joking aside, though, let's face the fact that the Chainer calling is truly vile. So why is it here?

The depiction of slavery in **Fading Suns** in no way condones such a barbaric practice. Its existence in the setting is meant to emphasize how far humanity has fallen from its own ideals. They're here to illustrate the misery many people have to endure in the far future. For peasants, they're bogeymen that actually exist.

Those who choose to play a Chainer character should be aware of just what kind of scum they're playing and why. We don't recommend you do it unless you want to use them to tell tales of redemption and revenge, showing a terrible practice as part of a morality play that reveals just how awful the business of capturing people and forcing them into labor actually is and always will be.

The same is true of any PC who uses their power and privilege for selfish or vile ends. A Sybarite might provide truly liberating and fun experiences for their guests, but they could just as easily use their calling as permission to be cruel and insensitive to the less-fortunate. This is even the case for the holier callings, ranging from Inquisitors to Friars. Anyone can abuse power.

The question for you as a player is: What can you do with this all-too-real setting element to elevate the drama? How can such low characters participate in or at least reveal the eternal transcendentals of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good? Short of that, how will they get their eventual comeuppance?

We're not advocating that every game be a demonstration of the moral arc of the universe, just that your villainous and unsavory characters (should you choose to play one) serve a dramatic purpose, not a sick desire to torture fictional characters or enact ill ideologies.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Streetwise Lore; choose a Transport capability (usually Aircraft, Beastcraft, or Landcraft)
Characteristics: Strength +2; Perception +2; Presence +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Chainer Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Fight 2; Impress 2; Melee 2; Observe 1; Vigor 2
Equipment: Ceramsteel cuffs (TL5 mechanical handcuffs; Herculean Resistance to break and Tough Resistance to pick; *Tech Compulsion:* Cruel)

CHAINER PERKS

Aim Where It Hurts
Bogeyman
Labor Contractor
Nothing to Lose
Ruthless

Detective

You're an investigator, gumshoe, or spy-for-hire. A Detective is a master at tracking down clues and putting them together to solve mysteries; some prefer to uncover illicit affairs (an all-too-common job for most professional Detectives). They learn to read a room for trace evidence, as well as people's unspoken motives. Detectives aren't always noir night-stalkers; some are patriots for a cause, such as alien rights, or even adjuncts to the Inquisition, rooting out sins. While sleuths in the popular imagination usually have bizarre character quirks, most Detectives are actually nondescript and rarely noticed.

PATRON SAINTS

Grant the Weary-Footed — A former member of the Rampart police, Ross Grant (4712-99) was hired by Duchess Camillia Juandaastas to recover a rare Anunnaki artifact of her father's, the Istakhr Ibis. After a two-day chase through the Istakhr Market, the jaded gumshoe succeeded and realized that his pursuit through the labyrinthine market was a metaphor for regaining his childhood faith. The Miracle of the Market restored his belief, and after marrying Camillia, Grant offered his services to the Patriarch.

Serendipity's Agent — A private detective in Tulasca on Tethys at the height of the Second Republic (c. 3800), Allan McCall rarely sought trouble but had a history of stumbling into increasingly deeper mysteries. Minor investigations routinely led to weird cases with psychic thieves, killer cyborgs, xeno-conspiracies, and corporate assassins — all somehow in the same case. McCall attributed his survival and his success to flukes and happenstance, although many still suspect he was secretly psychic.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any) *or* Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Streetwise Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Strength +1; Intuition +1; Perception +2; Presence +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Detective Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Disguise 1 *or* Empathy 1; Fight 1; Intrusion 2; Knavery 2; Observe 2; Shoot 1
Equipment: *Telltale eye* (TL5 monocle device: the classic sleuth's magnifying glass, but as a monocle; it allows its user to view the IR and UV spectrums. *Tech Compulsion:* Inerrant.)

DETECTIVE PERKS

All-Access Pass
Criminal Archive Access
Deduce
Deputize
Hard Boiled
Marksmanship

Imperial Cohort

Just as Emperor Alexius offered this calling for priests, he extended his call for duty to guildmembers. The Imperial Cohort offers aid and assistance and acts as staunch helpmates to his Questing Knights. In return for offering their skills and fealty, they reap the rewards of first claim on the merchant routes into newly explored territories. While this may earn a guilder new enemies, it also brings new opportunities to one's guild.

PATRON SAINTS

Captain Marcus De Vatha — Marcus de Vatha of Leagueheim was called to navigate the stars and to serve the first Emperor, and he did both with honor. Although a loyal Charioteer, he saw his peers as an undisciplined gaggle of misfits, and he served House Alecto with military professionalism and precision. Commanding the Emperor's flagship after Vladimir's assassination, the captain broadcast his last words as the ship was destroyed by Hazat forces over Byzantium Secundus: "What now the throne? What now the empire?"

Saint Heraclitus — A member of the Engineers Guild, Heraclitus (??-4521?) aided Vladimir Alecto's Leib-Gvardia Knights by recreating an arm for Sir Bors of the Watchful Vigil. His new Silver Arm was stronger, never tired, and could fight detached from Sir Bors' body. He also replaced Sir Toyotomi's sliced vocal cords with a small golden box, "the Miracle Voice." After Alecto's death, Heraclitus retired, reading the Omega Gospels in contemplative silence. He is also the patron saint of repair personnel.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Combat Armor *or* Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Jumpweb Lore (Known Worlds or Barbarian Space)
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Endurance +1; Intuition +1 *or* Perception +1; Presence +1; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Imperial Cohort Perks list or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Drive 2 *or* Pilot 2; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Interface 1 *or* Intrusion 1; Observe 1; Survival 1; Tech Redemption 2; Vigor 1
Equipment: *Cohort Badge* (TL7 curio; proof of status, keyed to your DNA and very hard to counterfeit)

IMPERIAL COHORT PERKS

This functions as the Priest calling of the same name.

Lawyer

Not even the upheavals of the Diaspora, the egalitarianism of the Second Republic, or the feudalism of the New Dark Ages could wipe out the lawyers. The profession of the law is the handmaiden to civilization. Without it, Lawyers say, humankind would descend into the kind of barbarism practiced by the Vuldrok (who actually have a somewhat egalitarian system of laws, but never mind that). Lawyers are the bulwark

of Reason against brutal violence, the defenders of the just, the champions for the wronged — and they charge hefty amounts of firebirds for their service. While most Lawyers work a local practice, some roam at large, adjudicating the law for fief lords, parishes, guilds, and even freemen societies who can afford them. While a few might play legal Robin Hood now and then, performing pro bono for good causes, most Lawyers are ardent defenders of the feudal status quo.

PATRON SAINTS

Kaari the Jurist — Never argue law with an obun: they shift from the specifics of legal rulings to the philosophy of jurisprudence, then argue against their own position until you end up defending their original claim. The descendent of obun emigrants to Criticorum, Kaari vo Mata (c. 3600) applied this sophisticated obun disputation technique to human legal arguments with such skill that she became the first (and only) alien to hold the title Senior Jurist of Leagueheim.

Yawster the Shrike — Scant evidence allows for the existence of Saint Yawster of Sutek (2800s?), but legend has it he was a "no frills" lawyer who placed his skills in defense of the new Church. He's often depicted as being converted by St. Maya the Scorned Woman after he defended her against the civil authorities for disturbing the peace. The famous statement attributed to him — "I used to shill for my clients in court, now I'm a shiller for Zebulon!" — is found inscribed on the Reeve University gates on Leagueheim. An appellant to Zebulon, the Miracle of the Plaintiff is attributed to him.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any) and a Customs Lore (Cathedral Customs or Court Customs)
Characteristics: Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Intuition +2; Presence +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Lawyer Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 2; Charm 2; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Interface 1; Knavery 2; Perform 2
Equipment: *Legal mind* (TL4 think machine: voluminous data file with legal case histories for 3 different areas of law, such as fief management, guild contracts, war, etc.; substitutes for a related Lore capability when arguing cases)

LAWYER PERKS

Bureaucracy
Friends in High Places
Playing the Game
Shield of the Law
Stunning Statement

Mercenary

If not the oldest profession in the universe, the Mercenary soldier-for-hire is certainly among the most ancient. Kingdoms rise and fall with and against Mercenaries. It's not always possible for rulers to maintain large standing armies; many often have to resort to contract war labor. Mercs are usually hired to work under the command of their employer's designated general, but sometimes, they also take on the work of high-level strategic command. Mercs have a code of honor among themselves, even those they might currently be fighting (and with whom they might be fighting alongside in the next hot spot for hire). While it's a dangerous, dirty, and often maiming job, Mercs are relatively safe in the knowledge that, should their employer's side lose, they can simply walk away to the next job. While a Merc could be a loner, they're most often part of a tight-knit band — or the last survivor of one.

PATRON SAINTS

Saint Dyn'dran — The Aylon ukar warrior Dyn'dran Oed Nata (?-4911) was a mercenary before joining the al-Malik army and eventually pursuing the holy path of peace, Tauntlasta. Preaching unity among all sentient creatures, he founded the Parliament of Speakers, consisting of representatives of the obun, ukari, oro'ym, vorox, shantor, gannok, hironem, etyri, and humanity. Killed by regency authorities, he is remembered among mercenaries as one of their own and regarded among many peoples as holy.

Unggala, the Growling Commando — Unggala of Ungavorox was part of an elite Bannockburn-based Muster squad-for-hire that served during the early years of the Emperor Wars. The squad commanded a high price, and Unggala played his part with terrifying ease. Devastating in combat, he fought to protect those who had become his kin. Their death on a mission while he was elsewhere broke him: "My angruwa is gone; I can fight no more," he lamented, and he lay down and died.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose Armor (Combat Armor or War Armor) *or* a Military Ordnance capability (Artillery, Demolitions, or Gunnery); Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns)
Characteristics: Dexterity +2; Endurance +1; Strength +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Mercenary Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Drive 1 *or* Observe 1; Fight 1; Impress 1; Melee 1; Remedy 1; Shoot 3; Vigor 2

Equipment: Supply depot (a Merc band can consolidate their guns and ammo to form a large depot; for each Merc in the band, spend 100 fb on military supplies)

MERCENARY PERKS

Armed to the Teeth
Battlesense
Born on the Battlefield
Fencing
Marksmanship
Martial Arts
Military Rank
Resilient
Seen Too Much

Reclaimer

Archaeologist, salvager, looter – these are all sobriquets of the Reclaimer. For the contemporary Known Worlder, the bulk of history lies behind them; the fading suns await ahead. There will be no more great marvels or wonders wrought by humankind. Those lie now in the past, waiting for Reclaimers to find and extract. In many ways, technological society would cease to exist if not for bold Reclaimers, who dig into the ruins, hidden fastnesses, asteroid bases, and abandoned moon cities left behind by human — and alien — forebears. Whether it's Second Republic military tech, Diasporan domestic utilities, or even Anunnaki relics, the Reclaimer will let nothing stop them from scouring every world for its last hidden secrets.

(While this is officially the calling most acknowledged by Scravers, their true favored calling is actually as Thieves.)

PATRON SAINTS

Blessed Saint Glam — As the only ukar ever recognized by the Church as a near-saint and declared by them as "Blessed," Glam (?-martyred 4603) is a saint to the small sect of ukari believers. Glam worked as a Reclaimer until he discovered early Universalist Church works. Converted, he returned to Kordeth with great zeal to spread his new faith. Glam was martyred deep underground attempting to convert the Traditionalist clans.

HSDS Salvage Crew Nine — The nine crewmembers of a deep space salvage mission sought glory in space and found it together in death. In the last decades of the First Republic, the Henrikson-Scott corporation sent a salvage crew beyond Tethys to investigate rumors of an unidentified ships' graveyard. Two centuries later, the salvage vessel was found floating adrift. Fragmentary ship's logs reveal in part the encounter with an indescribable creature of pure evil. The final log concludes with the captain's despondent cry, "It returns."

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any) *or* Streetwise Lore; Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns) *or* Shipboard Operations or a Transport capability (usually Aircraft or Landcraft)
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Intuition +1; Perception +2; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Reclaimer Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Intrusion 3; Knavery 1; Observe 1; Sneak 1; Tech Redemption 2
Equipment: *Hovernet* (TL7 anti-grav synthmesh bag with remote-control wristband; holds up to 2 cubic feet worth of items; floats behind its user. *Tech Compulsion:* Industrious.)

RECLAIMER PERKS

Can Opener
Intruder
Keen Awareness
Oriented
Recreate Artifact
Spotter

Scout

Scouts are wilderness guides, rangers, military recon experts, and explorers of the untrod frontiers. They're more comfortable roughing it in the wind and rain than in a cozy city apartment or a palace lounge. For some, the incentive is an affinity with nature; for others, it's just as much a hatred of the madding crowd as a love of tracking and hunting wild creatures. To others it's a job: getting behind enemy lines and mapping the lay of the land. They might have to put up with the coddled nobles, irate priests, and impatient merchants who pay them to guide their expeditions and caravans, but to a Scout, nothing beats roughing it in the wilds.

PATRON SAINTS

Gallus, Witness to the Vorox — Gallus Paciacus (4200s) came from a military background, serving as a scout for the Hawkwood forces against the early incursions from Vuldrok space. Noted for the Miracle of Gwyneth, where he saved a missing Hawkwood heir, he later became a scout for Church missions. Attempting

to convert the feral Vorox of Ungavorox, he plunged deep into the wilderness and was torn apart, martyred during an event called the Flaying.

Sutek's Boon — Robyn Marks (c. 2310) was the first scout on Sathra's Boon (now Sutek) to fully document Anunnaki structures, but the zaibatsu confiscated this data and ensured the sites remained hidden. After the Sathra Rebellion, a data disk was recovered that contained hundreds of personal illustrations, maps, and journal entries that Marks had not entered in formal reports: the scout's gift to those who had made the planet their home became an invitation to rediscover Sutek's ancient past.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any) *or* Life Science; Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns) *or* Shipboard Operations *or* a Transport capability (usually Aircraft, Beastcraft, or Landcraft)
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Intuition +1; Perception +2; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Scout Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Animalia 2; Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Observe 1; Remedy 1; Shoot 1; Sneak 1; Survival 2; Vigor 1
Equipment: Compact wilderness survival kit (TL4 backpack with microtech items that unfold into full-size: compass, water purifier, food rations for one month, rope, knife, machete, utility tool, one-person tent)

SCOUT PERKS

Animal Friend
Chameleon
Destinator
Guts
Memory Expander
Military Rank
Oriented
Spotter
Wild Domain

Spy

This function as the Noble calling of the same name. A Spy assumes a "cover identity" calling under which they hide. (See the *Cover Identity* sidebar near the noble Incognito calling.)

Merchant Spies have a true allegiance to their guild's professional agency: Charioteer Killroys, Engineer Harbingers, Muster Vigil, Reeve Auditors, or the Scravers (the whole guild is an informal intelligence network).

One form of spy peculiar to the Merchant League is the Republican, a partisan secretly advocating for the r/evolution of the Empire into a Third Republic. While this cause is more popular among yeomen, it can also be fought for within the League guildhalls by Spies.

PATRON SAINTS

Luka "The Mace" Moretti — Luka (?-4430s?) was perhaps an apocryphal figure, although some tantalizing evidence suggests he did exist. When his brother Josip became a priest, Luka swore to his mother he would watch over him. Becoming an enforcer and then a successful Scraver, he used his network of contacts to keep Josip safe. Josip later became Archbishop of the Delphian Metropilae. Luka's information saved his life on six occasions, twice miraculously.

The Paramour — Renowned throughout the Known Worlds for her alabaster skin, her seductive dance, and her dulcet voice, visits by Chantal de Sauve of Vera Cruz (c. 4575) were a welcome respite in the chaos of the Regency — until accusations flew that her true art was espionage. Allegedly, for every noble bed she shared, she acquired a dozen secrets for the League. Decados records document her capture and execution, but the *Song of Chantal* boasts of her escape and flight to safety.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 1 that supports your cover identity; Poison Lore *or* Streetwise Lore *or* Torture Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Perception +2; Presence +1; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Spy Perks list below, your cover identity's list, or from the open perks list.
Skills: Empathy 1 *or* Sneak 1; Knavery 2; Observe 2; allocate 5 skill ranks among other skills that support your cover identity.
Equipment: As your cover identity's calling.

SPY PERKS

Martial Arts
Mimic
Rabble Rouse
Ruthless
Second Skin
Secret Agent
Vicious Insult

Star Pilot

Star Pilots are professionals who fly the spaceships that ply the space between planets, moon, space sta-

tions, and the mysterious jumpgates. Many pilots spend their careers entirely within a single system, ferrying people and goods back and forth or standing on duty in the system's defense fleet. Some have even seen space combat, whether as a military helmsman or a victim of piracy. A rare few travel between systems through the jumpgates, witnessing the myriad worlds of the Empire. Star Pilots don't usually own their own ships; most of them are contract pilots for one patron or another. They are trusted as disciplined professionals but watched by the Church in case they become curious about the Sathra Effect. That state of rapture is the boon and bane of Star Pilots – the high some of them secretly chase but can never keep.

PATRON SAINTS

The Ecstatic — Lee Carlson (c. 2450) was among the most skilled star pilots of the First Republic and the first to helm countless experimental vehicles. Lee preferred the solitude of his craft and yearned for the untrammeled sanctity of space. He had logged hundreds of flights before disappearing in a prototype near Collier's Landing (Sargasso). The last message he sent before disappearing was cryptic: "Oh! I have released these mortal bonds! I shall touch the face of God!"

Vassily Alexeev, Jump Martyr — Born near Serov in the foothills of the Urals on Urth, Vassily (?-4538) was raised by his Uncle Maxim, a transport pilot in the Church fleet. After a wild youth, he settled to become the personal pilot to Bishop Kwame of the Eparchy of Luanda. Saving the Bishop's life from a jumpgate collision by ejecting him in a lifepod, he sacrificed himself as the ship rammed the gate. Pilots claim he is still active, bringing warnings to them.

Engineer Tech Redeemer

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Shipboard Operations; Think Machines *or* Transport (Aircraft)

Characteristics: Dexterity +2; Intuition +1; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Star Pilot Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Drive 1; Interface 2; Observe 1; Pilot 3; Shoot 1; Tech Redemption 1
Equipment: Spacesuit and a good luck token (coin, die, animal foot, etc.).

STAR PILOT PERKS

Daredevil
Mechanic
Military Rank
Risk Taker
Stunt Pilot
Windfall

Tech Redeemer

High priests of technology, Tech Redeemers are the magicians who repair and maintain — or "redeem" — the fallen tech from earlier eras. Sometimes they even invent new technologies. Tech Redeemers can be anyone whose job it is to keep the machines running. They might be simple wrenchjacks working the space port, jury-rigging starship engineers, or brilliant-but-uncanny scientists delving into realms of knowledge unknown to other sentients. Others stand in awe of their accomplishments — or in fear, afraid their hubris will bring down ruin on everyone around them. The Inquisition likes to make examples out of tech-heads who push the boundaries too frequently.

PATRON SAINTS

Brendan of the Blessed Tongue — Brendan (c. 3700) rose to prominence during the Second Republic, when he advanced the science of computational philology. Drawing from his insights on language and think machines, he developed wondrous devices that analyzed and interpreted alien languages. The *Apocryphal Codex of Brendan* reveals his deathbed words: "I have uncovered the Anunnaki metalanguage and can speak no more." Understanding of his science has dimmed, but his devotees seek to revive it to unlock the secrets of Anunnaki science.

Saint Rawiri — Rawiri ngā tūpuna (3900s-4000s?; real last name never revealed) hailed from Urth's Archdiocese of the South Pacific, where he trained as a skilled engineer and technician. When the Second Republic fell, his skills were instrumental in maintaining the failing node in the aging terraforming system. He later invented damper fields for the nascent Engineer fleet, then centered in the Ravenna system. His

miraculous skills at using "Dark Energy" canonized him in League lore.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose a Tech Lore; choose Think Machines *or* a Crafts *or* Science *or* a successive Tech Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Intuition +2; Wits +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Tech Redeemer Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 1; Crafts 1; Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Interface 2; Observe 1; Shoot 1; Tech Redemption 3
Equipment: Tool bandolier (holds tools for nearly every conceivable task within your capabilities).

TECH REDEEMER PERKS

Comprehend Tech Level
Craft Energy Device
Craft Wondrous Tech
Machine Spirit
Mechanic

Thief

Cutpurses, cat-burglars, second-story operators, heist masterminds, and even Robin-Hood-style rogues — thieves of all stripes are criminals to some (those whose goods they steal) and a romantic ideal for others. Thieves make a living taking what others have, which puts them on the wrong side of the law. The fact that they often work for patrons who represent that law — such as nobles seeking a rival's treasure — doesn't always get them off the hook. Many factions have Thieves in their ranks, but they're supposed to keep their activities on the down-low. The Scravers Guild has a reputation for harboring Thieves, but they always manage to officially deny it (while still giving favored status to the Thieves in their midst).

PATRON SAINTS

Grendel in the Shadows — Born on the moors of Ravenna, Grendel Grimstalk (4300s?) knew a spot where an old Second Republic defense field caused space ships to crash. Rummaging through the ruined hulls, he brought tech and shiny objects to his cave. A marked outcast, he was converted by Saint Tan. He then used his scavenging and skulking skills to steal from the wealthy to enrich the Church orphanages and feed the poor. Grendel was canonized a century after his death.

The Eye of Ben-Hadir — Abasi Ben-Hadir's passion for network intrusion and data theft were instrumental to her value in the Scravers Guild. Her services yielded valuable assets for negotiation, as people are remarkably compliant when your eyes are on their secrets. Like many of her family, she fell in the symbiot invasion of Absolution (4900). Most accounts report her death, although one hints at her conversion, as she allegedly became one with the greatest living networks in creation.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any) *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Streetwise Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +2; Intuition +1; Perception +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Thief Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Disguise 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Intrusion 2; Knavery 2; Observe 1; Sleight of Hand 1; Sneak 2
Equipment: Innocuous lockpicks (disguised as common items, such as utensils) and an outfit with up to four hidden pockets for concealing small items (resistant t0 TL6 and below scanners).

THIEF PERKS

Cat Burglar's Eye
Contortionist
Intruder
Keen Awareness
Legerdemain
Savings

Trader

As classic merchants, Traders buy and sell goods and/or services. A Trader might have a steady stall at the local agora or might be a star-spanning "merchant prince" who has cornered the market on a particular item. Either way, they've got to be good at haggling and shrewd when examining goods. A Trader who's an easy mark for cheap knockoffs or counterfeits isn't long for this business. With Hargard now in the Empire's reach, whole new markets are opening up in barbarian space for those Traders bold — or foolhardy? — enough to ply them.

PATRON SAINTS

The Merchant of Velisamil — William Gailbreath was among the first humans to visit Velisamil (c. 2800). He presented himself as an artist and a cultural attaché, but his real agenda was export: he anticipated the rise of "obunism" and the trade opportunities that obun

art and culture would present. Gailbreath manipulated obun trust to access countless artifacts and relics that fetched a high price in the human markets. To him, the scorn that his betrayal earned was worth the prestige and wealth he acquired beyond obunspace.

Saint Jakande — Legend states this merchant, establishing new markets on Pyre, encountered Zebulon on Kish (Encounter with the Sellers: Omega Gospels, *Galaxia 2:7*). Converting, he spread the Prophet's message via the trade routes. On Urth, the First Council beheaded him for civic disturbance, but Pascal Jakande picked up his fallen head and walked about Cuidad Mexico, proclaiming Zebulon's truths. Legend conflates Jakande with two other (historic Church) merchants, Denis Aguda and Jacque Ditiki.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any) *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns); choose a Customs Lore (Cathedral Customs, Court Customs, or Streetwise)

Characteristics: Intuition +1; Perception +1; Presence +2; Wits +1

Perk: Choose 1 from the Trader Perks list below or from the open perks list.

Skills: Charm 3 *or* Knavery 3; Empathy 2; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1; Perform 2; Shoot 1; Sleight of Hand 1

Equipment: *Lockbag* (TL6 curio; synthmesh backpack or satchel with Severe Resistance lock and fabric)

TRADER PERKS

Embargo
Gambler
Income Tax
Riches
Savings
Schmooze
Swimming with Sharks

Vorox Scraver Trader

Tycoon

The Tycoon is the ultimate high-class con-artist who believes their own con. They're suffused with a will-to-power and the supreme confidence that their confidence alone is all they need to succeed. Despite the name for this calling, the Tycoon doesn't necessarily have a lot of money. Tycoons who don't have many firebirds to rub together see their condition as merely a temporary setback, a learning experience. Soon enough, they'll convince someone to invest in their vision or superior methods of wealth-attainment and be back in the high life. Tycoons need patrons ("marks") to fund their schemes, but crazily enough, their chutzpah often wins through and brings them and their investors big rewards. That's never enough, however, to satisfy their craving to keep winning. Even those Tycoons who devote themselves to raising money for charities find that it's the pursuit rather than the cause that's more important to them. There'll be a new cause next week, but the race to win never ends.

PATRON SAINTS

The Prodigal Daughter — Griffin and Sons was a financial giant in the Second Republic. Its growth owed much to Jane Griffin (c. 3900), the corporation's Director of Philanthropy. Expenditures were staggering, but her effort to fund grants and services for displaced families and freed slaves brought Griffin and Sons to the public eye. Such positive attention created new investments and opportunities; but more importantly, Jane served as the human face of Griffin and Sons and encouraged public trust in corporate beneficence.

Shaddiyya the Shining — Shaddiyya Qalanjo (3800s-3900s) became a wealthy model during the Second Republic. Creating her own line of beauty products by having her friends and lovers invest and selling her name to corporate interests, she eventually became one

of the wealthiest women of her era. Traveling to the ukari reservations and seeing the poverty on Archeon, she became an activist, throwing half of her wealth into the Church and her own charities to aid the downtrodden.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any); choose a Customs Lore (Cathedral Customs or Court Customs) *or* a Science Lore
Characteristics: Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Intuition +1; Presence +2; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Tycoon Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Alchemy 2; Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Crafts 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1; Empathy 1 *or* Focus 1; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Knavery 2; Perform 1
Equipment: Power accessory (TL5 hypnotic curio tie, cravat, scarf, or necklace: once per scene, you can take a primary action to ostentatiously adjust it within sight of one or more marks; your next persuasion influence roll against any witness gets +1 goal)

TYCOON PERKS

Credit-Worthy
Friends in High Places
Hedge Fund
Long Con
Riches
Swimming with Sharks

Yeoman

Not all freemen belong to a guild. Some have either lost their guild affiliation or never had one to begin with. These independent agents — called yeomen — often work for the guilds, but they sacrifice the protection and stability such an organization offers for freedom and autonomy. They cannot call on back up when they are in trouble, but they also do not have to submit to someone else's commands. This arrangement is far from the norm, for almost everyone is beholden to someone else. Yeomen are the only people without a liege of some kind (though even they must profess allegiance to the Emperor).

While the guilds provide yeomen with most of their work, they are not the only customers who take advantage of these unique arrangements. Nobles will seek them out, especially when they don't want the guilds to become aware of certain tasks or if they want to be able to deny any involvement. The Church supports the feudal order even more fiercely than the nobles do, but it uses free agents in its fight against heresy. After all, it's easier to risk the soul of someone living on the outskirts of society than someone at its heart.

PLAYING YEOMEN

Ask why your character has become an independent agent. If one of the guilds kicked them out, do they maintain any ties to the League? If a noble recently made them a freeman, then why, and what obligations do they still have to that noble? If the character ran away from their previous obligations, whether that was a noble or the Church, then does their previous master still pursue them?

A yeoman takes a great deal of risk in making their way through the Known Worlds. These characters are best suited for life on the outskirts of civilization, perhaps near the barbarian worlds or on newly rediscovered planets. The closer a yeoman gets to the heart of civilization, the more pressures they'll feel to commit to a master.

A significant number of yeomen are aliens. Aliens can't always find their place in the ranks of the nobility, the cloisters of the Church, or even the guildhalls, so those who leave their native areas are most often yeomen.

As a yeoman, you can join a freeman society (see below) as your faction, or you can choose one of the houses, sects, or guilds. In the latter case, you are not officially a full member of that faction in the same way that a noble or priest is, but rather, you are a householder, a lay member, or an adjunct in the employ of that faction. You are able to move freely within that faction, and you might even garner a great deal of respect, but you will never have the same power and influence as a full member.

Most yeomen are likely to use one of the open callings (listed below). If they want to practice a noble, priest, or merchant calling, they've got to have a good excuse for how an outsider gets away with it.

Class: Upbringing

At 1st level, you gain the following traits:

UPBRINGING TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose one social arena (Court Customs, Cathedral Customs, or Commons Customs); Homeworld Lore; Read/Speak Urthish; and choose 2 additional capabilities to represent your background.

Characteristics: 5 ranks allocated to the characteristics of your choice in any combination. (However, at 1st-level, you cannot have a characteristic higher than 8.)

Perks: the Independent perk plus 1 class perk chosen from any class's perks list (including the Yeoman Class Perks list) or from the open perks list.

Skills: 5 ranks allocated to the skills of your choice in any combination. (However, at 1st-level, you cannot have a skill higher than 8.)

Yeoman Class Perks

A yeoman is a do-it-yourself character. They have only a handful of special class perks of their own, but they can mimic the perks of the other classes. Yeoman players should work with their gamemaster to figure out how they learned their abilities outside of their exclusive networks. Some perks obviously cannot be mimicked, such as the ranks (Noble Title, Church Ordination, Guild Commission), but many can be approximated. Also, in *no case* can a yeoman follow the Brother Battle calling or learn its perks.

Householder
Independent
Martial Arts
Military Rank
Nimble
Peasant Hero
Professional Reputation (Rep)
Saint's Blessing

Faction: Society Apprenticeship

Unlike the power factions of the Known Worlds — houses, sects, and guilds — freemen join *societies* formed around a special interest, such as an ideological cause, a hobby, or a shared sacrifice or commitment, such as military service or missionary work. While they are open to nobles, priests, and merchants (who can also choose one of these societies for their faction), they are mainly led by yeomen.

Innumerable societies exist throughout the Known Worlds. Most of them are purely local, such as lodges, fellowships, and clubs. Some of them are of such widespread appeal that members can be found on many worlds. The five listed below are examples of such interstellar societies.

If you choose this option, you spent your early apprenticeship years learning the ropes from your faction.

The Dispossessed

A brotherhood of mercenaries has formed, and most of them are fed up with nobles, priests, and merchants. In the last few years, this band has grown to include interstellar chapters, welcoming all former soldiers into its ranks. While most of its members are still active mercenaries, some serve in civilian capacities, helping the group to become the foremost veterans' rights advocates.

The Dispossessed is perhaps the largest and longest-lasting independent army in the Empire. Its record of victories and defeats reads like a list of the greatest battles in Known Worlds history. It began as an army of Ronin who escaped the annihilation of their Chauki masters in the Hazat purge of that noble house. Disgraced by its inability to protect its original employers, the small army today wanders the stars, offering its services to the highest bidder while maintaining a strict ethical code.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capabilities: Combat Armor *or* War Armor; Military Weaponry (choose Artillery, Demolitions, or Gunnery); Warfare Lore

Characteristics: Dexterity +2 *or* Strength +2; Endurance +2; Presence +1 *or* Will +1

Perk: Professional Reputation (Rookie)

Skills: Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1 *or* Vigor 1; Impress 1; Fight 1; Melee 1; Shoot 1

SOCIETY QUIRKS

Blessing: Taciturn (+1 Mind Resistance against influence)

Curse: Twitchy (-2 Presence in tense situations)

Favored calling: Mercenary

Material award: Military squawker (TL6 radio; planetwide range + 1 AU interstellar. *Tech Compulsion:* Indiscreet.)

F.A.R.
(Frontier for Alien Rights)

This is the foremost interstellar organization advocating for the full equality of all sentient species in Known Worlds society. With Alexius' tacit support, they have made significant progress in the last few years. Their core leadership is made up of yeomen, mostly attracting aliens, but some humans, too. Although F.A.R. has a rep for violent terrorist actions, the leadership has distanced itself from those fringe actors and strives to become an accepted political force.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capabilities: Customs Lore (choose Court, Cathedral, or Commons); Speak (choose a language); Xeno Lore (choose an alien species)
Characteristics: Intuition +2; Presence +2; Will +1
Perk: Professional Reputation (Rookie)
Skills: Academia 1; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Empathy 1 *or* Sneak 1; Fight 1 *or* Shoot 1 *or* Survival 1; Knavery 1 *or* Observe 1

SOCIETY QUIRKS
Blessing: Righteous (+1 goal for influence when standing up for alien rights and dignity)
Curse: Bitter (-1 goal for persuasion influence against anti-alien bigots)
Favored calling: Lawyer
Material award: You can choose a scrambler key (TL6 lockpick device; used to unchain enslaved aliens. *Tech Compulsion:* Industrious) or a translator (TL6 think machine ear-piece and throat-patch speaker; understand and speak up to three pre-programmed alien languages. *Tech Compulsion:* Indiscreet).

Society of St. Paulus

This society is an interstellar club of hunters and explorers. Its membership is open to yeomen, as well as nobles, priests, and merchants. Many, but not all, members of the Society of St. Paulus are pilots, and they all have a thirst for adventure. The Explorer calling is common among members of this society. Its members travel the Known Worlds gathering, collecting, and disseminating information about its flora, fauna, and geographies. They have a shared belief that all sentients should be free to roam the stars. Part of the admission to the society involves taking an oath to help any fellow travelers in need.

Most, but not all, members of the society revere their namesake, St. Paulus, also called Paulus the Traveler. St. Paulus was a star pilot who became the first disciple of the Prophet Zebulon. He is remembered as an affable swashbuckler who had a deep faith that the Pancreator would keep him safe. His starship, the *Spider*, is a legendary ghost ship of the jumpweb.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capabilities: Beast Lore *or* Life Science *or* Xeno Lore; Lore (any); Shipboard Operations
Characteristics: Presence +2 *or* Strength +2; Intuition +2 *or* Perception +2; Endurance +1 *or* Faith +1
Perk: Professional Reputation (Rookie)
Skills: Animalia 1; Charm 1 *or* Observe 1; Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Remedy 1 *or* Survival 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1

SOCIETY QUIRKS
Blessing: Alert (+2 Perception in unfamiliar environments)
Curse: Fidgety (-2 Presence in formal social situations)
Favored calling: Explorer
Material award: A physical or data copy of *The Society of St. Paulus Expedition Guide*. This provides a broad (but relatively shallow) Known Worlds Lore capability.

Vagabonds

These intergalactic hobos are more common than most people know, and they're overlooked more often than even the lowliest of peasants. Although outsiders sometimes refer to the Vagabonds as a guild — and they do have representatives on Leagueheim — they're really more a collective of familiar faces and half-seen bums joined together in a mutual protection society. There are no rules for joining the Vagabonds. The only prerequisite seems to be a willingness to lend a hand when it's needed. Any Vagabond can initiate someone into the "guild."

Vagabonds are everywhere. They are the down-and out; the ignored and the unwanted; the loners and travelers; the dreamers who won't work and the crippled who can't work. They have their own language, using universal hand gestures and whispered grunts. Secret signs exist all over the Known Worlds, pointing to hidden locations where a night's shelter is waiting or where food can be obtained. Scratch marks on walls, twigs placed in certain angles, and carefully laid patterns of stones in the streets all are reliable sources of information to the Vagabonds.

Their ranks swelled as the Emperor Wars ended. Not only did they recruit refugees displaced by the rampant destruction, but the massive demobilization

left millions of veterans out of the only work they had known for years. Many tried to return to life as serfs, and many could not make the transition. Instead they found a new camaraderie amongst the down-and-out, the ignored and the unwanted.

Even for the trained killers who swelled the ranks of the Vagabonds, information tendered, services rendered, and kindnesses granted are their main tools of survival. Though there are no formal leaders for the group, there's almost always a few to whom the others turn to for advice. Some of the unofficial rulers of the Vagabonds are reputed to have powers all their own, unique talents that make life for the Vagabonds as a whole much easier to accept. These beggar-kings are usually known to the people in power, and they're normally held with grudging respect or a very real sense of fear for the secrets they know.

Characters who choose this as their faction are "all in" — they're the organizers of the society and upholders of the four Vagabond codes: know how to survive; know who you can depend on; keep your eyes and ears open for information; and be useful.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any); Speak Vagabond Patois; Streetwise Lore
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Will +2 *or* Faith +2; Wits +2
Perk: Professional Reputation (Rookie)
Skills: Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1; Knavery 1; Observe 1 *or* Sleight of Hand 1; Sneak 1 *or* Survival 1 *or* Vigor 1

SOCIETY QUIRKS
Blessing: Compassionate (+1 goal for persuasion influence when helping others)
Curse: Uncouth (-2 Presence at society functions)
Favored calling: Amateur
Material award: You have a one-time bonanza of 100 firebirds from epic begging. This can be stashed in portions in various hidey holes for safekeeping.

Vuldrok Barbarians

Outside the Known Worlds, a group of planets share the same rough culture and a loose federation of tribes: the Vuldrok Star-Nations. To Known Worlders, Vuldroks are nothing but pirates – a reputation well-deserved for their raids on the Hawkwood worlds – but those raiders are only a small portion of the Vuldrok populace. Now that intercourse is increasing between the Star-Nations and the Empire (in more ways than one), more and more Vuldrok from different walks of life travel the Known Worlds, getting to know its people and judging whether they are friend or foe.

Some Vuldrok from the newly ennobled House Eldrid can be found in the Known Worlds, but this yeoman society represents Vuldrok freeman who seek out Known Worlders. The majority of Vuldrok society is made up of freefolk who only voluntarily bind themselves to thanes and other rulers.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capabilities: Armor (choose Combat Armor or War Armor) *or* Military Weapons; Speak Vuldrok; Vuldrok Lore *or* Crafts Lore
Characteristics: Dexterity +2 *or* Strength +2; Endurance +1; Faith +1 *or* Will +1; Perception +1 *or* Presence +1
Perk: Professional Reputation (Rookie)
Skills: Animalia 1 *or* Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Crafts 1 *or* Tech Redemption 1; Drive 1 *or* Pilot 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Survival 1 *or* Vigor 1

SOCIETY QUIRKS
Blessing: Unyielding (+1 goal on End-, Will-, Faith-based rolls when being called out)
Curse: Prideful (-2 Wits when insulted)
Favored calling: Pirate
Material award: Premium weapon (+1 goal; usually an axe) or a premium handheld shield (+1 to its Resistance bonus).

Open Callings

At 1st-level, you choose a calling to represent your early career. At this stage of your life, you've entered the work force.

These "open" callings are available to characters of any class or faction. They are especially popular among yeoman characters. Some of these callings might require the gamemaster's approval —a member of the Church is unlikely to become a Pirate (although anything is possible).

Amateur

Some people don't fit into a particular category. You may have spent your life bouncing from job-to-job, or maybe circumstances beyond your control made it impossible for you to settle down. You are a jack-of-all-trades but master of none.

This calling can also be used by players who don't feel that their character concept aligns well with any of the listed callings.

PATRON SAINTS

Jankowski of Cadiz – When Patriarch Nadim's ship crashed on Cadiz, he was found by Kuba Jankowski (4538? -4622?), whose study of migratory bird patterns helped guide the injured Patriarch north to safety. Jankowski's hobby of collecting edible insects kept the Patriarch alive, and his passion for old smoke signals brought them deliverance. He miraculously levitated the injured Patriarch to medics. Believed to be an apocryphal folk-saint, Church receipts vouch for his existence.

The Journeyman — With the rejection of Republican rule, many communities were forced into self-reliance. Ravenna legends tell of the craftsman Walker Schmidt (c. 4000) and his Wandergesellen, journeymen who travelled from place to place, offering their diverse services to townships and people in need. As volunteer generalists with a smattering of basic skills in programming, nursing, engineering, and other various trades, Schmidt and his itinerant journeymen (and women) proved vital to the survival and transformation of countless communities.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 2 capabilities.
Characteristics: Allocate 5 ranks to your characteristics.
Perk: Choose 1 from the Amateur Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Allocate 10 skill ranks.
Equipment: Choose basic gear (with the gamemaster's approval) that makes sense for your character.

AMATEUR PERKS

Beginner's Luck
Born Under a Lucky Star
Learning from Mistakes
Risk Taker
Superficial Knowledge

Artist

Artists come in many forms. You might be a sculptor, painter, photographer, woodcarver, or even a mosaicist — creating beautiful patterns and designs with pieces of ceramic and glass. Artists can be found in all parts of society in the Known Worlds. You might be a lone painter who sells your work in a crowded marketplace. You might be a sculptor whose patron is a noble house, and your life's work is the sculpting of heroic statues of the family line or carving sepulchers for the future dead; or you might be a mosaicist creating glorious scenes on temple ceilings. Your ego, drive for gainful employment, need for inspiration, or even your curiosity may lead you out to new worlds and into adventure.

PATRON SAINTS

The Dramaturge — Bernhard Waldmeister of Leminkainen (c. 3800) was an eccentric dramatist and allegorist whose final work, *The Symposium of the Worlds*, is said to have presaged the fading suns. With a dramatis personae of 13 planetary and cosmological spirits, the play's dialogue in the brief middle act consists entirely of literal gibberish… or a celestial language, depending on the audience's inclination. Bernhard's drama concludes with the incarnate solar spirit prophesying cataclysm as the stage descends in darkness.

Laurent of the Non-Framing Medium — Xavier Laurent (?-4755?) received an education in the arts on Rampart. Tiring of Neo-Free Association Classicism, he became a leader of the Symbolist-Liberation Artists, a guerrilla artist collective devoted to disruption of "the accepted subject matter." Specializing in "the Under-Id of Form," he converted when he attempted to paint the shadow of Zebulon. After his sudden realization of the Omega Gospels, Laurent devoted his life to miraculous five-dimensional "Ben-Day" representations of the Prophet.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 2 Lores (any appropriate to your medium).
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Intuition +3; Perception +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Artist Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 1; Arts 3; Charm 1 *or* Knavery 1; Empathy 2 *or* Focus 2; Observe 2; Sleight of Hand 1 *or* Vigor 1
Equipment: Artist's tools
Alternative: Actor
As above, but substitute the skill Perform for Arts. Equipment consists of three different performance outfits for three different stock parts.
Alternative: Musician
As above, but substitute the skill Perform for Arts. Also, a Musical Instrument capability is pretty much a requirement. Equipment consists of your instrument of choice, as well as performance clothing.

ARTIST PERKS

Cat Burglar's Eye
Contortionist
Main Attraction
Musical Savant
Perfect Pitch
Royalties
Virtuoso

Explorer

You believe you were born to see the universe. Explorers like you can be found anywhere within —and sometimes outside of— the Known Worlds, exploring planets and tinkering with ancient technology. You are always seeking new adventures and a new discovery. People choose to become explorers for many reasons. Some are explorers for hire — charting new worlds or seeking ancient relics to sell to the highest bidder. Some set out to the stars for the sense of adventure. Others seek hidden knowledge. Which kind are you?

PATRON SAINTS

Edwin the Far-Seeker – With the onset of the barbarian invasions, Edwin Hawkwood (c. 4545) sought neither vengeance nor conquest; he yearned to explore new vistas and strange worlds. Accompanied by his Orthodox confessor, Edwin forged ahead into Vuldrok space. They were inseparable, and they traveled together from exploit to exploit. Their journey ended in death: captured by Vuldrok on Hargard, they were lashed together and run through with a single blade, bound together in death as they lived in life.

Saint Jortda — William Quinn Jortda (3728?-?), a Second Republic geologist interested in impact cratering on lunar surfaces, took to exploring space in his starship *Percival.* Discovering habitable worlds now lost (3876, Eve, Gottard), he is primarily remembered for being a respected scientist and Church member, rare during his era. Known for the Miracle of the Sprouting Lunar Flower, later legend states he found Saint Lextius' hidden planet of Dogen and was admitted, never to return.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Lore (any); Science Lore (any) *or* Tech Lore
Characteristics: Endurance +1; Intuition +1; Perception +2; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Explorer Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 2; Animalia 2 *or* Tech Redemption 2; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1 *or* Knavery 1; Intrusion 1; Observe 2; Drive 2 *or* Pilot 2 *or* Survival 2
Equipment: Expeditionary medallion (TL5 think machine curio; acts as a compass, weather predictor, and simple motion detector)

EXPLORER PERKS

Animal Friend
Anthropologist
Cartographer
Destinator
Guts
Oriented

Mercurian

The Mercurians are both a secret society and a calling. Where some people may complain about the universe and their place in it, Mercurians prefer to handle the matter in a different way. They create chaos, generally in opposition to the current order, but also as a way to make people aware of the absurdity of life. Anyone can pull off a prank. Only Mercurians pull off the subtle or grand hoaxes that leave people talking about them for years to come. If an independent operative manages this epic feat, the Mercurians immediately hunt her down… and try to recruit her.

Most Mercurians lead a double life. In their day-to-day existences, they are nobles, priests, and guild members in good standing; when they are alone, or in the company of others of their ilk, they are a serious threat to order and respect. Some claim that hull rats were originally introduced as a result of the Mercurians, and almost everyone in the know is certain that the occasional unaltered brute on a ship is a direct result of their efforts. More than one ship has suffered a long, arduous space journey with the constant odor of brute musk.

But not every action taken by the Mercurians is a grand or sweeping gesture. Many of their maneuvers are subtle enough not to be noticed at all. True Mercurians do not troll others in desperate hope of getting a reaction. Instead their actions have specific goals — highlighting the vanities of a priest, the greed of a Reeve, or the abuses of a noble. A classic Mercurian prank is to dress up as a noble's work crew, dig up a major road, and leave it that way — a sign that the noble is too engrossed in building monuments to his own vanity to bother serving his serfs.

Most Mercurians are not paid for what they do. Rewards come in the form of secretive smiles and fond Mercurian memories. Many of the Mercurians only

meet other members of their secret group after helping them escape from prison. It normally takes years for Mercurians to even begin to understand what the group has accomplished and what they are planning for the future.

PATRON SAINTS

Saint Beytaz the Revealer — This ancient Avestite made her mark in the 43rd century at the height of the noble attacks on Temple Avesti. Already renowned for the efforts to which she went to reveal nobles violating the laws of Mother Church, her activities went into high gear when a noble fleet assembled to attack Pyre itself. The bawdy party she scheduled at a brothel on Criticorum revealed both lords of the fleet and their confessors, forcing the Patriarch to recognize the armada being assembled against true believers. Beytaz lost her life only a few years later at the hands of al-Malik nobles whose greed she brought to light, and the Avestites insisted she be named a saint within a few years, despite her sometimes scandalous behavior.

Saint Thornley — Surely a mythical figure, no one could have managed all the activities ascribed to this unofficial saint. Said to have been a Slayer involved in the assassination of Vladimir before leaving that guild to become both a Mercurian and a Vagabond, tales of St. Thornley place him at the site of the greatest pranks in history. Best known for claiming all people are patriarchs and should be treated right forever, Mercurians still make pilgrimages to his assumed grave on Holy Terra.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose any three Lores.
Characteristics: Dexterity +1 *or* Faith +1; Intuition +2 *or* Wits +2; Perception +1; Presence +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Mercurian Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Arts 1 *or* Perform 1; Charm 1; Disguise 1 *or* Sleight of Hand 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Knavery 3; Intrusion 1; Observe 1; Tech Redemption 1
Equipment: Prank paper (TL5 curio; a piece of paper that, when you write a message on it, mimics 1 of 3 types of official decrees: noble, Church, or guild. Lasts only for 24 hours, after which it dissolves. You begin with 10 pages; 10 FB per extra page.)

MERCURIAN PERKS

Calculating
Can't You Take a Joke?
Master of Deception
Nimble
Temporary Autonomous Zone
Vicious Insult

Pirate

You ply the space lanes seeking easy targets to plunder. You don't discriminate, targeting unarmed ships and unprotected ground bases equally. Pirates like you come from all walks of life, but you all share the desire for easy plunder. Some cultures, such as the Vuldrok, are notorious raiders and pirates.

Your M.O. is to haunt jumpgates or the outer fringes of a solar system, rarely daring to venture into populated areas, preferring far off colonies and moons that aren't heavily inhabited. The pickings might be scarce, but you're less likely to run into patrol ships and can more easily flee when the tide of battle turns against you. There isn't a Pirate out there who doesn't have a good escape plan. Most Pirates have a signature move or something that makes them stand out, allowing them to be known by reputation. One Pirate might be known for never leaving anyone alive, while another might pride themselves on never killing anyone on the ships they board.

Not all Pirates are independent; some choose to operate as privateers in service to a particular faction.

Taking this calling does not give you a starship. It simply means you have experience operating aboard a pirate ship.

PATRON SAINTS

Finnur Faith-Trothed, Pirate for the Prophet — Striking from Vuldrok space, Finnur Frostfraw (c. 4450) plundered the Known Worlds. Injured attacking Gwynneth, he was healed by Sister Matreiya, an Amalthean, who told him that piracy made him rich but his spiritual treasure was scant until he received Zebulon. Converting, he henceforth plundered to aid the poor. A folk saint, Finnur has often been added to and removed from the liturgical list of "official" saints over the centuries.

Christophe, Collector of Ships — Christophe Elbegarde was a shipwright from the Tethys star-shipyards when the Emperor Wars tore his world apart, killing his family. He stole the most advanced ship in the yard and began a campaign of revenge against the house fleets that had ruined his life, collecting a ragtag fleet from the ships he had seized. His campaign ended when he boarded a mysterious lone Church ship.

Confronting its captain on the bridge, he fell to his knees before Saint Paulus and proclaimed: "I have caught the prize of all prizes — the Pancreator!" He awoke aboard his own ship, recorded his encounter, and slipped away in a shuttle, never to be seen again.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (choose Energy Guns or Slug Guns); Combat Armor *or* War Armor *or* Shipboard Operations
Characteristics: Dexterity +1; Intuition +1; Perception +2; Wits +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Pirate Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Intrusion 1; Knavery 2; Melee 3 *or* Shoot 3; Pilot 2; Tech Redemption 2
Equipment: Hull knife (TL5 laser torch for cutting spaceship hulls and earthbound walls and doors; halves materials Resistance; cannot be used for turn-by-turn combat against moving targets. *Tech Compulsion:* Destructive.). This essential boarding device has iconic connotations for pirates, as well as military marines whose job is to board enemy ships.

Alternative: Smuggler
As above, except:
Capabilities: Jumpweb Lore *or* Think Machines; Shipboard Operations
Characteristics: Perception +1; Intuition +1; Presence +2; Wits +1
Skills: Charm 2 *or* Disguise 2; Interface 1; Knavery 2; Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Pilot 2; Tech Redemption 2
Equipment: *Camo tarp* (TL5 holo-tarp: when hung from walls or placed on a floor, it mimics nearby its environment to appear as just more ship decking or flagstones; covers 2m x 2m area.)

PIRATE PERKS

Aim Assistance
Armed to the Teeth
Born on the Battlefield
Can Opener
Fencing
Marksmanship
Two-Gun Fighting

Psychic

You have strange powers of the mind. Psychics usually cling to no particular faith or order and, unlike theurgists, they're rarely a part of the Church. The Inquisition hunts and seeks to eradicate psychics wherever they can find them. As such, psychics tend to be loners, making their way through the Known Worlds while trying to remain hidden from those who would destroy them. They often adopt false identities to hide their true "profession." Similar to a Spy or an Incognito noble, a Psychic can practice a false calling. Unlike those two callings, however, they cannot choose the perks and benefits of their false calling; it's a cover story only, something to disguise the scent of suspicion.

Some use their powers for good, seeking to give comfort to the wounded and ill. Others use their powers for their own benefit, manipulating minds and wreaking havoc wherever they go. Some psychics hide in plain sight, using their powers for the benefit of the Merchant League or a noble house. It is even rumored that the Inquisition has its own psychics that they use to hunt down heretics.

Obon Scraver Psychic

PATRON SAINTS

Saints Kallos and Adonia — Brother and sister, Kallos and Adonia (4200s) shared from birth a melding of psychic abilities. Of Thana descent, born in the slums of Criticorum, the beautiful twins used their gift to survive, but after reading the mind of Saint Mikos, a simple priest at the time, they encountered an overwhelming love for all creation. Experiencing both *Agape* and *Philia*, they dedicated their lives to the Prophet, starting a mission in Acheon. Many miracles are attributed to them.

The Savant of Shaka – Favyana legends mention Victor (c. 2450), a gifted First Republic psychic. Born on a Sathraist colony on the remote lost world of Shaka, Victor was both profoundly deaf and profoundly psychic. Freed from the boundaries of verbal discourse, he expressed and received thought-forms as visual, multilayered concepts that transcended language barriers. When strangers from Earth came for Victor, he saw their intent and fled into the wilderness, where he created a sanctuary for others like him.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Special: You gain 1 rank in the Psi characteristic. You can increase it by using the characteristic ranks awarded at each level.
Capabilities: Choose 2 Lores (any).
Characteristics: Allocate 4 ranks to characteristics tied to your particular psychic path *or* claim the following: Intuition +1; Perception +1; Will +2
Perk: Choose 1 from the Psychic Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Allocate 10 ranks to skills tied to your particular psychic path *or* claim the following: Charm 2 *or* Impress 2; Empathy 1; Fight 1 *or* Melee 1 *or* Shoot 1; Focus 3; Knavery 2; Vigor 1
Equipment: Psychic *lodestone* (attuned tiny item — a coin, amulet, ring — that allows you to use the power perk you gain at your current level without suffering unfavorable rolls)

PSYCHIC PERKS

Attune Fetish
Coven Membership
Enlightened
Imbue Tabernacle
Psychic Powers (you can choose psychic powers as calling perks; see **Chapter 5: The Occult**)
Scent of the Witch

Scholar

You seek the pursuit of knowledge above all things. You might be a recluse who spends your days and nights devoted to research, never leaving your study except for food and supplies; or you might be a professor at a university, conducting your own research while sharing it with others; or perhaps you're a cloistered monk who spends every waking moment seeking enlightenment. Some Scholars leave the library to do field research, gaining the kind of knowledge that only comes from experience. It's a big universe out there, and most of its strangeness isn't written down in books or data archives (or if it is, it's damn obscure and hard to find in this benighted age). It's every Scholar's duty to expand on the store of wisdom available to all sentients… so long as they don't step into heresy, of course.

PATRON SAINTS

Severina Sapientia — A senior Reeve jurist on Ravenna, Severina's true calling was scholarship. She studied Second Republic philosophical treatises, reconciling their syllogisms with Church doctrine in pursuit of a greater wisdom. Embroiled in the bitter politics of the Emperor Wars, she defended a noble accused of sedition. Baseless accusations of treason and theurgy were her reward, followed by torture and execution. She appears in visions to console those persecuted for their devotion to truth.

Tolhardy, Speaker for the Past — Jyrr Tolhardy (?-4673?) largely reconstructed the proto-language of the obun and ukari peoples, with the aid of the obun Talanu Keffik. A Church Doctor at the University of Saint Hombor, Jyrr Tolhardy received a vision telling him to go to Velisamil. Applying for a grant, his annual detail grew into an undertaking of two decades of research, producing the acclaimed work *Lingua Ubankari Oroborus.* The final voluminous notes were completed posthumously in 23 volumes.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Choose 2 from the Lores (any) and/or Sciences (any).
Characteristics: Intuition +1; Perception +1; Wits +3
Perk: Choose 1 from the Scholar Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Academia 3; Alchemy 1 *or* Crafts 1; Focus 3; Interface 2; Observe 1
Equipment: *Datavore* (TL5 think machine; used to link into other systems and copy data as well as scan physical book pages. *Tech Compulsion:* Inerrant.)

SCHOLAR PERKS

Anthropologist
Botanist
Epiphany
Linguist
Memory Expander
Polymath
Superficial Knowledge

Theurgist

You practice the religious magic called theurgy. Theurgists believe the Pancreator grants their gifts to them. Not all who walk this path are of the Church, but they all have faith. They also believe their special powers are gained through the power of prayer. Of course, theurgists who use their powers without the sanctioning of the Church are considered to be heretics and are hunted by the Inquisition.

Heretics can often be found on backwater worlds, gathering a congregation of their own. They must always be wary, for if (and when) the Church gets word of them, it will not be long until Church forces arrives to conscript or eradicate them. For this reason, most

heretics remain constantly on the move, spreading the word wherever the stars take them. Their abilities can prove quite useful, and they're often welcomed on board roaming merchant ships or among smugglers and less savory sorts.

PATRON SAINTS

The Raven Priest — Three texts name a Raven Priest: A late addition to the *Vitkasaga* mentions the trials of a young foreign priest on the Vuldrok world of Raven struggling to learn the ways of the vitki; Church records from the barbarian invasion of Byzantium Secundus (4537) describe a Vuldrok raider garbed in tattered Orthodox vestments who wielded strange magics; and an incomplete poem recalls an aged runecaster whose studies threatened madness. These three texts, possibly related, may narrate a single individual's lifelong quest for knowledge that knew no borders.

Saint Astrid Soul-Binder — A Prthivi Mater of the Amaltheans, Astrid (4718-4816) was able to perform exorcisms and soul-healing using theurgy. The miracle of the Whisper of the Husks occurred when Astrid used the relic of Amalthea's sari, returning 12 undead husks to their living state. Later studying with the Eskatonic Order to strengthen her gifts, Astrid discovered she could mentally create "temporary relics" and perform miraculous cures utilizing them. Both orders claim her.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Special: You gain 1 rank in the Theurgy characteristic. You can increase it by using the characteristic ranks awarded at each level.
Capabilities: Choose 2 Lores (any).
Characteristics: Allocate 4 ranks to characteristics tied to your particular theurgic rites *or* claim the following: Faith +2; Intuition +1; Will +1
Perk: Choose 1 from the Theurgist Perks list below or from the open perks list.
Skills: Allocate 10 ranks to skills tied to your particular theurgic rites *or* claim the following: Academia 2; Alchemy 2; Charm 1 *or* Impress 1; Empathy 2; Focus 3
Equipment: Vestments (mundane, not invested: miter, crosier, robes, censor, jumpgate cross, water, rosary), and implements (prayer book, incense, candles).

THEURGIST PERKS

Enlightened
Imbue Tabernacle
Invest Phylactery
Sanctify Arms and Armor
Scent of the Witch
Theurgic Rites (you can choose theurgy rites as calling perks; see **Chapter 5: The Occult**)

Personalization & Equipment

Your species, class, faction, and calling have filled in most everything on your character sheet that you'll have as a starting character. But there's one more step: personalization. People aren't cookie-cutter units spat out by their backgrounds. They're individuals with their own ideas about things. Hence, the final stage of character creation involves you making a few additional choices.

IDENTITY

Your character needs a name. People in the Known Worlds come from all sorts of backgrounds, so even if your character's culture is primarily colored by a particular old Urth culture (such as the Li Halan's obvious Asian cultural heritage), you can still create a name based on anything you want.

You'll write your character's name at the top of the character sheet, along with their rank (based on their faction and any rank-awarding perks) and species. Next to it, you'll also fill in your class level.

On the back of the character sheet, there is a "Description" section where you can fill out more details, such as your character's homeworld, their birthdate, hair color, height, etc.

BEGINNING TRAITS

You get the following traits to customize your character during this step:

Capability: 1 capability of your choice with *no restrictions* (even if you don't qualify for access to a restricted capability).

Perk: 1 perk of your choice with *no restrictions* — pick from any class or calling, and

Optional:

- Choose 1 Affliction. If the GM approves it, you can choose to take an Affliction at this stage (see *Afflictions*, in **Chapter 3: Traits**). You can only take one Affliction to gain one additional perk. You should be careful when taking an Affliction since it can greatly hinder your character.

CHARACTERISTICS

If you have not yet chosen your primary and secondary characteristics, do so now. Your primary begins at 5 ranks and your secondary at 4 ranks. All the rest are tertiary, beginning at 3 ranks.

VITALITY

Once you've determined your characteristics from your choices in the previous steps, you can figure out your base Vitality.

Vitality = Species Size (5 for humans) + Endurance + Will + Faith + level

You'll record this on the character sheet in the "Vitality" section, filling in the "Max" value.

REVIVALS

Revivals allow you to regain lost Vitality by getting a second wind, a recovery, or whatever way you want to describe it. See *Revivals* in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

Your Revival value is equal to your Size plus your level. A human (Size 5) of 3rd level gains 8 Vitality with a Revival.

On the character sheet, you'll list the "Value" for the amount of Vitality you regain with a Revival. You'll also list the "Total Uses" (based on your level: 1 at 1st level; see *Class Level*, below.)

SURGES

Once you've determined your characteristics, you can figure out your base Surge value. A surge allows you to gain victory points without needing to make a roll.

Surge = *highest* of (Strength, Wits, or Presence) + level

On the character sheet, you'll list the "Value" for the amount of VP you regain with a Surge. You'll also list the "Total Uses" (based on your level: 1 at 1st level; see *Class Level*, below.)

RESISTANCE

Your Body Resistance is based on your armor (and maybe special perks that award bonuses to it). Once you've determined your equipment, below, you can come back and fill in your Body Resistance (and your armor's value and any perk bonuses).

Your Mind Resistance is based on your perks, mainly the ones that award you rank. Review your perks to see which ones add to your Mind Resistance and record the total value under "Mind Resistance" on the character sheet.

Your Spirit Resistance is based on your perks, mainly the austerities that you practice. Review your perks to see which ones add to your Spirit Resistance and record the total value under "Spirit Resistance" on the character sheet.

BANK

As 1st level, your bank capacity is 5 VP. You do not have any VP in your bank when you begin play; you must transfer them from your cache once play begins.

On the character sheet, you'll list your "Capacity", based on your level (see *Class Level*, below).

RECORD EQUIPMENT

On the character sheet, you'll list the following items in the "Equipment" section.

MONEY

You start play with the money you've managed to scrimp and save throughout your apprenticeship and early career: 300 firebirds.

In addition, if you gained the Cash or Riches perks, you have that extra money at the beginning of gameplay.

WEAPONRY

You begin play with the following weapons.

- You have any weapons you received as faction awards and calling equipment.
- You get one weapon per weapon capability you've acquired. (*Example:* If you have the Military Weapons capability, you can choose one sword or mace or other military weapon. It is of standard quality.)

If you have the Slug Guns capability, you can begin with a handgun of standard quality and 2 clips worth of ammo. You can spend your firebirds to upgrade and/or gain additional ammunition.

If you have the Energy Weapons capability, you can begin with a handgun of poor workmanship (if you roll a critical failure when firing it, it breaks until it can be repaired) and 1 fusion cell. You can spend firebirds to upgrade it to standard quality. (See the

costs in **Chapter 4: Technology**; figure on paying half the listed price for an upgrade.)

Artifact weapons, such as flux swords, can only be acquired during play. Some gamemasters may wish to limit certain types of weapons in their stories, especially at the beginning of play. All weapons chosen are subject to GM approval.

ARMOR

You begin play with the following armor:

- If you have no armor capabilities, you have either thick clothing or a leather jerkin (civilian grade armor).
- If you have the Combat Armor capability, you have a studded-leather jerkin. You can upgrade to a plastic-studded or plasteel-studded version by paying the difference in cost. (See the costs in **Chapter 4: Technology**.)
- If you have the War Armor capability, you have a suit of scale mail. You can upgrade to the plastic or plasteel version by paying the difference in cost. (See the costs in **Chapter 4: Technology**.)
- If you have the Handheld Shield capability, you have a steel buckler.

TECH

Tech devices are items of TL5 or higher. You begin play with the following tech devices:

- You have any tech items you received as faction awards and calling equipment.
- You have basic TL4 or lower tools or equipment typically used for your calling, such as a backpack for a Scout, pen and paper for a Scribe, personal calling cards for Courtiers, etc.
- You can buy additional items with your beginning firebirds.

FAVORS

Favors are a way of skirting the normal restrictions on skill, capabilities, and perks. They're a means of acquiring *access* to that trait even if your class or calling doesn't normally allow it.

CHARACTER CREATION

During character creation, you can acquire up to no more than 3 favors. You need a separate favor for each trait you want access to.

Things for which you might accrue a favor include:

- a Church writ, guild contract, or noble decree allowing you access to a *single* restricted skill or capability;
- access to a *single* calling perk from another calling than your own.

GAMEPLAY

During gameplay, favors can still be levied by the gamemaster whenever a player makes a major change for their character, such as:

- You want to switch classes; you'll need a sponsor in your new class.
- You want to follow a different class's calling; you'll need a sponsor in that calling to induct you.

Note that yeomen do not need favors to learn other class's perks or follow another class's calling, so long as they have GM permission. (However, in *no case* can a yeoman or a favor allow anyone but a Brother Battle priest to follow the Brother Battle calling or learn its perks.)

HOW FAVORS WORK

The creditor to whom the character owes a favor can call it in anytime the GM wishes. The favor is usually a task for which people might normally get paid (guard this caravan until it reaches its destination, surreptitiously deliver this love letter to Duke Ormand, etc.), but the character has to do it for free.

The creditor is most likely a faction, such as the Sacred Society of Engineers or Sanctuary Aeon. One of its members lets you in on some of that faction's secrets or proprietary knowledge, but the favor is owed to the faction, not the individual. The creditor can be an individual, but it must be someone with the power and reach to make the character's life difficult should they fail to reciprocate on the favor when it's called in.

If the debt is called due and the character fails to respond or reciprocate, they will be hunted by the creditor and, if caught, forced to pay restitution (roughly equivalent to a year's worth of salary for someone of the character's calling) or be imprisoned. If enough time passes without the fugitive being caught, the creditor might begin to hire bounty hunters and private eyes to widen the search. If the creditor is the Church, Pancreator help the character who is hunted by the Inquisition or Brother Battle. If the creditor is the Merchant League, the Reeves have experts — and even star fleets — dedicated to debt collection.

Custom Characters

Step 1: Form the Troupe

As the character creation step at the beginning of the chapter.

Step 2: Create a Character Concept

As the character creation step at the beginning of the chapter.

Step 3: Choose Your Species

As the character creation step at the beginning of the chapter.

Step 4: Choose Your Class

Are you a noble, priest, merchant, or yeoman? This is your social class, defining your character's place in society.

At 1st level, your class grants you:

UPBRINGING TRAITS

Capabilities: 4 pre-assigned capabilities: a Customs Lore (based on class), Homeworld Lore, Read/Speak Urthish, and you can choose 2 additional capabilities to represent your upbringing.

Characteristics: 5 characteristic ranks allocated to the characteristics of your choice in any combination (*note:* at 1st-level, you cannot have a characteristic higher than 8).

Perks: 1 archetypal perk possessed by all members of your class that exemplifies your class's role:

Noble: Imperious
Priest: Inspiring
Merchant: Ingenious
Yeoman: Independent

…and 1 additional perk of your choice (from your class, calling, or the open perk list).

Skills: 5 skill ranks allocated to the skills of your choice in any combination (*note:* at 1st-level, you cannot have a skill higher than 8).

Step 5: Choose Your Faction

Choose a faction for your noble house, Church sect, merchant guild, or yeoman society.

At 1st-level, your faction grants you:

APPRENTICESHIP TRAITS

Capabilities: the Faction Lore capability for your faction and 2 additional capabilities of your choice.

Characteristics: 5 characteristic ranks allocated to the characteristics of your choice in any combination (*note:* at 1st-level, you cannot have a characteristic higher than 8).

Perk: the first degree of rank in your faction, as per your class's perk (Church Ordination, Guild Commission, Noble Title, or Professional Reputation).

Skills: 5 skill ranks allocated to the skills of your choice in any combination (*note:* at 1st-level, you cannot have a skill higher than 8).

FACTION QUIRKS

Blessing: You also gain a quirk that defines your faction. See the faction descriptions for your faction's Blessing.

Curse: You also receive a flaw or drawback that hinders members of your faction. See the faction descriptions for your faction's Curse.

Material award: You also gain one special item, something that is usually issued to newly ranked members of the faction. See the faction descriptions for your faction's material award.

CROSS-FACTIONAL CHARACTERS

In most cases, a noble chooses a house, a priest chooses a sect, or a merchant chooses a guild. However, they *could* choose otherwise: a noble could choose a sect or guild, for instance. This represents either the spurning of their birthright or some cross-factional political arrangement, such as when a Li Halan parent decides to send a third or fourth child to serve the Orthodoxy. (There's no place for them at court among their own family, so why not build a bridge between house and sect?) While the cross-factional character retains their class, they now chiefly serve another class's faction in their own class's capacity: nobles advise, priests minister, and merchants trade or deal with tech.

One aspect makes this choice different from changing classes: The character is still a noble, priest, or merchant, but their loyalty is chiefly to their chosen faction. A merchant who serves House al-Malik might be a bookkeeper for that house, while a priest who serves the Engineers may be there to bless the machinery (but without the official connections that could turn aside the Inquisition). This is very uncommon, but not unknown.

If you choose this option for your noble-born character, you need to declare their birth family, but they don't have the strong ties to it that would give them the quirks of that faction. The Family Ties perk can illustrate that you still maintain close ties with your direct family. (This perk can also represent a noble bastard who was raised by the Church, a guild, or among the yeomanry, but who can still claim noble blood, even if the family does not publicly acknowledge it.)

Characters who make this choice are still restricted to their class callings. So, a merchant who serves Temple Avesti still can't be an Inquisitor, but she could be their Banker.

Step 6: Choose Your Calling

Choose a calling from the lists for your noble house, Church sect, merchant guild, or yeoman society. Since you're making a custom character, you can ask the GM if you can use a calling from a list your class can't normally use. (For example, you might want to be a priest Tech Redeemer — a very rare role, but not completely unknown.) You'll still want to explain just how your odd career fits into the duties expected of you by your faction.

At 1st-level, calling grants the following benefits:

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: You can choose 2 capabilities.
Characteristics: 5 characteristic ranks allocated to the characteristics of your choice in any combination (*note:* at 1st-level, you cannot have a characteristic higher than 8).
Perk: 1 calling perk.
Skills: 10 skill ranks allocated to the skills of your choice in any combination (*note:* At 1st-level, you cannot have a skill higher than 8).

Step 7: Personalization and Equipment

As the character creation step presented before this section.

Character Growth

People change as they go through life. Characters in fictional stories tend to change even more dramatically, and RPG player characters are no exception.

One of the basic tenets of tabletop RPGs is the idea that characters get better at doing things (and learn new things to do) as they experience various encounters, dramatic twists and turns, combats, and struggles throughout their careers as protagonists in an ongoing story (what we call an "epic").

Characters don't just grow in terms of their rules-based traits; they're also growing emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Of course, life throws curve balls. Some people regress, becoming trapped in patterns of trauma that prohibit openness and growth, but we accentuate the positive here, presenting rules for characters who progressively improve their abilities.

We represent character growth with *levels*. These are abstract markers of a character's overall competency and experience. As your character experiences drama after drama, they'll get better with their skills and gain new perks, as well as increasing their capacity to save victory points from scene to scene. Also, you, as the player, will come to understand your character better — you'll grow as a roleplayer.

Class Level

Classes are defined by levels. As your character adventures through the universe, they advance in level at a pace set by the gamemaster (see below). Whenever a character advances a level in their class, they gain the following:

- 1 capability (usually associated with your calling)
- increased characteristic ranks (based on the chart)
- 1 calling perk
- With every *odd* level (1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, etc.), they gain 1 class perk
- +1 Revival, and an extra use at 4th, 7th, and 10th level
- increased skill ranks (based on the chart)
- +1 Surge, and an extra use at 4th, 7th, and 10th level
- +1 Vitality
- With every *even* level (2nd, 4th, 6th, etc.), they gain a +5 victory-point VP bank capacity

Level	Capability	Char†	Perks	Revival Rating	No.	Skills†	Surge Rating	No.	Vitality	VP Bank
1	*	*	1 class, 1 calling	**	1	*	***	1	****	5
2	1	+2	1 calling	+1	1	+3	+1	1	+1	10
3	1	+1	1 class, 1 calling	+1	1	+2	+1	1	+1	10
4	1	+2	1 calling	+1	2	+3	+1	2	+1	15
5	1	+1	1 class, 1 calling	+1	2	+2	+1	2	+1	15
6	1	+2	1 calling	+1	2	+3	+1	2	+1	20
7	1	+1	1 class, 1 calling	+1	3	+2	+1	3	+1	20
8	1	+2	1 calling	+1	3	+3	+1	3	+1	25
9	1	+1	1 class, 1 calling	+1	3	+2	+1	3	+1	25
10	1	+2	1 calling	+1	4	+3	+1	4	+1	30

† Skills and characteristics cannot be raised above 8 until you attain 2nd level and higher, and they can't be raised to 10 until 10th level.
* Beginning capabilities, skills, and characteristics are awarded by class, faction, and calling.
** Beginning Revival rating is determined by this formula: [Size + level].
*** Beginning Surge is determined by this formula: [highest force characteristic (Strength, Wits, or Presence) + level.
**** Beginning Vitality is determined by this formula: [Size + Endurance + Will + Faith + level].

This chart displays the gains at each level from 1st to 10th. Characters can continue to rise beyond 10th level; they simply follow the same progression.

CAPABILITIES

Your areas and knowledge and training. You acquire one new capability with each new level after the 1st. Some capabilities are restricted; see *Skills*, below.

CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics increase slower than skills. A 1st-level character cannot have any characteristic higher than 8 ranks, and no rank can be raised to 10 until 10th level.

REVIVAL

When you suffer wounds to your Vitality, you can take a quick moment to rally yourself and recover from the pain and hurt: you can heal some of your lost Vitality. Your Revival rating is calculated using several different traits. (See *Revival*, in **Chapter 3: Traits**.) You have a limited number of Revivals you can use before needing to take a Respite; see the chart above. All character's get their base Revival rating at 1st level and increase it by 1 with each new level.

SKILLS

Skill ranks gained when you gain a level can be applied however you wish. You can apply them all to one skill or divide them among your existing skills.

Some skills and capabilities are Restricted, which simply means that if you don't have proper access (such as through your calling), you cannot learn the skill unless you find a teacher. In character creation terms, you can:

- acquire a writ, meaning that you now owe that party a *favor* (see the sidebar in the *Personalization & Equipment* section), or
- learn the skill/capability on the black market, meaning that you now owe the black-market teacher a *favor*, and if you're caught using the skill or displaying the forbidden knowledge, you can be legally questioned by the restricting party or parties.

SURGES

A surge is your capacity to draw upon sudden reserves of willpower and ingenuity — in short, a surge gives you victory points. Your Surge rating is calculated using several different traits. (See *Surge*, in **Chapter 3: Traits**.) You have a limited number of surges you can use before needing to take a Respite; see the chart above. All character's get their base Surge rating at 1st level and increase it by 1 with each new level.

VITALITY

A character's Vitality rating is the indicator of how much damage they can take. Base Vitality is calculated using several different traits. (See *Vitality* in **Chapter 3: Traits**.) All character's get their base Vitality rating at 1st level and increase it by 1 with each new level.

VP BANK

Each character has a VP bank rating that determines how many victory points they can store. Characters begin with a base bank capacity that increases every even level (2nd, 4th, 6th, etc.). All characters begin with the same bank capacity and advance at the same rate.

Pace of Character Development

The GM sets the pace for how fast the troupe's characters "level up" — that is, how quickly they can go from one level to the next. They do so using the advice given in **Chapter 1: Drama** in the **Gamemaster Book**.

In between a full level advancement, your GM might allow you to take a *partial advance*. If so, you choose which trait category you advance — your bank, Vitality, capability, skills, characteristics, or perks — and raise it as if you've acquired the next level. Once you do gain the full level, you do not get to advance that category again, since you already did so with the partial advance.

Major Life Changes

Sometimes your character concept changes as you play and as your character travels the rocky road through life. You might want to change your character's class or switch to a different allegiance: joining a different faction. While you can change calling with each level advancement, it's a more dramatic — and rarer — event to change class and faction, but it can be done.

Changing Your Class

Most Known Worlders carry their social identities from cradle to grave. Born a noble, always a noble. Promised to the Church from birth. Apprenticed as an infant to a guild. It's rare for any individual to change their fate enough to change their class or their faction. (Calling is more changeable, but only to a degree.)

Still, it's not uncommon for a noble wracked by remorse or grief to give up his title and take to the monastery. In very rare cases, a merchant might perform such a great service for a house that she's inducted as a member of that house, ennobling her and her heirs. A priest might lose his faith and join the Merchant League, setting out to prove to themselves and the universe that violence and cynicism are truer than the lies of the Church.

With that in mind, it's possible to change course mid-play and have one's character change their class. (They must do so when they advance to a new level; they can't do it mid-level.) The main drawback is that you lose many of the privileges of the rank you held in your former class. In many cases, you can retain your title, but that's only ceremonial. You no longer have the duties and privileges of the rank, but you do maintain some of the respect. (You can still apply your former rank for Mind Resistance, but at one level less.)

You no longer have access to the former class's perks, but you do have access to your new class's perks. You don't automatically gain the *archetypal perk* that you normally gain at 1st level, but you retain the one gained from your former class. You must also select a new faction and new calling that are suitable to your new class. This, of course, requires some roleplaying — you can't simply decide to join the Engineers Guild; they have to accept you, which means you've got to convince them you're worthy enough — and trustworthy enough (changing classes and factions betrays a troubling mercurialness) — to be accepted into the fold.

When changing classes, keep the old class and level on your character sheet but also list the new class beginning at level 1. For the purpose of determining overall level advancement (and how much your traits increase), the *total* level is used. For example, a 3rd-level noble/1st-level priest is 4th level for the purposes of determining on the level chart which traits increase.

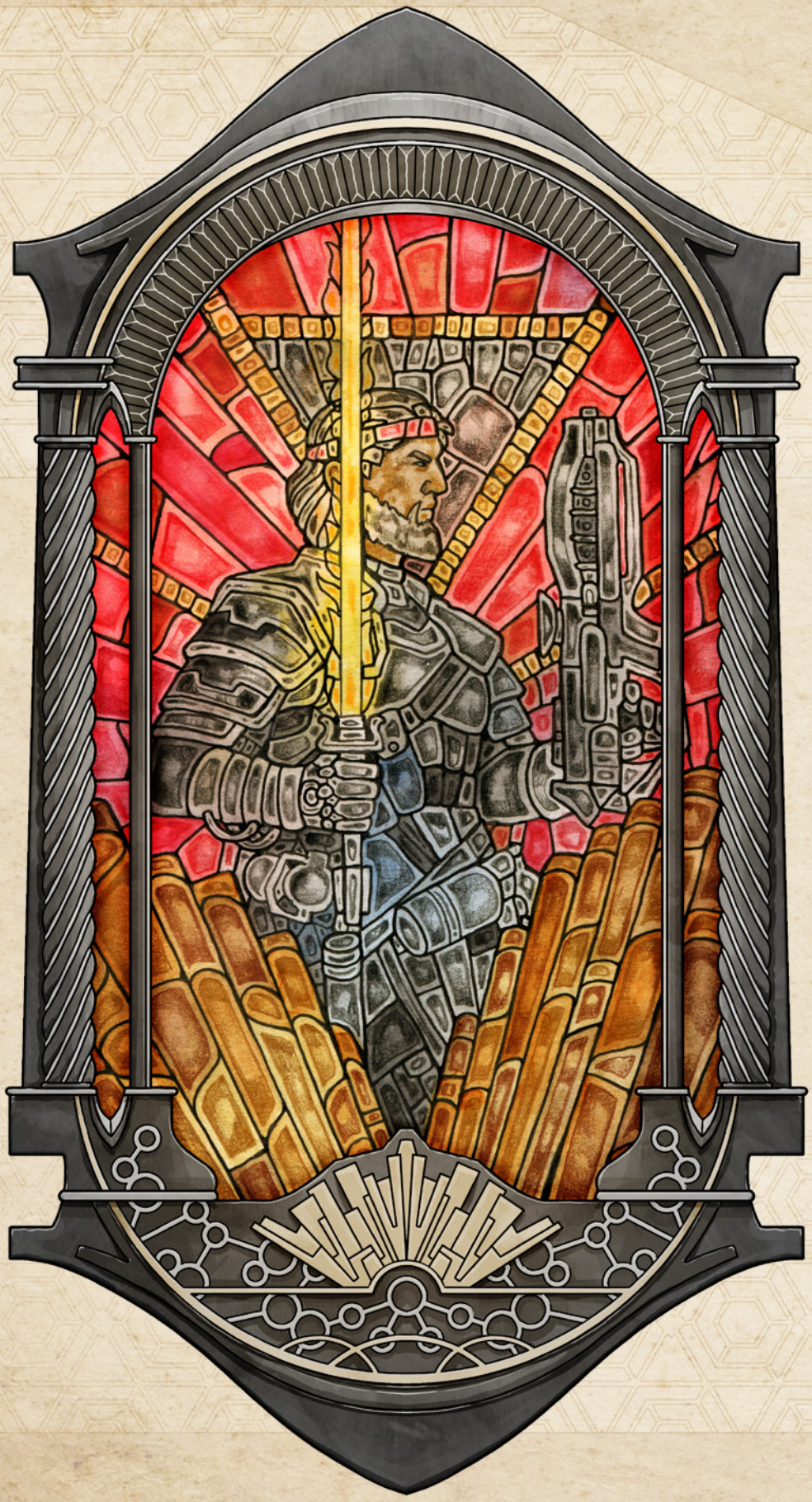
> ***Example:*** *Dame Verona of House Hazat is a 5th-level noble. When she advances to level 6, she decides to give up her title to become a merchant. This makes her a 1st-level merchant/5th-level noble (total: 6th level). She must now choose a new faction and a calling. The stars beckon to her, so she chooses Charioteer as her new faction and Star Pilot as her new calling.*

Changing Your Faction

You can choose to change your faction. An Engineer of the Merchant League may wake up one day and decide they want to be a Charioteer. A member of a minor house might find themselves adopted into one of the Royal Houses. Also, a character who changes their class must usually select a new faction. A character should not make changes like this lightly. If they do it too often, they might find themselves rejected by the remaining factions.

Upon adopting a new faction, the character does not gain any of the faction's starting traits. Their faction's blessing and curse will probably not change to reflect their new faction, although this choice is really up to the player and the GM. When a character leaves a faction, they're most likely stripped of the award they received and do not necessarily gain their new faction's award. Consult your gamemaster for more details.

Chapter 3: Traits



SAINT MANTIUS THE SOLDIER

Hail Mantius, mightiest of us all. Pilgrim, it is to Mantius that we pray for the strength and power to defeat our enemies and protect our loved ones.

Mantius was the warrior par excellence, unparalleled in fighting skill and unbeatable even by overwhelming odds — just like the Pancreator's justice. He honed his body and mind to serve one goal: protecting the faithful. He respects discipline and forthrightness and rejects action from heated emotion and hidden motive.

He was the Prophet's bodyguard, and thus, no attack shall reach those whom he blesses. He imbues weapons with holy furor so that even the bodiless minions of the Dark cannot withstand them. His secret fighting arts have been passed to the Brother Battle order, so they may better protect us from the menaces in the Dark.

He bears the flux sword Manjusri, which cuts through all evil, and the blaster rifle Ishbibenob, which is said to have disabled the Sathraist starship Far Kenning with one shot.

There is no record of his death, and many legends claim he hibernates, so he may waken when the universe's need is greatest.

— Charioteer Captain Zelina Hamid-Sandor, The Pilgrim's Path: H0w to Read the Omega Gospels

Traits are categories we use to illustrate a wide variety of a character's abilities — everything from muscle power and intelligence to competence at driving a vehicle or talent for painting. Many of these traits are represented by numbers that indicate a character's degree of ability with that trait. **Chapter 1: Rules** and **Chapter 2: Characters** provide more detail on how some of these traits are used and chosen, respectively. This chapter expands on those rules and offers more detail on their use, as well as how they interact with one another.

Here is a brief summary of the traits.

- **Bank:** Your reservoir of stored victory points.
- **Capability:** Represents bodies of knowledge that modify your skill use.
- **Characteristic:** Summarizes innate and practiced abilities that bolster your skill use
- **Perk:** Provides special privileges and abilities associated with your class or calling.
- **Resistance:** Measures your defenses against physical, mental, social, and even occult attacks and influence.
- **Revival:** You can take a second wind to recover lost Vitality.
- **Skills:** These trained abilities allow you to accomplish actions.
- **Surge:** When you're out of fuel, your adrenaline surge gives you VP to use.
- **Techgnosis:** This is your ability to carry high technology devices without suffering the compulsions such sinful items can cause.
- **Vitality:** Measures how much damage you can take before you drop.

Bank

At the start of your turn, before anything else happens, your cache is emptied out. Its VP go back into the well — except those that can fit into your bank. Your bank has a maximum capacity, a limit to how many VP you can store there. This is determined by your level; at 1st level your bank capacity is 5 VP. that increases by 5 every even level (2nd, 4th, 6th, etc.).

All characters begin with the same bank capacity and advance at the same rate.

You can freely transfer VP from your bank to your cache and vice versa. This is a player activity, not a character action.

At the beginning of your turn, when you need to empty your cache, you can transfer VP to your bank (up to its capacity), so you don't lose them to the well.

Level	Bank
1	5
2	10
3	10
4	15
5	15
6	20
7	20
8	25
9	25
10	30

Capabilities

Capabilities are bodies of knowledge that allow you to apply your skills in certain areas. Unlike characteristics and skills; they don't have ratings from 0 to 10; characters either have a given capability or they don't.

Capabilities work in conjunction with skills. When you make a roll in a given situation, there might be a capability that applies to that task. Most skills in **Fading Suns** are very broad in their purview. Instead of requiring characters to learn ranks in multiple knowledge skills or learn a separate skill for each weapon type, characters learn capabilities related to particular topics or equipment, representing study of that topic or practice with that piece of equipment. They can now apply what they know to their skill use.

> **Example:** *The Academia skill is used to represent a character's exposure to and retention of education. Most instances for which a skill roll is needed, however, apply to a particular topic – the rail system of Byzantium Secundus, the history of a local saint (which can provide clues for where his treasure might be hidden), or the greeting customs of the Ostmark Vuldrok on Hargard. These topics are represented in the game system by capabilities. In the case of Byz II's railways, Byzantium Secundus Lore (a Planet Lore) applies; for the local saint, either Planet Lore for his world or Religion Lore (for coded references in his miracles) provides information; and for the Ostmark Vuldrok, perhaps Vuldrok Lore (a Faction Lore) offers insight.*

Capabilities represent the fact that characters aren't know-it-alls or experts in everything simply because they have a lot of ranks in a skill. They must collect knowledge as they work their ways through life.

Capabilities can vary in how broad or focused they are. The broader a capability is defined, the more generalized its knowledge becomes. More focused capabilities provide more detailed and intimate expertise. For example, lore about a particular planet might provide general information about the planet: its continents, climate, major cities, etc. However, lore about a particular *city* on that planet would allow the character access to much more detailed information: important buildings, neighborhoods, and even knowledge of individual people of some import.

Gaining Capabilities

Characters acquire a number of capabilities during character creation, as described in **Chapter 2: Characters**.

After that, they gain one new capability of their choice with each level. (There are also perks that can provide more capabilities.)

You should work with your gamemaster to decide how your character acquires their capabilities. Do they have a teacher? Access to a think machine that can download the information into their brain during sleep? Or have they been a hobbyist up to now, slowly acquiring the information until it clicks?

Restricted Capabilities

Some capabilities are restricted, which means that only certain types of characters can learn them. (See *Restricted Skills and Capabilities* under *Skills* below for more information and how to skirt this requirement.)

Using Capabilities

The GM determines if a given roll is specific or obscure enough to require a capability. The need for a capability should be obvious. If the GM is unsure, they should forego the requirement. There's no need to make the roll more difficult for the character than is warranted.

If the character *has* the required capability, then the roll is made as normal.

If the character *does not* have that capability, then the roll is unfavorable.

> ***Example:*** *Lliana is pretty good with Shoot skill. She can fire a pistol (or any type of ranged weapon, really), but she only has capability with Slug Guns. When she finds a blaster, she won't be as accurate, since she lacks the Energy Guns capability: her roll to fire it is unfavorable.*

Complementary Capabilities

In some cases, if one character has a capability in a subject for another character's roll (which does not have a capability), then they can lend their own capability. This largely depends upon the nature of the task being performed and the capability in question. This is an area where the gamemaster will have to weigh in. It's unlikely that you can talk someone through using a slug gun properly if the gun wielder lacks the capability, but it would work for many types of lore and maybe some equipment/tool instances.

This strategy almost always requires the complementing character to use a primary action to assist. For physical tasks, the complementing character must be present. For mental tasks, such as research, an audio, video, or holovid connection between the characters might suffice. It's the GM's call.

Having another character assist and bringing multiple appropriate capabilities to a task can change a regular roll to a favorable one. If the gamemaster indicates that one of several capabilities are appropriate for a given task, one player can make the roll while the other character assists. For example, if you are trying to heal the vicious bite of a poisonous Severan marsh eel using Remedy and the Poison Lore capability, another character might be able to chime in with their specific knowledge of Severan eels using their Severus Lore or Beast Lore. If the gamemaster agrees that both capabilities apply, the roll can be made favorably.

Changing a roll from regular to favorable in this way only works if two or more characters are involved, as it represents a meeting of minds; each character brings their own ideas to the table to solve the problem. It *does not* apply if one character happens to have multiple capabilities that are appropriate.

Equipment Capabilities

These capabilities govern familiarity with items, tech, and weaponry.

ARMOR

Armor comes in three grades: civilian, combat, and war. You do not need a capability for civilian-grade armor, but combat armor and war armor require training. When you wear combat or war armor that you haven't trained with (that is, you don't have the right capability), your Vigor skill rolls are unfavorable. (See the armor chart in **Chapter 4: Technology** for a list of armors and their grades.)

In addition, combatants can wield handheld shields to increase their protection. This also requires a capability.

Note that wearing a spacesuit in space and/or zero-G environments requires the Shipboard Operations capability (see below). Wearing an armored spacesuit requires both the War Armor and Shipboard Operations capability; if you don't have both, your Vigor actions become unfavorable.

COMBAT ARMOR
This capability covers practiced use of light- and medium-weight armors.

HANDHELD SHIELD
This applies to practiced use of handheld shields, such as bucklers and security-force riot shields. When you wield a shield without this capability, your Vigor skill rolls *and* your attack rolls are unfavorable. Unless you're dueling, providing security for someone, or going to war, it is considered déclassé to carry a handheld shield. (The GM might also declare your persuasion influence rolls unfavorable.)

WAR ARMOR
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, the Dispossessed, Brother Battle, Imperial Cohort, Mercenary, Pirate, Templar*

You've trained in heavyweight armor.

MELEE WEAPONS

This capability is mainly used with the Melee skill. See the weapons lists in **Chapter 4: Technology** for each weapon's classification. You do not need a capability for the types of weapons commonly used by peasants, such as knives, clubs, axes, staves, and spears.

MILITARY WEAPONS
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, Yeoman, Amateur, Bounty Hunter, Brother Battle, Chainer, Explorer, Imperial Cohort, Mercenary, Pirate, Scout, Spy, Star Pilot, Templar, Thief*

Relevant to any weapon commonly associated with the military or dueling; includes swords, sabers, pole arms, etc.

ARTIFACT WEAPON [CHOOSE ARTIFACT]
This applies to weapons of extremely high tech, such as flux swords or vau energy lances. Each weapon requires its own separate capability.

MILITARY ORDNANCE

ARTILLERY
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, Brother Battle, Mercenary*

You know how to use and maintain heavy artillery: mortars, rocket launchers, etc.

DEMOLITIONS
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, Bounty Hunter, Brother Battle, Imperial Cohort, Inquisitor, Mercenary, Reclaimer, Scout, Spy, Tech Redeemer, Thief*

You know how to prepare and use explosives.

GUNNERY
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, Brother Battle, Chainer, Explorer, Imperial Cohort, Mercenary, Pirate, Scout, Star Pilot*

Your capability allows you to use heavy gun emplacements, such as vehicle-mounted weapons. This also includes starship guns (although those also require a Shipboard Operations capability).

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Prerequisite: Performing Arts Lore (Music)
This capability is most often used with the Perform skill, in conjunction with the Performing Arts Lore (Music) capability. Each family of instrument requires a separate capability. When you first acquire the Performing Arts (Music) capability, you may choose *one* capability from the following families. You can also choose to devote one or more of your other capabilities toward learning additional families of instruments.

Brass
Strings
Woodwind
Percussion
Keyboards

RANGED WEAPONS

These specializations are used mainly with the Shoot skill. See the weapons lists in **Chapter 4: Technology** for each weapon's classification.

ARCHERY
You know how to use and care for a bow and arrow or any string-fired projectile (including crossbows).

ARTIFACT GUN [CHOOSE ARTIFACT]
You know how to use and care for extremely high-tech ranged weapons, such as a nanite needler or vau beam-emitter monocle. As with artifact melee weapons, each weapon requires its own separate capability.

ENERGY GUNS
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, Amateur, Bounty Hunter, Brother Battle, Chainer, Explorer, Detective, Imperial Cohort, Inquisitor, Mercenary, Pirate, Reclaimer, Scout, Spy, Tech Redeemer, Templar*

You know how to use and care for ranged weapons that project energy: lasers, blasters, flameguns.

SLUG GUNS
You know how to use and care for ranged weapons that fire a physical projectile (such as a bullet) from a barrel.

THINK MACHINES

This capability is required to use and program complex think machines, such as those used on starships or in Church archives. This usually involves the Interface skill, but it might also be paired with Intrusion when trying to rewire a security system or Tech Redemption when trying to perform simple repairs to a device.

Most consumer devices, such as handheld helpers or data retrieval nodes, don't require a roll to use

them (and thus don't need this capability); their user interfaces were designed for ease of use by the untrained consumer.

See **Chapter 4: Technology** for more information on think machines.

TRANSPORT

This capability represents your knowledge of how to operate (drive or pilot) types of vehicles.

AIRCRAFT
You're skilled with flying vehicles, such as flitters, jets, and gliders; used with the Pilot skill.

BEASTBACK
You know how to ride an animal; usually, that's a horse, although other creatures exist that can be trained to accept riders. Used with the Vigor skill.

BEASTCRAFT
You're accustomed to ground vehicles — carts, wagons, sleds — that are pulled by one or more animals, such as horses, brutes (large beasts of burden), or even sled dogs; used with the Drive skill.

LANDCRAFT
Ground vehicles — skimmers (hovercars), wheeled cars and motorcycles — that are propelled by an engine or other high-tech means are your purview; used with Drive skill.

SPACECRAFT
RESTRICTED: *Noble, merchant, Brother Battle, Explorer, Imperial Cohort, Mendicant, Pirate, Spy*

You've been trained to pilot spacecraft (using the Pilot skill). The Charioteers guild maintains a near monopoly on the piloting trade from the major factions, but there are a few independent operators out there, as well as navy-trained pilots.

WARCRAFT
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, the Dispossessed, Brother Battle, Mercenary, Scout*

You understand the armored ground vehicles used by militaries, including tanks, artillery carts, and mobile guns; used with the Drive skill.

Lores

Lores are areas of knowledge and practice, from education in the customs of the Church (Cathedral Customs), ability to identify animals and predict their behavior (Beast Lore), to repairing a broken TL 5 fusion torch (Tech Lore: TL5). There are listed below within their related categories.

ARTS LORES

These capabilities are most often used with the Arts skill, for both making a piece of art and for evaluating and understanding one. Note that the performing arts (theatre, singing, etc.) are represented by the Performing Arts Lore capabilities.

IMAGERY
You can create and interpret handmade images, such as paintings and drawings, ranging from murals to illuminated books.

MAGIC LANTERN
Your medium uses moving or still images captured with a device (camera or holoeye), including everything from photography to narrative holovids. (Note that this applies to the writing, directing, and holography of a magic lantern play; its performance uses the Perform skill.)

POETRY
You've studied haiku, lyrics, and epics; they're all are highly respected art forms among the nobility.

SCULPTING
You can appreciate and craft aesthetic objects, such as military commemoration statues or obun prayer bowls.

WRITING
You're fluent with prose and non-fiction, including novels, histories, and biographies.

CRAFTS LORES

These capabilities are most often used with the Crafts skill, for both making an item and for evaluating and understanding one.

ARCHITECTURE
You comprehend the art and practice of designing buildings and large structures.

BLACKSMITHING
You know how to forge raw metals into items.

CARPENTRY
You can construct buildings and other structures; this also covers basic (not artistic) woodworking: cabinets, chairs, stools, staves, etc.

CARTOGRAPHY
You can create maps.

COOKING
You've developed the ability to create tasty and nutritious foods. Note that certain types of haute cuisine might also require use of the Arts skill, using this capability.

JEWELRY
You know the art of crafting jewelry from metals and other materials.

LEATHERWORKING
You can fashion leather into armor, clothing, and other materials.

LOCKSMITHING
Your knowledge of the inner working of locks includes the ability to make them, and it might help you to pick them (when you're using the Intrusion skill).

MASONRY
You can build structures with stone, brick, and mortar.

POTTERY
You've studied the art of crafting useful items with clay or similar materials.

TAILORING
You can create clothing from textiles.

WEAVING
You have the knowledge and ability to craft textiles from raw materials.

CUSTOMS LORES

These Lores concern social and cultural customs. Each provides knowledge of a certain subculture and its acceptable social practices. They are used mostly during attempts to influence others (see *Influence* in **Chapter 1: Rules**). They really only apply in formal and semi-formal situations or when you're trying to affect the person's duties or station, whether it's trying to get them to do something or simply think something.

CATHEDRAL CUSTOMS
These customs of the clergy include unwritten rules about how one should recognize and address all manner of priests, including everyone from one's hierarchical betters to lay members. It's especially important to know when one can joke and when one needs to maintain solemnity. Priests are trained in these customs, and others who wish to treat with them on equal footing had best learn this capability.

COMMONS CUSTOMS
These are customs among the common folk and those who rub shoulders with them most frequently — guilders (merchants) and yeomen. Besides knowing how not to put on airs around commoners and freemen, this capability includes the unwritten rules for haggling in the agora, as well as knowing the proper price for items. Merchants are mostly raised knowing these customs or learn them quickly when entering a guild. Those who wish to meet or trade with them without knowing this capability risk being taken to the cleaners.

COURT CUSTOMS
You know the customs of court life. Vulgar bumpkins are ignorant of these. Failure to act properly at court is a major faux pas. Courtly behavior includes a host of unspoken and subtle expectations. Nobles are raised knowing them, but others had best learn this capability if they are to compete or collude with nobles.

STREETWISE
You have a prodigious understanding of criminal practices and etiquette. Includes knowledge of prominent gangs throughout the Known Worlds (and in any area for which you possess a Lore), as well as the customs of people living in crime-ridden areas. Streetwise might be required when attempting influence among criminal and underworld elements, lest you make enemies of the wrong person or inadvertently single yourself out as a mark waiting to be exploited.

KNOWLEDGE LORES

Knowledge Lore capabilities mostly apply to Academia rolls, but they can become necessary in other situations, such as when trying to *deceive* someone by making them think you're an expert in Istakhr Market economics (Istakhr Lore), *castigating* a priest using scripture (Religion Lore), or proving your intellectual bona fides to a scientist (a Science Lore) you're trying to *befriend*.

BEAST LORE [CHOOSE KNOWN WORLDS OR BARBARIAN WORLDS]
You've learned knowledge of the animal kingdom, including alien creatures from many worlds. When you gain this capability, you must declare which region it applies to: Known Worlds or Barbarian Worlds. You can gain this capability a second time to complete your knowledge of the fauna of all worlds.

FACTION [CHOOSE FACTION] LORE
You can demonstrate understanding of the inner workings of different factions.

HISTORY LORE
You have knowledge of history (mostly of the Known Worlds). It is said that those who do not know this capability are doomed to repeat history's mistakes. It's also sometimes said, especially by the Inquisition, that some things are better left forgotten.

JUMPWEB LORE [CHOOSE KNOWN WORLDS OR BARBARIAN WORLDS]
This encompasses general knowledge of the jumpweb of the Known Worlds. You pretty much have a map in your head of the relative position of worlds and their connections (jump routes) to each other, as well as their solar systems. You also know much of the information provided in **Chapter 3: The Known Worlds** of the **Universe Book**, although you might have to make an Academia *enter memory place* maneuver to remember it when the pressure is on.

When you gain this capability, you must declare which region it applies to: Known Worlds or Barbarian Worlds. You can gain this capability a second time to complete your knowledge of the jumpweb.

OCCULT LORE
You maintain knowledge of the esoteric, arcane, and outright weird phenomena collectively called "the occult." This isn't just psychic powers and theurgy; it also includes the super science of the Anunnaki and the cutting-edge sciences that were only beginning to be unlocked during the late Second Republic.

PLANET [CHOOSE A PLANET] LORE
You possess knowledge of a specific planet of the Known Worlds and its solar system. This specialization represents more detailed knowledge of the world than the knowledge you would attain through Jumpweb Lore.

READ [LANGUAGE]
Most peasants can't read; even some guildfolk and yeomen are illiterate. They have to hire others to do that for them. With this capability, you can read one language. The common written language is Urthish.
RESTRICTED: *Guilders in the Merchant League can learn Urthtech, which is not really a separate language; it's a vast vocabulary of technical jargon. Many ancient (i.e. Second Republic and even Diasporan) tech manuals are so full of outdated terms and neologisms that they are nearly unreadable by the uninitiated. The guild intentionally adopts and maintains this "language" so as to keep their monopolies on knowledge intact. You must know how to Read Urthish before you can learn to Read Urthtech.*

RELIGION LORE
You're conversant in knowledge of the beliefs, teachings, customs, dogma, scriptures, and rites of the Universal Church of the Celestial Sun, including hymns, fables, and the lives of saints.

You can instead (or also) learn separate capabilities for: Erdgeist Lore (the pagan religion of the Vuldrok), El-Diin Lore (the religion of the Kurgans), Gjartin Lore, or Zuranity Lore.

SHIPBOARD OPERATIONS
You are conversant in the rules and regulations of shipboard life, and you've trained in basic spacecraft functions. (See *Starships* in **Chapter 4: Technology** for a list of maneuvers that characters might undertake aboard a ship; many require this capability.) This capability includes knowledge and practice for working while wearing a spacesuit. Performing a physical action in space or zero-G while wearing a spacesuit without this capability makes the action unfavorable. (Armored spacesuits also require the War Armor capability.)

SPEAK [LANGUAGE]
You can speak a language fluently. The common tongue for the Known Worlds is Urthish.
RESTRICTED: *Al-Malik can learn the Graceful Tongue, an elusive language of allusions and metaphors. Vagabonds can learn the Vagabond Patois, a dialect so full of codes and jargon that it's nigh impossible for others to make sense of. Scravers can learn the Scraver Cant, a hodgepodge of vulgar slang and coded gestures.*

WARFARE LORE
RESTRICTED: *Noble, Merchant League, the Dispossessed, Brother Battle, Mercenary, Scout*

You have extensive knowledge of military tactics. War is a complicated business involving many different skills at different stages of battle. This capability might be required in situations where you need to plan or execute troop movements or anticipate an enemy's movements. It might also apply to such situations as Impress *command* maneuvers to get troops into line.

XENO LORE [CHOOSE ALIEN SPECIES]
You've acquired knowledge of a particular alien species that is not your own. Since many species have historically been confined to their homeworlds, this lore also provides knowledge of their "mainstream" culture and customs. This does not necessarily apply to those aliens raised outside of such cultures. (Note:

Most aliens are assumed to have this capability as it applies to the dominant human culture.)

MEDICAL LORES

Medical Lore capabilities are often necessary when using Remedy to diagnose or cure someone.

DISEASE LORE
You know about diseases, including how to treat them.

POISON LORE
You know about poisons and how to cure them.

SURGERY LORE
RESTRICTED: *Priest, merchant, Chainer, Enthusiast, Healer, Questing Knight, Scholar*
You can perform surgery on living beings.

TORTURE LORE
You're proficient in methods that use physical duress to get subjects to divulge information.

PERFORMING ARTS

These capabilities are most often used with the Perform skill.

DANCE
Dancers offer beautiful displays of body movement.

MAGIC
Illusionists present magic tricks and misdirection.

MUSIC
Music soothes the savage soul… and causes sinful dancing. This capability conveys the ability to play, read, and write music.

You can use this capability in conjunction with the Arts skill to recognize or interpret orchestral music, folk songs, ballads, shantor chants, etc.

When you first acquire this capability, you also gain one Musical Instrument capability.

ORATORY
Oration is the rhetorician's weapon and the preacher's outreach.

SONG
Singing is an angelic art beloved by church goers.

THEATRE
The thespian's art is valued. In fact, it's heralded in Church lore as the original means of sermonizing the Prophet's message.

SCIENCE LORES

Science Lores are mostly used with Academia, but they might also be necessary when repairing, manufacturing, and especially inventing tech using Tech Redemption.

APPLIED SCIENCE
RESTRICTED: *Merchant League, Reclaimer, Scholar, Tech Redeemer*
You know how to create or manufacture technological items using sciences known to the Merchant League. Unknown, lost, or suppressed sciences might require their own separate categories.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)
RESTRICTED: *Merchant League, Occultist, Reclaimer, Spy, Tech Redeemer*
Precondition: Think Machines capability
You are learned in the art and science of programming sentient think machines. This capability is sometimes required when using influence against a sentient golem, whether to *command* or *befriend* it or try to *confuse* it into going against its protocols

LIFE SCIENCE
You understand the study of living organisms.

PHYSICAL SCIENCE
RESTRICTED: *Merchant League, Scholar*
You've pursued the study of non-living systems: physics, astronomy, chemistry, and planetary science.

TERRAFORMING
RESTRICTED: *Merchant League*
You've studied the process of transforming planets so they're habitable by humans.

TECH LORES

The Tech Lores are a series of individual capabilities, each of which applies to a different tech level and each of which must be learned sequentially, beginning at TL5 and up. Each capability includes knowledge of and the ability to use and repair tech of its particular level. Used chiefly with the Tech Redemption skill, these capabilities might also be required when using tech in other endeavors, such as creating a disguise (Disguise skill) using a facial mim-

ic mold or trying to *convince* someone of the superior electronics of a particular portable music player.

You do not need a capability to work with technology of TL4 and lower.

See **Chapter 4: Technology** for details on the tech levels and the types of technology associated with each level.

TECH LORE (TL5)
You know how to use and repair technology of tech level 5.

TECH LORE (TL6)
RESTRICTED: *Merchant League, Brother Battle, Enthusiast, Explorer, Imperial Cohort, Occultist, Questing Knight, Reclaimer, Spy, Star Pilot, Tech Redeemer, Thief, Trader*

Precondition: Tech Lore (TL5)

You know how to use and repair technology of tech level 6.

TECH LORE (TL7)
RESTRICTED: *Merchant League, Brother Battle, Enthusiast, Explorer, Imperial Cohort, Occultist, Questing Knight, Reclaimer, Spy, Star Pilot, Tech Redeemer, Thief, Trader*

Precondition: Tech Lore (TL6)

You know how to use and repair technology of tech level 7.

TECH LORE (TL8)
RESTRICTED: *Merchant League, Reclaimer, Star Pilot, Tech Redeemer*

Precondition: Tech Lore (TL7)

You know how to use and repair technology of tech level 8.

Note: This is the highest Tech Lore level that characters can learn.

Characteristics

Rannagoral's feet pounded hard on the forest path as she ran at full tilt on six limbs in pursuit of her prey. Every so often, she caught a glimpse of her quarry through the trees. She was closing, but not fast enough. The path curved to the left, offering a gentler course down the hill, but Rann rose up and plowed straight ahead into undergrowth on two legs. As she tore through bushes and vines, tree limbs lashed at her face and body, but she easily brushed them aside with her four free arms. She knew this trail well, just as she knew that the path curved back on itself. Cutting through the forest would save her valuable time.

Rann leapt to clear a fallen tree, landing in the middle of a clearing that had once been a shrine to a long-forgotten god. Her quarry, the man who had assassinated Count Valarus, whirled to face her, drawing a long, thin dagger. He grinned, noting that the vorox was unarmed. "You'll not take me so easily."

Rann's eyes narrowed, and she growled, spotting the viscous substance coating the blade. Sniffing the air, she caught the faint scent of mint — botalax venom, a poison so deadly that even a scratch caused instant (but very painful) death. The same poison was used to kill the Count.

"A coward to the end!" she said.

Rann roared as she reached for a small tree and pulled it up by the roots. The assassin's eyes widened at Rann's impressive display of strength as the vorox hurled the entire tree at him. He twisted to the side, but the tree caught him in the back and sent him sprawling. He lost grip of his blade, and it spun off into the forest.

Laughing, Rann leapt forward, pinning the assassin to the ground. The man's squirms suddenly changed to spasms and cries of pain. Flipping him over, Rann's smile grew wider. A trickle of blood ran down his face where his own blade had nicked him when he fell. The assassin's mouth contorted as his yellowing eyes looked wildly up at Rann. She dropped him to the ground and turned her back on him. Leaving him to die, she started back up the path toward the estate.

Characteristics represent a character's natural physical, mental, and spiritual abilities. Characteristics are rated from 1 to 10 (although some species can possess higher levels, and "occult" devices can raise certain characteristics above 10). All characters have at least some capability with all of these characteristics.

Characteristics are divided into three categories: Body, Mind, and Spirit. Each category has three characteristics. During character creation, you'll declare one of your nine characteristics as primary and another one as secondary; the rest become tertiary. Your primary characteristic begins with a base value of 5, your secondary characteristic starts with a 4, and your tertiary characteristics begin with a base of 3.

Choices made during character creation add to your base characteristics, although a 1st-level character cannot have a characteristic higher than 8. Also, characteristics cannot be raised to the 10th rank until the character attains 10th level, and they can't normally be raised above 10 without technological or supernatural assistance.

Each characteristic is detailed below, along with some examples of the skills that are commonly used in conjunction with them. The common abbreviation used for each characteristic is listed in parenthesis.

The functions are described below, after the characteristic descriptions, under *Functions: Force, Finesse, Fortitude*.

Function	BODY	MIND	SPIRIT
Force	Strength	Wits	Presence
Finesse	Dexterity	Perception	Intuition
Fortitude	Endurance	Will	Faith

Body

Body encompasses your overall fitness and physical well-being. Any physical task you attempt uses one of the body characteristics to bolster an appropriate skill. For example, if you want to climb a wall quickly, you roll Vigor + Dexterity.

STRENGTH (STR)

Raw muscle power. Strength determines how much weight you can lift and helps in athletic tasks like jumping and climbing (see the Vigor skill for more details). It also helps in hand-to-hand and melee attacks.

Your Strength rating determines how much weight you can lift over your head without the need to make a roll. You can lift more, but you must make a roll; the Resistance is 2 for each rank of required Strength above your own. If your Strength is 4, your lifting capacity is 60 kg (see the chart below). If you need to lift a fallen metal beam that weighs 100 kg (which requires a Strength of 6) you must overcome a Resistance of 4 (because 6 is 2 ranks higher than 4).

The maximum weight you can attempt to lift is your based on your Strength +3. (*Example:* A Strength 4 character can lift a maximum of 120 kg, the same amount a Strength 7 character can lift normally.) Multiple characters can work together to lift something by adding their Strength together (three Strength 3 characters can lift 160 kg without needing to roll).

The following chart provides details on how much a character can lift.

Strength	Weight
1	10 kg
2	20 kg
3	40 kg
4	60 kg
5	80 kg
6	100 kg
7	120 kg
8	140 kg
9	160 kg
10	180 kg
11	200 kg
12	220 kg
13	240 kg

DEXTERITY (DEX)

Represents agility and motor control. Dexterity defines how agile and nimble you are, as well as your ability to carefully manipulate small tools and objects. It's used in short-ranged firearms attacks, as well as dodging, sneaking, and overall athleticism. (See the Vigor skill for more details.)

ENDURANCE (END)

Represents stamina and hardy constitution. Endurance reflects your staying power, your ability to ward off disease, and your resistance to poison and other toxins. Endurance is one of the factors used to determine Vitality. (See *Vitality* for the full formula.)

Mind

Mind characteristics represent intellect, awareness, and self-discipline. Any task involving thought or reason that your character undertakes involves a Mind characteristic plus an appropriate skill. For instance, when you try to operate a piece of alien technology, the roll is Tech Redemption + Wits.

WITS (WITS)

Represents analytical intelligence and quick-thinking. Wits determines how well you remember and understand things, which helps with any task involving learning. The higher your Wits, the quicker you are at figuring out and reacting to events.

PERCEPTION (PER)

Represents sensory acuity and alertness. Perception reflects your awareness of your environment. This includes how well you notice hidden things or people, as well as other changes around you. The higher your Perception, the more observant you are: you notice things that are normally only noticed unconsciously, so you react to them sooner.

WILL (WILL)

Represents self-control and conviction. Will represents your strength of purpose and determines how well you can actively resist and shake off attempts to fool or confuse you. Having a high Will characteristic allows you to maintain composure in stressful situations and more easily overcome mental states (see *Overcoming States*, in **Chapter 1: Rules**), including times when your character is Afraid or Confused.

Will is also one of the factors used to determine Vitality (see *Vitality* for the full formula).

Spirit

Characteristics in the Spirit category represent a character's personality, their instinctual side. In the **Fading Suns** milieu, such traits as force of personality and courage are considered to be "of the spirit." Any task involving emotions or personality involves a Spirit characteristic. For example, when you try to talk your way into a party you weren't invited to, roll Charm + Presence.

PRESENCE (PRE)

Represents grace, allure, personal magnetism. Presence reflects your ability to influence others. People

tend to be automatically drawn to characters with high Presence. The higher your Presence, the easier it is for you to attract attention and to leave a favorable impression on those you meet.

INTUITION (INT)

Represents imagination and ingenuity. Intuition represents your insight, your gut instinct, and your ability to remain open to different ideas and ways of thinking. It's used when attempting to understand another person's motivations or when you're deciphering the purpose of a piece of unknown tech. It's also used in creative works, such as poetry, painting, or even inventing new tech. The higher your Intuition, the better your chance of feeling your way through a situation or making the right choice given limited information.

FAITH (FTH)

Represents courage and conscience. Faith reflects your inner light, the beacon that shows you the way in the darkest times. You are your own guiding light, and you do not succumb to peer pressure. Those with high Faith are comfortable in their own skins and with their place in the world; they're confident in who they are. A character with high Faith has the confidence to avoid social pressure and social states, including times when you might be Castigated or Humiliated (see *Overcoming States*, in **Chapter 1: Rules**).

Functions: Force, Finesse, Fortitude

Characteristics can be broken into three functions. These act as guidelines — not hard and fast rules — for when a particular characteristic is used in a roll. These guidelines are provided as a guide for the gamemaster to use when trying to decide which characteristic best pairs with which skill. You shouldn't feel beholden to this chart; instead, allow for some creativity in these pairings.

Whenever you attempt an action that is not described elsewhere in this book, or when you're uncertain which characteristic should be used, you can consult this chart for guidance.

Force can be used when you're acting directly upon another with physical force (Strength), during reasoned debate (Mind), or through force of personality (Presence).

Finesse can be used when you're acting with subtlety or fine control, such as nimbly sidestepping (Dexterity), noticing details (Perception), or creating/inventing something or repairing bizarre alien tech (Intuition).

Fortitude can be used when you're resisting physical force or harm (Endurance), mental coercion or confusion (Will), or social pressures and fear (Faith).

Perks

Your choice of perks (perquisites) for your character are listed with each class and calling in **Chapter 2: Characters**. Below are some general rules for perks.

You gain one calling perk with each level. You gain one class perk every *other* level after the 1st. Some callings allow certain class perks to be acquired as calling perks. (*Example:* Duelists can gain Fencing as a calling perk; for most of the other callings, it's a class perk.)

Types of Perks

ABILITY
Details a condition or special ability (generally non-supernatural) that you possess. This Ability might be a fighting style (allowing access to special combat maneuvers), a roll modifier (favorability or accenting), or a unique physiology or psychology.

Examples: Ambidextrous, Contortionist, Fencing, Musical Savant, Master of Deception

AUSTERITY
Describes a practice used to improve your Spirit Resistance. You can only gain the bonus from *one* Austerity at a time; they do not add together.

Examples: Armor of Purity, Incubation, Rise from the Ashes, Vow of Poverty, Wyrd Knowledge

CYBERDEVICE
Allows a cybernetic implant. These devices count toward your Techgnosis; if you have too many of them, you might suffer techgnostic overload. (See *Techgnosis* at the end of this chapter.) A number of cyberdevices are described in **Chapter 4: Technology**, as well as their tech compulsions.

Examples: Advisor, Aim Assistance, Destinator, Machine Spirit, Memory Enhancer

POWER
Includes supernatural abilities beyond the ken of ordinary humans (and even some aliens). Powers come with drawbacks, whether that's psychic Urge, theur-

gic Hubris, or some other phenomena that can get you (and others) into real trouble.

Examples: psychic powers, theurgic rites

PRIVILEGE
Represents the powers and duties that come with societal connections.

Examples: Church Ordination, Guild Commission, Embargo, Noble Title, Landed

VERVE
This is the category we use for the "meta" perks that involve the manipulation of victory points. This is hard to define; it's an intangible thing that's as much tied into the aura of one's office and standing as one's personal mystique. You can decide for your character how their own unique use of a Verve perk works. Is it a gift from the Pancreator or hard-won personal magnetism?

Examples: Holy Calling, Imperious, Independent, Inspiring, Ingenuity

Preconditions

You must meet a perk's preconditions before you can acquire it. Some perks are listed as "open." These are not tied to a particular class or calling, so they can be gained by anyone, so long as any additional preconditions that might be listed are met.

Perks

ABSOLUTION
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Confessor

By hearing someone's confession, you may set the penance for a sin and absolve the penitent. The general penance for sin is well defined by the Church, but a Confessor is trained to be able to fit sin with deed to benefit the Church, the penitent, and the Known Worlds.

Benefice: Besides the relief that basic confession can yield, you may, as a primary action, cancel a single brief, temporary, or enduring (but not chronic) mental or social state by prescribing a task the penitent must complete. You cannot, however, absolve states caused by occult means (psychic powers, theurgy, etc.).

Since this absolution only affects a short-lived state, the penance should be something easily or quickly achievable: a tithe, an oath to perform a later favor for the Church, even a mortification of the flesh. If the person agrees to the penance, the state is canceled. They must henceforth endeavor to complete it — forking over the money for the tithe, promising to honor a favor, or lashing themselves in contrition — sometime within the following act. If the penitent reneges on their oath, they cannot be absolved by this perk again until they've made amends. In addition, word tends to get around about oathbreakers. The same penitent can be absolved by you only once per act.

ADVISOR
Calling • Cyberdevice TL6 • Precondition: Open

You can call on the wisdom of a tiny think machine device implanted on your person.

Benefice: You have an innocuous TL6 think machine that appears as an earpiece or a metallic neck tattoo or something relatively innocuous. Its artificial intelligence can advise you on matters by speaking into your inner ear canal (but nobody else can hear it). It is a bit crude, however, and may become more annoying than helpful at times. It knows the equivalent of five Lore capabilities (choose which ones when you gain this perk). You can swap these out for different Lores later on, if you have access to a data vendor (usually found in agoras on the more cosmopolitan worlds), generally at a cost of 100fb per Lore.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

AIM ASSISTANCE
Calling • Cyberdevice TL7 • Precondition: Duelist *or* Pirate

You seem to know where people are standing without even looking.

Benefice: You have the ability to target opponents without looking in their direction without suffering any disadvantage, even when you are rendered Seeing Impaired or Blinded. If you actually look at opponents while attacking, you gain +2 goal to the attack roll.

While it seems a superior feat to those watching you, it's actually is a TL7 implanted cyberdevice that provides you with positional information on your enemies through hairs on your neck, bright outlines beyond your peripheral vision, or direct transmission of knowledge into your cortex. The device is outlawed on most planets and can only be acquired illegally. Additionally, it is considered to be cheating in official duels.

Tech Compulsion: Bloodthirsty

AIM WHERE IT HURTS
Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Bounty Hunter *or* Chainer *or* Duelist

Weapons are tools, and you know how to use them.

Benefice: When spending VP to increase damage for a victorious firearms or melee weapon attack, the first 3 points of damage only cost 1 VP each. After that, you must spend 2 VP per damage, as usual.

ALIEN FRIEND [CHOOSE SPECIES]
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

You are a known friend to a particular alien species.

Benefice: When dealing with members of the species to which this perk applies, your persuasion influence rolls are considered favorable. You also gain the Xeno Lore capability for that species. This perk may be taken multiple times. The effects do not add together; another species must be selected each time this perk is taken. Common choices for the perk are: obun, ukar, vorox, etyri, gannok, shantor, and human (if you're an alien). (You cannot gain this perk for your own species.)

ALIEN UPBRINGING [CHOOSE SPECIES]
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open, but can be taken only at 1st level

Due to an odd series of events, you were raised by members of another species.

Benefice: It's almost unheard of for humans to care for an ukari child or a vorox to take care of a human infant, but it has happened. With this perk, you begin play with knowledge of that species' language (the Speak capability) in addition to Urthish (your second language). You also have the Xeno Lore capability for that species. Anyone with a prejudice against non-human alien species (which includes almost every person in the Known Worlds) will tend to have a special distrust for you, but members of your nurturing species will trust you more than they would most strangers of your birth species. Moreover, they see you as an ambassador worthy of special consideration. Your influence rolls with them are favorable.

ALL-ACCESS PASS
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Detective *or* Imperial Cohort *or* Inquisitor *or* Questing Knight

The show of a badge opens many doors, while those who stay behind closed doors are rendered even more suspicious to you.

Benefice: While on a case for a noble, Church, League, or Imperial faction, you get free entry into any house, monastery, or business, as long as they are even remotely connected to the investigation. You may ignore restrictions on rank and affiliation when trying to access facilities. People might still try to stop you, but this is generally seen as a sign they are trying to hide something.

Abusing your power comes with repercussions, however. Influential people may use their connections to slow down your investigation, invalidate evidence, even try to ruin your career if you dig too deep.

ALLY [WHO?]
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

You have a close relationship with someone in a position of power, and that person will go out of their way to help you.

Benefice: You choose the identity of your NPC Ally and what kind of power they wield, in the form of rank or its equivalent — duke, director, bishop, etc. The higher their position, the more power they wield, but the less time they'll have to pay attention to your requests (it might take a while to get a message through) and the less likely they'll intervene in affairs that could harm their strategic interests. Your godfather, Duke Gavin Hawkwood, is not going to start a trade war with the Scravers just to bail you out of jail, but your Aunt Bernice, Canon of Sanctuary Aeon, might well march into the jailhouse and give the warden a piece of her mind, shaming him into releasing you. The flipside of the advantage of having an Ally is that you occasionally have to do things for them in return.

AMBIDEXTROUS

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

Most people are right-handed, while some are better with their left. You never really liked those kinds of decisions.

Benefice: When pushed, you may use your off-hand as proficiently as your main one. When your main hand is injured or occupied, that doesn't make your rolls involving it unfavorable. Additionally, you are even better at tasks done by hand so long as neither of your hands are injured. When you are not under pressure and performing a manual task that requires use of both hands in coordination your rolls are favorable. (Examples include opening a safe after taking care of the guards without raising an alarm or soldering a broken communicator device with absolutely no risk of it exploding if you connect the wrong wires.)

ANALYZE PERSONALITY

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Dreamtender

By understanding someone completely, you can draw upon that understanding when needed.

Benefice: By researching or observing a person for at least a scene, you can create a profile of them that gives you insight into their thoughts and actions. Once you have a profile on a person, you can use this knowledge to influence them more deeply. When using influence on them, the state you inflict is one step more persistent than usual. If it would normally be temporary (expires at the end of the scene), it's now enduring (lasts until the person takes a Respite). If was normally enduring, it's now chronic (lasts until therapy removes it). If it was chronic, it's now harder to dislodge (add +4 to the Resistance against therapy or Rallying).

ANIMAL FRIEND

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Explorer *or* Scout

You have a trained animal companion.

Benefice: Choose a small animal (Size 1-3) as a companion. It is well trained and devoted to you. You may give it simple commands, and it might even attempt to defend you from attackers by making threats or outright attacks.

If you lose your companion, you can *befriend* another animal by using Animalia skill in place of Charm, although it can take a while to train depending on the intelligence and capabilities of the creature.

ANTHROPOLOGIST

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Explorer *or* Mendicant *or* Scholar

Just because you don't share a common language with someone doesn't mean you can't communicate with them.

Benefice: When encountering a culture or species willing to communicate with you but whose language or etiquette you do not know, you may communicate any basic topic, such as asking for food and lodging, using gestures, employing onomatopoeia, or persistently using a lot of pointing instead of relying on verbal communication.

Additionally, when first encountering a tribe whose attitude towards you is hostile, you may use your communication ability to turn them neutral for the remainder of the scene, so long as you or anyone associated with you performs no threatening or hostile act. While they are neutral, you can make *befriend* attempts.

ARMED TO THE TEETH

Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Bounty Hunter *or* Brother Battle *or* Duelist *or* Mercenary *or* Pirate *and* proper weapon capabilities

You can use a melee weapon in your primary hand while carrying a pistol in your off-hand to gain an extra attack.

Benefice: When attacking with a melee weapon in your primary hand and a firearm in your off-hand, you can also make an attack with the pistol *instead* of taking a movement action that turn. This is a bonus primary action. Unless you have the Ambidextrous perk, your pistol shot is unfavorable.

ARMOR OF PURITY

Calling • Austerity • Preconditions: Inquisitor *or* Monk

You practice a spiritual discipline that strengthens your resolve against evil influence. Your Armor of Purity comes from a rigorous regimen of daily prayer.

Benefice: You gain +2 Spirit Resistance. If you should ever cease to practice your Austerity (daily prayer), you lose the benefit of this perk until you rededicate yourself to it for at least two days.

ARMOR OF SANCTITY

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Friar

You embody the Church to your parishioners.

Benefice: To your flock and community, you are beloved and above reproach. Those you serve as priest are considered to be Befriended by you as staunch allies. In addition, you can *mesmerize* them as a secondary action merely by speaking (you can cement your influence with VP from the roll). In such a state, they are unable to attack you, and someone who wishes to influence them against you first needs to shake them out of their Mesmerized state.

ATTUNE FETISH

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Psi *and* Psychic

You can enhance an item, allowing you to use your psychic powers with it to perform otherwise impossible feats.

Benefice: You can psychically attune a single existing item. The item to be attuned must be of at least superior quality. Attuned items can be used as channels for psychic power. They are rated by the Psi ranks required to easily use them for psychic purposes. When attempting to use a fetish rated higher than your Psi rating, you must spend 1 VP per Psi rank needed *per use*. If the item is rated at Psi 7 and you've got Psi 3, you need to spend 4 VP to use it for that action.

Weapons: The most legendary example is the mist sword, a psychically attuned flux sword. However, any weapon can be made into a fetish.

Weapon	Psi
Small melee weapon	1
Medium melee weapon	2
Large melee weapon	3
Small slug gun	3
Medium slug gun	4
Large slug gun	5
Small energy weapon	5
Medium energy weapon*	6
Large energy weapon	7

* With Psi 6, you can also make a flux sword into a mist sword.

A weapon fetish allows you to spend VP to increase your damage at a special rate: 1 VP per +1 damage, up to a maximum bonus equal to your Intuition rating, after which the cost rises to the usual 2 VP per +1 damage. Using your fetish this way requires you to spend your movement action for that turn, and the effects apply only to the next attack made with the fetish (although this attack can be held until a later turn).

Armor:

Armor	Psi
Civilian	2
Combat	3
War	4
Buckler or small handheld shield	1
Large handheld shield	2
Standard or dueling energy shield	5
Assault energy shield	6
Battle energy shield	7

Your fetish armor's Body Resistance can be boosted by 2 per 1 VP you spend per turn. (This cost is in addition to any VP you need to spend to attune armor rated higher than your Psi; see above.) A fetish energy shield can be activated against an attack that does not meet its minimum threshold by spending VP equal to the attack's damage per attack. Enhancing a fetish armor or e-shield costs you your movement action.

Tools: Your fetish tool gains +2 goal for each VP you spend, up to a maximum bonus equal to your Intuition. It costs your movement action to do so, and the effects apply only to the next skill roll you make with the tool.

Other Items: All sorts of items can become fetishes — medpacs, flitters, starships, etc. The GM should figure the specific effects while limiting them to a single use per VP expenditure. For instance, a fetish starship might provide a bonus to Pilot skill rolls, but it probably can't be used to boost thrust rating or maneuver speed.

This perk can be gained multiple times. Each new perk applies to a new fetish. If a fetish is destroyed, a new item (of at least superior quality) can take its place after you spend at least 24 hours with it; you then spend 1 VP for each point in the fetish's Psi rating to seal the bond.

BACKDOOR KEY

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Scribe

You have codes that can get you into most Known Worlds data archives, even the encrypted ones.

Benefice: So long as a data archive is not unique, or if an archive or think machine isn't segregated from any type of network, your Interface rolls to get information from a think machine or alter data in an archive are favorable. Of course, the notion that Scribes would retain a portfolio of hacking codes is preposterous and a terrible breach of trust, assuming that rumor is even true. Right?

BADGE OF MERIT
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Imperial Cohort *or* Knightly Order *or* Questing Knight *or* Templar

You have gained distinction and respect in your order.

Benefice: You have received one of the merits within your order. Gain +1 Mind Resistance. You have a measure of fame inside and outside your order; you may be recognized by name if not by sight. You gain +2 goal to persuasion influence attempts with members of your order and those among the populace who recognize your merit.

BADGE OF VALOR
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Imperial Cohort *or* Knightly Order *or* Questing Knight *or* Templar

You have proven to your order and to yourself that you are steadfast and unwavering.

Benefice: You gain +2 goal when performing the *shake it off* maneuver. You also get +1 Mind Resistance.

BANKSTER
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Banker

Bankers hold an almost mystical significance for Known Worlders, who mostly do not understand how money works. You know how to leverage this social capital for personal gain.

Benefice: As a primary action, you may loan VP from your cache to another character (PC or NPC) who can see or hear you and is willing to accept the loan. This requires an exchange of confidence, a consenting nod of approval, a thumbs-up, or an "attaboy." By the end of the scene, they must pay it back with interest equal to 20% of the amount loaned (round up). If they took a loan of 5 VP, they'll owe 6 (the 5 VP capital plus 1 VP as 20% interest). Failure to pay puts the debtor in the Penalized state until they either pay up or use *shake it off* on the state.

BATTLESENSE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Brother Battle *or* Mercenary

Your training left you prepared at all times.

Benefice: You can add your Endurance or Will ranks (choose one when you gain this perk) to your Surge rating. Additionally, you gain one bonus surge that can be used once per act.

BORN ON THE BATTLEFIELD
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Brother Battle *or* Mercenary *or* Pirate *or* Templar

You spent most of your life on the various battlefields of the Known Worlds and maybe even beyond. Fear is a stranger to you.

Benefice: You are immune to the Daunted state. You gain +2 Mind and Spirit Resistance against influence or occult powers that would place you in fearful states (such as Afraid and Terrified).

BEGINNER'S LUCK
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Amateur *or* Enthusiast

You convince yourself you can do anything. Sometimes it even works out.

Benefice: You can convince yourself that you can succeed with something on the first try, even if you've never done it before. You will make it; this will work out; just don't worry too much about it. Once per scene, you can raise your ranks in any skill (even a restricted skill) for a *single* roll by an amount equal to your Faith, Intuition, or Wits ranks (whichever is highest).

BLACKMAIL
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Sybarite

Power corrupts, and those with the most power stand the most to lose.

Benefice: Once per drama, when you hold one of your extravagant parties, you can invite particular guests and collect blackmail on them. Over the course of the evening, you coax each of them into doing something that, should it be made public, would prove embarrassing to them. You can blackmail a number of guests equal to your Knavery skill rating.

During the remainder of the drama, you may reach out to each of your compromised guests to redeem a favor. In exchange, you promise to destroy the incriminating evidence, silence

witnesses, and burn all pictures taken. The nature of the favor is usually social: They provide access to an event or location or set up a face-to-face meeting with someone you otherwise wouldn't be able to get near. Sometimes they might loan you a resource (a device, a landcraft, or even a non-jump capable spacecraft) or a hired servant for a single well-defined task. The details are to be worked out between you and the GM.

BLOOD HOUND
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Bounty Hunter *or* Inquisitor

Whether you strong-arm people or track literal and figurative trails, once you are on someone, you don't let go easily.

Benefice: Whenever you find a location your bounty has frequented (such as a safe house, their cruiser, or a favorite bar), you can spend time searching for traces they've left behind. This takes between 10 minutes and an hour, depending on the size of the location, and yields clues about your quarry's whereabouts: your bounty threw away a note including an address, you find a photo of their loved one, or the bartender knows their partner's name. Either way, you now know their current location, unless your bounty skips the planet (in which case you'll at least have a rough idea of their destination). This perk can be used to track anyone, not just your official bounties.

BODYGUARD
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Templar

While Brother Battle protect the Church as a whole, all Church orders have protectors.

Benefice: If you have not taken an action yet this round, you may throw yourself in the way of an attack against someone nearby (so long as you can reach them with your movement action). Treat the attack as if it's directed against you.

BOGEYMAN
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Chainer

The lower classes fear you and loathe you, but more unsavory types envy you.

Benefice: Your coercion influence attempts against anyone who does not have a rank of some sort (Church Ordination, Guild Commission, Noble Title, Professional Reputation) are favorable. On the flip side, your persuasion influence attempts against the same people are unfavorable.

There are always those who actually envy your power, though. You can enlist a local gang of toughs and thugs to help you in a task, such as rounding up "recruits" or gathering information from the locals at the end of a club. When you spend half an hour broadcasting your need in the local watering holes or agoras, you will soon have one thug at your beck and call per your level (at 3rd level, you get three thugs). They'll hang with you for the remainder of the act, but they expect to be given opportunities and license to punch one or two unfortunates. If you deny them this, they might turn on you. This is not a legal license unless you have the Labor Contractor perk.

BORN UNDER A LUCKY STAR
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Amateur

You tend to succeed spectacularly at anything you do.

Benefice: Your rolls are considered critical hits, not just when you roll the exact goal number but also when it's one less than that number. This only happens once per scene: the first time you roll 1 less than your goal. (*Example:* Your goal number for a roll is 12; you get a critical hit on a die-roll result of both 12 and 11.)

BOTANIST
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Enthusiast, Scholar, *and* Life Science capability

The tranquility of nature was alluring enough to you that you dedicated years of your life to its study.

Benefice: You studied plants in all their shapes and colors. You have familiarity with the flora of all planets in the Known Worlds. When you take time to inspect a plant, fruit, seeds, or roots, you can tell whether they are nutrient-rich, poisonous, or possess remedial effects.

Nutrient-rich plants and their fruits can be consumed to keep one person fed per unit of the plant. What constitutes a "unit" depends on the plant in question: While an adult can survive by eating half a kilogram of berries a day, it is said that a single leaf of the Kadjian palm boiled in a kettle can sustain whole armies, though this might be an exaggeration.

Poisonous plants can be used to create a variety of poisons, though the Poison Lore capability is required to handle them appropriately. Without this capability, those interacting with the plant risk exposure to the deadly effects themselves.

Remedial plants provide a variety of bonuses to Remedy checks, as well as the *shake it off* maneuver for removing states. (For example, consuming the correct herb can calm the nerves of those suffering the Afraid state, or revitalize those who feel Fatigued.) When applied correctly, they can also reduce the amount of time necessary for wounds to heal.

Given an appropriate space, you may grow your own garden. When planting the seeds, you may pick one of the following categories: nutrient, poison, or remedy. All plants growing in your garden are of this chosen type. Plants from different categories can never coexist in the same garden, but you may grow a separate garden with a different type.

BREATH MARK

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Chorister

When you work closely with others, timing when to act and when to breathe is essential.

Benefice: Once per scene, when one of your troupe takes (or is given) a surge, you can elect to gain VP as if you also called upon a surge, but this does not count toward your total allotted surges.

BUREAUCRACY

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Lawyer

You read and create contracts as if they were baking recipes.

Benefice: You may set up a contract with a target for a particular task. If the target — the signatory — agrees, they must accomplish the task for you or suffer penalties. The task might be a simple bodyguard contract ("protect me from harm"), a promise to accompany you to the duke's ball, or even a heist. You are expected to provide some form of compensation, either monetary or in the form of favors.

Each contract requires you to spend at least one hour of legal work. The signatory is in the Bonded state until the task is complete or until the end of the drama. (If more time is required, you might consider breaking the draft into multiple contracts, each representing a stage of completion.) If a Bonded signatory violates the contract or fails to complete it, they are put in a chronic Penalized state. There is no penalty if you break your end of the agreement, except for whatever enmity or retribution you've earned from the signatory.

Additionally, your knowledge can be used to evaluate existing contracts created by this perk. Spend 1 hour examining the contract. You can find loopholes in the wording, clauses which are impossible to fulfill, or articles that are illegal under local law, thus voiding the contract (and the signatory's Bonded state).

CALCULATING

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Conspiracist

When you play with fire, casualties happen. You are not fazed by loss anymore.

Benefice: Getting to your current position required sacrifices — some personal, some by (or of) those close to you. Your emotional state left you willing to risk anything and, more importantly, any*one* to achieve your goals. You do not suffer any negative mental or social states when confronted with the suffering of others. (Anyone who tortures your friends in an attempt to intimidate you automatically fails. Watching the explosion of a space station, which might inflict the Terrified state on others, leaves you cold.) You are only emotionally detached from other people, however, and still react to any threats and harm against your own wellbeing.

Additionally, you may take a *calculated risk*: Once per scene, you may take up to 5 + your level in VP from the well (e.g., at 3rd level, you could take up to 8 VP.) Write down the number of VP gained this way. You can repay this debt at any point by putting that amount back into the well. (The VP you spend to gain effects, such as impact or boosted Resistance, don't count toward this debt.) Should the scene end with you still owing any VP, you suffer a goal penalty to all social rolls (for influence or defense) for the next scene; the penalty is equal to the amount of VP you owe.

> ***Example:*** *You take a calculated risk and take 6 VP from the well. You repay 2 of those two turns later. You then insult the local lord, which causes him to storm out of the room, ending the scene. You have 3 VP left in your cache from the attack; you decide to use them to repay even more. You end the scene with a debt of 1 VP, resulting in a -1 penalty on social rolls during the next scene, as you fail to conceal your cold and calculating nature.*

CALL TO CONTRITION

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Confessor

Penance starts with contrition. Sometimes you may have to remind people that their eternal fate rests in confession.

Benefice: Once per scene, you can make a loud appeal for others to confess their sins, cajoling them to seek confession or suffer. Perform a *castigate* maneuver vs. each listener's Faith as Resistance. Those whose Resistance you overcome are Penalized until they undergo confession or the scene ends, whichever comes first. Note that this affects everyone who hears you, even your friends and troupe. Sending your companions into a such a state during combat may not give you the desired result.

CAN OPENER
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Pirate *or* Reclaimer

Breaching hulls and opening wrecks are second nature to you.

Benefice: You are an expert at inflicting massive damage to the outer hulls of vehicles, whether they are ground-, sky-, or space-bound. All your tricks require you to get close enough to use your tools of choice (sticks of explosives, corrosive liquids, a hydraulic sledge hammer, or a laser "hull knife"). When near a vehicle's outer layer, you can breach the hull. How long this takes you depends on the thickness of its plating: 1 turn for most ground vehicles, but up to 1 minute for a starship hull. Your breach is large enough for a Size 5 person (someone of average human size) to crawl through the gap. You can spend 2 VP to enlarge the gap enough to allow two people to enter side-by-side (or one person of Size 8 or smaller).

A Vigor-skill *breach* maneuver can be performed without this perk, but it requires at least 30 minutes of work before a roll can be made.

CAN'T YOU TAKE A JOKE?
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Mercurian

You justify your most malicious behavior by insisting other people should just see it as a joke. This allows you to dodge the ire of your victims — for a little while.

Benefice: Once per act, you can create a *prank coffer*. You can place VP into it, up to a limit of your Wits. For the duration of the act, you can apply this amount once per round as a bonus to your Resistance against a single attack or influence attempt by a person who has been the butt of your pranks. You do not spend the points in the coffer; you simply use the amount as a bonus to your Resistance (Body, Mind, or Spirit — whichever you choose as needed). However, you can use the coffer's bonus only a number of times equal to your level. (At 4th level, you can use the bonus four times during the act.) At the end of the act, or once all uses have been made, the coffer goes away, and its VP go into the well.

CARTOGRAPHER
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Explorer

You studied maps, preparing for your years of travel.

Benefice: On the planets included in this perk's reach (see below), you know all mountain ranges, major cities, continents, islands, canyons, volcanoes, reefs, even larger mines, and so on. Some of the maps you used were quite old, however, so some information might be outdated, especially where people are

concerned, as they change the surface of planets faster than tectonic plates do. This perk obviates the need for a roll to know anything about the local features, and it acts as a sort of Geology Lore for all the worlds in question, should a roll absolutely be needed. This doesn't mean you know where you are at any point, but you do know that New Haven is 150 km south of Hades' Tooth.

This perk can be taken twice to expand the reach of your knowledge.

First Perk – You know lay of the land of all planets in one entire Royal House's holding (or the Church's or League's).

Second Perk – Your reach includes the Known Worlds (or Barbarian Worlds).

CASH

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

Through well-earned wages, inheritance, treasure seeking, wise saving, or a surprise act of charity, you gain a goodly sum of firebirds.

Benefice: You gain 1000 fb each time you take this perk. You may carry it on your person, keep it in a local bank, or leave it with trusted friends; regardless, you can access it freely. This money may be spent to equip yourself before or during gameplay. However, unlike the Riches perk, once your cash has been spent, it is gone.

CAT BURGLAR'S EYE

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Artist *or* Enthusiast *or* Thief

One glance is enough for you to know whether an item is worth getting.

Benefice: You can assess an item's value — or identify a forgery — just by looking at it. You can perform an Arts-skill *evaluate artwork* maneuver as a primary action instead of the more time-consuming Present Tense action normally required; your roll is favorable. You can either assess its rough value or detect if it's a forgery. Resistance depends on the rarity of the item and the volatility of the market for that sort of item. A brick of gold has a fairly reliable value (Easy Resistance), while the worth of a unique modern sculpture raising awareness for the lives lost in the Farhold Uprising is a bit harder to estimate (Severe Resistance).

CHAMELEON

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Scout *and* Wild Domain perk

Like a predator hunting its prey, you blend into your environments.

Benefice: You've mastered the art of remaining unseen when you want to. While in one of your domains (see the Wild Domain perk), you may hide yourself or your vehicle as a primary action. While you remain hidden, opponents don't get instinctual perception tests to detect you unless they're right next to you; even then, their Observe *spot* and *search* rolls are unfavorable so long as you don't act against them. Additionally, you gain +2 goal on attacks you make while you are hidden from your opponent, regardless of environment.

CHARTOPHYLAX

Class • Privilege • Precondition: Priest *or* Clergy *and* Church Ordination

You have access to Church records normally forbidden to others, even to other priests who lack your privilege.

Benefice: You may gain access to protected Church libraries. You do so by presenting yourself to the head librarian and requesting to view the archives. No influence roll is required. You can also access secure Church data files. (You have a legitimate password to bypass Church data encryption; normally, that bypass would require an Interface skill maneuver against Severe Resistance.)

Others without this perk may attempt to access archives by bribing the librarian or fooling him into thinking they have permission from the bishop (persuasion influence; the librarian gains a +4 Mind Resistance bonus); however, failure may mean Church authorities are alerted to the presence of potential heretics.

CHILD OF DHIYANA

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Obun *and* 1st level

You were born with male and female sex organs, both equally mature when you reached adulthood.

Benefice: The obun see you as fully embodying both male and female aspects of the divine. Among obun who know of your birthright, your persuasion rolls are favorable, especially when trying to *convince* another obun about a spiritual matter. In addition, you get favorable rolls for *repress* and *reconcile* maneuvers against your psychic Urge, or your *repent* and *atone* maneuvers against theurgic Hubris (choose one type).

CHURCH ORDINATION

Class • Privilege • Precondition: Priest

You are a recognized member of the Universal Church, protector of souls and bringer of light. The titles for duties apply to all genders and identities.

Benefice: You bear a Church rank. Its title is dependent on how many levels of this hierarchical feat you possess. Each successive level raises you in rank one title (see the chart below). In addition, each rank grants you +2 Mind Resistance. This bonus increases with each successive rank (i.e., a canon gets +4 Mind Resistance).

Church Ranks			
	Orthodox/Avesti/Aeon	*Brother Battle*	*Eskatonic*
1st	Novitiate	Apprentice	Novitiate
2nd	Canon	Oblate	Provost
3rd	Deacon	Acolyte	Illuminatus
4th	Priest	Adept	Philosophus
5th	Bishop	Master	Magister
6th	Archbishop	Grand	Master Presbuteros

In addition, there are different duties within the Church, each with their own titles (and the perks to acquire them). Priests who act as ambassadors to a planet, house, or guild are called "legates." Those renowned for theology (and who have been approved by the Patriarch as official theologians) are called "hierophants." A keeper of Church records holds the post of "chartophylax." A deputy to the patriarch is called "syneculla". These duty titles are in addition to the rank titles.

CLEANSING WORD

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Dreamtender *or* Friar

You can talk someone down from a bad trip.

Benefice: As a primary action, you can speak soothing words to mitigate a mental or social state from which your target is suffering. For one turn per VP you spend, the state has no effect on them, and they are treated during that time as if they were free from it.

You can also perform the Empathy *minister* maneuver after 1 minute of discussion with your patient.

COMELINESS

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You are well groomed and/or have an attractive appearance, either naturally or through surgery.

Benefice: Your influence rolls in situations where your appearance matters (such as in seducing others) are favorable.

COMPREHEND TECH LEVEL

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Tech Redeemer

You can understand the complexities of a particular tech level; thus, you can invent technology of that tech level.

Benefice: While you can repair and jury rig tech of any tech level using the Tech Redemption skill (and the requisite Tech Lore capability), this perk allows you to *invent* items rated at the tech levels you can comprehend. This puts you on par with the geniuses of the eras in which those tech levels were originally mastered. See the Tech Redemption-skill *invent* maneuver.

This perk can be taken multiple times; each additional perk unlocks higher levels of technological competency. The first time you pick it, you gain the Comprehend Tech Level perk at TL5. The second gives you TL6, and so on with each new version of this perk. Tech Level 8 is the highest level a Known Worlder or barbarian can know without significant exposure to Anunnaki science.

- 1st TL5 (Diaspora-era: spacecraft, ceramsteel)
- 2nd TL6 (early Second Republic: advanced starships, advanced think machines)
- 3rd TL7 (Second Republic: energy shields, golems, early true A.I.)
- 4th TL8 (late Second Republic: sophisticated terraforming, advanced true A.I.)

In addition, you are immune to tech compulsions from devices whose tech level you can comprehend. With Comprehend TL5, devices of TL5 no longer impose their states on you when you suffer techgnostic overload, and so on with each tech level for which you gain this perk.

There are some exceptions, however. Energy devices, such as blasters and e-shields, require a separate perk to manufacture: Craft Energy Device. These are derived from alien vau-tech and require specialized study. Likewise, you need the Craft Wondrous Tech perk to make certain "wondrous" devices that require an extra degree of imagination.

CONCOCT ELIXIR

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Healer *or* Tech Redeemer

You can make doses of Elixir, the wondrous Second Republic flesh-regenerating drug.

Benefice: You must have access to an alchemical or scientific lab and various expensive materials (50 fb worth of supplies per dose). You'll need to perform at least 8 hours of lab work before a roll can be made. If you have the Remedy skill at 7 levels or higher, you can cut the time in half. Roll Alchemy + Intuition. You should have the Tech Lore (TL7) capability; otherwise, your roll is unfavorable. The Resistance depends on the potency you're aiming for: bare is Hard; poor is Demanding; standard is Tough; high is Severe. A victorious roll produces one dose of Elixir, plus 1 additional dose per 2 VP spent.

CONDEMN

Class • Verve • Precondition: Priest

You condemn sin in another person, greatly unnerving them.

Benefice: Once per scene per level, you can remove VP from another person's bank and/or cache, whether that's a player or NPC. You can drain a number of VP from the target equal to your level + 1 per 3 VP you spend from your own cache. You first drain from their bank; once it is empty, any excess is then drained from their cache. You cannot use these condemned VP for yourself; they go into the well. The same person cannot be condemned more than once per scene.

CONSCRIPT

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Commander *or* Lord *and* Noble Title 2+

You have the power to conscript your subjects into missions and war.

Benefice: You may force your subjects (from your fief or your direct family's fief) into military service. You may perform an Impress-skill *command* maneuver against a crowd. The Resistance is based primarily on how large a unit you're trying to assemble from the present crowd:

Unit Size	Base Resistance
Posse (3-5 people)	2
Squad (6-12 people)	4
Platoon (15 to 50 people)	6
2 platoons (51-100 people)	8
Company (101-250)*	10

The base Resistance is modified by your reputation among your subjects and the nature of the campaign:

+1 They do not know you.
+2 They are not personally affected by your cause.
+2 The enemy is known for brutality.
-1 They trust you and your reputation.
-1 You are a native to the area.
-2 The campaign has looting opportunities.
-2 The whole planet is in danger.

* To raise more soldiers than a company, you'll need to wait at least a day and try conscripting a new crowd.

If you are victorious, you assemble an army under your command. They are either equipped with whatever weaponry was at hand, or you can purchase uniforms and equipment for them. A failed attempt means your army crumbles before it even forms, as people drop out when they notice nobody else is joining, or you might end up with a malformed unit: soldiers lack equipment, squads do not have the right troop size, or most of your recruits have dodgy backgrounds.

The loyalty of your people depends in part on your leadership, partly on the progress of your campaign, and how well you pay. Casualties and defeats make them more prone towards cowardice in the face of the enemy, while winning battles and a surplus of supplies and rewards increases their commitment to your cause.

CONTACT [WHO?]

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

You have acquaintances who help you out in little ways.

Benefice: You have acquaintances within a particular calling or faction; it doesn't have to be your own calling or faction. It might be Star Pilots or Duelists, or House Hawkwood or Brother Battle. They know you by name and are willing to help you out a little. Your Contacts might provide information, sell good weapons, or just be willing to give you a place to stay when you need it, although they won't undertake jobs for you. Once you've chosen the calling or faction your Contacts come from, the gamemaster can flesh them out as they desire whenever you ask to call upon a Contact. The Contacts will want something similar in return: information (at least gossip, but maybe even strategic intelligence), a pick from among your reclaimed findings (i.e., loot), or a guest house they can crash in now and then. You can gain this perk multiple times, choosing a new calling or faction each time.

CONTORTIONIST

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Artist *or* Thief

As if your bones were made of rubber, you can contort into unbelievable shapes.

Benefice: Your rolls are favorable for actions that require moving your whole body, such as those involving the Perform (Dancing), Sneak, and Vigor skills (including the *dodge* maneuver).

COUNCIL MEMBER

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Conspiracist *or* Courtier *and* Noble Title 1+

You are a member of the council to a lord of your house, advising them in matters of your specialty.

Benefice: A high-ranking member of your house listens to you, either in one of your specialties or in general. Are you the financial advisor, the liaison to another culture, or a military strategist?

As attacks against you are also attacks against your lord, you gain +2 Mind Resistance against coercion influence attacks. However, you only gain this bonus while you are under your lord's employ. Should you lose your good standing (perhaps by causing too much trouble and tarnishing their good name), you may be removed from the council. You will then lose all benefits from this perk until you regain your position once more or take up a similar post with a different noble.

COUNTER THE DARK
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Occultist

Drawing upon your extensive esoteric studies, you know how to intervene when Dark influences affect others, and you can abolish occult influences.

Benefice: As a primary action, you can speak authoritative words to mitigate a state from which your target is suffering caused by occult means (such as psychic powers, theurgy, or exposure to Ur artifacts). For one turn per VP you spend, the state has no effect on them. During that time, they're treated as though they're free from it.

COUNTERFEIT
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Clergy *or* Scribe *or* Spy

You can perfectly mimic someone's handwriting. In a world where letters are the main means of communication among nobles and priests, this can cause a lot of trouble.

Benefice: As long as you have (or once had) a sample of a person's handwriting, you can expertly copy it. Use the Arts-skill *forge artwork* maneuver as a rules guideline, except that you can substitute Academia for Arts skill and Dexterity for Perception; the roll for that maneuver is favorable for you.

COVEN MEMBERSHIP
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Psychic

You have allies in a psychic secret society; thus, you have access to training and potential aid from persecution.

Benefice: You can recognize the signs and codes for the particular coven you joined, allowing you to answer the call to a meeting or convene one yourself. While participation in coven leadership issues is open only to psychics, non-psychics may also join; they must pledge service (usually as spies or informants in the civilian sector) in return for occasional psychic aid from a coven member.

While membership allows you the ability to meet with other psychics and petition them for training or aid, it also obligates you to perform missions for the coven. Since membership in a coven is illegal in the eyes of the Church and punishable by imprisonment (or death), these missions can get you into a lot of trouble.

You can only gain this perk once, unless you are a psychic Spy, in which case, you can acquire it multiple times to represent your infiltration into different covens. Moles are hated in any organization, but woe to the mole who pisses off a gang of psychics.

Background: Covens are secret societies, hidden from the sight of a condemning Church. Its members use code words or signs to signal meetings. The two main covens operating on an interstellar level in the Known Worlds are the Favyana, a society of psychic friends eager to change the psychics' bad repute (and hence, one that asks its members to act honorably), and the Invisible Path, a cutthroat group of psychics convinced they are the heirs of evolution, ascendant over humanity.

CRAFT ENERGY DEVICE
Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Tech Redeemer *and* Comprehend TL7+

You have the know-how necessary to manufacture energy weapons and shields.

Benefice: If you are near a workstation and have all the pieces necessary, you may attempt to construct energy weapons (lasers, blasters, stunners) or energy shields (standard personal, dueling, assault, battle, or starship grade), as long as you possess the Comprehend Tech perk at a tech level corresponding to that specific item (usually TL7).

Attempt a Tech Redemption + Dexterity roll against a Tough Resistance. If you don't have the Tech Lore capability for the weapon, this roll is unfavorable. You use up raw materials equal to half the weapon cost. Typical costs are listed in **Chapter 4: Technology**. You must spend one day of work per 100 fb cost before the roll can be made. You must have access to electrical or fusion power during the entire crafting time period, and any interruption in power will delay the making of the device.

CRAFT WONDROUS TECH
Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Tech Redeemer *and* Comprehend TL5+

You can make wondrous gadgets, toys, or entertainment devices, such as the amazing consumer items built during the Second Republic.

Benefice: If you are near a workstation and have all the pieces necessary, you may attempt to construct gadgets and tools, as long as you possess the Comprehend Tech perk at a tech level corresponding to that specific item. Example devices include crude smartbots that clean your laundry (starting at TL4, but TL5 are smaller and less prone to getting stuck in corners) and tri-vee suits that generate holograms in their fabrics (TL7).

"Wondrous tech" generally adds fun and ease to living and can even help you make money during performances, as they help to dazzle the crowd (making your *mesmerize* and *wow* rolls favorable). However, they are rarely functional as weapons. When used in combat, it is up the GM to decide whether such devices add any bonus (such as using a tri-vee suit to distract a foe).

To *replicate* an existing device, roll Tech Redemption + Dexterity. If you don't have the relevant tech capabilities, rolls are unfavorable. It takes one day per tech level to make the item, and it costs half the base price in raw materials. The base cost is usually 100 fb per tech level, although specific items may be listed in **Chapter 4: Technology**; use their costs instead.

If you *invent* a new gadget, consult your GM to define the details on your new gadget, such as its tech level and compulsion.

CREDIT-WORTHY

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Tycoon

Institutions tend to trust you with their money.

Benefice: You are a trustworthy member of high society, and people who know you are generally happy when you're looking over their investments. Your influence rolls when you try to convince people to lend you money or invest in your businesses are favorable. Additionally, people tend to offer you larger sums than they would otherwise. This is great, so long as you make sure that they get their money back in time.

CRIMINAL ARCHIVE ACCESS

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Bounty Hunter *or* Detective *or* Scribe

You have ways to find information on people of interest.

Benefice: You have access to an incomplete collection of data on criminals within the Known Worlds. While the different houses, Church sects, and guilds would never officially approve of a central database of all crimes committed to (and by!) them and their members, a rudimentary list of wanted criminals nonetheless arose as a necessity. It does help mitigate the grifters who try to game the system by capturing a bounty wanted by multiple factions and then returning the criminal to both — by dropping off a hand here and a head there.

You have access to this shared list of open and closed bounties, as well as data collected on various criminals. It usually contains visual reference of the wanted persons and their last-knowns mean of transport, known harbors, connections, and the crime(s) they committed.

To access the list, you need permission to use an official's think machine, or — more likely — reach one of your contacts who can do this more easily.

DABBLE IN THE DARK

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Occultist

Some knowledge probably shouldn't be known. You can call upon this knowledge to succeed but at the risk of your soul.

Benefice: Once per scene, whenever you fail a roll, you can choose to instead have gained foreknowledge of this event from your previous scrying attempts. This allows you to attempt a favorable reroll, hopefully getting a better result. Regardless of the result, you have confirmed the whispers you heard from the Dark, and as a result, you're haunted by that knowledge. You suffer the Haunted state for the remainder

of the scene. While in this state, you cannot perform a *shake it off* maneuver against this state or any other (you deserve your misery), and your persuasion influence attempts are unfavorable (because that look in your eyes creeps people out).

DANCE OF DESTRUCTION
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Duelist

Like a whirling dervish, you dance across the battlefield, leaving carnage in your wake.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may perform the Dance of Destruction, a mixture of performance art and sword-fighting style. Once in the Dance stance, whenever you score a victorious attack on an opponent, you can attempt an immediate bonus primary-action *daunt* or *mesmerize* maneuver against *any* one opponent who can see you or a *rouse* maneuver against an ally. You must use your movement action to move at least 1 meter to gain this advantage. If the influence attempt fails, you lose the Dance of Destruction stance, unless you spend 1 VP to maintain it.

DANGER SENSE
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Open

Your senses are always on the alert for danger.

Benefice: Nobody knows just when instinctual perception might be important, but you can hedge your bets toward better outcomes. Once per scene, you can take VP from your cache and place it in a special *vigilance coffer* at a rate of 2 VP per 1 point that goes into the coffer. The coffer can hold a maximum amount equal to your Observe skill rating. The coffer is then locked.

Each VP locked away in this coffer provides you with +1 Perception for the purposes of instinctual perception. The VP are not spent as they're used; they simply apply against instinctual perception, so long as they sit in the coffer. Since the GM doesn't always alert you to every instance of instinctual perception, you won't necessarily know when your coffer is needed.

VP in a vigilance coffer cannot be freely transferred to your normal cache or bank. At the end of the scene, the coffer is emptied back into the well.

DAREDEVIL
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Star Pilot

In intense situations, you focus purely on your bird, ensuring you and your crew make it to the end of this ride.

Benefice: While piloting a vessel or craft, you may call upon your inner calm or chant a prayer to a saint as a primary action. Roll Pilot (or Drive) + Faith against a Hard Resistance. VP generated from this roll become a special *daredevil coffer*. You may supplement the coffer from your cache at a rate of 2 VP for every 1 VP placed into the coffer; then it gets locked. Record the number of VP in the coffer; that's the coffer's VP value. At the start of each of your turns, any VP spent from the coffer are replenished from the well, up to the amount of the coffer's VP value.

VP from the coffer can be spent only on rolls related to the piloting situation at hand or boosting Resistance against rolls that target your vehicle. For example, it's useful when you're avoiding incoming missiles, dodging rubble from a collapsing tower, or getting your engine to run just a tiny bit faster to catch up to your target.

Once the situation is resolved (the battle is over; the pursuer has been outdistanced or shaken) or the current scene ends, you must empty the coffer into the well.

You may have only one daredevil coffer at any given time.

DEBAUCHERY
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Sybarite

By way of example, you can make someone lose his moral footing and temporarily fall into sin.

Benefice: After spending at least five minutes interacting with a person, you can perform a Charm-skill *debauch* persuasion influence maneuver against their Mind Resistance. The ideal environment for this maneuver is a private party where all the other guests are acting out and are known to be discreet about what they've seen. If the environment isn't ideal, the target might gain a +2 (or greater) Resistance bonus.

If you're victorious, the person is put into the Debauched state. While in this state, the target can be pushed into committing outrageous activities and atrocities by using *convince* influence maneuvers on them.

Targets already suffering from the Debauched state can be pushed further into the Depraved state with another *debauch* maneuver. Depraved targets lose all self-control and can be pushed into the most sinful of actions. Those suffering from the Debauched and Depraved states are fully aware of their actions and can remember all of them, but they cannot stop themselves until they manage to *shake it off*.

DEDUCE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Detective *or* Inquisitor *or* Occultist

By focusing on the tiniest details, you perceive subtle connections that others might miss.

Benefice: After taking a primary action to enter a deductive trance, spend 1 VP. For the rest of the scene, your rolls for the Observe-skill *detect*, *search*, and *spot* maneuvers are favorable, so long as they per-

tain to solving a particular mystery or crime: Who murdered the rector? Who stole the strawberries? Who was that unidentified man down in the kitchens before the dinner party was poisoned?

In addition to whatever clues or observations those maneuvers yield, they reveal to you an underlying pattern about how an event unfolded, a perpetrator's potential motive, and any possible suspects, helping you to solve the riddle. This can be doled out as a series of clues or facts by the GM, but your gamemaster is not obligated to serve up the complete answer.

There is a drawback: Your trance consumes your full attention. Any roll you attempt that is not related to solving the enigma is unfavorable. As a secondary action, you can end the trance at any time.

DELIVERANCE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Brother Battle

With your dying breath, you pray for the Pancreator's deliverance — and receive it.

Benefice: Once per act, if you take Vitality damage that would kill you, you can utter a prayer that instead recovers Vitality equal to your Surge rating. This does not count against your number of allowed surges.

DEPUTIZE
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Detective *or* Imperial Cohort *or* Inquisitor *or* Questing Knight

Some cases are too big for one person. Good thing you can share the workload with those you trust.

Benefice: Once per drama, you can deputize willing allies you trust. You can either deputize your entire troupe or a number of NPCs (up to a limit of 2 people per level; e.g., at 3rd level, you can deputize 6 people) for one specific investigation. They receive all privileges currently held by you regarding your investigations (access, responsibilities, influence, power) until the case is over.

You are regarded as their superior for all intents and purposes. This also means you are responsible for their actions. If they overstep their boundaries, you may end up paying the price.

DESTINATOR
Calling • Cyberdevice TL6 • Precondition: Explorer *or* Scout

A think-machine implant helps you find your way in unusual territories.

Benefice: You have a small TL6 implant connected to your retina or wired directly into your cortex. It stores map data for you and provides you with the best courses or paths to any destination, as long as it leads through known terrain.

To acquire knowledge of terrain, you may either survey it in person, study map data visually (by looking at a map for a minute), or access it via data link (if you can get access to a terminal that can provide such information).

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY
Calling • Privilege • Preconditions: Church Ordination *or* Guild Commission *or* Noble Title

While on business for your affiliated faction, you have a certain immunity from legal prosecution for acts you (allegedly) commit.

Benefice: If you commit a crime while on official business, you cannot be prosecuted for it. You can still be expelled from a fief or even a planet (depending on who you wronged), but you cannot be jailed, fined, or sold into slavery for your action. This immunity can even counter accusations of spying or murder. However, this does not make you immune from the condemnation of your own superiors. If your little deed caused them a great deal of trouble or lost political lucre, you may find yourself out of favor. Sure, you've avoided jail time, but Diplomatic Immunity is not an excuse to open a can of worms on your enemies and get away scot free.

EMBARGO
Class • Privilege • Precondition: Guild Commission rank 3+ (commander, fellow, boss, lieutenant, or manager)

You have the power to declare a League trade embargo against a particular individual.

Benefice: When you can declare an embargo against an individual, you can prevent any member of the Merchant League from selling to them. Since at least 70% of trade in the Known Worlds is conducted through the auspices of the Merchant League, this could prove crippling to someone who needs high-tech supplies or a steady stream or

goods. They can still trade and barter with local, independent merchants, but these small-timers usually provide only food or basic craft goods. They could perhaps try the black market, but much of that is run by the Scravers, and they're part of the League.

The League does not like calling embargoes, because it causes ill will with their other customers and loses them money. You better have a good reason for wielding this power; otherwise, it could cost you future promotions. Nonetheless, the League feels it must act quickly, decisively, and brutally against those who attempt to spurn League monopolies. League officials urge anyone calling an embargo to negotiate an end to whatever conflict caused it as soon as possible, although not by compromising the League's power.

The very threat of an Embargo is often enough to bring the individual to the bargaining table. Your influence rolls to get them to negotiate (not the negotiations themselves, but the attempts to get them to the table) are favorable, regardless of your method: the carrot or the stick.

EMPATHIC CONNECTION
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Dreamtender

You may call upon your specialized training when it comes to influencing people.

Benefice: You may use your Empathy skill in place of Charm or Impress (choose one when gaining this perk) when performing common influence maneuvers. You may gain this perk an additional time to substitute for the other skill.

ENLIGHTENED
Class • Ability • Precondition: Priest *or* Monk *or* Occultist *or* Psychic *or* Theurgist

Whether your devotion to the Pancreator has burnished your soul mirror or you're especially sensitive to psychic currents, you can tap into great undercurrents of power in the universe.

Benefice: Once per drama, you can convert VP from your cache or bank to wyrd points at a rate of 3 VP per 1 WP, up to a maximum WP equal to your level. If you're level 5, you can convert up to 15 VP into 5 WP.

ENTOURAGE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Courtier

You can gather an entourage of hangers-on and even bodyguards from your present company.

Benefice: While among a group of people, you may perform a primary-action Charm *befriend* maneuver against a number of individuals equal to your level. In addition to Befriending the target(s) and altering their attitude, they join your entourage for the scene and will follow your lead. If you request it, they will perform influence maneuvers on targets of your choosing. If they are allies, they will physically defend you from attacks, and you may make Charm *entreat* maneuvers against them to cause them to attack someone you select.

EPIPHANY
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Dreamtender *or* Enthusiast *or* Mendicant *or* Monk *or* Scholar *and* one or more Lore capabilities

You can deliver an uncannily apropos statement about a topic that stuns others into a sublime understanding of something they didn't realize before.

Benefice: Like a legendary Zen master or a divine fool, you can issue a single-sentence statement once per act about a topic with which you are familiar. You must have a Lore capability related to the topic at hand. Anyone hearing your statement may choose to try to comprehend it by rolling Focus + Intuition as a primary action against a Resistance equal to their own Will rating. If they fail, they do not understand the wisdom of your statement and do not benefit from it.

Those who are victorious find the doorways of perception opening in their minds just long enough to gain some vital understanding of the topic at hand; they are placed into a state of Gnosis for the scene. The catch is that you must also make the roll to benefit from your own statement — these words simply occur to you, as they are dredged from your unconscious or gifted by the muse; you don't necessarily understand them better than others.

The effects of your Epiphany's Gnosis vary, but it's usually enough to grant the person favorable rolls concerning the topic commented upon. For instance, if you make a statement about the odd religious practices of a particular sect, others who understand your utterance may gain favorable influence rolls when dealing with members of that sect. The effects apply only for one scene following the utterance.

EXECUTIONER
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Lord

You have the power to perform summary executions of traitors to your house.

Benefice: You have a license to kill. This only applies to persons who are subject to your house's rule. This privilege doesn't prevent questions and investigations about whether your execution was warranted, but it is legal.

This perk can be acquired a second time to become Grand Executioner, which expands your purview to include traitors to the Emperor.

EXEMPLAR
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You have a rare talent in one arena of endeavor.

Benefice: Choose one skill when you gain this perk. Once per scene, following a successful goal roll using that skill, you can collect extra VP from the well equal to your skill ranks. You can take this perk more than once; each additional perk represents a different skill.

FAME/INFAMY
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

You are famous or well-renowned in your field… for good or ill.

Benefice: Many adventurers eventually build reputations (usually as heroes or thugs). Your reputation becomes more important the farther up the social ladder you climb. Reputation is of extreme importance to nobles, it's highly valued by priests, and the League often bases promotions on it. However, your renown can be subjective. While most Known Worlders may recognize you as a hero, there are surely those who see otherwise and may hate you for whatever deeds caused you to gain such accolades. Likewise, a Decados may be seen as a vile snake by the populace, but fellow house members may see him as a cunning motivator.

When you take this perk, decide who among the populace adores you and who sees you as a villain. The groups must be of equal size and reach, or if one is smaller, they must be more powerful. If you choose Li Halan serfs for the former, you might choose Li Halan nobles for the latter.

Among those for whom you have a good reputation, you gain favorable rolls on any persuasion influence attempts to determine or change others' attitudes towards you (such as the Charm-skill *befriend* maneuver), as well as attempts to *haggle* to gain a discount on merchandise. Among those who know you as a cad, you gain favorable rolls on coercion influence attempts to intimidate others into doing what you want them to do (such as the Impress-skill *command* maneuver), as well as attempts to keep them from alerting the authorities when you help yourself to a discount on merchandise.

FAMILY TIES
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

Blood can be thicker than wine.

Benefice: You can draw on some exceptionally loyal allies from within your extended family. While this perk is perhaps best used by nobles, it can apply to others who have "family" members ensconced in positions throughout the Known Worlds. They could be actual relatives, sworn "blood brothers," former fraternity/sorority siblings, fellow secret society or cult members, etc. They should be well-defined; not just anybody can be called upon as a Family Tie, and it doesn't apply to all members of your faction (not even your noble house; just the more direct relatives). Of course, these Ties cut both ways — if someone kills your father, you will have to hunt the murderer down, even if that takes you to the farthest planet.

FENCING
Class • Ability • Precondition: Military Weapons capability *and* varies (see below)

You are trained in fencing with a particular military weapon.

Benefice: You gain special advantages when using a weapon in combat. See *Combat Specialties* later in this chapter for full details. If you don't have the proper weapon capability, your rolls are unfavorable, but you still gain this perk's benefits. Choose one style from the following list.

- *Duello* (*Precondition:* Noble) — Regarded as the classic sword fighting technique for the noble class.
- *Kraxi* (*Precondition:* House Decados, merchant, ukar) — Infamous as a form of ukari knife fighting with an emphasis on dirty tricks.
- *Serpentis* (*Precondition:* Noble) — Combines sinuous dance movement with sword strikes to keep one's opponent off-balance. Requires the Performing Arts Lore (Dancing) capability.
- *Torero* (*Precondition:* Noble) — Fencing with a whirling cloak in one's off-hand allows a combatant to fend off, hinder, or disarm an opponent.

This perk can be taken twice:

1st *Gallant:* You are an accomplished stylist.
2nd *Swashbuckler:* You have perfected your fighting art.

FORTHRIGHT
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You are supremely confident in social situations and do not hesitate to put yourself forward.

Benefice: You gain +1 Mind Resistance due to your confidence. In addition, you have the initiative edge for your influence attempts. Your place at the head of the queue cannot be overruled by a noble, although players and NPCs with initiative edges of their own might vie against you for first place, in which case you follow the normal rules: each rolls a d20; highest result wins. Furthermore, once per scene, you can declare one of your defense actions (such as *stonewall* or *debunk*) against a single influence attack to be favorable.

FORTITUDE IN FAITH
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Healer *or* Mendicant

You can gird yourself and others against deprivation or oppression with simple words from the Church's teachings.

Benefice: Many priests find inspiration in the Omega Gospels. You can take this inspiration one step further to lift spirits in extraordinary circumstances. Once per scene, by reciting aloud (as a secondary action) a passage or sermon relating to the current situation, you can make a listener's next roll favorable. You can spend 2 VP per additional listener you wish to affect (up to a total of your Faith rating).

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Lawyer *or* Tycoon

An old "friend" of yours might be able to help you out.

Benefice: Whether through careful planning, scheming, benevolence, or luck, you've amassed a number of people who are in your debt. You have a number of influential "friends" equal to your class level. Each of them is associated with one of the following: one sub-culture (court, cathedral, or commons); a specific noble house, sect, or guild; or an alien species or barbarian faction.

You don't need to declare who these friends are when you acquire this perk (or when you gain a new friend with each level). Instead, you can it figure out when you need to call on one of them. At that point, declare the friend's associated field or faction. Maybe they're an old childhood friend who ended up running the local chapter of the Charioteer's guild or a noble of House Hawkwood you rescued in the past.

Once per scene or Narrated sequence, you may reach out to one of your friends to turn a single influence attempt connected to that friend's respective field into a favorable roll. You must be able to speak with them, either in person or through a live communication device. If you are in any way prevented from reaching a specific friend, whether that's because they're unavailable or you're denied communication, you cannot use this perk for their field of expertise. You *might* be able to substitute one of those friend's trusted lieutenants, if they're available and if they know your prior arrangement with their boss; it's up to the GM.

Calling in favors comes with the risk that you might drag your friend into a messy situation, potentially tarnishing their reputation. They're loyal to a certain degree, but they'll cut you loose if you damage them too much. Should they cancel the friendship or debt, you must first rebuild the relationship before using their connection again.

GAMBLER
Class • Ability • Precondition: Merchant

Taking risks is your lifeblood.

Benefice: Once per scene, just before you make a roll, you can make a bet on how much VP it will reward. You can draw that many VP from the well right then, before the roll is made, and spend it and/or bank it. If the roll fails to produce *at least* that amount, you have failed the bet; you lose an amount of VP equal to double the amount you took from the well. If you cannot pay from your cache and bank, you are Penalized and can make no further gambles until you have squared your bet.

GEARHEAD
Class • Ability • Precondition: Merchant

You are especially attuned to technology, and you really don't understand the Church's fuss about it.

Benefice: Once per level per scene, you can make favorable a single roll involving the use of, understanding about, or repair of a specific type of technological device (TL5+). You can choose a different device each time per scene that you use this perk. Thus, within the same scene at 4th level, you can make favorable up to four different rolls involving up to four different types of device. *This does not apply to attack rolls.* As a guideline, use the equipment charts in *Chapter 4: Technology*. For instance, you might choose "Martech Red assault laser rifles" as your chosen tech for the scene, or "Mestengo Rover hoverbikes." You don't have to choose which devices your perk applies to until you need to. Also, your rolls to shake off techgnostic compulsions for any device are favorable.

GOSPEL
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Chorister

Your music inspires the Holy Flame in those who hear it.

Benefice: By spending 1 VP and singing a holy hymn as a primary action, you can provide "heart" against deleterious mental and social states. You must have the Performing Arts Lore (Song) capability. For each rank you have in the Perform skill, one listener is affected. Those affected enter a state of Epiphany for the remainder of the scene, but only so long as you keep singing. (This is a secondary action, although it's interrupted if you take damage that exceeds your Endurance rating.) They gain +2 Mind and Spirit Resistance against unwanted states. (This bonus combines with most others.)

GOSSIP NETWORK

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open *and* one or more Customs Lore capabilities

You have a series of informants who keep you up to date on certain areas of information.

Benefice: You gain +2 goal to influence rolls against subjects within your network's reach, thanks to gossip you've gathered on them from your network of informants. Your informants may be cackling old nobles who let you know which lords have committed breaches of etiquette, merchants who let you know who is buying what, or farmers who are more than glad to tell you who has gone through their area recently. This bonus only applies to targets for which you know the proper Customs Lore capability (Cathedral Custom for priests, Streetwise for the criminal underground, etc.).

This perk encompasses the holdings and territory of *one* Royal House, the Church, the League, or a single Vuldrok Nation's holdings. This perk may be bought additional times to enlarge your network's area to include *one* other Royal House, the Imperial worlds, or all of the Vuldrok Star-Nations. Successive levels do not increase the roll bonus, but they do enlarge the area to which your influence bonus applies.

GUILD COMMISSION

Class • Privilege • Precondition: Merchant

You are an official member of your guild.

Benefice: You are a fully entered member of your guild. This perk can be taken multiple times to represent higher degrees. The higher your degree, the more power (and responsibilities) you have. The degrees are the same for all genders and identities.

In addition, each rank grants you +2 Mind Resistance. This bonus rises with each successive rank (i.e., a Scraver boss gets +6 Mind Resistance).

GUTS

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Explorer *or* Scout

Wilderness survival requires a certain intestinal fortitude. You have it.

Benefice: You are especially resistant to natural poisons and animal venoms; your rolls to use *shake it off* on their effects are favorable, and you do not suffer any overdose effects from poisons or venoms that affect you. Finally, you recover from these toxins much quicker than most; their durations are halved. This resistance also applies to the effects of spoiled or contaminated food.

HARD BOILED

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Detective

Your years dealing with crime have left you jaded, but they also ensure you stay calm in any situation.

Benefice: You struggle to connect with other people and usually come off as harsh and detached in close social interactions. You suffer -2 goal if you ever attempt the Empathy skill *minister* maneuver. However, appearing cold-blooded gives you a threatening aura: gain +2 goal to coercion influence attempts. You also gain +2 Mind Resistance against influence or occult powers that would inflict the Afraid or Terrified states.

HARMONIZE

Class • Ability • Precondition: Priest *or* Chorister

Years of training to work in concert with others has made you an expert in teamwork.

Benefice: You may take a primary action to aid someone in taking an action; the action is then treated as favorable. (It cannot be a combat or influence action.) You must be trained in the skill used for the action (at least 1 skill rank above the base) – it's about lending experienced help, not just an extra set of hands. You must be present or available through a live remote feed where you can interact with the person. Alternatively, you can sing to help provide a tempo to the labor without needing ranks in the skill being used. That ally gains +2 goal to the roll instead of a favorable roll.

HEDGE FUND

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Tycoon

Your eye for potential investments finds avenues that promise constant revenue streams.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may open a *hedge fund coffer* as a primary action. Roll Focus + Wits as a

Guild Ranks

	Charioteers	*Engineers*	*Muster*	*Reeves*	*Scravers*
1st	Ensign	Apprentice	Private	Associate	Associate
2nd	Lieutenant	Entered	Sergeant	Chief	Genin
3rd	Commander	Fellow	Lieutenant	Manager	Boss
4th	Captain	Crafter	Captain	Director	Jonin
5th	Consul	Engineer	Major	Consul	Consul
6th	Dean	Master	Colonel	Dean	Dean

primary action against Effortless Resistance. VP generated on the roll are placed in the coffer, which is then locked. (No VP may be added to the coffer once it is locked.) Each turn thereafter, move 1 VP from your hedge fund coffer to your cache. Once the coffer is empty, it's deleted. (You can't create a new coffer until the first one is gone.) At the end of a scene, if there are any VP left in the coffer, they go back to the well and the coffer goes away.

HIEROPHANT

Class • Privilege • Preconditions: Priest *or* Clergy *and* Religion Lore

You are recognized by the Church as a worthy theologian, and your views influence Church policy.

Benefice: When your rolls are related to arguments over scriptural interpretation, they are favorable. Since scripture is often quoted to support arguments in ecclesiastical trials, you can serve as a most valuable prosecutor or defense lawyer.

In addition, you can introduce new interpretations into Church discourse, influencing the opinions of those who make policy. In such a way, you can attempt to transform heresies into mere differences of doctrine, saving their believers from inquisitorial persecution. First, you must formulate your doctrine. Spend a month and make an Academia + Intuition roll. The Resistance is Demanding for beliefs that fit well with the current Church opinion, but beliefs that are wildly divergent from current thought are Tough or Severe. Beliefs that clash with core Church values (such as the distrust of technology) may face Severe or higher Resistance.

Once formulated, your doctrine must be promulgated through oratory. When you would convert someone, attempt a *rouse* maneuver using the Perform skill with the Performing Arts (Oratory) capability. Those who are converted to your doctrine may begin to spread it (using their own influence attempts).

You may eventually be invited to argue your doctrine before distinguished (higher ranked) theologians, who will attempt to reveal the flaws in your beliefs. This initiates a Focus + Wits contest against a Demanding Resistance, but you can add +1 to your goal for every 100 people you have converted. If your views hold out, your work will enter the canon of currently debated theology. You may then be invited to argue your doctrine before the College of Ethicals, who determine Church doctrine. If you win here, your belief becomes a standard teaching of the Church — unless the current Patriarch dislikes it. He may challenge you to a new debate, one with a Herculean Resistance for his status. If you win this one, your doctrine is set for at least the next two or three generations.

HIRED MUSCLE

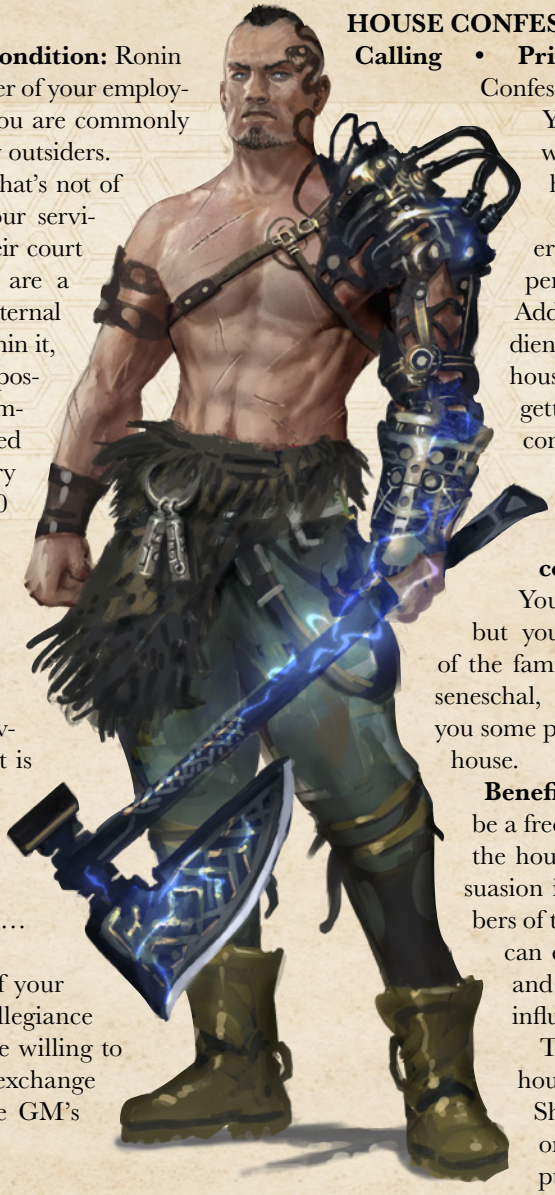
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Ronin

While you are not a member of your employer's noble house by blood, you are commonly recognized as one of them by outsiders.

Benefice: A noble house that's not of your own lineage bought your servitude, integrating you into their court as much as necessary. You are a member of this house for all external intents and purposes, but within it, you are of the lowest status possible — even a disgraced, gambling cousin is more respected by the family than a mercenary working for them the past 20 years. Blood is thick, after all.

You earn a yearly stipend of 150 fb, and you usually get free transport, so long as you are on official business. In exchange, you work for the house. When you are given tasks by your employer, it is your duty to fulfill them, regardless of the cost. Failure obviously means punishment, ranging from docked pay to more immediately… *physical*… personal loss.

If you leave the employ of your house, you may shift the allegiance of this perk to another house willing to accept your service, or else exchange it for another perk with the GM's approval.



HOLIER THAN THOU

Class • Ability • Precondition: Priest *or* Clergy

You can stave off attacks by spouting homilies or threats of Empyrean judgment.

Benefice: By exclaiming your holiness to others, you can protect yourself from their ire. Once per scene, you can spend 1 VP and perform an Impress *daunt* maneuver. All those within earshot are affected, as long as they can hear you and understand the language you speak. Only those whose Mind Resistance is overcome are affected. Those affected are Awed for the remainder of the scene: they cannot initiate attacks against the holy one or choose to shake off this state (although others can try to snap them out of it using the Impress *command* maneuver). If you fail the first attempt, you can still try again, but once successful, you can't keep doing it. Also, you can't physically attack or coerce anyone who is affected; doing so automatically dispels the Awe.

HOUSE CONFESSOR

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Confessor

You have served a noble house well and have the favor of that house.

Benefice: You are considered to have the Householder perk for the house you serve. Additionally, you may seek audience with members of that house, and any rolls related to getting such an audience are considered favorable.

HOUSEHOLDER

Class • Privilege • Precondition: Yeoman

You work for a noble house, but you're not an actual member of the family: you might be a servant, seneschal, or bodyguard. This allows you some privileges with regards to that house.

Benefice: You are considered to be a freeman in voluntary employ to the house. You gain +2 goal to persuasion influence rolls against members of that house. Once per act, you can evoke your employer's name and gain a favorable roll on an influence attempt.

These benefits represent the house's increased trust in you. Should you betray that trust or misuse the house's name, punishment can be harsh. You may face possible expulsion from house employ, enforced serfdom, or even slavery for extreme treason. So long as you're in good standing, you have access to the privileges that members of the house enjoy: room, lodging, meals, etc.

HUNTER'S CRED

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Bounty Hunter

You always keep an ear to the ground — and an extensive rumor mill — about the most wanted.

Benefice: You know about bounties before they are publicly posted. Whether you have friends on the inside, you're the closest one nearby, or your reputation ensures people inform you personally, you usually know of bounties hours — maybe even days — before most other bounty hunters are on their trail. The types of bounties you hear about — defined in part by their danger and

their pay — depends on your reputation. More importantly, your pay for delivering a bounty is 20% higher than the stated amount – paymasters like you.

IMBUE TABERNACLE

Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Brother Battle *or* Psychic *or* Theurgist

You can imbue an item with psychic or theurgic energy.

Benefice: A tabernacle acts as a VP coffer. You may use points "charged" into it to fuel your occult powers, so long as the item is on your person. Each tabernacle is either imbued for psychic power *or* theurgic rites, but not both. A psychic can use a psychic tabernacle but not a theurgy tabernacle, and vice versa.

Your tabernacle's victory point limit is equal to your current Psi/Theurgy rating x2. (If you have Psi 4, your tabernacle can hold up to 8 VP.) Once a tabernacle's stored points have been used up, you can recharge them with your own VP. This requires an hour-long ceremony.

This perk must be gained separately for psychic tabernacles and theurgy tabernacles.

IMPERIAL CHARTER

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Questing Knight

You are a fully chartered Questing Knight, sworn to the Emperor in name and deed for a period of service.

Benefice: You have some standing within the Known Worlds. You have a right of passage across feudal boundaries, and you can invoke your charter to inspect public records from noble houses, the Church, and the League. You also have the benefits of the Diplomatic Immunity perk, granting you protection from prosecution — you answer to the Company of the Phoenix and its council, not noble or Church bodies. Lastly, you have a yearly stipend of 300 fb. However, this remit comes with a code of behavior as well. You can never operate against Imperial interests. You can also be called upon to perform missions or quests for the Company council or the Emperor himself. Refusing a mission or failing to stay true to this code can mean being stripped of this charter, facing imprisonment, or even receiving a death sentence. Leaving the Company frees you from the charter but also eliminates its benefits.

Those who follow the Questing Knight calling without taking this perk are not fully chartered members of the Company. They may undertake quests in its name and accompany other Knights and Cohorts, but they don't have the sanctions listed above.

Background: Not all nobles have a respectable place in their family's fiefs. Second or third sons and daughters don't have much to inherit; thus, they must seek out their own opportunities. Many of them look to Emperor Alexius, who has chartered the Company of the Phoenix — the Questing Knights. These nobles swear a term of fealty to the Emperor and travel the realm enacting his vision, whether it be upholding fealty rights for downtrodden peasants, putting down Republican rebellions, or traveling beyond the Known Worlds into barbarian space, seeking word or evidence of lost worlds.

IMPERIAL COHORT CHARTER

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Nobles cannot be Cohorts, but anyone else can.

You are a fully chartered Imperial Cohort, an aide de camp to one of the Emperor's Questing Knights.

Benefice: You gain a small stipend of 100 fb per year and free transport on any Imperial Navy ship. In addition, you can cross feudal boundaries free of taxation and are allowed free counsel in case of legal prosecution. However, you must uphold a code of behavior and duty. You can never operate against Imperial interests, and you can be called upon to undergo any number of missions for the Company of the Phoenix or the Emperor. To refuse a mission or to be caught breaking this code of behavior can mean imprisonment or death.

Those who follow the Imperial Cohort calling but do not have this perk are not fully chartered members of the Company of the Phoenix. They may accompany and aid its Knights and Cohorts, but they don't have the sanctions listed above.

Background: Some priests hear the call to more worldly duty, enflamed by the values and vision espoused by Emperor Alexius. The role of Imperial Cohort to Alexius's Questing Knights is open to these few.

A priest accepted into this august company gives spiritual succor and advice to a knight, accompanying him on his travels into dire lands far from the bosom of the Church. They gain the unprecedented opportunity to preach to new converts and provide sterling examples to all — even if it costs them the ire of the more politically-ambitious Church priests, perpetually opposed to Alexius's ascendancy.

In return for offering their skills and fealty, merchants reap the rewards of first claim on the trade routes into newly explored territories. While this may earn a guilder new enemies, it also brings new opportunities to one's guild.

IMPERIOUS

Class • Verve • Precondition: Noble

The estate of the nobility was ordained by the Pancreator. You carry that authority in your bearing.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may spend a secondary action to assume a regal bearing and imperious mien to shield yourself from a single influence attempt or occult power. You spend VP to boost your Mind or Spirit Resistance, but you draw the VP from the *well* instead of from your own cache, up to a limit of 5 + your level. (*Example:* At 3rd level, you can draw up to 8 VP from the well.)

INCITE PASSION

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Open

Your mighty passions become the stuff of legend.

Benefice: You're a hothead, but this can work to your advantage. In times where your dearest desire or ardent goal is threatened, your passion can inspire you to amazing accomplishments in its defense. Your desire or goal can change from act to act, but once you've declared it, it remains your sole passion for the remainder of the act. Examples include: keeping your lady love from harm, vanquishing evil (real evil, such as demons, not tax collectors), or revenging your father's murder.

You may *incite passion* as a primary action once per act. The GM deems how well the circumstances warrant it. For instance, if the love of your life is about to be burned by inquisitors, that's a sufficient excuse for a passionate response. If, however, he or she is simply being fast-talked by a merchant, it's a pretty slim excuse for an overreaction. Nonetheless, you can always attempt to *incite passion* when your goal is threatened, no matter how slim your chances.

When you *incite passion*, take a number of VP from the well equal to your Spirit characteristics (Faith + Intuition + Presence) + class level and place them in a special *passion coffer*, which is then locked. If your Faith is 6, your Intuition 3, your Presence 5, and you're at 5th level, your passion coffer will have 19 VP.

You can draw from the coffer toward the achievement of your goal: rescuing your lady love, trouncing your rival, saving the village from evil, etc. At the end of the scene, so long as your passion is still unresolved (your lady love is not yet rescued, etc.), the coffer is refilled from the well. Once you have achieved your desire, or the act ends without a resolution, the coffer is canceled (any unspent VP go back to the well). If, Pancreator forbid, your desire is irrevocably thwarted (your love dies, the village is destroyed), you are Penalized as a chronic state until therapy can relieve your passionate grief.

You may have only one passion coffer at a time.

INCOME TAX

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Trader

While not all attacks on you are attacks on the League, they're definitely attacks on the economy. And we can't have that.

Benefice: Whenever you are the target of a physical attack or coercion influence attempt, you gain at 1 VP from the well. You don't gain this benefit if your attacker is a member of your troupe, a close ally, or a friend.

INCUBATION

Calling • Austerity • Precondition: Dreamtender *or* Mendicant

By sleeping in a sacred area, you seek to gain divine inspiration from your dreams.

Benefice: You gain +2 Spirit Resistance. At least once a week, you must take a Respite within a recognized sacred area — a shrine, temple, or a ritually consecrated area —to maintain the practice of this austerity.

INDEPENDENT

Class • Verve • Precondition: Yeoman

You are free from the constraints imposed on most members of society.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may exert your freedom from control, whether it's an influence action or an occult power. You spend VP to increase your Mind or Spirit Resistance, but you draw this VP from the *well* instead of from your own cache, up to a limit of 5 + your level. (*Example:* At 3rd level, you can draw up to 8 VP from the well.)

INDULGENCE

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Clergy

The Church no longer outright sells indulgences, but there are plenty of loopholes to exploit.

Benefice: Your knowledge of the minutiae of Church doctrine can allow others to reconsider their situation, so they can recover from mental and social influence. You may spend 1 minute speaking to the person, explaining Church doctrine in such a favorable light as to remove a temporary or enduring mental or social state from which the person is currently suffering (or downgrade a chronic state to enduring). You may do this for the same person only once per act.

INGENIOUS

Class • Verve • Precondition: Merchant

You know how to turn the sudden windfalls of daily life into long-term gains.

Benefice: Once per scene, you can reap extra reward from a single successful roll for a primary action: You can convert 3 of the VP you gain from that roll into 1 wyrd point.

INQUISITORIAL SEAL

Class • Privilege • Preconditions: Priest *or* Inquisitor *and* Church Ordination 4+

You are a permanent member of the Inquisition.

Benefice: You bear an Inquisitorial Seal granted by the Inquisitorial Synod. Unlike most such seals, which are handed out temporarily on a per-mission basis, this one is permanent, allowing you to perform inquisitorial duties full time and without the need to consult superiors regarding situations that arise during such duties. This does not mean, however, that you are free to act however you desire; your actions can still be judged by the Synod.

Special: If you have the Witch Hunt perk, once you meet the rank precondition for this perk, you may freely convert your Witch Hunt perk into this Inquisitorial Seal perk.

INSPIRE FEAR

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Inquisitor

All fear the Inquisition. Your status as a Church enforcer can open doors… and mouths.

Benefice: You may evoke your ties to the Inquisitorial Synod when you declare your holy right to question and condemn. Once per scene, whenever you are victorious in a coercion influence attempt against someone, you may gain extra effect on that attack: In addition to whatever state you've imposed on them, they are also made either Guilty or Afraid (choose which) as an enduring state.

INSPIRING

Class • Verve • Precondition: Priest

Your presence and words are a balm to your companions.

Benefice: Through inspirational behavior and sermons, you can give other characters VP and WP from your cache, even when it's not your turn in the initiative queue. They must be able to either see or hear you (and vice versa), although distance doesn't matter — you can even Inspire over a vid- or holo-transmission. You can divvy up this VP gift among other characters in any amount and combination, although the maximum number of players and/or NPCs who can receive your blessings in a single round is equal to your level (one person at 1st level, two at 2nd, and so on).

Also, once per scene, you can take 1 WP from the troupe coffer to give to a troupe member without requiring a vote. You can do this even if a vote has prevented that member from taking from the coffer.

INTRUDER

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Reclaimer *or* Thief

Locks are adorable ways of slowing you down, but they don't keep you out of places you want to be.

Benefice: Your Intrusion rolls related to opening locks or cracking codes are favorable. If an Intrusion roll would ever be unfavorable, it is normal instead.

INVEST PHYLACTERY

Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Brother Battle *or* Theurgist *and* Theurgy 5+

You may invest an item with one or more theurgic rituals, usable by anyone wielding the phylactery who has Theurgy 1+.

Benefice: A phylactery is an item invested with one or more theurgic rituals. Any theurgist wielding one can cast its rites, even if he has not trained in them (that is, gained them as perks). To make a phylactery, you must be able to cast the rites you wish to imbue into it. Your class level sets the limit to how many ranks of rites can be imbued. If you're 4th level, then you can imbue four 1st-level rites, two 2nd-level rites, one 4th level rite, or any combination thereof, so long as it doesn't exceed your level. Making the relic requires one day per rite degree for each rite you imbue, and you may only invest one phylactery per month.

Anyone using the phylactery to cast one of its rites uses the goal number of the phylactery's maker or their own goal number (whichever is higher). (Record your goal number for the rite when you invest it into the phylactery.) During casting, they must spend 1 VP to activate the phylactery, in addition to any other VP requirements for the rite being cast.

Phylacteries are holy items, not consumer goods. Producing them profligately or handing them out to just anyone is an act of hubris, requiring you to make a *repent* roll (Focus + Faith) to avoid gaining a rank of Hubris.

INVIGORATE
Class • Ability • Precondition: Priest *or* Commander *or* Healer

Your words of encouragement buck up the downtrodden.

Benefice: Once per scene per level, as a secondary action, you can voice supportive or commanding words to a wounded ally. That person gains a Revival as a secondary reflexive action. This does not use one of their own allotted Revivals; it's a freebie. However, you can invigorate the same person only once per act.

KEEN AWARENESS
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Reclaimer *or* Thief

A life of lingering in dark alleys left you with a stronger focus on the details around you.

Benefice: Your Observe rolls when using your visual or auditory senses are favorable. Additionally, when you use Sneak to remain undetected in a crowd or urban landscape (such as with the *blend in* maneuver), your rolls are favorable.

KEEPING SECRETS
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Confessor

Within the realm of recognized confession, you are bound to secrecy, but this familiarity with the true nature of sentient-nature brings insight.

Benefice: The keeper of secrets knows much and says little. While you can never talk of specifics, you can apply your knowledge of sin and the paths to it to the world around you. Your Empathy rolls are considered favorable if they involve people's motives, truthfulness, or intentions, such as when performing a *detect lie* maneuver.

KEY SIGNATURE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Chorister

By setting the tempo and guiding an action, those that follow your lead fall right into sync.

Benefice: Once per scene, you can spend a variable amount of VP to set a tempo by singing as a primary action. For each round that you keep time by singing (as a primary action), members of your troupe who can hear you subtract 1 from the Resistance opposing their actions for each VP you spend that turn (up to a maximum of your Sing skill). If you enter combat or sing for another purpose (such as the Harmonize perk), the effect ends.

LABOR CONTRACTOR
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Chainer

You have the right to... *acquire*… workers by various means. Your employees are supposed to "join" your enterprise voluntarily and get paid, but nobody looks too deeply into whether that's the case.

Benefice: You may legally capture slaves. Well, you *officially* have the right to "hire" laborers, provide them with the necessary paperwork, or even purchase their extended servitude. While you're supposed to look after your subjects, slavery is generally accepted as a necessary evil in the Known Worlds. It's usually overlooked by authorities so long as no person of interest or rank is enslaved. If you attempt such trafficking without this perk, and you get caught, you could well be enslaved yourself, condemned to forced labor. This perk helps you skirt that possible fate, although it does nothing to assuage your soul.

LANDED
Class • Privilege • Precondition: Noble *or* priest *or* merchant

You own land and rule over the serfs who live on it.

Benefice: In the feudal nobility, the serfs who live on your land owe you fealty. All your rolls to influence your serfs are favorable. You may judge crimes and call a posse to pursue criminals or muster a militia in times of conflict. While your lands generate income, they also generate taxes and upkeep. With this perk, your lands break even. If your fiefdom is successful enough to generate income, that can be represented by the Riches perk.

LAY PRIEST
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Friar

Tending to the common folk provides you with insight into their world and customs.

Benefice: You have capability in Commons Customs and never suffer an unfavorable roll in this arena. Your influence rolls with the lower classes — serfs, yeomen, and so on — are favorable. In addition, when there's trouble, such as a noble acting poorly or bandits about in the land or an Antinomy cult in the woods, they tend to come to you to let you hear of it.

LAY DOWN THE LAW
Class • Privilege • Precondition: Noble Title 3+ (Baron)

Noble houses have subjects: serfs and those who are sworn by liege law to serve the house. They also have free citizens — priests, merchants, yeomen — living within their fiefs and holdings who must obey their laws. With this perk, you can levy the power of your house's authority for your pronouncement and rulings against these people.

Benefice: Once per scene per level, when attempting influence actions against those subject to your house's law, you ignore any Mind Resistance based on their rank perk (Church Ordination, Guild Commission, Military Rank, Noble Title, Professional Reputation, etc.) if they are of lesser rank than you.

You may also do this when influencing those who are in your house but of lower rank, as well as those from other houses who beholden to your house (such as the Van Gelder are to House Decados).

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Amateur *or* Imperial Cohort *or* Incognito

Every failure is just another chance to improve.

Benefice: Whenever you fail a roll, add 1 VP to your cache from the well. You are still considered to have failed the roll, and this VP cannot trigger any effects that are based on gaining VP. Still, it's a nice consolation.

LEGATE
Class • Privilege • Precondition: Priest *or* Clergy

You are an ambassador to a noble house for the Church, where you command a level of respect for your position and diplomatic credentials.

Benefice: Choose the noble house where you have diplomatic privileges. You gain the Court Customs capability, as well as +2 Mind Resistance against influence attempts from nobles or householders from the house. Your influence attempts against house members when performing official priestly duties — such as taking confession, advising on ecclesiastical matters, or instructing them about scripture and dogma — are favorable.

LEGERDEMAIN
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Thief

Others had best keep an eye on their valuables around you… even if that won't help much.

Benefice: Your Sleight of Hand rolls related to picking others' pockets (or satchels, bags, etc.; see the *pick pocket* maneuver) and concealing small items (see the *conceal* maneuver) are favorable. Additionally, you may use Sleight of Hand instead of Perform to *mesmerize* an audience if you can use both of your hands.

LINGUIST
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Scholar *or* Scribe

The intricacies of the different dialects within oro'ym culture fascinated you since you were young — so you studied all of them.

Benefice: You have a knack for acquiring languages. You gain the Speak capability with *all* known Known Worlds languages — Urthish and each alien species' tongues — except the secret and/or exclusive coded languages (like the al-Malik's Graceful Tongue). Also, whenever you learn a new language (by gaining the Speak capability for it), you learn (and can improvise while speaking) all its known dialects and accents.

All rolls that rely on your capability with the languages you know are favorable. You can speak all dialects without any hint of an accent (or using whichever accent you choose). You can even convince locals that you're from their village (though they'll wonder why nobody has ever seen you before, and they may ask why you're wearing such an odd outfit).

This perk can be taken a second time to apply to the Read capability for all the languages you know. (If you like, you can instead apply your first perk to Read and your second to Speak.)

LIVING LEGEND
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Mendicant *or* Ronin

Tales of your deeds precede you. Locals welcome you with open arms… but also with expectations.

Benefice: After helping many a commoner, you built a reputation as a friend of the downtrodden. Whenever you come to a settlement that is new to you, people you've never met offer you free housing and food. Commercial-ship captains let you hunker down in their cargo holds for free (like the Passage Contract perk), and children look up to you, asking for your stories.

However, they expect you to be a shining paragon of virtue. The stories of your escapades tend to escalate a bit as they travel from town to town. Strangers will approach you with their problems, hoping to convince the Living Legend to save them. Local crime bosses, exploitative nobles, and corrupt priests will soon be brought to your attention. While you will not have time to solve every issue, ignoring these requests risks diminishing your reputation, or worse, turning it into its exact opposite.

LONG CON
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Tycoon

Following hunches, you constantly juggle your resources and reap rewards whenever you need them.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may open a *long-con coffer* as a primary action. Roll Observe + Intuition against an Effortless Resistance. VP generated on the roll are placed in the coffer, which is then locked. (No VP may be added to the coffer once it is locked.) For the rest of the scene, each time you generate VP from a roll, take 1 VP from the well and add it to your Long Con coffer. As a secondary action on any turn in the scene, you may transfer *all* VP from the coffer into your cache and remove the coffer. If you still have the coffer at the end of a scene, move its VP to your bank (only up to your limit, though) and remove the coffer. You can have only one long-con coffer at any given time.

LOVING PRAYER
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Healer

Your prayers can restore someone who has suffered physically.

Benefice: As a primary action, you can touch and heal someone who has suffered Vitality wounds within the same scene. You touch the target and speak words of consoling prayer. The target heals 1 Vitality per rank of Faith you have. You may do this on the same target only once per scene.

This is not a theurgic rite; it's a therapeutic prayer. You must be able to see the target, and the recipient must know, even on a subconscious level, that he's being prayed for. If he's Unconscious, he can still be restored through this therapeutic touch.

LOYALISTS
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Incognito

Not everyone is happy with those who deposed you.

Benefice: Serfs, seneschals, council members, or remote family members — whoever they are, they're ready to betray your rival(s) when they see a chance. Your network provides you with information whenever they can.

You regularly gain information on your rival(s), the person (or people) or faction who forced you into hiding. Who are they meeting? Which house did they recently make enemies with? What personal weakness can be exploited?

Additionally, you may find shelter in unexpected places. When you need to escape pursuers and lay low for a while, you may *entreat* one of the locals. If you're successful, one of your contacts is present in that location and can offer a safe haven.

LOYALTY UNTO DEATH
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Commander *or* Lord

A day may come when the courage of men fails, but it is not this day.

Benefice: Once per act, you may give a rousing speech in front of your troops or your troupe, urging them to follow you until death, if necessary. Giving the speech takes at least one minute and requires a successful *rouse* roll against your units. The Resistance for this roll is the highest Mind Resistance amongst your unit commanders or your troupe mates (who can choose to put up no Resistance). VP from the roll go into a *courage coffer*, which you can supplement by spending VP from your own cache. If the targets were in your troupe, they can also supplement the courage coffer by spending their own VP. The coffer is then locked. You (and only you) can draw from this coffer to aid any of your troop's actions, spending VP on their behalf.

Additionally, each ally who is Roused by your speech is also put into the Courageous state. While in this state, they are immune to mild fearful states, such as Afraid or Daunted. They also gain +2 Mind Resistance against influence or occult powers that could leave them Terrified.

MACHINE SPIRIT
Calling • Cyberdevice TL7 • Precondition: Tech Redeemer

You carry an A.I. implant with the sole purpose of helping you connect to other A.I.s. It knows how they tick and convinces them to assist you.

Benefice: Whether you have an artificial finger that hides a plug, several cables accessible behind your left ear or in your neck, or a hidden flap on your lower arm, you carry an A.I. in you that helps you connect to other A.I.s. This A.I. is a TL7 device and is permanently grafted into your body, connected to your auditory cortex.

To establish a connection, you must physically attach your implant to an existing outlet. If the device can accept wireless broadcast, your Machine Spirit can access it within 10 meters. Your helpful A.I. will then strike up a conversation with the other think machine. You can overhear the conversation but may not partake in it.

It is the A.I.'s goal to convince the other think machine (or sentient golem) to assist you, whether that's by circumventing password protection, disabling turrets currently aiming at your ship, or giving you a discount at the checkout machine. Mechanically, the game effect makes your Interface rolls favorable.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

MAIN ATTRACTION
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Artist

Your profession might not be respected by everyone, but it opens many doors.

Benefice: Whether you prefer a fan dance, contortionism in zero gravity, or a traditional waltz, you know how to charm and seduce those watching you. Following any successful Perform skill action, your persuasion influence attempts for the next scene are favorable against any target who witnessed your performance, as well as those who are in the Mesmerized or Roused states because of your performance. Only the first attempt against each target is favorable; successive attempts are treated normally. Additionally, this perk gives you +2 Mind Resistance against Knavery-skill *humiliate* and Perform-skill *wow* attempts (because after all, you know how the sausage is made).

MANHUNTER
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Bounty Hunter

You find people. No matter how well they think they're hiding, it's only a matter of time until you show up.

Benefice: You're experienced at coercing or convincing people close to your bounties that it's in their — and their friends' — best interest for you to locate them. When you interact with one of your bounty's allies, you may perform a *castigate*, *daunt*, or *entreat* maneuver against them. On a victory, you may inflict the Compelled state. A Compelled person will assist you in locating your bounty, answering your questions truthfully, and to the best of their knowledge, they'll even point out aspects of your bounty you might have missed or misunderstood before. (You can use this ability on anyone, really, not just people who are close to your bounty.)

MANTOK
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Brother Battle

You've trained in the unique hand-to-hand fighting style of the Brother Battle order. Acquiring this is like taking the Martial Arts perk (listed below) except you must choose the Mantok school.

This perk can be taken twice:

1st *Adept:* You're a trained combatant.
2nd *Master:* You're a living weapon.

MARKSMANSHIP
Class • Ability • Precondition: Duelist *or* Merchant *or* Noble

You know a number of tricks you can use with a gun.

Benefice: You gain special advantages when using a gun in combat. See *Combat Specialties* later in this chapter for full details. If you don't have the proper Ranged Weapon capability for your gun, your rolls are unfavorable, but you still gain this perk's benefits.

This perk can be taken twice:

1st *Sharpshooter:* You're well trained with a gun.
2nd *Gunslinger:* You can do some amazing things with that shootin' iron you wear on your hip.

MARTIAL ARTS
Class • Ability • Precondition: See below

You are trained in a particular martial arts school's fighting methods.

Benefice: You gain special advantages when engaging in hand-to-hand combat. See *Combat Special-*

ties later in this chapter for full details. Choose one school from the following list.

- *Graa* (*Precondition:* Vorox) — A vorox's extra limbs can be used to great combat benefit.
- *Iron Heel* (*Precondition:* Muster *or* Bounty Hunter *or* Chainer *or* Mercenary) — Your no-nonsense commando style specializes in kicks and holds.
- *Jox Kai Von* (Jox Boxing) — You learned from the ukari school of no-holds-barred fighting.
- *Koto* — Your fighting art uses misdirection, subtlety, and outright trickery.
- *Shaidan* (*Precondition:* Noble) — Your honorable school specializes in fist attacks, disdaining kicks, and grappling.

This perk can be taken twice:

1st *Adept:* You're an accomplished combatant.
2nd *Master:* You're a superior opponent.

MASTER OF DECEPTION
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Conspiracist *and* Knavery 5+

Your words are honey; your promises are fortunes; your lies are eels.

Benefice: You are an expert in lies. Your Knavery *deceive* maneuvers are favorable, and you gain +2 Mind Resistance against the *deceive* attacks of others.

MECHANIC
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Star Pilot *or* Tech Redeemer

You know every bolt and screw on your ship from stem to stern.

Benefice: You know one particular type of transport — such as a skimmer, flitter, explorer-class starship, or cargo-hauler — like the back of your hand. When performing repairs, especially with maneuvers like the Tech Redemption skill's *jury-rig*, your rolls are favorable. What's more, if your hands are full elsewhere (such as flying the ship), you can communicate this favorable state to another person who is in live vocal communication with you. You can add an additional transport type to your repertoire per class level.

MEMORY EXPANDER
Calling • Cyberdevice TL6 • Precondition: Scholar *or* Scout

A tiny think machine in your skull helps you remember things in more detail.

Benefice: Remembering little details is hard, and often, keeping track of them requires you to constantly take notes. It's much easier to attach a tiny thinking machine to your brain, so it can do that for you. This TL6 device stores visual, auditory, and olfactory information in such a way as to act as a mnemonic aid when trying to remember what you've seen and done — including a photographic memory of each page in the books you've read. Your rolls for the Academia-skill *enter memory palace* and Focus-skill *remember* maneuvers are favorable, so long as you know the roll's required capability.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

MENTOR
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Incognito

Even in hiding, you may trust your loyal servant.

Benefice: One of your former mentors followed you into hiding. Whether they travel under the same pretense as you (a fellow brother in faith, a remote cousin of your lower house lineage, or another trader in the caravan) or as a servant, they are loyal to you and your cause.

Their main purpose is to get you ready to return to your old self: Whether you need physical training or lessons in etiquette, they want to ensure you're in shape for what's coming next. Under their tutelage, when you gain a new level and choose a calling perk, you may choose a perk from your original calling, the one you followed before you went into hiding. (If you began as an Incognito at 1st level, you may choose the calling you were being groomed for, such as Lord or Courtier).

Additionally, once per scene when you suffer an injury, you may declare your mentor as the target of the attack instead. You may only do so while your mentor is conscious and nearby. (They cannot catch a bullet for you while they are in an adjacent room.) You must make this declaration before the attacker deals with the attack's Resistance.

Should your mentor die, you lose the benefits of this perk until you manage to find another loyal mentor willing to groom you for your return to glory.

MENTAL CONDITIONING
Calling • Austerity • Precondition: Brother Battle *or* Templar *or* ur-obun

Your mind is hardened against the Dark and other occult forces.

Benefice: You gain +2 Spirit Resistance by practicing the austerities of mental conditioning. This requires you to perform rigorous mental and spiritual exercises daily.

MICRO-CONFESSIONS
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Confessor *or* Dreamtender

You are well trained in watching for small details in expression and body language; you can often tell if someone is being deceitful.

Benefice: When someone attempts to *confuse* or *deceive* you, roll a d20: 1-10 = the roll is unfavorable; 11-20 = the roll is unaffected by your training.

Military Ranks

	Officer		Enlisted	
	Army	*Space Navy*	*Army*	*Space Navy*
1st	Lieutenant	Midshipman	Private	Starman
2nd	Captain	2nd Lieutenant	Private First Class	Able Starman
3rd	Major	1st Lieutenant	Corporal	Mate
4th	Colonel	Captain	Sergeant	Master
5th	General	Admiral	Staff Sergeant	Master of the Ship

Note: Muster guild mercenaries rate themselves with guild commission ranks instead of military ranks.

MILITARY RANK

Calling • Privilege • Preconditions: For officer ranks: Commander *or* Church Ordination *or* Guild Commission *or* Noble Title; no preconditions for enlisted ranks

You have served in the armed forces and have the rank to prove it.

Benefice: You bear a military rank in the armed or space naval forces of a noble house, a League guild, a Church order, or some other military organization. Your title is dependent on how many levels of this hierarchical perk you possess. Each successive level raises you in rank one title (see the chart below).

Titles provide different benefits for officers and enlisted.

Officers: Each officer rank grants you +1 goal to influence rolls to lead your troops. This bonus is stackable with each successive rank (e.g., a Major gets +2 goal).

Enlisted: Each enlisted rank grants you +1 goal to any Charm and Observe rolls performed wherever soldiers or sailors hang out (whether that's in the barracks or in a bar popular among mustered out or retired troops). Your rank more easily provides you the necessary background to mix with troops and loosen their lips. This bonus rises with each successive rank (e.g., a Corporal gets +3 goal). The drawback is that you may be called back to active duty in times of crisis. Refusing such a call is grounds for a court martial and removal of rank.

MIMIC

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Spy

You easily learn and copy the behavior and mannerisms of others.

Benefice: By watching someone for 5 minutes, you can expertly imitate their behavior and physical ticks. You can move, stand, and sit like them, copy their facial expressions, and even replicate oddities in their pronunciation. You still do not look like them or have the same voice, but both of those alterations can be achieved through other means. When you use the Disguise-skill *impersonate* maneuver to copy that person, your roll is favorable, and anyone trying to pierce the disguise has an unfavorable roll.

This also includes mimicking the capability related to the person's social arena (Cathedral, Commons, or Court Customs) if your target is versed in one you do not possess yourself.

MONASTIC ORDER

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Monk

You are a recognized member in good standing with a respected monastic order.

Benefice: You can call on locations dedicated to your order or closely allied with it; in exchange, you can receive food, lodging, and guidance. You gain +2 goal to persuasion influence attempts with members of your order and those allied to it. You also gain +2 Mind Resistance against coercion influence from Church members not of your order.

MONEY MANAGER

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Banker

As a banker, you are a neutral party who acts in your clients' interest. You can pool their assets and manage them for maximum gain.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may establish a *general funds coffer*. You then collect up to 3 VP from the caches or banks of each PC who's present in your location, regardless of whether they agree to this funds transfer. Any PC can choose to allow you to take more than 3 VP, up to a max of your level per person. You place these collected VP into the general funds coffer. You and others can draw from this coffer, but only with your permission. This coffer acts like a bank: Its VP funds do not go away at the end of the scene. However, the coffer cannot be added to once it has been established. You cannot create a new general funds coffer until the present one is empty.

MUSICAL SAVANT

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Artist *or* Chorister

You have a special gift when it comes to singing and playing musical instruments.

Benefice: Your Perform-skill *rouse* maneuvers are favorable when you have the Performing Arts (Song) capability when singing and the proper Musical Instrument capability for the instrument you're playing. When you encounter an entirely new instrument (such as a vau sitar or a Vuldrok mouth harp), you can acquire a temporary capability (lasts one scene) with it simply by listening to it being played for five minutes. (When you gain a new capability with a level-up, you can choose to devote it to this new instrument.)

Additionally, you are famous in Known Worlds musical and cultural circles. You can gain entrance to any social events due to your fame, but others gain +2 goal to pierce your disguises at such venues, simply because people know your face from previous performances, leaflets, and holovids.

NIMBLE

Class • Ability • Precondition: Open *or* Duelist

You are light on your feet, spry, or lithe. However you want to describe your Nimble perk, it helps you avoid your opponents' "pointed arguments."

Benefice: Once per round, when you spend VP to boost your Body Resistance against a physical attack, you can do so at a discount: you get +2 Resistance per 1 VP *against that attack only*. It doesn't have to be the first attack that comes at you, but you gain the benefit against only one attack per round.

The drawback is that you don't gain this perk's benefit if you're wearing combat- or war-grade armor or a spacesuit, nor does it apply if you're wearing any civilian-grade armor that levies a Dexterity or Vigor penalty (such as stiffsynth). If you're overloaded with gear, such as an expedition pack and accoutrements for a wilderness hike, you likewise forfeit this perk's discount.

NOBLE TITLE

Class • Privilege • Precondition: Noble

You were born a member of a noble family or have been knighted as a lord of a noble house.

Benefice: You bear a noble rank. Its title is dependent on how many levels of this hierarchical perk you possess. Each successive level raises you in rank one title (see the chart below). In addition, each rank grants you +2 Mind Resistance. This bonus rises with each successive rank (i.e., a baronet gets +4 Mind Resistance).

Nobles have the right to impress any serf beholden to their house into temporary combat service. Most serfs are terrible combatants, however, and they will usually run from a fight the first chance they get. Nonetheless, they may provide an adequate vigilante posse for hunting down escaped criminals. If the impressed serf is killed in such service, the noble must pay a wergild to his family, although this rarely costs more than three years of that serf's wages (average 10 firebirds).

1st	Knight/Dame
2nd	Baronet
3rd	Baron/Baroness
4th	Earl or Marquis/Marquessa
5th	Count/Countess
6th	Duke/Duchess

There is one higher title for each house: the prince is the head of the entire household. Such a rank must be gained through arduous gameplay. The Machiavellian schemes necessary to supplant the current prince are practically unimaginable.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Class • Verve • Precondition: Noble

Your high estate makes you a paragon of virtue to others. You are expected to occasionally extend generosity to those of lower standing.

Benefice: Through spoken decree, as a primary action, you can spend your banked VP and WP on the social influence actions of non-noble characters, so you can bolster them. You cannot spend VP to negatively affect them; you can only help them. You might spend to increase the goal or impact, or you may spend to boost someone's Resistance against influence. Unlike priests with the Inspiring perk, who give others VP to spend how they like, you are spending VP on their behalf; they cannot prevent you from doing so.

You can do this a total number of times per scene equal to your level. Each use lasts for one round, during which you can divvy up your VP spending among any present non-noble characters in any combination, up to a maximum number of players and/or NPCs per round equal to your Presence.

NOTHING TO LOSE

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Chainer *or* Ronin *or* ukar

You were a social outcast before you picked up this job, and it definitely did not improve your standing in society.

Benefice: You are especially resistant to the Castigated, Guilty, Mesmerized, and Wowed states. Attempts to inflict these states on you are unfavorable. Conversely, your bleak life has left you jaded: you are unaffected by the Divinely Inspired state.

ORAL MEMORY
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Obun *or* Alien Upbringing [Obun]

Your mastery of obun oral literature and recitation techniques grants you superlative recall skills.

Benefice: Your rolls for the Academia-skill *enter memory palace* and Focus-skill *remember* maneuvers are favorable, so long as you know the roll's required capability.

ORDER BADGE
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Knightly Order *or* Templar

You have a badge of your order, marking you as a member.

Benefice: You gain a yearly stipend of 300 firebirds from your order, as well as lodging, service, and aid from your brothers and sisters in chivalry. In exchange, you are beholden to the code of conduct and purposes of the order.

ORIENTED
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Explorer *or* Scout

You always know where you are, so long as you can see the sun or the stars.

Benefice: No roll is required; you simply know where you stand in relation to the compass points at all times. If you are offworld, such as on a spaceship or space station, you know where you are in relation to the central stellar body of the system you are in.

PARAGON OF ORDER
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Knightly Order *or* Questing Knight *or* Templar

You have vowed yourself to fully embody one of the key purposes of your order.

Benefice: Choose a purpose fitting for your chosen order's reason for being. Once per scene, if your planned action can be tied to furthering your purpose, you may collect VP from the well equal to your Faith rating.

PARAMOUR
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Courtier

You are the romantic partner of a lord or lady.

Benefice: Although they might have a spouse, you are the de facto companion of a person in a position of power. If opponents know about this relationship, you gain +2 goal on influence maneuvers against them and +1 Mind Resistance against their attacks, as you leverage your close connection.

Additionally, once per scene as a primary action, you may request a gift from your partner, so long as they are present. Attempt a primary action Charm + Presence roll against them; they suffer a -4 Mind Resistance against your request. In addition to any actual gift received (or denied, at your GM's discretion), the VP gained from this roll are kept as usual.

Should something happen to your partner, your position in court is in severe danger, as you will quickly lose all benefits of this perk (once word gets out). Similarly, you are perceived as your partner's weakness. Those who would want to hurt them might target you instead, especially if you're of lower social standing and therefore more exposed to attack.

You can search out and win a new partner at court by spending time at social events. Once you find a fresh target, a successful Charm + Presence roll can cement the relationship, restoring this perk.

PASSAGE CONTRACT
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

Thanks to a preexisting arrangement with one of the guilds, you don't have to worry about booking passage on starships.

Benefice: The accommodations you get may not always be the best, and the ship may make a number of stops along the way, but it is a (mostly) sure thing. You can claim a room in the transport section, but you'll have to share it with up to eight other passengers. If you have the Riches perk at Well-Off or better, you can claim your own stateroom.

This perk can be gained twice, allowing you to bring your troupe with you on board to share your accommodations. You are, however, responsible for them, and any bad behavior on their part might result in the loss of this perk's benefits until you can make amends. (If your Riches allow you to upgrade to a stateroom, you can fit two others in there with you; anybody else has to bunk in transport.)

PATRON OF THE ARTS
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Enthusiast

Entirely altruistic, you fund those dedicating their life to their craft.

Benefice: You are a known patron of the arts; therefore, you are a friend to all artists. You can gain admittance to nearly any art exhibit or event, and you usually receive invitations ahead of time. Your influence attempts against artists, musicians, scholars, and others who depend on generous donations to make their living are favorable.

Additionally, once per scene, you may acquire a temporary enhancement to a creative skill, but before you do, you must first have the chance to talk or communicate with an artist for at least 1 minute before rolling. After that, your roll is favorable, so long as it involves Academia, Alchemy, Arts, or Tech Redemption.

PEASANT HERO
Class • Privilege • Precondition: Yeoman *or* Friar *or* Healer

You are known to stand against tyrants in defense of the common man.

Benefice: Your influence rolls are favorable when dealing with peasants. Additionally, you may more easily be able to convince them to hide you (and your cronies) from the authorities (+2 goal).

PERFECT PITCH
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Artist *or* Chorister

You can easily recreate any piece of entertainment you've experienced at least once.

Benefice: You can memorize any song, poem, or play after hearing it once. You are able to replicate it after just a few minutes of practice. When you use it in a Perform skill action, you can spend 1 VP to test your memory. Roll 1d20: 1-10 = you gain favorability on the roll; 11-20 = the roll is normal.

PERFECT RECALL
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Scribe

Your memory about things you've read and heard is astonishing.

Benefice: When trying to recall something, such as when using the Academia *enter memory palace* maneuver or the Focus *remember* maneuver, your roll is favorable, so long as you know the roll's required capability. You also retain faces and names, so you're never at a loss for remembering which name and title goes with which face.

PETITION
Class • Ability • Precondition: Priest *or* Chorister

You can make a prayer for the Pancreator's blessing.

Benefice: Once per act, when you gain VP from a surge, you can convert one or more of those VP into wyrd points at a rate of 1 VP per 1 WP, up to an amount of WP equal to your Intuition. If your Intuition is 6, you can convert up to 6 of your surge's VP into WP. However, you *must* give at least half of these converted WP to the troupe coffer within the same round in which you received them. If you don't do this, you are Penalized for the remainder of the scene.

PLAYING THE GAME
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Lawyer

The best defense is offense, even in the court of law.

Benefice: You understand cases are not just won by giving the better speech, having correct evidence, or finding the right witness. Messing around with the evidence is a much easier method… if you know the right people. This perk represents shady contacts who can tamper with or bury evidence for a case you're involved in or find dirt on a witness that will tarnish their testimony. Basically, they can commit a dirty deed that will (hopefully) win the case or cause it to be

thrown out of court. You simply give the order (once per act only) through a dead drop or grapevine, and it will be done.

This raises your rep as a lawyer who wins. Doing this too often, however, causes some of the stink to linger on you. If you use this perk more than once per drama, the GM can choose to invoke blowback, although you should be given the chance through roleplaying to distance yourself or burn your contact as a matter of self-preservation. It will take you time (at least one act) to find another contact so you can use this perk again.

POLYMATH

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Scholar

Dabbling in multiple disciplines, you know more than the average person does; as a result, you solve problems in your own unique ways.

Benefice: You are well-versed in multiple disciplines, and you can easily acquire the basic knowledge required to accomplish tasks in fields you don't know. You may temporarily gain a capability you don't possess, such as a lore or even a weapon capability, by quickly examining a source about it (such as a book or data file) or practicing with it (for a weapon or tech tool) for at least 10 minutes. This lasts for the remainder of the act; once the act ends, your training doesn't stick, and you lose the capability.

Additionally, you are constantly coming up with new ideas for devices in your leisure time, using everything you know about your various fields of interest in blueprints you produce. You may provide +2 goal to Tech Redemption rolls that use these blueprints, not only for your attempts to assemble the machines but for others' attempts as well.

PRIVY COUNCIL

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Lord

Instead of making all decisions on your own, you surround yourself with a privy council made up of experts in a variety of fields.

Benefice: When you gain this perk, you immediately assemble a council made up of a number of NPC counselors equal to your class level. Additionally, whenever you increase your level, you may add another NPC to your privy council.

Your council provides you with a number of effects based on its members, each of which you may use once per scene, so long as you are in contact with that NPC. You must choose each counselor's role at the moment you add them to your council; see the list below. If a role requires specifying a faction, species, or topic, choose which it is when assigning the counselor and name the position accordingly (such as "Gannok Ambassador", "Vuldrok Ambassador", or "Master of Arts").

Role	Effect
Master of Ceremony	+2 goal on influence attempts when dealing with members of the Church
Master of Coin	+2 goal on influence attempts when dealing with members of the League
Ambassador	+2 goal on influence attempts when dealing with members of other houses
Alien Ambassador	+2 goal on influence attempts when dealing with a member of one alien species (choose one when you gain this perk)
Barbarian Ambassador	+2 goal on influence attempts when dealing with Vuldrok or Kurgans (choose which one when you gain this perk)
Master of Arms	+2 goal on rolls for controlling an army and forming strategies for military conflict
Master of Skill	+2 goal on rolls to use one of the following skills: Academia, Alchemy, Arts, Interface, Remedy, Tech Redemption (choose which one when you gain this perk)
Master of Lies	gain access to a network of spies, ranging from small outposts on colony planets, up to the Emperor's Court (similar to the Gossip Network perk)

Be aware that each councilor has their own goals and ambitions. They will want to be involved in all your decisions. Going against their advice might gain their disapproval. Your council members' loyalty toward you, your house, and each other is fickle at best, so your responses must be carefully balanced. Disgruntled council members may neglect their position to the point of leaving you permanently. Should this happen, you lose their benefit until you convince a qualified replacement to join your council.

Note to GMs: Council members are ambitious and driven individuals. They spent years bribing, intriguing, and lying their way to the top, just to reach the position they have now. They should not be simple, loyal servants; they have their own goals, which may or may not include taking over the whole council.

PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION (REP)
Class • Privilege • Precondition: Yeoman

As a freelancer, your word is your bond, and your work is your worth. A yeoman's Rep is their rough equivalent of a Noble Title, Church Ordination, or Guild Commission.

Benefice: This perk can be taken multiple times; each new perk raises one's Rep by one rank. Each rank level provides +2 Mind Resistance.

Unlike the other class's ranks, which represent formal grades awarded by factions, a yeoman's Rep is informal, based solely on word-of-mouth. It's possible that a client here or there might lie and try to defame a yeoman's reputation, but even then, the truth will out eventually. A yeoman who reneges too often on contracts and behaves unprofessionally to their clients might find their Rep drop by a rank or two until they can make amends.

1st = Rookie
2nd = Journeyman
3rd = Expert
4th = Savant
5th = Master

PROXY
Class • Verve • Precondition: Noble

You can declare a champion to act in your stead.

Benefice: Once per scene, you can designate someone as your "proxy" or "champion." They act on your behalf, making all the decisions in the arena for which they have been empowered (a duel, the agora, etc.). You can give them your banked VP and WP as a primary action, up to a limit per turn of your level. To do so, you must be present, within sight and hearing.

PURGE
Class • Ability • Precondition: Priest

Even the most libertine noble or guilder of the 51st century has doubts about the state of his immortal soul. You can exploit these doubts and verbally harangue a person into accepting penance.

Benefice: Once per scene, you can impose a form of penance on someone who is in the Castigated state (either someone you have castigated yourself, using the Impress *castigate* maneuver, or the victim of someone else's haranguing). This takes the form of a task they must accomplish, such as seeking forgiveness from a person whom they wronged, taking a pilgrimage to a local saint's shrine, or spending a day in labor helping to build a church. They must try in good faith to accomplish the task you set for them. If they haven't made any progress within one week, this penitent suffers the chronic Guilty state until they purge their soul of sin by finalizing the penance you gave them. Normally, chronic states cannot be shaken off without therapy of some sort, but once per day, the penitent can attempt to remove this Guilty state with the *shake it off* maneuver.

QUAESTOR
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Clergy

You are adept at navigating the machinations of the Church's administration.

Benefice: You are sure of your place in the hierarchy of the Church and rarely get caught off guard within its social environment. Your influence attempts are favorable within the Cathedral Customs social arena. Further, you have +2 goal for *stonewall* maneuver rolls in such environs.

RABBLE ROUSE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Conspiracist *or* Spy

You can rouse peasants and crowds into riotous action.

Benefice: You can exploit existing discontent among the lower classes and fan it into a blaze of anger. You must first go to someplace where peasants gather, such as at the local agora or inn. You then orate to them, playing on their hopes and fears to rouse them into action against a particular type of evil: a tyrant lord, a scheming merchant, a lying priest, a Republican sympathizer, etc.

You can then attempt to use a Peform-skill *rouse* maneuver using the Performing Arts Lore (Oratory) capability. Those who are Roused by your rhetoric will follow your lead onto the streets, wielding whatever weapons are handy. They can be directed at an example of whatever evil you orated against. If you point to a merchant and decry him as a usurer or Republican, they'll descend on him with sticks and beat him senseless.

This perk does not grant you legal or moral absolution for your actions. The local guard may attempt to arrest you as a rabble-rouser. The angry mob is certainly not exempt from punishment — some of them may even be hanged as rioters to provide an example for others. Their families may blame you and take action themselves to gain revenge. What's more, the victim of your aroused mob — assuming he survives the mob's ire — may make it his life's goal to repay your act of publicity.

RECREATE ARTIFACT
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Reclaimer *or* Tech Redeemer *and* Applied Science *and* Tech Lore (TL7) capabilities

It might be considered heresy, but you are able to build machines inspired by ancient artifacts from scratch. "Artifacts" are tech items from the Second Republic era (TL6 or higher) or of advanced alien manufacture (such as vau tech).

Benefice: If you have a functioning artifact on hand and you're capable of operating it properly (i.e., you have any required skill and/or capability), you may attempt to create a working replica. It might not look or operate exactly like the original, but it gets similar results. You need reasonable tools and materials that cost about one-quarter of the object's market value (in firebirds).

Roll Tech Redemption + Intuition as a Narrated action after spending at least 8 hours of work. The Resistance depends on the original's tech level (see the chart below) but can be reduced by modifying it into a less elegant device.

Tech Level	Base Resistance
5	Demanding
6	Tough
7	Severe
8	Herculean

Resistance	Modifications
-1	You can duplicate parts. If you have another version of the object you're recreating, such as a non-working model that you can mine for parts, your job is easier.
-1	You can scale the artifact up by two sizes (an extra-small handheld device becomes a more cumbersome medium-sized object).
-2	You can scale the artifact up by four sizes (the XS device becomes XL).

The impact determines how useful the resulting recreation is: victory (without spending additional VP) gives you one use of the item before it must be repaired; 2 VP gives you a working replica, but it will malfunction on a failed roll; 4 VP gives you a working item that only malfunctions on a critical miss during use. If the item requires energy, you must supply the energy source (usually a fusion cell) separately.

REEVE ADVOCATE

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open *and* Riches (Well-off or better)

You have a Reeve lawyer on retainer.

Benefice: When requested for a specific case, a personal advocate from the Reeves guild will be assigned to you. Whether for criminal litigation or drawing up a contract, that advocate represents you and your interests against the various local legal codes throughout the Known Worlds. You have to personally call on the Reeves to gain this representation. If you are prevented in some way from contacting the guild, then no advocate can be assigned.

REFUGE

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

You have some place you can go where you feel safe.

Benefice: Your Refuge might be a noble's castle, a hidden monastery, a guild safe house, or just a cave you outfitted yourself. Whatever the case, it is almost always open to you and very hard for others to find (such as a small farm or monastery). If its location is well-known, it may be fortified (e.g., a castle or guild safe house). It's unlikely for your enemies to find you when you're hiding out there, but should you show yourself, word might get out.

RESILIENT

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Brother Battle *or* Mercenary

You can ignore injuries.

Benefice: Once per scene, when damage is inflicted onto you, you can spend VP to cancel some or all of it: spend 1 VP per point of damage, up to a maximum of amount of Vitality equal to your Vigor skill.

RESPECTABLE

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Courtier

Due to the heritage or history of your own actions, you are a beloved member of the court.

Benefice: Members of noble courts that are not hostile to you or your faction are automatically on friendly terms with you. Those on your good side will be willing to give you information, should you be interested in some small talk. Successfully perform a Charm *befriend* maneuver to have a lovely chat. Your target will then give you insights into the lives of those close to them, and they might even share some rumors, though this is unguided: They might end up telling you about the young baron sneaking off with the lord's daughter, but this is because they want to, not because you asked for any dirt on the baron directly.

Additionally, all your Charm rolls are favorable while directed at someone within or serving under your house.

RETAINER

Class • Privilege • Precondition: Noble *or* priest *or* merchant

You have a devoted servant or friend who will follow you to the ends of the universe in return for food and upkeep.

Benefice: Your Retainer is devoted to your needs. They might be the loyal seneschal who's always served your family, or they might be a childhood friend who hasn't risen in social class like you, but they still honor a blood-brother oath through thick and thin. Regardless of their backstory, your Retain-

er is a yeoman trained in whatever line of work they need to best serve you. They are rated at half of your level (if you're 4th level, your Retainer is 2nd level), and they rise in level by one for every two of your level advances. They're considered to have whatever outfit they need for their work, but you must pay to equip them with weapons and armor.

You're responsible for playing your Retainer and maintaining their character sheet. The Retainer doesn't have their own VP cache, but they can use yours. (In this way, they might wind up costing you VP, but they do give you extra actions and aid.)

Additional hired help can be gained with money during gameplay, but they don't exhibit the fierce loyalty your Retainer does. In other words, when the money runs out, they're gone, but the Retainer always stays.

RETINUE

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open *and* Riches (Good or better)

If good help is hard to find, then good, loyal help is even rarer. You've beaten the odds and found good servants.

Benefice: You can certainly spend money to hire servants with your wealth, but you can't buy their loyalty. This perk gives you the loyalty of a handful of close servants. However, you do still have to pay them (hence, the precondition of the Riches perk). With Good Riches, you can get a butler or handmaiden, as well as a cook and a chauffeur. With Well-Off Riches, you can add a seneschal (an expert in influence). With Wealthy Riches, you can add a trained bodyguard.

RICHES

Class • Privilege • Preconditions: Noble *or* priest *or* merchant

Some characters are lucky enough to have real wealth — not just savings or wages, but land rulership or control of a business.

Benefice: These types of assets provide you with regular income and are usually tied to your rank and station in life. You do not actually own the business — your house or guild does — but through birthright, luck, or hard work, you have gained control over it. Thus, you can reap its benefits (and suffer its responsibilities). You cannot sell the business, but you may abdicate your position or temporarily place someone else in charge; during that time, you do not gain the income associated with that asset.

This perk can be taken multiple times to represent greater assets. Each form of asset listed below includes a firebird value: This represents how much value the asset brings you in yearly income after paying expenses, barring disasters or dramatic changes in circumstance for good or ill. When beginning gameplay, you have access to one-tenth (10%) of your yearly income; you may use this to purchase beginning equipment.

1st	Good (3000 income/ 300 starting cash)
2nd	Well-Off (5000 income/ 500 starting cash)
3rd	Wealthy (10,000 income/ 1000 starting cash)
4th	Rich (15,000 income/ 1500 starting cash)
5th	Filthy Rich (20,000 income/ 2,000 starting cash)

The source of your riches comes from either a fief, a business, or a monopoly on some sort of trade or interest from loans.

Fief: You rule or own a substantial portion of land and the serfs who work that land, creating wealth from their commodities (food, minerals, crafts, etc.) or by taxation. While you do not need to first acquire the Landed perk for this fief, without it, you are managing the land in another's name. While any freeman can own a plot of land, the nobles own the most valuable land and hold contracts of indenture on serfs. A portion of the land's wealth must go to support these serfs. Bad years where no money is made — or where natural disasters destroyed crops — can cause debt to accumulate.

Technically, you do not own the land — your noble house does. Except for the Emperor, a lord always has a lord above them to whom they must answer; misuse of lands is often cause for loss of rank. A lord does not necessarily oversee the daily demands of the fief; usually seneschals or chamberlains undertake this task. The size of a fief is not the most important factor determining its value; its resources — from raw minerals to manufacturing capability — must also be considered. A small parcel with a single gold mine may be as valuable as an entire province of prime farmland. While there were once rank requirements to rule the most valuable properties, the chaotic land-grabbing of the Emperor Wars has left knights in charge of fiefs once ruled by counts while certain dukes ruled land once considered barely fit for baronets. While such extreme cases are exceptions, it shows that one's rank is not necessarily a determination of one's wealth. Nonetheless, suggested traditional ranks are listed with each fief size. In some places, the Church owns and operates fiefs; priests are placed in charge of such assets.

- A Good fief might be a shire or village (usually lorded by a baronet) with tenant farms as its resources.
- A Well-Off fief might be a borough or town (baron) with a silver mine.
- A Wealthy fief is worthy of a province or city (earl or marquis) hosting prime farmlands.
- A Rich fief is a county or capitol city (count) that derives most of its wealth from taxation.
- A Filthy Rich fief is a continent or moon (duke) hosting raw or refined resources (mineral or otherwise).

Business: You own a business that creates wealth for you. This usually means that you employ a number of people in a variety of positions to keep the business running, ranging from manual laborers to accountants. Bad business can mean the firing of employees and even loss of assets; otherwise, you must throw all your profits back into the business just to keep it alive — a risky but potentially very good investment. You do not necessarily oversee the daily operations of the business; you can leave that in the hands of a trusted employee or partner.

- A Good business might be a hospital, catering to those who can afford medical care (rather than standing in line with the serfs at the local parish).
- A Well-Off business might craft or manufacture luxury items.
- A Wealthy business could be a mill that produces firearms or artillery.
- A Rich business suggests a high-tech manufacturing plant, perhaps a ceramsteel smelter, think-machine mill, or a fusion generator supplying power to a local grid.
- A Filthy Rich business is usually reserved for the highest profile businesses, such as a starport, shipyard, or starbase.

Tariffs/Loans: This type of Riches requires the Guild Commission perk. This covers a variety of ways to gain money on a regular basis. For example, you might levy taxation on all trade in an agora or trade route, or you might loan money to others in return for a fee upon repayment. At lower levels, you do not necessarily have to oversee employees (except for the occasional freelance enforcer), but you must monitor your assets regularly or hire someone to do this for you. This is the most volatile form of Riches, since you may be cheated out of money or worse. Loaners can default and refuse to pay back a loan. Merchants can refuse to pay the levied tax, forcing you to pursue embargoes or even violent methods to recoup your losses. These sorts of assets are almost always run by members of a guild. The higher the level or the broader the influence, the higher the rank of the "boss."

- A Good investment might mean you own an agora, levying taxes on all merchants who place stalls there.
- A Well-Off investment could represent a number of small loans you made to prominent locals, such as helping the duke's son with his gambling debts.
- A Wealthy investment may extend agora taxation across a continent or planetwide.
- A Rich investment may signify an interstellar trade route monopoly, such as all luxury goods trade between Criticorum and Shaprut.
- A Filthy Rich investment may well represent an interstellar banking institution that others regularly turn to for loans.

SOURCES OF WEALTH

The Known Worlds offers a variety of ways to accumulate wealth. Noble houses get most of their money from the ownership of land and all the resources associated with it — including serfs. The chain of rulership of these lands descends from the head of the house down to dukes, counts, earls, and baronets, each of whom may maintain a fief for their family lord. Profits from fiefs are divided in unequal portions throughout this chain.

Many minor houses or smaller families within the major houses, divested of their land due to war or debt, maintain their wealth through the ownership of proprietary manufacturing processes. Some also rely on the selling of services.

The Church gains its primary wealth from tithing the faithful, which includes nobles, merchants, and freemen. Serfs are also expected to tithe, but the most destitute can instead volunteer labor (with their lords' permission). However, the Church also owns its own lands and indentured-service contracts. It maintains these using many of the same methods nobles use to maintain fiefs. Another method of income involves the selling of relics and pilgrimage site entry fees.

Guildmembers gain their wealth through various means, including employment contracts to other guilds, priests, or nobles. They may profit from the ownership of businesses or the tendering of loans to certain parties. While some may own lands and the resources thereon, they cannot own serfs; however, they might pay their employees such criminally low wages that there is little difference.

RIGHTEOUS SERMON

Class • Ability • Precondition: Priest *and* Perform 5+ (Oratory)

You can inspire others with passages from the Omega Gospels.

Benefice: Once per scene as a primary action, by reading from the Omega Gospels (either from memory or from the book itself), you can inspire courage into your allies. Each affected person must be able to hear your sermon. The effect lasts as long as you keep reading the sermons (as a secondary action per round), although you can only maintain the effect for 1 turn per your level. During the oration, you

may fight, but you cannot activate occult powers. Your allies receive the Divinely Inspired state.

Only allies who believe in the teachings of the Prophet gain this bonus, although they don't have to follow a particular sect or order's teaching.

RISE FROM THE ASHES

Calling • Austerity • Precondition: Imperial Cohort *or* Questing Knight

By contemplating the spiritual supremacy of the Phoenix Throne, you steel yourself against the trials waiting in the Dark.

Benefice: You gain +2 Spirit Resistance. You cloak this Austerity in the form of prayer to the Pancreator, but you're really praying to the Pancreator's chosen hand, the Emperor. This is the heresy of the Reborn Sun, and it would be best for you to keep it to yourself (and maybe your closest fellows).

RISK TAKER

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Amateur *or* Star Pilot

You enjoy pushing your luck as much as possible.

Benefice: You may accent a die-roll result *upwards.* (For the rules on accenting *downward,* see the optional rule *Accenting the Die Roll* in **Chapter 1: Rules**.)

Accenting a roll upwards risks turning a failure into a critical miss, but if you're victorious, you'll get more victory points than you would have otherwise gained.

Once per scene, you can declare that you're accenting a roll upwards *before* the roll is made. If the roll is a success, you can accent the result upwards to increase your victory point yield. This can even give you a critical hit, if you accent the die result up to your exact goal number.

The maximum amount you can add to the roll result is equal to your rating in the skill being used. If you're hitting someone with a fist, then your rating in the Fight skill provides the limit by which you can accent your punches.

However, if the roll was a miss, it is now a critical miss. You've pushed your luck too far. The GM determines the exact result, based on the situation.

Example: *Julia is pretty darn good with a blaster pistol – her goal number is 14. Julia's player is confident she'll hit her target but wants to do it with maximum impact, so she decides to use Julia's Risk Taker perk to accent her roll upwards. She rolls and get an 11. It's a success, so she can now accent it upwards. Her Shoot skill is 8, so she could add up to 8 to the roll result, but she only needs to add 3 to turn her victory into a critical hit.*

If her roll had been, say, a 16 (a miss for her), she would have suffered a critical miss instead.

ROYAL CONFIDENCE

Calling • Ability: Precondition: Confessor

Your interactions with noble houses have brought insight into the nobility.

Benefice: You have capability in the Court Customs social arena and gain favorability to persuasion or coercion (choose one method) influence against nobles.

ROYALTIES

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Artist

At some point in your past, you published a work so good (or popular), it's still paying off — both literally in the form of firebirds and in non-monetary ways.

Benefice: Whether you wrote the most widely used academic book on the death rites of the etyri or a series of novels about the dashingly handsome space pirate Captain Frye, you receive a warm welcome from those who know your work. When attempting persuasion influence rolls against targets who are fans, your rolls are favorable.

The GM can roll a die to determine if any given NPC is a fan of your work. They won't necessarily recognize you on sight; you might have to tell them who you are.

NPC's background 1d20 result

Rural 1-5 = a fan; 6-20 = never heard of you

Urban 1-9 = a fan; 10-15 = indifferent; 16-20 = never heard of you

Cosmopolitan 1-13 = a fan; 14-17 = indifferent; 18-20 = never heard of you

Your fans are generally considered friendly. Hostiles who recognize you might change their attitude to become more open. Additionally, you receive a yearly income of 200 fb, collectable by contacting your agent responsible for printing, distribution, and sales.

RUTHLESS

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Bounty Hunter *or* Chainer *or* Inquisitor *or* Spy

A job is a job, and you'll see it through – if the money is right, of course.

Benefice: Influence actions or occult powers that inflict the Afraid, Daunted, or Terrified states are unfavorable against you.

SACRIFICIAL LAMBS

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Conspiracist

When you work from the shadows, your misdeeds are hard to pin on you.

Benefice: You always have a list of fall guys prepared — a servant who happens to be caught with a bloody knife, or perhaps a lower house noble who's secretly having an affair with the baronet.

When either the Castigated or Humiliated state is imposed on you, you may move it onto a nearby fall

guy instead, so long as the targeted person does not suffer from the state in question already. (Unless either of those states was caused by an occult power; you can't shift the blame against it.)

Additionally, when one of your intrigues would be pinned on you, you may sacrifice one of your contacts. They'll know it was you who set them up. Should they survive the punishment, they'll become your enemy. After repeatedly abandoning your agents and allies, you might also gain a reputation for leaving comrades out to dry.

SAINT'S BLESSING

Class • Ability • Precondition: Merchant *or* yeoman

You can petition a saint for their intercession.

Benefice: Once per act, by uttering a prayer (as a primary action) to a saint of your choice while vowing to live up to their ideals, you can convert VP in your cache or bank into wyrd points: 3 VP per 1 WP, up to a WP limit of your Faith. If your Faith is 5, you can convert up to 15 VP into 5 WP.

You must, however, behave for the remainder of the act in accordance with the saint's ideals. Should you break that vow, you become Penalized as an enduring state.

Examples of some saints and their codes are:

- *St. Horace:* Protect knowledge and correct ignorance.
- *St. Hombor:* Give charity to those who beg for it.
- *St. Maya:* Always protect the weak and despised, even at the cost of your own life.

SAINT LEXTIUS' BLESSING

Class • Verve • Precondition: Noble

By exemplifying the saint of knighthood, you gain holy benefit.

Benefice: Once per act, by uttering a prayer (as a primary action) to Saint Lextius and vowing to live up to his ideal of knighthood, you can convert VP in your cache or bank into wyrd points: 3 VP per 1 WP, up to a WP limit of your Faith. If your Faith is 6, you can convert up to 18 VP into 6 WP.

You must, however, behave for the remainder of that act in accordance with the highest chivalric ideals. Should you break that vow, you become Penalized as an enduring state.

SANCTIFY ARMS AND ARMOR

Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Brother Battle *or* Theurgist *and* Theurgy 6+

You can bless a weapon or suit of armor, empowering it with divine grace for the remainder of the drama. Those wielding or wearing it can mouth a silent prayer to activate its deliverance.

Benefice: You can enhance an existing weapon with an attack bonus or a base damage increase, or you can enhance an existing suit of armor's Body Resistance. The weapon or armor must be of at least masterwork quality. The effect lasts for the remainder of the drama.

Spend 1 hour per goal bonus, damage increase, or Body Resistance enhancement.

Weapons: You can add goal bonuses to a weapon or increase the weapon's base damage rating, up to a bonus limit of half your class level (round down, minimum 1). (*Example:* If you are 5th level, you can add +2 goal or +2 damage.) If you spend twice the amount of time, you can do both. The person wielding the weapon must spend 1 VP per attack to gain the sanctified bonus.

Armor: You can add Body Resistance to armor, up to a bonus limit of half your class level (round down, minimum 1). The person wearing the weapon must spend 1 VP per round to gain the sanctified bonus.

SAVINGS

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Banker *or* Thief *or* Trader

Preparation is everything. Your forethought can save you from ruin.

Benefice: Once per scene, you can roll a d20. You may use its result in place of rolling for a *single* action later during the scene. It must be taken "as is" (it can't be accented or nudged), and it cannot produce a critical hit.

Example: You roll a result of 14 for your Savings roll. Later, you need to make a *convince* maneuver. Your goal is 14. Rather than risking rolling and getting a low result or a failure, you draw from your Savings and take the earlier 14 result. Unfortunately, it's not a critical, but it does still deliver a success with 14 VP.

SAVOIR FAIRE

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You have a certain flair, dashing style, élan, or bravura that marks you as someone special.

Benefice: Everything you do is done with style, whether it be entering a room and turning heads, carving your initials into a tapestry with your rapier, or even savoring a meal at a banquet to impress the host. Your savoir faire is everywhere. You can intentionally attempt to impress others with your style in any task. You may attempt any required rolls normally while spending 1 VP to add stunning flair. The GM is free to dictate any rules effects from this, but possible outcomes are:

- You gain a bonus to influence attempts to further impress those who witnessed your deed.

- It is very hard to embarrass you, for you can turn even a pratfall into an elegant dance. You gain +1 Mind Resistance against attempts to embarrass you, even if you are unaware of what's going on.
- Anytime you fail very badly at something, you can attempt a Knavery + Wits or Presence roll as a primary action on the following turn to mitigate the failure and make it look intentional. The Resistance depends on the nature of what you've done wrong, but it's usually Hard or Demanding. The higher your impact, the better your reaction to failure appears.

SCENT OF THE WITCH
Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Inquisitor *or* Occultist *or* Psychic *or* Theurgist

You can sense supernatural corruption on a person.

Benefice: Spend 1 VP and roll Observe + Intuition as a primary action vs. the target's Spirit Resistance. If you're victorious and the target has at least 1 rank in an occult characteristic (Psi/Urge, Theurgy/Hubris), you sense it as a feeling or tingling intuition. Unfortunately, you can get a false positive on your reading: if the person was the target of an occult power sometime between now and when they last had a Respite, this will set off your alarms. Questioning can then root out whether the supernatural trace is theologically approved or heretical.

SCHMOOZE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Courtier *or* Sybarite *or* Trader

You dazzle courtiers and gather gossip from among the upper echelons as an insider.

Benefice: You attract rumors and know of scandals that everyone involved tries to keep secret. Whenever you use persuasion influence on a target on friendly terms with you (you might first need to *befriend* them if they're neutral or hostile), in addition to the normal impact, the target also suffers the Schmoozed state. While Schmoozed, they will freely share the most salacious and insider gossip, as well as "talking you up" to others at the party so that your own legend grows.

SECOND SKIN
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Incognito *or* Spy *and* Disguise 3+

You've gotten used to wearing a face that is not your own.

Benefice: After years of spending life pretending to be someone you are not, you are comfortable in skins that are not yours. When you gain this perk, pick a persona and an associated item or behavior (glasses, a

false mustache, a cloak, or a facial tick). You may don and remove this disguise as a secondary action. While you wear this disguise, opponents cannot detect it with instinctual perception and active observation rolls are unfavorable.

You may take this perk more than once, picking a new persona each time. You may swap between any of these disguises once per turn as a secondary action, so long as you have the proper props.

SECRET AGENT
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Spy

You are a spy working for an intelligence agency, gathering information or sabotaging rivals' works.

Benefice: You bear a commission as an intelligence agent; its rank is dependent on how many levels of this hierarchical perk you possess. Each successive level raises you in rank one title (see the chart below). In addition, each rank grants you +1 Knavery when communicating with fellow agents or trying to read the secret signs of rival agents. This bonus rises with each successive rank (i.e., a field agent gets +3 Knavery).

1st Recruit
2nd Agent
3rd Field Agent
4th Supervisor
5th Spymaster

In addition, your agency specializes in a role that provides you a bonus to a certain skill.

al-Malik Mutasih: Expert in high-tech surveillance; gain +2 Interface.

Church Synecullum: Expert in falsifying documents and records; gain +2 Academia.

Decados Jakovians: Expert in exploiting others' weaknesses; gain +2 Impress.

Hawkwood Rooks: Expert in methodical information gathering; gain +2 Observe.

Hazat Archons: Expert in decrypting enemy communications; gain +2 Focus.

Imperial Eye: Expert in covert information gathering; gain +2 Intrusion.

League Agent: Expert in protecting guild patents; gain +2 Intrusion.

Li Halan Hidden Martyrs: Expert in rooting out treason; gain +2 Empathy.

SEEN TOO MUCH
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Mercenary *or* Ronin

Combat trauma, survivor's guilt, or a horrible accident left you convinced that you died in the past and this is all just a dream.

Benefice: You've already made peace with death. You're willing to risk everything, if the situation requires it. You are immune to the Berserk and Penalized state due to your emotional detachment, and you have an edge in initiative from your heedlessness. Also, your Focus-skill rolls to *rally* from chronic mental and social states are favorable.

SENSITIVITY
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You are awakened to the currents of occult energy all around you.

Benefice: You can detect the presence of occult powers through instinctual perception, and your rolls to detect them are favorable. This includes psychic powers, theurgic and Antinomist black magic rites, Ur tech, etc. This perk does not actually confer occult powers, just a sensitivity to part of the occult spectrum. See *Defending Against the Occult* in **Chapter 5: The Occult**.

SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK
Class • Verve • Precondition: Priest

You are the spiritual minister to the souls under your care. You can gather their prayers and return them as inspirational bounty whenever the time is right.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may request VP from the cache of each PC who is present in your location. They must voluntarily agree to give them, up to a maximum from each PC equal to 3 VP +1 VP per your level (if you're 3rd level, a single PC can give you up to 6 VP). You place these collected VP into a separate *flock coffer*, which is then locked. You (and only you) can draw from this coffer. You can spend the VP on yourself or give them out to others. The coffer lasts until the last VP is spent. You can have only one flock coffer at a time.

SHIELD OF THE LAW
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Lawyer

Those who accuse you of wrongdoing know this will come at a great cost.

Benefice: Your knowledge of the law and your connections to influential individuals put you in the right, even when others would claim otherwise. You receive +2 Mind Resistance against *humiliate* and *command* maneuvers. Additionally, when you spend VP to bolster your Resistance against those maneuvers, you gain +2 Resistance per 1 VP spent (double the value). What's more, those who attempt such maneuvers against you suffer the Guilty state should their efforts fail (brief persistence: 1 turn per your level).

SIMMERING RAGE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Ukar

You have a simmering anger inside you that makes others nervous.

Benefice: You can declare a coercion influence roll to be favorable (before you roll it); you can do this a num-

ber of times per scene equal to your level. You don't even have to speak; sometimes growling is enough.

SMELL DANGER
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Vorox

Your sensitive nose can pick up the slightest traces, often revealing danger before your other senses are aware of it.

Benefice: You gain +2 Perception for instinctual perception tests. Your *spot* rolls to sense enemies, hidden danger, or imminent danger are favorable, so long as the source of danger cannot completely mask their scent.

SPOTTER
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Reclaimer *or* Scout

Because you're always on the lookout, enemies struggle to surprise you.

Benefice: Your Observe *spot* and *search* and Intrusion *scope* rolls to detect traps, ambushes, and pretty much any surprise reveal are favorable. Additionally, you may use your intuition for such things to improve your own traps and ambushes; your Sneak-skill rolls to hide and camouflage yourself or your nearby allies are favorable.

STEADFAST
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Brother Battle

You are trained from youth to push through any physical or psychological hindrance.

Benefice: You may perform the *shake it off* maneuver as a secondary action to remove a physical, mental, and social state (you can gain VP from this roll for overcoming the state). If for some reason you are not normally allowed to shake off the state, you can ignore that stricture and attempt to do so anyway.

STEADY HAND
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You remain preternaturally calm during crises that often cause hysteria in others.

Benefice: In situations where chaos reigns, you can focus and block out distractions, becoming a still point in a sea of confusion. You can, for example, summon a steady hand while defusing a bomb in the middle of a firefight or a panicking populace.

You may invoke *steady hand* as a primary action once per act. Take VP from the well equal to your Mind characteristics (Perception + Will + Wits) + class level and place it in a special *steady-hand coffer*, which is then locked. If your Perception is 5, your Will 6, your Wits 5, and you're at 5th level, your passion coffer will have 21 VP.

You can draw from the coffer toward the achievement of your goal: defuse the bomb, fix the starship engines, etc. This coffer lasts until it is empty. You can have only one steady-hand coffer at a time.

STOIC BODY
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You are tough-as-nails, resilient, and unbreakable.

Benefice: You gain +2 Body Resistance. This combines with any other bonuses you might have for Body Resistance, such as those from armor or occult powers.

STOIC MIND
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You are tough-minded, shrewd, indomitable, or just plain stubborn.

Benefice: You gain +2 Mind Resistance. This combines with any other bonuses you might have for Mind Resistance, such as those from social rank or occult powers.

STOIC SPIRIT
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You are centered and balanced: the epitome of self-sovereignty.

Benefice: You gain +2 Spirit Resistance. This combines with any other bonuses you might have, such as those from Austerities or occult powers.

STRATEGIC MIND
Calling • Ability • Preconditions: Commander

You see two steps ahead, anticipating and compensating for an enemy's actions.

Benefice: On your turn, you can spend VP from your cache as a secondary action to shout some orders to change plans. You may nudge an ally's next die result up or an enemy's next die result down. It costs 1 VP per +1 or -1 on the die result (up to a max of your level). This doesn't affect the goal number; instead, it affects the actual number rolled on the die. This perk may only be used against the same target once per scene.

STUNNING STATEMENT
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Lawyer

Whether you're making an opening speech, offering a closing statement, or simply moderating a guild meeting, when you speak, people listen.

Benefice: When you perform a victorious Perform-skill *rouse* maneuver using the Performing Arts Lore (Oratory) capability, you can choose to impose any of the following states rather than the Mesmerized state: Awed, Befriended, Confused, Convinced, Deceived, or Entreated.

STUNT PILOT
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Star Pilot

You know your ship like a lover; no stunt is impossible with this baby. Still dangerous? Okay, sure, it's dangerous. That doesn't mean you won't do it.

Benefice: You are especially good at performing the *stunt* maneuver with your Pilot skill; your rolls to execute stunts are favorable. Also, once per scene, you can ignore the calamity that would occur should you roll a critical miss on a Pilot roll — you escape by the skin of your teeth.

SUBTLE BODY
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Monk

You have studied meditation and contemplation of scripture, and you can use its balms to cure your soul and body.

Benefice: You may enter a contemplative trance. In this state, you seek the presence of the Holy Flame, letting it burn away sin and renew the body. During this time, you need neither food or water, seeming to obtain sustenance from some holy source. Any poisons in your body will cease to harm you. If you maintain this state for at least the length of a Respite, instead of merely gaining the usual benefits of a Respite, you remove any poisons or infections, remove a single chronic state (mental, physical, or social), and heal a number of Vitality points equal to your level.

SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Amateur *or* Scribe *or* Scholar

You know a thing or two about the topic at hand. It might even be enough to convince those around you of your intellect.

Benefice: Once per scene, when must make a roll involving a lore or science capability you do not possess, spend 1 VP to act as if you do possess this required capability for that *one roll*. You must conceivably have had a chance at some point previously to have read up on the lore or science in question. You might have stumbled upon a book on the flora of Rampart, for instance, and you might even read the blurb on its back cover. However, it is much less likely you found an ancient lexicon describing a death cult that sprung into existence three weeks ago.

SWIMMING WITH SHARKS
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Trader *or* Tycoon

You have a foolproof plan; you just need a small sum to start it. Fortunately, you know the right people.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may take a "loan" as a secondary action. When you do so, collect VP from the well equal to your Charm, Impress, or Knavery skill rating (choose only one) and place them in a *shark coffer*. You can spend freely from this coffer until it is empty or the scene ends. At the end of the scene, you must return VP to the well equal to the amount of the loan +3 VP. Should the VP in your shark coffer, cache, and bank not be enough to pay your debt, you gain the Penalized state and start the next scene with a leftover debt. Write down the VP you still owe. You can pay off this debt in VP at any point; when it's fully paid off, remove the Penalized state.

TAXES
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Banker

Banks always win, even when people try to fight them. It's good to be the bank.

Benefice: Whenever a PC or NPC spends VP to boost their Mind Resistance against your influence attempts, the first VP spent is added to your cache instead of being returned to the well. Further VPs are returned to the well as usual.

TECH SAVVY
Class • Ability • Precondition: Merchant

You are particularly well-integrated with one type of technology.

Benefice: Declare a special affinity with one class of equipment that's at least TL5, such as lasers, energy shields, or entertainment tech. Your rolls to repair that type of tech are favorable. Also, you do not suffer that item's compulsion, even when you roll a critical hit while using it when overloaded.

TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Mercurian

You don't accept the false social hierarchies that keep people from recognizing their basic equality. Duke, bishop, dean, peasant — they're all equal in this topsy-turvy world.

Benefice: Once per scene, you can ignore the effects of other people's social ranks. Specifically, the Mind Resistance bonuses conferred by Noble Title, Church Ordination, Guild Commission, or Professional Reputation don't apply against your actions. You can do this against a single target once per turn, up to a number of times within the same scene equal to your level.

TEND THE FLOCK
Calling • Verve • Precondition: Friar

By keeping up with the spiritual needs of your companions, you ensure that they're strong in their faith and ready to face the challenges of the world.

Benefice: Once per act, you may designate a number of people equal to your Faith as your "flock." Once per scene when you are present, any time a member of your flock gains VP from a surge, you may add your own Surge rating to the VPs gained. (This does not cost you one of your own surges.)

TRENDSETTER
Calling • Privilege • Preconditions: Open *and* Commons and Court Customs capabilities

You are the epitome of fashion. Whatever you wear quickly becomes fashionable everywhere, and your interests soon become the "next big thing."

Benefice: Some seek you out for fashion advice; others want tips on what one should be reading or thinking this season. Even if you don't go out of your way to impart this wisdom, others will copy you. Being seen at a particular magic lantern show is enough to ensure it's a hit. Your presence at a party is enough to make it notable in the society pages. Your public approval of a painting is enough to launch an artist's career. You can almost always get into any party or high-class affair to which you have not been invited. You can take a number of people with you equal to your Presence. In public places where you have specifically been barred from entering, you can still get in by making a Charm-skill *befriend* or *entreat* maneuver. (Resistance varies with how hostile the host is towards you). In addition, it is rare for an NPC you have never met to have a hostile attitude towards you.

TRIUMPHANT RETURN
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Incognito *and* the Loyalists *or* Mentor perk

Everything is prepared for your return. Your troops and spies await your sign.

Benefice: You spent time preparing your rise from the ashes: you've amassed a crowd loyal to you, placed your spies in important positions, and set a trap for your enemies.

When you finally decide to step out of the shadow and reclaim your rightful position, you gain a number of favorable rolls equal to your level, representing allies who provided you with inside knowledge, left doors unlocked, and so on. Before you attempt any roll toward cementing your rightful position (like intimidating guards to stand down, so they can let you enter the palace), you may announce the use of one of your Triumphant Return rolls. However, rolls against your rival cannot be modified with this perk: you still have to face them alone, regardless of your support among the commoners.

Once you succeed in your endeavor and reclaim your former role, you may immediately choose any other appropriate perk to replace this one, presumably from your newly reclaimed calling. Additionally, you gain a permanent +1 goal to influence rolls and +2 Mind Resistance against other nobles' influence attempts, now that your legend is growing.

TROUBLE MAGNET
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Ronin

It's odd. It seems like you can't even enjoy a nice meal without some ruffians interrupting you.

Benefice: Once per scene, you may "ask for trouble." When someone else is the sole target of an attack (whether that's a coercion influence or a combat roll) and you're nearby, you may intercept it as a reflexive action and become the target instead. If it's a hand-to-hand or melee combat attack, you must use your movement action to reach the attacker. (If you've already used it this round, you can't intercept the attack). Your Resistance gains a bonus of +4 against this attack, as your action surprises the attacker and leaves them flat-footed. A bandit might decide to rob a bank while you are waiting in line, only for you to challenge their intimidation attempts. A drunk noble attempting to lay hands on a servant did not expect you to stand up for a commoner.

Additionally, you've learned to accept that trouble follows you wherever you go, so you're always on edge. You gain a +1 Perception bonus for instinctual perception tests to sense danger.

TUTOR
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Enthusiast

Those willing to learn must surround themselves with the best teachers.

Benefice: You have a master of knowledge or science on retainer. Their training imbues you with +2 goal to rolls for a specific skill, and — if you can contact them to receive their advice before making the roll — their training enhances impact, should the roll be successful (+2 damage or +1 persistence for a state).

When you pick this perk, select any skill. Your tutor only offers support in this one specific field, but you may take the perk multiple times and select a new skill and/or tutor each time.

TWO-GUN FIGHTING
Class • Ability • Preconditions: Noble *or* Brother Battle *or* Duelist *or* Pirate *and* the proper weapon capabilities

You can use a pistol in both your primary hand and off-hand to gain an extra attack.

Benefice: When attacking with a pistol in your primary hand *and* your off-hand, you can make an attack with the off-hand pistol *instead* of taking a movement action that turn. Unless you have the Ambidextrous perk, your off-hand pistol shot is unfavorable.

UNDERWORLD CONTACTS
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open *and* Streetwise Lore

You know your way around the black market and organized crime.

Benefice: You are familiar with underworld and criminal activities. You know how to contact the criminal underworld or acquire illegal goods or services, including black-market items. No roll is required, just the courage to walk the shadier streets in search of the right places. With your access, you can attempt to fence illegal or stolen goods on the black market. You can also hire an illegal or shady service (leg breaking, breaking and entering, murder, etc.) at the going rate. (If they are caught in the act, however, they will finger you as their boss.)

UNTOUCHABLE
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Lord

Others do not dare bring their full force to bear against you.

Benefice: Once per act, you may declare yourself untouchable as a primary action. For the rest of the scene in which you declared this, you are "above the law," figuratively speaking. PCs and NPCs who attack you cannot spend VP to affect their goal rolls or improve their impact. They can, however, still spend VP to overcome your Resistance or spend VP to boost their own Resistance against your attacks.

VETERAN
Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Open

You are known for your prowess at a significant battle. You may even bear a medal proving it.

Benefice: You may invoke your past to change others' opinions about you, so you can solicit their aid. This invocation may be used against the same person only once. It allows you favorable rolls on influence maneuvers against that person for that scene. In addition, you are considered (for just this one-time request) to be one rank higher than normal, including any additional Mind Resistance the higher rank imparts.

VICIOUS INSULT
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Conspiracist *or* Courtier *or* Spy *or* Sybarite

If words can hurt, yours are mastercrafted rapiers.

Benefice: You know how to upset people, pushing them to the brink with a mere whisper. When you perform a victorious *humiliate* maneuver meant to scorn, instead of the usual Angered state, you may impose the Berserk state.

VIRTUOSO
Calling • Ability • Precondition: Artist

It normally takes time to create meaningful art, but you can reach down into the well of your inspiration to spontaneously create a deeply moving work of art.

Benefice: The Arts skill *create art* maneuver normally requires an amount of time spent (in Narrated time scale) to produce an effective work. This perk allows you to attempt it instantaneously, as a primary action in a single turn. You need to have the materials at hand to work within your given medium. If you're involved in combat, the gamemaster might raise the Resistance due to the stress and distraction involved. The rushed piece might be somewhat crude, but it still imposes its desired state onto its viewer.

VOW OF POVERTY

Calling • Austerity • Precondition: Mendicant *or* Monk

You have taken a vow to never horde money.

Benefice: You gain +2 Spirit Resistance so long as you maintain your vow. You can use money to buy necessities, such as simple food, clothing, transport, and basic supplies to aid your ministry. Otherwise, you must give away all money that comes your way, preferably to the poor and needy. You can accept gifts of items that aid your mission in life, such as weapons and armor to protect you on your travels, but these cannot be extravagant or of masterwork make.

WEB OF LIES

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Conspiracist

You have eyes and ears everywhere. When you whisper, nearly anyone may be exposed to your ideas.

Benefice: You have a network of agents who can act out your commands. You may attempt Charm-skill and Knavery-skill influence maneuvers from afar against anyone connected to any of your agents (such as the lady of a foreign house, whose handmaiden happens to be under your employ). Due to the distance, targets gain a +2 Mind Resistance bonus against these attacks.

Should you fail an influence attempt using your Web of Lies, the agent ends up caught and poses a risk of exposing you as their controller in an attempt to save their own life.

This perk encompasses the holdings and territory of *one* Royal House, the Church, the League or a single Vuldrok Nation's holding. This perk may be bought additional times to enlarge your network's area to include *one* other Royal House, the Imperial worlds, or all of the Vuldrok Star-Nations.

WELL-TRAVELED

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Open

You have been around a bit and have heard a bit more.

Benefice: You know tidbits about the customs, histories, and manners of nearly every culture and sub-culture. Once per scene, you can make a single influence roll favorable against a local when you appeal to a local custom or legend, such as thanking Saint Jerymaya when accepting a meal on Madoc or throwing salt into the wind in the Istakhr desert to protect those gathered against wind devils.

WILD DOMAIN

Calling • Ability • Precondition: Scout

You are used to certain environments and habitats. You know their flora and fauna inside out.

Benefice: You are well-trained in traveling and maneuvering across a specific terrain. When you gain this perk, pick a number of domains equal to your Survival skill rating: arctic, desert, forest (boreal), jungle (tropical forest), mountain, ocean (open waters), subterranean, swampland, vacuum (deep space).

Additionally, whenever you increase your skill rating, you may add another domain to this list. Your Animalia, Observe, Sneak, and Survival skill rolls are favorable while you are in one of your domains.

WINDFALL

Calling • Verve • Precondition: Banker *or* Star Pilot

Even when your pockets are empty, they don't stay that way for long.

Benefice: You gain +2 to your Surge rating and gain one bonus surge, even if your level doesn't allow for more than one.

WISE ONE

Class • Privilege • Precondition: Priest *and* non-Church sect (such as: Children of Zuran, Gjarti, Incarnates, etc.)

You are recognized as a religious teacher or authority among your sect. Your position brings respect, even among those who believe you are a heretic.

Benefice: While you cannot attain Church Ordination, you still carry the authority of one who studies and practices religious disciplines. You gain +2 Mind Resistance. Your religion might or might not have higher ranks of this perk; if it does, each additional perk confers +2 Mind Resistance.

WITCH HUNT

Calling • Privilege • Preconditions: Priest *or* Inquisitor

You can request official sanction from the Inquisition for a specific purpose, allowing you to organize efforts to hunt down heretics.

Benefice: Once per drama, you may petition the Inquisition to give you a temporary Inquisitorial Seal to root out a specific heresy or question a specific person. Sometimes this is a routine activity requiring little more than a hunch, but when powerful people are

involved, the burden of proof needed can be almost impossible to attain. The exact needs are decided by the gamemaster. With an Inquisitorial Seal in hand, you gain the backing of the Inquisition. You can set villages aflame, both figuratively and literally, in the pursuit of your sanctioned goal.

WYRD KNOWLEDGE
Calling • Austerity • Precondition: Occultist

You assiduously study the esoteric and proscribed sciences, believing that knowledge is both a shield and armor against the darkness.

Benefice: You gain +2 Spirit Resistance. You must maintain your studies, seeking out new esoteric and/or scientific lore and reading up on old records whenever you can. Even without fresh sources, you can contemplate the works you have read, seeking new patterns and clues in them. Whether it's the testimony of an obscure sect of hesychast theurgists whose monastery was beset by demons or the lost statistical reviews of the Phavian Institute concerning the extra-normal powers of the sentient mind, this dangerous knowledge is your métier and balm against evil — even if it's misunderstood by the Church authorities.

Afflictions

Afflictions are negative perks, handicaps that dog characters and cause trouble for them.

It is your choice whether or not your character has an Affliction. One — and *only one* — Affliction can be chosen during character creation. It is a defining element of your character, something that is not easily overcome. While you can spend time and effort trying to resolve it, it will haunt your character's personal story until at least 6th level, after which you can work with the gamemaster to figure out a dramatic way for your character to move past it.

Why choose such a flaw for your character? Because acquiring an Affliction allows you to gain one bonus perk from either class or calling. The "cost" of the Affliction, representing the trouble it causes you, is offset by the gain of the new perk. And while it might prove to be a challenge for your character, it can prove helpful to you for getting a handle on your character's identity.

Make a note on the character sheet next to the bonus perk. Should you ever ignore your Affliction or break it, you lose that Affliction's bonus perk.

Once you gain 6th level, you can work with the GM to find a way to resolve or overcome the Affliction; this is usually in the form of drama centered around that event. If your effort is successful, you can erase the Affliction and still keep the bonus perk it gave you. Alternatively, you can ask the GM to let you exchange your existing Affliction for a different one — your Stigma is cured through a miracle (or miraculous Second Republic-era tech), but you've gained a Vendetta in the process. Finally, if you're just done with dealing with the Affliction and can't wait for a good drama to resolve it, you can, with the GM's permission, "buy" it off with either your class or calling perk when you level up. (If your bonus perk was a class perk, you need to "spend" a class perk to buy it off.)

ADDICTION
You are addicted to some substance, and this addiction makes your life difficult at times.

Affliction: At first, the addiction is basic. The substance is cheap and easily obtained, although you must have at least one dose per week before symptoms of withdrawal begin.

Later on, it worsens. When you reach 6th level, the addiction becomes stronger. The substance must be consumed twice weekly before withdrawal symptoms set in.

Symptoms of withdrawal vary based upon the drug and the withdrawal period. The gamemaster may assign goal penalties as the symptoms get worse, or they might levy VP costs from rolls — whatever increases the dramatic tension of the moment is appropriate.

BLACK SHEEP
Precondition: Noble house faction

You are the black sheep of your family and are currently being ostracized by it.

Affliction: You are not allowed to set foot in court or anywhere the family frequents. If your actions bring further shame and insult to the family, you will be cut off from the family fortune. Should your actions continue to harm your family name, you might be disenfranchised, at which point, you can longer use the family name.

After enough time has passed (i.e., after attaining 6th level), if you've earned power and/or a positive reputation for the family or exhibited good behavior, you can resolve your differences with them. You will then be welcomed back into the family without losing your bonus perk.

(Also see Fallen from Grace, listed below, for a variant involving priests and merchants.)

BRANDED
Many cultures brand criminals and evil-doers, and you sport one of these brands.

Affliction: Your brand might be for theft, prostitution, or just insulting the duke, but regardless, it's an unerasable feature. Your initial persuasion influence attempts against anyone who can see your brand are unfavorable (but can become normal after they know

you better). Your coercion attempts may or may not be unfavorable, depending on whether the contempt and/or fear your brand instills in people can be turned to your advantage.

CLOISTERED

You grew up separately from other people and have never gotten over that.

Affliction: Since you've had so few dealings with others, you often misunderstand them, get nervous around them, and have a hard time relating to them. Others are likely to find you odd, especially when you start using the unique language you developed as a child.

The first time you attempt to influence someone who doesn't know you, roll a d20 first. On a result of 1, your roll is *favorable* because something about your oddity is appealing in this context. On a result of 2-10, your roll is normal. On a result of 11-20, your roll is *unfavorable* because you're just too weird.

DARK SECRET

Something about you is so horrible that you'll do almost anything to cover it up.

Affliction: Your dark secret isn't merely embarrassing — it's dangerous. Perhaps you helped run a psychic coven or you once tried to assassinate your local lord. Should anyone find out, your secret might lead to a bounty on your head. Almost no one should know about your Dark Secret at the beginning of the game, but if it does come out, then you should have a chance to either cover it back up or make up for it… for now. You and your GM should collaborate on what your Dark Secret is, as well as what you should expect when the truth comes out.

EXCOMMUNICATED

Precondition: Cannot be a priest

You have committed some great heresy and repeatedly refused absolution from a priest, forcing the Church to excommunicate you.

Affliction: Orthodox doctrine states that you are damned, denied the Pancreator's grace. You are an outcast. Any further crimes against Church law or doctrine are punishable by flame. You cannot receive sacraments, and you are considered repulsive by most people, possibly even spiritually infectious (and hence, unwelcome). Your persuasion influence attempts against those who know of your excommunication are unfavorable.

FALLEN FROM GRACE

Precondition: Church or guild faction

You have lost face before your peers and superiors. You can only make up for it after years of penance — if ever.

Affliction: Depending on your faction, you cannot conduct your guild's business or you cannot enter your sect's churches. You must do these things unofficially, "off the books," relying on friends and favors from within your faction — or you must seek employ and ministry from another guild or sect. You can still gain rank and promotion within your faction, although you and the GM will need to work out a darn good excuse for how this occurs despite a continuing official opprobrium.

After enough time has passed (i.e., after attaining 6th level), if you've earned power and/or a positive reputation for the faction or exhibited good behavior, you can resolve your differences with them. You will then be welcomed back into the faction without losing your bonus perk.

(Also see *Black Sheep*, listed above, for a variant involving nobles.)

INDEBTED

You are deeply in debt.

Affliction: You cannot get the Riches perk. You must also work hard to assuage your debt, lest your creditor take your possessions or sell you to the Chainers. The interest alone ensures this won't happen anytime soon.

After attaining 6th level or higher, if you come into a lot of money and use it to pay back your debt, you can re-

solve this Affliction and keep your bonus perk. However, it should take a goodly amount of money — more than the initial debt, thanks to interest — to pay it all back.

INFAMOUS FAMILY
Your family has gained notoriety; this affects the way people view you.

Affliction: You come from a family of thieves, heretics, murderers, or something worse. Note that certain branches of even the noblest families have their problems, too. Your influence attempts against respectable folk who recognize your family connection are unfavorable.

LOST WORLDER
You are from one of the newly rediscovered lost worlds or a barbarian world deep into Vuldrok or Kurgan space.

Affliction: In the millennia between the Fall of the Republic and the rediscovery of your home planet, culture has changed greatly. You struggle to fit in with Known Worlds culture, and most people are wary of you.

Whenever you attempt to influence a Known Worlder, first roll a d20. On a result of 1, your roll is *favorable* because something about your foreign culture is appealing in this context. On a result of 2-10, your roll is normal. On a result of 11-20, your roll is *unfavorable* because you're just too foreign.

OATH OF FEALTY
You owe an oath of fealty above and beyond your normal obligations.

Affliction: All nobles owe an oath to their prince, all priests owe their archbishop, and all League members owe their dean. Your Oath of Fealty Affliction requires something in addition to that oath. The holder of the oath may call on your aid when they desire, although there is usually something you receive in return (such as a pledge to send soldiers in case your fief is under assault or to upkeep your family should you die upholding the oath). You and your GM should collaborate on who your oath holder is; it needs to be someone who fits into the GM's story.

OBLIGATION
You have a duty you cannot avoid.

Affliction: This could be a sacred site you have to keep holy, a vorox child you must raise, or a payment you must make on a regular basis. This differs from the Oath of Fealty in that you do not get anything in return for your obligation, but it is rarely dangerous or deadly. Like that Oath, your Obligation must fit into the GM's story, or you might not be allowed to choose this Affliction.

OUTLAW
You broke the law in a big way.

Affliction: Someone, somewhere has put a price on your head, and anyone can collect it. A long jail term is the best you can hope for if you're caught. Guard your back at all times. You are hunted within the domain of the Empire. If you continue to commit crimes, the price on your head will be paid whether you're "dead or alive."

STIGMA
You have a physical stigma of some sort.

Affliction: This stigma is something that, if noticed by the common populace, would cause revulsion, suspicion, or fear. It might be a wandering eye, hair on your palms, dwarfism, or even a hunchback. When coming up with a stigma, think of what would unnerve a superstitious medieval peasant. Your influence attempts against these superstitious folks are unfavorable. (All occultists have a mild stigma, although theurgy stigmas are often seen as holy rather than damning. You cannot take this Affliction to represent those powers.)

VENDETTA
Something you, your family, or your friends have done has earned you an unyielding enemy.

Affliction: This person (or people) will do everything in their power to make your life difficult. If that proves too hard to accomplish, they'll eventually up the ante by trying to kill you.

If you ever permanently vanquish the enemy before you've reached 6th level, then another enemy will step up to take over the task — perhaps it's the enemy's son or daughter, or maybe it's their group's new leader. If the enemy is vanquished after you achieve 6th level, then the vendetta is resolved (and you can keep your bonus perk).

Resistance

As explained in **Chapter 1: Rules**, characters have three types of Resistance: Body, Mind, and Spirit. There is no base Resistance rating for any of the three types. Instead, characters have various means of increasing them.

BODY RESISTANCE: ARMOR

Most people have no base Body Resistance rating — unless they're chitinous ascorbites or a member of another naturally armored species. Most people need to wear armor to gain Body Resistance. Lists of various types of armor and their Resistance ratings can be found in **Chapter 4: Technology**.

MIND RESISTANCE: SOCIAL STATUS

A person's Mind Resistance is mainly based on their social rank — noble title, Church ordination, guild commission. These are acquired as perks. The greater the rank, the higher the Mind Resistance.

SPIRIT RESISTANCE: AUSTERITIES

Very few people ever develop any Resistance to occult powers, and devices that can provide it are even rarer. Those who are exposed to such powers or who practice and wield them — psychics, theurgists, Antinomists — tend to acquire perks that provide bonuses to Spirit Resistance. These usually require some form of practice (meditation, ritual, martial arts katas, yogic asanas) that cement one's defense against the Dark. These are called *Austerities*. (You can gain benefit from only one Austerity perk at a time; their bonuses do not add together.)

Raising Resistance

Keeping the general guidelines above for each type of Resistance in mind, let's examine the rules in more depth.

Resistance can be *boosted* (raised by spending victory points), *augmented* by certain perks, or *modified* by particular circumstances. Bonuses gained by boosts, augments, and modifications can be added together, but with the provisos listed below.

BOOSTING RESISTANCE

As described in **Chapter 1: Rules**, you can spend VP to boost your different Resistances against specific attacks. Consult that section for the rules and restrictions. This is considered to be the most common or default means of raising your Resistance. You'll be doing it routinely during gameplay.

Boosting adds to other bonuses you might have from perk augments and situational modifiers.

AUGMENTING RESISTANCE

Perks can provide a number of ongoing bonuses to Resistance. Each perk is tagged by a category, such as an Austerity or a Privilege.

Perks of different categories can combine together. You might have an Ability that provides +2 Mind Resistance and a Privilege that gives you +3 Mind Resistance. These combine for a total +5 Mind Resistance.

Within each category, however, there are specific rules for how same-category perks combine their bonuses with one another. Some, like Abilities, *do not* combine, while others, such as Privileges, do. For example, you might practice two different types of spiritual Austerity (represented by perks like Armor of Faith and Incubation), but you gain a +2 Spirit Resistance bonus from only one of them.

The categories and their combination rules are:

Ability: Represents a trained thing you can do. (For example, the Conspiracist calling's Master of Deception perk grants +2 Mind Resistance against deception attempts.) *Different Abilities do not combine.* If you have two or more perks that provide bonuses to the same type of Resistance (Body, Mind, or Spirit), only *one* Ability's bonus applies (use the highest).

Austerity: A highly disciplined practice involving spiritual ceremony can augment Spirit (or sometimes Mind) Resistance. *Different Austerities do not combine.* If you have two or more perks that provide bonuses to the same type of Resistance (Body, Mind, or Spirit), only *one* Austerity's bonus applies (use the highest).

Cyberdevice: Cybernetic implants can provide Resistance augments, but *they do not combine together*; use only the highest bonus.

Privilege: Your status in society can bolster your Mind Resistance. The most common example involves the various ranks that come from the Noble Title, Church Ordination, and Guild Commission perks. Privilege perks *can combine with one another*; add all their bonuses together.

Species: A natural feature of a particular species can augment Resistance. For instance, the ascorbites have chitin that provides a Body Resistance bonus. This category can also include those Changed whose mutations are inborn. Species perks *can combine with one another;* add all their bonuses together.

MODIFYING RESISTANCE

Situations are so varied that it's impossible to list all the circumstances that might raise (or lower) your Resistance. These modifications usually last only as long as the situation persists.

Different situational modifiers can combine together, adding and subtracting to provide a net situational modifier.

Some examples include:

Armor: The most common means of altering Body Resistance is by donning a suit of armor.

Cover: Hiding behind cover is a good way to prevent bullets.

Power: An occult power might provide temporary protection.

States: Certain mental, physical, and social states can modify one or more types of Resistance.

Recording Resistance

On the character sheet, record your Resistance ratings from each source — armor, rank, Austerities — and list the total rating in each category.

Revival

Vitality (see *Vitality*, below) isn't just your physical capacity to withstand damage. It's also your ability to power through fatigue and trauma through force of will (Will) and courage (Faith).

Just as you can shake off psychosocial states, you can (to a limited extent) shake off wounds and recover Vitality. Instead of rolling, you simply take a Revival as a primary action.

The amount of Vitality you recover per Revival is equal to your Size rating + your level.

***Example**: Gordo is a human (Size 5) Scraver of 4th level. He recovers 9 Vitality when he takes a Revival.*

You only have a limited number of Revivals you can call on. At 1st level, you get one. At 4th level, you get two Revivals you can call upon when needed. At 7th level, you get a third Revival, and at 10th level, you get a fourth Revival. You regain all your Revivals once you've taken a Respite (see below).

Skills

The door to the medbay opened with a hiss, and Caline stepped into the room. Dr. Sel hovered over the patient on the cot in the center of the room. Worry lined his face as he checked the readouts on the instruments monitoring the sickly looking man on the bed.

"Is he going to be all right?" Caline asked.

Sel looked up at the ship's captain and grimly shook his head. "None of my antivenins are working. He's slipping away."

Caline stepped over to the patient and frowned, "If we don't get him back alive, we lose our payday. What got him?"

Dr. Sel gestured to a nearby table. "Rann says it's a Severan marsh eel. Never heard of the things myself."

Caline clapped her hands, "No wonder your antivenins don't work. The Severan marsh eel doesn't have a typical venom. My grandmother grew up around here, and she told me about an old folk remedy they had for eel bites. Let me see…." She opened one of the cabinets lining the wall and began rummaging around. "Do you have any lespa-fungus spores?"

Skills represent your natural talents and learned abilities. They range from 0 to 10, although no character at 1st level can have a skill rating higher than 8. The rating of a skill indicates the character's degree of proficiency with it.

The description of each skill lists some sample *maneuvers*, specific actions you can take with the skill. Each lists the characteristic that is most often used in conjunction with the skill when taking that action. You should feel free to suggest an alternative characteristic, depending on how the skill is being used, but the gamemaster is the final arbiter. These lists of maneuvers are by no means comprehensive, and they don't represent everything you can do with that skill; there's always so much more.

Most skills have a base starting value, though some restricted skills must be learned from a trainer before you can acquire ranks in them. Restricted skills can only be learned if you have the proper *access*: membership in the skill's listed class, faction, or calling (or a favor from a member; see *Favors* in **Chapter 2: Characters**).

Additional ranks can be purchased during character creation and as you advance in level. However, no skill can be raised to rank 10 until the character attains 10th level, and you cannot raise a skill above 10 without supernatural or technological assistance.

SKILLS STARTING RANKS

The skills and their base ratings are listed below. (R) denotes a restricted skill; consult the skill's description to learn who has access to that skill.

Skill	Base Rating
Academia	3
Alchemy (R)	0
Animalia	3
Arts	3
Charm	3
Crafts	3
Disguise	3
Drive	3
Empathy	3
Fight	3
Focus	3
Impress	3
Interface (R)	0
Intrusion	3
Knavery	3
Melee	3
Observe	3
Perform	3
Pilot (R)	0
Remedy	3
Shoot	3
Sleight of Hand	3
Sneak	3
Survival	3
Tech Redemption	3
Vigor	3

Restricted Skills and Capabilities

Restricted skills and capabilities are only available to characters who have access to the class, faction, or calling that has exclusive knowledge of that topic. Each restricted skill/capability lists which types of classes, faction, and callings have *access* to that skill/capability.

A character without the proper access cannot learn the skill/capability — unless they find a teacher who is willing to buck protocol and train them. This always requires a big favor and comes with risk for the teacher (in the form of guild sanctions).

There are two methods for accessing a restricted skill or capability that allow the character to allocate their skill ranks to it or acquire the capability.

- *The legal method:* Obtain permission from the proper party for training: a Church writ, a guild contract, a noble decree, etc. The character now owes that party a *favor*. (See *Favors* in **Chapter 2: Characters**.)
- *The illegal method:* Find a black-market teacher. Getting caught using the skill or capability without a legal writ could bring sanction from the restricting party. (The League is especially zealous in protecting its knowledge monopolies.) This method means the character now owes the black-market teacher a favor (see *Favors*), and if they're caught using the skill or displaying the forbidden knowledge, they can be legally questioned by the restricting party or parties.

Maneuvers

A *maneuver* is pretty much any skilled action that you take. Several maneuvers are described with the skills, but these are only a small sampling of maneuvers that are possible. There are infinite possible combinations that players might come up with; players and gamemasters should by no means feel limited to those described here. Maneuvers are broken into four groups: action maneuvers, combat maneuvers, defense maneuvers, and influence maneuvers.

TYPE: ACTION, COMBAT, DEFENSE, OR INFLUENCE

The type of maneuver is listed in italics beneath the title of the maneuver.

Action: These are maneuvers that usually don't affect another character directly; they're not aimed at a particular target. Not all action maneuvers actually require physical effort; maneuvers such as *research* (Academia) are more mental.

Combat: These are maneuvers that allow you to inflict harm on another character or affect them physically.

Defense: These are maneuvers made in reaction to an attack (whether physical or influence) to help fend off the attack. See *Defense Actions* in **Chapter 1: Rules** for guidelines on when they can be employed.

Influence: These maneuvers involve social conflict with another character. There are two types of influence maneuvers: persuasion and coercion. Persuasion is used to get the target to *want* to do what you're asking of them. Coercion is used to *force* them to do it, whether they want to or not.

TIME

Maneuvers take time to accomplish. The *minimum* amount of time spent to make a roll is listed with the maneuver. It's possible that some maneuvers might take longer, based on the GM's estimation. See *Play Scales* in **Chapter 1: Rules** for more details on time in the game.

Instantaneous: One roll can be made per turn as your primary action that turn.

Present Tense: The maneuver takes a little while to perform. This might be a minute or 10 minutes; it's the GM's call.

Narrated: The activity takes place in downtime, so it isn't played out in much detail.

ROLL

Each maneuver lists the skill + characteristic combo used to accomplish it.

CAPABILITY

Some maneuvers require a capability, such as a lore or weapon. If you lack that capability, your roll is unfavorable.

RESISTANCE

Even if the maneuver's goal roll is victorious, Resistance must be overcome.

Many action maneuvers, such as picking a lock, require you overcome a Resistance rating set by the GM based on the standard Resistance chart in **Chapter 1: Rules**. A simple lock might be Hard, while a bank vault might be Tough or higher. *Research* or *meditate* might be done in the peace and quiet of your quarters with no one else around, but the GM might apply additional Resistance depending on outside influences (trying to meditate while your neighbor plays loud music) or the difficulty of the material (trying to memorize a 10-page speech written in ukari).

For combat maneuvers, the target's Body Resistance is used.

For influence maneuvers, the target's Mind Resistance is used.

For certain (but not all) occult powers, the target's Spirit Resistance is used.

IMPACT

A successful action maneuver produces the desired result: *research* unearths the forgotten knowledge, *hide* places the character out-of-sight behind the bushes, *first aid* stabilizes the patient. Spending VP might improve the result.

A successful combat maneuver delivers damage to its target, applied against their Vitality. The base damage is listed, and you can usually spend VP to increase it.

A successful influence maneuver places its target in a particular mental or social state. VP can be spent to raise the state's Resistance, making it harder to *shake it off*.

Academia

Base rating: 3

Academia applies when you want to locate information by researching written records, especially for lost or obscure information. This applies to guild databanks, Church repositories, and lost libraries. Searching for lost information can be a long and tedious process. In most cases, there is no easy reference system (such as the Dewey Decimal System). If you lack the capability to read the language in which the information is written, the search is unfavorable. (Obtaining information from people requires the use of Charm or Impress, not Academia.)

When using think-machine databases, the maneuvers listed below assume that you have access to the database. Accessing a forbidden or protected database might first require use of the Interface skill to access it. Of course, one character could use Interface to access the database and then allow another character to do the research.

Research takes time… often a *lot* of time. In rare cases, the time scale might be Instantaneous (turned-based), such as when querying an AI about the code word needed to enter a locked room while your companions fight off the undead husks streaming into the outer chamber. However, most research tasks take place in Narrated time, and the gamemaster sets the amount of time required in study (although VP from a victorious roll can often be spent to quicken the pace).

The gamemaster assigns a Resistance to the task. Accessing general information about the history of the Universal Church of the Celestial Sun might have no Resistance or be Hard, while finding the details on an obscure rite of the Eskatonic Order might be Tough. As

usual, you can spend VP to overcome this Resistance. Once the base Resistance is overcome, the research time can be halved for every 1 VP spent. If a task normally takes an hour, spending 2 VP can cut that to 15 minutes.

Typical capabilities: Knowledge of the relevant topic (Lore, Science) and the language the records are written in (Read).

ENTER MEMORY PALACE

Action

The nobility, Church, and Merchant League often train their apprentices in the *ars memoriae* — the art of memory. (The League calls this *mnemotechnics*.) This ancient method of memorization involves building a memory palace in your imagination. You return to a place in your mind, such as a library or temple, when you wish to recall a memory you stored there. Items in your palace — paintings, statues, mirrors, etc. — and their positioning act as mnemonic devices for conjuring up the memory you coded into them. Those with easy access to think machines tend to forego this art, but for most, it is a handy tool.

Any time an obscure subject comes up, or when there's something you want to know more about, you can enter your memory palace to see if you know anything about the subject.

When a particular topic is common knowledge, no roll is usually required. If the topic is uncommon and not too obscure, a roll is usually only required if the Resistance is higher than your Academia skill rating — assuming you have the requisite capability; if you don't, you'll need to roll to know the answer.

Note that this maneuver applies to book-learning. If you're trying to recall something that happened to you or a name somebody once told you, use the Focus skill *remember* maneuver.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Academia + Wits

Capability: Lore (relevant to the topic)

Resistance: Depends on the obscurity of the information: Hard for common knowledge, but up to Severe (or higher) for topics you've never encountered.

Impact: You remember something relevant about the topic. Spending VP increases your recall of the details. With 2 VP you might remember reading that the Oro'ym hail from Madoc, while with 4 VP, you can discourse on their marriage customs.

FIND BOOK

Action

Conducting general research in a library is one thing, but finding a tome hidden amongst ancient volumes is quite another. You can use this maneuver to find a book (or passage within a book) that is hidden or obscured. This involves delving into physical stacks and volumes of ancient lore, not interfacing with a database. If you know a book is already in the room somewhere, use the Observe-skill *search* maneuver instead.

Time: Present Tense. A disorganized or abandoned library might take a day to search, while a bookcase in the rector's bedroom might take only 5 minutes to scan.

Roll: Academia + Perception

Capability: Read (the language the book is written in)

Resistance: Depends on state of the library. A well-organized library is Hard, while a disorganized mess is Tough or higher.

Impact: You gain the book you seek (if it's in the area searched; if not, you know for sure it isn't there). Halve the time required per 2 VP spent.

IDLE
Action
See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar. Spending time just reading can help ease anxiety and stir the imagination.

RESEARCH
Action
Knowledge is a dangerous weapon. To get that weapon, you need to know how to arm yourself. Whether digging through a Church library or searching the Charioteer guildhall, you can use this maneuver to find the knowledge that you seek.
Time: Narrated. A disorganized archive might require a full day to comb through, while a well-formatted data record might need only half an hour.
Roll: Academia + Wits
Capability: Read (the language your topic is written in), Think Machine (if it's in a data archive)
Resistance: Depends on obscurity: Hard for common knowledge, Demanding for obscure topics, and Tough or higher for secret information.
Impact: You gain the knowledge you seek. Halve the time required per 2 VP spent.

Alchemy

RESTRICTED: *Priest, Engineers guild, Banker, Enthusiast, Occultist, Spy, Tech Redeemer, Theurgist*

Base rating: 0

Alchemy is the art and science of matter transmutation. Those who transmute matter through alchemic means also transmute the soul into more refined forms… or so alchemists believe.

Alchemy integrates aspects of chemistry, philosophy, and physics. It allows you to concoct various potions and substances and to refine implements for use with theurgic rituals. As odd as it may seem, alchemy actually integrates certain sciences from the Second Republic era, although they're not always fully understood by 51st-century alchemists.

Most uses of this skill require access to an alchemical lab: a room stocked with supplies where you can perform alchemical works uninterrupted. This could be a small backroom in a hovel, a well-lit high-tech guild lab, or even a small stateroom or cargo hold on a starship.
Typical capabilities: Applied Science, Religion Lore, any relevant Tech Lore for the item or substance being worked

IDENTIFY SUBSTANCE
Action
You can identify just about any substance and gauge its purity. You can also tell if a glass of wine is drugged or poisoned or if a gemstone is real or synthetic. Identifying a substance requires time, and in some cases, you may need specialized equipment.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action) to detect poisons; Present Tense for most other uses (at least 10 minutes spent examining the substance)
Roll: Alchemy + Perception
Capability: Depending on the substance examined, you might need a relevant Lore, Science, or Tech Lore.
Resistance: Depends on the rarity of the substance. Examples include a common ruby or a well-known selchakah in a drink (Hard); or a rare Vril-Ya antlered-wasp venom or an Eridolian pearl (Severe).
Impact: You correctly identify the substance (or lack thereof if the drink isn't spiked).

REFINE
Action
You may refine a substance, polishing it so that it better reflects the invisible light of the Empyrean. This substance can be material… or your own *soul.* Refining the soul is only transitory (the dross of the world soon begrimes it again), but as a meditative form of prayer, it can abolish negative mental and social states.
Time: Narrated. It takes at least eight hours of lab work before a roll can be made. Only one attempt per day can be made on the same substance.
Roll: Alchemy + Faith
Capability: Depending on the substance to be refined, you might need a relevant Lore, Science, or Tech Lore. If this attempt involves your soul, you need Religion Lore.
Resistance: Depends on the raw state of the substance. Already worked materials — alloys, woven textiles — are harder to refine than raw material. If the substance is your soul, the Resistance is your Will.
Impact: The substance becomes more spiritually pure than before. It is ideal for use as a theurgic implement — a phylactery or an object of a theurgic Sanctification or Consecration ritual (making it into a theurgic vestment). When using a refined item as the object of such an imbuement rite, your roll is favorable.

If your opus was aimed at your own soul, you can relieve (cancel) one mental or social state that you are currently suffering.

Animalia

Base rating: 3

Animalia represents your understanding of and empathy with animals, including non-sentient alien creatures. With this skill, you can train animals, and

you have a deep understanding of their habits in the wild. Those with a high level of Animalia are often more comfortable with animals than they are with members of their own species.

As a general rule, the Animalia skill is substituted for Charm, Impress, and Empathy when the target is an animal.

Typical capabilities: Knowledge of animal behavior (Beast Lore), a creature's native habitat (Planet Lore), or biology (Life Science)

COMMAND ANIMAL

Action

You can attempt to calm or spook an animal, whether it's trained or wild.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Animalia + Intuition

Capability: Beast Lore

Resistance: Based on the type of animal: a domesticated animal is Hard; a wild herbivore or trained animal is Demanding; a wild scavenger is Tough; a wild carnivore is Severe.

Impact: You have two choices: calm the animal or spook it.

Calm: The animal is placed in the Cowed state. In this state, it will not attack you or anyone else, but it will not approach or obey you. This state lasts only as long as you maintain concentration on the animal and take no other action, unless it is threatened or attacked.

You can spend 2 VP to make the animal Docile instead. While it's Docile, active concentration from you is no longer required, but it will automatically shake off the state if threatened or attacked. A Docile animal otherwise acts Cowed.

You can spend 4 VP to instead place the animal in the Tamed state. An already trained or domesticated animal will follow simple commands ("Go!" "Lie down." "Attack!"). A Tamed animal is comfortable around you and might be curious about your activities; it may even eat food from your hand.

Spook: The animal is placed in the Spooked state; it will flee. If unable to escape, it will back into a defensive position and attack if threatened.

You can spend 2 VP to make it Agitated instead. While Agitated, the animal will attack the first person to threaten it (approaching it is a threat).

You can spend 4 VP to instead place the animal in the Berserk state. An animal in this state will attack anyone (except the character who placed it in that state) who looks at it the wrong way.

In all cases, the animal reverts to its normal state at the end of the scene.

FROLIC

Action

See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar. Spending time among animals is emotionally balancing for you. This might involve playing with a litter of Urthish pug dogs, petting a Kishian plush-cat, shepherding a herd of Shaprut jostlehorns, or just watching the relentless pacing of Delphian razortoothed tigers in their cages. Generally, touching animals and being physical amongst them is ideal for this practice.

IDENTIFY ANIMAL

Action

You can identify an animal's species and may even have knowledge of its habits, such as whether it considers humans to be tasty. After a short period of observation, you can identify an animal's general nature and habits. If the animal is easily spooked or reclusive, you may also need to approach stealthily, requiring a *skulk* or *camouflage* maneuver using the Sneak skill.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Animalia + Perception

Capability: Beast Lore

Resistance: Increases with the rarity of the animal: Hard for a common herd animal from a core world (such as Criticorum); Tough for a rare bird from a backwater world (like Pandemonium).

Impact: You identify the animal. Spending VP increases your knowledge of its nature and habits.

TRAIN BEAST

Action

You can train an animal. This practice takes time and effort, requiring more than one roll. Each roll represents a step toward taming the animal and conditioning it to meet your commands. If any of the rolls fail, you must start over with the training.

Time: Narrated. Usually one day per roll, requiring a total number of rolls equal to the creature's Wits.

Roll: Animalia + Will

Capability: Beast Lore

Resistance: Animal's Will

Impact: The animal is trained to follow your commands. For 2 VP, it will also follow the commands of those you introduce as your friends. For 4 VP it will follow anyone's commands.

Arts

Base rating: 3

Your skill with channeling your imagination to express ideas and emotions in a particular medium, as well as providing a general understanding of any medium of art and its famous works.

Typical capabilities: You must be practiced with the particular medium you're working in or trying to understand. See the Arts Lore capabilities, which include Imagery (painting and drawing), Magic Lantern (moving or still images captured with technology), Music, Poetry, Sculpting, and Writing. When trying to understanding a work of art, you might also need to possess knowledge of art movements within a culture (History Lore) or alien art forms (Xeno Lore).

CREATE ART

Action

You can create a work of art. You must have the proper materials on hand, whether it's a canvas and paints, stone and chisel, or holoeye and actors (for magic lantern recordings).

The sheer variety of art forms makes any rules for making art problematic. Each piece needs to be approached with its own considerations. Still, some general rules can apply to most art forms.

Time: Narrated. Making art is a long-term task with multiple steps. You must spend time uninterrupted as you conceive and accomplish the work. The amount of time varies depending on the art form and the intent of the work. A lyric poem might take only an hour, while a canto in an epic poem might take a week.

Roll: Arts + Intuition

While manual Dexterity might be important for some works, such as sculptures, the roll most often uses Intuition. The inspiration and meaning behind the piece are the most important aspects.

Capability: You must have the particular Arts Lore associated with the medium in which you're working. Work about a particular subject matter might also need a Lore related to that subject. Writing a play about Emperor Vladimir might require History Lore, lest it be ridiculed by critics.

Resistance: Based on your own Art skill ranks.

You must wrestle with trying to communicate an emotion or meaning in a way that isn't trite or common. Novelty is key to capturing attention and shaking the viewer's expectations. You're working against the Resistance of the status quo, even in works of art that aren't avant garde; each work must break through the barrier of the common to communicate its beauty, power, or innovative ideas. Ironically, this status quo isn't set by the public. It's set by your own ability to outdo yourself: the Resistance of your *create art* roll is your own Art skill ranks. If your Art skill is 5, your Resistance for writing a poem is 5.

Impact: The aim of art is to move its viewer. In game terms, this means that a successful work of art can place its experiencer in the Awed state.

If you wish to instill a different state, such as Castigated or Confused, you must work with the GM to explain how you're accomplishing it, and you probably require ranks in the relevant influence skill (Impress, Knavery, etc.) equal to your Arts ranks. Warning: Creating unconventional art like this can bring acclaim, but it's more likely to attract opprobrium that could scare away patrons and lead to exile from the art community. Some art forms, such as Baron Trantos Gurvich Decados' torture trance holovids, can even instill a physical state, such as Tormented or Disoriented.

To gain the full effect of a work of art, the viewer must experience it by spending time with it. In game terms, they undertake a *muse* maneuver (see below).

The VP you spend on impact creates an *art coffer*, at a cost of 1 VP per 1 VP that goes into the coffer. This coffer is attached to the artwork; whenever a viewer muses upon the art, the coffer's VP are used to overcome the viewer's innate Resistance (based on their Will).

Normally, the art patron needs to decide they want to *muse* over your work. You can, however, produce such an arresting piece of art that they're forced to confront it upon first witnessing it. For this *arresting* effect, you must spend 2 VP on impact, in addition to any VP you spent to create the art coffer. Anyone encountering the piece for the first time must then make a reflexive *muse* roll to see if it affects them. If this is a painting or sculpture, the roll happens when they first see it. If it's a concert, movie, or play, the roll happens at the end of the performance.

Finally, you can deliberately make obscure art, only accessible to those who know the subject or medium you're working with. You can imbue the work with one or more Lore capabilities that are required for the viewer who muses upon the artwork. This might be the Art Lore for the medium you're working in, Court Customs, Occult Lore, or whatever. If a viewer lacks the required capability, their *muse* roll is unfavorable. You must spend 1 VP per capability imbued into the artwork during its creation.

DABBLE

Action

See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar. Spending time making art with no rhyme or reason can do wonders for the imagination.

EVALUATE ARTWORK

Action

After careful examination of a piece of art, you can attempt to identify the artist, evaluate the work's worth and quality, or determine if it's a forgery. You must have the same Arts Lore capability that

was used to produce the artwork (Writing, if you're examining literature; Sculpting, if you're evaluating a statue).

Time: Present Tense (at least 10 minutes, more likely 1 hour+)

Roll: Arts + Wits (identify the artist or appraise the value) or Perception (detect a forgery)

Capability: You must have the Arts Lore associated with the medium that you're evaluating.

Resistance: Evaluating a work of art is Demanding; this can be modified by the fame or obscurity of the artist. The higher the Resistance, the less likely it is that standard art critics will recognize its brilliance — only a true connoisseur comprehends the piece's visionary message.

In the case of trying to detect a forgery, the Resistance is based on the quality of the forger's work (see *forge art*, below).

Impact: With each roll, you can attempt one of the following: identify the artist of the piece, figure out its approximate value on the art market, or know whether the work is real or forged.

FORGE ARTWORK

Action

You can forge a piece of art. You must have the same Arts Lore capability that was used to make the piece you're mimicking, and you must either have possession of the piece or detailed pictures of it from multiple angles.

Time: Present Tense

Roll: Arts + Perception or Dexterity

Capability: The same Arts Lore capability that was used to make the piece you're mimicking. A related lore might be needed if the artwork's subject draws on particular details about Religion or History.

Resistance: Based on the skill ranks of the artist who created the piece. If a journeyman carved the bowl, it might only be 3, but the work of a master sculptor might be 8 or higher.

Impact: You produce a piece that is identical to the original. The Resistance used against attempts to detect the forgery depends on the VP you now spend: +1 Resistance per 2 VP.

MUSE

Action

Art can enliven the soul. With this maneuver, you can muse upon a work of art to try to understand its meaning, find solace, or relieve ennui.

Time: Present Tense (for a painting or sculpture) or Narrated (for a symphony or play).

Roll: Arts or Focus + Intuition

Capability: Not required, unless the artist imbued one or more required capabilities into the artwork.

Resistance: The VP stored in the artwork's art coffer are used to overcome your own Will as Resistance. (See the *create art* maneuver). If the VP equal or exceed your Will, the artwork delivers its impact.

Impact: The artist's intent comes through and the artwork affects you with the particular state that was imbued into it (see the *create art* maneuver). Most often, this is the Awed state, but some avant garde art might convey less beneficial states.

You also gain VP from a successful roll. Art enlivens, even if you get it but aren't moved by it (you succeeded on the roll, but the work failed to overcome your Resistance).

In addition, regardless of the state the art conveys, the act of being moved by art can be therapeutic. You gain +2 goal to your next Focus-skill *rally* roll. This bonus only applies when dealing with pre-existing states from before you mused on the artwork.

Charm

Base rating: 3

Charm represents your amiability and knack for persuading others. It's the skill you use to get people to like you. It can be used to make a good impression, calm an angry individual, or otherwise positively influence their opinion of you. You can use this skill any time you want to improve another character's view of you. This skill is only effective with individuals and small groups; swaying larger groups requires Perform.

The following actions are examples of possible social maneuvers that use Charm. A successful maneuver results in the target being affected by a particular state. Some maneuvers build on one another. For example, you may want to *befriend* someone before you attempt to *convince* or *entreat* them.

Persistence: As a general rule, when you perform one of the following maneuvers instantaneously, the state it imposes is brief. It lasts for 1 turn + 1 additional turn per 1 VP you spend. Spending 5 VP on persistence, however, makes the state temporary (it lasts until the end of the scene).

If you perform it in Present Tense time, the state is enduring (it lasts until the victim has a Respite). If performed in Narrated time, the state is chronic (undoing it requires therapy).

Typical capabilities: Cathedral Customs, Commons Customs, or Court Customs might be required.

BEFRIEND

Influence (persuasion)

You can change a target's attitude, so they'll like you better.

Characters adopt one of three attitudes towards other characters: friendly, neutral, or hostile. An NPC's attitude toward you is assigned by the GM. Other players assign their characters' own attitudes toward you. (Members of a troupe are assumed to be friendly with one another.)

It is up to you to describe how you go about attempting to befriend someone. Trying to do so outside of the proper social context may warrant the roll being unfavorable. Rather, you should find a way to get to know them, a shared social situation, such as a party or other gathering, or perhaps an introduction by a mutual friend.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Charm + Presence

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance. (If the target's faction is at war with yours, add +2 to their Resistance.)

Impact: Victory places the target in the Befriended state. This improves the target's attitude toward you, changing it from hostile to neutral or from neutral to friendly.

CONVINCE

Influence (persuasion)

You're presenting a reasonable argument to change the target's mind about something. This might require a bit of time to engage the target in conversation before you can change their opinion. The target's Resistance may be increased if you are challenging a hard-held belief.

Presenting a reasonable argument is only part of the equation when attempting to convince someone to change their mind. If the target is not already someone you know well, you may wish to *befriend* them first. Presenting solid evidence that supports your case might help overcome some or all of a target's Resistance. The gamemaster can weigh any supporting actions you take and modify the Resistance to the roll appropriately.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Charm + Wits

Capability: No capability is typically required, unless you're trying to convince the target that his facts are wrong, in which case the relevant Lore, Science, or Customs Lore capability might be required. For example, arguing scripture with a priest requires knowledge of the proper protocols (Cathedral Customs) and Religion Lore.

Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.

Impact: The target is Convinced.

ENTREAT

Influence (persuasion)

You're engaging the target to try to get them to do something. This request must be reasonable and within the target's ability. The gamemaster should feel free to increase the target's Resistance for unreasonable requests.

As with *convince*, entreating someone you have Befriended is easier than entreating a stranger. You can also offer something in return to make your request worthwhile. This could be a payment or a bribe or even the offer to perform a favor in return. The gamemaster decides how much this offer affects the target's Resistance.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Rolls: Charm + Presence

Capability: No capability is typically required, although the relevant Customs Lore capability might come into play if you're asking a noble to bend the rules or a merchant to give another customer a break.

Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.

Impact: The target is Entreated.

EXHORT

Action

You exhort another person into being the best they can be: "You can do this! I believe in you!" or "Don't screw this up…." In rules terms, you give them some of your VP. The target must be able to see or hear you, although this could be over a live video or audio feed.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Charm or Impress + Faith

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Effortless when applied to a fellow troupe member, Hard vs NPCs who know you, Demanding vs strangers.

Impact: You give the targeted person some of your VP (which goes into their cache), although you must place into the well that same amount. If you give them 3 VP, you must put 3 VP into the well (you must have 6 VP to spend).

You can *exhort* the same target only once per scene.

HAGGLE

Influence (persuasion)

You know how to get the best possible price for goods bought or sold. You may try to convince a buyer or seller to give you better a deal on a particular item or good. Declare what it is before you begin haggling.

If you're selling, your goal is to get more than the going price for the item. The GM determines the going price using the pricing guidelines in **Chapter 4:**

Technology. If you're buying, your goal is to talk the price down from the going price.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Rolls: Charm (or Knavery) + Presence
Capability: Merchants can *haggle* anyone; other characters need: Court Customs (noble target), Cathedral Customs (priest target), or Commons Customs (merchant or yeoman target).
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.
Impact: If the target is the seller, they can give you a good discount on the particular goods you were haggling over. Lower the going price by 10%, plus an additional 5% per 2 VP you spend.

If the target is buying from you, they accept your higher price. Raise the going price by 10%, plus an additional 5% per 2 VP you spend.

REBUFF

Defense
Your jaded mien fends off attempts to sway you.
Precondition: vs. a persuasion influence attempt
Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)
Traits: Charm + Intuition
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Effortless. Mental distractions or social pressures might increase the adversity.
Impact: You gain VP for your cache, which you can choose to spend to boost your Resistance if you wish.

Crafts

Base rating: 3

Crafts is the skill for creating, repairing, and appraising physical objects known for their simple functionality (generally Tech Level 3 and below). Examples include forging swords, crafting fine jewelry, and building houses.

The key difference between the Crafts skill and the Arts skill is functionality: Crafted objects need to work, but they aren't necessarily aesthetically pleasing.

Capability: See the Crafts Lore capabilities. Additionally, crafts such as architecture might need knowledge of a culture's customs (Planet Lore or History Lore). Cooking using strange foodstuffs might need Life Science to avoid poisoning the food.

MAKE CRAFTWORK

Action
You practice your craft by making things that work. Especially well-made items can bring high monetary reward.
Time: Narrated. It usually takes eight hours of working in the shop before a roll can be made (only an hour is needed for Cooking).
Roll: Crafts + Wits
Capability: The relevant Crafts Lore for the item being made.
Resistance: Based on the quality of the material. The cheaper the material, the harder it is to make it work: fine clay from Grail might be Hard when making pottery, while cheap Malignatian steel for swordmaking might be Tough.
Impact: You create an item. How much VP you spend determines its quality:

Quality	VP spent
Unreliable	0
Poor	1
Standard	2
Superior	4
Masterwork	6
Premium	8

However, you cannot spend more VP on quality than your ranks. If your Crafts skill is 4, you can only make items of superior quality or less; you must raise your skill before attempting masterwork or premium-quality items.

TINKER

Action
See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar. Spending time playing with tools and materials towards no particular productive end can be calming.

Disguise

Base rating: 3

Disguise is used when you want to appear as someone else. You can use clothing, make-up, and prosthetics to change your appearance. At the gamemaster's discretion, access to more advanced, high-tech disguise options (3-D printed prosthetics, etc.) might give +1 or +2 goal. Some disguises might not involve a lot of make-up; instead, they're more dependent on clever acting and body movement, such as adopting a limp, hunching over, and using facial expressions.

The gamemaster can apply Resistance based on the degree of difference between the character and their assumed identity. When you disguise yourself as someone with the same appearance, the Resistance is Hard; it's Tough to change your appearance to a different height or skin color.

When making a Disguise roll, you can spend VP to make it more believable and difficult for the disguise to

be pierced. When someone who encounters you has a reasonable chance of seeing through your disguise, use the rules for instinctual perception: compare their Perception ranks to the Resistance you built. If they meet or exceed it, they pierce the disguise; otherwise, they're fooled by it.

If someone is actively looking for someone in disguise, they roll Observe + Perception (or Wits, if they know the person the disguise is mimicking) as a primary action to see through the disguise. If the observer succeeds, they see through the disguise; otherwise, they probably take the disguised person at their word.

IMPERSONATE

Action

Attempting to mimic an existing person is probably one of the hardest types of disguises to pull off. All of the rules described above apply, but there are other factors to take into consideration. When mimicking a particular person, physical movement and expression can be as important (or even more important than) the physical disguise. To accomplish this goal, you might want to spend some time observing the target. In-person observations are always best, but video recordings can suffice in a pinch. If you don't have an opportunity to observe your target, the gamemaster might make your disguise roll unfavorable and/or any attempt to pierce may be favorable.

Time: Present Tense (if you're familiar with the person) or Narrated

Roll: Disguise + Intuition

Capabilities: You may need a Lore concerning the disguised person, such as Faction, Planet, Religion, or Streetwise.

Resistance: Besides the general guidelines given above, the more famous the person being mimicked is, the higher the Resistance to impersonate them becomes.

Impact: You establish a Resistance equal to your Disguise ranks; observers contend with this Resistance when trying to see through your disguise. You can increase this by +1 Resistance per 2 VP.

IMPERSONATE ALIEN

Action

While even the best disguise master will have difficulty fooling a member of an alien species they're attempting to impersonate, it may be possible to convince other species of the veracity of your disguise.

To disguise yourself as someone from a different species requires the Xeno Lore capability for that species, as well as access to convincing costumes, makeup and/or prosthetics (the higher the tech level, the better).

Rolls made by others to pierce your alien disguise are favorable. Surgery or truly remarkable or high-tech makeup may be able to offset this disadvantage.

Time: Narrated. It takes at least a couple of hours to build a proper alien species disguise.

Rolls: Disguise + Presence

Capability: Xeno Lore (species being impersonated)

Resistance: Depends on the degree of difference between the body types. Assuming the disguiser is human:

Species	*Resistance*
Obun or ukar	Demanding
Gannok	Demanding (if you're short) or Tough (if you're of average or tall height)
Hironem or oro'ym	Tough
Etyri	Severe — assumes damaged or clipped wings
Shantor or vorox	Herculean — you must have elaborate prosthetics to pull this off at all

Impact: You establish a Resistance equal to your Disguise ranks against; observers contend against this when trying to see through your disguise. You can increase this: +1 Resistance per 2 VP.

Drive

Base rating: 3

Drive allows you to operate ground vehicles (which includes skimmers: hovercars that glide above the ground but don't fly).

The Drive skill also includes basic knowledge of how to make temporary repairs and care for your vehicle. This might be fixing a flat tire, buffing a grimed antigrav plate, or removing a stone from the hoof of your cart's horse (unless you'd rather use Animalia). Attempting complicated repairs or repairing serious damage requires the Tech Redemption skill.

Typical capabilities: Each class of vehicle requires a separate capability: Beastcraft (animal-driven wagons), Landcraft (cars and skimmers), and Warcraft (tanks).

CHASE/ESCAPE

Action

Probably the most common use of the Drive skill is to attempt to catch or outrun an opponent. See *Pursuits*, below, for rules on how to handle such events.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Drive + Dexterity
Capability: Based on your vehicle: Beastcraft, Landcraft, or Warcraft.
Resistance: See the *Pursuits* sidebar.
Impact: Victory closes the distance (in a chase) or widens it (when you're escaping). (See *Pursuits* below.)

RAM
Action
This maneuver is used to either force your opponent to change direction or drive them off the road by ramming your vehicle into theirs — or at least feigning to do so. This action can be attempted only at *caught* range (see *Pursuit*, below).
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Drive + Dexterity
Capability: Based on your vehicle: Beastcraft, Landcraft, or Warcraft.
Resistance: Equals the target's Drive skill rating. The driver can spend VP to increase this.
Impact: You ram the other vehicle. The other driver must make a reflexive Drive + Dexterity roll to avoid running off the road; the Resistance is equal to 1 per 2 VP you spend.

Your own vehicle takes damage unless you spend 2 VP to avoid it (deftly pulling back just as you scrape the other vehicle).
Special: *Psych-out* — Instead of actually ramming the other vehicle, you can try to make the other driver think you're going to, achieving the same result of running them off the road. Roll Drive + Intuition as a primary action vs. a Resistance based on the other driver's Drive or Perception (whichever is highest).

REPAIR
Action
You can make minor, temporary repairs to a vehicle. These are fast, jury-rigged repairs that last no longer than a scene. With living beasts, this could apply to re-shoeing a horse or something similar.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Drive + Wits
Capability: Based on your vehicle: Beastcraft, Landcraft, or Warcraft.
Resistance: Resistance depends on the damage. A simple flat tire might be Hard, but a reframed antigrav plate on a skimmer might be Tough.
Impact: The vehicle's functions are restored until the end of the scene.

STUNT
Action
This maneuver is used when you attempt to move your vehicle in a way it wasn't intended to move. It can also be used when being chased to lose the pursuer by veering off into a narrow ally, leaping an obstacle (while riding a beast), or any other crazy move in an attempt to shake pursuit.

This action is a bit risky. A critical miss results in a crash or transport malfunction, ending the chase and possibly injuring those in the vehicle.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Drive + Intuition
Capability: Capability is based on your vehicle: Beastcraft, Landcraft, or Warcraft.
Resistance: Based on the pursuer's Drive or Perception (whichever is highest). The GM can modify this based on the environment. An open field leaves

little room for surprises (+4), while a crowded market street with many alleys might hold many (-2).

Impact: Increase the distance between you and your pursuer by two range increments (such as from *close* to *far*).

Pursuits

People often chase other people: on foot, on horseback, in ground cars, driving skimmers, flying flitters, and even piloting spaceships. Below are some general rules on how to handle pursuits.

PURSUER AND PREY

You are either the pursuer or prey. The prey is trying to escape; the pursuer is trying to catch them before they get away.

If more than one PC is involved with the chase, and each is in a separate vehicle (or on foot), they each roll separately (which means one or more of them might pull ahead or fall behind from the others). If they're all in one vehicle, only the driver/pilot makes the roll.

TIME SCALE

Pursuits are handled in Present Tense play as a sustained action with multiple stages, as per the rules for *Long-term Tasks* in **Chapter 1: Rules**.

When the chase starts, the GM determines the range between pursuer and prey. In this simplified system, we use a spectrum of six ranges: *caught*, *close*, *near*, *far*, *distant*, and *escape*. The goal of the pursuer is to close the range, bringing it down to *caught*. The goal of the prey is to increase the range, widening it to *escaped*.

Caught — The pursuer has caught up to the prey; the pursuer can then engage in close combat to subdue them or use influence to control them.

Close — The two vehicles are within sight of one another, perhaps a city block away. Either party can use ranged weapons against the other at long range.

Near — The two are still within sight, but much farther away; perhaps a few streets distant. This counts as extreme range for ranged-weapon attacks.

Far — The two may or may not be in sight, perhaps behind buildings. The other party might have to anticipate the other's moves. They're out-of-range for ranged-weapon attacks.

Distant — The two are out of sight from each other, but not so far away that the other party can't close the distance and keep the chase going.

Escape — The prey has escaped.

ROLL

The skill used depends on the method of travel:

Method of travel	*Skill*
Foot chase	Vigor
Ground chase	Drive
Air or space chase	Pilot

The GM rolls for the other party, who takes the opposite role from the players — if they're the pursuers, the GM rolls for the prey, and vice versa.

CAPABILITY

In the case of vehicle chases, the driver/pilot must possess the proper transport capability for that vehicle: Beastcraft (animal-driven wagons), Landcraft (cars and skimmers), Warcraft (tanks), Aircraft (flitters and jets), or Spacecraft (spaceships).

RESISTANCE

Resistance varies with the territory, and it's based on the obstacles it represents: A straight shot down the highway is Easy but weaving through side streets is Demanding or higher.

IMPACT

Victory means you close the distance (if you're the pursuer) by one range (such as from *far* to *near*) or widen it by one (if you're the prey). VP can be spent to increase this further: 2 VP per additional range increment.

If both pursuer and prey succeed, no ground is lost or gained.

If the prey achieves *escape* range, they get away. If the pursuer closes the range to *caught*, they've reached the prey and can engage them in combat (either physical or influence).

COMPLICATIONS

SHOOTING MATCHES

When the range between the parties is *near* or closer, they can fire weapons at each other. This could involve crossbows, pistols, or (when characters are in space) starship deckguns and turrets.

If it's a foot chase, either party can target the other directly. If it's a vehicle chase, they've got to target the vehicle, either aiming to pierce it and injure the driver/pilot or take out a tire/antigrav pad to slow it. (See *Transport* in **Chapter 4: Technology** for details on resolving vehicle combats; see *Starships* for resolving space battles.)

Damaging a vehicle might slow it, which adds to the Resistance its driver/pilot must overcome.

LOW FUEL
It's possible that one party's vehicle is low on fuel when the race starts. The GM declares how many rolls it can make before the fuel runs out, ending the chase.

RECKLESS/SAFE DRIVING
Breakneck driving raises a vehicle's speed class by one but makes pursuit rolls unfavorable. Likewise, careful driving lowers the speed class by one, but pursuit rolls become favorable.

SLOW/FAST CARS
These rules assume that the vehicles are matched in capabilities: beast-drawn wagon vs. beast-drawn wagon, skimmer vs. skimmer. If one vehicle is significantly faster than the other, award it additional range increases per victory instead of just one. See *Transport* in **Chapter 4: Technology** for the lists of speed classes per vehicle.

SPECIALTY VEHICLES
Some vehicles have special considerations that the GM should handle. Tanks, for instance (which use the Warcraft capability) can fire their weapons at *far* range but are slow — pretty much every vehicle except a beastcart can outpace it.

Empathy

Base rating: 3

Empathy is the ability to sense what another person is feeling by "reading" them for verbal and non-verbal cues. You have the ability to analyze someone's tone and intonation, as well as studying a person's stance, mannerisms, and other body language to determine their emotional state (and perhaps any mental or social states they're experiencing). You may be able to determine if a subject is lying. Your rolls are usually unfavorable when trying to read the emotional state of a different species (unless you have the Xeno Lore capability for that species).

DEBUNK
Defense
Your keen understanding of deception allows you to see through lies.
Precondition: vs. a Knavery-skill influence attack
Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)
Traits: Empathy *or* Knavery + Wits
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Effortless. Mental distractions or social pressures might increase the adversity.
Impact: You gain VP for your cache, which you can choose to spend to boost your Resistance if you wish.

DETECT LIE
Action
Although it is not foolproof, you can use Empathy to attempt to determine if a subject is telling the truth by observing their body language. Like the lie detectors of old, the empath looks for changes in breathing patterns, signs of nervousness, and other physical cues. This can prove to be extremely difficult; the process may lead to a false positive if the subject is uncomfortable about the topic and not actually lying.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Rolls: Empathy + Perception
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance or Knavery skill rating (whichever is higher). The target can spend VP to increase the Resistance. The target gets +2 Resistance if they're apprehensive or under the Afraid state.
Impact: You have good reason to believe the target is lying.

MINISTER
Action
You can perform the "talking cure" on someone, alleviating mental or social states they currently suffer from. You must spend time talking to that person, and you might need to delve into highly personal topics that could be embarrassing to the person if they were revealed publicly. For this reason, most people only accept duly trained ministers from the Church who take a vow to never reveal what they learn in confessionals and ministrations. Sanctuary Aeon is renowned for its mental ministries.

Time: Narrated. At least an hour must be spent conversing with the patient before a roll can be made. Normally, only one attempt can be made upon the same patient per day.
Rolls: Empathy + Intuition
Capability: Requires Court Customs (for a noble target), Cathedral Customs (priest target), or Commons Customs (merchant or yeoman target).
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance or Will (whichever is higher)
Impact: You can relieve or even remove a mental or social state from the target. A victory downgrades the stage's persistence by one step. Spend VP to downgrade its persistence further: 4 VP per additional step.

Example: *Deacon Harmonia helps a traumatized noble get over his Castigated shame, a chronic state that was imposed on him by an Inquisitor. Her successful roll relieves it to enduring (it will now last until the noble takes a Respite). She spends 4 VP to downgrade it further to temporary (it will last until remainder of the scene – it goes away when the session is over).*

Fight

Base rating: 3

Fight covers your ability with all hand-to-hand combat, including punching, kicking, wrestling, and even improvised weapons such as bottles or chairs. A character with the base rating is probably not formally trained.

The rule for how combats work can be found in **Chapter 1: Rules**. Special combat advantages that are available to characters through certain perks can be found later in this chapter: see *Martial Arts*.

Typical capabilities: Most Fight maneuvers require no capabilities.

BLOCK

Defense

You can block hand-to-hand combat attacks with your arms, legs, or body.

Precondition: vs. a Fight-skill attack

Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)

Roll: Fight + Strength

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Effortless. Environmental conditions — unsteady ground, strobing lights — might increase the adversity.

Impact: You gain VP for your cache, which you can spend to boost Resistance if you wish.

COUNTERSTRIKE

Combat

Defensive fighting. You block an attack and then counterstrike. This maneuver takes place hindmost in the initiative queue.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Rolls: Fight + Strength

Resistance: Equals the target's Body Resistance.

Impact: You inflict 1 base damage, and you gain +2 Resistance until your next turn.

GRAPPLE

Combat

This wrestling maneuver allows you to take down and/or hurt an opponent.

Before you can initiate a grapple, you must *already* be within reach of the target. The grapple maneuver requires both your movement *and* primary actions that turn, and you act last in the initiative queue. The move action is used to get past the reach of the target's arm, so you can get right up next to them. If you are more than 1 meter away from the target, you cannot initiate a grapple.

You can get yourself in position to grapple someone on the following turn by using a movement action to get right next to them; then on the following turn, you can use your movement action and primary action (together) to attempt a *grapple*. Of course, they can use their movement action to move away from you. To prevent this constant game of evasion, as soon as you move next to your target, you can declare to the GM your intent to *grapple*. Even though you can't yet execute it (until your next movement and primary actions come around again), if your target tries to move away from you, your declaration earns you a reflexive *grapple* action. If you fail, the target moves away as intended, and you lose your next movement and primary actions (you've just used them). If you're successful, proceed using the rules below.

Time: Instantaneous (primary *and* movement actions)

Rolls: Fight + Strength

Resistance: The target's armor does not provide Resistance against grapples, but they can use their Strength as Resistance. A person with a Strength of 5 would get 5 Resistance against a grapple. (If the target has the Martial Arts perk, use the highest of Strength or Fight.)

Impact: You inflict 1 base damage, and the target is Immobilized until the hold is broken.

Once a grapple is successful, you can continue to inflict damage each successive turn as a primary action without making another roll; you spend VP to inflict this damage.

There are a number of sub-maneuvers to consider during a hold.

Take-Down: Instead of inflicting damage, you take your target down to the ground, rendering both you and your target Prone. This makes it harder for the target to *escape* (see below).

Clinch: Instead of inflicting damage, you can opt to *clinch* your hold by making another roll each turn as a primary action. This improves your hold: you get VP you can spend to raise the Resistance against *escapes*. If the *clinch* roll fails, you still have hold of your target, but the target can make a reflexive roll to *escape* (see below). If the *clinch* roll is a critical miss, the hold is broken.

Subdue: Instead of inflicting damage, you can try to *subdue* your opponent. This can only be done on turns *after* the turn in which the hold was established. You spend 4 VP to impose the Stunned state. Your opponent can spend VP to boost their Resistance to contest this, forcing you to first overcome their Resistance before you deliver the Stunned state as your impact. Once the opponent is Stunned, on the following turn(s), you can spend 4 VP to render the target Unconscious. Again, they can boost their Resistance to contest this. Even if you succeed (overcoming their Resistance), they can still make a reflexive second-

ary-action Vigor + Will roll vs. your Strength as Resistance to avoid being rendered unconscious for that turn.

Escape: The person who is grappled can take a primary action to break free, rolling Fight + Strength vs. a Resistance equal to the grappler's Strength plus any VP spent on *clinch*. (If the target was subject to a *take-down*, as above, this roll is unfavorable.) If successful, they are free from the grapple and can take their move action to stand and move out of the 1-meter grapple zone. If the roll fails, they are still Immobilized (and Prone, if taken-down). If the grappler failed a *clinch* roll, the grappled person can make an *escape* roll as a reflexive action.

Hug: A person who is grappled could use their primary action to grapple their grappler, using the same rules. Victory allows them to inflict damage or *subdue* over successive turns, until the hold is broken.

STRIKE
Combat
Any straightforward attack, such as throwing a punch or a kick.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Fight + Strength
Resistance: Equals the target's Body Resistance.
Impact: 2 base damage

Focus

Base rating: 3

Focus is your ability to attain deep concentration. Entering a meditative trance requires you to maintain concentration for an extended time. Characters who practice prayer or who have occult powers are often skilled at Focus, but it can be used to aid in other long, deliberative tasks, such as studying for a test.

CONCENTRATE
Action
A *concentrate* maneuver can be attempted to overcome obstacles to memory or study tasks. It is performed directly *before* the task it is meant to aid. You might *concentrate* to aid your research about the pilgrimage route traveled by the legendary Saint Piotr of the Golden Key (an Academia *research* task). Use this action when you want to hone your awareness for traps and enemies as you sneak through the woods (before attempting an Observe task).

There's one drawback: By setting your concentration on a single anticipated task, you've made yourself less able to handle other tasks that might intrude, such as dealing with the pesky Baroness when she suddenly barges into the room demanding that you condemn her social rival.
Time: Present Tense
Roll: Focus + Will
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Varies by distractions in the environment. A quiet study might be Easy, while a crowded, rowdy bar might be Tough.
Impact: Victory allows you to make your next roll favorable, as long as it applies to the task for which you focused your will.

If, however, your next roll is for any other task — such as dodging a sword thrust or convincing your Church superior that you aren't wasting your time — that roll is unfavorable.

MEDITATE
Action
See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar. You may wish to enter a meditative trance for religious, mystical, or personal reasons. Meditation is a means to generate calm, serenity, and poise (i.e., VP that you can bank for later actions). Some warriors meditate before entering combat, and theurgists might meditate before performing a rite.

RALLY
Action
Those suffering from chronic mental or social states often need therapy to help resolve them, but therapy isn't always available. Those people must suffer for a time (at least one week) until they can resolve the state through their own efforts of self-awareness.

Before you can attempt a *rally* maneuver, you must have first spent some time over the course of a week meditating on your issue — the state that besets you. Then, following a Respite, you can attempt this roll.
Time: Present Tense (one roll per week)
Roll: Focus + Will
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You downgrade the chronic state into an enduring state (it lasts until you take a Respite). If you spend 4 VP, you can downgrade it further to a temporary state (it lasts for one scene). For 4 VP more, you cancel it immediately.

A failure means you suffer on for another week, after which you can try again.

READY
Action
You take a moment to marshal your resources. You limber up, perform a *kata*, size up your foe, calculate the variables you might face, or simply tell yourself "I got this."

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Characters can pursue activities during downtime that are restorative to their souls. In other words, they allow characters to generate VP for their vaults.

Normally, rolls that generate VP are only allowed when there is some risk involved: You might break something, make an enemy, or owe a favor. In the case of restorative practices, no risk is involved, making them valuable pastimes.

These practices can only be performed when there are no immediate threats (physical or social), and you must have undistracted time to fully engage in the practice. Nothing substantial is gained by these practices (except for VP). Tinkering doesn't yield a working device, dabbling doesn't create a work of art for the ages, and traipsing doesn't mean you can't get lost in that same area later on.

Restorative practices shouldn't be mere mechanical exercises in dice rolling. You should describe just what it is you're doing and where you're doing it. Are you meditating by reciting St. Amalthea's Orison to the Trees, or are you trying to empty your mind of all concrete thoughts? Are you dabbling by painting a mural of Vladimir's Third Return to Holy Terra on the wall of the hut you're staying in?

Time: Narrated. At least one hour must be spent before a roll can be made. Only one restorative practice attempt can be made within the same week.

Roll: Varies by practice.

- *Idle* among books: Academia + Wits
- *Frolic* with animals: Animalia + Presence
- *Dabble* with an artistic medium: Arts + Intuition
- *Tinker* with a craft or device: Crafts or Tech Redemption + Intuition
- *Meditate* for serenity and poise: Focus + Faith
- *Jam* (play music, sing, recite) with oneself or others: Perform + Intuition
- *Traipse* in nature: Survival + Perception

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Varies by undue distractions in the environment. A quiet study might be Easy, while a crowded, rowdy bar might be Tough.

Impact: The roll generates VP as per normal. You may place these in your bank for later use.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action) or Narrated

This maneuver may be performed as an instantaneous primary action only once per scene. Successive uses within the same scene take longer: 1 minute for the second attempt; 1 hour per attempt thereafter.

Roll: Focus or Vigor + Faith

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Easy. Environmental conditions and mental distractions might increase the adversity.

Impact: You gain VP for your cache. Generally, this maneuver is performed to replenish your bank, since the VP gained will only last until your cache is emptied at the start of your next turn, but the VP could also be used to boost your Resistance or given to other characters using the Inspire perk.

REMEMBER

Action

Among other things, Focus represents your ability to recall incidental information you've picked up during your life. This might be a song or story you overheard in a tavern, or you might remember instructions on how to activate an ancient relic. You can also use this action to remember people or events. Do you recall the color of a merchant's hat or the name of the young duke you met at a party last month?

The memory must be something you could have experienced at some point in your life, even if it's from childhood or your apprenticeship. If the topic involves something you've never experienced firsthand, it probably requires an Academia *enter memory palace* roll instead, reflecting whether you read about it somewhere.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Focus + Intuition

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Based on the obscurity or degree of detail of the event you are attempting to recall. Remembering the details of a story you overheard last night might be relatively low (Easy or Hard) while recalling the name of a minor functionary you encountered three months ago while registering your ship might be Tough.

Impact: You remember something about the topic.

SHAKE IT OFF

Action

You can take a primary action to remove a physical, mental, or social state that you are suffering. See **Chapter 1: Rules** for the description of this maneuver.

Impress

Base rating: 3

Impress allows you to order someone around, terrify them, or intimidate them. Unlike Charm, which can be used to convince someone to do something by getting them to like you, Impress is used to coerce someone through force of will and/or threats.

Persistence: As a general rule, when you perform one of the following maneuvers instantaneously, the state it imposes is brief. It lasts for 1 turn + 1 additional turn per 1 VP you spend. Spending 5 VP on persistence, however, makes the state temporary (it lasts until the end of the scene).

If you perform it in Present Tense, the state is enduring (it lasts until the victim has a Respite). If performed in Narrated time, the state is chronic (requires therapy to undo).

Typical capabilities: Cathedral Customs, Commons Customs, or Court Customs might be required, depending on the target and milieu.

CASTIGATE

Influence (coercion)

You can *castigate* someone into revealing information or into doubting themselves.

During Instantaneous (turn-based) time, you can usually only get simple yes/no responses, which means you must supply good questions to get useful answers. More detailed responses require at least a half hour of castigating. Given enough time (and a successful attempt), you can get your target to spill their deepest darkest secrets or even their life story (so long as it doesn't harm their loved ones).

Time: Instantaneous (primary action) or Narrated

Roll: Impress + Wits or Presence

Capability: Priests can *castigate* anyone; other characters need Court Customs (noble target), Cathedral Customs (priest target), or Commons Customs (merchant or yeoman target).

Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance

Impact: The target is Castigated.

COMMAND

Influence (persuasion or coercion)

You can make a target follow your commands. If performed instantaneously, it must be a simple declarative order, such as "Fight those Hazat soldiers!" or "Praise the Pancreator!" or "Bow, you worm!"

You cannot command a target to do anything that means certain death. The more out-of-character or dangerous the command is, the higher the Resistance becomes:

Resistance	*Type of Command*
+0	Perform a simple task (safe)
+1	Forced march through the night (foolhardy)
+2	Repair an alien object (risky)
+3	Charge an enemy line (dangerous)
+4	Hold ground against a more powerful enemy (very dangerous)
+5	Charge an overwhelming enemy (nearly suicidal)

Coercion and persuasion are both different means of approaching the use of *command*. You can persuade friends and allies but not enemies. You can coerce enemies but not friends. You can use either coercion or persuasion on neutral characters.

Targets cannot be commanded to betray their own faction.

Note that this maneuver can be used to force someone to try to shake off a state, even if they've already attempted it recently and failed. (See *Shake It Off* in **Chapter 1: Rules**.)

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Impress + Presence

Capability: Nobles can *command* anyone. Other characters need Court Customs (for a noble target), Cathedral Customs (for a priest target), or Commons Customs (merchant or yeoman target)

Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance modified by the type of *command* (above).

Impact: The target is Commanded.

DAUNT

Influence (coercion)

You can make a target fear or respect you.

Your target's circumstances — their edge — can affect their Resistance.

Resistance	*Target's edge*
0	One-on-one or equal footing
+1	Your target has the physically advantageous position (such as the higher ground or behind cover).
+2	Your target has allies who outnumber your troupe or forces

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Impress + Presence (or Strength if you make a show of physical force)

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance, modified by their edge (above).

Impact: The target is Daunted.

ENCOURAGE
Defense
You draw upon your courage to resist attempts to unnerve or control you.
Precondition: vs. a coercion influence attack
Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)
Traits: Impress + Faith
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Effortless. Mental distractions or social pressures might increase the adversity.
Impact: You gain VP for your cache, which you can choose to spend to boost your Resistance if you wish.

EXHORT
Action
By barking orders or threatening someone, you can give them some of your VP. See the description of this maneuver under the Charm skill, above.

Interface

RESTRICTED: *Merchant, Amateur, Clergy, Conspiracist, Enthusiast, Scribe, Spy*

Base rating: 0

Interface allows you to operate and program think machines that do not have a friendly user interface. Many think machines are designed with a user interface that does not require this skill. Think machines that do not have such an interface are largely incomprehensible to the average person. Those who have unlocked the mysteries of these ancient computers, and anyone skilled enough to use them, may be looked upon with awe — and even more than a little distrust — by those who aren't.

Typical capabilities: Think Machines or Artificial Intelligence Lore (for sentient golems and machines)

HACK
Action
You can break into a think machine's system to extract protected data.
Time: Present Tense. This usually takes anywhere from 1 minute to half an hour.
Roll: Interface + Wits
Capability: Depends on the think machine being hacked.
Resistance: Based on the think machine's security: weak is Hard, standard is Demanding, strong is Tough, invincible is Severe.
Impact: You extract the data you were looking for. Spending additional VP can yield related data: 2 VP per additional topic.

PROGRAM
Action
You can program a think machine to do something it can't (or won't) currently do.
Time: Narrated. It usually takes anywhere from an hour to 8 hours before a roll can be made.
Roll: Interface + Wits

Capability: Depends on the think machine being hacked.

Resistance: Depends on the think machine's Tech Level.

Impact: You can introduce a new function to the think machine's operations or alter an existing function. How much VP you must spend depends on how related the function is to the think machine's prior operations:

Enhances current operations (allows a visual scanner to also read the IR spectrum): 2 VP

Upgrades current operations (makes a cleaning bot into a butler bot): 4 VP

Significantly alters current operations (makes a butler bot into a military bot): 6 VP

Intrusion

Base rating: 3

Intrusion allows you to bypass security systems and to pick locks. This generally applies to mechanical or electrical locks as well as disabling electronic security systems. You will want to invest in the proper tools; picking a lock with a paper clip or similar improvised tool makes the roll unfavorable.

Typical capabilities: Tech Lore (based on the TL of the security systems)

DESIGN SECURITY

Action

Your ability to get past security systems gives you the know-how to design them. You can design a security system for a place that makes it hard for intruders to enter it and/or traverse it. Financial and technological limitations might constrain your plans.

Time: Narrated (minimum of a week)

Roll: Intrusion + Wits

Capability: You should have the proper Tech Lore when designing advanced tech systems.

Resistance: The size of the place sets a base Resistance: A single room is Hard; a small house is Demanding; a castle or office complex might be Severe. This is modified by the human touch: using extensive guard patrols lowers the Resistance by one degree while relying solely on automated systems raises it by one.

Impact: You create a base Resistance equal to your Intrusion ranks that intruders must contend against. You can raise this by 1 per 2 VP you spend.

Your system(s) can be identified using the *scope* maneuver listed below. You can make it harder on spies by raising the concealment Resistance: +1 per 2 VP you spend.

PICK LOCK

Action

This maneuver allows you to pick locks and safes. Attempting to pick a lock without the proper tools makes the roll unfavorable.

When you encounter a magnetic lock, keypad, disused Second Republic retinal or palm scanner, or any other type of electronic lock, you must also have the appropriate capability relating to that technology. The gamemaster can also decide that it is impossible to pick a tech lock without any tools. The Resistance is determined by the quality and complexity of the lock.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Intrusion + Dexterity

Capability: The relevant Tech Lore for the tech level of the lock.

Resistance: Depends on the quality of the lock.

Physical lock	*Tech lock*	*Resistance*
Cheap lock	Outdated software	Hard
Normal lock	Keypad	Demanding
Complicated lock	Voice print	Tough
Normal safe	Retinal scan	Severe
Vault	Quantum seal	Herculean

Impact: You unlock the lock or safe.

You can choose to spend VP equal to half (round down) the lock's Resistance to hide any trace of your work. Otherwise, an investigator with at least 3 ranks in this skill can make an Observe + Wits as a primary action vs. a Hard Resistance to figure out if the lock was picked.

SCOPE

Action

You can assess a location for its security, figure out what systems (if any) are in place, deduce where their weaknesses might lie, suss out traps — hidden pitfalls, nets, force-field cages, etc.

Time: Narrated. Spend at least half an hour observing the place.

Roll: Intrusion + Perception

Capability: The relevant Tech Lore for the tech level of the security systems.

Resistance: Depends on how well-hidden the security is. Obvious cameras and key locks are Hard, while invisible laser trip wires or buried weight plates might be Tough or more.

An irregular cycle of residents and/or guard shifts adds one step of Resistance.

If you are unable to physically watch or walk the grounds during your observation, and you're only going by blueprints or video surveillance, add two steps of Resistance.

The designer of the system might have dedicated effort toward concealing the system, as per the *design security* maneuver described above.

Impact: You know the place's security protocols. You can spend VP now to exploit perceived weaknesses with your later Intrusion and break-in related actions (such as Sneak): +1 goal per 2 VP.

Knavery

Base rating: 3

Knavery is the art of talking — *lying*, really — your way into or out of a situation. You know how to use natural charm, verbal deflection, and all-out chutzpah to get others to believe you.

When resisting Empathy's *detect lie* (or any other attempt to detect your emotions or motives), your Knavery rating can substitute for Mind Resistance, and you can spend VP to increase the Resistance.

Persistence: As a general rule, when you perform one of the following maneuvers instantaneously, the state it imposes is brief. It lasts for 1 turn + 1 additional turn per 1 VP you spend. Spending 5 VP on persistence, however, makes the state temporary (it lasts until the end of the scene).

If you perform it in Present Tense, the state is enduring (it lasts until the victim has a Respite). If performed in Narrated time, the state is chronic (requiring therapy to undo it).

Typical capabilities: No capability is usually required, but if you're trying to confuse someone with facts (or fake facts), you might need a relevant lore.

CONFUSE

Influence (persuasion)

Through double-talk and distraction, you can cause a target to doubt their beliefs or the evidence of their senses.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Knavery + Wits
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.
Impact: Your target is Confused.

DECEIVE

Influence (persuasion or coercion)

You can convince a target to believe outright lies. The Empathy *detect lie* maneuver can be used to see through the deception.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Knavery + Presence
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.
Impact: Your target is Deceived.

DISTRACT

Defense

You fight dirty (in combat) or talkback to/mock your influencer. You perform this maneuver reflexively, in immediate response to an attack, before the attack's goal roll is made.

Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)
Traits: Knavery + Intuition
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Hard. Mental distractions or social pressures might increase the adversity.
Impact: You can spend VP to lower your attacker's goal number: 2 VP per -1 goal.

You can only affect the goal roll of a person directly attacking you; you can't affect someone performing an area-wide attack or performance. This maneuver is, however, considered dishonorable (in dueling) and rude (against influence), which could affect your reputation among witnesses.

HUMILIATE

Influence (coercion)

Through scorn or mockery, you can infuriate or dishearten a target. Unlike most influence maneuvers, this may have several possible outcomes. You choose which tactic you're using — scorn or humiliation — before you roll.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Knavery + Wits
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.
Impact: Your tactic determines your results.

Scorn: Your target is Angered.

Humiliation: Your target is Humiliated.

Needless to say, both tactics tend to make enemies of your targets.

Melee

Base rating: 3

Melee represents your ability to wield all types of hand-to-hand weapons, such as clubs, energy swords, knives, or staves. Any type of melee weapon falls into this category.

The rules for combat can be found in **Chapter 1: Rules**. Special combat advantages that are available to characters through perks can be found later in this chapter: see *Fencing*.

Typical capabilities: Military Weapons, Artifact Weapons

DISARM
Combat
You can knock a weapon from an opponent's hand.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Melee + Dexterity
Capability: Depends on your melee weapon.
Resistance: The target's armor does not apply, but they can use their Strength or Melee skill (whichever is best) as Resistance.
Impact: The target drops their weapon nearby; retrieving it requires a primary action. You can spend VP to knock the weapon farther away, requiring your target to also use a movement action to retrieve the weapon: +1 meter per 2 VP.

HACK AND SLASH
Combat
Put your full strength behind your weapon, trading accuracy for impact.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Melee + Strength with -2 goal penalty
Capability: Depends on your melee weapon.
Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.
Impact: Your base damage = weapon damage +2.

PARRY
Defense
You can wield your weapon to defend against swords, spears, or even fists.
Precondition: vs. a Fight- or Melee-skill attack
Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action)
Roll: Melee + Strength
Capability: Depends on your melee weapon.
Resistance: Effortless. Environmental conditions — unsteady ground, strobing lights — might increase the adversity.
Impact: You gain VP for your cache, which you can spend to boost Resistance if you wish.

RIPOSTE
Combat
Using defensive fighting, you parry an attack and then counterstrike. Using this maneuver places you hindmost in the initiative queue.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Melee + Dexterity
Capability: Depends on your melee weapon.
Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.
Impact: Your base damage = weapon damage - 1, but you gain +2 Resistance until your next turn.

WEAPON STRIKE
Combat
An attack with a melee weapon.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Melee + Strength
Resistance: Equals the target's Body Resistance.
Impact: Weapon damage. (See *Chapter 4: Technology* for melee weapon traits.)

Observe

Base rating: 3

Observe reflects your innate awareness of the world around you. This skill applies when you are actively searching. You (or the gamemaster) may also use it to check if you notice something unexpected.

Observe-skill actions involve blind-bid Resistance contests. The GM assigns a Resistance based on how well-hidden or innocuous something is but does not tell the player what that Resistance is. The player must guess the amount of VP they need to bid to overcome the Resistance and then spend it. The GM then provides information based on whether the player succeeded; if the player's VP expenditure exceeded the Resistance, the GM might also provide them with additional information.
Typical capabilities: None are usually required.

DETECT
Action
This maneuver allows you to notice details that provide important clues to an investigation. Did you notice that urchin's tattoo isn't just a gang sign, but in fact, an indication that he is part of a heretical cult? Did you observe that spot of blood on Countess Dominia's tunic?

Detect is an opportunity for the gamemaster to provide an information dump in a sly, sideways manner. *Detect* doesn't provide knowledge of things the character doesn't know, but it can prompt an Academia *enter memory palace* or Focus *remember* roll that could fill in the details. For example, *detect* lets you notice the urchin's tattoo and realize it's important, while a subsequent *enter memory palace* roll tells you the name of the underworld cult that uses that sign.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Observe + Intuition
Capability: N/A
Resistance: You can make a blind bid against Resistance based on the sensory welter of the scene. A room filed with bric-a-brac is harder to parse (Tough) than a relatively empty prison cell (Hard).
Impact: The GM provides you with one or more important clues.

SEARCH
Action
When you're looking for something that has been concealed in a location or hidden on a person (patting someone down for a hidden weapon), you use the *search* maneuver.
Time: Present Tense (anywhere from 1 minute to an hour of searching, depending on the size of the search area)
Roll: Observe + Wits
Capability: N/A
Resistance: You can make a blind bid against Resistance based on the skill of the concealer. If you're looking for something that was hidden by happenstance (a lost pair of keys, a bullet casing at a crime scene), the GM assigns a Resistance based on its location. Finding that key hidden under the sofa cushions might only be Hard, while finding a telltale drop of blood in a small crack in the floorboards might be Severe.
Impact: You notice what you're looking for — or perhaps something hidden that you weren't expecting.

SPOT
Action
When you're not confident that your instinctual perception (see below) will allow you to notice danger or otherwise interesting things, you can scan around to *spot* them. This is the maneuver guards and patrolmen use when standing alert for intruders or ne'er-do-wells. This action could include scanning a crowd looking for a particular person… or a person with a weapon.

When something or someone is hidden from sight (and/or other senses), you need to use the *search* maneuver instead.
Time: Instantaneous (reflexive action)
Roll: Observe + Perception
Capability: N/A
Resistance: You can make a blind bid against Resistance based on the skill of the person trying to not to be noticed.
Impact: You notice something out of place and can act on this knowledge.

Instinctual Perception

People often notice things, even when they're not looking for them – that is, when they're not actively trying to *spot* them (by taking a primary action). This sort of passive, reflexive, or *instinctual* perception can still yield discoveries.

When something of interest or concern in the environment doesn't stand out or isn't immediately noticeable, the GM assigns it a Resistance rating based on how well-hidden or innocuous it is. Whenever a PC

comes within sensory range, the GM checks to see if they notice it instinctually. This is done by comparing the PC's Perception characteristic ranks to the Resistance; if they *exceed* it, the PC has a chance to notice the thing: the GM can then ask them to make a reflexive *spot* roll in a blind bid against the thing's Resistance. It's a good idea for the GM to write down the Perception ranks of each character and keep the list nearby.

The base Resistance for instinctual perception is almost always Demanding or Tough. This is a passive activity; when someone takes a *spot* or *search* action, investigation is easier. This can be modified by various factors:

- It's Severe when the scene is full of distractions: a loud concert, a room teeming with bric-a-brac, strobing lights, etc.
- It's Herculean when the thing to be noticed is tiny or camouflaged within its environment (a drop of blood on a red or busy carpet).

If the thing or person to be noticed is actively hiding or has been intentionally hidden, then the Resistance is based on the concealer's skill ranks and/or the additional VP they dedicated to hiding it. See the various concealment-related tasks, such as Disguise's *impersonate*, Intrusion's *design security*, Sleight of Hand's *conceal*, and Sneak's *camouflage* and *skulk*.

Perform

Base rating: 3

You use Perform skill to evoke an emotional reaction in an audience. You must have the associated Performing Arts Lore capability, whether it's Dance, Song, Theatre, or more.

Most Perform maneuvers can affect an entire audience, including everyone who hears or sees the performance.

Persistence: As a general rule, when you perform one of the following maneuvers instantaneously, the state it imposes is brief. It lasts for 1 turn + 1 additional turn per 1 VP you spend. Spending 5 VP on persistence, however, makes the state temporary (it lasts until the end of the scene).

If you perform it in Present Tense, the state is enduring (it lasts until the victim has a Respite). If performed in Narrated time, the state is chronic (requiring therapy to undo).

Typical capabilities: You need to have a capability in a particular Performing Art Lore: Dance, Magic, Music, Oratory, Song, Theatre.

Playing a musical instrument also requires you to have a capability with the musical instrument you're playing; otherwise, your rolls are unfavorable. Magic tricks using devices might require capability with various Tech Lores.

JAM
Action
See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar. Spending time fooling around with music, song, or wordplay can get the creative juices flowing.

MESMERIZE
Influence (persuasion)
This maneuver can be used on an individual or a crowd to entrance and to capture attention.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Perform + Intuition
Capability: The proper Performing Arts Lore.
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.
Impact: Your target is Mesmerized.

ROUSE
Influence (persuasion)
You can stir the audience's hearts and minds, bringing them to tears, elation, or anger. If you press their emotions hard enough, you can stir them to action: dancing, marching, or even rioting.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Perform + Presence
Capability: The proper Performing Arts Lore.
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.
Impact: Your target is Roused.

WOW
Influence (persuasion)
You seek to spread merriment and joy by telling jokes, fables, farces, and satires. Unlike Knavery's *humiliate* maneuver, *wow* doesn't make the target the butt of the joke; it seeks to make them laugh. The topic of the joke might be a common trope among the audience ("Two Avestites walk into a bar. The bartender says: 'Hey, put those things out! Don't you realize alcohol is flammable?'") or a short tale with a punchline ("…and that's why vorox aren't allowed in the rector's washroom anymore.") It can be in the form of standup comedy (Oratory capability), a song (Music or Song), an impersonation (Theatre), a silly walk (Dance), or a magic trick as the punchline (Magic).
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Roll: Perform + Wits
Capability: The proper Performing Arts Lore.
Resistance: Equals the target's Mind Resistance.
Impact: Your target is Wowed.

Pilot

RESTRICTED: *Noble, merchant, Brother Battle, Explorer, Mendicant, Pirate*

Base rating: 0

You can pilot flying vehicles.

The Pilot skill also includes basic knowledge of how to make temporary repairs and care for your transport. This might involve rebooting the nav-mind or clearing an intake vent. Making complicated repairs or fixing serious damage requires the Tech Redemption skill.

Many of the Drive maneuvers described earlier in this chapter can apply to aircraft and spaceships as well. For chases, see *Pursuit*, under the Drive skill. (For more on space ships, see *Starships* in **Chapter 4: Technology**.)

Typical capabilities: Each class of transport requires a separate capability, including Aircraft (flitters, jets, gliders) or Spacecraft (starships, shuttles, fighters).

Remedy

Base rating: 3

Remedy is the catch-all skill for everything medical, including first aid, anatomy, surgery, disease diagnosis, and preventive medicine. It can also include the implantation of cybernetic devices (although the character should possess the Cybernetics Lore medical capability).

Rules for Vitality and healing can be found later in this chapter.

Typical capabilities: Any of the relevant medical lore capabilities apply. You may need Xeno Lore (for extensive care of an alien), Life Science (for surgery on animals), Tech Lore (for advanced medical equipment and Amalthean merciful technals).

OPERATE

Action

Some wounds are so bad that first aid can't cure them. Certain types of weapons (such as sunder-slug and vorox-claw bullets, wire grenades, and barbed whips) can deliver the Mangled state, which requires surgery before wounds can heal.

Operate is a delicate procedure which involves attempting to repair damaged flesh, bones, or internal organs. The surgeon should have the Surgery Lore capability and access to the proper surgical tools. Lack of either makes the roll unfavorable.

Operate can also be used to perform cosmetic or reconstructive surgery. Such surgeries are in high demand among Scravers, Chainers, and fugitives from justice.

Time: Narrated. Requires at least one hour and with complete focus (no other actions allowed). Combat surgery can be performed in 10 minutes, but the Resistance increases by one degree.

Roll: Remedy + Dexterity

Capability: Surgery Lore

Resistance: Depends on the injury: Mangled is Hard, while cosmetic surgery can vary from Hard to Tough, depending on the extent of the changes.

Impact: You remove the Mangled state (allowing healing to occur), or you achieve your cosmetic/reconstructive surgery goals. You can spend 2 VP to hide the scars (something most cosmetic surgery patients demand).

REHABILITATE

Action

You can assist a patient in overcoming a deleterious condition acquired from physical trauma. This allows them to recover from long-lasting physical states, such as Tormented or Fatigued. They must first have spent a Respite healing at least 1 Vitality. (See *Respite*, under *Vitality*.)

Time: Narrated. You must spend at least two hours working with the patient before rolling. Normally, only one attempt can be made upon the same patient per day.

Roll: Remedy + Faith

Capability: If you're using elaborate medical equipment, you might need a Tech Lore capability.

Resistance: Hard

Impact: You can relieve or even remove a physical state from the target. A victory downgrades its persistence by one step. Spend VP to downgrade its persistence further: 4 VP per additional step.

TREAT WOUNDS

Action

You can render first aid to the wounded and dying. This maneuver assumes you have access to a basic medical kit or medical supplies. If no such supplies are available, the roll is unfavorable.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Remedy + Wits

Capability: If you're using elaborate medical equipment, you might need a Tech Lore capability.

Resistance: Hard (Demanding for a patient who is Mangled)

Impact: You can either staunch a wound, stabilize an Unconscious or Dying patient, or tend to a recuperating patient.

Staunch wound: Someone who has been injured can be treated by Remedy once, but only once, to have their wounds staunched so they stop bleeding; after that, they'll need to take a Respite to gain further healing. The *treat wounds* roll yields VP that *must* be spent to heal the patient's Vitality: 1 Vitality per 2 VP spent.

If the patient became Mangled earlier in the same scene, you can remove the Mangled state if

you heal at least 1 Vitality. If they were Mangled in an earlier scene, you must use the *operate* maneuver to remove the Mangled state.

Stabilize: A Dying person (see *Death and Dying*, under *Vitality*) can be treated to upgrade them to the Unconscious state. An Unconscious person can be revived to consciousness by spending 2 VP.

Tend: At any time during a patient's eight-hour Respite, you can spend 15 minutes tending to their injuries, dressing their wounds, and advising them on optimal care. The patient's Respite roll is now favorable. If conditions already provided for a favorable roll, the patient gains +2 goal.

Shoot

Base rating: 3

The Shoot skill applies to any handheld device that propels an object or energy bolt, whether that's a bullet, arrow, laser, or even a stone. Slings and bows, primitive muskets, assault rifles, and weird alien guns are all applicable.

When shooting a target within your weapon's short range, use Dexterity. When shooting at a long-range or extreme-range target, use Perception.

Shoot does not cover heavy-weapons emplacements or ship or vehicle-mounted guns.

Typical capabilities: Archery, Energy Weapons, Slug Guns

AIM

Combat

Take a moment to line up the enemy in your sights before firing. You act last in the round's initiative order but get +1 goal to your roll. You can spend up to two additional consecutive turns aiming (as a primary action) before you take your shot to gain cumulative goal bonuses (+1 per turn, for a max of +3).

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Shoot + Dexterity (short range) or Perception (long/extreme range) with +1 goal/turn (3 turns max)

Capability: Based on your weapon.

Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.

Impact: Based on your weapon damage.

BURST

Combat

You can quickly fire shots in succession at the cost of accuracy: -2 goal. Your weapon must be capable of burst fire. A *burst* uses half your clip's ammo.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Shoot + Dexterity with -2 goal

Capability: Based on your weapon.

Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.

Impact: Equals your weapon damage +2.

SHOOT GUN

Combat

You fire a gun.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Shoot + Dexterity for short range/Perception for long range

Capability: Based on your weapon.

Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.

Impact: Gun damage. (See *Chapter 4: Technology* for gun traits.)

SNAPSHOT

Combat

You pop out from behind cover, take a shot, and then drop back. This action requires both your primary and movement actions. You suffer -1 goal but retain the benefits of cover for that round.

Time: Instantaneous (primary *and* move action)

Roll: Shoot + Dexterity with -1 goal

Capability: Based on your weapon.

Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.

Impact: Based on your weapon damage; you also gain the defensive benefits of whatever cover you're behind, even if the shot fails.

Sleight of Hand

Base rating: 3

Sleight of Hand is a talent associated with charlatans and street performers. This skill can be used to hide small objects or remove small objects from another character's person without them noticing. Sleight of Hand is as much the art of misdirection as it is concealment.

Typical capabilities: No capability is usually required.

CONCEAL

Action

You can conceal small objects up to the size of a knife from observers.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Sleight of Hand + Dexterity

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Depends on the size of the item. A firebird coin is Effortless; a wallet is Hard; a switchblade or derringer is Demanding; a hunting knife is Tough.

Impact: You create a Resistance equal to your Sleight of Hand ranks, opposing others' attempts to detect the hidden item. You can increase this: + 1 Resistance per 2 VP.

If someone searches you for the item, they make a *search* maneuver against the Resistance you've built.

PICK POCKET

Action

This is the art of stealing small items that are in another's possession without their knowledge. This includes wallets, rings, small weapons, and even (for the truly daring) necklaces.

If the target is especially paranoid and actively engaged in looking for pick pockets, the roll might be unfavorable unless the target is sufficiently distracted.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Sleight of Hand + Dexterity

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Equals your target's Perception or Observe (whichever is highest), modified by ease of access: -1 for a pouch swinging from a belt; +1 for a holstered weapon; +2 for a necklace that is currently being worn.

Impact: You gain the item without notice. You can attempt an immediate reflexive *conceal* maneuver.

Sneak

Base rating: 3

Sneak represents your ability to move silently and to remain unseen. This skill applies to hiding oneself; concealing small items uses Sleight of Hand. Using Sneak often requires that you have some degree of cover or a crowd to move among; sneaking across the middle of a well-lit room or carefully observed areas is rarely possible.

Sneak almost always applies to a physical action. Attempts to stealthily access a computer database require Interface skill, not Sneak.

Refer to *Instinctual Perception* (listed under the Observe skill) if someone has a reasonable chance of noticing someone attempting to sneak.

BLEND IN

Action

You can blend in and get lost within a crowd.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Sneak + Intuition

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Depends on the density and nature of the crowd: a motley parade might be Hard, while an old couple on an open street might be Severe.

Impact: You create a Resistance equal to your Sneak ranks, resisting the attempts of other people to find you in the crowd. You can increase this: + 1 Resistance per 2 VP.

If someone searches for you, they make an Observe-skill *spot* maneuver against the Resistance you have built.

CAMOUFLAGE

Action

You can use materials at hand and physical structures to conceal yourself.

Tech can be a great aid to camouflage attempts. A holofield projector or chameleon cloak can create an almost impenetrable camouflage, making your roll favorable.

Time: Present Tense (at least one minute)

Roll: Sneak + Wits

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Depends on the materials you use: a cluster of vines in a jungle might be Hard, while a single potted plant in an office might be Severe.

Impact: You create a Resistance equal to your Sneak ranks, resisting the attempts of others to find you. You can increase this: + 1 Resistance per 2 VP.

If someone searches for you, they make an Observe-skill *search* maneuver against the Resistance you have built.

SKULK

Action

Silence and shadows are your friends. Moving about without being seen or heard is a necessary skill for thieves, assassins, and even nobles engaging in the arts of love. (After all, getting caught padding to your paramour's bedroom at night would be unseemly.)

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Sneak + Dexterity

Capability: N/A

Resistance: Based on the condition of the area you are moving through. Moving across soft grass is Hard, while walking on gravel is Demanding.

Impact: You create a Resistance equal to your Sneak ranks, resisting the attempts of others to hear or see you. You can increase this: +1 Resistance per 2 VP.

If someone searches for you, they make an Observe-skill *spot* maneuver against the Resistance you have built.

Survival

Base rating: 3

Survival allows you to survive in adverse conditions — generally, wild places far from civilization.

With this skill, you can track animals or people in the wilderness. It also includes knowledge of how to make fire, improvise makeshift shelters, identify edible plants, set traps, and fish.

Capabilities: Beast Lore (hunting), Planet Lore (orienting), Life Science (identifying edibles)

HUNT/FISH

Action

You find and catch prey or go fishing.

Time: Narrated. Spend at least an hour tracking and stalking prey or throwing lines in the water.

Roll: Survival + Perception (hunting) or Intuition (fishing)

Capability: Beast Lore (hunting)

Resistance: Based on the abundance or scarcity of local fish and game, generally from Hard to Tough or higher.

Impact: You catch dinner. Spend 2 VP to catch enough for another day's worth of food. Spend 4 VP to be provisioned for the next week.

TRAIPSE

Action

Spending time wandering aimlessly in nature can soothe the mind and soul. (See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar.)

TRAP

Action

You can set snares, traps, and nets, as well as making and setting decoys, in an attempt to catch animals. You might be just catching dinner or animals whose fur or other features can be sold for money. Trapping requires at least a minimal amount of materials, such as ropes, nets, or wood to carve for decoys. Unlike hunting, once you've set your traps, you're free to do other things until you come back and check on them the next day.

Time: Narrated. Spend at least an hour setting traps.

Roll: Survival + Intuition

Capability: Beast Lore

Resistance: Based on the abundance or scarcity of local animals, generally from Hard to Tough or higher.

Impact: You catch dinner. Spend VP to catch more food or pelts over the next day: 2 VP = a day's worth of food *or* good pelts (5 fb); 4 VP = a week's worth of food *or* fine pelts (10 fb); 6 VP = rare pelts (25 fb).

Tech Redemption

Base rating: 3

Tech Redemption is the skill required to make and fix technology. Known Worlders see this as a process of *re-*

deeming broken or recalcitrant technology, which is often thought to have a life of its own. This skill generally works with existing items: fixing them and upgrading their performance. The ability to invent new tech, as well as replicating the wondrous technologies of the past, often requires a special perk, used in conjunction with this skill. See the perks for the Tech Redeemer calling for examples.

Typical Capabilities: A character who takes this skill will need to have one or more applicable forms of Tech Lore: TL5, TL6, TL7, TL8, and perhaps Think Machines.

INVENT

Action

Most Known Worlders do not innovate new technologies; they keep using tech from the past, "redeemed" countless times so that it keeps working. The ability to invent new devices requires the Comprehend Tech Level perk at the required tech level for the desired technology. (See that perk description for more details.) Once you acquire the necessary perk, you can use this maneuver to invent new technologies, in collaboration with the GM's decision as to what is allowed.

Inventing tech requires materials, which costs money. As a general rule, figure on 100 fb per tech level, but that cost can be higher or lower depending on the scarcity of such tech on the planet you're on. Inventing on Leagueheim, where you'll benefit from its abundance of tech, is far easier than on Pyre, where you're lucky to find a spare circuit board.

Time: Narrated. It takes at least 1 month of steady work (8-hour days) before a roll can be made.

Roll: Tech Redemption + Intuition

Capability: Requires relevant Tech Lore.

Resistance: Depends on the tech level of the item.

Impact: You produce a working prototype of the new tech. It's a bit wonky and might break or short-out on a failure, but these setbacks can actually give you clues about how to improve your prototype: You can use this maneuver again to produce a better model that doesn't routinely break. By the third or fifth iteration, you might have tech that is solid enough to be replicable for new models. It still might take more iterations before it can be streamlined for industrial production, but even getting this far is a rare feat in this time.

Unfortunately, the issue of whether your new tech is properly "reflective" — approved by the Church — is another matter, one that requires the deliberation of synods.

Finally, like all tech of sufficiently high design, your new device will have a tech compulsion that can affect those who are overloaded with too much technology. See *Techgnosis*. You can work out what this is with the GM, or the GM can surprise you. The most entertaining thing about techgnostic biases inherent in technology is that they're almost always unanticipated by their inventors.

JURY-RIG

Action

You can make quick repairs to a broken piece of tech, even though you lack the proper tools and materials. Jury-rigged repairs usually last only one scene.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Roll: Tech Redemption + Intuition

Capability: Relevant Tech Lore

Resistance: Based on the degree of damage to the device. A dented blaster might be Demanding, while a skimmer's bullet-riddled anti-grav plate might be Severe.

Impact: You get the device working, although a critical miss while using the device means it breaks again. The repairs last for one scene, but they can be extended by spending VP: 2 VP for an additional scene, 4 VP to extend it for the whole act, and 6 VP to keep it working for the rest of the drama.

TINKER

Action

Spending time playing with tools and materials towards no particular productive end can be calming. (See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar.)

UPGRADE

Action

Equipment is graded on a scale, progressing from disrepair to unreliable, poor, standard, superior, masterwork, and premium. You can *upgrade* existing technology, as long as you have access to the proper tools and equipment. Upgrading existing tech takes time and a cost in materials.

Time: Narrated. It takes at least 8 hours before a roll can be made.

Roll: Tech Redemption + Wits

Capability: Requires the relevant Tech Lore.

Resistance: Depends on the tech level of the item.

Impact: Bump the item up *one* grade in quality, although the cost in VP varies.

Disrepair to unreliable: 0 VP
Unreliable to poor: 1 VP
Poor to standard: 2 VP
Standard to superior: 4 VP
Superior to masterwork: 6 VP
Masterwork to premium: 8 VP

You can attempt to *upgrade* the same item again. However, no item can be upgraded by more than two grades above its original state (the state in which it was manufactured). An unreliable item can only ever become standard at best, while a standard item can only be upgraded to masterwork.

Vigor

Base rating: 3

Vigor describes a character's overall athleticism. Running, jumping, swimming, climbing, and throwing all fall into this category.

CLIMB

Action

You can climb trees and walls. A failure does not mean that you fall; you simply do not move up or down.

Most climbs don't require gear, but truly distant treks might. If you have gear, such as a rope, the roll might be favorable. If you don't have the proper climbing gear when it's really needed, the gamemaster can penalize the roll by making it unfavorable.

If something causes you to lose your grip, make a reflexive Vigor + Dexterity roll to grab hold again before you fall. If it's successful, you prevent a fall but lose your next turn recovering. If it fails, you fall. See *Falling*, below.

Time: Instantaneous (primary and movement action)
Roll: Vigor + Strength or Dexterity
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Based on the scarcity of handholds. A stacked-stone wall might be Hard, while a sheer, smooth cliff face might be Tough.
Impact: You climb at a rate of 3 meters per turn. You can spend VP to increase your speed: +1 meter per 2 VP. (Creatures of Sizes greater than 5 can add their additional Size to the speed: vorox can climb 5 meters per turn.)

EVADE

Defense

You avoid gunfire by leaping and jumping around, making yourself a moving target. This requires your movement action for that turn, and you must move at least 3m. However, your *evade* roll becomes favorable! Conversely, any roll you make on your next turn (unless you *evade* again) is unfavorable: you're leaping around too frantically to pull it off well.

Precondition: vs. a Shoot-skill attack
Time: Instantaneous (reflexive primary action + movement action)
Roll: favorable Vigor + Dexterity *or* Intuition
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Effortless. Environmental conditions — unsteady ground, strobing lights — might increase the adversity.
Impact: You gain VP for your cache, which you can spend to boost your Resistance if you wish.
Drawback: Next turn's roll is unfavorable (unless you *evade* again).

HOLD BREATH

Action

You can hold your breath for 10 turns plus your Endurance rating without having to make a roll. Each turn thereafter, you must succeed at a *hold breath* roll; otherwise, you begin to drown. This is a secondary action; success on the roll provides no VP.

If you fail a roll, you can no longer hold your breath, and you become Fatigued. Each turn, you progress to a different state (replacing the previous state) until you are able to get air, progressing from Fatigued to Hindered to Incapacitated to Unconscious to Dying. If you get air, the progression halts and reverses step by step for each turn that you are able to breathe normally until you're back to normal.

Time: Instantaneous (secondary action; no VP)
Roll: Vigor + Endurance
Capability: N/A
Resistance: If you're active (taking any primary action), it's Hard. If you're in combat, it's Tough. If you're just moving, it's Effortless. The Resistance increases by 1 each turn.
Impact: You continue to hold your breath.

KNOCKDOWN

Combat

Ram into someone to take them down with you. This action requires both your movement and primary actions. You act last in the initiative queue.

Time: Instantaneous (primary *and* movement action)
Roll: Vigor + Strength
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Ignores the target's armor-based Body Resistance, but the target may substitute Strength.
Impact: You inflict 3 base damage. Both you and the target become Prone.

READY

Action

You can take a primary action to marshal your resources: you gain VP. See the description for this maneuver under the Focus skill, above.

RIDE

Action

You can control an animal you're riding (most likely a horse). In most cases, you don't need to roll; you simply use your mount's movement speed as your own. If the animal is scared, startled, or put into any situation it doesn't normally or naturally want to be in, you might need to make a reflexive secondary-action roll to control it (and you do not collect VP from that roll). Note that even trained animals do not want to be near combat unless they've received special training (such as a destrier horse).

Time: Instantaneous (reflexive secondary action; no VP)
Roll: Vigor + Presence
Capability: Beastback
Resistance: For trained animals, it's Easy, unless they're being asked to ride through danger or combat, in which case it becomes Demanding. If it's outright war (mass fighting, artillery, etc.), the Resistance is Tough. If the animal is not trained, raise the Resistance by two stages.
Impact: You can use your mount's movement speed for your movement action.

THROW
Combat
Throw a rock, spear, or other object.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Rolls: Vigor + Dexterity (short range) or Perception (long and extreme range)
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.
Impact: You inflict damage for your weapon or object (e.g., a rock does 2 dmg).

MOVEMENT

Characters engage in all manner of movement. They're often running, jumping, swimming, or climbing. For the most part, movement isn't particularly risky, so it usually doesn't require a roll. There are some exceptions, such as the Vigor *climb* maneuver, used when a character wants to scale a wall. Otherwise, use the following rules.

RUNNING

You can run up to your movement speed per turn by taking a movement action. You can also use your primary action as a movement action to go at double your speed.

Your movement speed is based on your Size. (See the *Size* sidebar under *Vitality*.) For humans, it's 10 meters per turn.

In a low-gravity environment, you gain half again your running speed (15 for humans).

JUMPING

You make a running jump by moving a distance of at least 3 meters and jumping. You can cover a horizontal distance of half your running movement speed (5 meters for humans) and an equal vertical distance. This requires a movement action.

You can make a standing jump to a horizontal or vertical distance of one-third your running speed (3 meters for humans). This requires a movement action.

In a low-gravity environment, you can double your jumping distance.

SWIMMING

You can swim up to half your movement speed per turn. (This requires a movement action.)

If you are overloaded with gear (carrying more weight than your Strength allows), your combat rolls are unfavorable when swimming. You can sacrifice your movement action to stay in place and stabilize yourself, allowing you to make normal combat rolls.

FALLING

Falling is usually involuntary, but if you choose to leap from enough buildings, horses, or banisters, you're going to get hurt. Gravity teaches harsh lessons to those who test it.

The distance you fall determines how hurt you might get. The base damage is half the distance in meters. So, falling four meters is 2 damage, and falling 24 meters is 12 damage. The surface you hit might affect this damage:

Surface	Damage
Sharp rocks, spikes	+2
Soft (mattress)	-4
Water	-6

Falling damage is applied directly against you, but armor can subtract its Resistance rating from this damage. Falling damage has the Slam property, so only armor that is rated as Slamproof gets its full Resistance value against it; otherwise, only half the armor's Resistance is applied. (See *Armor* in **Chapter 4: Technology**.) For example, plate armor is Slamproof with a Body Resistance of 8, and so it subtracts 8 from falling damage. Synthsilk, however, is not Slamproof; its 3 Resistance is only worth 1 Resistance against falling damage.

States

States are effects imposed on characters through various means. This includes special effects inflicted by weapons (a stunner pistol causing a target to become Stunned), characters influencing other characters (using the Impress *command* maneuver to make a target become Commanded), and characters bearing more high-technology than they can psychologically handle (an energy shield's tech compulsion is to make its user Reckless).

Some gamemasters find that writing a state down on an index card, making a few notes about the mechanics, and then handing it to the player whose character is affected makes it easier to keep track of multiple states. The rules for how states work are presented in **Chapter 1: Rules**.

STATES OF IMAGINATION

States are primarily roleplaying tools. They are script cues for the players — actors in our passion play. The descriptions below list some rules suggestions when dealing with the states — yes, *suggestions*. These aren't iron laws. In fact, you don't have to resort to these rules. You should be guided by their spirit rather than their law. Just because you've become Daunted by a foe doesn't mean the GM *has* to impose the suggested -2 goal penalty on your attacks against that foe. The rule is there as a possibility, showing you how serious things can become. It the GM's choice if and when to impose such rules.

It's impossible to detail just how states work in every context. The GM needs to call on ingenuity and imagination to fill in the details, altering the rules as needed to fit a state into the scene at hand. The state descriptions are guidelines, not hard and fast rules; they should be adapted to the situation.

Players can certainly collaborate with the GM to suggest just how a particular state might work in a given context.

SAYING "YES, AND…"

In improvisational theater, players are offered ideas from other players about their character's identity and situation. One of the golden rules is to accept one (or all) of them, expand upon it, and then improvise what happens next. This improvisational technique called "yes, and…."

It's a good idea to follow this guideline when your character is overcome by a state against their will. You might not like it, and you may feel that it doesn't represent how your character would react in that moment, let alone what it says about free will. And yet, the dice rolls have spoken and ruled that, yes indeed, your character has come under the influence of an unwanted state.

It's as if you're an actor whose been given a sudden script revision but without any lines or resolution to the scene — you've now got to write it on-the-fly, but you have to work within the limitations given to you: the state which impedes your character. That doesn't have to impede your roleplaying. You're a talented performer in the mystery play of the Fading Suns — play the hell out of the scene!

Has your iron-willed noble Commander been inflicted with the Afraid state? That's ignoble, yes, but a reality, even for combat veterans. The challenge is to get past sulking about it and ask yourself: What would that character do when they're confronted with uncontrollable fear? The same is true if your humorless Avestite has become Wowed. How do they cope with unexpected happiness?

Suffering from a state is a roleplaying gift, even if it proves a setback to the achievement of your character's immediate goal.

Physical States

BLINDED
You cannot see. All physical rolls you make against anyone you are not touching with direct contact are unfavorable. Others' physical attack rolls against you are favorable. Influence actions that usually require eye contact are likewise affected.

DAZED
You aren't operating at peak efficiency: you suffer -2 goal to perception-oriented rolls and your physical attacks.

DEAFENED
You cannot hear. You cannot succeed with any activity or perception that requires hearing. This includes any types of mental or social influence that require you to hear your target. On the bright side, sonic attacks, such as from a screecher pistol, are unfavorable against you.

DESENSITIZED
You've become comfortably numb. You are immune to pain-based states, such as Tormented (and some instances of Penalized, depending on the cause) for as long as the state persists.

DISORIENTED
Your perceptions are seriously awry. Your actions are directed at random targets, instead of the person(s) you think you're targeting.

DYING
You're dying. If you don't receive medical attention to stabilize you (leaving you Unconscious) before the end of the scene, you'll die. Once you are stabilized, this state goes away and you are Fatigued. (See the rules for *Death and Dying* under *Vitality* below.)

EUPHORIC
You're overcome with pleasure. Although it feels great, it's distracting. You act hindmost in the initiative queue, and you suffer -2 goal to all rolls.

FATIGUED
You are extremely weak. You suffer -2 goal on all actions involving physical activity. In addition, you must spend 1 VP to perform *any* action that requires a roll, even if there is normally no cost. You spend this before the roll is made.

HEARING IMPAIRED
You have difficulty hearing. You suffer -2 goal on any activity or perception roll that requires hearing. This includes any type of mental or social influence that requires you to hear your target. On the bright side, you gain +2 Resistance against sonic attacks, such as from a screecher pistol.

HINDERED
Your movement is restricted. You can only move at half speed, and you suffer -2 goal on all actions involving full-body movement (such as *dodge*, *climb*, *dance*, etc.)

IMMOBILIZED
You cannot move from where you are, and all your actions involving full-body movement (such as *dodge*, *climb*, *dance*, etc.) are unfavorable.

INCAPACITATED
You cannot initiate any actions that require rolls or react to others' actions.

MANGLED
You have suffered a wound that requires surgery before you can heal. Someone with the Remedy skill can attempt to remove the Mangled state, which then allows you to heal via Revival, Respite, or other medical care. Elixir can also heal Vitality and also removes the Mangled state. Certain theurgic rites can ignore the Mangled state to heal Vitality and even remove the state, allowing for natural healing.

NAUSEATED
You're sick to your stomach. You suffer -2 goal on all rolls. Certain triggers might cause you to throw up: disgusting smells, the sight of food you're allergic to, or the arrival of a hated rival. If you're jostled physically or suffer more Vitality wounds from a single attack than your Endurance rating, you'll reflexively, uncontrollably, toss your cookies, losing your next primary action (but you won't do that again for at least 10 turns.)

PARALYZED
You can't move at all, not even your hands. You cannot initiate any physical actions. Influence actions that require anything more than whispered speaking are unfavorable.

PRONE
You are lying on the ground. Your movement action can only be to move at a crawl (quarter speed) or stand up.

SEEING IMPAIRED
Your vision is hindered. All physical rolls you make against anyone you are not touching with direct contact suffer -2 goal. Influence actions that usually require eye contact are likewise affected.

STIMULATED
You are hyperaware of your surroundings, and your mind is racing. You gain initiative edge, as well as a +2 bonus to Perception for instinctual perception tests. Your *spot* maneuver rolls are favorable.

STUNNED
Your coordination is awry. Rolls involving physical actions and perception are unfavorable.

SUSPENDED
You are suspended in air (or maybe a vacuum). Your physical action rolls are unfavorable (unless you have a Shipboard Operations capability, which includes zero-G training). You cannot initiate movement without handholds, a rope line, a jetpack, or some other form of assistance or means of imparting motion.

TORMENTED
You are in excruciating pain. You suffer -2 goal on all physical actions. In addition, any time you spend VP, you must spend 1 additional point as a "pain penalty" to work past the distraction. (*Example:* You spend 3 VP to boost your Resistance. You must spend 1 additional VP pain penalty, increasing your total VP to 4.)

ANGERED
You've got a short fuse. You might respond to your provoker (whoever caused this state) with a challenge to a duel, coercion influence (*castigate*, *command*, *daunt*, etc.), or even an outright physical attack (until first blood is drawn). Any persuasion influence maneuvers you attempt (such as Charm's *befriend*) are unfavorable. On the bright side, any persuasion attempts made against you are unfavorable.

ANXIOUS
You're really worked up over something. You suffer -2 goal on influence attempts, as well as any long-term tasks you must roll for when in this state, such as repairing a device or meditating.

BERSERK
Your anger is beyond all reason. You will physically attack to maim or even kill whoever put you into this state, showing no mercy. If the cause of this state was an ally (or the state was an occult compulsion), you'll attack whoever they indicate or whichever enemy you know angers them most. If that person is not present or reachable for the duration of this state, you'll attack someone from their faction. If no such target is available, you'll snap and attack any random neutral or hostile person who is closest. Once this state ends, you'll be worn out; during the next scene, you must spend 1 VP to initiate any action or else your rolls will be unfavorable.

UNCONSCIOUS
You fall Prone (see above) and are oblivious to everything going on around you. You can take no actions whatsoever, although you might be allowed an instinctual *shake it off* attempt, depending on the situation. Physical attacks against you are favorable. On the bright side, you cannot be affected by influence attempts while unconscious.

Mental States

AFRAID
You feel under threat; your nerves are on end. You suffer -2 goal to undertake any action *except* perception-oriented actions, *dodge*, or *stonewall*, as you constantly scan your environment for threats. If you are being bested by a foe, you'll probably flee.

COMMANDED
You have been given an order and must execute it, although you don't have to like it. If this state's persistence ends before you can accomplish the order, then you no longer need to obey it. If the order directly harms your faction's objectives, you can make a reflexive *shake it off* roll each turn. You cannot be Commanded to outright betray your faction.

CONFUSED
You're not sure what to believe. When you first suffer this state, you lose your next action as you try to figure out what's really true. Thereafter, you are wracked with doubt about whatever topic caused the confusion and can't stop running it over in your mind: suffer -2 goal for all non-physical actions.

DECEIVED
You've been hoodwinked but don't know it. You believe that the person who put you into this state is telling the truth, so long as what they say has some plausibility. You won't, however, necessarily believe outrageous statements (such as "the prince of your house is a hironem disguised as a human"). You are inclined to fall for whatever your deceiver says. (Their persuasion rolls against you are favorable so long as you're still Deceived.)

ENLIGHTENED
You're operating on a higher plane. Your rolls to *repent*, *reconcile*, and *atone* psychic Urge and theurgic Hubris are favorable.

PENALIZED
Before making any roll, flip a coin: heads = an unfavorable roll. (Or roll a d20: 1-10 = normal, 11-20 = unfavorable roll.)

TERRIFIED
You are in mortal fear for your life. You must either flee the object of your fear (whatever or whomever caused this state) or, if forced to face it, curl up into a ball, unable to take any actions that are not defensive.

WOWED
You're full of good cheer, as if you just heard the funniest joke ever or the most uplifting symphony. Your persuasion attempts against others are favorable, as your demeanor is nonthreatening and infectious, but your coercion attempts are unfavorable.

Social States

AWED
You experience a sudden insight. Its nature and effect should be negotiated with the GM based on the context. It might unlock a mystery you've been wrestling with, resolve a spiritual dilemma, reveal a facet about a faction or an alien culture, or give you a new purpose or quest to pursue. Whoever caused this state gains your respect; their persuasion influence attempts against you are favorable. As a side effect, even after this state has worn off, your next restorative practice roll is favorable. (See the *Restorative Practices* sidebar, earlier in this chapter.)

BEFRIENDED
You like your influencer. If you were hostile, you're now neutral. If you were neutral, you're now friendly. If you were friendly, you're now a staunch ally. There are no specific rules here; just remember that friends generally want the best for each other and tend not to attack one another. In this state, you're well-disposed to do a favor for your friend if they request it. Nothing big (like undertaking a risky action), but you'll unlock a door, look the other way, overlook a minor legal transgression, etc.

CASTIGATED
You are guilt-ridden, a sinner in the hands of an angry god. You are nervous around your influencer. You suffer -2 goal on influence attack rolls against them. You will truthfully answer questions put to you by your influencer, but generally with "yes" or "no" answers. You won't reveal deep secrets of your faction (such as troop movements, locations of secret bases, or the identities of spies). Questions whose answers might put your allies in peril might trigger a reflexive *shake it off* roll.

CONVINCED
You adopt the belief, idea, or scheme that your influencer has conveyed to you. It's now your belief. Note that if this state was caused by influence, the influencer must have genuinely believed it to be true when he convinced you (the Knavery *deceive* maneuver is used for lying). If this state becomes chronic, you might want to spread the idea by proselytizing. In non-stressful moments, you will attempt to *convince* allies and friends of its worth.

DAUNTED
You are wary of your influencer. You suffer -2 goal on physical attack rolls against them, and your coercion influence attempts against them are unfavorable. If they begin to best you in combat or social affairs, you might retreat and yield the field. (This is not a strict edict; it's a feeling to be negotiated with the GM.)

DIVINELY INSPIRED
You are suffused with spiritual conviction, convinced that your deeds are in synch with destiny. You receive +2 goal to attack rolls and influence attempts, as well as +2 Resistance (after choosing one type to apply this bonus to: Body, Mind, or Spirit.)

ENTREATED
You are favorably inclined to do what has been asked of you by your influencer. You won't necessarily put yourself at risk (that's your call), but you'll put forth a good faith endeavor to get it done. If the task requires too much effort, though, you might ask your influencer to sweeten the pot (in the form of money, information, or a future favor).

GUILTY
You are convinced that you've committed a grievous sin and must make amends. Unless you sincerely make an effort to somehow make amends for what you've done (negotiated between you and the GM), your influence attempts are unfavorable.

HUMILIATED
You're deeply embarrassed, a laughing stock. Your influence attempts against those who witnessed your humiliation are unfavorable. If you were a friend to your influencer, you are now neutral for as long as this state persists until they apologize. If you were neutral, you're now hostile, and you might even challenge your influencer to a duel. If this state becomes chronic, it's quite possible that you will either nourish an undying grudge against your influencer or foster a desperate need to please them to regain some ounce of esteem from them.

MESMERIZED
You are fascinated by your influencer (or their performance, depending on how this state was imposed). You can't take your eyes off them and will hang on every word they say. You find it difficult to pay attention to things unrelated to the content of whatever Mesmerized you (except for self-defense). The GM might declare rolls for such actions unfavorable or levy a tax of 1 VP to perform the action (you must spend this VP before rolls are made).

ROUSED
You are moved by your influencer (or their performance) and take their words or actions to heart. You will seek to emulate the ideal they communicated. It might have stirred a deep love of your fief, a hatred of the Hazat, or a desire to help others. You won't feel good until you've done something to express or enact this ideal — by harassing foreigners, inveighing against the Hazat, or volunteering at a soup kitchen.

Surge

Whenever you're out of fuel — you've run out of victory points — and need to draw on your last reserves, you can call for a *surge*: a boost of adrenaline, brio, vim, or grit. In rules terms, you get victory points for your cache from the well equal to your Surge rating.

Your base Surge rating is determined like so:

Add your highest force characteristic (Strength, Wits, or Presence) *to your* level.

> ***Example:*** *Sgt. Bimani has a Strength of 6, a Wits of 4, and Presence 4. His highest of the three characteristics is 6, so that's the base value he uses when determining his Surge rating. He then adds his level (2nd). His Surge is 8.*

As you improve your highest force characteristic, your Surge rating will also go up.

You only have a limited number of surges you can call on. At 1st level, you get one. At 4th level, you get two surges you can call upon when needed. At 7th level, you get a third surge, and at 10th level, you get a fourth surge.

Once you've used up your allotted surges, you don't get them back until you've successfully taken a Respite (i.e., you've had eight hours of uninterrupted rest or sleep and your Vigor + Endurance roll vs. Effortless Resistance is successful; see *Respite* for more details). Once your Respite is over, you gain all your allowed surges again.

Techgnosis

The Church teaches that technology is not neutral. It comes with its own biases, which can alter the behavior and subconscious thoughts of their users. In the far-future universe of **Fading Suns**, these "techgnostic compulsions" (to use the Church's term) can be quite dramatic. It is perhaps best left to philosophers to ponder whether this is all psychosomatic, a result of the Church's relentless critiques, or if it's actually a property of the tech itself, a phenomenon unknown in the 21st century and only made obvious once tech became advanced enough.

Each character has a trait called *Techgnosis* that measures either their resistance to the compulsions of high technology or their adaptability to the evolutionary potential awakened by technology, depending on whether you prefer the Church's version or the League's.

In game terms, Techgnosis is a trait that measures your allowable tech inventory. It tells you how many high-tech devices you can carry and operate regularly without risking a *tech compulsion* — a mental state imposed on you by the device. "High tech" here refers to items of Tech Level 5 and higher. Items TL4 and below do not count; you can carry as many of them as you like without any techgnostic effect.

Your Techgnosis rating is equal to your class level.

You can mark this on the character sheet in the "Equipment" section.

Overload

When you carry and operate more tech devices than allowed by your Techgnosis, you are *overloaded*: When you roll a critical hit for an action that uses a piece of TL5+ tech, you suffer that tech's compulsion. Yes, a critical *hit*, not a critical *miss*: triumphing with tech inflates the techgnostic ego.

Each type of technology has its own type of tech compulsion. These are described in **Chapter 4: Technology**. As with most states, you can try to *shake it off*; otherwise, the compulsion persists for the rest of the scene.

This only occurs when the roll involves use of the tech, whether using it directly (firing a blaster; rigging a high-tech explosive; interfacing with a think machine; hacking a gen-lock) or performing an action related closely to it (making a physical defense-action roll while wearing synthsilk armor or an energy shield).

This includes using tech that you don't carry on your person: piloting a starship; turning on the city's energy grid; tapping into the planet's geothermal terraforming engine; etc. While this tech doesn't contribute to determining whether you're overloaded, if you use it while you are overloaded, it can cause tech compulsions. (The GM can choose the compulsion based on context.)

> ***Example:*** *Canon Ebenezer de Paulo wears an energy shield, a laser pistol, and a hand-held Advisor think machine. He is 3rd level, so his Techgnosis is 3. He suffers no problems carrying around these high-tech devices, since their quantity doesn't exceed his limit. He finds a Second Republic era stunner pistol in the ruins of ancient office building. He pockets it. This exceeds his Techgnosis by 1. He is now overloaded. If he were to roll a critical hit while firing the stunner or laser pistol, he'd suffer the gun's tech compulsion.*

Compulsions

The types of states imposed by technology tend to be different than those caused by influence or occult powers. Sometimes, it almost seems like a tech compulsion represents that technology's desire to be used more frequently. Of course, that's ridiculous. Perhaps it's the person using the tech who's become so enamored by technology that they want to keep using it. And yet, it really does seem sometimes that it's the device itself that seems to be exerting its needs.

Strangely, the Supreme Order of Engineers often agrees with this thesis, as it supports their view of technology as a sacred force of its own. The Church prefers not to personify technology this way, although many peasants do. Officially, the dogma is that the user is succumbing to their own weaknesses and fetishisms about technology, not that the tech is hypnotizing them.

For a list of compulsions, see *Tech Compulsions* in **Chapter 4: Technology**.

ARMOR AND CLOTHING

A full or partial set of high-tech armor (synthsilk, stiffsynth, Adept Robes, etc.) or an outfit of full-body clothing (holo-robes and cloaks) counts as *one* device when considering its effect on Techgnosis.

CURIOS

There is a class of high-tech items called *curios* that *do not* count against Techgnosis. These are typically luxury and leisure items from the Second Republic era whose effects are benign and relatively inconsequential to endeavors. An example is an al-Malik *aesthetic orb*, a small hover-device that can follow its user around and provide mood lighting and music.

ARTIFACT TECH

TL9 and 10 devices are in a whole different category when it comes to a sentient being's ability to work with and understand that tech. Regardless of your Techgnosis rating, using Ur tech *always* causes you to be overloaded. A critical hit using Ur tech imposes the tech's compulsion on you. Rolls to *shake it off* are unfavorable. Furthermore, the compulsion is chronic; it does not go away when the span ends and usually requires therapy to remove it.

Compulsions from Ur artifacts can get weird. Besides mental and social states, they can create physical trouble. They may cause other tech you're carrying to glitch, or they may even create strange quantum anomalies that distort reality around you.

Offloading

The easiest way to avoid techgnostic compulsion is to offload equipment — just stop carrying too many devices. Once the number of high-tech devices you're carrying is equal to or below your Techgnosis, your devices no longer trigger compulsions. However: any tech compulsion that was already triggered before you offloaded its device still lasts until the scene ends, even after you've offloaded enough equipment.

Vitality

Vitality is a measure of health, stamina, and overall will to live. It represents how much damage a character can take before falling unconscious and dying.

Your Vitality ranges from your maximum Vitality rating (see below for the formula) all the way down to 0. It never goes below 0 and rarely exceeds your maximum (except under special circumstances).

Vitality is never rolled. Instead, Vitality is reduced by one point for each point of damage you suffer.

Vitality is recovered over time by healing. This can be speeded up by access to medical care, amazing high-tech substances such as Elixir (which instantly heals wounds), and even miraculous theurgic rituals that restore the body, mind, and soul. (See *Healing* below.)

Determining Vitality

Vitality is calculated by adding your Size rating to all your fortitude characteristics (Endurance + Will + Faith) and then adding your level. Humans have a size rating of 5 and certain alien species might be higher or lower. (See the *Size* sidebar.)

Base Vitality = species Size + Endurance + Will + Faith + level

> ***Example:*** *Novitiate Lavinia (1st level) has an Endurance of 4, a Will of 4, and a Faith of 7. She's human, so her Size is 5. Her base Vitality is 21.*

As you rise in levels, your Vitality will also rise by 1 per level.

> ***Example:*** *At level 3, Novitiate Lavinia's Vitality is 23.*

As your fortitude characteristics rise, Vitality will also rise. Certain perks can also enhance Vitality.

Damage

Whenever you are hit by a weapon, or if you are exposed to adverse conditions (fire, vacuum, etc.), you lose Vitality.

SIZE

Humans vary in height and weight, but for the purposes of game mechanics, their Size ratings don't vary by much. Most adult humans are rated at Size 5. Adolescents and those with short stature have a Size of 4.

Alien species have a standard Size, but as with humans, it can vary for short or tall members of the species.

Base movement speed is in meters. (See *Vigor* for more details.)

Species	Avg. Size	Movement speed
Ascorbite	5	10 m
Gannok	4	8 m
Etyri	5 or 6	10 m (Size 5) or 12m (Size 6); 12m flight
Hironem	5	10 m
Human	5	10 m
Oro'ym	5	10 m; 10 m swimming
Shantor	7	28 m (quadrupedal)
Ur-obun and ukar	5	10 m
Vorox	7	14 m (two legs), 21 m (four legs), 28 m (six legs)

When you reach 0 Vitality, you are rendered Unconscious. If you take *any* additional damage when you are at 0 Vitality, you are then in the Dying state.

Unconsciousness

When you are reduced to 0 Vitality, you are unconscious; thus, you are in the Unconscious state. When you are in the Unconscious state due to loss of all Vitality, you can receive medical assistance to recover from it (see the Remedy *treat wounds* maneuver); alternatively, you can use the *shake it off* maneuver to regain consciousness.

On your next turn after becoming Unconscious, you can instinctually attempt to *shake it off* by making a successful Vigor + Endurance roll as a secondary action against a Demanding Resistance (or Tough, if you suffered grievous wounds, such as from a large explosion).

If you're successful, you regain 1 Vitality and enter an enduring Fatigued state. When you're in this state, you can't *shake it off*; it must be healed away through a Respite (see *Respite* below) and/or medical rehab (see the Remedy *rehabilitate* maneuver). If you failed the *shake it off* attempt, you awaken at the end of the scene with 1 Vitality and the Fatigued state, as above.

Death and Dying

If you take any damage while at 0 Vitality, you are dying and enter the Dying state.

On your next turn after entering the Dying state, you can instinctually attempt to *shake it off* by rolling Vigor + Faith against a Demanding Resistance (or Tough, if you suffered grievous wounds, such as from a large explosion) as a secondary action.

If the roll is successful, you are upgraded to a chronic Unconscious state (as above) but cannot attempt to *shake it off* without first receiving a Respite (see *Respite*, below) or receiving treatment (see the Remedy *treat wounds* maneuver).

If the roll fails, you will die at the end of the scene if you do not receive treatment or some form of medical aid before then.

If at any point you enter the Dying state and survive, you are in a chronic Fatigued state until you recover Vitality equal to or greater than your Size rating. Therapy from someone using the Remedy *rehabilitate* maneuver might be able to cure this state earlier.

KNOCKING SOMEONE OUT

In thrillers and action romances, heroes or villains may try to render unwitting people unconscious with a single blow to the back the head. In the spirit of such stories, you can attempt to do this to someone. Maybe it's a town guardsman you've snuck up behind, or maybe it's your impetuous friend you have to knock out "for his own good" to prevent him from going to a duel.

Generally, you can only attempt this against NPCs: Agents and Extras, but not Headliners. (See **Chapter 1: Drama** in the **Gamemaster Book** for the definitions of NPC types.) You can't do it to other PCs, unless the GM allows it, most likely because it serves a good dramatic purpose.

The system works like this:

- The person has to be unaware that you're about to attack. Either they don't know you're there, or they're lulled into trusting you completely and wouldn't expect such a dastardly betrayal.
- You can declare that your attack is to *subdue* the target instead of damaging them. If it succeeds, instead of delivering damage, the impact is the Unconscious state. This lasts for the remainder of the scene. You can spend 1 VP to increase this to Enduring (they won't wake up for 8 hours or so).
- If the target is a PC (the GM must first allow this), they can make a reflexive *shake it off* attempt to remain conscious. Their instinctual perception also might detect their attacker before they can strike.

Healing

Wounds heal, but that takes time. You can recover Vitality by taking a quick breather, by resting, or by having your wounds tended to (or a combination of these options).

Revival

You can use one of your allowed Revivals to restore lost Vitality. See *Revival*, above.

Respite

Next to a Revival, the surest way to recover Vitality is to take a *Respite*, which means having at least eight hours of uninterrupted rest or sleep. You can have a conversation or maybe read a book, but any maneuver that requires movement or doing more than lying about and resting negates the Respite.

At the end of a Respite, you regain 1 Vitality. In addition, you can roll Vigor + Endurance against an Effortless Resistance. If the Respite is spent in a hospital or an especially relaxing, homey, or luxurious environment, the roll is favorable. A healer can also make the roll favorable by tending to the patient using the Remedy *treat wounds* maneuver. Success on the roll gives you VP that must be applied toward healing your wounds: 1 Vitality healed per 2 VP.

After you recover from being Unconscious, you are in an enduring Fatigued state until you heal at least 1 point of Vitality through a Respite.

Medical Assistance

You can gain medical assistance from others. The Remedy skill is used to tend to wounds. Details on various methods of healing — *rehabilitate*, *treat wounds*, *operate* —can be found earlier in this chapter.

MEDPAK

While the rich and powerful have access to treatments and care that approach the advanced levels of the Diaspora or Second Republic eras, medical care for the average peasant is usually very primitive. However, the Second Republic left behind many easy-to-use healing technologies that were designed for consumers who had no medical training of their own. These include MedPaks: personal, hand-portable first-aid kits. These still require the Remedy skill to use, but they contain all sorts of healing aids, such as bandages and health monitors; sometimes they also include the regenerative drug Elixir (see below).

Using a MedPak makes Remedy *treat wounds* rolls favorable; if the roll is victorious, 1 additional point of Vitality is recovered.

ELIXIR

A powerful regenerative serum. It was invented during the Second Republic, but it's still produced by certain (most often League) manufacturers and a few individual alchemists. Since the rise of the Pax Alexius, the production of Elixir has increased somewhat. It is still too expensive for most to afford but not as scarce as it once was. The secret of its manufacture is still well-guarded by the few guilds and families who still produce it.

Elixir can heal wounds at a miraculous rate. More or less powerful batches of Elixir can be found on the market (and the buyer may not always know which they're getting). It comes in injector tubes which need only be placed against bare skin anywhere on the body — even far from the wound. Once triggered, the serum enters the patient's system through cellular osmosis and does its magic. The process is so advanced and little understood that it really does seem like magic.

A secondary action is required to inject oneself or another person with Elixir, so long as one hand is free and the injector is within easy reach (a pocket or a belt clip).

Elixir can heal nearly any wound, even wounds from someone in the Mangled state (see below). Most restrictions on healing through Respites or *treat wounds* do not apply.

Bare Potency: The patient may use one of their Revivals as a secondary action. (If they have no Revivals remaining, they heal 1 Vitality.) In addition, the poorly made serum causes the patient to be Stunned for 1 turn (although they can try to *shake it off*).

Low Potency: The patient may use one of their Revivals as a secondary action. (If they have no Revivals remaining, they heal 1 Vitality.)

Standard Potency: The patient gets a free Revival that does not count against their limit.

High Potency: The patient gets two free Revivals that do not count against their limit.

Mangled Wounds

Certain weapons or special attacks can *mangle* their victim, inflicting the Mangled physical state. This prevents the body from healing until surgery can remove the fragments left in the wound or stitch up the grievous tearing to the tissues.

Someone with Remedy skill can remove the Mangled state, which then allows the patient to heal via Revival, Respite, or other medical care. If the Remedy *treat wounds* maneuver heals at least 1 Vitality, the Mangled state is removed. If the patient doesn't receive medical care until after the scene in which the Mangled state was imposed, an *operate* maneuver is required to remove the state, so long as 1 Vitality or more is healed.

Elixir can also heal Vitality regardless of the Mangled state, and it also removes the Mangled state.

Certain theurgic rites can ignore the Mangled state to heal Vitality and even remove the state, allowing for natural healing.

Combat Specialties

The rules for combat are presented in **Chapter 1: Rules**, along with the pertinent skill descriptions — Fight, Melee, Shoot, and Vigor — earlier in this chapter. This section presents three special forms of fighting that can be learned from the perks Fencing, Marksmanship, and Martial Arts.

Fencing

Fencing is the art of the blade. Fencing duels are the preferred method of resolving disputes of honor among the nobles of the Known Worlds. A noble who doesn't know how to handle a sword may soon be dishonored or dead.

The Fencing perk represents training in one particular *style* of fencing. Anyone can thrust with a blade, but only those who have carefully practiced will gain special benefit from it. The perk may be acquired twice. The first time gives you the benefits of a Gallant; the second perk gives you Swashbuckler benefits.

When you first gain the Fencing perk, choose one style from the list below. Once you have gained the second perk (Swashbuckler), you may learn other styles as capabilities. For instance, once you've become a Duello Swashbuckler, you can use one of the capabilities you gain upon leveling up to learn the Torero style. This allows you to use any of its benefits at the Swashbuckler level; once you've mastered one fighting art, your understanding of the fundamentals make it easier for you to master others.

But remember: *You should have the proper weapon capability for your weapon.* If you do not, your rolls are unfavorable.

Styles

While most fencing styles are performed with a blade, they can be exchanged with most melee weapons. Some styles practice similar techniques using staffs, canes, or batons. Most nobles consider those unworthy weapons; a sword is the only real weapon of honor among proper duelists.

DUELLO

Precondition: Noble

The most common form of sword fencing, Duello isn't so much a single style as it is simply the "way of the blade," cloaked in customs of honor and respect. Most nobles learn it from their sword masters.

Perk	Benefice
1st	*Gallant:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits: • +2 goal for a Melee-skill action, • +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack, • +1 damage, • gain initiative edge, or • restrain up to 1 point of damage inflicted by your attack (see *Restraint* in **Chapter 1: Rules**).
2nd	*Swashbuckler:* As per Gallant above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform an *honorable strike* maneuver.

- *Honorable strike* — Perform a Melee-skill attack *and* spend VP to eliminate all damage (as per the rules for *Restraint* in **Chapter 1: Rules**); if successful — and no damage was done — make an immediate *entreat* maneuver as a bonus primary action against the same opponent. The target's Mind Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage you eliminated. The usual request in the sorts of games noble fencers play is for the opponent to yield with honor, to release their captive, or to accept a kiss or token of esteem.

KRAXI

Precondition: House Decados, merchant, ukar

Ukari knife fighting is perfected in a fast and vicious style similar to Jox Kai Von (see *Martial Arts* below). Kraxi emphasizes hidden knives and brutality over style and finesse. This style has become popular among some of the less scrupulous Scravers.

Perk	Benefice
1st	*Gallant:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits: • +2 goal for a Melee-skill action with a knife, • +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack, or • +1 damage with a knife, or • ignore up to 2 ranks of a single opponent's armor-based Body Resistance with a knife attack (if they're not wearing armor, this has no effect).
2nd	*Swashbuckler:* As per Gallant above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *penalizing strike* maneuver. • *Penalizing strike* — Perform a Melee-skill attack with a knife; if successful, attempt an immediate *deceive* maneuver as a bonus primary action against the same opponent. The target's Mind Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack. If victorious, instead of being Deceived, they are Penalized for their next action (plus one additional action per 2 VP you spend).

SERPENTIS

Precondition: Noble *and* Performing Arts Lore (Dancing)

This style's complex and weaving movements have made it all the rage among noble courts, not only as a form of defense but also as a dance performance. This style calls for accentuated movements and patience in striking. Serpentis fencers can spend minutes dancing, dodging, and weaving through complex patterns before they even draw their sword to strike a worn-down opponent. The current recognized champion of this style is Baroness Mareena de Corazon of the Hazat.

Perk	Benefice
1st	*Gallant:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits: • +2 goal for a Melee-skill action, • +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack, • +1 damage, or • double your movement speed for that turn.
2nd	*Swashbuckler:* As per Gallant above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *dancing blades* maneuver. • *Dancing blades* — Perform a Melee-skill attack; if successful, attempt an immediate *mesmerize* maneuver as a bonus primary action against the same opponent. The target's Mind Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack.

TORERO

Precondition: Noble

Torero stylists claim that their whirling cloak moves derive from an ancient art developed for fighting beasts on Holy Terra. A Torero fencer uses their cloak in their off-hand to distract opponents and redirect attacks. Maneuvers emphasize large dramatic movements, sweeps of the cloak, and contorting bodies. Torero is popular among nobles who not only want to be deadly but also want to compete in high-fashion Torero contests, using flashy cloaks and costumes to give performances for onlooking lords and ladies.

Perk	Benefice
1st	*Gallant:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits: • +2 goal for a Melee-skill action, • +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack, • +1 damage, or • a single opponent you are engaging in a fight suffers hindmost initiative (acting last that turn).

2nd *Swashbuckler:* As per Gallant above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform an *entangling sweep* maneuver.

- *Entangling sweep* — You act last in the initiative queue (except for any opponent you might have designated to suffer hindmost initiative). You can then attempt a Melee-skill attack with your cloak to entangle your opponent. If successful, they're yanked Prone and take 2 damage; you can also (or instead) attempt an immediate Melee-skill attack against them as a bonus primary action with -2 goal.

Marksmanship

The gun is the great equalizer. Unlike martial arts or fencing, anybody can pick up a gun and deliver a killing blow. It is lucky for most that in the Known Worlds, guns are not easily available to everybody. Gunsmiths charge exorbitant prices for their goods. Their steady customers — rich nobles and wealthy guildmembers — support this tradition, preferring to keep such tools in the hands of the upper classes. The outrageous cost for ammunition can also be blamed on this class bias. Much like medieval Japanese peasants who were not allowed to carry katanas — an honor reserved for samurai — the average **Fading Suns** peasant is not permitted to carry firearms, and most simply cannot afford one. While there is a steady black-market need for cheap, readily available guns, people get what they pay for. The lack of technical know-how ensures that these cheap knockoffs often fall to pieces after firing a few shots.

The Marksmanship perk represents training in gun derring-do. The perk may be acquired twice. The first time gives you the benefits of a Sharpshooter; the second perk gives you the Gunslinger benefits.

But remember: *You should have the proper weapon capability for your weapon.* If you do not, your rolls are unfavorable.

See **Chapter 4: Technology** for further details on guns.

Perk **Benefice**

1st *Sharpshooter:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits:

- +2 goal for a Shoot-skill action,
- +1 damage with a gun attack,
- gain initiative edge,
- ignore up to 2 ranks of a single opponent's armor-based Body Resistance with a gun attack (if they're not wearing armor, this has no effect), or
- restrain up to 1 point of damage inflicted by your shot (see *Restraint* in **Chapter 4: Rules**).

2nd *Gunslinger:* As per Sharpshooter above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *gunstorm* maneuver.

- *Gunstorm* — Lose initiative edge (if you have it). Attempt a Shoot-skill attack; if successful (and your gun's rate of fire is 2 or more), you may attempt an immediate bonus primary-action shot. The target's Body Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack.

Martial Arts

The Martial Arts perk represents training in a particular *school* of fighting. The perk may be acquired twice. The first time gives you the benefits of an Adept; the second perk gives you the Master benefits.

When you first gain the Martial Arts perk, choose one school from the list below. Once you have gained the second perk (Master), you may learn other schools as capabilities. For instance, once you've become a Koto Master, you can use one of the capabilities you would normally gain upon leveling up to learn the Shaidan style instead (so long as you meet the preconditions). This allows you to use any of its benefits up to the Master level. Once you've mastered one fighting art, your understanding of the fundamentals makes it easier for you to master others.

Schools

In the Known Worlds, martial artists proudly advertise their affiliations and engage in fierce rivalries with other schools. Grand tournaments are held to determine whose fighting style is best. In the end, it is usually not the school that determines the outcome of a fight, but the fighter.

Below is a list of the more famous martial schools. Others exist, but their teachers are rarer.

GRAA

Precondition: Vorox

Because this school relies on a vorox's six limbs, non-vorox cannot learn Graa. Vorox physiques allow for special techniques. A few vorox have taken advantage of this, perfecting their techniques in a martial form. This art is rare among the vorox, as it is practiced by only a small percentage of civilized vorox.

Perk	Benefice
1st	*Adept:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits: • +2 goal for a Fight-skill action, • +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack, • +1 damage with a Fight-skill attack, • gain initiative edge, or • you can perform an *Akla* maneuver. • *Akla* – You can use your extra limbs to aid any grapple or hold maneuver. You must have at least two arms free to perform a grapple, and you must have at least two more free to gain this benefit. This maneuver modifies any grapple or hold maneuver by giving it +2 goal.
2nd	*Master:* As per Adept above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *banga* or *drox* maneuver. • *Banga* — Do not stand in the way of a charging vorox. This action allows you to take full advantage of your superior bulk and six limbs to become a veritable speeding train. This functions as the Vigor *knockdown* maneuver, except that you can use the Fight skill, and you increase the base damage to 5 + 1 damage per 3 m that you run. • *Drox* ("Second Hand") — You have trained yourself to use one of your extra limbs to perform one bonus primary action per turn, although this bonus action is unfavorable (even if you have the Ambidextrous perk). This bonus action must involve use of one of your other limbs — a fist to punch, a foot to kick, a hand to grasp the bucking carriage, etc. You can also use this maneuver with melee weapons or ranged weapons, so long as your skill ranks in Melee or Shoot are 6+.

IRON HEEL

Precondition: The Muster *or* Bounty Hunter *or* Chainer *or* Mercenary

An art practiced mainly by the Muster guild, Iron Heel is a down-and-dirty commando style that stresses the need to incapacitate an opponent over the need for honor. It specializes in kicks and holds; the former are used for their reach, while the latter are used for their ability to hold an opponent long enough to cuff him.

Perk	Benefice
1st	*Adept:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits: • +2 goal for a Fight-skill action, • +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack, • +1 damage to a Fight-skill attack, • gain initiative edge, or • neutralize (ignore) 2 ranks of your opponent's Strength-based Resistance to your *grapple* maneuvers
2nd	*Master:* As per Adept above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *daunting strike* maneuver. • *Daunting strike* — Perform a Fight-skill attack; if successful, attempt an immediate *daunt* maneuver as a bonus primary action against the same opponent. The target's Mind Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack.

JOX KAI VON (JOX BOXING)

This nasty and dirty ukari art has no holds barred — eye gouges, groin punches, and ear pulls are fair game. It's a close-in fighting style, and thus, it relies on few kicks. Although the Grand Master is always an ukar, this art is popular among the Decados as a sport practiced against freemen and serfs (because they rarely use it against fellow nobles).

Perk	Benefice
1st	*Adept:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits: • +2 goal for a Fight-skill action or to escape a grapple hold, • +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack, • +1 damage to a Fight-skill attack, • gain initiative edge, or • a single opponent you are engaging in a fight suffers hindmost initiative (acting last that turn).
2nd	*Master:* As per Adept above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *penalizing strike* maneuver. • *Penalizing strike* — Perform a Fight-skill attack; if successful, attempt an immediate *deceive* maneuver as a bonus primary action against the same opponent. The target's Mind Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack. If your *deceive* maneuver succeeds, your target is not Deceived; instead, they are Penalized for their next action (plus one additional action per 2 VP you spend).

KOTO

A tricky art using misdirection to deliver unexpected blows onto an opponent, named after a mythological trickster bird from the folklore of the planet Aylon. The current Grand Master is Sir Mateo al-Malik, successor to Baron Jamal al-Malik after his mysterious disappearance. The art is steeped in weird mystical philosophies involving riddles and deconstructive ontology. Practitioners teach the art to anyone who proves worthy and are said to teach even serfs (a crime on some worlds).

Perk **Benefice**

1st *Adept:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits:
- +2 goal for a Fight-skill action,
- +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack,
- +1 damage to a Fight-skill attack,
- a single opponent you are engaging in a fight suffers hindmost initiative (acts last that turn), or
- ignore up to 2 ranks of a single opponent's Body Resistance.

2nd *Master:* As per Adept above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *confusing strike* maneuver.
- *Confusing strike* — Perform a Fight-skill attack; if successful, make an immediate *confuse* or *humiliate* maneuver as a bonus primary action against the same opponent. The target's Mind Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack.

MANTOK

Precondition: Brother Battle

Mantius was the Prophet's disciple (also known as the Soldier) whose purview was Protection. This martial fighting style is taught in his name, but only to members of the Brother Battle. Teaching Mantok's secrets to outsiders provokes harsh penalties.

Perk **Benefice**

1st *Adept:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits:
- +2 goal for a Fight-skill action,
- +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack,
- +1 damage to a Fight-skill attack,
- restrain up to 1 point of damage inflicted by your attack (see *Restraint* in **Chapter 4: Rules**),
- ignore up to 2 ranks of a single opponent's Body Resistance, or
- ignore your target's energy shield (but you cannot take a movement action in the same turn).

2nd *Master:* As per Adept above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *myriad strike* maneuver.
- *Myriad strike* — Perform a Fight-skill attack; if successful, attempt another immediate Fight-skill attack against the same opponent as a bonus primary action. The target's Body Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack. You can instead choose to delay your bonus action to *dodge* an attack that round.

SHAIDAN

Precondition: Noble

This no-nonsense power form is similar to ancient Urth karate. The current Grand Master of this school is Countess Nydia de Teruel, student of the former Grand Master. Promoted by her superior example, Shaidan is still the art of choice for people of class and distinction. Honor is highly valued, and underhanded fighting tactics are frowned upon — such maneuvers are for peasants, not noble lords. Shaidan fighters specialize in punches. Kicks and grapples are considered somewhat uncouth and are not as widely practiced.

Perk **Benefice**

1st *Adept:* Each turn, you can spend 1 VP and choose *one* of the following benefits:
- +2 goal for a Fight-skill action,
- +2 Body Resistance against a single Fight-skill or Melee-skill attack,
- +1 damage to a Fight-skill attack,
- gain initiative edge *or* ignore your target's energy shield. (When you do this, you cannot take a movement action in the same turn, and you act last in the initiative queue.)

2nd *Master:* As per Adept above, but your 1 VP expenditure allows you to choose *two* of the above-listed benefits for that turn, *or* you can perform a *commanding strike* maneuver.
- *Commanding strike* — Perform a Fight-skill attack; if successful, attempt an immediate *command* maneuver as a bonus primary action against the same opponent. The target's Mind Resistance is then lowered by an amount equal to the damage inflicted by the first attack.

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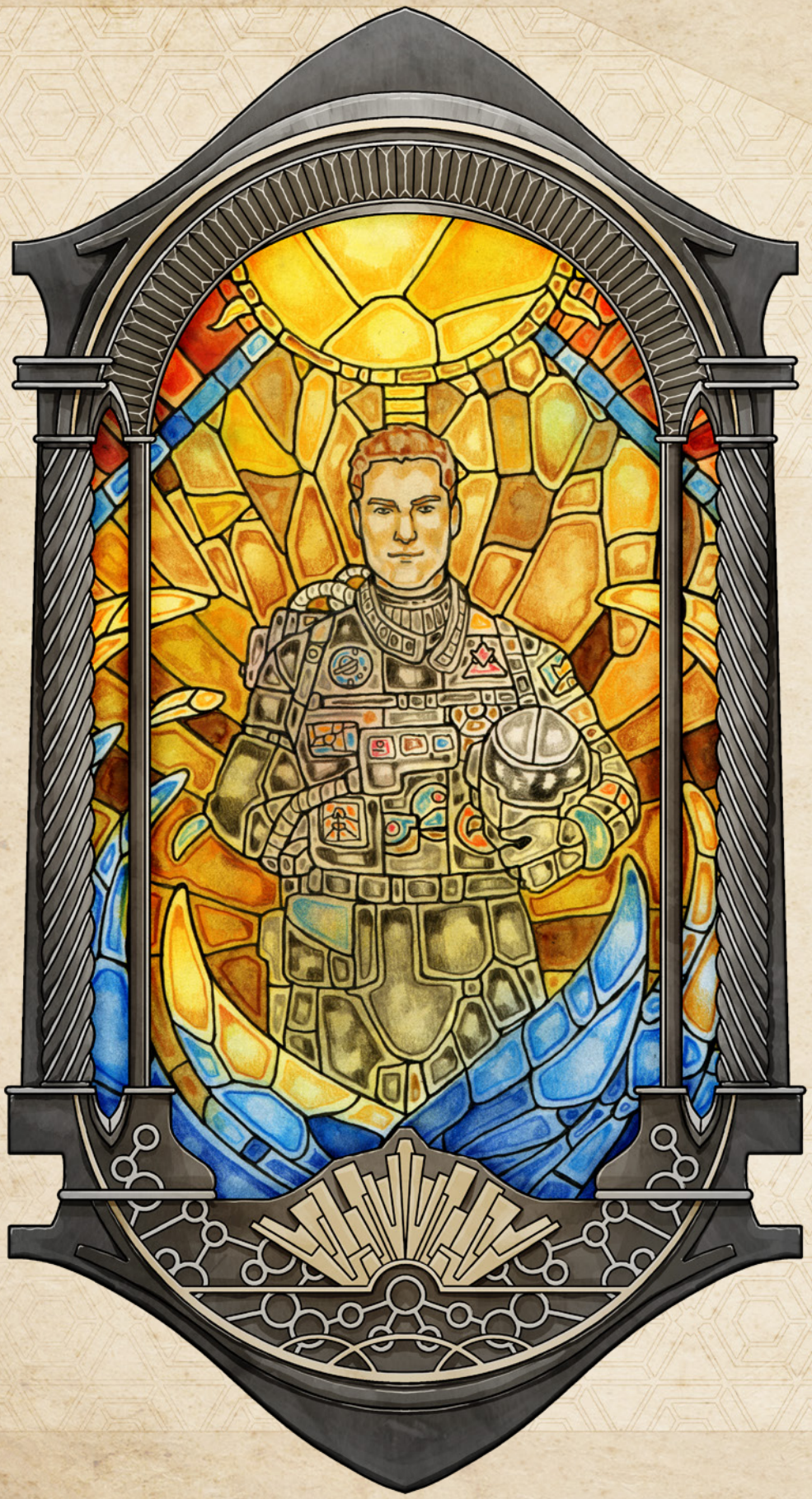
Chapter 4: Technology



SAINT PAULUS THE TRAVELER

Hail Paulus, most skilled among us. Pilgrim, it is to Paulus we pray when swearing pacts and oaths of friendship, for he was the Prophet's friend and star-pilot, always able to bring a smile to Zebulon's weary face.

Paulus was the most well-traveled of the Prophet's Disciples, although it is said he set foot on fewer worlds than Hombor did. The space lanes were his roads, and his ever-restless wanderlust mirrors that of the Pancreator's light, traveling in all directions and reaching into every dark corner of the universe. It is said that his tools — his starship called the Emissary*, his jumproutes, his spanners and blasters — have sanctified those technologies, making them safe for other sentients to use… within reason and with caution.*

He is the patron saint of children, instilling courage and cleverness. So beloved was he that legends tells of a demon that temporarily abandoned its malicious deeds to protect Paulus from ghosts. Even the Dark could not abide losing his company.

Nonetheless, a fever overcame him, preventing him from piloting Zebulon on his last journey. His grief and regret haunted him to the end of his days. Today, its mere evocation in an argument is enough to make rivals forget their feuds and renew old vows of friendship before they, too, take their last "journey from Manitou."

Paulus bears the Many-Colored Spacesuit, bearing patches and symbols from all the worlds, even those that have been lost.

— Charioteer Captain Zelina Hamid-Sandor, The Pilgrim's Path: H0w to Read the Omega Gospels

Tech Level

Director Anselm tried to be soothing. "Crying won't help."

Teeth coated in a monatomic silvery substance jutted from the stone-like machine, steadily piercing the student's skull.

Anselm's words weren't having much of a calming effect. "The test subjects that lasted the longest…" he pleaded, "…stayed calm."

"Why are you doing this?"

Director Anselm smiled softly. The student was trying to appeal to Anselm's humanity. Good. This was the first truly coherent action the student had taken since being strapped to the machine. Anselm stroked the impossibly ancient device gently. "Imagine a technology that can manipulate everything." He closed his eyes and breathed in its scent. "Down to the smallest particle." Anselm couldn't resist a smile as he patted the machine. "This was used for bulk programming. You could fit, oh, I suppose three obun on each side. More if they were children. Enough for a good start."

Anselm backed away. The "tongue" would extend soon, and he didn't want to be close enough for splashback. The smell of cranial fluid made him nauseous. "Of course, the machine is currently calibrated to non-human physiologies, but we're hoping with enough exposure to humans, she'll learn and recalibrate." Director Anselm arched his hands in front of him and took another calculated step back. "She's very clever." He leaned forward. "But she needs this, you know. She was so very lonely without a purpose." Anselm tried another smile but failed. He knew what would come next.

A deep cracking sound, and then the screaming.

Technology in the 51st century is handled with more caution than during any other time in human history. Some of this comes from Church doctrine, but it also comes from hard-earned lessons of experience. Until the fall of the Second Republic, people taught that tools, even advanced ones, were value-neutral. Even at its worst, technology couldn't cause anything worse than psychic stress or moral uncertainty.

They were wrong.

Later events would prove that humanity was less the master of tools and more their unwilling partners.

Arguments over the limits of technological influence were conducted over a thousand years, and the Church came to a simple, somewhat chilling conclusion: the more complex the tool, the more *animus* it inflicted upon its user. If the soul of humankind was

meant to reflect the light of the Pancreator, and if humanity's tools were made in humans' image, then these tools could act as a spiritually dangerous distraction, drawing attention away from the holy light towards base matter. When given the chance, the Church acted on this revelation with an almost Luddite fervor, limiting technology where and when they could. In this matter, much to peoples' surprise, they had an unlikely, though wholly reluctant, ally: the Merchant League.

The Church held that each person has a degree of *techgnosis* or "craft wisdom": the ability of the soul to bear the burden of technology's animus. In contrast, the League guilds argue that it's a matter of evolution: those with greater techgnosis are more adaptive to technology's influence. They should be able to handle it safely where others would be overwhelmed. The Merchant League offered a partnership with the Church because both sides recognized the danger of people with low techgnostic potential getting hold of dangerous tech. After all, whether the Church's philosophy was wrong wouldn't matter if something like a weaponized nanite plague decided to sweep over a planet. They needed to be able to stop such apocalyptic scenarios from happening before they started. The Church could serve, at worst, as an "ear to the street"; at its best, it would serve as a tool to keep the rest of humanity just under that pathological threshold. The Church, despite its frustration in dealing with technophiles, gained access to the expertise that could distinguish between a true threat and one that required only a stern warning.

The Temptations of Technology

In the late 21st century, humankind began to see that the impacts of technology had produced profound behavioral changes. Instead of sensibly rejecting it, people leveraged technology's new tools to wreak havoc on the political and cultural landscape. Had this been as far as the trend went, and if people had learned their lesson, perhaps society could have avoided the worst to come, but instead they decided to take the next obvious step: integrating new, psychologically altering technology directly into their brains, past the filters of their senses. This next leap of "innovation" gave rise to a twisted kind of artificial slavery, where advertisements were dumped into people's heads unless they paid for filters to keep them out.

This innovation facilitated the rise of revolutionary movements. The Neo-Luddites hid from society's worst excesses, while the extra-solar Sathraists, unknown to most, sometimes gained psychic powers from exposure to an even higher level of technology. These two extreme ways to preserve identity — the use of lower-level or higher-level tech — gave birth to the idea of techgnosis.

The concept of techgnosis concerns itself with whether the subject can maintain their integrity, a sense of whether one's soul mirror can receive the holy Light while being shadowed by technology's animus. It's the primary epistemology through which the Church expresses sentient relationships with technology. Those who fall too deeply into technology's shadow open themselves to compulsions that arise, not from within themselves, but from the tools they are using.

TECH LEVEL CHART

Tech Level	Era	Item
0	Stone Age	Knapped tools
1	Medieval	Forged iron
2	Renaissance	Gunpowder
3	Victorian	Electricity
4	Information Age	Computers
5	Diaspora	Spacecraft, ceramsteel
6	Early 2nd Republic	Starships, early A.I.
7	Second Republic	Force shields, androids
8	Vautech/late 2nd Republic	Terraforming, Artificial Sentience
9	Lesser Ur-tech	Soul shard
10	Ur-tech	Jumpgate

While any technology can create a compulsion, it only starts when technology gets far enough advanced to reflect a person's values back at them. This typically begins when a world reaches Tech Level 5, usually because of ubiquitous computers, radio, television, and mass communication. Beyond that tech level, a number of integrations designed to help the user end up directly impacting the user's psyche instead. This gets worse with more intimate connections. Cyberware is the most obvious and grotesque historical example, but nanites put into use in the Second Republic made cyberware look downright primitive. Vautech exists as something beyond nanotech, and Anunnaki technology can demonstrably flay someone's mind… and theoretically annihilate their soul.

Nobles and League guilders are allowed the Privilege of Martyrs because they have – through lineage, training, and tradition – proven themselves to possess sufficient techgnosis. The Church claims its training and tradition helps, but truth be told, much of a priest's privilege comes from a policy of never trusting technology unless its use is absolutely necessary. The Church has an incredible amount of evidence it can show to acolytes to prove where things go wrong, including broken Brother Battle monks who took one step too far with weapon tech and compromised themselves. There is no cure for tech compulsions, barring the decision to put the technology away and not use it. A tech compulsion isn't something you can go to confession for as you search for absolution.

The League has its own arcane practices, but most of them are built around rigorously developing personal techgnosis while keeping a check on other members. The League claims that people without proper training will become consumed by their technological compulsions, and inevitably, they will try to pull in others. They allegedly combat this by compartmentalizing exposure to high technology. Some guild members refute these allegations (though never openly), claiming that this policy is only for forcing regular reports and mandatory visits to superiors.

The term "user-friendly" has become a nightmarish idea within the League. It refers to relics that are terrifyingly calibrated to sync up with a user, not only to adjust the tech but also to align the user with the value set of the manufacturer. In the best case, this could be a psychosomatic need, but there were plenty of technologies created that went well beyond this. It doesn't help that on some worlds, "helpful nanites" were released far back in the time of the Second Republic. Some were implemented with the hope of creating a user database that would adapt to the user. Instead they helped create "the perfect farmer," "the perfect baker," or "the perfect soldier": a user whose only incentive is accomplishing their tasks. This is not quite the same as mind control; instead, it's just a mindful obsession that destroyed people's lives and, thanks to the durability of the tech, still pops up occasionally on those worlds... or on other planets where the technology was accidentally spread. Because of this danger, the League sometimes supports technologies that are difficult to use and require intense training. At the very least, this practice gives them some more time to monitor a member as they work to master their craft.

Tech compulsions manifest as a need to use a technological device more frequently, but their implications are not immediately obvious; early on, they can even present a definite benefit. The energy shield is an excellent example. It often caused its user to become compulsively reckless, but that lack of fear also made them a ferocious force in battle. The negative effects manifested later as heightened aggression and a callous disregard for risks, which ended up with a lot of people dead either in conflicts that could have been resolved peacefully or in situations where a sane, shield-less, person would have turned around and left.

You cannot choose your compulsion. Once techgnosis has been compromised, it's an open wound, and compulsions can come in from any piece of technology you are using. This has led people to assume that they are "handling" their new tech just fine, while ignoring their sudden obsession with their old equipment. Compulsions can also blind people to the dangers of tech when incompatible energies engage. More than one user has ended up dead because they ignored the warnings of their favorite device, simply because they couldn't bear to think of not using it.

The Church, the League, and the nobles all understand that technology has ceased to be a simple aid to humankind — as the shovel that bests the digging stick or as the gun that beats the sling. Instead, technology from a host of different eras and alien species has emerged as a force with an agenda for better or for worse. And because of this, the Matryrs alone are the ones qualified to stand between humankind and a technological apocalypse.

Tech Compulsions

Tech compulsions are states that can affect characters who become overloaded due to insufficient Techgnosis. (See *Techgnosis* in **Chapter 3: Traits**.) If you roll a critical hit while using tech when you're overloaded, you suffer the item's compulsion. Compulsions exacerbate the tendencies, desires, and notions that the use of a device tends to prompt in its users. Each type of tech described in this chapter lists the state it imposes on users.

The descriptions list intense bouts of tech compulsion, but the GM should feel free to pull back on the throttle and just let players roleplay through their

compulsions, acting them out without needing to bring rules and dice rolls into the matter. Still, rules are suggested below, should they be needed.

ACQUISITIVE

You need to collect things, even things you really don't need. Once per scene, while the compulsion persists, you must acquire at least one item that has attracted your eye. The monk's staff, the princess' necklace, the gambler's deck of cards — you choose what it is, although acquiring it should be a bit of a challenge (and that's where the compulsion comes in: if it were easy, it wouldn't be a compulsion). At the very least, you might need to use some persuasion influence to talk the item off its current owner. You won't necessarily attack them for it (unless that's kind of your thing anyway), but you'll help yourself to a five-fingered discount if other means won't get it for you.

BLOODTHIRSTY

You won't feel satisfied until you've literally drawn blood from an enemy. Whenever someone has raised your ire or actively opposed you, you must pay in blood. You must wound someone (preferably with the tech that causes this compulsion) enough to cause bleeding or bruising. Inflicting 1 Vitality of damage from a sharp or piercing weapon is good enough. For a blunt weapon, you must inflict at least 2 Vitality of damage. If the person gets away or the scene ends without you gaining satisfaction (in blood), you spend the next scene in the Penalized state.

CRUEL

You get a sick thrill watching another person's torment. If another person within sight is in pain (such as the Tormented state), you get distracted watching it: you suffer -2 goal for any action not directed at that person. If an opponent is especially vulnerable (such as in the Stunned state) or fearful (Afraid or Terrified), you might very well throw honor to the wind and take advantage of their state, inflicting emotional pain by making a *castigate* or *humiliate* influence attack. If that fails to twist the knife, you physically attack them to inflict bodily pain.

DESTRUCTIVE

While many people get a vicarious thrill from watching things break or burn, you feel the need to enact it firsthand. You are rough on your equipment: a critical miss means you might break it. Also, anytime you make a successful attack, you *must* spend VP to increase the damage. The amount of VP can't be lower than your *lowest* force characteristic (Strength, Wits, or Presence). If you cannot spend this minimum amount, your frustration causes your next roll (of any kind) to be unfavorable.

HEEDLESS
You seek daredevil thrills. When confronted with terrible odds or a situation that would cause others to pause — a rickety bridge across a deep chasm, a leap across an alley filled with gunfire, an honor challenge from a far-better duelist than you, a scriptural debate with the Patriarch — you won't hesitate: you dive right in. On the bright side, you can't be Daunted.

HYPERCRITICAL
You just have to criticize everything. You critically evaluate whatever people, places, and things you interact with and have trouble keeping your judgments to yourself. This need drives you to seek out the creative endeavors of your fellow sentients — plays, magic lantern shows, dance recitals — and weigh in. If you don't like something, you won't hold back in announcing it. While this can win you respect now and then for calling others on their bullshit, it more often makes you a boor and can win you sworn enemies. The GM can declare your persuasion influence rolls to be unfavorable, depending on whether you're speaking truth to power or disparaging the countess's tacky shantor ceramics collection.

INDISCREET
You have trouble keeping things to yourself. Whether it's sharing with too-much-information about something private or gossiping about the rector's secret tryst or the local Scraver boss's bizarre hobbies, you just can't help blurting out information that should remain secret. This can make your Knavery-skill *deceive* attempts unfavorable, as well as *befriend* attempts against those whose confidential info you've divulged.

INDUSTRIOUS
You're always in need of a hands-on project. You're always seeking an undertaking you can throw yourself into, whether it's fixing that clock, reconfiguring the nav computer, or writing your memoirs. Once you start on a task, you must finish it. When you finish that task, you'll soon find another, so long as you can keep yourself busy. Interruptions and side-projects are to be expected, but if you are kept from working on your key project for too long, you become anxious. The GM might declare your influence and non-combat rolls unfavorable until you get at least 10 minutes in on your project.

INERRANT
You are obsessed with accuracy in all things. You simply must succeed with precision and correct the inaccuracies of others — their mispronunciations, misspelled words, misstated facts, etc. Besides being overly pedantic in social situations, whenever you make an attack, whether physical or influential, you *must* spend VP to either increase the goal number or completely overcome the target's Resistance. If your target gets into a bidding war over boosting Resistance, you must spend an amount in your final bid at least equal to your lowest finesse characteristic (Dexterity, Perception, or Intuition). If you cannot spend this minimum amount, your frustration causes your next roll (of any kind) to be unfavorable.

PRETENTIOUS
You're a show-off who craves attention. You need others to notice some quality about you or some item that you feel would make them jealous, so you flaunt it. Unfortunately, others notice that you're trying too hard. While your initial persuasion influence attempts against a target are normal, successive attempts against them become unfavorable — and you will keep trying until you either succeed or they acknowledge your quality or cool thing. You also suffer -2 goal on Sneak rolls; skulking about is just not your style.

PROTECTIVE
You'd take a bullet for people who are important to you, such as troupe members or close faction associates. This isn't just figurative — you will literally leap in the way of a physical attack against them. Their protection is more important to you than your own health. You won't outright die for them, but you will defend them from physical attacks (unless you have your own immediate attacker to deal with). If they're being emotionally abused (such as by coercion influence), you'll intervene to draw the attention toward you instead, even if it means escalating a situation. You will be the last one out of a burning building and the one who gives up the last parachute so that your friend can live another day.

RECKLESS
You throw all caution to the wind. You gain initiative edge, but you cannot spend VP to boost your Resistance unless you take a primary action to do so. In addition, when the GM tests for instinctual perception, your Perception is halved (round down). When your direct attention is focused on one thing, you can't quite focus on anything else.

SOLICITOUS
You look out for others at the cost of your own needs. You hover around them, always checking to make sure they've got what they need and are comfortable. If they evince a need, or if a need is obvious to you, you'll interrupt what you're doing to tend to that need: bind a wound, give a hug, provide a sympathetic ear, or even just fetch a drink. You will hesitate to attack anyone, and if forced to do so, you would prefer to subdue them, if possible, rather than injuring or killing.

Money

Since Alexius' coronation, the primary currency of commerce is the "firebird". Minted on Byzantium Secundus, firebirds use a combination of high technology and Doramos' terraforming principles to make a unique metal called prismium that cannot be forged elsewhere. The Imperial Eye works hard to prevent counterfeiters from thriving in-system, which makes the firebird – an indigo/copper-colored iridescent coin with a phoenix crest on one side and Alexius' visage on the other – the most stable currency in the Known Worlds.

Each coin is etched so it can be broken down into halves ("crests") or quarters ("wings"), which represent half value and about a fourth of the original value, respectively. The Reeves guild issues "scrip" in exchange for firebird deposits, which is good for remuneration from Reeves and League banks on other worlds. Contrary to the dream of many Reeves (and the unique think machines they developed to implement it), it's just not feasible to set a fixed rate across all worlds, but most traders buck the guidelines and haggle for as much as they can get.

Some local lords and small guild concerns have contravened Imperial law: They've taken to aping the Reeves scrip system, issuing "deposit slips" of their own as payment for labor instead of hard currency. In combination with price-setting schemes for goods sold only in the local scrip, workers are forced to stay local. Of course, legally, a worker can demand compensation in firebirds instead of credit, but in practice, this rarely happens, short of a visit by Imperial auditors (usually Reeves contracted for the job).

Economies get more interesting further from the center of power. Regional currencies still come into play: "mantises," "crosses," "claws," and "sparklers," for example. Some smaller fiefdoms stubbornly mint their own currency: For instance, Madoc's "coral" is made from a local invertebrate-analog. However, these coinages, like the unusable Hawkwood "black lion," are not considered legal tender. At best, they are traded at a rate of about 8 "talons" (a nickname for non-standard coins) to 1 firebird. They are the lowest form of currency one can trade in at a planetary or interstellar level.

Although some hamlets develop hyperlocal currencies called "owlets" by the League, this isn't common. They aren't traded outside of their tiny regions and definitely not off-world, except as a curiosity. Past the urban centers, most villages and towns trade in barter alone, viewing even firebirds with suspicion. There are many places in the Known Worlds where no one has seen a firebird. Some poorer villages have gone to war over the coins, and some desperate villagers mug visitors who have them. The League recommends that travelers transfer at least a bit of their currency into barterable goods if they are planning to stay for a while on one of these worlds, especially if they are not trying to attract attention. A small processing fee will be required.

Some economic experts, especially within the League, believed that the growing power of the Emperor would help Imperial currency gain more traction. In the first heady years after Alexius came to power, it seemed this dream would come true. However, using local or non-Imperial currency became an easy way for foes of the Emperor to show their feelings without being too obvious about it. Some still do so, even when it makes goods more expensive for them. In addition, rumors of "cursed coins" have begun popping up like bad pennies, giving the superstitious even more reason to shun firebirds. No doubt such rumors are partially spread by Imperial foes who would use any tactic to undermine Alexius' authority. Regardless, even Church leaders have begun paying heed to such stories.

BANKING

Carting around too many firebirds is not feasible. You're just asking for highwaymen to take them from you. While many lords and merchants stockpile firebirds away in vaults and hidden caches, most people who have more money than they can fit into a mattress put it in a bank.

The most prevalent and trusted bankers have traditionally been the Reeves guild. With offices on every world, in most major cities, and even within many towns, the guild can take firebirds in return for "scrip," a form of paper proof of your holdings. They charge interest, of course, but the money is guaranteed against theft.

Unfortunately for the Reeves, there's a new banker in town. The Brother Battle order is giving them a run for their money. During the tumult of the Emperor Wars, the Reeves couldn't always protect deposits or even reach all their offices when local battles broke out. Pilgrims and travelers would often park their money with the order, trusting that the Brother Battle order was one of the few forces that could withstand the tides of war. Of course, this service was usually provided in exchange for a tithe (a percentage often matched the Reeves' interest charge). Throughout the

din, the Brother Battle proved a steady, reliable force, even when they were among the combatants causing the transport difficulties. Now that those wars are in the past, the order is continuing and even expanding its banking activities. Their chief customers for now are the many pilgrims taking advantage of the Pax Alexius to visit far-flung holy shrines that were off limits for so many years.

COST OF GOODS

The prices for equipment listed in this chapter represent the average cost. In agoras where such items are scarce, prices can be much higher. In cosmopolitan areas where the items are more commonplace, their prices tend to be somewhat lower.

ITEM QUALITY

Each item is rated for quality, which can affect the price of the item. In addition, the higher the quality is above standard, the harder it is to break the item (+1 Resistance for superior, +2 masterwork, +3 premium).

Quality	Price Adjustment
Premium*	+30%
Masterwork	+20%
Superior	+10%
Standard	base price
Poor workmanship	-10%
Unreliable	-20%
Disrepair	-30%

* Premium items provide +1 goal to the tasks they're built to perform. Weapons get +1 attack goal; armor get +1 Body Resistance; tools get +1 to repair/create items, and so on.

Armory

Militiaman Cedric studied the marauders' camp through his laser rifle's attached targeting scope. Data spewed across the lens: "RNG91.12m, Wind7m/s-SxSE, Temp11C, Humidity44%"

The Engineer's tech course — required for anyone operating this 1000-year-old gun — had prepared Cedric for reading the stats.

"Tonight, the marauding ends," he whispered to himself, toggling the sight. "A curse on House Decados!"

A message flashed across the lens: "NO NETWORK DETECTED. SEARCH FOR SIGNAL? YES? NO?"

It was common for the old lasgun to display such a message, and Cedric knew how to respond.

No.

He took aim again… when a new message flashed: "MEMORY CACHE FULL. REBOOT COMMENCING IN T-5sec."

"What?!"

"PLEASE WAIT." The lens went black.

"Come on! I've got marauders to kill before the patrol returns!"

"REBOOT SUCCESSFUL. COMPANION DEVICE DETECTED. SYNCH MarTech Indigo 8K11614 WITH Occular5000? YES? NO?"

Yes

Cedric took aim, toggled the scope dial and zoomed in on the…

"WARNING. DIAGNOSTICS 392,166 DAYS OVERDUE. RUN DIAGNOSTICS? YES? NO?"

*"Vorox dung!" Cedric cursed under his breath. *No**

"UNABLE TO SYNCH MarTech Indigo 8K11614 WITH Occular5000. RUN DIAGNOSTICS? YES? NO?"

**Yes* "I'm gonna strangle that Engineer!"*

"PLEASE WAIT"

Illegible codes scrolled over the lens.

"DIAGNOSTICS SUCCESSFUL. READ REPORT NOW? YES? NO?"

No

"MEMORY CACHE FULL. REBOOT COMMENCING IN T-5sec."

"Hellfire!"

"REBOOT SUCCESSFUL. PLEASE ENTER 21-DIGIT PRODUCTION KEY TO VERIFY USER."

Cedric took a deep breath, produced the scrap of paper the Engineer had given him, and punched in the numbers.

"VERIFICATION SUCCESSFUL. NO NETWORK DETECTED. SEARCH FOR SIGNAL? YES? NO?"

No

"ONLINE VERIFICATION OF DEVICE WARRANTY REQUIRED. SEARCH FOR SIGNAL? YES? NO?"

No

"UNABLE TO VERIFY WARRANTY. CONTACT MarTech HELPLINE OR VISIT OUR MARS OFFICE."

"Mars? Where the hell is that? Damn this all to the Outer Dark!"

Cedric threw the rifle in the grass and drew his axe and buckler. He had marauders to kill before the patrol returned and no time to spare on tech nonsense like this.

The tools of violence are ubiquitous throughout civilization. From upstanding nobles to lowly criminals, initiated technologists to the uneducated masses, righteous priests to rebellious aliens – all wield weapons to enforce their interests.

A Thousand Years of Weapon-Tech Proscription

One of the Universal Church's primary mandates is restricting technology in the Known Worlds, which, it teaches, poisons souls and corrupts civilizations. The Church imposed severe tech-restrictions after the Fall of the Second Republic, but over the centuries, war-tech restrictions have gradually eroded away in the face of political liberalization and wartime practicality. Here follows a historic overview.

Credo Praefectus (3983): The Church declares the Second Republic President "Defender of the Universal Faith," subordinate only to the Empyrean Grace (as dispensed by the Universal Church). The government secures the Faithful's loyalty at the Church's pleasure.

The Fall (c.4000): Mass hysteria and religious fervor increase Church power. The nobility and Church enjoy mutual support by echoing the Credo Praefectus.

Doctrine of Universal Inheritance (4067): The Church calls for return to an agrarian society, banning high-tech except for Church and faithful secular rulers (for whom high-tech remains restricted).

Doctrine of the Cleansing Flame (4079): The Church grants itself the right to employ violence and high-tech to enforce its heavenly mandate.

Doctrine of the Privilege of Martyrs (4357): The Church grants itself dispensation from restrictive anti-tech laws, declaring priests holy enough to responsibly employ high-tech.

Doctrine of the Privilege of Martyrs – Exemptio Nobilis (4545): Courting aristocratic favors, the Church extend tech-martyrdom to nobles, including recognized bastards (but not serfs and retainers), in return for mandatory church attendance and acceptance of sacraments.

Doctrine of the Privilege of Martyrs – Exemptio Phalangis (4560): After much pressure and lobbying, tech-martyrdom is extended to the guilds. New inventions must be approved by the local bishop, who may veto any tech use and production within their holy see.

Doctrine of Exemption Exceptional (4905): As the Symbiot War (4900-4955) threatens total and immediate annihilation of humankind, the Church sheds many tech-restrictions to allow civilization a chance to save itself. In return for mandatory daily confessions, martyrdom is extended to freemen and unrecognized bastards serving legitimate noble houses, League guilds, or Church sects. Battle cyborgs and Changed, "wielded" by tech-martyrs under Church supervision, are redefined as war-tech (with no personal rights).

Doctrine of Temporal Exemption (4905): The Church extends martyrdom, under Exemption Exceptional conditions, to serf militias.

Doctrine of Alien Rights (4908): The Church extends Exemption Exceptional martyrdom to alien servants of humankind. Alien nobles (or equivalents) are reclassified as technically unrecognized bastards of their patron (human) noble house (while minor houses require sanction from their patron Royal House to employ alien serfs and retainers).

Emperor Wars (4964-4995): With the symbiot menace contained on Stigmata and noble arsenals brimming with over half-a-century's worth of unchecked munitions production, civil war explodes across the Known Worlds.

Hezekiah's Bull (5000): The Church attempts to rein in liberal tech exemptions by reclassifying tech into restriction categories. The bull proves hard to enforce against recently empowered nobles and guilds, as well as an Emperor who claims increasing autonomy from the Church.

Weaponry Chart Key

Weapon: Listed by model or type. Some weapons list variant configurations or firing modes below the basic version. In such cases, use the basic weapon information for all traits not specified in the variant version.

TL: Represents the base Tech Level required for manufacturing and maintenance.

Goal: Add this accuracy modifier to the user's goal number.

Dmg: Equals the base (minimum) damage inflicted with an attack's impact. The wielder can spend VP to inflict additional damage.

Str: Represents the minimum Strength rating required to use the weapon unhindered. Apply -1 goal per rank the user lacks. (Optional: To add a realistic complication, when firing bursts or sustained fire, increase the STR requirement by the weapon's damage bonus amount each turn (cumulative) to represent recoil.)

Rng: Lists the weapon's range in meters. Short range is listed first; long range is second. In most cases, Dexterity is used for attacks against targets within short range, while Perception is used at long-range and farther out.

Range	Goal modifier
Short range	–
Long Range	-2
Extreme Range*	-4

* Extends up to double long range. Anything past extreme range is -6 goal and might require a scope. Shotguns that fire buckshot suffer -8 goal at extreme range.

RoF: Rate of Fire is the maximum number of shots you can fire with this weapon in a single turn. When a single digit is listed, this is the number of single-shots available. If a digit is followed by "b", the weapon is ca-

pable of burst fire (using the *burst*, *three-round burst*, *empty clip*, and *spread* maneuvers). See the *Rate of Fire* sidebar).

Ammo: Lists the maximum number of loaded projectiles.

ATTACK AND DAMAGE PROPERTIES

Weapons inflict harm in a variety of ways, from dense piercing bullets to super-heated plasma detonations and more unique forms of destruction. In **Fading Suns** such effects are represented by *attack* and *damage properties*.

These can get a little complicated. You're free to forego their use in your game; they're entirely optional. They do, however, add levels of nuance that can really help flesh out a science-fiction setting.

ATTACK PROPERTIES

Attack properties help weapons to pierce and/or ignore armor.

Weapons that deliver an attack property are graded with their property's name: Hard, Laser, Shock, etc. Armor can be *proofed* against one or more properties: Flameproof, Slamproof, etc.

When you get hit by a weapon with an attack property that your armor is *not* proofed against, halve the armor's Resistance rating (round down).

> ***Example:*** *Maelia is wearing a synthsilk robe. She is assaulted by a mob of Incarnates, angry at her sermons against their heresy. The leader wields a mace. It delivers Slam damage. Maelia's synthsilk is not Slamproof. That means its 3 Body Resistance rating is halved against the mace attack, providing her only 1 Body Resistance.*

Blaster: Uses hot plasma. Blaster damage has the potential to bleed through energy shields (see *Energy Shields*, below).

Flame: Inflicts fire damage. (See *Damage Properties* below.)

Hard: Armor-piercing. For bullets: at TL5, slug-gun bullets become Hard, as steel replaces lead projectiles (note that TL3 slug guns can fire TL4 bullets and vice versa). Blades, arrows, and stabbing weapons become Hard at TL5 (or at TL4 with superior quality, TL3 with masterwork, or TL2 with premium). Furthermore, some piercing weapons, like picks and metal-spiked clubs, are always Hard regardless of tech level.

Laser: Laser shots fired through thick fog, smoke, or light-fracturing atmosphere become unfavorable rolls.

Shock: Relies on electrocution or system shock. Armors are typically Shockproof at premium quality for TL3, masterwork for TL4, superior for TL5, or automatically at TL6+. Shock attacks ignore non-Shockproof armor completely and gain +2 dmg vs. non-Shockproof metal-armored targets. (See *Damage Properties* below.)

Slam: Applies broad concussive force.

Sonic: Ignores armor and energy shields. Hearing protection (represented by the states Hearing Impaired and Deafened) provides some defense against sonic attacks.

Ultra Hard: Ultra-Hard attacks (mostly bullets) halve the protection provided by Hardproof armor and ignore all other armor.

DAMAGE PROPERTIES:

Damage properties give Vitality wounds a twist. They only come into play when an attack overcomes Resistance and delivers damage as impact.

Flame: Flame attacks have two damage listings: the first represent the initial attack damage; the second shows *sustained* damage that's automatically inflicted each subsequent round (on the attacker's turn) until the fire is put out. This lasts for 3 turns. Anyone can take a primary action to put out the fire, ending the sustained damage.

> ***Example:*** *A Kalomite flamegun delivers 5 damage on its initial hit and 3 each subsequent round. This sustained damage lasts for 3 turns, or until it is put out.*

A target who suffers Vitality loss to a Flame attack gains the Tormented state, which lasts until at least 1 Vitality is healed.

Mangle: Inflicts the Mangled state if the target loses any Vitality from the attack.

Shock: If the target takes any damage from a Shock attack, they are Stunned. If total damage exceeds the target's Endurance, they must spend VP equal to the damage amount to avoid being rendered Incapacitated. While Incapacitated, if they again take shock damage that exceeds Endurance, they must spend VP equal to the damage amount or become Unconscious (this replaces the Incapacitated state).

Size: Represents the item's abstract size: XXS = extremely small; XS = extra small; S = small; M = medium; L = large; XL = extra large.

L and larger items require two hands to use. Hiding XL items upon your person is impossible; smaller items may be hidden depending on what you're wearing. The GM makes the call.

Agora: This listing indicates how readily available the item is for purchase. When a faction, sub-faction, or planet is listed, this represents the main market where such items are found. (If a market isn't listed, the item is universally distributed.) Factions or sub-factions listed in parenthesis show design owners and monopoly manufacturers (who are typically under patronage from the market faction).

Imp = Imperial; KW = Known Worlds; ML = Merchant League; UC = Universal Church. Other abbreviations are typically shortened house, guild, or sect names, which should be self-explanatory, except for the SOE (Supreme Order of Engineers — the Engineers Guild).

If no availability is given, the item is plentiful, and the item (or a knock-off copy) is easily found at every indicated market. "Common" means it is commonly available in specialist agoras; "Rare" means it is only available from individual specialist retailers or made-to-order workshops; "Exotic" items are collectable artifacts nearly impossible to find.

Note that item availability is capped by the TL of the local agora. For example, a TL6 market like Byzantium Secundus will rarely have TL7 items, like blasters, available for sale. (If they are, GMs should feel free to double the cost for each increased TL above the local TL. Also, local authorities routinely restrict or prohibit the use of items with higher TL than the local standard.)

fb: Baseline cost in firebirds.

Features: Includes attack properties, features, and notes. Common features include the following (also see *Firearm Accessories* below):

2-Handed: The weapon requires two hands to wield. Raise the required Strength by 3 for one-handed use.

Area: The weapon delivers its attack on all targets within the radius of its listed area. (See *Area Attacks* in **Chapter 1: Rules**.)

Aquatic: While most guns reduce ranges by 1/10th underwater, these guns only halve them.

Disguised: The weapon has been crafted to look like something else. Base Resistance is Severe (8) against Observe *spot* and *search* actions to detect its true purpose. In addition, Sleight of Hand rolls to *conceal* the item are favorable.

Explo: Explosions are area attacks. They list their blast radius in meters; every target within the radius is affected. In addition, explosions ignore all Resistance except armor. Boosted Resistance and perks such as Nimble do not defend against explosions.

Guard: Provides +1 Body Resistance vs. melee attacks.

Military: Requires the Military Weapons capability.

Noisy: When you or anyone near you activates this item, your Sneak rolls become unfavorable. Conversely, when you sneak past someone using this item, your Sneak rolls are favorable.

Poison: May be loaded with poison; the number of total doses equals to the listed number (one dose per attack, unless noted otherwise).

Sturdy: The weapon doesn't break if dropped, jammed, or hit; it also ignores misfires caused by a critical miss.

Stylish: Adds +1 goal on influence attempts when using the weapon to show off, threaten, or stare down opponents.

RATE OF FIRE

Some guns allow for more than one shot to be fired per turn. This is listed under the weapon's RoF (Rate of Fire).

> *Example: The Mitchau Ripper medium autofeed pistol has a RoF of 3. This means up to three shots can be fired in the same turn.*

Instead of handling each shot as separate attack rolls, you perform a maneuver based on how many shots you're firing that turn. Your shots are all made against the same target.

Note: Base damage is determined by weapon

Maneuver	Goal	Dmg	Effect
Two shots	-1	+1	Uses two rounds of ammo
Three shots	-2	+2	Hindmost initiative*; uses three rounds of ammo

* You act last in the initiative queue this round.

BURST FIRE

Guns capable of performing burst fire allow you to use the following attack maneuvers.

Note: Base damage is determined by weapon

Maneuver	Goal	Dmg	Effect
Burst	-2	+3	Empties half your ammo.
Empty clip	-2	+5	Hindmost initiative*; empties all ammo.
Spread	-1/m	+4	Hindmost initiative*; area attack: anyone in targeted area might be hit; empties all ammo.
Three-round burst	–	+1	Uses three rounds of ammo.

* You act last in the initiative queue this round.

Burst — Quickly fire shots in succession at the cost of accuracy. Your weapon must be capable of full-auto fire. A *burst* uses half of your clip's ammo.

Empty clip — Sometimes, you just want it to rain bullets. If you're using a weapon capable of burst fire, you can empty your entire clip of ammo by pointing your gun in a direction and holding down the trigger until it is empty. The gun bucks like a beast in heat, and it's hard to aim at a particular target, but those who are hit get hit hard.

Spread — If you're using a weapon capable of burst fire, you can spread the arc of your fire over an area to hit more than one target. You can spread your fire up to five meters in a circle around you (but you must spin in place for any spread wider than 3 meters). Anyone who is in or enters the area might get hit. Spreading fire empties the clip.

Three-round burst — If you're using a weapon capable of burst fire, you can try a three-round burst. This option has a bit more control than other burst-fire options, and it helps preserve bullets.

Unstable: This weapon counts rolls of 19 *and* 20 as a critical miss.

Vibro: Weakens e-shield efficiency by +1/-1 (i.e. turning an ordinary e-shield from 5/10 to 6/9). Activation requires a fusion cell (lasts 25 turns).

Unwieldy: Wielding this item places you hindmost in the initiative queue.

Firearms

SLUG GUNS

Requires the Slug Guns weapons capability.

Slug guns fire bullets, which come in a variety of types and calibers. Slug gun tech begins at TL3 and becomes standardized at TL4. Higher-level models improve the basic design but don't cause techgnostic compulsions.

Critical miss: A critical miss when firing a slug gun might mean a misfire or a jam. Roll a d20: 1-10 = simple bullet misfire (you can continue to fire normally next turn); 11-20 = a jam or mechanical malfunction (you must use a primary action to clear the jam or rejigger the gun back into working order).

Autofeeds: Autofeeds stack bullets in a clip or magazine, ejecting spent cartridges after each shot and allowing the next bullet to spring into place. Autofeeds inflict an unfavorable roll when testing for critical miss.

Boltfeed: This simple firing mechanism relies on the shooter manually ejecting spent cartridges by pulling back the firing bolt after each shot. Boltfeeds grant a favorable roll when testing for a critical miss.

Breakfeeds: A rarer, more primitive configuration, a breakfeed must be manually loaded by "breaking" open the gun to insert the projectile directly into the barrel(s). Breakfeeds grant a favorable roll when testing for a critical miss.

Revolvers: Revolvers are Sturdy guns, housing their projectiles in a drum that turns with every shot, positioning the next cartridge behind the barrel with

every pull of the trigger. Revolvers grant a favorable roll when testing for a critical miss.

Shotguns: Shotguns fire large shells loaded either with buckshot (typically 10 gauge) or solid slugs. Buckshot rounds fire a hail of metal balls that cause havoc at short range but spread out to inflict less of an impact at longer ranges. This is represented by buckshot's Goal and Dmg columns being divided into three bars, representing short, long, and extreme range respectively. Furthermore, buckshot doubles the ordinary goal penalties for extreme range. (Sawed-off shotguns spread their shot faster, causing additional impact at short range, but they quickly lose impact beyond that range, causing no impact at all at extreme range. For solid slugs, sawed-off shotguns halve each range band.).

Shotguns tend to be breakfeeds at TL3 and pump-feeds at TL4 (favorable critical miss tests). More sophisticated versions are typically autofeeds.

Handguns	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	fb	Features
DERRINGER AUTOFEEDS											
Lank derringer (.32)	4	-1	3	1	5/10	2	5	XS	Rare; **Scravers** (Lank)	70	Single use; invisible to TL0 to 5 security scans
Mitchau Maverick (.32)	3	-1	3	1	5/10	2	5	XS	**Hzt** (Mitchau)	50	
DERRINGER BREAKFEEDS											
Varsten Snake-eyes (.32)	3	-1	3	1	5/10	2	2	XS	**Decados** (Varsten)	45	Sturdy
DERRINGER REVOLVERS											
Typical derringer rev. (.32)	3	-1	3	1	5/10	2	4	XS	Common	50	
LIGHT AUTOFEEDS											
Typical light auto. (.32)	4		4	2	10/20	3	13	S		150	
Fenir Monbow (.32)	4		4	2	10/20	3	13	S	(Fenir & many licensees)	150	
Mitchau Rumber (.32)	4		4	2	10/20	3	13	S	Common; **Hzt** (Mitchau)	160	
Phoenix handgun (.32)	4		4	2	10/20	2	12	S	Common; **KW** (Imp)	120	Sturdy
Sumpter Krant (.32)	4		4	2	10/20	3	15	S	Common; **al-M** (Sumpter)	200	
LIGHT BREAKFEEDS											
Tarasov sidearm (.32)	3		4	2	5/10	2	2	S	**KW** (Reeves)	50	Sturdy; Pommel (3 dmg)
LIGHT REVOLVERS											
Typical light rev. (.32)	3		4	2	10/20	3	6	S		100	Sturdy
Fenir Shortstop (.32)	3		4	2	10/20	3	6	S	(Fenir & many licensees)	100	Sturdy
MacCauly Learmat (.32)	3		4	2	10/20	3	7	S	**Tethys** (ML)	125	Sturdy
Mitchau Protector (.32)	3		4	2	10/20	3	6	S	Common; **Hazat** (Mitchau)	110	Sturdy
MEDIUM AUTOFEEDS											
Typical med. auto. (.40)	4		5	3	20/30	3	10	S		250	
Imman Vorton (.40)	4		5	2	20/30	3	10	S	Common; **al-M**, (Imman)	300	
Krosler Dunehound (.40)	4		5	3	20/30	3	10	S	Common; **Bannockburn** (ML)	200	
Mitchau Ripper (.40)	4		5	3	20/30	3	11	S	Common; **Hzt** (Mitchau)	220	
MEDIUM BREAKFEEDS											
Tarasov officer pistol (.40)	3		5	3	10/20	2	5	S	Common; **KW** (Reeves)	150	Sturdy; Pommel (3 dmg)

Handguns	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	fb	Features
MEDIUM REVOLVERS											
Typical med. rev. (.40)	3		5	3	20/30	3	6	S		200	Sturdy
Drexler Firehunter (.38)	3		5	3	20/30	3	6	S	**Hwk** & **ML** (Hwk)	200	Sturdy
MacCauly Loadrite (.38)	3		5	3	20/30	3	7	S	**Tethys** (ML)	250	Sturdy
Mitchau QuarryGun (.40)	5		5	3	30/40	2	6	M	Rare; **Hzt** (Mitchau)	350	Sight 2; Sturdy
Mitchau Thunderer (.40)	3		5	3	20/30	3	6	S	Common; **Hzt** & **UC** (Mitchau)	200	Sturdy
Nerew Peacetrunk (.40)	3		5	3	20/35	3	6	S	Rare; **Mars** (Nerew)	200	Sturdy
HEAVY AUTOFEEDS											
Typical heavy auto. (.47)	4		6	4	30/40	2	8	M	Common	300	
Krosler Sampson (.47)	4		6	4	30/40	2	8	M	Common; **Bannockburn** (ML)	300	
Sumpter Urthquake (.47)	4		6	4	30/40	2	8	M	Common; **al-M** (Sumpter)	300	
— Longsword model (.47)		+1			30/50				Rare; **al-M** (Sumpter)	350	Stock
Tenson Blitzer (.47)	4		6	4	25/35	2	8	M	**Leagueheim**	280	
HEAVY REVOLVERS											
Typical heavy rev. (.47)	3		6	4	30/40	2	6	M	Common	250	Sturdy
MacCauly Buster (.50)	3		6	5	40/60	2	7	M	Rare; **Tethys** (MacCauly)	300	Sturdy
Sumpter Ulik (.47)	3		6	4	30/40	2	6	M	Common; **al-M** (Sumpter)	250	Sturdy
— Longsword model (.47)		+1			30/50				Rare; **al-M** (Sumpter)	300	Stock; Sturdy
Vuldrok revolver (.47)	3		6	5	30/40	3	5	M	Common; **Vuldrok**	250	Unstable
Tenson Mauler (.47)	3		6	4	25/35	2	6	M	**Leagueheim**	230	Sturdy

Rifles	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	fb	Features
AUTOFEED RIFLES											
Typical auto. rifle (10mm)	4		7	3	40/125	3(b)	30	XL	Common	500	Stock
Blue Lion M3 (.40)	4		6	2	40/120	2(b)	25	XL	**Hawkwood**	400	Stock
Hyram Splendor (.51)	4	-2	8	4	50/150	3(b)	25	XL	Rare; **Decados**	600	Stock
Masseri Stomper (.47)	4		7	3	45/125	3(b)	30	XL	**KW** (Masseri)	500	Stock
Model Hazat 68 (.40)	4		6	2	40/120	3(b)	32	XL	Common; **Hzt**	500	Stock
— Militia model (.40)						2(b)			**KW** (Hzt & ML)	450	Stock
Model Hazat 86 (10mm)	4		7	2	40/125	3(b)	28	XL	Common; **Hzt**	550	Stock
— Gold model (10mm)							32		Rare; **Hzt**	600	Stock
Muster Rover (10mm)	4		7	3	40/125	3(b)	32	XL	Common; **ML** (Muster)	850	Stock; Sturdy; Pod
Tarasov StormRifle (.40)	4		6	4	30/80	1(b)	12	XL	Common; **KW** (Reeve)	300	Stock; Sturdy
Van Gelder Thracker (.47)	4		7	3	45/125	3(b)	30	XL	**KW** (Van Gelder)	500	Stock
BOLTFEED RIFLE											
Typical break. rifle (.40)	3		6	2	40/120	1	8	XL		200	Stock
Basic hunting rifle (.40)	3		6	2	40/110	1	6	XL		150	Stock
Dragonfly 7 (.40)	3		6	2	45/140	1	5	XL	Common; **Li Halan**	250	Stock; Sturdy
Imperial rifle (.40)	4		6	2	40/120	2	10	XL	Common	200	Stock
— Veteran model (.40)									Common; **Imp**	250	Stock; Sturdy
Oro'ym "Newt Gun" (.47)	5		7	3	45/140	2	5	XL	Rare; **Oro'ym**	120	Aquatic; Stock; Sturdy

Rifles	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	fb	Features
Vuldrok Longarm (.47)	3		7	4	45/125	2	5	XL	Common; **Vuldrok**	300	Stock
REVOLVER RIFLE											
Tarasov rifle (.40)	3		6	2	30/80	2	5	XL	**KW** (Reeves)	120	Stock; Sturdy
SNIPER RIFLES (13mm)											
Typical boltfeed sniper rifle	3		8	4	50/150	1	5	XL	Rare	700	Sight 3; Stock
Hyram Glory autofeed sr	3		8	4	50/150	2(b)	15	XL	Common; **Decados**	1000	Sight 2; Stock;
Radir Longshot boltfeed sr	4	+1	8	4	55/175	1	5	XL	Rare; **KW** (Radir)	1500	Sight 4; Stock; Sturdy

Submachine Guns	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	Fb	Features
Typical SMG (.40)	4		5	1	30/40	3(b)	20	L		350	Stock
Herstal Project 98 (.32)	4		4	0	15/25	3(b)	56	L	Rare, **Leagueheim**	500	Stock; Sturdy
Jahnisak Muffler (.40)	4		5	1	30/40	3(b)	20	L		350	Stock
K&M S-M7 (.40)	4	+1	5	1	30/40	3(b)	30	L	**Tethys** (exclusively for al-M & Muster)	500	Stock; Stabilizer
Lank Stinger (.40)	4		5	1	30/40	3(b)	20	L	**Scravers** (Lank)	400	Stock; Sturdy
Martech Cobra (.40)	4		5	1	30/40	3(b)	30	L	Com., **KW**, (Engineers)	400	Stock
Tarasov SMG (.40)	4		5	1	20/30	2(b)	15	L	Com., **KW**, (Reeves)	200	Stock; Sturdy

Shotguns	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	Fb	Features
Typical shotgun (10g)	3	+1/0/-1	8/4/1	4	10/20	2	7	L		300	Stock
— Solid slug shell (.47)			7	3	30/80						Any 10 g shotgun
— Sawed-off (10g)		+2/-2/no			5/10/no						Any 10 g shotgun
Typical 2-barrel (10g)	3	+1/0/-1	8/4/1	4	10/20	2	2	L		200	Stock
Dreskel Boomer (10g)	3	+1/0/-1	8/4/1	4	10/20	2	7	L	**Scravers** (Dreskel)	325	Stock
— Solid slug (.47)			7	3	35/90						
Dreskel Gatling (8g)	4	+1/0/-1	9/5/1	4	12/25	2(b)	12	L	Common; **Scravers** (Dreskel)	450	Stock
Hazat Riotgun (10g)	4	+1/0/-1	8/4/1	4	10/22	2(b)	20	L	Common; **Hzt**	400	Stock
Xien Shortbarrel (10g)	3	+2/-2/no	8/4	4	5/10/no	2	6	L	Common; **Icon** (Xien)	275	Sawed-Off
— Solid slug (.47)		-1	7	3	20/60						
Vuldrok shotgun (10g)	3	+1/0/-1	8/4/1	4	10/20	2	5	L	Common; **Vuldrok**	300	Stock

Energy Guns

Requires the Energy Weapons capability.

BLASTERS

Critical Miss: Blasters are prone to overheating. (See the critical miss description for slug guns above; instead of a jam, a blaster overheats until it can be vented with a primary action.) A blaster's roll for a critical miss test is unfavorable.

Tech Compulsion: Destructive

FLAMEGUNS

Critical Miss: As a blaster (see above).

Tech Compulsion: Destructive

LASERS

Critical Miss: These weapons are highly stable, yet somewhat fragile and high maintenance. (See the critical miss description for slug guns above; instead of jamming, a laser overheats until it can be vented with a primary action.) Characters with the Energy Weapons capability gain favorable rolls when testing for a critical miss; for everyone else, the roll is unfavorable.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

SCREECHERS

Sonic weapons.

Critical Miss: As a slug gun (see above). A misfire is simply a temporary battery short.

Tech Compulsion: Cruel

STUNNERS

Includes tasers. The higher the tech level, the more sophisticated the delivery. Relies on electrical wires at TL4, projected arcs of electricity at TL5, or projected force fields at TL6 and above.

Critical Miss: As a slug gun (see above). A misfire is simply a temporary battery short.

Tech Compulsion: Cruel

Lasers	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	fb	Features
MINI LASERS											
Martech Midget	6		3	0	5/10	2	7	XS	Rare; **ML** & **al-M** (Martech)	200	Laser
Ring laser (handcraft)	6		3	0	5/10	1	1	XXS	Rare; **al-M**	600	Laser; Disguised
LASER PISTOLS											
Kurgan laser pistol	6		4	0	15/25	3	18	S	Common; **Kurga**	400	Laser; Unstable
Martech Amber	6	+1	4	0	10/20	2	21	S	Common; **ML** & **al-M** (Martech)	300	Laser
Martech Gold	6	+1	5	0	10/20	2	15	S	Common; **ML** & **al-M** (Martech)	300	Laser
LASER RIFLES											
Martech Indigo	6	+1	7	0	30/80	2	23	XL	Common; **ML** & **al-M** (Martech)	500	Laser
Martech Safire (sniper)	6	+1	7	0	60/160	1	10	XL	Common; **ML** & **al-M** (Martech)	600	Laser
ASSAULT LASER RIFLES											
Martech Red	6	+1	8	0	20/60	2	20	XL	Rare; **ML** & **al-M** (Martech)	700	Laser
Varsten Blacklight	6		8	0	20/60	2	20	XL	Rare; **Decados** (Varsten)	700	Laser
— Generator hookup						2	∞				Unlimited ammo

Blasters	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	fb	Features
BLASTER PISTOLS											
SOE Alembic	7		7	3	10/20	1	10	S	Rare; **Nobles** (SOE)	700	Blaster
Lank Eruptor	7		7	3	10/20	1(b)	9	M	Rare; **Scravers** (Lank)	900	Blaster
Vuldrok ancestral blaster	7		6	3	10/20	1	13	S	Rare; **Vuldrok**, (heirloom)	1000	Blaster, Sturdy
BLASTER RIFLES											
Republic Arms 3000	8	+1	15	4	30/80	1	20	XL	Exotic; Imp	5000+	Blaster, Stock
SOE Crucible	7		9	3	20/30	1	15	XL	Rare; **Nobles & ML** (SOE)	1000	Blaster
Nitobi blaster-blade	7	-1	9	3	20/30	1	15	XL	Rare; **Rampart** (Nitobi)	3000	Blaster; Unstable 2
— Axe	(4)		5	5	Melee						Hard; 2-Handed
BLASTER SHOTGUNS											
SOE Volcano	7	+2/0/-1	9/7/5	4	10/20/–	1	8	L	Rare**; Nobles & ML** (SOE)	1200	Blaster; Stock
Lank Incinerator	7	+2/0/-1	9/7/5	4	10/20/–	1(b)	8	L	Rare; **Scravers** (Lank)	1400	Blaster; Stock

Weapon	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	Fb	Features
FLAMEGUNS											
Kalomite flamegun (ka)	4	+2	5(3)	2	10/20	1	10	L	Common; **Avesti**	150	Flame
Kendra Dragon (napalm)	3	+2	4(4)	3	10/20	1	6	XL	Common	150	Flame
SCREECHERS											
Harpy screamer	6	+1	5	2	10/20	1	15	S		300	Sonic
Obun pitch-module	5	+1*	**	0	10/20	1	∞	nil	Rare; **Obun**	1000	Sonic; turns voice into weapon
STUNNERS											
Arbogast Sleeper	6	+1	4	2	10/20	2	15	S		300	Shock
SOE Tesla	6	+1	6	2	8/15	2	6	S	(SOE)	600	Shock
Womp gun	7	+1	5	2	10/20	1	15	S	Rare; **ML**	900	Area 2m; Shock; Slam

* Performing Arts Lore (Song) capability required
** Dmg is equal to the user's Perform rating

Ammo and Weapon Accessories

SLUG GUN AMMUNITION

Caliber	TL	fb (per shot)	Feature
.32	3	¼	Hard at TL5
.38-.40	3	½	Hard at TL5; Noisy
.47-.50	3	1	Hard at TL5; Noisy
10 mm	3	2	Hard at TL5; Noisy
13 mm	3	3	Hard at TL5; Noisy
Shotgun shell	3	½	(buckshot); Noisy
Fusion cell	6	10 (full cell)	Powers any energy gun

SPECIAL AMMO

Blast capsule	6	caliber + 6	+1 dmg; Hard; Blaster
Dumdum	3	caliber + 1	Mangle
Slapper	5	caliber + 3	Slam; target damaged = Stunned
Sunder slug	6	caliber + 3	Ultra Hard
Vorox Claw	5	caliber + 2	+1 dmg; Mangle

FIREARMS ACCESSORIES

Item	TL	fb	Feature
Laser sight	4	150	Potential +2 goal for Shoot *aim* maneuvers
Night sight	4	100	Cancels any visual impairment from darkness
Sight (optical)	3	30 x sight rank	Reduces range penalty by -1 per rank
Non-Metal gun	4-8	x2	Doesn't trigger metal-detector security systems
Sawed-Off shotgun	3	built-in	+1 goal short rng/-1 goal long rng/forfeit higher ranges
Stabilizer (SMG)	4	built-in	(When on) -1 dmg; cancels Noisy for .38-.40 caliber, lower caliber = unfavorable perception to hear it
Silencer	3	20	Cancels Noisy for .38-.40 caliber, lower caliber = unfavorable perception to hear it
Stock	1	built-in	+1 goal for Shoot *aim* maneuvers
Tri/bi-pod	2	10	Halves Strength requirement

Explosives

Blastforce: Explosives apply a fixed amount of VP against the armor-based Resistances of targets within their blast radius (they ignore non-armor-based Resistance, as per the Explo feature, described above). Unless noted otherwise, assume an explosive's blastforce is equal to its damage rating.

Cover: Structures can provide armor against blastforce if they're between you and the center of the explosion. The GM assigns a Resistance based on how tough the structure is. A wooden fence might be Easy, while a metal landcraft might be Tough or Severe.

Placed explosive: To place an explosive for optimal effect, spend at least 10 minutes and roll Focus or Intrusion + Wits. Resistance is based on the environment: structures that could contain the explosion raise the Resistance. You need the Military Ordnance (Demolitions) capability. VP from a successful roll can be spent to improve the blastforce by +1 per 2 VP.

Thrown explosives: You can't increase (or restrain) the blastforce of a thrown explosive by spending VP.

Tech Compulsion: Destructive

Throwing bombs/grenades: Instead of directing your attack against a character, you're usually aiming for the ground beneath their feet. If your targeted location is within short range, roll Vigor + Dexterity (as a primary action) vs. a Hard Resistance. If the terrain between you and the location presents obstructions or distractions — lots of trees or structures in the way — the Resistance rises to Demanding or Tough. For long-range locations, roll Vigor + Perception instead.

Weapon	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Rng	RoF	Ammo	Size	Agora	fb	Features
Blast pellet — marble size	6		3	0	10/20	2	5	XXS	Rare	20	Area 3 m; Blaster; Explo
— egg size	6		5	1	10/20	2	3	XS	Rare	30	Area 3 m; Blaster; Explo
— fist size	6		6	1	10/20	2	2	S	Rare	50	Area 3 m; Blaster; Explo
Etyri stinkbomb	0	-1	*	1	Drop	1	2	M	Common; Etyri	10	* Dex + Per -1, Sneak-3
Frag grenade	6	0	10	1	10/20	2	2	S		50	Area 5 m; blast-force 12; Explo; Mangle; Slam

* Stinkbombs ignore armor-based Resistance (but not boosted Resistance); each victorious attack reduces the target's Dex and Per by 1 and reduces Sneak by 3 (cumulative).

Melee Weapons

Weapon	TL	Goal	Dmg	Str	Size	Agora	fb	Features/Accessories
Hatchet/wood axe	1		6	4	L		2	
— Battle Axe	1		7	5	L		5	Military
Chainsword	5	-1	7	5	L	Rare; **Dec**	150	Hard; Mangle; Military; Noisy
Club	0		4	2	L		½	
— Quarterstaff	0	-1	5	3	XL		1	Slam
— Mace	1		5	3	L	Common	10	Hard; Military; Slam
Dagger	1		4	2	M		4	
— Ukari punch-blade	5		4	2	M	Common; Aylon	50	Hard; Poison 3
— Parry dagger/main gauche	2		4	2	M	Rare	5	Guard; Military
Garrote	0	-1	1 + *strangle*	1	XS	Rare	5	*Strangle*: uses Fight-skill *grapple* but delivers base dmg/turn in addition to *subdue*
Great weapon	1		8	6	XL	Rare	40	2-Handed; Military
— Adept Claymore	5		8	6	XL	**Bro Bat**	100	Guard; Hard; Military; Slam
Knife	1		3	1	S		2	
— Hollow knife	4		3	1	M	Rare	50	Poison 5
— Trench knife	3		3	1	M	Rare	6	Built-in knuckleduster; Military
Knuckleduster	1		+2	1	XS		2	Slam
— Shantor warshoes	5		+2	1	XS	**al-M**	20	Hard; Military; Slam
Morningstar	1	-1	5	4	L	Rare	20	Hard; Military; Slam
Rapier	2		5	3	L	Common	20	Military
Frap stick (shockstick)	4		6*	2	L	Common	15	Shock
--Hironem stunstick (yesht)	2		Faith**	2	L	**Hironem**	100	Shock
Spear	1		5	3	L		2	(2-Handed = Hard)
— Cavalry lance	1	-1	8	5	XL	Rare	20	Military; (*charge*: add mount Size to dmg)
— Shantor horn	5		5	2	M	Common; **al-M**	30	Guard; Hard; Military (*charge*: +2 dmg)
Sword	1		6	4	L		20	Military
— Kurgan side-sword	4		6	2	L	**Kurga**	45	Guard; leg sheath (*kick*: +3 dmg); Military
— Ascorbite crystal sword (arbat'a)	2		6	3	L	**Ascorbite**	1000+	Hard; Military; Noisy; Vibro (primary action to activate; lasts 3 turns)
— Vorox sword (glankesh)	2		6	4	L	**Vorox**	15	Military; (Hard in vorox hands)

* Base damage is 2 vs. e-shields; delivers full damage once it penetrates.
** Base damage is 0 vs. e-shields; delivers full damage once it penetrates.

ARTIFACT MELEE WEAPONS

Each artifact requires a separate, item-specific Artifact Melee Weapon capability.

FLUX SWORD
A flux sword has a heavy, bladeless handle from which a plasma-filled, force-field "sword" erupts with the flick of a switch.

Critical Miss: As with blasters (see above).

Tech Compulsion: Destructive

MIST SWORD
This psi-tech version of the flux sword allows psychics to attune with the weapon to enhance their use of it.

WIREBLADE
Consists of an elegant, bladeless handle from which a faintly luminescent, monofilament "sword" extends upon activation.

Critical Miss: This could get ugly. Roll a d20: 1-10 = wire temporarily warps (you can continue to use it normally next turn); 11-20 = you accidentally turn the blade on yourself, and you suffer the blade's base damage.

Tech Compulsion: Destructive

ARTIFACT MELEE WEAPONS	TL	Goal	DMG	Str	Size*	Agora	fb	Features
Flux Sword	8	+1	7	3	S/L	Exotic	15000+	Blaster; Hard
— Mist Sword	8	+1	7	3	S/L	Exotic	30000+	Blaster; Hard; Psi
Wireblade	8		8	2	S/L	Exotic	10000+	Ignores armor

* Size L when activated; size S when inactive.

MELEE ACCESSORIES

Item	TL	fb	Feature
Basket-hilt guard	2	+20	+1 Body Resistance vs melee attacks
e-shield breaker	8	+200	Requires fusion cell; overloads e-shield on victorious hit but cell burns out
Hard-spike club	1	+10	-1 goal; gains Hard property
Shock-tip	4	+30	Requires fusion cell; -1 goal; gains Shock property
Vibro upgrade	5	+100	Requires fusion cell; -1 goal; gains Vibro property

DRAWING YOUR WEAPON

Whenever you enter combat without a weapon already in hand, you can draw a holstered/sheathed weapon and attack with it as part of the same primary action. Doing so places you hindmost in the initiative queue. (Unless you have an initiative edge, such as from the Fencing or Marksmanship perks, in which case you to ignore this limitation and act first.)

This rule generally applies to most weapons of large (L) size or smaller. For an extra-large (XL) weapon, such as a rifle, it usually requires a primary action to ready it (after which it can be fired in successive turns).

If you want to swap weapons, you can drop the one you're currently holding and draw-and-fire another one as part of the same action, but if you want to return your current weapon to its holster/sheath and then draw-and-attack with a different weapon, you're once again placed hindmost in the initiative queue for that turn.

Armor

With a few exceptions, armors are either locally produced by native craftsmen or mass-produced on a variety of planets and widely distributed throughout the Known Worlds. Only rarely do planets or factions sport unusual armor designs with restricted distribution.

Tech Compulsion: Protective

R: The armor's Body Resistance rating.

e-shield: The type of e-shield that this armor can be worn with.

Grade: Notes which Armor capability is required for wearing this armor.

Features:

ABC: Protects against atomic, biological, and chemical exposure.

Hindering: The bulk of the armor hinders its wearer's ability to sidestep attacks. The cost to boost Body Resistance when wearing the armor is twice the usual cost: 2 VP per +1 Body Resistance.

"proof": Gains full Resistance against the attack properties for which it is proofed (i.e. Slamproof, Blasterproof, etc.). (See the *Attack & Damage Properties* sidebar.)

CIVILIAN GRADE ARMORS	TL	R	e-shield	Dex	Vigor	Agora	fb	Features
Thick clothing	0	1	eS				1	
Leather jerkin	1	2	eA				5	Shockproof; Slamproof
Polymer knit	4	2	eS			Common	200	Hardproof; Shockproof; Slamproof
Synthsilk	5	3	eS			Rare	300	Shockproof
— Stiffsynth	6	4	eA		-1	Exotic	500	Shockproof; Slamproof
— Smartsynth	7	4	eA			Exotic	600	Hardproof; Shockproof; Slamproof

COMBAT GRADE ARMORS	TL	R	e-shield	Dex	Vigor	Agora	fb	Features
Battle padding	0	1	eS				3	Shockproof; Slamproof
Studded leather jerkin	1	3	eA		-1		8	Slamproof
— Plastic-studded	5	3	eA			Common	15	Shockproof; Slamproof
— Plasteel-studded	5	3	eA			Rare	30	Hardproof; Shockproof; Slamproof
Galisp suit (iron-studded)	3	4	eS			Ukari	30	Shockproof; Slamproof; Stinks (-3 Sneak in non-Ukari enviro)
Half-plate	1	5	eB		-1		30	Hardproof; Slamproof
— Plastic	5	5	eB			Common	60	Shockproof; Slamproof
— Plasteel	5	5	eB			Rare	100	Hardproof; Shockproof; Slamproof
— Coral cuirass	0	5*	eB			Oro'ym	100	Shockproof; Slamproof (*Loses 1R each time hit; heals 1R per day soaked in seawater)

WAR GRADE ARMORS	TL	R	e-shield	Dex	Vigor	Agora	fb	Features
Ceramsteel exoframe	6	10	eB			Rare	2000	ABC; Hardproof; Hindering; Laserproof; Shockproof; Slamproof; 24 h power
— Adept Robes	6	10	eB	+1	+2	Bro Bat	10000+	+1 h life-support; radio; binoculars
— (Unpowered; both versions)				-5	-5			
Scale mail	1	6	eB	-1	-1		20	Hardproof; Hindering; Slamproof
— Plastic	5	6	eA	-1		Common	50	Shockproof; Hindering; Slamproof
— Plasteel	5	6	eA	-1		Rare	80	Hardproof; Hindering; Shockproof; Slamproof
— Frost fire dragon scale	0	6	eB	-1		Vuldrok	200	Blasterproof; Flameproof; Hindering; Laserproof; Shockproof; Slamproof
Kurgan repelsuit	6	**	eS			Kurga	250	** Activation: -2 goal to hit wearer, lasts 10 turns
Mail (chainmail)	1	7	eA	-1	-2		50	Hardproof; Hindering; Slamproof
— Plastic	5	7	eA	-1		Common	80	Hindering; Shockproof; Slamproof
— Plasteel	5	7	eA	-1		Rare	100	Hardproof; Hindering; Shockproof; Slamproof
Full plate	1	8	eB	-1	-2		80	Hardproof; Hindering; Slamproof
— Plastic	5	8	eB	-1	-1	Common	100	Hindering; Shockproof; Slamproof
— Plasteel	5	8	eB	-1	-1	Rare	150	Hardproof; Hindering; Shockproof; Slamproof

SPACE GRADE ARMORS	TL	R	e-shield	Dex	Vigor	Agora	fb	Features
Spacesuit	5	2	eB	-2	-1	Common	100	ABC; Flameproof; Hardproof; Hindering; Shockproof; Slamproof; 24 h life-support
— Armored spacesuit	5	6	eB	-1	-2	Common	400	As spacesuit +Blasterproof; Laserproof
— Charioteer tactical suit	7	3	eA		-1	Charioteers	1000	As spacesuit +Blasterproof; Laserproof
— Marauder spacesuit	6	7	eB	-1	-1	Rare	1000	As spacesuit +Blasterproof; Laserproof
— Antique spacesuit	4	1	eB	-3	-2	Rare	50	ABC; Shockproof; Slamproof; 12 h life-support

HANDHELD SHIELDS

The Handheld Shield capability is required to wield a handheld shield effectively.

A handheld shield is wielded in the offhand for defense. Such shields are incompatible with e-shields; wielding one prevents an e-shield from activating.

R: A handheld shield provides a bonus to your Body Resistance rating. This combines with armor Resistance.

Attack: You can shove your shield at an opponent as a primary-action attack. Like any offhand attack, your roll is unfavorable. (Unless you have the Ambidextrous perk.)

HANDSHIELDS	TL	R	Dmg	Str	Size	Agora	fb	Features
Body shield (steel)	1	+3	5 (Slam)	5	XL	Common	15	Slamproof; Unwieldy
— Riot shield (plastic)	4	+3		4	L	Common	25	Slamproof
— Battle shield (plasteel)	5	+4		4	L	Rare	50	Hardproof; Slamproof; Unwieldy
Buckler (steel)	1	+2	3	2	M	Common	10	Slamproof; +4 Resistance vs. missile attacks
— Dueling buckler (plasteel)	5	+2		1	M	Rare	25	Hardproof; Slamproof; +4 Resistance vs missile attacks

Energy Shields

Energy shields are highly priced but rare, typically found only among wealthy priests, guilders, and nobles, or their more prestige enforcer squads. E-shields project an invisible energy aura around the user (typically about an inch thick) that hardens to deflect impacting attacks, blocking damage within a set damage range (usually 5-10). If the aura is struck with less than minimum force (0-4 in most models), the e-shield fails to activate. If struck with greater force (typically 11+), the e-shield blocks up to its maximum amount (the rest penetrates past it).

Since energy shields are not exactly uncommon among nobles, most duelists fighting for honor or revenge against an e-shield-wearing opponent routinely exercise *restraint* (see **Chapter 1: Rules**) by pulling their blows (lowering their base damage by spending 2 VP per -1 dmg). They whittle down their opponent with a thousand cuts. This method also allows duelists to better survive combats with terms of "first blood."

Tech Compulsion: Reckless

BLEEDTHROUGH

Some attacks can still get through an e-shield's activated force field, such as a blaster's plasma and a flamegun's raw heat.

Blaster: Flip a number of coins equal to the final amount of damage delivered by impact, flipping them *after* the attacker has spent any VP to boost it. For each coin:

Heads = 1 point of damage ignores the e-shield (inflict this damage on the wearer)

Tails = 1 point of damage is blocked by the e-shield

Flamegun: Toss a number of coins equal to *half* the final amount of damage delivered by impact, rounding down; otherwise, proceed as above.

BURN-OUT

Multiple activations of an e-shield within the same round run the risk of burning out an e-shield. If the number of activations in a single round exceeds its lower impact threshold (usually 5), it must test for burn-out. Roll a d20; each e-shield is rated by a burn-out goal number (13 for a standard e-shield). Failure means the shield deactivates for a number of rounds equal to the amount of damage from the most recent attack.

Example: *Lady Dominique de Sutek wears a dueling shield. She is dishonorably attacked by a squad of soldiers firing rifles – seven different attacks within the same round! Luckily, her shield activates to block most of the attacks, but the sixth and seventh attacks push the e-shield over its limit (its lower threshold of 5). The GM asks Dominique's player to test for burnout. Her goal is 13 for a dueling shield. The first roll (for the sixth attack) is 7 – the shield activates. The second roll is 15 – the shield burns out. Lady Dominque takes the full brunt of the bullet – 7 dmg – and her e-shield will not protect her for seven rounds. She curses and limps behind the closest building, drawing her sword.*

Attacks from the *burst* and *empty clip* burst-fire maneuvers also prompt a test for burn-out (but not a *three-round burst* or *spread* attack).

Broad-area impacts also require a burn-out test. Falls that would normally cause you damage will trigger a burn-out test, as will broad-area impacts like grenade and bomb blasts. Should the test fail, the e-shield still blocks the damage but ceases to work for a number of rounds equal to the damage amount.

FIELD INTEGRITY

Energy shields limit their wearer's bulk. You simply cannot wear thick clothing and a ton of items and still expect the e-shield to activate. The technology behind the e-shield's invisible detection field is poorly understood in the 51st Century. Even the Second Republic tech wizards who made the shields didn't fully grasp how to extend the field very well. After all, the tech was originally reverse-engineered from stolen vautech.

When an e-shield is worn somewhere on the wearer's body — on the belt (typically) or as a fashion accessory — it "reads" that person's dimensions and envelops them in a field that is constantly "on." It detects any breach of its integrity. If the incoming energy — kinetic or energetic — meets the field's lower threshold, it "activates" by hardening the field to block the energy. If the energy is too strong, it will block up to its maximum threshold, but the rest will beat down the field and get through.

Just how it "reads" its user and envelops them is a mystery. Certain Engineers, working with Eskatonic occultists, have theorized that the e-shield somehow detects a person's "subtle" energy, a bio-spiritual field that allegedly every living thing emits; sometimes, this is called an "etheric" or "astral" body that surrounds the physical body. Regardless of how the reading is done, the e-shield seems "intelligent" enough to compensate for changes in the wearer's clothing and gear — so long as that load isn't bulkier than its field can handle. Some areas of the body are more expansive than others (hips, joints, head, feet, hands) to allow for more space before the field is disrupted. Hands are special: The field adapts and warps around gripped items without losing integrity. This mysterious technical feat is accomplished less often at TL6 (which means antique e-shields won't allow their wearers to wield large items and weapons because they disrupt the field), but this feature comes fully into play at TL7+.

Standard e-shields wearers can't wear backpacks and the like; that extra bulk interrupts the shield over too wide an area. (Most nobles wouldn't sully themselves with such stevedore's gear anyway; that's what servants are for.) Assault shields allow for backpacks and belt-laden gear, so long as they don't get too bulky: standard backpacks are okay; hiking backpacks are over the limit. Battle shields allow for more bulk and gear, including heavy armor and the kind of load a soldier might carry into battle.

There are no strict guidelines here; there are just too many items to consider. However, as a rough guideline, use these amounts for an e-shield wearer's carrying allowance:

e-shield	Items Carried*
Antique	1 L
Standard or Dueling	1 XL
Assault	2 XL
Battle	3 XL

* These are in addition to compatible armor and whatever's carried in the wearer's hands.

INCOMPATIBILITY

An energy shield's force field conforms to the its user's body but gives some additional wiggle room for clothing and items. Not all e-shields are equally generous. Armor is rated by the types of e-shields that

can be used while wearing that armor. If an e-shield is not listed as compatible with that armor, then it cannot activate when its wearer dons that type of armor. The armor is too thick and disrupts the subtle field that envelops the e-shield wearer.

E-SHIELD CHART KEY

Thresholds: e-shields are rated by a lower and an upper threshold: the minimum amount of damage that will activate it and the maximum amount of damage it will block/absorb. Any damage in excess of the maximum threshold gets through and is inflicted on the wearer.

Hits: Lists the number of activations (one per attack) an e-shield can make before its fusion cell is drained.

Burn-out: Lists the goal number when testing for burn-out.

Distortion: Once activated, the e-shield's force-field shimmers briefly, making its wearer harder to hit with ranged attacks for the remainder of the round in which it has activated. Apply the Distortion bonus to the wearer's Body Resistance against all long- and extreme-range attacks.

Noisy: Whenever an e-shield activates, it hums and crackles electrically, making the wearer's Sneak rolls unfavorable for that round. Conversely, when you sneak past someone wearing an activating e-shield, your Sneak rolls for that round are favorable. (Assault and battle shields always hum, even when they haven't been activated by an attack.)

Energy Shield	TL	Thresholds	Hits	Burn-Out	Distortion	Agora	fb	Features
Antique e-shield	6	6-9	8	10	+2 R	Rare	300	Size S; compatible with eS armors; Noisy when activated; incompatible with XL weapons/items
Standard e-shield	7	5-10	10	13	+1 R	Common	500	Size S; compatible with eS armors; Noisy when activated
Dueling e-shield	7	5-10	15	13	0	Rare	1000	Size XS; compatible with eS armors; Disguised; Noisy when activated;
Assault e-shield	7	5-15	20	15	+1 R	Exotic	3000	Size M; compatible with eA & eS armors; always Noisy
Battle e-shield	7	5-20	30	15	+1 R	Exotic	5000	Size M; compatible with eA, eB, eS armors; always Noisy

SHIELD DAMPER

It makes sense that someone would eventually figure out the best way to disable an energy shield. The most common method is a shield damper, a device that sets up a field disturbance on the same vibrational frequency as most energy shields. The frequency is invisible to most current tech devices designed to measure energy fields.

When the damper is turned on, it prevents all energy shields within its area of affect from activating. Different models have different areas (minimum 3 meters, maximum 60 meters). However, the larger the area, the more energy used. Generally, a damper will work for one hour, if it covers a larger area, the duration is shorter. After the time is up, the damper burns out. Exchanging batteries will not make it work again; only a repair session with high-tech tools will do so.

Shield dampers are extremely rare and quite illegal — no noble likes to think he can be assassinated by any common thug with a shield damper. Nonetheless, they are sought out by nobles to use against their rivals. Using a damper on a starship can cause damage to the stardrives or even jumpdrives — penalties for doing so usually involve being tossed from an airlock.

Cost: minimum 5000 fb. Size: Medium.

Equipment & Services

Sentients are defined by their tools. The Universal Church insists that sentients also risk being enthralled by their tools' convenience.

While countless gadgets and services are available across the Known Worlds and beyond, only a limited representation can be presented here. Most of the more self-explanatory items and services only have price listings, while more exotic items are granted more details. Each price listing represents either an individual specimen of the item, one service consultation, or an average day's work.

Costs are common guidelines; local factors could alter them dramatically. In the Stigmata trenches, a flea-ridden blanket could set you back hundreds of firebirds, while on Criticorum, a spare power cell and tool kit might be thrown in to close the deal on that laser rifle bargain. In the end, the GM sets the final price of things.

Communications

(e) = Encrypted. Intercepted communications can't be understood unless the code is first broken (an extremely long-term task for cryptographers).

Intercepting transmissions: You can attempt to intercept and view/listen-in on a transmission using the Interface-skill *hack* maneuver, so long as you have a matching or similar device of the same TL.

Sec: Lists the device's built-in Resistance against transmission interception. A device manufactured at a higher TL than the listed baseline gets +1 Resistance per higher TL.

Rng: Lists the maximum distance (usually in km) that transmissions may reach given optimal conditions. (The more massive and/or dense a blocking object is, the more it will interfere with transmissions).

Tech Compulsion: Indiscreet

Device	TL	fb	RNG	Effect
Glimmer card (XS)	5	100	100km	Playing-card-sized tablet links invited TL4-5 devices into a wireless network (no coms infrastructure required); Sec = Tough.
SQUAWKERS				
Walkie-talkie (S)	4	25	25km	Sec = Hard
Field headset (XS)	4	35	25km	Sec = Hard
Exec wristband (XXS)	5	50	25km	Sec = Tough
Whisper pin*	5	100	10km	Personalized (voice recognition); miniature collar-&-earpiece (Observe rolls to spot device are unfavorable); Sec = Demanding (e).
Imp. Starlight LRCD (XL)	8	300	100AU	Interplanetary tachyon radio. 10-second per AU delay; Sec = Tough (e).
Quantum radio (XL)	8	500	Unlimited	Instant quantum transfer (no delay or interference); Sec = Miraculous (e).
ENHANCEMENT DEVICES				
Encryption router (M)	4+	TLx20	–	Adds encryption.
Spy gear (L)	4+	TLx100	–	Makes *hack* rolls to intercept communications favorable.

* House Decados jealously enforces their monopoly on the patented whisper pin technology, so they're very picky about who can buy one. Many Decados fiefs run a brisk whisper pin trade, and each one is responsible for the pins they sell. Decados often charge three times or more the standard price for outsider customers. The Jakovian Agency is thought to actively employ source-code override technology to eavesdrop on whisper pin communications, although their own copies are notoriously difficult to intercept (+2 Resistance). Inferior Imperial, Merchant League, and al-Malik knock-offs are rumored to exist (RNG 3 km; Sec = Hard (e)).

Energy (Fusion Cell)

The Second Republic standardized its power needs for most consumer devices into the fusion cell (TL6). These rechargeable batteries come in various sizes, depending on their intended use, but they can all be recharged at a standard fusion power station. The Merchant League has kept some of the old fusion stations running. You can find one in nearly any agora on any planet in the Known Worlds. However, prices for use vary, depending largely on the demand and how well-maintained the station is. Some stations are gleaming, spotless paeans to Second Republic durability, while others are still running on spit and gum… and occasional explosions are not unknown.

Cost: 10 fb each (average 3 fb to recharge a cell)

Tech Compulsion: None

Size	Equipment types
XS	Dueling e-shield, energy guns (blasters or lasers), flux sword, whisper pin
S	Energy shields, squawker radios, portable think machines
M+	Small skimmers or hoverbikes

Entertainment

Tech Compulsion: Hypercritical

PASTTIME	TL	fb	Effect
Fantasy box (Artificial Reality System)	5	1000	Allows immersion *research* maneuvers and choice simulations; while in use, you are unaware of your actual environment
AUDIO REPLAY SYSTEMS			(Recordings are typically 10% of the player system cost)
Gramophone/wax cylinder	3	10	Fragile; 10-45 minute recordings
Tape/laser disk/digital	4	20	Sturdy; 45-90 minute recordings
Photon/quantum	5	30	Indestructible; recordings of unlimited duration
Personalized symphony	6	50	Instantly (AI) generated personalized music; mood-and-milieu reactive
News sheet	2	¼	Read about current affairs
SHOW TICKET			
Live			
Troubadour	0	tip*	Typical tip = ½ fb per VP spent on *perform* maneuver
Band/troupe	0	1+TL*	Typical tip = 1 fb per VP spent on *perform* maneuver
Orchestra/theatre	1	5+[TLx2]*	
Pre-recorded			
Magic lantern show	3+	TL	
Artificial reality show	5	10	
VIDEO REPLAY SYSTEMS			(Recordings are typically 10% of the player system cost)
Moving picture projector	3	20	Fragile; 10-45 minute recordings
Television apparatus	4	40	Sturdy; 45-90 minute recordings
Magic lantern (holographic projector)	5	60	Indestructible; recordings of unlimited duration
Wrist projector	TL4+	TL x20	Allows viewings of up to 1 TL lower at a fraction the size/system requirement
Viewscroll or Videobook	6	500	Super-thin video scroll (contains a public library's worth of info)

PASTTIME	TL	fb	Effect
VICES			
Tobacco (weekly)	0	1-5	
Pipe	1	2-10	
Novelty item	1	TL x½	
Make-up kit	1	TL x5	
GAMING			
Pack of cards	2	1-5	
Dice	0	¼-2	
Boardgame	1	2-20	
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS			
General types			
Drum	0	1+TL x5	(Full drum-kit = fb x5)
Wind	0	1+TL	
String	1	TL x10	
Keys	2	TL x20	
Electric	4	x2 or x½	Allows acoustic (simulated) & non-acoustic sounds, and audio effects
Specific items			
Percussion suit	5	100	Smart-cloth jumpsuit with built-in drum-kit touch pads
Magic flute	5	100	Projects holographic colors and shapes (simulated synesthesia)
Phantom instrument	6	x100	Holographical display of a fully playable instrument
Music collar	6	50	Translates voice into instrumental sound (substitute Perform-skill Sing for Play)
Uvular auto-tune	6	50	Allows favorable Perform (Sing) rolls and a wide variety of audio effects

* Noble/VIP ticket: x2 cost for additional services.

Fashion

Tech Compulsion: Pretentious

Clothes	TL	fb	Effect
Sturdy workwear (lasts one year)	0	10	
— Winter-wear	0	x2	
Heeled boots (pair)	1	3	
Casual outfit	1	2	
Evening clothes/Formal wear	2	5	
— Clerical fashion	1	x2	
— Guilder fashion	3	x3	
— Noble fashion	3	x3 + noble rank level	

Clothes	TL	fb	Effect
Smartcloth	7	x50	Dirtproof, self-repairing, fit adjusting, change color as secondary action
— Fireproof	7	+75	Flameproof (+ ignore secondary fire dmg)
— Impenetrable	7	+50 per +1 R	Gain +1 Body Resistance per 50 fb (max +3); Hardproof

Accessories	TL	fb	Effect
Finger ring (silver)	1	10	
Necklace (silver)	1	20	
Wristband/arm ring (silver)	1	16	
Brass	1	/2	
Gold	1	x2	
Glass bead	1	+3-5	
Semiprecious stone	1	+5-10	
Gemstone	1	+10-100	
Skilled craftwork	1	x2	
Excellent craftwork	1	x3-x5	
Masterpiece	1	x6-x10+	
Mass-produced (in a workshop)	1	/2	
Mass-produced (in a factory)	3	/5	

Illumination

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

Device	TL	fb	Effect
Candle (XXS)	1	¼	3-12 hours
Torch (M)	1	1	20-60 minutes
Lantern (M)	1	2	50-100 hours (oil 2 fb; flame damage 2 + 2 sustained)
Everlight (M)	8	200	Centuries; always on
Fusion torch (S)	5	25	10 hours; sturdy

Living Expenses

Even in the 51st century, staying alive is a constant struggle for most people. Blessed are they who keep their own (profitable) land… or whose patrons supply their food and lodging!

Rent/person	Day	Week
Dormitory bunk	¼	1
Private sleeping capsule	¼	1 ½
Private room (single)*	3	20
— Double*	2	10
— Group (4-6)*	1	5
--Elite suite*/apartment (all amenities)	10**	50**
Stables/barn (person)	¼	½
Stabling (mount; incl. meals & grooming)	1	6
Vehicle parking (incl. basic security)	2	10

* Includes breakfast and one bath a week
** Entire unit (not per person)

Food and Drink	TL	fb
Daily requirements (working serf)	0	¼
— Comfortable living (most elites)	1	3
— Noble requirements (minimum!)	2	5
Tavern dinner	1	1
Beer (glass)	1	¼-1
Wine (glass)	1	½-20
— Bottle	2	x5

Medicals

MedPacks: MedPack is a catch-all term for any pre-prepared, sterilized, and comprehensively stocked medical emergency pack. They are particularly common among soldiers, expeditioners, and medical personnel. They're essential for anyone who wants to efficiently *treat wounds* with Remedy; without such supplies, rolls are unfavorable. Several types of MedPacks exist, including anything from one-man pocket bags to crew-supply cases, each with their own additional effects (see below).

Surgery kits: Contains everything required to perform complicated medical procedures. A surgery kit is required to efficiently *operate* with Remedy; without such supplies, rolls are unfavorable.

Tech Compulsion: Solicitous

Med Tech	TL	fb	Effect
Autoleech (XXS)	5	10	Once/day: neutralize drug/poison and remove 1 drug/poison-induced state, but patient suffers 1 Vitality wound. (Organic leeches do the same once/3 days and cost ¾ fb.)
Doctor's bag (L)	2*	10	Remedy: +1 goal (20 uses)
Elixir (XXS)	7	10	Based on potency; see *Healing* in **Chapter 3: Traits**. Does not count toward techgnostic overload.
Elixir autoinjector (XS)	6	25	Programmed to automatically inject 1 dose whenever wearer suffers a Vitality wound greater than their Revival rating. (+10 fb to autoinject whenever Vitality loss exceeds Size.)
Lancet (XS)	2	3	Keen surgical knife: +1 goal to Remedy *operate* (1 use); combat knife: 2 dmg + Hard
MedPacks			
— Personal (XS)	4*	5	Favorable Remedy *treat wounds* & recover +1 Vitality if successful (1 use)
— Medic (M)	4*	20	Favorable Remedy *treat wounds* & recover +1 Vitality if successful (10 uses)
– Expedition (XL)	4*	100	Favorable Remedy *treat wounds* & recover +1 Vitality if successful (30 uses); halve potency of all venoms and most poisons; purifies water & cures allergy, indigestion, diarrhea
– NanoTech (L)	7	1000	Grants 1 instant Respite + 1 Vitality per 1 VP spent (20 uses)
Surgery kit (L)	4*	200	Required to perform Remedy *operate* maneuver
Poison snooper (S)	5	100	Detects poisons listed in its data archive

* Lower-tech versions: -2 goal per TL lower. Higher-tech versions: +1 goal per TL higher (max +3). Prices fall by 1/10th for every TL decrease and double with every TL increase.

Medical Care	TL	fb/day	Effect
Rest (home care)	0	Food	Allows Respite
— Bush care	0	Food+tip	Allows Respite & unfavorable Remedy *rehabilitate*
— Primitive hospitalization	1-3	TLx3	Favorable Respite; unfavorable Remedy *operate*; free MedPack included
— Advanced hospitalization	4	TLx5	Favorable Respite & Remedy *rehabilitate*; free MedPack included
— High-tech hospitalization	5+	TLx10	Favorable Respite, & Remedy *rehabilitate* & *operate*; free MedPack included (free Elixir instead at TL7)

DRUGS AND POISONS

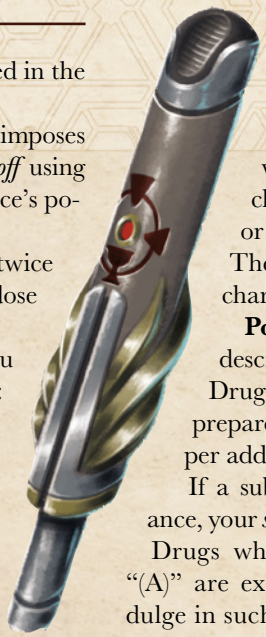
Dosing: The effects of a substance are listed in the chart below, based on a single dose.

When you are dosed with a substance, it imposes a state on you. You can attempt to *shake it off* using (Focus or Vigor) + Endurance vs. the substance's potency as Resistance.

If the substance's potency is more than twice your Endurance, you've been given an overdose and suffer the listed OD effects.

A critical hit on a *shake it off* roll means you develop a permanent tolerance for that drug: you require twice the potency to suffer its basic effects and don't suffer OD effects.

Duration: Lists how long a single dose (and its effects) lasts. If successive doses are administered while the previous dose is still in effect, add the new potency to the previous one to check for overdose (see above).



fb: Lists cost per dose. Costs given in (parenthesis) are estimates for substances rarely sold.

OD: Describes the ill effects suffered when you overdose. If an OD reduces a characteristic below 1 rank, organ failure or system shock occurs (the Dying state). The *treat wounds* maneuver can restore the characteristic as if it were Vitality.

Potency (POT): A substance's strength is described in terms of its standard potency. Drugs and poisons (but not venoms) can be prepared at higher potencies (double the fb cost per additional rating).

If a substance's potency exceeds your Endurance, your *shake it off* rolls against it are unfavorable.

Drugs whose potency rating is listed with an "(A)" are extremely addictive. Each time you indulge in such a substance, roll (Focus or Vigor) + a

Substance	fb	Potency	Duration	OD	Effect
DRUGS					
Beast tranquilizer	3	4	10 min	End -1, Wits -1	Unconscious
Cocaine	6	5	10 min	Pre -1, Wits -1	Heedless, Stimulated
Obun ("Vol-Qhaatai") spice	50	2	10 min	Will -2	Enlightened
Opium	5	3 (A)	20 min	Per -1, Str -1	Dazed, Euphoric; withdrawal: Fatigued
— Morphine	8	4 (a)	30 min	Per -1, Str -1	Dazed, Desensitized; withdrawal: Dazed
— Heroin	10	6 (A)	15 min	Per -2, Str -2	Euphoric, Stunned; withdrawal: Tormented
Selchakah ("Decados Dope")	10	5 (A)	20 min	Will -2, Wits -2	Epiphany, Euphoric; withdrawal: Angered
VENOM					
Vorox claw juice	(20)	3	5 min	Dex -1, Str -1	Confused, Dazed
Rattlesnake bite	(5)	7	1 hour	End -2, Per -1	Dazed, Tormented
POISONS					
Grixi (Ukari blade poison)	50	8	1 hour	End -1, Str -1	Mangled
Plox (Ukari blade poison)	25	5	2 min	Paralyzed	Fatigued

fortitude characteristic of your choice (Endurance, Faith, or Will) vs. a Resistance equal to the substance's potency. Failure means you become addicted to that substance. Henceforth, if you do not get a dose of it at least once per week, you suffer its listed withdrawal state until you can get a fresh dose. (A therapist using the Remedy *rehabilitate* maneuver can help you to break this addiction after a week's worth of rehab.)

Drugs whose potency rating is listed with an "(a)" are less addictive, but still dangerous; halve the potency (rounded down) when testing for addiction.

Vector: All substance effects assume administration through the most efficient vector (typically injection into the bloodstream). For less effective vectors (such as oral consumption), reduce potency by 1 and ignore the first OD.

Restraints

Tech Compulsion: Cruel (affects the owner/user, not the person being restrained)

Device	TL	fb	Effect
Handcuffs	1+	TLx5	Vitality = TLx2 (Slamproof at TL2, Hardproof at TL3, Flameproof at TL4, Shockproof at TL 5, Laserproof at TL6, Plasmaproof at TL7); Sec = TL
Muster Chains	6	300	Vitality 13 (-proof vs. all properties); Sec = Herculean (e); remote pain-inflictor (instills Tormented state for 1 turn per press of button)
Nano-futon constraint	7	600	A successful Fight + Dexterity action is required to wrap the victim in the futon; break free with unfavorable Str + Vigor vs. Tough Resistance; Vitality 8 (-proof vs. all properties)

Security

Gen = Gene-coded lock. Impossible to pick with matching TL tools; higher TL tools allow unfavorable Intrusion rolls.

Sec = Security. This is the device's built-in Resistance against Intrusion-skill attempts to open it. Electronic locks might require the Interface *hack* maneuver. A device manufactured at a higher TL than the listed baseline gets +1 Resistance per higher TL.

Tech Compulsion: Industrious

Vitality: This is the amount of damage the device can endure before breaking open.

Device	TL	fb	Effect
Gen-lock (door)	6+	TLx200	Full-body bio-scan; Sec = Severe (gen)
Ceramsteel magna-lock	5+	TLx10	Vitality 12 (proofed vs all properties); Sec = Severe (requires *hack* maneuver to unlock)
Scrambler pad	5+	TLx20	Use Interface or Intrusion to open matching-TL or lower-TL locks.
Thieves' keys	1-4	TLx10	Use Intrusion to open matching-TL or lower-TL locks.
VSM perimeter guard	6	200 each	8 cm diameter remotely controlled (or area patrol) spy orb; requires an Interface *hack* maneuver to operate; Sec = Tough; innocuous (Herculean vs. instinctual perception); capable of facial recognition, IR & low-light vision, alarm, or silent warning
Wellesley lock (Scravers)	4	2	Enhanced padlock; Vitality 8 (Flameproof, Hardproof, Slamproof); Sec = Demanding (e); Scraver tech (favorable for Scravers to pick)

Services for Hire

You can hire people for all sorts of things. You can even hire out your own services. Below are some jobs and the costs associated with them.

GMs: Any situation is an opportunity for drama, whether it's an argument at the barber shop or a courtroom drama. Feel free to flesh out the NPCs hired by PCs. Don't let them just be an entry in the ledger book. (Specialists tend to have goal numbers of 13+ for their specialties.)

Job	fb	Effect
Advocate (per week)	15-20	Each additional lawyer grants you one favorable roll during court proceedings
Day-labor — unskilled	¼-1	
Day-labor — specialist	1-10	
Courier (per day)	¼-5	Travel costs (see *Transports*, below) and living expenses (see above) must be covered separately
Hairstylist/barber (session)	¼-5+	You gain +1 goal for persuasion influence for the scene following your styling.
Prostitute — streetwalker	½-3	Quick hookup
Prostitute — evening escort	5x rank	Acceptable companion at society functions
Slave* — unskilled	30	
Slave* — specialist	100	
Modifiers		
Guild contract	x2	Required for hiring guild restricted skill specialists.
Noble customer	x2	Nobles are generally charged extra for service with flair and style.
* While slavery is technically illegal under Imperial and Church law, it remains a systemic problem in the Known Worlds. The Muster guild operates a particularly lucrative trade in indentured services contracts, generational debt bonds, and prisoners (who are classified as property until their crimes are payed off). Slavery remains common in backwater areas. Within al-Malik and Decados realms, slaves are a staple of most elite (as well as many commoner) households.		

Tools

Tech Compulsion: Industrious

Gear	TL	fb	Effect
Standardized tool kit (L)	1-8	TLx10	TL specific. (Without proper tools, Tech Redemption rolls are unfavorable)
— Well-stocked workshop	–	x200	Relevant Tech Redemption rolls are favorable.
Spade (L)	1-3	TLx2	
Sewing kit (XS)	3	1	

Think Machines

Think machines (computers) were once so common that even children regularly used them. This is no longer the case. The Universal Church strictly controls computers within its sphere of influence, restricting think machines to specialist priests and sanctioned staff, but the Church struggles to enforce its ban in noble and League territories (especially among the "tech-martyrs"). Beyond Church territories, governments often hide their computer and networking capabilities, restricting access to their own agents.

Freemen and the elite can typically employ simple computer systems at a TL up to that of the environment they were raised in — a rural upbringing probably means fewer computer skills than a cosmopolitan schooling. Interaction beyond basic consumer use requires the restricted Interface skill and the Think Machines capability.

Serfs, on the other hand, are routinely denied access to and education on think machines. Consequently, they struggle with anything but the most user-friendly computers and automated systems. To make matters worse, many facets of most serfs' lives are aided in some way (or even controlled) by think machines. Industrialized serfs in particular slave ignorantly under think machine rule, believing their work schedules and productivity analysis come down from some unseen boss; only when the Universal Church comes a-knocking do flesh-and-blood foremen materialize.

As with weapons and civil liberties, elite factions strive to restrict commoner access to information, going so far as to artificially inflate prices at their own expense, placing think machines and networks well beyond commoners' reach. In any case, the vast majority of serfs are too invested in Church dogma to even consider trafficking with the accursed "self-thinking machines." After all, aren't they just like unreflective demons?

Using/Coding

Most think machines are designed with a user interface, allowing almost anyone to use them without needing the Interface skill. Some, however, are designed to require some understanding of their workings to be able to get them to perform their functions.

Low-TL think machines tend to be clunky and counterintuitive to use while featuring less evolved security measures. High-TL versions, however, are more user-friendly, harder to hack, and more complicated to code.

Below are the Resistances for using and coding think machines based on their tech levels. Coding has an additional complication: languages. (See *Computer Tongues* directly below.)

TL	User-friendliness	Coding Complexity
4	Demanding	Easy
5	Demanding	Hard
6	Hard	Demanding
7	Hard	Tough
8	Easy	Severe

Computer Tongues

Think machines possess language. Part communication with compatible "minds" and part computing DNA, these languages grant power over thinking machines similar to how psychics and symbiots control their victims. The superstitious conceive of these coding languages as words of power controlling the machine minds inscribed with their sigils.

Throughout history, a variety of computer "tongues" have been used, many of which are still relevant in the 51st century.

You don't usually need to know a think machine tongue to use a think machine, but you do when you are coding for it. This language acts as a lore capability: without it, your rolls to code are unfavorable. Unlike a capability, you gain knowledge of one think machine coding language for every Interface rank you have. You can also elect to devote a capability to a think machine language.

Language	TL	Faction	Use
Antiquanautae	4-5	Scravers	The archaic language of simple First Republic machines was based on basic 21st-century computing traditions; virtually only Scraver specialists can read such a quaint computing tongue anymore.
Suprema	5	Universal	Suprema was the original Diaspora computing language, replacing Antiquanautae. Very accommodating and agile, Suprema gives users +2 goal for all Interface rolls with Suprema-based computers.
Constantinople	5	Reeves	This is the computer language of records and lists, created by the Reeves to maximize their bureaucratic powers. Experts debate whether Constantinople is deliberately confusing or just shockingly poorly constructed. Any work done on Constantinople coded think machines takes twice as long as usual (and Reeves bill by the hour). All rolls made when using or coding Constantinople computers are unfavorable unless you possess the Reeves Lore capability (and thus understand some of their bureaucratic methods).
Ië	5	Ur-obun	The obun computing language is confusing and poorly understood by non-obun. Ië uses complex symbolism and instinct-based reasoning that resembles a ceremonial tongue rather than programming codes. It bears a striking resemblance to obun religious texts and temple sermons. Any Wits-based work becomes Intuition-based instead, and all rolls made for using/coding Ië computers are unfavorable unless you possess the Obun Lore capability.
Lex V.V	5	Church	A corrupted and sanctified form of Suprema, Lex V.V is a cumbersome and confusing language that translates Suprema into Church Latin. It's run through theological symbol-encryptions and obfuscated by initiatory keys. As the only computing language sanctioned by the Universal Church, Lex V.V is specially designed to confuse the logic-matrices of artificial and unreflective intelligences. All rolls made using/coding Lex V.V computers require the Read Latin capability, and they're unfavorable unless you also possess the Church Lore capability. Golems, AIs, demons, and other unreflective intelligences suffer the Penalized state while working with Lex V.V computers. Users familiar with Suprema gain +1 goal on Interface rolls.
Link	5-8	Golems	Golems and true-AIs all run on this very sophisticated computing language. Said to combine neurology, psychology, and DNA sequencing with hard programming and high-level logics, Link is incomprehensible to most. All rolls made using/coding Link systems are unfavorable unless you possess the Artificial Intelligence Lore capability. Technical interactions with golems using Turing, Suprema, Lex V.V, or Ië rather than Link are possible, but the Resistance is doubled.
Turing	6	Engineers	Based on Suprema, Turing is a hyper-sophisticated coding tongue jealously guarded by the Engineers. It contains numerous built-in traps and pitfalls to guard against unauthorized use. All rolls made using/coding Turing computers are unfavorable unless you possess the Engineers Lore capability. A critical miss shuts you permanently out of the system unless you possess Engineers Lore *and* knowledge of Turing. Users familiar with Suprema gain +1 goal on Interface rolls.

Computer Networks

While most 51st century think machines are far superior to 21st century computers, communications infrastructure is abysmal. Moreover, knowledge is power, and information is empowering. Thus, planetary governments strive to restrict access to network resources. Listed below are the ideal systems that some localities might see at different tech levels. The harsh reality is that these systems routinely go down, either due to technical error or outright sabotage (from rivals, criminal syndicates, rebel insurgents, would-be inquisitors, etc.) and might take days or weeks to get back up and running.

TL	Network
4	Extremely limited intranets and restricted city networks may exist, available to specially approved government users only. They are weak, unstable, and badly in need of maintenance.
5	City-wide networks are common and fairly stable but restricted to government users and specially approved League technicians.
6	League-run city-nets are commonplace, but heavily surveilled by government agents (a service often leased to the guilds). Limited access is available for 10fb/month. Government controlled satellites allow limited planet-wide networks, but these are restricted to the government and League technicians. (Any guilder can buy deep access, although their user-ID is closely monitored… by other guilders.)
7	Planetary, satellite-supported networks are universally available for 5fb/month. For an additional 10fb/month, access can be extended to nearby celestial objects (expect a 10- to 30-minute delay per AU). Net use is closely monitored by guild specialists.
8	A world-wide network is readily available and often free. However, governments surveil everything, routinely selling user data to guilds for targeted advertisement and infomercials. Government and military nets are extremely powerful and hardy, although they're usually overseen by guilders. Ultra-secret, psi-mind, and computer-share networks are possible, although no government would ever (admit to) be dabbling in such deviltry.

THE IMPERIAL LATTICE

While few are aware of it, let alone realize its significance, there is a new dawn of communications infrastructure in the Phoenix Empire: the Imperial Lattice. The Imperial worlds are slowly but steadily (and very quietly) being upgraded with state-of-the-art (for their worlds) telecom networks, available exclusively to Imperial agents and officials.

Imperial agents are refurbishing old systems, laying down new cables, deploying satellites in high orbits, and launching interplanetary signal-bouncing buoys into deep space. They're also setting up new listening posts, spy-networks, and routers, promising to make the Imperial administration, the Imperial Eye, and the Questing Knights among the most well-informed groups in the Phoenix Empire — if they can get it all to work. The project has suffered innumerable setbacks and even outright sabotage from unknown agents. And all this occurred before the Church has even caught wind of it….

The Lattice is one of the major bones of contention between the Imperial worlds and the League guilds, who see their influence waning as the Phoenix rises. (See *The League on Imperial Worlds* in **Chapter 2: Society** in the **Universe Book**.)

Devices

Think machines take various forms, classified by functions. All function types are available at multiple TLs. Higher-TL versions are stronger and more demanding.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

Device	TL	fb	Functions
Accountant	4+	TLx100+200	Rolls for math are favorable.
Data Storage	4+	TLxTL	Stores vast amounts of data (TL in terabytes or more); compatible with most same-TL devices.
Facial Scanner	5+	TLx100+200	Stores vast number of faces (+irises, DNA, scents, and thought-patterns at higher TLs); recognizes all un-disguised faces. Reduce Resistance to pierce a disguise by TL-3
Library	4+	TLx200+600	Searchable database of vast content (TLx1000 books); allows Academia research of TL-relevant subjects; halves research time.
Advisor	5+	TLx300+600	Grants a number of Lore capabilities equal to TL, as well as favorable rolls for Lores the user already possesses.
Life Coach	4+	TLx200+100	Favorable goal rolls for 1 coach-prepared (non-combat) task. Planning time: 3 hours at TL4; 1 hour at TL5; ½ hour at TL6; 10min at TL7; 1 round at TL8.
Mapper	5+	TLx100+200	Records habitation, positioning, geology, and environments to create ever-expanding maps; typically comes with a number of pre-programmed world maps equal to TL (often centuries outdated). Also grants favorable Survival and orientation/navigation rolls (or just +2 goal if the data is outdated); add +2 goal if the user has access to current and functional government satellite networks (usually restricted).
Adjunct	4+	TLx50	This basic handheld computer device allows text-work, calculation, networking, music-&-art projects, audio/video, system diagnostics, coding, troubleshooting simulations, security, and more. Actions take twice as long but are favorable. (Both cable and wireless interfaces are available for same-TL devices/systems.)
Secretary	5+	TLx200+100	Records/registers user experiences (video, audio, schedules, notes, & statistics); you get favorable rolls for relevant Academia actions.
Targeting Systems	5+	TLx100+200	Guides firearms and heavy weapons attachments (vehicle sized/stationary at TL4; L attachment at TL5; S at TL6; XS at TL7; XXS at TL8). You get +2 goal on your first turn aiming (still max+3); ignore environmental conditions.

Transports

Transportation is the key to commerce, exploration, and civilization itself. For some, transports are a means to an end. For others, their transport defines who they are… or aspire to be.

The Known Worlds have thousands of modes of transportation, catalogued below in a few simple categories: mounts (ridden beasts), beastcraft (beast-pulled transports), landcraft (motor vehicles driving on or hovering over ground), watercraft (water-going transports), and skycraft (aircraft and near-orbital transports). Space travel and spacecraft are covered in the *Starships* section at the end of this chapter.

Speed Class

Transports are classified by a spectrum of speeds from sluggish to supersonic. When one transport pursues another (as per the *Pursuits* rules in **Chapter 6: Traits**), compare the transport's speed classes. For each level by which one vehicle is swifter than the other, it gains one additional range increase per victory on a *chase* or *escape* roll. (When vehicles are evenly matched in speed class, victory awards one range increase.) Slow and steady might win the day, but probably not the chase.

Sluggish: You're as "fast" as a brute cart or a walking human.

Slow: You proceed as quickly as a sprinting human or a horse cart.

Steady: Your transport is swift as a galloping horse… or a vehicle that's not built for speed.

Fast: This is the speed of most ordinary transports, like cars and motorcycles.

Racing: This category includes very fast vehicles like racing boats and helicopters.

Jet: You move with the alacrity of a swift aircraft.

Supersonic: You can achieve the velocity of very fast aircraft, rockets, and (most) TL4+ slug gun bullets.

Collisions

A collision may occur when a vehicle driver rolls a critical miss on a driving roll. The vehicle and its passengers suffer damage (with the Hard attack property) — as does whatever or whoever the vehicle collided with. The damage depends on the vehicle's speed. In the case of pursuits, use the following chart. (Otherwise, assume 1 damage per 10 kph: colliding with a stationary building at 100 kph inflicts 10 dmg.)

Speed Class	Damage
Sluggish	1
Slow	3
Steady	5
Fast	8
Racing	12
Jet	18
Supersonic	30

The above chart represents a full-on collision with stationary objects (like a car driving into a house). For head-to-head vehicle collisions, add both colliders' damages together and apply the total to both sides. For rear-end collisions, subtract the lowest damage from the highest and apply the total to both sides.

When a vehicle hits a pedestrian, the vehicle will probably only suffer cosmetic damage, while the pedestrian will suffer the full amount (with the Slam property). Armor can subtract its Body Resistance rating from this damage (half its rating if it's not Slamproof).

Renting Transportation

Fb costs represent the average purchase price for transports in good shape. Renting transports typically cost 1% of their listed price + food/fuel per day. Security deposits are common (10% of listed price). Thus, a rented horse costs 2 fb + 6 fb per day in food with a 20 fb deposit. A Juandaastas Slider can be rented for 150 fb + fuel, with a 1500 fb deposit.

TYPICAL TRAVEL FARES

Prices show one-way trips per person; food and lodging are included where applicable.

For cheap travel with no food or lodging provided, divide the cost in half. For luxury travel, triple the cost.

Transport	Intown	Regional	Continental	Intercont.	Orbital	Interplanet	Gate Jump
Beastcraft	¼ fb	1	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Watercraft	½ fb	2	5	10	n/a	n/a	n/a
Landcraft	1	3	8	15	n/a	n/a	n/a
Railroad	1	2	5	10	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aircraft	3	5	10	20	n/a	n/a	n/a
Moonbus/ shuttle	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5-10 fb	10+AUs	n/a
Starship	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	(included)	5+AUs	100

Vehicles

Kph = kilometers per hour, listing how much ground the vehicle can cover in an hour of travel.

Vitality: Measures the amount of damage the transport can take before it becomes inoperable. In the case of beastcrafts, the vehicle's Vitality is listed. (See *Mounts* below for the draft animal's traits.)

Except for mounts, a successful Tech Redemption *jury-rig* maneuver can restore 1 Vitality per 1 VP spent, although this repair is only temporary, just enough to keep the thing moving. This assumes proper tools (if not, the roll is unfavorable) and repair materials. (Most vehicles come with a basic repair kit in a trunk or compartment.)

Mounts

Beast	Speed*	Carry**	Vitality	Size	fb (food)	Attacks/Special
Brute	Sluggish (4/6 kph)	400 kg	19	8	20 (5)	Skunk Spray***; 2 Body Resistance
Camel	Steady (15/55 kph)	200 kg	22	7	500 (4)	Bite: 8 goal, 1 dmg; Ram: 6 goal, 3 dmg
Donkey	Slow (8/40 kph	75 kg	18	6	25 (½)	Bite: 10 goal, 1 dmg; Kick: 8 goal, 3 dmg
Pheriza lizard	Steady (15/55 kph)	150 kg	25	7	800 (10)	Acid spit: 14 goal, 5/10 rng, 2 dmg + 2 sustained
Riding horse	Steady (10/50 kph)	100 kg	20	7	200 (6)	Bite: 9 goal, 1 dmg; Kick: 7 goal, 5 dmg
War horse	Steady (8/40 kph)	150 kg	21	7	1000 (10)	Bite: 12 goal, 1 dmg; Kick: 10 goal, 6 dmg
Vuann steed	Steady (10/65 kph)	20 kg	16	7	20 (2)	Bite: 9 goal, 1 dmg; Kick: 9 goal, 4 dmg

* Speed in kph is walk/run.
** In addition to a rider.
*** Anyone without breathing protection who is caught in the 1-meter radius cloud at the brute's rear is Nauseated for 3 turns. Even with breathing protection, you stink for the next 3 hours: influence rolls are unfavorable against anyone without breathing protection.

Brutes: These docile herbivores native to Byzantium Secundus have become a favored draft beast on most worlds. Easily startled, brutes spray a foul, skunk-like secretion behind them as they flee. (Domesticated brutes are often bred to be less jumpy and have their stink glands removed.) While rarely ridden, brutes can haul a ton of cargo and are relatively cheap to keep.

Pheriza: The riding lizard of Kish, pheriza have spread to desert communities on Pyre and al-Malik worlds. Averaging at about 2.4 meters long, they have sucker-like pods on their toes. Pheriza travel unhindered across sand and steep terrain, and they have a legendary tolerance for heat. They also preserve their body water almost as efficiently as camels. Pheriza spit caustic acid when threatened (and sometimes when annoyed). Domesticated pheriza usually have their caustic sacs removed.

Vuann: This horse-sized, flightless bird is native to Velisamil, although it's found in obun and ukari communities throughout the Known Worlds. Obun breed vuann for a variety of uses; the listed beast is a *muo* or "battle steed." Their wing-assisted leaping runs make vuann among the fastest sprinting mounts.

Urthish Beasts: While humankind settled hundreds of worlds during the Diaspora, encountering innumerable alien animals, they usually relied on imported Urth animals for livestock, pets, and beasts of burden rather than trying to tame unfamiliar native critters. As a result, Urth beasts (as well as pests) spread to every world where humans settled (often to devastating effect for the local ecosystem). Today, they're an integrated part of the fauna of all the Known Worlds.

Beastcraft

Craft	TL	Speed	Cargo	Vitality	Armor	Day Rng	fb (fuel)	Features
Brute cart	1	Sluggish (4 kph)	1 ton	20	0	50 km	10 (10)	(2 brutes)
Stagecoach	1	Slow (8 kph)	1 ton	24	0	100 km	40 (24)	(4 horses)

Landcraft

Craft	TL	Speed	Cargo	Vitality	Armor	Day Rng	fb (fuel)	Features
Rickshaw	3	Slow (8 kph)	5 kg	4	0	45 km	10 (food)	
GROUND BIKES								
League Auto Quadbike	4	Steady (70 kph)	75 kg	10	0	280 km	1000 (28)	Autopilot: 8 goal
Masat-50 roadbike	4	Steady (65 kph)	20 kg	10	0	200 km	750 (20)	
GROUND CARS								
Hazat AT Rover (SUV)	4	Fast (110 kph)	100 kg	32	6	250 km	2500 (25)	
Hazat Transport (truck)	4	Fast (95 kph)	2 ton	40	6	300 km	3000 (30)	
League Auto Luxury Coach	4	Fast (130 kph)	300 kg	24	6	120 km	3000 (15)	TL4 Mapper think machine; Autopilot: 10 goal
League Auto Street Carriage	4	Steady (80 kph)	20 kg	16	2	300 km	1500 (30)	Autopilot: 8 goal
Shodan Off-Roader	4	Fast (95 kph)	1 ton	40	4	250 km	2500 (25)	TL4 Mapper think machine
SKIMMER — Hoverbikes								
Lancety Pegasus-250	5	Racer (400 kph)	10kg	12	0	450 km	9000 (18)	TL5 Mapper think machine
Mestengo Rover	5	Racer (300 kph)	10kg	12	0	500 km	7000 (20)	TL5 Mapper think machine
Tulanian Glidercycle	5	Fast (200 kph)	10kg	10	0	200 km	4500 (8)	TL5 Mapper think machine
SKIMMER – Hovercars								
Juandaastas Slider	5	Racer (375 kph)	20kg	14	2	350 km	15k (14)	TL5 Mapper & facial scanner (driver recognition) think machine; Autopilot: 14 goal
Lionheart Sedan	5	Racer (300 kph)	100kg	16	3	250 km	7000 (10)	TL5 Mapper think machine; Autopilot: 12 goal
Lionheart Carriage	5	Fast (120 kph)	100kg	10	0	300 km	2000 (12)	TL5 Mapper think machine; Autopilot: 12 goal
Masood Griffon Aircar	5	Racer (480 kph)	20kg	18	2	400 km	10k (16)	TL5 Mapper think machine; Autopilot: 13 goal
SKIMMER – Hoverpack								
Typical hoverpack	6	Steady (80 kph)	0kg	6	0	75 km	7000 (4)	Requires Hoverpack capability + Pilot skill

Watercraft

Craft	TL	Speed	Cargo	Vitality	Armor	Day Rng	fb (fuel)	Features
Tollefsen Tanker	4	Steady (50 kph)	30k ton	70	5	3000 km	200k (300)	30 passengers (+2/cargo ton forfeited)
Baosi motor yacht	4	Steady (80 kph)	1 ton	30	2	100 km	42k (10)	8 passengers
Challat sailboat	2	Slow (30 kph)	20kg	14	1	Infinite	5000 (0)	2 passengers
Tesla paddlewheel	3	Slow (30 kph)	20 ton	20	1	300 km	8000 (30)	200 passengers

Skycraft

Craft	TL	Speed	Cargo	Vitality	Armor	Day Rng	fb (fuel)	Features
AIRPLANES								
Dirigible	3	Steady (80 kph)	500 kg	20	0	500 km	5000 (50)	60 passengers
Cargo plane	4	Racer (400 kph)	10 ton	30	2	1000 km	15k (100)	4 passengers (+2/cargo ton forfeited)
Propeller flyer	4	Fast (160 kph)	200 kg	10	0	500 km	7000 (50)	2 passengers. Often a seaplane
Jet plane (personal)	4	Jet (1000 kph)	100 kg	20	2	1000 km	12k (200)	1 passenger
Jumbojet (carrier)	4	Jet (1000 kph)	400 ton	50	3	10k km	200k (2k)	60 passengers (+1/cargo ton forfeited)
HOPPERS (space shuttles)								
L.A. Flying Oxen	5	Racer (640 kph)	20 ton	24	7	3000 km	15k (120)	4 passengers (+2/cargo ton forfeited)
Wagon of Paulus	5	Racer (500 kph)	20 ton	20	10	5000 km	15k (200)	3 passengers (+2/cargo ton forfeited)
FLITTERS (anti-grav planes)								
Krusler air yacht	6	Supersonic (1200 kph)	2 ton	24	6	3000 km	25k (120)	4 passengers (+2/cargo ton forfeited)
Tanic Solar Racer	6	Supersonic (1600 kph)	500 kg	20	4	2000 km	40k (80)	2 passengers

Starships

Julia Abrams smirked and gestured at the sensor readouts. "No way can they find us here. This asteroid is one in a million, and we're stuck to it like a Madoc lamprey." She leaned back and laced her hands behind her head.

"Don't Madoc lampreys stay latched onto a corpse even after it's dead, even after they start to starve?" said Cardanzo, his brow furrowed.

Julia shrugged. "Beats me. I'm just saying —" Alarms blared from her console. "Shit!" She leaned forward, hitting various switches before she reached for the joystick.

"Don't tell me," Cardanzo said, latching his seat harness. "They've detected us."

"One in a million, damn it! We were one in a million!" Julia yanked back on the joystick. The ship lurched as the grav plates temporarily lost power during sudden acceleration before coming back online. "Uh, hey," Julia said, flipping on the speaker channel, "you guys might want to hold on to something back there. Until Sanjuk finishes the rewiring, those plates are going to be going on and off while I do some fancy maneuvering here." She flicked the channel closed and turned back to smile at Cardanzo. "I got this."

An explosion off their starboard hull jolted them. Cardanzo raised his eyebrows.

"Lucky shot," Julia said, turning back to give her full attention to piloting. "The shields will hold." She then muttered under her breath, barely loud enough for Cardanzo to hear her: "Saint Paulus preserve us. I swear, I'll pay back that debt I owe Alustro. Just get us out of this…."

Starships in **Fading Suns** are rare jewels, high-technology artifacts of a previous age that can be afforded by only the most powerful factions. A rare few individuals own their own ships, but for the most part, ships are owned by factions and operated under license by their agents and allies. Of course, PCs might very well become those agents for their factions, setting off for adventures among the stars under the patronage of a noble house, Church sect, League guild, or as Questing Knights and Imperial Cohorts for the Emperor.

The rules for dealing with starships could get hopelessly complicated if strict realism was the goal. We instead prefer to handle them as a part of the story of the characters who control or ride in them. In other words, we're more concerned with a ship's role in adventurous narratives than the exigencies of its exact functions.

TERMINOLOGY

We use the term "starship" to refer to any vessel that can travel between planets. To be more technical, "starships" have jumpdrives that allow them to travel to distant star systems via the Anunnaki jumpgates, while "spaceships" lack those drives and are bound to their systems. A more general term is "spacecraft," often used by people in the Known Worlds who aren't too familiar with such ships (beyond the idea that they travel in space). Don't get too caught up on terminology. Known Worlders tend to use the term "starship" for anything that gets them off the rock they're currently on.

Standard Ship Classes

There's a vast range of ship types, including everything from scout ships to freighters to luxury liners to massive military dreadnoughts. It's unlikely that PCs will operate large military ships. We've provided some details below on the smaller civilian ship classes that PCs are most likely to operate or gain passage aboard.

While there are a variety of one-offs and rarer ship types (designs mostly dating to the Second Republic), the standard classes are the most common, since the ability of the major factions to build, fit, and salvage them is fairly reliable.

The classes are based on the size of a ship's hull and its configuration. The smaller the hull, the smaller the ship class. In the early 51st century, spacecraft hulls are expensive to produce. They're quite durable, though. Ship combat involves disabling ship systems, but the hulls usually come out relatively intact. For this reason, it's preferable to board and capture a ship, so you can reuse it or ransom it back to its owning faction.

Each royal house has its own proprietary hull configuration for each class of ship. This is tech they can reliably reproduce, although at great expense. While one house might capture another house's ships, they won't necessarily have the tech know-how to reliably and cheaply maintain their foreign configurations. They'll usually ransom such ships back to their owners, in return for some of their own captured ships.

The Church and League have their own proprietary ships, although they're fewer in number and with less variety than the royal houses.

Explorer

Travelers use these ships as couriers, as well as for exploration expeditions and stealth recon in enemy space. Explorers usually have only one gun at most (usually turret mounted). They're graded for landing on planets.

The example below is based on the Hawkwood Wayfarer style of explorer.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)
Sensors: Basic 4

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot/navigator, engineer, gunner (optional: the turret can be run by a think machine program — 3000 fb)
Marines: 0
Passengers: 3-6

SECTIONS

Bridge; cabins x3 (1-person); captain's cabin; cargo holds x2 (10 metric tons each); mess; passenger cabins x3 (2-person)

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

Grapple gun (f0re), engines, maneuver jets (x4), shields (x2), turret-mounted laser (360°)

Raider

Used as traders and pirate ships, raiders can combine forces to take on frigates.

The example below is based on the Decados Reaper style raider.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)
Sensors: Basic 5

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot, navigator, engineer, 5 gunners (optional; the turret can be run by a think machine program)
Marines: 4 (typical quality: 3)
Passengers: 0

SECTIONS

Bridge; Bunkrooms x3 (2-person each); captain's cabin; cargo holds x2 (5 metric tons each); conference room; crew cabins x 3 (2-person each); mess

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

Engines, gun deck (port: grapple gun, laser), gun deck (starboard: grapple gun, laser), maneuver jets (x4), shields (x2), turret-mounted laser (360°)

Escort

Used to defend against pirates (usually raider ships).

The example below is based on the Merchant League Sentry style escort.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)
Sensors: Basic 5

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot, navigator, engineer, 7 gunners (optional: the turret can be run by a think machine program — 3000 fb)
Marines: 5 (typical quality: 4)
Passengers: 1 (2 double-bunked)

SECTIONS

Bunkrooms x3 (4-persons each); bridge; captain's cabin; cargo holds x2 (15 metric tons each); conference room; engineer's cabin (1-person); guest cabin (1-person); mess; pilot/navigator cabin (2-person); tech lab

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

Engines, gun deck (port: grapple gun, laser x2), gun deck (starboard: grapple gun, laser x2), maneuver jets (x4), shields (x2), turret-mounted laser (360°)

Hauler

The most common freighter configuration is a small ship that attaches to a preloaded cargo container.

The example below is based on the Merchant League Caravan style freighter.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)
Sensors: Basic 3

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot, navigator, engineer, gunner (optional; the turret can be run by a think machine program)
Marines: 0
Passengers: 3

SECTIONS

Bunkroom (3-person); bridge; captain's cabin; cabins x2 (2-person); cargo hold (330 metric tons)

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

Engines, maneuver jets (x2), shields (x4), turret-mounted laser (360°)

Transport (Small)

Now that stellar pilgrimages are becoming more common, the market has adapted to provide cheap transports for the flocks of the faithful. While the well-off can travel by luxury liner, commoners are consigned to the less comfortable rag-tag fleets of converted transport ships. This particular example is a small hauler (see above) whose detachable cargo hold has been modified to carry people rather than tonnage. Instead of private bunks, rows of crash seats accommodate up to 20 passengers and their personal belongings, leaving some room for light cargo bound for distant markets.

Some ships also offer a shipboard priest to tend to the pilgrims' needs on the journey. In the case of Church transports, these are usually young mendicants or friars. On League or independent ships, these are often priests who fell afoul of Church politics and could not get a proper posting to a cathedral or chapel.

Use the same traits as the hauler shown above, except that it can carry 20 passengers in the transport section (that is, the remodeled cargo hold), and its cargo capacity is 100 metric tons.

Military Ships

It is unlikely for PCs to have direct encounters with military ships, unless they're causing some real trouble in a system.

Military ships are expected to display faction colors on their hulls; civilian and merchant ships have no such requirement.

FRIGATE
The frigate is the most common combat ship. In times of peace, they perform gunboat diplomacy and systems policing. In times of war, they are scouts; when combined into armadas, they're front-line vessels.

GALLIOT
This variation of the frigate specializes in boarding actions. A host of marines take the place of guns.

DESTROYER
This dedicated warship is rarely used outside of times of war. A destroyer often performs escort duties for the larger capital ships.

CRUISER
A cruiser is a capital ship capable of bombarding a planet's surface from space.

DREADNOUGHT
The largest military ship is the dreadnought. Most royal houses have only a handful of them.

CARRIERS
These are rare in the Known Worlds, but they're known to be used by Kurgan barbarians. Their decks launch small fleets of short-range fighters.

JUMPDRIVES AND SATHRA DAMPERS

To be able to travel through a jumpgate to a distant star system, a ship needs a jumpdrive. The "drive" isn't so much a thrust engine as a field emitter, enveloping the ship in an energy field that somehow, someway resonates with the jumpgate's energy vortex, allowing it to be transported to the destination opened by the jumproute coordinates in a single piece. Large ships have larger fields and can sometimes fit other ships within their penumbra, although this takes careful piloting. Straying outside the penumbra during a jump results in the non-jump-capable ship disappearing altogether… or arriving in pieces.

The original jumpdrive tech was reverse engineered by zaibatsu technicians reading the energy fluctuations emitted by Urth's jumpgate. Somehow, they were able to activate the gate. After multiple experiments with drones, they figured out the field dynamics needed to maintain integrity of objects passing through the vortex.

When they sent manned ships through, they did not anticipate the Sathra Effect. The end result over the years was the creation of the Sathra damper, a shield that modified the harmonics of the jumpdrive field within the confines of the ship, preventing anyone aboard from experiencing the Sathra Effect.

Removing the damper is a crime. Inquisitors often know little about the technology they're busy condemning, but many often learn how to recognize a disabled Sathra damper. Luckily for the souls aboard, it's not easy to remove or disable a damper; it takes some engineering know-how.

Acquiring a Ship

Whether or not a troupe has control of a spaceship is up to the gamemaster, based on the needs of their epic. If they decide the troupe gets one, it's usually through one of the following means.

COMMISSION
The troupe does not own their ship; they use and care for it in trust for its actual owner, who is usually a high-ranking member of the troupe leader's faction. They must pay for upkeep, but often the owner might help with these costs. Example: A Questing Knight troupe might be given an explorer by the Imperial administration in return for performing missions and tasks for the Emperor in dangerous barbarian space. Rumors that the Imperial Eye places listening devices on all Questing Knight vessels are patently false, though the quality of these ships has often been less than stellar.

INHERITANCE
One or more of the troupe members has inherited a ship. They own it, but they also own all its costs for upkeep. If it's a family heirloom, it might be expected that the inheritor will hand it down to another generation when the time comes, so long as it stays in the family. Example: A Charioteer inherits his father's small freighter and is expected to keep up the family business of trading among the stars. Of course, sometimes this means the troupe inherits the relative's enemies (and debt collectors). Stories that the relative's ghost sometimes refuses to leave the ship are surely peasant folklore.

PIRACY
Surely no troupe member would ever steal a spaceship. It must all be a misunderstanding. Still, no matter how much the troupe's spiritual advisor may counsel otherwise, far too frequently this seems to be how the troupe gets their hands on one. Perhaps they have the noblest of intentions, only stealing from pirates. Perhaps a noble has managed to procure a letter of marque for the troupe to act as privateers against the Vuldrok, and they took a vessel as prize. Or perhaps, in desperate haste to get off a suddenly antagonistic planet, they put rapiers to the throats of the crew and demanded their ship. Now, while the troupe does have a ship (often needing repairs and lacking a full crew), they also have a new host of enemies and suspicions. Let's also hope the troupe has a highly qualified engineer to ensure the engines are not booby trapped, the shields are functional, and the Sathra damper is working.

MONEY
Starships are invaluable. They usually cannot be bought for money alone — although they do cost a lot of money. Most owners won't simply sell a ship to an individual; they'll also want some favor or arrangement with the prospective buyer's faction. This could be a trade contract, a dispensation from the Church, a promise of protection, or anything someone well-off enough to be able to sell a ship might need from a powerful institution. Even at the height of the Emperor Wars, when privateers regularly sold captured ships, they rarely sold to individuals. The factions, be they noble, merchant, or religious, bought the vast majority of these.

This means that troupes wanting to own and crew their own ships usually need to gain the backing of one of their member's factions. In return, they'll be expected to use that ship for one or more missions for that faction (the bigger the ship, the more the missions), until their social-capital debt is paid off.

But that is in addition to the cold, hard firebirds the ship's current owner will want. The chart below lists the typical costs for four different ship classes. Some ships can cost considerably more, if they're well-fitted, while a few might cost less if they're in need of repair or a thorough hull-rat extermination procedure.

Characters with the Riches perk can take out a loan instead of paying the full cost. The chart lists the minimum level of that perk needed to qualify, and the firebird cost rises by 20% due to interest. Half of the character's listed annual income for their Riches perk must be applied annually to paying off the loan (i.e., 5000 per year for a Wealthy character). Failure to pay can mean anything from a rise in interest rate to a leg-breaking warning to confiscation of the ship.

Troupe members can pool their levels together to co-sign for the loan (this is required to be able to afford an escort). For example, a character with Well-Off Riches can team with a character with Good Riches (for a total of three levels of the Riches perk) to match the equivalent of Wealthy.

Ship Class	Firebird Cost	Riches Perk
Explorer	70,000	Wealthy
Raider	100,000	Rich
Escort	120,000	Filthy Rich
Hauler, light	100,000	Rich
Hauler, fast	120,000	Filthy Rich

JUMPKEYS

Owning a ship doesn't mean a troupe has any jumpkeys. They'll need one or more of those to travel from one system to another. While Charioteers graduate their apprenticeships with a single jumpkey, a troupe will have to acquire others on their own, through gameplay on adventures, missions, or crimes.

Stellar Distances

Space is measured in astronomical units (AU). One AU is the distance from Urth to the Sun. Most jumpgates are about 70 to 100 AU distant from their system's sun, orbiting the outer edge of their solar sys-

tems. In between, there's a number of planets varying in size and number, as well as asteroids, natural debris, and maybe even the occasional comet.

For the purposes of these tabletop rules, we use the following steps to represent the different activities that can occur within different ranges. The actual distance is relative to each ship, based on its sensor rating. A raider with a 5 rating has a far range of 5 AU, while an explorer with a 4 rating reaches up to 4 AU at its far range.

Close — The target is within grappling gun range (a hit with a grapple gun allows you to board the targeted ship).

Near — The target is within "sight": about a fifth of a lunar distance (roughly 75,000 km). At engagement range, pursuits shift to battle mode (see below). Objects can be seen on the ship's visual monitors.

Far — The target is within sensor range: anything outside of near (visual) range and up to maximum sensor range (based on the ship's sensor's rating; 1 AU per rating). Objects can be detected by most sensors and possibly identified. Pursuits can begin at this range (see below).

Distant — The target is outside sensor range. Navigation to extremely distant objects relies on star charts.

Travel Times

Some ships are faster than others. Their engines produce more thrust, propelling an accelerating ship forward more quickly than a ship with less thrust power. Engines are classed as slow, standard, or fast.

- A slow ship can make the trip from planet to jumpgate in 10 days, assuming full thrust (or 20 days at partial thrust).
- A standard ship can make the trip in 7 days at full or 14 at partial thrust.
- A fast ship can make it in 5 days at full or 10 at partial thrust.

These are general times. The actual position of the jumpgate in its far orbit relative to the planet of departure can add or subtract travel time, as can taking alternate routes that don't go directly there.

Sensors

Space is big. Unbelievably big. That means it's not always easy to see what's out there. A ship's sensor array determines the range at which other objects (including enemy ships) can be detected, as well as the quality of detail that can be read.

A sensor array is given a rating from 1–10: the shortest distance is 1 and the longest distance is 10. Each rank represents the distance in AU that the sensors can read. A rating of 1 means the ship can detect things up to 1 AU away. Beyond that, it must rely on star charts to know what's out there and where everything is. Of course, the charts only apply to predictable objects, like planets and known comets; starships don't show up on charts.

There's also the quality of the sensors to consider in determining the level of detail they can divulge. Basic sensors can provide rough extrapolations, enough to identify a ship's class but not its particular faction's unique configuration. For instance, you can identify an explorer, but not whether it's the cylindrical Hawkwood model or the more raptor-like Decados type. Military sensors are more precise, providing exact identification of other ships but fewer details about other stellar bodies like planets. Second Republic sensors, although rarer, provide almost everything you'd want to know about anything within their range.

Sensor Array	Rating*	Information
Basic	1-5	Detect ship class** and speed, rough planetary info
Military	1-7	Detect class, faction, speed, ship systems, planetary details
Second Republic	1-10	Detect class, faction, ship systems, section-layout, crew numbers, planetary details

* 1 AU range per rating

** Detected at far and distant ranges; at close and near range, a ship's class and faction can be identified visually

Energy Shields

Spacecraft that travel too fast risk damaging their hulls. Energy shields are dedicated to deflecting the debris that is naturally scattered throughout space. As a ship moves faster and faster, it encounters more and more debris, requiring more of its shields to be dedicated to deflection. If all the shields are used up and the ship keeps accelerating, debris will begin impacting the hull. This tends to put an upper speed limit on starship chases. Still, a capital ship such as a cruiser or dreadnought has so many more shields, as well as thrust capacity, than a tiny explorer that it can plow through space with greater abandon in pursuit of distant prey.

Speed is simplified into three factors: stopped (no movement), partial thrust, and full thrust. When a ship is stopped, all of the ship's energy shields are available to deflect attacks. As the ship adds thrust, some shields become occupied dealing with debris, so that at partial thrust only half the shields are available to block enemy fire. At full thrust, *all* shields are occupied against debris and cannot protect against enemy fire.

Each available shield can block a single gun attack once per round, completely deflecting *all* damage from that volley.

Speed	Energy Shields
Stopped	All available
Partial thrust	½ available
Full thrust	None available (all are occupied vs debris)

Example: An explorer has two shields. When stopped, both are available. At partial thrust, one is available. At full thrust, all are occupied, none are available.

Shipboard Gravity

Ships maintain their own internal gravity, thanks to miraculous gravity-plate technology originally stolen from the vau. They're placed in the ceilings and fused with the hull. When powered on, they create an invisible repulsion field that exerts force downward, simulating 1 G of gravity. The field compensates for increased thrust, fast spin, or sudden vector changes, so the crew is not flung around every time the ship changes course. Cruder models on cheap ships sometimes have a slight "hiccup" when adjusting to such forces, forcing the crew to "buckle up" for rough rides.

More advanced models can alter the force for less or slightly more gravity, and all models can be turned off to produce zero-G in stopped ships. (A moving ship presents a degree of force from its thrust, but it's sideways to the normal up-and-down direction intended by most ship designs.)

Removing a grav plate from its hull is a major operation that requires a shipyard.

Combat

Combat in space between spaceships is a big topic. For simplicity's sake, you can resolve it similar to vehicle pursuits. In **Fading Suns**, guns are used mainly to disable a targeted ship's sections — such as engines and maneuver jets, as well as guns — which then allows the attacker to approach and send over boarding parties to seize the ship through hand-to-hand combat in the corridors.

Detailed rules for starship combat will be presented in future **Fading Suns** books.

Chapter 5: The Occult

PATRON: SAINT VEN LOHJI THE UR-OBUN

Hail Ven Lohji, most mystical of us all. Pilgrim, it is to Ven Lohji we pray when seeking knowledge beyond knowledge, as we attempt to decipher the secret signs that hide unseen all around us. She it is who helps us to shield our souls from the Dark — and from the minds of psychic interlopers.

Ven Lohji taught meditations and gestures to the Prophet, opening his mind to the traces of the Anunnaki that remained from the younger universe. She traveled with him and birthed the Voah-venlohjun sect of the Church, yet she sought no fame or reward for her deeds. She is the Unheralded One and the Indispensable One.

Her theurgic mysteries are vital to those who seek ancient secrets. The paths to Ur power are fraught with traps, but Ven Lohji knows them all, and she can guide pilgrims past them. Because of this, she is not only beloved of mystics but also reclaimers.

She bears no item, no relic, but forms a hundred mudras of power and teaches the Glyph of Unfolding, which unlocks the wisdom of the Anunnaki. On her shoulder perches a bird, "Zebulon's sparrow," emissary from the natural world and reminder that wisdom perches on branches grown from deep roots in rich soil.

— Charioteer Captain Zelina Hamid-Sandor, The Pilgrim's Path: H0w to Read the Omega Gospels

A Mysterious Universe

With the Fall of the Second Republic, humanity's Age of Reason also came to an end. In its place arose superstitions of all sorts. In many cases, once-unfounded fears were now quite well-founded: alien creatures, Anunnaki super-science, heretical psychics, genetic mutations — they were all real. Without the influence of science, people saw these phenomena through the lens of the Church, as well as their own fears, distrusts, and envies.

Even during the Second Republic, science could not explain many of the strange phenomena often encountered once humankind reached the stars. The Prophet and his Disciples did indeed seem to perform miracles. The technology of the Pre-Adamites was incomprehensible; only slightly less so was the technology "liberated" from the Vau Hegemony. Whole new fields of science opened up, as these technologies literally opened up new physical dimensions of space/time. From the baffling yet wondrous Pan-Physics to the mental science studied by the Phavian Institute, the world did indeed seem like magic was in the air and science was only one tendril of it.

Is magic just a form of not-yet-understood science? Or is it a sort of anti-matter to science's reason and order? The seeming reality of immaterial entities — what the Church calls demons — exists out in the darkness beyond the jumpgates, pointing to a fundamental chaos or entropy that stands in opposition to the light of reason. Or are these phenomena and perceptions merely projections from humanity's collective unconscious mind, fears given form by innate psychic powers possessed by all humans?

Such questions are for scholars safely ensconced in their studies. For those who have to travel the stars, the reality of the "occult" — the strange and unexplained, the dangerous and devilish — is beyond question. Psychic powers — telekinesis, mind-control, clairvoyance — are but one set of aptitudes that sentients have demonstrated exist, as well as another phenomenon common folk have learned to fear. The world we know now has genetic mutations that give people bizarre powers and appearances, from cat eyes to poisonous tentacles. The Changed who bear these "gifts" are abhorred by most people, treated as monsters to hunt down and burn. Nearly just as untrustworthy are the cyborgs, those who implant technology into their bodies. While cybertech was all the rage during the First and Second Republic, it's a disreputable practice under the eyes of the Church, an unhealthy fetish that can cause their recipients to lose sight of the Pancreator.

On the other hand, theurgy — the practice of religious magic — shows there is light amidst the darkness, that someone Up There is looking out for the little people Down Here. At least, that's the theory. When theurgy is cast by the Inquisition, nobody's secrets are safe from the fiery hands of judgment. Still, it could be worse: theurgy's dark side, Antinomy, calls not to the Pancreator but to the demons of the Dark — and it is just as effective, a fact that scares the Church more than it will dare admit.

This chapter examines two aspects of the occult that player characters might get involved in: psychic powers (psi, for short) and theurgy. Each of these powers, including theurgy, causes distrust in those people who cannot — or will not — wield them.

Stigma

Each occultist has a "tell," something they do or something that simply happens when they use their occult powers. It might be a nervous tick when activating a Far Hand power or an unconscious whisper when using Psyche's Emote power. Theurgy is even more telling, manifesting pretty much like a magic spell that often involves gestures, spoken word, and silent prayer.

In the superstitious world of the 51st Century, occult stigmas are like medieval folk deformities. Anyone with an odd birthmark or mode of speech might be suspected of having occult powers. Peasants are constantly on the lookout for such oddities, so they can cast accusations upon the unfortunate as a way to explain their own misfortunes. Woe to those on the receiving end of these aspersions, especially those who don't even have the powers that might make living with such a stigma worth it.

Theurgic stigmas, unlike psychic tells, are seen as holy. They might even take the form of religious stigmata — lash marks (sympathy with the Prophet's beating by Diasporan nobles), red-stained clothing (sympathy with Mantius, the blood-soaked soldier), a beard that grows back within one day after being cut (sympathy with Horace the Learned Man), speaking in tongues (sympathy with Hombor the Beggar), unbidden tears (sympathy with Amalthea the Healer), or sleepwalking (sympathy with Paulus the Traveler).

CHOOSING A STIGMA

Part of playing an occult character is choosing their stigma. While this can become a sign to others revealing when they're using their otherwise invisible powers, only those who know to link the stigma to the power will necessarily do so. Nonetheless, that won't stop peasants from assuming any odd or out-of-place behavior, mark, or words are signs of the occult at play.

Defending Against the Occult

Unless stated otherwise in a power's description, there is usually no way to be sure someone is using an occult power. Its effect might be obvious, but its source won't necessarily be. A psychic who uses Far Hand to pick up a sword and stab someone won't readily be seen as the culprit. Onlookers would see a levitating sword that strikes but not the hand behind the strike.

Theurgic rites have components that do indeed resemble something one might expect from a spell, but they're also things that priests do every day: recite scripture, draw the sign of the jumpgate cross in air, close their eyes to mouth a silent prayer. One might do this in *response* to a power, not always because one is behind that power.

This all means that, unless you know an occultist is using a power against you, you can't boost your Resistance against it. You're unaware of the attack, so can't defend yourself. If you practice an Austerity (see *Perks* in **Chapter 6: Traits**), your Spirit Resistance bonus will apply.

When an occultist does act against you, if you can see them, you can attempt an Observe *spot* maneuver to recognize that their stigma and/or behavior links them to the power. The Resistance is the occultist's Psi or Theurgy characteristic. (Most Changed powers, when used, are obvious, as are cybernetics; no *spot* roll required.)

Once a power has been used on you successfully, you'll get an intuition just before any successive use of an occult power that warns you it's coming. You can choose to boost your Spirit Resistance against it: 1 VP per +1. You could also perform a *stonewall* maneuver to give yourself additional resources to boost against occult attacks, or you may attempt a *dodge* against physical or energetic occult powers that you can perceive coming at you.

If you have the Psi or Theurgy characteristics, you will know when someone is using that power against you. You won't necessarily know who's doing it, but you'll feel the power and recognize it.

If you *suspect* that the occult is at play, you can steel yourself against it by boosting your Spirit Resistance. The catch is that you must spend those points, even if a power is never actually used against you that round. You're reacting to a suspicion, not a specific intuition. You'll be ready if it does happen, but you still spend the points if it doesn't.

The exceptions to these situations involve powers that affect you physically, such as Far Hand and Vis Craft. You'll know for sure when one of these powers is trying to affect you, so you can boost your Resistance or resort to a *dodge* maneuver.

WYRD FORCE

Occult powers can be made especially potent with wyrd points. To use any of the functions listed below, you must have at least 1 rank in an occult characteristic, such as Psi or Theurgy.

FORCE

Once per round, you can spend 1 wyrd point to *enforce* a single use of your occult power. This gives the power the Force attack property. (See the *Attack & Damage Properties* sidebar in **Chapter 4: Technology** for an explanation of attack properties.)

A Force power halves the Resistance posed against it. This can be especially useful for powers that must overcome a lot of Resistance, such as lifting heavy objects or affecting vast machinery.

Certain protective powers (such as the Shield of Faith theurgic rite) mimic the effects of an energy shield; powers with the Force property that deal damage have the possibility of "bleeding" through such occult shields. Treat the attack like a blaster when checking for bleedthrough. (See *Bleedthrough* in **Chapter 4: Technology**.)

The drawback is that a Force power is obvious to onlookers. Even a normally invisible effect, such as Psyche's Emote or Mind Sight, now produces a visible aura and an audible hum, emitting from the power's user to the power's target.

MASK YOUR FORCE

You can spend 1 wyrd point to mask the Force property on a single use of your Force power. The power now appears as it normally does, rather than producing the obvious visual and audible effects that accompany the Force property.

FORCEPROOF

You can spend 1 wyrd point to *Forceproof* yourself against powers that have the Force attack property. You could instead apply the proofing to an object on your person or a protective power (such as Shield of Faith) that you have activated/cast yourself. The proofing lasts for 1 turn per your occult characteristic rating.

The Forceproof quality negates the Force property's effect on Resistance; you gain your full Resistance against it. Forceproofed occult shields prevent damage bleedthrough.

Psi: Powers of the Mind

The existence of psychic powers was a mystery in the 21st Century. During the Second Republic, the mystery was explained. Humanity's potential to awaken phenomenal powers with the mind was well-known and documented.

Psychic powers became the premier science of the Second Republic, the prestigious profession to which all geniuses turned their faculties. The central forum for this profession was the Phavian Institute, where the "mental sciences" of telepathy, psychokinesis, ESP, and other phenomena were widely studied by many experts. But the Fall changed all that. Psychic powers, as with technology, were considered by the Church to be one of the causes of humanity's troubles. Unlike theurgy, psychic powers are intensely personal and internal; one can develop one's own powers without the aid of a teacher or — succumbing to a more dangerous temptation — without a doctrine. In addition, the common folk who did not possess psychic powers resented those who did. A psychic "next step in evolution" movement made this worse, painting non-psychics as evolutionary footdraggers.

Hence, the Phavian Institute was disbanded, and psychics became the targets of Inquisitorial witch-hunts. These hunts did not stop psychic powers from developing, but it drove some psychics underground. Others, those who were faithful, bought the Church line that their powers were sinful. Many anguished people, no doubt firmly in the grip of their Urges (their psychic dark sides), committed suicide rather than face sin. Others fell on the Church's mercy, begging aid and forgiveness. The Church accepted many of these repentant psychics and indoctrinated them with a code of behavior when using their powers. These became the Penitents.

Other psychics ran to the League for protection, hoping their Republican sentiments would get them some mileage. It did. The League began a psychic guild, and for years, guilders resisted the Church's protests. But the Church eventually won out and the guild was disbanded, leaving psychics with no formal protection. While the Church can hassle League or noble-house psychics, they cannot formally reprimand them. However, psychics without the protection of guild membership or royal title must hide from the Inquisition.

Covens

A small percentage of humans naturally express psychic ability. This percentage was quietly increased during the Second Republic by groups like the Phavian Institute, the foremost organization for the study of the psychic sciences. Even some noble houses applied select breeding programs to create psychics. Any popu-

PENITENTS

It is an understatement to say that psychics are not "well-liked" by the Church; "loathed" and "feared" are perhaps more accurate terms. But there are exceptions, such as the Penitents — psychics who have thrown themselves on the mercy of the Church. They are often carted off to distant monasteries far from social centers, where they're trained in moral doctrines and behavioral adjustment. If they respond well to these treatments, they're allowed their freedom — with a proviso. They must wear a symbol of their order so that all the faithful realize they are reformed psychics; in addition, they must always obey the dictates of Orthodox priests of higher rank (although they are under no particular compulsion to obey other sects or orders). Nonetheless, they will be under the occasional watch of Inquisitors.

Recognized Penitents can use their powers freely without fear of Church retribution (although they may suffer politically trumped up charges and trials if their powers were not used for the good of the Church). The penalty for impersonating a Penitent is ritualized torture before a crowd, performed under the close watch of theurges ready to prevent the psychic from using his powers to escape. From there, the impersonator is offered lifetime imprisonment, slavery at the hands of psychically shielded Chainers, or a chance at reform — a trip to a Penitent monastery for treatment. Despite the rumors of cruelty among the Penitent confessors, most psychics choose reform.

Friends of reformed psychics claim that they return from their sabbaticals changed and scarred. They no longer laugh the way they used to, and they often see sin waiting for them around every corner. The Church counters this by claiming that the psychic is no longer in the thrall of his own Dark Twin, and thus, is less dangerous to others, besides now being a Pancreator-fearing soul. It is true that the Penitent-reform process usually purges the Urge, but it is also known to purge levels of Psi.

lation of a sufficiently large size is bound to have a few people with a knack for one of the psychic paths. To unlock the true power of their abilities, however, most psychics need guidance and training. Thus, they form covens: groups of psychics working in underground societies for the benefit and protection of their members.

Countless covens are hiding throughout the Known Worlds. Most are small and purely local, consisting of a handful of members working together to survive. As a coven gets bigger, its power and influences grow, although in secret. These larger covens often end up involved as hidden hands in local politics and power brokering. Very few covens, no matter their size, can effectively contend with the Universal Church and its condemnation of psi. Those who forget this end up as martyrs to the Inquisition's flames.

A rare few covens can trace their origins back to the Second Republic, and they still act on an interstellar level. The Favyana, although now a shadow of the once-powerful institute, still seeks to promote acceptance of the psychically gifted and coexistence with all sentient life. They hope to prove their worth by using their powers to aid the non-gifted. Even if an individual member cannot come out of the shadows and claim accolades, if enough members of the populace begin to doubt the Church's creed against psi, then the next generation of psychics might be able to live openly as what they are.

The flip side of the coin is the Invisible Path, whispered about with dread and awe. Though its members keep their true motives very well hidden, they are ruthless in attaining their goals. To the Church, the Invisible Path epitomizes the selfishness and disregard for non-psychics it believes is the true creed of all who possess such powers: overweening ego in the hands of would-be godlings.

Special Calling: Dervish

During the Second Republic, the combining of psychic powers with military training and small-unit tactics became a secret weapon long before most people were even aware of the reality of psychic powers. Even after psi was widely confirmed, no one in power wanted the capabilities of their Dervishes — their psychic soldiers — to be well known. This secrecy served them well after the Fall of the Second Republic and the rise of the Church. In the public's mind, the Dervishes became a legendary boogie man from the past, but they were protected by their noble, guild, and, yes, even Church factions. As such, they fared better than the more public-facing psychics studied by Phavian Institute.

During the Emperor Wars, the Dervish doctrine was rediscovered by the Hazat and soon used by all the major houses to create elite shock troops. Any slight advantage was worth the possible Church proscriptions. Today, these troops are Penitents under the protection — and the responsibility — of their noble house or guild "sponsors."

Outside of the major factions, only the interstellar covens of the Invisible Path and Favyana have the resources to maintain units of psychics trained in military theory. On some worlds, a few paramilitary or guerilla traditions come close, but most formally trained Dervishes scoff at these "pretenders."

Dervishes excel at combat and tactics, using whatever psychic paths they can manifest to enhance their combat abilities, making them truly fearsome warriors. The best can shroud their occult abilities and appear as highly skilled but normal soldiers. Some are juggernauts or dynamos of destruction, relying on the absence of living witnesses to keep the Church from calling.

Some of the Royal House-sponsored units include: The Diwin (Li Halan), The Marifah (al-Malik), The Midnight Furies (Li Halan), The Screaming Dervishes (Decados), and Taliesen's Spear (Hawkwood).

PATRON SAINTS

Xonas the Reconciled — Xonas was originally one of the Dervishes who followed Don Marcika Holuzio Rolas to Hira to battle the Kurgan Caliphate after the Emperor Wars. Soon thereafter, he was overcome by his Dark Twin, who became a doppelganger, joined the Kurgan forces, and recruited a Dervish force in service to the Caliphate. Eventually, Xonas met his Twin in battle and struck him down. Witnesses speak of how he bent over the body of his Twin as the two bodies merged into one, producing a single being of such luminous repose that the entire army dropped their weapons and bowed before it. Xonas disappeared into the wilderness. Some say he still lives, preaching a path of reconciliation with one's own Dark Twin.

Zegai the Powerful One — Also known as Al-Uzza, the "Powerful One," Zegai was a heretical prophet from Grail (4844-4891). According to legend, she beheld the Three-Fold Vision of the Pancreator giving birth to the Self and then devouring it, creating the cycle of many "I's" which must die before enlightenment can come. The vision inspired her to create an army of fanatical soldiers she dubbed "dervishes." Although it took years of war by the houses to defeat her uprising, her psychic followers proved instrumental in the early Symbiot Wars, and so the Church, while still inveighing against Zegai as a heretic, relented somewhat in its condemnation of those who sought her intercession.

EARLY CAREER

This calling can be taken by any class. Your faction is your Dervish unit's sponsor.

Special: You gain 1 rank in the Psi characteristic. You can increase it by using the characteristic ranks awarded each level.

Skills: Allocate 10 ranks to skills tied to your particular psychic path, *or* gain the following: Impress 2; Fight 2; Focus 2; Melee 2; Shoot 1; Vigor 1.

Characteristics: Allocate 5 ranks to characteristics tied to your particular psychic path *or* gain the following: Dexterity +1 *or* Strength +1; Intuition +1 *or* Perception +1; Presence +1 *or* Wits + 1; Will +2.

Capabilities: Combat Armor *or* Occult Lore; Military Weapons *or* Ranged Weapons (Energy Guns or Slug Guns) *or* Warfare Lore (any)

Perk: Choose 1 from the Psychic calling list or from the Dervish Perk list below.

Equipment: Choose one weapon or piece of military equipment that acts as a lodestone for your psychic powers (in addition to its combat function).

DERVISH PERK

DERVISH RANK

Calling • Privilege • Precondition: Dervish

You served in a Dervish military unit under the command and patronage of one of the Royal Houses.

Benefice: You bear a Dervish military rank. Its title is dependent on how many levels of this hierarchical perk you possess. Each successive level raises you in rank one title (see the chart below). In addition, each rank grants you +1 Mind Resistance. This bonus increases with each successive rank. (For example, a hajib gets a +2 Mind Resistance bonus.) The Hazat rank terms are used, but equivalent terms are used by Dervishes of other houses.

1st	Shurtah (recruit)
2nd	Hajib (soldier)
3rd	Irfan (captain)
4th	Hadith (judge)
5th	Ma'rifah (Wandering Seer)

Each of these ranks gives the Dervish a legal right to freedom from the Orthodox ban on psychics, granted him by the Royal House he serves and recognized by the Church. The Hazat insisted on this protection, and it has precedents stretching back to immunities granted during the Symbiot Wars. The Church often tries to nullify them by declaring a Dervish's behavior sinful. Legally, such a warrior is charged with learning the Orthodox teachings of the Omega Gospels and is expected to choose a confessor priest, although there are no guidelines on how often this priest must be consulted. Records of the Dervish's powers must be given

to the Church, although they are often conveniently lost through bribery by a Royal House sponsor. This provision can be stripped if the Dervish engages in unlawful activities against the nobility and the Church.

Rules

The ability of characters to manifest psychic powers comes with the selection of special perks. Characters must meet all the preconditions for a psychic perk.

Special Characteristics: Psi/Urge

Beginning psychics gain 1 rank in a special characteristic called Psi, which allows them to practice psychic powers. This statistic is one part of a pair; it has an opposite characteristic that runs counter to it. Psi's opposite pair is called Urge, and it's not something any psychic wants — it's their dark twin, their shadow side, given strength by their psychic gift. These *paired characteristics* each share the same scale of ranks (1 to 10), and a rating in one characteristic lessens the maximum rating in its opposing characteristic.

> ***Example:*** *Johann has a Psi of 4 and an Urge of 2. This means his maximum Psi is 8. He cannot raise his Psi to 9 until he first lowers his Urge to 1 or less.*

Psychics do not begin with any ranks in Urge; those must be acquired through gameplay. They can also be diminished only through gameplay. (See *Urge* below.)

Psi is rarely used to bolster a roll, unlike most characteristics. It is a benchmark rating for measuring your psychic potential. Certain Psi ratings serve as preconditions for acquiring psychic power perks.

When you follow a psychic-oriented calling, such as Psychic, you gain 1 rank in Psi, as well as the ability to assign 1 or more of your level-awarded characteristic ranks to Psi. Certain species, such as the obun and ukar, can gain Psi at birth. Others, like the vorox, cannot awaken it at all (baring miraculous exposure to strange phenomena like Anunnaki tech).

Using Psychic Powers

To use a psychic power, you must first spend 1 or more VP before you can make the associated roll; the exact cost is listed for each power. Some powers allow or require VP expenditures for additional effects.

Lodestones

Psychics who are just beginning to learn a power need a tangible, physical item with which to focus their intent. A lodestone acts as a sort of capability for using your powers, but one which you can grow out of. It can be of tiny size, such as a coin, amulet, or ring; it can be crude (two sticks tied together with string to form a cross) or expensive (a diamond); it doesn't really matter what it is or what it's made of, so long as it holds some significance and meaning for you. This item is called a *lodestone*.

When using a psychic power whose precondition requires the same rating as your Psi characteristic, you must have your lodestone on your person somewhere (in your hand, your pocket, your satchel) when using that power. If you don't, your roll is unfavorable. Once your Psi characteristic is higher than the precondition's listed rating, you no longer need the lodestone when using that power. (***Example:*** Far Hand's Crushing Hand power has a precondition of Psi 3. If your Psi is 3, you need your lodestone when using that power. If you're Psi is 4 or higher, you don't need the lodestone.)

You can use the same lodestone for all your powers or adopt a different one per path or per power. One psychic might have a dozen odd trinkets serving as lodestones; another may have a single treasured amulet as their sole lodestone. It's all up to personal choice.

You must attune to an item to make it into a lodestone. You spend an hour with it and perform a Focus-skill *meditate* action. If you're victorious, you can spend 1 VP to attune to it and make it your lodestone. If you lose a lodestone, you can use this process to attune to a new one.

Elemental Powers

The first power in a psychic path is *elemental*. This means it's foundational to the powers that build upon it with higher levels of Psi, but it can also be used in a weaker manner instinctually without the effort and concentration required for the full use of the power.

Each elemental power lists the things it can do elementally with a Psi rating of 1, along with details on how this elemental use improves at Psi 5 and Psi 9. To use a power elementally, you simply need to spend 1 VP. The power use is a secondary action (although you can only do one such elemental secondary action per turn).

The drawback is that instinctual use touches into deep layers of the psyche — the very layers where Urge resides. Whenever you are affected by one or more of the following states — Afraid, Berserk, Dis-

oriented, Humiliated, Stunned, Terrified, or Tormented — your elemental power might activate on its own, out of your control. This usually happens only when you fail an action (even a non-psychic power action) or suffer some other setback while you're in the grip of those states. The GM takes over and decides what happens. The good news is that this uncontrolled eruption of elemental power does not cost you a VP. (The GM can choose to add states to this list.)

Paths

Psychic powers come in *paths*. They begin with a discrete elemental power and build into more potent variations on that power. These come in the forms of perks, each of which requires a prior power in the chain as a precondition.

OCCULT TECH: PSI CLOAK

A psi cloak is a TL8 device that defends against mental powers (psychic, theurgic, and otherwise), providing +5 Spirit Resistance to its wearer.

It isn't a physical cloak; it's an energy aura emitted around its wearer, similar to an energy shield (with which it's compatible.) The aura is invisible to the naked eye, but it's visible in the ultraviolet and infrared spectrums (as a shimmering haze around the wearer). Most occult perception powers (Subtle Sight, Second Sight, etc.) can perceive the cloak. Physically, the XS-size device is like a dueling e-shield core, concealable in a casing such as a belt buckle, brooch, or wristwatch. It requires an XS fusion cell and will take 10 hits (just like an e-shield) before powering down. These are no longer manufactured and are highly sought by everyone.

Cost: minimum 3,000 fb

Tech compulsion: Protective

Far Hand (Psychokinesis)

The path of Far Hand was one of the most measurable and practical phenomena studied during the Second Republic. Far Hand deals with the manipulation of physical objects and energy fields through the application of pure will. It is also one of the least subtle of the psychic paths — inanimate objects flying around or floating off the ground are obvious to anyone seeing them. The psychic is not necessarily the obvious source of the effect, but they might be revealed by a successful Observe + Intuition roll vs. Resistance equal to the psychic's Sleight of Hand skill rating.

Generally, unless stated otherwise in a power's description, the range for Far Hand powers is *sight*. This cannot be extended unless you use a Sixth Sense power (a video feed or the like usually won't do). If a force or finesse rating is needed when using Far Hand, use the psychic's Wits (for Strength) or Perception (for Dexterity).

LIFTING HAND

Calling • Power (elemental) • Precondition: Psi 1

By focusing your will, you can create a simple field of directional force to pick up, push, or pull objects.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per turn extended duration

Roll: Focus + Wits

Resistance: An unattended object's Resistance is 1 per 25 kg of weight. If someone is holding the object, they can resist your psychokinetic pull as a reflexive secondary action; add that person's Strength to the Resistance. VP can be spent to overcome the object's Resistance.

Impact: You lift an object within your sight 1 meter into the air. You can push it in any direction a distance of 1 meter per rank of Psi.

Each turn, you can keep this power going by spending 1 VP. While the power's duration lasts, you may use a secondary action to keep the object aloft and move it up to 1 meter per Psi rank. When the duration ends, the object returns to the ground as if dropped from its height.

ELEMENTAL USE

With Psi 1, you can use this power elementally (by spending 1 VP) to perform simple psychokinetic actions on items of negligible weight. You might turn an unlocked doorknob and push a door open, lift a pen, cause the drapes to flutter, etc.

At Psi 5, you gain a bit more control. You can lift a pen and write a crude message, cause plants to sway in a particular direction as a means of directing someone that way, or even cause a negligible item to hover and fly for up to 1 turn per Psi rating.

At Psi 9, you can lift objects up to 5 kg elementally.

THROWING HAND

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 2 *and* Lifting Hand

You propel an object you have lifted with considerable force. You must first use Lifting Hand to pick up the object; throwing it with this power is then a bonus primary action.

Time: Instantaneous (bonus primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Perception
Resistance: Equals the target's Body Resistance; if the target is an object, the GM determines its Resistance.
Impact: You fling your psychokinetically lifted object at a target (a person, thing, or location). The GM determines the base damage delivered by the object, based on its size, weight, sharpness, etc. If it's a weapon, use the weapon's damage.

The target must be within 1 meter per Psi rating. This range can be increased by 1 meter per 1 VP you spend.

You cannot extend the duration of this power. If you want to throw the object again, you'll need to first use Lifting Hand again and then this power.

CRUSHING HAND

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 3 *and* Throwing Hand
You can hold a target in place and exert crushing force.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per turn extended duration
Roll: Fight + Wits
Capability: N/A
Resistance: Against a person, the target's armor does not provide Body Resistance, but they can use their Strength as Resistance (e.g., a person with a Strength of 5 would get 5 Resistance). Against an object, the GM determines the Resistance based on toughness.
Impact: Inflicts 3 base damage, and the target is Hindered until your psychokinetic hold is broken.

Once a Crushing Hand hold is victorious, you can maintain the duration by spending 1 VP each turn. You can opt to inflict damage each successive turn as a primary action without needing to make another roll; you spend VP to inflict this damage.

During a Crushing Hand hold, you can consider three sub-maneuvers: *clinch, restrain,* or *escape.*

Clinch: Instead of inflicting damage, you can opt to *clinch* your psychokinetic hold by making another roll each turn as a primary action. This improves your hold — it grants you VP. If the *clinch* roll fails, you still have hold of your target, but the target can make a reflexive roll to *escape* (see below). If the *clinch* roll is a critical miss, the hold is broken.

Restrain: Instead of inflicting damage, you can try to *restrain* your victim. This can only be done on turns *after* the turn in which the hold was established. You spend 2 VP to impose the Immobilized state. On the following turn, you can spend 2 VP to try to render the target Incapacitated (if they fail a reflexive secondary-action Vigor + Will roll vs. your Psi as Resistance).

Escape: The character who is grappled can take a primary action to break free, rolling Fight + Strength vs. Resistance equal to your Psi. If successful, they are free from the Crushing Hand hold and can take their movement action. If the roll fails, they are still Hindered (or Immobilized, if they were restrained). If you failed a *clinch* roll, the victim can make an *escape* roll as a reflexive action.

DUELING HAND

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 4 *and* Crushing Hand
You can make a tool or weapon on your person leap into the air, perform an action, and then either return to your person or hover, ready to act again in subsequent turns.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per turn extended duration
Roll: [relevant skill] + Wits
Weapon = Melee or Shoot; tool = Tech Redemption; lockpicks = Intrusion; etc.
Resistance: As per the task you perform with the item.
Impact: The item can move up to 1 meter per Psi rating, plus 1 meter 1 VP spent.

If you're using the psychokinetically controlled object as a weapon, treat it like a normal attack, except that it's at range.

After the action is complete, the item returns to where it came from (holster, belt, etc.), unless you extend the duration (1 VP per turn), in which case the item hovers in place until you direct it again. (Hovering is a secondary action; using it again to perform a task is a primary action.)

FOCUSED HAND

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 5 *and* Dueling Hand
Focusing your mind, you can perform great feats of strength, such as lifting an object of incredible weight or raising multiple items into the air. You can also perform delicate tasks from a distance.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per turn extended duration
Roll: Focus + Wits
Weapon = Melee or Shoot; tool = Tech Redemption; lockpicks = Intrusion; etc.
Resistance: When lifting a single object, Resistance is 1 per 200 kg of weight. If someone is holding the object, they can resist your psychokinetic pull as a reflexive secondary action; add that person's Strength to the Resistance. You can spend VP to overcome the object's Resistance.

When lifting multiple objects, Resistance is 1 per 100 kg of weight.

When performing a skilled task, use the guidelines for the skill's maneuvers in **Chapter 3: Traits**, but generally, the Resistance is raised by one step (say, from Demanding to Tough).

Impact: You can lift one item, lift more items, or achieve a task.

Lift: You can either lift an object of immense weight, lift a multitude of items into the air, or move everything not nailed down away from you. This operates like Lifting Hand with the exceptions listed under Resistance (shown above), as well as the ability to lift more than one item.

You can also employ Throwing Hand with the objects you have lifted (as a bonus primary action; as per the Throwing Hand rules). You can use Dueling Hand with your multiple objects, but they must all perform the same action against the same target; otherwise, it costs you 2 VP per additional action/target.

Task: You can perform a skill maneuver from a distance (within sight). Use the guidelines for the skill from **Chapter 3: Traits**, but the GM will determine how well you can really perform here. You might be able to type on a think machine's keyboard from across the room, but that doesn't mean you can read the screen well enough to know if you're getting the results you intend. Combining this with a Sixth Sense power such as Far Self might lower the Resistance back to normal.

FAR WALL

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 6 *and* Focused Hand
You create a force field barrier similar to one generated by energy shield technology.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per activation

Roll: Vigor + Will

Resistance: Hard Resistance.

Impact: You create a force field of 1 square meter per Psi rating, plus 1 sq. meter per 1 VP spent. Anyone behind the field gains its protection, as if they were wearing a personal energy shield device.

The Far Wall behaves equivalent to an energy shield. Its lower threshold is equal to 3 + your Urge rating, while its upper limit is 10 + your Psi rating. (For example, if your Urge is 2 and your Psi is 6, your force field's protection is 5/16.)

The Far Wall lasts for the remainder of the scene, but each "shield" activation costs you 1 VP. If you can't spend the VP, the power is still active, but it doesn't have enough energy to activate the shielding effect until you can spend VP.

AIR STRIDE

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 7 *and* Far Wall
Focusing your directional forces on yourself, you can hover over the ground or take to the air.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Wits
Resistance: Equals your Size rating (5 for humans) + 1 for every 100 kg of equipment/objects/creatures you carry.
Impact: You hover up above the ground, and you can fly through the air for the remainder of the scene as your movement action. Your base speed is 10 meters per turn. You can increase this by 5 meters per turn per 2 VP you spend.

DEMOLISHING HAND

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 8 *and* Air Stride
By compressing an energy field and releasing it at a single point, you can create a big hole in something… or someone.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Perception
Resistance: Equals target's Body Resistance (ignores armor).
Impact: You compress and release a wave of force right next to a target, like uncoiling a spring. The force ignores Body Resistance from physical armor; it's considered a broad-impact strike against energy shields (check for burnout). Base damage is equal to your Will rating and can be increased by 1 per 2 VP spent.

Any target that suffers damage from this blast must make a reflexive secondary-action Endurance + Vigor roll vs. Resistance equal to the amount of damage taken. Victory means they are Stunned for their next turn. Failure means they are Unconscious for 1 turn per point of damage.

AIR DANCE

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 9 *and* Demolishing Hand
You may use Air Stride on others, even if they're unwilling.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP per additional target after the first (max limit = Psi)
Roll: Focus + Wits
Resistance: Figure the Size ratings + 1 per 100 kg of equipment carried for each target and apply it as Resistance; you can lift up those whose Resistance you overcome.
Impact: You bestow the Air Stride power on one or more willing targets, who are each in control of their own flight (although either you or they must spend VP to increase base speed). Unwilling targets can attempt a reflexive primary-action *dodge* maneuver (using Vigor skill); if they fail, you control their flight as a secondary action.

Omen

The path of Omen seeks to throw off the shackles of time itself, expanding awareness to include the past and the possible future. These psychic abilities were known as precognition and postcognition respectively in the Phavian Institute. They were also some of the least understood of the so-called psychic sciences.

Knowledge of the past is just history, and interpreting it is fairly straightforward, but when you begin to look into the future, things start to become… interesting. After all, the future is full of possible events. While nothing is set, knowledge of the future can change what will happen. The tricky bit comes in interpretation. With only a little knowledge, setting out to change the future can lead to the very events that bring that future about. Seeking to ensure a particular future might end up tipping things in another direction, bringing about an unseen future.

This psychic path is shorter than most other paths, but it requires considerable study and strength of will before one can understand visions in such a way that a reasonable interpretation can be made.

There is no elemental power for this path.

SHADOWS GONE BY

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 6
Attuning yourself to an object, you may "read" it to get a vision of the past surrounding it.
Time: Present Tense
Cost: 2 VP
Roll: Focus + Intuition
Resistance: Hard+ (see below)
Impact: You call forth an event from the past surrounding an object you are touching. You can attempt to see a particular time ("what happened 8 hours ago") or a particular event ("when Dame Julia was murdered").

You experience the event as a flashback that lasts around 30 seconds with sight, sound, and the general feelings of those around the object.

The GM will establish the total Resistance based on the distance in the past and the significance of the event. Seeing a year or two in the past might be Hard; going back to the Second Republic could easily be considered Miraculous. The significance of the event can also affect the Resistance: the less significant it is, the harder it is to call forth. If the ob-

ject was used to murder someone during the event, it wouldn't increase the Resistance, but if the object was only present during the murder, it could increase Resistance by one step or more. Someone just passing by the object and not notably interacting with it could increase Resistance by two or more steps.

SHADOWS TO COME

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 7 *and* Shadows Gone By
Turning your inner sight from the present, you may now gaze into the future and its possible outcomes.
Time: Present Tense
Cost: 2 VP
Roll: Focus + Intuition
Resistance: Hard+ (see below)
Impact: You can see, hear, and feel a scene from the future surrounding a person, place, or object. This can be a specific event or time (such as "the coronation of Bishop Vigaro de Aragorn" or "in this courtyard at midnight three days hence"). The Resistance is decided by the GM based on the distance into the future. An hour or two may only be Hard Resistance, while a week might be Tough or worse. You see a potential future but a very likely one. The glimpse of the future lasts for 30 seconds

VOICE FROM THE PAST

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 8 *and* Shadows to Come
You can channel the personality of someone long dead to speak through you and impart information.
Time: Present Tense
Cost: 2 VP
Roll: Focus + Presence
Resistance: Demanding (Severe if the subject is unwilling)
Impact: You summon and channel a deceased entity to have it answer one question through your voice. You may ask one additional question per 2 VP spent.

Some courts in the Known Worlds have allowed use of this power to take testimony from the dead in murder cases. The Church maintains, however, that these are not ghosts; allegedly, this power calls forth demons or the psychic's own twisted mind.

ORACLE

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 9 *and* Voice from the Past
By entering a trance-like state, you can give cryptic foretellings of the future.
Time: Present Tense
Cost: 3 VP
Roll: Focus + Presence
Resistance: Severe
Impact: You may answer one question posed to you during your trance, and you will be given an answer. As with the answers of the ancient Urth Delphic Oracle, the psychic's answer is always in the form of metaphors, riddles, or abstractions, and it must be interpreted. The GM is the voice of the omen, and they should use the power to reveal a possible future for the troupe.

Psyche

Once known as telepathy by the Phavian Institute, the path of Psyche pertains to the transference of information or feelings from one mind to another. It remains one of the most feared and commonly abused types of psychic phenomena, for it is both subtle and misunderstood. Claims of mind control are hard to prove, but nonetheless, they create loathing and hatred in those that believe such tales.

Psyche often imposes states on its targets. Unless stated otherwise, the victim can attempt to *shake it off* to free their mind from this influence.

These powers are most often opposed by Spirit Resistance.

Unless otherwise noted, Psyche powers have a range of *sight*. Increasing this range requires either a bond formed with the target or a power from a path like Sixth Sense to increase the viewing distance.

Note that people generally "think" in their native tongue — if you don't know this language, you probably can't tell what they're thinking.

MIND SPEECH

Calling • Power (elemental) • Precondition: Psi 1
You can project your thoughts into the mind of others and hear their responses, effectively allowing you to communicate silently.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per additional target after the first
Roll: Focus + Presence
Resistance: Hard +1 per additional target.
Impact: You can project your thoughts directly into the mind of another person in your sight for the rest of the scene, as if you were talking directly into their ear, and they may project thoughts to you in the same fashion. This communication is silent and undetectable, except by other Psi powers. You only receive what the participants want to send,

so you cannot in any way read their thoughts with this power.

You may spend additional VP to contact multiple targets at once, up to your Psi rating. This also increases the Resistance for the action.

If the target is unwilling, the base Resistance is their Spirit Resistance. If you're successful, they can try to *shake it off* (Easy Resistance) to sever your Mind Speech connection.

ELEMENTAL USE

With Psi 1, you can use this power elementally (by spending 1 VP) to send a simple thought (a short sentence or iconic image) to another person within sight as a secondary action.

At Psi 5, you can spend 1 VP as a secondary action to increase the effects of your successful Mind Speech: you create a "channel"' where all the targets can communicate with one another.

At Psi 9, you can send thoughts by Mind Speech to anyone in sight at no cost (but you still need Mind Speech to allow them to respond mentally to you).

INTUIT

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 2 *and* Mind Speech

By extending your mental senses, you can read the emotional state of a person within sight.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per 10 turns extended duration

Roll: Empathy + Intuition

Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance.

Impact: You can subtly sense the target's current emotional state as a secondary action for the next 10 turns. You understand the emotions they're feeling but not necessarily the cause of the emotion. If you're not in turn-based time, 1 VP will extend the duration for 10 minutes (Present Tense) or 1 hour (Narrated). Emotional insight allows for much easier manipulation of your target, as you quickly know if you're on the right track. You get favorable rolls for most influence attempts against the target, as well as therapeutic actions (such as the Empathy *minister* maneuver).

You can probe the target's emotions to determine if they're genuinely theirs or the result of an occult intrusion caused by powers such as Emote, Head Shackle, or Puppetry. Roll Empathy + Wits vs. Resistance equal to the Psi (or Theurgy) rank of the power. Victory does not tell you what the power is (although if you possess that power yourself, you can recognize it), only that the target's emotion is a result of a power.

EMOTE

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 3 *and* Intuit

By unleashing the baser aspects of your mind, you can create emotional states in the minds of others.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per +1 Resistance against *shake it off* attempts

Roll: Empathy + Presence

Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance.

Impact: You create a base emotion in the target, expressed as a state. Choose either Angered, Confused, or Daunted.

You can spend additional VP to choose a more intense state instead:

2 VP = Afraid or Reckless

4 VP = Berserk, Penalized, or Terrified

Emotions are transitory by nature — artificial ones, even more so. The state applied is temporary (it lasts for the scene), but additional VP spent during activation can make it more difficult to *shake it off*: +1 Resistance per 1 VP.

MIND SIGHT

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 4 *and* Emote

You can now peer deeper into a target's mind to read surface thoughts; it's as if the target was speaking their mind out loud for you to hear.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP per 10 turns extended duration

Roll: Impress + Presence

Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance.

Impact: You can read the surface thoughts of a target within sight as a secondary action for the next 10 turns. If you're not in turn-based time, you can extend the duration for 10 minutes (Present Tense) or 1 hour (Narrated).

You can get the target of this power to think about a particular subject by making a successful telepathic influence action (such as a *command* or *entreat* maneuver) as a primary action. The result is inherently subjective, however, as someone's thoughts about any subject are usually about how it relates to themselves.

Your *dodge* or *evade* maneuvers against the target's attacks are favorable, as you read their intentions moments before they act. You can instead shout a warning (as a primary reflexive action) to anyone else the target is attacking, giving them a favorable defensive roll.

Finally, you can probe the target's thoughts to determine if they're genuinely theirs or the result of an occult intrusion, as with the Intuit power (listed above).

MIND SEARCH

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 5 *and* Mind Sight
You can now delve deeply into a person's mind to extract answers to your questions.
Time: Present Tense
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per +1 Resistance against *shake it off* attempts
Roll: Charm + Presence
Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance.
Impact: You may dig the answer to a single question out of a person's mind. Every 2 VP spent on impact allows you to ask one additional question. Especially sensitive topics or secrets can trigger a subconscious *shake it off* attempt from the target, which cancels this power if successful. You may spend VP before the roll to increase the Resistance to *shake it off* attempts.

This power is only partially subtle: the target is not aware of the questions asked of them, but they do experience thinking the answer to the questions.

HEAD SHACKLE

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 6 *and* Mind Search
You can implant suggestions directly into the mind of others who have no choice but to follow these instructions.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per +1 Resistance against *shake it off* attempts
Roll: Impress + Presence
Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance +1 (if non-sentient) or +2 (if sentient).
Impact: You dominate the mind of another, compelling them to perform an action or series of actions. You may specify the next action they take. Each additional 2 VP spent on impact allows you to specify a subsequent action they'll take, but all the actions in the series must be specified when this power is activated. You can't direct them turn-by-turn like a puppet (see *Puppetry*, below).

Regardless of the number of actions in the series, after the target finishes the first action, their subconscious will attempt to *shake it off* as a secondary action, which cancels this power if it's successful. You may spend VP upon activation to increase the Resistance to the target's attempts *shake it off*. The target cannot inflict harm on themselves directly, and actions that harm loved ones or go against strong held beliefs might trigger another *shake it off* secondary action.

BRAIN BLAST

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 7 *and* Head Shackle
You can strike at a target's brain directly, inflicting damage and imposing physical states on them with pure mental control.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +2 VP per point of damage dealt
Roll: Focus + Presence
Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance.
Impact: You blast the target's mind for 1 point of damage per 2 VP spent, up to your Psi rating. Additionally, you can inflict a physical state on your target by spending VP:
2 VP = Fatigued or Hindered
4 VP = Disoriented or Stunned
6 VP = Immobilized, Paralyzed, or Unconscious
These states last for 10 turns. The Resistance to *shake it off* attempts is increased by the amount of damage this power dealt.

SYMPATICUS

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 8 *and* Brain Blast
Create a telepathic network with others, allowing each to communicate with one another and share extra resistance against Psyche powers.
Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per additional target
Roll: Focus + Wits
Resistance: Equals the highest Spirit Resistance of all targets.
Impact: You create a gestalt network linking all the targets to yourself, bonding you together. Any member can share thoughts or emotions with other members regardless of distance, so long as they're in the same solar system. Members can leave the group at will, and you can end the effect at any time; otherwise, the effect persists among the members for the remainder of the drama, so long as each member remains in the same solar system as you. Additionally, when within sight, any member can spend VP from their cache to increase any other members' Resistance to Psyche powers.

PUPPETRY

Calling • Power • Preconditions: Psi 9 *and* Sympaticus
You can telepathically take control of another person, possessing them completely.
Time: Instantaneous (primary + reflexive action)
Cost: 1 VP +1 VP per 10 turns extended duration
Roll: Focus + Presence
Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance.
Impact: You can touch a target and completely possess them with your will for the next 10 turns. If the target is resisting your touch, you need to roll Fight + Dexterity as a primary action vs. their Body Resistance (although you ignore armor — you're not trying to penetrate, just touch). If successful, you can activate Puppetry as a reflexive action.

Your consciousness leaves your body, leaving it inactive for the duration of the power. While you are controlling the target's body, you may perform actions with it, but you use the target's traits instead of your own. You may spend 1 VP as a secondary action to have your own body make a movement action (but it cannot make rolls). If your own body suffers more Vitality damage from a single attack than your Size rating, you must spend 1 VP to maintain this power. If your body is rendered Unconscious or Dying, your mind is flung back into your body in that state.

During the time you possess the body, the target can do nothing but watch what's happening to its body. There's one exception: If the target is a psychic with any Psyche powers, they can attempt a *shake if off* attempt (rolling Focus + Psi) as a primary action vs. your Psi as Resistance to evict you from their body. A psychic with Head Shackle or Puppetry can attempt to force you out using those powers against you, and if they were in Sympaticus with the target before it was possessed, they can make *shake it off* attempts for them.

If you try to make the body do something that would endanger it or the target's loved ones, the target gets to make a reflexive *shake it off* attempt as a secondary action. If successful, the Puppetry is canceled.

Sixth Sense

Known in the old Phavian Institute as Extra-Sensory Perception, this path seeks to cultivate modes of perception considered inherent in all sentient beings, although they are seldom (if ever) consciously accessed.

Unless otherwise noted, powers from this path last until the end of the scene.

This path can allow the range of some other powers to be extended by projecting the awareness of the psychic somewhere else so that distant targets are considered "in sight."

SHAPE SENSES

Calling • Power (elemental) • Precondition: Psi 1
You shape one or more of your normal senses to offset limitations imposed by your environment. You can tune out frequencies of sound to ignore the grinding of machinery as you try to hear the footsteps of someone sneaking around you, or you can alter your eyesight to perceive infrared light and ignore darkness. You can even filter out the taste of salt to better understand what other tastes might lie beneath it.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Perception
Resistance: Hard
Impact: Declare which sense you're honing — sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch — when you activate this power. Until the end of the scene, you are allowed an instinctual perception test, even when normal senses would normally disallow it, whether that's due to distance, a deleterious condition, or similar impediments. You ignore either the Visually Impaired or Hearing Impaired state (depending on which sense was shaped). At the GM's discretion, you can treat Blinded or Deafened states as Visually Impaired or Hearing Impaired, respectfully. You can spend 2 VP to ignore one of those states entirely.

You can activate this power again within the same scene to hone additional senses (one extra sense per additional use).

ELEMENTAL USE
With Psi 1, you can spend 1 VP to make a *shake it off* attempt as a reflexive secondary-action against any sensory-inhibiting state imposed by sensory overload (such as a bright flash or thunderous sound).

With Psi 5, you can spend 1 VP to add your Psi to your Perception for instinctual perception tests, effective for the rest of the scene.

With Psi 9, your Shape Senses power hones all five senses instead of just one.

SUBTLE SIGHT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 2 *and* Shape Senses
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +2 VP for aura motion, +2 VP for aura shape
Roll: Observe + Perception
Resistance: Equals the target's Spirit Resistance.
Impact: You tune your senses to see the psychic aura of your target. This aura can reveal the target's general emotions and state of mind, as well as their species and the presence of psychic activity acting on them or inherent in them. Auras do not reveal specific thoughts, but extra VPs spent can give you telling clues through the motion and shapes of the aura.

You can see a target's aura type and color. By spending 2 additional VP, you can discern the motion of the target's aura, which conveys the target's state of mind; spending another 2 VP allows you to also see its shape, which conveys the target's thoughts.

AURA TYPE: SPECIES/CONDITION

Species:

Ascorbite	Hexagon
Etyri	Triangle/wedge/cone, pointing down, flat on top
Gannok	Square/cubic
Hironem	S-shaped, curving forward
Human	Simple elongated oval
Oro'ym	Teardrop with pointed end down or back-facing
Shantor	Wave swelling up from ground, curving forward
Symbiot	Tiny filament-threads stretching out to infinity (obscure: Herculean Resistance vs. perception attempts)
Ur-obun	Exaggerated egg-shape with the big end at the top
Ur-ukar	Exaggerated egg-shape with the big end at the bottom
Vau	Sleek wedge, pointed at the top
Vorox	Torn, raggedy edges

Condition:

Asleep	Pale, empty aura with all color and activity concentrated in the center
The Changed	Folded or crimped around the altered body part
Psychic/Theurge	Deeper, more three-dimensional
Unconscious	Pale, empty aura

COLOR: EMOTIONS

Abstract thought	Gray
Afraid	Black
Angry	Red
Desirous	Green
Disgusted, repelled	Orange
Happy	Yellow
Loving, caring	White
Sad	Blue
Satisfied	Violet

MOTION: STATE OF MIND

Confused	Horizontal spiral
Depressed	Downward
Determined	Vertical spiral
Elated	Upward
Excited	Quivering
Extroverted (directed to others)	Outward
Fatigued, tired	Melting
Introverted (directed to self)	Inward
Indifferent	Sloshing

SHAPES: THOUGHTS

Certainty	Column
Doubt	Cloud
Emotion (strongly directed)	Rays
Hatred	Spike
Suspicion, distrust	Hard outer edge
Thoughts (incessant, nagging)	Veins
Whimsy	Swirls

PREMONITION

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 3 *and* Subtle Sight

Your senses extend slightly into the future, allowing you to potentially respond to danger before it harms you.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Observe + Perception

Resistance: Demanding

Impact: You consciously spread your senses into the world of potential futures; you then receive a psychic warning when there's imminent danger. Once active, this power lasts for the rest of the scene. You will feel the presence of danger and the direction it will come from, though not exactly what will happen. You might be able to tell that soon extreme danger will come from the direction of the engine room on a starship but not that the stardrive will soon explode. Such vagaries will require you to investigate to discover the threat.

In combat, the dangers are usually discernible, and the warnings are quite effective at helping you avoid deadly attacks. You gain a superior initiative edge (this beats normal initiative edges) and can more easily boost Resistance against physical or occult attacks: +2 Body or Spirit Resistance per 1 VP. Influence actions are usually too subtle for Premonition to detect.

Note that this power only reveals and aids against imminent dangers. For instance, a traitor in your entourage who isn't poised to strike won't be revealed.

FAR SIGHT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 4 *and* Premonition

Sometimes known by the old Phavian designation "clairvoyance," this power allows you to see a distant place as if you stood there presently.

Time: Present Tense (1 minute)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Observe + Intuition

Resistance: See below

Impact: You can project your vision to another location, seeing as if your own eyes were present; as a primary action, you may move your point of view slowly (1 m per Psi rating per turn). Once you have established the power, you can maintain it until the end of the scene. You may use other powers from the Sixth Sense path, but your mental awareness is not quite present, so you cannot use powers such as Psyche or Far Hand.

You must know the target place to some degree. Preferably, you've been there or have heard a lot about it, but even an address or mark on the map might be good enough to find it with your psychic senses. However, the Resistance is based on your familiarity of the target place.

Hard = You try to see your home or living quarters; you know exactly where it is.

Demanding = You try to see your hometown or a regular haunt, somewhere you know quite well.

Tough = You try to see a place you are somewhat familiar with and have been before.

Severe = You try to see an unfamiliar place; you know about it, but haven't necessarily visited there (e.g., a famous public space or building). This could instead be somewhere you have studied through maps or detailed records.

Herculean = You try to see a place you don't know, but you have some personal link (e.g. a warehouse where a friend is being held captive). You still need to know where the place is (the personal link lets you target it).

Miraculous = You try to see a completely unknown place with which you have no connection, but you know where it is (e.g. the thieves' lair or the Duke's clandestine club).

The place must be on the same planet. If you're in space, it must be within 1 AU per your Psi rating.

If you do not know the place, but you want to see it (e.g., you want to find where the captive Duke is currently being held), you will need the Finding power (listed below).

FAR SELF

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 5 *and* Far Sight

You can now expand your awareness of a distant location to include all the other senses, including hearing and smell; in addition, your mental awareness is fully present, allowing for other psychic powers to be used.

Time: Present Tense (1 minute)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Observe + Intuition

Resistance: See below

Impact: As with Far Sight, you can project your awareness to another location (with the same range limitations), and you can employ all your senses. You are also fully mentally present, so you can use other psychic powers as if you were there in the location, although these are slightly more taxing: increase the cost of any power by 1 VP.

This power uses the same Resistance as Far Sight.

SHARED SENSE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 6 *and* Far Self

You create a sensory conduit between you and a target, hitching a ride on their senses and experiencing the world through them.

Time: Present Tense (1 minute)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Empathy + Intuition

Resistance: Equals the target's Spirit Resistance (or Easy against willing and knowing targets).

Impact: For the rest of the scene, you can link your senses to those of another living target in sight (or within your Far Sight's vision). Once bonded in this way, as a secondary action, you can close your eyes and experience the world through their senses, even if they leave your visual range after you've established contact.

You are also fully mentally present with these senses, so you can use other psychic powers based on the target's sensory ranges. For example, you could use Premonition to protect them from danger or Far Hand's Air Stride to allow them to fly.

The target does not necessarily know you're hitching a ride in their sensorium. Any time you do something weird, like use a psychic power while riding their senses, they might get a clue.

WYRD SIGHT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 7 *and* Shared Sense

You open your perceptions to the invisible world of occult energies, revealing psychic powers, theurgic rites, and emanations from alien technology.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Focus + Perception

Resistance: Demanding

Impact: Using this refined alternative to Subtle Sight, you can gaze deeper into the astral spectrum, where you may perceive the hidden world of occult powers for the remainder of the scene. You might sense mental control as a light emanating from the psychic's head to his target, or perhaps you may witness the same light woven into the flesh of a Soma master, enhancing their strength. Theurgic activity appears as an unflickering candle-flame with the top point stretching off to infinity. Other powers can appear as a shifting darkness or spiraling colors. The GM is urged to be creative in describing Wyrd Sight, as well as the broad occult forces at work in any given scene.

FINDING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 8 *and* Wyrd Sight

Using your ability to sense astral energies, you can search for and locate a person or thing, even at great distances, gaining awareness of the area around them.

Time: Present Tense (10 minutes)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Focus + Perception

Resistance: Equals target's Spirit Resistance or your familiarity (see below).

Impact: You concentrate your senses into the astral spectrum, sending your awareness to find a specific person or thing, regardless of distance. You are completely unaware of your surroundings while this search is on, as your mind leaps from place to place following unknowable threads of connection that strain from your person to the target. When they are found (or it is located), you become aware of your target's surroundings as if you were within a meter of your objective; all your senses are present there, giving you a general idea of their state.

The higher a person's Spirit Resistance, the more slippery and hard it is to find the thread that leads to them. An object can't resist, but your familiarity with it can affect its Resistance. An important personal object may only be Hard, while an object described to you by another might be Severe. Locating an object you have only read about might offer you Herculean Resistance.

SENSES SHOCK

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 9 *and* Finding

You can open the senses of another, throwing them into confusion and stupefying them with intense sensations.

Time: Instantaneous (primary + reflexive action)

Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP per +1 Resistance to *shake it off* attempts

Roll: Focus + Perception

Resistance: Equals your target's Spirit Resistance.

Impact: You break down the target's ability to adjust their sensory input and intensity, causing normal sensations to overload their mental capacity for

the next 10 turns. The target is put into the Senses Shocked physical state. This is a single state, but it includes the effects of the Blinded, Deafened, and Disoriented states.

On their first turn after being affected, the target can attempt a *shake it off* maneuver to cancel this power's effect on them.

Soma (Body Control)

The path of Soma, also known as Prana Bindu, is a discipline based off many ancient Urthish practices brought together to affect the psychic's control of their own body. It is one of the more subtle paths, centered around the psychic themselves, and thus, it is largely unknown to observers. When it is noticed or revealed, it can often be mistaken for symbiot infection or demonic possession. Many practitioners find themselves employed in freak shows or other circus-like environments, where audience expectations for tricks and illusions help hide the psychic's miraculous abilities.

These powers have no range, as they are personal and only affect the psychic. A trait can only be increased to no more than double its normal rating with a Soma power.

Unless otherwise noted, Soma powers last until the end of the scene in which they are used.

TOUGHENING

Calling • Power (elemental) • Precondition: Psi 1
You use the power of mind over matter to increase your Endurance.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +2 VP per +1 Endurance
Roll: Vigor + Will
Resistance: Hard + 1 per +1 added to Endurance
Impact: You add 2 ranks to your Endurance rating for the rest of the scene. You can attempt to increase this bonus when you activate the power, but each additional rank increases the VP cost and the Resistance.

Rather than directly affecting your Vitality, Toughening allows you to ignore the first two Vitality wounds (plus one per additional Endurance you added) that you take once this power has been activated.

ELEMENTAL USE
At Psi 1, you can use this power elementally by spending 1 VP to attempt a *shake it off* maneuver to overcome the effects of drugs or poisons, even when no such attempt is normally allowed.

At Psi 5, you can use this power elementally (by spending 1 VP) to automatically succeed at a *shake it off* maneuver to overcome the effects of a drug or poison.

At Psi 9, thanks to this elemental power, you automatically know when a chemical is about to affect your body; thus, you can choose to ignore any effect you do not want, essentially making you immune to poisons or drugs… except for the effects you want.

STRENGTHENING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 2 *and* Toughening
You use the power of mind over matter to increase your Strength.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +2 VP per +1 Strength
Roll: Vigor + Wits
Resistance: Hard + 1 per +1 added to Strength
Impact: You add 2 ranks to your Strength rating for the rest of the scene. You can attempt to increase this bonus when you activate the power, but each additional rank increases the VP cost and the Resistance.

QUICKENING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 3 *and* Strengthening
You use the power of mind over matter to increase your Dexterity.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +2 VP per +1 Dexterity
Roll: Vigor + Perception
Resistance: Hard + 1 per +1 added to Dexterity
Impact: You add 2 ranks to your Dexterity rating for the rest of the scene. You can attempt to increase this bonus when you activate the power, but each additional rank increases the VP cost and the Resistance.

HARDENING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 4 *and* Quickening
You use the power of mind over matter to harden your skin to the consistency of steel, allowing it to act as armor.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Vigor + Will
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You gain +2 Body Resistance. You can harden even more during activation: +1 Body Resistance per 2 VP spent, up to a maximum Body Resistance bonus equal to your Psi rating.

SIZING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 5 *and* Hardening
In an amazing feat of mind over matter, you change your size and/or dimensions.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Vigor + Endurance
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You can modify your shape and size and weight. You can adjust your height and weight up or down by 20%, plus 20% more for each 2 VP you spend on impact. Every 20% up or down in height and weight changes your Size rating by 1.

For every rank of Size you lower, reduce your movement speed by 1 meter and subtract 1 from Vitality.

For every rank of Size you increase, add 1 to your movement speed and 1 your Vitality.

This power only allows for a maximum of 60% change in any direction. Thus, a human (Size 5) could get to Size 2 or Size 8, maximum.

MASKING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 6 *and* Sizing
You can control your appearance by physically altering your facial features.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Disguise + Endurance
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You can physically change your appearance — bone structure, facial features, eye color, hair color and length, skin tone and texture, etc. This change lasts for one act, although it can be extended repeatedly before it expires by spending 1 VP. If you are attempting to impersonate someone specific, every 2 VP spent on impact provides a +1 goal to Disguise and Knavery actions based on impersonating that person.

RECOVERING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 7 *and* Masking
You can repair and regrow your body, recovering from injuries with a thought.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP per +1 Vitality healed
Roll: Vigor + Endurance
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You recover 1 Vitality wound, plus 1 for every 2 VP spent. You can also spend 2 VP to remove the Mangled state. You can reattach a severed finger, toe, ear, or even limb, so long as you use this power within the same act that it was severed.

There are rumors of a higher-ranked version of this power that allows psychics to regrow severed or damaged body parts or organs.

SLOWING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 8 *and* Recovering
You have such amazing control over your body and its functions that you may enter a hibernation-like state that can be easily mistaken for death.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Endurance
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You can slow down your body's processes and operations to an almost undetectable rate. When that occurs, you are in the Soma Coma state. You cannot move or take actions, Observe rolls are unfavorable, and your Perception is 1 for the purposes of instinctual perception tests. However, you are immune to inhaled gases and most poisons, use 10x less oxygen, and need no food or water. You use your Endurance as Resistance against any attempts to detect you as a living being — this can even apply to psychic means of detection, if they use mental activity or the like.

When you exit this state, you are fully aware of your surroundings and fully awake. You can specify some sort of stimulation or a condition that will bring you out of this state, such as a chronopiece alarm or someone speaking a special phrase. If you take more than 1 Vitality in damage, you will awaken from this state. If the conditions are not met by the end of the scene, you can prolong this state by spending 1 VP per additional scene.

ADAPTING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 9 *and* Slowing
You are able to modify your body to function in extreme environments, as if you have evolved to do so. Surviving underwater realms, extreme heat, or even the vacuum of space is no problem for you.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Vigor + Endurance
Resistance: See below
Impact: You can withstand extreme heat and cold. If you wish to extend this to other environments or effects, you must spend additional VP when you activate the power. (If your environment changes for the worse after activation, you're only protected against the level of effects that you paid for.)

Environment/effects	VP cost
Underwater or biological poisons	+2
Acid and chemical poisons	+2
Full vacuum and extreme pressures	+4

Once adapted, you treat the conditions as if they were part of your native environment. You do not suffer from damage or debilitation based on your exposure. This only adapts you enough so that you're not killed by the environment — you could breathe clouds of chlorine gas, but you still can't see through it. Also, non-environmental effects still apply: if you're adapted to an extremely hot climate, you're still just as vulnerable to a flamegun as ever.

Vis Craft (Energy Control)

Even during the height of psychic research, Vis Craft was practically unknown. This path is all about manipulating material energies and affecting how these energies pass through matter. Some of the higher mysteries of this path can even manipulate spiritual energies. The ability to manipulate these energies provides no understanding of how to use them, although some Vis Crafters try to study sciences like physics, if they can get access to such lore.

Unless otherwise noted, Vis Craft powers require you to touch your target, as they use your own body to conduct the forces. For an unwilling subject or an item in another's possession, you first need to make a successful touch attack (using Fight skill); immediately afterwards, you may attempt to activate a Vis Craft power as a reflexive bonus primary action.

VIS EYE

Calling • Power (elemental) • Precondition: Psi 1
You can visually perceive the energy fields around you, allowing you to identify types of energy and trace them back to their sources.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Perception
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You gain the ability to sense energy fields for the rest of the scene. Your rolls involving the Tech Lore capabilities tend to be favorable, so long as they involve working on power system and sensing energy.

You may also sense invisible energies, such as a laser sensor or an electronic tracking emission (like the ones used in tracking devices that someone might have planted on you or your stuff). The GM should use your Focus skill ranks for instinctual perception tests to detect such energies, and you can make a *spot* or *search* maneuver using Focus instead of Observe to detect and identify energies; however, this roll is unfavorable unless you have the relevant Tech Lore capability for the energy source.

ELEMENTAL USE
At Psi 1, you can spend 1 VP to power a small device, such as a fusion torch or communicator, for an entire scene. In the case of items that use charges from a fusion cell, such as blasters and energy shields, you can spend 1 VP to provide enough power to the cell for a single charge (e.g., a single blaster shot or energy shield activation).

At Psi 5, your Vis Eye power can also sense and discern spiritual energies, such as wyrd points or symbiot lifeforce. This may require additional capabilities, most notably Occult Lore or Life Science, to avoid an unfavorable roll.

At Psi 9, you can spend 1 VP to fully recharge a fusion cell (the kind used for energy weapons and shields). Even when no battery or other power source is present, you can provide enough power (per 1 VP) to fire a single shot from an energy weapon or to activate an energy shield once.

VIS DRAIN

You can ground, drain, or cut off the flow of power from a power source with a touch, so that the device drawing that power no longer operates for a time.
Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 2 *and* Vis Eye
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: See below
Roll: Focus + Will
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You drain or cut the flow of power to or from one source or another. You cannot channel or redirect this power for any use, unless you couple it with other Vis Craft powers, like Vis Flow (below).

The amount of power to be drained determines the VP cost. At the GM discretion, you could break this into smaller tasks — instead of draining a small city (10 VP) with one use, you can go district by district (6 VP each) shutting down the power.

VP	Power (equivalent)
1	Small room/skimmer/fusion cell
2	Small building/flitter/heavy fusion cell
4	City block/small fusion generator
6	City district/small starship/large fusion generator
8	Mid-class starship/large facility
10	Capital starship/small city
12	Large city/starbase

This drain lasts until you break contact with the source; if you're affecting storage devices, such as fusion cells, the drain lasts until the entire charge has been drained away.

VIS FLOW

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 3 *and* Vis Drain

You can now use your body as a conduit to move energy drained from one source to another. You can recharge a fusion cell, bridge the gap between wires, or drain a laser pistol of a charge and transfer it to power an electronic lock long enough to open it.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Focus + Will

Resistance: Hard

Impact: You may channel energy by touching the source of the energy and the item to which it's being channeled. You can transfer as little as a single charge (such as a single shot's worth of charge for a laser pistol's fusion cell) or the entire source (see Vis Drain for the VP costs for large sources). For other types of transfers, such as bridging a gap, you can safely channel energy from the power source to the powered device for the rest of the scene, so long as you maintain contact.

Additionally, you are now immune to mild shocks, even when not using this power, but energy attacks or extreme power surges still affect you. You can activate this power as a primary reflexive action (as with a *dodge* maneuver) to redirect the damage inflicted on you from an energy weapon attack. The Resistance is equal to the damage delivered. If successful, spend 1 VP per 1 damage redirected. You can direct the energy into a fusion cell you're carrying (if it has any capacity) at a one-to-one ratio (a laser pistol shot becomes a single charge in the cell), or you can just let it ground or dissipate around you.

VIS SHOCK

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 4 *and* Vis Flow

With a touch, you discharge a high voltage shock from your own bioelectric field.

Time: Instantaneous (primary + reflexive action)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Fight + Wits

Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance (ignoring armor).

Impact: You pack an electric shock into a touch or Fight-skill *strike*. With specially designed weapons, you can even conduct this shock through a melee attack. Resolve the attack as normal using the base damage of the attack (or none for a touch). You can spend VP on impact for extra energy damage (up to a maximum of your Psi rating); this damage bypasses energy shields, unless the touch or strike caused enough base damage to activate one, in which case, it blocks all damage up to its maximum threshold.

VIS SHIELD

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 5 *and* Vis Shock

You manipulate your bioelectric field to act like a personal energy shield, protecting you from harm.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP per 5 additional hits

Roll: Focus + Endurance

Resistance: Hard

Impact: For the rest of the scene, you emit a personal force field that functions like a standard energy shield. (See *Energy Shields* in **Chapter 4: Technology**.) The Vis Shield's lower threshold is equal to 3 + your Urge rating, while its upper limit is 10 + your Psi rating. (For example, if your Urge is 2 and your Psi is 6, your force field's protection is 5/16.) Unlike a technological energy shield, the Vis Shield doesn't restrict the armor or equipment you can wear, nor does it suffer burnout from broad-area impacts or multiple hits in the same round.

The Vis Shield can take 10 hits, plus an additional 5 hits per 2 VP spent during casting.

VIS BOLT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 6 *and* Vis Shield

You direct a bolt of energy (like the one fired from a blaster weapon) at one target in sight.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Shoot + Dexterity

Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.

Impact: You release a blast of energy from your hand or eyes at a target. You can target anything you can see, but the bolt has the same range as a blaster rifle (see **Chapter 4: Technology**). The base damage is equal to your Endurance. You can increase the damage: 1 damage per 2 VP spent, up to a maximum of your Psi rating. This unstable energy bolt can bleed through energy shields as if it were a blaster.

VIS DYNAMO

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 7 *and* Vis Bolt

You can generate tremendous power on your own and deliver it with a touch. You no longer have to drain power sources to recharge fusion cells or power buildings… or even starships.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)

Cost: See below

Roll: Focus + Will
Resistance: Same as VP cost (see below)
Impact: You can generate power by converting mystical energy into electrical or fusion power. You must decide the amount of power you want to generate and spend the VP cost for that power:

VP	Power (equivalent)
Basic victory	Small room/skimmer/fusion cell
2	Small building/flitter/heavy fusion cell
4	City block/small fusion generator
6	City district/small starship/large fusion generator
8	Mid-class starship/large facility
10	Capital starship/small city
12	Large city/starbase

The Resistance is equal to the VP cost, as the universe literally creates resistance to this conversion. With a successful activation, the power is there at your fingertips, but you need to use a power like Vis Flow to direct it somewhere useful. Unlike the raw power generated by Vis Shock or Vis Flow, this potential power is unsuitable for combat, but it can be quite useful for overwhelming a system with a power surge. Undirected power you summon will dissipate rapidly, but otherwise, it will last for the rest of the scene unless stored longer in a fusion cell or other battery system.

VIS STORM

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 8 *and* Vis Dynamo
You create an explosion that lashes everything in the immediate area with raw energy.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Perception
Resistance: Equals your target's Body Resistance.
Impact: You choose a point in space within your sight that will serve as the focal point for your explosion of energy. The radius of the blast is 10 meters from the focal point; every target inside the area whose Body Resistance is overcome is affected. The base damage dealt by the explosion is equal to your Endurance. You can increase this by 1 damage per 2 VP spent, up to a maximum of your Psi rating. This unstable energy acts like blaster plasma and can bleed through energy shields like a blaster.

VIS PRIME

Calling • Power • Precondition: Psi 9 *and* Vis Dynamo
You become a power generator for the power's duration and can even share victory points with others.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Vigor + Intuition
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: For the duration of the scene, you can add VP equal to your level to your cache per turn as a secondary action. Also, you can transfer VP (or even WP) from your cache to someone else's by touching them.

In addition, once per scene while the power is active, you may convert some of your cache or banked VP into wyrd points. You can convert them at a rate of 1 VP per 3 WP up to a WP limit of your Focus skill.

Urge

For as long as there have been psychics, there have been tales of dark deeds by practitioners of this occult path. They reveal the dark side of psi: the Dark Twin or doppelganger, commonly called the Urge.

Whenever a you roll a critical miss on a psychic power roll, your Urge stirs. For the rest of the scene, your Dark Twin can step up and actively take part in your world. It can use Urge powers equal to or lower than your Urge rating.

Your Dark Twin will sow as much chaos and confusion as possible during the scene to try and break down the moral parts of your character, using its full knowledge of your thoughts and secrets. After all, your deepest secret is that this Dark Twin *is really you.*

Urge Powers

When active, your Dark Twin can use the following powers to make life difficult for you. It uses *your* traits on dice rolls. Generally, the GM takes on the role of your Urge, using the Dark Twin to enhance the drama of the game. It exists within your psychic's mind, and it is not generally suicidal. Your Dark Twin is trying to gain power and become dominant, not trying to kill you or itself.

The Dark Twin has its own VP cache and a bank with a capacity equal to yours (and its capacity increases to match yours as you rise in level). When the Dark Twin first awakens or is brought forth, it adds VP to its bank equal to your Surge rating. You can resist the Twin's use of Urge powers, but the VP you spend go into the Twin's bank, not the well. A high Urge rating can even give the Dark Twin the ability to steal VP from its host.

A character's Urge always acts just before its host does, whenever that is in the initiative queue. It works to influence the next action or actions the psychic takes.

You can resist your Twin's Urge power by taking a primary action and spending 2 VP. This cancels its

power before it can take effect. The Twin regains any VP it spent on the power, and your 2 VP go directly into the Twin's bank.

If you resist the Twin a number of times equal to your Urge rating, you can then attempt to stifle the Twin and put it back to sleep. You roll Focus + Faith as a primary action vs. a Resistance of your Urge rating. You must use VP to overcome its Resistance (or spend twice as much in VP). The Twin can use any VP in its cache or bank to boost its Resistance. If you succeed, the Dark Twin goes dormant, back into your subconscious, and it can no longer use Urge powers. If you fail to overcome Resistance, you cannot resist the Twin's Urge powers for the rest of the scene.

SPEAK IN TONGUES

Power • Precondition: Urge 1
As the Dark Twin awakens, it gains the power of speech.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP or more
Roll: Knavery + Wits
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: The Twin can influence your words and expressions to change the content or context of your communications. For each VP spent on impact, it can change a single word in something you say. This can be a direct word replacement by the GM, or the effect might be to make an influence roll unfavorable as you emphasize the wrong words, make small Freudian slips, or wiggle your eyebrows inappropriately.

MISDIRECTION

Power • Precondition: Urge 2
As your Dark Twin flexes its psychic muscles, it can shift the target of your psychic powers.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Wits
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: Instead of your intended target, you shift targets to one of the Twin's choice, so long as they're hostile to you. The Twin can spend 2 VP to instead choose a neutral target, like an innocent bystander. If it spends 4 VP, the action can be redirected at a friendly target. A critical hit allows the Twin to change the target and choose the action you take.

VOICES

Power • Precondition: Urge 3
The Dark Twin is now able alter your perceptions by creating or changing the sounds you hear.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Knavery + Perception
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: The Twin creates or changes the auditory stimuli you experience. For each 1 VP spent, the Twin can change a word you hear or create a single distraction. This might be used to draw you away from where you need to be or to startle you (causing your next action to be unfavorable). The effects are decided by the GM, who should feel free to get creative.

SPIRIT DRAIN

Power • Precondition: Urge 4
Your Dark Twin begins to collect the energy it needs to build its psychic body.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: None
Roll: Focus + Will
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: Once per scene that it is active, the Twin can attempt to siphon victory points from your cache (first) and bank (second) and place them into its bank. If its attempt is successful, it can take 2 VP per Urge rating. If you do not have enough VP in your cache and bank to cover this, you become Confused for the rest of the scene. For this reason, the Twin often waits to pounce until you've collected a bounty of VP.

MAKING A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

Desperate times call for desperate measures. Maybe you really, really need to boost your Resistance or activate a psychic power, but you have no VP, and you don't have VP in your own cache or bank. That's okay: you can choose to use VP from your Dark Twin's bank.

Whenever you do so, however, the Dark Twin awakens for that scene.

VISIONS

Power • Precondition: Urge 5
Your Dark Twin's powers have grown to the point that even your own eyes can't be fully trusted.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Knavery + Perception
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: The Twin afflicts you with visual hallucinations. It can change the appearance of one thing in

your perception, even if you aren't looking directly at the thing in question. For the rest of the scene, you will see the new thing as the Twin wants you to see it. For 2 VP, the Twin can change the appearance of multiple items or a single person. For 4 VP, it can change multiple people this way.

URGES

Power • Precondition: Urge 6
The Dark Twin now influences your emotions and state of mind, attempting to drive you mad.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Empathy + Presence
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: Once per scene, your Dark Twin can impose on you a social or mental state of its choice. It lasts for the rest of the scene. Every 2 VP the Twin spends on impact increases the Resistance for you to *shake it off*.

DEMENTIA

Power • Precondition: Urge 7
Your Dark Twin has driven you mad as it tries to break free of you. What kind of madness grips you?
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: See below
Roll: Knavery + Wits
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: You develop a neurosis or psychosis expressed as a chronic mental state whenever the Twin is active. The state you gain is based on the VP the Twin spends on Impact.

VP	State
Basic victory	Confused (see **Chapter 3: Traits**)
2	Disruptive
4	Contrary
6	Psychotic

This dementia is a mental defect that can be resolved through therapy, but only after the psychic's Urge rating drops below 7. You should work with the GM to decide just how your madness is defined and how the special states (listed below) work on and through you.

DISRUPTIVE
Your madness expresses itself through annoying and disruptive behavior. You will interrupt others or act out in a way fitting to your psychosis that generally annoys everyone in the area.

CONTRARY
When your Twin is active, this state causes you to be actively counterproductive to whatever task is at hand. For a reason related to your particular madness, you will oppose whatever you were attempting to accomplish, short of outright destruction and endangerment.

PSYCHOTIC
You have crossed the line and are driven to destruction. Your actions will be as destructive and dangerous as possible with no regard to consequences, except for blatantly self-destruction acts.

OUTER CHILD

Power • Precondition: Urge 8
Your Dark Twin is now powerful enough to project itself outside of your mind and into the real world.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Knavery + Wits
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: The Twin can now create an illusory projection of itself in the real world. It can speak and respond like an actual entity, appearing exactly as you currently appear. It cannot perform physical actions but can attempt influence actions against others (using your own traits). The Twin can spend VP to bolster Resistance against others' attempts to distinguish between you and your Twin, as if they were trying to pierce a disguise (see the Disguise skill in **Chapter 3: Traits**).

DOPPELGANGER

Power • Precondition: Urge 9
The creation of your Doppelganger is the true birth of your Twin, as it finally becomes its own separate physical being.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Knavery + Presence
Resistance: Your Spirit Resistance
Impact: Once your Twin gains this power, whenever it becomes active, it can make an attempt once per scene to become a doppelganger: If it succeeds, it leaves you and becomes a permanent, sentient entity as real as you are. It has your traits, except it has Psi 9 and Urge 1 (and can now develop its own Dark Twin). It retains the VP in its bank that it saved up.

The doppelganger is identical and indistinguishable to you in all physical ways, although the Psyche powers of Mind Sight and Mind Search can detect the difference, as well as the theurgic Second Sight and Knowing Heart rites. Someone who knows you well can use an Empathy *detect lie* maneuver to know the difference, although they'd have to already be aware — and on the lookout — that there is a doppelganger of you running around.

The good news is that once this happens, your Urge drops back down to 1. Should it rise to 9 again, a whole new doppelganger might be created.

Gaining Urge

Urge is gained through roleplaying. Certain acts or deeds you undertake may cause your Urge to awaken; if you keep performing similar deeds, your Urge will slowly grow. You may wonder: What determines if a deed is heinous enough to cause such a divide in the psyche? Breaking societal taboos can be an element, but personal codes and ethics also play a part. Even if you are an outsider to society, the societal mores you grew up in and unconsciously absorbed still affect your innermost being, regardless of how you try to deny it. Like it or not, we are social beings.

In the case of barbarians, or when dealing with characters raised by wolves and thus never exposed to any form of human society, the GM should figure out their own criteria for awakening Urge.

Below is a general guideline for taboos pertinent to humans born and raised in the Known Worlds.

When you break a taboo, you can perform a *repress* maneuver as a primary action to resist growing Urge. The traits used depend on the taboo you broke; see the chart below. The Resistance is your current Urge rating. The Twin can boost the Resistance by spending VP from its bank (and if you've got an Urge or 4 or less, that gives it access to the Spirit Drain power). If the action fails, you gain 1 or more ranks of Urge (set by the GM).

Taboo	Repress roll	Ranks
Refusing sacrament	Focus + Will	1
Missing confession for more than one year	Focus + Will	1
Suffering Inquisitorial torture	Focus + Presence	1–2
Suffering excommunication	Focus + Faith	2–3
Exposure to another psychic's Urge	Focus + Psi	1
Critical miss on a psychic power roll	Focus + Psi	1
Exposure to alien occult powers	Focus + Will	1
Exposure to evil artifact	Focus + Will	1 - 3
Declaring a vendetta	Focus + Will	1
Murder	Focus + Faith	1 - 2
Rape	Focus + Faith	1 - 2
Stealing	Focus +Wits	1
Rebellion against (house, Church, Emperor)	Focus + Wits	1

Losing Urge

Characters can learn to control themselves and dissolve their Dark Twin (or other Urges), but it's harder to close Pandora's Box than it is to open it. Losing Urge ranks requires a quest or great deed of some sort. Once the deed is completed, you can attempt to *reconcile* what you've learned to reduce your Urge.

The traits used for the primary action *reconcile* maneuver depend on the deed you performed; see below. The Resistance for your *reconcile* roll is your current Urge rating. The Twin can boost the Resistance with VP from its bank. If the action succeeds, you lose 1 or more ranks of Urge (the GM decides, based on the guidelines below).

Deed	Reconcile roll	Ranks
Pilgrimage	Vigor +Faith	1
Church mercy (becoming Penitent)	Focus + Faith	1–2
Performing Church mission	Focus + Faith	1
Exposure to Soul Shard	Focus + Psi	2 - 3
Exposure to Philosophers Stone	Focus + Psi	1
Selfless sacrifice	Empathy + Intuition	1–2
Exposure to Second Republic Psi Clinic	Focus + Intuition	1–2

The GM should feel free to create his own taboos or deeds.

RESOLVING URGE/HUBRIS CONFLICTS

Psi/Urge and Theurgy/Hubris are unique resisted characteristics. Psi and Theurgy come into conflict when you try to raise your rank past the rank of your Urge or Hubris. For example, Eusebius has Psi 5 and an Urge 5 and wants to raise his Psi to 6; he must first tame a level of Urge.

Because the two characteristics have come into direct conflict, you can choose to enter a combat of wills (for Psi) or attempt extreme humility (for Theurgy). A roleplaying event occurs: If you're a psychic, you confront your Dark Twin (the GM plays it) and must force, cajole, or charm it into retreating. If you're a theurge, you must gain recognition or pity from a stranger (not a fellow player character) by performing good works, selfless duty, etc. Only after the outside recognition of such sacrifice from another will Hubris be put at bay.

These events need to be roleplayed, and their resolution is largely up to the GM. However, you can demand an action roll (as a primary action) if you feel a climax has been achieved without GM recognition.

Psychics: Use Charm, Impress or Knavery (whichever task is undertaken) + Wits; your Resistance = Urge.

Theurgists: Use Empathy, Vigor, Charm (whichever the gamemaster feels is most appropriate) + Faith; your Resistance = Hubris.

Victory does not cause a reduction in Urge or Hubris ranks, but it does allow you to raise your Psi or Theurgy by one rank (when you level up and allocate your new level's characteristic ranks). This may mean that the characteristics are no longer symmetrically resisted (Eusebius will have Psi 6 and Urge 5 — totaling 11). Every time you wish to raise your Psi or Theurgy past the rank of its opposite, this contest of wills must take place (even if you have already succeeded in a previous contest of wills).

However, neither Urge or Hubris takes regard of their resisted characteristics when they are raised — they simply rise to whatever level is called for (see the *Gaining Urge* and *Gaining Hubris* charts). Raising Urge and Hubris does not require a contest of wills. Thus, it may be the case that Eusebius' Urge was raised to 6 before he tried to raise his Psi.

Theurgy: The Power of Faith

Master Norman looked out across the plain, watching helplessly as the defensive line his fellow Brothers had formed began to crumble. There was seemingly no end to the symbiots, and for a moment, he despaired that the Pancreator had abandoned them in this, their hour of greatest need. He then recalled the Holy Petitions Against Terror and recited them to himself.

"Adept Maurice," he said, turning to the man standing next to him, "have the Brothers fetch the Altar of Sabaoth and make it suitable for the Salutation to Zakheyelos."

The second man hesitated for an instant. "As you command, Master."

Norman had never undertaken the Salutation before this crisis, and even now, he was unsure of the wisdom in doing so. Were the situation on Stigmata not so desperate, he would not dream of calling upon the might of one of the Bodiless Intelligences of the Empyrean — but "desperate" certainly described the situation in which his Brothers found themselves, and he would not fail them. The Pancreator had blessed men with theurgy for moments like this; it was his duty to call upon the warlike Lord of Hosts, despite the risks.

As the Brothers brought the altar before him, Master Norman rehearsed the opening of the Salutation in his head, "Sanctify us, we beseech you, O Pancreator, and grant us, by the intercession of Zakhayelos, the victory over your enemies that we seek in your name...."

According to the teachings of the Church, the human soul reflects the divine light of the Holy Flame. At the end of time, only the brightest burning souls, those that most powerfully reflect the Pancreator's light, will endure. The process of reflection can be aided in numerous ways, especially the study of sacred scriptures (such as the Omega Gospels) and meditation, as well as living a life in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet.

Through dedication to this process, some souls can work wonders, affecting the world around them. The Church calls these wonders *theurgy*, and over the centuries, they've studied and codified their workings into an abundance of rituals, many of which will be described later in this section. A brief look at the Church's cosmology – the way it describes and explains the physical and metaphysical qualities of the universe – will provide a better understanding of theurgy and its place in the religion of the Known Worlds. This cosmology ultimately owes its existence to the Prophet's teachings, but it is also the result of centuries of study, observation, and speculation by the Church's greatest thinkers.

Naturally, different sects within the Church have different insights and place different emphases on aspects of this cosmology, not to mention the practice of theurgy itself. This difference is especially evident within the Eskatonic Order, which has delved into these mysteries more than any other sect. Nevertheless, priests within the Church have broadly reached agreement on these matters. What follows is a general overview that represents the consensus to which all sects (more or less) subscribe, along with occasional asides highlighting alternative viewpoints.

Cosmology

The Prophet preached about the Pancreator's Holy Flame, a Celestial Sun that burns at the mystical center of the universe, known as the Empyrean. The Holy Flame provides light and life to all souls throughout creation. Since this light is spiritual, it cannot be perceived with gross (what one might call "material") senses. The illumination of this ever-burning sun flows outward and touches everything – except the darkness emanating from the demons whose shadows blot out the light. Being spiritual in nature, actions of the soul can both nourish and damage the light. The teachings of the Prophet guide those who seek to nourish rather than damage it.

Some sects, like the Avestites, understand the Holy Flame in a very literal fashion, especially the Prophet's words about its capacity to burn away sins, which they attempt to do with their flameguns. Priests of other sects do not share their understanding (or zeal), arguing that the Prophet was speaking metaphorically; in this way, sin is "burned away" in the same way that darkness dissipates in the presence of light.

Even so, the material world is a reflection of the Holy Flame. Evil attempts to stand between the flame's light and the material world, thereby blocking the grace it imparts before it can reach mortal beings. That is why other points of light within the material world are so important, for they too reflect the light of the Holy Flame from other directions. In a similar way, cultivation of the virtues polishes the

soul to reflect the light, turning the soul into a beacon or lantern in the night of shadows. The web of lights created by all these points of reflection can thus be stronger in the material world than the direct illumination of the light itself, which is often blocked by the presence of evil.

The seat of the Holy Flame, the Empyrean, is the dwelling place of the Pancreator – this statement is true to the extent that such terminology even makes sense when speaking of a divine being. The Empyrean is a place of pure spirit and light, nigh unimaginable to the sin and shadow-stained minds of mortals. From the Empyrean, the light of the Holy Flame shines into all dimensions of existence. Theologians call this phenomenon the Descent of Grace. When grace is accepted, the soul becomes a mirror, reflecting back the light of the Holy Flame in a process known as the Luminous Return. The brightness of one's soul is vital, not just in this world, but also in the next. Failing to reflect enough light can lead to the soul's becoming lost in the darkness.

Sin blackens the soul; indeed, it is capable of shutting out the light of the Holy Flame entirely. Sin is thus like verdigris on the mirror of one's soul. To remove the sin, the soul must be polished through the various methods of castigation and penance taught by the Church's sects. Another sure way to do so, according to the Church, is by living one's life in comportment with the eight virtues. This is the path chosen by most of the faithful.

Some people, however, have the capacity to do more. By highly polishing the mirrors of their souls, these individuals allow the Holy Flame to work wonders through them. We call them *theurgists*, and they are rare in the Known Worlds. To a theurgist, the rituals they employ are done not according to their will, but according to the will of the Pancreator, who favors them by making them witnesses to the miraculous. Skeptics charge that theurgy is nothing more than Church-approved psychic power, but history suggests otherwise. Theurgy rituals have different effects than psychic powers, and they bring with them unique dangers, such as hubris (see below).

Special Characteristics: Theurgy/Hubris

Beginning theurges gain 1 rank in a special characteristic called Theurgy, which allows them to practice divine rites. This is one part of a pair; it has an opposite characteristic that runs counter to it. Theurgy's opposite pair is called Hubris, and it's not something any theurge wants — it's their overweening pride, their sin made manifest, given voice by their brush with the divine. These *paired characteristics* each share the same scale of ranks (1 to 10), and a rating in one characteristic lessens the maximum rating in its opposing characteristic.

> ***Example:*** *Margretta has a Theurgy of 4 and a Hubris of 2. This means her maximum Theurgy is 8. She cannot raise her Theurgy to 9 until she first lowers her Hubris to 1 or less.*

Theurgists do not begin with any ranks in Hubris; those must be acquired through gameplay. They can also be diminished only through gameplay. (See *Gaining Hubris* and *Losing Hubris* below.)

The Theurgy characteristic is rarely used to bolster a roll, unlike most characteristics. It is a benchmark rating for measuring your theurgic potential. Certain Theurgy ratings serve as preconditions for acquiring rituals.

When you follow a theurgy-oriented calling, such as Theurgist, you gain 1 rank in Theurgy, as well as the ability to assign 1 or more of your level-awarded characteristic ranks to Theurgy. Certain species, such as the obun, can gain Theurgy as a birthright (including a power some would call a "birth-rite.")

Components

Theurgic rituals require one or more components during their casting. When you first learn a rite equal to your Theurgy rating (e.g., The Prophet's Holy Blessing at Theurgy 1), you need to use the listed components when casting the rite. If, for some reason, you cannot use one or more of them (perhaps your mouth is gagged, preventing a liturgy), the casting roll is unfavorable.

However, once your Theurgy rating rises above the rite's stated precondition rating, you no longer need to use the components: You eventually outgrow the need to anchor a rite in gestures, liturgies, and even active prayer. For example, Temple Avesti's Scent of Evil rite has a precondition of Theurgy 2. If your Theurgy is 2, you need to use its components of gesture and prayer when casting; otherwise, your casting roll is unfavorable. If your Theurgy is 3 or higher, you no longer need the components when casting.

Here are the three components used in theurgic rituals.

Liturgy (L): Words must be spoken. Some rituals call for long orations, others for a simple benediction or short hymn.

Gestures (G): Symbols and signs must be traced in the air or on the object of the ritual. This could be a simple cross or a complex rune.

Prayer (P): The priest must meditate for the ritual. This can require a short moment of concentration or an hours-long trance.

Using one or more components to cast a ritual is a secondary action (although the ritual itself requires a primary action).

Vestments

Wearing appropriate theurgically imbued vestments makes the goal roll of certain theurgic rituals more effective. When used in a ritual in which it is appropriate, the vestment provides +1 goal. In addition, if you spend twice as long casting the ritual than is required, and you've got the proper vestment, your casting roll is favorable (or if your casting roll would be unfavorable, it's normal).

Wearing additional vestments has no added effect. Church vestments, blessed and properly prepared, are made theurgically potent with the Sanctification or Consecration rituals.

Vestment	Type of Ritual
Miter (Rank 4+)	Wisdom (Divine Revelation, Tongues of Babel)
Crosier (Rank 3+)	Command, leadership (Devotional Liturgy, Exorcism)
Robes	Protection (Armor of the Pancreator)
Censor	Cleansing (Cleansing, Consecration)
Jumpgate Cross	Morale, avert (Dispersing the Darkness, Fearsome Majesty)
Water	Healing (Laying on of Hands, Healing Hands of Saint Amalthea)
Rosary Beads	Concentration, meditation (Righteous Assignation of Penance, Righteous Fervor)

Using Theurgy

Each rite is acquired as a calling perk, most often through the Theurgist calling, although a few other callings provide access to theurgy rites (such as Brother Battle).

Unlike psychic powers, theurgic rituals do not have paths. Theurgists may simply learn the individual rituals, so long as they meet the preconditions. The rites are listed in alphabetical order.

Charismata

The first theurgic ritual of each order is a *charism* (pl. *charismata*), a "special spiritual gift" from the Pancreator. This means that it, in addition to its ritual casting effect, it can be expressed by the theurgist in a near-effortless manner, activated without the ceremony and concentration required for the full use of the ritual. In this sense, it is similar to a psychic power's elemental use. (See *Elemental Powers* earlier in this chapter.)

Each 1st-rank rite lists the way it can be expressed as a charism at Theurgy 1, along with a description of how it improves at Theurgy 5 and Theurgy 9. To use a charism, you simply need to spend 1 VP. This is a secondary action (although you can only do one such charism secondary action per turn).

Unlike elemental psychic powers, there are no overt drawbacks to theurgic charismata. They don't erupt out of the theurge's control.

Donning Multiple Rituals

Casting a rite upon oneself or a willing subject is euphemistically called "donning," as one would don a ceremonial robe or garment. A person can potentially don — that is, be under the protection of — multiple rites per turn. In other words, a Brother Battle could cast upon himself Soul's Vessel, Armor of the Pancreator, Liturgy of the Wrathful Host, and Smiting Hand.

However, each rite donned after the first costs one extra VP to cast. In addition, casting so many powers upon yourself is a vain act; each extra rite increases by 1 the Resistance against your attempts to *repent* and avoid gaining Hubris.

You may cancel any of your active rites anytime you choose with but a gesture.

Rites cast upon an unwilling person, such as the Avestite Sting of Conscience, are called "millstones." They do not count against a person's donned rites, do not cost additional VP, or do not add to the Resistance against gaining Hubris. If their effects contradict a donned ritual, they are deemed to take precedence and dampen the donned rite (which still lasts for its duration, but it might not take effect until the invasive millstone's duration is over).

Group Rites

Religion is a group activity; so are its rituals. While theurgy is usually cast by a single priest, many priests can band together to increase the effectiveness of their rites.

When one or more priests joins another priest's rite, use the following guidelines:

- One theurgist is designated the rite leader, while all others are participants. Theurgists can only actively participate in rituals they each already know. Thus, if two priests join in casting a Prophet's Holy Blessing rite, each must already have learned the rite.
- There is no limit to the number of theurges who can join in a single rite. However, gamemasters should use common sense before packing a room full of theurges — such spiritual experts are not common in the first place, and when two or more get together, there is no guarantee they will know the same rites.
- Members of different sects can sometimes learn the same ritual. However, methods of casting may differ from sect to sect. If a rite has participants of multiple sects (even if it's just one Amalthean in a cabal of Eskatonics), the rite leader suffers -1 goal on the casting roll.
- The number of targets the rite affects can be doubled with each participant. If two priests cast a rite that is normally effective only against a single target, it can now affect two targets. If three priests are involved, it can affect four targets. If the rite normally affects five people, 10 can be affected with one additional rite participant, 20 with a third, and so on. The VP cost increases by 1 per doubling.
- The rite participants can donate as much or as little VP to fuel the ritual as they desire. For instance, the rite leader may spend 1 VP to activate the power, while one of the participants may choose to spend 2 VP on the rite's impact. Such expenditures can be done in any combination desired. However, participants who don't contribute their fair share of energy may be reprimanded later.
- Only the rite leader makes the casting roll, and the roll uses the rite leader's traits; other participants can spend their VP to increase the roll's goal number or to overcome Resistance.

Ecumenical (Open) Rituals

Each sect has its own rituals, and each sect's rituals are associated with their patron saints and virtues. Sometimes, a character does not need to go to a priest from another sect to learn that sect's ritual. A hoary old master within their own sect might know it, although it might be in a somewhat different form that reflects their own sect's doctrines and ceremonies.

A few rituals are common to all sects; here are a dozen of them. Members of any sect or order can choose from this list of ecumenical rites.

Theurgy	Rite
1	The Prophet's Holy Blessing (charism)
2	The Devotional Liturgy
3	Laying On Hands, Lesser Banishment
4	The Prophet's Censure
5	The Pulpit's Gift, Oath to the Saints
6	The Tongues of Babel
7	The Righteous Assignation of Penance, Sanctification
8	Shield of Faith
9	Providential Deliverance

THE DEVOTIONAL LITURGY

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 2
By reciting an inspirational passage from the Omega Gospels, you can boost the morale of allies.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Perform (Oratory) + Presence
Components: L
Resistance: Easy
Impact: The *shake it off* and *stonewall* maneuvers become favorable for any friend or ally within earshot for the remainder of the scene. Also, any attack, influence, or power that would impose the Afraid or Terrified states on listeners is unfavorable. The range of this ritual is not extended by technology of any sort, such as long-range communications.

LAYING ON HANDS

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 3
By calling upon Amalthea, patron saint of healing and compassion, you may bring comfort to injured comrades with a touch.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Empathy or Remedy + Will
Components: P

Resistance: Hard
Impact: You heal 2 points of Vitality for every point of VP spent on others; you heal 1 point of Vitality for every VP spent on yourself. This healing is even effective on Mangled wounds.

LESSER BANISHMENT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 3
By brandishing the jumpgate cross and rebuking the Dark, you may suppress an active occult power and/or occult-based state affecting one of the faithful.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress or Perform (Oratory capability) + Presence
Components: LG
Resistance: Equals the Psi or Theurgy rating of the power (or the Tech Level, if it's an artifact) plus any Resistance boost its creator added.
Impact: You must be aware of the power, and you must know that its victim is suffering from it. You cannot simply cast this on someone on a whim. You are targeting the power, not its victim. If you cannot identify the type of power at work — whether its psychic, theurgic, Antinomistic, or Ur — then your roll is unfavorable. Using other rites that allow you to directly perceive the power, such as Second Sight, can make your roll favorable.

If the target is a power, it is suppressed for 1 turn per your Theurgy rating + 1 per VP you spend. If you spend 5 VP, the power is suppressed for the rest of the scene. If the occultist who created the power creates a new instance of the power, it is not affected by your banishment. (You'd have to cast a new banishment against that power.)

This suppression also applies to states caused by occult powers. When you spend 5 VP against a temporary state, it is canceled. If the state is enduring, it becomes temporary. If it is chronic, it becomes enduring.

When your Theurgy is 7 or higher, you may cast this rite as a Greater Banishment. A victory with that rite cancels the power or state outright.

OATH TO THE SAINTS

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5
Inspired by the Oath of Fellowship pledged by Zebulon's eight disciples to one another, you and your troupe can similarly pledge yourselves to each other under the patronage of one of those saints.
Time: Present Tense (30 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP spent by each person who makes the oath
Roll: Perform (Oratory) + Faith
Components: LGP
Resistance: Effortless
Impact: You create a bond with your comrades that grants each of them (and yourself) +2 goal when casting theurgy upon one another. In addition, depending on the saint whose name is invoked, each comrade gains +1 goal (and you gain +1 goal) for certain actions related to the saint's associated virtue.

This rite requires that the oath-makers also spend VP to join its effects. (The caster, if they're a priest with the Inspiring perk, can gift them the required amount from their own cache.)

The effect of this ritual lasts for the remainder of the act. If the troupe wants its effects for the next act, it must be cast again, and the caster and each oath-maker must pay their VP costs.

Saint	Actions
Paulus	Pathfinding, investigating mysteries
Lextius	Upholding a pledge, providing example to others
Amalthea	Aiding those in need, easing pain
Mantius	Defending the faithful (applies to defensive actions only), bettering oneself
Maya	Defending the innocent (applies to defensive actions only), punishing the guilty
Horace	Research, lorekeeping
Hombor	Befriending others, selfless acts of charity
Ven Lohji	Meditation, artistic endeavors

GMs should feel free to create actions appropriate to lesser saints, such as those described elsewhere in this book.

If any of the troupe members betray each other or the ideals of the chosen saint, that breaks the oath and brings bad consequences: all previous bonuses turn into penalties until the offenders have redeemed themselves through religious atonement. In addition, the oath-breaking stains the offender's soul; it can be seen with the Eskatonic Rending the Veil of Unreason ritual.

THE PROPHET'S HOLY BLESSING

Calling • Power (charism) • Precondition: Theurgy 1
By tracing a jumpgate cross on a companion's forehead, you may aid the target in a particular task.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: G
Resistance: Easy

Impact: Declare a specific task for the target to achieve. Their rolls to accomplish it are favorable. The effect of this ritual lasts until the target has made a successful roll for the particular blessed task. For the purposes of this rite, the task must be a specific action accomplished with a roll. Example include: sneaking across a room, pickpocketing the keys from a guard, or frightening the new recruit (with a *daunt* maneuver or similar effect).

You can expand the rite's stated task to a broader definition by spending extra VP: +2 VP allows for short-term tasks like defending Baron Stoval from Sir Gondry's attack; +4 VP can apply to long-term tasks, such as infiltrating an enemy fortress (only rolls to get inside it count as the task, not everything you do in the fort) or repairing the troupe's broken flitter. The goal bonus only lasts until the first successful roll for the task, even when its definition has been broadened. The rite can be cast on the same person again to further aid the task, but successive castings in the same scene suffer a cumulative -2 goal penalty against the same target.

CHARISM

With Theurgy 1, your charism allows you (by spending 1 VP) to bless your own or another person's next roll with a +1 goal bonus.

At Theurgy 5, your charism (by spending 1 VP) acts as above, but now your +1 goal blessing can be applied by the blessed person to any single roll of their choice anytime within the next 10 turns. (You cannot use another charism blessing, or any full casting of this rite, on that person until they've used the first one.)

At Theurgy 9, your charism (by spending 1 VP) acts as above, but now applies for the rest of the scene (or until the blessing is used).

THE PROPHET'S CENSURE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 4
By reciting the first two lines of the Prophet's Admonishment of the Unbelievers and making the sign of the barred jumpgate in their direction, you give any enemy within sight a small taste of divine displeasure.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: LG
Resistance: Target's Spirit Resistance
Impact: The target's rolls to accomplish a particular task are unfavorable. (See *The Prophet's Holy Blessing* for the parameters of the declared task.) The effect of this ritual lasts until the target is successful with a roll for the particular task you have censured.

PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 9
You or a target of your choice can escape danger through the intervention of the divine.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: LGP
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You or a target of your choice are saved from a hazardous situation in an unlikely — even miraculous — manner. The key word is "unlikely," as this ritual does not enable the impossible to occur. Thus, an unknown assailant might attack someone who is about to kill you, or a captor might drop his keys while visiting the cell in which you are imprisoned. The GM must orchestrate events in manner that allows you to make a clean getaway from whatever imperils you.

You may only cast this upon the same target (including yourself) once per scene.

THE PULPIT'S GIFT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5
Drawing on your training in delivering moving homilies, you can increase your social influence over those within earshot
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Perform (Oratory) + Will
Components: LG
Resistance: Equals the highest Mind Resistance of all the listeners present.
Impact: For the remainder of the scene, you add +1 goal to any influence attempts, but only when you are directly targeting someone who heard your sermon. You can increase this goal bonus by +1 per 2 VP spent on your casting.

THE RIGHTEOUS ASSIGNATION OF PENANCE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 7
You can impose a penance upon a sinner.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Empathy + Faith
Components: LP
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You can hear the confession of a believer and absolve them of their sins, provided they perform the penance you impose. During the next drama, so long as they work to accomplish the penance

you impose, they feel free from the terrible burden of their sin. In rules terms, they no longer suffer the negative effects of any and all mental or social states — including chronic ones — that beset them when the rite was cast, so long as the states are associated with the sin they've confessed. (States gained subsequent to the casting are unaffected).

Once the penance is complete (or when their persistence expires), the states are erased. A penance successfully completed may carry with it the removal of an Affliction or the reduction of an Urge or Hubris rating for a psychic or theurge.

If the penitent purposefully leaves off the penance unfulfilled, the states return with all their effects, and the penitent becomes Penalized until they seek confession again. They suffer nightmares or worse (gaining Hubris or losing Faith), at the GM's discretion. If they choose to divert from the path of penance for too long, their mental and social state(s) reassert themselves with greater intensity and cannot be cured through therapy or rallies; only accomplishing this rite's penance will erase them.

This ritual is central to the Church's function in the Known Worlds, as it is the means by which believers may remove the taint of sin. The Righteous Assignation is especially vital in cases where the sins confessed are of overwhelming enormity, presenting occult implications beyond simple personal salvation. This ritual may be the only means of navigating such dark mysteries.

Most imposed penances are charitable donations, community or personal service, pilgrimages, or quests, depending on the nature and severity of the sins confessed.

SANCTIFICATION

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 7
You can sanctify a common Church item so that it may mystically aid your theurgic rites.
Time: Narrated (1 day)
Cost: 2 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: GP
Resistance: Tough
Impact: You can turn a single object into a vestment. (See *Vestments* above.) This ritual takes one day to cast, but its effects are permanent. A vestment may lose its sanctity over time and through neglect, but if it is well cared for, it will continue to function. This ritual may be used a number of times per week equal to your level.

SHIELD OF FAITH

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 8
You can create a mystical shield to protect you against damage.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP per each additional meter, +2 VP per 5 additional hits
Roll: Focus + Presence

Components: GP
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: You create a hemispherical field with a three-meter radius around you; it moves with you. This field lasts for the rest of the scene or until its number of "hits" runs out (see below). Anyone within its radius is protected.

The Shield of Faith is similar to a standard energy shield. (See *Energy Shields* in **Chapter 4: Technology**.) The Shield's lower threshold is equal to 3 + your Hubris rating, while its upper limit is 10 + your Theurgy rating. (For example, if your Hubris is 2 and your Theurgy is 8, your force field's protection is 5/18.) Unlike a technological energy shield, a Shield of Faith does not restrict the armor or equipment you can use, nor does it suffer burnout from broad-area impacts or multiple hits in the same round.

The Shield can take 10 hits, plus an additional 5 hits per 2 VP spent during casting.

THE TONGUES OF BABEL

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 6
You can understand and speak almost any language you do not already understand.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +2 VP per additional person
Roll: Empathy + Wits
Components: GP
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: After hearing a language spoken frequently by natives (or a language spoken fluently by outsiders), you acquire the ability to converse in it for a scene. If linguistic or cultural barriers would normally impose goal penalties or unfavorable rolls, this rite makes them normal.

This ritual does not confer the ability to read the language acquired, unless it is normally written (or is spelled out phonetically) in the Urthish alphabet. (Alien, Vuldrok, and most other barbarian or Lost World tongues do not necessarily use the Urthish alphabet.) You can, however, spend an additional 2 VP during casting to allow letters written in an alien script to speak in your mind, revealing their explicit (that is, not subtextual or coded) meaning.

Brother Battle Rituals

Theurgy	Rite
1	Soul's Vessel
2	Rightly Guided Hand
3	Armor of the Pancreator
4	Righteous Fervor
5	Liturgy of the Wrathful Host
6	Smiting Hand
7	Fearsome Majesty
8	Oath of the Shieldmates
9	Salutation to Zakhayelos, Lords of Hosts

ARMOR OF THE PANCREATOR

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 3 *and* Brother Battle faction
As the Urth Orthodox rite of the same name.

FEARSOME MAJESTY

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 7 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can instill the fear of the Pancreator into a target.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP per doubling of the number of targets
Roll: Impress + Presence
Components: LG
Resistance: Equals your target's Spirit Resistance.
Impact: The target is Afraid. If you spend 2 additional VP (per target), you can upgrade this to the Terrified state. Targets already under the effect of either the Prophet's Censure or Tortures of the Damned rites are unaffected by Fearsome Majesty.

LITURGY OF THE WRATHFUL HOST

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can fill hearts with the fire of a holy cause.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Charm or Impress + Presence
Components: LP
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: By reading this passage from the Omega Gospels, you inspire others to do great things. For the next scene, the listeners are in the Divinely Inspired state. The Liturgy's effect is not extended by technological devices, such as long-distance communications.

RIGHTLY GUIDED HAND

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 2 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can improve your combat skills.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: (Fight, Melee, or Shoot) + Faith
Components: LG
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You can steady your hand under fire. Your combat skill rolls are favorable for 1 turn (beginning on the next turn after the casting) per your Theurgy rating, but only for the skill used to cast this rite.

RIGHTEOUS FERVOR

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 4 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can resist temptation.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Will
Components: L
Resistance: Hard
Impact: For the next act, you can intensify your stoicism by declaring your duty (such as "No harm shall come to the bishop under my watch" or "I shall safely deliver the writ to the Hierophant on Byzantium Secundus"). You become immune to any mental or social obstacles that would hinder you in the performance of this duty (such as the orders of the bishop to step down, the knavery of the Decados marquis, the lamentation of a peasant to free his trapped brother out from under a fallen ox-cart, etc.). In rules terms, influence actions against you that would deter you from your duty are unfavorable, and your rolls to *stonewall* them are favorable.

Furthermore, your Observe actions to notice physical obstacles (such as cutpurses, assassins sneaking through the crowd, etc.) are favorable, and you gain +2 Perception on instinctual perception tests.

Of course, the effect of this ritual has some drawbacks, as you can become quite callous to pleas for help if they would hinder your stated duty. In such cases, you must later confess your refusal within a week of the ritual's conclusion or risk gaining Hubris.

SMITING HAND

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 6 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can channel the power of the Holy Flame through your limbs.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Per attack action (see below)
Components: LG
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: You perform a fist, kick, or melee weapon attack using the rules normally required for that action. If it is successful, you may channel holy power into the attack's impact: +2 damage per 1 VP spent, up to a maximum damage bonus equal to your Theurgy rating. (In addition, you may still increase the blow's damage impact by spending VP per the usual rules.) If the target is an evil creature of the Dark (a husk, a psychic Doppelganger, a symbiot, etc.), this holy damage causes it to be Penalized on its next action roll.

SOUL'S VESSEL

Calling • Power (charism) • Precondition: Theurgy 1 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can perfect your physical body into an instrument of the Pancreator.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Vigor + Will
Components: P
Resistance: Easy
Impact: This ritual aids you by making favorable your rolls for all non-attack actions involving your Body characteristics — this includes lifting, climbing, and even the *evade* maneuver. It lasts for the scene.

CHARISM
With Theurgy 1, your charism grants you +1 Body Resistance against all attacks that round.

At Theurgy 5, you gain +1 Body Resistance against all attacks for 10 rounds.

At Theurgy 9, you gain +1 Body Resistance against all attacks for the scene.

OATH OF THE SHIELDMATES

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 8 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can turn your band of comrades into an elite fighting force.
Time: Present Tense (5 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP per 5 targets
Roll: Empathy + Will
Components: LGP
Resistance: Tough
Impact: For the rest of the scene, you can mystically communicate with and feel the emotions of the rite's chosen targets (who must be within sensory range during the casting), allowing the formation of a tele-

pathic network through you (similar to the Psyche psychic power Sympaticus). The range is 100 meters. However, this ritual actually makes it harder to manipulate or control your chosen targets (your influence rolls against them are unfavorable). The only viable targets of this rite are those who have pledged loyalty to your cause or who have been the targets of the Prophet's Holy Blessing with you.

SALUTATION TO ZAKHAYELOS, LORD OF HOSTS

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 9 *and* Brother Battle faction
You can call upon one of the Bodiless Intelligences of the Empyrean for aid.
Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress + Presence
Components: LGP
Resistance: Severe
Impact: You contact the strong and warlike Intelligence known as Zakhayelos, who rules the Fifth Emanation from the Celestial Sun. Zakhayelos is the pure embodiment of the military virtues: strength, courage, discipline, strategy, and logistics. They will take no direct physical actions, but as a being of nearly limitless capabilities, they can act in ways both grand and subtle to tip the scales of victory in your favor.

Zakhayelos has been known to aid the order with signs and omens that reveal enemy positions and tactics. They may bolster troops with substantial (but temporary) increases in traits (and sudden favorable rolls), or they may appear in the sky above Brother Battle armies (instilling your troops with the Divinely Inspired state while making the enemy Penalized). When taking visible form, they appear as a tall, noble knight clad in shining, elaborately decorated armor, wielding a flaming sword emblazoned with a jumpgate cross.

While some outside the Church doubt the existence of Zakhayelos and other Empyrean powers, there can be no doubt about their efficacy. The GM should imagine an appropriately spectacular effect for this ritual, using the examples given above as guidelines. Under no circumstances will Zakhayelos become directly involved, but if called upon, they will aid you.

This rite can be cast only once per drama without risk. If you cast it a second time within the same drama, you must perform a *repent* maneuver (Focus + Faith) to prevent gaining Hubris. (See *Gaining Hubris* below.) If you dare to cast it a third time (and every subsequent time), your *repent* roll is unfavorable.

Eskatonic Order Rituals

Theurgy	Rite
1	Celestial Alignments (charism)
2	Divine Revelation
3	Rending the Veil of Unreason
4	Second Sight
5	Osseous Transmutation
6	All-Seeing Eye
7	Refinement of Essence
8	Investiture
9	Knowledge and Conversation of Tholumiyelos, Lord of Wisdom

ALL-SEEING EYE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 6 *and* Eskatonic Order
You can observe a place in which you are not physically present.
Time: Present Tense (1 minute)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Observe + Intuition
Components: LP
Resistance: See below.
Impact: You gain the equivalent of the Sixth Sense psychic power Far Sight. Consult the description of that power earlier in this chapter for additional details.

CELESTIAL ALIGNMENTS

Calling • Power (charism) • Precondition: Theurgy 1 *and* Eskatonic Order
You can glean divinatory clues based on the positions of celestial bodies, reading what they portend for the current scene. You do not need to see the stars or planets; your intuition tells you their positions.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Observe + Intuition
Components: P
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You gain a flash of insight about the influence of the stars upon your exact time and place. For the rest of the scene, you can use this insight to declare a single reroll for any roll that you or someone else has just made. (This must occur directly after the roll in question; it cannot be later in the same round, after other rolls have been made.) In essence, the result of the first roll is what you foresaw; your prayer-based intervention allowed that outcome to change, so that the reroll

became the actual sequence of events that time played out. You have no control over the result of the reroll, however, and you must abide by it. (You also cannot cast this rite to redo a reroll brought about by this rite).

This rite can be cast multiple times within the same scene, but only after the preceding rite's reroll has been used (thus altering fate enough that you can again try to scry its new workings).

Additionally, knowledge of this rite gives you perfect knowledge of the stars: You can keep perfect mental notes of all the movements of the surrounding solar system, as well as the constellations (as they appear to an observer on the surface of a planet). With no more than a passing glance at the sky, you know sidereal time and your location, direction, and motion as you travel across a planet. While this provides some utility in interplanetary navigation within a solar system, it does not aid interstellar travel or complex maneuvers like combat, docking, or landing.

CHARISM

With Theurgy 1, your charism allows you (by spending 1 VP) to nudge the result of a single die roll up or down by 1 (turning a 7 into an 8 or a 6). A nudged roll cannot result in a critical hit, however, and a die-roll result of 20 is always a critical miss that cannot be nudged.

At Theurgy 5, your charism allows you (by spending 1 VP) to nudge the result of a single die roll up or down by up to 2 (turning a 7 into an 9 or a 5). The same restrictions apply.

At Theurgy 9, your charism allows you (by spending 1 VP) to nudge the result of a single die roll up or down by up to 3 (turning a 7 into a 10 or a 4). Again, the same restrictions apply.

DIVINE REVELATION

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 2 *and* Eskatonic Order

You gain divine insight into your current situation.

Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Wits
Components: P
Resistance: Easy
Impact: By reciting a prayer for guidance, you gain significant insight into whatever problem is vexing you. The GM should judge the degree of insight based on the VP spent: basic victory furnishes only the slightest of clues; 2 VP provides a more substantial answer; 4 VP grants you a clear indication of the exact nature of your dilemma and what needs to be done to resolve it; and 6 VP offers profound leaps of logic, in which case, the GM may simply opt to give you information to which you would not normally have access.

INVESTITURE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 8 *and* Eskatonic Order

You can create a superior tabernacle. The Imbue Tabernacle perk allows you to imbue an item with victory points as a separate coffer. This rite allows you to create a self-replenishing one with more capacity.

Time: Narrated (1 day)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Will
Components: LGP
Resistance: Tough
Impact: Your tabernacle's victory-point limit is your Theurgy rating + 1 per VP spent during casting. Once a tabernacle's stored points have been used up, you can recharge them with your own VP after an hour-long ceremony. However, your Invested tabernacle will replenish itself at a rate of 1 VP per your level per scene. If you're 6th level, your tabernacle replenishes 6 VP per scene.

Special: If you already have the Imbue Tabernacle perk, you can exchange it for this rite once you meet the Theurgy 8 precondition.

KNOWLEDGE AND CONVERSATION OF THOLUMIYELOS, LORD OF WISDOM

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 9 *and* Eskatonic Order

You can call upon one of the Bodiless Intelligences of the Empyrean for aid.

Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress + Wits
Components: LGP
Resistance: Severe
Impact: You contact the clever and insightful Intelligence known as Tholumiyelos, who rules the Eighth Emanation from the Celestial Sun. Tholumiyelos is the pure embodiment of wisdom and knowledge. They will take no direct physical actions, but as a being of nearly limitless capabilities, they can provide you with secret lore and metaphysical understanding of the universe by means of conversation.

These conversations are highly ritualized and formulaic, like a catechism or question-and-an-

swer session, featuring Tholumiyelos as the teacher and you as the student. Tholumiyelos seldom answers a direct question (such as "Is the duchess poisoning my meals?"); instead, they are more likely to ask you questions that might lead you to the answer you seek (such as "How do you think the duchess feels about you, and what political necessities might impinge upon your relationship?"). When taking a visual form, Tholumiyelos appears as an elderly androgyne with clear, sparkling eyes; they hold an ancient book in the right (or male) hand and a bubbling crucible in the left (or female) hand.

This rite can be cast only once per drama without risk. If you cast it a second time within the same drama, you must perform a *repent* maneuver (Focus + Faith) to prevent gaining Hubris. (See *Gaining Hubris* below.) If you dare to cast it a third time (and each subsequent time), your *repent* roll is unfavorable.

OSSEOUS TRANSMUTATION

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5 *and* Eskatonic Order
You can fossilize an object.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP per additional 10 kg
Roll: Alchemy + Wits
Components: LG
Resistance: 1 per 5 kg of weight
Impact: You call upon the transformative powers of your own indwelling spark of the Holy Flame to fossilize any object or body whose mass is equal to or less than your Theurgy ranks x20 in kilograms. You can affect additional mass at a rate of 10 kilograms per 2 VP expended. At this cost, you must touch the object, but if it is within sight, you may spend an additional 2 VP to affect it from a distance.

The transmuted object is now composed of a gray, chalky sandstone-like material. The object is strong enough to support a human's weight but brittle enough to crack or crumble with a sharp impact. As one would expect, technology transmuted this way ceases to function, and weapons become brittle, one-use clubs.

This transmutation is permanent, but Ur-artifacts are immune to it. Living organic tissue is also immune to it. Nevertheless, there are rumors of Stigmata Garrison Eskatonics who have somehow learned how to affect living tissue. If true, this would be a grave sin, as it would trap the target's soul inside a statue-like body, thereby preventing its Luminous Return to the Empyrean.

REFINEMENT OF ESSENCE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 7 *and* Eskatonic Order
You can remove impurities from objects.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP per additional 10 kg
Roll: Alchemy + Wits
Components: LG
Resistance: 1 per 5 kg of weight
Impact: You remove non-essential elements from an object or body whose mass is equal to or less than your Theurgy ranks x20 in kilograms. You can affect additional mass at a rate of 10 kilograms per 2 VP expended. At this cost, you must touch a portion of the mass, but if it is within sight, you may spend 2 VP to affect it from a distance.

Refinement of Essence is used to purify fuel, strengthen building materials, and detoxify food, water, or the atmosphere of an enclosed or sealed space. In rules terms, it upgrades the item's quality by one degree: from standard to superior, superior to masterwork, etc. You can improve it by one additional degree by spending 1 VP upon casting.

Unlike Osseous Transformation (a less specialized form of this power), Refinement may be used on living organic tissue. However, care should be taken when using it in this fashion, as even benign drugs and medicines, surgical implants, transplants, tissue grafts, and undigested food are considered "impurities," which means they will be forcibly expelled from the target's body. In addition, cybernetic enhancements break down and may cause damage to their bearer.

This rite has been known to even expel symbiot taint, although the longer the taint has been present in the flesh, the higher the Resistance to expel it (double Resistance after the first act in which the infection occurred).

RENDING THE VEIL OF UNREASON

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 3 *and* Eskatonic Order
You can perceive the aura of another being.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP +2 VP for aura motion, +2 VP for aura shape
Roll: Focus + Perception
Components: P
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You perceive the "mirror" of another's soul, which appears as a flame centered on the region of their heart. The size of the flame you perceive is

based on the Faith rating of the target: Faith 10 appears as a large and bright flame, completely filling its mirror, while Faith 1 appears as a small candle flame at the end of a long and dark corridor. Because a soul's mirror can be tarnished through sin, you may guess at the type and extent of the target's sins by examining the condition of their soul's mirror.

Sin	"Tarnish"
Pride	Narrow vertical streaks
Greed	Broad horizontal streaks
Lust	Violet bubbles rising from the bottom
Envy	Greenish streaks pointing inward from the outer edges
Sloth	Thick bluish bubbles rolling down from the top
Wrath	Reddish streaks radiating from the center
Oathbreaking	Cracks are visible, one for each oath broken, and the size of each crack is dependent on the importance of its oath.

In addition to this moral insight, you may also read the target's aura type and color as if using the Sixth Sense psychic power Subtle Sight; see the chart earlier in this chapter. By spending 2 additional VP, you can discern the motion of the target's aura, which conveys the target's state of mind; another 2 additional VP allows you to see its shape, which conveys the targets thoughts.

Finally, you can detect the tinge of occult forces within the soul — you can read whether the target has wyrd points in their cache or bank. You only know its presence, not its quantity.

SECOND SIGHT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 4 *and* Eskatonic Order
You can see any traces of dark corruption in a target's soul.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Perception
Components: P
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You see a psychic's Urge as a dark fetal form growing in their brain (at lower levels) or as a fully formed shadow that moves independently of the psychic (at higher levels). Second Sight can also reveal the presence of demonic influence, allowing you to see their dark forms hovering near an Antinomist or someone who is possessed. You likewise see the type, target, and caster of any theurgic rite within visual range.

Second Sight does not grant the aura-reading ability of Rending the Veil of Unreason (see above), as it operates according to a different range of the astral spectrum. The GM should use creativity in describing what you see with this rite, as individual auras are not being read. Rather, Second Sight confers the ability to see all the broad occult forces at work in a given scene.

Sanctuary Aeon Rituals

Theurgy	Rite
1	Cleansing (charism)
2	Hearth
3	Calming
4	Knowing Heart
5	Fruitful Multiplication, Restoration
6	Manna from Heaven
7	Healing Hand of Saint Amalthea
8	Sanctuary
9	Invitation of Hamomeyelos, Lord of Mercy

CALMING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 3 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can dissipate rage, hate, fear, and even less negative (but sometimes equally destructive) manifestations of simple excitement. This rite has prevented many confrontations from escalating to violence, which accounts for the Amaltheans' reputation as diplomats.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP per additional target
Roll: Charm + Will
Components: G
Resistance: Equals the highest Spirit Resistance of all targets present.
Impact: You cancel the effects of certain states within the affected targets: Afraid, Angered, Berserk, Daunted, Humiliated, Roused, Terrified, and similar states that would rile people up, including those caused by psychic manipulation and demonic possession. This nullification lasts for one scene, after which enduring and chronic states exert their effects again. By spending an additional 2 VP per target, you can lower the persistence of these states by one step (chronic to enduring to temporary to canceled).

CLEANSING

Calling • Power (charism) • Precondition: Theurgy 1 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can strengthen a person, object, or yourself against evil taint or influence (including the effects of psychic powers, Antinomy, Urge, or Hubris) by cleansing away the impurities through which evil gains a foothold.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: LGP
Resistance: Effortless against willing targets, Hard against one's self
Impact: For the remainder of the scene, the target gains +2 Resistance to all their Resistance traits against the above-listed threats. You can increase this by +1 Resistance per 2 additional VP you spend upon casting, up to a bonus limit of your Faith rating.

Additionally, Cleansing is also useful in treating wounds when no chemical antiseptic is available. It does not heal Vitality itself; instead, it provides the target with a bonus equal to your class level for a single Revival (so long as the Revival is used in the same scene as the casting).

Some Amaltheans perform this ritual daily as part of their devotional ceremonies. This effect lasts for the remainder of the act. A cleansed person participating in a rite acts as a vestment (see *Vestments* above), provided they possess at least 1 rank of the Theurgy characteristic.

CHARISM

With Theurgy 1, your charism (by spending 1 VP) grants a target that you can see (not yourself) +1 Resistance against a single attack for that round only. Alternatively, you can spend 1 VP to remove dust, dirt, and similar mundane foreign contamination from inanimate objects.

At Theurgy 5, you can grant a target that you can see +1 Resistance against two attacks, so long as they occur within 10 rounds. Alternatively, you can spend 1 VP to remove mold, mildew, and similar mundane contaminants from inanimate objects, including food and drink.

At Theurgy 9, you can grant a target that you can see +1 Resistance against three attacks, so long as they occur within that scene. Or you can spend 1 VP to repair small mundane damage to inanimate objects, such as tears in clothing, cracks in ceramic, or bent metal, making them good as new.

FRUITFUL MULTIPLICATION

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can replicate material substances.
Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Sleight of Hand or Vigor + Faith
Components: LP
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You increase the mass of a single targeted substance (such as food, water, cloth, building materials, breathable air, etc.), doubling its existing amount. You can triple it by spending 2 VP or quadruple it with 4 VP.

Fruitful Multiplication will not replicate manufactured items, only basic materials. Using this rite on precious metals is frowned upon by the Sanctuary Aeon sect and is usually grounds for immediate excommunication.

HEALING HAND OF SAINT AMALTHEA

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 7 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can perform miraculous healing upon the afflicted.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: See below
Roll: Empathy or Remedy + Intuition
Components: LGP
Resistance: Easy
Impact: By meditating upon Saint Amalthea while reciting all the names of the Pancreator from the Compassionate Truths, you heal Vitality wounds at a rate of 2 Vitality per 1 VP spent. Even Mangled wounds can be healed in this way, which removes the Mangled state. Unlike the Laying On of Hands rite, you do not need to touch your target; you must simply be able to sense them with your own senses (you can't use this rite over a vidscreen).

You can heal more than one person by spending 2 VP per additional target. You must pay this cost *before* the roll is made. The maximum number of additional targets is limited by your Faith characteristic. The amount of VP you spend to overcome Resistance is applied against all targets, but you must spend VP to heal Vitality separately for each target.

In addition, you can reattach severed limbs and remove deeply embedded shrapnel, diseased organs, or insidious parasites. In these cases, you (or an assistant who follows your directions) will need

to touch the patient in the affected region, and the Resistance for the casting becomes Demanding. With the GM's approval, a critical hit might even restore the very recently dead to life.

HEARTH

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 2 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can create a roaring fire.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP for each additional scene of duration.
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: LG
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You produce what appears to be a campfire, which generates enough light to see in a 10-meter radius and enough heat to boil water and cook food. It lasts for one scene. Unlike the Avestite rite of Torchbearing, however, the fire created is not a natural fire. The flames are not hot enough to fire pottery or smelt ore, and they cannot be used to start other fires or ignite flammable materials. Similarly, no fuel is needed, but a cleared space must be prepared beforehand.

By spending 2 VP for the scene, you can move the Hearth so that it travels with you, although only at a walking pace.

INVITATION TO HAMOMEYELOS, LORD OF MERCY

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 9 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can call upon one of the Bodiless Intelligences of the Empyrean for aid.
Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress + Presence
Components: LGP
Resistance: Severe
Impact: You contact the compassionate and beneficent intelligence known as Hamomeyelos, who rules the Sixth Emanation from the Celestial Sun. Hamomeyelos is the pure embodiment of benevolence and generosity. They will take no direct physical actions, but as a being of nearly limitless capabilities, they can aid you in a multitude of ways relating to the virtues they embody.

Hamomeyelos has never revealed themself directly to anyone, but they always manifest in the tangible physical form of a good Samaritan, a kindly stranger, a timely messenger, or any manner of helpful or generous locals, passersby, wandering mendicants, or even forgotten acquaintances. Regardless of its manifestation, Hamomeyelos will always be in a position to make available to you and your troupe whatever safety, sustenance, or support is necessary (though not necessarily what is overtly requested but rather what is truly required).

This rite can be cast only once per drama without risk. If you cast it a second time within the same drama, you must perform a *repent* maneuver (Focus + Faith) to prevent gaining Hubris. (See *Gaining Hubris* below.) If you dare to cast it a third time (and each subsequent time), your *repent* roll is unfavorable.

KNOWING HEART

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 4 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can observe the inner workings of the target's psyche, both emotional and intellectual.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Empathy + Perception
Components: P
Resistance: Target's Spirit Resistance
Impact: You read the current state of the target's mind, but only their active, "surface" thoughts and emotions; subconscious or deeply buried feelings, thoughts, or intentions are not disclosed by Knowing Heart. However, by spending 2 VP, you may probe for such inner states.

MANNA FROM HEAVEN

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 6 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can create food.
Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP per each additional day or 10 adults
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: LP
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: You create sufficient sustenance to feed 10 adults for one day. The VP expended determine the quality and variety of the food created: basic victory (without VP spent) yields a chewy, dense (but nutritious) substance somewhere between jerky and old bread; an additional 2 VP makes for a simple but hearty assortment of meats and vegetables; an additional 4 VP yields fully prepared meals.

RESTORATION

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can cure diseases and expel poisons from the body of the target.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: LGP
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: While Vitality damage already inflicted from disease or poison is not healed by this rite, their source is removed, thereby allowing the target to recover normally. In the case of disease, the target's own immune system wins over the sickness, while poisons are literally expelled from the body, leaving lasting evidence that may be analyzed by investigators attempting to trace the poisoner. Additionally, imbalances in the spiritual humours are soothed: chronic mental and social states become enduring.

SANCTUARY

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 8 *and* Sanctuary Aeon
You can create a "damper field" in which no violent or harmful actions may take place.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Charm + Faith
Components: LGP
Resistance: Tough
Impact: Sanctuary affects either a large room or a 10-meter radius around you. You can enlarge it by 2 meters per 1 VP you spend, up to a maximum VP equal to your Theurgy rating. Any roll within the Sanctuary using Fight, Melee, or Shoot only succeeds on a roll of 1 and any other malevolent or overly aggressive action, such as a psychic attack, is unfavorable.

This ritual is the foundation of Sanctuary Aeon's political power through the ages, as it ensures that Amaltheans can act as mediators between the warring factions of the Known Worlds.

Temple Avesti Rituals

Theurgy	Rite
1	Knowing the False Heart (charism)
2	Scent of Evil
3	Sting of Conscience
4	Torchbearing
5	Fault of the Soulless
6	Fearsome Majesty
7	Inquisitory Commandment
8	Tortures of the Damned
9	Petition to Jachemuyelos, Lord of Judgment

FAULT OF THE SOULLESS

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5 *and* Temple Avesti
You can cause a piece of personal technology, such as a blaster, a comlink, a computer terminal, or a robot of human size or smaller to cease to function, so long as you can see it.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress or Tech Redemption + Presence
Components: LG
Resistance: Demanding (Severe vs. tech items that have been enhanced by occult means: a psi fetish, a sanctified blaster, etc.)
Impact: You can spend additional VP to affect larger and more complex pieces of technology: 2 VP to disable a personal land vehicle, 4 VP for a building's security system, and 10+ VP to take out a starship. The VP required can be adjusted at the GM's discretion. For example, if you possess sufficient tech knowledge, you might be able to target a starship's helm systems by expending only 4 VP.

The severity of any malfunction is based on the VP you spend: basic victory causes simple mishaps lasting only a few turns (misfires, jams, etc.); an additional 2 VP makes for more serious but repairable damage that takes a scene to correct (dead batteries, overheating motors, system crash, etc.); an additional 4 VP means the machine is permanently ruined and maybe unfixable (broken chassis, cracked casings, wiped memory, etc.). With an additional 6 VP or more you can produce spectacularly destructive effects, like fuel leakages, core meltdowns, or smoke and sparks pouring out of a control panel while gears and springs drop from the bottom of the console.
Fault of the Soulless cannot affect Ur technology.

FEARSOME MAJESTY

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 6 *and* Temple Avesti
This ritual is identical to the Brother Battle rite of the same name (although it can be acquired at a lower Theurgy rank).

INQUISITORY COMMANDMENT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 7 *and* Temple Avesti
You can compel someone to tell the truth.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Empathy + Presence
Components: L
Resistance: Target's Spirit Resistance
Impact: Your target suffers the Abjured state, an extreme form of the Castigated state. They can be compelled to answer questions in depth (not simply "yes" or "no") and made to give up deep secrets. While questions that might put allies into danger still allow for a reflexive *shake it off* attempt, the roll is unfavorable. The state lasts for one scene.

KNOWING THE FALSE HEART

Calling • Power (charism) • Precondition: Theurgy 1 *and* Temple Avesti
You can detect intentional dishonesty and deliberate untruthfulness in a target.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress + Presence
Components: G
Resistance: The dissembling target's Spirit Resistance
Impact: For the rest of the scene, you know whether the target is lying whenever they communicate with you or others. While this only applies to outright falsehoods, you may still detect half-truths if you spend 2 additional VP upon casting.

Instead of a person, you can target a written text, either a short letter (Hard Resistance), a passage from a book (Demanding Resistance), or an entire book (Tough Resistance). You can tell whether the author of the text believed what they wrote to be true, although you must read the full text, however long that takes.

CHARISM
With Theurgy 1, your charism allows you (by spending 1 VP) to intuit — on your *next* turn — whether someone within earshot of you has spoken a falsehood during the prior round. However, if more than one person in earshot talked that turn and a lie was spoken, you're not sure which person(s) is the liar. You catch the telltale scent of a lie, but don't know who dealt it.

At Theurgy 5, you can recognize falsehoods as above, but the duration extends to 10 turns. At the beginning of each turn, you'll know whether someone (but not necessarily who) lied during the previous round.

At Theurgy 9, you can recognize falsehoods as per directly above, but the duration extends to the rest of the scene.

PETITION TO JACHEMUYELOS, LORD OF JUDGMENT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 9 *and* Temple Avesti
You can call upon one of the Bodiless Intelligences of the Empyrean for aid.
Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress + Faith
Components: LGP
Resistance: Severe
Impact: You contact the stern but fair arbiter of disputes known as Jachemuyelos, who rules the Fourth Emanation from the Celestial Sun. Jachemuyelos is the pure embodiment of judgment. They will take no direct physical actions, but, as a being of nearly limitless capabilities, they can provide you with guidance in rendering a judgment in difficult cases. Their advice can steer you toward the most just outcome.

Jachemuyelos is not an entity of blind wrath or damnation, but a truly objective intelligence with a perfect comprehension of the balance between retribution and repentance. Their guidance is what keeps the most fervent and zealous inquisitors in check. Only the most malevolent enemy of life and faith will ever see the harsh and vengeful aspect of Jachemuyelos, of which even Avestites speak in euphemistic whispers. Your interactions with Jachemuyelos must be worded in rigid and precise legalese, much as a counselor would approach a judge, or else they will offer no assistance to you. The visible form of Jachemuyelos is an older man with a long beard and stately judicial robes, holding the scales of justice in one hand and the gavel of Order in the other.

This rite can be cast only once per drama without risk. If you cast it a second time within the same drama, you must perform a *repent* maneuver (Focus + Faith) to prevent gaining Hubris. (See *Gaining Hubris* below.) If you dare to cast it a third time (and each subsequent time), your *repent* roll is unfavorable.

SCENT OF EVIL

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 2 *and* Temple Avesti
You can perceive acts of Antinomy or a psychic's Urge, the presence of demons, or Ur-artifacts with negative effects.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Empathy + Perception
Components: GP
Resistance: Hard
Impact: This rite indicates the presence of evil (as listed in the rite's description above), but not exactly what the evil is doing. Some precision is possible, however, depending on the VP spent. Basic victory, for example, merely signals the presence of evil ("There is evil in this house!"); spending an additional 2 VP means a more specific area can be sensed ("Somebody in this room..."); spending an additional 4 VP also gives you a sense of the type of evil present (Antinomic, Urge, alien, etc.); an additional 6 VP or more also pinpoints the evil precisely ("J'accuse! Antinomy most foul!").

STING OF CONSCIENCE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 3 *and* Temple Avesti
You can verbally harangue a target to make them feel guilty about some past sin or misdeed.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress + Presence
Components: LG
Resistance: The target's Spirit Resistance
Impact: The target is both Castigated for the scene (they must answer your queries) and Guilty (they need to make amends) as a chronic state; this lasts until they either resolve it with therapy (with a Focus *rally*) or through your verbal absolution of their guilt. Until then, their *shake it off* rolls are unfavorable.

Sting of Conscience may be used without a specific verbal accusation against its target. In that case, its effect is unpredictable. A relatively guiltless person may begin to obsess over some mischief from their childhood, while a truly sinful person may be driven to wildly self-destructive acts that endanger everyone around them.

TORCHBEARING

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 4 *and* Temple Avesti
You can ignite a flame without the use of lighters, matches, or flint and steel.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Presence
Components: G
Resistance: Hard
Impact: This flame burns for 10 turns without the need for fuel, after which it will go out unless fed. You can spend 2 VP to make it last for the scene. Normally, the flame can only be ignited by touch, but you can spend 2 additional VP to create the flame anywhere you can see (as long as it's not a direct attack).

TORTURES OF THE DAMNED

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 8 *and* Temple Avesti
You can incapacitate a target with pain.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP

Roll: Impress + Presence
Components: LG
Resistance: Target's Spirit Resistance
Impact: You flood a targets mind with images of Gehenne (Hell). These visions may take the form of Orthodox or Avestite descriptions — burning fire or numbing cold that lasts for eternity — or a more personal form, such as reliving a traumatic event or seeing one's greatest fears come to life; they may manifest as some combination of both. In either case, the target becomes Terrified for 10 turns, after which the deep psychological nature of the experience causes a chronic Guilty state.

Urth Orthodox Rituals

Theurgy	Rite
1	Consecration (charism)
2	Light
3	Armor of the Pancreator
4	Faithful Heart
5	Dispersal of Darkness
6	Consecration of Land
7	Blessing of Crops
8	Exorcism
9	Sealing the Temple

ARMOR OF THE PANCREATOR

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 3 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can protect yourself or another from physical harm.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP per 5 additional hits
Roll: Empathy or Focus + Faith
Components: LG
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You produce a force field that protects its target. The target is a single individual, whether that's you or someone else, but it must be declared before the ritual is cast. Otherwise, it acts like the ecumenical Shield of Faith rite (above), although it only protects its target, not an area around the caster.

BLESSING OF CROPS

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 7 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can purify and enrich foodstuffs.
Time: Present Tense (5 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Empathy or Vigor + Presence
Components: LGP
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You can neutralize impurities and organic poisons. You can also restore perishable foods within two days of their having spoiled. When blessing untainted foodstuffs, you can make them more nutritious and fulfilling by 50% (for example, a 10-day supply of rations can be stretched out to 15 days). The amount of foodstuffs affected is equal to your Theurgy rating in kilograms.

CONSECRATION

Calling • Power (charism) • Precondition: Theurgy 1 *and* Urth Orthodox
You purify an item from the taint of evil.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: GP
Resistance: Hard
Impact: You make a vestment (see *Vestments* above) that lasts for the duration of the act, after which it returns to normal — unless the goal roll is a critical hit, in which case the Consecration is permanent. The consecrated item resists being affected by psychic powers, Antinomy, Urge, or Hubris; rolls by these powers to affect the item are unfavorable. Tech Level 5+ items are hard to consecrate; subtract one from the casting roll.

CHARISM
With Theurgy 1, your charism sanctifies (by spending 1 VP) an item temporarily. The sanctification lasts for the next single action in which the vestment is used.
At Theurgy 5, the bonus lasts for 10 turns.
At Theurgy 9, the bonus lasts for the rest of the scene.

CONSECRATION OF LAND

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 6 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can consecrate a large swath of ground.
Time: Present Tense (5 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Faith
Components: GP
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: You consecrate an area equal to your Presence rating x10 in square meters. Consecrated ground is impassable to evil minions, such as husks, and it repels the occult powers of unrepentant psychics. Antinomists and negative Ur-artifacts suffer

unfavorable rolls. This effect applies both to powers used within the consecrated ground and those targeted from without. After an act, the ground returns to normal unless a critical hit was rolled, in which case the consecration is permanent.

DISPERSAL OF DARKNESS

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 5 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can repulse the servitors of evil.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP for each additional 10 turns of duration
Roll: Impress + Presence
Components: LG
Resistance: Demanding
Impact: You can turn away husks, psychic Doppelgangers, creatures under the negative influence of Ur-artifacts, or any other servitors of evil. The rite creates an aura with a 1-meter radius per 1 VP you spend. Evil creatures can come no nearer to you than the outer radius. If they're within the radius when the rite is cast, they must use their movement actions to withdraw as soon as they are able; if they cannot move, their actions against you are unfavorable. Also, ranged physical attacks directed at you are unfavorable, but influence attempts and ranged occult powers are unaffected. The aura lasts for 10 turns but can be extended to an additional 10 turns per 1 VP expended. This extension can occur multiple times, even after casting, so long as the 10 turns have not yet run out.

EXORCISM

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 8 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can end psychic or Antinomic domination, demonic possession, and the influence of Ur-artifacts and some aliens.
Time: Present Tense (30 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Impress + Faith
Components: LGP
Resistance: A dominated target uses the Spirit Resistance rating of the psychic responsible, while a possessed target uses the Spirit Resistance of the demon responsible. Both psychics and demons can contest exorcism attempts by expending VP of their own. The Resistance of other types of occult influence is left to the GM to determine, but most are at least Demanding.
Impact: You drive out any dark power which is influencing or possessing the target.

Special: If you do not know the name and/or identity of the possessing malefactor, your roll is unfavorable. For this reason, the theurgist usually interviews the friends and family of the possessed beforehand, so the priest may ascertain who is behind the possession.

FAITHFUL HEART

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 4 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can protect yourself or others from mental harm.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP
Roll: Focus + Will
Components: LP
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You shield the soul and mind of a target against mental invasion or domination by psychics and their Urges, other theurgists, alien telepaths, or Antinomists, and anything else that affects Spirit Resistance. The target can be you or someone else. For the remainder of the scene, the targets gains +1 Spirit Resistance. You can increase this by +1 per 2 additional VP you spend.

LIGHT

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 2 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can create a sphere of light.
Time: Instantaneous (primary action)
Cost: 1 VP + 1 VP for each additional 1-meter radius or 2-meter beam
Roll: Focus + Intuition
Components: G
Resistance: Easy
Impact: You generate an insubstantial floating ball casting light in a 5-meter radius that lasts for the rest of the scene. The light is sufficient to read by. The ball follows you unless you direct it otherwise. As a secondary action, you can move the ball elsewhere at a speed of 1 meter per your Theurgy rating.

As a primary action, you can reshape the light into a tight searchlight-type beam that extends from your palm and can be used to search darkened areas for blind "enemies of the faith." (Roll Focus + Dexterity as a primary action to aim at a target's eyes vs. the target's Perception as Resistance; impact: the target is Blinded for 1 turn per 2 VP you spent, or if they're wearing eye protection, they are instead Visually Impaired.) The range for this beam is 10 meters. Upon casting, you can extend the range by a 1-meter radius (or 2 m for the beam) per 2 VP spent.

SEALING THE TEMPLE

Calling • Power • Precondition: Theurgy 9 *and* Urth Orthodox
You can protect your flock during times of great trouble by turning a temple into a temporary fortress.
Time: Present Tense (15 minutes)
Cost: 1 VP + 2 VP per additional hits equal to your level
Roll: Impress + Will
Components: LGP
Resistance: Tough
Impact: This is cast onto a room, building, or structure no larger than your Presence x10 in square meters. It acts as both the Dispersal of Darkness and Armor of the Pancreator rites: evil creatures cannot approach within the area of protection, and attacks upon the structure from without must contend with a property resembling an energy shield.

Hubris

The Church refers to the dark consequences of theurgy as hubris, which it understands as overweening pride before the Pancreator. Hubris is not a split personality or a dark entity growing inside you; it is your own human fallibility before the divine. A lack of humility leads to supercilious pride in one's ability to call forth miraculous powers, powers that are supposed to be the Pancreator's gift rather than your own will exerting itself. Consequently, extreme Hubris can even lead to lack of faith.

Whenever you roll a critical miss on a theurgic ritual roll, your Hubris grows: the effects of your Hubris powers exert themselves in increasingly dire ways. You must also perform a successful *repent* maneuver to avoid gaining an additional Hubris rank. (See *Gaining Hubris* below.) The effects of Hubris remain with you until you lose the ranks of Hubris that currently empower them. Hubris has nine generally acknowledged ranks, each of which is described below. There are additional ways to gain Hubris, most commonly by committing sins. (See *Gaining Hubris*.)

As with the psychic Urge, Hubris opposes your Theurgy characteristic. If you have 1 rank of Hubris, you can have no more than 9 ranks of Theurgy. If your Hubris is 2, your maximum Theurgy is 8, and so on: As Hubris grows, Theurgy diminishes. If this causes you to lose a rank of Theurgy that you had previously gained, any rites that require that rank as a precondition cannot be cast. You still know them, but your powers are useless to evoke them until you've lost the blocking Hubris, which then allows your pre-existing Theurgy to return. For more details, see the *Resolving Urge/Hubris Conflicts* sidebar earlier in this chapter.

Hubris Powers

The powers of Hubris represent the changing relationship between the theurgist and the Pancreator, which is to say, between the theurgist and the universe at large. Most Hubris powers are permanent or always in effect, while some (for example, ranks 2 and 4) require specific circumstances to become active. No rolls need be made, since the precise manifestation of each power is largely left to the imagination of the GM.

AVERT BEAST (HUBRIS 1)

Animals fear you: dogs bark at your passing, birds take flight, cats hiss and spit, horses rear and throw their riders, oxen bolt from their harnesses, etc. "Skittish as a Terran cart-mule" is a private joke among rural priests, who keep their Hubris in check through the recognition of this "early warning" effect. Among urban priests, growing Hubris is less likely to be noticed, since they generally have less direct contact with the natural world.

GUILTY SOUL (HUBRIS 2)

You become prone to unconscious slips of the tongue that reveal your sin. The Church believes that your tarnished soul wishes to speak out, so that you might recognize the Hubris growing within you and seek atonement through humility. Normally, public knowledge of this Hubris power can endanger a theurge's career, so those afflicted with it keep it well hidden, if possible. Of course, a guilty soul tries to speak out at the most inappropriate times by making embarrassing and self-revelatory declarations. This power only lasts for a scene after you've rolled a critical miss on a ritual roll or any roll involving Faith.

BLEMISHES (HUBRIS 3)

Your pride before the Pancreator grows until it cannot cure itself through mere speech. Instead, it reveals its Hubris physically through warts, splotches, and similar marks on your face or hands. These blemishes are visible signs that you have overstepped the boundaries of the Church's teachings. Blemishes, unlike religious stigmata, are usually recognized and understood by the faithful as evidence of sinful behavior. Cynical observers of fashion trends have noted that the Avestite preference for long robes with concealing hoods or veils originated during a particularly corrupt period in the sect's history.

FLAGELLATION (HUBRIS 4)

If a guilty soul (see above) is left unchecked, it grows too large for the dark recesses of your heart, building pressures that can cause it to manifest in actual deeds rather than in mere words. Your guilt eats away at you, and you begin to perform unintended actions — often dangerous and potentially life-threatening — designed to reveal it to others. This power only lasts for a scene after you've rolled a critical miss on a ritual roll or any roll involving Faith.

DOLOROUS STROKE (HUBRIS 5)

As the sin of spiritual pride increases, it is accompanied by disdain for the real, the mundane, and the physical. Under the effects of this power, the soul is contorted in agony and contorts the body along with it. The process that started with blemishes (see above) is completed with the dolorous stroke, when you suffer from a crippling bodily affliction, such as painful arthritis (sometimes bending the hand into a claw-like appendage), a hunched back, a lame leg, etc. The dolorous stroke is permanent until its Hubris rank is decreased and may, at the GM's discretion, involve the loss of one or more ranks from Body characteristics.

FAITHLESS (HUBRIS 6)

An inflated sense of self-importance eclipses the rightful place of the Pancreator in your heart, enabling guilt and sin to spill out into the world around you. Your Hubris is now too great for you to bear alone, so its effects soon start to taint others, as well. Your sermons, no matter how beautifully composed or passionately delivered, cause others to feel a deep unease within their own souls, leading to a loss of faith. Those so affected may desert your sect or even the Church itself. In extreme cases, such as those already depressed when they fall under the sway of this power, they may commit suicide — a grave rejection of the Pancreator's light.

WASTELAND (HUBRIS 7)

As the secret sin continues to grow, spreading from person to person, it starts to affect the inanimate world as well. Your now-intense Hubris begins to taint the earth itself. The local land becomes barren: crops will not grow, animals will not birth, and their milk and meat go bad on the hoof. If you leave the area and do not return, the land may eventually recover in time, but it is a long and slow process that can only be accelerated through cleansing rites and blessings. If you remain in the area, it may never recover.

PLAGUE (HUBRIS 8)

As the faith of the people falters and the land is drained of all its vitality, your Hubris manifests in the very bodies of those around you. A virulent plague is visited upon the local populace, bringing with it suffering and death. You are protected from this accursed disease of which you are the cause, but anyone who comes into contact with you — including merely seeing you — is afflicted by it. As with the manifestation of a Wasteland (listed above), the plague may be combated through the use cleansing rites and blessings, but it is stubbornly resistant to technological medicine. Furthermore, the plague does not abate until you leave the area.

DEAD WORLD (HUBRIS 9)

Standing at the brink of damnation, your insufferable pride is swollen to encompass your entire planet. The Pancreator has cursed the very world on which you stand. The entire world on which you stand when you gain this rank of Hubris become a Wasteland — all life on it withers and dies, leaving behind a dead world. Only when you are healed of *every* level of Hubris you have acquired will the planet begin to live again. Priests whisper that the reason the planet Nowhere — said in Second Republic records to be lush — is now a windblown desert is because of a forgotten theurge's Hubris. True or not, the mere suggestion of it serves as a cautionary tale against Hubris.

Gaining Hubris

Hubris is gained through roleplaying. If you perform certain deeds, your Hubris will grow, and it will continue to do so if you perform similar deeds. What follows are some general guidelines for the deeds that threaten to increase Hubris.

When you commit such a deed, you can perform a *repent* maneuver as a primary action to resist growing Hubris. The traits used depend on the sin you committed (as listed below). The Resistance is your current Hubris rating. If the action fails, you gain 1 rank or more of Hubris.

Sin	Repent roll	Ranks
Critical miss on a theurgic casting	Focus + Theurgy	1
Refusing a sacrament	Focus + Will	1
Missing confession for more than one month	Focus + Will	1
Suffering Inquisitorial torture	Focus + Presence	1
Suffering excommunication	Focus + Faith	2-3
Exposure to alien occult powers	Focus + Faith	1
Exposure to an evil artifact	Focus + Faith	1-3
Declaring a vendetta	Focus + Will	1
Murder	Focus + Will	1-2
Rape	Focus + Will	2
Stealing	Focus + Wits	1
Inventing proscribed tech	Focus + Will	1
Rebellion against sect	Focus + Faith	1
Starting your own sect	Focus + Faith	1-3

Losing Hubris

You can learn humility, but regaining squandered grace is difficult. Losing Hubris ranks requires both a quest or great deed and a successful *atone* action to cement what you learned. What follows are some general guidelines, including suggested Hubris rank reductions.

The traits used for the primary-action *atone* maneuver depend on the deed you performed as penance (see below). The Resistance is your current Hubris rating. The GM can contest this, as described above for *repent*. If the action succeeds, you lose 1 or more ranks of Hubris. (The GM decides, based on the guidelines below.)

Deed	Atone roll	Ranks
Pilgrimage	Vigor + Faith	1
Church mercy (absolution)	Focus + Faith	1-2
Forsaking theurgy*	Focus + Theurgy	3
Performing a Church mission	Focus + Faith	1
Exposure to a soul shard	Focus + Faith	1-2
Exposure to a Philosopher's Stone	Focus + Faith	1
Selfless sacrifice	Empathy + Intuition	1-2
Exposure to a relic (once per relic)	Focus + Theurgy	1
Converting heathens, heretics, etc.	Empathy + Faith	1-2
Converting other sects or orders	Charm or Impress + Faith	1
Renewing the faith of one who had lost it	Empathy + Faith	1-3

* Character must not practice for one year or all lost Hubris will be regained.

Miracles

Random acts of grace can and do occur, according to the many eyewitnesses to miracles. The Church, however, does not always concur with common accounts; it has much narrower criteria for identifying a miracle than the average peasant. Naturally, this has led some skeptics to wonder just how often the Pancreator takes a personal hand in the lives of humanity — and how many miraculous occurrences are effectively lost to history, usually because it was politically inexpedient for the Church to acknowledge them as such.

In play, any character can pray for a miracle. However, only one troupe member may do so per drama. Once one troupe member has done it, no other troupe members can do it again until the next drama *and* only after each has advanced at least one class level.

The GM should place as much emphasis on roleplaying the prayer as possible. The beseecher recites the prayer aloud for the group, saying exactly what is being asked for and why. If they're only seeking to further their own or their companion's interests, asking without regard for the greater good they could achieve with divine aid, a miracle will not occur. This is a wild card that characters can call on at times, though even truly deserving characters may not succeed — few people get a personal answer from the Pancreator.

Furthermore, when you seek a miracle, you must empty your cache *and* bank — you spend *all* your VP and personal WP. No roll is required, so long as the beseecher empties out his cache and bank.

The GM makes the miracle happen — but it can be as subtle or awe-inspiring as they want. The GM should take note of what aid the petitioner asks for (such as "Save me from my enemy!" or "Convert these heathens!"). The request will come to pass, but in a manner chosen by the GM. It might indeed be a stunning moment of divine intervention where the skies open up and a vision of the Prophet or a saint appears, or it might be an event that seems like pure happenstance or coincidence.

Finally, a miracle is always selfless: The aid requested will be granted, but it won't necessarily be in a way that helps the beseecher directly. The heathens you prayed to convert will convert — but it might come at the cost of your martyrdom, as their guilt for torturing or even killing you consumes them. Your prayer for deliverance from your enemy does provide your escape, but it brings you to the attention of that person's superior.

Miracles are a way to enhance the "miracle play" aspect of **Fading Suns** but should never become merely mechanical. Just because you *can* ask for a miracle once per drama doesn't mean that the troupe *should* use its allotted miracle before the end of every drama. The GM can choose to allow for fewer or more miracles, based on the tenor of the game. A drama about the ins and outs of politics at the Imperial court might be a rather dry place for divine intervention, but a rescue mission into symbiot territory on Stigmata might be pregnant with providence.

The GM has other ways to introduce the role of the miraculous into the game. See *Signs and Wonders* in **Chapter 1: Drama** in the **Gamemaster Book** for more ideas.

Antinomy

Theurgy channels the powers of the Empyrean. Antinomy ("against the law") channels the Dark. Antinomists seek congress with demons.

Lurking in the shadows cast by dying stars across a nascent empire, awaiting the return of a hollow darkened universe, poisoning the ears of high and low with greed, rage and fear, the dark lords of pain engineer the collapse of civilization. Antinomy and trafficking with malefic spirits can be traced back to the prehistory of ancient Urth and other species' homeworlds, but the unholy practice appeared to have undergone a renaissance with the extinction of Sathraism. Early Orthodox history contains detailed accounts of the practices and behavior of captured Antinomists, but little has been gleaned of their beliefs or occult techniques.

One document intercepted by Avesti inquisitors and translated by Eskatonic monks appears to be a round chant purporting to describe the hierarchy of all creation. It is written in an ancient dialect of Kurgan, a fact of which the Hazat never fail to remind Brother Battle troops in their border wars. Beginning with a brief recapitulation of Eskatonic cosmogony, the chant describes the Celestial Sun with Its layered Emanations, called Sefiros or "spheres" by the order. Each Emanation, through the action of its residing Intelligences or "Empyrean angels," reflects the Holy Flame outward until it is buried deep in the Tenth Emanation: the material world. From there the chant proceeds into a heresy long since purged from the Eskatonic Order: Beyond the Tenth Sefiros lie ten more planes of existence cut off from the Holy Flame, dark empty shells of the Sefiros called Qlippoth in the chant.

The progression of Qlippoth twists through nonspace so that the outermost Emanation converges upon a central point, named by old heretics the Infernos Prime, an inconceivably dense orb of black devouring fire, the opposite of the Celestial Sun. Inhabiting the Qlippoth are the hollowed vessels of consciousness known as demons, who yearn to break

through ancient barriers confining them to the Qlippoth and consume the never-ending bounty and grace of the Celestial Sun. Since their natural portals to the Sefiros were closed off by great beings in some primordial eon, they must enter the material plane through the heart of a human or other sentient, which can open its own doorways to heaven or hell.

Antinomists work in secret to open the way for the demons, using powers granted to them by their attunement to the Qlippoth. They spread anger, hatred, mistrust, and any manner of corruption which can drive the Holy Flame from within, eating away enough of the soul to receive demonic possession. A GM wishing to use an Antinomist as an antagonist may create Qlippothic equivalents of most of the above occult powers – more intrusive, soul-rending, and painful versions – with each rank corresponding inversely to the Qlippoth through which the power of the Infernos Prime is accessed. (For example, a rank 1 power would derive from the Ninth Qlippoth, a rank 2 from the Eighth, and so on.) Practitioners of Antinomy are often plagued by their fealty ties to a dark lord, which create effects similar to Urge and Hubris. Be sure that the Antinomist never takes center stage for too long, however, as their kind prefer to watch from the wings as mastermind manipulators.

Character Sheet

NAME

Planet

RANK

Birthdate

SPECIES

Size Speed

CLASS

Level

FACTION

Blessing

Curse

CALLING

SKILLS

Academia	(3)		Intrusion	(3)			
Alchemy	(0)	R	Knavery	(3)			
Animalia	(3)		Melee	(3)			
Arts	(3)		Observe	(3)			
Charm	(3)		Perform	(3)			
Crafts	(3)		Pilot	(0)	R		
Disguise	(3)		Remedy	(3)			
Drive	(3)		Shoot	(3)			
Empathy	(3)		Sleight of Hand	(3)			
Fight	(3)		Sneak	(3)			
Focus	(3)		Survival	(3)			
Impress	(3)		Tech Redemption	(3)			
Interface	(0)	R	Vigor	(3)			

BODY

Strength	(3)	
Dexterity	(3)	
Endurance	(3)	

MIND

Wits	(3)	
Perception	(3)	
Will	(3)	

SPIRIT

Presence	(3)	
Intuition	(3)	
Faith	(3)	

OCCULT

Psi	Urge	Theurgy	Hubris		

RESISTANCES

Body		Mod.
Mind		Mod.
Spirit		Mod.

ARMOR

Blstr.	Flm.	Hrd.	Lsr.	Shk.	Slm.	Son.

E-SHIELD

Thresholds / Hits

VITALITY

Rating Current

REVIVALS

Rating Number

ACTIONS

Maneuver/Attack	Goal	Impact

VP BANK

Capacity

Current VP

Current WP

SURGE

Rating

Number

Fading Suns

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Reference Sheet

PERKS

CAPABILITIES

BIRTHRIGHTS

POSSESSIONS

Techgnosis

Carried Equipment	TL	Size	Carried Equipment	TL	Size

Carried Weapons	TL	Goal	Dmg.	Str.	Rng.	RoF	Ammo	Features

Owned	Location	Owned	Location

MONEY

Cash	Asset	Income	Asset	Income

LAST NOTES

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